

**What's
Inside**

**James Todd is
installed as
District Superin-
tendent**

Page 3

**YOUTH
EXPLOSION!**

Page 6

**Summer Camp:
Gone but not
forgotten!**

Page 7

Index
Calendar2
Nation4
World5
Classifieds11

Bishop leads focus on making disciples

By Suzy Keenan

“Our mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ,” said Bishop Marcus Matthews as pastors from the East District listened during the first Bishop’s Day on the District event. “There is no



Bishop Marcus Matthews speaks with clergy at the Bishop’s Day on the East District.

other purpose for being the church of God.”

Bishop Matthews introduced his plan to focus all churches and members of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference on “Making Disciples for Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World,” and set a goal of 10% growth to be attained by the year 2012.

At the clergy meeting on the East District, he thanked all pastors for who they are, what they do, and how they are a blessing to others. Then he guided the discussion to laying the foundation on which we will build our mission of making disciples to help transform a hurting world.

Eastern Pennsylvania Conference membership was 125,902 in 2005, down 2,594 from the previous year’s membership of 128,496 (a 2% decline.) Membership over the past 10 years has declined by 17,731 since 1995, when membership was 143,633 (a 12% decline.)

Bishop Matthews acknowledged shock over the drop in membership. His plan is for all congregations to get involved in

a variety of ways in the movement to make disciples, engaging with staff and district superintendents. He also announced plans for training and resourcing from the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship in Nashville.

The plan will look at engaging in the movement through spiritual renewal, active disciple making, education and practical skill training, and leader development.

“There is a cry for spiritual renewal in our churches,” Bishop Matthews said. “We need to get strong, so when we talk with others, sharing our faith, we know who we are. Prayer, Bible study, and small group participation will lead the way to spiritual renewal, to energize and center us as we discern what we are called to do.”

Bishop Matthews spoke of churches that do not offer an invitation to membership, “almost as though the church had enough, or that you need a secret code to be able to get in.” He added, “It doesn’t take



Bishop Marcus Matthews

an action of General Conference to invite people to church, to let folk know they are welcome and you want them to join – to be a part of the good things happening in our church. What has hap-

continues on page 10

UM Witness welcomes new director

By Suzy Keenan*

A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania welcomes its new executive director, Soozung Sa Rankin, who began serving in her new position on September 11. Located in Pennsylvania’s capitol in Harrisburg, PA, A United Methodist Witness is the advocacy arm of the four United Methodist Annual Conferences in the state: Eastern PA, Central PA, Western PA, and Wyoming (named for the Wyoming Valley of northeastern Pa.).

Ms. Rankin calls herself “a prenatal Christian, caught between the pages of a Bible coming out of the womb.” Her story is rooted in the living witness to faith and advocacy. Her grandparents and her father, (then a boy) escaped the Communists from Manchuria, China, hiding during the day, and running at night, making their way through North Korea into South Korea. Rankin’s grandparents started a Christian children’s

home in Anyang, Korea (30 miles south of Seoul) with four children they found on the streets during the Korean War, and raised more than 3,000



Soozung Sa Rankin, Executive Director of The United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania

continues on page 12

Pilot program increases missionary support

By Wendy Hudson-Jacoby*

The Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference has been invited by the General Board

of Global Ministries (GBGM) to participate in a pilot project designed to increase the number and types of Covenant Relationships with



The Rev. Sally Wisner Ott (right), a missionary with LUMINA in Lancaster, PA, discusses details of LUMINA’s Community Day Camp with Diane Deemer, Camp Director.

continues on page 8

Conference Calendar

OCTOBER 7

Grant Writing 101 Workshop

This workshop covers: Exexecutive Summary * Stating the Problem Identifying the Need * Community Assessment * Project Description * Supporting Documents * Elements of Successful Proposals * Follow-up. Cost: \$50.00 (includes meals & materials) Continental Breakfast 8:30 am, **Workshop: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm** (Lunch 12:30 - 1:30 pm). Call Jean Kershaw at 215-739-1306 or email at hancockstjohns@comcast.net. Presented by The Thompson Group, Management Training & Program Development Consultants, at Simpson House, 2101 Belmont Avenue, Philadelphia PaA19131.

OCTOBER 7

Boehm's Chapel Apple Festival

The 21st annual apple festival will be held at Boehm's Chapel from 9 am - 3 pm. This is a great way to spend a fall day in Lancaster County. The famous apple butter will be made on site the day of the festival. There will also be all sorts of apple goodies to eat - apple dumplings, apple nuggets, apple bread, apple pies, apple ice cream, apple crisp, etc. Food will also be available for lunch - homemade soups, hamburger bar-b-que and hot dogs (with or without sauer kraut). This year's entertainment will be music provided by The Messiah's Messengers. Tables will be filled with crafts of all kinds. The Chapel, built in 1791 and reconstructed in 1991, will be open for tours. Boehm's Chapel is located at 13 West Boehm's Road, Willow Street, PA. For further information, contact Janice Sherick, Executive Director, 717-393-7104 or execdirboehms@dejazzd.com.

OCTOBER 11 & 12 and NOVEMBER 15 & 16

Basic Coach Training for Pastors and Ministry Leaders - Consider enrolling in a Basic Coach Training that is specifically designed for Pastors and Ministry Leaders. Learn how to increase your leadership impact, stay focused, empower others and "work the gap." This training includes a comprehensive understanding of the Core Coaching Competencies, a Coaching Handbook and LIVE coaching sessions. For more information, including Fall dates and locations, go to www.coaching4clergy.com or contact J. Val Hastings at val@coaching4clergy.com or 610-385-8034

OCTOBER 14

Church Librarians and Media Resource Persons - Fall Workshop

Franconia Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Montgomery County, PA, 9:00 a. m. - 2:00 p. m. Luncheon Speaker: Diane Gibfried, author of *Brother Juniper*, a story for ages 5 and up about a generous monk in the Order of St. Francis. Special Guest Artist: Freiman Stoltzfus, a well-known Lancaster County artist and illustrator. Workshops offered: Holiday Books, DVDs, and Videos; Creating Library Newsletters, Library Automation; Sponsored by The Delaware Valley Chapter of the Church and Synagogue Library Association; and the Bux-Mont Church Librarians. Registration fee (includes luncheon): \$18.00. For more information contact Verna Colliver 215 855 0797

vcolliver@comcast.net. REGISTRATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 7, 2006

OCTOBER 17

Safety seminar for all churches with Daycare/Childcare and Early Learning Center operations

- Valley Forge: St. Matthew's UMC, 600 Walker Road, Wayne, PA 19087, October 17, 2006, from 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
- Lebanon: Kochenderfer's UMC, 1105 Kochenderfer Road, Lebanon, PA 17046, October 17, 2006, from 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The seminar is being conducted by safety professionals from our insurance agent, Engle-Hambright and Davies, Inc. and from our insurance carriers, Philadelphia Insurance and Eastern Alliance Insurance. The seminar will discuss ways to prevent injury and promote safety at your childcare center. In addition, this meeting will continue the focus on the safety we are placing on all of our churches and, in particular, daycare centers, to help you with a concern we know you all have - preventing injuries to children and staff.

The individual responsible for your daycare operation and/or staff members in charge of safety should attend. Please confirm your attendance by calling Brenda Walls, Engle-Hambright and Davies, at 1-800-627-3732 by October 6, 2006 at the latest.

OCTOBER 20-22

Volunteers In Mission - NEJ Celebration and Training Event - 2006 Sweat Evangelism - Sharing Christ through Mission! Fatima Retreat Center, Dalton, PA-Every Annual Conference has responded this year to local needs! Every Annual Conference has responded this year to Hurricane Katrina! Every Annual Conference this year has sent numerous International Teams! COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US IN THE VITALITY AND GROWTH OF THE UVMIM MOVEMENT IN THE NORTHEASTERN JURISDICTION!! Registration contact: Greg Forrester, UVMIM NEJ coordinator umvimnej@twcny.rr.com, phone (607-756-7799), or download registration forms at www.umvimnej.org see "NEJ Rally 2006."

OCTOBER 21

United Methodist Women of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference 33rd Annual Meeting Saturday, October 21, 2006

See ad page 9.

OCTOBER 21

Custom Fit for Growth Conference

A Church and Ministry Growth Conference-*The Gospel Message is the Same, the way you tell it is Different* - 8 am-4 pm Through this conference we hope to share with you our experiences in fostering and weathering church growth. Our goal is to show you our highs and lows to help spark your own creativity and strategic leadership in God's growth plan for your church. We look forward to the exchange of thoughts and ideas through 2 general sessions and 3 workshop sessions. We look forward to welcoming pastors, lay leaders, church staff, worship technicians, committee members, teachers, and anyone with a passion for serving Christ in their local church.

Workshops include: Men's, Women's, Children's and Youth Ministries, Worship and Music, Welcome and Assimilation, Media and Technology, and Organization Pastor Sessions and Lay Pastoral Care. **Keynote Speaker:** Bishop William H. Willimon, Bishop of The United Methodist Church in North Alabama. Bishop Willimon was named by Baylor University as one of the Twelve Most Effective Preachers in the English-speaking world.

Website <http://www.bethanyumchurch.com/> **For Information:** Call 610-395-3613 or Fax 610-395-3565.

