

"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

May 21, 2010



Worshipful Work

The Floral Park UMC put their hands to work on April 18 by assembling health kits as part of their Sunday worship. Pastor Gainus Sikes offered a homily, "Love Makes A Difference," and then invited those gathered to make a health kit and offer a prayer for the recipient. More stories about health kits on Pages 3 and 11.



Getting Ready To Gather At Hofstra

In a few short weeks, clergy and lay members of the New York Annual Conference will be gathering again at Hofstra University on Long Island. So if you have not yet registered, now's the time to do so—and it's all online at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2714>. During the time together, our theme will continue to focus on the NYAC vision statement: "For Such a Time as This: We Are Building Up a Healthy Body of Christ."

Check-in begins at 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 9, at the Hofstra Arena. The clergy session starts at 1 p.m. in the university playhouse. Rev. Vance Ross, deputy general secretary of the General Board of Discipleship, will speak at the laity session beginning at 2 p.m. Ross will also be offering the Bible study each morning at 8:30.

Bishop Jeremiah Park will officially open the conference at 7 p.m. Wednesday, with his episcopal address following at 7:30.

The memorial service to honor the clergy, spouses and children who have died in the last year is at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 10. Rev. Ken Kieffer, superintendent of the Connecticut District, will preach.

Also on Thursday, the legislative sections are scheduled to begin after lunch, and the celebration to honor those clergy who are retiring is at 7:15 p.m.

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VIM Teams to Return to Haiti

BY REV. JOSEPH EWOODZIE
Conference Mission Coordinator

The moment has come for us to put love into action. Our brothers and sisters in Haiti are calling on us to come and help. The New York Annual Conference is now scheduling teams for Volunteers in Mission work in Haiti and 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

June 15–23: 12 persons
July 20–28: 10 persons
August 23–31: 10 persons
September 21–29: 10 persons
October 18–26: 10 persons

How to Apply

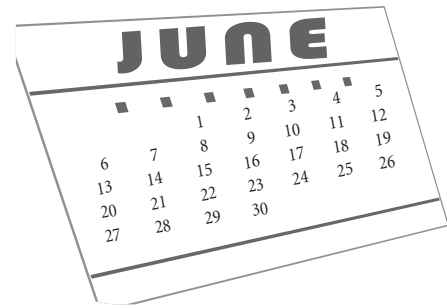
- Complete an application—available site at: <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1740>.
- Select from the scheduled trips above, indicating your first and second choice.
- Provide the name on your official passport, and your contact information.

- Send a deposit check of \$500 payable to NYAC/Haiti ERT
- Total cost per participant is \$1,500 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.

SAVE THE DATE



“Children of Eden” Performances

May 20–22: Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*) and John Caird’s (*Les Misérables*) Children of Eden is an inspirational musical about forgiveness. It’s loosely based on Genesis, and offers a frank, heartfelt, and often humorous examination of the timeless conflict between parents and children. For information and tickets, go to the APAC website: <http://www.apacny.org/>. Performances run through May 22; Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8 p.m., Saturday matinee at 2 p.m. The theater is at Good Shepherd UMC, 30-44 Crescent Street at 30th Road, Astoria, NY 11101.

Ethnic Clergywomen Prayer Conference

May 21–22: “Fresh Fire,” a prayer conference for women in the NYAC is planned at Stony Point Conference Center, Stony Point, N.Y. Space is limited to 50. The fee is \$150. Register by April 30, by sending a check payable to Fenimore Street UMC with Ethnic Clergywomen’s Conference in the memo line. Send a check and your contact information to: Andrea Smith, Fenimore Street UMC, 266 Fenimore St., Brooklyn, NY 11225-5311. For questions, contact Smith at 718-469-8816. Rev. Dr. Maxine Nixon is the convener.

Creating Safe Sanctuaries

May 22: Safe Sanctuary Workshop, NYAC Learning Center, White Plains, NY. Registration is at 12:30 pm; the workshop runs from 1-4 p.m. To sign up, please contact Lynda Gomi at lgomi@nyac.com or LearningCenter@nyac.com; toll free: 1-800-696-6922, ext. 219 or direct at 914-615-2219.

Annual Conference at Hofstra

June 9–12: There’s still time to register online, at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2714> for the New York Annual Conference gathering at Hofstra University in Uniondale, N.Y. See the related stories on Page 1, 3 and 4.

Swiggett Retirement Celebration

June 19: Ernest Swiggett, who is retiring as conference treasurer, will be honored at 1 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza hotel, White Plains, N.Y. Ticket deadline is June 7; cost is \$85 per person. Please send a check along with your name, church name, and a mailing address for the tickets to: Ivy Mignott, 920-12 H Baychester Ave., Bronx, NY 10475. Questions to Ivy at 718-671-9426.

Photography Workshop at Kingswood

June 28–July 2: Learn to produce commercial-quality images in a natural setting with instruction in landscape and plant photography. Shoot in the fields and woods, or on the trails and pond at Kingswood Campsite in Hancock, N.Y. A special trip is planned for nature documentary shooting. Enjoy fellowship, camp cooking, and the superb

natural, diverse environment of this camp in the Catskills. Cost is \$375; leader is Christie R. House, editor of New World Outlook magazine. Call the Kingswood camp registrar at 845-679-5692 to sign up.

