



**Bishop Johnson returns to Philadelphia Area**

'We have much good work to do in these next four years,' Story on page 3.



Eastern PA Conference delegates to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference hear news of Bishop Peggy Johnson's return for another four years. *John Coleman photo*

## Unity but not Uniformity NEJ's Connectional Quilt shows its colors

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The last became first throughout much of The United Methodist Church's Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference when more than 300 delegates, bishops and staff met July 11-15, in Lancaster, Pa.

The first plenary session honored peoples too often thought of last in our church and society. During a solemn Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples there were Native American songs danced by a family wearing jingle dresses, richly poetic prayers and liturgy, a painful account of a 1763 massacre, and ceremonial gift-giving.

Later, delegates from the jurisdiction's

10 annual conferences made history by electing two African American women as bishops. The Rev. Cynthia Moore Koikoi and the Rev. LaTrelle Miller Eastlerling became the first black clergywomen elected since 2000, when now-retired Bishop Violet Fisher became the only woman of color ever to join the NEJ College of Bishops.

Meanwhile, the conference enthusiastically endorsed two dramatic, related calls for action—one to remedy a growing crisis of racism, injustice and violence vexing the nation; the other to support initiatives for racial healing but also the survival and growth of black churches.

The conference theme, Quilted by Connection, evoked images of colorful quilt patches stitched together. That

theme came alive throughout the conference—from the multiracial, multi-talented praise and worship band, to the youth representatives who participated; from the various bishops who presided and preached over three days, to the 13 diverse candidates who sought election to that highest office, most of them enduring extensive vetting interviews and balloting.

### Bishops, delegates call for peace with justice

The NEJ College of Bishops opened the conference with a bold, sweeping proclamation of repentance and a quest for reconciliation. They declared their intention to actively oppose the fear, injustice and deadly violence being stoked across the nation by racism, homophobia, hate, privilege and other sources of oppression.

"Black lives really do matter, and the lives of all persons of color really do matter" stated the College's president, Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball of West Virginia, to a resounding standing ovation, as her fellow bishops stood behind her. "The lives of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters really do matter.

"The NEJ College of Bishops believes that in the midst of the chaos, fear, and violence, there is a rich opportunity for the church to be the church," she asserted, promising that the bishops would be accountable for engaging church leaders in candid discourse and actions to foster social healing and transforma-

*continued on page 7*

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- Re-envisioning' Congregational Development, page 11
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### Long awaited Act of Repentance

The Rev. Anita Powell (*left*) and Barry Lee, singing in his native Munsee language, lead the opening worship procession into the Eastern PA Annual Conference June 16. Lee and his wife Barbara Christy Lee began the conference's Act of Repentance ceremony by recalling the massacre of Conestoga Indians in 1763. See full Annual Conference coverage on pages 4-6. *Paul C. Davis photo*

# AUGUST

**AUGUST 20**  
UM Day at Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom

**AUGUST 21**  
Campus Ministry Sunday

# SEPTEMBER

**SEPT. 10**  
Children's Ministry Training Event, West Lawn UMC, 8:45-3:15

**SEPT. 13 & 20**  
Lifetree Cafe Intro. & Training, Part 1 & 2

**SEPT. 17**

Laity Retreat, Jarretstown UMC, Dresher, PA, 9 to 1:30

# OCTOBER

**OCT. 1**

Adjourned Session of Annual Conference, Bethany UMC Macungie, 8:30-3:30

**OCT. 1**

"Sabbath: Break... or Brick?" Artos retreats for clergy spouses, Mariawald Retreat Center, AM and PM sessions

**OCT. 8**

Radical Discipleship Workshop, Thornedale UMC, 8:30-3:30

**OCT. 15**

Conference Connectional Table meets

**OCT. 16**

Laity Sunday

**OCT. 22**

Planting Seeds for Ministry Growth, Hopewell UMC, 2-6:30

**OCT. 22**

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

**OCT. 28-30**

2016 Changing Racism Training, Daylesford Abbey in Paoli

# NOVEMBER

**NOV. 6**

Native American cultural program with worship, Innabah Camp & Retreat Center, 4-6PM.

## BISHOP'S DAYS ON THE DISTRICTS

- Northwest District--Sept. 27
- Southeast District--Oct. 3
- Southwest District--Oct. 4
- Central District--Oct. 17
- Northeast District--Oct. 19
- East District--Oct. 20.

# L is for...



**Laughter**—to enjoy fellowship on United Methodist Day at Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom, Aug. 20



**Leadership**—to nurture and support college students on Campus Ministry Sunday, Aug. 21



**Legislating**—to resource ministry at our Annual Conference Adjourned Session, Oct. 1.



**Learning**—to teach children about Christ at our Connecting Children with Christ Seminar, Sept. 10

**So join us, and don't miss any of these wonderful opportunities to "L"-evate your life and ministry to the glory of God.**



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## Faithfully Yours Grateful!

**A**t the United Methodist Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in Lancaster, Pa., July 11-15, our demonstration of hospitality exceeded my wildest expectations!

The Eastern PA Conference, along with some support from the Pen-Del Conference, hosted this event, and I am grateful for the many women and men who worked tirelessly, around the clock it seemed, to greet and serve our many guests. People commented to me again and again about how friendly the staff was and how well things were organized. Many thanks to all!

This historic conference gave me

many reasons to be grateful. I am grateful that I have been reappointed as the Bishop of the Philadelphia Area for another four years. This has been an answer to prayer, as I feel that my work is not yet finished.

With the strong possibility of episcopal area realignment in 2020, I will be in a unique position to help shepherd that process. I appreciate the many letters, e-mail messages and phone calls saying "Congratulations" and "Welcome back." Truly it is a blessing to serve in this wonderful area at such a crucial time as this.

I am grateful that we have two new bishops--two new sister-bishops--both sister-bishops of color, joining the NEJ College of Bishops. What a joy to watch Bishop LaTrelle Easterling and Bishop Cynthia Moore-KoiKoi be elected and to hear their words of hope and excitement as they greeted the conference.

God is up to something with these vibrant new leaders. Bishop Easterling will serve in the Washington Area and Bishop Moore-KoiKoi has been assigned to the Pittsburgh Area.

I am grateful for the "Call to Action" to the jurisdiction and the College of Bishops issued by the NEJ BUMP, BMCR, and BLF organizations. This bold, timely statement calls the church to accountability for affirming the value of black lives and all lives of color.

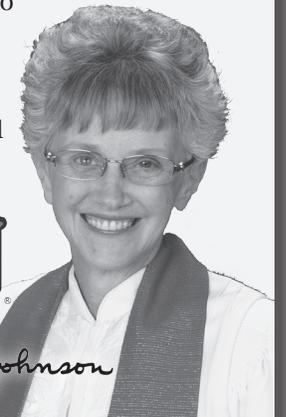
The statement sets into motion a number of agendas for dialogue, training, relationship-building and programming that each conference will be responsible for in the quadrennium ahead. I look forward to the work we can do together to dismantle racism and build bonds of peace.

We have much good work to do in

these next four years, empowered by our strong faith and our determination to do what is right. May these be blessed years of prayer, study, spiritual growth and ample commitment to serving others, sharing our faith and growing churches to the glory of God.

