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## XOC makes disciples among ex-offenders



The XOC (Ex-Offenders Church) banner hangs in Ross St. United Methodist Church during Friday evening worship services.

By Suzy Keenan

"I was in prison and you visited me," Jesus said in Matthew 25: 36. But what happens when a prisoner is released back into the community?

"Ex-offenders often feel forgotten, neglected, or just plain not wanted in our communities, and even in some of our churches," said Amanda Hipple, founder of XOC. XOC stands for Ex-Offenders Church.

XOC was founded in May of 2004 at Ross Street United Methodist Church in Lancaster, PA, and as part of the shared ministry of LUMINA. LUMINA is a Church and Community Ministry project of the General Board of Global Ministries based in the Southwest District of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church.

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## Bishop's Days on the Districts emphasize making disciples

By Sherry L. Lantz and Suzy Keenan\*

Bishop Marcus Matthews has held special days on each district, inviting clergypersons and laypersons to hear his message and engage in dialogue.

In the clergy sessions, after lunch and fellowship, each district superintendent opened the meeting with special devotions for their district.

On the Central District, Bishop Matthews opened his remarks with words of thanksgiving for Rev. Palmer's service as interim superintendent during December and January. Bishop Matthews added that Rev. Palmer blessed the cabinet with his leadership. On each district, Bishop Matthews offered words of thanks and praise for the devoted service of our district superintendents.

Bishop Matthews spoke of coming to the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference in 2004 "open to the winds of the Holy Spirit" rather than with a ready-to-go plan. His desire was to spend time in the churches of our conference, listening to the laity and the clergy and together prayerfully discerning how God is moving us toward 2012. He wanted to assess and then build upon the work that was



Bishop Marcus Matthews speaks on the conference focus to make disciples of Jesus Christ at the Bishop's Days on the Districts.

already being done.

As we move toward 2012, he said, the health of the churches will be assessed based upon four criteria:

- Spiritual renewal
- Active disciple-making
- Education and practical skill training

- Leadership development

Bishop Matthews challenged and encouraged the pastors to set the tone of the congregation, which may mean needing to do what is not necessarily popular. He went on to speak of the need to be more welcoming to those who enter our doors. He lifted up the book, *Your Leadership Legacy*, while asking, "What do you want your legacy to be where you are?"

He spoke of the need for clergy to encourage young people to prayerfully consider God's work. So many clergy have found their calling as they have heard their pastor's words of encouragement, witnessed their pastor's example and seen their pastor's excitement. He encouraged pastors to continue to be excited about their appointment and to continue to "bloom where you are planted." He

*continues on page 14*

## Conference Calendar

### MARCH 9-12, 2007

**Ecumenical Advocacy Days, Washington, D.C.** - "and How are the Children?" will be the focus of the Ecumenical Advocacy Days for 2007. Available study tracks are Domestic, Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Eco-Justice, Global Security and Jubilee and Economic Justice. Each area will discuss the challenges faced by parents and/or caregivers in ensuring the future for their children. The final day will be spent as a "Lobby Day" visiting members of Congress to share ideas and needs and discuss their position on issues important to our children's futures. *For more information about the conference or costs, please contact Peggy Wood at (610) 524-5935. Partial scholarships are available from Church and Society of the Eastern Pa. Conference as well as a roommate sharing bank.*

### MARCH 14, 15, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Preparing your congregation's Ministry Action Plan.** See page 10.

### MARCH 18, 2007

**Installation Service for Rev. Dr. Wm. Gary George - 4:00 pm** Tindley Temple UMC, 750 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA.

### MARCH 18, 2007

**Drexel Hill United Methodist Church**, 600 Burmont Road (at School Lane), Drexel Hill, PA, will present the 44-voice touring choir from **North Central College**, Naperville, Illinois, on **Sunday, at 10 AM**, in the Church Sanctuary, under the direction of Jeordano Martinez, Professor of Music. Choral repertoire will include works by Palestrina, Bach, Copland, Charles Stanford, and Irving Berlin. North Central College is located in west suburban Chicago. It has an historic relationship with The United Methodist Church and Bishops from both the Northern Illinois and Wisconsin Conferences sit on its Board of Trustees. For further information, call the church office at (610) 259-2104. Map and directions to the church: [www.drexelhillumc.org](http://www.drexelhillumc.org)

### MARCH 23 - 25, 2007

**Marriage Enrichment Workshop** at Bethany United Methodist Church, Allentown, PA. Marriage Enrichment is an affiliated program of The United Methodist Church, and is designed to make good marriages better. The program schedule includes Friday night, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Registration is open to all, with a fee of \$50.00 per couple. The registration fee covers the cost of the program, and a free will offering will be accepted to help with meals and child care. Contact us at 610-395-3258 or by e-mail at [charles.e.gardner@verizon.net](mailto:charles.e.gardner@verizon.net). Please register by March 9, 2007. For more information, we can send you a CD to share with others in your church or community, or you can visit our website at [www.marriageenrichment.org](http://www.marriageenrichment.org).

### MARCH 24, 2007

**Responding with Faith to Immigration Workshop: How we got to where we are today - and what we can do for tomorrow** - Arch Street United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, offering a brief history of immigration and discussing the current status and immigration law. Hear

first-hand stories from immigrants and refugees, and hear information on how we can work for justice for immigrants. The workshop is sponsored jointly by The Methodist Federation for Social Action and the Church and Society Work Team. From 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.. Registration and coffee at 9:30 a.m. and the speakers will begin at 10 a.m. (*Please note: Discounted parking vouchers are available if requested in advance by calling the church at 215-568-6250.*) The speakers will be followed by a brown bag lunch (beverages provided) with Mefford and others, for further discussion.

### MARCH 24 & 25, 2007

**Youth Musical, "Bow Down"** (The story of Esther) will be presented by God's Youth in Motion (GYM), the Lansdale United Methodist church youth group. The band "Good With Coffee - Free Trade" will perform at 6:30 p.m. The professionally - staged musical, "Bow Down" will begin at 7:00 p.m. Music, dance and teen-inspired dialogue teach how we can all use our influence for God. Lansdale UMC is located at 4<sup>th</sup> and N. Broad Sts. in Lansdale, PA. A free will offering will be taken. Refreshments follow the show. Reserved seating for youth groups is available by calling Amy Biemiller at 215-368-0829 or e-mail at [amybiemiller@aol.com](mailto:amybiemiller@aol.com).

### MARCH 25, 2007

**at 4:00 p.m. The McDonald Family in Concert at Elam UMC.** Followed by a covered Dish in the Pierce Family Life Center. Elam UMC is located at 1073 Smithbridge Road in Concord Township, PA. [www.elamumc.org](http://www.elamumc.org). Please contact Mary for more information: 610-459-2911.

### MARCH 30, 2007

**UM Night at the 76ers** - For more information, see page 16.

### MARCH 30, 2007

**Los Angeles Touring Company Production - A Pebble In My Shoe: The Story of John Shelby Spong's Fight for Human Rights with the Christian Faith** 7:30 pm at Miller Chapel, Lebanon Valley College (101 N. College Avenue in Annville). \$10 General Admission. Contact (717) 867-6135 for more information.

### MARCH 31, 2007

**Lincoln University Choir Concert, 4:00 p.m. - Tindley Temple UMC 170th Anniversary** - The stellar Lincoln University Choir, led by Dr. William Garcia, will perform a concert at Tindley Temple UMC (750-762 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa.) as part of our year-long 170th Anniversary celebration. Come out and enjoy excellent musicianship and singing in the great Charles Albert Tindley tradition! For more information, call 215.735.0442.

### APRIL 13 - 15, 2007

**Marriage Encounter Weekend in York, PA** - Put a little shine on your marriage! The 44-hour weekend begins 7:30 p.m. Friday night and concludes late Sunday afternoon. Space is limited. GBOD is offering 1.5 CEU credits for clergy upon completion of this weekend. The weekend is also open to non-clergy husbands and wives. There is a nonrefundable registration fee of \$50.00. To register contact: Dick & Donna Reisinger 224 Main Ave, Warren, PA 16365. For registration

form call Bernell & Jola Shoff at 717-244-4848, or get a registration form on line at: [www.encounter.org](http://www.encounter.org).

### APRIL 14, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Prayer.** See page 10.

### APRIL 17, 2007

**Pocono Plateau Youth Leader's Day** - 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. This special day is designed for youth workers as a resource in your ministry with youth. Continental breakfast and lunch provided. Topics and information available include: Ministry in the Wilderness; How to Plan and Lead a Retreat; Games, Activities, and the use of Adventure in Youth Ministry; Fun Food for Youth Groups; Service Projects for Youth and Adults; Summer Camp Opportunities. Tour the facilities including: Main Site and Adventure Site accommodations; High Ropes courses; Low Ropes/Team Building course; Zip line; Climbing tower; and Leap of Faith. Experience first-hand our "Leap of Faith" high challenge element. Free time to walk the grounds, hike our interpretive nature trail, enjoy boating or canoeing on our 25-acre lake. Optional: Stay overnight for a free personal retreat. Contact the camp office for more information. RSVP at 570.676.3665 by Wednesday, April 10, 2007. Check out our web site: [www.pocoplateau.org](http://www.pocoplateau.org)

### APRIL 19, 2007

**Spiritual retreat for older adults titled "KEEPING THE SABBATH WHEN LIFE IS A WHIRL OF ACTIVITIES"** from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the National Christian Conference Center in Valley Forge. The retreat will be led by the Rev. Dr. J. Dennis Williams, former District Superintendent and Dean of Cabinet of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. "Keeping the Sabbath" is a day-long experience for older adults that is meant to refresh a person's faith. The cost for the session, including lunch, is \$35 per person. To register contact Mrs. Georgiann Parks at [ghpns1119@verizon.net](mailto:ghpns1119@verizon.net). Deadline for registration is March 30. For directions: [www.nc3.org](http://www.nc3.org). Sponsored by The EPA Conference Older Adult Ministry Committee.

### APRIL 20-21, 2007

**Gretna Glen Camp's Spring Fun & Work Weekend** - All Ages. This weekend is a great opportunity for families, youth groups, individuals or small groups to work together on service projects. Friday evening will be filled with games and a movie. Saturday will bring many opportunities to serve through various clean-up, construction, landscaping, and other projects around camp. All meals are provided. Cost is by donation. Call

the camp at 717-273-6525 or email [coordinator@gretnaglen.org](mailto:coordinator@gretnaglen.org) for a brochure and registration form.

### APRIL 21, 2007

**Gretna Glen Historical Scrapbooking** - Don't you love old pictures? Do you have any vintage Gretna Glen ones? Come and join us as we continue our scrapbooking and celebrate Gretna Glen's history. Call the camp at 717-273-6525 or email [coordinator@gretnaglen.org](mailto:coordinator@gretnaglen.org) for a brochure and registration form. [www.gretnaglen.org](http://www.gretnaglen.org)

### MAY 10, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Living as Christian Disciples: The Means of Grace and Ordinances of God.** See page 10.

### JUNE 13-15, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Faith Sharing and Evangelical Recruitment.** See page 10.

### JULY 21, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Vibrant and Transformative Worship.** See page 10.

### AUGUST 3-5, 2007

**24<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy for Laity** at the Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel and Conference Center, King of Prussia, PA. The theme for the weekend is "Sharing Our Faith—in the local church, in the community and in the world." The Rev. N. Lynne Westfield, Associate Professor of Religious Education at Drew University and an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church, will be the keynote speaker. Mark the date on your calendar and register early for the Academy. Details about courses and registration will be available in March on the Christ Servant Ministry website: [www.gbgm-umc.org/csm](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/csm) or the Conference website: [www.epaumc.org](http://www.epaumc.org). If you have questions you may contact Verna Colliver, Dean of the Academy for Laity at [vcolliver@comcast.net](mailto:vcolliver@comcast.net) or 215 855 0797.

### AUGUST 18, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Ways to Increase Your Church Attendance.** See page 10.

### SEPTEMBER 8, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Christian Education and Spiritual Formation.** See page 10.

### OCTOBER 13, 2006

**Making Disciples Training Series - Faith Sharing.** See page 10.

### NOVEMBER 14, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Stewards of God's Gifts.** See page 10.

### DECEMBER 13, 2007

**Making Disciples Training Series - Accountable Discipleship: The power of small group ministry for all ages.** See page 10.