Faith, Hope, Love at Mission School

July 22–24: With a theme of “Faith, Hope, Love in Action,” the 2010 Cooperative School of Christian Mission will be held at Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, Conn. Areas of study include the epistles of John, the Sudan, evangelism in the age of global Christianity. The three-day program is \$180 for adults, \$150 for teens age 13–17; \$60 for first child under age 13 and \$40 for each additional child. Registration information is available at: <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/NYACCSOCM/index.htm>. The reservation deadline for both the program and your hotel is June 23. Book a room online at www.ethanallenhotel.com, or by calling 1-800-742-1776. Mention that you are part of the UM Women’s group. The double occupancy rate per night is \$109, plus tax. Please contact cooperative school registrar Doug Nicholson at somdoug@optonline.net with any questions.

Fall Clergy Day Apart



October 14: Clergy Day Apart at the Memorial/Central Korean UMC in White Plains.

UMM Annual Retreat

October 29–30: NYAC men’s retreat, “Building A Faith-Based Community,” at Stony Point Retreat Center, Stony Point, N.Y.

2011 Order of Elders’ Retreat

May 3–6, 2011: The retreat is scheduled for Mount St. Alphonsus in Esopus, N.Y. To suggest or recommend a speaker, contact Rev. Constance Pak at, pastorconstance@msn.com.

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

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Getting Ready To Gather At Hofstra

Continued from page 1

Bishop James Swanson Sr. will be the preacher for the joint service of commissioning and ordination that will be held at 7 p.m., Friday, June 11. Swanson, who was elected to the episcopacy in 2004, serves the Holston Area, which includes 906 churches in east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and north Georgia. He will also speak during Saturday afternoon's "Momentum of Ministry" gathering.

On Saturday morning, thousands of NYAC church members will rally outside the arena under three tents for the "Momentum" festival of ministries, which will include live music, interactive learning and children's activities. Then after a boxed lunch, churches will parade with their banners into the arena to hear Bishop Swanson and celebrate our Volunteers in Mission teams. The afternoon is scheduled to come to a close at 4 p.m.

The conference agenda, the various committee reports and the legislative petitions can all be found online at: <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1641>.

There are a variety of ways to keep up with what will be happening during conference:

- Check for Daily Updates of The Vision on the information tables beginning on Thursday morning.
- Joanne Utley, editor of *The Vision* will be blogging during the sessions at <http://www.nyac.com/blogs/author/1>
- Look for posts and photos on the New York Annual Conference FaceBook page (Are you a fan yet?)
- Follow our tweeters by searching for the hashtag #nyac2010 through your Twitter account.
- And for the first time, we will be streaming live to the Internet most of the worship services: Wednesday evening, the memorial and retiree services, commissioning and ordination, and possibly the Bible studies each morning. The web site is: <http://gntv.info/live/ny/>. Please let your congregations, family

and friends know about this opportunity to watch the conference live from home.

Health Kits: Bring your completed health kits to the collection area on the mezzanine level of the arena on Wednesday–Friday. Any kits delivered on Saturday should be brought to the children's ministries tent in the parking lot. Additional kits will be assembled as one of the projects during the outdoor festival.

Church Name Banners: Each church that has new members coming for the "Momentum in Ministry" event on Saturday has been asked to bring or create a banner with their church name on it. The new members will carry that banner during a parade into the arena.



Ministry & Seasonal Banners: Churches are also being asked to bring handmade topical or scriptural banners to be hung along the railings around the arena. These banners could be for Advent, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Bible verses, Jesus' parables, and the like. (No church names, please). Bring these banners on Wednesday when you pick up your registration materials at the arena. The conference staff will hang them up, but you will need to remember to take them down yourself on Saturday.

Free Health Screenings Available

One of the special health offerings at annual conference this year is the ProCheck health screening. Using a simple blood test, the ProCheck screening provides information about cholesterol levels, heart disease and stroke risk, diabetes risk and management, thyroid abnormalities, kidney disease, anemia or iron overload, liver disease, and prostate cancer in men. The screenings will be available at the Hofstra Student Center on Thursday, June 10 and Friday, June 11, from 7 to 10 a.m.

The ProCheck screening is offered free to all participants and spouses covered by HealthFlex active medical plans or Medicare companion plans. Please remember to bring your medical ID card. Clergy, lay workers and spouses not

covered by HealthFlex may take the ProCheck screening for a fee of \$115, payable at the time of service by cash, check or credit card. These tests would cost much more at a doctor's office or other medical facility.

And we will pay our participants for taking the Procheck. Yes, you will get a \$50 Cokesbury card that can be used at their bookstore at Annual Conference.

For the most accurate results, you should fast from food and beverages from midnight until after your ProCheck blood draw. But you can drink water and brush your teeth. Since the ProCheck screenings are early in the morning, you can catch up on breakfast afterwards. Some

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Churches Go For Mission Gold

Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, mission coordinator, has put out a call for the NYAC's Mission Gold Award applicants. Churches qualify for a mission gold award if their shared ministry apportionments have been paid in full and they have participated in two or more of the mission areas listed below from June 2009 to May 2010:

- Supported at least one local mission project.
- Received "Special Sunday" offerings or similar mission related offerings.

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JUNE 9-12



ANNUAL CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Church & Society Works for Mother, Child Health

"I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

—John 10:10

The Conference Board of Church and Society (CBCS) will host a presentation on global maternal and child healthcare at their dinner at annual conference. "Healthy Families, Healthy Planet" is an initiative of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) and 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.

Featured speakers for the presentation will be Julie Warren, a nurse with extensive maternal health experience in Liberia, and Katey Zeh, the GBCS Director of the Healthy Families, Healthy Planet initiative. The dinner is 5 to 7 p.m., Friday, June 11, in the Student Center Greenhouse Room. The dinner is free to conference attendees.

