The Gift that Keeps on Giving and Living

heard on the radio the other day a catchy slogan as part as a fund raising campaign for Fox Chase Cancer Center. They are letting their would-be donors know that a gift to cancer research is a "gift that keeps on living." This is most likely a spin on the advertising slogan that we are used to hearing that says "the gift that keeps on giving." The origins of that slogan go back as far as the early phonograph machine, the 1925 RCA Victrola. Others have picked it up through the years in their advertising. Among them are: Coca Cola, Kodak cameras, flower stores that sell tulip bulbs, kitchen appliances, Hyundai cars, Chesterfield cigarettes, Avon cosmetics, ConocoPhillips (Petroleum oil) and even banks. We like the idea that our gifts have a long and enduring quality about them. We don’t want to give something that is opened quickly on Christmas morning and then stored away in a sock drawer or worse yet, thrown out with the used wrapping paper.

This is the season of giving. Christ came to earth as the ultimate gift of God’s love to the people of earth. The wise men came to Bethlehem to offer rare and valuable gifts to the Christ Child. We typically exchange gifts with loved ones and friends. This business of gift giving has often obscured the true meaning of Christmas as it can escalate into over-indulgence and extravagance. Many children are asked “what do you want for Christmas” and from an early age they are conditioned to seeing Christmas as a time of receiving.

Christmas should be above all else, a time of giving, giving to others out of love for Christ and especially for giving to those in need. One of the best ways to give a gift that keeps on giving is to give to missions. There are many opportunities to give to our wonderful United Methodist mission projects. We have missions all over the world that provide education, medical care, agricultural training, and emergency relief to name a few. That is a gift that keeps on giving as a gift to missions extends blessings in many ways.

We should also give the gift that keeps on living and that would be to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those in our communities and in the world. John 1:4 declares “in him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the light of all people." As people come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, they have life eternal as well as the light of guidance and truthful living here on earth. What greater gift could there be than the gift of life eternal? I am sure there is nothing more we could ask for than life in heaven with Jesus. Why is it that we don’t share our faith with people more?

The UMC has launched into a “Call to Action” program that is emphasizing the importance of increased church attendance, membership, small groups, mission involvement and mission giving. None of this can happen unless people are invited and drawn into conversation about Christ. We Christians are the ones who are called to share our testimony. This Christmas give to missions and make the world a better place here on earth. This gift keeps on giving. Don’t forget to give the gift of Christ by sharing your faith so that more people might know the joy of heaven. This gift keeps on living!
December

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11
UMW Prayer Service Against Domestic Violence: 3:30 at Mt. Zion UMC, 1530-38 N. 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122. For more information contact: Jeanyne James 215-878-6129.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25
Christmas Day!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31
Deadline to Submit Call to Action Information: The “Call to Action” is calling us to set goals and measure our progress. Re-calling us to transform the world through our actions and our relationships.

February

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10 - THURSDAY, JANUARY 12
Bishop’s Midwinter Retreat for Clergy & Spouses: Physical, Mental & Spiritual Wholeness: Taking care of ourselves is not an option - it is a necessity. Clarion Fontainebleau Resort, 10100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD 21842. See page 8.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22
District Days with Bishop Johnson: 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. For all clergy and laity. Phila.: Janes Memorial UMC, 41 - 59 E Haines Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144-2113.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10 - THURSDAY, JANUARY 12
Bishop’s Midwinter Retreat for Clergy & Spouses: Physical, Mental & Spiritual Wholeness: Taking care of ourselves is not an option - it is a necessity. Clarion Fontainebleau Resort, 10100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD 21842. See page 8.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31
Deadline to Submit Call to Action Information: The “Call to Action” is calling us to set goals and measure our progress. Re-calling us to transform the world through our actions and our relationships.

February

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5
District Days with Bishop Johnson: 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. For all clergy and laity. Coatesville: Olivet UMC, 3rd & Chestnut Streets, Coatesville, PA 19320-3203.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12
District Days with Bishop Johnson: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. For all clergy and laity. Lima UMC, 209. N. Middletown Road, Lima, PA 19037-0158.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13
General Conference Listening Sessions: February 13, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Allentown: Asbury UMC, 1533 Springhouse Road, Allentown, PA 18104.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17 - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18
First Annual Retreat for Associate Members, Local Pastors, Student Pastors, Supply Pastors, or Certified Lay Ministers: Pecometh Riverview Retreat Center, 136 Booker Wharf Road, Centreville, MD 21617. For more information, contact Martha Callaway, 302-542-7011.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21
Bishop’s Lenten Day Apart for Clergy: 3:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Montgomery Square UMC, 1900 County Line Rd. at Limekiln Pike, Montgomery Twp, PA.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26
District Days with Bishop Johnson: 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. For all clergy and laity. Wescosville: Bethany UMC, 1208 Brookside Road, Allentown, PA 18106. 7:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. at Mt. Pocono UMC, 12 Church Avenue, Mt. Pocono, Pa 18344.

