



To Staten Island or Bus. . .

NEWSPIRIT EXCLUSIVE REPORT

The idea began in tragedy: A young New York woman discovered her mother died in a freezing bedroom after Hurricane Sandy had cut off all power. Former New York native, and current Lancaster resident Alex Cuebas, knew the family through his niece.

"That hit me hard," said Cuebas, "I know that place. My family is there and New York is in my veins. I had to do something and do it quick." Cuebas organized

fellow members of Covenant United Methodist Church in Lancaster to solicit emergency supply donations. He drove them out in a rented U-Haul trailer, and delivered them on November 5 - after worship - to his contact in Staten Island. On Monday he answered his phone: Could they return with more supplies?

He couldn't say no.

Cuebas connected with his friend Chris Eden, pastor at Boehms United Methodist Church in Willow Street. After a few phone calls to church leaders a partnership

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Sharing Christmas

"Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."

Luke 2:10

BY REV. DR. CHRISTOPHER JACOB KURIEN

Christmas is truly a time of joy celebrating the birth of Christ by sharing gifts with family and friends, and remembering those in need.

All over the world people celebrate the good news of Christmas with great joy. From my childhood days I remember everyone from children to older adults joining together to create a choir for the Carol Service. We'd start early in the year to rehearse familiar and new carols. And then on the night of the Carol Service we'd walk through neighborhoods decorated with strands of hanging stars, visiting, singing, and accepting donations to give to the needy. All this was done with great joy, because it was done with the intent of sharing Christ with the community.

Sharing Christ in the way that God shared his Son Jesus with us is the true meaning of Christmas. When God sent his Son to be born

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Volunteers help hurricane victims

BY DEBRA DEPRINZIO



Bob Philby helps clean up downed branches as a volunteer with an Early Response Team in Montgomery County.

Hurricane Sandy hit on Monday, October 29, 2012, and since that time, the Disaster Response Ministry of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church has been actively responding with needed assistance throughout our region.

Townships have been assessing the damages and reporting to their respective counties. County Emergency Management Agencies are coordinating with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SEPA VOAD). The conference Disaster Response team is a part of this VOAD.

Before our Disaster Response ministry can help with clean up or repair, insurance companies must first determine

their coverage for each homeowner that has had damages. For some homeowners, insurance monies will never come. Many families will face the struggles of trying to return to some sense of normalcy with little or no support.

These needs are referred to as "unmet needs." This is where our Disaster Response ministry comes in, and where the faith-based organizations come together to try to meet the needs. Along the way, residents' names are gathered and these needs are divided up among the various organizations active in the local SEPA VOAD.

Over these past few weeks, the Conference Emergency Response Team, coordinated by Bob Simcox, has responded to help families in Chester and Montgomery Counties. We still wait for assess-

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December

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24 -
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2

Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Office closed.

January 2013

TUESDAY, JANUARY 8 -
THURSDAY, JANUARY 10

2013 Bishop's Midwinter Retreat:

Holiday Inn Oceanfront, 6600 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD 21842. Keynote Speaker: Rev. Jim Walker of Hot Metal Bridge. More info on back cover.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10

Deadline to apply for Peace with Justice grant: Funding targets ministries that witness 'to God's demands for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world.' Peace with Justice Grant form available by contacting Marvlyn Scott, (202) 488-5643.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19

Call to Ministry Retreat for Youth

"Yes": 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Gretna Glen Camp and Retreat Center. For young people in middle school or high school who may be considering a call to ministry. More info: Rev. Matthew Heckman, 717-679-8346 or coastermatt@kochenderfer.org.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19

Rally for Leaders - United Methodist

Men's event: 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Albright College, Reading, PA. More information: Ross Brightwell, 215/643-1269 or rossbrightwell@verizon.net.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20

Human Relations Day

SATURDAY, JANUARY 26

Tools for Ministry: essential training for church leaders on each district. Contact your district office.

February

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Lenten Day Apart for Clergy: Bishop Ernest Lyght will speak on "The Practice of Prayer on the Lenten Journey," at St. Matthews UMC, 600 Walker Road, Wayne, PA.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Spark Retreat for Youth: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Camp Innabah, 712 Pughtown Road, Spring City, PA.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28 -
FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Order of Deacon Retreat: St. Francis Center for Renewal, Bethlehem, PA. Deacons, Provisional Deacons, Deacon Candidates and those discerning a call - come gather together for a time of spiritual renewal and fellowship. Contact: Susan Worrell, (484) 883-7628 or susan.worrell@comcast.net.

March

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Laity Retreat 2013: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. West Lawn UMC. "Fruits of the Spirit" with retreat leader Rev. Charles Cole.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

Faith Sharing Training & Rally: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Wescosville: Bethany United Methodist Church, 1208 Brookside Road Allentown, PA 18106. Keynote Speaker

Dr. H. Eddie Fox. More information available at: <http://www.epaumc.org/calendar/events/2013-faith-sharing-mar>.

SUNDAY, MARCH 10

One Great Hour of Sharing

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

Spark Youth Day of Mission: Various locations on 6 districts. For more information, contact Denise Harris, dharris@epaumc.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

UM Night at the 76ers: Game time - 7:30 p.m. Philadelphia 76ers vs. the Charlotte Bobcats. Wells Fargo Center, South Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa. Tickets are \$22 (an \$8 discount) and \$32 (a \$13 discount). More info: Ross Brightwell, (215) 643-1269 or rossbrightwell@verizon.net.

April

SUNDAY, APRIL 14

Native American Ministries Sunday

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

TriConference Disability Workshops & Conference: Asbury United Methodist Church, Cinnaminson, N.J. 08077. Keynote: The Rev. Bill Gaventa

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Bishop Johnson Convenes the Order of Deacons: All Ordained Deacons, Provisional Deacons, and Deacon Candidates will gather with the bishop for a time of fellowship, dialogue and celebration of ministry. More info: Susan Worrell, (484) 883-7628 or susan.worrell@comcast.net.

In Memoriam

Mrs. Eva Louisa Becktel

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Eva Louisa Becktel, widow of Rev. Russell Gordon Becktel. Mrs. Becktel turned 100 on Sunday, September 23. She died peacefully in her sleep on September 26, 2012.

Rev. Becktel served the following appointments beginning in 1925: Sinking Springs, Fontana, Brunnerville, Lykens CT Tremont, Tremont Barry, Lebanon: Bethany, Mont Clare, Silver Spring CT, U. S. Army Chaplain (1941-45), Phila: Fourth, Phila: First, Harrisburg, Middletown, and Mountville. He retired in 1973, and passed away in 1981.

She is survived by her children Phyllis Turcotte and Bruce Becktel; her grandchildren, Cynthia Vaughn, Vickie Conwell and Mark Becktel; seven great grand children; and two great great grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Brunnerville Methodist Church, 517 Pine Hill Road, Litiz, PA 17543, or Monumental UMC.

Rev. Richard M. Dickey

Word has been received of the death of Richard M. Dickey, 74, of Cape May Court House, NJ, who passed away on Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012.

Richard served as a United Methodist minister in the following appointments: Lancaster Otterbein (1961-64), Reading Park (66-69), Susquehanna Conference, and then went on Honorable Location in 1970. He then worked for the Reading School District as a Special Education teacher and then in administration. Upon retirement, he worked for the Pennsylvania State Department of Education in Special Education.

