

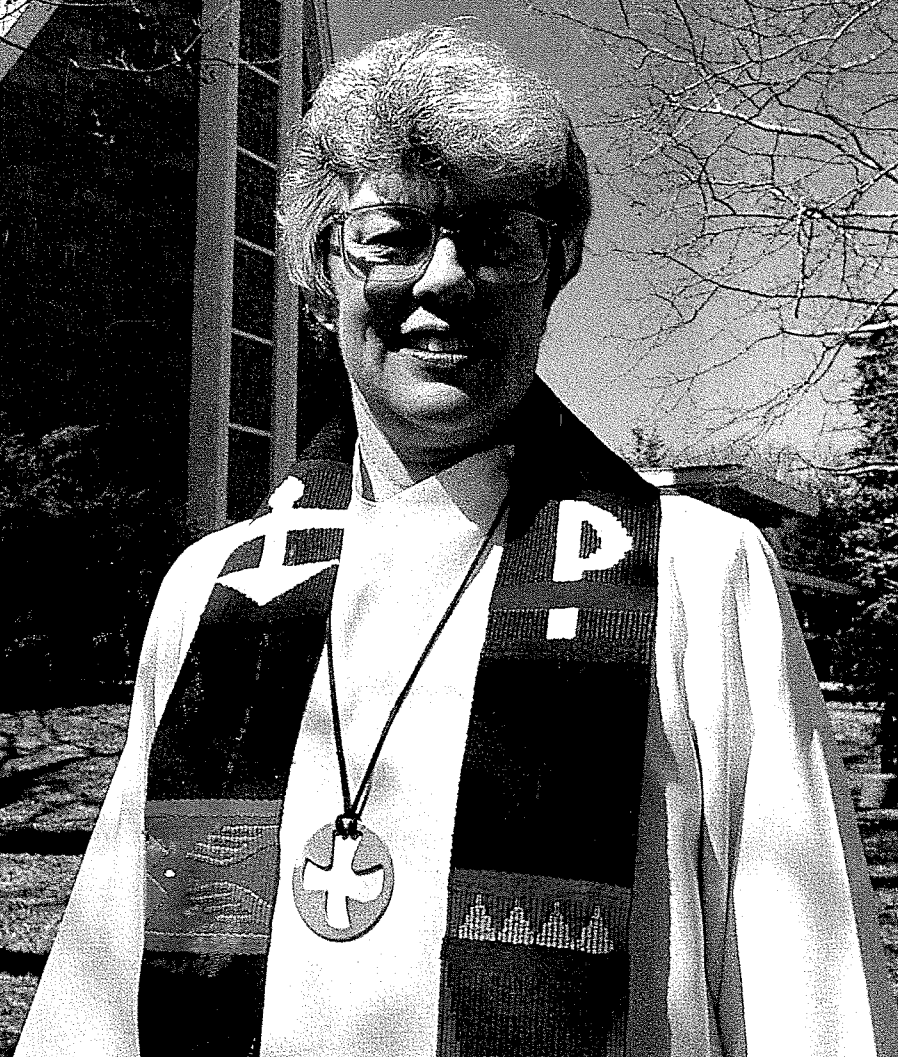
# Interpreter

PROGRAM IDEAS FOR UNEECED METHODISTS  
JULY-AUGUST 1975

Calendar  
Order Form Inside

## Women Pastors

page 12

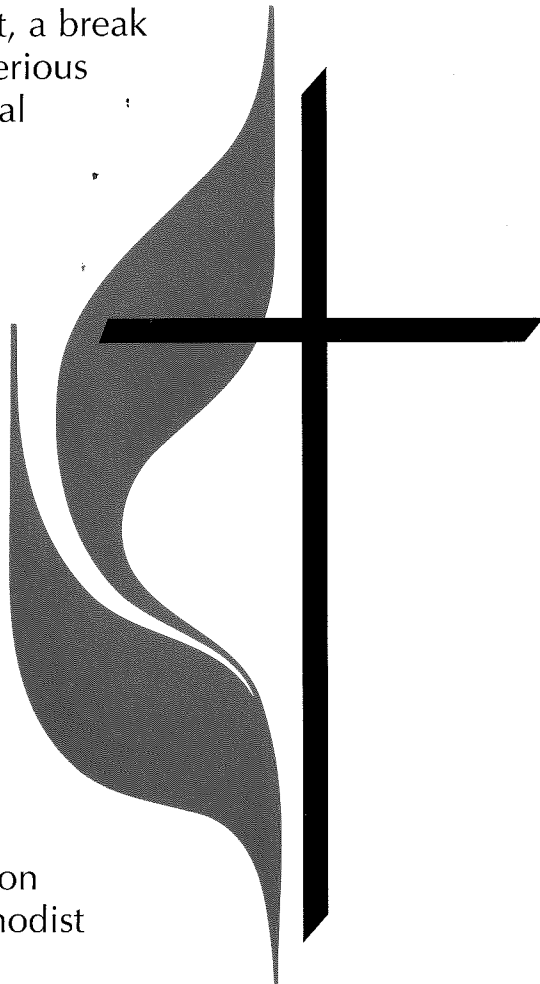


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**Publisher**  
Arvin R. Luchs

**Editorial Director**  
Laura J. Okumu

**Editor**  
M. Garlinda Burton

**Art Director**  
Suzanne Story

**Associate Editors**  
Amy Wallace Brack  
Barbara Dunlap-Berg

**Editorial Secretary**  
Ladale Carey

**Marketing Manager**  
Jac'Que Gordon

**Advertising Manager**  
Jeannette May

**Circulation Manager**  
Barbara Sullivan

**Subscription Coordinator**  
Cynthia Wilkins

**Production Manager**  
Orville D. Hinkle

**Art Assistant**  
Allan F. Bean

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## Reflections

# Women in Ministry



MIKE DUBOSE/UMCOM

As a child I spent my summers in Hickory, N.C., the sole recipient of a good spoiling by both of my grandmothers.

