

# UM MEN

The magazine of  
**UNITED METHODIST MEN**

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**UNITED  
METHODIST  
MEN IN  
MISSION**



**GIL HANKE**  
General Secretary/  
Chief Executive Officer

For many individuals, mission is an essential part of their walk with Christ.

I learned about missions as a child, listening to Methodist missionaries who visited our church with slides of their work halfway around the world. I have also learned of missions from the work performed in inner cities that dealt with hunger, health, education and hopelessness.

Missions can be the repair of homes, and lives after fires, tornados, floods and hurricanes. Sometimes we get to do the mission work, and at other times we get to help finance the mission work completed by others.

I have sat in an African clinic and listened to a physician explain, “Some of those ‘Nothing but Nets’ you bought, are shipped to me here in Mozambique. I grew up here, I am familiar with all the villages around us for miles. Each week we identify those patients who come to us due to mosquito-borne diseases, and when we find a community with several new patients we get to work. We go to that village with the nets you gifted us and teach everyone how to use them, and the next months no new patients come to us from that area with that diagnosis.”

I was glad I had bought some nets; but at that moment, I wished I had bought many more.

This issue brings a sampling of mission organizations that this denomination supports in a variety of ways. All these can be hands on; they can also receive funds or both. All the projects that are listed this issue are endorsed or in the process of being endorsed by the commission. We created this endorsement process so that we can recommend a variety of organizations to local churches without reservation. That process was delayed last fall, due to the pandemic, but will be completed in 2021.

I can recommend each of these mission opportunities to you and to the members of your church.

In addition to these, your annual conference has mission projects that you can learn about; most will be listed on the conference website. It can be collecting school supplies, support for feeding and housing the homeless in your community, and disaster relief. Some require training and certification; others only require willing hands and hearts. Some are in a neighboring county; others in another country.

The mission work I have done has been transformational for me and for the teams. Some trips have used my professional skills as a speech/language pathologist; others have used skills from other experiences, and others taught me skills on site. Sometimes I have been a leader, other times I have enjoyed being a follower.

All these experiences have several things in common. In every case we were able to make a difference. In every case that I can remember, we unknowingly had the right people, with the right skills and could find the materials to do what needed to be done. In every case, God shows up.

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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 United Methodist Men. Articles without bylines are written by commission staff.

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## contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Letter from the General Secretary                                       | 2  |
| Letter from the Editor  | 4  |
| UM Men engage in prayer   | 6  |
| UM Men protect families   | 10 |
| United Methodist Men enrich spiritual lives                             | 12 |
| Using religious emblems to fulfill the Great Commission                 | 14 |
| The Class Meeting: The chance to be a movement again                    | 16 |
| UM Men provide devotional books to military troops and first responders | 18 |
| Men called to missions  | 22 |
| UM Men provide transportation for those who can't walk                  | 24 |
| Willing hands and loving hearts   | 26 |
| UM Men provide food for hungry families                                 | 28 |
| UM Men reach out to youth and their families                            | 30 |
| 2020 by the numbers   | 32 |
| UM Men provide clean water  | 34 |
| James Lawson inducted into Society of John Wesley                       | 36 |
| Night will end and morning will come                                    | 38 |
| In Memoriam   | 40 |
| Dad's Zone  | 42 |
| Across the Nation   | 44 |





**REV. RICH PECK**  
Editor

This is the 60<sup>th</sup> issue of *UM Men* magazine I have edited.

It was the easiest.

For the other 59 issues, I've knocked on the doors of strangers asking if they would be willing to write articles for publication (no author has ever been paid).

Frequently, I addressed unfamiliar topics.

I had to learn as I edited.

Occasionally an unknown author would send a manuscript my way and that missile would become the source of inspiration to invite other authors to address a similar topic.

Of course, there were times when national gatherings or other significant events provided the cover story. Speeches, elections, and activities became copy for those issues.

This issue was a no-brainer.

All I had to do is knock on the doors of long-standing friends to write on topics I knew well.

While this issue cannot include descriptions of the activities of every affiliate organization, it does focus on those we know well.

If you are a long-time member of a UM Men organization, I suspect you also know almost all the authors and you are well acquainted with the ministries they describe.

Since this magazine is now digital and is available to anyone who chances to click on it, perhaps we should consider this issue as an introduction to the ministries of UM Men to those who are not familiar with our life-changing ministries.

However, I hope those of you who are well acquainted with the authors and their ministries will enjoy the opportunity to engage with these friends.

Yes, the pandemic has changed some of the ways in which these ministries are conducted, but each of them continues to find ways to transform lives.

Read on.

# DEEPLY ROOTED PEOPLE OF GOD



## UM Men engage in prayer

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”*

– Luke 11:1 (NIV)

UM Men believe prayer is the strongest defense against racial violence, civil unrest, and individual suffering. They turn to God when other efforts seem futile and unproductive.

They have become the prayer warriors of the denomination.

### Support for Upper Room Prayer Center

With prayer advocates in every annual conference, the men have supported the Upper Room Living Prayer Center for decades.

In the early years, UM Men provided funds for the phone lines and frequently answered urgent prayers on remote prayer lines.

When the prayer line stopped receiving phone requests, UM Men organizations now pray for people who post prayer requests on the [Upper Room Prayer Wall](#).

### Praying together during the pandemic

During the pandemic, UM Men found ways to pray together when they couldn’t be together.

Each of the five U.S. jurisdictions sponsored 3-hour prayer sessions where bishops, clergy and laymen offered Scripture readings, meditations and prayers.

In the fifth UM National Day of Prayer, sponsored by UM Men of the South Central Jurisdiction, Louisiana Area Bishop Cynthia Harvey noted the presence of multi-faceted pandemics, saying, “Nothing in front of us looks like anything in our rearview mirror.”

While many look forward to a return to “normal,” the bishop, who serves as president of the Council of Bishop, said she does not want to return to a place with consistent racism and divisions in the church and society.

She told participants in an August Zoom call, “I pray we don’t go back to normal.”

She suggests the virus and social distancing “have given us time to refocus.”

“The world is pretty dark right now,” said the bishop. “We can bring the light [and] prepare the way for a better tomorrow.”

### Prayers to eliminate racism

The Rev. John Russell, a pastor at University UMC in Indianapolis, told one of the on-line meetings that 74 percent of young men of color experience trauma.

He told how he is routinely treated as an African-American.

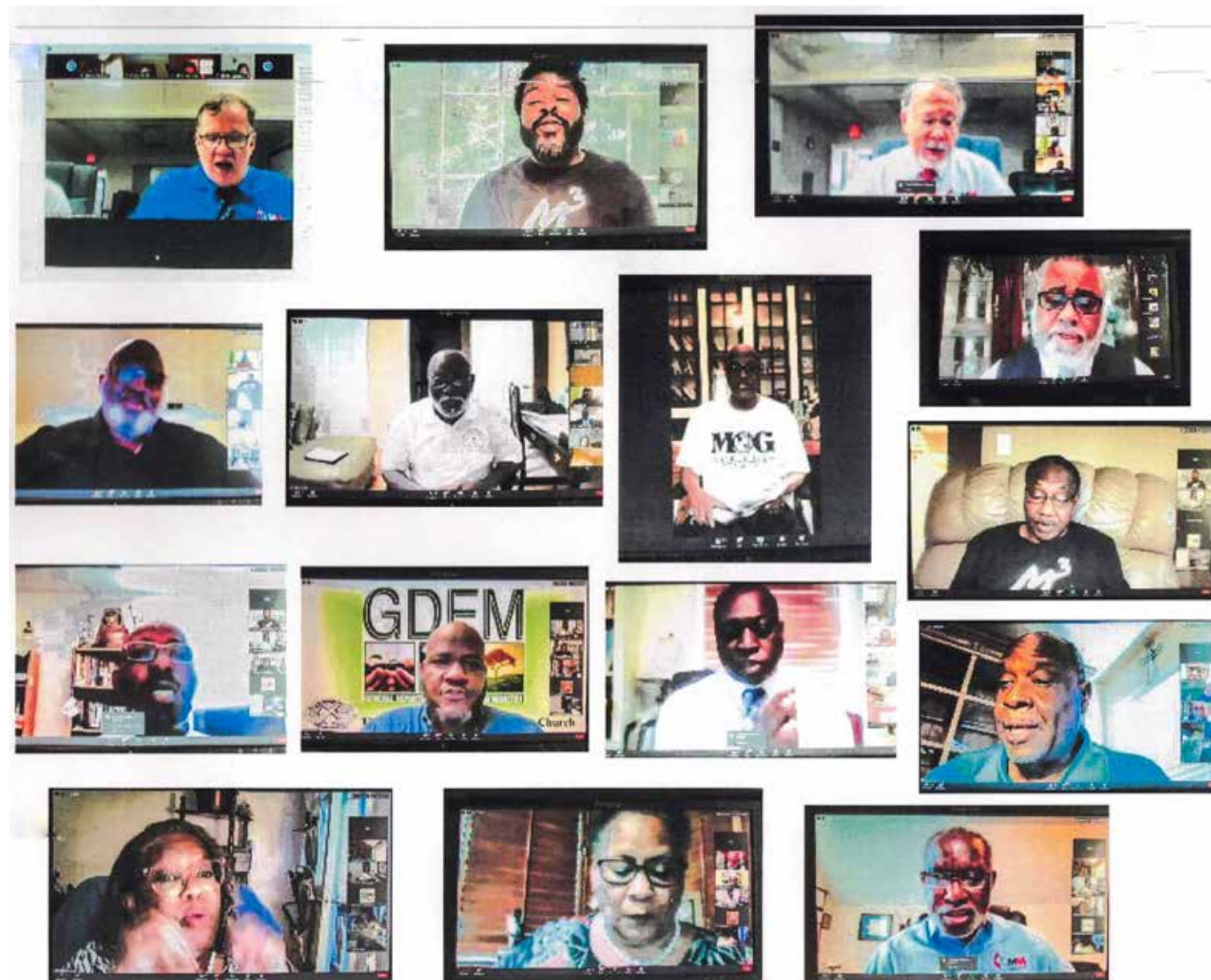
“It is a weight we carry through life without knowing it,” he said. “I know I must be better than my counterpart in order to receive the same recognition.”

The pastor told how he was frequently pulled over by police when he drove a Buick Riviera, but he was not stopped when he drove a pick-up truck.

“It should not be the responsibility of the victim of racism to resolve it.”

### Curtain ripped away

The past few months have ripped away a curtain revealing a deeply shameful, unacceptable reality that



FIFTEEN MEN FROM FOUR DENOMINATIONS OFFER PRAYERS DURING A ZOOM PRAYER MEETING WITH 300 PARTICIPANTS.

racism is a rampant reality,” said Wisconsin Area Bishop Hee Soo Jung. “Our whole country has been awakened to a painful reality.”

The bishop said Jesus “made it crystal clear that the best way to honor and serve him is to welcome the stranger, comfort the afflicted, feed the hungry and visit the prisoner.”

He lamented the fact that Christian have a long history of using passages of Scripture to justify racist behavior, but Jesus taught us to love our neighbor and through a parable he made it clear that “those who are hated and despised are our neighbors.”

“Every human being on earth bears the image of God,” said the bishop. When one part of the body is harmed we are all harmed. When George Floyd “can’t breathe,” we all can’t breathe.

### Pan-Methodists prayer group

During time of racial strife across the U.S., UM Men joined with leaders of men’s ministry organizations in the African American Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church for a [3-hour prayer session](#).



“Why should leaders of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, and the United Methodist Church gather for prayer when everyone is marching on the street?”

That’s the question Bishop James Swanson, president of the General Commission on UM Men, asked some 300 participants in a September on-line day of prayer and meditation at which 15 people offered meditations and prayers.

The bishop noted the disciples understood the importance of prayer because they only asked Jesus to teach them how to do one thing. “Teach us how to pray” is the only request of Jesus reported in the Gospels.

The bishop said prayer acknowledges we can’t change things on our own and it recognizes our inability to match our deeds with our words as we pray to become one.

