



(From left) The Revs. Bumkoo Chung, Nicolas Camacho, Tracy Bass, Irving Cotto and Herbert Coe visited the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico in February to examine needs and assist in its recovery from Hurricane Maria. *Andres Cotto photo*

Resilient hope arises from hurricane's horror

Eastern PA team visits Puerto Rico churches

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The Rev. Nicolas Camacho saw and heard about extensive damage and destruction done by Hurricane Maria to many churches and homes in

Puerto Rico during his brief visit to his native land in mid-February. But what he also saw, heard and felt in many tearful stories of suffering were living sermons about the saving grace and protection of a faithful God and the resilience of God's people.

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Visitors from the Eastern PA and Peninsula-Delaware conferences spent nearly two weeks in February learning from their hosts in the Central Congo (DRC) Episcopal Area, as they toured Congo Partnership mission projects there.

Mission tour reveals Congo Partnership's lifesaving impact

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

"Now I can see and know." A smiling Dr. Adolphe Yamba Yamba, director and lead physician at Mpasa Medical and Nutrition Center in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), offered that exciting news of revelation to visitors about the new ultrasound ma-

chine they had helped him purchase. He told them what it was like to perform surgery prior to having this essential medical equipment so common in the U.S but rare in areas of developing countries. "Can you imagine not being able to know what was happening to the mother?" he asked. "Far too many women have died when

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Annual Conference 2018: June 14-16

Oaks Expo Center.

Hotel: Hampton Inn & Suites (Valley Forge/Oaks).

District Conferences: May 6.

All resolutions due by March 12.

Media Materials due by May 4.

Look for more information in our *NEWSpirit Spring* issue!

Featured Speakers:

- The Rev. Eric H. F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute.
- The Rev. Justin Hancock, North Texas Conference
- Bishop Cynthia Moore-KoiKoi, Pittsburgh Episcopal Area
- Bishop Peggy Johnson, Presiding Bishop

Church leaders to take the field with Tools for Ministry, page 2



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MARCH

MARCH 10
TOOLS FOR MINISTRY

- **North:** First UMC of Schuylkill Haven
- **South:** Camp Innabah
- **East:** Lansdale First UMC
- **West:** Church of the Good Shepherd, Lebanon

MARCH 28

United Methodist Night At The Sixers: 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, Sponsored by Eastern PA Conference United Methodist Men. Tickets available for \$36 and \$45.

APRIL

APRIL 17

Basic Sexual Ethics: "I Sound Like My Parent: Understanding How Family Systems Impact Your Ministry." 10:00 am - 3:30 pm, \$35, at Willow Grove UMC.

APRIL 20 - APRIL 22

Changing Racism Workshop: \$300, Desmond Hotel.

APRIL 22 - APRIL 24

Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors Retreat 2018: "The Character and Purpose of Luke's Christology." Black Rock Retreat Center.

MAY

MAY 5 - MAY 6

NEJ Commission on Archives & History: Hosted by Eastern PA Conference. Lancaster, PA

MAY 6

District Conferences: All Districts. Locations & Times TBD

MAY 12

2018 Healthy Transitions For Clergy Spouses: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. A workshop designed especially FOR clergy spouses, BY clergy spouses! \$10 for adults, free for children, lunch included. Location:

Refreshing Mountain Retreat Center, Stevens, PA

MAY 19

Latino Commission's Holy Convocation

Camp & Retreat Centers' Open Houses: At all four camps.

JUNE

JUNE 14 - JUNE 16

2018 Eastern PA Annual Conference

UNITED METHODIST NIGHT
AT THE SIXERS

PHILADELPHIA 76ERS VS. NEW YORK KNICKS

March 28 at 7 PM

Seats for \$36 and \$45 tickets. A portion of ticket sales will support ministries of the EPAC United Methodist Men.

BONUS! Special PRE-GAME access!

Purchase tickets at groupmatics.events/event/UM76ers

Any questions? Contact Clifton Hubbard at chub21@aol.com.

Church leaders to take the field with Tools for Ministry

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

While Philadelphia's Super Bowl-champion Eagles are nesting, and the 76ers and Flyers are in mid-season, the Phillies are enjoying baseball's spring training. Hundreds of Eastern PA Conference church leaders will also be in spring training March 10, when they take the field in Tools for Ministry classes at four district sites around the region.

Both fledgling and seasoned church leaders will rise from their nests early on Saturday, March 10, and flock to half-day Tools for Ministry academies at three churches and Innabah Camp and Retreat Center.

After welcoming plenaries, they will disperse to various classrooms to stretch their mental muscles and sharpen their skills in various forms and aspects of ministry. An impressive lineup of instructors and coaches will field easy and hard-hitting questions to help their students minimize errors and score successes on the field of ministry.

Those instructors will draw from their church administration playbooks to teach: church councils and leadership teams; trustees and finance committees; Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations committees; church stewardship and mission leaders; coordinators of ministries for children, youth, young adults and families; persons interested in Christ Servant Ministry, and so on.

But the four districts will offer other useful classes on interesting topics, including:

- *Making Disciples Rather Than Members*
- *Emotional Mechanics: Committing to Self-Care*
- *Reaching Your Community with Facebook*
- *Addiction Recovery through the Power of Prayer*
- *Helping Our Neighbors in Disaster Response*
- *Preparing for an Armed Intruder*
- *Adaptive Leadership* (taught in English and Spanish)
- *Kingdom Rules: Leading through Church Conflict*
- *The Different Faces of Addiction*, on the current opioid abuse epidemic, and
- *Can Churches Grow in the 21st Century?* on reaching people the way Jesus did.

Each district will also offer classes to enhance ministry relationships with people who face minority status and often mistreatment in our churches and communities.

The **Southeast** will feature two classes titled *How to Have Meaningful Conversations in Your Local Church about Race* and *Reading the Scripture Through Native American Eyes* (about the Doctrine of Discovery and how America was "discovered" by taking land from its original inhabitants, with church support).

The **East** will offer a class on Immigration law, including: legislation affecting DACA recipients; pathways to asylum and citizenship; and how churches can offer sanctuary or other protections to the "stranger in need."



With the theme "To Whom Am I A Neighbor?" the **North** will invite attendees to "look for the Good Samaritan in each of us." Classes will include *Invisible Fences-Visible Bridges*, which explores how we often distance ourselves from our neighbors but instead can

build bridges across our diversities.

And *A Place for ALL of God's Children: Effectively Including Those with Disabilities* will help equip students to offer and promote ministries for children who face disabling conditions.

Of the 26 Tools classes in the **West**, four will focus on sharing in relational ministry, including:

- *Mental Illness Ministry: Responding in Christian Love*, a discussion of common mental illnesses and grace-filled ways of accepting and assisting persons who experience mental illness.
- *Autism Workshop*, where participants will hear about experiences, needs and effective practices among people who care for autistic children in the community and in church.
- *Conversations toward Reconciliation* will engage church leaders in open dialogue about racial and ethnic diversity to remove barriers and develop just

relationships with peoples of different cultures.

- *Open and Affirming Ministry: Learning from the Journey* is about committing to being in ministry with all people, including "LGBTQIA+ persons" and facing the "risks and opportunities for grace" such openness can provide.