Through grassroots education and advocacy efforts with policy makers, the goal of the project is to achieve higher levels of foreign aid for international family planning through the U.S. government. Healthy Families, Healthy Planet



strives to lift up voices from the global south and is working with the General Board of Global Ministries to bring reproductive health experts from around the world to the United States to share their stories and recommendations, and to meet with American legislators. It is funded by a grant from the United Nations Foundation.

Find more information on "Healthy Families, Healthy Planet" and take action to support the initiative by going to, www.umchealthyfamilies.org. Through the web site, you can ask your congressional representative to support President Obama's proposed increase in funding for international family planning and reproductive health in the foreign assistance budget.

Globally, motherhood can be dangerous for women and children. Here are some key reasons for undertaking the *Healthy Families* initiative:

- Every minute a woman in sub-Saharan Africa dies from complications during

pregnancy or childbirth. Nearly all of the annual 536,000 maternal deaths worldwide occur in the developing world.

- More than 200 million women worldwide want to avoid pregnancy, but lack a family-planning method.
- There are 80 million unintended pregnancies each year. More than half result in abortion, many of them under illegal and unsafe conditions.
- Investing in family planning reduces unintended pregnancy and increases health.
- By empowering women and men to make healthy decisions about how to space their children and determine their family size, family planning helps create healthier lives for themselves and for their children. Spacing children lowers the risk of infant mortality.
- Annually 4 million infants die within a month of being born. When a mother dies, it dramatically increases the risk of death for her baby.
- Women account for nearly half of all people living with HIV and are disproportionately affected by new infections. This could be reduced if women and men had access to contraception.

Avoid New Health Deductible—Take the HQ!

BY BILL SHILLADY
NYAC Board of Pensions
and Health Benefits

The General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits has made an important change that affects the conference medical plans for 2011. 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. 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.

Previously, participants who completed the online HQ had received a \$100 incentive. This change eliminates that bonus.

Completing the HQ by August 31 is the only way to avoid the medical plan deductible. If only one person in a family covered by HealthFlex

active plans takes the HQ, the deductible will still be charged at \$500.

WebMD, an accredited health organization with high standards for security and confidentiality, processes the personal data entered in the online HQ. Your health information is kept confidential; it is never shared with your annual conference, employer or the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

You can complete the HQ online at www.gbophb.org, using any computer with Internet access, after you have registered for an account with WebMD. Many of you have already done this after four years with HealthFlex.

If you are unable to complete the HQ, requests for accommodation must be addressed in writing to: General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, 1201 Davis St., Evanston, IL, 60201; Attn: HQ Requests. Please understand that our local board cannot make exceptions.

HealthFlex participants and spouses in active or Medicare companion plans can participate in the Virgin HealthMiles program,

which offers financial incentives for being physically active. You can earn up to \$300 in HealthCash incentives, depending on your level of activity.

HealthFlex believes there is a shared responsibility between the health plan, covered individuals and plan sponsors to be good stewards of health and health care resources. The HealthFlex incentives—including the two levels of deductibles and HealthCash opportunities—are designed to encourage participants and spouses to make choices that can improve their health. HealthFlex data shows that people who regularly complete the HQ typically have lower average health care costs than those who never take the HQ.

We will post all related documents at the conference website to answer any questions you may have.

Remember to it makes cents to walk for good health. And now it will cost you if you do not follow our plan's goals to help you toward better health by filling out the HealthQuotient online.

Recent New Appointments

Gabriel Akinbode
Bloomfield/CH

Stefanie Bennett
Middletown (CT)/CT

Robert Booth
Seymour UMC/CT

John Brandon
Bellport/LIE

John Chung
Jackson Heights (Chinese)/LIW

Delois Davis
Jackson Heights (English)/LIW
(Current interim pastor)

Larry Dunlap
Margaretville & Fleischmanns/CT

Nathaniel Grady
and **Joseph Crockett**
St. Mark's (Manhattan)/MET
Interim co-pastors

Simeon Law
Bayport/LIE

Joon Woo Lee
Higgenum & Rocky Hill/CT

YongBo Lee
Good Shepherd (Astoria)/LIW
(In addition to Astoria Korean)

Halley Low
Associate Pastor
Greenville & Norton Hill/CH

Jean Montas
Immanuel & First Spanish
(English)/LIW
(In addition to Première Eglise)

Beverley Morris-Joseph
Cuyler-Warren Street (Brooklyn)/
LIW

Erik Rasmussen
First, Central Islip & Hauppauge/
LIE

Lunne Rouse
Huntington-Cold Spring Harbor/
LIE

Wesley Shand
Brewster/NY-CT

Milagros Solorzano
Knickerbocker-South Third
(Brooklyn)/LIW

Elisa Vicioso
Immanuel & First Spanish
(Spanish)/LIW

Ruth Widmann
Woodbury, N.Y./LIE



New Rockaway Feeding Site Dedicated

Bishop Jeremiah Park and the Board of Directors of the United Methodist Center of Far Rockaway consecrated the new site of the feeding program on Sunday, April 25. Despite the cold and rainy weather, a warm heart for mission was the theme of the day. Nearly 150 friends and clients attended this special service and time of fellowship. Donations of \$1500 were collected and will be matched by the United Methodist City Society to benefit the center at 1032 Beach 19th Street.

Justice Offering for Local, Global Causes

Peace with Justice Sunday, one of the United Methodist Special Sundays with offering, will be officially observed May 30. However, congregations are welcome to celebrate Peace with Justice Sunday on any date that works best. This Special Sunday supports programs that advocate for peace and justice at home and around the world.

Established by the 1988 General Conference, peace with justice is a faithful expression of shalom in the Bible. The Peace with Justice program aims to make shalom visible and active in people's lives and communities by setting people free from bondage.

