

*"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

June 29, 2012

## Guaranteed Appointments: Modified or Gone?

### A UMNS REPORT

Supporters of guaranteed appointments for United Methodist clergy have a new reason for hope.

The Rev. L. Fitzgerald "Gere" Reist II, secretary of the General Conference, informed the Council of Bishops late June 11 that the language in the 2012 Book of Discipline "does not eliminate the security of appointment for elders."

But, other denominational leaders question Reist's interpretation of what the 2012 General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body, accomplished when it met April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla.

At issue are two potentially contradictory sections of the Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church's law book.

The 2012 General Conference deleted in the book's Paragraph 337 the required security of appointment for elders in good standing. The changes allow a bishop to recommend an elder be put on transitional leave.

However, the assembly left Paragraph 334.1 intact.

The latter paragraph says: "Every effective elder in full connection who is in good standing shall be continued under appointment by the bishop . . ."

Some bishops contend that General Conference did not so much eliminate security of appointment as modify it.

Continued on page 3

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP



PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE PARSONS

**Bishop Sally Dyck urged the clergy candidates to offer their hearts in spite of the wounds that may come in their ministry.**

## Malaria Beware: We Do Care

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY

Mosquitoes, Transformers and nets, oh, my!

There was a definite buzz in the air on Saturday morning as the conference launched its Imagine No Malaria campaign. It could have come as the praise and HYPE bands got the arena rocking. Or maybe it came from the children, youth and families filling the floor. But most likely it came from that annoying, little mosquito that seemed to have more lives than a cat!

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**Transformers, big and small, gave chase to eradicate a mosquito in Hofstra Arena.**

## 15 Celebrated In Ministry

BY MARGARET LAEMMEL AND JOANNE S. UTLEY

A sea of red and white washed across the Hofstra Arena floor on June 9 as clergy members processed in for the Celebration of Ministry to the hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." As the recessional sounded some two hours later, 15 persons had been licensed, commissioned, ordained and recognized by the New York Annual Conference.

Edward Dayton, Vera Isaacs,

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### 6/28–7/2: Adult Campers Learn to Weld

Kingswood Campsite is again offering a special 4½-day camp for novice and experienced welders that includes instruction and hands-on experience in welding your own metal sculpture or project. Cost for the program is \$350, per person all-inclusive; participation is limited. The event includes lodging at an equipped tent site, accommodating up to 5 adults, and gourmet meals prepared at the campsite. Lodging is also available at the nearby Hancock Hotel for an additional cost. Call Holly Moore, Kingswood family camp program director, at 845-679-5692, to register. Visit [www.kingswoodcampsite.org](http://www.kingswoodcampsite.org) for updates.

### 6/30: “No Strings Attached”

Does your job have you tied in knots? Does being a spouse and a parent have you uptight? Has your spiritual walk been setting you free? Come and break the sense of entrapment with God’s strategies. 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Oratory of the Little Way in Gaylordsville, Conn., led by spiritual director, Bishop Alex McCullough. Fee is \$30. Call 860-354-8294 to register.

### 7/4–8: Conference Center Closings

The White Plains offices will be closed for the Fourth of July Holiday. The center will also be closed on Fridays and Saturdays throughout July and August.

### 7/14: Oratory Healing Conference

Speakers Rev. Nigel Mumford, director of healing ministry at the Spiritual Life Center and Dr. John Murphy, CEO of Western CT Health Care at the First Congregational Church in New Milford. For more info call, 860-354-8294, or visit the web site, [www.oratoryhealing.org](http://www.oratoryhealing.org). Sponsored by Oratory of the Little Way, 8 Oratory Lane, Gaylordsville, CT 06755.

### 7/15–20: UMC Secretaries Institute

The General Council on Finance and Administration sponsors an annual certification institute that provides advanced professional training and enrichment for United Methodist church secretaries. A participant who completes the program and meets the requirements set forth by GCFIA is eligible to apply for certification as a Professional United Methodist Church Secretary. The institute is in Nashville. Class size is limited to 30; registrations will be honored in the order in which they are received. For details, go to: <http://www.gbmg-umc.org/paumcs/certification.html>.

### 7/18–20: Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference

Under a theme of “Rise Up: Encounter God, Engage the World,” this

gathering of delegates from 10 annual conferences will be held at the Charlestown Civic Center, Charleston, W.Va. One the conference’s main duties is to elect and place new bishops. For additional details or to register until June 1, go to: <http://www.nejunc.org/>. Conference accommodations are at the Charleston Marriott Town Center Hotel.

### 7/19–21: Cooperative School of Christian Mission

With the theme, “That All May Have Life,” this year’s Cooperative School will be held at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. The NYAC and the conference’s United Methodist Women co-sponsor the school. Rev. Sonia A. Jermin is dean of the mission school. This year’s mission studies for adults, teens and children will include: immigration in the Bible, Haiti, and poverty. In addition to the longer program this year is a “Saturday Sampler,” especially for those unable to attend for three days. The fee is \$50 for 8 a.m.–5 p.m. session on poverty and registration is required. Registrations are due by June 22; forms can be found at <http://nyac.com/events/detail/3766>. Fees for adults and teens range from \$150–\$200 for the three-day program. Accommodations are available at the nearby Ethan Allen Hotel in Danbury. Book online at [www.ethanallenhotel.com](http://www.ethanallenhotel.com), or call 1-800-742-1776, and ask for the United Methodist Women’s Group rate of \$109 plus tax, per night, for a single room through June 20. Additional people in the room are \$10 each, per night.

### 7/21: “Heaven Now and Then”

This one-day retreat will explore what we can know about heaven here and there.

9 a.m.–3 p.m., Oratory of the Little Way in Gaylordsville, Conn., led by spiritual director, Bishop Alex McCullough. Fee is \$30. Call 860-354-8294 to register.

### 9/28–30: “Ages and Stages” Retreat

A weekend experience (Friday, 7p.m.-Sunday after lunch) for men and women to explore what it means to journey with God through adulthood. Led by retired UMC pastor, Rev. Caroly R. Gibson, at Wisdom House, 229 East Litchfield Rd., Litchfield, CT 06759. Total cost of \$225, includes five meals, room, program, and materials. Space is limited. Questions or further details, call 203-380-1260; or email: [cgibsonumc@peoplepc.com](mailto:cgibsonumc@peoplepc.com).

### 9/29: Clergy Spouses Day Apart

9 a.m.–3 p.m., at Learning Center, New York Conference Center, White Plains, N.Y.

