



## Briefly

## POSITION AVAILABLE

•**Organist:** Wesleyan Hills UMC, 390 S. Yates, Memphis, TN 38120. Sunday mornings and Wed. evenings. Salary commensurate with experience. Call **Bill Russell**, 901-682-5471.

## LUTHER SMITH TO EXPLORE THURMAN SPIRITUALITY

The public is invited to hear **Dr. Luther E. Smith**, Professor of Church and Community at Candler School of Theology, speak on *Building Community on Common Ground: Exploring the Spirituality of Howard Thurman*.

Dr. Smith will be at Lambuth University's R. E. Womack Memorial Chapel on Sunday, **February 25**, at 6:00pm. This free event for laity and clergy entitled, *Community Beyond Our Dreams*, is jointly sponsored by Lambuth University and the Jackson District Council on Ministries.

Dr. Smith will also address the clergy of the Jackson District on Monday, **Feb. 26**, 9:30am-1:00pm, in the Hamilton Room of the Student Union Building. Lunch reservations can be made by contacting the Jackson District Office at 731-660-1376. Tickets are \$10 per person.

Professor Smith's current research focuses on the role of congregations in public health issues, a sacramental understanding of hope, and an ethical perspective on black church financing. His publications include: *Intimacy and Mission: Intentional Community as Crucible for Radical Discipleship* (1994); *Howard Thurman: The Mystic as Prophet* (1981).

## CARING FOR CREATION

It's not too late. Call now to sign up for the Caring for Creation Conference, Feb. 18-19, at Our Lady Queen of Peace Retreat Center in

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# A child with no name haunts VIM team in Sierra Leone

By **DR. JOSEPH GEARY, PASTOR**  
Paris First United Methodist Church

It was late on the last day of our mission work in Taiama, Sierra Leone. The driver and vehicle had arrived and the sun was hanging low on the horizon. Volunteers were packing up their belongings and supplies and getting on the vehicle when suddenly, Elyse Bell, our co-leader, sent word from the clinic for me to come.

When I arrived, I was quickly told that a child was near death and asked to come in to the treatment room to pray.

A mother had walked in from a nearby village with a two-month-old baby girl who weighed less than two pounds. The mother's milk had dried up and the baby had nothing to eat for weeks.

Ruth Roberts, Registered Nurse and member of St. Paul UMC in

Lakeland, worked feverishly to get badly needed fluids in the child.

When I approached the mother and asked the child's name, a worker translated my request into Mende. The mother responded, "She has no name."

I was momentarily stunned. I thought I had misunderstood. I asked the question again and the response was the same, "She has no name."

Nothing in my years of pastoral experience had ever prepared me to pray for a dying child with no name. I called on the Holy Spirit to help me form the words and I prayed that our efforts combined with help from above would save this child's life.

After praying, I turned away and walked toward the only window in the room and gazed out on the cottonwood trees and the weaver birds returning to roost for the evening. I thought is there



**Her mother's milk dried up, a tiny baby girl fought for life and lost. Ruth Roberts, a team member, struggled to save her.**

any greater indignity in the world than to be an impoverished child, hungry, and not have a name.

The effort continued to save

the child into the evening. But, alas, when we returned to the Taiama Methodist Clinic com-

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**Jim Cochrane (third from left) and colleagues in Northern Zambia during a pilot project for the African Religious Health Assets Programme.**

## 'Redefining the box' Using a global model to improve Memphis healthcare

In Washington, D.C., on Feb. 8, the African Religious Health Assets Program released its report, "Appreciating Assets: The Contribution of Religion to Universal Access in Africa." On the heels of the report, officials with Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare announced they would replicate the global model in Memphis, making it the first U.S. or European city to apply the model in pursuit of enhanced healthcare and quality of life.

The report, funded by the World

Health Organization, presented research representing the first comprehensive assessment that maps both the tangible and intangible assets of religious entities in portions of two African countries, Zambia and Lesotho, to improve the health outlook for those with HIV/AIDS.

Through its newly created Center for Excellence in Faith and Health, the Memphis work will focus on health challenges distinct to Memphis. Shelby County has a higher incidence of infant mortality, dia-

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# Faith in a country where belief in God is suspect

By PATRICK WHALEY  
(From Moscow, Russia)

We all need encouragement. We all need trusted people of faith who will lead and guide us, who will teach and model what it means to be the Church. As the children's song says, "I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together; all around the world, we are the church together." But it's very difficult to be a Christian in the former Soviet Union.

