Greetings!
Welcome to your connection for up-to-the minute news and information from the Mississippi Conference. Featured in this newsletter are the latest announcements, dates to remember, celebration stories from across the conference and current employment opportunities. Our hope is for The Circuit Rider to become a tool for building the connection across the conference, strengthening our districts and local congregations as we go forth to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Please e-mail your news and information for us to share with others around the conference to news@mississippi-umc.org.

Attention:
POWER of We: Core Four Resources Available on Web Site

Go to http://www.mississippi-umc.org/pages/detail/990 to view or download.

Matthew 4:12-23
New International Version (NIV)
Jesus Begins to Preach
12 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali -- 14 to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:
15 “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles -- 16 the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”
17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Jesus Calls His First Disciples
18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 20 At once they left their nets and followed him.
Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus Heals the Sick

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Mississippi Conference Boosts Giving Last Year

The Office of the Mississippi Conference Treasurer

“Congratulations Mississippi Conference, you had an increase over 2012. Our challenge is to see how we can increase our giving in 2014. It’s a high hill to climb, but we can do it,” said David Stotts, treasurer of the Mississippi Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Generosity in the Mississippi Conference was alive and well in 2013 and continues to grow overall reports the conference treasurer, David Stotts. A total of $19,107,785 was received from the gracious givers of the local churches for the connectional work of the conference. That is $92,142 more than 2012.

Stotts said “As I think about this sign of generosity, I believe the churches have given partially because of what they received. To me, that means more work was done in the local community because more funds must have been given. That lives out fully the mission of the United Methodist denomination which is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Paragraph 120 of The Book of Discipline continues, “Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.” With the understanding of that statement and the number, not only is generosity alive and well in Mississippi, so is disciple-making in the local community.

The funding plan for 2013 was a total of $21,392,141. This includes the mission shares of $15,345,979 and the clergy pension of $6,046,162. Receipts for mission shares totaled $12,529,482 or a 81.70 percent pay out. The churches paid $6,022,652 toward the clergy pension invoices or 99.6 percent. This totals an overall payout for 2013 at 86.72 percent.

In 2012, the conference received 82.70 percent payout for the mission shares. For the same period of time the clergy pension invoices were paid at 96.57 percent. That means we had a payout rate for the 2012 funding plan of 86.44 percent.

“Congratulations Mississippi Conference, you had an increase over 2012. Our challenge is to see how we can increase our giving in 2014. It’s a high hill to climb, but we can do it,” said Stotts.

To climb that hill, Stotts adds that the conference will need to continue to pay clergy pension invoices at the 99 plus percent level to honor clergy. That should easily be done with fewer dollars because the percentage for pension invoices is less in 2014 due to the reduced pension plan offered to clergy.

Stotts explained that laity can honor clergy for their gracious gift by using those funds to increase their giving to the mission shares. By doing so, the result would be an increased payout on the mission shares.

“If your church was one of the 598 churches that were at 100 percent, thank you. If not, how about using that clergy pension invoice savings to pay on your mission shares to get closer to 100 percent,” said Stotts.

The mission work done beyond the local church in the conference and the whole denomination is funded by what is known as turnarounds. That term means that we “turnaround” the money received for the mission shares and send it directly to the mission partners withholding nothing for administrative costs.

Stotts said, “That means every dollar given for God’s work by a gracious giver goes directly 100 percent to that ministry. No other charitable organization can boast that.
In 2013 the conference had $9,211,539 in turnarounds that were funded by the gracious givers with $7,663,674 or at an 83.2 percent rate. This means that the conference gave more money to others than it did for our internal work as a conference.

“Now that is generosity, to give away more than we spend on ourselves,” said Stotts.


Hattiesburg Native Named Acting Dean of the Chapel, Religious Life at Emory
From Emory University Media Relations

The Rev. Lisa Garvin, associate dean of the chapel and religious life at Emory University, has been named acting dean of the chapel and religious life, effective February 7.

She will assume on an acting basis the post being vacated by the Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, who was named general secretary of The United Methodist Church’s (UMC) General Board of Church and Society, the denomination’s main arm for social justice and advocacy, education and international outreach.

Garvin, a deacon in the UMC, came to Emory as associate dean in 2012.

Prior to joining Emory, Garvin, a native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, had served as director of ministerial services for the UMC’s Mississippi Conference since 2008.

