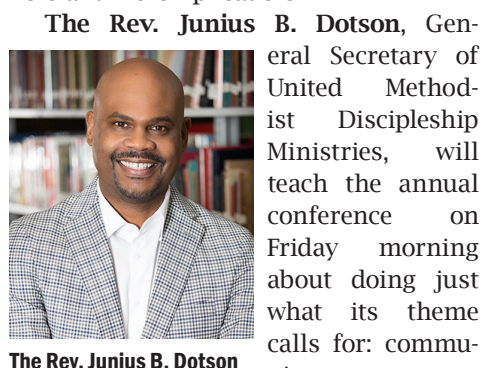


## Annual Conference 2020 to focus on reaching out and stretching forward

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

**“E**ngaging Communities for Christ” will be the outreach theme for the 2020 Eastern PA Annual Conference, June 18-20. Returning to the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, Pa., the yearly session will feature a diverse array of mission-minded guest speakers, preachers and worship leaders.



The Rev. Junius B. Dotson

Before taking the Discipleship Ministries helm in 2016, he was the senior pastor of Saint Mark UMC, a 3,500-member, multi-campus church in Wichita, Kansas.

“We must shift the conversation from fixing churches to reaching people for Christ...” Dotson says when he speaks, teaches and writes to promote “See All the People,” his agency’s evangelism and church revitalization resourcing campaign. His goals include helping conferences and churches improve their

disciple-making systems.

“The most essential step for making disciples of Jesus Christ is to immerse ourselves in the lives of people who are right outside our doors,” See All the People teaches, “acknowledging that God calls us to have meaningful relationships in authentic, organic and consistent ways.”

**Bishop Mark Webb**, leader of the Upper New York Episcopal Area, will preach the Service of Ordination and Commissioning. President of Discipleship Ministries’ board since 2016, he was formerly a pastor and superintendent in the Susquehanna Conference and a Harry Denman Evangelism Awardee in 2002.

Born in Williamsport, Pa., Webb has a passion for collaborative leadership development, new faith communities, and fostering mission-minded vitality among all congregations.

The conference’s **Latino Commission** will plan and conduct opening worship on Thursday afternoon, June 18, inspiring the assembly with Latino/Hispanic music, dance, liturgy, visuals and voices. Those voices will include young adults like the **Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé**, who will preach during opening worship. She is the pastor of First Spanish UMC in New York City, and she continues the conference’s focus on hearing young voices like those who taught and spoke at the 2019 annual session.

The conference will hear a report from its delegates to General Conference  
*Continued on Page 4--ANNUAL CONFERENCE*



Bishop Mark Webb



Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé



## Anita Powell to retire as DCM; Dawn Taylor-Storm to succeed her

**B**ishop Peggy Johnson announced the retirement of the Rev. Anita Powell as Eastern PA Conference Director of Connectional Ministries (DCM) and the appointment of the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm as her successor, effective July 1, 2020. Taylor-Storm is currently Superintendent of the South District and was recently Dean of the Cabinet.

Bishop Johnson praised Powell’s service and accomplishments as DCM the past two years. She was previously Superintendent of the former Central District in 2011-2017, after planting Church of the Open Door as a new church start in Kennett Square in 2001.

“Dr. Powell has built successful relationships across this annual conference, our jurisdiction and the general church during her tenure,” she said. “She has encouraged cooperation and communication among the ministries under her charge and demonstrated humility coupled with mindful problem-solving in all her work. We wish her and her dear husband, Marvin, the very best.”

“God has truly blessed me with the privilege of serving the church and conference as a pastor, district superintendent and Director of Connectional Ministries,” said Powell. “Being in ministry with clergy, congregations, Conference staff, and committees has been a highlight in my life, stretching and challenging me, while also bringing me much meaning and joy. I will especially remember the relationships I have formed, and the many situations which have informed and formed me. To

all of you, I am deeply grateful.”

Taylor-Storm became Superintendent of the former Southeast District in 2014, after serving as pastor of St. Matthew’s UMC of Valley Forge. She previously served White Haven UMC. Her introduction to ministry was as a Global Ministries Mission Intern serving at a community center in San Marcos, Texas.

“Rev. Taylor-Storm has demonstrated the power of the connection through her work in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the South District raised funds to build and develop a pediatric clinic, an eye clinic and a life skills program,” wrote Bishop Johnson in her announcement. “She looks forward to bringing a missional focus to the work of the DCM and seeks to encourage churches to join together in rebuilding communities, making disciples and offering the hope of the Gospel.”

“I have seen firsthand the reason why the connectional church matters and what the body of Christ is capable of when we serve in mission together,” Taylor-Storm wrote in an acknowledgment letter to her district, as she recalled the ministry strides made during her five-year tenure. “Together, we have worked to seek God’s vision for abundant life for all people, from here on the South District, to the Democratic Republic of Congo.”

Bishop Johnson invites recommendations of eligible clergy to consider for the position of Superintendent of the South District, effective July 1, 2020. Suggestions should be e-mailed only to newdsepa@gmail.com.



Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm



Rev. Anita Powell

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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## DECEMBER

DECEMBER 7

CLM Program Orientation Session: 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

MissionInsite WEB-CAST: 1 PM.  
Contact Gordon Hendrickson at  
gordonacts6@gmail.com or 267-  
258-9507 for details and call-in  
instructions.

Latino Commission Meeting:  
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm, Holy Spirit  
UMC, Philadelphia

DECEMBER 17

Cabinet Day of Service: Norris-town State Hospital

DECEMBER 20 - JANUARY 1  
Conference Office Closed  
for Christmas Holidays, from  
December 20, 2019 at 10:30 am  
through January 1, 2020.