On this journey, I've met with people from Norway searching for new models to reach out to their ever-changing community. Their world is going through tremendous change. Inflation is high, belief in God is low, and the influx of Muslims is extremely obvious.

Everywhere, the church struggles to find its identity. I've spent almost a week in Latvia leading teacher training events, meeting with pastors, planning for ministry, blessing babies at the Hope Center, preaching at First Methodist in Riga and on the Christian radio

station there, visiting the Baptist Seminary and conversing with the President. I also spent time with the pastoral Latvian leadership shaping the future of the church. I wish each of you could be part of these gatherings.

I am currently in Moscow. Bishop Vaxby and I spent Saturday together praying, planning and playing. Worship was great on Sunday with music from university-age students from Taiwan and Korea. We are a world church, disciples of Jesus Christ sharing life and ministry together.

For the past three days, I have been with Bishop Vaxby and his twelve District Superintendents whose ministry stretches over eleven time zones and seven countries. Pastor Nelli Mamonova from Pskov is one of these trusted leaders. She has much wisdom and is given great respect.

We worshipped and prayed. I gave a two-hour presentation on mentoring. It was another opportunity to share the Pastor's Continuing Education Plan and Lay Leadership Training that I helped develop.

Throughout these days, I was the one on the phone or e-mailing the Upper Room Ministry at the General Board of Discipleship to discuss evangelism or calling the General Board of Higher Education & Ministry to look at issues related to mentoring and seminary education.

Communication continues with World Methodist Evangelism and the General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Publishing House and The Walk to Emmaus. Together we are developing curriculum, planning the first Russian editions of the Upper Room, and training pastors.

I've spent much time with seminary students challenging them to a deeper understanding of their call within the local church.

## All around the world, we are the church together

You've heard me share before that we in America have grown up in the Church. We have churches on every street corner and Bible Studies every day of the week. Our brothers and sisters around the world need our prayers, our

support and our experience, all packaged in God's love.

These Eurasian leaders have the Call, they have the heart for ministry, and they live as Christians in a daily world that is so different from ours. It's not easy to be called a cult, to be questioned by police, to have the daily life struggles while also being called to be the light shining out of darkness.

I wish I could tell you the stories I have heard these past few days, stories that would break your heart, stories of faith in the midst of life's difficulties.

SASHA (Shepherding a Servant's Heart Amen) is listening and caring, mentoring and praying, leading Bible studies, sharing experience and finding new possibilities for being the Church in today's world.

Pray for these pastors and leaders as God calls them into ministry. I have been asked to go many places throughout Eurasia to work with pastors and churches in evangelism, church growth and discipleship. Through training and mentoring leaders, we will grow the Church to become all God has

called it to be.

Don Green used these words at the Friends of Estonia meeting in the middle of January. "Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete." 2 John verse 12.

I am being sent places where face to face we can share the Good News of Jesus Christ with people who have never heard the Gospel and never seen a Bible. I am so honored to work with pastors who will let God's light shine through them.

SASHA is Shepherding A Servant's Heart in a world that does not know Jesus. Please pray for safe travel and for God to open doors for ministry to take place. Pray that God will be glorified and the Bible will be heard with open hearts.

Your prayers and support are so very important. I pray that you will join with me on future trips as we disciple new believers in the name of Jesus Christ. Give God the Glory! •

## Immigration meeting urges hospitality to the 'strangers'

By KATHY L. GILBERT

LAKEJUNALUSKA, (UMNS) Participants at a conference in the cold Great Smoky Mountains were reminded that God created hospitality—not borders and walls.

"God has concern for widows and orphans and marginalized outcasts, and there is nothing you can do about it," said the Rev. A. Clark Jenkins, pastor of St. Andrew-by-the-Sea United Methodist Church in Hilton Head, S.C.

That message was sent home with more than 100 people attending the United Methodist conference called "Our Call to Hospitality: A Biblical Response to the Challenges of Immigration." Among those present were representatives from the Memphis and Tennessee Annual Conferences.

Held Feb. 1-3, the event was sponsored by the Southeastern Jurisdiction and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society.

"We expect immigrants to flip our burgers and take out our trash," said the Rev. Clayton Childers, the board's program director for annual conference rela-

tions. "We expect them to be here and then blame them when they are."