And may the fruit of all that we do be revealed in bold new disciples who are engaged in world-changing mission for Christ. To behold that fruit would make me eternally grateful.

*Peggy A. Johnson*



## Bishop Johnson returns to Philadelphia Area

**B**ack by popular demand, Bishop Peggy A. Johnson will return to the Philadelphia Episcopal Area to lead the Eastern PA and Peninsula-Delaware conferences for another four years. After a week of suspense, her reassignment was announced at the closing session of the UMC's Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

The announcements of where all nine NEJ bishops would serve in 2017-2020 followed the election of two new bishops to fill vacancies. Most bishops serving in their first terms will return for another four years. Bishop Johnson is the only one to return to an area for a third consecutive term.

New Bishop Cynthia Moore-KoiKoi will serve the Pittsburgh Area, as current Bishop Thomas Bickerton moves

to the New York Area after 12 years in the Western PA Conference. New Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling will serve the Washington DC Area (Baltimore-Washington Conference), following the retirement of Bishop Marcus Matthews.

Bishops Jeremiah Park (Harrisburg Area-Susquehanna Conference), John R. Schol (Greater New Jersey Area), Mark Webb (Upper New York Area), Sandra Steiner Ball (West Virginia Area), and Sudarshana Devadhar (Boston Area-New England Conference) will all return to serve their current areas. Bishop Jane Middleton, retired, will leave her post as interim-Bishop of the New York Area.

Bishop Johnson briefly celebrated with delegates and members of her two conferences. "It is my joy to accept the invitation by the NEJ Episcopacy Com-

mittee to remain as the bishop of the Eastern PA and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences for another four years," she said. "My husband Michael and I are thrilled to have the opportunity to serve among you for this unprecedented additional third quadrennium."

She read from 1 Thessalonians 5:11-18: *"Therefore, encourage one another and build up one another, just as you are also doing, but we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work..."*

"If we do all that," she added, "we'll be fine. We may not even have to go down to eight areas."

### Realigned episcopal areas expected in 2020

Unless there is a large increase in membership, NEJ leaders plan to prepare for a reduction in the number of bishops to eight in 2020. The declining overall membership has fallen below the number needed to sustain nine bishops. The jurisdiction was spared that reduction this year by an extension granted in May by the denomination's 2016 General Conference and its Inter-Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. A study has been requested to assess if membership alone should be the criteria to determine episcopal areas, or whether other mission factors should play a role as well.

The reduction will require a realignment that would likely pair the Penin-

sula-Delaware Conference with the Baltimore-Washington Conference in one episcopal area, and pair the Eastern PA Conference with the Greater New Jersey Conference in another.

### Returning to the Philadelphia Area

Bishop Johnson read the following statement to her Philadelphia Area leaders following her reassignment as possibly the last bishop to serve this area as presently constituted.

"It is my goal to continue to build up the body, both laity and clergy, to encourage

our leaders, to "seek after that which is good" for all people, with a particular emphasis on our churches of color, and to engage in intentional efforts to help eliminate racism and violence. The strength for this work is found in the living resources of our spiritual disciplines. In all things let us give thanks and pray without ceasing. There is much good work yet to be done in the Philadelphia Area."

"It would have broken my heart to leave," said the Rev. Michael Johnson, asked to speak as well. "I've enjoyed being in ministry here with all of you."

"Eastern PA rejoices in the reassignment of Bishop Johnson to our area," said the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm, delegation leader and a new member of the UMC's Inter-Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee. "She is a mission leader who brings a servant's heart to our ministry efforts here. We're glad to be continuing our covenant together in working to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."



Bishop Peggy Johnson reads a statement to the two Philadelphia Area delegations to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, expressing gratitude for her return and some ministry priorities for the 2017-2020 quadrennium. John Coleman photo

# Annual Conference celebrates clergy lives in transition

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The Eastern PA Annual Conference honored in worship and celebration the lives and ministry transitions of its clergy June 17-18. First came new clergy retirees, then newly ordained and commissioned elders and deacons, and finally those who passed on, receiving their eternal reward, since the last conference session.

Twenty-five new retirees were honored for their many collective years of service. During the annual ceremony, they gathered around new clergy to be ordained later that evening. Presenting them with prayer shawls, the retirees embraced and anointed the ordinands, praying for them and symbolically passing their mantles to the next generation of clergy leaders.

## Honoring ministry milestones

Also invited to stand and be recognized were clergy whose ministry careers began precisely 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 years ago.

Celebrants reminisced about each of those milestone years by highlighting many other, coinciding events in U.S. and world history, including the birth of the National Organization of Women in 1966 and Apple computers in 1976, the tragedies of the space shuttle Challenger and the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant in 1986, the reelection of President Bill Clinton in 1996, and the beginning of Twitter and the end of Saddam Hussein in 2006.

Moreover, there were two other historic milestones celebrated that have impacted the entire denomination: the 60th anniversary of the ordination and full membership of clergywomen, approved by the 1956 General Conference; and the 20th anniversary of ordaining deacons, approved by General Conference in 1996.

The Rev. Sally W. Ott, who is the earliest ordained clergywoman in the Eastern PA Conference, and the Rev. Jennifer Sauerbrun, co-chair of Women in Profes-

sional Ministry, recognized the Rev. Jane Harner and the Rev. Elaine Barnes as the first women to be ordained elders in the Eastern PA Conference. They then asked all ordained clergywomen to stand. (See photo on page 12.)

The Rev. Richard Erisman, who became one of the conference's first ordained deacons in 1997, and the Rev. Tiffany Manning, chair of the conference Order of Deacons, together celebrated the 20th anniversary of ordained deacons who seek "to be a bridge between the church and the world."

## Clergy ordained and commissioned

Hours later, the church invaded the world when clergy members, wearing their robes and stoles, boldly marched through the bustling streets of downtown Lancaster, greeting pedestrians and motorists, as well as news media and protesters. They made the six-block trek together from the convention center to historic First UMC in Lancaster for the annual Service of Ordination, where four deacons and seven elders would be commissioned and ordained.

The crowded sanctuary seemed to glow and reverberate with power and pageantry—from the congregation's full-throated singing of hymns, accompanied by an organ and a brass quintet, to the prayers, preaching and proclamations, to the examination and anointing of this 2016 class of ordained and commissioned clergy members, and finally to the invitation extended to anyone who wished to come forth and answer a call to ministry.

"Ordinands! Commissionands! Jesus has showed you the way! Get out there and reach people for Christ: all people, anyone, everyone," urged Bishop Peggy Johnson in her challenging message to the new class. "You are appointed to your community, not just your church, specifically the 'not so loved' people of this world." (Read Bishop Johnson's full sermon, titled "Water Works," on our conference website.)



2016 ordinands and confirmands greet one another during the ordination service. John Coleman photo

## Memorial Service honors deceased

Former Philadelphia Area Bishop Marcus Matthews, who retires this year from serving the Washington DC Area, also challenged the congregation the next morning in his Memorial Service message. Referring to tragedy and death as part of life's journey of challenges, he joined the conference in honoring bishops, clergy and lay members who "entered the church triumphant" during the past year, as well as clergy spouses and children who also passed on.

