

# LEGACIES

NOVEMBER 2025

## Foundation Recognized for Acting Out Against Hunger



Jill Penick, Debby Fiser, Rev. Mackey Yokem, Rev. Lynn Kilbourne, Amy Forbus, Amy McGovern, and Rev. Wayne Clark celebrate at the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance's Sept. 18 Hunger Action Breakfast after Rev. Clark received the Acting Out Against Hunger Award on behalf of MFA.

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas (MFA) on Sept. 18 received the Acting Out Against Hunger Award at the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance's Hunger Action Breakfast.

Years ago, forward-thinking MFA donors directed their estate gifts to addressing food insecurity. Today, their generosity lives on, empowering MFA to assist local churches, key nonprofits, and the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church in fighting hunger statewide. The Foundation is grateful to be entrusted with ensuring these gifts continue to make an impact, and to see our partners' work bearing fruit (often literally).

Thanks to our nominators, Mary Lewis Dassinger of the Arkansas Conference's 200,000 More Reasons initiative, and Jeff Quick, CEO of the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas. Let's keep working together to feed our neighbors!

## NAUMF's Jim Argue Memorial Award Increases to \$40,000



ARGUE

The 2025 annual meeting of the National Association of United Methodist Foundations (NAUMF), held in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, October 20-22, included honoring this year's recipient of the Jim Argue Memorial Award, a national honor named for the longest-serving President of the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas (MFA).

While MFA will always hold Jim's memory and legacy dear, his significant influence on his peers through his membership in NAUMF also lives on through this annual group donation to a ministry that reflects the Kingdom of God. This year's award, given to Rooted & Rising of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was in the amount of \$40,000, led by a \$10,000 contribution from Wespath and a \$5,000 gift from MFA.

Rooted & Rising ([rootedandrisingwp.org](https://rootedandrisingwp.org)) has origins in United Methodism, and for more than 30 years has served the Washington Park neighborhood of Milwaukee through providing quality housing, childcare, food security, basic resources, and neighborhood engagement. They elevate the voices of their neighbors, serve with humility and compassion, and work to build a more stable, equitable, and prosperous community — all pursuits that Jim would wholeheartedly support.

MFA is grateful to see Jim Argue's legacy extend to a new location each year, as NAUMF meetings move to different parts of the U.S. and the award goes to a ministry in the host area. From our home in Little Rock's James B. Argue Jr. Stewardship Center, we offer our congratulations to Rooted & Rising, and may your work continue to be blessed!

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## A MESSAGE FROM WAYNE

Rev. J. Wayne Clark  
President & CEO

# On grandparenthood

I've always heard friends say that grandchildren are wonderful and life-changing. Some have even joked that if they had known how amazing grandchildren were, they would have had them first! Well, on October 18, Rynnett and I were blessed with our first grandchild – and now we fully understand what our friends meant.

Our granddaughter, Aurelia Elizabeth, was born to our oldest daughter and her husband in Alexandria, Virginia. Aurelia has already found places in my heart that I didn't know existed.

Births – especially the birth of a grandchild – make us more reflective about life, our values, and the contributions we've made in this world. I've been thinking a lot about my life and the life that lies ahead for this seven-pound child. She will learn and grow and have so many adventures. I also know she will face struggles and challenges. But with a strong foundation and many people who will love, support, and guide her, she will survive, thrive, and grow from those challenges.

As I think about her future, I've also been thinking about my legacy. What have I done that Aurelia will remember? What can I do now to leave her something meaningful?

For one, I can set up an education fund so she can enjoy a wonderful college experience. I can also leave her an ethical will – or what some call a legacy letter. This is a non-legal document that passes down values, beliefs, life lessons, and whatever wisdom I've gathered along the way. An ethical will focuses on the intangible parts of life: family history, spiritual beliefs, and hopes for future generations. Mine will include stories of my people – funny ones and not-so-funny ones – along with gratitude, guidance, and maybe even a few favorite foods and travel memories to keep the family heritage alive.

Working at a place like the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas makes me think a lot about legacy. I know each of you has your own story to tell and a legacy that matters. If we can be of assistance as you live out your legacy, please let us know.

# Part of strengthening communities, changing lives

When volunteers gather at the Samaritan Community Center (SCC) in Rogers to pack food for children, there's a sense of energy and purpose that fills the room. Once a month for six months out of the school year, a group from Rogers First United Methodist Church joins in that mission, filling SnackPacks to be sent home with kids who might otherwise go hungry over the weekend.