Richard is survived by his wife, Sandra E.; his children: Deborah, Carol, and Deidre; and seven grandchildren.

Online condolences: www.radzieta.com.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Lung Association, 1031 Route 22 West, Suite 203, Bridgewater, NJ 08807.

Mrs. Charlotte Susan Klingborg

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Charlotte Susan (Sue) Klingborg, wife of the Rev. Ken Klingborg, who passed away on Friday, October 12, 2012.

Rev. Klingborg has served the following appointments: former Bangor: Salem, Chapman Quarries, and Bushkill.

Sue is survived by her husband, Ken, and by her daughters, Katrina and Kimberly.

Condolences may be sent to The Rev. Kenneth A. Klingborg, 202 Coventry Court, Palmyra, PA

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Bishop's Town Hall Meetings For Clergy and Laity on the possibility of cutting districts.

Northeast District

Monday, February 18 @ 7:00 p.m.

Southwest District

Tuesday, February 19 @ 7:00 p.m.

Northwest District

Thursday, February 21 @ 7:00 p.m.

Southeast District

Sunday, February 24 @ 3:00 p.m.

Central District

Sunday, February 24 @ 7:00 p.m.

East District

Tuesday, February 26 @ 7:00 p.m.

Contact Amy Botti at (610) 666-1442 or abotti@epaumc.org for more information.



(USPS 19-604)

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A Word from the Bishop

What Color is Christmas?

Once again this year the Halloween orange and black decorations were barely off the store shelves when the red and green Christmas holiday merchandise appeared in the stores. We identify our seasons with colors, not only in stores but in our churches. This time of year we have the liturgical colors of Advent. Our altar cloths and Advent wreath candles are either purple (for repentance and royalty) or blue (for hope) with a pink candle (for joy) on that Sunday just before Christmas. The liturgical color for Christmas is white for purity and holiness. Sometimes we see gold decorations that remind us that Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We adorn our churches with green holly wreaths with red berries, which is a reminder of the red blood of redemption shed for us on the cross and the green of life eternal promised at Easter. But what do the scriptures say about the color of Christmas? Not a word. These color themes are part of our church tradition which is based on the truth of Scripture. Advent is not mentioned in the Bible, nor are the many customs we observe during this Holy Season. Traditions such as these are helpful reminders about the purpose of the season's obser-

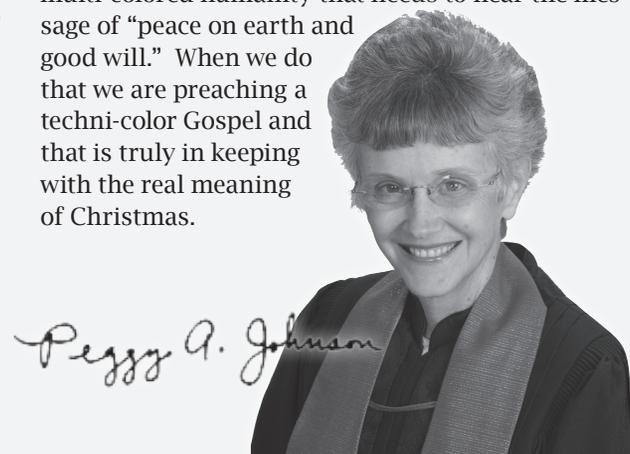
vances.

The Bible has a lot to say about the meaning of Christmas and for that we need to widen our color imagination. John 1:14a says "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." Jesus, God's Son, the Living Word, came to earth as a person with flesh the same as ours. What color is flesh? There are certainly many colors of human skin. The variety is almost endless but they are all a variation on some shade of brown. The Crayola Crayon Company sells a special box of crayons now known as "multi-cultural crayons." It has numerous variations of brown that are much like the many hues of humanity.

Multi-color flesh tones! That is the color of Christmas. Why? Because the scripture says "For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). The whole point of Christmas is God's love for humanity, the multi-colored totality of all people on earth. That love was so great that God was willing to give his Son Jesus to live and to die for us so that we might be able to have everlasting life. This was a huge undertaking, a global mission, as big as every

nation and race of people in the world.

The message of God's love is for everyone and our churches need to extend that love to all people in the community. Remember the angel who spoke to the shepherds on that first Christmas night: "I bring good news of great joy that will be for all people!" (Luke 2:10b) Who is missing in your congregation? Does everyone in your church look like you? If so, you have some work to do. Decorate your churches not only with colored decorations and symbols of the season but also focus on the multi-colored humanity that needs to hear the message of "peace on earth and good will." When we do that we are preaching a techni-color Gospel and that is truly in keeping with the real meaning of Christmas.



In Memoriam

Continued from page 2

17078-9185.

Memorial contributions may be made in memory of Sue to the Northampton County Special Olympics, Colonial Intermediate Unite 20, 6 Danforth Drive, Easton, PA 18045.

Mrs. Mildred Reichley Barth

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Mildred Reichley Barth, 103, on Tuesday, October 16, 2012. She was the widow of the Rev. Dr. George R. Barth, who died in 2003.

Dr. Barth served the following appointments beginning in 1933: Erdenheim: St. Mark's; Akron; Lansdale: Christ; Easton: Christ; and Lancaster: Pearl Street and retired in 1976.

She is survived by her sister-in-law, Mary R. Reichley, widow of Richard N. Reichley, nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made in Mildred's name to The Capital Campaign Fund, Grandview United Methodist Church, 888 Pleasure Road, Lancaster, PA 17601.

Online condolences may be posted online: www.thegroffs.com. Read more: http://lancasteronline.com/obituaries/local/758630_Mildred-Reichley-Barth.html#ixzz2AKm6tb9w

Mr. James (JP) O. Powell

Word has been received of the death of Mr. James (JP) O. Powell, husband of Rev. Margret Powell, on Wednesday, October 24, 2012.

Rev. Powell has served as pastor of Solid Rock UMC in Philadelphia since 2004.

Mr. Powell was a Christ Servant Minister of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

He is survived by his wife, Margret, and five children: Aphonso, Sherri, Zulema, Larscenia, and Dominique.

Condolences and gifts may be mailed to Rev. Margret M. Powell, 201 East Tabor Road, Philadelphia, PA 19120.

Rev. Dr. B. Burns Brodhead

Word has been received of the death of The Rev. Dr. B. Burns Brodhead, who passed away on Sunday, November 18, 2012.

Dr. Brodhead was appointed to Bensalem - 1944, Bethlehem: Fritz - 1950, Valley Forge: St. Matthews - 1960, Lansdale: First - 1968 and became Superintendent of the "beautiful Anthracite District," as he loved to call it, in 1980. After his retirement in 1986 he did five short term missions in the Bahamas and served the Landingville Church. Burns was beloved for his joyous spirit, affirming attitude, and clear sounding trumpet!

Burns is survived by his wife Ruth Tyson Wagner Brodhead, two daughters, Lois Brodhead Freese and Janet Brodhead Morley, two step children, Peter Wagner and Anna Wagner Kleckner, and 4 grandchildren and 3 step-grandchildren.

Condolences may be sent to Ruth Brodhead at PO Box 8, Orwigsburg, PA 17961.

Mrs. Muriel Pike

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Muriel

Pike, wife of the Rev. Robert Pike, on Friday, November 23, 2012.

