

UMM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men

What a Journey



Celebrating 20 years of ministry

The General Commission on United Methodist Men 1997 - 2017

A letter from the General Secretary

Celebrating where we have been and where we are going

Most of the articles in this issue celebrate the unlikely beginning of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, which—after 20 years—is going stronger than ever.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts of where we are going.

Since the beginning of the commission, we have expressed that to fulfill our mission, we have to be more than a monthly meeting with an usually un-healthy breakfast or dinner. We want men to have an on-growing relationship with Jesus.

When I ask a good man where he has seen Christ in the last seven days, and he can't answer, something is wrong; we can't follow Christ while standing still. So we continue to bring men together to experience Christ, through sharing, through missions, through serving others, and through accountability groups that ask historic Wesleyan questions.

If you have read recent issues of this magazine then you know we are attempting to lead our men and churches to be the catalyst to end domestic violence. Violence against women begins with men; so this is not just a women's issue. I am pleased that we are making some real progress in this area.

A related issue we will address deals with the number one use of the internet which impacts half of all the men in our churches, and to which 30-40 percent of pastors are addicted—pornography.

We don't talk about it. We hope it will just go away. Maybe you thought that the most internet use is buying on Amazon, or playing video games, or sharing pictures

on Facebook or Instagram. Nope. it is porn and it is stealing men's souls.

Technology is not a curse. It can be a very positive tool. We are doing a great deal of our work via the technology of the day. Technology enables us to have meaningful—even holy meetings—even if we are not in the same city.

The members of one of the electronic groups I am in were commenting on what we have been through in the last two years. Changes in jobs, issues with parents and children, deaths, joys, and challenges to our faith.

Participants said, "I could not have made it without this group." "You guys are the ones that listen to me." "I know you have my back." "I am better during the week because I'm with you guys today."

These are uplifting meetings with deep conversations, mixed with great joy, laughter, celebration and prayer.

We continue to make the same offer that has been around since we became a commission. If you need something in men's ministry or scouting ministry, we have it, we know where it is, or we will create it.

I hope you find hope and inspiration in this issue. We strive to be servants of God as we serve you.



—Gil Hanke

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



contents

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UM Men

Spring 2017

FEATURES

- 5** Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the commission
- 9** What a journey!
- 13** My memories as first director of men's ministry
- 16** Reflections on my 20 years with the commission
- 19** The journey to become a commission
- 21** Dad's Zone
- 22** Across the Nation
- 27** In Memoriam
- 30** **MENS NEWS**
- 35** **SCOUTING NEWS**

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 was serving as editor of the *Daily Christian Advocate (DCA)* during the 1996 General Conference in Denver.

Most people would think the editor of the daily publication

with news from the conference, photos of participants, legislative proposals and transcripts of proceedings would carefully observe all sessions.

In truth, I observed very few sessions during the four quadrennia I served as editor. I spent nearly 100 percent of the time in the editorial offices and only occasionally observed conference sessions as I passed by a television monitor in the DCA lobby.

I was also more than a little distracted by the fact that Heather, my adult daughter who was serving as a copy editor, tripped while rushing copy from one office to another. She broke her leg and was rushed to a Denver hospital. She spent the rest of the two-week period editing copy from a wheel chair.

Since I grew up in Denver, I also spent all available free time chatting with family members who dropped by for a visit.

So, I was not in attendance when delegates created the General Commission on United Methodist Men. I did review the copy of the writer who covered that plenary session, but I had no idea that someday I would serve as a staff person with that agency.

While I was still a staff member of the Nashville-based United Methodist Publishing House, the men's commission asked if the publisher could send over someone to help the commission staff begin a magazine.

I was selected as that "someone."

"What a special group of people," I thought after I had the opportunity to work on the magazine with Joe Harris, Larry Malone, Larry Coppock, Daon Johnson and Martha Davis. Larry Malone was named the editor of the new magazine.

Following that 1997 meeting, the editorship of the magazine moved from Larry Malone to Kwasi Kena, and the magazine was changed from a standard-size to the digest size it is today.

In 2003, I had retired from the publishing house and I was writing for United Methodist Communications and other church agencies when I was invited to write articles and news releases for United Methodist Men.

In 2004, Kwasi accepted a position with the General Board of Discipleship and Joe Harris invited me to shift from the role of contributor to the post of editor, a position I continue to serve with great joy.

It's been a special treat for me to revisit the 1996 creation of the commission and the 1997 beginnings.

Joe Harris laid a solid foundation for the commission. During the past 20 years, several staff members have built upon remarkably stable footing.

I consider it a special privilege to have been part of this remarkable 20-year history.

Rich Peck

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the commission

By the Rev. Dr. Joe Harris

It is a great honor to help celebrate the 20th anniversary of the creation of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

In 1996, when I first heard that the men wanted to create their own agency, I did not think much about it. However, later in the year, as I traveled to Denver as a delegate to the General Conference, I gave it considerable attention.

Until 1996, the ministry of men in the UMC was done through a division of the General Board of Discipleship.

Leaders of UM Men believed it was time for the men of the church to have their own agency where they could focus on men's and scouting ministries without having also to respond to the other needs for which the Board of Discipleship was responsible.

At the time, the "Promise Keepers" movement was making a huge splash

across the country and it was felt that United Methodists should have a similar impact on men around the world.

Serving as district superintendent in Oklahoma during this time, I had taken men to several Promise Keepers events in Dallas. At those events, not only were the crowds large, but the enthusiasm and testimonies about what was happening to men was undeniably life changing.

Since I always want to be where God is making a difference, I knew these events revealed possibilities for men's ministries everywhere.

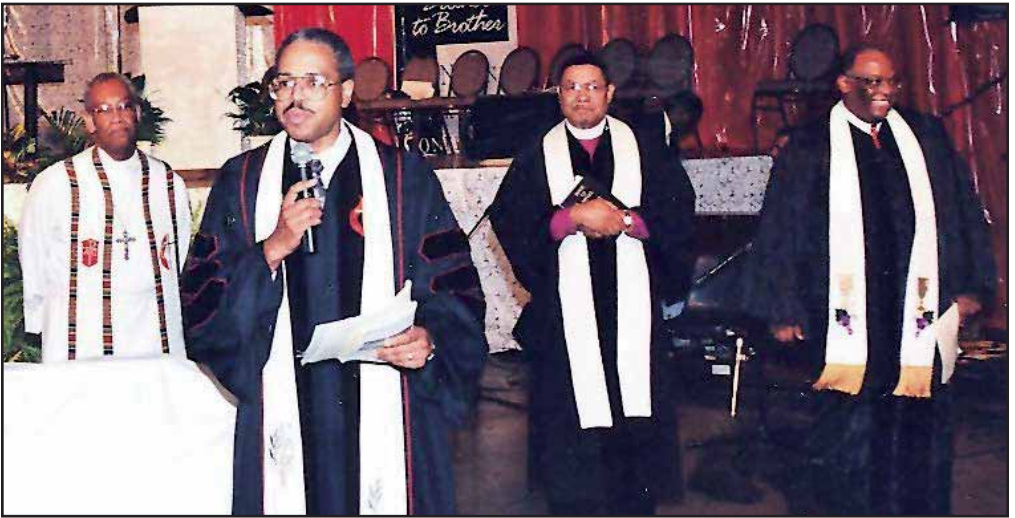
Convinced of the need

During the 1996 conference sessions, I listened to the debate about the proposal. Men and women from around the world spoke about the absolute need for such a commission.

I was quickly convinced that God was



The Nashville staff led by Joe Harris. From left: Daon Johnson, Del Ketcham, Larry Coppock, Josh Eidson, Ann Waller, Rich Peck, Larry Malone, Joe Harris, Martha Davis and Marc Stowe.



Dr. Joseph Harris speaks at a Service of Holy Communion during the national Black Men's Conference.

speaking to us about our need to renew our focus on men and expand our commitment to scouting ministries.

After the Denver conference, I returned home satisfied we had done a good thing for the church by establishing this new agency.

It was also the time that I was getting ready to transition out of the position of district superintendent and assume a new appointment.

Noting my interests and skills, Dale Waymire, a district trustee and president of the UM Men Foundation, asked if I would pray about applying for the position of general secretary with this new agency.

I had not given any thought to the position, but my wife, Nancy, and I began to pray about what we might be able to bring to this new organization.

However, after a few weeks, I forgot about this request. When I saw Dale again, he asked me if I had applied. I told him, "No," but because of his persistence, I would make a decision soon.

As Nancy and I prayed, it became clear to us that we should apply and, at least, present our vision for what could happen in men's ministry if I were to become

general secretary.

The rest, as you know, is history.

Work begins

My first responsibility was to hire associates who could help define what men's and scouting ministries could look like in the coming years.

We developed an interview team and received applications from talented men who could help lead us into the future. Larry Malone was selected to help with men's ministry and Larry Coppock for scouting ministry.

Our tasks were formidable. How could we help UM Men develop effective men's ministries in the 21st century?

Some of the ways we responded to this challenge were by doing the following:

- Helped to move men's organizations from "meet and eat" to making disciples of men.
- Helped the UM Men's event at Purdue University appeal to men of all ages, races and cultures.
- Created the largest ever Black Men's focused conference inviting the three historically African American

Methodist denominations (AME, AMEZ and CME) to participate.