Scan the image to the left with your smartphone for more great events!

In Memoriam

Rev. Sarah G. Beaman

She is survived by her children, Thomas Beaman and Wynne B. Hewitt.

Condolences may be sent to Wynne B. Hewitt, 205 West 17th Street, Wilmington, DE 19802.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief: http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/.

For online condolences, please visit CHANDLER FUNERAL HOMES & CREMATORY: chandlerfuneralhome.com.

Mrs. Angela J. Haney
Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Angela J. Haney, 94, who passed away on November 4, 2011, at Cornwall Manor, Cornwall, PA. She was the widow of the Rev. James M. Haney.

Rev. Haney served the following appointments beginning in 1938: W. Davenport (Wyoming); W. Belmar (Greater New Jersey); Chalfont Montgomery Square; St. Clair; Bryn Mawr Radnor; Phila: St. Matthew; Pottsville; Coatesville; and Phila: Arch Street. He retired in 1983, and passed away in 2008.

She is survived by daughters: Janelle Cooley (Bloomington, IL), Janette Kohr (Pittsburgh, PA) and Janitta Carithers (Seattle, WA), 8 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, two sisters: Faith Boettiger, Hope Vandegriff and brother, Fenelon Johnson.

Condolences may be sent to Janelle Cooley, 11 Pendleton Way, Bloomington, IL 61704.

Continued on page 5
A season of service

BY REV. DR. CHRISTOPHER KURIEN

In the early days of my ministry, as a young pastor in India, I served a two-point charge. One year, on the Sunday after Christmas, I was heading to one of my churches. On the way, I saw two poor rag-picker boys, about eight or nine years old, going through the trash. I paused to watch them pick through the trash to find food or other useful items. One boy found something to eat. The other put his hands up to ask, “Can I have some of that?” The first boy broke it into two pieces and had the heart to share what he found without hesitation. Tears came to my eyes when I saw that. When I arrived at the church, I told them of my experience and shared with them how the boy’s act reflected God’s generosity and sacrifice in sending his Son Jesus into the world to give us hope and salvation. God’s generous act in sending Jesus and the rag-picker boy’s act of generosity and love are actions we need to practice during the season of Christmas. How many of us would be willing to share half of what we have? After sharing my experience, the congregation responded by deciding to do something meaningful in missions in their community.

Another year, the same congregation, which was affluent, decided to forgo their special Christmas gathering and meal to go out to share with nearby quarry workers. Most of these quarry workers and their families were migrants from different parts of neighboring States. They lived in very small houses and struggled to provide for their families. Their children played outdoors with little supervision. The church decided to gather these children together for a Christmas celebration. They helped to bathe the children, provided a meal, shared Christmas pound cakes, and gave gifts with those kids. That was one of the most meaningful Christmas seasons I have experienced.

Let us remember our missionaries around the world who may be involved in similar ministries with the poor, and share our gifts with them, so that we can partner with them in going out into the world to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Please see the article in this issue of NEWspirit on pages 4-5 about establishing a Covenant Relationship with our United Methodist missionaries.

There are many opportunities for us to support ministry and make a difference in our global community: In this issue of NEWspirit you will also find articles on many Conference Advance Specials and other important ministries that you and your congregation can support to make a difference in the lives of persons in need.

Our camps - Innabah, Gretna Glen, Carson-Simpson Farm, and Pocono Plateau - are doing great ministry, not just during the summer, but all year round. Please support these important ministries so they can reach more children, youth, and adults for Christ. The January issue of NEWspirit will be dedicated to conference camping and retreat ministries.

We have a number of new churches that are struggling to start up and reach out to new people in their communities. Please pray for these churches. Another issue of NEWspirit will focus on new church starts, and offer you an opportunity for you to partner with them by sharing your prayers, your gifts, and your service.

