

LEGACIES

SUMMER 2024

Bishops' Club Celebrates 37th Annual Luncheon Gathering

Among friends of The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas, there was much to celebrate at the 37th Annual Bishops' Club Luncheon. This year's event, held on Friday, May 17, 2024, at Little Rock's Camp Aldersgate, included a record attendance crowd and featured speaker Dr. Ashley Boggan, the General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History.

At the luncheon, we were thrilled to announce Bishops' Club members made possible our partnership with First United Methodist Church in Crossett and 200,000 More Reasons to address food insecurity in Ashley County. Ashley County is in the top 10 of all counties in the nation for the highest percentage of population with food insecurities. Our new partnership enables Crossett FUMC's food pantry to expand their capabilities and serve as a hub to address food insecurity in Ashley County and surrounding counties.

To commemorate our first Wesley Heritage trip to England, the Foundation presented members with a John Wesley or Susanna Wesley bobblehead as a special thank you gift. You can see more Bishops' Club photos on our website.



John and Susanna Wesley bobbleheads



Dr. Ashley Boggan addresses the Bishops' Club luncheon attendees.



The Foundation's Rev. Mackey Yokem with Revs. Miranda and Chad Hornsby



Lunch with friends



Hugs all around



Rev. Danita Waller-Paige, Mable Donaldson, Roxie Balenton, Dr. Charles Donaldson, and Kathy Conley.



Rev. J. Wayne Clark
President & CEO

Rev. John Wesley's Three Simple Rules

A MESSAGE FROM WAYNE

I keep an article by Karen Manczko, the Foundation's Wespeth Institutional Investments contact person, entitled "What John Wesley's 'Three Simple Rules' Teach Us about Values Aligned Investing." Wespeth, formally the General Board of Pensions for the United Methodist Church, manages most of the assets for The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas.

We all know the rules....they are 'simple' as Rev. Wesley described, and there are only three: 1. Do no harm. 2. Do good. 3. Stay in love with God.

Wespeth and the Foundation's philosophy on our fund investments is guided by the Book of Discipline. Simply put, we invest in companies who are socially responsible and with companies whose business practices align with the values and mission of United Methodists. At the same time, it seeks the competitive returns necessary to support the Church's missions. Wesley provided countless lessons relevant to us as investors and partners in mission.

Rule 1. DO NO HARM

This rule provides an important foundation by highlighting what not to do. You can rest assured that all the money the churches and institutions invest with us is invested in socially responsible ways. None of the money at the Foundation is invested in businesses and industries that make money from alcohol, tobacco, gambling, adult entertainment, military, or private prisons.

Rule 2: DO GOOD

Wesley refers to this rule as actively engaging in acts of kindness, charity, and service to others. It encourages people to seek opportunities that make a positive difference in the world and help those in need. At the Foundation, this rule is played out in so many ways, including our thriving grants program, which awarded over 1.52 million in 2023, as well as clergy and laity professional development programs, and mission trips.



Rev. John Wesley

Rule 3: STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD.

This is the rule where we 'find our moral direction, wisdom, courage, and strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustains us, and sends us into the world as witnesses who daily practice the way of living with Jesus.' For the Foundation, not only do we award grants helping with local community ministries, we seek partnerships with churches to help positively impact the greatest number of people.

Over 170 churches and institutions, along with the Arkansas Annual Conference, have placed their money with The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas with the expectation of us to being good stewards of those funds. We would love to visit your church and share about our services and how we apply Wesley's rules to our work every day supporting Methodist ministries in Arkansas. Thank you for your faith and trust in the Foundation. We do not take this relationship lightly.

Blessings,
Wayne

News from Northwest Arkansas

OUT
& ABOUT
WITH
AMY

Amy Anderson

Northwest Arkansas Development Officer



In the early hours of Sunday, May 30, 2024, 13 tornadoes ripped through North Arkansas, seven of which struck Benton County. Many of our Bentonville, Decatur, and Rogers churches were directly impacted. Power was lost, stained glass was broken, and trees that had been a part of the church property for many years were uprooted. The leadership of these churches quickly jumped into action! Services for the day were either canceled or switched to an abbreviated service online as they figured out the damage and course of action. As I watched it unfold on social media and through contact with the pastors, I was amazed at how quickly they all mobilized to pick up the pieces at the local churches and figure out which of their members were affected and sent out groups to support those impacted.



Volunteers with Ozark Mission Project assist with tornado clean-up in Rogers, AR after storm on May 30, 2024.

