



The Call

HOLSTON CONFERENCE

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THIS ISSUE

Love Gift



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Back to School

Bookwalter UMC reaches out to local school kids with a 'pack a backpack' ministry.

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OPEN DOORS — The Rev. Jaime Potter-Miller (left) visits with Lincoln Park pastor Mark Hicks during a cross-country trek promoting the Igniting Ministry campaign.

Photos by Kevin Slimp/ *The Call*

It's here again: charge conference season

Who goes first this year? We just had to know

Nobody wants to — but somebody's got to — be the first church in the district to have charge conference.

But how would you like to prepare for the first charge conference in the conference? After contacting all 12 district offices, "The Call" learned that on Sept. 6, promptly at 7 p.m., Lincoln Park UMC will hold Holston's first such event of the year.

"Oh, it's dreadful," said the Rev. Mark Hicks. "It's almost impossible to get together so much paperwork this time of year."

The former Baptist preacher said he asked Knoxville District Superintendent Jim Whedbee if having an early conference was a form of punishment.

"He told me it's an honor to be first," Hicks said, laughing. "I want to find out what I did so I won't have to be 'honored' again."

Here's a sneak preview of Lincoln Park's report.

Charge: Lincoln Park UMC
Location: Knoxville's inner city
Average worship attendance: 70
Membership: 196

Igniting Ministry plans: Outdoor worship service on Sept. 9. People in the neighborhood don't seem to want to come in for worship, Hicks said, "but they will come out on their front porches and listen when we have church on the lawn."

Greatest need: Children's ministry workers. "A lot of our members have already raised their kids. They're into the grandparent stage and working with inner-city children is tough for them."

Proud achievement: The community didn't have a park, so the church built one. Local kids are attracted to the basketball goals and playground; the congregation plans cookouts and line-dancing lessons as relationship-builders. Next goal: A walking track.

D.S. says: "Lincoln Park is one of our central city churches that, even ahead of Igniting Ministry, has been working to invite the community," said the Rev. Jim Whedbee. "They are always ready to celebrate their ministry. They'll help get the charge conference season off to a good start."

■ *List of district 'firsts,' page C3*

Come in

Holston joins nation in massive campaign to welcome visitors

It's time. Open House Month begins nationwide in United Methodist churches on Sept. 1.

In Holston, the TV commercials began Aug. 15 and will run through Sept. 25 — in all, 1,400 spots in the Tri-Cities, Knoxville and Chattanooga markets. On Sept. 4, United Methodist Communications launches a national TV campaign on CBS, CNN, A&E, TNT, VH-1, BET, Discovery, History, Lifetime, TBS, USA, Weather Channel and others.

The commercials are designed to raise awareness about the United Methodist Church and offer messages about God's love. They center on the theme, "Our hearts, our minds and our doors are always open. The people of the United Methodist Church."

"We're getting quite a bit of response already from Holston churches that have already seen the commercials," said Kevin Slimp, conference director of communications. "People are excited."

The goal is to reach the nation's "unchurched." Thirty-two percent of all adults in the country 18 years old and older — about 95 to 100 million people — have not attended a church in the last six months except for a wedding or funeral, according to data collected by the Barna Research Group of Ventura, Calif.

Many Holston local-church leaders are rushing to take advantage of the TV campaign by producing supplementary promotional materials — door hangers, newspaper ads, radio spots — provided in the Igniting Ministry planning kit. Meanwhile, others throughout the country are creating their own ways of responding to the campaign.

On July 15, a Pennsylvania clergywoman began motoring across the country Charles Kuralt style, visiting local churches and annual conferences participating in the Igniting Ministry campaign.

The Rev. Jaime Potter-Miller made
See Campaign on page C3.



Lincoln Park UMC, located in Knoxville's innercity



Bishop's Perspective

Transcending friendliness for authenticity

I have visited hundreds of congregations, and the leaders of each of these churches are convinced they are friendly. But when I challenged one congregation on such an assumption, the church's leadership council plunged into a heated and angry debate over the degree of their friendliness. One man insisted that his was the "friendliest church in America." Yet, when a single young mother visited with her two children, she was told she should care for them herself in the nursery. "Our church doesn't have nursery workers because we don't have any children," the mother was told.

