

Live nativity reaches out to community



51 cast and crew members participated in Romansville's Living Nativity, with another 20 people behind the scenes. Live animals included a donkey named Dink and a llama named Cool Llama as well as three horses and a sheep. 228 visitors enjoyed the event. Left to right: Trevor Peasley, Mark Boileau, Tabitha Bartilomo, Cailie McKee, Amanda Boileau, Walt Sherota, Maggie Roseto and Nick Roseto.

Romansville United Methodist Church is celebrating a decade of presenting their drive-through Living Nativity as their annual Christmas gift to the community. The first Living Nativity took place in 2001. It was a monumental undertaking for the small

congregation and immediately became a successful and beloved outreach event.

After the first nativity, while the cast and crew were changing out of costumes, cleaning up and enjoying homemade cookies and hot chocolate everyone

was expressing their delight about the success of the project when the pastor overheard a long time member say "she'll probably want to do it every year now!" and that is exactly what has happened.

During the past ten years the congregation and the

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Conference adopts new strategy, structure and healthcare

BY SUZY KEENAN

On Saturday, November 13, at Hempfield United Methodist Church, nearly 500 members of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference attended the Adjourned (Fall) Session.

Rev. Jim Todd, superintendent for the Southwest District, and Rev. John Longmire, pastor of Hempfield UMC welcomed the crowd.

Rev. Rene Perez, pastor of Lititz UMC preached, noting the bad economy and its effect on the country. He asked, "How do we respond and live out faith - churches and conference asking the same question - how are we going to do this?" Rev. Perez shared the situation in his own congregation, with the bad economy, and being \$30,000 in debt, when they committed to sending a container with \$10,000 of medical supplies to Kenya. "We asked everyone in the congregation to pray, and God planted dream and a vision. It is God's dream and vision - he will provide!" He added, "We give not what we can give, but what God promised we could give. Imagine the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and all its churches together with one mission in mind - to change



At Fall Conference: Bishop Peggy A. Johnson, Rev. Rodney Miller, Conference Secretary and Dr. Mary White, Conference Lay Leader.

the world with people coming to Christ by the hundreds!" And he asked, "Now how many of you are with me today?"

John Longmire introduced Michael Agwanda, director of Life for Children Ministry in Kisumu, Kenya. This

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December

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

Messiah Performance: at Arch Street United Methodist Church, 55 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107. Arch Street's annual presentation of the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah, Sunday, December 12th during the 11 o'clock service.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

"Two Thousand Years Ago" - Christmas Musical: Hope Church UMC - Douglassville, PA 7 p.m. on Sunday. Reservations are suggested but are not required. "Two Thousand Years Ago" is an original Christmas musical presented by the Hope Church choir and special guest vocalists. Contact: Ran Birkins - Choir Director, choirdirector@hopechurchamity.org. More information: www.HopeChurchAmity.org.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

Sacred Orchestra & New Hanover UMC Choir Christmas Event: 9:00 & 10:45 a.m. Enjoy the glorious sounds of Christmas from The Sacred Orchestra directed by renowned trumpeter, Dave Stahl, and the 70-voice New Hanover UMC Sacred Choir performing the powerful music of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir! Expanded parking & Children's Ministry available. New Hanover United Methodist Church, 2211 Swamp Pike, Gilbertsville, PA 19525; 610-323-2353; www.newhanoverumc.org.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19,

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

"A Christmas Offering" a Christmas Cantata by Marty Parks: The choral cantata performance is on Sunday, December 19th, at 7 PM and Sunday, December 26th, at 9 AM during the morning worship service. For more information about TUMC's "A Christmas Offering" choral presentation and for driving directions to Tabor UMC, please contact TUMC at 2209 Hendricks Station Road, Woxall, PA 18979, or call the church office at 215-234-4852; or visit www.tabor-umc-org.

WEDNESDAY - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29-31 JR/SR High Retreat: Wednesday 7:00 p.m. - Friday 2:00 p.m. Celebrate the season at WINTER BLAST 2010! Connect with God, renew your faith, and experience outdoor adventures including late night gala! Join us for a birthday celebration and the real meaning of Christmas! Don't miss out on this awesome holiday retreat! Grades 7-12. The Program Directors are Liz and Jared Stoltzfus. Cost: \$95. www.pocconoplateau.org.

January

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, JANUARY 14 - 16 Youth Winter Blast Retreat: (Friday 7:00 p.m. - Sunday 2:00 p.m.) Try out ice skating or show off your skills at the local ice skating arena. Come learn how we are called to be full time followers of Jesus.

Don't miss this weekend of fun, crafts, games, high ropes, fellowship and food! Cost: \$85.00. www.gretnaglen.org

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15

Nepal Mission Team: Those interested in being part of a 10-12 member Nepal Mission Team are invited to gather from 10:00 AM to Noon to talk about possible dates, the purpose, and preparations at West Lawn UMC is located at 15 Woodside Avenue in Reading, PA.

TUESDAY - THURSDAY, JANUARY 18-20

Bishop's Midwinter Retreat 2011 for Clergy and Spouses: Lancaster Convention Center, Marriott Hotel, Lancaster, PA. Guest Speaker - The Rev. Kwasi Kena, General Board of Discipleship Register now online: <http://www.epaumc.org/events/calendar/midwinter-retreat>

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21

Winter Jamboree! Children's Retreat: Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center, 304 Pocono Plateau Road, Cresco, PA 18326. Theme: Say What? Cost: \$85/person. On-line registration forms and mail-able forms are available on website: www.pocconoplateau.org. Contact Glendon Carper, Program Manager, 570-676-3665 or camp@pocconoplateau.org

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, JANUARY 21 - 23

Children's Retreat: (grades 2-5)
Youth Retreat: (grades 6-9)
Women's Retreat: www.innabah.org for more information on any of these events.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29

Tools for Ministry: See article on page 4.

MONDAY, JANUARY 31

Exploring the Faith: Led by Scholarly Ordained Ministers - Practical, Evocative Lectures Relevant for the 21st Century Church, Rooted in Scripture and Tradition. FREE lunch and registration. All prospective graduate students: REGISTER TO WIN A United Theological Seminary Tuition Voucher! 0.4 Continuing Education Units. To Register, go to www.united.edu - click on Alumni/ae Tab and choose Exploring the Faith from the left menu or call 937.529.2256. Held at the Willow Valley DoubleTree Resort, 2416 Willow Street Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602.

February

FRIDAY - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4-5 "Understanding Today's Youth Culture": Pocono Plateau Camp + Retreat Center retreat for Youth Workers, Pastors, Parents, and Teachers. The retreat is scheduled for 2 pm February 4th - 7 pm Feb 5th-2011. Contact us at 570.676.3665 to register or for more information. For the FULL-BROCHURE: <http://www.pocconoplateau.org/documents/CPYUFullRetreatBrochure.pdf>

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4 - 6 Challenge Retreat: - (ages 12 and above) - Innabah Come join us for another awesome challenge retreat. Activities include Bible studies, games, songs, socializing, relaxing, camp fires, and so much more... Cost: \$80.00. www.innabah.org

FRIDAY - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11 & 12

Conference-wide Laity Retreat
At: National Christian Conference Center, 1485 Valley Forge Road, Phoenixville, PA 19460. Dr. Mary White, Chair of the Board of Lay Ministry For More Information contact office- Ph 215-236-0304 or mwhite9891@aol.com. THIS IS OPEN TO ALL LAITY Print a flyer: <http://www.epaumc.org/events/calendar/laity-retreat>

THURSDAY - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 - 26

Ecumenical Marriage Encounter Weekend Clergy Couples: Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekends take couples beyond the frustration, disappointments, and loneliness that can be a part of everyday life. Brochures are available from dottielund@comcast.net (ph. 302-478-4209) or register on-line at: www.presby-me.org. Registration is also available at www.encounter.org, the website of Encounter - United Methodist. Space is limited to 10 couples, so register early!

SUNDAY - WEDNESDAY, FEB. 27-MARCH 2
Northeastern Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation: See page 12.

March

THURSDAY - SATURDAY, MARCH 24-26
Restoration 2011: Restoration through the Means of Grace. Grace: Our bridge over troubled waters at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront Sponsored by The Vision Team and Strengthening the Black Church Congregational Development. Featured Speakers: Bishop Peggy Johnson, Rev. Dr. Tyrone Gordon, Victor Perez, Rev. Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem, and Rev. Mark Farnell. Contact: Peninsula-Delaware Conference, c/o Marilyn Cleeton, 139 N. State Street, Dover, DE 19901; 1-877-736-3351.