OCTOBER 21

Grant Writing 101 Workshop

This workshop covers: Understanding Commonly Used Terms * Importance of Collaboration * White House Office of Faith Based & Community Initiatives * Resources of Regional Foundation Center * Resources Internal to The United Methodist Church. Cost: \$50.00 (includes meals & materials). Continental Breakfast 8:30 am, **Workshop: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm** (Lunch 12:30 - 1:30 pm). Call Jean Kershaw at 215-739-1306 or email at hancockstjohns@comcast.net. Presented by The Thompson Group, Management Training & Program Development Consultants, at Simpson House, 2101 Belmont Avenue, Philadelphia PaA19131.

OCTOBER 23 & 24

Clergy Retirement Security Program

See page 10.

OCTOBER 24

Women in Professional Ministry Fall Gathering

Women in Professional Ministry will be holding a Fall Gathering at Asbury United Methodist Church in Allentown. All women in professional ministry are invited and encouraged to attend. We will begin with a coffee hour at 9:30 am and begin our formal time together at 10 am. We will conclude by noon. Asbury United Methodist Church is located at: 1533 Springhouse Road; Allentown, PA 18104. If you have any questions please contact the co-conveners: Mandy Stanley Miller at stmatthewumc@verizon.net or Dawn Taylor-Storm at whumc@nni.com.

NOVEMBER 10-12

23rd Annual Conference with the Holy Spirit

The EPA Renewal Fellowship will be hosting their annual conference at Refreshing Mountain Camp in

Stevens, Pennsylvania (near Lancaster). This year's theme will be "FREEDOM: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17)." Opportunities include the main conference, a pre-conference session, "Lord Teach Us to Pray Seminar Training", a Youth Retreat and Children's Ministry. Come as many days as you are able to deepen your relationship with the Lord. Saturday Only" pricing is available. For more details, please see our website www.tabor-umc.org/renewalfellowship or call 215-234-0751.


APRIL 18, 2007

Anger Management for Clergy An Advanced Sexual Ethics Workshop Wednesday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Cornwall Manor, Cornwall, Pa. Directions: cornwallmanor.org Cost: \$30 **Topic:** Addressing Anger Before It Addresses You: Anger management and the Vulnerable Minister. **Summary:** Using case studies and group discussion of the stressors encountered by ministers, the basics of anger management will be illustrated with direct application to the professional role of ministry as well as to the personal life of the individual. Opportunities for discussion of pastoral issues will be provided. **Leaders: Ronald J. Karney, Ph.D.** Licensed Psychologist Kelly Counseling & Consulting, **Paul J. Ashton, D.Min., Psy.D.** Candidate, Kelly Counseling & Consulting. **Registrar:** Rev. Bronwyn Yocum, Revumcmom@comcast.net, 865 South Main Street, Phoenixville, Pa 19460 610-933-5936

JUNE 5, 2007

10 day "Holy Land Journey Through the Bible" 2007* - with Rev. Ken & Mona DeWalt through EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, the largest Pilgrimage Tour company operating in Israel. Depart from JFK, NYC. Pastor Ken brings his long time interest in world and especially Biblical history, as well as his passion for sharing the love of Jesus Christ to this pilgrimage. Mona is an extremely well-read Christian who offers her own style of warm hospitality to any tour they lead. This Trip ID: HL07/JB. Ken DeWalt's Host ID: 42336. Contact: kdewalt@dejazzd.com or cell: 610-223-8630. For more information on the trip, go to: <http://www.eo.travelwithus.com/Default.aspx?tabid=55&tourid=226&load=yes>. *Ask for information on the Nile Cruise post tour also.



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Todd installed as superintendent of Southwest District

By Suzy Keenan

Bishop Marcus Matthews installed the Rev. James B. (Jim) Todd as superintendent of the Southwest District on Sunday, September 17.

Bishop and Mrs. Matthews, the Bishop's cabinet, conference staff, district assistant Mary Ann Unangst, as well as many pastors and laypersons from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference gathered together for the celebration and installation, which took place at Memorial United Methodist Church in Quarryville, PA.

Rev. Todd's family, among them his wife, Karen, daughters Lauren and Kristin, his parents and mother-in-law, were joined by members of his church family, including persons from all of his previous appointments: Media: First, Penns Park, Lafayette Hill; Messiah, and Solebury United Methodist Churches.

In his sermon, Todd acknowledged the deep roots of the United Methodist denomination in Lancaster County, where both the United Brethren Church and the Evangelical Association had their roots. Those two groups joined in 1946 to become the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which joined with the Methodist Church in 1968 to become the United Methodist Church.

He also recognized our historical roots in missions, as Lancaster County produced "a husband and wife team, Henry and Ella Appenzeller, from First Methodist in Lancaster, who set sail for Korea as missionaries for a place that had never heard the Gospel. The World Methodist Council was recently held in Seoul, Korea, and much of it was held in a Korean Methodist church which our bishop reported has 123,000 members."

"Whenever we talk about starting work together as sisters and brothers in Christ, where do we begin? With our baptism. Because baptism is where God started his work in us," said Todd.

Todd paid tribute to "what I know already will go down as one of the greatest experiences in my superintendency on this district." The Rev. Roseanne Goldberg, who serves Ross St. UMC, invited him to be a part of a service of baptism on a Sunday afternoon at a pond in Leola, where she baptized twelve youth ages 8 to 15. "Twelve people. I seem to remember twelve people turning the world upside-down about 2000 years ago," said Todd. "One by one, they were plunged under the water, held by Roseanne on one side and one of the recently baptized on the other. Dying to their old nature, dying to sin as they went under the water, being raised to walk in newness of life through Christ. It was a raw, cloudy day in Leola, I had the sense of being on holy ground."

Todd encouraged those present to share their faith, saying "Remember, as Paul says, 'WE WALK in newness of life.' We don't stand still. We don't stay inside our comfort zone. We get out there in the world because we have tasted new life in Christ and we want others to know. We walk, we move out, we go into the world proclaiming Jesus Christ."

He also spoke of the Rev. Ted McCabe, pastor of a new church start on the Southwest District, called The Bridge. The Bridge is for those who have never had a church home, or perhaps have not had one for a long time. McCabe kept sharing his faith with a resistant neighbor. "At last count, the neighbor has who wanted nothing to do with God or the church has recruited 25 people to come and join the Bridge!"

"You see, there's a hunger and a thirst inside every person for God, whether they recognize it or not. God has appointed the baptized community to walk out in newness of life and proclaim that Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, is living among us," he said, encouraging every one of our churches to be reaching out to persons with new life in Jesus Christ.



Rev. James B. Todd leads the benediction at his Service of Installation on September 17.

Bishop calls for prayer to stop violence

"Today United Methodists stand together with other leaders of the faith community, citizens groups, and government and law enforcement officials to call state legislators to take action to end violence in our streets. Fifty buses of citizens have gone from the City of Philadelphia to the steps of the capitol in Harrisburg to decry the violence that plagues our streets and neighborhoods across Pennsylvania. To date, the murder rate in the City of Philadelphia has climbed to 285 persons killed by handguns - most of them illegally bought and sold.

Today's rally in Harrisburg coincides with a day-long discussion on reducing gun violence in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The rally has been organized by The Coalition to End Handgun Violence, and includes Mayor John Street of Philadelphia along with mayors from Reading, Lancaster, Bethlehem and Allentown. Many pastors and laypersons from our United Methodist churches in Eastern Pennsylvania have joined the effort, including our Conference Lay Leader, Dr. Mary White. The three goals of the rally are to ask legislators to stop the flow of illegal handguns, to enact smarter laws and support more effective law enforcement to curb gun crime, and to invest in a peaceful future by expanding opportunities for education and employment.

Together, as United Methodists, we mourn for the victims of gun violence, including the murdered persons, their families, and their communities. In our Wesleyan tradition, and as part of the Body of Christ we are called to be witnesses to a loving God, to love our neighbors, to heal our communities, and to restore God's kingdom of justice and peace.

As it says in our United Methodist Social Principles, "We offer our prayers for those in rightful authority who serve the public, and we support their efforts to afford justice and equal opportunity for all people." *Social Principles 164 F*

Now is the time for United Methodists in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference to pray. **Now through November 1, I am calling every United Methodist in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference to a season of prayer for peace in the region.** Join me in praying for God to stop the violence in our communities.



Bishop Marcus Matthews issued a call to prayer for peace to all United Methodists in Eastern Pennsylvania. In a statement released on Tuesday, September 26, he asked all churches and members to continue the prayer focus through November 1.

While we pray for our communities to be safe for people of all ages, let us pray for God to guide our ministry outreach to victims and perpetrators of violence.

In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he urged believers to pray for everyone and for leaders.

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity." (1 Timothy 2: 1-2, NRSV)

God is calling us to pray for peace in our communities.

Let us pray...

Dear God,

We lift prayers for peace in the Eastern Pennsylvania area, in the United States and in our global community. We pray for our children who are being killed by senseless guns that we make available. We pray for our seniors who struggle to make ends meet in an economy that is not just. We pray for the poor; and that you would give us the wisdom and heart to share our resources. We pray for our lawmakers and public servants that they may lead the way in creating a climate of peace in our communities. Help our congregations be places of hope, peace and healing for our communities. These prayers we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

In Memoriam

Retired elder, the Rev. Benjamin O. Gould, died on September 6, 2006. He was 89 years old, and resided at Ware Presbyterian Village in Oxford PA.

Rev. Gould served the following appointments beginning in 1945: Paoli; Philadelphia: Fletcher; Phila.: Germantown, First; Lima; Reading: Holy Cross; Paoli; Phoenixville: First. He retired in 1982 and in retirement served Hopewell and Lafayette Hill: Messiah. In retirement, he also served as visitation pastor at Paoli Presbyterian Church.

