NEW Spirit!

Eastern Pennsylvania Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Volume 17 Number 4
Fall 2017

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
For the Transformation of the World

2018 Annual Session to feature Eric Law

"We Will All Be Changed" will be the theme of the next Eastern PA Annual Conference June 14-16, 2018. The prophetic theme—perhaps a timely, symbolic one for our denomination—comes from 1 Corinthians 15:51. ("Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed…")

Returning to the familiar, if not fancy, Oaks Expo Center, the conference will feature a morning teaching session led by the **Rev. Eric H. F. Law** (*left*), an Episcopalian priest, who founded and directs the Kaleidoscope Institute. The institute, which provided anti-racism training for the Conference Cabinet in 2016, promotes "inclusive, sustain-

Continued on page 2.

Participants discuss their small-church challenges and ideas during the lunch break at "Hope! Talks—Inspiration for Small Congregations," Oct. 21. ***Counter-clockwise, from left:*** **the Rev. Barbara Jean Seekford of Chalfont UMC; Carol Stevens of Delaware (sign interpreter); the Rev. Barbara Lee of Fritz UMC, Bethlehem; George and Elaine Cahlink, members of Jarrettown UMC; the Rev. Angela Kellie Ebo of Evansburg UMC; and the Rev. Robert L. Johnson of Tindley Temple UMC, Philadelphia, who was one of the Hope! Talks presenters.**

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'Hope! Talks' offers inspiration for small churches

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

"Hope! Talks," a recent Eastern PA Conference seminar offering short, upbeat, revealing, TED Talk-style* presentations, sought to provide nearly 200 local church leaders with what its hopeful subtitle promised: "Inspiration for Small Congregations."

The six-hour event, held on Saturday, Oct. 21 at Lighthouse Fellowship UMC in Glenside, offered engaging narratives of diverse ministry experiences, ideas and insights from clergy who labor in the vineyard of nurturing small-membership churches. Their suggestions were focused not on how to make small churches big, but how to make them successful.

About 100 leaders from about 30 congregations attended in person, and about 70 more viewed livestreamed video of the event. Recorded video of the speakers is available on YouTube.

Rev. Cynthia Brubaker

With titles like "Let It Go," "A Vision Without Limits" and "You Just Need to Get Out of the Boat," presenters urged the gathering to dream and dare faithfully, to follow God's lead

Continued on page 5.

Serving the Methodist Meal: Churches that feed their communities

At East Stroudsburg UMC's weekly community dinners, coordinator Ana Price *(center)* **teaches young volunteers how to serve the church's hungry neighbors. Read the story and see photos on page 6-7.**

Congo Partnership celebrated…

With hands raised, Central Congo (DRC) Bishop Daniel Lunge (left) and Congo Partnership Mission Coordinator Dr. Adolphe Yamba Yamba pray a blessing over Eastern PA Conference leaders who will tour and work at Congo Partnership mission sites in February 2018. Read the story on page 4.

Read this entire newspaper in color online at ***www.epaumc.org/news-events/newspirit-publication***

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 26
United Methodist Student Day

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 2
Introduction to Christ Servant Ministries: Instructor: Judy Ehninger.

Christ Servant Ministries: Speaking Course 1. Instructor: Rev. Harold Burkett.

DECEMBER 5
Annual Advent Gathering for Women in Professional Ministry

DECEMBER 2
Changing Racism—Continuing the Conversations: Time: 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM. Location: The Conference Office.

DECEMBER 16
CLM Orientation Meeting: 10 AM – 12 PM

DEC.EMBER 25 - JANUARY 2
Conference Office closed for Christmas - New Year's Day Break

JANUARY

JANUARY 14
Disability Awareness Sunday

JANUARY 20
Conference Connectional Table meeting, First UMC Phoenixville

JANUARY 25-27
Latino Commission Retreat

MARCH

MARCH 2-4
Conference Council on Youth Ministry Diversity Retreat , Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center

MARCH 7-9
Conference hosts UM Association of Communicators annual meeting

MARCH 10
Tools for Ministry district learning academies

Witnesses feel painful 'Loss of Turtle Island'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The Loss of Turtle Island was a poignant historical journey that opened the ears, eyes, minds and hearts of those who experienced it on Sunday evening, Nov. 12, at Innabah Camp & Retreat Center.

Sponsored by the Eastern PA Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM), the interactive exercise posed a striking scene, as about half of the 50 people who came stood shoeless on a patchwork of colorful blankets. They stood on behalf of Native peoples who have suffered loss of land, colonization, broken treaties, forced removal, assimilation and extermination. And facing forward, they silently listened as a team of CONAM facilitators recounted this largely unknown American history.

Encircling them was a large contingent of other witnesses, silent and seated, who also watched and listened intently. Their faces bore serious expressions as they heard troubling statements read. Periodically, individuals in each group would take turns reading statements themselves from small scrolls of parchment.

And periodically, facilitators would walk over to the standing witnesses and remove blankets from beneath their stockinged feet. This abrupt action symbolized the taking of land—parts of Turtle Island—from its original inhabitants and the removal of those inhabitants from lands that had long sheltered, nurtured and fed them.

Once their blankets were taken, the standing witnesses would silently leave and sit alongside their peers. Their gradual disappearance from the floor continued until there were no more blankets and no more land upon which to stand.

To see, to hear, to know, to feel

It was riveting to see this human exercise unfold. But to learn the stark truth underlying its disturbing symbolism required one to listen to the words being read, accompanied by visual slides on-screen. The words spoke of brutal violence, of heartless exploitation, of rampant conspiracy and cruel dehumanization, all inflicted on Native Americans by Europeans who came as invaders, conquerors, colonizers and land-grabbers, claiming white supremacy and America's dubious manifest destiny.

The words spoke of suffering but survival, of capitulation but compromise, of forced removal but fierce resiliency. They were words of and about Native people who were here first but became last, who were pushed off their fertile lands and onto barren reservations, pushed into boarding schools for assimilation, pushed out of history books, except to appear as villains and caricatures, and finally pushed into the dim margins of America's conscience—out of sight, out of mind.

The words, the history undergirding this solemn Loss of Turtle Island exercise were the real source of painful expressions around the room. That history includes the frequent complicity of Christian churches that accommodated or even conspired with militaries **Continued on page 10.**

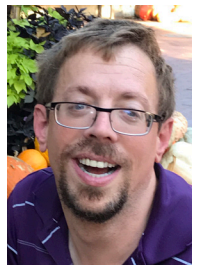
'2018 Annual Session' --continued from page 1.

able churches and communities."

Law spoke at the 2012 Eastern PA Annual Conference. For over two decades, he has authored books, led trainings and produced resources to help denominations in the U.S. and Canada, including several UMC annual conferences, create transformative experiences to foster and embrace greater cultural diversity and inclusiveness. That goal remains an ongoing one for our conference and others.

Worship services and celebrations will highlight variations on the theme. Two bishops and an ordained deacon will preach the traditional three services during the annual session.

The Rev. Justin Hancock *(right)*, a clergy member of the North Texas Conference, will preach the opening worship service ("We Will All Be Present") on Thursday, June 14, before the session is called to order and Holy Conferencing begins. Having worked with college students, he has "a passion for helping people discover who God designed them to be." Hancock, who has Cerebral Palsy (CP), and his wife Lisa volunteer at New Day Amani, a micro-church that serves African refugees in Dallas. They hope to start a new faith-based community that welcomes people with disabilities.



