

One with Christ

One with Each Other

One in Ministry to All the World



The Desert Connection

News and Notes

June 1, 2011

Volume 5 Issue 20

Move from debt to generosity

Top church stewardship leaders will explore topics such as dealing with debt, countering consumerism, preparing for retirement and teaching children about money at the 2011 Stewardship Gathering, June 23-24, 2011 at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill. Jointly sponsored by GBOD and the National Association of United Methodist Foundations, the event's theme is "Freed Up From (anxiety, debt, fear) ... to Generosity." To register, email Courtney Whitehurst at cwhitehurst@gbod.org or by phone at 1-877-899-2780, ext. 7059.

Shalom 2012

Methodist/Wesleyan leaders worldwide are invited to join in the 30 anniversary celebrations and attend Shalom 2012- a Holy Land Evangelism Seminar in Jerusalem from January 9-17, 2012. This is the next worldwide evangelism celebration following the 2011 World Methodist Conference in Durban, and 300 Methodists/Wesleyans are expected to attend.

The details of cost, registration, airfares, and deadlines will be shortly available on at <http://vrmei.ws>. Questions can be directed to wmei@emory.edu.

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Living the Connection Welcome to Annual Conference

The Desert Southwest Conference will celebrate its 27th annual session on June 23-26, 2011, at the Renaissance Glendale Hotel in Glendale, Arizona. What a privilege it has been for me to serve as your presiding officer over your last 7 Annual Sessions. While the days of an annual session are busy ones, I am always glad for the opportunity to see all of you and have what ultimately feels like a few fleeting hours to celebrate God's goodness and to plan our faithful response together.

As we gather for the 2011 Annual Session, we will be embraced by our quadrennial theme of, *Extravagant Hospitality, God's Abundant Grace!*

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Celebrating God's Abundant Grace at the 2011 Desert Southwest Annual Conference Session



Once again The Desert Southwest Annual Conference Session will be held at the Renaissance Glendale Hotel.

By Rev. Louie Lyon, Annual Conference Secretary

Annual Conference will soon be upon us. Those that are serving as lay members

and clergy from our local churches have already received in the mail their Pre-Conference Registration

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DSC Communications launches a new communications channel

A DSC Communications Image



<http://desertconnection.org> is the newest way to stay connected to important news and stories of ministry in the DSC.

By Stephen J. Hustedt, Director of Communications

A new Desert Southwest Conference communications

channel has launched that will deliver information to those looking for it online in a more

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Rendle to lead day of learning

(DSC Communications)—After a great deal of positive feedback from last year's day of learning, again this year there will be a full day of learning at Annual Conference. The Day of Learning will be Saturday, June 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. This time is open to anyone. The teacher for the day of learning will be Gil Rendle.

"I'm an optimist. The future and the possibility are still strong," Rendle shared. "A lot of the anxiety at the moment is driven by resources. Do we have enough money? Do we have enough people? The bottom line is that we don't have enough to keep doing

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Photo courtesy of the Renaissance Glendale Hotel

Celebrating

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Photo by Don Benton

Rev. Louie Lyon is the Annual Conference Secretary for the Desert Southwest Conference.

Forms and their Pre-Conference Reports. During the month of May Pre-Conference Briefings were held throughout the Annual Conference to allow all that will be attending the 2011 Annual Conference

to know in advance what will be presented and to then be prepared to act on what

is brought before them. There is also extensive information on the Conference website at <http://www.desertsouthwestconference.org/annualconference>. This year Annual Conference is held from June 23rd-June 26th.

Those that are attending this year's Annual Conference at the Renaissance Glendale Hotel are reminded that Registration begins on Wednesday, June 22nd at 12:00 Noon and runs through 5:00 p.m. Registration then continues again that evening from 6 – 8:00 p.m. The Registration Desk Closes and Registration concludes on Thursday at 1:15p.m. Many will be checking into the hotel on Wednesday but the first full day of Annual Conference begins on Thursday morning with a Worship Service of Remembrance and Resurrection in the Media Center. We invite not only those representing their churches but anyone from throughout our Annual Conference who would like to remember and honor the Saints that have gone home to be with the Lord during the past year. The Rev. David Wilkinson



Extravagant Hospitality, God's Abundant Grace is the quadrennial theme for each Annual Conference from 2008 to 2012.