The purpose of the conference was to educate and spur United Methodists to work for comprehensive immigration reform. Participants shared ways churches and conferences are working with immigrants and learned how to advocate for immigration reform.

Workshops encouraging hospitality included immigration and racism; causes and consequences of immigration; the effects of "English only" declarations; and legal issues in immigration.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung of the Northern Illinois Annual (regional) Conference and Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker of the Florida Annual Conference started and ended the conference with worship services.

### Immigration laws

Immigration has been a hot topic in the United States during recent years and, in December 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a strict immigration bill that stirred protests across the nation. Bill Mefford, program

director of civil and human rights with the board, said the Senate passed "not a good but a better" piece of legislation in May 2006, and immigration became "a tool for politics" during the months leading up to Election Day last November.

In opposition to the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Resolution Act, the Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church states in paragraph 162 that "being an undocumented person is not a crime."

The original immigration bill "was a really bad piece of legislation and we don't have it anymore; we are starting from scratch," Mefford said. "But now it is a tougher hill to climb because there is a lot of money behind the anti-immigration side."

Mefford urged Christians to make their voices heard. "One thing I hear over and over again is that lawmakers have to hear from people in favor of immigration reform," he said.

"This is not a Democrat or Republican issue. This is not a left or right issue. It is a faith issue."



Anthony Velazquez (left), a staff member with the United Methodist Council on Finance and Administration, participates in a small group discussion. UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert.

### Immigration reform

The Board of Church and Society is advocating for comprehensive immigration reform that is not based on amnesty or open borders, but aims to:

- Provide a path to citizenship
- Protect workers
- Reunite families
- Restore the rule of law and enhance security

Participants called the conference enlightening and expressed a desire to work toward immigration reform in their own churches and communities.

Niranjan Noronha works with the South Asian population in

Georgia and said the conference was a "very positive experience."

"One thing I learned is that the economic policies of the U.S. bring more immigrants here rather than keeping them in their own countries," he said. "I learned about the realities about what causes immigration and what immigrants face here, especially legal matters."

Video and audio recordings of the worship services, plenaries and workshops can be ordered from the Southeastern Jurisdiction by calling (828) 452-2881 or e-mailing Kenneth Ratcliffe at [ratcliffe@sejunc.org](mailto:ratcliffe@sejunc.org). •

## A child with no name

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pound the next morning to say our good-byes and return to the United States, we were met with a stoic, understated voice that simply said, "The child died."

Those were heartbreaking words to hear and the only comfort our team took was in knowing that during the last night of her life, the little girl had something comforting in her stomach.

As I struggled to understand why the parents had not named the child, the only thing that kept coming to me was their sense of utter hopelessness. With the mother's milk gone and death a certainty, not giving the child a name was an attempt to stave off grief.

We had welcomed this child in the name of Jesus and ministered to her in Word and Deed. Jesus said "whoever welcomes one such child welcomes me." Jesus surely gives his name to children like this little girl every day in our world.

According to Mende custom, the child was buried that same night in her home village according to tradition and tribal rites.

I cannot begin to describe to you what it is like to watch another human being die of starvation. Every moment, 20 children die from hunger in this world. Ministries like the Lenten World Hunger Offering of the Memphis Annual Conference address this need. Hope is not only offered through this fund but through an exciting new approach treating underweight and malnourished children aged six months to five years described in the accompanying article "Peanut Butter-A Gift of Life" by Elyse Bell.

We must not give in to despair but minister in ways that are effective and life-giving. •

*Author's note: During the period Dec. 31, 2006 through Jan. 13, 2007, Samuel Pieh, Elyse Bell and I led a VIM team to Sierra Leone. Our 16 members hailed from Cordova, Dyersburg, Paris and Knoxville, Tenn. Team members helped to renovate a church, staffed a medical clinic, started a cooperative farm, established a chapter of Celebrate Recovery and initiated a Child Nutrition Project to help malnourished children.*

*The vignette above is but one story among many that could have been written. It illustrates why we return to Sierra Leone year after year. It describes how despair empowers us to develop ministries of hope.*

# Peanut Butter – A Gift of Life

By ELYSE J. BELL, LAY LEADER  
Paris First United Methodist Church

"For I was hungry and you gave me food."