 <p><b>The Vision</b></p> <p>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</p>
<p><b>Bishop: Jeremiah J. Park</b></p> <p>Director of Connectional Ministries: <b>Ann A. Pearson</b></p> <p>Editor: <b>Joanne Utley</b></p> <p>New York Conference of The United Methodist Church</p> <p>20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606</p> <p>Phone (888) 696-6922</p> <p>Fax (914) 615-2244; Website: <a href="http://www.nyac.com">www.nyac.com</a></p> <p>Vision e-mail: <a href="mailto:thevision@nyac.com">thevision@nyac.com</a></p>

# Guaranteed Appointments: Modified or Gone?

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“Someone having an appointment is not the same thing as them being appointed to serve a church,” Indiana Area Bishop Michael Coyner said in an email to bishops that he shared with United Methodist News Service. “Transitional leave is an appointment and so is a part-time appointment.”

Ultimately, Reist and Coyner agree the Judicial Council—the denomination’s equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court—must decide the matter. The Judicial Council is the top authority on interpreting church law.

Questions regarding the elimination of security of appointment will go before the Judicial Council at its next meeting in October, and this debate could come under consideration.

## What happened at General Conference

The Higher Education and Ministry legislative committee—the first stop at General Conference for appointment-related petitions—voted 68-7 in favor of changes to Paragraph 337.

Those changes include:

- Removing the requirement that elders “be continued under appointment”
- Allowing a bishop to recommend to the board of ordained ministry that an elder be placed on transitional leave if “a missional appointment is not available.”
- Requiring a bishop to initiate the complaint process if an elder is found ineffective
- Mandating each annual conference name a task force to develop a list of criteria to guide bishops and cabinets as they make “missional appointments.”
- Requiring cabinets to report to the board of ordained ministry executive committee the reasons clergy have not received full-time appointments as well as the age, ethnicity and gender of elders who have not received full-time appointments.

“The intent of the (Higher Education and Ministry) legislative committee was clear, even if our action was not as clear as our intent, and the intent was the elimination of the language of security of appointment,” said the Rev. David Alan Bard, the committee’s chair. Because of the legislative committee’s overwhelming support for the changes, the petition went on the General Conference consent calendar.

The consent calendar is a tool used by General Conference to expedite legislation wherein recommendations from legislative committees with no more than 10 votes in

*This is the full text of the message sent by The Rev. L. Fitzgerald “Gere” Reist II, secretary of the General Conference, to the council:*

The Book of Discipline 2012 does not eliminate security of appointment for elders. The amendments to paragraph 334 that would have mirrored the changes in 337 were

not supported by the committee. They were not voted on in the plenary. The language of 334.1, “Every effective elder in full connection who is in good standing shall be continued under appointment by the bishop provided that if the elder is appointed to serve in an affiliated relationship in a missionary conference (¶ 586) and that appointment is terminated by the bishop who presides in the missionary conference, then the responsibility for meeting this obligation rests with the bishop of the conference of which the elder is a member.” remains in effect.



opposition are grouped and approved together. A motion to reconsider the item on May 1, failed by a vote of 564 to 373.

On May 4, General Conference delegates approved a motion to ask the Judicial Council whether the removal of security of appointment passes muster under the denomination’s constitution.

## What about 334.1?

The legislation to eliminate security of appointment originated with the Study of Ministry Commission. In its report, the commission said the practice is not financially sustainable and “limits the ability of the church to respond to the primacy of missional needs.” An earlier report estimated there are 784 more U.S. clergy than positions needed in the church.

The Higher Education and Ministry legislative committee voted unanimously against the commission’s petition, which included changes to 334.1, and thus it never went before the full plenary.

The Rev. Amy Gearhart, a member of the Study of Ministry Commission, chaired the subcommittee that dealt with that petition. She said that petition was voted down because it also related to early ordination for elders, which the committee had decided to oppose.

## Source of confusion

In the rush of General Conference, Reist said, it is difficult to track how each petition relates to other petitions and other parts of the Book of Discipline not under discussion.

“This is the difficulty of making the objective of General Conference how much legislation we can pass rather than determining the quality of the legislation we pass,” he said. His comment echoed what he said after the Judicial Council ruled an agency restructuring plan unconstitutional, undoing a major action of the General Conference.

The Rev. Gloria Kymn, a delegate from the Pacific-Northwest Conference, said she was sad that the full General Conference plenary did not get a chance to discuss such a significant change to United Methodist tradition.

“I am the local church pastor who feels like I’m on the frontlines of working with United Methodists every day,” she said. “And I felt like my daily ministry was not important for this body, the general church, to talk about.”

She said Reist’s concerns give her hope that perhaps clergy will have four more years to prepare for change and reflect better what it “really means to be effective clergy for The United Methodist Church.”



PHOTOS BY ALICE LUM

The Eucharist is offered to those attending the service of Christian unity at St. Paul's Chapel.

## ALL TOGETHER NOW

# 3 Denominations Commune for Unity

**BY REV. DENNIS WINKLEBLACK**

On one of the most spectacularly beautiful Saturday afternoons of the year, New York Conference United Methodists came to the shadows of Wall Street to worship in historic St. Paul's Chapel (Episcopal), the oldest public building in the City of New York. There they were joined by both Episcopalians and Lutherans in a first of its kind celebration of Christian Unity.

The eucharistic worship on May 12 was led by Bishop Jeremiah Park, Bishop Andrew Sisk of the Episcopal Church Diocese of New York and Bishop Robert Rimbo of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Synod of New York. The service bore witness to the Interim Eucharistic Agreement between the UMC and the Episcopal Church (since 2006) and the full communion status we share with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (since 2008). The service was the culmination of three years of study and dialogue between a task force of NYAC United Methodists and their counterpart from the Episcopal Diocese of New York. The goal is full communion with the Episcopal Church by 2016 as we now enjoy with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Full communion means the possibility for interchange of clergy, transfer of members between denominations and increased opportunities to be in mission together, among other benefits.

In his remarks, Bishop Park noted that our Methodist forebears went to St. Paul's Chapel and nearby Trinity Church for the sacraments before the official founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784. In his journal, Francis Asbury often wrote of the occasions that he worshipped in the very same space while in New York. Bishop Park also commented that our historical documents reveal that at least two rectors of St. Paul's or Trinity Church as well as several members of the Anglican Church contributed to the building of Wesley Chapel on nearby John Street—which is now John St.



**Bishop Robert Rimbo of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, left, Episcopal Bishop Andrew Sisk, and Bishop Jeremiah Park following the service.**

United Methodist Church, our denomination's oldest church. For this early contribution to the Methodist cause, Bishop Park thanked Bishop Sisk, "however belatedly," provoking laughter that filled the sanctuary.

Bishop Park concluded his greeting by saying, "To be very sure, the Holy Spirit is with us and in this place today. Our churches may be measured in discerning how to effect God's will for our three denominations, but we know that God's desire is for us to be one body, as Jesus declares in the Gospel of John.

"It is my prayer that the full communion or interim Eucharistic relationship that we share, and today's step forward will be magnified in ways now unimaginable to us. It is my prayer that the next generation of Christians, having benefitted from our common faith and expanding witness in the years to come, will look back and say, 'They may have been slow about it, but thank God they didn't give up.'"