Bishop Cynthia Moore-KoiKoi *(left)*, who leads the Pittsburgh Episcopal Area (Western PA Conference), will preach the Service of Ordination ("We Will All Be Sent") on Friday evening. A former superintendent in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, she was the first of two African American clergywomen elected to the episcopacy at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2016, a historic achievement.

And **Presiding Bishop Peggy Johnson** will preach the Memorial Service ("We Will All Be Changed") on Saturday morning before the session resumes.

The remainder of the agenda will include necessary conference business as usual, with resolutions and reports, award presentations, visitors' greetings, celebration of ministries and monitoring for inclusiveness. We will report more information in future issues and report on an evaluation of the 2016 session, including inclusiveness monitoring feedback, on our website.

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Living the Reformation

Jesus is known by many names: Emmanuel, Advocate, King of Kings, Rock of Ages, Teacher, Messiah, Good Shepherd, Bright and Morning Star, Bridegroom, Great Physician, the Holy One, the Man of Sorrows, the Living Bread, Son of David, the Carpenter's Son, the Living Stone, the Rose of Sharon.

There are at least 208 names for Jesus. I personally think we could add many more to this list, based on what Jesus means to each of us. I would like to add one in particular **"Reformer."**

This fall we celebrate with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Roman Catholic priest and professor Martin Luther began that reformation by nailing his critical 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church on October 31, 1517. The impact that followed turned the world virtually upside down.

In Luke 4:16-30 Jesus preaches in his hometown synagogue, undaunted by the pressure of preaching to people who know him well. He reads the prophet Isaiah's words and then proclaims that the "good news" prophecy he has just read—one of release, recovery and yes, dramatic reform—was being fulfilled on that very day.

Revealing truth through God's Word

Jesus knew the words, the laws of God for God's people. He said in his Sermon on the Mount that he came not to change the words but to explain their full meaning. For example, he taught that hating one's brother is the same as murder. Lustful thoughts were the same as adultery. In his view, the true intent of the law centered on the intentions of the heart.

Through Isaiah, he called for living out God's Word by seeking social justice for all, including those who lived on the margins of Jewish society but also people of other countries, cultures and faith experiences.

Martin Luther found his breakthrough in his spiritual struggles from devout study of the Word. His Roman Catholic training emphasized works of the Law and performing acts of penance to repent for misdeeds. He would even crawl up the steps of a cathedral or sleep naked on a floor to show he was sorry for his sins.

This was all a dead end for Luther spiritually. But as he studied the Scriptures more intently his revelation came from Romans 3:28. "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."

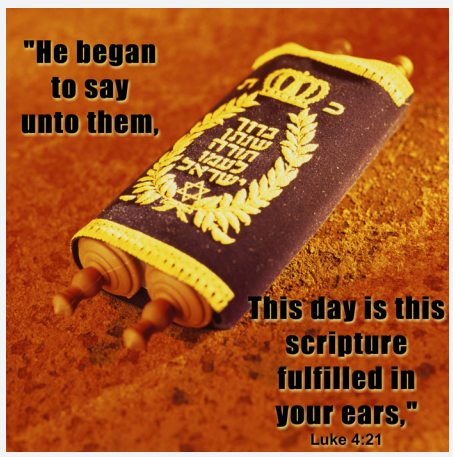
This insight delivered his moment of freedom and salvation, which set in motion events that led to the Reformation and the birth of the Protestant Church. He began to proclaim that faith alone saves a person and not good works or even acts of penance.

"I grasped that the righteousness of God is the righteousness by which, through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us through faith," Luther wrote, foreshadowing the same revelation that would come upon John Wesley in 1738. "Thereupon," he continued, "I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise."

We too need to know the Bible, study it intently and seek its truth for our daily lives. Do you study the Word? Are you in Bible study? Are you studying it at home every day? How can you grow in faith without it? The greatest personal breakthroughs come through this holy book.

Going into hard places

Jesus did not stay in one place. The Gospels are a travel log of his many visits to places near and far. In Luke 4:16-30 he is in his hometown synagogue. You might consider that an easy place for him to preach. But as he said, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown."



This was not an easy gig at all. The congregation knew him from way back. That can breed a kind of disrespect like no other. And he knew them and all their stuff, another difficult dynamic.

Jesus went to other difficult places, too: to Samaria, where Jews like him were not welcome, and to the tombs where he encountered a ranting, demon-possessed madman. Then he set his face toward Jerusalem, where he knew he would be arrested, tried and executed.

Martin Luther went where it was hard to go as well. He was tried at the Diet of Worms and could have been killed. He agreed to be locked in a prison tower alone for his protection. But he used that time in solitary confinement to translate the Bible into the language of the people.

God often calls us into places and among people we would rather avoid. It may well be God's will for you to face hardships in places and situations where burdens can be forged into blessings. God can lead us into the "valley of the shadow of death" if it is God's will. But we know that God is always with us in that valley and that Jesus has gone there ahead of us.

At the end of the day, we who are in Christ have volunteered willingly to live in God's service, whatever that may bring. As Paul said in Philippians, "For me, to live is Jesus Christ and to die is gain."

Being good news for the poor

Jesus loves everyone; but he has a bias in favor of the poor. He proclaims recovery of sight to the blind (and access for the disabled), release to the captives (and unjustly imprisoned), deliverance for those who are oppressed (by racism and all other "isms" of society, even oppressed by abuse, violence or addiction).

Jesus brought healing and inclusion and raised the social status of women, children, tax collectors and outcasts. All of that was good news to desperate people living and dying in the dim shadows of society.

Martin Luther was good news for the poor as well. He challenged the church to reach out to people in helpful ways and to not take advantage of them in order to build large cathedrals or to enrich clergy living in luxury.

Where, when and how do we strive to be good news to the poor? Do you give of your means to help those on the margins of life? Do you take less for yourself so others can have more?

To bring liberation, healing and compassion, to proclaim good news to the poor, and may ultimately translate into bad news for the rich and powerful. Jesus angered his former teachers with his audacious good news that God favored all people, not just God's chosen people. They wanted to throw him off a cliff.

Martin Luther was also a man of justice who spoke out against the evils of his time and in favor of wider, more informed public devotion to learning and living out God's Word. He once said, "If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write." He also said, "An unjust law is no law at all" and "The gospel cannot be truly preached without offense and tumult."

And yet, still today, injustice abounds. We are followers of Jesus if we speak out for those who are voiceless or lack influence and if we are activists for justice. Where can you say a word, write a word or do a word of justice from near or far? Where is your voice on immigration justice and mercy? Or health care for all? Or prison reform, or reducing gun proliferation and violence?

If we are true followers of Jesus Christ we should relate to and care about all people. We should study and share God's Word. And we should speak Christ's good news to the poor while speaking Christ's redemptive truth to the powerful.

Indeed, Reformation—then and now—is dangerous work. But it is God's work, work that must live in us. And best of all, God is with us.

Faithfully Yours,
Peggy A. Johnson

Congo Partnership celebrated; mission team consecrated

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

"We are God's ambassadors." That's how the Rev. Jonathan Baker described the faithful leaders working to better the health, education and lives of people in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). That includes him and Donna Baker, both United Methodist Global Ministries missionaries there, the indigenous staffs of life-saving UMC mission enterprises in the area and the annual conferences—including Eastern PA—that support their work.

