

Praying for the people of Haiti *A Pastoral Letter from Bishop King*

To the beautiful people of South Georgia,

All of us have been touched in deep places by the suffering of our Haitian brothers and sisters caused by the recent earthquake. The photographs and video images reporting the scope of the destruction and the extent of human suffering are too much to grasp. We pray for God's grace, in all its abundance, to fall upon all who are in pain.

Many of you have sought ways to express Christlike compassion and offer tangible assistance. Your ceaseless prayers, generous gifts and selfless offers to volunteer are all deeply appreciated. Thank you for desiring to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

Many governmental agencies and faith-based organizations are responding quickly and with great humanitarian efforts. Rescuing the trapped, relieving the suffering, and rebuilding homes and communities will be a long process. We pray continually for those who suffer and for those who are offering direct and indirect aid.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is already at work in Haiti. In two United Methodist Board of Global Missions staffers died from injuries related to the collapse of the Hotel Montana during the earthquake. Sam Dixon, UMCOR Executive, and Clint Rabb, GBGM Mission Volunteer Coordinator, were in Haiti working to offer long-term aid for the poor and marginalized Haitian people when the earthquake hit. We pray for Sam and Clint's

family and the Global Ministries family as they come to grips with his death.

UMCOR is actively engaged in this initial response of relief and aid. UMCOR will be involved for many years as the rebuilding process begins. Right now, the best way to offer assistance is through monetary gifts. Each congregation is encouraged to receive an offering that can be designated for the Haiti Emergency, Advance Number 418325. You may remit your gifts through our Conference Treasurer's Office using this Advance number and those funds will be sent immediately to UMCOR.

Additionally, I encourage you to find ways to participate in the global response to this horrific disaster. Monitoring our Conference website, www.sgaumc.org, will be the best way for you to find the most current requests for assistance and the best way to respond.

God is using people just like us from all over the world as instruments of grace and healing for the Haitian people. Together, we are seeing our neighbor's need and working to alleviate suffering. I am proud of South Georgia United Methodists for joining in this outpouring of love, for in so doing, we are partners in growing a Christlike world.

In God's grace,



News in Brief

Pastors Salaries: For the 2010 clergy compensation list visit <http://www.sgaumc.org/communicator>.

Confirmation Retreats 2010: Join the Journey one of two confirmation retreats. (See page 5)

Helping Haiti: Find out ways you can respond to the Haiti emergency. (See page 7)

One Great Hour of Sharing: Find out how your church can take part in this vital offering March 14. (See page 8)

New Conference Center: Plans for new conference center unveiled. (See page 9)

God envisions faithful, fruitful and bold congregations and ministries passionately growing mature disciples of Jesus Christ who are living vessels of the Holy Spirit's desire and miraculous power to redeem every soul and circumstance.

What is God up to?

BY DR. BRAD BRADY*

While reading Leonard Sweet's book entitled, *So Beautiful*, I came upon this question that wouldn't go away: What is God up to?

Most of us are so busy living life that we are stunned by the question. The question generates the same sensations one gets when we are given a pop quiz. We know we should know the answer. We know that it is a fair question to ask. We are just unprepared to answer.

As we begin the New Year, I invite you to spend some time pondering these aspects of the question.

What is God up to in your life? No doubt you will find God actively pursuing a loving relationship with you. Upon reflection, you will notice that God's approach is customized just for you. God approaches us through the Holy Spirit's planting God-thoughts within us. As we become aware of God's loving presence, we can identify God's efforts to reach us at our genuine point of need. Whether it is awakening grace, convicting grace, forgiving grace, or maturing grace,

God is up to something in your life.

What is God up to in your church? Look around the sanctuary next Sunday and embrace the fact that God is continually up to something in the lives of every person gathered. While that activity is personalized, God's activity is directed in such a way as to prepare us to work cooperatively with others as instruments of grace in the world. As we embrace salvation fully, grow in Christlikeness with ever-increasing maturity, cultivate and engage God's gifts and resources bestowed on us, and actually launch out through service to each other and our neighbors, we will begin to see more fully what God is up to in our churches.

What is God up to in your community? This might be the trickiest aspect of the question for some of us since there is so much chaos, confusion and uncertainty in most communities. Yet, for those who know God is up to something in the lives of every individual and in every congregation, we can be sure God is out in the community redeeming souls and circumstances. Sometimes God's activity is done through our words and deeds. Other times, God works through the hands and hearts of those yet to

profess Jesus as Lord. But trust this, God is up to something!

Here are some clues. Wherever you see relief offered, unmerited love shared, walls of separation torn down, creation protected, hearts breaking over the things that break God's heart, and others awoken to God's love you will be dipping into what I affectionately call the "Whitman's Sampler" of God's kingdom.

What next? What do you do once you identify that God is up to something?

Blackaby and King wrote good advice years ago in *Experiencing God*. Wherever you see God at work consider it as God's invitation for you to join in what God is doing. Everything God does is directed toward healing every creature and every aspect of creation. Joining in what God is up to will draw you closer to God's heart, will confirm your faith, and will launch you into the greatest adventure of your life.

Can you begin to imagine just how thrilling a year it would be if we were continually vigilant and fully engaged in what God is up to?

*BRAD BRADY is the Assistant to the Bishop for Connectional Ministries for the South Ga. Conference.

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Be a Kingdom Builder

BY KAREN HAHN*

In the 1960's Kingdom Builders was established to offer people across the South Georgia Conference a way to support new church development. New and Revitalized Congregational Development has grown out of that club. In 2002 the Office of New and Revitalized Congregational Development of the South Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church was birthed.