At a recent packing session, that energy hit a new high.

Before the group began working, the SCC SnackPacks Coordinator, Jon Rambo, shared an update about the program's new setup and some changes to the food items going into each pack.

"We've been able to increase the protein this year," he told the volunteers with a proud smile. Then he added something that sparked an even bigger reaction: a grant had made that improvement possible.

"I had an inkling," **Harriet Mack**, a member of Rogers First UMC who helps coordinate her church's volunteer group, wrote in an email to me. "So I asked if that grant might have been from the Methodist Foundation. He smiled big and said, 'Yes, it was!' Then our group of 20 broke out in cheers and high fives—grateful for the good and important work of the Foundation!"

That moment of celebration captured exactly what the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas seeks to do: connect generosity with ministry in ways that strengthen communities and change lives.



A group from First UMC of Rogers assists with SnackPack assembly.

The Foundation's recent grant to the SCC's SnackPacks for Kids program helped fund the addition of higher-protein foods to the weekend packs that go home with nearly 6,000 children across Northwest Arkansas each week. For students facing food insecurity, those small bags of nourishment mean more than just calories; they mean stability, care, and a reminder that their community sees them.

For volunteers like Harriet and her team from Rogers First UMC, it's a full-circle moment. They see firsthand how faith, generosity, and partnership come together—through the Foundation, through SCC's dedicated staff, and through every person who shows up to pack a bag.

It's a reminder that the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas' work is about more than grants or numbers on a balance sheet. It's about empowering ministries that embody the love of Christ—sometimes in simple, tangible ways, like a bag of food with a little extra protein and a lot of heart.

OUT  
& ABOUT  
WITH  
AMY

**Amy McGovern**  
Director of Development,  
Northwest Arkansas Office



Three SnackPacks volunteers with some of the high-protein snacks purchased by Samaritan Community Center using grant funds from the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas.

## CONTACT US

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# Board of Directors Begins Fall Meeting with Retreat



The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas Board of Directors met November 18-19 at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute atop Petit Jean Mountain. The extra day and beautiful retreat setting allowed the Board — particularly its seven newest members — opportunities to get to know MFA staff and each other as they reviewed their duties and responsibilities, heard reports on this year's growth, and previewed initiatives for 2026. Board members pictured, from left: Dr. Stephen Routon, Rev. Bud Reeves, Dr. Beverly Lyn-Cook, Bishop Laura Merrill, Loria Oliver, Eddie Martin, Kathy Conley, Jan Pugh, Bert Kell, Rev. J. Wayne Clark, Maurica Dooley, Megan Rugg, Jill Penick, Rev. J.J. Galloway, Sam Gibson, Rev. Judy Rudd, Bill Kincaid, Jonathan VanHorn, Todd Burris, and Rev. Dane Womack.

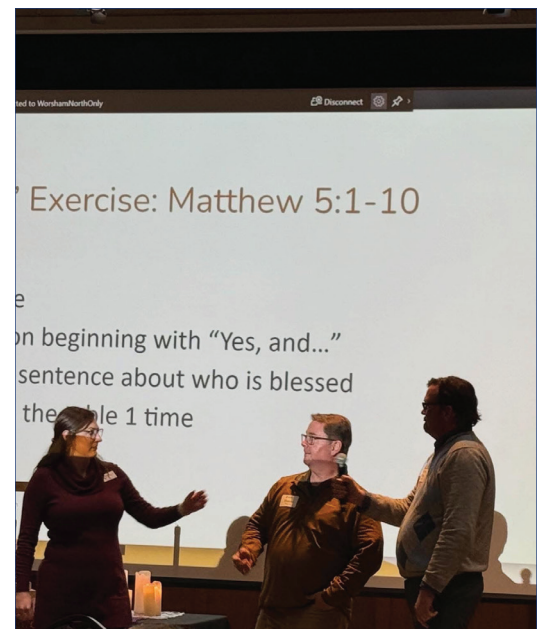
## Griffin-Allison Speaks, Leads Gill Preaching Workshop

**Rev. Rachel Griffin-Allison**, pastor of Oak Lawn UMC in Dallas and advocate for marginalized persons, visited Hendrix College November 3-4 to lead this year's John and Marjem Gill Preaching Workshop.