In this season of God’s extraordinary and ultimate gift to us, let us be generous and sacrificial in our support of ministries that generously and sacrificially share God’s love.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmas season,

Christopher Kurien

REV. DR. CHRISTOPHER KURIEN IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of Congregational Transformation and Director of Connectional Ministries for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference The United Methodist Church.
Partner with our missionaries around the world

Conference Secretary for Global Missions, the Rev. David Davis is encouraging churches to support our United Methodist missionaries around the globe by entering in a Covenant Relationship. When a church establishes a Covenant Relationship with a missionary, they enter into a partnership. The church commits to financially support the missionary. “This is an expression of being a connectional church. It demonstrates being the Body of Christ at work around the world for those who are most in need of God’s love,” said Rev. Davis.

In developing a partnership, the missionary and the church pray for each other and communicate regularly about their struggles and successes, creating a dynamic relationship. Once every three years, the congregation has the opportunity to meet the missionary face-to-face by hosting them at their church.

Over 300 missionaries in 60 countries are supported through Covenant Relationships. “When you support our United Methodist missionaries, you are helping to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the World,” Rev. Davis said.

Please consider entering into a Covenant Relationship with these missionaries:

The Rev. Dr. Mark Abbott is a United Methodist missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries assigned with his wife, Diane, also a GBGM missionary, to serve in Madrid, Spain. He is professor of New Testament in the United Evangelical Theological Seminary. The United Evangelical Theological Seminary (SEUT) is an institution of the Spanish Evangelical Church and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church. Their vision is to help prepare spiritual leaders, both clergy and lay, for the Spanish Protestant community without focusing upon a particular denomination.

Prior to this assignment in Spain, the Abbotts served in Monterey, Mexico, where Mark was professor of New Testament and academic dean of the John Wesley Seminary, one of two seminaries of the Methodist Church of Mexico.

Mrs. Diane Abbott is a United Methodist missionary, who, along with her husband, the Rev. Dr. Mark Abbott, is serving in Madrid, Spain. Diane does materials production, translations and secretarial back-up at United Evangelical Theological Seminary. She is a harpist and pianist. She plays for seminary chapel services each Wednesday and is director of music and organist in the English-speaking Community Church of Madrid. Prior to this assignment the Abbotts served in Monterrey, Mexico. Diane worked in family and community ministries, and was also pianist for the Union Church of Monterrey. In her earlier term in Madrid, Mrs. Abbott served as hostess, musician, and choir leader at the English-speaking Community Church of Madrid. She shares, “Jesus ministered to those around him, not just by preaching and teaching, but helping them with everyday concerns. I was in a servant/encourager and sometimes leader role.”

Craig and Karen Dial, Board of Global Ministries missionaries, are Associates in Mission Service (AIMS) serving with Red Bird Mission of the Red Bird Annual Conference in Kentucky. When the Dials arrived at Red Bird Mission in August of 1987, Craig came to serve as supervisor for Retail Operations, and Karen came to be manager of the craft program, which is one of the major parts of economic development outreach.

In March of 1995 Karen became the Development Associate for Red Bird Mission handling inquiries about Red Bird as well as sending acknowledgments for all donations received. In 1998 she became a Candidate for Ministry and was licensed as a Local Pastor in July of 1999. Karen has served full-time as a pastor in the Red Bird Missionary Conference since 2000, and is currently under appointment to the Lothair and Combs United Methodist Churches in Hazard, KY. Besides being a full time pastor, Karen serves as a board member of the General Board of Church and Society. She is also serving on the Board of Directors of the Red Bird Mission as well as continuing her Course of Study as a local pastor.

Craig serves as the Director of Economic Opportunities at Red Bird Mission. He also oversees the Craft Program, the Community Store at Greenbriar, and the main Community Store at Red Bird Mission. Under his leadership, Red Bird Mission built a new clothing store to replace the old one and also built a receiving building that can handle all the clothes, household goods, and furniture that are donated to the Mission. The remodeled craft store has twice as much sales area as well as a warehouse. Craig and Karen Dial #773906.

Dr. Ellen Titus Hoover is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo (also called DRC or Congo-Kinshasa). She is a part-time professor at the United Methodist University in Mulungwishi where she teaches courses in Islam and church history in the college of theology. Ellen also works with The English-speaking School of Lubumbashi (TESOL), an elementary and middle school for children of missionaries, full-time church workers and other English-speaking families in a city where French is the common language of instruction. After helping start the school in 1987, she served on the Administrative Council and as director of the school. Dr. Hoover holds a Bachelor of Arts from Duke University and a Ph.D. in African History from Yale University. Ellen entered missionary service in 1979 and is married to Dr. Jeffrey Hoover, also a GBGM missionary who serves in the DRC. Their family includes their children Jane, Jeremy and wife Lindsay, and Mark. Ellen Hoover #07990Z.

