



Year In Review

2013 Annual Conference Recap

Bishop B. Michael Watson called to order the 147th North Georgia Annual Conference session under the theme "Bridges to Mission," marking his fifth year of service to the North Georgia Episcopal Area. In the three-day session, North Georgia United Methodists celebrated their growing commitment and connections to nations around the world as well as to local outreach efforts.

The conference welcomed 24 international mission partners from The Bahamas, El Salvador, East Africa, Portugal, The Philippines and Russia, plus World Methodist Evangelism and local mission agency Action Ministries.

Continuing the focus on mission, conference members and guests assembled 518 UMCOR Cleaning Kits, donated 67 units of blood through the Red Cross, ran an early morning 5K to raise funds for the North Georgia Conference Housing and Homeless Council, and gave more than \$100,000 to the Annual Conference special offering for Bridges mission partners.

NGAC 2014

The next session of the North Georgia Annual Conference will be held June 10-12, 2014 at The Classic Center in Athens.

This year's theme will revolve around Children, Youth, Young Adults, Camps, and Campuses. We want to exemplify that Together We Build Disciples.



We Are Now on YouTube!

Find our account, NGUMC, on YouTube to watch Connectional Cafe's Quick Byte videos, messages from Bishop Watson, and information from Church Development.

We want to start supplying you with more videos. Some stories are better seen and heard than read. We have posted our first in-house video on Glenn Memorial's Friday Night Skate and we are eager to hear your suggestions on what to broadcast next.

Please e-mail your suggestions to Sybil Davidson at sybil@ngumc.org or Ansley Brackin at ansley@ngumc.org

Get Pinning with NGUMC on Pinterest

Prepare to pin your favorite Methodist Memes and Bible Studies. The North Georgia Conference is on Pinterest!

We want to share our fun finds with you involving Missions, Youth & Children's Ministry, Worship, and what makes being United Methodist so great.

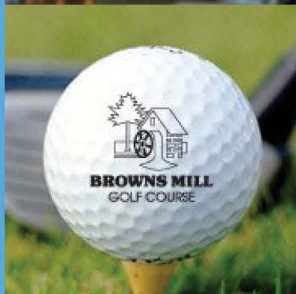
Please, follow us and send us your favorite Methodist pins.



The North Georgia Notebook is Back!



The Advocate is gone, but we still post The North Georgia Notebook bi-weekly on our website to keep you up to date on local church happenings.



Many of our churches host some great events from barbecues, to concerts, to special services. Be sure to read this important news piece to learn what's going on in your community.



Lincolnton UMC Recieves Non-Profit Business of the Year Award

Lincolnton UMC was recently named Non-Profit Business of the Year by Lincolnton-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce.



The church was honored at an awards banquet on Feb. 28. Praised for its service to the community, several of the church's outreach ministries were mentioned at the event including: The Master's Closet, the jail ministry, Club Christ, Turkey 'n' Blessings and River of Life.

Lincolnton UMC pastor Rev. Jim Bocian asked church members to stand as he accepted the award, saying, "They make this happen."

Church member Ken Hayes was named 2013 system-wide Teacher of the Year at the same ceremony.



Iglesia Metodista Unida Douglas Street Welcomes All
By Angelia Gilreath-Rivers

A small brick church is located on a street corner in a high crime transitional neighborhood.

On Sunday morning the congregation begins to gather 45 minutes before worship begins. Some come walking, some drive a few minutes, some drive more than half an hour. There are families with children - lots of children - young adults, singles, straight and gay. There are Hispanics, Anglos and African Americans. There are people from Peru, Columbia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico. Some can barely read, others have graduate degrees. Some have served prison time. Some are recovering alcoholics. Some are citizens; some are not. There are many differences, but those differences are unimportant as the congregation gathers for worship at Iglesia Metodista Unida Douglas Street United Methodist Church.

After being greeted on the patio, most people stop by a small room on the right of the narthex for continental breakfast, which is taken into the traditional sanctuary and eaten throughout the service. As the music begins there are worship videos in English and Spanish, traditional hymns, contemporary music and a variety of musical styles. Diversity is the face of worship in this multicultural, bi-lingual church.

Every Sunday is a day of Pentecost with worshippers hearing the Gospel in their own language. Many who worship on Sunday have not felt comfortable or welcome in other churches. Here they find a church home where all are welcome. Because we are one in Jesus Christ, we look for ways to build bridges.