It also includes the UMC's new Central Congo episcopal leader, Bishop Daniel Onashuyaka Lunge. In early November he visited our conference and others in the U.S. that are part of the Bishop Peter D. Weaver Congo Partnership, a remarkable mission collaboration. Interpreting for the French-speaking bishop was Dr. Adolphe Yamba Yamba, who functions as the Mission Coordinator for the Congo Partnership.

Bishop Lunge and Dr. Yamba Yamba visited Eastern PA Nov. 1-2, before attending the UM Council of Bishops meeting at Lake Junaluska, N.C. Their first stop was Lima UMC for a celebration of their successful relationship with Eastern PA. (The other two U.S. partner conferences are Peninsula-Delaware and Western North Carolina.)

"We feel the connection in the heart that we have with you in this partnership," said Bishop Lunge in his grateful remarks, prior to showing slides and describing the often amazing work being accomplished. "We would like to have that connection be an everlasting thing."

Mission team to visit Congo in Feb. 2018

A small team of church and conference leaders will try to strengthen that connection when they visit and volunteer at mission venues in Congo for two weeks, Feb. 14-26, 2018. Joining the Bakers there will be: Bishop Peggy Johnson; the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm; the Rev. Bob Wilt, Lima UMC's pastor; and Lima UMC members Tony Barnett and Ann Jacob, a seminary student at Boston University.

Also on the team are three clergy members serving in the Pen-Del Conference: the Rev. Joseph Archie, a superintendent; the Rev. Vicki Gordy-Stith, Director of Connectional Ministries, and the Rev. David Ryan, who is on-loan there from Eastern PA.

"Our hope is to further the relationship with the Congo Partnership as we plan for an Eye Clinic/Cataract Care facility in the Mpasa area," said Taylor-Storm, South District Superintendent and team leader. Her district has raised over $150,000 to help build and furnish Mpasa's new pediatric clinic. "I sense that all the participants will experience transformation as we learn from our Congolese sisters and brothers."

The team will tour and participate in some of the work described by Bishop Lunge and Dr. Yamba. That includes:

- Mpasa Medical and Nutrition Center, where Dr. Yamba is director and where the new Pediatrics Building houses operating rooms and new solar-powered equipment.
- Miriam's Table children's nutrition program;
- Wembo Nyama Children's Ministry averaging over 6,000 students per month in 43 classes;
- the Cape Lodja Agricultural Project;
- fresh-water wells drilled in 2015 and more currently in process.

They will also visit the Mama Tola Secondary School, which offers education for girls, and the Jack and the Renie Miner Trade School, both located in Diengenga, a small village in the remote Central Congo area. And they will teach local pastors school classes and join area clergy and laity in worship.

About 60 people attended the evening celebration at Lima UMC, which included lively music provided by the church's praise team and a choir from the Clearview UMC in Philadelphia.

"It's always special when a congregation can meet missionaries and leaders who represent United Methodist ministries that they support," said Wilt, Lima's pastor. "It makes the connection more personal and increases the commitment to faithfully give witness to Christ."

"What moved me most during our celebration," recalled Taylor-Storm, "was hearing Dr. Yamba tell the story of the first time he heard a baby's heartbeat using the equipment purchased for the pediatric clinic. Truly, our work with the Congo Partnership is enabling God's people to have access to health care, many for the very first time."

Climaxing the celebration was a dramatic, bilingual prayer by Bishop Lunge and Dr. Yamba to consecrate the mission team. Bishop Johnson described it as "a moment of Pentecost, demonstrating our multicultural awareness and our passion for reaching people for Christ."

View more photos of this celebration of mission on our Flickr page.

Asbury UMC Allentown: *Partnering in mission for Liberia*

BY DICK MCCREIGHT
ASBURY UMC ALLENTOWN

God has blessed Asbury UM Church Allentown through a beautiful relationship with our brothers and sisters in rural Liberia. This is a story—actually, two parallel stories—of God at work, opening doors though servant-disciples. The first is a story of Asbury's link to rural Lofa County through Pastor Jerome Kennedy and Marwu Zaza. The second is the story of our long-term mission partnership with Dr. Chris Hena.

Lofa County: Connected in mission

We first became aware of the economic struggles of rural Liberia's Lofa County and the UMC's Voinjama District when Asbury's former pastor, the Rev. Mindy McKonly served on a Global Ministries committee with Voinjama District Superintendent the Rev. George Wilson. She traveled to Liberia as the 14-year civil war was winding down to visit the people there and those displaced to refugee camps.

The Rev. Jerome Kennedy, who succeeded Wilson, had a beautiful talent for communicating the needs of the people of Lofa County through e-mail, photographs and videos. Responding to his appeal, Asbury Church began sending "Barrels of Love," 55-gallon drums filled with clothes and donated supplies.

Large chainsaws were purchased so that our friends there could make lumber for housing. We sent used clothing from our UM Women's (UMW) bazaar and textbooks when the Allentown School District changed its curriculum. In post-war 2010 an Asbury mission team traveled to Lofa County to hold a Vacation Bible School and youth camp.

Marwu Zaza continues to distribute the contents of Asbury's Barrels of Love and oversee installation of wells, funded by Asbury and other UM churches, in Lofa and Bong County villages. They just dedicated the 11th well.

With Jerome's guidance and Marwu's project implementation, Asbury prayed for God's guidance to help us improve the lives of rural Liberians. The fruit of those prayers include much-needed clothing, life-changing education through scholarships and textbooks, clean water to fight waterborne illnesses and the Good News of Jesus Christ, shared by Lofa clergy.

At a Liberia mission presentation at Asbury, UMW members suggested job skills and small businesses would really help our Liberian friends provide income for their families' basic needs. So, a sewing school was founded. Sewing machines were purchased at Lutheran Training Institute (LTI), and four instructors are being sponsored by As-

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‘Hope! Talks’

--continued from page 1.

and to build networking relationships that can lead to survival and success. Their remarks could have benefited many more small-church leaders who could really use the help.

Eight exemplary elders and licensed local pastors spoke, each recommended by the conference’s Cabinet, which sponsored the event. Bishop Peggy Johnson substituted for a ninth. They were each limited to about 10 minutes, in true TED-Talk style. But they filled their remarks with rich, empirical wisdom and encouragement for their peers.

Vibrant, on-your-feet worship music by the praise band and choir from Bickley’s New Beginning UMC in Philadelphia, set the stage in the morning. So did Lighthouse Fellowship’s own choir to start the afternoon session following lunch.

The **Rev. Cindy Brubaker**, host pastor, led off the seminar by recounting a frightening dream of driving off a cliff. It was a dream that, like several of her pastoral appointments, turned from bad to good once she let go and let God lead her.

Just say ‘Yes’

“Every time God wants you to go off a cliff for Him, just say ‘Yes,’ she advised. “He always has a plan.” She shared some risk-taking decisions and selfless mission ventures made by her churches that paid off, including the Lighthouse Fellowship congregation’s merger and move into its current home 19 years ago.

When Bishop Johnson asked them to welcome some deaf/special-needs residents of a nearby group home, the church said “Yes” and made needed changes to accommodate them. Now those neighbors are an integral part of the church’s worship, ministry and fellowship.

“God will provide what you need to serve him,” Brubaker asserted, decrying the common emphasis on raising money before attempting ministry. “Get the car out of the garage…Stop protecting what God wants you to give away.”

With “Get Out of the Boat,” the Rev, Bill Ritzenthaler had a similar message worth repeating. He shared his journey from a very successful retail business career to serving for the past nine years at St. Peter’s UMC in Emerald, a small church making a big impact on its community.