The solemn, final service featured a guest choir and praise dancer from Philadelphia and a creative sand-pouring ritual in which families of the deceased poured sand from small containers into a large, common vessel, perhaps symbolizing the combined impact of those individual lives on the church and community as a whole.

"We meet God with the sum total of our realities," said Matthews in his sermon, "and God meets us with the sum total of God's love."

*Note: You can view the recorded 2016 Annual Conference session—except for the Ordination Service, which was not recorded—on our conference YouTube channel.*

# Annual Conference defers votes on key resolutions

The 2016 Eastern PA Annual Conference, meeting June 16-18, cautiously postponed action on some key resolutions during debates, at times choosing compromise over controversy. Members approved 21 resolutions, rejected none, and agreed that some others should be post-poned, modified and resubmitted.

## Approved Resolutions (a partial list):

- An invitation to churches to offer "Radical Welcome" especially to LGBTQ young people, many of whom suffer high rates of family rejection, homelessness and suicide. It was suggested that churches hold special events on Sunday, Oct. 9, two days before National Coming Out Day, Oct. 11. (The vote and emotional debate came just days after the massacre of dozens of young people, many of them LGBTQ, in Orlando, Fla.)
- A call for aggressive support of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act, popular legislative bills (HB1510 and SB974) that would amend the state's Human Relations Act "to ensure freedom from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation based on sexual orientation, gen-

der identity or expression."

- A new Policy on Sexual Misconduct Involving Adults, offered by the conference's I-Care Team, which replaces one in use since 1998. It defines and interprets prohibited behaviors, including romantic relationships between ministerial staff and parishioners, except for married spouses. And it sets expectations for reporting and investigating charges, including a non-retaliation policy to protect legitimate accusers.
- Two advocacy resolutions related to undocumented immigrants. One urges support for granting such immigrants legal driver's licenses; the other supports a plan to provide health insurance for all children, including more than 24,000 undocumented, currently uninsured children.
- A recommended 12 local and conference-wide ministries as Advance Special Projects to receive local church donations in 2016-2017.

## Resolutions withdrawn, referred or postponed for modification and resubmittal:

- New conference rules for choosing nominees to endorse for election as bishops. After debate the conference delegation to the 2016 General and Jurisdictional conferences, which proposed the new rules, was allowed to withdraw the resolution for further consultation and refinement.
- Proposed new Safe Sanctuaries policies were

given back to the Safe Sanctuaries Committee to be refined, with input from others who have suggestions and concerns, and then resubmitted at the Oct. 1 Adjourned Session of Conference.

- A proposed new "Computers, Networks and Internet Access Policy" for ensuring secure, responsible usage of churches' electronic resources, was not addressed and will also be resubmitted to the Adjourned Session.
- Calls for changes in the church's *Book of Discipline* to sanction marriage and ordained ministry for LGBTQ persons. A majority of conference members agreed to postpone consideration of these resolutions until the next General Conference decides to change or maintain church law, based on a recommendation by the Council of Bishops.
- A request for the conference to "denounce" any legislative bills anywhere that use the term "religious freedom" to justify discrimination against LGBTQ persons in employment, housing and public accommodation. The body approved a motion asking the Bishop to form a special commission, including LGBTQ members, to examine the issue and report back to the conference by Nov. 2, 2017.
- A request to study alternative voting methods, such as "ranked-choice voting" for electing members to committees and delegations." It is to be resubmitted at the Oct. 1 Adjourned Session.

## Eastern PA Conference Act of Repentance



**W**ith drum beats and chants, **Barry Lee** (Munsee) and his wife **Barbara Christy Lee** (Munsee-Seneca), members of First UMC Phoenixville and the conference's Committee on Native American Ministry (CONAM), led the

Eastern PA Annual Conference's opening worship procession, as they do each year. But this time they also read and showed the names of 20 Conestoga Indians murdered in Lancaster in December 1763 by a group of white vigilantes known as the Paxton Boys.

In a Call to Repentance non-Native members of CONAM named other abuses and called on the Annual Conference to acknowledge, apologize and repent for "the Church's participation in the destruction of Native American peoples and their culture."

Bishop Peggy Johnson, along with Conference Lay Leader David Koch, led the assembly in a "Responsive Confession." Members were then invited to tie gray ribbons around one another's wrists to symbolize their shared accountability for making changes. And the bishop suggested some of those changes in a list of commitments offered on behalf of the conference. That list included:

- increased support of and involvement in CONAM by local churches;
- giving to the churchwide Native American Ministries Sunday offering and also to General Church Advance mission projects serving Native churches and communities;
- developing Native American leadership at all levels of the church;
- educating more non-Native people about why the Act of Repentance is important; and
- supporting United Methodist justice initiatives for Native peoples related to land and treaty rights, cultural preservation, health and education.

### A moment of rebirth

The Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett (Seneca), guest preacher, counted 40 years of seeking denominational confession and repentance through countless meetings, consciousness-raising dialogues and advocacy for Native American causes. "The church has not been kind to us; we have felt like step-children. But this is a moment of rebirth."

Following a Native-style sharing of Holy Communion, he called for more intentional outreach by United Methodists to Native Americans and other racial-ethnic peoples and more education about their respective histories, cultures, challenges and concerns. "We must consecrate ourselves to new tasks. ...This will be painful for many of us. But if there's no pain, there's no gain."



# Annual Conference learns about breaking down dividing walls

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

**T**he two main featured speakers at The United Methodist Church's Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference in June set a tone that was healing and harmonious, like the Apostle Paul's good news that Jesus Christ had "broken down the dividing wall of hostility," uniting Jews and Gentiles as one people. (Ephesians 2:14)

While new walls of hostility and conflict are erected continually across our nation's social landscape, old walls remain, like those dividing people of indigenous cultures from the dominant society that has oppressed, exploited and disregarded them for centuries.

When nearly 900 Eastern PA Conference clergy and lay members met to handle church business June 16-18 in Lancaster, Pa., they began by first breaking down walls in a solemn opening worship ceremony that sought repentance for an egregious U.S. history of mistreating Native Americans. They also learned ideas for building bridges of relationship, based on truth and accountability and inspired by the conference theme, "Open Wide Your Hearts!" (from 2 Corinthians 6:13).

*Mitakuye Oyasin*, a Lakota phrase meaning "All my relations," was the term the **Rev Thom White Wolf**



**Fassett**, a member of the Seneca nation and a retired elder in the Upper New York Conference, shared with the conference. He emphasized the interconnectedness of all people as part of God's creation and the mutual responsibility that truth confers on all believers.

Fassett, an internationally respected advocate for justice and reconciliation, preached on "A New Beginning" during the Act of Repentance and Healing toward Indigenous People, a ceremony conducted by members of the conference's Committee on Native American Ministry (CONAM). He has done the same for other annual conferences who complied with a mandate from the 2012 General Conference to hold such observances.

### Citing church complicity in abuse

"We have a lot of work to do together," said Fassett, before recalling instances of the church's historic complicity in governmental abuse of Native peoples—from treaty violations to extermination efforts, from forced removal from their lands westward on the Trail of Tears, to forced assimilation of Native children at boarding schools like the first one created in Carlisle, Pa.

