



NEWSCOPE

THE WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR UNITED METHODIST LEADERS

Arizona Bishop Asks for Prayers after Shootings

Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño (Phoenix Area) is calling for prayers of healing following the Jan. 8 shootings in Tucson, Ariz., that left six dead and more than a dozen—including U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords—wounded. The bishop issued a statement calling the shootings “senseless.” She expressed hope that the incident is not an expression of “growing intolerance.”

Giffords and two of her aides were among the 14 wounded. The dead included a federal judge, a third Giffords aide and a 9-year-old girl. “We raise our prayers for U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and others who were affected by the senseless shooting that occurred today in Tucson, Ariz.,” Carcaño said in a Jan. 8 statement. “We mourn the deaths of those whose lives were cut short in this moment of insanity, among them Federal Judge John M. Roll. “We are holding close to our hearts those who are struggling to survive their injuries including UM Pam Simon, who serves on Congresswoman Giffords’ staff,” the bishop said.

“For some time now many of us have been concerned about the uncivil tenor of life in this state, and pray that what has happened today is not an expression of a growing intolerance,” Carcaño continued. “Today we have certainly seen a blatant lack of respect for human life. Let us pray for healing for our sisters and brothers in Tucson, and for our state. May God be merciful and may we be agents of Christ’s grace and love.”

Giffords, a Democrat, was shot while holding a meeting with the public at a grocery store. She underwent surgery and was listed in critical condition as of Jan. 9. Jared Lee Loughner, 22, was arrested and has been charged by federal prosecutors for the shootings. The investigation is continuing. —*UMNS*

Co-op Ministry Cares for Rural Poor

Delbert Hancock and his family were truly proud when they moved into their own home on Upper Sand Mountain 18 years ago. “It wasn’t a big mansion, but to us it was,” he said. The Hancock family was able to purchase its own home thanks to the Heart and Hand Housing program, a ministry of the [Upper Sand Mountain Parish](#), a cooperative ministry encompassing eight area UM churches in a 1,000- square-mile area of Jackson and DeKalb counties in the northeast corner of Alabama.

Operating since 1969, the parish provides a long list of services to this rural area at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. “We formed together as a parish because we had so many people in need in our congregation,” said Tayna Rains, director of the parish. The small churches in the area had realized that alone they couldn’t meet all of the needs in the community.

• *MINISTRY WITH THE POOR* •

Kenneth Graham served as pastor of Section UM, one of the eight UM churches in the parish, for three and a half years and saw firsthand the difference the parish makes in the community. Graham said the parish provides stability in the area. People know that the parish is going to be there for them if they need anything from food to assistance after tornadoes.

Rains said the parish is unique because it literally does anything to help people in need—from providing food, money for rent or electric bills to transportation, clothes and school supplies. The most used service provided by the parish is its food pantry. Some 4,400 people received food through the pantry in 2009.

Rains said the parish strives to provide a “hand up” to residents in need rather than a “handout.” For example, the Gardens of Plenty program gives families seeds and fertilizer so they can grow their own gardens. In turn, Upper Sand Mountain Parish operates an industrial cannery where fruits and vegetables are cooked and canned. Some items go to the food pantry or are used in soup kitchens in the area. Others are canned for the parish’s line of food products, Alabama Green Tomato products, which are sold at area shops and through the Internet.

A new project for the parish is a small homeless shelter called the HOPE (Helping Other People in Emergencies) Center. The center will provide temporary housing for families in the area. Upper Sand Mountain Parish works in partnership with churches that volunteer to raise the money for the building supplies and build the houses. To date, 45 houses have been constructed. —*Erin Edgemon for UMNS*

Angolan Church Supports Domestic Violence Law

UMs in Angola marched on Jan. 8 in support of a new law against domestic violence that received general approval in December by that West African country's national assembly, according to a local press report. Under the banner, "UM Church says no to every type of violence," the march, led by Bishop Gaspar João Domingos, started in front of the UM Church Centre of Luanda and ended at the Family and Women Promotion Ministry building. —*UMNS*

Interim Meeting of Judicial Council

The Judicial Council will meet Feb. 12, in Dallas to consider the following request: IN RE: A request from the Council of Bishops for a Declaratory Decision as to the Meaning, Effect, and Application of the Amended Division Two, Section VI, Paragraph 35, Article IV of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*.

