

South Bend Clay Church expands to new building

SOUTH BEND, Ind. – Clay Church, a “United Methodist Community of God’s Love” in South Bend expanded its ministry in November and moved into a new second facility.

The church’s original seven-acre south campus at 17646 Cleveland Road had no room to grow. The 1,300-member congregation expanded its facilities with a 20-acre north campus at 52866 North Ironwood located one-tenth of a mile north of its now south campus.

The new 35,000 square-foot north campus building doubled the church’s space and is completely handicapped accessible. Clay built a raked floor sanctuary for better visibility and placed two projection screens on either side of the front. The choir loft is larger than the one at the older facility. The church also installed a theater lighting system, upgraded its sound system and installed pews to comfortably seat 600 participants.

Near the new building’s front entrance, the church created a

space for people to connect. It contains several small parlors with couches and a cafe that serves coffee, hot chocolate, juice and baked goods on Sunday mornings.

Clay’s children’s ministry has its own wing in the new building. The wing resembles the Main Street of a little town. Each room has a different storefront. Names of the stores include Gabriel’s Daily News, Noah’s Boat Rental and Jonah’s Fish Market. The largest room is for the group worship and contains a stage.

The church plans to develop its campus grounds by putting in a garden, walking paths and two pavilions, as well as an outdoor picnic area for the community to use.

The original south campus houses Clay’s Firehouse Youth Center for youth (grades 6-12). It contains a gym, fellowship hall and large kitchen, spaces the new facility does not have.

Other plans for the youth center include a computer lab for homework, a coffee shop, a sand volleyball court and an athletic

area. The church also plans to provide a couple of rooms at the youth center for outside community groups.

Clay’s lead pastor is Dr. Herb Buwalda. The Rev. Kim Bloom serves as associate pastor. The church also has 12 program and 11 support staff members.

For more information about Clay Church, log on to www.claychurch.com.

This story was based on a longer story that appeared in The South Bend Tribune.

Haitian women artisans find support in new for-profit business

North Indiana United Methodists can be proud they are supporting a new way of doing missions. HAPI, a brand new for-profit business was started in March 2007 with seed-money grants from the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries and its Women’s Division.

A group of women artisans with no other means of income have been trained and are being guided through the process of developing their business in the

mountain village of Mizak, Haiti. They are marketing their hand-embroidered products through their own Web site, www.HaitianArtisans.com.

In order to assist them in a very tangible way, volunteer groups in Indiana are assembling the embroideries into greeting cards that are sent to customers across the United States. Several UM churches have made the once-a-month commitment to assemble, including in Fort Wayne, First

Wayne UMC, Saint Joseph UMC, Covenant UMC and 1st UMC; in Warsaw, Warsaw UMC; in Marion, Herbst UMC, Mier Community and several others are coming on board.

There are several ways to be involved including: product assembly, secretarial help, research, development and individual volunteers to work at the co-op site in Mizak to help eliminate pover-

ty in the poorest country of the Western Hemisphere.

Please pray for HAPI and contact Lorelei VerLee at GodsDesign@gmail.com for further information.

UE professor recognized for excellence by Higher Education and Ministry

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (UE) – The University of Evansville is proud to announce Bob Dion, associate professor of political science, as the recipient of this year’s Exemplary Teacher Award.

The Exemplary Teacher Award is presented each year by the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, as a way of recognizing excellence in teaching at United Methodist Church-related institutions of



Dion

higher educations. Dion was honored with the award Dec. 19, during the UE Winter Commencement ceremony.

“We’re very proud today to announce Dr. Dion as the recipient of this prestigious award,” said UE Vice President for Academic Af-

fairs Susan Kupisch. “Since coming to the University of Evansville in 2001, Dion has consistently received top evaluation marks from his students, from his colleagues, and from his superiors.”

“Dr. Dion truly does personify the exemplary teacher.” Dion came to UE in 2001 from Syracuse University, as an assistant professor of political science. He received tenure and was promoted to associate professor in March

2007.

In his time at UE, Dion has been chair of the University’s Snyder Concert and Lecture Series committee and has, for four years, been chairperson of the Evansville-Vanderburgh County Human Relations Commission.

Cokesbury available to help with resource needs of congregations

Now is the time to start thinking about curriculum and 2008 VBS supplies.

Landon DeCrautos, key account manager for the Cokesbury store in Fishers, Ind., would like to make himself available to you. He is available to come to your church to give learning sessions regarding dif-

ferent types of curriculum that are available.

DeCrautos also is able to help you with any other church supplies or growth resources you may need. If you are interested in meeting with Landon DeCrautos, contact him by e-mail at ldecrautos@cokesbury.com or by telephone at 317-849-1551.



Gulfport housing recovery program ends after rebuilding 640 homes

GULFPORT, Miss. – Volunteers from Tennessee and Virginia spent Tuesday, Dec. 4 putting the finishing touches on a storm-damaged house on Second Street. They were among 6,500 volunteers, including hundreds of Hoosier United Methodists, who have been part of the Katrina Rebuilding Program at Trinity United Methodist Church in Gulfport.

“It’s been overwhelming,” said Carol Kawa, a volunteer from Kingsport, Tenn. “To go into homes that have been devastated, to help rebuild, to meet the homeowners, to see the gratitude on their faces, has just been a real moving experience.”

“It has been an incredible opportunity for Trinity to be involved in the community, to open their hearts and doors and to truly make a difference in people’s lives,” said Courtney Allen, Rebuilding Program Coordinator for Trinity.

The rebuilding program at Trinity actually began days after Katrina, when the church fed more than 35,000 people in three weeks. After that, volunteers came to clean-up 700 homes and rebuild more than 640 houses.



Photo by Sharon Dunten

Representing months of work by volunteers from all over the country, Southport UMC participated in one of the last house blessings from Trinity UMC Gulfport recovery station, November 2007. Courtney Allen, Recovery Coordinator at Trinity, gave a candle to a hurricane survivor to be lit as remembrance of God’s shining light during trials in life.

On Dec. 5, almost two and a half years later, that extraordinary mission came to an end.

“This is the last official mission trip down here through Trinity Church,” Kawa said. “It’s very, very sad. It’s been a very emotional time.”

Story courtesy of WLOX, Channel 13, Biloxi-Gulfport.

Trinity’s recovery numbers

- ◆ Hosted more than 6,500 volunteers.
- ◆ Logged more than 750,000 hours.
- ◆ Gutted approximately 700 homes.
- ◆ Positive rebuilding steps in more than 640 homes.

South Indiana Conference adds administrator for VIM, disaster response volunteers

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – Dr. James Bushfield, director of Connectional Ministries of the South Indiana Conference, recently announced the addition of Jenni Walker to the conference staff.

Walker will be the resource administrator for volunteers-in-mission work teams and disaster response volunteers. According to Bushfield, “this new staff position was created in response to the

overwhelming number of work teams from congregations all over the South Indiana Conference responding to the needs of the Gulf Coast and Baker Chapel and our need to grow our connectional capacity to respond to disasters and other community and global needs.

“In experimenting with new staffing models for a new conference, Jenni will be working from

the Turning Point United Methodist Church in Evansville, with frequent visits to the conference center in Bloomington for staff team building.”

To contact Walker for help with VIM and disaster response forms before you go, forms after you’ve gone, VIM trip insurance, questions on where to go: email her at jwalker@sicumc.org or call at 812-893-1760.