

news briefs:

Church leaders pledge cooperation on budget

(UMNS) The top staff executives of the United Methodist Church's 14 general agencies have pledged to work together in new ways and to avoid a "fight over the dollars" at the 2004 General Conference.

The executives, or general secretaries, of the denomination's boards and agencies made the pledge as they met Jan. 14-16 in Orlando, Fla., to begin working on the budget for the 2005-2008 quadrennium. The United Methodist Church organizes its work in four-year periods, with funding requests for each period going to the General Conference for approval. The denomination's top legislative assembly will meet in Pittsburgh in 2004.

The budget process is often viewed as a time of intense competition for funds among the agencies. "We are saying we do not want to fight over the dollars," said the Rev. Randolph Nugent, top staff executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries in New York. "We want to help educate about the mission and ministry of the whole church."

Study guide offers bishops' reflections

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – A new study guide initiated by the United Methodist Council of Bishops is available to help local congregations deal with hard questions in the aftermath of Sept. 11.

The 12-page book, "Be Not Anxious: A Guide for Study from the Council of Bishops," contains personal reflections by bishops, as well as suggested Scripture readings and questions for discussion and reflection. The United Methodist Board of Discipleship produced the guide at the bishops' request, made on the opening day of the council's Nov. 5-9 meeting. An optional cassette contains expanded comments from the bishops about Sept. 11.

The book has been sent to the denomination's bishops, general secretaries and directors of connectional ministries, said Steve Wilburn, editor of special projects in the board's Upper Room unit. It can be downloaded from the board's Web site at www.gbod.org. The book and cassette tape can also be ordered together or separately at no charge by calling (800) 972-0433.

Igniting Ministry unveils Easter ad

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – Igniting Ministry, the United Methodist Church's television advertising campaign, recently unveiled a new Easter television spot that will air nationally during Lent. "'Dream' is the first seasonal spot produced for the campaign. It will speak to a special unchurched audience and can be customized for local use," said the Rev. Steve Horswill-Johnston, executive director of the four-year initiative launched in late 2000.

Igniting Ministry also recently awarded matching grants to 27 United Methodist groups. The grants of up to \$50,000 each enable recipients to conduct local and regional Igniting Ministry broadcast television campaigns to support the national media schedules during Lent. The recipients are spread across the denomination's five jurisdictions and include the Mississippi Annual Conference and Tennessee Annual Conference.

Applications for the back-to-school and/or Advent grants will be received April 1 through May 1. For more information, call (877) 281-6535; e-mail imgrants@umcom.org; or visit www.ignitingministry.org/matchinggrants.

McAnally retires from news service

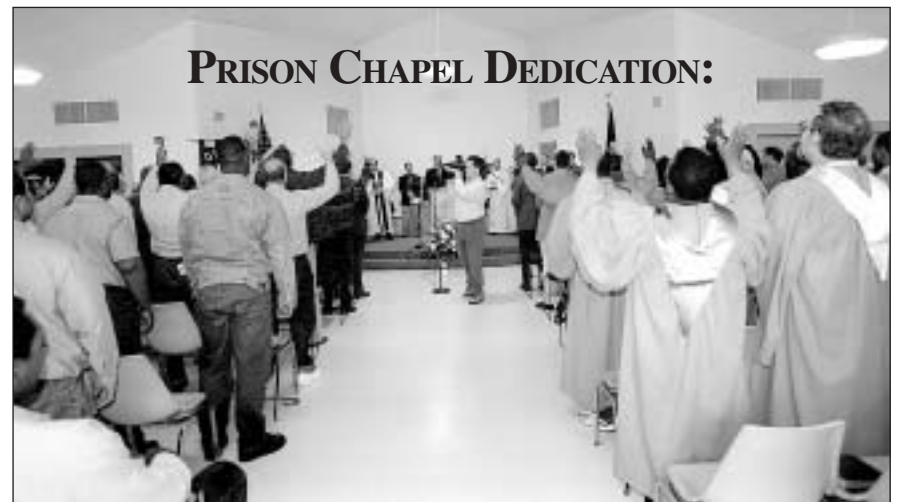
(RNS) Tom McAnally, the longtime director of United Methodist News Service who pioneered church-sponsored independent news agencies, has retired after 33 years with the church.

McAnally, 61, accepted an early retirement package late last year and said he wants to spend his time relaxing and focusing on creative writing projects. McAnally, director of the office since 1983, started working with the church in 1969.

McAnally moved the office from a small operation to a widely respected news service that reported on the activities — and conflicts — in the nation's second-largest Protestant church. As director, McAnally functioned as unofficial spokesman, public relations chief and liaison to the secular media.

Throughout his career, McAnally felt strongly that his office should be able to maintain an independent voice without the threat of church censorship. "We have to tell the bad news, too, to maintain any kind of credibility," he said. ■

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▲ *Inmates at the Avoyelles Correctional Center in Cottonport, La., some wearing choir robes, help dedicate a new interfaith chapel at the facility. United Methodists in Louisiana are involved in a campaign to construct 20 chapels in prisons throughout their state.*

'Shooting Spree in Grundy,' continued from front page

Congregation members are providing meals at the Lawton home but otherwise have been waiting patiently for the media-infused commotion to fade, said McNalley, who also pastors King Mountain and Garden United Methodist churches. "They know and understand that after life gets back to normal, [Margaret's] going to need us here."

'Very saddened'

The Rev. Dennie Humphreys had just finished lunch and was on his way back to the Big Stone Gap district office when he heard about the shootings. Although Grundy is located in the Tazewell District, Humphreys knows the president of Appalachian Law School because Lu Ellsworth lives in and attends church in Wise, Va.

Humphreys immediately tried to reach Ellsworth at the school but was "unable to get through." Later, Ellsworth's administrative assistant called Humphreys to let him know the college president was being flown by a state helicopter from Richmond, Va., back to Grundy. Ellsworth had been visiting the legislature with the Buchanan County delegation that day.

Humphreys, along with David Gibson, a candidate for ministry who had worked with Ellsworth's church, joined the president at the school that night. Humphreys returned to the school on Jan. 22, providing support for Ellsworth, his staff and 140 students on the day before classes resumed.

"[Ellsworth] is obviously very saddened, but also very determined to move forward," Humphreys said.

In addition to 42-year-old Sutin, professor Thomas Blackwell, 41, and student Angela Dales, 33, were killed in the renovated junior-high school building near downtown Grundy. The three wounded students are expected to fully recover. The student accused of the shootings, Nigerian-born Peter Odighizuwa, 42, is being held in New River Valley Jail pending a March preliminary hearing.

Both Humphries and Tazewell District Superintendent Gene Lovell praised McNalley for his service following the tragedy. A former nursing home administrator, McNalley entered full-time ministry in 1998.

"His nursing home experience was wonderful preparation for dealing with that crisis," said the Rev. Lovell, who was attending an out-of-town meeting when the shootings occurred. "I'm really proud of Paul. He's done well in a difficult situation."

"Paul's presence had a very calming effect on the people," Humphries said. Clergy from other denominations also were "remarkable" in providing support to the community during memorial services, candlelight vigils and grief counseling, he added. "It made me feel good to be in the ministry." ■

who said that?

"There are passages in the Bible and in the Koran ... that are dangerous in the hands of fools."

—Imam W. Deen Mohammed of the Muslim American Society, speaking at a Jan. 15 dialogue sponsored by the National Conference for Community and Justice in Washington.