

UMM MEN

The magazine of
UNITED METHODIST MEN

FALL 2019 ● Volume 22 Number 4



**Expand
your
ministry
to men**



letter from the **GENERAL SECRETARY**



GIL HANKE

*General Secretary/
Chief Executive Officer*

It works.

As promised, this issue of the magazine is on men's ministry. Some have asked, "Why do we have a program agency on men's stuff?" That question has an easy, data-supported answer: Men are missing in church. Count, by gender the attendance in church this Sunday. In many settings, men make up 30 percent or less of attendees. We also know, statistically that when a man comes to Christ the family also comes to Christ and a much higher rate (92 percent) than when another family member is the first to come to Christ.

Our goal as the commission is that all the men of this denomination and all the youth we have in scouting have an on-growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Bishop James Swanson, president of the commission, told me he wants "the men of this church to reach their spiritual potential."

From my vantage point, even a weird approach can work. The Memphis Conference, has one event for men each year. It is on a Tuesday night at Archer's Chapel UMC in the unincorporated city of Frog Jump, Tenn. This church is 75 miles from Memphis, about 40 miles from Jackson, Tenn., 120 miles from Paducah, Ky. (also part of the Memphis Conference). Most of the travel is on non-interstate roads. It is not close to anything, and if you were an event planner, this would be the last place you would select. Once every year, 200 to 300 men of all ages, come, eat fish, hushpuppies, country ham, and balance a second dinner plate for deserts. They then go to the sanctuary for several hours of teaching, preaching, and requests for help with missions. It is not logical, but it works.

A Mississippi church does "Monday night football" during the season. They gather, have a meal and great devotional then watch the football game until halftime; and then return home. After the playoffs, they continue to meet for "Monday night basketball" which is the same format each with work in small groups studies. They take a break in the summer but begin again when football returns. It works.

Increasingly, men are meeting weekly on tablets or laptops with other men. A core group may meet at a specific location, but they open a device, so that others who live some distance, or for various reasons can't be physically in the "room." It works.

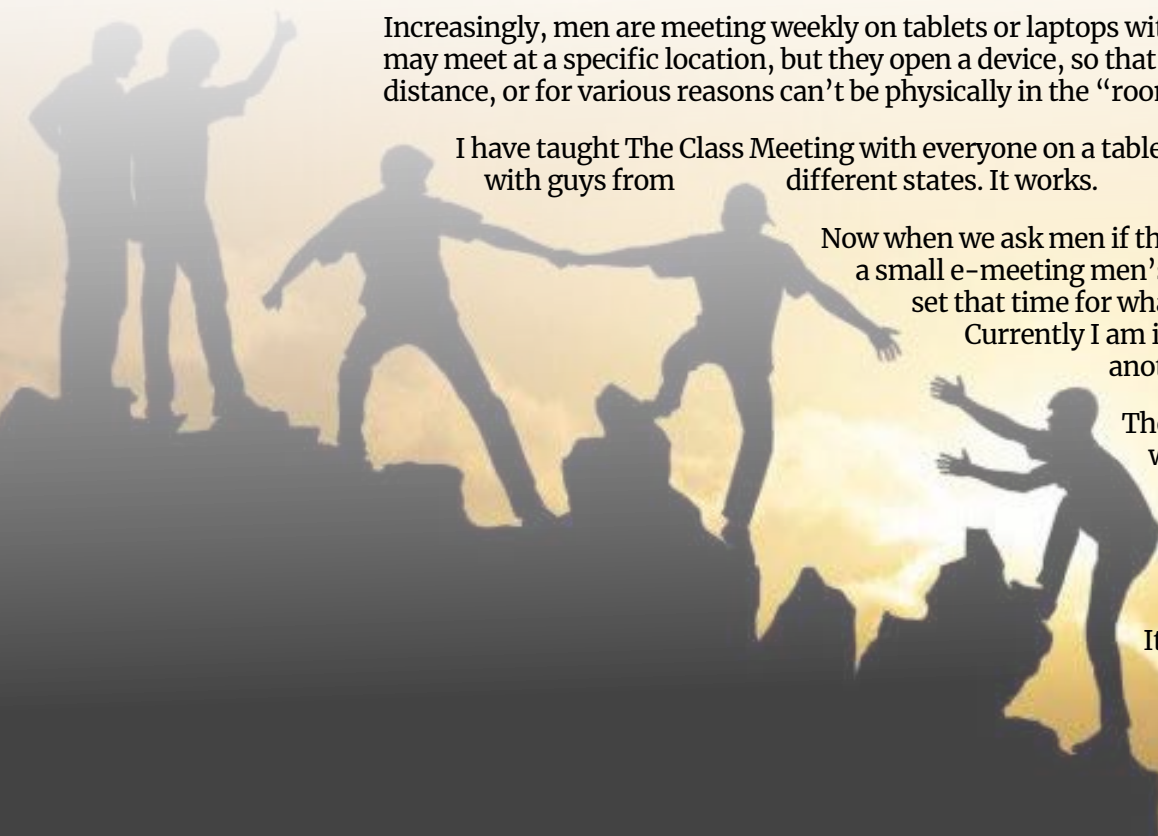
I have taught The Class Meeting with everyone on a tablet, laptop or smart phone, with guys from different states. It works.

Now when we ask men if they would consider attending a small e-meeting men's group each week, we can set that time for what works for those men.

Currently I am in a meeting at 6:45AM and another at 6PM- it works.

These groups are vital to my walk with Christ. They are available to you; let me know if we can help you set up a group for guys in your church or beyond.

It works.



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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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letter from the **EDITOR**



REV. RICH PECK

Editor

You may put this issue in the “no-brainer” file of magazine topics.

Of course, we should follow a summer edition devoted to ministries to young people with a fall issue devoted to ministries to men.

It also didn't take a lot of creativity for me to begin the planning process with a knock on the office door of the Rev. Dr. Rick Vance, director of the Center for Men's Ministry.

Rick tells us there is value in men meeting together for a meal and Bible study, but that pattern only reaches a small percentage of men in a church and none of the men in the neighboring community.

He introduces us to a host of additional ways to reach men, and he invited Greg Arnold to help us reach men in the digital age. Gil Hanke suggests that we form accountability groups patterned after the class meetings created by John Wesley. Geoffrey Parker teaches us about the importance of personal invitations to younger men, and the Rev. Anthony Arrington tells us how and why he created a rite of passage for African American boys. Finally, the Rev. Jennifer Wilson suggests ways in which we can make churches especially friendly to men.

Scouting ministry specialists, men's ministry specialists, conference presidents of UM Men, district presidents, deployed staff members and Nashville-based staff members of the General Commission on UM Men are anxious to help your church expand your ministries to men in your church and your community.

While you are thinking of ways to utilize resources on the website of the commission and looking up phone numbers or email addresses of commission staffers or volunteers, you might want to set aside October 21 as a day to provide some financial support for the commission. This “UM Men Gift Day” is a new opportunity for you to express appreciation for this free magazine, the bi-monthly newsletter, a score of free resources on the website, and a battalion of commission staffers and volunteers who stand ready to assist you with your ministries to and with men.



MAKE THE RIGHT CALL

MAKE SURE THE MINISTRY EXPANDS



UNITED METHODIST MEN

GIVE

DAY



2019

OCTOBER 21

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How to Start your Ministry with Men

By the Rev. Dr. Rick Vance

During the time I have served as director of the Center for Men's Ministries, I have been asked time and time again, "How do we start men's ministry?" "What things must we do to get men in our church and our community involved in the life of the church?"

Men's ministry is complicated and difficult. Contrary to popular belief, there is no single thing a person or a church can do to attract men to their ministry.

While prayer is a key essential for any ministry, there are some principles that must be followed for effective ministry to take place.

Principle 1: Purpose

"Definiteness of purpose is the starting point of all achievement." - W. Clement Stone

Lewis Carrol once said; "If you don't know where you are going, any road will lead you there." The same is true about men's ministry.

As you start or re-tool a men's program in your church, it is important to have a clear purpose or vision for the ministry. Ministries without a clear sense of purpose frequently morph into a social-service project with no attribute of its original purpose.

Beginning with the "why" will automatically shape the who, what and when for your ministry.

The "why" for the General Commission on UM Men is to "help every man have an on-growing relationship with Jesus Christ."

When we have ministry opportunities, the first question we should ask is, "How will this opportunity help us fulfill our 'why'?" If it doesn't, can we add a component to help it meet our "why" or is it something we need to not do?

One of the biggest temptations for men's ministry is to try to do everything.

When this occurs, nothing is done with excellence.

Principle 2: Passion

"Without passion man is a mere latent force and possibility, like the flint which awaits the shock of the iron before it can give forth its spark." - Henri Frederic Amiel

Many times, people are "voluntold" (volunteered without being asked). While this may be an effective way to fill slots on the leadership sheet, it is not an effective way to find ministry leaders. At times a man serves as the leader because "nobody else will do it."

This is problematic in a couple of ways. First, if a person has no interest or passion for the position they hold, they will be less likely to give the attention and energy necessary to lead the ministry. Second, a lack of passion of the leader can be seen by the participants of the ministry. Men have an exceptional skill to detect when people are not authentic with them.

When dealing with men, it is important to remember that they are looking for authentic relationships with God and with other men. Most times, they are not able to articulate these needs, but they know when a person is not being authentic.

Because men's ministry is challenging, it is important that a person involved in starting or leading a group must be involved in intentional spiritual development and spiritual accountability. Participation in Wesley class meetings, Bible studies and prayer groups allow leaders to continue to grow spiritually. This growth will fuel their passion, and enable them to be more authentic with their groups.



Rev. Dr. Rick Vance is director of the Center for Men's Ministry for the General Commission on UM Men.

Principle 3: Planning

“Plans are of little importance, but planning is essential.” - Winston Churchill

Planning is essential not only for the next upcoming men’s event, it is important for the entire ministry.

As a leader with passion and purpose, planning ensures that your ministry stays on a road that fulfills the purpose of your ministry.

Developing a plan can be as simple as making a list of events (projects, meetings, studies, fellowship opportunities) that will occur during a specific time.

What is more effective, however, is to gather with a small group and pray, discuss, and discern the ministry opportunities that God has provided. Once that list is developed, look again at the purpose statement of the group and make sure that there is an aspect of each event that fulfills your group’s purpose.

As part of the planning process, identify people who might lead each event. Contact those people and ask if they are willing to serve as leaders or coordinators of the events. If they agree, give them space to lead the event.

Avoid, at all cost, being a “parachute leader” who needs to drop in and make changes. If the person who has been charged with the coordination of the event needs help, give him the requested help, but let him continue to give leadership.

“Planning check-ins” may be helpful for event coordinators, but this meeting should only be about reports. Do not offer suggestions unless requested.

Principle 4: Pursue

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” - Matthew 28:19a

When starting men’s ministry, many people believe that if they build a program and advertise it in the church bulletin, people will respond. Men today just don’t show up; they need to be invited. Getting involved in a men’s ministry group is hard and requires several things.

First, getting men involved in attending an event requires relationships. Too many times, we believe an email, announcement, or note is all that is required. Men need to know that they will be welcomed, so phone calls, texts, and face-to-face invitations are necessary.



Second, as you are developing relationships, be sure to ask about the needs and interests of the men. Ask about time and schedule constraints that might affect their ability to participate in ministry events. Ask them about their passions (health, mission, fellowship, or study).

Third, after men get involved in ministry, it is important to provide follow-up to keep them involved. Too many times, men enter the front door of the church because of a special event and exit through the back door because there is no intentional follow-up.

One purpose – many models

It can never be said often enough that helping men experience, renew and grow in their relationship with God is the reason this ministry exists. Many successful men’s ministry models are available, however the programs you utilize will require prayer, a study of the context for the ministry, and careful consideration of the needs and abilities of men in your church and community.

Before implementing a pre-packaged program for your ministry, spend time applying the principles I have discussed and look for opportunities that will move your ministry forward in accordance with those principles.

There is no one correct answer. Rather, there are many correct answers and some of them are better for your ministry setting.