The NYAC was represented in the service by Renata Smith, conference lay leader, who read the scripture from Isaiah; Patricia Sawyer, who read the prayers of the people; and Rev. Dennis Winkleblack who has chaired the dialogue team since its inception. Other conference members who have worked on the task force include Rev. T. Anne Daniel, Rev. Sungmu Lee, Rev. Skip L'Heureux and Rev. Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii.

# Never Underestimate The Richness of Life

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministries

Elizabeth was a gem. She always had a huge grin at the ready—she loved everyone around her. Other residents adored her. She was different though, having a medical event early in her life that damaged her brain and left her thought processing slow and often quite childlike. But her personality rose above what could have been a tragedy. For whatever reason, she managed to live a full life, working as a housekeeper for the Residence for Students of St. Vincent's Nursing School in Bridgeport, Conn. Despite what others may have thought, she lived life with aplomb and grace, even after retirement. She died peacefully the other day at 86 years of age at Wicke Health Center, where she was a resident.

Elizabeth struck a chord in most people who knew her, as evidenced by the outpouring of genuine grief, mixed with real appreciation for her life. I will surely think of her often, always with a smile of appreciation for having known her.

Her story reminds me not to make snap judgments about someone based on the initial impression, especially on what can be seen externally. As badly as I feel about those moments when I did exactly that, I know I am not alone. The numbers of people who visit Wesley Village (a United Methodist Homes

continuing care community in Shelton, Conn.), who are equally shortsighted, strike me. They come as adult children, family members, friends, pastors, and lay members, all seeking to express genuine care and concern for our residents.

So often they do so, unready or unable, to see beneath the externals and discover the internals. They miss opportunities to touch the real person, miss the opportunity to allow their loved one to express who they really are, what they really feel.

Their conversations too often revolve around the physical. How's your health? How's your exercise and therapy going? Those of us who visit in this manner never know the real person, never know the dreams (yes, older, frail, sick people, still have dreams) or the possibilities yet to be discovered (yes, older people are capable of exploring and growing right to the end of life).

We shortchange them and ourselves by not looking and delving deeper, not opening pathways to conversations about continued growth. And in not doing so we expect too little of the older adult, adding to an often growing sense of "I've outlived my usefulness." Elizabeth reminds me what a mistake it is to underestimate anyone, anywhere, anytime. Don't make that same mistake.

Our faith tells us that hope is eternal, and a rich, full life is possible, regardless the age or circumstances.



GOD'S GIFT OF LONG LIFE



## Teach Children To Guard Their Safety

As adults, one of our most important responsibilities is keeping children safe. We can give our children skills to help them stay safe and act wisely with strangers, bullies, and people they know. The skills they practice may be able to stop some abuse, an abduction, assault, or bullying.

Children can practice:

- Assessing situations to know what their safest choices are
- Moving their bodies in order to create more space between themselves and people who might cause problems for them
- Making safe choices about talking to or taking things from strangers
- Checking in with adults in charge before they change the plan about where they are going, what they are doing or who they are going with
- "Emergency only" skills of using physical techniques to escape from danger
- Making and following a safety plan for how to get help in public including if they get lost
- Being clear in telling trusted adults when they have a safety problem and persisting until they get the help they need
- Using their voices loudly to attract attention if a situation becomes threatening
- How to deal with hurtful words and stop teasing and bullying from peers
- Techniques to increase their self-esteem by protecting themselves from the hurtful or damaging things they might say to themselves

At the Children's Home we have been offering safe environments and opportunities to help children and families for 100 years. Thank you for celebrating with us in our 2012 anniversary year.

For more information on the Children's Home and for resources to conduct a Children's Home Sunday in your congregation, call us at 607-772-6904 (or toll free 800-772-6904) ext. 131.

## "This & That... More Than a Cookbook"

The United Methodist Women of St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC (SPSA) have created a book with great recipes and helpful tips for families to share in the kitchen and around the table.

Recipes come from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian families, and span the globe from Latin America and Africa to the Philippines and Bangladesh. Many of the nearly 100 contributors are from SPSA.

And it is more than a cookbook—have fun decorating cupcakes, learning to compost, or how to make a Christmas tree from bottle caps! There's even a play clay recipe.

Order the "This & That" book for \$16.95 plus \$4 shipping/handling by sending a check made out to UMW-SPSA to: Jo Goodson Tiedeman, 345 West 70th Street, Apt 1A, New York, NY 10023. For a preview, go to: [www.stpaulandstAndrew.org/home/ministries/women](http://www.stpaulandstAndrew.org/home/ministries/women). Proceeds will be used to fund the various mission projects of the church.

## DISPATCHES FROM KAZAKHSTAN

# Kims Settling In, Learning Russian

Our family arrived in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Dec. 15, 2011. After traveling by plane for two days, we arrived on a cold snowy morning. Over the last few months we have slowly begun to adjust to life here. Even though we miss a few things from home, Almaty is a large city and almost anything we need can be found—except that imported items are very costly. The average temperature in Kazakhstan is in the 20s during the winter. Now the weather has warmed up this spring and as a family we enjoy playing outside with the kids.

Prumeh took Russian for four years in high school so we are able to get around on our own. Eumin is now enrolled in an intensive Russian language course at a local university. Ye-Ari is attending Elko, a small private Russian school. It's amazing to see how quickly she is picking up Russian. Eli is a thriving 11-month-old and loves to crawl all around the house—his favorite room is his sister's room.

As a family we attend Jerusalem UMC that worships in the Mission Center. Ye-Ari attends Sunday School and Prumeh teaches once a month. Eumin also helps by preaching occasionally, and cooks up American food once a month for fellowship.

Although we miss family and friends, we love living in Kazakhstan. When someone asked Ye-Ari if she liked America or Kazakhstan, she answered, "Both!"

What we love most about being here is that we live every day with a purpose—to humbly serve God and his people in Central Asia. Eumin has been working on developing closer relationships with the pastors and lay leaders of the 14 churches and Bible groups that the Mission Center supports. He will have plenty of opportunity to do training and teaching, but he first wants to develop a trusting and caring relationship with everyone. Prumeh is getting busier with the administrative and



program details of the center. In the fall, she hopes to start teaching English classes as a way to reach out to more people.

### United Methodist Mission Center

The Kims serve as the co-directors of the UMC Mission Center of Central Asia. The Mission Center where we work oversees the ministry of 14 churches and Bible

groups in Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, and Uzbekistan. The mission center is supported by the Central Asia Mission Initiative of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). We work closely with Pastor Oleg Starodubets, the district superintendent of Central Asia and Bishop Hans Vaxby, the bishop of Eurasia. Our responsibilities include:

- Develop and oversee programs

**LEFT: Eumin and Prumeh Kim, at left, moved their family to Almaty, Kazakhstan, to serve as missionaries for the General Board of Global Ministries. ABOVE, food and fellowship with Pastor Oleg and members of the Bishkek UMC.**

and financial operations of the Mission Center;

- Plant new churches
- Provide assistance with the development of educational programs
- Uphold communication channels for the promotion of the Central Asia Mission Initiative
- Eumin, in particular, will also mentor pastors of churches and Bible groups while Prumeh will work with programs for youth and women.