Many of the same group participated in an international one-hour on-line Watch Night Service which was posted for viewing on New Year’s Eve.

In response to calls for racial justice, UM Men published a book of prayers available [here](#).

## A prayer by Rick Vance

Good and gracious God, who loves and delights in all people. We stand in awe before You, knowing that each life was wondrously made by You.

While at the same time, as I watch the news each night, I find myself asking: When did we forget that You called us to love each other as You loved us? When did we forget that You called us to act with justice, mercy and compassion?

Forgive me, when I just stand by and say nothing. Forgive us when we remain silent in the face of injustice. Ezekiel 36:26 reminds us: "I will give You a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within You. I will remove the heart of stone from Your flesh and give You a heart of flesh." May that be so in my life and in the life of all my brothers and sisters. May we realize that differences among cultures and races is a manifestation of Your beauty. May our hearts and minds be open to celebrate the similarities and differences among our sisters and brothers.

We place our hopes for racial harmony in our committed action and in Your Presence in our community and world. May all people live in peace! Amen.

*This prayer is an excerpt from the United Methodist Men Pray for Peace with Justice*



The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) comes alongside those who suffer from natural or human-caused disasters – be it famine, hurricane, war, flood, fire or other events – to alleviate suffering and to be a source of help and hope.

Your generosity ensures that vulnerable communities around the world will receive support when they need it most.



## Support Men's & Scouting Ministries

[CLICK HERE](#)



GIVE TO UMCOR TODAY AT:  
[umcmmission.org/umcor](http://umcmmission.org/umcor)

## UM Men protect families

By Rick Vance

A [report](#) from the National Institute of Health says, “Reports of domestic abuse and family violence have increased around the world since social isolation and quarantine measures came into force.”

We are experiencing a pandemic of domestic violence within a COVID-19 pandemic.

China experienced a three-fold increase in February 2020 compared to 2019. France reported more than a 30 percent increase following the beginning of self-isolation, and the U.S. reported increases ranging between 21 to 35 percent since the beginning of COVID-19.

A 2017 [World Health Organization article](#) reports 35 percent of women in the world experienced physical or sexual abuse. The organization suggests ways to reduce that percentage:

End discrimination against women in marriage, divorce and custody laws.

End discrimination in inheritance laws and ownership of assets.

Improve women’s access to paid employment.

Develop national plans and policies to address violence against women.

Address violence as a public health problem.

While the following suggestions are directed to health-care professionals, I believe that the church should follow the same guidelines:

Provide comprehensive services, sensitize and train health-care providers in responding to the needs of survivors holistically and empathetically.

Prevent recurrence of violence through early identification of women and children who are experiencing violence and providing appropriate referral and support.

providing appropriate referral and support.

Promote egalitarian gender norms as part of life skills and comprehensive sexuality education curricula taught to young people.

### Commission action

In 2016, the General Commission on UM Men cooperated with the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee to develop an 8-week study designed to eliminate violence against women and girls by engaging and educating men.

The study is based on the understanding that good men must play a critical role in creating a community where all women and girls are valued and safe.

It is only with the support and involvement of men and boys that the cycle of gender-based violence will be stopped.



The Rev. Dr. Rick Vance is director of the Center for Men’s Ministries at the General Commission on UM Men.

More than 800 men have participated in the [Amending through Faith](#) program.

One participant said the study “helped me realize the way I was talking to my wife was hurting her and destroying our marriage.”

The commission also facilitated the Amending through Faith study with groups of college and university men. At the end of the 9-week study one young man said he now understands that his locker-room helped contribute to an un-safe environment for women at his college.

If you are asking “Should I participate in this study?” My answer is simple: “If you consider yourself a Christian male, it’s for you!” “If you are a man passionate about ending violence against women, it’s for you.”

This study is for men who seek specific ways to make the world a better place. It’s for men who want to strengthen their relationships with others. It is for men who want to build a healthy community of Godly people.

In short, yes, you should engage in this study.

UM Men who have completed this study are now offering the study to other men in their churches. By doing this they are increasing the awareness of routine aspects within their communities that lead to domestic violence.

The outcomes of this study are as follows:

During this 8-week group series, participants will:

- ▶ Learn why violence against women is a problem, and explore how our culture supports violent behavior.
- ▶ Explore how both men and women are harmed by a culture that supports violence against women.
- ▶ Learn what Scripture tells us about what it means to be a man.
- ▶ Develop skills to recognize and challenge the behaviors that lead to violence.



After this series, participants will leave with:

- ▶ A supportive and energized community of engaged men.
- ▶ Skills that enable them to confront behaviors that lead to violence.
- ▶ Skills for coping with stress and improving their communication.
- ▶ The strength and motivation to be positive agents of change in their communities.
- ▶ UM Men are change makers. Through Amending through Faith, they are leading other men to change their churches and community to become safer places for women and girls.



*If you want to make a positive change in your church and community, and if you want to stop domestic violence, please contact the commission for information (615-620-7277).*



# United Methodist Men enrich spiritual lives

By Jason Noland

**Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.)** is best known for the P.R.A.Y. religious awards program.

P.R.A.Y.'s mission statement is to "foster the Christian growth of children, youth, and families through churches and youth serving agencies." Everything that the P.R.A.Y. national board does is centered on the two parts of this mission statement: collaborations between churches and agencies, like the United Methodist Men, and the P.R.A.Y. program.

The P.R.A.Y. program is a Christian resource that uses Bible lessons to educate and promote discipleship and servanthood. The age-appropriate curriculum and programming help young people to develop a deeper relationship God by helping them see ways in which God is active in their lives and the world around them. P.R.A.Y. encourages families, youth agencies like The Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts USA, and Campfire, and UM Churches to use the P.R.A.Y. series to foster spiritual growth in children, youth and families.



## Six programs

The P.R.A.Y. program is available to young people from kindergarten through the 12th grade. Each study is written and presented for the target age group.

- **Jesus and Me (kindergarten to first grade)**
- **God and Me (grades 1 – 3)**
- **God and Family (grades 4 – 6)**
- **God and Church (grades 6 – 8)**
- **God and Life (grades 9 – 12)**

In addition, **Bible Basics RP3** is a free Bible-based curriculum designed to help families and groups "Read the Bible; Picture the passage; Ponder its meaning; and Put it into action."

An integral component of any religious emblem includes opportunities for UM Men to serve as counselors or lead classes and for young people to meet and speak with ordained or lay ministers as part of the final review process.

## Youth are recognized for their work

Most emblems take several weeks to complete and are recognized nationally by the youth agency partners through medals, patches and pins as the official uniform recognition for young United Methodists who connect their faith to a Scouting experience. In 2020, 2,428 P.R.A.Y. emblems were earned by young people in 583 UM Congregations.

P.R.A.Y. also provides opportunities for churches to recognize adult leaders through the "God and Service" and "Building Faith in Youth" awards.



Jason Noland is chief executive officer of P.R.A.Y.



P.R.A.Y. is a small organization and we multiply our work and ministry through, thousands of volunteers who serve as curriculum writers, counselors, and instructors. This past year presented many challenges in delivering ministry to young people. Like many organizations we found ways to overcome with the help of UM members and clergy across the country who helped us develop virtual programs to support classes, gave us platforms to train others about virtual learning, and opportunities to collaborate in delivering virtual programs.

P.R.A.Y. collaborates with the Center for Scouting Ministry at the General Commission on UM Men to provide these spiritual-enrichment opportunities for children and youth. This side-by-side cooperation enables young people to be trained both inside and outside of the church. By working together, we reach objectives not attainable by working alone. As part of its mission, P.R.A.Y. encourages collaborations between churches and youth agencies to benefit young people. It is this collaboration between P.R.A.Y. and the Center for Scouting Ministry at the General Commission on UM Men, where both organizations have unique resources in carrying out their work with children and youth.

TWO OLD FRIENDS MET ONE DAY AFTER MANY YEARS. ONE ATTENDED COLLEGE, AND NOW WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL. THE OTHER HAD NOT ATTENDED COLLEGE AND NEVER HAD MUCH AMBITION.

THE SUCCESSFUL ONE SAID, "HOW HAS EVERYTHING BEEN GOING WITH YOU?"

"WELL, ONE DAY I OPENED THE BIBLE AT RANDOM, AND DROPPED MY FINGER ON A WORD AND IT WAS OIL. SO, I INVESTED IN OIL, AND BOY, DID THE OIL WELLS GUSH. THEN ANOTHER DAY I DROPPED MY FINGER ON ANOTHER WORD AND IT WAS GOLD. SO, I INVESTED IN GOLD AND THOSE MINES REALLY PRODUCED. NOW, I'M AS RICH AS ROCKEFELLER."

THE SUCCESSFUL FRIEND WAS SO IMPRESSED THAT HE RUSHED TO HIS HOTEL, GRABBED A GIDEON BIBLE, FLIPPED IT OPEN, AND DROPPED HIS FINGER ON A PAGE.

HE OPENED HIS EYES AND HIS FINGER RESTED ON THE WORDS, "CHAPTER ELEVEN."





# Using religious emblems to fulfill the Great Commission

By Shan Sixbey

Is your church searching for ways to engage youth and increase church attendance? Is your congregation bemoaning the lack of young families as your church ages? I know my church is graying and coping with declining church attendance. Moreover, the books floating around my house are about reaching millennials, reaching the unchurched, and the church in quarantine and post-quarantine. Why is “build it and they will come” no longer sufficient? Because we are not called to be passive. We are called to be in relationship with those whom we wish to reach and disciple.

So how do we reach our neighbor? How do we connect with those who are different than us? A potential path to discipleship and developing relationships is in our hands. The P.R.A.Y. program is “a Bible-based religious emblems program for Protestant and Independent Christian churches designed to bring children, youth, and families to Christ.” Oh, that. But wait – it truly can be what it says, a program designed to bring children, youth, and families to Christ. What is missing? Us – as disciples, apostles, teachers, and followers – doing what we were called to do:

**“And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”**

– MATTHEW 6:15

In 2010, my family moved to First UMC in Fox Hill, Va. My children had started in the P.R.A.Y. program in our previous church, completing “God and Me,” the first level, at that time, of the Religious Emblems program. What a delight it was to discover girls were welcome in the program and not just boys. The program has been traditionally offered through Cub Scout packs or Boy Scout troops, so I had not witnessed a program open to girls. To keep my children advancing in the program I implemented a P.R.A.Y. Religious Emblems programs at our new church. Thus, our narrative was flipped: the church offered the program, rather than the Scouting unit.

The first time we offered the program it required recruiting solid Christian teachers from the church. While it is a lot of work to recruit two teachers for each grade level, coordinate start and end dates, and manage an award ceremony, once the details are worked out, it is a matter of maintaining what has been created. Furthermore, we only offer the program every other year to not wear out our volunteers. Over time we brought the award ceremony into a Sunday morning service with an award cake reception afterward. Our most recent epiphany was turning the award celebration into a potluck for the youth and their families along with church members. We had finally moved past delivering content and building a few key relationships with the youth, to encouraging our church members to see the number of wonderful youth who use our building weekly and make tentative steps towards reaching out and connecting with these youth and their families.



Shan Sixbey and her husband Pastor Brian Sixbey from First UMC in Fox Hill, Va., received the God and Service Award, Cross and Flame Award, the Building Faith in Youth Award, and the Torch Award.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed our momentum. We heard requests for an online Religious Emblems program, but our teachers were not ready for the challenge in the Spring. Then information from P.R.A.Y. and our Virginia Scouting Conference Ministry Coordinator sparked renewed enthusiasm. Within a week I recruited the teachers, and they are ready, willing, and raring to go with teaching the program online. The new P.R.A.Y. resources promise to make the task easier. And the teachers of the younger grades are excited about the necessary level of parent involvement for them to successfully teach elementary-aged children online.



SHAN SIXBEY INTRODUCES MEMBERS OF FOX HILL UMC TO HER P.R.A.Y. CLASS GRADUATES.

Hmmm, maybe we are not looking at an unfortunate obstacle, but rather a God-given opportunity to fulfill our Great Commission.