The General Commission on UM Men has many programs and studies that will help lead your men into an on-growing relationship with God.

We are available to talk to you about these resources.

How to Reach Men in the Digital Age

By Greg Arnold

In the summer of 1976, America was buzzing with excitement as the country celebrated its 200th birthday. While the nation prepared for the firework show over Lady Liberty, the digital age crept into our lives.

We didn't even notice.

The beginning

In January of that same year, the first commercially developed supercomputer was released by Seymour Cray called the Cray-1, it was sold to the NSA as its first "unofficial" customer. The Cray-1 supercomputer required the floor space of an average household living room with the computing ability of about 1/16th the power of the smartphone in your pocket.

I'm not sure what the summer of 1976 looked like in your community, but in "no-where rural America," we played ball until dusk, chased fireflies, drank tepid water from the faucet, and sat on the porch with family until the evening news came on.

I was 6-years old in 1976. What about you? Our community enjoyed three channels on the television set and our radio dial was full of AM stations. There were a few FM stations trying their hand at broadcasting, but it was still "new technology".



Greg Arnold is a deployed staff member of the General Commission on UM Men and the founder of Live Bold Ministries.



Church was our social network

In most of America, church life in 1976 was simple. Outreach was easy. Membership was thriving. For a child of the 1970s there wasn't much else to do on a Sunday but complain about getting up on the weekend and putting on "church clothes". We spent valuable ball-field time attending Sunday school where adults would tell us the same three stories about Noah, Jonah, and a little lost lamb. The day wasn't complete until we sat quietly for another hour listening to an old guy yell about going to hell. But, we were there--faithfully.

In that era, church was a place to be seen. It was where the community caught up on the local happenings and found out about family and friends. It's where traditions thrived. Before the digital age, church was a gathering place for social networks and friends. Church was our social network--our "Facebook" group.

In 1976, the church was easily ranked in the top three things to do on a Sunday morning. However, in 2019, church must fight to make the top 10 list on any given Sunday.



Moore's Law

While sitting in those church services as a child, I had no idea that a commercially viable supercomputer was crunching data while I was humming along to "How Great Thou Art". I also was unaware that Moore's Law was introduced into our lives and would quietly change our culture right under our noses.

“Moore’s law is the observation that the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit doubles about every two years. While it only observes the trend, it has held true over the past 43 years” (Wikipedia).

Moore discovered that the digital age that began in 1976 would not take another 200 years to mature. In fact, each year the power of computing would double. I’m not a math whiz, but I do know doubling something that just doubled adds up quickly. This doubling is what brought the digital age into our lives quicker than we could adjust to the changes.

In our pockets

In the 43 years since that lovely summer of 1976, we have evolved from living-room-sized supercomputers, to more-powerful computers no larger than a bar of soap. The technology which once only belonged to fewer than 100 businesses, now rests neatly in the pockets of more than two billion people.

If we want to reach those “prodigals” roaming around in the digital mire, then it’s worth understanding who they are and what they want.

In the last 40 years of digital advancement, the kids of the 1970s and 1980s went through more technological breakthroughs than any generation before or since. These kids belong to “the often-forgotten generation called Gen X” (Pew Research).

Members of this generation (aged 38 to 54) are responsible for creating the personal computer, AOL, Yahoo, Google, and Facebook.

You can thank Gen Xers for the acceleration of the digital age.

Missing in church

As I travel the country and speak with churches, I ask about the 38–54-year-old adults. It is widely agreed that this age group is missing.

Gen Xers are the first generation raised in single-parent households and often referred to as latch-key kids as both parents left them alone to go earn the dual-income dollar. Gen Xers learned to do life independently out of necessity, and these frequently fatherless children have a skeptical view of church leaders.

So here we are in 2019 with two billion powerful computers in our pockets. Why are they so addictive? It’s not the phone or the apps that hold their attention. It’s the connectivity with other people. I don’t think it’s an accident that the latch-key kids were the first to realize that digital tools could bring them something they missed— a sense of belonging.

Hard-truth time

So, why do so many churches struggle to remain relevant in 2019? Most are still doing church the way it was done in 1976. They believe, “If you build it they will come.”

Churches continue to operate in silos, disconnected from the world and community around them.

Simply put, if your church is just now asking the question, you missed the bus.



The America we knew in 1976 is gone. If you belong to the Greatest Generation (born 1900-1924), the Silent Generation (born 1925-1945), or the Baby Boom Generation (born 1946-1964), the digital age crept in through the back door while you were busy building your careers.

Meanwhile Gen Xers (born 1965-1979) are creating new pathways with digital tools. Millennials (born 1980-2000) are creating experiences and breaking down walls with new digital tools. And Gen Zers (born 2000 to present) are doing it their own way with the world knocking on their door every second of every day.

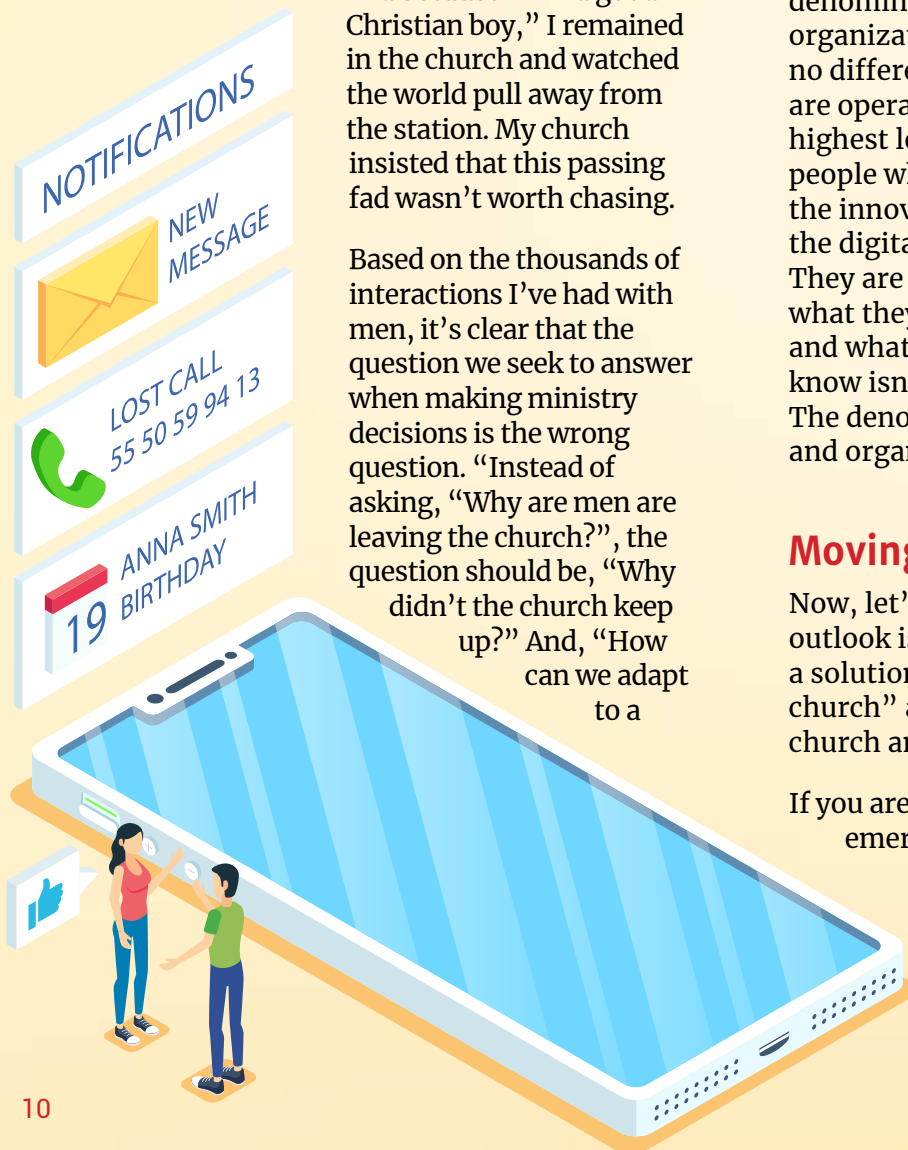
It is clear members of the last three generations view the church quite differently than the preceding three generations.

Left the station

Growing up “digital” through the 1970s and 1980s gave me a front-row seat to the rise of the digital age.

And because I’m “a good Christian boy,” I remained in the church and watched the world pull away from the station. My church insisted that this passing fad wasn’t worth chasing.

Based on the thousands of interactions I’ve had with men, it’s clear that the question we seek to answer when making ministry decisions is the wrong question. “Instead of asking, “Why are men are leaving the church?”, the question should be, “Why didn’t the church keep up?” And, “How can we adapt to a



digital generation?”

If you think “digital” means better technology and more fantastic bells and whistles to attract those silly “prodigals”, you don’t understand what’s happening. The digital age isn’t about the super great smartphone and doubled technology. The digital age is about connection, authenticity, and relevance.

Predicting results

My personal experiences are far from scientific, but they are numerous and consistent. They have helped me pin down key areas which predict poor or positive results.

When a church is operated by non-digital native leaders, it struggles. When church leaders push back from the table to invite digital natives to innovate and lead, it begins to reverse its downward trend line.

The general church and large denominational organizations are no different. Most are operated at the highest levels by people who missed the innovation of the digital age. They are stuck in what they know, and what they know isn’t digital. The denominations and organizations struggle.



Moving ahead

Now, let’s focus on how to move ahead. The outlook is not one of doom and gloom. You can be a solution! Rather than trying to be a “tech-savvy church” and doing it poorly. Why not be a digital church and start creating connections?

If you are older, step back and listen to the emerging leaders. Change your role to mentoring and coaching. Use your life experiences and wisdom to help new leaders navigate their personal lives. Restore connections that were lost many years

ago. Be the wise man, not the tool man.

Live Bold Ministry

I can offer one glimpse into what it looks like to reach the men who are missing from the local church. My Live Bold Ministry is a digital ministry. God has blessed me with a virtual church with over 24,000 members from around the globe and it's delivered through an app, available on that smartphone in your pocket (liveboldapp.com).

At Live Bold Ministries, we do church every day— not just on Sundays. Our prayer room is filled with people who are hurting while others join and offer powerful prayer for those unfiltered and un-sanitized requests. We have a challenging discipleship pathway for those men ready to take the next steps, and we have small-group ministry which is beginning to take hold. We deliver sermons and messages of encouragement through podcasts and video coaching, and we connect through daily devotions. We also tackle that hush problem in the church, called pornography.

Growing ministry

The Live Bold App for Christian men continues to add 30 to 40 members every day and meets them where they live, work, and play. The message we offer isn't complicated and it's not judgmental. We accept men where they are and help them meet Christ through the daily disciplines of faith. We share the gospel and let the Holy Spirit take it from there. We focus on connections.

Most of the members in our community are guys aged 25-54. They come from all backgrounds and live all around the world. They come to the Live Bold App daily because they can find an authentic way to connect and grow their faith with others.

Until you get a handle on your men's ministry and discover innovative ways to reach those missing men, simply connect your guys to my app as a starting point. Use the Live Bold App to just get something going. Allow me to be your digital men's pastor and we can grow from there.

Once your guys begin to connect, I can show you a far more robust "churched-up" tool that mixes digital into a traditional program. But let's not start there. Just get the men connected with the free Live Bold App. Then, we can talk about taking the next step if you want a more traditional

church-based tool.

So, let's get back to question, "How do you reach men in the digital age?"

Ask if your men's ministry is like the way it was done when you were 25? If the answer is "yes," you've been left back at the station. The train is gone. It's time to do something different.

There is hope! There are some very exciting and dynamic ministries happening around the world. Men are connecting to churches and ministries who aren't afraid to embrace the digital age and to make authentic connections. You can be the catalyst for change - but it may require you to change first.

The question remains, "Do you have the guts to change?"



Transforming Men via Class Meetings

By Gil Hanke

Let me begin with a short history lesson.