She served as chaplain to Millsaps College from 2005 to 2008, and as coordinator of ministries with young people for the Mississippi Conference from 2003 to 2005. From 1994 to 1996, she was coordinator of continuing education at the University of Southern Mississippi.

For the UMC, Garvin serves as a director of the church’s General Board of Church and Society, and is a member of the United Methodist Leadership Scholars Steering Committee of the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation. She served as a delegate to the church's General and Jurisdictional Conference in 2012.

Currently Garvin also is a member of the Board of Trustees at Millsaps College, where she sits on the Committee on Finance and chairs the Student Life Committee.

New Opt in Number for ConnecTText

ConnecTText, the conference texting system for news and alerts, has a new opt in number. Those interested in getting conference updates can text the letters ‘MSUMC’ or ‘MSUMCYouth’ to the number 95577 to stay informed. People who elected this service through the previous number will still receive conference alerts and do NOT have to opt in again using the new number.

Congregations for Children New Website

Congregations for Children has a new website that provides information about issues and why they matter to children, what decisions impact children and how people can influence those decisions and what tools and resources are needed to be effective. The website links to resources from partner organizations as well as find resources for congregations.

Congregations for Children aims to recruit people of faith -- all faiths -- from all across the state of Mississippi to become advocates for children -- specifically advocates for public policies in the areas of health, education and family income that would improve outcomes for our state's poor children. Mississippi is (according to the Pew American Forum) the most religious state in the nation. Mississippi is also (according to Kids Count) the worst state in the nation in child well-being. Congregations for Children believes these two designations should not be simultaneously true; in fact, Congregations for Children believe this should outrage people of faith and motivate them to work hard to improve child well-being in Mississippi. Being the most religious state should be demonstrated by also being best for child well-being.

Visit the new website at http://www.cfc-ms.org/.
Cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease. We know these leading causes of death by heart. But what about the leading causes of life? What are they and how can faith communities use them to help people live healthier lives, make communities more vibrant, and ultimately make the world a more peaceful place?


Early registration ends Feb. 15. Partial scholarships are available for full-time college and seminary students. Register by calling 800-222-4930 or visit www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.

The interfaith conference will feature six guest speakers from across the globe who will talk about their work in developing countries, the United States, working with mothers’ and children’s health and the role faith communities have in combating disease, violence and poverty, often the causes of poor health, said Wannie Hardin, a retired Methodist minister and a co-chair of the Peace Conference design team. The conference will also feature local speakers, workshops and panels, including a presentation by practitioners of alternative spiritual approaches to health, which will be moderated by Rabbi Phil Bentley of Hendersonville.

“The purpose of the whole conference is to talk about world peace,” said Hardin, who lives at Lake Junaluska. “Health issues and the lack of good health care around the world can be contributors to the lack of peace. So, many of the situations that contribute to poor health are things that stand in the way of peace. Clean water, proper nourishment, proper food, and sanitation, housing and proper shelter. All of those things contribute to poor health and often are found in unstable environments, and that’s true around the world.”

This is the sixth conference -- the first was held in 2008 -- and is composed of leaders of different faiths, a directive established by Wright Spears, the “grandfather of this conference,” who first brought the idea of a peace conference to his fellow ministers during the time of the Iraqi War, said Garland Young, a retired Methodist minister and chairman of the Peace Conference committee. Spears was concerned that the church had been too silent on the issues of war and violence.

“During the planning and the carrying out of the first conference it became obvious that world peace was not something that Christians were going to be able to pursue themselves, but that it had to be done in cooperation with other faiths, in particular the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Islam and Christianity,” Young said.

Among the speakers will be local physician Sameera Ahmad, M.D., a Muslim, who will speak on women’s roles in Islam and the Islamic perspective on health. She was recommended by Ahmad Abu Amara, a member of the Peace Conference executive committee and the design team, who also is Muslim. “I’ve been working for many years on interfaith groups and promoting the commonality of the communities,” said Amara, who is on the faculty of the College for Seniors at the University of North Carolina Asheville. “All of us are a creation of God and what we believe in our faith is personal.”

Rabbi Bentley (retired), a member of the Peace Conference Committee and a lifelong advocate of interfaith ministry, said he brings a different perspective to the discussion of faith and health, one that sees “humanity as God’s partners” and that for “every illness God created, He created a cure.”

“In Judaism, we are God’s hands. If we don’t do what is Godly or Holy, it’s not going to get done,” he explained. “We believe that God finished creation after the sixth day and put the world in our hands.”