You see, these people were friendly to

each other but not to the strangers among them. This church was a tightly knit club whose members were dying and the congregation was shrinking.

We will have more visitors than usual attending our churches this fall. This is the result of our TV and newspaper promotion of United Methodist churches as places of "open hearts, open minds and open doors." Over and over again in this Igniting Ministry campaign, we have been urged to provide friendly, inviting environments for our guests. Some good ways to get started:

- **Make** sure worship service times are clearly posted outside the church.

- **Record** a telephone message announcing worship times and offer an invitation to attend.

- **Save** the best parking spaces for guests rather than for staff and members.

Bishop
Chamberlain

"We're not trying to be the friendliest club in town. We're seeking to create honest encounters with God."

- **Be** sure the worship bulletin includes the words of the Lord's Prayer or where to find such in the hymnal. In other words, be "worship user friendly." We will have visitors who do not know the Lord's Prayer, Gloria Patri, or Affirmation of Faith.

This is only a partial checklist addressing

some very practical concerns. The way you greet, treat, care for and follow up with visitors is crucial.

But I'm also concerned about something that transcends friendliness. Above all, I want us to provide a worship experience that's baptized with a sense of awe and the presence of the Holy Spirit. We must avoid the illusion that friendliness can be substituted for authenticity of worship. This requires we spend time in careful preparation for each worship service. It means we saturate the worship hour with prayer. We're not trying to be the friendliest club in town. We're seeking to create honest encounters with God who heals our brokenness, forgives our sins, offers hope, and empowers us to go forth and "do good" — to live meaningfully and treat others as we treat ourselves.

God forbid that visitors find our open doors lead only to a vacuous and innocuous hour of friendly fellowship. My dear brothers and sisters, offer Jesus Christ to all who worship. Do it prayerfully, humbly, creatively, thoughtfully and expectantly. The stakes are too high for anything less.

Grace and peace,

Ray W. Chamberlain Jr.
Resident Bishop

In Brief

Prayer encounters in
Cleveland, Knoxville

A Houston-based speaker will lead "Acts 29 Prayer Encounters" at two locations this fall: Broad Street UMC, Cleveland, Tenn., on Oct. 13, and Cokesbury Center, Knoxville, on Oct. 14.



Terry Teykl

Terry Teykl, author of "Pray the Price" and "Blueprint for the House of Prayer," has been teaching and preaching on prayer since 1980. After he began a church with only eight people committed to prayer, Aldersgate UMC grew to a membership of more than 1,000 in five years.

Sponsored by the Cleveland District, the Oct. 13 encounter will be held 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and includes prayer activities for children. Call (423) 476-5886 or (423) 476-8221 to register.

Sponsored by the Knoxville District, the Oct. 14 encounter begins at 2:30 p.m. and concludes at 7 p.m. Call (865) 470-7005.

Continuing education credits (.7) are available from the Wesley Institute. A \$20 registration fee includes workbook.

Good things come in small
packages

Christian Believers at Liberty Hill

LIMESTONE, Tenn. — When a church with 22 in average weekly worship has 12 people sign up for a "Christian Believer" course, that's impressive. Classmates celebrated completion of the course in July at Liberty Hill UMC in the Johnson City District. Since then, Liberty Hill "praises God for several spin-offs from the course, including the baptism of one student, the confirmation of another, and the reception of a new member," reports the Rev. Jane Ayers.

Correction:
Not Doyal but Titcombe

In the story, "Mission kits arrive in Africa this month," the Aug. 3 edition of *The Call* incorrectly identified a photo subject as the Rev. Stephen Doyal of Norwood UMC. Pictured was the Rev. James Titcombe of Bethel (Knox) UMC. *The Call* regrets the error.

What's Your Size?

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

- ☉ Churches with average 85 or fewer in principle weekly worship service(s)
- ☾ Average 86 to 225 in worship service(s)
- ☀ Average 226 or more in worship service(s)

Commentary

Simple prayer to help us 'win some'

By Jean Henderson
Discipleship Team Chair

Part 3 of excerpts from her June 13 address to the Holston Annual Conference in Lake Junaluska

In a recent issue of *The Call*, Bishop Ray Chamberlain's column was an open letter to the Apostle Paul and John Wesley. I know most of you were stirred by it, but let me remind us of something he said in that letter. He said it broke his heart to report that 45 percent of Holston churches did not receive a single person by profession of faith last year. He went on to ask, "What do we have to change to 'win' converts in these churches?"

