

"Write the vision clearly on the tablets, that one may read it on the run." - Habakkuk

THE VISION

The Newspaper
of the New York
Annual Conference
of The United
Methodist Church

December 16, 2011

Occupy Advent, Occupy Shalom—Transform the World

BY MELISSA HINNEN
Church of the Village

A spirit of Shalom spread through Zuccotti Park in downtown New York City on Sunday, Dec 4, as United Methodist leaders spoke out on issues of economic justice and lifted up messages of hope. Hosted by Communities of Shalom, the Occupy Advent prayer and protest included guest preachers Bishop Jeremiah J. Park and Bishop Alfred Johnson, senior pastor at the Church of the Village. Civil rights activist, Rev. Jesse Jackson made a surprise appearance and spoke to the more than 100 people who had gathered.

"Thanks to Occupy Wall Street, we are being reminded that unless we are looking out for the poorest among us, we are not being faithful to our God," proclaimed Bishop Park. "If we are not in the hope-giving business to the marginalized among us, our business model is all wrong!"

Zuccotti Park is the staging area for Occupy Wall Street, a movement for economic justice that began on September 17. Hundreds of occupiers camped out in the park for nearly two months until the city evicted them. Following the eviction, a number of churches stepped in to offer housing to those who were displaced. The occupy movement has sparked protests around the country, and while few people spend the night in Zuccotti Park, Occupy Wall Street continues to grow in new ways. Working groups meet regularly in the park and in the surrounding area and protest activities continue to develop around the city.



PHOTO BY MELISSA HINNEN

Rev. Jesse Jackson, left, was an unexpected visitor to the Occupy Advent prayer service where Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, center, and Bishop Alfred Johnson spoke.

According to Rev. Michael Christensen who leads Communities of Shalom, the faith leaders who gathered stand in solidarity with those who are addressing the systems and principalities

that "enrich the few at the expense of the many." He continued, "We are here today—occupiers and allies—together proclaiming that a new

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1/1/2012: Insurance Program Termination

Letters explaining the change were sent to each participating church in early July. For additional details, go to: <http://www.nyac.com/pages/detail/1514>.

January–May: Permaculture Design Course

Tune your design skills within a permaculture learning community one weekend a month for 5 months. Dates are January 14–16, February 25–26, March 31–April 1, April 21–22, and May 18–20 at the Green Phoenix Permaculture site at Camp Epworth in High Falls, N.Y. Tuition ranges from \$900 to \$1500 and includes accommodation. For more information, or to register, contact Joan via email at: mamajoane@yahoo.com, or call, 845-687-7646.

1/7–3/31: NY/CT Lay Speaking Ministry

Classes are being offered on seven Saturdays at Jesse Lee Memorial UMC, in Ridgefield, Conn. Details at: <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/3631>. To register contact Elaine Winward, director of lay speaking ministry for NY/CT, at ewinward@optonline.net, or 914 669-5264.

1/15: America's Sunday Supper

Churches are invited to participate in a community-by-community, nationwide conversation about our most pressing social issues in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This is an opportunity for individuals to reach out to new persons and build community over a shared meal. United Methodist Communications has teamed up with HandsOn Network and Points of Light Institute to offer America's Sunday Supper as a Rethink Church Event—providing a model to honor both Human Relations Day and Dr. Martin Luther King's life. UMCCom has created several free resources to make it easy to host a supper. These resources include downloadable films for focused discussion and a toolkit to help plan and execute a meaningful event. For free planning resources and to register to participate visit www.sundaysupperumc.org.

1/17–19: Bishop's Convocation

Dr. Bob Farr, director of congregational excellence for the Missouri Annual Conference, and author of "Renovate or Die: Ten Ways to Focus Your Church on Mission" will be the guest speaker at the next Bishop's Convocation for clergy and spouses. New location is the Villa Roma Resort & Conference Center in Callicoon, N.Y. <http://www.villaroma.com/>. To register, go to: <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/3508>.

1/20-22: IGNITE 2012

Group registration is now open for "Raising the Belief," a weekend event for all teenagers in the NYAC at the Taconic Retreat and Conference Center. Per person cost is \$179 and covers housing, five meals, and a T-shirt. Features the HYPE praise band and special guest speaker, Pastor Emily Peck-McClain. For more information and to register, go to: <http://umyouth.com>.

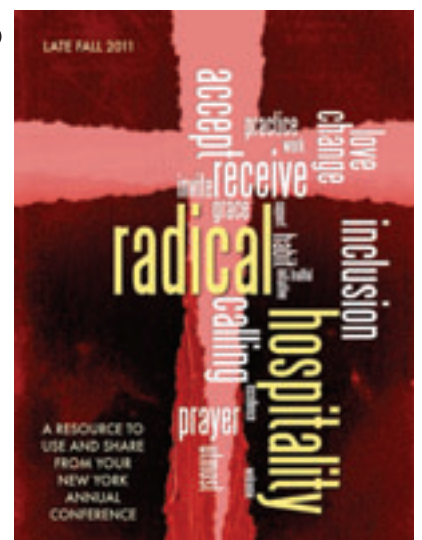
2/23–26: Prayer Retreat

"Prayer: Holy Conversations With God" offers an opportunity to set-aside time for exploration of the many ways to connect with God through a prayerful heart. Methods used will include, *lectio divina* with nature, body awareness prayer, centering prayer and meditation. The retreat also delves into the significance of places of prayer, using art-making to hear God, and how we image God. It will be a time not only to pray, but also to investigate questions about prayer.