April

SATURDAY: APRIL 2
Regional Disabilities Conference: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 2313 Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE (302) 478-2575 or www.aldersgatede.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9
"I am Available": one-day seminar led by Rev. Roger Dowdy, DFC for laity/deacons/elders/local pastors, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at First UMC, 68 N. Church Street, Ephrata, PA 17522. More information: www.epaumc.org/events/calendar/available.

In Memoriam

Rev. Ronald L. Bickhart

Word has been received of the death of The Rev. Ronald L. Bickhart, retired Elder, who passed away November 25, 2010, in Reading Hospital and Medical Center.

Rev. Bickhart served the following appointments beginning in 1970: Jonestown; Fredericksburg; West Lawn; Lancaster: Pearl Street; Telford: Grace; Collingdale: Mariner's; and Harmony. He retired in 2007, and has served since that time as Pastor of Visitation at West Lawn UMC. He graduated from Ephrata High School in 1960, Albright College in 1967, and United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH in 1970.

He is survived by his wife, Anna (they were married 42 years), a daughter, Pam, wife of Mark Kennedy, and two grandsons.

Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Anna Bickhart, 2900 Garfield Avenue, West Lawn, PA 19609. Online condolences may be recorded at www.kuhnfuneralhome.com.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to West Lawn United Methodist Church, 15 Woodside Ave., West Lawn, PA 19609.

Rev. Reeves C. Havens

Word has been received of the death of The Rev. Reeves C. Havens, Retired Elder, who passed away on November 9, 2010.

Rev. Havens served the following appointments: Extension Ministry in NJ; Pittston: ST. Paul's; Skiner's Eddy; Wyalusing; Chenango Bridge (all in Wyo. Conf.); Nome AK (Missional Pastor); Ketchikan, AK; Nichols, NY (Wyo. Conf.); Extension Ministry: Phila: Chaplain, Methodist Hospital; Former Lancaster: Broad St. (now Christ); and Extension Ministry, Chaplain, Cornwall Manor. He retired in 1978.

He is survived his wife, Geraldine, and by four children: Allan Havens, Lyndal H. Lovett, Rane Wise and Maia Havens.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family in care of his wife, Mrs. Geraldine Havens, 314 Cool Springs Blvd., Apt. 132, Franklin, TN 37067.

Rev. Howard D. Huddleson

Word has been received of the death of Reverend Howard D. Huddleson, 87, on Friday, August 27, 2010, at Hospice of Lancaster County. His wife, Glenda Susan (Frick) Huddleson preceded him in death in 1996.

Reverend Huddleson served as pastor

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(USPS 19-604)

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**Making Disciples
of Jesus Christ for the
Transformation of the World**

A Word from the Bishop

Happy New Year!

The season of Advent is upon us once again and I say to you "Happy New Year!" It is right to say "Happy New Year" on the first Sunday of Advent because it is the first Sunday of the Christian calendar. During the four weeks before the celebration of the birth of Christ we devote ourselves to preparation. We prepare spiritually for the coming of Christ into our hearts and lives and look forward to Christ's second coming.

We remember the words of John the Baptist who calls people to repentance and change. (Matthew 3:2) We read from the prophet Isaiah "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain." (Isaiah 40:3-4) He is talking about our lives and behavior here, not road construction. Isaiah is calling for social justice which will result in the revelation of the glory of God so that all people can see the Lord. (Isaiah 40:5)

In another month we have another occasion to say "Happy New Year!" That is of course, the celebration of a new calendar year. People often prepare for this by declaring any number of "New Year's Resolutions." These tend to be a list of earnest plans to improve ourselves; chief among these resolutions is losing weight. But there are countless other resolutions that we can think of as we sense this "turning over a new leaf" time of a new year's approach.

This year Advent's call to social justice can be paired with the calendar's New Year's Resolution in a United Methodist Call for "Just and Humane Immigration Reform in 2011." This program ("The New Year's Resolution Campaign") calls United Methodists and all people to choose some action steps to do in the new year that will help promote peace among the earth's people. Here are possible activities:

- 1) Call congress once a week and urge your representatives to enact humane immigration

reform laws that reunifies families and provides a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants.

- 2) Invite an immigrant family to your home for dinner.
- 3) Have conversations with friends or fellow church members about the issues of immigration reform.
- 4) Volunteer to teach at an "English as a Second Language" ministry or at an immigration legal clinic.
- 5) Host the showing of a film about immigration
- 6) Pray daily for the protection of immigrants and their families.

Few issues divide people like the issue of immigration reform. There are Christians of good will who strongly disagree about this. We can agree that the laws in this country with regards to immigration are not working well. People need to work together in peace to find solutions that are lasting and fair. United Methodists have historically worked for social justice and get involved in ministries with the poor.

Several years ago when I was a pastor in Baltimore, I got to know a deaf man from Ethiopia. He came to the U.S. seeking asylum because there were death threats on his life due to some political strife back home. He attended the deaf church and lived with his sister, who was a U.S. citizen. This deaf man had to leave his wife and children in Ethiopia because there was no money to bring them to the U.S. The people who were seeking his life in Ethiopia would constantly harass his wife and family. This deaf man struggled long and hard in the immigration court system. It was doubly hard for him because his sign language was different from American Sign Language. Through the years I worked with him I got to know his sister, have dinner with them in their home and understand the pain of separation and the severe poverty they suffered with every day. His family back home suffered even

more from hunger and deprivation. Blessedly this deaf man was successful in immigration court and has documentation that will allow him to live in the US. His wife and children have recently joined him in this country.

Getting to know him as a person and not as a stranger or an intruder was an important experience for me. In the Disney movie "Pocahontas" the song "The Colors of the Wind" says it this way: "You think the only people who are people are people who look and think like you, but if you walk the footsteps of the stranger, you'll learn things you never knew you never knew."

Perhaps you will consider having someone to your home for dinner who is an immigrant. When we break bread together we break barriers of distrust and suspicion. I wish you a Happy Advent and a Happy New Year and I pray that whatever plans you make, you will give a thought to immigration reform in whatever way the Lord lays on your heart.

Leviticus 19:33-34 says "And if a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not vex him, but the stranger that dwells with you shall be unto you as one born among you and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt, I am the Lord your God."



In Memoriam continued from page 2

of United Methodist Churches in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference for over 40 years. During those 40 years he served Phila: St. Luke's Snyder Avenue; Phila: Norris Square; Chatham; Avondale; Phila: Olivet-Bethany; Columbia: First; Summit Hill; Former Wadesville; St. Clair-Wade; Grove; Bird-in-Hand; Williamstown; Peach Bottom: Mt. Zion; Pleasant Grove; Pottsville: Evangelical; Parkesburg; Springtown: Salem; Hellertown: St. Paul's; Upland; and Former Coatesville: Grace.

Surviving are four children: Daniel J. Huddleson, Williamstown; David W. married to Pamela Huddleson, Syracuse, NY; Susan H. married to Thomas Hambleton, Quarryville; Ruth E. married to Brian Frankhouser, New Holland; a daughter-in-law Connie Huddleson, widow of son Thomas M. Ogallala, NE; 11 grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, and a niece.

Memorial contributions may be sent to Hospice of Lancaster County, PO Box 4125, Lancaster, PA 17604-4125. Online condolences: www.groffckenroth.com.

Rev. J. Louise Thatcher

Word has been received of the death of The Rev. J. Louise Thatcher, who died on Friday, October 22, 2010.

Rev. Thatcher served the following appointments: former Glendon; former Nazareth: Trinity; Shenandoah: First; and William Penn. She retired in 1988.

She is survived by her sons Daniel, Craig, and Jason; a sister, Susanne Sumerfield of Mount Joy (wife of The Rev. Allan Sumerfield, Sr. of the EPA Conference); nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mr. Jason Thatcher, 201 N. Sprague Avenue, Wyoming Seminary, Kingston, PA 18704.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to Fritz Memorial United Methodist Church, 309 W. Packer Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18105.

Mrs. Erma Mae (Suters) Yrigoyen

Erma Mae (Suters) Yrigoyen, 96, born in Philadelphia, PA, March 25, 1914, died on September 1, 2010 at the nursing center at Attleboro Retirement Community. The daughter of Edward Garfield Suters and Alverdia (Jones) Suters, she was a resident of Attleboro in Langhorne, PA where she lived since 1996. She was the widow of Rev. Charles Yrigoyen, D.D., who died on July 28, 2006. They were married for seventy-two years. She provided a loving home for her husband who had been raised at Girard College in Philadelphia.