What can we do to measure up to the expectations Christ has for his church?

Could it be that simply changing our prayer lives could liberate us to serve others and 'win some'? What if we persistent-

ly, earnestly, faithfully, prayed as a church — as a body of believers — just these four lines:

1. *Lord, we are ready for you to use us.*

2. *Fill us with your spirit and compassion and anoint us with your power, that we may speak your word with boldness.*

3. *Keep us alert and sensitive to the opportunities you are bringing our way.*

4. *Keep us faithful even when we do not see results right away.*

Could that kind of commitment really make a difference? I believe it could!



Jean Henderson



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The Call

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KINGSPORT, Tenn. — Ketron Memorial UMC seeks **part-time pianist** for morning worship and Sunday evening services. Salary commensurate with education and experience. Send resume to: Staff Parish Committee, Ketron Memorial UMC, 301 Virgil Avenue, Kingsport, TN 37665, phone (423) 246-6792. ☉

ELIZABETHTON, Tenn. — **Director of music** sought for 300+ member church. Responsible for oversight of total music program including Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, and instrumental Ensemble, with expansion into Children's Choir and Youth Choir. Director should be comfortable with multiple styles of music and application in worship setting. Music degree required; experience preferred. Resumes with brief history accepted immediately at: First UMC, 325 East E Street, Elizabethton, TN 37643 Attn: Music Ministry Search Committee. ☉

KINGSPORT, Tenn. — Mountain View UMC seeks a **director of lay ministries** to recruit, train, and support volunteer lay members and coordinate lay activities. Preference given to applicants with college degree or experience. Salary negotiable. Send resume to: Butch Hite, Mountain View UMC, 4405 Orebank Road, Kingsport, TN 37664, fax (423) 245-1325. ☉



Project Crossroads provides 'bridge aid' to flood victims

By Steven MacKay

Smyth County News & Messenger

NEBO, Va. — When heavy rainstorms flooded portions of Smyth County in late July, a number of small bridges were washed away. The residents who rely on those bridges were left with only a few choices: stay away from home, stay at home or find another way in and out. For the elderly, pregnant women and others who may be reliant on emergency services, the hardship was greater.

This is where Project Crossroads entered. The United Methodist organization, best known for repairs to the homes of low-income or elderly families, was asked to switch gears and build bridges, according to Project Crossroads Director Harry Howe.

"Looks like we're going to be in the bridge business for some time," the Rev. Howe said as he stood near a footbridge under construction on the property of Wallace Myers on Lick Creek Road.

The bridge was destroyed during heavy rainstorms on July 28 and 29. High waters, dragging trees, rocks and debris, slammed into the bridge. Built 20 or so years ago, it just gave way, according to Myers.

"I'm 69 years old and that's the most (rain) I've ever seen," Myers said, adding that he has lived on the property for 56 years.

When Howe received a call from the Smyth County Department of Social Services asking the nonprofit group to help rebuild the bridge, he was unsure of what to



Patrick Moore, left, and Adam Lawson work to install an upright support for one of the new bridge rails. Both are from Allen Memorial UMC, Cleveland District. ☉

Photo by Dan Kegley/
Smyth County News & Messenger

do. Howe said he mentioned the problem at a Sunday church service, and congregation members from First Marion UMC offered to help. Area industries were contacted and offered metal, welding and lumber supplies, transportation and other needs for free or at a reduced cost, Howe said.

Various churches in the Project Crossroads family have lent assistance, including youth workers from the Cleveland District's Allen Memorial and Trinity UMC and Chattanooga's Harrison UMC. A Presbyterian church from Canada also helped.

Reminders of the flood are evident everywhere. Along the river, grass, trees, bushes and other vegetation is bent from

the current of the rushing waters.

At the corner of Mill Dam Road and Old Wilderness Road, James Cregger's swinging bridge was also destroyed. Pieces of the bridge can be seen from the road. As floodwaters rose two weeks ago, Cregger and his family left their home. They were unable to return for more than a week.