Mark and Rebecca Smallwood are serving as Associates in Mission Service (AIMS) with the Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church at Red Bird Mission in Kentucky. Mark

Continued on page 5
Partner with missionaries

Continued from page 4

and Rebecca came to Red Bird Mission in August 1988 to serve as teachers at Red Bird Mission School during its first full year as a private Christian School. Mark directs the vocal and instrumental music programs for the elementary, middle school and high school. Rebecca taught 4th grade for 9 1/2 years and now teaches Elementary Christian Education.

For Mark, music has been an outlet for expressing his faith since childhood. When a pastor took him on a visit to Asbury College, he knew that was where he would be going to college, and in 1986 graduated prepared to share his music and put it to use for the Lord. After two years in the public schools in West Virginia, he arrived at Red Bird and began the process of resurrecting a music program what had suffered severely for lack of a teacher. Mark earned a MA degree in Music Education from Eastern Kentucky University in 1991.

Rebecca’s pilgrimage gives credence to the saying at Red Bird that “if you get your feet wet in the creek you’ll be back.” Her first contact with Red Bird was in 1982 as a member of a work team and even then she felt God’s call to return to Red Bird as a teacher. Rebecca is a 1986 graduate of Oakland City College in Oakland City, Indiana with a BS in Education and in 1992 earned a MA in Elementary Education from Eastern Kentucky University. Following her marriage to Mark in 1986 she was a public school teacher for two years prior to returning to Red Bird. Mark and Rebecca Smallwood #773777.

Dr. Mark Zimmerman is a United Methodist missionary assigned to work in Kathmandu, Nepal, a predominantly Hindu country in the Himalayan region of Asia. A medical doctor specializing in internal medicine, Mark has been working in Nepal since 1986 – initially as a hospital-based clinical doctor, later as medical director of Patan Hospital (1998-2005), and now as director of the Nick Simons Institute (NSI), an organization working in Nepal with a mission to train and support skilled, compassionate rural health care workers. “NSI emerged out of several confluent streams. First, those of us working in Nepal’s hospitals have long been aware of (and frustrated by) the huge urban-rural gap in health care. For many people in the hills, quality health care is the privilege of the prosperous few. Second, in the last few years our mission hospitals have conducted innovative types of training that improved rural health care. Finally, Jim and Marilyn Simons of New York came to Nepal to create a memorial for their son, Nick, who had worked here and died. Through training and staff support, NSI is working to improve health care for rural Nepali people. We believe that God’s hand brought these situations together, and we value your prayers for this exciting work.”

A native of Warminster, PA, Mark is a member of the Lehman Memorial UMC in Hatboro, PA. Mark Zimmerman #109082.

Mrs. Deirdre Zimmerman is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church – in partnership with the Church Missionary Society of Ireland – serving with her husband, Dr. Mark Zimmerman, in Kathmandu, Nepal. A nutritionist and dietitian by training, Deirdre was first assigned to work for United Mission to Nepal’s Nutrition Programme, which addresses the problem of malnutrition in women and children through training and education. After a two-year break to care for their young sons, Zachary and Benjamin, Deirdre returned to part-time work as advisor to Nutrition Promotion and Consultancy Services, an organization which is an offshoot of the previous Nutrition Programme. Of her work Deirdre shares, “I see this as involvement in God’s work to restore full life and to provide for all the needs of all people: nutrition and health (in all its facets) being essential for people to achieve their God-given potential.” Deirdre understands her assignment as a “ministry of presence.” “I hope my presence in Nepal as a United Methodist missionary can encourage the local Nepali church that the universal church stands in solidarity with them (a minority faith in a Hindu country), and that I may be a channel for bringing some of the gifts of the Nepal church into American churches.” Deirdre Zimmerman #13171Z.

How to establish a Covenant Relationship

- Establish a financial goal of $2,500 annually or $5 per church member per year.
- Complete and submit the Covenant Relationship Form to establish your partnership with a missionary. Covenant Relationship Form:
  - http://new.gbgm-umc.org/advance/missionaries
- Send financial support to the EPA Conference clearly designating the missionary’s name or Advance number.
- Consider the missionary as an extension of your church staff by listing them in your church bulletin and prayerfully supporting their work.

In Memoriam

Continued from page 2

Mrs. Joan MacMain

Word has been received of the death of Mrs. Joan MacMain, wife of Rev. James S. MacMain, who passed away on Monday, October 24, 2011.

Rev. MacMain has served the following appointments: Swarthmore (Assoc.), Cochranville, Former Sharon Hill, Parkside, and Morrisville. He retired in 1999.