NRCDD seeks to bring gifted leaders, called by God to churches and communities in need, to provide financial support to birth new congregations and to revitalize declining congregations. In 2009, forty-five congregations fell under the umbrella of NRCDD with an average weekly attendance of 5,500! That is good news! These congregations include new congregations, revitalized congregations and Hispanic congregations. Dr. Hugo Magallanes, along with Rev. Felipe Ricardo and Rev. Daniel

Medina, lead NRCDD Hispanic Ministries.

The Giving Clubs of NRCDD (Kingdom Builders, New Congregational Supporters, Vision Promoters and New Congregational Planters) are helping to bring financial support to all of our congregations. For those who have been a faithful supporter of Kingdom Builders,

thank you! For those of you who have not yet begun to support this important ministry, February 28th is Kingdom Builders Sunday, and I invite you to partner with us as we seek to offer exciting worship opportunities to people across South Georgia!

**KAREN HAHN is the Assistant for Development and Communications for NRCDD.*

**- LifeSpring -
a new United
Methodist
Church start
in Statesboro**

I want to be a part of the Kingdom Builder's Club!

Name: _____ Home Church: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

I/We want to be: **Kingdom Builder:** \$15 twice a yr. **New Congregation Supporter:** \$50 twice a yr.

Vision Promoter: \$100 twice a year **New Congregation Planter:** \$500 twice a year

Return completed form to: NRCDD / P.O. Box 26938 / Macon, Georgia 31220

Thank You, South Georgia United Methodists

BY MIRIAM HAGAN*

This week we have been trying to close the books on Apportionments for 2009. I want to thank all the members of the churches in South Georgia who give their tithes and offerings to their local church which enables the local church to pay the churches

apportionments.

I am always grateful for churches that pay their

apportionments, but I am especially grateful this year because of the

economic times in which we are living. Many local churches have been feeling the results of the downturn in the economy. Members have lost their jobs; members have been put on furlough for days or weeks; and members who are retired have had their health insurance premiums increase while they did not receive a cost of living increase on their social security benefits. So I am deeply grateful for the faithfulness of the members and the churches that sent us money during 2009.

We are working on entering final payments into the computer, but it looks like we will receive over \$10,450,000 on conference apportionments for 2009, another \$1,224,000 on district apportionments, over \$121,000 on special Sunday offerings, and well over \$2 million donated to Advance

Mission Special projects. Although not everything has been entered, I am estimating that our percentage we have collected will be over 85% for 2009. The Bishop, the Cabinet, various committees and my staff have heard me expressing concerns over and over this year that we might not receive but an 83 or 84 percent collection rate on apportionments. So I am rejoicing and saying "thank you" to all the churches who have found ways to pay their apportionments this year.

In case you are not familiar with this word, United Methodists define "apportionments" as the portion of the conference budget that each local church is asked to pay.

Apportionments received from local churches help fund mission projects around the world, support United Methodist Colleges and Seminaries, provide funds to help pay for children and youth camps and weekend retreats, enables the conference to start new churches, revitalize existing churches, begin Hispanic congregations, operate the Moore Museum at Epworth By The Sea, allow for local church training events, help support Wesley Foundation ministries on college campuses all over Georgia, assist students who are attending seminary, hold license to preach schools, help provide health insurance and pension benefits for our retired ministers, and many other programs. In addition the apportionments pay salaries and benefits for conference employees

and the expenses related to operation of the offices, pay expenses of the Annual Conference session, and reimburse persons for the expenses related to their service on conference committees.

When churches pay their apportionments we have the funds needed to fund all of the above and many other items which were not listed. By working together, churches are able to do more than any one church can do on its own.

I am grateful for the District Superintendents and their secretaries who call or write and encourage churches to pay apportionments. I am thankful for the employees of the Administrative Services Office who arrive early and stay late as we work to receive and record correctly all of the payments from local churches. I am thankful for employees who believe in our mission projects enough to help our churches understand what the "three star award" for mission giving is all about and help them find the information about the projects.

As I count my many blessings, which includes a wonderful supportive husband and two sons and their wives who have given me three grandchildren that love me, I am grateful to be a part of the United Methodist Church and am fortunate enough to get to work for and with the churches, ministers and lay persons of the South Georgia Conference.

**MIRIAM HAGAN is the Director of Administrative Services for the South Ga. Conference.*

Financial Planning Services Available Again This Year for Clergy

The General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits has once again arranged to offer Ernst & Young Financial Planning Services in 2010 at no charge to: active participants with an account balance, surviving spouses with an account balance, and terminated and retired participants with an account balance of at least \$10,000. Ernst & Young's financial planners can provide confidential, objective guidance on: making investment decisions, saving for retirement, managing debt, understanding tax issues, evaluating insurance needs and options, buying a home, and more! To take advantage of this valuable resource, just call Ernst & Young directly at 1-800-360-2539 between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Join the Journey for 2010 Confirmation Retreats

Two weekend-long Confirmation Retreats are scheduled for 2010, the first from February 26-28 and the second from March 19-21.

Designed for students in the 6th grade and above, the "Join the Journey" Confirmation Retreats will provide churches of all sizes an opportunity to connect with others through worship, study, and fellowship. They will also include large group gatherings around the church seasons and breakout sessions with topics of grace, United Methodist History and United Methodist lingo.

The entire event will compliment Cokesbury's Claim the Name curriculum. Not meant to be the only confirmation youth go through, the Confirmation Retreat should be complimentary to what a church is or will be doing.

