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# District Roundup

NEWS FROM YOUR DISTRICT



Bookwalter UMC collected 637 cans of corn for Thanksgiving baskets that will go to the needy, reports the Rev. David Lord (pictured).

## Abingdon:

Instead of having individual charge conferences, the district gathered for one large charge conference on Oct. 29. "We filled the Higher Education Center in Abingdon to overflowing, with 780 folks from across the district," says Superintendent Kim Goddard. "I wanted to give us the idea that we are much bigger than what we do on Sunday morning." All but two of 94 churches were represented. To connect with congregations individually, Goddard is offering to teach Wesley studies in the local churches.

**Big Stone Gap:** Send news and photos to: Editor, *The Call*, P.O. Box 32939, Knoxville, TN 37930-2939, fax (865) 690-3162, [thecall@holston.org](mailto:thecall@holston.org).

**Chattanooga:** First Whitwell UMC was eager to participate in the town's Labor Day parade, but was unable to obtain a trailer to make a float. That's when the pastor's wife, Danielle Jenkins, had a brainstorm. "She decided we could pull my boat in the parade," says the Rev. Jack Jenkins. "Hence the theme, Fishers of Men." The congregation also handed out more than 400 "redemption bracelets" to children and more than 200 fans to adults. The fans had a picture of the church with the message, "Join us for fan-tastic worship and fun-tastic fellowship." **S**

**Cleveland:** Twenty to 30 children from the Cleveland Home School Group will sing at Benton UMC's Hanging of the Greens service on Dec. 3. In the church newsletter, "Benton Breeze," Pastor Mat Merker explained that the students needed a place to have their Christmas concert. The children will join in hanging wreaths and lighting candles, and the congregation will provide cookies and milk. **S**

**Kingsport:** Blountville UMC celebrated its 200th birthday Oct. 28-29, reports Christine Grant. The Saturday agenda included a church-



First Whitwell UMC gets creative in the Labor Day parade with a boat float and theme, Fishers of Men.

## Chattanooga

history Jeopardy game, blow-up toys for the children, a cakewalk, soup-and-sandwich supper, and special video with footage dating to the 1940s. On Sunday, Superintendent Fred Dearing preached to a crowd of 160. Blountville's average worship attendance is 125. **M**

## Knoxville:

This Thanksgiving, Knox Area Rescue

Ministries will give out 1,200 baskets of food to the needy. When Bookwalter UMC was asked to provide 200 cans of corn toward the effort, the congregation responded in triplicate – with 637 cans. A rising "pyramid of corn" at the front of the sanctuary helped remind and inspire the congregation to bring in the cans over a three-week period, reports Pastor David Lord. **M**

**Maryville:** The Witness Team of First Maryville UMC applied for – and won – an Igniting Ministry matching grant for television advertising. A total of \$3,136 was spent for six weeks of cable TV ads in September and October, but it's not clear if the campaign made an impact, says the Rev. Larry Carroll. "It still stands that the most effective way to reach people is for the congregation to invite them." First Maryville is considering several new ideas along that route, Carroll said. **L**

**Morristown:** The United Methodist Women of Midway UMC held their own spiritual retreat Sept. 16-17 at the Oaks Retreat Center in Greene County. "Words cannot explain the closeness we all felt to God during this experience," reports Lynda Brown. **S**

**Oak Ridge:** Five years ago, Irwin UMC had eight to 10 in average worship attendance. Today, Irwin has about 45 in worship and recently celebrated a groundbreaking for a new fellowship hall. The revitalization started with a visitation program, says the Rev. Gary Tye, and a campaign to convince the congregation "they were still alive." Last year, Irwin

celebrated eight professions of faith. The new building will also provide much-needed classroom space, reports parishioner Brian Zimick. **S**

**Tazewell:** Midway UMC (Cedar Bluff) celebrated 150 years with a homecoming service and meal on Oct. 15. The morning service was led by the Rev. Charles Dilks, who served Midway in the 1970s. A highlight, reports the Rev. Paul McNalley, was the unveiling of a new church sign, designed and handmade by member Henry Stacy. **S**

**Wytheville:** Island Creek UMC received a \$3,000 Renfro grant and \$1,000 conference grant to provide a handicap-accessible bathroom near the sanctuary. Pastor Victoria Neese says the existing bathroom requires a hike down a steep flight of stairs, which is difficult for the older adults and one physically-challenged child in the congregation. The upcoming renovation is the latest in a series of morale-boosters for the church, Neese adds. Since a "40 Days of Purpose" study earlier this year, Island Creek has four Sunday school classes instead of one. Worship attendance has increased from 40 to 55. **S**