While three districts will end their sessions by 12:30 PM, the East will go into extra innings, lasting until 2:30 PM. The four Tools academy sites are:

- **North District:** First UMC, Schuylkill Haven (snow backup date: March 24)
- **East District:** First UMC, Lansdale
- **West District:** Church of the Good Shepherd, Lebanon,
- **South District:** Innabah Camp & Retreat Program Center, Spring City



This 2016 Tools for Ministry class on building a prayer-focused church, taught by the Rev. Andrea Haldeman (right front, wearing a shawl) will happen again on the South District, along with another class on prayer vigils. John Coleman photo



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Abundant Health, Abundant Life

BISHOP PEGGY A. JOHNSON

Jesus said, "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10b) Our God is not a God of scarcity but of abundance. Nothing could be more precious than life: abundant life in this world and eternal life in the world to come.

The health of our bodies is important to God, and so is the health of our soul and spirit. That is why The United Methodist Church has "Global Health" as one of its "Four Foci" (four areas of ministry focus). Health is important to us all; and the things that make for abundant and healthy bodies should be emphasized as part of our personal Christian stewardship.

Along with that, we need to be doing the things that promote abundant health around the globe. According to UMC Abundant Health, "Children are our future, and yet nearly 6 million children under the age of five die every year. Millions of children and adolescents still don't have access to the life-saving information, services and supplies they need for a healthy fulfilled life."

The goal of the Abundant Health

program is for UMC congregations "to bring better health to people in every place, from our own backyards to around the world." The UMC is in partnership with the United Nations initiative "Every Woman Every Child" to assist in this health agenda. Our local churches can do something as well.

Last year at our session of Annual Conference we made a presentation about the "Abundant Health" project that was launched by the General Board of Global Ministries. Quite a few of our churches signed up to be a part of the solution, which includes taking concrete action of some kind on one or more of the following areas of health:

- Promoting health and wholeness for

all people

- Addressing nutritional challenges and promoting breast feeding
- Advancing prevention and treatment of childhood diseases
- Ensuring safe births
- Something we all can do locally is to promote the physical health of our members by encouraging exercise and proper diet. Obesity and high blood pressure epidemics in our country and sadly even among our clergy. The Abundant Health office is launching a

"Hulapalooza" to encourage exercise. Hula-hooping is a way to get moving and have fun at the same time.

I am encouraging all churches to get hula-hoops or find other ways to get our members and pastors moving. We need exercise programs that can improve our physical health and draw awareness to the importance of the enhanced life a healthy body can bring.

The hula-hoop is a call to "get moving," to do something tangible to help heal

our world. Youth groups and Sunday School classes could sponsor a "hula-thon" to raise funds for global health.

Many curable diseases are still taking the lives of people around the globe. Maternal education, clean water projects and inoculations for developing countries are just a few of the areas of need.

Let's be local and global in our approaches to health. Everyone can commit to at least one thing that can lead to Abundant Health.

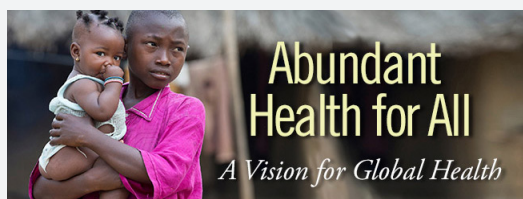
The possibilities are endless, and the life-giving Spirit of God goes with you as you do.

Watch this cool YouTube video on how to do the hulapalooza: www.umcabundanthealth.org/hulapalooza

Faithfully Yours,
Peggy A. Johnson



Bishop Johnson invites members of the Latino Commission (above) and her Conference Cabinet (below) to exercise with hula hoops for good health.



Octavius V. Catto

This is holy work. The heroic stories of those in the "cloud of witnesses," those who have gone before and given their lives for others and for justice, should inspire us all to try harder, to do better.

Be sure to read Bishop Johnson's compelling Black History Month essay on her always insightful **Bishop's Blog** at www.bishoppeggyjohnson.blogspot.com. She writes about **Octavius V. Catto**, a colonial Philadelphia hero and martyr honored in 2017 with the first public statue of an individual African American erected in the city.



Mission tour reveals Congo Partnership's lifesaving impact

Continued from page 1.

surgery was too late. Now I can see and know. This ultrasound machine is saving lives."

Dr. Yamba Yamba's visitors (*below*), leaders of the Bishop Peter D. Weaver Congo Partnership, a United Methodist



joint-initiative, came from the Eastern PA and Peninsula-Delaware conferences to "see and know" the lifesaving ministries made possible by the support of many members and churches in their conferences.

Those ministries include a new pediatric surgical center with a new baby incubator and other lifesaving—yes, a word that bears repeating—newly solar-powered equipment. Dr. Yamba Yamba, who directs onsite operations of the Congo Partnership, told his guests that a baby had just been born there and placed in the incubator for additional, necessary care.

The eight U.S. visitors, led by Philadelphia Area Bishop Peggy Johnson and the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm, a district superintendent in the Eastern PA Conference, spent nearly two weeks there, arriving Feb. 15. While Bishop Johnson departed Feb. 23 for a Council of Bishops meeting, the others were there till Feb. 26.

Also among the visitors were: the Rev. Robert Wilt, pastor of Lima UMC, and Lima UMC members Tony Barnett and Ann Jacob, a seminary student at Boston University; plus three clergy members serving in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference: the Rev. Joseph Archie, a district superintendent; the Rev. Vicki Gordy-Stith, Director of Connectional Ministries, and the Rev. David Ryan, a pastor on-loan there from Eastern PA.

Their hosts, in addition to Dr. Yamba Yamba, include Bishop Daniel Onashuyaka Lunge, the Central Congo Episcopal Area's new leader elected in 2016; the Rev. Jonathan Baker and his wife Donna Baker, both United Methodist Global Ministries missionaries; and the many indigenous staff members of the various mission centers there.

"We are God's ambassadors." That's how Jonathan Baker recently described all these servant-leaders working to improve the health, education and wellbeing of residents in this economically depressed area of the DRC.

"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, Superintendent of the South District, before the mission team's visit. Her district has raised over \$150,000 so far 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."

From the moment of their arrival, the visiting team enjoyed exceptional, joyful hospitality—including generous gifts—and gained a humbling appreciation for the resilient faith and fortitude of their hosts. Despite the severe economic poverty, civil strife and other challenges they face, the people seem not poor in spirit but lavishly grateful for God's abundant blessings.

"At the opening ceremony of our visit to the Central Congo Conference Center," Bishop Johnson reported, "we were greeted by an enthusiastic group of young people who sang and danced, simultaneously proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. Accompanied by loud drumming, they praised God several times throughout the service, including at the end while the grown-ups were eating... There will be a church in the future because of this next generation of young people who are on fire for the Lord."

"The hospitality of the Congolese far exceeds anything I have ever seen," wrote Taylor-Storm. "Bishop Lunge met



us at the airport with a delegation. Pastors from the Congo Episcopal area traveled to be with us. How beautiful to see pastors from the Philadelphia Episcopal Area sharing fellowship and a Congolese feast with pastors from DRC." Several of the U.S. clergy also taught classes for their hosts at an arranged Local Pastors School.

