

LEGACIES

FEBRUARY 2026

Remembering Where You Came From: The Harpers Honor Past and Current Connections through Giving



Anne and Neil Harper of Massachusetts give through the Methodist Foundations of New England, Kentucky, and Arkansas.

Neil Harper recalls an early lesson in philanthropy from about age six, when he attended Little Rock's Capitol View Methodist Church: From his four-nickel weekly allowance, his parents taught him to put one nickel in the offering plate, deposit another nickel to savings, and have two left to spend as he wished. "That was my initiation into John Wesley's notion about earning all you can, saving all you can, and giving all you can," he says.

The lesson definitely stuck.

Although his education and work life took him out of state, Harper never forgot his Arkansas roots. His faith formation through Methodist congregations here still influences him—and Arkansas.

He and his wife, Anne, aim to make life better for others not only where they live now, but also where they grew up. They do so through funds distributed by the United Methodist Foundation of New England, the Kentucky United Methodist Foundation, and the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Blessings to Go Receives \$20,000 MFA Grant

GRACE CHAPEL ROGERS MINISTRY IS MORE THAN A DRIVE-THROUGH

Neighbors line up in their vehicles at the Blessings to Go food pantry offered by Grace Chapel UMC in Rogers.



Grace Chapel United Methodist Church of Rogers has been awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas in support of its Blessings to Go drive-thru food pantry, a vital ministry serving hundreds of Northwest Arkansas families each month.

Launched in June of 2025, Blessings to Go provides free, ready-to-eat food and grocery staples to anyone in need, no questions asked. The ministry has quickly become one of the cornerstones of Grace Chapel's outreach, offering not only food but also dignity, community, and hope to those facing food insecurity.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

MFA BOARD MEMBERS

TODD BURRIS | CONWAY

KATHY CONLEY | BLYTHEVILLE

REV. ANDREA CUMMINGS | GREAT MILLS, MD

MAURICA DOOLEY | COLT

REV. J.J. GALLOWAY | HOT SPRINGS

SAM GIBSON | BENTON

BERT KELL | ROGERS

BILL KINCAID | FAYETTEVILLE

DR. BEVERLY LYN-COOK | LITTLE ROCK

EDDIE MARTIN | LITTLE ROCK

BISHOP LAURA MERRILL | NORTH LITTLE ROCK

REV. RONNIE MILLER-YOW | LITTLE ROCK

LORIA OLIVER | ROGERS

REV. KEN PEARSON | NORTH LITTLE ROCK

JILL PENICK | LITTLE ROCK

JAN PUGH | LAKE VILLAGE

REV. BUD REEVES | FORT SMITH

DR. STEPHEN ROUTON | LITTLE ROCK

REV. JUDY RUDD | PINE BLUFF

MEGAN RUGG | LITTLE ROCK

JONATHAN VANHORN | LITTLE ROCK

REV. DANE WOMACK | PARAGOULD

MFA STAFF

REV. J. WAYNE CLARK | PRESIDENT & CEO

WCLARK@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

AMY FORBUS | COMMUNICATION MANAGER

AFORBUS@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

CATHY HALL | OFFICE & HOSPITALITY MANAGER

CHALL@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

KRISTIN HARTMAN | SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTING

KHARTMAN@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

REV. LYNN KILBOURNE | VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

LKILBOURNE@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

EMILY MADDEN | ACCOUNT MANAGER

EMADDEN@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

REV. DR. C.E. McADOO | GIFT OFFICER

CEMCADOO@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

AMY MCGOVERN | DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT,
NORTHWEST ARKANSAS OFFICE

AMCGOVERN@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

OREA MEEKS | ACCOUNT & OPERATIONS ANALYST

OMEEEKS@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

CLARENCE E. TRICE | SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & CFO

CTRICE@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG

BRIAN WHITE | BUILDING MANAGER

REV. MACKY YOKEM | DIRECTOR OF LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES

MYOKEM@METHODISTFOUNDATIONAR.ORG



A MESSAGE FROM WAYNE

Rev. J. Wayne Clark
President & CEO

‘Each has received a gift...’

There is so much about the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas that brings me joy and deep gratefulness—the incredible staff, the opportunity to work with individuals to match their passions for the church and mission with faithful stewardship, helping churches invest with the Foundation so they can earn more to do more ministry, and providing leadership programs for clergy and laity to make better disciples of Jesus Christ—just to name a few.

