

UMM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men

**Caring for
those who
serve**



A letter from the General Secretary

Caring for—and thanking—those who serve

I have a confession to make.

I am often in situations where, within a large group of folks, there is a request for all the veterans to stand to be thanked for their service.

I stand and appreciate the “thank you.”

I am proud of my service. I believe I did well. I received awards. I employed the skills I had and I learned new skills to help others,

However, I confess that serving three years in the Army was not my idea.

I was not a willing participant.

When I was finishing my senior year at Lynchburg College, President Nixon stated that no one with a draft lottery number over 50 would be called. Since my number was 67 and I am legally blind without my glasses, I made plans for employment after graduation.

A few weeks before graduation that number was raised to 90 due to losses of U.S. troops in Vietnam. So my carefully designed life plan ran well for two whole days after graduation.

I then received a letter indicating my presence was requested in Richmond, Va., where I passed my physical in spite of vision (I was warm and breathing). I ended up enlisting just before being drafted.

After basic training in South Carolina and additional training and work, I ended up teaching at the Academy of Health Sciences in San Antonio. I was part of a team that trained people to work at psychiatric and drug rehab centers for the Army and other services.

Although I spent my entire time in the U.S., I am classified as a Vietnam Era vet.

I am so pleased that those on active duty and vets are being thanked for their service.

For those who chose to serve during Vietnam or those “invited” to serve, I want



to extend a special appreciation. For many, that thanks and care are long overdue.

My appreciation is to all vets, male and female, those in the Reserves or National Guard, and particularly those of you who served multiple deployments. You were placed in danger for months on end. You spent months away from friends, family and you were without the comforts I take for granted.

This country has a wide range of positions when it comes to armed conflict.

If you're a vet, listen closely: The most liberal dove pacifist and the most ardent hawk, and everyone in between, truly thank you for your service and want you to have the care promised to you.

We may not agree on when our government determines that we should enter into armed conflicts; but we all honor those who serve.

Gil Hanke

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



contents

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UM Men

Fall 2015

FEATURES

- 5** Soul care for veterans and families
- 7** Healing souls wounds
- 9** The UM statement on war and peace
- 10** Love the warrior not the war
- 11** Believe, Belong, Become
- 13** My ministry with military chaplains
- 15** New York men lead effort to purchase van for veterans
- 16** Chaplain gives out devotional books
- 17** Providing *Strength for Service* in combat zones
- 18** Home Depot offers way to support *Strength for Service*
- 20** Police ask for *Strength for Service* books following shooting
- 21** In Memoriam
- 22** Mail Call
- 23** Dad's Zone
- 24** Across the Nation
- 28** **MENS NEWS**
- 37** **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.



United Methodists believe war is “incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ.”

At the same time, we are part

of a part of a nation that sends young people to combat situations, and those young people are seldom involved in the political decisions made by people you and I elect.

It is the young who pay the price:

- They pay through lost years when they might be completing their education or furthering their careers.
- They pay through endless days of escalated stress and terrifying experiences.
- They pay through wounds inflicted upon their souls.
- They pay through severed relationships and divorce.
- They pay through broken bodies.
- They occasionally pay with their lives.

This issue of *UM Men* magazine focuses on ways we can minister to wounded warriors and veterans whose wounds are not so obvious.

It would be easy to respond by saying we aren’t responsible for their difficulties, and we have no ability to help with the healing of mental, spiritual or physical wounds.

However, we elected the ones who sent them into high-risk situations, and we have an obligation to find ways to address issues such as PTSD, broken families, wounded bodies, and shattered lives.

We also worship a Saviour who told us to love one another.

Most of the authors of articles in this issue had first-hand experience with combat and even if they avoided physical harm, their souls were impaired.

The Rev. David Smith, a 30-year chaplain in the U.S. Army, says he suffered through four near-death experiences and it took him 10 years before recovering began. As a result of his experience he formed the Soul-Care Initiative to care for veterans and their families.

In this issue, he writes, “The church is uniquely positioned to give attention to the spiritual health of our veterans—an underserved component of a veteran’s well-being.”

Larry Malone is a special friend and former staff member of the commission who flew an A-6 Intruder Bomber over Vietnam. He tells of PTSD, moral injury, and soul wounds, and he suggests ways in which the soul can be healed.

Bishop Woodie White and Chaplain Richard Pusateri have had experiences with chaplains and service men and women around the globe, and both have found ways to provide care for these caregivers and their troops.

We now have the opportunity to care for these men and women as they retire from active service and move to our communities.

Authors in this issue know how torn spirits can be mended, and they invite United Methodist Men to become involved in the healing process.

Rich Peck

Soul care for veteran and families

By Chaplain David Smith

"I tell you the truth, I have not seen faith like this in all the land of Israel."

—**Matthew 8:10**

Jesus makes this emphatic statement about the faith of a Roman Centurion, a warrior.

"On the day I cried out, you answered me. You encouraged me with inner strength."

— **Psalm 138:3**

This Psalm by David reveals the importance of faith for another warrior.

Faith and the Armed Forces

Faith, defined as confidence, trust, belief, reliance, loyalty, commitment, and dedication, is central to the character of soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and guardians. Whether it is the commitment to one's country, belief in the mission, loyalty to one's battle buddies, reliance on training, or trust in God, faith has significance for the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Much of what we hear about veterans today is related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Politicians, media, and advocacy groups have recently focused on veterans who return from war with difficulties adjusting to civilian life. Still, many veterans, who have been diagnosed with PTSD, contribute importantly and effectively in their communities.

Also, it seems that American society has labeled our veterans either as heroes or broken. Neither of these considerations brings us close to understanding our veterans and their challenges.

For me, understanding our veterans and the challenges they face centers around faith.

A spiritual crisis

War's violence evokes questions of faith.

When a warrior steps onto the battlefield he or she is immediately confronted by the kinds of hardships and horror that have moved

humanity through the centuries to reach for the Holy. The battlefield becomes a test of the soul.

Returning veterans often face a deep spiritual crisis, unknown to the casual observer.

There is a cadence that we use in the Army when marching or running in formation: "When I get to hell Satan's gonna say, 'How'd you earn your livin'?' 'How'd you earn your pay?'" I replied with a boot to his chest, "Earned my living laying souls to rest'."

It is paradoxical that countless warriors describe their war experience with the word "hell."

Many veterans suffer their hellish experiences in isolation and silence that further deteriorates their relationships.

Soul wounds feel like hell that strikes at the core of the warrior's well-being. The experiences may lead to confusion about God, or a shattered faith in God, others, and one's self.

Soul wounds

I lived through hell while serving in Iraq.

From mid-December 2003 until the second week of February 2004, I experienced four near-death events.

I returned from war a changed man. For a period of time I exhibited the spiritual symptoms of soul wounds: shattered self-esteem, difficulty in praying and I had no spirit of thankfulness. I also saw no value in Scripture.

People of faith can be changed by trauma. They may be so wounded by the violence of war that they lose their faith or adopt destructive behavior as an escape from war.

Many warriors have lingering fear and guilt from their experiences. Some struggle with ethical and moral challenges. Severe soul wounding can result in a diminishment of everything meaningful and a loss of faith in God.

War is a gross result of human failure—sin. The violence and brutality point to our

inhumanity. Even if the outcome brings peace, the broken and shattered lives along the way become a reminder of the impact on those who have engaged war's merciless realities.

As a result, many warriors experience grievous wounds to their souls.

Healing journey

How can the returning veteran journey toward healing of the wounded soul?

It took me a 10 year-long spiritual quest to find healing. That process included repentance, forgiveness, mourning, lamenting, and reconciliation.

I shared my story with several who understood the sacred story and they listened without judgment. Additionally, as I began to develop the Soul Care Initiative, a ministry with veterans and families, I looked beyond my own soul wounds into the needs of others. This has had a deep healing power.

I am still on the journey and the church has been a partner.

The role of church

The church is no stranger to such spiritual quests.

Here are some important factors for clergy, lay leadership and congregations to consider:


The journey toward healing may begin with repentance and forgiveness. Some veterans do not like the person they have become and are stuck in guilt and shame. Some carry deep rage—reasoning they can never forgive or be forgiven. Some veterans do not realize they need forgiveness until much later. Therefore, forgiveness from violence or trauma can be complicated and elusive. The church has rich liturgy and traditions that can be offered to the veteran.

Another critical step in the veteran's spiritual journey may be remembering and grieving. Survival and the mission come first while in harm's way so grief and memorializing get put on hold. The warrior may find comfort in remembering and solace in mourning the loss of friends, or safety, or physical health, or innocence, or possibly their

faith. Lamentations, such as the Psalms can help one know that lament is being totally honest with God and can provide a path through the pain.

There is power in story. The warrior's story is "sacred." Members of the church can be a great resource through compassionate listening. The church can live out the sacred story through the liturgy during worship, following spiritual disciplines, and using the seasons within the church calendar.

Often, it is in service to others that the veteran begins to see the positive connection with others, and see this as a restorative path. Members of our congregations include companion veterans and families of veterans that can be key links in this ministry.

The church is uniquely positioned to give attention to the spiritual health of our veterans—an underserved component of a veteran's well-being. Churches have distinctive strengths and capacities for care. The church is the sacred community called forth for life, faith and healing. 



A 30-year chaplain in the U.S. Army, the Rev. David Smith serves as coordinator of the Soul-Care Initiative of JustPeace. The initiative provides resources and collaborates on the cultivation of spiritual care and resiliency of veterans and their families. While in the Army, Smith served as Command Chaplain with NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Mons, Belgium; Division Chaplain, 82nd Airborne, Command Chaplain, US Army Africa, Vicenza, Italy; and the Command Chaplain of U.S. Forces, Kabul, Afghanistan.

If you desire more information on training, awareness, and resources to assist your church in developing or sustaining a mission and ministry for veterans and their families, contact Chaplain David Smith at dsmith@justpeaceumc.org or visit the Soul Care Initiative website at www.soulcareinitiative.org

Healing soul wounds

By Captain (Ret) Larry Malone, US Navy

In the preceding pages, Chaplain Dave Smith has written a compelling article about his personal experiences in war, and their effect on his life.

The healing in his life helps the church provide care and healing for veterans and their families through the Soul Care Initiative and Just Peace. Dave and I are friends, with similar experiences that result from combat, death, and the violence of war.

I am committed to helping veterans care for their souls in personal quiet time and healing relationships with individuals and their communities. On Monday mornings, I have the honor of leading a soul-care workshop at "Operation Stand Down Tennessee," a Nashville center for homeless veterans. My primary qualification for leadership is that I am a Vietnam War wounded soul in the process of healing and recovery.

PTSD, moral injury, and soul wounds

PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) is widely recognized and diagnosed based on symptoms that follow exposure to traumatic events, especially those likely to occur in combat and military operations.

PTSD is a disorder with both psychological and physiological roots. Treatment for veterans with PTSD is often a combination of counseling, therapy and medications, provided by medical and counseling professionals associated with VA healthcare facilities.