Every time the doors opened at Hartzell United Methodist Church, those two sturdy women—with me in tow—were there, working. They baked biscuits and fried chicken for funerals, bore altar flowers and cards to the sick, washed the glass cups and plates after Holy Communion, even led women's prayer circles.

Whenever there was need, they tended the ailing, comforted the dying, celebrated the weddings and births of the joyful, and revealed the love of Christ to everyone who came through the door.

Despite their faithfulness, it never occurred to either one to declare themselves "ministers" sent out in the name of Jesus. I'm sure both "Mama" and "Grammy" died never having heard a woman preacher.

They probably never realized how their womanly service to the church was paving the way for women called to take their place alongside men as bearers of God's word.

Until recently, I regularly told people I'd never seen or heard a woman minister until I was 24 years old. They may not have been ordained, but my "grands" were God's ministers. I think they'd be thrilled to know that women have moved from the church kitchen to the pulpit. And we're moving still.

The cover story in this issue celebrates the growing number of women who, despite the gender barriers of institutional church and society, have answered God's call to ministry.

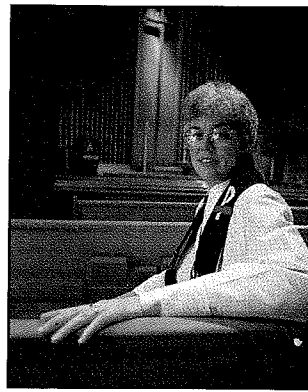
The article contains personal stories of prejudices challenged, lives changed, faith fulfilled, and the Word proclaimed by ordained women. It recounts the journey from the first laywoman preacher to the six active women bishops serving our denomination today.

The anecdotes are designed to make you smile, grimace, ponder and celebrate. I urge you to pray daily for men and women around the world who have answered the unique call of God to serve the church and humanity with integrity, devotion and selflessness.

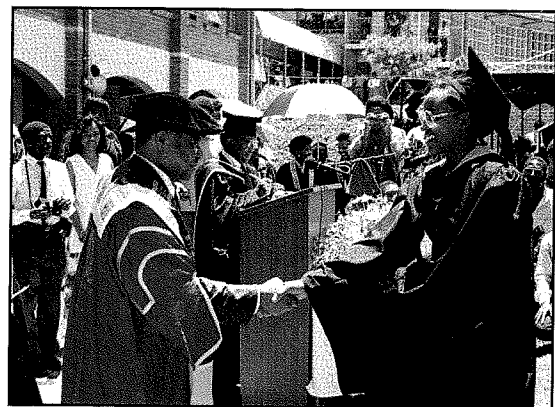
Take risks!

M. Garlinda Burton, editor





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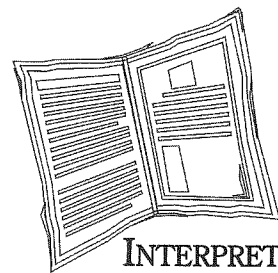
# Interpreter

PROGRAM IDEAS  
FOR UNITED METHODISTS

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Cover photo by John Goodwin.  
Carol Cox, pastor of Christ  
United Methodist Church,  
New Rochelle, N.Y.



**INTERPRETER  
is changing!  
See inside  
back cover.**



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**THE MISSION OF INTERPRETER** is to help local churches foster the ministry and growth of God's reign in their communities and around the world. As the denomination's program journal, INTERPRETER shares the recommendations and resources of the church's general agencies and the experiences of local churches in a manner that will inform, inspire and encourage local church leaders.

## Calendar

**June-August**  
*Vacation Bible School.* To teach children about the Bible and Christian faith. Education, children's and youth coordinators.

**June-August**  
*Church Camp.* To teach all ages about the Christian faith and God's creation. Age-level and family ministry coordinators.

**Oct. 1**  
*World Communion Sunday.* To call the church to be the universal inclusive church. Administrative council, council on ministries, worship, higher education and campus ministry. See pp. 29-30, July-August 1995 INTERPRETER.

**Oct. 15**  
*Laity Sunday.* To celebrate the ministry of all Christians as their lives are empowered for ministry by the Holy Spirit. Lay leader, coordinator of adult ministries, administrative council and council on ministries. See p. 21, July-August 1995 INTERPRETER.

**Oct. 31**  
*Reformation Day.* To celebrate the spirit of continuing reformation in the church. Christian unity and interreligious concerns.

**Nov. 1**  
*All Saints' Day.* To remember historical and contemporary saints. Worship.

**Liturgical Colors**  
June 18-Oct. 29 .....Green  
Nov. 1 .....White  
Nov. 5-19.....Green  
Nov. 23 .....Red or White  
Nov. 26 .....White

# Letters

### Let There Be Ads

So long as good sense is exercised, I fail to see the problems in INTERPRETER accepting non-United Methodist advertisements (April letters, p. 5). Those who complain about this practice are yielding to a parochialism that surely would have evoked, for one, the ire of the prophet Amos. Our world thrusts serious and compelling problems on us Christians. This is not one of them!

**J. Kenneth Kuntz**, ordained minister and professor of religion, University of Iowa, Iowa City

### Another View of Violence

The April "News and Comment" section included an item about a letter sent to pro-life groups. Your article quoted the letter saying "rhetoric has encouraged violence and unstable individuals to harm God's children."

It makes no sense to say we don't want God's children harmed and not include the unborn as His own. The *Discipline* says we United Methodists support "safe, legal abortions in limited cases." Perhaps this reflects what is right in our own eyes. However, a biblical view is needed.

**Bob Johnson**, layman, First Church, Eustis, Fla.

### Don't Omit Aldersgate Day

For two years the April calendar in INTERPRETER has noted awareness of social issues and how we can be more relevant to society. Noticeable by its absence is Aldersgate Day, May 24.

Is the conversion date of John Wesley and the beginning of heartfelt faith less worthy than COCU (Consultation on Church Union) Sunday? Is our first task to be relevant to God or to be relevant to culture?

My hope is that we will not lose our heart.

