



# District Roundup

NEWS FROM YOUR DISTRICT



**Wytheville**  
During Vacation Bible School at Graham's Forge UMC, participants wrote prayer requests on slips of papers. At the end of the week, the prayers were placed inside balloons and released ceremoniously into the sky.

**Abingdon:** On Oct. 14, the district once again held a joint charge conference with nearly all 93 congregations represented. More than 650 members attended. Bishop James Swanson preached. More than 700 banners were displayed. The combined Chilhowie UMC and Chilhowie Baptist choir sang – the same choir that sang at Annual Conference in June.

**Big Stone Gap:** Trinity UMC of Big Stone Gap celebrated Open House Month. On Sunday, Sept. 2, an “education service” recognized teachers, bus drivers, and school administrators. On Sept. 9, grandparents were recognized. Sept. 23 was “Serve the Servants Day,” celebrating firefighters, police officers, physicians, and nurses. WCYB-TV covered the latter. “Our goal was to participate in as many areas of community life as possible,” reports Jettie Hess.

**Chattanooga:** Grace UMC had a pumpkin patch to raise money for missions. But the key purpose was to “make people aware of the church, to get more people to step onto the property,” said the Rev. Ken Sauer. Visiting [www.pumpkinsusa.com](http://www.pumpkinsusa.com) (Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers), Sauer ordered pumpkins grown on the Navajo reservation in Farmington, N.M. Grace sold \$4,000 worth of pumpkins, keeping 25 percent in profits (\$1,000). But the best part is that Grace is now known in the community as “the pumpkin church.”

**Cleveland:** Decatur UMC has completed a building addition that includes Sunday school rooms, a choir room, and restrooms. But the drought has delayed the laying of sod and an open house celebration. “We could not be good stewards and use the water that’s needed to establish a new lawn,” says Pastor Archer Coppedge. “Hopefully by spring there will be an end to the drought and water rationing.”

**Johnson City:** Send news and photos to: Editor, *The Call*, P.O. Box 850, Alcoa, TN 37701-0850, fax (865) 690-3162, [thecall@holston.org](mailto:thecall@holston.org).

**Kingsport:** First Broad Street UMC has declared Nov. 18 as Caring for God’s Creation Sunday. The congregation will “recognize that all creation is the Lord’s” and “proclaim it through word and song,” according to the church newsletter. The special day marks the “official birthing” of First Broad Street’s Environmental Stewardship Ministry. Each family will receive a recyclable grocery bag and energy-saving light bulb.

**Knoxville:** In May, each worshipper at Kodak UMC received \$10, symbolic of the minas in the Gospel of Luke. All summer, congregants “put the money to work,” creating pies and furniture and providing services to increase their original \$10. On Sept. 9, Kodak gathered on “Fellowship Sunday,” bringing their proceeds and other offerings to pay off the building debt of nearly \$200,000. “To think this church has eliminated the debt in just four years is exciting,” says the Rev. Rowland Buck.

**Maryville:** On Oct. 28, First Alcoa UMC celebrated its first Sunday in a new \$3.2 million sanctuary, which seats 660 worshippers compared to 400 in the former 50-year-old sanctuary. Also on Oct. 28, Bethel (Seymour) UMC celebrated its new building on five acres, located a mile from the previous location on one-half acre. “The old church seated 75 uncomfortably; the new one seats 162 comfortably,” reports the Rev. Tom Robins. The new church cost about \$275,000, with only \$20,000 remaining in debt (“lots of bean suppers and yard sales,” explains Robins, along with district and conference grants and a Holston Conference Foundation loan). And

the pews and sanctuary furniture? Donated by First Alcoa from its old building.

**Morristown:** Missions Chair Rose Marie Harrell was thinking about the Nothing But Nets campaign when a little song and dance came into her head. *Buzzzzz*, stomp. *Buzzzzz*, stomp. “That was kind of infectious,” she said to herself. So she went to the choir director at Strawberry Plains UMC and worked out an Africa-influenced “ditty” that she calls “Stamp Out Malaria.” Harrell has used the song to teach her congregation that just \$10 will buy a bed net to prevent malaria. Visit [www.nothingbutnets.net](http://www.nothingbutnets.net).

**Oak Ridge:** The community didn’t know it until recently, but Jellico UMC has a gymnasium in the basement. The Rev. Scott Ketron opened the gym and created a game room, and now 40 teens are congregating at the church – an increase from zero youth since June. On Wednesday nights, the church serves free hot dogs on the street. Ten members have joined the church in the last two weeks; worship attendance is up from 15 to 40. Stay tuned.

**Tazewell:** First Narrows UMC hosted a community cookout on the church lawn on Oct. 13, with a free lunch, games, and fun offered to all. Lay Leader Bob Lilly entertained the children by making balloon animals, reports Cornelia Smith.

**Wytheville:** Graham’s Forge UMC hosted 110 for Vacation Bible School in August. Each evening, participants wrote secret prayers on strips of paper, which were later placed inside balloons. On the last night, students and staff released the balloons (100 in all) into the sky, cheering as they disappeared. Participants also gave \$320 in offerings, designated for a cancer patient and girl with birth-defect complications.



**Abingdon**  
Under the theme, “Cast Your Nets Wide,” Abingdon churches gather for a district-wide charge conference on Oct. 14 at the Higher Education Center in Abingdon. Bishop Swanson preached.