He further addressed the "historical trauma" caused by that history, sadly evident in widespread alcoholism, drug abuse, poverty, violence and other ills throughout Indian Country. And he noted widespread rejection of the Christian church by Native people, whose members are often discounted and ignored by mainstream church leaders.

The former and now emeritus General Secretary

of the denomination's Board of Church and Society also lectured that first evening, sharing personal experiences and insights about the struggles and challenges of Native Americans still burdened by historic oppression, exploitation and neglect.

"We're not here to apologize," said Fassett, "but to seek ways to bring about healing relationships... and to reconstruct our institutions and principles so we can live together in justice." Rather than "hand-wringing" over the horrors of history, he urged church leaders to look ahead and ask the same question he once put to revered leaders of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy: "How do we prepare and make decisions that will affect the next seven generations?"

The next morning, as if chiming in on cue, retired



**UM Bishop Linda Lee** led the conference body in an exercise titled "Creating a Church and a World for All People." She shared ways to break down dividing walls of "cultural domination, cultural marginalization and institutional racism."

The former chairwoman of the General Commission on Religion and Race offered wisdom on how persons, churches and institutions can do the "soul-work" of "unlearning, relearning and new learning" to transform lives, relationships and organizational structures through honest, vigilant assessment and accountability.

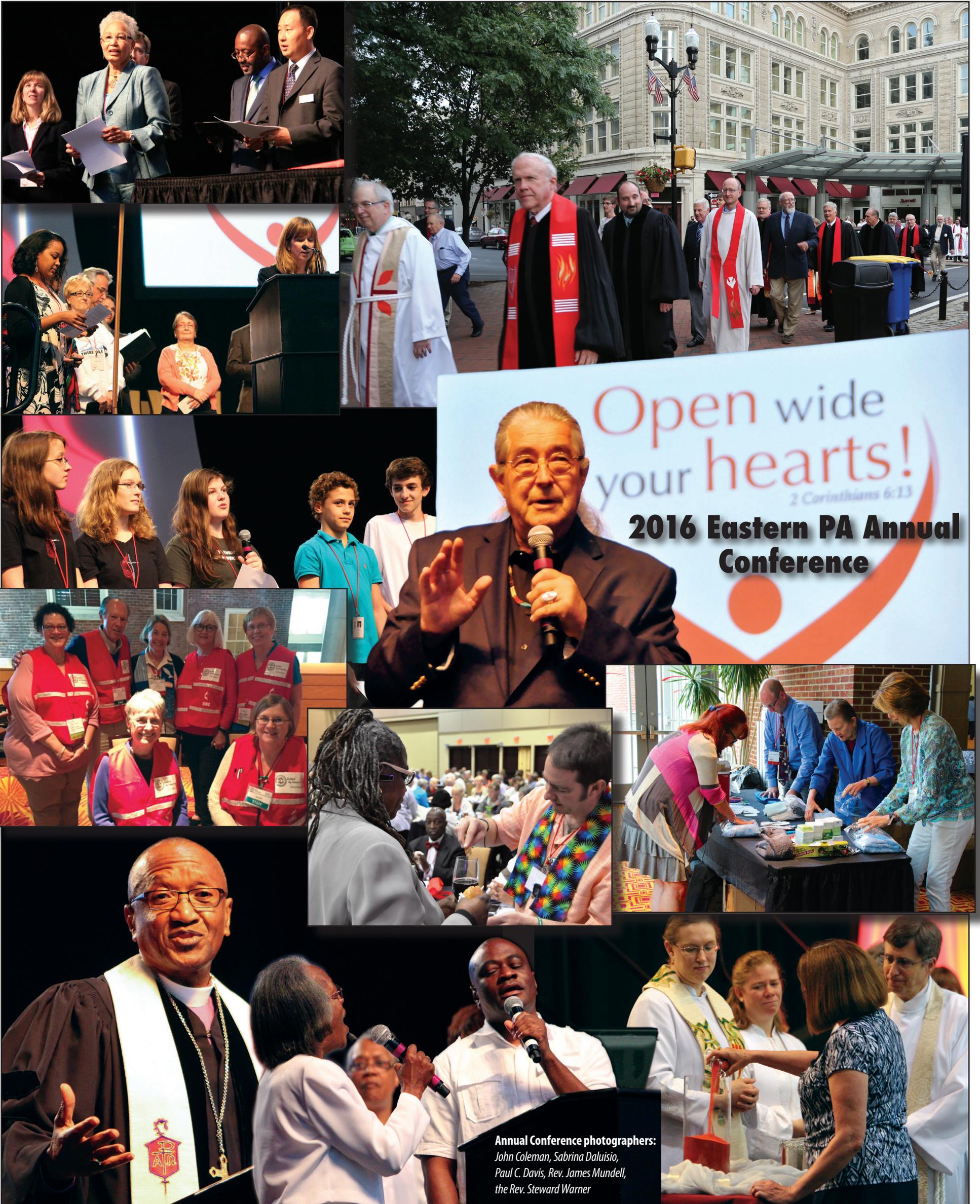
### Participation in racial solutions

"One of the most important things we can do is to create, find and participate in solutions for the ways we handle reality," said Bishop Lee, who formerly led the Michigan and Wisconsin episcopal areas. "We need to focus today on race matters because when racial equity becomes a reality in the U.S., other forms of oppression can be overcome."

Recalling Jesus' boundary-crossing ministry efforts, she asked conference members, seated at round tables, to share with one another memories of their personal histories, because "knowing and sharing our histories is crucial for healing, redemption and relationships." Then she had them reflect in groups on their cross-cultural curiosities, impressions and interactions.

"Our phobias often force us to focus on differences," she said, recommending ideas and resources for understanding and dismantling racism as a mandate of our Christian and Wesleyan beliefs. Her teaching, like Fassett's, stirred interest among many conference members, and some have requested more information and recordings of the sessions (now available on the conference YouTube channel) to share with their churches.

"We are kin," Fassett taught, referring to a "tree of peace" throughout the earth whose roots connect all who are created by God. "Even if we leave here not having adopted one resolution, we live as kin under Jesus Christ, in whom we find oneness. I hope in the next 40 years, Native Americans can become equal partners in The United Methodist Church."



**Annual Conference photographers:**  
*John Coleman, Sabrina Daluisio,  
Paul C. Davis, Rev. James Mundell,  
the Rev. Steward Warner*

# Unity but not Uniformity

continued from page 1

tion. “We seek to be the leaders of this church. We seek justice, repentance and reconciliation. We seek not just to love peace, but to be peacemakers.”

Another, similar Call to Action was offered by several black NEJ organizations—Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), Black United Methodist Pastors, (BUMP); and the new Black Leadership Forum—with support from some black delegates and the NEJ’s Multi-Ethnic Center for Ministry. It challenged bishops, jurisdictional leaders and conferences to become more pro-active and move “from rhetoric to action” to remedy “the wounds caused by unchecked racism, white privilege and internalized oppression.”

The approved resolution, to which each delegation and bishop stood and pledged commitment, called on the NEJ to evaluate and address the impact of structural and institutional racism on people of color. It targeted in particular the closing of black churches and “how current ordination processes in annual conferences affect black persons interested in ordained ministry.”