Erma is survived by two sons: Charles, Jr. (married to Jeanette Alice Brittingham) of Willow Street, PA,

and Robert Paul of Philadelphia, PA; two grandchildren, Debra Y. Floriani (married to Michael J. Floriani) of Downingtown, and Charles Yrigoyen, III (married to Paula J. Radice) of North Liberty, Iowa; and two great grandsons, Darin Charles Yrigoyen and Hunter Radice Yrigoyen also of North Liberty, Iowa.

As a pastor's wife, Erma was an active church member and leader in her husband's churches (all in eastern PA - Croydon, Kensington, Langhorne, Brookline, Reading, Arch Street (Philadelphia), and Allentown). She taught Sunday school, sang in the choir, was active in the churches' women's groups, and fulfilled with joy the many duties expected of a pastor's wife. While her husband was the Chaplain of Philadelphia's Methodist Hospital, she was a leader in the hospital's woman's auxiliary and served for many years as its treasurer.

Erma was an excellent housewife, cook, and baker. Among her favorite activities were travel, good music and preaching, entertaining friends, and holiday gatherings with the family. Wherever she lived or was hospitalized those who knew her commented on her good nature and courteous demeanor. She was a member of the Langhorne (PA) United Methodist Church.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Erma S. Yrigoyen Memorial Fund, Langhorne United Methodist Church, 301 East Maple Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047.

Tools for Ministry

JANUARY 29, 2011 ON EACH DISTRICT

[HTTP://WWW.EPAUMC.ORG/EVENTS/CALENDAR/TOOLSFORMINISTRY2011](http://www.epaumc.org/events/calendar/toolsforministry2011)

CENTRAL DISTRICT: AT HAWS AVE. UMC, NORRISTOWN, PA

8:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. Cost: \$10.00 person
Mail registrations to: Dr. Mary White, 312 Rockingham Road, Rosemont, PA 19010.
Registration deadline: January 15, 2011.

NORTHEAST DISTRICT: AT QUAKERTOWN UMC

9 to 9:30 a.m. - Coffee and registration
9:30 a.m. - Worship
3 p.m. - Program Ends
Two separate workshop slots - morning and afternoon

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT: AT WEST GROVE UMC

300 North Guernsey Road, West Grove, PA 19390

8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Cost: \$5.00 per person
Continental Breakfast included. Lunch will NOT be available. Workshops to be announced soon.

Registration will be through the District Office only - call or email Lin George: 610.436.4277 or lgeorge@epaumc.org

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT: AT LAMPETER UMC

1101 Village Road (Village and Book Roads), Lampeter, PA 17537

8:30-9:00 a.m. Registration
9:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Tools for Ministry
1:30-4:30 p.m. Poverty Simulation sponsored by LUMINA

Cost: \$5.00 for the morning event
\$10.00 additional cost for lunch for folks staying for the afternoon event. (Must be registered for the afternoon)

Registration Deadline: Register with the District Office by January 19, 2011 Checks should be made payable to the "Southwest District" and sent to the Southwest District Office, P O Box 271, Bird-in-Hand, PA 17505.

FOR COMING INFORMATION ON EACH DISTRICT'S PLANS VISIT WWW.EPAUMC.ORG/EVENTS/CALENDAR/TOOLSFORMINISTRY2011.



A Call to Action



The Reverend Lillian C. Smith

BY LILLIAN C. SMITH

No one is immune. A situation presents itself in which a decision has to be made. Every person, generation, community, family and church faces a pivotal situation. Whether it is a recession, or some other situation, no one is immune.

When faced with a body of water in front of them, and those who wanted to re-enslave them close behind, formerly enslaved Israelites had to choose. Surrender to those who wanted them to return to a life of bondage, or go into the water in front of them. Go back to Egypt to a life of captivity, which wasn't God's plan, or trust God in seemingly impossible situations. The situation must have been frightening, maybe even disheartening. In their call to action, the people were challenged to trust God and go into uncharted territory, on their road to fulfilling God's destiny for their lives.

In fear, the Israelites said to Moses, "What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." Moses then said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today..." God then told Moses "Tell the Israelites to go forward." (Exodus 14: 10-15) If you don't remember the story, God created a path in the water so that the Israelites could cross

over to freedom. The ensuing Egyptians did not have it so good. The water overtook them.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus faces a situation that would cost him his life and result in ridicule, heartache, and pain. Knowing full well that he was about to be betrayed and eventually crucified, Jesus chose to stay the course to save us and all of humanity. Instead of calling on the angels to deliver him from the situation, he prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass un-

less I drink it, your will be done. (Matthew 26: 36-42)

The United Methodist Church and the people called United Methodists are now being issued "A Call to Action." Faced with continuing decline, the Council of Bishops, the Connectional Table and every church and congregational leader is being invited and challenged to act.

Findings revealed, "While there are many examples of effective disciple-making, prophetic witness, and ministries of justice and mercy across the Connection, these efforts do not obviate the effects in the United States and Europe of our increasingly older membership and aging leaders; declines in the numbers of professions of faith, worship attendance, and baptisms; and growing financial burdens accompanied by decreasing revenues." (pg. 8)

The report goes on to say, "Thus the adaptive challenge for The United Methodist Church is: 'To redirect the flow of attention, energy, and resources to an intense concentration on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.'" (pg. 8)

"The Call to Action," is calling for increased accountability for every level of ministry - clergy, congregations, general agencies, and Bishops. Congregations will be challenged to demonstrate effectiveness in implementing the three factors of vitality identified in the Towers Watson Report. Those factors are attendance, growth, and engagement." The report also calls for the dramatic

reform of "clergy leadership development, deployment, evaluation and accountability systems. Active Bishops will be "assuming

1. responsibility and public accountability for improving results in attendance, professions of faith, baptisms, participation in servant/mission ministries, benevolent giving, and lowering the average age of participants in local church life; and
2. establishing a new culture of accountability throughout the church.

Saints of the Most High God, we are all in this together. It will take all of us, by the grace, power and anointing of God, to turn things around. To read the entire report, go to: www.umc.org/call-toaction.

During the coming months we will learn more of how we will be invited to respond to the call to action. The districts and the conference, as a whole, will have to increase efforts to resource congregations so that they can better fulfill their mission of "Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." You will hear more from Bishop Johnson and the District Superintendents about how this call will affect our conference.

Now is not the time to throw in the towel because of fear. Now is not the time to retreat or place our head in the sand. Now is not the time to lament, "We just can't do it." Instead now is the time to answer the call, trust God, pray, and move forward.

Like Paul, in his letter to the Church in Philippi, we will each need to declare, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14)

Like our spiritual forebears, it is time to again answer the call. Like Charles Wesley, in his hymn, we are challenged to declare, "A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, a never dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky." Like our spiritual forebears, it is time again to trust God and answer the call. Is it impossible? Under our own power, yes it is. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, nothing is impossible to us who claim and believe in the name of Christ.

I give thanks to God for you and the ministry you undertake for Christ. May God strengthen all of us for the challenge that lies ahead.

REV. LILLIAN C. SMITH IS THE Director of Connectional Ministries and Executive Director of Congregational Transformation with the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church. She can be contacted at lsmith@epaumc.org or 610-666-9090.

Event trains leaders of African descent



left to right: The Rev. Amos Oladipo, Sr. Pastor, Epworth United Methodist Church, Chicago, IL, The Rev. Dr. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Director, Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, Ghana, Africa, Gerald Lenoir, Director, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, Oakland, CA and Julie Fleurinor, M.Div. Candidate, Garrett Theological Seminary, Haiti.

BY YVETTE DAVIS

On October 15, 16 and 17, 2010, New York Theological Seminary, The Institute for Diasporan and African Culture, The California-Pacific Conference of The United Methodist Church, and the Office of Urban and Global Ministries of The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference hosted The African/Caribbean Diaspora Leadership Conference in New York City, New York and concluded with a "Thanksgiving Worship Service" at Mother African Zoar United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The African/Caribbean Diaspora Leadership Conference invited persons of African descent from Africa, the Caribbean and the United States to continue a dialog and experience that will launch a multi-year journey and consultation and bring healing, mutual understanding, and vital ministry among and with persons of African descent in the United States.