No day at the Foundation is ever the same. One day I might welcome a group into our building who is learning new skills to expand ministry and better serve their community. Another day, I may be visiting a church to discuss their accounts or delivering an endowment check to a nonprofit.

One of my favorite days, though, is when the entire staff gathers to process the distribution checks that will go out to churches and institutions to support their work for the kingdom. Yes—all the staff. After the accounting team has worked for weeks to close the year and calculate hundreds of distributions, we come together to fold checks and letters, stuff envelopes, seal, and stamp them.

An hour (or two) later, a large stack of envelopes is ready to be mailed to churches and institutions across the state. These checks may represent earnings from a church’s invested funds, or they may be distributions from an estate gift left to the Foundation to support a donor’s favorite church or nonprofit.

Some estates even instruct us to divide earnings among several ministries. What those instructions represent is a person’s deep love for the church and for agencies doing meaningful work in the world. While the total number of envelopes—and the money inside them—is substantial, they embody something even greater: the ways individuals, churches, and institutions are living out the gospel through faithful stewardship.

As Scripture reminds us, “Each has received a gift; use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10).

If you haven’t visited the Rogers or Little Rock office—or if it has been some time—please stop by and see how ministry is happening every day through this work.

Remembering 'Mr. Ozark'

Late last year, we lost a very dear friend of the Foundation—one of the very first people Wayne wanted me to meet when I began working here. It didn't take long to understand why. That friend was Vernon McDaniel of Ozark.

You may recognize Vernon's name. I introduced him in our Legacies series a few years ago as "Mr. Ozark," a fitting title for someone who never forgot where he came from. Born and raised in this small town just off I-40, Vernon's impact and legacy will be felt for generations.



Amy McGovern and Vernon McDaniel, shown here wearing his Foundation ballcap and his Ozark Area Depot Museum volunteer t-shirt, became good friends thanks to MFA.

Vernon loved to learn. He graduated from the University of the Ozarks (then the College of the Ozarks) and later earned a Master of Social Welfare and Journalism from Florida State University. His studies and work took him to Denmark, Colorado State University, the University of Arkansas, and the University of Central Arkansas. Over his 92 years, he was a teacher, a journalist, an avid tennis player, a volunteer at the Ozark museum, and a lifelong Methodist. Through it all, he never forgot where he came from.

Giving back to the community he loved was central to Vernon's life. He established the Vernon McDaniel Scholarship at the University of the Ozarks to help students pursue their own love of learning. He also served the City of Ozark faithfully—three terms as mayor and six years on the City Council—always working to make his hometown a better place for everyone. In 2014, he was honored with the Ozark Area Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his dedication and leadership.

Vernon was not only a leader; he was a giver and a doer. In addition to his passion for the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas, the Salvation Army held a special place in his heart. He served as head of the Ozark Area Unit and looked forward each year to ringing the bell. Under his leadership, the Ozark unit consistently exceeded its fundraising goals—no surprise to anyone who knew him.

OUT
& ABOUT
WITH
AMY



Amy McGovern
Director of Development,
Northwest Arkansas Office

A legacy giver, Vernon established several Charitable Gift Annuities with both the Foundation and the Salvation Army to ensure his generosity would continue beyond his lifetime. Each year, he would call to say a donation was coming from one of his IRA accounts and would add, "Tell Wayne to put it wherever he feels it's needed most."

He placed no restrictions, trusting us fully to do good for Arkansas.

You would never have guessed the depth of Vernon's generosity from the way he lived. He embraced a simple life—never married, no children, no home of his own. He rented a small duplex, drove a Prius with very few miles on it because he preferred to walk everywhere, and even did his laundry in the bathtub rather than owning a washer and dryer. He wanted every dollar he had to make a difference for those who needed it most.

My life is richer for having known Vernon. Though our friendship was brief, I am deeply grateful for the time we shared—our lunches, his stories, and his deep knowledge of Ozark's history. He always asked about my children, and I always asked how many miles he had walked that week.

At his funeral, several people spoke, including the current mayor, who shared how much she valued Vernon's counsel; his editor at the local paper; and a representative from the Salvation Army. After hearing her stories, I felt compelled to meet her. Since then, we have talked often, sharing "Vernon stories," laughing and crying together. That friendship exists because of him.

Vernon, you are greatly missed. But because of your life, your generosity, and your unwavering love for your community, we will never forget where you came from.