The UMC declares that peace with justice will be celebrated when all people have access to adequate jobs, housing, education, food, health care,



income support and clean water. We will further celebrate when structures and systems that reflect economic exploitation, war, political oppression, and cultural domination no longer exist.

Half of the offering collected by an annual conference is retained to fund local peace with justice programs. This is the sole source of funding for our NYAC Board of Church and Society. There is no line in the conference budget for our "church and society" ministry. So please announce the Peace With Justice offering in your church on May 30 or another Sunday.

The remainder of the offering is remitted to the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) to help fund U.S. and global work in social action, public-policy education and advocacy. GBCS also provides training around the globe for United Methodist pastors and laypersons, and grants to conferences, districts and local churches for education and advocacy around social concerns. A new church start in our own conference is a recipient of a substantial GBCS grant.

Stories of lives changed by Peace with Justice Sunday are available online at www.umcgiving.org. You can make a gift to Peace with Justice Sunday at any time through your local church or by going to www.umcgiving.org and clicking on "Donate."

CHANGE THE WORLD



Walden UMC, N.Y.: 32 members participated in three activities. Some cleaned up brush and branches at the Wallkill Valley Cemetery while others lead a hymn sing and visited residents at the Montgomery Nursing Home. The third group delivered gift baskets to senior citizens in their homes. Afterward, the congregation gathered for lunch and to share their experiences.



Milton & Marlboro UMC, Milton, N.Y.: Heavy rain couldn't keep congregation members from cleaning up three roads in Milton. Other members greeted shoppers at a local convenience store, handing out pinwheels to children and flower seed packets to the adults, each of which contained a Bible verse. The day ended with a covered dish supper.



Good Shepherd UMC, Astoria, N.Y.: The church joined in the Sleep Out to End Malaria to publicize the Nothing But Nets campaign. The group came together for dinner and then watched and discussed, "When the Night Comes," a documentary by Bobby Bailey about malaria deaths in Africa. Inclimate weather forced the sleepout inside, but members stayed the night and had breakfast before worship. Those who participated were asked to share their experience during worship.



Poughquag UMC: The church adopted a house with Rebuilding Together Dutchess County for \$3000, and then supplied 30 volunteers for a one-day home renovation for the sponsor family. The work included painting, installing gutters, electrical work, and removing a rotting enclosed porch.



Reservoir UMC, Shokan, N.Y.: Three work teams were dispatched from the church. One did cleanup at a rural cemetery while a second team planted flowers at the Shokan Post Office and the local coffee shop. The third team worked at the home of disabled man to remove debris from a fire and to scrape the home in preparation for painting. They also wrote cards to missionaries, letters to prisoners and advocacy letters to Congress regarding the International Violence Against Women Act, and tax credits for low-income families.



Phoenicia UMC, N.Y.: Members distributed labeled bags in the community to collect staples for the Town of Shandaken Food Pantry. They also wrote cards to missionaries, letters to prisoners and advocacy letters to Congress regarding the International Violence Against Women Act, and tax credits for low-income families.



Colchester Community UMC, Downsville, N.Y.: On April 18th, 27 members donned work clothes and set out into the community on three teams after a brief worship service led by Pastor Dale Ashby. One group helped truck large unwanted items to the transfer station while a second team cleared debris from the roadways. The third team visited the Roscoe Nursing Home. Afterward, everyone returned to the church for prayer and a time of fellowship.



True Ministry Begins in Loving People

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministries

Less than two weeks out of seminary, at my first fulltime appointment as a pastor, Al came to see me. Al was 50 years my senior, a retired Methodist pastor, and more than ready to offer advice. And never was the advice offered meanly or critically! It always came with a sense of caring that was always welcomed. Over the years, we became good friends and colleagues, with a great deal of respect for each other. In fact, Al visited me each Tuesday morning, even after I had moved 90 miles away from where he lived. He became a part of my family, performing baptisms for my children, attending birthday parties and picnics, and seeing my children as the children he never had. Al has long since died, but his presence and advice are still very much alive in my memory.

I've long wondered what it was that drew me to a true friendship with a man 50 years my senior. One thing is certain: the friendship began that very first day he visited me and offered me advice. What prompted the advice that made me want to know him better?



Al clearly sensed that, as a young 24-year-old assigned to a congregation with a lot of older adults, I was feeling a bit uneasy. In seminary, there were no classes or seminars on how to win trust with those of a much older generation. He said, "Jim, if we know you love us, you can say and do anything you want. You can make all sorts of mistakes, and you will. (Boy, was he right there!) You don't even have to be a good preacher. The more you love us, the more your preaching will improve. In the final analysis, just love us, that's all anyone really wants or needs."

Those words rang true instantly. I've carried them with me for more than 45 years now, and they have never been proven wrong. In fact, when I practice them, they are always proven absolutely

right. In those moments of ministry when doubtful of the ability to minister adequately, when I remembered the advice and "just loved" them, the doubt disappeared and ministry happened.

As I lead workshops and do preaching and speaking around the conference on ministry to and with older adults, the question of "how to" always is raised. I've come to believe there is no magic bullet, there is no surefire way to do ministry with older adults. But I do know that effective ministry at any level has to begin with "just loving" the people. That seems so basic, it sounds trite. But there is no doubt it is an accurate statement. Without loving the people (which includes: caring enough to speak the truth, expecting the same in return, accepting them as and where they are, redirecting self-centered concern into concern for others, offering the gospel of serving others to them) there can be no effective ministry. How to have effective ministry to and with older adults? Begin by just loving them. "In the final analysis... that's all anyone really wants or needs."

Thank you Al!

