Cabinet diversity to grow in 2014
Three new district superintendents appointed

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson has appointed three new district superintendents who will further enhance the diverse experiences of conference leadership in several ways. On July 1, 2014, the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm will become Superintendent of the Southeast District, the Rev. Tracy Bass will become Superintendent of the East District, and the Rev. BumKoo Chung will become Superintendent of the Southwest District.

THE REV. DAWN TAYLOR-STORM

TO LEAD THE SOUTHEAST DISTRICT
A lifelong United Methodist, the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm spent her early years attending Mountainhome UMC. As a youth she served on the denomination’s Appalachian Development Taskforce and was president of the EPA Youth Annual Conference. But when a pastor asked her to consider a career in the ministry, she replied, “If God calls, God will get my answering machine.”

Desiring a career in forensic psychology, Taylor-Storm attended Elmira (NY) College to major in criminal justice and psychology. Her work as a college intern at the maximum security Elmira Correctional Facility revealed to her the need for advocacy and reform within the criminal justice system. A passion for prison ministry and restorative justice has continued to be a focus of her ministry.

In 1994, as a Global Ministries Mission Intern serving in San Marcos, Texas, she felt God calling her into ordained ministry. Months of prayerful discernment led her to enroll in Yale University’s Master of Divinity program, where she

The Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm

EPA Financial Stewardship Campaign nearly $3 million goal

“W”e’re so close!” The Rev. Denny Emrick voiced anxious anticipation when asked about the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference’s Financial Stewardship Capital Campaign. He held his hands forward as though ready to grasp something within reach.

“We’re right at the brink. Now I know how Jeremiah felt when he bought that field (Jeremiah 32). He was so sure of God’s promises.”

Emrick is elated and hopeful about the campaign, titled Fulfilling Our Covenant, because pledges have almost reached the $3 million goal and may surpass it by the year’s end.

The campaign, approved by the Annual Conference in 2012, is intended to help pay off the pre-1982Retired Clergy Pension before the 2021 deadline, while stabilizing the payments required annually from local churches. The pension obligation is a sacred commitment to retired clergy who sacrificed to serve churches in ministry. Additional payments on the debt have come from conference spending cutbacks and proceeds from the sale of non-urban church properties.

Emrick, a retired supply pastor serving Mount Carmel UMC in St. Peter’s, is also a former fundraising consultant. He has been involved in the campaign since it began, assisting Kirby-Smith Associates in the preliminary feasibility study, and CCS in planning, promoting and implementing the campaign.

Now his role is to answer questions and advise congregations on their pledge fulfillment efforts over the next three years.

“Part of my job is to help churches remove roadblocks to giving,” he explained. “I’m taking the hand-off from CCS after they worked so hard to raise the pledges.”

CCS staff consultant Matt Harrigan and Meg Strunk met with nearly every EPA church, either individually or in groups, working up to 12-hour days, to address their concerns and discuss the four fundraising plan options, a unique campaign feature for this conference.

Harrigan continued working with church and conference leaders until Thanksgiving, before traveling to Cleveland, Ohio, to begin his next campaign.

CCS will continue to assist Emrick as he helps congregations fulfill their pledges on behalf of the EPA Conference. Meanwhile churches can pay on

The Rev. Tracy Bass

The Rev. BumKoo Chung

The Rev. Mary Miller (left) and Stephanie Brown Wilson serve Communion to the Rev. Brunilda Martinez at a lunch-hour service during the church trial for the Rev. Frank Schaefer in November. The three clergywomen were among 13 “Chaplains/Peacemakers” serving during the two-day trial at Camp Imnabah. Identifiable by their stoles, their goal was to “provide a safe, hospitable environment” and a source of emotional support through healing prayer and Communion for those who desired it.

Schaefer faces ministry decision

(EDITOR’S NOTE: We regret that we had to publish this December issue on December 16, prior to the EPA Conference Board of Ordained Ministry’s meeting with the Rev. Frank Schaefer. For an update and statement on the outcome of that meeting, please visit our Web site at www.epaumc.org.)