Julie Fleurinor, a Haitian African-American woman and seminarian at Garrett Theological Seminary was present for the conference. Ms. Fleurinor reflected on the transformation she experienced while attending The African/Caribbean Diaspora Leadership Conference, "Growing up in Miami, Florida, there were real dangers in not being able to walk, talk and act like an American. The tremendous pressure to conform and fit in was unbelievable. I remember a heart-breaking incident of a young boy killing himself after a group of his friends discovered that he was Haitian. Though there is not that much pressure to conform today, attitudes towards immigrants continues to be discriminatory and dismissive. The prevailing cultural undertone is, 'different is deficient.'"

During the recent African-Caribbean Diaspora Leadership Training Conference in New York City, Ms. Fleurinor experienced a miraculous healing in her heart, mind and soul through a story told by Professor Kofi Asare Poke, a native from Ghana and retired Professor of World Religions from Lafayette College in Pennsylvania. He told a story about a farmer finding a wounded eagle, and the farmer did his best to nurture the eagle by placing the eagle in the chicken pen. Ms. Fleurinor found herself identifying with the wounded eagle that had taken on the characteristic of the chicken as a part of survival. She said, "At that very moment, I felt a sense of shame for my non-actions as a woman called by GOD, born in Haiti, and raised in the United States. I began to wonder how I could bridge the gap between where I was born, and where I grew up. My assimilation process included

working very hard not to sound like a Haitian. As a child I would sit in the mirror and practice English over and over again. I wanted to be sure no one could detect an accent, or point me out as being different."

Prof. Emile Townes, a leading womanist theologian and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Yale Divinity School, began the conversation with principles for transformative leadership: integrity, vision, courage, and "passion for the things that keeps us going when we are afraid." Prof. Mercy Ambo Oduyoye, Director, Institute of Women in Religion and Culture in Accra, Ghana, exclaimed, "Embrace your full humanity!" Mr. Gerald Lenoir, Director of Black Alliance for Just Immigration BAJI, located in Oakland, CA, presented this observation: "Connect the dots by becoming a natural bridge in your community...utilize your knowledge of both worlds to build bridges in your community." Nana Ansah Sasraku III Osabarima, Chief, Mamfehene of Akuapem in the eastern region of Ghana promoted becoming a leader that leads with justice and equality, even when your own family is not following.

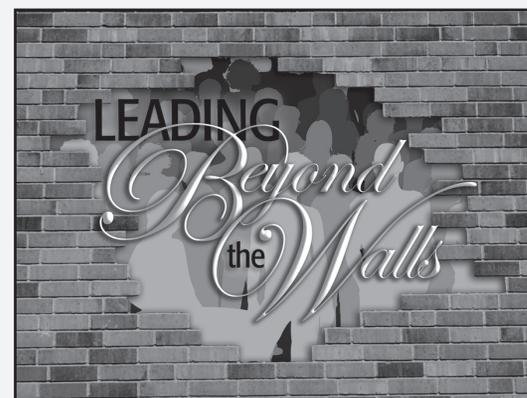
Rev. Kelvin Sauls, a native from South Africa, one of the conference organizers, and Executive Director for New Ministries in the California-Pacific Conference, encouraged listeners, "Never confine yourself to the American pie, because its expiration date has come and gone. With the world as your parish, learn to imagine, create and bake gourmet pies to feed a diverse global community."

At the final worship of celebration, hosted by African Mother Zoar UMC in Philadelphia, Rev. Dr. Vance Ross, Deputy General Secretary of the General Board of Discipleship, emphasized the need for us to recognize and realize the "inter-related commune" as part of the African/Caribbean Diaspora community. In his sermon title, "Different Histories, Common Destinies," he said, "As people who call Africa Mother home, we must learn to live according to 'Mother's' definition of humanity: I am because you are, and because you are, I am."

Ms. Fleurinor expressed gratitude for the conference, "As I reflect on my experience at the conference, I am grateful for the quality time the panelists spent with a wounded eagle called Julie. Moreover, I was nurtured to healing and freedom! I am deeply indebted to the co-sponsors of this first-of-its-kind conference."

YVETTE DAVIS IS DIRECTOR OF URBAN AND GLOBAL MINISTRIES for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference: Yvette.davis@epaumc.org.

Leading Beyond the Walls



The Church of the Resurrection will be coming to the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference in the spring to lead follow-up sessions to annual conference's presentation of "Leading Beyond the Walls"

- **March 4-5, 2011**-Combined Northwest and Southwest District
- **March 11-12, 2011**-Combined Central and Southeast Districts at Paoli UMC, 81 Devon rRad, Paoli, PA
- **March 18-19, 2011**-Combined Northeast and East Districts
- **April 1-2, 2011**-Northeast District at East Stroudsburg UMC

Day One: 5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Day Two: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Each congregation will be invited to send a team of at least three people, including the pastor. More information about registration costs and sites will be forthcoming.

Exploration 2011

Exploration 2011, an event for young adults who feel God's call to ordained ministry as a deacon or elder in The United Methodist Church, will take place Nov. 11-13, 2011, in St. Louis, Mo.

The event provides a chance to explore the call to ordained ministry through worship, prayer, workshops, networking, and small groups.

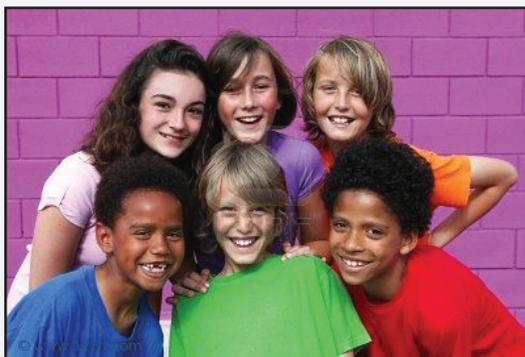
Sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Exploration 2011 is open to young adults age 18 to 26. The registration fee will cover a two-night stay at the Millennium Hotel, meals, and program fees. Updates and registration information will be posted on the event Web site at www.gbhem.org/exploration.

"This year's event will incorporate feedback we received through a longitudinal study begun at the 2009 Exploration. We hope to use what we have learned so far about the effect of these events on the discernment process to make each event more relevant to the participants," said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, director of Candidacy, Mentoring, and Conference Relations.

The Design Team which is planning the event encourages campus ministries, annual conferences, and local churches to identify young adults who exhibit the gifts and graces for ordained ministry and to invite and support their attendance at this event.

The event will include speakers, worship, workshops, and small group interaction to help students hear, discern, and respond to their call to ordained ministry.

Alternate giving: Coins for kids



BY ANGELE PARKER

Your congregation is invited to support Methodist Services for Children and Families "Coins for Kids" Campaign. This new initiative is an opportunity for congregations in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church to continue their support of the Methodist Home for Children in a unique way.

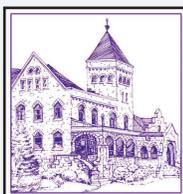
Perhaps you are looking for a way to further engage the young people in your congregation and encourage their philanthropic spirit. Or perhaps you would like to offer alternative gifting at Christmas. Through "Coins for Kids" your congregation can designate the loose change offerings on a Sunday to Methodist Services.

The donations collected through "Coins for Kids" will provide support to children and families throughout Eastern Pennsylvania in many ways, including:

- Providing After School Programming for inner city youth
- Offering Community Counseling to individuals and families in need
- Helping families find safe and affordable housing
- Supporting single mothers find employment and daycare for their children
- Creating permanent homes for children through adoption

We are grateful for the ongoing, generous support of the congregations in the Conference and thank you in advance for your support of the "Coins for Kids" Campaign. If you have any questions or are interested in having a speaker from Methodist Services come to your church, please call Joan Shumate, Director of Community Relations, at 215-877-1925 ext. 116 or jshumate@methodistservices.org.

ANGELE PARKER, PH. D. IS PRESIDENT AND CEO of the Methodist Home for Children.



**Methodist Home
for Children**

UM Neighborhood Services makes Christmas possible for low-income persons



Dr. Mary White with blankets donated to the 2011 UMNS Christmas Shop.

BY SUZY KEENAN

United Methodist Neighborhood Services in North Philadelphia reaches out to low-income persons each year with a Christmas Shop. This year the shop is stocked with new clothing and toys, all donated by the United Methodist Women's Ingathering, churches, and generous individuals. All items in the shop are affordable, with nothing over \$10. The shop will be open from

December 1 - 23, 2010, 9:30 - 3:00 p.m. Monday- Saturday.

Items needed for the shop are as follows: New clothing for women, men and children all sizes (babies, toddlers, children, boys and girls) hats, gloves, toys, board games, dolls. Dr. Mary White, executive director, issues this invitation: "If you have the time and would like to share the spirit of Christmas, come down and lend a hand in the Christmas Shop and meet our clients."

