

"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

July 23, 2010



A pair of teen counselors head to the new George and Sue Klein Welcome Center at Camp Quinipet.

New Center Welcomes Campers

On a day befitting the beauty of the setting, the George and Sue Klein Welcome Center was dedicated at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island. The large crowd that gathered on July 3 also bore witness to the impact the Kleins have had on the camp community—specifically on the family camping program for the past 42 years.

With the porch of the new covered walkway as a stage, Camp Director Greg Nissen welcomed the more than 250 who had gathered, including Rev. Sue Klein and her extended family. He also read a letter of congratulations from resident Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, who was unable to attend.

Betty Slavicek Gastelua offered greetings and praise from the NYAC Camps Governing Board, of which she is the chairperson. She cited the early Methodist tradition of providing campgrounds as places of rest and retreat. Pastor Tom MacCleod of Sag Harbor UMC added to that history by describing the camp meeting movement



Camp Director Greg Nissen and Sue Klein take a coffee break on the center's timber porch.

which began as a way for Christians to come together on the American frontier in the 1800s. But perhaps our greatest legacy for this place, he said, comes in Jesus' words to his disciples in Mark 6:31: "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while. For many were coming and going, and they had no

leisure even to eat."

When it came time for Bob Virgalla, of the Newtown UMC, to speak about the mission and ministry of the Klein family, he asked Sue to come stand beside him for support. Klein, who is an ordained deacon in the United

ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP

5,000 Plus
Bring Fanfare,
Frenzy, & Spirit

BY REV. JOANNE UTLEY
Editor, *The Vision*

New York Mets relief pitcher Tug McGraw may have coined the catchphrase, "Ya gotta believe!" back in 1973, but it certainly also could have been the rallying cry at the Momentum of Ministry Festival on the final day of annual conference at Hofstra Arena. The attendance on Saturday, June 12, exceeded Bishop Jeremiah Park's 2009 challenge to fill the arena with 5,000 United Methodists—5,000 new witnesses for Christ.

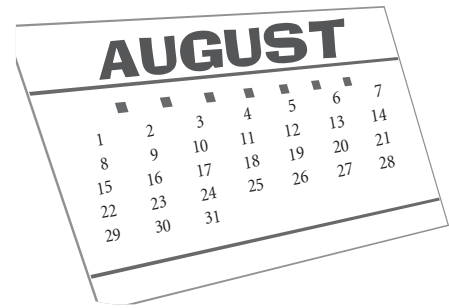
The bishop had especially invited all those who had become church members since 2004, the year he began his episcopacy. And they came—by busload, by carpool and by commuter train—to enjoy the parking lot festival in the morning, and the powerful preaching of Bishop James Swanson Sr. in the afternoon.

The outdoor festival featured three blue-striped tents each with a stage for music and dance performances. The booths inside the tents represented the various ministries and organizations of the conference, from camping to Justice for Our Neighbors, from Volunteers in Mission to prison ministries, and from the Learning Center to Methodists In New Directions. The crowds were encouraged to ride a PET mobility vehicle through an obstacle course, do some rock

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SAVE THE DATE



Willowcreek Leadership Summit 2010

August 5–6: An opportunity for leadership development for both clergy and laity. Speakers include Bill Hybels, Terri Kelly, Jim Collins, T.D. Jakes, Adam Hamilton, and Jack Welch. Please visit <http://www.willowcreek.com/events/leadership/2010/>. For information on the Long Island satellite site and discounted registration information, go to the conference web site at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2908>. Questions can be emailed to Rev. Albert Hahn at smithtownumc@netzero.com.

Upcoming VIM Trips

Haiti Disaster Response Mission

August 23–31; Sept 21–29; and Oct 18–26
Apply through: nyacdisaster@gmail.com. See related story on Page 7.

January 7–19, 2011/Cambodia

Leader: Laura Galbraith, Pastorlaura.g@sbcglobal.com

January 11–23/Ecuador

Leader: Judy Stevens, Jas116@aol.com
Leader: Oscar Destrugue, juan316@aol.com

February 16–28/Youth Ambassadors

Leader: Donna Jolly, jolly_donna@hotmail.com

June 24–July 9/Bolivia

Leader: Carl Franson, Cfranson417@comcast.net

August 6-22/Mozambique

Leader: Annette Griffith, annettegriffith@earthlink.net

September 5-17/Ghana

Leader: Joseph Ewoodzie, jewoodzie@gmail.com

John Wesley on Leadership

September 11: A program on leadership and early Methodism for lay leaders, lay speakers and all laity and clergy led by lay speaker and Wesley scholar Jerry Eyster. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Jesse Lee Memorial UMC, Ridgefield, Conn. Check the conference web site at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2947> for registration information.

Far Rockaway Fundraiser

September 18: Join in this walk-a-thon along the beach to help support the ministry and feeding programs at the United Methodist Center in Far Rockaway, Queens, N.Y. See related story on Page 5.

Bishop's Retreat with Clergy/Northern Districts

September 27–28: Clergy in the Northern districts will meet at Mt. Alphonus in Esopus, N.Y. More information will follow.

Bishop's Retreat with Clergy/Tri-Districts

September 29–30: Clergy in the tri-districts will meet at Bishop Molloy Retreat Center, Jamaica, N.Y. More information will follow.

Hartford Marathon

October 9: The conference team will be running again in the 5K, relay, half-marathon, and marathon categories. Have you begun training yet? More details to come.

Fall Clergy Day Apart

October 14: Clergy Day Apart at the Memorial/Central Korean UMC in White Plains. Begins at 9 a.m., and adjourns by 3 p.m. The Order of Elders sponsors this event, but it is open to all clergy members. Plan to join this sacred time together for spiritual renewal and growth.

Church Records, Archives Workshop

October 16: This workshop at the New York Conference Center is intended to support and assist pastors, administrative assistants, trustees and local church historians by introducing participants to basic archival concepts. Hands-on activities will be included. Lunch is provided at noon; the workshop runs from 1–4 p.m. Attendance is limited to 25. To register, contact Mary Robison at archives@nyac.com; toll free: 1-888-696-6922 or direct at 914-615-2128.

UMM Annual Retreat



October 29–30: NYAC men's retreat, "Building A Faith-Based Community," at Stony Point Retreat Center, Stony Point, N.Y. Email John Lewis for more details at asherod@aol.com.

Clergy Spouses' Day Apart

October 30: 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., New York Conference Center, White Plains, N.Y., Conference Room 115

"Share the Harvest" Event

November 11: Long Island Council of Churches will host a special fundraising event, "Share the Harvest: Helping Neighbors in Need," to raise funds for its Riverhead Emergency Food and Community Resources Center. Event is 6:30-10:30 p.m. at Giorgio's, 100 Fox Hill Dr., Baiting Hollow, N.Y.

	
The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church	
Bishop: Jeremiah J. Park Director of Connectional Ministries: Ann A. Pearson Editor: Joanne Utley New York Conference of The United Methodist Church 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606 Phone (914) 997-1570 or (914) 615-2219 Fax (914) 615-2244; Website: www.nyac.com Vision e-mail: thevision@nyac.com	

New Klein Center Welcomes Campers

Continued from page 1

Methodist Church, and her late husband, George, became involved with the Family Camp program at Quinipet in 1969. They came with their children, and now with their grandchildren. Klein would eventually become the Family Camp program director. She also serves the Newtown church as their minister of music.

Klein then took a few moments to talk about the great blessing the camp had been for she and her husband and their family. Martha Varnum, daughter of the Kleins, echoed some of her mother's sentiments and said that dedicated service to others was always a part of growing up in the Klein household. Alan Krauss, former director of Quinipet, also thanked Klein for her devotion to this ministry and applauded Nissen's leadership.

Jane Wakeman then performed the song, "Quinipet," an original composition written by she and Frank Teodosio. The song extols the natural beauty as well as the loving relationships created in the place that is called Quinipet.

Nissen especially thanked all those who had a hand in the planning and construction phases: construction manager Brian Cass and his crew of Cori and Chester Pete Jr., architect Pam Pospilsi, Paul Yeaman and Matt Kast for timber framing, the Town of Shelter Island, Riverhead Building Supply, Shelter Island Hardware, Chapman Air Systems, Social Concrete, Pete Kazakla and Unlimited Excavation & Drainage, Peter Larson, Dennis Clark painting, Grady Reilly Gardens and Crazying Asphalt.