Christian Craftsmen Build Up LaGrange District Churches

The LaGrange District Church Development Committee is teaming with the LaGrange District United Methodist Men to form teams of volunteers to assist churches in the District that need to make repairs/improvements to their physical plants that will extend/enhance their ministries and missional outreach to the community.

The District Church Development Committee will assist the UMM in setting up the initial organizational structure of the proposed team. The UMM teams will then work with the Church Development Committee on providing teams that are available to assist the church in need of help with its repairs or improvements.

The first UMM team assisted Union Springs UMC, pastored by Rev. Earnestine Mitchell, in painting and repairs both in the interior and the exterior of the church with great success. Fifteen men and women from 7 churches pitched in to help.



registration forms for those interested in volunteering can be downloaded from the district website: www.lagrangedistrict.com

A Year of Travels

Transforming at The Convocation for Pastors of African American Churches in Texas

By *Rory Francis Blakeney*

“Our focus is mission-based as opposed to maintenance-based.”

The Rev. Rudy Rasmus, pastor of St. John’s UMC in Houston spoke at the 2013 Convocation for Pastors of African American Churches. He used the term “wino” literally and figuratively as he told the nearly 500 hundred pastors, seminaries and lay leaders the story of St. John’s, a model case study for the Convocation, which focused on the theme “Shifting Wineskins: Education, Adaptation, Transformation.”

In 1992, he went to St. John’s, a decaying church in downtown Houston, with 9 members. The church has grown to more than 9,000 members. St. John’s reaches a cross section of people with its invitation to join the love revolution.

Another case study closer to home is Impact Church. Started in January 2007 with a core team of 25, the church located in Atlanta’s West End is reaching a new demographic – the young tech-savvy, multi-cultural urban dweller. Its slogan is Doing Church Differently. Six years later, with 1,200 regular weekly attendees in three services and more than 100 volunteers, the church has acquired a 76,000-square-foot warehouse property on 10 acres of land.

“We teach our congregation to live out a proactive ministry agenda targeting people and their life issues while helping them realize their God-given potential,” explained the Rev. Olu Brown, pastor and organizer of Impact Church.

Both congregations are examples of how the church can adapt to reach new people and new generations. That was a primary focus of the three-day meeting held in Atlanta in January at the Marriott Atlanta Airport.

United Methodists’ First Mountain Man Chaplain

By *Annette Spencer*



Twenty-six year old Josh Lindamood began his 2,200 mile journey in the North Georgia Conference at the Springer Mountain trail head, hiking the Appalachian trail as a roving United Methodist chaplain. Lindamood’s goal is to provide an encouraging spiritual presence to trekkers tendered by nature and physical challenge during the

2,200-mile, spring-to-fall quest. “I just love nature and the outdoors and the way God speaks to you when you’re in it,” said Lindamood.

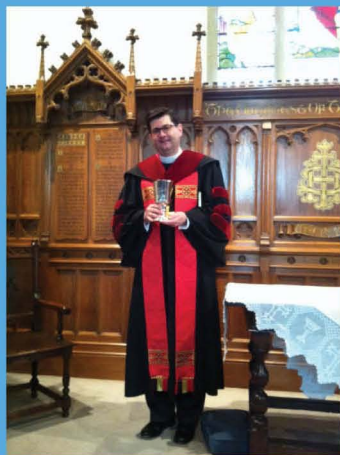
The chaplaincy venture is backed by Holston Conference, the parent regional body for 897 United Methodist churches in Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and north Georgia.

The Rev. Alan Ashworth is the pastor of three United Methodist churches that began Appalachian Trail Outreach Ministry more than a decade ago. They have worked together to provide a unique ministry to serve hikers, including placing a cooler with drinks, weather reports, and New Testaments on the trail and serving a hot breakfast.

Lindamood said he’s long had his own dream to conquer the trail, although he couldn’t afford the expense. Organizers raised \$11,500 to support the chaplain with training, gear, food, insurance, and other expenses.

In late October, Lindamood came off the trail due to the loss of his grandmother. However, the journey is not over yet. A new hiking chaplain will be announced for 2014.

You can follow and support both Josh Lindamood and the upcoming Trail Chaplain on the Facebook page [Appalachian Trail Chaplain](#)



John Beyers Goes To England

By *Sybil Davidson*

Dr. John Beyers, pastor of Conyers First UMC, preached and served Holy Communion at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Epworth, England. In participation of the 2013 meeting of the World Methodist Council, Beyers was invited to preach and administer the sacrament at a joint service of Wesley Memorial Methodist and St. Andrew’s Parish (Church of England) in Epworth.