The Eastern Pa. Conference Board of Ordained Ministry is scheduled to hear the Frank Schaefer’s decision Dec. 19 on whether or not he will remain an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church. Retaining his ministry credentials

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 2

Continued on page 6
January

Friday-Sunday, January 10-12
Pen-Del Youth Rally—“Ransomed”:
Hundreds of EPA youth will join several thousand Peninsula-Delaware Conference youth for fellowship, fun and faith formation in Ocean City, MD.

Thursday-Saturday, January 16-18

Tuesday-Thursday, January 21-23

Saturday, January 25
Tools for Ministry: Simultaneous lay ministry training on all six districts. Theme: “Ministry for Today’s Church.” 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (NOTE: The Jan. 26 FLAME and March 7 ABLAZE EPA youth retreats are cancelled. A new two-day youth retreat is being planned for May.)

February

Saturday, February 1
Youth Call to Ministry Retreat: 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For teens who are, or should be, considering a call to ministry. Two new locations: Camp Pocono Plateau and New Life UMC in Upper Darby. For information contact Northwest District office, 570.626.1471 or Northwest4@verizon.net.

Saturday-Sunday, February 8-9
Annual Girls on the Go Retreat: A creative, affirming camp experience for girls, ages 13 to 18, sponsored by the EPA UMWomen. Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center, Lebanon.

Friday-Saturday, February 21-22
Wellness Retreat: Hosted by the EPA Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Instruction and inspiration for healthy living for all clergy and their spouses. Look for registration and cost information in January. Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center, Lebanon.

February 22
Training in Hispanic Ministries for Non-Latino Churches: Camp Innabah, Spring City.

Tuesday, February 25
A Day with Clif Christopher: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Training, dialogue and action planning with the visionary financial stewardship expert and author. Only 200 seats available. Sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic UM Foundation. $50 includes lunch. Dr. Christopher’s book, Not Your Parents’ Offering Plate, and other materials. Glen Mar UMC, Ellicott City, MD.

Tuesday, February 25
Basic Sexual Ethics: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. $30 pays for continental breakfast, lunch and materials. Contact David Woolerton, shepherd2482@comcast.net or 717-653-5493. West Lawn UMC, Reading.

March

Saturday, March 1
4th Annual Laity Retreat: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Laity will gather on each district for a multi-site retreat. Theme: “Living Waters for Thirsty Leaders.”

Tuesday, March 4
Bishop’s Lenten Day Apart: Interfaith presentation and Q&A on how the “Children of Abraham” can foster cooperation through Holy Communion, followed by Lenten worship and Communion. Trinity UMC Lickdale, Jonestown, PA.

Thursday, March 6
Advanced Sexual Ethics Workshop: “The Elephant in the Sanctuary.” 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. West Lawn UMC Reading.

Saturday, March 8
Faith Sharing Event: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Dr. Eddie Fox, executive director of World Methodist Evangelism, returns to inspire and encourage discipiles and churches interested or engaged in personal evangelism. Bethany UMC Wescosville.

April

Fulfilling Our Covenant Continued from 1

The Rev. Denny Emrick (left) takes the reins of the EPA Conference’s Financial Stewardship Campaign from Matthew Harrigan of CCS, as the pledge phase draws to a close and the pledge fulfillment phase begins. Emrick is available to answer churches’ questions and advise them about their campaigns. John Coleman photo

their pledges to Letter Concepts, an independent donor participation management firm providing pledge remittance services.

Why has the pledge campaign been so successful when most previous campaigns have not, according to Emrick? He sees four likely reasons:

1. The thorough feasibility study and extensive outreach to church leaders to hear their concerns and enlist their support.
2. The relatively modest amounts asked of churches, based on the size of their budgets. “People expected a large burden, but they were often surprised that the asking seemed so doable.”
3. The unique range of options offered where churches could choose from four fund-raising plans with varying levels of commitment and support.
4. The extra incentive in two of the plans that offers participating churches a percentage share of what they raise over four years for their own capital fund-raising needs.

