

Church women plan weeklong vigil in Washington, D.C.

By **United Methodist News Service**

United Methodist Women will take their prayers for peace to Washington during the week following Easter.

The women will gather near the White House from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily, April 21-25, and continuously read from the more than 10,000 prayers that have been mailed to the organization from around the nation and world.

The prayers have arrived at the United Methodist Service Center in Cincinnati as part of the UMW's prayers for peace campaign. Each individually written prayer pleads for peace.

Participants gathering at the nation's capital will do so at their own expense. Directors from the Women's Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, the administrative arm of UMW, will begin each day with devotions and information at

the United Methodist offices at Capitol Hill. Division staff will follow the day's prayer session with a debriefing and urge women to visit their members of Congress to share their concerns.

The Women's Division is encouraging UMW units that cannot make the trip to Washington to participate in their own communities by assembling to read their prayers and by visiting their state capitals.

Joyce Sohl, chief executive of the Women's Division, affirmed the importance of the prayers for peace, noting that women, children and youth "are the first to suffer in times of war, oppression and dispossession."

United Methodist Women is a million-member organization whose purpose is to foster spiritual growth, develop leaders and advocate for justice. Members raise more than \$20 million a year for programs related to women, children and youth in the United States and in more than 100 countries around the world. ■

Sprague, Jackson meet with U.N. secretary-general

NEW YORK (UMNS) – United Methodist Bishop C. Joseph Sprague of Chicago and the Rev. Jesse Jackson met March 27 with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to discuss the war in Iraq.

"We talked about several issues that are of deep concern to us and, we believe, to the whole church community," Sprague told United Methodist News Service as he waited for a flight at LaGuardia Airport after the meeting.

The bishop, who recently preached at Jackson's Rainbow/Push Coalition headquarters in Chicago, was invited by Jackson to accompany him to the United Nations.

One topic of discussion with Annan and his staff was the need for the Geneva Convention to be honored during the war in Iraq. "We want to be certain that POWs are treated as international law mandates," Sprague explained. Some in the church community, he added, have expressed an interest in visiting with prisoners of war on both sides.

The two religious leaders also expressed deep concern about getting food and water to the Iraqi people, particularly the children. "I want to know what's going to be done and what the church can do to assist with the whole business of humanitarian aid," Sprague said.

The bishop said Annan assured the pair that "the U.N. is poised to deliver" such aid, but needs access to do so. ■

Three districts will receive, *continued from page 1*

Henderlight, 65, has served as senior minister at Munsey Memorial since 2000. Other pastoral appointments have included senior minister at First Oak Ridge, senior minister at First Johnson City, and pastor at Kern Memorial. Henderlight served the Maryville District as superintendent from 1984 to 1988.

According to Chamberlain, Henderlight brings "wisdom and the maturity of experience" to Oak Ridge and the cabinet. "[He] has distinguished himself over many years as an exceptional pastor, theologian, and preacher."

After spending a combined 15 years in the Oak Ridge District at First Oak Ridge and Kern Memorial, Henderlight said he is "most happy" to return to the area.

"The district has a good cross section of churches with varying memberships, each one vital to the ongoing work of God's coming Kingdom," he said. "The district also has an abundance of outstanding lay leadership. With the prayers and support of both clergy and laity, my primary goal will be to lead the churches of the district into new arenas of mission and ministry."

Matthews, 56, has served as Holston director of finance/conference treasurer since May 2001. From 1997 through 1998, he served as vice president of development at Holston Home for Children. His pastoral appointments have included Broadway, First Dandridge, and Mountain View.

To the cabinet, Matthews brings the "broad experience of knowing the conference well," Chamberlain said. "[He] comes to us with a rich background."

Matthews thanked Chamberlain, the cabinet and Maryville District leaders for their "expression of confidence."

"This will be a challenging assignment in servant ministry, but one which I humbly accept with an expectant faith in God's providential guidance," he said. "My desire is to see each congregation realize their greatest potential in a Christ-oriented ministry that is both local and global in nature ... Pat and I love the people of Maryville District and know many of those with whom we will be privileged to serve."

Maryville District's current superintendent, the Rev. Brian Taylor, will be appointed to a local church this summer, Chamberlain said.

"Both Brenda Carroll and Brian Taylor leave the cabinet with our pro-

found gratitude for their selflessness and insightful service," he said. "They will both be sorely missed but go to their new appointments with our prayers."

Ridenour, 64, has served as Oak Ridge District superintendent since 1997. Chamberlain called him a "trusted and proven pastor and district superintendent," as well as a "skilled administrator and utterly dependable."

"It is no small tribute for him to be named as the first executive assistant to the bishop," he said. "Though new to Holston, the position is in place in other conferences."

Ridenour's responsibilities will be "many and varied in assisting me and speaking for me and coordinating staff functions." In addition to assuming primary staff responsibilities for new congregation development, Ridenour will help with the transition to the incoming bishop who will be assigned to Holston in September 2004.

Holston's current director of new church development, the Rev. John Ripley, will return to retirement following Annual Conference, Chamberlain said. "For these three years, he has given far more to this conference than we ever expected in a part-time position. We will miss his cutting-edge consultation on church growth." ■

News Briefs

Conference explores family challenges

ATLANTA (UMNS) – Modern families, sex in the scriptures, the role of religion in marriage and numerous topics in between were discussed by scholars from a variety of religious disciplines for three days at Emory University. "Sex, Marriage, and Family and the Religions of the Book," was an intense discussion by more than 70 scholars on research papers with titles ranging from "Happily Ever After? Sex Marriage, and Family in National and Global Profile" to "Trends in Dating, Mating, and Union Formation Among Young Adults." More than 600 participants, including over 200 students, attended the event, supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts and convened by the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Religion at United Methodist-related Emory. ■