Agenda Set for NWA Methodist Lawyers Conference

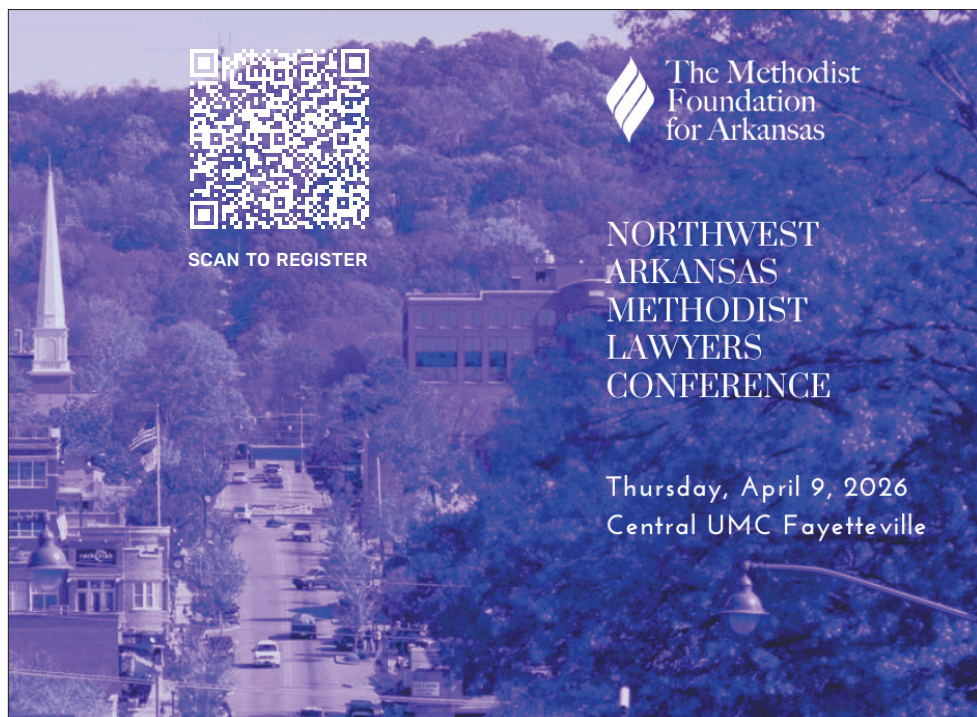
**APRIL 9 CONTINUING EDUCATION
ON LEGAL SITUATIONS UMC
CONGREGATIONS MAY FACE;
REGISTER BY MARCH 30**

The Northwest Arkansas Methodist Lawyers Conference, a new, free continuing legal education event sponsored by the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas (MFA), is open to United Methodist attorneys and others who represent United Methodist congregations in their work. The day-long, in-person conference is set for Thursday, April 9, 2026, at Central UMC in Fayetteville.

This event builds upon MFA's long-running annual Methodist lawyers gathering in central Arkansas, but the topics covered in the Fayetteville-based program are different from those offered in Little Rock, providing an additional

source of CLE credit for those who qualify to attend. This year's agenda deals specifically with several matters related to the United Methodist Book of Discipline. United Methodists

or those who represent UM congregations may register at the Upcoming Events page of methodistfoundationAR.org (or by scanning the code below) by March 30.



Clergy & Spouses: Choose One of Two Financial Literacy Workshops

The popular workshop "Saving Grace: Financial Literacy for Clergy" returns to the MFA calendar March 2-3 at First UMC of Rogers and March 9-10 at the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas office in Little Rock.

Open to clergy and their spouses at no cost to them, this workshop encourages reflection on the complex relationship between money and faith. Participants will spend time in Scripture and examining and discussing the related teachings of theologians, including John Wesley.

In addition to learning for their own personal benefit, participants are encouraged to consider how

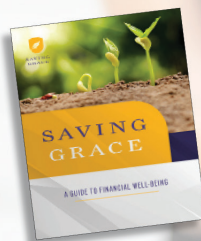
Saving Grace: Financial Literacy for Clergy *Making grace-filled financial goals*

March 2-3, 2026

Monday 3 p.m. to Tuesday 2 p.m.
First United Methodist Church of Rogers
307 West Elm

March 9-10, 2026

Monday 3 p.m. to Tuesday 2 p.m.
The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas
601 Wellington Village Road, Little Rock



Participation cost covered by



FOR ARKANSAS.
FOR GOOD.

they might use this resource to help their congregations and communities.