“It’s vitally important that churches who have yet to make pledges do so now before we end this phase of the campaign,” said Emrick. “We want to reach the $3 million goal and then redeem all our pledges. This is a solemn commitment of our faith and fidelity to support those who have supported and served us in pastoral ministry for so many years.”

For more information, to make individual pledges or to get help with your campaign, visit the campaign Web site, www.epaumc.org/capital-campaign, or contact Denny Emrick at denny@emrick.info or 484-366-1373 (O).

To pay or adjust your campaign pledges or select your choice of Plan 1, 2, 3 or 4, contact Karen Timberlake of Letter Concepts at 800-525-4063.

Faith Sharing Training and Rally

Featuring Dr. H. Eddie Fox, Back by Popular Demand!
Executive Director, World Methodist Evangelism Institute

Saturday, March 8, 2014, 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M.
Bethany United Methodist Church Wescosville
1206 Brookside Road, Allentown, PA 18106

Cost: $10/each. Includes Materials and a Boxed Lunch.
Championships may be used with the Faith-sharing textbook for an additional $12. (Recommended one per church.)

Qualifies for 0.5 CEUs.
Registration Available in January. Register Online at www.EPAUMC.ORG/Events.

Faith Sharing
commences January 15

UM Night at the Sixers: 7:30 p.m. Join fellow UMs and root for the Philadelphia 76ers against the Memphis Grizzlies at the Wells Fargo Center. Tickets: $17 to $32 – $5 from each ticket sale will be used to support UM ministries. Reserve seats at www.nba.com/sixers/promocode. Enter code: UMC.

Saturday, March 22
Rally for Leaders: Sponsored by EPA United Methodist Men. Details to come.

Tuesday, March 25
Vital Church Mergers Workshop: Talk and training on planning and implementing fruitful church mergers and ministries, led by Dirk Elliott, author of Vital Mergers. Contact Gordon Hendrickson, EPA Congregational Development Coordinator, at ghendrickson@epaumc.org.

Saturday, March 29
Mission InSite Training: Introduction and training to use the leading online demographic and lifestyle information resource for visioning, planning and evaluation of church and community ministries.

April

Friday, April 4-6

Saturday, April 5
Mission Celebration: More details to come.

April 7
The Rev. Denny Emrick (left) takes the reins of the EPA Conference’s Financial Stewardship Campaign from Matthew Harrigan of CCS, as the pledge phase draws to a close and the pledge fulfillment phase begins. Emrick is available to answer churches’ questions and advise them about their campaigns. John Coleman photo

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A
s we are well into the holy seasons of the church year the theme of giving is in the air. Just weeks ago we supplied food pantries, soup kitchens and Thanksgiving baskets to ensure that others enjoyed a Thanksgiving dinner. At Christmas time there are numerous drives for toys, gifts and worthy causes that we give to out of love for the Christ Child. Indeed, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” (John 3:16)

As we give we are being the presence of Christ for many people and are doing with all our means what God has asked us to do: Share! The need for charitable giving is and always will be a central part of our Christian experience and Wesleyan heritage. I have been the recipient of gifts in the past that have given me a sense of hope and joy. I remember wanting to go to the Consultation of Clergywomen back in 1979, and it was the United Methodist Women of my home church that sent a sacrificial gift of several hundred dollars so that I could go. It changed my life.

Just as important as giving to those in need is the work of justice in the political arena seeking equality for the poor. Christians have always spoken for those with no voice in the halls of power in order to bring about economic justice and equal rights. That is a harder way to give but vitally important. When there are legislative bills coming forward in our government that make a difference for those in poverty we need to be adding the power of our citizens’ voices to the mix.