The joint Eastern PA and Pen-Del delegation divided into two teams to visit and volunteer at various mission sites, some in remote rural areas, including:

- Miriam's Table, a children's nutrition program;
- Wembo Nyama Children's Ministry in Sankuru Province, serving

an average of over 7,500 children per month in 45 different groups, "where children are learning to love Jesus and many are bringing their parents to Christ";

- The Cape Lodja Agricultural Project;
- The Mama Tola Secondary School for girls;
- The Jack and Renie Miner Trade School, and several other United Methodist schools and projects in Diengenga.

In one of many highlights, the Bakers and their visitors were able to witness the operation of "a new well they had worked very hard to dig for the town of Wembo Nyama," reported Bishop Johnson. "There had been many attempts, and the ground was not right. But finally, a suitable vein of water was located, and the Bakers raised the funds through the Partnership. This is an incredible gift to a town that only had

a river to depend on for water."

Jonathan Baker dedicated the new well, which saves local residents in the Sankuru Province from having to trek to the river and use contaminated water for their families.

"Hallelujah!" Dr. Yamba Yamba rejoiced on his Facebook page. "We dropped to our knees with joy as we saw the water gushing from the earth!" Additional, much-needed wells are being drilled in Wembo Nyama and Tshumbe, thanks to the generosity of donor churches and individuals.

"We feel the connection in the heart that we have with you in this partnership," said Bishop Lunge when he visited both Philadelphia Area conferences last fall to



Bishop Peggy Johnson (left) and the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm with a baby incubator.

offer thanks and a report on the impressive mission work being accomplished with their support. (The Western North Carolina and Central Congo conferences are also part of the Congo Partnership.) "We would like to have that connection be an everlasting thing."

'A Connection in the heart'

Indeed, this historic visit may well ensure that the Congo Partnership does in fact become an everlasting thing, a long-term "connection in the heart." For example, the visiting team learned about a new Congo Partnership project to provide needed transportation and rural economic development.

"This work involves the refurbishment of a barge to enable resources for churches to be shipped upcountry by water," said Taylor-Storm. "Currently there is no viable way to bring resources to the rural areas."

"The Congo Partnership is an example of our Connectional system at its best, observed Bishop Johnson. "Each of the parts does its part to lift up the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are honored and privileged to watch God at work on this Congo trip."

Enjoy more colorful photos in the Congo Partnership Visit album on our Flickr page.



Resilient hope arises from hurricane's horror

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The Rev. Isabelino Rivera, pastor of a southern coastal Methodist church in Guardarraya, Patillas, showed Camacho and his visiting Eastern PA Conference



colleagues, how the September 2017 hurricane's winds severely damaged church classrooms, part of the parsonage and its garage, as well as neighbors' homes. But he also recalled the people praying for survival, despite their fears, and then witnessing a force "like the hand of God" holding back a 40-foot wave of water that rose up but did not come ashore to take lives or devastate property.

'Destruction, despair across the island'

While destruction and despair swept through the island in the hurricane's wake, there were undoubtedly many such occurrences when God seemed to restrain the forces of nature. "Even with so much chaos," said Camacho, "God was saying, 'I am still God and I am still in control.'"

Camacho, who leads the Eastern PA Conference's Helping Puerto Rico Rise Again campaign, was part of a six-member team from Eastern PA that arrived there Feb. 14, on Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day.

They began by visiting Methodist churches in San Juan, Levittown, Maunabo, Guayama, Arecibo and other

communities. In addition, they met with Bishop Hector Ortiz and his staff.

The multiracial team also included the Revs. Irving Cotto, Bumkoo "BK" Chung and Tracy Bass—all district superintendents—the Rev. Herbert Coe, pastor of St. Daniel's UMC in Chester, and Cotto's son, Andres Cotto. They visited churches, pastors and communities across the island, seeing the damage, hearing the stories, sharing in worship and fellowship, and learning how our conference can best respond.

The three superintendents gave a surprised Bishop Ortiz about \$33,000 in initial donated funds from our churches to support recovery efforts. They will report to the Eastern PA Conference Puerto Rico Recovery Support Task Force when it meets again March 12 and help plan and promote a more intensive campaign to raise support through more donations and Volunteers in Mission work teams. The conference is trying to raise at least \$100,000 by the time Annual Conference meets in June.

"We will never be the same again," the pastor of a Methodist in Torrimar, on the northern coast, told the group. As they quietly said "Amen" and pondered the pastor's words, he repeated his assertion insistently: "No, we will never be the same again."

Suddenly, they understood, recalled Camacho. They realized all that the severely damaged church was now doing to serve its community in ways it had not done before: serving meals, distributing food and clothing and inviting neighbors in for help in addressing other needs.

"God had taken them from the way they were doing things before to a new way of being the church—like the early church in Acts," said Camacho. He works with public high school students in Rading and serves as a part-time community pastor at West Lawn UMC.

He spoke of how important churches in Puerto Rico are to their communities, even to neighbors who don't attend church but rely on churches to help in times of great need. Just like some pastors and laity he visited there, he too became emotional as he shared their stories of seeing transformation begin to emerge from tragedy.

He related accounts of destroyed roofs, unusable sanctuaries, wind-tossed church pews and altars, mud-impacted floors, cracked foundations, and dangerous mold infestation from flooding, forcing many congregations to worship elsewhere. Repairs are slowly underway; but churches are not a top priority for FEMA and UMCOR funding, even though repairs to some could cost



The Rev. Nicolas Camacho

many thousands of dollars.

Much of the island still lacks electrical power and other necessities. And while it rains frequently there now, Puerto Rico's rainy season and its next hurricane season will both begin in June, which will hinder repairs and rebuilding.

'We will never be the same again.'

'Great resiliency' among the people

"But the great resiliency of these people can't be described in words," said Camacho. "We may talk and preach about hope and faith here; but the way they talk and look.... You can feel their sadness from what they went through. But they're still being hopeful, and that's what's driving them."

His team and the larger task force intend to share the hopes and dire needs of Methodists and others in Puerto Rico with the Eastern PA Conference in the months to come, encouraging members to not grow weary in their generous well-doing. "This recovery will take a long, long time and a lot of ongoing support," said Camacho, acknowledging a difficult, but well-known truth. "They have a long way to go, and they will need our help long-term."

See more colorful photos in the Puerto Rico campaign album on our Flickr page.



'Pass the Dream Act Now!' immigration advocates urge

Many of the approximately 700,000 young immigrants known as Dreamers were brought to the U.S. as children without proper documents; but they are trying to remain here legally to live productive, law-abiding, aspirational lives.

They may have just won a temporary reprieve from fair-minded U.S. judges.

But their fight is not over.

Indeed, the Eastern PA Conference Rapid Response Team (RRT), which advocates for immigration justice and mercy, implores conference members and churches to make it our fight, too. They urge us to contact our U.S. senators and Congressional representatives right now and continuously, by letter and telephone, and urge them to "Pass the Dream Act Now!"

The young people have until now benefited from DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals executive order initiated by former President Barack Obama.

But current President Donald Trump last September rescinded that order effective March 5. That action could lead to mass deportation of these lifelong U.S. residents back to native countries they do not know and where they have never really lived.

