

# THE MISSOURI METHODISTS



JUNE 2014

**The Missouri Conference Breaks Ground**  
Young Clergy Gather at COR  
Church by Size



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Publications

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On The Cover:  
Ivan James, chairman of the  
Missouri Conference board  
of trustees, speaks at the  
groundbreaking for a new  
addition to the Missouri  
Conference Center.

**A**lrigh loyal readers, we're a year into this thing. The June 7, 2013 issue of The Missouri Conference Review was the last issue of the Missouri Conference newspaper, ending a 40-year relationship the Missouri Conference had with the United Methodist Reporter.

The relationship ended the way most really strong relationships do – one of the partners died. Our partner, UMR Communications, had been ill for some time, although she had bravely tried to deny it. I'd meet with staff there and say, "Are you sure you're OK?", only to get a "Ha. Don't worry about me. I'm fine. I've been here 200 years."

Unfortunately, being around 200 years is no guarantee you'll be around 200 more. As I was sending my last May issue to press, I received an email from UMR saying they had given up the ghost, and would be unplugging the presses forever at the end of the month. I had just enough time to get out that June 7 issue, and after that the Missouri Conference was suddenly single again.

Several years ago my oldest son, who was then very young, was playing little league baseball. There was one kid on his team who could hit the ball into the outfield. The kid thought he was Babe Ruth. He'd step up to the plate, send that first pitch soaring into the outfield, and start running. By the time one of the outfielders ran over and picked up the ball, attempted to throw it to a cut-off man, then he picked it up and attempted to throw it to the wrong base, then it was dropped a couple of more times, the slugger had made it home - a home run every time. The only variable was how many people we had on base.

Then, one fateful day, we played a team with a centerfielder who had the remarkable ability to catch the ball in the air. Our star hitter came up to bat, slammed the ball into the outfield and started his run for first. Then he was called out. He was confused – he really didn't understand what had happened. He had hit the ball really hard like he always did, but now he was out. He went to the bench bewildered.

The next time he was up the same thing played out – a strong hit, caught in the air. Out. This time he teared-up a little.

His third at bat, he really nailed it. And it was caught in the air again. This was the breaking point. He threw his bat into the fence behind the catcher, kicked dirt and went into the worst screaming fit that his youthful vocabulary could muster.

Sometimes you can feel like you're doing everything right, but it still doesn't work. UMR had a rich history, and it was doing a lot of things right, but it wasn't enough. I had considered other publication options for the Conference before, but not with the same intensity as I did when suddenly the time of change was upon us. After an intense but short search, we found a good partner in Modern Litho, a printer in Jefferson City that specializes in small magazines like ours.

Now that we're a year in, I hope readers feel the magazine is less of a prototype, and more of a publication you can count on. But that doesn't mean things should become to routine, we're always looking for ways to adjust our swing. The great thing about publications is you start every issue with blank pages.

Fred Koenig, Editor  
Missouri Conference Publications



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## Missouri Conference Magazine Recognized by RCC

The Missouri Methodists won the Award of Excellence for local or regional publications at the Religion Communicators Council's annual meeting in April. The *DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards* are given to active members of RCC who demonstrate excellence in religious communication and public relations. This year RCC received 212 entries. Each entry was judged on overall quality, including concept, writing, design, creativity, style, use of color, appropriateness of material for intended audience, creative use of resources, and effectiveness in achieving its purpose. Faculty members from the Journalism and Mass Communications Department at Marshall University in Huntington, W.V., were responsible for judging the projects of religion communication professionals across the country. The digital edition of *The Missouri Methodists* ([www.moumethodist.org/momethodists](http://www.moumethodist.org/momethodists)) received an Award of Merit. Faith groups participating in RCC included Presbyterians, Bahá'í, Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist, Soka Gakkai International, Disciples of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist, and others, as well as many faith-based non-profit organizations.



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# Reflecting on Boston



The Boston Marathon. Those three words bring to mind tradition and endurance. For anyone who runs, the words carry a sense of awe, difficulty, and maybe ultimate accomplishment.

But this year, the Boston Marathon carried even greater significance after last year's finish line bombing. Especially for the people of Boston and anyone who ever has crossed that finish line. This year, it was "Boston Strong" – proud, resolute, determined.

I'm one of those. Having run the Boston Marathon ten times (now 11) over the last 25 years, the event has a special, personal significance. Last year on Patriot's Day in Boston, I was in the Atlanta airport headed for Mozambique with our conference's leadership team when the news broke about the tragic bombing. Memories of the course and finish area flooded my mind as I thought of the people who were there, those who had already finished, and those who were trying to help the injured and sort out what happened. I even received several texts, e-mails, and calls from people asking if I was there, expressing concern.

So a few weeks later, when my daughter April said she had qualified and wanted to "run Boston" again (we ran and finished together in 2011), I knew I had to go back too. So did almost 36,000 others as the race officials enlarged the field to accommodate the outpouring of support. But going back wasn't easy. I had to train during the summer and run another marathon (26.2 miles) in a qualifying time, then navigate the registration process that cut off in September. All that got done, and the anticipation began building all over the nation as the April 21 date approached for the 118th Boston Marathon.

Eventually, marathon weekend arrived.

Logistics are always tight with such a large event. And this year security was extra tight for participants and spectators, although it seemed that everyone understood. Actually, I thought the organizers did an outstanding job keeping the event safe with very little disruption to "normal" routine.

All over the city people wore t-shirts or displayed signs saying "Boston Strong" to show solidarity with the spirit of continuing the marathon, actually recovering from last year's tragedy to be even stronger. Packet pick-up was a special time as people took pictures. Large banners were displayed at the expo for people to sign and leave messages of encouragement, reflection, or prayers. The finish line area was even more crowded with people gathering, taking pictures, and remembering what happened a year ago.

The day before the race was Easter. My family had decided to worship Easter Sunday at the Old South Church, an old traditional-looking church next to the marathon finish line on Boylston Street. We arrived early for the second service, but found a long line of people who had the same idea. After waiting and visiting with folks in line, we got in.

What an uplifting worship experience! "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" seemed even more significant, with orchestra, choir, and a sanctuary full of people lifting their voices. One highlight was a blessing of the runners, where after a prayer each marathon runner was given a blue and yellow scarf knitted by someone from a church somewhere in the U.S. Mine was from Littleton, MA while my daughter's was from Jill at a church in Kansas City. The note attached said "This scarf is interwoven

with love and courage.” Love, courage, and strength were themes expressed over and over during the weekend. Oh yes, and this “scarfing” became an outreach of the church as they stood outside during two days presenting any marathon runner with a scarf. I suppose they also came with a blessing and prayer – certainly with a sense of appreciation by the runner recipients. The final highlight of the worship service was everyone singing “The Hallelujah Chorus”, which was even more significant for Kim and me since we missed singing it with our choir at home in Springfield.

Marathon Monday dawned clear and beautiful. Everything seemed to go well, from the early morning bus ride out to Hopkinton to getting to the starting corral on time. As our wave prepared for the starting signal, the significance of the event hit me – what a blessing to be here, having come through the training and travel logistics, with so many thousands for whom this event had such personal significance. The marathon was back! I turned to my daughter April and said a prayer out loud, thanking God and asking for protection, strength, and perseverance to finish the tough course.

Ah – perseverance. That word is in one of my favorite scriptures in Hebrews 12:1-2, which I think of and repeat often during a long race: *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...”*

I really relate to that idea of witnesses (there were a million cheering people lining the streets of the course), getting rid of excess stuff, running with perseverance, and fixing our eyes on Jesus. The writer of Hebrews thought the athletic imagery fit well with our Christian lives. I agree. Just as the last few miles of a marathon can get tough and perseverance is put to the test, so it is with our leadership in the church. Sometimes we really do need to be reminded of all those who have gone before and are “cheering us on”, that we must persevere to reach our goal for the Kingdom, and that we must keep our eyes focused upon Jesus.