Moral injury is a recent area of study that is receiving a lot of attention because it is closely linked with PTSD symptoms and suicides. Moral injury is a complicating overlay to the traumatic events that initiate PTSD. When moral injury joins with the toxic power of trauma triggered by violence, death and human suffering, the pain becomes intense and relentless.

Trauma can induce traditional PTSD



Larry Malone stands before his A6 Intruder

symptoms that can be treated effectively by traditional therapy and professional caregivers. Moral injury can be understood as a wound of conscience that has somehow violated internal principle codes and beliefs.

Moral injury is often the bridge that carries physical and emotional experiences available to traditional healthcare treatment, into the spiritual realm. Once the wound becomes hosted in the spiritual domain of the soul, the rules change about the kinds of medicine and therapy that can treat and heal it.

The soul

The soul is the spiritual essence of a human being, and it is not available to healing through traditional, clinical or psychological therapy, even by the most competent professionals.

Soul-wound symptoms include a distortion of identity, absence of perceived worth, deep sadness, spiritual despair and a sense of hopelessness.

A soul wound will frequently defy all forms of therapy and relief-seeking methods, both prescribed and self-inflicted.

The pain might subside or be subdued, but then it's back.

The tragic veteran suicide rate of nearly one every hour can often be traced to a sense of utter hopelessness by persons who have tried everything, finding no lasting healing relief. In such cases, despair becomes total, and death becomes a viable—too-often tempting—option.

The healing agent

The sole healing agent for wounds that harm the soul is love. Love is the oxygen the soul was made to breathe, inhaling first from its divine source, and then exhaling into the lives of others in the completion of its purpose. This is true for all human beings, regardless of their faith, beliefs or religious practices.

Love is delivered in two ways: 1) directly from the divine source or 2) through human connection and relationships. But the origin of this love is divine, even when received through acts of human kindness.

The healing of deep soul wounds happens incrementally over time, with regular doses of love as the primary medicine of the soul. Other medications and treatments may be effective for lesser wounds, but they cannot heal the soul. Only love does it.

Soul fitness is a daily conditioning practice that provides intentional care for the soul, sustains healing as an ongoing process, and builds resiliency for future wounds of life.

Soul healing happens in very quiet environments where the soul can be heard, and direct communication and relationship can be established between the soul and its source: love.

Begun in solitude, soul care enables the experience of grief, confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Shared sacred story becomes a primary means of compassion and understanding, and is the foundation of relational depth that gives love a bridge for passage. The soul and its divine love source share a sacred story, and it passes forward with humans, one by one.

Three churches


Soul Church happens only when alone. It's where a soul gets to breathe a pure form of love as its oxygen, together with its source. Soul Church is indispensable for soul healing and wellness. It's also rarely attended, even by devout persons.

Little Church happens in a growing relationship with another person, empowered by the love received and exchanged at Soul Church. People don't have relationships with groups; they have personal relationships with individuals in multiple numbers.

Big Church is a special form of community that is centered in common faith, beliefs, service, worship and prayer. The "golden triangle" of two people and God heals both souls. Big Church is composed of these triangles, operating together in common purpose and unity.

Resources

There is a special role for church in the outreach to our veterans and their families. Chaplain Dave and the Soul Care Initiative are focused on the development and distribution of excellent and effective resources for churches at www.soulcareinitiative.org

Soul fitness expands a soul's capacity to receive, hold and pass love to others. It begins with a decision by a person to make soul fitness a priority. Community resources to aid the healing of wounds carried by our military, police, and others who serve in harm's way are being developed. 



Larry Malone is the former director of men's ministry with the General Commission on United Methodist Men. He served as a U.S. Navy pilot during the Vietnam War.

UMC

The UMC statement on war and peace

We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ.

We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy.

We oppose unilateral first/preemptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government.

As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict.

We insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them. We advocate the extension and strengthening of international treaties and institutions that provide a framework within the rule of law for responding to aggression, terrorism, and genocide.

We believe that human values must outweigh military claims as governments determine their priorities that the militarization of society must be challenged and stopped; that the manufacture, sale, and deployment of armaments must be reduced and controlled; and that the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons be condemned. Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

*Social Principles ¶165(c),
the 2012 UM Book of Discipline*

The UMC statement on support for veterans

We call upon the government of the United States and its partners in the Iraq war to provide full support and services for as long as needed for returning veterans, especially for those wounded in body and spirit by their experiences in the war. Such support should include medical treatment, appropriate counseling, training for employment and a generous pension for those who are not able to provide a living for themselves and their families.

*Resolution 6142,
the 2012 UM Book of Resolution*

Young people's statement

We are the young people of The UMC. We hear God's clear call to be instruments of peace in all corners of the world.

We are among those sent to the front lines of every war, by every nation and organization that chooses to engage in war.

We are among those who pay the price of military action at the expense of our education, our health care, and our security.

We are among those most affected by the insidiousness of war:

- Damage to our bodies
- Damage to our psyches
- Damage to our communities
- Damage to our spirits

And yet, we are among those with the least representation in decision making bodies around the world.

*Resolution 6132, the
2012 UM Book of Resolutions*

Love the warrior, not the war

By the Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell

I believe with all of my heart and soul that when any one is disrespected for any reason, that disrespect must be challenged not only by the one who has been disrespected, but more importantly, by those who are the allies of the disrespected.

There were times when those of us who resisted the Vietnam War also disrespected military persons who fought in that war on our behalf.

I learned at that time, that regardless of my dislike of war, I should not allow that dislike to become a dislike and distrust of those who wore the uniforms of our country.

Prejudice against uniforms and skin color

There is a common thread between “disrespects” whether it is directed at a person because of the color of his/her skin, or because the person wears a military uniform.

In his poem, “I Too,” Langston Hughes, the African American author, writes, “I, too, sing America.”

The woman or man in uniform, regardless of the war he/she fights or the military duty that is theirs, “sing America” with as much conviction as any of us who dislike the military because of the wars they fight.

Hughes writes of the “darker brother”: “They send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes.”

Too often we have relegated our military to places unworthy of the service they have given to our country. How could our Veteran’s Administration so often fail those who through great sacrifice have given of themselves on our behalf?


How dare we stand proud as the

military and the flag march by us in parades and our hearts beat faster, and tears well up in our eyes, yet we are silent when they are disrespected as military men and women with unmet health and economic needs.

Langston Hughes ends his poem by writing about “the darker brother” finally coming out of the kitchen and eating at the table “when company comes.” He writes, “They (the company) will . . . see how beautiful I am and be ashamed—I, too, am America.”

Need for weapons in violent world

I remember my two years in the ROTC at my college. I was extra proud as I wore my uniform for our weekly drills. I was clumsy as I never really learned to care efficiently for my M16 rifle, but as anti-war as I was (and am today), I knew that weaponry was necessary in a violent world. I am pleased to be a clergyperson in a United Methodist Church that values the humanity and spirituality of our women and men who have served in the military and who serve today.

I cannot imagine what authentic American patriotism would look and feel like if we did not value our military. They and we “sing America”—knowing that we need them, and they need us. 



The Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell is a civil rights leader and a retired clergy member of Rocky Mountain Annual Conference. He now lives in Asbury Park, N.J.

Believe + belong + become = spiritual resiliency and growth

By Colonel (Ret) Gerald Scott Henry Jr.

When one sees a world-class sports team, the consistent element is near flawless execution of the basic skills of the game. The same applies to military organizations. Drilled into each member from day one of basic training are the skills, team attitudes, values, and virtues necessary to fulfill the mission. Just maybe, the same is true for The United Methodist Church and specifically our United Methodist Men.

Serving for more than 28 years as an Air Force Chaplain in combat and garrison settings, taught me about the three “basics” of spiritual resiliency/growth.

The majority of current research on resiliency suggests that if one has a solid belief system, belongs to healthy groups, and is becoming a person with positive meaning in life then he can endure suffering, pain, tragedies, and the negatives in life, and can also overcome and grow more resilient.

Sure sounds to me like many of the biblical verses I have memorized and preached across my ministry:

- “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).
- “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword” (Romans 8:35)?
- “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:27)
- “Do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another even more.” (Hebrews 10:25).
- “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2-4).

Christian spiritual resiliency is by no means new. It has gone by many names across 2,000 years of church history. John Wesley’s class meetings were structured for just such growth in faith, encouragement, support, and outreach that offers life both temporal and eternal meaning.

The Class Meeting

The heart of Methodism during the life of John Wesley was the Methodist Class Meeting. This was a small covenant discipleship support group where members were accountable to each other. They confessed their faults one to another, prayed for each other, and stirred up one another to love and good works. Here the teachings of the Bible were examined in light of personal experience. Here leaders were nurtured and equipped.”



Gil Hanke, top staff executive of UM Men, is encouraging UM Men to form similar small groups based on *The Class Meeting* by Kevin Watson. I encourage you to respond to his invitation.

As leaders in your UM Men’s group, ask yourselves an honest question: “Does our UM organization equip men (including veterans) to believe, belong, and become Christians who exemplify spiritual resiliency and growth?”

If the answer is “yes,” I rejoice with you and suggest that you share your story across your district, conference, and with this magazine as a best practice.

If the answer is “no,” consider some ideas that worked for me in a military setting; I trust they are easily transported to our church setting and they might enhance

your outreach to men (some of whom are veterans).

Don't target veterans

I suggest you treat a veteran the same as every other man in your group. Do not target them as a special needs group.

Firstly, I suggest that in your outreach methodology, you switch the order of the equation to Become + Belong + Believe = Spiritual Resilience/Growth.

Most efforts attempt to reach out and develop men by inviting them to Bible studies or church for a good sermon. The logic is get them to belief first and the rest will follow.

A strong belief system is critical but from my experience it should not be the first step with its emphasis on orthodoxy (a correct belief system informed by the Wesleyan quadrilateral of Scripture, reason, experience, and tradition).

Action first

The first step to growing men spiritually should stress orthopraxy (correct actions and practices).

In Wesleyan parlance, "Stir up one another to love and good works!"

Get your men out working and loving God's people. Offer new opportunities for Christian service to your community and invite new men (I suggest intergenerational groups that include young men) to participate.

Some time ago, a young Catholic priest I supervised in the Air Force suggested that the men of the chapel should build a Habitat for Humanity house in the community.

"Do we have the manpower to pull this off?" I asked.

"Trust me," he said.

He sent a base-wide e-mail inviting religious and non-religious men to help make a difference for a family and the community.

In less than 24 hours, 75 men had volunteered.

The house was constructed that

summer, and more than 25 families formed positive relationships. They felt a new sense of purpose and belonging, and most of them made the Protestant or Catholic community their home for worship.

Both men's groups grew by adding projects to enhance the community. These "safe" non-religious activities for service provided opportunities for spiritual growth. Friendships developed, and all the ministries of the church were opened to these new faith families!

