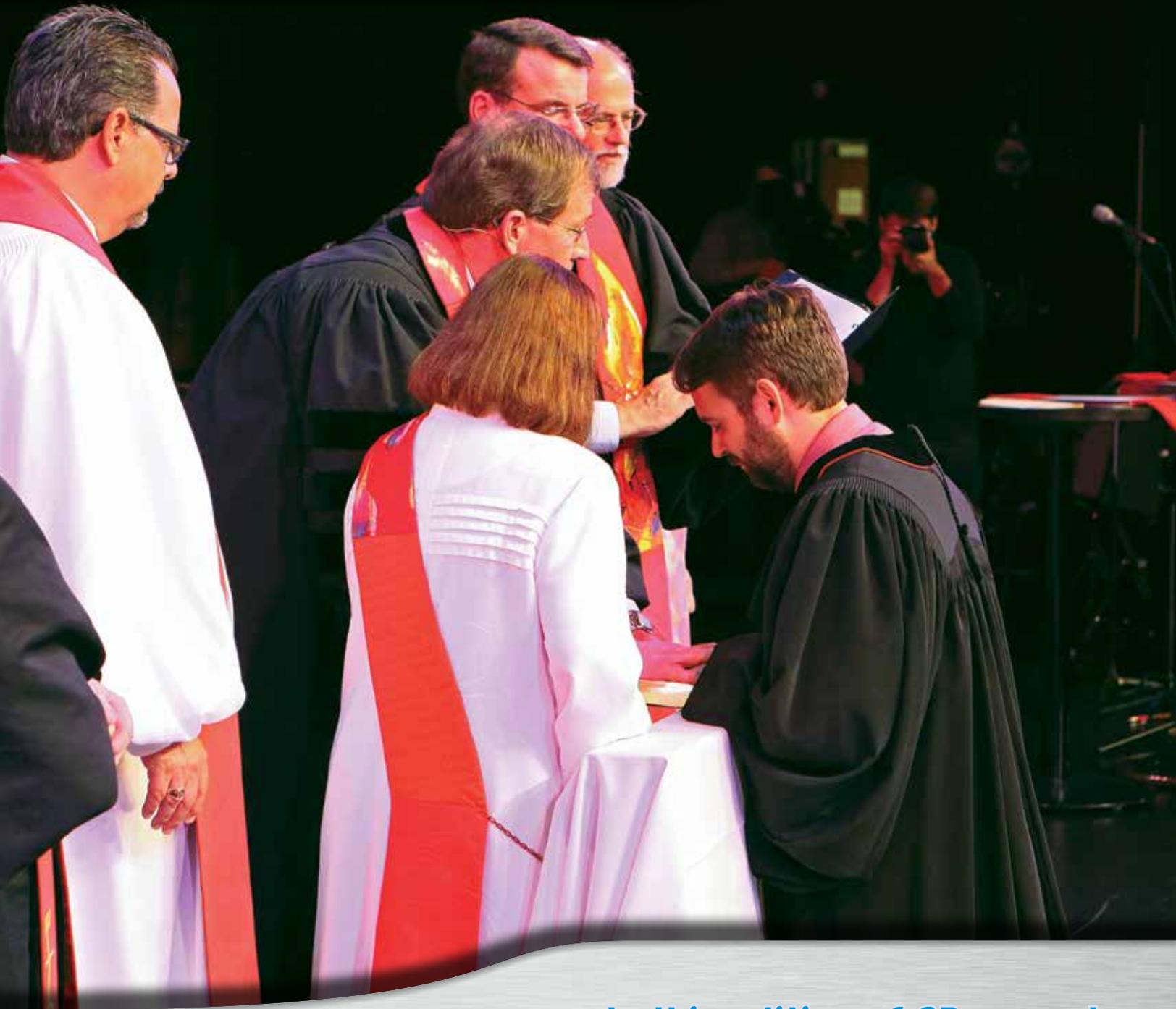


GPconnect

Connecting United Methodists across the Great Plains

Summer 2014



In this edition of GPconnect:

Annual Conference Session recap

Map of the Great Plains Conference

Big, Hairy, Audacious Education Caravan



Connecting United Methodists across the Great Plains

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Cover photo

Bishop Scott Jones ordains the Rev. Andy Hargrove at the 2014 Great Plains Annual Conference Session. See pages 4-7 for more on annual conference. Photo by Bill Wiley.

Educating all the children of all the people



Bishop Scott J. Jones

View the bishop's blog at greatplainsumc.org/bishopsblog

COME, Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
To whom we for our children cry!
The good desired and wanted most
Out of thy richest grace supply —
The sacred discipline be given
To train and bring them up for heaven ...

Unite the pair so long disjoined,
Knowledge and vital piety:
Learning and holiness combined.

We care about our children! United Methodists have cared about educating children since John Wesley founded the Kingswood School near Bristol, England, in 1739. When the idea of universal, free education for children was established in America, our foremothers and forefathers were active in establishing public schools all over Nebraska and Kansas. Today, in many of our communities, committed United Methodist Christians are serving as teachers, aides, principals, superintendents and school board members. They do it because they care about young people and their future. I am deeply proud of our United Methodist tradition of supporting public education.

In the hymn written for Kingswood School quoted above, Charles Wesley talked about our yearning for our children to receive both knowledge and vital piety. They need the "sacred discipline to train and bring them up for heaven." That is why we focus so much on Sunday school, after-school programs in our churches and public education.

The crucial point, however, is that we need to emphasize that "our children" includes all the children of all the people. The great commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves means that we should consider every child in Nebraska and Kansas as one of ours, and we should take whatever steps are necessary to give them what they need for successful, happy lives. For that, education is a necessity. One hundred and fifty years ago, a proper education might have been the three Rs: reading, writing and arithmetic. Now the world is much more complicated and proficiency in many fields such as calculus, physics, civics, environmental science, foreign languages and global culture is necessary. At the same time, the breakdown of family structures and the increase in poverty have made the educational process much more challenging.

It is time for the people of Kansas and Nebraska generally, and Christians in particular, to strengthen our support for public education. At a time when schools are facing increasing challenges, state funding has declined. We are asking dedicated teachers to do more and more with less and less. For a more full description see our case statement at www.greatplainsumc.org/education.