John Wesley established three general rules for the growing the Methodist movement in England: “Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.” He told these new Christ followers that “staying in love with God” was achieved by practicing the ordinances of God. Those “ordinances” are described in Bishop Rueben Job’s wonderful book, *Three Simple Rules*:

1. Attend public worship.
2. Participate in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
3. Engage in private and family prayer.
4. Search Scriptures.
5. Study the Bible.
6. Fast or abstain.

Part of the accountability mechanism Wesley created was to form small groups (he called them “classes”) who were shepherded by a leader. In their original form, the leader would, each week, connect with individual class members to see how they were following the three rules, particularly the ordinances of God. In addition, the class leader collected a penny from each member to pay off a building debt.

At first class leaders reported to Wesley about failures of members to follow one or more of the three rules. So, the accountability model was changed. Classes met together once a week, to report to each other and to the class leader how they were avoiding doing harm, how they were doing good, and the ways they were staying in love with God.

Not a Bible study

This was not a Bible study or a prayer meeting; it was reporting how faithfully they were in reading the Bible and how their prayer life was bringing them closer to Christ. They were to “watch over one another in love,” and to answer Wesley’s classic questions, “How is it with your soul?” “How is your life with God?”

This same model was used in the colonies.

Wesley believed, and our history validates, that these meetings create disciples who are challenged to improve their relationship with Christ each week. The self-imposed accountability and the support of the group, along with practicing the ordinances create an on-growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

They are transformational.

The beginning

I met Rev. Dr. Kevin Watson several years ago. His presentation and his book, *The Class Meeting Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience*, changed me and has changed the small groups that we create in men’s ministry.

Our denomination appears to be overly dependent on curriculum, and that addiction has made us smarter, but following the curriculum does not address our mission of “making disciples for the transformation of the world.”

The process

Our process is simple. We assemble a group of men who want to grow in Christ and in some cases, who want to lead another group to that goal. This group will meet weekly face to face or screen to screen, or in some combination.



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



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BARRY

HANKE PARTICIPATES IN A WESLEY CLASS MEETING VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING.

Most groups have 6-10 members. In some cases, they are in the same church or in the same community. In a growing number of cases, they may be in different states and have never met each other before the first meeting. With this type of group, they meet via laptop, tablet or smart phone using a video conferencing platform like [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us).

In my local church we have a group where some members have moved out of state, or who live some distance from our meeting or who, like me, travel a lot. To include as much of the group as possible, we begin the meeting by opening the video conference platform on a device, so those invited folks can join us each week.

The first eight sessions

The first eight sessions are the eight chapters in Watson's book. There is now a video introduction to each chapter by Dr. Watson available from Seedbed, the publisher of his book. The group might choose to have one person lead the group or rotate that responsibility. The book is well written and enjoyable to read and to teach. There is an irony that Watson's book is a curriculum on how to set up and maintain a group that does not use a curriculum; but that is the case.

After the eighth session, the time together is spent doing what has been learned. There is a suggested format in the book, and being in several of these, each group takes on a unique personality. I have been contacted by wives of members of our group saying, "I don't know what you are doing in that

group, and I don't need to know. But for God's sake don't ever stop. My husband is a changed man."

A meeting of strangers

The first group I set up was 100 percent on line, with people who did not know each other. I began this group right after meeting Dr. Watson and reading his book.

Our first session was December 4, 2014. I purposely set it up to test if a very diverse group of strangers could become a transformation group. It was made up of three UM clergy in different positions and with different credentials, and three laity who each had very different experiences in the church.

We did not stop at eight weeks, and it continues to be a most amazing group. We have led each other through a wide variety of personal and professional changes, challenges and with whom each week, I grow in Christ. We have met every week (except for a few holidays) for nearly five years, and only one member of the group has dropped out due to his change in employment.

Making disciples

I think you will agree there is value in having a mission statement and centering all decisions in the light of that statement. For decades our denomination has had a mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." When asked, "how do we do that?" I have been told about many random programs or book studies. But in our experience through the commission, using the method that gave our denomination its name, that caused a movement in England and in the U.S. is still the answer.

We are not disciples because we know more. We are disciples because we are held accountable in a small group to grow in Christ each week. These are transformational, disciple-making, vital weekly gatherings which are growing in numbers across our connection. They work. They fulfill the mission of this denomination.

How to Reach Younger Men

By Geoffrey Parker

I recently spoke to a room of college students participating in a missions-focused internship. Most of them grew up in a church, yet few of them now regularly participate in a congregation.

They exemplify the difficulty we have connecting across generations.

To address that difficulty, I revisited research by sociologist and professor Christian Smith. After following the religious and spiritual lives of youth and young adults, he writes:

“New members of any society are always inducted into the group by elder members who form them in different ways to become active participants of various sorts... through role modeling, teaching, practicing, and other means. This is simply how most youth learn religion and everything else.”

A little intentionality goes a long way

In my mid-twenties, my job with the Boy Scouts gave me the opportunity to move to a new area. It was the type of friendly place where you see people you know every time you leave the house. Barry Rountree had grown up there and was still working into his seventies, I think because he loved getting to know new people.

Barry and I bonded over our shared passion for Scouts, and one day he asked me to have lunch

with him at a Mexican restaurant. Although we attended different churches, it wasn't uncommon for him to ask about the men's group at my church or share the latest thing he learned in his Bible study. As we ate, he brought up a weekend retreat he thought I would appreciate. I learned later that Barry had been involved in Walk to Emmaus for some time.

As a single guy in my twenties, I wasn't the typical pilgrim, Barry took the care to consider me, and prayed with me for several weeks until I eventually decided to go. The care that he put into asking me to join him on a Walk to Emmaus continues to impact my faith, a decade later.

Take inventory of the blessings you have to offer

Our lunch wasn't the first time Barry thought about inviting me to Walk to Emmaus. Before he spoke to me about it, he had taken an inventory of his blessings and considered with whom he could share them.

He had a rich experience with Walk to Emmaus and he had an ability to listen to the needs of others. He connected with people from church, from Scouts, and professionally; he had no trouble sharing his blessings with people from any of these groups.

I encourage you to list your blessings. You may start with one or two; the list will probably grow over time. Maybe you have the keys to church and could invite someone else to join you taking care of things. Perhaps you could share insights from a book you've read or a sermon you've heard. Perhaps you have a skill someone else needs.



Geoffrey Parker is the director of Youth and Young Adult Spiritual Formation Programs for The Upper Room. When he is not working with pastors, youth leaders, and young adults, Geoff and his wife enjoy traveling, remodeling rooms in their house, and playing with their dog, Lex.



When my wife and I bought our first house three years ago, we needed to renovate the guest bathroom, that had a hole in the wall. A friend from church who had renovated his house provided us with tips and lent us some tools. I might have learned about renovations online, but no video provides the support of a friend who sits next to you with his hand covering a leaking water pipe.

Take time to think about your talents, skills and blessings and consider with whom you might share them.

Bless someone

As pastor and author Barbara Brown Taylor writes:

“You constitute a blessing simply by showing up.”

Whether it’s holding a towel over the leak, inviting someone to lunch, or sharing the keys to the church, you have a variety of ways you can offer blessings to others. Whether you start with the blessing in mind, or with a person in mind, being the person who offers the blessing will be meaningful to both of you.

At the church in which I grew up, there was a group of men who took turns mowing the church lawn. I was in fifth or sixth grade when someone began teaching younger boys how to use the two riding lawn mowers. This was an enticing adventure. It was also a sign of trust from the men who handed me the keys. Of course, they were always nearby to make sure I used the mower safely.

Stay connected

Teaching me to use a riding lawnmower was a comparatively small, intentional action that opened the door to an ongoing relationship.

From Barbara Brown Taylor again:

“At the very least, most of us need someone to tell our stories to. At a deeper level, most of us need someone to help us forget ourselves, a little or a lot.”

The relationships with those men lasted for years and helped me form the foundation of what it means to be in community with other people – not just in the church, but now in my neighborhood, with my coworkers, and with others.

In the last few verses of Acts chapter 2, we read about members of the early church having everything in common. Certainly, this refers to how we think about our possessions. It may also refer to how we associate with each other. When we take inventory of the blessings we have to share, we have begun a method of spiritual formation.

As Christian Smith states it from his research:

“One thing is certain sociologically: operating at the heart of both personal and religious stability and change are the crucial matter of significant personal relationships. . . . Significant personal relationships may not be the heart of religious life itself, but they certainly provide the bones and other muscles within which the heart of religion beats.”

It is in building relationships that we experience mutual blessings.

You have help

Every congregation, men’s group, or person seeking to share blessings with others has help. The Upper Room and UM Men have a long partnership, with an emphasis on prayer and spiritual formation.

Two resources to help you get started.

1. Is your group looking for an intentional way to see people of different ages, or others who may not currently be in your church? Take time to look at [See All the People](#), a movement of United Methodists who are building these kinds of relationships.
2. Are you looking for a specific way to invite younger adults into community? You can partner with young adults from your church, or with others who are in ministry with young adults on a [Journey to the Table](#), a new spiritually formative experience that grew out of Walk to Emmaus..

You have blessings to offer. In offering them in mutual relationships you are living the call to love others as Christ loves us, so no one must renovate a bathroom, mow the church lawn, or grow in faith alone.

Casting nets
in new waters...



UNITED METHODIST MEN

GIVE

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TEXT UMMEN
TO 44321

Creating a Rite of Passage for African American boys

By the Rev. Anthony Arrington

Every second Saturday of the month the men of St. Paul's AME Church in Pittsburgh gathered for choir practice and usher training. That's when my dad and the other men of the town would wrestle out of bed with cries, "It's time for men to get together." This clarion call meant that we were part of a special breed; our road to manhood would be defined by their approval and their example.

There was never a time when the men got together that they didn't manage to wrangle up a scrumptious breakfast or a spaghetti dinner. We were recruited as chef assistants, where someone's dad or uncle would share his secrets for the best spaghetti sauce, the lightest pancakes or coffee that would make a mule kick.

It was during these meals that these men would give us life lessons on how to serve the Lord, how to be respectful to our parents, and how to navigate life in America.

There was something miraculous about these men. They were second and third generations from slavery. While they lacked world opportunities, they prided themselves as children of God from whom they received the gift of wisdom.



The Rev. Anthony Arrington is a retired clergy member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.



It was their willingness to build and maintain their families that they instilled God's statutes and morals in us that we might be honorable in the eyes of God rather than men.

We were taught that God was sovereign, and that God made all people equal. Now, that might seem frivolous in the 21st century, but in 1969, at the height of the civil rights movement, it was a gigantic boost to our self-confidence.

We were no longer second-class citizens; we were men!

The rite of passage

Twenty years after receiving these life lessons, I became one of three UM pastors who (with the help of the Holy Spirit) created a rite-of-passage for African Americans boys, ages 9 to 12.

It was named the Howard Bailey Life Enrichment Program, after a renowned pastor who was a pioneer in camping ministries for African Americans from the 1940s to the 1980s.

Bailey believed that the camping experience helps round a boy out and give him character that is unmatched by other experiences. He helped us create a format that enabled these young men to be proud of serving God, their churches and their families.

Our mission was to transform the lives of these young men through example, experience, and interaction. Our program was nestled

in a camping environment in which outside distractions were eliminated. The program was designed to help young men discover how to navigate within American society without compromising their humanity or their integrity. They learned they were children of God rather than the labels assigned to them by social bias.

It would be impossible for me to impart the totality of the ministry. However, I will highlight some of the lessons we learned about ministry in the African American context as opposed to Euro counterparts.

Perception of arrogance

Often African Americans are considered arrogant or cocky; they are viewed as people who seem to be “too big for their britches”.

Most of my life I was told I had to be twice as good, twice as prepared, and twice as confident to just compete in the game, and, even then, I might not get picked.

When a person of color excels in a sport or as a competitor and when he is asked to express himself, his exuberance over a victory can often be misinterpreted.

Search of self

Many young men achieved their greatest progress when they found inroads to who they were as individuals.

Amazingly, these young men understood how the greater society portrayed them and, although they were part of the emerging digital world, they understood that racial discrimination and prejudice were here to stay. Our goal was to help them maneuver a prejudiced society with dignity and courage.