Published 10 times per year by

**The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church**

Valley Forge Corporate Center  
980 Madison Avenue, Norristown, PA 19403

**Bishop Marcus Matthews Philadelphia Area Bishop**  
**Suzy Keenan Director of Communications**  
**Ileana Rivera Graphic Design and Layout**

Annual subscription \$12

Please submit articles for publication by the 10th of the month to:  
**The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church,**  
P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820  
or via e-mail to [communications@epaumc.org](mailto:communications@epaumc.org)

Periodical postage paid at Norristown, PA 19403, USPS #0019604

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
**NEWSpirit at EPA Conference, P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820**

## Bishop's Lenten Day Apart – It's all about dialogue

By Suzy Keenan\*

Bishop Marcus Matthews invited Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton of the Western Pennsylvania Conference to be his special guest preacher for the Lenten Day Apart for clergy on February 20.

"Dialogue" was the theme of the day, and Bishop Bickerton emphasized that the theme of dialogue around the world is essential to the global nature of the church. "For 50 years we have been teaching Africa about Jesus and the church," he said. "50 years later, we need to invite them to come and teach us what we forgot!"

Last year, the bishops of the United Methodist Church met for the first time outside the U.S. in Mozambique. The president and minister of health asked to meet with the bishops to discuss HIV/AIDS and malaria. Nelson Mandela and his wife, Gracia Machel, who had been educated in a UM school and healed in a UM hospital, came to speak with the bishops. The bishops learned that in Africa, communication is power – a unifying link – to which everything is tied: health, education, justice, spirituality. It is all about dialogue.

Bishop Bickerton noted that in Africa, 1 million people die each year from malaria, and that 75% of them are children. He told a story of Rick Reilly, a writer for *Sports Illustrated*, who sent basketball nets to Africa, and discovered he sent the wrong nets. He should have sent bed nets to protect people from the mosquitoes that infect people with malaria. Simultaneously, the UN Foundation and the

Gates Foundation were sending bed nets, and everywhere they went the found United Methodist clinics, schools, and churches. So they came to the United Methodist Church and asked to partner together at the grass roots level, saying that they saw how well the church does this work. The church's surprised response was, "Really?"

The partnership, now known as Nothing but Nets, began with a focus on each organization's differences. But with the questions of whether we can use the church's logo, came the question, "How many people would die before General Conference meets to OK use of the logo?"

"The answer lies in Africa," said Bishop Bickerton. "God's people not always agreeing, but operating under a common umbrella of purpose. We can rise above that which separates us in order to meaningful work together. It takes partnership, collaboration, and dialogue."

He continued, "Bridges can and should be built. The issue is never the issue. The issue is how we treat each other in the midst of the issue and what separates us."

After Bishop Bickerton's presentation, clergy shared in worship together. Preaching for worship, Bishop Bickerton remarked to the pastors that most of us live our lives in disappointment. Like Eeyore, we proclaim, "The church is going nowhere." The disciples who encountered Jesus on the road to Emmaus had love beside them, the Savior in their midst so close they could have touched him, but were so blind they could not see him.



Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton (left) was Bishop Matthews invited guest speaker for the Lenten Day Apart for clergy on February 20.

Bishop Bickerton asked, "Does our biased mindset make us blind to Jesus, too?"

He added, "The most skeptical souls on earth share a common title: pastor! What happened to the possibility of Christ working in and through all things? When the disciples exhibited radical hospitality, partaking a com-

mon meal in common surroundings, they saw Him. When we sit down at a common table, Jesus is the common umbrella."

\* Suzy Keenan is director of communications for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

## In Memoriam

**Mr. Donald Beaman**, husband of retired pastor, the Rev. Sarah G. Beaman, on Friday, February 9, 2007. Rev. Beaman served Phila: Wissinoming, and retired in 1988. In retirement she served Phila: Lawndale, and Catasauqua: Grace. A memorial service was held on Saturday, February 17 at Catasauqua: Grace United Methodist Church. Condolences may be sent to Rev. Sarah G. Beaman, 86 Covington Place, Catasauqua, PA 18032.

**Rev. Edwin L. Ellis** passed away on Wednesday, February 14, 2007. He was 82. He had served churches in EPA from 1965 to 1981, and then he transferred to the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. In the EPA Conference, he served Lansdowne, Phila.: St. Barnabas, and Tindley Temple. Condolences may be sent to his daughter, Mrs. Marcia Thomas Henley, 286 Birch Drive, Lafayette Hills, PA 19444.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Gottschalk**, widow of the Rev. Asher M. Gottschalk, on January 29, 2007. She was 96 years old. Born Elizabeth Kathryn Shaub on October 10, 1910, in Scranton, PA. In 1928, she graduated from Shillington High School, Shillington, PA. She graduated from Ursinus College (PA) in 1932 with a degree in English and Social Studies. She furthered her studies at the University of Pennsylvania and in 1960, she earned a Masters of Library Science from Kutztown (PA) State College. Betty worked as a teacher and librarian in the Schuylkill

Valley School District, Cornwall School District, and Warminster School District. Betty developed the church library and in 2005, she was honored by having the new children's library named for her. She was very active in United Methodist Women and Churchwomen United. She is survived by four children, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Condolences may be sent to Jerome Gottschalk at 4222 Keystone Avenue, Culver City CA 90232. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, contributions in Betty's name be made to either the Betty Gottschalk Children's Library at FUMC, Deming, or to the national Alzheimer's Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Fl. 17, Chicago, Ill. 60601-7633.

**Mrs. E. Louise George**, on January 26, 2007; she was the widow of Ernest C. George, and was 98 years old. She would have turned 99 on January 30. She resided in Calvary Fellowship Homes in Lancaster, and was a member of First UMC in Lancaster. She had been a Methodist Deaconess. Most of Rev. George's appointments were in the Wyoming Conference. He transferred to the Philadelphia Conference in 1963, and served Birdsboro, Georgetown, and Thorndale before retiring in 1968. He died in December, 1974. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. George's daughter, Caren Maxwell, 94 Little Drive, London, KY 40744-8363. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to the "We Care Program" at First

UMC, 29 E. Walnut St, Lancaster, PA 17602.

**Former clergy member, Joan Hemenway**, on January 31, 2007. She had been a full member of EPA Conference, and retired on July 1, 2003. She withdrew her credentials in 2004. She resided in Guilford CT, and had been in Extension Ministry, mostly as a chaplain, through her ministry. A memorial service was held on February 24, 2007 at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, CT. Her only immediate survivor is her sister, Marion Conklin, who resides at 10 Oriole Court, Shelton, CT 06484.



◆ **Upper Room Ministries, an imprint of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship**, and the Center for the Church and Global AIDS have compiled *Prayers for Encouragement: Hope for Persons Suffering with HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Serious Diseases*. The booklet includes meditations written by ordinary women and men who struggle with what it means to live with stigma, discrimination and rejection by family and friends. The booklet will be distributed through Upper Room Ministries' global editorial and distribution network. For more information contact, Dale Waymack at [dwaymack@gbod.org](mailto:dwaymack@gbod.org); 877-899-2780, ext. 7236.

◆ **This year's One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be taken up March 18 in United Methodist congregations across the United States.** The United Methodist Church is one of nine Christian denominations that participate in the annual offering to help vulnerable and needy people around the world. The special offering from United Methodist congregations supports ministries operated by the United Methodist Committee on Relief, or UMCOR, which brings hope and aid when catastrophe strikes anywhere in the world. Resources: visit the UMCOR Web site (<http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/give/oghs>). Or visit ([www.umcsgiving.org/ss](http://www.umcsgiving.org/ss)) online or call (888) 346-3862.

## In The Nation

# Pastor's compassion gives rabbi gift of life

By Kathy L. Gilbert\*

On Jan. 23, Onesti, pastor of Masonville-Rancocas United Methodist Church, donated her left kidney to her friend Bossov, rabbi at Mount Laurel's Adath Emanu-El synagogue.

Now recovering, Onesti is scheduled to return to her pulpit on Easter Sunday, and Bossov expects to be back at his synagogue in time to celebrate Passover in early April.

### Journey of faith

For the two spiritual leaders, the operation in Philadelphia was the culmination of a year-long odyssey that began in January 2006 as both attended an interfaith council of churches meeting in Mount Laurel.

Onesti noticed people asking Bossov how he was feeling, and she stayed afterwards to inquire about his health.

Bossov, 47, shared that his kidney disease had progressed and that he had been placed on a waiting list for a transplant. Without hesitation, Onesti offered, "I'll give you one of mine. My family has great kidneys, and we live into our 90s."

Bossov was astonished. "I hadn't even thought yet about asking people to donate; I was just telling everyone I was listed."

Onesti, 49, never wavered from her offer, though she had to undergo a hysterectomy and many tests before she could be a donor.

The fact that both got the green light for proceeding with the surgery during the seasons of Christmas and Hanukkah attracted a lot of media attention. "That and the fact that we sound like a bad joke—a rabbi and a minister walk into a hospital," Bossov says. "There are so many bad stories out there about religion. To have a good one right around the holidays, like one reporter told me, 'This story just writes itself.'"

### Sharing the love

The first article was written by a member of Bossov's synagogue, a reporter for the New Jersey Courier-Post, which started the media

rollercoaster. An Associated Press story followed and landed in newspapers around the world, including The Jerusalem Post. Onesti and Bossov were interviewed by ABC network's "Good Morning America," as well as local television stations.

The day of the surgery, crews with several TV stations were at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, where the transplant took place.

"I woke up the following day and saw on TV that the surgery was a success," laughs Onesti. "I just see God very much at work in all of this. The ripple effect of what God is doing is a blessing." Masonville-Rancocas United Methodist Church held a 12-hour prayer vigil for Onesti and Bossov before the surgery, and both houses of worship held special services as well. Describing the experience, Onesti cites Romans 8:28: In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. "Both Andy and I love the Lord and we are called to do God's purpose," she explains.

### Gift of hope

Bossov and Onesti want people to consider registering as organ donors and to make sure family members know their wishes.

The United Methodist Church sup-



Rabbi Andrew Bossov reads Scripture during a prayer service at Masonville-Rancocas United Methodist Church in Mount Laurel, N.J., as (from left) the Rev. Karen Onesti, Rabbi Emeritus Richard Levine and the Rev. Bob Smith, Capital District Superintendent, listen. A UMNS photo by Frank Onesti.

ports organ transplantation and organ donation in its Social Principles as "acts of charity, agape love, and self-sacrifice."

Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday is observed in The United Methodist Church the second Sunday in November. National Donor Sabbath, an interfaith celebration of the gifts of hope provided through organ and tissue donation, is held in November and observed by many religions.

World Kidney Day will be observed on March 8, and the National Kidney Foundation urges people to learn about how to prevent chronic kidney disease.

In the United States, more than 95,000 people are on a waiting list to receive an organ transplant. Some 26,000 transplants have been performed, and approximately 14,000 donors have given organs.

"This is not just our story," Bossov said. "This is the story for all those people who have been giving before us and for those who gave the day after us and those who will give in the future."

\*Gilbert is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.



The Rev. Karen Onesti and Rabbi Andrew Bossov share a moment together during a special service at Adath Emanu-El Synagogue. A UMNS photo by Frank Onesti.

## The Nation in Brief

◆ A group of active and retired military chaplains have formed a United Methodist task force working to teach the church how to support and welcome service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. The group met Feb. 12-13 in Nashville, Tenn., and was organized by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, which approves pastors to serve as chaplains, and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, the denomination's social advocacy agency. Currently, 359 United Methodist pastors serve as military chaplains. The task force discussed how the church can welcome, support and use the experiences of chaplains to educate congregations. It will develop an action plan to be implemented under the oversight of the Board of Church and Society.

◆ The Rev. Anne Robertson, pastor of the United Methodist Church of Westford, Mass., is poised to become the first female executive director of

the 198-year-old Massachusetts Bible Society. She is to assume her new job in Boston on April 17, succeeding the Rev. Donald A. Wells, who is retiring after 19 years. Robertson is a strong proponent of using new forms of communication to spread the Gospel. During the past year and a half, she's offered podcasts of her Sunday sermons and sent weekly devotions via e-mail. Robertson hopes to promote biblical literacy while providing the tools to look at a biblical text in different ways. During its existence, the society has distributed more than 1 million Bibles in some 200 languages.