If our experience has inspired you to consider sponsoring a Religious emblem awards program in your congregation through P.R.A.Y, enlisting your own adult leaders and whatever youth you have in the church, community, and scouting organizations, the P.R.A.Y. organization, denominational scouting associations, and we the Sixbeys stand ready to assist you in planning, implementing, and celebrating a viable disciple-making extension in your community.



# The Class Meeting: The chance to be a movement again

By Gil Hanke

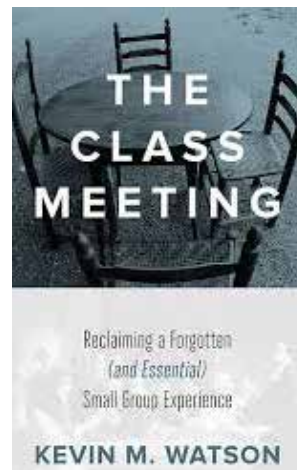
I heard about the Wesley's Class Meeting before I began my present position as general secretary of the General Commission on UM Men.

What I knew back then was neither accurate nor helpful.

That changed when I heard a presentation to the Council of Bishops by Dr. Kevin Watson, a professor at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. Watson told the bishops about his book [The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten \(and Essential\) Small Group Experience](#). The book is designed to help church members start their own Class Meetings. Participants review chapters in the book and then they continue to meet based on the principles first established by John Wesley.

There is a time and place for curriculum-based study groups. But, those groups have different outcome than groups who focus solely on growing as disciples of Jesus.

The Class Meeting does not make you smarter or teach you how to interpret the Bible. It does deal with your relationship with Christ during the previous seven days, and how you will improve that relationship in the next seven days.



The Class Meeting has a different purpose than a curriculum study. To use an analogy, a screwdriver and a hammer are both tools, but each has a different purpose. Curriculum studies and Class Meetings are both small-group experiences, but they are designed differently and have a different outcome. The outcome of the Class Meeting is to become an on-growing disciple of Jesus. It is not educational; it is transformational.

## A test group

After hearing Watson's lecture, I read the book and began to consider how we could use this as a tool in men's ministry.

I wanted to test the effectiveness of the Class Meeting with men from different backgrounds.

I invited three laymen and three clergymen. I selected an elder who worked for another agency, a full-time local pastor, and an elder serving in a cross-cultural appointment. They had never met. Two of the laymen had met, but did not really know each other, and the third did know anyone in the group except me. Some had some experience with men's ministry and two had experience with scouting, one was divorced, one was a person of color, three of the six lived in Tennessee, one lived near Chicago, another near Pittsburgh, and another lived in rural Arkansas. A majority had heard of the term, Class Meeting but none had read Watson's book. I figured if this group could get through the 8-week study with a positive outcome, it would work for anyone. Obviously, we met on a video-conferencing platform.



Gil Hanke is the top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men.

We decided to meet each week at 7 a.m. (C.T.) on Thursdays. I served as the leader of the first 8-session study of Watson's book. I then became a member for all subsequent meetings. We have been meeting weekly for six years. Only one of the members has left the group, due to a job change which made his attendance impossible. During our time together, there have been job changes, address changes, significant health concerns for members and family, times of great pain, and times of great joy. We have never met face-to-face.

It is one of the most important hours of my week.

## Additional groups

The success of this group caused me to broaden the reach of this book. We have conducted several training sessions and in nearly every case, the groups that have been started have continued to be a blessing. Using the eight sessions in the book, gets everyone, literally, on the same page, and serves as a great starting point.

Dr. Watson has produced 10-minute video introductions for each of the sessions, which are very helpful for those who don't see themselves as teachers or trainers.

Once the 8-week, 8-session, book study is completed, all the groups continue to meet and ask each other the questions Wesley asked, "How does your soul prosper?" and "How is your life in Christ?"

I have come up with about 30 additional ways to get to the core of these questions. The other key component of these questions is that they are not historical in nature. We don't care what happened two years ago, or 20 years ago; our collective concern is where I have been a disciple in the last seven days, and what will I do in the next seven days, in my actions, that will grow my relationship with Christ?



GIL HANKE PARTICIPATES IN AN ON-LINE CLASS MEETING. PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BERRY OF UM COMMUNICATIONS.

During the middle of the pandemic, we started four groups composed of leaders of UM Men at the conference or jurisdiction level.

The "ticket" to be part of one of these groups was the promise they would start another group within their context. Because these were all on Zoom, many did not know each other well, and they were from different parts of the U.S. They signed up because the time of day worked for them, and they had no idea who would be in the group, until the first meeting. We had three groups going at the same time, and an additional group started shortly after this first round was completed.

If we Methodists want to be a movement again, this replication is essential. Just do the math: We had nearly 40 folks in these four groups. If each one started a group of ten and each of those ten started new groups, we could get to thousands of active participants in just a few months. And each group would be composed of disciples with on-growing relationships with Christ.

In most churches, multiple class meetings are a realistic potential.

These groups are transformational.



It does not take long before each member reports, "This is the most important hour I have each week."

That was true in Wesley's time as well. Let's be a movement again!



# UM Men provide devotional books to military troops and first responders

By Larry W. Coppock

During 2021-2022 Strength for Service will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We will honor its birth in the UMC through the General Commission on UM Men and its transformation into a non-profit publisher.

We are excited to share the story of our humble beginnings, from an Eagle Scout service project to devotional book publisher.

## 1997-2002

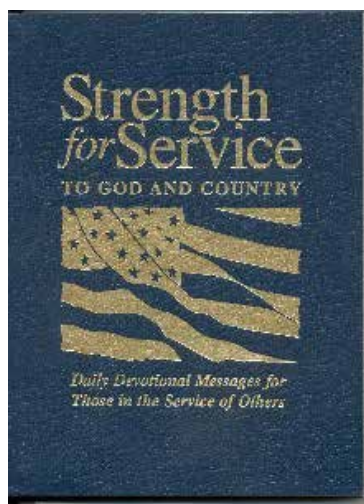
Upon being hired by the commission as the director of scouting ministries in 1997 little did I know that I would soon participate in one of the most fascinating and God-inspired journeys of a lifetime: Strength for Service.

In 1999, I received a phone call from Evan Hunsberger, a 14 year-old California Boy Scout, and his father, Don. They wanted to arrange a meeting with me while I was in Pasadena to discuss his Eagle Scout project. It was set for June 1999, University of the Redlands, site of the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

In the meeting, Evan outlined a plan to republish a



Larry W. Coppock is executive director of Strength for Service.



WW II era devotional book, *Strength for Service to God and Country*. His recently deceased grandfather, Eugene, had carried the book with him on island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific. Serving as a navy corpsman, he used the book to comfort sick and dying men.

*Strength for Service to God and Country* has 365 devotions and was published by the Methodist Publishing House in 1942 after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese naval forces.

Norman Nygaard, a WWI veteran and chaplain for Lockheed, recruited 365 authors from several denominations and served as editor. The book followed a simple format: a Bible verse, an inspirational story, and a prayer. Writers include noted theologians like Henry Sloane Coffin and E. Stanley Jones and many lay people. More than 1,000,000 copies were distributed in WW II and the Korean Conflict before going out of print.

Evan wanted to republish the book and raise funds to print and send copies to marines at Camp Pendleton. He revised the new edition to include entries from contemporary authors, update the language and ensure the book was relevant to a diverse military. To accomplish this feat he asked the commission to be his project sponsor.

The UM Publishing House showed no interest in republishing the book. So, Providence Press, a vanity publisher in Franklin, Tenn., was selected to complete the work. They printed the first 250,000 copies from 2002 to 2006, until the publishing house finally reversed course.



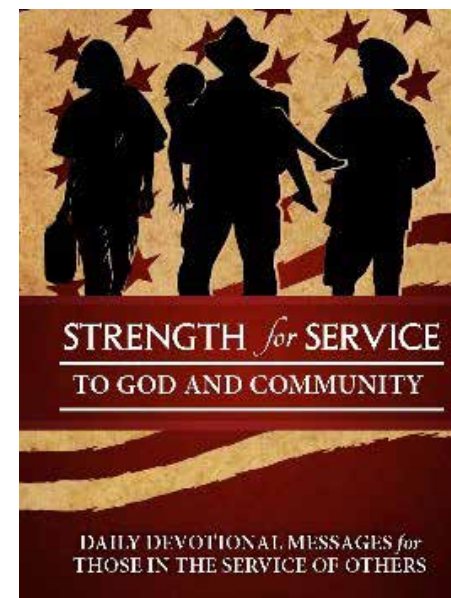
From 1999-2002 our leadership staff, Larry Malone, Dr. Joe Harris, Rich Peck, and myself, served as contributing editors in complementing Evan's work to gain additional entries for the revised publication. However, the effort languished until Sept. 11, 2001. The terrorists attack on the U.S. served as the facilitating event to move forward.

The commission staff concluded that *God and Country* be completed and shipped to troops as soon as possible.

The new book includes devotions by Rev. Robert Schuller, the Crystal Cathedral; Rudy Ruettiger of the movie *Rudy*; the first female student body president of Notre Dame, a few UM bishops and pastors from various denominations reflecting the books' ecumenical focus.

The first 10,000 copies were shipped to the Pentagon for delivery to soldiers in Afghanistan in 2002. From 2002-2012 the SFS team shipped more than 400,000 *God and Country* devotionals to deployed troops. Military chaplains frequently related that *Strength for Service to God and Country* was their most requested devotional book.

Today more than 580,000 copies of *SFS to God and Country* are in print.



## 2012-2021

Two important developments occurred as the wars waned and our troops came back home.

First, plans were made to form a nonprofit entity in which SFS could operate more efficiently. SFS was chartered in Tennessee in 2012 and

subsequently became a 501(c)(3). A 12-member board of directors began operations in 2014 and an advisory committee was created for additional support. An office was set-up in the commission building on Music Row.

Similarly, first responders were asking for a book of daily devotions aimed at their spiritual needs. *Strength for Service to God and Community*, a companion book, was initiated and completed in 2013. Since 2013, more than 80,000 copies have been printed and distributed to law enforcement officers, sheriff's deputies, firefighters, EMT's and related public service personnel.

*SFS God and Community* books have been given out free in response to tragedies including the death of Hot Shot firefighters in Prescott, Ariz., the Sandy Hook School shooting in Connecticut, the school shooting in Parkland, Fla., hurricanes in South Carolina, Florida and Texas, and night club shootings in Florida, Ohio and California.

Today, SFS books are available in several editions and may be printed with sponsored logos on the back cover for community distribution.

The board of directors is led by L.W. Smith, Columbia, S.C., and myself, executive director. We work with board members who craft policies, programs and partnerships that



encourage book distribution: free books for tragic events, sale books for UM men's group and local church distribution and related sales through Amazon, Cokesbury, the Boy Scout Supply Division, and various retail outlets that market to first responders and military personnel.

SFS enjoys strong partnerships with the Federation of Fire Chaplains, the International Conference of Police Chaplains, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, Carry The Load and many more.

Of course, SFS enjoys the highest level of partnership with the UM Men. One dollar from each book sale goes to the commission. We also contract for staff support.