Learn more and find the registration links for both Rogers and Little Rock at methodistfoundationar.org/news-events/events.

Camping Scholarships Available for Tanako, OMP; Mount Eagle Providing Lodging Discounts



MFA Offers Financial Assistance to Attend Camp Tanako, OMP, Mount Eagle in 2026

And this year, we're adding Mount Eagle to the mix: Groups from any United Methodist congregation or related ministry who have never been to Mount Eagle Retreat Center — or who haven't visited since January 2020 or earlier — will be eligible to have most of their lodging covered for a visit in the coming year.

To apply for a Camp Tanako MFA scholarship, visit methodistfoundational.org/camp-scholarship.

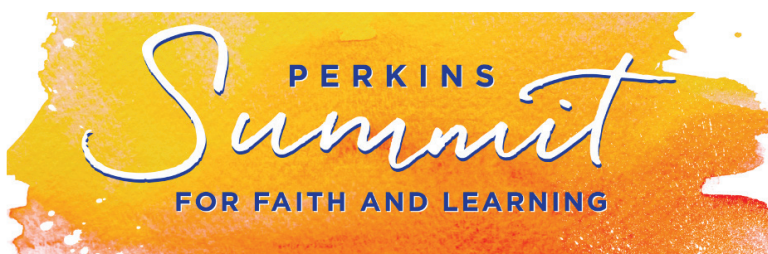
If you're hoping to get your child into a Camp Tanako or Ozark Mission Project session this summer and need to take advantage of the Foundation's scholarship assistance, now is the time to get started.

For 2026, the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas will

again make camp and retreat ministries more accessible to United Methodist youth of Arkansas. MFA offers 50% tuition discounts to support those experiencing financial hardship that would otherwise prevent them from attending Camp Tanako and Ozark Mission Project.

For OMP scholarships, visit ozarkmissionproject.org/scholarships.

And for Mount Eagle reduced fee opportunities, contact the staff at info@mounteagle.org or 501-723-4580.



- Registration opens Monday, January 26
- Hosted by McFarlin Memorial UMC, Norman, OK, March 20-21
- MFA sponsors 100% of tuition for Arkansans who use code **AMFSUMMIT26**



FOR ARKANSAS. FOR GOOD.

Foundation Covering Arkansans' Tuition at SMU's Perkins Summit in Oklahoma, March 20-21, 2026

This year's Perkins Summit for Faith and Learning will happen Friday and Saturday, March 20-21, at McFarlin Memorial United Methodist Church in Norman, Oklahoma. The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas will pay 100% of the tuition for any Arkansas United Methodist participant who registers using the discount code **AMFSUMMIT26**!

Last year's Perkins Summit at St. James UMC Little Rock provided excellent opportunities for learning and spiritual growth; ask any of the more than 100 attendees! See this year's course schedule, topics, instructors, and registration at smu.edu/perkins/publicprograms/summit-for-faith-and-learning, and remember to enter AMFSUMMIT26 to receive your tuition coverage from MFA.

CONTACT US

501.664.8632 (LR) OR 479.957.3089 (NWA)

Harpers (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Another key connection for Harper's faith formation came from taking piano lessons from John Summers at Little Rock's First Methodist Church and participating in the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) group there. Ultimately, the family transferred their membership to First Church because of their son's involvement in its music ministry. He later switched to organ lessons, and by the time he was in high school, Summers would leave Harper in charge of worship music during Summers' vacation. "The First Church people would come up and say, 'Oh, I couldn't tell a difference between you and John Summers on the bench!'" Harper recalls. "I'm not sure that was true, but it was nice of them to say that."

He remembers Winston and Martha Faulkner as big influences in his youth, and also the steady presence of Dick and Gertie Butler. He and Anne have contributed for many years to the Gertrude Rimmel Butler Child Development Center's scholarship endowment.

In 1955, Harper matriculated at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, checking "Methodist" on the religious preference area of his orientation forms, which meant the pastor of Harvard-Epworth Methodist Church connected with him. The Harpers remain active members of that congregation today. Anne, another "in utero Methodist," had come from Kentucky the year before to attend Wellesley College, and the pair met that fall, though they didn't date until Neil's senior year.

After MIT, Harper worked as a civil engineer for a large Chicago architectural firm, putting him in the right place in the right time to help introduce computer technology to the industry. He then returned to Massachusetts to start his own firm helping architects and engineers manage their businesses. "I always told my employees that better

management was something we could give back to the architects because they had given so much to us in city planning, civic involvement, and beautiful buildings," he says. The software his company developed is now the dominant architectural management software in the industry.