There was calling time from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 10, 2006, with a service at 2:30 p.m., at Paoli Presbyterian Church, 225 S. Valley Road, Paoli PA (610-644-8250).

He is survived by his wife, Gladys, who is in the Alzheimer's Unit at Ware Presbyterian Village in Oxford PA. He also is survived by a daughter, Beverly Henry, and a son, Stephen Gould. He was predeceased by a daughter, Judith Spahr, in 1968.

Condolences may be sent to Rev. Gould's daughter, Mrs. Beverly Henry, 168 Blackburn Drive, Nottingham PA 19362. Or, you can go to www.rememberingbengould.com and leave a message of remembrance.

In The Nation

New England pastors reach out to migrant workers

By John Gordon*

They work up to 12 hours a day, harvesting the delectable main ingredient for blueberry muffins, pancakes and pies.

Each year, thousands of migrant workers stream into Washington County to work in the wild blueberry capital of the world. But the migrants (representing a diverse mix of Native American and Latino cultures) face backbreaking work, low wages and sometimes poor living conditions as they bring in the crop.

United Methodist pastors from New England are reaching out to help.

"It's hard. We think they often get taken advantage of," said the Rev. Betty Palmer, pastor of Jacksonville United Methodist Church in Machias, Maine.

Palmer began her ministry six years ago, visiting migrant workers, giving away blankets and baby needs, and holding worship services in camps where they live.

"The first year we went out, three of us with a sign around our neck, in Spanish, that said, 'God loves you and so do we.' And we handed out blankets and Bibles and became known as the blanket ladies," she said.

The ministers and volunteers who come to help them are a welcome sight for Armando Aguilar, 26, from Honduras. Aguilar began working in the fields after construction jobs became difficult to find in the area.

"We work here and then we work there, and we don't make very much money," he said. "And so we can't afford the medicines and things that we need."



Armando Aguilar, a migrant worker from Honduras, rakes blueberries in a field in Washington County, Maine. United Methodist churches in New England and their pastors provide ministries that support the migrant workers who face backbreaking work, low wages and poor living conditions when they return to the area each year to harvest the blueberries. A UMNS photo by John Gordon.

One of the best shopping bargains in the area may be a used-clothing store, Holy Pants and Shirts, supported by United Methodist churches. For a dollar, migrants can fill a large bag with clothing, shoes and Bibles. Or, if money is a problem, they can pick out what they need without charge.

Many migrant workers are supporting their families in other countries, or making money to buy school clothes or a used car.

Andres Flores, 46, came from Mexico and began working in blueberry, orange and tobacco fields five years ago.

"I have to be here," he said. "In Mexico, doing the work, we earn very little money. For me, it's just the work for my family."

About 20 churches, most of them United Methodist, support the migrant-workers outreach as part of Down East Maine Missions. The clothing store is located near a center that offers free commodity foods, medical care and other assistance to workers.

Churches have come up with creative ways to raise money for the outreach.

Native Americans who used to live in Maine return to the area each year to rake the wild blueberries, which

grow on squatty bushes close to the ground.

Donna Augustine, whose Native American spirit name is Thunderbird Turtle Woman, began working in the fields when she was a child. She now lives in Canada and raises seven children.

"It's a tradition to come here," Augustine said. "It teaches the children hard work" that at the end of the day, after you've raked very hard, that you'll feel good about yourself, and when you pick up that paycheck, it wasn't just handed to you."

Pastor Palmer estimated about 6,000 migrant workers came to harvest blueberries this year in Maine down from previous years. She said fewer jobs are available because some leaseholders now use machines, which do not require as many workers.

More information about Down East Maine Missions is available at http://neconference.brickriver.com/files/oFiles_Library_XZXLCZ/Material_Aid_for_Down_East_Maine_Missions_WQJT6CG4.pdf or by contacting Betty Palmer at (207) 952-0413 or pastor@prexar.com.

*Gordon is a freelance producer and writer based in Marshall, Texas, who travels on assignment for United Methodist News Service.



Migrant workers can fill a bag with clothes for \$1 at the Holy Pants and Shirts used-clothing store. The store is supported by United Methodist churches in New England and is one of the ministries in the area supporting the migrant workers that come to Washington County, Maine, each year to harvest the blueberries. A UMNS photo by John Gordon.

The Nation in Brief

■ The Commission on United Methodist Men has joined a coalition of faith groups to help reduce teen smoking. The commission voted Sept. 16 to add its signature to a resolution that calls for increasing the cost of cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and other tobacco products as one of the most effective ways of reducing smoking and other tobacco use among adolescents. The men's agency joins United Methodist Women and the churchwide Board of Church and Society as members of a coalition called "Faith United Against Tobacco," to mobilize the faith community to support proven solutions for reducing smoking - including increasing state tobacco taxes.

■ Children from Chattanooga's inner city are experiencing the thrill

of seeing their own artistic talent make an impact in a program at Christ United Methodist Church. An enormous slingshot, paint-soaked tennis balls, and happy faces are the kids' payoff for voluntarily spending summer mornings hitting the books, as part of a program aimed at raising the academic performance of children in the inner city. The women, who call themselves Moms on a Mission, use the extreme art in tandem with the academic instruction offered at the Bethlehem Center, a United Methodist neighborhood center in the inner city. The art and other enrichment activities are a lure to keep middle-school students involved in the academic tutoring program during the lazy days of summer.

■ Louise Sellars and her friends forget sometimes why they are

wearing flower leis around their necks. They are dressed for a Hawaiian luau at the "House of Friends." All of the "friends" at this weekly gathering suffer from dementia. Bethany United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas, provides activities designed for seniors like Sellars. The group has time each week for arts, crafts, music, snacks and conversation. Church members say the House of Friends grew out of a support group for families caring for loved ones with dementia. The round-the-clock care these seniors require can pose hardships for families trying to provide that care. The program was designed to give these caregivers a weekly respite. The House of Friends is offered, free of charge, to participants of all faiths. The ministry is supported by donations and grants.

■ A United Methodist church and a Presbyterian congregation have formed a two-year training center for college graduates interested in youth ministry. Brentwood (Tenn.) United Methodist Church and First Presbyterian Church of Nashville have partnered to form the Center for Youth Ministry Training. Nine students are participating in the inaugural semester, which began Aug. 16 and ends Dec. 12. Most of the students are in their first youth ministry position. The center's immediate goal is to equip its students with the tools and foundation they need to make a long-term difference in youth ministries in the region.

In The World

Camp in Sierra Leone teaches children to “live in light”

By Phileas Jusu*

Two hundred and ten children from different parts of Sierra Leone and from various religious backgrounds gathered this summer for a weeklong camp at June Hartranft Memorial Primary School for Girls.

The Children's Ministry of the United Methodist Sierra Leone Annual Conference organized the July 17-24 camp, which had as its theme, “Live as Children of Light,” inspired by Ephesians 5:8.

The event was the third organized by the Children's Ministry after Sierra Leone's bitter civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002.

The camp was timely, said the Rev. S.E.A. Fonnies, superintendent of the United Methodist Church's Moyamba West District, where the event was held.

“After the war, we have found out that most children are wayward,” he said. “But now that this camp is in

session, it will serve as a forum where their lives will be molded. The lessons they're going to learn will instill in them a God-fearing spirit and the values of Christian life.”

In his address to the children at the official opening ceremony, Bishop Joseph C. Humper of Sierra Leone admonished the children to treat life seriously and warned them to stay away from harmful drugs. He said the children were in the camp to prepare themselves for future leadership.

Humper told the camp counselors — teachers and caretakers who had traveled with the children from different locations in the country — to spend time with the children and be pacesetters for them.

The children spent the week studying portions of the Bible and learning about HIV/AIDS and substance abuse, and they also had fun through indoor and outdoor games. The interaction and the discipline they received from the camp “will also have a positive



Campers and counselors walk to church at the children's camp at June Hartranft Memorial Primary School for Girls in Moyamba, Sierra Leone. The July 17-24 camp was organized by the Children's Ministry of the United Methodist Sierra Leone Annual Conference. Campers spent the week in Bible study, learning about HIV/AIDS and substance abuse prevention, and having fun and fellowship. A UMNS Web-only photo by Phileas Jusu.



Campers sing songs at June Hartranft Memorial Primary School for Girls in Moyamba, Sierra Leone. The July 17-24 camp was organized by the Children's Ministry of the United Methodist Sierra Leone Annual Conference. Children spent the week in Bible study, learning about HIV/AIDS and substance abuse prevention, and having fun and fellowship. A UMNS Web-only photo by Phileas Jusu.

social impact on the children,” Fonnies said.

Sallu Kamara, a camp counselor and director of the Bible Training Institute in Bo, Southern Sierra Leone, is optimistic about the camp's impact on the children. The United Methodist Church has a policy to nurture children during a vacation like this, so as to become good citizens in the future. We expect them to learn to be orderly at home, school and the community within which they live. We also expect them to learn Christian virtues like respect for elders and also to become better Christians and children in the communities where they live.”

The Rev. Jane Lahai, head teacher of June Hartranft Memorial Primary School for Girls and also camp manager for 2006, shares Kamara's optimism. “I believe the boys and girls will take home new knowledge, new skills and comportment. On the whole, I expect good from this camp this year.”

The Rev. Etta Nicol is the director of the Children's Ministry. At the opening ceremony, she assured the children that they would return home

full of knowledge, and she encouraged them to be attentive in class.