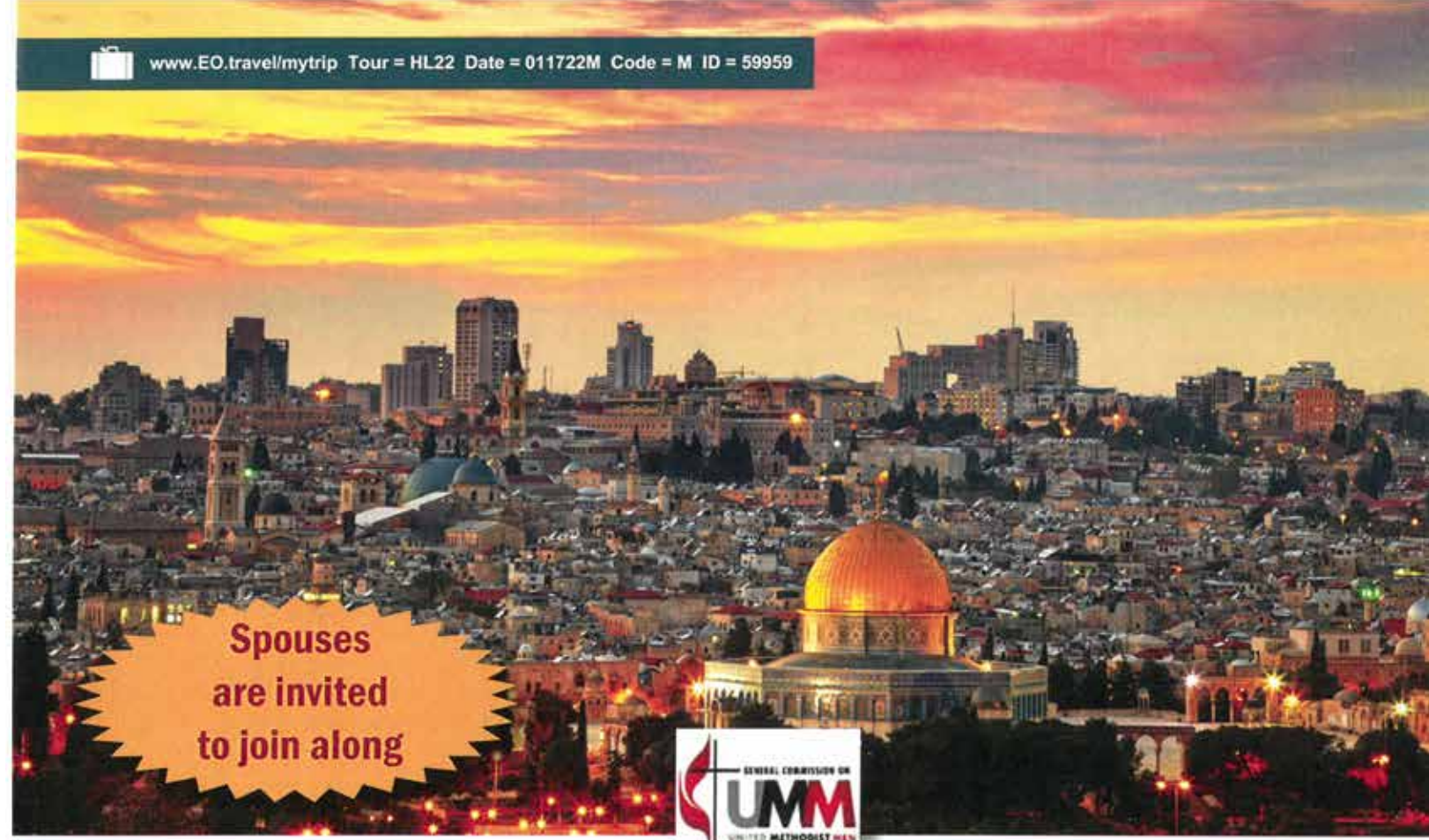
SFS is recognizing its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of September 11 in 2021

with a *Spring Initiative* that includes discounted pricing for church and men's groups to recognize your local community servants and/or military personnel. For example, Armed Services Day (May 15), Police Week (May 9-15), International Firefighters' Day (May 4) and related events (July 4, Sept. 11).

Our *Because of You* marketing campaign begins in April. Please stay tuned for testimonials and inspiring videos on YouTube.

To make a donation to SFS please visit our website, [www.strengthforservice.org](http://www.strengthforservice.org). To purchase books please contact Larry Coppock, [strength4service@gmail.com](mailto:strength4service@gmail.com).

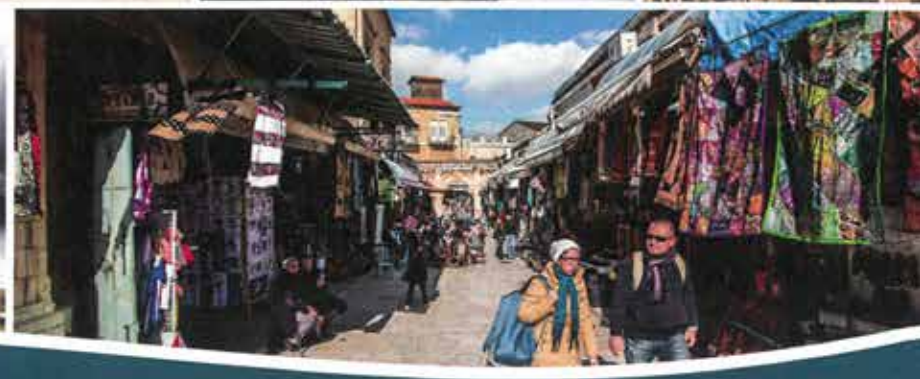
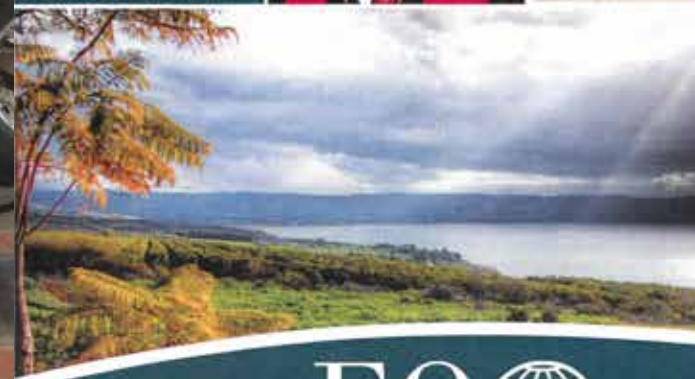
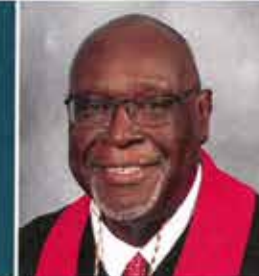
For additional information please visit us on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and GuideStar.



# Join The Centers for Men's & Scouting Ministries at GCUMM UMC Men's Holy Land Tour

January 17-26, 2022

Guest Speaker  
**Bishop James Swanson**





## Men called to missions

By Gil Hanke

Many of you support the commission by being EMS donors (a gift \$45 per year, thank you very much!). The “M” stands missions.

We are called to be in missions and that work takes hundreds of forms.

Some men and women participate in missions that reach beyond their annual conferences and connect folks around the world.

Some mission teams require people with specific skills, but there is always room for helpers and learners.

Many folks put mission teams together following extraordinary events such as fires, storms or earthquakes.

For example, I participated in a team of family and friends who responded to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Other mission projects opportunities have more of a regional pull, like helping and supporting the Lydia Patterson School in El Paso, which is linked to the South Central Jurisdiction.

Many projects in the Western Jurisdiction serve indigenous populations.

I have a colleague in Germany who participates in mission projects in African nations.



*Gil Hanke is the top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men.*

To see the range of U.S. and international disaster-recovery and mission projects, go [here](#).

### My first ‘yes’

Some of you who know me, are aware that I have been blessed to work in multiple projects in the U.S., Haiti, Costa Rica, and Siberia.

BUT, I wasted a lot of time saying “no.”

I had lots of reasons to decline, but Sam, a pastor and friend, continued to invite me in less-than-subtle ways.

Team leaders seem to have a sense (perhaps, a notion from God) about who would work well on a team.

Unlikely as this might seem, I was moved to say “yes” to Sam’s consistent invitations during an annual conference worship service.

I went to Sam after that service and said, “Just put me on a team.”

### On a team to Haiti

Two months later, I received an abbreviated phone message: “Gil, this is Sam; Haiti; October; call me.”

It turned out that there were two teams going to that island nation; one would do some construction work, the other would work at an Episcopal hospital. Since I had been a medic during my invited service in the Army, and as a speech-language pathologist who worked some in a hospital setting, I suggested I could work at the hospital, but I said, “I’ll work wherever you need me.”

After training and submission of resume and credentials we flew to Miami and we arrived at Port au Prince on Sunday. I was introduced to a Cecilia Manness, director of the Guest House who set up the trip. We had a day to see sights and attend a church service.

I was in Haiti for less than 48 hours and was already overwhelmed.

Cecilia became quite a force in my life.

### Redirected

The hospital team left early Monday morning, and we were greeted by the administrator who gave us assignments. I was the last name on the list, and he said, “We don’t need you here, we need you to help at St. Vincent’s School for Handicapped Children in Port au Prince.

As the team leader and I considered this unexpected twist, I reminded him that I said I would work “wherever they needed me.”

The next morning, with Cecilia’s phone number in my pocket, I headed off for St. Vincent’s.

I was ushered to a waiting area where I met Sister Joan, a nun with the U.S. Episcopal Church, who served as director of the school.

She was a bit gruff and to the point. She asked about my experience with special-needs children, and I passed the test. She had someone take me to one of the classrooms on the third floor. When I entered the class, all the students and the teacher stood. The teacher spoke in Creole or French which I did not understand, but at the same time she signed “good morning.” I signed back “good morning” and that started a wonderful relationship with multiple schools for children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Haiti.

It turned out that the only children with whom I could communicate were children who couldn’t hear.

### The beginning of Hope of Hearing

The trip to St. Vincent’s started a pattern for scores of other trips to Haiti, working on other projects, but spending at least one day at St. Vincent’s. That work morphed into The Hope of Hearing, a ministry where Haitian children are professionally evaluated by audiologists and fit with donated hearing aids.

And, I have the joy of helping.

I tell you that story, only because God has a surprising way of using us. I was not an example of a willing participant; it took me too long to say “yes.” But, I trusted God, and the leaders of the team, who did not really know me at the time; they grew to be special friends.

St. Vincent’s building was destroyed in the 2010 earthquake but is still functioning and rebuilding with more consistent help from Canadian audiology teams. On one of our last trips to Haiti, we visited St. Vincent’s, and the lead teacher and others were doing well and expressed their love and appreciation to God for seeing us again.

### What does this mean for you?

Regardless of your age, or ability, regardless of your zip code or size of your church, there is mission work to be completed. You don’t have to go overseas; you don’t need an advanced degree. It could be with the homeless shelter in your community, gleaning farmer’s fields through the Society of St. Andrew, or helping with a wheelchair ramp through SAWS. The possibilities are endless, and the need is real and close to home.

It’s what we do as disciples of Jesus Christ.





# UM Men provide transportation for those who can't walk

By Scott Walters

Take a newly made mobility cart to a forensics lab and you will find that it's covered with the fingerprints of men involved in the UM Men's ministry. Each one of these unique wheelchair carts are handcrafted by dozens of men and sometimes women who painstakingly handcraft each part. Volunteers fashion raw lumber and steel into sturdy, sleek and finely engineered wheelchair carts for people who are unable to walk on their own and who live in remote areas of the developing world.

To say that UM Men help others is a bit of an understatement when it comes to [Mobility Worldwide](#). Their efforts in providing these sturdy wheelchairs truly change the lives of thousands of people every year. People who have no other means of transportation than to crawl in the dirt or ask a friend or family member to carry them.

Mobility Worldwide's vision is to end immobility in the world. They have their work cut out for them as the World Health Organization reports there are about 70 million people in the world in need of a wheelchair with only 5 percent having access to one. It's also estimated that 80 percent of those needing a wheelchair live in what are called low or middle-income countries where resources are scarce and living conditions are rustic to say the least.



## Our history

Mobility Worldwide's Methodist founders had these harsh environments in mind when they designed the first mobility cart in the early 1990s. Today, UM Men can be found in virtually every one of their shops cutting wood, fabricating metal, turning bolts or getting grease under their fingernails. Since production first began in a Methodist minister's garage in Columbia, Mo., over 25 years ago, mini-factories, called affiliates, have sprung up in dozens of locations throughout the US and Zambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

But the Methodist Men are giving away more than wheelchair carts. When a leg disabled person is lifted from the roadside and placed on the seat of a mobility cart, they are blessed with independence, dignity, hope and joy in addition to mobility. Users are no longer looked down upon by passersby. They are filled with the confidence needed to convert their



Scott Walters is executive director of Mobility Worldwide.

