



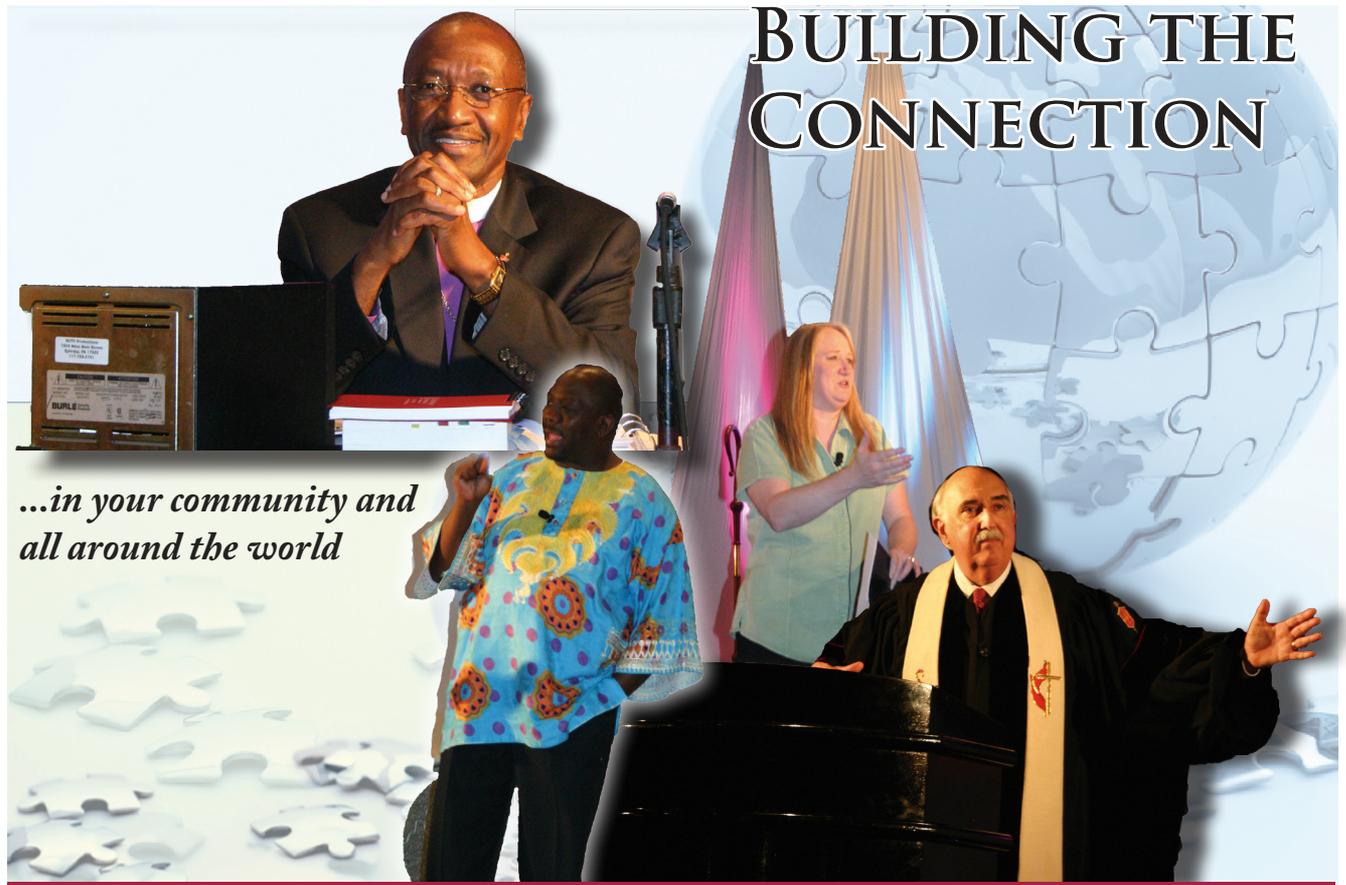
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*...in your community and
all around the world*

Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference 2008

by Suzy Keenan

Building the Connection was the theme when nearly 1,000 members met for the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference in Philadelphia on May 29 and 30, 2008.

The 222nd Annual Session began with Opening Worship, as the steel drum band of Christ United Methodist Church in Easton played hymns in Caribbean style. Bishop Marcus Matthews, pastoral leader of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, preached. "Good news," said Bishop Matthews, "Pennsylvania has sent more Volunteers in Mission teams out in mission around the world than any other place! In 2006 more persons worshipped in our churches. We cut our decline by more than 50%! We are on the path to making disciples!" He quipped, "Put on your seat belts; we have more good news. After twenty years, this Annual Conference paid in 2007 100% of its apportionment for ministry and mission around the world!" Bishop Matthews

explained that because we serve a Risen Christ who first served us, we each have a mission to fill. "Go therefore and make disciples." What is your response? "We can't - we don't have enough money...we're surrounded by immigrants that don't look like us...we can't go over the tracks." "No," Matthews said, "Here I am. Send me!"

Cokesbury

Ruth Daugherty, a member of the Board of the United Methodist Publishing House, introduced Robert Harris, the new manager of the Cokesbury Store in King of Prussia. They highlighted several excellent resources for ministry available at the Cokesbury Display, including Three Simple Rules and Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. Daugherty presented a check for \$11,974 to Bishop Marcus Matthews, a percentage of Cokesbury sales that is returned annually to the conference for ministry. The Annual Conference voted to contribute the full amount to the Central Conference

Pension Fund.

Budget approved

Moses Kumar, conference treasurer, along with conference staff and leadership of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, presented the budget for 2009, "Tools for Moving Forward." The budget includes \$3,984,030 for conference ministry, \$1,480,938 for the World Service Fund, and \$1,305,650 for other General Church Funds. With no questions, the total budget of \$6,770,618 was approved unanimously.

Conference votes to approve three episcopal candidates

The General Conference Delegation, represented by co-chairs, Mary White and Charles Yrigoyen, presented its proposed nominees for the episcopacy: the Rev. Michele Wright Bartlow and the Rev. Melinda L. McKonly. The

continues on page 6

Calendar

- **JUNE 22, 2008** - The Annual Boehm's Chapel Heritage Celebration Sunday will be held June 22, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. The Rev. James B. Todd, District Superintendent of the Southwest District, Eastern Pa. Conference will be the speaker for the 27th annual Heritage Celebration. In keeping with the bilingual heritage of The Chapel's early history, special music by a local quartet will feature several German hymns. Following the service a light meal will be provided in the fellowship hall. Call Dolores Myers 717-872-4133 for more information or visit www.boehmschapel.org.
- **JUNE 29, 2008** - New Journey/ Nueva Jornada United Methodist Church invites you to Celebrate the merger of Central Park and Emanuel Olivet United Methodist Churches on Sunday, June 29, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. Gathering will be from 5:53 p.m. Worship Service will start at 5:30 p.m. Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Dr. William Gary George, Superintendent Central District and Special Music by "Nations of Hope" Choir from Spring Valley Church of God. For more information, contact the church at 610.375.2662; 138 South 6th Street, Reading, PA.
- **JULY 8, 2008** - Women in Professional Ministry will be holding a luncheon and Prayer Service for Mindy McKonly, Michele Wright Bartlow and Dorothy Watson Tatem from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at St. Matthew's UMC, Valley Forge. Please bring a covered dish. Dessert will be provided. Contact Dawn Taylor-Storm at pastor@st-matthewsvf.org for questions.
- **JULY 17-19, 2008** - Rock the World Advocacy Camp. An advocacy camp this summer at Gretna Glen will center on becoming acquainted with the world and the issue of poverty and hunger. George Schofield, Denita Connor (camp director), Alicia Julia-Stanley and Peggy Wood will be counselors. Limited to 20 kids, ages 11 to 14; it should be a great experience with lots of flexibility. Tuition is \$90 and some scholarship funding is available. For more information call Peggy Wood at 610-331-9727. For information on Gretna Glen Camp and Retreat Center: <http://www.gretnaglen.org>
- **JULY 18-20, 2008** - School of Christian Mission 2008. Theme: "Living the Sacred" at the Inn at Reading, 1040 Park Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610. The Courses are: "I Believe in Jesus" (Taken by

All), "Giving our Hearts Away: Native American Survival" (Elective), "Israel and Palestine" (Elective). Scholarships are available, contact Mary Lou Kerrich at 570-646-2443. General information contact person: Frances Sokso 610-269-3192. Registrar: Minnie Chamberlain, 22 Buttonbush Lane, Willingboro, NJ 08046-3911; 609-877-0883; femc22@peoplepc.com. For complete brochure and registration form go to: <http://www.epaumc.org>.