In addition to group learning experiences, time will be set aside for worship, individual reflection, labyrinth walking and meditative reading and music at the Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville, Tenn. For more info or to register, go to: www.scarrittbennett.org/programs/pr.aspx.

Moving To 'Radical'

Be on the lookout for the "Radical Hospitality" magazines that will be delivered to all of the churches in the NYAC before Christmas. The magazine offers 20 pages of ideas on how to increase your congregation's welcoming and hospitality skills—from greeting visitors, offering gluten-free communion and reaching out with social media. Each church will be receiving five copies and can request more through the Office of Connectional Ministries.



The Vision

The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church

Bishop: Jeremiah J. Park

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Sept. 5, 2011: Outside Prattsville UMC

Lines Written at the Cleanup From Hurricane Irene

BY DEREK FURR

The Scoharie filled the church basement with mud and eels,
Submerged the pews and rose to the sills of the stained-glass windows,
Seeped into the fire-proof safe, defaced its contents,
The traces of a past.

As if to go the creek one better,
After the flood we tore out the sheetrock, but with heart and design.
We wore dust masks, swung crow bars, and joked,
“There’s nothing stashed in the walls, no silver dollars
Skimmed from the offering, no relics of Methodist martyrs
Or Presbyterian heretics.”

From the basement
Emerged the wise men, soiled but salvageable.
When there’s a lawn again, they’ll re-attend the nativity,
Pending the recovery of a Christ child.

Derek Furr and his family recently helped in the recovery efforts at Lexington Westkill UMC in Lexington, N.Y. He is a poet, who teaches in the literature program at Bard College. Furr is also pianist and chair of church council at Clinton Avenue United Methodist Church in Kingston.

Irene Recovery Needs Your Gifts

As winter settles into our region, there is still much work that can be done in the Catskill Hudson district to help in the recovery from Hurricane Irene. In this season of giving, let us generously offer our time, talents and resources to aid the people in these devastated communities.

TO DONATE

Online at: <http://nyac.com/registrations/register/46>.

Via check: Make checks payable to NYAC with “Irene Relief” on memo line, and mail to: New York Annual Conference, Attn: Fran Collins, 20 Soundview Ave, White Plains, NY 10606.

TO VOLUNTEER

1. Each team leader, or individual should complete an online registration, which is available at: <http://nyac.com/registrations/register/49>. If you are unable to complete the online form, please call 914-615-2226.
2. Also complete a medical and liability release form for each person at: <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1791>. Email, fax, or mail the medical and liability release form(s) to the NYAC Disaster Office:
Email: nyacdisaster@gmail.com.
Fax: 914-615-2244
Address: NYAC, 20 Soundview Ave., White Plains, NY 10606 /
Attn: Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie

For those coming from outside of the New York Annual Conference, the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) offers optional insurance coverage for all of our volunteers. The cost is \$.75 per person, per day. If you and/or your team are interested in this insurance please complete the GBGM form found at <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1791> and mail it with payment to the GBGM address listed on the form.

BASIC ERT TRAINING

(Required for all disaster response volunteers)

Dec. 15 & 16, 6–10 p.m.
Butler Memorial UMC, 3920 Paulding Ave. Bronx, NY
10466 / 718-653-0358
Instructor: Claris Skerritt
\$10 for Safe Sanctuary background check

Dec. 17, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
New Paltz UMC, 1 Grove St. New Paltz, NY 12561 /
845-255-5210
Instructor: Art Mellor
\$10 for Safe Sanctuary background check

Occupy Advent, Occupy Shalom—Transform the World

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world is possible, a new world is coming, a new world of Shalom!”

Bishop Johnson is encouraged by the goals of the Occupy movement, and has been preaching an Advent series at the Church of the Village called “Occupy Christmas.” Reflecting on the afternoon, Bishop Johnson said, “The occupation, particularly for people of faith, is a sign of a journey. The real destination is Shalom, God’s Shalom in Jesus that is born at Christmas.”

Framing his remarks around the prophet Jeremiah’s words, Bishop Park assured the group that God’s plan for them is one of hope and shalom. “I call upon our church to be a house of hope. I call upon our people to be agents of hope.”

Proclaiming that it is wrong for people to have to make a choice between food and medication, Bishop Park passionately addressed issues of economic justice.

“Something is seriously wrong in America with the way we’ve been doing economics and life. And, as usual, those with the least are suffering the most . . . The economic system that feeds and satisfies the untamed greed of the most powerful who possess the most resources so that the richest get richer, while the poor stay poor and the middle are squeezed, is not God’s plan. A future with hope! That’s God’s plan for all of us. When hope is missing, we have the God given right to demand it.”

He reminded the gathering that John Wesley said there is no holiness but social holiness. Wesley was known for occupying the streets of London to serve those who are poor.

“A movement called Methodism was born to offer new life and hope to people of all ages and stations . . . What’s social religion all about? A religion that brings hope to everyone. What’s social holiness all about? A holiness that brings hope to all people, particularly to the most underprivileged.”

Bishop Park prayerfully closed his remarks saying, “We are waiting for the One who is the Healer of our brokenness, the Prince of shalom, and Hope of the world. Come to us until hope occupies our hearts, our wills, and our streets. Amen.”