The boys taught us that the struggle continues.

Assimilation

One of the many overlooked cultural nuances is the fact that, by birth, African Americans live in a dual world. In order to survive, one must assume aspects of the general culture and incorporate them as crucial living skills.

One's level of education, class and social standing all contribute to one's ability to navigate the greater society while keeping a foothold on their culture of origin.

Unfortunately, those in the dominant culture feel no compunction, whatsoever, to learn about or to appreciate the culture of the minority. In the mind of those in dominance the assimilated person has abandoned his origins to become part of the mainstream.

Our experience in facilitating men's ministry in the UMC is a rich and storied adventure in which we meet men who serve as our spiritual guides to the Kingdom of God. Every generation of African American men has an obligation to carry on the struggle for freedom and liberation from oppression and bigotry. It is not our desire, yet it is simple fact that we all must endure.

The need continues

It is important that we continue to nurture men and boys. However, much has changed since we started our rite-of-passage ministry in 1992. African ritual and culture don't carry the same weight that they did back when we were discovering our heritage through campfire conversations.

The digital highway causes people to receive information by tapping into their phones and computers.

What a run!

However, we can glory in the 22 years the Lord gave us to help young men navigate their lives through Christ and the road to salvation. This ministry produced seven pastors; four entrepreneurs; 44 fathers who respect their wives and cherish their children; and a conference-wide ministry that changed the lives in the community and local churches.

Other than the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of Jesus, our only contribution to these young men was to show them their potential if they used salvation and faith as a foundation. It was God who helped them realize a humanity which pushed them to divine righteousness.

The Consequence of Being Early

By Jeff Thornton

On a Saturday in February, my Rotary Club was holding a fundraiser at my church.

Since I had the code to unlock the door to the fellowship hall, I was asked to open the building.

If the door were to be unlocked before 6:30 a.m., an alarm would be activated.

I looked at my watch; it read 6:31 a.m.; I inputted the code and walked into the hall.

Immediately an alarm sounded, making me jump. I'm certain it also was a wakeup call for the neighbors.

I later found out that the clock on the door was 6:29 a.m.; I was one minute early.

At 6:32, Police Officer Sean Adams arrived. I explained the mishap and invited him to come back later for a free breakfast.

After getting the alarm situated and shoveling three inches of snow off the sidewalk, the fundraiser opened on schedule.

Later in the morning, Officer Adams took up my offer. As he finished his breakfast, I asked him about his faith and he pulled up his sleeve to show me tattoos of Bible verses.



JEFF THORNTON (LEFT) PRESENTS A COPY OF STRENGTH FOR SERVICE TO GOD AND COMMUNITY TO OFFICER SEAN ADAMS.

He was a veteran of the war in Iraq and talked about some of the things that took place during his tour.

I told him about the Strength of Service book and asked if he would be interested in a copy. I told him sheepishly that I did not have any copies on me, but I would go home and get a few if he would come back again later.

When Officer Adams saw the book, a tear came to his eye as he found the book included daily devotions from other police officers. I asked him if I could give each of his fellow officers a copy and he said he would get the hand-out approved by his chief.

I gave a second book to Mark Bearth, a new Rotarian and a 35-year veteran emergency medical technician. He immediately posted a Facebook message telling everyone how appreciative he was and the excitement of reading the book.

I learned two lessons from being early: 1) The Holy Spirit led me to give these books to two men who needed them. 2) From now on I am going to carry extra books in my van.



Jeff Thornton is a member of the UM Men Foundation and president of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference UM Men.



Keep the fire burning.

You can make certain the ministries
of the General Commission on United
Methodist Men will continue by
texting UMMen to 44321.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

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AMAZING GRACE

How we made the church more welcoming to men

By the Rev. Jennifer Wilson

Grace UMC was founded in the 1800s to serve the community of LaSalle, Ill.

It was a traditional church in its liturgy, stained glass windows, hymnals, and organ.

However, as many churches in the U.S., it had experienced a significant decline in membership when I was appointed to fill the Grace pulpit in 2003.

I was determined to help the church find new life.

The book, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* by David Murrow, had an amazing impact on my life and ministry.

Creating a new environment

I realized, that if I wanted to engage men and attract their families, we needed to do things differently. We needed to create an environment where men would feel comfortable when they walked in the door.

With that realization, I started to make changes at Grace UMC.

The changes made were slowly.

Since I write my own liturgy, I began to look it through the eyes of a brick layer, mechanic or a farmer. I imagined the imagery that would resonate with them.

I began to change my sermon topics. As a series preacher, I began to address topics that were more appropriate to guys. They loved it.

I began to realize that many of the songs in the hymnal were overtly feminine. The imagery cadence and language were feminine. While we sang those songs in some groups, we avoided them in mixed groups.

Murrow suggested that we should be careful about homemade or overtly feminine items. While the decision to remove these items from the sanctuary was difficult, members of the church were receptive when I explained to them the reason for removing them. The church appeared to be more welcoming for all the congregation.

The first summer after starting this journey, we repainted the pink and beige interior walls to neutral colors.

In our Sunday morning projection, we did away with the pinks and flowers and began to use more natural colors with images of mountains and rivers. This imagery was comfortable for all the people, but it helped men enter the next level of worship on Sunday mornings.

It is important to say here that we did not announce that we were making the church more man friendly. We simply made subtle changes over time.



The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Wilson is senior pastor of Wheatland-Salem UMC. A graduate of the Oklahoma City University (B.S.) and the University of Dubuque (D.Min.), She has served the congregation in greater Chicago since 2013 after serving Grace UMC for 10 years. She is a board member of the General Commission on UM Men and chairs the Personnel Committee.

The results

The effect of these changes did not make people perceive the church as overtly masculine, but we had more men than women involved in the total ministry.

The church became a place where men said they could be themselves.

They brought their families.

Membership increased by 10 percent a year, and we had to increase the size of the sanctuary. We also had to develop more space for the increased number of children.

Our giving doubled during the 10 years I served that congregation.

The average age of the congregation was 42 when the average in our area was the upper 50s.

We did not try to move women out of the picture, but we did understand that reaching men was critical to church growth.

It's like a whole group of people in our society were sidelined and the minute we engaged them, we engaged their families.

Men became leaders. Lives were changed, and families got stronger.

A 21-year-old man said to me; "I like the changes I see in my father. I am closer to him now than I have ever been and its because he is coming to this church."

Making similar changes may help your church become more friendly to men. The changes may also affect the ministry to your community.

It happened at Grace UMC.



Honoring a World War I Code Talker

By Ginny Underwood

Private Joseph Oklahombi, a member of the Choctaw Nation, is one of the most decorated war heroes from Oklahoma. However, most of his contributions were unknown until after his death.

Oklahombi, from Wright City, Okla., served as a code talker in World War I in the 141st Infantry. This special, highly important assignment involved using his native language to send secret military messages.

Kept a secret

“When he came home from war, they told him not to talk about how he served as a code talker in case they needed to use the language again,” said Lee Watkins, a descendent of Oklahombi and member of Chihowa UMC in Durant, Okla. “For a long time, no one knew what he had done.”

Oklahombi died in 1960 and is buried in the cemetery at Yasho UMC in Broken Bow, Okla.

Jumps into enemy gun pit

The Republic of France awarded Oklahombi the Croix de Guerre medal. The French citation recounts how Oklahombi and 23 men were cut off from the rest of the company. Oklahombi ran 200 meters through a barbed-wire maze and jumped into a machine-gun pit. He turned the captured machine gun against the Germans and held out for four days without food or water and “despite a constant barrage of large projectiles and gas shells.”

His actions contributed to the capture of 171 prisoners. The French citation also stated that he crossed the “no man’s land” territory several times to collect information on the enemy and rescue wounded comrades.

Silver Star

The U.S. Army awarded Oklahombi with the Silver Star with Victory Ribbon for his bravery. No minority soldier at the time had ever received a Medal of Honor. American Indians were not given U.S. citizenship until 1924 and could not vote in some states until 1957.

Some people are attempting to get Oklahombi’s Silver Star upgraded to a Medal of Honor.

“He didn’t enlist to be a hero; he did it because he loved his country,” Watkins said.

According to the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Native Americans have participated in each of America’s major military encounters since the Revolutionary War.

The museum website notes that Native Americans have served in the armed forces at one of the highest rates per capita of all population groups, with approximately 31,000 American Indian and Alaska Native men and women currently serving around the world and 133,000 Native American veterans are alive today.



JOSEPH OKLAHOMBI SERVED AS A CHOCTAW CODE TALKER DURING WORLD WAR I. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



Ginny Underwood is a communication consultant with ties to the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. She is a member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma.

What Kind of Christian Do I Want to Be?

By Bishop Gary Mueller

Maybe it's my age, the fact that I'm in my 40th year of full-time ministry or that I've been a bishop for a while, but, for some reason, I've recently been asking myself, "What kind of Christian do I want to be?"

The interesting thing about my response is that it always begins with the kind of Christian I don't want to be.

I don't want to be one kind of Christian in public and another in my private life.

I don't want to be the kind of Christian who claims he wants to do God's will, but, goes ahead and does what he wants instead.

But most of all, I don't want to be one of those Christians others look at and say, "Well, if he's what a Christian is like, there's no way I want to be one of them."

I want to be a Christian who actually experiences the love of God, which is more powerful than all my insecurities, failures and mistakes.

I want to be a Christian who accepts Jesus' invitation to be in relationship with Him as Lord

and Savior every moment of every day, and to be his follower all the time.

I want to be a Christian who is becoming the person God dreams for me to be, regardless of what's going on in my life, because the love of Christ is transforming my attitude, beliefs, temperament and actions from the inside-out.

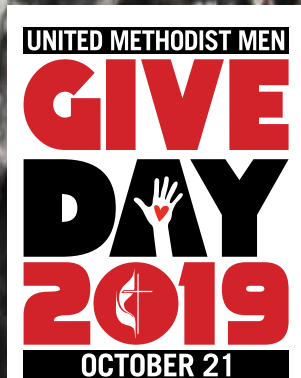
I want to be a Christian who is head-over-heels in love with Jesus for all of eternity.

But, most of all, I want to be a Christian who so loves other people that I can't wait to share His love with them.

So how about you? What kind of Christian do you want to be?



Bishop Gary Mueller is vice president of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.



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Several Ways You Can Support the Ministries of the General Commission on United Methodist Men

This commission raises 75 percent of its budget from donations, the highest percentage of any general program agency in the denomination. The remaining 25 percent comes from the World Service Fund, one of seven general church apportionments.

The commission is grateful for the financial support it receives from individuals, churches, and from United Methodist Men and Scouting organizations.

Men and women who want to honor or remember a friend or family member may do so with a gift to the [United Methodist Men Foundation](#).

Thousands of men give \$45 a year in our [Every Member Shares](#) (EMS) program.

Hundreds of men give \$10 or more a month through their credit cards or bank drafts as [Legacy Builders](#).

A few men give \$1,500 or more a year as members of the [Circuit Rider Society](#).

Thousands of churches give \$85 per year for [charter subscriptions](#). Some churches have renewed their charters every year since 1942. Each chartered church receives a packet of new resources every year.

You may also give awards and recognitions that support the ministries of United Methodist Men.

- [The Society of John Wesley](#)
\$1,000
- [Engraved Pavers in Front of Commission Office](#)
\$500 or \$200
- [Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence](#)
\$500
- [Life Achievement Award](#)
\$250
- [Silver Torch Award \(Scouting\)](#)
\$75
- [Cross and Flame Award \(Scouting\)](#)
\$60
- [Torch Award \(Scouting\)](#)
\$60
- [Good Samaritan Award \(Youth\)](#)
\$60
- [Bishop's Award of Excellence \(Scouting unit\)](#)
\$50
- [Shepherd Church Charter \(Scouting church\)](#)
\$25



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United Methodist Men Promise to Continue Their Ministries Regardless of General Church Actions

The General Commission on United Methodist Men, meeting August 15-17, agreed that no matter what the 2020 General Conference decides, the commission is going to continue its ministry to men and young people.

