



Twelve of the 22 Eastern PA Conference delegates elected to the 2016 General and Northeastern Jurisdictional conferences gathered for their first meeting June 6 at West Lawn UMC. (From left) Seated are: Mary White, Judy Ehninger, the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm (delegation leader) and Krystl Johnson. Standing are: the Rev. Mindy McKonly, the Rev. Lydia Muñoz, Ross Brightwell, the Rev. Robin Hynicka, the Rev. Jeff Raffauf, Clarita Krall, Aaron Smith and David Koch. For the entire list of delegates see the article on page 10. Full coverage of Annual Conference appears on pages 7-12. *John Coleman photo*

## Planting Seeds: Laity Academy 2015

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

“I learned to lead non-believers toward salvation.” “It was a great blessing to my spiritual growth.”

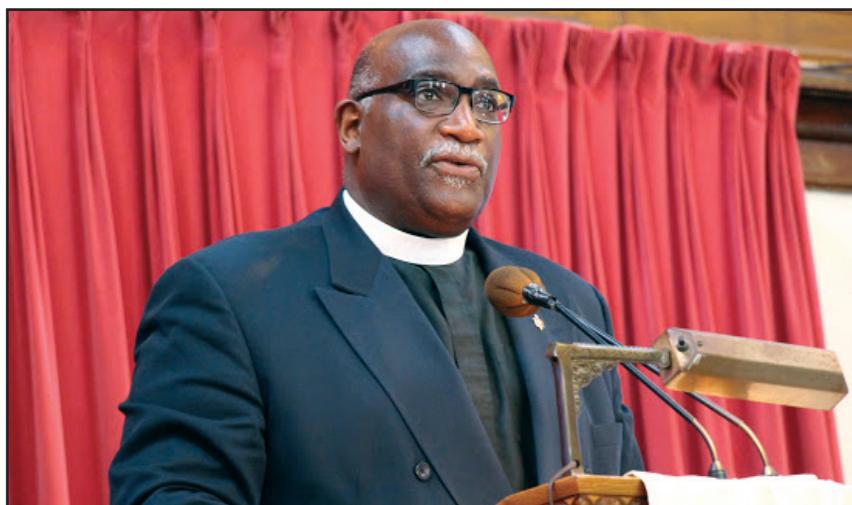
“The church has been changing; we must change with it.” “I have more to share than I was aware of.” “(I learned) how important the laity is.” “Thank you for a blessed fellowship.”

It seems clear from evaluations of the 2014 Eastern PA Conference Laity Academy that minds were opened, hearts were moved, and lives and ministries were possibly changed. The numerous glowing

accolades followed two days of concentrated learning and dialogue, fellowship and worship for more than 170 people.

The 32nd annual Laity Academy, August 14-16, 2015, will offer others a chance to enjoy the same transformational learning experience and to come away feeling similarly blessed. The gathering will return, back by popular demand, to The Inn

**continued on page 4**



Bishop Gregory Palmer was the featured preacher May 30 at the historical celebration of the former Delaware Annual Conference. See coverage on page 16. *Sabrina Daluisio photo*

## Finance strategist hired as Conference Treasurer

James E. Cruickshank, CFA, a longtime financial leadership and investment management executive, brings his skills and experience to the Eastern PA Conference as its new Conference Treasurer beginning Aug. 3.



Bishop Peggy Johnson and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration announced his hiring in June. He will succeed current Treasurer Peter DiNofia, who retires after seven years in the post.

During his 30-year career, Jim Cruickshank has successfully led strategic growth initiatives for corporations and business units. His specialties include corporate finance, capital markets, risk management, financial planning and analysis, and relationship management.

He was Director of Treasury and Corporate Finance and then President of John Hancock Capital Corporation, where he managed \$5 billion of fixed income investments. He began his career as a fixed income credit analyst at John Hancock Financial Services.

Jim joined Lincoln Financial Group as Assistant Treasurer in 2001 and later became Vice President for Corporate Finance and Investments. Since 2010 he has worked as an executive consultant, helping clients with their strategic, financial, and investment management projects.

While earning an M.B.A. in finance from the Sawyer School of Management at Suffolk University in Boston, Mass., he was inducted into several business and finance honor societies. He also earned a bachelor's degree in Economics from Colby College in Waterville, Maine. He holds the Chartered Financial Analyst designation (CFA) and is a member of Financial Executives International (FEI), the Philadelphia Financial Analysts Society, the CFA Institute, and the Philadelphia Treasurer's Club, where he is a former vice president.

Jim is an active supporter of Baker Industries, a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation that helps individuals who are challenged, recovered from substance abuse, or released from incarceration, return to productive, self-sufficient employment positions in the private sector.

He lives in Wayne, Pa., with his wife Karen and two children. “I look forward to joining the Eastern PA Conference team,” he said, “and working with them to achieve important goals that help the churches they serve make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

## July

JULY 18

**UMMen's Prayer Breakfast:** Tindley Temple UMC, Phila., 9 to 11 AM. Guest Speaker: Lt. Col., Chaplain, Sherrol James, U.S. Air Force.

**United Methodist Night at the Phillies**

**Ballpark:** 7:05 PM Phillies vs. Miami Marlins. Discounted tickets. Ticket proceeds benefit Conference UMM Ministries.

JULY 21

**Level 1 (Basic) Sexual Ethics:** 9 AM – 3PM. Conshohocken UMC. Registration: \$30.

JULY 24-26

**Mission U:** The Inn at Reading. Mission education for men, women, and youth

JULY 25

**UM Men's Softball Tournament:** Starts 9 AM. Mondauk Commons Park, 1451 Dillon Rd., Amble, Pa. Registration: \$135 plus \$20 per team per game for the umpire.

## August

AUGUST 1

**UM Day at Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom (Rainout date):** Discount coupons available.

AUGUST 14-16

**32nd Laity Academy:** The Inn at Reading. Selection of basic and intensive classes in various faith- and ministry-related topics. Basic and advanced training for Christ Servant Ministers and Certified Lay Ministers.

## September

SEPT. 9-12

**District Laity Retreats:** (6 locations) Spiritual renewal for lay leadership.

SEPT. 19

**"Only Four Things Grow Churches" Workshop:** 9 AM--4 PM, St. Matthew's UMC of Valley Forge. Training in inviting people into Christ and your church, then connecting, discipling and sending them back into the world as missionaries. Registration: \$75/person or \$65/person in a team of three or more.

SEPT. 25

**Sexual Ethics Advanced-Level Training:** "Shame-Less Lives, Grace-Full Congregations." West Lawn UMC. 9 AM--3:30 PM

## October

OCT. 2-4

**NEJ Conference on Transformational Leadership:** Hershey Inn, Hershey, Pa. Training event for emerging leaders.

OCT. 5

**Mission InSite Training:** Eastern PA Conference Center. Workshop with Tom Bandy (Live Video Streamed)

OCT. 7-10

**Interim Ministry Training:** National Conference Center, Phoenixville.

OCT. 10

**Healing Communities Training Event:** 9 AM-4 PM. St. Matthew's UMC of Valley Forge. Providing church and community-based support and restorative justice ministry with current and former prison inmates and their families.

OCT. 17

**UMW Annual Celebration:** 9 AM-3 PM, Lehman Memorial UMC, Hatboro. Presentation on racial justice, election of officers for 2016, and UMW pledge service.

**Conference Connectional Table Meeting:** 8 AM--2 PM, Camp Innabah. Networking, planning for leaders and representatives of conference boards, teams and committees.

OCT. 24

**Sexual Ethics Level 1 (Basic) Training:** 9 AM – 3PM. West Lawn UMC, Reading, 9 AM--3 PM. Registration: \$30

OCT. 30-NOV. 1

**Changing Racism:** National Conference Center, Phoenixville. Training to address racial bias and discrimination, and improve interracial relations.

### BISHOP'S DAYS ON THE DISTRICTS

- **Oct. 8:** Southeast District
- **Oct. 13:** Central District
- **Oct. 14:** East District
- **Oct. 20:** Northeast District
- **Oct. 22:** Northwest District
- **Oct. 28:** Southwest District

## November

NOV. 7

**Planting Seeds for Ministry:** Hopewell UMC

NOV. 14

**Adjourned Session of Annual Conference:** Hempfield UMC, Lancaster

## Come celebrate an American Patriot and an American Pastime on Saturday, July 18

Come meet and hear **Lt. Colonel Sherrol James**, a U.S. Air Force Chaplain, speak at the Eastern PA Conference **UM Men's Annual Prayer Breakfast July 18**. Join us for good food, great fellowship and an inspiring message at **Tindley Temple UMC**, 750 S. Broad St, Philadelphia, from 9 to 11 AM.



Then come see Lt. Col. James throw out the ceremonial first pitch while you enjoy **United Methodist Night with the Phillies at Citizens Bank Park**. Baseball's Phila. Phillies will face the Miami Marlins at 7 PM. Bring your friends, family and fellow church members. Bring your neighbors and coworkers. Join us as we root for the home team and celebrate our United Methodist presence at the Park. And come hear New Hanover UMC's choir sing the National Anthem!

Visit our Website, **epaumc.org**, for info about tickets to the prayer breakfast and ballgame.

Also, Lt. Col. James will preach Sunday, July 19, at New Hanover UMC, 2211 Swamp Pike, Gilbertsville, PA. Services are at 8, 9 and 10:30 AM.

*"Give me 6 hours to chop down a tree, and I'll spend the first 4 sharpening the axe." --Abraham Lincoln*

Come sharpen your tools for leadership and church growth at these dynamic upcoming training events. Register now. See our Website calendar for links to more information.

### Launchpad

**AUG. 21-23, AT NEW BIRTH UMC (NUEVO NACIMIENTO) IN LEBANON, PA.**

This PATH 1 training is for current or prospective new-church planters and their core leaders. Launchpad guides teams through the early stages of church planting with exercises to help them start new faith communities. The training, offered in English and Spanish, is based on lessons learned from hundreds of church planting leaders across the USA. Costs: \$100 for the church planter (and free for spouses) and \$50 for other team members. Registration deadline: Aug. 1.