- **JULY 26, 2008** - Weaving a Web of Connections. Part of the Making Disciples training series.
- **JULY 26, 2008** - United Methodist Night at the Phillies - Phillies vs. Atlanta Braves at 3:55 pm. Pre-game activities will feature a United Methodist Men's Choir singing the National Anthem plus other events. If we sell over 1,000 tickets, UMM will receive a rebate of \$5 per ticket, which will benefit UMM ministry. If we break 1,500 tickets sold we get \$6 back per ticket. Last year we had one of our biggest church groups ever - over 140 persons came by bus from the Anthracite region, sat in deep center field, and had a ball!!! For more information, contact Ross Brightwell, rossbrightwell@verizon.net.
- **AUGUST 3-6, 2008** - Worship 2008 "Expressions of Grace" - Doubletree Hotel, Downtown Wilmington, DE. Classes include: Dance and Drama, Children in Worship, Preaching, Choir Leadership, Handbells, Organ, Visual Arts and Writing for Liturgy. For more details go to : www.FUM-MWA.org.
- **AUGUST 8-10, 2008** - "Growing, Sharing, and Living Our Faith." The 25th Anniversary of the Academy for Laity at the Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel, King of Prussia. Guest preachers: Former EPA Conference Bishop, Rev. F. Herbert Skeete and Rev. Charles "Chuck" Yrigoyen. Special Anniversary Banquet, New Courses and more. See page 11 for more information and www.gbgm-umc.org/csm or contact Verna Colliver 215-855-0797.
- **OCTOBER 19** - Laity Sunday. Laity Sunday focuses on the celebration of the ministry of all lay Christians, and in many local churches, Laity Sunday is observed by having laypersons lead all parts of the worship service. This would be a fitting day to recognize adults and youths who are involved in various ministries in the church and community. For Laity Sunday resources, go to: www.gbod.org

In Memoriam Classifieds

Mrs. Marie S. Smoker, widow of the Rev. John L. Smoker, at the age of 101 on March 15, 2008. Rev. Smoker served Virginia Conference from 1924 to 1926 and EPA from 1926 to 1978, including the following appointments: Silver Springs, Neffsville, Intercourse and Pottstown. He retired in 1978. Services were held March 19, 2008 at Mt. Gretna UMC. Mrs. Smoker is survived by her son, Richard. Condolences may be sent to Richard Smoker, General Delivery P. O. Box 22, Monocacy Station, PA 19542. Memorial contributions may be sent to Mt. Gretna United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 427, Mount Gretna, PA 17064 or Salem United Methodist Church, 335 West Street, Pottstown, PA 19464.

Mr. William E. Brown, father of Amy Botti, Bishop's Executive Secretary, Philadelphia Area, passed peacefully in his sleep at 1:00 a.m. the morning of May 14, 2008, in Greenville, NC. Graveside services occurred on Saturday, May 17, 2008, the day after what would have been his 80th birthday. In lieu of personal phone calls to Amy, please keep her and her family in your prayers. Please feel free to send cards to her at the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Office, P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820.

Mrs. Frances Gommoll, widow of the Rev. Harry Gommoll, who died on May 20, 2008. She was 94 years old. The Rev. Harry Gommoll was a part-time local pastor who served New London from 1982 to 1986, and retired in 1986. He died in 1990. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Gommoll's daughter: Harriet Peters, 29 Mark Street, Hurricane, West Virginia 25526.

Mrs. Dorothy Williams, wife of retired local pastor, The Rev. Paul Williams. Mrs. Williams died on May 14, 2008. Mrs. Williams is survived by her husband, Paul, and children Deborah J. Wilhelm, Christine M. Finitzer, Gwentyth L. Doggett. Condolences may be sent to Gwentyth L. Doggett, 710 Saint Vincent Street, Philadelphia, PA 19111.

PART TIME DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES NEEDED

Lima United Methodist Church, Lima, PA 19037. Fax resume: 610-891-9110. For more detailed information, call 610-566-7109 (church office).

PART-TIME ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR (10 hrs/week) beginning September. Marshallton United Methodist Church, 1282 W. Strasburg Rd, West Chester, 19382. Worship style is traditional. Call 610-696-5247 or email: office@marshalltonchurch.org

SUPPORT ASSOCIATE -DESKTOP PUBLISHING

for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Office. 35 hrs a week starting at \$30,400. Essential duties and responsibilities include researching, designing and organizing activities such as newsletter, brochures, booklets, directories and website updating using various Adobe, Macromedia, Microsoft Products and other word processing software. For more information and to send resume contact Gloria Knoeller at gloria.knoeller@epaumc.org.

Save these dates!

BISHOP'S ADVENT DAY APART FOR CLERGY

December 2, 2008
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Aldersgate UMC, Wilmington, DE

BISHOP'S MIDWINTER RETREAT FOR CLERGY AND SPOUSES

January 13 - 15, 2009
Clarion Hotel, Ocean City, MD



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Philadelphia Area Bishop

Suzy Keenan
Director of Communications

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Welcome Irving Cotto



The Rev. Dr. Irving Cotto will become Director of Congregational Development with the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference starting July 1, 2008.

Cotto grew up and was nurtured in a Methodist family. He was born in New York City and baptized in Grace United Methodist Church in the Westside of Manhattan. Early on he was involved in Sunday School and worship in a Spanish-speaking church. In 1962, his family moved to Puerto Rico, as his father went to work with the American Bible Society.

"At the age of 15 I had my own Aldersgate conversion experience after an evangelistic crusade in church," Cotto said. "There, for first time, I claimed faith in Jesus Christ for myself. I ended up standing up in the pew and went up to the altar, surrendering all to the Lord." At sixteen, he felt a strong sense of a call to ministry. "My father himself was pastor - that helped in preparing the ground for me. That turning point in my life has been at the very core of my spiritual development. Regardless of the ideas I have wrestled with - I always come back to that moment when I told Jesus to come into my heart."

It is because of this conversion moment that Cotto is very intentional about altar calls in his ministry. "Nothing can equal that moment of radical giving of oneself to the Lord. I firmly believe that the power of the Holy Spirit cannot be replaced by human ingenuity - in all the academic training, learning, concepts, and theories - a person's eyes are opened when they realize they are loved unconditionally.