Becoming and belonging

Once men find meaning in Christian service, make friends in outreach activities (even golf), and feel a part of the group, then the stage is set for doing the theological work of developing a solid belief system.


This paradigm of becoming, belonging, and believing can thus become the basic backbone for spiritual growth and resiliency of each individual and the group.

Finally, never neglect the virtues of hospitality, patience, and acceptance as you work with veterans and, for that matter, all people.

Air Force Commander and Chief, General Mark Welsh, reminds us, "Every Airman has a story." He encourages Airmen to share their stories and for senior leaders to listen.

Not bad advice for us UM Men.

"Every UM man has a story."

It is the responsibility of leaders to create an environment where men feel free to share stories of their spiritual pilgrimage by believing in, belonging to, and becoming more like Jesus Christ. 



Chaplain Colonel (Ret) Gerald Scott Henry Jr. is the director of Extension Ministry and Pastoral Care, and the UM Endorsing Agency for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

My ministry with military chaplains

By Bishop Woodie W. White

One of the most personally rewarding experiences of my ministry as a bishop, is my relationship with UMC clergy, serving as military chaplains. It is an incredible and unique ministry.

The UMC has some 150 active duty military chaplains stationed throughout the world. Additionally, there are more than 200 National Guard and Reserve chaplains, who stand ready to serve the nation if called. Each time one reads of our young men and women, being sent into harm's way, there among them—providing spiritual support and direction—is a chaplain, and often a UM chaplain.

In 1986, the Endorsing Agency of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry invited me to visit with chaplains in Europe and the Far East.

The agency has a long history of providing oversight and direction for UMC clergy who commit themselves to ministry among those serving in the military.

A tragic beginning to episcopal visits

Soon after the beginning of World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt invited Methodist Bishop, Adna Wright Leonard, to visit chaplains and troops in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The president thought the visit would be a boost to their spirit and morale, to have a visit from home, as an expression of support and to remind those defending the country



Bishop Woodie White (front row, center) and the Rev. Randy Cross (second row, right) visit with the chaplaincy team stationed at Osan Air Force Base in South Korea.

Photo courtesy of the UM Endorsing Agency.

in distant places, they were not forgotten. The visit was to be an expression of care for the chaplains.

Bishop Leonard left in April, 1943, on this unique and important ministry to represent his Protestant colleagues throughout the nation.

Weeks later, the Army plane in which the bishop was traveling crashed on May 3, 1943, killing all aboard, including Presbyterian Chaplain Frank L. Miller, and Methodist Chaplain Robert H. Humphreys, a member of the Virginia Conference.

My service as endorser

While an active bishop, I was invited to make a number of these visits. However, in retirement, I was asked to serve for a quadrennium as the ecclesiastical endorser for the denomination.

This meant in part, I was the official denominational representative who signed off on all those moving into appointments beyond the local church. For those going into military chaplaincy, a specific military protocol must be followed; this entailed an annual visit to chaplains serving outside the United States.

It was especially gratifying to experience the welcome chaplains gave to representatives of the general board. Soon after chaplains greeted "the bishop," conversations, quickly became intimate and personal.

Invitations to homes and families were genuine. Sharing was frank, and questions were often difficult. But always, there was this special connection, and the visit conveyed the message that the church cares!

No two the same

Chaplains with whom I related over the years were as diverse as our denomination. They were members of both genders in various racial and ethnic groups with different experiences from numerous geographical regions with varying theological perspectives.

One thing they all had in common—they were highly competent.

When visiting a military base as the ecclesiastical endorser, the first stop was always with the base commander. We discussed two things—the mission of the base, and the role and work of the chaplain.

Whatever the branch of service and whatever the region, base commanders expressed high regard for UM chaplains and their ministries.

Medical center visit

In all my visits, none was more moving, than when I accompanied a chaplain on “rounds” at the Regional Medical Centers, in Landstuhl, Germany. This is where military personnel are airlifted from the field of battle. Some of the finest medical staff in the world are assigned here. Their job is to attend the wounded until they could be sent elsewhere for more comprehensive care.

I joined the chaplain in offering prayers with the wounded and their family members who had flown in to see their loved one, who was often unrecognizable.


The chaplain would often offer prayers with an attending nurse or physician. Moments earlier they were models of professional care, but in the presence of the chaplain, they asked for God’s care, comfort and guidance.

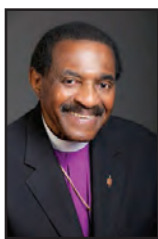
At the close of the visit, I then prayed for the chaplain—often at his or her request.

Two experiences

At a retreat for chaplains and others serving in ministry settings beyond the local church, I was walking across the picturesque grounds, when I heard a youthful voice, shouting, “Bishop White! Bishop White!” I saw a boy of about 12 years of age running towards me. Reaching me, he wrapped his arms around my waist, signaling his joy in seeing me. I last saw him on a visit to Germany a few years earlier, where his father, a chaplain, was stationed. Not only had we been on a retreat together where families were invited, we shared several meals. We had become friends.

On another occasion, the spouse of a chaplain simply placed in my hand a handsome bound, pocket-size book. She said nothing, and moved on. When I opened the book, I found she had copied in beautifully, sprawling penmanship, prayers, classic and modern. The book was filled with moving and inspiring prayers. It is inscribed with a personal message of appreciation for bishop’s ministry to a chaplain’s family.

The ministry of military chaplains is too little known among too many UMs, but it is one that is a blessing to the nation, church, and to this UM bishop. 



A graduate of Boston University School of Theology, Bishop Woodie W. White served as the first general secretary of the Commission on Religion and Race prior to being elected to the episcopacy in 1984 where he served the Illinois Great Rivers and Indiana Conferences. He served as president of the Board of Discipleship (1988-92) and president of the Council of Bishops (1996-97). In retirement he teaches at Emory University Candler School of Theology and served the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as the accrediting agent for military chaplains.

New York men lead effort to purchase van for veterans

By Scott Stumpf

It was the spring of 1987, and budget cuts came down hard on American Veterans. Congress eliminated all funding for the Veteran's Beneficiary Program. No longer would the federal government reimburse veterans for the costs of transportation to Veteran's Affairs (VA) medical facilities.

With so many disabled veterans living on small fixed incomes, travel costs were forced to give way to shelter and food. Health needed to be sacrificed for everyday necessities.

These were and are our nation's heroes. They traveled the globe to protect our freedoms. Suddenly, they were hard pressed to travel the distance from their homes to appointments at VA medical centers and clinics. Those who gave so much for our country were suddenly abandoned, unable to get the medical treatment they justly deserved.

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) could not ignore this injustice. They began organizing volunteer drivers and privately funded vehicles to transport veterans in communities across the United States. Today, this transportation network carries more than half a million veterans to and from their appointments at VA medical facilities at no cost. Throughout the country, DAV hospital service coordinators organize transportation programs at more than 180 VA medical facilities.

At home

In Central New York, 300 volunteers based out of the Syracuse VA Medical Center and its community-based outpatient clinics operate a fleet of 34 vehicles that support the transportation needs of veterans within 13,451 square miles.



This is the largest VA region of New York, and without the transportation provided by our network, veterans of modest means or those who cannot drive themselves, might forego appointments for life-sustaining or critical care to which they are entitled. A free, friendly lift to a VA-approved medical engagement can make all the difference for a veteran living in one of the 14 counties we serve.

Reach out

Our fleet is aging. This situation jeopardizes the sustainability of our program. However, with the financial support of the community at large, we can make sure that no individual who served this country is denied proper medical care just because the veteran cannot reach a VA facility. This financial support would ensure that veterans would not have to sacrifice food and lodging – or neglect their health issues – because they cannot afford transportation.

Community partnership

In the fall of 2012, my wife and I were volunteering at the Syracuse VA Medical Center, and also helped at a DAV facility.

I noted the aging vans that were transporting veterans to the hospitals and clinics.

I suggested to Steve Ranous, president of the Crossroads District UM Men, that it would be a great ministry if we could purchase a seven-passenger Ford Flex for the VA.


Steve presented the idea to the Rev. Darryl Barrow, superintendent of the Crossroads District. He suggested we ask all the churches within the district to participate.

It was then I realized, "We can do this."

When you help veterans, you welcome them back into the community. You give back to those who gave their all for us.

Donations from UM Men and churches were matched by DAV National, and in July, 2015, the new van was delivered.

This single donation will result in transporting thousands of veterans to and from medical appointments in relative safety.

This truly is charity that begins at home and keeps on giving and a great way to do something for the men, women, and families that have protected us over the years. 



Scott Stumpf is a member of Fayetteville UMC and a leader of the effort to purchase the \$14,500 van.

Chaplain gives out devotional books

HERMITAGE, Pa.—

The Rev. David Williamson, pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, serves as chaplain of Hermitage Fire Rescue and a Boy Scout camp.

During the eight years he served as chaplain at Custaloga Town Boy

Scout Camp in Erie, Pa., he invited Scouts to read devotions from *Strength for Service to God and Country*.

"Almost every week, a Scout leader came up after the


service—some in tears—to tell me that he had just come back from Iraq or Afghanistan, and that a lieutenant or sergeant had led devotions there using his grandfather's well-worn book," said Williamson. "They were grateful to rediscover the timeless Christian wisdom and spiritual guidance in the new edition, and I gave away many copies to these veterans who were still serving their country as leaders of young men here at home."

Following the 2013 release of *Strength for Service to God and Community*, Williamson found the second book was especially relevant to his role as chaplain at a fire station.

"Most of the stories are related to the experiences and stresses of firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical service personnel."

He now uses the second book at the Scout camp. "It's resonating not only with the first responders who serve as leaders, but with the Scouts, who embrace the ideals of aiding others in their times of greatest need and selfless community service," he said.

"I look forward to using *Strength for Service to God and Community* at Scout camp again this year, and will continue giving out copies to the firemen I serve here in town.

"Thanks to everyone who let the Holy Spirit speak through them to produce two great devotional books for our generations." 



The Rev. David Williamson

Providing *Strength for Service* in combat zones

By Navy Chaplain (Ret) Richard Pusateri

I was honored to serve as chaplain for Marine Corps in Southwest Asia from 2005 to 2009.

As chaplain of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command, I served as a member of the Commanding General's executive staff for the religious support of the 35,000-40,000 Marines and attached Sailors, soldiers and airmen deployed in the combat zone.



Chaplain Pusateri in Kabani Village in Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

As senior supervisory chaplain, I coordinated the ministry of 150 chaplains and chaplain assistants who ministered to those combat troops.

While I spent most of the time in Iraq, I also served in the Horn of Africa, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Afghanistan, Jordan and Egypt.

Throughout my tour of duty, I was continually impressed to see the reach of *Strength for Service*

to *God and Country* in combat theater.

Books found everywhere

As the senior Marine General's chaplain I visited some of the most remote outposts and security stations in Iraq. I found copies of the devotional book while waiting for helicopters and convoys in tents, and small huts. I saw the historic books in tiny chow halls, rec rooms,

medical-aid stations and on the tables in company command posts.

