

2010 Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference Summary

*By Suzy Keenan**

With a theme of "Leading Beyond the Walls," the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference met May 20-22, 2010 at the Lancaster County Convention Center in Lancaster, PA.

Nearly 1,000 clergy and lay delegates attended, representing the conference's 463 churches. The morning of Thursday, May 20 began with Clergy and Laity Sessions. The Laity began with the election of Dr. Mary White to a second four-year term as Conference Lay Leader. Members from the Southeast District led worship, and district lay leaders led presentations on the United Methodist Four Areas of Focus.

Opening Worship began with a procession and music by the praise team of West Lawn United Methodist Church. Bishop Peggy Johnson welcomed Bishop B. Penrose Hoover, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna area of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bishop Johnson preached, "When we re-member Jesus we think about all of the parts of the body. All the world is called into union with Christ through this act of death. Yet all of the parts of the body are not equally welcome. Some parts are not welcome at all. We struggle with our re-remembering because to remember means to accept as part of us, all of us." She urged everyone to "think about who is not a member, and who you are uncomfortable being around," while remarking that while pastor of an all-Deaf church that the hardest persons for the Deaf to accept were the people with HIV/AIDS. Bishop Johnson implored all to proclaim God's love, to share material blessings, to self examine for sin, and to remember that "God forgives as we forgive." She invited all to forgive and to come to the communion table.

The Rev. Adam Hamilton, Senior Pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, was the Annual Conference keynote speaker. His presentations focused on Effective Church Leadership, Ideas for Preaching and Worship, and Strategies for Reaching the Unchurched. In his second session, on preaching, Hamilton spoke on the results of a study in which many people indicated that they do not find fulfillment during a worship service, and did not expect to. He invited preachers to think about worship as a "Soul Food Cafe."

Deceased bishops, clergy, and spouses were remembered in a Memorial Service on the afternoon of Friday, May 21. Arthur F. Kulah, bishop of the Nigeria Area of The United Methodist Church, offered words of witness to the lives and service in remembrance of the deceased. Family members, as well as superintendents and lay members, lit candles for each remembered person as the names were read, while the bell from Mother African Zoar UMC was rung in remembrance.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church honored the service of nineteen retiring pastors – representing a total of 540 years of ministry - at the **Retiree Service** on the evening of Friday, May 21. The service began as Bishop Peggy Johnson invited those to be ordained and commissioned for ministerial orders to come forward and asked them the Historic Questions. Bishop Johnson welcomed the retiring pastors. As a symbolic transfer of the mantle of ministry from the retirees to the new ordinands, Rev. Richard Conner "yoked" Rev. Wendy Orzolek with a red stole. The service concluded as retiring pastors anointed and prayed with the new ordinands. The nineteen retiring pastors include these persons: Richard H. Andrews, Birdsboro: Focht Memorial, 22 years; Richard W. Conner, Manheim: Salem UMC, 43 years; Nancy R. Dougherty, Wyomissing: Calvary UMC, 31 years; Jan S. Edwards, 27 years; David Felker, Effort UMC, 18 years; Clyde S. Flaherty, Elam UMC, 24 years; Charlene L. Gaspar, 18 years; Daniel G. Herner, Lebanon: Covenant UMC, 43 years; Kent E. Kroehler, Lancaster: First UMC, 42 years; Bruce Lefever, Manheim Township: Faith UMC, 9 years; Philip Lloyd-Sidle, 27 years; Theodore E. McCabe, The Bridge UMC, 37 years; Lee F. Michaels, 33 years; Martin S. Morgan, 33 years; Dr. Gwinyai Muzorewa, New London UMC, 27 years; J. Wayne Pratt, Wooddale and Paradise Valley: Keokee Chapel, 19 years; Steven W. Rodgers, 27 years; Rodney H. Shearer, Lebanon: Kochenderfers UMC, 41 years; Carole A. Wood, Stroudsburg: Faith, 19 years.

On both Friday and Saturday, there were more than 1,000 registrations for lunchtime workshops on a variety of topics from leadership, evangelism, Safe Sanctuaries, and social justice issues, to developing healthy church finances and including young people.