Annual conferences are asked to report on their efforts and plans to the NEJ’s Committee on Episcopacy, its governing Vision Table, the Multi-Ethnic Center and the 2020 NEJ Conference. Goals include increasing representative black leadership, strengthening the viability of black churches, and starting a new faith community with black youth and young adults in every episcopal area with a significant black population.

## Historic election sustains inclusive leadership

The quest for more black leadership took a leap when Moore-Koikoi, a district superintendent in Baltimore, Md., was elected on the first night after leading the field for 11 straight ballots. Easterling, a district superintendent in Boston, Mass., trailed just behind her until her election on the 17th ballot the next morning.

Behind them most consistently was the Rev. Derrick Porter, recently a district superintendent in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. And rising to third place in later ballots was a write-in candidate, the Rev. Rene Perez-Avalos, a district superintendent in the New England Conference.

Perez and another candidate, the Rev. Irving Cotto of Eastern PA, joined other Latino members in presenting an emotional statement to the conference after the elections. They thanked the delegates for the opportunity to be considered for the episcopacy and assured them that they would keep pushing for the election of the first Latino/a bishop in the NEJ. They cited the fast-

growing Latino population in the region and a lack of Latino leadership at all levels of the church. A group of Asian-American delegates later offered a similar statement calling for more racial inclusiveness.

The NEJ Nominating Committee was also challenged to diversify the jurisdiction’s governing Vision Table, after it had presented a multi-racial slate of board and committee members for election. The committee then nominated José Tirado, a youth member of Nuevo Creación (New Creation) UMC in Lancaster, to replace Clarita Krall as Eastern PA’s lay representative on the Vision Table.



## Conflicts over ministry and sexuality prohibitions

Even annual conference delegations were diverse in some ways. But it was clear from their votes that the majority leaned ideologically toward a more liberal or progressive position on one key issue: church laws that forbid ordaining LGBTQ persons for ministry and conducting marriage ceremonies for same-gender couples.

The Jurisdictional Conference resolved to ask the Council of Bishops’ soon-to-be-formed study commission on human sexuality and the Book of Discipline to recommend allowing jurisdictions to adapt church law in accordance with their own ministry contexts and prevailing ideological views.

During emotional, at times painful, debate, delegates approved that and two other resolutions in disagreement with the denomination’s Book of Discipline. One, which called for “non-conformity” to church law, passed but was later ruled out of order by Presiding Bishop Peggy Johnson. Some delegates then invited the bishops to consider “being out of order with us.” College members discussed the invitation during a dinner break but later declined.

“We know that we are all not of one mind,” said Johnson. “We honor the work of the body, where 60 percent were in favor of this,” said Bishop John Schol, her assistant presider. “And, we also honor the 40 percent who disagreed.”



A third resolution encouraged annual conference councils on finance and administration to agree that there is “no money” for church trials. It was eventually ruled in order after it was amended and its unlawful “Stop the Trials” title was removed.

The Rev. Jeff Raffauf, Eastern PA Conference delegate, asked Presiding Bishop Mark Webb of Upper New York for a ruling of law on the passed, untitled resolution, based on several Discipline paragraphs and Judicial Council decisions. Webb said he would study it and issue a ruling in 30 days.

Some delegates denounced the controversial resolutions as dishonest and potentially destructive of the United Methodist connectional system. Others defended

them as principled and protective of LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersexual, Asexual) members seeking full acceptance and inclusion in the church.

Other jurisdictional conferences also wrestled with the Discipline’s prohibitions through resolutions, statements and debates, not willing to wait for the Council of Bishops’ study commission to make recommendations to the next General Conference.

## Conference celebrates ministry legacies

Finally, the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference found much to celebrate in the ministries of its annual conferences and in the contributions of its one retiring bishop, as well as several bishops and bishops’ spouses who died since the last quadrennial conference.

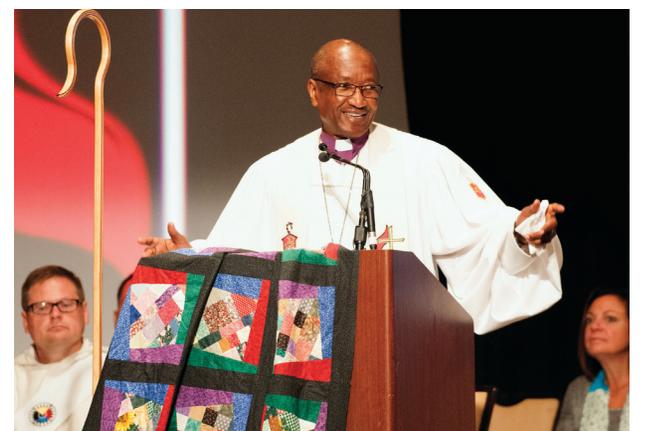
Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar of the New England Area delivered the State of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Address on behalf of his colleagues. He used the conference theme and quilt symbol as a motif for his enthusiastic message about being in radical, creative mission for Christ. He celebrated and portrayed through visuals numerous examples of the 10 conferences’ ministries among various population groups and in diverse settings.

“What an amazing quilt!” he proclaimed. “All across the Northeastern Jurisdiction, the rich fabric of our United Methodist heritage is being woven into new and amazing faith communities and ministries that reach out into the future.”

He called on the jurisdiction to stop doing “business as usual.

“We as a church need to be the clear and loud voices of the voiceless, poor, marginalized, LGBTQIA community, and the imprisoned who cannot speak for themselves. We cannot keep silent when black lives are being lost in our neighborhoods, and some people are saying we need more walls when we, the church, should be challenging them to tear down all kinds of walls and helping to build bridges.

“We cannot remain silent as a church,” he further admonished, “when heroin addiction is destroying families and communities, gun violence is threatening our very being, and genocide and terrorism continue to add to our refugee crisis....There is work still to be done; we are still unfinished.”



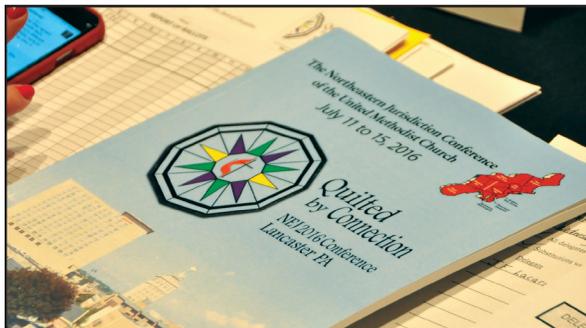
Bishop Marcus Matthews was celebrated with gifts and accolades for his retirement, especially by the conferences he has served: Eastern PA, Peninsula-Delaware, Upper New York and currently Baltimore-Washington. He also preached at the opening Memorial Service, which celebrated the lives and legacies of Bishops Martin McLee and Frederick Wertz and bishops’ spouses Eunice Jones Matthews and Lois Yeakel, all of them deceased since 2013.

The Memorial Service special offering went to support LUMINA, the Lancaster United Methodist Inner-City Alliance, a mission of the Eastern PA Conference and its Southwest District, serving in ministry with the poor in Lancaster County.