About halfway through the hourlong service, Rev. Jackson made an unexpected visit. He was quickly invited to address the group. Rev. Tanya Linn Bennett, the chaplain at Drew University, commented, “It was nice to see him come and stand with the people and speak a word of truth and justice.”

Jackson spoke of Martin Luther King Jr. as a model for seeking justice. “His last plan was



ABOVE: Rev. Vicki Flippin, second from left, joins the crowd in prayer. **LEFT:** Rev. Dr. Michael Christensen, international director of the Communities of Shalom, speaks to the 100 people who were gathered for the service. Communities of Shalom is housed at Drew University in Madison, N.J.

to come to Washington and occupy the Mall . . . challenging our nation to choose the war on poverty and healing at home rather than the war on Vietnam and killing abroad.”

In his address, Bishop Johnson engaged the Advent message of occupation, “right in the middle of a matrix of mighty military and conspiring religious institutional power, the interrupting Word of God occupied John the Baptist, who occupied the wilderness with words that occupied and even overflowed into the public and political economy of that day, and declared, a change is gonna come! God’s change of justice and fairness for all.”

He concluded his message; “God will send us where God will send us. And we’ll do more than occupy the space—we’ll transform the space with peace and justice—where everybody

is welcome and everybody has food . . . and everybody can say hallelujah together.”

Following the service, Christensen reflected in his blog: “I think it was a powerful and prophetic witness to those who did not expect the Church to occupy Zuccotti Park for prayer and protest, for Christian clergy to call for a separation of Corporation and State, or for Jesus to be identified so closely with the 99%!”

The service was held as part of Occupy Faith, a multi-faith coalition of more than 1,400 people who support Occupy Wall Street. Worship services are held every Sunday at 3:30 pm in Zuccotti Park. All are welcome to attend. Congregations and other groups who are interested in leading an Occupy Faith service or related activities may contact: occupyfaith@gmail.com.



UM Men Light Up New Milford

When you need a little help setting up the Christmas tree, you would do well to call upon the expertise of the United Methodist Men of New Milford, Conn. For years, the men's group has been raising funds for and installing the trees for the annual Festival of the Lights on the village green. This year marks the 45th year for the celebration, which kicked off with the tree lighting on November 26. In what's become a multi-generational labor of love, the dedicated group of church volunteers donate their time and effort to cut the trees down, set them up, string wires and multicolored lights—and then take it all down again.

Funds Available for Summer Programs

The United Methodist City Society is soliciting applications for 2012 funding of summer day camps and Vacation Bible School programs.

When preparing your proposal, please note the following guidelines and restrictions:

- All summer programs must be at least four weeks in length;
- All programs must submit a proposal (minimum four pages);
- Programs that were funded in 2011, but

did not submit their final report forms are not eligible for funding this year; and

- Any program that was granted an award in 2010 and 2011 but canceled the program both years will not be eligible for funding until 2014

There are limited funds available so the UMCS asks that those who apply have no other way to fund their programs. The support is intended for those churches most in need of funds. All proposals are due by 4 p.m., March 1,

2012.

If you have any questions or would like assistance with your proposal, email Director of Children's Programs Aisha Campbell, at acampbell@umcitysociety.org, or call 212-870-3084, ext. 6.

If you or your congregation would like to support this or other work of the United Methodist City Society, send your donation to: UMCS, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 1922, New York, NY 10115



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

The stage in the conference's Learning Center is filled with a display of Nativity scenes created by Lynda Gomi. Stop by the White Plains center to view this incredible array of figurines made from wood, ceramics, and FABRIC.

Celebrating Laity: Hispanic-Latino Style

In an article celebrating Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month, Rev. Liano Perez Feliz, pastor of Bethlehem United Methodist Church in Clarksville, Tenn., said, "In our Hispanic-Latino countries, every day is a celebration of our respective cultural heritages. We live daily the richness of our countries and our history, our customs, the concept of unity in the family, and everything that is part of our daily lives."



On Sunday, October 16, I ventured to Iglesia Metodista Unida Nueva Jerusalem in Brooklyn and got a glimpse into the richness of the culture of our Hispanic brothers and sisters. I joined them in worship in the annual celebration for Domingo del Laicado, (Laity Sunday). Rev. Milagros Solorzano is the pastor there.

I was warmly greeted by members who had gathered from Hispanic-Latino congregations from all over the conference and beyond. Clergy and laity came from all five boroughs, Westchester and Connecticut. There were visitors from Mexico, Puerto Rico and Florida as well.

There was an unmistakable joy among the worshippers as they gathered—hugging, kissing



Lay members from each of the participating churches were escorted to the front by their pastors for recognition.

and greeting each other. The sanctuary was packed to capacity by the time the service began at 4 p.m. The singing led by Director of Music, Frank Colon, was accompanied by drums, guitar and keyboard. Worshippers lifted their hands and voices in praise to God as they sang, "Solo tu eres Santo." Karina Feliz gave the message, 'Representante de amor: Siervos de Cristo.' She reminded us that God's gifts to us are for the common good to be used for the fortifying of the church. One person does not receive all the gifts

because the church is a body. She underscored that more excellent way in using our gifts: love.

A layperson from each church was recognized, and accompanied by their pastor they each came forward to appreciative applause.