- Created a world movement of Methodist men through the World Methodist Council.
- Represented UM men in places not previously present, such as the General Secretary's Table, the General Council on Ministries, the General Council on Finance and Administration, and World Methodist Council.
- Produced a *UM Men* magazine showing what UM Men and scouting ministries are doing around the world.
- Worked with Society of St. Andrew and Stop Hunger Now to feed millions.
- Helped strengthen the Upper Room Prayer Center.
- Expanded scouting ministries to other groups that work with young people, including Big Brother Big Sisters.
- Developed *Strength for Service*, a ministry tool for first responders and those who serve our country in the military.


During my tenure at the commission I had the privilege of being inducted into the John Wesley Society by the UMM Foundation, and I received the Silver Buffalo Award from the Boy Scouts of America. I also had the opportunity to preach before 7,000 boys at the National Boys Scout Jamboree and I helped raise \$1 million for the UM Men Foundation.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the outstanding staff that the commission was blessed to have at the start. Including Martha Davis, Marc Stowe, Ann Waller, and Rich Peck, who are still with the commission. Others who have gone on to other responsibilities, also enabled a strong beginning for the commission. Add to this, board members who stood strong despite the numerous challenges faced by the new commission:



It probably won't be mounted on his wall, but Joe Harris pulls in a fish during a UM Men deep-sea expedition.

Robert Powell, UM Men Foundation chair at the time; Gil Hanke, who was then president of the National Association of Conference Presidents; and Bishop Ray Owen, our first board president. They all helped this new agency get on its feet and begin to run.

I thank God for His grace in getting us started and helping UM Men become a vital part of making "disciples for the transformation of the world." 



The Rev. Dr. Joseph Harris served as general secretary of the General Commission on UM Men from 1997 to 2005. He now serves as director of communications and assistant to the bishop of the Oklahoma Annual Conference.



Presidents of the General Commission on UM Men

1997-2000—Bishop Raymond Owen
2001-2004—Bishop Ernest Lyght
2005-2008—Gilbert C. Hanke
2009-2012—Bishop James King
2013-present—Bishop James Swanson

Presidents of the National Association of Conference Presidents

1997-2000—Robert Powell
2001-2004—Gilbert C. Hanke
2005-2008—Glenn Wintenberg
2009-2012—John Dowell
2013-2016—Dan Ramsey
2016-present—Steve Nailor

General Secretaries of the Commission on UM Men

1997-2005—Dr. Joseph Harris
2005-2006—Bishop William Morris (interim)
2006-2009—The Rev. David Adams
2010-present—Gilbert C. Hanke

Presidents of the UM Men Foundation

1981-2000—Dale Waymire
2000-2009—Robert Powell
2009-2012—Carl Young
2012-2016—Ed Shytle
2016-present—Glenn Wintenberg



HUMOR



My dad's better than yours

Three boys are in the schoolyard bragging about their fathers.

The first boy says, "My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a poem and they give him \$50."

The second boy says, "That's nothing. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a song and they give him \$100."

The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a sermon and it takes eight people to collect all the money!"

Things that make you go hmmm...

As a father lay on the couch watching television, his son, all dressed for church, entered the room said, "Dad, I have a question."

"What's that son?" replied the father, never removing his eyes from the screen.

"When am I going to be old enough not to go to church like you?"



What a journey!

By Gil Hanke

I was in the room in 1996 when the United Methodist Men Foundation considered a motion to approve legislation to leave the General Board of Discipleship and create the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

I spoke against it.

I thought I had a valid reason for concern. I had read all the proposed legislation to the 1996 General Conference, and the most common verbs used were “cut,” “reduce,” and “eliminate.” But, members of the foundation were convinced that we were stifled by the bureaucracy, and made a convincing argument that, “Now is the time.”

It was a unanimous vote.

The 1996 General Conference

The assembly in Denver was my first General Conference. All legislation to come before the assembly must first be considered by one of 12 legislative committees.

Since I was the president of the Texas Conference UM Men, I served on the Discipleship Legislative Committee.

The committee was divided into three sub-committees, one dealt with the study on Baptism, one dealt with issues of the laity, and one took the remaining pieces of legislation. On the subcommittee on the laity with me were Carl Young from Oklahoma (who knew everyone and everyone knew him), and Ken Summers from the Wyoming Conference (a judicatory in northern Pennsylvania and southern New York). Attending without voice or vote were other men’s ministry leaders, Chuck Jones, Jim Snead, Roy Lifsey, and Robert Powell.

We needed the legislation to be passed by the sub-committee, which we knew would be difficult, but then it had to pass



Gil Hanke, speaks to the 2005 National Gathering at Purdue University. Carl Young stands behind.

the whole committee, before being considered by a plenary session of the full General Conference.

The proposal was essentially revenue neutral except for extra costs for board meetings, travel and the salary of a general secretary.

A plan of attack

We plotted who would do what.

Carl and Ken agreed to work the room, and I suggested Carl, as a seasoned delegate and lawyer, should do all the talking. But, Carl requested that, since I was basically unknown, and a bit younger, I should do the talking. Those who were guests could be called on for their expertise. In our imagined scenario for the subcommittee, I would speak first and then others would speak in support of the main points we had all rehearsed.

We were all in our places, and each of us had focused on our particular piece of our presentation. As our legislation was introduced to the sub-committee, I noticed a woman in a bright yellow dress growing more and more anxious. I was sure she would be a leader of the opposition. As the chair of the subcommittee



Presidents of annual conference units of United Methodist Men meet with conference prayer advocates at a 2016 meeting in Nashville.

was finishing the introduction, she could no longer stay seated and abruptly stood up, hand raised. The chair really had no other option than to recognize her. She boldly stated, "If this General Conference passes only this one piece of legislation, it will go down as one of the best General Conferences ever held."

We were speechless!

She went on to make a compelling argument for our legislation. After she finished her speech, there were a few questions, which we answered and I did have a chance to make some additional brief comments, but the heavy lifting had already been done; and the legislation passed the subcommittee overwhelmingly.

The whole committee did have a serious, and, at times, heated debate. Carl and Ken did work the room and with a lot of support from surprising places, the legislation passed the full committee by a margin of 69 to 1; five people did not vote.

Action in plenary session

When the legislation was introduced to a full session of the conference, I was selected to answer any questions about the legislation.

There were a few questions as to why we were requesting this change. The last question was fairly long, but basically asked, "Did you really think this through?" "Can you really pull this off?" My response

was simply, "Yes."

Dozens of men and women worked on, added to, and re-worded the document; each was guided by his or her vision of what this new commission might accomplish.

Twenty years later, our vision for our future continues to be bright and achievable, but we are not there yet. The answer is still a resounding "Yes, we can pull this off."

Work begins

In 1997, Dr. Joe Harris was elected as the first general secretary of the new commission. He hired a great staff, but they had their hands full. The commission board was challenged by conflicts with affiliate organizations.

In 2000, I was elected president of the National Association of Conference Presidents, a position which placed me on the governing board of the commission. And, in 2004, much to my surprise, I was elected the president of the commission. Nearly all of the agencies are led by bishops, so the election of a layman to head an agency turned some heads.

In 2008, I rotated off the board. I felt I had finished the work God had for me on the national level, and I continued my volunteer work with United Methodist Men in East Texas.

Elected general secretary

Near the end of 2009, the Rev. David Adams, the general secretary who followed Dr. Harris, returned to his first love, the local church. In February, 2010, I was elected as general secretary; a position that has brought me great joy and spiritual growth.

We now have eight staff members in Nashville, and four deployed staff who work part-time out of the communities where they live. All the staff are talented, committed and are servants of God as they do the real work of the commission. Add to them hundreds of volunteers in local churches, district, conference, and jurisdictions serving in men's ministry and scouting ministry.

Board President Bishop James Swanson and Vice President Bishop Gary Mueller lead a 20 member governing board with representatives from each of the five U.S. jurisdictions, from Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia and people with expertise

in specific areas of ministry.

We have formal, accountable affiliation and endorsed relationships with more than 20 ministry organizations, 40 men's ministry specialists and 333 scouting ministry specialists. We provide a dozen webinars every year and conduct over 320 electronic meetings and small group discussions every year. We continue to be the largest most organized men's ministry in the U.S.

A 25 year journey

I came to Nashville for the first time in March, 1991 as president-elect of the Texas Conference. I had gone to some UM Men meetings with my dad, and I had served as a district president, so I thought I knew about UM Men.

The National Association of Conference Presidents meeting blew me away.

When I returned home I called my friend, Ken Hillsten who was designated to follow me after a 2- or 4-year term as




The 2017 Nashville-based staff. Back row: Joe Strausbaugh, Marc Stowe, Rick Vance, Rich Peck and Larry Coppock. Front row: Martha Davis, Ann Waller and Gil Hanke.

president. "Ken, I need to do this for four years or not at all. There is just too much to do!" Ken assured me that he was in no hurry, and that began a journey that continues to bring me great joy.

What has made such a difference in this journey are those who mentored me, who pushed me, who supported me, who challenged me. People like Robert Powell, Harold Batiste, Joe Harris and Dan Ramsey and so many more. Add in the members and pastors of Perritte Memorial UMC in Nacogdoches,

Texas, and a wonderful supportive family and each member of the commission board.

What is really cool is...the journey continues. Our brightest days are still ahead. 



Gil Hanke serves as general secretary of the General Commission on UM Men

Lynette Johnson named top executive of the Society of St. Andrew

BIG ISLAND, Va. —


The Board of Directors of the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) named Lynette Johnson as the new executive director.