**Douglas Desper**, pastor, St. Mark's Church, Waynesboro, Va.

### For Theological Clarity

I have just read with great interest the letter from Mr. Sheldon and Mr. Gribble (April, p. 5). I had not read the article to which they refer ("Miracle of Grace," November-December, p. 8), but I am under the impression that they—and perhaps the article itself—have confused the Immaculate Conception with the Virgin Birth.

Immaculate Conception is the term used to explain the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was conceived, by her parents, without original sin. It has nothing to do with how Mary became pregnant with Jesus.

If you have any doubt as to the veracity of the above, you can check any Catholic encyclopedia as a reference.

I enjoy your magazine and find it to be filled with wonderful ideas and suggestions to improve our church home. Thank you!

**Sandy Pastor**, music minister and secretary, Pleasant Street Church, Salem, N.H.

### Pastors Need Pastoral Care

United Methodist ministers are only human and can only endure so much (February-March "Idea Mart," p. 28). That is why I hope you will have a future article regarding the demands on dedicated ministers. They need some kind of assistance, especially if they are appointed to spread the Word at two or more different congregations each Sunday.

We sympathize with overworked doctors; why not sympathize with overworked ministers? It is hard when one shepherd has to guard far too many sheep. Even Noah had to have support in order to keep the ark organized.

**Judy M. Irby**, laywoman, Bethel Church, Greenville, S.C.

Send letters to: Editor, INTERPRETER, P.O. Box 320, Nashville, TN 37202-0320.

# UM digest

News & Information About the Worldwide Church

## In Bombing Aftermath Churches, Bishops Reach Out, Speak Out

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.—Nearly four months after the deadliest terrorist attack in U.S. history, United Methodists' prayers and actions are helping heal the wounds of the Oklahoma City bombing.

Contributions to help blast victims are still being collected through the disaster fund of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (No. 901607-1).

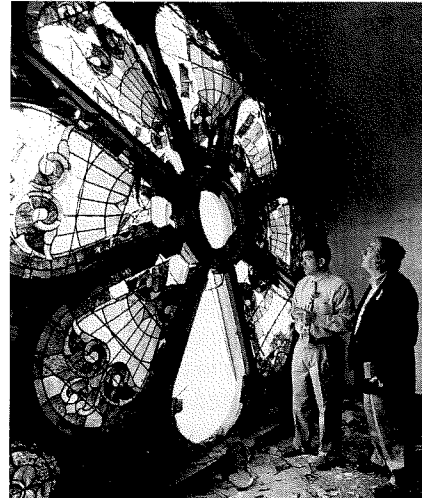
United Methodists from around the world have collected special offerings, sent letters of sympathy and solidarity, and challenged the faith community to counter hatred and violence with acts of love and reconciliation.

At their spring meeting, United Methodist bishops agreed to issue a letter decrying violence in our society. Oklahoma Area Bishop Dan Solomon called for a "massive moral uprising" of anti-violence activism by people of faith.

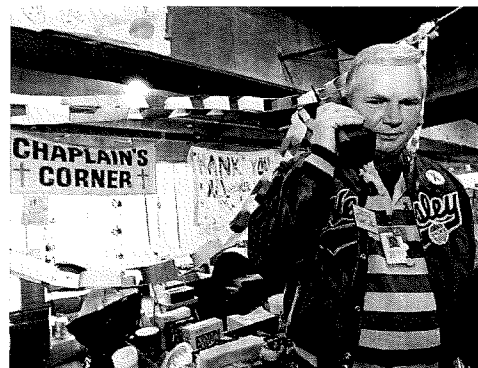
In May, more than 100 United Methodist groups studied "Making Meaning Out of Horror," the first in the series "Faithlink," faxed weekly.

The lesson addressing the bombing was based on John Wesley's belief that God's grace exists despite suffering and violence. The

**Right: The Rev. Lance Gutteridge, left, associate pastor at First Church, Oklahoma City, and Joe Richardson of Nacogdoches, Texas, survey a stained-glass window that was damaged by the terrorist bombing this spring.**



**Below: United Methodist pastor Robert Allen works as the mayor's appointed coordinator of 500 chaplains and ministers in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing.**



United Methodist Publishing House series is designed to help laypeople relate their faith to their daily lives.

When the search for bodies at the Alfred P. Murrah building ended in early May, 167 people were confirmed dead, including Raymond Johnson, a Social Security Administration employee.

Johnson was the husband of Anne Marshall, staffer with the United

Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

Among property damaged by the explosion was First United Methodist Church, located directly across the street. A special fund has been established to help repair the historic church building. The denomination's Board of Global Ministries in New York contributed the first \$100,000 to Advance No. 982700 in remembrance

of Oklahoma City's attempt "to regain wholeness in the wake of an act of hate."

A group of diaconal ministers organized through Southern Hills United Methodist Church also worked to comfort children affected by the bombing.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief sponsored a workshop to help adult workers comfort children touched by the attack on the federal building.

Robert Allen, senior pastor of the city's Wesley United Methodist Church, was assigned by Mayor Ron Norick to coordinate the services of more than 500 chaplains who counseled victims and families and rescue workers.

After recovery efforts ended, Allen led a service for rescue workers and their families, many of whom had come from across the nation. More than 3,000 people attended the service and, led by Allen, gave a 20-minute ovation honoring the rescuers.

—reported by UM News Service and Boyce Bowdon, communications director, Oklahoma Conference

## Korean Churches Celebrate Jubilee

NEW YORK (UMNS)—Christians from North and South Korea will unite spiritually as they celebrate 1995 as the "Year of Korean Jubilee."

Timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan and its division into two parts by the superpower nations, the religious observance will focus on continued efforts toward reunification, according to the Rev. Michael Hahn, a United Methodist and chairman of the Korea Church Coalition.

## Group Claims Church Has Strayed From Heritage

ATLANTA (UMNS)—An estimated 900 United Methodists have drafted a strongly worded statement to address

## Missions Arm Proposes Downsizing

NEW YORK (UMNS)—Directors of the Board of Global Ministries have proposed cutting its voting membership from 180 to 90.

In its recommendation, the board also proposes structuring its staff into a women's division, a health and relief unit, an executive committee, six "world witness" program areas, and five standing committees.

a "theological crisis" within the church.