Educational and inspirational events are scheduled in Garden City (July 29), Iola (July 30), Topeka (July 31), Scottsbluff (Sept. 29), Kearney (Sept. 30) and Lincoln (Oct. 2). We hope you will come or watch the live stream on Oct. 2. Your church should start or strengthen a partnership with a school near you. You should support your educators. You should write your legislator about this important value. We care about educating all the children of all the people.



Bishop Scott J. Jones,
Resident Bishop
Great Plains United Methodist Conference

[@Extreme_Center](https://twitter.com/Extreme_Center)

From your lay leader

Summer opportunities

Greetings Great Plains Conference,

Wow — summertime is here already! My church's calendar is in the full swing of summer activities such as vacation Bible school, church camp, weddings and mission trips to interesting places. While this is a very fun and busy time for many, it's also an opportunity for us to take a moment — and a deep breath — and offer a word of gratitude for the blessings we share with one another. We should also lift up our thoughts and prayers of those who may be in need of our care and concern and those who may be experiencing difficulties. Remember to keep in mind those who are in the midst of life transitions such as graduation and moving to another place. I hope you'll take the time to reach out to your neighbor in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Among the many blessings that I am grateful for, is the opportunity to meet so many of you at our first Great Plains Annual Conference Session held in Lincoln, Neb., this past June. It was amazing to meet new friends, catch up with old friends and share in our common love and interest of the church. It's important work. My favorite part was hearing about our many churches and the great work we are doing in reaching and serving our neighbors as God intends. Be sure to check out the conference website (www.greatplainsumc.org/annualconference) for various post-conference resources. If you were unable to attend, you can also see updates and news of the sessions as well. We have so many wonderful and diverse ministries in our conference and many opportunities to get involved — I hope you will check it out.

In the past few months, we have seen an enormous outpouring of service by our laity, especially in response to tornadoes in Baxter Springs, Kan., and Seward County, Neb. In addition, our Hands on the Great Plains events took place across the conference and we saw many churches and congregations engaging in mission in their communities (see page 15). Again, I invite you to check out our conference website and read these inspiring stories.

I presented my first State of the Conference address at the Annual Conference Session, and I invited the audience to think about people in their lives whose faith may have influenced them, and what the "fruits of your faith" might look like in the future — just something to ponder during your next vacation or quiet moment. We are the church, and today we are shaping what it will look like tomorrow.

Have a blessed summer,



Courtney Fowler

Courtney

Courtney Fowler
Conference Lay Leader

Conference events are posted at
greatplainsumc.org/events

July 13-20

UMMen Mission Impact Tour, Camp Fontanelle and Omaha, Neb.

July 19

VIM team leader training, Augusta, Kan.

July 21-24

Weekday Mission u, Salina, Kan.

July 26

Camp Horizon Golf Scramble, Winfield, Kan.

July 29

Big Hairy Audacious Education Caravan, First UMC, Garden City, Kan.

July 30

Big Hairy Audacious Education Caravan, Wesley UMC, Iola, Kan.

July 31

Big Hairy Audacious Education Caravan, First UMC, Topeka, Kan.

Aug. 1-3

Weekend Mission u, Kearney, Neb.

Aug. 2

VIM team leader training, Beatrice, Neb.

Aug. 8-10

Campus Catalyst Launch Pad, Salina, Kan.

Aug. 9

VIM team leader training, Meriden, Kan.

Aug. 9

Emergency Response Training, Great Bend, Kan.

Aug. 15-16

Nebraska Disaster Response Summit, Lincoln, Neb.

Aug. 23

Emergency Response Training, Iola, Kan.

Sept. 13

Unity of the Church webcast, greatplainsumc.org/livestream

Sept. 21

Camp Fontanelle BBQ, Nickerson, Neb.

Sept. 27

Discover Ministry, Centenary UMC, Beatrice, Neb.

Sept. 29

Big Hairy Audacious Education Caravan, First UMC, Scottsbluff, Neb.

Sept. 30

Big Hairy Audacious Education Caravan, First UMC, Kearney, Neb.

Sept. 31

Big Hairy Audacious Education Caravan, Saint Paul UMC, Lincoln, Neb.

Conference events

It's not easy, but it's worth it

Bishop Jones ordains 16



PHOTO BY BILL WILEY

The newly ordained elders with Bishop Scott Jones. Front row, from left: Ezekiel Koech, Claire Gadberry, Natalie Faust, Bishop Jones, Amanda Baker, Trudy Hanke, Wendy Mohler-Seib and Andy Hargrove. Back row, from left: Patrick McLaughlin, Linda Kusse-Wolfe, Brenda Davids, Alan Gager, Nicole Schwartz and Blair Thompson.

By **MELINDA HARWOOD**,

pastor at Oskaloosa UMC, Oskaloosa, Kan.

The timpani rumble with the crescendo of “Festival Intrada” opened the first ordination service for the Great Plains Conference Friday, June 13, at the Lied Center, in Lincoln, Neb. The choir made up of members from multiple Lincoln churches featured accomplished soloist Dr. Michael Tully. The choir connected all hearts with the Spirit of God.

A high-church processional, led by members of the Cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry, were followed in by those to be commissioned, ordained or recognized. The Christian symbols — light, cross, scripture, cup and basket of bread — are the traditional icons of ordination.

Bishop Scott Jones greeted the assembly and introduced the Rev. Roddy Dunkerson, conference minister for the Nebraska Conference of the United Church of Christ, who served as the ecumenical representative for the ordination service. Dunkerson offered a short response.

Courtney Fowler, conference lay leader; Bruce Emmert, chairperson, Board of Ordained Ministry; Karen Nyhart, chairperson, Order of Deacon; and Jim Keyser, chairperson, Order of Elder presented the ordinands and those to be commissioned.

The face of each person commissioned for the work of elder changed as the assembly committed to support them. Bishop Jones laid hands on their shoulders and prayed for them to do the work of God.

The Lied Center's amazing acoustics highlighted the assembled voices singing “The Church's One Foundation,” as the Plymouth Brass and C. Richard Morris, organist, accompanied.

The ordination message from the Rev. Jorge Acevedo did not disappoint as he connected all of us to “The Raw Emotions of Ministry” using six points from the writings of the Apostle Paul.

Six points

As he began, Acevedo caught the audience's attention when he mistakenly said “sex” instead of “six” points. His first point was about the pressure of pastoral ministry. Acevedo then talked about the raw emotion of the heartbreaking desire for people to grow in spiritual maturity. Every pastor knows what it feels like to be with people who will not change. “It will always hurt when someone leaves your church,” he said.