"It's a mess," Cregger said, adding that he is expecting help from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Administration soon. The family is next on Howe's list to call.

Reprinted with permission. Send donations to: Project Crossroads, 201 East Main, Box 5, Marion, VA 24354.

Campaign

Continued from front page

stops in Holston July 31 and Aug. 1, visiting the Knoxville Conference Center, Lincoln Park UMC, Asbury (Knox) UMC, and Munsey Memorial UMC in Johnson City.

Eighteen days into her 14-week itinerary, Potter-Miller said she saw evidence that Methodist churches are tailoring their campaigns to their communities.

For example, in Chevy Chase, Md., "a

town that has more Ph.D.s per capita than any other city in America," churches are using lectures and concert series to draw people in rather than traditional methods.

"They know their community; that's important," the Johnstown, Pa., district superintendent said. "And that's one of the geniuses of this campaign." The Igniting Ministry kit allows local churches to custom-make their welcoming efforts, she said.

Not all clergy are enamored with the campaign, however.

In an email to the denomination's communicators, United Methodist

Communications General Secretary Larry Hollon recently addressed open letters and news articles he said took "the form of an attack."

"The campaign has been criticized by those who say the campaign theme misrepresents the church because it is not open, in their view, to gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual persons. And others say the campaign is not well grounded theologically," Hollon said in an Aug. 9 statement.

For example, one open letter — addressed to the Council of Bishops, signed by 46 clergy members from seminaries and United Methodist churches, and appearing on an ecumenical website — stated the TV commercials "shortchange United Methodism by trading the riches of our tradition for a pottage of vacuous if catchy slogans."

Refusing to "enter into theological debate," Hollon said the campaign is built on solid research.

"It entails the risk that we will not communicate effectively enough, or that we will not embody community in a way that incorporates seekers into our midst," he stated. "But it is a risk worth taking, carefully, prayerfully and with sensitivity to the presence of God in the culture, calling us to speak works of comfort, healing and new life."

For more information

■ For a full schedule of Igniting Ministry commercial airtimes or reports on the Rev. Jaime Potter-Miller's cross-country trek, visit www.ignitingministry.org.



Photo by A.S. Bender/ *The Call*

Back-to-school ministry at Bookwalter

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Pencils, crayons, paper, backpacks — if the children of nearby Inskip Elementary needed it, Bookwalter UMC provided it. About 70 students from the low-income community turned out for the church's recent "Pack-a-Backpack" ministry on Aug. 18. Parishioners donated supplies then sent an invitation to the school's principal. "We want to meet the students and their families and we definitely want them to know who and where we are," said the Rev. Tom Ballard. ☉

FLOOD UPDATE

Just as the Aug. 17 edition of *The Call* was being mailed, the latest in a series of floods afflicting the conference occurred Aug. 13 and 14 in Pound, Va.

Preliminary estimate of the damage will top \$1.5 million, bringing Wise County's total flood loss during the last month to \$4 million.

Armed with a total \$80,000 in United Methodist Committee on Relief funds, Holston Conference has participated in flood cleanup efforts since Tazewell District was hit by surging waters on July 8. Updates:

Pound, Va., Big Stone Gap District: Flood victims are in need of bottled water, canned foods, bleach, paper products and bath products, says the Rev. Ken Pierce, disaster coordinator and pastor at Clintwood/McClure UMC. Supplies may be delivered to Pound Hardware store. Work teams are currently not being requested. Contact Pierce at (540) 926-6853 or (540) 926-6021.

Greene County, Morristown and Johnson City Districts: Johnson City Disaster Coordinator Brian Rosecrance said that local ministerial organizations are now mobilizing to help repair 350 damaged homes recently denied federal assistance. Work teams are requested. Funds are also requested for building materials. Contact Rosecrance at (423) 929-9967 or (423) 975-5565, or Morristown Disaster Coordinator Millard Johnson at (865) 993-3363 or (865) 993-2378.

Bishop, Va., Tazewell District: Work teams are still welcome, especially skilled workers who can help install new flooring, repair plumbing, re-insulate, put up sheetrock, etc. Building materials are also requested. Contact: Kenny Fields, (540) 979-1443.