"The Confirmation Retreats are about experiencing the good news of Jesus Christ with others who are on the same spiritual journey," said Rev. Adam Ricker, event planner and associate director of Connectional Ministries. "Even after five years of attending these retreats there is something new that I learn each time. Whether it is about the character and nature of God or the history of our United Methodist Church, I am always inspired to continue growing in my faith."

Workshop topics include:

- Amazing Grace: this workshop will help confirmands more deeply understand prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace.
- Talkin' Funny / Mumbo Jumbo: This workshop with help attendees
- Come to the Table (Holy Communion) – this workshop explores the meaning of

understand and define the words used in United Methodism, including Wesleyan terms, organizational terms, titles, and more. Confirmands will gain a greater sense of organization and understanding of key people and terms.

- Climbin' the Family Tree: This workshop explains the history of United Methodism and contains an interactive time to discover predecessor groups and denominations.

Also offered during the weekend are Join the Journey "Holy Clubs," smaller breakout groups that will study specific topics with a method and purpose, to grow in knowledge and love for Jesus Christ.

Confirmands may choose to study any of the following:

- An Invitation to Chat (prayer): this workshop focuses on looking into the practice of praying and gives confirmands a better understanding of what prayer is: when, where, and how they can pray. Opportunities to lead prayers in Sunday morning worship will be available if a group or individuals desire.

Holy Communion and gives confirmands the opportunity to serve during Sunday morning worship.

- Feast on the Word (Bible study) – this workshop helps unlock the mysteries of an ancient book with an ever-so present message applicable to daily life.
- Devotion Motion (Devotions & Meditations) – this workshop looks at and practices reading devotions and meditations appropriate for youth.

The large group general session gatherings will take place in Strickland Auditorium and will include high-energy music, a contemporary blend of new and old, drama relevant to the topic being discussed, a speaker, individual church time for discussion, multi-media presentations, and youth involvement. The following church seasons will theme each of the individual sessions: Advent and prevenient grace, Lent/Good Friday and justifying grace, Easter and justifying grace, and Pentecost and sanctifying grace.

"The Confirmation Retreats bring together the best of a diverse group of leaders from across our conference who really want to help our students encounter the living God," Rev. Ricker said.

For more information about the Join the Journey Confirmation Retreats or to register your group, visit www.sgaumc.org or call Diane Giles at 888-266-7642.

2010 Summer Camp Dates

MID HIGH CAMPS

Mid-High Mania 1: June 7-11
Mid-High Mania 2: June 14-18
Epworth By The Sea
For those entering 6th-9th grades

ELEMENTARY CAMPS

Elem. Camp 1: June 21-25
Elem. Camp 2: July 5-9
Elem. Camp 3: July 12-16
Epworth By The Sea
For those entering 4th-6th grades

Applications now being accepted for summer camp counselors

Attention college students: summer camp counselors needed! If you desire a summer in ministry, Epworth By The Sea is the place to be. As a camp counselor, you will be able to minister to hundreds of youth and children throughout the summer, while making Christian friendships with other staff members that last a lifetime. As a paid position, staff members on the Leadership Team will commit to nine weeks of service which will include serving at mid-high camps, elementary camps, as well as traveling to local churches. The summer will run from May 29– July 22, 2010. Begin praying now to see if this opportunity is for you. Applications are available online and interviews will be completed by February. For more detailed information please call Adam Ricker at 888-266-7642, or check out the camping section of our website at www.sgaumc.org.

2009 Leadership Team

'Using All God's Tools' - Technology Training

Do you want to enhance the use of technology in your local church? Are you interested in using technology tools and resources for effective ministry? Then join local church volunteers, staff, webmasters/servants, communicators, and pastors for this one day training event sponsored by the South Georgia Conference Office of Communications. "Using All God's Tools" is set for Saturday, February 27 at Nashville UMC in Nashville, Ga. from 10-3. Through interactive presentations, hands-on demonstrations and comprehensive handouts participants will explore a variety of options for using technology tools for effective ministry. Training sessions include: 1) Video for Worship: Enhance, Focus, and Share your message using modern imaging technology; Getting the Most from Your Sound System; 3) Being Good Stewards of Your Tech Budget, and 4) Staying Connected: Technology Roundtable. Leading the training sessions will be Rev. David Wood and Mr. Ken Spears. Cost is \$15, payable at the door. To register, e-mail Kelly Roberson at kelly@sgaumc.com. CEU credit (0.5) is available for full participation. Visit www.sgaumc.org/tools for more information.

Generous Georgia Donor Doubles Gift to CCPI

The anonymous donor who previously gave a \$500,000 challenge gift to the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) has contributed another \$500,000. The phenomenal support from the clergy and churches of the North and South Georgia Conferences have made this total \$1 million gift a reality. The total commitments from Georgia is now \$2,452,467.37.

These gifts go toward pensions for clergy in Central Conferences (conferences outside the United States) who often serve in areas of great need only to face hunger and poverty in retirement.

This now brings the current CCPI campaign total to \$19.1 million of the \$20 million goal. For more information visit www.ccpi-umc.org.

Wood Home Available for Rent

One of the eight James A. and Virginia Willingham Wood Homes in Epworth Acres on St. Simons Island has become available for occupancy by a retired minister. The vacancy is at 102 Arthur J. Moore Drive.

Eligibility to occupy this home includes (i) being 62 years of age or on a disability retirement under the Comprehensive Protection Plan, (ii) having served full time in the itinerant system as an appointed minister for at least 15 years of active service in the South Georgia Annual Conference, and (iii) having retired from the South Georgia Annual Conference. Retirees who own comparable residential property elsewhere are not eligible.

For a copy of the Wood Homes Policy Statement and an application, visit www.sgaumc.org/woodhome or contact the Connectional Ministries Office at 888-266-7642.