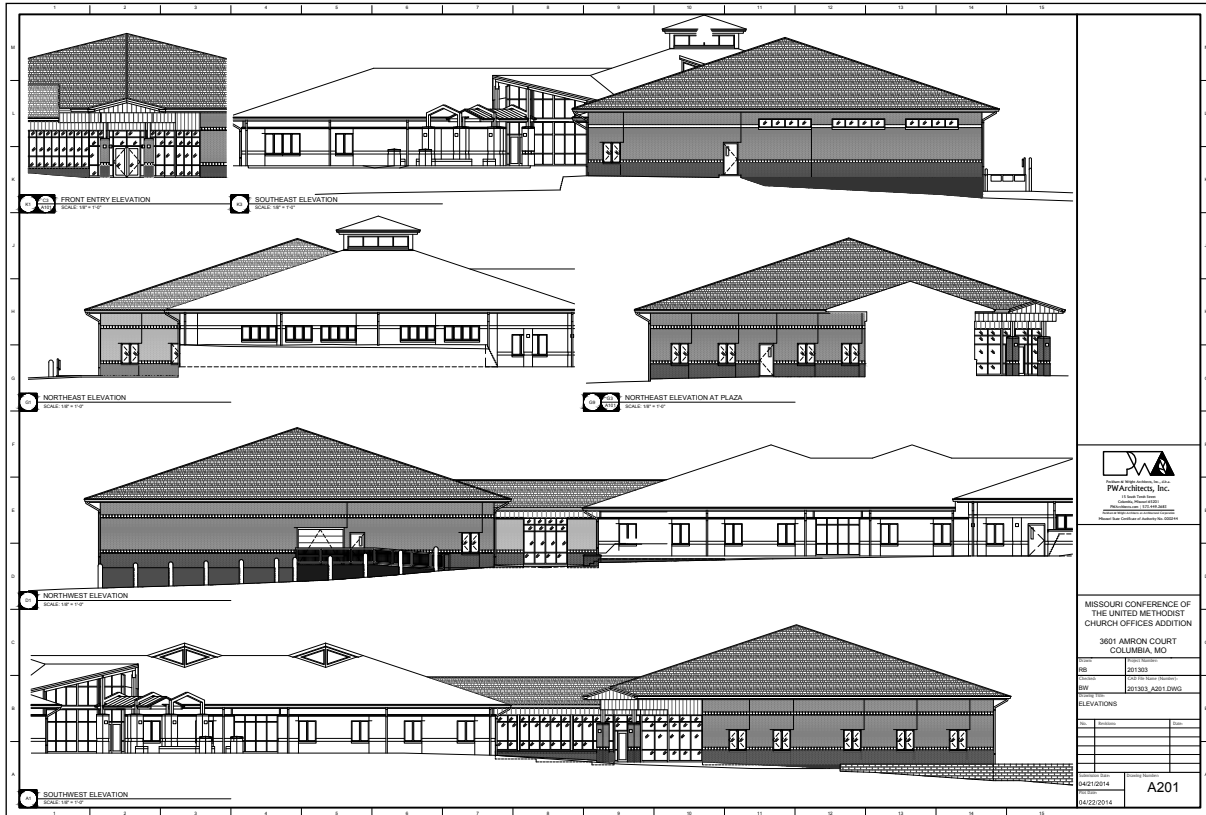


Well, we did run the Boston Marathon with perseverance – although my legs slowed after mile 22 after we got past the famous Newton hills (including Heartbreak Hill). What a thrill to see my wife and some family members at the 24 mile point – I even stopped to give her a kiss and my son a high five (then mumbled something like “I’m going to finish this” which he caught on video and posted to YouTube). And despite cramps on the final stretch, I crossed the famous finish line. Giving thanks and looking up.

So Boston this year was about coming back from difficulties, refusing to yield, affirming common bonds with courage and strength. Celebrating life. What a blessing to be part of it!

May all of us lead in our church with such an attitude, as Hebrews instructs – with perseverance, putting aside distractions, and keeping a fixed focus upon Jesus – the main thing!

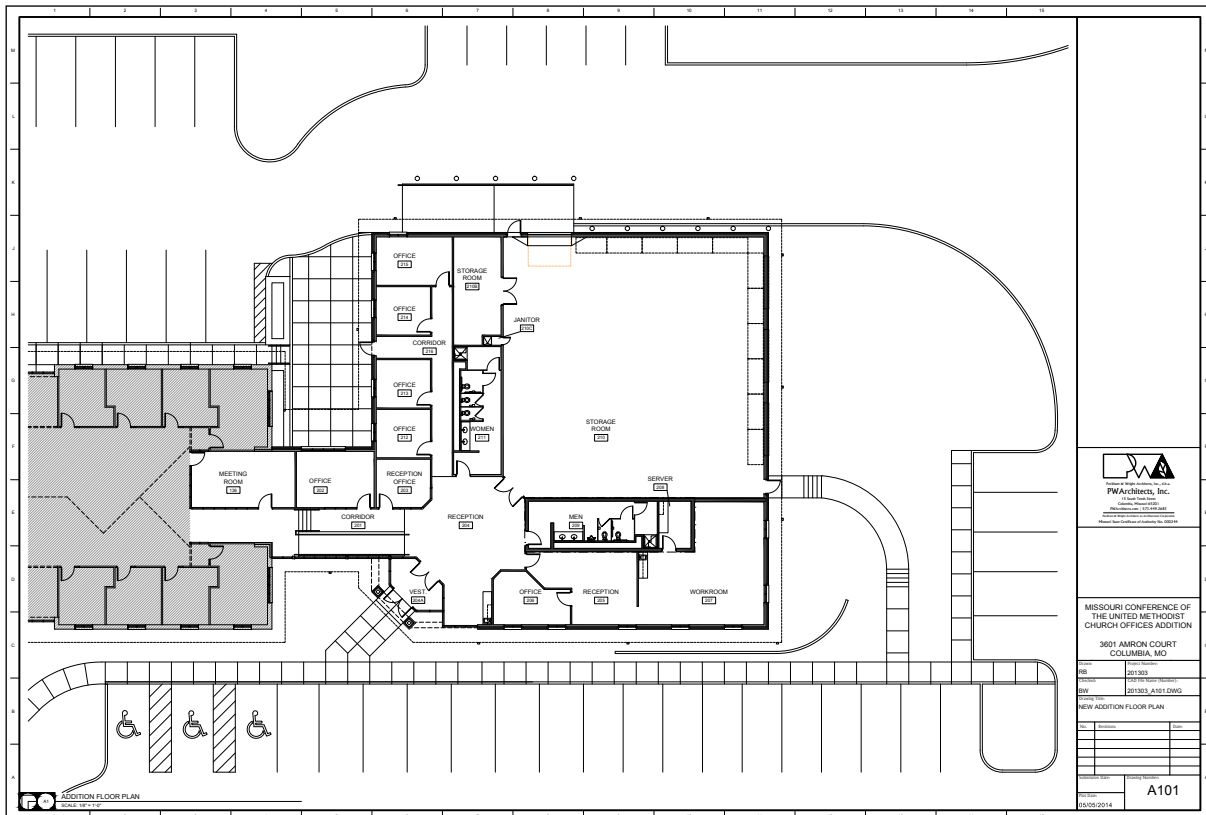




MISSOURI CONFERENCE OF  
THE UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH OFFICES ADDITION  
3601 AMIRON COURT  
COLUMBIA, MO

DATE: 05/15/14  
BY: J. [Name]  
CHECKED BY: [Name]  
PROJECT NO: 201303\_A201\_DWG

ELEVATIONS  
A201  
04/21/2014  
05/15/2014



MISSOURI CONFERENCE OF  
THE UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH OFFICES ADDITION  
3601 AMIRON COURT  
COLUMBIA, MO

DATE: 05/15/14  
BY: J. [Name]  
CHECKED BY: [Name]  
PROJECT NO: 201303\_A201\_DWG

NEW ADDITION FLOOR PLAN  
A101  
05/05/2014



# GROUND BREAKING

## CONFERENCE CENTER BUILDING ADDITION

**O**n April 23 every parking spot was taken and people were parking on the street at the Missouri Conference Center. Most of those present had never been there before, and weren't United Methodist. They were members of the Columbia Area Chamber of Commerce, and were there to celebrate a ground breaking for an addition to the Missouri Conference Center.

Missouri Bishop Robert Schnase explained to those gathered that the Missouri Conference Center is like the corporate office for the 855 local churches and 170,000 United Methodists who are in Missouri.

The addition to the building will provide space to locate the Mission, Service and Justice ministries at the Missouri Conference Center, as well as space to lease to the Missouri United Methodist Foundation. He views this as the final step in the

merger of the Missouri East and Missouri West Conferences, which began in a leased office building in the south part of Columbia, then purchased property and constructed this building.

"This will help our Episcopal and administrative offices be better coordinated with the Missouri United Methodist Foundation and our Mission, Service and Justice ministries," he said. "This also makes clear our identity as a people focused on hands on mission and service."

The new addition will be about 8,000 square feet, including a storage area that will take up about 3,600 square feet. It will be constructed on the east side of the current building. There will be a loading dock built onto the storage area.