Her visit was co-sponsored by the **Compelling Preaching Initiative (CPI)**, which is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment and administered by the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas. CPI seeks to build the capacity for bold, innovative preaching within Arkansas United Methodist clergy to transform churches and communities.



Rev. Rachel Griffin-Allison preaches at Hendrix College. Griffin-Allison stepped in to present after scheduled speaker Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber had to cancel for health reasons.

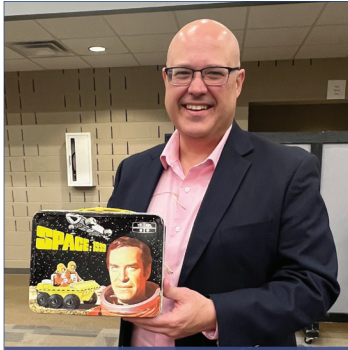


Revs. Miranda Hornsby, Daniel Thueson, and Terry Gosnell engage in an improvisational exercise during the Gill Preaching Workshop held at Hendrix College November 3-4.



# October: Pastor Appreciation Month with MFA

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas participated in the October celebration of Pastor Appreciation Month by offering congregations a grant of \$75 per appointed clergy to help them celebrate their pastors. More than \$10,000 went out to over 100 congregations to honor their pastors; here are some of the photos MFA received along with churches' thanks!



Rev. Bill Cato of First UMC in Bryant was celebrated with a cake and punch, plus a vintage lunchbox (and thermos!) to add to his collection.



Rev. Danita Waller-Paige received a card, a check, and several gifts from the congregation at St. James UMC of Pine Bluff.



Rev. Cale McGillvray, left, received a card and money in appreciation for his service with Central Avenue UMC in Sharp.



Revs. Katie Chambers and Ellen Rowland with the cards they received at Pulaski Heights UMC Little Rock.



Rev. Diane Hughes (dressed as Dorothy for important work ahead!) received a card and money at England UMC's Fall Festival following the service.



Rev. Reggie Russell received a check, a poster of appreciation, a favorite cake baked by a member, and many words of thanks to him and Trina for their service to Gardner Memorial UMC.



Rev. Edna Morgan, left, received a gift card to her favorite restaurant, a floral arrangement for her home, and a basket of cards from members of the congregation at St. Luke UMC in Pine Bluff.



Rev. Rashim Merriwether and Andrea were celebrated with a cash gift in addition to MFA's grant funding, plus two boxes of his favorite treats, Suzy Q's, by St. Paul UMC of Little Rock.



Rev. Jana Green of Wesley UMC in Fort Smith with Sunday morning breakfast goodies and a card and gift purchased for her using the MFA Pastor Appreciation Grant funding.



# MFA's Support for Every Child Swims Highlighted in Video Shown at Jones Center's 'Big Night' Event

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas' support for Every Child Swims, a program of the Jones Center of Springdale, was featured November 14 as part of Big Night, the center's signature fundraising event.

Every Child Swims serves third-grade students in Springdale Public Schools, providing free swim lessons and water safety education to every student who needs these resources. The goal is to reduce the state's high drowning rates by eliminating barriers to becoming familiar with water safety and skills.

MFA recently made a \$20,000 investment in Every Child Swims, as it aligns well with the Foundation's grantmaking priorities of community health and enabling education.

**Amy McGovern**, the Foundation's Director of Development, Northwest Arkansas Office, was interviewed for a video shown during Big Night to emphasize the program's success.

"It's just in its second year, and the impact it's made after its first year? Incredible," McGovern says in the video. "These kids that were scared of the water love to swim now... and their families feel

An instructor in the Jones Center's Every Child Swims program works with a third-grader from Springdale's Parson Hills Elementary School.



more comfortable, they feel more secure [now] that their child has learned to swim."

Big Night exceeded the Jones Center's expectations, raising more than \$310,000 to support access to scholarships and programs like Every Child Swims.