## JANUARY 2020

JANUARY 10 - 12  
Pen-Del Youth Rally 2020

JANUARY 28  
Connectional Table ZOOM  
meeting: 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm

## FEBRUARY 2020

FEBRUARY 8  
National Black HIV/AIDS Aware-  
ness Day Event: 11:00 am - 2:00  
pm, at Wharton Wesley United  
Methodist Church

FEBRUARY 22

True Justice: Seeking Equal  
Justice for People and Commu-  
nities of Color, 9:00 am - 3:00  
pm, at Cedarville UMC, Pottstown

## MARCH 2020

MARCH 7  
Tools for Ministry (All Districts)

MARCH 20 - 22  
NPHLM Encuentro 2 (Encounter 2)

MARCH 20  
Dismantling Racism: 3-Day  
workshop, March 20-22, 2020, at  
the Desmond Hotel

MARCH 21  
ERT/VIM Training: 8 AM - 4 PM

MARCH 21-22

UMW Girls on the Go Retreat:  
Camp Innabah

MARCH 28

Eastern PA Conference Youth  
Rally: Site TBD. Theme: "Perfect  
Vision 2020"

MARCH 28

Racism, Post-Traumatic Stress,  
& Transformation: 8:00 am -  
5:00 pm

## APRIL 2020

APRIL 25

Faith-Sharing Event: "Evan-  
gelism in a Changing Landscape."  
Speaker: The Rev. Lisa  
Greenwood.

## MAY 2020

MAY 17

District Conferences

2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE  
DELEGATION LISTENING SESSIONS:

- Wednesday, March 25, 2020  
– 7 pm to 8:30 pm Church of  
the Good Shepherd
- Thursday, April 2, 2020 – 7  
pm – 8:30 pm Downingtown  
UMC. This event will be  
streamed and accessible by  
ZOOM.
- Saturday, April 4, 2020 – 10  
am to noon Simpson House.
- Monday, April 20, 2020 – 7  
pm to 8:30 pm Epworth UMC

## Historic St. George's UMC celebrates 250 years

Historic St. George's UMC, founded in 1769, inaugurated what may become a yearlong celebration of its 250th anniversary with an historic Sunday worship service Nov. 24. Ensuing events include a Dec. 1 Christmas concert and dedication of special plaques during another concert Jan. 25, 2020, to help dedicate its new Justice for Our Neighbors immigration legal aid ministry.

The Rev. Mark I. Salvacion, pastor, welcomed the Rev. Fred Day, former pastor and the denomination's chief historian, as the anniversary service guest preacher and Bishop Peggy Johnson, who led the celebration of a special Holy Communion. Day served as Historic St. George's pastor in 2005-2014 before becoming head of the UMC's General Commission on Archives

and History.

As the oldest continuously operating Methodist Church in the U.S. celebrates its history, it also charts a path of justice ministry into its future. The church will launch in January Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) of the Delaware Valley. It will be the newest member of a national United Methodist network of church-based, free or low-cost immigration legal services provided to vulnerable immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Salvacion, a practicing attorney who has handled challenging immigration cases, will lead the ministry and handle its cases. Historic St. George's JFON office will serve the Philadelphia area initially and then expand further into Delaware and New Jersey. It will be the first JFON ministry in

this region, joining 17  
other sites.

"In this time of uncertainty within the UMC, it is vital that all United Methodists honor the historic roots of American Methodism at HSG," said Salvacion. "But we will also highlight HSG's new and ongoing missions, including our new immigration ministry."

Additional anniversary events will focus on the church's 20 years of hosting an interfaith study among religious



The Rev. Fred Day preaches at Historic St. George's 250th anniversary, as (from left) Bishop Peggy Johnson, Rev. Mark Salvacion and Rev. Joanne Miles listen.

leaders and its commitment to improving disability access in its facility. To learn more visit their website and Facebook page.

## Historic Zoar UMC honors its past, seeks its future

"Emboldened by our past and striving to fulfill God's Purpose for our future" was Mother African Zoar UMC's theme for its Nov. 9 luncheon banquet to celebrate its 225th anniversary. And indeed, both its past and future were on the minds of many, including its keynoter, Bishop Gregory V. Palmer.

The oldest continuous African American congregation in United Methodism has been a landmark church in its community and among Black Methodists for over two centuries, including its role in giving birth to seven other congregations. But like many historic mainline urban churches, it is striving to discern and fulfill its purpose for the future.

Bishop Palmer spoke to that challenge from 1 Corinthians 3:10-16, urging the congregation to build on its foundation in Jesus Christ and to creatively renew its mission to serve its community—a community in deep conflict, with "gang violence on one side of the street and gentrification on the other," he said.

"Your golden past is not coming back.

You have to decide now that you're going to do some work and then decide what kind of materials you will use. Are you going to go down the old tried and true path...or will you choose the road less traveled?"

Bishop Peggy Johnson and Suzette James of the Eastern PA Conference Congregational Development Team both greeted the full gathering at the Hilton Philadelphia Hotel and lauded the historic congregation for its heritage and ongoing witness in leadership and ministry.

"Zoar's legacy of 225 years in active ministry should be seen by all as a testament of faith and trust in God," said the Rev. Shayla Johnson, pastor. "Throughout all the challenges the church and its denomination have faced over the last two centuries, Zoar has withstood it all and will continue to do so with God's help, according to God's will. While we cannot go back to the way it used to be, we are grateful for those experiences and even more grateful for the joys and ministry that God has for us in the days ahead."



Bishop Peggy Johnson - Philadelphia Area Bishop  
John W. Coleman - Director of Communications, Editor  
Lindsey Cotman - Graphic Design and Layout  
Dr. Anita A. Powell - Director of Connectional Ministries

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or via email to communications@epaumc.org



# Walk in the Light

BY BISHOP PEGGY JOHNSON

The season of Advent is at our doorstep, and once again we hear the ancient story of Jesus' birth foretold by the prophets. The prophets give us instruction about preparing for this Immanuel, who is God coming to be with us.