How to send money: Churches wishing to receive conference credit for flood donations should make checks to "Holston Conference." Address: Holston Conference, Treasurer's Office, P.O. Box 2506, Johnson City, TN 37605. Please indicate if you wish your contribution to benefit a specific region.

First charge conferences, by district

Continued from front page

■ **Abingdon:** South Bristol, Rev. Mark Huffine; Virginia Avenue, Rev. Laura Rasor; Sept. 23

■ **Big Stone Gap:** Alley's Chapel, Rev. Robert Cloud, Oct. 1

■ **Chattanooga,** Brooks Memorial, Rev. Amos Taj, Sept. 16

■ **Cleveland:** Spring City/Reed's Chapel, Rev. Ronald Goodman; St. Clair, Rev. Anthony Ramsey; Evensville/New Bethel, Rev. Lonnie Eldridge, Oct. 3

■ **Johnson City:** TBA

■ **Kingsport,** Mt. Zion, Rev. Louis Forrester, Sept. 24

■ **Maryville:** Sevierville Circuit, Rev. Charles Copeland, Sept. 17

■ **Morristown:** Mosheim Central/ Mt. Pleasant, Rev. Bruce Hensley, Sept. 10

■ **Oak Ridge:** Mt. Zion, Rev. James Mullens, Sept. 23

■ **Tazewell:** Mt. Pleasant/Steelesburg, Rev. J.C. Johnson, Sept. 16

■ **Wytheville:** Glenwood/Bishop's Chapel, Rev. Gleasanna Johnson, Sept. 24

'Holston came through for Ishe Anesu,' team member reports

On Aug. 1 a team of Holston volunteers departed for Mutare, Zimbabwe, with a mission to lay the groundwork for a new school and serve the people of Ishe Anesu. Technology Specialist **DONNA HANKINS** provides this account of her 10-day experience.

"The children think all people from the U.S. are good and kind and giving." Spoken by Mrs. Chinzvenda, assistant to Ishe Anesu missionary Maria Humbane, that comment struck something in me as we drove through the dirty, impoverished area of Sakubva in Mutare, Zimbabwe.



Donna Hankins

As I made my last visit with the women who are mothers and guardians to the Ishe Anesu children, I realized the true blessing of bringing joy to the needy. Just as I had promised to visit these ladies one last time to buy the bread and cookies they prepared earlier that day, Holston came through for this community.

When Maria Humbane unveiled her dream of helping the orphaned children of Sakubva, she was met with a great deal of skepticism from almost everyone she talked to. She was told that you can't expect people to come up with \$1 million *zim* to build a school. But on Aug. 3, U.S. dollars equaling \$1,290,000 *zim* arrived from Holston Conference. The funds allowed for several of Hilltop's unemployed men to begin work on the school building.

For various reasons, the 16 Volunteers in Mission team members who traveled to Zimbabwe didn't get to see all the mission kits and toys delivered. The two tractor-trailers full of supplies from Holston were to arrive in Sakubva on Aug. 14 after being held by Zimbabwe customs officials.

However, the time spent in fellowship

and ministry alongside the people of Sakubva is enough for us to return with. Organized by Karen Griffey Todd of First Broad Street UMC, Holston members worked with Ishe Anesu children during a three-day Bible school. Before we left, the children could be heard singing the songs they learned.

Nancy Lantz, a nurse from Maryville's Fairview UMC, may have had the most difficult task as she attended to the physical and emotional needs of Ishe Anesu's women and children. I was another eyewitness to the plight of a people ravaged by HIV, unemployment, and poverty. My tears were unavoidable as the women spoke of husbands refusing to talk about AIDS and how they were beaten unconscious if they insisted on condom use. Maria told us that these women never had anyone to listen to them or show concern for their problems.