The estimated cost of the building is \$1.4 million. It will not cause an increase in apportionments to local churches. Most of the mortgage

"This will help our Episcopal and administrative offices be better coordinated with the Missouri United Methodist Foundation and our Mission, Service and Justice ministries.

This also makes clear our identity as a people focused on hands on mission and service."

ROBERT SCHNASE

payment will be offset by the reduction in what the MSJM is currently paying in rent, plus rent coming in from the Missouri United Methodist Foundation. Last year the Missouri Conference received a large, unexpected distribution from a trust fund that is also being put toward the construction. The loan on the current facility is being refinanced. "This fits with our desire for the









“I think we’ll have a better day-to-day dialogue between departments when we are located together.”

JEFF BAKER

Missouri Conference Center to not just be a business office, but also a place where mission and outreach happens,” said Jeff Baker, director of Mission, Service and Justice ministries. “I think we’ll have a better day-to-day dialogue between departments when we are located together.”

The MSMJ currently operates out of a leased building in a warehouse district at 3009 David Drive in Columbia.

“I’m really excited not just about the convenience, but also the identity of our facility being more united with our mission, service and justice ministries,” said Director

of Financial and Administrative Ministries Nate Berneking.

“Although the foundation is its own organization, I work closely with them frequently and it will be advantageous to have them close.”

Missouri United Methodist Foundation Director David Atkins is also looking forward to the move.

“In addition to having better parking and accessibility than we currently have in our downtown location, I think this will also raise our profile among our constituents, who are coming to the Conference Center for other reasons,” Atkins said. “Although we are a separate 501 C-3 charitable organization, and that separation will remain intact, our mission is to serve United Methodists in Missouri.”

The foundation is currently located on the second floor of an office building in downtown Columbia, at 111 South 9th Street. The Missouri United Methodist Foundation

existed long before there was a Missouri Conference.

It was established in 1967 with an office in St. Louis, but had board members from the Missouri East and Missouri West Conferences, and the mission of serving the entire state. In 2001 the office was moved to Columbia so the staff could more easily make day-trips almost anywhere in the state.

The foundation has three fulltime and one part-time staff members in the office, and one fulltime and two part-time staff members in the field. The foundation’s space will be similar in size and facilities to its current operations. “The architects and the Conference have been great to work with to assure us the space will be suitable to meet our needs,” Atkins said.

Construction on the addition is expected to begin within the next few days. The estimated completion time is around the end of the year.



# Be a Better Email Communicator in 2014

Email has slowly become the primary communication channel for many churches. However, how effectively do churches use email? Are we guilty of assuming that people are receiving and reading our messages and acting appropriately – without evidence? It is important to create emails that people open and read. Here are some good practices to follow when creating the next email campaign for your church.

## START SMALL

This is a great concept to apply when choosing designs that adapt to mobile platforms. What does your email look like on smartphones? Does it pass the squint test? Avoid designing your email using a flashy template that looks great on a website but not on mobile. Smaller templates with bigger fonts and plenty of whitespace look the best on mobile devices. Before sending, use a service such as Litmus to preview how your emails will look on different devices and then make the necessary adjustments to optimize for the largest audience.

## TELL RECIPIENTS WHAT YOU WANT

Emails must have a clear call to action (CTA):

- This important message needs your response.
- Share this via social media.
- Vote on these new ministry ideas.
- Sign up now.

## MAKE A SECONDARY CTA

If your email simply provides information, consider adding a secondary CTA. For example, if the message announces a cancellation, you might ask recipients to sign up for a new event or to post alternative plans on your social media channels.

## ONE OR TWO CTAS ARE BETTER THAN THREE

Each email should have one main message and sometimes a secondary CTA. Promote other CTAs elsewhere. If you

must break this rule, think minimal. Use smaller font sizes and softer colors for other information, so the primary message grabs the reader's attention.

## TELL THEM WHY

If you want recipients to download a PDF newsletter, give them a good reason to do so. Here are a few ideas.

- Download this month's newsletter to see photos of the mission trip.
- Check out this month's newsletter and read the article about our own (person from the church). Complete the registration form for the last Parents' Night Out before Christmas. It is in this month's newsletter.
- Find a detailed list of summer education and mission opportunities in this month's newsletter.
- Read about the new monastic retreat led by Pastor (name) in this week's news download.

## DO NOT BE SUBTLE

If you need people to sign up for an event, include an obvious "button" or text link that draws attention. Many times images are blocked by default or by user preference, so it's always good to include a text link above or below the linked image.

## PLACE YOUR CTA NEAR THE "FOLD"

Content areas at the very top do not always have the most engagement. In fact there's new data that proves the opposite. People know by now that the "meat" is a little farther down, so they skip over content at the very top. Keep important information and links near the top and to the left.

Information on the right may be hidden from mobile users who have to scroll over. To make a simple heat-map, print-out one of your e-newsletters. Then write the click-through rate next to each link. Your email service provider should provide these click-through rates.





### DESIGN FOR SKIMMERS

A desktop user may read more email content. However, mobile users will likely skim the message. Since mobile use continues to increase, be sure to keep content simple and clear. Use bold headlines and bulleted lists to engage the skimmers.

### ASSOCIATE EMAIL LOOK WITH CAMPAIGN

Create email templates that fit the message. The youth announcements should not be on the same template or have the same look as an email used for the children's ministry. Create several themes and use a different template for each campaign.

### TELL RECIPIENTS WHERE TO SIGN UP

Often emails from the church come from the office housing "the list" of church members. This makes it hard for those outside the congregation to learn what the church is doing. Use an email service provider, such as MailChimp, that makes it easy for people to sign up for your messages. MailChimp lets non-profits send up to 12,000 emails a month free.

### USE IMAGES WITH IMPACT

Poor stock photography can be just as bad as clip art if you don't have time to search for something fresh and interesting. Many stock images are seen repeatedly and some are too stereotypical. Commission some talented volunteers to photograph or create unique images.

### GET BACK INTO THE PRIMARY FOLDER


Last year, Gmail rolled out its own filter system. Emails now show up in "primary," "social" or "promotions" folders. Other email clients will likely follow suit. Let everyone know that church emails may be buried in the "promotions" folder. Instruct them to drag the email to the primary folder, so they do not miss important updates. Be sure to include these instructions on your website and blog and in printed newsletters.

### BREAK THE RULES, BUT TEST RESULTS

These guidelines should be called "better practices" because marketing rules are not always the "best." You must test to learn what is "best" for your specific message and audience.

There are times when you can break certain rules. For example; your newsletter subject line may be so provocative that you put the subject line's content at the bottom of the newsletter. People will scroll to the bottom to find the interesting news, and in the process, view all other stories as well. This could boost engagement across the board! But you won't know until you do an A/B test and find out.

Follow and test these "better practices" so your emails do not get unsubscribed from or ignored. If new visitors unsubscribe, you may lose all contact with them. Take the extra time to design effective emails and share your strategies in the comment section below.



# Young Clergy

**W**hen Adam Hamilton spoke to young clergy from the Missouri Conference, he didn't start by painting a rosy picture. Instead he went over some of the grim statistics of decline in the United Methodist Church. He said to choose to be a Methodist pastor at this point, either you must be someone with no other options, you're interested in providing hospice care for a dying church or you believe you can be someone who turns things around.



# The key to the future of the church is leadership.



“If you think you can just ‘mind the store’ and be a pastor while ignoring the trends, this isn’t for you,” he said. “You’re going to either be an EMT or providing hospice care.”

The meeting at the Church of the Resurrection Leawood, Kansas, campus was for present and future clergy under the age of 40, and was attended by 40 people. Missouri Bishop Robert Schnase and all of the Missouri Conference directors also participated. It was organized by Director of Pastoral Excellence Karen Hayden.

Hamilton told those gathered that ultimately the future of the United

Methodist Church would rest largely with them.

“The key to the future of the church is leadership. The people aren’t going to the promised land without Moses,” he said “Remind them that Jesus is calling the church to take the hard road.”

Hamilton shared a few key turning points in growth at Church of the Resurrection that could have gone the wrong way. The first was when the church outgrew its original funeral home meeting space and was looking for a new home. One option was a nearby church for sale. It was a “real” church in its classic sense, and even had stained glass windows. People in the congregation were excited about having a home, and becoming a real, legitimate, brick and mortar church. And the seating capacity would expand from 100 to 160.

The second option was using a local school. They would have to get there early to set up, and stay late after church to take everything back down. They still wouldn’t have a building they could point to and say, “That’s my church.” But it would seat 300.