Along with that is the understanding that sometimes our good-intended giving can actually be a hindrance to those living in poverty around the globe. If we give clothing to a developing country that can put the clothing industry there in jeopardy. Our giving can create a dependence sometimes that has the opposite effect of helping. Providing funds for a micro-business would be a better way to help. Peter Greer, president and CEO of Hope International said in an interview with Jerry Bowyer of Forbes:

“Something that is designed to be helpful actually causes harm. Micro-finance turns that model on its head and instead of giving in and just saying ‘We’ve got a lot of things you don’t, so we’re just going to give it to you,’” it says ‘Every single individual is created by a God who loves them, and that means there is worth and there is dignity and there is ability!’ So we go in and say ‘What don’t you have?’ but ‘What do you have?’ ‘What are your hopes and dreams for your kids?’ ‘What is it that is in your hand to do?’ Micro-finance gives people the means to develop skills and become self-supporting. That is a better gift.”

Tom’s Shoes is famous for selling shoes to Americans, and with the cost of the shoes you also pay for a pair of shoes for a person in a developing country. Tom’s Shoes has recently decided to go in a new direction in Haiti. Instead of just giving shoes to people they are establishing what is called a “responsible and sustainable shoe industry in Haiti.” Haitian people will get jobs and work for a living and be able to buy their own shoes and other things in the future.

Where can we as Christians begin to give that kind of gift? Empowerment and development are the keys to a better quality of life. Christ came to give people abundant life spiritually, and that ultimate gift empowers us to attain and share our material abundance. As Christ’s church we are called to share with others Christ’s gift in all its forms during the holidays and always.

May your Christmas and New Year be filled with God’s abundant grace, and may your hearts overflow with gratitude and generosity.

Reggy A. Johnson

A Word from the Bishop

The Season of Giving

NEW DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

continued from 1

interned at a downtown UM church and advocated for justice for hotel employees. She also facilitated Pan-Methodist dialogues at Yale among UMC, CME, AME and AME Zion church leaders.

At the university hospital the young seminarian received clinical pastoral education as a chaplain to heart transplant patients. She graduated and was commissioned for ministry in 2001, when she was appointed to White Haven UMC. She became an Elder in 2004, and in 2008 was appointed to St. Matthew’s UMC of Valley Forge, where she serves today.

Rev. Taylor-Storm was a delegate to General Conference in 2000 and 2012, serves on the Northeastern Jurisdiction Vision Table, co-chairs Women in Professional Ministry, and is chair of Conference Relations on the EPA Board of Ordained Ministry. In addition, she chaired the Camping Board from 2006 to 2009, and enjoys directing a week of camp each summer.

The future superintendent is married to Daniel Taylor-Storm, who teaches 11th-grade English at Upper Merion High School. They have two children, Lucas and Rebecca.

THE REV. TRACY BASS TO LEAD THE EAST DISTRICT

The Rev. Tracy Bass is a native of the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. He moved to Philadelphia, Pa., in 1988 to begin practicing law and soon began attending Janes Memorial UMC in Philadelphia with his wife, Tracy Y. Bass.

After a 17-year legal career, Bass felt God’s call to pastoral ministry and enrolled at the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia, graduating with honors in two years. He currently serves on the seminary’s United Methodist Advisory Board.

Rev. Bass has served churches in Philadelphia, Norristown and Downingtown and currently is at Paoli UMC. As a pastor he help create and grow ministries serving food and clothing to the poor and a partnership to aid welfare recipients in transition. He served on the board of the Norristown Hospitality Center, a day shelter for homeless neighbors, and chaired the board of Partners for Families, a non-profit Christian organization. In 2009 he received the Denman Award for Evangelism.

A former Conference Secretary, Rev. Bass has served the connectional church, including: the District Committee on Church Location and Building; conference boards of Lay Ministry, Trustees and Pension and Health Benefits; the EPA I-CARE and Conflict Intervention teams; the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits; and BMC’s Northeastern Jurisdiction.

Rev. Bass and his wife have two sons, Braelin, a school sophomore, and Kenneth. Bass earned a Master of Divinity degree from Drew University in 2003. While at Drew, Rev. Chung met and married Eun Kyung (Debra), now a scientist at CD Diagnostics, Inc. They have a daughter, Kayla Yeaji.

