

## Two Clinton churches join forces to provide community service to youth in the Terre Haute area

By Crystal Garcia  
Tribune-Star, Clinton

CLINTON, Ind. – Two Clinton churches are breaking down denominational walls with a common denominator – youth.

On Friday nights from 6 to 10 p.m., kids can go to a large metal barn next to the First United Methodist Church in Clinton to skateboard, scooter and ride their bikes on a half-pipe, a quarter-pipe and various fun boxes and ramps.

This outreach began when Glenn Parrish and his wife began

talking to the children and teens they saw out late at night.

Parrish said they were trying to find out what their interests were and what they'd like to see in Clinton. Most importantly, he said they wanted to know what the youth were doing out so late.

"They just didn't have anywhere to go," Parrish said.

Thus, Christian Street Invasion, or SCI Clinton, was formed. Parrish and his wife belong to a Pentecostal congregation, New Life Family Foursquare Gospel Church.

A common thing he and his

wife heard the kids want was a skate park, so he had a half-pipe built and put in this driveway for them to ride on instead of damaging private property around town with their bikes, boards and scooters.

Between 15 to 20 children regularly showed up at the Parrishes, but when First United Methodist Church got involved things really started to take off for this special ministry to kids.

With a large, empty barn next to the church, the Parrishes approached First UMC's officials to ask if they could put the half-pipe

in the barn to get the children out of the elements.

That was three months ago. Since then there has been an average of 95 kids utilizing the facility, Parrish said, with a high of 127 kids one time.

By joining together, Parrish said the two churches are "breaking down denominational walls."

CSI Clinton even has its own MySpace page, although Parrish said he won't add the kids as "friends" until he's checked their pages and made sure there's nothing offensive on them.

Adults supervise inside and

outside of the facility. Theresa Rennick, First UMC lay leader, said more volunteers are needed to supervise.

Rennick said the church wants to add heating and air conditioning and expand the facility so it can be used for other community events such as basketball, meetings and wedding receptions.

"It's not about anything but to glorify God," said Parrish.

*This story is abridged from a longer story published in the Jan. 12, 2008, issue of the Tribune-Star of Terre Haute, Ind. Used by permission. Tribune-Star © 2008.*

*Proposal to divest church funds from Caterpillar, based in Illinois with a plant in Lafayette, Ind.*

## United Methodists explore divestment proposals

FORT WORTH, Texas (UMNS) – Would divestment from companies connected to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land help bring about change in the Middle East?

United Methodist speakers explored that question during a Jan. 25 panel discussion on "Divestment, the Middle East and Sudan" during the Pre-General Conference News Briefing sponsored by United Methodist Communications.

The Rev. Steve Sprecher, a director of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, called divestment "a time-honored policy" within The United Methodist Church.

Sprecher was part of the committee of the General Board of Church and Society that led the social action agency to send a petition to General Conference recommending divestment from Caterpillar Inc., the heavy-equipment manufacturer based in Peoria, Ill., with a plant in Lafayette, Ind. and other plants in the United States and other countries. The petition charges that the company profits from illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and contributes to the occupation by supplying Israeli Defense Forces with heavy equipment.

### The petition charges that the company profits from illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

About \$5 million of the denomination's estimated \$17 billion pension portfolio is invested in Caterpillar stock.

He stressed that the action against Caterpillar is proposed because the company's bulldozers and other equipment are being used to clear Palestinian land, destroy Palestinian homes and olive groves and help erect the "wall of separation," some of which is on Palestinian land.

The Rev. W. Douglas Mills, an executive with the United Methodist General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, noted that divestment is not such a simple solution and could have a negative impact for a denomination that places a high value on Christian-Jewish relations, the horror of the Holocaust and the quest for peace in the Middle East.

Mills said he likes processes that foster dialogue and is "a big fan of shareholder advocacy."

Dave Zellner, chief investment officer with the United Methodist General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, noted that his agency is recognized as "the leader among denominations" on investor advocacy. He called for advocacy, rather than divestment, with Caterpillar. "With our partners, we are very effective in making change."

A position paper issued by the pension board on investments in companies doing business with Israel states that the agency "views divestment as a policy of last resort."

The Rev. Timothy Bias, a General Conference delegate and pastor of First United Methodist Church in Peoria, where 70 percent of the membership has employment ties to Caterpillar, questioned Sprecher on whether directors or staff from Church and Society had spoken directly with Caterpillar executives before passing their proposed resolution.



UMNS file photo by Mike DuBose

Palestinian farmer Abu Houli stands in front of what remains of his home, orchard and well house in 2000 after the Israeli Army bulldozed parts of his family farm near Deir El Balah in the Israeli-occupied Gaza strip. The United Methodist Board of Church and Society is sending a resolution to General Conference calling for divestment from companies producing products or services used for "illegal destruction" in Palestine.

Sprecher acknowledged they had not, although Jim Winkler, Church and Society's chief executive, recently met with Jim Owens, chairman of Caterpillar, who also is a United Methodist.

Bias noted that delegates to General Conference are being urged to engage in "holy conferring" on divisive issues and

questioned why the board did not engage in the same practice of dialogue and listening with representatives from Caterpillar. "It just seems to me that we would serve ourselves much better ... if we would have conversations before we pass resolutions," he said.

For the complete story, log on to [www.umns.umd.org](http://www.umns.umd.org).

## UIndy presents 2008 Showers Lectures-Symposium March 27

The University of Indianapolis will present the 2008 Showers Symposium "Christian Missions in the United Methodist Church: Past, Present and Future" on Thursday March 27, from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Topics and participants include: "Mission and the Quest for the Homeland: The Legacy of the Evangelical United Brethren" with J. Steven O'Malley of Asbury Theological Seminary; "Evangelism Without Apology" with Stephen Graham of the University of Indianapolis, who will speak about E. Stanley Jones; "Affection

Without Attachment: Toward a Theology of Christian Mission" with Thomas Thangaraj (Church of South India) of Candler School of Theology; and "No Bootstrap Theology: Grace and Holiness in Mission" with Beth Felker Jones of Huntington University.

The Showers Symposium is free, however those who wish to register to participate in one of the lunchtime discussions need to contact Cindy Tyree at 317-788-2106 or e-mail her at [ctyree@uindy.edu](mailto:ctyree@uindy.edu). An event brochure is available by logging on to <http://eip.uindy.edu/>.

## TechTalk Workshop looks at technology and congregations

As society becomes more and more technologically savvy, congregations are finding ways to use technology to complement their work. Computers, internet, email, social networking, database systems, and multi-media are all part of the picture. Center for Congregations staffers Nancy Armstrong and Aaron Spiegel will help your congregation explore technology so you can decide what best fits your community. The goal is godly service, not technological glitz.

Co-authors of the book *40*

*Days and 40 Bytes: Making Technology Work for Your Congregation*, Armstrong and Spiegel are uniquely qualified to help you think about the role of technology in your congregation. They worked with more than 100 congregations in the Center's innovative Computers and Ministry Grants Initiative to help congregations address the challenges they face when using computer technology in their ministries.

*TechTalk* is 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 5, at St. Paul's

United Church of Christ, 2227 W. Michigan St. in Evansville, and Thursday, March 6, at Scottsburg United Methodist Church, 616 S. Honey Run Parkway.

The cost is \$30 a person (\$25 for congregational teams of three or more). The fee includes lunch, parking and a copy of the book, *40 Days and 40 Bytes*. Registrations received by Feb. 27 guarantee lunch and a copy of the book.

For more information on registration, log on to [www.centerforcongregations.org](http://www.centerforcongregations.org) or call 317-237-7799.