### "Only Four Things Grow Your Church"

**SEPT. 19, 9 AM TO 4 PM, AT ST. MATTHEWS UMC OF VALLEY FORGE, WAYNE, PA.**

Bill Tenny-Brittian and Bill Easum will conduct a seminar designed for church leaders (clergy, staff and laity) who are committed to seeing their churches become effective, faithful, and sustainable. They will teach key concepts for Inviting, Connecting, Discipling and Sending people into the world to make more disciples. Cost: \$75. All attendees get a \$50 gift card. Also, teams of 3 or more save \$10 per registration.



### NEJ Conference on Transformational Leadership

**OCT. 2-4 AT HERSHEY LODGE, IN HERSHEY, PA.**

"See, Know, Love." The Northeastern Jurisdiction Vision Table sponsors this ground-breaking learning adventure for emerging leaders. Dynamic speakers, vibrant conversations and innovative workshops will alter the way you think about leadership and living out your faith. Costs: \$25 for the symposium; \$140 for meals; \$159 a night for hotel.



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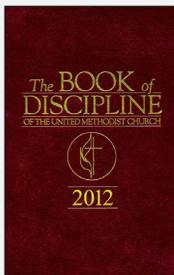
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## Faithfully Yours Loving Alike with One Heart

John Wesley the founder of the Methodist movement once said “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without a doubt, we may!”

That is my prayer as we absorb the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down state laws barring same-gender couples from enjoying marriage on the same terms given to opposite-sex couples. Included in the Court’s majority statement were these words: “Many who deem same-sex marriage to be wrong reach that conclusion based on decent and honorable religious or philosophical premises, and neither they nor their beliefs are disparaged here.”



### Book of Discipline has not changed

The justices also stated, “It must be emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the

principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered.”

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church has not changed with this ruling from the Supreme Court. Only our General Conference can change our rules and policies. General Conference will meet again in May 2016 in Portland, Oregon. At that time there will likely be many petitions appealing for same-gender marriages to be permitted for churches and pastors who feel called to engage in this kind of ministry.

### Unity of the church is in question

The denomination’s coordinating body, The Connectional Table, has voted to put forth a petition for consideration known as “A Third Way.” This measure would allow “the exercise of conscience” among UM clergy to perform ceremonies that celebrate same-gender unions if they wish. And clergy who do not wish to perform such ceremonies would not be required to do so.

Annual conferences would continue to determine matters of ordination, including whether or not to ordain LGBTQ persons. Bishops would determine where to appoint clergy based on the existing consultative process outlined in the Discipline.

This proposal also removes being a practicing homosexual or performing same-gender wedding ceremonies from the list of chargeable offenses for United Methodist clergy. But it would leave the funding restrictions

against promoting homosexuality intact.

There are others who wish to keep the Discipline as it is written and who call for stronger “accountability and consequences” for those who break current church rules about homosexuality and same-gender weddings. One such petition came to me and other bishops from the Mississippi Annual Conference.

Ministry with people in the LGBTQ community is affirmed in our current Book of Discipline; and for some the Supreme Court’s ruling favoring marriage equality is a cause for great rejoicing. Other parts of the Discipline do not condone homosexuality and same-gender marriages, and for these people this is a cause for concern and disappointment.

The unity of the church is in question around this issue. It strikes at the heart of many things we value as United Methodists: primacy of Scripture, tradition, holiness, diversity, social justice, and human rights.

### ‘Both holiness and hospitality are excellent values’

In his sermon at the 2008 General Conference Bishop Hee-Soo Jung spoke of this tension in our church today: “One could argue that those who espouse greater openness are holding fast to biblical principles of hospitality. Those who desire clarity in matters of boundaries, however, are adhering to biblical principles of holiness.

“Both holiness and hospitality are excellent values,” he continued. “Both are biblical and both are right. Of course, they can also both be wrong.

The problem is this: When we concern ourselves only with holiness, we become rigid and inward looking. We make an idol of our purity. When we concern ourselves only with hospitality, however, we lose our sense of who we are. We become so open to others that we lose the language of our own faith.” (from *Celebrating God’s Love: Living into Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships*, edited by Donald E. Messer, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015, p. 39)

It is my prayer that we as a United Methodist Church will stay unified in the one heart of Christ that is our core mission and mandate. The mission of the church we can agree on, as Wesley suggests, even if we are not of the same opinion around other issues.

### Look seriously at the “Third Way”

It is also my prayer that the 2016 General Conference can look seriously at the “Third Way” proposed by the Connectional Table as a means of continuing our main mission with added flexibility so that more people can receive the ministry of the church and more people can be empowered for ministry. To do this would mean that, even while thinking differently, we strive greatly to “love alike,” uniting our hearts in prayer and conversation, and humbly listening to one another.

I believe we can become stronger and stay unified in the midst of this crucial time in the life of the church. Please pray with me and remain tender-hearted toward one another. Wesley says we can do this “without a doubt.”

## Pressing on in the race to end malaria

“Press on toward the goal,” the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, “for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14)

Indeed, the Christian life is like a race. The opportunity to do greater and greater works for God is ever before us. And we strive toward the goal of Christian perfection, fueled by our faith in Christ’s promise.

The **Imagine No Malaria** (INM) campaign is pressing on toward a goal as well. As United Methodists we have pledged to raise \$75 million dollars to fund efforts that should effectively wipe out the disease of malaria in our lifetime! The Eastern PA Conference has given much toward this effort in the last 8 years.

In fact, you may recall that the original Nothing But Nets campaign that

launched in early 2007 was inspired by the efforts of then-6-year-old Katherine Commale of Hopewell UMC. Aided by her mother, her church and her community, she eventually raised more than \$135,000 to purchase and donate



insecticide-treated bed nets to protect children and adults in Africa from mosquitoes that spread malaria. Our conference responded by raising more than \$250,000.

United Methodists have not yet achieved our goal, but we are pressing on. So far we have raised \$66 million. We are getting close. And it seems only right that we here in the Eastern PA Conference should finish what we started.

We have done so much with the funds raised so far. According to the Imagine No Malaria office we have:

- Trained 13 Health Boards and 11,600 volunteers in Africa to oversee INM programs in 16 countries.
- Distributed 2 million insecticide-treated mosquito nets and

treated over 235,000 cases of malaria.

- Trained a new generation of leaders to advocate for global health issues.
- Slowed the mortality rate in Sub-Saharan Africa down by 54 percent.

We have made a huge difference in the lives--and the faith--of our sisters and brothers in Africa. Malaria has taken millions of precious lives, mostly children, from families, churches and communities. Can you imagine the disappearance of this dreaded disease from their lives? I believe they can imagine it, many for the first time.

At \$66 million, we’re only \$9 million short of our goal. As a popular gospel song says, “Lord, I’m runnin’, tryin’ to make a hundred, because ninety-nine and a half won’t do.” Let’s finish this race and see to it that the UMC completes its pledge of \$75 million dollars by the time we go to General Conference in 2016. What a beautiful triumph that would be, a powerful reminder of the great things we can do as a people

of God connected in mission together.

We will launch our new campaign this summer; and we ask that you and your church join us in fervent prayer. We want full participation from all our districts, churches and mission connexions. And we hope that for many it will be a community effort, not just a church effort. Generating broad awareness and participation in this campaign is more important than the amount raised.

Our conference can play a big role in helping our entire church push this effort across the finish line. Please give generously and think creatively about how you can raise the needed funds. Many thanks to all who have done, and will do, wonderful events to educate people and raise the needed support. As we strive to finish this mission effort that we started, we are truly participating in the “upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

*Peggy A. Johnson*



# Laity Academy 2015

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

at Reading, at 1040 North Park Road, Wyomissing, PA. And now is the time to register online.

“Planting Seeds: Rooted in God’s Word” is the 2015 theme, taken from Matthew 13:8 and signifying that seeds of knowledge, planted in the good soil of faith and commitment, can yield wisdom in great abundance. No doubt the Laity Academy is good soil for producing capable servants of Christ and principled leaders for churches and their communities.

“It’s your opportunity to learn about your church, your God and your place in God’s Kingdom from seminary-level instructors,” says Aubrey Bates, academy dean. “It’s a joyful weekend of fellowship with like-minded others, a chance to become a Christ Servant Minister or to take advanced courses if you are already a CSM, and a time to begin the journey toward becoming a Certified Lay Minister.”

Of course, you don’t have to be involved in these lay ministry programs to benefit from the Laity Acad-

emy. It’s open to everyone. Attendees can learn all about:

- Preparing Local Church Servants (Basic course for CSM and CLM preparation)
- The Purpose of the Church: “Reform the continent and spread scriptural holiness through the land.”
- Making Every Prayer Count: Learning How to Effectively Pray for Others
- Charting the Path of Emotional Intelligence
- Walking in Love: The Act of Repentance and Healing Relationships with Native American and Indigenous Persons
- Preaching to be Heard and Preaching by Numbers
- “What Do I Say?” Pastoral Care Ministry
- Do I Really Need That? How Technology Strengthens Your Church

“At the Academy,” says Bates, “we can grow in knowledge of our church’s politics and culture, our ability to effectively lead church groups, our capacity for local and global mission work and our ability to

speaking God’s Word to a world hungry for that knowledge.

“Our instructors are a mixture of clergy and laity who are experts in their specific subjects. All have experience that can be leveraged to help you and your church in mission. Jesus reminded us that while He is the vine, we are the branches that carry the nectar of life and love to the leaves of the tree. If we learn to effectively abide in our Lord, we can help people in our church and in the world to bear much fruit. And isn’t that what we are commissioned to do? Let’s make our churches vital and responsive. Come and find out how we are planting seeds rooted in God’s Word.”

Visit the online event information page to access the Paper Registration Form and Course Selection Brochure, Course Descriptions and FAQs. For more information contact Aubrey Bates or Anne Taylor. Room reservations must be made directly with the hotel: [Reservations@InnAtReading.com](mailto:Reservations@InnAtReading.com). Mention “Laity Academy.”



