

**exchange:**

■ **MARION, Va.**— First Marion UMC seeks to fill a **part-time organist** position. Weekly responsibilities include two Sunday morning worship services and rehearsal. Should exhibit skills at playing a two-manual pipe organ. Contact: Rex Rachel, Director of Music, First UMC, 115 South Church Street, Marion, VA 24354, phone (276) 783-5194, [rex\\_rachel@hotmail.com](mailto:rex_rachel@hotmail.com). ①

■ **KNOXVILLE, Tenn.**— Bridge Refugee and Sponsorship Services seeks a **part-time sponsorship developer**. We have a dynamic ministry and need someone to recruit and train churches of all denominations to participate in our work. Must be a dynamic public speaker with the ability to work autonomously. Call Mary Lieberman at (865) 540-1311.

**who said that?**

“It’s not a small measure of irony that these four governments, among others, are seeking to impose their religious views on the nation at the same time the nation is fighting those overseas who would impose their religious views on others.”

**American Civil Liberties Union attorney David Friedman, speaking about a lawsuit the civil liberties group filed Nov. 27 against four counties in Kentucky that have posted the Ten Commandments in courthouses.** ■

**What's Your Size?**

*The Call* uses the following symbols to identify articles about small, medium or large churches:

- ⑤ Churches with average 85 or fewer in principle weekly worship service(s)
- ①① Average 86 to 225 in worship service(s)
- ① Average 226 or more in worship service(s)



(USPS P000-014)

Published biweekly by  
THE HOLSTON CONFERENCE  
of the United Methodist Church  
9915 Kingston Pike, Suite C  
Knoxville, TN 37922

Telephone (865) 690-4080 Fax (865) 690-3162  
[www.holston.org](http://www.holston.org)

Application to mail at  
Periodicals Postage Rates is pending at  
Knoxville, Tennessee

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Call,  
P.O. Box 32939, Knoxville, TN 37930-2939.

Ray W. Chamberlain, Jr. .... Bishop  
Kevin Stimp ..... Director of Communications  
Annette Bender ..... Editor  
Rita Broderick ..... Circulation Manager  
Dion Dykes ..... Layout Artist

**bishop's perspective:**

By Ray W. Chamberlain Jr.

Resident Bishop

## A miraculous story for a miraculous season

Christmas is all about miracle and mystery, and wrapped up in the miracle and mystery is the gift of Providence. God’s providences in our daily lives are fulfilled in many ways.

One of my favorite stories of the miracle of providence is about a pastor who was sent to reopen a broken-down church in Brooklyn. He arrived in October and invested enormous energy into preparing for his first service on Christmas Eve.

Shortly before Christmas, a heavy rain caused so much damage to the church building as to create a tremendous hole in the wall behind the altar. The pastor wondered if he should postpone the Christmas Eve service. With a heavy heart, he headed home.

On the way, he stopped at a flea market and purchased a handmade, exquisitely crocheted ivory tablecloth with an embroidered cross in its center. With some excitement, he realized it was just the right size to cover the hole in the sanctuary. Instead of going home, he returned to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was hurrying toward the bus stop. But the bus pulled away without her, so the pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus. Resting in a back pew, she paid little attention to the pastor as he climbed a ladder to drape the tablecloth across the gaping hole. The pastor reveled in the tablecloth’s loveliness.

Then he noticed the woman walking toward him. Her face was ashen. “Pastor,” she said breathlessly, “where



▲ Martha and Ray Chamberlain at the Episcopal Residence in Knoxville

did you get that tablecloth?” She asked him to look at the lower right corner. The initials EBG were crocheted there, the woman’s own initials. She had made the cloth 35 years earlier.

Before the war she and her husband were well-to-do citizens of Austria. When the Nazis came, her husband forced her to leave, promising to follow as soon as possible. She was soon captured and imprisoned, never again to see husband or home.

The pastor offered the tablecloth to her but she insisted he keep it for the church. He drove her to her home on the other side of Staten Island. The woman had only gone to Brooklyn that one day for a housecleaning job. It had to be a miracle.

That Christmas Eve the church filled. The cloth shimmered in the candlelight on the altar. Following the benediction, the pastor greeted everyone at the door. Then he noticed one older man still sitting in a pew, gazing at the altar. The minister recognized him as a neighbor.

The gentleman asked where he found the tablecloth. It looked

identical to one his wife made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war. “How could there be two tablecloths so much alike?” he asked.

With rising excitement, the pastor asked if the man would accompany him on a ride. Driving to Staten Island, he pulled up to the house where he took the woman just three days earlier. He helped the old man climb the stairs to the woman’s apartment and knocked on the door.

Then he witnessed an unimaginable reunion: one more Christmas miracle of God’s magnificent providence. ■

**in memoriam:****Donald Rugh**

**SEVIERVILLE, Tenn.**— Donald E. Rugh, 86, died at his home in Sevierville on Nov. 23, 2001. A retired Holston minister, the Rev. Rugh served as a United Methodist missionary for 36 years in India and two years in Botswana.

Funeral services were held Nov. 25 at First Sevierville UMC with interment at Middle Creek Cemetery.

He is survived by wife Doris Franklin Rugh; three sons and two daughters, Jim and wife, Louise, of Atlanta; Carol and husband, Jim Green, of Maryville, Tenn.; David and wife, Ruthe, of Seattle; Doug of Sevierville; and Kim and husband, Roman Bergier, of Madison Heights, Mich.; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to First UMC, Sevier County Food Ministries, or Covenant Hospice. ■

**correction:****Cleveland, not Chattanooga**

►The Nov. 23 edition of *The Call* incorrectly stated that First Copperhill UMC is located in the Chattanooga District in Georgia. The church is actually located in the Cleveland District in Copperhill, Tenn. The errors appeared in the story, “From Copperhill to Pulaski, the Trotters served Holston well.” “A lot of people here in our congregation still remember Rev. Frank Trotter,” said Lay Leader Garry Day, referring to the story. *The Call* regrets the errors. ■

**By all means, win some!**