



## Service overcomes two centuries of division

BY SUZY KEENAN

**I**n the celebration of a 240 year anniversary of Methodism in Philadelphia, the coming together of two historic churches is making a new history.

On Sunday, October 25, hundreds of members of Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church poured into St. George's United Methodist Church, and filled the sanctuary for a combined Sunday morning worship service in a symbolic reversal

of the history of division of the two churches.

On this Sunday, Veronica Saunders, a member of Mother Bethel AME who was dressed in her starched white usher's uniform and cap, welcomed worshippers at the door to the sanctuary of St. George's UMC. "This is beyond historical moment; it is a day of rejoicing, of true enlightenment, and of gratitude - of moving from the past into the future." Laticia Stauffer, one of St. George's representatives to the combined team that helped plan the worship, welcomed worshippers stepping into the historic sanctuary. "This event came together effortlessly, like it was meant to be," she said. "This is a great step to building new history."

That history began in the 1780's. Richard Allen and Absalom Jones became the first African-American lay preachers at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, licensed by Francis Asbury, Methodism's first bishop in America. The growing number of African members brought in by Allen and Jones led to the building of a balcony, completed in 1792. With the balcony came segregated seating.

One Sunday when Jones was forcibly moved by a church trustee from where he was praying, Allen and Jones led a walk out of the African-American members. Allen began Mother Bethel Church, whose struggles with the overseeing church, St. George's, continued with a "long, distressing and expensive lawsuit" over rights to self-determination. In 1816, the Supreme Court decided in favor of Mother Bethel, and Allen founded the African Methodist Episcopal denomination.

Rev. Alfred Day, pastor of St. George's, welcomed the brimming sanctuary to the special Sunday worship. "We're here today because God's Spirit is full of surprises," he said. The combined worship resulted from an invitation to the Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler, pastor of Mother Bethel AME Church, to preach as part of St. George's 240th anniversary. Rev. Tyler's response was, "Sure, but how about if I bring Mother Bethel with me?"

In asking why the churches were coming together, Rev. Day said, "The God of our mothers and fathers is busy pointing to the Promised Land more than back to Egypt." He added, "Why do we keep coming back to something that happened so long ago? Because in church and community

that they can't be at home in their own house if it look like they don't belong in the neighborhood. Because we must never forget—God's people of St. George's and Mother Bethel - the story our ancestors have lived, hope can rise from it amidst the hurt. The work overcoming racism, discrimination and division is work that every generation must do in and for its own time."

Rev. Day presented a gift to Rev. Tyler, a cross made of the original nails taken from the very balcony that had led to racial segregation and division.

Rev. Tyler preached from Genesis, when two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, bury their father, Abraham. He pointed out that there are always two stories at a funeral - the one in the bulletin and the one in the parking lot, and that the story of Hagar and Ishmael is part of the latter. Rev. Tyler paraphrased what Ishmael might have said, "Mama, the bitterness is your stuff. Maybe I can go back and get rid of my hate and say thank you. I return because my brother needs me to stand with him." Rev. Tyler described how the text shows a new way, that the children get past the anger, and that blood is thicker than water.

Describing the two churches, Mother Bethel and St. George's, Tyler pointed out that the congregation shared a common father, John Wesley. "The same blood that runs through our veins is thicker than what divides us." He admitted that on the morning of this Sunday he did not know how he would end his sermon until the moment Rev. Day handed him the cross. "Until Fred put the nails in my hand, and I remembered it's all about the blood - that Jesus' blood is thicker than water!"

The congregation shared in communion using a chalice sent by John Wesley to the Methodists in America, and is thought to have been used to

**Continued on page 7**



Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler, pastor of Mother Bethel AME, and Rev. Alfred Day, pastor of St. George's UMC, prepare to serve communion at the historic Sunday worship Service.



there are still people pushed into balconies or as far to the edges as we can push them . . . because of segregated swimming pools not all that far from here, because people profiled so

## November

**WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4-6**  
**Vitality of Small Churches - Fall Retreat:**  
 Camp Hebron, 975 Camp Hebron Rd., Halifax, PA 17032. Price: \$ 135.00; Commuter Fee \$75.00; Single rooms available upon request, \$25.00 extra per night. Info: Pastor Sandra Brant, PO Box 345, Ulster PA 18850-0345.

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4**  
**Clergy Day Apart at Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center:** Call one week ahead and let us know that you are coming. Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center, RR2 Box 2747, Cresco, PA 18326 570-676-3665.

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6-8**  
**2nd Annual Men's Retreat at Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center:** "RE-KINDLE YOUR BOYHOOD DREAM & DISCOVER YOUR TRUE CALLING." Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center RR2 Box 2747 Cresco, PA 18326, 570-676-3665. www.poconoplateau.org.



**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7**  
**Enlivening Worship for Advent:** 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. To make reservations or for more information, please contact April Anderson Bupp at abupp@lancasterseminary.edu or 717-290-8758. Tuition: \$25 per participant; \$40 per congregation

(two or more participants).

**MONDAY-WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9-11**  
**Pennsylvania State Pastors' Conference:** "Living in our Particular Wilderness: Being Healthy Leaders for Healthy Churches." Four Points by Sheraton, 800 East Park Drive, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Information: <http://www.pachurches.org>.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12**  
**Frankford Group Ministry 30th Anniversary Celebration:** At Rosewood Caterers, 8888 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA. 7:00 p.m. Tickets: \$35.00/ person.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13**  
**Rethink Church - "Train the Trainers":** Friday, November 13 is only for selected Trainers from each district. West Chester United Methodist Church, 129 S. High Street, West Chester, PA. For more information, contact Suzy Keenan, EPADirector of Communications, communications@epaumc.org or 800-828-9093, ext. 227.