Sahr Sam, an 11-year-old from the UMC Boys Primary School in Koidu Town in Eastern Sierra Leone, enjoyed the camp. “I came to this camp to learn more about God,” said Sahr, who wants to learn how to preach. “I also like the camp because of the big playground and good water to drink.”

Hannah Kanu, 13, a second-year student from Holy Rosary Secondary School (a Catholic high school) in Kenema, Eastern Sierra Leone, also gave the camp high marks.

“I was delighted to come because I have never been to a camp before,” she said. “Already, I have learned a lot from what (the) bishop said yesterday, that I can be a child of light by being a good girl.”

Eleven-year-old Hawa Abu, from the UMC Primary School in Kulanda Town, Bo, Sierra Leone, had attended the 2004 camp as well. She said she loved camping “because of the new friends I make and the new skills I learn from them.”

*Jusu is director of communications for The United Methodist Church's Sierra Leone Annual Conference.

The World in Brief

■ Following an 11-year civil war, United Methodists from the United States and Liberia led a July workshop to help leaders of this West African nation train teachers to rehabilitate the minds and hearts of young people. The need for such a workshop became evident last February, when students from a United Methodist high school in Yonibana burned down a local police station. After living with daily violence for 11 years, the youth used violent means to oppose the police detention of one of their student leaders. Bishop Joseph C. Humper, who leads the denomination's Sierra Leone Area, told leaders from United Methodist schools in the region that since the war ended in 2002, the government has been busy rehabilitating and reconstructing hospitals, schools and police stations that were destroyed during the years of fighting. He said it is now time to

help people traumatized by the war.

■ Families displaced by recent violence in Sri Lanka are being assisted by the United Methodist Committee on Relief as they return home. Guy Hovey, UMCOR Sri Lanka's head of mission, reported what started “with a trickle” of returnees to the town of Muttur has expanded significantly. “We're now working in Muttur helping people resettle themselves,” he said during a Sept. 18 visit to the agency's headquarters in New York. UMCOR has been designated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as the lead agency for the return and reintegration of displaced people in the Muttur area. Since the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami, UMCOR has worked in partnership with the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka on recovery and

rehabilitation projects in the Trincomalee, Ampara, Batticaloa, Matara and Mullaitivu districts of Sri Lanka.

■ The United Methodist Committee on Relief work is continuing in Sudan, despite uncertainty over security in the near future. Safety has only become a concern in the past two months in the areas of the south where UMCOR operates, according to Jane Ohuma, head of mission in the region, during a visit to the agency's New York headquarters. The heavy presence of the military, both on the ground and in the air, has curtailed the movement of all nongovernmental organization staff. The agency takes basic safety precautions and relies on national staff for access and information, she said. UMCOR, which has offices in Khartoum, South Sudan and South

Darfur, has received major support for its Sudan work from the Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in Tipp City, Ohio.

■ United Methodists from around the world gathered in the nation's capital to hear that the church must get involved in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. “We need you, and more people like you, to become ambassadors for the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund,” said the Rev. Don Messer, a member of the fund's board of directors. “Lighten the Burden,” held Sept. 8-9 in Washington, was sponsored by the fund, which was created by the 2004 General Conference, Board of Global Ministries and the Board of Church and Society. Attendees heard that nearly 40 million people have the virus worldwide. Sixty percent of those with the virus live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Faith into Action from A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania

By Soozung Sa Rankin*

A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania (Witness) is the social justice and advocacy arm of United Methodist ministry in Pennsylvania. We are committed to communicating clear, concise, and effective messages that will inspire United Methodists across the state to be voices for justice in our state. Understanding the issues affecting our short term and long term goals will only help each of us make well informed decisions. This is not about the separation of church and state. This is about the community of believers making their voices heard. We need to be voters. And need to be informed voters.

We want to provide important information about important issues of justice, remind you of the United Methodist Social Principles, and provide resources so you feel informed and involved. For some persons, it may be as simple as exercising the right to vote. For others, it may be as important as praying for our political leaders as they lead neighborhoods, communities, cities, counties and our state. Most important is putting our faith into action, and being voices for justice and change in our neighborhoods and communities.

It would be difficult to miss the upcoming elections this November, as we are being bombarded by ads and commercials using a myriad of media. I want to encourage you to tune in. Take a look at it from a new perspective. Study the Social Principles, understand your beliefs, seek to influence your congregation, family and community in ways you never have, and discern how you can make your voice heard.

There are many issues to consider as you go to the polls this November, but let me focus on Gambling and Property Tax. It is important to talk about both as they are related and linked. Witness, in coalition with other advocacy groups, has worked against gambling and its expansion in our state. While Pennsylvania currently has racetracks, Witness is opposed to the expansion of gambling to casinos in our communities. Witness was an active participant in the Pennsylvanians Against Gambling Expansion (PAGE) lawsuit several years ago to overturn ACT 71. ACT 71 allowed for the license of slots venues. The courts upheld ACT 71. Since then, the struggle continues. The issue of gambling is more complex than it appears on the surface. The negative outcome far outweighs any financial income. An increase in crime, family stress, financial challenges due to bankruptcy, addictions and mental health issues affect our communities as a result of gambling. Witness continues to invest in advocating for overturning gambling in Pennsylvania.

There are also significant inequities in the real estate tax system in Pennsylvania. Property taxes are the main source of funding for public schools. Pennsylvania has decreased its share of school funding from 68% to 33-35%, making local property taxes the main revenue. This has caused strain on property owners, affecting most those who are least able to afford it. Funding public education through local property taxes creates a disparity in the dollar amount spent on education from community to community, thus a disparity in the quality of education offered across school districts in the state.

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church can be found in the 2004 Book of Discipline. Most likely you will find it in your church library. You may download a 2004 copy of the Social Principles online from The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society website: <http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/pp.asp?c=fsJNK0PKJrH&b=845451>, or order an updated 2005-2008 Social Principles and Study Guide for \$1.25 per booklet from the same website.

Finding information about the candidates is fairly easy on the Internet and in campaign offices. As we get closer to Election Day, November 7, you will find candidates' positions on issues laid out side by side in your local papers.

Resource your congregation. The by-laws of The United Methodist Church do not allow us to tell people how to vote, but we can inform them on the issues and where the candidates stand on each issue, and remind them of our Social Principles. Encourage your church members to visit the General Board of Church and Society website for helpful information about social justice issues: <http://www.umc-gbcs.org>.

A United Methodist Witness calls all members to put their faith into action. Sign up for our email list and watch for Action Alerts. You may become a member of Witness by going to the website www.umwitnesspa.org, or by calling the Witness office for information at 1-800-511-4937 or 717-236-6363. Email us at umwitnesspa@epic.net or write to us: A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania, 216 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101.

* Soozung Sa Rankin is executive director of A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania.



Healing the Wounds of Racism Schedule for 2006

November 15-17, 2006 - Port-O-Call Hotel Ocean City, N.J.

For more information, contact:

Rev. Hilda Campbell, Director Human Relations and Leadership
Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820; 610-666-9090, ext. 224; hilda.campbell@epaumc.org

YOUTH EXPLOSION ROCKS CHESTER

by Rev. Andrew L. Foster, III.*

What happens when you combine youthful enthusiasm through praise dancers, Christian rappers, a local community drum line and drill team, accompanied by college students from Lincoln University, a 19 year old preacher from Philadelphia and a former football star, now carrying the ball for Jesus? Well, if you were present at Grace Community September 15-17, you would know the answer to the question - **A Youth Explosion!!**

Grace Community UMC, located at 1213 Central Avenue in Chester, PA began its 1st Annual Youth Explosion.

to be the "church" and seek out ways to reach those that are rarely on the radar screen for church membership and discipleship. He reminded the youth and the adults that if Saul (Paul) were not able to be in the church, we would not have the benefit of 13 books of the New Testament and would not have the plan of salvation.

Saturday was a day filled with excitement and fun and activities galore were everywhere the eye could see and the ear could hear. The smell of hotdogs and the taste of Philadelphia style pretzels were enjoyed by all. Face painting, moon bounce, fishing on land and various games were



A team of youth leads praise and worship dance at Youth Explosion in Chester.

It was a combined vision by Kathleen Miller, Church School Superintendent, and Rev. Hilda Campbell, Youth Pastor. It required a lot of hard work, a lot of phone calls and a lot of letter writing to community leaders and residents. The desired outcome was to give the children and youth of Chester a safe and creative way to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a traditional and non-traditional way.

The weekend started off on Friday Night with a youth revival featuring Honor Ministry from Philadelphia who challenged us to "Stomp on the Devil and Rock with the Lord. We also experienced a dynamic young preacher, Minister Rodney Weaver, who was licensed to preach at age 14. His message was thought provoking and relevant. He preached a subject entitled: "When the Gangster Meets the Church." He challenged the "church"

available for all ages. New coats were distributed to the children and youth. The music filled the city and Sunday's worship was concluded by The Rev. Irving D. Fryar, Pastor of New Jerusalem House of God, Mount Holly NJ and former Philadelphia Eagle, teaching us through the Gospel of Mark 5:24-29 on "How to Handle an Issue" recognizing that most times the issue "Is You." One of the greatest experiences for me during this weekend was the new relationships that were formed and the former relationships within the community that were restored. For this pastor, the sheer joy of seeing young and old working and playing together was truly explosive.

