

in memoriam:

Claude Emmert

BLOUNTVILLE, Tenn. — Claude Haskell Emmert, 78, died Nov. 16 at Indian Path Medical Center after a lengthy illness. He was a retired local pastor in Holston Conference. The Rev. Emmert is survived by his wife of 54 years, Virginia Pope Emmert; six children, Sheila Ketron, Kingsport; Jerry Emmert, Kingsport; Jeffrey Emmert, Kingsport; Claudia Jean Horton, Kingsport; Lawrence Emmert, Blountville; and Randall Emmert, Limestone; sisters, Elsie Dunn and Dorothy Welch, both of Bristol; brothers, Dayton, Jack and Bobby Emmert, all of Bristol; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandson; several nieces and nephews. Memorial services were conducted in East Lawn Funeral Home chapel with the Rev. Larry DeVault and the Rev. Randall Emmert officiating. Grave-side services were held at Tri-Cities Memory Gardens with full military honors. Memorial contributions may be made to Cassidy UMC or Cassidy Preschool Program, 5801 Memorial Blvd., Kingsport, TN 37664. ■

exchange:

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Middlebrook Pike UMC is looking for a **full-time music director**. Send resumes by Jan. 6 to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee at MPUMC, 7234 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37909.

■ What's Your Size?

The Call uses the following symbols to identify articles about small, medium or large churches:

- S** = Churches with average 85 or fewer in principle weekly worship service(s)
M = Average 86 to 225 in worship service(s)
L = Average 226 or more in worship service(s)



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commentary:

Who is the 'right' General Conference delegate?

A UMNS Commentary
 By James W. Lane

At the 2003 annual conferences of the United Methodist Church, we will be electing from among ourselves delegates to the 2004 General Conference. There will be around 1,000 delegates (half lay and half clergy) elected from around the world to gather in Pittsburgh April 27-May 7, 2004, to open up our United Methodist *Book of Discipline* and begin to fine-tune it again.

This is probably not the perfect way to select a representative body for the church, but it is our way.

Someone said to me recently, "Now if we can just get the right persons elected ..."

OK, but just who is the right person? What would that person look and act like? What would our test be?

Those who have been a part of our delegations in the past will tell you that it will take a lot of time and energy — not for just the period of April 27 - May 7, 2004, but for lots of meetings before hand. You will need a lot of stamina, both physical and mental, for sitting in long meetings and hearing a lot of dialogue.

Does politics or campaigning have a place in this process? It does if it is your desire to elect from among yourselves the best campaigner or best politician. If campaigning were "the thing," I am sure that there are many out there who could put the Democrats and Republicans to shame on campaigning!

Maybe just the right kind of campaign literature or campaign button. Oh, I know, if I just wore the right color clothes! Maybe if I could just get the right person to write letters for me.

There are always the hot-button

issues that get folks riled up. The issues of human sexuality and reproduction have taken a lot of time, energy and emotion in past General Conferences. At the 2000 General Conference, some folks got carried off to jail just so they could "have their say." One day the whole General Conference was shut down and even some of our church bishops were arrested, just so they could "have their say." The General Conference voting delegates then "had their say." There were lots of winners and lots of losers that day. It was an extremely sad day for the church. I got physically ill and came home. You see I love our church that much.

And then we say, "Well if we could just elect the right person ..."

Who is that "right person?" Is he or she a conservative, a liberal, a middle-of-the-roader? Is that person Anglo, African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Mexican American, Native American, male, female? Is he or she endorsed by United Methodist Women, United



Methodist Men, Good News caucus, Hispanic caucus, Confessing Movement, Black Methodists for Church Renewal, the local church, etc.?

We proudly proclaim that the mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and yet when we come to "doing the business of the church," we return to those age-old habits of politics as usual.

I can tell you that to the average person coming to your United Methodist Church trying to live out their walk with God, it does not make one whit of difference who backs whom for what or what the makeup of your ancestry is or whether you are male or female. That is not to say that we

do not want a representative delegation, but it is to say that those are not the first criteria.

I asked Virginia who she wanted representing her. You might remember her as the person addressed in the famous line, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." Here is what she said.

"First of all I want a person who has a personal, daily, moment-by-moment relationship with the living Christ.

"A person who has chosen Jesus Christ as the only Lord in their life. One who has been able to set self aside and let Jesus just take over their life — not just in the easy times but also in the hard times.

"One who sees worth and value in every other person they meet. One who is willing to really listen to their brothers and sisters who cry out for justice.

"One who has stood the test of faithfulness to the United Methodist Church and continues to be loyal to the church and uphold it with their prayers, their presence, their gifts and their service.

"One who will not be tossed to and

fro by every wind of doctrine. One who has cast down deep roots and has their anchor caught in the solid rock.

"One who is not willing to sell their soul, or vote, for what is the popular whim of the day. One who is in church 'every Sunday, on time, with a studied lesson and an offering for the Lord.'

"One who, with an open mind and Christian integrity, will sit within the councils and listen to all sides, and then using all of their best information and judgment, and fervent prayer, cast a vote that they feel that God wants them to cast."

Virginia says she wants such a person to represent her at the 2004 General Conference. Virginia, let it be so. Yes! Let it be so! ■

Lane, of Sherwood, Ark., is past president of the National Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders. He delivered the laity address to the 1996 General Conference.