“Either you grow or die,” he said, recalling a heavily indebted church that was close to shutting down when he arrived. When a company initially offered him 21,000 pounds of free food to give away, Ritzenthaler said “Yes” and found his mission. He has since secured contracts with restaurants and grocery stores, trucks to transport goods and ample storage space. Benefiting from his enthusiastic networking, solicitation and organizing abilities, the church, which still has few monetary assets, will give away this year a million dollars-worth of donated food and other necessities to residents through churches and nonprofits, he reported.

Ritzenthaler warned listeners to not fear failure in trying, which can be the best teacher, but to rely on God obediently and courageously. “The moment you find a reason not to move forward is the moment you’ve failed.”

Connect with Community

Other speakers emphasized fostering a church’s collective imagination and the ability to understand, embrace and connect with its community. That’s what Cokesbury UMC in Marcus Hook has done for years, said the **Rev. Sandi Cislo**, who was raised in that church and now serves as its pastor. The small, working-class but economically depressed town, full of mostly dormant oil refineries, depends on the active church for its food pantry and monthly community dinners and its programs to teach and feed children.

The Rev. Robert Johnson is also trying to “make an impact” on the church where he was raised and now serves, Tindley Temple UMC in Philadelphia. They are experimenting with blended traditional and contemporary worship that is livestreamed, and maintaining weekly outreach ministries to feed, educate and serve the community.

The Rev. Joe Martin of Fallsington UMC encourages his members to recognize and share “your God story” with people everywhere as a means of sharing the gospel and inviting others to experience their church’s worship and ministry.

“Building Hope in a World of Alternative Facts,” was the title of the **Rev. Victor Gimenez’s** talk. At Union Memorial UMC in Darby he believes in using firm diplomacy and leadership transitions to advance progress, but also building trusting, outreaching relationships to stir discipleship and serve the community. “It’s not about attendance; it’s about engagement,” he offered as a recipe for small-church success. “Our survival depends on engagement.”

‘Bigger than you think you are’

The Rev. Jason Perkowski, who serves Faith UMC Manheim and Oregon Community UMC, offered three main points: “You are bigger than you think you are,” “Being small ain’t bad,” and “If you do small well, you won’t be small for long.” He extoled the far-reaching value of our connectional participation in The United Methodist Church and its worldwide mission and the special benefits and close relationships found in many small-membership churches, “where everybody knows your name.”

The Rev. Joong Hyuck Kim, pastor of the Korean UMC of Bethlehem, stressed the need for patience and persistence in serving and nurturing a small church, which often must happen slowly. He also spoke of the importance of celebrating and teaching older members’ culture to younger generations, while making room for young people to create and enjoy their own iterations of culture.

In her closing talk, **Bishop Johnson** taught about the root systems of sturdy plants like mint that can maintain vitality despite harsh conditions and treatment. “It all comes down to love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things,” she said, reciting the virtues of love from 1 Corinthians 13.

During the lunch hour, it was participants’ turn to talk and network. After hours of quiet listening, they filled the fellowship hall with conversation about what they were learning and about their own churches’ efforts to keep hope alive through visionary and vital ministries of discipleship.

“We were pleased that over 30 congregations took part,” said Brubaker, who first discussed the idea with fellow clergy at the East District dialogue on race back in February. The planning team made a concerted effort to invite diverse presenters.

‘An idea from God’

“This really was an idea from God that the Bishop and Cabinet helped to support,” she explained. “They suggested pastors to invite who are doing great things in their small congregations, mostly of them under 100 members.”

Feedback has been mostly positive. “We heard clearly the desire to do this again,” said Brubaker, “and I think it would be great to have one in Philadelphia, as well as out in the western and northern corners of the conference.”

**TED Talks, a nonprofit, began in 1984 organizing conferences to share ideas and learnings about Technology, Entertainment and Design. Today it is a teaching model that educates and engages participants on a broad array of topics through short, compelling, often visually-aided talks by practitioners.*

Serving the Methodist Meal: Churches that feed their communities

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

It is commonly known that Methodists believe in feeding folks. At church meetings, coffee hours, event receptions and other meet-and-greet gatherings, we become virtual "foodies," serving snacks, sweets or entire suppers to whosoever will come.

But it's when we feed our communities—at breakfast buffets, soup kitchens, weekly or monthly dinners and holiday feasts—that serving meals becomes key to our mission.

Many churches across the Eastern PA Conference and beyond will feed countless hungry bodies and souls during Thanksgiving week and again at Christmastide. But some of them endeavor to do it all year long. When one steps beyond their serving tables and into their kitchens, it becomes clear that such labors of love require teamwork among dedicated volunteers and ample helpings of church and community support.

First UMC Lancaster serves waffles, eggs, oatmeal and other savory meals to well over a hundred of its downtown neighbors each weekday morning in its gym through the Anchorage Breakfast Ministry. Its VIP guest list, which grows longer toward the end of the month, includes "low-income, unsheltered and socially excluded populations and all who are hungry."

Tindley Temple UMC

After 30 years, the nearby St. James Episcopal Church could no longer host this life-sustaining ministry. So, in August 2016, after much discussion, planning and prayer, First UMC cautiously agreed to take it over, with the help of ecumenical and community partners, including volunteers from a dozen churches. The ministry, which soon exceeded its $100,000 budget, recently became a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit to draw more non-church support.

"I saw this as a calling from God," remembers the Rev. Joe DiPaolo, who had just arrived as the church's new pastor a month earlier. "So, how could we say no?"

Except for occasional drama—including a few fights and drug overdoses in the church parking lot—the folks who come are largely peaceful, helpful and grateful. Several might approach the pastor or staff to ask for prayer or a winter coat or blanket. Meanwhile, social services workers are onsite to address other needs.

First UMC Lancaster

Two African American churches on North and South Broad Street in Philadelphia's inner city are among the many that feed their neighbors also. **Tindley Temple UMC** began serving nourishing meals in the early 1900s under its eminent founding pastor and namesake, the Rev. Charles A. Tindley. He garnered contributions for that important ministry from various community sources, and the church continues to do so today to support the hot lunches it serves in its fellowship hall on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Breakfast and lunch on Broad Street

Robert O'Farrell directs the church's "Soup Kitchen," offering homemade soup and so much more to over a hundred people weekly. The ministry also offers them various community health services, organized by Parish Nurse Alicia Parker. Those services include information-sharing, health screenings, flu shots, counseling and examinations by specialists.

In its downstairs fellowship hall, **New Vision UMC** serves an early Sunday breakfast to dozens of hungry neighbors in need, following a brief 8 AM worship service. Many who gather there are homeless, unemployed or recently out of prison. But they join together with church members in hymn-singing, testimony and prayers, before hearing a short sermon and receiving Communion on first Sundays. Meanwhile, volunteers prepare and serve them a weekly hot breakfast.

Christ Servant Minister Jean Kershaw and former Lay Leader Lee Thomas started the breakfast program 15 years ago with inspiration and ideas they received at the 2002 Conference Academy for Laity. It has since spawned other outreach efforts, including a midweek community dinner and Bible study.

"This ministry has become a wonderful source of new persons coming to Christ," said Kershaw, in her testimony at the 2017 Academy for Laity. "Some even

New Vision UMC

New Vision UMC

East Stroudsburg UMC

become new members and ultimately, an integral part of the New Vision family."

Family is an integral part of most ministries at **Cokesbury UMC in Marcus Hook**. The church hosts "family-friendly worship," family movie nights, year-round programs for children and youth, the Angel Food Pantry "for families in need," and a community dinner on first-Sunday evenings.