In his opening address, Mississippi Bishop James Swanson Sr., president of the board, asked the 20-member board to adjust their Friday committee meeting schedule to allow time to prepare a statement to the denomination.

He noted that ever since the 2019 Special Session, “We’ve been trying to make decisions while running toward a precipice. We’re getting ready to destroy something God has created,” he said

“In Mississippi alone, we have over 900 churches and other ancillary ministries. There are countless numbers of men and boys who are counting on us to stay the course.”

“We are keenly aware of the conversations surrounding the future structure of connectional ministry within The United Methodist Church as we move toward General Conference 2020,” said Swanson. “However, we refuse to allow these conversations to dampen our spirits or our commitment to fulfilling our purpose.”

On Saturday morning, the board unanimously finalized their statement to the church:



MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD AND STAFF OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON UNITED METHODIST MEN GATHER IN FRONT OF THEIR OFFICE ON MUSIC ROW IN NASHVILLE.

“The General Commission on United Methodist Men is committed to expanding its ministry to men and youth within all Wesleyan communions, regardless of the outcome of the 2020 General Conference.”

“The meeting was encouraging and confirming that United Methodist Men are determined to continue to fulfill the Great Commission,” said Tarmo Lilleoja, a commission member from Estonia.

Hammering out a new mission statement

The commission took a long prayerful and thoughtful look at its ministry in light of the current context of the world and the church.

“We have decided that our primary purpose for which we were created in 1996, ‘to declare the centrality of Christ in the lives of men in all their relationships,’ has not been fulfilled,” said Swanson.

“In fact, given the context of our world that in every facet of men’s lives today we see more of a need to be ‘a creative, supportive fellowship of men who seek to know Jesus Christ, to grow spiritually and to seek daily His will.’”

Under the leadership of the Rev. Jennifer Wilson, chair of the Personnel Committee, the 20-member team began the process of hammering out a new mission statement.

By Saturday afternoon, the assembly referred a possible new statement to the executive committee for refinement and possible legislative action by the 2020 General Conference.

“The purpose of the Commission on United Methodist Men is to coach men to thrive through Christ so others will know him.”

“The meeting inspired me to give my best to the United Methodist Men of the Philippines,” said Carlos Manio.

“I am energized by the proactive organization going forward,” said Steve Nailor, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents of United Methodist Men. “The future of United Methodist Men is an ever-changing ministry, and I’m glad to be proud to be engaged with it.”

In other actions, the board:

- Learned there are 314,493 Boy Scouts meeting in United Methodist Churches, the largest number of any denomination and United Methodist congregations are welcoming Scouts from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which will drop BSA on December 31. Steven Scheid, director of The Center for Scouting Ministries, participated in the World Jamboree of Scouting, and he is working to increase the presence of the denomination in Scouting in other nations.
- Learned that *the Amending Together through Faith*, an 8-week study to reduce domestic violence, has been used by groups of United Methodist Men across the nation and college groups.
- Established October 21 as United Methodist Men Gift Day, an opportunity for United Methodist to support Scouting, efforts to reduce domestic violence, resources for men’s ministries, support of hunger-relief efforts, prayer ministries, Strength for Service, and scores of other outreach ministries.
- Agreed to recommend making changes to four resolutions in the 2020 *Book of Resolution* and one change in the 2020 *Book of Discipline*.
- Celebrated the accomplishments of the commission as several members, including Bishop Swanson, have served two 4-year terms and will retire in 2020.
- Noted that the Society of St. Andrew is celebrating 40 years of providing meals for hungry people; the agency set August 27 as a “Day of Giving.”

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THIS IS **YOUR INVITATION** TO PARTNER WITH OTHER GENEROUS, INVOLVED MEN ON THEIR MISSION TO :

- ♥ Address root causes of domestic violence by providing *Amending through Faith* resources to men of all ages.
- ♥ Challenge churches and provide them resources to minister to young people by establishing *Cub Scout packs, Boy and Girl Scout troops, and Camp Fire groups.*
- ♥ Provide churches with a wealth of information and resources to help them reach unchurched men, and to provide spiritual-growth opportunities for church members.
- ♥ Encourage men to serve as big brothers to boys whose fathers are incarcerated through the *Amachi program of Big Brothers Big Sisters*
- ♥ Provide materials and information that will enable men to participate in accountability groups similar to *class meetings* established by John Wesley.
- ♥ Recruit and train people to serve as prayer partners to respond to prayers posted on the *Upper Room Prayer Wall.*
- ♥ Provide hearing aids for children in Haiti through a program created by Gil Hanke.
- ♥ Encourage churches to establish *Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY)* classes for Scouts and other young people.
- ♥ Feed hungry people through potato drops, gleanings, and fund-raising projects coordinated by the *Society of St. Andrew.*
- ♥ Provide opportunities with *Mobility Worldwide* to build hand-crank carts for people in Third World countries who have lost the ability to walk.
- ♥ Recruit, train and certify men to serve as men's ministry or Scouting ministry specialists. These volunteer leaders help neighboring churches discover effective ways to reach men and youth in their communities.
- ♥ Distribute copies of *Strength for Service* books to first responders and military troops.
- ♥ Participate in *Rise Against Hunger* food packaging events.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE DATE:

October 21 is the day after Laity Sunday, which is celebrated every third Sunday in October. The day was established in 1928 as "Laymen's Day" by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1930, the Evangelical Church had begun celebrating the work of laity at the culmination of each annual men's retreat. These early celebrations focused only on the ministry of men.

Today, Laity Day is inclusive of both genders.

THREE EASY WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE:

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3. SEND A CHECK TO: P.O. Box 440515
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Service to Mankind Award

ALBANY, GEORGIA

The Albany Sertoma Club presented its 2019 Service to Mankind Award to Larry Price, former president of South Georgia UM Men (2004-2008) and the Southeastern Jurisdiction of UM Men (2012-2016).



From left: Marvin Laster, Larry Price, Steve Dilts, and Mark Mitchell.

Larry is also past president of the Kiwanis Club of Dougherty County and past president and current board member of Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany.

Michigan church honors pair

MIO, MICHIGAN

The Rev. Brenda Klacking, pastor of Mio UMC, presented a Life Achievement Award to Jerry Dall. UM Men President William Kusey Sr. presented the same award to Dennis Maier.



From left: UM Men President William Kusey Sr., Dennis Maier, Jerry Dall, and the Rev. Benda Klacking.

Both men have held positions in the UM Men organization.

For 29 years, they worked with Kusey and Dennis Kann to serve fund-raising beef dinners. Meals are served during January, February, and March.

UM Men vice-president leads peanut sales

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Men of Centenary UMC presented Jack Cole with a Life Achievement Award following his service as vice-president of UM Men and co-leader of the Peanut Labeling Group. Jack and his wife, Anza, lead the annual effort that sold 132 jars of peanuts and provided \$300,000 for mission projects.



Jack and Anza Cole

A 50-year church member, Jack has served as treasurer of his Sunday school class, a member of the Church Council, a member of the Communion Committee, and an usher. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of UM Men.

'Work don't stop -- You stop'

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Wesley UMC presented Wilfred Johnson, 76, with the Man of the Year Award for his service as a van driver, a member of the male- and combined-choirs, current vice chairman of the Board of Trustees (chair from 2008-2015) and as a teacher of an adult Sunday school class.

A regular visitor to members who are sick and shut-in, Johnson uses his carpentry and handyman skills to help with members with home repairs.



Wilfred Johnson (center) accepts his award surrounded by his children: Wilfred Johnson Jr.; daughter, Anitra; Johnson; son, Cameron Graham; daughter, Monica; and daughter, Kimberly Graham.

The father of eight children constantly bellows, "Work don't stop. You Stop!"

The Board of Trustees presented him with a plaque declaring him Man of the Year and UM Men gave him a plaque embossed with "Work Don't Stop".

Men present first Life Achievement Award

LEXINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Men of Mt. Hebron UMC have been honoring church members with Life Membership Awards since 1985. Fifteen men have received that honor during that 33-year time span.

In 2019, the UM Men Foundation changed the Life Membership Award to the Life Achievement Award.



Dr. Thomas R. Edmonds

Mt. Hebron UM Men thus began a new tradition as they presented their first Life Achievement Award to Dr. Thomas R. Edmonds (DMD).

He was honored for providing dental care for people in Honduras and for volunteering at a children's dental clinic in Lexington.

He has served as lay leader, chair of the Church Council, chair of the Stewardship Committee, chair of the Building Committee for the Children's Wing, and a mentor for members of the Confirmation Class. He also teaches an adult Sunday school class and leads the hash crew at the annual UM Men barbecue.

Lucretia Ward named charter customer care coordinator

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

The General Commission on UM Men has named Lucretia (Cre) Ward, former vice president of Nashville-based wireless consulting company, as the charter customer care coordinator.



Cre Ward

Cre served as vice president of e-desk operations for G Squared (G2) Wireless from 2010 to 2019. In that position, she attended industry conferences, upper management meetings and led a 10-person team to manage wireless transactions for 25 companies, including several in the Fortune 500.

G2 is known for providing companies with the maximum benefits from their investments in mobile software applications and it operates a top-rated help-desk.

"Cre has many of the gifts and graces needed in this position and is eager to learn new skills," said Martha Davis, chief operating officer for the commission.

Cre succeeds Joe Strausbaugh who left the post at the end of April.

With a B.S. degree in business administration from the University of Tennessee at Martin, Cre served as the store manager of an AT&T Wireless store in Jackson, Tenn., from 2001 to 2006. In that position, she advised customers on all new wireless communications technologies.

In 2006, Cre moved to Nashville where she served as the account manager for Dell Corporation. In that position, she managed 150 accounts and met or exceeded \$1 million quarterly sales goals.

In 2008, she took a position as a consultant with AT&T Wireless where she again increased sales through effective product marketing.

"I'm so happy to join the team at the commission," says Cre. "I look forward to getting to know everyone and learning the job."

Theatre technician enhances worship

HURRICANE, WEST VIRGINIA

Men of St. John UMC presented Joe McCullough with a Life Achievement Award following 11 years of service as the worship leader.



Joe McCullough

Following graduation from Oklahoma City University (B.A. in technical theatre), Joe served St. John UMC as the congregational hymn leader before being named minister of worship in 2008. He now uses his theater skills along with audio and visual aspects to enhance worship services.

The son and grandson of Methodist clergymen, Joe says, "St. John is a second home for me."

In Memoriam

Dr. George C. Washington III



Dr. George C. Washington III, 91, former president of UM Men of the Mississippi Annual Conference, died October 2018.

A fellow in the Society of John Wesley and a recipient of the Order of Dickson Award from the Mississippi Annual Conference, he served as a member of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Episcopacy Committee.

Dr. Washington was a certified lay servant minister and served Aldersgate UMC as president of the UM Men organization, the Prime Timers, and the Board of Trustees.

He served as a trustee of the former UM Gulfside Assembly and as a member of the Board of Trustees for Piney Woods School, where there is a greenhouse named in his honor.

Following his 1948 graduation from Alabama A&M College (now University), Dr. Washington received two graduate degrees from Indiana University in Bloomington.

He served as a biology professor at Jackson State College (now University) from 1957 to 1999, and he continued as an adjunct professor for a few years following his retirement. While serving in the Biology Department, he received a “Teacher of the Year Award”.

He was a member of a faculty team that received the first National Science Foundation grant given to Jackson State.

Dr. Washington received the “Kappa Man of the Year” from the Jackson Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and the “Lifetime Achievement Award”. At the time of his death, he was the oldest surviving member of the fraternity in the state of Mississippi.

He was a three-time president of the Jackson Northwest Optimist Club, and he served as a member of the Jackson Historic Preservation Committee.

Dr. Washington’s spiritual journey began at St. John CME Church in Gadsden, Ala. He was nurtured in both St. John and Sweet Home Methodist Episcopal Church, where his mother was a member. After moving to Jackson, he joined Anderson Methodist Church and later transferred to Aldersgate UMC.

He served in the 406th Engineer Battalion of the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict, where he earned an Occupation Medal.