The document from the "Confessing Movement Within the United Methodist Church" declares that the church is being negatively influenced by versions of the faith not rooted in Scripture.

The statement calls for orthodoxy in theological matters, including a Trinitarian faith; condemns homosexuality and abortion; and decries experimentation "with pagan ritual practices."

## Vandalism Against Church Decried

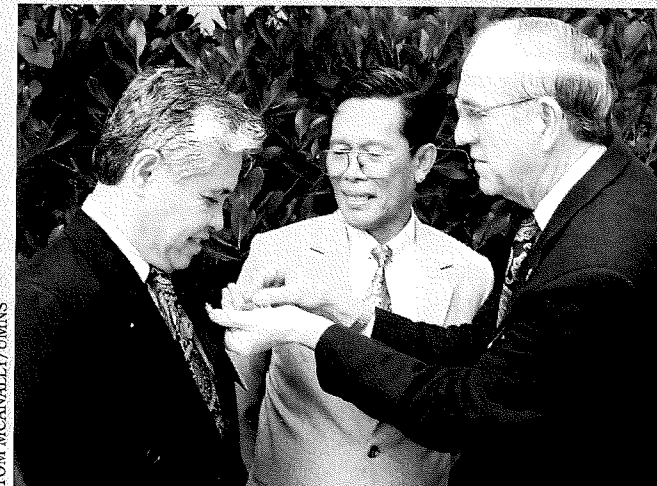
TULSA, Okla. (UMNS)—Efforts to intimidate a Native American congregation here with vandalism and death threats backfired.

Instead, the area's entire religious community held an interfaith service of reconciliation and support at Tulsa Indian United Methodist Church,

which was vandalized earlier this year. The interfaith group prayed for increased unity in Tulsa, and vowed not to tolerate such attacks.

Vandals broke into the church, ransacked rooms, spread feces on the bathroom walls and stole sound equipment. A death threat was left on the answering machine, according to pastor Tim Byington.

## Filipino Bishops Elected



**Houston Area Bishop Woodrow Hearn, 1994-95 president of the Council of Bishops, pins newly elected Filipino bishops Daniel C. Arichea Jr., left, and Benjamin Gutierrez, of the Baguio and Davao Areas, respectively.**

## Names in the News



Shin-Lee

The Rev. **Kyung-Lim Shin-Lee** became the first Korean woman vice president at a United Methodist seminary, when she was named head of church relations and student development at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington.

New York Area Bishop **Forrest C. Stith** is on leave from his duties after citing stress-related health problems stemming from job demands and a grievance filed against him.



Stith



James

The Rev. **Kevin M. James**, chaplain at UM-related Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Fla., was recently appointed to the state board of One Church, One Child by Florida Governor Lawton Chiles.

**Diana L. Eck**, a United Methodist and Harvard University professor of comparative religion, has been awarded the 1995 Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Religion. ... The Rev. **Jose Orlando Rivera**, pastor of Maywood (Calif.) Church, has been named executive director of MARCHA, United Methodism's Hispanic caucus. ... **Carolyn Wright**, a member of Hamilton Park Church in Dallas, has been appointed justice of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. ... The Rev. **Vladislav Spektorov** has become the first Russian to be ordained an elder in The United Methodist Church. ... After 20 years of applying to the Israeli government, United Methodist missionary **Alex Awad** has received an official visa for his mission work in Israel-Palestine. ... Bishops **Joel N. Martinez** of Nebraska and **Dan E. Solomon** of Oklahoma received the 1995 Distinguished Alumni award from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas.



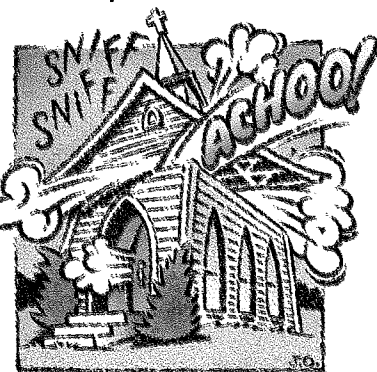
# POTLUCK

## Hypoallergenic Worship Is Nothing to Sneeze At

When First Church, Boise, Idaho, learned that allergy-prone churchgoers had a hard time worshipping alongside people wearing heavy perfumes and other irritants, the church launched a fragrance-free service.

Now nearly a year old, the Sunday afternoon service has grown in popularity, according to the Rev. Tom Tucker, former pastor of the 2,400-member congregation.

Worshippers wear only natural-fiber clothes and refrain from wearing scented toiletries.



JIM OSBORN

## John Wesley Slept Here?

For United Methodists who can't get enough of church history, skip the hotel with pool this summer, and visit the farmhouse where John Wesley rested during circuit rides.

A newly published travel guide offers information on more than 300 church landmarks. For vacationers *A Traveler's Guide to the Historic Shrines and Historic Landmarks of United Methodism* also includes directions to and brief sketches of each site.

The guide is available from the General Commission on Archives and History, (201) 408-3189.

## Another 'Dimension' for Fund Raising

Singer Marilyn McCoo, formerly with the Grammy award-winning group The Fifth Dimension, recently won recognition from United Methodist-related Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Fla. President Oswald Bronson presented McCoo with the school's Champion Award



for "service to Black higher education" and her fundraising efforts. The singer traveled to Florida for a benefit concert sponsored by First Church of Ormond Beach.

## 'Dear God' Letters Show Children's Imaginations

"Dear God, my dad thinks he is you. Please straighten him out," writes 11-year-old Wayne.

The letter is one of dozens showcased in *Dear God* (Perigee Books, \$9), a new book by psychologist David Heller. An expert on children's spirituality, Heller celebrates the "humor and vitality" of children's ideas about God.

Indeed, the letters show both the innocence and insight of children. Eight-year-old Carmeñ writes that she'd like to apply for the job of angel "if you don't have to be too handy." As for Fred, age 9, he simply wants God to improve the taste of asparagus.

## National Elections for Bishops?

A seminary dean is advocating national election of bishops by General Conference.