For three years, the monthly Sunday Supper has offered town residents and church members a reliable venue to meet, greet and eat together. Donated clothing and other items are also available, along with a little pastoral care for good measure.

The Rev. Sandy Cislo was raised in this church and community, where she now serves as a part-time pastor while also administering grants for the local school system. So, she and her church leaders know the neighbors and their many needs and struggles.

"I'm passionate about this community," she said, "and our church is a very welcoming place. People are loved here."

Love seems to fill the room at **East Stroudsburg UMC** during their weekly Monday dinners. Up to 150 neighbors, including some who live on the streets or in tents under a nearby bridge, gather weekly at tables to talk before, during and after dinner is served. The kitchen bustles with fast-paced activity, as coordinator Ana Price and her intergenerational team of volunteers prepare a sumptuous feast of nutritious foods.

Longtime church volunteers welcome helpful high school and college students who come weekly to also serve their community through this historic church's nurturing ministry. "Without them I couldn't do all this," said Price, who has been doing all this with her team for eight years,

East Stroudsburg UMC prepares and serves meals also on holidays, when the Salvation Army and other churches may be closed. They will serve 21 meals between Christmas and New Year's Day, Price said, even while short-staffed, because they are the only source in town.

During the week, she stays busy doing other good works and obtaining donated food and supplies for this ministry. "Ana is a good organizer and has a special presence with people," said her helpful pastor, the Rev. James Todd. "But we try not to burn her out with all she does."

Why do these and many other churches work so hard to feed their communities—whether through served meals, emergency food pantries or bags of groceries?

"It is not only important but essential for churches to serve those who are in need. It is a part of who we are as people of faith," said the Rev. Kay Painter, pastor of **First UMC in Mount Carmel**, located in the heart of Coal Country. "Jesus calls us to serve others in whatever way we can. We are to practice our faith, to put it into action—not sit idly by as people suffer."

For those who feel it's the government's job to stand in the gap and fight hunger, Painter has an apt response: "The church's mission is to serve those in need, regardless of what the government provides or does not provide….Welfare sends a check or a money access card," she adds, "but the church provides face-to-face contact. We offer relationships, not only with each other, but with God."

(All photos by John Coleman, except for the First UMC Mount Carmel photo, below)

Cokesbury UMC Marcus Hook

First UMC Mount Carmel

Arch St.reet UMC

Arch Street UMC's weekly Grace Café offers Sunday night worship and dinner and other services to over 200 of its downtown Philadelphia neighbors, including many "experiencing homelessness and struggling with food insecurity." Worship coordinator John Busby (*center*) talks with fellow coordinators Carmen Francesco, a Global Ministries US-2, and Deaconess Darlene DiDomineck.

Planting Seeds academy inspires hope for the city

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

"Pray for the City" was the theme for the 14th annual Planting Seeds for Ministry Growth, held Sept. 30 at Hopewell UMC in Downingtown. But in addition to prayer, the academy's faculty also taught careful planning, imaginative programming and strategic practices for improving a church's ministry, music and management of money.

The Rev. Scott Chrostek serves Resurrection Downtown, the burgeoning, 6-year-old, urban satellite congregation of rural UM Church of the Resurrection, located in the heart of Kansas City, Mo. The young pastor delivered humble humor and adaptive wisdom from his church planting experiences. "Imagining the Possibilities" was the title of his sermonic keynote address, followed by a how-to lecture about "God's Misfit Mission: Meeting People Where They Are."

Scott Chrostek

Story after story, complete with lessons learned, revealed some of the blessed, and even bizarre, encounters, radical generosity and unusual people and practices that have grown the church to nearly a thousand weekly worshippers. One event-planning insight Chrostek offered was to "get outside of your church calendar obsession and pay attention to the calendars and concerns of people in your community."

Other afternoon workshops, led by expert teachers, taught how to draw the most out of the aging voices more prevalent in today's church choirs and how to develop best practices in church financial management, fundraising and investment. Singing voice specialist and clinician Margaret Baroody taught "Singing Strong: Getting the Most from the Voices in Our Choirs." Jack Brooks, CEO of the Mid-Atlantic UM Foundation taught "Rich Church, Poor Church."

In addition, Keith Wilburn, Hopewell's Pastor of Urban Connection, led a tour of the suburban church's new downtown community center. The Well is a spacious former funeral home that Hopewell purchased and has been rehabbing all year, thanks to dedicated volunteers from the church and community. The new mission enterprise houses the South District offices, an after-school program, the church's Celebrate Recovery group and other ministries ready to serve local residents.

The final Planting Seeds speaker was the Rev. Wilson Goode Sr., the 79-year-old director of the acclaimed, faith-based Amachi Program that connects thousands of children of incarcerated parents with caring mentors. A Baptist minister and Philadelphia's first black mayor, he also pioneered affordable housing development and supervised federal education policies in the Clinton Administration.

Wilson Goode

Goode spoke of the challenges facing millions of urban children, including parental incarceration, poverty, violence and neglect. "There are children all across this country who need our help, including 10.7 million children with parents in prison or under legal supervision," he said. "We must advocate for those whom others consider disposable… or we're no better than non-Christians."

"We've got work to do, folks," said the Rev. Steve Morton, Hopewell's pastor, in closing remarks. He quoted the Jeremiah 29:7 scripture that inspired the event's theme. "We know we must pray and actively seek the welfare of the city."

The Philadelphia UM Mass Choir and Hopewell's praise ensemble provided inspirational music for the evening service. And two morning workshops preceded the formal Planting Seeds event. "The Way of the Labyrinth" taught contemplative, prayerful path-walking on the church's outdoor labyrinth. And "Children's Ministries—Building a Firm Foundation" taught ways to create and sustain vibrant growth and exploratory learning activities for children in the church.

Enjoy photos of the Planting Seeds event on our conference Flickr page, and listen to speeches by Scott Chrostek and Wilson Goode on Hopewell UMC's website.

Asbury UMC

--continued from page 4

bury members.

At Asbury Church, we are living the joy of mission. When we answer God's call, He guides us, connects us and opens doors for us. In the process our congregation is energized and excited about being Christ's hands and feet in service to His people.

Dr. Hena comes home to help her people

Dr. Chris Hena grew up in rural Lofa County, Liberia. In the 1970s she benefited when the Soviet Union sought to recruit Liberia's best and brightest youth for a free university education in Moscow. They hoped to spread Soviet Communism to Africa upon the students' return home.

Chris completed her medical degree studies. But the Soviets demanded that she and other students denounce their Christian faith in order to receive their earned degrees. She refused and was evicted from the Soviet Union without a passport. Eventually she made her way to Atlanta, Ga. Sponsored by a church there, she was able to complete her medical degree.

Answering the call to mission, Chris joined United Methodist Global Ministries and accepted a position in, of all places, Moscow, in post-Soviet Russia. She was assigned to serve in a several former Soviet republics, the last being Kazakhstan. Throughout this time, Chris has been an Asbury mission partner, supported by our church.

Meanwhile, Liberia's 14-year civil war had devastated the country and killed an estimated half-a-million of her people. Liberia had become one of the world's poorest countries, with a $900 per capita GDP (Gross Domestic Product), roughly half that of Haiti.

Chris was worried about her family and began to send much of her small missionary salary home to her family in Kakata. When she finally had an opportunity to visit there, she found that her father, Dominic, had used those funds not for his personal needs but instead to build elementary and junior high schools.