As we begin this season I am savoring the words of Isaiah who calls us to "walk in the light of the Lord." (Isaiah 2:5) How do we do this? The prophet gives us the roadmap for our Advent journey.

## Learn from the Lord

First we learn from the Lord. Isaiah 2:3 calls us to "Go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob that he might teach us his ways." Study the God's Word with intentionality, for it is the lamp that lights our path. (Psalm 119:105)

Engage in an Advent Bible Study or devotion, and set aside time during this season to ponder what Christ's coming means to your life personally. Consider also what God wants you to do about it.



## Engage in God's salvation plan for the world

Secondly, consider how your faith is a part of God's master plan for the world. Isaiah speaks of all nations coming to the Lord's holy mountain. (Isaiah 2:2) God wants to reach all of humanity, not just the children of Israel. His plan has always been for the salvation of the world. And his inclusive outreach should be ours as well.

Where are you and your church engaged in mission? I am proudest of the UMC for its incredible ministries that reach out and embrace lives across the U.S. and globally, including over 300 missionaries serving in 60 countries, operating 300 UM hospitals

and clinics. We also alleviate human suffering through the UM Committee on Relief, UMCOR, wherever there are needs and natural disasters.

We have educational institutions around the globe that for many are the only source of formal education and development. Our participation in church development and agriculture has given light and life to millions. We support these efforts in general through our apportionment dollars. But we also support specific projects, missionaries and concerns through our giving to the Advance.

But what about your church's local outreach? As you walk in the light, who is left in your shadow? Is the diversity of your church's neighborhood reflected in your congregation? Are people of other languages and cultures and people with disabilities experiencing your hospitality and welcome? Are you seeing all the people, to echo UM Discipleship Ministries' question?

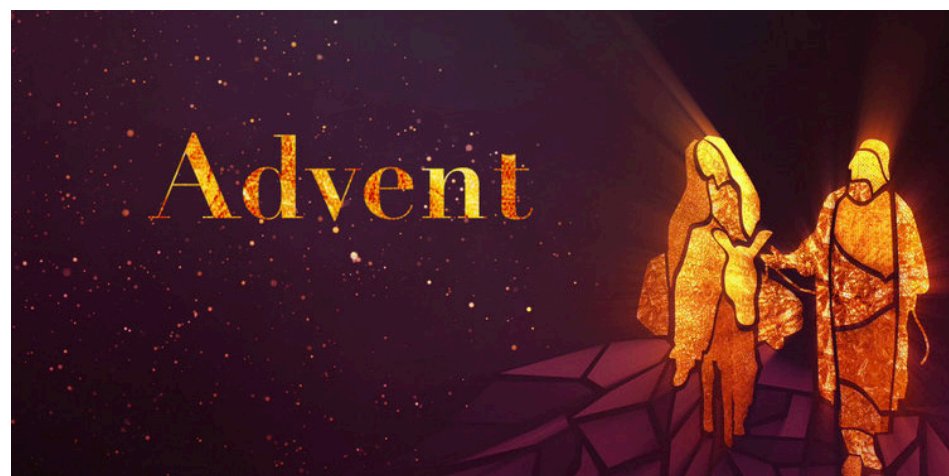
Don't focus only on people who come to your church. Go into the community and be a catalyst for good in schools, businesses, public forums, health care facilities and other settings. We can walk in the light and see the face of Christ among those in need when we minister among them in love. Then we can discover and share the true meaning of Christmas.

## Practice God's Peace Plan

Finally, practice God's peace plan! Isaiah proclaims that "God shall judge between the nations and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4)

We all agree that the end of war and strife on this earth would be a wonderful thing. There is a catastrophic amount of death and destruction on this planet now due to violence. In God's peace plan it is God who settles disputes and not people with their weapons, their lethal tools of terror.

God's peacemaking tools are forgiveness and reconciliation. When we



humbly submit to God's plan, peace has a chance! It starts with us. We cannot point fingers of blame at the wars around the world and still harbor grudges and anger toward people in our own lives.

Peace on earth begins with us. With whom do you need to reconcile? This takes hard work and a willingness to take the responsibility for making amends, even if you are not the one at fault.

Finally, peace comes through justice, the Old Testament prophets admonish us as they cry out for justice on every page. When human rights are available to all people then "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat...They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain." (Isaiah 11:6) In human terms, we are called to advocate for human rights and dignity for all people.

many misguided churches in that day were preaching that slavery was God's will, as they dubiously cited New Testament scriptures. (Ephesians 6:5, Colossians 3:22, Titus 2:9, I Peter 2:18.)

I ask myself: Would I have risked my life and security for the human rights of slaves back then? I want to think so, but I honestly have to search my heart.

Still today, it is risky business to speak up for the downtrodden, be they undocumented immigrants and refugees, people who are trafficked and enslaved for sex and labor in our own neighborhoods, people who can't get health insurance, or gay people in Pennsylvania who still are denied their full civil rights.

Justice is risky business. Peace comes at a high price. May we ponder and then pursue what God wants us to do personally in the realm of peacemaking.

During this holy season of Advent be



## Courageously pursue justice

I watched the "Harriet" movie recently, the true story of Harriett Tubman, who fled slavery and then became an abolitionist and Civil War hero. She freed hundreds of slaves by her incredible bravery and passion for human justice.