“Like everyone else, I was excited about getting a real church,” Hamilton said. “But it came down to what I call discernment by nausea – the path that makes me sick to my stomach is almost always the one God wants me to take. But that night I prayed about it, and got that nauseous feeling in the pit of my stomach, and I knew we would have to go for the school.”

Hamilton believes if they had gone for the church, they would probably still be there with a congregation of 300 people. Instead later they were shopping for land. A consultant working for the district found a nice 3.5 acre property that they could build on. Hamilton said he didn’t think it was big enough. The consultant told him that might be true in Texas, but people don’t grow big churches in the Midwest. That advice was ignored, and the church ended up buying 40 acres at \$20,000 per acre.

As they were dealing with debt, the church decided it would sell 20 of the 40 acres on the backside for \$17,000 per acre. A few years later

“It came down to what I call discernment by nausea – the path that makes me sick to my stomach is almost always the one God wants me to take. But that night I prayed about it, and got that nauseous feeling in the pit of my stomach, and I knew we would have to go for the school.”

ADAM HAMILTON

the church ended up buying it back for \$72,000 an acre.

“Selling that property was the biggest mistake we ever made,” Hamilton said.

During the capital campaign to build the Wesley Chapel, Hamilton faced a personal challenge. He was already doing a full 10 percent tithe on his \$29,000 salary, and had little money left over in his family of four to go much beyond that. But he knew a pastor should kick off a capital campaign with a public pledge. He figured he could cut out that once a week meal at McDonald’s that totaled \$10, which over three years would make a \$1,650 pledge. But then he remembered the Taurus, the car he’d been talking about trading in for several years. It was getting rusty and worn, but was still reliable.

And it was paid for. He could get a few more years out of it and put the car payment toward the church. Keeping the old car meant he could raise his pledge commitment to \$10,000, so he did, and he let people know.

“The average commitment we got from that campaign was \$10,000,” he said.

Church of the Resurrection just completed a capital campaign for a new \$90 million addition. The campaign goal was \$60 million, they received commitments for \$63 million.

After Hamilton addressed the group, they all participated in staff chapel service at Church of the Resurrection. Following the service Bishop Schnase spoke to the young clergy, explaining how the Conference is focused on supporting clergy under the age of 40 in various ministry settings.

“The size of this group is growing, and that is good,” he said. He stressed the importance of



being connected, and shared how Conference staff are working on Compass, the next step in voluntary peer learning.

“Research has shown that clergy learn best from other clergy. That is more true for our profession than most others,” Bishop Schnase said. “Even the worst peer learning group tends to have a greater impact than the best seminar.”

The appointment process has been amicable to young clergy, with several young clergy serving in large church appointments. It is also reflected in Conference staffing, as three of the five directors

in the Missouri Conference are considerably younger than the average clergy person, or average United Methodists.

“We want everyone here to always feel like there is a number you can call, no matter what the issue is,” Bishop Schnase said. But in addition to Conference support, Bishop Schnase urged those present to seek support from each other, and from their older clergy colleagues.

“Connect in any way that works for you,” he said. “I have always intentionally connected with other clergy, and I need that in a fundamental way.”



# Message from the Cabinet

## *Living Inside the Kingdom of Heaven*



Ann M. Rathert  
Gateway Regional  
District Superintendent

*“As you go, proclaim the good news,  
‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’”  
Matt. 10:7 (NRSV)*

Coffee, warm yeasty breads, cinnamon. Smells swirl, music joins with voices of those huddled around tables. A smile awaits me as I set down my coffee and join a pastor.

Our business done, the pastor updates me on the church—the number of youth in worship continues to increase and she continues to be amazed by the laity’s leadership. It all gladdens my heart. But what stands out is the story of the man who is blossoming through his teaching ministry, which continues to attract new people. As I heard about his troubled background and all the good that is now happening I had to blink back tears. His decision to attend church and to invest himself in the ministry of teaching allowed the kingdom of heaven to come near for him, for those in the study and for me as I listened to his story. These are ripples of transformation within the kingdom.

A wintery breeze blows leaves from the backyard oak trees. Cozy on the warm side of the windows, cactus plants not only remain green but are sporting long, white blossoms. Decaying leaves and healthy foliage are only a pane of glass apart. Similarly, it’s as if each decision to follow God’s will moves us to the other side of a window where the kingdom of heaven exists with its transformative power to nourish health and new life.

Such decisions delight me and are one of the main reasons I have loved my time as a district superintendent. I’ve seen two churches of a charge chose to do the hard work of facing their financial constraints in truth and love. A new collaborative relationship began to emerge. In another part of the district, Conference leadership decided to birth a new church, SunRise in O’Fallon. SunRise then birthed Morning Star Church, which birthed The Word at Shaw and most recently The Way in Wentzville. These churches collectively averaged 3,008 in 2013 worship.

The decisions of these people ushered the kingdom

of heaven not only into their own lives but also into the world and lives around them.

Four months have passed since writing the above. It was the start of an article for the January, 2014 issue of this magazine. Before finishing I was involved in a car accident that has kept me in hospitals and care facilities until Holy Week when I returned home.

That fateful December day I only remember seeing the car from the opposite side of the road spin into my lane. Then nothing until waking up to incredible pain and a man’s voice telling me to remain still. In the ensuing weeks the pain from my life saving surgery and my many broken bones was overwhelming. People told me how amazing my attitude was throughout the months that followed. From my perspective, there was a day by day infusion of strength and love from the incredible covering of your prayers. I literally could feel them surrounding me and bringing me a wellbeing outside of what I could muster. The innumerable decisions to pray made the kingdom of heaven’s transformational power available for me and the many caregivers with whom I shared faith stories.

As I think back over the years as district superintendent, my deepest disappointments came when people’s wants drove decision making rather than God’s will. Meanwhile pastors, individuals and/or congregations suffered and continue to suffer the consequences of the resulting conflict and stress. People’s need to be right or to keep things as they want, can be and has been more destructive than sticks of dynamite. Jesus said, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.” (Luke 9:24 NIV) Sadly, I have seen too much loss.

Each of us chooses daily whether to live my way or God’s way. When was the last time the kingdom of heaven has come near to you or your church? I invite you to seek God with your deepest being. God will come! Whether life is great or is burying you, somehow when God’s Spirit fills yours, the kingdom of heaven comes near and it’s transformational, both for you and those caught in the ripples you send out into the world!



# Avondale UMC

It's impossible to say exactly what the founding members of Avondale UMC each thought the future would hold for the church in the next century. But it's pretty safe to say they didn't envision the church would be generating its own electricity from solar panels installed on its roof. But the addition of solar panels is just one of the ways that Avondale UMC is living like its first 100 years was just its first step in ministry.

The solar panels cost about \$90,000, but a grant from Kansas City Power and Light takes the expenses down to \$40,000.

"Fortunately we have a very large high roof that faces southwest, which makes our building a great facility for placing solar modules," said Mark Whitaker. "We also have a forward-thinking congregation that recognizes the benefits of making the investment in our future."

As the church pays respect to its heritage in its 100th year, it is also making sure its celebrations are active ones, that look to the future. In March the church made its first 100 goal: 100 people for 100 smiles celebrating 100 years of the church as it marched Saturday in the North Kansas City Snake Saturday Parade Saint Patrick's Day weekend. That number was made up of the church attendees and representatives of the various scouting groups that the church sponsors and supports.

While walking they sang *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling*, *When You're Smiling*, *Jesus Wants Me For a Sunbeam*, *Oh How I Love Jesus* and *His Name is Wonderful*. It's hard to keep 100 people together in a parade, when some are on a float but most are walking, but they kept it going.

"People watching the parade could sometimes tell we were singing, but I'm not sure how many of them recognized what we were singing. But it was a fun time walking, waving, singing," parade song leader Jonathon Lightfoot said. "After the review stand we turned the corner and the parade officially ended. Except people were lined up for a few more blocks, so we continued waving and greeting until the people ran out."

On May 17 the church assembled 100 volunteers for a day of service, with teams cleaning up a local park, working at a community garden, helping at Harvesters Community Food Network, assisting with meals and crafts for people in hospice care, working on the SafeHaven domestic violence shelter, helping at the local youth center, and other church and community projects.

On July 20 the church is having an ice cream social with guest missionary speakers (and AUMC members) Rev. Kristy and Larry Schmitz from Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, Oct. 26 is the big celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary including plans to re-enact the march down the hill from their previous building.