Rev. Chung was pastor of the Greater Pittsburgh Korean UMC, a multi-ethnic congregation in the NEJ Korean Mission. Now the pastor of West Grove UMC, he previously served Cochranville UMC and Cherry Lane UMC in Tannersville. A former chair of the conference Racial-Ethnic Ministry Work Team, he serves on various conference boards and agencies, including the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Pastoral Care Team, the Southeast District Committee on the District Superintendency, the I-CARE Team, and the Congo Partnership.

Beyond the conference, Rev. Chung directs the NEJ Korean Church Council; and from 2011 to 2013 he was Vice-President of the National Association of Korean American United Methodist Pastors Serving Cross-Racial/Cultural United Interagency. Bishop Johnson expressed deep appreciation for the service of departing superintendents. The Rev. Jim Todd (Southwest District and Cabinet Dean) is in his eighth year on the Cabinet. The Revs. Michele Wright Bartlow (East District) and H. Joe Tyson (Southeast District) are completing 18 months of interim service.

“The three new DSS are persons of excellence, with a deep faith in Christ and true hearts for ministry in our conference,” she wrote, “I appreciate the suggestions I received from clergy and lay persons, I covered this decision with much prayer, and I feel confident that our ministry will continue to grow with their gifts and leadership.”
Mission of Peace

“Going to South Africa after Nelson Mandela’s death and all the mourning and celebration of his life will make this trip more meaningful for us,” said Adrienne Newcomer, 17, of North Wales (above, center). She leaves Dec. 28 with Bishop Peggy Johnson and two other EPA Conference youths on a three-week United Methodist Mission of Peace to Johannesburg and Capetown. “I want to learn more about the man and the effect he has had on the country and on people’s lives there,” said Newcomer, pictured here at annual conference with her fellow sojourners, Mia Sanchez of East Petersburg and Madeline Devitas of Chester Springs. The three teens studied and raised funds for their trip and will join about 16 other selected NEJ youth to go learn, teach and forge friendships of peace with South African youth. They will try to dispel cultural myths and stereotypes, and share insights about their faith, concerns and hopes for positive change in the world. The annual adventure has sent youth to numerous countries since 1986. This will be Bishop Johnson’s first time serving as episcopal guide.

Tools for Ministry

Ministry for Today’s Church
Saturday a.m., January 25, 2014
Come experience:
Worship, Witness, Workshops and the warmth of Christian fellowship!

Six District Locations
Central District - First UMC, Phoenixville, PA
East District - Bensalem UMC, Bensalem, PA
Northeast District* - Asbury UMC, Allentown, PA
Northwest District - First UMC, Schuylkill Haven, PA
Southeast District - West Grove UMC, West Grove, PA
Southwest District - St. Mark’s UMC, Mout Joy, PA

*Note: The Northeast District will have two Tools for Ministry events. The one on January 25 at Asbury UMC, Allentown, will offer training for Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations, Finance and Trustee committee leaders. Participants may attend this event or view it in a Webinar either live or later on-demand. A second Tools for Ministry event on Saturday, March 22, at East Stroudsburg (PA) UMC will offer about a dozen additional workshops.

Learning for Leadership
Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, The United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 820, Valley Forge, PA 19482
(800) 828-9090 | www.epaumc.org
The EPA Conference welcomes three new staff to its leadership ranks, having bid farewell to three others who now are using their esteemed gifts in other places.

New Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries Matthew Davis and new Director of Communications John Coleman, both Philadelphia natives, joined the staff in November. Newly hired Camp Innabah Program Director Katie McFarland begins her work in January.

Davis has been a youth and young adult ministries leader and camping program director in various settings for more than 15 years. Currently the part-time Director of Congregational Life at Lima UMC, where he is responsible for youth and young adult ministries, he works half-time for the Conference. He recently began meeting with youth leaders to organize a spring 2014 retreat, identify resources and seek ways to increase youth ministry participation conference-wide.