As I met with our ministry teams traveling out to their units, I saw many chaplain assistants adding the pocket-size books to their backpacks to bring to the combat troops.

As I wandered around troops waiting to go "outside the wire," I often saw Marines and soldiers huddled in corners reading *Strength for Service*.

Grateful troops

Sometimes I'd strike up a conversation with the person by mentioning *Strength for Service* was provided by my United Methodist Church.

Almost always the troop expressed thanks when he or she discovered the devotions came from my church. But that wasn't the important part. *Strength for Service* contributed by speaking meaningfully of God's love and guidance—even in the harshest moments of combat. It offered personal spiritual support to the troops in critical moments and places that other outreach rarely did.

I discovered selections from *Strength for Service* were also read during troop-led



Chaplain Pusateri addresses troops in Habbaniyah al-Anbar Province, Iraq.

devotions when a chaplain couldn't be there.

During my late-night visits to Combat Operations Centers I'd come upon staff reading from *Strength for Service* in the quiet moments while they waited for something to happen.


While making a combat update visit to a fellow Colonel staff member or an action officer, I frequently noticed a copy of *Strength for Service* on his or her field desk.

Most surprisingly, fellow chaplains from denominations very different from the UMC enthusiastically distributed copies of *Strength for Service* among their troops.

Spiritual resource

As the troops say about many things, *Strength for Service* "is what it is." It's a quiet and often quite personal devotional guide. In the Southwest Asia combat zone it's a close-at-hand spiritual resource available to the troops when

they seek words of hope, strength and God's presence in a challenging and unpredictable environment. It's a reliable and accessible source of broad Christian encouragement for the troops from many religious and non-religious backgrounds.

No doubt, lives are changed and faith is strengthened and sustained by the daily devotions. As the Marine combat force chaplain I always was gratified *Strength for Service* was there for the troops, and proud my church made it available. 



The Rev. Richard (Dick) Pusateri is the executive for Itinerant and Missionary Support for the General Board of Global Ministries in New York. A clergy member of the Tennessee

Conference, he retired as UM-endorsed chaplain in 2013, following 30 years in the U.S. Navy (16 years with the US Marine Corps).

Wounded veterans get lines and poles

HEBER Springs, Ark. —


UM Men of First UMC organized a fishing retreat for 67 veterans from VA hospitals. The Arkansas Freedom Fund also provided funds for the retreat near Lobo Landing on the Little Red River.

Mark Douglas, a therapist at the Fort Roots VA Hospital in North Little Rock said the 35 former soldiers he brought all have PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). "This is a wonderful opportunity to get them out with other veterans. I work with them on their addictions and depression. Some of them have never been fishing or even been in a boat."

This is the third year UM Men have sponsored the event. UM Men President John Pickell said the group raises funds from businesses in Heber Springs. "The first year we did this we had a guy here



Veterans go fishing. Photo by Staton Breidenthal, courtesy of the Arkansas Democrat Gazette.

who said he hadn't been outside in two years. It means a lot, especially to the ones who have been cooped up or they are recuperating. We wanted a different way to say thank you to them." 

Home Depot taps *Strength for Service* as recipient of rebates

NASHVILLE, Tenn. –

Home Depot offers UM churches and affiliate organizations an opportunity to help fund the distribution of free copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country*, to U. S. military troops and veterans.

The book of daily devotions was first published in 1942 following the attack upon Pearl Harbor. More than 1 million copies were distributed during World War II and the Korean conflict. An additional 480,000 copies of an expanded edition of the book have been distributed since 2001.

L.W. Smith, a United Methodist from South Carolina serves as president of the 12 member board of directors of the Strength for Service Corporation. "I'm very grateful to Home Depot for providing additional funds for us to expand the distribution of the historic book to veterans and men and women on active duty," said Smith.

Focus on veterans

Noting that Strength for Service Corporation has a close relationship with veterans, The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) selected the non-denominational organization to be the recipient of the rebates derived from The Home Depot Pro Xtra Loyalty Program.

The registration process is fast and easy and can be done in two ways:


1. On the internet go to: www.HomeDepot.com/proxtra
Username/Email:
sponsorship@gcfa.org



The collaboration among the General Council on Finance and Administration, Home Depot and Strength for Service, Inc. was confirmed last spring at the Nashville office of the General Commission on UMMen. Participants included (from left): Larry Coppock, Bobby Smith, Jehan Zarate, Michael Daniel, and Gil Hanke. Photo by Rich Peck.

Password: `gcfasponsor1` —
Agreement code: USC
For security purposes, there is no need to provide an expiration date or security code. The program only needs the 16 digit card number to ensure future purchases will be credited.

2. Contact your UMC Pro Account Representative- Michael Daniel at michael_r_daniel@homedepot.com or 817-825-0279

While the program is designed for church organizations, individuals performing a UMC-related project may also receive a 20 percent discount on paint by providing the "Pro Rewards" phone number (615/329-1177) at checkout. 

Police ask for *Strength for Service* books following shooting

OCALA, Fla.—

A 33-year-old Ocala Police Department officer was accidentally shot and killed by a fellow officer following an April 6 firearms training.

Jared Forsyth and the second officer were unloading their weapons when the semi-automatic gun of the second officer accidentally fired. The bullet ricocheted off a bench and entered through Forsyth's arm and continued behind his bulletproof vest. He was rushed to the hospital and died on the operating table.

It's like losing a member of the family," said Ocala Police Chief Greg Graham.

Following the shooting Ocala Police Chaplain Edwin Quintana asked Larry Coppock, executive director of the non-denominational Strength for Service

organization, for 150 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* in order to provide comfort and strength to grieving officers.

"It has devastated the whole department - in particular Police Chief Graham and Mayor Kent Guinn," said Quintana. "The last officer shot in the line of duty for Ocala Police Department was 60 years ago."

Coppock rushed the 150 requested books to Ocala. 



Jared Forsyth

In Memoriam — Dean Hollomon

PORTLAND, Oregon—

Dean Hollomon, 81, former president of the Oregon-Idaho Conference of UM Men and former president of the Western Jurisdiction of UM Men, died August 7.

"I've had a great life," said Dean after the physicians told him cancer had spread to his pancreas, lungs and liver. "I am lucky that I have some time to get my life straightened out and say goodbye to old friends."

Dean held his own "Dean is Dying Party" in June where more than 100 friends and family came by to tell him how



much they loved him.

A former secretary/treasurer of Portland-based Local 305 of the Teamster's Union, followed by a career with the Oregon School Association and the Oregon Medical Foundation, Dean said he first became active in UM Men in 1993 and he became active at the national level following the 2001 National Gathering of UM Men at Purdue University in Indiana. I've

been active in UM Men for 18 years," he said.

Dean is survived by his children, the Reverend Mike Hollomon, Kurt Hollomon, and Cindi Williams. 

In Memoriam — Harold E. Batiste Jr.

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—

Harold Batiste, 83, former president of the National Association of Conference Presidents (NACP) and a member of the first General Commission on UM Men, died June 15.

Harold was elected to a two-year term as national president in 1985. Under his leadership, 6,055 men attended the National Congress of UM Men at Purdue University, an event that included the first remote prayer line. Harold was re-elected to a second two-year term in 1987 and initiated “Bowl-a-thons,”

which raised \$109,464 for the UM Men Foundation.

“I first met Harold at the Lakeview Methodist Conference Center, a Texas Conference center in Palestine,” said Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men. “I was a new district president and spoke for the first time at a conference event. From that day on, he has befriended and mentored me. One of the special gifts he gave me was his attendance at the first NACP meeting when I was welcomed as the new general secretary of the commission.”



*Harold Batiste (right)
with Gil Hanke*

Service on the general commission

Following the 1996 General Conference, Harold was appointed to the transitional committee that shifted men’s ministry from the General Board of


Discipleship to the new commission.

After he was appointed to serve on the commission in 1996, he was elected chair of the Personnel Committee and was instrumental in hiring the Rev. Dr. Joe Harris, first general secretary of the new commission. He continued in that post until 2004.

“Harold Batiste was a man who celebrated life and lived it to its fullest,” said Harris, who now serves as communications director for the Oklahoma Annual Conference and assistant to the bishop. “Harold knew that for men living a life of servant devotion was the only way to realize one’s full manhood. He told me, ‘When men finally realize that they are put here not to be served but to serve others, we will truly change this church and world.’ Harold lived his life as a man after God’s own heart.”

A 33-year-career officer in the Air Force, Harold always made his colleagues conscious of their poor posture as he stood with a straight back and shoulders thrown back. He usually carried a camera and his photos graced many pages of UM Men magazine over the years.

Harold retired in 1985 as director of medical education at Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center and became lead instructor of the Nursing Home Administration program at St. Phillips College.

He was a member of Windcrest UMC and is survived by his wife Gertrude “Trudy” B. Scott Batiste and three children. 



Mail Call

The discovery of a 46-year-old book adds a new chapter to the history of *Strength for Service* books

NASHVILLE, Tenn. —

In 1969, Army Chaplain Robert Covington noted how important mail is for members of the Armed Forces serving overseas.

“No one knows better than the soldier away from home how important mail call is,” said Covington. He noted that occasionally mail brings bad news, but most of the time “it relieves our fear, strengthens our hope, and gives us comfort in love.”

The message from the chaplain was included in a 1969 edition of *Strength for Service to God and Country*, a book following the format of a 1942 book of the same name.

That 1969 book was found on eBay by Larry Coppock, executive director of the Strength for Service Corporation. “I didn’t know such a book existed,” said Coppock who was looking for additional copies of the 1942 edition. “We always thought there was no similar resource after the end of the Korean conflict in 1953.”

As the first book, the shirt-pocket-size book contains Scripture passages, meditations, and prayers by 120 military chaplains, pastors, editors and community leaders. Unlike the first book, the meditations in the smaller book are not designated for the days of the year.

In his introduction, Lawrence Fitzgerald, editor of the 1969 collection, says the idea for the book came from the

Rev. Walter MacGowan who was very familiar with the first World War II book. “Shouldn’t we have another edition, bringing its ideas and format up to date?” he asked.

Members of the Methodist Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel agreed the book “should be written by men who knew how to direct the soldier, sailor, airman to the God who is able to meet those needs.”

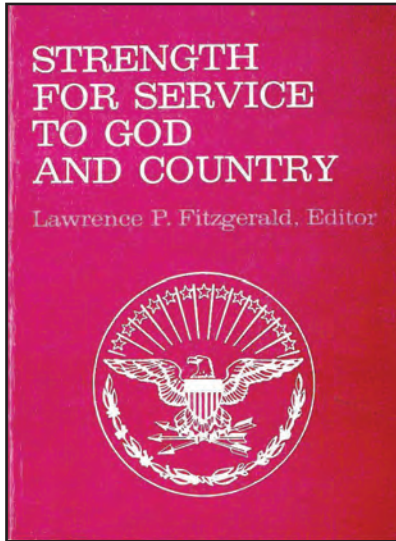
Abingdon Press, an imprint of the United Methodist Publishing House, agreed to serve as publisher for the new edition.

