Healing comes to Nickel Mines in the wake of tragedy

By Andrea Brown*

A district superintendent new to “Amish country” guarded the door against intrusive TV cameras as a young United Methodist pastor and seminary student offered words of hope to worshippers shaken by a tragedy at a nearby schoolhouse a day before.

Georgetown United Methodist pastor Michael Remel, who lives two doors away from the man who shot 10 girls at the Nickel Mines School in southern Lancaster County on October 2, told those who had gathered, "This event will change all of us greatly. But we can get through it together." He offered the assurance that "God’s love is still there." The Fishers’ granddaughter, 13-year-old Marion Fisher, was one of the victims.

"I said, 'Look, don’t you worry about the news cameras, Mike. I’ll take care of that.' Todd recalls.

So in both spiritual and practical ways, United Methodists became deeply involved in the healing work that followed in the wake of the school tragedy. The response of local churches has included ecumenical efforts to bring comfort, congregational efforts to interpret the event theologically, and individual efforts to reach out to those who are grieving.

The tragedy drew an official response from Bishop Marcus Matthews, who had written a pastoral letter just a few days earlier about gun violence in Philadelphia. Now, he noted in a new letter, we are reminded once again that guns hurt children everywhere—from big cities to tiny rural villages.

Matthews had received letters of support from near and far—including the United Church in New Brunswick, Canada. For members of Georgetown Church, just a mile from the school, the event felt very close to home. Remel said of the Amish and non-Amish in the area, "We live so close together that we share each others’ lives." Despite a religious separate-ness practiced by the Amish, they do interact regularly with their “English” neighbors, so everyone in the community was deeply affected.

The prayer service at Georgetown drew together leaders and lay members of the team who agreed to keep cameras a safe distance away so that Ruben Fisher, an Amish elder, and his wife could feel free to worship there that night. The Fishers’ grand-daughter, 13-year-old Marion Fisher, was one of the victims.

"I said, ‘Look, don’t you worry about the news cameras, Mike. I’ll take care of that.’ You get ready for the service,” Todd recalls.

Sarah Riehl of Kinzers stands outside Georgetown United Methodist Church before a prayer service on October 3 attended by 150 people from the area of West Nickel Mines School. Riehl came to the prayer service at the church after spending the day with the family of 7-year-old Naomi Eberiot, who died in the incident. Photo by Suzette Wenger, Lancaster Intelligencer Journal.

*By Lillian Smith*

God has a vision! Can you see it? Sometimes the vision has seemed obscured by some distracting clouds. Without God’s vision for direction, we find ourselves a little off track every now and then. Even with the clouds, God’s vision is present and continues to call us.

At the Bishop’s Days on the District, Bishop Marcus Matthews is visiting with clergy and laity of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference to talk about God’s vision for each church to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” In response to God's call for churches to 1) invite people into relationships with Jesus Christ and 2) equip Christian followers for ministry, Bishop Matthews is calling each congregation to grow by 10% by 2012.

The last edition of New Spirit detailed more information about the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference commitment to “Making Disciples for the Transformation of the World.” The EPA Conference is entering into an 18-24 month consultative relationship with the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD). Beginning in January 2007, GBOD will resource monthly workshops for teams of laity and clergy from each congregation, so that United Methodist congregations in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference can grow and thrive.

A team of at least 6 people from each congregation is invited to attend the monthly sessions. Each Congregational Ministry Team should consist of clergy and laity. Additional members of the teams could include the lay leader, lay member to SPFR Chairperson, Church Council Chair, Christian Education Chair, UMYF President or other Youth Leader, Young Adult leader, etc. The team should represent a cross section of generations and people.

Topics to be addressed in 2007 include:

• Transformational Spiritual Leadership

Without a vision, the people perish

continues on page 10

continues on page 9

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NOVEMBER 26
UNITED METHODIST STUDY DAY
For information, worship resources, and items you can use to promote United Methodist Study Day, on November 26, 2006, in your congregation, go to http://www.umc.org. See page 6.

DECEMBER 2
Innabah’s Christmas Open House
7:00 PM at Rigby Hall at St. Mark’s UMC, Broomall. Please call 717-285-5156 with any questions or to pre-register for childcare. For more information: http://www.innabah.org

JANUARY 20
Connections – A United Methodist Learning Experience
9:00AM – 1:00PM, at Wayne United Methodist Church, 210 South Wayne Avenue, Wayne, PA. 19087

WORKSHOP: Share Your Faith - Becoming a Magnetic Methodist – Rev Drena Miller; Preparing and Presenting the Christmas Wreath – Dave and Brion Fullan. Please send registration fee of $10.00 per registrant to along with their name, address, tele- phone, church and district to: EPC – Connections, PO Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820. (Please make checks payable to EPCA Conference.)

JANUARY 20
Oasis Ministries for Spiritual Development announces a workshop, “Exploring Spiritual Direction” on Friday, January 20, 2007, 9:00AM to 3:30PM at St. David’s Episcopal Church, Wayne, Pa. The leader for this workshop is Glenn Mitchell, Director of Training and Program for Oasis Ministries. He has a private practice in spiritual direction and retreat leadership in State College, Pa. Participants will explore both the receiving of spiritual direction as a part of an individual’s spiritual walk as well as what is involved in a ministry of offering spiritual direction. The day will include nine workshops with presentations about spiritual direction. Information about Oasis Ministries training program, Spiritual Direction for Spiritual Guides and more details will be available. The workshop cost is $85-85 (the cost is on a sliding scale as participants are able). Register by Jan. 6, 2007.

For more information or to register contact Betty Kelley (betsykeller@oasismin.org) at Oa- sis Ministries, 419 Deerfield Rd., Camp Hill, PA 17011 or call 717-737-8222. More details can be found at www.oasismin.org.