Davis was active as a youth at Sayers Memorial UMC in Philadelphia and has directed youth ministries at Salem UMC in Manheim and Church of the Good Shepherd in Lebanon. He also directed programs at Gretna Glen and worked at Pocono Plateau, both EPA camping and retreat centers. He has worked with several youth ministeriums in Lebanon and Lancaster counties, creating and assisting with collaborative church youth and young adult events.

Former interim youth and young adult ministries coordinator Denise Harris, who was quarter-time, continues her ongoing work as youth pastor at Yardley UMC.

John W. Coleman Jr. is the new Communications Director, now a full-time position that will focus on improving the conference’s Web site and use of social media, continuing to publish its quarterly newspaper, NewSpirit, and initiating other communications and marketing efforts.

A lifelong Methodist, Coleman’s early childhood was spent at Mother Zoar UMC, before his father, a fourth-generation Methodist clergyman, moved his family around the region serving churches and also working at the General Board of Global Ministries in New York.

Coleman himself has served the denomination as a communications executive and consultant for more than 25 years at the conference and general church levels. He has won top United Methodist awards for writing and video production, published newspapers and mission study books, and redeveloped conference and agency Web sites. From 2002 to 2005 he was Co-director of Communications for the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Suzie Keenan, who formerly directed EPA communication...
SCHAEFER MINISTRY DECISION  
Continued from 1

will require that he promise to uphold the denomination’s laws against conducting same-gender marriage ceremonies.

The meeting comes at the end of Schaefer’s 30-day suspension from pastoral duties, a penalty imposed on him by an all-clergy jury on Nov. 19, after it found him guilty of violating the prohibition against pastors performing same-sex unions and of “disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church.”

Schaefer’s two-day trial drew national attention, including both support and criticism for him and the conference. He told several media sources that he did not blame the church for its actions because he once held the same beliefs as those espoused in the United Methodist Book of Discipline, that “homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.” His mind was changed however, when his son Tim revealed that he was gay and had suffered fear, agony and shame as a result of the church’s teachings.

When Tim asked his father to conduct his 2007 legal wedding to another man in Massachusetts, Schaefer accepted, which led to the charges later filed against him and eventually to his trial. Schaefer told the court and later the media that with his mind and heart now changed, he would become an advocate for full rights in the church and society for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) persons.

On Dec. 19 he must tell the clergy oversight board if his new advocacy commitment will include conducting future same-sex weddings. If his answer is yes, then he may be asked to surrender his ministerial credentials.

“We must follow the Discipline’s mandates, but we have sought to do so as fairly, graciously and respectfully as we could,” said Bishop Peggy A. Johnson. “This difficult decision is entirely in Rev. Schaefer’s hands.

“We recognize the pain that many in our church feel about this matter, and we hold all those affected in our prayers,” she continued. “We know that United Methodists have diverse opinions, but we hope that more of us will pray and work together toward greater understanding, unity and healing.”

STAFF CHANGES  
Continued from 5

ations, is now a full-time communications strategist for OCV, which markets mobile apps, live video streaming, custom Facebook pages and media libraries for churches and non-profit organizations.

New Camp Innabah program director Katie McFarland, a native of the Detroit area, is a “six-season camping veteran” who began as a general counselor in Maine and worked at camps in Pennsylvania and Florida, where she currently directs programs at the Circle F Dude Ranch in Lake Wales. She is known for being a creative, hands-on leader in all aspects of camping, not just programming, which inspired her nickname “Katie Mac-of-All-Trades.”

McFarland is described as “passionate, determined and vibrant” in her advocacy and her love for nurturing campers and “encouraging others to follow their dreams.” She follows Dorothea Landis, a longtime Innabah camper and volunteer, who directed the Nature Center, created Youth Group Nights and then served as Program Director there from 2011 to 2013. Landis, who once described Innabah as like a second home, now shares her creative gifts and commitment to nurturing ministry at a Christian daycare center.

EPA aids new church efforts in new ways

BY GORDON HENDRICKSON

The Rev. Gordon Hendrickson  
Development has responded creatively to its limited resources by supporting new church initiatives in different ways.

Today we look for people who can start something new by taking a vision and implementing it. Once they show initial positive results we can come alongside them and bolster their efforts with limited conference funds.