He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Dora S. Washington; his children: Edith Patrice Colbert, M.D., Chesterfield, Mo.; George C. Washington, IV, Austin, Texas; Tamara Y. Washington, Falls Church, Va.; and six grandchildren.

Tim Ewing

Tim Ewing, 58, Virginia Annual Conference Scouting Coordinator, died August 19 while working to overhaul the USS George Washington aircraft carrier.

“Tim was not only known for his faith and integrity but also for his endless work to support the Boy Scouts,” said Steven Scheid, director of the Scouting Ministry Center. “His death comes as a shock. He will be deeply missed.”

“Tim’s impact runs deep, as he mentored the youth and always lent a helping hand when needed,” said the Rev. Robert Chapman, Ewing’s pastor at Chestnut Memorial UMC, “He was a disciple of the lord, God was very true to his heart and mind and that really affected all of the things he did.”

Tim was an Eagle Scout and a leader of Boy Scouts Troop 11 at the church, as well as at the district and conference levels.

He also served on the church’s Board of Trustees. “I don’t think you can walk on church property without having seen Tim’s influence,” said Chapman. “His hand prints are all over the buildings and grounds and inside our building here.”

Jennifer Boykin, president of the Newport News Shipyard, said the accident that led to Ewing’s death is under investigation. The 58-year-old construction supervisor was working inside a small tank on the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier when he fell.

At the shipyard, Tim coordinated Boy Scout volunteers for ship christenings, Boykin said. The week before his death Tim was honored by the shipyard with an ethics award for “credibility in his actions, honesty and never-quit attitude.”



Extend Your Church's Outreach through Scouting

By Ty LaValley

Scouts BSA Girl Troop 295, chartered by Springfield (Ga.) UMC, made history on April 1, 2019, when they held their first meeting at Camp K.T. Wallace. The troop is the first Scouts BSA girl troop in the Coastal Georgia Council in the South Georgia Annual Conference.

The troop began with three girls who crossed over from Pack 295, chartered by Guyton UMC. Two of the girls previously earned the Arrow of Light Award, Cub Scouting's highest award. The girls immediately jumped into the BSA fingerprinting merit-badge class and selected merit-badge classes for a summer week at Camp Bert Adams outside Covington, Ga. They will join a troop of boys of the same number from the Springfield church.

Frank Patterson, a 2011 recipient of the UM Torch Award, said he began the girl troop in order "to see the girls have their opportunity to earn the Eagle Scout Award." Frank was the Scoutmaster of the boy troop for more than 18 years before assuming the position of district commissioner, a post he held for six years. He returned to serve as Scoutmaster of the girl's troop in order to pioneer this new expression of Scouting.

Troop 295 joins Troop 1, chartered by Bonaire UMC in the North Central District, and numerous Cub Scout packs throughout the South Georgia Conference in welcoming girls.



Ty LaValley is a scouting ministry specialist serving as scouting coordinator for the South Georgia Annual Conference. He is the former director of scouting ministries in Cote d'Ivoire and a recipient of the Silver Torch Award.

Rincon UMC

A few miles away, Rincon UMC is a prime example of how an aging congregation with few young families can still affect the mission of evangelism in the community

through Scouting ministries. Although the church has only three children and three young people attending church on any given Sunday, the campus overflows with youth and children on Monday and Tuesday nights with a Boy Scout troop, a Cub Scout pack, and two Girl Scout troops.

The units serve as a bridge between the church and the community.

The congregation partners with the units to offer Program of Religious Activities for Youth (PRAY) classes. Thirty-four Scouts received age-appropriate religious awards. In addition, the congregation recognized 10 adult mentors, and awarded the Cross and Flame Award to Scoutmaster Seth Zeigler and the Torch Award to Ken Luikart, former Scoutmaster who now serves as chair of the Scouting Committee.

The Boy Scout troop also provided push power for the "Faster Pastor" entry in a "bed race" benefiting Family Promise, a ministry to homeless families.

The four Scouting units based at Rincon UMC provide thousands of service hours to the church and community.

Altogether, 88 churches in the South Georgia Conference provide homes for 128 BSA units and 52 Girl Scout (GSUSA) units.



Three girls begin a girl BSA troop at Springfield (Ga.) UMC.

Sixteen Scouters Trained at Philmont Scout Ranch

Best practices in faith-based Scouting were taught at BSA's Philmont Training Center during the June 16-22 Faith Week.

Sixteen participants from around the United States engaged in a fast-paced and information-laden course. Thirty-four training modules were presented, including: Recruiting and Retention; Generating Youth Participation; Special Needs Scouting; Building A Conference Scout Team; Community Outreach; Operational Excellence; Interfaith Scouting; Bishop's Dinners; Mental Health; First Aid; Religious Emblems; Family Scouting; Girl Scouts USA; and other courses related to best practices in Scouting ministry.

The course was led by Steven Scheid, director of the Center for Scouting Ministry; Course Director Caroline Rudisill, Texas Annual Conference Scouting Coordinator; and Assistant Course Director Rev. Dr. Scott Pickering, pastor of Cornerstone UMC in Newnan, Ga. They were joined by Jim Marchblank, co-chair of the National Religious Relations Committee, and former course directors Susan Lawyer, Amanda Vogt, and Cliff Coan.

North Georgia Conference Scouting Coordinator Chris Karabinos provided information for Scouting coordinators of other annual conferences.

Additional faculty members included Don

Cohick, Rebecca Harley, Alyssa Hightower, Duane Jackson, Patrick Liang, John Lyon, Evelyn Williams, Michael Williams, and Ronnie Williams. Each of the faculty members shared the best practices in their field of expertise.

Course participants included newly appointed leaders and experienced conference coordinators. They all shared their passion and action plans for their churches, communities, and Scouting units.

Course visitors included BSA Commissioner Ellie Morrison; BSA Assistant Chief Scout Executive Patrick Sterrett; and Jewish Scouters Bruce Chudacoff and Norman Kahn.

Mark Francis, co-chair of the 2020 Vision Committee for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, told of the plans of that church as it ceases its formal relationship with BSA at the end of 2019.

Each visitor enriched participants' appreciation of the ministries of their Scouting partners.

The class received Holy Communion and participated in a Bethlehem Light of Peace ceremony. They gave generously to the outreach program of El Pueblito UMC, and the experience made Scouting a truly connectional ministry.

The Rev Dr Scott Pickering will be the director of the 2020 course.



Northern Illinois Conference Disciples Serve their Communities

By Jim Loeppert

It's been more than a year since George Groves, president of Northern Illinois Conference UM Men, appointed me to the post of Conference Scouting Coordinator. It has been the most rewarding ministry that I have undertaken.

Yes, I came up through BSA as a Scout and adult leader. I also served as a district and council leader. But, being a Conference Scouting Coordinator opened new opportunities for outreach to community youth. This ministry doesn't replace Sunday school or UM youth activities. However, it completes a youth-ministry program by providing opportunities to go out into the world to make disciples.

A UM church that works with BSA, GSUSA, Campfire, and/or Big Brothers/Big Sisters reaches young people beyond the church. Leaders mentor youth in exploring their relationship with God.

A ministry with these youth-serving agencies works in big churches, little churches, and churches without children or youth.



WHAT'S NEW?

1. The new mega Pathway to Adventure Council of BSA in Northern Illinois is reaching out to under-served communities with an innovative program called "Restoring the Village". Churches or community organizations can invite BSA to charter a unit. In this environment, the council provides trained leaders to fill roles usually held by parents. This jump-start demonstrates the values of Scouting. As success is achieved, the operation of the unit is transitioned to proud parents.
2. The council is also developing an improved STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) program. Scouting is no longer confined to the outdoors and camping. This program allows students to learn skills while working within the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
3. Girl Scouts are also engaged in a make-over. They have introduced **GIRL** (Go-Getter; Innovator; Risk-Taker; Leader). This program focuses on developing exceptional leaders within the traditional Girl Scout moral compass.
4. Girl Scouts of the USA has reached out to the faith community. They recently hired Kara Ball to be the senior manager of Faith-Based Relations. She has a long track record of working with faith groups professionally. She is an outstanding partner.

Are you as excited as I am about the potential for community youth outreach ministries in your church? The ministry provides the opportunity to mentor young people in their growth and faith development.

Please look into Scouting ministries of the UMC.

Lost Man

A man had been lost and walking in the desert for about five days. One hot day, he comes to the home of a preacher. Tired and weak, he crawls up to the house and collapses on the doorstep. The preacher takes him in and nurses him back to health.

Feeling better, the man asks the preacher for directions to the nearest town. The preacher tells him the directions and offers to lend him his horse to make it. The preacher says, "However, there is a special thing about this horse. You have to say 'Thank God' to make it go and 'Amen' to make it stop."

Anxious to get to town, the man says, "Sure, OK," and gets on the horse. He says, "Thank God" and sure enough, the horse starts walking. A bit later he says louder, "Thank God, Thank God," and the horse starts trotting. Feeling really brave, the man says, "Thank God! Thank God! THANK GOD!" and the horse is soon up to a full gallop.

About then he realizes he's heading for a huge cliff and yells, "Whoa!" But the horse doesn't even slow. It's coming up REAL QUICK and he's doing everything he can to make the horse stop. "Whoa, stop, hold on!" Finally, he remembers, "AMEN!"

The horse stops a mere two inches from the cliff's edge, almost throwing him over its head. The man, panting and heart racing, wipes the sweat from his face and leans back in the saddle. "Oh!" he said, gasping for air, "Thank God."



North Georgia Conference honors district superintendent

ATHENS, GEORGIA

Georgia Conference presented the Rev. Brian Clark, superintendent of the Athens Elberton District, with the Cross and Flame Award at St James UMC (Athens, Ga.) for helping start Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops in the district. Brian includes Scout leader training at district events, and he encourages churches to offer PRAY classes.



Dr. Brian Clark, second from left, receives the Cross and Flame Award.

A graduate of Reinhardt University (A.B.), Candler School of Theology (M.Div.), and Erskine Theological Seminary (D.Min.), Dr Clark was appointed to the North Carolina Conference cabinet in 2017.

Bethel UMC honors Scout leader

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Bethel UMC presented Jeff Carson with a Cross and Flame Award for his service as Scouting coordinator for the Atlanta-College Park District and chair of the 2018 Bishop's Scout Lunch. The 10-year Scout veteran also serves on the staff of the Scouters' Religious Academy.



Jeff Carson (second from left) receives a Cross and Flame Award.

North Georgia Conference presents three Cross and Flame Awards

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Three UM Scout leaders received Cross and Flame Awards during the Scouters' Religious Academy.



From Left: Chris Karabinos, North Georgia Conference Scouting coordinator; Rebecca Harley; Yolanda Wareham; Brad Ripple; and Steven Scheid, director of the Center for Scouting Ministries.

Rebecca Harley, co-founder of the academy, chairs the North Georgia Conference Scout Training Committee and serves as a

PRAY class instructor. She is a 25-year veteran BSA leader and a 15-year veteran Girl Scout leader.

Yolanda Wareham is a 21-year veteran with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and co-founder of the academy. She has served as a Cubmaster, academy trainer, and a PRAY class instructor.

Brad Ripple, Scouting coordinator for the Athens-Elberton District, started several Scout units and is a Boy Scout leader at Peachtree Road UMC.

Mt. Zion UMC presents Cross and Flame Award

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Mt. Zion UMC presented a Cross and Flame Award to Ernest Perry, a Scouting ministry specialist since 2007.



Ernest Perry (center) receives a Cross and Flame Award.

Ernest serves as the Scouting coordinator for the Atlanta-College

Park District and president of Mt. Zion UM Men. The 27-year Scout veteran has served as a Scout trainer for the North Georgia Conference UM Men.

Church presents two Cross and Flame Awards

CANTON, GEORGIA

Hickory Flatt UMC presented Cross and Flame Awards to Tim Moss and Mary Ann Laughlin.

Tim, a 25-year Scouting veteran, serves as Scouting coordinator for the Atlanta-Marietta District and is a regular moderator of PRAY classes.

Mary Ann is a former charter organization representative for the church and a PRAY class instructor.