He also expressed deep gratitude for the volunteers and key partnerships on the project: Conference Treasurer Ernest Swigggett, the Governing Board of the Camping and Retreat Ministry, Bishop Park's Partnership in Missions Fund, Newtown UMC, Riverhead UMC, Bridgehampton UMC, Lake Ronkonkoma UMC, and Steven's Memorial UMC.

The blessing and dedication of the center was offered by Rev. Joanne Utley of the Bridgehampton UMC. "We have come here today to celebrate an incredible labor of love," Utley said. She then asked Klein to join her in consecrating the structure by sprinkling water with pine branches.

"The water comes from the waters that surround this island; water is necessary to sustain all life. The evergreen branches come from the camp, and symbolize God's abiding presence and providence in our lives," said Utley. She closed with a prayer asking God's blessing on the camp and all those who walk on its sacred ground.

Following the blessing, Nissen pointed out



Quinipet Director Greg Nissen welcomes the crowd gathered in the shade at the back of the new center.



Sue Klein, far left, and her extended family turned out for the dedication of the center which bears the name of she and her late husband.

that the camp dinner bell now hangs below the cupola in the rafters of the covered walkway. He pulled the rope and rang the bell just once in memory of George Klein and all those who have served in the camp's ministry. The celebration then moved indoors to the dining hall for a barbecue feast prepared by the camp's cook staff.

One would hardly recognize the shingled Klein Center as the former ranch house that was donated for the project by the Seymour family, and moved from about a mile away in September 2009. The new welcome center is just that—a welcoming timber frame front porch opens into a designated registration area with cozy couches, a coffee pot and a computer with internet connection in the corner. Much of the

furniture and the rugs were donated with the house itself. The rest of the upper floor consists of meeting spaces, a kitchen area, staff offices and handicapped-accessible bathrooms. A walk downstairs leads to the infirmary and the nurse's living quarters. The infirmary is also accessible through a walkout door on the basement level.

While the center is now open for use, the fundraising efforts will continue. An additional \$100,000 is needed, Nissen said. Contributions can be made online with a credit card at www.quinipet.org; or by sending a check to: Camp Quinipet, PO Box 549, Shelter Island Hgts, NY 11965. Nissen is glad to answer any questions about donations and may be reached at 631-749-0430, or via email at: gwnissen@hotmail.com.

Discovering Ways to Nourish Your Spirit

On a Saturday in late May, I journeyed to Jesse Lee Memorial UMC in Ridgefield, Conn. and joined with others in a time of worship, teaching and prayer focused on “The Healing Power of Praise.” The prayer and healing ministry of that church sponsored the event; the speakers were Pastor Debbi Mygatt, Rev. Bill Pfohl and Henric Idestrom. My spirit was wonderfully blest. It was great to take this extended time to praise God . . . just for who God is!

This is what Elaine Winward, director of lay speaking for the New York-Connecticut District and a team member of the healing prayer ministry, says about what it means in her life:

“What I notice is that when I spend a good deal of time in God’s presence, in prayer, praise, and in the Word, my prayers then, are more powerful in praying for others.

“This is encouraging and assures me of God’s response to prayer. Being in this prayer mode



seems like a spiritual investment account that blesses me and in turn allows me to be a blessing to others. This naturally builds up my own spiritual health, and raises my sense of God’s hand in my life”

Elaine sometimes speaks at the prayer services. Please check their web site www.prayanandsee.org for weekly offerings, and upcoming events.

You might also want to consider Wellspring, a two-year spiritual growth program for laity and clergy, sponsored by the New York Annual Conference. Monthly retreats are held at Bethany Spirituality Center in Highland Mills, N.Y. As a member of Wellspring Class II, one of the spiritual practices from which I

derive so much is that of solitude and silence. Experiencing God’s presence in the silence is a habit which is increasingly permeating my daily life, and what a gift! Another of my Wellspring gifts this year is the opportunity to be in a covenantal relationship with a small group of Christians, and to have friends who listen to you, and share in your joys and struggles.

This is what another Wellspringer, Kathi McCleery, has gained from her participation in the program:

“Many different ways to listen to God, to find the Spirit’s movement in my life. And why was that important? You will be surprised at the many problems that Spirit can solve for you if you only learn to listen! Shalom—peace in body, mind, heart, and soul, the peace that passes all understanding—will be yours.”

For more information about Wellspring, contact Director Gail Erdie, at 845-255-8058. A new class is starting in September; the

schedule and application can be found at <http://www.nyac.com/pages/detail/1738>.

It is a good thing to get away from one’s regular schedule and to attend a program like Wellspring or a conference like I did at Ridgefield. However, our spirits require daily nourishment. So a diet that fits our circumstances wherever we may be is recommended:

- Daily prayer and reading of the scriptures.
- Learn to praise God through singing and movement.
- Journal what you hear God saying through scripture, nature, and dreams.
- Develop the habit of holy listening. Start with just a few minutes and gradually increase the time.
- Ask God to lead you to a small group with whom you may engage in an accountable spiritual relationship (covenant group)
- Find out what your spiritual gifts are, and use them lavishly to serve others.

2010 State of the Church Report Available

The median age of United Methodists, the number of professing members around the world, and our current giving trends are among the topics found in the newly released “2010 State of The Church” report. The report is now available online at www.umc.org/sotc2010.

The report is an annual look at where the United Methodist Church stands statistically in membership, giving and church growth. This year’s report also offers key findings from the United States Congregational Life Survey and resources to help United Methodists stay up-to-date with important conversations taking place across the denomination that could impact church structure and processes in the future.

“In this annual report, we see signs of hope,” said Bishop John Hopkins of the Ohio East Episcopal Area and chairperson of the Connectional Table. “United Methodists are making great strides in the four areas of focus of the denomination. Also, this report captures how the church is making changes to address the declining membership trend we have witnessed in the U.S. and Europe.”

The four areas of focus include:

- Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world
- Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations
- Engaging in ministry with the poor
- Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally

The 2010 State of the Church report is available online and through the July/August edition of the Interpreter magazine published by United Methodist Communications. The report is available in English, French and Portuguese.

The “State of The Church” report was first commissioned by the Connectional Table, the leadership entity that coordinates mission, ministries and resources for the denomination. The 2007 report was the first time the church produced a comprehensive overview of the life of the church. It has been used to stimulate dialogue across the denomination on how to carry out the mission of making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Highland Mills Named ‘Welcoming Congregation’

The Highland Mills UMC has recently been recognized by United Methodist Communications (UMCom) as a “Welcoming Congregation.”

“Welcoming Congregations” are a select group of United Methodist churches that meets certain criteria, including embracing newcomers and providing opportunities in discipleship. The recognition program is part of a larger effort launched in 2000 by UMCom to use modern technology and television media to spread the Good News of Christ to a world in need.

Rev. Darlene E.R. Resling is pastor at Highland Mills, and the nearby Mountainville church, which has also been recognized as a “Welcoming Congregation.”

A Salute to Longtime Treasurer Swiggett

**BY RENATA SMITH
Conference Lay Leader**

On Saturday, June 19, friends and family of Ernest Swiggett gathered at the Crowne Plaza hotel in White Plains, N.Y. A little after 1 p.m., the dais guests filed into the ballroom, greeted joyfully by the more than 450 guests who had come to salute this well-loved and much-appreciated treasurer, director of administrative services and statistician of the New York Annual Conference. Swiggett is retiring, effective September 1.

Bishop Jeremiah Park, resident bishop, and Lisa Park, were joined by Bishop Herbert and Shirley Skeete, Bishop Forrester and Josephine Stith, and Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, and Jack Middleton. Other dais guests were Metropolitan District Superintendent Noel Chin and Barbara Chin, Rev. Dr. Allen Pinckney Jr., and Annemarie Pinckney. Rev. Leo Curry served very ably as master of ceremonies.

Family members and close friends of Swiggett included Deborah Bass, Ambrose Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Carter,



The event was a time for Ernest Swiggett to celebrate with friends and the conference staff. Above left, he chats with Heman Persaud and his wife, Nanda; and at right, with Kim Cartiglia.

William Cochoran, Darrin Glymph, Walter Penn, Cheryl Smith, Harold Swiggett, Sr., Harold Swiggett, Jr., Anita Swiggett and Dorothy Swiggett. There were several guests from the Northeast Jurisdiction, where Swiggett has served in several capacities, including a member of the Episcopacy Committee and the Vision Table.

Music for the occasion was provided by soprano Ruthann



Cunningham and tenor Reginald L. Hayes, both accompanied by Dr. Eric L. Martin.