She has been with SoSA since 2010. Her first assignment with the organization took her to Nashville, where she served as regional director for Tennessee and Alabama. She extended SoSA's gleaning network into Tennessee and oversaw day-to-day operations in both states, putting 14 million servings of nourishing produce on the tables of Alabamians and Tennesseans at risk for hunger. In 2013, she was called to SoSA's national headquarters as the organization's director of church relations. In this role, she worked with congregations throughout the country, promoting the ministry, resources, giving and volunteer opportunities.

Prior to joining the SoSA staff, Lynette enjoyed an 18-year first career as a church educator and supply pastor, and an eight-year second career as a magazine editor and art director. She is a certified Christian educator and ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Lynette grew up in Huntsville, Ala., one of five children in a NASA family. She



holds a B.A. in religion from the College of William & Mary (1982) and an M.A. in Christian education from Scarritt Graduate School (1986). Lynette has three children: Jake Patterson, a special education teacher in New Orleans; Emma Patterson, a fourth-year geology student at Oberlin College; and Will Patterson, a high school senior. She has made her home in Buena Vista, Va., since 1997. 

My memories as the first director of men's ministry

By Larry Malone

I was hired as the first director of men's ministry on October 1, 1997. That same day, another Larry was hired in a similar role for scouting ministries. We were both relocating our families to Nashville to take these jobs. Larry Coppock and his wife, Diane, were coming from Memphis, and I and my wife, Diane, were coming from Atlanta.

For about a year, Larry and I shared a modest Scarritt-Bennett apartment near the office. We were both geographic bachelors missing our Dianes. We bonded together as brothers on a mission to reach men and boys for Christ.

The early years were ugly at times, especially with contentious and conflicting board matters. The best medicine we

found to help us keep our spirits up and moving forward was humor, laughter and prayer. Larry and I had to find humor in the situations we faced; alternative coping mechanisms were not good options.

As roommates, we learned how to push each other's buttons and trigger humor on a grand scale. Staff and others may recall times when Larry and I were buckled over rolling on the floor, wheezing and crying in laughter. I don't believe either of our Diane wives fully understood this behavior. I know others did not.

Fond memories of a great staff

My 13 years with the commission forged deep relationships with people who shaped the better parts of me.



Larry Coppock inducts Larry Malone into the "Order of the Bull Goose Looney" during his 2010 retirement party at the General Commission on UM Men.



Larry Malone joins Narciso Managuelod, a member of the governing board of the Commission on UM Men, on a return visit to a site where Larry was trained as a Navy pilot in 1972. The experience was designed to provide pilots with survival techniques in case they were forced to parachute into the jungle of Vietnam.

Joe Harris was a great leader and listener. We travelled to the St. Louis area to begin Brothers United, a pilot program that united men from black and white churches.

I was driving a rental sedan on our trip to St. Louis. Joe was sitting in the back seat, viewing a small videotape player that was placed on the front passenger seat. We must have been a confusing sight: a white man driving a black man in the back seat, who seemed to be talking and staring at an empty front passenger seat.

Two black brothers in Christ, Daon Johnson and Kwasi Kena, joined the staff. Both gifted men helped forge a staff based on friendship and respect.

Marc Stowe marches to a different drummer. I thank God for Marc, who has given me much that I want to keep. I had countless hours of joy and contrarian discourse with Marc, and I am a better man

for it. When I would leave to get a haircut, Marc would always say, "which one?" I would retort, "That boy (Marc) ain't right!"

Other staff members continue to occupy places in my memory bank.

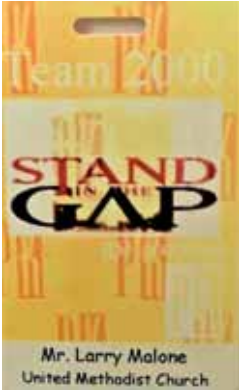
Ann Waller is one of the finest, truest examples of humanity I have known.

Martha Davis and I seldom agree or see things in the same way. Martha is "other" to me in just about every way. Yet, Martha is true, steady and good. I respect and love her.

If a bad day fell in the forest, and only Rich Peck were there to see it, would he pick it up or leave it there? (Sorry, bad Zen joke, but you know what I mean). Have you ever sneaked up on Rich to find a sour, mean, pouting curmudgeon? NO! Of course not. Rich breathes the joy and light of life. He has the countenance of his friend, our Lord.

Promise Keepers pray for the UMC

On October 4, 1997, three days after I was hired, I attended the largest Christian men's gathering in history. Promise Keeper's "Stand in the Gap" in Washington, D.C. drew 2 million men at the Mall. I was escorted into a small area with leaders who represented other denominations.



The name tag given Larry Malone during the 1997 "Stand in the Gap" gathering of 2 million men in Washington, D.C.

They had a name tag waiting for me, "Mr. Larry Malone, United Methodist Church." When my name was called, the 2-million member assembly prayed for the 14 million men, women and children of The United Methodist Church.

The highlight of my work at the commission was leading men's retreats from the high desert of New Mexico, across

the U.S. to Norway, the Philippines and South Korea.

I loved leading retreats, and I was always blessed by the healing power of God's love that was manifested in unpredictable ways.

Both the retreats and I evolved over time.

Heart Quest

Heart Quest was the theme of retreats for the first few years. Men were encouraged to find out what was going on inside themselves. The primary highway was men telling their personal stories.

Flight Quest

Flight Quest became the second retreat stage, moving toward God as we learn to fly **with** God. God's wingman became

a metaphor for spiritual growth for men. My experiences as a Navy pilot helped develop the story platform for these retreats. Personal friendship and partnership with David Reed and songwriter, Ed Bruce, developed the format with music and lyrics as ways to penetrate the deep inner spaces of men.

Godstory

Godstory became the third retreat stage. Men, women and children were encouraged and equipped to connect the dots of their lives in ways that made visible the stories of God in their lives. The ability to see God at work in and around you is a spiritual skill that can be practiced and developed. Knowing those Godstories, especially stories unfolding around you, is a powerful and effective Christian witness.

I hold in my personal Godstory treasure vault many priceless experiences where God in Christ Jesus showed up in power and love, to save and heal.

I remember life-and-death choice points where men had given up, and were checking out of life; love, and the arms of men, caught them before the fall.

Yes, men's ministry is tough, important and rewarding work.

I thank the General Commission of United Methodist Men, its staff, board leaders, and the denomination for the honor and privilege of serving God and helping men.

I was ministered to by the same persons I served.

May God's Spirit fill the wind of your ministry sails now and in the years to come.

UMM



Larry Malone served as director of men's ministry from 1997 to 2010.

Reflections on my 20 years with the commission

By Larry Coppock

As I reflect on 20 years as director of scouting ministry many people come to mind. First and foremost is the Rev. Dr. Joseph Harris, the first general secretary.

Joe hired Larry Malone, first director of men's ministry, and myself on October 1, 1997. I hold dearly the pioneering years with Larry and Joe.

Joe was a visionary. He was calm, thoughtful, and persistent in the face of challenging circumstances. He instilled a feeling of confidence in his staff and volunteers, and he enabled them to plan, prioritize and implement strategies to achieve key objectives.

Alongside Bishop Raymond Owen, the first president of the commission, these two Okies built

the sinews of what is now the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

The first quadrennium was full of threats from members of well-entrenched groups who were in conflict with one another and with the commission.

Dr. Harris and Bishop Owen quelled threats that might have derailed ministry initiatives. At the same time, they respected and honored groups and individuals who wanted to take the commission along different paths.

Our path forward was always bathed in prayer.

Scouting Ministry Committee

Joe was intentional about running interference for Larry and me when it came to issues that might impact ministry initiatives; for example, in 1998 he allowed for the creation of the scouting ministry committee as an advisory group. In 2005, that group became a standing committee. At first, the function of the committee seemed innocuous, but as its role became clear, it drove the agenda for operation of scouting ministry.

The committee has been led by some very capable leaders including, Bishop Joe Pennel, Phil Howard (twice), Judge Carl Stewart, Dr. Sam Bala, and Dr. John Bright Cage.

The Rev. Greg Godwin has served as vice-chair, and he led efforts related

to BSA jamborees in addition to other projects.

All of these men contributed to making scouting a ministry, not just a program.

The committee crafted a strategic plan that guided ministry in five key areas: Membership/Relationships; Awards and Recognition; Training; Development (fundraising); and Communications and Publications. Each category includes benchmarks related to the "Four Areas of Focus" of the denomination.

The best and the worst

Even with that extraordinary support, I discovered the political side of the church



Larry Coppock, acting executive director of Strength for Service, presents 400 devotional books to member of the 101st Air Borne prior to their deployment to Iraq. From left: Staff Sergeant Alan Cripps, Larry Coppock, Chaplain Bowlus and Chaplain Craig Hornbarger

and our civic youth agency partners to be similarly impacted by dynamic social issues.

At General Conferences, my position converts to the role of "lobbyist." We had the unenviable task of wrestling with the issue of human sexuality. I recall a sub-committee vote of 10 to 9 at the 2004 General Conference; the millennial-aged chairperson cast the deciding vote.

I have witnessed the worst the church has to offer in these environments, but also the best. I am a better person for representing scouting ministry at five General Conference sessions, but, I'm thankful that they only occur every four years.

Making a Difference

In the last 20 years, the Commission on UM Men, the Office of Scouting Ministries and the UM Men Foundation have provided more than 100,000 New Testaments to high adventure Scout camps. During that time The United Methodist Church continues to serve as the second highest denomination in sponsoring Boy Scout troops and it ranks first in the number of Cub Scouts.


In the last 15 years more than 5,000 donors have contributed over \$2.3 million dollars to Strength for Service, making possible the distribution of 500,000 *SFS God and Country* devotional books since the events surrounding Sept. 11, 2001.

