

Highlights from the May/June issue of Together

Liberia President Sirleaf addresses United Methodists

FORT WORTH, Texas (UMNS) - Liberia President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf told a worldwide gathering of United Methodists that her country and her church share a common commitment to eradicate poverty.

Sirleaf, a member of the Monrovia (Liberia) United Methodist Church, greeted delegates to the denomination's top lawmaking body as "fellow Christians and fellow Methodists" many times during her April 29 address to the 2008 General Conference.

"This is a special honor for me," she said. "I am the first African leader and the first female president to address the General Conference of The United Methodist Church."

Sirleaf, 70, was greeted with cheers, applause and "ululations" from fellow Africans in the assembly. General Conference brings together delegates from around the world every four years to decide church law. The body met April 23-May 2 in Fort Worth.

Governor honors Bill and Gloria Gaither with state's highest award

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana's Governor Mitch Daniels honored gospel music singing and songwriting pioneers Bill and Gloria Gaither of Alexandria, Ind., on April 2 with the 2008 Sachem Award, the state's highest honor.

"With all the success they have achieved, the Gaithers still live with us: in the house in which they raised their children, in the way in which they raised those children, in the way in which they and their music have spoken to us and to the better angels of our nature now for 50 plus years," said Daniels.

The Sachem is given annually by the Governor of Indiana to recognize a lifetime of excellence and moral virtue that has brought credit and honor to Indiana.

The Indianapolis Star named "He Touched Me" (#367 in The United Methodist Hymnal) among the top 10 songs of the 20th century written by a Hoosier. The UM Hymnal also has three other Gaither songs.

Bill Gaither told Together that the three leading users of their music are Southern Baptists, Roman Catholics and United Methodists.

Nationally known organist to retire from New Albany church

NEW ALBANY, Ind. - Dr. Donald Paul Hustad, 89, is perhaps one of the most preeminent experts on church music and worship alive today. He currently serves as the associate organist at Trinity United Methodist Church in New Albany, Ind. He plans to retire in June to move to the Chicago area to be near his family. He will be 90 on Oct. 2.

He has been organist at numerous churches in the United States, taught organ and most notably served as Crusade organist for the Billy Graham Evangelical Association from 1961 to 1966 working directly with George Beverly Shea, Cliff Barrows and Dr. Graham.

At a tribute to Hustad in Louisville this spring, he was called "the reigning 'Dean' of evangelical church music in the United States."

Trinity United Methodist Church at 2796 Charlestown Road in New Albany will be hosting a retirement celebration on Sunday, May 25. That Sunday will be Hustad's final Sunday to play for the New Albany congregation at the 9 a.m. worship service. That afternoon at 2 p.m. ET, the church will hold a celebratory event at which Hustad will play some of his favorite hymn arrangements. One of his daughters will join him and play the flute. A variety of recognitions will be presented on "Dr. Don's" life and service to the church, church music and worship.

Janitors' victory points way to good jobs with health care

INDIANAPOLIS - As workers throughout the Midwest face ever-increasing economic pressures, Indianapolis janitors have won higher wages, more work hours and health insurance in their first-ever city-wide union contract.

The groundbreaking agreement will help lift more than 1,000 janitors out of poverty, increasing the income of the average worker and increasing the income of the lowest-paid workers by an incredible 169 percent during the course of the contract, more than doubling the income of workers at the lowest end of the spectrum within the first 20 months.

The agreement comes following similar janitors' victories reached in the nearby Ohio cities of Columbus and Cincinnati. Cities like Indianapolis have seen a sharp increase in service-sector employment. In all three cities janitors gained the support of hundreds of religious, elected and community leaders, including United Methodist pastors, and urged the region's numerous Fortune 500 companies, who contract out for cleaning services and who combined take in more than \$1-billion a day in revenues, to support good jobs with health care for the region's working families, who are falling further behind as corporate CEOs receive record levels of compensation in millions of dollars.

The agreement recently ratified by janitors provides the city's janitors with victories on four key fronts.

- Higher Wages
- More Hours
- Quality, affordable health insurance
- Paid holidays and vacation time

Head of new church starts to speak at North Indiana Conference

The North Indiana Annual Conference will not have a conference preacher this year during its session. Indiana Area Bishop Mike Coyner will be preaching at the Memorial Service at the opening of conference on Thursday morning and during the Commissioning and Ordination Service on Saturday.

Tom Butcher, the church's executive officer for New Church Starts in the United States and leader of the Path 1 Team of the General Board of Discipleship, will be speaking Thursday evening May 29 during the Church Development Celebration Service.