Each of the bishops reflected on their work with Swiggett, all attesting to his faithful stewardship, sincere faith and humility. His nephew, Darrin Glymph, who is a lawyer in Washington, D.C., shared that Swiggett was like a father to him. Cousin Harold Swiggett, Jr., left the audience in ripples of laughter

as he recounted experiences from their childhood. Inherent in his remarks was the early discipline that had shaped Swiggett's life. Many speakers commented that God was at the center of who Swiggett was, and what he did.

Presentations were made on behalf of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, the New York Chapter of the Black Methodists for Church Renewal, and the Hispanic Caucus, in addition to the conference.

In his response, Swiggett recounted the amazing journey to New York from his childhood home in Chester, Penn., a place he left amid the tears of family. He spoke lovingly of his home church, Salem UMC, and graciously thanked the gathering for their love and appreciation.

Swiggett was also honored during a tribute on the opening night of the Annual Conference gathering at Hofstra University. At that time, Swiggett said, "This has been the most amazing 23 and a half years of my life . . . I love you from the foundation of my soul. Thank you, New York Annual Conference!"

Far Rockaway Mission Seeks Volunteers, Worship Supplies

The United Methodist Center of Far Rockaway, one of the oldest sponsored NYAC mission programs, is reaching out to the faith community to meet some special needs. Since moving to a new facility at the beginning of the year, their feeding program has expanded by 20 percent in the number of meals served and food pantry bags distributed.

So, the first need is for additional donations to help meet the growing need of hunger in this oft-forgotten area. The \$10,000 from the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund at annual conference will help the center operate throughout the summer. In addition to increased food cost, the center is paying a higher rent to have an exclusive facility from

which to minister.

Volunteers are needed from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays to serve the 100 meals a day. The center would welcome your youth group, UMW or UMM or any other church volunteers. Contact Mearl Grant at 718-327-5071 to volunteer.

This new facility at 1032 Beach 19th Street offers greater freedom and flexibility in ministry, and has allowed the resumption of Sunday worship services. At 11 a.m. each Sunday, Marie Davis, the Long Island West director of Lay Speaking Ministries, is ministering in very special ways in Far Rockaway. To volunteer for Sunday services, contact Davis via email at: Roses4him777@yahoo.com.

The center, as a mission station feeding the spiritual needs of

people, is also in need of worship resources. They are looking for the following new or very gently used items: tabletop cross, folding altar table, Communion chalice, Communion trays with cup slots, cover for communion tray, bread plate, altar Bible, portable kneeler, and candlesticks. They also need a baptismal font with bowl and cover,

and a podium—or for someone to refinish the font and podium that they have.

Monetary donations can be sent to: United Methodist Center of Far Rockaway, P.O. Box 900875, Far Rockaway, NY 11691. And please save the date of September 18 for the Far Rockaway Walk-a-Thon fundraiser.

JOB OPENING: St. Mark's Organist

St. Marks UMC, Manhattan, is looking for an organist. Applicants must be familiar with organ presentation, and prepare the choir for worship offering anthems, contemporary, and gospel music. Please send a resume to: St. Marks UMC, Attn: Music Search Committee, 55 Edgecombe Avenue, NY, NY 10030, or call 212 926-4400.

Bolivia VIM: New Encounters in The Spirit

“The Journey of The Son-Ship”

Trip Report #3 from the June 2010 Team

Saturday, June 26, means that a week from today we will be landing back at New York's JFK airport and going home from there. Our adventure in face-to-face mission with the people of the Central District of Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia will be over, but certainly not forgotten.

You may guess from the heading to this report that, in the manner of the Starship Enterprise going where no starship crew has gone before, we are traveling into new experiences and new examples of the Holy Spirit moving in our lives each day.

The five days since our previous report have been extremely busy, so much so that this report has been in process for three days because finding time to complete it was impossible. In that time, we have continued with our dual offerings of vacation Bible schools at four churches and construction work alongside members of the new congregation of Luz de Vida. Our evenings have been filled with by moving stories of ways in which the Holy Spirit has acted in people's lives, visiting other areas of the city and similar adventures.

Looking at the start of each day can best be seen in the following description of some routine daily events from the perspective of the construction people:

After arising and gathering in the dining hall at 7 a.m., “. . . we were subsequently fortified for our day's travails with a traditional Bolivian breakfast—traditional meaning large and delicious. Rachel (Bird) led us through a meaningful devotion and then the team broke into its work groups for the morning. My team—the bakery construction group—boarded our transport, a 30-plus year old Dodge short bus painted in a style ala the Partridge Family . . . traveling to the jobsite with much machismo, daring vehicles of lesser mass to prevent our incursions into their lanes and intersections.”

At Luz de Vida, we have spent most of our efforts preparing an area behind the garage chapel for equipment that will enable several women in the congregation to operate a bakery business. We have dug out a shallow hole

measuring about 10 x 50 foot, carefully placed rocks into the hole and then spread concrete over the rocks for the bakery floor.

The church members erected the framework for the roof, and on Friday, the ovens, dough mixer and related equipment were brought from Emmanuel church. The guys who lifted and carried the equipment—Dan Abbot, Ed Dayton and Carl Franson along with several Bolivian brothers—earned special admiration because of the weight and awkwardness of the load. By today (Saturday), one oven was operational.

Two of our team, Rachel Bird and Holly Johnston, have experience as bakers, so baking the first batch proceeded briskly. Holly found a recipe on the Internet and adjusted the measurements for the elevation of Cochabamba. While she purchased ingredients and mixed the dough, others cleaned the oven. By the end of the afternoon, amid a great deal of celebration and a lot of pictures, we had several loaves of bread from the Luz de Vida bakery that will be used for communion tomorrow.

Considering that we approached our work a week ago thinking that we would be working solely to construct the new church facility, and that we were not even aware of the possibility of creating a bakery, it was really a remarkable accomplishment.

As Rod Wendt observed, many VIM teams leave construction sites having accomplished much, but knowing there is still much to be done by subsequent VIM teams. It is especially satisfying to have both started and finished a task that holds so much promise for the future of the congregation and those who will work as bakers.

The vacation Bible schools have attracted varying numbers of children, but all have had joyful days, meaningful lessons, and many hugs. There were many craft projects tied to the Bible lessons each day. For example, each VBS class created “quilts” to display in their churches by tying the children's drawings together with bits of ribbon. The children at Luz de Vida serenaded the construction workers each day.

The VBS at Piedra Viva (Living Stones) had special meaning for two of our members, Holly Johnston and Kathy Silva, members of Mt. Rock UMC in the Susquehanna Conference. Since

2007, Mt. Rock has provided financial support for the children's program at Piedra Viva. That support was inspired by a VIM team that worked in Cochabamba, and the similarities of church names—Mt. Rock and Living Stones.

Friday was a time of celebration and sad farewells as the VBS classes ended with the presentation of ribbon stoles to the children and a special snack.

Our evening activities included:

- A visit with the women of the sewing cooperative at Emanuel church, who make beautiful sewn goods distributed in both conferences and in New Hampshire. Earlier, we had visited a similar new cooperative at Luz de Vida, where they create sewn goods, and also jewelry made from seeds native to Bolivia.
- A meeting with the program coordinator of Emanuel Church for an update on other outreach programs—daycare, medical/dental clinic, youth programs, and programs for the elderly.
- A celebration of the feast of San Juan, which coincides with a much older celebration by the indigenous people of the return of the sun. The feast is traditionally celebrated by the lighting of bonfires throughout the country and firework displays. Our own modest celebration consisted of a small pile of hot coals where we cooked cocktail wieners and roasted marshmallows with some of our Bolivian sisters and brothers.

▪ A time of sharing the God moments in our lives, lead off by Wilson Boots and a stirring description of his call to the ministry and Latin American mission service. He and his wife Nora, despite being retired, are our principal mission contacts in Cochabamba, where they live for three months each year.

All in all, it has been a wonderful week. It's hard to believe that in just a few days we will be leaving this place, but the wonderful memories will remain with us. We will try to get off one more report before we leave to make a brief tour of this beautiful country to learn more about it and its people. Then we'll move on to Santa Cruz to catch our flights home next. As always, thanks for your prayers and other support.

Your Bolivia VIM Team

For additional reports from the team, go to: <http://www.nyac.com/blogs/author/7>.

