



Quilted
by Connection
NEJ 2016 Conference
Lancaster PA

NEJ Conference will elect 2 bishops

The Eastern PA Conference will host the UMC's 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, July 11-15, at the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square. With the success of its appeal to the Inter-Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee and the recent General Conference, the NEJ will maintain nine bishops and episcopal areas, even though the jurisdiction's membership has dropped below the mandatory threshold for that number. Thus, we will elect two new bishops to replace one retiring and one deceased bishop.

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Remember, Repent, Rejoice! Annual Conference 2016

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The 230th Annual Session of the Eastern PA Annual Conference, meeting June 16-18, at the Lancaster Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, will have some special features, including one that will resemble the recent General Conference in Portland, Oregon.

With the theme "Open Wide Your Hearts!" members will be seated at round tables throughout the session, at times facing one another, which may well enhance their worship, dialogue, fellowship and Holy Conferencing.

The opening worship service--influenced by Native American history and culture--will usher in the Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous People that follows. The worship procession will begin on

the convention center's second level, before a replica of the 1936 painting "Treaty of Lancaster."

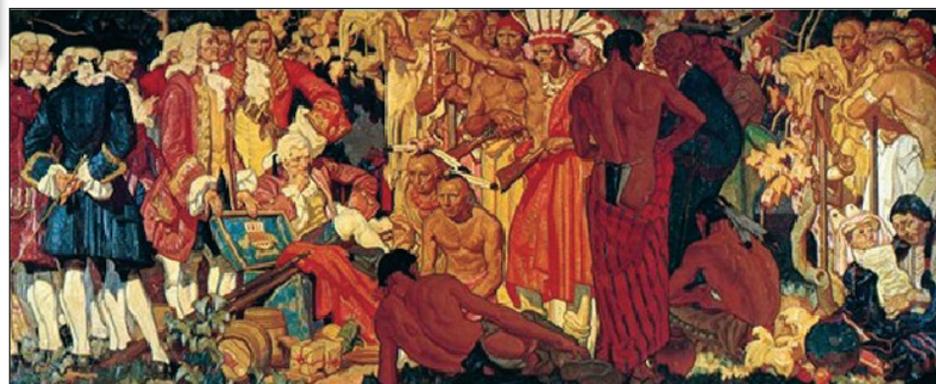
Artist Dean Cornwell's vivid work depicts the 1744 meeting of Iroquois Federation Indian leaders with British and American colonial officials, including Benjamin Franklin, in Lancaster. At that meeting to form an alliance, the brilliant Onondaga Chief Canassatego advised the colonists to unify themselves so they could speak with one voice. Later Franklin would share that wisdom with the American Continental Congress, urging the colonies to unite as one new nation. The U.S. Constitution is essentially based on the Iroquois Federation model.

That starting point for the worship leaders' procession may have timely significance. As they join conference members gathered on the first floor,



entering to sounds of drums and singing, they will do so grateful for a tenuous unity that the General Conference preserved by a vote that forestalled the threat of denominational schism.

That vote called for the Council of Bishops to forge a "way forward" that resolves the perpetual conflict over church law and doctrine pertaining to human sexuality and ministry. That topic will emerge again at this annual conference as several familiar resolutions are presented for debate and decision. (See related story on resolutions on page 4.)



First there will be worship

But first there will be worship, from the traditional "blessing of the grounds" by Barry Lee to the celebration of our faith and unity in Christ through song and sermon, liturgy and Holy Communion. The Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett, a member of the Seneca tribe and a long-respected voice for justice and reconciliation among United Methodists,

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During an emotional debate at General Conference 2016 Ann Jacob, an Eastern PA Conference reserve delegate, with support from her peers, reads a statement calling for church unity, adopted by the Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in July 2015. See page 6 for more photos of our bishop, delegates, and members at General Conference. Kathleen Barry photo, UMNS

General Conference struggles to keep the UMC united

The 2016 General Conference in Portland, Oregon, May 10-20, was a dramatic, sweeping marathon of legislation, celebration and demonstrations, and it was one for the ages. In keeping with the theme "Therefore, Go," much was accomplished in celebrating and sending forth The United Methodist Church as a powerful force for gospel-sharing, life-saving, world-changing mission.

Many left rejoicing that the global denomination remains formally united, for now. But others left disappointed

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Remember, Repent, Rejoice!

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will preach on "A New Beginning," celebrate the Eucharist and lead the body in its Act of Repentance. On Thursday evening he will teach on "Living our Theology: No Pain, No Gain," about racial justice from a Native American perspective and the challenges facing racial-ethnic persons and communities.



Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett

Fassett was just honored by General Conference for his work against racism and for intercultural and interfaith unity. With his leadership the 2012 General Conference observed the first Act of Repentance and called on every annual conference to do likewise. Since then, our Conference Committee on Native



Bishop Linda Lee

American Ministries (CONAM) has sought to prepare us for it. That included last year's ceremony honoring nearly 200 children who died and were buried at the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School, now the U.S. Army War College.

3 bishops to speak

Continuing the conference's focus on understanding and repenting from racism, retired United Methodist Bishop Linda Lee, a Philadelphia native, will

lecture Friday morning on "Creating a Church for All People." The former chairwoman of the General Commission on Religion and Race will discuss how persons, churches and institutions can open and transform organizational structures through honest, vigilant assessment and accountability.

In other worship services resident Bishop Peggy Johnson will preach about the vision of a multicultural church of the future during the annual Service of Ordination and Commissioning, before she consecrates the 2016 class of elders and deacons for ministry. The service will take place at historic First UMC Lancaster on Friday evening after a public procession of clergy in robes and stoles march the four blocks from the Marriott Hotel to the church.

Finally, we will welcome back Bishop Marcus Matthews, who served the Philadelphia Episcopal Area as a new bishop in 2004-2008. He will preach during the Memorial Service to honor clergy and clergy spouses who died in the past conference year.



Bishop Marcus Matthews

JUNE

JUNE 5

District Conferences

JUNE 16-19

2016 Eastern PA Annual Conference

JUNE 26

Boehm's Chapel 225th Anniversary Celebration

JULY

JULY 7-10

NEJ Youth Rally

JULY 11-15

NEJ Conference

JULY 16

Basic Sexual Ethics Workshop, 9 AM-3:30 PM, Conshohocken UMC

JULY 16

UM Night at the Phillies Ballgame, Citizens Bank Park, 7 PM

JULY 22-23

Mission u, Inn at Reading (Friday, 5 PM, to Saturday, 4:30 PM)

AUGUST

AUGUST 13-14

Academy for Laity, The Inn at Reading

AUGUST 21

Campus Ministry Sunday

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 10

Children's Ministry Training Event, 8:45AM - 3:15PM, West Lawn UMC

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 1

Adjourned Session of Annual Conference, Bethany UMC at Macungie

OCTOBER 2

World Communion Sunday

OCTOBER 8

Radical Discipleship Workshop with Bill Easum, 8:30 AM- 3:30 PM, Thorndale UMC

Bishop Matthews currently leads the Washington Episcopal Area, serving the Baltimore-Washington Conference, where he will retire this year. He chairs the Northeastern Jurisdiction Vision Table, and the Africa University Development Committee.

Making worship meaningful

"We want to make each worship service a really meaningful experience," said the Rev. Candy LaBar, who is coordinating worship along with the Rev. Monica Guepet and other volunteers. "The bishop has a vision of seating us at round tables, and we want to maximize that. It's exciting."