One copy of any briefs or comments should be sent in electronic format via e-mail to judicialcouncil@umc.org with 13 hard copies shipped to The Rev. F. Belton Joyner, Jr., Secretary of the Judicial Council, 1821 Hillandale Road, Suite 1B, PMB 334, Durham, NC 27705. These are due by Jan. 31. Direct questions to the Secretary at judicialcouncil@umc.org. —*Judicial Council*

Clarification

The story about the Mary Elizabeth Inn, "A Place to Call Home," in the Jan. 5 issue of *Newscope*, stated that the building was a gift to the Methodist Church from Lizzie Glide. We wish to clarify that the building was donated to the Woman's Missionary Council of The Methodist Episcopal Church South. *Newscope* regrets any confusion caused by this misstatement. —*Newscope*

Faith Leaders Condemn Egypt Bombing

Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders have condemned the New Year's Eve bombing that killed 21 worshippers and wounded many others at All Saints Church in Alexandria, Egypt. "The perpetrators of this outrage are apparently so blinded by hatred that they have lost touch with the tenets of any known faith," said the Rev. Michael Kinamon, top executive of the U.S. National Council of Churches. "It is simply agonizing to think that many around the world will mistake this horror as the attack of one religious community on another. Christians, Jews and Muslims around the world are united by their outrage and condemnation of this soul-less act." —*UMNS*

Brian Combs—Love for Modern-day "Lepers"

The Rev. Brian Combs ignores labels and simply calls everyone a child of God. "God sees us . . . as people of sacred worth, not by our titles or our clothes or by our affluence." Everyone is welcome at the Haywood Street Congregation —white collar, blue collar, bloody collar," says Combs, a UM minister at the urban church in Asheville, N.C., that bridges the gap between privilege and poverty.

Combs said, "My calling is to be with people on the streets, and that's why this church was started — to welcome the modern-day lepers. . . . The prevailing notion of homeless ministry is that the church has something to offer and that it's transformation in one direction. But actually, what we would say is that sanctification is something that goes both ways. It's reciprocal: It requires me to look at you as a minister; it requires you to look at me as a minister. And once we get on that equal place of footing between each other, then transformation happens."

Combs listens to the people he meets. The idea for a midday worship service on Wednesdays came from a homeless man. Combs asked him what he thought the church should be doing. The man told him, "Well I'm homeless, I'm struggling with addiction and I need something during the middle of the day because that's when I really struggle with crack, marijuana and alcohol. And if you had a worship service, I'd much rather be doing that than getting high."

Haywood Street is not like the UM church Combs grew up in, but he is hearing from his parishioners that it is the kind of church they have always wanted. "I remember a doctor saying, 'I need to be here for my spiritual manna more than homeless folks need to be here for food and clothes.'"

Haywood Street offers an encounter with Jesus with no strings attached, Combs says. He's heard stories about homeless folks forced to attend church and listen to sermons before they get any services. Coercion

• MINISTRY WITH THE POOR •

"[S]anctification is something that goes both ways. It's reciprocal: It requires me to look at you as a minister; it requires you to look at me as a minister. And once we get on that equal place of footing between each other, then transformation happens." —*Brian Combs*

and church should never be in the same sentence, he says. “There is something antithetical to Jesus about that for me, so we’ve just flipped that on its head and said you can come here, you can get clothes, you can eat, you can engage in any services you want and then you can go on your way. But if you want to come to worship, you’re welcome.”