Olmstead Offers 3 New Retreats For Renewal, Spiritual Growth

One of the NYAC's most overlooked resources is the historic Camp Olmsted in Cornwall-on-Hudson, in the Hudson River Valley. Tucked into the protective shadow of Storm King Mountain, the Olmsted complex includes two separate houses, summer camp facilities with a pool and rope course, acres of parkland and nature preserve and a National Register of Historic Places designation.

The Five Points Mission, under the aegis of the United Methodist City Society, has been providing summer camp experiences for city children since the early 20th century. Less well known is the possibility of holding retreats, workshops and conferences in the buildings on the property year round. Previously, groups had to organize their own projects and then arrange for accommodation. Now, a program of weekend retreats, under the direction of an experienced retreat leader, has been scheduled:

• **October 15–17:** “Get-Away to God” will give you the gift of a time apart to rejuvenate and discover new ways

to connect yourself and God. The retreat will explore the true meaning of sabbath and how we can create strategies to reclaim peace in ourselves and our surroundings. Reflections, lectio divina, meditation techniques and other simple practices will be offered.

• **November 5–7:** “Gratitude Pilgrimage” is a weekend exploration of gratitude, an important foundation for prayer and source of happiness and peace. Before launching into the stresses of the holiday season,

take time to recognize the true values in your life and how to nourish them. Journaling, lectio divina, color prayer, centering prayer and other spiritual practices will enhance our ability to say thank you to God.

• **January 15–17:** “How Does Your Garden Grow?” will use the garden as a metaphor for our spiritual life. What needs weeding and pruning with some new discernment techniques? Where should we water

with meditation or fertilize with prayer? Which blossoms or fruits of the Spirit are we trying to cultivate? This weekend will encompass many kinds of spiritual tools to foster new spiritual growth and get your spiritual garden blooming, despite the weather.

These retreats are being organized by Sheila Peiffer, who is a life-long Catholic married to a United Methodist pastor. Sheila has an M.A. in Theology and more than 20 years experience in directing religious education, teaching theology on all levels, facilitating for church transitions, doing marriage

preparation, leading parenting courses and coordinating a wide variety of retreats, days of reflection and spiritual workshops. In addition to the schedule of retreats mentioned above, Sheila is available to plan a “custom” retreat for a group—adapting to your particular needs and time schedule.

More information about these new spiritual opportunities are available by calling the Olmsted Center at 845-534-7900, or visiting the web site at www.campolmsted.org.



The gate at Camp Olmstead welcomes visitors to take in the beauty of God's creation all around them.



VIM Teams Return to Haiti

Our first two teams since the January earthquake have gone off to Haiti and more volunteers are needed to fill teams for the rest of the year. The New York Annual Conference is now accepting applications for prospective Early Response Team / VIM team members. Please consider this invitation prayerfully and respond as soon as you can.

Travel Dates & Maximum Team Size

August 23–31: 10 persons. Deadline August 5.
September 21–29: 10 persons. Deadline September 5.
October 18–26: 10 persons. Deadline September 25.

What to Expect

1. Sleeping arrangements are with host pastors or in tents around worksite areas
2. Meals will be provided by host.
3. Work:
 - a. Physical work—construction;
 - b. Spiritual and emotional—outdoor games with children
 - c. Medical care

How to Apply

- Complete an application—available on the NYAC web site at: <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1740>.
- Select from the scheduled trips above, indicating your first and second choice.
- Provide the name on your official passport, and your contact information.
- Send a deposit check of \$500 payable to NYAC / Haiti ERT
- Total cost per participant is \$1,100 including airfare, meals, housing and all other local expenses.

Trip Requirements

- Medical clearance by your physician to work under humid, and very stressful conditions.
- Valid passport, and completion of all necessary immunizations including tetanus, typhoid, rabies, hepatitis A and B, and access to malaria tablets.
- Attend the Haiti VIM team orientation, which is to be scheduled.

For a report on the first team's trip to Haiti, go to: <http://nyac.com/blogs/author/6>.

Conference Center Summer Hours

July & August: The New York Conference Center in White Plains, N.Y., will be closed on Fridays until the week of Labor Day.

BP Investments Give UMC Voice in Cleanup

A UMNS Report

If you have a pension with the United Methodist Church, you have investments in BP, Transocean Ltd., and Halliburton. Likewise, if you have a fund with the United Methodist Church Foundation, you also could have a stake in BP.

That's not necessarily a bad thing.

Those investments might be the best chance the church has of influencing these energy companies to clean up the oil spill now darkening the Gulf and clean up their acts, say church officials.

"Our position has always been that it's better to have a seat at the table than none at all," said David Zellner, chief investment officer with the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

By owning shares, these church organizations have more authority in urging companies to act in a way consistent with United Methodist Social Principles. Such shareholder advocacy can include making phone calls and writing letters to corporate executives. Often, it takes the form of shareholder resolutions that can pressure a company to behave in a more ethical manner.

"If Jesus were here, Jesus would not say, 'I'm not going to own any shares,'" said Byrd L. Bonner, executive director of the United Methodist Church Foundation. "He would want to own shares so he could get in there and call them to accountability."

Call to action

As of June 28, the pension board held the equivalent of 133,091 ordinary shares of BP traded on the London Stock Exchange and valued at about \$600,000. The board holds 440,816 shares of Halliburton and 82,600 shares of Transocean Ltd. BP owns the well now gushing into the ocean, Transocean owned the Deep Horizon drilling rig and oil services company Halliburton was in charge of cementing the well.

As of July 6, the foundation held 550 shares in BP, worth about \$16,100, Bonner said. An investor needs at least \$2,000 worth of shares to draw up resolutions under Security and Exchange Commission rules.

The United Methodist Church, like many other faith-based organizations, has long participated in what the financial industry calls socially responsible investing. That means screening out certain investments while engaging in shareholder advocacy with others.

The Book of Discipline, which contains the denomination's rules and bylaws, requires that



Photo via UMNS

Fish and wildlife rescue workers prepare to net an oiled pelican in Barataria Bay, La.

all church agencies and institutions including hospitals and universities "endeavor to avoid" certain investments that violate church teachings. These include businesses that engage in racial discrimination and defy human rights with sweatshops or forced labor.

The Book of Discipline also frowns on companies that support gambling, pornography, alcoholic beverages, tobacco or the production of nuclear armaments. As a rule, United Methodist groups will not invest in a company that gets more than 10 percent of its revenue from these products.

The 2008 Book of Resolutions also encourages investments made with certain targeted goals including the reduction of greenhouse gases and the use of power supplies from renewable resources.

"There are several issues with the environment—like clean water, landfills and deforestation in addition to all of the implications of this oil spill—that are more appropriately and more easily addressed through shareholder advocacy, by actually talking to the companies," Bonner said.

Both Zellner and Bonner can point to some wins using shareholder advocacy. For example, the pension board was instrumental in getting Wal-Mart to no longer use cotton produced in Uzbekistan, which uses child labor.

Talking to BP

Even before the oil spill in the Gulf, the pension board was involved in trying to get Halliburton and BP to be better stewards of the

environment.

In 2008, the pension board tried to meet with Halliburton executives to discuss how the company planned to remain competitive in the developing low-carbon energy market. When the energy company did not respond, the pension board filed a shareholder resolution requesting that Halliburton adopt a policy for low-carbon energy research, development and production.

The company challenged the resolution at the SEC, but the federal agency ruled in the pension board's favor. A few days before the May 2009 annual meeting, Halliburton updated its Web site to include a new section that described the company's work in low-carbon technology.

Earlier this year, the pension board staff had scheduled a conference call on May 7 with BP officials to discuss what the company was doing to mitigate the environmental risks of its oil sands production in Canada. After the Deepwater Horizon blowout, the pension board planned to use the call to also address what happened in the Gulf.

BP canceled the May 7 meeting and declined further requests from the pension board and other socially responsible investors to hold a teleconference call to discuss concerns about the blowout. The energy giant did agree to engage in individual discussions with concerned investors.

The pension staff was able to participate in an investor briefing on June 6 attended by the BP chair and chief executive officer.

Add a Health Coach to Your Team



A qualified health coach can motivate you to achieve health-focused goals—like losing weight, lowering cholesterol or managing stress. HealthFlex recently teamed up with WebMD to provide industry-leading coaching services that integrate with the HealthQuotient (HQ) and other online health resources. Why not give this new program a try? As a HealthFlex participant, you can speak with a health coach as often as you want, at no charge.

Don't you need to take a timeout from your busy schedule to focus on yourself? Caring for yourself makes you better equipped to focus

effectively on your family, friends, congregation and colleagues. Make an appointment to talk with your health coach once a month or once a quarter—or call as often as you wish.