Mobility Cart into a mobile business to earn money for themselves and their family.

## Making carts during pandemic

Even during the pandemic, UM Men volunteers worked in smaller groups, carefully practicing social distancing in order to make several thousand carts which were loaded into shipping containers and sent abroad. Once the containers arrive at their intended destinations, a partnering charity or non-governmental organization take ownership of the carts to distribute them to those in need.

Each mobility cart is given to a recipient free of charge. A person is fitted to the device and trained on how to use it properly before they are free to go. But it's not only the recipient who enjoys their new found freedom. Often, a spouse, parent or another caregiver is freed from the chore of having to carry or transport their loved one. It's a liberating experience for the whole family.

UM Men who enjoy making mobility carts are often retired tradesmen. Some are retired woodworkers or metal fabricators or engineers. Others have no trade experience but are willing to learn. Many of the 500+ active volunteers are retired and enjoy the opportunity to help those who they will never meet.

When visiting one of the affiliate shops, a person will often meet a volunteer who performed missionary work sometime in their life working at a Christian hospital or clinic or another setting where their skills were put to good use. A retired Methodist physician who has worked at one affiliate for over 20 years says that mobility carts are miraculous in that the three-wheeled cart provides immediate relief with no recovery time needed. A person simply picks up his or her mat and moves on.

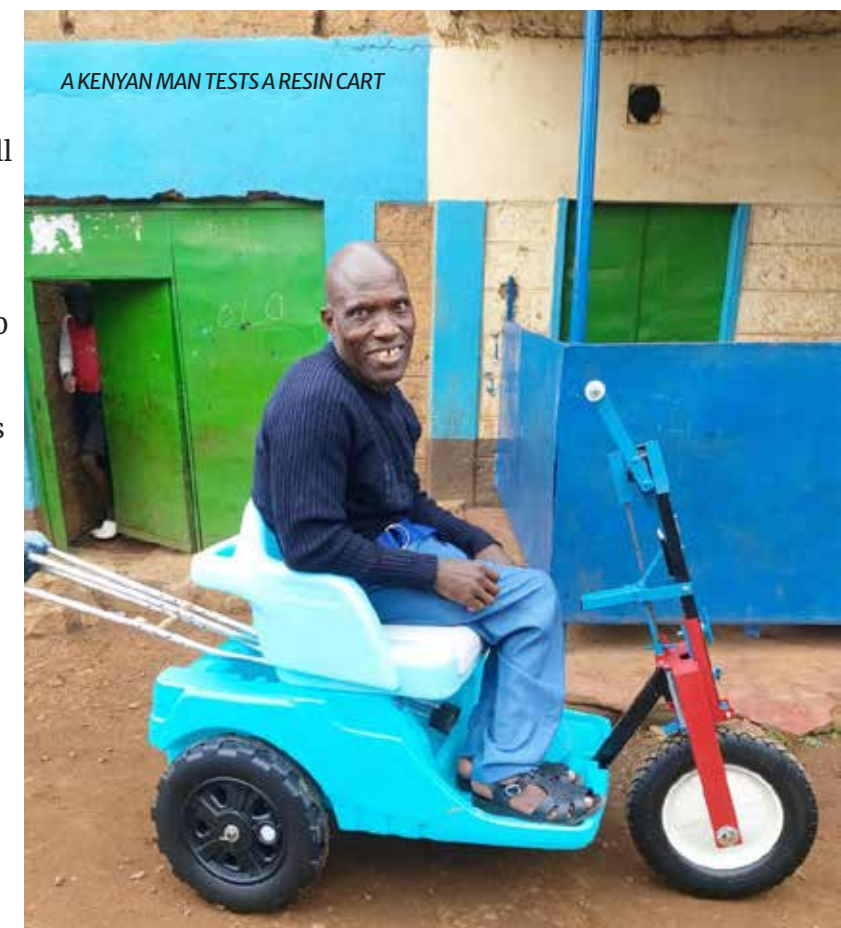
## Seeking improvements

Mobility Worldwide continues to seek out ways to improve its wheelchair carts. Today, they are field testing a cart with a molded resin body so that perhaps one day, they might be able to supplement their original cart production by mass producing resin bodies to help an even larger population. Its ideas like this that will help Mobility Worldwide to cast a wider net to serve more people.

The World Health Organization projects that the number of disabled people globally is expected to double by the year 2050 with the vast majority of this group living in low-income areas. Mobility Worldwide has also begun collecting other assistive devices like crutches to distribute to those in need of help but not necessarily in need of a cart.

It's hoped that more production sites can also be established in key markets throughout the United States as well as in the countries where recipients live. UM Men who are in need of establishing a hands-on project designed to help others while simultaneously attracting caring men looking for a way to express themselves in a meaningful way are encouraged to reach out to Mobility Worldwide to get started.

A great way to begin is to visit their website or attend their annual conference in Columbia, MO, September 22-25, 2021 to meet with others who can help guide them along their path. All UM Men are welcome to attend. It would be a great way to put your fingerprint on a Mobility Cart that will change a person's life.





## Willing hands and loving hearts

By David Kennedy

**“...You will free the captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons.”  
Isa. 42:6**

Freedom isn't free; it has its price and someone must pay that price. The volunteers of Servants At Work (SAWs®) have decided it is a price they are willing to pay for someone else's freedom.

### Beverly's story

Donna and her husband Chuck have been foster parents to 18 children with disabilities over the years, and there was one 3-year-old named Beverly that Donna was determined to adopt.

Forget it.

Doctors told Donna that Beverly would not reach the age of 5. Brain-damaged by injuries before her fifth day of life, she was best left to institutional care for the short time she had been allotted. “Don't get attached to Beverly,” they said. “She's not going to make it. She will never walk, talk, or call you 'Mommy'.”

That was 39 years ago.

Beverly endures multiple health problems. She needs a heroic amount of care. She also is witty, vivacious,



David Kennedy is a volunteer and board member of SAWs who has personally experienced some of the limitations to mobility and daily activities that affect SAWs clients.

kind, courageous, a movie buff, a wizard at jigsaw puzzles, and by her mother's description, “the star of the family” that includes eight grown siblings. “She's been a blessing,” Donna says. “We thank God for her every day.”

As it happens, “Blessing” is the same word she uses for the volunteers from SAWs who gathered to build a multi-level ramp at the rear of their Southside Indianapolis home, thus ending a daily ordeal of coming and going.

Cerebral palsy contracted in infancy has left Beverly with lifelong balance difficulties and impaired vision. The front and back stoops of the home were not manageable to her wheelchair.

Doctors say that Donna, 68, and Chuck, 77 also have disabilities that will have them both in need of wheelchairs down the road. Living on modest pensions but caught in the no-man's-land just above eligibility for public-health assistance, they have been “eaten up,” as Donna puts it, by medical bills from Beverly's cerebral palsy, diabetes, heart problems, seizures, and injuries.

Nevertheless, they hesitated when a family member mentioned SAWs. They thought others might be more deserving.

The organization found the family most deserving when Donna finally made the contact. The result was a handsome two-directional 20-foot ramp.

“They did a great job,” Chuck said as Donna eased Beverly down the structure a few days after installation.

“We'd just been praying for this. I didn't want to do



those steps anymore,” said Donna.\*

### The beginning

SAWs was founded to build wheelchair ramps for low-income people with disabilities or conditions of aging which deny access to their families, neighborhoods

and communities. Overcoming activity impediments allows people to “age in place” and remain in familiar surroundings thereby reducing the strain on institutional health care and maintaining community integrity.

In 2005, St. Luke's UMC in Indianapolis joined with Second Presbyterian Church's “Second At Work” ministry to provide freedom, independence, and dignity for individuals held prisoner by their obstacles in their homes and financial circumstances. In addition, this ministry afforded opportunities for service unavailable before.

St. Luke's UM Men dove in headfirst. The name was changed to “Servants At Work” to reflect the ecumenical nature of the organization. St. Luke's soon became the largest single volunteer group in the SAWs network.

### Link with UM Men

In July of 2017, the General Commission on UM Men held its quadrennial gathering at St. Luke's. where SAWs volunteers staffed a parking-lot exhibit to demonstrate the ramp building process.

The Rev. Dr. Rick Vance, director of the Center for Men's Ministries, and Gilbert C. Hanke, top staff executive of the commission, watched the demonstration and agreed to help SAWs address the need for personal wheelchair ramps on a national basis.

Also in attendance was David James, president of the Western Jurisdiction of UM Men.

By the fall of 2017 discussions were underway with national leaders of UM Men and the Western Jurisdiction of UM Men.

By early 2018, SAWs Arizona had been established and the gathering of the necessary team members was underway. SAWs now has groups in both Phoenix and Sierra Vista serving the differently abled communities of central and southern Arizona. Conversations have also been had with UM Men leaders of the North Central Jurisdiction.

SAWs has also established an affiliate in central Virginia based in the Fredericksburg area. They are building ramps at a fevered pace and can use more help and more funding.

### Staggering need

While federal, state, and local mandates to comply with the 30-year-old ADA guidelines for public accessibility have been mostly successful, there has been no progress toward providing individuals the ability to enter and exit their homes without assistance.

According to the 2019 American Community Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau, 12.7 percent of the population of the United States report a disability and 11.8 percent are living in poverty. That data translates into millions of people who are trapped in their homes by disabilities and poverty.

To respond to this need nationwide, SAWs will require significant numbers of “willing hands and loving hearts” along with substantial financial resources. Leadership is critical. Commitment on a local basis is the key to success.

Building a team so that no one must commit too much time makes the effort more robust. Each “affiliate of SAWs” finds greater success with local fund raising which is why all donations given to SAWs and designated for at specific affiliate go directly to that area. Visit our web site [here](#).

To inquire about building your own SAWs ramp organization, email David Kennedy at [kennedydavid45@gmail.com](mailto:kennedydavid45@gmail.com) or Rik Hagarty at [rhagarty@sawsramps.org](mailto:rhagarty@sawsramps.org). To make a donation go to our web site and click on Donate.

\*Adapted from article written by Dan Carpenter for SAWs NEWS, Volume 1 Issue 4, 2014



# UM Men provide food for hungry families

By Wade Mays

2020 was a challenging year for millions of people around the country. The number of families struggling to put food on their tables doubled since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Families that managed to scrape by each month before COVID suddenly faced an unexpected crisis as layoffs, furloughs, and unemployment wrecked their carefully balanced plans.

The pandemic and its effects have not gone away. In fact, the number of families experiencing hunger is increasing. Lower-income families are the most vulnerable. There's a new wave of people who managed to make ends meet each month, before the pandemic, who are now struggling to put food on the table for their children.

These families must make difficult decisions daily to give something up to pay for food. For some families that something might be electricity— for others, it might be clothing or medicine. To make their food last until the next paycheck, parents add an extra cup of water to soup, water down milk, or give children soda because it's cheaper than milk.

## Food waste

In the time it will take you to finish reading this, 340,000 pounds of perfectly good food will go to

waste in the United States. Hard to believe, isn't it? Yet, it is an astounding fact that more than 263 million pounds of food is wasted every day in this country. What makes that waste even worse, is that every day millions of Americans struggle to get enough food for their families to eat. It must break God's heart to see so much waste in the face of so much need.



## Bridging the hunger gap

Fortunately, however, UM Men are working every day to bridge the hunger gap in the United States. Some volunteer to help in soup kitchens. Others go into farmers' fields after harvest to pick up leftover food and

deliver it to those in need. Still others help out at food banks and local pantries that serve the poor. All across this nation, the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA), with the support of UM Men, is doing something to address hunger in America. I truly hope the men in your fellowship are so engaged.

Many UM Men reached out to SoSA looking for ways to help get good food to families in their communities. Even though many groups weren't meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic, they saw the need and wanted to help. This is the heart of UM Men— a heart for serving and caring for their neighbors. We have seen it time and time again around our country as needs have arisen.