When asked what else Asbury could do to support her mission in Kazakhstan, Chris said she really didn't need anything there, but asked if we could help Liberia by providing children's books to replace those destroyed during the war. The youth of Asbury gathered thousands of books (our first Barrels of Love shipment) to send to Liberia, where Chris's sister became a librarian. Books were loaded into buckets and shipped from school to school.

At St. Matthew UM School in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, students were regularly kidnapped during the war. Many boys became child soldiers, and many girls were forced into prostitution.

Having lost so many students, the school board prayed for some way to keep their kids safe. They found the church's name and address among the many books they received from the Asbury book drive. They appealed to Asbury for help, and our AIM (Asbury in Mission) ministry gave them funds to build a wall around the school.

The school's enrollment soared from 300 students to over 1,000, operating three sessions a day. When an Asbury team visited in 2010, the entire St. Matthew church, school and administration came out to thank us for all we had done to keep their kids safe.

In 2012 Chris left Global Ministries and returned to Liberia to found Healthy Women-Healthy Liberia. (Learn more at healthywomenliberia.org/our-history). In only five years she has been able to open the Waterfield Primary Healthcare Center.

Asbury in Mission has sent her funds, barrels of clothing, medical supplies and textbooks. In 2016 we were able to fund purchase of an ultrasound machine for the clinic. Chris has named the ultrasound room for Asbury. A plaque there reads "Given in love for our brothers and sisters in Liberia. Asbury Church, Allentown, PA, USA."

In addition to the clinic, Chris is running a school for girls in her front yard, and she has purchased sewing machines and hired a tailor to teach them sewing skills.

We look forward to continuing our mission partnership with Chris and with our other friends in Lofa County. God has graciously connected us with faithful servant-disciples in Liberia, so that we might serve God by serving God's people there.

As they say in Liberia and here as well, "God is good, all the time. And all the time, God is good."

Turning worship into *work-ship* through mission

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

Engaging members' hearts and hands, two mission-minded churches did what might be called *work-ship* on two Sundays in October. They moved easily from doing heartfelt worship to doing hands-on work, leaving their comfortable sanctuaries to go prepare and package food for the hungry and perform other mission activities.

St.John's UMC Ivyland: R.I.S.E.

St.John's UMC in Ivyland, near Richboro, celebrated R.I.S.E. Sunday (Rejoice, Involve, Serve, Engage) on World Communion Sunday, Oct. 1, after four months of preparation. The congregation gathered for one early service, rather than the usual three. Then, after singing a rousing, unifying theme song, more than 180 enthusiastic members—youth and adults—dispersed to various rooms and got busy on five different projects.

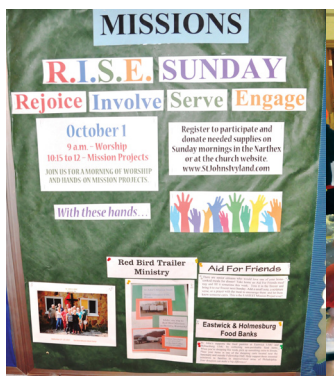
The largest contingent participated in a systematic process of preparing 13,824 highly nutritious, carefully packaged meals through Rise Against Hunger. Formerly called Stop Hunger Now, the hunger relief organization coordinates the packaging and distribution of food and other life-changing aid to people in developing nations.

A noisy roomful of members wearing protective pink hairnets worked in well-orchestrated teams, carefully measuring meal contents, preparing and heat-sealing packages and ultimately surpassing their goal. But first, St. John's raised over $4,000 to purchase all the materials.

Other members assembled 92 "Necessities Kits," containing donated hygiene and first-aid products, gift-cards and other useful items, plus caring notes written by St. John's youth. The kits would be given to homeless, runaway and nomadic youth in Bucks County by the local Synergy Project.

Still others made six sleeping bags for local homeless neighbors. And another group of members made over 40 pillowcase dresses, a popular gift to be sent to girls in Africa.

"We're a mission-driven church, but we want more members to move from just writing checks to getting involved in mission hands-on," said Ruth Portzline, a Certified Lay Minister. "We want people to see Christ in us, but we also want our members to see Christ in other people." She assisted project coordinator Alison Beale and the Rev. Janice Puliti, pastor, in this major effort.



Doylestown UMC: Feed My Starving Children

Doylestown UMC, also in Buck's County, drew wide participation for its anti-hunger *work-ship* project on Sunday, Oct. 29. More than 430 people showed up for the 8:15 AM service and then spent the rest of the morning at Delaware Valley University. There they prepared nutritious packaged meals for Feed My Starving Children (FMSC), a non-profit Christian organization "committed to feeding God's starving children..."

Over 6,200 children die daily from starvation and hunger-related illnesses, reports FMSC. Ending that crisis has been a passion and a "big dream" for Kevin McPoyle, a Doylestown UMC member, businessman and one of the annual, community-wide, weekend event's organizers.

This year's ambitious overall goal was to package over 1 million fortified meals, each containing rice, soy protein, powdered vitamins and dehydrated vegetables. McPoyle wanted to involve his church this time. The Rev. Mike Murphy, Doylestown UMC pastor, was looking for a big mission project for the church; so, he supported efforts to promote this one churchwide.

"We provided the largest shift of any group of volunteers on Sunday, said McPoyle. The overall goal was surpassed, and the church's contribution was to package more than 105,000 of those meals. That amount would provide a daily meal to 288 children for an entire year, he said.

"The feedback from our members was phenomenal," McPoyle recalled. "When I asked them if they had fun, they all shouted 'Yes!' So, we're going to do this again in 2018."

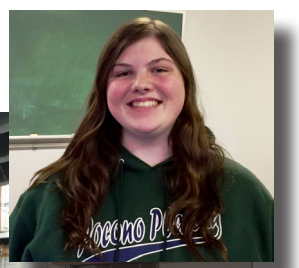
(See more photos of the St. John's UMC R.I.S.E. event, by John Coleman, on our conference Flickr page.)

UM Men hold annual meeting

The Eastern PA Conference UM Men reelected officers, heard reports and discussed ministry opportunities at their annual meeting Oct. 29, at Evansburg UMC. Herman Turnage *(standing),* **vice-president, shares his views as treasurer Delno Moyer** *(facing, left)* **and president Clifford Hubbard** *(facing, center)* **listen. David Marks** *(seated left, back to camera)*, **secretary, spoke on the benefits of having UM Men groups in local churches. (Marks' Powerpoint presentation is available on the Conference website, Lay Ministry / UM Men's page.)** *John Coleman photo*