Betty Scott, a member of Simpson Memorial in Kensington volunteers two times a week in the shop. "My church was collecting canned goods and I brought them here," she said. "I thought I should help with this important ministry."

At Thanksgiving time, the agency provided over 60 meals, complete with a turkey. Dr. White explained the economic situation, "You don't know how frightful it is with the lack of employment, and with persons lacking skills to seek employment and affordable housing." She has recently obtained a grant to help persons with rental assistance and utilities.

In 2011, Dr. White will initiate a common table for service providers to talk about how they can better serve the community and support each other.

The agency's staff of six is supported in their work by many volunteers from United Methodist Churches, including Tina Jenkins, a member of Bethel Hill UMC, who organizes the Saturday morning Breakfast Club, providing a good meal and fun to children two Saturdays a month.

For more information on how you and your church can support UM Neighborhood Services, contact Dr. Mary White, 215-236-0304 or mwhite9891@aol.com.

Clifton UMC and ACME partner to provide Thanksgiving dinners

In a conversation before Thanksgiving, local parishioner and shopper Naomi Antonelli of Alden PA, a member of Clifton UMC, and Laura Rainer, Manager of the Acme in Clifton Heights devised a plan to provide Thanksgiving meals for local families.

As the Acme market solicited contributions from the checkout counters, Clifton United Methodist Church identified families to receive a Thanksgiving meal, complete with cooked 10 pound turkeys, mashed potatoes, stuffing and gravy. Ms. Rainer said, "It is important we contribute to our own community, and we are happy to do this." On Tuesday evening the generous and spirited workers of the Acme market filled Pastor Scott Friedgen-Veitch's SUV with fifteen meals, and off he went.

The meals were given to individuals and families who might not have had an opportunity to celebrate Thanksgiving. The first meal was



Laura Rainer, manager of ACME market in Clifton Heights and Rev. Scott Friedgen-Veitch of Clifton UMC worked together to supply Thanksgiving dinners to persons in need.

given to a retired nurse, who is the "Pied Piper" for the kids in her neighborhood. The kids helped her heat and serve the meal and they shared it together.

Other meals went to shut in families whose partners recently underwent surgery, and who were not able to get to the homes of loved ones this year. Besides leaving meals behind for the families to enjoy, Pastor Scott shared prayers and fellowship

with recipients. Several meals went to African families in Collingdale so they could experience a traditional American Thanksgiving. One meal went to persons recently transplanted to the community from Liberia, via South Dakota.

Pastor Scott often says, "I believe our souls must be located somewhere between our hearts and our stomachs, because sharing our faith often includes a meal!"



Methodist mission schools in India make opportunities available to children through affordable education.

Lighthouse Fellowship builds new church in India

BY CINDY BRUBAKER

In 2006, one of our members, Mr. Anthram Lazarus, asked our congregation, Lighthouse Fellowship United Methodist Church, to build a new church for his impoverished rural childhood village in India.

The construction and supply costs amounted to about \$44,000, including the purchase of land in 2007. Over the course of time our congregation gave over \$13,000 through members' personal donations, while Mr. Lazarus' extended family raised over \$10,000. A private benefactor generously donated \$5000 for the fresh-water well, but we still needed over \$15,000 to complete the construction.

We want to convey to you the importance of believing God for impossible things! We prayed and voted to give the balance due from the last of our savings to complete the work. With less than 100 members in church every Sunday worshipping in a big facility needing repairs, giving all our savings has been a huge step of faith for our congregation. But trusting God is what makes all things possible.

Before we even knew how much it would cost, we knew the Lord was calling us to take on this task. We sent the rest from the very last of our congregation's savings. Before the merger of Glenside and Abington UMC's to create our new congregation, Lighthouse Fellowship, we had a missionary come and speak. The congregation voted to give the whole offering to her even though we need a new roof. Within days, a community member contacted us saying, "We heard that you need a new roof, and we've come to give it to you." So here is the basis of our faith: if we give what we have, God will provide what we need. Often in our churches, we

save for a rainy day, and it is pouring out! We're trying to save ourselves and we can't do it. If we give it all away, God will provide for our need if we are about his business.

Back in India, Mr. Lazarus' own father had been a poor subsistence farmer from a family of poor subsistence farmers. Traditionally, as the eldest son, Mr. Lazarus was expected to follow in his father's footsteps, but his father had a different plan. He insisted that his son go to the Methodist mission school in Vikarabad and become educated. Mr. Lazarus became a civil engineer and built many mission schools and churches in southern India. He and his wife, Sugandhini, a teacher, have two children who are doctors - just the second generation from their illiterate grandparents. (Did you know that only \$20 a year provides one student's education, room, board, and supplies in a Methodist mission school in India?)

This past July, six members from our congregation traveled to India for 18 days to dedicate the new Grace Methodist Church with the Bishop of Hyderabad, Bishop M. V. Khristi, and to visit the Methodist mission schools and churches whose work we support. Mrs. Lazarus was our guide and host as, sadly, Mr. Lazarus had died suddenly

just weeks prior. It was a powerful trip for our group on many levels, one that opened our eyes to the beautiful people of India and to God's amazing work in that overwhelmingly complex land. We saw miracles firsthand, not only with the dedication of the new church, but also as we visited the Methodist mission schools and churches. Again and again we witnessed dedicated local Christians lovingly changing the destiny of an impoverished nation one precious life at a time. We were blessed beyond words.

Whether the price tag is \$44,000 or \$20, we have found it possible and completely worthwhile to spend ourselves on the kingdom of God. We encourage you to do the same. Remember this: when we put our hope in God, we are only going halfway. God is waiting for us to not just put hope but our confidence in Him.

Bishop Khristie has asked for doctors to come to work in the Methodist Mission hospitals in Hyderabad. Medical personnel can contact Rev. Cindy Brubaker for more information: 215-884-5251.



Worshippers celebrate the opening of the new Grace Methodist Church.

Live Nativity continued from page 1

community have wholeheartedly supported the Living Nativity. Ninety percent of the congregation is actively involved each year. Many are involved in behind the scene roles such as praying, baking cookies, designing and sewing costumes, electrical and lighting engineering, set design and building, assembling and lighting luminaries, building and tending the campfires, and transporting the animals. Others help with a refreshment station for the cast, rotating and escorting cast members to the church kitchen for warm up breaks.

Neighbors and community members are also part of the cast. A number of animals are provided by residents of the village who don costumes and tend their animals during the program. Outreach Director Leona DiMemmo and her team coordinate the event beginning in September and Choir Director Laurie Haas directs the Romansville United Methodist Church Nativity Choir which serenades the guests with Christmas carols as they are leaving.

Pastor Lin George said, "The initial event was planned as an outreach event, a gift to the community. However, the congregation feels that they are the ones who are most blessed by their effort with the gift of knowing they have glorified God in celebration of the birth of His Son."

The church sends out postcard invitations to 600 households and the congregation invites their family and friends to visit. This year on Saturday, December 4, the church had a nativity float in the Coatesville Christmas Parade for the first time. Congregation members passed out small gifts and invitations to the Tenth Annual Living Nativity which was held the next night, December 5 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Romansville UMC is located at 1859 West Strasburg Road in the Village of Romansville, PA 19320. For more information contact Rev. Lin George, pastor.lin.george@gmail.com or 610.350.9372, or visit www.romansvillechurch.org.



Welcome new staff

James P. Brown



James P. Brown began November 22 as manager of Financial Services for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

His previous work experience included serving as finance director for the Latin American Community Center in Wilmington, DE, where he

supervised three finance staff and managed over forty federal and state grants. James was previously a financial systems consultant for Gunnip & Co., Wilmington, DE, and comptroller for the Garnet Valley School District. A graduate of Widener University in Chester, PA, he holds both a Master of Science in Accounting and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting.

James loves to coach baseball and basketball at the Brandywine Youth Club. James and his wife, Renee, have a son, Hayden. The Brown Family attends St. John's Episcopal Church in Concord Township, where James served for two years as finance chair.

Contact: jbrown@epaumc.org or 610-666-9090, ext. 224.

Tamara Clark



Tamara C. Clark began November 1 as support associate for Accounts Payable and Cash Receipts for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Tamara holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Temple University with a concentration

in Accounting.

She previously held the position of staff accountant at David A. Lopez & Co. in Philadelphia, where she provided financial accounting for individuals, small to mid-size companies and non-profits, including audits, reviews, compilations, and tax returns.