from Saint Francis of the Foothills UMC in Tucson will be preaching at that service. Immediately following the Service of Remembrance the Lay members of our Annual Conference will attend a Laity session where the issues and events of Annual Conference will be introduced to them. This is both an informative and fun time for our Laity as they begin Conference. Our clergy will attend their Annual Executive Session at that time. The Opening Session of Annual Conference begins with the first Plenary Session in the Media Center at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday. There will be a dinner break from 5 – 6:30 p.m. and then because

of all the work we have this year we will have an evening Plenary Session from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Much of this year's Annual Conference will deal with what could be brought up at the 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church. During Annual Conference this year Conferences all around the US and world will be bringing forth Resolutions and Petitions to be presented at the General Conference. We also will elect our delegates to both General and Jurisdictional Conference at our Annual Conference session. On

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DSC Com

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efficient and digestible way. <http://desertconnection.org> will provide the articles featured in The Desert Connection and other stories in a web friendly way will allow people to more easily find the news and information they are looking for. The new website will also make more use of more multimedia, and integrate social media, and online communities.

<http://desertconnection.org> is not replacing the award-winning biweekly publication of The Desert Connection that has become a centerpiece of The Desert Southwest Conference over the last five years. Rather, it is an altogether new communications channel that will offer another option for people to stay connected. While some

people will still prefer the classic newsletter layout of The Desert Connection, <http://desertconnection.org> will appeal to another audience and let us share our stories in a new and exciting way.

<http://desertconnection.org> will also be a very useful tool for local church communicators and editors. The stories and photos are available for reproduction in local church communications, and local church communicators are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this resource to strengthen our connection and bring more people into the fold.

The Conference Communications Commission is excited by this new resource and believes that it will be one more tool to help our Conference build a culture of starting new communities of faith, bringing up leaders,



The new <http://desertconnection.org> will incorporate video and a variety of other exciting features with the stories and information contained in the Conference's biweekly newsletter, The Desert Connection.

and addressing issues of social justice. If you have any questions about this exciting new communications channel or how it can be used for min-

istry contact the Desert Southwest Conference Communications Office at 602-266-6956 or communication_s@desertsw.org.

Living

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I invite us all to prayerfully consider what it means for each of us to share extravagant hospitality with each other as we spend those days together. As spiritual leaders, part of our work is to model what it means to be thankful for the grace upon grace that God daily pours out upon us.

A thankful heart brings many blessings – healing and wholeness, joy, and the bond of love – are some of the blessings that thankfulness can bring. Being thankful to God who loves us unconditionally, and showers blessings on all without exception, exponentially multiplies all blessings! The extravagance of God's own grace leads us to be extravagant toward each other and all whom we meet along the way. Let's prepare to model this as we gather in Glendale.

Your Sessions Committee has worked diligently in preparing for our time together

and I have every confidence that it will be time well spent. Here are some of the highlights of what's coming:

- Preachers, Rev. Dr. David Wilkinson pastor of St. Francis in the Foothills U.M.C. of Tucson, AZ, and Rev. Kyle Woodrow who returns home to be with us from his special appointment to the Simon's Town and Ocean View Circuit of the Methodist Church of South Africa;
- Hearing from extraordinary guides about our Context of Ministry, Mrs. Ginny Hildebrand, President and CEO of the Association of Arizona Food Banks, and a member of Grace U.M.C. in Mesa, AZ, and Mr. Frank Pierson, Lead Organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation serving in Arizona and Nevada;
- A Day of Learning with the Rev. Dr. Gil Rendle, a widely respected guru on what the church needs to be and look like in the 21st Century to be faithful and fruitful;
- Election of delegates to the



Photo courtesy of UMNS

Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño will preside over the 2011 Desert Southwest Annual Conference.

- 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences;
- Commissioning and ordination of new clergy and the celebration of the ministry of those who are retiring;
- Unveiling of the Marshall Lindsay Award.

I for one think great things are coming through the 2011 Annual Session of the Desert Southwest Conference but some of you may be asking, "Why do we gather?" The easy answer is because we have much work to do. The deeper

answer that better goes to the heart of the matter is that we gather because it is who we are! We are a connectional people who know that we are stronger and more able to serve God who has blessed us with abundant grace and welcomed us into God's own household with extravagant hospitality, when we work together. I rejoice in the opportunity to work together with you at your 2011 Annual Session!

Spiritual Formation is central to a vital church



Photo by Don Benton

Rev. Judith Boroto is a member of the Spiritual Formation Committee.