His third point is the pressure on the pastor's family. Pastors have families, and he said, if you are over 40, you know what it is to have a broken heart. Fourth, he talked about the never-ending task of preserving unity. Live in harmony. “The truth is the sheep bite the shepherd. It's worse when the sheep bite each other,” he said.

His fifth point described the insidious temptation to compare ourselves to others. “God isn't fair when passing out gifts,” said Acevedo. “Let's share each others' successes.”

Finally he talked about the heartache of personal betrayal and abandonment.

“Don't forget your call. Keep going back to your Damascus Road — keep remembering what brings you joy,” said Acevedo.

Ordinary people

Acevedo asked, “What's at stake? I remind you, it is the glory of God being revealed in ordinary people.”

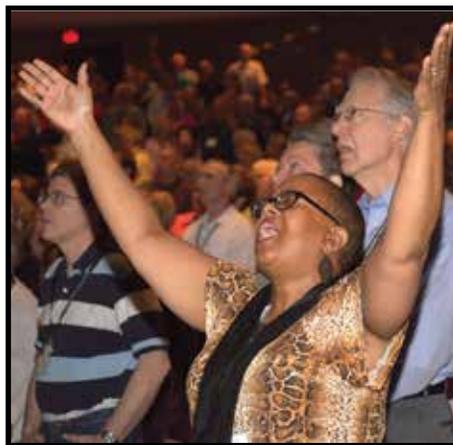
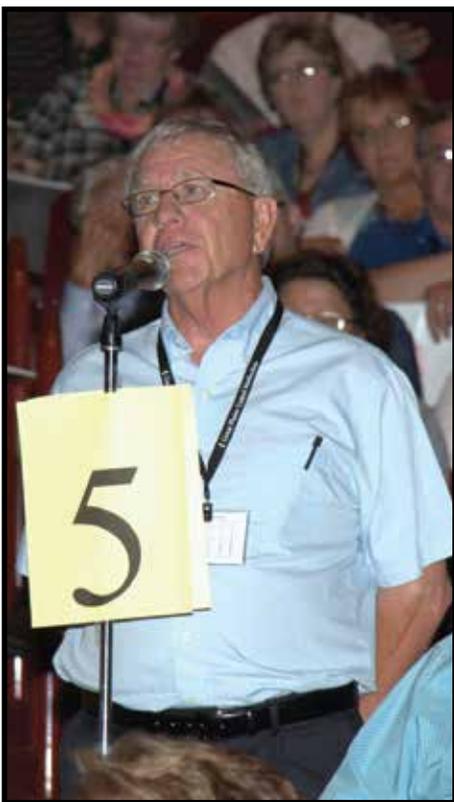
“I want to get baptized, I want to follow God, every day of my life,” said Venezia Hernandez. “No matter what happens, Jesus has the last word.” These were words, spoken on a video from a baptism ritual where Acevedo serves at Grace UMC, in Cape Coral, Fla.

“You will be privileged to be a pastor to someone like Venezia. So don't forget what's at stake,” said Acevedo.

A rousing plea to make our offering our prayer to stop human trafficking was given by United Methodist Woman Louise Niemann. “Praise The Lord Ye Heav'ns Adore Him,”



Photos from top. Opening worship of the Great Plains Annual Conference Session, held at the Lied Center in Lincoln, Neb., was led by Bishop Scott Jones. Microphones were numbered throughout the Lied Center for participants to be recognized and to have an opportunity to speak for the business of the session. Cheryl Jefferson Bell, below, joins in praise during Thursday's worship. Photos by the Great Plains Conference.



a hymn commissioned by Saint Paul UMC, Lincoln, exemplified the call to justice and mercy.

Tully sang "Come, Holy Ghost, Our Soul Inspire" as those who were prepared as deacons and elders were ordained under the authority of Bishop Jones.

Those ordained as elders were: Amanda Lee Bennett Baker, Brenda Jo (Fasse) Davids, Natalie Kay Faust, Claire Elizabeth Gadberry, Alan W. Gager, Trudy Hanke, Andrew Barnes Yantis Hargrove, Ezekiel Kimutai Koech, Linda Kusse-Wolfe, Patrick McLaughlin, Wendy Mohler-Seib, Nicole Jean Schwartz and Blair Elizabeth Thompson.

Those ordained as deacons were: Susan Barham and Barbra J. Lenz.

Those recognized from another denomination were: Jaiseong Pi and Sergio Tristan.

Those commissioned as provisional elders were: Lora Lee Andrews, Emily Elizabeth Spearman Cannon, Andrew Michael Frazier, Benjamin Christopher Hanne, Changsu Kim, Hyeayoun Kim, Joohyang Kim, Teresa Lynn Lucas, Joseph McColligan, Jose Manuel Miranda, Charles Augustine Rivera and Kimberly Anne Shank.

Those commissioned as deacon include: Katherine Elizabeth Ebling and Melanie Nord Martin.

Business 2014 Annual at Conference

Episcopacy committee

The Rev. Maria Campbell, episcopal committee chair, announced an episcopal residence task force to discuss and make a recommendation on the location of the episcopal residence to the 2015 Annual Conference Session. If there is to be a change in location of the episcopal residence, it will take place in September, 2016. At this time, no changes are being considered in the locations of the current conference offices.

Education resolution passes

Chair of the Mercy and Justice Team, the Rev. Kent Little spoke to (Resolution #3) Establishing the Great Plains Conference Public Education Partnership. After brief dialogue, the resolution was passed with a voice vote. The Rev. Evelyn Fisher reported that \$50,000 of grant money will provide small matching fund grants to local congregations to establish or strengthen partnerships with local schools and for publicity and media. She challenged congregations to attend one of the Big Hairy Audacious Education Caravan nights (see story page 11). The Great Plains has 144 churches already engaged in educational partnerships.

Approved 2015 budget totals \$16,036,373

Carl Nord, chair of Finance and Administration for the conference, led the financial discussion. He reaffirmed the Rev. Gary Beach as conference treasurer and thanked him for his service in times of great change and transition. Beach recognized his own staff, who have been putting in many hours to make the transition to the Great Plains Conference. He noted about 30 businesses and pseudo-conference businesses were shut down during the transition and aggregated into four incorporated organizations. At the same time his staff was reduced, meaning the department is doing more work with significantly less staff.