◆ When a doctor told Pat Galasso she had two bad knees that would require surgery, she knew she would need a lot of support—literally. "I really needed a walker," said Galasso, 77. Fortunately, Galasso knew exactly where to get one on loan. The United Methodist Men's Hospital Equipment Loan Service in Connellsville, Pa., keeps an inventory of wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, portable

commodes and even mattresses for people who need medical equipment. Most equipment is donated. Every item is repaired, if necessary, then cleaned and sanitized by volunteers from 11 area United Methodist congregations. "The primary areas where we see the need is for people without insurance coverage or people who do not meet the income or age requirements for the government programs," said Wes Boots, a retired school teacher who has volunteered with the ministry since 1966. The loan service began in the late 1950s.

◆ Six-year-old Heather Martin, accompanied only by her mother on piano, has become an overnight Internet sensation for a song performed at their rural church in Cache, Ok. Written for her brother Shaun serving in Iraq, the song became one of YouTube's most requested videos of all time in December after a member at Cache First United Methodist Church recorded and posted Heather's perfor-

mance on the video-sharing Web site. The video had received 1.7 million hits as of early February. Heather's mother, Cindy Martin, wrote "When Are You Coming Home?" after learning that 22-year-old Shaun would not be home for Christmas.

◆ Elizabeth Cumbest, 15, says the seven songs she has written about Hurricane Katrina are prayers set to music. She released an eight-song compact disc at a special service on Jan. 14 at Heritage United Methodist Church in D'Iberville, Miss. Within three weeks, "All Things New - Songs of Hope after Hurricane Katrina" had raised about \$6,000, with proceeds going to help Seashore Mission Church recover from the storm. When Katrina roared ashore Aug. 29, 2005, a dozen people sought shelter at the Seashore Mission, which serves the poor and homeless in Biloxi.

## In The World

# U.S. religious leaders say Iranians want peace

By Kathy L. Gilbert\*

The Iranian people don't want war with the United States and say a sign of U.S. goodwill would go a long way toward preventing conflict, said a United Methodist leader who just returned from Iran.

"Even with this tragic history we have visited upon Iran for the past 55 years, there is an amazing depth of appreciation and love for the U.S. people," said Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, the denomination's social action agency.

"I am hopeful if our government would capitalize on that and offer to sit down and negotiate with the government of Iran, our conflicts could be resolved.

"Winkler was part of a 13-member delegation of U.S. religious leaders that visited Iran Feb. 17-25. The group, which included Episcopal, Catholic, Baptist, Evangelical, Quaker and Mennonite traditions, released a statement on the trip during a Feb. 26 news conference in Washington.

"As Christian leaders from the

United States, we traveled to the Islamic Republic of Iran at this time of increased tension, believing that it is possible to build bridges of understanding between our two countries. We believe military action is not the answer, and that God calls us to just and peaceful relationships within the global community," said the statement.

The U.S. delegation met with Muslim and Christian leaders, government officials and other Iranian people.

"There have been lots of contacts between Muslim religious leaders and Christian leaders from around the world—and with American Christians—over the years, but this was considered to be significant because it was attached to meetings with government leaders," Winkler said.

"The Iranians don't want war. Every political and religious leader we met with said Islam forbids the possession or development or use of weapons of mass destruction of any kind including nuclear weapons," he said. "They would love to talk to the U.S. if there was but some sign of goodwill."



Members of a 13-person religious delegation talk about their recent meetings in Tehran with Iranian religious and political leaders. A UMNS photo by Jay Mallin.

Next week, the delegation will meet with members of Congress including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., Sen. Richard G. Lugar, Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. John Warner, among others.

"These meetings have been very easy to set up because members of Congress are very interested to hear our report and reflections," said Winkler.

The group's meeting with Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was the first time a U.S. delegation had talked in Iran with an Iranian president since the Islamic revolution in 1979. The meeting lasted more than two hours and covered a range of topics, including the role of religion in transforming conflict, Iraq, nuclear proliferation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The delegation urged both the U.S. and Iranian governments to:

- immediately engage in direct, face-to-face talks;
- cease using language that defines the other using "enemy" images; and
- promote more people-to-people exchanges including religious leaders, members of Parliament/Congress, and civil society.

"As people of faith, we are committed to working toward these and other confidence-building measures, which we hope will move our two nations from the precipice of war to a more just and peaceful relationship," the statement said.

The United States and its Western allies have said Iran must halt uranium enrichment as a precondition to talks. They believe Iran is using its nuclear program to produce an atomic weapon, but Iran says it is working to generate electricity.

Ties between the United States and Iran have been broken or poor since



Jim Winkler (right), representing The United Methodist Church, and the Rev. Ron Flaming, of the Mennonite Central Committee, take part in a Feb. 26 news conference in Washington after their trip to Iran. A UMNS photo by Jay Mallin.

Iranian students stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979 and held its occupants hostage for 444 days. President Bush has named Iran part of an "axis of evil" and, in recent weeks, his administration has claimed Iran is behind attacks on troops in Iraq—a charge that Iran denies.

Winkler said the Iranian people are keenly aware of their history and say the U.S. overthrow of their elected government in 1953 set U.S.-Iranian relations on a destructive course. "Needless to say, the capture of American hostages contributed very negatively from their side. But then we gave huge support to Saddam Hussein in the 1980-88 war between Iran and Iraq, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iranians."

More information on the delegation can be found at <http://mcc.org/iran/delegation/>

\*Gilbert is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn. Information for this report was provided by the Mennonite Central Committee.

## The World in Brief

◆ Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, is among religious leaders from the United States and Iran meeting in Iran to find common ground among faith groups as a step toward international peace, particularly as political tensions grow between the two nations. The 13-member U.S. delegation arrived in Tehran on Feb. 19 and began a weeklong series of meetings with Iranian religious and government leaders, including a scheduled meeting with Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In addition to The United Methodist Church, the U.S. delegation represents the Mennonite, Quaker, Episcopal and Catholic churches. The group is scheduled to return Feb. 25 and plans to meet with members of Congress to report on their conversations.

◆ As of Jan. 29, The United Methodist Church is legally registered in Serbia. A Serbian law passed last year recognized a limited number of "tradi-

tional churches and religious communities" as having full rights. Other religious groups, including The United Methodist Church, were required to register to qualify for a tax exemption and the right to run schools, medical facilities and prison ministries. The 18 congregations in Serbia are part of The United Methodist Church in Southern and Central Europe.

◆ United Methodist Bishop Ntambu Nkulu Ntanda, leader of the North Katanga Area in the Democratic Republic of Congo, has been elected to that country's Senate. The new Senate is expected to be installed Feb. 3. Congo's Parliament has two chambers, the Senate and the National Assembly.

◆ MEXICO: FLOOD RELIEF  
Torrential rains caused extreme flooding throughout the Rio Grande Valley last September. People in Texas and Mexico were left with ruined homes and belongings and have begun the

slow path of recovery. UMCOR provided assistance on both sides of the border. Providing assistance to the Rio Grand Annual Conference in the US and in Mexico, UMCOR worked with Manos Juntas Mexico. Through UMCOR's grant, the organization could provide medicines, water jugs and staple foods, mattresses, gas burners, baby supplies and other items for survivors. In addition UMCOR Sager Brown sent over 11,000 health kits and nearly 250 bedding kits. More than 10,000 people in Rio Bravo, Mexico received needed assistance through these efforts. When you give to International Disaster Response, UMCOR Advance #982450, you help UMCOR to respond to disasters such as this.

◆ SOUTHERN AFRICA: GIVING RELIEF THROUGH SHADE  
UMCOR is working with SHADE (Sojourner: Help, Advocacy, Development, Education), a ministry of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa that addresses issues of hunger and poor

nutrition among women with HIV/AIDS, their children and orphans. SHADE provides feeding centers, food distribution as well as nutrition classes and help for agricultural projects. In the past year SHADE reached thousands of people in six countries with their programs. Please give to SHADE, UMCOR Advance #180001 and help eradicate hunger in Africa.

◆ INDONESIA: RECOVERING FROM JAKARTA'S FLOODS  
Jakarta, Indonesia's capital city, is suffering from torrential rains and flooding that has left nearly 300,000 people in need of emergency assistance. UMCOR is assisting Action by Churches Together members already working in the area to provide relief supplies, shelter, food, and medical care to some 20,000 survivors. Your gifts to UMCOR Advance #982450, International Disaster Response, help UMCOR to respond to this and many other disasters throughout the world.

# Living Connected as God's People: "Nurturing the Connection"

*The Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference  
June 13-15, 2007 at the Sheraton Philadelphia City Center*



## Deadlines

*Materials enclosed with deadlines were previously mailed.*

### **IF YOU ARE REQUESTING CONSIDERATION FOR TIME ON THE CONFERENCE AGENDA, THE DEADLINE IS MARCH 16, 2007.**

· All requests for consideration **MUST** be submitted in **writing** to Mrs. Amy Botti, P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820 or by email: [amy.botti@epaumc.org](mailto:amy.botti@epaumc.org). Late requests cannot be accommodated. Presenters will be asked to submit **detailed scripts** accompanied by the name(s) of the actual presenter(s) and the estimated presentation time by **MAY 1, 2007**. If a script is not received by the deadline, the presenter will lose presentation privileges.

### **IF YOU HAVE A RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT, THE DEADLINE IS MARCH 16, 2007.**

· Resolutions are to be submitted to the Conference Secretary: The Rev. Charles E. Weigel, Jr., 751 E. Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown, PA 19335; Direct your questions to: (O) 610-269-1496, (H) 610-269-0629; email: [Weigel4@aol.com](mailto:Weigel4@aol.com). The name of the actual presenter must accompany each resolution. Resolutions, in portrait format, must be sent on a disk or CD in Microsoft Word, along with a hard copy. Resolutions submitted *after* the March 16, 2007 deadline will be referred to the Agenda Review Committee in accordance with the rules of the Annual Conference. Copies cannot be made by the office staff at the Conference Office and will not be published in NewSpirit.

### **IF YOU HAVE A REPORT FROM YOUR COMMITTEE, AGENCY OR WORK TEAM TO SUBMIT FOR PRINTING IN OUR CONFERENCE JOURNAL, THE DEADLINE IS MARCH 16, 2007.**

· Submit reports to the Conference Secretary: The Rev. Charles E. Weigel, Jr., 751 E. Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown, PA 19335. Reports, in portrait format, must be sent on a disk or CD in Microsoft Word, along with a hard copy.

### **REGISTRATION MATERIALS FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE CLERGY, LAY AND EQUALIZING DELEGATES WILL BE MAILED OUT IN MARCH.**

· For returning the completed registration materials and for those registering via website, the deadline is **MAY 1, 2007**.

### **IF YOU HAVE MATERIALS TO SUBMIT FOR INCLUSION IN THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK, THE DEADLINE IS APRIL 2, 2007.**

· Copy-ready originals must be sent. For more information, please contact Mrs. Evangeline Johnson at 610-666-9090, ext. 215 or 800-828-9093, or by email: [evangeline.johnson@epaumc.org](mailto:evangeline.johnson@epaumc.org).

### **IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RESERVE A DISPLAY TABLE AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE:**

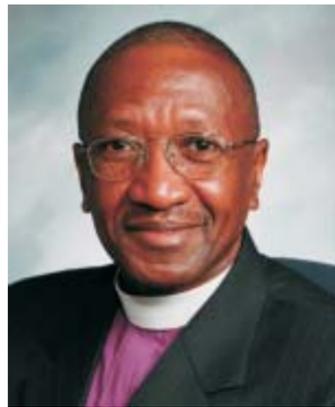
· Please contact Mrs. Evangeline Johnson, P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820, 610-666-9090, ext. 215 or 800-828-9093, email: [evangeline.johnson@epaumc.org](mailto:evangeline.johnson@epaumc.org). Vendor reservations for display tables must be submitted **and** payment received at the time of submission. Space is limited and will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### **THE MEDIA AND/OR TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS DEADLINE IS MAY 1, 2007.**

· Please complete the Media Specifications Submittal Form and return it to the Conference Office by **MAY 1, 2007**. Please complete the Technical Specifications Submittal Form and return it to the Rev. Drew Parsons by **MAY 1, 2007**. Any presenters planning to have a media and/or technical presentation must submit **ALL** materials by this deadline to retain presentation privileges. Late entries will **not** be accommodated due to the amount of time needed to process all the submissions.

