NEW Spirit!

Eastern Pennsylvania Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Volume 9 Number 5
June 2009

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ

"Sharing the Connection" Annual Conference 2009

Bishop Peggy Johnson's leadership, a new location, video streaming, a pesky mosquito, and a prayer room will be among the new features of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference 2009.

The conference will meet for the first time under Bishop Peggy Johnson's leadership. Bishop Johnson was the only bishop elected at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in July of 2008; she was then assigned to lead the 1,000 churches of the Philadelphia Area, which is comprised of the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences.

Nearly 1,000 lay and clergy persons will represent Eastern Pennsylvania's 463 churches. They will gather at the new Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, PA for three days, June 16-18, 2009, with the theme, Sharing the Connection.

The entire conference will be available to viewers over the Internet via video-streaming.

The Annual Conference will begin with clergy and laity sessions at 9:30 a.m. on June 16. Opening devotions at 2:00 p.m. will focus on Sharing the Connection: New Places for New People and Renewing Existing Congregations.

Opening Worship, organized by conference Young Peoples Ministries, will feature communion and preaching by the Rev. Vance Ross. Ross is associate general secretary of the Discipleship Ministries Division of The General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, TN.

The Rev. Dr. Hal Recinos will lead Bible Studies, at 9:00 a.m. on the mornings of Wednesday, June 17, "Jesus, the Poor Stranger" based on Luke 24:13-25, and Thursday, June 18, "God Makes a World of Difference" based on Galatians 3: 26-29. Recinos is professor of Church and Society at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

Wednesday, June 17 will feature recognition of fifteen retirees representing over 470 years of ministry. Dr. Mary White, conference lay leader, will present her Laity Address. Rev. Lillian Smith will lead a program celebrating conference connectional ministries. During the evening's Memorial Service, Rev. Ross will preach.

The final celebration of the conference will be the Service of Ordination at 2:30 p.m. on the afternoon of Thursday, June 18. Four persons will be commissioned: two for deacon's orders and two for elder's orders. Two deacons will be ordained and the orders of a third will be recognized. Fifteen persons will be ordained with elder's orders. Bishop Peggy Johnson will preach for ordination on Sharing the Connection: Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and World.

Holy Conferencing will take place throughout Annual Conference, and will include consideration of thirty-two proposed General Conference amendments and fifteen Annual Conference resolutions.

Churches are invited to send offerings in support of our ministries:

- Opening Worship: Hope for the Children, supporting ministry with children in poverty in Eastern Pennsylvania and Africa
- Service of Ordination: Scholarships for Undergraduate and Seminary students of the Eastern PA Conference
- Nothing But Nets: A roving offering…Watch for Mozzy the Mosquito, who will "bug" you until you hand over $10. $10 buys a bed net to protect a family from malaria.

In addition, churches are also invited to support the 2009 Annual Conference Mission Project by sending gift cards and hygiene kits for school-based programs of Methodist Services for Children and Families.

Opportunities for Individual reflection will include a prayer room, which will be open for meditation and prayer throughout Annual Conference, as well as early morning reflection and communion on June 17 and 18 at 7:30 a.m., hosted by the Order of St. Luke.

A concession stand located in the food court area will be open throughout the day for refreshments, and a vendor area will feature displays with resources and items for sale. A Rethink Church display will feature resources to engage in this exciting welcoming initiative of United Methodist Communications of Nashville, TN. Another important feature of the vendor area will be the used book sale which is hosted by and benefits the Eastern Pennsylvania Historical Society. Conference attendees are encouraged to bring books to donate. Also present will be Josie Martinez, Conference Liaison/Education and Plan Sponsor Relations, from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church, who will be available to discuss pension information. Sign up in advance by contacting Jo Fielding, 610-666-9090, ext. 213, or jo.fielding@epaumc.org.

For more information on Annual Conference, including the 2009 General Conference Amendments, Annual Conference Resolutions, and 2010 Budget Book, go to www.epaumc.org; go to the News tab and select Annual Conference.

Video-Streaming: Please invite people from your congregation to be a part of Annual Conference 2009 by watching the proceedings live online: www.epaumc.org.

June

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

Free Course - "Foundation Fund-Raising - An Introductory Course": in Spanish! Yvette B. Davis, Collection Supervisor; Johnson-UGO Foundation Library, 3117 Longshore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19149; V. 215-338-5020|F.215-338-5031.

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

Farewell Service for Dr. Alfred Maloney, Superintendent of the East District: 3:30-6:30 p.m. at Huntingdon Valley UMC, 3470 Huntingdon Pike, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006. All are welcome to attend. stmatthewtrevose@comcast.net.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9

Candidacy Mentor & Clergy Mentor Training: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Valley Forge: St. Matthew's UMC in Wayne. No cost for this training. Participants will receive a copy of "Fulfilling God's Call: Guidelines for Candidacy." Register: 215-878-4607.

SATURDAY-WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13-17

Living Justice Seminar: Alma Matthews House in New York City, June 13-17, 2009. deaconess@gbgm-umc.org or blouter@gbgm-umc.org or 212-870-3850.

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15-24

Experience Israel and Jordan: Tour the Holy Lands. Kent Kroehler or Katherine Spear (tour leaders) at 717-394-7231.

TUESDAY-THURSDAY, JUNE 16-18

2009 Annual Conference: Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks, 100 Station Road, Oaks, PA 19456. www.epaumc.org.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Heart Saver CPR, First Aid & AED Training: American Heart Association CPR, First Aid & AED certification class for adults and youth age 15 and over. Cost: $90. 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Carson-Simpson Farm, 3405 Davisville Rd., Hatboro PA 19040; 215-659-0232.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Bednet Worship Celebration and Family Festival: 11:00 a.m. Bishop Tom Bickerton of the Western Pennsylvania Conference will be joining us for the day as well as staff from the UN Foundation. www.hopewellumc.org.

MONDAY, JUNE 22

PRO - A Recovery Institute: Recovery Specialist 7 - Day Training Series. Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services at 701 Market Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. www.pro-a.org

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JUNE 22-26

Lancaster Theological Summer Academy: 50% tuition scholarships for pastors for classes and workshops in the Summer Academy. Contact April Anderson at 717-290-8758 or aanderson@lancasterseminary.edu. www.lancasterseminary.edu.

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Urban Academy: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The Abraham Lincoln - A Wyndham Historic Hotel, 100 North Fifth Street, Reading, PA 19601; (610) 372-3700, (800) 866-6855 or dorothy.watsontatem@epaumc.org

July

MONDAY-FRIDAY, JULY 6-10

Lancaster Theological Summer Academy: 50% tuition scholarships for pastors for classes and workshops in the Summer Academy. Contact April Anderson at 717-290-8758 or aanderson@lancasterseminary.edu. www.lancasterseminary.edu.

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY, JULY 8-11

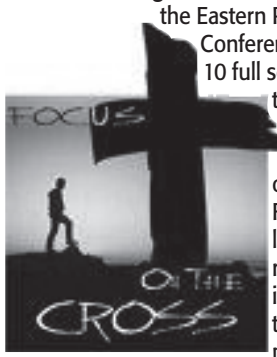
Nor'Easter 09: It's a Shore Thing!: Servant Leaders that follow Jesus! selflessness...hospitality...obedience...reverence...evangelism Ocean City, New Jersey. Registration: $150 per person covers room and program costs. To register, contact Rich Hogg, 701 Baltimore Avenue, Mt. Lake Park, MD 21550; (304) 484-9991; richogg@yahoo.com.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 10-12

Elevate: Taking Young Adult Ministry to the Next Level, July 10-12, 2009, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact Jim Wilkins, jim.wilkins@epaumc.org or Lydia Munoz, PRgirlsings@aol.com.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 10-12

UMM Gathering in Nashville: UMM of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference is offering 10 full scholarships to this great event for men from 19 to 30 years old. This includes FREE airfare, lodging and registration. For information on the scholarships, please contact Ross Brightwell, President, UMM of the EPC, 1050 Limekiln Pike, Maple Glen, Pa. 19002; Ph. 215/643-1269; rossbrightwell@verizon.net. www.gcumm.org



SATURDAY, JULY 11

United Methodist Night at the Phillies: Philadelphia Phillies vs. Pittsburgh Pirates. Game time - 7:05.p.m. http://www.epaumc.org/NewsDetails.asp?pageID=3067

MONDAY-THURSDAY, JULY 13-16

Imagination 2009: Orlando, Fla. www.fummwaconvo.org or e-mail the national office at FUMMWA@aol.com.