Led by Rev. Lillian Smith, Director of Connectional Ministries, the annual conference **Celebration of Ministries** took an in-depth look at the conference connection, from camping, urban ministry, new church starts, and Healing the Wounds of Racism, to communications updates on the new conference website and database, and congregational transformation. A new video from the General Board of Church and Society on the Social Creed was shown. Rev. Smith recognized Ben Botti, retiring coordinator of EPA Volunteers in Mission. Four conference congregations received an UMCOR certificate recognizing their refugee resettlement ministry: Chiques, Lancaster: First, Lohr's Memorial, and Grandview. Six Lay persons and four Pastor-Mentors who had completed Modules 1 and 2 of Lay Missioner training were awarded their certificates. Rachel Barnett, representing the Advance for Christ, spoke on the work and accomplishments of this second-mile giving program of the General Board of Global Ministries. Columbia United Methodist Church received the Kim Jefferson Award for Urban Ministry for their ecumenical work with impoverished persons in the community.

Ordination was the final event of the 2010 Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference, its 224th annual session. Ten persons were ordained with Elders Orders, and the Orders of another were recognized. One persons was commissioned for Deacons Orders and seven were commissioned for Elders Orders. Bishop Peggy Johnson was assisted in the ordination by two bishops: Arthur F. Kulah of the Nigeria Annual Conference and John R. Schol of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference welcomed back home Bishop Schol, who preached for the service.

Ordained as Elders in Full Connection: Brian George Albert, Elaine Miller Bortman, Leonard William Calhoun, Thomas Duane Ebersole, Robert L. Hachtman, Jr., Richard L. Hostetter, Susan Joy Ketterer, John Lewis, Sr., Wendy Sue Orzolek, Navin Satyavrata. **Recognition of Full Membership with Orders as Elder:** Quentin Wallace.

Commissioned to perform the ministry of the Deacon: Benjamin Dale Caldwell. **Commissioned to perform the ministry of the Elder:** Victoria Lynne Allen, Robert Amundsen, Amy Elizabeth Banka, Hannah Adair Bonner, Johnson Dodla, Candy LaBar, Michael S. Remel.

Concurrent with Annual Conference, a youth rally called **The Big Event** drew a diverse crowd of youth from across the conference to First UMC in Lancaster. Top on the bill was preaching by Pastor Shawn McBride and music by Christian rock group, Saline.

The three **offerings** at Annual Conference raised funds for these important ministries: Hope for the Children of Africa \$5,679.18; Scholarships for Undergraduate and Seminary Students \$4,021.36; and the Central Conference Pension Initiative \$3,620.50.

All three of Rev. Hamilton's presentations - as well as the entire annual conference - were videostreamed online, watched by over 900 persons, therefore including many persons who were unable to attend. Interpretation in American Sign Language, assistive listening devices, and on-screen transcription of the spoken word were offered for Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. A big-screen reader made written materials available to persons with visual disabilities. For the first time, up-to-the-minute news was posted throughout the conference on both Facebook and Twitter (#epaumc).

In addition, the Eastern Pennsylvania Renewal Fellowship led a prayer walk around the conference rooms prior to Annual Conference. The Order of St. Luke held morning communion and the Prayer Room, which was open throughout the day. The Methodist Federation for Social Action held a dinner at Paul's United Methodist Church with a presentation from Peter Pedemonti on The New Sanctuary Movement and immigration issues. Rev. Clair Wagner led costumed tours of the city of Lancaster on

Friday afternoon. In addition to a health fair, the Office of Pensions and Health Benefits offered consultations with Josie Martinez, Conference Liaison from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Camping was one of the most popular exhibits in the Vendor area, featuring the making of "smores" over a small flame.

In business:

Deborah Denzel, student ambassador, thanked the Annual Conference for its support of the Black College Fund, one of the denomination's seven apportioned funds. The Rev. Dr. Christopher Kurien presented the District Superintendents' Report, giving thanks for Bishop Johnson and conference leadership, and noting the superintendents' role in leadership development and strengthening the ministry of conference churches. In her Laity Address, Dr. Mary White, Conference Lay Leader, asked if we believed that we are a denomination in decline or, "do we believe that God is alive, active and at work in our world? Do we expect God to do great things among us?"

