

EAST DISTRICT

E-ALERT FOR

August 17, 2017

Editorial Policy of the East District E-Alert:

Generally, articles will appear for only one week, and, if pertinent, will be posted on the East District website (<http://www.epaumc.org/districts/east>). Or, if you are on the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference website (<http://www.epaumc.org>), there is a link to the East District website at the bottom of any page. Previously published E-Alerts will be posted to the East District website.

This 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.

STATEMENT BY BISHOP PEGGY JOHNSON ON THE TRAGIC WEEKEND EVENTS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

August 13, 2017

Our terrorism: fears within, fightings without

Our world has been rocked with many forms of terrorism in recent years. Long before the events of September 11, 2001, and ever since, we have seen an unprecedented number of bombings, mass shootings and other violence.

The world once again witnessed acts of extreme violence and rage in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the weekend. Once again, as all too often, the heinous cause is racism--in fact, racism born of a demented, demonic belief in white supremacy.

It is beyond strange and deeply disturbing when some misguided malcontents feel racially superior but also fearful; when they pose as strong and dominant to hide the inferiority and weakness of their world views that are doomed to extinction. Meanwhile, memorials to paragons of the slave-holding Confederacy disappear, as God's beloved community comes more clearly into view.

Much of the cause for acts of terror in our world--especially this weekend's racial violence in Charlottesville--is fear-induced rage: fear of the "other," fear of someone taking away something we value, or fear of false, perceived threats. Often, it's fear of losing something that is already lost--indeed, something born of human hate and the enemy's lies that was lost from the beginning.

Such fear and rage within gives birth to terrorism without. And this outgrowth of animus comes in overt acts of violence but also in subversive acts or verbal and attitudinal assaults.

I see it all the time, even in the church when people decide for whatever reason that certain people or certain beliefs are not to their way of thinking. The result is a call for righteous indignation, insults, rejection, division and strife.

The Lord shakes his head at our church, the Body of Christ, whose many different parts are God's divine plan for accomplishing the mission of the church most effectively. We are called to work together in love and humility; but instead, some parts of the body are calling out other parts of the body because of fear. And the verbal violence and schism are not far behind.

As I John 4:18 reminds us, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." Our mission needs to be to teach and model for the world the perfect love of Christ that casts out fear: fear of the "other," fear of want, the fear, pride and ignorance of having to have our own way at any price.

We must celebrate and find ways to enhance our marvelous diversity. This is slow and heart-searching, heart-changing work. The "terrorism within" us is deep-seated and can only be cleansed by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

During the aftermath of this most recent scene of horror and deadly violence in Charlottesville, I call the church to prayer and witness. I call us to inscribe on our hearts and in our thoughts and actions the words of the Rev. Carolyn Gillette's song: "God, with Joy We Look Around Us"

*God, with joy we look around us at your world's diversity.
Folk of every kind surround us and you call your church to see.
All are made in your own image, all are people whom you love.*

*In the times we've hurt each other, Lord, we've hurt the ones you bless.
Hating sister, cursing brother, we've denied what you express.
All are made in your own image, all are people whom you love.*

*God, you sent a Savior to us, breaking walls that would divide.
By your Spirit now work through us as we witness side by side.
All are made in your own image, all are people whom you love.*

(Used by permission, "Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor," from Upper Room Books)

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CERTIFIED LAY MINISTER?

Register now for Orientation/Admission Sessions for the Certified Lay Ministry Class of 2018, which begins in April 2018. All prospective candidates must attend one of nine Orientation/Admission sessions, which are held from September to December at locations in the four districts of the Eastern PA Conference. To register, see the Orientation/Admission sessions schedule attached to this email E-Alert, and contact Judy Ehninger, CLM Program Coordinator at, [610-442-3140](tel:610-442-3140) or by e-mail at Ehninger@ptd.net. Learn more about Certified Lay Ministers on the ChristServantMinistries.net website.

SUMMER ISSUE OF NEWSPIRIT IS POSTED ONLINE

The latest issue of NEWSpirit is posted online at this link: <https://www.epaumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Summer17-web.pdf>. It included colorful photos of conference life and events, along with important, well-written articles (especially Bishop Johnson's column, "Teach us to walk the good road") and a paid-for, full-page color ad for Methodist Services on the back page.

TAX SAVING GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES AND MINISTERS

- Is your church properly set up to take advantage of the present tax laws?
- Are you paying your minister correctly and taking advantage of fringe benefits?
- Are your church's housing/parsonage allowance plans structured for the best interest of both the church and the minister?

- Is your church officially recognized as non-profit status? Is your church aware of the benefits of being incorporated?
- Are there further things your church can do to prepare better for annual record keeping and audits?
- Is your Administrative and Financial Team doing strategic planning for your church?

Ralph Todd, Jr. of Laurel DE, will present **Tax Saving Guidelines for Churches and Ministers** on **Saturday, October**, beginning at **9 am** at **Berry Long Memorial UMC** (1745 S. 58th St., Phila. 19143). Realizing that the finances of churches and ministers are often difficult to interpret and carry out properly, this seminar will be of interest to all committee members of Administrative Councils, Finance and Staff/Pastor Parish Relations committees, and Board of Trustees. This is an opportunity for pastors and church committee members to become more informed about proper financial practices. Though there is no charge for the seminar presentation, please call the Berry Long Memorial church office at (215) 729-2500 to assist in materials preparation. For more information, see the information sheet attached to this E-Alert email.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please add retired elder, **The Rev. Susan C. Czarnecki**, and her family to your prayer list. Rev. Czarnecki has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer and she is having trouble tolerating the chemotherapy treatments she is receiving.