Rev. Pike served the following appointments: Mt. Carmel; Mt. Joy: Salunga; Drexel Hill; Fairless Hills; Phila: Fox Chase; Glenside; and Reading: Holy Cross. He retired in 1987.

Mrs. Pike is survived by her husband, Robert, daughter, Cynthia McGary, and son, Douglas Pike.

Condolences may be sent to The Rev. Robert Pike, Cornwall Manor Gateway 4E, PO Box 125, Cornwall, PA 17016

Memorial contributions can be made to the American Cancer Society.

Mrs. Aurelia (Dod) Marian Kulp

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Aurelia (Dod) Marian Kulp, wife of Rev. John C. Kulp (Jack). She died on November 6, 2012.

Rev. Kulp served these appointments: Chaplain: Pennington Sem.; Hulmeville; Drexel Hill; Swarthmore; Phila: SO DS; Allentown; Allentown: Asbury, and Evangelical Manor.

She is survived by her husband, Jack, son, John Kulp, and daughter, Susan Smith, and grandchildren: Kristin Smith Connell, Steven Smith, Andrew Kulp and Jordan Kulp.

Condolences may be sent to Rev. Jack Kulp, 473 Freedom Blvd., West Brandywine, PA 19320-1560. Gifts may be sent in her name to PSCPC (Penn State Center for the Protection of Children), Office of University Development, PO Box 852, Hershey, PA 17033.

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Sharing Christmas

Continued from page 1

as a human, God entered the human condition to bring about our salvation – to meet our need.

When we send cards, share gifts, address the needs of our neighbors at Christmas we have an opportunity to share Christ. The way in which we celebrate the great joy can invite a person into a relationship with Christ or deepen it. It can also deepen our relationship with loved ones and neighbors longing to talk with someone about spiritual matters. Getting to know people, sharing gifts or Christmas cards is important, but understanding the needs and experiences of the recipient and sharing Christ with the intention of developing a deeper relationship can be even more meaningful.

This is not only true for Christmas celebrations, but also true for the life of Christian discipleship in general. Due to Hurricane Sandy many are still without power and the basic necessities. Some are even homeless. Here is an example of an opportunity to be a messenger of the good news of great joy – not only sending gifts of donations – but also planning to serve with a team of volunteers.

The experience of Jesus' family at His birth was seemingly a disaster. There was no place in the inn and the only accommodation available was a stable! The first to visit the Christ were poor, outcast shepherds. The simplicity of the Christmas story uniquely, and purposefully, places the Christ in the midst of the human condition; and with Christ came good news of great joy that transformed it.

Christmas is a time of tremendous opportunity to reach out to many people in our communities who need to hear good news of great joy and to be transformed by it. People everywhere have a longing for lasting hope and love; and we can offer it in the way we celebrate and observe Christmas, as well as in the way we live our faith in daily life. May our family, friends, neighbors and strangers find the good news of



great joy through us!

This is the season of sharing Christ with the world and with our own communities. May you all have blessed Christmas and happy New Year!

The Faith Sharing training has been rescheduled to March 9, 2013; here is an opportunity for your church leaders to better understand how to share Christ – not just at Christmas – but all year long. Read more: <https://www.epaumc.org/news/stories/2013-faith-sharing-training>.

THE REV. DR. CHRISTOPHER JACOB KURIEN IS THE DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference The United Methodist Church.

The Christ in Christmas

BY ROBERT J. MORGAN

Christmas really is the most wonderful time of the year. Churches must be assertive, unyielding, and unapologetic in presenting a Savior who came upon a midnight clear. For some reason, lots of people want to strip Christmas of its historical and spiritual heritage. And many more fight tooth and nail to “keep” Christ in Christmas. But I want to say for the record that it’s actually pretty hard to get Christ out of Christmas.

The word Christmas spells our Savior’s name in its first six letters.

- If they want to call it a holiday, let’s remind them that the word is derived from the words “holy day,” and it refers to the holiness of the birth of Christ.
- If they want to call it Yuletide, that’s the old phrase for the 12 days of Christmas—the Feast of the Nativity.
- If they want to talk about the seasonal holiday, we’ll tell them how Jesus is “the reason for the season.”

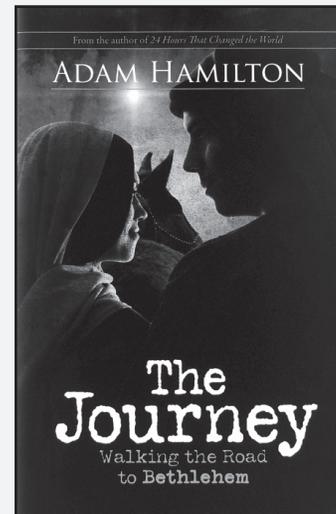
- If they want to talk about Santa Claus, let’s explain that there really was a Christian named Saint Nicholas in the city of Myra, Turkey, in the fourth century, who was famous for his generous gifts to the poor.
- If they want to talk about gift-giving, tell them about the Magi who brought the first Christmas gifts to the Christ child.
- If they talk about the songs and sounds of the season, tell them about the first choirs that filled the Bethlehem skies on the night Christ was born.
- And if they want to use the abbreviation Xmas, point out that the “X” is the Greek letter Chi, which is the first letter and the symbol of Christ.

It will be pretty hard to get Christ out of Christmas, especially if we take full advantage at my church and yours as we shout it from the mountaintop and spread abroad the good tidings of comfort and joy.

Originally posted at <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/blog/entry/1882/the-christ-in-christmas> on November 25, 2012.

Christmas Resources from Cokesbury

THE JOURNEY - WALKING THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM



Journey with Adam Hamilton as he travels from Nazareth to Bethlehem in this fascinating look at the birth of Jesus Christ. As he did with Jesus' crucifixion in 24 Hours That Changed the World, Hamilton once again approaches a world-changing event with thoughtfulness. Using historical information, archaeological data, and a personal look at some of the stories surrounding the birth, the most amazing moment in history will become more real and heart-felt as you walk along this road.

ISBN-13: 9781426714252

Sale price: \$11.33

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHRISTMAS - DVD WITH LEADERS' GUIDE



Help your church cast a vision of living and giving like Jesus, beginning with the Christmas season and continuing through the year. This five-week study helps participants see the traps and discontentment of consumerism and the call of God to live generously to fulfill God's mission in the world.

This five-session DVD features Mike Slaughter, Lead Pastor of Ginghamburg United Methodist Church and popular author

of *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday*. Each 10-15 minute video inspires viewers to approach Christmas differently and be transformed in the process.

This comprehensive resource includes a 64-page Leader Guide containing everything needed to guide your group through the study. Inside you'll find session plans and discussion questions, as well as multiple format options and suggestions of ways to make the study a meaningful experience for any group.