WebMD health coaches have credentials you can count on:

- Coaches have diverse expertise and include registered dietitians, exercise physiologists, health education specialists and mental health professionals.
- Your coach will help set practical goals that fit into your lifestyle at a pace that feels comfortable. You might start with small steps—walking around the block or adding fruit to your breakfast, for example.

Your WebMD health coach does not replace your doctor's care. But having a coach on your side makes it easier to incorporate your doctor's recommendations into your daily routine. And working with a health coach over the phone is completely confidential. Your church, annual conference, employer, insurance carrier, HealthFlex, or the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits will not be told if you qualify for coaching or what you and your coach discuss. It's also completely voluntary—you decide whether and when you'd like to speak with a health coach.

Completing the HealthQuotient (HQ) online health risk assessment is the first step to qualify for health coaching. If you already took the HQ and qualified for coaching, a health coach will call you directly. If you haven't yet taken the HQ, please visit the HealthFlex/WebMD web site at www.gbophb.org, click on "HealthFlex/WebMD" and enter your username and password; then

Take the HQ Online, Avoid the Deductible

All participants and spouses covered by HealthFlex active plans will now need to complete the online HealthQuotient (HQ) questionnaire by August 31, 2010, or pay a \$250 individual/\$500 family deductible before your physicians will receive reimbursements in 2011. There is nothing that can change this. Those who do take the online HQ will continue to have no deductible. If only one person in a family covered by HealthFlex active plans takes the HQ, the deductible will still be charged at \$500.

Active plans include all EPO, PPO, EPO/OOA and PPO/OOA plans, regardless of current employment status. This change does not involve Medicare companion plans.

This change eliminates the previous \$100 bonus for taking the HQ. You can complete the HQ online at www.gbophb.org, after you have registered for an account with WebMD.

click on "HealthQuotient" in the "Get Started" column. After you've completed the HQ, you'll be able to click on "HealthQuotient" and then "Schedule Call" to make an appointment online.

For questions about the health-coaching program or the HQ—or to schedule a coaching appointment—call WebMD at 1-866-302-5742. Health coaching is currently available only to participants and spouses covered by HealthFlex active plans—EPO, PPO, OOA or CDHP.

Call to Action Offers Signs of Crisis, Hope

A UMNS REPORT

First, the bad news: The United Methodist Church needs to change its operations denomination-wide to address financial challenges and be more relevant in its ministry around the globe.

Then, the good news: Despite these challenges, many churches of varied sizes and settings have found ways to grow and thrive.

Those are the findings of two studies by independent researchers released in mid-July by the denomination's Call to Action Steering Team. The reports included an "Operational Assessment of the Connectional Church" and a "Congregational Vitality" overview.

"The operational assessment invites us to think about how we can realign the whole system to reinforce what we learned about what makes congregations vital," said Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, who led the steering committee.

The 16-member Call to Action Steering Team, which includes clergy and laity, will

present recommendations based on the studies to the denomination's Council of Bishops and Connectional Table in November.

The main conclusion of the operational assessment is that the denomination is experiencing a "creeping crisis" of relevancy.

"Although the crisis is being influenced by financial duress, it is not foremost a financial crisis," said the report by Apex Healthcare Group, which was based on surveys and interviews.

Among the problems outlined by the assessment are a general lack of trust within the denomination and a perception of great distance among local churches, annual conferences and the general church agencies.

The study indicated some areas where improvement is needed:

- More clarity and understanding about the denomination's mission, culture and values
- Less perceived organizational "distance" between and among the foundational units of the church
- Better defined leadership roles,

responsibilities, and accountability; and improvements in trust

- More standardized management processes and reporting systems
- Utilizing opportunities for improved affordability and effectiveness

The second study by the consulting firm Towers Watson examined the factors that lead to vital congregations, as measured by attendance, growth and the engagement of members.

The firm analyzed data from more than 32,000 United Methodist churches in North America and identified diverse types of congregations that could be classified as vital.

According to the study, the four main drivers of vitality are:

- A mix of both traditional and contemporary worship services
- Small groups including programs for children and youth
- Inspirational preaching and length of pastoral appointment
- Lay leadership



Banners, New Lives Lifted High by the Spirit

Continued from page 1

climbing on an inflatable wall, shop the mission booths for handicrafts, or write a letter of support to a soldier deployed overseas. There was even a “mascot” cross and flame who posed for countless numbers of photo opportunities.

At times, it was difficult to navigate between the tents. In a posting on the NYAC Facebook page, Ed Dayton said, “At one point I tried to make my way from the mission tent to the laity tent and I could not push my way through the crowd! Congratulations to Ann (Pearson) and everyone for a tremendous success.”

For some, it was a chance to reconnect with friends from across the conference, and for others to create new relationships. Members from distant corners of the conference shared their boxed lunches together, as people scrambled for any available chair. Kathy Hanse said it was the “most meaningful and inspiring conference ever,” in a Facebook posting. “The festival of ministry was amazing—truly a life changing event! It was wonderful to be a part of such a vibrant and blessed group!”

And first-timer Stacey Gallagher shared a similar response, “My first annual conference—the Holy Spirit was present! Totally rejuvenating! Thank you to all who worked so hard to bless so many!”

Another impressive result of the day was the assembly of 3,600 health kits. That number was added to the kits that had already been delivered to the arena, leaving the conference with more than 11,000 kits to send off to UMCOR. Thanks to the work of Rev. Jessica Anschultz and Rev. Gene Ott, a Walgreen’s drugstore in Hempstead, N.Y., helped the effort by delivering 3,600 nail clippers and 3,600 bars of soap at a discounted price.

In his episcopal address on Wednesday, the bishop had set the tone for the week by insisting that what the church needs is “urgent, trusting and radical change.” Hard choices will need to be made. Our life as Christians is all about Jesus Christ and his love. “We’ve been chosen by Jesus Christ to go and bear fruit,” Park said. “It is a privilege and joy, not a burden.” We must revive love and joy in our churches, otherwise “what’s the point?”

That love and joy was apparent throughout the day, but especially as hundreds of congregations processed under an explosion of colorful banners singing and laughing all the way into the arena. It seemed at times that the parade would never end. Trudy Koehn Clark wrote on Facebook, “I was holding back tears



Bishop Park is framed by outstretched arms during the altar call on Saturday afternoon.



ABOVE: Children carry a mixture of American and Korean flags. LEFT: Hundreds of churches joined in the parade of banners into the arena.

during the parade . . . what a terrific day!”

Bishop Park welcomed the throng to “this awesome celebration . . . We are here to be a witness to the awesome God we serve in Jesus Christ.” But he cautioned that if they liked it too much, there might be a problem. “This place will be too small!” he said with a grin. It was apparent that the day had turned out better than even he had envisioned. He then led the body in singing one of his favorite hymns, “How Great Thou Art!”

There was wild cheering when the bishop asked all of the new members to stand and be recognized. Then he asked them to sit down, while those around them stood and held out their arms as he lifted the new members in prayer.

This was the time to share more good news about God’s work going on throughout the conference. Clergy and laity from six different congregations stepped to the podium to share how God is working through them to bless their communities:

- Harpersfield UMC meets for worship on Thursday nights instead of Sunday morning, and shares a fellowship dinner after the service.
- Ghana Wesley UMC has a “funeral ministry” in which they will arrange for a funeral in Ghana for any of their members who so desire. Someone from the church accompanies the body and pays all the costs.
- The Church of the Village reflects the energy and diversity of its NYC location with

Continued on page 11



Banners, New Lives Lifted High by the Spirit

Continued from page 10

its praise dance team, drummers' choir, and monthly open mike nights. It also hosts a feeding and referral program for its neighbors.

- Hicksville UMC is reaching out to its changing multicultural community with Indian and Korean services, and has also begun outreach to Muslim youth and families.

- Jesse Lee Memorial UMC is reaching out specifically to men who have shunned the church to join in their building ministry. The teams have done maintenance and rehab on the church's own structures and also jobs in the community. In Spring 2011, they will be building at Camp Epworth.

- South Meridian Trinity UMC has partnered with other churches in their cluster to establish and operate Unity House, a refugee resettlement house that has been home to 11 people since 2003.