A  
**STAR**  
IS BORN

**M**arjorie Atkins was a STAR at Smithville United Methodist Church.

When she died just days after her husband in 2012, our church felt the loss as would any family. Marjorie and “Junior” Atkins had been members of Smithville UMC as well as the Smithville community for many years. Theirs was a history of work, community involvement and raising their only child, and in keeping with Marjorie’s belief as a Christian, always helping others in any way she could.

Although she preferred to remain behind the scenes, Marjorie had an even greater impact through her monetary donations to activities involving children. Whether it was candy for the SUMC Annual Easter Egg Hunt, or items for SUMC Vacation Bible School, her contributions always played an important part in the events’ success.

So it did not surprise anyone when, after her death, a monetary gift from her estate came to the Church, with the stipulation it be used for the children. Thus the STAR program came into being.

STAR is an acronym for Service, Trust, Accept, Respect; the very essence of Marjorie Atkins.

The STAR program so far has helped fund once a week after school snacks and activities for the children who lived in the apartment complexes next to the church. The first group of STAR children has moved from the community, but the program is available whenever the need arises.

The STAR program helped create and sustain a volunteer reading mentoring program at the Smithville Middle School. This program has earned the Excellence Award from the Smithville School Board. It continues in its second year with fourteen people volunteering their time one day a week, sitting with the students as they read aloud, helping with pronunciation or word meanings.

Marjorie would be embarrassed about any acknowledgment of her involvement; however the STAR program continues to impact Smithville UMC and the Smithville community. Service, Trust, Accept, Respect A STAR continues to shine!





# Empty Tomb, Full Churches

Easter is a huge day for nearly every church. It's not unusual for a church to have double or more than its average attendance. For a small country church, that might mean going from 18 to 40. For a church like Wood's Chapel in Lee's Summit, it means going from an average of 1,270 to 3,056. Either way, the day feels different than any other day of worship, and takes special planning and preparation. The following is a look inside of what just a few Missouri Conference churches had going on this Easter.

First UMC Jefferson City added a third service for Easter morning, and had a children's event that ran concurrently with each service, with a total attendance of 1,071. A Stations of the Cross display in the lobby was visited by 60 people during Holy Week. The Maundy Thursday service had nearly 100 in attendance.

There were 204 people who attended worship at Tebbets, Steedman and Mokane UMCs, the three churches on the River Circuit. They raised \$1,500 for Imagine No Malaria.

Community UMC in Columbia had 547 in attendance on Easter Sunday, starting with a Sunrise service on their front lawn by the three crosses. There were another couple hundred people who attended other worship experiences through the week, including two one-act plays during a Good Friday service.

Keytesville and Dalton UMCs had a special Maundy Thursday service with a hand washing ceremony, where they discussed the way Pilate tried to wash his hands of the blood of Christ, and how as Christians they should strive to keep their hands clean of sin. On Easter Sunday Dalton had an attendance of 30, and

Keytesville had 131, which may have been a record.

This year First United Methodist Church of Sedalia had its eighth Easter@theMathewson. This was the largest crowd to date with just over 2,800 people. They had professions of faith and renewals of faith as dozens of people came forward during the invitation time. The celebration draws about 13 percent of the town and 8% of the county population. Around 200 volunteers helped to put the service together in the 24 hour time period that they have to take a public space (which houses everything from rodeos and monster trucks events to indoor football and State Fair Queen coronations) and transform it into a worship space for an experience celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.

Resurrection Downtown in Kansas City held this year's Easter Services at the Kauffman Center for





the Performing Arts. They hosted 2,000 people from throughout the city at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The Kauffman Center is one of the most iconic buildings in Kansas City and it plays host to some of the most talented and creative artists from across the world. By hosting Easter worship there, they were able to invite people who might not ever be able to afford entry into that space, to experience the beauty of that space while celebrating the Easter message of hope and resurrection.

Saint Paul UMC in Joplin had five services, two of which were concurrent with a video venue. Attendance for the five was 1,959.

Morning Star UMC in O'Fallon had an attendance of 4,200 on Easter. That's just its five Easter services, not counting the 900 who came to the two services on Good Friday. To make room for the crowd the church utilized technology between their auditorium and their video venue to create a completely synced service. Both bands played the same songs at the same time, and video allowed the music to be seen and heard in both rooms. For example, they sang the song, "Say Something," by A Great Big World to set up the idea that God isn't finished with us yet. It was performed by Mark Roach in the Auditorium and Carolyn Roach in the Venue. But the folks in the Venue

could see Mark on the screens and hear his voice; and likewise, the folks in the Auditorium could see Carolyn on the screens and hear her voice.

The Easter attendance at Manchester was 3,523. They had a Holy Saturday service, then on Sunday they had a youth-led sunrise, three traditional, and one contemporary service. Each Sunday service featured multiple choirs, liturgical dance, and orchestra. One thing they did uniquely in preparation for Easter was a Palm Sunday evening concert presenting the Midwest premiere of Mark Hayes' "Requiem," featuring a 150 voice choir and 45-piece orchestra.

The Word at Shaw celebrated their fourth Easter this past April. Although God has been increasing their church plant's numbers every quarter since they launched in January of 2011, the first quarter of this year has seen greater growth than they've ever experienced. After an attendance of 142 on Palm Sunday, they hosted 96 at the Good Friday service, and 173 at the main service on Easter morning. The increase may have come from a couple of favorable news stories about the church leading up to Easter, along with a flyer distribution party that sent out 2,000 flyers before Easter followed by 2,000 flyers after Easter. The attendance number has continued to remain strong in the

weeks following Easter as well, and they hope to carrying this momentum into the summer months.

He is Risen! was the topic of the day at Waynesville UMC. Nearly all of the 560 folks present were shouting at the top of their lungs, "He is Risen indeed!" at a minimum of 24 times per service. Easter started out with a "Sonrise" Service at Waynesville City Park at 6:15 a.m., followed by a traditional service back at the church complete with a full processional of our new acolytes. The acolytes wear albs, carry the Bible, holy water, holy oil, banners, cross, light of Christ and the elements for communion. The church confirmed eight youth after they had baptized one of them. The Assembly of God church loaned them a portable baptismal since the youth requested immersion. They ended Easter by taking their bounce house, hot dogs, popcorn and 400 Easter eggs up to our neighboring apartment complex where we invited them to an Easter Egg hunt.

The Gathering in St. Louis, a growing multi-site ministry, chose to offer one worship service on Easter. "We wanted to celebrate the resurrection in a big way and extend an invitation to experience the power of Easter," said Senior Pastor, Matt Miofsky. Worship was held at Powell Symphony Hall in midtown St. Louis and was attended by 1,951 people.



# The Church With An Impact

BY ROYAL SPEIDEL

**A**urora, MO is located 28 miles southwest of Springfield, and has a population of 7,000. Pastor Jan Bond led Aurora UMC through the HCI consultation process in March of 2012. The church reported an average worship attendance of 164 that time. Pastor Kathy Osiel was appointed to the congregation in July of 2012, and under her leadership worship numbers increased to 177. To address the concerns of the church, the HCI Consultation Team assigned it five prescriptions.

## PRESCRIPTION 1

As with all HCI churches the first prescription called for the church to accept as its mission the making of new disciples for the transformation of the world. It also had to agree

to having a Day of Prayer and Repentance as well as creating a vision for the church through a Visioning Workshop.

The church adopted a vision motto of Seek, Grow, Serve and Live, which means the members are to Seek God and others, Grow in Christ, Serve our community and Live for God.

## PRESCRIPTION 2

The second prescription dealt with Intentional Faith Development.

Aurora UMC had .67 weekly first-time guests. In order to retain them and bring spiritual growth to the current members, the pastor was to create an Intentional Faith Development team of 4-5 people using as a resource the book, *Go Big With Small Groups*. Churches with strong small group programs

are most successful at retaining guests, so the team was to initiate a small group plan to help the church have 60% of their total membership in small

groups and Sunday School. The church is close to that goal with 80-90 participating.

Kathy Woodcock, chair of the Intentional Faith Development Team created a Small Group Fair after worship where five new groups were organized with a sixth to follow. Also, a step by step discipleship plan was developed, which included tracking and measuring participation in worship attendance, in small group participation, and in doing hands on service. The process also involved sending “We Miss You” cards to members who missed several Sundays of worship. Wonderfully, weekly first time guests have almost quadrupled to 2.4.

## PRESCRIPTION 3

Accountable Leadership and Structure was the center of the third prescription. An Accountable Leadership Workshop using the book, *Winning on Purpose*, resulted in setting goals, hopes and dreams for fulfilling the mission and vision of the church. This focus also developed a strong leadership team for Aurora UMC.