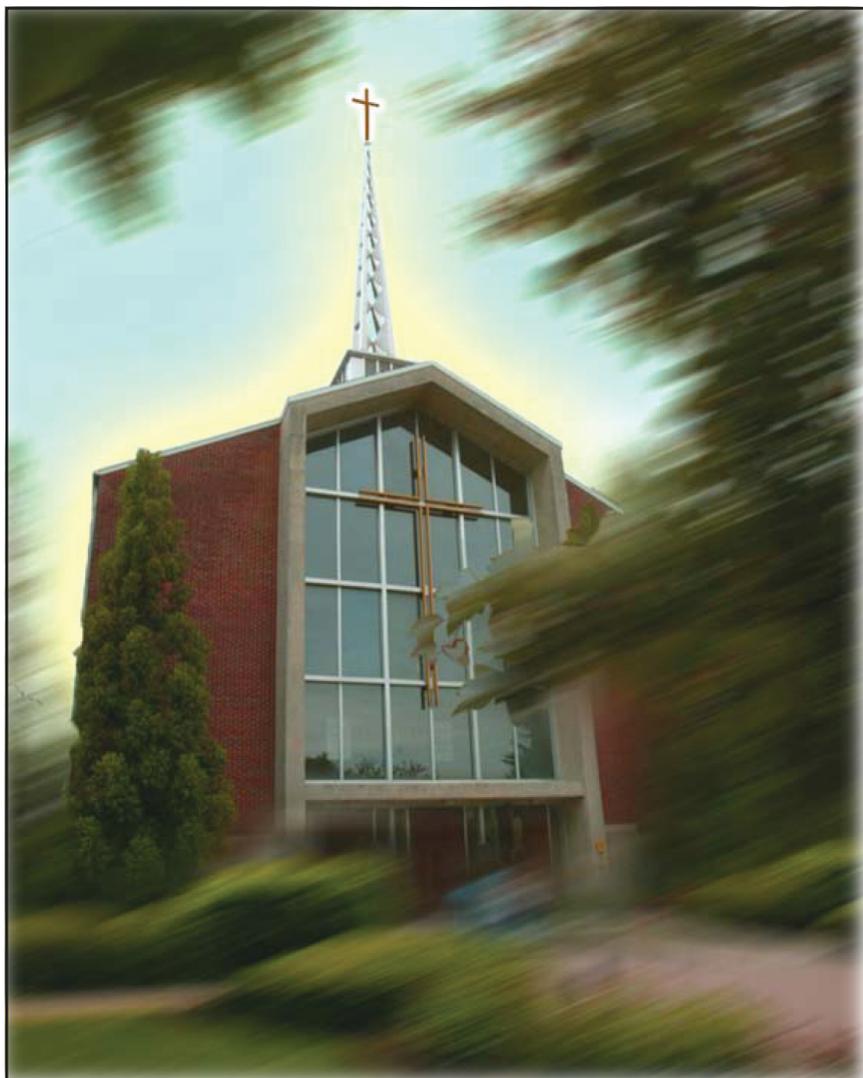
Sessions include:

1. Expect a Miracle
2. Giving Up on Perfect
3. Scandalous Love
4. Jesus' Wish List
5. By a Different Road

ISBN-13: 9781426753541

Discount price: \$31.99

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Saturday, 19 January

9:30am to 3:30pm

Albright College Chapel*

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MORE INFORMATION: <http://www.epaumc.org/events/calendar/UMM-rally-for-leaders>

UMM Night at the 76ers!



VS.



Bobcats vs. 76ers

March 30 - 7:30 p.m.

Wells Fargo Center

MEZZANINE CORNER ROWS 1-7: \$22 (face value \$30)

MEZZANINE CENTER ROWS 1-7: \$32 (face value \$45)

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www.nba.com/sixers/promocode

Please enter promo code:

UMETHODIST

For more information contact Travis Pollio at
(215) 339-7601 or travispollio@sixers.com!

Girls On The Go

"Extrême Makeover 139" will be the theme for Girls on the Go, an annual event for teenage girls held by United Methodist Women. Girls on the Go will be held at Camp In-nabah, February 9 and 10, 2013.

From Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon, Margaret Cottrell Keefer, from Grace Again Ministries, will lead the girls to discover how Psalm 139 applies to their lives. The event will include games, discussion, activities, make-up tips, and a fashion show.

All girls ages 13 to 18 are invited to share in the fun and fellowship, which can lead to spiritual growth. The UMW units from our local churches may want to sponsor girls, and to help with the \$50 fee which covers food, lodging, and this fun and meaningful program.

Chaperones are needed, too. Women of all ages are invited to participate in this outreach to teens. The event in 2012 was attended by 28 girls from 11 churches on 5 districts, along with 8 chaperones and presenters. There is room for many more in 2013!

For more information, contact Barbara Drake: Bedrake15@aol.com.



United Methodist Women seek new mission opportunities



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH · HOPE · LOVE IN ACTION

BY BARBARA E. DRAKE

"What new thing is God calling you to do?" Bishop Peggy Johnson asked this question of the United Methodist Women attending the Annual Meeting on October 20. In her message, based on God's words from Isaiah 43:19, "Behold I am doing a new thing," Bishop Peggy recommended four actions for women to take. Pray to gain God's strength to do God's work. Put away the old ways which weigh you down. Dream big for God. Sacrifice by giving until it helps.

At the Officer Update in November, Conference and District United Methodist Women (UMW) officers discussed how to dream big for God. Goals were set for reaching our big dream of an effective and growing UMW in every church composed of women of all ages including teens. Communication is the key component of the plan. The message for all to hear is that no church is too small for UMW, and every woman and girl has a place in UMW.

A handout about UMW was prepared and was given to District Superintendents for distribution at Charge Conferences, while sharing their support and encouragement with local United Methodist Women. Those handouts are already bearing fruit

as women are calling to request help in starting UMW in their churches.

District and Conference newsletters will be seeking stories about the great variety of mission work that local UMW groups are doing, with the goal of involving more women in similar missions and promoting collaboration between groups located near each other. Greater use of email is planned for distributing newsletters to get the news out faster and more economically so that more money can be devoted to mission work.

A new and improved resource center for obtaining UMW materials is opening on Monday December 17. United Methodist Women will be working with PBD Worldwide in Duluth, Georgia. All orders placed online will be processed with no additional cost to UMW, so by ordering online you can make the most of mission dollars. The site is www.umwmissionresources.org and deliveries will begin on January 7, 2013. For those who don't use e-mail, orders can be called to 1-800-305-9857 or faxed to 1-770-280-0061.

By reading Response magazine, using the Prayer Calendar, and participating in the Reading Program, women can learn about our mission work and how they can get involved. To receive inspiration, share fellowship, and increase your knowledge using UMW mission studies, everyone is invited to "Mission U", the new name being used nationally for Schools of Christian Mission. Mark your calendars for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Mission U to be held July 19-21, 2013 at Lancaster Bible College.

Working together we can both dream big and achieve what God is calling us to do.

BARBARA E. DRAKE is the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference President of UMW.

Capital Campaign Approved by Adjourned Session



If Not Now, WHEN?

BY DENNIS EMRICK

The Adjourned Session of Annual Conference meeting on Nov 11 at Hempfield UMC approved a three million dollar capital campaign to address the Pre-82 Past Service Liability for retired clergy.

The campaign is a part of a three tiered strategy to provide the Conference Board of Pensions with funds to continue to pay the 25% of the annual conference bill that it is currently paying. The 25% payment shields local churches from a pending increase of 30% at the end of 2013. The other two tiers are: 1 to reduce conference expenses for 6 years and channel the saving to the Conference Board of Pensions and (2 to direct 50% of the proceeds from the sale of local churches to Conference Board of Pensions (the other 50% will restore funds to the Conference Board of Trustees and support established ministries.