After selling his company to his employees and retiring at age 48, Harper helped establish the United Methodist Foundation of New England and spent a decade chairing its board, which he says "gave me an opportunity as an entrepreneur to do it all again, but this time to do it for the church, and I loved that. It was just great."

Harper also recalls how helpful the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas' CEO Jim Argue was during that time, offering advice and providing New England's leaders with the Arkansas Foundation's bylaws for reference. "We remember Jim and his family with great fondness," he says.

The Harpers now reside at a United Methodist-founded retirement center in Concord, Massachusetts. With both of their adult children and their families well established, their estate will be given to Methodist foundations to help others. "It's not enough just to give to one or two organizations, or just to give to the church," Harper says.

For instance, the Harper Fund at MFA makes grants to United Methodist-based outreach, cultural and arts organizations, educational institutions, environmental concerns, and help for the needy.

"Anne and I always felt some remorse that our lives did not lead us back to our home states to become good citizens of where we came from," Neil confesses. "But we've always maintained relationships with our home states, and we wanted to do something in a monetary way that we were not able to do in a personal way. The balance of our estates will go to those Methodist Foundations to carry on the work."

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE A PHILANTHROPIST, TOO?

Here's one way to get started: The Bishops' Club. Its member dues go directly to the Foundation's grant ministry. Want to become part of it? Scan the code to visit [methodistfoundationAR.org/bishops-club!](https://methodistfoundationAR.org/bishops-club)



Wednesdays at the Well Connects Vilonia UMC with Neighbors

\$3,000 grant from MFA will help supply food the program offers

Vilonia United Methodist Church was recently awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas to assist with funds to help food insecure children and youth who attend Vilonia UMC's Wednesdays at the Well evening program in 2026.

Originally a program that relied on parents or guardians, usually member families, bringing children to the church, Wednesdays at the Well changed in 2013 to include and provide transportation for children and youth in the surrounding neighborhoods. This change gave the Vilonia UMC congregation an opportunity to serve, meet and form relationships with the young people who attend on Wednesday nights.

"This grant will help us tremendously, as the need is great right now," said Donna Lewis, Children's Coordinator for Vilonia UMC. "The grant will not only allow us to continue helping the children and their families, but also allow us to continue forming relationships with them and showing God's love."

According to Feeding America, in 2023, 20% of children in Faulkner County were food insecure. To help address this community need, Vilonia UMC provides a food bag for each child/youth to take home if they want. In addition, Vilonia UMC has started sending home holiday food boxes during November and December to help the children/youth and their families. One parent expressed her appreciation for their Thanksgiving food box by saying, "That was extremely kind and we are so thankful. The kids were so grateful and excited too! Thank y'all for all the hard work you put into serving others."

"Our church is proud of the work we are able to do through this grant. We are able to do ministry with more families than we could on our own, and through our feeding ministries we are introducing



Wednesdays at the Well participants at Vilonia United Methodist Church assemble snack bags for neighbors in need.

young people to Christ and showing what a loving church community looks like," said Vilonia UMC's pastor, Rev. Chad Hornsby. "We are extremely grateful to the Methodist Foundation for their support."

Vilonia UMC, located at 1112 Main Street in Vilonia, offers a variety of community ministries along with their weekly Wednesdays at the Well program, including a new summer "Lunch is on Us!" ministry where sack lunches are delivered to children/youth and their families and are also available for pickup by all families in Vilonia.

The church also hosts a Blessing Box to help with community food insecurity, coordinates community volunteering at the monthly Vilonia Food Pantry distribution, and offers special worship events for the community throughout the year.

For more information about Wednesdays at the Well or to get information about volunteering, contact the church at umcvilonia@gmail.com or 501-200-1790.

CONTACT US

501.664.8632 (LR) OR 479.957.3089 (NWA)

MFA's 2025 Grant Disbursements Reach \$2.1 Million, a New Annual Record

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Jan. 27, 2026)—The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas (MFA) awarded 209 grants during calendar year 2025, bringing its annual total of granted funds to \$2,103,474. This amount exceeds 2024's tally of just over \$1.8 million in grant disbursements, as well as all other annual totals in the history of the MFA's grant ministry.