At the opening service, rather than having Communion typically served at various stations around the room, people will serve each other using a loaf and cup at each table. "We had to make special arrangements," LaBar said. "So all the bread will be gluten-free and we'll have antibacterial wipes, provided by the Conference Health & Healing Council, at each table."

Once again, as the Conference body celebrates retiring clergy and learns about milestones in their ministry journeys, the retirees will, in turn, celebrate, and welcome with prayer shawls, new clergy to be ordained and commissioned. Meanwhile, conference members will be invited to write thank-you notes at their tables to be given to the new retirees.

And during the Memorial Service, worshipers at their tables can again participate. Up front, family members or district superintendents will come forth and pour colored sand into a large vessel as each name of a deceased clergy member or spouse is read and the bell tolls. But at the tables there will be small vessels of sand that worshipers can also pour out in small amounts to honor each name read.

Worship services at annual conferences are always profoundly stirring events in both their solemn and celebratory moments. Much of the reason is the inspirational and diverse forms of music performed. This session is likely to be no different, with traditional

Native American instruments, liturgical dance and the musicianship of David Bryant, Director of Music Ministries at First UMC Phoenixville for the past decade.

"Our goal for this Annual Conference, as always, is to help our people reach more souls for Christ by opening their hearts and minds and becoming more culturally competent," said Bishop Johnson. "It's all about us being the beloved community and drawing more people to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, while making disciples who can help transform our world."

New deacons, elders to be approved

The following persons should be approved by vote at the June 16 Clergy Session of Annual Conference.

Candidates for Ordination as Deacon

- Edward Locke Cameron
- Gregory Scott Ellis
- Nicole Kelley Kleinberg

Candidates for Ordination as Elder

- Susan L. Moore
- Marcia Lincoln-Heinz
- Jared Earl Stine

Candidate for Commissioning as Deacon

- Diana A. Esposito

Candidates for Commissioning as Elder

- Angela Kellie Ebo
- Bradley M. Leight
- Nina Patton-Semerod
- Julia Lynne Singleton

To be approved as a Full Time Local Pastor

- Jason Brant Perkowski



(USPS 19-604)

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Faithfully Yours Division

...So that they may all be one. (from John 17:11b)

One of the most moving events that I attended at General Conference was the Korean evening of celebration and prayer for unity. For nearly 70 years the Korean Peninsula has been divided between North and South Korea, separated by the Cold War between Communist countries in the East and Capitalist nations in the West. Even after the Korean War cease fire in 1953, the two nations never signed a peace treaty and remain technically at war.

This truly sad division of one people into two opposing nations has left families separated for generations. Many have never seen their loved ones again or even know their fate.

At this General Conference gathering there was a gracious dinner



The Rev. James Chongho Kim holds a cross, assembled from two pieces of wood, symbolizing the two Koreas, during a report from the Committee on Peace by the Korean Association of the United Methodist Church, May 19 at the 2016 General Conference. Photos by Mike DuBose, UMNS

and several presentations about this tragedy and about the hope that someday there will be a united Korea once again. We were further encouraged by a presentation from Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, of the former West Germany, and a pastor from the former East Germany, who both spoke of the reunification that miraculously occurred there in 1990. They said they did not believe that unification would ever happen, but God made a way. Koreans of goodwill on both sides of the peninsula are fervently praying for a similar miracle.

Division a grievous thing

Division of people, especially people of the same ethnicity and culture, is a grievous thing. The concerns that divide people are never as big or important as the essential values that should unite them. But we humans are obsessed with position, power and pride. And while some may cling to long-revered principles, too often they forget Jesus' priority that, "The greatest of these is love."

When people focus on what unites us, so much more can be accomplished. The human family can prosper. And swords and spears--instruments of death and destruction--can be beaten into plowshares and pruning hooks--farm implements used to nurture life. This is certainly true for the family of God in The United Methodist Church.

The division in our denomination around issues of human sexuality and ministry is deep and hard. Inflexible lines have been drawn by people who

are passionate on both sides. Yet, at every General Conference I always feel something else.

I feel these "middle" people, the ones who want peace and moderation. They are there, quietly choosing through their votes to soften the hard lines, voting for "may" instead of "must," for grace over the law. We witness them promoting a generous goodness, instead of planning strategies in closed-door meetings to defeat the "other."

The gracious "everyone is welcome" spirit that this middle group promotes is the unifying Spirit of God. It affirms my belief in God's amazing Pentecost Spirit. And it gives me hope: hope for Korea, hope for our human sexuality and ministry debate, and hope for every place on this earth where humans are in deep conflict and division. Our very survival and prosperity depends on it.

I need you to survive

Hezekiah Walker's famous song: "I Need You to Survive" speaks well this sentiment:

I need you. You need me. We're all a part of God's body.

Stand with me; agree with me. We're all a part of God's body.

It is his will that every need be supplied.

You are important to me, I need you to survive."

When we think like that, we can't be drawing swords against each other, using weapons of division and discord against one another. Instead we need to be like the Apostle Paul, who

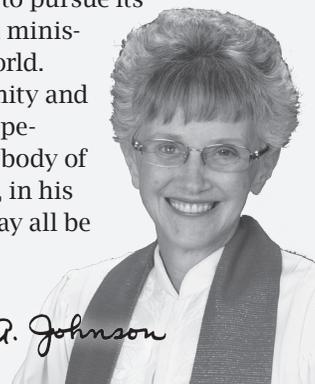


Kay Woo holds up a peace cross during a report from the Committee on Peace by the Korean Association of the United Methodist Church, May 19 at the 2016 General Conference.

encouraged us to use the "weapons of righteousness" (II Corinthians 6: 7), in which we overcome our divisions with "purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech and the power of God."

Over the next few years the Council of Bishops has been charged with crafting a way forward so that the UMC can remain unified despite the divisions between our different beliefs about human sexuality, ministry and marriage. Pray for this process. Pray for the church, our church, as it continues to pursue its mission and ministry in the world.

Pray for unity and for peace, especially in the body of Christ. That, in his name, we may all be one.



Peggy A. Johnson

NEJ Conference will elect 2 bishops

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During the conference episcopal candidates will meet with the various annual conference delegations, including the 16 delegates from Eastern PA, to seek their support. There will also be jurisdictional committee meetings, reports and presentations, plus elections to UMC boards and agencies. Following the episcopal elections, bishops will be assigned to their respective areas on the final day.

Quilted by Connection is the timely theme for the NEJ Conference. Along with the colorful logo symbolizing a quilt, it pays homage to the diverse interconnection of churches across the jurisdiction's 10 annual conferences, and also to the host Pennsylvania Dutch Country, well-known for its Amish quilts.

"Like the iconic quilts, the people of the United Methodist Church are a collection of spiritual and cultural expressions connected to each other to form a tapestry of beauty and func-



tionality," reads the NEJ Jurisdictional Conference's Webpage. "As such, the colorful quilt becomes a visual image of the diversity that is central to the identity of the churches of the Northeastern Jurisdiction." Visit the Webpage to register for the conference and see information for delegates, bishops and episcopal candidates.

Laity Session to spotlight ministry

The Eastern PA Conference Laity Session, preceding Annual Conference on June 16, will feature a remarkable servant-leader whose life may well exemplify the conference theme, "Open Wide Your Hearts!"