I am being totally truthful when I say that the Laity Academy changed my life. I attended the Basic Course in 2013. I left there a totally different person than when I arrived. Not only was the class educational, but it was so emotionally moving. I made so many new friends and they, along with our wonderful instructor, helped me grow in my faith and helped me along my path to becoming a Christ Servant Minister. I reached that goal during the 2014 Laity Academy, which was another awesome and spiritually rewarding weekend. I look forward to the 2015 Academy and can’t wait to meet up with all the other attendees and instructors.

Dianne Maylen

## Conference graduates 9 Certified Lay Ministers

BY JUDITH EHNINGER

Nine lay members of the Eastern PA Conference were honored as new Certified Lay Ministers (CLM), June 7, in a service of recognition at Royersford UMC. This is the fifth class to complete the CLM process, bringing the total number trained so far to 40. The 2015 graduates are:

### Central District

Brenda Del Rosario of Ardmore UMC  
Cressa Morris of Mt. Zion UMC, Philadelphia  
Scott Johnson of Royersford UMC  
Robert Wagner of Calvary UMC, Mohnton

### East District

Andrew Rozek of Christ UMC, Fairless Hills

### Northeast District

William Klinger of St. Paul’s UMC, Drums  
Robin Roman of Fritz Memorial UMC, Bethlehem  
Charles Wilson of Faith UMC, Stroudsburg

### Southwest District

David Kling of Community UMC, Lancaster

Bishop Peggy Johnson inspired the gathering with a message titled “Simplicity,” taken from II Kings 5:1-14. She encouraged all to be faithful in completing ordinary tasks with extraordinary devotion, in service to the Lord. Conference Lay Leader David Koch joined her in presenting certificates, along with James Duck-



The new, 2015 class of Certified Lay Ministers were celebrated June 7. Seated (from left) are: Robin Roman; Cressa Morris; and Charles Wilson. Standing (from left) are: program coordinator Judy Ehninger; David Kling; William Klinger; Scott Johnson; Brenda Del Rosario; and Robert Wagner. Andrew Rozek was away witnessing the commissioning of his son, Eric Rozek, USN, as Commanding Officer of the USS Mississippi nuclear submarine at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. John Coleman photo

ett, CLM Class of 2010.

The Revs. Misty Fuller, Janet Hess, Walter Carter and Andrew Foster III served as clergy course instructors. They provided dedicated guidance to help these new lay ministers expand ministry in the Wesleyan tradition in partnership with other clergy and lay disciples of Jesus Christ. Certified lay ministers may be assigned by the Bishop to a church under an Elder’s supervision.

The next CLM class begins with Module 1 on April 24-25, 2016, and completion is scheduled for November 2016. Required orientation sessions for the 2016 class begin in August. Candidates must be active, recognized Christ Servant Ministers for at least one year to begin the program.

For more information contact Judy Ehninger, at 610-965-2290 or [ehninger@ptd.net](mailto:ehninger@ptd.net). Also visit the [christianservantministries.net](http://christianservantministries.net) Website.

# Moving beyond our church walls

BY THE REV. GORDON HENDRICKSON

One of our four mission foci for The United Methodist Church is “to create new places for new people,” where we can invite others to come experience the Holy Spirit in new, potentially life-changing ways. We are called, as John Wesley was, to make the world our parish by moving outside our church walls and to meet people where they are.

No longer can we sit in our church pews and wait for people to come to us. Those days of people beating a path to our church doors have been gone for many years; but too many of us are still waiting for them to arrive or to return. The only return we can be sure of is that of Jesus Christ.

Innovative churches with an outward focus are looking to MissionInSite for help in looking carefully at the people in their communities and seeing who they are, what they need and how we can best share with them the love of Jesus Christ.

Church-growth strategist, trainer and author Tom Bandy, whose latest book is *See, Know and Serve*, will be here Oct. 4-6 to show us how using the powerful demographics tool of MissionInSite can help transform our churches and benefit the communities they serve. Be sure to watch our live-video stream of Tom teaching about MissionInSite on October 15.

## Nuevo Nacimiento UMC to host Launchpad

Nuevo Nacimiento (New Birth) UMC in Lebanon is starting house churches in its community to grow in faith and fellowship with neighbors in their homes. The idea was born along with the church in 1998; and now they have 11 lively house churches meeting bi-weekly. Many participants also attend the Latino church’s thriving Sunday worship services. But their discipleship is being nurtured and their needs are being met at home also.

Our conference will sponsor, and Nuevo Nacimiento

will host, Launchpad on Aug. 21-23. It’s an intensive training event, offered in English and Spanish, for church leaders and teams wanting or starting to plant new faith communities. Our PATH 1 friend Paul Nixon, who coaches new church start efforts, will co-lead the training with Sam Rodriguez, one of the foremost experts on church planting within Latino communities.

## Lifetree Café

Meanwhile, Lifetree Café, a national, innovative ministry that reaches beyond church walls, is where Congregational Development will concentrate much of its efforts in the coming months. People gather weekly in a coffee shop, restaurant or pub not just to meet, greet and eat, but also to create an open, non-threatening environment to talk about what’s on their minds and in their hearts. It may not always be about religion, but it may have more to do with their need for faith and capacity for discipleship than they realize.

Important concerns are happening daily to us all. Lifetree Café is about listening and engaging in gentle, guided, topical conversations, as people share their concerns and opinions, unhindered by fear of prejudice or judgment. They wait on the Holy Spirit to know when and how they should respond, but they are always led to respond with *agape* acceptance.

In June we visited and learned about the Lifetree Café that meets Monday evenings at the Canal Street Pub in Reading. It’s led by Reading police sergeant Nathan Matz and his wife. Nathan came and spoke to us at the March 21 faith-sharing event, *Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore*, led by Thom and



Members of the Eastern PA Conference’s Congregational Development Team—(clockwise from bottom left) Rev. Mike Netznik, Rev. Rick Rimert, Rev. Deanna Geiter, Suzette James, Rev. Christopher Kurien and Rev. Gordon Hendrickson—gain insights from Nathan Matz (bottom right), co-founder of the Lifetree Cafe that meets at the Canal Street Pub in Reading. They attended a Lifetree Cafe Monday night gathering there in June. John Coleman photo

Joani Schultz, the creators of Lifetree Café.

We hope to create a dozen or more similar experiences around the conference in the next year or two. What’s important is for many or most of the participants to be not from our churches but from our communities, especially neighbors who need something more than just church.

## Two new emerging ministries

We have two new similar ministries just emerging at opposite ends of our conference, each with a flavor of its own. The Rev. Lydia Muñoz has launched Starting Point: Philly in several areas of Philadelphia. Read her article about this inventive, boundary-crossing ministry.

Meanwhile, Jeremy Graeff, a Lancaster Theological Seminary student, is starting Ember, a new faith community that will borrow from secular art, music

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# StartingPoint: A new journey together

BY THE REV. LYDIA E. MUÑOZ

In a recent study done by the Pew Research Center, “the number of U.S. adults who do not identify with any organized religion is growing rapidly. Statistics show an increase of 6.7% from 16.1% to 22.8% between 2007 and 2014 in this category.”<sup>1</sup> This might not be surprising news for many; however the speed to which this statistic continues to move should cause us to sit up and take notice.

As a church, how do we respond? There are many answers to that question; but as a person called to share the message of Jesus Christ I have always understood that message to be one of invitation to follow Jesus on a faith journey of love and discovery.

We are all sojourners in faith. Some of us have a clear understanding of faith in Christ; but if I’m honest, even with all of my years as a follower, I am discovering things about my faith journey that are clearly different from the first day I began this sojourn. The best thing is that Jesus has never turned any of my questions or struggles or sometimes stumbles along the way into a reason to disqualify me as a disciple. And that’s exactly why I am passionate about the mission of StartingPoint:Philly.

StartingPoint:Philly is a new community of faith

that seeks to walk alongside people who are starting their journey at whatever stage they find themselves. Believer, non-believer, atheist, spiritual but not religious, unchurched, de-churched, or re-churched—they are all welcome to join our conversation about faith and life.

We primarily focus on millennials, but the truth is, real community has no age limits. We are strongly committed to what we call “creating third places” for people to build new relationships across many boundaries in real ways. That means real conversations about racism and intercultural relationships, sexism, LGBTQ inclusion, immigration, poverty, and many other social realities that intersect with our lives and our faith.

So, at StartingPoint we meet people where they are. We gather at a park, at a pub, at a coffee shop, at a public demonstration or march — anywhere people come together to talk about life and faith and love. That’s where we share the gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that invite people into a conversation.

Recently, we celebrated our first major event along with the Rev. Dr. Hal Taussig. At *Next Steps: A New, New Testament* people discussed and discovered again sacred texts and extra-canonical texts that Christian communities have been reading since the second century. The discussion was rich and powerful and evocative. As one young lady told us, “This is the first step I’ve taken in a long time to return back to church. Thank you.”

As we continue to build on this community com-

posed of people from a variety of walks of life, we try to build on this common value: “All voices are heard, and all journeys are welcome, and we are not alone.” The same Jesus who walked the road to Emmaus, sharing a story that made hearts burn with passion, is the same one who walks with us on this *StartingPoint* of our journey.

The Rev. Lydia E. Muñoz is Eastern PA Conference Missional Developer for the Central District and Pastor of StartingPoint:Philly, a UMC New-Church Start.

<sup>1</sup> [www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape](http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape)



StartingPoint:Philly folks (clockwise from bottom left): the Rev. Lydia Muñoz, Lauren Rowello, Lacey McIntire, Tom Lank, Bethany Amey and Wade Sutton.

# Response and Responsibility

## Churches learn to respond to domestic violence

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

Every nine seconds a woman is assaulted or beaten, most often as a victim of domestic or relationship violence, the leading cause of injury to women in the U.S. Daily, women are threatened, attacked and murdered by husbands and boyfriends. Yet, too often their fearful screams are silenced, their bruises and broken spirits hidden even from churches they may belong to or live near. Fearing rejection, victim-blaming or public exposure, they are afraid to seek help in the one place where it should be most available.