# Quilted by Connection

NEJ 2016 Conference  
Lancaster PA



Photos by John Coleman, except for two bottom photos by Jerry Wolgemuth, Susquehanna Conference



## 'Sabbath: Break ... or Brick?' A new retreat for clergy spouses



BY JULIE ANDERMAN

“P henomenal. Playful. Instructive.” Those were comments from Cabinet members who recently previewed the Sabbath Game, a key part of a new, uniquely creative retreat experience for clergy spouses.

We invite clergy spouses to come enjoy the half-day retreat on Saturday, Oct. 1, at 8:30 AM till noon or 1:30 to 5:00 PM. We'll gather at the Mariawald Renewal Center in Reading, Pa. Find out more at [www.ArtosRetreats.org](http://www.ArtosRetreats.org).



### Celebrate Jesus' call to rest

The newly created “Sabbath: Break ... or Brick?” retreat celebrates Jesus' call, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28). Designed by clergy spouses for clergy spouses, this retreat is the first of many blessed collaborations between graphic designer Lisa Mears, musician Lynnette Carter, and myself, an instructional designer and facilitator.

We are Artos Retreats, a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve the wellbeing of clergy spouses. We design our retreats to allow clergy spouses to express common issues without revealing church-specific situations.

Learning occurs through original visual and musical activities, case scenarios, problem-solving and the Sabbath Game. Groups are small (24 maximum), to encourage a safe environment for interaction.

### How did this come about?

Eighteen years ago, I felt called to marry my wonderful husband, the Rev. Tim Anderman, but I have never felt called to be a clergy spouse. Therein lies the rub for so many of us who journey in this role. Too often we flounder; our wellbeing suffers. The Lord has been calling me for years to help fellow clergy spouses flourish, not flounder. I finally paid attention last summer.

I laid aside my professional work of designing and developing experiential, highly interactive learning programs for Fortune 100 companies. Now I focus full-time on a vocation to improve clergy spouse wellbeing. And not just for the sake of clergy spouses.

A growing body of research supports what has seemed obvious for years. Clergy spouse wellbeing plays a critical role in pastoral wellbeing across multiple dimensions. Healthy pastors cultivate healthier churches. Ultimately, healthy churches grow God's Kingdom.

We believe that clergy spouse wellbeing begins with Sabbath, where clergy spouses often struggle to claim real rest in God. Sundays can feel like another kind of workday. The “Sabbath: Break ... or Brick?” retreat introduces ways to celebrate Sabbath the way God calls us to.

“Try it,” suggested a recent clergy spouse participant who enjoyed a pilot preview of this new retreat experience. “It's probably not what you think!”

*EPA Conference clergy spouses can attend either a morning or afternoon half-day session on Oct. 1, at Mariawald Renewal Center, Reading, Pa. Register online via the Conference Calendar. Early registration discounts and partial scholarships are available. This event is sponsored in part by the Office of Bishop Peggy Johnson for the benefit of clergy families.”*

*Julie Anderman is an EPA Conference clergy spouse and can be contacted at [ArtosRetreats@gmail.com](mailto:ArtosRetreats@gmail.com).*

## Open-hearted generosity on display at conference

“Open Wide Your Hearts!” was the theme of the 2016 Annual Conference, and many members, guests and churches did just that with their generous giving to support higher education and disaster relief mission.

The conference received three offerings during its two-day session, June 16-18; and additional donations have come in since the session to add to giving totals. One offering eventually raised \$8,511 to provide undergraduate students with financial aid through the conference's higher education scholarships program. That amount exceeded the 2015 offering of \$7,000.

The offering received during Friday's ordination service raised about \$3,330 for Ministerial Education Fund scholarships to aid Eastern PA Conference seminary students preparing for ordained ministry careers.

And the offering received Saturday morning raised \$5,282 to support the construction of a Sports and Fitness Center, named for Bishop Marcus Matthews, at United Methodist-related Africa University in Zimbabwe.

Matthews, who preached during the conference's memorial service, is the previous bishop of the Eastern PA Conference. He will retire in September as bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, which is raising funds to help build the fitness center. A longtime leader on the Africa University Board of Directors and Development Committee, he joined in a ground-breaking ceremony to begin construction of the new center in June.

### Donated health kits assembled at conference

In addition to offerings, Eastern PA Conference members and churches also contributed to disaster relief mission by collecting supplies and assembling health kits to aid UMCOR in responding to needs of disaster victims.

The Order of Deacons sponsored the project in celebration of its 20th anniversary since the 1996 General Conference approved the ordination of deacons. Many churches responded to the call to donate supplies that the deacons and others could assemble into health kits during the annual conference session.

About 30 people participated in collecting, assembling and packing 242 kits, according to the Rev. Greg Ellis, Deacon, who reported on the operation. Ellis is Disaster Ministry Coordinator for the conference.

Plus, there were enough extra supplies and cash donations to create another 350 kits. And at least 10 other ministries in the conference received supplies that could not be used in the kits for various reasons.

The kits were taken to the Northwest District HUB of Mission Central at Immanuel UMC in Cleona. The team there verified contents, completed partial kits and had them delivered to Mission Central for delivery worldwide through UMCOR.

Since annual conference, four churches have contacted Ellis about assembling health kits as service projects for their youth and small groups.



Sabrina Daluisio photo.



### A time of remembrance and reconciliation

The climax of Boehm's Chapel's 225th anniversary weekend celebration, June 24-26, was the powerful moment when Mennonite bishops officially apologized for the expulsion of Martin Boehm, more than 240 years ago, in punishment for his bold outreach to German Reformed Church leader Philip Otterbein and other non-Mennonite Christians. Boehm and Otterbein formed the United Brethren in Christ, a forerunner of the Evangelical United Brethren and today's United Methodist Church.

Bishop Peggy Johnson (left), dressed in costume as Boehm's wife, Eva, responds to the confession and reinstatement of Boehm's credentials after Mennonite Bishop Stephen Weaver (right) read the proclamation before members of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference and other attendees. Boehm's Chapel, a UMC heritage landmark near Lancaster, celebrated its joyous milestone anniversary with special worship, tours, fellowship events, children's activities, historical reenactments, a time-capsule ceremony and a message from Bishop Johnson, who addressed the gathering as Eva Boehm. John Coleman photo

# Adjourned Session convenes October 1

Register online by September 23 for the 2016 Adjourned Session of Annual Conference at Bethany UMC Macungie, Pa.

Members will ratify the 2017 Conference Budget, hear more about a proposed new apportionment formula for funding ministry, and vote on these resolutions:

- A redistricting proposal (previewed in April) to reduce districts from six to four and save about \$400,000 a year in conference spending.
- Revised Safe Sanctuaries policies.
- A proposed new Computer Network and Internet Access Policy to ensure safe and responsible usage.
- A proposed Ad-Hoc Study Committee to Evaluate Alternative Fair Voting Methods for Electing Members to Committees and Delegations.
- The annual Comprehensive Funding Plan for clergy and staff benefit obligations.

Onsite registration is at 8:30 AM. Worship and Holy Conferencing begins at 9 AM. Session ends by 3:30 PM. There will be no formal lunch break; so bring snacks. (Bethany UMC will sell hot dogs again.) A special offering will be received to fund scholarships for clergy and laity to attend Changing Racism Workshops.