Since the spring of 2012, a Task Force, appointed by Bishop Johnson has been working to determine the feasibility and scope of such a campaign. Over 1000 members of Eastern Pa Conference churches voiced their opinion through an online survey and in personal interviews. This feasibility study was conducted by Kirby-Smith Associates of Quarryville. It indicated overwhelming support for a campaign to fund the liability, that the conference should focus on paying the liability first before trying to fund new ministries, that a three year campaign should have flexible start dates for local churches, that it should be conference led with local church control, and that it should be voluntary for the local church.

The Task Force received the analyzed results and presented them to the Annual Conference in resolution 2012.

In a unanimous vote, the Conference approved the resolution with minor changes and authorized the Task Force to serve as an Interim Steering to work with the consulting firm CCS to develop the specific strategies of the campaign.

CCS was chosen from 9 firms who were invited to submit proposals. CCS has a history of working with conferences, dioceses, and other non-profits with diversified constituents.

Over the next several weeks, the Interim Steering Committee will work with CCS to develop a structure, process, and recruit leadership for the campaign.

Stuff the Bus

Continued from page 1

was secured. Then the miracles arrived.

On Tuesday, Shultz Transportation donated a full-size school bus, a full tank, and an Easy-Pass for tolls, accompanied by the words, "Don't return it with a full tank."

Newspaper, radio, and Facebook and web stories appeared Wednesday with pleas to "Stuff the bus!" Many names appeared on volunteer signup sheets.

By Thursday a sign was out along the highway near Boehms UMC, tables were in place, and phones began ringing with questions about where and what to donate. Bishop Peggy Johnson invited Eden to bring the bus to Hempfield United Methodist Church on Saturday, November 10, for the fall budget session of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference. Pastors and lay leaders brought donations from their churches to stuff the bus for delivery to Mission Central in Mechanicsburg, PA.

Donations flew in on Friday. A steady stream of heart-warmed people - most having no connection to either Covenant or Boehm's church - brought carloads of work gloves, paper towels, baby formula and diapers, shovels, blankets, socks, hygiene supplies and more.

Boehm's UMC members also learned an unexpected history lesson that day. The Reverend Henry Boehm, the legendary circuit rider who established the Boehm's congregation in the historic chapel bearing his family's name, was commissioned to serve the Staten Island charge in the 1800's. He and his wife are buried in a United Methodist church cemetery there, and a current 750-student elementary school bears his son's name: Henry M. (Martin) Boehm School, PS 55.

Donations continued and increased on Saturday. Boxes and bags full of items made their way onto the bus at Hempfield while tables filled at Covenant and Boehm's. By 5 p.m. more than \$2,200 had been donated to buy additional supplies, a blessing that caused a new (and happy) problem.

"We never anticipated receiving that much money," said Eden, "so we hadn't thought through the logistics. How do you buy \$2,200 worth of items, in one night, as frugally as possible, without a truck big enough to haul them back to the bus?" After two hours of frantic calls and texts, a pickup truck and trailer arrived. A team of 7 people, led by Boehm's member Bonnie Moore, canvassed two stores and brought everything back to Boehm's for sorting.

But, would the bus hold it all? Eden voiced his concern during worship the next morning. Unknown to him, two Boehm's members were securing a second bus from Shultz Transportation. After worship, both congregations mobilized a Bucket Brigade to load up the bus, then burst into applause when the second bus and its driver arrived.

The brigade made short work of loading the first bus. A procession of buses and members made their way into Lancaster to meet up with Covenant members. Two buses departed crammed full of donations and 24 volunteers. A few hours, one wrong address, and one closed-facility later, the buses pulled up to a Staten Island church gymnasium that had been converted to a relief warehouse. Four visibly tired, yet enthusiastic, neighborhood workers met the bus to lead the emptying and sorting of more than 21,000 items. Then all gathered for a photo and explanation of the warehouse's efforts in the area before departing for the trip back home.

In six days God used three churches and two buses to bless people they didn't know. Countless Lancaster county residents (churched and unchurched, alike) were given an opportunity to meet tragedy and hardship with love and generosity.

Volunteers help hurricane victims

Continued from page 1



Volunteers help clean up in Montgomery County: (l. to r.) Bob Simcox, Jonathon Reed, Dave Reppert, Chris Williams, Tiffany Baily, Bob Philby. (Not Pictured Debra Deprinzio.)

ments to come in from Bucks and Philadelphia Counties.

DESERT STORM VET

One couple from Chester County was struggling before the storm hit. The husband is a Desert Storm Vet who needs a heart valve replacement and he has also had a heart aneurysm. He can't lift anything over 20lbs, and is scheduled for surgery next February at a hospital in Cleveland. While awaiting the surgery, Hurricane Sandy hit their home. They suffered roof damage, water flooded their basement and damaged their belongings, their burner and boiler got wet and they lost power for a couple of days. They had the water drained from their basement and had a contractor come in and install special drains/sunk pumps in the basement.

With funds exhausted on safeguarding their basement, they could not afford to fix the other damages. Without flood insurance, their insurance didn't cover the damages they suffered. They barely had any oil in their tank and they were afraid to use it until it was certified safe. A few weeks passed before their need came to our attention. They tried to stay warm by using space heaters, but it was hard.

The first weekend, we had a team clear out the basement and bring many of their belongings upstairs, while they decided whether the items were salvageable. The team sanitized the basement walls and floors and, as it was drying, raked the leaves in the yard.

During the week, we had the burner and boiler serviced and then had 150 gallons of oil delivered. They finally had heat!

The following weekend, another four-member team went in and repaired the damage to the roof by replacing shingles and patching small nail holes with roofing tar. We repainted the basement with drylock, cut down tree limbs hanging over the roof, cleaned the gutters, and bought five 50-gallon plastic storage containers

so they could protect their belongings in the future.

The residents responded with their own generosity by making homemade beef stew - a thank you for what we had done. We asked permission to pray with the Vet and his son. We stood in their kitchen among the items to be sorted from the basement and we prayed for healing, wholeness and peace for this family.

In Philadelphia County, an 80 year old woman called seeking help with 5 downed trees on her property. She was overwhelmed. I explained to her that our ministry does not do chainsaw work but I promised that I would pass her name along to another faith-based group who specializes in tree removal. A few days later, she called me to thank me for being faithful to her and to God, and for keeping my promise. Whereas before she had 'lost hope in humanity' because no one helped their neighbor anymore, we had restored her hope. She was grateful and thanked God for our ministry.

Another older couple in Philadelphia had spent their years maintaining their home and keeping up on the bills until the storm hit. On a fixed income, they struggled to pay the monthly bills. They sent an email to the Governor pleading for help and explaining their situation. Insurance would cover \$4,000 in damages to their roof - except for the unaffordable \$1,000 deductible. An email went out to the agencies requesting assistance. We were able to help this elderly couple pay their deductible and feel safe again. The wife couldn't believe there are people out there who serve God the way we do. She said she had never seen anything like this before - the beauty of God at work in his people.

We served an elderly, widowed woman who was overwhelmed with the work needed in her home. She had been without heat for a couple of days and her basement was flooded. We removed a lot of debris from the basement and sanitized the floor and walls. We cleaned up her yard and spent time talking with her. She said it was as if angels dropped out of heaven.

