

## district roundup:

# News from the Holston Conference's 12 Districts

**Abingdon:**

**Virginia Avenue UMC** reports that 6,258 bags of groceries were handed out during 18,005 visits to its food bank in 2001. "Estimating conservatively that each bag of groceries is worth \$30, this means we offered \$187,740 in food to people in need!" the church newsletter recently announced. The 2001 numbers reflect a 36 percent increase over 2000 figures, and a whopping increase over 1998 when 501 bags of food were distributed. **M**

**Big Stone Gap:**

**Clintwood UMC** was one of several groups participating in an annual fundraiser benefiting the Dickenson County Ministerial Association. "Operation \$10,000" is a \$10-a-plate dinner featuring soup, soup beans, cornbread, onions, pickle relish and water. "Many people who benefit from the food bank probably eat this type of food often," Clintwood Pastor Ken Pierce told *The Dickenson Star*, a local newspaper. "For each \$10 plate sold, the food bank can feed someone for two to three days." Dickenson County's food bank is the largest in Virginia. **M**



▲ **MARYVILLE:**  
*Oakland's new facility  
was built by the best.*

**Chattanooga:**

**The Reid Wilson Alzheimer's Respite Care Center** opened at Forrest Avenue UMC in January. Trained volunteers care for Alzheimer's patients on Tuesdays and Saturdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m., for a \$5 donation. The center still has vacancies; contact Rev. Bill Poister, director, at [twopoisters@mindspring.com](mailto:twopoisters@mindspring.com) or (423) 802-9864. Chattanooga United Methodist churches contributing funds and volunteers include Forrest Avenue, Pleasant Grove, St. Luke, St. Mark's, Hurst, and First-Centenary. **SMI**

**Cleveland:**

**Rev. Jeff Wright** started the year out with a new club at Allen Memorial UMC: the Pastor's Pound Club. For every pound Wright loses, parishioners promised to give \$1 to the Good Faith Clinic, an ecumenical medical ministry in Athens, Tenn. So far, the pastor has lost 22 pounds; his goal is to lose 50 by Easter Sunday. The tough part, he says, is attending breakfasts with the men's club or senior citizens and "not being able to eat the biscuits and gravy." **M**



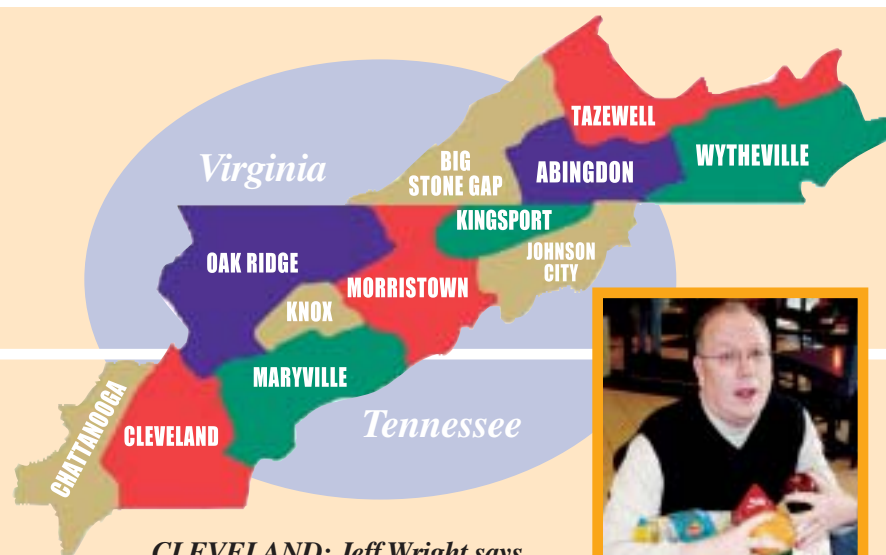
▲ **OAK RIDGE:**  
*Carol Hodges sizes up the needs at Norris.*

**Johnson City:**

**Commemorating** the opening of its new \$4 million Christian Life Center, Munsey Memorial UMC invited more than 25 local artists to display their work in a Fine Art Show March 11-14. Bishop Ray Chamberlain will consecrate the life center – which features a gym, walking track and exercise room – on March 17. **I**

**Kingsport:**

**"Community Spiritual Life"** is packing them in at Colonial Heights UMC on Sunday nights with the sort of multi-faceted program churches typically offer on Wednesday nights. "Our young people are involved in sports during the week," explains Jackie Parker, director of nurture ministries, but they'll come on Sunday night." Besides quilting, weight-loss, C.S. Lewis studies, grief support, youth and children's groups, the church also offers chapel services led by guest retired ministers. Debuting in 2000, the program has an average attendance of 200 plus. **I**



**CLEVELAND:** Jeff Wright says goodbye to gravy, hello to grapefruit.

**Knoxville:**

**Paper rolling** is more than just a fundraiser for St. Andrews UMC, it's part of history. Parishioners collect newspapers, spread the sheets out, stack them, roll them, then sell the rolls to a local wholesale florist for 10 cents a pound. The paper is used to insulate cut flowers, earning a total of about \$800 for the north Knoxville congregation in 2001. Church records show that St. Andrew's predecessor church, Whittle Springs, started selling rolls of newspaper to wholesale florists as early as 1955. They've been doing it ever since. **S**

**Maryville:**

**On March 3**, Oakland UMC consecrated a new building that's adding six classrooms, a kitchen, fellowship hall, restrooms, nursery and minister's office to its existing space. Parishioners raised \$125,000 and did most of the work on the new building themselves, finishing in less than a year. "So it's not only built, it's paid for," said a proud Rev. Mary Parson, Oakland's pastor. **M**

**Morristown:**

**The district's evangelism rally**, "Teach to Reach," will be held on March 17. Featured will be the Amusing Grace Christian Clown Ministry from Panther Springs UMC, music from the choirs of First Morristown and Pruitt Hill/Tate Chapel, and a message by Rev. Rochelle Maxwell.

**Oak Ridge:**

**Norris UMC** reports that its clothes closet – open one day each month for two hours – averaged 31 visits per month in 2001, totaling 369 family visits for the year. The busiest months, says manager Carol Hodges, were July and August, "when people start thinking about going back to school." **M**

**Tazewell:**

**The district's youth lock-in** on Feb. 22 was a "great success," church leaders report. Attending were 179 youth and 40 adults representing 15 charges. Devotions were provided by the contemporary Christian band, Still Mind. An offering of canned goods filled 15 grocery bags. Number of pizzas delivered at snack time: 90.

**Wytheville:**

**First Hillsville UMC** reports that the first of two new church signs, at different entrances, have been installed and paid in full. Now parishioners are rallying to raise money for another lighted sign, estimated by a local company at about \$4,000. Once completed the new signs "will be a billboard announcing the service of the First United Methodist Church to the glory of God," church leaders announced. **M**

**BIG STONE GAP:**  
*Soup's on for \$10,000.*



Photo by Preston Gannaway, *The Dickenson Star*