Beach noted that he has received nothing but gracious support and kindness from the people of the conference. "I appreciate that," he said.

Beach presented the 2013 Mission Share percentages of the former three conferences — Kansas East, 85.04 percent; Nebraska, 86.05 percent; and Kansas West, 87.65 percent.

Beach asked if it was even possible for churches to meet Bishop Jones' challenge of 95 percent fulfillment of apportionments. He highlighted several conferences who regularly meet that level. He went on to recognize

See **BUSINESS** on page 14

Forty-four remembered during memorial service

By **RACHEL MOSER**, *communications coordinator*

In a heartfelt service of remembrance and celebration, the Rev. Delores “Dee” J. Williamston delivered a powerful message of what is beyond the horizon for the Great Plains United Methodist Church during Thursday morning’s memorial service.

The service, which honored the lives and ministries of 44 departed Great Plains Conference clergy and spouses, was a time of reflection and anticipation. Williamston, Salina District superintendent as of July 1, told a story about when her beloved grandmother passed away. She remembered paying her respects and that her grandmother was in her Sunday suit, hat, gloves, shoes and purse. While leaving the church, her four-year-old self wondered where her grandmother was going all dressed up.

She then talked about a student and a teacher who were discussing the horizon line and how it appears to be the end of the earth.

The teacher told the student that he had been beyond the horizon. The student put faith in the teacher, believing that the earth didn’t end and that there were other cultures and wonders in the world.

Williamston said we also must believe that there is more beyond the horizon. There is someone who did go back, past the line of death — Jesus Christ. “We need to have faith in the unseen,” Williamston said. Death cannot hold us if we believe.

Williamston said she believes that beyond the horizon there will be one conference — the Kingdom of God conference — and there will be the one bishop. She said she believes that one day, we will get there and see our loved ones and Jesus. We will be shouting “Amen” and “Hallelujah.”

Clergy remembered

Charles A. Bailey, Donald (Don) R. Barb, Ronald Bumstead, Michael W. Conner, Burr P. Crickard, Frank Lee Dorsey, Keith O. Dudeck, Duane Lee Dyer, Virginia Rae Fleharty, Clifford Fryda, Robert C. Harder, Billy Hughes, Dr. Dugh A. Maddry Jr., Donald F. Marsh, Lila Picton, Ralph A. Rosenblad, Marvin L. Ruebsamen, Vincent Rutherford, Phyllis Samuelson, A.K. Saul, Melvin Lee Short, Phyllis Southhard, Thomas H. Walsch and Charles Earl Wretling.

Clergy spouses remembered

E. Laverne Amend, Myron Juanita Bailey, Gary S. Blasi, Bethel K. Christensen, M. Nanon Clare, Delores Doran, Loretta “Orr” Ellenberger, June M. Froelich, Norma Gates, Beverly Ann (Benson) Goering, Glenna J. Newkirk, Nina E. Pringle, Sylvia Stearns, Eileen Stouppe, Dennis Lee Tompsett-Welch, Shirley Turner, Sharon Vaughn, Ruth E. Viets, Ruth K. Warner and Linda L. Woods.



Connect online
www.greatplainsumc.org



To view videos, photos and the daily recaps from the Great Plains Annual Conference Session go to greatplainsumc.org/annualconference.



Photos clockwise from top left: Dorothy Halvorsen, Nigeria Partnership chair, talks with an attendee at the Nigeria Partnership booth. The Rev. Delores Williamston preaches during the memorial service. Bishop Scott Jones smiles while Mel Luetchens receives the Francis Asbury Award. The associate conference lay leaders at the laity luncheon (front row, from left) Carolyn May, conference lay leader Courtney Fowler, Micole Harms-Brazell, (back row, from left) Oliver Green and Tom Watson. Bishop Jones preaches during the Annual Conference Session. The Rev. Jorge Acevedo, lead pastor at Grace UMC, a multi-site congregation located in Southwest Florida, led worship on Friday and Saturday. Photos by the Great Plains Conference.



Clergy honored for their ministry

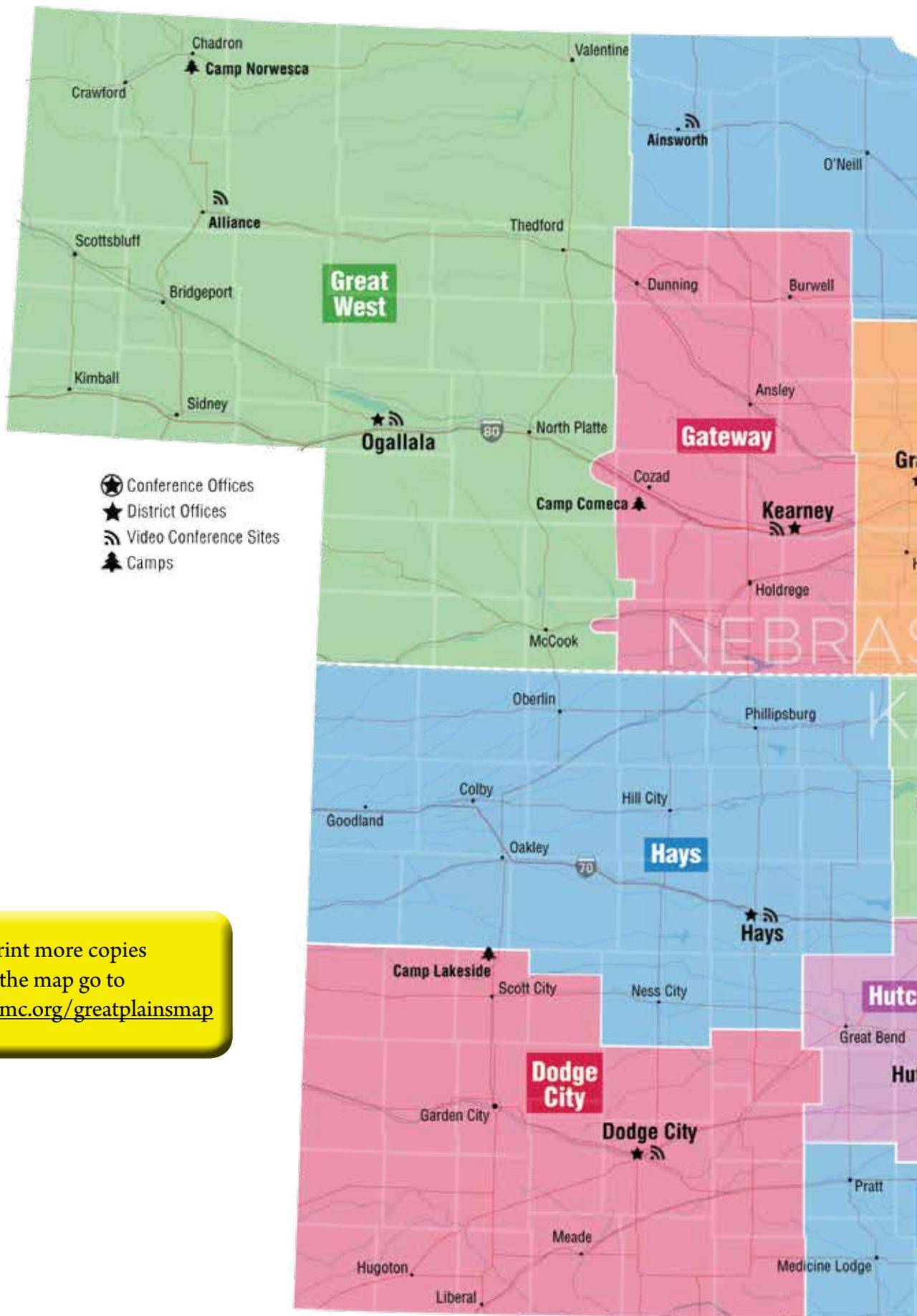
By **RACHEL MOSER**,
communications coordinator