Cotto attended Bayamon Central University in Bayamon, PR and attained a B.A. in Psychology. He then attended an evangelical seminary in PR. During that year he started his first pastoral work among very humble people in a new church start among families involved in agriculture. After a year,

he was offered an opportunity to come to Eastern PA. At that time the Annual Conference of Puerto Rico was associated with Eastern Pennsylvania, and Bishop Ault put together a project between the Union Theological Seminary, the Annual Conferences of Puerto Rico and Eastern Pennsylvania. On this one-year study project, Cotto did studies at Union while pasturing a new church start in Reading: Emanuel (now Emanuel Olivet), a church birthed by Central Park UMC.

Subsequently, he was appointed to El Redentor UMC in Lancaster, where he served for sixteen years, "beautiful, fruitful years." The emphasis there was on building the base of the congregation of about 25 members - building the inner life of leadership, worship, committees, a handful of committed leaders. Then Cotto worked through the sixteen years to build community work with agencies, ecumenical relationships, civic and community work.

He then began facilitating workshops with the National plan for Hispanic Ministries. "I knew I wanted to do that kind of work to share with larger body of the United Methodist Church," Cotto said.

Nine years ago, Cotto received a call to come to the New Jersey, and was appointed to work in Camden at Asbury United Methodist Church. There, he further developed his gifts of working in multi-cultural communities: a Latino fellowship and an African and African American fellowship. And he has developed a new paradigm for multi-cultural congregations, focusing on being one pastoral charge with two language fellowships - one church with multiplicity of fellowships, and a church council representative of the entire parish. Cotto said, "Today's meeting might run in English or Spanish depending on who is in the meeting - when entire group is there we make sure both sides

are getting info. It's not perfect, but we are very intentional!" He added, "Cell groups - five family groups - and one Wesley fellowship - has impacted church tremendously. We have at least 30 to 40 persons engaged in prayer and Bible study in different places, which has strengthened the congregation and relationships."

Cotto's doctoral project revolved around the training of leaders in the church in order to achieve missional mobilization.

Looking toward the future in Congregational Development for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, Cotto foresees the starting of new churches which right from the beginning have a vision of the whole gospel, from day-one an understanding of a holistic view of the gospel, and "which are passionate about worship, discipleship, making disciples, and social justice." "In recent

days I have been working with ideas around congregations that develop a spirituality of hospitality," he said. "The Good News is something we need to share, in what we sing, in our attitudes and life styles, and in how we open spaces for people to become part of God's family. Our denomination's new church starts will continue to change the face of the denomination and be reflective and representative of all of God's children."

Lilian Lucrecia, Cotto's wife, has been serving as associate pastor for four years at Asbury UMC. She started her theological studies at the Universidad Biblica Latino Americana in Costa Rica (San Jose). The Cottos have three sons: Julio (28), who works for Jr. Achievement in NYC; Andres, a graduate of the University of the Arts with a major in Jazz performance and trumpet; and Alejandro, majoring in Liberal Arts at Villanova.

New Beginnings for conference staff

Lin George, formerly District Resource Assistant for the Southeast District, is now Church Business Administrator for Hopewell United Methodist Church in Downingtown, in addition to serving as part-time local pastor for Romansville UMC.

Rene Perez, Director of Outreach and Church Multiplication Ministries and Latino Ministries, will begin July 1 as pastor of Lititz United Methodist Church.

Ileana Rivera, Desktop Publishing for NEWSpirit and the Annual Conference, will go to school for Visual Communications at Westwood College and begin new job closer to home in Lebanon, PA. Her last day at the Conference Office will be July 15.

Northeast Jurisdiction

In mid-July, United Methodists in the United States will gather in five regional meetings to elect new bishops and assign bishops to episcopal areas. United Methodist Communications will provide ongoing coverage of the episcopal elections at www.UMC.org. United Methodist News Service and the Web Ministry Team will work with church communicators in each of the five jurisdictions to provide up-to-the-moment ballot results as the episcopal elections proceed. UMNS also will post news stories on each new bishop elected, as well as roundup stories on where the bishops in each jurisdiction are assigned to serve for the 2009-2012 quadrennium. The conferences will meet simultaneously July 16-19 in their respective regions, except for the Northeastern Jurisdiction, which meets July 13-18 (www.nejumc.org)





Volunteers stitch comfort clothes for wounded soldiers



Shirleen Harms sews adaptive clothing for a wounded soldier as part of the sewing ministry at First United Methodist Church in Oviedo, Fla.

by John Gordon*

After sewing a pair of boxer shorts for more than two hours, Shirleen Harms pauses to “say a prayer for the young man that’s going to wear this.”

“And I pray that he’s going to be strong enough to heal,” Harms adds.

Harms is part of a sewing class at First United Methodist Church in Oviedo that makes adaptive clothing for soldiers who have lost limbs or need special attire to fit over casts or medical equipment. The sewing class is part of Sew Much Comfort, a U.S.

organization that distributes adaptive clothing to military hospitals.

“They need to know that we still see them as whole entire people,” says Margaret Morris, a church member in the sewing group. The soldiers are “people first, but with a disability—not a disability attached to a person,” she says.

At military hospitals, hospital gowns are often the only clothing available, but are drafty and do not cover many patients adequately. The adaptive attire gives wounded soldiers an alternative and is designed to make their recovery

comfortable, both physically and emotionally.

“Anyone who’s ever been in a hospital realizes that a hospital gown doesn’t give you much dignity,” says Joy Campbell, regional director for Sew Much Comfort in Florida. “And we’re talking about injuries to our troops that are of such a degree that they are not going to get well within a week, a day, a month.”

Founded in 2004, Sew Much Comfort is trying to meet the needs of about 30,000 soldiers wounded in the Iraq war. Campbell says about 30,000 items were made and shipped in 2007 by the organization’s volunteers.

“If you give someone one pair of boxer shorts, then you really haven’t done them a favor. They need six or seven pair,” she says. “And the same thing with T-shirts, athletic shorts, long pants. One pair is not good enough.”

At the Oviedo church north of Orlando, about a dozen members attend the sewing class and have made more than 600 items in a little over 15 months, according to Pat White, who coordinates the ministry for the sewing club.

“We had no idea that we would be able to do that much,” says White, a former Navy nurse. She checks each piece of clothing to make sure it meets the specifications of Sew Much Comfort.

Some of the seamstresses have personal reasons for volunteering to help.

Georgette Hester has both a son and a daughter-in-law deployed in Iraq. “I appreciate that I have enough skill

In the Nation



Jeffrey Lightbourn, a patient at U.S. Army Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, tries on clothing developed by Sew for Comfort founder Ginger Dosedel.

to participate and I can only imagine what it would be like to receive a gift like this,” says Hester. “It’s a very, very rewarding experience for me.”

Shirley Peters empathizes with the soldiers due to her family’s experiences from a different war in a different time. “One of my brothers was a Vietnam casualty. He didn’t make it back,” Peters says.

While members of the sewing volunteers discuss the latest stitches and patterns during their meetings, the politics of the Iraq war are not part of the discussion.

“I can’t stop the war. I can’t stop them being wounded,” says White. “But I can at least make their recovery process a little smoother—and give them some indication that there are people out here who care.”

*Gordon is a freelance producer based in Marshall, Texas.

The Nation in Brief

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals’ stay of execution for a death row inmate on June 3 answered the prayers of many United Methodists keeping a close watch on the case. Derrick Sonnier received his reprieve 90 minutes before he was scheduled to receive a lethal injection at 6 p.m. The convicted killer would have been the 406th person executed by the state and the first executed in Texas after The United Methodist Church called for an end to the death penalty in the state that leads the United States in executions. The denomination passed its latest resolution against the death penalty on May 2 during the 2008 General Conference, which convened this year in Fort Worth. The church’s top legislative body, which meets once every four years, has passed resolutions opposing the death penalty at every assembly since 1956.