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13-15**  
**Confirmation Retreat at Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center:** Cost: \$95; Register online at: Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center, RR2 Box 2747, Cresco, PA 18326, 570-676-3665, <http://www.poconoplateau.org>.

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13-15**  
**Encounter 2009 - Youth Weekend:** Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center in Lebanon, PA. Space is limited, so reserve your spot ASAP! Cost for Encounter 2009 is \$95, which includes all meals, lodging, and weekend activities! Register online at [www.gretnaglen.org](http://www.gretnaglen.org).

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14**  
**Rethink Church Training:** Training for everyone interested in ministry of hospitality and welcoming will be held at West Chester United Methodist Church, 129 S. High Street, West Chester, PA, on Saturday, November 14, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost is \$40 per church team. Register at <https://www.123signup.com/event?id=jqmph>. For more information, contact Suzy Keenan, communications@epaumc.org or 800-828-9093, ext. 227.

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14-15**  
**Interfaith Conference on Peace in Israel & Palestine:** Building Peace in the Holy Land: Opening Hearts, Opening Minds". Saturday-Sunday, November 14-15, 2009. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill. For further information, visit [www.holylandpeace.org](http://www.holylandpeace.org).

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29**



**United Methodist Student Day:** One of the six church-wide Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church. United Methodist Student Day furnishes scholarships and loans for students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities. [www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org).

## In Memoriam

### Rev. Paul S. Williams

Word has been received of the death of the Rev. Paul S. Williams, retired elder, on October 10, 2009. His wife, Dorothy, preceded him in death in 2008.

Rev. Williams served churches in Indiana, New Jersey, and Maine beginning in 1940. He then served on extension ministry as a missionary and church planter in Argentina and Uruguay from 1946 to 1976. In the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, he served Lancaster: Otterbein and Lancaster: El Redentor. He retired in 1979, and served both Rawlinsville and Marville in retirement.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, October 17, at Conestoga United Methodist Church.

Rev. Williams is survived by three daughters: Gwyneth L. Doggett of Philadelphia, Christine M. Finitzer of Cincinnati, OH, and Deborah J. Wilhelm of Pequea, and twelve grandchildren.

Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Gwyneth L. Doggett, 710 Saint Vincent Street, Philadelphia, PA 19111.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505.

### Rev. Elaine Barnes

Remembering Rev. Elaine Barnes, former Disaster Relief Coordinator for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Word has been received of the death of the Rev. Elaine Barnes on Wednesday, October 14, 2009.

Rev. Barnes served the following appointments beginning in 1968: Phila.: Univer. City, Calvary; Morton: Kedron; Logan; Extension Ministry: Frankford Group Min. Coord.; Phila.: Emmanuel; Reading: Covenant; Reading: Ebenezer; Phila.: Grace; Extension Ministry: Executive Secretary Church and Community Min., General Board of Global Ministries (1986 to 1991); Mountainhome; and Cheltenham. She retired in 2003. For many years, Rev. Barnes served as Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Disaster Relief Coordinator. She had a heart for missions and wherever there were people suffering from disaster, you could expect to find Elaine, from Ground Zero after 9/11, to the Mississippi Gulf Coast after Katrina, to Monroe County after the flooding along the Delaware in 2006.

A Memorial Service was held on Sunday, November 15, at Historic St. George's UMC.

She is survived by a brother, George W. Belzer. Condolences may be sent to Mr. George W. Belzer, 12323 W. 102nd St., Lenexa, Kansas 66215.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Memorial Fund, Historic St. George's UMC, 235 N. 4th St. Phila. PA 19106.

# DOORS TO LEARNING

**UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY**

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PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY. YOUR GIFT DOES MATTER.

## november 29, 2009

[www.umcgiving.org/UMSD](http://www.umcgiving.org/UMSD) item#87000209

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Proverbs 16:16, The Message

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(USPS 19-604)

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**Making Disciples  
 of Jesus Christ for the  
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A Word from the Bishop

# Happy Birthday, Church!

**P**entecost is the birthday of the church but for United Methodists in America it is Christmas. At the Christmas Conference in Baltimore in 1784 the Methodist Episcopal Church in America began. This year will mark the 225th year! In the Peninsula Delaware Conference, part of the Philadelphia Area, the celebration is a bit sooner. At Barratt's Chapel in Frederica, DE Bishop Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat and Francis Asbury met on November 14th of 1784.

Asbury's journal recalls it this way: "I came to Barratt's Chapel. Here to my great joy, I met those dear men of God, Dr. Coke and Richard Whatcoat. We were greatly comforted together. The doctor preached on 'Christ, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.'"

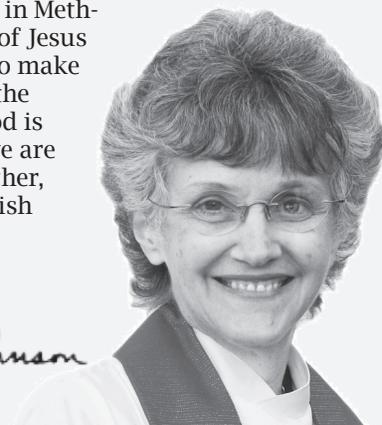
Coke's biographer, Samuel Drew tells what occurred after the sermon "Scarcely however had he finished his sermon before he perceived a plainly dressed, robust, but venerable-looking man, moving through the congregation, and making his way toward him. On ascending the pulpit, he clasped the Doctor in his arms and without making himself known by words, accosted him with the holy salute of primitive Christianity."