Rev. Kenny Yi, Long Island West district superintendent, then explained that the conference has committed to create 30 new faith communities in the next three years; six will be started in 2010, 12 in 2011 and another 12 in 2012. The new starts this year range from urban foreign-language congregations to a rural community in Sullivan County to a prison ministry. The conference is also looking for 12 existing congregations to reinvigorate. Laity are especially being encouraged to apply to be a "vision bearer" in bringing Christ to new people in new places. The bishop then offered a blessing for those who will lead the six new starts this year.

To emphasize the need to build both a healthy spiritual body and a strong physical body, Bishop Park asked the crowd if anyone thought he could do 20 pushups. Their enthusiastic "yes" led him to go higher and higher in his challenge as a nervous Bishop James Swanson Sr. looked on. Eventually, Bishop Park took off his jacket and dropped to the stage as the crowd enthusiastically counted out 120 pushups. The bishop's actions prompted a few quick \$120 checks to be brought up from the audience for the Partners in Mission Fund. Jill Wilson commented on the bishop's pushups on Facebook: "As I watched him, I kept thinking, how many others have a bishop that would do this?"

Bishop Swanson was more than a little relieved when he was not called upon to match Park's feat, but he worked up quite a sweat as he brought another powerful message from God. He asked how many neglected and hurting people



Emphasizing the need for healthy bodies, Bishop Park challenged the gathering that he could do 120 pushups—and they counted them out for him.

live within the shadow of our own steeples. "We reach out across the world, but ignore what's right around our churches," he said, "... might be folks right in your pews."

He suggested that most of our churches are suffering from spiritual fever—"the fever of past-itis. That old dead pastor's not coming back, we're not going back to what we used to be. God has given us a brave new world—new hope, new people to change this messed up world!"

Swanson said the church needs more leaders who will be instruments of healing in the example of Jesus. "Jesus is at the center of churches that are growing," he said. "Everything we do in worship is leading up to that invitation to Christ; we can't not make the offer."

He encouraged the role of laity in making disciples for Christ. "Pastors are shepherds," he said, "and congregations are sheep. When's the last time you saw a shepherd give birth to a sheep? Where do sheep come from?" he exclaimed. "Sheep come from sheep."

"Where do sheep come from?" he asked, excitedly.

"Sheep come from sheep," the audience chanted back.

"Get busy, sheep!" he screamed in reply.

Then he caught his breath for a moment, wiped the sweat from his brow, and explained, "I came here with my manuscript to show that I can be erudite for this New York crowd. But you brought the wrong people in here! I get excited when I see people get excited about God; it's like giving sugar to a dog." The audience clapped and cheered in delight. "It's wrong to have this kind of energy in this place and then leave it here!

"Maybe some of you have heard something,

felt something and now you want to respond. The Lord is speaking, you decide if you want to follow Jesus," he said. "Decide if you want to give your life to Jesus Christ at annual conference."

Hundreds responded to his altar call and came forward to commit their lives and their work to Christ. They were met by the district superintendents, and other clergy and laity, who prayed with each one. As God was tugging at the hearts of those in the arena, Bishop Swanson took his unused manuscript, and slipped quietly out a side door to try to catch his 3:30 flight.

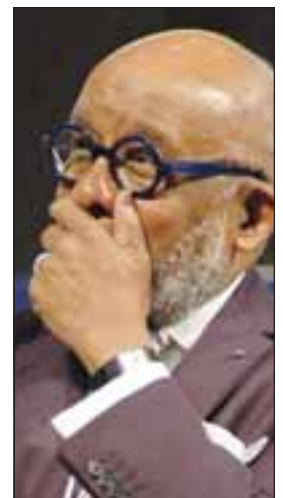
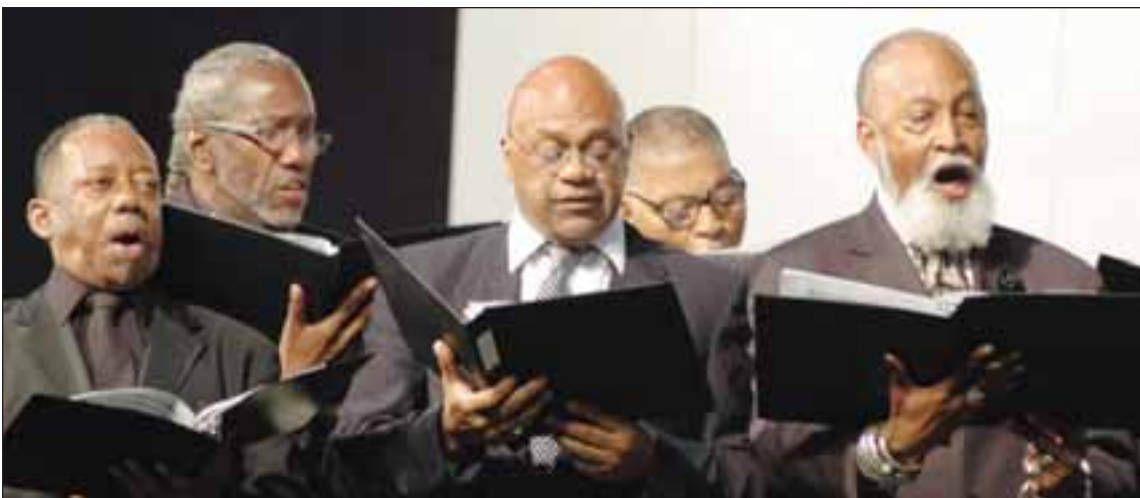


A conga line broke out as people came forward with the offerings for the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund.



WEDNESDAY

Clockwise from above: Outgoing Conference Coordinator Rev. Vicki Fleming is applauded; liturgical dancer Martha Chapman; Bible study leader, Rev. Dr. Vance Ross; Treasurer Ernest Swiggett at his retirement tribute; chancel choir members from Salem UMC; and Bishop Park delivers his episcopal address. Additional photos can be found at: <http://nyac.com/galleries/category/3>, or on the NYAC Facebook page.





Joy in Serving, Hope in Rebuilding

BY REV. DARLENE L. KELLEY

“When we celebrate mission, we are celebrating you!” Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie proclaimed at the Mission Dinner held on Friday, June 11, during Annual Conference. “It is you, our volunteers, who have set our Annual Conference on fire!”

Indeed, the flames of love and hope burned brightly as people gathered to honor the volunteers in mission who have responded to the needs of others in our own land, and around the globe. The evening’s festivities began with song as an acappella group from Haiti, The Union Brothers, sang in French and in English. Then Ewoodzie, our own mission outreach coordinator, addressed the crowd. “This is our second mission celebration dinner,” Ewoodzie said with a wide grin, “and it’s growing!”

Ewoodzie then introduced Brian Rivers, volunteer coordinator with HOPE, a community development agency in the Gulf Coast region. Rivers explained that the need in Biloxi, Miss., is still great. “We still need the New York Annual Conference. We still have over 1,000 people living with black mold, and in temporary housing,” Rivers said, “and it is your volunteers who bring God’s love to those who are suffering.”



Rev. Gesner Paul described the great need for recovery in his home country of Haiti.

Since October 2005, 119 teams of NYAC volunteers have responded to the cries of the people of Biloxi, and will continue to do so until the work is done.

“It was the church who provided,” said Ethel Clay, “It was not the government. It was not the insurance companies. We couldn’t find either one of them.”

“It was you. And I thank Almighty God that you came to help us,” Clay said, as she fought back tears to express the deep gratitude of all the homeowners in Biloxi. “The stench of death was everywhere” she sighed. “Flies swarmed, and the humidity was so high it was almost unbearable, but



Teams from the NYAC have helped Biloxi resident Ethel Gray rebuild her home.

you came, and you are still helping families on the Gulf Coast.”

Yet, as we celebrate the work in Biloxi, the conference is preparing to respond to the suffering and devastation in Haiti. Rev. Gesner Paul, president of the Methodist Church of Haiti, drew from Nehemiah’s words as he spoke of the gracious hand of my God.

“Let us start rebuilding. Let us stand together to rebuild Haiti,” Rev. Paul implored. “Haiti is now sick in bed. The hospital room is ready. The medicine is there, but we need doers to heal Haiti . . . Everything has changed since January 12,” Paul added. “Don’t you see the trouble we are in?”



Brian Rivers, volunteer coordinator with HOPE in the Gulf Coast, and Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, conference mission coordinator.

Rev. Paul’s sorrow was palpable as he spoke of the 76 members of the Methodist Church of Haiti who were lost during the tragic earthquake. Other 117 members suffered serious injuries; 410 member homes, nine schools, and six churches were destroyed.