## Action in St. Louis

One UM Men leader saw the rising need in his community in St. Louis. Mark Shrader recognized the need and went all in to share nutritious food with families in his community. He saw the need and God

prompted him to help make sure that the hungry were fed. Mark also put us in touch with The Urban League. By partnering with SoSA at just the right time, we provided truckloads of food for that community. UM Men hosted Saturday feeding events that served more than 5,000 families.



Bringing people together to help serve others is what SoSA and UM Men are all about. We all envision a world in which physical and spiritual hungers are met through God's grace and abundance in Jesus Christ. We also seek to bring people together to harvest and share healthy food, reduce food waste, and build caring communities by offering

nourishment to hungry neighbors.

## New York responds

Another group of UM Men in the Upper New York Conference wanted to put their faith into action and assist others in need. John Conklin, Dean Burdick, Buddy Heit and Mark Jones led men all over the conference to host multiple potato drops to help feed those in need. The dedication that these men showed in spite of some challenges was inspiring for so many. They helped to share over 1 million servings of food to the hungry in the last half of 2020.

## Northern Illinois provides funds

Still others led the way financially to help SoSA deliver food. The Northern Illinois UM Men led by George Groves and Steve Nailor once again stepped up in a major way to help fund Meals for Millions. The COVID-19 pandemic forced their fundraising concert to be cancelled but that didn't stop the Northern Illinois men. They stepped up and found a way to help provide over 3 million servings of food.

## A call for prayer and action

Let us remember there are still people whose greatest blessing would be simply having enough food on the table for everyone to eat. Will you pray for these families struggling with an unthinkable burden? Please, pray that this ministry seeks to glorify God as He empowers SoSA's mission to harvest and share healthy food.

There are countless ways to continue helping to reach out and serve those in need in 2021. Please reach out and I will help to get your group involved and on mission to feed the hungry. Thank each of you for helping to assist others during their time of need. Our hearts are full knowing the dedication and commitment that UM Men have shown in putting others ahead of themselves. May God continue to richly bless you.

## Thousands of others

There's also no way to forget that thousands of people, just like you, stood up in the darkest moments and answered the call to serve others and share abundance. Your story may not be shared here but we have heard and seen the impact that your generosity and heart for mission have made on those in need.

We have a common-sense solution to an unprecedented crisis. Neighbors have reached out to help their neighbors and bring people together when hunger is at its highest.



Wade Mays is director of Meals for Millions and Hunger Relief Advocates for the Society of St. Andrew.



# UM Men reach out to youth and their families

By Steven Scheid

UM Men have a history of reaching out to youth and their families.

Grandfathers, fathers, brothers, disciples, and disciple-makers have unique roles in interacting with youth in their churches and communities. The roles they play differ over time.

## The need

Increasing numbers of young people are not being raised in church homes. The [Pew Research Center](#) reports, “Only half of millennials (49 percent) describe themselves as Christians; four-in-ten are religious ‘nones’ and one-in-ten millennials identify with non-Christian faiths.”

This percentage of non-Christian millennials (people between the ages of 23 and 38) is troubling as they are the parents of the next generation.

While more than half of these parents do not attend church, they are never-the-less concerned about opportunities for their children to gain values. They especially want their children to be engaged in values-based activities.

A church that offers scouting and other youth-serving ministries opens opportunities to minister to young people growing up in non-religious homes.



Steven Scheid is the director of the Center for Scouting Ministries at the General Commission on UM Men.

## Become a family for millennials

The Pew Research Center noted in May 2020 that 4-in-10 millennials do not live with a family of their own.

As children of millennials become involved in Scout troops based in UM churches, there is an opportunity for churches to become families to millennial parents. By sharing love and concern UM Men can transform relationships from sponsors of Scout troops into brothers, fathers, and grandfathers.

All people have times when they need extra support. If UM Men are present with the love of God, these parents will find families.

## Represent the church

When a UM man steps up to serve, he brings the voice and heart of the church.

It took four years of being present and reminding the youth that I represented the church for them to begin to see the church. When I offered service, they would respond, “That is just you.” I let them know that I am a member of the church. When I donated, they responded, “Thank you.” I let them know it was the church that wanted them to succeed. When we prayed together, they responded, “You are faithful.” I let them know that the church was present.

## Tell the story

Romans 10:13-15 says,

*“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news’.” (NIV)*

Hundreds of young people do not believe because they have not heard. You have the opportunity to be the one who tells the story and that story is best told in actions.

Supporting Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire and Big Brothers Big Sisters is a vital way to make contacts. We open our churches. We provide activities. We become family. We care and love. We mentor.

Preaching with our lives is our greatest witness.

Scouting ministries changes lives. I have seen it work in others and I have been changed by those who invested in me.

Will you be the hands and feet of Christ in your community? Without your support the body of Christ will continue to shrink. It is a great time to renew our commitment to grow the body of Christ through scouting and other youth-serving ministries.

## UM Men Foundation – the cornerstone of scouting

The UMC and predecessor denominations provided funds for scouting ministry until 1981. In that year, the denomination felt it could no longer provide financial support for this ministry.

That was when the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men stepped up and established the [UM Men Foundation](#) to ensure scouting ministry would continue.

**The purpose of the foundation is to provide endowment funds to support evangelism, mission, and spiritual-life ministries, especially scouting. Founders of the foundation hoped the fund would support men and youth in their quest to know Christ and empower them to share Christ with others.**

**The multiplying effect of giving to the foundation is profound.**





**9**  
People inducted into the John Wesley Society.

**28**  
People participated in the first on-line meeting of the General Commission on U.M. Men.

**38**  
Men currently certified as men's ministry specialists.

**46**  
Scout leaders trained at an on-line session.

**130**  
People participated in a Zoom prayer meeting led by 10 leaders of four Methodist denominations.

**168**  
People currently certified as scouting ministry specialists.

**310**  
Handicap ramps built by SAWS in three states.

**2,427**  
P.R.A.Y. (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) Awards given by 583 U.M. churches.

**100**  
Years of partnership with Boy Scouts of America.

**3,111**  
Churches with chartered Scout units.

**800**  
U.M. Men engaged in an 8-week AMEND study of domestic violence.

**3,992**  
Number of EMS members.

**1,746**  
Tons of literature delivered to 28 different countries by Love Packages.

**4,607**  
Dollars contributed to the Upper Room Prayer Line.

# 2020

## by the numbers

**9,344**  
Scouting units in U.M. churches.

**17,852**  
Copies of Strength for Service books given to first responders and members of the military.

**41,000**  
Dollars contributed by the U.M. Men Foundation to support the Office of Men's Ministry

**114,500**  
Dollars contribute by the U.M. Men Foundation to support the Office of Scouting Ministries.

**29,000**  
Dollars contributed to the Heritage Society of the U.M. Men Foundation

**51,584**  
Dollars provided by U.M. Men to Society of St. Andrew Meals for Millions.

**89,372**  
Prayer requests posted on the Upper Room Prayer Wall

**146,896**  
Participants in U.M. Men organizations according to 2018 reports to the General Council on Finance and Administration.

**486,584**  
Pounds of produce gleaned with Society of St. Andrew.

**486,003**  
Youth served by scouting units in U.M. churches.

**1,719,466**  
Servings of food provided by U.M. Men through Meals for Millions.

**14,370,887**  
Dollars spent on UMM projects according to local church 2018 reports to the General Council on Finance and Administration.



# UM Men provide clean water

By Steve Young

Eighty-member Conshohocken (Pa.) UMC proves the adage, “Through God, all things are possible.”

In addition to serving those in need in their area, “ConshyUnited,” through its partnership with [Living Waters for the World](#) (LWW), shares the gift of clean, sustainable water with community partners in Kenya, Cuba and soon, at the Karama Education Center located in Uganda.

“I feel that I’ve been called to do this work because God has given me so many blessings in life,” says Dave Patterson, who with his wife, Pat, helm the ConshyUnited Living Waters team. “One of the ways that I can do that is by providing clean water, one of the most valuable resources that we have in this world, yet one that millions of our brothers and sisters do not have.”

Pat adds, “In Uganda, 80 out of every 1,000 children will die before they reach their fifth birthday due to illnesses caused by drinking contaminated water and inadequate sanitation practices. By installing a LWW filtration system, we will be able to purify the water and provide the community with safe drinking water for a generation!”



Steve Young is executive director of Living Waters for the World

## Partners around the planet

LWW’s unique, volunteer-driven, train-equip-support model has empowered partners (like Conshohocken UMC) to form clean-water partnerships with more than 1,000 communities throughout the world.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS CONSTRUCT THE BUILDING THAT WILL HOUSE THE LIVING WATERS FILTRATION SYSTEM.

The “secret sauce” of LWW can be summed up in one word – relationships.

The relationships formed by the Conshohocken Living Waters team with their international community partners are a wonderful example of joining around God’s table to share both gifts and accountability so that clean water may flow for years to come. *[Editor’s note: the General Commission on UM Men has recommended*

*Living Waters for the World as an official partner ministry.]*

## A partner in Uganda

As with their water installations in Kenya and Cuba, the ConshyUnited team sees their partnership with Uganda’s Karama Education Center as another “God thing.” The school, located just a few kilometers from both Republic of Congo and Rwanda, began in 2017 as a joint effort of the NOW AFRICA Initiative and The Chain Collaborative.

Currently serving 350 students Kindergarten through 7th grade, the school already boasts the second highest literacy rate in their district.

And, after having to collect water from a great distance, the school now has a rainwater harvesting system and local tap.

Unfortunately, the water source is contaminated, causing widespread illness. In 2018, The Chain Collaborative’s executive director shared this information at a meeting of the Conshohocken Rotary Club, where – you guessed it – the Pattersons were in attendance. “We felt God tap us on the shoulder,” laughs Dave. “With God’s help and the experience we had gained from our other Living Waters partnerships, we knew our team could climb this mountain.”

Fundraising began in earnest, seeded with funds from their Rotary Club and a UMC Peace with Justice grant. The team travelled to the site in January 2020 to lay the groundwork, following LWW protocols.

Upon arrival, the team was greeted with dancing and a feast. Then getting down to business, the Water Committee was formalized with responsibility for the ongoing sustainability of the system. Operations and Education committees were also formed. Project preparation and system management plans came next. “The school and community are committed to improving the health of the children and believe clean water is key to improving health and the ability to learn and flourish,” says Dave. “Each of the teachers at the school will be trained as either health instructors or system operators. In addition, an equal number of community members will be trained and participate on these teams, thus ensuring solid coverage for all ages in learning about and running and maintaining the system.”

## Pandemic slows process

Of course, an endeavor of this magnitude has its challenges, and the ConshyUnited Living Waters team has encountered more than its share due to the global pandemic. Previously scheduled to return this past September to complete the installation of the system



CONSHYUNITED LIVING WATERS TEAM LEADERS DAVE AND PAT PATTERSON DISPLAY THE LWW WATER SYSTEM NOW INSTALLED IN HOLGUIN, CUBA.



KARAMA EDUCATION CENTER. CONTAMINANTS IN THE WATER WILL BE REMOVED BY THE LIVING WATERS FOR THE WORLD FILTRATION SYSTEM.

and the solar panels required to power it, the team has had to learn the tough lesson of patience. “Waiting is hard, particularly knowing the need,” says Pat. “Our plan is for the solar installation to take place later this spring, with the water system to follow this fall. We ask for prayers for our partners during this time and for a successful outcome.”

When able to travel, the ConshyUnited Living Waters team will boast new members, partnering with other LWW-trained volunteers from First UMC in Wenatchee, Wash., further demonstrating the power of relationships in God’s service.

Tim Duchesne, lead pastor of ConshyUnited, has seen first-hand the benefits of following God’s call, wherever it may lead, including sharing clean water for bodies and souls. “Here at Conshohocken UMC, it is truly an honor to help bring clean drinking water to those in need. Our ongoing support of this ministry is making a difference in the lives of others and our own, and we are privileged to be a part of the Living Waters for the World ministry. It is our hope that we will be able to continue to make a difference in the lives of others in this way well into the future.”

