

Russian seminary appeal

Bishop Vaxby comes to Holston

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Holston’s goal was to raise \$50,000 for the Russian Seminary Initiative by Sept. 30. Then along came Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, and the conference focus was diverted.

Bishop Hans Vaxby of the Eurasia Area came to the Knoxville conference office anyway on Nov. 7, thanking Holston for the \$21,334 that has been raised.

“I want to express gratitude for what you have already done ... and I am glad you are not here to tell me it’s all over now,” said Vaxby to a group of about 35 conference leaders.

Bishop James Swanson urged Holston churches to continue efforts to reach the \$50,000 goal, helping the Eurasia Area pay off a \$120,000 debt.

Vaxby explained that a Russian seminary is necessary because the oldest of the 100 Eurasian churches were established in 1991. Pastors have no more than 14 years experience. “Training of pastors is essential,” said Vaxby. “We must not wait 50 years until we have a seminary.”

Of 110 pastors in Vaxby’s area, “Seventy have finished or graduated from the seminary or are presently involved,” he said. Currently, eight students are full-time and 40 participate in extension studies.

The churches and pastors struggle financially, he said. Local pastors earn \$150 per month; ordained elders, \$280 per month. “We don’t need to reach out to the poor because the poor are in the church.”

Church treasurers should place their congregation’s entire offering into one check. Make checks payable to “Holston Conference Treasurer” and mark the memo line, “RUMTS Appeal.” Mail checks to Holston Conference, P.O. Box 32939, Knoxville, TN 37930-2939. ■



Photos by Annette Bender, The Call

SMALLER PHOTO, ABOVE: Vladimir Shaporenko points out Eurasia Area territories on a map. Shaporenko is executive secretary for the General Board of Global Ministries’ Congregational Mission Initiatives in Ashburn, Va. **LARGER PHOTO, ABOVE:** Bishop Hans Vaxby thanks Holston for raising funds to pay a Russian seminary debt.

Loy Memorial closes, merges into New Market



Photo by Homer Marcum, Holston Home for Children

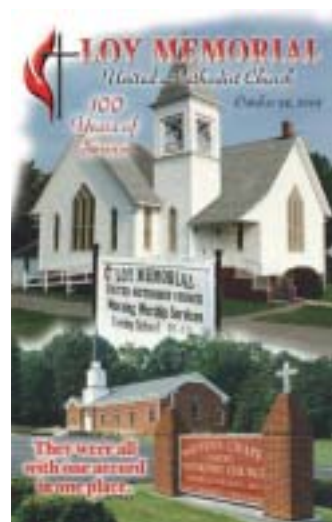
Former and current pastors gather for a final service at Loy Memorial UMC. Above, from left to right: the Rev. Henry Harlow; Mabel Arnold, wife of a former pastor; the Rev. Dennis Loy; the Rev. A.C. Cobble; the Rev. Lee Campbell; and the Rev. Bill Hill.

NEW MARKET, Tenn. – Many churches resist closing their doors or merging with other congregations. When 98-year-old Loy Memorial United Methodist Church dwindled to 20 in worship attendance, the parishioners themselves proposed a merger with Wooten’s Chapel UMC.

Wooten’s Chapel then “jumped on board,” and New Market United Methodist Church was born, says the Rev. Bill Hill, pastor of the two merging congregations.

“It was the most obvious and correct thing to do, and we hope other churches will see that as a good example,” he said. “They don’t worship a building. They worship the Lord.”

Morristown District Superintendent Richard Patterson participated in a final, emotional, two-hour worship service at Loy Memorial on Oct. 23, along with several former pastors. Among them was the Rev. Dennis Loy, whose ancestors



Bulletin design by Bonnie Spencer

helped start the church in 1908. Loy served Loy Memorial as pastor from 1985 to 1990.

“I am so grateful for that congregation bringing Christ to five generations in my family,” he said.

On Oct. 30, the newly merged congregations worshipped for the first time in the Wooten’s Chapel building. Fifty-two attended worship and 40 participated in Sunday school in the Wooten’s building, which is more spacious than the Loy building, Hill said. The churches are located within two miles of each other.

“The whole thought was that we could be more effective in ministry by merging into the Wooten’s Chapel building,” he said.

The newly formed New Market UMC remains on New Market Circuit along with Cedar Grove UMC, all pastored by Hill. ■