SUNDAY, JULY 19

United Methodist Sunday at Lancaster Barnstormers: Clipper Magazine Stadium, 650 North Prince Street, Lancaster, PA 17603. Game time - 6:05 p.m. Tickets: $9.00. Order your tickets by sending your payment of $9.00 per ticket to: Southwest District, P O Box 271, Bird-in-Hand, PA 17505 marked Barnstormers.

TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2009

Prison Ministry Workshop: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Aldersgate UMC, 2313 Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE 19803. No registration fee. You must register by contacting Rev. Hilda Campbell at 610-666-9090 x224. Please bring a lunch; desserts and drinks will be provided.

TUESDAY-FRIDAY, JULY 21-24

Focus 2009: Church Leaders to Focus on Children, Indianapolis, IN. www.gbod.org or contact Melanie Gordon at mgordon@gbod.org.; www.gbod.org/focus2009

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2009

Silent Auction at Carson Simpson Farm: Bidding will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. If you have an item or service you would like to donate to the silent auction, please contact JoAnne at the camp. Carson-Simpson Farm 3405 Davisville Rd Hatboro PA 19040, 215-659-0232, JoatCSFarm@aol.com.

JULY 31-AUGUST 2

2009 Academy for Laity: Park Ridge Hotel and Conference Center in King of Prussia. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at brendatildon@aol.com.

August

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, AUGUST 21-23

Healing the Wounds of Racism Training: Level II - Daylesford Abbey. For more information or to register, contact Rev. Hilda Campbell, director of Human Relations and Leadership, 1-800-828-9093, ext. 224 or hilda.campbell@epaumc.org.

In Memoriam

Rev. Woodrow W. Kern

Rev. Woodrow W. Kern, 94, retired elder passed away on May 19, 2009 at Homestead Village in Lancaster, PA.

Rev. Kern served the following appointments beginning in 1937: Steelton - Highspire, Former Atglen, Bensalem, Philadelphia: Cumberland Street, Trevose, Upland, Narberth, Reading: Wesley, Former Phila: Roxborough: First, Ridley Park, and Mount Joy: Chiques. He retired in 1980 and then served Clearfield and Oregon.

A graveside memorial service was held on Thursday, May 21, 2009.

He is survived by three daughters: Nancy K. Loane of Valley Forge, Beverly K. Feldman of Yardley, and Marjorie K. Babiak of Ridley Park, five grandsons, and a great granddaughter.

Condolences may be sent to Marge Babiak, 323 Shaw Road, Ridley Park, PA 19078.

Memorial contributions may be made to Homestead Village, PO Box 3227, Lancaster, PA 17604.

Kathleen "Kitty" Brouse

Word has been received of the death of Kathleen R. "Kitty" Brouse, 75 of East Earl, on Sunday, May 24. She was the wife of Richard H. (Dick) Brouse.

Kitty served as a Diaconal Minister (consecrated in 1999), certified in the field of Parish Nurse. She was currently on staff at Ephrata: First UMC. Previously she served as Parish Nurse at St. Paul's UMC, Terre Hill.

In addition to her husband, Richard, she is survived by three sons, Richard H. Jr., Timothy C., and James A.; a daughter, Barbara L. Browell; six grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter.

The funeral service was held on Friday, May 29 at First United Methodist Church, followed by interment at St. Paul's United Methodist Cemetery in Terre Hill.

Expressions of sympathy can be sent to her husband, Richard H. Brouse, 1487 Conestoga View Drive, East Earl, PA 17519-9577.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in her honor to the Ephrata Cancer Center Benevolence Fund, 460 N. Reading Road, Ephrata, PA 17522.

NEWSpirit!
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Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World

A Word from the Bishop

Holy Conferencing

Greetings from your bishop! I am eagerly awaiting our annual conference. As we enter annual Conference I ask each of you to pray that a spirit of Holy Conferencing will permeate throughout the body of Christ's people bringing harmony iwht one another and the Holy Spirit. This enables us to do what God is calling us to do. We are diverse but we seek to be of one accord in the midst of that diversity. There are no winners or losers in our discussions and voting. We want unity of Spirit. This is a discipline that requires listening, open mindedness, humility, faith and kindness.

The early Methodists believed that it was a means of grace. Through our work together we empower all to experience God in a new way. We are like a group of sailboats all with different sails but all seeking to catch the same wind . . . the wind of God's Spirit.

As a conference I am calling all of us to accountability to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Clergy and laity together are called by our Lord to spread the Gospel. In the next year the cabinet and conference staff will be working with churches and pastors that are not making disciples and asking people to do all they can and be accountable to God for their ministry. The world needs the saving love of Christ that we have to offer. If we don't do this how will people know? We would like to see every church gaining in church attendance, increasing in outreach, and every pastor fulfilling the duties of their covenant as clergy. Please pray with me as we continue the vital work of this conference in the strength of God's Spirit.

See you at Annual Conference and may you come prepared to worship, to give generously to the offerings, work together and enjoy fellowship.

Peggy A. Johnson

Welcome Jo Fielding

NancyJo Fielding has returned to the EPA Conference as Conference Benefits Officer and Executive Director to the Board of Pension and Health Benefits. She served previously in this capacity for seven years, from 1998 to 2005. In the interim, Jo has spent time teaching, working in human resources with Target Corporation, working with the Lower Providence Community Library, and homeschooling her youngest daughter.

Jo and her husband, John, are the parents of two daughters: Caitlyn is a junior at Mansfield University studying Music Business, and Karalyn is a freshman attending Montgomery County Community College School of Dental Hygiene. Jo continues to enjoy reading, writing, pottery and stained glass.

Jo is excited to be a part of the ministry of the Eastern PA Conference, and looks forward to assisting you with your benefit decisions.

To contact Jo Fielding: 610-666-9090, Ext. 213 or jo.fielding@epaumc.org.

Bishop Johnson receives award

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord," this is how Wesley Theological Seminary President David McAllister-Wilson describes the ministry of the recipient of the 2009 Society of John Wesley Award of Merit, Bishop Peggy Johnson. "She was that kind of messenger as a pastor, ministering in what others thought of as a wilderness. She has now come out of that wilderness to lead us as a bishop."

Wesley Seminary gives this award annually to alumni who, through sacrificial leadership, exemplify a high standard of commitment and devotion to God, the universal church and Wesley Theological Seminary. Recipients are Wesley graduates nominated and selected by their fellow alumni. Bishop Johnson earned her D. Min. from Wesley in 1993.

In the course of her career, Bishop Johnson has been an activist for ministry to deaf and hearing-impaired persons. She has served this community in a variety of progressive ways: as campus minister at Gallaudet University, as a leader in higher education for deaf persons; as pastor to the Christ United Methodist Church of the Deaf; and, as director of a choir for the deaf which has performed many times around the world, including at the 2008 UMC General Conference.

In her current role as Bishop to the nearly 1,000 UM churches in the Philadelphia area, she has continued to find progressive ways to reach the deaf and hearing-impaired. This past Easter, she ventured into new territory: YouTube! She created six video messages - Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, The Lord's Prayer, and two versions of an Easter message - and posted them on the popular site. The videos show Johnson signing the messages in American Sign Language while speaking them with her voice. "The deaf community - young and old - has really jumped into YouTube," Johnson says. "It is reaching deaf people where they are in terms of visual communications."

When elected as Bishop, Johnson promised to bring, "a sense of wonder, creativity, compassion, and grace" to the position. It is that same commitment that makes her a worthy recipient of the Society of John Wesley Award of Merit.

Left to right: Rev. Dr. William Gary George, Rev. Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem, Rev. Robert Wilt, Rev. Dr. Christopher Kurien, Bishop Peggy Johnson, Rev. James Todd and Rev. Bronwyn Yocum.

Volunteers till soil at Shalom Farms ceremony

Farm manager Rob Moore, wearing a cap, helps members of Girl Scout Troop 740 from Richmond place plants in a garden at Shalom Farms. The farm is a United Methodist project to help the hungry in central Virginia.

BY NEILL CALDWELL

The first of ten different crops — including beans, okra, potatoes, cucumbers and watermelon — were already in the ground when a large and diverse crowd helped Shalom Farms celebrate its start.

During the May 2 groundbreaking ceremony, volunteers and guests got a hands-on experience of what the unique project is all about: providing food for hungry people in central Virginia.

The two-acre plot of land — on a back corner of Camp Westview, a tri-district United Methodist camp on the James in rural Goochland County west of Richmond — also serves as a classroom, teaching inner-city young people that food doesn't have to come in plastic wrappers from the grocery store.