Our Rapid Response Team, along with the UM Board of Church & Society and other teams and agencies around the U.S., are calling for a "Clean" DACA bill, unencumbered by compromising or inhibiting, anti-immigrant legislation. Meanwhile, district judges in California and New York are preventing the Trump Administration from ending DACA on March 5, while plaintiffs challenge the



Attorney Christina Galvan (left), of the Solow, Isbell & Palladino firm, specializing in Immigration and Nationality Law, consults with a family, part of a service provided to immigrants by Casa del Pueblo, a ministry of Lehman UMC in Hatboro.

policy change in court as an "arbitrary and capricious" violation of federal procedure.

The Administration asked the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene and lift the temporary injunction prematurely;

Continued on page 12.





Youth outreach ministries nurture young lives

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

Perhaps two of the most fundamental experiences necessary for a healthy childhood are self-discovery and self-expression. If those self-experiences are grounded in Christian faith and discipleship and elevated by self-less compassion, then the odds of children becoming healthy, whole persons are very good.

Congregations across the Eastern PA Conference are using that formula in various ways in search of that healthy outcome for their own youth and others in their communities. Beyond tutoring and homework help, they are using mission trips, the arts, sports and recreation, candid conversations and even the therapeutic influence of animals to encourage self-discovery and self-expression among young people.

We feature glimpses of some promising and proven youth outreach ministries in this issue of NEWSpirit. But we would like to feature more in future issues if our readers and churches would share with us their effective examples of how to reach, disciple and transform youth for Christ. In the meantime, we encourage you to contact leaders involved in these ministries to learn more about them.

Yardley UMC (East District): MyCalling!

"Mission work is something that has quickly become a huge part of my life," said Faith Macwana of Morrisville UMC. "While making awesome friends and creating tons of memories, we are also able to give back to the community. I couldn't imagine a better feeling."

About 20 young teens from Morrisville UMC joined Yardley UMC's new Winter version of its annual MyCalling! Middle School Mission (formerly YU?MC) for middle-school-age youth, usually held mid-summer. Nearly 50 youth in all, plus adult coordinators—from Eastern PA, New Jersey and New York—descended on historic St.

James UMC in Philadelphia Feb. 16-18 to help the church in its extensive, ongoing makeover.

Sleeping on bunkbeds and sleeping bags, they lodged in the church's former parsonage, now its new Mission House, which itself was renovated by previous volunteers, mostly from Discovery Service Projects, based in Pipersville.

Yardley's high school youth planned and supervised the mission experience for their younger peers. Together with St. James' members, they cleaned, painted, did repairs and began work on the



church's future music recording studio. But they also enjoyed worship, fellowship, a movie, games and Philly favorites like cheese steaks and Tastykakes®.

"It's a real blessing because there are few mission trip opportunities like this for young teens," said MyCalling! coordinator Kelly Rymer. The program recently received a grant from the UMC's 2018 Global Youth Service Fund.

"Some people think mission trips are just hard, boring work," said Rob Hawk, also of Morrisville UMC. "But it's a chance to have a good time with your peers and people around you, while also reflecting on your life through God."

"I am glad that the work we have done will help the community in and around the church" added Josh Schettino of Yardley

UMC. "I can't wait to come back next year."

For any church wanting its middle-schoolers to experience the summer version of this mission adventure, **July 8-12**, registration is open now. Contact MyCalling! at yumcmissons@gmail.com. Visit their website (<http://www.mycallingministries.com>) to learn more. And visit their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/mycallingmission>) to see more photos.



First UMC Lancaster (West District): *Upward Basketball*

Bearcats, Wolverines, Hurricanes, Cyclones, Thundering Herd... The names are fearsome, but the K-4th-grade boys and girls who play on these Upward Basketball League teams sponsored by First UMC Lan-



caster are anything but. In fact, they are taught to be Christ-like in competition—demonstrating teamwork, integrity and respect—and they are as much rewarded for sportsmanship as for skill.

Upward Basketball is the most popular sport in Upward Sports, purportedly the world's largest Christian youth sports provider. Their mission is to promote the discovery of Jesus through sports. First UMC has operated a league for about 12 years. In fact, the church built its present upstairs basketball court with this community outreach ministry in mind.

Laura Sambrick, the church's Minister to Families and Children, coordinates the burgeoning league, which this year numbers 352 children from Lancaster city and county, in 40 teams led by 88 volunteer parent-coaches. Only about a dozen of the players belong to First UMC, she said.

Game-day volunteers are essential, as is the church's partnership with nearby Highland Presbyterian Church to host so many teams for five days of weekly practices and eight weekends of games, plus three weeks of pre-season practice.

"You are giving much more than just your time and energy," Sambrick tells volunteers, whom she relies on to handle the Snack Shack, scoreboard, hospitality, cheerleading and other tasks. "Together we are preparing athletes to succeed in the game and in life."

At halftime Sambrick takes the floor, surrounded by families, to offer five minutes of devotions before play resumes. And opposing teams form a circle to pray together before each game and a line to salute each other afterward.

The sports league is family-friendly in cost—only \$70 per child, with need-based scholarships available—and in time, with weekly practices lasting only an hour.

"We're maxed out and would need to add another church to grow any bigger," said Sambrick, who often wishes Sunday school and church attendance would grow as fast and with such popularity. "This is the biggest ministry we have."

Indeed, the children do learn Bible verses and life lessons at each practice.



And parents interviewed during a game in January said they liked the low-key, non-aggressive play, where their young children can have fun, learn skills from patient coaches and "get comfortable learning to know themselves and each other."

Parkesburg Mission ConneXion (South District): *The Point*

Churches in the Parkesburg Mission ConneXion have partnered with other churches, schools, businesses, social organizations and law enforcement for 15 years to develop and support young people through The Point, located in Parkesburg.

All these partners and more collaborate to address the needs of vulnerable students in Western Chester County. The dedicated staff and volunteers keep the faith-based, after-school, weekend and summer programs innovative, lively and responsive to the needs and concerns of their young charges.

The Point's huge facility, a converted former grocery store on 4.25 acres of now debt-free property, includes a community center with an indoor skatepark, a gymnasium, a cafeteria with a commercial kitchen, a student chapel, fitness center, classrooms and the community's local food cupboard.

With about 400 students, ages 8 to 18, currently enrolled in programs, more than 250 of them may show up each week after school or in the summer. Others may be there late on Friday nights, staying off the streets; and some get to enjoy weekend events and field trips during the year.

Each after-school visit to The Point includes a wholesome meal prepared and served by outside volunteers, including groups from several churches.

Academic and personal development

The Academic Enrichment Program offers students daily tutoring, computer access and reading assistance to help them improve their grades, graduate on time and set goals for post-secondary education. A variety of enrichment activities include cooking, science experiments, painting, gardening, art and music lessons—and even music composition and recording—to enhance their academic and personal development in fun, creative ways.

High-schoolers get help with applications for college, financial aid and employment, along with mentoring, college tours and career readiness workshops. And a variety of games and sports—most popularly basketball—provide social outlets to help energetic youth learn to play together, while developing athletic and leadership skills.

Students and other community residents benefit from the "Ask a Nurse" program, where bi-monthly visits by a MainLine Health nurse allows them to privately discuss and receive advice about medical concerns and also receive preventive health screenings.