2 UM Homes Honored for Programs

The Assisted Living Federation of America has given their "Best of the Best" awards to programs in two United Methodist Homes Communities in Connecticut. The awards recognize the best practices that promote resident wellness and health in assisted living communities nationwide.

ALFA recognized Crosby Commons in Shelton for its Transitions of Care program which helps ease the movement of residents back and forth to the hospital or to a skilled nursing community for short-term rehabilitation. The program provides up-to-date clinical information, improving communication as well as the health outcomes of the residents.

Middlewoods of Farmington was honored for a comprehensive wellness program that taps into Western and Eastern ideologies and incorporates a variety of exercise, both on and off-campus. The program involves a partnership with the local YMCA as well as classes in reiki, Qi-Gong, Tai Chi, and belly dancing. Staff and residents alike have bonded in their desire to stay fit, leading to a substantial increase in activity levels.

"We are honored to receive ALFA's recognition of our best practices," "By getting to know our residents and creating an environment that nurtures and supports all members of the community, we continue to implement programs

that fulfill our mission to deliver high-quality, resident-centered care," said Robert L. Clapp, president and CEO of the UM Homes. "ALFA's awards reaffirm our efforts."

United Methodist Homes is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that has been

providing senior healthcare and housing for more than 75 years. Headquartered in Shelton, Conn., UMH operates assisted living communities in Shelton, Farmington, and Newington, Conn., as well as in Memphis. Go to www.umh.org for more information.



Wesley Heights Celebrates Renovation

Bishop Jeremiah Park, far right, addresses more than 250 residents, staff, donors, and guests at the rededication of the Wesley Heights senior living apartments on April 30 in Shelton, Conn. The ceremony celebrated the \$11-million renovation of the facility's 90 apartments, dining room, and gathering spaces. Owned and operated by United Methodist Homes, Wesley Heights shares its Wesley Village campus with Crosby Commons, and Bishop Wicke Health Center.

Goodbye, Hello! Navigating Pastoral Change

Prepare to welcome your new pastor

- Open your hearts and decide that you are going to love your new pastor.
- Begin praying daily for the new pastor and family, even as you continue to pray for your departing pastor and family.
- Invite church members individually to send cards of welcome to the incoming pastor.
- Know that welcoming your new pastor in genuine and effective ways lays the groundwork for a healthy relationship and the development of stable, long-term ministries together.
- Plan for the transition. Occasionally important welcoming gestures are missed with everyone thinking someone else is handling these details. Appoint a liaison to whom the pastor can go for help during the transition.

Say goodbye to your current pastor in a healthy way

- Show love, regard, and even grief, for your departing pastor. This is one of the best things you can do for the new pastor.
- Acknowledge the change in public ways, allowing the congregation better to let go and receive the new pastor.
- Provide the congregation the opportunity to say good-bye to the outgoing pastor, even if things have not always gone well.
- Find appropriate occasions—in worship and at other times—to thank the outgoing pastor.
- Express appreciation in ways that are consistent with past efforts.
- Consider giving the pastor the last two weeks off. This helps the pastor enter the new situation rested and gives an emotional buffer between one pastor's last Sunday and another pastor's first Sunday.
- Plan goodbye celebrations prior to the beginning of the two weeks off.
- Provide information to the local media about the outgoing pastor's accomplishments and future plans.
- Do not invite the former pastor to return for weddings, funerals, or baptisms. This allows your former pastor to engage fully with his or her new congregation and it establishes your new pastor as everyone's pastor from the beginning.

Make things move-in ready

- Make sure the parsonage and pastor's office are clean and ready. Offer to provide help or a cleaning service if needed.
- Determine if the parsonage is in need of repairs or painting. Do not ask a new pastor to



move into a parsonage “under construction.”

- Consult the new pastor on any paint, design, or furnishings issues.
- Offer to have someone cut the parsonage grass.
- Make sure the new pastor and church officials are clear on how moving expenses are paid and all matters related to compensation, benefits, and reimbursement policies.

Welcome your pastor on moving day

- Stock the parsonage refrigerator and pantry with some staples. Make sure there are kid-friendly foods in the refrigerator if children are arriving.
- Have a small group on hand to greet the new pastor and family when they arrive and to help as needed.
- Offer child care if there is an infant or toddler in the household. Invite children in the household to do things with others of their same age. Welcome any youth in the household by having church youth group members offer to show them around.

Continue the welcome during the entry period

- Take food over for the first few days.
- Provide a map with directions to local dry cleaners, grocery store, drug store, veterinarian, etc., and information on internet and cable television providers.
- Give gift certificates to your favorite restaurants in the community.
- Give the pastor and family a welcome reception on the first Sunday.
- Plan a worship celebration of the new appointment.
- Make sure the pastor's spouse and children are invited to Sunday School and other appropriate small groups.
- Continue to remember your new pastor

and family in your daily prayers.

Help the new pastor become familiar with the congregation

- Introduce yourself to the pastor repeatedly! You have one name to learn, your pastor has many names to learn.
- Wear nametags. Even if nametags are not a tradition, the congregation can wear them for a few weeks to help the pastor learn names.
- Provide a current pictorial directory of all the church members.
- Provide an up-to-date list of all church committees and officers.
- Provide the new pastor with a tour of where things are kept inside the church and perhaps a floor plan of the facilities.
- Orient the new pastor to information systems and the way records are kept.
- Make sure the pastor has a list of home bound or nursing home members, a list of those struggling with long term illness, and a list of those still in grief over recent deaths. Better yet, take the pastor and introduce them to each of these households.
- Have someone offer to go with the pastor for introductions and support if there are particularly urgent pastoral situations.
- Have a lay official offer to take the pastor to meet church members in their businesses or other work settings, if they are easily accessible.
- Offer to help arrange small group sessions to meet and talk with the congregation.
- Create a “church yellow pages”—a list of people in the church who have specific skills that a newcomer may find beneficial.

