

Press Release

Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau

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United Methodist Church Annual Conference Brings 2,000 to Springfield June 5-8

Springfield, Mo. – The 7th regular session of The United Methodist Church Missouri Annual Conference is June 5-8 at the Exposition Center in Springfield. Registration opens Friday morning for the 2,000 people designated as lay or clergy members of the annual conference.

While in Springfield, conference attendees will celebrate ordination of new clergy, retirement of others, and will remember the lives of those who have died in the past year. They will conduct necessary business, including the approval of a budget for 2009. Just as importantly, those attending from the almost 900 congregations across the state, will focus on developing intentional strategies for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ when they return home to their communities.

The theme this year is “Somewhere out there... is the outwardly focused church.” The Conference will focus on ways churches are reaching beyond their walls. Throughout the session videos will highlight moments where a church’s outwardly focused mission and people’s personal lives intersect.

Things will get started at 10:30 a.m. on Friday with opening worship led by Rev. Robyn Miller of Church of the Shepherd.

Friday night there will be a “Mozambique Mingle.” Bishop Joaquina Filipe Nhanala from Mozambique will be present to meet with people, and the music and food for the evening will be African. The event will be a casual, and people are expected to come and go.

At 8 a.m. Saturday, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward will lead a time of learning on Mission Evangelism. The commissioning and retirement service will be at 10:45 a.m. Saturday.

The offering collected during the retirement service will be for the Central Conference Pension Initiative. For clergy who serve in the central conferences, conferences outside the United States, retirement is a difficult decision. Despite all the good they’ve done for their country and its people, these humble servants often will not have government-funded pensions, and many have no financial support in retirement without church involvement.

For several years Missouri United Methodists helped to sustain retired UM pastors and their spouses or widows in Mozambique. In January 2009 the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits began providing permanent support for these retired pastors and spouses in Mozambique. The Missouri Mozambique Initiative continues to provide

assistance by participating in this permanent endowment called CCPI. Give generously and provide these faithful servants with a measure of financial security in retirement as a matter of justice.

Workshops will be available at 3:15 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Ordination will be at the Juanita K. Hammons Performing Hall for Performing Arts with gathering music at 7 p.m. and ordination beginning at 7:30 p.m. Bishop Robert Schnase, Bishop Ward and Bishop Nhanala will each be sharing their stories about their call to ministry.

The offering collected during Ordination Service will be for the Carolyn Belshe Orphanage. This orphanage at Cambine Mission Station in Mozambique began as “Teles Orphanage” in a different location to serve the “Children of the War”. Over the years since the war ended in 1992, the Carolyn Belshe Orphanage, renamed for the United Methodist missionary who served there, continues to serve more than forty children who otherwise would have no home. There is always a need for food and clothing. In addition, an endowment was started in order to provide permanent sustenance and mission teams are working on permanent facilities in the new compound. Give so they might live healthy and whole lives.

Sunday at 6:54 a.m. will be the Annual Walk for Mission Giving, led by the United Methodist Women.

Sunday morning will also be the time of bringing forward the major offering for this Annual Conference Session, which is to complete unfinished church buildings in Mozambique. The offering will be brought forward Mozambique style, with singing.

The memorial service will at 10:45 a.m. At 6:10 p.m. people attending the session will have the opportunity to attend a Springfield Cardinals baseball game.

At 8 a.m. on Monday Bishop Robert Schnase will lead a time of leaning. The fixing of appointments is scheduled for 11 a.m., and the dismissal time is planned for noon.

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