Another alternative is to hold General and Jurisdictional conferences at the same time and site, to save money, said Dennis Campbell, dean of Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C. U.S. bishops currently are elected by jurisdictions the summer following General Conference.

Campbell's suggestions are part of a three-year study of Methodism and U.S. culture, funded by the Lilly Endowment.

## Under One (Church) Roof

Despite their ideological differences, President Bill Clinton and family and Republican leader Bob Dole and wife Elizabeth worship regularly at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington.

Pastor J. Philip Wogaman told *United Methodist Newscope* that while neither couple is present every Sunday, it is not unusual for both the Clintons and the Doles to attend Sunday morning services.

Wogaman said the couples' participation in the same church demonstrates that the Christian faith "can transcend political differences."



TIM FOLEY

# Spectrum

Readers Speak Out

## Getting Ready for a Woman Preacher

by Mary Ann Matthews



Mary Ann Matthews

"I heard Bible stories come alive with new meaning. Her vision was refreshing."

When we were told that we were going to have a woman preacher, I welcomed the news. From conversations with my daughter-in-law, who teaches at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and with my son, who teaches a course on John Wesley, I understood a good bit about women in ministry. I saw them as dedicated, well-trained and increasing in number, with a nurturing quality to enrich their ministry.

But I had a problem. I knew many of my friends in our congregation were not ready for a woman preacher. How was I going to prepare my 90-year-old father? He had been a member of Pleasant Grove Church in Lawrenceburg, Tenn., since he moved to the area in 1921. I rehearsed many times what I would say to keep him from becoming disenchanted with the Methodist Church that he had loved so long and served so faithfully.

I decided to break the news to him before someone else did. He listened patiently as I explained the changing times. Then unexpectedly he said, "Why, Mary Ann, that is nothing new! We had a woman preacher in Alabama when I was a boy."

It was not the last time I would be surprised by someone's reaction to our woman pastor.

On the Sunday Janet Wolf arrived, I told her, "I will support you in any way I can." Although her coming was the beginning of a very challenging period in my life, I never had reason to regret or withdraw that offer.

While my father made the adjustment, others in our church were extremely hostile and resentful, not only to our pastor, but to those of us who supported her. I was shut out, shunned by people in the church with whom I had worshiped and worked all my life. I struggled with anger and the pain, but I grew in the process.

Several families left the church. People from other denominations and churches in town denounced us from their pulpits for allowing a woman to preach God's word.

While some people in our congregation and community refused to consider altering their anti-clergywomen view, I saw friends who struggled to reconcile their traditions with a desire to hear and follow the will of God. Some succeeded; others failed.

Despite her difficulties, Janet worked hard to live up to her calling. She was open and loving. As she preached, I heard Bible stories come alive with new meaning. She challenged us to explore the depths of our

calling as Christians. Her vision was refreshing.

Our pastor lived out the gospel she preached. She visited the sick, nursed the dying and provided respite for family members. She cooked, painted and planted. She visited people in prison.

Involving herself in the life of the broader community, Janet loved and cared for the church and the unchurched. She saw the hungry, the homeless and the helpless among us—and was committed to doing something to help them.

She organized a local hunger coalition to work at alleviating the root causes of poverty. She worked with Meals on Wheels and recruited volunteers so that people in rural areas could receive the service.

Janet supported local, district and state United Methodist Women. In addition, she helped reorganize a local Church Women United unit, bringing together Protestants and Catholics, Blacks and Whites, young and old, to study, sing and pray, and to learn to love as sisters.

Having worked in Nicaragua, she taught us about conditions there. She led some of us into a covenant relationship with church women in Esteli, Nicaragua, in which we promised to pray for, love and support each other.

Although our church leaders admitted they were not yet ready for another woman pastor, as Janet was leaving, our church's leadership wrote a letter affirming Janet's ministry. Even those who opposed her position as minister had to admit that she had opened doors at Pleasant Grove that can never be closed.

Mary Ann Matthews is a member of Pleasant Grove Church in Lawrenceburg, Tenn.

# It Worked for Us!

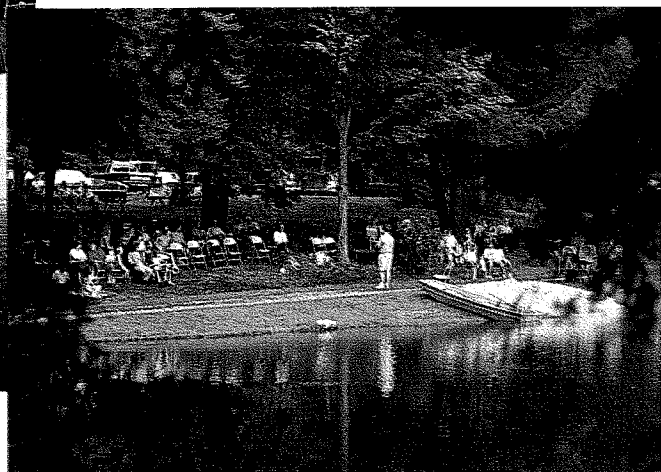
Success Stories

## Galilean-Style Worship

Lay leader Mick Dawes shares how Trout Run (Pa.) Church traveled back in time to Galilee.



Members of Trout Run (Pa.) Church enjoy an outdoor worship service.



What started as a church picnic turned into a meaningful worship experience for our congregation.

After a brief Sunday school session at the church, nearly 70 people gathered in the woodlands about 10 miles away at a cabin owned by a family in our church. We sat on a hillside on lawn chairs and blankets enjoying the special service planned by our pastor, Mark Brumbach. Music was played on a portable keyboard.

After reading the Scripture on the banks of the pond, our pastor rowed a small boat out onto the water. He spoke to

us from the boat about how Jesus calmed the storm and the disciples' fears and how Jesus can calm our fears today.

The setting was reminiscent of biblical times, when Jesus often preached from a boat along the shores of Galilee, the hillsides providing a natural amphitheater.