Completed applications should be sent to Gwen Barber, 102 King Cotton Rd., Brunswick, GA 31525 and must be postmarked by January 25. The Board of Trustees of the South Georgia Annual Conference is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Wood Homes.

For more information, contact Gwen Barber (912-264-2630) or Warren Plowden (478-745-2821).

Haiti Emergency Response

WHAT CAN I DO?

1) **PRAY** Pray for those still trapped in the rubble. Pray for those who have lost everything. Pray for families that still do not know the status of their loved ones. Pray for those who are grieving. Pray for the relief workers for strength and safety.

2) **MONETARY GIFTS** Gifts to support UMCOR's Haiti Relief efforts can be made to Haiti Emergency, UMCOR Advance #418325. Checks can be made to the South Georgia Conference with "Advance #418325 - Haiti Emergency" in the memo line. Checks can be put in the church's offering plate or mailed to: South Georgia Conference, PO Box 52101 / Macon, GA 31208. 100% of gifts made to this Advance project will go to help the people of Haiti. You can also give online at www.umcor.org.

3) **PREPARE HEALTH KITS** There is a great need to restock the supplies in the Sager Brown warehouse that are currently being moved to Haiti. See the list to the right for more information.

4) **BE AWARE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE SITUATION** Preliminary estimates place the death toll as high as 200,000. Due to the enormity of this disaster it will take significantly longer for volunteer teams to be allowed in the destruction area. According to Barbara Tripp, an UMCOR consultant, volunteers are encouraged to wait until conditions are safe for entry and the mission is defined. UMCOR is regrouping in the Dominican Republic at present in preparation for their long term volunteer response. As soon as we are aware of volunteer opportunities, we will inform you.

5) **SUBMIT CONTACT INFORMATION TO ASSIST** At the request of UMCOR, the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, Southeastern Jurisdiction is collecting contact information for individuals interested in traveling to Haiti to assist in disaster recovery and humanitarian aid. Interested missionaries can visit www.umvim.org/haiti and enter their contact information into the form on that page. This list of contacts will be activated as soon as UMVIM has news about scheduling a mission trip to Haiti.

Health Kits Greatly Needed

For people who are feeling powerless in being able to help those in Haiti, providing health kits is a tangible way they can make an immediate difference. The kits will be distributed to those who have been forced to leave their homes as a result of the recent disaster.

For individuals or groups that want to contribute basic necessities, UMCOR requests that the following NEW items be placed in a sealed one-gallon plastic bag.

- 1 hand towel (15" x 25" up to 17" x 27". No kitchen towels.
- 1 washcloth
- 1 comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)
- 1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
- 1 bath-size bar of soap (3 oz. and up)
- 1 toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper, no child-size brushes)
- 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages
- \$1.00 to purchase toothpaste

(NOTE: Toothpaste is purchased in bulk to be added to health kits to ensure that the product does not expire before they are sent.)

Because the emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations and strict rules govern product entry into international countries, UMCOR requires that the kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.

Each packed box cannot exceed 66 pounds. Sager Brown Depot provides the following shipping tips for the health kits.

- Complete two packing lists – one for your records and one to be put on the shipping box.
- Paste the shipping label/packing list on the outside of each box sent. The shipping list helps the depot to quickly process kits.
- Processing and shipping costs: Please enclose an envelope containing at least \$1.00 for each kit you send. This donation enables kits to be sent without delay to Haiti.

You can send assembled relief supply kits to
UMCOR Sager Brown Depot
P.O. Box 850, 131 Sager Brown Road
Baldwin, LA 70514-0850

Further instructions on assembling and shipping health kits are available at www.umcor.org.

South Georgia & North Georgia United Methodist Foundations Announce Merger

The North Georgia United Methodist Foundation and The South Georgia United Methodist Foundation announced plans to merge effective January 1, 2010. The boards of trustees of both foundations unanimously approved this merger. The newly formed nonprofit agency will be called the Georgia United Methodist Foundation.

“This merger will greatly enhance the new Foundation’s ability to serve the financial and stewardship needs of clergy, laity, churches and agencies in the North and South Georgia Conferences,” said Bishop Mike Watson, Resident Bishop of the North Georgia Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church.

“I am personally excited about the potential benefits of this new

partnership,” said Bishop James King, Resident Bishop of the South Georgia Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church. “As one Foundation, we will have increased financial strength, stability and growth potential, which will expand ministry resources to our local churches throughout the state. Once again, we will be benefiting from the strength of the United Methodist connection.”

The Georgia United Methodist Foundation will be led by the Rev. Robert Fletcher, president of the North Georgia United Methodist Foundation. The Rev. Wayne Racz, executive director of The South Georgia United Methodist Foundation, will serve as senior vice president of the new Foundation.

Both Fletcher and Racz share the same vision of helping churches, agencies and individuals multiply their financial

resources for mission and ministry. Additional goals include partnering with United Methodists to grow God’s kingdom, maintaining high Christian and professional standards, and providing expert counsel, superior value, and a wide range of stewardship services.

The Georgia United Methodist Foundation encourages faithful stewardship by managing funds entrusted to it; by building endowments for future ministries; by providing investment opportunities and planned giving; and by working with churches and agencies on loans and fundraising campaigns.

To learn more about the Foundation’s resources, visit www.gumf.org or call 770.449.6726 or 877.220.5664.

One Great Hour of Sharing is March 14

LIFE-CHANGING MINISTRY— A RESPONSE TO GOD’S LOVE

Join United Methodists everywhere by participating in this special offering that supports UMCOR’s vital work.

Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing lay the foundation for UMCOR to seek justice and mercy for suffering people everywhere.

You can be assured that when catastrophes cause suffering, your church, impelled by Jesus’ love and compassion, will be in the lead to ease the pain.

THE 2010 OFFERING— ESSENTIAL TO UMCOR

Gifts to this offering underwrite UMCOR’s “costs of doing business.” That helps us keep our promise that 100 percent of every other gift you make to a specific UMCOR project can be spent on that project—not on home office costs. UMCOR is a good steward of God’s gifts. UMCOR’s top ratings by both [Charity Navigator](#) and the [American](#)

[Institute of Philanthropy](#) attest to UMCOR’s financial accountability.

Offering gifts over and above those used to cover administrative costs are channeled where they’re most needed. UMCOR’s specialized ministries responding in disaster, fighting hunger, alleviating poverty, providing relief supplies around the world, and offering hospitality to immigrants and refugees all assist the most vulnerable people whose need is greatest.

CELEBRATE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING MARCH 14 OR ANYTIME

While One Great Hour of Sharing is traditionally celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent, you can choose the date that works best for your church schedule. Offering materials are available online and in print throughout the year to support your offering celebration.

To learn more about UMCOR or to order resources to promote the offering, visit www.umcor.org.

Plans for New Conference Center Announced

BY KARA WITHEROW*

Detailed plans have been announced for a new South Georgia Conference Center, to be located on the grounds of Wesleyan College in Macon.

During the 2009 session of the South Georgia Annual Conference, the South Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church approved the design, fundraising and building of an 8,000 square foot Conference Center.

Renting property for office space since the South Georgia Episcopal Area was formed 21 years ago, the Conference now believes that it is time to own property instead of rent. The new Conference Center will allow many conference offices to work under the same roof instead of being dispersed in multiple office buildings. It also gives the conference the ability to design the space to fit their needs and optimize work flow and delivery of services to the conference.

After meeting and working with Episcopal Office and Administrative Services personnel – the conference entities that will comprise the majority of the center’s office space – projecting future growth needs, and including mechanical space, the Conference Office Task Force concluded that a larger building was needed than the 8,000 square foot building originally planned. The proposed conference center will now measure 10,600 square feet and will include a 2,720 square foot conference and meeting area.

The task force was approved to build the center at a cost not to exceed \$2 million, but now estimate that \$2,900,000 will be needed. With \$487,750 in hand as of September 2,

2009, the remaining funds will be received from private donors, not local churches.

“We will accept gifts from anyone in the conference or beyond,” said Dr. Hal Brady, chairman of the task force. “All funds will be raised through special giving. This will not be an apportioned item to the local churches beyond what is already being apportioned to pay for the rented office space.”

During the fundraising portion of the project, which will launch in January, 2010, charitable foundations will be contacted and asked to give charitable gifts to fund the building project. Individuals who come to the attention of the committee will also be approached with an invitation to make a special gift to the project.

Additional design work and detailed drawings will be prepared while the fundraising is ongoing, said Dr. Brady. Groundbreaking will occur once funding is secured.

The task force, headed by Dr. Brady and comprised of clergy and lay leaders from across the conference, has been working with architect Bob Brown,

conference trustees and Wesleyan College officials. Because of zoning regulations in the Wesleyan College area of Macon, the South Georgia Annual Conference will buy the land, build the center, and lease it from Wesleyan College for \$1 per year for 99 years. The North Alabama Conference has a similar relationship with Birmingham Southern College.

Architectural drawings of the proposed conference center show a building that reflects the look and feel of existing Wesleyan College structures, with a brick exterior, curved windows and cupola.

*KARA WITHEROW is the South Georgia Advocate editor.

If you are interested in making a financial contribution to this project, please contact Dr. Brady’s administrative assistant, Maggie Roberson, at 706-327-4343 or by email at maggie@sltukeum.com.

Thomasville District Leadership Training Event

January 30, 2010 at Albany First United Methodist Church

“Equipping for Ministry” is a one day district-wide training event designed to equip congregational leaders with tools to be effective in the area they have been called to serve. Cost for the event is \$7. Please contact the Thomasville District Office (229-228-4081) for more information. Workshops include: Advocacy ▪ Children’s Ministry ▪ Clergy Roundtable ▪ Communications ▪ Finance and Stewardship ▪ Lay Leader ▪ Natural Church Development ▪ Nurture ▪ Older Adult Ministry ▪ Outreach ▪ Pastor-Parish Relations Committee ▪ Trustees ▪ VBS – And More! ▪ Witness ▪ Youth Ministry

MissionInsite provides free demographic information to South Georgia congregations

BY KARA WITHEROW*

MissionInsite, a Columbus-based company providing denominational agencies and congregations with demographic research, real-time congregant analysis and easy to use web-based discovery tools, is the new provider of demographic information for the South Georgia Conference.

“MissionInsite is a means through which we can do some pretty extensive demographic analysis for all of the churches in the South Georgia Conference,” said Dr. Jerry Roe, pastor of Byron United Methodist Church and conference liaison for MissionInsite. “It really is amazing the amount of data that is contained within their database.”

Falling under the umbrella of the New & Revitalized Congregational Development Office, the MissionInsite system provides more than 50 variables of current demographic information on the MissionInsite website (www.missioninsite.com). The MissionInsite website not only provides instant access to demographic data, but also has tools that will allow congregations to conduct their own mission discovery and analysis in real-time. Plus, the user-friendly system is free to all South Georgia United Methodist congregations.

“This is a free service; it’s paid for by the conference,” Dr. Roe said. “It’s enormous what it can do for church ministries.”