“Finding this book changes our understanding of the history of this ministry to military personnel,” said Coppock. “Up to this discovery we always assumed there was no similar resource between 1953 and 1998 when Evan Hunsberger decided to republish the 1942 edition.”

In 1969, Chaplain Covington noted the importance of mail to U.S. servicemen.

In 2015, we understand how important *Strength for Service* books have been to members of the Armed Services from 1942 to 2015.

For additional information, visit www.strengthforservice.org.



Giving back to the future

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

Many of us heal through service. Volunteers of all ages build houses for the homeless. They collect shoes for the shoeless. They glean farmers' fields for the hungry. They ring kettle bells for those less fortunate. They work with disabled veterans. They read stories to children and play games and do arts and crafts with the sick or elderly.

Giving is the gift that keeps on

A professor told us recently that he tutors inner-city teenagers to help them prepare for college entrance exams. His students comprise all ethnicities and backgrounds. He recalls his very best success story. A young gang member wanted to pull himself up and out of his hopeless lifestyle. He agreed—even signed a contract—to attend weekly tutoring sessions. His grade point average was rock bottom. After three years of hard work and commitment on everyone's part, this ex-gang member graduated from high school with a full academic scholarship to Dartmouth College.


What's in your DNA?

Those kinds of transformative stories cause goose bumps. The fact is that there are countless potential life-changing stories out there if only there were enough people willing and able to volunteer their time. Civil servants come in all sizes, ages and genders. The only qualification is that caring must be part of a person's DNA.

Enter your teenager! How many of us dads get irked at the time our teenagers waste? They may be staring glassy-eyed at the TV. They may be mentally numbed by a video game. They may be hypnotized by the characters dancing across their cell phone/pad/pod windows. At the same time, they may be bellyaching that "there's nothing to do around here!"

Teach values—be a model

Dads, take charge and strongly suggest that your teenagers volunteer their time for community service. Do it with them unless they'd rather do it solo. What better way to teach the value of giving back, of serving others. Start slowly—one or two hours a week. Provide some suggestions, but emphasize that anyone can come up with his or her own creative approach to volunteer service. It doesn't have to be through an agency or organization. It could be arranged through your church or school. It might be an idea suggested by your family. Need a jumpstart? Call the nearest retirement home and find out if and how they could use some help. Maybe your teenager would be willing to call. Imagine your teenager replacing even a fraction of the time spent on Facebook with face-to-face service to real people! Talk about "friending"!

Get on the computer and Google "volunteer opportunities in (your community)." There will probably be dozens of opportunities. It usually proves to be true—once you give your time and talents to others, you'll see a change in them and feel a lasting impact on yourself. 



Tom Tozer and Bill Black write a syndicated column on fatherhood and are authors of Dads2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers.

They are available for workshops. Contact them at tomandbill@Dads2Dadsllc.com. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at Dads2Dadsllc.



Across the Nation

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.—

Men honored for ministry to homeless

Men of Mandarin UMC received the “Trinity Rescue Mission Shield Bearer’s” award for its ministry to the men of the Trinity Freedom Farm.

Trinity Rescue Mission houses homeless families and serves 600 meals a day.

Mandarin men bring men from the mission to their activities and they annually host two day-long “life-skills” seminars.



REEDSVILLE, W.Va.—

Cubs receive bishop’s award

Cub Scout Pack 66 received the Bishop’s Award of Excellence for supporting PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) and Reedsville UMC activities.

“Youth members serve as acolytes and ushers,” says Paul T. White, local church scouting coordinator. “They make apple butter, participate in “cookie walks,” Christmas ornament sales, and “Operation Christmas Child.”



Cub Scouts participate in Scout Sunday at Reedsville UMC.

HAMBURG, N.Y.—

Church receives charter recognition

Hamburg UMC, home of a Boy Scout troop, a Cub Scout pack and two Girl Scout troops, received a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition.

The pack and troops have been part of the fabric of the church for more than 50 years. They work at the annual fish fry, serve as parking attendants at special events, collect canned food, and build handicap ramps.

McKINNEY, Texas—

Men raise \$10,000 for homeless shelter

Men of Stonebridge UMC hosted a car show that raised \$10,000 for the Samaritan Inn, a homeless shelter.

"We are so grateful for the men of Stonebridge UMC," said Lynne Sipiora, executive director of the shelter.



HOPE, Alaska —

Men support prison ministry, plan Habitat build

Last spring, the Rev. John Campbell, pastor of St. John UMC in Anchorage, led 24 men in two study sessions on "Decisions that will change your life."

In planning sessions, the men: 1) affirmed their support for the religious-awards program for youth; 2) continued their support for the volunteer prison ministry of Paul Williams, a member of Willow UMC; 3) scheduled a September

work day on a Habitat house; 4) planned to build additional seats for PET mobility carts in October; 4) considered distributing *Strength for Service* books to first responders; and 5) began raising funds to send men to the 2017 national gathering of UM Men in Nashville.

DENHAM SPRINGS, La.—

Men spruce up a playground

Twenty-three men and youth of First UMC and Roberts UMC power washed and cleaned the grounds and equipment of Kids Korner Playground, a park for special-needs children.

Dave Rector, a member of First UMC who assisted in the construction of the park, led the effort.



FORT WORTH, Texas—

Food truck brings meals to homeless

Each month, Arlington Heights UMC sends a food truck to bring dinners to 30 homeless veterans.

"Five & Two," named for miracle feeding of 5,000 from five loaves and two fishes, provides meals from a refurbished 1996 Chevy plumbing truck

"It's a full commercial kitchen on wheels," says Allen Lutes, associate pastor and director of the food-truck ministry.

The food truck will give away pulled pork tacos and sandwiches at special events for voluntary donations. "Every \$5 serves two other people," said Lutes.

The truck will also serve first responders and victims during emergencies.

The Monday morning men's prayer-breakfast group provides the funds for this ministry.

ATHENS, Georgia—

Crop drop honors former hunger advocate

A crop drop was held during the 2015 session of the South Georgia Annual Conference.

“The Art Shoemaker Memorial Crop Drop” honors the former Society of Saint Andrew Hunger Advocate for Georgia and one of the founders of the food-distribution event. Art also managed the “Love Thy Neighbor” food bank at Avalon (Ga.) UMC.

Participants at the University of Georgia Conference Center gave cantaloupes, squash, cabbage and sweet corn to churches and food banks.



NEWPORT NEWS, Va.—

Church honored for scouting ministry

Chestnut Memorial UMC received Shepherd Church Charter Recognition for serving as host to 75 Girl Scouts in Troop 1260; 28 Cub Scouts in Pack 11; and 30 Boy Scouts in Troop 11.

The church presented three Cross and Flame Awards to adult leaders, a Good Samaritan Award to a youth preparing for the ministry, and four God and Family Awards.

“The church also hosts the Girl Scout Cookie Drive, where more than 1,000 boxes of cookies were given to area troops,” said Tim Ewing, co-scouting coordinator for the church and vice president of UM Men.

LINCOLN, Neb.—

Cowboy Trail participants raise funds for missions

The Great Plains UM Men distributed \$4,729 to various missions including the Society of St. Andrew; Stop Hunger Now,

conference disaster response; conference UM camps; a Lincoln jail ministry; 100 club scholarships for Christian service; Epworth Village youth ministry; Imagine No Malaria; an orphanage in Nigeria; and the Upper Room Prayer Line.

Funds were raised by donations to 20 people who rode, walked or provided on-site support for the 14th annual UM Men’s Cowboy Trail ride/walk



Participants in the May trail ride included participants from Columbus, Norfolk, Genoa and Bellevue, Nebraska, and Marion, Iowa.

MADISON, Ala.—

Five-year-old helps feed the hungry

Logan Todd, a 5-year-old member of



Logan Todd brings his collection box to a food drop.

Asbury UMC, is a two-year veteran of raising funds and participating in crop drops for the Society of St. Andrew.

In 2013, he participated in a 60,000-pound drop of squash and sweet potatoes at Asbury UMC.

In 2015, he brought \$100 to Mary Lynn Botts, coordinator for the society in Alabama; she told Logan the money would feed 5,000 people.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.—

Members of Tool Belts refurbish churches

Men of Florida Conference Northeast District created “Tool Belts United” in order to repair and restore district churches.

Equipped with pressure-washing machines, paint rollers, and landscaping

tools, 10-15 men from six district churches spend Saturdays refurbishing deteriorating church buildings.

They began their work with four Saturday work days at Mount Moriah UMC in central Jacksonville. That work was followed by work on Franklinton UMC and Trinity UMC on Amelia Island.

A typical Saturday begins at 9 a.m. with devotions. A church family provides a lunch and supplies. The day usually ends by 3 p.m.

Long-range plans call for the creation of work teams in every district who will work on churches, food banks, homeless shelters, and other community buildings.

“Being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in our community is rewarding on many levels,” says Michael Maxwell, district president of UM Men. “While Tool Belts United helps the local church with the makeover, it helps men build relationships with one another.”

“While these churches receive a ‘facelift’ those serving are receiving a ‘heart-lift,’” said District Superintendent Tim Smiley.



Tool Belt members repaint the exterior of Mount Moriah UMC.

TUCSON, Ariz.—

Men provide meals for homeless

For the past five years, men of Catalina UMC have prepared meals for 100 men at the Primavera Men’s shelter. Each month UM Men spend five hours baking 240 chicken pieces, peeling, mashing and cooking 50 pounds of potatoes, and mak-

ing homemade gravy, biscuits, salad, and cookies or cake.



PLANO, Ill. —

Church celebrates charter

Many groups of UM Men simply hang up new charters when they arrive in the mail. The UMC of Plano makes the reception of a new charter a time of celebration



Pastor Kent Svendsen presents the charter to UM Men President Tony Curtis.

CAPE HATTERAS ISLAND, N.C. —

Food bank served 100,000

Over the past 37 years, the UM Men Emergency Assistance and Food Pantry Program has served over 100,000 individuals and donated over \$1.5 million in goods and services to those in need on the island.

In 2015, Walt Fulcher, 85, retired after 37 years as director of the ministry, and he was presented the North Carolina Order

of the Long Leaf Pine, “the state’s highest civilian honor.

Fulcher and volunteers paid all operating expenses, so all donations went directly to those in need.

A life-long Methodist, Fulcher also served in various groups in Buxton UMC.



Dennis Carroll (left), a member of Buxton UMC, congratulates Walt Fulcher (center). They are joined by Daniel Couch, president of Cape Hatteras UM Men. Photo by Daniel Pullen.

DALTON, Georgia —

Men build homes, make repairs

Under the leadership of President Bruce Gray, men of Five Springs UMC have built a Habitat House and a home for a disabled daughter and son-in-law of a member of UM Men.