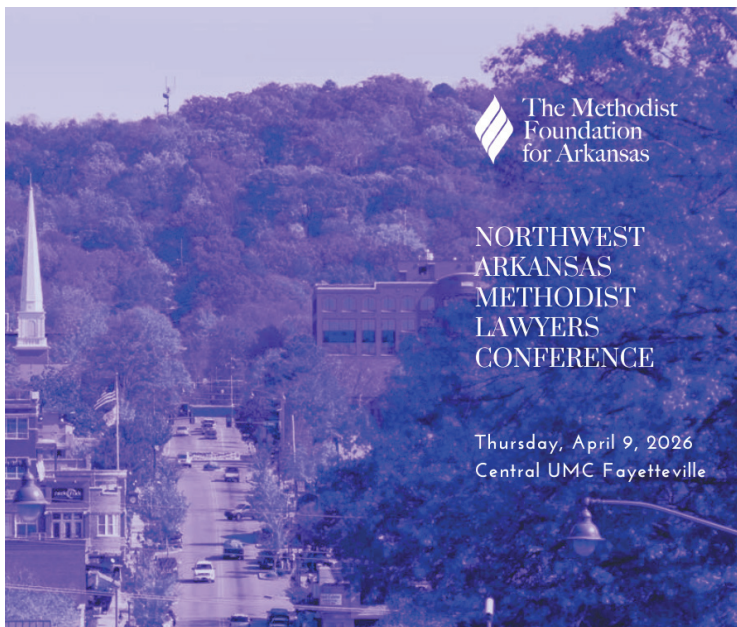
To watch the video, scan the code on this page or visit [youtube.com/watch?v=Hvh7XgU7kbY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=Hvh7XgU7kbY).



## Coming in 2026: Northwest Arkansas Methodist Lawyers Conference

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas has added a second Lawyers Conference to its event schedule in 2026, increasing the geographical reach and providing double the annual opportunities for continuing legal education. The Northwest Arkansas Methodist Lawyers Conference will be held **Thursday, April 9, 2026**, at Central UMC in Fayetteville.

This day-long event is offered at no charge to Arkansas Methodist attorneys. The agenda will cover items relevant to the work of representing churches and congregations, but topics will differ from the September event in Central Arkansas. Look for more details and registration information on the Foundation's Facebook page and website in early 2026.





# UPDATES ON FOUNDATION STAFF

## NEW TITLES FOR KILBOURNE, MCGOVERN



KILBOURNE



MCGOVERN

At the November 19 Methodist Foundation for Arkansas Board of Directors meeting, Human Resources Committee Chair **Jan Pugh** announced new titles for two MFA staffers, effective immediately:

- **Rev. Lynn Kilbourne**, formerly Director of Development, is now **Vice President of Development**; and
- **Amy McGovern**, formerly Northwest Arkansas Development Officer, is now **Director of Development, Northwest Arkansas Office**.

In addition to their work with the Foundation, both Kilbourne and McGovern hold related professional leadership roles:

- Kilbourne serves as executive director of the National Association of United Methodist Foundations (NAUMF), and
- McGovern currently serves as President-elect and in January will start her term as President of the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Northwest Arkansas Chapter.

McGovern recently co-chaired and emceed the chapter's 40th anniversary celebration of National Philanthropy Day, November 12. She is pictured at right with her event co-chair, Jessica DeBari of Mount Sequoyah Center.



Photo courtesy 3W Magazine

## LEDBETTER SERVING AS MFA STAFF INTERN



LEDBETTER

**Sadie Ledbetter**, a senior at Bryant High School and chair of the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries, has begun an internship with the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas. She is spending approximately 10 hours per week during her senior year helping MFA staff accomplish the Foundation's goals while learning about various facets of nonprofit work, such as development, accounting, grant management, event planning, and communication. The Foundation is grateful for Sadie's initial contributions and eager to see what else she will accomplish with MFA before her graduation.

### CONTACT US

501.664.8632 (LR) OR 479.957.3089 (NWA)

# MFA Grants Surpass 2024 Total in Q3 2025

*Running total for year's grants reached \$1.9 million in September*

The Grant Administration Committee of the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas (MFA) Board of Directors has awarded a total of 25 grants across its three monthly meetings of the third quarter, bringing total granted funds to more than \$1.9 million for the year to date, surpassing last year's 12-month total of just over \$1.8 million.

"We're so incredibly grateful for the laypersons and clergy who help make our grant ministry possible," said MFA President and CEO the Rev. J. Wayne Clark. "Their bequests of all sizes, over the course of decades, have given the Foundation the ability to help communities across Arkansas. Our goal is to manage these funds so they generate a steady flow of resources for the good of as many Arkansans as possible."

Grantees and their award amounts from MFA's Grant Administration Committee during the third calendar quarter are:

**First UMC Magnolia:** \$10,000 to replace a HVAC unit for its Stew Pot feeding ministry, which serves three hot meals per week for a total of 26,000 individual meals per year.