Rev. Magaly Beltre, newly retired, gave a passionate and informative presentation about the denomination's Call to Action. I had an opportunity to speak about that as well, thanks to Rev. Arturo Maine, Hispanic/Latino consultant

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"All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing..."

—Colossians 1:6

Park Tapped to Serve UMC Mongolian Mission

December 1, 2011

Dear United Methodists of the New York Annual Conference:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer, the Prince of shalom, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world!

I am writing to share with you that I have been assigned by the Council of Bishops to serve as the first presiding bishop of the Mongolian Mission of the United Methodist Church. As you may know, bishops of our church, in addition to the residential responsibilities, share in oversight of our work within the United States and around the world. For example, I have been assigned for several years as presiding bishop of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Korean-American Mission. I anticipate that I will travel to Mongolia once a year to conduct an annual meeting and to supervise, support and strengthen the mission of our church in that part of the world in collaboration with the General Board of Global Ministries.

Mongolia lies between China and Russia in northern Asia. It is slightly smaller than Alaska and is a nation of vast semi desert and desert plains. With a population of 3.1 million, Mongolia won its independence from China in 1921. It has been a democracy since the fall of communism in 1990. The capital of Mongolia is Ulaanbaatar, a city of nearly one million people.

It is estimated that there are approximately 40,000 Christians in Mongolia. The majority religion is Buddhism. United Methodist mission work began in 2001. In 2002, the first United Methodist missionary,

Helen Sheperd, arrived to start a hospice in the extremely poor area of Ulaanbaatar. Initial support came largely from Korean United Methodists and the North Georgia Annual Conference. Currently, there are 4 full time missionaries in residence and 6 United Methodist congregations. There are two mission centers which host classes for children, youth and adults (computer, language, cooking, recreational activities and music programs, as well as bible studies and small group ministries), senior citizens' fellowship, and meals for the homeless.

Mongolia is a nation undergoing rapid social and economic changes, and church leaders are finding a people longing for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am thrilled to be part of this effort, and ask you to pray for our missionaries and the people of Mongolia. I also covet your prayers for me. I believe that Mongolian United Methodists and New York Conference United Methodists can be a blessing to each other, and I look forward to being part of what God has in store for all of us for the sake of our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

I pray that God will bless each of you and your churches in this season of Advent in which we prepare to receive again our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ.

In Christ,
Jeremiah J. Park

For more information about the Mongolian Mission, got to:

<http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/work/initiatives/mongolia/>.

Young Missionaries, Interns Sought

For 60 years, Global Ministries has been sending young people into service. Through the US-2 and mission intern programs, the lives of thousands of young men and women have been enriched, and through their witness touched uncountable youth, adults, and communities. The US-2 and mission intern programs develop church leaders, as young people work in communities that face issues such as poverty, racism, or environmental justice.

US-2s serve two years living out faith through social justice in the United States. They live, work, and make a positive impact working with a United Methodist partner organization, boldly reexamining their role and participation in society to address systemic injustice. Mission interns integrate the global and local by serving for three years, approximately half of the time in an international community and half in their home country. They respond to the prophetic voice of communities and individuals working for systemic change around the world, walking the path of justice, mercy, and love.

The deadline for the 2012 class of mission interns and US-2s is February 5; the application is available here: <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/connections/youth/applications/>.

Brinna Koltitz, who grew up in the New Milford (Conn.) UMC, is currently serving as a US-2 missionary. She works as a specialist with Family Support Network in Billings, Mont. Check out her blog at: <http://koltitzb.wordpress.com/>. You can help support Koltitz by going to www.advancinghope.org, and clicking on the box on the right hand side that says "Give now to The Advance of your choice." Type in 3021354 into the "Find project" field and click search, then click on Koltitz's name.

United Methodists Score In Favorability

About 62 percent of adult Americans have a favorable impression of United Methodists. That's according to a new survey from LifeWay Research that looks at perceptions of faith groups among adults in the U.S.

United Methodists had the highest percentage of favorable impressions among the faith groups included in the survey—Roman Catholics, Southern Baptists, United Methodists, Mormons, and Muslims—with 15 percent of respondents reporting very favorable impressions and 47 percent reporting somewhat favorable.

United Methodists also had the lowest percentage of unfavorable impressions: only 23 percent compared to 38 percent for Roman Catholics, 40 percent for Southern Baptists, 52 percent for Mormons, and 63 percent for Muslims.

Americans in the West and Northeast were most likely to be not familiar with United Methodists. Americans who never attend a worship service are the least likely to have a favorable opinion and the most likely to have a very unfavorable opinion.

Support for the Kims

Rev. Eumin Kim and his wife, Prumeh, of the New York Annual Conference, are serving as UMC missionaries in Kazakhstan. Donations can be made through Global Ministries Online System; Rev. Kim's Advance number is #3021370; Prumeh Lee Kim's is #3021369. Go to: <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/give/missionaries/> for more information.



Floral Park Earns Scouting Award

Rev. Gainus Sikes, center, receives the "Shepard Church Charter Recognition" from NYAC Scouting Coordinator Greg Holder, right, for the work being done in the scouting ministry at Floral Park UMC. At left is Doug Nicholson, NYAC-UMM Executive Committee and a former member of Troop 4 at FPUMC.

Teaching Your Child to Be Cheerful Giver

At this time of year, our thoughts turn toward giving. Is your family looking for something or some way to "give" to others this season? This is the perfect time of year for random acts of kindness.