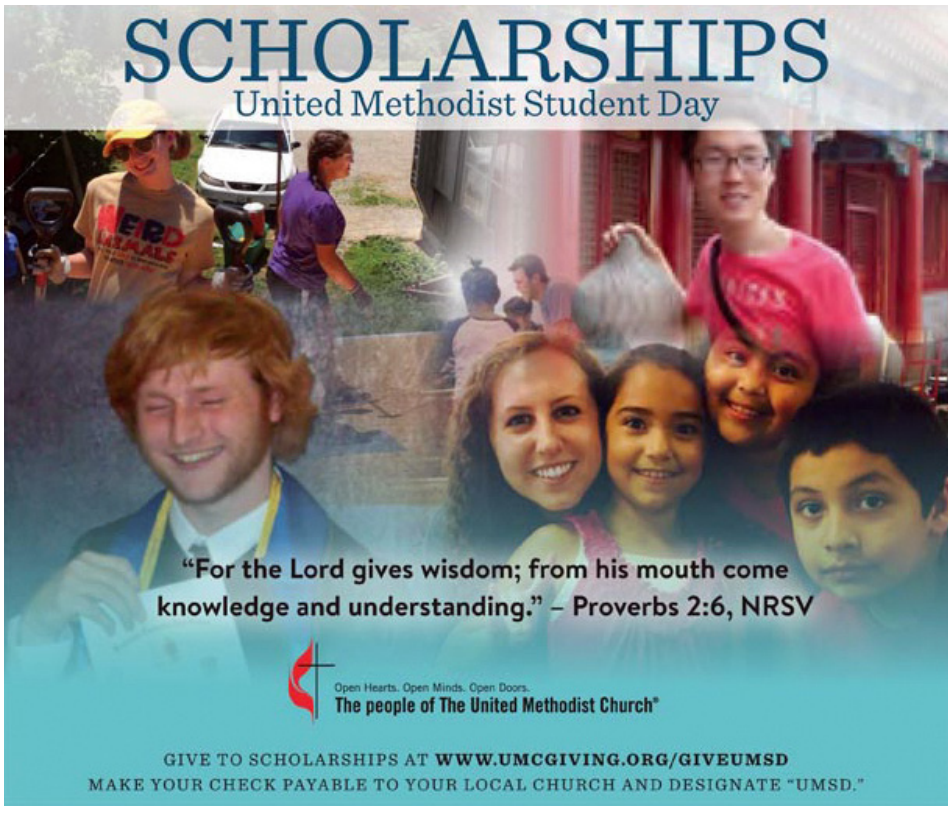
NEJ Youth pray and walk in Kensington

Members of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Council on Youth Ministries (NEJCYM) met at Emilie UMC in Levittown Nov. 3-4. David Piltz *(second from right),* **Eastern PA Conference Youth Ministry Coordinator, led a small group on a Saturday morning prayer walk through the streets of Kensington. NEJCYM president Jess Eden** *(below)*, **a member of Fallsington UMC, led a second group. The youth talked and prayed with passers-by, like this young resident, and prayed for the community, which struggles with crime and rampant drug addiction.** *John Coleman photos*



UM Student Day, November 26

United Methodist Student Day calls the Church to support college students preparing for careers as capable, principled leaders who seek to unite their faith with knowledge. Our offerings provide scholarships and loans to deserving United Methodist students in the Eastern PA Conference and around the UM Connection. Please give generously.



Human Relations Day, January 14, 2018

Human Relations Day signifies the importance of fostering cooperative relationships, overcoming systemic racial prejudice and fulfilling human potential. Your offering on this Special Sunday helps nurture at-risk youth and fortify struggling communities through ministries that support and advocate for justice, educational alternatives and community development.

One such ministry in the Eastern PA Conference is **Casa del Pueblo**, based at Lehman Memorial UMC in Hatboro, Pa. It serves and strengthens Latino immigrant families through Spanish-language worship, discipleship, education and community outreach. This ministry, led by the **Rev. Lillian "Luki" Cotto** *(right)*, is a new project of the Community Developers Program, funded in part by your Human Relations Day offering.

Please give generously on Jan. 14, 2018, or whenever your church observes Human Relations Day.

Anawim is Casa del Pueblo's 2-year-old music school, through which Latino children learn to play music and perform liturgical and folk dances inherited from their diverse cultures. *John Coleman photos*

'Loss of Turtle Island' --continued from page 2.

and governments to promote immoral edicts like the malignant Doctrine of Discovery.

Doctrine of Discovery

The Mennonite Church, which studied and repudiated this antiquated doctrine, defines it as "a philosophical and legal framework dating back to the 15th century that gave Christian governments moral and legal rights to invade and seize Indigenous lands and dominate Indigenous Peoples." The United Methodist Church denounced it in 2012 and again in 2016. ("Doctrine of Discovery," 2016 Book of Resolutions, #3331)

Four Eastern PA CONAM leaders met with Mennonite leaders in May at their national offices in Akron, Pa., for a seminar to learn more about the Doctrine of Discovery. Although widely rejected, it is still used to support legal judgments related to property ownership and acquisition in U.S. courts. The CONAM leaders were trained to facilitate the Loss of Turtle Island exercise, which they led first at the Northeastern Jurisdictional CONAM meeting in Maine in October.

The exercise at Innabah was followed by dialogue, as leaders and participants formed four talking circles and took turns sharing their observations, reactions, concerns, personal experiences and learned insights. Participants, including several Native American church members and guests, came from across the conference. Nine came from Summerfield-Siloam UMC in the Kensington area of Philadelphia, which has a longtime relationship with the Ponca Indian Mission in Oklahoma.

"I was pleased to see so much truth up there and that the story of Indians being robbed of their land and rights was so well presented," said Bob, a well-informed Summerfield-Siloam member. "But it makes me angry. Some laws and treaties may have been written by men of goodwill, but there was so much duplicity."

'We live on stolen land'

"It seemed to me that most people found themselves identifying with the Native Americans and were not able to understand the actions of the colonists," recalled the Rev. Gary Jacabella, pastor of Exton UMC and a CONAM member. "I think most people felt at a loss to say how to right these wrongs or what to do about the way so many of us benefit from these wrongs today. We live on stolen land."

"I cried when I learned about the Trail of Tears at (UMW) School of Mission," said Joy Frazier, Scottsville UMC's representative to CONAM. "I knew some of this history, but there was so much here that I didn't know."

CONAM member Verna Colliver said she sensed "anguish of Native Americans in the group exercise, while non-Native persons expressed sadness, pain, guilt and even anger. As a non-Native I ask myself 'How could such cruelty happen?' Then I realize it's still happening, and I ask 'What am I going to do about it?'"

"This exercise of participating in the historical overview of our country's abuse of Indigenous people was sobering," said Bishop Peggy Johnson, who wore a t-shirt given to her that read, "Make America Native Again." "Yet it brought with it a thread of hope for a future when people who have learned the stories can create a new and just day in the future. We need to be students of history in order to walk in the right direction going forward."

NOTE: Visit our conference website (Racial-Ethnic Ministries / Native American Ministries webpage) to learn more about the Loss of Turtle Island exercise and read more comments from those who participated.

In Memoriam

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

Mrs. Juanita Sparrow

Mrs. Juanita Sparrow passed away on Friday, October 20, 2017. She was the surviving spouse of The Rev. Arthur Sparrow, a Retired Associated Member of the Eastern PA Conference.

Mrs. Sparrow is survived by her daughters, Sandra Sprowl and Juanita Julia Gilmore, and her son, Arthur Sparrow. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mrs. Sandra Sprowl, at 7225 Swiftrock Ridge Terrace, Chesterfield, VA 23838.

Rev. Arthur Sparrow served at Sayers Memorial UMC in Philadelphia while he was a member of the Eastern PA Conference. He also served in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference.

Rev. Morton W. Caffey

The Rev. Morton W. Caffey passed away on Tuesday, October 10, 2017. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Astrid B. Caffey, and his children, Mrs. Shari Miller and Mr. Jeff Caffey. Expressions of sympathy may be send to the Mrs. Caffey at 115 Winding Hill Drive, Lancaster PA 17601-1739.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Care Ministry of Hempfield UMC.

The Rev. Morton W. Caffey's Service Record: Philadelphia: John Wesley; Elverson; St. Peter's: Mount Carmel; Bethesda; Mount Nebo; Rawlinsville; Shamokin: St. John's; Prospectville; Schuylkill Haven: Covenant.