A special Annual Conference Supplement to the May issue of "NewSpirit" will be published. For this Supplement, materials must be received by **APRIL 2, 2007**. This includes resolutions and also includes all materials relevant to the Annual Conference Supplement to the May "NewSpirit."

**Thank you for your cooperation! We believe that this information will greatly assist the work of the Annual Conference 2007.**



**Bishop Marcus Matthews** will preach for Opening Worship of The Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference, June 13, 2007. Bishop Matthews is spiritual leader for nearly 1,000 United Methodist Churches in the Philadelphia Area, comprised of the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conferences. He will lead the annual meeting for its three days in Center City Philadelphia, as nearly 1,200 delegates from 475 churches gather in Holy Conferencing and to elect delegates to the 2008 General Conference to be held in Fort Worth, TX.



**Bishop Gregory V. Palmer** will be preacher for the Memorial Service and the Service of Ordination. Bishop Palmer is the Resident Bishop of the Iowa Episcopal Area (Iowa Annual Conference), assigned there after his election in 2000. He is the President-Designate of the U.M. Council of Bishops, elected in November 2005. He will become President of the council in 2008. Bishop Palmer was born and raised in Philadelphia, son of the Rev. Herbert and the late Mrs. Charlotte Sue Palmer. In 1977 he became a deacon (probationary member) of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, and was ordained Elder in 1981 in the East Ohio Conference. He served six churches in North Carolina and Ohio and as being Youngstown District Superintendent prior to his election as bishop.



**The Rev. Mary Ann Moman**, Associate General Secretary of the Division of Ordained Ministry of the UM General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will lead the Bible Studies at Annual Conference. Rev. Moman is responsible for the overall administration of the work and programs of the Division of Ordained Ministry, the Ministerial Education Fund, the Association of United Methodist Theological Schools, and the Commission on Theological Education. She serves as the liaison with United Methodist seminaries and provides support for the University Senate.

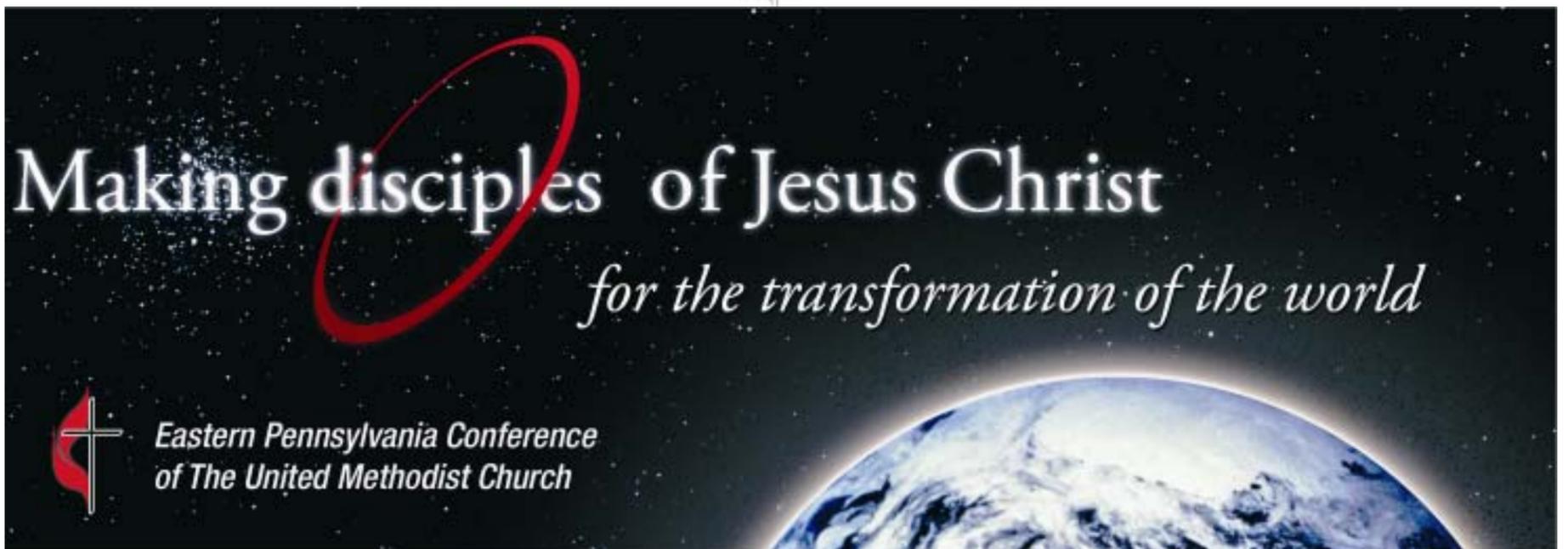
## Electing Delegates for General Conference 2008

At the 221st Annual Conference Session in June, EPA members will elect six clergy and six laity to attend the 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church meeting in Fort Worth, Texas. These twelve persons will also attend the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in July 2008.

An additional six clergy and six laity will be elected to complete the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference delegation. These additional 12 persons will also serve in order of their election as reserve delegates to the General Conference. Three clergy and three laity will be elected as reserve delegates to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

The EPA process for electing delegates is outlined in Article XVI of the EPA Conference Rules of Order printed on page 388 of the 2006 Journal. The Conference Secretary, Rev. Charles Weigel, has sent nominating petitions to EPA clergy in full connection and lay members eligible to vote. The *Discipline* provides that only clergy members in full connection and lay members of the Annual Conference may participate in the election of General and Jurisdictional Conference members.

Nominating petitions allow clergy and laity to nominate a maximum of twelve persons. Persons will be nominated when they have been named on ten nominating petitions. As in the election process, clergy nominate only clergy and laity nominate only laity. Nominees must fulfill the requirements of the *Discipline*.



## Discover your divine assignment

By the Rev. Robert Shank

With the lyrics of the Praise Band still echoing in the hearts and minds of the congregation, the Rev. Kelvin Sauls began to his presentation, "Transformational Spiritual Leadership." Rev. Sauls is director of Congregational Development with the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship. His two presentations on leadership, one in January and one in February, have inspired more than 2500 attendees.

On February 17, earlier in the day, the Making Disciples Team had been to Ruhl's UMC in Manheim and Tindley Temple in Philadelphia, and now Rev. Sauls began his third presentation of the day at Asbury UMC in Allentown. It was a whirlwind day for the speaker and the conference staff, and now the Spirit was stirring up its



The Rev. Kelvin Sauls

own whirlwind for all gathered in this place!

Rev. Sauls began by saying, "We ran away from the "E-word" (Evangelism), and corporate America gladly picked it up." He noted Jack Welsh, "chief evangelistic officer" for Starbucks, and noted how corporate evangelism is the hot topic in marketing. Then he suggested that congregations read the book, "Discovering Your Divine Assignment" which argues that God has given us a specific assignment we are supposed to fulfill and God has equipped us to accomplish our divine assignment.

He read 2 Timothy 1:5-7 from "The Message": "That precious memory triggers another: your honest faith—and what a rich faith it is, handed down from your grandmother Lois to your mother Eunice, and now to you!

And the special gift of ministry you received when I laid hands on you and prayed—keep that ablaze! God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but bold and loving and sensible."

Rev. Sauls suggested that this vital passage tells us three things about our divine assignment: It is a generational thing involving all generations; it is intentional - not by accident; it is bold, and we should not be shy or timid with our gifts, but bold and sensible.

A sound of warning was echoed with the words of Peter Drucker when he wrote about the future: "The things that got us here will not get us there." These are important words of warning the church must hear, listen to, and do something about. Rev. Sauls

*continues on page 10*

## Acts 29 - Prayer Encounter with Terry Teykl

April 14, 2007

Tindley Temple United Methodist Church

### Schedule:

- 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - *Pastors' and Laity Luncheon*
- 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. - *Session*

### Cost:

- \$10 - Pastors' Luncheon
- \$10 - Laity Luncheon
- \$10 - Registration

Register online at:

[www.epaumc.org](http://www.epaumc.org)



**Acts 29**  
ENCOUNTER  
with Terry Teykl

**Save the Date!**

## Nurturing Young Disciples

### Companions In Christ and The Way of the Child Training Event Promote Spiritual Growth for Adults and Children

A 1-day leader training event for the Companions in Christ family of resources is set for Saturday, May 5 at West Chester United Methodist Church, 129 South High Street, West Chester, PA from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The training provides leaders of children and adults with an in-depth experience in Companions in Christ resources and trains them in the distinctive leadership skills called upon when leading formational groups. For information, call Jo Higgins at 610.692.5190.

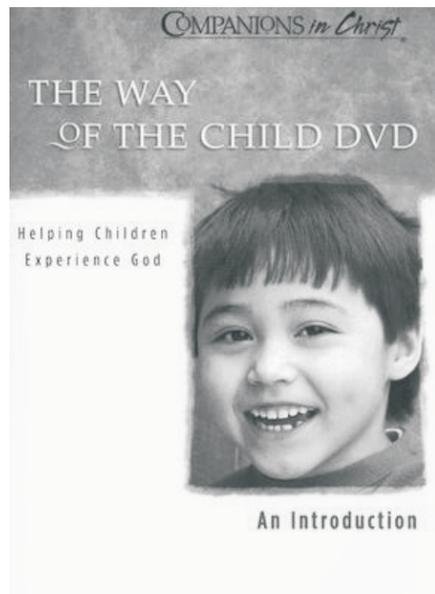
The Companions in Christ family of resources from Upper Room Ministries brings a transforming small-group experience to congregations. Most in-depth Christian studies offer knowledge about scripture, prayer, or other areas of faith. Companions in Christ invites participants into a deeper experience of the Christian life. As the journey unfolds participants discover classic and contemporary spiritual practices that form rather than inform the participants and encourage them in inner and outward expressions of their faith.

*The Way of the Child* offers an opportunity for leaders and parents of children ages 6-11 years to learn about environments and practices that help children grow spiritually. Resource sessions provide children with a "time apart" to experience and learn spiritual practices that will deepen their relationship with God for a lifetime. These practices also help children know themselves and how to live with confidence and conviction.

Authors of the Companions series include Stephen D. Bryant, editor/publisher of Upper Room Ministries; Gerrit Scott Dawson, senior minister of First Presbyterian Church in Lenoir, N.C.; Adele J. Gonzalez, Assistant Director of the Office of Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Miami, Fla.; E. Glenn Hinson,

author and retired professor of spirituality at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va.; Rueben P. Job, a retired United Methodist bishop and former editor/publisher of *The Upper Room*; Marjorie J. Thompson, author and Spiritual Director of the Companions in Christ initiative in Nashville, Tenn.; and Wendy M. Wright, professor of theology at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb. The Author of *The Way of the Child* is Wynn McGregor, certified Christian educator in the Presbyterian Church, USA.

Upper Room Ministries is an ecumenical organization that produces resources for encouraging deeper spiritual formation, including *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide, distributed to over two million people in 44 languages, five other magazines, a line of books, and programs for youth and adults.



## Maximizing Disciple in Your Church online workshop

The first presentation of the Institute for Discipleship online workshop "Maximizing Disciple in Your Church: A Workshop for Disciple Facilitators" by Bishop Richard Wilke, author of DISCIPLE, and Lisa Buffum, DISCIPLE facilitator" has just successfully completed. The workshop will be offered again April 9 - 27, 2007.

This workshop is intended for pastors and lay persons who already facilitate, or would like to facilitate, DISCIPLE Bible Study in their home church. With the use of a wonderful DVD featuring Dr. Wilke, we will explore the need, purpose, structure, and expectations of DISCIPLE. The DVD also includes ten ways to mess up DISCIPLE in a church and helpful hints. There will be a new assignment every three days to give the partici-

pants time to watch a short video and read a section of the book. Discussion will center on helping DISCIPLE Bible Study to flourish in your congregation.

This is not DISCIPLE training nor is it intended to replace DISCIPLE training. The intent of the workshop is to assist currently trained facilitators and potential facilitators in the growth and use of the DISCIPLE program within their church.

