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# District Roundup

NEWS FROM YOUR DISTRICT



Pass it on: Central UMC and the Bland Fire Department conduct a bucket brigade during a summer night of fun for the kids.

**Abingdon:** During Vacation Bible School, children at Trinity UMC raised more than \$400 for Heifer International Project. "Considering we had 50 kids overall and an average of 32 per night, that's a feast," says Pastor Amy Yeary Holmes. The money will go to buy a flock of birds, a bee hive, part of a water buffalo and some goats. **M**

**Big Stone Gap:** Hiltons Memorial UMC celebrated "Thanksgiving in July" on July 18. Pastor Will Shewey said he had the inspiration for the special day about six weeks earlier, when he started thinking about all the answered prayers experienced by the church. In addition to testimonies and a youth drama to the Ray Boltz song, "Thank You," 20 new members joined the church, bringing membership to 216. A family of four was baptized, "and a bountiful thanksgiving meal was enjoyed," Shewey said. Worship attendance was 219, up from the average attendance of 172. **M**

**Chattanooga:** When McFarland UMC members discovered that a pornography shop, called "Exciting News," had opened 300 feet from church property, they joined other local congregations in protesting to Rossville, Ga., officials. Within weeks, the shop's owners had been arrested and booked on misdemeanor charges for operating an "explicit media outlet" within 1,000 feet of a church. The shop is still open, but under investigation. "Now that the city has done what we asked them to do, we're going to be gracious and thank them," says the Rev. Steve Galyon. Besides letters and phone calls, the congregation will deliver homemade pies to officials at the next city council meeting. **S**

**Cleveland:** In honor of Big Spring UMC's 100th anniversary celebration on Sept. 26, the congregation is purchasing a new sign. Pastor Billy Kurtz says the sign will "serve as a great ministry and invitation tool." Parishioners are giving donations toward the cost: \$5,000 to \$7,000. **S**

**Johnson City:** Citing safety issues, Munsey Memorial UMC replaced its old multi-passenger van with two newer models. Munsey donated the old van to Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), which works with churches to provide temporary housing for homeless families.



Munsey Memorial's Brian Taylor (right) hands over the keys to IHN's Brian Rosecrance (left).

Johnson City IHN Director Brian Rosecrance says the Munsey van replaced an even older van that was "falling apart." Munsey is one of 14 United Methodist churches in the Johnson City area that support homeless families through IHN. The others are First Johnson City, Wesley Memorial, Sulphur Springs, Piney Flats, Marvin's Chapel, East Pine Grove Park, Jonesborough, Rockhold, Gray, Fairhaven, Edgefield, Bluff City and Fairview.

**Kingsport:** Ketron Memorial UMC just replaced its old, wooden sign with a new, lighted, two-sided model including a message board. "Signs make a difference," says Pastor Aaron Pierce. "I've had a new sign put up in every church I've served." Pierce says he has a brother-in-law in the sign business who helps him get discounts. Ketron is the third church to benefit, and Pierce is especially glad that passersby can see the sign from both sides. The church raised \$4,800 to buy the sign through donations and benefit dinners. **M**

**Knoxville:** After Grant Fetters saw "The Passion of the Christ" movie last spring, he felt strongly that he had to get involved in church. He and his wife Sharon visited other churches, but when they came to St. Mark UMC, they knew they had found a home. The Fetters were intrigued by St. Mark's new ministry, the "Moses Basket," a clothes closet created specifically for needy children. The Fetters started sewing new baby clothes for the ministry, and they plan to join St. Mark as members within a few weeks. Look for a future article on the Moses Basket,



Winners of the "Man-Made Cake Contest" at Virginia Avenue UMC

which won a \$2,000 Change for Children grant last month. **M**

**Maryville:** Mt. Moriah Cemetery apparently once belonged to Mt. Moriah Methodist Church. But according to a recent *Daily Times* article, the cemetery is overgrown and inaccessible, and the family of relatives buried there wants the owner to clean it up. Superintendent Ron Matthews has searched

but cannot find records of Mt. Moriah Church's discontinuance, although a historian did find Mt. Moriah listed as one of the churches in the Little River Circuit as early as 1845. "I'd love to see this mystery solved," says Matthews.

**Morristown:** Children who resided at Holston Home for Children in the 1950s met with youngsters now living there during a homecoming picnic in June, according to spokesperson Homer Marcum. Holston Home alumni now number more than 7,000 since its founding as an orphanage in 1895.

## Oak Ridge:

Trinity (Lenoir City) UMC has three service members in Iraq on the prayer list, so the Challenger Class recently decided to send gifts to those soldiers and others. The gifts included sunscreen, lip balm, underwear, boot socks, and snacks. The Rev. Charles Burnett is pastor. **L**



**Tazewell:** Virginia Avenue UMC held its 2nd Annual Man-Made Cake Contest, and the Rev. Larry Murphy is slightly miffed that his watermelon cakes only won 3rd place. In first place was Brent Cook, but Murphy couldn't remember anything special about Cook's creation. Murphy simply offered: "We're a church that likes to have a lot of fun." **M**

**Wytheville:** Several members of Bland Fire Department are also members of Central UMC. During a recent summer activities night for the children, the firefighters conducted a bucket brigade and taught the kids how to put out fires quickly. The evening concluded with ice cream and watermelon. **S**