New Birth (Nuevo Naciamento) UMC in Lebanon, Pa., is one example. This Latino congregation, the largest in the UMC’s Northeastern Jurisdiction, established several house churches and sent prospective local pastors for training to License to Preach School. Not all the churches will likely make it, but some may.

This initiative caught our attention; so Congregational Development Team (CDT) members visited, evaluated their efforts and presented them with a $3,000 check to support their church-growth initiative. While there is no guarantee of future funding, there is the potential of granting them additional aid in six months if their efforts continue to bear fruit.

We are encouraging other churches to envision new ministries they can create and begin to implement, in the hope that CDT can come alongside and assist them. With such vision and the faith and fortitude to make it a living, growing reality, we can all look forward to innovative ministries that grow the Body of Christ in new and exciting ways.

SIGN UP TODAY.  
CONTACT GORDON HENDRICKSON AT GHENDRICKSON@ EPAUMC.ORG.

MARCH 25:  
VITAL CHURCH Mergers  
led by Dirk Elliott, author of Vital Mergers: A New Church Start Approach That Joins Church Families Together

MARCH 29:  
MISSION INSITE TRAINING  
to help churches use this powerful online demographic information resource for visioning, planning and evaluation of church and community ministries.

SAVE THE DATE  
MISSION CELEBRATION  
Saturday, April 5, 2014 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Olivet United Methodist Church  
310 East Chestnut Ave. (3rd & Chestnut)  
Coatesville, PA 19320

Registration cost: $10 (materials & lunch included)

Special Guest: Patrick Friday, Director of “In Mission Together” for the General Board of Global Ministries

Converse with missionaries through Skype  
Mission themed workshops  
Learn about the missionaries related to Eastern PA Conference
In Memoriam

The Rev. John Kirk, Sr.
The Rev. John Kirk, Sr., died Dec. 2, 2013. He was the surviving spouse of the Rev. Adele Wilcox, who served Pottsville: Evangelical, Falls and Valley Forge; Saint Matthews. Kirk was a member of the former Troy Conference (now part of the New England Conference). A memorial service was to be held Dec 17 at St. Matthews UMC, Valley Forge. Memorial gifts should be sent to Neighborhood Hospice of West Chester, 795 E. Marshall Street, West Chester, PA 19380. Kirk is survived by his wife, Angela, who requested that no flowers or cards be sent to her; instead, donations should go to the hospice. Kirk has four surviving children: Benjamin Smith, Douglas Anasten, Jeffrey Kirk and John A. Kirk Jr.

Mrs. Anne Garrison
Anne Garrison died Nov. 30, 2013. She was married to Earl Garrison, former Treasurer of the Eastern Pa. Conference. Garrison is survived by her husband Earl and four children: James Garrison, Jean (and husband Alwin Britton), Heather Miller and Lauren Miller. Memorial donations may be offered to ACTS Vision Foundation, 375 Morris Road, PO Box 90, West Point, PA 19486-9973.

Mrs. Isabella deKrafft
Isabella deKrafft died Nov. 11, 2013. She was the surviving spouse of the late Rev. George deKrafft, an Elder in the Eastern Pa. Conference from 1967 to 1992, who died in 2002. Isabella deKrafft is survived by her husband, Elmer Britton, and three daughters: Gail, Donna, Linda and Patti. Memorial donations may be offered to Manor Estates, 1569 Teels Road, Pen Argyl, PA 18072.

Mrs. Dorothea C. Mohr
Dorothea C. Mohr died Oct. 29, 2013. She was married to the late Rev. Warren P. Mohr, who died in February 2005. She joined her husband in serving churches in Lehigh, Schuylkill, Northampton, Monroe and Lancaster Counties. She is survived by a son, Philip W. Mohr, and his wife, Leann, of State College; a daughter, Linda J. Howell, and her husband, Keith, of Pen Argyl; four grandchildren-- Timothy Mohr, Tamara Welsh and her husband, Christopher, Todd Howell and his wife, Laura, and Justin Howell; and two great-grandchildren, Nathanael Howell and Reagan Welsh. Mohr was preceded in death by two sisters and a brother. Memorial donations may be given to either Grace United Methodist Church, 404 E. Mountain Ave., Pen Argyl, PA 18072, or to Chandler Foundation, 375 Morris Road, PO Box 90, West Point, PA 19486-9973.