EAST DISTRICT CELEBRATION

*Clergy are requested to encourage Laity of your church to attend the 5:30 pm Dinner with Bishop Peggy Johnson and the Laity Session afterwards. **Clergy are required to attend the 4 pm Session with Bishop Johnson.** Registration is open now. Click [here](#) to register by September 5.*

Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2017 *(Note the change of location from what was previously announced.)*

Location: Sanctuary United Methodist Church, 1346 E. Prospect Ave., North Wales PA 19454

Agenda:

4 pm Clergy Session with Bishop Johnson

Devotions – Bishop Johnson

Presentation on Leadership – Bishop Johnson

Every clergy will receive a copy of Grace to Lead

Report from Director of Connectional Ministries, Dr. Anita A. Powell

Report from Mrs. Jo Fielding, Executive Director of Pension and Health Benefits & Director of Administrative Ministries

Report from *new* Conference Treasurer

Announcements from District Superintendent Tracy Bass

5:30 pm Clergy and Laity Buffet DINNER with Bishop Johnson for \$10 per person

Hot Roast Beef; Sausage, Onion & Peppers; Baked Chicken

Cold meats and cheeses: ham, roast beef, turkey breast, corned beef, Genoa salami, American & Swiss cheeses

Salads: potato, macaroni, cole slaw, pickles, tomatoes

Rolls & rye bread

Desserts

6:30 pm Laity Session with Bishop Johnson

Worship – District Lay Leader Mrs. Karen Fisher, DS Bass, and Conference Lay Leader Mr. David Koch

Devotions – Bishop Johnson

Presentation on Leadership – Bishop Johnson

Conference Lay Leader Report – Mr. Koch
Report from Director of Connectional Ministries, Dr. Anita A. Powell
Report from Mrs. Jo Fielding, Executive Director of Pension and Health Benefits & Director of Administrative Ministries
Report from *new* Conference Treasurer
Announcements from District Superintendent Tracy Bass

CHARGE CONFERENCE FORMS NOW AVAILABLE ON CONFERENCE WEBSITE

Charge Conference forms are now posted on the Conference website. Click [here](#) to access and download. **All forms except the Church Budget and Fund Balance report are due two weeks before your charge conference.** Completed forms may be emailed as attachments to the East District Office at cakrall@epaumc.org, mailed (East District Office, Simpson House, Suite 1, 2101 Belmont Ave., Philadelphia PA 19131), or hand-delivered to the District Office.

Pay close attention to the [2017 Church Forms Schedule](#). This is the “on year” for submitting the “**Safety and Accessibility Inspection**” form. The **Action Plan** does not have to be submitted. All Safe Sanctuary policies should be updated according to the Resolution 2016-09. **The Accountability Agreement between the EPA UMC and the BSA** was introduced in 2016 and must be completed every three years. Therefore this must only be completed this year:

- if it was not completed in 2016
- if there is a new BSA troop at your church
- if there has been a change in scout leadership

District Superintendent Tracy L. Bass will be conducting all the charge conferences for the churches that have recently become part of the *new* East District. Churches that have been under the supervision of District Superintendent Bass as part of the previous East District will participate in cluster charge conferences with an elder officiating. Information about dates, times, and facilitators is available in two formats: click [here](#) for the alphabetical format by church “location: name” or [here](#) for the calendar format.

LAITY RETREAT 2017

Responding to the Nearness of God....and the message of the Prophet Isaiah

When: Saturday, September 9

Time: 9 am to 1:30 pm

Where: 490 West Boot Road, West Chester PA 19380

Registration fee is \$35 and includes meals and retreat materials.

Attached to this E-Alert email is a registration form. To register on-line or for more information, visit the Conference website at <https://www.epaumc.org/conference-calendar/2017-laity-retreat/>.

PLANTING SEEDS FOR MINISTRY GROWTH 2017

When: Saturday, September 30, 2017 – 11:30 to 5:30 pm

Where: Hopewell UMC, 852 Hopewell Road, Downingtown PA 19335

Theme: Pray for the City

*“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city...
Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.
Jeremiah 29:7*

“Imagining the Possibilities” – Keynote: Pastor Scott Chrostek, Pastor of Resurrection Downtown Kansas City

When we are called to get up, get out, get moving, and give it all away... with joy and thanksgiving, simply by doing the same things that Jesus did first for us, imagine the possibilities! Scott will share the vision, the questions, the ups-and-

downs, and the miracles that he and a new Christian community experienced along the way in planting RezDowntown, where 1,000 people worship every weekend in the city! Under Scott's leadership, this new Christian community has built the first new church building in downtown Kansas City in over 80 years. The author of three books, Scott is part of Adam Hamilton's Executive Leadership team at Church of the Resurrection, and is widely viewed as one of the brightest young leaders among United Methodist clergy nationwide.

***Worship Speaker – The Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr., Director, Amachi, and former Mayor of Philadelphia
Special Music by the Philadelphia United Methodist Mass Choir***

For more information, and to REGISTER, visit www.hopewellumc.org/planting-seeds. To register, go to <http://www.hopewellumc.org/planting-seeds-registration>. Address email inquiries to boyd@hopewellumc.org.

UPDATED MISSION CONNEXION GRID

The District Office is continually updating the District Mission ConneXion. Attached is the most recent update.