**The Rev. Andrew L. Foster, III is the Senior Pastor at Grace Community United Methodist Church in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Summer Camp: Gone but not forgotten!

Beyond the Border was the theme at our Eastern Pennsylvania Conference camps this year. Through Bible studies and worship experiences, more than 3,000 campers discovered that Jesus crosses any border to be with us. There are not just a few places where Jesus can be found. God's grace, through Christ, is available to all people, in all places.

Carson Simpson Farm Christian Center

God worked in a mighty way at Carson Simpson this summer, challenging us to do a spiritual inventory of ourselves, and the personal borders that we build to keep others out.

We dusted our fingerprints and made mirrors as we learned that in order to love others we must love ourselves first, and that we are to forgive others, just like God forgave us. We learned how to become "Movers and Shakers" for God as we had our annual Derby Races and boat races. We shined our light for God during our talent show. We learned to face our fears by depending on God to do all things in our lives. On the last day of camp we wore tie-dyed shirts we had made, showing how we are all the same, yet also unique.

We searched for spiders and cheered as the staff faced their fears during "Fear Factor." We explored what real peace is during "Peace like a river" week as we looked at physical differences in each other. We all learned how to sign, and we worshipped together at Friday chapel. As one camper said "peace only comes from the Prince of Peace."

We were challenged during "The New Frontier" week to go out and make a difference for Christ. We were reminded that God is so big that He can handle anything in our lives. Our final chapel was a beautiful picture of the vastness of our creator, as we entered a dark room and prayed, and then the room filled with star light. We were then ready to head out and allow God to use us no matter where we are or how big we are. We were ready to go "Beyond the Border" for Him. *From Raymond Neitz, director.*

Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center

Gretna Glen added four new overnight camps this summer, including off site hiking and rafting trips, new onsite activities for senior high campers, and art and craft experiences for younger children in grades one through four. After Hours brought the thrill of night camp back to Gretna Glen with everything from high ropes to simply cooking meals, and even a laser light praise concert, all done at or after the midnight hour.

New day camp programs offered the opportunity for children to say, "Come With Me," and experience camp with their parents. Wet & Wild and Puddle Jumpers let children get wet and have fun doing it. Gretna Glen went further Beyond the Border, taking the Community Day Camp program on the road to churches in Reading and Lancaster.

Camp Can Do, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, enjoyed two full weeks in the beauty of God's creation, and the Muscular Dystrophy Association brought their program to Gretna Glen again. We aren't sure whether the ministry was greater for the patients, campers and volunteers of these two camps or for the Gretna staff. The blessings truly flowed in both directions.

2006 was a summer of exceptionally talented summer staff, spirit-filled self-sacrificing volunteers and newly equipped campers whose eyes were truly opened through the camp experience! *From Paul Douglas, director.*



The magnificent setting alone is a demonstration of God's sincere love for us. Guests often tell us that they begin to "feel different" as they drive up Pocono Plateau Road. This is sacred ground.

This is God's place. It is His camp; His retreat center, and He gets to work on our hearts right away! Praise the Lord!

This summer we added two new camping experiences: Children's Eco-Explorers and Zion/Bryce National Parks Hiking Trip, which traveled to Utah. We were also blessed to have the familiar faces of returning summer staff, volunteer counselors, program directors, nurses, and best of all...1047 CAMPERS, 295 of whom were new to the Plateau!

Camp Innabah - 68 hours of "Son" Power

On Tuesday night, July 18th, a terrible storm rolled through Camp Innabah, bringing extremely high winds and hail. When it was over more than 100 trees were down and we were without electrical power. Thankfully, all of the campers, volunteers and staff were safely under cover when it hit.

On Wednesday morning we had port-a-john's delivered and buckets of creek water taken to each lodge to flush toilets. Volunteers brought ice and drinking water, and a large generator was delivered to camp, providing power for water, septic, and the pump at the pool. It also enabled us to email people asking for their prayer support, which resulted in a tremendous outpouring of love, support and offers of help. Finally, on Friday afternoon the power was restored.

We are thankful for how God was very much a part of those long 68 hours, and particularly that no one was injured in this powerful storm! Additionally, none of our buildings were damaged! God is certainly good!

Overall, we had a fantastic summer at Innabah. We were blessed with remarkable summer staff who truly shone in the midst of all the normal and not so normal camp chaos. Hundreds of volunteers helped us provide over 1,000 campers with a unique, safe, and meaningful camp experience. As usual, registrations for Grandparents & Me, Water Sports Splash, Fishin' Camp, Little Minnows and Challenge Camps filled up first. Tee It Up camp was offered for the first time this year, and we had some very full hilltop camps for a variety of ages throughout the summer. The Day Camp program is growing as more homes are being built in the area.

God's love shone in so many ways this summer at Innabah. Thank you for your continual prayer support! *From Christie Heflin, director.*

Pocono Plateau

Some people think that camp is just for fun...but there is more to summer camp at Pocono Plateau than that! The summer camp ministry has a huge impact on the lives of campers. On this mountaintop, people receive encouragement, hope and spiritual renewal as they experience God in a personal way—sometimes encountering Jesus Christ for the very first time.



We were equally blessed with 188 volunteers who gave of their time and energy to share their love of Christ with the campers. We could not have done it without them!

Most important of all was the opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with campers. Whether they were familiar with the Plateau or new in 2006, lives were touched and changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. And let's face it, that's what summer camp is truly all about! *From Ron Shane, director.*



Looking for a place to hold an upcoming retreat? For more information on the four Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Camp and Retreat Centers, go to: <http://www.epaumc.org/MrCamping.asp>, or contact Mr. Jim Wilkin, director of Camping and Nurture Ministries, 800-828-9093, ext. 225 or jim.wilkin@epaumc.org.

Your church makes this ministry possible through its Connectional Ministry Funds.

Pilot program increases missionary support

continued from page 1

missionaries. Covenant Relationships allow local churches, church clusters and individuals to enter into a supportive relationship with a missionary and reap the many rewards of being connected in the worldwide ministry of Christ.

As a missionary through GBGM, The Rev. Sally Wisner Ott never has a dull day. She serves as the executive director of LUMINA, providing leadership to several churches throughout Lancaster County as they support programs for children, teens and adults in need throughout the region. She coordinates food cupboards, school uniform banks, after-school programs and ministry to ex-offenders. She meets with church leaders and community residents. She manages the administrative budget of LUMINA and oversees the office staff.

Rev. Ott is not alone in her work as a Church and Community Worker. She is in Covenant Relationships with United Methodists around the country. In addition to the congregations in Lancaster who support LUMINA, she has churches from as close as Philadelphia and as far away as Michigan who are in regular prayer for her and LUMINA, who support her work monetarily and who provide goods and services.

"The prayer and financial support and ongoing encouragement that I receive through Covenant Relationships are essential to the vitality of my mission. I could not imagine being in mission without the United Methodist connection," Rev. Ott said.

Covenant Relationships are a primary way that missionaries are supported in The United Methodist Church. Through these relationships, congregations agree to support a missionary with regular prayer, communication, and financial commitment. The more Covenant Relationships local churches establish, the more missionaries can be sent and received around the world, to spread the Good News of God's compassion, grace, mercy and love.

"One conference from each jurisdiction was selected to be a part of GBGM's Pilot Project. Eastern Pennsylvania was selected because of our diversity and our interest in missions locally and around the world," said the Rev. Mindy McKonly, pastor of Asbury UMC in Allentown and chair of the Conference Committee on Mission Personnel, which is coordinating the pilot project.

Participating in Covenant Relationships has many benefits, both for the congregations and the missionaries. These relationships give missionaries a network of support and prayer partners that surround the globe. Missionaries have a way to reach out for supplies, goods and services that their ministries may need. They are assured of a steady funding base, enabling them to spend more time serving and less time raising money.

Congregations and individuals also benefit from Covenant Relationships. They can establish a lasting relationship with someone who ministers and serves in geographic areas or to populations that they are passionate about. They can be a part of the world-

wide reach of The United Methodist Church. They can pray with new meaning for the part of the country or world in which the missionary serves. Their church or personal life may come alive through participation in missions.

"Developing a covenant relationship with a missionary puts a personal face on the mission outreach of The United Methodist Church. We read world events with a new understanding of how they effect the people we have come to know in that area. Our prayers on Sunday morning are more meaningful. Our UVMIM teams help support the mission and ministry of our covenant missionaries," Rev. McKonly said.

Covenant Relationships can be established in three ways:

- By a local congregation
- By a cluster of congregations, based on geography or ministry interest
- By an individual

Cluster Covenant Relationships provide a unique opportunity for smaller congregations to come together to provide missionary support. Clusters can be formed based on geography or ministry interest. Demonstrating our connective system, clusters can do more together than they could alone. They can pool technology to enable the churches to stay in touch through e-mail or video. They can send cluster teams on a Volunteers in Mission trip. They can coordinate prayer vigils for the ministry and missionary.

Both clusters and local congregations also can enter into relationships for \$5 per active member and a commitment to prayer. There is no limit to the amount a congregation can give. Through the pilot program, the Conference Committee on Mission Personnel is encouraging larger congregations to fully support a single missionary, which averages \$50,000 a year. This type of support enables non-U.S. based missionaries to be sent to countries where they are most needed, for example, sending a missionary from the Ivory Coast to Rwanda.

A new feature of the pilot program is the individual Covenant Relationship. For \$500 or more, an individual will enter into a relationship of prayer and communication. He or she will receive newsletter, mailings and e-mails from the missionary, just like congregations will.