There's much more available, including daily talks with boys and girls separately to nurture their maturity and motivation, as well as self-esteem and other positive values. Bible studies, retreats and field trips are also popular.

Most of these students live in low-income, single-parent families. Many have been homeless or transient,

Continued on page 8.

Del Moyer (left) and other volunteers from Cochranville UMC prepare and serve nutritious dinners to students at The Point on first Mondays, after which Moyer (shown with Director Dwayne Walton, left) presents gifts to those with birthdays each month. All photos by John Coleman, unless otherwise credited.



Continued from page 7.

and some have suffered from hunger and mental or physical abuse. Understandably, many also struggle academically. Such conditions make them high-risk for getting caught in the juvenile justice system or facing mental illness, drug or alcohol abuse and school truancy.

What they find at The Point is support, friendship, personal development and resources needed to address their academic, physical, emotional and spiritual needs. What they find simply is love.

"We stay in touch with their lives here to let them know we love them," said Dwayne Walton (*below*), The Point's longtime director. "Those who are struggling need that most of all."

He should know. Walton himself says he endured homelessness as a young child living in New York, after his father was murdered. His teachers sometimes had to "do double-duty as social workers." He accepted Christ while in high school, drawn by young Christian adults who challenged him and his friends to basketball games and then shared their faith.

He joined an African Methodist Episcopal church located across from an abandoned crack house in inner city Queens, NY. There the older women of the church lavished love and care on him and encouraged him to do well in school. "I didn't want to disappoint them," he recalls.

After moving to Philadelphia in 2004 to help plant a church with some friends, Walton volunteered and spoke at a weeklong basketball camp in Chester County. Some youth there told him about The Point and invited him to come check it out.

What he discovered was just the kind of program he had long envisioned starting himself. So, he joined their ministry, which he now leads; and there he helps young people, many of whom remind him of himself.

Hazleton/Valley UM Mission ConneXion (North District): *The Listening Post*

When members of the Hazleton/Valley Mission ConneXion considered how they might collaborate in an outreach effort to impact lives back in 2015 they decided on a collective ministry of presence. That is, they decided to be present among the young people attending the Keystone Job Corps (KJC) center in Drums, near Hazleton, and to lend their listening ears to any who might want to talk.

With eager support from the KJC administration, the eight-church mission *connexion* established The

(*Below*) Hazleton/Valley Mission ConneXion volunteers at the Listening Post. The Rev. Earl Roberts III is on the right.

Listening Post, modeled after a campus ministry program used effectively at several colleges in the region. Volunteers quietly invite Keystone students to share their thoughts, feelings and concerns freely without receiving judgment, advice or unsolicited opinions in response. What they do receive is simply kind acceptance and a lollipop.

Every Wednesday, during the two lunch periods, volunteers sit casually at dining hall tables with a few empty chairs, just waiting... sort of the way Jesus waited at the Samaritan well. But a little promotion always helps. So, there's also a Listening Post sign, some brochures and free candy to welcome visitors or entice passers-by.

"This is not counseling or advice-giving, but friendly, non-judgmental, active listening," said the Rev. Earl Roberts III, pastor of Lattimer UMC. "We are known to be a ministry of United Methodist churches in this area, but proselytizing is not the intention of our conversations. Spiritual issues do come up when raised by the student. And we have contacts in the administration to which we refer students for concerns that are out of our depth."

Many of the conversations are brief, as candy is picked up, said Roberts, "but often amongst them are one or two of greater depth, proving there is value in our simple presence there."

The most irresistible draw for many students may be two friendly canine volunteers, Sally and Moca, who come on alternate weeks to listen or just sit and be petted. Dave Orbin, a retired teacher and member of Diamond UMC in Hazleton, manned the Listening Post one day in 2016 with his yellow labrador Sally, following a campus peace rally to protest recent violence.



Dave Orbin photos.

Keystone Job Corps students enjoy time with Sally.

"A young lady sat down next to Sally and stroked her head for about 45 minutes," Orbin recalls. "The student did not say much, but silent tears were streaming down her face for most of the time. I tried to get her to talk, but I think Sally knew more about what she needed than I did."

When former KJC Director Bryan Mason later received Orbin's report, he replied, "It is powerful beyond words the impact this ministry has been to our campus community. I'm sure Sally and Dave turned a very sad day into a tolerable day for this young lady... I'm so grateful for the Listening Post's quiet, yet powerful model of faithfulness."

The Job Corps center relied on that faithfulness again recently when Roberts got a request for the Listening Post to be staffed on Monday Feb. 26, in addition to the usual Wednesday schedule. A revealed school terrorism threat on Friday, Feb. 23, quickly led to a former student's arrest without incident; but it incited fear among some students and staff. After the recent school killings in Parkland, Fla., KJC staff felt the Listening Post could help students who might want to talk about their fears and anxieties.

"The students seemed OK; I don't know that we were a great help," said Roberts who stood his post with Orbin, a third volunteer and Sally. "But the school thought of us as a good resource at least, and we were present if needed." When they explained to students why they were there on a Monday, Roberts said, "they appreciated it."

Students often appreciate the volunteers being there, said Roberts. Some share with us their excitement about pending graduation and the fact that they already have jobs lined up.

"We get a lot of kids who are just homesick," said another volunteer. "They want to talk about their parents, grandparents, siblings. Also, about their programs and plans for the future. Some of them have very big dreams and need some encouragement."

Dave Orbin photos.



Frigid trek to youth rally yields heart-warming inspiration

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

For many Eastern PA Conference youth and adults who braved ice and windswept snow en route to the 31st Peninsula-Delaware Conference Youth Rally, Jan. 5-7, the event's guiding scripture verse, Hebrews 12:1, must have seemed most fitting—especially the part that reads, “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...”

While a number of church youth ministry leaders cautiously decided against making the risky annual winter expedition to Ocean City, Md., about 2,800 did attend, a decline of only about 15 percent from last year's total, reports Bishop Peggy Johnson. She led the tra-

all the youth.”

Indeed, getting closer to God and drawing lasting strength and serenity from one's faith and the support of others were key messages offered by diverse speakers and singers, all focused on the rally's one-word theme: “Marathon.”

“Covenant had a great time at the rally,” Gold reported. “All but one of our kids went up for the altar call, which was pretty awesome. We had a few who were attending for the first time, and I do think they will never forget it. This year we wanted to bless others; so we gave out Philippians 4:13 wrist bands to other youth groups. To me this was the best part.”

“We all had a blast,” said Jonathan

in breakout sessions and among exhibit and vending displays.

“Despite the weather and multiple relocations of our lodging due to broken water pipes (which drenched some youth and their belongings), the 10 youth and two chaperones from Cedarville UMC in Pottstown had a fantastic time at the 2018 Rally,” reported youth ministry coordinator John McCormick. “The music was excellent, speakers were engaging, and the energy of thousands of people praising God together is something that has a positive impact on our kids.”

‘Our young people come back changed’

Krystl Johnson makes sure she takes youth from St. Daniel's UMC of Chester every year. “Our young people come back changed. The event is impactful. It gets through to our kids. So, it's definitely worth trekking through the snow.”