I spoke with Karen Anderson, a lifelong member of Central UMC in Rogers, who also coordinated the relief efforts for her church, about how Central could support their community. For at least two solid weeks, Karen coordinated the volunteers and projects for their community. They organized meals, bought and delivered groceries, checked on members, did physical clean up, helped move displaced members from their homes...they just "did what needed to be done." There was even a crew at the church kitchen making hot dogs to take to the community and hand out to the utility workers working tirelessly around the clock to restore power to the area.



Hotdogs and helpers



Karen Anderson of Central UMC, Rogers

She told me one story of a mother and her two children who were displaced from The WayStation Shelter that lost power for days. Since Rogers UMC's Mother's Day Out program was closed for the week, it was the perfect place to house that sweet family. Other residents moved to Grace UMC, where they were able to sleep on air mattresses until they were able to move back to The WayStation safely. Karen told me of people who were affected but never thought **THEY** were an urgent need and they wanted the church to focus on others with greater needs. This happened over and over. So many of their members came out to serve. And those who were just as affected by the tornadoes as others "put on their oxygen mask and served." It was more important to them to help their neighbor in need. Wow. How powerful is that?

Karen mentioned working with the other local United Methodist Churches, as well as the UMC Volunteers in Mission group, led by Rev. Andrew Smith of Living Waters UMC in Centerton, and how this is what being a part of a connectional church looks like. That is something that I kept thinking about over and over as the days of cleanup and healing passed. So many of our churches, organizations, and nonprofits

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The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas
UPCOMING EVENTS
 2024 -2025
for clergy

NOVEMBER 1, 2024	Applications Now Open Compelling Preaching Initiative Arkansas United Methodist clergy under a full-time appointment (elders, deacons, local pastors, and associate members) are welcome to apply for a 2-year cohort with 12 participants. Apply now by visiting our website. Selection will be based on a written application and 2 recommendations.
FEBRUARY 18-28, 2025	Travel with the Foundation to Greece & Turkey The Travels of Paul Join the Foundation and Rev. Lynn Kilbourne as we walk in Paul's footsteps in Greece and Turkey. The book of Acts will come alive as we spend five days in Greece visiting Thessaloniki, Neapolis, Philippi, Corinth, and Athens. Then we will fly to Turkey and visit Sardis, Pergamum and Thyatira, Ephesus and Miletus, Smyrna, and Istanbul.
MARCH 21-22, 2025	Perkins School of Theology comes to Little Rock Summit for Faith & Learning Mark your calendars for March 2025, when Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, Office of External Programs, comes to Little Rock to offer a wide range of theological mini-courses for laypersons, community leaders, and clergy.

methodistfoundationAR.org

NWA continued from previous page

leaned on each other to not only get through the immediate needs but also for the long-term needs. As many of you know, Ozark Mission Project does many beautiful things throughout the year, particularly during the summer. They assessed the community's needs and teamed up with Bentonville FUMC to help with tornado relief and cleanup. I visited the site where they were helping an elderly community member who could not physically take care of the trees down in his yard and had destroyed some of his property. So, this team from the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas did just that. They were able to cut down the trees, remove them, and haul the debris to the curb for the city to clean up. Without the help of these youth from Kansas and OMP, there is no telling how long it would have taken for this neighbor to have gotten the help he needed after these storms.

For those who have experienced a tornado (or seven), you understand the devastation it leaves behind for individuals and their communities. It takes time to clean up, for repair, and for healing. But how wonderful that these communities have churches like ours, UMC Volunteers in Mission, and OMP to turn to to help with the relief efforts and healing process.

FOUNDATION HAPPENINGS



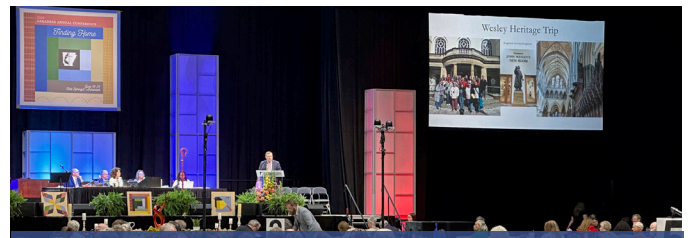
Board of Directors President Sam Gibson address board members at the May 17, 2024 meeting.



A grant from the Foundation to the Arkansas Annual Conference funded training for 45 UM interns at churches and non-profits around Arkansas.



Foundation participants in discussion at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, Summit for Learning in Dallas, TX.



Rev. Clark presents to the 2024 Arkansas Annual Conference in Hot Springs, AR.



The Foundation hosted ARUMC Pastors in Transition in May.



Bishop Laura Merrill speaks at the Foundation.



Wesley Heritage Tour 2024: Clergy Reflection

*Rev. Bryan R. Diffie, Senior Pastor
First United Methodist Church, Monticello, AR*

On April 15, 2024, I, along with around 25 other Arkansas United Methodists, boarded a plane in Little Rock to visit the land of the Wesleys. As a lifelong United Methodist, England has always been on my bucket list of places to visit. What made this trip even more special was that my youngest child, Hannah, could accompany me.