Following the service Asbury, Coke and Whatcoat met to discuss the calling of a conference of all Methodist preachers in Baltimore in December. The purpose of the meeting was to take up the business of formally organizing the church in America.

Ezra Squier Tipple in his book Francis Asbury: the Prophet of the Long Road wrote about Asbury this way: "He had been in America 13 years, he had imbibed the spirit of democracy, and he would not consent to the proposals of Mr. Wesley until they had been considered by the preachers in Conference."

Asbury would not submit to being a superintendent or being ordained unless the conference elected him to do so. This they did at the Christmas Conference of 1784.

Much has changed since those early times in Methodism but the goal of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the need for Holy Conferencing to make decisions has never changed. Then as now the work is difficult, the laborers are few but God is faithful and equips us to do the work that we are called to do. As we work together, talk together, and agree in Christian love, we can accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God.



*Peggy A. Johnson*

## Becky Parsons commissioned as missionary



Rebecca Parsons is commissioned as Church and Community Worker.

More than 1,000 people around the globe watched as 40 missionaries were commissioned for service to the world on October 13 at the annual meeting of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries.

Among the 40 new missionaries was Rebecca (Becky) Parsons, a 26 year-old young adult from the Eastern Pennsylvania. Becky, daughter of Drew and

Sandy Parsons, both clergy, just began her assignment as a Church and Community Worker at the Community Outreach Program in Roanoke, VA.

The Program is housed and supported by four United Methodist Churches in the Roanoke area. At Trinity UMC, the main center of the Program, 60 children come three nights per week for tutoring, worship, games, classes in fine arts, dance, painting, singing, sports, and puppetry. The Program also offers GED classes, and hopes to graduate at least one person this year. Over 150 children in the four churches are offered a place to be warm and safe in the evening, and are offered dinner and clothing from a clothing bank.

Becky said about her ministry, "My call to ministry came over my twenty-six years - calling, discipling, growing, learning, healing. It took me a long time to accept the call."

In the summer of 2008, while Becky was working at a Community of Shalom and attending the School of Christian Mission on the Eastern Shore, she met Brenda Connelly, Executive Secretary of Church and Community Ministry for the General Board of Global Ministries. "I realized the church did have a place for me - a place I was called to minister," Becky said. She spent the next year applying to be a Church and Community Worker, a missionary in the U.S.

At her commissioning, Becky was called forward and pledged "to take the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into all the world."

"The only reason I can be here is because of the connection," she declared. "Every United Methodist who tithes or give to collection plates supports me in this mission. We're all in this together, so we can be in mission around the world."

Becky asks for prayer for her work and that of all missionaries, and she is featured in the 2010 Prayer Calendar on August 15. She is hoping to come to Eastern Pennsylvania to talk about her mission in the near future. Churches may support Becky through the Advance #3021143 or by establishing a Covenant Relationship with her. She also welcomes donations of clothing for the Community Outreach Program.

Contact Becky: 540-342-3101 or becky12\_98@yahoo.com.

## Frankford Group Ministry Banquet

For the past thirty years Frankford Group Ministry has provided care and guidance to the Northeast neighborhoods of Philadelphia. Through it's ministry and family support services, many relationships were developed. It's time to celebrate! You are invited to join in the celebration because you have been a part of FGM's past and, hopefully, it's future.

The banquet is scheduled for Thursday, November 12th, at Rosewood Caterers, 8888 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA at 7:00 p.m. The keynote speaker will be the former Frankford Group Ministry Executive Director, Bishop John Schol, of the United Methodist Baltimore Washington Conference. Also in attendance will be Bishop Peggy A. Johnson of the United Methodist Philadelphia Episcopal Area. This is a semi-formal affair and the donation is \$35 per person.

The entrees to be served are a half spring chicken with mushroom gravy or broiled Atlantic scrod. Frankford Group Ministries needs your choice by November 1st.

For tickets or additional information contact Pastor Mary Elum at 215-288-5522 or 21-533-1836. We look forward to seeing you at the celebration.



# 'Little church with big heart' catches Yankees' pitch



Church members Bertha Burke, Frankie Hailey and Jennifer Charlmers help distribute unused food from a Yankees home game. A UMNS photo by Reed Galin.

BY LINDA BLOOM

It is a story as old as the Gospel parable of the rich man's banquet and as new as the \$1.5 billion sports palace where the New York Yankees are making another run at the World Series.

Through a partnership with a small United Methodist church and an antipoverty think tank, the latest incarnation of Yankee Stadium -- complete with 51 luxury suites, \$2,500 box seats, a members-only restaurant, martini bar and a concierge to assist with theater tickets or restaurant reservations -- also is catering to the hungry.

The uneaten hot dogs, hamburgers, sushi and other food from game days are being packaged up and sent for immediate distribution to neighborhood feeding centers, such as one six blocks away at 166th Street near Woodycrest Avenue.

There, in a quiet residential setting amid squat, brick apartment buildings and older homes of modest means, members of Woodycrest United Methodist Church are the servants posting fliers and making calls to bring all to the feast provided by the Yankees.