In 1988 **Jim Ford**, a retired physical education teacher, founded Good Works, a Christian home repair ministry serving low-income homeowners in Coatesville, PA. He directed it for over 25 years and retired again in 2014, having built Good Works into a vibrant source of help and hope for many Chester County neighbors. "Jim Ford is one of the most caring human beings I have ever met," said the local United Way CEO.

The Laity Session theme is "Responding to God's Call," and Ford, who now shares with others what he learned about being in ministry with the poor, will speak on "Availability." Conference Lay Leader David Koch met Ford when he spoke at Koch's church, Grove UMC, for Laity Sunday.

The session will also recognize District Lay Leaders, Certified Lay Ministers and Christ Servant Ministers, hear reports on General Conference from lay delegates, and remember lay annual conference members who died in the past year.



Conference resolutions propose advocacy and new policies

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

A new process for episcopal endorsements, revised Safe Sanctuaries and sexual harassment policies, and a new policy for secure usage of church computers and the Internet are among the 21 resolutions the Eastern PA Annual Conference will consider when it meets June 16-18.

Two advocacy resolutions related to undocumented immigrants urge the conference to support the state assembly's House Bill #1459, that would grant them legal driver's licenses, and to support the Dream Care Campaign to provide health insurance for all children, including the undocumented.



Denial of driver's licenses to an estimated 200,000 undocumented persons hurts the state's economy, public safety and quality of life for those immigrants, advocates say. Meanwhile, publicly endorsing Public Citizens for Children and Youth's Dream Care Campaign could improve the health of more than 24,000 undocumented, uninsured children.

Five more resolutions call for "full in-

clusion of LGBTQ persons in the UMC" and fair access to employment, housing and public accommodations.

Process for episcopal endorsements

Currently there are no conference rules for endorsing episcopal candidates. So delegates to the 2016 Jurisdictional Conference are proposing a process. The delegation may recommend vetted nominees for endorsement, or it may decide to recommend no one, which is the case this year.

In the proposed process, the annual conference must confirm the delegation's recommendation by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote. If the approval margin is less than 2/3 of the voting body, consenting, eligible candidates may be nominated for endorsement from the floor, provided the conference secretary receives a petition for each nominee signed by 10 members, lay or clergy, and the conference body receives at least 500 copies of the nominee's biographical profile and personal statement.

Four hours later the conference can vote on any eligible nominees for endorsement, up to the number of episcopal vacancies to be filled, which this year is expected to be two. A nominee must receive at least a 2/3 majority vote for endorsement. But Jurisdictional Conference delegates are not bound to support endorsed candidates when they cast their votes in July.



Ensuring personal safety and responsibility

The revised Safe Sanctuaries and Sexual Misconduct policies, and the new policy for secure usage of church computers, networks and the Internet are all proposed to increase the safety and responsibility of persons who attend, occupy, work at or use the resources of church and conference facilities.

New Safe Sanctuaries policies for all congregations to adopt represent ongoing efforts to "reduce the risk of abuse in the church." They include standards for screening, selecting, training and supervising church staff and volunteers and for reporting and responding to allegations of abuse.

The new Sexual Misconduct or Harassment policy replaces one in use since 1998. It includes definitions, interpretations and expectations for reporting and investigating charges without retaliation against legitimate accusers.

The "Computers, Networks and Internet Access Policy" resolution recommends imposing rules, responsibilities, restrictions and protections on the use of computer equipment, e-mail, the Web and private information of church members.

Welcoming, protecting LGBTQ persons

One resolution advocating "full inclusion" for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning) persons in the UMC relates to marriage equality; the other to ordination equality. Another resolution calls for aggressive support of the Fairness Act, a popular but still unpassed state bill to extend freedom from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations to LGBTQ persons.

A similar resolution on "religious freedom" asks the conference to denounce any legislation anywhere that uses that term for laws that would restrict LGBTQ persons' rightful access to employment, housing and public accommodations.

And the Resolution on Radical Welcome would encourage all churches to extend just that to LGBTQ persons, especially LGBTQ youth, who suffer high rates of family rejection, homelessness and suicide. It calls upon churches to hold special events on Sunday, Oct. 9, two days before National Coming Out Day (Oct. 11).

Other resolutions

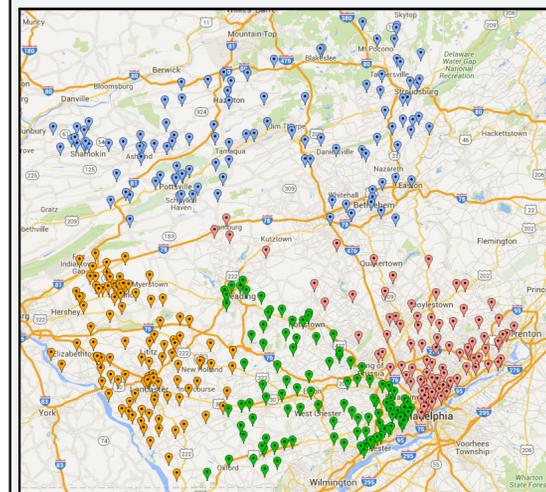
One annual, mission-focused resolution recommends 12 diverse local and conference-wide ministries to be endorsed as Advance Special Projects for local church funding support in the coming conference year.

Three other annual resolutions care for the needs of retired or disabled clergy members and adopt the conference's Comprehensive Funding Plan for payment of pension and health benefits. And one other annual resolution recommends a 2 percent increase in Equitable Compensation assistance to ensure minimum base salaries for clergy serving low-income churches.

Unfortunately, what have also become annual are resolutions to officially discontinue historic churches that have decided to close after declining in membership and essential resources. "Discontinuance" of four closed churches will be approved this year. Two are in Schuylkill County: Immanuel UMC in West Penn (est. 1857) and William Penn UMC (est. 1882). Two others are Spring City UMC (est. 1845) and Park UMC in Freeland (est. 1905).

A final resolution calls for studying "alternative, fair voting methods for electing members to committees and delegations." It recommends "ranked choice voting (also known as 'preferential voting')," used to choose from multiple nominees or to elect delegations.

Resolutions will be considered throughout the annual conference session. All resolutions may be found and read in detail on the 2016 Annual Conference page of our Website.



Fewer districts proposed in town hall meetings

The Rev. Timothy Thomson-Hohl, of Ardmore UMC, asks a question during the Central District's April 5 town hall meeting on the conference's financial challenges and the Cabinet's recommendation to move from six districts to four. Bishop Peggy Johnson presented an extensive background report and proposal--including church location maps--to lay and clergy members in all six districts, with help from Conference Treasurer Jim Cruickshank and Pension and Health Benefits Director Jo Fielding. The Annual Conference will vote on the proposal at its scheduled Adjourned Session Oct 1. If approved, the redistricting will take effect July 1, 2017, with a transition period. *John Coleman and Sabrina Daluisio photos*

General Conference struggles to keep the UMC united

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that what they see as an inevitable schism over doctrine and discipline did not occur.

Rule 44 was proposed as a group-discernment process to avoid contentious debate in handling difficult legislation on issues such as sexuality and ministry. But it was ultimately rejected as an alternative form of holy conferencing. Ironically, however, the debate on sexuality and ministry was averted anyway when delegates narrowly approved a Council of Bishops' proposal to fully examine the issue through a special commission and to make recommendations before the next scheduled General Conference in 2020.



