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The Call

Digest

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Chattanooga and Cleveland Districts offer discipleship training. Holston pays 100 percent apportionments.

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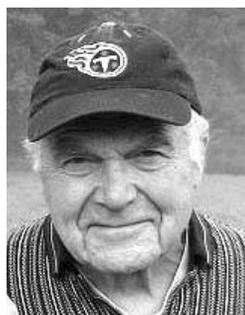
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Church searches for man after disappearance

LAUREL BLOOMERY, Tenn. -- On a warm Sunday afternoon in January, 82-year-old Harry Rosenberg went for his daily walk in the Cherokee National Forest. He never came back.

A few hours later, his wife called 911. In addition to rescue parties from three states, members of First United Methodist Church of Mountain City responded quickly to the disappearance of the retired mathematics professor.

Church members not only joined in the search, they brought food and stayed with Harry's wife, Donna. They prayed.



Rosenberg

"He was a gentleman and a gentle man," said John Borst, a friend and fellow church member. Borst sang in the church choir with Rosenberg before Alzheimer's disease interfered with his activities.

"On good days, we could still have some good conversations," said Borst. "This is a pretty small congregation,

and Harry was well regarded in it."

Rosenberg disappeared on Jan. 13. Exhaustive searches – including those with helicopters, all-terrain vehicles, and dogs – provided no clues. Johnson County, Tenn., is so close to the state line that search parties from North Carolina and Virginia were also involved.

"At the end of the second week, the sheriff came by and said they had used all their resources and leads," said the Rev. Boo Hankins, pastor at First United Methodist Church.

Yet, members of the community continue to search for the quiet grandfather of four.

"We won't stop praying or searching until we find something," Hankins said. "We just wish there was something

more we could do."

Rosenberg spent most of his life in Colorado before relocating to Johnson County, Tenn., in November 2002. He taught math and geography at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., for 34 years.

"He was a very spiritual man, a good mathematician," said his wife, Donna Rosenberg, age 75. "But his main concern was helping his students -- teaching them to think and not just passing on information. He loved his students so much."

The Rosenbergs retired in upper east Tennessee and soon discovered the nearest United Methodist church. Harry Rosenberg was Catholic until he and his first wife divorced. Donna Rosenberg had attended Episcopalian churches.

First United Methodist Church of Mountain City, a congregation of about 100 regular worshippers in the Holston Conference's Abingdon District, seemed to be a good fit.

"We have never had as many friends as we've had in this one small community," Donna Rosenberg said.

Harry Rosenberg was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2007. On the day he disappeared, the temperature was about 60 degrees, Borst said. A day later, heavy rains set in, followed by snow. Family and friends began to lose hope that Rosenberg could survive exposure to the weather conditions, while wondering if he was the victim of drug-related violence or if he had somehow managed to be transported back to Colorado.

"The unknown is, what in the world happened?" said Donna Rosenberg. "I don't worry about the spiritual part of him. But the physical part ... I won't go there. I would like to have some closure."

Rosenberg is about 5 feet, 8 inches tall and weighs about 160 pounds. A Facebook page has been created: "Help Find Harry." ■

HOLSTON BRIEFS

One Great Hour of Sharing, observed on Sunday, March 10, provides administrative support for UMCOR as it responds to disaster survivors around the world. To give, write a check to your local church with "One Great Hour of Sharing" on the memo line.

United Methodist Men are invited to a Saturday with Holston's new resident bishop, Mary Virginia Taylor. "UMM Day

with the Bishop" will be held Saturday, March 16, at Kodak United Methodist Church from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Register by March 8 for the \$20 entry fee (\$25 at the door.) Visit <http://umm.holston.org> or call Eric Knoefel at (865) 388-9459.

Know a high-school student who might be hearing God's call to ministry? "Discovery" is an opportunity for youth to explore their callings with others. This year's retreat is March 22-24 at Camp Wesley Woods near Townsend, Tenn. Contact Youth Ministries at (865) 690-4080 or lauralambert@holston.org. ■

Districts offer January discipleship training

Several Holston districts followed an unofficial tradition by offering weekend training sessions for church leaders within the first two months of the new year.

The Chattanooga District held a “Day of Discipleship” at Brainerd United Methodist Church on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 13. Workshops were led by the Rev. David Graves, Kingsport District superintendent (“Leading Vital Congregations”); Rev. Michael Hubble, Chattanooga District superintendent (“Staff Parish Relations Committee”); Caroline Merrell, worship director at Long’s Chapel UMC in Waynesville, N.C. (“Inviting and Inspiring Worship”); and Devry Coghlan, groups coordinator at Cove UMC, Huntsville, Ala. (“Nurture Through Small Groups”).

About 240 attended, including those participating in a “Stop Hunger Now” food-packing activity. Participants packaged about 10,200 dehydrated meals and gave an offering of \$1,288, to be divided between Ligotolo United Methodist Church in South Sudan and Imagine No Malaria.



Chattanooga church members pack dehydrated foods for a “Stop Hunger Now” activity in January.

The Cleveland District also held a discipleship training event at Walker Valley High School on Jan. 13. About 180 attended. “Our theme was ‘Called Out to be the Church,’ focusing on Matthew 16:18,” said organizer Debbie Stokes. “We tried to live out that theme by having the event at a location other than a church building.”

Seminar leaders included Rev. Jerry Jones, First Rogersville UMC (“Called to be Visionary”); Rev. Micah Nicolaus, Central-Lenoir City UMC (“Called to be Creative”); Rev. Richard Richter, Hillcrest UMC (“Called to be Hospitable”);

Rev. Joe Green, Cleveland District superintendent (“Staff-Parish Relations Committee”); and Mike Goodman, Cleveland District treasurer (“Church Finances and Stewardship”).

The plenary gathering for worship included worship centers interpreting the “Called Out” theme; the praise team from Keith Memorial UMC; and the Rev. Will Shewey from Salem UMC as guest preacher. ■

Holston pays 100 percent apportionment

NASHVILLE -- The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) reports 20 annual conferences paid 100 percent of their general Church apportioned funds in 2012 and overall apportionment payouts reached 90 percent, the highest payout level the general Church has reached since 2001.

The conferences paying 100 percent are Alaska, Baltimore-Washington, Desert Southwest, East Ohio, Greater New Jersey, **Holston**, Illinois Great Rivers, Iowa, Kansas West, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Northern Illinois, Oklahoma Indian Missionary, Peninsula-Delaware, Red Bird Missionary, Tennessee, West Michigan, West Virginia, and Western Pennsylvania.

In 2011, 17 conferences gave 100 percent to all seven gen-

eral Church apportioned funds.

Moses Kumar, General Secretary for GCFA said, “It is truly a blessing that we had this increase for 2012. But more importantly, the people of The United Methodist Church have come together in a way that affirms the ministries of the Church. The support of the apportioned funds is a statement that we are doing a new thing in the Church and that together we can make a difference in the lives of so many people. There are so many stories throughout the connection of annual conferences that made significant increases – and that also increases the total impact on ministry. That is a testament to the commitment of the Church for local and global ministry. Thank you.” ■

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 ● Twitter @TheCall_Holston ● Free e-news: thecalltwo.holston.org