Neither will eradicate the poverty that exists in the southwest Bronx. Not the church, which can fit 180 worshippers in the pews of a sanctuary built in 1913. Nor the ball club, which often has more than 50,000 fans on game day.

But together, these two institutions -- the "little church with the big heart," as one member calls it, and an iconic American sports franchise -- are taking a small step to reach out to one another and narrow the gap between the economic haves and have-nots in their neighborhood.

In the glory days of October, as the Yankees pursue their 40th American League pennant and 27th World

Series championship, Woodycrest United Methodist has its own dreams: expanding its ministries with a community center, senior citizen housing, day care.

A half-dozen blocks away from the glare of the baseball playoffs, a light of hope is shining a little brighter in the Bronx.

Woodycrest's appearance in the Highbridge section of the Bronx -- named for a steel arch bridge that still spans the Harlem River -- preceded the Yankees by 14 years. Elizabeth Worrell Jones made a deathbed request of her husband, Joseph Harris Jones: Establish a Methodist church and Sunday school. He complied.

Nearly a decade after Woodycrest dedicated its church building, a crowd of 74,200 watched Babe Ruth hit a three-run homer against the Boston Red Sox on April 18, 1923, at what became commonly known as "the house that Ruth built."

For years, both the church and the stadium reflected the mostly Irish and Eastern European middle-class neighborhood around it. In the late 1950s, the first ethnic minority groups began to move into the area. Within a decade, Woodycrest was a predominantly black congregation.

In 2002, the Rev. Denise Pickett was assigned to Woodycrest by the United Methodist New York Annual (regional) Conference. The Yankees won four more championships. Pickett started a Bread Basket program to feed the poor.

If there was a temptation to join critics who see the new stadium as a temple of excess that displaced local parkland, Woodycrest leaders have chosen instead to be thankful for the team's outreach to the community.

On select days after home games, the congregation sets up tables outside the church to distribute the abundant leftovers from concession stands, usually right around the dinner hour.

The partnership is facilitated by Rock and Wrap it Up, an organization started in 1990 by Syd Mandelbaum, who asked rock bands to donate leftover prepared food from concerts to local charities. The concept has since spread to 31 sports teams, including eight in the New York metropolitan area.

The pastor has nothing but praise for its organizers and the generosity of the sports teams. "We've had many more pickups than were scheduled because we're so close (to Yankee Stadium)," she adds.

Being able to share this food has helped the church fulfill the commandment of Jesus to "feed my sheep," a scriptural message that Pickett takes "very seriously," according to Hailey.

## The Nation in Brief

### JESUS WINS BATTLE OF GERMS

Be not afraid. Jesus is more powerful than germs. That's the advice from The UMC's agency charged with providing leadership and resources to local churches in the face of concern over the H1N1 flu virus. "Do celebrate worship and the sacraments fully, and be not afraid," said Taylor Burton-Edwards, director of worship resources for the Board of Discipleship. UM churches across the country are in some cases arming themselves with bottles of sanitizers, doing hand waves instead of handshakes and celebrating Holy Communion with a little more caution than usual, but they aren't letting the virus shut their doors.

### INNER/OUTER BEAUTY

Beauty is in the eyes - and minds - of the beholder. That is the philosophy Kathy Patrick has followed in building a literacy ministry from the foundation of a combination hair salon and bookstore in this small northeast Texas community. The proprietor of Beauty and the Book also heads the Pulpwood Queens book club, which she says has grown to 240 chapters. "It's combining my two passions, hair and books," she says. "And it's ended up, I think, this is what God wanted me to do."

### COUPLE OFFERS ADOPTION GUIDE

When the Rev. Bart and Claudia Fletcher married in June 1996, it didn't take them long to start a family. The day after their honeymoon, the

couple submitted an application to become foster parents. By October, they had their first boy and, three months later, the second came along. Now, 13 years, six foster children, and 12 adopted children later, Fletcher, pastor of Belgrade Avenue UMC, and his wife have published a book promoting adoption. Their book is both a guide and a memoir. [www.outofmanyonefamily.com](http://www.outofmanyonefamily.com)

### LEADERSHIP IN RACIAL JUSTICE AWARD

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary has established the Bishop Edsel A. Ammons Award for Leadership in Racial Justice and Understanding. The award was announced during a service Oct. 13 celebrating the 39th year of the seminary's Center for the Church and the Black Experience. It will be presented each

spring to an individual who has distinguished herself or himself as a leader of racial justice and understanding. Seminary President Philip A. Amerson said Ammons "stands among the most distinguished alumni of Garrett-Evangelical. ... (he) has acted with tireless energy and distinction in seeking to do that which is (from Philippians 4:8) 'true, honorable, just, pure, commendable and pleasing to God.'"

### BISHOP EUGENE M. FRANK, SOCIAL ACTIVIST, DIES AT 101

Bishop Eugene M. Frank, the first president of the Council of Bishops of The UMC, died Oct. 13 at Kingswood Manor in Kansas City. At 101, Frank was the oldest UM bishop. When he was elected in 1956, he was the youngest bishop in the Methodist Episcopal

Church. A passion for racial equality in the church and beyond marked his ministry. During his 16-year tenure as bishop of the Missouri Area, he oversaw the merger of the African-American Southwest Missouri Conference with the two predominantly white annual (regional) conferences in the state.