Tim Moss and Mary Ann Laughlin hold their Cross and Flame Awards.

Church honors two Scout leaders

JOHNS CREEK, GEORGIA

Johns Creek UMC presented the God and Church Award to Malcom Wills and the Cross and Flame Award to Jerry Stillabower.

Malcolm, a 20-year Scout veteran, has led the PRAY Awards program at the church for eight years and is the PRAY coordinator for the North Georgia Conference.

Jerry serves as Scouting coordinator for the Atlanta Roswell District. The 20-year Scout veteran served as the charter organization representative for the church, which charters eight BSA units and hosts 12 GSA troops. Jerry has led multiple PRAY classes at all levels.



Malcolm Wills (second from left) and Jerry Stillabower (third from left)

Scout Council presents religious awards

DALTON, OHIO

The Buckeye BSA Council presented religious awards to Liam Linebaugh, Noah Clark, and Chase McCoy, members of Cub Scout Pack 16, sponsored by First UMC of Columbiana, Ohio. Terry McCoy served as their counselor.



From left: Terry McCoy, religious awards counselor for Pack 16; Liam Linebaugh; Noah Clark; Chase McCoy; and Rick May, a scouting ministry specialist who chairs the Sandy Beaver District Religious Committee.

Church give Cross and Flame Awards

WATSONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Watsonstown UMC presented Cross and Flame Awards to the Rev. Ryan Krauss, pastor; and Paul Huffman, a Scouting ministry specialist.

Lynda Schlegel Culver, state representative for Northumberland County, presented special citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to both recipients.

Ryan is a graduate of Albright College (A.B.) and Princeton Theological Seminary (M.Div). Previously, he served for three years as a chaplain in Pennsylvania state parks.



From left: Representative Lynda Schlegel Culver, Russell McClintock, the Rev. Ryan Krauss, Paul Huffman, and Harry Hefty.

Paul is a member of the Religious Emblem Committee of the Susquehanna BSA Council and a member of the National Eagle Scout Association.

Conference presents Silver Torch

SIMPSONVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Pat Long, former Scouting coordinator for the South Carolina Conference, received a Silver Torch Award for years of service to the conference, the Southeast Jurisdiction, and the National Scouting office.



Pat Long (center) receives a Silver Torch Award from Marvin Horton, president of the South Carolina Conference UM Men, and the Rev. Robert Cox, Scouting coordinator for South Carolina Annual Conference.

Harry Denman Youth Award

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

Virginia Conference presented Chris Ganoë with the Harry Denman Youth Award for receiving three Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY) Awards. He is completing his fourth PRAY study, which will give him the PRAY Four Star Award. He is also leading an Eagle Scout project. "Chris is the future of our conference and nation," says Virginia Conference Scouting Coordinator Bill Chaffin.



Bill Chaffin congratulates Chris Ganoë after he received the Harry Denman Youth Award.

Water Closet or Wesley Chapel?

An English schoolteacher is looking for a room in Switzerland. She calls a local schoolmaster to help her find a suitable accommodation.

Knowing that not every room has a bathroom or water closet (W.C.) as it is known in England, She asks if the W.C. is near the room.

The schoolmaster, not knowing the English expression, is puzzled by the term "W.C." He asks the parish priest. He says, "She must mean the Wesley Chapel."

The lady receives the following letter:

"Dear Madam:

The W.C. is located nine miles from the house, in the heart of a beautiful grove of trees. It will seat 150 people at one time, and is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. Some people bring their lunch and make a day of it.

On Thursdays there is an organ accompaniment. The acoustics are very good. The slightest sound can be heard by everyone.

It may interest you to know that my daughter met her husband at the W.C.

We are now in the process of taking donations to purchase plush seats. We feel that this is a long-felt need, as the present seats have holes in them.

My wife, being rather delicate, hasn't been able to attend regularly. It has been six months since she last went. Naturally, it pains her not to be able to go more often.

I will close now with the desire to accommodate you in every way possible, and will be happy to save you a seat either down front or near the door, as you prefer."

Scout's honor...
they're counting on *you*.



ST. ANDREW'S UM MEN IN VIRGINIA BEACH SUPPORT BOY SCOUT TROOP 417

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Many People Have Clogged Arteries and Don't Know It

By Dr. Bryant Stamford

If you follow the American lifestyle of consuming unhealthy foods in excess and avoiding exercise, over time the arteries can become dangerously clogged. This is called atherosclerosis, and clogged areas in arteries are referred to as plaques.

At first, plaques are mushy, but over several years the plaques become calcified, meaning they harden and are cemented in place. The purpose of a Coronary Calcium Scan (CCS) is to detect and quantify calcium in the coronary arteries. In turn, the amount of calcium detected serves to reflect the degree of advanced atherosclerosis.

To be clear, CCS is not without controversy. Mushy plaques go undetected because they have not yet calcified, and therefore it's possible to get a good (low) score despite having lots of mushy plaques that are clogging the arteries.

For this reason, CCS have been criticized as possibly promoting a false sense that all is well inside the arteries when the opposite can be the case.

However, if you understand the purpose and limitations of the test, the information can be valuable to you and your doctor.

Plus, the test is easily accessible and inexpensive.

A CASE STUDY

I am a big believer in the value of CCS, as is cardiologist Dr. Henry Sadlo, an evangelist for preventive cardiology.

Dr. Sadlo shared an experience with me.

He met a guy, I will call Fred, at a gathering and was able to spend some time talking with him.

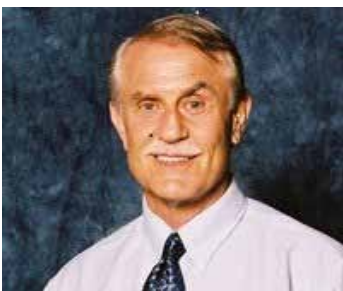
During their conversation, Fred revealed that his brother in his early 50s had just had a heart attack. Henry probed for information. Was he a smoker? Was he overweight and inactive? What about his diet?

Not a smoker and nothing unusual about him that would explain his heart attack in the prime of life. Thus, perhaps there was a hereditary influence at work. In other words, some folks are born with characteristics that predispose them to heart disease.

Sadlo noticed that Fred appeared to be the picture of health, slender and athletic looking. Fred told him that he runs a few miles several days a week. That sounded good.

However, Sadlo was intrigued about his brother's heart attack at a young age and he encouraged Fred to have a CCS to see where he stood and if there might be a family connection.

Fred followed through with the scan and the score turned out to be quite high. When they met to discuss the findings, Sadlo asked Fred if he ever had any symptoms of heart disease, like chest pain.



Bryant Stamford is a professor of kinesiology and integrative physiology at Hanover College in Indiana. This article is courtesy of the Louisville Courier Journal.

FIRST SYMPTOM

As Fred thought about it, at first, he said no. Then he recalled what he figured was a minor incident hardly worth mentioning. When the elevator in his building was out of service, he quickly climbed six flights of stairs and in the process experienced some tightness in his chest. But, since the pain wasn't that bad, and it went away quickly, he didn't think any more about it. Certainly, it wasn't anything to see a doctor about.

Pain in the chest, and particularly tightness, can be a prime indicator of cardiac involvement and a symptom of heart disease. On the other hand, chest pain can be caused by a number of factors unrelated to the heart.

The key here is that having had a CCS, and the combination of a high scan score plus symptoms of chest tightness concerned Sadlo. He ordered sophisticated tests to look inside Fred's arteries.

Sure enough, there were major problems that needed to be addressed. Fred had severe atherosclerosis, narrowing his coronary arteries, and it required immediate attention in the form of coronary artery bypass surgery.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fred, a seemingly healthy, robust, physically active man in the prime of life was suffering from advanced heart disease but didn't know it.

Yes, he had had a brief bout of chest pain, but he didn't give it a second thought. That's human nature, and without Sadlo probing him for details due to concerns caused by his high CCS, nothing would have been done, allowing atherosclerosis to advance further and greatly increase Fred's risk of a heart attack.

The way things played out, a strong case can be made that the coronary calcium scan was instrumental in saving Fred from a heart attack, and it possibly saved his life.



When Dad is Not There

Tom and his wife had the pleasure of hosting their daughter and two grandsons for a couple of weeks while their son-in-law was on a month-long trip. His time was limited to a few FaceTime calls and one brief in-person get-together.

So, 3-year-old Tyler's full-time playmate was Putter.

An explanation is needed. When Tyler was born, Tom wanted a unique name for himself. It had to be a complete departure from Gramps, Papa T, or Poppoff. Tom is a lousy golfer, but Putter seemed a suitable appellation (Golf has to offer something positive).

Putter was just a stand-in

Tyler and Putter played a lot. Tyler wanted to play all day. Putter needed time in the clubhouse – alone. And while Tyler and Putter were best pals, Putter noticed how much Tyler missed his daddy. When Tyler was reminded that his daddy wouldn't come home tonight, tomorrow or the next day, he would become downcast. Putter would try to make him laugh, and most times he was successful, but at the mention of his daddy, Tyler would tear up.

It was apparent to Putter that his 3-year-old grandson really, really, really missed his daddy. Sometimes, no amount of games and toys and making funny faces with Putter could overcome the gloom of not having his daddy there. Daddy was the main player in his young son's life. Putter was a pinch-hitter.

Missing in action

What about all those young children whose daddy is missing in action or who's not part of their kids' lives at all? Worse yet, what about the daddy who comes home every evening after work and buries himself in the TV or newspaper and hardly acknowledges his kids? Watching Tyler ache for his daddy was tough enough, but everyone knew his daddy would return eventually. In some families, daddy is just another word for an empty space.

You are loved

To you dads out there, we will state the obvious. Be present in your children's lives. Your kids long for your attention, your voice, your funny faces, your silly noises, your perspective, your presence. When you go off to work, they miss you like crazy. A big part of their small world is missing. They will think about you a lot. But they won't be able to feel your hug or hop on their favorite sore-knee-daddy bronco and hold on for dear life. You'll come home from work tired and worn to a frazzle. Shake it off, Dad. You have even more important work to do—play with your kid.

We grownups can't measure that void. We cannot understand what it feels like to our small child when we aren't there. We dads need to know our absence can create fear or sadness in our child's life. "I'll be back as soon as I can," you say as you walk out the door. To your young child—and to Tyler—that means a very long time.

So, Daddy, when you're home, really be there. When you're not home, get there as soon as you can. Someone misses you so much, it hurts.



*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.*



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PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Strength for Service distributes 400 books to first responders

After distributing 5,000 books to military veterans and first responders in Dallas on Memorial Day, Larry Coppock, top staff executive of the Nashville-based Strength for Service organization, hopped over to Phoenix where he distributed 400 books to police officers and fire fighters attending the fifth annual prayer breakfast for fire fighters and law enforcement officers.

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich gave the address at the May 29 event at the Grand Canyon University Arena.

Doug Wright, a member of the Strength for Service Board of Directors, helped Coppock distribute the books to fire fighters and police officers attending the annual event.



Larry Coppock (left) and Doug Wright (right) congratulate Chaplain Richard S. Todd of the Buckeye Police Dept. He received one of three awards presented to first responders for outstanding achievement. He coordinates the department's victim-advocate program and crisis intervention for its employees.

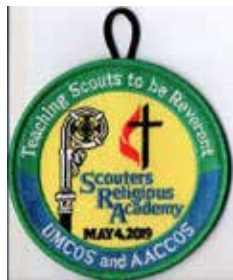


ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Scouting committee conducts religious academy

The North Georgia Conference Scouting Committee hosted its third annual Scouters' Religious Academy at Peachtree Road UMC on May 4th.

"In today's Scout units, many leaders are hesitant to talk about faith for fear of stepping on someone's toes," said Chris Karabinos, conference Scouting coordinator. "This academy reminded Scout leaders that not only is it OK to talk about faith in Scouts, it is our responsibility."



Jason Noland, executive director of Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY), encouraged Scout leaders to promote the religious emblem programs for all faith groups. Steven Scheid, director of the UM Center for Scouting Ministry, led a session on Scouting in the UMC.