She is survived by her husband, Jim, and three children: Cathy, David, and Nancy.

Condolences may be sent to Rev. James S. MacMain, 169 High Street, Newtown, PA 18940.

Memorial contributions may be sent for the Camp scholarship fund, to Camp Innabah, 712 Pughtown Road, Spring City, PA 19475.
John Crapper, Tindley Temple UMC, received the Walter King Memorial Award at the 28th Annual Academy for Laity at the Sheraton Hotel, Bucks County PA, on Saturday evening, August 6, 2011.

The award was presented by members of the Academy Planning Team as part of the evening program which began with praise music led by Grove UMC Praise Band and included dinner and a time of fellowship.

John Crapper accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and joined Tindley Temple UNC in 1967. He served as lay leader, administrative council chair, Christian education chair, Sunday school superintendent, evangelism chair and lay member to Annual Conference. Beyond the local church, he has been district lay leader and has been active in leadership in United Methodist Men.

As a Christ Servant Minister, John has a special love for service in speaking, caring, and visitation ministries. He visits the sick, homebound, and terminally ill, as well as counseling and teaching the word of God. His Bible study sessions during the Academy weekend were always well received.

His strong personality, intelligence, articulation and outgoing, friendly spirit has engendered close friendships within, and beyond, Tindley Temple where he is tirelessly active, always willing and ready to help anyone.

John and his wife, Beatrice Smallwood, are the proud parents of two sons, four daughters and fourteen grandchildren. Raymond DeBrest, John’s good friend, comments, “Having known John for over 25 years, I am confident that he is more than deserving of this award. Walter would be honored in knowing John Crapper is the recipient of this award honoring his name.”

The Walter King Memorial Award is presented in the memory of Walter King who was active in his local church and in the conference. He was treasurer for the Academy for Laity and faithfully served on the planning team for a number of years. The award was established in 2010 and is given to a Christ Servant Minister who embodies and exemplifies the characteristics of a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ through leadership, communication, and caring ministries.

The next Academy for Laity will be held August 3-5, 2012 at West Lawn UMC in Reading. Some scholarships are available through the Board of Laity and the Reta Barto Scholarship Fund.
Holiday Wish List helps women and children

The United Methodist Women of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Philadelphia are in partnership with Philadelphia’s Women Against Abuse, Inc, one of the largest domestic violence programs in the country, serving more than 10,000 individuals each year with emergency housing, legal services, hotline counseling, education and advocacy. Women Against Abuse (WAA), while headquartered in Philadelphia, also serves women and children in need throughout Philadelphia’s neighboring counties. According to the organization, meeting the needs of so many can be challenging, especially when families have to be turned away for lack of resources and space.

You can join us in helping to eradicate Domestic Violence. To help raise Awareness, please set aside time in your church to advocate and give voice to this social ill which affects so many families. You are encouraged to donate items at Mt. Zion UMC, as we have been designated as an official WAA Holiday Gift Drop-off Site. United Methodist Neighborhood Services will be assisting with the project. Please pray daily for victims of abuse around the world. Pray for an increase in the public and private funding that provide services for so many women and children.

Items listed below are most needed:

- New Coats (Women & Children)
- Hats and Scarves
- Slippers
- Pajamas (Women & Children)
- Toiletries
- Toys
- Discarded or used Cell Phones
- Wash Cloths/Towels
- Pampers (all sizes)
- Laundry Detergent
- Gift Cards (Kmart, Target, Walmart)

For more information, visit www.womenagainstabuse.org. Or, contact Jeanyne James, Conference United Methodist Women Social Action Coordinator, 215-878-6129.

Spread a little hope

Strength for Service is a devotional written specifically for those in service of others. First published in 1942, the volume went out of print in the 1950s as armed forces personnel returned home. Fifty years later, Boy Scout Evan Hunsberger discovered his grandfather’s well worn copy of the book and made an Eagle Scout project out of seeing the volume republished. Today, the revised book has been distributed to service personnel of many denominations. Your help is needed to share this inspiring devotional with thousands more. Whether serving on the front lines in Iraq or caring for the wounded stateside, U.S. military personnel around the world need Strength for Service.

Hold a Strength for Service Sunday: Talk briefly about the book and what an encouragement it is to so many men and women. Invite those with loved ones serving in the U.S. and overseas to stand and be acknowledged, and pray for our troops before collecting a special offering.

More than 450,000 copies of Strength for Service have been given around the world. Many more are needed both here in the U.S. and around the world. To make an online donation, go to http://www.strengthforservice.org/. Or you can mail your donation, check made payable to Strength for Service Publication Fund, General Commission on United Methodist Men, P.O. Box 440515, Nashville, TN 37244-0515.