### Sharing the Gospel

When we first arrived in Almaty, Eumin lamented that he missed preaching. After being a pastor for 16 years, he cherished being a shepherd to congregation members and sharing God's word from the

**Continued on page 7**

# Clark Sailing Into 2nd Olympics

## COMBINED WEB REPORTS

Her sailing career may have taken her to more than 40 countries, but Amanda Clark still calls Shelter Island, N.Y., home. Clark, who lives on the island with husband and Camp Quinipet Director Greg Nissen, will be making her second appearance in the summer Olympics as a member of the Team USA sailing contingent. She and her new crewmate, Sarah Lihan of Florida, will compete in the women's 470 races.

On June 9, the two women sailed to an impressive silver medal in Hyeres, France, in the Sail for Gold. This is the second World Cup medal for Clark and Lihan, who earned bronze at last year's Sail Melbourne in Australia.

"Team Go Sail," as Clark and Lihan have dubbed themselves, started the day in sixth overall, with a chance at either the silver or bronze medals. The regatta was held in Weymouth and Portland, U.K. where racing will take place in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Clark and Lihan won the medal race to clinch the silver medal.

"It feels great," said Clark in a report posted on the web site, [www.ussailing.org](http://www.ussailing.org). "We're pretty excited to be racing at the front of the fleet. It's going to be amazing competition. By no means does this say this is how it's going to stack up (next month). This is why we do this, to sail against the best in the world and to challenge ourselves.

"Sarah and I have worked really hard for this," Clark said. "We're psyched to take this into the Olympics." Although the team has only been together for 15 months, they have seen their performance advance.

"I think we're the strongest we've ever been," said Lihan. "Amanda is one of the most talented skippers in the world and I'm honored to sail with her."

In the 2008 Beijing games, Clark and then crewmate, Sarah Mergenthaler, finished 12th in the women's 470. The London games open on July 27, with the sailing events running July 29 to August 11. The women's 470 events are scheduled to be aired on the mornings of August 3-5, and 7-8; the medal race will follow on August 10.

To watch a video interview with Clark and Lihan, go to: <http://youtu.be/IDPnCB5z9Ws>. Or follow the pair via their "Team Go Sail" page on Facebook.



PHOTO COURTESY US SAILING

**Sarah Lihan, left, and Amanda Clark earned women's 470 silver at French Olympic Sailing Week in Hyeres, France.**

# Kims Settling In as Missionaries

## Continued from page 6

pulpit. Now he will be shepherding other clergy and lay leaders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Recently, Eumin was given more opportunities for training leaders as well as preaching. In April, he spoke at Youth Forum, a leadership conference for young adults from Central Asia. He also spoke at an ecumenical clergy training in Almaty. Then in May, he spoke at Youth Forum for International Students in Kyrgyzstan. The Bishkek UMC has a ministry specific for international students from China, India, and Pakistan. This event was for both believers and non-believers. The picture above is from Eumin preaching at Zhetygen UMC, at Pastor Kanat's church.

## Ushtobe

Helen Park had served as the director of the mission center for the past 7 years. Recently she was re-assigned to serve as the director of the Ushtobe Youth Center, which she is in the process of building. She continues to be an invaluable asset to the mission center as we still have much to learn from her.

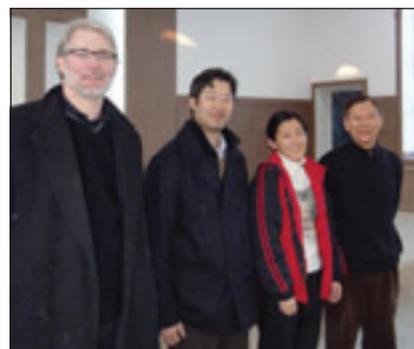
"Helen Mama," as she is called in Ushtobe, serves the Koreans, or "goryo saram" in this rural town. Some 34,000 Koreans were deported to Ushtobe from the Far East by Stalin in 1937 with no food or supplies. Thousands died that winter. Today, many of the descendants continue to live in poverty.

The Ushtobe Bible group is growing; at Christmas they had 120 adults and children. At the youth center, she has also built an organic vegetable, pig, and chicken farm. The farms will help support this critical ministry. Helen Mama has plans to help develop a pharmacy, hair salon, and playground because there are none in Ushtobe. Here is a link to a Korean TV documentary on Helen Park.

## Supporting the Kims:

If you are interested in supporting the Kims through a Covenant Relationship, please give directly at <http://www.umcmision.org/Give-to-Mission> to Eumin Kim, Missionary Advance #3021370, or to Prumeh Kim, Missionary Advance #3021369

If you are interested in partnering with the Central Asia Mission Initiative either as a church or individual, please contact the In Mission Together Coordinator, Mirhang



**Eumin and Prumeh Kim, center, stand in the sanctuary of the youth center in Ushtobe with other pastors.**

Baek, [mirhingg@gmail.com](mailto:mirhingg@gmail.com). You can also give directly on the GBGM website: Central Asia Mission Initiative Advance #14939A.

For more information about developing a GBGM Covenant Relationship visit [www.advancinghope.org](http://www.advancinghope.org). You can also mail in support to: Advance GCEA, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087; or call (888)-252-6174.

## Contact Info:

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Skype Phone: 201-676-2994  
Skype ID: prumeh

## Prayer Requests

**Visa situation:** Our visa situation is very complicated in Kazakhstan. Please pray that every time we travel and re-enter Kazakhstan that the immigration officials will quickly accept our passports and visas.

**Spiritual alertness:** The culture in Kazakhstan is very anti-religious, whether it is Muslim or Christian. Please pray that we can remain spiritually disciplined.

**Pastors of Central Asia:** In this culture, it's a challenge to lead people to remain committed to their faith. The pastors are like "Lone Rangers," often on their own without any spiritual support. Please pray for their spiritual well being. Also pray for our pastors in Uzbekistan, as they are enduring a very difficult time of persecution from the local government.



The First UMC of East Hampton, N.Y., collected donations for the local food pantry.