"We accept our role as spiritual leaders to lead The United Methodist Church in a 'pause for prayer' — to step back from attempts at legislative solutions and to intentionally seek God's will for the future," said new Council President Bishop Bruce Ough.

"I believe that it is well worth the time to allow the bishops to work on this important matter for the next few years," wrote Bishop Peggy Johnson in a report to the Eastern PA Conference, "and for all of us to pray and work for the unity of the church in the loving, unifying spirit of Christ.

You can find plenty of news stories, photos and commentaries on much of what happened—and didn't happen—at General Conference on our Website, www.epaumc.org, and on the denomination's official Website, www.umc.org. That includes an uplifting summary of highlights from Bishop Peggy Johnson.

But here are comments from a few of our Eastern PA leaders who attended this memorable, global gathering. Our delegates will present their official report at Annual Conference. More photos of our folks appear on page 6.

Judy Ehninger, lay delegate

The worship was rich and inspirational, the fellowship warm and encouraging, but the tension and anxiety were palpable. On the first day as I entered the Discipleship Legislative Committee, I surveyed the room and saw a man, in African dress, sitting alone at a table. I approached and asked if I could sit down. He was from Zimbabwe. We had a long conversation about Africa University, and so began a multicultural adventure.

Soon a Japanese pastor joined us, then one from Germany and an African American lay leader from North Alabama. The last person to join our legislative small group was a pastor from Serbia- Macedonia. A mini-United

Nations at one table. A vision of heaven, perhaps. I came to that table believing in the global nature of our church and left absolutely affirmed that we must preserve and support our global connectional relationships.

We were quite an amazing work team. Did we agree on every petition? Of course not, but we agreed to discuss and disagree in Christian love. This is truly the United Methodist way. The legislative work was laborious, but it is the foundational fabric of the General Conference's business. It is amazing to see well-prepared delegates engaged in discussion, affirming or amending hundreds of petitions submitted from across the church.

The plenary sessions involved five days of prayer and worship, celebration of our tremendous accomplishments, and serious consideration of all the legislative work presented by committees. All of it demonstrated our uniquely inclusive membership, our episcopal government and ecumenical involvement, and our global evangelical ministry.

Unity of the Church intact

The Eastern PA delegation was extraordinary, and our leader, the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm, was outstanding. We met each morning at 7:30 for prayer and preparation. Bishop Johnson would check in with us to offer news, encouragement and prayers for our health and work. By Friday most of us left the conference exhausted but with the unity of the church intact, and trusting the Holy Spirit to guide our bishops in determining the path forward for the denomination.

Our 16 delegates to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference will have the opportunity to elect two bishops for our jurisdiction. This is a miracle of provision which took place at General Conference, as many were expecting a reduction in our number of bishops.

I humbly accepted my election to General Conference praying to seek God's will and act accordingly. I have returned determined to continue the work of Making Disciples for Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World in the Eastern PA Conference.

Clarita Krall, lay delegate

The worship experiences at General Conference have been glorious. The music is outstanding. A choir of Korean voices, known as "I Solisti Roma," brought me to tears with their rendition of "Laudate Dominum." I have thoroughly been inspired by the preaching of the bishops each morning. They are calling the General Conference to be inclusive of all people.

The bishops came back with a plan, a



(From left) The Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm, Bishop Johnson, and Judy Ehninger

process calling for a time of prayer and discussion among the delegates seated together. It was the first time that our Eastern PA Conference delegation actually shared our personal stories with one another. I was most grateful for that time to finally be able to share my story and to hear the stories of the delegates, whom I have grown to love and respect as we have been preparing to serve together over the past months since our election.

Krystl Johnson, lay delegate

(She participated in the opening worship procession and presented part of the Global Ministries Legislative Committee's report.)

It was exciting to address the general body and to serve as a subcommittee chair for the Global Ministries Legislative Committee. There is no greater joy than to be used by God. As a first-time delegate, I could never have imagined that God would use my voice and share my gifts of leadership and compassion in this venue....

The texts of encouragement from family and conference members watching from home, and knowing members present there were praying for every word I uttered, were all a reminder of what God said to Moses in Exodus 4:12, "Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

In my spiritual reflections, it was revealed to me that God has been preparing me for this time. The anonymous recommendation for me to lead in opening General Conference was just one of the things God used to point this out to me. Carrying the Christ candle during opening worship reminded me of my sealed commitment to let the light of Christ shine through me.

Dawn Taylor-Storm, clergy delegate

For the first time, General Conference has asked the bishops to lead us forward, and they did that....I think



this is a call for us as a church to step back and pray and be in conversation. I give thanks for their statement that upholds the unity of the church. As a voting delegate, I kept praying about the 12 million members of our United Methodist Church and how just a small body of under 900 people would be trying to make a decision on the future of our church and whether we should split. I give thanks that this is the way forward we have chosen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

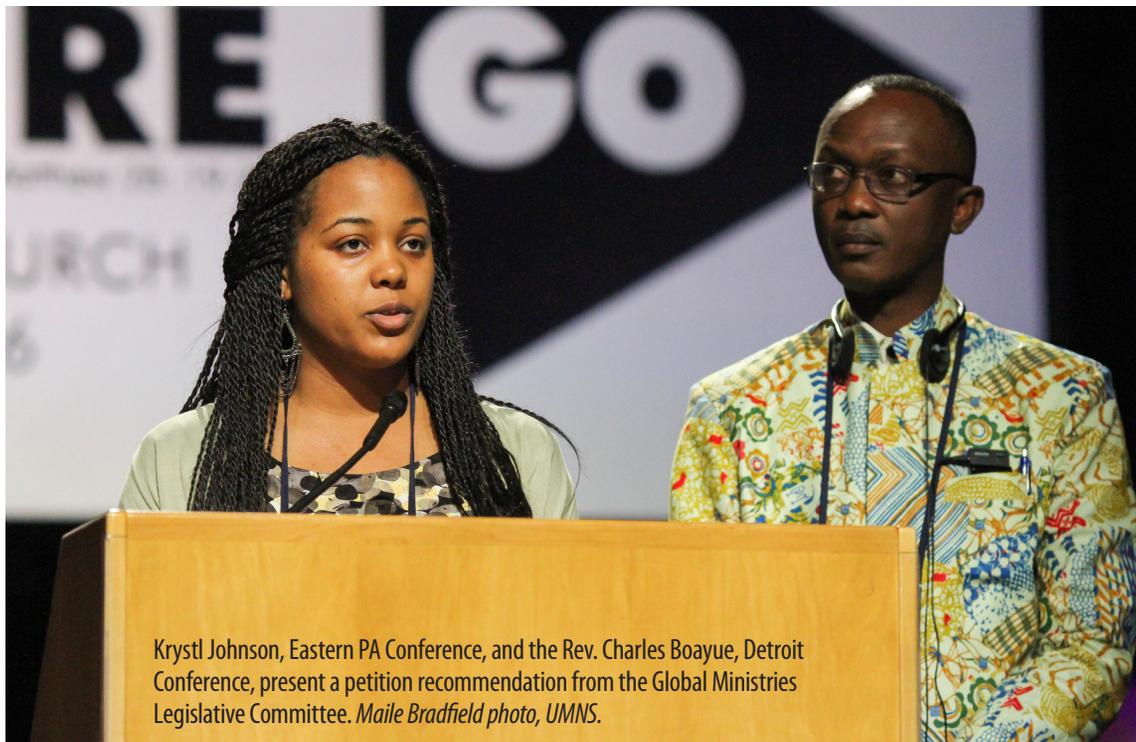
I saw much life-giving service and hard work not only from our constituencies but from all disciples at this global gathering of United Methodists. I appreciate so much their ministry of service and sacrifice.