Help the new pastor connect to the community

- Provide local media with information about the new pastor.
- Provide a list of hospitals, nursing homes, and community service agencies.
- Introduce your new pastor to other clergy in the community. Provide information on any ecumenical activities or associations.
- Introduce the new pastor to public and community leaders. Ask church members in civic clubs to take the new pastor to one of their meetings.

Dr. Robert Crossman, Minister of New Church Starts and Congregational Advancement for the Arkansas Conference of the UMC, is the primary author of this document. The Lewis Center staff and others provided input, suggestions, and editorial assistance. To subscribe to the Lewis Center's free biweekly online newsletter, Leading Ideas, go to www.churchleadership.com.

Celebrate Aldersgate Day in Ecumenical Ways

BY TOM GOODHUE

Many Methodists and other spiritual descendants of John and Charles Wesley (such as the Church of the Nazarene) celebrate Aldersgate Day on or near May 24, the day of John Wesley's spiritual experience in which he felt his heart "strangely warmed." It is good to celebrate our founders but needlessly divisive to act as if the Mother Church has not changed at all since our schism. We can move closer to Christian unity if we share what the founders of our denomination received from our elder brothers and sisters in Christ. Here are a few suggestions for Aldersgate Day:

- Tell how Anglicanism nurtured the Wesleys, how the Church of England gave them a profound appreciation for the Eucharist or how Methodist innovations, such as small group meetings and a methodical approach to discipleship and mission, grew out of the Anglican's Oxford Movement.
- Explain what your denomination lost when it broke with its predecessors: how Christians descended into dualism and an unhealthy mind-body split when we they broke away from Judaism, how Protestants forgot most of the women of the Bible when we rejected the veneration of saints, and how Methodists nearly stopped practicing the Lord's Supper for many years when we decided we could do without priests.
- It would be fitting, while observing the founding of the Methodist movement, to offer thanks for the good things we have received from the Church of England and to pray that God will help us overcome our divisions, including those that may have seemed necessary at the time. You might sing, for example, "Amazing Grace" by the Anglican John Newton, and "The Church's One Foundation" by the Anglican Samuel Stone, who wrote,

*"Though with a scornful wonder we see her sore oppressed,
with schisms rent asunder, by heresies distress,
Yet saints their watch are keeping; their cry goes up, 'How long?'
And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song."*

You could also use this bidding prayer from the Anglican (Episcopal) festival of lessons and carols:

*"Beloved in Christ,
it is our duty and delight
to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels,
and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem,
and to see this thing which is come to pass,
and the Babe lying in a manger.
But first, because this would rejoice Jesus' heart,
let us pray for the needs of the whole world and all its people
for peace upon the earth he came to save,
for love and unity within the Church,
for goodwill among all people. . . .
And particularly at this time let us remember
the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed,
the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved,
the aged and the little children. . . ."*

Tom Goodhue is a member of the Conference Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns, and Executive Director of the Long Island Council of Churches. You can reach him tomgoodhue@optonline.net.



Westbury Youth Lead the Way

A team of youth and adult leaders from the Westbury UMC on Long Island participated in the 13th Annual EIF Revlon Run/Walk for Women on May 1. Some 25,000 participants joined in the event to raise funds to support women's cancer research, counseling and outreach programs in the New York City area and beyond.

OBITUARY

Chay Stinson Ponlork

Chay Stinson Ponlork, 35, died following an automobile accident in Pawling, N.Y., on April 15. He was the son of Rev. James and Barbara Stinson. Rev. Stinson, who has led several churches in the New York Annual Conference, serves as the director of spiritual life at the United Methodist Homes in Shelton, Conn.

Ponlork was an X-ray technologist at the Danbury (Conn.) Hospital. Born in Cambodia, he and his younger brother, Choch Stinson Ponlork, were orphaned when their birth parents died during the war in that country. The brothers lived in a refugee colony for two years before being adopted into the Stinson family in September 1982.

Survivors include wife Maria; daughter Keira; and stepdaughters Kristina and Alyssa. In addition to Jim and Barbara Stinson and Choch, a sister, Amy Crookshank; and three other brothers James Stinson, Andrew Stinson, and Kenneth Stinson also survive him.

A service of thanksgiving for the gift of his life was held April 19 at the Danbury UMC, Danbury, Conn. Condolences may be sent to: Rev. James and Mrs. Barbara Stinson, 91C Penny Meadow Lane, Stratford, CT 06614. Memorial gifts may be made to: Dorothy Day Hospitality House (a homeless shelter and soup kitchen), 11 Spring St., Danbury, CT 06811.



The Warwick Valley High School 2013 Chorus performs during a benefit concert for Haiti relief.

“Hallelujahs for Haiti” Raises \$2,806

The Sugar Loaf UMC hosted a benefit concert, “Hallelujahs for Haiti”, on February 21 that raised \$2,806 for the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Many local musicians and student groups donated their time and talents for this afternoon event. The performers included: the Chamber Choir, the Guitar Club and the Women’s Choir from Warwick Valley Middle School; the Chamber Orchestra Trio and the 2013 Chorus from Warwick Valley High School; Jubilate; Side by Side; Emish; Ava Heatley; Becky Severence;

Nicole Bartolotta; Vicky Triola; Jenny Minett; Farrell Brenner; Lenna Darbin and Alan Andrews; Banjo Lil; Ryan Muehlbauer; Jim Elwell; the E’lissa Jones Duo; and the Reddan Brothers Band. Plants donated by the Floral Cottage were sold at the event. Donations were received for the homemade soups and desserts served by the church and baked goods from Janet’s Breads.

