

## news briefs:

**Team moves ahead with church board idea**

(UMNS) The idea of creating a single governing board for almost all of the United Methodist Church's general agencies has taken a step forward with the approval of the denomination's Council on Ministries' leadership team. The Servant Leadership Team, meeting Feb. 5-7 in New Orleans, embraced the idea and decided to develop a formal proposal for the full General Council on Ministries. Top staff executive Daniel Church has suggested that the general agencies "share a common table of governance" while continuing to operate with their own individual portfolios. A single board would provide leadership for all of the agencies except the United Methodist Publishing House and the Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

The Servant Leadership Team has set a fall deadline for getting a final decision on what GCOM will recommend to General Conference. The church's top legislative assembly meets in Pittsburgh in 2004.

**Training events offered for new songbook**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – The United Methodist Publishing House and churchwide Board of Discipleship are planning a series of six introductory and training events for The Faith We Sing songbook. The three-day events will be held in the United Methodist Church's five U.S. jurisdictions. The event nearest to the Holston Conference is Saint Mark UMC in Atlanta, April 22-24. The Providence event will feature some of the church's most prominent music. Topics will include gospel and ethnic music, the theology of the songbook, worship planning, Taize music and use of the hymnal as a choir book.

For more information or a brochure on the training events, contact Jean Musterman at the Board of Discipleship, toll free, (877) 899-2780, Ext. 7070, or at [jmusterman@gbod.org](mailto:jmusterman@gbod.org). Information and materials are also available at <http://www.umcworship.org>.

**Conference will focus on changing communities**

(UMNS) Windsor Village United Methodist Church, the denomination's largest U.S. congregation, will share its experience in transforming communities by hosting a nationwide conference this spring. Up to 500 United Methodists and leaders of other traditions and nonprofit organizations are expected to attend the April 4-6 eChurch2002 Ministry Conference to network and gather resources for changing their communities.

EChurch is a "teaching-church" initiative of Windsor Village in Houston that will provide opportunities to increase the effectiveness of churches, pastors and ministry volunteers, organizers said. More information, including registration, may be found online at [www.kingdombuilder.com](http://www.kingdombuilder.com), by sending an e-mail message to Robert Johnson at [rjohnson@wvumc.org](mailto:rjohnson@wvumc.org) or by calling (713) 723-8187, Ext. 237.

**Baptists to stop endorsing ordained women chaplains**

(RNS) The Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board has decided to no longer endorse ordained women chaplains. The action, taken at a trustee meeting Feb. 6, reflects another adaptation of denominational policy following revisions of the faith statement of the nation's largest Protestant denomination. "The Chaplains Commission has not required or considered ordination in the endorsement of chaplains in the past," said a statement from the trustees. "However, in the future we will refrain from endorsing ordained women to the office of chaplain. We recognize ordination as a local church action, but endorsement and its requirement is the action of a national agency."

Since there are relatively few women pastors in the denomination, chaplaincies have been one of the main career opportunities for ordained Southern Baptist women until this decision, a spokesperson said. The group estimated in 2000 that there were just under 100 women serving as pastors or co-pastors in Southern Baptist churches.

**Souper Bowl raises \$2.6 Million to fight hunger**

(RNS) The annual "Souper Bowl of Caring" fund-raiser on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 3, raised \$2.6 million in 6,350 congregations across the United States, and that number will probably exceed \$3 million when all the reports are in, organizers said. That money will be given by the churches to local soup kitchens, food banks and other charities, said Brad Smith, the campaign's director. Since the program went national in 1993 – raising \$144,000 the first year – youth groups have collected \$13.6 million. The vast majority of the money — \$12 million — has been raised in the last four years. The programs involve church youth groups who stand at their churches' doors with soup pots or chef's hats seeking donations. This year, Smith also encouraged the youth groups to work on the Saturday before the Super Bowl at a local soup kitchen or other charity.

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**Giving to apportionments remains stable**, *continued from page 1*

percent, actual cash receipts were higher than they were in 2000. Holston members gave \$703,481 more through apportionments than they did in 2000. However, the budget was higher in 2001.

The conference budget was \$14.06 million in 2000, compared to more than \$14.67 in 2001.

Nationally, United Methodist churches do not usually receive 100 percent of their total budget figures. In 2001, the denomination received \$114.7 million through apportionments, representing 90.1 percent of its budget. The Holston Conference has historically received about 90 percent of its budget through apportionments, Matthews said.

Also known as "Fair Share," apportionments are set amounts paid by local churches to support conference missions. The conference in turn supports the general church through its own set payments.

Above and beyond apportionment giving, Holston members also contributed \$723,997 to Advance Special missions in 2001. The 3.6 percent increase over the previous year's receipts was boosted by money given to flood relief in four of Holston's districts, as well as to the denomination's "Love in the Midst of Tragedy" fund for victims of Sept. 11.

Holston giving to the "Tragedy" fund hit \$215,880 by Dec. 31, 2001, according to the treasurer's office. In a year marked with summer floods in the Tazewell, Big Stone Gap, Morristown, and Johnson City Districts, the treasurer's office received a total of \$52,572 in funds designated for "disaster response" or "flood relief." That was \$38,500 more than was contributed to disaster response by Holston churches in 2000.

Combined, the four districts experiencing floods in 2001 reported receiving an additional \$58,819 from churches, groups and individuals outside the conference and denomination. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) provided an additional \$80,000 in flood-relief funds to Holston districts.

It's important for church leaders and members to note how generous people are when "the vision is clear and the need is evident," Matthews said.

"People give to people, they don't give to budgets. That's born out time and time again," he said. "I personally believe that every congregation in this conference is capable of paying 100 percent of their Fair Share apportionments. But many times they don't understand how it really makes a difference.

"You need to translate those budget numbers, which are not necessarily inspirational, into flesh and blood," Matthews added. "If you can help catch that vision and the evident needs, people respond."

Among the conference's 12 districts, Wytheville led the way in apportionment giving by paying an average of 96.5 percent in 2001. Morristown was in second place with 95.6 percent. Abingdon was third with 95.1 percent. Knoxville and Chattanooga brought up the rear with 81.5 and 86.0 percent, respectively. ■

**Children in poverty**, *continued from page 1*

"Kingdom Eyes" program, Children's Coordinator Claudia Howard commended congregations for seeking innovative ways to connect with children in poverty.

"Many [congregations have] traditional settings and programs that are needed and helpful," she stated. "I believe in order to reach more children for Christ we must look for non-traditional settings as well."

Travis said she was "excited" for the four Holston churches that were notified of their grants in February. "It's such a good example of general church apportionment dollars flowing back into the Holston Conference." ■

## opportunity:

**Brochures from Holston Conference Foundation**

Two new brochures are available free of charge from the Holston Conference Foundation. "Your 2002 Personal Planning Guide" provides ideas and strategies on estate planning, estate and gift taxes, charitable gift planning, investments and retiring for individuals. The "2002 Federal Tax Pocket Guide" is geared primarily for professional advisors. For free copies or information, contact Roger Redding, Foundation executive director, at (865) 690-4080 or [rogerredding@holston.org](mailto:rogerredding@holston.org). ■