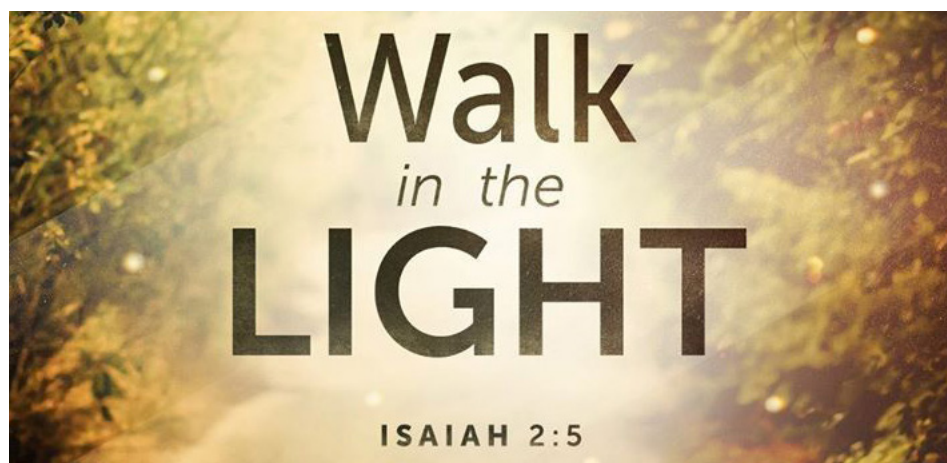
I seethed with anger at the attitude of the cruel, white slave owners in the movie. And I admired the socially conscious white people who joined the battle for abolition. They walked in the light; but theirs was not an easy path.

They were breaking the law by helping slaves escape. They were putting their lives and their families at risk. Some were killed and some lost everything. Meanwhile,

blessed, but also be a blessing. Walk in Christ's light, and share that light with others. Only then can we experience the true meaning of Christmas in all its joy, peace, love and hope.



*Faithfully Yours,*  
Peggy A. Johnson





## CONAM members share highlights of friendship journey

Members of the Eastern PA Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) believe in taking road trips to visit Native friends—whether to the former Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pa., (now the U.S. Army War College), or to St. John UMC in Bridgeton, New Jersey, or to Cherokee, North Carolina, or to another favorite destination: the Blackfeet United Methodist Parish (BUMP), headquartered in Browning, Montana.

CONAM welcomed friends at another



favorite venue, Innabah Camp & Retreat Center in Spring City, Nov. 3, for their traditional fall worship and fellowship gathering—just in time for the start of Native American Heritage Month. Their Sunday soiree began with worship that included special music and a Thanksgiving litany adapted from the Haudenosaunee (literally “people who build a house”), also known as the

six-nation Iroquois Confederacy.

Then two members enthralled guests with a PowerPoint show and tell about their visit to a dear CONAM friend, the Rev. Calvin Hill and his multifaceted ministry at the Blackfeet UMC Parish in Montana. Hill and his wife Sheri visited Eastern PA's CONAM and supportive churches over four years ago to share their vision for ministry and to seek assistance.

The fruit of that visit is a cherished friendship that has included several trips there, participation in their annual Christmas Shoe Box Mission, the sending of funds to help BUMP respond to a winter weather emergency, and a CONAM scholarship to help one of Hill's assistants pursue the Licensed Local Pastor Course of Study.

In their presentation Sherry Wack and Bob Hinderliter told guests about their August four-day, three time-zone trek by car through Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota to finally



Members and guests of CONAM, including (seated, from left) Bob Hinderliter, Sherry Wack and Joy Frazier.

arrive at BUMP August 21.

Their host, the Rev. Calvin Hill, a Navajo born in Arizona but raised in East Los Angeles, is the lead pastor of BUMP's several churches and a man on a mission. That mission—with help from various sources—includes raising cattle, growing alfalfa hay to help local ranchers feed their livestock, providing food and firewood to homebound families during harsh winters, feeding large indoor fellowship gatherings, and building needed facilities, including a



Rev. Calvin Hill

Continued on page 5--CONAM.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE--

#### Continued from page 1.

2020 (May 5-15) and consider candidates for episcopal elections, if any are to be elected at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in July. Members will also celebrate Bishop Peggy Johnson's 12-year term here and likely bid farewell to her, unless a change at General Conference delays her reassignment and keeps her here. She will preach at the Memorial Service to honor recently deceased clergy and clergy spouses.

Among other actions, the conference will also:

- approve a 2021 budget, based in part on new, 2021-2024 general church apportionments;
- elect conference council and committee chairpersons for the 2021-2024 quadrennium;
- ordain and commission elders and deacons; and
- honor new clergy retirees.

Clergy retirees will be able to attend the conference at no cost, a change approved by members at the 2019 session.

“We look forward to welcoming more conference members—active and retired—at this historic annual session,” said Bishop Johnson. “We will respond faithfully to dramatic changes that may likely occur at General Conference. But only with God's steadfast guidance and grace will we be able to trust in a future with hope, as we chart our path forward into the next quadrennium and beyond.”

## Doing justice, loving mercy for our neighbors

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

When 6-year-old “Mariana” came from Guatemala with her aunt and cousin this year to join her mother in Warrington, Pa., she got separated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers at the U.S. southwest border in Arizona and placed in detention with other children. And then she got lost in the system.

Her mother, who came here several years ago to escape domestic violence, was frantic with fear. Lacking adequate English skills, she relied on her pastor, the Rev. Lillian “Luky” Cotto, to contact ICE officials almost daily with urgent appeals for updates on their search. After three weeks, “Mariana” was found at a center in nearby New York, and she was finally reunited with her family, who are members of Cotto's Casa del Pueblo congregation at St. Paul's UMC Warrington.

### ‘I’m her pastor’

When immigration officials asked Cotto who she was and why she kept calling on the distraught mother's behalf, she replied with a simple answer that seemed to satisfy them: “I’m her

pastor.”

“Her pastor” has since helped “Mariana,” now more talkative but still disturbed by her ordeal, get enrolled in school and get needed counseling to help her recover. And her pastor is helping other families and children, including young teens who must work to send money back home to help pay the “coyotes” who escorted them across the border.