Strength for Service is now available in a Kindle version!
Circles Initiative

With nearly one-sixth of our society living in poverty, the Circles Initiative of Palmyra is working to provide emergency assistance that sustains people living there. The objective is to minister with people in poverty so they can make progress toward sustaining themselves.

The Circles Initiative partners persons who want to work their way out of poverty with individuals who want to journey with them as they move toward personal sustainability. Circles also impacts its communities: Early results demonstrate that for every $1 spent on the program, $2 in welfare and food stamp subsidies were returned to the state, and $4 to the community as new earned income.

The Palmyra Initiative is an outgrowth of a recent meeting and encouragement from Bishop Johnson to start at least 6 Circles Initiatives within our conference. While strong support from within the congregation and $10,000 of seed money have already been raised, volunteer Lee Smedley and pastor Dave Harris of Palmyra First UMC are organizing community informational meetings to share information and gather further support.

The Palmyra Circles Initiative asks for prayers for discernment and success according to God’s plan in bringing Circles to Palmyra and to our conference.

If you would like to learn more about Circles, contact Lee Smedley, who available to speak to your church or community group: lee@leesmedley.com or 610-914-3846.

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Bringing Christmas to needy families

BY MARY WHITE

Each year United Methodist Neighborhood Services (UMNS) sponsors a Christmas Shop with generous support from United Methodist groups, churches, and caring individuals. In the past years we have been able to help many needy families. In addition, this year we hope to do much more with the generous contributions given by many individuals. This year we will be able to help 20 adopted children and their new families with Christmas toys, gifts, and food.

The staff of the UMNS would like to give special thanks to those United Methodist churches and individuals that provided toys for the needy families.

Volunteers are always needed; if you have some free time and would like to help with hands on mission we welcome your help. We are in need of help in our clothes closet, office, food pantry and front desk.

Again, thank you for all the prayers and support you have given to United Methodist Neighborhood Services over the years. As you might know, the needs are growing each year.

DR. MARY WHITE IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of United Methodist Neighborhood Services.
**Feeding the hungry**

*BY BISHOP PEGGY JOHNSON*

We recently celebrated Thanksgiving. What did you have: turkey... ham? I know some people in Lebanon County have stuffed pig stomach. On the eastern shore some families serve oysters and crabs. What you eat is not the main point of Thanksgiving of course. The giving of thanks to God is the center of this national observance. As we give thanks we should always be “living” thanks by acts of compassion and sacrifice.

Why not give to the Agricultural Project in the Central Congo Conference of The United Methodist Church? Last year a team of Congolese farmers were trained at an agriculture school in Zambia, run by missionary Paul Webster. Volunteers in Mission from the Pen-Del Conference assisted with this training. These new farmers are doing some amazing work now in the Congo but they need help to continue to train people and to establish more farms. This is critically important in order to feed people as well as become a source of income. The Congo is slowly recovering from years of civil war and food is scarce. Our Congo Partnership, that includes the Eastern PA and the Peninsula-Delaware Conferences, has provided $15,000 for start up funds. We need to raise at least $25,000 for the next phase of the project. If everyone would donate to the Congo Partnership this project could feed so many people. You can do so by sending funds made payable to: Eastern PA Annual Conference. Mail to: Congo Partnership, c/o Rev. David Ryan, Hopeland UM Church, 295 N. Clay Road, Lititz, PA 17543. Be sure to write “Congo Partnership Agriculture Project” on the memo line when you donate.

The Agriculture Project Powerpoint can be shown at your churches and it further illustrates the incredible need and that wonderful progress: [http://www.epaumc.org/news/stories/congo-agriculture-project](http://www.epaumc.org/news/stories/congo-agriculture-project).

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**Hub provides help**

*BY BRIAN ALBERT*

The Northwest District Hub is an emergency relief project of EPA which operates in cooperation with the Susquehanna Conference. The Hub provides help for people in our neighborhood and emergency kits and products for people around the world.

In refugee camps, third world countries, and disaster stricken parts of America, products like cleaning buckets (flood buckets) go around the world or down the street. Following Tropical Storm Lee, the Hub prepared 21 buckets to help our flood ravaged neighborhood. Money was donated on a Monday, product was purchased on Tuesday, and the buckets were assembled for distribution through FEMA on Wednesday. On a worldwide scale, Birthing Kits give a midwife in a refugee camp the essential materials to help in childbirth. Layette kits give a mother something to clothe the baby in after birth.