## How You Can Help

While much of the funding required for the installation of the water system has been secured, approximately \$5,000 remains to be raised. Any funds received above that amount will be used to support other projects for the school and surrounding community. Donations for the Uganda project may be made to Conshohocken UMC, 20 W 6th Avenue, Conshohocken, PA 19428

Living Waters for the World welcomes participation and funding from UM churches. To learn more, visit [here](#) or contact me [here](#).



# James Lawson inducted into Society of John Wesley

The Rev. James Lawson, 92, one of the pillars of the civil rights movement, was inducted as a fellow in the Society of John Wesley during a February 6 celebration.



The UM Men of California-Pacific Annual Conference, UM Men of Holman UMC, and UM Men of the Western Jurisdiction presented the award.

“We so often honor our heroes after death; here we were able to share the moment with the living legend,” said Reggie Grant, a member of the General Commission on UM Men and sponsor of the event. “Jim Lawson is still a powerhouse of insight, knowledge and so inspiring. I am honored to have been a part of the celebration.”

Lawson is a leading theoretician and tactician of nonviolence. Recruited by Martin Luther King, he trained many activists in nonviolent resistance including Diane Nash; Washington D.C. Mayor Marion Barry; U.S. Congressional Representative John Lewis; Bernard Lafayette; and James Bevel.

## Early life

Lawson was born on September 22, 1928, in Uniontown, Pa. He grew up in Massillon, Ohio. Both Lawson’s father and grandfather were Methodist ministers.

After graduating from Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, he went to Nagpur, India, where he studied nonviolence resistance.

He returned to the United States in 1956 and entered the Graduate School of Theology at Oberlin College in Ohio where he married Dorothy Wood and the couple had three sons, John, Morris and Seth.

## Enrolls in Vanderbilt

Lawson enrolled at the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University in 1958, where he served as the southern director for Congress on Racial Equality and began conducting nonviolence training workshops in his church basement.

In 1959 and 1960 he launched sit-ins at Nashville lunch counters to challenge segregation laws. In 1960, he was expelled from Vanderbilt for these activities, a move that captured national attention and caused several faculty members to resign.

He later graduated from Boston University School of Theology.

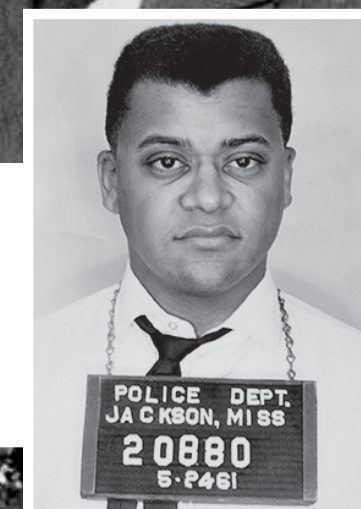
## Pastor in Memphis

In 1962, he was appointed pastor of Centenary Methodist Church in Memphis, Tenn. In 1968, black sanitation workers began a strike and Lawson chaired their strike committee. Six years later he extended an invitation to Dr. King to speak in Memphis. It was in that city, King delivered his “Mountaintop” speech, and was killed in April 1968.



## Move to Los Angeles

In 1974, he was appointed senior pastor of Holman UMC, a post he held for 25 years. He retired in 1999, but he remains active with preaching and teaching engagements throughout the country along with conducting nonviolence workshops locally and overseas. He leads his nonviolence workshop every fourth Saturday at Holman. He also serves as adjunct professor at California State University.



## The Society of John Wesley

Established in 1982 by the directors of the UM Men Foundation, the [Society of John Wesley](#) is a means to recognize those who exemplify the characteristics of John Wesley. These characteristics are best seen through service to others and a commitment to the teachings of the Christian faith. Fellows in the society include two former U.S. presidents, several bishops, pastors and outstanding laymen and laywomen. A gift of \$1,000 to the UMM Foundation enables one to become a fellow in the society.



# Night will end and morning will come

By Walter Albritton

If the Bible tells us anything it tells us that God hears the cries of his children. And that is good news when you are distressed. Trouble often seems like night so we speak of times that seem like the “dark night of the soul.” In the midst of such dark nights we are prone to think that God has deserted us, that he does not care about our misery. Darkness can seem heavy and breathing laborious. But somehow we cling to the hope that morning will come. That hope, though weak, enables us to make it through the night.

## Assurance from Jeremiah

Daylight is a welcome sight. It has always been so. That is how it was in the days of the prophet Jeremiah. Jerusalem had been destroyed. Most of the people were now exiles and slaves in a foreign land. Some were allowed to remain in Jerusalem where Jeremiah sought to help them understand the ways of the Lord. Overwhelmed by sorrow, uprooted from their homeland, the Israelites had little hope for the future. They had disobeyed God. Now they were enduring God’s punishment for their sins. Most of us know from experience what that feels like. Despite the stubbornness of the Jews, God did not abandon them. God never stopped loving them. In fact, just when they needed it the most, God gave them the precious gift of hope. This gift was “made flesh” in a man – the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah saw beyond the present

suffering; he saw a future full of the goodness of God. The prophet saw that hope is greater than grief, that joy is greater than sorrow. Jeremiah knew that no matter how dark the night morning will come. And wisely the prophet linked “morning” with the grace of God.

Jesus can turn the tears of failure into the wine of victory

## Great is thy faithfulness

Few greater visions of God are recorded in Holy Scripture than this one from the pen of the weeping prophet:

*Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” (Lamentations 3:22-24, NIV)*

It was this vision that birthed the greatly beloved hymn, “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” This soul-stirring song often brings me to my knees in worship, especially the words, “All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided.” I want to cry out for all to hear, “Yes, Lord, Yes! Glory!”



The Rev. Walter Albritton is pastor emeritus of St. James UMC in Montgomery, Ala.

## New every morning

God’s mercies are new every morning. No matter what pain or misfortune we endured during the night, God’s mercies are as sure as the morning light, and ours for the asking. We may choose either the word “new” or “fresh” to describe his mercies. Both are beautiful words, though I prefer “fresh.” Morning suggests breakfast. When we rise from a night’s rest, normally we feel renewed; we have fresh energy. The aroma of fresh coffee makes many of us glad to be alive. Fresh bread smells so good and tastes delicious. Think of our disappointment if all we had for breakfast was day-old coffee and stale bread. Not so God’s mercies; they are fresh every morning.

## More grace

The Rev. E. Stanley Jones was being shown to his room at a retreat center. His hostess was a cheerful Roman Catholic nun who provided him with towels and soap. Politely she asked if there was anything else he needed. With a twinkle in his eye the famous evangelist replied, “More grace.” Smiling, the alert and witty nun responded: “Help yourself, Brother Stanley, it’s all around you.” She was right because God is faithful and he keeps His promises.

Our troubles may weigh us down, but we need not stay down. Whenever we will, we can reach out and help ourselves to the mercies of God. Faith helps us believe that God’s eye is “upon the sparrow,” and thus upon me, and you, and all his children. He cares about our sorrows. He hurts when we hurt. And every new morning can be a new beginning because his compassion never fails! Shout it until you believe it with all your heart, mind and soul: “The night will end and morning will come! Yes it will! Yes!” And never forget that mercy is the reason why.

## COOKIE MONSTER!

An elderly man lay dying in his bed, Suddenly death's agony was pushed aside as he smelled the aroma of his favorite homemade chocolate chip cookies wafting up the stairs.

Gathering his remaining strength, he lifted himself up from the bed. Leaning against the wall, he slowly made his way out of the bedroom, and with intense concentration, supported himself down the stairs, gripping the railing with both hands. In labored breath, he leaned against the door frame, gazing wide-eyed into the kitchen.

There, spread out on the kitchen table were literally HUNDREDS of his favorite chocolate chip cookies!

Was it heaven? Or, was it one final act of heroic love from his devoted wife, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man?

Mustering one great final effort, he threw himself toward the table, landing on his knees in a rumped posture, one hand on the edge of the table. The aged and withered hand quiveringly made its way to a cookie near the edge of the table; feeling the warm soft dough actually made the pain of his bones subside for a moment. His parched lips parted; the wondrous taste of the cookie was already in his mouth; seemingly bringing him back to life.

What, then, was this sudden stinging that caused his hand to recoil?

He looked to see his wife, still holding the spatula she had just used to smack his hand.

“Stay out of those!” she said, “they’re for the funeral.”





# In Memoriam



## Walt Stephens

Walt Stephens, 78, Scout Coordinator for the North Georgia Annual Conference from 2002 to 2013, died Oct. 30, 2020.

A 1964 graduate of Morehouse College, and later of Georgia State,

Walt devoted a huge amount of his time to Hoosier Memorial UMC and Scouting.

Walt formed Buffalo Soldiers Boy Scouts Troop 141 in 1987. He named the Hoosier-based troop after the strong, proud, and fierce Black soldiers who were deployed out west after the Civil War to protect the territories from Native Americans who bestowed upon them the name of the buffalo.

He served as Scoutmaster of the troop for 25 years influencing over 1,500 Black youth, many from inner city communities.

He taught them discipline, pride, Black history, faith and the true meaning of manhood. He took his troop to 42 U.S. states, including Alaska, Europe, and Africa.

As Conference Scout Coordinator, he also helped dozens of Georgia churches start and grow their Scout programs, impacting thousands of youth throughout the state.

Walt earned the UM Torch Award from the General Commission on UM Men and the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scouts of America.

In 1996, the Georgia Secretary of State honored Walt for his dedication and commitment to Scouting and former president and Georgia governor Jimmy Carter awarded him a Citation of Merit.

President Clinton invited Buffalo Soldiers Troop 141 to a conference he hosted in Atlanta.

In 2001, the Atlanta City Council issued a proclamation recognizing “Walt Stephens Day,” honoring him for “his compassion and loving spirit for promoting pride, academic achievement, unity and commitment among African-American people for the sake of our communities, our young people and our future.”

Even when he was diagnosed with stage four colon cancer four and a half years ago, Walt lived life to the fullest every day. He taught Sunday school up until a few weeks before he died,

Walt joined Mead Corporation in 1968 during the time of segregation. He became a trailblazing executive, worked there for 33 years, the first Black to become a manager of an international division. Not satisfied with excelling while others were left out or left behind, Walt helped form the group Black Employees Against Discrimination (BEAD) which demanded and negotiated changes within the company in 1970 to address racial discrimination, salary and promotion disparities, and lack of training and advancement opportunities.

In 1996, the Georgia Secretary of State honored Walt for his dedication and commitment to Scouting and former president and Georgia governor Jimmy Carter presented him with a Citation of Merit. President Clinton invited Buffalo Soldiers Troop 141 to a conference he hosted in Atlanta. In 2001, the Atlanta City Council issued a proclamation recognizing “Walt Stephens Day,” honoring him for “his compassion and loving spirit for promoting pride, academic achievement, unity and commitment among African-American people for the sake of our communities, our young people and our future.” He also received WXIA-TV Channel 11’s Community Service Award.

Walt and Rita were married for 52 years and raised two talented children, Swarita Stephens and John Stephens.



## Henry Holt

Henry Holt, president of UM Men of the South Georgia Annual Conference, died January 30.

Henry was elected conference president last August. He previously served as vice president and president of

the Columbus District.

He was an active member of St. Mary’s Road UMC in Columbus and he participated in a virtual leadership retreat earlier in the day of his death.

In the Sunday service the following morning, the Rev. Adriane McGee Burgess, pastor, sadly announced that Henry had transformed his membership from “the Road” to the “Church Triumphant.” In her closing comments, she said Henry had spent his final day on this earth in the service to the church through his participation in the leadership retreat.

## Bishop served as pastor

Bishop James Swanson, president of the General Commission on UM Men, once served as pastor of St. Mary’s Road UMC. He recalls Henry joined the congregation while he was stationed at Fort Benning. “I found Henry to be a man you could count on to fulfill his word and to go the extra mile to carry out any duties, responsibilities or leadership assignments that were accrued to him,” said the bishop. “He brought joy and laughter to all that found themselves in his company.