Black and white anti-torture banners are being displayed next to the familiar cross and flame on the front of some United Methodist churches during the month of June. More than 300 faith groups in all 50 U.S. states are displaying the banners in support of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture’s “Banners Across America” campaign. In a press conference on June 5, religious leaders representing diverse congregations launched the campaign to mobilize faith communities against U.S.-sponsored torture. The campaign is timed to offer an interfaith public witness during Torture Awareness Month, said the Rev. Richard Killmer, campaign director. As of June 5, twenty-one United Methodist churches, along with the United Methodist Board of Church and Society in Washington, were displaying banners with the words “torture is wrong” or

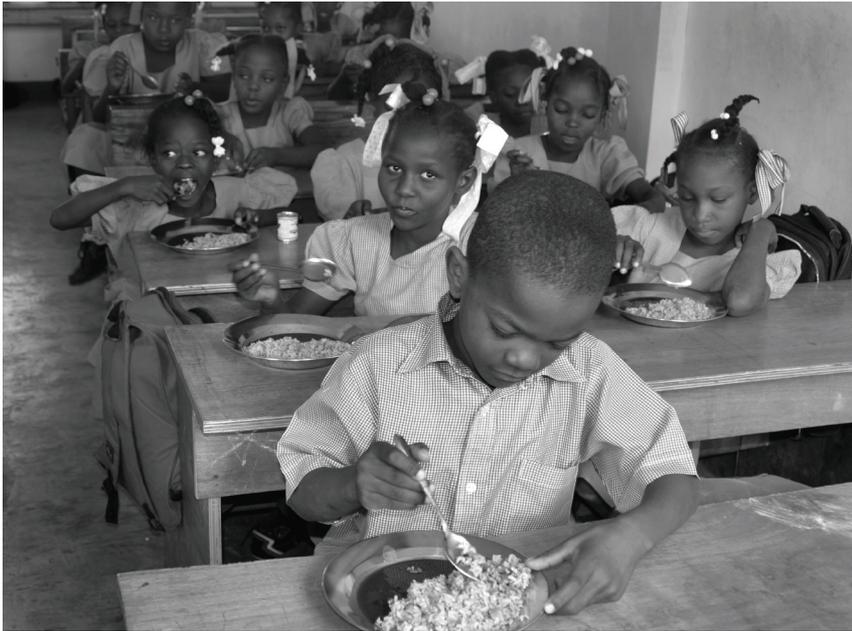
“torture is a moral issue.”

The candidacy process for ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church will be shortened by two years beginning in January 2009, under legislation approved by the 2008 General Conference. “Steps were taken to shorten and expedite the process and make it more accessible,” said the Rev. Sharon Rubey, director of Candidacy and Conference Relations at the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry. “The effect of these changes reduces the possible years from entry into candidacy to ordination by two years, plus makes the process less prescriptive, therefore making it more accessible to more possible candidates.”

More than 300 “little lights” representing workers arrested in an immigration raid in northeast Iowa were lit and then extinguished during a “service of solidarity” May 15

held at First United Methodist Church in Sioux City. The vigil was one of a series of faith events across Iowa that have drawn attention to the plight of immigrant workers and their families in the wake of the largest single-site immigration raid in U.S. history. Iowa’s United Methodist episcopal leader, Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, responded by calling for an end to such raids and urging U.S. government leaders to pass a comprehensive immigration policy that recognizes the contributions of migrants to the U.S. economy and culture. The workers, mostly from Mexico and Guatemala, were arrested May 12 in a federal raid on Agriprocessors, the world’s largest kosher meatpacking plant, in Postville, Iowa.

Stop Hunger Now marks 10th with million meal event



School children in Haiti eat food provided by Stop Hunger Now and the United Methodist Committee on Relief. A UMNS photo courtesy of Stop Hunger Now.

by Linda Bloom*

The Rev. Ray Buchanan had spent years working to banish hunger in the United States when an experience in Sierra Leone made him re-think his focus.

In 1997, during the height of the African country's civil war, he visited with a number of United Methodist pastors in the city of Bo who told him "they wore their clerical collars when they begged in the streets because people would be more generous."

Returning home "in a self-righteous fit," Buchanan raised \$65,000 in six weeks, enough to provide rice for every

pastor's family in Sierra Leone for a year.

That experience in Africa helped propel Buchanan to found Stop Hunger Now in 1998. During its 10-year existence, the Raleigh, N.C.-based organization has provided more than \$44 million in direct aid to more than 60 countries, including more than 5 million meals for the poor.

For 2008, Stop Hunger Now has set a goal to package 5.5 million meals. On Aug. 23, its "University Million Meal Event" hopes to bring together 4,000 volunteers from nine colleges and universities to assemble 1 million meals

in one day.

"We have a vision of ending hunger in our lifetime," the 61-year-old pastor told United Methodist News Service in a June 4 interview. "In order to do that, it's not enough to feed the hungry. We've got to inspire, motivate and educate the whole world community to be involved."

Personal approach to hunger Buchanan, a Texas native, former U.S. Marine and clergy member of the United Methodist Virginia Annual (regional) Conference, long ago took a personal approach to the problem of hunger.

In 1979, he and the Rev. Ken Horne co-founded the Society of St. Andrew and moved their families into what he called "an intentional community of covenant lifestyles" on a 58-acre farm in the mountains of Virginia. A \$15,000 grant from the United Methodist Board of Discipleship helped them get the community started. "They realized, as we did, that you'll never deal with hunger unless you deal with the issue of lifestyles," Buchanan explained.

They combined the living of a simple life "considerably under the poverty level"—growing their own food and using solar power—with a mission to educate college students about hunger and lifestyles and integrated their message into the community through local United Methodist congregations.

"We saw firsthand how much good food was being thrown away," he recalled.

Although the farm community disbanded after three and a half years, that knowledge about food waste led

In the World

to the society's very successful "potato project," which was supported with funding from the Virginia Annual Conference. "I can't say enough about the faithfulness of the church to make that happen," Buchanan said.

He and Horne continued to expand the work of the Society of St. Andrew but, at a certain point, his attention was drawn to the international scene. "It was obvious to me that the need internationally was so much greater than the need in the United States," Buchanan said. "The hunger here is real, but we have such enormous numbers of safety nets."

After the experience in Sierra Leone, he remembered a potential major donor, John Hewitt, co-founder of Jackson Hewitt and currently founder and CEO of Liberty Tax Service, who had once contacted the Society of St. Andrew about feeding famine victims. Soon, Hewitt helped Buchanan realize his dream of being able to travel to a crisis area, assess the situation and quickly deliver food to the people who need it.

Stop Hunger Now was born. "I wanted to do a half million dollars worth of hunger relief in the first year," he said, noting that the organization actually dispensed \$2.9 million worth of aid in 18 countries that year.

More information on the University Million Meals Event or Stop Hunger now is available online at www.stophungernow.org or by calling (888) 501-8440.

*Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York.

The World in Brief

The groundbreaking covenant partnership between the Texas and Côte d'Ivoire annual conferences of The United Methodist Church has yielded its first fruits—more than \$1 million in donations from Texans to fight malaria in West Africa. The distribution will include another 400,000 nets authorized by the United Nations Foundation through the Nothing But Nets fundraising campaign. The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries will play a key role in helping with the logistics of the distribution through its Health and Welfare unit and the United Methodist Committee on Relief. The Texas Annual (regional) Conference has commissioned a team of 35 clergy and laity, representing all nine districts of the conference, to help distribute the nets. The Texas funding was generated sooner than expected. Members of the Texas conference pledged at its 2007 legislative meeting to raise \$1 million in

two years to cover Côte d'Ivoire with insecticide-treated mosquito nets. During its 2008 meeting held May 25-28 near Houston, a 60-member Ivorian choir led the celebration that the goal had been surpassed in a single year.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is providing humanitarian assistance in politically charged Zimbabwe. UMCOR responded on June 4 to a request for aid and will assist a partner organization working on the ground in distributing food and medicine to communities and clinics serving the most vulnerable. Because of the high cost of fuel, UMCOR will help pay to transport the goods to areas most affected by food shortages and politically related violence. The agency also is working with Bishop Ivan Abraham and the Methodist Church in Southern Africa to help provide shelter and food in the Johannesburg area for refugees there, many of them from Zimbabwe.