A replacement to the Percept system and in use around the conference for the past two years, MissionInsite extracts information from a variety of community demographic products, including census data, geographic data, client data, new residential development data, parcel data and aerial

imagery. Three different levels of reporting – from a four-page report to an 18-page report – are available to local churches and congregations.

The beauty of the database, said Dr. Roe, is that it provides demographic information for the conference, districts, and local churches, and data can be detailed down to county, zip codes and even neighborhoods. The data provides detailed information to even the household level and gives insight into people’s spending, their magazine subscriptions, lifestyle trends, and much more. It even provides information about an area’s population density, and for the first time, there are noted electronic boundaries for the conference. Every church is plotted by satellite and can tell a user, down to two to three feet, where every church in the conference is located.

“MissionInsite gives the local church access to the same broad and deep market research that leading retailers and manufacturers have and use all the time,” said Rev. Scott Hagan, pastor of Waverly Hall and Ellerslie United Methodist Churches. “It helps the local church see how families in our neighborhood live and where their priorities are, which really helps us understand our neighbors better.”

Rev. Hagan says that MissionInsite has been a great tool to help educate church leaders at Waverly Hall and Ellerslie about the changes their communities have undergone in the past decade. Learning that 200 young children, kindergarten age and younger, live within five miles of one of the churches helped them reinvest and refocus their children’s ministries.

“We’ve learned that families are moving here for the great education that is provided by the Harris County schools, and the church fails them if we don’t also offer them faith formation.

“We’re in communities that have

changed,” he said. “MissionInsite helps us see what others are seeing about how our communities are changing. When the church can better understand our neighbors we are better able to serve them.”

MissionInsite was co-founded by Mike Regele, Chuck Salter and Peter Wernett, all of whom have been providing mission planning resources to regional and national church agencies as well as local churches across the United States for more than 20 years. All three are ordained clergy, including two United Methodists, who have served both within either a regional or national agency as well as served in firms providing demographic services.

The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church has formed a strategic alliance with MissionInsite designed to benefit Annual Conferences in the United States and their churches. MissionInsite currently has 28 United Methodist Annual Conferences as clients.

“MissionInsite doesn’t create new ministry,” Rev. Hagan said. “It’s not a cookie-cutter program for starting new things, but it gives you insight into the mission you’re already committed to. We’re committed to making disciples, and it gives us insight into what that might look like in our context.”

To learn more about how your church can use MissionInsite, contact Dr. Jerry Roe at 478-956-5717.

*KARA WITHEROW is the South Georgia Advocate editor.

Nurture Café serves up practical training

BY KARA WITHEROW*

The South Georgia Conference Nurture Team, charged with equipping the local church in nine areas of ministry, has created a unique and specialized way to bring practical training in a variety of ministry areas to churches in the South Georgia Conference.

Called the Nurture Café, it is designed to “feed” the local church by offering a “menu” of “entrees” (workshops) from which local churches can “place orders.”

Churches can order “a la carte” (a single workshop) or a “combo” (two or more workshops). Once an order is placed, a “server,” or presenter, will tailor the training to the specific ministry needs of the local church.

“The Nurture Team really encompasses a wide variety of ministry areas, and we were trying to figure out the best way to get in the local churches and help,” said Allison Eastin, chair of the Nurture Team. “We talked about it and realized that all the churches are different shapes, different sizes, have different personalities and very individual needs. By taking these kinds of workshops into the local churches we can really tailor them more to their individual needs.”

Serving the local church in the areas of Christian formation, education, small group ministries, worship and stewardship, membership care, age-level ministries, children and youth camps, older adult ministries, family ministries and outdoor ministries, the ways the Nurture Team can serve congregations through the Nurture Café are endless, say Eastin. With the Young Adult Missional Priority Team now under the umbrella of the Nurture Team, the Nurture Café will be adding young adult ministry workshops and new Christian education workshops to the 2010 Café menu.

“The possibilities for how churches can use these different workshops are endless,” she said. “That’s what’s exciting to me; there’s so much potential. When a church calls, we are very interested in what their individual needs are. We really want to tailor the way we present the different workshops to their needs.”

Workshops can be used as a Wednesday Night Program, a day-long or multi-day training event, a Bible study, for a volunteer training or appreciation, or a special emphasis event.

The Nurture Café’s first “order” was from Speedwell United Methodist Church in Savannah. The Nurture Café’s SHAPE workshop was

The Menu

Keeping Traditional Worship Contemporary

With much buzz about contemporary worship today, this workshop offers insight into helping very traditional services embrace variety within their traditional forms.

The Evolution of Church Hymnody

With every generation music changes. This workshop explores the changes in church music over the centuries from a musical and cultural point of view to help churches gain a better appreciation for offering something for everyone.

ABIDE

This interactive presentation based on Adam Hamilton’s book, *Selling Swimsuits in the Arctic*, will explore 7 keys to success in what your church has to offer in outreach and ministry for growth.

S.H.A.P.E.

Get your congregation “in shape” – in shape for ministry that is! Based on Eric Rees’ book, *S.H.A.P.E.*, this interactive workshop will help to unveil how God has given us a unique shape for ministry and service.

Can we build it? Yes, we can!

Build connections, build partners, build success and build balance. In this workshop learn ways to construct and build a strong team of faithful, committed volunteers.

A Preteen Prescription: ‘Tween Ministry

Ages 10-12 – are they children or youth? That is a good question for kids that often feel caught “in-between.” This workshop explores the unique needs of this group to create a jam-up ‘tween ministry.

All in the Family

The dynamics of our families are ever-changing. In this workshop, discover ways to encourage families of all shapes and sizes to worship, serve, fellowship and grow together in their faith and within their church “family.”

