



## in memoriam:

### Bill Adams

**ABINGDON, Va.** – William Amos “Bill” Adams, age 80, died May 11 at Grace Healthcare. The Rev. Adams was a retired Holston clergy member who had served as a substance-abuse counselor and also as pastor at Ooltewah, Chilhowie, and Damascus UMC, among other churches. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Dorothy Crew “Dottie” Adams; two daughters, Lattina Adams of Denver, Colo., and Nancy Adams of Atlanta; one son, Jay Adams of San Carlos, Calif.; three sisters, Waneta Gifford of Walton, N.Y., Eunice Deming of Sidney, N.Y., and Luceda Tuff of Belleville, Wash.; and five grandchildren.

A funeral service was held May 20 at Pleasant View UMC with the Rev. Jim Goddard, the Rev. Sullins Lamb, and the Rev. Bill Hinton officiating. Interment followed at Emory & Henry Cemetery in Emory, Va. Memorial contributions may be made for mission projects in Jamaica and Honduras through Pleasant View UMC, 18416 Lee Highway, Abingdon, VA 24210. ■



## exchange:

**OOLETEWAH, Tenn.** – Ooltewah UMC seeks a part-time nursery staff (3-7 hours per week) to care for children birth through age four on Sunday mornings. Background check is required. Send resumes to: OUMC, 6131 Relocation Way, Ooltewah, TN 37363, attn: Children’s Ministry; e-mail [childrensministry@ooltewahumc.org](mailto:childrensministry@ooltewahumc.org).

**OOLETEWAH, Tenn.** – Ooltewah UMC seeks part-time Mother’s Day Out teachers (12 hours per week) to care for children six months through age five on Tuesday and Thursdays. A degree in early childhood education or child-care experience is preferred. A background check is required. Send resumes and references, or inquiries, to: OUMC, 6131 Relocation Way, Ooltewah, TN 37363, attn: Children’s Ministry; or e-mail [childrensministry@ooltewahumc.org](mailto:childrensministry@ooltewahumc.org).

**KNOXVILLE, Tenn.** – Kay Senior Care Center at Church Street UMC seeks a part-time program assistant. Current hours are 11 a.m.- 6 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Candidates should have a high school graduate or equivalent and some experience in working with older persons. Kay Center is a state licensed senior day care facility, and all employees must submit to a criminal background check and fingerprinting. Send resume by May 31 to: Diana Brown Taylor, Director, Kay Senior Care Center, 900 Henley at Main, Knoxville, TN 37902, fax (865) 521-0261, or e-mail [kaycenter@churchstreetumc.org](mailto:kaycenter@churchstreetumc.org). ■

# at lunch:

By Annette Spence



## Mary Ruth Richards: Our new conference lay leader

**M**ary Ruth Richards is waiting for her interview outside 12 Bones Smokehouse in downtown Kingsport. She’s not alone. She’s already chatting with a crowd of diners.

As the upcoming meal will reveal, Richards knows a lot of people, and a lot of people know her. She can hardly finish a sentence (or a forkful of her Wedge Salad) without having to stop and answer another greeting.

At age 51, the incoming conference lay leader has logged a lot of face time in the community through church work as well as her career. She’s worked as a medical technologist at Indian Path Medical Center since 1979, most recently as lab director, overseeing 62 employees.

She has served as Kingsport District lay leader since 1998, participating in all the district’s charge conferences with Superintendent Fred Dearing for the last few years.

She’s a Natural Church Development coach for Holston Conference, currently working with Mafair UMC and East Pine Grove UMC.

In addition, she’s one of those uber-active local-church members, rolling up her sleeves and wearing almost every hat at Ketrion Memorial UMC in her 30-year membership. Currently, she’s pastor-parish relations chair, young-adult Sunday school teacher, and Wednesday-night leader of early elementary students.

“I am convinced that your time is like your money,” she says, picking fried onions off her salad. “When you tithe your time to God, it’s amazing how it will multiply.”

However, one does wonder how someone with so many commitments can add “conference lay leader” to the queue.

The demanding volunteer position is filled by the Nominations Committee, based on the Board of Lay Ministry’s recommendations. Richards follows Bob Lockaby, who has headed Holston’s lay ministry since 2000. Holston lay leaders have four-year terms, with the possibility of serv-



Mary Ruth Richards passes on the barbecue and orders a salad instead at 12 Bones Smokehouse in Kingsport, Tenn.

ing an additional term (maximum: 8 years).

“It’s a God thing,” says Richards, explaining that prayer and encouragement from others led her to accept the nomination. “I would rather be under the radar. I’ve asked God, ‘Why can’t I be in the back?’ I never wanted to take a position because it had, quote, a little bit of power. I just wanted to do what God called me to do.”

Richards’ belief that she is called to lead the conference lay ministry – in addition to having a recently emptied nest and an abundance of vacation time – gives her confidence she can manage the responsibilities: “God has assured me that it will all work out.”

When asked about her leadership plans, she asks to e-mail her answer a few days later:

“The primary role of the Board of Lay Ministry is to foster awareness of the role of lay ministry in the Holston Conference. I would like to build upon the foundation already laid by this board in the past with Bob Lockaby’s leadership (laity training and promoting the relationship between lay and clergy for mutual ministry). Another focus will be exploring avenues to encourage and support laity in the local church on a district and conference level.”

But she might be most inspirational when she speaks casually of her career as a ministry (“This is such a hurting world. There are 60-plus employees, and all of them have so much happening in their lives”) or when she laments the church’s missing ingredients (“People, where is your joy, your passion, for doing the mundane? When God gives you a curveball, a mighty opportunity, what are you going to say: ‘Let me get back to you?’”)

Richards is the mother of three young-adult children. Her daughter, Sarah Richards Suits, is a long-time worker at Buffalo Mountain Camp and spouse to Jared Suits, youth director at First Broad Street UMC. Richards’ mother is a resident at Asbury Place at Steadman Hill, and her brother is the Rev. Steve Blakemore. Her childhood church is Appalachia UMC of Big Stone Gap District. ■

## opportunities:

### Sudan Summitt: June 20-21

The Sudan Action Team is hosting a Sudan Summitt June 20-21 at Lake Junaluska, N.C. An invitation is extended to any local church, Sunday school class, United Methodist Women or Men’s group, or other United Methodist group working through the East Africa Conference for the work of the UMC in southern Sudan. For more information, visit [missions.holston.org](http://missions.holston.org) or call the Connectional Ministries office toll-free at (866) 690-4080.

### Hope for Africa Children’s Choir: June 23-July 3

Holston members are invited to hear the Hope for Africa Children’s Choir on these dates: June 23 at First-Centenary; June 24 at Keith Memorial; June 25 at First Oak Ridge; June 26 at Concord; June 27 at Tuckaleechee; June 28 at Niswonger Performing Arts Center; June 29 in Kingsport District; July 1 at Pleasant View in Abingdon; July 2 in Wytheville District. Most concerts are at 7 p.m. For more info, call (866) 690-4080 or watch *The Call 2*. ■