Matthew 25:35a NRSV

While serving on a Volunteer in Mission team in Sierra Leone two years ago, our team unfortunately witnessed the death of an infant twin boy, Joseph. It was a heart wrenching experience. I was certain God did not intend for His children to die of malnutrition.

When I returned home, the image of Joseph's mother carrying him several miles back to his village that night for burial left an imprint on my heart that I could not forget. I began to think about what one person could do to make a difference in a village in the middle of the African bush.

Sierra Leone has recently emerged from a 10-year civil war. The infrastructure of the country is devastated. The U.N. Human Development Index ranks 177 countries in the world. Sierra Leone ranks 176th. Per capita income is \$548, the infant mortality rate is 17%. Of those surviving birth, another 20% die before the age of five. The statistics are staggering. What could I possibly do?

Shortly after my return home, our daughter, Traci Brown, sent me a newspaper article from St. Louis about Dr. Mark Manary who was pioneering a new approach to the problem of malnutrition in Africa.

I called Dr. Manary, a pediatrician at Washington University's Children's Hospital, and set up a meeting. His concept was simple, affordable and practical in areas where cooking fuel and electricity were unavailable—and it was saving lives!

This home-based therapy for severe childhood malnutrition has been successful in several countries over the past five years. It is a ready-to-use therapeutic food combining powdered ingredients with a rich paste and results in a high-energy food supplement.

These very basic ingredients, requiring no refrigeration, include powdered milk, vegetable oil, sugar, peanut butter and powdered vitamins and minerals. It can be stored in an airtight container in tropical conditions for



Peanut Butter Project saves a life.

Picture by Robert Hill

three to four months.

A severely malnourished child, between the ages of six months and five years, can eat just a few spoonfuls 5-7 times a day and come to a complete recovery in 2-3 months. The cost is approximately \$2.00 per week to feed a malnourished child. The supplement had been successful in Malawi, Niger and the Congo, so why not take it to Sierra Leone?

I checked on the availability of the ingredients in Sierra Leone. Nearly everything was accessible and groundnuts (peanuts) were a thriving crop in the area. They might even be able to process their own peanut butter. The only ingredient that would require shipping would be the powdered vitamins and minerals. Currently, the supplement is only available from a commercial supplier, Nutriset, in Malaunay, France.

My church circle, The Moving Methodist Women, was my first trial group. They helped me mix the first batch of the peanut butter supplement. At the close of the demonstration, they donated the

first \$100 for the purchase of a case of vitamins and minerals.

The next day I arranged for a wire transfer of the funds to Nutriset in France. The ministry was on its way.

Next on my agenda was an informational session with the Paris District Cluster Meeting where more generous donations were received. After I presented the case for the therapeutic food at my daughter's United Methodist Church in St. Louis, more funds were made available.

On Dec. 31, 2006 sixteen VIM team members, under the leadership of Dr. Joe Geary and native Sierra Leonan, Samuel Pieh, journeyed from the United States through London, England, to Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa.

The trip took 13 days, four of which were travel. One full day was spent in the capitol city purchasing all the necessary ingredients and 300 plastic storage containers.

Our son Todd Bell of Baton Rouge suggested we take along a battery converter to power our electric hand mixer, which would

be charged by a car battery purchased in Bo.

With all of our supplies loaded in vans, we journeyed for several hours into the bush country. This was the third trip our team has made to the 800-member village of Taiama.

For seven days we interviewed mothers and screened babies and young children for malnutrition. They were all weighed, measured and charted according to age for severity of malnutrition. Through an interpreter, each mother was advised on how much and how often to give the supplement to her children as well as when to return for a weight check and refills of peanut butter.

Many had walked for miles from their surrounding villages to find health care for their children. They thanked us, but we were the ones truly blessed by the smiles on their faces.

In those seven days we mixed approximately 200 pounds of the peanut butter supplement, packed them in 250 plastic containers, and served over 100 children. What a blessing!

During our week in Taiama, Ms. Abator Thomas, Minister of Health and Sanitation for Sierra Leone, visited our site to learn more about the program for implementation throughout the entire country.

Upon our return to Freetown, we were invited to present the Peanut Butter Project to a press conference at her request, participated in a nationwide televised broadcast panel discussion and gave a hands-on demonstration at the Princess Maternity and Malnutrition Hospital.

In April of 2007, I will join with six other VIM members to follow up on the Peanut Butter Project and to strengthen the infrastructure and training aspects of the program. Team members will also continue to develop our agricultural demonstration acreage called Taiama Farms.