So what can the church--any church--do to help them?

"Faith communities are really instrumental for providing (domestic violence) survivors with help and healing," a trainer told about 60 church leaders from around the Eastern PA Conference recently. Julie Owens, a survivor herself and the daughter of a retired Presbyterian pastor, shared her own horrific experience of being brutally attacked, abducted and threatened by her husband, who then attacked and tried to kill her clergyman father.

Both escaped, the former husband went to prison, and Owens, who shares her painful but redemptive story freely, found her life's passion in helping others--including church leaders--to understand and respond to domestic violence. The first response is to help victims and survivors find safety and support, which for many is in short supply. Teams of clergy and laity came to learn about this scourge that inflicts pain, loss and secret shame on numerous households, including many whose names are on church membership rolls. The attendees were challenged to devise and lead other churches in fulfilling what the training's title promised: "Domestic Violence: A Faithful Response."

The full-day workshop, held June 6 at West Lawn UMC in Reading, revealed the dynamics of "DV" and

how churches can and must begin to speak up and step up to address the needs of victims, survivors and their abusers. Owens conducted the training on behalf of FaithTrust Institute, an organization based in Seattle, Wash., that trains and resources religious groups to seek proactive solutions to clergy sexual abuse and domestic violence. The national office of United Methodist Women, based in New York City, selected Eastern PA Conference from among several conferences that applied to receive the free training.

Participants came in groups from five of the conference's six districts, learning together in plenary sessions and then separating to attend three breakout sessions. Those sessions focused on rendering effective pastoral care to victims and survivors, ensuring safe places for them to disclose abuse and seek help, and helping teenagers recognize and create healthy relationships.

### Causes and Consequences

Owens, a trainer with two decades of experience in developing, managing and resourcing domestic violence programs, provided a primer to the gathering, covering social, spiritual, situational and psychological causes and consequences of the problem. They explored a broad range of concerns including:

- victims' safety issues and barriers to leaving their abusers;
- misuse of scripture and how religion can be both "a resource and a roadblock";
- guidelines for effective responses by faith groups; and
- collaboration with community allies to help victims and abusers.

"A faith response begins with knowing your role," Owens told the gathering. "You are not therapists or social workers, police officers or shelter providers." Instead, she said, churches can provide respectful confidentiality, caring support, guidance, resources, advocacy, information and referrals. The goal is not to tell victims what to do, but to offer them safety and support if they choose to leave, and encouragement if they don't. And to hold abusers accountable for their misdeeds.

The goal of the training, which will be provided to other conferences, is to generate creative, coordinated



Julie Owens



Members of Nuevo Nacimiento and East Stroudsburg UMCs listen as Danielle Hill of Faith Trust leads an exercise. John Coleman photos

### A 2nd DV training opportunity in October. Register asap!

Another free, weekend training for church groups wanting to learn and respond faithfully and strategically to family violence will be offered at the Doubletree Hotel in King of Prussia Oct. 23-24. FaithTrust Institute, which facilitated the June 6 training, will also lead this "Safe and Healthy Churches: Ending Family Violence" training event, which is free to participants and funded by the InFaith Community Foundation.

This overnight training event--with free hotel lodging provided--will be ecumenical, inviting 25 four-person teams from Christian churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

They will develop actions plans to support DV survivors and their families, help prevent future harm, and hold abusers accountable. The training will address:

- Pastoral Care Responses to Domestic Violence;
- Child Abuse Prevention for Lay Teachers and Ministers;
- Healthy Teen Relationships for Youth Ministers; and
- Child Sexual Abuse: Prevention & Intervention for Risk Reduction Leaders.

The deadline for online registration (<http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/training/safe-and-healthy-churches-training-2015-king-of-prussia-pa>) is Aug. 15, and churches accepted for the training will be notified by Aug. 29.

If you need more information contact Sharon Hachtman at 570-460-7301 or shhooma@live.com.

At FaithTrust Institute you can also contact either Clare Obradovich at 206-634-1903 ext. 27 or clareo@faithtrustinstitute.org, or Carolyn Scott Brown at 206-634-1903 ext. 23 or csbrown@faithtrustinstitute.org.

responses to domestic violence in districts, churches and communities, according to Mollie Vickery of the National UMW agency. That coordination should involve UM Men's, Women's and youth groups.

Two FaithTrust Institute staff facilitated interactive breakout discussions during the training. Program Director Jane Fredrickson led a discussion on ways to help churches ensure safety and confidentiality for victims who need to disclose abuse. Program Manager Danielle Hill helped another group creatively examine the growing problem of teen dating violence and how to prevent it.

"Our church teams came ready to learn and to work," said Sharon Hachtman, RN, a UM Deaconess who applied for the training opportunity and organized it. "This event was a wonderful success with expert training; and I look forward to more opportunities to increase our abilities and expand this learning so more of us can respond to this serious problem in loving, informed and effective ways."

### Participating churches at the training were:

Church of the Open Door UMC, Kennet  
Doylestown UMC  
East Stroudsburg UMC  
Hopewell UMC  
Iglesia Nuevo Nacimiento (New Birth) UMC  
Janes Memorial UMC Philadelphia  
Schuylkill Haven UMC  
Union UMC, Havertown  
West Lawn UMC

# Peace amid passion: Resolutions stir Annual Conference debates

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The Eastern PA Annual Conference considered 23 of 25 submitted resolutions during its 2015 session, May 14-16, and a handful of them generated heavy debate on controversial concerns. But despite some expressions of pain and insistence on loyalty to Scripture and covenant, the desired peaceful, collegial spirit of Holy Conferencing seemed to prevail.

Five resolutions proposed that the Annual Conference petition the 2016 General Conference to amend the United Methodist Book of Discipline by changing church law that rejects homosexuality as illicit in lifestyle, matrimony and ordained ministry. While several resolutions received a majority of votes, all five—submitted by various churches—failed to receive the required three-fourths proportion of votes needed to send a conference-endorsed petition to General Conference.

Titled “Full Inclusion of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) Persons in the UMC,” three of the resolutions sought to achieve that goal by removing prohibitive language from the Discipline. Resolution 2015-13 specified “Eliminate Discrimination;” 2015-14 specified “Marriage Equality;” and 2015-15 specified “Ordination Equality.”

Resolutions 2015-18 and 19 sought amendments to the Book of Discipline’s Social Principles and its Constitution, respectively. They would acknowledge and accept differences in beliefs among United Methodists and ensure that churches would not “reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends,” nor exclude them from full participation in church membership.

## Resolutions debated together

To save time and reduce repetitive discourse the body agreed to debate the five resolutions together as one block, although they were presented and voted on individually. The hour-long debate ranged from one member who suffered anti-gay insults by fellow church members, to others who expressed love for all people regardless of sexual orientation but refused to accept “something contrary to the word of God.” While some appealed for openness to fully accept LGBTQ persons as “made in the image of God,” others expressed anxiety that conservative members and churches would leave the denomination as a result of that full acceptance.

“It’s so important that we as a conference continue to dialogue on these issues and not defer or table them,” said the Rev. Steve Cherry in presenting Resolution 2015-13. “We have to find a way forward together...We need to stay together to do the work of God.”

Indeed, Bishop Peggy Johnson, presid-

ing over the session, affirmed members for their tenacity and the tone of their debate. “You have worked hard; this body has done good and faithful church conferencing,” she told them. “May I commend you on the tenor of your conversation and the Christian respect that I have felt in this room. Thanks be to God.”

After all five resolutions failed to pass, the Rev. Joan Trout withdrew another resolution she was to present titled “Affirming Standards of Sexual Practice.” She acknowledged the matter had been settled.

The Rev. Joseph DiPaolo ignited more debate, however, with his resolution titled “Affirming Our Covenant and Accountability,” which he reprised from the 2014 Annual Conference. He lamented a “loss of trust rooted in the breaking of trust,” alluding to the recent unlawful performance of same-gender weddings by UM clergy.

DiPaolo urged the conference to demand clergy accountability to the Discipline’s “rules of our common covenant,” and to call upon clergy to challenge those rules only “through legitimate channels of holy conferencing, rather than breaking that covenant.”

Impassioned debate revolved around the understanding and value of the clergy covenant, and the notion of a “higher law” superseding church law and ordination vows, among other issues. Eventually, the resolution passed with 266 members voting yes, 166 voting no and 12 abstentions.

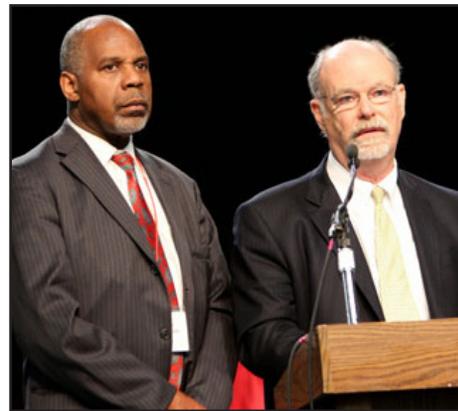
## Wesley UMC Quarryville leaves denomination

The fear that challenges and indeed, changes to church law in this arena might prompt conservative churches to leave the denomination was realized on the session’s first day. Conference Trustees Chair Alvin Kingcade reported on the board’s negotiations with Wesley UMC in Quarryville, which recently decided to leave the denomination. According to conference officials, congregational leaders say they have considered leaving for nearly two decades primarily because of the denomination’s homosexuality controversy and recent challenges to the Discipline’s positions and prohibitions.

Founded in 1828, Wesley UMC grew



Wesley UMC Quarryville



Trustee Chair Alvin Kingcade (left) and Conference Counsel Robert Shoemaker

from about 30 worshipers to about 700 in the last two decades, making it the fastest-growing church in the conference and reportedly, in the Northeastern Jurisdiction. Part-time local pastor Blake Deibler has led that remarkable growth since he was appointed there in 1993. The rural church has a \$1 million budget but \$4 million in mortgage debt, mostly on its new, two-year-old building. It is a debt the conference does not want to assume by taking over the building through the UM Discipline’s trust clause (paragraph 2501).