Tamara is a member of Midtown Parish United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, where she has served on the Building Committee with the responsibility of making financial plans for the building of a new church structure. She initiated the church's use of part of its property as a Youth Lounge where youth could come to a safe place for faith and fun activities.

Contact: tclark@epaumc.org or 610-666-9090, ext. 219.

NorthStar UMC warms up Black Friday shoppers



Bob Orzolek, husband of Pastor Wendy Orzolek, hands out hot chocolate in the pre-dawn hours to chilly shoppers at Target in Exeter Township.

BY SUZY KEENAN

Pastor Wendy Orzolek, pastor of new church-start, NorthStar UMC, and a faithful team of five found a great way to warm up the Exeter Township community to God's love. In the pre-dawn hours they served up hot chocolate and coffee to anxious chilly shoppers waiting in line outside Target on Black Friday.

NorthStar has worshipped together two times to date: once in October and once in November. The Black Friday outreach was a way for the church to make its presence known to the local community and to share God's love in a unique way.

Rev. Orzolek said, "Our Black Friday outreach was awesome! Yes, despite the crazy early hour, we had a great time. Even better, the reaction was as we had hoped--people were truly surprised and very appreciative of free coffee or hot chocolate while they waited in line for Target to open. What a great way to spread some kindness and joy on a typically frazzled, 'me-first' kind of day."

The morning was not without its challenges. She explained, "Just as Tony was about to put on the backpack full of 5 gallons of hot chocolate, the

connection between the spout and hose cracked off and hot chocolate gushed all over the back of my car and into the parking lot! Thankfully, this happened then and NOT when we were serving people in line. Pastor Gil (New Hanover UMC) had the idea to fill the empty 'Boxes of Joe' that we had from Dunkin' Donuts with the hot chocolate. And, there were even more people who wanted hot chocolate than coffee--especially when they saw we had whipped cream to go with it! Using 10 oz cups, we went through 640 oz (5 gallons) of each

beverage in less than one hour!"

The team also handed out cards with the message, "Merry Christmas! This is a simple way of sharing God's love!" On the back of the card was an invitation to Christmas Eve services at the Dunn Community Center, which will be the third worship service for the new congregation.

Although some of the team members were skeptical about how shoppers would receive the outreach, and were also apprehensive about the welcome that they would receive from the Target store, all went well. Rev. Orzolek explained, "Target security barely paid us any attention. Maybe it helped that we also went around with a garbage bag at the end!"

She added, "It was a really fun way to connect with people and give a gift to the community and to help people see the love of God in a practical way! A huge 'thank you' to Tony, Linda, Chuck, Bob, and Gil for getting up early and serving with such a joyful spirit!"

"It was something simple to touch people's hearts," Rev. Orzolek said, "and open them up to hearing something else."

Check out the photos at www.Facebook.com/NorthStarUMC.

Two congregations certified "welcoming churches"

Congratulations to the two new certified Welcoming Congregations in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference: Epworth United Methodist Church in Bethlehem and its pastor, Rev. Timothy Duchesne, as well as Valley Forge: St. Matthew's United Methodist Church, and its pastor, Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm.

Epworth and St. Matthew's join five other Eastern Pennsylvania congregations which have been striving to be more welcoming and inviting congregations: Hopeland, Orwigsburg: Salem, Berwyn, Mohnton: Calvary, and West Lawn.

Pursuing Welcoming Congregation certification means reviewing a checklist. You can note welcom-

ing activities in which your church already participates, and examine ways in which your church might become more welcoming and inviting. To obtain a copy of the award checklist, go to: www.umcom.org/rethinkchurch.

Bishop Peggy Johnson encourages all of our congregations to obtain certification: "I am thrilled to know that Eastern PA has two new certified 'welcoming churches.' This is evidence of sound doctrine and a commitment to evangelism. Many of the items on the checklist are simple to accomplish and yet many of our churches could be doing so much more."

As a Welcoming Congregation you will receive an official letter,

a plaque with seal and a few other items to help you celebrate and share the story of your church's welcoming certification. Starting in January 2011, United Methodist Communications will be offering an online forum for all Welcoming Certified Congregations to share their successes, best practices and complete steps toward annual renewal of the welcoming certification status.

Rethink Church trainers are also available in every district to help train your church's leadership in welcoming ministry.

For more information, contact Suzy Keenan, director of Communications, communications@epaumc.org.

RETHINKCHURCH

Plumbline on the Mainline: A Place for You!

BY LYDIA E. MUÑOZ

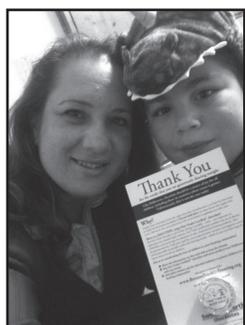
If anyone tells you that the process of church planting is filled with great joy and excitement, stop them immediately and ask them "so, have you planted a church lately?" The truth is that it is filled with great joy and excitement, but they are cleverly disguised in challenges, struggles, endless phone and personal contacts, countless hours of proposal writing, and a myriad of trips to the grocery store for refreshments to be ready for every event that you host.

However, sooner but most likely later, through divine intervention, things begin to line themselves up and those long days of working through contact after contact, and perhaps never seeing a response begin to bring back some results. Now I can guarantee you that the results will never seem exactly the way you had planned it, but the more I work at this, the more I see that it's true what Scripture says in Acts 2 "and the Lord added to their number."



The Rev. Lydia Muñoz

PlumbLine Fellowship in Narberth UMC is a new church start that began its birth process in July of 2009. Through many dangers, toils and snares, PlumbLine has been trying to work through the hard process of transforming an existing congregation that has been struggling to survive, into the vision of PlumbLine with a mission to be a place where people are called to become disciples of Jesus Christ working to bring spiritual depth and equity in an unbalanced world. This has not been an easy task, and there have been moments of complete frustration. Nonetheless, the existing congregation has been engaged in the extensive work of discovering what it means to be a new church start, and of developing the gifts to practice radical hospitality in order to welcome new folks.



Muñoz with son at "Reverse Trick-or-Treat."

One of the ways we strive for our mission is through the ministry of the Family Resource Center. Here families can receive food, clothing and legal consultation to help them with their utilities bills. Our Center also provides mental health assistance through our program, Circles of Care. This program is designed to create support groups for people in transition due to job loss, economic hardship and or immigration issues. We are diligently working with the community to create a much needed community center that will house several classes for all generations, after school programs, musical events, small group studies and worship.

Another place we seek to live out our mission is through our alternative worship service called The Well. The Well is a coffee house emergent worship, where people come to a relaxed experience of worship, engage in Biblical and theological reflection and participate in the Eucharist. At The Well, we provide a complete meal to folks because we realized that many of our attendees also frequent the food bank ministry of our center. We wanted to provide a warm meal for families however we were committed to treating people with dignity and respect, so a soup



Rev. Lydia Muñoz leads worship at Plumbline UMC.

kitchen was out of the question. We wanted people to experience what a group of committed, Jesus-loving, Kingdom-building disciples could do in the name of Love. So at our coffee house you never know who you will sit with because everyone is treated the same. You are ushered to a beautifully prepared table complete with candles and silverware, while you enjoy wonderful music that will lift your heart as well as move your feet. PlumbLine exists to bring balance and build equity, so at the table people from all walks of life, rich and poor, of all ethnic backgrounds, all different kinds of stories converge into one story and one song - "Jesus loves me, this I know."

PlumbLine is also engaged in witness outside of our building walls. We have done this by participating in many events that the local community holds, such as the Fourth of July festival, the Charles Dickens Festival, and Earth Day Festival, and most recently through the celebration of our Animal Blessing. It is a gift to be able to connect and learn about the values of a community in order to build your identity as part of that community. This has made the name of PlumbLine Fellowship begin to be a familiar name throughout the community because we are involved in every level of the community's life. From HSA and PTA meetings to Borough Council meetings, PlumbLine is committed to being a real neighbor.

True to God's word, the Lord is leading people to PlumbLine as we have seen with the recent addition of Ms. Cheryl Graham who has organized youth in her community to help raise awareness and funding sources to help young people get to college. PlumbLine will be a site for a new youth ministry centering on the performing arts and using the talents of young people to introduce the message of Jesus Christ. Already this first weekend we expect to have 50 to 100 young people participate in a talent and dance show. God has also brought to us Yvette Diaz, a second year student at Palmer Seminary to intern with us. She brings a tremendous desire to serve God in the midst of a new church start, as well as great people and organizational skills.