Most Sundays, our prayer is full of concerns, but that Sunday it was full of joy and adoration. After the service, picnicking, recreation and fellowship filled the afternoon. Our outdoor worship service was a wonderful way to remember God's presence in the world.

## Back to School!

Associate pastor Patti Miller Seeman describes how Saint John's Church, Austin, Texas, celebrates the beginning of school.

To mark the opening of school each fall, our church has a "Celebration of Youth and Family" on a weeknight with prayer, singing and liturgy.

Members of our single-adult fellowship serve the meal. We decorate the tables and make students and their families feel special.

The worship meditation is different each year. This year it was on thinking, and last year it was on listening.

The students enjoy being the center of attention, and everyone enjoys the fellowship.

### We Need Your Ideas

Do you have an idea to share with other churches?

In 100 words or less, describe how you got started and what the response has been. We encourage you to send along good-quality color photographs that illustrate your idea.

Please include your name, address and a telephone number where you can be reached during the day Monday through Friday.

Send your material to *It Worked for Us!*  
INTERPRETER, P.O. Box 320, Nashville, TN  
37202-0320.

## Pumpkin Patch

At First Church, Emporia, Kan., youth ministries profit from pumpkins. Member Joe Weigand tells the story.

To raise money to attend "Youth '95" in Salt Lake City, the youth at our church sold pumpkins around last Halloween from the church patio.

For two weeks from 10 a.m. to 6 or 7 p.m., volunteers sold the pumpkins. Youth helped after school and on weekends. The intergenerational project fostered an atmosphere of cooperation.

The pumpkins were ordered through a fund-raising company. We initially ordered 2,000 pumpkins; when those sold out, 1,700 were ordered.

The youth sold more than \$9,000 worth of pumpkins, with a profit of more than \$3,000. The few remaining pumpkins were donated to farmers for stock feed.

Our pumpkin project helped increase our church's visibility in the community. The truckload of pumpkins on our doorstep naturally attracted attention and allowed us the opportunity to meet new people and tell them about our church.

During the sale, children received free miniature pumpkins to take home. Several groups from local schools came to buy class pumpkins for Halloween decoration.

Pumpkins pay off  
for youth of  
First Church,  
Emporia, Kan.



## Many Choirs, One Spirit

Diaconal minister Bernice Sjogren of Teaneck (N.J.) Church explains how multiple choirs can enhance worship and increase participation.

Our church is unique in its 29 ethnic groups represented here. However, we're probably not unique when it comes to the challenge of organizing choirs and rehearsals to meet everyone's schedules and musical tastes.

To meet the challenges, we have started several new choirs in addition to the sanctuary and children's choirs.

Rehearsals are scheduled at convenient times once or twice a month.

Our "Joyful Noise" choir sings contemporary music with taped accompaniments. Another choir performs music in Hindu and other Indian dialects, accompanied by drums, woodwinds and violin.

The "Spirit Dancers," made up of youth, interpret Scripture and songs with creative movement.

We also have a gospel choir, a Spanish-language choir, and a group that twice a year performs traditional European chorales.

The choirs perform alternately, with two groups usually performing each Sunday. All choirs participate about once a

## Friends in Deed

Martie Thompson, associate pastor, tells how Northwest Hills Church in Austin, Texas, befriended a sister congregation in flood-damaged Missouri.

When floods hit the Mississippi and Missouri valleys in the summer of 1993, we wanted to respond. Our missions work area came up with the idea of establishing a relationship with a church from the affected region.

A relief agency gave us the name of Hermann (Mo.) Church, located about 80 miles west of St. Louis. Businesses, homes and farms there were under water, and the town was cut off from major highways.

After researching people's needs, we sent a washer and dryer for an elderly couple. We mailed a banner signed by people in our congregation to let Hermann Church members know we cared.

At Thanksgiving, we provided meals for about 80 Hermann families.

During Advent, our members wrote letters to people in Hermann Church, offering love, support and prayers. Shortly before Christmas, we shipped 100 stuffed bears we had collected for Hermann's children.

In summer 1994, a mission work team from our church went to Hermann to help repair and rebuild local homes.

In sharing our faith and our resources, we made a difference in the lives of people recovering from disaster.

month, with the sanctuary choir performing slightly more often.

The variety of choirs involves more people as visible contributors to our worship, and has also made people from different backgrounds feel welcome.



At Teaneck (N.J.) Church, "Raga Paraga" sings in Hindu and other Indian dialects.



# when the pastor's a woman

Clergywomen overcome obstacles  
to proclaim the gospel.



Carol Cox, pastor of Christ Church, New Rochelle, N.Y., has been the first woman pastor in many congregations.

During her second year of seminary, Carol Cox applied for a position in a New York suburban parish.

She was turned down, with the frank declaration that the congregation "just wasn't ready for a woman."

That was the first time around, in 1969. Five years later, when she returned to Union Theological Seminary for further study, the atmosphere had changed.

This time, she was surrounded by other women like herself—suburban, married with children—who were heeding the call to ordained ministry. Today, she is a pastor of growing church in New Rochelle, N.Y.

From the time she was old enough to understand the preaching and clap her hands to songs of praise, Tsitsi Moyo knew she wanted to be a pastor. She also knew it wouldn't be easy for a woman

raised in rural Zimbabwe, where "minister" meant "man."

But Moyo found support among people who shared her dream, including the man she married, also a pastor. When United Methodist-related Africa University opened its doors in 1988, she enrolled in its theological college.

Last December, Moyo became a part of history as one of the first graduates from the university's theological school. Weeks later, she was ordained. Now the mother of four is a pastor in Zimbabwe and a mentor for women seminarians in her conference.

In August, 1,300 women are expected to convene in Atlanta for the largest-ever international conference of United Methodist clergywomen. As they gather to study, pray and praise God together, much discussion will likely center on their individual and shared journeys,

how far the church has come and how far we must go before the ministries of all women and men are affirmed.

Despite gender bias that would maintain the clergy as a virtual men's club, women—heeding God's call—have pressed their way into ministry, defying sexism, and sometimes lacking support from church leaders, parishioners and some male colleagues.