A member of the Conference Committee on Mission Personnel is available to come to local churches and present a program on Covenant Relationships. For more information, please contact Rev. Mindy McKonly at 610-398-2577 or

mmckonly@asburylv.org.

For more information on the ministry of LUMINA, go to:

www.luminaoutreach.org.

* *The Rev. Wendy Hudson-Jacoby is pastor of West Grove UMC in West Grove, PA, a member of the Conference Committee on Mission Personnel, and a former Young Adult Missionary through GBGM (Mission Intern 1996-1999).*

Book Review: A New Spiritual Home

By Barbara Wheeler

I grew up in a spiritual household. My family attended church every Sunday at a small country United Methodist church in central Pennsylvania. This church was one of my first spiritual homes as well.

In his new book, author Hal Taussig examines the new spiritual home that many Christians have found in progressive congregations. *A New Spiritual Home: Progressive Christianity at the Grass Roots* defines and illustrates the progressive Christian movement in today's society. Taussig also examines the future of progressive Christianity including the challenges and opportunities the movement's momentum faces.

Taussig is a United Methodist pastor from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York who draws his research from conversations with students and also spiritual practices from congregations across the United States. He points out the following characteristics of progressive churches: spiritual vitality, intellectual integrity, gender expression, interfaith experience, and social justice ministry. Through his research, Taussig has found that progressive Christian churches from different denominations have some if not all of these characteristics.

In addition to *defining* progressive Christianity in today's world, Taussig also shows readers what progressive Christian congregations are *doing*. Through the course of his research, Taussig discovered over one thousand progressive Christian congregations across the country. The book profiles the progressive characteristics of almost 50 specific congregations.

Progressive Christianity is focused on congregational issues and concerns and less on structure and organization, as much of organized religion is. "Grassroots" implies a foundation. The foundation of the progressive Christian movement is congregations, and the foundation of Taussig's book is congregations: how they worship, who they welcome, what they believe, why they organize to

address social concerns, and how they remain relevant to their members.

Throughout the book Taussig shows readers how this foundation has spread and continues to deepen the faith of congregations and give meaning to individual Christians who struggle to define their spiritual lives in a world where grassroots movements are challenged by traditional organizations that exist as an ends to themselves.

Progressive Christians often feel isolated and alone in a culture that is dominated by conservative political leadership and fundamental religious ideology. My new spiritual home is in a progressive, urban United Methodist congregation. A congregation, in fact, that Taussig lists in the Appendix of his book as one of the thousand progressive Christian congregations in the country. On more than one occasion I have heard members of the congregation (many of whom have belonged to other churches across the country in the past) remark on the uniqueness of our church. However, in terms of progressive Christianity, and according to Taussig's book, we are not as unique as we may think.

Taussig writes, "The organic emergence of progressive Christianity from the grass roots has given it an enormous integrity. This new movement has come directly from the courageous work and creativity of many different Christians in local situations across the country."

The "organic emergence" has also led congregations with similar progressive characteristics to grow separately, and almost grow apart from one another. Taussig's book can be a tool that congregations use to grow together and further network within and across denominational boundaries.

Taussig's book gives genuine life and voice to a grassroots movement. The history of the progressive church is still being written, and Taussig weighs it in a very thoughtful and practical way. As the progressive movement and specifically the progressive Christian movement continues to gain members and momentum, Taussig's book will become part of the foundation of a new spiritual home.

United Methodist Women Eastern Pennsylvania Conference 33rd Annual Meeting



Saturday, October 21, 2006 - 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

Zion United Methodist Church
22 East Main Street, Myerstown, PA
Northwest District

Theme: Working for peace through a shared mission

Guest Speaker: Mia Adjali, Executive Secretary for Global Concern, Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries

Program will include a panel of local women comprised of Sally Wisner Ott and Wilhelmina Young sharing their Program of Reconciliation

Registration Fee: \$8.00 - Includes morning refreshments and lunch

Mail registrations to:
Henrietta Thomas
7760 Bennett Road
Wyncote, PA 19095-2302
215-572-1318

Make checks payable to:
EPA Conference UMW

All registrations due by Friday, October 6, 2006

30 Years in food ministry - Something to celebrate

by Angela Juckem*

The church secretary got up from her desk to answer the knock at the door finding yet another person from the neighborhood asking for food. She brought in canned goods to be available to those neighbors on the other side of the door. This was 1976. It became evident that there was a growing community facing economic problems and the church decided it was time to have a volunteer take over the distribution of food. Tona Hatt accepted that responsibility and became the Coordinator of the Central Park UMC Food Ministry. Tona assembled a group of volunteers from the church and other churches to divide bulk food on Tuesday and pack the bags of food as the clients arrived and Wednesday became the Kitchen Cupboard day. Tona spearheaded fund drives to expand the number of items made available for the growing clientele. As the need grew, food items were purchased from the Greater Berks Food Bank, loaded onto their old truck on Monday and Wednesday and brought to the church by additional volunteers. Today the food is delivered to the church by the large Food Bank truck and unloaded by some of the same volunteers. We receive bread and fresh produce from local supermarkets and restaurants.

To qualify a person needs some identification indicating a low income or no income bracket. Volunteers sit at a table inside the door checking identification and number of people in the family. Two more volunteers fill two bags of groceries of the client's choosing. The choices being: cereal, spaghetti sauce, pasta, two soups, two

vegetables, jelly, peanut butter, tuna, canned fruit and, when available, other canned meat. A third bag of Government surplus items is also given. Families of seven or more receive an additional bag which includes several large portion items.

In 1982 several women from the church realized the presence of the homeless in our community and a need for a hot noontime meal. They decided to prepare and serve soup to 25 people several days a week. "What do we do when the 26th person arrives?" Of course, serve them as well. That number grew and a daily soup kitchen emerged making it necessary to hire a Soup Kitchen Coordinator and ask for more volunteers.

This resulted in not only individual persons but groups of people from churches, organizations, offices, High Schools and Confirmation Classes. Our clients receive a bowl of soup or other hot item, sandwich, fruit, drink, dessert. Many restaurants contribute on a regular basis as well as volunteer groups preparing a meal. The only restriction is that persons cannot receive food in both the Kitchen Cupboard and the Soup Kitchen.

A clothing center is opened weekly for all the clients. During the Christmas season, personal care items are distributed to the Soup Kitchen clients and socks, hats, gloves and scarves are provided to all the clients as the supply allows. These are donated by individuals or purchased with financial contributions.

Over time other needs in the community were recognized. This has resulted in the establishment of a single parenting group. Periodically, by working with other city agencies,



Students from the Mennonite Academy School, 14th South Street, Reading, serve as volunteers at the Soup Kitchen for the first time. The Soup Kitchen provides the opportunity for students across the County to do community service as part of their graduation requirement.

group meetings are offered on substance abuse rehabilitation, baby and child care, job placement and computer training. If they choose, the Food Ministry clients can benefit from these groups meeting at the church.

A Board carries on the business of the Food Ministry. Managing the budget and planning fund raising is a prime responsibility as well as supporting the Food Ministry Coordinator, Kitchen Cupboard Coordinator and Soup Kitchen Manager. In 30 years we have gone

from a knock on the door to serving groceries to 2,400 Kitchen Cupboard clients and 14,000 lunches during the first 6 months of 2006.

Central Park UMC, 138 S. 6th St., Reading, will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of our Food Ministry during the 10:00 am worship service on Sunday, October 29. Dr. Gil Rendle will preach. You are welcome.

* Angela Juckem is president of the Food Ministry Board at Central Park UMC.

Methodist Services keeps families together

By Theresa Haenn*

There is a growing need for in-home service to families in order to prevent the dissolution of the family and the children from being taken from the home and placed in foster care. Methodist Services for Children and Families (MSCF) Community Counseling Services has developed an Intensive In-Home Family Counseling and Preservation Support Program which allows Carbon County families to receive counseling services and crisis intervention services in their own home before the children are removed from the home or when the child is preparing to return to his or her family home."

Marjorie Reagan, Administrator for MSCF Community Counseling Services cites an example of how the program can be successful through the eyes of a young family with two preschool children: "The parents each had difficulties including mental health diagnoses, drug and alcohol addictions and their own personal histories of abuse and neglect as children. Community Counseling Services provided parenting assistance and training around communication and discipline; showed them how to maintain their home's cleanliness; gave them education on nutrition and providing appropriate meals; and provided support with employment, as well as working with other community resources to help the family. The

family - especially the parents - worked diligently over a 9-month period, and are experiencing the joys and satisfaction of being successful."

Ms. Reagan added, "As a result of the program, and following treatment leading to recovery for both father and mother, the children will be able to remain in the home. The young children are doing well in pre-school and the collaboration with other community agencies on behalf of the family has sustained them."

The Intensive In-Home Family Counseling and Preservation Support Program works in partnership with the Carbon County Children and Youth Services providing counseling and wrap-around services for local Carbon County families. At this point, six to eight families can be served at this time in this year-old program. Methodist Services for Children and Families Community Counseling Services is looking to expand the program once available funds are identified. The organization uses a professional Case Manager, a Masters Level Family Therapist, and a Family Team Resource Coordinator who together develop a family plan for each individual family. Each plan is individualized to each family's goals - covering aspects of all life domains such as employment, mental health, nutrition, hygiene - developing goals to achieve in each area.

This is considered to be a wrap-around approach by uniting counsel-



Methodist Services for Children and Families Community Counseling Services helps parents and their children in Carbon County stay together and avoid foster care with in-home counseling services.

ing services with community resources to strengthen faltering families.