## New college students receive scholarship aid and advice from BMCR, BUMP

The Philadelphia Area Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) and Black United Methodist Preachers (BUMP) co-sponsored their annual Scholarship Awards Luncheon July 9, awarding scholarships to five college-bound students: Tauren L. Bass, Herbert W. Coe Jr., Shatana Griffin, Brianna Mangum and Audean (A.J.) Miller. The young scholars, members of Grace and Janes Memorial UMCs in Philadelphia and St. Daniels UMC in Chester, are enrolled at Hampton University in Virginia and Lock Haven, West Chester and Neuman universities, all in Pennsylvania.

Bishop Peggy Johnson offered words of wisdom and encouragement to the students who attended the event, as did their pastors, parents and two district superintendents, Tracy Bass and Dawn Taylor-Storm. *Rev. Andrew Foster III photo*



*The Academy for Laity*

## From Christ's heart to our hands The Ministry of the Laity

Read about the **Academy for Laity** (August 13-14) and the **Conference Laity Retreat** (September 17) in our fall issue of NEWSpirit, scheduled for late October. And remember, October 16 is **Laity Sunday**.

## Mission u opens minds, hearts to serving Christ

"We learn about God's path for us through the courses we take at Mission u," says Barbara Drake, former president of United Methodist Women in the Eastern PA Conference.

She has been attending the annual discipleship academy for about 40 years. She first learned about its predecessor School of Christian Mission while in high school, when her mother served as its dean (1957-58). It's where she and countless other women and men across the nation come to learn about serving Christ through spiritual and social engagement in mission "for the transformation of the world."

Drake served as Dean of the Eastern PA Conference's 2016 Mission u, in Reading, Pa., July 22-23. They welcomed 91 students from 47 churches, including 19 first-timers and a number of youth. In addition to worship, hymn-singing, fellowship and a ceremonial love feast, they attended courses in:

- **Latin America**, a comprehensive study taught by the **Rev. Roger Velasquez**, a pastor and Duke University chaplain from Nicaragua;
- **Climate Justice**, about protecting and sharing God's creation, taught by scientist and "eco-warrior" **Linda Elam Young** and the **Rev. David Norris**, a mission volunteer and summer camp director for grandparents and kids; and
- **The Bible and Human Sexuality**, a spiritual exploration of these two intersecting topics with which our church grapples today, led **Dr. Esther Barkat**, a retired U.S. school psychologist, child therapist and psychology professor born in Pakistan.

In their evaluations students lauded the instructors for opening their eyes to broader and deeper understandings of these topics and for inspiring them to make commitments to seek truth and change in their lives and in their communities. The assembly also raised \$1,822 in an offering for the UMW Pledge to Mission.



Rev. Roger Velasquez



Linda Elam Young



Rev. David Norris



Dr. Esther Barkat

# 'Re-envisioning' Congregational Development

BY THE REV. GORDON HENDRICKSON  
EASTERN PA CONFERENCE  
COORDINATOR OF  
CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## PART 2\*

When we are spiritually ready to make disciples, we will need to do another fundamental shift in how we do ministry. Our world is changing so quickly that the church is at least a generation behind in reaching new people for Christ.

Here is the first fundamental change: We do not have a pastor just for our congregation. Here is the second: The congregation does not exist just for itself.

The third fundamental shift is that we no longer sit and wait for our community to come to us, but we go out into the community to reach others.

As a result of these changes, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee wants a pastor who focuses not on the needs of the congregation but on the needs of the community. (Good luck with that appointment, Cabinet!)

## Serving the community's worship needs

Let's take worship as an example. Many churches fight over whether or not to implement a contemporary service versus a traditional or blended service. Heated debates happen in meetings and church parking lots. These are internal disputes based mostly on members' preferences. The real struggle should be about serving the people in our community by providing the worship experiences they want.

Yes, you can keep doing what you are doing, but also add new worship experiences to appeal to non-members. There may be people in your community looking for help with addictions. They don't want to be preached to; instead they may want conversational worship. Or they may want healing worship where love encourages change and reconciliation.

This is where MissionInSite and consultant Tom Bandy can help. It's a matter of asking, "Who is my neighbor?" We need to know our communities; and a research-based understanding of local demographics is crucial to that knowledge.

But how do we translate that knowledge into ministry? Bandy answers that question for us, helping us to understand the 71 discovered lifestyle segments out there and what they are each looking for. Once we define community, we must send disciple-teams out to

look, listen and feel the lifestyles, needs and energies that pulsate daily in places where our neighbors congregate—coffee shops, restaurants, bars, grocery stores, parks and recreation areas.

We need to have conversations and make observations within the community. As we examine the information and insights we gain, we need to also take a good look at who we are as a church. What are our lifestyles, needs and energies, our strengths and weaknesses, our assets and possibilities?

Do we have the right pastor and leadership to serve not just our church but our community? For many this may be a whole new way of rethinking and redoing church. Our conference's Congregational Development Team (CDT) is putting together a team trained by Tom Bandy to help teach, resource and advance this process.

This brings us to Lifetree Café, our innovative, outreach-focused mission initiative created by Thom and Joani Schultz at Group Publishing. Our first step out of the walls of the church into the community should be to places where

people gather, interact and live their lives. We need to be in those places—coffee shops, restaurants, pubs, etc.—offering a non-threatening but appealing ministry of fellowship and faith-sharing such as the Lifetree Café.

It is a one-hour conversational time that uses short, interesting, topical videos and friendly, open discussion in a non-dogmatic, non-judgmental environment. For me this is a seed-spreading time to reach people we don't see in our churches.

I am currently working with Lifetree Café, Inc., to develop a beta-model where we can franchise many new groups to hold gatherings in our conference at a reduced rate. Training events are being held regularly to get more of our churches on board with this bold, new outreach strategy. We have two vibrant cafes in Lititz and Lebanon, created since last fall, where pastors and volunteers from several churches are working and investing together in this promising venture. Others are in the planning stages.

## Moving outside church walls

I know we have churches starting and growing ministries that move outside their walls into the community. New Birth (Nuevo Nacimiento) UMC in Lebanon is operating house churches where prayer and Bible study happen weekly in the community. Jeremy Graef created Ember, which meets for creative worship Sunday nights in a Lancaster art studio. Please tell us what your church is doing to move outside its walls. Contact me at gordonacts6@gmail.com.

We are not abandoning the movement to grow large churches. New Birth is our largest Latino church in the Northeast Jurisdiction, already outgrowing its space for Sunday worship. We are working with Lutherans to create a bridge ministry that could ultimately enable New Birth to relocate to one of their church buildings.

Congregational Development wants



Gordon Hendrickson teaches a Northwest District Tools for Ministry class.

to partner with churches who know, or want to know, how to make disciples who can transform the world. Our partnership with Discipleship Ministries' Path 1, a program to resource church planting, is enabling New Birth to train future Latino pastors in starting new ministries. While one such individual may leave to develop a new ministry in the Susquehanna Conference, another will help plant a much-needed Latino ministry in Reading, Pa.,

thanks in part to our investment.

## Finding new ways to reach others for Christ

We are undergoing a radical change in how we do and invest in ministry. People, including lay people, who have a vision of a new way to reach others for Christ must excite and organize others to grow that vision into reality. Get it started and then come to CDT to share what is happening, and ask us to come alongside to help.