The power of the Holy Spirit and Pentecost has once again shown up in the UMC. We have an opportunity to push the pause button on this conversation and spend a couple of years studying this carefully and writing things in a new way that may serve the church better as we go forward. I don't know what the results will be, but I do know God is in the midst of the process as we have conversation and prayer together. I greatly rejoice and pray as the church moves forward in all the million ways we're doing evangelism and mission and ministry.

So much good is happening in our church, so many wonderful missions and opportunities for telling people about Jesus Christ and the good news of the gospel. Rejoice in your church that continues to be a United Methodist Church, concerned about diversity, continuing to spread the love of Jesus Christ and the life-changing good news that can transform hearts and lives.

The Eastern PA Conference at **General Conference 2016** **And thus we went...*

**borrowed from the Baltimore-Washington Conference General Conference Blog*



Krystl Johnson, Eastern PA Conference, and the Rev. Charles Boayue, Detroit Conference, present a petition recommendation from the Global Ministries Legislative Committee. *Maile Bradfield photo, UMNS.*



The Rev. Lydia Muñoz, Eastern PA Conference, speaks during a discussion of United Methodist Women. *Paul Jeffrey photo, UMNS.*



Eastern PA Conference delegates and members huddle for a briefing and prayer before the morning worship and plenary session. *John Coleman photo.*



Bishop John R. Schol, leader of the Greater New Jersey Conference and a member of the Eastern PA Conference, presides over the closing business session of the 2016 United Methodist General Conference in Portland, Ore. *Mike DuBose photo, UMNS*



Bishop Peggy Johnson interprets Bishop Gregory Palmer's episcopal address into American Sign Language *Mike DuBose photo, UMNS.*



The Rev. Fred Day, a member of the Eastern PA Conference, and head of the General Commission on Archives and History, helps celebrate the 200th anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. *Maile Bradfield photo, UMNS.*



The Rev. Robin Hynicka (*right*) and the Rev. Herbert Snyder, both of the Eastern PA Conference, were among clergy and laity who protested the treatment of LGBTQ persons at General Conference, often through silent protest. Their actions symbolized the feeling of being silenced on the conference floor and continually barred from participating fully in the life and ministry of the denomination. *John Coleman photo*



The Rev. Michael Johnson receives Holy Communion from Bishop Beverly Shamana. *Mike DuBose photo, UMNS*



Aaron Smith talks with the Rev. Joe DiPaolo *John Coleman photo.*

Eastern PA churches, districts open wide their hearts



Eastern PA Conference churches in every district are reaching out near and far to embrace neighbors in need, from around the corner to around the globe. We lift up some noteworthy examples here, and we will feature more on our Website and in our next few issues of NEWSpirit. We celebrate our churches in mission, spreading their witness as disciples of Jesus Christ that the world may be transformed.

Clockwise from top-left: Lititz UMC and fellow churches planted our first Lifetree Cafe in a Lititz restaurant last October to offer unchurched neighbors a different kind of faith experience where questions, doubts and friendly, open conversations are welcome. A second Lifetree Cafe opened in April, planted by a Lebanon-area mission connexion of churches. *John Coleman photo.*



The Northeast District sponsored a poverty simulation exercise for its Tools for Ministry session in March, giving church leaders a glimpse of what the cruel constraints and pressures of poverty can feel like. Inspired leaders of East Stroudsburg UMC will bring the eye-opening--and indeed, heart-opening--experience to their church this summer. *John Coleman photo*

Children at the newly expanded Mpsa Pe-



diatric Clinic in the Congo will benefit from the generous mission contributions of the Southeast and Northeast districts, as they give to furnish the clinic for life-saving surgeries. The Rev. Jonathan and Donna Baker, Congo Partnership missionaries, visited the Southeast District Conference June 5, to thank them for their support and give them an update. *Photo courtesy of Donna Baker.*

Pastors and members of Lighthouse and Bensalem Korean UMCs joined a New Jersey Korean church in May on a first-time mission trip to the burgeoning city of Santiago, in the Dominican Republic, to share their faith and fellowship with some of the half-million Haitians living there. They visited churches, taught Bible school, provided acupuncture, engaged in prayer, testimonies and Christian studies with their hosts, despite language barriers, and helped break ground on a new, much-needed church. *Photos courtesy of Rev. Byung Cho.*

Members of Mid-Town Parish UMC in Philadelphia move pews and other furnishings donated to them by Malvern UMC in its preparations to close in 2015. The two historic congregations developed a special friendship when Malvern joined other Central District churches in helping Mid-Town Parish acquire funds and other needs to build and furnish its new church facility. The congregation has spent a decade meeting in a community center, since its previous building burned and was condemned. It received its new pre-fabricated structure in March and will occupy it this summer. Mid-Town Parish members joined in Malvern's closing service in January 2015, symbolizing its continuing legacy as their benefactor. Mid-Town Parish lay leader Dana Clark (left) and the Rev. James Elliott, Malvern's last pastor, embrace. *John Coleman photos.*



A whole lot of learnin' goin' on

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

Beyond their open hearts, United Methodists strive always to fill their open minds with new wisdom, much of it focused on finding new ways to open their doors to new people.

The Eastern PA Conference, its six districts and some of its teaching churches together sponsor learning events throughout the year, welcoming anyone to come and learn how to make disciples and help change the world. There are the annual training events, some of them required of clergy and staff, including ones in Sexual Ethics, Changing Racism and Safe Sanctuaries.

Then there are events to introduce or advance knowledge in various ministry arenas and situations—like the Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments Forum offered by the Central District and annual retreats held by Deacons and by the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members.

There is the fertile Planting Seeds for Ministry training offered by Hopewell UMC each November, and other upcoming opportunities, like the **Radical Discipleship training** by Bill Easum's group, which Thorndale UMC will host Oct. 8.

District-sponsored events

Moreover, there are always district-sponsored



clergy breakfasts and luncheons with guest speakers. In April the East District welcomed back former conference staffer Yvette Davis to teach grant research and writing strategies. In May the Southwest and Northeast districts each welcomed leadership coach Ken Willard to teach time management skills; and the Southeast District hosted a talk by church futurist Reggie Neal.

The Northwest District recently invested in intensive learning events for clergy and laity, with cutting-edge thinkers. David Oliver led a two-part Soul Care workshop on tending the spiritual health of both pastors and congregations. And sociologist Josh Packard shared from his published, in-depth study, *Church Refugees: People Done with Church But Not Their Faith*.

Annual Tools for Ministry training events, hosted by each district for church leaders, mostly rely on local talent to provide high-quality instruction. But the Southwest District's Tools session in March featured the Rev. Mike Mather, pastor of Broadway UMC in Indianapolis, who taught on the "Death and Resurrection of a Church," about revitalizing the church through an asset-based community development approach.

Conference Events

For three years now, the conference has sponsored in March its Faith-Sharing Seminar to encourage

evangelism, choosing this year an unconventional but dynamic, forward-thinking guest presenter in the Rev. Romal Tune. And the conference Congregational Development Office annually offers seminars on using Mission InSite demographics and lifestyle research to help churches grow and become more relevant by addressing real needs and interests in their communities.