"The Foundation's grantmaking is only possible because of local churches and individuals who want to make a difference with their money," said MFA President and CEO the Rev. J. Wayne Clark. "Whether it's through a bequest from someone's estate, endowment earnings, an annual gift made through our Bishops' Club, or the investment fees from well-performing church accounts, it all matters. Every individual, every faith community, and every nonprofit organization that places funds with MFA has a part in feeding hungry Arkansans, educating clergy and laypersons, supporting community health, and all the other work that our grants help accomplish."

"I would like to highlight the growing support of the Bishops' Club in helping us combat food insecurity in our communities," said MFA's Director of Leadership Ministries the Rev. Mackey Yokem, who oversees the grant program. "Since 2024, 100% of the funds that the Foundation's Bishops' Club members provide have gone directly toward alleviating hunger here in Arkansas. Their commitments are making a real difference for their neighbors."

Grantees and their award amounts from MFA's Grant Administration Committee during the fourth calendar quarter of 2025 included:

Star City FUMC Backpack Program: \$1,500 – a backpack feeding program that provides weekend protein and snack foods for children K-5 who depend on the school for meals.

Blessings to Go: \$20,000 – A weekly drive-up feeding ministry serving Rogers and surrounding areas from the parking lot of Grace Chapel UMC.

Scott County Backpack Program: \$5,000 – A provides nutritious, easy-to-prepare food for children to take home on weekends and holidays.

Prairie Grove UMC We Feed People Orchard: \$2,000 – The church will use 10 acres on church property (with adequate space, water supply, soil and caretakers) to grow an orchard and garden that feed clients through the food pantry.

ARUMC United Women in Faith: \$5,000 – Scholarships to attend Assembly 2026, where women can nurture and/or enhance their leadership skills and network with women from across the nation on how to inspire more women to become active in the organization.

Theresa Hoover UMC "Project Hope": \$10,000 – Grant funding will be used to provide a variety of six nutritious meals over each weekend for students at Stephens Elementary School. The program ensures that children most in need receive consistent access to healthy meals when school-based food resources are not available.

FUMC Osceola: \$10,000 – This request will allow the church and its partners to increase their current food pantry capacity, diversify food offerings, and extend community garden programming to include seasonal workshops,

youth engagement, and nutrition education.

White Memorial UMC: \$15,000 – Support for offering free food and free library access to children to take home a grade-level book. Presently, they serve 240 students, from Pre-K through high school, nourishing both body and spirit through food, faith, and learning.

Sequoyah UMC: \$1,500 – A new pastor and new staff people seek to improve individually and meld into a productive, collaborative, and goal-oriented team. These funds will provide for a consultant to lead the church staff through this process.

Vilonia UMC: \$3,000 – Weekly food bags for children and youth, consisting of 2 breakfast items, 2 fruit items, 2 main dish items, and 2 snack items.

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund: \$12,000 – Helping single parents to move toward financial security by providing educational assistance.

Trust Tree: \$7,500 – Supporting activities for teaching art, music and songwriting in a camp setting.

LifeQuest: \$10,000 – Promoting and offering lifelong learning for older adults in cooperation with First UMC Conway and Hendrix College.

The Interfaith Center: \$12,000 – Funding programs that foster interfaith education, understanding, and collaboration.

Manna House: \$12,000 – Providing assistance to purchase food and health supplies to share with those in need.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

PROOF THAT EVERY INVESTMENT MATTERS:

In 2025, the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas distributed **more than \$2.1 million in grants** to help faith communities help their own communities. Because of faithful investments, charitable funds, gifts, and bequests from churches, nonprofits, and individuals, our work contributes to a **God-sized impact for Arkansas** — through food distribution hubs, education, health clinics, and more.



FOR **ARKANSAS**. FOR **GOOD**.

FROM PAGE 8

Arkansas Family Alliance: \$12,000 – Providing assistance to families and children in crisis; addressing root causes of poverty and family separation.

The Centers: \$12,000 – Strengthening medical support for children with complex emotional, behavioral, and physical needs.

Apex Development: \$10,000 – Providing support and education for families of youth with disabilities.

Other Grants Beyond Committee Action

In addition to the grants above totaling \$160,500 and grants announced at the close of the first, second, and third quarters, the Foundation has made other disbursements beyond the committee's purview: to support programs that began receiving approved funding before the current fiscal year, and smaller disbursements that do not require committee action according to the MFA Board of Directors bylaws.