Consider teaching your children how to give of their time, talent or treasure to those less fortunate than themselves. "You will feel great about yourself when you give of yourself to someone else," said Don Bader, Girls and Boys Town Community Service Coordinator.

Here are some tips:

Role model. Be a model of giving so your children to be excited about helping others. Discuss and demonstrate sharing financial and material gifts both inside and outside the family.

Be a cheerful giver. Be enthusiastic about giving. Don't make it seem like a challenge. Seek out opportunities families can engage in together.

Make giving a habit. Make a plan for yearlong giving so the act of giving and thinking of others becomes a habit for children. If something becomes a habit when one is young, it is more likely to be practiced throughout life.

Praise children. Make sure to notice and effectively praise children for giving. In time



they will give, not because they receive notice, but because they are internally motivated to do the right thing.

Donate goods. Giving does not always mean opening your checkbook. Giving often comes in the form of time and talent, not always treasure. Kids can donate books, toys, clothes, etc. Host a party where you ask guests to contribute food or a gift for those in need.

Consider volunteering. Volunteering has a financial impact on an organization as well and can have a big effect on kids. Once they see smiles on the faces of those they have helped, they will also smile. Develop an attitude of gratitude by helping others.

At the Children's Home we believe "every child deserves a safe place." For more information on the Children's Home, call 800-772-6904, ext. 131, or visit the web site at www.chowc.org. Please feel free to send donations directly, or use our New York Conference Advance number, 60-0588.

JOB OPENING

Pastor for Recovery Worship

Community United Methodist Church in Massapequa, N.Y., hosts 12-step group meetings six days a week. Hundreds of persons come to our building each week seeking support in their recovery from addictions. We plan to start a weeknight "recovery worship" to reach out to these and other persons with the message of God's transforming and healing love through Jesus Christ.

We are seeking a part-time layperson or clergy person to design and lead this worship.

Our ideal candidate will possess the following:

- Experience preaching and leading worship
- Experience working with persons in recovery from addictions
- A passion for sharing the love of God with others in a way that contributes to the healing of bodies, minds, souls, and relationships
- Candidates do not need to be ordained or seeking ordination

Even if you do not see yourself as the "ideal candidate," but feel that you have a passion for this ministry, please send us your resume. Email resume and cover letter to massapcumc@aol.com, or fax to 516-541-1694. If you have questions, contact Pastor Jeff Wells at 917-604-5227.

Pastor Plays Out Life on Sax & In Song

Excerpted from *The Riverdale Press*

On a recent weekend, a man's journey from professional jazz saxophonist to pastor was presented at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church.

"The Compositions of Rev. Nat Dixon" explore Rev. Nathaniel Dixon's path from jazz clubs to the pulpit.

Rev. Dixon has been pastor of St. Stephen's UMC for more than six years. In that time, he spearheaded a successful fundraising campaign that restored the tattered church to how it looked in 1898. In 2005, the retired music teacher and former supervisor for the New York City Department of Education founded the successful St. Stephen's Saturday Music Academy, where he teaches brass to people ages 8 to 80. He also served on Community Board 8 and created a homework help center for local students.

Rev. Dixon's teaching, preaching and playing worlds were melded together during a series of weekend performances, Dec. 2-4.

"This is the best point in my life, because it's all coming together,"



RIVERDALE PRESS PHOTO / BYRON SMITH

Rev. Nathaniel Dixon, belts out a couple of notes on his tenor saxophone in the sanctuary of St. Stephen's UMC.

he said.

Rev. Dixon has played in jazz ensembles, blues bands, rock bands, big bands and Latin bands.

"All that's in there, man," he said.

The first night of music featured a quartet with Rev. Dixon on sax. The performance represented Rev. Dixon, or in this case, Nat Dixon's early life as a professional jazzman.

It chronicles a period during which he toured the world and

played shows with other prominent musicians such as Sam Rivers, Reuben Wilson and Kenny Kirkland. He described this first piece of the trilogy as inspired by legendary sax player John Coltrane and one of his most frequent collaborators, pianist McCoy Tyner. Songs from Rev. Dixon's five jazz albums will be included in the performance.

The second night of music

featured five singers: Tyrone Aiken, Lori Hartman, Maria Carrie Lord, Desiree Noor and Le Verne Williams. As he moved from being a jazzman to a teacher and ultimately to a pastor, he said he grew spiritually. To express that, he started writing lyrics. But he said it was hard to put lyrics to his music.

"I didn't know they were that hard to write. I didn't use to have much respect for lyricists. They're challenging," he said.

The last performance on Sunday afternoon featured three choirs singing Rev. Dixon's songs. St. Stephen's choir, the Salem UMC choir and the Michael Howell Singers performed his songs, representing where he is now: a pastor rich in spirit.

"You play what you are, at least you should play what you are. Other than that I don't know what else to play," he said.

The original story written by Adam Wisnieski, appeared in the November 30, 2011, online issue of The Riverdale Press. It can be found at this shortened link to their web site, <http://bit.ly/t1rJ5W>.

47 Awarded Scholarships, Loans

More than 2,600 students have been awarded \$5.3 million in loans and scholarships for 2011 by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Of the recipients, nearly 2,300 were under the age of 35, and more than 500 are enrolled in seminary pursuing a Masters of Divinity degree. The offerings collected on United Methodist Student

Day, World Communion Sunday, and Native American Sunday help fund a portion of the loans and scholarships. The remaining funds come from gifts, annuities and endowments GBHEM has invested and administered for decades.