Congregational Development has now launched values-and relationship-based Spiritual Leadership (SLI) training for the Cabinet and large-membership churches, with training for medium and smaller-size churches to follow.

Meanwhile, this summer will again feature two annual, two-day learning events intended for everyone, but primarily for laity: **Mission u, July 22-23**, sponsored by UM Women; and the **Academy for Laity, August 13-14**, sponsored by the Board of Laity. Both will again take place at The Inn at Reading.

And just in time for kids to return to school, the new conference Children's Ministries Team will sponsor "**Connecting Children with Christ**," Sept. 10, at West Lawn UMC in Reading. They invite all leaders, teachers, staff and volunteers who work with children to come learn and share best practices and great ideas for nurturing children's faith. Keynote speaker will be Melanie C. Gordon, Director of Ministry with Children at Discipleship Ministries.



Teaching and learning the faith

(clockwise from top right): The Rev. Romal Tune on faith-sharing; Yvette Davis on researching grants for ministry; the Rev. Giovanni Arroyo of GCORR on Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Appointments; the Rev. Mike Mathers on rethinking church at Tools for Ministry (Rev. Jim Goudie photo); the Rev. Justo Gonzales, Wesley Forum lecturer, posing with Latino clergy (Rev. Chris Fisher photo); Dr. Josh Packard, lecturer on *Church Refugees*; and attendees at the April 25 Fellowship of Local Pastors & Associate Members Retreat, taught by Dr. Charles Yrigoyen. (Photos by John Coleman, unless otherwise identified)



Re-envisioning Congregational Development



BY THE REV. GORDON HENDRICKSON

EASTERN PA CONFERENCE COORDINATOR OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PART 1*

What is happening in growing new churches and redeveloping existing churches? A lot! I remember when I went to Annual Conference in the early 2000s and heard what new church development had become. We had changed the initial paradigm of developing new churches from the traditional “parachute drop.” That’s where an appointed pastor descends on a community fully resourced to create a new church from scratch, costing a million dollars in full-elder compensation, land and building construction. Now it became a group meeting in a school or a diner or an existing church with no immediate expectations of having a full-time pastor or land or buildings.



During a monthly SLI training session for the Eastern PA Conference Cabinet, the Rev. Tracy Bass (from left) discusses an idea, as the Rev. Christopher Kurien and SLI coach Rev. Phillip McKay listen. Large-church pastors and leaders are also receiving training at New Hanover UMC.

We were mixing clergy elders and lay ministers to lead these new churches. In fact, we couldn’t afford the compensation package for an elder; so we became more dependent on using part-time lay pastors. In reality, our dollars had dried up and we couldn’t afford the traditional way.

So finances were forcing us back to our origins of lay-led grassroots ministries, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Perhaps God is taking us back to our roots as we forge our path into the future.

One of the realities of ours and many other conferences is the nature of who we have become. Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world may be our mission; but in too many churches maintenance and survival have become the priority concern. Yes, there are some growing churches that are striving to call, equip and send forth world-changing disciples, but only a precious few.

Growing churches must create and be fruitful to multiply. They must:

- increase their worship attendance,
- increase the number of new believers making confessions of faith,
- increase mission giving, and create new ministries outside the church,
- create small groups and new ministries inside the church
- address the needs and interests of people whose lifestyles predominate in the community, and
- create adaptive leadership and Ministry Action Plans (MAPs), based on spiritual formation in healthy environments.

What can we do to create an environment where making transformative disciples becomes our priority

and our passion, true to our Wesleyan DNA? Churches, as well as conference and district leaders, must go back to abiding in Christ by spending time in spiritual formation. Unless we are spending a huge amount of time growing together in the Spirit of Christ we will never develop the environment to make the adaptive changes and develop the MAPs needed to grow.

Learning to see each other for who we are, through the eyes of Christ, will break down the silos and barriers we have at times unwittingly constructed that restrict the flow of the Holy Spirit. For example, I do not join the choir just to sing, but I join to grow as a disciple who enjoys and ministers to others through singing. I do not become a trustee primarily to look after the church property but to grow as a disciple who serves Christ as a faithful steward caring for the church’s property.

For this reason, we have brought SLI, Spiritual Leadership, Inc., into our conference to introduce initially our Cabinet and leaders of our large-membership churches to the process for creating spiritual formations that lead to healthy environments resulting in adaptive ministries. I myself am being trained as a coach in this process to eventually help all willing members of our conference to learn and implement anew this “old” way of doing church. It really goes back to our Wesleyan roots and the roots of our early church chronicled in Acts.

**Editor’s Note: This is Part 1 of a longer article on Re-envisioning Congregational Development and SLI (Spiritual Leadership, Inc.), a new developmental initiative of our conference. The rest of Gordon’s article will appear on the Congregational Development page of our Website and in the next issue of NEWSpirit.*

Academy seminars teach clergy financial leadership

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

“Giving is an act of love. So is asking.” “If you don’t ask, the answer will always be no.” “You have to trust in God’s promise of abundance.”

Non-profit Fundraising axioms were plentiful at the Mid-Atlantic UM Foundation’s two-day Financial Leadership Academy (FLA) seminar on that topic in April. But behind them was a lot of wisdom shared with about 60 clergy by two experts in higher education funding development.

Matching needs and donors, segmenting solicitation strategies demographically, planning campaign events and activities, identifying fundraising strengths and challenges, understanding the donor life-cycle...a lot of wisdom filling minds, conversations and notebooks with ideas.

It was the fifth of six FLA seminars that began in January 2015 and will end Oct. 17-19, 2016 with a final seminar on Planned Giving, covering tactics for establishing church endowments through trusts, annuities, bequests and other gifts. The Rev. Ken Sloane, Director of Stewardship & Connectional

Ministries for the General Board of Discipleship, will lead that seminar.

A new, two-year series of academy seminars for a new class of clergy learners will begin simultaneously, Oct. 18-20, meeting at the Hilton in Christiana/Newark, Del., and starting with first things first: Personal Finances for Clergy. The series will again proceed with seminars in Stewardship, Leadership, Church Finances, and so on. During and between seminars, the pastors benefit from peer groups, coaching and “personal action plans” to help them become financial, as well as spiritual, leaders for their congregations who can turn good ideas into good practices.

“What I have learned has completely changed the

way I approach strategic planning for the church... and given me a profound sense of confidence in my ministry,” said the Rev. Jenny Sauerbrun, who serves Epworth UMC in Bethlehem. The seminars and the peer groups combine clergy from the three conferences the Foundation serves: Eastern PA, Peninsula-Delaware and Baltimore-Washington.

Most new students are recommended by current ones and by their district superintendents. The \$1500 tuition is payable over two years, and clergy can earn continuing education credits (CEUs). The new FLA series registration deadline is Monday, June 13. Contact Jeanne Mackowiak at jmackowiak.mafoundation@gmail.com to register.

John Coleman photos



Seeking God's healing and hope for our future

BY THE REV. CHRISTOPHER J. KURIEN
DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

Our 2016 Annual Conference will offer important reports and resolutions, a moving ordination and commissioning service, great music and preaching in worship, inspiring prayers and fellowship with one another. But we will be especially blessed to hear the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett, a scholar, historian, author, church leader and renowned advocate for justice.