Rev. Lillian “Luky” Cotto

Many of Cotto's members cannot attend worship on Sundays because they must work in low-paying service jobs to afford housing and other basic needs. But she is still their pastor; and that means she and her lay leaders visit their homes weekly to lead Bible study and share the gospel, to build relationships and address various concerns.

Indeed, Cotto and other pastors and churches in the Eastern PA Conference, although far from the southwest border, are nonetheless on the front lines of rendering assistance to many Central American migrants and refugees seeking protective asylum and legal residency in this area.

Cotto's face shows the anguish she feels when she describes the desperate, unmet needs of immigrants she

and her church try to care for—needs that include affordable housing and basic furnishings, food and clothing, transportation, work permits, tutoring, counseling, legal assistance and so on.

Profit-driven landlords are charging recent arrivals up to \$4000 for rent, deposits and utilities, she said. Thus, families are crowding—up to a dozen people at a time—into sponsors' homes or two-bedroom apartments until they can afford their own places. But they have to remain where they are initially for weekly ICE visits to confirm their addresses. And they have to make monthly check-in visits to ICE offices in Philadelphia, always fearful that they will be denied asylum and scheduled for deportation. Helping them overcome their fears, while getting settled and making progress is a daily challenge.

### Generous help and donations

But Cotto's joy and gratitude—and yes, her faith—are also evident when she describes children like “Mariana,” who eagerly participate in worship and other church activities, and also when she speaks of the generous help and donations she receives from several churches, United Methodist Women groups and other benefactors.

Cotto is the lead pastor of Casa del Pueblo, the 11-year-old Latino

congregation and ministry sponsored by Lehman Memorial UMC in Hatboro. She also oversees Casa's fledgling satellite congregation about six miles away, meeting at St. Paul's UMC in Warrington. Both sponsoring churches are predominantly white, but St. Paul's pastor is also her supportive husband, the Rev. Irving Cotto. Of even greater support are Imelda Zuniga and Andrea Rodriguez, two Christ Servant Ministers who are both preparing to become lay pastors.

“The Lord has sent us many angels,” said the busy pastor known affectionately as “Luky.” A skilled networker and support-seeker, she is also a National Hispanic Ministry Plan Missionary and a participant in the national Community Developers Program—both administered by the UMC's Global Ministries agency. In addition, she recently became the Eastern PA Conference's Coordinator of Latino Ministries.

Among the “angels” the Lord has sent her way are the churches across all four districts who responded to a recent appeal for donations of money, clothing and furnishings from the conference's Immigration Rapid Response Team. Now Cotto and her crew plan to start a tutoring ministry at St. Paul's in December to help the many young children who “are getting frustrated because

Continued on page 5--DOING JUSTICE



# True Justice: Seeking Equal Justice for People and Communities of Color

**A Film Showing, Discussion and Action Planning for Change: February 22, 2020 (Snow Date: February 29)**

**T** *True Justice: Bryan Stevenson's Fight for Equality* is an HBO documentary film about the lifesaving, life-changing crusade of Bryan Stevenson. Stevenson is a dedicated public defense attorney and the founder and Executive Director of the groundbreaking Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Ala.

Two Eastern PA Conference groups—the



Prison Ministries & Restorative Justice Team and the Commission on Religion & Race—will cosponsor a public showing of this compelling film, on Saturday, Feb. 22 (snow date: Feb. 29), 9 AM to 3 PM, at Cedarville UM, 1092 Laurelwood Rd, Pottstown, PA. Viewers will engage in brief discussion afterward and then hear from a panel of expert leaders who are working to foster racial justice in the criminal justice system.

Those leaders will then lead breakout groups where participants can learn more about challenging aspects of racial injustice in the legal system and how people of faith can proactively, creatively “do justice and love mercy” in response.

*True Justice* examines Bryan Stevenson's personal journey, as he labors to bring justice to wrongfully convicted and disadvantaged prison inmates. The film weaves together his own story, those of his clients, and a history of injustice and complicity in our justice system. As Stevenson reveals a troubling narrative of racial inequality still prevalent in this country, he challenges us to seek

the truth, confront it and work towards reconciliation.

## Topics for Discussion and Action Planning

Four topics for Discussion and Action Planning include:

- The Legal System and Returning Citizens
- The School to Prison Pipeline
- Unconscious Racial Bias against People of Color

- Communities of Color: Impact of Mass Incarceration

A \$10 donation is requested, and lunch is included. CEUs certification requested. For more information, visit the event webpage or contact Rev. Marilyn Schneider, Prison Ministries & Restorative Justice Team Chairperson, at 610-696 2663 or prisonministries@epaumc.org.

Please register online by **February 1, 2020**.



CONAM--Continued from page 4.

greenhouse to raise plants year-round.

Hill and his helpers also provide one-day veterinary clinics, where neighbors can bring their animals for diagnosis, treatment and vaccination. And they provide equestrian training to teach horse riding, grooming and other skills.

Hill works hard to teach church members servant discipleship and “to build up the body of Christ.” BUMP now has 30 lay servants and two licensed local pastors. In fact, Rayola Running Crane, who received CONAM's scholarship, and Gail Hoyt are the first Blackfeet licensed local pastors. Both are assigned to churches, relieving Hill of having to make the 148-mile drive there each Sunday.

Wack and Hinderliter attended BUMP's lively annual camp meeting during their visit. The festive event drew guests from near and far (including Calgary, Canada) for worship and fellowship over meals from Thursday evening to Sunday morning. Highlights included a potluck dinner, preaching, testimonies, hymn-singing and a musical jam



Dignity Statue in Chamberlain, South Dakota

session joined by Hinderliter on guitar.

In addition, Wack's travelogue included photos of fascinating sights on their journey there and back, including Little Big Horn, Glacier National Park, the Crazy Horse memorial mountain sculpture, the popular Devil's Tower and the towering sculpture of a Native woman titled the Dignity Statue.