JANUARY 26
Oasis Ministries Offers Opportunity for a QUIET WINTER RENEWAL. During this 24 hour retreat, we will reflect on winter’s gifts of a slowed pace, and quiet dark – and bring these gifts to our time together. We will experience the beautiful “spare- ness” of the season when nature is at rest, and find a time of rest for our- selves. There will be a gentle rhythm of quiet time and group sharing. Per- sons are welcome to arrive earlier or stay later working out those details with Mariawald. Leader: Nancy Bieber is a spiritual director and retreat leader from Lancaster PA. A graduate of Shalem Institute, she is on the teaching staff of Oasis Ministries. She is a member of Lancaster Quaker Meeting, and led retreats at Pendle Hill for many years. Nancy has a particular interest in the spiritual renewal of individuals and communi- ties. From 4:30 PM Friday, January 26, 2007 until 4:30 PM Saturday Janu- ary 27, 2007. Mariawald Retreat Cen- ter, Reading, Pa. FEE: Recommended range, $160-195; price includes supper and breakfast and lunch on Saturday.

Upcoming Events with United Methodist Women
February 10-11, 2007 - Girls on the Go Retreat for girls ages 12 to 18 at Camp Innabah
April 20-22, 2007 - Spiritual Life Retreat - “Restoration Women” at the Days Inn and Conference Center in Allentown
July 20-22, 2007 - UMW School of Christian Missions - www.umw.org
October 20, 2007 - 34th UMW Annual Meeting

UPCOMING HEALING WOUNDS OF RACISM WORKSHOPS
November 15-19, 2006 - Port-O-Call Hotel, Ocean City, NJ

For more information or to register, contact Rev. Hilda Campbell, director of Human Relations and Leadership, 1-800-828-9093, ext. 224 or hilda.campbell@epaumc.org.

AUGUST 3-5, 2007
24th Annual Academy for Laity Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel, King of Prussia PA. “Sharing our Faith” in the Church, in the Community, and in the World- Offering the Basic course for aspiring Church Servant Minis- ters.

Advanced Courses for Certification in Leading, Communicating and Caring. And additional courses to be an- nounced. Open to all clergy in Eastern Pa Conference. The Academy for Laity is led by the Director of Lay Ministry, VO. NOTE THE DATE and LOCATION. MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW.

APRIL 13-17, 2007
Youth Workers Network
Attention all youth workers! The NEW Youth Workers Network is planning a youth worker retreat.

WHO: For all paid and volunteer youth workers in Eastern Pennsylva- nia Conference churches

WHEN: April 13 to 15, 2007
WHERE: Greens Glen Camp and Retreat Center

PROGRAM: workshops on youth ministry topics, inspirational speaker- ships, worship, and resources for youth ministry

Save the date!
Look for more information in the December issue of NEWSpirit and on www.epaumc.org.

Sign up now! Interested in information, program- ming, and resources for youth minis- try? Sign up for the Youth Work- ers group email.

Go to www.epaumc.org and click on “Sign up now” to join the EPA, Youth Workers group email.
Bishop Marcus Matthews and local church volunteers offered “the sisterly and brotherly love” of the Philadelphia bishops in a citywide event that featured public sermons by local pastors and lay persons from across the Northeastern Jurisdiction who came to the Philadelphia Area last month for The Great Leadership Event. The gathering was designed to move clergy and lay leaders to a realistic look at the current state of the church and build spiritual strength, support and strategy to make new disciples for the transformation that is underway.

“It’s my hope that this event will enlighten you to the best practices offered by the many speakers and presenters and equip you with the skills and methods to take leadership position to the next step,” Bishop Matthews said.

Bishop Matthews’ statement that Philadelphia “has long been considered the ‘crossroads’ of United Methodism” brought friendly debate from Bishop John C. Schol of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, but both bishops agreed on the importance of the event in supporting pastors and churches in their common goal of making disciples of Christ. “I think it’s really important to bring together strong leaders from this conference to share ideas,” Bishop Schol said.

“Familiarize yourself with the General Board of Global Ministries,” Bishop Schol said, “and their work with the sending and support of missionaries around the world. We get into trouble when we make assumptions about what people are thinking and what their interests are.”

Bishop Matthews noted that, “Our diversity,” he said, “requires uniformity nor sustainability. It requires uniformity nor sustainability. Christian unity neither requires uniformity nor encourages it. For Christians to be different is not only acceptable, but it is expected, and even necessary for the richness, wholeness, and vigor of the body.”

“Christ-like community, and sharing the story of Christ with the world.”

“Take Courage!” Homitsky said. “Begin research to find the greatest needs in your community with demographics and interpretive materials,” he said. “This is available through Conference offices or the General Board of Global Ministries.”

“Familiarize yourself with the General Board of Discipleship’s Church Vitality Indicator or programs with similar assessment tools and see if it is appropriate for your congregation,” he added. “Look at ways to make your church healthy!”

In addition, Homitsky said, “Know your ministry partners.” Collaborating with businesses or other churches in the community can make a big difference, especially for smaller congregations, he said.

“Take Courage!” Homitsky said. “Take Courage!”

By Jacqueline Campbell*
Death penalty continues despite church's 50-year opposition
By Tom McAnally

Fifty years ago, delegates to the Methodist General Conference granted full clergy rights to women. Action by that top legislative body of the denomination announced prohibitionary celebrations across the United Methodist Church this year.

Delegates to the 1956 conference in Minneapolis took another historic action that has received little attention. For the first time, delegates put the church officially on record as opposed to the death penalty.

Each Methodist and United Methodist General Conference since that time has reaffirmed its opposition to capital punishment. Meeting every four years, assemblies are the only bodies that can speak officially for the denomination.

In plenary debate at the 1956 conference, lay and clergy delegates debated several issues related to a proposed update of the church’s Social Creed. They discussed the role of the United Nations and armed at length about war and conscientious objection to military service. They talked about capitalism and communism and whether the church should bless any to military service. They talked about war and conscientious objection for the denomination.

By Tom McAnally*

The church's Social Principles, found in both the 2004 United Methodist Book of Discipline and the 2004 Book of Resolutions, include a succinct paragraph calling for elimination of the death penalty from all criminal codes.

While progress may seem slow to some, opponents celebrate the fact that the annual number of death sentences has dropped dramatically from a total of 300 in 1998 to 125 in 2004.