### More Women in Seminary, Pulpits

Women's enrollment in the denomination's 13 U.S.-based seminaries has increased fourfold in the past 20 years. Currently, 46.9 percent of all United Methodist master of divinity students are women. Women outnumber men in five theological schools (Boston; Garrett-Evangelical, Evanston, Ill.; Iliff in Denver; Saint Paul, Kansas City, Mo.; and United, Dayton, Ohio).

Where there were fewer than 250

### Women Bishops

Since 1980, United Methodists have elected eight women to the episcopacy. The late Bishop Marjorie Matthews of Wisconsin was the first. Today, the 67-member international Council of Bishops includes, seated, Leontine T.C. Kelly (retired) of San Mateo, Calif., and standing, from left, Judith Craig, Columbus, Ohio; Mary Ann Swenson, Denver; Sharon Zimmerman Rader, Sun Prairie, Wis.; Ann Sherer, Chesterfield, Mo.; Sharon Brown Christopher, Minneapolis; and Susan Murch Morrison, Valley Forge, Pa.



ordained United Methodist women in 1975, in 1995 there are nearly 3,500. The number of women ordained in 1987 alone was more than the total number of women elders in the denomination in 1977.

Yet, despite their increasing numbers and the fact that women make up 60 percent of the total United Methodist Church membership, clergywomen say they still face gender-based impediments to their ministries at all levels of the church's institutional life.

*A church that  
has a woman  
pastor is more  
likely to welcome  
another woman  
in the next  
appointment.*

A study by Hartford (Conn.) Seminary found that the ordained ministry is less open to women than other professions. For instance, the study found that 25 percent of all U.S. lawyers and 20 percent of all U.S. doctors are women, but only 10 percent of the nation's Christian clergy are women.

Studies and statistics show that the obstacles to women ministers are found in local churches, seminaries and denominational agencies. For example:

- Although 70 percent of United Methodists surveyed in 1988 said their churches are more open to women pastors, 56 percent said they prefer a man as pastor. Another 18 percent said their churches would not accept a woman;
- Clergywomen, on average, are paid less than men with comparable education and experience (a study in the Kansas East Conference showed a salary gap of up to \$3,800);
- The church's international Council of Bishops, with 67 active members, has only six women bishops. Of the 529 district superintendents in the United States, only 70 are women;
- A Division of Ordained Ministry-sponsored study at Boston University found that more women than men eventually leave the local church ministry;
- Although the denomination has ordained women for nearly 40 years, women constitute only 12 percent of seminary-trained, ordained ministers.

### Openness to Women Increasing

Still, hopeful signs are emerging. Several studies indicate that United Methodists are more open to having women perform their weddings, bury their loved ones and baptize their babies than

they were 20 years ago. As both the church and society continue to grapple seriously with the issue of justice and equality for women, grass-roots United Methodists are expanding their notion of "preacher" to include women as well as men.

Although the church has only six active women bishops, since the 1980 General Conference changed language in the *Book of Discipline* to reflect openness to women, at least one woman has been elected every quadrennium.

A General Council on Ministries study on clergywomen found a congregation with a woman as pastor is more open to women in future clergy appointments.

As pastor of Christ Church, New Rochelle, N.Y., Carol Cox, 50, has been a parish minister for 18 years. She has experience with churches that are "not quite ready for women," but she said she has succeeded by following God's call, not by bowing to fears and prejudices.

"In every parish I have gone to I've been the first woman pastor," Cox said. Once a congregation gets to know the pastor as a person, their fears are "alleviated," if not eliminated, she added.

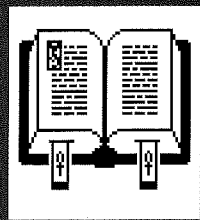
Cox said a key issue not often discussed is the need to help the congregation broaden its traditional psychological perception, so that a pastor can be a mother figure as well as a father figure. "That's a big adjustment," she admits.

## Milestones for United Methodist Clergywomen



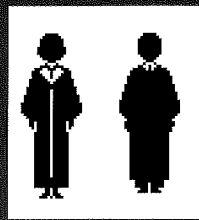
1876

Anna Oliver earns a bachelor of divinity degree (Boston University School of Theology), the first woman to graduate from a U.S. seminary.



1920

The Methodist Episcopal Church Book of Discipline extends to women the local preacher's license, a first step to ordination.



1968

Full clergy rights for women are affirmed by the newly formed United Methodist Church.



1980

Marjorie Matthews, assigned to the Wisconsin Area, is the first woman bishop in United Methodist and mainline Protestant history.

Cox credited The United Methodist Church for being "in the forefront" of ordination of women, and observed that clergywomen who have the support of their bishops tend to do well.

#### Bishop's Support Pivotal

The Rev. Lois Neal, Atoka, Okla., agrees that the bishop's support was pivotal in her journey from pastor's wife to seminarian to pastor to district superintendent in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

Neal, then a widow and mother of seven children, recalled "fighting God's calling for a year" before finally enrolling in Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo. She credited Oklahoma Bishop Dan Solomon for "challenging me, and encouraging me in my ministry."

Describing herself as "a typical shy, reserved Indian woman," with a love for church music and liturgy, Neal admitted she has encountered those who were "not exactly happy about a woman ministers."

Still, she said, the bishop "made all the difference." He and her children have been her "greatest supporters."

In 1992, Neal, a Cherokee, was appointed by Solomon as the denomination's first Native American woman superintendent.

As she visits the 39 churches in her district, Neal said she is heartened by the growing pride and determination of Native American leaders, particularly women.

"I see the gifts and the fruits, and I tell young people considering ministry to let God lead them," Neal said. "I tell the young women that even Christ walked the valley alone."

"But when you answer the call, and God tells you it's right, there's nothing more beautiful," she added.

#### Overcoming Trials on Every Hand

The first time Janet Wolf heard a woman preach, in 1976, she remembers thinking, "Who does she think she is?"

"I had seen women missionaries, and I wanted to be a missionary, but I believed in my heart that it was wrong for women to preach."