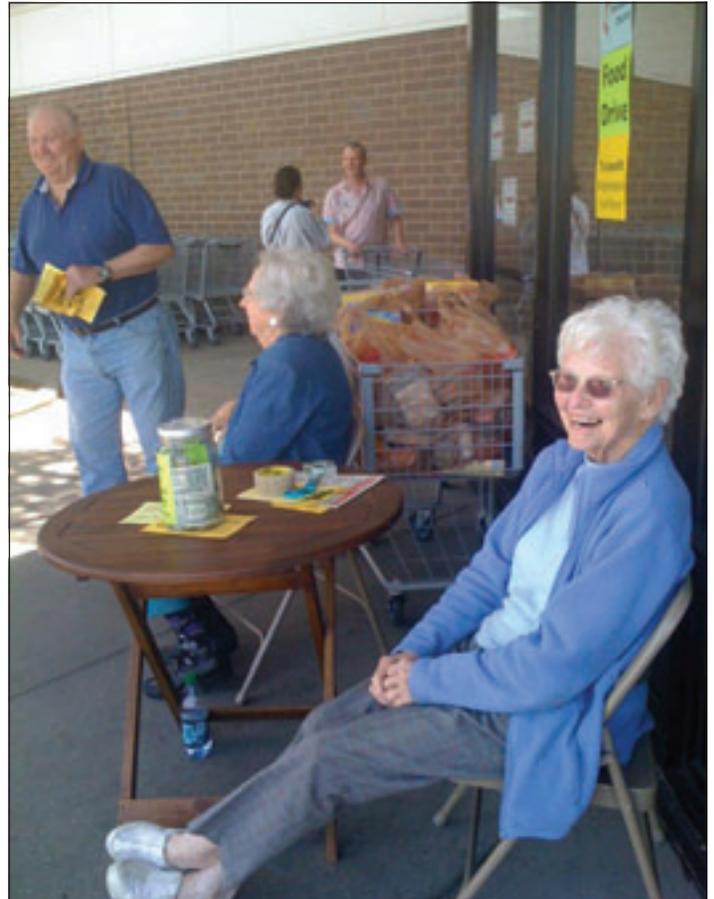
North Shore UMC participated in the community Duck Pond Day by marching in the parade, and hosting an information booth in Wading River, N.Y.

# CHANGE THE WORLD

For the third year in a row United Methodists in more than 1,500 locations around the globe ventured outside their buildings on May 19–20, got involved in their communities and participated in a global push to fight malaria.



A drum circle after worship at Drew UMC in Carmel, N.Y., helped raise awareness about the fight against malaria. The Spirit Walkers picked up litter found along the trail. This ecumenical hiking group brings together members from Drew UMC, Gilead Presbyterian, St. Andrews Episcopal, and Holmes UMC. Drew also worked on a Habitat for Humanity house in Putnam County.



Bridgehampton UMC conducted their second food drive outside a local grocery store in Bridgehampton, N.Y.

# Reflections on 2012 GC: A Voice From Below

**BY JACOB DHARMARAJ, PH.D**  
National Federation of Asian American  
United Methodists

As I reflect on the 2012 General Conference with a fair amount of distance and time, one image kept coming back. If the 2012 GC were a sport, it would be sumo wrestling. It would be two big fat guys in a ring, with all sorts of posturing and rituals and stomping of feet, but actually very little contact, until the end of the match, when there is a brief moment of shoving, and the loser gets pushed out of the ring. No blood letting but a lot of ego shattering.

The IOT's towering recommendations and high aspirations incubated in the crucible of corporate-style containers and commercial archetypes before their currency gained legitimate circulation at the legislative sessions of the GC were not only grooved with grief but also welded with throbbing pain and irascible soreness.

The occasional bursts of sane voices from the youth reminded the presenters and delegates not to "hide behind rhetoric" but face the challenges of time. Savvy comments from sage parliamentarians nonetheless successfully convinced the fence-sitters to garner votes and join the throng to sing the chorus that the ecclesial sky is falling and new mission structures must be created.

From an asinine argument about the "expensive" printing paper a general agency uses in order to communicate with its constituents to standing in solidarity with the suffering Palestinian Christians, the debates were all veneered with denominational rhetoric "for the transformation of the world."

Whenever someone echoed that phrase, and reminded the delegates that "the world is watching," it evoked chuckle among some visitors. Live streaming never reached more than 2000 viewers and the national or global media, except for a scant coverage did not make much of this quadrennial event.

While I reflect on the five days of deliberations and the last-hour bolt from the blue, I was reminded of a scornful comment by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, a Hindu and former President of India, who said, "Christians are ordinary people but they make extraordinary claims."

In all honesty, while I refuse to agree with

## COMMENTARY



Radhakrishnan's scathing remark, I must admit that it carries a twinge of truth. It is indeed a self-aggrandizing statement to say that we are going to transform the whole world when in reality we do not have a clear plan and passion about how we are going to do it. Was the youth delegate who made the blistering comment in one of the plenary sessions that "we are delusional" far from truth?

The previous century started with a big-bang mission statement: "Evangelize the world in this generation." Of course, the previous century ended with a whimper as far as the church in the global north is concerned.

The 2012 GC is another example that proves our denomination's ministry continues to focus on the dominant, triumphalistic paradigm. Transformation cannot be brought by replacing one structure with another structure. It has to come from grassroots and grass tops. It must be a movement from below, not from above. Movements can only be facilitated not managed. They must be generated but not legislated.

Painfully, General Conference also inflicted so much pain and ache upon a number of non-majority groups with no regard for human emotions and people's daily lives. The conference that blithely talked about diversity failed to demonstrate it. It repeatedly failed to acknowledge that it is not who is included that is important, but who is left out that is more important.

For instance, if only we had had a representative voice from the Palestinian Christian community on the floor or podium, the GC would have voted differently on the Palestinian Christian issue. That goes for the

petitions that were submitted by other non-dominant groups as well.

Can one group or individual really understand or share the perceptions, thoughts or feelings of the different other? Can the rich really understand the poor? The differences in background and perceptions are too deep and profound to be shared. Therefore, our denomination must engage in what is referred to as "a suspension of expectations" in which cultural assumptions and perspectives are suspended, entering into the other's world of assumptions, beliefs, and values, and temporarily taking them as their own. They must see, value, and feel as the other sees, values, and feels.

The GC's decision to remove "ineffective pastors," in my opinion, is not the panacea for ecclesial vitality while the church itself is out of step with the times at hand. The hope for the contemporary church as well as the church of the future lies not in the effectiveness of its current leadership but in the preparation, release and anointing of the emerging generations of leadership to meet the challenges of the post-modern and post-Christian society.

Receiving gifts from Christians from the margins include those from

- Diasporic communities
- Hyphenated identities
- Different language groups
- Post-Western societies who have not yet lost the mystery of the kingdom of God.

I do believe that the church is in need of change echoing the proven wisdom of leaders: *ecclesia semper reformanda*. The local church is the hope of the denomination. It must move from a consumer model of church to one that is essentially missional.

If the denomination has to become a successful one in a Google-shaped world, it must become a host, not an authority that dispenses settled truths, wise words and the sole path to salvation. The leaders who influence our faith and action must convene (or moderate or enable) the conversations that change our life—or the activities that transform our understanding of ourselves, our world, and our God. The era of command-and-control is over. May we go back to the foundational practice, basin-and-towel model of authentic servanthood and true discipleship? Mission from the margins.

## OBITUARIES

### Rev. James McGraw

Rev. James R. "Jim" McGraw, 76, of New York City, died May 28 at home. McGraw served 11 years as senior pastor at John Street UMC, the oldest Methodist society in America. He retired from ministry in 2003.