Be on the lookout for a new 2010 menu, coming soon!

If local churches have needs or ideas not currently included on the menu, the Nurture Team may be contacted to discuss a customized workshop. To place an order or for more information, contact Allison Eastin at allisone_dfumc1@windstream.net or 912-384-4404, ext. 13.

Speedwell UMC’s kick-off event and Friday night program for their August leadership retreat.

In October, Putney United Methodist Church and Palmyra United Methodist Church, both in Albany, joined together to host two workshops.

All three churches have placed follow-up orders with the Nurture Café.

“Making an impact Conference-wide can seem like a monumental task at times,” Eastin said. “But the Nurture Café is able to tailor to the individual needs of the church and then the ripple effect can grow within the Conference!”

*KARA WITHEROW is the South Georgia Advocate editor.

2010 Annual Conference Session

Plans are taking shape for the 2010 South Georgia Annual Conference session scheduled for June 6-9 in Tifton, Ga. at the University of Georgia Tifton Campus Conference Center. The theme of the conference will be "Sowing the Word."

The Annual Conference Session Program Committee met in Tifton recently to evaluate the 2009 conference and to begin planning for 2010. While many of the normal conference routines will remain, several schedule changes were determined at the meeting.

Sunday evening will be a time of conference-wide worship in the John Hunt Auditorium beginning at 7:00 p.m. Currently, we are looking at a service of singing favorites from the Cokesbury hymnal and an evening message. A reception will follow this evening worship experience.

The laity session and clergy session will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Monday. The laity will gather in the John Hunt Auditorium and the clergy will meet in the Conference Center Ballroom.

Bishop James R. King, Jr. will preach in an opening worship service scheduled for 10:00 a.m. in the John Hunt Auditorium. The first plenary session will begin at 11:15 a.m.

The worship service to commission new provisional clergy will be held

Monday at 2:00 p.m. The ordination service for Full Elders and Full Deacons will be at 7:30 p.m. with Bishop Richard Looney preaching.

Recognition of retiring clergy will be held on Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. The Memorial Service for deceased clergy and clergy spouses will be held Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.

Woven between worship services will be plenary sessions for information sharing, celebration, inspiration, and decision-making. Bishop Richard Wilke, of Disciple Bible Study fame, will be with us to teach on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the 2010 Annual Conference will be the sending forth service late Wednesday morning. In addition to challenging the conference and finalizing the appointments, Bishop King will distribute to each clergy a token of their commitment for faithful service for the coming year. Simultaneously Roy Blackwood, Conference Lay Leader, will be presenting each lay member of the Annual Conference with the same token.

All conference business and worship sessions will be held at the University of Georgia Tifton Campus Conference Center, which is located on the Abraham Baldwin College campus.

"The Annual Conference Session Planning Committee is constantly evaluating the conference experience based on the feedback received from conference participants. Our goal is to glorify Christ, to edify the body of Christ known as the South Georgia Annual Conference, and to highlight our disciple-making mission," said Dr. Brad Brady, Assistant to the Bishop for Connectional Ministries, in speaking for the committee.

"The changes in this year's schedule are in response to suggestions we have received, to the new location where we will be conferencing, and to the Christlike spirit we hope to enhance in our gathering."

Tifton First United Methodist Church planning team is well underway in making preparation for our gathering.

Members are encouraged to go to the South Georgia Annual Conference website (www.sgaumc.org) for information about lodging and additional information as plans become firm.

The Annual Conference Session Program Committee will meet next week to solidify the next stage of logistical details.

Annual Conference Information

HOTELS: A list of hotels that have been blocked for the 2010 South Georgia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church can be found at www.tiftonfirstumc.org. The cut off date for making reservations with these properties is April 30, 2010. When making reservations, each person will need to inform the hotel that they are with the United Methodist Convention in order to get the special rates.

BANQUETS: To book a banquet or special event, contact Sissy Martin at Tifton First UMC at (229) 382-6100 or sissymartin@gmail.com.

DISPLAYS: A display space costs \$50. Reservations for the space must be made prior to the conference. If you would like to have a display, please contact Tyrone at (229) 386-0216 or email at spearmanagency@friendlycity.net

LUNCH OPTION: Lunch will be available for those interested at the ABAC dining hall on Monday and Tuesday. The meal cost is \$6.30, which includes beverage and dessert. Transportation will be provided to and from the ABAC dining hall both days.

Sexual Ethics Workshops

Sponsored By: Commission on Pastoral Counseling

Below are the dates that have been set for the 2010 Sexual Ethics Workshop for Clergy. These workshops are required every three years for persons serving under appointment by the bishop (clergy, local pastors, extension ministers, appointed lay speakers). Cost is \$5 for lunch (collected at the door). To register, please e-mail cpcassistant@sgaumc.com. This event is sponsored by the Conference Commission on Pastoral Counseling.

Thursday, February 11, 2010

Epworth By The Sea
St. Simons Island, GA
10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Tuesday, April 27, 2010

St. Paul United Methodist Church
Columbus, GA
9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Thursday, September 9, 2010

Porterfield United Methodist Church
Albany, GA
9:00 am– 3:00 pm

2010 Special Sundays

Human Relations Day	January 17 *
Andrew College Sunday	February 14 **
Volunteers in Mission Awareness Sunday	February 21 **
Kingdom Builders Promotion Sunday	February 28 **
One Great Hour of Sharing	March 14 *
Native American Awareness	April 18 *
Magnolia Manor Sunday	May 9 **
Peace With Justice	May 30 *
Wesley Glen Day	June 20 **
Golden Cross Sunday	July 4 *
Christian Education Sunday	August 15 **
Methodist Children's Home	September 19**
World Communion Day	October 3 *
Vashti Day	October 17 **
Wesleyan College Day	November 14 **
United Methodist Student Day	November 28 *
United Methodist Global AIDS Fund	December 5 **

* General Church Offerings

** Annual Conference Special Offerings

For General Church Offering resources visit www.umcsgiving.org.