During the retirement service on Thursday, June 12, 35 clergy were recognized for their years of devotion to ministry at the Great Plains Annual Conference Session. Bishop Scott Jones introduced the retirees and said, “For everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven. So too, there is a time for movement, new adventure, fields of service not yet cultivated and where abundance may abound. With love, we send you forth in the spirit of John Wesley — may the world be your path.”

A representative of the retiree class, Carol Roettmer Brewer then passed a stole to Claire Gadberry, who represented the ordination class. This symbolizes the light of Christ the retirees have carried in their ministry being passed along to the next generation of clergy.

Those who retired include: Fred W. Andersen, Carol Roettmer Brewer, James Brewer, Max Clayton, Theta Dame, Ira L. DeSpain, Harry P. Disbrow III, Robert F. Edwards, John Ewton, Eleanor Foster, Roger Gillming, Diana Gaier Hill, Nel Holmes, Glenda Jardine, Jan Justice, James Keyser, George Kilmer, Jay Krumeich, Lawrence “Butch” Lambert, Sheila Lawson, Terry McGuire, Sandra Moore, Phillip Morris, James A. Newkirk, Carol Moore Ramey, Kent Myron Scott, Robert Smith, Carol Jean Stapleton, Sharon Thomas, Valjean Warman, Raynold H. Weinerman, Robert Winslow, Paul Wolf, Holly Wood and Rena Yocom.





To print more copies of the map go to greatplainsumc.org/greatplainmap



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Wichita, Kansas 67207

Wichita West District
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Ottawa, KS

Camp Comesca
75670 Road 417
Cozad, NE 69130

Camp Fontanelle
9677 County Road 3
Nickerson, NE 68044

Camp Horizon
30811 Horizon Drive
Arkansas City, KS

Camp Lakeside
300 E. Scott Lake Drive
Scott City, KS

Camp Norwesca
79 Camp Norwesca Road
Chadron, NE

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Alliance, NE 69301

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Wichita KS 67207

Bike rides raise significant dollars

Bishop's Bicycle Challenge raises more than \$12,000 for Open Door

On the morning of Saturday, June 21, 2014, 110 cyclists took off from Andover UMC in Andover, Kan., for the 5th annual Bishop's Bicycle Challenge. Riders chose between three routes around Butler County, 100K (62 miles), 50K (35 miles) and 20 miles, all starting and ending at the church.

The weather was perfect with little wind and no rain. The event raised \$12,311 to support the ministry of Open Door, a conference-supported mission agency in Wichita, Kan. In the five years of the challenge, this year had the most riders.

Sponsors for the 2014 ride were Bicycle Pedaler, Bicycle Exchange, Heartland Bicycle, Interstate Batteries, Johnson's Garden Centers, Lee's Bike Shop, Mead's Corner and Signs and Designs, all businesses in Wichita, Kan.

Photos from the event are posted on Facebook ([facebook.com/bishopsbicyclechallenge](https://www.facebook.com/bishopsbicyclechallenge)) and on Flickr.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BISHOP'S BICYCLE CHALLENGE AND NUMB

More than 100 riders participated in the Bishop's Bicycle Challenge (top). The ride started and ended at Andover UMC in Andover, Kan., The more than 140 NUMB Ride participants (bottom) gather for a group picture at Cozad UMC, in Cozad, Neb. The NUMB ride started and ended in Holdrege, with stops in Cozad, Broken Bow and Gibbon (all in Nebraska).

NUMB Ride raises largest annual amount for hunger projects

The Nebraska United Methodist Bike Ride for Hunger, affectionately known as the NUMB Ride, raised \$62,800 in support of Food Bank for the Heartland, Bread for the World, Heifer Project and Africa University's farm practices program. Contributions will be divided evenly among the four projects. Since 1995, when the first ride raised \$10,000, to the current record-breaking year, the ride has raised a total \$712,800 in support of food security.

Four days and 250 miles took 144 riders and 25 support personnel on a loop ride starting and ending in Holdrege, Neb. The ride took place June 28-July 2. June 28 was an optional ride through Wilcox and Funk, then back to Holdrege with 64 riders participating. The riders meeting was Saturday night and the ride began Sunday morning after a breakfast hosted by the Holdrege UMC.

Each community afforded riders ample hospitality. Campgrounds were made available at a YMCA (Holdrege) and near schools (Cozad, Broken Bow and Gibbon) for those camping. A support trailer hauled rider tents and belongings from place to place. Support personnel offered riders snacks and hydration about every 10 miles of the ride. The United Methodist Church in each location provided hearty breakfasts and pasta-loading dinners each night (often capped off with ice cream for dessert).

The weather was mild, with a short, non-threatening rain storm on Sunday and a 20-plus mph head wind on Monday on the way to Broken Bow. Most riders reached the next destination by noon or early afternoon. Showers, late lunches, swimming and other activities filled afternoons. Riders' meetings each night featured both local and rider talent, updates on the next day's route, awards and other announcements.