"We are dedicated to growing nutritious food for the hungry and teaching the hungry to help grow food," said the Rev. Dave Cooper, executive director of United Methodist Urban Ministries of Richmond. "We are dedicated to the shalom — the well-being — of metro Richmond."

The goal of Shalom Farms is to make an impact on the region's food security through a holistic approach to sustenance. Fresh produce grown at the Shalom Farms site will be contributed through Central Virginia Food Bank outlets and distributed throughout metro Richmond.

But Shalom Farms will reach further into the community than merely providing fresh fruit and vegetables. The farm will welcome groups of children through schools and churches who will come and learn about the food, as well as offering hands-on opportunities to develop a better perspective of healthy foods. The hope of Shalom Farms is that the children and families will bring this knowledge back home and make a shift to a healthier, more viable food choice.

Infrastructure and ground improvements at Shalom Farms site began in March. The camp is donating the land for the project.

The farm is the brainchild of United Methodist Urban Ministries of Richmond but includes a number of United Methodist partners, including the Richmond District, Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corp., Wesley Housing Development, the Communities of Shalom and the camp.

Other partners include the Society of St. Andrew, the Blue Sky Fund, First Contractors Inc., The Central Virginia Food Bank, William Byrd Community House and the Virginia Cooperative Extension agency.

"It's amazing how these partnerships have grown," said Cooper. "The Shalom Farms network is already at work across metro Richmond, and we expect that network to grow."

Jonah Fogle of Virginia Cooperative Extension said local agriculture extension agents are actively involved with the farm. "You'd probably underestimate the level of effort that's already gone on to bring together a very large coalition of people," he added.

"We're excited about having the farm here," said Blanton Youell, mission coordinator at the camp. "It's another chapter in the good works that Westview wants to do as we move forward into the future."

Farm manager Rob Moore said his learning curve was about an hour ahead of the volunteers he was teaching how to work with the soil. "It's a new opportunity for us," Moore said. "The food produced here is going to the people who need it, and that's how we take care of God's planet."

Formed in 2006, United Methodist Urban Ministries of Richmond facilitates collaborative partnerships among individuals, congregations, and organizations to assure food security, educational supports, affordable housing, health care and faith development in the greater Richmond metro area.

More information about the Shalom Farms project can be found at www.umumr.org.

CALDWELL IS EDITOR of the United Methodist Virginia Advocate.

The Nation in Brief

FORGIVENESS JOURNEY

Trinity United Methodist Church and the Rocky Mountain United Methodist Conference are helping a Native American organization take a forgiveness journey cross-country in search of healing from two centuries of oppression. Leaders of White Bison, an organization that helps Native Americans recover from substance abuse and addiction, are traveling 6,800 miles to visit the 22 sites of U.S. Indian boarding schools where thousands of children were taken to live and learn the dominant U.S. culture.

HYMNAL REVISION STOPPED

Work has been halted on a proposed new United Methodist Hymnal, making it the latest victim of the economic crisis. "The resources required to sustain a dedicated staff and pay for the planned activities are simply not available at this time," said Bishop Ernest S. Lyght, chairperson of the hymnal revision committee.

CHILDREN'S EYE CLINIC

Amy Cross is walking around with her world in a blur. The eighth-grader knows she needs glasses, yet she is not wearing any. "Every time I get glasses, I usually break them and my mom never takes me to get them fixed," she said. With the economy struggling and employee benefits dropping, many parents who are paid hourly are forced to choose between feeding their children or taking them to the doctor. Cross is one of 52 students at Manchester Elementary School in Pittsburgh who failed their eye exams. Then The United Methodist Church stepped in. The Rev. Larry Homitsky, head of Northside Ministries, said the church asked the school principal one question: What do you need? The answer was a free eye clinic.

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Television superstar Oprah Winfrey put two United Methodists under the microscope to see how they are making medical miracles come true in a small Arkansas town. Dr. Dan Bell and his wife, Suzie, members of Eureka Springs United Methodist Church, were two of the "everyday heroes" featured on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" May 19. The Bells started a free medical clinic in the small town of Eureka Springs in 2005 after attending a workshop on how to be better "kingdom people." "We wanted to live our faith more than we were," Dan Bell said in an interview.

BODYBUILDER IS INSPIRATION

At age 72, Ernestine Shepherd is training for a women's bodybuilding competition. It will be her third. Shepherd, who picked up her first dumbbell at age 56, was initially hesitant to strap on a bathing suit and compete alongside women half her age. But insecurities vanished after her first competition when she received a medal – for first place.

CHILD PROTECTION

Actor David Keith wants United Methodists to be on the forefront of the struggle to protect children from abuse. Keith, who grew up as a United Methodist and is a member of First United Methodist Church in Knoxville, Tenn., is the campaign chairperson of Promise to Protect, a national organization dedicated to the protection of children from abuse and neglect. The actor known for playing Richard Gere's buddy, Sid Whorley, in the movie "An Officer and A Gentleman" is committed to his role as a child advocate. "United Methodists are known for their love, they're not known for carrying a big stick. But I think it is time we showed people that we're as tough as any religion, and I want us to lead the way on this war," he said. The United Methodist Board of Church and Society, the denomination's social justice agency, endorsed the work of Promise to Protect after Keith addressed a board of directors meeting.

United Methodists in Nashville, Malawi form bond

BY ELLIOTT WRIGHT

The hymn says, "Blessed be the tie that binds." But ties in Christian mission also can expand.

Growing stronger is perhaps the best way to describe a mission partnership between a United Methodist congregation in Nashville, Tenn., and the denomination's Malawi Missionary Conference in central Africa.

The collaboration between the Belmont United Methodist Church and Malawi United Methodists is taking a new turn as a couple from Belmont prepares for a year of service in Malawi as Individual Volunteers in Mission. Jeff and Kara Oliver, both 35, will represent the commitment to Malawi that has become part of life at Belmont.

A vibrant and diverse congregation, Belmont's membership represents 25 different nations of birth, including a group of 150 men, women and children who are refugees from Myanmar. The pastor is the Rev. Ken Edwards.

Mission seeds that have grown into the strong partnership were sown in 2004 when the first United Methodist Volunteers in Mission team from Belmont visited Malawi, according to the Rev. Herb Mather, a retired pastor in the Tennessee Annual Conference and a Belmont communicant who has played a leading role in the Belmont-Malawi story.

The volunteer teams visited again in 2006 and 2008, stopping in many villages and engaging in what Mather called a "ministry of encouragement." Belmont would subsequently make Malawi a mission priority.

Belmont remembered its mission partner in 2005 when the 1,650-member congregation, located in an older neighborhood of Nashville near Vanderbilt University, decided to raise $3 million for a new community center. The campaign included $50,000 to begin construction of a United Methodist conference center in Malawi.

"We had a special Christmas Miracle offering last December with a goal of raising $30,000 in hopes of building 10 village churches," Mather stated in an e-mail. "We received over $52,000. Fifteen village churches and one city church will be built with these funds. We are now working on linking Sunday school classes and individuals with the 'miracle' churches so there is communication between our people and the Malawian people.

"Part of the Christmas Miracle offering was an offering of prayers," he added. "People in the congregation were invited to write prayers for Malawi and to bring them to the altar. Around 200 prayers were brought to the front of the church and placed in African baskets. These prayers were taken to Malawi ... [and] some were read at a pastor's training event and all were distributed to the 22 pastors in attendance to take back and share with their congregations."

During the past five years, the people of Belmont have sent Bibles in the Chichewa and Tumbuka languages, paid for the drilling of 12 deep wells (boreholes) in Malawi, upgraded two parsonages, and sent 12 bicycles, a motorcycle, an automobile, recreational equipment, livestock (goats and pigs), and treadle irrigation pumps to the African country.

United Methodist Women at Belmont contributed funds for treadle and electric sewing machines and provided training in sewing and funds for 11 literacy classes for village women.

The United Methodist Church in Malawi is fairly young. Started some 21 years ago by indigenous leaders, it was for 20 years a district of the episcopal area based in nearby Zimbabwe. In April 2008, the United Methodist General Conference, the denomination's top legislative body, recognized Malawi as a missionary conference, with special ties to the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. Today, there are about 100 congregations organized into 22 circuits.

Malawi is a land-locked country of 10.5 million mostly rural people east of Zambia, west of Mozambique, and south of Tanzania. Like Zimbabwe, it was colonized by English-speaking Europeans in the 19th century. It gained its independence from Great Britain in 1964 and became a democratic republic in 1994. Lilongwe is the capital city. The annual per capita income is $800. Some 80 percent of the population is Christian, 55 percent of those Protestant.