In addition Pastor Osiel led both the paid and unpaid leadership teams to use the excellent book, *Effective*





*Staffing for Vital Congregations.* It is very impressive that Kathy has regular meetings with key leaders to get rich feedback. The lay leadership is to be commended for its wisdom and commitment, and Kathy is to be commended for having a humble, learning spirit open to these relationships.

#### PRESCRIPTION 4

With the average age of AUMC being 57, there was a need to grow the number of children and younger families in the church; therefore, prescription four addressed that need. It called for the hiring of a Children's Coordinator, who would recruit a Family Leadership Team to reach younger families.

Through the leadership of Vince Osiel, the new Children's Coordinator, Aurora neighborhoods were saturated with advertising for the VBS. As a result 73 kids attended the 2013 Vacation Bible School with 15-20 adults helping.

VBS was followed by a Saturday Fun Fair for whole families with 165-170 in attendance. The names of many new children and families were obtained for follow-up ministries. The church offers a free Wednesday evening dinner where 70 kids come with 25 of them being bused.

Parents with infants and toddlers feel more comfortable if their children are in a nursery near the sanctuary. Prescription four called for the church to create a nursery with an access door from the lobby. This turned into a beautiful project enhancing the joy and security of new families.

#### PRESCRIPTION 5

A Bridge-Building Team was recruited that engaged the church

in many activities serving the community in 2012 and 2013.

One community connecting event was a free picnic for the neighborhood and city including a moon walk and other activities for kids. The church also set up a church booth at the community festival and built a float for the Aurora parade. The five acre church lot offers adequate space for an exciting trunk and treat event at Halloween.

AUMC has a phenomenal buddy pack ministry, whereby 120-140 food packs are assembled and delivered to homes every Saturday morning. This involves both enormous financial as well as human resources.

During Serve 2013 AUMC learned that the children of one family were about to be taken from the parents because of the unsafe condition of their home. Church members helped the family clean their home, fix windows and enhanced the safety of the home in other ways. Through their efforts the state allowed the parents to keep their children.

Aurora UMC has been heavily involved in serving schools. As a result the church was given an award by the school district during an assembly program. In appreciation the school has allowed students to do many projects for the church.

First time guests report to Pastor Osiel the influence of the church on the city drew them. As a result, whereas 13 new members joined in 2013, 14 have already joined in the first four months of 2014. Aurora UMC is making a great impact on the community in the name of Jesus Christ.



## Advancing Outreach with Foundation Ministry Grants

“We never say ‘no’ to a child without a church home,” says Pastor Amanda Ross, “even though we keep telling ourselves we cannot handle any more children.” That is the spirit that has kept the Immanuel UMC in Canton, Missouri, and its Wednesday after-school program Cool Kids for Christ thriving over the years.

This year was the biggest yet with 36 children, so the dedicated volunteers decided to switch things up with a rotational approach that allows each lesson or activity to meet the needs of each age group. The church also applied for a Ministry Grant from the Missouri United Methodist Foundation.

“The grant enabled us to purchase a Smart Board,” states Ross. “Now, I have the pleasure of leading the lesson with the ease of the Smart Board, which allows me to quickly adjust to the different ages.”

Due to the program’s growth, there has been unexpected outreach into the community. Ross says she has “connected with Culver-Stockton College to receive additional technology support and, working alongside professors through class projects and internships, we have gained more volunteers. What a blessing!” She says previous residents whose children were in the program have returned to the community and are now volunteering to cook meals and provide financial support.

Ross credits volunteers like Bev, D’Ann, Kathy, Nancy,



and many more who have the faith to change the lives of children. When reading the parable of the mustard seed Ross states, “I think of Immanuel United Methodist’s leaders of Cool Kids.... each week we continue to reach out into the community, build relationships, provide encounters with Christ, and grow intentionally in discipleship.”

Is your church nurturing a ‘mustard seed’ ministry? Perhaps a Foundation Ministry Grant would help it grow. The Ministry Grant Application Deadlines are April 1 and October 1. Learn more and download the application at [www.mumf.org](http://www.mumf.org) or call 800-332-8238.





# Heifer International Celebrates 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

BY MEL WEST

**F**ifty years ago Heifer introduced me to the exciting and satisfying arena of world missions. With a farm background and degrees in dairy husbandry and church administration I was eager to put those skills and my passion for helping the less fortunate to work. I visited the Heifer offices and asked them what I could do. They told me that if I would raise the money for 25 quality pregnant dairy heifers (or get them donated) I could fly with them to Costa Rica and deliver them to the project. I did that and was hooked on Heifer and its common sense approach to tackling the problems of hunger and poverty.

Here are a few of the reasons why I am celebrating Heifer's 70th, and ask you to join me: Heifer's approach is to empower the poor to go from poverty to self-reliance. The poor enter into a partnership with Heifer to enhance their own lives and those of their community.

The dignity of the poor is maintained by their "passing-on-the-gift." For each animal they receive they agree to pass on an offspring to another family in need. Heifer focuses heavily on working with

women because they are usually the food producers and money managers in the poor community. Shared decision making between husband and wife is encouraged.

Improved animal management is at the core of Heifer's program. The species and breed chosen must be appropriate for the area. Animals are managed so that they do not roam free and become a negative factor in the community.

Heifer's program provides, in general, milk, meat, muscle (draft animals), manure and money. Milk is vital for children, meat provides needed protein, water buffalo are crucial in some areas, and manure is captured to create bio-gas for the home and also for fertilizer. Heifer provides a very wide variety of animals, including milking camels, bees, etc.

Education is a major part of Heifer, including budget management, family planning, community development and leadership skills.

Sustainability, earth care and self-reliance are important. Heifer only works in a community for a limited time. It is important that the project continues under local leadership.

Heifer has projects in the continental US as well as overseas. I have worked on projects with the Native Americans and in the poverty areas of the Mississippi Delta.

Heifer lends itself well to fundraising. Increasing numbers of families use the alternative gift program for special occasion gift giving. Children often have their first experience at mission giving by either receiving or giving an animal, a hive of bees, or a flock of chickens. The giving of an Ark of animals (\$5,000) is popular.

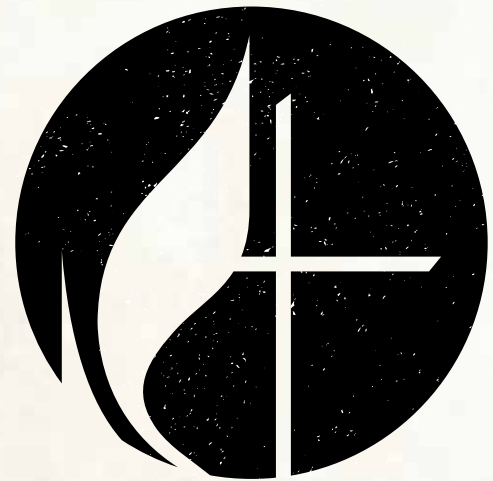
Heifer has made a significant impact, serving in its 70 years more than 105 million people.

Heifer offers go-and-see possibilities. You can visit their headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas, and their educational ranch at Perryville, Arkansas.

Donations to Heifer International is one of the three opportunities offered to United Methodist Churches in Missouri at Annual Conference Session, June 6 – 9 in Springfield. You can send a big thank you to Heifer, and at the same time give help and hope to some of those who are less fortunate.

# CHURCH BY SIZE

BY FRED KOENIG



**W**hat's the difference in terms of the way a church functions based on its size?

What issues come up when hovering between 200 – 300 in that area in between?

Pastors serving churches ranging in size from 100 to 250 in attendance came together at the Missouri Conference Center recently to talk about what it's like to be a Medium.

“My experience is that a mid-sized church is the hardest church to serve,” Anderson said. “It's easier to serve a small or a large church.”

Anderson is from Indiana, and has been under appointment for 44 years, serving churches of all size, as well as serving as a district superintendent. He's developed an understanding of how churches are different based on size.

## Anderson's Take on How Churches Differ By Size

1. Understanding the role of the pastor – In small church, you give care, build relationships, nurture folks... if you preach well but don't build relationships, it won't take you far in a small church. Building

relationships is critical. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. When you're in 100 – 125 in worship, there's a lot of pull and tug. In a large church, the primary role of the pastor is to be the leader – what issues does the church address, what persons are at the table, etc. Leadership is identifying right issues and facilitating process to help get to the place the church needs to be. You still provide care, but vast majority of time and emphasis is on providing leadership. In a mid-sized church, you've got to do both.