Like the Grant Administration Committee disbursements, these gifts span MFA's grant priorities, recently streamlined from 11 categories to six: 1) Food Security, Homelessness, and Poverty; 2) Clergy and Laity Education; 3) Community Health; 4) Evangelism and Discipleship; 5) Diversity; and 6) Environmental Awareness and Energy Education. Examples of such disbursements range from providing EV chargers in multiple locations across the state and supporting the Creation Care program at Mount Eagle Retreat Center to establishing and supporting a series of food distribution hubs that serve multiple counties in high-need areas of the state.

MFA welcomes grant proposals from United Methodist and Pan-Methodist churches and organizations, as well as non-church-related community nonprofits that pursue goals aligning with one or more of the priorities listed at methodistfoundationAR.org/grants. Churches and

organizations planning to request funds from MFA should also visit the link above to establish a login for the Foundation's Grant Portal. Addressing food insecurity in Arkansas remains a top priority of the Foundation's grant program.

About the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas

With a mission to establish and manage charitable funds to strengthen and expand Methodist ministries across Arkansas, the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas manages over \$260 million in endowment funds and other charitable assets that benefit local churches and other United Methodist ministries. Founded in 1963, the Foundation has grown into one of the largest United Methodist foundations in the country, managing more than 800 funds that support Methodist ministries. To learn more, visit methodistfoundationAR.org.

CONTACT US

501.664.8632 (LR) OR 479.957.3089 (NWA)

Blessings to Go (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

"This grant from the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas makes an incredible difference," said the Rev. Rachel Krest, pastor of Grace Chapel UMC. "It allows us to continue meeting people's needs—with compassion, hospitality, and the love of Christ in action."

The Blessings to Go ministry was envisioned by Grace Chapel member Pat Barlett, whose heart for serving others helped transform an idea into a thriving, community-driven outreach.

"Blessings To Go isn't your typical food pantry. Our volunteers meet people right where they are—calling them by name, listening to their stories, and sharing in both their concerns and their joys," Barlett said. "We're not just here to feed; we're here to love, just as Christ calls us to do. That's why this support means more than words can express. Knowing we can continue serving every Thursday night is a blessing beyond measure. From all of us at Blessings to Go—and from every family who comes through—we send our thanks to the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas and ask God's blessing upon them."

Each week, cars line up as volunteers greet guests with warm smiles, conversation, and prayer. The impact of those encounters reaches far beyond nutritional needs being met.

"I'm so thankful for this pantry," says Linda, who picks up food boxes for two elderly friends. "I have a full-time job, so it makes it hard getting to a daytime pantry. I love how you all treat people coming here—the laughter and the love. Oh, and the prayer is another favorite of mine."

Another guest, a working parent with a spouse and two children, said, "We both work and between rent going up, and every day the cost of groceries going up, we can't keep up! This box helps us out so much."

"This pantry means so much to a single mother trying to take care of her kids while trying to keep everything else going," said another recipient.

And Clint, a repeat guest, summed up the heart of the ministry this way: "I love that you all talk to us!

Sometimes we just need someone to say hi and not judge us. You all do that. You call me by name; we laugh. It's not doom and gloom. You not only give us food—you make us feel good."

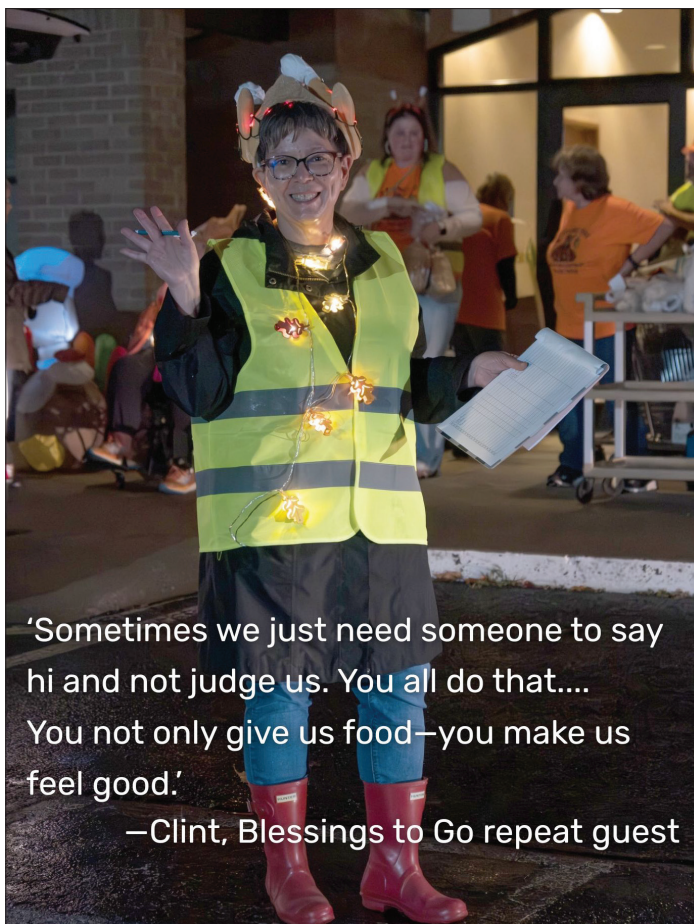
The grant from the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas will help sustain and strengthen Blessings to Go's ongoing operations, ensuring the ministry can continue offering food and encouragement to those in need throughout 2026 and beyond.