Our search for new, creative ways to grow the Body of Christ may link us to other conferences, denominations and even other parts of the world. With support from our Bishop and Connectional Ministries Director, the CDT is helping to take the successful model of a pastors training school in Kenya across the border to Tanzania, where fledgling United Methodist pastors direly need such training.

The mission of the school in Kenya is "to reach and teach a million new people for Christ." Wouldn't this be a great vision for the pastors and churches in Tanzania? Actually, wouldn't this be a great vision for pastors and churches in the Eastern PA Conference?

\*Part 1 of this article appeared in the Spring issue of NEWSpirit. The entire article may be found on our website in the Congregational Development section.

## In Memoriam

Full death notices are available at  
[www.epaumc.org/death-notice](http://www.epaumc.org/death-notice)

### Rev. Reid Stroud

The Rev. Reid Stroud, an Eastern PA Conference retired Elder, passed away July 2, 2016.

Rev. Stroud served in the following appointments from 1967 until his retirement in 2000, except for a leave of absence in 1991-1992: Levittown: Emilie MC; Trevese UMC; Philadelphia: Simpson Memorial UMC; Bristol: First UMC; Philadelphia: Crescentville UMC; Executive Director of Homehealth Services & Staffing Associates; Lumberville UMC; Lahaska UMC; Kemblesville UMC

### Mrs. Muriel Mae Allyn

Mrs. Muriel Mae Allyn passed away on June 15, 2016. She was the surviving spouse of the Rev. Pearce A. Smith. Mrs. Allyn is survived by her son, Gary Smith.

The Rev. Pearce A. Smith, passed away in 1954. He served: Twelfth Street, Philadelphia; Norris Square, Philadelphia; Much Chunk; Portland and Delaware Water Gap; Port Carbon; Ambler; Hatbox; Ardmore. He was serving the Ardmore church at the time of his death.

### The Rev. Dale Norris Cowan

The Rev. Dale Norris Cowan passed away July 25, 2016.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Linda Cowan, and sons Scott T. Cowan and Kevin W. Cowan. Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Linda Cowan at 417 Main Street, Apt. 312, Niantic, CT 06357.

He served the following churches until his retirement as a full member in 2004:

Levittown: Emilie; Division of Chaplains, USA; Nuremberg: Bethany; Ringtown: Aurand Memorial; Zion Grove: Davis Chapel; Indian-town Gap: Emmanuel.



## Radical Disciple Making

A Radically Different Conference

Oct. 8 at Thorndale UMC (3503 Lincoln Highway, Thorndale, PA.)

Don't miss this dynamic seminar offering practical ideas and insights that may help transform your church's discipleship efforts from routine to radical.

8:30 AM to 3:45 PM. Led by discipleship expert Bill Easum's Effective Church Group. Register online at [www.radicaldisciplemaking.com](http://www.radicaldisciplemaking.com).

# Summer camps offer 'God's Love without Boundaries'

The adventure of Summer Camp ends in early August at the Eastern PA Conference's four bustling Camp & Retreat Centers. But what an awesome, animated, action-packed adventure it has been for hundreds of blessed young campers, as well as counselors, staff and volunteers.

"God's Love Without Boundaries" was this year's general theme. And each camp site, through creative activities and interactions, worked to help campers of all ages cross the boundaries of their comfort zones to experience the breadth and depth of God's love.

Yes, there was plenty of swimming, fishing, boating, hiking, sports, archery, rock-climbing, ropes swinging, artistic crafts and crazy-fun games—both silly and serious—as well as some close encounters with various plants and animals. And of course, there were the usual daily necessities of Bible study, devotions, team-building exercises, cabin chores, great meals, etc. But when it comes to really special theme camps, what's in a name? Read on.

**Pocono Plateau** honed the skills and stoked the enthusiasm of young Eco-Explorers, Pioneers, Trailblazers and Challengers, among its many camps.

**Innabah**, meanwhile, delighted nature-lovers like Little Minnows and Outdoor Explorers, while exciting others with Experiments and Explosions, Covenant Creativity and a cultural journey Around the World in 7 Days.

**Carson Simpson Farm Christian Center** welcomed Little Critters, Junior Sci-

entists and future Red Cross Lifesavers, as well as young leaders training to become Disciples and PEACE-makers.

At **Gretna Glen** the Saddle Crew Girls mounted their horses and blazed a trail for Wilderness Adventurers, Adventure Seekers, Talent Seekers, Night Owls, Zoo Keepers, Musical Maniacs and anyone wanting to have a Native American Adventure or just Totally Awesome Random Fun.

## Latino Camp a nearly 30-year tradition

Gretna Glen also hosted in July its annual, bilingual Latino Camp, a nearly three-decade tradition that drew about 70 children and



Gretna Glen's Dan Kirby teaches the "Flying Squirrel" ropes course team activity to Latino Camp participants. John Coleman photos

youth from Latino churches and communities, plus clergy and lay counselors and staff. They enjoyed a fun week of mind-expanding, self-affirming lessons in life, culture and faith, and several youth came forward during nightly worship services to give their lives to Christ.

The Latino Camp kids studied in class the dynamic, youth-oriented, auto-biographical book *God's Graffiti*, authored by Romal Tune, the featured presenter at our conference's 2016 Faith-Sharing Seminar in March. Then they got a really

special treat, when the Rev. Esdras Seda, conference Latino Ministries Coordinator, arranged for Tune to talk and listen to the youth by video-chat via Skype from India, where he was presenting a workshop.

## So what comes next?

So what comes next, as summer

comes to a close? Well, plenty!

Pocono Plateau, honored by the Center for Faith and Service as one of eight Camps that Change the World, will sponsor its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Hero Dash 5K & One-Mile Fun Run, Sept. 17. It's a race to support their "Pathways to Our Future" fundraising initiative. Then there's the Senior Adult Fall Retreat, Oct. 4-7; the Knitting Retreat, Oct. 21-23; and a Men's Retreat, Nov. 11-13.

Innabah will host a fun, activity-filled but also relaxing Family Jamboree on Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3-5, followed by its annual benefit 5-Mile Trail Run and 2-Mile Run/Walk for children and families, Oct. 8; and an Open House, Oct. 8.

Carson Simpson Farm will have its annual Flea Market & Mums Sale, Sept. 24. And Gretna Glen will resume its monthly Free Youth Nights, Sept. 18 and Oct. 16, as well as Autumn Leaves Senior Day, Oct. 11, and Confirmation Camp, Oct. 14.

Visit the four Camp & Retreat Centers' informative websites for more information about these planned activities and more. View their colorful, engaging summer camp photographs. And start making plans to get involved in the 2017 Summer Camp season as a camper, volunteer, staff, supporter or donor.

*View some great summer camp photos from our four camp sites that will make you smile. Find them in our Flickr Gallery and also in the fall issue of NEWSpirit.*



## Celebrating 60 years of ordained clergywomen

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of General Conference granting full clergy membership rights to women, clergywomen who are ordained elders in the Eastern PA Conference gather with Bishop Peggy Johnson (kneeling fourth from left) for a group photo prior to the 2016 Ordination Service, June 17. Rev. Steward Warner photo