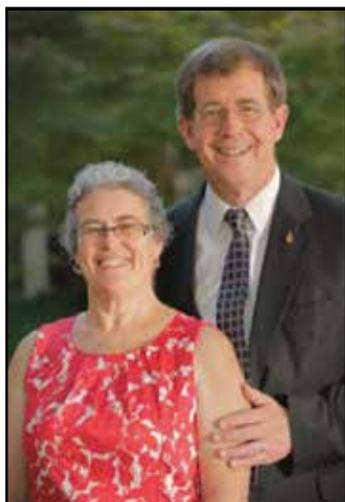
The Preston family members were recognized as pledges from family and friends in the amount \$6,000 were made in honor of Ray Preston, an 18-year NUMB participant who passed away from cancer earlier this year. Phyllis Larsen was the top individual fundraiser with \$2,775 in donations.

Photos from the event are posted on NUMB's Facebook page. Read Kathryn Witte's daily ride blogs on the Great Plains website under "News," "Blog Posts." You can still donate to NUMB at www.numbride.org under donate now.

2015 Orders and Fellowship Meeting Scheduled

The 2015 Orders and Fellowship Meeting, an annual event for clergy in the Great Plains conference, is scheduled for Jan. 21-22, at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, in Lincoln, Neb. The featured guest speakers will be the Rev. Jay Hanson, senior pastor, and Anne Bosarge, director of discipleship, from The Chapel in Brunswick, Ga. The topic is leaders developing leaders in the local church. More information will be available on the Great Plains website in September. This is an opportunity for the orders of Elder, Deacon and Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members to meet as groups as well as benefit from professional development.

Journey through the Bible with Bishop Scott Jones and Mary Lou Reece



SAVE THE DATES
Jan. 28-Feb. 7, 2014

Your pilgrimage begins as you depart the USA on an overnight flight. You will be welcomed to the Holy Land and transferred to your hotel in Bethlehem where your adventure begins.

View this online tour at www.EO.travel/mytrip

Tour = HL15 Date = 012814 Code = L

Big, Hairy, Audacious Education Caravan

Education Partnership's first event July 29



United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas will launch their public school partnership with an education caravan at six locations designed to bring attention to the importance of public schools. The goal is to increase collaboration among United Methodist congregations, schools and community partners to support local schools.

Each event will feature local public education experts, advocates, interactive displays showcasing successful partnerships, small group conversations and a short address by Bishop Scott J. Jones, bishop of the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church. Pie and ice cream will be served. Locations, dates and special guests are:

- First UMC, Garden City, Kan., July 29, 1106 N Main St. (Superintendent Dr. Rick Atha)
- Wesley UMC, Iola, Kan., July 30, 301 E Madison Ave. (Allen County Community College President Dr. John Masterson)
- First UMC, Topeka, Kan., July 31, 600 SW Topeka Blvd. (Superintendent Dr. Julie Ford)
Webcast at greatplainsumc.org/livestream.
- First UMC, Scottsbluff, Neb., Sept. 29, 2002 4th St. (TBD)
- First UMC, Kearney, Neb., Sept. 30, 4500 Linden Dr. (TBD)
- Saint Paul UMC, Lincoln, Neb., Oct. 2, 1144 M St. (TBD)
Webcast at greatplainsumc.org/livestream.

Members and groups of local UMC congregations, community partners, local education leaders and members of the public are encouraged to attend. All events will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a short program at 7 p.m., followed by small group discussion and refreshments.

These rallies follow the passage of a resolution in June, during the Great Plains Annual Conference Session. Church groups, community organizations and individuals are invited to register to ensure there is enough pie and ice cream (and to make sure enough materials are prepared). To register go to greatplainsumc.org/education.

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Thirty-six begin ministry journey

By KATHRYN WITTE, *communications director*

The first of what will be annual Great Plains United Methodist Conference Candidacy Summit took place at St. Mark's UMC, in Lincoln, Neb., on June 27-28.

The Rev. Amy Lippoldt, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry's Call Team said, "We're here to help make the process more accessible, better guided and smoother. We want candidates to experience community in order to help minimize the barriers to ordained ministry."

Thirteen mentors will work regionally, in pairs, with small groups of candidates to help answer administrative, process and other general questions related to the journey to ordained ministry. Of the mentor pair, one is to facilitate gatherings of the small candidate groups, the other is to focus more on administrative processes so that candidates do not miss something along the way, in terms of paperwork and scholastic requirements.

The Rev. Troy Bowers from First UMC in Manhattan, Kan., preached the opening worship. He said the call to ministry is putting one's whole trust in God's grace as he told his own call story.

Bishop Scott Jones reminded candidates of the prevenient grace that God extends to all, even without our awareness, that is active all the way through life.

Bishop Scott Jones has a conversation with Candidacy Summit attendee Shella Choi (above right). Shella is a student at Saint Paul School of Theology, in Leawood, Kan. The summit was held at St. Mark's UMC in Lincoln, Neb., June 27-28. Photo by Kathryn Witte



Volunteers needed for tornado recovery

Volunteers are needed through the end of October, 2014, to help with the long-term recovery in both Baxter Springs, Kan., and Beaver Crossing, Neb. Individuals and groups should contact Lin Harris, site manager for Baxter Springs at 918-607-5125 or at marklinharris@yahoo.com. For Beaver Springs recovery contact Dorothy Aspegren, site manager, at 402-641-9698 or umc.dr.beaver@greatplainsumc.org.

Great Plains United Methodist Women

Jorge Lockward is putting the pieces together with global praise at the UMW Annual Meeting and Celebration



The Great Plains United Methodist Women (UMW) are pleased to announce Jorge Lockward, director of global praise at the General Board of Global Ministries, as the keynote speaker at the 2014 Great Plains UMW Annual Meeting and Celebration. The event will occur Oct. 17-18, 2014, at Saint Paul UMC, in Lincoln, Neb.

The theme of the event is "Putting the Pieces Together" and Lockward will utilize his skills in weaving learning, listening and experiences in creating a worship environment that embraces our past, present and future. He will be leading worship, workshop and a plenary session that will allow participants to experience and learn new ways to build a worship setting that connects spirituality to cultural awareness and mission and justice initiatives around the world. Many United Methodists would recognize Lockward's work as a worship leader at National UMW Assembly, General Conference and Missionary Commissioning services.