Mefford, a United Methodist layman, is a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary where he is currently working on a doctor of theology degree. He joined the Washington-based Board of Church and Society staff in February. A native of Tennessee, much of his adult life was spent in Texas, a state which ranks first in the number of executions since 1976 (370) and second, behind California, in the number of inmates now on death row (404). Mefford is working to reinvigorate “United Methodists against the Death Penalty,” a network of death penalty opponents started by one of his staff predecessors. “Capital punishment is an issue being dealt with by state by state, but we want United Methodists to know that as they work for change we at the national level are interested in them and want to offer encouragement and resources.”

Today, 38 of the 50 states allow the death penalty. According to the Death Penalty Information Center in Washington, 1,945 individuals have been executed since 1976. The largest number in a single year was in 1999 with 98 executions. As of September, 41 individuals have been executed this year.

The church’s Social Principles, found in both the 2004 United Methodist Book of Discipline and the 2004 Book of Resolutions, include a succinct paragraph calling for elimination of the death penalty from all criminal codes.

**McAnally, retired director of United Methodist News Service, lives in Nashville.**
More than 100,000 insecticide-treated bed nets will be delivered to Nigeria in November as part of a new malaria prevention campaign called Nothing But Nets. Partners in Nothing But Nets include the United Methodist Church, the United Nations Foundation, and the National Basketball Association. The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Communications are coordinating the church’s participation in the campaign, which will include a major initiative for youth groups.

The goal is to raise funds to eradicate malaria in Africa, where the mosquito-borne disease causes the death of one-fifth of all children under 5 years old. Hanging nets over children while they sleep is a simple, inexpensive way to kill the mosquitoes or keep them from biting.

The idea for Nothing But Nets came from Sports Illustrated columnist Rick Reilly, who encouraged readers to donate money to the U.N. Foundation after he learned that 1 million children die from malaria each year and that bed nets could save lives. In a May 5 column, he wrote, “If you’ve ever cut down a net, jumped over a net, watched the New Jersey Nets, worn a hair net, surfed the net, or loved fishnets, send 10 bucks and maybe you could save a life.”

In just a few months, more than 17,000 people sent $1.2 million. Reilly plans to join a delegation from Nothing But Nets to distribute nets in Nigeria and to meet children who will benefit from them.

The U.N. Foundation asked the United Methodist Church to join Nothing But Nets because of its community health work, including the new Community-Biodiversity Malaria Prevention Program of the Board of Global Ministries. The most recent project, started in Sierra Leone last December, focuses on community-based primary health care, education and creating a “net culture.”

“All of this work makes the denomination a natural partner for the Nothing But Nets campaign,” said Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, president of the Commission on Communication, which governs United Methodist Communications. “Not only do we want to eradicate malaria, but we also want to get our young people involved in mission work.”

United Methodist Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton outlines the denomination’s participation in the Nothing But Nets initiative to combat malaria during a session before the annual meeting of the United Methodist Association of Communicators in Indianapolis. Bickerton is president of the United Methodist Commission on Communication and leads the denomination’s Pittsburgh Area. He spoke at an Oct. 18 event held by the communications agency the day before the association’s meeting.

A UNNS photo by Mike DuBose.

United Methodist youth groups that raise money for Nothing But Nets will be eligible for prizes at Youth 2007, an international event for United Methodist youth in Greensboro, N.C., July 11-15. The event is sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Discipleship. Fund-raising awards will include a trip to Africa to distribute bed nets, a trip to New York to tour the United Nations and a variety of NBA gear.

A cell phone text-messaging network will provide campaign updates to youth. They can send a text message to 47647, type “Nets” in the text field and hit “send” to be added to the network.

“One of the benefits of being a partner in Nothing But Nets is that we’re giving a tool to congregations that may be struggling to reach youth. This is an avenue that will speak to youth,” Bickerton said.

“In sports, we’re always dealing with nets. It struck me as the simplest way to save lives,” Reilly said in an interview. “I think it’s so cool the church is involved.”

More information is available by going to the United Methodist Church youth section of nothingbutnets.net or the denomination’s official Web site at umc.org.

*White is associate editor of Interpreter magazine. This report first appeared in slightly different form in the magazine. Both Interpreter and United Methodist News Service are ministries of United Methodist Communications.

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**In The World**

**Nothing But Nets campaign raises money to fight malaria**

**By Deborah White**

Working by the light of two bare light bulbs, Cristiana Alberto Martins, 13, arranges a mosquito net over her bed at an orphanage operated by the East Angola Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in Malanje, Angola. Forty-six percent of all the deaths in Malanje are related to malaria. Nothing But Nets is a partnership that includes the United Methodist Church, the United Nations Foundation, Sports Illustrated, the National Basketball Association, Millennium Promise and the Measles Initiative. The goal is to raise funds to supply insecticide-treated bed nets to communities in Africa, where the mosquito-borne disease causes the death of one-fifth of all children under 5 years old. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

**Nothing But Nets**

**The World in Brief**

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**Differences in polity and theology among three denominations are causing division at an ecumenical seminary that trains clergy and laypeople in Cuba.** A nine-member delegation under the auspices of the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns visited the Methodist Church in Cuba Oct. 7-12 to strengthen relations with the church in the Philippines with which the U.S. church is in first multiracial election.

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**The United Methodist Commission on Discipleship** is seeking nominations for its board of directors. Nominations should be submitted to the denominational office in Richardson, Texas, by May 1. The commission, which governs United Methodist Communications, is responsible for providing communications resources and services to the denomination.

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**International Disaster Response,** UMCOM Advance #982440, and placed in local church offering plates or sent directly to UMCOM, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330, New York, NY 10115. Credit-card donations can be made by calling (800) 554-8583.