“The kids laughed together, looked out for each other and bonded all night long,” she later reported in an e-message to her pastor, the Rev. Herbert Coe. “On Saturday night, one of our youth committed her life to Christ and another responded to the recommitment appeal. One of the speakers (Preston Centuolo) touched them, spoke about bullying, and broke down forgiveness in a way that had a couple of them reaching out to parents and friends.”

D.D. Deischer-Eddy, 17, of Grove UMC in West Chester, also liked Centuolo, especially the way he addressed some of the daunting insecurities youth face. She was “most affected” by the breakout sessions. But she also loved joining friends and the throng of youth at the stage-front to enjoy Tenth Avenue North's concert. “A really great experience,” she said. “I don't listen to Christian contemporary music much, but I want to hear more of them.”

This was the high-school junior's third Pen-Del Youth Rally, where many youth enjoy the escape from school and home life for a weekend. “The first year, I



went away changed,” she recalled. “But they're always amazing and satisfying, helping us to connect more deeply with God and with others, and to reexamine our faith.”

“Especially at the altar call,” she added, “I often cry when the speaker says something inspiring to help me open myself up more. At this point, I'm trying to understand who I am and what's important for my life.”

“As always, the Pen-Del rally delivered in the quality of its bands and speakers and in the important messages they shared,” summarized Piltz. “Youth and their adult leaders were reminded of how difficult the journey of following God is—like running a marathon—but also the amazing benefits to our lives when we do. We were reminded that every person is loved by God, no matter what happens; that Jesus has our back and to be Christ-like is to have each other's back.”

The theme for the 2019 Youth Rally in Ocean City, Jan. 4-6, will be “Protector,” based on Isaiah 43:2 (NRSV)

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.*

Photos courtesy of Diana Esposito and Asher Tunic.



ditional closing celebration of Holy Communion. (Read her inspirational account of this event and her praise for youth rallies in general, titled “Surrounders,” on her Bishop's Blog.)

About 380 youth and adults from 25 Eastern PA Conference churches registered for the rally, a sharp decline from the last two years, said David Piltz, conference coordinator of Young People's Ministries. Yet, about 10 churches may have decided not to make the trip, reducing our presence there further, probably to about 260.

But many of those who went were very glad they did, especially youth who found their hearts warmed and souls uplifted—perhaps even transformed—by the challenging messages and celebrative music they enjoyed, and by their engaging fellowship with one another.

‘Never been closer to God’

“I've never been closer to God and have never been so happy before in my life,” texted one teenager afterward to his youth ministry coordinator, Michael Gold, at Covenant UMC in Moore Township, Bath, Pa. “I want to say thank you for being my youth leader. You have shown me what it means to care about our youth, and you have a great love for



and Erin Noland, youth ministry co-directors at Scottsville UMC in Langhorne. They took five youth and four adults to the rally. “The kids really enjoyed the Social Club Misfits

(a Christian hip-hop duo from Miami, Fla.). We all enjoyed Sunday morning worship time and our fellowship with other youth groups. The weekend was a great success and we look forward to the coming years.”

Other scheduled performers included:

- Tenth Avenue North, a young, contemporary Christian band;
- Josh Griffin, a youth pastor for 20 years and co-creator of DownloadYouthMinistry.com;
- Jimi Cravity, a unique, multi-media, multi-genre Christian musician
- Jasmine Murray, a vocalist and finalist on TV's American Idol program; and
- Preston Centuolo, a popular motivational speaker and “master-storyteller.” He connects strongly with youth by “helping them see beyond pressing obstacles...to find balance in an increasingly chaotic, high pressure, information-overload age.”

Some presenters and performers also engaged their young listeners beyond the stage, interacting with them



Enjoy more colorful photos in event albums on our Flickr page.

Laity learn to share gift of Holy Spirit through sacraments

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

Ironically, while two groups in the Eastern PA Conference were considering The United Methodist Church's future—and the work of its Way Forward Commission—on Jan. 27, another group was trying to recover some of its past—namely, sacramental practices



of early Methodists and even the first Christians in the Bible's Book of Acts.

Bishop Peggy Johnson convened members at St. Matthew's UMC in Valley Forge to explore best ways to dialogue peaceably and productively about the denomination's stance on human sexuality and church law. Meanwhile, conference members involved in the conservative Wesleyan Covenant Association welcomed its president, the Rev. Keith Boyette of the Virginia Conference, to come speak on that same topic and the church's uncertain future at Hemphill UMC in Lancaster.

But another event at nearby

Salem UMC in Manheim was all about the Holy Spirit—that force of God's nature that birthed the church, inspiring Jesus' disciples at Pentecost and early Methodists in America. The Revs. Gordon Hendrickson, Conference Coordinator of Congregational Development, and Mike Netznik, chair of the Congregational Development Team (CDT), led about 60 people—mostly laity—in exploring “The Four Stations of the Holy Spirit.”

Those “four stations” are where empowered laity can offer **Prayer**, **Anointing** with oil, affirmation of **Baptism** and/or **Holy Communion** with consecrated bread and wine to fellow members in the church or even to others



The Rev.s Mike Netznik (left) and Gordon Hendrickson. John Coleman photos.

outside the church.

The CDT tag team led a six-hour exposition on renewing sacred and sacramental practices of what some consider the once and future church of Acts. They called for the deployment of more lay disciples to help “spread holiness throughout

Continued on page 11.

Christmas card outreach to inmates grows More prison locations sought

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The Eastern PA Conference's Christmas Cards to Inmates Project scored another record-breaking year in December 2017. Nearly 9,500 Christmas cards were, in the words of a popular song, “signed, sealed, delivered,” mostly to recipients in 11 of our region's county and state correctional institutions.

That total exceeds the roughly 8,000 signed cards collected in 2016. And with some prison populations in decline, some cards were shared with facility guards and staff.

The Conference's Prison Ministries & Restorative Justice (PMRJ) Team finds more supporters of this three-year-old holiday cheer campaign each year—more people willing to pen a few caring words and sign their names to simple, photocopied greeting cards. The carefully designed and vetted cards, bearing modest but meaningful messages of Christmas hope and joy, help many inmates experience two emotions they may rarely feel living in a penal institution: grace and gratitude.

“There's value in reaching out to share God's love with anyone impacted by the criminal justice system,” said the Rev. Marilyn Schneider, the team's leader. “We're doing what Christ calls us to do.”

Cards went to correctional facilities in Montgomery, Chester, Delaware, Lan-

caster, Lehigh and Berks counties, plus the Berks County Residential Center (where immigrant families seeking asylum are detained) and the Norristown State Hospital Forensic Center. Also receiving cards were juveniles at the Chester County Youth Center and in a Philadelphia court-supervised youth arts program.

Cards touch hearts and souls

Team member Brenda Del Rosario, of C.C. Hancock UMC in Springfield, gave 102 cards to youth she teaches in the arts program—up from 75 in 2016. “The teens accept the cards but act like they don't like them,” she reported. “However, I see them open and shut them several times, reading the written messages inside. One teen last year asked me if Christmas cards would be given out again this year. These cards are touching their hearts and souls, I can tell.”

Linda McCrea delivered over 1,200 cards to the Berks County Jail and 100 cards to the immigrant families in the Residential Center on behalf of her church, West Lawn UMC. Each year she gets hundreds of members, visitors and friends, to sign Christmas cards for inmates. But she also offers them insights into the challenges inmates face, both inside penal institutions and when they reenter society.