To enroll for the workshop, visit [www.BeADisciple.com](http://www.BeADisciple.com). You must register as a user to the website first, and then log in to enroll.

If you have any questions regarding the workshop or the Institute for Discipleship, email Lisa Buffum at [beadisciple@sckans.edu](mailto:beadisciple@sckans.edu).

## Building bridges through Healing the Wounds of Racism

By Hilda Campbell\*

Healing the Wounds of Racism training is a vehicle that will assist in building bridges. Congregations can delve deeper into learning and caring about each other when we understand others culture, customs, and history. To be truly effective in our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, we all need to come equally to the table and recognize and value our differences and similarities.

Surface encounters and nice exchanges on Sundays and at meetings do little to deepen effective Kingdom building. The Healing the Wounds of Racism training has an effective component, Covenant Groups, which create an environment for sincere friendship and understanding to develop. After completing Healing the Wounds of Racism training, you are eligible to become a member of a

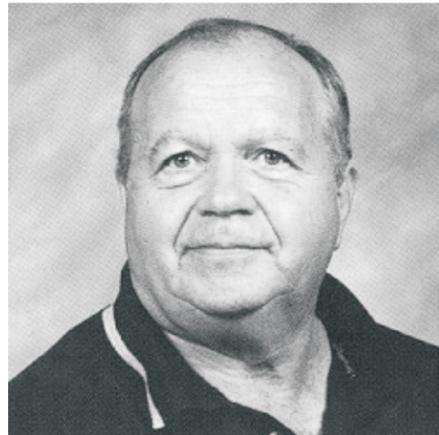
Covenant Group. Through these groups, sisters and brothers in Christ can begin to work together by participating in truthful conversations, which often clear up our stereotypes and other barriers to understanding.

In the November, 2006, Healing the Wounds of Racism training, the Rev. Bill Wolfe shared the story of his heritage, which includes Bishop Joshua Jones, bishop of Jones Tabernacle in Philadelphia. Bishop Jones was an African American, a story that was not shared by past generations of his family. Rev. Wolfe was recently asked if he could be included on a website genealogy as part of the descendants of Bishop Jones, and he said he would be delighted to be included.

"If the new found African American family member had not been renowned, would you have been as proud and as enthusiastic?" I asked Rev. Wolfe.

He responded that this heritage came from his mother side, and his mother had died when he was a young child. Rev. Wolfe was delighted to finally discover his family background, happy to finally be able to understand and embrace his heritage.

At the close of Healing the Wounds of Racism training, each participant is given a piece of a puzzle, and all must come together to complete the puzzle. Without even one piece of the puzzle the picture is not complete. The same is true in our Kingdom building and disciple making. We must invite all of God's people equally into discipleship for the Kingdom to be complete.



Rev. William Wolfe

\*The Rev. Hilda Campbell is director of Human Relations and Leadership for The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

## God is good all the time - All the time, God is good!

Two years ago, a middle-aged woman began to attend the contemporary service at Salem UMC, Manheim, PA. She usually came alone, sometimes brought a little boy with her or a young woman. Several months later, Judy approached me to ask if I would consider officiating at the marriage of her daughter (the young woman) and her fiancée. After the obligatory premarital sessions, the wedding was a joy and a success. Janie began to attend Salem more Sundays than not with her mother. As we approached the Lenten season of 2006, I encouraged "Judy" to sign up for one of the small group studies, focusing on Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Life* book. Judy signed up that very day to be in one of my groups. For the next 7 weeks, she didn't miss a session; and in fact, after week two, Janie came with her mom.

During this past year - 2006 - Judy and her husband, Doug, joined Salem United Methodist Church. Doug is a long-distance truck driver, so he misses a week now and then, but for the most part, they are both attending our contemporary service with their daughter, Janie. Doug will often bring

fresh fruits and vegetables along back east for our food bank and considers this his own "small" contribution to Salem Family Ministry - our outreach program at Salem United Methodist Church.

Judy and Janie have now joined a new small study group that I am leading - H. Norman Wright's *Making Peace with your Past*. After the first night of study last week, they took me aside and informed me that Janie and her husband are expecting their first child this July - a little girl - Judy and Janie asked if after this precious little one is born, would I baptize them all in one service. I will be baptizing grandmother, mother, and child sometime in August or September!

By Rev. Jacquilyn Sheely, Pastor of Salem UMC of Manheim of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church.

This story was taken from the "Share your Disciple Making Story" on the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Website. If you would like to share your story with us, go to: <http://www.epaumc.org/NewsType.asp?NewsTypeID=13>

## Bishop Matthews recommends:

**I Was a Stranger: A Christian Theology of Hospitality**  
by Arthur Sutherland

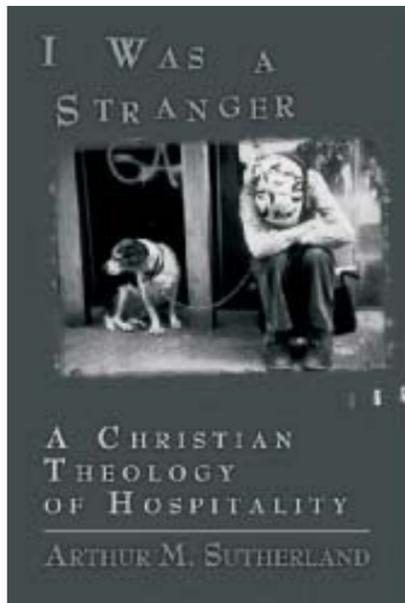
Author Arthur Sutherland places before us our fear of meeting the “other” and the “stranger” in an increasingly global, and frequently dangerous, village. Various social, political, and historical factors have conspired to leave us in a veritable crisis: the decline of hospitality.

Why is this a crisis? Why should we practice hospitality? What is it about Christian theology that compels us to think about hospitality in the first place? Sutherland offers a passionate plea to recover and rediscover hospitality, and to respond to the divine appeal to welcome the stranger.

Therein lies the central concern of the book: that hospitality is not simply the practice of a virtue but is integral to the very nature of Christianity’s position toward God, self, and the world—it is at the very center of what it means to be a Christian and to think theologically. He offers a challenging definition of hospitality and calls us to a practice that is *the* virtue by which the church stands or falls.

Drawing on modern theologians (including Howard Thurman, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, Martin Luther King Jr., and Letty Russell) and considering American slavery, the Holocaust, feminism, and prisons, Sutherland eloquently presents a Christian theology of hospitality.

Published by Abingdon Press, this book retails for \$8 to 12, and is available from [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com).



## Your Leadership Legacy

By Robert Galford and Regina Fazio Maruca

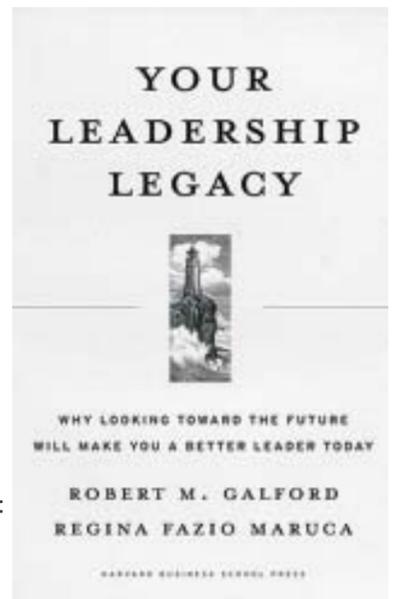
You should worry about your legacy later in your career, at the edge of retirement-right? Not according to Robert Galford and Regina Maruca. In *Your Leadership Legacy*, these authors argue that thinking about your legacy now makes you a better leader today.

Based on stories of top leaders who have shaped successful careers, the book explores the art of “legacy thinking,” helping you to formulate a legacy that will exert a positive effect on your work immediately. The authors provide a disciplined approach to framing your legacy, as well as shaping it over time. They start with the idea that your legacy is defined by how others approach work and life as a result of having worked with you. They then demonstrate how to assess your current impact on those around you, strengthen that impact, and pass along the best of yourself in the process.

While many leaders “find themselves” and hone their work accordingly only after a major life crisis, *Your Leadership Legacy* enables all leaders to craft their work and build their legacy unburdened by such crises, and to experience personal satisfaction and achievement throughout their working lives.

“By planning for the impact you will have on your people and your organization, you become a better leader today.”

Now available: The Leadership Legacy Assessment Test: Identifying Your Instinctive Leadership Style. For more information, go to: [www.yourleadershiplegacy.com](http://www.yourleadershiplegacy.com)



## Hospitality to strangers

By Kathy L. Gilbert\*

Participants at a conference in the cold Great Smoky Mountains were reminded that God created hospitality - not borders and walls.

“God has concern for widows and orphans and marginalized outcasts, and there is nothing you can do about it,” said the Rev. A. Clark Jenkins, pastor of St. Andrew-by-the-Sea United Methodist Church in Hilton Head, S.C.

That message was sent home with more than 100 people attending the United Methodist conference called “Our Call to Hospitality: A Biblical Response to the Challenges of Immigration.” Held Feb. 1-3 at the United Methodist Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, the event was sponsored by the Southeastern Jurisdiction, which stretches from Kentucky to Florida, and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, the social advocacy agency of the denomination.

Jenkins called hospitality one of God’s greatest gifts. “It is appalling to me that we celebrated when the wall in Berlin came down and now we are seeking to build a wall in Mexico,” he said.

“We expect immigrants to flip

our burgers and take out our trash,” said the Rev. Clayton Childers, the board’s program director for annual conference relations.

“We expect them to be here and then blame them when they are.” The purpose of the conference was to educate and spur United Methodists to work for comprehensive immigration reform. Participants shared ways churches and conferences are working with immigrants and learned how to advocate for immigration reform in local congregations and communities.

Workshops encouraging hospitality included immigration and racism; causes and consequences of immigration; the effects of “English only” declarations; and legal issues in immigration.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung of the Northern Illinois Annual (regional) Conference and Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker of the Florida Annual Conference started and ended the conference with worship services.

### Biblical hospitality

“I greet you in the name of the migrant refugee Christ,” said the Rev. Joan Maruskin in opening a session on Christian hospitality.

An ordained United Methodist minister and an author, Maruskin led participants on a journey through the Bible, highlighting



“I greet you in the name of the migrant refugee Christ,” says the Rev. Joan Maruskin in opening a session on Christian hospitality. A UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert.



Anthony Velazquez (left), a staff member with the United Methodist Council on Finance and Administration, participates in a small group discussion. A UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert.

Scriptures that focus on God’s care and concern for “the stranger.”

She said the Hebrew Bible advises the people of God more than three dozen times to care for strangers, and the New Testament is full of stories about Jesus welcoming and healing strangers.

“Our salvation, according to the words of Jesus, is directly tied to our welcoming the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick and the prisoners. Jesus was one with the undocumented,” said Maruskin, who is director of the York County Council of Churches, an ecumenical agency of 130 Christian congregations

in York County, Pa.

Maruskin called on participants to “vow to increase your circle of true friends to include those different from you.”

“The United States is a nation built by design through the blood, sweat, tears and love of immigrant populations. Interestingly, the indigenous people of this land are the Native Americans and the Mexicans,” she said.

\*Gilbert is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tenn.

# Discover your divine assignment

continued from page 7

then compared the church to the TV show "Home Improvement" because Tim Allen "tries to be what he is not, and his wife reminds him who he is."

"To do improvements," Rev. Sauls said, "we have to check what we have in our toolboxes. This is what Jesus did with the disciples. They were fishermen and Jesus said, 'Okay, you will now be fishers of men and women and children.' In other words, you know how to fish, so now get out there and fish for people!"

Leonard Sweet, in his book, AQUAChurch, speaks about the fluid world in which we live: "The church needs to discover the leadership arts necessary to lead our culture to the uncharted truths of the Gospel."

Rev. Sauls said that we need to think across the generations. "The Word was made flesh and we now need to lead our culture. We need to be the headlight, not the taillight!"

