

Commission: Possible

In September, United Methodists from throughout our Annual Conference will be traveling to Summersville for what could be the greatest evangelism event in Conference history. Why?

We've got good news and bad news. The bad news first... Many local churches are in decline. Yours may be one of them. When you look around on Sunday morning, do you notice more empty seats than there were a few years ago? Sadly, if you're attending an average church, the answer is "yes." What's going on?

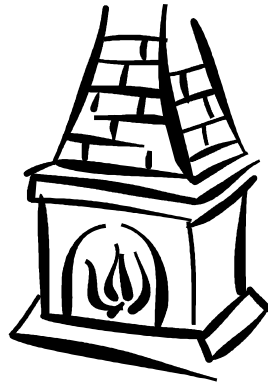
There are all sorts of answers. Some are good. Others aren't worth the paper they're printed on – if they're printed at all. Perhaps you've heard someone say, "It's all because people get mad and leave! If it wasn't for (fill in the blank with their favorite complaint), our church would be packed to the rafters!"

It would be nice if that was true. If it was, we could all take a course in good manners and everything would be fine. But it's not true. Oh, a few people roam around from church to church, looking for the perfect fit. But the real reason is a whole lot simpler to see, but a whole lot harder to fix: Members simply grow old and die, and no one takes their places.

It's a bit like a fire. All you need is plenty of kindling, a pile of logs, and a match. After you strike the match and light the kindling, it isn't long before you're adding logs to the fire. Which is fine, as long as you don't run out of logs.

As your pile of logs shrinks, you have two choices: you can sit and enjoy the fire, ignoring your shrinking pile of logs, or you could go out to the wood pile and bring in some more. Sadly, for far too many years, a lot of churches have been enjoying the fire. There haven't been nearly enough trips out to the wood pile. Now most of the extra logs are gone. The fire is starting to burn down.

That's the bad news, but we have good news, too. Not every church is shrinking. If you look around, you can find a growing church almost anywhere. Some of our growing churches are in



cities, some are in small towns, and some are in the open country. Every growing church is proof that we don't have to let the fire go out. The solution's simple: go out and bring in some more wood.

Wood? Well, not really. We need to bring in our unsaved, unchurched neighbors and friends. If you look around, you can find them everywhere. It's almost easy! And Bishop Lyght's Task Force on Evangelism is ready to help.

How? With *Commission: Possible*, a conference-wide gathering of people who want to see their church grow. Set for Summersville on September 19 and 20, *Commission: Possible* is going to be the perfect place to get fired up about evangelism. Don't delay. Seats are limited. Mark the dates on your calendar today, and watch for more details in the weeks ahead.

If You Need Lodging, You May Want to Make Reservations Now

If you would like to take advantage of the inexpensive but rather primitive lodging available on the grounds, you don't need to make reservations yet. However, if you would like to stay elsewhere, call soon. The motels listed have set rooms for us. Ask for a room set aside for United Methodists.

LOCAL MOTELS INCLUDE...

Best Western	304-872-6900
Comfort Inn	800-872-1752
Country Inn and Suites	304-872-0555
Hampton Inn	304-872-7100
Sleep Inn	800-872-1751
Super Eight	304-872-4888

LOCAL CABINS INCLUDE...

Country Road Cabins	304-658-5266
Laurel Ridge Cabins	304-872-1602
Mountain Lake Cabins	304-872-6222

LOCAL CAMPGROUNDS INCLUDE...

Mountain Lake Campground	304-872-6222
Summersville Lake Retreat Campground	304-872-5975