2. Build a system of care, involving more people in a ministry of care to free up your time to be a leader.
3. Lay Leadership – In a small church, it is informal, home-grown, relational. Lay leadership at a large church is recruited, it's intentional, and the focus of leadership is to accomplish a specific ministry. Meetings in small churches are often a good part therapy, talking about personal lives, having a sense of care. People love their small



church, because it's just like a family. In a large church, it's a community, not a family. A large church is a place of choices and options. Worship, Sunday school, mission projects, we're looking for a place to offer choices and options. Small churches don't want options, they want to all be together in the same service. How do we help get additional people connected and involved in serving God? With choices and options. In a mid-sized church you have both cultures – smaller are more relational, larger are less. You can't keep meeting to talk for 10 years about what we





### Advantages to Starting a New Program on a Monthly Rather Than Weekly Basis

- Less burnout
- Easier to recruit volunteers
- Time to plan and be creative
- More enthusiasm from participants
- Scarcity principal - you don't want to miss it
- Pastor can be more involved
- Parents more likely to get kids to do something once a month
- It's easier to start monthly and increase the frequency than to start weekly and cut back



wished we could do, you must be continually thinking what's next in the larger church.

4. Programs – In a small church they are few in number, involve the entire church, and are in-house. A program in a small church expects everyone to be there, and to get new folks in. Large church programs are primarily to connect with people in the community. Anderson was starting at a church that averaged 340 in attendance, and had 220 there for their Wonderful Wednesday mid-week program. How many were from community? None. “How could you have none?” he asked

a member. We didn't invite anyone, was the reply. They were a large church functioning as a small church, thinking their programs were “Just for us.” When launching new ministry in a mid-sized church, think monthly first. People tend to think weekly, but that's problematic. You might look at a program in a large church that you want to replicate, and not take into account that they have 15 people they have working on it. You spend four months getting ready for the first one, and have six days to get ready for the second one. The creativity starts to decline, enthusiasm and energy takes a drop, and the program dwindles.

5. Decision making – there are three different kind of decisions you can make – they are very different, some are more often in small churches and some are more often in large. Decisions looking for permission, approval or support. In a small church, most of votes are votes of support: if they decide to do VBS, they need everyone to be there. In a large church, if we

have VBS we don't expect every member of church council to be hands-on support for VBS – it would bottle neck. They should be involved in some area of ministry, but not every area of ministry. Small church, votes are votes of support. Large church, vote of approval may not be vote of support.

6. Connecting new comers – In a small church the process is a form of adoption, in a large church it is a process of assimilation or connection. My small church is like a family, if someone new is coming, we're adopting them into the church family. Have someone share why they want to be a part of the church. If they are just connected to the pastor, they will leave when the pastor leaves. Connect a new member to matriarch of the church – it's not just joining the church, it's being adopted into the family. In a large church you need to belong to a ministry, to a small group and to a worship service. It's about connecting with the church, not adopting into the family.



I'm gonna go there. I'm gonna tackle one of those hot-button issues discussed among worship leaders. I've heard it discussed at conferences—entire breakouts built around the discussion—even books have been written about it. The issue is (drum roll) paying musicians.

Now, if you read last month's submission by yours truly, entitled *Somewhere In-between*, then you probably won't be surprised at all by my stance on this controversial topic. It's also worth saying that we fortunate few who actually get paid to do what we do in the first place (yes, I'm aware that are many out there who do what I do for absolutely zero compensation) need to address this question carefully, as we are obviously kinda living on one side of the line already.

I'll start with my general philosophical stance: In my opinion, we should try NOT to pay musicians to serve in our ministries.

Now, that may surprise you. Many assume that churches the size of Morning Star Church all pay musicians—maybe even just because we can (we actually can't. I'll get to that.) We don't. We almost never do. I'll get to the exceptions in a minute, but first, allow me to justify my philosophy a bit.

Let's start with the obvious: we don't pay the dozens (or hundreds!) of children's ministry or

hospitality volunteers, so why pay musicians? If we do, should we pay the sound operator? Lights? Where do you draw the line? Ok, how about the budget issue? Even a big church like ours shudders at what those numbers can look like. We have almost enough to pay one full band for one week in our annual budget. Bottom line is this: if you're looking for your choir, band, orchestra or whatever group you've assembled to be great and that's all you care about, you could certainly just budget for that and bite the bullet. That said, if you're interested in shepherding a group of Christ-followers who want to use their gifts to worship their Creator, you might want to rethink that.

There is true beauty inherent in a group of people voluntarily sacrificing their time and talent for the greatest cause of all, and I believe that is often lost when money enters the picture. As for churches paying the leaders who assemble, direct and vision-cast for those volunteering? I'm certainly NOT challenging the idea of paying anyone making a living implementing arts in the church. They'll likely need to produce, lead and just plain show up on a different level than volunteers. I am saying that building your ministry around unpaid servants who are invested in your church and so volunteer their time is a win/win for all involved.

Ok, my BIG exception to this rule is pretty simple: I pay someone when no one is available to fulfill a role that needs to be fulfilled. The best example I can give would be a weekend all of our drummers are simply out of town. If I have a raucous, high-energy worship set or feature planned, I simply can't steward the voluntary gifts of the rest of my band to deliver that set or feature without a drummer. I will pay for a guest to come in if it allows our entire team to continue serving without a hitch. I'll also pay for specialty instruments from time to time, like a cellist or a horn section, if we need them to pull something off, but don't have them in our congregation already.

I know this a hot-button issue. I always welcome thoughts, concerns, etc. I hope this perspective is valuable, and look forward to next month!





# Wesley in the World Today

BY HAL KNIGHT

The day of Pentecost is sometimes celebrated as the “birthday of the church.” This not wrong but it is far too limited. Pentecost is first and foremost about the coming of the Holy Spirit. We can better grasp the meaning of Pentecost when we compare it to Christmas. At Christmas we celebrate Son of God’s coming to live among us. We read in the gospels how Jesus touched the lives of all around him, and how he died and rose again. This all happened in a few decades over 2,000 years ago in Palestine. Jesus was indeed Emmanuel, “God with us.” But as a human like us, God’s presence was limited in space and time.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit the presence of God is extended to all persons, in all places and throughout all of history. We do not have to have lived in Palestine in the first century to personally encounter the reality of God, for the Holy Spirit is reaching out to everyone. The same love that we see in Jesus is touching lives today through the Spirit.

John Wesley emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit to an unprecedented degree. While there are many things we can say about the work of the Holy Spirit in Wesley’s theology, I want to highlight two. First is that *the Holy Spirit assures us that we are children of God*. This witness of the Spirit, Wesley says, “is an inward impression

on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly ‘witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God,’ that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.” (*The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse I, I.7*).

We do not have to wonder if we are accepted by God. While some may be unable to testify to this witness, Wesley believes it is meant for all Christians and can be prayed for. He also insists that it does not stand alone, but must be evidenced by fruit of the Spirit such as faith, hope, and love.

Second, *the Holy Spirit makes us into the image of God, which is love*. Wesley makes this distinction: “By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God.”

(*On Working Out Our Own Salvation, II.1*). The first “implies what God does for us through his Son;” the second is what God “works in us by his Spirit” (*Justification by Faith, II.1*).

Sanctification is for Wesley the entire point of salvation, Through the Holy Spirit we are given a new life in which we increasingly come to love as God loves, and have Christ reigning in our hearts and governing our lives. If Pentecost meant only this, it should elicit our joyous and whole hearted thanksgiving.



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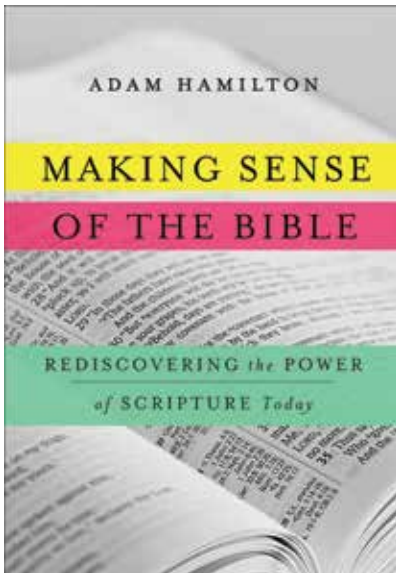
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# Making Sense

The Bible is a wonderful and mysterious collection of books that chronicle the movement of God from the creation of the world through the return of Christ.

Written in various literary styles by an eclectic selection of individuals, the Bible has been the source of inspiration and direction for millions of people throughout history.

Contained within the Bible, however, are some passages that are at first glance confusing and provide a certain level of consternation for the casual reader. It is because of this that Reverend Adam Hamilton decided to write his latest book, *Making Sense of the Bible: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today*.