### DEC. 15 DEADLINE FOR ETHNIC YOUNG ADULT INTERNSHIPS

The deadline to apply for a 2010 Ethnic Young Adult Summer Internship is Dec. 15. The program is for people ages 18-22 with an interest in exploring issues of public policy, social justice advocacy and social change. Interns will work in social justice placements in the U.S. capital from May 30 to July 31. More information: contact Rev. Neal Christie, [nchristie@umc-gbcs.org](mailto:nchristie@umc-gbcs.org).

# 'Imagine something more' to end malaria, bishop says

BY LINDA BLOOM

United Methodist Bishop Thomas Bickerton keeps a \$10 bill in his pocket so he can demonstrate how little money it takes to protect an African household from malaria.

But the roving ambassador for the denomination's involvement in the Nothing But Nets project, a joint effort with the United Nations Foundations and other groups, has a much larger goal than the millions of bed nets that have been sent to Africa.

Bickerton, who is chairperson of the Global Health Initiative for the UM Council of Bishops, seeks nothing less than the elimination of malaria – a treatable and preventable disease that still claims a life every 30 seconds – by 2015.

The reality, he told directors of the UM Committee on Relief during their Oct. 13 meeting, is that it will take a far greater effort than Nothing But Nets to achieve that goal.

Although UMCOR has been among the UM partners combating malaria, "we have to imagine something more," the bishop explained. "We have to imagine collaboration, cooperation and partnership on a scale we have not thought of before."

A new campaign, Imagine No Malaria, has been formed, with a public launch set for the next World Malaria Day – April 25, 2010.

## \$75 MILLION FUNDRAISING GOAL

The church's Global Health Initiative has a \$75 million fundraising goal approved by the 2008 General Conference. Imagine No Malaria will expand grassroots programs like Nothing But Nets and develop more comprehensive efforts to promote prevention and education activities, strengthen health delivery systems and train health care workers to more effectively treat the disease.

The United Methodist Church was the first faith-based partner in Imagine No Malaria, but the Lutherans have joined the cause. The Lutheran Malaria Initiative, also with a \$75 million goal, is a shared effort among the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Lutheran World Relief.

Bickerton, who leads the Pittsburgh episcopal area, admits that the 2015 deadline – a date set to halt deaths from malaria in one of the millennium goals of the United Nations – "has been laughed at."

But in the midst of such doubts, "the power of God is at work. We have 160 years of success in this denomination when it comes to the mission of the



Kaltouma Zakaria Moussa relaxes beneath a new mosquito net provided by the Nothing But Nets campaign at her home in a camp near Goz Beida, Chad, where the Mentor Initiative is fighting malaria. UMNS file photos by Mike DuBose.

church."

The United Methodist Church was approached to be a partner in this endeavor because of the health delivery system it already has in Africa, an aging but intact infrastructure that "has put us in place to be a player on the world scene," he said.

In fact, Bickerton added, a distinctly Methodist system – the connectional system that binds its churches together around the world – is serving as a model for the campaign.

"Malaria is being eliminated through connectionalism," he declared. "What the world is discovering is that we need each other to solve big problems."

The church, for example, is both a donor to and recipient of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, has received a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and is working with International Federation of the Red Cross on distributing mosquito nets in Sierra Leone.

## 'UNITING OF FAITH AND WORK'

UM Communications is leading the denomination's effort to meet the \$75 million goal by the end of 2012. "This effort is really a uniting of faith and work," said the Rev. Gary Henderson, staff executive.

"We go to churches and we ask them to set a goal – and then make it fun," explained Kevin Armshaw, a fundraising consultant. One of the models is the "Impact 100 Society," where individuals pledge gifts of \$1,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Other church agencies are playing a role in the Global Health Initiative. The Board of Global Ministries is focusing on the delivery of health care-focused services to Africa through missionary work and UMCOR.

The Board of Church and Society is advocating for better education about diseases of poverty plaguing Africa and asking lawmakers to adopt policies to address the diseases.

Shannon Trilli, an executive with UMCOR Health, noted that a significant portion of the \$75 million goal will be invested back into UM hospitals and health systems in Africa. Church leaders and local health boards "will tell us what they need, in their communities, to fight malaria."

Bickerton believes the goal is attainable. "When people sense a need in The United Methodist Church, they have an overwhelming ability to respond," he said.

BLOOM IS A UMNS NEWS WRITER based in New York.

## The World in Brief

### CONGO CHURCH OFFERS SPOUSES' SCHOOLS ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Spouses' schools offered in the Democratic Republic of Congo should be a role model for U.S. congregations, Bishop James Swanson of the Holston Annual (regional) Conference told UM Board of Higher Education and Ministry directors. The schools, offering theological education to pastors' spouses, were discussed during the board's Oct. 8-10 meeting. Bishop David Yemba, resident bishop of the Central Congo Area, said that church members in his area seemed to think the pastor's spouse had as much theological education as the pastor. "Spouses are called on to lead Bible stud-

ies and do all kind of things. Because of that, we created a school for spouses," Yemba said.

### SEMINARIES COOPERATE ON RUSSIAN METHODIST DIGITAL ARCHIVE

A digital archive of Russian Methodist history is being created through a joint project of the Boston University School of Theology and the Russia UM Theological Seminary in Moscow. The project was announced during a recent international academic conference on "Breaks and Links: Past, Present and Future of Russian Methodism" sponsored by the Russian seminary, The UMC in Eurasia, and the UM Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The first item for the archive is a photo album in the form of an annual missions report by the Russian Methodist Pastor

Konstantin Egoroff, who was ordained by Bishop Ainsworth of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for mission work in Kharbin in 1926.

