

operation classroom:

Mission project in Liberia benefits from 2000 Holston offering

AN OFFERING COLLECTED during Annual Conference 2000 has resulted in extensive renovations for the J.J. Roberts School in Liberia as well as a new two-story building addition, Holston mission workers recently announced.

The addition, named "Holston Conference Building," will contain offices and meeting rooms on the first floor and classrooms for the high-school division on the second floor. A building to house the computer lab is nearly complete.

At the request of Bishop Arthur Kulah, Holston undertook to restore and renovate the Monrovia, Liberia, school, which had been heavily damaged during the 1990s civil war. Congregations sent books, school supplies, work teams, and more than \$150,000 in funds.

With work at J.J. Roberts nearly complete, Holston Conference is now working with the Tappita and Feloken United Methodist Schools, two of about 120 total schools operated by the United Methodist Church of Liberia. At a recent meeting of the Holston Conference Operation Classroom Committee, \$3,000 was designated for renovating Feloken School. First Broad Street UMC contributed \$6,000 for the purchase of materials at Tappita School, where a new building addition was recently named for the Kingsport church.

Both schools need desks (\$10 each), sewing machines (\$175), and typewriters (\$550 new, \$250 used). For \$2,000, teacher training can be provided for two-month sessions. Also needed are student scholarships (\$25 each), books, and basic school supplies.

► **FOR MORE INFORMATION**, contact Dan Kelly at 5124 Robin Road, Knoxville, TN 37918, phone (865) 687-2410, or email dkelly@usit.net.



▲ **Built with Holston Funds:** Principal Ruth Doe and Vice Principal Mary Bedell stand with two students in front of the 'Holston Conference Building,' a new two-story addition to the J.J. Roberts School.

church development:

By John Ripley



OUTSIDE THE BOX

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME you visited the Knox Area Rescue Ministries in Knoxville? I don't mean when did you stay there or stop by for lunch.

Actually, the organization's new campus on Broadway houses many ministries. It includes a new, freestanding chapel – all on the site of an old auto dealership. Previously, the main campus was a half-block further west.

With the move, the ministry's organizers have built a chapel and plan to reach out to people in the community who are off the street but live in substandard housing – like the old 5th Avenue Motel, a place even the police avoid. They call them the "dark places" where there is little light of hope.



The dream includes a full-time pastor to lead in these outreach ministries to the poor, the dispossessed, the hopeless, the homeless. When they began dreaming of how to find a pastor, director Monroe Free called Steve Diggs, director of the Emerald Youth Foundation, a ministry begun by Emerald Avenue United Methodist Church.

Knoxville Superintendent Jim Whedbee and I met with Monroe Free. He told us his dream. "We have never done this before," we said. "How can a rescue mission to the poor be called a new church start?" we wondered.

Then someone remembered that Mr. Wesley told his preachers, "Don't go where you are needed. Go where you are needed the most." If not here, where would we be needed more? If not the Methodists, who will go?

Monroe told us one of the contributors for the rebuilt campus suggested that United Methodist would be a good denomination to become partners with the Knox Area Rescue Ministries. We agreed. Our commitment to the poor follows the example of John Wesley who sought to follow Jesus, who described his ministry to his hometown synagogue as one to the poor, the captives, those in bondage (*Luke 4:18, 19*).

When the Holston Cabinet met March 11-14, Bruce Spangler, whose ministry includes Unity Center in Cleveland and St. Elmo in Chattanooga, both core city churches, was appointed to this new faith community.

Outside the box? Certainly not out where it is clean and green. But a new church where it is down and dirty – one that's not even United Methodist? Perhaps the important question is, "Where is God at work, and how can we become a part of God's new creation?"

The Rev. Ripley is the conference's director of new church development. ■

Who Said That?

"The voices of violence and hate are certainly present in our world. But in this Easter season, I hear an invitation to listen to the other voices and to know that God is at work in every land, creating in us a capacity for mutual compassion and respect, and granting us the capacity to work for justice and peace in a world where we are brothers and sisters."

—Bishop Ann Sherer,

Missouri Area, on the situation between Israel and Palestine



briefly:

► **CHURCH & community** workers in three districts are calling for work teams in the wake of March flooding in Virginia and Tennessee. In Abingdon District, call Harry Howe at (276) 782-3339 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. In Big Stone Gap District, call Nancy Hobbs at (276) 523-0417. In Morristown District, call Randy Hildebrandt at (423) 733-4195 and (423) 733-1971, or Rev. Lyle White at (423) 733-1518.

► **HOLSTON** groups planning to have audiovisual presentations at Annual Conference June 9-12 should immediately contact Technology Specialist Donna Hankins at (865) 690-4080 or write dhankins@holston.org.

► **"STEWARDSHIP:** Beyond the Annual Campaign" is the focus for the 49th Annual Conference of the United Methodist Association of Church Business Administrators. Leading the Aug. 5-8 conference at Lake Junaluska Assembly, N.C., is Reginald Mallett, a Methodist minister and physician. Contact Rev. Scott Nowlan at (336) 275-4587 or snowlan@wmsumc.org.

► **THE ADMINISTRATIVE** board at First Galax UMC recently approved a \$200,000 gift for The Legacy of Commitment pensions campaign. The gift will be paid in \$50,000 installments over a four-year period. All Holston churches will be asked to support the campaign on Retired Ministers Sunday, April 28.

► **NEIGHBORHOOD** Reconciliation Service, a Holston ministry in Johnson City, Tenn., is the recipient of a \$4,977 grant awarded by the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. The board's Peace with Justice Work Area approved grants totaling \$64,197 for church groups inside and outside the nation. The grants were supported with funds given by United Methodists to the Peace With Justice Special Sunday Offering, observed this year on May 26. ■