UMCOR sent a \$10,000 emergency grant and may provide a staff member there for several months.

A United Methodist-supported relief team has been assessing the needs of earthquake survivors in several Chinese villages and distributing emergency supplies. On May 21, the Amity Foundation team distributed 6.8 tons of oil and 1,700 quilts in the villages of Penghua and Wolong. According to a report from She Hongyu, Amity's overseas liaison, other materials such as waterproof cloths and rice were being purchased. Ten days after a massive earthquake struck China's Sichuan Province on May 12, the death toll stood at 51,151, according to the Chinese government, with 288,431 injured and another 29,328 missing. The estimate of those left homeless by the quake is a staggering 5 million. The United Methodist Committee on Relief is supporting the relief efforts of the Amity Foun-

dation, a voluntary Chinese Christian organization and longtime partner of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, UMCOR's parent agency. Amity and UMCOR are both part of Action by Churches Together International. UMCOR is sending \$50,000 to Amity through the ACT International partnership, according to the Rev. Sam Dixon, UMCOR's chief executive.

Tonny Mbowe takes children living in "extreme poverty" in Africa and shapes them into singers, dancers and lovers of God's word. Mbowe is the director for the Hope for Africa Children's Choir and Academy in Uganda and was profiled on UMC.org for the month of May featuring United Methodists from around the world sharing their stories and how they are living out their faith.



222nd Session of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference Summary

continued from page 1



Marcia McFee leads AC worship.

Annual Conference voted to approve the two nominees. Additionally, the Rev. Renez Perez nominated The Rev. Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem as a candidate for the episcopacy. Watson Tatem was approved by a vote of the Annual Conference. The three candidates will go to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, July 13-18 in Harrisburg, PA, when bishops are elected for the Northeastern Jurisdiction. (www.nejumc.org)

Evening Worship

The Evening Worship opened with the dynamic music of the praise band of El Redentor UMC in Lancaster. "What would Jesus think of the way churches advertise themselves today" asked Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey in his Evening Worship sermon, "soccer, free movie, bingo, car show?" McCleskey, resident bishop of the Western North Carolina Annual

Conference, asked, "What would Jesus think of the way we invite people to be part of our faith?" He suggested that invitations to experience Jesus calling should be direct, not entertainment first, springing the Gospel on them later. "When Christ asked his disciples to 'Go and make disciples of all nations,' he added, 'And teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.'" McCleskey remarked that what Jesus commanded was, "Love God and love your neighbor!" He asked churches to reclaim these three: "Follow me. Make disciples. Obey me." The Conference received \$4,446 in an offering during Evening Worship for the Hope for the Children Initiative for ministry with children in poverty.

Bible Study

Dr. Kelvin Sauls, of the office of Congregational Development of the General Board of Discipleship of The



Juanita Mahoney, lay member of Radnor UMC, lights candles for the Memorial Service.

United Methodist Church, led Bible Study Friday morning on the text from Matthew 7: 24-29, part of the Sermon on the Mount. Sauls reminded us that "When Jesus invites people to a mountain, something is about to go down!"



Dorothy Wood rings the bell for the Memorial Service.

Sauls issued a challenge to move from belief to Kingdom behavior, that Jesus is calling us to move from hearing the

excavation and wider through application: "Break up fallow ground, build up our common ground, and become holy ground." He left us with three questions for reflection: "Which areas in your life need more excavation from the inside out? In what ways are you currently applying Jesus' ethical teaching in your life/ministry? And how is God's Word becoming flesh through your life/ministry?" Sauls concluded by saying that Jesus invites us to "incarnational" discipleship for the transformation of the world.

Lay Address

Conference Lay Leader, Dr. Mary White, in her Lay Leader's Address, encouraged Annual Conference lay members to understand the four focus areas and seven pathways of The United Methodist Church. She encouraged laity to take more effective leadership roles in increasing membership and increasing giving, and with taking responsibility for keeping the track record of 100% giving to the General Church. The areas of older adults, young adults, lay leaders, United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, District Lay Leaders, and Volunteers in Mission all come under the Board of Lay Leadership umbrella. The conference honored Dorthea Burnett, who retired as coordinator of Older Adult Ministry.

Retiree Service

Twenty-five retirees representing 744 years of ministry were celebrated in the Retiree Recognition Service on Friday morning. The retirees "yoked" the class of 2008 ordinands as a symbol of passing the mantle of ministry.



V.I.V.E. worship team at El Redentor UMC of Lancaster, leads music for Thursday's Evening Worship.

222nd Session of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference Summary



Retiree, District Superintendent Susan May, is honored by Bishop Marcus Matthews.

At the Laity Luncheon on Friday, conference lay members under the direction of Lay Leader Mary White, listened as our General Conference lay delegates described their experiences in Ft. Worth during the meeting of the worldwide United Methodist Church, April 24 to May 2, 2008.

Celebration of Ministry

Rev. Lillian Smith, director of Connectional Ministry, led conference program staff in celebrating the highlights of the Making Disciples effort and conference program ministry in 2007 and 2008. The Bishop's Hope for the Children Award was presented to Grace Community UMC in Chester, Rev. Andrew Foster, pastor. The \$5,000 award will benefit the church's ministry with community children.

The Kim Jefferson Award for excellence in urban ministry went to Berry-Long Memorial United Methodist Church. This church, located in West Philadelphia, continued with vibrant worship and ministry in the community so that people were nurtured in their faith and the church continued to grow in ministry and membership despite the challenges of stolen water and heating pipes and stolen altarware. Rev. Raymond Mitchell, pastor, accepted the award.

Memorial Service

The Memorial Service on Friday evening opened with the music of Bethel Hill UMC's choir. Bishop McCleskey preached about the Good Shepherd who would park himself at the gate to the sheepfold, and one by one would check the wounds of each of his flock. McCleskey urged pastors to care for their flocks. Deceased bishops, pastors, and clergy spouses were remembered and celebrated as the historic bell from



Bishop Marcus Matthews ordains David W. Brown a Deacon of The United Methodist Church.



Robert Jones, member of Cookman UMC, is part of the video and camera crew.

Mother African Zoar UMC tolled and as candles were lit in remembrance

Marcia McFee led vital and dynamic worship throughout Annual Conference in song and praise. McFee, who also led worship at the recent General Conference in Ft. Worth, TX, introduced experiential tables prior to communion where participants could write



2008 Class of Elders: (left to right) B. Row: Susan Czarnecki, Coryn Beck, Barbara Seekford and Christopher Schiavino. F. Row: Marjorie Harris, Carolene Brubaker, Susan Sliker and Christina Keller.

on the afternoon of Sunday, June 1, at First United Methodist Church, with a standing-room only crowd. Rev. Kelvin Sauls preached, urging listeners to deploy Jesus's root commission: "Love one another the way I love you," by making their generosity extravagant and their hospitality radical, and by risk-taking in mission and service. He asked all to "choose to be chosen, as God says to us, 'I choose you; will you choose me?'" An offering for \$2,356 was received for scholarships for Eastern Pennsylvania undergraduate and seminary students.