Bentley, a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the oldest and largest organization in the United States devoted to working for peace, justice and nonviolence, said the Peace Conference allows people of different faiths to better understand each other. “In Jewish tradition, we have a very strong tradition in medicine and we share that with Muslims. Our belief is that the community must provide health care for everybody, and that tradition goes back to ancient times,” he said. “We are having an extra panel with a nationally known Christian Scientist who is a health care practitioner, a Cherokee medicine man, and someone who provides holistic health care in Asheville so people can see there are very different approaches to health care.”
The idea of faith communities working to improve world health is not a new one, said Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, presiding bishop of the Raleigh Area of The United Methodist Church and one of this year’s Peace Conference speakers.

“Faith and health are at the heart of the Wesleyan way of life and ministry,” Ward said. “John Wesley [the founder of Methodism] was fascinated by the intersections of faith and health. This was more than an avocation. The profound connections informed and shaped the Methodist movement.”

This year’s keynote speaker is Dr. Christoph Benn, director of External Relations and Partnerships Cluster for The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, in Geneva, Switzerland. Benn is a medical doctor with a master’s in Public Health from John Hopkins School of Public Health and a master’s in Religious Studies and Ethics from the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

Other speakers include:

Joshua Dubois, former director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships during President Obama’s first term
- Dr. Gary Gunderson, vice-president of Faith and Health Ministries at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, Winston-Salem, NC
- Dr. James Cochrane, professor in the Department of Religious Studies and senior research associate in the School of Public Health and Family Medicine at the University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Dr. Henry Perry, founder of Andean Rural Health Care, and senior associate at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, presiding bishop of the Raleigh Area of The United Methodist Church.

The book “Leading Causes of Life: Five Fundamentals to Change the Way You Live Your Life,” was a core resource for establishing this year’s theme, Young said. The book was co-written by Gunderson and Larry Pray, who is one of the conference workshop leaders. The book urges readers to frame the leading cause of life through the lens of their own experience.

“Life has a language that allows us to talk to each other—deeply and practically—across many barriers that usually divide us,” Gunderson writes. “Of course, everyone writing and reading about life has a stake in the subject. I’m talking about the life of the whole neighborhood and the whole community where we find our own lives. The key is changing the focus of conversation from death to life.”

The Lake Junaluska Peace Conference is an ongoing response to God’s call to peacemaking and reconciliation. Affirming the community of Abrahamic faiths, the Peace Conference seeks to work in partnership with Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religious traditions to advance the work of reconciliation and peace. www.lakejunaluska.com/peace

Melanie Threlkeld McConnell is a freelance writer, former AP newswoman, editor and media consultant based in Waynesville, North Carolina.

Housing Accommodations for General Conference

United Methodist News Service

The Commission on General Conference has selected Connections Housing as the official accommodations partner for the 2016 General Conference in Portland, Oregon and the 2020 General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Through this partnership with The United Methodist Church’s top legislative body, Connections Housing will manage all aspects of accommodations, including leading and organizing hotel relationships, negotiations and contracting. Connections Housing will take reservations via their call center and through a custom-designed website using secure Passkey technology, the largest processor of online group hotel reservations in the world.

“We encourage non-delegation groups to also contact Connections Housing for help with their hotel blocks in Portland and Minneapolis,” said Sara Hotchkiss, Business Manager of The General Conference of The United Methodist Church. “By all of us working together on our housing needs, we create an opportunity to save money on future General Conferences by getting more accurate data of our total hotel use and economic impact.”

General Conference 2016 will take place May 10-20 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. Scheduled for May 5-15 in 2020, General Conference will be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Connections Housing has established hotel industry relationships in both Portland and Minneapolis. The group has been a full-service meetings management and housing service provider since 1986. For more information about Connections Housing, go to www.connectionshousing.com or contact our Connections Housing representative Jon Mitchell at jon@connectionshousing.com or 404-876-5555.
About General Conference

General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church which meets once every four years. The conference can revise church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs.

A New Year’s Resolution That Will Transform the Church

United Methodist News Service (UMNS)

Gil Hanke, photo right, top executive of the Commission on United Methodist Men, suggests how churches can cultivate small groups that turn “pew sitters” into disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. Click here to read his commentary.

Hattiesburg District New Email Address

The Hattiesburg District office of the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church has a new email address. The new address is hatdistrict@gmail.com. Please note this change in your records.