**Shepherd's Hope Neighborhood Health Centers:** \$50,000 to support this source of free medical care for individuals who have no health insurance. Volunteer practitioners provide medical, dental, vision and pharmaceutical services through this ministry connected with Oak Forest UMC Little Rock.

**200,000 More Reasons** initiative of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church: \$25,000 to support this established feeding ministry of the Annual Conference

that assists local United Methodist congregations provide feeding and literacy ministries in their communities.

**Micah 6:8 Initiative:** \$40,000 for this ministry connected to First UMC Rogers, which serves Northwest Arkansas by providing emergency shelter, clothing and food to homeless neighbors. This request serves as part of a matching grant from another organization.

**Parents Left Behind:** \$12,000 to this ministry based at Central UMC Fayetteville that provides support and counseling to families who have lost a child in death.

**Teen Action/Support Center:** \$20,000 to this organization connected to Central UMC Rogers that provides counseling and housing to youth and their families when the child is experiencing a mental health crisis.

**Methodist Village Senior Living:** \$25,000 to support the Advanced Dementia Practitioner Program, a service provided to the residents at MVSL through a connection with First UMC Fort Smith.

**Arkansas Foodbank:** \$50,000 to this statewide foodbank providing canned, frozen, and fresh food to those in need across Arkansas.

**Samaritan Community Center:** \$15,000 to support their successful and effective Backpacks for Kids ministry in the northwest Arkansas area, providing meals on weekends and during the summer months to schoolchildren across four major cities.

**Our House:** \$20,000 to assist with emergency and transitional housing for homeless families.

**Family Network:** \$24,400 to this national nonprofit with a northwest Arkansas location that provides diapers for families with children.

**Museum of Discovery:** \$8,500 to provide science demonstrations in one of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) fields in Title I schools in eastern Arkansas.

**CareLink:** \$6,732 to support the traditional Meals on Wheels program long provided by this organization.

**Mount Sequoyah Center:** \$14,000 toward a wayfinding signage system that will also identify flora and fauna on the campus. In addition, the program will describe the changes predicted by climate change.

**The Jones Center** of Springdale: \$20,000 supporting their established program Every Child Swims.

**First UMC Conway:** \$15,000 to support a joint venture including the congregation, Hendrix College, and LifeQuest of Arkansas to promote healthy and lifelong learning and volunteerism for older adults.

**Wesley Foundation at Arkansas Tech University:** \$3,250 matching grant to support ministry start-up for the fall 2025 semester.

**Wesley UMC Conway:** \$2,500 to provide food-insecure neighbors with a holiday meal and related assistance.

**Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church:** \$30,000 for an on-boarding program to provide an intentional process for newly appointed pastors to be known and to get to know their inherited staff and congregation. The newly appointed pastor is supported by a Certified On-



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Boarding Facilitator. This amount will be awarded per year for three consecutive years, for a total of \$90,000.

**First UMC Smackover:** \$4,500 to support and expand the Shoes for Buckaroos ministry by providing new shoes, clothing essentials, and school supplies to children in need within the Smackover-Norphlet School District.

**Big Brothers/Big Sisters NWA:** \$12,500 toward a transformative youth leadership program that will serve communities and provides support for their High school Leadership Program and especially Project Reach.

**Big Brothers/Big Sisters:** \$12,500 toward a transformative youth leadership program that will serve communities in Central and Southeast Arkansas, with a focus on Pulaski County (Little Rock) and Desha County (McGehee).

**Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church:** \$18,000 for Creating a Culture of Renewal, a three-year, highly interactive leadership program designed to interrupt decline, increase vitality, and reconnect congregations with the gospel's transformative mission. This amount will be awarded per

year for three consecutive years, for a total of \$54,000.

**Rison UMC:** \$7,500 to fund the congregation's monthly feeding ministry, which distributes between 100 and 120 boxes of food each month, feeding an estimated 6,000 people annually.

**Defraying EV Charging Station Installation Expenses:** \$9,000 to assist with the installation of EV charging stations in locations in northern and central Arkansas. The charging stations themselves were part of an earlier grant from the Foundation.