A clergy member of the Upper New York Conference, Dr. Fassett will lead our conference in observing the Act of Repentance and Healing for Indigenous Peoples. I pray for God's healing touch and wholeness to be experienced by all, as we "open wide our hearts" with candor and compassion for one another.

Many in our congregations have studied Dr. Fassett's enlightening, historical book, *Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival*. Early immigrants came to America's shores from everywhere seeking new opportunities, freedom, wealth and settlement in new territories. But their migration often led to intrusion on Native peoples' lands, along with broken treaties, exploitation, displacement and tragic deaths among millions.

Today our church has a responsibility to alleviate the sad legacy of such tragedies and to identify with the hurts and pains of people who were treated wrongly.

We have an active, committed Conference Committee on Native American Ministry. With their help we, like many conferences, are making efforts to understand and address the atrocities done to Native people over the years and the mistreatment that

continues today.

The 2012 and 2016 General Conferences both observed Acts of Repentance. The latter one focused on the painful memory of the Sand Creek Massacre, led by Col. John Chivington, a Methodist clergyman. Descendants of some of the victims of that terrible attack welcomed our efforts to repent. I hope the Act of Repentance we observe in Lancaster this month will not be seen as a onetime event, but will be an ongoing effort to make things right with Native peoples of this land.

Since we are meeting just after General Conference, I am sure many are thinking about our struggle to maintain denominational unity amid divisive issues. As the Council of Bishops creates a new commission to study the difficult issues of our doctrine and our



Discipline, and as they bring forth proposals, let us pray for God's wisdom to guide everyone involved.

We, as a nation, are also going through a contentious Presidential election season. So we need to pray for our nation and for God's wisdom to guide our leaders, especially our President and the candidates for that office.

Let us pray that everyone will treat one another with respect. And let us pray for our communities and relationships, that we will be open-hearted and graceful to one another, always looking for ways build each other up, rather than tear each other down.

May God's loving Spirit guide all of our deliberations and decisions during and after Annual Conference!



Connectional Table develops affinity groups

Left: At the Connectional Table's April 9 meeting, leaders of conference boards and committees divided into affinity groups to network and plan ministries together, based on the denomination's four mission foci: creating new places and developing new leaders for ministry, engaging in ministry with those who are poor, and promoting global health. Collaborating here are (clockwise from bottom-left) Carol Black (Nominations Committee), Marilyn Wilt (Commission on the Status & Role of Women—COSROW), Gladys Hubbard (UM Women), the Rev. Jason Perkowski (Higher Education & Campus Ministry), David Piltz (Young Peoples Ministries) and Barbara Christy (Committee on Native American Ministry). **Right:** The Connectional Table, led by the Rev. Christopher Kurien (left) and the Rev. Bob Wilt, meets twice a year to connect and enhance ministry efforts. John Coleman photo



Largest class of Certified Lay Ministers graduates

"The Certified Lay Ministry Class of 2016 celebrates today our transformative journey," read Jean Howe in a heartfelt testimony from her class of new CLM graduates. "We dedicate ourselves to faithfully journey through the crossroads, with God's help.... We have not walked this journey alone!"

Eleven new CLMs were recognized by Bishop Peggy Johnson and their families, friends and supporters during a ceremony April 14 at West Lawn UMC. It was the sixth and largest class to complete the process, which has produced 51 Certified Lay Ministers in all. The 2016 graduates, shown here with Bishop Johnson and program coordinator Judy Ehninger, are (not in order): Jean Howe, Robert Irving, Jon Kirkbride, Pamela Snyder, Dorothy Stem, Rob Stoner, Susan Velez, John Vidal and Rick Wrisley.

They are serving churches as lay pastors, music and worship leaders, church business manager, food bank manager, Sunday School leader, Bible study leader, volunteer coordinator and prayer ministry coordinator. Clergy instructors for the course included the Revs. Misty Fuller, Janet Hess, Walter Carter and Andrew Foster, III. Dawn Taylor-Storm photo



BMCR Caucus Officers, 2016-2017

Officers of Black Methodists for Church Renewal's Philadelphia Area Caucus gather after their May 24 spring meeting (from left): the Rev. David Brown, outgoing Vice-Coordinator; and Lawrence Lee, outgoing Coordinator; Thomasenia Harrell, interim-Secretary; Krystl Johnson, incoming Vice-Coordinator; the Rev. Shayla Green, incoming Coordinator; and Tamara Wims, Treasurer. Other officers include the Rev. Andrew Foster III, Membership Chair, and Lorraine Foster, Scholarship Chair.

The caucus sponsored a meeting with Bishop Peggy Johnson to hear about General Conference, plans for Annual and Jurisdictional conferences, and the Cabinet's proposed reduction of districts. John Coleman photo



In Memoriam

Full death notices are available at www.epaumc.org/death-notice

Geraldine Bowen Havens

Geraldine Bowen Havens, age 95, of Des Moines, WA., died May 14, 2016. She was a surviving spouse of the Rev. Reeves C. Havens Jr., a retired Elder of the Eastern PA Conference, who died in 2010. He served as a pastor and chaplain in at least five states. In Eastern PA he served at: Philadelphia Methodist Hospital; Lancaster: Broad Street (now Christ UMC); and Cornwall Manor.

Mrs. Havens, born in Binghamton, NY, was a teacher in preschools and high schools, and she tutored students of all ages. She is survived by: her son, Alan (and wife Mary Ellen) Havens; three daughters--Lynne (and husband Don) Lovett, Rana (and husband Barry) Wise, and Maia (Amy) Havens; seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Her sister, Margaret Freeman Norton, and her brother, Fred O. Bowen, preceded her in death.

Mrs. Diane Whitehead

Mrs. Diane Whitehead, the widow of the late Rev. Edward Whitehead, passed away on Friday, May 20, 2016. Rev. Whitehead served the Audenried-Jeansville UM Church from Sept. 1, 2009, until his death on March 17, 2012. He was a lay supply pastor who became a Licensed Local Pastor in the year of his death.

Mrs. Whitehead, 72, of Nesquehoning, Pa., worked at Maple Shade Meadows in Nesquehoning before retiring. She was an active member of Meed's Memorial UM Church there.

Surviving her are three sons, Edward Jr. (and his wife, Cindy) and Walter; two daughters, Diane Schnell (and her husband Glenn), and Sherry Whitehead; a brother and three sisters; 13 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. She was also predeceased by a brother Allen Gillespie.

The Rev. Kenneth L. Beale Sr.

The Rev. Kenneth L. Beale Sr. a retired Elder in the Eastern PA Conference, passed away on Saturday, May 14, 2016. He was 89.

Raised in Eden Methodist Church, he served in World War II in the U.S. Army and as a pastor and chaplain throughout his ministerial career. He was married to the former Anna Carey for 66 years until she passed in 2014.

Rev. Beale served four Philadelphia Methodist churches from 1950 to 1959: Wesley; Mt. Hermon; 22nd Street; and Taylor Memorial. He then served Jarrettown UMC for nearly 34 years, from 1959 until his retirement in 1992. After retirement, he became an associate pastor at Chalfont UMC for 24 years and continued to work as a chaplain at Abington Hospital.

Surviving Beale are his two sons: the Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Beale, Jr. and Keith E. Beale, six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

The Rev. James A. Landis

The Rev. James A. Landis, a retired associate member of the Eastern PA Conference, died on Wednesday, May 11, 2016. A resident of Horsham Twp., he was 86.