Bishop Eben Kanukayi Nhiwatiwa of the Zimbabwe Area has visited Belmont to cement the partnership and express appreciation for the church's commitment.

The Olivers were in the delegation that took the prayers to Malawi and now they are devoting a full year to service there as Individual Volunteers in Mission, a program linked to the Board of Global Ministries.

Oliver and his wife, Kara, visited a Malawi market with Bishop Eben Nhiwatiwa.

They will work with the leadership of the Malawi church in a variety of ministries. Jeff Oliver is trained in information technology and Kara Oliver is a freelance writer who has written for "The Upper Room", the international daily devotional guide at the Nashville-based United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

On May 9, a benefit raised $14,000 for the purchase of a used vehicle that the Olivers will use during their ministry in Malawi and then leave for the church there. From a base in Blantyre, the couple plans to visit each of the 22 circuits, working under the direction of the Rev. Daniel Mhone, the mission superintendent. The departure date for Malawi is July 6.

"They are a terrific couple," Mather said, "and their commitment has caught the imagination of our large contingent of young adults, who form a major part of our congregation." The Olivers have sold their house in Nashville, put their careers on hold for mission, and spent a great deal of time preparing their children, Carter, 3, and Claire Marin, 9, for the adventure ahead.

Kara Oliver greets a young Malawi child during a February trip to deliver prayers from members of Belmont United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tenn., to United Methodist congregations in the central Africa country.

Support for the couple during their Malawi year is not part of the Belmont budget, but Mather said that they anticipate considerable aid from individuals and small groups. "This practice has worked in the past. All of our funds for Malawi have come in response to stories of how God is working among the people of Malawi."

The Olivers' faith journey to Malawi can be followed at their blog, http://blog.oliverville.org.

Funds from Belmont to Malawi go through The Advance, the United Methodist designated giving mission channel. The Olivers can also be assisted through The Advance account for Individual Volunteers. Donations can be sent to Advance GCFA, PO Box 9068, GPO, New York, NY 10087-9068. Make checks payable to Advance GCFA and on the memo line write, "Advance #982465, for Jeff & Kara Oliver."

WRIGHT IS THE INFORMATION officer of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

The World in Brief

CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

Marvin Parvez is afraid that what has become one of the largest displacements of people in Pakistani history could grow into an even larger crisis. Parvez, a Methodist from Pakistan who is the director of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Program of Church World Service, believes the number of displaced persons from the Swat Valley could double if the fighting between the Taliban and Pakistani military spreads into new districts. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that 1.5 million people have been displaced in northwest Pakistan recently, in addition to 500,000 who had fled the area since 2008.

GERMAN CONTAINER CHURCH

The United Methodist "Church in the Container" of Oranienburg has a new building to serve a community with a dramatic past and acute contemporary needs. A new facility was dedicated May 10 in a service attended by civic and church leaders. Like its predecessor portable container, the building is yellow, a standout in the surrounding White City, a complex of apartment buildings constructed for house workers at military factories during World War II.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

The 2009 advocacy conference for Churches for Middle East Peace will be June 7-9 at the Kellogg Conference Center at Gallaudet University. The theme of the conference is "Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Hope for Things Unseen." Attendees will learn how to be an effective advocate for peace in the Holy Land. An Obama administration official will update participants on the status of U.S. peace efforts and a Congressional Prayer Breakfast will begin the Capitol Hill advocacy day. Workshops will focus on a broad variety of topics, including Palestinian Christians, human rights, grassroots organizing and interfaith cooperation.

FIGHTING DISEASE, POVERTY

Women of the West Africa Central Conference met for the first time in a women's gathering May 7-10 under the theme "we are better in Christ together." The four-day gathering at First United Methodist Church focused on how women could help combat the deadly HIV/AIDS disease, malaria and poverty. The women resolved to engage their annual conferences and communities in fighting disease and empowering women against poverty.

Making Disciples of Jesus

At the intersection of faith and pavement

BY SUZY KEENAN

Pastor Tim Patterson had a new ministry birthed in his heart the day after the attack on 9/11.

He has always had strong interest in the intersection of where faith and the sidewalk meet, and in expanding the four walls of the church. But "the rubber met the road" the day after the attack. He said, "There wasn't anything more important than me checking on people in town." In town refers to Orwigsburg, PA where he is pastor of Salem United Methodist Church.

He walked the town square and met with a whole spread of emotions: "Its great you're here; come in and sit down with us and pray" to "What the hell are you doing here!"

"I carved out an area of the business community that I could faithfully visit every week," Rev. Patterson said. "On the fourth week, I took a handful of Dove chocolates, and I said as I handed each one out, 'May God's peace be with you."

One week he handed out Baby Ruth candy bars, and said, "You're a homerun hitter with God!"

For Christmas 2001, he handed out a chocolate Santa and gave out a prayer card with the story of St. Nicholas, and continued handing out treats and cards through Easter. "After Easter, I had three folks ask me, 'When are you going to do your next series? Your cards – I saved all of them and pull them out and read them!'" That was when he started handing out a piece of chocolate with a prayer card every week. Each prayer card is 1/8 page which contains a short message or prayer. "I write a unique message each week; my intention foremost is pastoral care. Every person has longing in their heart," Rev. Patterson explained. "This opens an opportunity for dialogue and for the Holy Spirit to be at work."

He's had women with their heads in the sink at the beauty parlor say, "Oh Pastor Tim's here! Can you keep me in your prayers?" His usual response is, "Can we pray right now?" "Yea, we can pray right now," he often hears.

He hands out 264 cards and candies each week. He's had deep conversations with people separated from the church on nature of church. He had a request to bring communion into the workplace at a local flower shop and a conversation with the store owner who had a recent death in her family. Once he had a request to do a service of healing, and ran across the street to Thomas' Pharmacy to purchased oil for anointing and frankincense.

Rev. Patterson explained, "You are entering into a relationship with people where they are. You get to know them and they know and trust you. Eventually they ask the question, 'Why do you do this? As a pastor you run into this stuff – tragedies – how do you deal with this all the time?'"

For Holy Week, Rev. Patterson adopted a practice of cleaning bathrooms. He wrote a letter to all the businesses in town, explaining where, in the Gospel of John, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and asking if he could clean their bathroom as a sign of God's love. "This year I cleaned twenty four," he said. "It is an opportunity to speak about the sacrificial love of God."

"Waitresses in a bar always had a faith question of the week for me. I gave them Bibles and we began having a Bible study before the bar opened."

Rev. Patterson visits 46 businesses each week: hairdressers, banks, a Harley dealership, restaurants and bars, a car repair shop, the PA State Liquor Store, the post office, a shoe factory, and a middle school. "At the end of the day, I am planting seeds of faith, and then trusting them into God's hands - that they received the Good News that day and that their lives were changed."

Welcoming C

Salem United Methodist Church in Orwigsburg, Berwyn UMC, Calvary UMC in Mohnton, and Gravel Hill UMC in Palmyra have been recognized by United Methodist Communications as official "Welcoming Congregations."

"Welcoming Congregations" are a select group of United Methodist congregations nationwide that meet criteria including embracing newcomers and providing opportunities in discipleship.

Welcoming is not the task of a committee or individual, but rather a lifestyle shared

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OPEN

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Each September, United Methodist Communications encourages congregations to celebrate United Methodist Open House Month. Plan now for your Open House, which might invite and recognize community leaders, public servants such as police and firefighters, and teachers to your church home.

Make it a year-round state of mind. Hosting special events, worship festivals or making other efforts to welcome those in your community present perfect opportunities to

Christ: Sharing Your Faith

ongregations

by each member of a congregation. When we truly welcome people, we open our doors and show that church is not just a place to go, but something we do. We are connecting them with people in our communities and around the world. The welcoming certification program is a four-year program that celebrates and recognizes the efforts to proactively prepare to receive newcomers.

For more information on becoming a Welcoming Congregation, go to www.rethinkchurch.org or call toll free (877) 281-6535.

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intentionally recognize Christ in everyone -- and to remember that guests may look for Christ in us. Your welcoming outreach may start with an Open House in September during "United Methodist Open House Month" then carry into the holidays as a living nativity and holiday tour, appear during winter as a chili night, celebrate spring with an Easter egg hunt, then welcome all to a mid-summer barbeque. These are all ways to help seekers rethink church and what it can mean in their lives.

Fertile ground for planting seeds of faith

BY LILLIAN SMITH

One of my joys is gardening! I love to grow flowers and vegetables and when we moved to this house, over a year ago, the planning began to create flowerbeds. Two problems presented themselves. My house didn't have any already established flowerbeds and the ground around my home is extremely rocky and hard to break up. Last summer, when I first tried to break the ground to create flowerbeds, the effort seemed impossible! In fact, my plans for new flowerbeds through the traditional method were put on hold.