Highlights of Holy Conferencing

- A historic first for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference: Deacons were present for the first time at the table for Annual Conference assisting with Holy Communion.

- Rodney Miller was elected Conference Secretary.

- Churches donated items and gift cards for the Methodist Home for Children.

- Conference approved thirteen resolutions including those relating to:

- adoption of a Safe Sanctuaries Policy, reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church;
- support of a Death Penalty Moratorium;

- support for "One Handgun a Month" Legislation in PA;

- approval of 18 ministries as Conference Advance Specials, making them eligible to receive supplemental funding for ministry.

Membership for 2007 stands at 123,360, down 1,014 over 2006. Worship attendance for 2007 stands at 49,915, down 752 over 2006.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference will meet again May 21-23, 2009.

their "negatives" down on paper that they then placed in water and watched them dissolve away; tables held also the communion elements and candles to experience the presence of Christ and to take Christ's light into the world.

Service of Ordination

The Service of Ordination took place



Weaving A Web Of Connections

Using Internet Technology For Effective Ministry
July 26, 2008

West Chester United Methodist Church, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Do you want to develop or expand a Web presence for your local church, district or conference organization? Then join us for this exciting training event co-sponsored by United Methodist Communications and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Office of Communications. Through interactive presentations, hands-on workshops and informative displays, you will be able to explore a variety of options for Weaving a Web of Connections by using Internet technology for effective ministry.

Training Session Topics include:

- Making Connections: What Is Web Ministry?
- User-Centered Design for Effective Web Ministry
- Welcoming the Seeker through Web Ministry
- Staying Connected: Maintaining a Dynamic Web Ministry

Training Leadership includes:

- Matt Carlisle, former director of the Web team for United Methodist Communications and now the founder and CEO of Big Heart Design
- Susan Crawford, director of Igniting Youth, UMCCom staff
- Cheryl A. Hemmerle, technical training specialist, UMCCom staff
- Mary Lynn Holly, coordinator of conference relations, UMCCom staff

The training fee is \$75 and includes all meals, breaks, sessions and materials. The registration deadline is July 18, 2008. To register for the training, visit www.training.umcom.org and select Weaving a Web of Connections. To register by telephone, call toll-free (888) 278-4862. Space is limited to 100 people. There is no refund for cancellation; however, registration is transferable. CEU credit (0.6) is available for full participation.

Overnight accommodations can be arranged with Holiday Inn West Chester by calling (610) 692-1900. The hotel is less than 1 mile to the church. Participants are responsible for their own transportation and lodging arrangements and payments. For more information, visit training.umcom.org or send an email to training@umcom.org.

SCHEDULE

- 8:00 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Making Connections: What Is Web Ministry? with Cheryl A. Hemmerle
- 10:00 a.m. User-Centered Design with Matt Carlisle
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. Welcoming the Seeker with Susan Crawford
- 3:00 p.m. Staying Connected: Maintaining a Dynamic Web Ministry with Cheryl A. Hemmerle
- 5:00 p.m. End of Training

Register online at www.epaumc.org.



Elders Retreat: A Sweet, Sweet Spirit

by Rev. Andrew L. Foster, III.

The drive was gloomy and dreary as I made my way to the Elder's Retreat at Mariawald Renewal Center on April 28th. However, when I arrived, the atmosphere inside was filled with possibility. There were more than 40 Elders from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, who represented each of our six districts. We were asked to bring our ordination stoles, hymnals and bibles. We began our day with prayer by Rev. Susan Cole, who led the retreat, and a welcome by Rev. Bron Yocum, chair of the Order of Elders. It was indicated that this would be the first of many Elder retreats in our conference. It was designed to bring about a closer connection and community.

The circle was comprised of persons who were ordained last year (including me) and as far back as 1963 (Praise God!) Each person was asked to lay their ordination stoles in the center of the room on a white linen-draped cloth in order of their ordination year. Prayers were offered for each person present affirming their ministries. Prayer cards with the names of close to 600 elders in our conference were prayed over and everyone present chose cards to sign. The cards were later mailed by the committee to further build community, and the names distributed to those present for on-going prayer.

A hymn was also enjoyed by all as we each lifted up songs from both the Faith We Sing and the United Methodist Hymnal (It sounded heavenly a cappella). We began singing "Here I Am, Lord" and ended our day with "It is Well with My Soul." To further seal the day and our connection, Holy Communion was served.

I want to publicly commend the committee that pulled this event together. Truly, a Sweet, Sweet Spirit was in the place.

Any Elders interested in being a part of planning for efforts to continue building community within the Order are invited to contact Bron Yocum at 610-933-5936.

Thank you for the connection!

First UMC in Shenandoah starts new Latino ministry

Pastor Brunilda Martinez, one of our Spanish-speaking pastors, was appointed on July 1, 2007 to First United Meth-

odist Church in Shenandoah. With the growing Hispanic/Latino population in the area, District Superintendent Chris-

topher Kurien encouraged the congregation and Pastor Martinez to pray and to work toward starting a new ministry for the Latino community in the area.

The congregation worked together to develop an outreach ministry over the last year. With the help of God, the first service was held on May 18th, Trinity Sunday. Dr. Kurien and his family attended the first Spanish worship service in Shenandoah at the First UMC. The services will continue every Sunday at 1:30pm.

Pastor Martinez said, "In being a new mission congregation, we seek the prayers and support of everyone to care for the various needs of this new church family. We are grateful for the opportunity to put into practice our open hearts, open minds and open doors and thank the District and the Conference for their support."



From left to right: Elsen Jacob, Christy Jacob, The Rev. Christopher Kurien and the Rev. Brunilda Martinez (center). Rev. Martinez's Family: husband, Ramon Adorno, granddaughter (in arms), Alyn B. Chavez, and her two daughters, Dayra and Adrea Adorno.

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at the Annual Conference*



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- Romans 12:2 (The Message)

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or Jim Wilkin at
jim.wilkin@epaumc.org



Lazarus' Miracle

Rev. Cynthia Brubaker

Jesus said to Martha outside of Lazarus' tomb, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" John 11:40 NIV

Have you ever hoped for something that only God could provide? Antharam Lazarus grew up near Hyderabad, India in a little place called Naskal Village. He became a civil engineer and member of the World Methodist Council, marrying Sugandhini, a teacher of many future pastors. Together they helped to plant and build over thirty churches in southern India. But Antharam's dream was to build a church in his own village, where no church had ever been built.

Two years ago he asked his congregation, Lighthouse Fellowship U.M.C. in Glenside, PA to help him fulfill his dream. The congregation sent letters to then Methodist Bishop of Hyderabad, Bishop Sagar, asking if he would accept pastoral oversight for a new congregation and he heartily agreed. So, Mr. Lazarus drew up plans: a sanctuary for 200, a well, septic facilities, and a parsonage with fencing all around (to keep the animals out). Land was purchased in early 2007 and the necessary permits were obtained. At the same time, a small group of Christians began meeting in the Lazarus' home in Naskal Village.

On August 23, 2007 Bishop Dr. K. T. Sagar and District Superintendent Rev. Dr. K. J. Samuel were on hand with the Lazarus, various pastors and local Christians, for a wonderful ground-breaking and cornerstone-laying ceremony for the new Grace Methodist Church. The first miracle: praying for nine days that it would not rain on the multiple day ceremony in the middle of the monsoon season - and it did not rain!