The Hoosier native was a former magician and pianist, civil rights activist and author whose collection of meditations delivered over the 10 Sundays after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, "Prayers from Ground Zero," was published by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. John St. UMC is located just blocks from where the World Trade Center stood.

McGraw also edited and co-authored seven books with comic and civil rights activist Dick Gregory. He served for 20 years as editor of *Adherent*, and *Renewal* magazines. He also was interim editor of *New World Outlook*, the mission magazine of the General Board of Global Ministries, and a frequent contributor to *Christianity in Crisis* magazine.

McGraw also served congregations as pastor of Windsor Terrace UMC, Brooklyn, and Lexington UMC, Manhattan. He ran the youth program at Warren Street Methodist Center in Brooklyn.

A great fan of theater and acting, McGraw appeared in several productions in retirement, including the HBO series *The Sopranos* and the Nicole Kidman movie, *The Interpreter*.

He received a master's degree in divinity in 1960 from Yale Divinity School and did his residency at New Milford Methodist Church in Connecticut.

Rev. McGraw is survived by a brother Gene (Mary) McGraw of East Lansing, Mich., a nephew, Scott (Marcia) McGraw of Portage, Mich., a niece, Shanna (Bill) Mikolic of Holt, Mich., and three great-nephews and two great-nieces.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, July 8 at the John Street UMC. The church is located at 44 John Street in the financial district.

### Michael M. Ackerman

Michael Merlin Ackerman, 39, died on April 29. He is the son of Rev. Lorraine Coscia-Ackerman and Peter Merlin Ackerman. Coscia-Ackerman is the pastor of Township UMC, Hobart, N.Y. In addition to his parents, he is survived by a son, Tenzin Renchen.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the family at, P.O. Box 205, Hobart, NY 13788.

## JOB OPENINGS

### Youth Group Leader

Commack UMC is seeking an energized and faith-filled leader to encourage the youth of the church to serve God through mission and worship. The coordinator will build relationships with the youth through traditional means as well as social media. The program will reach out to all the youth of our community, not just those who are members of the church.

The job will require 8 to 10 hours a week; responsibilities include making and maintaining relationships with youth as well as coordinating mission events, fellowship opportunities and youth participation in worship. Qualifications include a mature faith in God and Jesus Christ, enthusiasm for young people, and comfort with social media. Must be 21 years or older. For more information please email resume to [mail@commack-umc.org](mailto:mail@commack-umc.org), or call the church office at 631-499-7310.

### Youth Coordinator

The UMC of Lake Ronkonkoma in Lake Grove, N.Y., is searching for a part-time youth coordinator. This position requires an individual who has creative programming ideas, and can direct volunteers to implement them. The candidate must have a bachelor's degree, and be motivated and organized. Position requires being at the church on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings, approximately six to seven hours per week from September to May at \$20 per hour. Also, the youth coordinator must be available for occasional retreats or weekend activities as needed.

Please send your resume to Liza Wright at, [lizawright@optonline.net](mailto:lizawright@optonline.net), or fax to the church at 631-588-0753.

### Organizer for Social Justice Advocacy, Education

This is a part-time, paid position of the NYAC, averaging ten hours per week. The coordinator will work primarily from home or on the road, and will report to, and be supervised by, the

Conference Board of Church and Society.

Responsibilities include:

- To help organize the work of the Conference Board of Church and Society (CBCS) in education and advocacy around the Social Principles of the UMC. This includes being in regular contact with the co-chairpersons and the leaders of the ministry teams that compose CBCS to help further their work.
- To coordinate joint education and advocacy work with the United Methodist Women, the Conference Task Force on Immigration, and other Conference boards, commissions, and racial/ethnic caucuses.
- To act as a liaison with other organizations inside and outside of the UMC that engage in education and advocacy around social concerns.
- To communicate regularly about CBCS initiatives and concerns through conference print and online publications.
- To help publicize events sponsored by CBCS and other advocacy organizations in the NYAC.
- To act as a resource for local churches and districts on social justice advocacy.
- To communicate with and stay abreast of the work of the General Board of Church and Society.
- To communicate regularly with the Friends of the Board of Church and Society.

The ideal candidate will possess the following:

- 1) Training and experience in leading education and advocacy around social concerns.
- 2) A passion for doing social justice advocacy.

Even if you do not see yourself as the ideal candidate, but have a passion for ministry of social concerns and justice, please submit your resume and a cover letter to: Mary Ellen Kris at [mekris@nyc.rr.com](mailto:mekris@nyc.rr.com), Rev. Jessica Anschutz at [rev.jla@gmail.com](mailto:rev.jla@gmail.com), or Rev. Jeff Wells at [pastorwells1@verizon.net](mailto:pastorwells1@verizon.net).

## Recovery Ministry Launched

Community United Methodist Church, Massapequa, N.Y., has launched a worship service focused on recovery and healing from addiction and other life struggles. These services at 7 p.m. on the first and third Monday of each month are part of a wider "Journey into New Life" ministry.

The service will be led by the Rev. Bob Gunn. Gunn, who is ordained in the United Church of Christ, currently has a full-time psychotherapy practice and is himself in recovery for 30 years. A dedicated recovery ministry team made up of laypersons is also working on this effort.

The church is located at 100 Park Blvd., Massapequa, between Sunrise Highway and Merrick Road. For more information, please call 516-541-7008.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP



PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE PARSONS

The Saturday Celebration of Ministry saw four receive licensing as local pastors, four commissioned as provisional elders, one ordained as a deacon and six as elders, and one recognized as an elder in full connection.

## 15 Honored In Ministry Celebration

Continued from page 1

William Frederick Loving, and Dora Janeway Odarenko were licensed as local pastors. Commissioned as provisional elders were Daniel J. Cho, David Collins, Suhee Kim and Hwi Joon Park. Carrie Mae Smallwood was ordained as a deacon, and Young Choi, David L. Jefferson, Song Ha Park, Andrew Peck-McClain, Darlene E.R. Resling, and Hector Rivera as elders. Paul Moon, whose ordination was accepted two years ago, was received as a full member.

Bishop Jeremiah Park was joined for the afternoon event by four other bishops: the UMC's Alfred Johnson, F. Herbert Skeete, and guest preacher, Sally Dyck; and Bishop Robert A. Rimbo of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

After the introduction of candidates, the First Flushing UMC Choir offered "Lord, We Have Come to the Lakeshore" as the anthem.

With 2 Corinthians 6:1–13 as her text, Bishop Dyck began her "Marked by Love" sermon talking about the scars that we receive and carry throughout our lives. She confessed she had gotten more than her share of physical scars by jumping on a bed as a child, or falling down on a training run, and

while cooking.

"I've gotten a lot of scars doing things that I love," she said, turning to the candidates. "Ministry is a lot like that. You're not going to get out of this without some wounds and scars."

