

EAST DISTRICT E-ALERT FOR December 22, 2015

*JESUS is that perfect gift,
fitting every size heart.*

*May God grant you the gift of perfect peace this Christmas
and a sense of Divine presence in your heart every day of 2016!*

Merry Christmas!

Editorial Policy of the East District E-Alert:

Because of the recent launch of a redesigned Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Website (<http://www.epaumc.org/>) which has a link, at the bottom of the Home Page, to a new East District website (<http://www.epaumc.org/districts/east/>), articles will appear for only one week, and, if pertinent, will be posted on the District web site. Previously published E-Alerts will be posted to the East District website.

The E-Alert is sent to Pastors and Church Offices on the East District and to lay people who have requested being added to the distribution list. Feel free to clip or copy any article for your church's bulletin or newsletter unless permission has specifically been granted to the East District for publication, in which case, request permission from the source. The District Office requests that pastors forward the E-Alert to church leaders and congregants who might find the E-Alert helpful and informative.

HOLIDAY HOURS

The East District Office is closed for the Christmas and New Year holidays beginning **Wednesday, December 23** and will reopen on **Monday, January 4**. If you need to contact Rev. Bass during this time, email him at tbass@epaumc.org.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Bishop Peggy Johnson is praying for the East District during the week of **December 27 to January 2**. Send joys and concerns to bshpajohnson@aol.com.

The District Office has learned of the passing just this morning of **Mrs. Helen Chreiman**, wife of **the Rev. Paul Chreiman**, retired elder. The Chreimans reside in Newtown and attend Newtown UMC. Funeral arrangements are not yet announced.

APPOINTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Effective November 10, **the Rev. Herbert W. Phillips, Sr.**, PTLP, is appointed ¼-time as Associate Pastor of Christ UMC in Fairless Hills.

NEWS

SUGGESTIONS TO PREVENT CHURCH EMERGENCIES DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

By the [Rev. Greg Ellis \(gellis@epaumc.org\)](mailto:gellis@epaumc.org)

Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness & Response Ministry and Coordinator of UM Volunteers in Ministry
Eastern PA Conference, The United Methodist Church

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The Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee does not want to be a wet blanket around celebrations. However, during Advent and Christmastime, many churches have more activity and people within their walls. So it's worthwhile to remember a few cautions, so we can all celebrate the season safely.

Some considerations for services:

- 1) If you are having a candlelight service, your ushers (or others specifically tasked) should have fire extinguishers and blankets with them in the sanctuary or worship space. These individuals should be asked to watch over the service for worshippers' safety rather than participating in the candle lighting.
- 2) Make sure walking paths are clear if you plan to invite people forward for Holy Communion. Remember, you will have many guests and infrequent attendees who may not know how you usually proceed forward and return to seats. So having extra ushers and assistants is helpful and hospitable.

Property matters:

- 1) Remember to extinguish candles when leaving a room. Double-check the building because many groups like to use Advent Wreaths, so there may be candles in more places than usual.
- 2) Don't overload electrical circuits. Make sure extension cords are secured and are not a tripping hazard.
- 3) While the weather has been mild so far, when it changes, remember to keep walkways to all building entrances free of ice and snow. Remember, your guests may not know what the "normal" entrance is.
- 4) If you have parking lot attendants, they need to wear high-visibility vests. Do not try to be "cute" or "fun" and wear blinking lights or other festive attire while directing traffic or pedestrians in a parking lot. Be festive in the building: be safe in the parking lot!

You need only turn on the nightly news or pick up a newspaper to see stories about people whose intentions are not holy but harmful. As churches our first inclination should be to follow Hebrews 13 1- 2: "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."

As a precaution, however, try to engage strangers in meaningful conversation. Ask their names and where they are from. Most people who would do harm or disrupt a service want to remain anonymous. Besides, you may make a new friend.

And remember the watchword we hear often these days from law enforcement officials: "If you see something, say something."

Blessings to all during this Advent and Christmas season!

Deacon Greg

NOTE: For anybody interested in more details, log onto the FEMA Webinar, "Partnership Resources to Help Prepare Houses of Worship for Emergencies" this Wednesday, Dec. 16, from 2 to 3:15 PM.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is hosting a [webinar](#) to help connect faith-based and community organizations with federal government tools, resources, and partners to help prepare their houses of worship for all hazards, including active shooter incidents. Access resources, recorded webinars, trainings and more today at www.fema.gov/protecting-houses-worship. This webinar is a collaborative effort between FEMA and the Dept. of Homeland Services Center for Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships, a center of the White House Office of Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships.

Title: Partnership Resources to Help Prepare Houses of Worship for Emergencies

Date: Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Time: 2:00 - 3:15 p.m. (EST)

How to Join the Webinar: [Adobe Connect Registration](#)

A LETTER TO EPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE MEMBERS FROM THE GC & JC 2016 DELEGATION

2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference Episcopal Elections, The United Methodist Church

Dear Eastern PA Annual Conference Member,

As the 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference delegation of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference begins its work, one of the great responsibilities of the delegation is to identify the individual or individuals who will represent the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference as an Episcopal candidate. The Eastern PA General and Jurisdictional delegates request interested clergy and lay members to submit up to two (2) names of persons the Conference may consider as Episcopal nominees.

Every four years United Methodist delegates gather regionally (in five Jurisdictions in the US and in Central Conferences outside the US) to elect new bishops to fill vacancies created by retiring bishops. Generally, Annual Conferences nominate one or more candidates to be considered by the Jurisdictional Conference for election. The 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, to which the Eastern PA Annual Conference belongs, will meet in Lancaster, PA

in July 2016. Elected delegates from each of the Annual Conferences in the Northeastern Jurisdiction will interview the nominees and elect the new bishops through a balloting process.

The Eastern PA General/Jurisdictional delegates are now engaging in a prayerful and careful process to select our nominee(s). This process includes soliciting nominations from clergy and lay members of the Annual Conference, informing those nominated and securing their consent to participate in the selection process for Conference nominee(s), requesting written materials from those who consent to nomination, interviewing each nominee, and identifying the Eastern PA nominee(s) after prayer and conversation.

We are also inviting individuals who may be sensing a call to the Episcopacy in their own lives to submit their names following the same process.

Nominees must be ordained elders in the Eastern PA Annual Conference or another Annual Conference. If a person reaches age 68 ON OR BEFORE July 1, 2016, he/she is not eligible to be nominated.

Judy Ehninger has agreed to receive these nominations on behalf of the delegation. All nominations must be sent to: judy.ehninger@gmail.com by **Feb. 1, 2016**. Please fill out the form attached to this email to submit a nomination.

Also, the New York Area is inviting candidates who may feel a call to the episcopacy to interview with their delegation. Candidates who feel a call to the episcopacy and would like more information on interviewing with the New York Area, can contact either Judy Ehninger or Dawn Taylor-Storm to receive New York Area interview materials. The deadline for the New York Area delegation to receive materials is **Dec. 31**.

The Eastern PA Conference delegation appreciates your participation in this vital process and covets your prayers as we move forward in this important task of identifying an Episcopal candidate. If you have any questions concerning this process, please feel free to contact either of us.

May this fall season be a time of rich ministry and mission.

Sincerely,

Dawn Taylor-Storm and Judy Ehninger

Eastern PA Conference Delegation Co-Chairs

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