### WCC, ASIAN CHRISTIANS URGE LIFTING SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA

The leaders of the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia are urging the international community to lift economic sanctions against North Korea. The Rev. Samuel Kobia, a Methodist from Kenya and the WCC's top executive, led a delegation to North Korea Oct. 17-20, accompanied by Prawate Khid-arn, leader of the Christian Conference of Asia. U.N. sanctions against North Korea were intensified in June after the country conducted an underground nuclear test in violation of international treaties.

The two church leaders stated their positions to Ecumenical News International after attending a church-backed meeting in Hong Kong Oct. 21 on the peaceful reunification of North and South Korea.

### SKYPE BRINGS GLOBAL MISSIONARIES CLOSE TO HOME

In the age of Skype, the church can instantly connect with far-flung missionaries. On Oct. 13, directors of the UM Board of Global Ministries, meeting in Connecticut, used the technology to converse with a Brazilian missionary stationed in Mozambique. Skype allows real-time video calls over the Internet. The visual connection was with Claudia Maia, a community worker in the UM public health mission in Chicupe. Despite some small time-lapse problems and a six-hour time difference, the

strong audio connection put her squarely in the room with the directors.

### TSUNAMI HITS HOMES OF SAMOANS STUDYING IN TENNESSEE

Ben Aigamaua was on the phone with his sister in American Samoa when the second wave of the tsunami hit their home in Leone Village Sept. 29. "She answered the phone from upstairs at our house," said the defensive lineman at UM-related Lambuth University. "She was safe, but the house, while still standing, was completely ruined." Asosaogalu "Sunday" Meaole, Ben's childhood friend and a linebacker for the Lambuth Eagles, learned his family's house in Amanave Village was swept away. Meaole said he thought he should go home to help. "But my dad told me not to worry."

## Get your 2009 Journal!

This year, we are improving the way you can access the 2009 Annual Conference Journal.

The 2009 Journal posted on our website - Free of Charge.

The procedure for accessing the Journal from the website follows:

1. Log onto the EPA Conference website: [www.epaumc.org](http://www.epaumc.org)
2. On the homepage in the right sidebar, under "Areas of Interest", click on 2009 Journal
3. Username: EPAUMC
4. Password: Journal
5. Click on digital journal and the download will begin
6. The Journal is available as a PDF file for you to print

If you would like to receive a hard copy of the 2009 Journal for \$25 each, please return the completed form below, along with your payment, by November 20, 2009 to:

Mrs. Yadeline Ortiz  
PO Box 820

Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820

This year, we will not be producing a CD version of the Journal

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## Connecting church to healthy body, soul, and spirit



Children, youth, and adults experience healthy living in this new ministry at Solid Rock UMC.

**S**olid Rock United Methodist Church in Philadelphia is reaching out to its community by offering Connecting Body, Soul, and Spirit, a health and fitness program in partnership with the Community Enrichment Fitness Network (CEFN). Margret Powell, Solid Rock's pas-

tor said, "We opened our doors to this Fitness Program for children, after the adults participated and graduated - pastor included - this past spring."

"CEFN is offering healthy eating and living activities for parents and their overweight children between

the ages of 8 and 12 years old," Rev. Powell said. "We hope to encourage families to become involved, and realize the dangers of childhood obesity before it's too late!"

Topics discussed in the eight-week sessions include how to make smart food choices, why dieting is not working for me, how to read food labels, and how to overcome sugar addictions.

Fitness includes Gospel Line Dancing and Chair Exercise sessions. Kisha White, CEFN's Gospel line dance instructor said, "I am ecstatic about bringing the health and fitness program to a wider audience. We always encourage our participants to remember that it is not about perfection, but participation."

CEFN has also started shooting the TV pilot program of their health and fitness series, Focus on Fitness, which be offered on Comcast's Public Access TV Channel 66 and Channel 21 in Radnor, PA, and hosted by Linda Taylor, holistic wellness food consultant, and Dr. Michael D. Brown, director of Fit 4 Life research study at Temple University.

For more information, contact Rev. Margret Powell, [zoelifenow@msn.com](mailto:zoelifenow@msn.com).

## Rethink Church: Opening the door to new possibilities



BY ERIC YEAKEL

**A**lthough each survey on church growth/decline seems to produce different results, there is no arguing that mainline protestant denominations have seen serious decline in membership since its peak in the mid 1960's. If our mission as United Methodists is to "Make Disciples for the Transformation of the World" then we cannot ignore this shift in culture.

What has been successful in making disciples in the twentieth century seems to no longer be as fruitful. So where do we go from here? The United Methodist Church believes that the starting point for change is to Rethink Church.

Many congregations in the twenty-first century see the church as a consumer church, where people go to fill their need for religious goods and services. This produces a feeling of "I go to Church."

What if church started to become missional again? A missional church is one where a body of people sent on mission gather in community for worship, encouragement and teaching from the Word. This produces a feeling of "I am the church."

Asbury United Methodist Church in Allentown, PA has made it a priority to rethink church by going beyond

the walls of the church to build relationships and make disciples. A first step in the "rethinking" process was to create an alternative worship service which reaches individuals who have never had a church home or have abandoned the church: the Open Door worship service. The new service started in September, and is now held every Sunday morning at 10:45 in the church's multi-purpose facility, the Wesley Center.