The new Bishop of Hyderabad, Bishop Christy, assigned Grace Methodist a new pastor, Rev. Devaiah, as the little band had quickly swelled to a hundred

worshippers! Area believers in India supplied chairs, rugs, hymnals, and Bibles. Lighthouse Fellowship members are providing the salary for the pastor and sexton (to watch over the building materials) until the congregation can afford to do so themselves. The plan was to build a church building but God planted a thriving new congregation!

Materials are continuing to be collected for the construction and the foundation is being prepared. The Lazarus are flying over this month to oversee and hasten the construction before the rains begin. The original cost estimates have nearly tripled due to oil costs and the lower dollar overseas. Currently, the written estimates exchange into approximately \$38,000 US dollars. Lighthouse Fellowship (with less than 100 active members) is acting purely on faith that God will provide, sending over more than \$8000 to date. In June they realized that the well needed to be put in first, another \$4-\$5000, which a private outside donor provided the next day - another miracle! When God is in something, you do not have to have much to do a whole lot. The Lord gladly provides when we step out in faith.

Together, believers here and in Naskal Village are trusting God to provide for the rest of the funds and for the construction. Perhaps you or your congregation would like to be a part of this new church planting? Your prayers are coveted and your funds are welcome. Even a little adds up to more than enough in God's economy. Join Mr. and Mrs. Lazarus, the Methodist Church in Hyderabad, and Lighthouse Fellowship U.M.C. as they witness God's glory at work in Naskal Village, India.

(Please make checks out to: Lighthouse Fellowship UMC with "Naskal Village" written on the memo line. Mail to: Lighthouse Fellowship U.M.C., 137 North Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038. For more information contact Lighthouse Fellowship U.M.C. at lfumc1@juno.com or 215-884-5251.)



Left to right: Bishop Sagar, Mrs. Sagar, Mrs. Sugandhini Lazarus, Mr. Antharam Lazarus.



2008 Appointments (listing by district)

FULL-TIME APPOINTMENTS

Full-time District and Conference Staff appointments:

1. Christopher Kurien from Northwest District to Southeast District Superintendent
2. Robert Wilt from Valley Forge: St. Matthew's UMC to Northwest District Superintendent
3. Bronwyn Yocum from Phoenixville: First UMC to Northeast District Superintendent
4. Irving Cotto from Greater New Jersey Conference to Director, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference

Full-time Local Church appointments:

Central District

1. Dawn Taylor-Storm from White Haven UMC to Valley Forge: St. Matthew's UMC
2. Amy Smith from Lehman Memorial (Assoc.) to Phoenixville: First UMC
3. Lester Groves from Temple UMC to Goodwill UMC
4. Quentin Wallace from Reading: New Beginnings UMC to Reading: St. Matthews UMC
5. Debra Hebden from Penn Argyl: Grace UMC (Assoc.) to Mont Clare: Otterbein UMC
6. Alice Cook to Bala Cynwyd UMC
7. John Bhajjan from Havertown: Hope UMC to Bethel Hill UMC
8. Elaine Ayers to Tindley Temple UMC
9. James McIntire from Prospect UMC to Havertown: Hope UMC

East District

10. Janice Puliti from Ivyland: St. John's (Assoc.) to Ivyland: St. John's (Senior Pastor)
11. Richard Rogers from Lickdale: Trinity UMC to Jarrettsville UMC
12. Anthony Arrington from Phila: Trinity (Baynton) UMC to Journey of Faith: A UM Congregation

Northeast District

13. Paul Crikelair from Goodwill UMC to Cherry Valley/Poplar Valley

UMCs

14. Robert Hachtman to Bethlehem: Fritz UMC
15. Gene Boyer from Allentown: Emmanuel UMC to Black Creek UMC
16. Robert Shrom, Jr. from Springtown: Salem UMC to Tamaqua: First/Salem UMCs
17. Karyn Fisher from Perkasie: First UMC to White Haven UMC
18. Jonathan Wesley Hall to Allentown: Emmanuel UMC
19. Thomas Fries to Pocono Lake UMC

Northwest District

20. Brian Albert from Lebanon: Ebenezer UMC to Shamokin: First UMC
21. Alice Ann Bonham from Ridley Park UMC to Lebanon: Trinity UMC
22. Rodney Shearer from Northeast District to Lebanon: Kochenderfer's UMC
23. Timothy Anderman from Mont Clare: Otterbein UMC to Lickdale: Trinity UMC
24. Mark Dricker from Schaefferstown: Zion UMC to Lebanon: Ebenezer UMC
25. James Whitehouse from Elysburg UMC to Fredericksburg UMC
26. Ivan Alberts to Elysburg UMC

Southeast District

27. David Eckert from Phila: Germantown, First UMC (Assoc.) to Drexel Hill UMC
28. Ryan B. Wieland to Ridley Park UMC

Southwest District

29. John Longmire from Quarryville: Memorial UMC to Hempfield UMC
30. John Laughlin from Lebanon: Kochenderfer's UMC to Millersville: Grace UMC
31. John Keretzman from Elverson UMC to Quarryville: Memorial UMC
32. Rene Perez from Director of Outreach and Church Multiplication Ministries and Director of Latino Ministries to Lititz UMC
33. Rodney Miller from Tamaqua: First/Salem UMCs to Neffsville: Long Memorial UMC
34. Debra J. Davis from Bird-in-Hand

- UMC to Lancaster: Otterbein UMC
35. Randolph Smith to Mt. Joy: Chiques UMC (effective April 1, 2008)
36. Sandra Knaub from Rothsville: Salem UMC to Paradise: St. John's UMC
37. Robert Pope from Churchtown UMC to Churchtown and Morgantown UMCs

16. Ralph N. Cain to Glen Moore UMC
17. Lori Wagner Snyder to Wallingford: Old Union UMC
1. Daniel Hepner from Glen Moore UMC to Hopewell UMC (Asst.)
19. Walter Reeves to Springfield: C.C. Hancock UMC (Asst.)

Southwest District

20. Charles Marshall from Bainbridge: Ludwig and Falmouth UMCs to Bainbridge: Ludwig UMC
21. Robert Bailey from Lancaster: Otterbein UMC to Bird-in-Hand UMC
22. Michael Roney to Denver: Trinity UMC
23. Joseph Puckhaber from Paradise: St. John's UMC to Falmouth UMC
24. Sharon Barley to Mountville: St. Paul's UMC
25. David Unangst from Neffsville: Long Memorial UMC to Rothsville: Salem UMC
26. Beth Trone from Minersville/Llewellyn UMCs to Schaefferstown: Zion UMC
27. Helen Adams to Stehman Memorial UMC
28. Thomas O. Grubbs to Elizabethtown: St. Paul's UMC (Asst.)
29. Christianne McLaughlin to Grandview UMC (Asst.)

