



District Roundup

NEWS FROM YOUR DISTRICT



"I thought you might want to add a new district to the back page of *The Call*," says the Rev. David Gass. The Knoxville-based pastor currently serves at Deer Park UMC in Maryland, where the congregation joined in Holston's hands-on missions project by assembling food buckets for Zimbabwe.

Abingdon: Send news and photos to: Editor, *The Call*, P.O. Box 850, Alcoa, TN 37701-0850, fax (865) 690-3162, e-mail thecall@holston.org.

Big Stone Gap: Billy Odle and Carolyn McConnell knew each other in high school, then reconnected in Nickelsville after their spouses died. They courted through events at Nickelsville UMC, eventually setting a wedding date for June 9. But when the church's lay member to Annual Conference suddenly had a schedule conflict, Carolyn, as alternate, had a decision to make. Should she attend Annual Conference on her honeymoon? For Billy, the answer was simple. "We love it over there," said the newlywed, referring to Lake Junaluska and the surrounding area. "It's so quiet and peaceful." The couple happily stayed in a cabin in Maggie Valley, attending "most" of the June 10-13 session in Stuart Auditorium.



Billy and Carolyn Odle were wed at Nickelsville UMC on June 9. At right is the Rev. Joe Barber.

Chattanooga: For the fourth year, the Mother's Day Out program at East Ridge UMC held a "trike-a-thon" to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Twelve youngsters rode their tricycles to raise \$600. They also learned about fire safety (and fire trucks!) from local firefighter Mike Brooks.

Cleveland: Like most districts, Cleveland District well surpassed its goal for hands-on mission kits for Africa. Cleveland District collected 474 health kits for Liberia, almost doubling its goal of 250. On June 8, volunteers loaded up the supplies at Wesley Memorial UMC before dispatching them to the conference's collection depot at Fairview UMC in Maryville, Tenn.

Johnson City: Holston members were awfully proud recently, when the band playing for a Southeastern Jurisdiction event was none other than the house band from East Tennessee State University's Wesley Foundation. The six-member group was invited to play for services during "Connect," a June 27-29 Volunteers in Mission gathering at Lake

Junaluska, N.C. The band brought a "youthful spark and spiritual energy" to the 300-member crowd of "mostly middle-age and older adults," said Holston Children's Ministry Coordinator Anita Henderlight.

Kingsport: In 2005 and 2006, a volunteer work team led by Herb Creech built a new bathroom and remodeled the fellowship hall for Pactolus UMC. During the process, the 85-member congregation learned about the houses that Creech's teams build in Mexico for \$1,500 each. In late May, Pactolus had a yard sale to raise money for Creech's next Mexico mission in October 2007. Total amount raised: \$1,561.

Knoxville: The Rev. David Gass is a former member at Middlebrook Pike UMC, now studying at Wesley Theology Seminary in Washington, D.C. He's also serving as student pastor at Deer Park UMC in Reisterstown, Md. When the pastor told his congregation about Holston's annual hands-on missions project, "they wanted to help." The congregation put together three food buckets for Zimbabwe, and Gass brought them to Annual Conference. "It was a good way to demonstrate our connection with other annual conferences, as well as our brothers and sisters in other parts of the word," said Gass.



Volunteers load health kits for Liberia. Pictured above are Jim Henderson (far left) and the Rev. Mike Feely (far right).

Maryville: A life-size photo of Bishop James Swanson was a big hit at Annual Conference, used to raise money for Change for Children. The Rev. Al Shaver intends to keep the joke running, after donating \$100 in order to bring the virtual Swanson back home to Maryville District. Shaver, who pastors Mountain View UMC, expects to bring the cardboard replica back to Annual Conference 2008. "The highest bidder can have then have a 'Bishop in Residence' in their district until the 2009 conference," he says.

Morristown: On June 10, Strawberry Plains UMC dedicated a \$22,000 playground for the enjoyment of the community and church. The playground is named for the late Bill Morgan, "a pillar of the church who loved kids," reports the Rev. John Crabtree.

Oak Ridge: For years, Andersonville UMC has provided scholarships to its college students. However, with a growing youth membership, the congregation knew it would have to find new ways to raise funds for future scholarships. On June 15, Andersonville held its first community fish fry with great success, serving up 100 pounds of fish and raising \$1,600. "We were amazed at the turnout," says Pastor Frank Woodward. "We're already thinking about how we can make it even better the next time around."

Tazewell: The fifth annual "Blessing of the Bikes" was held May 6 in Burke's Garden. Sponsored by the East Tazewell Circuit and Iron Titans Motorcycle Club, the event was attended by 200 people with 150 motorcycles. Each rider, including their passengers, received a pin. The message on the pin? "God allows U-turns."

Wytheville: Participation in the district's lay speaker training has increased dramatically, from about 80 seven years ago to 142 this year. Wilma Snyder, secretary for Wytheville's lay speaking, notes that many participants are returning each year for training, over and beyond the three-year recertification requirements. Consequently, organizers have added an in-depth course on Old Testament Studies, with plans to provide New Testament Studies and Advanced Preaching Practices in the future. "Not all of these trainees are interested in going into the pulpit, but some are interested in leadership training for positions within the church," says Snyder. ■