You may be wondering if there are any missionary fields left to explore, or perhaps you have been praying for God to move you into a new direction. Have you considered partnering with a new church start? Have you considered what it would be like to minister to the unchurched or nominally religious? This is the time and PlumbLine might be the place. Join us; you just might be who we are waiting for!

For more information on Church Planting please contact: Dr. Irving Cotto, Director of Congregational Development, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church, 800-828-9093, Ext. 218 or Irving.Cotto@epaumc.org

REV. LYDIA E. MUÑOZ IS PASTOR of PlumbLine Fellowship at Narberth UMC: PRgirlsings@aol.com or 215-687-1368. Read Rev. Muñoz' blog online at: <http://epachurchplanter.blogspot.com>.

Adjourned Fall Session continued from page 9

international partnership brings life and hope to HIV/AIDS orphans, of which there are 2.5 million in Kenya. "1.8 million children are living on street, looking in trash cans for something to eat," he said. "It tears my heart, many will die without knowing the love of Jesus Christ." The Ministry feeds thousands of children a meal and teaches them about Jesus.

Bishop Peggy Johnson had words of encouragement: "Find some way your church can be involved in something international. Do you have one already? Then please find a second."

The conference voted to adopt agenda and rules of order. Nominations for the Committee on Investigation were approved by vote.

Strategic Review Team, led by Rev. John Bhajjan, presented the proposed goals for the Annual Conference, which are divided into the four areas of focus: developing principled Christian leaders; creating new places for new people, younger people, more diverse people and revitalizing existing congregations; engaging in ministry with the poor; and improving health globally. These goals are for how the local churches so they may live into their ministry with purpose. Rev. Bhajjan said, "Look at these goals in the local context - in taking these goals to your congregation - and the conference to provide resourcing to achieve these goals. The goals are bottom up - not top down."

The new strategy was approved by vote of the conference.

The Structure Review proposes a new structure for staff and boards for the Annual Conference. Jason Perkowski, chair of the Structure Review Team, said, "The heart is the local church - working cooperatively in localities to find ways to do ministry better together." The new structure was adopted by vote.

2010-17A Healthcare resolution

Rev. Tim Anderman presented Jim DiGuseppi, who explained the proposed Health Savings Account (HSA) funding plan through Aetna with a high deductible. With a cost of \$5,093,000 for 2011, this will bring a savings of \$2,142,000 over IBC. With the HSA high-deductible plan, an individual will pay \$1000 and the conference will also pay \$1000, after which there will be 100% coverage. Family coverage will be \$2000 cost for employee, matched by \$2000 from the conference.

If the conference stayed with the current plan, the cost would be \$21.5 million over next 5 years. The HSA will cost \$17.1 million over next 5 years. 99.3% of facilities and 97% of doctors used today are currently in Aetna's network.

With a friendly amendment to study the cost if everyone were required to participate including part-time local pastors, the resolution was approved by a vote of conference.

An offering received for the Congo Partnership was in the amount of \$3265.51.

Mike Netznik chair of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, and Peter DiNofia, Conference Treasurer, presented the budget for 2011, which was approved. The budget of \$3.5 million for Conference ministry and \$2,764,710 for General Church ministry was approved.

Mr. Jim Wilkin presented the revised Safe Sanctuaries Resolution. The resolution does not amend any requirements for background checks of church staff and volunteers who work with children and youth. This proposed amendment allows groups such as the Boy Scouts to submit their policies and procedures for screening, training and supervision to the conference Board of Trustees for approval. If the group receives the Trustee's approval, they may then follow their own policies and procedures for screening, training and supervision. All other ministries of the church serving children and youth will continue to follow the requirements of the conference safe sanctuaries policy. The Resolution was approved.

The Camping Strategic Planning Team, chaired by Rev. Mark Moore, presented an update on the strategic planning process for Conference Camping. The Camping Board will present a strategic plan at 2011 Annual Conference in May.

Delaware Conference Book Published

African Americans have been part of the formation of Methodism since it was established in the United States in the early 1700's. The history has been typified by trials and tribulations and that story is being presented in a new publication entitled, "Freedom Drawn From Within: A History of the Delaware Annual Conference" by Rev. David W. Brown.

The publication is the result of a year-long research effort by a committee that included clergy, historians and persons interested in preserving and telling the story of perseverance that characterized the African American experience within Methodism according to Bishop Peggy A. Johnson, the Episcopal leader for the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences that includes parts of the Greater Delaware Valley where much of this history originated.

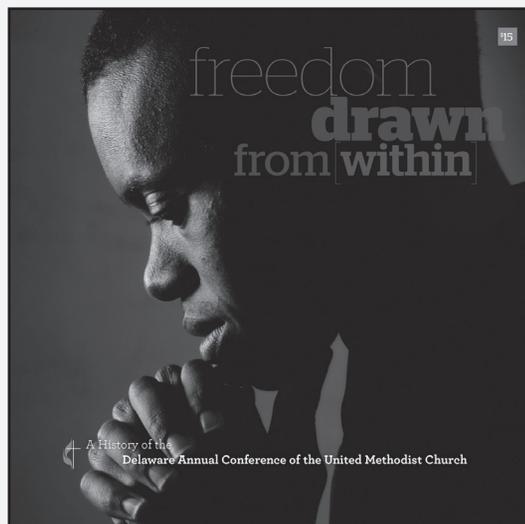
"The publication focuses primarily on the formation of the Delaware Annual Conference in 1864- the first Annual Conference authorized by the Methodist church to be defined by the race of its membership," Bishop Johnson. "Even today, the issue of race can serve to either divide or bring together people and it is our hope that the proud history of The Delaware Annual Conference will educate people of all walks of life in building bridges as a human family."

The Delaware Annual Conference was established in 1864 and operated until 1965 when it was merged into the mainstream of the Methodist Church as part of the denomination's centuries-long struggle to accommodate the diverse needs of its African American members according to the publication's author, Rev. David W. Brown.

"The history of African Americans within the Methodist movement is a complicated tale to tell," Rev. Brown writes in the opening paragraph of Freedom Drawn From Within. "There are moments of conflict, compromise and collaboration - all striving toward a freedom that celebrates the unique nature of who African Americans are as a people while remaining true to the traditions of the Methodist faith."

The Delaware Annual Conference had an impact beyond Methodism in that it shaped the nation's treatment (and eventual abolition of) slavery, the higher education of African Americans and the ongoing fight for equal rights in this country.

The publication is available for \$15 on-line at epandelarea.smartevents.com.



Cornwall mission team builds in Tanzania



Members of a twelve-person mission team from Cornwall UMC weld the structure for the new Family Life Counseling Center in Tanzania.

BY J. ROBERT LADD

No task is too big for God!! Or so it seems to the members of a relatively small congregation in rural south-central Pennsylvania. Almost ten years ago the lives of Lucas and Limi Ndaro intersected with the people of Cornwall United Methodist Church. Lucas came to nearby Evangelical Theological Seminary on a scholarship to seek his Master of Divinity degree. Soon after he arrived he was invited to attend Cornwall church and the congregation welcomed him as family. They soon agreed to help bring Lucas' wife Limi and their two sons to the U.S. and adopted the family as missionaries to Tanzania.

In 2001 a group of twelve from the church, including Lucas, spent a total of ten weeks in Buramba, Tanzania, building a new church in this village where Lucas had grown up. When Lucas and Limi returned to Tanzania in 2007 to teach and serve as administrators at Nassa Theological College they had accumulated four masters degrees. Limi's degree was in Marriage and Family Therapy. The congregation has been anxious to have an impact on their ministry in their homeland and the need for a counseling center was soon identified.

A two-year plan was adopted by the mission committee in 2008 and fundraising began almost immediately. An exploratory trip to Africa by the project chairman and his wife in March 2009 led to site analysis, architectural plans, a basic ministry plan and cost estimates for construction of a two-story building on the shore of Lake Victoria and just off the college campus. The building would be a two story structure with three separate counseling centers on the first floor - Marriage and Family, AIDS and Financial. The second

floor would be an apartment.

