## The

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Inside

Thanks, Holston

Supplies are dispatched

to hurricane victims

Florida.

know.

in North Carolina and

**Tacos Tonight?** 

Before you bite down on

Taco Bell burrito, there's

a Mt. Olive pickle or a

something you should

Apples & Pizza Continuing the food

theme ... Read how a Big Stone Gap District

youth group served St. Andrews and a Chattanooga District children's

served Holston Home.

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HOLSTON CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 21, Number 23

Oak Ridge District church transforms old school into new community center

## By Annette Bender

CLINTON, Tenn. - Pay attention because this is kind of complicated.

In 1996, Heiskell United Methodist Church traded spaces with Heiskell Volunteer Fire Department.

The two groups literally swapped properties without monetary exchange. The fire department needed the choice corner lot occupied by the church. Meanwhile, the church's tiny building was deteriorating and the congregation had a dream to begin a community center.

So Heiskell UMC moved into the fire department. Which used to be a school.

Soon, the fire department took the old church building, tore it down, and built a brand-spanking new fire department on the lot.

Which still left the church with an old school.

But the story has a happy ending, as you might have guessed. For eight years, members at the little church spent every Saturday transforming the old school building (which used to be a fire department) into a spacious, sparkling new community center. With only 30 in worship attendance, Heiskell UMC saw a need for "The Heiskell Gathering Place" in a rural area where parks and recreation centers were nonexistent.

Today, the congregation coexists in a renovated building with the community center they created. Exercise



Photo by Annette Bender, The Call



Above, from left to right: The Rev. Pat Bishop, Ron Milligan and Doug Davis make plans for the ongoing transformation of the old school and firehouse into Heiskell Community Center and Heiskell UMC.

classes meet there on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Bluegrass jam sessions happen on Monday night. A new walking track – built with \$11,400 from an anonymous donor, a former student of the old school - was completed this month.

How did the little Oak Ridge District church come so far?

"I think God's blessing is on this place," says the Rev. Pat Bishop, Heiskell's pastor. "These people love each other, and they had a vision for this."

It was "traumatic" for the congregation, established in 1912, to give up their old church building

Trading spaces, continued on page 7

**UMNS** Analysis

## United Methodists run on both sides of presidential race



George Bush

By Amy Green

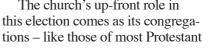
resident Bush is proud of his United Methodist faith and speaks of it often. But he is not the only United Methodist candidate in this presidential election.

Vice President Dick Cheney and U.S. Sen. John Edwards also are United Methodists, putting the denomination in a unique position at a time when Protestantism is declining and outcry is mounting over the

political weight of the religious right.

The United Methodist Church is the nation's second-largest Protestant denomination, with a diverse 8.3 million U.S. members that resemble the nation's electorate. Its conservative and progressive factions have chafed for years on issues such as homosexuality.

The church's up-front role in this election comes as its congrega-



United Methodists run, continued on page 7



John Kerry