I am amazed at the way God opens doors when we truly seek to do His will and serve the least, last and lost. I will never forget tiny little Joseph but I pray that through the implementation of this program other children might not have to endure the same fate. Thanks be to God. •

For information, contact Elyse Bell at [ejbvim@bellsouth.net](mailto:ejbvim@bellsouth.net).

## Briefly

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Dancyville Tenn. Plenary sessions, worship and workshops are designed to inspire people of faith to commit to increasing stewardship of God's creation and to share that concern in their churches and synagogues. Registration is \$50/person. Call 731-664-8480.

### HOW TO HANDLE HONORARIA

Pastors, do you receive money for officiating at weddings, funerals or other ceremonies? According to the IRS, these payments are "fees", not "gifts" and are fully subject to both income and self-employment tax. For more information, read the most recent *Clergy Finance Letter* from the Nashville Area United Methodist Foundation.

### SEJ MINISTERS' WEEK TO FEATURE MIKE SLAUGHTER AND BISHOPS SWANSON, GWINN, WILLS AND DAVIS

During the July 9-13 SEJ Ministers' Week at Lake Junaluska, NC, the theme "Making Disciples, Transforming the Family, Congregation and World" will be explored. The speaker is **the Rev. Mike Slaughter**, pastor of Ginghamburg UMC in Tipp City, Ohio. While 4,000 people can be found on Ginghamburg's campus on any given week, Mike's greatest source of fulfillment is the radical Jesus-followers who are "On Mission" at home as well as out making a difference around the globe. Evening worship speakers are **Bishops James Swanson, Al Gwinn, Dick Wills and Lindsey Davis.**

### SEJ MULTI-CULTURAL EVENT, DEC. 13-15, LAKE JUNALUSKA

The December 13-15 Multi-cultural Event at Lake Junaluska will equip participants to create a more ethnically inclusive church in their local settings. The skills acquired in the event could be transferred to address other areas of conflict and differences as well. For information on the events, go to [www.sejumc.org](http://www.sejumc.org).

An award winning newspaper  
Cathy Farmer, Editor  
Carol Kiddy, Circulation  
24 Corporate Blvd.  
Jackson, TN 38305-2315  
Phone: 731-664-8480  
Sub. Rate: \$19.50/26 issues  
for issues beginning June 1

## 'Redefining the box': Using a global model to improve Memphis healthcare

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betes, hypertension, obesity, stroke mortality and residents living below poverty level, than other parts of Tennessee and the nation.

"Like Africa, Memphis is rich in religious health assets that, if identified and aligned, are the key to turning our communities toward better health and quality of life," said the Rev. Gary R. Gunderson, senior vice president for Health and Welfare Ministries for Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare. Dr. Gunderson served as principal investigator for this study in his role with the Interfaith Health Program, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University.

The World Health Organization welcomes the Memphis site, with Rev. Canon Ted Karpf, partnerships officer, Department of HIV, for WHO, saying, "The fact that the process will be replicated in Memphis gives the World Health Organization a chance to validate the techniques in a different culture, which is important to adapting the methods in many other parts of the world."

Religious health asset mapping uses traditional GIS (Global Information Systems) mapping coupled with other interactive mapping approaches to create a comprehensive compilation of health programs, networks and other resources.

Entities to be mapped include congregations and health-related ministries, walking trails, public gyms, food pantries, clothes closets,

economic and housing development groups, and neighborhood initiatives, along with hospitals and clinics.

Key authors of the African study, Professor Steve de Gruchy, director of Theology and Development Programme, School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu Natal, and Professor James R. Cochrane, Religious Studies, University of Cape Town, have already visited Memphis to lay the foundation for the rollout of the techniques. Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, local academics and hundreds of community and congregational leaders will also be involved.

"Religious health asset mapping can help us reverse those bleak statistics by enabling us to identify all the things in our community that are successful in combating our targeted health issues," said Dr. Gunderson. "Once identified, we can begin the work of collaborating, mobilizing and aligning these resources for maximum advantage."

"This work is desperately needed and is unprecedented in our city and country. With this knowledge, we can fill critical gaps and target interventions," said Dr. Gunderson.