“It was a great trip,” said Wack. “We saw a lot, became reacquainted with old

friends and made some new ones. It was definitely an inspiration for me.”

*Note: All photos and information in this story about Rev. Calvin Hill and BUMP's ministry was provided by Sherry Wack in her PowerPoint script.*



Glacier National Park

DOING JUSTICE--Continued from page 4.

they do not understand enough English, even though they go to ESL class. They are not producing, and I am getting calls from teachers about them.”

Cotto and her helpers get calls regularly from teachers and school administrators, employers, landlords, community leaders, church members and constituents. Those calls—either about problems, needs or potential solutions—are really about doing justice

and loving mercy for the neighbors she and others strive daily to serve. And her the motivation is simple: because she is their pastor.

*Learn—and please share with us—more information about United Methodist churches and groups reaching out to “do justice and love mercy” among the sojourners arriving in our communities from distant lands. Read and contribute to ongoing coverage on our website and various NEWSpirit publications.*



## Hearing a young mother's plea for mercy

The Rev. Evodia Villalvia, pastor of El Buen Samaritano UMC in West Chester, sought help in October for one of her members, a young Latina immigrant mother whose husband had been detained and then deported back to Honduras. “Isabella” and her husband came to the U.S. with their young son in 2013, escaping gang violence that threatened their son's life. She then gave birth to a daughter, got a job, joined the church and was given three years to seek asylum. But her work permit expired, and she recently was denied asylum. Thus, she may be deported at any time.

Villalvia sought help from West Chester UMC, El Buen Samaritano's partner church, and from South District Superintendent, the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm. Isabella shared her story with Bishop Peggy Johnson and the Rev. Luky Cotto, Latino Ministries Coordinator and pastor of the Casa del Pueblo ministry in Hatboro. Local immigration attorneys and Casa del Pueblo's part-time attorney were unable to help Isabella under current political conditions, with a broken immigration justice system. But both churches are helping her with food and other basic necessities, plus English lessons.

“It is quite sad that there seems to be nothing that can be done legally at this time,” said the Rev. Molly Dee Rounsley, West Chester UMC's Associate Pastor. Pictured here after the meeting are (from right) Taylor-Storm, Rounsley, Villalvia, Cotto, Bishop Johnson, who wrote about Isabella's ordeal in her Bishop's Blog (“Via Dolorosa”), and Luis Castillo, a translator. *John Coleman photo*



# Recent Conference events address matters of the head and heart

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

The Eastern PA Conference was bustling with conference-wide events from September through November, filling many weekends and some weekdays with rich learning opportunities to resource leaders and ministries and even to offer some fun and fellowship. Training event topics—addressing matters of the head and heart—ranged from preventing domestic violence to using emotional intelligence, from ministering to veterans and families struggling with the wounds of war, to leading churches in the midst of conflict.

Even with so much learning going on, our “fall semester”—unlike real school—began with recess. About a hundred members, families and guests converged on Camp Innabah Sept. 7 to enjoy food, fun and fellowship and great, soul-stirring music at the multicultural **Celebrating Our Cultures** picnic. The event was so popular that the sponsoring Commission on Religion and Race plans to offer an encore next Sept. 12.

That same weekend our Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM) cosponsored **Camping at the Crossroads**, a youth ministry retreat hosted by Covenant UMC of Moore Township in Bath. With plenty of inspiring music and messages, it was a festival, a rally and a retreat, all rolled into one, to reach youth and young adults for Christ. One great outcome is that several North District participants have now joined the CCYM and attended its Nov. 23 meeting with other new and old members to help plan its 2020 events.

The last two Saturdays in September offered Hopewell UMC’s annual **Planting Seeds for Ministry Growth** event, Sept. 21, and **Domestic Violence, the Church Responds II**, Sept. 28, hosted at Simpson House.

Planting Seeds’ keynote presenter, Jen Hatmaker, inspired a roomful of her fans and online followers, plus others perhaps unfamiliar with her. The popular author, speaker and blogger who co-leads a new church with her husband in Austin, Texas, enthralled listeners with her humorous but hard-won wisdom about leading church folks through transformation “when things get tough.”

When asked what she saw as the most urgent

problem in our society today, Hatmaker surprised many in the mostly white audience when she spoke with impassioned honesty and humility about the problem of racism.

The second annual Domestic Violence seminar, sponsored by the conference DV Committee, focused this year on the errant socialization of boys and men that often causes misguided, disrespectful and even abusive masculine attitudes and behaviors toward women. The Rev. Rickie Houston, a pastor, father and trainer with A CALL TO MEN, keyed the event and joined other specialists and workshop leaders in a candid panel discussion.

The **Leadership Launch Workshop**, Oct. 5, sought to help a roomful of leaders at all levels—from conference to congregation—answer the burning question “How churches can form and mobilize vital, visionary leadership teams to launch into bold, life-changing and church-changing ministries?”

The Rev. Jacqui King, of the UMC’s Discipleship Ministries agency, an enthusiastic, enjoyable, expert in leadership development, took her audience on a full-day “leadership training adventure” at Quakertown UMC. She focused their attention on three keys for a successful leadership launch: clear, realistic goals; a courageous faith; and effective teamwork.

Those same keys, among others, were emphasized two weeks later by a procession of visionary clergy presenters at **HOPE! Talks 2.0: ReBoot!**, Oct. 19. Hosted again by Lighthouse Fellowship in Glenside, it was an encore of last year’s much-appreciated sharing of best ministry practices among a collection of stories and strategies to inspire among small but vital churches.

**Churches as First Responders to the Military and Veteran Population**, Nov. 13, was a half-day seminar for clergy and laity hosted by First UMC Phoenixville and sponsored by the Office of Connectional Ministries and the Committee on Disabilities Concerns. It was led by the Revs. Will Barnes and Wanda Sevey, clinicians trained in marriage and family therapy with experience in teaching students and working with military service personnel and their families.