PART-TIME APPOINTMENTS

Central District

1. James Jannotti to Temple UMC

East District

2. Adolphus Caphart (Certified Lay Minister) to Holmesburg UMC
3. Tracy Duncan from True Worship UMC to Journey of Faith: A UM Congregation
4. Nancy Ludwig (assistant pastor) from Langhorne UMC to (assistant pastor)Lehman Memorial UMC

Northeast District

5. Joseph Henry (Certified Lay Minister) to Lehighon: Ebenezer UMC
6. Candy LaBar to East Stroudsburg UMC (Asst.)
7. Maryanne Ditter (Probationary Deacon) to Woxall: Tabor UMC
8. William Abrams from Slatedale UMC to Parryville and Slatedale UMCs

Northwest District

9. Cheryl Lynn Hackman To: Palmyra: Gravel Hill (Associate Part-time)
10. David Heberling to Ashland Methodist Presbyterian Church (effective January 15, 2008)
11. Valerie Long to Cressona UMC
12. Ashley Brown (Certified Lay Minister) to Cumbola UMC
13. Andrea Haldeman to Hamburg: Bethany UMC
14. Nancy Gehres to Minersville/Llewellyn UMCs

Southeast District

14. Sang-Hong Park to Drexel Hill: New Covenant UMC

OTHER APPOINTMENTS:

1. Mark Young from Lebanon: Trinity UMC to Attend School
2. Timothy Reichard from Shamokin: First UMC to Extension Ministry
3. Laurie Ann Rookard from Camphor UMC to Extension Ministry as a Behavioral Health Specialist at Cookman UMC
4. Laura Welch from Sanctuary: North Wales (Assoc.) to Extension Ministry as a Full-time Chaplain for Vista Innovative Hospice in Darby, PA
5. Suzanne Duchesne from Elizabethtown: St. Paul's UMC (Assoc.) to Attend School

2008 CONFERENCE SCHOOL OF MISSION

Friday through Sunday, July 18-20, 2008

The Courses are:

- "I Believe in Jesus" (Taken by All)
- "Giving our Hearts Away: Native American Survival" (Elective)
- "Israel and Palestine" (Elective)

Location is The Inn at Reading.

For Additional Information Contact: Dick Howarth rwhjwh@earthlink.net

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For more information, contact: Althea U. Harmon, Dean; altmon@comcast.net or at 25 East Park Road, Reading, PA 19609

2008 gift from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits:

Ernst & Young Financial Planning Services is FREE This Year!

We are at the mid-year point to reevaluate your finances. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits arranged for free financial planning to eligible active, surviving spouses, and terminated and retired participants. In the past, participants were charged a fee of \$99.00 from January to March, then the rate changed to \$149.00 for the rest of the year.

In 2008, the service is no cost to you!

Call TODAY, Ernst & Young Financial Planning Services, 1-800-360-2539 between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

For more information, please click for the General Board's HARK newsletter at <https://extranet.gbophb.org/extranet/express/ob/20080104/hark200801.pdf> or you may contact Janet A. Mills, Senior Support Associate, Pension and Benefits, Communication and Coordination 1-800-828-9093 ext. 213 or janet.mills@epaumc.org.



Safe Sanctuaries

A new Safe Sanctuaries policy was passed at Annual Conference last month. This policy states:

It is the policy of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference that all conference and district ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults conform to the standards set forth in this policy.

It is also the policy of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference that, by its 2008 Charge Conference, every church in the conference adopts a Safe Sanctuaries policy that conforms to the standards set forth in this policy.

The complete conference policy is available on the conference website <http://www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=2304>. The Safe Sanctuaries Taskforce is currently finalizing a schedule of trainings to be held in each district in the early fall to assist local churches comply with the new policy.

For more information, please contact Jim Wilkin, Director of Camping and Nurture Ministries, 610-666-9090, ext 225; jim.wilkin@epaumc.org.

Laity Session at Eastern PA Annual Conference

by Verna Colliver

The Laity Session of Annual Conference featured the laity gathered around tables in the Independence Ballroom of the Sheraton City Center Hotel, sharing lunch, enjoying fellowship, and listening to reflections about General Conference. Dr. Mary White, Conference Lay Leader, began the session by welcoming the laity and introducing the District Lay Leaders, the Conference Director of Christ Servant Ministries, the Dean of the Academy for Laity, and the lay delegates to the 2008 General Conference.

Dr. White also spoke about plans for the year ahead, asking the laity, "What would you like to see different in the life of the Conference in 2009?" Stating her goal of visiting every church during her four year term, she also challenged the laity, saying "You can make a difference."

In their reflections about General Conference, all the EPA Conference lay delegates agreed that the 2008 Session at Fort Worth was very special in the feeling of unity and spirituality that pervaded the long and exhausting days of discussion and debate. They all felt

uplifted by the worship, the sermons and the hospitality of their hosts, the Central Texas Annual Conference.

For Mary White, the significance of being 30 miles from the site of the 1968 merger which created the United Methodist Church was very meaningful. Ruth Daugherty spoke on our becoming a world wide church and the action taken to move from central conferences to regional conferences. These changes will be made possible through constitutional amendments which will be voted on at the 2009 Annual Conference.

Thomas Gibson emphasized the unity within the Council of Bishops as they and the General Secretaries begin working together to address the Four Focus Areas for the future of our church. As a new trustee for Africa University, Lenora Thompson shared her excitement about what the UMC is doing in Africa. "Nobody is doing what we're doing around the world." The communication technology employed by the planners of the conference made it instantly accessible to United Methodists around the world.

Candace Carter focused on the hospitality and the creative worship services, saying "Creativity in worship

is a blessing." For first time delegate, George Hollich, the Conference was an "awesome, exciting experience." He was excited by the promise of the first ever young people's address which reflected the theme of the conference and gave evidence of a "resurrection of hope."

The Laity Session concluded with announcements and information: Verna Colliver, Dean of the Academy for Laity, highlighted the August 8-10,

2008, Academy course offerings; Ross Brightwell, President of United Methodist Men, emphasized the mandate for every congregation to organize a UMM group; Anna Bickhart, President of the United Methodist Women, announced a February 7-8, 2009, retreat for Girls on the Go with the theme, "For Christ's Sake, Let's Turn the World Upside Down."



Tom Gibson



Lenora Thompson

5TH ANNUAL PLANTING SEEDS for Ministry Growth

A learning and sharing event, designed to empower local congregations



SAVE THE DATE!

9:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.
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 HOPEWELL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,
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SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:
 Bishop Marcus Matthews, M.Div., D.Min.

PLANTING SEEDS WORKSHOPS

Anticipate the following workshops designed for your church leaders:

- 1 **Building A Culture of Caring**
 Rev. Dr. Christopher J. Kurien, District Superintendent, Southeast District of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference
 Will discuss the importance of strong caring ministries within congregations as the main ingredient to community building and church growth.
- 2 **Going Viral for Jesus: How Youth Ministry Can Make Us a More Missional Church**
 Rev. Dr. Kenda Creasy Dean, Princeton Theological Seminary
 We'll take a look at some of the most recent research on teenagers and religion, and what it means for the American church-and for our own ministries. How can youth ministry change your church into a more missional community?
- 3 **Changed Forever – Forced to Serve or a Serving Force**
 Rev. David Cumbest, Heritage UMC, D'Iberville, MS
 Many disciples have experienced transformation through their serving efforts in the Gulf Coast since hurricane Katrina devastated that area almost three years ago. Rev. Cumbest will share how his congregation was forced to serve nearly 1,500 people daily within just hours of Katrina and how they have been transformed from that experience.
- 4 **Small Does Not Mean Struggling**
 Rev. David B. Smith, Creek Road Baptist Church, Cincinnati, OH
 Is the smaller congregation less of a church because of its size? It may not have the large budget and huge programs of a mega congregation but it has everything it needs to impact its community for the kingdom.
- 5 **Keeping Children Focused on the Reason for the Seasons**
 Hopewell UMC, Mrs. Donna Hepner, Director of Children's Preschool; Patty Wiehler, Director of Children's Ministries
 Sharing program ideas that center our children on Christ during Holiday Seasons in a culture that immerses them in materialism & commercialism.

Please visit our website for more information www.hopewellumc.org or call 610-269-1545. This Event is sponsored, in part, by Connectional Ministries Fund dollars provided by the Eastern PA Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Summer Camp 2008

Listen! God Is Calling

[God] saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to [God's] own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began. 2 Timothy 1:9

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JULY 26, 2008

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August 8-10, 2008

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