District Superintendent Models Special Stole

Clergy persons from across the Meridian District contributed to a surprise Christmas gift for district superintendent, Rev. Billy Owen, made for him by his wife, Renelda. Each square in the patchwork stole is a piece of fabric donated by a pastor in the district from a tie, shirt, scarf or other item. Some also shared stories to go along with the swatches of cloth. Rev. Bryan Carubba, pastor of Pachuta, gave a piece of fabric from a pair of khakis that had traversed the world with him during his career in the navy before he entered the ministry. Rev. Lynne Anderson, of Pleasant Grove, gave a section she had pieced for a quilt. Rev. Jonathan Tullos, of Oak Grove, gave material from one of his uniforms he wears as a paramedic for Metro Ambulance.

The stole is lined and trimmed in green. Owen said, “I love the stole and can hardly wait to wear it as I preach. Thank you to each pastor who gave a piece of fabric for it, and to my wife for making it. I especially enjoy the stories that came along with the fabric. I will always think of you when I wear it.”

The Rev. Billy Owen shows off his new stole made from fabrics donated by pastors of the Meridian District.

Starkville District Leaderships Training

Nearly 180 clergy and lay members of the Starkville District attended the annual leadership training event at Starkville First United Methodist Church on Saturday, January 11, 2014. Training was provided in nine areas: trustees, pastor parish relations committee (PPRC), youth, safe sanctuary/children, communications, small membership churches, finances, year-end statistical reporting and vital congregations.

The day ended with a mission fair. The goal was to assemble health kits that will be distributed through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Between financial contributions and donated items, more than 50 health kits will be sent to the Philippines where there is a need for relief supplies following the November 2013 typhoon.

During the communications training, Nancy Ford won a POWER of We shirt for naming all the core values of the Mississippi Conference. Patricia Tate received one for giving the correct stats about church social media usage.
The Starkville District extends a special thanks to Starkville First UMC and especially Lynn Berch for assisting in making the day possible. A special appreciation to the facilitators: Rev. Tim Thompson, Ali Ryan, Larry Davis, Rev. Gary Howse, Rev. George Buell, Dr. Embra Jackson, Rev. Kenny McGill, Rev. Trey Harper, Jeff Walton, Tamica Smith-Jeuit, Jasmine Haynes and Lee Burdine.

Nearly 180 people split in groups to learn about vital information to strengthen their local church.

Gautier First UMC Helps Warm Community

The United Methodist Women of Gautier First United Methodist Church sponsored a sock and mitten Christmas tree to help people stay warm during cold weather. With the help of the congregation, the group provided 20 scarves and 55 pairs of gloves to Seashore Mission in Biloxi, 56 pairs of men and women's socks to Singing River Rehabilitation Center in Moss Point and 20 hats to local schools. The ladies in the picture are from left to right: Rose Marie Luke, Nancy Green, Karen Teesdale, Donna Reiter, Beverly Seigrist, Jean West and Mary Jane Brewster.

Meridian District Leadership Training
January 26, 2014

Meridian District leadership training will be held Sunday, January 26 at College Park United Methodist Church located at 1103 Hwy 19 North in Meridian, Mississippi. The event time is 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

The sessions are:
- **Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC)** - Rev. Billy Owen, District Superintendent
- **Finance** - David Stotts, Conference Treasurer
- **Trustees** - Arthur Gallagher Insurance
- **Youth** - Mike Howington, Conference Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator

Everyone is invited to attend this training session, especially the following leaders and committee members: pastor parish relations committee (PPRC), youth leaders, trustee committee members, treasurers and finance.

For more information call the Meridian District office, 601-483-6221.

2014 Campus Ministries Statewide Wesley
February 7-9, 2014

Campus ministries statewide Wesley gathering will be at Timberrcreek Camp in Morton, Mississippi on February 7-9. The cost for the gathering is $82.00. The scholarship application for this event is available here. All needs will be considered in the order in which they are received and applicants will be notified of the total amount approved by the conference office. The registration and payment deadline is Friday, January 31, 2014.