The service has a casual coffee house atmosphere and worshippers begin with a gathering for some light refreshments. The worship area is mainly composed of round tables where the congregation can take their refreshments and sit down. There is also a children's area directly in the center of the worship area which has coloring and other activities for children. The dress code is casual in order to help people feel more comfortable during worship.

The Open Door service helps people experience God in many ways. They hear the Word being taught by the pastors and sung by the band. The band mainly plays alternative Christian rock and is led by a new worship leader, Adam Tavolaro. Technology is also important, and helps people experience God through various videos and movie clips. A weekly sharing of the Lord's Supper and a private prayer station lend to the atmosphere of experiencing God's grace.

Asbury is heeding the Great Commission by rethinking church and focusing on being a missional church. This new gathering addresses many of the stumbling blocks people give for not coming to church. But, it is now up to our people, who are the church, to go out into the community and invite an unchurched friend, neighbor, or coworker to the gathering.

Learn more about welcoming and connecting at the Rethink Church training on Saturday, November 14. (See page 8 for more information.)

ERIC YEAKEL IS ASSOCIATE PASTOR of Asbury United Methodist Church in Allentown, PA.

## Women in mission



Anna Bickhart, Hattie Hamilton and Harriett Jane Olson

An opportunity to hear featured speaker, Harriett Jane Olson, drew a crowd of more than 200 Eastern Pennsylvania United Methodist Women (UMW) to the Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 24 at Hope UMC in Ephrata.

Ms. Olson is deputy general secretary of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, the national administrative and policymaking arm of United Methodist Women. This 800,000-member organization gives more than \$20 million per year for global mission, especially related to women and children.

Ms. Olson spoke on the call to mission and how the mission is God's. "Jesus began the mission; we carry it on: the work of teaching, challenging authority, the work of healing." She added, "You can see the Gospel in the missions United Methodist Women support." She called the present time "an amazing time of opportunity," adding, "It is powerful for us to speak as women of faith - to talk about



Gladys Hubbard welcomes Ms. Olson.

how we use tax dollars - as never before."

"United Methodist Women is a way to be a disciple," Ms. Olson explained, "to hear more profoundly, live more faithfully."

A new slate of conference UMW officers was elected for 2010: Anna Bickhart, president; Gladys Hubbard, vice-president; Kym Oglesby, secretary; and Janet Evans, treasurer. Ms. Olson participated in the installation of officers.

Hattie Hamilton presented Ms. Olson with historical documents and items of Josephine Beckwith for the Women's Division archives. Beckwith was the first African American to be commissioned a home missionary by the Board of Global Missions. Miss Hamilton was the first African American woman to serve as Eastern Pennsylvania Conference UMW president.

For more information on EPA Conference UMW, go to [www.gbgm-umc.org/umw-epac](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/umw-epac).

## Service overcomes

Continued from page 1

serve Richard Allen and Absalom Jones communion.

At the end of worship, Rev. Day quipped, "Rev. Tyler just told me that us UMCs have just been made AMEs since worship has lasted more than two hours!"

"To me it was a historic moment in the life of Old St. George's and for the members of Mother Bethel and for the Methodist church in the Philadelphia area," said Dr. Mary White, Conference Lay Leader for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. "The word and table experience was a day of creativity and holy imagination, giving us all new possibilities to sense God's life-giving presence."

As superintendent for the Central District, Dr. Gary George classified the event as "one of the greatest historical events of Methodist history. After 240 years of hate, hurt, and disgrace, for the two congregations to come together in such a peaceful, loving, and celebratory way was amazing to see."

Following the service, worshippers were invited to refreshments and to tour St. George's museum. This was of special interest to retired United Methodist Bishop Forrest Stith, president of the African American Methodist Heritage Center located at Drew University. Bishop Stith said, "Old St. George's will never be the same again. They were the greatest hosts one could ever imagine.

The persons who were visitors from Mother Bethel and the AME churches in Washington, D.C. and New York all felt extremely welcome and well received." Bishop Stith called this "an impacting event that brought back the children of John Wesley to affirm Wesleyan spirit and lineage." As part of his museum tour, he especially enjoyed seeing portraits of "Black Harry" Hoosier, Richard Allen, and Absalom Jones.

As a tour guide in St. George's museum, Vicki Lock also serves as the church's lay leader, Parish Relations chair, and trustee. She had participated in a Reconciliation Service held at St. George's with Mother Bethel in 2001. Reflecting on this event's place in history, she said, "Rev. Tyler's sermon was great - that we're all one in God and the rest doesn't really matter - that is the ultimate message."



## Animal Blessings: A Tool for Church Planting



Narberth residents and their pets line up to receive a blessing.

On any morning you can see people happily walking or jogging with their dogs in the quaint borough of Narberth. However, on the morning of Saturday, October 3, they were coming to meet up with neighbors and pet owners on the front lawn of Narberth UMC for an animal blessing.

The new church start in Narberth, led by its pastor, Lydia Muñoz, kicked off its outreach to the surrounding community with the Animal Blessing. People lined up both to receive a special blessing for their beloved pets and to renew their commitment to care for God's creation. Rev. Muñoz said, "Members from Narberth UMC were excited about greeting new people, serving them refreshments,

taking pictures of them and their special friends, and genuinely creating a culture of hospitality and family."