Therefore, the conference trustees, assisted by Legal Counsel Robert Shoemaker, are negotiating “an unprecedented agreement” to let Wesley keep the property for a payment of \$100,000 over five years, plus other monies owed to the conference. They recognize, admitted Kingcade and Shoemaker, that planting a new church there or selling the building, located in a remote area, for an appreciable amount would be “nearly impossible.” However, they cautioned the conference body that the agreement to relinquish church property should not be considered a precedent for future, similar situations.

The Rev. Dave Lewis presented Resolution 2015-17, calling for continued dialogue about the separation and a report to the 2016 Annual Conference before any decision is made. He admonished conference members about the tragic loss of mission and ministry potential if Wesley UMC leaves—“Potential we’re never going to get back.” It was a loss clearly felt by many who asked questions and expressed their dismay.

But the Rev. John Longmire presented a substitute motion authorizing the

conference trustees to “negotiate the best possible outcome” in this case, while also setting forth a more accountable process in the event another congregation decides to leave the denomination. That process would require dialogue between the bishop, district superintendent and church members to clarify the full implications of their withdrawal, and it would require authorization of any negotiations be given by the annual conference and by a vote of the congregation at a church conference. The motion was approved by the conference body.

**Update:** With negotiations settled, Wesley UMC has paid all monies owed, including full payment for their property.

## New Safe Sanctuary policies

Additional resolutions voted on by the conference ranged from revised Safe Sanctuary policies based on new Pennsylvania child safety laws, to advocacy on solitary confinement in prison, racial justice, fair wages, and full, equitable state funding of public schools.

Members approved, with a few minor changes, the revised, conference-wide standards for ensuring “Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church” (Resolution 2015-20). But after raising many hard-to-answer questions, they decided to table the related resolution calling for a new conference-wide Electronic Media Policy, so it can be developed further and brought before the next conference session.

## Justice-oriented resolutions pass

Four justice-oriented resolutions all passed with little opposition. Three called for churches to oppose solitary confinement in prisons and to support payment of equitable, living wages—including at least \$15 per hour for church employees—and “a full, fair funding formula for Pennsylvania schools.” A fourth resolution on racial justice called for:

- the conference’s ministry networking group, the Connectional Table, to “develop and support small-group dialogues on racial justice throughout the annual conference”;
- the Bishop and Conference Sessions Commission to make racial justice and white privilege a key element of the 2016 Annual Conference; and
- conference leaders to help congregations and communities advocate for fair, non-racial policing policies and practices, including establishment of independent citizen review boards to monitor and recommend improvements in police conduct.

Another justice-related resolution was tabled by its presenter until the

continued on page 11

NEWspirit!

Photos by Sabrina DaLuisio, The Rev. James Mundell, and Paul Davis.



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015 Faithful Stewards of the Earth, Time, and Treasure

# Looking back, leaning forward: Annual Conference 2015

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

**R**anging from the serious to the celebratory, the 2015 Eastern PA Annual Conference, May 14-16, shone its spotlight on past, present and future concerns, beyond merely voting on resolutions and General Conference delegates. There were also presentations, reports, worship services, memorials to the deceased—including both clergy and Native American children—ordination and commissioning of new clergy, and a celebration of conference connective ministries.

The first presentation that drew a crowd of conference members to the Expo Center in Oaks, Pa., came the night before. “An Evening with Clif Christopher” presented the popular church finance expert in an informal talk and Q&A session open to anyone, not just conference members. The next evening he delivered the Annual Conference’s keynote address. His appearances were sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic UM Foundation and coincided with the conference’s holistic focus on stewardship.

In both addresses Dr. Christopher diagnosed why UMC membership and giving are declining in most U.S. conferences and prescribed some possible solutions. His remarks came in the wake of a discouraging survey report released May 12 by the Pew Research Center, titled “America’s Changing Religious

Landscape,” that cited decreasing religious affiliation and support among the nation’s increasing population of young “Millennials.”

Christopher urged churches to focus more on understanding, promoting and fulfilling their core mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. He emphasized the need for improvement in church worship experiences, outreach and welcoming efforts, and financial leadership acumen. As usual, he also stressed the need for more clergy to preach about tithing and to be involved in managing church finances, including knowing how much members give.

Conference members gave generously to offerings during three worship services: \$6,200 was given to support higher education scholarships, \$3,656 to financial aid for seminary students, and \$3,369 to support the conference’s Congo Partnership, a joint mission to aid UMC health and education efforts in an impoverished area of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The Rev. Susan Henry Crowe, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, preached at the opening worship service, offering vivid images of chaos leading to creation, as she noted the approaching observance of Ascension Day.

Bishop Peggy Johnson preached at the annual memorial service to honor recently deceased clergy and clergy spouses. In prose and pictures she extolled the

“eyes of faith and eyes of God” that perceive all from a heavenly perspective, a view now shared by “those who have entered the Church triumphant.”

Bishop James Swanson, leader of the Mississippi Conference, preached at the annual service of ordination and commissioning, his stage presence, mobility and enthusiastic eloquence enlivening the solemn occasion and inciting applause and “Amen’s.”

“Learn to praise God, and you’ll learn how truly generous God can be,” he told the clergy members about to become ordained and provisional elders and deacons. “You’ll trust God enough to allow a bishop and Cabinet to tell you where to go...to an appointment where you might think you don’t belong.... In the midst of pianos out of tune, choirs that can’t sing, boilers and electrical systems that stop working, God called you to comfort and lead the people. It’s a heavenly call.”

Clergy, laity and congregations who have answered that call in exemplary ways received awards for their ministries. The Kim Jefferson Urban Ministry Award went to St. Philip’s UMC in Philadelphia, and the new One Matters Discipleship Award, recognizing membership growth, was presented to Iglesia Nuevo Nacimiento (New Birth) UMC in Lebanon. Two Harry Denman Evangelism Awards went to the Rev. Maxime Jaouen, pastor of Lansdale First UMC, and John

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## Two ‘role models’ receive Denman Evangelism Award

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

**T**wo extraordinary church leaders who seek to personify Jesus Christ—one of them literally—were honored at Annual Conference with the Harry Denman Evangelism Award, an annual tribute to the spirit and example of its Methodist namesake.

The Rev. Maxime “Max” Jaouen, who received the Denman Clergy Award for Evangelism, has served Lansdale First UMC for 9 of his 33 years as an ordained United Methodist pastor. In that time 78 persons have joined the church by Profession of Faith.

“Pastor Max understands the Great Commission of Christ and lives it each day,” wrote Lay Leader Luann Ingram in her nomination. “He reminds the congregation that our church is a great ‘beacon of light’ in the community. He challenges (us) to not only minister to the local community through our works, but to be a witness of Jesus Christ.”

Ingram calls Jaouen a “consummate teacher” with

an “amazing” grasp of Scripture. “Every sermon, every committee meeting, every pastoral visit is an opportunity for Max to teach the word of God...There is pure joy on his face and in his voice when offering this information to his listeners.” She credits him with inspiring “common folks in the congregation,” herself included, to become leaders and servants of Jesus Christ.

“Pastor Max has been an inspiration to young and old,” wrote Ingram. “His youthful attitude and spirit draw many young people to him. He loves to give and get hugs so every person of any age immediately feels his love and warmth.”

Similar affection was expressed for John Schadler, a lifelong member of Fairless Hills First UMC, who received the Denman Laity Award for Evangelism. “He conducts his life in a way that leads people to Christ and exemplifies dedicated Christian discipleship,” wrote his pastor, the Rev. Victoria L. Allen. “Presenting a quiet and unassuming demeanor, John zeal-

ously goes about the task of sharing the love of Christ through his faithful witness in ministry...giving his all diligently in devoted service to the church and community.”

Allen extolled Schadler’s enthusiastic, selfless involvement as a trustee, youth leader, lay equalizing delegate and member of the men’s ministry. He even convinced his own family and the youth of the church—to whom he is “a mentor and role model”—to become more involved in serving the church.

During special Holy Week reenactments, “John has become...our resident Jesus,” wrote Allen. “He portrays Jesus throughout the Easter season. John can be seen seated at the Last Supper, riding into Jerusalem, hanging from the cross and portraying the risen Lord during Easter Sunday worship.

“This past Easter Week was extraordinarily special,” Allen recalled. “In the pulpit area, John hung from the cross with ‘blood’ dripping down his body. In stark contrast, on Easter Sunday he dressed as the risen Lord robed in white. During the sermon he quietly sat in front of the same cross, which was now adorned in white and gold draping, surrounded by flowers. In both services, when the preaching concluded, the spirit moved people to respond to the altar. Ten to 15 teenagers, along with a few adults, came forth to boldly reaffirm their commitment to Christ (depicted by John)...One senior adult stepped forward to hold Christ’s (John’s) hand.”

The Foundation for Evangelism has partnered with annual conferences for over 30 years to honor role models of evangelism with the Harry Denman Award, named for a renowned layman who led the Methodist Church’s global evangelism efforts from 1938 until he retired in 1965. Denman was a mentor and role model to Billy Graham and many other evangelists. The Eastern PA Conference award is presented annually by the conference’s Congregational Development Team.



**(Left photo)** Suzette James **(right)** of the Congregational Development Team presented Denman Evangelism Awards to the Rev. Maxime Jaouen of Lansdale First UMC and to **(right photo)** John Schadler of Fairless Hills First UMC. Both recipients were congratulated by Bishop Peggy Johnson. *Rev. James Mundell photos*

# Annual Conference elects delegates to General, Jurisdictional conferences

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The 2015 Eastern PA Annual Conference elected eight delegates to the 2016 General Conference next May and eight more to join them at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference next July, plus six alternates, for a total of 22 delegates.