For more information, contact Allyson Willis, statewide Wesley coordinator at aewillis@bellsouth.net or 662-231-9929. For registration form, go to http://msumc.s3.amazonaws.com/C952BD26D91B4C50956C12CC72B69FDE_2014%20Wesley%20Statewide%20Scholarship%20Application%20Form.pdf?utm_source=Circuit+Rider+Newsletter+1-22-14&utm_campaign=1-22-14+Circuit+Rider&utm_medium=email.
2014 The Gathering Student Conference -- “Mind Games”
February 28, 2014 - March 2, 2014

The Gathering Student Conference is a ministry designed for the young people of the Mississippi United Methodist Conference. This event was formally known as MYAC. It will take place February 28, 2014 - March 2, 2014 at Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi. For more details and to register, visit the Mississippi Conference website at www.mississippi-umc.org.

Meridian District Lay Servant
March 1, 2014

Meridian District Lay Servant training will be held March 1, 2014, at College Park United Methodist Church, 1103 Hwy 19 North in Meridian, Mississippi. Registration is $35.00 per person. To view the brochure for this event, go to http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1102747532396-1621/2014+Lay+Servant+Brochure-Meridian.pdf.

7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. Registration/Breakfast
8:00 a.m. - 8:10 a.m. Welcome/Devotion
8:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Classes
11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Lunch (on site)
12:15 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. Classes
4:20 p.m. Conclusion & Covenant

McAllister’s will be providing lunch at $8.00.

Confirmation Retreat -- Seashore Assembly, Biloxi
March 7-8, 2014

This retreat is designed especially for sixth graders to experience the Wesleyan ideas of piety and mercy within the context of community. Hands-on encounters with people actually doing the work will be a plus for each individual and group. Church groups are being invited to participate in the Stop Hunger Now packing event at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. They can register to bring older youth or anyone to help. There is a place on the registration form for that. Youth will have an opportunity to create something to participate in our closing worship on Saturday evening. Anyone coming for the packing event is welcome to eat dinner and stay for the service. This retreat is open to churches from other districts. The deadline to register is February 21, 2014. Download the registration brochure, go to http://seashoreassembly.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2014-brochure.pdf?utm_source=Circuit+Rider+Newsletter+1-22-2014+st&utm_campaign=1-22-2014&utm_medium=email. For more information call 228-436-6767. Seashore Assembly’s mailing address is 1410 Leggett Drive, Biloxi, MS 39530.

2014 Wesley Pines Free Church Day
March 15, 2014 | May 3, 2014

On March 15, 2014 and May 3, 2014, Wesley Pines invites all to come and experience a taste of summer camping! Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in archery, canoeing, high and low ropes events on these days. Along with the spiritual lessons shared through the ropes course, the prayer trail will be open for spiritual reflection and devotionals. Registration and time for tours of the camp will be from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. Activities will be from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. with lunch and a devotional from the activity field at noon.

These days are for individuals and church groups to come and get a feel for camping activities. There is absolutely no charge, however all participants are asked to call by the Monday before the camp dates to inform the Wesley staff of how many people will be attending with their group. For more information call Camp Wesley Pines at 601-892-2341 or email wpoffice@wildblue.net.
Announcements:

Free Piano Available to a Church

Hopewell UMC in Rose Hill has a very good used Kimball piano and would like to give it to a church needing one. Call the pastor, Rev. Wayne Taylor at 601-480-1260 or Perry Rich at 601-727-9882 if interested.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Resources

United Methodists around the world are asked to participate in the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is January 18-25 this year. The office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, United Methodist Council of Bishops, has online resources. To check out what is available, visit http://www.gccuic-umc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=422&Itemid=1&utm_source=Circuit+Rider+Newsletter+1-22-14&utm_campaign=1-22-14+Circuit+Rider&utm_medium=email.

Commission on Women Offers Free Leadership Webinars Feb. 4

A series of webinars aimed at helping develop principled leaders in The United Methodist Church is being offered this year by the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Among the topics are the following: Robert’s Rules of Order and submitting petitions to annual or General Conferences. The webinars start at 7:30 p.m. February 4. To register, email Audrey Krumbach at akrumbach@gcsrw.org. For more information, visit http://umcconnections.org/2014/01/13/gcsrw-webinars/?utm_source=Circuit+Rider+Newsletter+1-22-14&utm_campaign=1-22-14+Circuit+Rider&utm_medium=email.

Deadline to Apply for 2014 Urban Fellows and Missional Fellows programs Feb. 1

The deadline to apply for 2014 Urban Fellows and Missional Fellows programs at Wesley Theological Seminary is Saturday, February 1. The Urban and Missional fellows receive a $10,000 stipend for educational and living expenses. For details, visit http://www.wesleyseminary.edu/en-us/downtown/urbanministry/urbanfellows.aspx?utm_source=Circuit+Rider+Newsletter+1-22-14&utm_campaign=1-22-14+Circuit+Rider&utm_medium=email.