Now the enormity of the project for this small congregation in a terrible economy became even more evident. The goal was to raise all the money needed to get the building under roof and take a group of ten or twelve people to the site to help with construction in August of 2010. It was estimated the building would cost a total of \$120,000 to complete but for \$70,000 we could get it under roof. In a classic example of underestimating God's power the mission committee decided we should do this project in stages. Fundraising went well and several substantial matching gifts hastened the process. Late in 2009 the church got a wonderful offer. The brother of a member of the church, Howard Gallup, who had died ten years before, offered a challenge gift. If the church could raise the first \$70,000 by May 2010 he would give the other \$50,000 to complete the project. Howard had been very involved in the finance ministry of the church and so it was decided that the one coun-

seling area would be called the Howard Gallop Memorial Financial Counseling Center. In May a gala Tanzanian dinner was held and the proceeds put the fund over the \$70,000 mark.

While all this was taking place there was a growing group that wanted to travel to the site in August to work on the center. Everyone who wanted to go on the trip had to raise or contribute \$2,500 to cover their travel costs. In the end there were seventeen who went, ranging in age from 15 to 71. The logistics of moving that many people around in Tanzania was challenging but all went well and project was an amazing example of ingenuity and teamwork. An advance team arrived three days ahead of the balance of the workers and purchased steel, tools, material and a generator/welder. In the end, without heavy equipment like cranes, thirteen steel roof rafters were fabricated, welded, erected and covered with roofing material. The heavy rafters were erected with teams using ropes and pulleys and then welded in place. This was a wonderful example of God's blessings and wonderful teamwork.

The building is not yet finished but the local workers and contractors are doing a great job and the hope is to begin doing counseling there early next year. The task has just begun, however. Now there is an effort underway to form strategic alliances with Christian groups working in that area of Eastern Africa with which FLCC can partner to do more effective counseling in the targeted areas. There is already a desire among many who experienced this opportunity to serve our friends in Tanzania. It is no mistake that the logo developed for the center is plural -Family Life Counseling Centers. Cornwall will never underestimate God's power again.



Cornwall team members take time out from building to get to know local children.

Merger creates Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation



BY SUZY KEENAN

The newly formed Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation, with assets approaching \$60 million, is poised for dynamic new growth to support Methodist churches in growing their mission and ministry.

The Foundation was created this year by a merger of two former foundations - The Eastern Pennsylvania/Peninsula and The Baltimore-Washington Area Conference Foundations, and was approved by vote of the Eastern Pennsylvania, Peninsula-Delaware, and Baltimore-Washington Annual Conferences. The effective date of the merger was July 1, 2010. The Mid-Atlantic Foundation now serves the three annual conferences with stewardship and investment services.

Jack Brooks, executive director, spent nearly three years developing and implementing a new strategy for the former Eastern Pennsylvania-Peninsula Foundation. This included designing new stewardship programs and materials, improving investment services, and seeking partnership opportunities.

"My vision when I began in 2008 was to concentrate on enhancing the two items at the very core of the Foundation's business model," Brooks said, "first: identify ways to dramatically improve our investment performance and investment platform, and second: reach out to strengthen every church's finances by searching for new and meaningful ways to deliver stewardship resources."

The results are very impressive. In the course of nearly three years, Brooks has more than doubled the size of assets entrusted to the Foundation's investment management, from \$26 million to \$57 million currently. "We've achieved growth in two ways," said Brooks. "First we enhanced investment returns by adding three new investment managers to diversify and improve overall performance. Second we actively solicited churches to commit investment reserves and endowments to our care as a way of contributing to our ministry and our growth." Due to the scandals on Wall Street many churches are questioning their relationship with existing "for profit" investment managers. There have been true ethical questions about how investment managers conducted themselves and if they put their clients' interests first. "Here, at the Foundation, we are a 501(c) non-profit organization with the church's interests at heart said Brooks. Any profits from our annual operation are reinvested in our organization as a way of sustaining our growth and capitalizing future programs."

"My goal today remains the same as prior to the merger: to make the new Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation the investment manager of choice for all United Methodist Church assets," Brooks explained. "This merger represents a continued step toward increased efficiency in managing assets by reducing investment costs, improving research and technology, and therefore better fund our unique stewardship resources and delivery."

All these achievements seem more significant considering the challenging economic times during the worst recession since the Great Depression. "As an investment professional I'm an eternal optimist. I always believe opportunities for organizational growth are present in both good times and bad if you are willing to accept the difficult challenges and make some very complex financial choices. The Foundation, like any of our churches and ministries, has essentially two choices - to thrive or decline. Unfortunately a third choice, just staying the same in a rapidly

changing world, will rarely happen. Economic recessions force all organizations to refocus on efficiently using the capital resources they have, rather than focusing on what they could have done with resources they simply don't have anymore. By accepting fiscal responsibility and oversight, you move forward to better position the organization and yourself for sustained growth as the economy turns. You emerge from a recession operating efficiently, pro-actively and with a hopeful and exciting vision for future growth and sustainability."

The Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation manages investments for churches and through nominal fees, generates capital for programs supporting church stewardship and legacy giving. The fee structure for the Foundation is easy to understand: charge a competitive fee, half of which goes to the costs of managing the investment services, and the other half goes to run the mission and ministry, covering the foundation's expenses. The Foundation's investment policies focus on socially responsible investing in accordance with the United Methodist Church while diversifying assets through a number of qualified and



experienced money managers to reduce risk.

Beyond investments, the Foundation continues to develop new programs and resources for local church stewardship and planned giving, and informs churches on legacy gifts and legacy planning to help steward the church to the next generation.

"Many of our churches were created a generation ago by substantial gifts through the vision and planned gift in a member's will. During this difficult economic time we need to reintroduce and encourage legacy giving as a way of endowing our future and perpetuate the church for future generations to come," said Mr. Brooks. He added, "I believe most people are inherently generous. We see people everyday answer the call to support a variety of causes like the earthquake in Haiti. What we're focusing on as we move forward at the Foundation is to help council and match a donor's desire to give a substantial gift, with all the possible ways they could give and guide them through that gifting process."

The headquarters for the new Mid-Atlantic Foundation is in Valley Forge, PA, at the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference office, with two satellite offices in Fulton, MD, in the Baltimore-Washington Conference Office, and in Dover, DE, in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference Office. Mr. Brooks said, "As we grow, we will need to continue expanding staff and support for more localized services."

Two staff persons currently work with Mr. Brooks to help manage the Foundation's services. Tracy Brown has been executive assistant to the Eastern Pennsylvania-Peninsula Foundation since 2008. She graduated from Villanova University in 1993 with B.S. in Business Administration, majoring in Finance. Her background includes many years of experience in accounting. The first new hire since the merger is Frank Robert, associate director. See article at right.

Key support and guidance for the Mid-Atlantic Foundation is the Board of Directors. The Board is composed of talented clergy and lay people from all three Annual Conferences. Each member brings unique skills related to either stewardship or investment management. All are committed and actively participate toward the vision of the foundation, giving churches the best investment services and programming that can be provided.

"It's my view the core business mission of the church and the Foundation is really to make more Christian disciples. Being good and responsible stewards of the financial gifts God has given us will fund this mission and make ministry possible for future generations. The Mid-Atlantic Foundation exists to help churches become the best stewards possible of their financial resources and gifts received from God" Said Brooks. www.midatlanticfoundation.org

Frank Robert joins Foundation team

BY SUZY KEENAN

Frank C. Robert, Jr. is the new associate director for the Mid-Atlantic Foundation. He began September 15 in this new role.

As the associate director for the Foundation, Frank will be concentrating



on supporting client churches and developing Foundation relationships in Maryland,

West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Jack Brooks, executive director said, "Frank is a great addition to our team. We were impressed with Frank's commitment to his local church as the lay delegate to the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference in addition to his background in both education and sales. I feel Frank's communication skills - his ability to articulate our unique United Methodist mission and ministry - will be a key to developing future clients as we continue the rapid growth and expansion of the Foundation."

Frank's work previous work experience as an executive sales professional at Sanofi-Aventis included implementing a successful strategic marketing plan for medical products. He has also been a guest lecturer at Lynchburg College in "Networking and Rapport Building."

For more than ten years, Frank was a senior professional health care consultant at Pfizer, where he was responsible for pharmaceutical sales to teaching hospitals, V.A. hospitals, military medical facilities, local area hospitals and primary care providers, for which he received numerous top sales awards.

Frank is also active in his local community as president of the Sykesville Town Council, where he oversees a budget of \$3 million. He has organized several successful fundraising events for the College of William and Mary.

His educational background includes a Masters of Business Administration from Loyola College, Baltimore, MD, as well as a Masters of Higher Education and a Bachelors of Art, both from the College of William and Mary.

Contact: Frank Robert: frobert@bwcumc.org or 800-492-2525 Ext 475



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