"Blessings to Go is a beautiful example of what a congregation can accomplish when they use the power of relationship and

community to meet the immediate needs of their neighbors," said the Rev. Mackey Yokem, director of leadership ministries for the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas.

"The Foundation is grateful to be able to support Grace Chapel in this difference-making work."

To learn more about Blessings to Go, or to give of your time or resources to support it, visit www.gracechapelumc.life/about-2.



'Sometimes we just need someone to say hi and not judge us. You all do that.... You not only give us food—you make us feel good.'

—Clint, Blessings to Go repeat guest

MFA MOMENTS



MFA recently selected its third feeding ministry hub site, providing a **\$40,000 startup grant** to First UMC of Arkadelphia. United Methodists in Arkadelphia have begun transforming the building that housed the now-closed St. Andrew UMC so it can join the work of hubs in Crossett and Mountain Home, providing hunger relief across a multi-county area. Pictured, from left: feeding hub team members Nellene Roberts, Claire Gehrki, Smokey Smith, Cindy Jackson (who also directs the Clark County Ecumenical Food Pantry), David Griscom, Rev. Zeke Allen, FUMC Treasurer Missy Lewis, and MFA Director of Leadership Ministries Rev. Mackey Yokem.



MFA's Spring 2026 Taizé International Study Cohort came together January 9 to start preparing for what to expect and begin engaging with the traditions of the monastic community they'll be visiting this spring. From left: Revs. Jeremy Hopper, Mary Steward, Haley Jones Wells, Chase Green, Danita Waller-Paige, Edna Morgan, Jana Green, Dan Read, Corey Read, Kenny Lee, Katie Pearce, Melissa Maskell, Lauren Delano Grosskopf, J.J. Galloway, Claire Newbill, Mark McDonald, Ron Hayes, Wayne Clark.



Retired pastor and former MFA Board member the Rev. Phil Hathcock peruses the pastries on Phil Appreciation Day at the Foundation. The staff thanked Phil for his weekly volunteering and steady all-around helpfulness.



**REVEREND
J. WAYNE
CLARK**

**PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE
METHODIST FOUNDATION OF ARKANSAS**

**five-oh-
ONES to WATCH**
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
**Methodist
FAMILY HEALTH**



Congratulations to MFA President & CEO Rev. J. Wayne Clark for being named a Five-Oh-One to Watch by 501 LIFE magazine! Scan the code above to read the feature on him (written by First UMC Conway member Colleen Holt).

PHOTO BY MIKE KEMP

CONTACT US
501.664.8632 (LR) OR 479.957.3089 (NWA)



601 Wellington Village Rd
Little Rock, AR 72211

2103 S. 54th Street, Suite #1
Rogers, AR 72758

Non-Profit Org,
U.S. Postage
PAID
Little Rock, AR
Permit No. 2297

Investment Forum to Bring Wespath Leaders to LR

- Who:** Account holders and friends of the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas
- What:** MFA Investment Forum
- When:** Tuesday, May 12, 2026 | 11:30 a.m.
- Where:** The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas
601 Wellington Village Road | Little Rock

Account holders and other interested parties are invited hear directly from Wespath leaders at the MFA Investment Forum on Tuesday, May 12. Wespath administrators will present information about your investments and a general outlook on the markets and the economy. The program begins with lunch provided by MFA and will conclude around 4 p.m.

Please contact **Cathy Hall** at 501-664-8632 or chall@methodistfoundation.org to reserve your seat at the Forum; attendance is limited to 40 participants.