“Now, my friends,” Paul said, “we count on you. We must come together to work. We have to be people of action”. And act we will. On Tuesday, June 15, the first team of trained volunteers left for Haiti. They will respond to a long list of needs, and just like the volunteers in Biloxi—they will keep responding until the work is done. (See Haiti VIM story on Page 7.)

Williams New NYAC Treasurer

Ross Williams, a life-long United Methodist, will become the treasurer/director of administrative services upon the retirement of Ernest Swiggett on September 1. Williams was nominated by the conference Council of Finance and Administration, and approved during the meetings at Hofstra.

Williams has been vice president and chief risk and compliance officer at Cognizant Technology Solutions since 2004. Cognizant is a \$4 billion global provider of information technology services with over 85,000 employees. From 1998 to 2004, he was Cognizant’s vice

president and corporate controller.

He became a certified public accountant in 1992, the year after earning an M.B.A. from Fordham University. Williams graduated cum laude from the State University of New York at Brockport, with a bachelor’s degree in finance/economics.

Williams grew up in Yonkers, attending the Asbury-Crestwood UMC. As a young adult, he joined the New Canaan UMC, and for the last 12 years has been a member of Darien UMC. He helped bring Natural Church Development to Darien, and currently serves as the chairperson of the finance and stewardship committees.



Bishop Jeremiah Park congratulates Ross Williams who will serve the conference as treasurer.



THURSDAY

Clockwise from above: Arms are raised in a blessing for the retirees; Holy Communion is served during the memorial service; choir from New Life Community Church; Rev. Ken Kieffer preaches; Rev. Joseph Agne and his wife, Dana Jones, receive the MFSA's White Award.



Saints Remembered

Rev. Ken Kieffer delivered a message of hope and remembrance during the Thursday morning service in memory of those who had died in the last year:

Clergy: Constance Jackson, John Seongmo Park, William C. Carroll, Fredrick Craig Clark, Harold Monroe Jenkins, Claude R. Welch, Harold Lee Beaumont, Francis R. Lewis, F. Allan Kirton, Robert Standish Hamilton, Duncan T. Trueman, Evelyn Newman, Helen Ayer Lombard, and Charlotte Ann Jaroscsak

Spouses of clergy: Patricia King Martin, Frances Perry Newton, Yolanda Horbert, Beatrice Hewitt, Roberta M. Marsland, Laura Mae Siktberg, and Bettie Lee Carothers Clarke

Widows and widowers of clergy: Evelyn Brown, Dorothy S. Nutt, Dorothy Osborn, and Eleanor Thompson

Children of clergy: Paul Todd Bradley, and Chay Stinson Ponlork

21 Retirees Honored

On Thursday night, 21 retiring clergy members, who have more than 400 years of combined service were honored: Victoria Affram-Boyd, Joseph Agne, Anne (Vicky) Annin, Warren Beaven, Carol Robinson Beaven, John Brown III, Nancy Carter, Mark Chatterton, Mary Helen Crump, Peggy Fabrizio, Dorothy Ann Grant, John Horesco III, Frederic O. Jackson, Merrill Kanouse, Joan Krawchick-Johnson, David Lull, Charles Naugle, John Nelson, William Resling, Thomas Smoot and Joyce Wilkerson.



Bishop Swanson Fires Up Ordination, Commissioning

BY REV. DARLENE E.R. RESLING

If you've ever seen ashes blown out of a hot fire and then watched as they drifted higher and higher, you have an idea of what it was like to be in the preaching presence of Bishop James E. Swanson Sr. Friday night during the joint ordination-commissioning-licensing service in the Hofstra arena. With a powerful combination of humor, directness about God's call, and a bold voice, Bishop Swanson brought down the house!

Following his address, nine candidates were ordained as elders in full connection: Gabriel O. Akinbode, Amanda Iahn, Tisha Michelle Jermin, Robert E. Kersten, Dale Ellen Krazmien, Cynthia Major, Dorothy M. Morris, Anne Rossini, and Alpher K. Sylvester. Commissioned as provisional elders were Delores Barrett, Delois Davis, Leslie Duroseau, Camella Fairweather, Juhye Hahn, Margaret Laemmel, Simeon Law, Halley Low, Gene Ott, Seungho Shin, Bette Johnson Sohm, and Joanne Utley. In addition, Steven Knutson was recognized as an associate member, while Carol Bloom and Donald Adams received local pastor licenses.

Bishop Swanson drew each person into his ordination message by explaining that all those gathered have a consistent call from God—whether they were on the



The newly ordained respond to the applause and cheers of the crowd.

stage or in the audience. "We are all commissioned to carry the Good News to a bad news world," he said.

Then turning his focus, he told the candidates on stage that they had been set apart to help others go into the world to fulfill this mission of Good News. He said each of them had felt the spirit of God descend and knowing that would help them realize that they were being called to perform miracles, by God's power. Each would be expected to heal broken hearts—even while their own hearts are broken. Each would be called to preach deliverance to the captive, just as Jesus declared in Luke 4:16–21, rather than simply offering "smooth sounding words."

Frequent applause and cheers at times smothered the Bishop's

words, but that only seemed to heat up the power of his declarations as he loudly and cheerfully proclaimed, "We serve a risen Savior who's kicking butt and taking names . . ."

Declaring that the church is not dying but is very much alive, Swanson shared how his Columbus, Ga., congregation grew from 16 persons to more than 500. Bishop Swanson, who was elected to the episcopacy in 2004, serves the Holston area that includes 906 churches in parts of Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia.

Electricity filled the arena as he roared, "He lives, He is our Savior, and He is alive!" Turning again

to those on stage, he cautioned that they would be sent to places that would make them cry, "but remember God has sent you so that the church might have life!"

Advising them to trust in God and to put their lives in Jesus' hands, he said, "God would make a way . . . You'll set New York Annual Conference on fire!!!"

Joy, hope, and power overflowed the arena as all felt themselves lifted higher and higher—lifted up by the challenge to go and to make a difference in this world by sharing the Good News in a bad news world, while knowing we are all called to serve a Risen Savior! Hallelujah!



Delores Barrett, left, and Delois Davis kneel to be commissioned as provisional elders.



Bishop James Swanson Sr. brought the crowd to their feet during his ordination sermon.



Rev. Juhye Hahn and Rev. Peg Laemmel enjoy the moment after being commissioned.



Church & Society Urged to Aid Mother, Child Health

BY TOM CODDINGTON

The speakers at the July 11 annual dinner meeting of the NYAC Board of Church and Society (CBCS) sounded a warning on the global health of women and their children.

Katey Zeh, a consultant for the General Board of Church and Society's "Healthy Families, Healthy Planet," called the initiative, "an investment in family health. More than 1,000 women a day, and more than 350,000 a year, die from childbirth and pregnancy issues," she said. The project, which has been funded by the United Nations, works to educate and mobilize United Methodists in the United States on the importance of maternal and child health, and international family planning. The CBCS has taken on the task of promoting this initiative locally.

"Why should this be important to the church?" Zeh asked. Answering her own question, she said, "Christ called us to love everyone. Our social principles say that we have the right and the responsibility to be concerned."

Zeh told the gathering, "Millions of women have no access to family planning, no way to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and no way to reduce the risk of HIV transmission.

"This program can save the lives of women and children.

We can cut the mortality rate of women and children by one-third, right away, when it is applied. It will cost less than \$2 to save one woman," she said.

Julie Warren, a registered nurse now working out of Chesterfield, Va., has worked with women at risk in many third-world countries, particularly in Liberia. "Many of these women keep having babies because they want to keep the family going. Many of these children die before they are two years old," she noted.

"They have no preventive medicine and, as women, they also have no rights," she added. "We can reduce child mortality by improving maternal health, and by combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases."

Warren also said that conditions in many of those countries are so unsanitary that many babies are actually "born in the dirt." She said that UMCOR has designed "birthing kits," and she displayed one of these kits for those in attendance. "For just \$7, we can save a life!" she declared.

To find more information on "Healthy Families, Healthy Planet," and take action to support the initiative, go to www.umchealthyfamilies.org. Details on the birthing kits can be found at <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/birthingkit/>.



Four of the 16 students winning awards and scholarships from the New York Education Society receive certificates.