Determined to have a cutting garden, I had to find another way to accomplish my goal. While frustrated that I was unable to break the ground, I learned another method to accomplish the goal of growing flowers – the Lasagna Garden Method. Less back breaking, this method utilizes layering various components on the ground to create new beds. Newspaper is first laid on the ground, followed by layers of leaves, peat moss, compost, soil, (and any other elements you want to add).

A funny thing happened. This spring, after many rains, I decided to try again and was able to easily break up the ground that had been impossible to work with earlier. With no effort, I could dig holes to plant fruit trees and flowers. Compost and peat moss needed to be added to enrich the soil for optimal plant health and growth. But nonetheless, it could be done.

Gardening is a lot like evangelism. There are numerous methods that can help us accomplish our goals of sharing the gospel. Certain seasons are easier to plant in so that the plants can grow optimally.

It's time to plant! People who were not open to considering the message of the gospel a year or two ago are now open. The rains of life – financial and economic woes, job losses, continuing wars and life's uncertainties have broken up the soils of people's lives so that seeds can sow new life with Christ.

One more lesson I've learned this season is that you can plant a flower garden on top of your compost pile. (Yes, I have one of them also.) If you take the left over matter, your coffee grounds, vegetable scraps, grass clippings, etc, and put it in a pile, it will break down into the rich matter of compost. Layer soil upon it, and you are in business. Hurting people have all the left over matter that life has given them – rejection, brokenness, pain, sin, etc. With God's love through Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, their left over matter becomes rich compost that can be transformed into a beautiful garden.

For some congregations and Christians that have shied away from the E word – evangelism, like Lasagna Gardening, with the application of the rich matter of increased bible studies and small groups, passionate spirituality and worship, and radical hospitality, the soil will be prepared to experience verdant growth from evangelism.

Some would say, "You work in the Conference Office, how would you know?" At Zoar Church, where my husband pastors, I practice what I preach. Through weekly prayer walking in the neighborhood, the Holy Spirit is preparing the soil and supernaturally drawing people to God. We are seeing seeds blossom where we didn't expect it as more people of the neighborhood are starting to come to church services, bible studies or activities. On Mother's Day, 149 attended worship and 70 attended the free Mother's Day Brunch. Get this! God provided breakfast foods that more than met our need without a financial burden. The day was designed to intentionally target unchurched women and their families in the neighborhood and city. Side Walk Sunday School is enabling us to reach more children for Christ. To learn more about this, please check the website, look under the Office of Congregational Development to see a list of recommended resources, links and other churches' experiences.

Don't give up! Keep working the soil! If one method doesn't work, try another one. Keep planting gospel seeds! Keep sharing the good news of Jesus! Continue being instruments of God's love. God, the Master Gardener will always bring the increase!

I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants, but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow. 1 Corinthians 3: 6-7

THE REV. LILLIAN SMITH IS DIRECTOR of Connectional Ministries for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Appointments

Bishop Peggy Johnson announces the following appointments, effective July 1, 2009:

Dong-Jin Choi
West Lawn as Assoc. Pastor

DongJin Choi, affectionately called DJ, was born in Seoul, Korea. He attended Don Wha High School in Migeum, Korea and Arizona State University from 1996-2000, graduating with a B.S. He received his M.Div. in 2004 from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. He served Bensalem Korean UMC as a Youth Minister from 2004 – 2007. In 2007 he became the Senior Pastor of Johnson Memorial in Philadelphia for two years. In June 2009, DJ will be ordained an Elder.

West Lawn UMC continues to be one of the fastest growing churches in Reading and on the Central District. It is a welcoming congregation with a lot of excitement and passion for ministry. Their "Wednesday at West Lawn" continues to attract people from around the area of Reading. Wednesday nights at West Lawn feeds over 500 people for free and has a worship service for those who choose to attend.

Monica Guepet
Hellertown: St. Paul's

Monica Guepet is a licensed local pastor, currently serving as Associate Pastor for Education at Lehman Memorial United Methodist Church in Hatboro. She is also a second year student at Moravian Seminary in Bethlehem, and is a candidate for ordained ministry. Monica attended Goucher College in Maryland for her freshman year, planning to major in dance and biology. As she became convinced of her call to ministry, she transferred to Penn State University, and graduated with a major in religious studies. During her college years, Monica spent a summer at Heritage Towers as a chaplaincy intern. In 2003 she joined the staff at Lehman Memorial UMC as Director of Christian Education, and after licensing last year was appointed as their Pastor of Education. Monica is married to Steve, an engineering graduate of Penn State. They have a 2 and ½ year old daughter, Alisabeth.

St. Paul's UMC in Hellertown is a congregation known for its warm, welcoming spirit. With easy highway access, Hellertown has become a bedroom community for Philadelphia, New York and parts of New Jersey, and is rapidly growing. The church reaches out to the local community in a variety of ministries. Members of the congregation work with Turning Point, a support organization for victims of domestic violence. The church is also actively engaged with the local Muslim community to foster better understanding and a spirit of peace between the two faiths.

Robert Johnson
to Phila.: Mount Zion

Robert Johnson comes to Mt. Zion from Phila.: Simpson-Fletcher UMC where he has been the pastor for 13 years. He graduated from United Seminary in Ohio. He has done a wonderful job building the ministry at Simpson-Fletcher. With the Lord being his helper, he will build the

Continued on page 9

2009 Report of the Committee of Nominations

Addressing Community and World Issues Resource Team – 100.3
Allen Jay Black, Sr. (LM)(EA)(1)

Administrative Support Resource Team – 100.5
Robin Hynicka (C)(CE)(1)

Calling Disciples Resource Team – 100.1
Dong-Jin Choi (C)(EA)(1)
Esdras Seda (C)(EA)(1)

Camping Board – 108
Mark Moore (C)(SW)(1)(2013)

Congregational Transformation Team – 100
Marilyn Wilt (LW)(NW)(1)

Equitable Compensation, Commission on – 203
Mark Moore, Chairperson (C)(SW)(1)

Finance and Administration, Council on - 301
Mark Egbert (LM)(CE)(1)
Jon Gruber (LM)(NW)(1)
Greg Holston (C)(EA)(1)
Navin Satyavrta (C)(NW)(1)

Healing the Wounds of Racism Core Team- 114
Gwinyai Muzorewa (C)(SE)

Human Resources (Personnel) Committee - 313
Michelle Flamer (LW)(CE)(1)
Timothy Smith (C)(SW)(1)

Leadership Resource Team – 100.4
Carrie Bobrowicv (LW)(CE)(1)
Denita Conner (C)(SE)(1)
Shauna Ridge (LW)(SE)(1)
Jacquelyn Sheely (C)(SW)(1)

Loan Fund Board – 308
Steven Cherry, Chairperson (C)(EA)(1)(2011)
Dan Betancourt (LM)(SW)(1)(2013)
Carl Boyd (LM)(EA)(1)(2013)
Owen Foizen (LM)(NE)(2)(2013)
Joseph Jones, Sr. (LM)(NW)(2)(2013)
Tim Patterson (C)(NW)(1)(2013)

Marital Separation and Divorce – 200.4
Alicia Julia-Stanley (C)(EA)(1)
Mertice Shane (LM)(NE)(1)

Metro Ministries, Inc., United Methodist – 104
Laurie Ann Rookard (C)(CE)(1)

Nominations, Committee on – 304
James Anderman (C)(NE)(DR)(1)
Sukja Bang (C)(EA)(1)
Tamara Clark (LW)(CE)(1)
Ann Jacob (LW)(SE)(1)
Zabdiel Khan (C)(SE)(1)
Donna Klinger (LW)(NE)(DR)(1)
Valerie Long (LW)(NW)(1)
William Matthews (LM)(EA)(DR)(1)
Marinetta Smallwood (LW)(CE)(1)

Pennsylvanians Concerned about Alcohol Problems – 511
Barbara Drake (LW)(CE)(1)
Thelma Kennerly (LW)(CE)(1)
Susan Worrell (C)(SE)(1)

Property and Liability Insurance Com. – 302.2
David Cassidy (C)(CE)(1)

Status and Role of Women, Commission on – 306
Ross Brightwell (LM)(EA)(1)
Jim McIntyre (C)(CE)(1)
Shirley Parham (LW)(CE)(1)