In addition, the Hub assembles sewing kits, school kits, and health kits. It receives old computers for refurbishing and distribution. Recently, the Hub acquired five computers for the Local Hispanic Center. The Hub also collects bicycles, medical equipment, furniture, and old suitcases. These are either sent out for global distribution, or given back to our neighbors in the community as we hear of a need. This is a hands-on ministry that meets people where their needs are. To help, contact Rev. Brian Albert at Covenant UMC in Lebanon or Rev. Gary Jacabella at Immanuel UMC in Cleona. For more information about our relief efforts, go to [www.missioncentral.org](http://www.missioncentral.org).

![Volunteers pack emergency supplies for distribution in the Lebanon community.](image)
Shalom Partnership

BY ROBERT HANNUM

There is a crisis in our school system. About 67% of our youth graduate from high school. Though test scores are rising a bit, it is slow, and children and youth need all the remedial help they can get. With recent budget cuts, in Lancaster there is now no summer school, creating a real need for programs in the summer to augment the good work our teachers are doing.

The Shalom Partnership of Lancaster, a partnership of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and El Redentor and St. Paul’s United Methodist Churches, will be in our thirteenth year next summer of sponsoring programs in math, reading and science, to keep our students reading and learning. We hire certified teachers from the District, and let principals develop summer learning opportunities to fit the need. We raise the money and contract with the teachers (2 per program) whom the principals recommend.

From one program, we have grown to three programs last summer, and will add a fourth this coming summer, with another school waiting in the wings. Our teachers work with 3rd and 4th grade students who are pre and post-tested to ascertain results. Most make significant improvement. We will serve about 200 persons, including the 85 students in our programs. We encourage our students to develop better self-esteem and a new respect for school, keep learning and growing during summertime, to go on to higher educational institutions in time, and to take their places as productive citizens in their communities.

The long-range plan is to find two or three persons with a passion for this ministry, and to fund the programs for 3-5 years.

For more information, contact Rev. Bob Hannum, Executive Director, Shalom Partnership of Lancaster, Inc, 664 Oakwood Lane, Lancaster, PA, 17603; bhannum@verizon.net or 717-299-3798. The Shalom Partnership of Lancaster is a non-profit, 501 (c)(3) organization.

Bread of Life Ministry

BY SUSAN KEELEY

In September 2011 Angelfood Ministries officially went out of business. Mount Hope Church was left with the dilemma of how to help those in need in our surrounding area of Aston, Trainer, Brookhaven, Parkside and Marcus Hook, Pa. We had been helping 25-30 families a month. One of the best parts of this ministry has been to come to know those in our community and show and tell them the love of Jesus Christ - an opportunity to put God’s awesome love into action.

When Angelfood was available, people from the community could order food at a discount price. There didn’t seem to be enough food in those boxes, so we added an extra table, from donations, where people could pick up those extras items such as, eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables and basic staples at no cost. Then we added a clothing closet. Word has gotten out that you could call Mount Hope and get help.

People that came for food were from all walks of life: an aging former college professor, his dear wife and family; a police officer out of work; a Mom who had been addicted to drugs and was trying to beat that addiction, finally getting custody of her children; a nursing assistant whose husband had a heart condition - he was out of work and then she lost her job; a man who had had a double transplant and then his wife fell ill with a neurological disorder; a number of elderly people who were struggling to pay their living expenses and cost of medicines, doctor visit co-pays; the list goes on.

This ministry has had a wonderful core group of volunteers and we have worked together as a church family side by side. Often there have been 20 people or more who showed up to help. The number of volunteers has grown as members of all ages and their friends and family came out to help.

In the beginning, sharing my faith with others was hard for me to do. At first I could just hug and sometimes cry with others, but as time went on I could hold their hands or lay hands on them in prayer. I felt and saw the Holy Spirit working in their lives and my life too.

We are prayerfully seeking ways to continue and expand this ministry here at Mount Hope Church. The people coming to us need food, and they need the Lord: The Bread of Life! Thus our new name was inspired.

We are in an area that is right next to the second poorest city in the nation and where the oil refineries are soon to shut down and a lot of jobs will be lost. We anticipate that the need in this area will only grow. To meet that need we are planning ways to expand storage with freezers, refrigerators and shelving to store the food. Please keep Mount Hope Bread of Life Ministry in your prayers.