By Rev. Judith Boroto, Spiritual Formation Committee

Spiritual Formation means

different things to different people. The best way I can explain it is to borrow from Robert Mulholland's book: "Shaped by the Word." He differentiates between reading the Bible for information and reading it for formation. When you read for information you are looking for facts or story details, the content of what is written. When you read for formation, you get below the surface of the words to understand how they affect you; what meaning they have for you; what God is trying to tell you; where God is trying to lead you. Spiritual Formation is allowing God to mold you – to form you – to transform you into a more essential spiri-

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Los Arcos UMC leaves a lasting legacy of ministry



Photo courtesy of Rev. Cynthia Kristopeit

After a great deal of study and prayer the leadership at Los Arcos UMC has decided the best course for the future is to join the congregation of Scottsdale UMC, but even as their building shuts its doors, the nearly 50 years of ministry will leave a lasting impact.

By John Lester, Los Arcos, and Stephen J. Husted, Director of Communications

After nearly 48 years in South Scottsdale, the Los Arcos United Methodist

Church plans to close its doors. The buildings will soon be vacated, but most of the congregation will be integrated into the membership of Scottsdale UMC and

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Los Arcos

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the legacy of ministry will live on.

In December of 2009 The Redevelopment Task Force at Los Arcos was reinstated to look at the how ministry would continue in South Scottsdale into the future. Shifting demographics and commercial development had impacted the effectiveness of many of the ministries of the church over the years. Extensive study was given to what it would take to continue ministry in the church's current physical location and several other options. The congregation was kept fully aware of the developments through the church newsletter and regular meetings.

In the end, the Task Force realized that the membership of the church was not going to be able to sustain and maintain the Los Arcos building much longer, or to rent a new building. The Building/Study Task Force recommended closing and affiliating with another church.

On January 9, Los Arcos

held a church conference with intention to close the church. The motion passed. They then worked on a proposal to join with another church. It quickly became clear that Scottsdale UMC, the church that had birthed the Los Arcos UMC almost 50 years ago, was the logical choice.

The Los Arcos Church was formed in 1963 with many of its charter members coming from the older Scottsdale church. The unique building, located at 74th and Culver Streets, near the ASU SkySong complex, was designed by the architectural firm of Cartmell & Rossman. Its arched design has been likened to a space ship or an inverted clamshell. Services commenced in these buildings in 1966, and the congregation was closely aligned with the Los Arcos Mall for many years, until the mall was closed and demolished to make way for the ASU SkySong project. The church thrived and grew for many years over its lifetime, serving the people of south Scottsdale and north Tempe.

"The ministry of Los Arcos UMC will continue long after



The congregation of Los Arcos UMC has been supported by local United Methodist Churches and Conference Leadership. The congregation was blessed to have Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño be a part of their Easter worship service.

the physical space is gone," said Pastor Cynthia L. Kristopeit. "Many of the furnishings will go to Justa Center, Wesley Center, Santa Cruz Valley UMC, and Scottsdale UMC. Los Arcos Sidewalk Ministry will be moving with many of the members to the Scottsdale UMC. That ministry has positively affected the lives of children and youth in this neighborhood for almost 8 years and is looking forward to new areas to minister in. Our active UMW will be assimilated into

the Scottsdale UMW. Our choir and bell choir will join with Scottsdale UMC and we will become one new church. We know that Scottsdale UMC has been active in mission outreach and look forward to blending our passions for justice ministries. Hacienda de Los Arcos will be taken over by the Annual Conference so that good affordable housing will continue to be offered in South Scottsdale."

On June 30 the property

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Celebrating

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Friday our first Plenary Session begins at 9:00 a.m. with a break for lunch and then we continue on with the business of the Conference through 5:00 p.m. A very special evening is planned with a Celebration of Ministry and Service for those of our clergy that will be retiring this year at the Annual Celebration of Ministry and Service Banquet. The meal for the banquet is part of the meal ticket purchased or a ticket can be purchased for this wonderful event for \$35. If you would like to hear a pastor who is retiring this year share about his/her ministry this is the place to be. You can contact Patsy

Soto, Conference Registrar, at the Conference Office if you need a ticket for this banquet.