One young musician commented, “I hope that I have helped to make a difference in a place where there is so much poverty.”

Stevens Memorial Exceeds the Challenge

The United Methodist Women of Stevens Memorial UMC challenged its South Salem, N.Y., congregation to assemble 50 health kits, and offered to lend their assistance by purchasing some of the supplies. Not only did the church meet the challenge, but far exceeded it by assembling 90 kits.

The middle and high school Sunday School students got involved and sponsored a special Valentine’s Day dinner on February 14. The “For the Love of Haiti” dinner raised more than \$600. The students purchased items for 20 health kits from the profits and donated the balance of \$500 to UMCOR to be used where needed.

Stevens Memorial, a small, family church, was happy to contribute to this far-reaching effort. Pastor Gene Ott, who offered great encouragement for the project each Sunday during worship, will deliver the health kits during annual conference.



Students from Stevens Memorial UMC with health kits they assembled and a \$500 check for UMCOR; in the front are Joey Haberny and Ilaria Fabbri; and in the rear, Eric Gonzalez, Justin Vass, Vanessa Fabbri and Margaret Hall.

Mount Kisco Seeks Community Projects

On June 6, the UMC of Mount Kisco will declare, “the church has left the building” for its third annual Faith in Action Sunday. Volunteers from the church and the community will join together to perform carpentry work, cooking, cleaning, calling on shut-ins, nursing home visits, painting, litter pick-up and yard work. The church is seeking proposals for work sites, with a goal of identifying a total of 8–10 projects for that day.

“We hope to reach out to our neighbors in need,” said Pastor Matt Curry. Projects will be selected with the goal of providing service opportunities for volunteers of all ages and abilities. Past Faith in Action Sundays have brought together community members from both within, and outside the church, Curry said. “Many of the people in our work parties are neighbors who don’t even attend our church, but see the value of what we are doing and want to help. I am proud that our church not only serves our community with enthusiasm, but also seeks to provide opportunities for everyone in our community to serve.”

To propose a work project, contact Curry at, pastor@mountkiscochurch.org or call, 914-666-5014. Anyone wanting to join a work party should meet at the church at 9:30 a.m., June 6.

3 Retreats at Oratory

The Healing Ministry at the Oratory of the Little Way will be offering a series of one-day retreats at its facility in Gaylordsville, Conn. Please register for the following retreats by calling 860-354-8294:

Thursday, May 27: “Forgiven, Loved and Free,” led by Rev. David Martin from Troy UMC. The workshop is from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; registration at 9. This is a day to focus on trusting in the reality of God’s grace, claiming our identity in Christ and walking in the liberty of the Holy Spirit.

Saturday, June 5: “Finding More Joy,” with Bishop Alex McCullough. Have you experienced anxiety? Depression? Or simply feel discontented? Come and discover how to find more joy. The workshop, from 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m., begins with registration at 9.

Thursday, June 17: “Coping with Chronic Diseases—Diabetes,” from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. with Dr. Tony Borrelli. Retreat is designed for people who suffer with diabetes, and would like to learn how to deal with the disease spiritually.

Creating Connections Key to Reviving Church

BY JOANNE S.UTLEY
Editor, *The Vision*

“What is the most important thing that churches need to remember?” If you were to ask the Rev. Paul Nixon that question from his own two-minute street survey, he’d undoubtedly have a ready answer. And it would probably involve the human need for community, the desire for making connections. In a new faith community that Nixon’s helping create in Washington, D.C., he uses the term worship community rather than worship service: “People come for the community, not the service,” he said. “Connection is the key.”

- Nixon, author of “I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church,” returned to New York for a second workshop with conference clergy and laity in mid-April at the Stony Point Center, Stony Point, N.Y. He told those gathered for the two days that one of most important things that churches can do is to break down barriers for newcomers and strangers so that real connections can be made.

- “It takes a few people to be intentional about it,” Nixon said. “We need to cultivate people to do this as their ministry.” Churches need to move beyond greeters who stand at the door wearing a badge, and instead “call” people to warm up the room.

- That intentionality is the result of a visioning process that helps people move from the past into a future for the church that they can embrace. “In order to move out of survival mode, you need to discover a future that is not scary—a future that people will buy into,” Nixon said. “Find a future that is fun. It’s more powerful as a member of a vibrant church, than a dying one.”

- Nixon also recommended putting people on ministry teams before they are members. “Rally them and go do something; let them feel the joy of being in ministry.” That will help keep “bright-eyes” in your congregation



Paul Nixon, third from right above, discusses strategies for reaching the unchurched population in their community with the team from Walden UMC. At right, the gathering prays for Pastor Tony Beck, center, and his congregation at Christ Church UM in Beacon, N.Y.

focused on the possibilities and not the negatives.

On Friday morning, Nixon worked with pastors and laity from three NYAC churches to discuss strengthening connections in their individual settings. In each of these roundtable discussions—with Walden UMC, UMC of Peekskill and Christ Church UM—Nixon used demographic reports from a five-mile radius to stress the importance of getting to know the



community.

“It will take time,” he said. “But it will help you create a team that reflects the complexity of your community. You need people who diversify your outlook.” By examining these statistics churches can better target their ministries

to the concerns and needs of their communities.

Some of the ideas Nixon shared during those discussions included:

- The visioning process is key in rethinking “how” we do church. Enlist people of all ages outside your church to serve as a focus group, making sure to tap into the different core groups in the community. Focus groups are a good place to begin to make friends and build relationships.