“When you hear somebody’s story, they are no longer a stranger. They become brother and sister. We have an obligation as people of faith to include everybody in the circle of faith.” —*Kathy Gilbert, Heidi Robinson, Antonio Davis for UMNS*

UMCOR UPDATES

HAITI: CHRONOLOGY OF RECOVERY. When the 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck at 4:53 p.m. on Jan. 12, 2010, then UMCOR head, the Rev. Sam Dixon, was already in the country designing, with the Methodist Church of Haiti and other partners, a plan to improve health ministries in the country. Dixon was accompanied by the head of UM Volunteers in Mission, the Rev. Clinton Rabb and UMCOR consultant the Rev. James L. Gulley. Rubble from the Montana Hotel trapped the three, along with colleagues from IMA World Health. Dixon and Rabb later succumbed to their injuries. The work Dixon and Rabb began in Haiti has continued, as UMCOR presses forward a five-year plan to respond to earthquake survivors in the context of long-term development. UMCOR’s priorities are focused on the areas of health, shelter, water and sanitation, education and livelihoods. Read [Haiti: Progressing with Hope](#), a timeline of UMCOR’s relief and recovery activities in Haiti since the earthquake.

HUMAN-TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY APPROACHES. The US Senate has designated Jan. 11 as a “National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness.” The US State Department estimates that 12.3 million people are currently in forced labor, bonded labor and forced prostitution around the world. Most of those affected are adult women and children. The United Nations says trafficking in persons is a “low risk/high reward crime” that is based on coercion, deception, fraud or abuse and that also “takes advantage of conflicts, humanitarian disasters and the vulnerability of people in situations of crisis.” It is a serious human rights violation that also undermines development efforts. Gifts to Anti-Human Trafficking, [Advance #33615](#), help UMCOR respond to survivors of this abuse.

Religion and Race Commission Urges UMs to “Drop the I-Word”

The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) is urging UMs to join a national campaign to eliminate the use of the word *illegal* as part of the conversation on immigration reform. GCORR has signed on to endorse the “Drop the I-Word” public education campaign launched by ColorLines.com and the Applied Research Center (ARC), a racial justice think tank urging media outlets and other organizations across the country to stop using the term *illegals* and its derivatives. GCORR is seeking 10,000 UMs to take the pledge.

“GCORR is proud to endorse the ‘Drop the I-Word’ campaign because it is a tangible way to engage The UMC in moving from racism to relationships,” said GCORR General Secretary Erin M. Hawkins.

“Immigration has proven to be a divisive issue across the country and even within our churches. Proverbs 18:21 says that words can kill or words can give life. Who better than people of faith, to help lead a movement that believes we should communicate in ways that reflect God’s love for humanity. . . . We as UMs cannot tolerate any attempts to dehumanize or devalue immigrants or any racial ethnic community.”

The GCORR “Drop the I-Word” campaign is taking the national campaign directly to UMs because it aligns with a commitment to racial justice outlined in the denomination’s Social Principles which states, “We affirm the rights of all immigrants...to freedom from social discrimination and to advocate for justice for all” (§1162, *The Book of Discipline*).

GCORR is seeking 10,000 names for the campaign by Dec. 6. “10,000 pledges would mean that 10,000 UMs are committed to eliminating the hate-filled rhetoric that is so prevalent in this immigration discourse,” said Bishop Minerva Carcaño, chair of the UM Interagency Immigration Task force and GCORR vice president.