The work will begin in underserved parts of South Memphis, an area with many health disparities. In the second phase, the data captured will be disseminated in a number of ways, including Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare's

Congregational Health Network, a partnership between Methodist South Hospital and nearly 40 churches in its primary service area. Under Dr. Gunderson's leadership, the network is being expanded in the city with a goal of 400 congregational partners.

"This work is important, because of the many health deficiencies prominent in our community," said the Rev. T. O'Neal Crivens, Sr., pastor of Testament Hope Community Baptist Church in Whitehaven. "I believe they are not being addressed by our community. Adequate information is not being infused to help people make better choices."

Methodist Healthcare Foundation has committed to raise \$750,000 over three years to fund the study. Longtime Methodist business partners Cerner Corporation, the leading provider of healthcare information technology, and Cigna, Inc., a national provider of group life and health insurance, have made seed money commitments to launch the project, and more partners are still being sought. MLH is matching all contributions through the allocation of multiple resources including: staff, leadership, land and money.

Neal Patterson, Chairman and CEO of Cerner Corp., said, "Cerner places a high value on innovation and is happy to contribute to efforts that come from this kind of thinking, which is not just 'out of the box,' but redefining the box." •

## Seminar: Keeping Seniors safe in a changing world

Seniors are vulnerable to identity theft, frauds, scams, gambling, out of control spending and internet addiction. Learn how to recognize the signs of when a hobby becomes "too much."

On Thursday, March 8, from 9am-2pm, Memphis Conference Older Adult Ministries is offering the seminar, "Keeping Seniors Safe in a Changing World," at Jackson First UMC. Registration is \$15 per person which includes the cost of lunch. Scholarships are available. The registration deadline is February 26. Please, no walk-ins.

Dr. Teresa Cutts will lead a session on "Vulnerability in Older Adults: Behavioral Addictions." Cutts is a clinical psychologist and the Associate Director of the U.T. Health Science Center's Office of Community Affairs.

Gerald Wiltshire, the Financial Crimes Investigator with the Jackson, Tenn. Police Department, will lead a session called: "Identity Theft, Frauds and Scams." Wiltshire is a computer forensic analyst and sworn Special Deputy U. S. Marshall with the U.S. Secret Service Economics Crime Task Force in Memphis.

This seminar will prove useful to church program directors, lay people in older adult programming, pastors, all older adults and people who care for older adults, and those worried about older adult family members and friends.

For more information, call Luci Cromer, 901-755-0803. •



PAUL SAIK TO PERFORM

On Feb. 25, at 3:00pm in the Jackson First sanctuary, 200 S. Church Street, vocalist/pianist Paul Saik will perform in honor of Lula Bingham's 80th birthday. The concert is open to the public.

## Paul Saik in concert Feb. 25 at Jackson First

Paul Saik will return to First United Methodist Church in Jackson, Tenn. to perform in a concert partially underwritten by the Bingham family in honor of Lula Bingham's 80th birthday.

Those who attend will be blessed by Paul's blend of outstanding vocal and piano performance, as well as his contagious enthusiasm for life. Paul will preview the concert at both worship services on February 25. The concert is free and open to the public.

From the time Paul Saik was a small child, he has touched the lives of many with his talent. An accomplished vocalist and pianist, Paul is living his purpose with every breath and every step, armed with a passion for sacred music and a desire to reach others with the message of Christ's love.

A native of Jackson, Miss., Paul began playing piano at the age of three and spent much of his time performing in church. When he was 13, his first church position was as pianist at First Baptist Church in Pearl, Miss. He quickly developed a love for church music and started playing the organ at age 16.

While studying piano and organ at Mississippi College where he received a Bachelor of Music in piano, Paul won several awards and competitions in organ, including being runner-up in the national NMTA organ competition. He also won several awards in vocal competitions and studied abroad at the University of London.

A Pressar Scholar, Paul furthered his education at Baylor University, where he received a Masters of Music in church music and

organ and won several vocal competitions. And he has performed with opera companies around the world, appearing with various symphonies. A versatile singer, he also worked on Broadway in New York.

But after many years of performing on some of the world's biggest stages, Paul realized that the successes of his career could not outweigh the stresses and challenges that he faced every day.

In the summer of 2003, he retreated to Lake Junaluska and briefly performed as an accompanist and soloist for the Lake Junaluska Singers. It was at Lake Junaluska that Paul felt God's call back to his first love—sacred music. He was the recipient of the Christian Artist Fellowship at Brentwood UMC and moved to Nashville in December 2003. •