There are still many needs to be met and we will be out there serving until it is done. We try to make a difference in every family we serve: we pray with them, love them, and encourage them through these difficult days. We too are blessed and encouraged as we feel the presence of our Savior at work within the hearts of His people.

DEBRA DEPRINZIO IS DISASTER RESPONSE COORDINATOR for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church.



Tools for Ministry
Saturday, January 26, 2013

Essential training for lay and
clergy church leaders.
Contact your District Office
for more information.

El Redentor and St. Paul's receives hospitality award

United Methodist Communications is pleased to award El Redentor and St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Lancaster, PA, initial certification as an official Welcoming Congregation in 2012. "Welcoming Congregations" are a select group of United Methodist congregations nationwide that meet criteria including embracing newcomers and providing opportunities in discipleship. The recognition program is part of a larger effort launched in late 2000 by UCom, the denomination's communications agency, to use modern technology and the common language of television to spread the Good News of Christ to a world in need.

Because The United Methodist Church places a high value on radical hospitality as a vital ministry, we celebrate this important achievement and support El Redentor and St. Paul's United Methodist Church as it embraces newcomers and provides opportunities for discipleship through its welcoming lifestyle.

Rev. Brunhilda Martinez, pastor of El Redentor and St. Paul's UMC, said, "We are growing in numbers

RETHINKCHURCH

and welcoming visitors almost every Sunday. We have two groups participating in the Catch series, after our recent merger. Together we are learning how to attract and welcome new people to our church, and purposely we are encouraging worshippers to be welcoming of new people."

El Redentor and St. Paul's United Methodist Church will receive a plaque and seal to symbolize its certification as a Welcoming Congregation. In addition, the church will be recognized as a Welcoming Congregation on the denomination's Find-A-Church.org website. You can see this designation on the church's Find-A-Church.org profile by using the church zip code or city and state to search the listings.

Please encourage your congregation to participate in the welcoming certification program so every member of your congregation can embrace welcoming as a lifestyle, and the church can maintain a dynamic welcoming ministry for all people.

More information is available online: www.rethinkchurch.org or call toll free (877) 281-6535.

"In as much as you have done it to one of the least of these..."



When you give a financial gift to Methodist Services

- A child without insurance receives counseling
- A homeless family can move into permanent housing
- A student can attend an after-school program
- A mother and her children can receive temporary shelter

You have done it unto me!"
(Matthew 25:40)

For more information on how you can help make a difference in the lives of children and families please contact:

Methodist Services
4300 Monument Road
Philadelphia, PA 19131
215-877-1925, ext. 116

DNA of Church Growth

BY GORDON HENDRICKSON



After meeting recently with a group of church pastors, I was inspired to see four areas of ministry development. It is my hope that you will share your successes with me, so we can use them as models for ministry.

CHURCH GROWTH

Gordon Hendrickson Together, we looked at how to help churches of all sizes to grow. Note: growth is both spiritual and numerical - it is never about just one or the other.

Your first step is to do a survey of who you are as a church.

Next, determine your geographic boundaries called "your community." With this area defined, you can use a demographic study (use MissionInSite: <http://www.epaumc.org/ministry/missioninsite>) to determine who the people are in your community and what their needs are.

If you need help in this area, please contact me and we can find someone to help you with this process. If enough churches request this help, then we can schedule a group workshop. With a demographic analysis, you see where the similarities and differences are.

Pray for the vision to see where the Spirit will lead you to use your strengths to reach out to meet a need in your community. This is the best way to grow both internally and externally. When you determine an area of need, please send me information on your ministry needs.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESSES

We would like to identify churches in our confer-

ence that do excellent ministries in a variety of areas. Please identify an exceptional ministry in your church. Create a two to three minute video about this ministry. Then upload your video to the EPA Conference Media Library: <http://www.ourchurchvideos.com/19482/epaumc/> (You will need to set up a username and password and then upload your video.) Or, use Youtube and send the link to me: gordonacts6@msn.com.

Send me a brief written description of the ministry and your contact information, and the phone and email of the person in charge of this ministry. Here are examples: worship and music, outrageous hospitality, assimilation small groups Christian education, prayer, stewardship, sports, youth, young adult, senior, evangelism, multimedia, mission, hospital and in home visitation, pre-school/children, school min., social justice, physically challenged mentally challenged, retirement home ministry, deaf ministry, addiction ministry, blind ministry, unemployment ministry, divorce ministry, couples, thrift ministry, soup kitchen/feeding ministry, homeless ministry, college min., prison min., men's min., women's Min., health min., military min., satellite ministry, organizing ministries of the Church.

By creating a database of churches looking at doing new ministry and existing churches doing excellent ministries, we can put the two together. If enough churches ask for help in certain ministry areas, we will host workshops.

We have enough gifts in our conference to help each other, and to do great things to build the Kingdom of God. Please contact me for more information: Rev. Gordon Hendrickson, gordonacts6@msn.com or 610-666-9090, ext. 218.

GORDON HENDRICKSON IS THE COORDINATOR OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference The United Methodist Church.

Staffing changes at Asbury Ministry at Drexel

On October 17, 2012 co-executive directors Tim and Amy Emmett-Rardin informed the Wesley Foundation of Philadelphia that they are resigning from their positions at Asbury Ministry at Drexel University effective December 31, 2012.

The Board received and accepted Amy and Tim's letter of resignation. While we are saddened by their departure, we appreciate and recognize their many years of service to the Wesley Foundation of Philadelphia and the students, faculty and staff of Asbury Ministry at Drexel University. Tim has served as the executive director for seven years and Amy served for three years. Each brought unique gifts of pastoral care, creative programming, and practical and challenging applications of faith and justice.

The Wesley Foundation is an ecumenical Christian min-

istry for and with college students in Philadelphia. Our mission is to cultivate an authentic and welcoming community which seeks to deepen the understanding and practice of spirituality and justice. The Board is in the process of strategic visioning. Over the next few weeks a transition process will be in place and a search committee will be announced.

We ask for your prayers and support for Amy and Tim, the students of Asbury and the Board of the Wesley Foundation as we make this transition and live into

our new vision and mission for campus ministry in University City.

Additional questions should be directed to Board President Michelle Whittaker (mcmcbrooks@gmail.com), or Board Personnel chair Pamela Townsend (pjtownsend@comcast.net).



Appointment Announcements

THE REV. SALIM KHAN TO BETHESDA UMC

The Rev. Salim Khan has been appointed part-time pastor to Bethesda UMC in Philadelphia. Rev. Khan has retired status but has been active at the Crescentville UMC, also in Philadelphia. Rev. Khan brings to Bethesda Church a deep pastoral love for God's people and encouragement and guidance as they do the work of the Lord in the community and within the congregation. Bethesda UMC lost its beloved pastor, the late Rev. Roy Kramer, in July 2012, but even in the midst of grief, it remained committed to be a vital church of nurturing to its members and of ministry to its community.