Thrilled to preach at the special service for the two churches, he asked if it would be possible to use the historic “Wesley” Chalice as he administered the sacrament. This chalice, which is kept locked away at St. Andrew’s, was used by Samuel, John and Charles Wesley. It was a gift to the church in 1706. “What has rarely happened is for the chalice to sit on the altar table used by the Wesleys,” said Beyers. For the first time in anyone’s memory, Beyers placed the chalice on the storied altar that now stands in Wesley Memorial Methodist.

Beyers is a trustee of The Old Rectory in Epworth As an avid Methodist historian, Beyers’ primary interest in The Old Rectory is as a vehicle to tell Susanna Wesley’s story. Although she is known as the “Mother of Methodism” by some, her story of faith can stand apart from her husband and children’s stories.

To learn more about The Old Rectory and learn more about the home and its most famous occupants, and to become a Friend of The Epworth Old Rectory visit <http://www.epwortholdrectory.org.uk/>.



Crossing Bridges & Serving in The Bahamas

The Buford First United Methodist Church has had the privilege of working through the North Georgia

Conference Bridge that connects us with Bahamas Methodist Habitat. We have had two trips, one in July 2012, and then again in February 2013.

The first was a youth trip to work in Nassau at the All Saints Camp. This settlement is a refuge for the very poor and sick. Most of the residents have HIV or AIDS. Their families are not able to care for them, and so they find shelter and food at All Saints. Bahamas Methodist Habitat supplies teams for All Saints two weeks each summer. This church is a generous, loving congregation, welcoming mission teams in the name of Christ.

In February 2013, a team of nine adults went to Nassau through BMH and worked at All Saints. The group of seven men and two women tiled five floors, hung doors, trimmed windows, and repaired a ceiling. The women also helped with lunch and personal care for the residents, giving them a chance to spend quality time with men and women. They also had a Valentine's Day Party at the camp, which was the highlight of the week. Residents were thrilled to have pizza for lunch, receive cards, and a goodie bag full of candy.

The opportunity to worship with the Bahamians was a beautiful experience and strengthened relationships with the people there. They were able to share, pray, sing, and praise God together in a different country, all believing, worshipping, and working together to serve others in Christ. It was miraculous.

Romans 15: 5-6 reminds us to join with others in serving and praising our God: May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Smart Lunch, Smart Kid, Smart Ministry

Leaders of Action Ministries have announced that thanks to widespread support the Smart Lunch, Smart Kid program that had hoped to serve 200,000 healthy lunches to children in Georgia was instead able to exceed its goal and serve 210,055 lunches this summer.

SMART LUNCH SMART KID

A total of 1,486 volunteers donated 24,054 volunteer hours to make and serve the lunches to children living in 24 cities located in 13 counties in our Conference.

Action Ministries Each weekday – from the first day through the last day of summer vacation – Smart Lunch, Smart Kid volunteers fanned out through communities to distribute healthy lunches prepared by members of the community to children who receive free or reduced-price lunches during the regular school year

“Smart Lunch, Smart Kid teaches us that everyone – from the students of Berry College in Rome to the Guinness World Record event members of the Atlanta Lions Club to employees from Honeybaked who held a volunteering event and made 4,000 lunches – can have an impact on the children of Georgia,” said Mark Hellman, executive director of hunger relief programs for Action Ministries. “What happened in these 24 cities can happen in any town in Georgia next year. We welcome the opportunity to talk about our plans for 2014 with all those who would like information.”

For more information about the 2014 program, contact Mark Hellman of Action Ministries at mhellman@actionministries.net or 770-905-9191 or Andrea Fowler, vice president for programs at afowler@actionministries.net or 404-824-3019.



UMCOR Serves The Philippines

Our conference has established a strong tie to the people of the Philippines.

Typhoon Yolanda took a terrifying toll on The Philippines, but as The Conference and UMCOR trailed the storm and its destruction, preparations for providing service were immediately constructed.

UMCOR quickly distributed training classes throughout The Conference, gearing up many eager missionaries for serving God's people. Striving to provide at least 1,000 families for food and water purification, the organization once again became a hometown hero. Northwest District Superintendent Herzen Andone spoke with Bishop Juan of the Philippines to express both our sorrow at the loss of life and our willingness to help.