Condolences may be send to Mrs. Nancy S. Wright, his surviving daughter, at 523 Mullen Road, Ambler, PA 19002-1603.

An Evangelical and Methodist Pastor for 27 years, Rev. Landis was appointed to serve the following churches, before he retired in 1993: Phoenixville: Bethesda; Emmaus: Zion; Bethlehem: St. Luke's; Palmerton: Salem; Quakertown: Bethel; Bellegrave; Water Works; and Narvon: Mt. Zion.

Following his retirement, he served for several years as a visitation pastor for First UMC Perkasio. He was also a former president of the Highland Park Campmeeting Association, Sellersville, PA.

A U. S. Marine Corps Veteran of the Korean War, he was married for 62 years to Eleanor B. (Benner) Landis, until her death in 2014.

Rev. Erwin E. Boettcher

We received word that the Rev. Erwin E. Boettcher, 89, of Lancaster, passed away on May 2, 2016. He was on loan to the Eastern PA Conference from the Moravian Church when he served Brunnerville UMC from 1988 to 1992, and then he retired.

Boettcher was a Moravian minister for 37 years, and a chaplain at Moravian Manor, Lititz, from 1982-1988.

He is survived by three daughters and their spouses: Wendy (and William) Hardiman of Bethlehem, PA; Jill (and Rev. Richard) Bruckart of Riverside, NJ; and Rebecca (and Kelley) Jones of Red Lion, PA. Also surviving him are three grandchildren, one great-grandson and one sister.

Rev. Richard Voigt

The Rev. Richard Voigt, 83, retired Elder passed away on Feb. 19, 2016.

Condolences may be sent to his surviving spouse, Mrs. Linda A. Voigt, at 1050 Dogwood Drive, Cornwall PA 17016. Rev. Voigt served the following churches: Philadelphia: Burholme; Barnesville: Bethany; Quakake: Ebenezer; Akron: Mt. Zion; Saylorville; Ackermanville; Danielsville: Salem; and Bowmanstown.

He also served in Extension Ministry, establishing the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Northampton Area Community College in Bethlehem and serving as its first professor. He retired in 1996 and received the title of Professor Emeritus.

Survivors include Voigt's wife of 33 years, Linda; a son, Douglas (and wife Mary Voigt); daughters, Janice Banko (and husband Joseph), and Jennifer Murgia (and husband Christopher); three grandchildren; and a brother, Edward Voigt.

The Rev. Tresita M. Beach

It was reported that the Rev. Tresita M. Beach passed away on March 4, 2016. She served the Eastern PA Conference prior to transferring in 1999 to the Troy Conference (now Upper New York).

She served at Saylorburg: St. Peter's UMC in Eastern PA, as a retired Local Pastor. Prior to her transfer out, she served at Valley Forge UMC and Evansburg UMC. She has four surviving children: Ronald R. Frey, Allen D. Frey, David Beach and Cheryl Beach.

The Rev. John (Jack) C. Kulp

The Rev. John (Jack) C. Kulp, of West Brandywine, formerly of Wayne, a retired Elder, passed away Feb, 22, 2016. He was 92.

Rev. Kulp served in these churches and ministries: US Navy Student Chaplain (Active Duty); US Naval Reserve Chaplain (Active Duty); Teacher, Senior High English (The Pennington School); Norristown: Asbury; Hulmeville: Neshamony; Drexel Hill; Swarthmore; District Superintendent, South District; Allentown: Asbury; Pastoral Care for Clergy & Clergy Families; and Director of Pastoral Care at Evangelical Manor. He retired in 1988.

Kulp was married to the late Aurelia M. Kulp (nee Marian). He is survived by his daughter, Susan K. Smith (and husband Gary); his son, John C. Kulp Jr. (and wife Kim); four grandchildren; a great-grandson; two brothers-in-law; and other relatives.

The Rev. Frederick C. Lowery

The Rev. Frederick C. Lowery, of Lancaster, passed away on Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. He was 91.

Lowery became the pastor of the three-church Jonestown circuit in Lebanon County in 1954. He then served Evangelical (now UMC) in New Holland from 1960 to 1987 and retired in 1987. During retirement, he served Intercourse UMC until 2003.

Lowery served as a Chaplain in the Army Reserve from 1957-1978, retiring as a Lt. Colonel. A World War II veteran, he was awarded four bronze stars and two bronze oak leaf clusters,

Surviving him are his wife of 67 years, Cora Jean (Kling) Lowery, in addition to a son, David K. Lowery (married to Deborah); a daughter, Julia A. Lowery; a daughter-in-law, Jeanie (Voreis) Lowery; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; a brother and sister-in-law. Preceding him in death was a son, Daniel F. Lowery, and a brother, Robert B. Lowery.



'Preaching with Power'

Janes Memorial UMC in Philadelphia hosted a rousing celebration of sermon and song on United Methodist Night, March 15, during the annual Forum on Black Preaching and Theology. Lutheran Theological Seminary's Urban Theological Institute sponsored the event, and members of the Eastern PA Conference Cabinet made a generous donation to support the ecumenical institute, which includes UM students.

"Preaching with Power" was the forum's theme, and those words came alive in the fiery, Holy Spirit preaching of retired Bishop Violet Fisher. One of several noted preachers who spoke during the forum, she urged the congregation to rediscover the spirit of evangelistic worship and committed discipleship in Jesus Christ.

Providing the celebration of song was the new Philadelphia United Methodist Mass Choir in its first performance. The large assembly of singers from several local, black UM churches is directed by the Rev. Eric Carr, musician and pastor of Philadelphia's Wharton-Wesley UMC. *John Coleman photos*



'Spring forward': Special events draw young people to the great outdoors

As calendars and clocks advanced, it was "spring forward" for active young people who took part in various special events around the conference.

(Top-left) Over 100 people ran toward a worthy goal in West Chester UMC's 5th annual Beat the Bug Run/Walk Race, April 17, to raise funds for Imagine No Malaria. The church raised over \$13,700 this year, totaling over \$50,000 since its first race in 2012. (Photo courtesy of Craig Thomas)

(Top-right) Teen girls from across the conference stretched beyond their comfort zones at the UMC Women's annual Girls on the Go Retreat, March 5, at

the Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center. There they made new friends while enjoying recreation, learning and creative activities. (John Coleman photo)

(Middle) The annual Gretna Gritty, May 7, brought the young and the restless (and some not so young) to test their mettle in another race by running, climbing, crawling, leaping and staggering through Gretna Glen's marvelous, muddy obstacle course. They overcame climbing walls and huge tires, pianos, a splashing pond, fire pits and plenty of mud. The prize at the end for each racer was a tiny medal and a big feeling of satisfaction. (Sabrina Daluisio photos)

(Bottom) The new Conference Council on Youth

Ministry (right) helped organize the second annual Eastern PA Conference Youth Rally, April 24. Nearly 400 youth and adults attended the lively gathering in Hopewell UMC's outdoor amphitheater. They listened to the provocative prose and poetry of several inspirational speakers and the uplifting music of Hopewell's Christian youth band, #JesusTrending. The 2017 rally will return to Hopewell on Saturday, April 22, for a full day (9 AM to 4 PM), with a theme from Isaiah 60:1: "Wake Up God's People; God's People ... Wake Up." (Sabrina Daluisio photos)