Once again the Saturday of Annual Conference will be a Most Special Day. It begins as a Day of Learning for all those in attendance. Dr. Gil Rendle will help us to examine our mission field and then challenge us to claim our power and become more fruitful in effort to work in the world we live in today. Dr. Gil Rendle is a Senior Consultant with the Institute for Clergy and Congregational Excellence of the Texas Methodist Foundation in Austin, Texas. His expertise is in working with leaders on planning and issues of change. Saturday's day of learning is not only for those that are attending as lay

members or clergy to the Annual Conference but it is open to all Untied Methodist and congregations from the ecumenical and interfaith communities. On Saturday evening another very special worship service will take place. For many it is one of the highlights of Annual Conference. Beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Media Center a Service of Retirement, Commissioning and Ordination will take place. Our Bishop, Minerva Carcaño, will be preaching and challenging our Ordinands at this service. There will also be a time after this worship service for anyone considering the Call to Ministry to speak with a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

This year's conference concludes on Sunday after an

opening Plenary Session which begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 9:30 a.m. so we can prepare for our final Worship Service of the Conference, A Service of Sending Forth and Fixing of the Appointments. The Lord's Supper will be served at this service and our preacher will be the Rev. Kyle Woodrow, a member of the Annual Conference who is currently serving the Methodist Church in South Africa. As your conference secretary I am honored to serve you. If you should have any questions regarding anything brought forth in this article please feel free to contact me at 623-974-5821, Ext. 117 or I can also be contacted via email at louie@desertsw.org.

Rendle

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Photo courtesy of Gil Rendle

Gil Rendle will lead the day of learning at the 2011 Desert Southwest Annual Conference.

what we've been doing, but the possibility is that we have enough or more than enough to do what God calls us to do next. It's only if we trap ourselves into saying that we have to continue what we have that we run into this pessimistic kind of a moment."

Rendle serves as Senior Consultant with The Institute for Clergy and Congregational Excellence of The Texas Methodist Foundation in Austin Texas and as an independent consultant working with issues of change and leadership in denominations and large churches. Prior to this position he served the Alban Institute as an author, seminar leader and senior consultant for twelve years. An ordained United Methodist minister, Rendle served as senior pastor of two urban congregations in Pennsylvania for sixteen years and as a denominational consultant for The United Methodist Church for nine years.

"This is a really difficult moment because so many of our congregations and our clergy have been nurtured in the idea that they are the center of attention of the denomination, because the denomination wants to make them happy," Rendle said of the changes that need to

happen to make impactful congregations. "Suddenly, we're now in a place where the question isn't whether or not (leaders) are being made happy; the question is, are they being deployed appropriately to be used as a tool to get to this other goal of making disciples? That's a substantive shift. That requires a shift in our identity."

Rendle has an extensive background in organizational development, group and systems theory, and leadership development. He has consulted with congregations on planning, staff and leadership development, and issues of change. He is well known for his work with middle judicatory and national denominational offices and staff as they wrestle with denominational and congregational change.

"This scenario that I painted about moving clergy or congregations from being the object of attention of the denomination to kind of an expendable resource -- there's a huge loss there," Rendle admitted. "What if my needs of security aren't met? What if I lose my place on the clergy ladder? What if my congregation is not productive enough to get the kind of clergy leadership that we need? What if they disband some of the committees and I was a chairman of that committee? Where do I go now? It's this deep sense of loss that people intuit."

In training workshops and conferences, Rendle has led numerous large and small groups in practical learning that directly impacts participants' decisions and practice in their leadership roles. He is the author of six books, a contributor to four books, and the author of numerous articles and monographs. His most recent book is Journey in the Wilderness: New Life for Mainline Churches published by

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Los Arcos

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will be transferred to the church's Annual Conference for sale, and the Los Arcos congregation will be officially integrated with the Scottsdale congregation at that time following an act of Annual Conference.

It has been a long and difficult process, but the members of Los Arcos have been greatly supported by the United Methodist Churches around them and the leadership of The Desert Southwest Conference. Bishop Carcaño was with the congregation on Easter Sunday.

"It was a joy to have her here bringing a message of resurrection hope," Kristopeit said. "The people of Los Arcos deeply appreciated hearing her respect and admiration for their courage in making this difficult decision."

The last service will be held at the church location on Sunday June 5 at 10:00

a.m. with a service of de-consecration led by the church's Pastor, Rev. Cynthia Kristopeit and the District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Robert Burns.

Kristopeit summed up, "When the history of South Scottsdale is written, Los Arcos UMC will deserve mention for the unique outreach ministry from the beginning when they were the church in the Marketplace which was Los Arcos Mall. The Hacienda de Los Arcos housing project will remain one of the best HUD sites in Scottsdale. The children of the area will never forget Sidewalk Sunday School. Finally, Los Arcos UMC has donated \$10,000 to Mingus Mountain for the new Ramada. They have given over \$7800 to the Mighty Methodist Coalition of Habitat to build more housing for those in need. And when the property is finally sold, that money will be used by our Annual Conference to plant new churches. This is a legacy to be proud of."



