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College students flock to church in Schuylkill Haven

by Suzy Keenan

First United Methodist Church of Schuylkill Haven, PA, may not have known it, but they were poised to do something new, and new is what they got: an inter-generational and inter-racial outreach program.

Pastor Albert Mosley has been at First UMC since July of 2003. He saw immediately that the church had a lot of energy and enthusiasm, but needed direction. The church had just completed a strategic plan, and expressed desire to get involved with the Penn State/Schuylkill Campus.

First UMC is a predominantly white congregation in a community in Schuylkill Haven that is 99% white. For Pastor Mosley, 32 years old and African-American, this is a cross-racial appointment.

Their outreach to the campus started in an informal way by inviting Voices of Schuylkill, a campus gospel group, and Praise in Motion, a liturgical dance ministry to participate in worship. A member of the church, Dr. DeEdre Lewis-Johnson, is director of



Adopt-A-Family students from the Penn State-Schuylkill campus enjoy a great meal and fellowship at First UMC in Schuylkill Haven

minority student affairs at the campus, and she initiated this interaction. It developed into an adopt-a-family program, where students can choose to interact with a family from the church.

Mosley's experience included

having been in campus ministry. At Albright College he was chaplain and director of multi-faith center for one year and at Duke University he was assistant dean and director of religious life for two and a half years. Before

that, he taught at Milsaps College, a United Methodist college in Jackson, MS as adjunct professor of religious studies. "I sort of always had one foot on campus and one foot in the church," Mosley said of his experience.

"This was a new and different thing for the church - gospel music and African-American students," Mosley explained.

Mosley's first assignment as pastor was in western North Carolina in the Appalachian Mountains. "The kids in church wanted to touch my skin to see what would happen - they had never seen a black person before. In that area the inhabitants generally do not encounter people of color at all. My educational background made them more comfortable with me and with who I was as a person of color." Mosley is a graduate of Milsaps, Duke and Yale. "I believe my calling

See SCHUYKILL HAVEN P6

Ralph E. Blanks appointed to Bishop's Cabinet

By Suzy Keenan

The Reverend Ralph E. Blanks has been appointed by Bishop Marcus Matthews to the superintendency of the Central District. He will begin his new appointment on July 1.

Blanks' motto is to bloom where he is planted - wherever he may be appointed to serve God's people. Born to a deeply religious

family in Little Rock, Arkansas, Blanks said that his family prayed like the family of Samuel for a child who would be dedicated to the Lord.

At age twelve, Blanks first acknowledged his call to ministry. He was ordained a deacon at fourteen and an elder at seventeen in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He served as youth pastor in his home church, Bethel A.M.E.

With the encouragement of his home pastor, family, and godparents, he enrolled in Hendrix College to pursue a B.A. in Religion and Philosophy. The Academic Dean of Hendrix College suggested that he attend Drew University School of Theology to pursue a Masters of Divinity Degree. Following graduation from Drew, one of his classmates shared his name with a

United Methodist district superintendent. Blanks was appointed to serve a two-point Charge in Burlington, New Jersey: Saint Mary's Street, an African-American congregation and Union, a white congregation.

In 1980, Pastor Blanks transferred to the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference to

See BLANKS P7

Pastor's postcard hobby becomes ministry for disaster relief

By Suzy Keenan



A Philadelphia Area pastor is turning her passion for postcards into a way to help the survivors of the tsunami disaster in South Asia.

The Rev. Charlene Gaspar, pastor of Gladwyne United Methodist Church in a suburb of Philadelphia, has been collecting postcards since she was 11 years old. For the past three years, she has been auctioning postcards from her extensive collection, numbering in the tens of thousands, with the proceeds going toward the ministry of her church.

Often she has raised \$250 per month through eBay

auctions, with recent sales as high as \$700 in one month.

Gaspar saw the tsunami disaster as a "horrific situation, producing a desperate need," and has been moved to direct the proceeds from her auctions to the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

"UMCOR has been working hard for disaster relief. My congregation has always been a congregation that has wholeheartedly given its 100 percent share of connectional giving and has gone the extra mile for special offerings," she said. "My congregation gives from the heart, and they will celebrate

See POSTCARDS P7

Conference Calendar

BISHOP'S LENTEN DAY APART

February 8, 2005, 8:30 - 12:30.

Aldersgate UMC, Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE. Guest speaker Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History. Theme: "Wholeness and the New Birth: And Can It Be That I Should Gain." All clergy should register by contacting Marilyn Cleeton: ddsuper@aol.com or 302-734-3082.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

February 11-13, 2005

Rehoboth Beach, DE - If squeezing the toothpaste from the middle has doused the romance in your marriage, a UM Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend may just be the spark needed to rekindle the fire of your wedding day. Here's a 44-hour marital makeover away from job, kids, chores and phones. You will focus only on each other. If you're hankering for greater depth, growth, and enrichment in your relationship, contact Rudy and Jean Iannacone at (609) 259-2527 for details. Or visit the website at: www.encounter.org

GIRLS ON THE GO

February 12-13

"From caterpillar to butterfly" - For teens united for mission in the 21st Century, sponsored by EPA UM Women at Camp Innabah Retreat Center, Spring City, PA. Overnight retreat with Bible study, prayer walk, hands-on mission, crafts, games, etc. Registration fee of \$40. due by deadline of Jan. 22. For more information, contact Lucille Schaeffer at 610-287-7000 or Ethel Malone at 215-247-0572

FESTIVAL OF CHOIRS

February 26, 2005

The First Annual Festive of Choirs sponsored by First UMC Schuylkill Haven will be held at 420 Saylor St., Schuylkill Haven, PA. Rehearsal will be from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., with lunch provided by the church. Concert performances will begin at 7:00 p.m., and will be conducted by Mrs. Jennifer Morris. Registration fee is \$40. Registration deadline is January 28, 2005. For more detailed information, please contact Lynne O'Connell at 570-385-3941.

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES FORUMS

March 19, 2005.

The Church and Society Work Team will be sponsoring the second in a series of six forums surrounding The Social Principles. This second forum will address The Economic Community and our role as Christians in fostering economic justice for all of God's creatures. Bela Vora of Ten Thousand Villages will present an interactive educational piece regarding the work of Ten Thousand Villages in fostering self-sufficiency to indigenous peoples around the world. Ten Thousand Villages is a nonprofit program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the relief and development agency of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America. Ten Thousand Villages has been working around the world since 1946.

The forum will be held at Union UMC, 200 Brookline Blvd., Havertown, PA 19083 - 9:00 a.m. for registration and a continental breakfast, 9:30 forum begins and will end around 10:45 a.m. You may call Peggy Wood at (610) 524-5935 for more info. or directions. Union UMC Church office phone is 610-789-1700 (unionhavertown@verizon.net) or you can reach Pastor Bob Coombe at the Parsonage 610-789-2328.

CONNECTION 2005

March 30-April 3, 2005.

Youth workers in your church who could use training, renewal and growth might want to consider coming to Connection 2005 in Nashville, TN. The leadership lineup looks

great! For more information and registration, go to www.umyconnection.com or call toll free 877-899-2780 ext. 7074.

SPRING CONFIRMATION CAMP

April 1-3, 8-10, or 15-17

At Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center. For UM Confirmation Classes. Pastors and / or Educators, bring your Junior or Senior High youth confirmation class to this weekend devoted to learn how they can use their gifts from God to help others. Cost is \$80.00 per camper. Contact the camp at registrar@gretnaglen.org or call 717-273-6525 for more information or to register your group.

UM MEN CONVOCATION

April 1-3, 2005

The UM Men Convocation will be held at Pocono Manor Inn and Golf Resort, Pocono Manor, PA. Speakers include Theme Speaker, Rev. Dr. Eh. Eddie Fox and Keynote Speaker, Rev. Dr. Jack Topolewski. Special musical program will be presented by Bruce and Josh Evans, with Dorothy Blakeslee at the piano. Four popular features remain: "SUNRISE INSPIRATION" Bible Study; The Convocation Men's Chorus; The Upper Room Prayer Line; and the Cokesbury Book Sales Display. Three workshops are available; participants select two choices at the convocation. 1) The Power Of A Praying Man; 2) Introduction To Faith/ Sharing; 3) Hands -on Ministry.

COST: Regular Saturday & Sunday registration \$120 per person, double. Singel, \$140. For Fri. arrival, \$179 per person, double. Single, \$219. Saturday program only, \$45 per person. If you are only attending the saturday session, you still must register. For registration form or if you have questions, send e-mail to eriedel@webtv.net

GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

April 5-7, 2005

The Office of Urban and Global Ministries invites local churches throughout the EPA to hold these dates. Workshops will be held on April 5th (evening) - 6th (morning) in Philadelphia; April 6th (evening) - 7th (morning) in Reading. Each workshop will be in 2 sessions- morning/evening.

The facilitator will be Dr. Joe D. Connelly, and ordained UM Minister who has served as Church Growth Consultant for the UM denomination since 1994. Dr. Connelly will cover organization readiness, drafting the proposal and grant research. This is a dynamic and interactive workshop to share the secrets of grant writing and help your church build its skills in this important method of financing ministry in your community. For further information, a brochure and registration, please call Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem, Director of the Urban/Global Office at 215-878-8054.

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

April 9, 2005

Developing leadership in small membership churches training workshop. Tony Pappas of The Alban Institute will speak/train on why small churches are central to God's plan. Four current definitions of "small church" and why three are inadequate, Eight ways small-church culture differs from U.S. society and what to do about it, An affirming, challenging model for understanding the nature of the small church, Five attitudes that will help small-church leaders increase their leadership "batting average" while having more fun, Six measures to small-church health, Six means to turn the "headaches" and "heartaches" of small-church ministry into an agenda for health and growth, Eleven action strategies to introduce change into your small church. Time: 9:00 - 4:00 Location: Myerstown: Zion UMC, 22 E. Main Ave., Myerstown, PA. For more information or to register, contact The Northwest District Office, 1725 Breckenridge Rd., Orwigsburg PA 17961-9544; Phone: 570.366.1471; Fax: 570.366.1626; E-mail: northwest4@verizon.net.

The Wilderness Spirit

An Episcopal Letter to United Methodists in the Wake of the Tsunami Disaster

Dear Clergy and Members of the Philadelphia Area:

"In my distress I cry to the Lord, that he may answer me." -Psalm 120:1

"You are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." -Psalm 23:4b

In the twinkling of an eye, walls of water swept tens of thousands of our sisters and brothers in South Asia, Southeast Asia and Africa to their deaths. Some firsthand observers recall that the onrushing torrent looked like smoke, so quickly did it move and so high in the trees. A third of the dead may be children. Millions of people are destitute.

Now the long recovery has begun. Thanks to the generosity of big hearted people-United Methodists in the United States as well as people in the affected regions and persons of all faiths-aid is moving into place in nearly a dozen stricken countries. The emergency aid includes medicines and health camps, temporary shelters, food, and clothing such as saris and dhotas.

Rapid measures are possible because of cash donations to many relief and humanitarian agencies, including the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

The outpouring of response deeply moves me and other members of the United Methodist Council of Bishops. The bishops are profoundly grateful to our church members who have heard cries of distress on the other side of the world and responded with action. UMCOR dispatched \$750,000 in aid in the first week, and there is more to come.

Another important contribution is your gift of your trust in a sound relief process. UMCOR is listening closely to our ecumenical partners and to communities most affected by the disaster in planning long-range efforts. We are notably interested in ministries that fill the gaps in humanitarian response. UMCOR's strength is in finding those who are or may be missed, identifying the services that will assist over-stressed providers, and in respecting the strengths and the capacity of the local people to manage their own recovery.

We thank you for the generosity of your donations by phone, on the Internet, and in special Sunday offerings. We urge congregations that have not received an offering for

tsunami relief to prayerfully consider the possibility. The needs for renewal and restoration in the vast areas swept over by the tsunamis will be acute for a long time in the future. UMCOR is evaluating the roles it can play in reconstruction. A delegation visited Indonesian sites January 12-16. Staff was on the way to Sri Lanka that same week. Their observations and



BISHOP MARCUS MATTHEWS

recommendations will help us determine a long-term strategy for the region. Your persistence in giving and your heartfelt prayer for these colleagues will be important sources of support as we enter this future work.

Soon the tsunami story will move off of page one, out of the 24/7 television news spotlight, perhaps out of the consciousness of many of us as the next news takes its place. But the beauty of The United Methodist Church is that it has always found the resources to stay the course. UMCOR will be there, assisting in whatever way it can for years to come. That is how we do things. We have the patience to abide with the most vulnerable.

On March 6 our church will have an opportunity to underscore both emergency assistance and patience in the long haul, this United Methodist gift of bearing witness away from the spotlight. On that date, our congregations will receive the annual One Great Hour of Sharing offering. This offering supports the administrative costs of our humanitarian mission. Our stewardship in this offering makes it possible for every single dollar of your gifts designated for the tsunami emergency to reach the people whose lives changed on December 26.

Again, thank you for your gifts of money, trust, and ability to abide so that cries of distress do not go unheard. Thank you for your generous hearts. Thank you for strengthening survivors and aid workers alike with your gifts of ceaseless prayer in the Lenten season ahead.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Marcus Matthews



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Pastor composes anthem to help with tsunami relief efforts

By Suzy Keenan

When the Ken Morrison heard the news of the devastation of the tsunami in South Asia, he could do little but sit down.

Morrison, a composer and United Methodist pastor who resides in the Philadelphia area, sat down at the piano, feeling a melody stir in his heart.

Out of a heart for the victims of the tsunami and their suffering, he also wrote and set a prayer to the melody. His composition became "Tsunami Prayer," a new choral anthem. Morrison has made it available for free printing and performance by church and school choirs who want to encourage prayer and support for the victims of the Dec. 26, 2004 tsunami.

Morrison (a member of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference) formerly served as interim pastor of Sanctuary United Methodist Church in North Wales, PA and now volunteers as part of music ministry team there, while working as fulltime songwriter and also teaching conflict resolution at Eastern School of Christian Ministry (undergraduate) as well as theology and practice of worship at Eastern Seminary.

"This a story of human need," said Morrison. "Our missions agencies will invite teams to raise funds to help with relief efforts. I hope that this anthem will be helpful to congregations as they gather teams together to pray for the victims and support relief efforts of The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)."

By January 6, Morrison was rehearsing "Tsunami Prayer" with the choir at Sanctuary UMC, and premiered the composition on the morning of Sunday, January 16 in worship. The anthem was accompanied by projected scenes of survivors and relief efforts.

Jim Carver, Senior Pastor of Sanctuary UMC said that he "was so captivated by the rhythms of the anthem, almost haunting as it is being sung, befitting the incredible devastation of that region, yet filled with hope. The song captured the hope we have in God, and it acknowledged the miracles that are unfolding even in the midst of this great tragedy." Sharon Meyer, organist and children's/youth choir director at Friendship United Methodist Church in Cincinnati, OH, called the piece "very beautiful, a well written piece," while requesting permission to use it in worship. The composition is written for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices with male and female soloists and has accompaniment for piano and strings.

"I have been writing songs for worship my whole career," Morrison said. His education includes a B. S. in Music from Millsaps College, a Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry from Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

For the last year and a half he had been composing choral music and praise and worship music fulltime, and received an award from Broadjam (a web community) for his composition, "That's What He Did" based on a family story, being a theological reflection on losses of people in the military.



Composer Ken Morrison sits at the piano where he composed the choral anthem, "Tsunami Prayer."

TSUNAMI PRAYER

Words and Music by Kenneth L. Morrison

Lamb of God, hear us in our sorrow; catch the tears from waves that washed away tomorrows. Once you crossed a raging sea; stand with those whose pain we see. Jesus, Jesus.

Lamb of God, give our bread to others; heal the sick, let them drink pure water. Send the miracles they need; help us love in word and deed.

Bind the broken hearted with cords of human care; show a world who doubts you the truth, you are there. Give ev'ry child loving arms, healing hands. Give ev'ry parent the strength to go on. Jesus, Jesus.

Lamb of God, open wide the heavens; save the weak, fill their souls with leaven; send them miracles they need, help us love in word and deed.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy. (REPEATED)
Lamb of God, have mercy upon us we pray; take all our sins away. (REPEATED)**

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy,

Lamb of God, hear us as we pray.

(Written January 5, 2005 to encourage prayer and support for the victims of the tsunami on December 26, 2004. First performed at Sanctuary United Methodist Church in North Wales, PA on January 16, 2005.)

Copyright 2005 by Kenneth L. Morrison
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Use my songs in worship: www.sing4free.com

"Tsunami Prayer" and other anthems by Morrison are available at: www.sing4free.com

To view and print the song, "Scorch" software will have to be downloaded from the website and installed on the visitors computer. Then, click on the "Tsunami Prayer" name at the bottom of the screen.

There is also an mp3 file of a demo recording generated by the composer's Sibelius software.

"Tsunami Prayer" is also available on www.gbod.org.

For more information, contact Ken Morrison at email drkenmorrison@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING CCN SEMINARS

TRANSFORMING CHILDREN INTO SPIRITUAL CHAMPIONS

Thursday, February 10 11:30a - 2:00p- Becoming a church that transforms children into spiritual champions. Recent research indicates that the critical years for developing world view happens before a child is 14 years old and once set, that world view does not radically change. If that's true, then there is no more important people group for the church to invest in than children! Join George Barna and ministry experts as they teach you how to build an effective ministry to children and families that can actually transform children into spiritual champions!

OVERCOMING OVERLOAD

Thursday, February 17 11:30a - 2:00p- Pastors are more overloaded than ever - information overload, expectation overload, meeting overload, sermon overload, and more! With Pastors leaving the field at an alarming rate, Dr. Richard Swenson and Kevin Miller are ready to provide hope and help for overloaded Pastors. Discover how to make the load manageable with practical tools and insights from these experts. Dr. Richard Swenson, Kevin Miller

GOOD \$ENSE BUDGET COURSE

Saturday, February 26 11:30a - 5:30p- For required workbook pre-register by Feb. 6. Help the people in your church discover tools and develop skills that enable them to control their finances rather than allowing their finances to control them. Invite your whole congregation to take their first steps toward financial freedom! (Note: Workbook \$8.50 each) Dick Towner

FOR ALL EVENTS

For guaranteed seating, please call ahead to confirm. Seminars may be cancelled when interest is low.

Cost of regular seminar at First Church, Ephrata: \$10 per person. Beverage & light refreshments served.

Call Ahead To Confirm

First UMC, Ephrata 717 738-2465 — bfoster@ephratafirst.org

Grace UMC, Millersville 717 872-4571

— billskelly@gracemillersville.org

Kochenderfer's UMC, Lebanon 717

273-0525 - mail@kochenderfer.org

UMC of The Redeemer, NE Phila 215

745-5963 — RedeemerUM@aol.com

YOUTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MAY 20-22, 2005.

The theme for YAC 2005 is "Youth Under Construction" (Phil. 1:6) There will be speakers and music groups from our own Eastern PA Conference, games, workshops, small group Bible study, dancing and lots of fun! We are trying to keep costs at a minimum to maximize participation. Registration will be available on-line in February. Watch for a postcard and more information at the conference web site in the coming weeks. If you have a recommendation for a speaker or music or drama group from the Eastern PA Conference please e-mail the suggestion to Georgette Hall-Peterson at ghpeterson@comcast.net.

OLDER ADULT CONFERENCE

October 21-22, 2005

Sponsored by the Nurturing Disciples Resource Team Older Adult Task Force. Days Inn Conference Center - Allentown, PA. Featuring Dr. Richard Gentzler, Director of the Center on Aging and Older Adult Ministry. Of the General Board of Discipleship. For further information or to receive "The Elder Sage" Newsletter contact: Dorothea Burnett, Older Adult Coordinator, 116 South 53rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19139; 215-476-5504 or othea9@netzero.com

Giving to UMCOR tsunami relief exceeds \$6 million

By Elliott Wright

NEW YORK — Contributions to the United Methodist Committee on Relief for Asian tsunami relief passed the \$4 million mark during the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend and passed the \$6 million mark by January 31st.

"We are still opening checks," said Roland Fernandes, treasurer of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, the parent organization of UMCOR.

The death toll from the tidal waves that swept the Indian Ocean the day after Christmas reached 220,000 on Jan. 19.

"The outpouring of love and concern in the form of dollars is deeply touching," said the Rev. R. Randy Day, chief executive of the mission board. Two days earlier, he had returned from Indonesia, the hardest hit of the 12 countries swept by the gigantic waves.

Contributions included in the \$4 million figure are primarily from telephone and online credit-card donations and checks sent directly to UMCOR.

Fernandes said this included some but by no means all of the money given through local church collections and forwarded through denominational channels. He noted a significant slowdown in online contributions in recent days. "This is quite natural as we move away from the immediate emotional impact of the tragedy," he said.

Day and a delegation of United

Methodist mission and communications leaders visited the island of Sumatra, near the epicenter of the earthquake that caused the tsunami, on Jan. 11-16. The group took more than 100,000 doses of medicine for tsunami survivors.

Dr. Charles Yeh from the Chinese Christian Relief Association in Taiwan and Indonesian Methodists will use medications presented by a delegation of leaders from the United Methodist Church to aid tsunami victims in Bireuen, Indonesia.

UMCOR is engaged in both immediate and long-term relief and rehabilitation in the affected area. Its work is coordinated with that of other Methodist and humanitarian agencies, and it puts a high priority on collaboration with local efforts and personnel.

Donations to UMCOR's "South Asia Emergency" relief efforts can be placed in local church offering plates or sent directly to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330, New York, NY 10115. Designate checks for UMCOR Advance #274305 and "South Asia Emergency." Online donations can be made at www.methodistrelief.org. Those making credit-card donations can call (800) 554-8583.

Wright is the information officer of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.



United Methodist Bishop Genevieve Z. Wright (right) plays over a shipment of medicine presented by a delegation of leaders from the United Methodist Church to aid tsunami victims in Bireuen, Indonesia. At left is delegation member Kyung Za Yim, president of the denomination's Women's Division. A UMNS photo By Elliott Wright

The Ministry of UMCOR around the world is made possible when your church pays 100% of its Connectional Ministry Asking.

The Nation In Brief

• OKLAHOMA

Weekday ministries thrive at downtown churches

OKLAHOMA CITY - Not long ago, many Americans lived, worked, worshipped and shopped downtown. While that has changed as people have moved to suburbia, downtown Methodist churches remain a vital part of many cities. Members have overcome such obstacles as declining residential populations, parking headaches and even - in the case of Oklahoma City - terrorist activity, to continue serving their ever-changing neighborhoods. In doing so, the churches themselves have changed the way they do ministry and worship. Like the corporate world, these downtown churches are open for business all week.

• TEXAS

Jobs program helps fill gaps for youth with disabilities

LONGVIEW - Preparing a resume, tracking down leads and getting ready for interviews can make searching for a job a challenge for anyone. The process can be even more challenging for the 53 million Americans with disabilities. "They're falling through the cracks when they graduate from high school," says Debby Puckette, who saw that firsthand with her own family. She founded Real Jobs for Youth, providing training and encouragement for young people with disabilities and becoming an advocate

for employers to hire them. Puckette relied on her faith as a United Methodist to start the nonprofit organization two years ago, trying to fill a gap left by other agencies. She works with students and former students ages 14 to 29.

• NEW YORK

Take precautions when giving online, UMCOR executive says

NEW YORK - During the first two weeks after the Indian Ocean tsunami, more than a fourth of the \$2 million given to the United Methodist Committee on Relief came from online credit-card gifts. While online giving is safe, "there are a few ways in which scam artists can mess up an occasional transaction," says Glenda Survance, with the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, UMCOR's parent organization. "So we have developed a short list of precautions that donors to UMCOR should follow." Donors should use only Web sites they know are reliable and avoid charitable links sent by e-mail, she says.

• WISCONSIN

Fitting forgiveness into hectic lives often a struggle

MADISON - All too often, we live our lives by mechanically running through to-do lists as we juggle tough jobs and demanding family responsibilities. If we work hard enough, we believe we can have it all. But when we slip up, can we admit it? Are we able to

forgive ourselves and others, whether it's for a spat about money or something more serious? Religious leaders increasingly find the topic turning up in pastoral care. Dr. Bob Enright of the International Forgiveness Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison estimates there were no more than 10 books on the topic 20 years ago when he began researching it. Now there are more than 700, he says, and the number of studies on forgiveness has ballooned.

• WASHINGTON D.C.

United Methodist pastor gives benediction at inauguration

United Methodist Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell asked for God's blessing on George W. Bush's family and administration during the president's Jan. 20 inauguration ceremony in Washington. As he did in Bush's first inaugural ceremony in 2001, Caldwell gave the benediction after the president's address. In his prayer, which closed Bush's official swearing-in, Caldwell focused on thanksgiving, rallying Americans together and providing "equal opportunity for all, including the least, the last and the lost." After the prayer, Bush, also a United Methodist, embraced Caldwell. The pastor leads Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston.

• GEORGIA

CNN features UM pastor on 'get-fit' program

ATLANTA - The Rev. Leigh Ann Raynor, senior pastor of Thomasville First UMC, is used to being in the limelight within her congregation, but now she is taking center stage on a much larger platform - the worldwide cable network of CNN. Raynor is one of five people selected to participate in the "New You Revolution," a CNN project to help people get fit and manage their health. Raynor, 49, is working with a personal trainer, attending cardiac rehab and learning from a nutritionist - all at no cost to her. Her progress will be charted and updated each week on CNN's "American Morning."

• WASHINGTON

'Off' switch may be best shield against indecency in media

The answer to the national debate over decency in the media might be simple: Control the remote, lest the remote control you. Is media decency a faith issue? "Everything is a faith issue," says Philip Patterson, author of *The Electronic Millstone: Christian Parenting in a Media Age*. "Scripture tells us to 'test everything.' I think that applies to the media I watch," he says. Teresa Tomeo, a Christian radio talk-show host in Denver, encourages visitors at www.teresatomeo.com to pray for change in media, join letter-writing campaigns to network officials, and boycott programs and advertisers' products when appropriate.

UMCOR stays course in 'mega-disaster' relief

By Linda Beher

NEW YORK — How well do relief operations follow through with rehabilitation after “mega-disasters” such as the earthquake and tsunamis that swept the Indian Ocean Dec. 26?

The New York Times posed that question in a front-page story Jan. 11, using as examples the 1998 hurricane Mitch in Honduras, the 2000 floods in Mozambique and the 2003 earthquake in Iran. The story described unfinished housing dotting the Honduran landscape and uncompleted projects in Bam, Iran. “We are abandoned,” a resident of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, said.

“In big, complex recoveries from mega-disasters, we plan to be in place for a long time — for years,” said the Rev. Kristin Sachen of the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

“I do not doubt that more rebuilding is needed in Honduras, Mozambique and Iran. Though a number of organizations have left those three countries, UMCOR is still at work,” she said, “just as we will be in the Indian Ocean region long after the media and dignitaries leave.”

“Our volunteers are still rebuilding houses in the Honduran towns of Tegucigalpa, Subriana and LaCeibita,” said the Rev. Paul Dirdak, UMCOR’s chief executive. “We sent 45 teams to Honduras in 2004 and have even more scheduled for 2005. In Iran, through grants to our partner, the International Blue Crescent, UMCOR continues to minister to children in Bam.”

UMCOR has also built housing units in Cuba with funds donated for

Hurricane Mitch recovery. In 2004, 20 families in a small fishing town at the west edge of Havana moved into new apartments and another 100 received upgraded water service as a result of UMCOR work there — six years after the hurricane struck.

United Methodist donations are still at work in Mozambique, another country mentioned in the Times. Floods in 2000 devastated whole villages. UMCOR helped build houses in the new village of Mangoanine for 70 families that lost both their homes and land. A second project begun later in Bantu involves building 138 flood-resistant brick homes using a brick-making machine purchased by UMCOR. Landmine removal and school construction are ongoing projects across the country.

“United Methodists are extremely generous in responding to disasters,” Sachen said. “This means we can stay with people as long as it takes to get them back on their feet. It’s the way United Methodists do things — having the patience to stay with the most vulnerable, however long it takes. We don’t quit.”

Cash gifts will help UMCOR continue to support local relief efforts in the South Asia disaster area as well as other regions. Checks can be mailed to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 330, New York, NY 10115. One hundred percent of every donation to any



A fishing boat rests in the street in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, following a Dec. 26 tsunami killed thousands in the region. A delegation of mission and communications leaders of the United Methodist Church visited areas of Sumatra, Indonesia, near the epicenter of the earthquake that triggered the waves. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

appeal, including “South Asia Emergency,” UMCOR Advance #274305, goes to support recovery efforts in the disaster-stricken regions.

Donors using a credit card may call toll free (800) 554-8583 or give online at MethodistRelief.org. The Internal Revenue Service will allow donors to decide whether to apply

tsunami relief contributions to the 2004 or 2005 tax years, as long as the gift designated for 2004 is made by Jan. 31.

Beher is communications director for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, a unit of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

The World In Brief

• INDONESIA

New UMC.org feature offers full coverage of delegation visit to Asia

UMC.org, the official Web site of the United Methodist Church, has launched a new online feature package offering immediate reports from a delegation of mission and communication leaders who visited Indonesia in January. Accessible from UMC.org’s home page, the Indonesia delegation feature includes print, photo and video reports provided by a team of reporters from United Methodist Communications. The Rev. Larry Hollon, head of UMC.org, also shares his personal accounts of the trip through his Weblog on the site.

• INDONESIA

Upper Room plans long-term spiritual tsunami assistance

The Upper Room, a United Methodist ministry that provides spiritual resources to people around the world, is focusing on the emotional needs of the victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami. The Upper Room, housed at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship in Nashville, TN, is a global ministry that meets the spiritual needs of people through devotional magazines, books and printed resources. Its devotional guide, *The Upper Room*, has editions and partners serving people in nearly all of the Indian Ocean areas affected

by the tsunami, including Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka, as well as in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and elsewhere. The guide is localized and printed and distributed in each of these areas.

• SRI LANKA

Sri Lankans work across religious lines to help with recovery

BATTICALOA — Abdul Mahid stands looking at what is left of his house. Unlike his neighbors, he is not searching through the rubble — all that remains of his home. “More than 50 of my neighbors died,” he says. He is still dazed at having escaped the force of the waves with his life. Abdul Mahid lived and owned a store in Kattandkudy in Batticaloa, on the east coast of Sri Lanka. Whole areas of his town and villages nearby were obliterated by the tsunami that crashed into the coastline Dec. 26. In this part of town, the Muslim Quarter, 1,000 residents have been confirmed dead, says the Rev. Nadarajah Arulnathan, who is coordinating area relief efforts for the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka — a member of the global alliance Action by Churches Together International. The National Christian Council/ACT is heading the coordination of medical assistance to 10 camps in the Batticaloa area, where about 5,500 were killed. “It is a big challenge to feed them,” Arulnathan says.

• ENGLAND

Methodists across Europe respond to tsunami

LONDON — Horrified by what they saw and heard of the destruction wrought by deadly tsunamis in South Asia, Methodists across Europe have lined up to help in whatever way they can. A congregation in the north of England is filling and shipping plastic crates called “aquaboxes” that contain water purification and filter equipment. An elderly Irish Methodist couple donated their government winter fuel subsidy to those they believe have more need of the money. Lithuanian United Methodists collected a special offering that will go to the United Methodist Committee on Relief’s tsunami response. Slovakian United Methodists are collecting donations for the entire month of January. And in the Czech Republic, where United Methodists remember the devastating effects of recent floods in their own country, congregations have organized a national appeal. The story is similar in Switzerland, Germany and other parts of Europe.

• GERMANY

European youth discern God’s call for their lives

BRAUNFELS — Young United Methodists from Central Europe gathered in late 2004 to discern God’s call for their lives. The 45 Methodist participants, ages 16 to 26, gathered in

November for European Exploration 2004, a weekend event modeled after the biennial U.S. Exploration events that the denomination’s Board of Higher Education and Ministry has sponsored for the past 12 years. The European gathering, sponsored by the denomination’s central (regional) conferences in Europe, offered the participants an opportunity to look at using faith in daily life, no matter what profession they choose.

• URUGUAY

Methodist sees hope in new Uruguay ruler

QUITO — The year 2004 was notable for the emerging of left-wing governments in Latin America, and a Protestant leader believes that in Uruguay, this could lead to a change in the privileged position the dominant Roman Catholic Church has held. In Uruguay, voters participating in October elections — the first since a severe economic crisis two years earlier — chose the country’s first leftist president, Tabare Vazquez, who will take over leadership of the country in March. “One thing is for sure: Uruguay will not change drastically,” said the Rev. Oscar Bolioli, president of the Methodist Church in Uruguay, commenting on the left-wing victory. But the election result represented a key step forward for a historically fragmented left, as it “acted together,” he said.

Annual Conference Workshops

One more reason to attend Annual Conference in Philadelphia June 15-17, 2005.

Workshops are back - they are different, informative and exciting. Registration information will be included in your conference booklet.

The DNA of Small Membership Churches - Small member churches of less than 200 members represent the largest number of congregations in America. Yet many small churches don't understand their structure enough to be healthy. Join Al Maloney as he provides facts on ways to understand the strengths and weaknesses of these churches and how those attributes play a vital role in the vitality of the church.

Technology and the Local Church - This workshop led by members of the conference technical staff will teach the awesome power of Technology in the church. The face of worship is changing and you won't want to miss this opportunity to learn and ask questions on "Worshipping with Technology"

The Ministry of Finance - Building the Local Church Budget - Steve Morton will share valuable information on the local church budget and how it impacts the total church ministry, mission and programs. Pastors and members of the Finance and Stewardship teams will benefit from this workshop.

Writing Successful Proposals and Grants - Join Lenora Thompson for an overview of how local churches miss out on available funds to grow ministries by not understanding the components of grants and where to look for funding. Learn how to take the information you have and use it to write grants that work.

Healing the Wounds - An Overview - Many of you expressed some concern in attending this mandatory workshop. Join the core team in this overview of what to expect for your investment of time and money. Not to be confused with the actual workshop, this is an opportunity to ask questions from the experts and feel more comfortable in attending the three day program.

Youth and Christ Servant Ministry - Where Do They Fit? Pastors will want to attend this informative workshop on preparing youth to serve as Christ Servant Ministers. Youth understand and are already involved with volunteerism in the local church. Prepare them for future service.

Stewardship a Matter of the Heart - This workshop will help members of the local church overcome the barrier of giving and provide ways to start the stewardship process. Learn effective tools to help promote a willingness to make commitments.

Beyond Belief! Developing a Vision for Your Congregation - This exciting workshop addresses the topic of vision and the significant role it has in the overall health of the mission and ministry of a church. Join Val Hastings as he guides participants in gaining a strong understanding of the power of vision, how to cast a vision and the nuts and bolts of implementing a vision.

Multiple Intelligence, the Art of Developing Spiritual Gifts! - This new and innovative workshop looks at laity and how they can be empowered in the congregation. You won't want to miss this different approach to the partnership between clergy and lay.

Property Liability, Workers Comp and Risk Management - a must for Trustee Chairs and Pastors. Jim Lewis from the Conference Insurance Group gives valuable insight into what's new in insurance and things we should be doing as a matter of protection.

Emerging Trends and Demographics - Peter Wernett, President of Percepts offers valuable information on demographics and how it can be used to respond to the community, a must for new church starts and for churches wanting to identify need in their community and discover their "target audience". This valuable information is being used successfully in many of our local churches

Charles Wesley, the Founder of Methodism - Join Chuck Yrigoyen, as he provides a historic overview of the research compiled for his recent book. Chuck always provides us with historic views that can be used in today's environment. For those who want to understand more about the United Methodist Church and its beginnings, you won't want to miss this experience.

College students flock to church in Schuylkill Haven

Continued from Pg 1

is to bridge those divides of the white and black communities."

He grew up in the delta region, the poorest region of Mississippi, which Mosley characterizes as twenty years behind rest of Mississippi, which is twenty years behind rest of country in terms of race relations and inclusiveness. "I was taught that we could not go into public library, and at 12, my friend Lee and I said we ought to read some books. That caused a stir in the library."

First UMC is now becoming a connector themselves - to welcome those who might not feel welcome otherwise. The kids in program are all African-American, come from the inner city, and probably come from lower income families.

The first objective was to encour-

Annual Conference schedule set

The June Session of Annual Conference will open with worship mid-day Wednesday, June 15th, include evening business sessions, and adjourn with the Ordination Service Friday evening, June 17th. Lunch will be provided on Wednesday.

The June session (except for the Clergy Session) will be held at the Loews Hotel (the recently renovated former PSFS Building) at 12th and Market Streets in Philadelphia.

Because of a recent Judicial Council ruling which now allows Clergy Sessions to be held at a separate place and time, EPA's 2005 Clergy Session will be held at Hempfield United Methodist Church on Monday, June 13th, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Church is located at 3050 Marietta Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17601. For directions, go to: www.hempfieldchurch.org

The Laity Session will be held at the Loews Hotel on Wednesday, June 15th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There will also be an additional Laity meeting Thursday, June 16th during breakfast for those who cannot attend the Wednesday Laity Session.

The rates will include 2 nights stay (Wednesday & Thursday), parking and food for two and half days (2 breakfasts, 3 Lunches and 3 dinners). Complete details, including rates, will be available in the registration materials, which will be mailed in February.

Members and churches of The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference contributed a total of \$14,803.64 toward the Peter D. Weaver Service Fund for the Bethlehem Haven Ministry in Pittsburgh, PA.

HEALING THE WOUNDS OF RACISM WORKSHOPS

Southeast: Jan. 28-30, Sept. 22-24
Southwest: Feb. 24-26
East: March 14-16
Northwest: April 29-May 1
Northeast: May 19-21, Oct. 21-23
Central: Aug. 26-28, Aug. 22-24
General Area: Nov. 7-9

For the full brochure and registration form, go to: www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=655

age interaction, with students being special guests at meal and having them perform. Feeling welcomed, the students themselves said they wanted to go to church at First UMC. Dr. Johnson and Mosley arranged programs for students over breaks. When students got back in the fall, Johnson had pulled together program asking families to sign up. At one time they had more families than students. Then word got out and more students signed up.

Participants are required to have at least two or three interactions per semester. They can choose together whether the families invite the students to meals or to go out.

One family had lost their only daughter who was their pride and joy. "They've been very depressed," said Mosley. The young woman who was assigned to this family happened to have lost her mother when she was an infant. The mother called up her student on the girl's birthday, asking what she was going to do for her birthday. Mosley said, "The girl said she had no plans. And the mother arranged for a cake and a party with friends. Clearly, a generational divide and a racial gap have been bridged."

Ama, a student in the program who comes from West Africa, recently sat braiding her adopted mother's hair into African cornrows. The mother wore it to church the next morning. Mosley sees "transformative stuff" in this kind of interaction, "and the

church is at the core of it. The church is the bridge."

Ama says of her relationship with her adopted mother, "I can call her and we can go to her house and hang out. It's nice. She calls me once a week, and I call her. We email each other." Explaining her background, Ama said, "I am not Christian. My religion is Akan from Ghana, West Africa. Coming here, she (my adopted mother) was open to learning about my religion and I was open to going to church with her." Forty-five students are now part of the program, and each is assigned a family.

Dr. Johnson had noticed in her in her work on campus that there was little interaction of students with churches or spirituality on the campus. Most students come from urban area and had little feeling of belonging to or connection with the community. She also saw how her church had wanted more involvement with youth and campus. Now she receives calls from other churches asking if they can get involved in the adopt-a-family program.

Johnson notes that informal get-togethers work best in building relationships. Once the relationship aspect fell into place, the program began to see success. "The families and students share things they have in common - feelings, love, willingness to grow and move beyond comfort zone. Now both students and families are on the waiting list," she said.

Methodist Services for Children & Families Educational Support and Counseling

Through the following programs -

After School Programs
Beacon Community Center
EduCare Learning Center
Intensive Delinquency Prevention
MSCF/Genesis Counseling
Summer Day Camps



Methodist Services
for Children and Families

Call 215-877-1925 x 113 today
to say "TELL ME MORE!"

4300 Monument Road
Philadelphia, PA 19131-1616
www.methodistservices.org

The official registration and financial information for Methodist Services for Children and Families may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free (within Pennsylvania) 1-800-732-0998. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Bishop Matthews Ralph E. Blanks appointed to Cabinet

Continued from Pg 1

serve the Harry Hosier United Methodist Church (UMC), a new church start in the Logan Community of Philadelphia. Blanks stated, "I have had a fun-filled, challenging, rewarding, holistic ministry. Not only was it a new congregation, but the community was new in that it was changing - African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Indian-Americans were moving in and whites were moving out. We shared our building with three fledgling congregations: one Asian and two Indians. On the cutting edge, we looked at how best we could live together and do what we needed to do to help each other - which included English classes as a second language in the Harry Hosier Church."

Bishop F. Herbert Skeete appointed Rev. Blanks to Mother African Zoar UMC in 1985. At Mother African Zoar, he led the congregation in a year long Bicentennial celebration in 1994 and a \$300,000 historic building renovation program. Working with the West

Poplar Neighborhood Advisory Community Development Corporation, a \$9 million Nehemiah Housing Grant was secured to do more than 180 affordable Townhouses for first-time homeowners. This housing project brought a long awaited renaissance to the West Poplar Community. It also proved to the mayor and city leaders that if you build in North Philadelphia, people will return and invest their resources.



RALPH E. BLANKS

Bishop Peter D. Weaver appointed Rev. Blanks to Janes Memorial UMC in 2001. Playing a strong role in the community, he serves as chair, Resource Development Committee of African American Inter-Denominational Ministries; vice-chair, North Philadelphia Health Systems; chair, Patient Services and Planning Committee St. Joseph's Hospital; chair, City of Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission; and member of Black/Jewish Coalition, First Hospital Foundation, Greater Philadelphia Health Action, and Korean Community Development Service Center. He is

the only United Methodist pastor to have served as president of Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity and the second United Methodist pastor to serve on the School Board of the City of Philadelphia (the late Rev. Dr. Henry H. Nichols, longest-tenured pastor of Janes UMC was the first).

Rev. Blanks' service to Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and the General Church includes the following: delegate and alternate to Jurisdictional Conference; president, United Methodist Metro. Ministries, Inc.; member of the Board of Ordained Ministry and District Committee on Ministry; member and former president of Black United Methodist Preachers; member and former treasurer of National Black Methodists for Church Renewal.

As a part of his global ministry, Pastor Blanks has traveled to the Ivory Coast, Korea, Zimbabwe, Israel, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Austria. A volunteer with Operation Smile, a medical organization which does facial reconstruction focused on cleft-lip/palate impairment of children, Pastor Blanks went on several mission trips to

Kenya. He has made a commitment to work with an indigenous Kenyan community group to develop and build a medical clinic.

As a district superintendent, Blanks envisions his role to be one of walking with pastors and congregations, getting to know them, as well as working, supporting, encouraging and living with them in the midst of day to day ministry. "These are exciting and challenging times to be God's ambassadors. The stronger the local church, the greater the impact in transforming lives and communities; thus, a more visible witness as Christians in the United Methodist Church. After a 30 year journey of pastoral/community ministry, I come as a pastor to work with clergy and laity for the advancement of the Kingdom of God."

Blanks is husband to Judith, father of Jason, Noelle and Averie, and grandfather of LaTise and Jasmine. He credits a good diet, a regular exercise program and a strong devotional life as supplying the power and stamina needed for the challenge of ministry.

Pastor's postcard hobby becomes ministry for disaster relief

Continued from Pg 1

this donation to UMCOR with me."

"Five hundred dollars per month would be easy, but I would like to raise \$1,000 per month," Gaspar said. "If I wake up in the middle of the night, I go see how my sales are doing. My husband, Ruben, makes a trip nearly every day to the post office before going off to work."

She easily spends six hours a day posting auctions on the computer and packaging postcards to mail to customers.

Known as "postcardpastor" on eBay, Gaspar has sold postcards to customers all over the world. While giving the name of her church on each auction, she also sees her auctions as reaching out in the name of Christ. People from different continents have e-mailed her with such questions as, "Are you really a pastor?" and "I didn't know women could be pastors."

Several customers and even non-customers have sent donations, sometimes including an additional amount above their postcard purchase as a donation. "People have sent

money for the church, sending me \$10 on a sale of \$3.50, and ask me to put the rest in the plate," she said.

"Ebay is a global market, and so it's amazing what people will buy. I have sold postcards to people from Israel, all over Europe, Africa, Japan, South America, Thailand and Hong Kong."

Gaspar has received more than 8,000 positive feedbacks (indicating customer satisfaction) from more than 4,251 customers since March 1999. She sells just about anything in terms of postcards, new or old, even if in ragged and horrible condition, as those are purchased for scrap booking. Customers like local or global cards, dogs, cats, floral and art cards, old documents, stamps and first day covers.

"Your mission field is anywhere you make it," Gaspar mused.

While in nursing school in her early 20s, she had wanted to be a missionary in the United States, but changed those plans when she met her future husband, Ruben, while both were attending Arch Street United Methodist Church in Philadelphia. As a registered nurse for 28 years, Gaspar took care of people who are now members of her church, viewing this as having nurtured their bodies and their souls. Now, with her own walking disability, she finds members at Gladwyne United Methodist Church nurturing her.

In order to accommodate Gaspar's walking disability, Gladwyne converted its downstairs room into a multipurpose room and sanctuary, to make it accessible.

The upstairs, formerly the sanctuary, houses a home schooling project for 33 children from kindergarten to grade 12, of Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths. On Sundays, the church building also hosts a new church start, a non-denominational Pilipino congregation.

Gladwyne is a small, struggling congregation in a tiny village that used to be a mill town, and is now surrounded by multimillion-dollar

mansions inhabited by some of Philadelphia's richest and most famous celebrities.

"Rather than feel 'helpless' in light of these tsunami events, this is one way we can come together and provide extra dollars to UMCOR relief in South Asia," Gaspar said of her postcard ministry.

She welcomes donations of postcards of any sort, in any condition. They can be sent to her at 317 Iven Ave., St. Davids, PA 19087. She can be contacted by e-mail at charlenegaspar@comcast.net.

A hundred percent of all donations to UMCOR go to emergency relief around the world. As on Jan. 10, contributions to UMCOR for tsunami relief reached \$2 million, a figure that incorporates online giving and telephone credit card donations but only part of the boxes of checks received so far.

The Internal Revenue Service will allow donors to decide whether to apply their tsunami relief contributions to the 2004 or 2005 tax years, as long as the gift designated for 2004 is made by Jan. 31. UMCOR is exempt from tax under the Internal Revenue Code and qualifies for the maximum charitable contribution deduction by donors.

More information about UMCOR's ministries is available at www.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/. Donations can be placed in local church offering plates or sent to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 330, New York, NY 10115. Donations by credit card can be made at (800) 554-8583 or by going online to www.MethodistRelief.org.

Contributions specifically for tsunami disaster relief should be designated for UMCOR Advance #274305, "South Asia Emergency."

A UMTV report is available at umns.umc.org.

Keenan is director of communications for the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual (regional) Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Saturday, March 5 — 9:00a-4:00p

First United Methodist Church of Moorestown
446 Camden Avenue • Moorestown, NJ

\$40 per church

Bring a team to get started or to catch what's new

Information and advance registration:

www.IgnitingMinistry.org or (877) 281-6535

Registration deadline: Friday, February 18

Summer camps gear up for faith and fun in the sun

It's cold outside! Want to feel "strangely warm"? How about starting to think about Summer Camp 2005 with the Eastern PA Conference at Carson-Simpson Farm, Gretna Glen, Innabah and Pocono Plateau!

Prayer will be an active part of every day at camp this summer as we explore together the theme "PRAY!" As Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Campers will be encouraged to see that living lives of prayer helps them see God at work in their lives and in the world.

There are 114 different events to choose from at our four Eastern PA camp and retreat centers for ages Pre-K through Grandparents. There are more new events each year that are worth looking into including family and parent/child camps, sports day camps, mission/work project camps, fishing camps, music and drama

camp, movie and computer camps, late night and stay-up-all-night-sleep-during-the-day camps, bike and paddle camps, and lots of exciting adventures to challenge campers and grow lasting friendships. Events include day camps, three-day overnight, six-day overnight and trip camp opportunities.

Complete information on "PRAY!", the 2005 Summer Camp program of the Eastern PA Conference of the UMC, including a downloadable registration form, is available on line at www.epaumc.org/camping or at each of the sites individual web sites: www.csfarm.org, www.gretnaglen.org, www.innabah.org, and www.poconoplateau.org. You can call our toll free number 1-877-UMC-CAMP to order a summer camp catalog or to be connected directly to any of our four camp and retreat centers.

The printed version of the summer camp catalog was mailed to the churches and summer camp families

on Monday, January 24, and individual site brochures were mailed to summer camp families earlier in January. Online registration is available as well as mail-in and fax registration. Credit cards are accepted.

Scholarships are available from various sources for those campers and families that are facing economic hardship. No camper is to be refused an opportunity to attend due to financial reasons. The application for the EPA Conference Campership is included on the registration form. Camper families are encouraged to seek scholarship help from their local church first, then the camp/retreat center at which the event is taking place.

What a great opportunity it is to serve as a summer camp volunteer! Program directors, counselors, nurses, chaplains, registrars, maintenance and food service volunteers are needed. Training is provided. Most volunteers have such a great experience that they

come back year after year! Scholarships are available for adult volunteers to send their children to camp during the week that they serve. Pastors are encouraged to take a non-vacation week to join us in this vital ministry. Take a look at the catalog and choose a week to help make a difference in a child's life this summer!

The Volunteer Program Director Training Day is set for Tuesday, March 1st at Innabah for all four sites. As in years past, there will be identical sessions from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (including lunch) and from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (including dinner). This will be our final opportunity to share in the ministry of the Rev. David Berkey who is leaving Eastern PA to become Executive Director of Camps and Retreat Ministry in the Florida Conference. Please register through the camp/retreat center at which your event will take place this summer. Volunteer counselors are also welcome to attend. The snow date is March 8th.

EPA Camping program and leadership to undergo changes

The Camping Board and Conference staff received word on January 14 that the Rev. David Berkey has accepted the position of Executive Director for Camps and Retreat Ministry of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, effective in March.

Rev. Berkey has been the Director of Camp and Retreat Ministry of the EPA Conference since May, 1995, during which time there has been significant growth in the program, revenue and facilities. Overall revenue is up nearly 75% and summer campers have risen to over 5400 registrations during the ten year period. The conference-wide capital campaign from 1998-2002 yielded \$1.5 million and has resulted in the construction of a new recreation center at Innabah, dining hall at Pocono Plateau, retreat lodge at Gretna Glen, and the planning for a new multi-purpose building at Carson-Simpson Farm.

In his new position in Florida, Rev. Berkey will oversee a state-wide United Methodist camp and retreat ministry based in Leesburg that includes a 400-bed adult retreat and conference center with a youth/children's camp across the road, all on Lake Griffin. There is also a South Florida Camp near Ft. Myers and Lake Asbury Retreat Center near Jacksonville. The new position will begin in March with a job-share transition to take place during the month of February.

"I'm leaving with a mixture of excitement and sadness," says Rev. Berkey. "It is a wonderful opportunity and challenge with the Florida Conference as they are seeking to do a new thing with camp and retreat ministry in forming a new board and developing new programs and fund-raising. I am confident that the situation with the camp and retreat centers in Eastern PA is on solid ground. We have a great

staff and volunteer leadership that with God's help will guide the ministry into the future."

The Human Resources Committee of the EPA Conference and the Office of Congregational Transformation will be developing the job description for the Director of Camping and Nurture

Ministries over the next few weeks with the hope of advertising the position sometime in March or April. For further information, please contact the Rev. Larry Leister, Executive Director of Congregational Transformation, at 610-666-9090, ext. 230.

UM Foundation prepares for 2005-2006 scholarships

By Stacy Martin

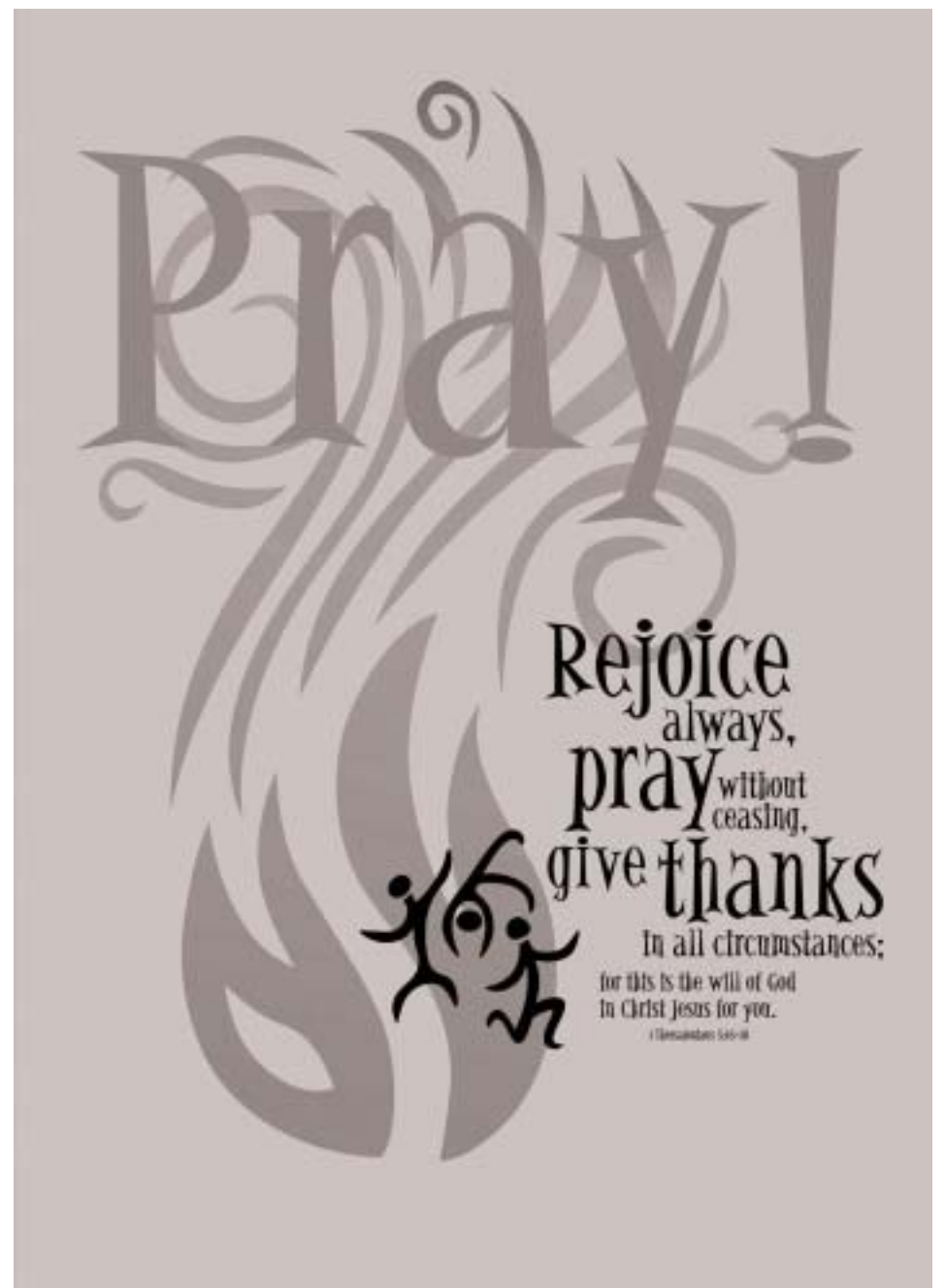
December continued to present more "firsts" for me as I learn more about my ministry in my new position as Director of the Foundation. The Rev. Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem, my co-chair, and I met with the Scholarship Team to make awards for the spring semester. Three awards were made to individuals pursuing degrees from area seminaries with the intent of doing full-time ministry within the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference upon graduation: Tracy L. Bass, Kenneth Eugene DeWalt, and Samuel Derick Kofi Ashley.

The ability to grant scholarships for seminary students within the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference is made possible by the generosity of funds set up by two people: George Garrett and Hilda Longenecker. Many years ago these two individuals established funds, in 1939 and 1988 respectively, specifically to provide scholarships to seminary students. Through the benefit of good invest-

ment management, the assets have grown to a point where they can provide significant assistance to students. Both individuals saw the importance of helping future pastors with their seminary expenses. The fear of taking on such seminary expenses, especially for those seeking a second career in ministry, prevents some individuals from pursuing a career toward which God may be calling them.

In addition to awarding scholarships to students preparing for full-time ministry, the Scholarship Team also awards scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students studying in other areas. These awards are made in the spring for the upcoming academic year. If you, or someone you know, are interested in applying for scholarships for the 2005-2006 academic year (Sept. - May), applications and a list of scholarships are available on our website www.epaumc.org, under the Business and Finance section, or, by calling

See SCHOLARSHIPS P9



Good Schools Pa: national report highlights need to close the equity gap

This week's "Quality Counts" report, issued by the D.C.-based Education Week, highlights the urgent need for Pennsylvania to come to terms with providing a school finance system that guarantees every child access to a quality public education.

This annual report, which assesses each state's progress in improving public education, compares states across a broad array of indicators, including how states pay for education, how they distribute money to school districts, and whether they track expenditures.

Equity

According to the report, Pennsylvania remains in the bottom of the pack among states when it comes to the fairness of its system for funding public schools, ranking 43rd and earning an overall grade of C-. Trailing Pennsylvania were North Dakota, Virginia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Montana, Idaho, New Hampshire, Vermont and District of Columbia.

Avid readers of past "Quality Counts" reports may recall that last year Pennsylvania ranked 48th. According to Education Week researcher Ronald Skinner, the change is less a result of anything Pennsylvania did than a change in the methodology used by Education Week. This year's

analysis excluded the state equalization effort, a measure that reflects both the percentage of funding for education provided by the state and the extent to which those funds are targeted to property-poor districts. While the measure can be an important indicator of state efforts to equalize funding across districts, Skinner said, it is "sometimes subject to vagaries in the classification of finance data across the states, and may not capture the multiple measures states use to equalize funding."

Adequacy

In another departure, this year's report also dropped its grading of states on adequacy because "there is no agreed-upon measure of adequate spending on education." More problematic to Good Schools Pennsylvania is that our historic high ranking on adequacy has always masked the disparities among districts. And this year's report shows just how "gross" those disparities are. Consider this: Pennsylvania's average per pupil expenditure is \$8,328. However, only 13.6% of Pennsylvania's students are in districts that spend at or above the national median of \$6,208. In contrast, every neighboring state - including West Virginia - has close to 100 percent of students in districts

spending at or above the national median!

Percent of students in districts with per-pupil expenditures at or above national median of \$6,208:

- * Delaware: 100%
- * Maryland: 100%
- * New Jersey: 100%
- * New York: 100%
- * Ohio: 90.2%
- * Pennsylvania: 13.6%
- * West Virginia: 99.1%

These statistics should dispel any myth that Pennsylvania is a high-spending state. Rather, Pennsylvania starts to look a lot like a third world state compared to our neighbors.

Other indicators show plenty of room for improvement as well: Pennsylvania gets a B- in standards and accountability, a C in efforts to improve teacher quality, and a C in school climate.

Meanwhile, in the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), (also known as "the Nation's Report Card"), Pennsylvania students scored as follows:

- * 36% of 4th graders at or above proficient in math
- * 30% of 8th graders at or above proficient in math
- * 33% of 4th graders at or above proficient in reading
- * 32% of 8th graders at or above proficient in reading

Despite the changes made to school funding this year, lawmakers continue to balk at asking the really important

questions: What will it actually cost to enable all students to meet high standards, and how are we going to pay for it so we can ensure that students from low-income communities have equal opportunity? Without asking those questions, our approach to school funding is like throwing darts at a target while blindfolded, and hoping to get it right.

Fourteen states are involved in costing out studies to answer such questions. Sixteen states are tied up in litigation challenging the school finance systems they now have in place, according to the "Quality Counts" report, while over the past five years, lawsuits in 20 other states have been decided or settled, often in the plaintiff's favor.

Until we have a responsible school finance system in place, every quality of life indicator for every Pennsylvanian will suffer. The quality of our schools affects our economic development, whether our cities and inner ring suburbs flourish or wilt - even whether our open space is preserved or consumed by migrating families in search of better schools. It's crucial that the governor and the legislature this year continue to take steps to reduce the opportunity gap.

To read the "Quality Counts 2005" report, go to: www.goodschoolspa.org

UM Foundation prepares for 2005-2006 scholarships

Continued from Pg 8

Carol von Minden at 800-828-9093. The due date for applications this spring has been extended (for this spring only) to April 1, 2005.

Also included on the list are scholarships available through many of the General Boards and Agencies of the United Methodist Church. You can find more information on those scholarships by going to www.gbhem.org. In preparing for the Scholarship Team meeting, I learned that the total amount of financial aid given by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Office of Student Loans and Scholarships in 2003 was \$68,660 to students in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference!

The UM Student Day Offering gives United Methodists an opportunity to support our students. In 2003, EPA members gave \$6,360 to this offering. Inasmuch as 10% of the Student Day offering will come back directly to the EPA for local scholarships, our students will receive an additional \$636. Students in our Conference and around the world really benefit from our connectional giving!

If you are interested in helping to support our students with a direct gift, either for seminary students or undergraduate students, please call me at the Foundation at 800-828-9093 ext. 247. While we have some funds available, every contribution makes a difference in the life of a student or possible future pastor!

may be sent to the William Strother Memorial Scholarship, c/o Sayers Memorial United Methodist Church, 6101 Catherine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19143.

Rhea Flurer, widow of Rev. Frances G. Flurer

December 10, 2004.

Mrs. Flurer was the surviving spouse of Rev. Francis G. Flurer. Surviving Mrs. Flurer are two children, Lon David Flurer and Lois Ann Snyder. Condolences may be sent to Mr. Lon Flurer, PMB, 38, Ozark, AL 36361.

APPOINTMENT

Bishop Marcus Matthews announces the appointment of the Reverend Ralph Blanks from Janes UMC to superintendent of the Central District, effective July 1, 2005.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT YOUTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005

Youth Annual Conference (YAC) 2005 will be held at East Stroudsburg University the weekend of May 20-22, 2005, one week later than previously announced. This is to accommodate the youth who will be involved in confirmation activities on Pentecost May 15th. The theme for YAC 2005 is "Youth Under Construction" (Phil. 1:6). There will be speakers and music groups from our own Conference, games, workshops, small group Bible study, dancing and lots of fun! We are

trying to keep costs at a minimum to maximize participation. Registration will be available on-line in February. Watch for a postcard and more information at the conference web site in the coming weeks. If you have a recommendation for a speaker or music or drama group from the Conference please e-mail the suggestion to Georgette Hall-Peterson at ghpeterston@comcast.net. Make your plans now to join us at YAC 2005! Please forward this announcement to

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN SMALL MEMBERSHIP CHURCHES

April 9, 2004, 9:00 - 4:00 Myerstown: Zion UMC, 22 E. Main Ave., Myerstown, PA
Speaker/Trainer: Tony Pappas, The Alban Institute
Contact Northwest District Office to register:
570.366.1471 or Gloria.Maloney@epaumc.org

Participants will learn:

- * Why small churches are central to God's plan
- * Four current definitions of "small church" and why three are inadequate
- * Eight ways small-church culture differs from U.S. society and what to do about it
- * An affirming, challenging model for understanding the nature of the small church
- * Five attitudes that will help small-church leaders increase their leadership "batting average" while having more fun
- * Six measures to small-church health
- * Six means to turn the "headaches" and "heartaches" of small-church ministry into an agenda for health and growth
- * Eleven action strategies to introduce change into your small church

Most of the afternoon session will focus on:

- * Developing an effective, small-church-appropriate leadership strategy for your ministry
- * Examining nine functions of a healthy small church
- * Assessing your congregation's current strengths
- * Targeting one or two areas for developing effectiveness

Many small churches stagnate because they have substituted inertia for the adventure of God's calling, management for leadership, duty for joy, and guilt for giftedness. But this workshop will help small-church people break out of their constraints and re-find the excitement of God's presence and purpose!

Workshop Leader: Tony Pappas, the American Baptist Area Minister for southeastern Massachusetts, pastored a small Rhode Island church for 20 years. He edits The Five Stones-Newsletter for Small Churches and has authored five books, including entering the World of the Small Church - A guide for Leaders and Pastored Stress (both published by the Alban Institute). Dr. Pappas regularly speaks in local-church, regional, national, and international conferences on small-church issues.

IN MEMORIAM

The Rev. James T. Myers, retired elder

December 25, 2004.

He is survived by his wife, Emily, 3 sons, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Services were held Thursday, December 30, 2004 at Good Shepherd UMC, Security, Colorado. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Emily S. Myers, 325 Everett Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80911. Memorials may be made to Pikes Peak Hospice, 825 E. Pikes Peak Avenue, Suite 600, Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

The Rev. William C. Strother, Jr., retired elder

December 26, 2004.

Services were held on Friday, December 31, 2004, at Sayers Memorial United Methodist Church. Rev. Strother is survived by a daughter, Pricilla Anne Ramsey. Condolences may be sent to Shirley Tyree, 6135 Ellsworth Street, Philadelphia, PA 19143. In lieu of flowers, contributions

United Methodists forge ties with Indonesian church for recovery work

By Linda Bloom

MEDAN, Indonesia – A United Methodist team's visit to the island of Sumatra following the Dec. 26 tsunami has laid the foundation for a future partnership with the Gereja Methodist Indonesia (Methodist Church of Indonesia).

United Methodist Bishop Joel Martinez of San Antonio said he found Indonesian church leaders "genuinely pleased and appreciative" about the Jan. 12-16 visit. Martinez, who is president of the denomination's Board of Global Ministries, co-led the delegation with the Rev. R. Randy Day, the board's chief executive.

"We tried to listen to the church and get their perspective, and then we also were able to witness and observe for ourselves," Martinez explained.

Part of that observation included a tour of the devastated city of Banda Aceh and impromptu visits to camps for internally displaced persons. Even three weeks after the tsunami struck, the bishop believes "the full dimensions of the tragedy are not fully known" and expects the price tag of the disaster to exceed initial estimates just as the death toll did.

Although the tsunami swept over other Indian Ocean nations — including Sri Lanka, Thailand and India — the delegation chose Indonesia as the place to make a pastoral call, to let Indonesian Methodists know that the greater Methodist family was grieving with them, according to Day. Sumatra suffered 115,000 of the more than 162,000 deaths caused by the tsunami and the earthquake that triggered the giant waves.

"While we mourn the people who died in the tsunami, we're also taking immediate action to care for the survivors, so the death toll doesn't go higher," Martinez said. That action included delivery of medicines that the Indonesian church can use in its relief efforts in 11 camps for displaced people.

The Rev. David Wu, a board staff executive and native of Indonesia, said he was impressed that the small

church had immediately set up an emergency relief committee on its own, without asking for help.

"Perhaps bringing our church and their church together would create a



UM Bishop Joel N. Martinez (left foreground) visits with a patient at the Rumah Sakit Methodist Hospital in Medan, Indonesia. The woman was evacuated from her home in Banda Aceh for treatment following the tsunami that devastated the area.

greater energy, a greater hope," he noted.

Kyung Za Yim, president of the Women's Division, Board of Global Ministries, said she found the survey of tsunami damage to be a "shocking and painful experience."

After meeting with several church women in the region, she said she hoped to help them coordinate efforts to participate in tsunami relief efforts, perhaps through the assistance of the Women's Division's regional coordinator based in the Philippines.

"Once they set up a system, they can empower local women to join them," she said.

Day said he is thankful for the initial generous response of United Methodists to tsunami relief efforts through the United Methodist Committee on Relief and Board of Global Ministries. Besides Indonesia, funds have been directed to Sri Lanka and India, and future work is expected in Thailand.

Coordinating with Asian leader-

ship, he would like to see new gifts directed to the care of internally displaced people now living in camps, especially children. That care could include housing, medical and education needs. "We want to do our part in rebuilding those communities," he said.

As in other countries, the rebuilding of communities by UMCOR covers people of all faiths, according to the Rev. Paul Dirdak, the relief agency's chief executive. In communities divided by religion or ethnicity, "our projects are often opportunities for modeling coexistence," he said.

One such possibility, he added, would be in the town of Meulaboh, which was severely damaged by the tsunami. An equal number of homes could be constructed for Methodists and Muslims there.

Day noted that Indonesia has a long history of religious tolerance, even though it is overwhelmingly Muslim. That foundation of tolerance "gives a basis for cooperation as we do humanitarian work together."

preach and what they feel.

Since many churches are not equipped to take this step, Wu said he hopes to organize a retreat for Indonesian pastors to help unravel theological issues raised by the crisis.

Another concern is possible discrimination against some tsunami victims by the Indonesian government. The Rev. Henry Leono, an Indonesian native and pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Willingboro, N.J., said a number of ethnic Chinese that he met during the trip expressed fear that the aid would not reach them.

For Leono himself, the destruction of the area where he spent his childhood was painful to see. "I feel so overwhelmed by the magnitude of the need," he said.

He hopes the church can at least keep small relief projects going "to keep their hope alive."

The Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, said his agency would help present the reality of the tsunami disaster, in Indonesia and elsewhere, to the denomination as a whole. "My hope is that we can help interpret the need, which is obviously for the long



About 700 people who were displaced by the Dec. 26 tsunami are living in this camp in Bateilik, Indonesia. The Methodist Church of Indonesia is helping support programs at the facility. A delegation of mission and communications leaders from the denomination visited areas of Sumatra, Indonesia, near the epicenter of the earthquake that caused the triggered the waves. [UMNS photo]

"We would see it as an honor to work with Muslims in the largest Muslim country in the world," he added.

Delegation members acknowledged the need for psychological as well as physical care in Indonesia. Dirdak pointed out that Methodists there — in addition to being "shocked and exhausted" from the first three weeks following the disaster — carry the everyday strain of being part of a small minority and sometimes suffering from discrimination.

Right now, Indonesian church members and pastors are in a "survival mode," Wu said. "But deeper than that, it's a question of theological understanding: Where is God in this disaster?"

If pastors don't have the chance to process or cope with this question, there will be a disconnect between what they

term," he said.

He believes the immediate worldwide response after the tsunami demonstrates a rejection of hostility and conflict in the face of human need. "A spirit of compassion lives around the world, and people want to bridge these divisions," Hollon declared.

Donations to UMCOR's "South Asia Emergency" relief efforts can be placed in local church offering plates or sent directly to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330, New York, NY 10115. Designate checks for UMCOR Advance #274305 and "South Asia Emergency." Online donations can be made at www.methodistrelief.org. Those making credit-card donations can call (800) 554-8583. One hundred percent of the money donated to "South Asia Emergency" goes to the relief effort.

Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York. She is traveling with the United Methodist delegation to Indonesia.



A Muslim Mosque stands relatively unscathed amongst a sea of debris and destruction in Banda Aceh. However, the mosque did sustain extensive water damage inside [UMNS photo]

Christmas, in the eyes of the children in Kensington

Jude 1:22

And of some have compassion, making a difference.

(King James Version)

The congregations of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and their members really helped make a difference for the children this Christmas! The gifts delivered to Methodist Services for Children and Families were distributed to more than 3,000 children. Such a beautiful demonstration of faithful love for others!

The following recounts the experience of one Methodist Services staff member and her visit to the Christmas party at the Kensington office. The young teens who received the gifts you delivered struggle daily to focus on their school work while living in one of the most violent and dangerous neighborhoods in Philadelphia. They knew that gifts they received at the party would be the only gifts they would receive. When the children opened the gifts at the party, they were rather sad, knowing that their parents could not provide them with a gift chosen just for them.

"Janice, the program director, worked especially hard to find a special gift for each of the teens in her program - and thankfully this year we

had plenty of gifts so she could make good choices. As each young person received their gift from under the tree, they were reluctant to open them. They wanted to save them for Christmas morning. Even after the gifts were opened, some young teens re-wrapped their gifts to bring home so they could open them again. The atmosphere was subdued, which was sad. This party was very different than what occurs in many homes and at other Christmas parties - the smiles and the joy are not long lasting. The children's eyes were so sad; they knew that they are separated from other children their age by the simple fact that they are so impoverished. One other issue is that often these children have been mistreated and neglected, so when they do get a nice gift from us, they don't think they are worthy to receive it. After that party, I just wanted to go home and hug my sons and tell them how much I love them and how wonderful they are."

Methodist Services for Children and Families is an authorized child welfare agency of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference providing vital intervention, counseling and educational programs in Philadelphia and rural northeastern Pennsylvania. The generous support of individuals and their congregations allows crucial



Stuffed animals, games and other gifts sit ready to be distributed by Methodist Services for Children and Families to over 3,000 children.

programs to continue.

Angele Marie Parker, president and CEO of Methodist Home for Children, extends thanks to all of the Churches in the Conference, the United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women's groups and parishioners for the overwhelmingly generous outpouring of gifts for Christmas. Parker said, "You enabled more than 3,000 children to have a joyful Christmas! Your gifts brought wide smiles and some tears of happiness to children of

all ages. What a joy to bring Christmas gifts to every single child we serve! Your generosity made the mothers in our Bridge House for Women Transitional Housing Program proud to be able to give a toy to each of their children or grandchildren."

Without your support the Methodist Home for Children would not be able to serve all the children that they do, which gives them hope for their future. To find out more about the programs, please call 215-877-1925.

A UNITED METHODIST WITNESS IN PENNSYLVANIA FAITH IN ACTION

WITNESS strives to inform members of the United Methodist Church and members of the General Assembly about issues of social concern to church ministry such as the regulation of alcohol, preventing the expansion of gambling, education quality, healthcare and welfare reform, and the repeal/reform of capital punishment.

ACT NOW!! Make a difference, be involved. Join our online advocacy network— receive the latest legislative updates and action alerts on issues of social concern to church ministry. Receive an invitation to attend media events, advocacy days at the capitol, and annual meeting. Join A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania.

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Family celebration shares Latino traditions of Christmas holiday

Jose "Ricky" Ayala
C.A.L.M. Missionary

Columbia Area Latino Ministry (CALM), with the partnership of Columbia UMC held an event on January 8 entitled "Star of Bethlehem." Children and their families learned about a Latino tradition that celebrates "Three Kings Day" on January 6th.

More than 100 people enjoyed hot dogs, chips and refreshments prepared by the volunteer kitchen committee from Columbia UMC. A special play, based on scriptures reading from Matthew 2:1-11 and Luke 2:1-20, involved seventeen children acting in the roles of Mary and Joseph, shepherds' animals, and three wise men bringing gifts to baby Jesus. After-

wards the children received gifts donated by sponsors who filled the wishes of the children from their wish lists.

Since the event was family oriented, there were gifts for parents as well. It was a joy to see people of different backgrounds in one location enjoying themselves, laughing together and spending time with their children (a big plus!).

CALM would like to thank the following churches for their continued support: Ruhls UMC (Manheim), Covenant UMC (Lancaster), Milton Grove UMC and Columbia UMC. Through their generous donations, the children of this community are reached and through the children, the parents get involved also.

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sions: 54.3" x 17.8" x 4.8" Weight: 72 lbs.. Has a hard travel case and stand. Original List price was \$6,120. Asking \$3,000. Call Rev. Judy Kehler at 610-767-2001 for further information.

COMMUNION CUPS AVAILABLE

We have many (100+) glass communion cups that we no longer use. If you would like them, please contact Eileen Colelli at Glenside/Abington UMC, 137 N. Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038, telephone - 215-884-5251, e-mail gaumc1@juno.com.

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SPRING GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

The Office of Urban and Global Ministries invites local churches throughout the EPA to participate in a spring grant writing workshop on these dates: April 5-7, 2005

Workshops will be held in two locations:

April 5th (evening) and April 6th (morning) in Philadelphia

April 6th (evening) and April 7th (morning) in Reading

(Each workshop will be in 2 sessions: evening and following morning.)

The facilitator will be Dr. Joe D. Connelly an ordained United Methodist Minister who has served as a Church Growth Consultant for the United Methodist denomination since 1994. One of his primary areas of focus has been grant writing. Dr. Connelly will cover Organization Readiness, Drafting and Proposal and Grant Research. This is a dynamic and interactive workshop to share the secrets of grant writing and help your church build its skills in this important method of financing ministry to our community.

For further information, a brochure and registration, please call Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem, Director of the Urban/Global Office at 215-878-8054.

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We accept e-mailed articles in only the following formats:

- .doc Microsoft Word document
- .rtf Rich Text format
- .txt Simple text file

If you are sending us photos, we prefer them sent as actual stock photos. If you must send them electronically, please send them either as .tif or .jpg. We cannot use pictures less than 800 pixels wide.

If you are sending logos or other graphic art, please send them in either .wmf or .eps format.

Please **do not** embed articles or graphics in e-mails. Send them as attachments. This will prevent us from having to extract the file from the email.

If you have previously sent us a submission and wish to update or correct it, please indicate that it is an update or correction.

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FOREWORD By Bishop Neil L. Irons, Ph.D.
Resident Bishop, Harrisburg, PA Area, UMC

Bishop Irons: “Here is a kind of realism that remains optimistic in a world of people that does not always welcome gospel.”