Clergy delegates elected to both conferences were: Dawn Taylor-Storm, Jeffrey Raffauf, Robert Wilt, and Lydia Munoz. Lay delegates elected to both conferences were: Judith Ehninger, Mary White, Aaron Joseph Smith, and Clarita Krall, who was nominated from the floor.

Additionally elected as NE Jurisdictional Conference Delegates were: Laity--Krystl Johnson, Ann Jacob, Jordan Harris and Lenora Thompson.; and Clergy--Joseph DiPaolo, Tracy Bass, Christopher Kurien and Robin Hynicka. Elected as Alternate Delegates were: Clergy--Irving Cotto, Melinda McKonly and Sutja Bang; and Laity--Ross Brightwell, Jane Bonner and David Koch.

Some unsuccessful clergy and lay nominees withdrew from General Conference consideration after

early ballots, including several who were later elected to the NEJ Conference. Difficulties with the new electronic voting devices slowed the process.

The complete delegation is rich in racial, ethnic, gender and generational diversity, perhaps a result, in part, of Bishop Peggy Johnson's reminder expressed before each ballot that, "We are a diverse denomination." Two women, the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm and Judith Ehninger, were the first clergy and lay members elected, respectively. Taylor-Storm and the Rev. Tracy Bass, are two of the conference's newest district superintendents.

Three of the four Jurisdictional Conference delegates--Krystl Johnson, Ann Jacob and Jordan Harris--are all racial-ethnic young adults. General Conference delegate Aaron Smith is also a young adult.

Among other affinities, Mary White and Lenora Thompson, both African American women, previously served as Conference Lay Leaders; and David Koch is the current Conference Lay Leader. Also, the Rev. Christopher Kurien and Ann Jacob, father and daughter, will both attend Jurisdictional Conference together for the second time.



The Eastern PA Annual Conference elected a diverse delegation to the 2016 General and NE Jurisdictional conferences. Included were five in this group of lay nominees who were introduced to the annual, pre-conference Laity Session. *Sabrina Daluisio photo*

## Peace amid passion: Resolutions stir Annual Conference debates

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adjourned annual conference session in November. It calls upon the conference to declare all acts of Anti-Semitism as "deplorable" and to stand in support of the State of Israel and "Jewish people everywhere."

In addition, 24 local church and conference-affiliated programs and ministries were approved as Conference Advance Specials for 2015-2016. That designation affords them authorization to seek direct funding support from churches that have first fulfilled all their conference and general church commitments and wish to extend their stewardship into generous "second-mile giving."

Finally, six resolutions were approved together without debate, using a "consent calendar." They were:

- a consistent start-date of July 1 for all pastoral transitions (with the first Sunday in July being any new pastor's first Sunday in the pulpit);
- rental or housing allowances for retired or disabled clergy members;
- 2015-2016 guidelines for clergy moving by appointment;
- the adoption agreement to establish 2016 rates and policies of the Clergy Retirement Security Program;
- adjustments in the 2016 minimum starting and base salaries of pastors and other Equitable Compensation policies and considerations; and
- continuation of the Mission ConneXions initiative launched in 2013 as a two-year experiment in aligning churches for special collaborative ministry and creative mission enterprises.

The Council on Finance and Administration will present a proposed 2016 conference budget for a vote at the Adjourned Conference session Nov. 14 at Hempfield UMC, Lancaster, with the expectation that economic forecasting and planning for next year will be more accurate at that time.

## Looking back, leaning forward: Annual Conference 2015

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Schadler, a member of Fairless Hills First UMC. And the Urban Commission presented a grant to Philadelphia's Mid-Town Parish UMC for its efforts to erect a long-awaited new church facility.

Also the Rev. David Ryan, conference liaison to the Congo Partnership, climaxed his report by presenting a certificate of appreciation to the Southeast District for raising \$60,000 to build and outfit a pediatric and eye surgery wing of the Mpsa Medical Clinic in Central Congo. Representatives of the denomination's Imagine No Malaria fundraising and awareness campaign were also on hand to request the conference's help in making a final push to reach the goal of raising \$75 million by 2016 to fund mosquito nets and other resources for fighting the deadly disease of malaria.

Two other presentations commemorated history--the good and the bad. Simpson House in Philadelphia, the oldest retirement community historically related to the UMC marks its 150th anniversary this

year. Kim Williams, President and CEO of Simpson Senior Services, shared a moment of joyful celebration with conference members, many of whom have relatives, friends and colleagues who have resided there.

Much less joyful was the Committee on Native American Ministries' celebration of the children who attended the old Carlisle Indian Industrial School but who died and are buried there. Carlisle, now an Army installation, was the first of dozens of industrial schools created in the late 1800s to indoctrinate Native American children into Anglo-American culture and rid them of their indigenous cultures and heritage. As many of their pictures were displayed onscreen and hung on curtains surrounding the conference floor, youth members read the names of children buried at Carlisle, while CONAM members



Boe Harris

led the conference session in solemn remembrance.

Finally, the conference witnessed a creative, multimedia, interactive Connectional Ministries report celebrating conference and local church ministries implemented over the past year. And it bid a fond farewell to Conference Treasurer Peter DiNofia, who retires in August after seven years of managing the conference's finances. Presented by Kip Craven, Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Administration, DiNofia expressed his appreciation for the leadership opportunity and support he received and for the faithful stewardship of Eastern PA Conference congregations. CFA, which recently announced James Cruickshank as DiNofia's successor, will present a 2016 budget for approval at the Adjourned Session of Annual Conference, Nov. 14.



### A prayerful passing of the mantle

The Rev. Mary Elum (right), a new clergy retiree, prays for the Rev. Erin Maurer prior to her ordination to Deacon in a moving ceremony, as retirees covered those following in their footsteps with prayers and prayer shawls. Afterward the new clergy retirees were formally introduced and applauded by the conference body. *Sabrina Daluisio photos*



Drena Miller  
Kenneth Klingborg  
Donald Anderson  
Robert Booker  
Mary Elum  
Richard Hostetter

John Jennings  
George Miller  
Sharon Paul  
Carl Schneider  
Barbara Welsh  
Joan Pacocha

James Bamberger  
Larry Frank  
James Garner  
Michael Alleman  
Eric Ritz  
Allen Jenkins

Melinda McKonly  
Rodney Miller  
Keith Price



### 2015 Class of Commissioned and Ordained Elders

#### Commissioned at the 2015 Annual Conference

(Front row, from left): Andrea M. Haldeman, Deanna Marie Geiter, Jessica Lynn Ross and Dorcas Kumba Kamanda

(Back row, from left) Steven Jeffery Handzel, Walter Jerome Unterberger, John Allen Keller (Deacon), Nelson Roger Alleman, Bradley Allen Schutt and Jennifer Lynn Berry

All were commissioned Elders except for John Allen Keller.



#### Ordained at the 2015 Annual Conference

(Front row, from left): Jennifer Sara Sauerbrun, Barbara Smith Lee, Donna Christine DiMeo Hammell and Karyn Gerber Fisher

(Back row, from left): Erin Antrim Maurer (Deacon), James H. Wilkin, Andrea Sue Brown, Helen L. Adams and Sarah Fernsler

All were ordained Elders except for Erin A. Maurer.

Rev. James Mundell photos



Also, the Rev. Elizabeth Watson-Martin, who transferred her orders from the Central Texas Conference, received recognition as an Elder in Full Connection in the Eastern PA Conference. She is Director of Pastoral Services at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.

# EPAC members show up, speak out for justice

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

**E**astern PA Conference members attended some key events and engaged in important acts of social and political advocacy in recent months.

A small contingent of United Methodists gathered at the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg June 24 to help persuade legislators to increase and apportion more fairly the state's inadequate funding for public education. While some came Saturday, June 20, for an interfaith prayer service to begin a 10-day public fast as a witness for education justice, others came later to a mid-week rally to participate in worship, dialogue, public readings of the Social Principles and visits to legislators' offices.

Advocates want the state to allocate about \$3 billion to Pennsylvania schools for basic education, far more than the \$400 million proposed by new Gov. Tom Wolf this year. The House Republican majority proposed only about \$100 million. Wolf vetoed their budget, and negotiations on a compromise began in July. Advocates also want a school funding formula weighted in favor of schools dealing with poverty and other inequities. The state has the widest gap between rich and poor districts in the nation in per-student funding.

"It was natural for United Methodists to take part in this effort to focus attention on the need to have a fair education funding formula in Pennsylvania," said the Rev. Dai Morgan (*right*), Coordinator of United Methodist Advocacy in Pennsylvania. Several Eastern PA Conference members joined him and others, including (*bottom photo, from left*) the Rev. Kipp Gilmore-Clough, of Chestnut Hill United Church, and Cathy



Carroll, a Philadelphia school teacher and member of Lighthouse Fellowship UMC in Glenside, who led prayers outside a state legislator's office. (*Margaret Ernst photos*)

The bishops of three Pennsylvania annual conferences--Peggy Johnson of Eastern PA, Jeremiah Park of Susquehanna and Thomas Bickerton of Western PA--co-authored an episcopal letter to churches advocating support for the needed improvements in education funding. They also co-authored an open letter in April to the state legislature calling for expansion of Human Relations laws to include sexual orientation and gender identity in outlawing discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. A year-old bill with sponsors and supporters in both houses (SB/HB 300) is still awaiting passage.

Finally, clergy and lay members joined in prayer vigils at several area African Methodist Episcopal churches to express solace and solidarity while honoring nine victims brutally slain by a gunman on June 17 at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C.

A young white supremacist allegedly took their lives during a Bible study. Among the victims was Emanuel's pastor and a beloved state senator, the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, who was later eulogized by President Barack Obama on June 26.

"Because you hurt, we hurt," said one worshiper after a service at Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia (*Photo by Crawford Wilson, courtesy of Bethel AME Church*). Both Bethel and Emanuel are revered as historic "Mother" churches, being among the first established in the predominantly black denomination with Methodist roots.

"The attack on one house of worship is an attack on all of us," said yet another person. "This is a tragedy for our whole country."