Ministries such as Sidewalk Sunday School will directly continue on as the Los Arcos congregation joins Scottsdale UMC, while the impact of many other ministries will continue to be felt in the community even once they are gone.

New site highlights ministries with the poor

By Linda Bloom, UMNS

After staff and customers at the West Side Campaign Against Hunger confronted empty shelves at the food

pantry as demand rose in February, they worked jointly to do something about it.

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Photo courtesy of Rev. Cynthia Kristopeit

ELATION performing 'Godspell'

The music group ELATION of St. Stephen United Methodist Church in Mesquite, Texas, will appear in concert at Trinity United Methodist Church in Phoenix, Arizona on Friday June 10th at 7:00 pm. Trinity UMC is located at 3104 West Glendale Ave in Phoenix. Admission is free.

ELATION is composed of 32 youth ranging in age from 12 to 18. The group was formed in August of 1999 and has shared Godspell with over 125 congregations in 30 states and Canada throughout the past eleven years.

All cast members have both singing, dancing and speaking roles to help retell the parables from the Gospels in "GODSPELL". The musical drama of the life of Christ is understood by the youth to be their means of conveying the message of Jesus Christ. As a result of their sincerity, "GODSPELL" becomes a significant worship event.

For news and information from around the United Methodist Connection visit the denominational website at <http://umc.org>.

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New site

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Together, customers and staff members organized a May 24 "Fill Our Shelves" luncheon. Donors sipped maple-syrup mint lemonade among now-full shelves, then moved to the main fellowship hall of the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, which houses the ministry, for a lunch prepared and served by "customer chefs."

As the donors ate, another customer spoke about how the anti-hunger group was helping him navigate the transition from prison to the outside world.

Started in 1979 by a variety of faith groups, the Manhattan-based food program is a prime illustration of the commitment by The United Methodist Church to engage in "Ministry With the Poor."

A new interactive website,



Image courtesy of UMNS

<http://www.ministryWITH.org>, highlighting that commitment was launched May 31 by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, in partnership with a denominational interagency task force and

the Council of Bishops.

The With* educational campaign also is being introduced throughout the connection at annual (regional) conference celebrations of mission and ministry.

Spiritual

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tual being.

Reading Scripture is not the only thing that helps form you spiritually, of course. Any of the spiritual disciplines, when practiced in an intentional way, are formative and can give you a deeper relationship with God and Christ. These include but are not confined to: fasting, study, journaling, meditation, silence, worship, various forms of prayer, and lectio divina. Most of these practices are individual, but some are corporate in nature.

The Spiritual Formation Committee of the Desert Southwest Conference has strived to foster congregational spiritual formation through sessions that we

called Tending the Soul. The challenge has been how congregations can be more intentional in keeping God at the center of all activities, not just worship or educational endeavors. To that end we have had presentations regarding dealing with conflict; leadership development; using formative corporate practices in the areas of worship, education and administration; and using GodStories as a means of witnessing and evangelizing.

Because we believe that this congregational spiritual formation is so essential to revitalization and transformation of our churches and their members, we will be offering various formative opportunities at Annual Conference. Soul Spaces (Sacred Spaces) will be set

up in and around the conference hall where participants can individually or in small groups pause to reconnect with God and to re-center themselves. In addition, various forms of prayer will be utilized before, after or during the plenary sessions to bring more intentionality of our conference business being centered in God.

In addition to adding to the experience of those in attendance, we are hopeful that these activities will be taken back to the churches to be utilized in their activities as well. Monthly articles in the "Desert Connection" will continue to address this topic of spiritual formation and provide some specific examples of how this can be accomplished.

Rendle

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Abingdon Press, 2010. Gil is a resident of Pennsylvania where he lives with his wife, Lynne.

"Is there a real loss for some of our (leaders) who are of an age that they don't

or even can't retool? Sure," Rendle agreed. "Where we lose the capacity to subsidize or to support some ministries, those are all real losses along the way, but those are tangential to that central change that we're talking about. It's not going to be an easy trip, but the wilderness never is. You

know?"

Editor's note: The full text of the interview with Gil Rendle will appear in the summer issue of *Transformation*, the ministry magazine of The Desert Southwest Conference and originally appeared on the Faith & Leadership website, <http://faithandleadership.com>.