Resolutions:

Resolution #2010-14: Resolution Relating to Salary/Benefits Recommendations for 2011 – voluntarily removed from the Consent Calendar.

Consent Calendar: Approved (Consent Calendar included 2010 Resolutions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12)

Resolution #2010 – 1: Resolution to designate Bensalem United Methodist Church as a Historic Site of the United Methodist Church

Resolution #2010 – 2: Resolution to designate Bethel Hill UMC as a Historic Site

Resolution #2010 – 3: Resolution to designate St James/Solid Rock UMC, Philadelphia as a Historic Site

Resolution #2010 – 4: Resolution Encouraging the Support and Use of the Eastern PA Conference Camp and Retreat Centers

Resolution #2010 – 6: Resolution Related to Transformation

Resolution #2010 – 7 Resolution Relating to Conference Advance Specials for the Year July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

Resolution #2010 – 9: Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons

Resolution #2010 – 10: Pertaining to the Adoption Agreement to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) for the Year 2011

Resolution #2010 – 11: Resolution pertaining to Gambling as a Moral Issue, Urging repeal of PA Gambling Laws: Abstaining from Gambling

Resolution #2010 – 12: Resolution urging removal of housing barriers for people with disabilities and advocating non-toxic, safe, affordable, accessible housing

Resolution #2010 – 5: Relating to Amendment of the Policy: Safe Sanctuaries, Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church – Motion to refer and bring back to the Annual Conference was approved

Resolution #2010 – 8: on the Updating of the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws of the Eastern PA Conference Education Society of the United Methodist Church – resolution approved

Resolution #2010 – 13: Pertaining to the Establishment of a Consumer Driven Health Care Plan for the Year 2011 –resolution approved. The proposed plan will be brought to the Fall Session, November 13.

Resolution #2010 – 14: Relating to the Salary/Benefits Recommendations for 2011 – resolution approved

Resolution #2010 – 15: Concerning the United Methodist Foundation - resolution approved

Resolution #2010 – 16: Relating to the Eastern PA Conference Safe Sanctuaries - resolution not approved

New Resolution presented on the floor of Annual Conference: A Call to Action for Immigration Reform - A motion to suspend the Rules of Order (required in order to vote on the resolution) was approved on the third vote (requiring a two-thirds approval in favor of suspension of the Rules) and the resolution was approved. Bishop Peggy Johnson commended the "therefore" section of the resolution, and recommended that churches show hospitality to immigrants.

Nominations Report: The full report is posted online: <http://www.epaumc.org/news/annualconference>. Some of the 2014 dates may be incorrect due to people filling in for positions, those approved for Committee on Investigation will be alternates and one of the current alternates will fill the open position created by a resignation.

The recommendations from the Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee to the 2010 Session of the Eastern PA Annual Conference on the 2008 and 2009 Payments to World Service Fund were approved.

The Fall Session of Annual Conference will be held on Saturday, November 13, 2010, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, Hempfield United Methodist Church , 3050 Marietta Ave., Lancaster, PA 17601. This session will include the following business: to look at the Rethink Conference initiative including EPA Conference program ministry and staffing, to pass a 2011 Budget for our Connectional Ministry, and to approve the final health care design and costing structure. Who should attend: clergy and lay members of annual conference.

Annual Conference 2011 will be held May 19-21, 2011 at the Philadelphia Expo Center, Oaks, PA.

Download photos onto your computer from the Annual Conference photo galleries: <http://picasaweb.google.com/EPAConference>. Photos by: Jim Mundell, Suzy Keenan, John Shannon (Ordination), and Sherry Lantz (Celebration of Ministries).

2010 Annual Conference Video Gallery - videos of the entire Annual Conference can be accessed free of charge through the online video gallery: www.epaumc.org/news/videogallery.

Purchase DVDs of Annual Conference (price includes shipping)

Opening Worship DVD	\$12
Memorial Service DVD	\$12

Retiree Service DVD	\$12
Service of Ordination DVD	\$12
Leading Beyond the Walls by Rev. Adam Hamilton (set of 3 DVDs)	\$25

To order using a check: send check made payable to EPA Conference, along with your name, address, phone, and email address, and indicating the quantity of each DVD you are purchasing to: Video Order/Communications, EPA Conference, P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820.

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