Members of historic St. George's UMC, out of which Bethel was founded in 1794, attended the prayer vigil, as well as other UM clergy and laity. The Rev. Maridel Whitmore, St. George's pastor, felt "an astonishingly calm mix of defiance and anger, pain and grace" during the vigil. The Gregory Holston of New Vision UMC briefly addressed the gathering. And Bishop Peggy Johnson sent an open letter expressing her grief and support.

"This incident adds yet another frustrating layer of pain to our sorrow from the many brutal shootings and bombings that have taken lives and wreaked havoc across our nation in recent years," she wrote. "We in the Philadelphia area join our many ecumenical and interfaith partners in praying for the people of Mother Emanuel and Charleston."



"As we lift our anguished prayers to God," she continued, "we must also renew our concerted efforts to teach people that hate and violence are not valid means for solving problems, and that angry thoughts and words too often lead to violent deeds. We must teach that hate and racism are not acceptable in any setting of our society, least of all in our churches. And we must work together prayerfully toward the day when such crimes as this will no longer happen."

St. George's UMC will host daily tours for attendees of the 50th Quadrennial Session of the AME Church's General Conference that will convene in Philadelphia in July 2016. The tours will include viewings of a series of racial-historical paintings titled, *My Racial Ignorance*, currently on display at the church and now extended through August 2016.

Eastern PA Conference members are also invited to come view the paintings by Bonnie Mettler. They provide "a wonderful venue for frank discussions about race," said archivist Donna Miller. "The art is a perfect starting point and provides an emotional trigger to get people to open up."



**Black Methodists for Church Renewal and Black UM Preachers awarded their annual joint scholarship to two new college students during a luncheon June 20. East District Superintendent, the Rev. Tracy Bass, (*seated, center*) offered words of wisdom to the two recipients: Kayla Butts (*on his right*) of Camphor UMC, who will attend Lincoln University; and Ashley Thompson (*on his left*) of Wharton Wesley UMC, who will attend the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown. Joining these young scholars are their family members, leaders of BMCR and BUMP, and new Wharton Wesley UMC pastor, the Rev. Eric Carr (*standing, left*). *John Coleman photo***

## Pastor of thriving Dallas church visits Latino Convocation

The Eastern PA Conference Latino Commission held its annual Latino Convocation May 23, during Pentecost weekend, at Nuevo Nacimiento (New Birth) UMC in Lebanon. About 75 clergy and lay attendees heard about the experiences and lessons learned by the Rev. Owen Ross, pastor of the thriving 12-year-old Christ's Foundry (la Fundición de Cristo) UMC Mission in Dallas, Texas.

Ross, who is Anglo but fluent in Spanish from serving in the Peace Corps, explained the vital elements of successful Latino Ministry. This included having a core objective, which is: "Hacer Discipulos" (to make disciples). His mission church, also called "La Mision," makes disciples of all people but has a primary focus on doing outreach with the poor.

The Rev. Esdras Seda, Eastern PA Conference Latino Ministries Coordinator, met Ross and learned about his church in March at the National Hispanic Ministries Convocation at Duke University, Durham, NC.

Ross began La Mision in 2002 near Love Field in Dallas. Members met initially in his home, as he knocked on doors to meet residents in the heavily populated, mostly low-income Latino community.

With strong community support and ample help from local donors and other churches in the North Texas Conference, the congregation grew to more than 200 members and built a \$2.5 million church with a distinctive bell tower debt-free in 2013. Today Christ's Foundry is the largest Spanish-language United Methodist congregation west of the Mississippi River.

Members reach out to children, youth and families, operating feeding ministries, sports teams, children's fiestas, community work

projects, advocacy for undocumented immigrants, Early Head Start, and women's ministries. Key to their success is acquiring and balancing resources from several sources, including the North Texas Conference, supportive congregations, grant funders and tithers. The church is also politically active, as it speaks out on behalf of the poor and for people with no voice.

Ross, who calls himself a "pastor/missionary," is a savvy networker and organizer with a heart for ministry among the poor. He recruited a praise band and choir for his church, but also added free music instruction, mostly in guitar, to neighborhood children and youth. He told the Latino Convocation how he got donations from a Japanese company located in Dallas and other sources to buy guitars for the children, whose joyful involvement also drew their parents to the church.

Bi-lingual worship is spirited with music and passionate preaching. The church also uses video and social media, and actively promotes ministries to the community.

Worship during the Latino Convocation was led by Nuevo Nacimiento's praise team and pastor, the Rev. Elena Ortiz. Ross preached a sermon about the calling of Peter and encouraged listeners to do all that they can to serve God. There was much celebrative



(From left) The Revs. Esdras Seda, Alicia Julia-Stanley and Irving Cotto, Bishop Peggy Johnson, and the Rev. Owen Ross and Xóchitl Medina Ross.

music and dance. Bishop Peggy Johnson, who joined in the dancing, also served Holy Communion, praying the Great Thanksgiving in Spanish.

The Latino Commission also had a board meeting and business session following a lavish luncheon provided by the church members at Nuevo Nacimiento UMC. Members discussed the Eastern PA Conference's Oct. 3 bilingual Launchpad training for developing strategic new-church starts. They also elected new commission leaders: Manfredo Martinez, pastor of La Hermosa UMC, Allentown, as president; Joel Ayala as treasurer, and Sharon Rivera as secretary.

In September the commission will hold an assembly for leaders of the seven Latino churches and four Latino faith communities in our conference. They will assess progress, problems and possibilities for new church development, according to Seda, while also evaluating the commission's new structure.

*Bishop Peggy Johnson and Communications Director John Coleman each wrote portions of this story.*



## Conference Camps 'Power Up' for summer fun

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

"Power Up: Living in the Spirit!" That's the theme at our four conference-owned Camp and Retreat Centers for their high-energy, fun-filled 2015 Summer Camp season. For about six weeks children and youth are bravely elevating their bodies, minds, spirits and talents through an amazing range of uplifting activities--from swinging on ropes through trees, to scaling rock-climbing walls, to raising their voices in song and their hearts in prayer during daily devotions.

But they'll be doing so much more: swimming, canoeing, archery, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, sports and games (including the always rambunctious game Gaga), science and crafts, learning and performing music, creating visual arts, and enjoying exciting nature trips. There's a muddy obstacle course and crawling critters, a zoo trip and a safari, fish and fowl, plenty of green earth, blue water and fresh air--the very best of God's unparalleled creation. Well, maybe just one thing better: some of the nicest human beings God ever made. Camp counselors, staff and volunteers are making sure all the fun and fellowship is safe, nurturing and memorable.

There are also special camps that allow children and youth to explore diverse cultures and relationships. Camp Innabah once again offers the adventurous "Around the World in 7 Days." Gretna Glen hosts the always popular Latino Camp, and also a

Native American Adventure Camp. In fact, there's plenty of leadership development happening at our summer camps. Gretna Glen has a Camper in Leadership Training for teens who want to become camp counselors someday. Carson-Simpson Farm has the Cornerstone Youth Leadership Disciple Program for teens and PEACE Ministries (Partners Equipping All Children for Eternity) for inner city children. And Pocono Plateau offers team building experiences to teach that valuable skill to youth.

Innabah, meanwhile, continues to excel in offering invaluable summer camp experiences to groups with special needs. Camp of Dreams welcomes persons with high-functioning autism and Asperger's syndrome. And the remarkable, seven-level menu of Challenge Camps--now in their 49th year--are designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities. In addition, Gretna Glen hosts the Muscular Dystrophy Association Camp and the always exciting and heart-warming Camp Can Do for children battling cancer.

What's in a name? Check out the daring titles of some of our camps. The Eco-Explorers Camp teaches children at Pocono Plateau how to preserve God's ecosystems and protect their natural environment. Then there are Trailblazers, Pioneers, Challengers, Junior High Extreme, Experiments and Explosions, and Wilderness Adventure camps. But there's also the irresistibly named Totally Awesome Random Fun Camp that is...well, just totally awesome.

Summer camp is not just a daytime activity. In-

nabah, Pocono Plateau and Gretna Glen all have after-hours or night owl camps--no early bedtimes allowed. And summer camp is not just for children alone. We offer several Family Camps and camps for children coupled with their parents, grandparents and other family and friends.

So much fun-loving and friend-making, learning and laughing, discovery and dreaming happens from week to week at the Eastern PA Conference's summer camps, that the children and youth who come there leave indelibly changed by the total experience. Indeed, they make each of these incredibly beautiful and blessed oases what they are and rightly claim to be: "God's place apart, transforming lives."



Photo courtesy of Gretna Glen

## In Memoriam

Full obituaries are available at [www.epaumc.org/news/obituaries](http://www.epaumc.org/news/obituaries)

### Rev. G. Kim Gilson

The Rev. G. Kim Gilson, 69, of Holly Oak in Wilmington, Del., went home to be with his Lord Friday, June 26, 2015. He served a total of 48 years in the ministry, most recently as pastor of Holly Oak Calvary UMC in Wilmington and previously as pastor of Immanuel UMC in Crisfield Md. His home church was Wilkinson Memorial UMC in Croydon, Pa. He served churches in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland and Delaware.

A graduate of Asbury University in Wilmore, Ky., Rev. Gilson enjoyed arts, crafts, music and hosting foreign exchange students. He is survived by his son, Stephen Gilson (and wife, Nuria); daughter, Heather Gilson; mother, June McGrath; brother, Jeffrey Gilson (and wife Debbie); sister, Elaine Gilson; two grandchildren; and a sister-in-law and many nieces, nephews and cousins. Flowers are welcome, or contributions in his name can be sent to: UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), 475 Riverside Dr., Room 1520, New York, 10115.

### Rev. Colin T. M. Gorman

Rev. Colin T. M. Gorman, 91, a Retired Elder, passed away Thursday, June 25, 2015, following his late wife of over 71 years, Mabel, who passed away on Feb. 1. Born in Scotland, he came to the U.S. in 1938 and later became an ordained minister in the Methodist Church.