So many servant leaders have collaborated over the last 20 years to plan, draft, and promote the achievements and ministries listed above. It's reassuring to know that current and future leaders will expand on these developments to ensure that scouting ministry flourishes in local churches.

This is one of the most varied and interesting jobs that anyone could have. No two days are the same. One day you are recruiting a chaplain for Philmont Scout Ranch or the BSA Jamboree, or recruiting a course director for Sea Base training. The next day you may be raising funds for SFS books, preparing a presentation for

a training course or setting travel arrangements for an event six months in the future. It's always interesting and serves to mold you into a very organized individual. Most of the work is planning and preparation, setting the agenda, and thinking through what to do, and who to contact in order to effect ministry achievements.

The past 20 years with the commission have been among the most exciting and rewarding of my professional career and personal life. I am eternally grateful to my wife, Diane, for putting up with my travel that frequently includes 20 to 25 annual trips away from home. I thank God for giving me a wife who never complains and always reassures me during difficult times. We share the joy that comes from achieving something of significance for God's kingdom.

May God continue to bless the staff and volunteer leaders who direct the ministries of the commission as well as those persons who will benefit from their decisions and actions. 



During a 2005 trip to Cameroon, Larry Coppock congratulates Daniel Mbong, 14, for memorizing the Scout Oath. Larry broke his wrist during a fall on some slippery mud while introducing scouting to the African nation. In spite of the pain pills, Larry described the trip as a "spiritual high-light" of his life.



Larry Coppock is the director of scouting and other youth-serving ministries for the General Commission on United Methodist Men. He also serves as executive director of the Strength for Service Corporation.

Key events in scouting ministries

- 1998 — Scouting Ministry Advisory Committee created.
- 2001 — Good Samaritan Award for youth and young adults created; more than 1,500 young people have received the awards.
- 2001 — Cal Turner, Jr. gives \$1 million to the UMM Foundation.
- 2002 — *Strength for Service to God and Country* is republished with 10,000 books shipped to servicemen and women in Afghanistan.
- 2005 — Scouting introduced to youth camp in Kribi, Cameroon.
- 2006 — Addition of Big Brothers Big Sisters as a civic youth-serving agency partner.
- 2007 — Ed & Gwen Cole give \$500,000 to retire mortgage on GCUMM office building.
- 2008 — Shepherd Church Charter Recognition award introduced.
- 2009 — Silver Torch Award introduced.
- 2009 — Scouting Ministry Specialist (SMS) program created; 333 people now certified.
- 2010 — Florida Sea Base becomes a high adventure training site.
- 2010 — Some 5,000 Scouts and leaders attend a UMC worship service at the BSA Jamboree at Fort. A.P. Hill, Va.
- 2010 — BSA adopts "Nothing but Nets" as its national "Good Turn" project, \$20,000 raised for the effort to combat malaria.
- 2013 — Scouting Ministry Guidelines become the primary training resource.
- 2013 — National Scouting Jamboree held at The Summit, West Va. United Methodists serve as chaplains, participants in worship and hosts in a display area.
- 2013 — *Strength for Service to God and Community*, devotional book for first responders, introduced in 2013. More than 50,000 copies in print.
- 2014 — Strength for Service becomes independent nonprofit organization; L.W. Smith, South Carolina layman, elected first president.
- 2015 — Scouting ministry adult/youth awards program is revised to allow non-United Methodists to be recognized.
- 2016 — The Summit serves as site for scouting ministry training; 22 "Summiteers" trained.
- 2017 — National BSA Jamboree at the Summit

The journey to become a commission

By Robert Powell

In 1988, I became president of UM Men of the Dothan (Ala.) District. It was a new experience for me. Two years later I was elected president of UM Men in the Alabama West Florida Conference.

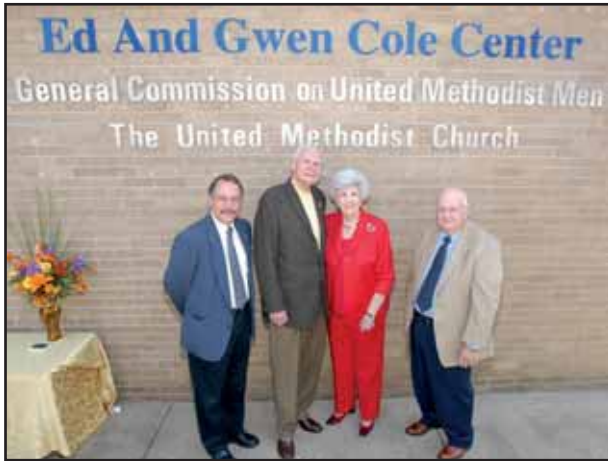
Four years later I was elected as president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of UM Men and a member of the General Board of Discipleship which was responsible for ministry of UM Men.

Over long association with the board, we felt the need to create our own commission, and we consulted with the general secretary of the board. He said he just didn't know where UM Men should be headed. "If you don't know where we are going, how will you know when we get there?" asked Ernie Wendell, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents (NACP).



Robert Powell presents a check to the commission that paid off the Nashville building.

Stan England followed Ernie as national president and I was elected president at the 1996 NACP meeting. During that session, we announced that legislation had been sent to General Conference to estab-



Gil Hanke and Robert Powell join with Ed and Gwen Cole following the 2008 dedication of the building on Music Row in Nashville.

lish the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

I was not a delegate, but I decided to join Jim Snead, Roy Lifsey, and Chuck Jones to lobby for the legislation during the 1996 Denver conference. After a few changes were made by a legislative committee, the

legislation passed.

Bishop Ray Owen was elected as the first president of the new commission and Bishop Joe Pennell was elected vice-president.

A committee was appointed to select the first general secretary, and Dr. Joe Harris was selected to fill that position. A staff was put together to run the office; at that time it was only a few rooms in the Kern building, home of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Early in the history of the commission, we experienced funding difficulties.

"You probably aren't going to make it," Brent Smith, a staff executive of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), told the commission.

"Well, you don't know about the dedication of our men for this ministry," I



The former GCFA office is refurbished for UM Men in 2006.

responded. I then flew out to Oklahoma and asked Dale Waymire, president of the UM Men Foundation, for a \$100,000 loan for the commission until we could obtain adequate operating funds.


Dale agreed, and we soon were able to pay that back and had a good reserve with GCFA.

When Dale Waymire gave up his position as chairman of the UM Men Foundation, he hand-picked me to follow in his place. Soon, with the help of Bishop Pennell we were able to obtain a gift of \$1 million for the foundation.

With limited space in the Kern Building, in 2006, the commission was able to purchase property on Music Row formerly occupied by GCFA. Financing was provided by the foundation.

Sometime later, Larry Coppock and I called on Ed and Gwen Cole and they gave the foundation an amount of money that would allow the foundation to forgive the debt owed by commission. The building was named after the Coles.

I was delighted to see Brent Smith at the 2008 dedication of the building. I reminded him of his statement that we would not make it. The commission now owned the building formerly occupied by GCFA.

One of the great things that happened to UM Men was the election of Gil Hanke as general secretary of the commission. He has given and continues to give great leadership. 



Robert Powell served as president of the National Association of Conference Presidents from 1997 to 2000 and president of the UM Men Foundation from 2000 to 2009. He now serves as a development associate for the UM Children's Home in Montgomery, Ala.

Challenge young people to be 'influencers'

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

It's hard to imagine how today's kids will grow up without being tainted by all the negative behavior around them. Dads, moms, grandparents and other adults must strive to be the very best role models they can be in their children's lives. We know that young people—despite their rebellious tendencies—really do emulate their parents' behavior and the behavior of other responsible adults who touch their lives. We'd like to suggest an additional approach to helping your kids live in what seems to be an increasingly uncivil society.

Change agents

Teach your kids and grandkids that they can be positive "influencers" in their world. While we know that young people assimilate so much of what is happening around them—and, in some cases, imitate what they see and hear—we should also encourage them to affect their environment in positive ways. We should encourage our kids to be agents of influence in what they see and hear around them. For example, there is no reason to succumb to a bully's horrific behavior. Nor must your son or daughter, grandson or granddaughter stand idly by while someone else is being bullied. They have the power to step up, get involved and make it known that that kind of behavior is not acceptable. Do they risk getting bopped in the nose? Yes. Is there a chance that their positive interference will make an impression on others around them? Also, yes.

Risking a black eye

Be an "influencer." Dad, mom, grandparent, you can also model this proactive involvement. First, you should model civility and teach good manners. Teaching what's right and wrong is the bases for

setting values. However, *knowing* what's right and *doing* what's right are two different things. If I, as a dad, see someone shoplift, I should do more than shake my head. I should blow the whistle. If someone near me in the bleachers is screaming obscenities, rather than move farther away from him, I need to tell him to cool it. If I witness someone being harassed or mistreated, I must at least try to run interference in order to divert attention or shift the focus. Do I risk a black eye? Yes. Is there a chance that my "participation" might make a difference? Also, yes.

Whose business is it anyway?

There are those who will insist that I should mind my own business. Hey, that angry lady isn't slapping *your* child. Chill out. It wasn't *your* car that person hit with a shopping cart. Forget it. Indeed, in today's short-fused world, you run the risk of getting more than a bloody nose by sticking it where some think it doesn't belong. What will we teach our kids, however, if we look the other way and choose to be influenced every which way rather than be influencers of the right way? Are we content to be sheep and allow the wolves to rule?