Hamilton is the founding pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, and author of 19 books. In *Making Sense of the Bible*, Hamilton explores the many nuances of the Bible, including the parts that cause the most confusion and controversy.

Shane Claiborne, in his recommendation of this book writes that “Hamilton asks taboo questions and refuses cliché answers.” In 32 accessible chapters, Hamilton addresses issues and topics that many of us grapple with when reading the Bible. In his own words, Hamilton “envisions having a conversation with you, the reader, sitting on my back porch, each of us with a glass of iced tea.” Because of the conversational nature of this book, anyone can pick it up and find it to be a valuable resource in their quest to find God’s truth. If you’d like to go deeper, Hamilton also included a thorough bibliography that directs the reader to more scholarly texts and resources.

To launch this book, Hamilton embarked on a national speaking tour that provided him with the opportunity to introduce this book in a personal way. Utilizing a town hall meeting format, Hamilton traveled to several cities in the United States to meet with people who wanted to learn more about his new book. When he stopped in Washington D.C., I attended the event and found myself captivated by his friendly demeanor and presentation.

It is evident that Hamilton is someone who loves Scripture. Quoting John Wesley, he told the audience that it is his desire to be *homo unius libre*, or a man of one book.

Hamilton attests to the Bible’s paramount role in his life, confessing that he regularly memorizes portions of Scripture and his days begin and end with reading God’s Word. Especially poignant is Hamilton’s personal view of Scripture: “When I open its pages, I hear God speaking to me. Its story, particularly the story of Jesus, is the one story that I hope will define my life. The Bible captures my deepest hopes and aspirations.”

It is obvious that the Bible holds a primary place in Hamilton’s ministry—for several years, he has encouraged his congregation to carry with them pocket testaments and challenges them to “be caught reading the Bible” and then to give it away to the person who noticed. To help facilitate this, the church provides these pocket testaments to its members.

*Rob Reardon is the National Young Adult Initiative Coordinator with the Salvation Army in Washington, D.C. This book review first appeared in the New Frontier Chronicle.*



Adam Hamilton is the founding pastor of Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, the largest church in the United Methodist denomination. He’s the author of several books, the latest being *Making Sense of the Bible*. He will be teaching and preaching at the Missouri Annual Conference Session.

# M'punzu Trio from Mozambique to Missouri

The Missouri United Methodist Conference and the Mozambique Initiative (MI) are thrilled to welcome the M'punzu Trio from Mozambique to Missouri in June. As part of the MI's vision of "partnering to transform people and their communities toward the image of Christ," the MI is committed to fostering a mutual exchange of spiritual gifts and worship experiences with our brothers and sisters in Mozambique.

Given this year's theme at the upcoming Missouri Annual Conference of "passionate worship", we have invited the M'punzu Trio to join us by taking a key role in leading and teaching us about expressions of passionate worship from Mozambique. The M'punzu Trio will be touring the state of Missouri while here. Please consider joining us for any of these worship experiences at the following venues.



The word "M'punzu" is a Mozambican traditional instrument similar to a trumpet, which is used for calling people for adoration and joyful worship. The meaning of the word itself refers to the announcement of a new day, rebirth, hope, and joy.

The M'punzu Trio is Joel Mauele (guitar/vocals), Renaldo Cardoso (bass) and Valdemar Gimo (drums).

## Springfield, MO - Annual Conference

*Friday, June 6: Annual Conference, Worship Slam, 6:30pm-8pm*

*Saturday, June 7: Annual Conference, Mozambique Mingle, 5pm-7pm*

Location: Gilardi's Italian Restaurant, 820 East Walnut Springfield, MO 65806

All are welcome – snacks provided, suggested donation of \$10. Email the MI to RSVP at [sbollinger@moumethodist.org](mailto:sbollinger@moumethodist.org).

*Monday, June 9: Annual Conference, Appointments Session, 8am-11am*

## St. Louis, MO

*Tuesday, June 10: 2720 Cherokee, doors at 7pm, show at 8pm*

Location: 2720 Cherokee Performing Arts Center, St. Louis, MO 63118

Playing with Sarah Bollinger and The B-sides.

## Kansas City, MO

*Friday, June 13: Central UMC - District Wide Concert, 7pm-9pm*

Location: Central United Methodist Church, 5144 Oak Street, Kansas City, MO

Playing with Sarah Bollinger and The B-sides & Central UMC's Congolese Choir.

*Saturday June 14: Country Club UMC, 100 Year Anniversary Celebration, 4pm-7pm*

Location: Country Club United Methodist Church, 400 W 57th St., Kansas City, MO  
BBQ provided, playing with Sarah Bollinger and The B-sides.

*Sunday, June 15: St. Paul's Raymore, Leading Sunday Worship*

## Sikeston, MO

*Wednesday, June 18: First UMC Sikeston - Leading Mid-Week Worship*

## Cape Girardeau, MO

*Friday, June 20: House Concert with La Croix UMC, 7pm-9pm*

Contact Jim Beise for details at [jbeise@lacroixchurch.org](mailto:jbeise@lacroixchurch.org).

*Saturday, June 21: La Croix UMC - Leading Saturday Worship Service*

*Sunday, June 22: La Croix UMC - Leading Sunday Worship Services*





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**JULY 24, 2014**

## **Mission U 2014**

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: Central Methodist University, Fayette MO

Contact: Katie Willis, [mrskatiebugs78@centurylink.net](mailto:mrskatiebugs78@centurylink.net)

Mission U is a cooperative event with the Creative Ministries team and United Methodist Women. Come and learn about the Roma of Europe, How it is with your Soul and how the church deals with people with disabilities.



**JULY 26, 2014**

## **50th Year Celebration at Wilderness Camping & Retreat Center**

Location: Wilderness Camping & Retreat Center, 34030 W 204th St., Lawson, MO 64062

WRDC is celebrating its 50th year in 2014! Join us for a celebration of all that has happened here since 1964. There will be time in the afternoon to tour and enjoy the facilities. A meal will be provided in the early evening along with a guest speaker. Following the dinner and speaker will be a concert by a well-known Christian artist. Stay tuned for more details.



**AUGUST 1-2, 2014**

## **Missouri Conference School of Lay Ministry**

Time: Starts at 6:00 p.m. on August 1 and ends at 12:00 p.m. on August 2

Location: Woods Chapel UMC, 4725 NE Lakewood Way, Lee's Summit, MO

Coordinator: Jeff Fothergill, [jeff\\_fothergill@msn.com](mailto:jeff_fothergill@msn.com)

The 2014 Conference School of Lay Ministry will be held on August 1 & 2 at Woods Chapel UMC in Lee's Summit, MO. Continuing the Annual Conference theme of Passionate Worship, this year's school will give Laity tools and solid steps to assist Pastors in fostering an environment of passionate worship. Specific speakers and additional details will be added over the next few weeks.



Visit [www.moumethodist.org/events](http://www.moumethodist.org/events) for information on upcoming events.



## I AM THE MISSOURI CONFERENCE...

**R**ob King can articulate his faith story clearly. It started in line at the drive-up window at the bank. The car in front of him had a bumper sticker that said 107.9, so he tuned to it. It was the local Christian radio station. He started listening to well known nationally syndicated Christian radio shows, like Focus on the Family and The Bible Answer Man.

"The topics they were preaching on made sense to me," King said. As King warmed to the idea of what it means to be a Christian, his wife's family invited them to bring a friend to church Sunday at Trinity UMC in Brookfield. It was the beginning of a four-part sermon series that led King to a new way of thinking.

"The messages revealed who God is, that God is not looking for us to be more religious, he is looking for relationship," he said.

Later when listening to the radio, he heard Chuck Swindoll preaching about Barabbas, and how Barabbas must have been so scared, and then relieved when Christ took his place on the cross, and how Christ took the place of all of us.

"At that moment I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior, and I haven't been the same since," King said.

King said it's easy to get the wrong impression about church. He had previously been turned off to the idea of going to church, because he knew people who viewed it as an obligation.

"It's not a duty that you have to go do, worship is a privilege that you get to experience," he said.

King's faith was contagious. His whole family was baptized in a pond on his father's farm, which has been in the family nearly 150 years. As a member of Trinity UMC, he has taken Disciple Bible classes, taken part in lay leader retreats, and has done some pulpit supply.

King went to work at his parent's meat processing shop in Marceline, King's Processing, in 1982. He and his wife bought the business in 2003. When you go in there today, you'll hear the Christian station on the radio, see religious pamphlets on the counter, and see scripture on the wall.

"I try to be a faithful steward," he said.