### **Additional Grants Beyond Committee Action**

In addition to the grants above totaling \$455,382 and those announced at the close of the first quarter and second quarter, 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 11 grant priorities: clergy and laity

educational opportunities; clergy selfcare; community health; fostering inclusivity and understanding among groups of people with differing beliefs and backgrounds; enabling education and employment; environmental awareness and energy education; evangelism and discipleship; food insecurity; ministries with unhoused persons; ministries that attempt to reverse poverty in local communities; and charitable support for organizations that provide immediate assistance to persons in need. Examples of such disbursements include \$250 for Canvas Community to purchase bottled water to distribute to their unhoused neighbors and \$14,588.48 in assistance for the Greater Crossett Area Feeding Hub.

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](http://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.

## **REMINDER: MFA GRANT PORTAL UP AND RUNNING**

The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas welcomes grant proposals from Methodist, Pan-Methodist, and other Wesleyan-rooted 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](http://methodistfoundationAR.org/grants)**. To apply for a grant, your church or organization must first create a Grant Portal login. Visit the Grants page

of the site and click the "Set Up Your Grant Portal" button in the sidebar to get started.

**Because this is a completely new system, previous grant recipients must set up their Grant Portal before submitting an application, even if the organization has previously received funding from MFA.** All new grant proposals must be submitted through the Grant Portal.



# MFA MOMENTS | HIGHLIGHTS



More than 30 Arkansans received sponsorship from MFA to attend Leadership Institute at United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan., in October.



MFA Board of Directors Chair Bert Kell of Rogers offers words of welcome October 30 at the Northwest Arkansas Bishops' Club Dinner at Mount Sequoyah Center in Fayetteville.



Rev. Mackey Yokem celebrates with the latest cohort of Micah Fellows to complete a nine-month program focused on ending poverty and championing economic justice. MFA has supported these efforts alongside the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and Faith Matters Network.



Judy Mattox and Rev. Michael Mattox (background) in attendance at the Northwest Arkansas Bishops' Club Dinner.



The Kilbourne, Forbus, Taulbee, and McAdoo households represented MFA at the Methodist Family Health Foundation's annual Southern Silks Stakes event September 20. Ask Rev. Nathan Kilbourne about his dramatic come-from-behind finish!



At an early October conference, AME Zion pastor Rev. Gary Adams Sr., left, visits with MFA Gift Officer Rev. Dr. C.E. McAdoo.



# FROM LATE SUMMER AND FALL OF 2025



Jeff Quick, CEO of the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas and an active United Methodist, served as keynote speaker for the Northwest Arkansas Bishops' Club Dinner held on October 30 at Mount Sequoyah Center in Fayetteville.



Rev. Bud and Carey Reeves listen to a speaker at the Northwest Arkansas Bishops' Club Dinner.



MFA staffers Rev. Dr. C.E. McAdoo, Amy McGovern, Clarence Trice, and Revs. Lynn Kilbourne, Wayne Clark, and Mackey Yokem at the NWA Bishops' Club Dinner.



Retired Bishop Max Whitfield and Valerie Whitfield are welcomed by their fellow Bishops' Club NWA guests.



From left: Rev. Chase Burns, Rev. Chase Green, Adrienne Ingram, Rev. Virginia Brown, Rev. Jana Green, Rev. Judy Hall, Spencer Hall, and Rev. Blake Bradford share in table fellowship at the Bishops' Club NWA Dinner.

*Bishops' Club NWA Dinner photos by Ryan Versey*

## IN DA CLUB, WE ALL

### PHILANTHROPISTS: Bishops'



Club dues go directly to the Foundation's grant ministry. Want to become a part of

it? Visit [methodistfoundationAR.org/bishops-club](https://methodistfoundationAR.org/bishops-club) or scan the code included here to learn more or join!

#### CONTACT US

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## Little Free Library, Little Free Pantry Arrive at MFA HQ

A Little Free Library and a Little Free Pantry arrived in October at the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas' Little Rock headquarters. Look for them near the point where MFA's driveway and parking lot meet.

Many thanks to **Rev. Chris Cooper** for building the two cabinets, and to **Rev. Nathan Kilbourne**, MFA Building Manager **Brian White**, and



Rev. Chris Cooper arrives to begin installing the Little Free Library and Little Free Pantry he built for the Foundation.



Brian White and Orea Meeks have a look inside the Little Free Library and Little Free Pantry after finishing the installation.

MFA Account and Operations Analyst **Orea Meeks** for assisting with installation.

While the concept of the Little Free Library ([littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org)) originated in Minnesota, the Little Free Pantry movement traces its roots to Fayetteville, Arkansas. Learn more about it at [littlefreepantry.org](http://littlefreepantry.org).