MSCF Community Counseling Services has active outpatient offices in Palmerton, Bangor, and a new site in Easton. Community Counseling Services is seeking licensed mental health professionals to serve all offices. For more information on the

services offered or employment opportunities, please call Marjorie Reagan at 610-588-9109.

For more information on MSCF, go to: <http://www.methodistservices.org/>

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

Bishop leads focus on making disciples

continued from page 1

pened to us that we are so comfortable in our four walls that we don't want to go out into the community and invite others to join us?"

Through the Making Disciples plan, and in conjunction with the General Board of Discipleship, practical skills training will prepare members and leaders to "step out on faith in bold new steps – to learn new languages and cultures and to connect by being more welcoming in spirit." Bishop Matthews also addressed that there are gaps of persons in their 30's and 40's in clergy leadership, and that there is a need for churches to encourage women and men to enter into professional ministry.

The Action Plan for making disciples of Jesus Christ will encompass five important areas:

Calling Disciples to Faith:

Practical training will help churches to offer new services for unchurched persons, to prepare them for reaching out to previously unreached ethnic communities, and to create new outreach ministries.

Connecting Disciples to the Faith:

This area will include training in prayer methods, small group development in the Wesleyan manner, and

membership invitation and altar calls.

Committing Disciples to the Faith:

Spiritual Renewal will be an important component. Bishop Matthews used the illustration of the Kumnan UM Church in Korea, where the World Methodist Council met in July, and which has grown from 200 members to over 120,000 members through a deep commitment to prayer.

Education will include ministry for children, youth, young adults, and adults; it will span teaching about Wesley theology and the United Methodist connection to teaching and updates for active clergy and probationers on core values of the UM Church.

Leadership Development will be offered through Leadership Universities: intensive training for clergy and laity through GBOD on practical hands-on areas such as evangelism, stewardship, budget and finance, effective practices for committees such as Trustees and SPRC, and new worship styles.

Disciples in Faithful Service:

This area will focus on training Christ Servant Ministers, and on

offering mission opportunities on a local, national, and global basis

Disciples Sharing Faith:

Every church will be encouraged and trained in developing a welcoming and inviting lifestyle to create "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors." Churches will also be asked to participate in the Church Vitality Indicator, an online self-analysis which will show your church how to effectively reach out to your community and grow in numbers. Every church will also develop an ongoing Church Action Plan for Making Disciples.

(For more information on these five areas, see *UM Book of Discipline*, Para. 122.)

Bishop Matthews will share information on the focus on Making Disciples for Jesus Christ at all of the Bishop's Days on the Districts across the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. He especially encourages all laity from conference churches to attend one of these events, whether it is in their district or another (these events will be held in the evening.) For more information on the district events, see page 12.

Innabah's Celebration Banquet - November 5, 2006 - At the Innabah Recreation Center. 5:30 pm Appetizers and 6:00 pm Catered Dinner. Join us for a fantastic night! Bring your family and friends! Help us celebrate the ministries at Innabah. Festivities Include: Highlights of 2006, Silent Auction, Entertainment, Fellowship, Good Food, and lots more! No cost for this amazing dinner and program. R.S.V.P by October 26, 2006 by calling us at 610-469-6111 or emailing us at program@innabah.org.

Innabah's Christmas Open House - Saturday, Dec. 2, 2006, 2:00 - 5:00 pm (Snow Date - Dec. 9th) \$3.00 a person
Tree Trimming, Caroling, Candy Cane Hunt, Appetizers, Crafts, Cookie Decorating, Gingerbread Houses, Door Prizes & More!
Overnight lodging available for the weekend. \$125.00 per family: includes 2 nights lodging, 3 meals, and admission to open house. Advance reservations required for overnight lodging. \$25.00 discount if only 2 people in a room. RSVP not necessary, but very helpful! Contact Innabah for more information: 610-469-6111 or innabahdirector@aol.com.

Methodist Home for Children is the Child Welfare Agency of The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference

*WE NEED YOUR HELP
to make Christmas joyful for 3,000 children!*

Please provide new unwrapped toys,
books, sports items or new costume jewelry

For a complete list of needed items please call
Call 215-877-1926 x 109 today
to say "**YES! WE CAN HELP!**"

Just think of the joy your gift will bring
to a child on Christmas morning!



**Methodist Home
for Children**

4300 Monument Road
Philadelphia, PA 19131-1616

www.methodistservices.org

The official registration and financial information for Methodist Home for Children may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free (within Pennsylvania) 1-800-732-0900. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)

The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference has scheduled FIVE training sessions, in conveniently located places, introducing the Clergy Retirement Security Program, which begins January 1, 2007. It is a retirement program providing lifetime income and account flexibility designed for those who serve God as clergy of The United Methodist Church.

These sessions are open to:

***Eligible clergy/local pastors** (You are eligible to participate in CRSP if you are a clergy member or local pastor under Episcopal appointment to a conference, church, charge, district or conference-controlled entity or unit and are receiving compensation.)

* **Local Church Treasurers and Finance Chairs**

***Staff/Parish Relations Committee Chairs**

Monday, October 23, 2006

-10:00 a.m. – Noon, Simpson House (*Society Hall*), 2101 Belmont Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19131

-2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Thorndale UMC, 3503 Lincoln Highway, Thorndale, PA 19372

-7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Lititz UMC (*Social Hall; enter at lower entrance across from pavilion*), 201 E. Market St., Lititz, PA 17543

Tuesday, October 24, 2006

-10:00 a.m. – Noon, Asbury UMC (*Parlor*), Springhouse Rd. & Walbert Ave., Allentown, PA 18104

-3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., First UMC, 420 Saylor St., Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

So that we might have sufficient handouts available, please RSVP your attendance to Evangeline Johnson at 1-800-828-9093, x215 or evangeline.johnson@epaumc.org no later than October 16. Please indicate your name and which session you plan to attend. Pension questions may be referred to Eleanor Weiser at 1-800-828-9093, x220 or eleanor.weiser@epaumc.org.

Donate to Your Church Directly from Your IRA

By Stacy J. Martin

On August 17, 2006 the Pension Protection Act of 2006 ("the Act") was signed into law. Despite its name, many of the provisions impact income, gift and estate tax planning. One of particular interest during our fall stewardship campaigns is the creation of a qualified charitable distribution.

The Act provides a new rule that permits IRA owners to make a gift to their favorite charity and not include the distribution in their gross income. The otherwise taxable distributions from a traditional IRA or a Roth IRA may be made with all three of the following requirements:

- 1) the distribution must be made by the IRA Trustee directly to the qualified public charity (certain private foundations are included but donor advised funds are not)
- 2) the transfer must occur on or after the date the IRA owner attains age 70½ and
- 3) only for distributions made in 2006 and 2007 without carryover into any subsequent year

Note that the distributions must go directly to the charity from the IRA Trustee. The distributions are counted as part of the IRA owner's required minimum distribution for that year. This temporary provision states that these distributions are not included in gross income and therefore are not included in the owner's deduction for contributions to charity.

Benefits arise for taxpayers that are affected by limitations on itemized charitable donations and for those taxpayers who do not itemize. For the former group, they can meet some or

all of their required minimum distribution using this provision and their deduction matches the amount, rather than being reduced by AGI limitations. For the latter group, their gross income is not increased at all.

Interested donors need to contact their Trustee to learn what is needed to initiate the transfer - letter of instruction or a form they will provide. If the Trustee will wire transfer the funds, call your church treasurer to get the name of the church's bank, the routing (ABA) number, and the account number. If a check may be mailed, be sure that the church is the payee and the check is mailed to the church. I recommend including an "attention to" line with the church treasurer's name, and, a call to that person to let them know it is coming.

As a former tax preparer, I advocate keeping copies of all the correspondence you send and receive from your Trustee. Review your Form 1099R when you receive it in January. This distribution will be coded differently so that it is not included in taxable income. Provide the copies to your tax advisor for his or her file. As noted above, this provision will expire at the end of 2007 so be sure to act soon.

Finally, enjoy the sense of giving you experience knowing you have made a difference in the lives of others through your gift. Share the idea with others in your congregation - both the tax benefits of this provision and the idea of responding to God's gifts.

Please contact me at:
Eastern Pennsylvania-Peninsula United Methodist Foundation
1-800-828-9093 x247
Email: stacy.martin@epaumc.org



SAVE THE DATE!

The Eastern Pennsylvania-Peninsula United Methodist Foundation is hosting another seminar series, with two locations. Please save the dates:

- ***Friday, November 10th** at Williamson Restaurant, Horsham, PA beginning at 6PM (dinner and 90 minute program)
- ***Saturday, November 11th** at Cabela's Sporting Goods, Hamburg, PA beginning at 10AM (coffee and 90 minute program)

Registration Details and Forms are available at the Foundation Office. Please call, fax or email your request for information to:

Stacy Martin
800-828-9093
Fax 610-666-9093; Email: stacy.martin@epaumc.org

Classifieds

PART-TIME CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR Lansdale United Methodist Church, 300 N. Broad Street, Lansdale PA 19446, is seeking a part-time Christian Education Director, 15 to 20 hours per week. For a full job description contact Doris Shaedle at lumcmail@verizon.net. Church telephone: 215 855 8364. Resumes may be sent to the church at the above address to the attention of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

CHURCH MUSICIAN - Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church, Phila., PA, is seeking a musical director for the Youth Choir and an assistant to the Gospel Choir Musical Director. The Church Musician directs and plays for the youth choir one Sunday a month and accompanies the Gospel Choir one Sunday a month. Must be able to play keyboard in addition to piano. This is a part-time paid position and is available immediately. A more detailed job description is available. Resumes may be sent to Camphor Memorial UMC, 5620 Wyalusing Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19131 or emailed to pastor@camphormemorial.org.