THE REV. MARY P. ELUM AND THE REV. CARLOS CARRERO TO ST. THOMAS UMC

The Rev. Mary P. Elum and the Rev. Carlos Carrero are appointed as co-pastors of St. Thomas UMC, effective August 1, 2012. Both are part-time local pastors. Rev. Elum has been the pastor at St. Thomas for thirteen years. Rev. Carrero formerly served at a mission church affiliated with Frankford Group Ministry. St. Thomas UMC has been a small, predominantly African American congregation in the Frankford section since 1872 and recently celebrated its 140th anniversary. Young adults are a significant part of the congregation, which is an excellent example of a multi-generational local church.

THE REV. ANTHONY A. ARRINGTON TO PENINSULA-DELAWARE CONFERENCE

The Rev. Anthony A. Arrington, elder

in full connection in Eastern Pennsylvania, is appointed to a congregation in Wilmington, Delaware, in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference, effective September 1, 2012. Prior to this date, Rev. Arrington served the two-point charge of Journey of Faith and Advocate-St. Stephen's UMCs, both in Philadelphia.

THE REV. HILDA M. CAMPBELL TO JOURNEY OF FAITH AND ADVOCATE-ST. STEPHEN'S UMCs

The Rev. Hilda M. Campbell, full-time local pastor, is appointed to Journey of Faith and Advocate-St. Stephen's UMCs, both in Philadelphia, effective September 1, 2012. She previously served Siloam and Trinity UMCs, both in Chester. Journey of Faith and Advocate St.-Stephen's congregations are both passionately committed to continue to serve their communities and to make disciples for Jesus Christ. The range of their services go from a produce garden that is shared with the community, a clothing bank, and a ministry to families of loved ones who have died due to violence.

THE REV. MARY ELLEN BECKMAN TO AVON: ZION

Rev. Mary Ellen Beckman, retired elder, is appointed to Avon: Zion United Methodist Church as 3/4 time interim pastor from January 1 to June 30, 2013. Pastor Beckman most recently served as a minister of visitation at the Lebanon: Church of the Good Shepherd. Pastor Beckman previously served Lansford, Summit Hill, Pine Grove: St Paul, Donaldson, and Schafferstown: Zion. She has also served as chaplain at Cornwall Manor.



Jan. 20 – 21: Willow Valley, PA



FEATURING: "Spirit-filled: The Global Pentecostal Movement in United Methodist Contexts"; Dr. Luther Oconer: Assistant Professor of United Methodist Studies; Director of the Center for Evangelical United Brethren Heritage; United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH

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Spirit Led, Renewing the Church!



Save the Date!

3rd Annual Laity Retreat 2013

Fruits of the Spirit

West Lawn UMC

March 2, 2013 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Retreat Leader: Rev. Charles Cole



Staffing changes at Camp Innabah

Farewell: Christy Heflin is leaving Camp Innabah after 12 years as Director to take a new position as a camp Director at Wesley Acres Camp and Retreat Center, Dazey, North Dakota. Her husband, Jim, has served as Camp Innabah's food manager, and will fill that same position at Wesley Acres. The Heflins will be leaving for North Dakota early next week.

We thank God for Christy and Jim's leadership at Innabah over the years and ask for God's blessings upon their family as they move to North Dakota.



Conference announces the following job openings:

DIRECTOR: CAMP INNABAH

Camp Innabah, a United Methodist Church camp in Spring City, PA, is seeking a Director.

Founded in 1929, Innabah is comprised of 179 acres of meadows and woodlands in historic Chester County.

Innabah is one of the oldest church affiliated camps in the Mid-Atlantic Region, owned and operated by the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church. The name "INNABAH" was given by the Navajo People to the daughter of Rees J. Frescoln, the man who donated the original \$5,000.00 to purchase the property. INNABAH translates to "May the Great Spirit Be With You Always". For more information about the wonderful ministry of Camp Innabah visit www.innabah.org. (ACA Accredited)

Or visit: <https://www.facebook.com/campinnabah>. The position is a full-time on site, year around position. Salary, Housing and Benefits are included. Follow this link to the full job description.

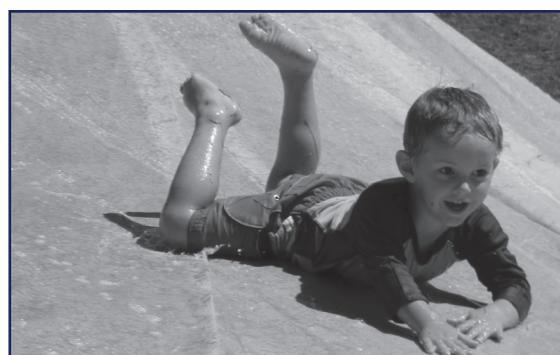
Please send resume, cover letter, to Rev. Dr. Christopher Kurien, Director of Connectional

Ministries by email to ckurien@epaumc.org or mail to Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820; office: 610-666-9090.

CAMP AND RETREAT MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, PART-TIME

The Conference Camp & Retreat Ministry Coordinator has primary responsibility for marketing & development efforts for the Camp & Retreat Ministry which includes four Christian Camps in the Eastern PA Conference (Carson Simpson Farm, Innabah, Gretna Glen, and Pocono Plateau). The Coordinator also helps to interpret reports and statistics and delineate how they influence and guide the marketing and development efforts. In addition, the CRMDC also coordinates and works with Site Directors concerning the various responsibilities.

Please send resume, cover letter, to Rev. Dr. Christopher Kurien, Director of Connectional Ministries by email to ckurien@epaumc.org or mail to Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0820 Office: 610-666-9090.



Homosexual Dialogues

BY BISHOP PEGGY JOHNSON

Two years ago at Annual Conference there were resolutions submitted that were asking the Eastern PA Conference to encourage legislation to be passed at General Conference 2008 that would eliminate the language in the Book of Discipline that speaks negatively about homosexual people. The conference voted not to debate these resolutions and instead they directed the maker of the resolutions to submit them on their own. Months later representatives from the Evangelical Connection and the Reconciling Ministries Network of Eastern PA met with me to develop an opportunity for a more extended dialogue between the two "sides" on this issue. It was thought best to wait until General Conference was over. At General Conference 2008 the language that forbids the ordination of people who are homosexual as well as statements against homosexuality as being "contrary to Christian teaching" and a ban on the conducting of holy unions remained in the Book of Discipline. There was no change made though it was debated and discussed at great length during the 10-day General Conference that was held in May in Tampa, Florida.

For three Saturday mornings, in three locations around the conference, dialogues were held in order to continue the conversation. The Evangelical Connection and the Reconciling Ministries Network each produced a 20-minute position presentation and 3 five-minute testimonies. They were produced on videotape and were shown at the dialogues so that each of the three events would have exactly the same presentation. In addition there was a time of dialogue with people breaking into small groups. The dialogue was facilitated by Rev. Dr. Karin Walker, a District Superintendent from the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Dr. Walker has done extensive work in this field and has led a number of dialogue groups for the Baltimore Washington Conference in the past. During her presentation she explained about the importance of having a covenant for Christian conferencing and the difference between debate and dialogue. She said that the word "sacred" and "scared" are spelled almost the same but they are very different. In sacred space people can share freely and with respect. When there is a sense of condemnation people become scared and dialogue cannot happen. She also taught us that if we want to draw closer to God we have to draw closer to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The three events were well attended and the spirit of Christian conferencing was evident. The position presentations are now posted on our website and can be downloaded and shown in your churches. There will be training on Saturday, February 2, 2013 (from 10 am until 2 pm) at the Valley Forge Conference Center for those who wish to continue the dialogue groups.