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**Since 1990,** the United Methodist Church’s mission agency has developed 400 new congregations through 11 mission initiatives in parts of Asia, Africa, the northern tier of Eastern Europe and Honduras. NEW work also has started in the southern region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Work in Thailand will begin soon. Director of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries received that information during their Oct. 9-12 annual meeting in Stamford, Conn.
Congo Missionaries visiting Conference Churches

By James S. Holton*

While raising three fingers and saying, “Jesu ni Ewana Wa Woite,” and requesting the same response, the Rev. Dr. David and Mrs. Lorene Persons, and the Rev. Dr. Kongolo shared the traditional greeting between United Methodists in South East Congo at four conference churches in October: West Chester, Hempfield, Jenkintown, and Jarrettown. This greeting symbolizes “Jesus is Lord of All.” The Persons and Dr. Kongolo serve our church at the United Methodist Seminary at Mulungwishi, Katanga in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This seminary trains ministers and leaders for six United Methodist Conferences in Central Africa. The United Methodist Church has taught Congolese students at this location since 1910. Our early missionaries’ goal was to “Plant churches and raise local leadership.” The early schools, staffed by United Methodist missionaries, today have grown to include all ages, from primary and secondary schools to a university and a graduate seminary now staffed by local leadership.

The United Methodist seminary, Faculte Methodiste de Thologie (FMT), was started in 1951 by Rev. Bartlet (Lori’s father) and has trained Africans past 20 years. Recently the seminary became part of the University of Katanga. The faculty of theology has the unique distinction to have more Ph.D.’s than any other United Methodist Seminary on the African continent. In early October, Dr. Kongolo became Dean of the Seminary, allowing David Persons to step down and become a faculty staff member. Dr. Kongolo is a product of local United Methodist schools and colleges in the Congo.

The United Methodist Church has ordained Congolese pastors since before WWI, giving a local United Methodist heritage going back nearly a century. When Congo Independence came in 1960, Katanga Province contained only 20,000 United Methodist members. The church has grown at an astounding rate, so that now six Annual Conferences have more than 500,000 United Methodist members. Most of the United Methodist bishops in the Congo are graduates of FMT, as are many of the District Superintendents. Since the area’s primary language is French, the Conferences now send missionaries to other French speaking parts of Africa.

When a pastor comes to the seminary for training, so does his family. While the pastor works toward his degree, the wife receives three years of training and education at the “Doris Bartlet Women’s School” (founded by Lori’s mother) and the children attend Mulungwishi’s primary and secondary schools.

The seminary faces challenges – some are challenges similar to those faced by U.S. schools, plus a few that are unique to the region. The major challenge is paying the costs for the students and faculty. A family scholarship – for pastor, wife and children – is $2,500 a year. The Conferences can afford fewer than 20 scholarships per year for new and current students. That allows only about 14 new students per year from over 400 applicants, some of whom was recommended by their local congregation and District.

Each member of the Congolese faculty received their Ph.D training around the world and returned from affluent Western countries to serve at much lower salaries in order to train pastors in their homeland. The seminary needs our ongoing financial support.

The Congo has suffered under previous governments, and has now lost many of the roads, utilities, and industries that it had 40 years ago. Many parts of the Congo over the past 10 years were battlefields in what is now called “Africa’s First World War.” Katanga and Mulungwishi, while not in the area of heavy devastation suffered by areas few hundred miles north, subsequently became a haven for many displaced people. This human challenge puts stress on the area and its schools.

Dr. Kongolo was asked at one local church, “What is the greatest challenge today for the Congo and the seminary?” His answer was simple: “Peace. We need peace to start rebuilding our Hope in Christ.” The Persons, who grew up in the Eastern U.S., said, “While our United Methodist Church members in the Congo live the very hard lives of poverty, we are humbled by their faith.”

Through the support of local congregations, districts and annual conferences, funds and missionaries have served to develop local Congo leadership and its training institutions. The seminary continues its work to spread the Gospel, made possible by our financial support.

United Methodist Student Day is only weeks away: November 26.

By Suzy Keenan*

The Office of Loans and Scholarships Office of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry reports that fifty-three students from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference received scholarships and loans made possible by the generous gifts of United Methodists to the Student Day offering.

Thanks to our connectional system and the people called “United Methodist,” more than 3,000 students have received a scholarship or loan to attend undergraduate or graduate school this fall. Sadly, some of the home congregations of these students do not even observe United Methodist Student Day.

Please promote this special Sunday in your church.

My 19-year-old daughter, Katie, a student at West Chester University in West Chester, PA, is a recipient of a scholarship. Firsthand, we know what a tremendous difference her scholarship makes. This is helpful financially to bear the heavy barden of college tuition. Most of all, though, Katie knows that her United Methodist church “family” cares about her; and encourages her as a young adult disciple of Jesus Christ. Our family gives thanks for this support and encouragement.

I will participate generously when the offering plate is passed in my local church at the United Methodist Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

*James S. Holton is an active lay member of West Chester United Methodist Church.

*Suzy Keenan is director of communications for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.
College Students and Youth Encounter Math – Hands On!!

By Lynn C. Jaeger, M.S., and the Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Leonard

College students and at-risk youth together discover the excitement of hands-on science and math for the third year in a collaborative effort between the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Office of Urban and Global Ministries and Temple University. Seven Temple University Education students are partnered with students attending the Alternative Learning Community for Youth, housed at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church (UMC) under the auspices of the North Phila-
delphia Cluster of UMC congregations. The students include Julie Friedman, Denise Gillespie, Akiba Gregg, Ilana Grubin, Eun Kyung Lee, Mindy Salyards and Jaime Schall, who work with the congregation of con-
fidence Deacon, the Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Leonard, associate professor of Math-
ematics at Temple. Together they are having a great time exploring the application of the scientific method and mathematics concepts as they pertain to flight.

The Alternative Learning Community consists of about 20 students, ages 14-18, who are taught in the program for its own on-one instruction and self-paced approach because, for a variety of reasons, regular public school was not meeting their needs. Attendance is voluntary – and enrollment is con-
tingent on consistent attendance and participation, so that the student makes an investment toward their own academic goals.