The recipients from the NYAC are:

Joo Hyun Moon, Ardsley
 Grace Bang, Astoria Korean
 Griffin Burr, Babylon
 Paul Moon, Brokenbuilders Ministries
 Brandon Samuel, Butler Memorial
 Andrew Ahn, Central Korean
 Alexander Simmons, Cheshire
 Priscilla Wong, Chinese
 Amanda Yau, Chinese
 Andrew Yau, Chinese
 Shane Ward, Cornwall
 Kathryn Ward, Cornwall
 Joseph Gordon, Crawford Memorial
 Natalia Alvarez-Plaud, Evangelical/Co-Op City
 Niti Misra, Farmingdale
 Anthony Vaughn, First Summerfield

Alex Yoon, First/Flushing
 Rachael Johnson, Fordham
 Victoria Kittoe, Ghana
 Daniel Akonor, Ghana Wesley
 Emma Lord, Greenville Norton Hill
 Elisa Vicioso, Immanuel-First Spanish
 Hyeonjin Yi, Island Park
 Roslyn Lee, Korean / Staten Island
 Paul Smith, Lake Ronkonkoma
 Vincent Burke, Metropolitan
 Jisu Lee, Mid Hudson
 Juyeon Lee, United Church of Westville
 Eun Joo Park, United Church of Westville
 Melia Bonomo, New Rochelle Christ
 Kevin Smith, New Rochelle Christ
 Haeun Chung, New York-Plainview

Joeng Lee, New York-Plainview
 Marcus Delancey, Newman Memorial
 Fiona Bryson, Nichols, Trumbull, Conn.
 Julia Gorton, Nichols
 Tyler O'Malley, Nichols
 Kevin Pace, Rowayton
 Miranda Benjamin, Saint James
 Emma Sanborn, Saint James
 Julia Madden, St Paul-St Andrew
 Emily Peck-McClain, St Paul-St Andrew
 Betty Lynn Gannon, Stevens Memorial
 Renee Robinson, Wakefield Grace
 Carolyn Hallahan, Warwick
 Casey Mears, Warwick
 Ashley Hanse, West Hartford

Bethel Tree Lighting Illuminates 100th Birthday Celebration

Oh, the weather outside was frightful, but the smiles were so delightful for the 12th Annual Tree Lighting at Bethel Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. James Holden, Jr., chairman of Bethel's Board of Directors, led the festivities and Beth Goldstein, CEO, welcomed more than 100 family members, neighbors and community leaders. She presented a plaque to Holden that honored the service he and his family have given to Bethel for more than 50 years. The tree, planted in 2000 by Holden to honor his father, will be henceforth known as the Holden Tree, and will be commemorated with a permanent plaque.

Participating in the festivities was Rev. Kevan Hitch of Valhalla UMC, who pointed out that his Indiana Jones-inspired rainwear paled in comparison to the bevy of beauties dressed in vintage apparel from 1911. In celebration of the care center's 100th anniversary, staff and community members dressed and decorated in a style befitting an early 20th-century Christmas. From the pine boughs



draping the building to the 1926 Model T Huckster that transported Santa to the tree lighting, the scene felt like a Currier and Ives print. Robert Vitetta of Peekskill provided the Model T.

A special treat were the residents of the Camp Woods Meeting Association in Ossining who reenacted personalities from the original 1911 community that founded Bethel. Most notably, Katie Gorycki, representing the first woman Methodist preacher,

delighted the crowd with her realistic portrayal.

For nearly 100 years, Bethel has been helping older adults live life to the fullest, caring for them with compassion and understanding. Bethel offers a full continuum of care from its campuses in Ossining and Croton-on-Hudson. Services are provided through: The Pines, affordable apartments for independent living; Bethel Nursing and Rehabilitation Center at Ossining; a 78-bed skilled



Above: Kalen shares his Christmas wishes with Santa. Left, Beth Goldstein, left, CEO of the Bethel Homes, poses with staff members in 1911 garb.

nursing facility; The Springvale Inn, a 125-unit assisted living apartment complex in Croton-on-Hudson; and Bethel Nursing and Rehabilitation Center at Croton-on-Hudson, a 200-bed, state-of-the-art facility.

Although founded by, and for, Methodists, Bethel is a non-sectarian community, providing equal housing and employment without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, disability, or marital status.

Never Underestimate the Healing in A Hug

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older adult Ministries

Benjamin is grandpa's favorite four-year old! Others may think their four-year-old grandson is wonderful, but this grandpa knows his Benjamin is truly wonderful and wonder filled, never failing to remind me just why he is.

When I came to his home the other night for an overnight babysitting stint with him and his equally wonderful sister and brother, he almost bowled me over. He had heard my voice and came running to see me and give me the customary greeting—a hug and a kiss. In that moment, all the cares of a busy day tumbled away. Any concerns I had seemed suddenly unimportant.

There is something magically healing about such moments! Little children have no compunction about expressing their love. It is boundless, non-judgmental, and expressed in very physical ways. I used to think that the bumper sticker asking, "Have you hugged your child today" was a reminder of how important it is to let your child know in a visible, tangible way that you care. It is more than that! It is a reminder of the importance of a touch, of physical contact, of connecting words with actions. As such it builds self-assurance in the child. This building of self-assurance is a two-way street. It is not only "cool" to be greeted so warmly. It is reassuring both to the giver and to the recipient.