Part of the campaign includes urging UMs to monitor the word’s use by congregations and community media, and provides tools to change the conversation. “Ephesians 2:19 reminds us that in Christ we are no longer strangers, but sisters and brothers in the household of God. This is a campaign that starts with the pledge on the internet, but it quickly becomes interactive advocacy,” said Victor Cyrus-Franklin, coordinator of advocacy for GCORR. “We expect to see church members and students tweeting about this, sharing stories about the impact the I-word has had on them, their families and friends. It’s in the conversations about the word and its impact that we can build relationships formed out of respect for and understanding of each other. And in the end, that moves us closer to our goal—moving The UMC from racism to relationships.” On its website, www.gcorr.org, UMs can take the pledge and find resources including teaching tools and a Bible study designed to help churches start new conversations without using the I-word. —*GCORR*

Forthcoming Events

Lake Junaluska presents Confirmation Retreat, Weekend 1, Mar. 18–21. Confirmands will explore the deeper meanings of their commitment to the church. Register online at www.lakejunaluska.com/confirmation-1 or call 800-482-1442.

Lake Junaluska presents Ebony Youth Christian Vocation Exploration Retreat, Mar. 18–20. African American youth will have the opportunity to explore Christian vocations and God's call on their lives during this spiritual formation weekend. Register online at www.lakejunaluska.com/ebony or call 828-454-6656.

Lake Junaluska presents Caring for Creation, Mar. 31–Apr. 3. Participate in informative green workshops, visit a sustainable community, worship and share green ideas with others. First 50 persons to register will receive a free copy of Jonathan Merritt's book, *Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet*. Register online at www.lakejunaluska.com/caring-for-creation or call 828-454-6656.

Faculty members of Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO) will lead online courses that qualify for one continuing education unit each. The classes will be taught over a four-week period beginning Apr. 25. MTSO is presenting these classes as part of the Online Continuing Education Consortium, in collaboration with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The UMC. Contact Barbara Smigelski (bsmigelski@mtso.edu; 740-362-3482) for more information.

Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University will host Ministers Week Feb. 7–9 at the Hughes-Trigg Student Center on the SMU campus. "What's a Christian to Do? – Thinking Faithfully about War and Peace in Troubled Times" is the theme for this year's gathering. This continuing education program includes endowed lectureships, a variety of worship services, workshops, and symposia, drawing participants from throughout the United States. Registration, pricing, event details, and lodging information are available at smu.edu/perkins/publicprograms. For additional information, call 214-768-2251 or e-mail AdvanceMinistry@smu.edu.

"Wade in the Water," the quadrennial South Central Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation, is set for Mar. 22–25 in New Orleans. Optional activities include tours of the post-Katrina city; a tour of St. Mark's UMC/North Rampart Community Center, an innovative urban ministry established and run by UM Women; and various kinds of relaxation organized by hosting Louisiana clergywomen. An early bird registration fee is available until Feb. 16, as are special rates. Register and find scholarship applications at <http://wadeinthewater.org> and for more information, contact Ellen Blue (ellen.blue@ptstulsa.edu; 918-809-5128).

Personalia

The Foundation for Evangelism board of trustees has appointed **Jane Boatwright Wood** as interim executive director, succeeding **Dr. John "Jack" Ewing**, who has accepted the position of executive director for Lake Junaluska Assembly, Inc. Wood assumed the interim position beginning Jan. 1.**Dr. Dorothy Jean Furnish**, author and professor emeritus at Garrett-Northwestern University, died on Jan. 3 in Louisville, CO after a lengthy illness. There was a memorial service on Jan. 7 at Community UCC in Boulder.**Phoenix Area Bishop Minerva Carcaño** has been named one of the "Most Intriguing Arizonans of 2010" by the Arizona Republic. The newspaper recognized the first Hispanic woman bishop in The UMC and leader of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference for her advocacy and care for immigrants.*Delfi*, a Lithuanian Web portal, recently honored the Rev. **Walla Carlson** of Sweden with the "People's Golden Heart" award. Carlson, a UM pastor with Lithuanian roots, has volunteered in Lithuania for many years, according to Jodi Cataldo, a former UM Board of Global Ministries missionary to the north-central European country.

Positions Available

Hinton Rural Life Center seeks President/CEO. Visit www.hintoncenter.org to view a complete position description including how to apply. Apply by Jan. 31.

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