In recent days, the students have learned about sampling methods – they cut up and identified the compo-
sents of a number of variously-com-
pounded “moons rocks,” and then decided, based on the proportion of contents, what sort of “minerals” they had sampled. Concepts related to flight (altitude and attitude, lift, force, air-
flow, etc.) were directly tested by build-
ing and testing tetrahedral kites and two different kinds of Styrofoam gliders. While making geysers of different brands of soda and varying amounts of candy mints, students learned to use the scientific method, and also learned a little chemistry. All of these concepts came together in a hands-on rocketry project involving paper tubes and nozzles, empty film cans and Alka-Seltzer!

“Temples students said...” I was anticip-
ating a lack of motivation and prob-
ably feelings of resentment towards anyone “forcing” the students to be there. They immediately proved my theories wrong. I was fully expecting that they would ignore or barely ac-
knowledge me. Strange enough, I

think that I gained more in the way of acceptance and encouragement from the students than they gained from me during our first day together.” They were very inquisitive and tried many times to fly their airplanes. They at-
tached a paperclip to see if this would help the airplane go far. They seemed to enjoy this activity and flew their planes at the end.

Ms. Betty James, educational direc-
tor at the Mt. Zion UMC learning site, offers parent support, clear rules, and high expectations for success. Instruc-
tional materials come from a home school provider. The pairing of college students with these middle school students is generating commitment, enthusiasm, and a lot of questions about how math can make a difference, for collegians and youth alike. One difference that is apparent already everyone involved has been empowered through their increased understanding and direct application of mathematics, and the result of this needs assessment and discernment process.

Congregations are also using the accom-
panying CD-ROM, which is included with the book, in the preparation of printed orders of worship. All the worship resources in the book are available in a cut and paste format for ease of use.

“We use a lot of the liturgies, calls to worship, and prayers of confes-
sion. It’s important for us to have this wonderful resource,” said the Rev. Gloria Roach Thomas, pastor of Camphor UMC in Saint Paul, Minn. “We’re the only African American UMC in the state of Minne-
nesota. It’s a wonderful way for me, my con-
gregation to connect with the greater United Methodist African liturgies and people. We’re not working in iso-
lusion,” she said.

The liturgies are presented in lan-
guage that resonates with worship-
ship. Roach-Thomas has found “Sin
Doesn’t Lost Its Grip” and “Feed Me I’ll
Want No More” particularly popular with her congregation during wor-
ship, communion services, and Bible studies.

“They almost get down in our bones!” “It’s wonderful! We love it and we use it,” she exclaimed.

“They [the liturgies] connect us to our daily lives. All of us can relate. I don’t care who you are—African-American and other groups—they are so real and practical and authentic. It’s truly a wonderful re-
source!”

Worship resources for special days like Black History Month, Martin Luther King Day, and Watchnight are already available.

“The Africana Worshipbook offers high-quality resources that help revi-
talize and renew Africana congrega-
tions and, indeed, all faith communi-
ties,” said the Rev. Karen Greenwald, GBOD general secretary.

General Editor of the African-
American and other groups—Worship book, the Rev. Dr. Valerie Bridgeman Davis teaches preaching and worship and Hebrew Bible at Memphis theological Seminary. Asso-
ciate Editor, the Rev. Dr. Safiyah Fosua is the director of invitational preaching ministries at the General Board of Discipleship.

William B. McClain of Wesley Theological Seminary wrote the fore-
word. In addition to the editors, con-
tributors to this collection are Eu-
genie Blair, Carolyn Dandridge, Jo-

For more information about The Africana Worshipbook, visit

www.gbod.org,
www.africanaworship.org or contact Safiyah Fosua at 877-899-2780, ext. 7084.

The General Board of Discipleship’s mission is to support annual conference and local church leaders for their task of equipping world-
changing disciples. An agency of The United Methodist Church, The General Board of Discipleship is located at 1906 Grand Avenue in Nashville, Tennessee.

www.epaumc.org

Kevin Pettit, a student at the Alternative Learning Community for Youth at Mt. Zion UMC, holds up a Styrofoam glider he made to test flight characteristics.

The General Board of Discipleship has released a new worship resource called The Africana Worship Book.

This rich resource contains calls to worship, liturgies, prayers, litanies, offerings, prayers, doxologies, choral worship, liturgies, prayers, litanies, called

www.africanaworship.org

or (write “Truancy Program” on the memo line), 1530-38 North 11th Street, Philadelphia 19122.

High school students are partnered with students from one of a number of Eastern Pennsylvania Conference schools, and at-risk youth is served by the Youth Prudential Foundation, the Youth Prudential Community Foundation of Philadelphia, Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth Prudential Foundation, the North Philadelphia Cluster, and the

www.gbod.org,
www.africanaworship.org or contact Safiyah Fosua at 877-899-2780, ext. 7084.

The General Board of Discipleship’s mission is to support annual conference and local church leaders for their task of equipping world-changing disciples. An agency of The United Methodist Church, The General Board of Discipleship is located at 1906 Grand Avenue in Nashville, Tennessee.

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Denomination launches resources to increase church vitality

The United Methodist Church has launched a cutting-edge resource that helps church leaders focus time and energy on areas of ministry that have the most potential for strengthening, reshaping and moving congregations forward.

By using a congregational assessment and planning process called the Church Vitality Indicator™, church leaders discover where and how to invest their congregation’s energy and passion for the future.

The Church Vitality Indicator™ helps focus a congregation’s resources on the areas of ministry that will yield the most results.

Betsy Heaver says the CVI is more than a fill-in-the-blank survey. Heaver is a member of the congregational leader development team in the Discipleship Ministries Division.

“The emphasis isn’t on technology. It’s the combination of survey and discernment that lead churches in a powerful planning process,” she says.

The Nebraska Annual Conference has purchased the resource for the entire jurisdiction. The conference has elected to purchase the resource for developing discipleship plans that focus on leadership development for clergy and laity.

Church leaders in Nebraska believe the CVI will help them evaluate their current ministry situation and provide a process for developing their own discipleship plans.

“CVI will help local congregations focus their energy and creativity on what ministry they do best and that, in turn, will have a positive impact on their other ministries,” said the Rev. Nita Hinds-Park, associate director of connectional ministries and director of congregational development for the Nebraska Annual Conference.