February is Black History Month

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship has music and worship resources for Black History Month observance. For more details, visit http://www.gbod.org/planning-calendar/black-history-month?utm_source=Circuit+Rider+Newsletter+1-22-14&utm_campaign=1-22-14+Circuit+Rider&utm_medium=email.

Pray 40 is Underway

Pray 40 is happening again this spring starting Sunday, Jan 19, 2014. Prayers have been authored by 40 campus ministry leaders from 40 different organizations covering the whole spectrum of Christian groups. Just as cool, Pray 40’s last day on February 27 is also the Collegiate Day of Prayer.

Each fall, over 17 million American students head to college and university campuses. Millions more will head to college when you include universities around the world. These students are making decisions, learning lessons, and being shaped into the next generation of teachers, accountants, mothers, fathers, doctors, CEO’s, journalists, and ministers, among others. The mission of Pray 40 is that the Spirit of the Living God revealed in Jesus Christ would awaken, encounter, heal, and shape them to be His disciples on campus and in the world.

Below are ways that students, faculty/staff, parents, pastors, and churches can support Pray 40:
Signing up at www.pray40.com
Follow on Twitter: pray40
Annual Conference 2014
June 6-8, 2014

Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr., has announced that the 2014 session of the Mississippi Annual Conference will be held on June 6-8 at the Jackson Convention Complex.

Rev. Allen Bailey, retired associate pastor at Indianola First UMC, passed away on December 23, 2013. His funeral was December 27. Please continue to lift his family in prayer.

The Rev. Dennis Bowling, who was appointed to the East Jackson District Harrisville/Rexford UMC, passed away on Monday, January 6. Please keep the Bowling family in your prayers. Burial arrangements took place in his home state in Missouri.

Funeral services for Mrs. Bessie Barnes, wife of Tupelo District Superintendent Dr. Jimmy L. Barnes, will be Tuesday, January 28 at 2:00 p.m. in the Christian Life Center of St. Paul UMC, 501 N. Front Street, Tupelo, Mississippi. Public visitation will be from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Monday, January 27, at N. L. Jones Funeral Home, 2510 S. Gloster Street in Tupelo, with family hour from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, family suggests that gifts in memory of Mrs. Barnes be made to ICC Wesley Foundation, c/o Tupelo District Office, P.O. Box 3957, Tupelo, MS 38803.

Employment Opportunities

• Pastoral Assistant, Wells Memorial UMC

Address: 2019 Bailey Avenue Jackson, MS 39213

Background Information: Wells United Methodist Church is presently seeking qualified candidates for several positions/roles within the church staff. Currently, three subcommittees of the SPRC (Staff-Parish Relations Committee) are organizing job descriptions and vetting potential candidates. This job description addresses the position of Pastoral Assistant. This position is vital to the daily operation of Wells Church.

Another subcommittee is currently performing the same function in regard to the position of Associate Pastor. Based on the skills, graces and abilities of the successful candidate for the Associate Pastor position, this job description for the Pastoral Assistant may then be refined to exclude those tasks and duties which will be performed by the Associate Pastor. Until that position is filled, this subcommittee will seek qualified candidates based on the duties and tasks currently performed by the incumbent Wells employee who will be retiring in mid-2014. It is the hope of Wells Church that the successful candidate for this position will “shadow” the incumbent for a mutually agreed upon time frame prior to retirement in order for him to pass on his extensive institutional knowledge regarding this most important position.

Position Summary: The person that presently holds the position of Pastoral Assistant currently performs the following wide range of tasks and responsibilities. The candidate who is hired to fill this position will be required to have the ability to accomplish the vast majority of the following tasks in regard to the operation of Wells Church. Some of these duties may be assigned to other staff or sub-contracted to outside parties.
Recurring Administrative Tasks:
1. Answer the telephone and door during office hours
2. Take and relay messages
3. Assist pastor with mail.
4. Prepare Sunday Bulletin from draft developed by pastor(s); print children's bulletins; recruit weekly lay ministers. Create bulletin inserts as needed.
5. Develop the annual statistical report submitted in January to the Conference statistician.
6. Maintain the church website, uploading sermons, music, the Sunday Bulletin and special notices as necessary.
7. Distribute email Prayer Requests and General Notes as necessary.
8. Prepare placemats for special suppers, including the Galloway School honors banquet.
9. Respond to requests for information or assistance from church members.
10. Substitute for the pastor interviewing neighbors who request utility/rent assistance from the Pastor’s Fund. Schedule assistance appointments.
11. Order supplies of needed items, including paper products and office supplies, as well as James Club Bibles and educational materials as requested.
12. Order floral arrangements as necessary.