Mrs. Dorothea C. Mohr

The Rev. Clarence D. Ulrich
The Rev. Clarence D. Ulrich died Oct. 28, 2013. He served from 1959 to 1994 at the following churches: Geyers, Falmouth, Avon Zion, Brunnersville, and Reading: St. Matthews. His home church was Mount Joy; St. Mark’s. He is survived by his wife, Pauline Ulrich, his children--Chris and his wife Brenda, Cindy and her husband Brian, and Joe—his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Memorial donations may be sent to Cornwall Manor to help fund construction of the new health center. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Pauline Ulrich at Cornwall Manor, 222 Laurel Place, PO Box 125, Cornwall, PA 17016.
M any people around the world are celebrating the season of Christmas! They’re visiting friends and families, exchanging greetings and gifts, singing carols and attending special events. In all this activity, many often forget the reason for the season: Christ, our Savior. He lived and died amongst us, offering peace and healing to all. This Christ seeks to enter our hearts and homes, our churches and communities at Christmas and every day thereafter. He cares about every soul in need, and He calls us to do the same. It is when we hear His call and embrace people wrestling with life’s challenges that Christmas becomes most meaningful.

The recent passing of former South African president Nelson Mandela inspired memories of my visit to his country just a few years ago. I visited isolated Robben Island, off the coast of Cape Town, and the prison where Mandela was held for 18 of his 27 years as a political prisoner fighting for freedom during apartheid.

It was heartbreaking to see his tiny cell and the conditions the inmates had to endure. Yet, despite many hardships, he was able to forgive his oppressors and call for reconciliation and peaceful stability in the nation he would lead. The struggle to forgive is also about freedom, freedom of the soul. It is a precious legacy he has left to all of us.

Mandela, a tribal prince and longtime Methodist, was educated at Healdtown, a Wesleyan secondary school. In 1999, at the Parliament of the World’s Religions, he said, “Without the church, without religious institutions, I would never have been here today.” In 2000, the World Methodist Council awarded him the World Methodist Peace Award, its highest honor, for his profound commitment to peace and reconciliation.

Mandela was willing to sacrifice his life and freedom for the anti-apartheid movement. “I have cherished the ideal of a democratic, free society in which all persons live together in harmony with equal opportunities,” he told the court that convicted him. “It is an ideal which I hope to live for and achieve. But if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

Through his resilience and passion, he was able to share his vision of that ideal with the world. As we celebrate first the born and risen Christ, let us also remember the legacy of this freedom fighter’s life. And let us each strive in our own ways to be “ambassadors of reconciliation,” bringing peace and justice, hope and healing to our hurting world.

During this Christmas season of light let us ask, “How can we show God’s love to people in need? How can we be Immanuel to people who live in pain and darkness?”

Let this blessed season and the new year inspire us to become true disciples of Christ who participate more faithfully in God’s plan for salvation and in God’s transformation of our world.

Visit our www.epaumc.org to see Dr. Kurien’s photos of his 2011 visit to Robben Island.

Churches, camps and serving agencies throughout the EPA Conference shared gifts from the heart during Advent. From top: United Methodist Neighborhood Services in Philadelphia offered its annual month-long Christmas Shop, where neighbors can select and give gifts donated by United Methodist Women and other donors. Here Director Mary White (right) waits on Michelle Ruffin. LUMINA in Lancaster gave donated gifts as part of its Hope for the Holidays ministry. And Camp Innabah’s open house on Dec. 7 offered food and desserts, crafts for all ages and abilities, cookie decorating, caroling and games. Gretna Glen Camp also sponsored a Children’s Winter Blast retreat for 54 campers.