“As a result of this process, there should be a ‘rebirth’ and renewal of the Gospel story as told in ‘the United Methodist way’ in Nebraska,” Hinds-Park says.

The congregations that make up the Nebraska Annual Conference began using CVI in September. Later this fall, they will analyze the assessment and begin strategic planning.

What Nebraska is doing is important because “First and foremost, we have a Story to tell and a world waiting, sometimes in agony, to hear the Story telling the Story is who we are and what we do,” said Hinds-Park. The CVI will help us be more effective and creative in our Story Sharing.”

According to Hinds-Park, the General Board of Discipleship’s creativity in integrating the CVI with Nebraska Conference’s Signs of Discipleship process has made this an invaluable assessment tool and discernment process that can help congregations of all sizes and in all settings.

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“CVI will transform the spiritual life of our churches as they begin the journey to a more dynamic congregational life and ministry,” said the Rev. Karen Greenland, top executive for the General Board of Discipleship.

What makes this tool so powerful is that the results are tailor-made to specific congregations. It’s like having access to a ministry consultant 24/7.

For more information about the Church Vitality Indicator™ and other resources for renewal and new church starts, contact Betsy Heaver at 615-348-7295, or visit the Web site http://www.cvidicator.com.

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Conference pastor ministers to Nickel Mines community

For Mike Remel, a 32-year-old student at Paimer Theological Seminary and the pastor of Georgetown United Methodist Church, the Oct. 2 shooting at Nickel Mines Amish school was a “baptism by fire” for him as a pastor, as a father, and as a member of the community.

Yet Remel was never so powerfully aware of God’s presence in this moment.

Though the incident was overwhelming, he said, “I don’t know that it would be any different for an older pastor” since the strengths that were called for were less his than God’s.

I have really relied on God and on my prayer life and meditation,” he said, “but I have never been more convinced that I’ve become exhausted, “I felt the refreshment of the Spirit sustaining me and giving me strength,” he said. Whenever he called for were less his than God’s.

“When we lost our son,” Remel said, “we said, ‘All of us in this community are going to lose someone.’ Well, Bryce must be very sad.” And we said, “There must be some certainly were not.”

Remel had many conversations with children offatal schoolhouse.’  We did not connect the two events.  He has since seen news with his 5-year-old son, Shawn.

Remel had many conversations with children of Bryce Roberts, the 5-year-old son of Charles Carl Roberts IV, who shot 10 girls at the school two years earlier.

Remel said, “I’ve seen God working in our family. One of those tasks was sharing the news with his 5-year-old son, Shawn.

Remel’s son is named Shawn in honor of his 5-year-old son, Bryce Roberts.

Remel said, “We have tried to teach our children; we know Marie,” he said. “One of those tasks was sharing the news with his 5-year-old son, Shawn.”

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Without a vision, people perish continued from page 1

• Preparing and Implementing Your Congregation’s Ministry Action Plan
  • The Importance and Power of Prayer
  • Living as Christian Disciples: The Means of Grace and the Ordinances of God.
  • Telling Your God Story: Faith-Sharing and Evangelical Recruitment
  • Vibrant and Transformative Worship

This understanding of God’s vision is not just from Bishop Matthews. Just from reading the responses from persons who attended the Bishop’s Day on the East District, it is evident that this vision is the yearning of people in this conference. When asked to respond to the question, “Imagine God has a vision! Can you see it?”, people are saying that this vision is the yearning of God’s vision for churches to make disciples was a recurring theme about God’s vision. The urging related to God’s vision for churches to make disciples was a recurring theme at The Great Leadership Event: Taking the Next Step in Leadership Development, held October 13-15, 2006, in Valley Forge, PA, sponsored by The Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.


Homitsky asked the attendees, “Is it not really about numbers, is it?” In response he added, “Yes, it is actually about the numbers.” He encouraged participants to take courage, name the goal, and then work to achieve it. “We are to reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people.” Homitsky added.

Beginning in November 2006, best practices in ministry will be distributed via email and posted on the web page. You are invited to post and share your ministry best practices, as well. The best practices information and the workshops are provided to help each Eastern Pennsylvania Conference United Methodist and congregations strengthen ministry to people of all ages and stages. If you have an idea about best practices or want more information, let us know. The trainings will be held throughout the annual conference to ensure that all congregations - even those with financial challenges - can participate.

God has a vision! Can you see it? It’s time to live into it!

* Lillian C. Smith is Director of Congregational Ministries for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church. She can be contacted at lillian.smith@epaumc.org or 800-828-9693, ext. 230.
Healing comes in the wake of tragedy
continued from page 1

The nearby Presbyterian and Lutheran congregations with this small United Methodist presence joined with the Amish couple, as well, made those who had gathered especially aware of their powerful oneness in Christ.

In the immediate aftermath of the shooting, Georgetown UM members swung into action, cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner for emergency workers and visiting and praying with their Amish neighbors.

“I have an excellent congregation,” Remel said. “There was not even a question. As soon as we heard what had happened and where it was, the church was immediately open for prayer, and it stayed open for about three days. We had people from all over the county praying in our sanctuary.”

Since then, he said, cards, flowers and stuffed animals have been pouring in from all 50 states—“Hawaii and Alaska started coming in this week”—and the church has made it its mission to distribute them appropriately.

“People say, ‘I just want to help. What are you doing?’ And we’re trying to do that down there,” Todd noted about the Georgetown congregation, which typically had its full attendance for Sunday worship. “Just all of that has been so heartwarming.

What’s more, said Remel, is personal screening mail sent to the family of Charles Carl Roberts IV, who took his own life after shooting the schoolchildren, to assure that that mail is comforting and not hurtful.

Christiana Church, just a bit farther from the Nickel Mines School, called every member on the day of the tragedy and announced a prayer service for the following evening, according to the Rev. Allan F. Sumerfield, Sr. He noted that many members have Amish neighbors and so felt blessed to have an opportunity to pray for them.