While it deserved a larger audience, those attending learned to recognize the many possible needs and problems that military and veteran congregants and their families face. They learned about military culture and its impact on families and how churches and pastors can minister to those suffering from PTSD and moral injury (an emotional injury to one’s “moral conscience and values resulting from an act of perceived moral transgression”).

**Emotional Intelligence & You!—Jesus’ Approach**, Nov. 16, hosted by Bethel UMC in Spring City, taught mental and relational skills innate to everyone and important for every church. EQ impacts communication, teamwork and conflict management. And it can create an inclusive, welcoming environment, especially where the gift of human diversity exists.

It’s about how to “know thyself,” by



At the **Leadership Launch** training event, Oct. 5, the Rev. Jacqui King teaches church and conference leaders how to build and motivate teams to launch bold, life-changing and church-changing ministries.

being fully aware of oneself and fully present in relating to others. That includes recognizing and addressing true emotional needs and motivations for behaviors. And according to the Revs. Anita Powell and David Piltz, who co-taught the session, there was no one who did it better than Jesus Christ. The workshop provided insight into Jesus’ approach to managing conflict, creating believers, and teaching others about living life with God at the center.

There were certainly more conference teaching and training events over this last quarter of 2019—including:

- Claiming Sabbath for Clergy Spouses, Sept. 21
- Basic Sexual Ethics, Oct. 12
- Changing Racism, Oct. 18-20, and
- Elders Day Apart with Bishop Johnson, Nov. 20.



The Rev. Rickie Houston, of A CALL TO MEN, keynote the conference’s second annual **Domestic Violence Seminar**, Sept. 28, organized by the DV Committee, including the Rev. Jacqueline Hines, chair, and UM Men’s President Clifton Hubbard. The Rev. David Piltz was one of four workshop leaders.



The Revs. Will Barnes and Wanda Sevey led **Churches as First Responders to the Military and Veteran Population**, Nov. 13, a seminar for clergy and laity on recognizing and responding to the needs of military personnel and families.





The Conference Council on Youth Ministries, including new members and adult youth leaders, met Nov. 23, welcoming members from all four districts for the first time. The group discussed implicit racial bias, part of its ongoing focus on race, culture, racism and reconciliation. Members also began planning their **2020 Youth Rally** March 28 and selected two youth to represent them at the 2020 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.



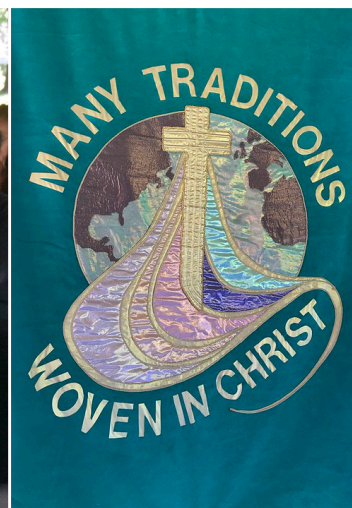
The Rev. Anita Powell (standing) and the Rev. David Piltz (seated, far right) led **Emotional Intelligence & You!—Jesus' Approach**, Nov. 16, teaching mental and relational skills innate to everyone and important for every church.



Following spirited singing to warm up the atmosphere, the **HOPE! Talks 2.0: ReBoot!**, got underway, featuring 10 pastors—including the Revs. Elena Ortiz (left) and Steve Pittman—each of who shared best ministry practices and a collection of stories and strategies to inspire members of small but vital churches.



At Hopewell UMC's **Planting Seeds for Ministry Growth**, Sept. 21, keynoter Jen Hatmaker (bottom, right) inspired a roomful of her fans and online followers, including Hopewell's pastor the Rev. May Banka, who shared the stage with her for a Q & A session. The music was as stirring as Hatmaker's surprising answers to some questions; but so was the always dynamic seminary teacher, writer and speaker the Rev. Tony Campolo, who preached at the evening worship service.



About a hundred members, families and guests converged on Camp Innabah Sept. 7 to enjoy diverse foods, fun and fellowship among families and friends, and soul-stirring music at the multicultural **Celebrating Our Cultures** picnic. Music was offered by the Revs. Irving Cotto and Lydia Munoz, the Philadelphia UMC Mass Choir and the Deaf Choir from Grace UMC. The Commission on Religion and Race plans to offer an encore of this event next Sept. 12.



# Newly chartered NorthStar UMC leads the way

BY JOHN W. COLEMAN

**“G**od has touched my life through this church,” said teenager Austin Boettlin, sharing how his life has changed during his five years at NorthStar United Methodist Church in Reading. He told the congregation about finding love and acceptance, friendship and enjoyment in the church’s youth fellowship, “a connection with people my age that I didn’t have anywhere else.”

He also credited mission trips with teaching him how deeply gratifying helping others can be. “Every mission trip dramatically changes me for the better,” he said. “I get to help other people, and in return, I learn to get closer to God... I feel that God is telling me to trust Him, and He can lead me to amazing places.”

Austin’s testimony was one of three shared with the NorthStar congregation during its chartering service on Sunday, Sept. 22. As Bishop Peggy Johnson pronounced it an official church of the Eastern PA Conference, the Rev. Wendy Orzolek, pastor, welcomed 51 members of the 10-year-old congregation who signed membership covenants. They join 29 others who became members earlier through confirmation.

## ‘We felt so welcomed’

Tracy Rudolph received a postcard inviting her family to the new church’s Christmas Eve service nearly a decade ago. “We felt so welcomed that evening that we decided to go back in January. We again felt welcomed and began to regularly attend the monthly services.”