Rev. Donald E. Boyd

The Rev. Donald E. Boyd, 79, of Seltzer, Norwegian Township, passed away September 7, 2017. He spent 53 years in ministerial service, most recently as the pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church, Tremont, and Joliett First Methodist Church. He was also the founding pastor of the Church of the Nazarene in Pottsville, where he served for 28 years.

Boyd retired as a Local Pastor in 2012. He is survived by his wife, Janet (Smith) Boyd; a son, Roger Boyd; a daughter, Donna Boyd, and her partner, Shannon Brennan; a stepdaughter, Jodi Seigfried and her husband, Keith; a stepson, Kevin Cresswell and his wife, Denise; and seven grandchildren.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Ms. Janet Boyd at 123 Main Street Box 4115, Seltzer, PA 17974.

Judith Bartoe Kohler

Judith Bartoe Kohler, spouse of Rev. Robert F. Kohler, passed away on September 29, 2017 at the age of 74.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Willard Francis and Edith Fritz Bartoe, and her sisters Phyllis Speakman and JoAnne Lewis. She is survived by her husband, her children Christopher and Jonathan, and by four grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Belmont UMC, Alive Hospice, or the charity of your choice.

The Rev. Robert F. Kohler served the following appointments before his retirement: Richmond; Washington Crossing; Jim Thorpe: Grace-St. Paul; EPA Attend School; Allentown: Asbury; Cedarville; Mohnton: Calvary; Asst. Gen. Sec., Div. of Ord. Min., GBHEM.

Marianne Thorne Wright

Marianne Thorne Wright, 83, passed away on September 16, 2017. She was the widow of the Rev. Robert H. Wright and a member of Asbury UMC Allentown, where he served prior to his retirement. Her husband of 52 years passed away in 2007.

Mrs. Wright is survived by her daughters, Elizabeth "Libbie" Wright Jae (and husband Jeff) and Marian Wright Sieke (and husband Steve), plus four grandsons, a great-granddaughter and two sisters, among other loved ones.

One of "Mannie's" last wishes was to be a donor to the Johns Hopkins Brain Bank to help researchers find a cure for Parkinson's Disease. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation as a tribute gift in honor of Mannie Wright. (www.michaeljfox.org).

The Rev. Robert H. Wright served the following appointments: Springfield: Covenant; Havertown: St. Andrews; Lancaster: Grandview; Extension Ministry: Conference Consultant and Program Director; Extension Ministry: Superintendent, Lancaster District; Allentown: Asbury; Elder Retired.

Mrs. Doris H. Schroeder

Mrs. Doris H. Schroeder, 91, passed away on August 22, 2017. She was the widow of the late Rev. Hans W. Schroeder, a clergy member of the Eastern PA Conference. Rev. Schroeder served the Montgomery Square UMC from 1960 to 1992, when he retired. He passed away in 1994. Doris Schroeder was a longtime member of Lansdale First UMC. Survivors include her three adult children: Karen L. Dixon (and husband Glen), John W. Schroeder (and wife Fawn), and Sheri L. Moyer (and husband Richard); plus two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Mrs. Schroeder's memory to Dock Woods Benevolent Fund, 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446.

NEWSpirit Briefs

John Coleman photo

'Well done, good and faithful servant…'

Clarita Anderman Krall retires in December after 25 years as an invaluable District Resource Assistant in the Eastern PA Conference, mostly recently for the East District. She was celebrated by a host of loving family, friends and colleagues Nov. 4 at Jarrettown UMC and again by fellow staff at the Conference Office Nov. 20. She served four bishops, seven district superintendents and many churches during her long tenure. Flanking her here at the Nov. 4 tribute are four superintendents she supported: (*from left)* the Revs. Dorothy Watson-Tatem, Tracy Bass, Joe Tyson and Al Maloney. *John Coleman photo*

Bandy returns to teach leaders MissionInSite strategy

Church growth strategist and coach **Tom Bandy** returned to our area November 13-15 to teach basic and advanced strategic uses of MissionInSite. He shared information from the valuable demographic, psychographic and lifestyles research-based tool to help forward-thinking church leaders design and adapt ministries to attract new people. After teaching sessions at the Conference Office and at two churches, he also spoke to the Order of Elders during their fall meeting. Look for more reporting on our website highlighting how churches are using Bandy's teaching and MissionInSite to plan for their churches' future growth.

Aid for hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico

Bishop Peggy Johnson and the Eastern PA Conference Latino Commission will meet Nov. 30 to further plan and coordinate their strategy for aiding the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico in its recovery from Hurricane Maria. Churches across the conference are giving through UMCOR, but only a small portion of those funds may be used to help repair or rebuild damaged or destroyed churches.

A new conference disaster response appeal number has been established: **Fund #0345PR—Puerto Rico Hurricane Relief.** Meanwhile, the commission and its member churches are collecting and sending numerous supplies to Puerto Rico to address urgent identified needs. Look for more information on the conference Disaster Response webpage.

Michael Yancey new East DRA

Michael Yancey, of Philadelphia, is the new East District Resource Assistant (DRA), succeeding Clarita Krall. Like Krall, he attends and performs music at First UMC Germantown. He is a classical pianist with a B.A. degree from Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia.

Exploring cross-racial/cross-cultural ministry

Invited Eastern PA Conference pastors serving in cross-racial or cross-cultural appointments joined conference ministry leaders at a forum Nov. 6, organized by the Connectional Ministries office and led by the Rev. Grace Pak of the General Commission on Religion and Race. The four-hour dialogue began with Bible study and explored the vision, goals, obstacles, learnings and difficult questions involved in this challenging area of ministry.

A follow-up session is scheduled for Dec. 6, as they plan for more intensive resourcing efforts with GCORR's help. ***John Coleman photo***

Methodist SERVICES

Bridge House Transitional Housing

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HELP METHODIST SERVICES MEET A CRITICAL NEED

Situated on a beautiful urban campus in the heart of West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Methodist Services' Bridge House Transitional Housing serves homeless single women, referred from shelter, whose goals are to exit to permanent housing within 12 months. Bridge House residents have suffered a variety of life traumas which have led to homelessness, due to domestic violence, financial catastrophe, debilitating mental illness and family estrangement. Ranging in age from 18 to 24 years old, residents come from a variety of racial and ethnic/cultural groups.

Dignity and quality are core values, integral to Methodist Services' housing and other social service programs. Aging Bridge House buildings do not currently meet Methodist's standards of excellence. Built in 1966, Bridge House consists of two buildings with 22 bedrooms for 32 women. Sorely in need of renovations, Bridge House bedrooms will be "gutted," walls and closets rebuilt, new flooring, ceiling fans and energy efficient lighting installed, as well as new furnishings and home goods purchased.

AN INVITATION TO GIVE: Double Room=$6,500, Single Room=$3,500

We invite you to help Methodist Services raise $110,000 for Bridge House Room Renovations. Support room refurbishment for a double bedroom at $6,500 or a single bedroom at $3,500.

ADOPT-A-ROOM If your congregation wishes to refurbish a room, Methodist Services will name each bedroom in honor of your church.

SUSTAIN-A-ROOM If your congregation wishes to become an ongoing donor for a specific room, Methodist Services will update you, annually, about replacement costs for household goods, as Bridge House residents transition in and out.

Contact Carole Boughter, Director of Development: cboughter@methodistservices.org