Dyck looks to the example of the Apostle Paul as one who has gone before us into ministry bearing all his wounds and scars. She noted that the scars can come from many different places. People leave the church and decline to tell you why, or LGBT members are hurt by church policy.

"I hope it hurts that we know so many people need to hear the word of God," she added.

While there is protective gear to keep us safe in some parts of life, protecting oneself in ministry just makes it difficult to move.

"You can't really protect yourself," Dyck said. "Your offer of hope and heart may come back to hurt you." But there is a salve—"some no-scar stuff"—when one sees the difference that God can make in the life of another, she added.

Dyck ended her message by saying, "May the wounds and scars come because you always love Christ and what you are doing in your life."



District Superintendent St. Clair Samuel receives a gift from a Transformer—actually one of the youth ambassadors in mission who went to Ghana.

## Malaria Beware! We Do Care

Continued from page 1

The costumed Transformers, cheered on by the crowd, battled the insect with a giant can of bug spray and a huge swatter to no avail. But in the end, the chants of "Veto the mosquito!" and a very large net did him in.

The event featured skits by our conference youth and Youth Ambassadors in Mission, and music from Butler Memorial UMC's "Spirit in Black," and the Shining Steelpan Orchestra from Westchester UMC.

Bishop Sally Dyck, who has led the Minnesota Conference to raise \$2.5 million to fight malaria, said that while we may find mosquitoes

quite annoying, they are "little death missiles" in some places in the world. Within 48 to 72 hours, people in Africa who have been bitten by a malaria mosquito will become really sick. And most will not get the care they need to get well.

Dyck stressed that the United Methodist Church's initiative has many partners, including the Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation. Then she asked the gathering, "Are you one of our partners? . . . This is a really big thing to do"—eradicating malaria in Africa by 2015. The UMC has committed to raise \$75 million with Imagine No

Continued on page 15

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP

## In Case You Missed It . . .

### Legislative Work

All but four of the submitted petitions/reports were included in the consensus calendar, and were approved by the plenary (excluding the budget). Those considered by the plenary were:

**Item 3004** / Commission on Religion and Race did not receive consensus but received concurrence. After removal of a requirement of when clergy should receive the proposed training, the petition was adopted as amended.

**Item 3008** / The Olive Branch Resolution did not reach consensus or concurrence.

It was recommended that the plenary affirm the section's decision not to adopt. The petition sought a two-year moratorium to "lay aside our issues of disagreement . . . on homosexual behavior and same-sex marriages" for the "express purpose of building unity of one mind and heart to focus on the mission of the Church." The moratorium would have prohibited annual conference discussion or action on proposals related to homosexuality. After a suspension of the rules, a vote was taken and the petition was not adopted.

**Item 3009** / The Spiritual Crisis Caused by the Requirement to Discriminate reached concurrence but not consensus in committee. The petition sought to have the NYAC affirm its "historic commitment to the . . . rights and privileges of all persons, including LGBT persons." And to acknowledge the "grave pastoral crisis facing the Church at all levels" when clergy are bound by conscience to stand with Jesus amid the marginalized and oppressed.



After much discussion and a pair of amendments, the resolution was passed. After passage, a motion came forward asking the bishop to issue a decision of law whether the resolution violated certain paragraphs in the Book of Discipline.

**Item 3010** / Study Committee for an Inclusive Conference

draw four amendments from the floor. One was adopted, one was defeated and two were accepted as friendly amendments (adding BMCR, the Hispanic Council, Asian Council and Pacific Islanders and Native American caucuses). The amended resolution was adopted. The resolution, which laments the General Conference's turn from the "Wesleyan conviction of God's pure,

**WEDNESDAY: Lay delegates, above, discuss how they witness about God in their ministries during the laity session. One of many beautiful altars, left, created by Rev. Todd Pick.**

PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE PARSONS

unbounded love" in connection with the LGBT community, calls for the NYAC to "study and evaluate alternative ways of being the United Methodist Church in the Wesleyan tradition and to further explore the structural and disciplinary changes in the United Methodist Church."

### Budget Passed

The gathering approved the following budget for 2013: \$8,718,593 for shared ministries, \$3,346,951 for pensions, and \$4,209,869 for health benefits for active clergy. The total of \$16,275,413 is 4.2 percent less than 2012 budget.

### Corporate Session

- Amended, then approved the resolution, "Proceeds from the Sale of Discontinued and Abandoned Property." After accumulated expenses and debt is paid, the proceeds will be distributed on the following formula: 40 percent to new church development, 40 percent to be invested for use by parish development, 20 percent to the

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP

# In Case You Missed It . . .

Continued from page 12

NYAC Board of Trustees.

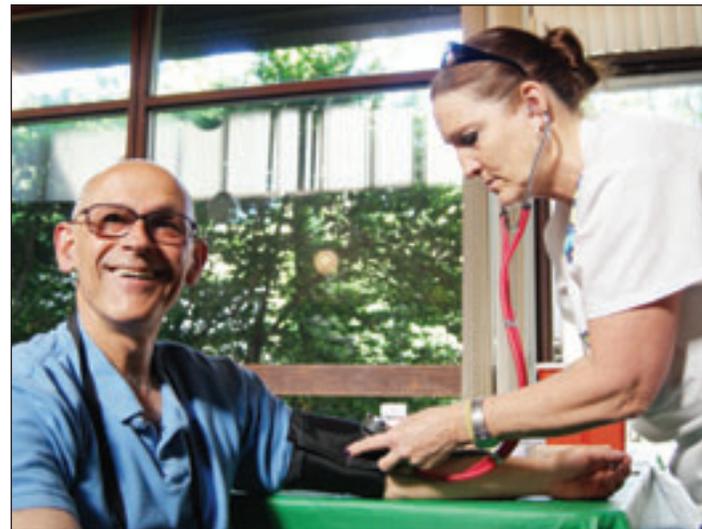
- Approved the mergers of four churches into two, namely the Bellvale and Sugar Loaf UMCs, and the Ridges/Roxbury and Stamford Korean UMCs.
- Approved the discontinuation of six congregations in New York: Beaverkill, Germantown, Woodmere-Lawrence, Armonk, Rye, and Summerfield (Port Chester).
- Approved and celebrated the chartering of a new church, Flushing Chinese UMC, that is home to more than 200 members. It began as a mission project of the Chinese UMC in Manhattan, and was eventually taken under the wing of the Long Island West District and nurtured in the Vision Bearer project. The church has raised \$500,000 in anticipation of buying a new home.