Butcher will work to build and implement the denomination's collaborative effort to train 1,000 new church planters who are planning to start 650 new congregations by 2012. He leads the denomination's effort to make new disciples of Jesus Christ by planting new churches. A leader with a proven track record of helping to start new churches, during Butcher's tenure in

Congregational Development, he facilitated the start-up of 24 new churches and the revitalization of more than 40 others congregations.

Storey: Methodist Church of Southern Africa to build seminary

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa is working to open a Methodist seminary that will develop leaders to transform the church and the nation of South Africa.

"Leadership is the gift and skill of moving other people into transformative action in the world," said the Rev. Peter Storey, former bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

During a presentation sponsored by the Upper Room earlier this year, a ministry of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, Storey talked about the challenges faced by his country - poverty, pandemic diseases, crime, corruption, racism, education crises and environmental degradation.

Storey is chairman of the project to open the new seminary, which is scheduled to enroll its first 35 students next January. The seminary will provide candidates for the ministry with three years of residential, spiritual and academic training and internships - instead of the current six years of on-the-job training

The seminary will be named in honor of the late Rev. Seth Mokitimi, who "models the kind of minister the seminary seeks to produce," said Storey

The new seminary "is not about bricks and mortar" but about developing life-changing spiritual leaders to transform the church and the nation of South Africa, Storey said

Transformational pastors, he said, have qualities that include a spiritual life nourished by Christ; personal conduct that is above reproach; accountability to colleagues and the church; ability to interpret Scripture faithfully and preach spiritual liberation effectively; and a passion to work for justice, reconciliation and unity of all people

Storey will preach during the ordination-commissioning service at the South Indiana Annual Conference session at the Indiana University Auditorium in Bloomington on Friday, June 6, at 7:30 p.m.

He also will speak at the Duke Divinity School breakfast at 7 a.m. in State Room West of Memorial Union. Information about tickets is available through the South Indiana Conference Web site at www.sicumc.org.

McGriff to sign book at both Indiana conference sessions

Dr. Carver McGriff, author and a former senior pastor (now retired) of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, published a book this past year titled Making Sense of Normandy: A Young Man's Journey of War and Faith. He will be available in the Cokesbury display at both North Indiana and South Indiana conference sessions signing his book.

In his book, McGriff gives a rare veteran first-hand account of the harsh realities of World War II combat - not only the struggle for physical survival but for emotional and spiritual survival as well. It is a timeless story for all generations, a rare treasure that will touch the hearts and minds of all the Greatest Generations - yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's.

McGriff served in the Infantry in Normandy, receiving a Bronze Star medal and two Purple Hearts. He is the author of nine books and resides in Zionsville, Indiana, with his wife Marianne, and is the father of three young women.

Bishop and dean speak about living in Wesleyan Way

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana Area Bishop Mike Coyner and Dr. Greg Jones, dean of Duke Divinity School, spoke to more than 560 Indiana United Methodist clergy during a two-day Our Life Together retreat at St. Luke's UMC in Indianapolis on April 14 and 15. Using the Wesleyan way of living, Coyner left his prepared sermon to speak from his heart to pastors. He said, "I love The United Methodist Church and I believe we got it right. We have a theology of both faith and works, both local and global."

Addressing the same pastors, Jones talked about living the way John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, intended his pastors to live. He spoke about three characteristics of leaders in the Wesleyan movement today.

First is personal humility by the work we do on behalf of the church. "We need to put away selfish ambitions as an alternate to mediocrity. We need to stop being preoccupied with ourselves and (be) passionate about our mission," said Jones.

Transformational leaders are people of extraordinary character, not in their personal charisma but the way they lead their lives with, as Wesley would say, holiness of heart and life, letting the light of Christ to shine through.

Effective leaders are powerful storytellers, Jones said. We need to tell the story to chart a new direction. We have the best story ever told. We need to tell this story in fresh ways. We will be successful as leaders if we can hold things together, in this fragmented society, until a new way is made known. Jesus has the capacity to keep people around the table until their imagination comes into being.

Jones further used three images to inspire connections: Friendship to God and friendliness to others; to imagine hospitality to strangers: and to imagine loving enemies.

Operation Classroom needs your help for schools in West Africa

Operation Classroom will have a yellow truck on the north side of the Elliot Hall of Music at Purdue University in West Lafayette for loading In-Gathering supplies during the North Indiana Annual Conference session May 29-31. Items may be dropped off all day Thursday and Friday and until noon on Saturday, according to the Rev. Joe Wagner, OC coordinator.

That same yellow truck also will appear during the South Indiana Conference Annual Conference session, June 5-7 in Bloomington. It will be parked in front of the Indiana University Auditorium during the conference session. Items may be dropped off all day Thursday and Friday and until noon on Saturday.