Teach your kids to be "influencers." Inform them that they have the power to make a difference. They just may stop a punch from being thrown. They just might interrupt a barrage of insults. They just may change a life.



Tom Tozer (left) and Bill Black write a syndicated column on fatherhood and are authors of *Dads-2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers*.



AURORA, Ill.—

Church sponsors Halloween event

Some 20 cars were part of the seventh annual “Trunk or Treat” event at Wesley UMC on Halloween. The event included a bounce house and science experiments.



John Connell, right, a high school science teacher and member at Wesley UMC, combines white vinegar and baking soda to demonstrate an acid-based reaction. Photo by Al Benson.

CHICAGO, Ill.—

Men send water to Flint

Resurrection UM Men with red vests provided 148 cases of water for the people of Flint, Mich.



From left: Resurrection UM Men President Tommie Lymon, Audrey “Pete” Carr, and Charles Bell.

COLUMBIA, S.C.—

It only takes one man

South Carolina UM Men held a Men’s Ministry Leadership Training at Windsor UMC.

The Rev. Stephen Love, superintendent of the Greenwood District, told the assembly, “If only one man attends, do all the ministry you can with the one.”

Drawing from the story about four men who lowered their paralyzed friend from a roof so he could be healed by Jesus, Love said Jesus responded to their faith then and he still responds to that kind of faith today.



Dr. Stephen Love.

“The mission of UM Men is to disciple men so God can use their families, churches, communities and the world,” said Herman Lightsey, president of South Carolina UM Men. “To make that happen, men need to use three tools: connection (largely through relationships), communication (through the website and social media) and accountability (contracts, support groups, and prayer partners).”

JACKSON, Tenn.—

Barbecue supports health center

Men of Northside UMC barbecued 750 pounds of pork and chicken to provide \$4,200 for the Faith Health Center.

The annual barbecue was founded by Dr. Dave Larsen, a Northside member who operates the center with his wife, Sara.

“God is faithful and He continues to provide a way,” said Larsen.



AIKEN, S.C.—

Public Safety Chief speaks at UM Men meeting

Aiken Public Safety Chief Charles Barranco spoke at a meeting of UM Men of St. John’s UMC, and the men presented him with 104 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community*.

Prior to being named public safety chief in 2012, Barranco served for six years as captain of the Aiken County detention center. “Sometimes people forget inmates are people, too,” he told UM Men. “Many of them are just people who made a mistake and a lot of them are people who just need some help.”

Shortly after being named public safety chief, Barranco introduced a community-wide effort to engage, educate and encourage violent offenders to make healthy life choices.



Aiken Public Safety Chief Charles Barranco talked about the importance of a working relationship between police and the community.

Aiken Standard photo by Tripp Girardeau.

SENECA CASTLE, N.Y.—

UM Men lead effort to glean fields

Thirty-five volunteers broke into three groups in order to pull 1 ton of carrots, gather 5 tons of butternut squash and pluck 1,000 pounds of apples for hungry people in upstate New York.

Begun 10 years ago by Cliff Kunes, 84, a member of Seneca Castle UMC, the annual fall effort is now led by UM Men of Upper New York Annual Conference.

Each year Kunes tries to get three different crops for gleaners to gather. The squash and carrots have been mainstays; apples were new in 2016.

Called “God’s Gracious Gleaners,” some of the volunteers from across central New York are affiliated with food pantries in their hometowns and are active in other events to feed the hungry.



AURORA, Ill.—

Men celebrate Cub victory

Fourth Street UM Men held a pancake breakfast along with a cookie and holiday-gift sale.



David Brandt shows off a Chicago Cubs-logo pancake he grilled at the Fourth Street UMC pancake breakfast. Paul Eggert applied strawberry-flavored syrup.

Photo by Al Benson.

MOFFETT FIELD, Calif.—

Girl Scouts explore career opportunities in science and technology

“Career options for young women have opened up dramatically, but girls often do not have visibility into the worlds of science, or get access to female role models in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields,” said Heather Burlew-Hayden, chief marketing officer for Girl Scouts of Northern California.

In an ongoing effort to expose girls to all kinds of amazing science and math careers, a “Career Exploration Day” was held at the NASA Ames Research Center. The day was sponsored by NASA Ames Women’s Influencing Network and The Girl Scouts of Northern California

designed to attract girls to science-related fields traditionally dominated by men.

Some 1,100 girls in grades 6 to 12 and their families visited environmental career booths featuring hands-on science activities and attended panel sessions to hear from professional women regarding careers in electrical and electronics engineering, astrobiology and atmospheric sciences.

“Faith-based groups like the UM Men provide valuable funds and relationships to the Girl Scouts on a local and nationwide level,” said Burlew-Hayden, daughter of John Burlew, a long-time leader of UM Men.



The career day became an opportunity for California Girl Scouts to learn about everything from starfish to fiber optics to computer systems. Photo by Christine Benavides, co-chair of Ames’ Women’s Influencing Network, a co-sponsor of the Career Exploration Day.

SYRACUSE, N.Y.—

UM Men provide van for veterans



EJ Thomas UM Men, an organization of men from Bowens Corners UMC, Warners

UMC, St. Paul's UMC, and Little Utica UMC, teamed up with a local veterans support organization to purchase a \$16,000 van to transport veterans to VA hospitals. UMM President Paul Thompson said the van is dedicated to the memory of Cpl. Kyle Schneider.

For the past three years, the organization has also set up tents and grills at Brown Memorial UMC to provide 600 hot dogs and snacks to residents of inner-city neighborhood in Syracuse.

XENIA, Ohio—
Men renovate house

During the last five years, Men of Faith Community UMC spent 2,400 hours renovating a house for students at United Theological Seminary. The men cleared the lot of brush, scraped away the old paint, power washed the surface, painted the house, and performed routine maintenance.



The house in 2011.



The house in 2016

VIENNA, W.Va.—
Two Scouts receive funds to attend national jamboree

Two Boy Scouts received scholarship to attend the 2017 National Scout Jamboree

at The Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve. Charles W. Boston and Joseph S. Shepard, received scholarships provided by UM Men of the West Virginia Conference.



Joseph S. Shepard, a Life Scout in Troop 20 chartered by Wayside UMC in Vienna, W.Va., receives a scouting scholarship award from Don Davis, president of the West Virginia Conference UM Men. Joseph completed all four of the PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) programs. From left: John Shepard, Don Davis, Joseph Shepard, and the Rev. Greg Markins, pastor of Wayside UMC.

LONG BEACH, Calif.—
Church provides 190 SFS books to veterans

California Heights UMC provided 190 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to patients at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Long Beach.

The Rev. Douglas Dickson, pastor, presented the books to the Rev. George Vogel, chief of chaplain services.



From left: Erin Stenburg, director of children and family ministries at California Heights UMC; Jim Jeffery, a member of the Strength for Service Advisory Committee; the Rev. George Vogel, and the Rev. Douglas Dickson.

LAKEWOOD, Ohio—

Men sponsor workday at food bank

UM Men of Lakewood (Ohio) UMC sponsor a semi-annual workday at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.



Members of Lakewood UMC sort and repack frozen food at a local food bank.

ZACHARY, La.—

Church aids flood victims

Members of Zachary UMC helped 29 families clear out personal belongings destroyed by the 2016 flood waters. They also provided shelter to the families while they pulled out flooring and drywall as the first step to recovery.

The youth building was converted into a distribution center where volunteers handed out 2,500 flood buckets, health kits and other supplies.



DECATUR, Ga.—

Barbecue raises \$29,500

The Oak Grove UMC men's organization served 4,809 barbecue meals to Decatur residents and raised \$29,500 for 28 church organizations, community causes and mission projects.

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz.—

Men assist displaced families

The Fishermen, a UM Men's organization within the Sierra Vista UMC, presented a \$1,000 check to an organization that assists displaced families with safe, temporary shelter, and helps them achieve economic and social self-sufficiency.



From left: Gary Larson, Fisherman treasurer, presents a check to Kathy Calabrese, director of the Good Neighbor Alliance. Dale O'Neill (right) serves as chairman of the Fisherman organization, Photo courtesy of John Marvin.

Murphy, N.C.—

Law enforcement officers receive devotional books

Cherokee County UM Fellowship presented 104 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to law enforcement officers.



From left: Cherokee County Sheriff Derek Palmer, N.C.; Highway Patrol Sgt. Chris Wood; Murphy Police Department Assistant Chief Dustin Smith; Andrews Police Department Chief Richard Taylor; and Cherokee County UM Men President Tom Payne.

PICKENS, S.C.—

Church aids firefighters

Men of Grace UMC barbecued 350 chickens and provided meals for firefighters who were fighting blazes on Pinnacle and Table Rock Mountain.

The church bus was packed with food, cleaning supplies, socks, bandannas, toboggans for their heads, and hand warmers.



Firefighters from Utah, Oregon, California and Idaho receive meals provided by UM Men of Grace UMC. All were appreciative of the Southern hospitality and they even learned to like grits. Photo by Mary D. Wolfe.

SUN LAKES, Ariz.—

Scouts honor veterans

In 2000, Sun Lakes UMC constructed a monument to honor military veterans. The names of 400 veterans were painted on

monument blocks. However, planners did not account for the Sonoran Desert sun that bleached out the names.

In 2016, Kyle Frederick led a team of Scouts from Troop 280 in Chandler to repaint each block with a durable paint, and the project was completed by Veterans Day.