Trustees, Board of – 302
John Laughlin, Chairperson (C)(SW)(2)(2013)
Christopher Kurien (C)(SE)(1)(2013)
Jeff Rowlands (LM)(NE)(1)(2013)
Dan Weaver (LM)(NE)(2)(2013)

Witness in Pennsylvania, United Methodist – 513
Dianne Berlin (LW)(SW)(1)

Youth Ministries, Council on – 107
Chante Washington (LW)(CE)`

Central District Committee on Ordained Ministry - 402.1
Walter King (LM)(1)
Terrie McKinley (LW)(1)

Central District Board of Church Location and Building - 403.1
Diana Albright (LW)(1)(2012)
Kerry W. Bart (C)(1)(2012)
Bunnie Bryant (LW)(1)(2012)
Richard Freeze (LM)(1)(2012)
Joseph A. Harmon (LM)(1)(2012)
Jennifer Smith (LW)(1)(2012)

East District Committee on Ordained Ministry - 402.7
Michele Wright Bartlow (C)(1)
Andrew Krpata (C)(1)
William Matthews (LM)(1)

Northeast District Committee on Lay Leadership - 301.4
Robert L. Hachtman (C)(1)
Lemuel A. Ross (LM)(1)

Northeast District Committee on the District Superintendency - 401.4
Christina J. Keller (C)(1)
Robert Lamson (LM)(1)

Northeast District Committee on Ordained Ministry - 402.4
Mertice M. Shane (LM)(1)
Nancy H. Ross (C)(1)
Lois Tarbell (LW)(1)

Northwest District Committee on the District Superintendency - 401.2
Brayton Brunkhurst (LM)(1)
Sandy Fausey (LW)(1)
Randall Leitzel (C)(1)
Susan Roehs (C)(1)

Northwest District Board of Church Location and Building - 403.2
John Adams (LM)(1)(2009)
Gerald Ketterer (LM)(1)(2009)
Rose Marquardt, Chair (C)(1)(2009)

Southeast District Committee on the District Superintendency - 401.2
Bumkoo Chung (C)(1)
Lynne McCall (LW)(1)

Southeast District Committee on Ordained Ministry - 402.3
Edward C. Goodley (C)(1)
Carol McGinley (LW)(1)

Southeast District Board of Church Location and Building - 403.3
Wendy T. Hudson-Jacoby (C)(1)(2012)
Alvin Kingcade, Sr. (LM)(1)(2012)

Gretna Glen celebrates Year of Jubilee

BY VANESSA HELMS

The story of Gretna Glen began 50 years ago in the historic town of Mount Gretna, where children and youth attended the Evangelical United Brethren Church camp programs beginning in 1949. As the number of children attending grew, the camp leadership began to see a need to expand, and decided the time was right to build a new youth camp.

A location was found a just few miles away along Old Mine Road, an old homestead with acres of woodlands and a small creek. Church leaders moved forward with the purchase of the land in 1958 from Mrs. Cora Weimer. By 1959, ground was broken for the first building, which was the dining hall, to be named Newcomer Lodge. Day trips were planned to the property that summer, where youth explored nature, camped out, and held Bible studies. Newcomer Lodge, the cabins and the shower house were dedicated in 1960 and youth campers were able to reside on site for the first time.

In a naming contest in 1961, the name Gretna Glen was chosen. This distinguished the camp from the old site, which became known as Gretna Heights. Both locations operated together as Camp Mount Gretna for a number of years until eventually all of the summer camp programs were moved to Gretna Glen.

In the first several years a dam was built by Titus Musser to create a small lake for boating and fishing, and a swimming pool and pool house were added. Over the years a health lodge, pavilions, retreat lodges, the Zimmerman Environmental Education Center, shelter and tent sites, a maintenance garage, offices and staff housing have all been added to that original humble group of cabins, enabling a variety of programs to be carried out year-round.

During its 50 years of existence, the mission of Gretna Glen has changed very little. It has always been envisioned as a place set apart from the distractions of daily life, where people of all ages can develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Living in community with other people of faith has always been a part of this Christian camping site. Gretna Glen exists to share the joy of knowing and following Jesus Christ. Since Gretna Glen's founding, innumerable young people have discovered that joy for themselves, and we praise God for their changed lives.

Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center 50th anniversary celebration

In ancient Israel the fiftieth year was declared a year of jubilee and so you are invited to celebrate Gretna Glen's Year of Jubilee. On Sunday September 27 at 3:00 p.m. a worship service will be held at the Tabernacle in Mount Gretna, followed by a reception and dinner at Gretna Glen. We will sing the old camp songs, tell stories, and view scrapbooks, photographs and memorabilia of the fifty plus years of camping in Mount Gretna and Gretna Glen.

Summer Camp 2009

Children, youth and adults are still growing in their Christian life through the ministry of Gretna Glen and are encouraged to donate their time, talents and treasures to continue to support the ministry. The curriculum for summer of 2009, "Breakthrough," is brimming with opportunities for young people, and includes a wide range of interests. Check out the schedule online to find a program just right for you: www.gretnaglen.org.

SUMMER ACADEMY 2009

A holy adventure!

June 22-26 & July 6-10

Among the classes we're offering this summer:

Preaching Paul	*Greg Carey*
Emerging Christianity	*Bruce Epperly*
Alternative Worship	*Jonny & Jenny Baker*
African American Christianity	*Donna Allen*
Theology and Film	*Lee Barrett*

In addition, we're offering classes and workshops for clergy and lay people in the liturgical arts, Christian theology, sacred movement, spiritual practices, church history, and educational ministries.

For a complete list of classes and activities visit us at www.lancasterseminary.edu.

Lancaster THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Appointments

Continued from page 9

ministry at Mt. Zion UMC.

Mt. Zion UMC is located at 1530-38 North 11th St. Philadelphia, PA 19122. They have made a significant impact on the ministry in that area for many years. They are looking for the ministry at Mt. Zion UMC to continue to move forward.

Joseph L. Wenrich
Berne: Salem-Berne

Joe is a graduate of Blue Mountain High School. He has an undergraduate degree from Messiah College, and a M.Div. from Wesley Theological Seminary. While attending seminary, Joe served the North Chevy Chase Christian Church, Nantmeal UMC, and the former Coatesville: Grace UMC. Since graduating from seminary, his appointments have included the former Coatesville: Grace, Narvon: Mt. Zion, White Haven UMC, Geigertown: St. Paul's, St. Peter's: Mount Carmel, Cornwells Heights UMC, and Friendship UMC. Joe also served in Extension Ministry as the Manager of Maintenance for Camp Innabah. Joe's new appointment will take Joe and his wife, Barbara, a little closer to their roots. Joe's sponsoring church was Schuylkill Haven: Covenant UMC. Joe has a particular passion for camping ministry and for the Civil Air Patrol, for which Joe is a volunteer chaplain. Joe also serves as a volunteer chaplain onboard the S.S. John W. Brown.

Berne: Salem-Berne UMC was organized in 1871. This two hundred member congregation added seven new members to its rolls last year. The church offers one primary worship service, which has both traditional and contemporary elements. A significant number of young families participate in the busy life and ministry of this congregation. Locally, the church is noted for its Potpie Suppers and a Classic Car Show, as well as outreach programs, which include: KID'S Club, Youth Fellowship, and a Community Festival.

Catherine L. Bowers
Interim Ministry: Morrisville

Catherine received both an M. Div. from Union Theological Seminary and her MSW from Columbia School of Social Work in 1989. Throughout much of her ministry, she has served to bring healing and resolution in various appointments which have often been in distress. As part of a clergy couple (she is married to Rev. Thomas Brooks), she has served as Director of Frankford Group Ministry until being appointed in January as 'interim' at Morrisville UMC. Interim Ministry appointments are based on 'trained individuals' serving congregations during times of transitions, when called on by the Bishop to facilitate that transition. This announcement represents an appointment extension effective the 1st of July 2009.

Morrisville United Methodist Church is located in what is called "a quaint little borough of approximately two square miles" across the Delaware River from Trenton, New Jersey. The church is seeking to redefine itself to reach the diverse population in and around the community. With membership around 500 there is a lot of enthusiasm around having that number make an impact for Christ in the community.

School of Christian Mission: 2009

The United Methodist Women of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference will convene their annual School of Christian Mission on July 23 through July 25 at West Lawn United Methodist Church, 15 Woodside Avenue, Reading, Pennsylvania 19609.

All church leaders--lay and clergy, men and women, youth and children—are invited to attend this event in order to expand their understanding of the global mission of the church and the responsibility of all Christians to support mission. Members and elected leaders of United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, pastors, chairpersons of mission-related organizations and all other laity concerned with mission are invited and encouraged to attend.

