

district roundup:

News from the Holston Conference's

12 Districts

**Abingdon:**

Betty Roberts had been a foundation engineer for more than 20 years when Sept. 11 happened. Called to Washington, D.C., on Sept. 13, she joined professionals from many backgrounds to discuss protecting the country's infrastructure. Following discussions about building concrete barriers and posting guards, Roberts realized she "wanted to help God work in righting the world." She enrolled in Duke Divinity School last January and is currently doing field education at her home church, Abingdon UMC, this summer. She gave her first sermon on June 2, based on Matthew 7:21-29. The theme: Building your foundation on rock instead of sand.



▲ **KNOXVILLE:** Lincoln Park puppets take to the stage.

Big Stone Gap:

Veterans of U.S. armed services were honored during a Memorial Day service by Dryden-Seminary Charge. Members of a color guard entered the sanctuary bearing the flag, while retired Lt. Charlie Bunch of the U.S. Navy led the pledge. After honoring veterans and widows with ribbons and proclamations, the congregations gathered for a picnic. **\$**



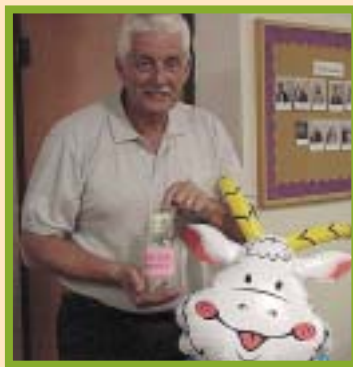
▲ **JOHNSON CITY:** Piney Flats confirmands show off the new gym.

Chattanooga:

To raise money for vacation bible school, Ft. Oglethorpe UMC is having a "Kiss Cliff the Goat" contest. Rev. Benny Matherly says the idea came out of this year's VBS theme, "Faith Mountain." ("Mountains have mountain goats, don't they?") Parishioners put money in jars marked with other members' names. The person with the least money will have to kiss a real goat, owned by one of Ft. Oglethorpe's members. So far, Matherly says his jar has the least money. The contest lasts until VBS begins on June 24. **M**

Cleveland:

Mount Olive UMC received a \$2,500 Change for Children grant in 2001. On April 28, 2002, the church celebrated completion of a playground built with the grant. "The playground will be a great way of opening doors to the community," says the Rev. Annette Warren. A mission statement was placed on a sign at the playground's entrance: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and praise His name." **\$**



▲ **CHATTANOOGA:** Ft. Oglethorpe's Benny Matherly may have to pucker up.

Johnson City:

Piney Flats UMC celebrated Pentecost Sunday by receiving 14 youth and five adults into membership through confirmation and profession of faith. The congregation also consecrated a new 10,000-square-foot building addition, which includes a gym, two adult classrooms, kitchen and children's wing. More than 250 people gathered for a worship service that usually averages 140, according to the Rev. Carol Wilson. **M**

Kingsport:

Six years ago, a Mountain View UMC choir director organized a summer concert series on Mondays at lunchtime. Mountain View's music staff stepped in when the choir director moved on, and "Noonday Worship" remains a popular community event. The series began June 3 and continues through July 29 with musicians including the Memphis Christian Youth Choir and Tusculum College music professor David Hendrickson. **L**

Knoxville:

Lincoln Park UMC's new puppet ministry involves nine church members ranging from age seven to 65. Rev. Mark Hicks started the puppet group in January after noting how easy and popular puppet ministries are: "It gives people who are shy about doing ministry a chance to participate without being seen." After buying the puppets, making costumes, and practicing on Sunday afternoons, the puppeteers debuted during worship on May 5. Lincoln Park hopes that performances will help them attract neighborhood kids in their ongoing inner-city outreach efforts. **\$**



▲ **OAK RIDGE:** Central celebrates groundbreaking on May 26.

Maryville:

Friendsville UMC wants to connect with people moving into the area to be near the lake. So on Sunday afternoons, they send out a visitation team armed with surveys and brochures. If the team meets with someone interested in finding a church home, they follow up by mailing a packet of info and sending someone to visit two weeks later. Visits to about 85 homes have reaped two or three newcomers, says Assistant Lay Leader Leroy Painter. **M**

Morristown:

The Crusaders, a Sunday school class at Noe's Chapel UMC, is raising money to buy a car for a minister couple in Kiev, Ukraine. Since 1997 the class has helped support Valeriy and Lora Pavlenko as they began a ministry for street children. Now the class has raised \$3,200 toward the \$5,000 needed for a car. More than 120 street kids are served through the Kiev Christian Youth Center, according to Noe's Chapel member Ron Willis. **M**

Oak Ridge:

Central UMC celebrated groundbreaking for its new facility on May 26. Currently situated in central Lenoir City with little parking or room to grow, Central is moving five miles away to build a new place. Bishop Ray Chamberlain and District Superintendent Gordon Ridenour joined Central Pastor Mark Gooden for the event. **L**

Tazewell:

Servicemen and women in Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay may have to go weeks without showers, and there's nowhere to buy magazines or batteries. So every week since February, a youth Disciple Bible Study class at First Pearisburg UMC has been sending "boodle boxes" overseas. The class has sent more than 265 pounds of baby wipes, beef jerky, games, gum and drink mixes. Parishioners help the youth collect the goods; teachers Nancy Noble and Ellen Jones chip in for the postage (\$165 so far). **M**

Wytheville:

Kwabena Osie-parong is a freshman from Ghana studying accounting at Radford University. He came to the U.S. in December, but a decline in his uncle's business has resulted in a shortage of funds for Kwabena's upcoming tuition. The Wesley Foundation is raising \$9,000 to help. "I believe that God directed this young man to us," says Director Martee Buchanan. "We hope we can be good Samaritans for this young man whose dream is to be 'President of the World Bank' someday." **R**