She added, "As we entered into a special time of worship, we began to sing together. This is my Father's World and as if by divine intervention, the animals also begin to

share in the music with a cacophony of barks, meows, and chirps. At that very moment, I knew that I was about to receive a greater blessing than the one I was preparing so hard to give. God showed up, and transformed what for others would have been perceived as chaos into a way to touch the hearts and lives of people in our community."

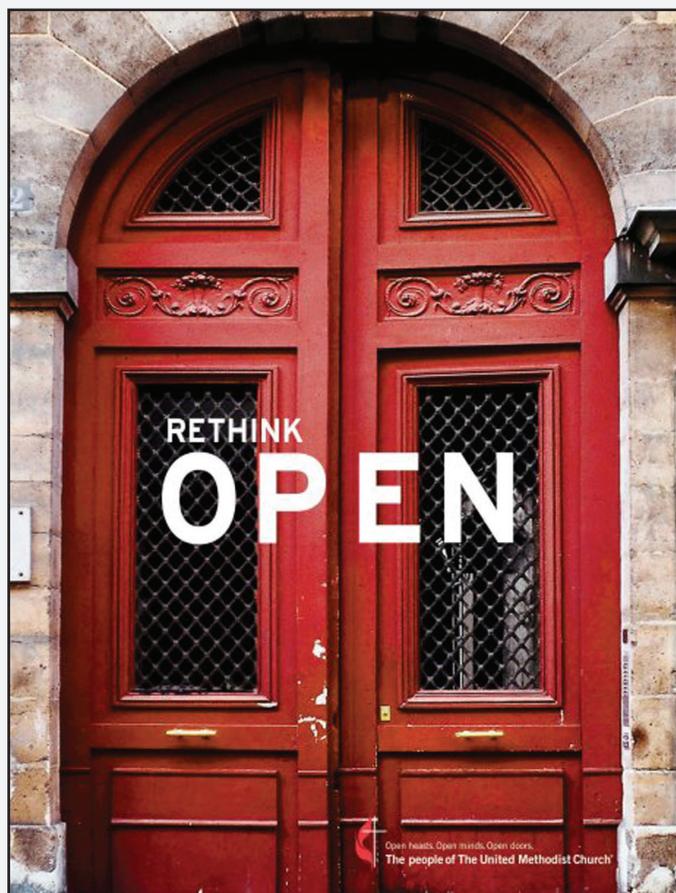
Rev. Muñoz met persons who had not been to any worship in a long while, "people who had not heard or received a faithful loving witness from a Christian community, let alone a Methodist one, become part of what God was doing." She added, "People were crying, laughing, singing and being truly blessed. You need to

know that this is significant, because this was my first time ever being part of an animal blessing let alone putting one together. I really had no idea how the community would react. However, I knew that people in this community really love their pets and value the sanctity of all life. Armed with that knowledge, a small committed crew and a whole lot of faith, we put our faith in motion."



A beloved guinea pig is blessed to be a blessing.

## Rethink Church Training



**November 14, 2009**

*Open hearts, open minds, open doors.  
What if open were a verb?  
What if church were something we did 24/7?*

Register now for Rethink Church Welcoming Training, presented by United Methodist Communications and sponsored by the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

National trainers will facilitate the training event:

- Terry Keeling, lay member of Richfield United Methodist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Rev. Danette H. Howell, pastor of Weimar Church in Weimar, Texas, and
- Rev. Larry Homitsky, pastor to a cluster of United Methodist churches, rebuilding an urban ministry presence in Pittsburgh, PA (previously Director of Connectional Ministries of the Western PA Conference)

Training will be held at West Chester UMC, West Chester, PA, on Saturday, November 14, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost is \$40 per church team. Register now: <https://www.123signup.com/event?id=jqmph>. **Deadline Nov. 7.**

For more information, contact Suzy Keenan, Director of Communications, [communications@epaumc.org](mailto:communications@epaumc.org) or 800-828-9093, ext. 227.

*Powered by the Holy Spirit, 'Rethink Church' serves as a catalyst that moves the denomination, and those we hope to reach, into dialogue -- and ultimately, into transformative, collaborative action.*

# RETHINK CHURCH



## Bishop's World AIDS Day Apart for Clergy

**Tuesday, December 1, 2009, 8:45 a.m.**  
**Aldersgate UMC, Wilmington DE**

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Cherian Thomas**  
Executive Secretary, Health and Relief for the  
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)



Dr. Thomas draws from his medical experience to direct the domestic and international programs of Health and Welfare. His work includes coordinating the hospital revitalization program which strengthens the outreach of United Methodist Hospitals in Africa and Asia; HIV/AIDS ministries in the US and abroad; congregational health ministries; and community-based primary health care programs, among others.

## Bishop's Midwinter Retreat

for clergy and spouses

Theme: "Lord have mercy!  
Loving our enemies and  
practicing forgiveness,  
even in church."

**January 12-14, 2010**

Keynote Speakers from  
Duke Divinity School:  
Rev. Dr. L. Gregory Jones, Dean and  
Rev. Susan Pendleton Jones, Director  
of Field Education

Clarion Fontainebleau Hotel  
10100 Coastal Highway  
Ocean City, MD 21842

Register online: [www.epaumc.org](http://www.epaumc.org)  
For more information contact: Mrs. Amy Botti  
1-800-828-9093, ext. 233 or email at [amy.botti@epaumc.org](mailto:amy.botti@epaumc.org)