

## in this issue:

### ■ Be Our Guest

If a church sent you an invitation for a free dinner and the chance to meet a former Pittsburgh Steelers player, would you go? Clintwood UMC hopes so.

Page 8

### ■ Nation & World

Methodist news from outside the conference.

Pages 6-7

### ■ Claim the Name

Youth ministers and educators are encouraged to bring confirmation youth to "Claim the Name" retreats scheduled at Holston Conference camps in March 2002.

Page 3

### ■ Staying Alive

Holston Conference ministers' wives will gather for an annual retreat March 14-16, 2002, in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Theme: "Survivors by the Grace of God."

Page 2

### ■ Bristol Story

Years ago, the Rev. Clarence and Betty Dishman inherited a large family farm in Bristol, Va. Find out why the Dishmans are selling the farm – and how future ministries stand to benefit.

Pages 4-5



©2001 Photos By John Bray, The Call

### Cautious:

Holston receptionist Judy Arwood picks up the conference mail at P.O. Box 2506 in Johnson City every morning. 'I'm cautious, but not fearful,' she says.

## Council approves 'Design for Ministry'



Grogg



Henderson



Garrison

A new organizational structure for the Holston Annual Conference was conditionally approved by the denomination's highest judicial body at a session held in Nashville Oct. 24-26.

Holston's Design for Ministry, which has been in the works since a task group began chiseling it out in 1996 and implementing it in 1999, is the first such plan to gain acceptance from the United Methodist Church's Judicial Council. Other annual conferences are still revising their restructure plans to meet approval of the denomination's "supreme court."

►See 'Design for Ministry,' on page 7

## Should Holston workers worry about terrorism?

### 'Be alert,' church leaders say

By Annette Bender, Editor

Every day at 8:30 a.m., receptionist Judy Arwood stops off at the post office to pick up the conference mail. Then she heads to the Johnson City Conference Center, where she sorts the mail for 17 staff members.

By the end of the week, Arwood will handle 800 to 1,000 letters and packages. Besides apportionment payments, P.O. Box 2506 is also the conference's destination for mission offerings, camp fees, youth mailings and other correspondence inside and outside Holston boundaries.

But even as health departments all over the country work overtime to test suspicious-looking letters for anthrax, Arwood says she doesn't worry about exposure to the deadly bacteria while handling large volumes of mail.

"I pay attention to what comes in," she said. "I'm cautious, but I wouldn't say I'm fearful. If I was working in a government office instead of a church office, I might feel like I was in danger. But I don't."

In the Kingsport District office where 50 to 70 pieces of mail are opened each week, Administrative Assistant Susan Smith says she sometimes thinks about anthrax, but she doesn't feel threatened.

### ■ No panic

Is there cause for concern about terrorism in the Holston Conference? United Methodist and Holston leaders say yes, but staff members and church volunteers should be alert rather than fearful. The issue generated enough concern for the United Methodist Church to circulate the document, "Bomb & Disease Threat Management Procedures," to all U.S. conference offices in October.



The document, provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration's risk management division, gives guidelines for evacuating buildings or handling suspicious looking mail. It also points out that Catholic churches and schools were targets of anthrax incidents investigated by the FBI prior

to Sept. 11, 2001. In another case, a United Methodist Annual Conference reported receiving anthrax spores in a letter in 1998. The incident turned out to be a hoax.

The message for Holston churches and staff is that terrorism "could happen to us," said Anne Travis, who oversees the Knoxville Conference Center as director of connectional ministries. "There's no need to panic," she said. "We just need to be aware and smart."

Besides avoiding contact with suspicious mail (i.e., it's unexpected or from someone you don't know), Holston churches should evaluate poten-

►See 'Terrorism,' on page 7