They have also replaced the roof, refurbished the exterior, and repaired the plumbing of a home of a widowed church member.

Under Gray’s leadership the men pressure washed the church building, repaired the plumbing and electrical systems, and painted the interior.

Every Easter, the men provide breakfasts for the congregation, and every Christmas, they provide a free evening meal for church members at a local restaurant.

The men raise funds through an annual barbecue lunch.

The men honored Gray with a Life Membership Award.

DILLON, S.C.—

Men purchase utility trailer for work projects

Men of Main Street UMC tackle so many projects they had to purchase a chop saw, two cordless drills, two cordless screwdrivers, an air compressor, a pneumatic nail gun and a 6,000-watt generator. Then they had to purchase a trailer to store the equipment.

Church members gave \$5,785 for the trailer and the projects.

“I have never seen such a strong congregation as the one we have,” says Ronnie “Catfish” Carter.



Men of Main Street UMC stand on a new 65-foot ramp they built for a Clio UMC.

UPPER DUBLIN TOWNSHIP, Pa.

Conference sponsors 23rd softball tournament

Four teams of UM Men in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference participated in the 23rd annual softball tournament.

The July tournament began with a Bible study by Rev. Bob Strauss, pastor of Jarrettown UMC, a prayer by Dan Hepner, and the singing of “Rise Up Oh Men Of God.”

Grove UMC in West Chester won the tournament.



Eastern Pennsylvania Conference UM Men President Ross Brightwell holds trophy with names of winning teams. He is joined by team members from Hopewell UMC, Grove UMC, Jarrettown UMC and New Hanover, UMC. Photo by Doug West of Hopewell UMC.

'Something good is going on,' says bishop

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—“Something good is going on with UM Men,” Bishop James Swanson, president of the General Commission on UM Men, told the 20-member governing board of the Nashville-based agency.

Quoting Scripture passages that reported the disciples were unconvinced of the good news of the Resurrection, Swanson told the August 20-22 gathering that like the disciples members of the denomination seem to focus on bad news and enjoy “self-flagellation.”

He recalled how delegates to the 2004 General Conference focused on negative actions and totally ignored the fact that Cote d’Ivoire wanted to join the denomination. “No one celebrated that two million people wanted to become part of the UMC,” he observed.

“We have to find—and we don’t have to look far—to see what God has done in our lives, and we need to tell those stories. Don’t talk about what hinders us,” he said. “Look to see what God has done in your life.”

“We sit in the dark—not because there is no electricity—it’s because we don’t turn the light switch on. If you can’t see how God is at work in your own life, how can you help others see it.”

“We know when we get together something wonderful will happen,” he concluded. “Let us rejoice and be glad because we can do all things because God is with us.”

In business sessions, the board:

- agreed to ask General Conference to amend a resolution related to ministry to men and youth. An addition to the 2012 resolution encourages churches to form small groups of men who use the “class meeting” model of Wesley as described in the book by Dr. Kevin Watson with the same title. These meetings can be either face to face or in an e-meeting format;
- asked the Personnel and Finance Committees to seek ways to fund the open position of director of men’s ministry, and continue the use of the three Deployed Staff who work part time for the Commission;
- made positive comments about the revised website which has been remastered to work smoothly with smart phones and tablets;
- celebrated contributions by UM Men to Society of St. Andrew Meals for Millions program that provided 8.2 million serving of fresh produce;
- noted there are 36 men’s ministry specialists and 30 in the candidacy program. These men are enhancing the capacity of neighboring churches to make disciples of Jesus Christ;
- agreed to encourage 303 scouting ministry specialists and conference scouting coordinators to contact churches with or without troops or packs and discover ways to help them expand vibrant youth ministries;
- established three categories of relationships with other groups. They named the National Association of Conference Presidents, the UM Men Foundation, the Society of St. Andrew and Strength for Service as affiliate partners. Six groups were named affiliates and nine groups were named endorsed ministries. They asked General Conference to eliminate references to particular organizations in the *2016 Book of Discipline* as the groups can be changed at any time;
- expressed appreciation to Dan Ramsey and Ed Shytle for their leadership as presidents of the National Association of Conference Presidents and the United Methodist Men’s Foundation



Conference prayer advocates meet at Upper Room in Nashville.

The origin and future of the Upper Room Prayer Line

By Jennifer Bryant

At The Upper Room, we are proud to have established the place “Where the World Meets to Pray.” Almost 80 years ago, a UM church in San Antonio prayed us into existence, and we have been hosting the world’s prayer space ever since. From our daily devotional to our Living Prayer Center, The Upper Room accompanies over three million people across the globe on their spiritual journey each day.

Vital partnerships have driven The Upper Room to grow from a small daily devotional produced and distributed in The United States to

a worldwide prayer movement with multimedia spiritual formation content. We began crowdsourcing the daily devotional more than half a century before the idea took the Internet by storm because our readers urged us to include them.

The Living Prayer Center began in 1977 and its success has hinged in large part upon its connection to UM Men. At every turn, our partners have sparked and supported our growth.

The time has come again for us to grow, and we are calling on our faithful partners to consider once more how they might play a key role in the future of The Upper Room.

In November of last year, we launched a digital prayer wall to connect with those who could not reach the Living Prayer Center by phone. Since that time, we have received an average of 19,000 public prayers per month. The world is coming to The Upper Room, calling out for prayer.

We need you. Will you consider visiting our digital prayer wall to pray on behalf of those who need it?

I had a friend who used to close his emails with the word “forward.” It has always reminded me of Paul’s description of his ministry to the Philippians: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14, NRSV). He had much work to do; we do, too. God is calling The Upper Room forward. Will you go with us?



Jenn Bryant works with the Living Prayer Center Global Digital and serves as marketing manager for the Strategic Initiatives Team



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Plan now to enter national contest

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Now is the time to plan to enter the second annual national contest for the most outstanding local church, district and conference ministries to men.

Wall plaques will be presented to the top five local-church ministries, the top district and the top annual conference. The top local church will receive a trophy and a wall plaque.

The deadline for entries is Feb. 1, 2016, but entries will be received beginning October 1.

There is no form to fill out. Simply describe the ministries, the number of people involved, the amount of money raised and to whom it was contributed, along with ways in which the ministries have made a difference in the church and community. Do not confine your report to the activities of the small group of men who engage in Bible study. The ministries encompass all the activities of men in your

church, district or annual conference.

E-mail information and optional photos to RPeck@gcumm.org or mail entries to Rich Peck, 1000 17th Ave. S., Nashville, TN 37212.

Entries will be judged by a panel composed of conference and jurisdictional presidents of UM Men selected by Dan Ramsey, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents (NACP).

Winning entries will be announced at the March 3-6, 2016, NACP meeting in Nashville. Winning ministries will be advised in advance of the meeting so representatives may plan to personally receive the awards. Plaques and trophy may also be presented during annual conference sessions.

Local church, district and conference winners will be featured in the summer 2016 issue of *UM Men* magazine.



Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men (second from right), presents a plaque to UM Men President Fred Gore. The award declares Christ of the Hills UMC in Hot Springs Village as named the top local church in the 2015 competition. Dr. Buddy L. Smith, pastor of the Hot Springs Village church, is at the far right. Jim Bodge, former president (far left), submitted the entry. Will Faulkner, president of Arkansas Conference UM Men, holds the trophy. The church leaders were honored during the June session of the Arkansas Annual Conference in Hot Springs. Photo by Marcia Dunbar.

UM Men Awards

Drinda McNichol

Volunteer finds many outlets for service

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—

Men of Northwest Hills UMC presented Drinda McNichol with a certificate of appreciation for her work with unwed mothers, children ministries, Vacation Bible School, “Wiggler” packets, and church newsletters.



“This was the first award ever presented by UM Men,” said George Hampton, president.

Rod Lucas

Many churches, many positions

CORVALLIS, Mont.—

Men of Corvallis UMC presented Rod Lucas with a Life Membership Award following 63 years of service to men’s organizations in several UM churches.



“Over the years he has held many offices [and] in the Corvallis group he has held every office and currently is the secretary,” says Ray Dunbar, a member of UM Men. “He has chaired, worked, and participated in more men’s group projects than I have time to enumerate.”

Joe Richards

Men honor 52-year church warrior

MOUNT AIRY, Md. —

Men of Calvary UMC presented Joe Richards with a Life Membership Award.

“Joe has been with the UM Men at Calvary for 52years,” said Bruce Eldridge, president. “He has been the treasurer for as long as I’ve been the president, [and he] is an absolutely wonderful warrior for Christ and a prayerful member of our UM Men chapter.

Steve Mahaffey

Former president still serves others

WASHINGTON, W.Va.—

Men of Lubeck UMC honored Steve Mahaffey, their former president, with a Life Membership Award.



While serving as president, Mahaffey coordinated monthly breakfasts, helped seniors with transportation and home repairs, and he led fund-raising activities such as car washes, dinners, and picnics.

He also served a term as president of Little Kanawha District UM Men, and he served Lubeck UMC as lay leader, a trustee, and a choir member.

“Steve can be found almost every day involved in some church activity,” says Harry Snyder, current president of UM Men. “He may be in Bible study, out shopping for the next dinner, cooking in the kitchen, mowing the church lawn, or participating in a puppet practice.”

Marietta Ann Kusey

Michigan church honors librarian and homemaker

MIO, Mich.—

Mio UMC presented Marietta Ann Kusey with the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence for her service as a Sunday school teacher, co-author of the History of Mio UMC, church librarian, chair of the Memorial Committee, and a member of the Church Administrative Council.



William Kusey Sr., lay leader of Mio UMC, joins his wife, Marietta, as she receives the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence from the Rev. Brenda Klacking, pastor.

The daughter of Elgie Dow, a superintendent of Michigan Public Schools, and Ina Dow, a

public school teacher, Marietta is a summa cum laude graduate of Kirtland Community College in Roscommon, Mich., where she studied art, ceramics, nursing care and liberal arts.

She worked in Bay City and Flint, Mich., prior to her marriage to William Kusey, and the couple raised five children.

Larry Johnson *Men honor president*

WYLIE, Texas—

On the last Sunday in May, UM Men presented a Life Membership Award to Larry Johnson, president of Wylie UM Men.

Wylie UMC placed second in the national completion of top ministries to men. The organization repairs homes, serves lunches to children, engages in prison ministries, and builds handicap ramps.



NACP President, Dan Ramsey (left) listens as Larry Johnson responds to the presentation of his 2nd place plaque.

Jim McCormack *Men tap president for honor*

VERONA, Ill.—

Men of Verona UMC presented a Life Membership Award to Jim McCormack for his service as president of UM Men, chair of the Church Administrative Council and a



member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

“The church would be a much poorer place without his smiling face each Sunday,” says Kenneth Bunker, a member of UM Men.

Larry Few *UM Man elected president of Fire Chiefs*

EAST POINT, Ga.—

Larry Few, chair of the Board of Trustees for First Mallalieu UMC and fire chief for Fulton County, was elected president of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association, a section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

“It is truly an honor for me to have been elected to serve as president of such an important organization,” said Chief Few. “As president, I will be able to have a global impact on the future of fire safety and prevention.”