The theme this year is "Together at the Table." The School offers a Spiritual Growth Study, which will be attended by all participants. Attendees will be given a choice of one of two additional studies. The Spiritual Growth Study, "Food and Faith," (using a text with the same title by Wendy Whiteside), will be led by Sally Graham-Ernst. The elective issue study is "Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival." This study will be led by Julia Tulloch and Rev. Harold Jacobs. The text titled "Giving Our Hearts Away," was written by Thom White Wolf Fassett. The geographic study, "The Beauty and Courage of Sudan," will be led by the Rev. Bo-Joong Kim, Susie Johnson, Dr. Saria Chand and Ruth A. Daugherty. The text of the same title was written by Linda Beher. A Youth Study titled "Food and Faith" will be led by the Rev. Mary Catherine Miller using the text "food, faith and me" by Kelly Martini. The Children's Study titled "Piece Work/Peace Work (Sudan)" will be led by the Rev. David Cassidy.

Costs including meals and registration are as follows: Adults $140; Youth, ages 12 through 17, $100; Children, ages 6 through 11, $50. Housing must be arranged by the attendee. We have negotiated special rates at the following hotels: Days Inn-Wyomissing, 910 Woodland Road, Reading, Pennsylvania, 610 374 1500 (the rate is $88 per night plus tax); and Best Western Inn Reading, 2299 Lancaster Pike, Shillington, Pennsylvania, 610 777 7888 (the rate is $99 per night plus tax). If using either of these hotels, ask for the United Methodist Women School of Mission room block. Additional hotel suggestions are available from the registrar.

Mail registration forms to Minnie Chamberlain, 22 Buttonbush Lane, Willingboro, NJ 08046-3911; phone 609 877 0883; e-mail fcmc22@yahoo.com. www.gbgm-umc.org/umw-epac

"VOICES OF HOPE" raises awareness and funds for ovarian cancer research

Front row: Angela DeMarro, creator of the Voices of Hope Concert and the Jubilate Choir Director at Elam United Methodist Church. Back row (left to right): Nate Bankert, who directed the choir the day of the event, Elam's Coordinator of Music and Worship; Kristen Varley, an ovarian cancer survivor and founder of Teal Ribbon Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (TROCRF), and coordinator of the concert; and Joel Lenderman, organist for Christ Church in Media, PA, who also directed the choir the day of the concert.

In 2008, Kristen Varley, a member Elam United Methodist Church in Glen Mills, PA, spoke in church about her journey through ovarian cancer survivorship. Kristen spoke of the ovarian cancer that invaded her body and of the harsh chemotherapy treatments, and how this has led her on a mission to spread hope and help prevent other women from suffering the same fate.

Inspired by Ms. Varley's testimony, Elam's choir director, Angela DeMarro began to talk with colleagues about how persons from the community could join together to raise awareness and funds for ovarian cancer research while making music together. Out of these conversations, "Voices of Hope" was born among the members and friends of Elam UMC.

The first Voices of Hope community choral event to raise awareness and funds for ovarian cancer research was held on April 26 at Garnet Valley High School, located near the church in Glen Mills, PA. Singers from Delaware County and surrounding areas, under the direction of Angela DeMarro, as well as Nate Bankert, Elam's Worship and Arts Coordinator, and Joel Lenderman, organist for Christ Church in Media, came together to present sacred, secular, and patriotic music. Rev. Clyde Flaherty, Elam UMC's pastor, opened the concert with words of welcome on the theme of hope. The concert also featured speakers: a care-giver, a nurse, and a researcher, who offered information and inspiration on surviving ovarian cancer.

"Events such as Voices of Hope provide me with the HOPE that we will banish ovarian cancer from our minds, body, and world," said Ms. Varley, the inspiration for the event, and president of Teal Ribbon Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (TROCRF). Teal Ribbon Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation, Inc. was created in honor of Ms. Varley, who was diagnosed with stage IIIC ovarian cancer at age 38 in August 2003. Since her diagnosis, Kristen has taken an active role in helping other women. As an ovarian cancer survivor, she is dedicated to sharing her story and stressing the need for a reliable early detection test and treatment.

The Voices of Hope concert raised $1700, which was donated to TROCRF for ovarian cancer research. Upcoming events include the Teal Ribbon 5K Race Against Time '09, the 5th Annual Teal Ribbon 5K for Ovarian Cancer on Sunday, May 24 at 8:30 a.m. at the Carousel House in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, PA. Visit www.trocrf.org to register or call 610-459-8783.

Cabinet and Latino Commission sign historic covenant

The Commission on Latino Plan and Ministries and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Cabinet met in April to sign a covenant. The Covenant will help strengthen the Latino United Methodist churches, to develop Latino leadership, and to encourage new Latino ministries in our region. The Cabinet will engage in a consultative role with the Commission on Latino Plan and Ministries. The Executive Committee of the Latino Commission includes Rev. Alicia M. Juliá-Stanley and Daniel Betancourt, Co-chairs, Rev. Richard Nazario, Secretary, Rev. Dr. Irving Cotto, Director of Congregational Development, and Rev. Brunilda Martinez, Treasurer. Currently there are eleven Latino UM Churches in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Present for the Latino Commission/Cabinet Covenant signing were the following: Front row, left to right: Elena Ortiz, Alicia Julia-Stanley, Brunhilda Martinez, Evodia Villalva, Bishop Peggy Johnson, Irving Cotto, Lillian Smith, Dorothy Watson Tatem, Lucrecia Cotto, Bronwyn Yocum. Back row, left to right: Gary George, Alfred Maloney, Lydia Muñoz, Esdras Seda, Armando Iraheta, Nicholas Comacho, Jim Todd, Dan Betancourt, Jorge Grieb, Bob Wilt, Peter DiNofia

Casinofree Beat the House Event Planned for June 6 at PA Slots Parlor

On Saturday, June 6, 2009, Casino-Free Philadelphia will put the casino industry on notice. Residents of Philadelphia and allies from around the country will cover new ground

"We are putting the industry on notice: the citizens will not tolerate casinos in Philadelphia."

Lily Cavanagh
Beat the House organizer

— inside an existing, operating casino in the region — and conduct ourselves in ways that focus the public's attention on the heart of the controversy.

The event, called Beat the House, will use various tactics that can be replicated at any casino anywhere in the country — including the two casinos proposed for Philadelphia, SugarHouse and Foxwoods, whether they open in our city or elsewhere. Working in teams, participants in this event will enter a nearby slots parlor and use a series of actions to expose the predatory practices used by the gambling trade.

"Our supporters will engage the industry on its home turf to highlight the predatory practices that would come to Philadelphia if the elected officials dare to push forward the plans for SugarHouse or Foxwoods, the two casinos proposed for Philadelphia," said Ivan Boothe, an organizer with Casino-Free Philadelphia

"I am hoping to recruit 100 United Methodists to participate in this action," said Rev. Robin Hynicka, pastor of Arch Street United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, and a member of the Methodist Federation for Social Action. "It should be eye opening and inspiring."

Casino-Free Philadelphia has been fighting to keep casinos out of Philadelphia since 2006. Its current campaign, the "Declaration of Independence from Casinos," seeks to embolden at least one elected official repre-

"We will enter the casino as any other citizen is allowed to do and, inside, we will take actions designed to ask the hard questions the industry does not want to answer."

Ivan Boothe
Organizer with Casino-Free Philadelphia.

senting Philadelphians to publicly adopt the position that casinos do not belong in our city. The June 6 action will remind politicians, the casino industry and their investors that casinos are not welcome in Philadelphia.

"Through our actions, we will expose their predatory practices and demonstrate how this trade is politically indefensible," said Lily Cavanagh, Beat the House organizer with Casino-Free Philadelphia.

Casino-Free Philadelphia's mission is to stop casinos from coming to Philadelphia and close any that open. The benefits of casinos can never outweigh the social and economic costs from an industry reliant on addiction to survive. Visit us online at www.CasinoFreePhila.org.

Uniting in our Diversity is God's Call

How can we respond? The Racial Ethnic Ministry Work Team is a group of clergy and Laity from our Conference, whose mission statement is:

"To identify and empower Racial-Ethnic communities as Christ-centered ministries by educating, developing networks, creating cultural sensitivity and dismantling racism at every level of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church in keeping with God's Great Commission."

We are available and prepared to help pastors and congregations work together in their racially ethnic diverse communities for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ. We are able to help pastors and congregations develop strategic ministries with the aim at facilitating a healthy environment for mutual support, spiritual growth, and effective ministry.