It is easier not to have these conversations but it is an important matter of our faith to talk with Christians who think differently from us and seek to find our center in Christ. Understanding and respect can come when we listen to one another. One person commented after the November 17th event "we need to experience the grace of our situation and live obediently in Christ." It is not about changing anyone's mind on this topic. It is about experiencing the grace in everyone and obeying Christ's command to "love one another."

My thanks to Gretna Glen Camp, St. Matthews UMC (Valley Forge) and Solebury UMC for hosting these events and to those who worked hard to produce the videos and to the many monitors who volunteered to assist with the dialog circles.



MID-ATLANTIC

United Methodist Foundation, Inc.
Stewardship and Investment Management

Are Church Contributions About to Fall Off The Fiscal Cliff?

BY JACK BROOKS

Much has been written of late about the pending “Fiscal Cliff,” popular shorthand used to describe the challenge our government is facing at the end of 2012. At midnight on December 31, 2012 the terms of the Budget Control Act of 2011 are scheduled to go into effect. A number of tax breaks for businesses, tax cuts for individuals, and automatic spending cuts in government programs will be triggered.

Should the church care about the “Fiscal Cliff,” or is this an issue for politicians to wring hands over while America sits and watches the news? Normally it would be a complex answer of politics, policy, time, and eventual problem solving that we have little control over. But lately charitable and

church contributions have entered the debate.

The issue of charitable deductions, and in particular church charitable deductions, has recently emerged as a hot new topic of conversation in the search for revenue. The question being raised in a number of editorials and articles is simple. Should donors to churches and charities be allowed to continue to take a tax deduction for contributions at a time when the Government needs additional tax revenue?

How much revenue is related to church deductions? In April, a University of Tampa professor, Ryan Cragun, and two students examined U.S. tax laws to estimate the cost of tax exemptions for religious institutions. They came to the conclusion that by denying religious institutions tax exemptions on property donations, business enterprises, capital gains on investments and sales, and “parsonage allowances,” the Treasury could raise as much as \$71 billion a year. A tempting number when everyone is looking for additional revenue sources.

The Bible suggests we contribute 10% of our income. Christians do not make charitable gifts for tax reasons, but tax incentives have encouraged more giving and have often made bigger gifts possible. Tax incentives seemingly reinforce the core Christian value that being charitable matters to all our society. But this is also why it comes under attack.

A recent editorial by Jodi F Bullock is an example. In the editorial she questions “Why should any taxpayer be required to pick up the financial slack left by religious institutions while they tend the spiritual needs of their limited congregation and do little else that is definitively beneficial for the general

population subsidizing their work?”

We who are blessed to share the United Methodist connection know the answer. Our mission work speaks volumes in response. United Methodist missions are active in communities from coast-to-coast and around the globe. Millions of volunteers and millions of dollars in generous financial support have shaped change in the lives of our fellow man throughout the history of The United Methodist Church- even before the income tax itself was enacted early in the 20th century.

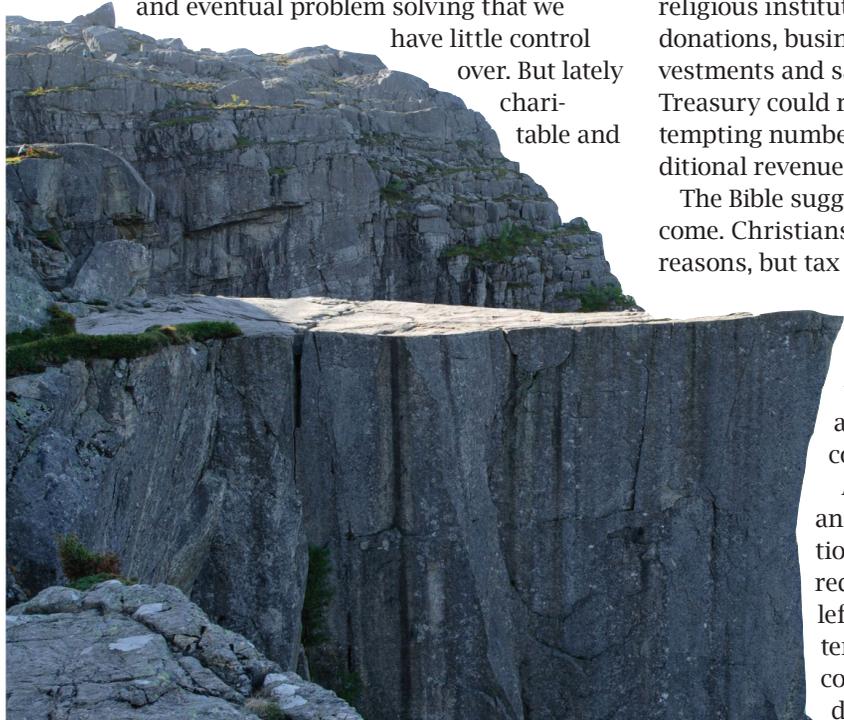
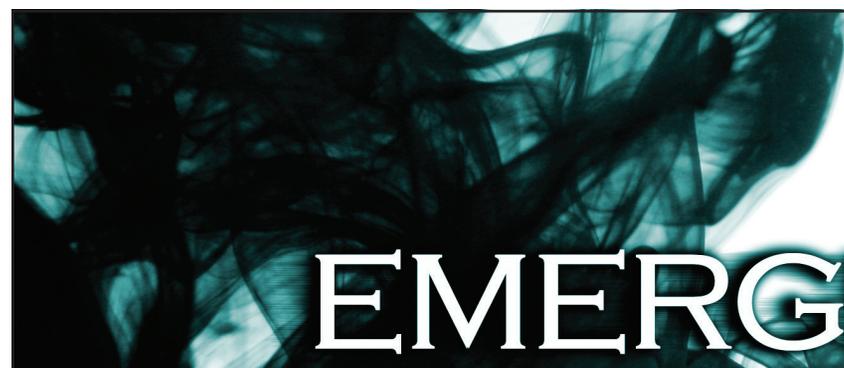
Is our work “definitively beneficial for the general population subsidizing their work”? I would argue yes. Certainly it would cost our general population if there were fewer volunteers or financial contributors in the church. The tax deduction taken on a form once a year is perhaps more a simple reminder of our participation in the mission of the church.

As Christians we are not motivated simply by a tax break we may receive, but because of our true scriptural understanding of benevolence. The charitable tax deduction encourages us to choose kindness, compassion, and to use our abundant wealth to help those without. It allows us to voluntarily redistribute a portion of wealth to church purposes and is part of an American philanthropic heritage that is truly worth keeping.

As we enter this Christmas season I suggest you take advantage of the current tax policies and be a generous giver to the mission and ministry of your choice. Your gift will be “definitively beneficial” not only for the general population, but all of God’s people.

For more information contact the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation at 800-828-9093 ext 247.

JACK BROOKS IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

BISHOP’S MID-WINTER RETREAT
JANUARY 8 - 10, 2013

EMERGENT CHURCH

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Ocean City, MD 21842

NEW VENUE!

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Keynote Speaker
Rev. Jim Walker
Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community

Pastor Jim is a fully ordained elder in The United Methodist Church who works with the Western Pennsylvania Conference doing congregational development.