HENDERSON, Tenn.—

Men build free book kiosk



From left: Cyndi Langhans, Barbara Scheirer and Tom Gaare stand in front of the "Little Free Library" book kiosk in Henderson, Tenn.

In Memoriam

Walter Lee Smith


SAN ANTONIO, Texas—

Walter Lee Smith, 85, former district president of UM Men, a life member of UM Men, and a fellow in the John Wesley Society, died Nov. 22.

"I will always remember Walter Smith as a quiet and compassionate person," said Ernest McClure, a leader of UM Men and former secretary of Rio Texas Conference UM Men. "It was his leadership and sponsorship of men's ministry programs that

led to his selection as a life member and induction into the John Wesley Society."

Walter had a 22-year career with the U.S. Air Force, and while stationed at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, he met and later married Clara "Billie" Toney. The couple had one daughter, Constance. Walter also showered love on three stepchildren, Donna, Pat, and David.

Walter served as a steward at St. Paul UMC and president of UM Men. 

Mike Smith makes a difference

By Charlie Overton

The best kept secret of the UMC — that’s how Mike Smith describes The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA).

A former president of the Holston Conference of UM Men, Smith says he had never heard of SoSA until he attended the 2008 National Gathering of UM Men where Wade Mays, national Meals for Millions coordinator, showed a video of sweet potatoes being dumped into a landfill.

“I think about all that God provides,” said Smith. “We waste so much.”

Since discovering SoSA, Mike has been an enthusiastic advocate in Tennessee. Between organizing crop drops at his home congregation, Concord UMC, and gleaning projects in the greater Knoxville area, he has helped save . . . well . . . tons of food.

In 2010, he helped organize his first crop drop of what he thought would be potatoes, but the produce changed


several times until finally a truck filled with watermelons arrived.

“Sometimes you just have to roll with it,” he said.

Since that first drop, Mike has organized seven crop drops of everything from sweet potatoes to yogurt.

One of the top-ranked agricultural programs in the U.S, the University of Tennessee, operates farms that enable future farmers to explore new techniques and technologies. For two years, Mike and volunteers from the Knoxville area have gleaned UT farms to provide fresh produce for several area agencies.

“Knoxville is the 26th hungriest metro area in the country,” he notes. “That means there is a lot left to do. This isn’t hard work, and I always get so much more than I give.”

UM Men has officially worked with Society of St. Andrew in the “Meals for Millions” ministry since 1998. 



Mike Smith (center) first heard about SoSA at a 2008 National Gathering of UM Men in Nashville. He’s been an inspirational volunteer and leader in gleaning ever since.

Meals for Millions

In 1998, the Society of St. Andrew joined with the General Commission on UM Men and the National Association of Conference Presidents to establish the Hunger Relief Advocate (HRA) Initiative. Operating under the title of Meals for Millions, this joint effort is designed to help churches engage in ministry to and with the poor and hungry.

Meals for Millions funds the national effort to establish HRA advocates in every annual conference and volunteer advocates in UM Men units at every level.

Individuals may contribute to the effort by becoming a "challenge disciple" who commits to a \$25 twice-a-year contribution or by becoming a HRA sponsor who donates \$50 twice each year. Register at <http://endhunger.org/umm-individuals/>

UM Men organizations may become "challenge fellowships" which donate \$200 a year to Meals for Millions, an amount that provides 10,000 servings of fresh food.



Virginia residents glean egg plants for local food kitchens.

Hunger relief advocates are charged with:

- Establishing and administering gleaning networks to provide food directly to those in need.
- Raising awareness of the extent of hunger in America and developing anti-hunger programs.
- Encouraging UM Men to participate in Meals for Millions.
- Serving as an education and action resource for the church on hunger-relief and poverty issues.



Welcome to Heaven

HUMOR

Several persons who had worked in health care professions, having died, were lined up for (hopefully) entrance through the pearly gates into heaven, awaiting St. Peter's gate-keeping questions.

"And what area of health care were you involved with?" he asked the first.

"I worked in a community health center in a poverty-stricken neighborhood," the man replied.

"Excellent," said St. Peter, "how self-giving; please pass through to your heavenly reward."


"And you?" Peter asked the second.

"I spent most of life in nursing, caring for the needs of suffering patients in their hospital rooms."

"A noble calling, indeed," said Peter, "you're in!"

"What about you?" he asked the third.

"Me? Well, most of my health care career was spent administering an HMO plan."

St. Peter got out his charts and some graphs and his pocket calculator. He plugged in his laptop and worked the keyboard intensely. After about a half-hour, he said to the man: "I've got some good news. I think I can get you into heaven for five days." 

Mission experiences and workshops

While attending the Indianapolis gathering men will have three opportunities to participate in mission experiences and/or workshops.

Mission Experiences



Produce Drop

Society of St. Andrew will operate a potato or vegetable drop in which men will package produce for the hungry in the Indianapolis area.

The PET Project — “A Gift of Mobility”

Men will build PET (Personal Energy Transportation) units. This hand-cranked cart is provided to people in Third World nations who are unable to walk.

Mission Project with the Men of St. Luke’s UMC

St. Luke’s UMC provides handicapped ramps for citizens of Indianapolis; UM men will build components of these ramps.

Workshops



Craft a Vision for Your Local Church

Biblical visioning can unify churches, bridge diversities, create energy and inspire people. Discover ways to discern God’s purpose for your ministry to men.

“I Can’t Do This Alone”: Developing Team Ministry

Men’s ministry is best done in connection with people who share the same vision. Learn how to identify, develop and equip people to be part of a team that engages in shared ministries.

‘This Happened to Me — Change the Game Plan

This workshop will address common problems faced by people engaged in men’s ministry. There will be opportunities to discuss challenges faced by workshop participants

Men’s Health and Wellness

Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19). Learn how to treat your body as a living temple with preventative practices and healthy-living practices.



Workshops continued

Leave a legacy for the “Next Generation”: Grandfathering

You want the very best life in Christ for your grandchildren. For thousands of men who feel they are past their prime, this workshop will invite you to participate in a vital task.

Handle Stress and Anger

Some Christian men find it difficult to admit their inability to handle stress and anger. This session will suggest ways to address them as men of faith.

Live as a Spiritually Empowered Man

God gives each person special abilities for the common good of the body of Christ. Discern your gifts. Use them in the right places, at the right time, in the right roles and for the right reasons.

Prayer through the Normal and Abnormal Days

We may find it easy to have conversations with God at certain points of our lives. At other times it is difficult. Discover ways to be in conversation with God throughout your life journey.

Daily Engagement with the Holy Spirit

John Wesley, believed that daily engagement with the Holy Spirit is necessary. Learn ways to have a daily encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Where are They? Fishing for Men

If younger men are missing from your organization, discover ways to reach Millennials and GenZers. Fish in new ponds with new bait.

What if They Can't Come?

The requirements of work and family sometimes makes it impossible for men to be part of accountability groups or studies. Use web technology to connect.

And the Winners are _____!

How Did They Do It?

Join this panel discussion with winners

of the “Best Unit of Methodist Men in the United States” as they discuss their successes, challenges and strategies.

Develop Discipleship through Small Groups

Small group ministry is an important tool for developing discipleship. You will learn the best practices to develop discipleship among men.

Living Lives with a Pure Desire

Learn techniques that will help men engage in healthy and helpful discussions about difficult issues related to sexual purity.

Reaching Youth: Planning, Organizing and Communicating for Effective Discipleship

Discover new ways to recruit and disciple youth and parents. Help members of your church and conference engage in outreach ministries

MEND (Men End Domestic Violence)

For too long, men have been conspicuously absent from efforts to reduce or eliminate domestic violence. It is time to make men the major part of the solution.

CyberBullying

Approximately 35 percent of students aged 11-14 experience cyberbullying. It is important for adults to know the causes and find resources to help victims find grace and healing.

Mentoring a New Generation

Invest in young people who are just beginning their life journeys. Discover ways to become a mentor to this generation.

Take the Flag: Following God's Signals in the Race of Your Life.

There is a parallel between the flags used in auto racing and the signals God sends us in our fast-paced lives. Pay attention to the signals God gives us each day.

UM Men Awards

Samuel Keeve

'Mr. Fix-it' honored for 36 years of service

EDWARDSVILLE, Va.—

Men of the Northumberland Charge presented Samuel Keeve with a Life Membership Award for 36 years of service to Galilee UMC.

“Not only does Sam serve as “Mr. Fix-it” at Galilee, but he is often seen replacing a window, a door or repairing porch handrails and steps, and constructing handicap ramps,” said Lawrence Burian. “If a person can’t pay for the materials, Sam provides the supplies and worries about donations later, which may or may not occur.”

Raymond Johnson

Former president edits newsletter

OLNEY, Md.—

Men of Oakdale Emory UMC presented Ray Johnson with a Life Membership Award.

A 44-year church member, he has served as president and secretary of UM Men and currently edits the UMM newsletter.

In 2014, Ray instituted monthly breakfasts and with the meal donations, UM Men gave \$50,000 to a Boy Scout troop and community service agencies.

A Stephen Minister for the last 13 years, Ray has served as lay leader, superintendent of the Sunday school, chair of the Council on Ministries, and a leader of 7-week new-member classes.

Doug Wright

U.S. representative honors veterans

TUCSON, Ariz.—

U.S. Representative Martha McSally nominated Doug Wright, a member of the General Commission on UM Men and the Strength for Service Board, for the 2nd Annual “Veteran of Distinction” Award.

Wright was a lieutenant in the Air Force and received the National Defense Service Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal.



Rep. Martha McSally presents a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for Outstanding Community Service to Doug Wright.