Some of the men on our team worked on putting up a temporary building where Ishe Anesu classes will be held until the new building is complete. As a thank-you and farewell gesture, the Hilltop men blessed their co-laborers with an inspirational song in Shona language — something the Hol-

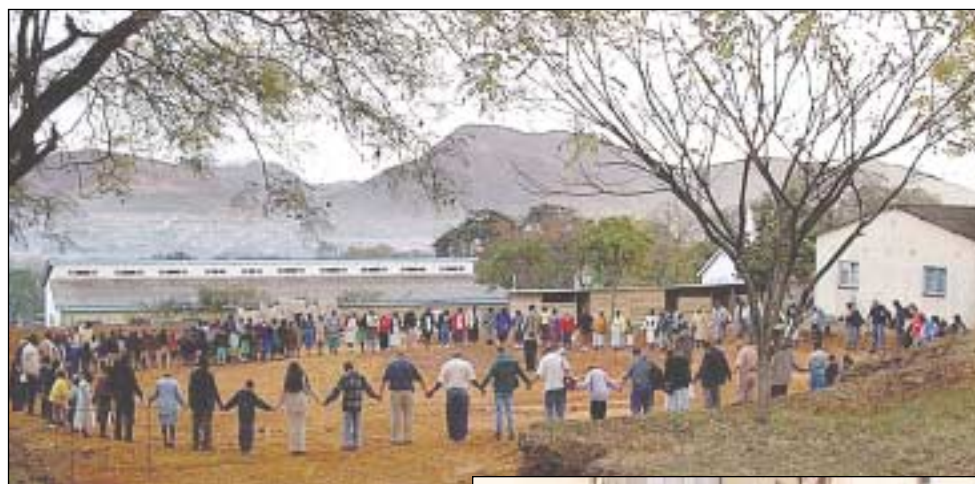
ston volunteers won't soon forget.

So there we all were: a tiny minority being made to feel so welcome. What to make of a comment about how we are "all so good and kind"? I didn't tell them that all Americans aren't so good and kind. But they understand that we are brothers and sisters saved by grace. We were all taught many valuable lessons that week. We were reminded of how much we have to be thankful for. And we departed as better and kinder people, I'm sure of it.

Additional photos can be viewed online at <http://www.holston.org>



Holston team members delivered \$1,290,000 *zim* for a new school.



ABOVE: Members from Holston, Ishe Anesu and Hilltop UMC join hands for a groundbreaking ceremony celebrating the new school in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

RIGHT: On her first day in Sakubva, Hankins met these two children who live in a house near the school's future site.

Photos by Donna Hankins/ *The Call*



People

Cleveland pastor paints mural at Asbury Acres

MARYVILLE, Tenn. — Rev. **Lonnie Eldridge's** paintings are realistic — so realistic, they were a potential problem for the Asbury Acres officials who wanted Eldridge to paint a countryside mural in the retirement home's secured wing. "They were afraid their Alzheimer's patients would run into the wall," said the longtime art teacher and pastor at Evensville/New Bethel UMC in the Cleveland District. Then Asbury Chaplain **Bob Hayes** thought of having carpenters place window-like frames around the painting to create a "safe illusion" — and the project was a go. In May, Eldridge completed a 16' x 5' mural that pictures such familiar local scenes as Mabry Mill in Fancy Gap, Va., and Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains.

Velma Burke, a geriatric nurse practitioner and consultant to Asbury, said the mural is therapeutic as well as attractive: "I just rolled a wheelchair up to the mural today for someone who thought she recognized a house." Not only does the painting engage patients, it helps draw them down a long hall to a recently opened activity center. Asbury officials are proud, said Burke, because "we don't know of any other mural that's been done like this. [Eldridge] was very generous with his time and gracious to consult us about our ideas. We feel like this is one of a kind."



The Rev. Lonnie Eldridge (right) receives painting assistance from the Rev. Bob Hayes, a former art student.

Running runs in Oak Ridge minister's family

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — It takes more than strong legs to run 26 miles. For most marathoners, it also takes a strong incentive. The Rev. **Mark Flynn** of Kern Memorial UMC found his in the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. "I have a close family friend from my home church who's very, very ill," said Flynn, referring to Trinity UMC member



Gwen Dixon of Knoxville. "I'm running to honor her and her courage." Scheduled to take to the streets in the Chicago Marathon on Oct. 7, Flynn has already raised \$2,000 for medical research just by writing to Holston churches he's served. His goal is \$3,100. The Oak Ridge pastor has competed in triathlons, but this is his first marathon. It's not a first for the Flynn family, however; Kern Memorial's associate pastor, the Rev. **Annette Flynn**, conquered the Cincinnati marathon in May.

Gifts that keep giving

The Holston Conference Foundation has 407 accounts with a total value of \$35.83 million. Account breakdown:

