**Partnership provides affordable housing for seniors**

*By Allison Boyle*

More than 40 older adults will have beautiful and new affordable housing in North Philadelphia thanks to a partnership between a United Methodist Church, Simpson Senior Services and government agencies.

In a dedication service on October 10, 100 people joined together in celebration of Simpson Mid-Town. The senior living residence is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the City of Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Mid-Town Parish United Methodist Church and Simpson Senior Services.

Changes to the Clergy, Lay, and Retiree insurance program.

*By Suzy Keenan*

For about three weeks after Hurricane Katrina, Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Coordinator, Ben Botti, was working eight to ten hours a day to keep up with the emails and phone calls he was receiving. Churches, clusters, and individuals from across the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference were contacting Botti in response to the devastation of the hurricane and need for mission teams to help with disaster clean up and repair.

“We’ve had tremendous interest,” exclaimed Botti. “At last count, 61 teams will go, each with from 6 to 25 persons per team. I also received calls from an additional 85 individual volunteers who want to be placed on existing teams.”

The first team to go to the Gulf area will be an Early Response Team (ERT), trained for the special needs of being in mission soon after a disaster. That team is from Hope United Methodist Church in Douglassville. They are leaving on November 25 and will be staying for about 10 days, and will be taking a 24-foot mobile home donated by community residents Dave and Shirley Holeman for use by mission workers or evacuees. Going to Ocean Springs, MS in the Biloxi area, they will not know what work they will be doing until about a week before they get there.

Prior to Katrina there were only two trained ERT’s in the thirteen annual conferences of the entire Northeastern Jurisdiction. The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference now has its own.

At least one person from each team, the team leader, is required to participate in VIM training. “We have about 100 persons go through the training on September 27 and October 1,” said Botti. “If the training that we have done so far is a condensed version that covers ERT and VIM team leader training. They learn team building skills, what to do and what not to do.” Botti added, “The project is not about the work - it’s about the people.”

He cites the importance of flexibility, “because one thing you can count on is that there will be changes in the work because a project might be behind schedule or it may be completed and you might be

**EPA volunteers respond to disaster**

*By Suzy Keenan*

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**Yvette Diaz, Deaconess and Peace Advocate**

*By Suzy Keenan*

Even before she recognized it, Deaconess Yvette Diaz felt called to missions. As far back as she can look, her passion has always been to help - through music, friendships, and service.

Diaz, whose grandparents migrated from Puerto Rico to the United States in 1941, grew up in the East New York section of Brooklyn, which stands on the bones of the Dutch settlement of New Lots. It was a predominantly African-American neighborhood rich in culture. It was there that she experienced first hand the “brutal pangs” of poverty. Church involvement was the joy of her life. She played her guitar and sang in St. Gabriel’s Roman Catholic Church.

When she was fourteen, her mother became a homeowner and moved the family to Queens; after that, she no longer went to...
Conference Calendar

Change in Conference Office hours
Due to the rising cost of gas, beginning October 1, 2005 and continuing to the end of the year, the Conference Office will be open four days per week: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

November 12
Digital Storytellers’ Seminar
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Camp United Methodist Church, 417 S. 22nd St., Camp Hill, PA. Phone: 717-773-5631; email: church@camphill.org. Cost: $89 per person, $69 per person (groups of 3+). Registration forms available at www.cppcumc.org - look under Conference Events or call 1-800-674-8474. Send registration and payment to: CPCUMC - Communications, PO Box 2053, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-2053. For more information, please call Sandi Peiffer at 800-674-8474, e-mail speiffer@cppcumc.org. For more information on Digital Storytellers, visit www.midnightoilproductions.net/ds/tour/index.html.

November 13
Annual Men’s Day Service at Grace Community UMC, everyone welcome to join celebration Service on Sunday, November 13, 2005. The Morning Service will begin at 11:00 a.m. with the Rev. Ralph E. Blanks, District Superintendent of the Central District, as the guest preacher. Renowned Saxophonist, William Douglas will render musical selections during the morning service. The Afternoon Service will begin at 3:30 p.m. with the Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray, Professor of African American Studies at Lutheran Seminary, as the guest preacher. DGCR will be served between the services. Women, you are indeed welcome to attend. For more information, contact The Rev. Artistic Post at Grace Community UMC, 1213 Central Avenue, Chester PA; 610-876-6347.

2005 State Pastors’ Conference
The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is now accepting registra-tions for the 2005 State Pastors’ Conference. Scheduled at the Radisson Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center in Camp Hill. Still, this year’s confer-ence will focus on the “emerging church.” Its theme is “We’ve Never Done It Like This Before: Lessons from the ‘Emerging Church’ Movement.” For more information, go to www.pacchurches.org or for details, including a registration brochure you can download, a news release that tells you more about the conference, and link to a secure site to register for the conference and pay with a MasterCard or Visa credit card. Or, call 717-545-4761.

November 18
Grant Writing Review Workshop
Friday, November 18th from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.: A following grant writing review workshop for those churches which participated in the workshop in April. There is no fee. Site: The Moravian Suites by Hilton, 681 Shannonell Blvd., Audubon, PA 19403, 610-539-7300 (near the Conference Office). The group will meet in the “Valley Forge Conference Room.” Please call the Office of Urban and Global Ministries in order to regis-ter for this Review Workshop (215-787-0714). All registrations must be in by Thursday, November 3rd.

November 19
Grant Writing Workshop
Saturday, November 19th from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.: This is a workshop for those persons/churches that wish to learn grant writing basics and resources. The fee is $25 per person (The fee is modest because the Office of Urban and Global Ministries subsidizes this event through Connectional Ministry Funds). All churches are welcome to attend. A continental breakfast and lunch will be served. Site: The Moravian Suites by Hilton, 681 Shannonell Blvd., Audubon, PA 19403, 610-539-7300 (near the Conference Office). Please call the Office of Urban and Global Ministries in order to register for this event. All registrations must be in by Thursday, November 3rd.

United Methodist Student Day
November 27, 2005
Make a difference in the life of a student
www.umcgiving.org

December 10
Christmas Peace Pilgrimage—Road of Peace
Come, walk with your family and friends, and make new friends who seek a more peaceful world. More than a Walk - even if you cannot walk a portion of the pilgrimage, please consider participating in our related events. Following the singing, we will walk to the United Church of Christ at Market and Center Streets for a simple coffee and to hear our guest speaker this year our speaker is Sr. Patricia Keefe, Outreach Coordinator for the Nonviolent Peace Force, USA, who will speak on “Incarcarnational Peacemaking.” Schedule: Participants will meet in the parking lot of 520 E. Broad Street, Bethlehem (corner of Broad and Elm) before 11 a.m. Buses will transport pilgrims to Nazareth Moravian Church on Center Square at 10:45 a.m., buses begin leaving 520 E. Broad Street (Bechtel Building) 11:00 a.m. Last buses leave Bethlehem for Nazareth. For more information, contact Bishop’s Office at 1-800-672-1789 or go to: worshipconnection.cokesbury.com. Information on hotel and transportation will be available at www.cpcumc.org - look under Conference Events or call 800-874-6357.

January 15, 2006
HUMAN RELATIONS DAY - 2006 SPECIAL OFFERING SUNNY
Human Relations Day was created by the United Methodist Church in 1972 to provide ongoing resources for persons and communities developed under the previous quadrennium’s Fund for Reconcilia-tion. In 1988, the UMC Governing Board decided that Human Relations Day be on the Sunday before the observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday. Lives have been turned around, commu-nities revitalized, and the gospel proclaimed. This has been the legacy of Human Relations Day. The offering includes diaries, photos, and resources to promote Human Relations Day in your congregation, go to: http://www.diving.org

January 17-19, 2006
Worship Conference with the Large Church Initiative, sponsored by Cokesbury’s Worship Connection at First United Methodist Church in Grapevine, Texas. This worship conference is open to: clergy; musicians, band members, lay speakers, worship committee/altar guilds, anyone interested in planning worship! For complete details visit your local Cokesbury Christian Bookstore, call 1-800-672-1789 or go to: worshipconnection.cokesbury.com/content.aspx?dvn=435. If you have questions please call or e-mail Ellie Trimble, Events Coordinator 615-749-6193; Betsy Hall, Worship Connection Team, 615-749-6557.

March 26, 2006
One Great Hour of Sharing
Each year, join United Methodist worldwide on the fourth Sunday of Lent (this year on March 26) in observing the One Great Hour of Sharing. This special offering is vital to under-writing the work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief and its humanitarian ministries. For more information, go to www.umcgive.org

April 30, 2006
Native American Ministries
Native American Awareness Sunday, April 30, 2006, recognizes and supports the contributions of American Indians to the church and society. The observance, approved by the 1988 General Conference, is one of six special churchwide Sunday offerings to be celebrated in each of the 35 United Methodist churches in the United States. The funds collected will allow The United Methodist Church to part-ner with existing native ministries and create programs on behalf of American Indians. Money collected also supports seminary scholarships for United Methodist Native Americans. For more information, go to: www.umcgive.org

June, 2006
Peace with justice Sunday
Six times throughout the year, United Methodist congregations celebrate churchwide Special Sundays with offerings. Your support is critical to the survival of these important minis-tries and for sharing God’s gifts around the world.

October 13-16, 2006
“The Great Event”
Sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship at Valley Forge Radisson, Valley Forge, PA.

For Philadelphia Area clergy - please place these important dates with Bishop Marcus Matthews on your calendar:

November 28, 2005
“The 2005 Bishop’s Advent Day Apart” 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon at Aldersgate UMC, 2313 Concord Pike (Route 202), Wilmington, Delaware 19803.

March 10-13, 2006
“A Waiting and Working Toward a Wider Vision” - presentation by Dr. Laurence Hall Stookoy, Director of Worship and Liturgics, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.

October 9-12, 2006
“Student Day” sponsored by the Student Ministry of the United Methodist Church, Box 2053, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-2053; Phone: (302) 478-2575. Information on how to RSVP will be forthcoming.

February 28, 2006
“The 2006 Bishop’s Lenten Day Apart” 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 2313 Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE 19803; Phone: (302) 478-2575. Information on how to RSVP will be forthcoming.

Announcement
The Rev. Charles E. Weigel, Jr. is the new Conference Secretary for The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Weigel is pas-tor of Downingtown United Methodist Church in Downingtown, PA. He succeeds Mrs. Elizabeth (Lisa) Fisher in this position.

The 2006 Bishop’s Advent Day Apart
Guest Speaker: Dr. Maxine Clarke Beach, Dean of Theological School, Drew University The Atlantic Sands Hotel, Rehoboth Beach, DE. Information on hotel and registration will be forthcoming.

The 2006 Bishop’s Lenten Day Apart
Guest Speaker: Dr. Suzy Keenan Grapevine, Texas. This worship conference is open to: clergy; musicians, band members, lay speakers, worship committee/altar guilds, anyone interested in planning worship! For complete details visit your local Cokesbury Christian Bookstore, call 1-800-672-1789 or go to: worshipconnection.cokesbury.com/content.aspx?dvn=435. If you have questions please call or e-mail Ellie Trimble, Events Coordinator 615-749-6193; Betsy Hall, Worship Connection Team, 615-749-6557.
When is the pastor’s Sabbath?
by the Rev. Cecile J. Grantham*

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, ‘Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.’ (Mark 6:31)

But for a pastor, Sunday is a work day, overwhelming. Pastors often get sick right after the holiday, often neglecting their time off. It’s not unusual for them to be in the office over the weekend, often letting the clock dictate to them. We are so accustomed to keeping a hectic schedule that we feel guilty for not giving enough time to our family, and anxious that we might not be successful at fulfilling our goals. A different way of thinking about time is that it is a wonderful gift from God. We are given a balance between activity and nightly rest. God’s time is sufficient for what God has planned.

This time of year, pastors are often more stressed. We are pulled in many directions: charge conferences, the community Thanksgiving service, Advent planning, extra Christmas activities, pastoral care duties, stewardship activities, pastoral care duties, stewardship needs for the church, and more. Do you have a chance to rest, to schedule a different day of rest for yourself and rest a while? (Mark 6:31)

In our modern Western culture, we often let the clock dictate to us. We fight time. Twenty four hours just isn’t enough. The pastor’s Sabbath is to rest a while. For many were coming to a deserted place all by themselves. (Mark 6:31)

Responsibilities. It should be a day devoted to our family and to our church. It should be a day to re-energize yourself. Spend time with your spouse and your family. Take time for your own spiritual development. Take a nap if you are physically exhausted. Make an appointment with a counselor or spiritual director. (Subsidy help is available for counseling and spiritual direction. Contact Grantham@verizon.net)

“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” (Mark 6:31)

*Rev. Cecile J. Grantham Chair Pastoral Care Committee

New Director for Asbury Protestant Ministry

The Rev. Robert D. Newhart, retired elder on October 3, 2005 at the age of 81.

Rev. Newhart served the following appointments: Swiftwater; Bushkill; Chapman Quarries; Jollett-First; Former Tremont First; Tremont; St. John’s; Oak Grove; Elysburg; Bethel; Tobyhanna; Hazleton; Diamond; Hibler. He retired in 1982. He is survived by his wife, Lucille S. Newhart, RR4 4675 Pumphouse Road, Lake Ariel, PA 18436-8840. Also surviving is his son, Timothy, who resides in Montana.

The Judicial Council decision in the case of Irene Elizabeth Stroud

Today the Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church announced its decision in the case of Irene Elizabeth (Beth) Stroud to reverse the Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals decision, and to reinstate both the guilty verdict of the trial court of thirteen of Stroud’s peers, and the penalty that revoked Stroud’s clergy credentials.

In a church trial in December of 2004, Stroud was found guilty of violating a United Methodist Church law that was in effect in April 2003 when she declared that she was in a covenantated, homosexual relationship. That law states that self-avaowed, practicing homosexuals are not to be ordained or appointed.

Stroud appealed the verdict and penalty, and on April 29, 2005, the Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals overturned the trial court’s verdict and penalty, citing legal error, and restored Stroud’s clergy standing.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, in an appeal to The United Methodist Church’s top court, the Judicial Council.

In an open hearing on October 27, representatives of Stroud and The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference were each allowed 30 minutes to present their arguments. Deliberations of the Judicial Council followed the hearing.

The Judicial Council specified in its decision that Stroud was “accorded all fair and due process rights enumerated in The Discipline and in Judicial Council decisions.” The council additionally decided that the Committee on Appeals was without jurisdiction to declare that para. 304.3 of the Discipline established a new standard of doctrine contrary to established doctrine. That law declares, “Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avaowed, practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.” Further, the council decided that legal error did not occur in respect to the law as it was stated to or determined by the trial court. There is no further appeal process in this case.

Church law is made or changed by a vote of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, when clergy and lay representatives of the worldwide denomination gather every four years. The next General Conference will be held in the spring of 2008.

Please continue to keep The United Methodist Church, in particular its bishops, pastors, and other leaders, in your prayers.

In Memoriam

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Statement from Bishop Marcus Matthews

Bishop Marcus Matthews, Philadelphia Area

The Rev. Tim Rardin is the new director of The Asbury Protestant Ministry at Drexel University, a ministry of the Wesley Foundation of The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Rardin began his position on October 3rd.

In addition to his responsibilities at Asbury, he is also serving as part-time pastoral associate at Calvary UMC in West Philadelphia, where he is also a member. He is also a candidate for elders orders with the Eastern PA Conference. Asbury Protestant Ministry evolved out of Asbury UMC, which was across the street from Drexel until it burned down in 1996. The church had been very active in ministry with the university, and so set up an endowment to establish a student ministry at Drexel, with a responsibility to reach out to Protestant students. Efforts are now also being made to expand the ministry to Temple University with the support of the Wesley Foundation.

Rardin reflects on the ministry’s purpose: “The board has made a commitment to ministry by now having a full-time pastor. I see my role to be in ministry with campus as a whole - students, faculty and staff.” Counseling, pastoral care, worship, fellowship will all be included. “I want to offer a Christian perspective on a variety of issues and questions that come up on an urban campus in the heart of the city,” he said.

“I certainly hope to grow and hope to provide a lot of options for people to participate, including alternative worship at times amenable to a student’s life, worship, Bible study, community and social action, alternative spring breaks.” Rardin noted that Drexel students’ cop-op schedule (six months in school, then six months in a work environment) will offer challenges to keep them engaged.

Formerly, Rardin served on the Wesley Foundation board before he went to seminary. He graduated in 2004 with an M.Div. From Drew Theological School. He also holds a B.A. in English and Communication from the University of Michigan (1994).

Rardin was engaged to Asbury, he held a variety of church and non-profit/social service positions in Baltimore, Philadelphia and Nework, N.J. His work included being Adult Basic Education/GED Instructor at Community Women’s Education Project/Community College of Philadelphia, ministry intern at Protestant Community Centers Inc.of Newark, N.J. and youth director at both Fox Chase UMC in Philadephia and UMC of Green Village in New Jersey.

Rardin is originally from central Ohio, where he was active at First United Methodist Church in Marysville, Ohio. “I am excited to journey with students in the process of self-discovery and in making sense of their spirituality in the context of all the questions. As they explore what they want to do with their lives, we offer spiritual grounding.” You can reach him at tsrardin@yahoo.com.
Church marks 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women

A UMNS Feature By Vicki Brown*

On May 4, 1956, in Minneapolis, the General Conference of the Methodist Church approved full clergy rights for women. Half a century later, the fruits of that action are the nearly 12,800 United Methodist clergywomen who serve the church at every level, from bishops to local pastors.

By Vicki Brown*  
A UMNS Feature

A year long celebration of the 50th anniversary includes worship services, books celebrating the lives of pioneering clergywomen and writings of other clergywomen, special observances at annual conferences, and a banquet and concert on Aug. 15 during the International United Methodist Clergywomen’s Consultation in Chicago, Aug. 13-17.

“The decision forever changed the face of ordained clergy. Because of the General Conference action, bishops were required to appoint every pastor in good standing within the conference. The effect was that any woman in full connection and in good standing would receive an appointment,” said the Rev. Mary Ann Moman, associate general secretary of the Commission on Ordained Ministry of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

To take that step in a long journey of acceptance for many clergywomen, the church’s celebration of this anniversary is a reminder of all of us both the joys and heartaches clergywomen have experienced in the journey toward full acceptance in the church.” Moman said.

Bishop Susan Moore of the Albany (N.Y.) Area, episcopal liaison to the task force planning the celebrations, says that while the conference action opened an official door that was embarrassing to have closed, change was slow. And the anniversary is a reminder of that, as well as a celebration of the leadership and gifts of women clergy.

“In one way it reminds us that throughout history the church has not always been open to diversity and inclusiveness,” Moman said.

The Revs. Grace Eloise Huck and Marion Kline, two of the first 27 women accepted into probationary status in 1956, plan to be at the August clergywomen’s gathering. Both women were received into full connection in 1960.

Both recalled simply following God’s call.

“It didn’t always work out exactly as planned,” said Kline, who is 94. “I think I want to be a full participant,” she said of the annual gathering. “This is a unique opportunity for them to get together and discuss the issues that they are facing now.”

The Rev. Jane Ann Stonerhew, 89, said she never dreamed she would be able to serve as a clergywoman.

“I didn’t know I was a foremother. I never dreamed I was going to be a foremother. I never dreamed women would be able to serve as clergywomen as long as I was alive. I’m just grateful for what God has done for me,” she said.

Thus, women paved the way toward full acceptance in the church,” Moore, 74, said. “Now it’s time to bring them home.”

Moore referred to the 2007 General Conference where the denomination’s top legislative body opened an official door that was embarrassing to have closed, and women in full connection and in good standing would receive an appointment.” The decision forever changed the face of ordained clergy. Because of the General Conference action, women were now required to appoint every pastor in good standing within the conference. The effect was that any woman in full connection and in good standing would receive an appointment.”

The Rev. Mary Ann Moman, associate general secretary of the Commission on Ordained Ministry of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

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Concern rises over lack of tents for Asia quake survivors
UMNS Report
By Linda Bloom*

Relief workers trying to assist survivors of the South Asia earthquake are racing against time and the approach of a harsh winter.

New estimates by regional officials of the death toll from the Oct. 8 earthquake had jumped to at least 79,000 by Oct. 19, according to the Associated Press. But the real concern is for the survivors, according to Marvin Parvez, director of Church World Service Pakistan-Afghanistan.

“With the 2 to 3 million affected and homeless, the government and U.N. estimates that the affected families need over 600,000 shelter kits or tents,” he told United Methodist News Service. “Currently, we have a little over 100,000 available in the supply chain, so you can see we have a huge gap between demand and supply here.”

In an Oct. 18 New York Times article, Andrew Macleod, the United Nations’ humanitarian chief in Pakistan, said the problem was not the response from aid organizations but the size of the task. He said “we need more winterized tents than exist in the world today.”

Parvez pointed out that in many of the regions affected by the earthquake, there was a window of only 15 to 20 days from Oct. 19 before winter sets in, and this will increase the vulnerability of the children and the elderly.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is working with CWS Pakistan/Afghanistan and the International Blue Crescent to respond to the earthquake. The White City is a place where a legacy of home, hope and healing exists in the world today. Together partners are working in El Salvador to assist people affected by Hurricane Stan and a volcanic eruption that happened during the same week.

More than 3,000 vulnerable families are receiving immediate assistance as well as help for future recovery through community organizations and health care. Give to UMCOR Advance #501300, Central American Emergency, to help survivors of this tragedy restore their lives.

MALAWI: FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

UMCOR has received an urgent appeal from the Malawi United Methodist Church requesting assistance in the face of a severe famine in the country. Each of the 55 United Methodist churches is working to provide immediate assistance to the neediest families in their communities. They are also implementing programs to prevent food shortages in the future through better irrigation technology as well as seeds and other supplies. Your generous gifts to UMCOR Advance #102520, All Africa Drought and Famine Relief, will help hungry people in Malawi and in other African countries facing drought and famine conditions.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is reaching out in African villages where starvation and malnourishment are epidemic. Drought and locusts have created an acute crisis, according to officials at UMCOR, which is partnering with Swiss Interchurch Aid. Known as HEKS, which has long-term commitments in Niger, the alliance is providing seeds, cattle fodder and staple foods such as milk powder in the southern region of Niger and goats in the country’s northern and western regions.

Food aid and sustainable agriculture are examples of approaches to combating food insecurity in vulnerable parts of the African continent.

BERLIN (UMNS)

White City is a place where a legacy of conflict dating back to the 1930s still intrudes into everyday life. This week of Oriongen, a suburb of Berlin, was also home to Soviet soldiers during the Cold War when Oriongen was part of what was then East Germany. When communism rule ended, Russian soldiers left the area in ruins. It is here that the Rev. Heinrich Meinhardt and his congregation have created a church that literally fits into a large container. The physical space inside the Evangelisch-methodistische Kirche im Container (which translates “Church in the Container”) includes one central meeting/activity area, a closet-size office, a storage area and a bathroom. With limited space the church is run by church members who volunteer and serve on the Sunshine Band, as well as two full-time employees.

UMCOR’s parent agency, the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, also is part of the African Church of Pakistan’s Mission Partners Forum. The Church of Pakistan - the largest Protestant Church in Pakistan - is a member of the Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran and Presbyterian (British) Church family.

The earthquake was centered about 60 miles north of Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, an area that was felt as far east as New Delhi, India, and as far west as Kabul, Afghanistan. Devastation occurred in northern Pakistan and in both the Pakistan-controlled and Indian-controlled sections of Kashmir.

NOVEMBER 2005

The World in Brief

CENTRAL AMERICA: HURRICANE STAN RESPONSE
UMCOR is assisting thousands who were affected by Hurricane Stan’s unremitting rains in early October through partner organizations that are already at work in the region. Through Ecological Indigenous Federation of Chiapas, UMCOR is helping indigenous coffee farmers meet basic needs after the hurricane destroyed crops and washed away precious land. Action by Churches Together partners are working in El Salvador to assist people affected by Hurricane Stan and a volcanic eruption that happened during the same week.

More than 3,000 vulnerable families are receiving immediate assistance as well as help for future recovery through community organizations and health care. Give to UMCOR Advance #501300, Central American Emergency, to help survivors of this tragedy restore their lives.

MALAWI: FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

UMCOR has received an urgent appeal from the Malawi United Methodist Church requesting assistance in the face of a severe famine in the country. Each of the 55 United Methodist churches is working to provide immediate assistance to the neediest families in their communities. They are also implementing programs to prevent food shortages in the future through better irrigation technology as well as seeds and other supplies. Your generous gifts to UMCOR Advance #102520, All Africa Drought and Famine Relief, will help hungry people in Malawi and in other African countries facing drought and famine conditions.

A woman waits while her husband tries to get trans- portation out of Panama, a Pakistan village destroyed by the quake. (The Oct. 7 earthquake was centered in the Pakistani-controlled part of Kashmir, and it caused death and destruction in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.) A UMNS photo by Marianne Preuss Jacobsen.

NEW YORK (UMNS) UNICEF needs to work in partnership with United Methodists and others to end the threats to children in today’s world. That was the message delivered by Rima Salah, UNICEF’s deputy executive direc- tor, to directors and staff of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries during a forum at the Church Center for the United Nations. Salah said she has witnessed “many examples of threats children face every day.” Those threats include being abducted or killed, or being trafficked to other countries for cheap labor or prostitution purposes, and being subjected to rape as a weapon of war. “Even in times of peace, the lives of children are under threat,’” she noted. She said that the board members that UNICEF or any other organization alone cannot solve all the problems that children face in the world, but “together, we can join hands and create a world in which children can live in safety and with dignity.”

MONROVIA, Liberia (UMNS) As their country emerges from years of civil war, Liberians are pinning their hopes for the future on the outcome of a run-off election set for Nov. 8, between soccer star George Weah and former Liberian finance official Ellen Johnson Sirleaf — both United Methodists. Nei- ther of them has more than 50 percent of the votes necessary to win. On Oct. 11, more than 1 million people — 74 percent of registered voters — went to the polls to participate in Liberia’s first democratic elections following 14 years of civil war. While there has been no major fighting since the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003, the Liberian capital city of Monrovia remains without electricity or running water and more than 120,000 people are languishing in refugee and internally displaced camps throughout the region.

ZIMBABWE (UMNS) A caravan of United Methodist deacons, searching for a site for an AIDS treatment project, personally confronted the needs of those suffering with the disease on a Sept. 16-Oct. 1 visit to Zimbabwe. The six deacons delivered more than 400 pounds of medical supplies and 200 sets of clothes to clinics and hospitals in the Mutare area and worked on a partnership with Africa United Methodist Medical Mission. The group also was looking for a site for an AIDS treatment and rehabilitation, as well as respite care with home-based care for follow-up counseling and spiritual support for people living with AIDS.
Native American Ministries
*by Hilda Campbell

The Northeast Jurisdiction Committee on Native American Ministries Task Force (NEJ CoNAM) met October 14 to 16 at Arch St. United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, where The Rev. Robin Hynicka, senior pastor, and members of the church welcomed the group. The event culminated with a Native American service, an annual event of Arch St. UMC, usually held in November. Chief Buffy Red Feather (seen at right) preached the message, “One Spirit, Many Nations”, after which participants danced with the Cherokee Sister’s Drum Group, and then enjoyed lunch together. The service included “Amazing Grace” sung in Cherokee by Jusdene April Rain Clark and Chairmaine Sunflower Lark.

Cyndi Kent, chairperson of NEJ CoNAM, led the three-day meetings where attendees met, worshipped, and shared stories. Rev. Mattie Alethia Williams, Executive Director of the Multiracial Center for Ministry of the NEJ, met with the group on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. The task force discussed many issues and developed an “action plan” to assist each Conference in the Jurisdictional area. One goal is to have every conference in the jurisdiction represented; currently, three are not.

This means there must be an active effort to locate and support Native American Ministries within and outside of the local church to encourage awareness and growth of Christian Native Americans. It is important for each team to have a written report for the Annual Meeting. A web page has been designed and is ready to be put on the site. Conferences are being asked to become aware of Native Americans within congregations and to encourage active participation in the worship services. There are limited funds available for programs and outside sources should be sought.

Stix Chics and Flying Eagles were two very successful youth programs that were shared with the group by the Pen-Del Conference. The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference invites a Chief, Tribal leader or spiritual leader for each fifth Sunday to share issues and concerns within the tribe, knowing that their brothers and sisters need to be known in order to be of help to them.

Thanks goes to both Eastern PA Conference, as host, which will cover the cost of the meeting space while Greater New Jersey took care of the food and preparation. West Virginia CoNAM is working on Repatriation and increased use of available storytellers. The Washington, DC CoNAM runs a Peace camp and the “Wins Program” in which 82 students meet for breakfast, prayer and worship every Friday. During the summer many decided to give community service, not for dollars, but just their desire to give back without being asked.

There are over 554 federally recognized Native tribes, nations and villages in the United States. This doesn’t include state recognized or those in the process of seeking recognition. Proceeds from the Native American Ministries Sunday Special Offering (to be held April 30 in 2006) support Native American Ministry in each conference, provide educational assistance and the establishment of urban Native ministries. Native American representation will be at the World Conference in Korea. We thank Dulgaida Wolfsen for her coordination efforts and Donald Robinson for being the tour guide around the city. We stopped at Findley Temple, Old St. George’s and the St. Peter’s Episcopal church, where we viewed the burial site of eight Chiefs.

UPCOMING EVENTS:
“Pau Wow.” November 4 & 5, 2005. Univ. of Maryland College Park Campus & American Indian Heritage and Education Assoc. For more information, contact Greg Hamilton 240-685-6443 or Dotie Bass 301-840-5618.


*The Rev. Hilda Campbell is the Director of Human Relations and Leadership of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Youth group “builds an ark” to fight world hunger

By Susan DeSandre

Goats, sheep, cows - an ark of animals has risen on the mountain in Pocono Lake! The youth of Pocono Lake United Methodist Church raised over $8,000 for an ark of animals for Heifer International.

Heifer International is an organization whose mission is ending hunger and caring for the earth. The gift of an ark helps families worldwide who are poor and hungry to become self-supporting. The livestock that the families receive are not only a source of food, but also provide a dependable income. Heifer International has been around for about 60 years. During that time, millions of families in over 128 countries have been given an opportunity for self-reliance for a better tomorrow. In addition, families and individuals who receive animals become donors themselves. People share the offspring from their animals to others in their community thus passing on the gift of hope and self-reliance.

The youth came up with a variety of creative fundraising projects that would involve the congregation and the community at large. They held a spaghetti dinner, a jellybean sale, a t-shirt sale, and a community movie night. They held a cookie walk before Christmas, where customers bought an empty cookie can, and walked around tables filling their can from plates of homemade cookies. In the spring, members were given a daily reading and asked to place a coin in an ark bank after completing the reading every day for 28 days. And in the summer the youth held a 24-hour famine, for which people pledged an amount of money to support the 24-hour famine cause. The youth also gained an understanding of what it is like to go without food, as many children do everyday around the world.

What a fantastic year the youth had working together. They made new friends and built their dream, a dream that they all can be proud of. In Micah, chapter 6, verse 8, the Bible states, “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” Certainly the youth have embraced this passage.

*Susan DeSandre is a publicity communications chair and a member of Pocono Lake UMC.
Methodist Home for Children

Founders Day Dinner

By Theresa F. Haenn*

Methodist Home for Children celebrated 126 years of continuous outreach to children, individuals and families during its Founder’s Day dinner on September 29 with Bishop Marcus Matthews as the Keynote Speaker. Angele Marie Parker, Ph.D., President and CEO in her welcoming comments talked about the work of Methodist Home for Children through the commitment of the volunteers who provided leadership, vision, a helping hand and a loving heart throughout the agency’s history.

Dr. Parker spoke of the outreach to children and their families in Kensington, highlighting the work of the Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Frederick Douglas, Jr. with boys whose fathers are absent and what it means for those young men to have a positive male role model; of a mother with six children who moved to a new apartment community at the Methodist Home for Children, Monument Village, who in conjunction with the staff was able to find a computer and office training program that led to a full-time job that paid her enough so she and her children could move to their own apartment in Southwest Philadelphia. “Methodist Home for Children is about breaking the cycle and helping people make changes for the better!”

Congregations around the Conference have been given to Methodist Home for Children in a tremendous outpouring of love and support for the children. Personal care items and toiletry kits were a gift at Easter along with baskets of candy; unwrapped toys and gifts are brought to the campus by the thousands in December to be given to every single child in our programs, and for many that is the only gift at Christmas that they will receive. One church gave winter clothing as a result of their Epiphany Tree giving which meant that children in Kensington who were going to school without winter coats, hats, boots and gloves, could finally be warm.

Bishop Marcus Matthews in his keynote presentation said that “the time is now for the church to become the voice of the voiceless – the children.” The Bishop went on to say that we must look ahead 50-100 years and ask ourselves, what will we look like then? The legacy of this great institution is to say to the world – how can we keep the legacy and vision of Mrs. Simpson going so that every child can grow to be a fine productive citizen? According to John Wesley we need to provide holistically for their needs so that all children know that they were made in the image of God and welcomed by Jesus. Working together in concert with the churches and the Conference we can say that we have seen their misery, heard their cry and have seen their suffering and together have come to deliver them.

Bishop Matthews’ eloquent presentation was a wonderful lead in to the award presentations of the evening. Three awards were presented for Service Excellence, Volunteerism and the George Bonadio Leadership Award.

*Theresa F. Haenn is director of development for the Methodist Home for Children

Cornwall Manor celebrates Founders Day

by Kelly Saylor*

On Wednesday, October 18, Cornwall Manor Retirement Community celebrated its beginnings and honored those who have supported its mission of caring over the past, 56 years at its annual Founders Day dinner and program.

The event featured an awards presentation to those who have demonstrated the highest levels of philanthropic support for Cornwall Manor. The honored guest and keynote speaker was Bishop Marcus Matthews, Presiding Bishop of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Awards presented included the annual Founder’s Day Award. This year’s recipient was Patricia C. Ewald, Cornwall Manor resident. This prestigious award is given to those who exhibit commitment to Cornwall Manor on a variety of levels.

Through her actions, Mrs. Ewald has helped Cornwall Manor carry on a tradition of caring.

Mrs. Ewald and her late husband George moved to Cornwall Manor in July of 1990. One word that is used to describe Mrs. Ewald is “involved.”

In addition to her numerous community and church (Good Shepherd UMC in Lebanon) volunteer activities, she has been a tireless volunteer for the Cornwall Manor community. She and her husband shared their time, talents and treasures for the betterment of Cornwall Manor from almost the day they moved to our community. Others were honored at the Founders Day program as they were inducted into the Buckingham Society. The Buckingham Society was named for Mrs. Margaret Coleman Buckingham, considered Cornwall Manor’s first philanthropist.

Members of the Buckingham Society are recognized for their philanthropic support of Cornwall Manor. This year’s inductees were Cornwall Manor resident Jean Lytle and the Cornwall Manor Woodshop Volunteers, Thelma Charnock, Gilbert G. Driesbach and Robert W. Robbins were inducted posthumously.

Faithful Friends were also recognized for their consistent contributions to support our mission for 20 years or more. Those honored included Chalfont United Methodist Women, Charmaine Foltz, First United Methodist Women of Media, Clinton and Dorothy Hughes, Vernon and Jessie Neff, and Ruth Page.

Cornwall Manor is a 500-resident, not-for-profit continuing care retirement community that offers diverse levels of care, including independent living, supportive housing, health care and related services for individuals to achieve a retirement and aging lifestyle they find fulfilling in a secure, caring, and Christian environment.

*Kelly Saylor is Public Relations & Development Coordinator for Cornwall Manor.
Volunteers assigned to another project." He also noted that the recent trainings excluded cultural awareness and other aspects that would be stressed for international VIM teams.

The training on September 27 was led by Greg Forrester, the Northeastern Jurisdictional VIM coordinator. Training on October 1 was led by Russell Atkinson and Ben Botti, both experienced team leaders, who served together on a VIM team to Grenada 10 years ago.

Botti stressed that clean up and rebuilding is going to be a seven to ten year process, and that there will be an ongoing need for VIM teams during that time. "After media attention dies off, it is out of people's consciousness, and people forget about the need. We need to keep it at the forefront so people do not forget about those who need our help," he said.

The VIM teams will mainly be repairing homes: replacing dry wall and insulation, treating for mold, electrical and plumbing repair, and roofing. Each team is assembling a skills inventory, which Botti will then communicate to his contacts in three conferences in the storm area: Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama/West Florida.

One VIM team expressed interest in working on a church, which Botti will help to accommodate. As UM COR money is used only to repair homes, not churches, funding for rebuilding churches will have to come from other sources. If your church would be interested in partnering with a church in the storm area, VIM coordinator for the Northeastern Jurisdiction, Greg Forrester, has created a link on www.umvimnej.org that will help you to identify UMC churches in the storm area. Forrester spoke about the storm-affected churches:

"Though many were not severely damaged, over 170 were severely damaged. All the churches need spiritual, emotional, and financial assistance to respond to the needs of those around them. Please reach out with Christian support."

Churches, clusters, districts, individuals are still encouraged to form teams to go. A full 6-hour VIM team leader training is being planned for a Saturday early next spring. A VIM training event is also scheduled for Monday, November 7, from 6:00 PM to 9:30 PM in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference at Cornerstone UMC, Bear, DE on Route 98, a few miles south of Philadelphia. The training will be led by Don Hamilton, Peninsula Delaware Conference VIM Coordinator, and Ben Botti.

For more information, please contact Ben Botti, Eastern PA Conference VIM Coordinator, 127 Barndt Road, Sellersville, PA 18960; Phone 215-725-8367; Fax 215-723-2945; e-mail bbotti@centermail.net.

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St. Paul’s UMC Pre-school staff honored

St. Paul’s United Methodist Church Preschool Center in Warrington is proud to announce that two of their staff members, Mary Cavallero and Terri Mohapp, were presented with 2005 Bucks County Association for the Education of Young Children Outstanding Educators Awards. Additional staff members, Anne Reinheimer, Pat Suchanec and Jacki Van Houten, were 2005 Outstanding Educator Award nominees.

The preschool, an outreach of St. Paul’s United Methodist Church serving the community since 1967, ministers to over 300 children on a weekly basis.

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Caring for Our Community is in Our Spirit

Methodist Hospital Foundation cares about our neighbors. Our spirit guides our mission — to improve the quality of life and healthcare services in South Philadelphia, regardless of ability to pay.

We support programs that reach our most vulnerable neighbors. We proudly support Methodist Hospital’s Parish Nurse Program, Methodist Hospital’s Southeast Asian Outreach program, and The Caring People Alliance “Visiting Animals, Plants and Me” for the homebound elderly, among others.

Thanks to our generous benefactors, Methodist Hospital Foundation has awarded nearly $800,000 in grants since 1998.

Methodist Hospital Foundation supports the development of health care services in South Philadelphia. It is the fundraising arm of Methodist Hospital, helping offset costs for medical care of uninsured and underinsured patients in the community.

To contribute to the Methodist Hospital Foundation, please call 215-952-9006.

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Asbury UMC Celebrates 85

On Sunday, November 13, at 10:15 am, Asbury United Methodist Church of Norristown will celebrate its 85th Anniversary with a special worship service and reception. Bishop Susan Wolfe Hassinger, retired bishop of the Boston Area, will be the guest preacher.

The theme for the Anniversary Celebration is “Celebrating Our Past, Embracing Our Future.” This theme grows out of the church’s present experience of revitalization as Asbury engages in a redevelopment process through Project 615. Bishop Hassinger was elected to the episcopacy in 1996. Prior to that, she served as director of The Office of Resource for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and also served as district superintendent of the former Allentown District. Currently, Bishop Hassinger is bishop-in-residence at the Boston University School of Theology. The church is located at the corner of Pine and F Freedley Streets in Norristown.

For more information, call Bishop Susan Hassinger 610-272-1233.

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Yvette Diaz
continued from pg 1

church. That began “the ten hardest years of my life,” during which she graduated from the LaGuardia High School of Music and Art, had two children, and studied liberal arts at the City College of New York. Although raised in the Roman Catholic Church as a child, her “real faith journey” was sparked in 1994 in marriage classes that she and her husband, Leo, attended at a United Methodist church in Lancaster, PA. As this was a second church marriage for each of them, some-thing not permitted in the Roman Catho-lic Church; they sought and were wel-lcomed to attend marriage classes at El Redentor United Methodist Church in preparation for their wedding. Her expe-rience led to an Eastern morning awaken-ing, and she discovered a burning passion for The Word.

As a public servant in the Department of Public Welfare, Diaz is in ministry with those in poverty as a Career Work-supervisor, supervising six caseworkers who work directly with consumers in food stamps, medical assistance programs and former cash assistance recipients. She instills her work with encouragement and support for those in poverty as a Case Work-ship. And running tutoring and summer pro-gram for children in the inner-city area.

As president of the board of the Sha-lom Zone in Lancaster (PA), Diaz hopes to share with everyone involved in the Deaconess Program. While I was working in the church, I was organization, The Deaconess Program of the General Board of Global Ministries, which works to bring peace and whole-some life to impoverished communities. This led her to attend the Shalom Zone Summit in Chicago in 2000. “With only 93 active deaconesses in the U.S.,” Diaz said, “it was by God’s hand, not by chance, that I met Deaconess Peggy Wantauk, who shared her experience as a deaconess with me, on the train during an excursion at the sum-mit.”

Diaz followed up with a call to ask for materials on the Deaconess Program. When I received the brochure, I was stunned. All of the scriptures that I marked down in my Bible as meaningful to me were the ones in the brochure,” she said.

After completing the six required courses for the Deaconess Program in two and a half years, studying part-time, Diaz was commissioned a deaconess in 2004, along with twenty-six other women in the United States as part of the DIAKONIA movement. Each member organization picks one or more people (depending on size) to serve as a delegate to the quadrennial event. Looking forward, the assembly has set forth an ambitious agenda that includes strengthening its funding position – particularly as it pertains to disparities between countries within the same region; a greater involvement of young people in the assembly as it seeks to have “catch the spirit of diakonia”; preserving and archiving the history of the World Assembly; and involving the grassroots communities touched by the work of assembly members in maintaining the momentum between assemblies. As the members departed to all corners of the globe, it was an-ounced that the DOTA (of which the United States is a part) would host the 20th World Assembly of DIAKONIA in 2009. More in the near future, the members of DOTAC will be meeting from July 2 – 6, 2006 in Trinidad to continue its preparation as host for the World Assembly in 2009 and other issues. For more information on the World Assembly of DIAKONIA, visit their website at www.diaconia-world.org

*By the Rev. David W. Brown
Probationary Deacon Candidate
Commissioned Toward Ordination in Full Connection
Eastern Pennsylvania Conference
Reprinted from the September 2005 online edition of Across the Boards (www.gbhem.org/acrosstheboards). Used by permission

If you are a lay person (man or woman) who feels called to a full-time vocation in service to those who are marginalized and in need in the world today, there is an opportunity to be a part of a supportive community in connection with the United Methodist Church as a deaconess or home missioner. For more information, contact Becky Dodson-Louter, Deaconess Program Office, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 520, New York, NY 10115, 212-870-3850, deaconess@gbgm-umc.org. For more information, go to http://gbgm- umc.org/who_we_are/m/dnews_cfm#newcommission

www.epaumc.org

Diakonia World Assembly meets in Durham, England

*by The Rev. David Brown

They came from around the globe: Egypt, Australia, Germany, the United States, Korea, Fiji, Africa, Scotland, and more. They represent a broad array of service ministries from providing the basics of food and water to a remote village devastated by war to helping women with cancer patients. Approximately 400 deacons, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses representing more than a dozen countries and various denominations gathered in Durham, England for the DIAKONIA 19th World Assembly from July 20 – 27, 2005. For United Methodists, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry staff members Sharon Rubey and Anita Wood joined nearly 20 current and retired deacons and diaconal ministers who made the trip “across the pond” to gather in the spirit of diakonia. (See picture above. Front row from left: Sharon Rubey, Kathy Mitchum, Cathy McGovern, Diane Eberhart, GBHEM board member, Rebecca Wayland, McMahan. Second row from left: David Brown, Margaret Ann Crain, Ken Boyd, Rick Rutherford, Teresa Park, Anita Wood, Rhoda Markus, Barbara Schreier, Marie King, Beverly Abbott)

“Diakonia” is defined by many expressions in the church. Diakonia comprises the World Federa-tion of Diaconal Associations and Communities of which the United Methodist Church is a member. In ministry, “diakonia” is described as “Christian service to which all the baptized are called and is part of the mission of Christ’s church in the world.” The diaconate that makes up this body includes those persons called, identified, prepared, set apart and/or commissioned or ordained for public ministry of diakonia” in Christian service.

Definitions aside, the unifying characteristic that typified this gathering is the unfailing dedication each individual shares emulating Jesus Christ’s mandate “not to be served...but to serve.” This spirit was captured in the opening worship held in the historic Durham Cathedral – one of the greatest churches ever built with many of the features from the original structure erected in 1093 still intact. The worship service included an address by the Right Reverend Tom Wright, who said, “The purpose of diakonia is never ‘What’s in it for me.’ You are called to fill the need whatever that need is. Instead of ‘What’s in it for me,’ diakonia calls us to connect to the world allowing those we touch to discover ‘What Christ can do through me.’

Within the context of this spiritual direction, the World Assembly also represents a time to conduct the business of the organization. The Assembly convenes just once every four years. The Executive Council that guides the Assembly meets annually as a group, conducting a significant amount of business remotely among council members via phone and e-mail.

The World Assembly of DIAKONIA is made up of three regions: the Diakonia Region Africa, Africa (DRAE), Diakonia Asia-Pacific (DAP), and Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC) of which The United Methodist Church in the United States is a part. Each member organization picks one or more people (depending on size) to serve as a delegate to the quadrennial event.
Board of Pension and Health Benefits

Insurance Information for Clergy and Lay of the EPA Conference:

It’s Annual Enrollment Time
Annual enrollment for the 2006 benefit plan year will be conducted during early November.
If you currently participate in a Conference-sponsored health plan, a letter containing your benefit plan highlights was mailed to your home in mid-October. You may even have been invited to an informational meeting (available in some locations).

Active Participants: What You Need To Do
Annual enrollment for active participants in the Conference-sponsored health plans is November 1 – 15, 2005, for the 2006 benefit plan year.

If you are a participant in a Conference-sponsored health plan and you wish to stay in that plan . . .

Do nothing. You will continue to be enrolled in the plan, with the changes outlined in the newsletter mailed to your home.

If you are a participant in a Conference-sponsored health plan and you wish to discontinue your Conference-provided health coverage . . .

Contact Trish DePetris at 800-828-9093, ext. 213, or Eleanor Weiser, Support Associate-Benefits at 800-828-9093, ext. 220 for the proper forms.

2006 Plan Highlights
The chart on this page provides highlights of the 2006 benefit plans for active participants. If you did not receive a letter from the Conference, or if you were unable to attend a meeting that was offered in your area, you may access more detailed benefit summaries by logging on to http://www.epaumc.org/bfpensionhealthbenefits.asp.

2006 Plan Highlights
The chart on this page provides highlights of the 2006 benefit plans for active participants. If you did not receive a letter from the Conference, or if you were unable to attend a meeting that was offered in your area, you may access more detailed benefit summaries by logging on to http://www.epaumc.org/bfpensionhealthbenefits.asp.

Retired Participants: What You Need To Do
Annual enrollment for retired participants in the Conference-sponsored health plans is November 15 – 30, 2005, for the 2006 benefit plan year.

If you are a retiree in the Conference Medicare Supplement Plan OR the Keystone 65 Plan and you wish to stay in that plan . . .

Do nothing. You will continue to be enrolled in the plan, with the changes outlined in this newsletter.

If you reside in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery or Philadelphia County and you wish to change enrollment from Keystone 65 to the Conference Medicare Supplement Plan (or vice versa):

Contact Trish DePetris at 800-828-9093, ext. 213, or Eleanor Weiser, Support Associate-Benefits at 800-828-9093, ext. 220 for the proper forms.

The Conference’s Approach to Medicare Part D Coverage for 2006
After reviewing the new Medicare Part D coverage, and the available options, the Conference has decided to continue to provide prescription drug coverage to eligible retirees in 2006, with the changes outlined in this newsletter. There are advantages to receiving prescription drug coverage through a Conference plan instead of electing Medicare Part D through a private insurance provider. If you have not received a letter containing your benefit plan highlights which was mailed to your home in mid-October, please contact Trish DePetris at 800-828-9093, ext. 213, or Eleanor Weiser, Support Associate-Benefits at 800-828-9093, ext. 220.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you decide to enroll in Medicare Part D through a private insurance provider, your medical and prescription drug coverage under the Conference Group Health Insurance Program will terminate December 31, 2005.

www.epaumc.org
The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference offers funding, grants, loans, or scholarships, made possible through the conference Connectional Ministries Fund. Here are some of the monies available, some with approaching application deadlines. Look for additional information on available funding in the December issue of NEWSpirit.

UPCOMING DEADLINES
November 15 deadline
- Conference Resourcing and Connectional Ministries (formerly Congregational Transformation)
Grants are given to provide seed money for new ministries in local churches. Deadline for application for 2005 funds is November 15. Applications are received on an ongoing basis.
For more information, contact The Rev. Dr. Sherrin Marshall, executive director of Conference Resourcing and Connectional Ministries, 1-800-828-9093, ext. 236; sherrin.marshall@epaumc.org

November 15 deadline
- Urban and Global Ministries
Seed grants are offered for local churches to engage in ministry with the communities in which they exist. There are two grant deadlines each year: November 15 and May 15. Applications may be obtained from the Office of Urban and Global Ministries at 215-878-8054.

Ongoing deadlines
- Conference Education Society
Loans are provided to students pursuing higher education who are members of churches of the EPA Conference. The maximum yearly amount needed to be borrowed shall not be less than $1,000 nor more than $2,000 in any one year, and the total amount loaned to such persons shall not exceed $8,000 total. The present rate of interest is 3%. Request for applications must be made by May 15 each year.
For further information, contact the Rev. Felicia Kumar, Conference Education Society, 980 Madison Avenue, Norristown, PA 19403; fel6222@juno.com; 610-650-8534.

- Latino Plan and Ministries
The impast of “SRI” on performance and fiduciary responsibility
By Stacy Martin*

Last month I presented information regarding SRI (“Socially Responsible Investing”). This month I would like to discuss two questions that quickly come onto the table when implementing a socially responsible investment policy:
1) Is there a negative impact to investment performance?
2) How does the Church’s investment committee choose between performance and SRI?

The short answers are “no” and “you can have both.”

With regard to performance measure- ment, it should be noted that socially responsible investing has not been a common investment concept for much longer than the last ten years or so. Individuals began asking their investments to affirm their values. During this same time period, mutual fund investing exploded. The result is that there are relatively few socially responsible mutual funds that have a ten-year performance record—a common investment tool to use when evaluating a fund. Further, there are varied social issues that a fund may seek to support or avoid. I recommend the following websites for you to use in learning more about this type of investing: www.socialinvest.org, and www.dominion.com.

Let’s address the first question: do socially responsible investments under-perform their non-screened counterparts? The answer is they should not, and, a SRI investor should not expect underperformance. A socially screened portfolio will still participate in market growth if it is well diversified. Certainly, sectors of the market may enjoy growth (beer and cigarette sales expand during tough economic times) but this overall performance is temporary and can be overcome with a well-managed, diversified portfolio. This is particularly true for our United Methodist churches and agencies as they are long-term investors, committed to the future.

The second question is not a matter of asset selection but rather a matter of investment policy. The primary duty of a fiduciary is to manage a prudent investment process. This can only be done with a stated, well considered investment policy. A written policy should address the committee’s need for performance as well as socially responsible investments. By having both in the policy, the committee is taking steps to manage their fiduciary duty to the beneficiaries of the fund for which they are responsible. A written policy will do the following:

- Statement the goals of the fund thereby reducing conflicts and differences of opinion by the committee members
- State the guidelines for investing (diversification, asset allocation, spending policy) to reduce any erroneous decisions
- Establish and state the reasonable and clear expectations for the beneficiaries of the fund
- Again, fiduciary responsibility is not a function of the asset chosen as there can be an argument made against every individual investment as being risky for one reason or another. Rather, investment committees are at risk when they do not have, or do not comply with, a sound investment policy. Therefore, a sound investment policy is a must for all screens. This is particularly true for institutions for which no one would be surprised to learn there were matters of social concern—like churches and religious organizations.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions you have about the services and investment solutions offered by the Foundation.

* Stacy Martin is executive director of the Eastern Pennsylvania-Pensilvania United Methodist Foundation
Alaskan Explorer Cruise with Bishop and Mrs. Matthews

An extraordinary opportunity open to members of the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences, their families and friends: 7-day Alaska Scenic Cruise aboard Holland America’s ms Oosterdam departing Seattle, WA on May 20, 2006. Cost per person ranges from $1408 for an inside cabin to $2738 for a luxury suite; plus $220 in port taxes and $45 in government taxes. Early registration is advised - space is limited. For a brochure, call the EPA Conference Office at 1-800-828-9093.

Hopewell to Mississippi

By Lauren Berdich*

In an effort to provide hope to the children affected by Hurricane Katrina, Hopewell United Methodist Church has opened their arms and hearts. They have partnered with the neighboring community (stores, clubs, schools, and churches) and Jevic Transportation Inc. to collect and transport new items to early childhood centers in southern Mississippi. “The re-building process will take awhile so we cannot let these children give up hope,” stated one Hopewell member; “...this is our calling.” Hopewell UMC contacted friends at the East & West Jackson Districts of the Mississippi Conference of The UMC to receive a list of new items the children need. The truck left for Mississippi on October 29th. Hopewell & the Community thank all who have donated to this great cause.

*Lauren Berdich is a member of Hopewell United Methodist Church.