Joyce Blackwelder

Men honor lay leader

PENSACOLA, Fla.—

Men of Cokesbury UMC presented the “Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence” to Joyce Blackwelder for 34 years of service to the church and community.

She serves as lay leader, a leader of Anna Circle of UM Women, and a lay member of the Alabama West Florida Annual Conference. She chairs the Upper Room Remote Prayer Line and coordinates the



UMM President Mike Moser presents Susanna Wesley Award to Joyce Blackwelder

“Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner.” She has participated in the “Relay for Life” and the “Walk to End Alzheimer’s.” She

also serves as worship greeter, a Communion steward, and a volunteer worker in the prayer garden. She has participated in mission trips and the “Walk to Emmaus,” and she is a “Super Sale” volunteer and an advocate for Camp Happy Sands.

Lynda Bryd

Men give Susanna Wesley Award

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—

UM Men of Northwest Hills UMC presented Lynda Bryd with a Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence following her service as a district leader of the General Board of Global Ministries, lay leader, Sunday school teacher, and president of “Blue Birds Volunteers” at Methodist Hospital. She has also served in several capacities on the church’s Administrative Board and “Haven Hope,” a place of new beginnings for people experiencing homelessness.



George Hampton, president of UM Men of Northwest Hills UMC, presents a Susanna Wesley Award to Lynda Bryd.



Hartley Gross

Lay leader leads prison ministries, mission trips

PRINCE GEORGE, Va.—

Men of Sycamore UMC presented a Life Membership Award to Hartley Gross, 86, for serving as the lay leader, a Sunday school teacher, and a participant in Kairos Prison Ministries.

He also reads to children in a local school and serves as an EMT with the Prince George Emergency Crew.

Hartley participated in four mission trips to Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina, four mission trips to support the Red Bird Mission in Kentucky and one trip to Haiti following the 2013 earthquake.

Ted Witten

Men tap sixth member for life award

NORMAN, Okla.—

Sam Ott, president of UM Men of McFarlin UMC, presented Ted Witten with a Life Membership Award to the church and the community.



Sam Ott (right) presents Ted Witten with a Life Membership Award.

Everybody needs a cheerleader

By Nancy Cardwell Erdos

Everyone needs a little cheerleading now and then.

Paul talks about the spiritual gift of “exhortation” (Romans 12:7-8). The Greek word, “paraklésis” literally means “a call to one’s side”—the perfect place to be when encouraging others, sharing joy, and providing comfort.

Mary-Claire Spencer, 24, a lifelong member of the Broad Street UMC in Statesville, N.C., now serves as a regional executive with Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee.



Mary-Claire Spencer, attends the 2016 Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee “Salute to Outstanding Leadership Awards” in Nashville.

“I wish every single person in the world had a cheerleader in their life who roots for them,” she says. “I had lots of cheerleaders, and that’s why I am who I am. I had that from the time I was born, but so many people don’t.

When I think of Girl Scouts, I think about girls in troops making friends their own age—but also they have adult mentors and leaders who care about them and help shape their character.”

Growing up in church

Mary-Claire spent a lot of time at church while growing up.

“I was confirmed in the UMC, we went to Wednesday night suppers and Sunday

services, I was in youth group and I did the bells, and I went on lots of mission trips,” she recalls, smiling.

Mary-Claire’s parents met as social workers in a children’s home, and their family is very pro-scouting. In fact, they required their children to earn their Eagle or Gold Award before they could apply for a driver’s license. “The funny thing is, I never remember feeling resentful about that,” Spencer says. “I was the youngest of four, and it just seemed normal to me.”

Mary-Claire’s church-based Girl Scout troop started with 12 members in kindergarten, and nine of them graduated together as Gold Award recipients, the highest service award in Girl Scouting.

Gold Award

Mary-Claire’s Gold Award project was to renovate the Lifespan Circle School for developmentally disabled preschoolers.

She painted Dr. Seuss and Bible character murals on the walls, sewed curtains, and raised funds to purchase playground equipment. Her project mentor, Sarah



From left: Troop 41 girls, Elizabeth, Paris and Helina visit Mary-Claire Spencer for a tour of the local Girl Scout Council office.



Mary-Claire Spencer visits Camp Holloway and runs into local Girl Scout, Lillian, at the Art Barn.

Wilkinson, was a friend at church whose daughter, Clara attended the school. “When I was in middle school and high school, I volunteered in the nursery at church,” Mary-Claire said, “and I just fell in love with Sarah. She had the most beautiful spirit and was so sweet. Two of my cousins are handicapped in various ways, so this was something that was really important to me.”

Study abroad

Mary-Claire graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2014 with a major in sociology and social and economic justice.

During her senior year she studied abroad for six months, working as a social worker at a township school in South Africa. “I would not have had the courage to do something like that,” she says, “to go to a city and culture where I didn’t know anybody, without believing this was something that God wanted me to do. And really, Girl Scouts gave me the confidence I wouldn’t have had otherwise.”

Her joyful, encouraging spirit makes Mary-Claire a natural Girl Scout executive, and the members and staff love her. She also volunteers with local organizations that help the homeless, and women who are transitioning out of prison.

Become cheerleaders

Mary-Claire encourages UM Men to become cheerleaders in the lives of young people through a scouting ministry. “If a church chooses to support Girl Scout troops, they’re going to help young women in a way that inspires them to be leaders of their community that not only fight for justice and service, but also do so from a foundation of a strong faith,” she says.

A church becomes stronger when it starts a scouting program. And, in addition, to learning camping and leadership skills, children grow up with servant hearts that make the world a better place—just like Mary-Claire Spencer.



Nancy Cardwell Erdos is the membership extension manager at Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee in Nashville. A 35-year veteran with the Girl Scouts, she works on faith-based initiatives and serves as a translator for the Hispanic community. She is a singer/songwriter, and plays acoustic bass, guitar and hammered dulcimer.

Brian Axtell—A scouting ministry specialist

“Brian Axtell embodies all the qualities of a scouting ministry specialist. He has organized a Venturing Crew at his local church and serves as a merit badge counselor. Brian expanded his service to regional and national events by volunteering at the UMC Faith and Beliefs exhibit at the 2013 BSA Jamboree and has made similar plans for the 2017 BSA Jamboree.”

—Larry Coppock, national director of scouting ministries

If you want to know what a scouting ministry specialist does, we invite you to spend some time in Londonderry, New Hampshire.

In that city, you will find Brian Axtell, a scouting ministry specialist, his wife, Pam, a former Venturing leader, and their sons Ian

and Wesley, both Eagle Scouts.

Following a youthful career in scouting as Cub Scout, Eagle Scout, God and Country recipient, assistant scoutmaster, and president of an Exploring Post, Brian became an adult Scout leader when his oldest son, Ian, became a Tiger Cub. Over a five year period, Brian served as a leader of a Tiger Den, a Cub Scout Den, a WEBELOS Den, and he chaired the Pack Committee.

When Ian crossed over from the pack to the troop, both father and son felt Ian had probably seen enough of his dad.

Brian supported the troop as an active parent and the unit commissioner, but he shifted his attention to scouting on the district and council levels. He helped form a new district and became a district commissioner.

Asked to list some of his adventures as a Scout leader, Brian offered a litany of activities:

- Coordinated and accompanied group to the Philmont Scout Ranch



Brian Axtell joins his sons, Wesley (left) and Ian during the 2010 National Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. A graduate of Penn State University (B.S. degree in meteorology and computer science) and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (M.S. degree in computer science), Brian now serves as a business architect for John Hancock Manulife.

- Responsible for activities and programs for two New Hampshire State Jamborees
- Formed a Venture Crew
- Organized and accompanied a crew to Northern Tier High Adventure Camp
- Organized or assisted in numerous troop and pack outings
- Organized and accompanied a crew to the Florida Sea Base
- Formed the Nutfield District within the Daniel Webster Council
- Became assistant district commissioner
- Staffed the Technology Exhibit at the 2010 National Jamboree
- Staffed the Faith and Beliefs Exhibit at the 2013 National Jamboree
- Served for five years as a district commissioner
- Served as a merit badge counselor

As a scouting ministry specialist, Brian serves as the scouting representative to Londonderry UMC Council, and the chartered organization representative to the troop and crew. He promotes Scout Sunday events by creating a bulletin insert which lists those who have achieved the Boy Scout rank of Eagle, the Girl Scout Gold Award, and the Venturing Crew Silver Award. He also wrote a history of Girl Scouts for their anniversary.

"I have always believed that it is the program that will attract the youth," said Brian. "To use a movie phrase: 'If you build it, they will come.' If you have an exciting program focused on today's youth, they will want to be part of it. If your program is stuck in the past, you will lose them."

Church changes supplier to support ministry

SUPERIOR, Wisc.—

Each July, Faith UMC and Harbor House Crisis Shelters host a "Wildfire! Youth Mission Event" to welcome youth from around the region who will be engaged in mission work in the area. The goal is for Christian "holiness to spread like wildfire throughout the region."




The Revs. Joel and Barb-Certa-Werner

The Rev. Joel Certa-Werner, pastor and director of the mission work, says they previously purchased some \$10,000 in supplies and equipment at Menards because the store in Superior gave them an 11 percent discount.

"When we learned Home Depot is willing to donate a portion of purchases to help the *Strength for Service* devotional, we decided to drive the extra distance, forego the 11% rebate from Menards, and make the bulk of our purchases through Home Depot," says Certa-Werner. "By doing so lives can be reached and blessed."