The annual meeting and celebration will also include opportunities to learn about mission and justice initiatives currently being addressed by the United Methodist Women, resources for spiritual growth and leadership training.

"It is a blessing to have Jorge Lockward as our keynoter for our first

meeting and celebration as the Great Plains United Methodist Women," says President Esther Hay. "We are encouraging people to invite a friend and come join together in a fellowship of sisterhood, be refreshed, renewed and energized to go and make a difference in the world."

Everyone is invited to attend this event. It is open to all United Methodist Women, clergy and church lay members. This is a great opportunity to learn new ways to invigorate the worship environment in congregations and methods to incorporate worship in all aspects of spiritual life.

For more information, visit the Great Plains UMW website greatplainsumc.org/umw.

Paid for by Great Plains United Methodist Women. Contact Lisa Maupin at lisamumw@gmail.com.

Hot meals provided to victims, volunteers



By **AMANDA WOITA**,
communications intern

After a natural disaster, victims are often left without the basic necessities of shelter, electricity, running water and hot meals.

While getting most of these essential resources up and running takes time, the Hutchinson District Disaster Response Team can do something about the hot meals right away. They travel to disaster sites and prepare food for survivors and volunteers in the area.

The district's hot food preparation trailers got their start in April, 2001, when Hoisington, Kan., was struck by an EF4 tornado. Arlen "Butch" Proffitt was the Kansas West Conference Disaster Response coordinator at the time, and was surveying after the storm.

"I asked one person from the area what they thought was really needed in a situation such as this," Proffitt said. "Their answer was to have some way to feed the survivors and the workers involved in the disaster."

Proffitt and the Hutchinson District volunteers decided they needed an entirely mobile means of providing hot meals. They began with two trailers: a 24-foot trailer with a kitchen and a 16-foot support trailer. The trailers have their own power source, fresh water source, storage for graywater (waste water from sinks, kitchen appliances, etc.), and heat and air conditioning for volunteers.

The first time the Hot Food Preparation Trailers were used was in Pascagoula, Miss., after Hurricane Katrina.

"Being from Kansas, we had no idea what a hurricane was like or what it did," Proffitt said. He added that he had seen flooding and housing damage before, but not together and not on such a grand scale as it was in Mississippi. Overall, the Hutchinson volunteers stayed in Pascagoula for 69 days and served more than 40,000 meals.

Since then, the trailers have gotten more support and more use throughout Kansas and recently, to Nebraska.

According to Linda Stewart, the Great Plains Conference's Disaster Response coordinator, the Hutchinson District Food Trailer has been in Beaver Crossing and Wakefield, Neb. She added that many Nebraskans came to volunteer as well. "It gave us a new identity as serving together," Stewart said. "It's just awesome."

The volunteers don't automatically take the trailers whenever and wherever a storm strikes. If a disaster happens outside the district, that district's relief coordinator has to invite the trailers to the site. If a disaster happens outside the state or conference, there has to be cooperation between each conference's bishop in order for the trailers to go. According to Proffitt, this helps avoid an oversaturation of volunteers.

Proffitt said the trailers are owned by every United Methodist Church in the Hutchison District. They make sure everything is clean and running smoothly before the next disaster.

"There will always be a next disaster," Proffitt said.

Proffitt added that with every disaster, there are always volunteers. And there's a job for everyone. Even those who can't do physical labor can help with paperwork or keep track of other volunteers and donations.

"The main factor in the whole thing is the volunteers," Proffitt said. "The trailers don't do it themselves."



PHOTOS BY LINDA STEWART

Volunteers from Faith Westwood UMC in Omaha, Neb., respond to the tornado disaster near Wakefield, Neb. They served hot meals from inside the trailer (above left) and prepared meals before they go out to the field (above right).

Death notices

Jerrald "Jerry" Boden, 61, the spouse of a clergy member, died, May 16, 2014. He is survived by his parents, Jack and Homerine Boden; wife, Pastor Lorna Boden, and children Lindsay Sapp, Rachel Bise and Jordan Boden. Memorial contributions may be sent to Furley UMC, 11400 E. 101st N. Valley Center, KS 67147; Mulvane UMC, 107 S Central Ave, Mulvane, KS 67110; or Stand Up To Cancer, File 1224. 1801 W. Olympic Boulevard Pasadena, CA 91199-1224.

The Rev. Donald E. Carper, 90, a retired clergy member, died May 24, 2014. Don served six years as associate program director of the Kansas West Conference and was a 1976 delegate at the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Lorene Buehler Carper, and daughters Teresa Carper-Espino and Cynthia Maronick. Memorial contributions may be made in his name to Kansas Wesleyan University, 100 E. Claflin Ave., Salina, KS 67401.

The Rev. Don Christensen, 81, a retired clergy member, died July 5, 2014. Survivors include his sons David Christensen and Steve Christensen. He was preceded in death by his wife Beth Christensen. Memorial contributions may be made to First UMC, Lincoln, Neb.

The Rev. Michael W. Conner, 74, a retired clergy member, died April 26, 2014. The survivors include his wife, Marilyn Conner, and daughters Sharalyn Nelson and Joycelyn Hardy. Memorial contributions may be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation in Lincoln, Neb., or Special Olympics.

Naomi Kaye Hull, 83, a retired deacon, died July 5, 2014. She is survived by her husband, Ron Hull, and children Kevin Hull, Brian Hull, Brandon Hull and Kathryn Hull. Memorial contributions can be made to Peoples City Mission, Nebraskans for Peace or Saint Paul UMC, all in Lincoln, Neb.

Correction: In the Spring issue of "GPconnect" the Rev. Dr. Robert C. Harder and Billy Clyde Hughes should not have been further referenced as Hugh.

The Rev. Karl J. Jones, 88, a retired clergy member, died June 3, 2014. Jones was a district superintendent of the former Kansas West Conference. Survivors include his wife Marguerite Jones, and son Charles Morrow-Jones. Memorial contributions may be made to the visiting nurse program of Trinity UMC in Salina, Kan.

The Rev. Dr. Hiram W. Lilley, 100, a retired clergy member, died June 16, 2014. Survivors include his wife, Sherryl L. Lilley, and daughters Christy L. Goldberg and Lesley L. Parilla. Memorial contributions may be given to Voices of Omaha or Crescendo Concert Series of Dundee Church, both in Omaha, Neb.