He outlined the practical ways the church can lead into the uncharted future to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by minimizing liabilities. His first point was about passionate worship, saying, "Worship doesn't have to be a test of endurance! It should be passionate, spirit-filled. It should leave your tank filled, and ready to do the work of Jesus Christ. It should be

about truth – liberating – a place to leave your burdens at the altar, with God being the wind beneath your wings." Engaging in intercessory prayer, the second point, should not be a "911" to God, but a dialogue in which we listen more than we say. He also included deepening faith formation and perpetual practice of faith, which extends to witnessing beyond the church walls.

Maximizing the assets of your church takes the church another step forward. "We have assets in our congregations," he said. Tindley Temple is celebrating 170 years of ministry. Certainly there are a great many assets in this church!" Then he asked, "Have you done a human resource assessment in your congregation? There are congregations who are sleeping giants just waiting to be awakened!" Enabling people to discover their spiritual gifts by doing a spiritual gifts assessment will help them find their divine assignment. He asked, "Who are the people in your pews connected with? We don't know who our members play golf with!" These connections and relationships are all part and parcel of the human resources available to congregations.

Rev. Sauls encouraged churches to know their history and leverage their strengths and good reputations. "If

you don't know where you are, you won't be able to know where you're going. The spiritual gifts assessment tells you where you are."

Finally, Rev. Sauls shared six practical pieces to mobilize congregations to engage in making disciples of Jesus Christ:

- Increase visibility
- Review and re-invent your congregational image
- Increase membership participation
- Expand in community
- Strengthen the ministry of hospitality
- Engage in intentional congregational assessment

"Imagine the otherwise!" he said. "You have what it takes to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Therefore, take what you have, go and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!"

Being equipped to live out our divine assignment is essential to making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To help your congregation equip, attend the monthly training events. Discover and live out your divine assignment!

## ROMANS 12 PROJECT: examining the Wesleyan model of forming disciples

The United Methodist Board of Discipleship is initiating the "Romans 12 Project," a year-long initiative that involves exploring best practices in United Methodist congregations to mine ideas, concepts, practices and principles that help form vital churches. The project is designed to study vital United Methodist churches with the goal of revitalizing the denomination and expanding its effectiveness in equipping world-changing disciples for the transformation of the world. Through a new initiative, the agency is seeking help in identifying exemplary congregations that represent the Wesleyan model of forming disciples. To learn more about the Romans 12 Project and to make nominations, visit <http://www.gbod.org/congregational/romans12/default.asp>.

## LEARN TO SHARE

**YOUR FAITH** - Discipleship Resources, a publishing unit of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, has announced the publication of *Witness: Learning to Share Your Christian Faith* by Ron Crandall, associate dean of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky. Originally published in 2001, the revised and updated version of *Witness* includes a 25-week experience that continues the tradition of learning about Christian faith through Bible study and reflection; growing spiritually within a small-group experience; identifying gifts for ministry; and learning how to witness to others in a natural and effective way.

## LIVING PRAYER CENTER ON UMC.ORG

Your schedule may be busier than ever, but with the new UMC.org, you can access spiritual support from the people of The United Methodist Church 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week. Through UMC.org, you can privately and conveniently submit a prayer request to the Upper Room Living Prayer Center and their Covenant Prayer Groups. Your prayer concern will be forwarded to one of 300 Upper Room Covenant Prayer Groups, who will pray for your request for an additional 30 days. More than 30,000 prayer requests are received each month. For the privacy of those requesting prayer, each request is edited to remove any information that would identify the person or situation needing prayer. UMC.org Prayer Request feature also provides visitors with spiritual resources. To visit the Prayer Request feature, just click the "Pray" button on [www.UMC.org](http://www.UMC.org).

You can also submit a prayer request over the phone to the Upper Room Living Prayer Center by calling 1-800-251-2468. United Methodist Communications encourages you to visit the Prayer Request feature and share this information with members of your church and your community. To download a bulletin insert and sample service announcement, go to [www.UMC.org/launch](http://www.UMC.org/launch).

## Making Disciples 2007 Training Schedule

**MARCH 15 AND 16, 2007 -**

**WEBCAST FOR THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE CVI PROCESS by March 1: (Thursday, Friday BY WEBCAST. 7:00 PM**

**gested through plenaries**  
Session 6 and Session 7

*\*Celebrate successes 6-month check in for the Making Disciples Initiative*

**JULY 21, 2007 -**

**Vibrant and Transformative Worship - Saturday – one location,**  
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM - Session 8

**AUGUST 18, 2007 -**

**Ways to Increase Your Church Attendance**  
9:00 AM - Small Congregations  
11:00 AM - Medium Congregations  
1:30 PM - New Church Starts  
3:30 PM - Large Churches  
Training by Rev. Rene Perez and Rev. Dorothy Watson Tatem

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2007 -**

**Christian Education and Spiritual Formation – Saturday, one location, Congregational Leaders Team**

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM - Small Groups  
11:00 AM - Plenary GBOD – Carol Krau  
Noon-1:00 PM - Lunch  
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM - (Age level, youth, young adult, college/campus minis-

try, family, single, etc.)

**OCTOBER 13, 2007 -**

**Faith Sharing - Saturday, One location: "Using Communications in Evangelism Recruitment" – location to be determined**  
9:30 AM-4:00 PM - Training by Rev. Larry Homitsky, Director of Connectional Ministries, Western PA Conference, UMC and Suzy Keenan, EPA Director of Communications Worship  
"Igniting Ministries Training"

**NOVEMBER 3, 2007 -**

**Stewards of God's Gifts**  
David Bell  
6:00 PM - 6:30 PM - Worship  
6:30 PM - 8:15 PM - Training by the Rev. David Bell, Director of the Center for Christian Stewardship of The United Methodist Church

**DECEMBER 13, 2007 -**

**Accountable Discipleship: The power of small group ministry for all ages**  
6:45 PM - 7:15 PM - Worship  
7:15 PM - 8:45 PM - Training by Steve Manskar, GBOD

**APRIL 14, 2007 -**

**PRAYER - Saturday – One location: TINDLEY TEMPLE UMC in Philadelphia (Childcare will be provided.)**

11:30 AM-12:30 PM - Clergy/Laity Luncheons  
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM - Acts 29 Prayer Encounter with Terry Tekyl

**MAY 9, 10, AND 11, 2007 -**

**Preparing Your Congregation's Ministry Action Plan - three separate locations, childcare will be provided**

6:00 PM - Dinner  
6:45 PM - 7:15 PM - Worship  
7:15 PM - 8:45 PM - Session 5

**JUNE 13-15, 2007 -**

**Faith Sharing and Evangelical Recruitment- During Annual Conference with streaming video/audio to people not attending Annual Conference – sug-**

## Deacons celebrate milestones as their role evolves

By Vicki Brown\*

In the decade since the Order of Deacons was created, ordained deacons have taken The United Methodist Church outside its traditional brick walls and stained-glass windows. They have ministered to the homeless, worked with labor unions and served through fields as diverse as health care, education and even advertising and communications.

"Deacons are trying to put a swinging door on churches, going out into the world and serving and bringing people back into the church," said the Rev. Anita Wood, a deacon who is director of professional ministry development at the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

The church created the Order of Deacons to enable United Methodists to answer the call to an ordained ministry that connects the church with the world—both by work outside the church and by involving congregations in ministries that heal the world's hurts. Such a call resounds with both young people in seminary and many second-career candidates for ministry.

According to the board's Division of Ordained Ministry, 1,659 people are currently candidates to become deacons within The United Methodist Church. If most are ordained, the number will more than double. Currently, there are 1,381 active deacons and 213 retired.

Deacons and diaconal ministers will gather April 19-22 in Orlando, Fla., for

"Celebrating Diakonia," a convocation sponsored by the higher education board to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Order of Deacons and the 30th anniversary of the Office of Diaconal Ministry.

### What do deacons do?

Even as they celebrate, deacons and candidates for the diaconate say the church is confused about their role.

"Folks are still learning what deacons do. I have to educate the people who are mentoring me," said the Rev. David Brown, an associate to the senior pastor at Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church in Philadelphia and a probationary member. "As an African-American man, I've been pushed to become an elder. Could I do that? Sure. Is that true to my calling? No."

The role of deacons has evolved since the 1976 General Conference created the Office of Diaconal Ministry. When the 1996 General Conference created the Order of Deacons, many diaconal ministers were ordained as deacons.

The *Book of Discipline* provides for ordained deacons "called by God to a lifetime of servant leadership," while elders are "ordained to a lifetime ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament and Order." Both are clergy, theologically trained and have full membership in their annual conferences. However, elders can administer the sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism, while deacons may assist. Elders are ap-



Bishop Janice Riggle Huie (center) celebrates Holy Communion at the final worship service of the International Clergywomen's Consultation last August. Assisting her are deacons Jeannie Trevino-Teddle (left) and Margaret Ann Crain. A UMNS photo by Vicki Brown.

pointed to jobs by the bishop, while deacons generally find their own employment and then are appointed by the bishop. Many deacons do specialized ministry within congregations in areas such as music, education or youth work, but a growing number serve in other settings.

The Commission on the Study of Ministry acknowledged confusion over the diaconate role in its recent draft report about the ordering of ministry. The draft recommended further study of the order, saying it now falls short of the

work envisioned by the definition in the *Book of Discipline*.

"The church needs to identify the barriers, challenges, and possibilities for realizing the full potential of this office," the draft report stated.

To learn more about Celebrating Diakonia, or to register online for the April 19-22 meeting in Orlando, visit [www.gbhem.org/convocation07](http://www.gbhem.org/convocation07).

\*Brown is an associate editor and writer in the Office of Interpretation, United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Nashville, Tenn.

## Resources for Ministry

By Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem  
Yvette Davis-Trotman

The Johnson-UGO Foundation Library is open for business! Churches, nonprofits, and individuals are invited to select and attend the trainings that will be most beneficial to the ministries for their communities. Workshop offerings are as follows:

**Introduction to Fundraising Planning** - Saturday, March 31, 2007; Registration- 8:30am9:00am-11:00am

**Before You Seek A Grant - A Checklist for Nonprofits** - Saturday, April 28, 2007; Registration - 8:30am9:00am-11:00am

**Grantseeking Basics** - Saturday, June 30, 2007; Registration- 8:30am9:00am-11:00am

**Foundation Directory Online Basics** - TBA

**Proposal Budgeting Basics** - Saturday, July 28, 2007; Registration- 8:30am9:00am-11:00am

**Proposal Writing Basics** - Thursday, August 30, 2007; Registration- 6:30pm7:00pm - 8:30pm

**Guide to the Resources on the Foundation Center's Website** - TBA

**Introduction to Corporate Giving** - Thursday, September 27, 2007; Registration- 6:30pm7:00pm - 8:30pm

**Prospect Research Basics: Researching Individual Donors** - Saturday, October 27, 2007; Registration- 8:30am9:00am-11:00am

**Your Board & Fundraising: An Introductory Class for Small Nonprofits** - Saturday, December 1, 2007; Registration- 6:30pm7:00pm - 8:30pm

**An Introduction to Grantseeking for Individuals** - Saturday, September 22, 2007; Registration- 8:30am9:00am-11:00am

**Seeking Funds to Support Educational Expenses for individuals** - Saturday, September 22, 2007; Registration- 11:30am12:00pm-2:00pm

Individuals will also be able to acquire training in grantseeking for program purposes and to support educational expenses (undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate). Yvette Davis-Trotman, the Library Supervisor, will facilitate the trainings.

For further information and registration, please contact the Johnson-UGO Foundation Library by phone at 215-338-5020; by fax at 215-338-5031; or by e-mail at [johnsonugolibrary@yahoo.com](mailto:johnsonugolibrary@yahoo.com), located in the Education Building at Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church; Rev. Richard H. Andrews, Senior Pastor; 3117 Longshore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19149.

Your apportionment giving makes this a **free** service of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

*The Johnson-UGO Foundation Library, a collaboration of Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church and the Office of Urban and Global Ministries, Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem, Executive Director, is a Cooperating Collection of the Foundation Center, the oldest and most comprehensive philanthropy library in the United States. Johnson-UGO is the first faith-based collaboration to be designated a Cooperating Collection in the Foundation Center's 50 year history.*

## Young adults from EPA attend Global Convocation

By Rev. Hilda Campbell\*

Twelve members of the EPA Conference of the United Methodist Church met at the Philadelphia International Airport to fly through Atlanta on our way to Johannesburg, South Africa on the day after Christmas. Unfortunately, the plane left late, therefore our arrival at our Atlanta stop was late. So, we were stuck in Atlanta with the clerk telling us we had to sleep in the airport till the next flight, which was the following day. Needless to say, we received rooms, had a marvelous Mexican meal, with fried ice cream for dessert.