Soon, her son Bryan, then a very shy 7th-grader, began singing with the worship team. “We started to see God working in him,” Tracy recalls. “He was beginning to gain more confidence in himself and started to look more comfortable in front of people. The following school year, he auditioned for the junior high musical and was given a part in the show. Before we knew it, Bryan had made some very close friends. Being on the worship team really helped him discover the gifts God has given him.”

Now in college, Bryan has led worship and joined mission teams, thanks to the

discipleship influence of his beloved church.

NorthStar has met for 9 years in the cafeteria of Exeter Township Junior High School, where Orzolek was once a student. Volunteers, known as “roadies,” arrive at 7:30 each Sunday morning to set up the altar, instruments tables, chairs and other furnishings, while the praise team rehearses and others make coffee, arrange breakfast treats and set out information materials. After the roughly one-hour service, they break it all down and the roadies load everything back into the truck until the next Sunday.

## ‘Meeting people where they are’

“Only about 25 percent of our congregation have been regularly involved in church as adults,” said Orzolek. The others were previously not connected to any church, and some of them had never attended a church.”

“We focus on meeting people where they are,” she explained. “We look at the people God has led to this church and ask what their needs are and how the gospel can speak to what matters to them. People are worried about paying their bills or their children making poor choices, or how to be a good parent, or they feel lonely or are concerned about their future. Everybody has something.”

“The gospel message is relevant to all of these concerns, but people often don’t make that connection,” Orzolek said. “That is especially true for people who haven’t been involved in church in the past. So we are very intentional about making the gospel relevant and about practical applications of the Bible, which was also a hallmark of John Wesley. This comes through in the sermons as well as the ways we serve in the community and the ministries in the church.”

Dealing with family tragedy and illness, Carol Fritz and her family found the loving support and faithful friendship they needed at NorthStar UMC 10 years ago. They first encountered Pastor Wendy and “those very smiley people” at community celebration events, where church members were cheerfully inviting passers-by to play games and offering to take family photos.

Then she kept seeing Wendy “everywhere” in the community. So she and her family visited the church—their first in many years. “I cried through the entire service. It was so moving and like nothing I had ever experienced in a church before,” Fritz recalled. They

were so inspired by the worship, the come-as-you-are hospitality and genuine friendship they discovered there that they returned and finally joined.

“NorthStar isn’t a once-a-week church,” said Fritz, for whom the church and its pastor have been present for prayer before surgeries, a wedding and other key moments. “It’s family.” That truth comes across clearly in the fun, upbeat, heart-touching music video members enjoyed seeing themselves in as part of their chartering celebration.

“We have prioritized being a blessing to our community, the school we meet in, and everyone we come into contact with from the very beginning,” said Orzolek. “So it is part of our DNA. I think that has been a major factor in our growth and has helped shape who we are.”

Having members previously uninvolved in church “has pushed us to look at growth and discipleship from different angles,” Orzolek explained. “Rather than have the primary focus on what happens on Sunday morning worship attendance, which is still important, we look at engagement—how people taking steps to become more involved in ministry.”

## ‘We look at each step as a win’

That includes service opportunities, small groups, ministries with children and youth, or community outreach events, especially for members with busy lives and active families that can limit their church attendance. “We look at each step that a person takes as a ‘win’ and try to be patient,” said the pastor, “remembering that we are there to provide opportunities and encouragement and support, but it is the Holy Spirit who causes the growth.”

Orzolek, who is thankful for the support of her own family—her husband Bob and son Sam—in NorthStar’s growing ministry, is looking at ways to also facilitate spiritual growth outside of Sunday mornings. “We are experimenting with providing tools for parents to have faith conversations with their children while they are driving to a sporting event on a Sunday morning,” she said, “as well as having videoconference Bible studies which allows adults who are already time-strapped to participate without the extra stress of one more place to be at a certain time.”

But Sunday worship is still central to many members’ spiritual lives and their best chance to enjoy face-to-face fellowship with their church family. There they learn lessons of grace and discipleship that can guide their lives, much like the celestial North Star that has served that purpose for many travelers through the ages.

“I look at all the people I didn’t even know 10 years ago...and I am reminded

of God’s faithfulness,” said Orzolek, who may have appreciated the testimonies during the chartering service more than anything. “I loved hearing the stories about how God has used this church to bring hope and new life to so many.”

“I think it is a good springboard to intentional discussions about what God is calling us to next.”



## In Memoriam

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

### Mrs. Marian B. Adams

Mrs. Marian B. Adams, surviving spouse of The Rev. Lee F. Adams, Sr., died on November 6, 2019.

The Rev. Lee F. Adams, Sr. was a full member who died in 2005. He served the following Eastern PA Conference churches: Harmony, Geigertown: St. Paul’s, Temple, Cedarville, Lehigh: Wesley, Parryville, Slatedale: Salem, Schuylkill Haven: First, Scottsville, Philadelphia: Trinity (Cheltenham), Narberth, Reading: Windsor Street, and Birdsboro: Christ.

Expressions of Sympathy may be sent to her surviving family, to the attention of The Rev. and Mrs. Lee F. Adams, Jr., at 56 Indian Trail, Jim Thorpe, PA 18229.

### Mrs. Harriet Ranck

Mrs. Harriet Ranck, surviving spouse of The Rev. John Allan Ranck, died on October 16, 2019.

Rev. Ranck retired in 1977, and died in 1979. His Extension Ministry service record shows: Denominational Director of Young People’s Work; National Council of Churches, Associate General Secretary; and National Council of Churches, Associate Director, Commission on Stewardship.

Harriet is survived by her brother Henry M. Spangler, and three nieces. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, 10 Delp Road, Lancaster, PA 17601.

### Mrs. Greer Sims

Mrs. Greer Sims, Eastern PA Conference Retired Staff member, died on November 6, 2019. She is survived by her daughter Linnette Johnson.