The church sent $500 that night to the fund established for both the Amish families and the Roberts family.

Summerfield, with Remel, is part of an ecumenical group providing ongoing counseling to relieve post-traumatic stress.

A number of pastors spoke of ecumenical work in response to the tragedy. For instance, Lancaster’s First Church participated in prayer services of the Downtown Ministries, in addition to responding to the events as a congregation in worship, in the church’s weekly email, and through care of extended family members and friends of Mr. Roberts.

Rev. Peter L. Kroo of Chiques Community Church noted that the church also interpreted the good that was able to shine through in the midst of the tragedy, including the appearance of the word “Christ” in national and international media, “without any reference to power politics or scandal.”

The Mountville minister sought a fitting way to reach out and decided that a simple one would be appreciated by a people who value simplicity.

The Rev. John Cordes, pastor of St. Paul’s Church, was tapped by the group to write a short letter to the Amish pastors—a letter from one community to another.

“The way you’ve responded continues to be a witness,” he planned to write. “Your example of being peace-makers has blessed us.”

Grandview Church sought a similarly simple gesture—this one reaching from one United Methodist church family to another. To let the Georgetown UM congregation know they were thought of in their grief and in their ministry to the community, the Grandview family sent them flowers.

Some responses were more direct. The Rev. Stephen Taylor, who had volunteered as a chaplain at Ground Zero following the September 11 tragedy, felt called again into a tragic situation and went to the Nickel Mines area to offer his services as a counselor.

Taylor also combined the adult Sunday School classes at Chiques Church in Mount Joy to respond to questions raised by the tragedy. Though people in Lancaster County live near the Amish, he noted, most don’t know much about the history and theology of this Anabaptist group. Plus, many in his congregation were troubled by that age-old question of why God permits terrible things to happen to innocent people.

The witness of the Amish community as a forgiving people was highlighted in sermons in many United Methodist churches, including St. Mark’s in Mount Joy, where forgiveness is the 2006 theme.

Senior Pastor David Woolverton pointed out, in an article in the Lancaster New Era newspaper, that the killer’s inability to forgive himself and God for earlier events in his life was part of what led to the tragedy.

“A lot of who he was, his brokenness, that’s in all of us,” Woolverton observed. “We are all broken people. God asks us what we are going to do with that brokenness.”

Todd noted that efforts at healing are ongoing. Representatives of Lutheran Disaster Relief met with Remel, Todd, and Deb DePrinizio, the disaster coordinator for Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. They are establishing a plan to provide financial resources for long-term counseling.

Though forgiveness was nearly immediate, Todd said, “If there is some other tragedy like this, it’s going to bring back those feelings.” Churches are working together to prepare so that we can do more than react.

Condolence cards may be sent to the affected families and community via Georgetown United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 76, Bart PA 17509.

* The Rev. Andrea Brown is associate pastor of Grandview United Methodist Church in Lancaster, PA.
The Foundation Center comes to the Eastern Pennsylvania

Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem and Yvette Davis-Trotman

The Office of Urban and Global Ministries of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference (EPA) and The Rev. Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem, Director and Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church, The Rev. Richard H. Andrews, pastor, have collaborated to form the Johnson-UGO Foundation Library, a Cooperating Collection of the nation’s leading nonprofit management and grantmaking library. The Foundation Center, Johnson-UGO is the first designated Cooperating Collection formed by a collaboration of faith-based organizations. This is among five Foundation Center Regional Libraries and close to 300 Cooperating Collections throughout the United States. Ms. Yvette Davis-Trotman, a corporate librarian of 15 years experience and eight years of engagement in the nonprofit sector, has been appointed by the Office of Urban and Global Ministries to be the supervisor of the Johnson-UGO Foundation Library. She is also the Lay Leader of JUMC and is a Christ Servant Minister.

Johnson-UGO Foundation Library is located in the Education Building at Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church in Northeast Philadelphia. As a complement to the Regional Foundation Center Library, located at the Free Library of Philadelphia in Center City, Johnson-UGO will offer the same extensive foundation and grant resources provided by the Foundation Center’s core collection and these sources will be available during the following non-traditional hours:

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The Foundation Center core collection includes but is not limited to the Foundation Directory Online Professional database. The volunteers will also be available to assist patrons through orientations to the library and one-on-one training.

We will be offering two five-week series of training workshops at Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church. Dates and times will be announced via The NewSpirit e-News and other media.

In addition to the Foundation Center core collection, the Johnson-UGO Foundation Library is presently equipped with three computers for searching and printing. A photocopier is also available for copying entries from the print directories.

The volunteers will also be available to assist patrons through orientations to the library and one-on-one training.

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In addition to the Foundation Center core collection, the Johnson-UGO Foundation Library is presently equipped with three computers for searching and printing. A photocopier is also available for copying entries from the print directories.

There is a $0.10 per page charge for computer printing, there is no charge if the patron brings own paper and a $2.50 per page charge for photocopies.

For more information about The Johnson-UGO Foundation Library, if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, or would like to donate office supplies, please call 215-338-9022.

In the time it took to read this message, another person is infected with the virus and another person has died.

We care that: An estimated 65 million people are living with HIV/AIDS.

We care that: In the time it took to read this message, another person is infected with the virus and another person has died.

We care that: HIV/AIDS is here in Chester County.

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Bishop Matthews celebrates day on Southeast District

By Suzy Keenan

Southeast District clergy and laity gathered on October 25 to meet and hear Bishop Marcus Matthews at the Garden Church in Lansdowne. District Superintendent Susan May welcomed everyone and led devotions. Reflecting on Acts 2 and the Pentecost story, she said, “We were born multi-lingual, and we have a message that can be understood by all. We talk about learning a new language. The language of Christ is what we need to speak all around.”

Bishop Matthews thanked the pastors of the district for being prophetic leaders, and for all the quiet ways in which they make contributions. He acknowledged the learning and listen- ing he has been doing around the East-Coast Peninsula-Delaware Conference, the Philadelphia Conference over the past two years, and announced plans for the initiative to engage all pastors in active disciple making.