The Rev. Dr. Lee Roy Louderback, 72, a retired clergy member, died June 23, 2014. He is survived by his wife, Kansas West District Superintendent Linda Louderback, and children Edith, Leah, Maria, Ken, Amy and Andrea. Memorial contributions may be made to First UMC Missions, 330 N. Broadway St., Wichita, KS 67202; or Imagine No More Malaria Great Plains Conference, 9440 E. Boston Ste. 110, Wichita, KS 67207.

The Rev. James L. Moores, 84, a retired clergy member, died May 23, 2014. Survivors include his wife, Pat Moores, and children Debby Bohaboj, Cheryl Kay, Betty Taylor, Amie Hanson and Richard Moores.

The Rev. Marvin L Ruebsamen, 83, a retired clergy member, died May 7, 2014. Survivors include his wife, Jinna Yoon; children Randy Ruebsamen, Mark Ruebsamen, Gary Ruebsamen, Michelle Miller and Denise Putland; and step-children Jill Bergkamp and the Rev. Jay Moses. Memorial contributions may be made to the Rotary Club of Lake Elsinore, Calif.

The Rev. Afzood K. (A.K.) Saul, 83, a retired clergy member, died May 5, 2014. Survivors include his wife, Vibha Saul, and children Rebecca Czubak, Rachel Monnier and Ruben Saul. Memorial contributions may be made to the family, c/o Dorr & Clark Funeral Home, Falls City, Neb.

Business, continued from page 5

Great Plains districts who indeed had met that challenge in 2013.

- Gateway District in Nebraska, 96.49
- Hays District in Kansas, 95.13
- Flint Hills, Hutchinson and Dodge district were just under the 95 percent.

Beach noted that if the conference would reach the 95 percent level on apportionments we would raise an additional \$1.5 million. "It would enable us to do extraordinary things," he said.

Carl Nord, led the group through the budget approval process starting with affirming the 10 + 1 Mission Share formula, affirming Mission Agency Support and ending with the approval of the 2015 budget.

Nord suggested attendees review income line items generated from the new Restricted Reserve Fund, in addition to apportionment income. (The Connecting Council approved the creation of this fund at its spring 2014 meeting.) It acts as an endowment for the GPC. The fund, along with interest, accounts for three line-items in the 2015 income section of the budget. A complete explanation of the Restricted Reserve Fund and the allocation from it for the 2015 budget, can be found on pages numbered 24-25 in the AC Resource Booklet.

"We have a great committee and I am really happy to be part of this, it's a great process we're going through," Nord said. He thanked all the committee members and the bishop for their contributions to the process.

Consideration of redistricting

A resolution to reduce the conference to 14 districts in order to provide greater funding for campus ministries was brought to the floor on Thursday, officially considered on Friday, and referred to the Connecting Council on Saturday.

The Connecting Council met at a special meeting at 8 a.m., in the Lied Center Johnny Carson Theatre, on Saturday to hear Bishop Scott Jones' recommendation on how to manage the referral. (See below.)

The Connecting Council accepted Bishop Jones' recommendation. He plans to appoint a 15-member committee to consider redistricting.

Connecting Council approves actions

In actions taken after the Annual Conference Session the Connecting Council approved by email vote, bylaws changes for United Methodist Homes, parent company of Aldersgate Village, in Topeka.

The list of proposed Advances presented in the preconference workbook, the CFA report and other reports in the workbook were also approved.

The session workbook and bishop's recommendation are still available at greatplainsumc.org/annualconference. The business of AC is continued on the website at greatplainsumc.org/acbusiness.

Hands on the Great Plains Many hands make light the work

Transforming service to the world is one of the Great Plains Conference's missional priorities. Engaging in service to the community demonstrates an interest in the people outside the church walls and conveys Christ's love to all.

Congregations across the Great Plains Conference were encouraged to engage in hands-on mission in their communities between April 26 and May 18. The effort was intended to conclude with Change the World weekend. However Great Plains United Methodists continue to organize hands-on mission projects in their communities.

First UMC in Scottsbluff, Neb., wanted to host an event that brought families together, so they organized a fun day with games, bounce houses, a Christian band and food. The youth group at Edgerton UMC, in Edgerton, Kan., conducted a spring cleanup of yards and gardens, and then they



PHOTO BY KATHY LEFLER

On April 26, East Heights UMC Love Wichita team member, Tom Fleming, assists a homeowner by trimming a shrub.

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planted flowers at the church and in the community. Vinland UMC, in Vinland, Kan., hosted a recycle pickup.

Topeka celebrated its 5th Annual Hands on Topeka with large and small projects at eight locations. There were 175 volunteers who participated in the Hands on Topeka work day, tackling projects that involved painting, landscaping and/or cleaning property.

Brenda Bauman-Swank, a member of Topeka's Countryside congregation, was quoted in the *Topeka Capital-Journal*: "It feels good to come out and help the community. Lots of people helping can make quick work of things. It's also a great way to get to know people from your church."

More than 20 congregations registered projects at www.HandsOnTheGreatPlains.org — many unregistered projects also were completed by the end of June.

Webcast on the Unity of the Church

Saturday, Sept. 13, 10 a.m.

Bishop Jones discusses the unity of The United Methodist Church in the midst of controversy over human sexuality.

GreatPlainsUMC.org/livestream

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PHOTO BY JEREMY WURST

The 2014 class of retiring clergy. Back row, from left: Roger Gillming, Ray Weinerman, Fred Andersen, Lawrence "Butch" Lambert, John Ewton, Jim Keyser, Max Clayton and Paul Wolf. Middle row, from left: George Kilmer, Ira DeSpain, Sheila Lawson, Terry McGuire, Rena Yocom, Valjean Warman, Jan Justice, Young Ho Chun and Glenda Jardine. Front row, from left: James Brewer, Carol Roettmer Brewer, Russell "Paul" McAlister, Sandra Moore, Theta Dame, Carol Jean Stapleton, Diana Hill, Eleanor "Ellie" Foster and Sharon Thomas. Not pictured: Harry Disbrow III, Robert Edwards, Nel Holmes, Jay Krumeich, Phillip Morris, James Newkrik, Carol Moore Ramey, Kent Myron Scott, Robert Smith, Robert Winslow and Holly Wood. See story on page 7.