Rev. Jim Rush, Dr. Evelyn Laycock to lead Older Adult Retreat

Mark your calendars for the 2010 Older Adult Retreat, “Enduring Faith – A Heart of Wisdom,” set for April 12-14, 2010, at Epworth By The Sea. The South Georgia Conference Older Adult Retreat is an exciting retreat that offers senior adults an opportunity to discover, develop, and fulfill their God-given purpose. This year’s retreat will focus on Psalm 136 and Psalm 90. The guest preacher will be the Rev. Jim Rush and leading the bible study sessions will be Dr. Evelyn Laycock. Since worship and spiritual growth are the main focus of this retreat, participants are able to totally immerse themselves in the atmosphere and become spiritually renewed. There will also be a professional tract offered for those interested in receiving continuing education credit or who are simply interested in leading life changing older adult ministries within their congregation. These classes will be taught by the Rev. Dr. Rick Gentzler, the director of the Center on Aging and Older-Adult Ministries for the General Board of Discipleship for the United Methodist Church. For more information, please contact Diane Giles at the Connectional Ministries Office at (888) 266-7642 or by email at diane@sgaumc.com.

Winter Camp Meeting

Sponsored By: Epworth By The Sea

Epworth By The Sea is hosting the 2010 Winter Camp Meeting January 24-27 under the theme “Seek Ye First.” Bishop James King will be preaching Sunday night. Guest preachers include Revs. Don Kea, Jim Trice, Vance Mathis, Jim Rush and Herchel Sheets. Rev. Bill Mallard will be the Bible study leader. Music leaders will be Mr. Jason Patton and Ms. DeDe Singleton and area choirs. For more information, visit www.epworthbythesea.org.

Church Planting Seminar

Sponsored By: Harvest Church

Harvest Church in Warner Robins will be hosting a Church Planting Seminar on March 1, 2010. Mark your calendar and watch for more information. For questions e-mail questions@harvestchurch4u.org.

Georgia Clergy Spouse Retreat
April 16-18

UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat
March 26-28

UMM Spring Retreat
April 16-18

Conference Coordinated Calendar 2010

JANUARY

- 20 Conference Center Task Force Meeting, Macon
- 24 Bishop King preaching in Waycross District
- 24-27 Epworth Winter Camp Meeting, EBTS*
- 25 Annual Conference Program Committee Meeting, EBTS*
- 26 Extended Cabinet Meeting, EBTS*
- 27 Full Cabinet Meeting, EBTS*
- 28 Cabinet Meeting, EBTS*
- 30 Thomasville District Training, Albany First UMC

FEBRUARY

- 5-13 Licensing School for Local Pastors, EBTS*
- 11 Sexual Ethics Workshop, EBTS*
- 14 Andrew College Sunday
- 16-18 Cabinet Appointment Making Session 1, EBTS*
- 21 Bishop King preaching in Dublin District
- 21 Volunteers in Mission Awareness Sunday
- 22 Conference Trustees Meeting, Macon
- 22 CFA** Budget Meeting
- 23 CFA** Meeting
- 24-25 Cabinet Appointment Making Session 2

- 26-28 Confirmation Retreat 1, EBTS*
- 27 Using All God's Tools – Technology Training, Nashville UMC
- 27 NRCD*** Meeting, Centenary UMC, Macon
- 28 Bishop King preaching in Thomasville District
- 28 Kingdom Builders Promotion Sunday

MARCH

- 1 Church Planting Seminar, Harvest Church, Warner Robins
- 2-3 Appointment Making Session 3
- 4 Natural Church Development Coach Reunion, Macon
- 7-10 Board of Ordained Ministry Meeting, Macon
- 14 Bishop King preaching in Columbus District
- 14 One Great Hour of Sharing
- 14 United Methodist Women Day
- 14 CFA** Budget Meeting
- 15 CFA** Meeting
- 16-17 Appointment Making Session 4
- 18 Full Cabinet Meeting
- 19-21 Confirmation Retreat 2, EBTS*
- 21 Bishop King preaching in Americus District
- 26-28 United Methodist Women Spiritual Growth Retreat, EBTS*

APRIL

- 2 Conferences Offices Closed
- 6-7 Appointment Making Session 5
- 12-14 Older Adult Retreat, EBTS*
- 13-14 Appointment Making Session 6
- 15 Extended Cabinet Meeting
- 16-18 United Methodist Men's Retreat, EBTS*
- 16-18 Georgia Clergy Spouse Retreat
- 18 Native American Awareness Sunday
- 24 Celebration Day at the Macon Campus of The Methodist Children's Home
- 27 Sexual Ethics Workshop, Columbus

MAY

- 3-4 Natural Church Development Training – Wave 3, EBTS*
- 9 Magnolia Manor Sunday
- 11 Transition Workshop for Moving Clergy, Tifton
- 12 Transition Workshop for Moving Clergy, Dublin
- 17 Annual Conference Program Committee Meeting
- 18 Cabinet Meeting
- 19 Full Cabinet Meeting
- 22 Transition Workshop for Part-time Local Pastors, Eastman
- 30 Peace With Justice Sunday

* Epworth By The Sea
 ** Council on Finance and Administration
 *** New and Revitalized Congregational Development

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