The proverbial hug is loaded with potential! I want to create a new bumper sticker that asks, "Have you hugged your older adult today?" Each



day, in my capacity as director of Spiritual Life for the United Methodist Homes, I become ever more convinced that this segment of our population often doesn't get the hugs it needs. They are often not touched in tangible, physical ways.

We've seen studies that demonstrate children who spend their early days and months without physical contact from caring individuals suffer more often than other children from 'failure to thrive' syndrome. Older adults often have the same response. They fail to thrive physically, emotionally and spiritually, having lost the self-assurance so vital to full living. Much time and attention goes into meeting their physical needs, yet the simplest physical need of being 'touched' goes unattended.

What a gift we bring to our older adult ministries when we find creative ways to offer "hugs" to those with whom and to whom we minister. Worship, especially the sacrament of communion, offers the opportunity to linger an extra moment as we place the bread in the hands of the one receiving. The passing of the peace during our services offers the same possibility, as does holding hands as we pray, or a hug when coming or going (if the relationship allows it). Social events are ripe with appropriate opportunities! Rather than passing a tray with goodies, why not place the goodies in the hands? Rather than walking an older adult to wherever they are going, why not offer an arm or a hand? The list is endless. There are countless ways to reach out and touch an older adult in appropriate, reassuring, comforting, life enhancing ways.

Be creative, but be sure to "Hug an older adult today!"

OBITUARIES

Beatrice Crowell

Beatrice Crowell died November 29, at age 84, in Cuddebackville, N.Y., She was the widow of Rev. Arthur Renfro Crowell, Sr., who died in 2007.

Rev. Crowell served churches in the NYAC at Salem and Union. Previously, he served as a district superintendent in the Central Florida Conference and professor at several colleges in Florida, North and South Carolina.

Mrs. Crowell is survived by three sons: Frederick (Dr. Dora Dixie) Crowell of Chicago; Hendrick (Pamela) Crowell, Esq. of Suisun City, Calif.; Dr. Arthur Crowell of Hartford, Conn.; a daughter, Devika Constance (Stan Ford) Crowell of New York City; two sisters: Eunice of London, England. and Glenda of Perth, Australia; a brother, Archibald Hansen of London; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life and resurrection was held December 6 at the Knight-Auchmoody Funeral Home in Port Jervis, N.Y.

Memorial contributions may be given to Hospice of Orange & Sullivan, 800 Stony Brook Court, Newburgh, NY, 12550.

Condolences may be sent to the family through the Knight-Auchmoody Funeral Home, 154 E Main St., Port Jervis, NY, 12771.

Jill Riggles

Jill Riggles, the wife of Rev. Dr. Elven O. Riggles, died November 10 in Middletown, Conn. She was 57. Mrs. Riggles served as music director and organist for the United Churches of Durham (Conn.), where her husband is the pastor.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by two daughters: Meredith (Matthew) Huntly of Waltham, Mass., and Elizabeth Riggles of New Haven, Conn.; and a son, John Riggles of Durham.

A memorial service was held at the church on November 19. Condolences may be sent to Rev. Elven O. Riggles, 120 Main St., Durham, CT 06422

Lillian A. Hertlin

Lillian A. Hertlin, founder of the Hertlin House and a longtime member of the Lake Ronkonkoma UMC, died November 3, at Morningside House Nursing Home in the Bronx. She was 96.

Hertlin's dream to create a special haven for the seniors of Long Island came to fruition after she donated a 14-acre site that is now home to Hertlin House, a non-profit 120-room

senior independent living community in Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y. She had lived in the facility until recent years. Hertlin served for many years as a director and secretary of the Methodist Retirement Community Development Corporation.

Hertlin also was a teacher for nearly 30 years in the Sayville School District on Long Island.

A funeral service was held November 9 at the Lake Ronkonkoma UMC.

Memorial donations may be made to: Hertlin House, 675 Portion Rd., Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779, or Lake Ronkonkoma UMC, 792 Hawkins Ave., Lake Grove, NY 11755.

Teresa Montant

Teresa Lacy Montant, a former administrator and director at Camp Quinipet, died October 27 in Southampton, N.Y., after a two-year battle with breast cancer. She was 54.

Montant served Quinipet in the early 2000s, and is credited with helping reinvigorate the struggling camping program there. She remained an ardent supporter of Quinipet, even after her tenure ended at the Shelter Island, N.Y., facility.

She was secretary to the Shelter Island

Highway Superintendent and Commissioner of Public Works. In the late '90s, Montant earned a master's degree in theological studies at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Fla., and served as the first female youth director at a United Methodist Church in Florida.

In the last few years, Montant worked to raise awareness of breast cancer and breast density issues by instituting the "Real Men Wear Pink" event on Shelter Island, N.Y. She was also working on promoting legislation in order to educate women about breast density.

Montant is survived by her husband, Townsend "Towny" Montant; two brothers: her twin, Mark Lacy of Bainbridge Island, Wash., and David Lacy of Oswego, Ill.; two sisters: Mary Lacy and Patricia Harris, both of Colorado Springs, Colo.

She was predeceased by a sister, Peggy Lacy; a brother, Mike Lacy; and a stepsister Beth Garrity, as well as her parents, Shirley and Cliff Lacy.