The UM committee invited the Atlanta Archdiocese Catholic Committee on Scouting to co-host the event. Attendees included Scout leaders from the Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox churches, the Muslim community, and six UM annual conferences.

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Men present \$3,500 scholarship

During the 2019 laity session of the South Georgia Annual Conference, UM Men presented a \$3,500 check from the Roy Lifsey Memorial Scholarship Fund to Spencer Sealy vice president of Advancement of Andrew College in Cuthbert, Ga.



Donald Rhodes, president of UM Men of South Georgia Conference, addresses the laity session of the conference prior to presenting a check to Andrew College.

Roy Lifsey (1931–2014) was a leading spokesperson for the creation of the General Commission on UM Men during the 1996 General Conference.

TUCKER, GEORGIA

'Music for Missions' raises \$250,000

Twenty-four years ago, the UM Men Fellowship of Lawrenceville Road UMC wanted to raise money for mission projects. "We considered barbecues, yard sales, magazine sales, and several other one-time projects," says Jack Sartain. The men ended up creating a concert series titled "Music for Missions."



Jack was asked to serve as producer. "I agreed to produce the concert with three caveats: 1) No performer or group will be invited that I have not personally seen or heard; 2) We will not sell tickets or charge admissions; 3) None of the donations—except a small amount to cover the church's overhead such as lights, heating or air conditioning and printing of the quality programs will go to operational or program costs of our local church."

During the last 24 years, 401 concerts by 385 performers attended by 75,000 people raised \$250,000 for various mission projects.

"Our program of concerts includes opera singers, brass bands, swing bands, bluegrass groups, college choirs, community choral groups, pianists, gospel quartets, barbershop groups, organists, magicians, circus acts,



Dr. Bobby Cooper directs the Hinds College Singers, one of the Music for Missions concerts produced by Jack Sartain.

accordionists, and tap-dance teams," says Jack.

The church also hosts a Music Lending Library to help churches and schools that cannot afford to buy much music. The library contains 3,000 anthems, 20 cantatas, and a variety of song books.

AURORA, ILLINOIS

Members assist Oklahoma City charities

The Rev. Derek Rogers, pastor of Flowing Forth UMC led 11 high school youth and nine adults on a mission trip to Oklahoma City.

Ten members of the team partnered with Restore OKC, a job-training ministry that sponsors a community garden.

Ten members worked with Project 58, an effort that converted a church building into apartments for low-income residents.

Every fifth Sunday, Flowing Forth members hold a "Serve Day" where members work in a community garden, serve in a food pantry, and engage in other service projects.

Flowing Forth UMC is the result of a merger of Fourth Street UMC and Flowing Grace UMC, both in Aurora.



PHOTOS BY AL BENSON

Members of the mission team report on their trip to Oklahoma: From left: Paxon Rio, Josh Bode, Chris Stewart; Max Williams, and Roger.

Danny Kenyon places a bag of groceries on the altar of Flowing Forth UMC. Congregants donated 50 bags of groceries to Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry during "Serve Day".



BATAVIA, ILLINOIS

Men present prayer shawl

Aurora District UM Men presented a prayer shawl to Bill Franze, the hunger advocate for the district who is experiencing health issues.



PHOTO BY AL BENSON

From left: The Rev. Cynthia Anderson, senior pastor of Batavia UMC; Joshua Bailey-Green, associate pastor; Herb John, president of Aurora District UM Men; and Greg Hall, president of Batavia UMC.

The shawl was crafted by Wesley UMC in Aurora.

The shawl presentation followed the installation of Greg Hall as president of UM Men of Batavia UMC.

OSWEGO, ILL.

Men provide 21 tons of potatoes

UM Men of the Good Shepherd Church provided 21 tons of potatoes for churches and food banks in the Oswego area.

A tractor-trailer delivered 21 tons of salvaged potatoes in 10-pound bags from Wisconsin to the Oswego church's parking lot.



Men and boys load potatoes into waiting trucks and vans.

DES MOINES, IOWA

Fifty years of portraying the Last Supper

For 50 years, West Des Moines UMC dramatized Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. Various teams of men have presented the drama 426 times, including three shows in 2019.

The event began after men of the church attended the 1969 National Gathering of UM Men at Purdue University.

During that West Lafayette, Ind., event, a team of men recruited by the late Rev. Ernest Emurian of Arlington, Va., presented the Last Supper drama, concluding with Holy Communion and the singing of the Lord's Prayer.

On the trip back to Iowa, four men from the West Des Moines church agreed they should recruit a team of men to portray the event for their congregation.

The drama was first presented on Maundy Thursday in 1970. A crowd of 700 visitors overflowed the first session and about 300 waited downstairs in fellowship hall for a repeat performance. Iowa Bishop James Thomas then asked the troupe to bring the drama to the 1970 annual conference.

"The Last Supper drama has been an important part of our family's life," said Dennis Sibert, who portrays Peter. "It is as moving now as it was that first time 37 years ago."



Jesus and each disciple explains what he is thinking during

WICHITA, KANSAS

Men clean out basements

UM men spent two June days in two basements.

On Friday, June 7, five men worked for six hours to clean out the basement of an elderly man in Hutchinson.

On Saturday, a 17-member team worked for five hours in the basement of a home in Wichita.



AITKIN, MINNEAPOLIS

Men portray Last Supper

Men from Aitkin UMC, Emily UMC and Pine Lake Chapel enacted the Last Supper at a Maundy Thursday service at Aitkin UMC.



CARL JUNCTION, MISSOURI

Men repair tornado damaged homes

Members of Christ's Community UMC in Joplin are accustomed to helping people following months of experience helping victims of a 2011 twister that devastated that city and killed 161 people.

Church members were quickly on the scene when a 2019 tornado damaged homes in Carl Junction, a small town about four miles north of Joplin.

Jeff Koch, a candidate for the position of men's ministry specialist at Christ Community UMC, helped coordinate relief efforts and the construction of two wheel-chair ramps.

"I love Christ's Community," says Jeff.



Some 30 members of Christ's Community UMC in Joplin saw up tree limbs and place tarps on roofs of Carl Junction homes damaged by a May tornado.



Members of Christ's Community UMC build ramps for people with handicapping.

COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA

Cyclists raise \$1,000

In 2019, 13 bike riders and walkers from Columbus raised \$1,000 for Camp Fontanelle, seminary scholarships, and UM Men mission projects.

This was the 18th annual ride/walk organized by Rocky Plettner and Doug Kallesen. During that time, cyclists raised \$120,000 for 35 mission causes in the Great Plains Annual Conference, the nation, and the world.



Columbus bike riders.

GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Books presented at power prayer breakfast

Larry Coppock, top staff executive of Strength for Service, presented 100 copies of Strength for Service to God and Community to participants in the North Carolina Annual Conference Power Prayer Breakfast at Jarvis Memorial UMC.



From left: Larry Coppock; James Enos-Edu, a member of the Strength for Service Board of Directors; Tom Starnes, former president of North Carolina Conference UM Men; and Walter Mills, president.

LAKWOOD, OHIO

Men sponsor Volunteer Day

Men of Lakewood UMC sponsored Volunteer Day where they joined with four other organizations to sort 16,500 pounds of food items at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

“It was a very humbling but rewarding experience for all,” said Bill Fredrick.



Volunteers from Lakewood UMC sort non-perishable and frozen food items for people in need. Lakewood.jpg

CHESTERFIELD, SOUTH CAROLINA

Men provide camp scholarships

Last year, Don Crutchfield worked with the pastors of Ebenezer UMC and Friendship UMC to form a men’s organization.

The group now conducts monthly meetings, and the men sponsored a fish fry that provided \$500 to enable two young people to attend Salkehatchie Camp New Hope.



Don Crutchfield, president of the Men’s Fellowship, presents a check to Carmen Wilks, director of Salkehatchie Camp New Hope.

LEXINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

BSA girl troop wins Bishop’s Award

BSA Troop 9518, chartered by Red Bank UMC, is one of the first girl troops to win a Bishop’s Award of Excellence.

Robin Smith, scouting coordinator, and the Rev. Bob Dunn, pastor, also presented Bishop’s Awards of Excellence to Cub Scout Pack 518 and Boy Scout Troop 518.



NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

A week at the beach for families of fallen first responders

UM Men and two Bible study classes at Trinity UMC provided a free week at the beach for two families of fallen first responders.

“We believe it is time to show an attitude of gratitude for those who put themselves in danger every day on our behalf. Jesus said blessed are the peacemakers, and there are no better examples of peacemakers than our military and first responders,” organizers of Miracle of Hope at the Beach stated.

COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

Scout units honored

Cub Scout Pack 452 and Boy Scout Troop 452 chartered by Arlington UMC each received the Bishop's Award of Excellence in Scouting and The Shepherd Church Charter Recognition during the 2019 session of the Memphis Annual Conference.



From left: Teresa Rector, charter organization representative and religious coordinator of Arlington UMC; the Rev. Larry Woodruff, pastor; and Thom Henning, lay leader.

The Scouting units offer all levels of the PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) classes twice each year.



FROG JUMP, TENNESSEE

UM Men gather for annual event

Frog Jump is a small town located 70 miles northeast of Memphis. The community's name is derived from its size, namely that it's small enough for a frog to jump over in a single hop.

No one can explain why for 17 years, some 500 men annually travel across rural roads to crowd into Archer's Chapel UMC for a Memphis Conference fish-fry.

Seventy-five feet of tables are filled with fish, country ham, hushpuppies, side dishes, and desserts.

Men bring chairs, sit in the choir loft, stand, or sit on the floor. The place is packed.

Each year, the men bring eyeglasses to enable mission teams to provide free vision care for people in underdeveloped countries.

J.D. Walt, vice-president of Seedbed Press at Asbury Theological Seminary, was the speaker at the 2019 event, and Joe Kelley, president of the South-Central Jurisdiction UM Men, was the speaker in 2018.

In 2017, guest speakers included Columbia Area Bishop Jonathan Holston, Nashville Area Bishop Bill McAlilly, and the Rev. Dr. Rick Vance, director of the Center for Men's Ministry.

Gil Hanke was the speaker in 2012.

In 2013, guest speaker McAlilly told the assembly about how a resurrected Christ told seven disciples where to cast their nets (John 21:1-7), "That scripture is the first record of a fish fry," joked the bishop.



Men enjoy a fish fry at Archer's Chapel UMC in Frog Jump, TN.

BEAUMONT, TEXAS

Devotional books given to Vietnam veterans

A.J. Brian, a member of the Strength for Service board of directors, presented copies of Strength for Service to God and Country to Vietnam War veterans attending a ceremony at the Ben J. Rogers Center.



A.J. Brian presents an historic book of daily devotions to Kerwin Stone, a veteran of the Vietnam War.

DALLAS, TEXAS

Veterans carry devotional books

Strength for Service, a non-denominational ministry formed by UM Men, provided 5,000 books of daily devotions to veterans and first responders who participated in “Carry the Load”, a three-team 11,500-mile national relay handing off the American flag every five miles for 32 straight days.

Books were sent to participants in the:

- 4,600-mile march from Seattle to Dallas.
- 3,000-mile march from West Point to Dallas.
- 3,900-mile march from Minneapolis to Dallas.

Carry the Load was founded in 2011 by two veteran U.S. Navy SEALs who wanted to honor veterans and those who gave their lives for America.



Carry the Load chaplains Troy (left) and Doug distribute copies of Strength for Service books to participants on The Katy Trail at Revershon Park in Dallas.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Ice cream treat for teachers

The Men of Northwest Hills UMC provided two ice cream socials for teachers at Carson Elementary School.

They welcomed the teachers with ice cream on the opening day of school, and they returned with the same treats on Teacher Appreciation Day.



UM Men host breakfast every Wednesday at 7 a.m. in the activity center of Northwest Hills UMC.

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

District creates prayer garden

In 2008, men of the York River District created a memorial prayer garden at the Heart Haven's Morrison Home.

The District Board of Missions sold the home in 2018, and St. Mark's UMC agreed to provide a new home for the memorial garden and the paver bricks.

Paver bricks are sold for \$75 and funds support the maintenance of the garden.





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