“A lot of community people gladly sign the cards,” she reported. “But along with asking, we need to be educating. I

recently talked with a released inmate who said that anything we are doing for inmates is greatly appreciated by most. He came to our church to thank us for all we did for him while he was incarcerated. God continually shows us that serving in the prisons matters. God leads, I follow.”

The essential contact—gatekeeper, really—in each facility is the chaplain, who generously accepts the responsibility to receive, screen and disseminate the cards to inmates. Having good relationships with cooperative chaplains is necessary for the cards to be welcomed.

After leading worship one morning at the Norristown State Hospital, Bishop Peggy Johnson joined the Rev. Robert Crane, a chaplain and local pastor in our conference, in walking the halls of five forensic units to give out Christmas cards and chocolate bars to incarcerated patients there.

‘Tell Daisy I appreciate this card’

“One patient opened his card and read the sweetest message about peace that passes all understanding,” recalled the bishop in an e-mail message to Schneider. “It was signed by someone named Daisy. The patient said, ‘Tell Daisy I appreciate this card so much.’ His face glowed with gratitude. This program makes a difference.”

Schneider, a deacon serving at Grove UMC in West Chester, is eager to convince more penal institutions across the region, especially larger ones, to accept



Scott Johnson (left) talks with Marilyn Schneider, as PMRJ team members work on vetting cards for delivery to prison inmates. John Coleman photos

the cards in the future, so that the grace and gratitude that comes with Christmas greetings may abound. She has contacted another UM chaplain, the Rev. Donald Moore, at Northampton County Prison. And she would like the project to gain access to facilities in Bucks County, Philadelphia and other locations.

The key is knowing someone who has a good relationship with an institution's prison chaplain or warden and who can help PMRJ team members present the Christmas card ministry there and gain acceptance. It's not easy, but it's worth the effort to Schneider.

“Every inmate and every signed card is important” she said. “More of us need to step outside our comfort zones and do what our faith calls us to do: ‘Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them.’” (Hebrews 13:3)

“Every time someone writes a kind card greeting to an unknown inmate,” said Schneider, “they're thinking of that inmate as a person. That is important, and we are thankful to everyone who signed a card or supported this effort in any way.”



In Memoriam

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

The Rev. Jo Ann Enders

The Rev. Jo Ann Enders, 75, of Mountville, PA, passed away on February 16, 2018. She was the wife of Harold F. Enders with whom she celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on February 11. She served in many churches, most recently at Washington Boro United Methodist Church as a licensed local pastor.

Surviving her in addition to her husband, are her children: Deborah J. (and husband John N.) Albright; Harold F. (and wife Debra J.) Enders, Jr.; and Dr. Belinda G. (and husband Christopher M.) Collins. She leaves behind also one brother, Donald (and wife Patricia) Aument, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

The Rev. Melvin G. Sponsler, Jr.

The Rev. Melvin G. Sponsler, Jr., 84, of Willow Valley Communities, passed away on Monday, February 12, 2018. A Retired Elder, he served in pastoral ministry for over 40 years, starting as a student pastor at Lebanon Valley College and several rural churches.

He went on to serve the below Eastern PA Conference churches: Manheim: Salem UMC; Campbelltown UMC; Allentown: Trinity UMC (closed); Mountville: St. Paul's UMC; and Mount Hope.

In addition, he taught at United Wesleyan College, Allentown; was an evangelist and Bible teacher at retreats and Bible conferences; was a pastor supervisor for seminary students; and chaired the Eastern PA Conference Board of Evangelism.

Rev. Sponsler was the husband of the late Marilyn Derk Sponsler, who died in 2008. He is survived by four children; Timothy (Melanie Bryan) Sponsler; Tamara (Daniel) Johnson; Theodore Sponsler of Mountville; and Thomas (Sharon Buttemere) Sponsler; plus seven grandchildren, a great-grandson, and a sister.

The Rev. Burgess Lee Gordon, Jr.

The Rev. Burgess Lee Gordon, Jr., a retired Local Pastor, passed away on June 18, 2017. He retired in 1995, after serving these local churches: Montgomery Square; Philadelphia: Spring Garden (closed church); Philadelphia: Emmanuel; Newtown (Columbia PA); Lebanon: St. Luke's; Lehigh: Ebenezer; Weissport: Ebenezer (now Bowmanstown: Faith Alive from a merger); Coaldale; and Summit Hill.

The Rev. Ralph Stevenson

The Rev. Ralph Stevenson, a retired elder, passed away January 15, 2018. He served under appointment in the Eastern PA Conference (and the former Philadelphia Conference) for more than 40 years, until he retired in 2013. He then continued to serve at Bethany UMC in Wescosville as an Associate Pastor of Missions, Discipleship and Seniors' Min-

istries, as well as Church Historian.

Rev. Stevenson's service record includes: Ivyland: St. John's; Washington Crossing; Hulmeville: Neshaminy; Canadensis; and Wescosville: Bethany.

Rev. Stevenson's surviving family includes his wife Christal, son Russ and daughter Emily. Expressions of sympathy may be mailed to: Mrs. Christal Stevenson, 6495 Hickory Road, Macungie, PA 18062-9402.

Mrs. Elaine Longnecker

Elaine Longnecker, clergy-spouse of the Rev. Robert P. Longenecker, passed away on Tuesday, December 19, 2017. The Rev. Robert P. Longenecker, a retired elder who passed away in 2006, served in the following appointments: Rocherty; Fontana (Closed); Myerstown: Zion; Annville; Extension Ministry: Allentown District Superintendent; Philadelphia: St. James (closed, but later reopened); and Philadelphia: Holmesburg.

Mr. Vernon Hoskins

Mr. Vernon Hoskins, spouse of Retired Elder, the Rev. Mary E. Hoskins, passed away on December 9, 2017.

Before retirement in 2017, Rev. Hoskins served the following Eastern PA Conference Churches: Hopewell; Kemblesville; Penns Park; Rocherty; Terre Hill: St. Paul's; and Willow Street: Boehm's.

Mrs. Dorothy E. Moody

Mrs. Dorothy E. Moody, surviving spouse of The Rev. Herman T. Moody Sr.,

passed away on November 24, 2017.

Rev. Moody served the Eastern PA Conference from 1972 to 1994 at the below churches: Philadelphia: John Wesley UMC; Philadelphia: Wharton Memorial UMC; and Philadelphia: Wharton-Wesley UMC (John Wesley and Wharton Memorial churches were merged to become Wharton-Wesley.)

Mrs. Moody is survived by her children: The Rev. Dr. George B. Moody (G. Patricia), Mrs. Constance Saunders-Young, Dwight L. Moody (Tina).

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to The Rev. Dr. Moody, at 14 W. 20th Street, Wilmington DE 19802.

Mrs. Clara L. Harris

Mrs. Clara L. Harris, surviving spouse of the Rev. Robert L. Harris. She passed away on Wednesday, November 29, 2017.

Rev. Harris served these churches: Philadelphia: Frankford Group Ministry; St. Thomas UMC; Philadelphia: St. Barnabas-Bethsaida UMC; Philadelphia: Tioga UMC (closed); Philadelphia: Camphor Memorial UMC; and Philadelphia: Janes Memorial UMC. He also served as a District Superintendent.