- Don’t allow your church building or church name to hold your ministry hostage. Congregations may need to walk away from their old structures and re-launch their church in a different location or community. “Just like the rich young ruler, divesting of our riches can free us up to see new possibilities,” Nixon said.

- Your web site is your church address. “More people will drive by



Pastor Cherie Philips, left, and members of her congregation talk with Paul Nixon about their Peekskill church.

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Health Screenings

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people with diabetes or on certain medications should not fast. If you're not sure, check with your doctor.

HealthFlex is committed to keeping its participants healthy. The ProCheck health screening is one positive step toward preventing serious disease and maintaining good health. ProCheck screenings are administered by Health Ministries Association (HMA), under contract with HealthFlex. HMA hires local phlebotomists to perform the blood draws.

3 New Doctorates Offered at Drew

Drew Theological School is offering three Doctor of Ministry programs that will begin in Fall 2010. The new programs are in Congregational Growth and Community Development; Mind-Body-Spirit-Healing for Congregations and Clergy; and Global Online. Applications may be submitted online by July 1 at www.drew.edu/theo/apply, or learn more at www.drew.edu/theo/newyork.

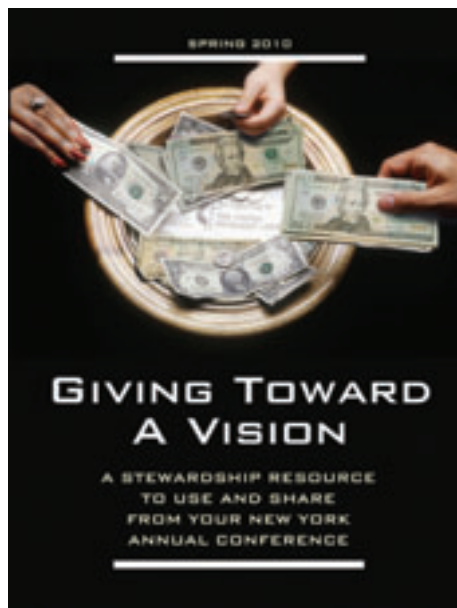
The Madison, N.J., school also awards 100 percent tuition scholarships for United Methodists who are admitted to the Master of Divinity program with undergraduate GPAs of 3.5 or above. For information, go to www.drew.edu/theo/umscholarship.

Students may also earn a Certification in Spiritual Formation at Drew. The certification program will develop the skills to provide spiritual leadership to individuals and in within the local church. Classes are available online and in an intensive format. Learn more at www.drew.edu/theo/certification.

New Conference Scouting Coordinator

The United Methodist Men of the NYAC have announced that Gregory S. Holder is the new conference scouting coordinator. Holder is available to answer any questions you may have about scouting—boy, girl or Campfire programs.

He is also hoping to locate and identify all of the scout groups in the Methodist churches in our conference. If you have a scouting group that meets in your church, please e-mail this basic information to Holder: troop or pack number, day and time of meetings, and the number of youth in each troop or pack. He can be reached by phone at 917-476-7551, or 718-783-5761; and by email at ggregholder@aol.com. Holder's mailing address is: Scoutmaster Troop # 55, c/o John Wesley UMC, 260 Quincy St., Brooklyn, NY 11216.



By now, each church in the conference should have received copies of the new stewardship publication, "Giving Toward A Vision." The Council on Finance and Administration, and the Office of Connectional Ministries created it as a resource to use and share in local congregations. If you'd like more copies, please email Ann Pearson at apearson@nyac.com.

United Seminary Offers Online M.Div. Degree

Beginning in fall 2010, United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, will offer a new online Master of Divinity degree that can be completed in three years. The program offers the same quality of education as a traditional degree with the added flexibility of attending class from any location with Internet access. To earn the degree, students must complete a minimum of 30 percent of the degree in a hybrid (partially online and partially face-to-face) or face-to-face format. For ordination requirements, students should check with their own judicatories.

United's new program is designed to include gathering weeks so that students need only spend one week per semester on campus. For more details about the program, including a course schedule, please visit United's website at www.united.edu. United also offers many online courses for those who just need a course or two for ordination or who may have an interest in a theological topic. For a list of courses please visit the web site, or contact United's admissions office at 800-322-5817.

Reviving Church

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your site than your building," Nixon said.

- Develop new ministries around the margins of existing community programs. For instance, if your town has a youth basketball league, offer a basketball clinic so players can hone their skills before the league starts.

- Find ways to partner with parents in your community to help them raise great kids. Look for short-term manageable ministries that can be stamped by prayer or quick devotionals.

- Look at the groups already using your church—nursery schools, scout troops, 12-step programs, food pantry or soup kitchen clients—and create a strategy on leading those participants along the journey to discipleship. What entry points already exist? What new ones can be created? How do you create community or move worship out of the sanctuary to where they are? Can you add some music or take prayer requests?

- Use a service like www.newmovers.org to track the newcomers in your community. Deploy specific people to meet the new folks in your neighborhood.

Churches Go For Mission Gold

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- Fulfilled a covenant relationship with a missionary obligation

- Supported at least one Conference Mission Initiative such as Mozambique, Bolivia, Haiti, Burundi, etc.

- Sent at least one person on a Volunteer In Mission Trip.

- Attended Cooperative School of Christian Mission.

- Celebrated Mission Sunday with a mission speaker.

- Took a group on a Mission Study Tour or Volunteer in Mission Trip.

- Offered a new mission experience; did something new that your congregation had never done before.

- Supported the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Team.

- Supported Justice for our Neighbors

The application can be found at <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1573>; deadline is May 30. The mission awards will be presented at annual conference at Hofstra Arena on Sat., June 12.