A Bridges Mission Trip was already scheduled to the Philippines from Jan 26 to Feb 4. “We did have an agenda planned out for that trip, but it may change depending on the needs of our partners in the wake of the storm,” said Andone.

The Conference has previously taken two Bridges trips to the Philippines and welcomed a Filipino delegation to North Georgia during Annual Conference in June.

This organization is always in need of volunteers and donations. Visit www.umcor.org to learn how you can serve kingdom of God.

Youth and Young Adult Happenings

THE 2ND STORY CAFE'

East Point First Mallalieu Reaches Young Adults

More than 50 people including the Atlanta College Park District Superintendent Coy Hinton gathered at The Second Story Cafe for an evening of poetry, music, and comedy.

The initiative, led by young adults, is designed to open the church's door to people with a non-traditional and non-threatening approach.

On opening night, Jan. 25, the featured artists included rappers 2Grown Man - Demario Phillips and Carlos "Grown Man" Porter; Comedienne Star Wilson, poet Kimberly DeWitt and acoustic guitarist and vocalist Erika JaNaé.



Smyrna's Small UMC's Make One Super Youth Group

By Ansley Brackin



The lack of youth in small churches can pose a problem so constant that a collection of small United Methodist churches in Smyrna are working together to solve this common issue within their community.

Rev. Larisa Parker of Faith UMC became inspired by her sister's church, Willow Glen UMC in San Jose, after learning how they combined with multiple small United Methodist churches in the area to form one large youth group. This collaboration eventually boosted the youth activity from 8 youth to 200.

Sarah Lyons, Director of Children's and Youth Ministries at Smyrna's Cumberland UMC, spent a large amount of time praying for the perfect solution to the same struggle within her ministry. When Faith UMC's pastor called her regarding a Joint Youth Ministry idea, many doors of new opportunities opened for the youth of her church, as well as Faith UMC, Tillman UMC, and Vinings UMC.

Their Joint Youth Ministry, and those like it, represents the togetherness that churches can thrive off of together. "Youth don't care where they go," says Parker. "They are open to meeting new people and getting involved". Lyons understands the fear of losing youth by reaching out to another church for help, but the focus of action for any youth ministry should be on raising "productive and healthy servants" for the Glory of God.

"I really do believe that this may be a viable model for other small churches," Lyons says. "We don't have to be a mega church to do have an awesome youth group, just be a church devoted to awesome youth." The leaders of this partnership want to motivate other small churches to join together for the good of their youth.

Hannah Pressey Uses ELI Skills in Her Church

The Experiential Leadership Institute Program is designed for rising 11th-12th graders who will benefit from gaining leadership experience before leaving home for college.

After participating in Camping and Retreat Ministries' ELI program in 2011, Hannah played a large role in rejuvenating her church's children's ministry. This year, as a junior, Hannah was encouraged by adults to become president of the church Youth Group because of her skills at leading and modeling group discussions and behavior.

"Her enthusiasm and skill from what she brought back from Glisson lit a fire under many adults who had grown weary and discouraged. ... Now the children's ministry program is not short on help, funds, or children," said Hannah's mother, Ann, about her daughters experience.

After a week of leadership theory and skills training, each participant serves one or more weeks as a Day Camp Counselor, putting newly acquired skills to practice. After finishing the program, participants commit to work with their pastor to find a leadership role at their church.

Glisson has made room for more ELI participants than ever in 2013. Applications are still being accepted. Make sure the rising 11-12 graders you know are aware of this powerful program.

The Dalai Lama Chats with Emory University Students

By Ansley Brackin & Sybil Davidson



His Holiness The Dalai Lama made numerous appearances of various sizes during his stay in GA, but the lecture on October 16th was within the Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church, filled with hundreds college students.

When The Dalai Lama speaks he is often soft-spoken, but his voice is youthful at 78 years old. Four young adults received a special invitation to personally ask His Holiness a question. Students Scott Parent, Rebecca Berge, FikreJesus Amahazion, and Edmund Xu inquired insight on the economy, human usefulness, the prison system, and respect within society.

The opportunity in a nutshell, taught students the importance of education, morality and of knowing one's strengths and weakness. The Dalai Lama illustrates that to teach is one of the most useful gifts; not with force, but with love and joy.