Certa-Werner says the process was simple. "All we had to do was register the church credit cards with Home Depot, and now, whenever we use those cards at Home Depot, a portion of what we spend automatically goes to Strength for Service. It doesn't cost us anything! This is truly a win-win situation. We are very pleased and would strongly encourage every UM to register through Home Depot."

In 2016, the ministry received \$62,000 from Home Depot. 

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Robbery leads to a lifetime of service to scouting ministry

Seven female graduates of Spelman College were living together in Atlanta when they discovered an uninvited “guest” had entered an open window and an unseen robbery occurred.

“At different levels of fear, all seven of us slept in the living room that night, and as women do, we began to talk it out,” says Yolanda Wareham. “Three of us had been to Cascade UMC the previous Sunday, and we suggested we call the Rev. Walter Kimbrough, then pastor of the Atlanta church.

“He came to our rescue and taught us some defense skills,” says Yolanda. “The next Sunday three of us joined the church and the following Sunday, the other four joined.”

Recalling the joy of being a Brownie Scout for one year while living in New Jersey, Yolanda decided she would live out her commitment to her new church home as a Girl Scout leader.



Yolanda joins other workshop participants on a white water rafting trip.

“This is where the fun begins,” she says.

Under Yolanda’s leadership the program gradually included 70 Brownies, Juniors, and Cadettes.

“Our girls went everywhere including the World’s Fair in New Orleans, and we did lots of camping. We were quite a force,” says Yolanda. “So many cookies were sold one year that we didn’t go pick them up; the truck came to us.”

Reintroduced to scouting

Years later when Yolanda, now a parent of a 7-year-old girl, returned to scouting.



Yolanda Wareham (left) and other members of the North Georgia Annual Conference attend the United Methodist Scouting Workshop at the Summit.

“We stuck with it until the girls separated for various high schools in the 9th grade.”

It was 15 years ago when Yolanda’s daughter got her mother involved in Explorer scouting. “I never knew the Scout connection, but I asked a simple question: ‘What can I do to help?’”

That opened a door.

“I became a cubmaster, an assistant scoutmaster, and I became involved in district roundtables and council activities,” she says. “I was then asked to help with training on the council level. This was a no brainer since I like training. This led to chairing two council training universities and service as district training chair. Additional Wood Badge training led to two stints as a troop guide, and work with Cub Scout day camps.

Last year, Yolanda spent two separate weeks at a National Youth Leadership Training and one week with the United Methodist Workshop on Scouting; she will serve as a shepherd for the 2017 workshop.

“I believe we are to do everything to the best of our abilities and if you’re going to do it, get the full experience. Go all the way,” she says. “The talk is easy, the walk is harder; however when we take the walk and seek God’s guidance, He provides strength for the journey.”

Chief Scout executive congratulates UMC

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Michael Surbaugh, chief executive of the Boy Scouts of America, headquartered in Irving, Texas, visited the Nashville office of the General Commission on UM Men on January 9.

“The Boy Scouts of America congratulates The United Methodist Church for increasing its service to youth with a membership gain in 2016,” said Mike. “The BSA is appreciative and celebrates the partnership to serve our national youth.”

Scouting increases

At the end of 2015, there were 324,696 young people involved in UMC chartered Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews. At the end of 2016, that number had increased to 327,405.

“This is our first growth in several years,” says Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministries for the General Commission on United Methodist Men. “We continue to lead all denominations with 201,505 youth in Cub Scout packs and we are second to the Latter Day Saints (LDS) in the number of Boy Scouts with 119,592 Scouts in 4,634 troops. In addition, there are 6,308 young men and women involved in 689 Venturing crews chartered by United Methodist churches.

The number of youth involved in scouting organizations sponsored by religious groups at the end of 2016 totaled 1,477,843, down 6,778 from 2015. The UMC and the LDS churches were the only major religious organizations to experience growth in 2016.

An additional 228,177 youth are involved in packs, troops and crews sponsored by civic organizations, a decrease of 4,113 from the previous year.



Mike Surbaugh (center) congratulates Larry Coppock (left) and Gil Hanke for their role in increasing the number of scouts involved in units chartered by United Methodist Church.

Michael Surbaugh

After graduating from Salem College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in youth agency administration, Mike chose scouting for his career. He served as a district executive in Jacksonville, Fla., in 1984, and then served as a senior district executive and program director in Syracuse, N.Y. He then became director of field services, director of development, field director, and development director in Minneapolis, Minn.

Mike’s real aspiration was to run a BSA high-adventure base. But rather than hold out for such a role, he served as the Scout executive in both Sioux Falls, S.D., and Appleton, Wis.

In 2007, he accepted the position of Scout executive in Pittsburgh, Pa. From Pittsburgh, he was promoted to BSA group director at the National Service Center in 2014, a position he held until being named chief scout executive in 2015.

Scouting Awards

Andrew Hooper

Lawn equipment finds new home

GRAY, Tenn.—

Men who cared for the lawn of Gray UMC had no place to store their equipment, so church trustees had a quick answer when Andrew Hooper asked for suggestions of an Eagle Scout project.

After 690 service hours, the lawn mower crew could store their equipment in a 12x20-foot building, complete with a concrete floor, ramp, and rain gutters.

The church presented Andrew with a Good Samaritan Award.



Andrew Hooper stands outside the utility building constructed by members of Troop

Camy Brungard, Krista Yoder, Harry Hefty, and Charlotte Bryan

Church gives four awards

WATSONTOWN, Pa.—

Watsontown UMC presented four individuals with Cross and Flame Awards.

At the recommendation of The Rev. Ryan Krauss, pastor, and Boy Scout Unit Commissioner Paul Huffman, the church honored Camy Brungard and Krista Yoder, leader of Girl Scout troops, Vacation Bible



From left: Pastor Ryan Krauss, Charlotte Bryan, Harry Hefty, and BSA Unit Commissioner Paul Huffman.

School and preschool children. They also presented awards to Harry Hefty, Boy Scout charter organization representative, and Charlotte Bryan, chair of the Troop 610 Committee.

Nicholas Hiratsuka

Scout creates film on cyberbullying

TUCSON, Ariz.—

Nick Hiratsuka created a 28-minute film on cyberbullying as his Eagle Scout project. He received

the rank at a January Court of Honor.

Titled "It's Not Just a Joke," Nick Hiratsuka (right) directs a scene from "It's Not Just a Joke." created to help leaders of St. Mark's UMC address the problem of cyberbullying and to provide steps young people can take to minimize or eliminate bullying.



Nick lays down the audio track with Jamal Givens, narrator for the 28-minute film.

A member of a youth theater group with plans to become a film director, Nick recruited 30 young people to participate in the project.

"I have used the film as a teaching tool at our church," said Kim Ogle, youth director at St. Mark's and youth coordinator for the Desert Southwest

Annual Conference Council on Youth Ministries. The film was also shown at the youth council, a conference gathering, a meeting of Tucson church members, and the "Food Truck Café."

Nathan and Nicholas Sanders
Brothers receive Good Samaritan Awards

STAFFORD, Va.—
Brothers Nate and Nick received Good Samaritan Awards for their participation in Sunday school and youth fellowship at Andrew Chapel UMC. Both boys serve as acolytes, play the piano for offertories, help with Vacation Bible School and clean the church and yard. They prepare and serve food to the homeless and assist with the Scout food drive. They also sell and deliver mulch, participate in popcorn sales, and both are working for a Home Repair Merit Badge.



Nate Sanders



Nick Sanders

Nate is a Star Scout and Nick is just beginning his Scout career.

The Rev. W. Stephen Morse
Church honors singing pastor

GREENSBURG, Pa.—
Members of Greensburg UMC presented their pastor with a Cross and Flame Award for his service to youth in the community.

A graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, with a degree in music, and the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Steve has combined his love of music with his service as pastor. He has led singing sessions of Western Pennsylvania Conference for the last 11 years. In 2011,



The Rev. Stephen Morse

he began to serve as the director of the Ministers' Chorus.

Kenneth Linning and Reginald Pettus
Leaders receive Cross and Flame Awards

JONESBORO, Ga.—

On Scout Sunday, Andrews Chapel UMC presented Cross and Flame Awards to Kenneth Linning and Reginald Pettus, members of UM Men of the North Georgia Conference.



Kenneth Linning (far right) leads Cub Scout Pack 964 with Fred Loney (top center). The pack visited the Martin Luther King National Historic Site in Atlanta.



Reginald Pettus (right), a retired Army veteran, provides direction to Scouts from Scout Pack 964.

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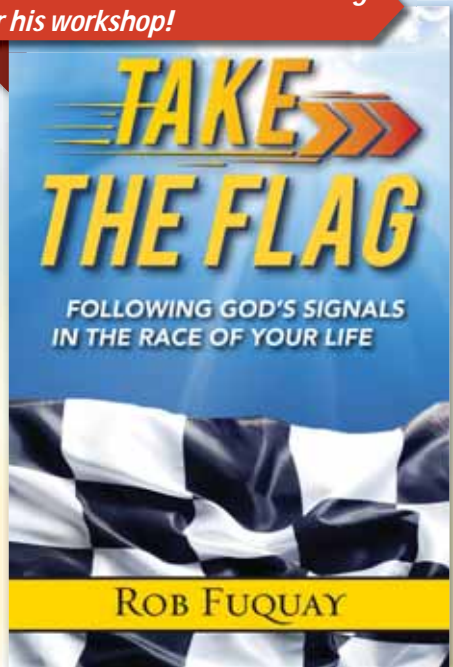
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