Rev. Bryan Diffie and daughter, Hannah

From rural Epworth to the Spires of Oxford, this was truly the trip of a lifetime. It was in these locations that Samuel and Susanna Wesley raised their children, and John and his brother Charles literally changed the world through their lives, teachings, and ministries. To walk in the footsteps of the first “Methodists” helped give me a deeper appreciation of the shared heritage of all those who claim the Wesleys as their spiritual ancestors.

There is so much rich history in the British Isles, and to be able to visit those places that I read about in history books was a surreal experience. One of the many blessings of this trip was to have the Rev. Dr. Tim Maquiban, a retired minister from the Methodist Church of Great Britain, join our group. He was able to bring so much context to what we were experiencing, along with being just a very nice human being. I am now able to count him as a friend and someone that I converse with often.



Trip participants with Wesley statue, London, England UK

Before this trip, I could only dream of standing in the Epworth Rectory, St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, The New Room, City Road Chapel, Bunhill Fields Cemetery, and visiting John Wesley’s house and grave. I am still in awe over places such as Charles Wesley’s House, Francis Asbury’s Cottage, Churchill’s War Room, St. Paul’s Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Platform 9 ¾ at Kings Cross Station, Stonehenge, and Jave Whiskers Cat Café.

I want to thank Rev. Wayne Clark and all of those at The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas for giving me this opportunity to see so many important places and make so many great memories with my daughter, Hannah. I am so thankful for the friends and experiences I will treasure for many years to come.

Holy Saturday Meal Celebrates Act of Togetherness



Rev. Englert-Jessen looks over meal plans with friends at their Holy Saturday celebration.

*Rev. Eva Englert-Jessen, United Methodist Deacon
Pastoral Care Director, Methodist Family Health*

I have been passionate about and invested in the relationship between food and faith for many years. Food is the one of the most primary ways in which we interact with creation. Eating is a sacred act. Too many people go hungry. And throughout the Bible, we see the ways in which Jesus often revealed himself and the heart of his mission of hospitality, grace and justice through the breaking of bread and sharing of food. Many scholars highlight the ways in which the Bible is an agrarian book, one which is calling us to reconciled relationship with God, creation, and one another—from the garden of Eden in Genesis to the tree of life in Revelation.

Amazing things can happen at the table.

In November 2022, I had the opportunity to attend the Perkins School of Theology Fall Convocation on Food and Faith. (You can read more about it in the Winter 2023 Legacies newsletter). It re-inspired this love of the food and faith connection, and inspired me and friends and colleagues from my church, FUMC Little Rock, to think about what a dinner church might look like in our context. My colleague and friend Rev. Haley Jones Wells suggested a Holy Saturday meal.

What better way to honor and name this liminal space between Good Friday and Easter Sunday than with a meal with neighbors and friends? Holy Saturday, not often formally observed in the United Methodist tradition, is a time of lament and waiting. It is a time when we sit by Jesus' tomb and when we recall the women who prepared spices and herbs for the Sabbath.

About 10 of us gathered in a home, blessed the ingredients and the gathering together, prepared a simple soup, salad, and fruit salad together, and shared in conversation and reflection at the table. The flow of the experience was inspired by Simple Church, a United Methodist sacred-meal method I was part of while in seminary in the Boston area. It is not expensive, doesn't require too many supplies, and can be adapted in so many different ways. Rather than hearing a traditional sermon from a pulpit, this style of worship invites the act of eating together and the shared conversation to build the message together. I have also used a similar framework called "snack church" in my ministry with children and teens at Methodist Family Health, adapting the flow slightly for a younger age group.

It is my hope that this can be a way for churches to experiment with different ways of worshiping and discipling, prioritizing the sacredness and equality of the table. I am so grateful for the support of The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas in allowing us to experiment, and for church friends and supporters who came and prepared food and shared holy space together as we waited for Easter morning.



A delicious Holy Saturday soup



Rev. Haley Jones and friends meal prep for Holy Saturday.



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Join the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas for the Arkansas Methodist Lawyers Conference on Thursday, September 19, 2024 at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock.

This free CLE event is grounded in Methodism and is tailored to topics important to the Methodist Church and its members. We would love for the attorneys in your congregation to join us. Visit our website to learn more.

**ARKANSAS
METHODIST
LAWYERS
CONFERENCE**

Thursday, September 19, 2024

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas

The banner features a blue background with a photograph of a bridge's steel structure. The text is white and arranged in a clean, professional layout. The logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the banner area.