NYSE, Current Scholarships Awarded

New York Education Society Scholarship Winners

\$1200 Fellow

- Jonathan Brito, St. Paul & St. Andrew UMC
- Kimberly Elizabeth Brown, Butler UMC
- Donna J. Fringuello-Girot, Nichols UMC
- Preet Korani, Community UMC
- Julia Madden, St. Paul & St. Andrew UMC
- Carla Esther Phillips, UMC Pleasantville
- Emma Rose Sanborn, St. James UMC
- Amanda Yau, Chinese UMC

\$800 Scholar

- Paul John, St. Mark's UMC, Valley Stream
- Jelani Magloire, Butler

UMC

- Brandon Samuel, Butler Memorial

\$500 Book Grant

- Deonne Beverly John, St. Mark's UMC, Valley Stream
- Sushil Purushotham, Community UMC
- Justin Cecil Thompson-Gee, Poughkeepsie UMC
- Andrew Yau, Chinese UMC

\$1500 Conference Merit

- Emily Peck-McClain, St. Paul & St. Andrew UMC

Gloster B. Current Sr. Scholarship/\$1,000

- Elise Noelle Boykin, Vanderveer UMC
- Kemara Genardo, St. Paul UMC, Jamaica

Appointments on NYAC.com

For the list of 2010-11 clergy appointments, please go to the NYAC web site at:

<http://www.nyac.com/pages/detail/1742>.

Thanks So Much!

A great big thank-you to a group of folks who put their giftedness to work covering annual conference as part of communications team: Tweeters Melissa Hinnen and Jennifer Harmer; photographers Mark Gafney, Stephanie Parsons and Peg Laemmel; writer/photographer Tom Coddington; and writers Darlene Resling and Darlene Kelley. God bless you for coming to the rescue.



FRIDAY

Clockwise from above: Bishop Park and Rev. Sandra Mantz congratulate Denman Evangelism Award winners, Rev. Darlene Kelley and layperson, M.E. Solomon; Lay Leader Renata Smith gives her report; shopping at the Bolivia booth; ProCheck health screenings; Bishop Park introduces new Conference Coordinator Rosemarie Walker; Rev. John Carrington and Current scholarship winners, Elise Noelle Boykin and Kemara Genardo; Rev. Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii presented the cabinet report; and a pair of very young Methodists and their moms.





Never Too Late for VIM Celebration

An apologetic Bishop Park met with the Volunteers in Mission teams following the adjournment of conference on Saturday afternoon. "I love you. After all these things, do you still love me?" he asked, the dozens of volunteers that had joined him on the stage. With the banner parade and Bishop Swanson both running overtime, the VIM portion of the program was bumped at the last minute.

But the teams didn't seem to mind too much because it meant they had the bishop all to themselves. He commended each of the teams on their continued dedication to the mission work and encouraged them to share their stories with their families, friends and congregations.

And then it was time to hand out those really big checks from the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund. A total of \$95,000 was given to:

- **\$10,000:** Youth Ambassadors, Ghana, Mozambique, and Central Conference Pension Fund

- **\$5,000:** Cambodia, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Women's Advocate Ministry

- **\$35,000:** Haiti Mission —\$3,500 for each of 10 monthly teams. UMCOR will match the \$3,500 for each team.

The following people also received certificates of appreciation for their dedication as Biloxi VIM team leaders:

Three times

Rev. Paul Hibbard, Watertown, Conn.

Jerolyn Morrison, Christ Church
Deborah Lamb, Red Hook



Bishop Park prays with the VIM team members who met with him after the close of conference on Saturday afternoon.

Terry Temple, Hyde Park
Deborah Dayton, Norwalk
Patricia Little, Poughkeepsie
Jud Ramaker, Asbury, Croton-on-Hudson

Four times

Leigh Lewandoski, First Greenwich
Ross Porter, Mt. Kisco
Rev. Martha Vink, The United Ministry, Delhi, NY
Bob Christie, Woodbury, NY

2010 Mission Gold Awards

24K Gold
St. Paul & St. Andrew, Babylon

18K Gold

Chinese, Wakefield, Hyde Park, First Stamford, Vanderveer Park, Woodbury, Conn., and Mary Taylor Memorial.

14K Gold

Fishkill; Pleasantville; Sugar Loaf; Mt. Kisco; Shady, Overlook; St. Mark-Napanock; Clinton, Conn.; Asbury, Forrestville, Conn.; and First Baldwin.

12K Gold

Mountainville; Highland Mills; Trinity; Ulster Heights; Union, East Northport, NY; and North Shore.



LEFT: Bishop Park asks the forgiveness of the VIM teams, who were bumped because of time constraints. ABOVE: A check for \$5,000 is given for the mission that will go to Ecuador in January 2011.



SATURDAY

Clockwise from above: There was something for everyone at the outdoor Momentum of Ministry Festiva—a boxed lunch; an inflatable slide, old friends, dance troupes to entertain; and crafts to make.





Things You Might Have Missed

Other actions and events at annual conference included:

- An appearance by Rev. Paul Gesner, president of the Methodist Church in Haiti, who addressed the immediate needs of his earthquake-ravaged country. The conference has donated nearly \$500,000 to UMCOR for Haiti, and, over the next 10 months, will be sending one VIM team a month to the country.

- The giving of \$95,000 from the Bishop's Partners in Mission fund for mission trips to Haiti, Ghana, Mozambique, Cambodia, Bolivia, and Ecuador, and to the Women's Advocate Ministry and the Central Conference Pension Fund.

- A celebration honoring all VIM teams, especially those who have been rebuilding in Biloxi, Miss., during the last five years.

- The collection and/or assembling of more than 11,000 health kits for UMCOR. A Walgreen's drugstore in Hempstead, N.Y., provided 3,600 bars of soap and nail clippers at a discounted price for the effort.

- Presentation of the Henry Denman Award for Evangelism to layperson, M.E. Solomon, and to Rev. Darlene L. Kelley of Clinton Avenue UMC in Kingston, N.Y.

- Votes to approve four church mergers: Christ UMC and St. Luke's UMC to become New Rochelle UMC; South Third and Knickerbocker will join to become New Jerusalem UMC; South Middletown and Higganum to be known as Higganum UMC; and Glendale and Maspeth to become Glendale Maspeth UMC.

- The conference has



LEFT: Those who will start six new faith communities this year are sent off with prayer. The communities range from urban foreign-language to rural Sullivan County. RIGHT: Young and old alike helped assemble 3,600 health kits at the festival Saturday, and that brought the total to be shipped to UMCOR to nearly 11,000.



committed to create 30 new faith communities in the next three years; six will be started in 2010, 12 in 2011 and another 12 in 2012. The new starts this year range from urban foreign-language congregations to a rural community in Sullivan County. If you'd like to get involved in new starts, go to the NYAC web site at, <http://www.nyac.com/news/detail/148>; training begins in September.

- UMC bishops Alfred Johnson and F. Herbert Skeete, as well as Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Bishop Robert J. Rimbo, of the Metropolitan New York Synod, participated in the commissionings and ordinations.

- Offerings totaling \$40,000 were received for the Children's Home, the Black College Fund, the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund and the Ministerial Education Fund.

- Adoption of a 2011 expense budget of \$9,678,558.00 (a 6.8 percent increase over 2010), which includes an apportionment budget

of \$8,594,558, a 1.3 percent increase.

- A prayer of gratitude for the outstanding ministry and leadership of Dr. Maxine Beach, who is retiring after 10 years as dean of the Drew Theological School.

- For the first time, the annual conference was telecast, via live Web streaming, enabling friends and family around the globe to witness the opening session, and the memorial, retirement and ordination/commissioning services.

- Among legislation passed on consensus was a call for action on immigration reform, and support for a living wage campaign and global health initiative for mothers and babies, and a mandate to correct and republish past conference journals.

- Legislation approved by floor vote included the imperative to respond to hate crimes, a call for equality in ministry, and the request for a Judicial Council decision on the right of some clergy to marry. A petition asking that the NYAC apologize for the church's stance on homosexuality in advertisements was ruled out of order by Bishop Park.

- It was reported that membership in conference



A gigantic thank-you to Ms. Hospitality herself, Rev. Ann Pearson, who as director of Connectional Ministries coordinated everything that went into making the Momentum of Ministry Festival a huge success.

churches stands at 115,813, a decrease of 2,782; average weekly Sunday School attendance was 10,707, down 638. But weekly worship attendance rose by 342 for a total of 37,072, and professions of faith increased by 53 to 2,328.

Video, Audio Recordings Available

You can purchase audio CDs, video DVDs and download MP3 files of many of the events at annual conference, including the ordination/commissioning service, and the daily Bible studies. You may order online at www.gntv.info. GNTV is a ministry of the South Georgia Annual Conference.