Today, Wolf is the pastor of small, urban and struggling Hobson Church in Nashville, Tenn. She seeks to combine her two callings: preaching the gospel and working on behalf of the poor, oppressed and shunned.

She herself has been all those things, even in the process of becoming a United Methodist minister. Her first years at Vanderbilt Divinity School, the veteran of the Civil Rights and anti-poverty movements said she was criticized for being "too confrontational"



BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

*"When you answer the call, and God tells you it's right, there's nothing more beautiful."*

—Lois Neal,  
district superintendent

about racism, sexism and homophobia at the seminary.

She found a home at Edgehill Church in Nashville, known for its eclectic worship, cutting-edge social-outreach ministries and open-door policy to gay men and lesbians.

That congregation, led by pastor Bill Barnes, encouraged Wolf to pursue the ministry, and she cleaned houses and worked as a farm laborer to earn money while attending seminary.

When she applied for ordination in 1988, she was turned down, she claimed, because of her vocal support of homosexual people, a stand deemed by many United Methodists as contrary to the

Christian faith.

She kept pushing, with the support of Barnes and others, and was ordained. "One district superintendent told me there wasn't a church in the Tennessee Conference that would have me."

She was sent to a four-point charge in Lawrence County, Tenn. "I think they figured if I could make it there, I could make it anywhere," she mused.

With the support of her children and her husband, Bill Haley, Wolf began "one of the most challenging times" of her life.

It was not easy. Even before she arrived in town, Wolf—that community's first woman pastor—was denounced from "nearly every other pulpit in town." Her children's classmates taunted the boys as "children of the devil."

Several people left the churches, saying that a woman as pastor was a "sin." Wolf said, despite her need for support and conversation, the cabinet left her to fight the battle alone, she recalled.

Still, she found people who were willing to try her as pastor (see "Spectrum," p. 9). One of her most rewarding moments was when she participated in a member's funeral at a neighboring Southern Baptist church.

"Even though the pastors there wouldn't let me in the pulpit because I'm a woman, they did acknowledge my role as pastor."

At the graveside, the Baptist ministers honored the family's request to let Wolf give the eulogy. Wolf described that act as "a fairly bold witness" which "created a good deal of controversy."

#### 'Oh Boy, We've Got A Woman!'

A trend that is both heartening and troubling is the increase in the number of women who are associate pastors at churches where a man is senior pastor. Heartening because more women are being appointed to large, pacesetter churches. But many women are troubled that they are sometimes accepted only in a secondary role.

Still, many carve out significant roles in the number-two position.

The Rev. Peggy Arter Good, associate at First Church in West Lafayette,

#### Texas Clergy Praise Show



COURTESY NBC

The Rev. Hannah Miller, a feisty pastor portrayed by actor Patty Duke in the new NBC series "Amazing Grace," got high marks from a group of Central Texas United Methodist clergywomen.

A panel of eight ordained women watched the first episode together recently and evaluated it in terms of authenticity. They agreed that the show has potential, even though they said the first episode lacked depth.

The Rev. Jacquetta Chambers, pastor of McMillan Church in East Fort Worth, said she was impressed with the real-life problems Hannah Miller faces as a pastor, woman and single mother.

The Rev. Janice Cain, pastor of a three-point charge in the Waxahachie District, also applauded the program as a good start in affirming the growing number of women entering the ministry.

Check your local listing for broadcast times.

—Carolyn Stephens,  
Central Texas Conference  
communications director

Ind., oversees faith development and Christian education. She recalled the initial reaction to her as new pastor, compared to the support and affirmation she now enjoys.

"[The congregation] has gone from thinking, 'Oh no, we've got a woman,' to saying, 'Oh boy, we've got a woman!'"

Good said she has earned respect as a pastoral counselor and confidante. "I offer another perspective on some things."

"Women and men communicate differently," said Good, who has been at

First Church for five years. "It's good to have both men and women on the church staff."

#### Family Support Key

Seminarian Yani Yoo and her husband, Jwan Jin Yi, are both doctoral students. They came to the United States from Korea six years ago to study.

Back home, Yoo had grown discouraged because, although she first got the call to ministry when she was in high school, she was afraid to go public with her desire to become a minister. In fact, she ran away from home to attend seminary and waited a year before breaking the news to her parents.

"The Korean Methodist Church did not ordain women much before 1989," said Yoo, who is pursuing a Ph.D. in Hebrew at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

"Even now, I'm not sure they would invite me to be a pastor there."

So, Yoo and Yi are considering staying in the United States after completing their degrees. "The United Methodist Church is more open to women," she said. "Women have some problems here, but they also have more support."

Even her husband's attitude toward her ministry has changed as they have become friends with both men and women in ministry, she said.

"He came from a very conservative family. He was under a lot of pressure from men back home not to support me in becoming a pastor," Yoo said.

"Now, he has friends and classmates who are women. He takes me seriously."

Many clergywomen credit their families—both immediate and extended—for helping enhance their ministries.

Wolf's husband, Bill Haley, "is the one who bakes 15 apple pies for the church bake sale," and helps their sons do homework.

She said she withstands

criticism from those who view hers as the mirror opposite of the perfect family, because Haley and their sons "are always in my corner."

Judith Wismar Claycomb, pastor of First Church in Oberlin, Ohio, said she gets more consideration from her congregation than many clergymen when it comes to family responsibilities. The mother of Aaron, 4, and Kara, 6, said she is allowed—even expected—to make her children a top priority.

Extended family support from her congregation is also a boon, she said. She enjoys exchanging hugs with affectionate parishioners, particularly older adults who need to feel loved. Claycomb observed that such physical displays of affection may come easier for her than for a man.

"I don't feel I am at risk for that to be misinterpreted as it might be for a man," she said.

#### Layman Says 'Yes!' to Women

With the increase in women pastors, laypeople in many churches are growing accustomed to and affirming their presence. Michael Tarrt, a Dallas firefighter and lifelong United Methodist layman, recalled "being real uncomfortable" when pastor Sheron Patterson

Ohio pastors Judith Wismar Claycomb, left, and Betty Howard both credit clergywomen mentors with helping them realize their calls to ministry.



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