A malfunctioning light on the plane makes more delays, but gave the opportunity for one of our young adults, Kabrene Sligh, to notice Chris Tucker, who granted us photo opportunities. However, we unfortunately missed our "free day" in South Africa, our destination.

Our arrival in South Africa was four hours late, but we found everyone to be very welcoming, even feeding us at midnight.

At the convocation, groups of young adults were to attend special workshops on "issue topics." After some initial confusion over the legislation process, I assured our Eastern Pennsylvania team that all they needed to do was stay at the table, pay attention, and ask questions. After advice to "Just don't get frustrated, upset, angry, disillusioned and leave the table," the next morning, they engaged by debating social issues, making amendments, asking for Bibles, song books and the book of discipline for clarification of rules and guidelines.

Our young people can and will involve

themselves when given the chance, feel they have something to contribute and can make a difference. I am so glad I had the opportunity to witness this marvelous event that can go down in the history as the pivotal point for Methodism, revival, renewal and young people's involvement/participation.

Shauntaye Connor, one of the young adults from the Eastern Pennsylvania delegation, had this to say about her experience: "I want to start my story talking, THANKING the LORD for everybody who made this trip to South Africa possible. The trip in my opinion was a great success. South Africa is a very Beautiful place; there are a lot of wonderful, surprisingly kind people in Johannesburg. The hotel was great, the food was excellent, the songs we sang together were fulfilling and I had a great time. I loved my group from the moment we got on the plane; I knew they were great people. It also was a blessing when we got a chance to legislate the Book of Resolutions and learned how the United Methodist Church rules and laws work. We learned that we as young people should stand up and speak out as to what we believe in and how we feel about the things that are going on around the world. We went to these great museums in Johannesburg, and it was a BLESSING that words can really describe. I thank every single person for believing in young people. I can't wait to hang-out with the group and sit down and catch up a little bit."

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

## XOC makes disciples among ex-offenders

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For Ms. Hipple, XOC began as a dream in which she was running after sheep. "I wasn't alone in this activity because there were others also running with me. But the strange thing was, we were all running after sheep. It seemed like each one of us had our own sheep to follow. This dream was unlike any dream I had ever had. I woke up crying and emotional. I knew this vision was from God but I didn't understand its meaning. A year or so after the dream, God finally interpreted it by saying, 'If you keep running after me, you will see me!' I have never forgotten this challenge. I'm running after God just as fast as my faith can take me. And now God has giving me something to run with."

Ms. Hipple had been involved with prison ministry at Lancaster County Prison for about ten years. She started by playing volleyball with inmates and progressed to doing one-on-one pastoral visits. She also became involved with church services for women inmates once a month. "In talking with these ladies, and learning more about their needs," she said, "I heard over and over that the reason they don't go to church after they are released is because they don't feel comfortable at a traditional service. Self-esteem issues, guilt and fear of

being rejected or judged keeps them from even stepping foot in a church. I feel that God gave me a vision of how to reach these ex-offenders and break the destructive merry-go-round that they are on. They find God in jail, get out of jail, have no church family to turn to and end up in jail again. This pattern needed to be addressed and dealt with."

It was to fill this need, that XOC was birthed. XOC provides a church service that is casual in dress and open to everyone (even non-offenders). Services are held on a Friday night, which is a hard night for people with addiction issues. At XOC, people can hear the word of God, and experience what real Christian fellowship is all about. Thus, XOC's mission is "to provide a nurturing and creative worship experience, based on the Word of God, with love and forgiveness for all."

"Creative worship experience" includes having a different guest preacher every week. According to Ms. Hipple, "My calling isn't to be a preacher, so I had to find a way to get the Word spoken in the service. So I called every pastor, minister, or Christian speaker I knew of and started scheduling someone different every week. How many churches can say they get a fresh Word from someone different each week?! We cross denominational lines too. Sometimes we have

praise and worship bands come and do a concert. We have testimonies, and we try to have communion once a month as well."

XOC also gives back by providing *Life Application Study Bibles* to Lancaster County Prison as well as the *Life Recovery Bible*, which incorporates the 12 Steps from Alcoholics Anonymous. The inmates earn the Bibles by memorizing Bible verses. More than 200 Bibles have been given away at XOC and in prison. XOC also provides a prisoners devotional book written specifically for people in the prison, which the inmates can earn by memorizing more Bible verses.

XOC now provides van service to four different transitional homes in Lancaster, Lititz, and Leola. Attendance has risen from an initial four or five in worship to about 30 each week.

Ms. Hipple shared the story of lives transformed, "In this world of so much heartache, so many sad stories, and so many hurting people, we have touched the lives of people who often feel that God's love isn't meant for them, and use them for His kingdom."

For more information, contact the Rev. Sally Wisner Ott, Church and Community Worker, LUMINA, 133 Pearl Street, Lancaster, PA 17603; 717-394-8412, or go to:

[www.luminaoutreach.org](http://www.luminaoutreach.org).

## Conference Advance Specials

Applications for inclusion in the resolution on the Conference Approved Advance Specials to be presented in June, 2007, are available through the Rev. Richard W. Howarth, 610-792-4822, email: [rwjhwh@earthlink.net](mailto:rwjhwh@earthlink.net).

A Conference Approved Advance Special is a program of ministry within the boundaries of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference that can seek funds through EPA churches that meet their connectional commitments. See The Book of Discipline ¶654.2. Inclusion on the list does not guarantee funding but is permission to systematically approach these churches. Funding raised for a Conference Advance is to be remitted from the Treasurers of Local Churches using the monthly remittance form. The remittance is to be listed using the name of the ministry as it appears in the resolution. The measure of the effectiveness or the appeal of a program of ministry listed as a Conference Advance is the total amount remitted to the Conference Business Office.

## Sister in Christ turns 100 years old

In March, St. Barnabas Bethsaida United Methodist Church will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of its sisters in Christ, Mrs. Virginia Robinson.

Known as Cousin Virgie to some, and as Mother Robinson to many, Mrs. Robinson was born on March 19, 2007, in Camden, N.J. At an early age, she became a member of Union Methodist Church. Later she moved to Philadelphia, and there met the love of her life, Sam Robinson, to whom she was married for 50 years. Mrs. Robinson also worked for the City of Philadelphia for 33 years starting in 1930.

In Philadelphia, she first joined John Simmons Methodist Church. Today a member of St. Barnabas Bethsaida, she can still be found in her usual place in the midst of her loving congregation on Sunday mornings. She continues to attend weekday Bible study and is truly what one would call an active member as she continues to love and serve her church. Mrs. Robinson has served several times as secretary of the church administrative board and also as its chairperson. She has served as a primary teacher in the Sunday School, president of the Women's Society of Christian Service, chairman of the Worship Committee, a member of the senior choir, and is an active member of United Methodist

Women.

Mother Robinson has always endeavored to empower African American Methodists for effective witness and service among pastors and laity in local churches, conferences, and the larger community of Christianity. She has striven to encourage and involve all people in the struggle for spiritual and social justice in the church and community.

The Rev. Allen Jenkins, pastor, said, "Mother Robinson is a pillar of love and affection. We at the St. Barnabas Bethsaida United Methodist Church applaud her for her longevity and fine



Mrs. Virginia Robinson

work that she has rendered to the body of Christ locally and to a greater extent internationally."

## DONATIONS NEEDED FOR ASBURY'S ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK TO NEW ORLEANS

Asbury Protestant Ministry at Drexel University, a campus ministry sponsored by the Wesley Foundation of the City of Philadelphia and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, is planning its second Alternative Spring Break in New Orleans, March 24-31, to help with ongoing relief and rebuilding efforts there.

This year, Asbury will be taking a group of 30 Drexel students and staff to work with Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge program, focused on rebuilding homes in the eastern side of New Orleans. Last year the group worked with the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

Students are organizing various fundraisers on campus, but additional support is needed!

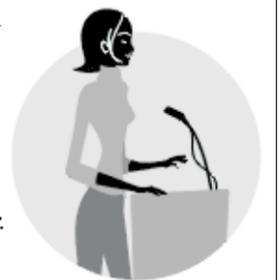
To make a donation, or for more information about the trip or about Asbury, please contact Pastor Tim Emmett-Rardin: 215-895-2522, [asbury@drexel.edu](mailto:asbury@drexel.edu) or [www.asburycrossroads.org](http://www.asburycrossroads.org).

## United Methodist Women 2007 Spiritual Growth Retreat

On April 20 - 22, 2007 a Spiritual Growth Retreat with the theme "Resurrection Women" will be held at the Days Inn and Conference Center in Allentown at Routes 22 and 309. The retreat will begin with dinner on Friday evening and on Sunday morning. Our leaders from the Northeast Jurisdiction Core Planning Group are Marion Perkins and Dr. Mary White. Music leaders are Yvette Diaz and Frances J. Rivers. *The retreat is open to all women.* Please bring friends. The retreat will focus on the theology of mission. The purpose of the retreat is to increase the understanding and the commitment to God's mission to women, children and youth.

There will be opportunities to join in singing, Bible study, Biblical drama, meditation, a labyrinth walk and worship. The cost per person is: 2 people sharing a room - \$130.00; 3 people sharing a room - \$107.00, 4 persons sharing a room - \$95.00. If you have questions, please contact Grace Potts at 610 775 1773 or the Registrar, Henrietta Thomas at 215 572 1318 or you may visit the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference United Methodist Women Website at [www.gbgm-umc.org/umw-epac/](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/umw-epac/). You may register on line or by contacting the Registrar.

Registration deadline is March 23, 2007.





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## Bishop's Days emphasize on making disciples

continued from page 1

reminded us that "clergy lead from the front, not from the rear," and that people respond to real leadership. He spoke of our "golden opportunity to make a difference in this conference" and our "golden opportunity to make a difference in the congregations where we serve."

Bishop Matthews also recommended the book, *I Was a Stranger: A Christian Theology of Hospitality*. He said that we need to extend an invitation for people to come in, to find ways to show Christ's love and acceptance, and to receive them into our presence. Rather than functioning like a club, where it is assumed that everyone already knows how we function, we need to recognize that folks who are coming to Christ do not know the "language" we speak. They are "infants" in Christ. We must find ways to let every person who walks through our doors know that they are welcomed. "We need to start bringing people to Christ and stop making excuses," he said.

"God has done so much for us; it's amazing how timid we are to say it," said Bishop Matthews. "I want people to know I am a Christian. I don't want to hide it under a barrel." He added, "It does trouble me when I go to a neighborhood and ask for directions to the United Methodist Church and they can't tell me where it is when it is only 3 blocks away."

Because of declining membership, we have lost two delegates to General Conference. Bishop Matthews emphasized that the membership loss may

come in part from a lack of invitation to join. "In many churches, if I were moved to join, I wouldn't know how to do it! There is nothing in the bulletin and no announcement from the pulpit saying, 'We want you here as a part of our church.' Don't be guilty of doing nothing! Use the authority God has given you to win souls for Jesus Christ." He reflected on the future by saying, "I have a new granddaughter, Troy Angel. I wonder if there will be a United Methodist Church in 20 years for her to be a part of."

The Rev. Lillian Smith, Director of Connectional Ministries, enthusiastically shared the emphasis on "Making Disciples." She stated that this is "a pivotal time in the denomination." She believes that God is saying, "I am calling you to a new thing."

She spoke of the high percentages of congregations, in which, in recent years, no one has joined by profession of faith. In 2006, 162 out of 475 conference churches had no persons come into membership by profession of faith. She spoke of the "Making Disciples" emphasis as a way to help congregations re-tool in order to reach out to our communities for Christ. Each congregation is encour-



The Rev. Lillian C. Smith

special program and it is not about institutional preservation. "Yes, it is about the numbers. It is not about having more people so we can pay the bills and the apportionment. It is about saving souls." She shared the message of Kelvin Sauls, presenter for the first two Making Disciples trainings, "The Great Commission is not an option; it is an obligation!"