The UM Men organization presented Few with a Life Membership Award.



Chief Larry Few and wife Mazie.

Osmond A. Lindo Sr. *Author named ‘Man of the Year’*

GARDENA, Calif.—

The Western Jurisdiction of UM Men, named Osmond A. Lindo Sr., author of *Real Men Read Jesus’ Parables*, as the “2015 Man of the Year.”

Larry Dozier, president of the jurisdiction, says Lindo was selected because of his work to lead men to Christ. “His book is a blueprint for men, ages 18-35, to become successful Christian men,” says Dozier.

A native of the Republic of Panama, Lindo is a graduate of the United Theological

College of the West Indies in Jamaica. He served as a pastor in Jamaica before going as a short-term missionary to the Valiente Indian Mission in Panama. He was later appointed a superintendent in Costa Rica.



Returning to school in 1973, he earned Master of Theology and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. Since 1977, he has served as pastor and district superintendent in the California Pacific Annual Conference. He and his wife Miriam, a retired elementary school teacher, now reside in Richmond, Texas. They have three adult children.

Dorothea Timson *Church makes presentations an annual tradition*

HUNTINGTON, N.Y.—

The UMC of Huntington-Cold Spring Harbor has created an annual tradition of presenting a Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to an outstanding woman in their congregation.

In 2014, men of the Long Island church presented Wardean Henry with the award and in 2015, the honor went to Dorothea Timson.

A member of the church since 1954, Dorothea has served as treasurer and a member of several committees, including the Board of Trustees.

She served as a medical secretary for the last 50 years, and she is a certified Scuba diver.

Ruth Ann Powers *Men honor UMW president*

PHENIX CITY, Ala.—

Men of Summerville UMC presented Ruth Ann Powers with a Susanna



UM Men and the family of Dorothea Timson (center) gather at the front of the sanctuary with their pastor, Dr. Luonne A. Rouse (far right). Dorothea's son Robert and his wife Caroline are in the front row left next Dorothea's son, Chuck.

Wesley Award of Excellence.

A graduate of Columbus College, she served as president of Alabama -West Florida Conference UMC Women, a director of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, and dean of the Conference School of Christian Mission.

From 1988 to 1994, she helped build a Methodist Church in Oaxaca, Mexico, and in 1996, she worked in a well-baby clinic and taught English in The Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire).

She also organized and served as executive director of a Phenix City shelter for battered women which eventually included rape crisis response and victim's advocacy center.

Lucious Moore *'You can do Moore or less'*

CHICAGO—

UM Men of the Southern District of Northern Illinois Conference inducted Lucious Moore, former district president, into the John Wesley Society.

Moore spent 28 years as an active and reserve officer in the U.S. Navy followed by a career with the Chicago Police Department where he was active in a program to improve relationships between the police and the residents.

A 30-year member of Morgan Park UMC, he serves a lay leader and a member of the Board of Trustees. He also serves with



Steve Nailor (right) congratulates Lucious Moore following his induction into the John Wesley Society.

the Morgan and Maple Park food pantry, provides security for Esmond Elementary School, and heads up fund-raising for the homeless.

“Lucious is a special man who is willing to help others regardless of the cost,” says Northern Illinois Conference UMM President Steve Nailor. “Lucious drove Wardell Boyd to his dialysis treatments and trips to Wisconsin and Nashville so he could continue his work as conference prayer advocate.”

Lucious’ moniker is “You can do Moore or less.”

Doug Wright *Council gives lifetime achievement award*

TUSCON, Ariz.—

Dr. James S. Wilson, a former president of the Catalina BSA Council, presented Doug Wright, a scouting ministry specialist, with the first Catalina Council Lifetime Endowment



Doug Wright stands in front of the “Second Century Endowment Wall.” When Wright was named leader of the fund-raising effort, there were only four names on the endowment wall. Today the Catalina Council recognizes 136 donors!

Achievement Award.

Over a period of 20 years, Wright was instrumental in securing more than \$32 million in endowment gifts to benefit 20 councils.

Curt Janota *Men honor president*

WHEATON, Md.—

Men of the Glenmont UMC presented Curt Janota with a Life Member Award for his service to the men’s organization and the church.

As UMM president, Janota led projects that provided funds for the church, a middle school, the Kairos prison ministry, and Imagine No Malaria.

As chair of the Glenmont Audio/Video Committee, he sets up the video screens in the sanctuary and trains young people to carry on the video service. He is member of the Board of Trustees and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and he serves as an usher.



The Rev. Dr. E. Allen Stewart, pastor of Glenmont UMC (left), presents a Life Member Award to Curt Janota. Vincent McDonald, treasurer of UM Men, is in the center. Photo by Richard Oppong.

Robert Bentley *Veterinarian is the ‘go-to’ guy*

HAZEL GREEN, Ala.—

Men of Hazel Green UMC presented Robert Bentley with a Life Membership Award for serving as lay leader, chairing the building committee for the



Christian Life Center, and helping build a picnic pavilion.

Known as Dr. Bob, the veterinarian is a founding member of UM Men and has served on the Church Council, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and the Board of Trustees.

Known as the “go-to” guy, Bentley was delivering Christmas presents to local residents when he noticed the roof of a trailer of an elderly man was badly damaged. He rallied UM Men and a few weeks later the man had a new roof.

Donald M. Davis *A trucker elected conference president*

MORGANTOWN, W.Va.—

Spruce Street UM Men presented Donald M. Davis with a Life Membership Award following his service as president of the local unit of UM Men in 2008.

In 2009, the over-the-road trucker was elected president of the Mon-Valley District UM Men, and in 2014, he was elected president of West Virginia Conference UM Men.

He serves on the church Finance Committee, the Board of Trustees and the Church Council.

Each week he delivers food and other donations to Scotts Run Settlement House.



Joann Follette *Church honors parish nurse*

SPEARFISH, S.D.—

Family and friends of the Spearfish UMC presented Joann Follette with the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence in recognition of 10 years of service as a parish nurse.

Beyond introducing a health ministry, she spearheaded efforts



Les Pribble, treasurer of the Spearfish UMMen, presents the Susanna Wesley award to Joann Follette

to establish an outdoor healing garden in a previously weed-ridden corner of the church property. She was an active participant in all four Disciple Bible studies and served as president of the Rachel Circle of UM Women. The congregation provided funds for the award with an additional \$950 to support the health ministry and scholarship funds for the church-sponsored Children First Center.

David White *Church honors leader of UM Men*

SANFORD, Fla.—

Men of First UMC honored David White with Life Membership Award “as the best disciple we have in the church.”



Venters Nesmith Jr. *Men honor president*

NESMITH, S.C.—



Men of Friendship UMC presented Venters Nesmith Jr. with a Life Membership Award for serving as president of UM Men for 10 years. He also chaired the Kitchen Committee,

and served as vice president of the male choir, and a member of the Pastor-Parish Relations, Homecoming, and Friend’s Day committees.

Jason Mincey *Pastor inducted into John Wesley Society*

DACULA, Ga.—

Men of Hamilton Mill UMC, inducted their associate pastor, the Rev. Jason Mincey, into the John Wesley Society.

While leading “Starting Point,” the newcomer orientation program, his favorite role is serving as cheerleader for UM Men.

“We have tons of opportunities for men to grow in their faith and to reach out into the community with love through service,” says Mincey. “We have a lot of fun hanging out, growing and serving together. I want every man to know what that feels like.”



It will only take an hour a week

Thirty years ago the president of the local college escorted Keith Winchester and Montee Sneed into his office.

“I have a project for you,” he began. “It is a thankless job and no plaques or awards will be given to you for the work.”

“However, it will only take an hour a week,” he said as he invited them to become unit commissioners for the Boy Scouts.

“But, we don’t have any children,” the men complained as they signed up for what appeared to be a one-hour weekly commitment.

Keith

“I can’t believe he used the “only one hour a week” line on us laughs Keith, who now serves as scoutmaster of a troop chartered by First UMC in Columbia, Tenn.

Keith eventually did have two sons who joined and benefited from scouting. His son, Rob, became an Eagle Scout.

Keith also went on to serve in other scouting roles including cubmaster. He has graduated from Wood Badge and the College for Commissioner Science. He is a recipient of the UM Cross and Flame Award and the Long Rifle Award. He also served as district commissioner and chair of the Round Table, and his troop received the Bishop’s Award of Excellence.

Montee

Montee serves as the chartered organization representative and heads the scouting ministries for Columbia First UMC. He is heavily involved in children’s ministry and currently sponsors the Scout troop, two Cub Scout packs and three Girl Scout troops. His



Montee Sneed (left) and Keith Winchester

son, Thomas, became an Eagle Scout.

Montee has served as a cubmaster, unit commissioner, district committee member, and he serves on the governing board of the BSA Middle Tennessee Council. He is a recipient of the Cross and Flame Award, The Torch Award, the Daniel Beard Masonic Scouter Award and the Long Rifle Award. First UMC has been recognized as a Shepherd Church for its scouting ministry.

Both men have served as presidents of UM Men in their local churches.

“UM men have an important role to play in the struggle to save our kids,” says Montee, a life member of Columbia First UM Men.

“I think that what keeps us going is we can see firsthand the impact that scouting has on our kids,” said Montee. “Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H and Boys/Girls Clubs are about the only things out there providing character education.

“Keith and I are now seeing the children of some of our original kids come back to us.”

My career in scouting

By Will Rockefeller

I began my Scouting career in kindergarten. You can't officially begin Scouts until Tiger Cubs, in first grade; but my dad was anxious to get me into scouting as soon as possible, so I attended Tiger Cub meetings even before I could officially join.

As soon as I entered first grade, Dad signed me up for Cub Scouts with Pack 12.

Some of my most memorable childhood memories, particularly of campouts, are a result of my time in scouting. But, most importantly, scouting was about spending time with my father and brothers. Anyone who knew Dad knew about his passion for scouting.

Achieving the rank of Eagle

My father never got the rank of Eagle, but he knew of its importance in shaping young men into the leaders of tomorrow. He was determined his sons would achieve that rank.

The day I walked out of my Eagle Board of Review was one of the proudest moments of my dad's life. Although my father never got to see it, I'm proud to say that my three younger brothers also earned the rank of Eagle.

Lots of time in Pulaski Heights UMC

Scouting has a very significant religious component. As the Scout Oath notes, "On my honor, I will do my duty to God . . ."

Attending worship services and Troop 12 meetings at Pulaski Heights UMC reinforced the religious aspect of my life.

From racing cars in Pinewood Derbies to helping serve chili during Scout Sunday, to just attending regular troop meetings, a large amount of my life has been spent at Pulaski Heights. In addition, I was able to help with numerous service projects, through the church, Scouts, or both, that benefited the church and surrounding community.