ORGAN AVAILABLE - St. Luke's in West Lebanon, PA has a 1950s Hammond - Concert series organ and speakers to give away. It functions well and only needs to be plugged in to work. Interested parties are responsible for moving it. Any questions can be directed to Tom Steger at tandj.steger@gmail.com or call the church at (717) 272-5090. We also have eight 6 ft. wooden pews that are also available for anyone interested.

YOUTH PASTOR - 30 hours a week, for well-established program, grades 7-12. Strong congregational and parental support. Fun-loving and energetic, Christ-centered person. Experience with praise band a plus but not a requirement. Jarretstown United Methodist Church (eastern Montgomery County). For full job description, contact sfdufresne@comcast.net or 215.646.4129.

PASTORAL CARE - Allentown: Asbury United Methodist Church has part-time opening in Pastoral Care. Call the office at 610-398-2577 between 8 am and 4 pm or email mmckonly@asburylv.org for additional information.

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION - Allentown: Asbury United Methodist Church, has part-time opening in Adult Christian Formation. Call the office at 610-398-2577 between 8 am and 4 pm or email mmckonly@asburylv.org for additional information.

PART-TIME CHOIR DIRECTOR - Asbury Protestant Ministry, a Christian campus ministry at Drexel University in Philadelphia, is looking for a gifted and creative person to guide music and direct a small choir for an informal Sunday evening worship service, and perhaps for other occasions, beginning in the Fall. Commitment to weekly or bi-weekly rehearsals (timing negotiable) in addition to the Sunday service. Stipend and small budget for music provided. Great way to earn a little extra spending money! Prior accompanist/direction experience preferred but not required! If interested, or to discuss the position further, contact Pastor Tim Rardin, Asbury's director, at pastortim@drexel.edu or 215-895-2522.

SUPPLY PREACHER AVAILABLE - Pastor Tim Emmett-Rardin, director of the Asbury Protestant Ministry at Drexel Univ., is available as supply preacher. Contact him at pastortim@drexel.edu or 215-895-2522.

FOR SALE - TWO PULPIT ROBES, a black one and a white one. They belonged to the late Rev. Dr. Robert P. Longenecker. His widow, Mrs. Elaine Longenecker, would like to sell the robes for a donation - no fixed price. Bob was medium height and weight. Anyone interested may call her at Pilgrim Gardens, Apt. 410, 7025 Rising Sun Ave., Phila, PA 19111 by dialing 215-289-8132.

SEEKING POSITION AS MUSIC DIRECTOR
Casey Proch, currently the Music Director at Trinity UMC, just outside of Dallas, Texas, will be moving to the Philadelphia area soon and would like to find employment as a Music Director in a Methodist church. Casey holds a Masters degree in conducting, has several years of Music Director experience, and has begun the United Methodist Music certification program. To contact, email him at caseyproch@hotmail.com.

Know someone who excels in ministry with the aged?

Each year, Lancaster Theological Seminary alumni/ae honor graduates who demonstrate excellence in ministry. The theme for the 2007 recognition centers around ministry with those 60 years and older. Nominees must be graduates of Lancaster Theological Seminary who demonstrate in creative, measurable, and meaningful ways, ministry to older adults in congregations, institutional settings, and/or the general community. Letters of nomination must be postmarked no later than November 30, 2006. For more information please consult the Alumni/ae page (Alumni/ae Award Nominations) on Lancaster Theological Seminary's Web site www.lancasterseminary.edu or call 717-290-8729 or 800-393-0654, ext. 129.

Grants for Older Adult Ministries

In an effort to support ministries by, with and for older adults, The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries has a limited amount of grant money available.

The purpose of the grants is to help local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and UM chaplains and UM-related institutions develop intentional, innovative, and creative ministries with older adults.

In order to request funding, grant applications must be completed and submitted with a postmark no later than January 15, 2007. The grant application is available online at www.aging-umc.org or by contacting our office:

Teri Kline, **Assistant to the Director**, Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries, General Board of Discipleship - UMC; P O Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203; Telephone: 615-340-7177; Fax: 615-340-7071; Email: tkline@gbod.org

Wesley Heritage Tour



9 Exciting and Educational Days

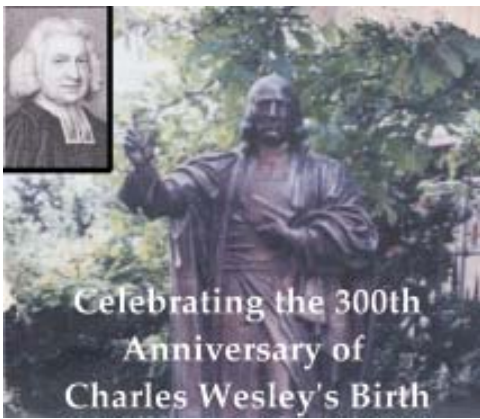
Join Bishop and Mrs. Matthews and the Philadelphia Conference
 Depart on August 6, 2007
 Philadelphia or Baltimore from \$2298*
 *Plus taxes, tips, fees, etc.

Your Journey of a Lifetime Includes:

*Roundtrip Airfare *Week Stay in First Class Midlands Hotel *Daily Breakfast and Dinner (dinner in London on your own) *Deluxe Motorcoaches *Guided Sightseeing *Entrance Fees *Study Guide *Lecture Program

Educational Program:

*Asbury House, Birmingham *New Room and Charles Wesley House, Bristol *City Road Chapel, London *Old Rectory and St. Andrews Church, Epworth *Coventry Cathedral, Coventry *St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester



For brochure contact the conference office at 1-800-828-9093 or e-mail Carol von Minden at carol.vonminden@epauc.org.

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 - Midwinter 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:

October 25 - Southeast District
 January 29, 2007 - Central District
 February 6, 2007 - Northeast District
 February 22, 2007 - Southwest District
 March 1, 2007 - Northwest District

Please go to: <http://www.epauc.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 dates 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.epauc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=1231>.

For more information or for an additional copy of the letter or brochure, please call the Retreat Registrar, Mrs. Amy Botti, 610-666-1442/1-800-828-9093, ext. 233 in the Bishop's office.

UM Witness in welcomes new director

continued from page 1

children there. Her father, Zi H. Sa, emigrated to the U.S. in 1956, and settled in Wisconsin to teach, accepting his call into ministry ten years later. In Wisconsin, he planted and chartered the first four Korean American United Methodist Churches in that state.

As a young child, Rankin was her father's "quiet sidekick," going with him as he found Korean people in communities, visited them, and invited them to church. She also attended Annual Conference with her father, briefcase in hand, which was filled with coloring books, rugs to hook, and Barbie dolls. She saw churches built from the ground up, some starting with her father preaching, her mother at the piano, and she and her sister in the pews. As a preacher's kid, she saw the dedication and long hours it took to build a church.

Rankin has been a part of church leadership every since she herself was a youth. She began directing church choirs at the age of nine. Her childhood leadership experiences led her to

positions as director of youth ministry in two churches: Grace and Covenant United Methodist Churches in Wisconsin. While at Grace, she also managed a 530-acre camp and retreat center.

Rankin's calling led her to the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, where she was the Director of Ministries with Families and Singles from 2001 to 2004. She has also been a writer for The United Methodist Publishing House, Discipleship Resources and The Upper Room. For five years, Rankin has served as a coach and instructor for Dynamic Communicators Workshop, which trains persons in public speaking and engaging leadership.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music, 1989, from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. After eight years of full-time local church ministry, Rankin knew it was time to go to seminary, and began her studies at Vanderbilt University and Asbury Seminary. She is currently in the process of completing her M. Div.

Rankin counts among her hobbies and interests being an enthusiastic

runner, an avid cook, a gymnastics coach and instructor, a costume/hair/make-up designer for theatre productions, a back-drop designer and artist for stage productions, a director of children's choirs and musical theatre productions, a Korean Folk Fan Dancer, and a seamstress.

In 2005, she and her husband, Brian Rankin, moved to Philadelphia from Tampa, FL, to follow a job offer he received from Comcast's legal department.

"As executive director of A United Methodist Witness, I am excited to join committed people in The United Methodist Church as we rally around important issues that affect us today and tomorrow," Rankin said. "Growing up as a preacher's kid, I understood the importance of advocacy work. It was clear to me that ministry happens outside as well as inside the walls of a church building. Often, we forget that our involvement in the congregation is intensely intermingled with everything that goes on in the neighborhoods surrounding our churches as well as in the larger community."

As a shared ministry of United Methodists across Pennsylvania, A United Methodist Witness tracks legislation in the Pennsylvania General Assembly; informs members on important issues of justice such as equitable education, gambling, and property tax; and educates members on upcoming elections and candidates' stands on issues. Witness resources members and calls them to action to contact their legislators regarding their stand on upcoming bills and legislation.

A United Methodist Witness in Pennsylvania is located at 216 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; telephone: 717-236-6363 or toll free 1-800-511-4937. For more information, go to: www.umwitnesspa.org. Contact Soozung S. Rankin, executive director, at umwitnesspa@epix.net.

*Suzy Keenan is director of communications for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church.