The bishop noted that Henry was particularly devoted to

the local UM Men’s Chapter at St. Mary’s Road. He later became president of UM Men in the Columbus District. Bishop Swanson says Henry was tutored by Johnny Hemingway, a member of St. Mary’s Road and a former president of South Georgia Annual Conference UM Men. This led to Henry becoming a vice president of the conference UM Men and finally as president.

## Education and career

Following a BA degree in behavioral science from the University of Southern Colorado in 1990, he completed a master’s degree in human resource management at the University of Northern Colorado in 2002.

He was the senior account executive with I-Heart Radio where he developed marketing plans for the radio station and prepared scripts for programming teams to voice on air.

Henry was found in the station’s parking Saturday evening by DJ Chip, vice president of programming for iHeartRadio.

He was known as Uncle Henry to many people because of his generosity and the hard work he put in supporting many community organizations. He was instrumental in bringing some of the big musical acts to Columbus. An army veteran, he worked with iHeartRadio for 20 years.

“I think he’d probably want to be remembered as the Henry that we knew, who was the real helpful guy,” said Chip. “Real God-fearing man. He was real helpful, he was a mentor, all around good guy. He was helpful to us like that. He was real friendly, always smiling.”



# Sacred things

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

What would be your definition of spirituality? Ours would be broad and inclusive, something that speaks to fathers of all faiths, creeds, and backgrounds.

We can have school spirit. A mentor might encourage our positive efforts by saying, “Hey, Bill, that’s the spirit!” Or a friend might give a thumbs-up with a “Keep up your spirits, Tom!”

You might feel the presence of the Holy Spirit from time to time.

However you define it, we would say it relates to sacred things, both secular and religious.

## Reaching the saturation point

As fathers who care about character and dignity, we want to teach our children spiritual precepts and help them put those into practice. Tom’s dad, a minister, made sure that Tom’s formative years included going to church, singing in the youth choir, attending Vacation Bible School, being active in youth fellowship, and dutifully sitting in the front row with his siblings at the weekly Wednesday night prayer meeting. Participation was not negotiable. After all, Tom’s mother was choir director, VBS teacher, and the pianist on Wednesday nights. It was all part of the family package. As a kid, Tom was spiritualized and basted until he was well done.

Bill’s father was an educator, son of a pastor, and was called upon to give guest sermons occasionally at his church when the minister was out of town and the associate was otherwise occupied. Bill

remembers clearly that Easter morning riding with his father to a sunrise service where his dad was to give the sermon. Unbeknownst to Bill, his father was fighting the flu and after service became too ill to drive home. So Bill had to drive the short distance back home, (at age 14!), stopping more than once for his dad to open the car door and relieve himself.

## Identifying sacred things

Tom and Bill don’t regret that church played a large part in their lives, but they admit that their regard for sacred things extends beyond stained-glass windows and old-time religion. Dads who want their children to develop a spirit-filled life need to observe sacred things in every corner of life. That doesn’t mean that we reject those early years participating in those bathrobe dramas at Christmas and Easter. Rather it suggests that we need to expand our view of what those sacred things in life are.

We must teach as well as live those spiritual precepts.

## Teaching the spiritual by example

A loving relationship between dad and mom is sacred. A friendship is sacred. A kindness shown to a neighbor or stranger is sacred. The orange sky of a sinking sun feeds the soul. A piece of music can move mountains in the heart and mind. A family heirloom can certainly be a gift beyond measure. Sacred things. Sacred actions.

So how do we dads raise our children with spiritual precepts? Much of it has to do with attitude. Did Tom learn spiritual precepts by his perfect attendance at Vacation Bible School? Probably not at the time. However, as he grew and matured, he started seeing others practice kindness, demonstrate respect, show love, appreciate beauty, pray for one another,

reach out and help the poor and homeless, feed the hungry, and radiate warmth. Those things were not in a VBS leaflet or hymnbook; rather they were outgrowths of a strong faith and good works—demonstrated by mom and dad.

## Preaching is easy, but practice ...

It’s a precarious road we take when we pledge to practice what we preach. Imagine the confusion it causes in a child’s mind when he or she sees dad being disrespectful to someone, pushing a homeless person aside, or being hateful toward someone whose skin is darker or religion different than his. Exercising one’s spiritual precepts takes courage, consistency and tons of practice.

## Wrapping flesh around words

It’s to be expected that we dads all head toward Proverbs 22: 6 when we’re dealing with raising kids. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Sounds easy. Sounds good. But we all know it isn’t always a rosy path teaching a child the way he or she should go. In fact, sometimes it doesn’t ring true. It goes back to not only saying those words but putting flesh on them. “Live your life the way you want your child to live, and as he grows older, he or she will return to it.” Your son may depart from it ... for a time. Your daughter may reject those precepts out of hand ... for a time. What we hope as fathers is that while our children may depart, they also will return. They will come back to the sacredness we honor.



Tom Tozer and Bill Black are authors of *Dads2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers*. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at [Dads2Dadsllc](#). Contact them at [tomandbill@Dads2Dadsllc.com](mailto:tomandbill@Dads2Dadsllc.com).





**VIENNA, GEORGIA**

**Hunters provide venison for hungry families**

Vienna UMC has five freezers packed with ground venison.

Venison is a vital part of the church’s food ministry, which serves up to 75 families each month. Area hunters keep the church’s freezers stocked with the deer they donate during hunting season.

Last year, they donated 28 deer which provided 1,500 pounds of meat for hungry families.



*Hunters keep refrigerators full of venison at Vienna (Ga.) UMC*

**COLUMBIA, MISSOURI**

**Mobility Worldwide opens new center**

In the late 1990s Mel West built mobility carts for handicap people in his garage and in a Community UMC room in Columbia. At that time his ministry was called PET (Personal Energy Transportation), it was later changed to Mobility Worldwide to avoid confusion with non-profits related to animals.

Today, they are being made in a new facility designed for that purpose, with a high-tech welding shop, woodshop, assembly line, packing area and loading docks.

The Mel and Barbara West Cart Center was officially opened in September of 2020. The pandemic caused the situation to have a quieter launch, with an open house event happening with a small group in attendance and Facebook Live.

Owning a building had been a dream of the organization for a long time. They now have a \$1.5 million debt-free facility.

“The goal is to ramp up to 50 carts per week, from a previous high of 35 per week,” said Executive Director Gary Moreau.

It’s not the only place building mobility carts. There are now 21 affiliates, including two in Africa.

Every shop stands on its own,” Moreau said. “Every affiliate finds its donors and its volunteers.”

The Columbia shop may be one of many, but it is undoubtedly the biggest.



*The Mel and Barbara West Cart Center.*

**ARDEN, NORTH CAROLINA**

**Church honors Scout leader**



*Council Armstrong, skipper of Sea Scout Ship 758, and Carl Gittings, ship boatswain.*

Avery’s Creek UM Men presented Council J. Armstrong with the Silver Torch Award for 70 years of scouting.

Her became a Scout in 1951, joined the UMC in 1953, and he has been a leader of both Scouting and the church ever since.

A Scouting Ministry Specialist, Council served for 10 years on

the board of the National Association of UM Scouters where he supported the Philmont Bible Project and Nothing but Nets.

He was a Protestant chaplain for the 2017 Asia Pacific Regional Jamboree in Mongolia and the 2020 Inter American Regional Jamboree in Brazil.

While not able to travel because of COVID-19, Council helped men construct stairs so church members could attend outdoor services.

**WEST AUSTINTOWN, OHIO**

**Church transforms sanctuary’s west wall into a prayer wall**

“We spent four months trying to figure out a way for our church to join their prayers as a sort of living time capsule,” said the Rev. Jeffery Harrison, pastor of West Austintown UMC. The answer came after a visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Harrison proposed the church create its own Western Prayer Wall. Two-foot long planks of pinewood were cut out for each church family, and they were invited to write personal prayers on the back of the planks. “Even if someone didn’t want to do it themselves,” said Jeffery, “I put their name on one as a gesture that we are surrounded by all the saints.”

The planks were stained with different color sand placed on the Western wall of the church. The wall was revealed on All Saints Day.



*The back of each board contains a prayer written by a member of the congregation.*





## GREER, SOUTH CAROLINA

### Men host tailgate talks

In 2016, Chris Rondeau, South Carolina coordinator of Man in the Mirror ministries, led men of men of Covenant UMC in GO: Jumpstart Your Ministry to Men, a resource designed to help a church leadership team implement No Man Left Behind.

It was the jumpstart they needed.

In addition to gatherings around meals, small groups and events, they offered retreats, which proved to be a powerful springboard for their men to go deeper in spiritual growth and involvement. From the retreat, leaders then helped connect men to either the GO men's Bible study or the GO leadership study, based on where they were spiritually and their best next step.

When COVID-19 hit the area, they brainstormed ideas to reach these men who felt disconnected from each other and ministry.

"We thought about what men like to do in the fall," said a leader of Covenant men's ministry. "Tailgating was the number one answer."

With the help of Chris, they chose *The Christian Man* book and began "Tailgate Talks with The Christian Man."

Each Sunday evening the men gather in camping chairs to discuss the book and ways they can improve their relationships with their wives, family and friends.



Men gather at Covenant UMC for a Sunday Night Tailgate Talk in the church parking lot and discuss a study together, all while following COVID safety guidelines.

## ORANGEBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

### Church honors Scoutmaster

Jim Bradshaw, Scouting coordinator of the Hartsville District, presented a UM God and Service Award to Ronald Mosely, commissioner of the Edisto District and Scoutmaster of Troop 500 based at New Light UMC.



Scoutmaster Ronald Mosely and Scouts of Troop 500.

## GALVESTON, TEXAS

### Men repair bikes

UM Men of Galveston Central Church volunteer to repair bicycles, a valuable resource among those with otherwise limited access to transportation. The UM church opens its doors to community members, many of whom are experiencing homelessness. The church provides a safe space and services including internet access, meals, showers and laundry facilities.



From left: Ricky Postell, Randall Wood, and Misty Bonham.

PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE, UM NEWS.

## HOUSTON, TEXAS

### Church feeds 1,000 families

Faithbridge UMC never intended to be a mega food bank.

Prior to COVID-19, the church partnered with neighborhood families for relief and rehabilitation services, including counseling, afterschool programs for kids, flu vaccine clinics and vision screenings, ESL classes and tutoring. Providing food donations on a small scale was only one part of the cooperative ministry.

When the Coronavirus pandemic hit, needs rose in the neighborhood of primarily Hispanic and Vietnamese families. Thankfully, resources did too, including an official partnership with the Houston Food Bank and an influx of volunteers from Faithbridge UMC.

The ministry hit the remarkable milestone of distributing more than 1 million pounds of food in 2020, an accomplishment only made possible by faithful volunteers.



Volunteers deliver food to hungry families.

## Support Men's & Scouting Ministries



[CLICK HERE](#)

## PLANO, TEXAS

### Church members sign books for Navy officers



Mike Kelly provides a table for people to add personal messages to Strength for Service books to be delivered to the Pensacola Naval Air Station.

Members of Saint Andrews UMC added personal messages to 864 copies of Strength for Service to God and Country books to be presented to officers at the Pensacola (Fla.) Naval Air Station.

For the fifth year in a row Mike Kelly worked with Gary Brooks, president of St. Andrew UM Men to provide books for military bases. In previous years, Kelly invited parishioners to add messages to the books of daily devotions at the church. In 2020, because of the pandemic, Kelly set up a place in a Target parking lot where church members and others could drop by while shopping to add a note in the front of a book. The books were sent to Lieutenant Richard O. Tiff, deputy chaplain of the air station.

## PARKERSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA

### Men provide potatoes to hungry families

Men from all eight counties in West Virginia's Little Kanawha District gathered last December to pick up a shipment of potatoes from the Society of St. Andrews.

With the help of the employees of Peoples Cartage, the men loaded potatoes into their pickup trucks, vans, trailers and cars. They then distributed 40,000 pounds of potatoes to food pantries throughout the district.



Men load potatoes for delivery to food pantries. Photo by Norman Cowart.





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



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



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

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