The Harris' surviving children are: Constance Ophelia Long, Paul Danford Harris, James Eugene Harris, Charles Edward Harris, Calvin Francis Harris and Minerva Thomas. Preceding them in death were: Robert L. Harris, Jr., Gladys L. Clayton and Henrietta Thomas.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mrs. Constance O. Long, #224, 46 Township Line Rd, Elkins Park, Pa. 19027.

Laity learn to share Holy Spirit through sacraments

Continued from page 10.

the land" with clergy-authorized sacraments to celebrate new life in Christ with others.

"As an elder for 25 years, I've learned that everybody can have the gift of the Holy Spirit and anybody can help grow the Body of Christ if God wants you to," Hendrickson proclaimed to his audience. He decried the notion of elders being "spiritually superior" and recalled early American Methodism when the few existing, traveling preachers had to consecrate sacramental elements for laity to administer in their absence.

The retired pastor, who has coordi-

nated Conference Congregational Development support for six years, offered a primer on sacramental theology and then gave attendees copies of the Rev. Bill Hybels' 2013 book *Too Busy Not to Pray*. Few if any hands were raised when he asked how many people frequently experience Holy Communion, or anointing prayer or affirmation of their Baptism.

'Why don't you turn the Holy Spirit's power loose?'

"Are you seeing the problem here?" he chuckled. "This is mind-boggling to me. If I miss Communion on first Sunday, I may have to wait weeks for another chance. And don't you think we should anoint people before they go to the hospital for healing or if they're having trouble in their marriages and need confession?"

"Why not offer these things all the time at church, or in your small groups or other gatherings?" Hendrickson asked. "Why don't you turn the power of the Holy Spirit loose? What's wrong with us as a church? We're keeping the greatest power we have locked up."

"And then the next step is, how do we take that power out into the world

to people who are struggling?... Maybe a person might never come into your church; but you can take the power of the Holy Spirit to them, right?"

Netznik shared his own application of these ideas as pastor of Covenant UMC in Moore Township. While he greets some worshipers at the door on Sundays after worship, members are ministering to others who need anointing prayer or Communion at the altar. And some have

done so out in the community as well.

"We hold in our hands and hearts people's lives that just need to be blessed," Netznik said after attendees practiced praying, anointing and sharing Communion with one another. He gave them each separate, small bottles of consecrated water and oil and challenged them to empty those bottles soon in service to others.



About a dozen members of New Birth (Nuevo Nacimiento) UMC in Lebanon attended the Four Stations of the Holy Spirit training and then put what they learned into action during a recent worship service. "Children prayed for their parents, and parents prayed for children," reported the Rev. Elena Ortiz, pastor. "We prayed for a paralytic. One person accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, and three reconciled with God. We could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in such an amazing way. That workshop has been a blessing."



'Pass the Dream Act Now!' Continued from page 5.

but it refused, allowing plaintiffs to have their day in court. DACA recipients—who enjoy broad public support for their cause—may continue to work jobs and attend school for now, and also apply for renewal of their expiring certificates for up to two years. But those who have not had valid DACA certificates can no longer apply and are subject to removal.

"The U.S. Congress is now deciding on whether, and how, to protect these immigrant young people, and they need to hear from us," urges the Rev. Jeania Ree Moore of Church & Society, which provides on its website a sample advocacy letter anyone may use. "Urge Congress to vote Yes on legislation that is focused on a pathway to citizenship for immigrant youth, and to reject any proposals that would fundamentally change our immigration system, especially family sponsorship and access to asylum."

The Rev. Lilian "Luky" Cotto and Ruth Daugherty, co-chairs of our conference RRT, are seeking Church & Society funds to sponsor workshops this spring to help churches learn about providing Sanctuary for at-risk Dreamers. They also want to prepare trainees to go into communities and teach people about their rights and how to avoid arrest by Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Meanwhile, there is "immense urgency for Congress to do the right thing on the Dream Act," said Cotto and

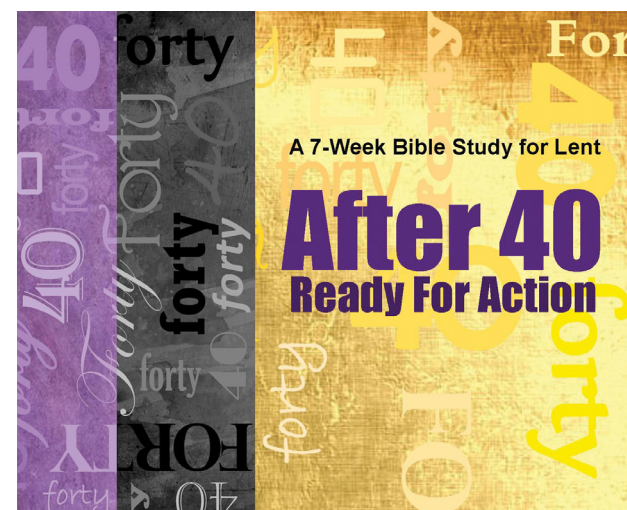
Daugherty, who provide resource documents on our Immigration Ministry Concerns webpage. "While the injunction ensures that these young immigrants can rightfully reapply for DACA, it is still only a temporary solution."

While Congress bickers, and the President rejects multiple bipartisan deals, time is running out for Dreamers worried about losing their American future. A permanent legislative solution is critically needed; and so are the voices of people of faith to advocate for mercy and justice.



The Rev. Lilian "Luky" Cotto (center) is pastor/director of Casa del Pueblo, a Latino faith community sponsored by Lehman UMC in Hatboro. Casa offers worship, discipleship training, community organizing and outreach, cultural events and *Anawim*, a school of music and dance for children and youth.

Increasing federal arrests and deportation of undocumented persons has incited fear and anxiety among local immigrants and their families. But Cotto was able to recruit immigration attorney Christina Galvan (left) and psychotherapist Sharyvette Mattos to offer low-cost legal consultation and psychological counseling, respectively, to individuals and families who need help. John Coleman photo



Lent: Preparing for something better

Christians celebrate and engage the 40 days of Lent as a holy season of preparation, through study, self-denial, sacrifice and finally, spiritual renewal. We remember Jesus' difficult life-journey of submission to God, from the wilderness to the cross, as his journey inspires our own in different ways.

But Lent comes from an Anglo Saxon word, *lencten*, which means "spring," the much-anticipated season, beginning March 20, that follows winter. So, beyond our preparation, and beyond Holy Week (March 25-31), we look forward to the renewal that spring and indeed, Easter offers to all of us.

It is a time for action, as churches who are using Hopewell UMC's new Lenten resource *After 40: Ready for Action* are no doubt learning. The seven-week, multi-media Bible study offers a fresh, reflective look at Bible stories where the number 40—whether in days or years—is a significant timeframe in which God's people—like God's own Son—are tested and prepared for something better in the Kingdom.

May we all emerge from this Lenten season ready for action and prepared for something better in our lives.



Please give so that others may live on UMCOR Sunday, March 11, 2018



www.umcgiving.org/UMCOR



April 15, 2018



www.umcgiving.org/NAMS