A table will be set up at our Annual Conference for you to stop by and share your thoughts and struggles as you worship and minister in this special place of cultural diversity. We hope we can be of assistance in your ministry as work for unity and the transformation of the world. For more information: Irving Cotto at irving.cotto@epaumc.org.

26th Annual Laity Academy

Park Ridge Hotel, King of Prussia, PA
July 31-August 2, 2009

The Academy weekend will feature special guests: Bishop Peggy Johnson, as the keynote Friday evening speaker and a special Saturday evening CSM Recognition dinner.

2009 Academy Course Offerings

Laity Only: Delving Deeper – Spiritual Ministries for Personal and Congregational Change and Growth (led by: Rev. Sharon Vandegrift)

In this session we will explore the powerful role that Spirituality Ministries can have in the life of a congregation that is seeking change and learn about the role spiritual direction can play in supporting laity who feel called to lead in this way.

Clergy Only: Leadership Can Be a Team Activity (led by: Rev. Dr. Alfred Maloney)

The Book of Discipline provides a guide to evaluate how pastors use their gifts, skills, time and priorities to affect the mission and ministry of the congregation. This course covers an important redefinition of the "gift" of leadership and how this gift of leadership equates to an effective partnership between clergy and laity.

Christ Servant Ministries: The Basic Course (led by: Rev. J. Dennis Williams and Judith Ehninger, CSM)

Participants will explore God's call in their lives as they take the first step toward becoming a Local Church Servant and ultimately a Christ Servant Minister. This spiritual journey involves reading and reflection, Bible study and the use of a journal. Registrants are required t complete assignments from a Basic Course Manual prior to the Academy. The cost of the manual is $5.00, payable with the Academy for Laity registration form. Registrants are also required to submit a recommendation letter signed by their pastor.

Christ Servant Ministries: Basic Course for Young Adults (led by: Minister Georgette Hall Peterson and Dana Cornett)

Are you a good listener, a gifted speaker? Is caring your gift? If you answer yes to any one of these questions this course is for you. The Basic CSM course for Young Adults is designed to assist young adults in claiming their God-given gift and using that gift in an effective and focused way to serve others for God. Participants will spend time exploring scriptures that will help claim their unique gifts, serve God and God's people, the church, and share the "Good News" at the same time. Discover what it means to serve where you fit best.

For more information visit www.epaumc.org and click on the 2009 Academy for Laity icon or contact Brenda Tildon, Dean of the 2009 Academy for Laity at brendatildon@aol.com or 302-836-8553.

Church shares faith through drama

Over the forty-six years of production of the The Passion Play, Hopewell United Methodist Church has grown from a small country church to a bustling community, offering six services of worship each weekend. The church has gone through three major additions. The Passion Play is one of many ministries of Christian nurture and outreach which helps to make Hopewell Church the vibrant spiritual center that it is.

Maryanne Bishop, chairman of the Church Council, said, "All three of my children, ages 3 to 11, have been a part of the play. It just brings that level of personal involvement, to the point where Emily exclaimed 'That's my Jesus,' and seemed to grasp, at two years old, what the meaning of that sacrifice is for her. The audience can relate to the story, because they are in the middle of it, like living it."

The Passion Play at Hopewell started as a "bathrobe and bedsheet" production in the fellowship hall of the church. Opening night for the play was on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1963. It was produced by a group of young people using a script by Hopewell member Charles J. Ax, based on the Gospels. After the original performance, a plan was drawn up using the natural contour of the hillside behind the church as an amphitheater setting. In 1966 The Passion Play moved outside after countless hours of work. Thousands of feet of sound and electrical cables were placed underground, speakers were nestled in trees and lighting was spread throughout the area to enhance scenes. The Charles J. Ax Amphitheater was now ready to seat 1000 people. Donald Bower, the church's pastor from 1956 to 1982, initiated the demanding role of the Christus, now played by two men each year.

The setting developed through fellowship and hard work of church and community members. The giant backdrop curtain at the rear of the amphitheater was devised as paint by numbers project and completed by members of the congregation. The rock in the Garden of Gethsemane weighs over 2 tons and was lowered into place by helicopter in 1988. The helicopter operator was so impressed by the process that he attended the play and came to Christ following his experience.

In 2006, the play expanded to two versions: The Passion Play using King James language, and The Power and the Glory, in contemporary language, which includes scenes from the Sermon on the Mount and the Great Commission. This year, the story of Christ in both the original form and in the contemporary version will be presented. In 2010, they will offer a new quality drama in June in our magnificent amphitheater.

This June will be your final chance to see the play for a few years. The Power and the Glory will be presented on June 12 and 13. The Passion Play will be presented on June 19 and 20. All performances begin at 8:30 p.m., and admission is free with no tickets required.

For more information: www.hopewellumc.org.

Bishop Peggy Johnson of the Philadelphia Area prays for 12 religious activists at Arch Street United Methodist Church before they headed to court on charges of trespassing. A UMNS photo by the Rev. Carolene Brubaker.

A stand against gun violence

BY KATHY L. GILBERT

The Revs. David Tatgenhorst and James McIntire have too much in common. They have seen too many lives shattered by handgun violence.

In protest, the two United Methodist pastors joined 10 other religious leaders and blocked the entrance to Colosimo's Gun Center in January. They were arrested for trespassing and disorderly conduct, and put on trial.Then their cries of justice were heard.

As the defendants took the stand, story after story of lives destroyed by handguns came out, Tatgenhorst said. "The bigger issue of justice took hold. It was miraculous."

All 12 were acquitted May 27.

At one point, it started to feel more like the gun retailer was on trial as the activists, many of them clergy, began to tell their stories, Tatgenhorst said.

McIntire testified about being in a hospital room with parents who had just lost their second son in five months to gun violence. As the dazed family was leaving they met a young Amish couple coming in. It was the day after a gunman opened fire in an Amish school in Lancaster, Pa., killing five little girls. Three more children were in intensive care.

"One of the women from Kenny's family looked through her own tear-filled eyes and with compassion asked, 'Oh, how are your girls?'"

It was in that moment that McIntire said he felt God calling him to do something to stop the epidemic of violence.

Tatgenhorst believes the simple act of blocking entrance to the store probably saved someone's life that day. "We may have turned some straw purchaser away," he said. Straw purchasers are people paid to buy handguns by persons who cannot legally purchase the guns themselves.

More than 100 people packed Arch Street United Methodist Church at 8 a.m. on the morning of the trial in support of the 12 protesters. Among them were United Methodist Bishop Peggy A. Johnson, episcopal leader of Philadelphia, and 15 other United Methodist pastors.

Johnson quoted from Timothy II, "'God has not given us a spirit of fear, but power, love, and self control.' In the midst of this gun violence world of Philadelphia there is much fear. But we have the power of God for empowerment, the love that casts out fear and the self control that speaks the truth in love."

A Good Friday protest at Colosimo's was organized by the faith-based campaign, Heeding God's Call.

As each of the 12 names were called, supporters laid hands on them, praying: "Holy One hear our prayer and journey with us as we seek to drive away the forces of violence from our land. Surround us with your spirit and the power of your love that your truth may be heard and heeded here in this city of Philadelphia on this day."

At 9 a.m., the gathering walked with the defendants to the courthouse singing "We've Come This Far by Faith."

The trial had to be moved to a bigger courtroom when 150 people came to hear testimony. McIntire said there were another 100 people in the hallway outside the courtroom.

"The judge was shocked, the gun owner was shocked, the prosecution was shocked," he said.

Tatgenhorst and McIntire are members of Heeding God's Call, a grassroots campaign to end gun violence in Philadelphia.

The group chose Colosimo's Gun Center because it is listed as one of the five worst gun shops in the U.S. in terms of guns sold and then recovered from crime, according to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

The state's legislature has failed to adopt a law that would limit purchases of handguns to one a month, McIntire said. "I began to realize the absurd reality of living in Pennsylvania—the absurdity of being able to walk into a gun shop and buy as many handguns as one wants as long as you have an ID, no criminal record and no history of mental illness."

The group asked the owner of Colosimo to sign a 10-point gun dealer's code of conduct that he would voluntarily take responsibility and not allow unlimited purchases of guns.

Both pastors are praying Colosimo and his family will be affected by the trial and have a change of heart.

The group continues to stand outside the gun shop every Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and every Monday from 4 to 6 p.m. Tatgenhorst said sometimes it is only two people, sometimes it is 30.

McIntire says what started as a peace conference focused on gun violence has turned into a movement.

"It feels like it is growing and uniting lots of people around this issue—it is powerful."

GILBERT IS A NEWS writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tenn.