Preliminary Job Description
1. Purchase nursery supplies as requested.
2. Prepare copies of minutes and handouts for Council and Board meetings.
3. Prepare and address birthday greeting cards for pastor's signature.
4. Assist the pastor with scheduling.
5. Maintain the church database, mailing list and member/friend directory.
7. Maintain Sanctuary candles and microphone batteries.
8. Produce, package and mail recordings of the services.
9. Mail copies of the Upper Room to shut-ins and others on request.
11. Prepare such other meals as requested. (Easter Sunrise, Mission Mississippi).
12. Send messages to the texting service as needed.
13. Prepare Charge Conference reports for submission to District Superintendent

Financial Secretary Duties:
1. Copy all checks and contribution envelopes and record donors’ names for annual mailing of giving statements in January.
2. Copy all invoices for Treasurer. Record all checks issued and obtain second signature before mailing.
3. Reconcile bank statements and prepare monthly reports of finances for the Administrative Board.
4. Preserve records of all income and disbursements, with copies of checks and original invoices.
5. Assist the Finance Committee in the preparation of the annual budget for presentation to the Charge Conference and Administrative Board.
6. Prepare the annual Fund Balance Report for submission to the Conference office.
7. Print, edit, sign and mail annual statements of giving

Newsletter Editor Duties:
1. Layout, write and edit materials for the monthly newsletter.
2. Seal, label and mail the monthly newsletter.
3. Upload a pdf version of the newsletter to the church website.
4. Edit and publish literary/Advent/Lenten journals

WellsFest Duties:
1. Update WellsFest web page as needed
2. Maintain WellsFest personnel roster.
3. Produce Bulletin inserts for WellsFest
4. Produce school handouts for WellsFest
5. Update and produce 2,500 5K Run/Walk registration forms in early June
Interested Candidates:
Interested candidates should submit a 1-2 page letter of introduction explaining your interest in serving at Wells along with a current resume and a minimum of four professional references. This information should be emailed to Bruce Reynolds, the S/PPRC Sub-committee contact, at bruce.spencer.reynolds@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please feel free to call him at 601-941-9306 (C).

Microwave Potatoes in Sour Cream Sauce

2 cups sliced, cooked potatoes
2 teaspoons butter or margarine
½ cups sour cream
1 tablespoon parsley or chopped green onions
2 tablespoon flour
1 cup milk
Salt and pepper, to taste
Paprika

Wash four medium-sized potatoes and microwave on full power for eight minutes, or until done. Cool and slice fairly thin or cut into cubes. Place in a two-quart dish. Set aside. Melt butter; add flour and milk. Cook three minutes on full power. Stir once. Add sour cream and season. Stir into potatoes gently. Sprinkle parsley or chopped green onions over top, or stir in. Add a little paprika and cook for two minutes on full power, uncovered.

– Juanita Smith, “Loaves and Fishes” from St. Paul UMC in Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Submit to The Circuit Rider by Noon Each Monday

The Conference communication team looks forward to getting your stories and events for the next issue of The Circuit Rider, but the details are needed no later than noon each Monday the day before distribution on Wednesday.

There’s no guarantee that items received after the noon cut off will make the following Circuit Rider, so share your happenings soon. Send to: news@mississippi-umc.org.

Thanks in advance for helping tell the Mississippi United Methodist story!

Follow the Conference on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Mississippi-United-Methodist-Conference/436491529732524 and on Twitter at https://twitter.com/Mississippi_UMC.

Stay Connected with ConnecTText

Mississippi United Methodists with the ability to receive text messaging via phone are encouraged to sign up for ConnecTText. The service is another option for people to stay informed about important dates and other conference happenings.

To sign up for ConnecTText:

Remember, you must have the ability to get text messages on your phone.

From your mobile phone, text the letters ‘MSUMC’ to the number 95577 and press send.

Wait a few seconds for a confirmation text and you’re connected!