Rev. Smith asked the gathered groups to share in groups of six and to respond to questionnaires and to share our dreams. "Imagine it is the year 2012 - what do we want it (the church and the conference) to look like?" "What can I/Vision Team/Member of Local Church/Member of Annual Conference do to make the plan a reality?"

Rev. Smith said that the Making Disciples emphasis offers every congregation access to the resources and training being offered by the conference in conjunction with the General Board of Discipleship. She stated that those who have a Ministry Action Plan designed through either Project 6:15 or Natural Church Development can bring their plan to the Making Disciples sessions. She also encouraged churches to contact her for more information on the Congregational Vitality Indicator tool.

\* Sherry L. Lantz is Pastor of Discipleship & Congregational Care at West Lawn UMC in Reading. Suzy Keenan is director of communications for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

aged to send a pastor and 6 to 9 lay members for the training. The ultimate goal is making disciples for Jesus Christ with a desired outcome of at least a 10% increase in attendance in the church by 2012.

She emphasized that this is not a

### The Philadelphia Caucus of Black Methodist for Church Renewal (BMCR) needs you!!

If you are not a member of BMCR, we hope you would consider becoming a member and being a part of helping to reshape and move this organization forward. If you are not familiar with BMCR, you can visit the website: [www.bmcrcumc.org](http://www.bmcrcumc.org). and see why you are vital to strengthening this organization. The mission of BMCR is to raise up prophetic and spiritual leaders who will be advocates for unique needs of black people in the United Methodist Church and in society.

### Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 11, 2007 @ 7:00 P.M. at Tioga UMC (Broad & Westmoreland Streets, Philadelphia, PA).

We are looking for men and women to take this organization to another level. If you are one of them, we hope to see you on March 11th. The following local meeting will be on Sunday, April 15, 2007 @ 7:00 P.M. at Grace Community UMC (1213 Central Avenue, Chester, PA). Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration in becoming active in BMCR-Philadelphia Caucus. For more information, contact Rev. Andrew L. Foster, III., President, BMCR (Philadelphia Caucus).

We currently meet the 2nd Sunday of each month except when it falls on a major holiday. When the locations of each meeting are determined, we will email them to you. All meetings are held 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.

### The dates for 2007 are:

Sun. March 11, 2007 @ Tioga UMC  
 Sun. April 15, 2007 @ Grace Community UMC  
 Sun. May 20, 2007 (location to be announced)  
 Sun. June 3, 2007 @ St. James UMC  
 No Meetings in July & August  
 Sun. September 9, 2007 @ Mt. Carmel UMC  
 Sun. October 14, 2007 (location to be announced)  
 Sun. November 11, 2007 (location to be announced)  
 Sunday, December 9, 2007 (location to be announced)

## Come Find Out What's New At Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center! "Youth Leader's Day"

Tuesday, April 17, 2007  
 9:00am - 2:30pm

This special day is designed for youth workers as a resource in your ministry with youth. Continental Breakfast and Lunch provided

#### ◆ Topics and Information available include:

- Ministry in the Wilderness
- How to Plan and Lead a Retreat
- Games, Activities, and the use of Adventure in Youth Ministry
- Fun Food for Youth Groups
- Service Projects for Youth and Adults
- Summer Camp opportunities

#### ◆ Tour the facilities including:

- Main Site and Adventure Site accommodations
- High Ropes courses, Low Ropes/Team Building course, Zip line, Climbing tower, and Leap of Faith

#### ◆ Experience first-hand our "Leap of Faith" high challenge element

- ◆ Free time to walk the grounds, hike our interpretive nature trail, enjoy boating or canoeing on our 25-acre lake

#### ◆ Optional: Stay overnight for a free personal retreat. Contact the camp office for more information.

#### ◆ While you're here, book a retreat for the Fall and receive a discount!

RSVP at 570.676.3665 by Wednesday, April 10, 2007  
 Check out our web site: [www.poconoplateau.org](http://www.poconoplateau.org)

Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center A ministry of the Eastern PA Conference of the United Methodist Church

## Why Invest the Church's Money with the Foundation?



By Stacy Martin\*

The Foundation provides custodian and investment management services to its clients. The Foundation is available to all 1,000 United Methodist churches located in the two Philadelphia Area Conferences, Peninsula-Delaware and Eastern Pennsylvania. We currently provide these services to several of the agencies and boards within the Conferences. Our client list includes 135 relationships and over \$28 million under management. Please note that we only serve United Methodist entities within our boundaries. This allows us to focus our attention

on their goals and to uniquely meet their needs.

The Foundation's Board is comprised of fifteen members, all committed to meeting the needs of the local church's Trustees, Finance Committee, Endowment Committee, etc. We believe the Foundation offers these Committees immediate solutions to the following problems:

**Instant Diversification:** The Foundation's equity options include large/mid cap funds, small cap, international and several fixed income options. The diversification also includes different investment styles.

**Delegation of Selection of Various Money Managers:** The Foundation's Board selects and oversees the performance of the money managers. This allows the Church Committee members to focus their time and attention to their ministries rather than meeting, evaluating and monitoring several different managers. Further, our role solves the dilemma of having a church member or family member handle the investment decisions for the church's funds.

**Asset Allocation:** The Foundation's Board has a recommended allocation for the equity side of our clients' in-

vestment, that is, what percentage of the equity portion should be invested in large/mid cap, small, and international.

**Spending Policy:** We can work with you and customize your portfolio to meet the needs of your ministries and incorporate the principles of sound spending so your ministries can continue into the future.

**Socially Responsible Investing:** Our funds comply with *The Book of Discipline* mandate to allow us to live in Christian stewardship in all aspect of our lives.

**Fiduciary Responsibility:** Although the Committee members are volunteers, their responsibility is serious. We understand the challenges and issues facing the Committees and can support and guide you through those issues.

**Stewardship Education Support:** Our clients enjoy full support from the Foundation for providing materials, guidance and education of the Committee members and/or the congregation so our response to God can be maximized. Detailed materials are available regarding gifts of stock, charitable gift annuities, donor advised funds, endowment policies, mar-

keting plans, estate and gift planning. These materials are easily customized to meet your church's needs.

**Competitive Pricing:** We believe our pricing is very competitive with other investment options, particularly when you include all the additional services and resources available to our client through our relationship.

**Living in Connection:** We enjoy a good relationship with all areas of both conferences we serve, Peninsula-Delaware Conference and Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. We are available to the leadership of the conferences and support their programming needs whenever we can. We understand that the success of bringing more individuals to know Christ is a community effort and we must all work together toward that goal.

Please feel free to contact me at the Foundation office for more information about our services. Blessings.

\*Stacy J. Martin is the Executive Director of the Eastern Pennsylvania-Peninsula United Methodist Foundation. [stacy.martin@epaumc.org](mailto:stacy.martin@epaumc.org); 800-828-9093 x247

## Classifieds

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST** - Haws Avenue UMC seeks to fill the position of a Music Director/Organist to help us connect with our community. A detailed job description is available upon request. Send resume to Haws Avenue United Methodist Church, 800 W. Marshall Street, Norristown PA 19403 or email to [hawsavenueumc@verizon.net](mailto:hawsavenueumc@verizon.net) **FREE:** Lowrey Organ, 2 keyboards and 2 octaves of foot pedals, with bench. Pick up organ and bench from

donor. Contact Jeffrey Kiesel, 610-389-2140 or [cjkiesel2@verizon.net](mailto:cjkiesel2@verizon.net).

**GUEST PREACHER/SPEAKER AVAILABLE** - Pastor Tim Emmett-Rardin, director of Asbury Protestant Ministry at Drexel University (campus ministry sponsored by the Wesley Foundation of the City of Philadelphia and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference), is available to preach and/or to speak about Asbury's ministry with college students.

**ARE YOU A DREXEL ALUM?** - Of Drexel University and/or Asbury Protestant Ministry at Drexel (or the old Asbury UMC)? If so, Asbury wants to hear from you! Please contact Pastor Tim Emmett-Rardin, Asbury's director, at 215-895-2522 or [pastortim@drexel.edu](mailto:pastortim@drexel.edu). For more info about Asbury's ministry, visit [www.asburycrossroads.org](http://www.asburycrossroads.org).

**WANTED: PART TIME COORDINATOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES** for Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Ap-

proximately 10 hours per week. Participate with Conference Council on Youth Ministry efforts to plan and run activities and events for conference youth, coordinate sharing of information about youth ministries with district offices and local congregations, provide resource information and support to adult workers in youth ministry. Please send resume to Jim Wilkin, Director of Camping and Nurture Ministries, P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482; [jim.wilkin@epaumc.org](mailto:jim.wilkin@epaumc.org).

### ◆ Peace with Justice Grants Available

The Church and Society Work Team of the Eastern Pa. Conference is offering grants for both individuals and churches/organizations for up to \$2,000. If you have a project, want to attend a conference, begin a training program or other initiative that seeks to approach peace from a faith perspective, we'd love to hear from you. We believe that peace is *more* than the absence of war. A peaceful society is one which is just and provides opportunities for all people to strive for wholeness. A peaceful society is created by motivating and educating ourselves and our community.

For more information including guidelines and application form visit [www/gbgm-umc.org/epacs](http://www/gbgm-umc.org/epacs). The Peace with Justice page provides an application and guidelines in PDF format. If you should need a copy sent to you please contact Peggy Wood at (610) 524-5935 or [Peggy.Wood1@verizon.net](mailto:Peggy.Wood1@verizon.net). Deadline for organizations/churches is March 31, 2007. Applications for individuals operate on the basis of rolling deadlines. If you have questions about whether you qualify or how the funds can be used please contact Rev. Carolene Brubaker at (610) 692-5190 or [cbrubaker@westchesterumc.com](mailto:cbrubaker@westchesterumc.com).

## Angele Marie Parker chosen as Administrator of the Year by the United Methodist Association

The United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries (UMA), a national network of United Methodist related organizations, will honor ten outstanding leaders and two organizations during UMA's



Angele Marie Parker, President CEO, Methodist Home for Children

upcoming 67th National Convention on Saturday, March 10.

Angele Parker, President and CEO, Methodist Home for Children, Philadelphia, PA, will be honored as Administrator of the Year for the Children, Youth and Family Division. This prestigious award is presented to the Administrator who is known to

- view and demonstrate that her work is a personal ministry to serve,
- possess strong leadership which enables the organization to excel, and
- maintain active involvement in the community and connectional units within the United Methodist local Conference.

"Angele has provided irreplaceable vision and leadership as the Methodist Home has partnered with other agencies to build and now operates Monument Village – a village on our main campus that provides housing and services to women being reunited with their children as they transition from treatment to independent living," said Lawrence D. Dodds, Ph.D., Chair of the Methodist Services for Children

and Families and Methodist Family Services of Philadelphia Boards. "A second project is our current endeavor to create transitional housing for young women exiting the foster care system. Again, Angele's vision, creativity and guidance have brought us to the start of an exciting venture. In both examples, Angele has worked to extend our Wesleyan mission into areas that traditionally were not served."

Robert O. Niles, Chairman of the Board for Methodist Home for Children, noted, "Dr. Parker's leadership has been reflected in the continued improvements in program diversity, quality and management. She brings strong leadership to the agency as it continues to cope with outside forces that impact its vision and mission."

UMA is a national network of approximately 400 healthcare and human service organizations. UMA provides its members with education, accreditation, networking, communication and business services while keeping with the rich, historical Wesleyan traditions and practices of the United Methodist denomination. For more information, go to: [www.umassociation.org](http://www.umassociation.org).



## United Methodist Night at the 76ers

All churches are invited to be a part of our 4th annual United Methodist Church Night with the Philadelphia 76ers.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 2007 @ 7:00 P.M.

**76ers vs. Boston Celtics**



### Package Cost & Location

\$52.00 - Lower Level Ends (sections 106-108 and 118-120)  
 \$30.00 - Mezzanine Centers (sections 223 – 203 and 211-215)

To print out a ticket order form go to:

<http://www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=1644>

If you have any questions, please call

UM Representative

Jim Wilkin @ 610-666-9090

ext. 225

**\*\*For Each Ticket Sold a donation will be made for Conference Youth Ministry\*\***



## 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 Amy Botti to [amy.botti@epaumc.org](mailto:amy.botti@epaumc.org).