When they're old enough, I plan on my children being involved in church and scouting in the same way I was.

Ups and downs of Troop 12

I have been in Troop 12 through good times and bad.

Troop 12 is the oldest continuously chartered Scout troop in Quapaw Area Council.

When I entered Troop 12, it suffered from a lack of adult leadership—while we engaged in fun activities like camping, there was very little in the way of programming.

When I was a Star Scout, I wanted to transfer to another troop in Little Rock to be with many of my friends.

Dad convinced me that he and other adults were working to change the culture of the troop, but change would not come quickly. He said they needed Scouts like me to stay in and help improve the troop.

I reluctantly stayed.

Today, thanks to a succession of scoutmasters that helped further the transition that my father and others started, our troop is one of the best in Quapaw Area Council.

No better training

I always knew that my involvement in scouting would be a lifelong affair. Lots of programs encourage youth development; but I know of no other organization that provides more comprehensive training.

Scouting teaches leadership, social, and survival skills along with how to be a good citizen in their community, nation, and the world. It exposes boys to a variety of hobbies, interests, and experiences, and it fosters positive character traits.

Scouting prepares young men for life.

Whether a young man makes it to Eagle or leaves Scouts prior to achieving that rank, he will still acquire skills and knowledge he will depend on for the rest of his life.

Four out of 100

For every 100 boys that enter Scouts, 12 will be from families that belong to no church; six will be brought into contact with a church and continue; three will become pastors; 45 will join

the military; 18 will become Scout leaders; and four will achieve the rank of Eagle, an honor and distinction that will open doors both in the short- and long terms.

Many of our nation's business, political, social, and religious leaders have participated in scouting, including many who achieved the rank of Eagle. If you look at any field, profession, or industry, you'll find Eagle Scouts at or near the top. Not being an Eagle, or even a Scout, does not mean that you'll be a failure, but being an Eagle equips you with the tools necessary to succeed in life, and gives you a leg up on success.

When I was going before my Eagle Board of Review, I was asked the question: "If you could add a 13th point to the Scout law, which quality would you add, and why?"

I don't remember which principle I chose, but if I were asked that question again, I would choose "resourceful."

Scouts honor oldest Eagle

ATLANTA, Ga.—

During their 2015 national meeting, Boy Scouts honored Lamar Wallace, a 103-year-old Eagle Scout and a member of Hopewell UMC in Tyrone, Ga.

Wallace was born Nov. 28, 1911, in Romulus, Okla., the first child of Ernest and Lucille Wallace. He had two sisters, Evelyn and Oleta. His family moved to Gotebo, Okla., in 1925 where Lamar achieved the rank of Eagle in 1927.

Following his 1937 graduation from the University of Oklahoma, Wallace worked in the circulation department of the Tulsa Tribune until he entered the U.S. Army in February, 1941. He commanded the 4416th Battalion in Europe from December 1944 until July 1945. After that, his company was sent to the Pacific. Wallace was passing through the Panama Canal on the way to the Philippines when Japan surrendered.

After his discharge from the Army in January, 1946, Wallace returned to Tulsa where he resumed his career with the Tulsa Tribune. He later became a real estate broker in Westport, Okla., until he retired in 1979.

He married Helen Ward of Tulsa, Okla., in June 1941, and the couple lived in Tulsa and

Scouting teaches you many things, but the most important thing (aside from good character) is how to be flexible, how to adapt, and how to figure things out. The Scout motto is "Be Prepared."

Scouting truly does teach boys to "be prepared" for life.



William Rockefeller serves as projects director for U.S. Senator John Boozman, where he handles water, waste water, and land issues affecting communities in western Arkansas. He also serves as an assistant scoutmaster of Troop 12, chartered to Pulaski

Heights UMC. This article is based on a speech he delivered at an Arkansas Conference Bishop's Dinner for Scouting

Westport until Helen's death in 1976.

On a 1977 trip to Israel, he met Mary Louise Decker,

a widow from Atlanta. The couple married in 1978; they moved to Valdosta and relocated to Tyrone in 1992. Mary passed away in 2010.

Asked about changes he has witnessed, Wallace said the greatest changes have been in medical care. Other changes deal with transportation. The auto industry was in its infancy when he was a youngster, and it would take hours on bumpy dirt roads to travel less than 100 miles.

When Wallace was born, William Howard Taft was president, and some of the men in his town were veterans of the Civil War. He has voted in 19 presidential elections, casting his first ballot for Franklin Roosevelt in 1932.

A sign on his desk states, "I've survived just about everything."



Participants in the national Scout meeting in Atlanta applaud Lamar Wallace.

Scouting Awards

Matthew Beyes

Scout provides prayer labyrinth

ST. LOUIS, Mo. —

For his Eagle Scout project, Matthew Beyes provided Mount Zion UMC with a 48-foot diameter prayer labyrinth. It took 22 people working for six hours to construct a gravel pathway and a spiritual labyrinth with brick edging.

Matthew served as the assistant patrol leader for a trek from the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico and was later named senior patrol leader, second vice chief for the District Order of the Arrow, and the camp master for a district camporee.



Matthew joins the Rev. Keith Janis, pastor of Zion UMC, and Tom Luecke, Scout adviser, at the pathway entrance to the Mount Zion UMC prayer labyrinth.

Marcella Ciccotelli

Church honors staff member

DEFIANCE, Ohio—

St. Paul's UMC presented Marcella Ciccotelli with a Cross and Flame Award for her service as director of youth and family ministries.

“These three closely related passions—God, God’s creation and God’s children—are



Marcella Ciccotelli

what I choose to build my life upon,” said the 1995 graduate of the University of Michigan.

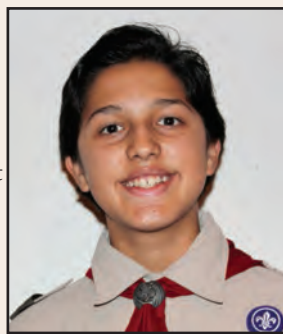
Leo Gomez

Lunches support closet for homeless

HOUSTON, Texas—

Spring Woods UMC presented a Good Samaritan Award to Leo Gomez for preparing and selling \$5 lunches in order to support Micah's Closet, a ministry to the homeless.

Under Leo's leadership, Scouts prepared and sold pre-ordered lunches to church members on four Brown-Bag Sundays. They raised more than \$400.



Leo Gomez and other Scouts prepare lunches.

Ian Burgess-Linden

Scout receives two awards from two churches

AVON BY THE SEA, N.J.—

Avon UMC presented a Good Samaritan Award to Ian Burgess-Linden for creating a prayer garden, his work at the church thrift shop, and his service as an acolyte, liturgist and usher. He also assisted



At an Avon UMC service, Lynn S. Capezza recaps Ian's commitment to service with the church and the community.

with the St. Patrick's Party for The Arc of Monmouth.

Ballard UMC in Asbury Park presented Ian with the Cross and Flame Award for his service as a den leader and assistant cubmaster of Pack 75 in Ballard.

He also works with Asbury Park children in the Vacation Bible School and other programs

sponsored by the Asbury Community Academy.

An Eagle Scout with Monmouth Council BSA Troop 76 in Wayside, N.J., Ian serves as assistant scoutmaster as he begins his study at Rowan University.

Theo Johnson UM Scout attends international meeting

WAUKESHA, Wisc.—

Theo Johnson, a Life Scout with Troop 175 and a member of First UMC in Waukesha, served as the sole ambassador of Boy Scouts of America to the August Nagasaki (Japan) Peace Forum.

The two-day conference gave participants an opportunity to meet young people in Nagasaki City and to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima at the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Park.

In 2013, Theo raised \$820 for Nothing but Nets and he received the Good Samaritan Award.



Theo presents a check for Nothing but Nets to Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball following a 2013 UM Communion service at the National BSA Jamboree in West Virginia.

Greg Carr

SAN MARCOS, Texas —

Eloy Valdes, a scouting ministry specialist, presented Greg Carr with a Torch Award during a July meeting of the Order of the Arrow Lone Star Fellowship at Texas State University.

As chief of the Otyokwa Chapter, Carr attended the National Order of the Arrow Conferences in 1967, 1969, and 1971, where



Greg Carr proudly shows his Torch Award.

he earned national championships in fancy dance competitions.

The Eagle Scout was named charter organization representative at Holy Trinity UMC in 2003 and began leading religious-emblem and advancement training with a Cub Scout pack and the Boy Scout troop. In 2005, he joined the Raven District Committee, and he now serves as a committee member of a pack, troop and Sea Scout ship. He is also associate adviser and lodgemaster for the Raven Chapter of Colonneh Lodge of the Order of the Arrow.

Steve Purdy

Fifty-eight years in scouting

BERRYVILLE, Va.—

Crumbs UMC honored Steve Purdy for a lifetime of service to the church and scouting in three denominations.

He began his scouting career as a youth in First Christian Church in Independence, Mo., where he earned a God and Country

Award and achieved the rank of Eagle in 1963. Following his marriage and college graduation, he became a member of the Lutheran Church where he served for eight years as Troop 289 representative in Aurora, Colo.

Upon his transfer to Washington, DC, he joined Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Herndon, Va., and served as scoutmaster of Troop 966 in Sterling, Va., for 12 years. He also served as unit commissioner for the National Capitol Area Council for three years; and cubmaster of Pack 63 in Winchester, Va., for four years.

Upon his 2007 retirement, he moved to Kearneysville, W.Va., and joined Crums UMC. He continues to serve as a unit commissioner, counselor for PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities for Youth), and chaplain of Troop 3.

He is a recipient of the Wood Badge and Silver Beaver Award, and in 2014, he received the Statuette Award from the Shenandoah Area Council.

DEFINITIONS

Once all villagers decided to pray for rain, on the day of prayer all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella.

That's **FAITH**

When you throw a baby in the air, she laughs because she knows you will catch her.

That's **TRUST**

Every night we go to bed, without any assurance of being alive the next morning but still we set the alarms to wake up.

That's **HOPE**

We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future.

That's **CONFIDENCE**

We see the world suffering, but still we get married and have children.

That's **LOVE**

On an old man's shirt was written a sentence 'I am not 81 years old. I am sweet 16 with 65 years of experience'

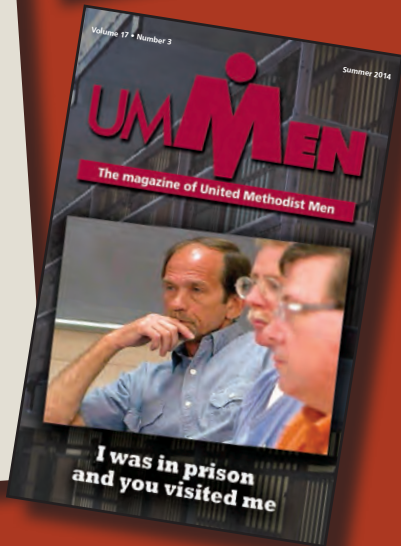
That's **ATTITUDE**

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