For more information, contact Susan Keeley: sussyrm@yahoo.com.
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In mission with the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of The United Methodist Church
Methodist Home for Children

BY JOAN SHUMATE

Children and their needs are the heart of the mission and work of Methodist Home for Children. Founder Mrs. Ellen Simpson, wife of Bishop Matthew Simpson, along with a group of Methodist women had a vision for orphaned and alone children following the Civil War. While no longer an orphanage, Methodist Home for Children continues the legacy of providing care for children and their families through its social, residential, educational and prevention services.

Through MHC’s two service agencies, Methodist Services for Children & Families and Methodist Family Services of Philadelphia, staff work with families who need the basics of food, clothing and shelter but who also face issues of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, homelessness, mental health diagnoses, delinquency, truancy and crime. The goal is to enable them to have the basic essentials for living and to help them achieve their greatest potential in life.

Through dedicated staff and entrusted resources, Methodist Services provides outpatient counseling, life skills education, childcare & after school programming, parenting programs, crisis intervention, independent housing assistance, and child protection services. These services are provided at the Main Campus on Monument Road in Philadelphia and at satellite offices in Bangor, Palmerton and Easton.

Each year Methodist Services touches the lives of approximately 2,500 clients. Each year MHC through its Foundation needs to raise considerable private dollars to replace the continued funding cuts made by government.

For more information on how you can become involved in touching lives, contact Christine Moore at cmoore@methodistservices.org.

JOAN SHUMATE IS OUTREACH COORDINATOR for the Methodist Home for Children.

2011/12 Conference Advance Specials

Conference Advance Specials are approved ministries within the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference eligible to receive second-mile giving from Conference churches. Ministries may apply for Conference Advance Special status by submitting an application to the Conference Mission Secretary, Rev. David Davis. Having Conference Advance Status means that a ministry may seek funds from a local church. The church, however, must have met its financial commitments to the Connectional Ministry Fund and General Church Funds in the prior year’s budget. Please support these Conference Advance Specials:

Asbury Ministry at Drexel is the only full-time campus ministry currently supported by the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. As the ecumenical Christian ministry at Drexel, Asbury visibly demonstrates God’s love by providing a spiritual presence, pastoral guidance and prophetic voice that impact the University.

Challenge Camps Scholarships and Program provide camping experiences for the developmentally challenged so regular camp activities are enjoyed at an appropriate pace. Advance special funds provide scholarships and additional program support.

Eastern Pa Mission Partnerships with the Central Congo projects provide doctors and nursing support in Mpasa, Wembo Nyama, Tunda and Minga; food for children and elderly through the Mpasas Clinic and Nutrition Center; an Agriculture Project; Communications support for the conferences; the establishment of a Conference center, and Christian Education in Wembo Nayama.

Greater Hazleton Metro Ministries offers English instruction to over 100 students. Three regularly scheduled classes serve 15-25 students each, with students ranging from early elementary school to senior citizens. A computer lab will offer language lab capacity and computer literacy courses to a variety of persons, as well as tutoring in English and citizenship classes.

Hope Christian Counseling & Retreat Ministries offers professional counseling, retreat and workshop facilitation, and training for individuals and groups by qualified, certified or licensed professionals and/or ordained clergy. Areas of expertise include addictive/compulsive behaviors; mental health concerns; grief, loss and life transitions; relationship issues; visitation ministry; and small group ministry.

Lancaster: Lumina coordinates the outreach efforts of over 75 United Methodist Churches on the Southwest District. Our 3 main areas of focus are: 1) Children’s Ministries 2) Clothing (Professional clothing and school uniforms) and 3) Nutrition Education. We serve individuals and families living in poverty.

Lancaster: Shalom Partnership’s Summer Enrichment program is a unique partnership between the organization, local UM churches and the School District. Three enrichment programs in Lancaster City are customized to meet the specific needs of students in three Elementary Schools.

Mid-town Parish Vision Table is a team of persons representing 10 congregations of the Central District, which has come alongside the congregation of Mid-town Parish to work with them in erecting new facilities for mission, evangelism and social service in the heart of North Philadelphia, after their old building was razed several years ago.

Philadelphia: Methodist Family Services of Philadelphia seeks funding to enhance educational programs including computer, drama, and swimming in the summer camp program, and supplies for five after school programs and day care center.

Philadelphia: United Methodist Neighborhood Services provides services to the low income families in the North Philadelphia area such as summer enrichment summer camp, food and clothing, assistance with rent and heating bills.

Spiritual Renewal Ministries, Inc. offers scholarships to churches, groups and individuals who desire to deepen their relationship with God in Jesus Christ, through spiritual direction, retreats, and seminars, undergirding their mission and ministries with prayer, and spiritual formation.
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