Memorial donations may be made in her name to: "Are You Dense," 96 Rowley Road, Woodbury, Conn., 06798; East End Hospice, PO Box 1048, Westhampton Beach, NY 11978; or Lucia's Angels, 10 Oak Street, Southampton, NY 11968.



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2/27-29: Creating Jazz Liturgy Workshop

A workshop for pastors, church musicians, worship planners, and seminary students interested in jazz as legitimate music for worship at the Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville, Tenn. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Kwasi Kena. Topics will include conceptual understandings of worship and jazz, worship planning, and selection of music, music arrangements and musicians. For info or to register, go to www.scarrittbennett.org/programs/Jazz.aspx.

3/10: Black College Fund Luncheon

This annual gathering is scheduled for 1 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, White Plains, N.Y.

4/16-19: Elders Retreat

Spiritual retreat at Graymoor Spiritual Life Center, Garrison, N.Y.

4/24-5/4: General Conference 2012

"Making Disciples of Jesus Christ to Transform the World" is the theme for the quadrennial gathering of the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church, to be held at the Tampa Convention Center. The 1000-member assembly will consider revisions to church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. For additional information, go to: <http://nyac.com/events/detail/3578>, or www.gc2012.umc.org.

6/6-9: Annual Conference

The 213th gathering of clergy and laity, Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y.

7/18-20: Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference

Will be held in Charleston, W.Va. For additional details, go to: <http://www.nejumc.org>.



Bishop Jeremiah J. Park meets with the staff and board of directors at Anchor House.

Bishop Encourages Anchor House Ministry

BY BARBARA J. EDWARDS

On November 17, Anchor House mission and ministry was blessed by a visit from resident Bishop Jeremiah J. Park. Before lunch, the bishop led us in a spirit-filled devotional service. He thanked the Board of Directors and staff for the ministry that we do here at Anchor House.

It represents the mission and ministry of the church at its best making disciples and transforming lives. Park referenced Colossians 3:15-17 to speak about the Anchor House's leadership and courage. He reminded us that as disciples of Christ most of our battles of self-discipline begin in the mind. Permanent change and improvement always begin from the inside out.

Bishop Park called Anchor House, the "House

of Hope." He closed with blessings and hopes that we continue to be strengthened by the power of Jesus Christ in our hearts, and always be thankful.

Following lunch, Bishop Park and the staff retired to a private room for a time apart. The bishop discussed some of the fundamental spiritual building blocks needed for the staff to avoid mental or spiritual burnout.

We are all called to minister to all God's people, in all places, and in all times and we are called to love and serve.

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I hope."—Psalm 130:5

Edwards is president of the Anchor House Board of Directors.

Metropolitan Drive For Baby Items

The Metropolitan District's prison ministry is collecting baby clothes for the Women's Advocate Ministry. Baby clothing is urgently needed for the babies cared for at the nurseries in the Rose M. Singer Nursery at Rikers Island, Bedford Hills and Taconic Correctional Facilities. The babies are with their mothers in prison.

The following new items will be accepted:

- Summer and winter clothing, in sizes newborn-2 toddler
- Blankets
- Hats and socks
- Pacifiers
- Crib sheets and pillowcases

- Diaper bags
- Baby bottles (without BPA)
- Teething rings

Please bring items to all church, districts, or conference meetings. You may also deliver items to WAM'S office, 211 W. 129th St., New York, NY 10027. For large quantities of new clothing, call coordinators Arthur McLean at 212-923-7729, or Emma Doctor at 718-931-6788, for pick-up arrangements.

WAM'S mission began in 1983. As advocates on behalf of incarcerated women and their children, WAM collects clothing for babies in the various facilities with their mothers.

Celebrating Laity

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for the New York Annual Conference, who translated for me.

Thanks to Daisy Tavarez who invited me. She is to be commended for being a true advocate for our Hispanic-Latino brothers and sisters on the Board of Laity.

As I have reflected on that inspiring worship service, something else that Rev.Liano Feliz said in that article which I quoted earlier continues to challenge me. She said, "However there are some who feel somewhat isolated from all that has formed and developed their existence." That is one of the reasons why it is important to make a special time for services such as Hispanic Laity Sunday. It occurred to me that many of our congregations could be missing out on experiencing more dynamic and inspiring worship as well as ministry with far-reaching impact, by failing to recognize and celebrate the cultural diversity in their own congregations on a regular basis.

Why wait for next October or another selected month, or for annual conference, or district meetings to have someone from another culture read the scripture in another language, or pray in their own tongue? As we seek to increase the number of vital congregations in our conference in response to the Call to Action, how about making our small groups truly reflect the diversity in our congregations? How about making the materials we use in training and sessions readily available in a form that all can access and comprehend? How about reaching out in love to those who often feel isolated and lonely among us? How about providing a platform in which they can tell their stories? As followers of Jesus Christ, we should do no less.

Hymnal Music Available Online

The worship web site of the General Board of Discipleship now offers live piano accompaniments of Advent and Christmas hymns and carols. These may be used to accompany congregational or other singing. Currently there are accompaniments to nineteen hymns from The United Methodist Hymnal in this joint project of the GBOD and UM Communications. All sound files are available without charge and all are provided without copyright restriction or permission required. Other accompaniments for Lent, Easter, special dates and general use will be added in the future.

Use this shortened link for the GBOD worship site to find the files, <http://bit.ly/vuvD8L>.