

Digest?

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The Call Digest

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Rev. Arturo Reyna gives 8 reasons why he is proud to be United Methodist.

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Wesley House triples inner-city ministry

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. -- After 61 years in the same location, Wesley House Community Center relocated last week to a place more than three times larger, with a plan to triple the number of children served.

The historic inner-city ministry moved less than a mile from Dameron Avenue to 1719 Reynolds Street, the previous home of Laura Cansler Boys & Girls Club. The 27,000-foot building was built in 1952 as Cansler School.

"We're tripling this mission because we want kids in the inner city to have all the opportunities they deserve," said Nathan Rowell, Wesley House board chair and member at Church Street United Methodist Church. "What sets Wesley House apart from other community centers is we're Christian-based but also very academically based."

Last year, Wesley House enrolled 55 children in the after-school program and 65 children in the summer program. This fall, they plan to accommodate 75 after-school children, increasing enrollment by 25 each semester until they reach 150, Rowell said.

"We have to raise money for the budget before we can take care of more kids," he said.

About \$230,000 has been raised for a \$550,000 campaign to purchase the building and expand the ministry, Rowell said.

The Dameron Avenue location is owned by the United Methodist Women (UMW), which designates Wesley House as one of 100 National Mission Institutions. (Also included in the list is Bethlehem Center in Chattanooga, Tenn.)

"Through the years, the biggest group of supporters for Wesley House has been the United Methodist Women," said Pat Bellengrath, board member and UMW president at Church Street United Methodist Church. "Money, food or time – whatever they have needed, the United Methodist Women have stepped up to get it for them."

On Sept. 7 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., United Methodist Women from four districts (Knoxville, Maryville, Oak Ridge, Morristown) will host a barbecue dinner fundraiser at Wesley House to kick off a \$50,000 campaign to help meet the \$550,000 goal by June 2014, Bellengrath said.

United Methodists in these four districts and throughout Holston Conference are also challenged to pledge \$30 monthly for one year to help meet the campaign goal, said the Rev. Nathan Malone, Knoxville District superintendent.

"That's one dollar each day to help make a difference in



Nathan Rowell shows off Wesley House's new gym.

the lives of at-risk children," Malone said.

"If people want to get involved, operational dollars are what we're most concerned about," said Tim Adams, director.

The annual budget has increased by about \$200,000 within the last two years to \$625,000, he said.

Church and school groups adopted rooms in the new location, providing furniture, supplies, and decorating: Church Street United Methodist Church, Cedar Bluff Baptist Church, and Webb School.

"I would love people to come see this [new location], especially if they saw the other building," said Adams said.

Other churches assisting with volunteer time and donations include Knoxville District UMW, Trinity-Knoxville UMC, First Maryville UMC, Concord UMC, Bradbury UMC, Bearden UMC, Christ-Knoxville UMC, Middlebrook Pike UMC, and St. Paul-Fountain City UMC.

Enrollees in the after-school program are selected based on need from four main elementary schools: Beaumont, Lonsdale, Maynardville, and West View, according to Kelsey Vaughn, program director. Parents pay \$17 per week per child, with a discount for families with multiple children.

Wesley House staff transports the children from school to the center, providing a snack and immediate focus on homework. Wesley House also serves 25 adults through its senior program.

To find out more, visit WesleyHouse.com. ■

“Why I am proud to be United Methodist”

By Arturo Reyna

Someone asked me once: “Are you Methodist?” and I remember that I raised my head high and said: “Yes, I am United Methodist and I am proud of being one.”

I remember the look of surprise of that person. Later I remember that he came to me and asked: “Why are you proud of being Methodist?”

I looked him in the eyes, and I remember that I told him: I am United Methodist and I am proud of being one because the United Methodists were attentive to the voice of God, when God told them to throw the net toward the Hispanics in a town called Galax in the state of Virginia, and they didn't think twice about responding to the command of the Lord.

I am United Methodist because the Methodists open their doors to all without regard to color, age, race, culture, or gender.

I am United Methodist, because in this church there is opportunity to service for all who desire to serve the One that lives and reigns forever.

I am United Methodist because in this church my children are valued for what they are ... creations of the Most High.

I am United Methodist, because in this church they don't tell you how to worship God, they invite you to worship God.

I am United Methodist, because in this church the women can serve God in all of their potential, no matter the call they have, for we recognize the call that God gives and not man.

I am United Methodist because I believe and I know, that the United Methodist Church is guided by the Holy Spirit of God and interprets the Holy Scriptures not to how one feels or thinks they should be interpreted, for we are not based on feelings, but rather on a foundation of theological reasoning.

Finally, I am United Methodist because the Lord brought me here and because the United Methodist Church is not a building of four walls. No, the United Methodist Church is a body that says and believes that which its founder said: “The world is my parish.” ■



Arturo Reyna

The Rev. Arturo Reyna is Hispanic ministry coordinator for Holston Conference and pastor of Rivers of Living Water (Rios de Agua Vida) United Methodist Church in Morristown, Tenn.

HOLSTON CALENDAR

Cleaning buckets needed/ Aug. 31: In an effort to help UMCOR respond to multiple U.S. storms, Holston churches are asked to help collect 475 buckets by Aug. 31. For more information, contact your district office or Karen Wright at (865) 690-4080.

The Gathering/ Sept. 13-15: The Native American Ministries Team presents their 15th annual celebration of Native American culture and spirituality Sept. 13-15 at Coker Creek Village in Tellico Plains, Tenn. For more information, visit TheGathering.holston.org or contact Vicki Collins at (865) 548-2920.

Stewardship Conference/ Sept. 14: The Rev. Michael Reeves will speak on the “Spiritual Discipline of Money,” 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 14 at Concord United Methodist Church in

Knoxville, Tenn. For more information, visit Stewardship.holston.org or contact Bill Kilday at (865) 690-8124.

Holston Secretaries Retreat/ Sept. 19-20: Church secretaries are invited to the Holston Conference Secretaries Association meeting at Holiday Inn Convention Center Sept. 19-20 in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. For more information, visit HCSA.holston.org or contact JaNae' Swanson or Karen Wright at (865) 690-4080.

Children's Ministry Training & Retreat/ Sept. 20-21: Children's ministry workers and volunteers are invited to Camp Wesley Woods Sept. 20-21 for the fall session of “LEAD Kids.” For more information, visit HolstonKids.org or contact Gaye King at (865) 690-4080. ■

The Call is the news source for Holston Conference. ● The Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church includes 897 churches in east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and north Georgia. ● Our resident bishop is Mary Virginia Taylor. ● Our executive assistant is the Rev. Carol Wilson. ● Our office address is P.O. Box 850, 217 South Rankin Road, Alcoa, TN 37701. ● (865) 690-4080 ● www.Holston.org ● thecall@holston.org or info@holston.org ● [Facebook.Holston.org](https://www.facebook.com/Holston.org) ● [@TheCall_Holston](https://twitter.com/TheCall_Holston) ● Free e-news: thecalltwo.holston.org