Plan to be a part of the In-Gathering of supplies and materials needed for Operation Classroom schools in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Here is what is needed:

- For HOME ECONOMICS (Sewing-Tailoring) - Sewing and tailoring supplies, embroidery supplies and Crochet supplies, cloth remnants.

- Cooking supplies - Measuring cups, measuring spoons, cooking spoons and ladles, cookie cutters, spatulas, rolling pins.
- For children: Children's multi-vitamins, children's Tylenol, Cream of Wheat, Enfamil and Similac
- 1,000 needed - 1 toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper) 1 large tube of toothpaste (4.5 oz or larger, expiration date must be 6 months or longer), bath-size bar of soap and small bath towel
- For schools - copy paper, soccer balls, tennis shoes (can be used, if in good condition) YES and ET KITS, notebooks, solar calculators and other school supplies.
- Choir and pulpit robes, communion ware, United Methodist Hymnals, 1964 edition of the Book of Worship.
- OC recently was able to purchase more than 24,000 boxes of chalk for 30 cents a box so this need as been taken care of.

Plants of hope to be placed at Old City Church site in Gary

This past fall more than 200 United Methodists met at the site of the Old City First United Methodist Church ruins in downtown Gary, Ind. During the service of hope and resurrection led by Indiana Area Bishop Mike Coyner, Calumet District Superintendent Michelle Cobb distributed packets of flower seeds asking participants to plant them with a plan to bring them back to the downtown church ruins in the spring.

It's now spring and time to plant those flowers. That planting will take place on Saturday, June 7 at 10:30 a.m. CT.

Indianapolis church honors organist for 68 years of service

INDIANAPOLIS - Members, colleagues, and friends of the Meridian Street United Methodist Church in Indianapolis gathered on April 15 to honor organist Dorothy Scott's 68 years of being "at the console." As well as the honor shown her by Indianapolis Mayor Ballard, Scott was awarded the title of "Distinguished Hoosier" by Governor Mitch Daniels.

Dorothy Scott and her late husband, Farrell, began their church-related music careers when asked to assume the positions of organist and Director of Music, respectfully, by the Meridian Street Methodist Church in 1941. At the start of her tenure with the Meridian Street church, she also briefly played for the First Baptist Church. Both of the Scotts also were involved with the music program at the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation for 27 years, located 10 blocks north.

National gambling opponent to speak at conference sessions

Cheered by those who oppose the expansion of gambling and often feared by those who profit from that expansion, the Rev. Tom Grey will be speaking at both the North Indiana and South Indiana 2008 Annual Conference sessions.

Grey is known for his no nonsense presentation of the failure of gambling to deliver on its promises. For the past 15 years, Grey has been outspoken in his opposition to gambling.

Grey is a retired United Methodist pastor now living on the west coast, who continues his traveling and speaking on behalf of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling (NCALG).

He says gambling is not winning all or even the majority of the battles in the United States. He will outline the possibility of changing the direction of legalized gambling in Indiana.

Grey is scheduled to speak Friday morning, May 30, during the North Indiana Annual Conference session at Elliott Hall on the campus of Purdue University in West Lafayette. He also is scheduled to speak during the South Indiana Annual Conference session on Thursday morning June 5. Grey will address both annual conference session and speak during a noon luncheon following the session. Those wishing to attend the luncheon will need to purchase a luncheon reservation from their respective conference.

A new Indiana Conference designed for 21st century goals

Both the North Indiana Conference and the South Indiana Conference sessions of The United Methodist Church will be conferencing and voting on the Imagine Indiana Design Team Report including proposals for uniting the two conferences into one new Indiana Conference.

The North Indiana Conference will hear a report presentation during its session at Purdue University in Elliott Hall in West Lafayette on Thursday, May 29 from approximately 2:15 to 2:45 p.m. Conference members will then meet in one of seven Christian conferencing groups from 3 to 5 p.m. to discuss the plan. The Imagine Indiana Design Team Report will then come back to the floor of the conference on Friday, May 30 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. to discuss and to vote on the plan.

The South Indiana Conference will hear a report presentation during its session at Indiana University Auditorium in Bloomington on Thursday, June 5 from 3 to 3:30 p.m. Conference members will then meet in one of seven Christian conferencing groups from 3:45 to 5 p.m. to discuss the plan. The Imagine Indiana Design Team Report will then come back to the floor of the conference on Friday, June 6 from 3 to 5 p.m. to discuss and to vote on the plan.

Creating a new Indiana Conference is about these five practices of a fruitful annual conference (adapted from the book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Robert Schnase).

If you missed the Imagine Indiana Design Team Web cast on March 30, you can see the entire hour-long presentation with questions and answers now. Log on to www.inareaumc.org and click on the URL given under Imagine Indiana.

This is also the site where you can download the 50-page copy of the Design Team Report and the two-page summary.