“Some are not so concerned about our United Methodist membership decline,” said Bishop Matthews. “They say, ‘Let’s not be concerned about the numbers, but whether we have quality people.’” He added, “Well, I think we do need to be concerned with the num bers: it’s about saving souls for Christ.”

He mourned churches which act like secret societies or clubs, “where if a lost soul comes in off the street, they wouldn’t know what to do. We need to treat these persons like a baby in Christ. They may not know where to start or how to find a hymn or how to find Matthew in the Bible. So often we run them off, using terms as if everyone knows what we’re talking about.”

The success story of a church in the Peninsula Delaware Conference, shared by Bishop Matthews, is an example of how invitation to membership will make a difference. Over the past year, after the pastor began invit ing persons to church membership each week in the Sunday bulletin, they have received more than 63 new members.

Bishop Matthews introduced the Rev. Lillian Smith, director of connec tional ministries. She quoted from Acts 2:47, “Day by day the Lord added to their numbers those who were being saved.” She announced plans in which the conference will work to gether with the General Board of Discipleship to resource all congrega tions to fulfill their mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

“Beginning in January, monthly trainings will be held throughout the conference, and every church will be invited,” Rev. Smith said. Workshops will include topics on worship, transitional spiritual leadership, prayer, and developing a ministry action plan through using the Church Vitality Indicator.

Each church will be expected to take the Church Vitality Indicator, except where a church already has already developed a ministry action plan or has begun work with the Natural Church Development assessment. For more information on the Church Vitality Indicator, see page 8.

UPCOMING EVENTS WITH BISHOP MATTHEWS

For Clergy Only

2006

Tuesday, November 28 - Bishop’s Advent Day Apart - Bishop Woodie W. White, Bishop in Residence at Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, GA will be our guest speaker and preacher; Aldersgate UMC, Wilmington, DE

2007

Tuesday - Thursday, January 16-18 - Bishop’s Mid-Winter Retreat - Mid-winter Retreat for clergy and spouses - Bishop James R. King, Jr. Resident Bishop, Louisville Episcopal Area will be our guest speaker; Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel, Ocean City, MD.

Lenten Day Apart

Tuesday, February 20, 2007 - Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference will be our guest speaker and preacher.

Bishop’s Advent Day Apart

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

For Clergy and Laity

Bishop’s Day on the Districts:

January 29, 2007 - Central District
February 6, 2007 - Northeast District
February 23, 2007 - Southwest District
March 1, 2007 - Northwest District

Please go to: http://www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=1499 for more information on place and time.

Attention all S/PPRC Chairpersons:

Are you looking for a way to honor your pastor? Be on the lookout for a letter in the mail from Bishop Matthews suggesting that your congrega tion consider sending your pastor (and spouse) to the Bishop’s Mid-Winter Retreat at the Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel, Ocean City, MD. The state’s are January 16-18, 2007. Discounted registrations are available the sooner you register.

For a copy of the brochure that you can print out, go to: http://www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=1231.

For more information or for an additional copy of the letter or brochure, please call the Bishop’s Registrar, Mrs. Amy Hoth, 610-666-1442/1-800-828-9095, ext. 233 in the Bishop’s office.

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Please go to: http://www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=1499 for more information on place and time.

Attention all S/PPRC Chairpersons:

Are you looking for a way to honor your pastor? Be on the lookout for a letter in the mail from Bishop Matthews suggesting that your congregation consider sending your pastor (and spouse) to the Bishop’s Mid-Winter Retreat at the Clarion Resort Fontainebleau Hotel, Ocean City, MD. The states are January 16-18, 2007. Discounted registrations are available the sooner you register.

For a copy of the brochure that you can print out, go to: http://www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=1231.

For more information or for an additional copy of the letter or brochure, please call the Bishop’s Registrar, Mrs. Amy Hoth, 610-666-1442/1-800-828-9095, ext. 233 in the Bishop’s office.

By Suzy Keenan

Southeast District clergy and laypersons gathered on October 25 to meet and hear Bishop Marcus Matthews at the Garden Church in Lansdowne. District Superintendent Susan May welcomed everyone and led devotions. Reflecting on Acts 2 and the Pentecost story, she said, “We were born multi-lingual, and we have a message that can be understood by all. We talk about learning a new language. The language of Christ is what we need to speak all around.”

Bishop Matthews thanked the pastors of the district for being prophetic leaders, and for all the quiet ways in which they make contributions. He acknowledged the learning and listening he has been doing around the East-Coast Peninsula-Delaware Conference, the Philadelphia Conference over the past two years, and announced plans for the initiative to engage all pastors in active disciple making.

“Some are not so concerned about our United Methodist membership decline,” said Bishop Matthews. “They say, ‘Let’s not be concerned about the numbers, but whether we have quality people.’” He added, “Well, I think we do need to be concerned with the numbers: it’s about saving souls for Christ.”

He mourned churches which act like secret societies or clubs, “where if a lost soul comes in off the street, they wouldn’t know what to do. We need to treat these persons like a baby in Christ. They may not know where to find a hymn or how to find Matthew in the Bible. So often we run them off, using terms as if everyone knows what we’re talking about.”

The success story of a church in the Peninsula Delaware Conference, shared by Bishop Matthews, is an example of how invitation to membership will make a difference. Over the past year, after the pastor began inviting persons to church membership each week in the Sunday bulletin, they have received more than 63 new members.

Bishop Matthews introduced the Rev. Lillian Smith, director of connectional ministries. She quoted from Acts 2:47, “Day by day the Lord added to their numbers those who were being saved.” She announced plans in which the conference will work together with the General Board of Discipleship to resource all congregations to fulfill their mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

“Beginning in January, monthly trainings will be held throughout the conference, and every church will be invited,” Rev. Smith said. Workshops will include topics on worship, transitional spiritual leadership, prayer, and developing a ministry action plan through using the Church Vitality Indicator.

Each church will be expected to take the Church Vitality Indicator, except where a church already has already developed a ministry action plan or has begun work with the Natural Church Development assessment. For more information on the Church Vitality Indicator, see page 8.