Gorman served the following churches from 1948 to 1980: Prospectville; Cumbola; Huntingdon Valley; and Bethlehem: Wesley. He then joined the staff of the General Board of Global Ministries' Office of Finance and Field Services, helping local churches raise funds for buildings and budgets.

He also worked in the Louisville Conference in Kentucky for a year to help the conference raise money for ministers' pensions. He retired in 1990. After living in Buckingham, Pa., for eight years, the Gormans moved to Wesley Village in Wilmore, Ky.

Survivors include: Gorman's son and his wife, C. Marshall and Rebecca Gorman; his daughter and her husband, Gwenn and James Talbott; his four grandchildren; and his sister and her husband, Priscilla and Glenn Fisher.

### Rev. William A. Sharp

Rev. William A. Sharp, a retired Elder of the Eastern PA Conference, passed away June 18, 2015.

Sharp was preceded in death by his wife, Jeanne, and his companion in his later years, Dee Walker. He is survived by three daughters, Jude Sharp of Lancaster, Lois Rothenberger (and Alan) of North Wales, and Cate Sharp (and Eileen Bresnahan) of Colorado Springs. Also surviving are two granddaughters and three great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to the Nature Conservancy, 15 E. Ridge Pike., Conshohocken, PA 19428 or to Heifer International, 1 World Ave., Little Rock, AK 72202.

To send an on-line condolence, visit

[www.DeBordSnyder.com](http://www.DeBordSnyder.com) (Debord Snyder Funeral Home And Crematory).

Sharp was a Superintendent of the former Lancaster District and also served the following churches: Pomeroy, Bainbridge: Ludwig, Mauch Chunk, Tannersville Circuit, Lima, Upland, Philadelphia: Cooper Memorial, Easton: Green Pond, Philadelphia: Frankford Memorial, Swarthmore, Lancaster: First

### Rev. Brian T.L. Hunt

The Rev. Brian T.L. Hunt died on May 27, 2015. He served Levittown: Emile UMC before going into Extension Ministry. He was a chaplain at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, where he also served in other roles, including directing Emergency Preparedness, and designing and implementing the Palliative Patient Care Program.

Hunt is survived by his wife, Nancy Frances Hunt (address: 3337 Ashmore Court, Olney, MD 20832-2530), and by their sons and their families: Joseph Petrucci and his wife, Nicki, of Fort Smith, Ark.; and Edward Petrucci and his wife, Kelly. Hunt also leaves another son, Brian Nathan Hunt, from his previous marriage to Katherine Hunt.

### Mrs. Vicki Lynn Lefever-Hill

Mrs. Vicki Lynn Lefever-Hill, of Millersville, the wife of the Rev. Cross & Flame Richard M. Hill (Honorable Location), died Wednesday, June 3, 2015. Her memorial service was held at the Grace Campus of Millersville Community UMC on Saturday, June 6.

A lifelong musician, she earned a degree in Music Education and played

flute with professional symphony, chamber and opera groups.

Rev. Richard Hill served the following churches: Berwyn; Clarks Grove; Norristown Haws Avenue; and Marticville.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by their two children, Jonathan R. Hill (married to Jenna K. Hill) and Jennifer L. Hill; one granddaughter and one brother, Michael S. Lefever (married to Anita Lefever).

### Rev. Robert Young-White

The Rev. Robert Young-White, 71, of Lancaster, Pa., retired elder, passed away on May 8, 2015. He served the following churches before retiring in 2008: Philadelphia: Lindley, Philadelphia: Siloam, Philadelphia: Olivet-Bethany, Drexel Hill: Covenant, Chester: Providence Avenue, Philadelphia: St. John's, Philadelphia: Hancock Street, Conshohocken, Lancaster: Christ.

He also directed Kensington Area Ministries, was a chaplain at the University of Pittsburgh and served briefly in the Western PA Conference.

Memorial contributions may be made to Habitat for Humanity, 443 Fairview Avenue Lancaster, PA 17603.

Condolences may be sent to his surviving spouse, Mrs. Pamela Young-White at 55 Deep Hollow Lane, Lancaster PA 17603. Also surviving him are his children--Timothy R. White (and wife, Crystal White), Jennifer B. White-Burke and Deborah L. Montgomery (and husband, Matthew Montgomery)--as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## Where there's a will, there's a way Leaving a legacy for Camp & Retreat Ministries

BY SALLY W. OTT



For some of us, Eastern PA Conference's Camp & Retreat Ministries (CRM) has had a profound impact on our spiritual growth and that of our families and friends. That

is so true for me that I have searched for a way to make a real and lasting difference for CRM.

Unfortunately, I'm not a rich person. But someone told me I could make a gift to support our Camp and Retreat centers that costs me nothing during my lifetime. How? By including CRM in my will.

By making a bequest to CRM I am honoring Christ by providing resources that will be used to extend his kingdom on earth through our wonderful Camp and Retreat Ministries program. When I am gone, my gift to support this vital, life-changing ministry will live on. It is an exciting win/win situation for anyone.

And it is so easy. You can choose to allocate a percentage of your assets or determine an outright gift to CRM. In either case, it is a very simple process. If you have questions, just contact me or a lawyer who can assist you with your estate planning to learn more.

You can choose to leave your legacy with one of our four unique Camp & Retreat centers; or you can leave it with the "Eastern PA Conference CRM" to be used where it is needed most or divided among our four sites:

1. Camp Innabah
2. Carson-Simpson Farm Christian Camp
3. Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center
4. Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center

Our camps have impressive Web sites and videos, so that you can see God's people in action and be inspired by our traditional and specialty camp experiences for people of all ages.

Giving is beautiful. So as you consider your final arrangements, consider giving a gift that will keep on giving and a legacy that will keep on living long after you're gone.

*"If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over."* (Luke 6:38)

Sally W. Ott is Development Coordinator for Camp & Retreat Ministries of the Eastern PA Conference. You can reach her at [sott@epaumc.org](mailto:sott@epaumc.org) or 717-468-7017.

## Moving beyond our church walls

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

and culture to "help share the gospel in more accessible ways with people who have never been to church, don't go to church often, or have left the church." Gatherings are slated to begin Sept. 6, meeting on Sundays at 7 PM in a downtown Lancaster art studio near Franklin & Marshall College. Right now Graeff is getting the word out and trying to raise funds for this effort.

Both of these innovators, with help from their districts, are reaching beyond church walls to touch people who otherwise might never grace the doors of our traditional churches. We will share updates about their progress and about our multi-site Lifetree Cafe efforts in the coming months.

God is waiting for you and your church to fulfill the Great Commission in creative ways by reaching and touching people where they live. Listen and be lifted by the Holy Spirit's Wind beyond your church's walls. Let it take you to see new places, meet new people and discover new adventures that you've never dreamed of before. Then write us and please tell us all about it.

*The Rev. Gordon Hendrickson is Coordinator of Congregational Development in the Eastern PA Conference. He can be reached at [ghendrickson@epaumc.org](mailto:ghendrickson@epaumc.org).*

# Delaware Conference history celebrated 50 years after merger

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

Nearly 200 people gathered at historic Tindley Temple UMC in Philadelphia on Saturday, May 30, to celebrate “A Century of Commitment, A Legacy of Love.”

With that theme, they fondly remembered the old Delaware Annual Conference, which from 1864 to 1965 nurtured the faith, fellowship and fortitude of African Americans in the former Methodist and Methodist Episcopal churches. This was a special occasion—both joyful and poignant—that recalled struggles to overcome racism, heroic leaders, faithful disciples and the relentless arc of social transformation that by God’s grace, “bends toward justice.”

Rich oratory, rousing anthems and gospel classics, radical choreography and keen remembrances all reverberated through the lengthy worship celebration. Bishop Ernest Lyght came from New Jersey and the Rev. David Briddell, a former Philadelphia pastor, journeyed from Berlin, Md., both to share compelling historical insights about the old Delaware Conference. Young Anthony Washington, of New Vision UMC, electrified the interracial congregation, including Cabinet members, with his dramatic eloquence in rendering lyrical, rhythmic spoken word.

Then Bishop Gregory Palmer, a Philadelphia native who heads the West Ohio Conference, preached powerfully, offering profound insights in his sonorous voice. Introduced by his beloved father, the Rev. Herbert Palmer, he challenged church leaders, including descendants of the old Delaware Conference, to be boldly authentic and affirmed in the expression of their Christian faith and racial identity.

## Expressions of faith and identity

Along with all the prose and poetry there were indeed, expressions of faith and racial identity that enriched a dynamic, intergenerational program of music and dance. Across the sprawling, sunlit sanctuary the attentive congregation responded with awed delight to organ and piano solos by Tindley Temple’s music director Theodore Thomas and the Rev. Tracy Duncan of St. Matthew’s UMC in Trevoze. Three choirs—the Sounds of Joy, Faith in Action and Mother African Zoar’s Youth Choir—also filled the room with melodious songs of faith. And Grace-in-Motion, Grace UMC’s exciting young liturgical dance troupe, wearing painted faces, energized the crowd with their explosive music and choreography.

The Rev. Fred Day, who leads the denomination’s General Commission on Archives and History, brought greetings, lauding both the celebration and the heroes and history of the old Delaware Conference that inspired him in his ministry. Visual highlights of that history were also on display in a joint exhibit created by Tindley Temple and Zoar archivists.

Much was said and done during the three-hour-plus program, which former Conference Lay Leader Mary White emceed and helped organize. But the reception that followed was even more animated with joyous fellowship and heart-warming reunions among old friends. Amid the noisy laughter and reminiscences, some admitted that this grand, milestone celebration of the Delaware Conference—which ended 50 years ago—may be the last one many of its members will get to enjoy. And so literally, it was a celebration for the ages.



Clergy celebrants gathered before the Delaware Conference worship program at Tindley Temple UMC. Surrounding host Bishop Peggy Johnson are (from left) the Revs. David Briddell, Fred Day, Herbert Palmer, Bishop Gregory Palmer, Bishop Ernest Lyght and Robert Johnson, host pastor. *Melanie DuPree photo*