Emory University has been connected to The Dalai Lama for many years. He was named Presidential Distinguished Professor at Emory in 2007, the first university appointment accepted by the 1989 Nobel Laureate. His appointment was an outgrowth of the Emory-Tibet Partnership, which was founded in 1998 to bring together the best of Western and Tibetan Buddhist intellectual traditions. As Presidential Distinguished Professor, the Dalai Lama continues to provide teaching sessions with students and faculty during Emory's study-abroad program in Dharamsala, India.

Operation Renovation at Clark Atlanta University

"We are proud to be involved with efforts to improve the environment in which students are being trained to learn and grow," said Dr. Cynthia Bond-Hopson, assistant general secretary of the UMC's Black College Fund & Ethnic Concerns.

The United Methodist Church (UMC) recently approved a Black College Fund grant totaling \$300,000 to Clark Atlanta University (CAU) to support infrastructural improvements to McPheeters-Dennis Hall. The historic building houses several academic and was named in honor of deceased CAU educators Dr. Alphonso A. McPheeters, a former dean of Clark College, and Dr. Joseph J. Dennis.

The grant money was used to replace the original roof – which was more than 50 years old – with a new TPO LEED compliant roof. The funding was awarded in June, and the project was completed in August.

CAU has also embarked on a multi-year renovation project to upgrade the physical and aesthetic space at McPheeters-Dennis Hall and improve the technology and equipment used in the classrooms and laboratories. The renovations include state-of-the-art technological enhancements, 100 percent mechanical and electrical systems replacement and upgrades.

This year, the United Methodist Church has given almost \$1.3 million to Clark Atlanta University through its support of CAU's annual fund, student scholarships, building and grounds improvements, and the university's Graduate Studies program. The historic relationship between UMC and CAU goes back to the founding of Clark College in 1869. Clark College and Atlanta University consolidated to form Clark Atlanta University in 1988.

The McEver Road UMC Family Extends Internationally

By Ansley Brackin

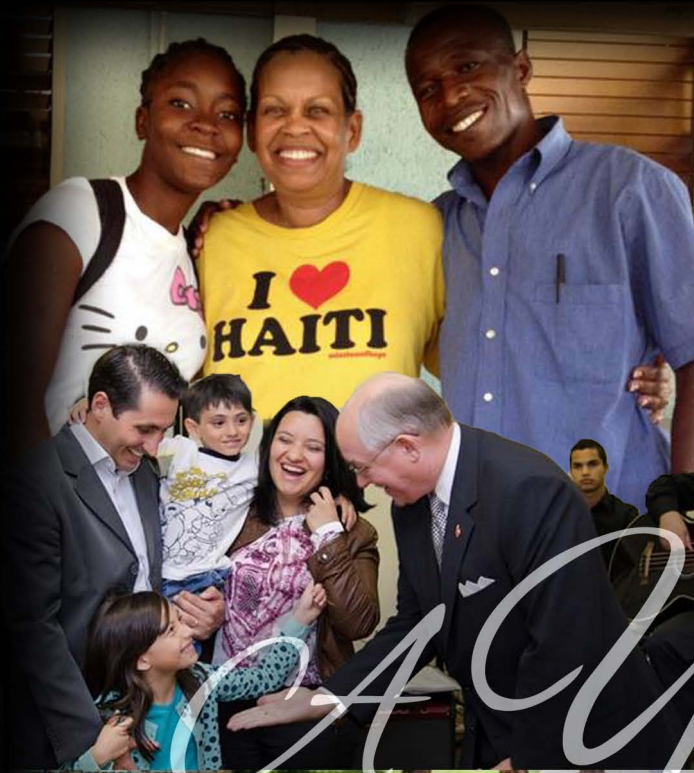
"We get to go home at night to our families when they don't, and for them to know someone here cares for them... We've just really embraced that."

Pennie Eddy came to the church in the spring of 2013 with the desire to reach out to the international women of Brenau University. After speaking with the students more, the church found that their biggest need was finding a way to obtain the typical college essentials: clothes, snacks, and school supplies.

McEver Road UMC offered a trip in their church bus to the Mall of Georgia right before the group left for their home countries. Eddy remembers a young lady asking if students had to be Christian to get on the bus. "I said, 'no. All you need is the desire to get on. We just want to be here for you.' I think that meant a lot to them," recalls Eddy.

The kick-off Meet and Greet for new participants took place November 13th, along with the pairing of host families, if desired. This year, two men have enthusiastically





A Year In Photos