## Health and Pensions

The report of the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits was approved in the legislative section. Some of the changes in coverage include:

### Healthflex for active clergy

- Deductible for 2013 is \$750 singles / \$1500 families unless both the pastor and spouse complete the Health Quotient online questionnaire between August 1 and September 30. Taking the HQ reduces the deductible to \$500 singles / \$1000 families.
- Increase in co-pays: \$200 for emergency room; \$100 for urgent care visit. Co-pays on prescriptions will also increase, but the annual deductible will be eliminated.
- Healthflex premiums for 2013 are projected to be \$14,448, with the church paying \$13,248



**THURSDAY:** A little impromptu dancing, above, breaks out during the Festival of Missions on the mezzanine. But Sam Rosenfeld, left, kept it calm while getting his blood pressure taken at the Blueprint for Wellness health screening.

PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE PARSONS

- or \$1204 monthly (92 percent) and clergy paying \$1200 or \$100 monthly (8 percent).
- Board will establish \$300 Health Reimbursement Accounts for all active clergy to cover new out-of-pocket expenses.
- Complete the Blueprint for Wellness screening by July 31 to earn \$100 in HealthCash.

### Retiree Medicare

- "Extend Health" will be the new method to provide access to retiree supplemental insurance.

- It provides access to a wide variety of medical, drug, dental and vision plans from the nation's leading health insurers.
- Each retiree will be given a Health Reimbursement Account of \$2644 to be used for premium and expense reimbursements.
- Retirees will work with an Extend Health lifetime-benefits counselor to "choose the best plan for their needs and area."

Over the next few months,

the conference will begin to hold small group informational and educational sessions in several geographic regions. Extend Health will begin mailings to all eligible clergy/retirees/spouses in August.

## Episcopal Nominees

The body approved selecting three people as episcopal candidates for the Northeast Jurisdiction. Five names appeared on the ballot: Adrienne Brewington, Virginia Carle, Edward Horne, Betsy Ott, and Tim Riss. Brewington and Riss, who had both been previously endorsed by the General Conference delegation, were selected, as well as Horne,

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## ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP

## In Case You Missed It . . .

Continued from page 13

who was a nominee in 2004. New bishops will be elected, and all bishops assigned, during the July 18-20 Northeast Jurisdictional Conference in Charleston, W.Va.

### Jurisdictional Candidates

In addition to the delegates already elected to the Northeast Jurisdictional Conference, the following people were put forth as possible candidates for NEJ committees: Annette Griffith, Joyce Palevitz, Melody Merola, Jason Dobney, Rev. Vicki Flippen, Rev. Jessica Anschutz, Rev. Ian Straker, Dr. Traci West, Rev. Steve Phillips, Rev. Jeff Wells, Rev. Kristina Hansen, Rev. Bill Pfohl, Dr. Gennifer Brooks, Rev. Betsy Ott, Rev. Javier Viera, and Rev. Rick Hanse.

### New Vision Bearers

Michelle Holder, a member of Metropolitan Community UMC, plans to develop several prayer hotlines for people who are not affiliated with church but in need of help and divine guidance.

Claire Hojung Wu, a member of Broken Builders UMC, will plant a house church in or near her home in Manhasset Hills on Long Island that targets the growing Asian population of families with children in her neighborhood.

Joyce J. Lee, also member of Broken Builders UMC, will develop a church in upper Manhattan that focuses on young adults pursuing higher education in New York City, particularly those who have relocated from other countries and states for the opportunities the city can provide.

### Trustees Elected

Laity: Cora Doram of Westchester UMC, Robert Pollsen of Highland Mills UMC, and James Perkins. Clergy: Kevin Mulqueen, serving Grace UMC in Ridgebury, and Slate Hill UMC.

### Nominations

The slate of nominations was adopted with the addendum of June 5, 2012.

### Conference Chancellor

Larry McGaughey was reaffirmed to continue serving in this capacity.

### UM City Society

Rev. Bill Shillady announced that the society



PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE PARSONS

**FRIDAY: Clergy spouses, above, offered an inspirational song before dinner. Bishop Park celebrates with two new Vision Bearers, below right, after their introduction; Bishop and Lisa Park, below left, thank the gathering for their support.**



will mark its 175th anniversary in 2013. Hillary Rodham Clinton will be the guest speaker at the celebration.

### Society of John Wesley Award

The UM Men's Royston Bailey surprised Bishop Park by honoring him as a fellow in the Society of John Wesley. Established in 1982 by the directors of the UMM Foundation, the Society of John Wesley is a means of recognizing those who exemplify the characteristics of John Wesley – witness, vision, and stewardship that enhance and strengthen the mission and ministry of the church. It is the highest honor that the UMM can bestow.

### Shirley Parris Award

Lucille Dockery, Hyde Park UMC, was the

first recipient of the conference's award that is given for exceptional volunteer service to the United Methodist connection. Dockery, who serves on the conference Committee on Episcopacy, has served in all levels of the church and beyond in mentoring programs, mission teams, and financial management positions. The award is named in memory of Shirley Parris who served as conference lay leader, and four-time delegate to General Conference.

### Scholarships Announced

#### UM City Society Urban Ministry College Scholarships

- Natalia Alvarez-Plaud, Hofstra University
- Brandon A. Samuel, Howard University
- Priscilla Wong, Penn State University

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## ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP

## In Case You Missed It ... Scholarships, Offerings

Continued from page 14

**Seminary Scholarships**

- Prince Donkor, NY Theological
- Lori Hartman, NY Theological
- Byoungwk Jeon, Drew Theological
- Juyeon Lee, Drew Theological
- Elon Sylvester, NY Theological

**New York Education Society Conference Merit / \$1500 award**

- Gordon Edwards, Calvary UMC

**Fellows / \$1000 award**

- Tamara Taylor-McDonald, Saint Mark's UMC
- Emelio Woodstock, Butler Memorial UMC
- Lakira McQuilter, Christ Church UMC
- Juyeon Lee, United Church of Westville
- Haley Merritt, Union UMC
- Kahlil Lashley, Kings Highway UMC
- Samuel Phillips, Pleasantville UMC
- Julia Madden, Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew
- Emily Peck-McClain, Calvary UMC (Durham, NC)

**Scholars / \$750 award**

- Carla Esther Phillips, UMC Pleasantville
- Priscilla Wong, Chinese UMC
- Brandon Samuel, Butler Memorial UMC
- Amy Phillips, UMC Pleasantville
- Rachel Barber, Fishkill UMC

**Book Grants / \$500 award**

- Amanda Yau, Chinese UMC
- Alison VanBuskirk, Christ Church UMC
- Kenneth Peden, UMC of Huntington

- Tiffany Miller, Butler Memorial UMC
- Natalia Alvarez-Plaud, Co-op City UMC
- Jelani Magloire, Butler Memorial UMC
- David Irons, Butler Memorial UMC
- Roy Grubbs, Yorktown UMC

**Brunson Retiring**

Bishop Park announced that Evelyn Brunson, his administrative assistant, would be retiring at the end of the year. He thanked her for being his partner in ministry and in prayer. "Her vital spirituality blesses me every day," Park said. "I would like to have her with me wherever I may go."

Brunson started working with Bishop Ernest Lyght in 1997. She admitted she didn't know what it was about, "but when God sends you, God will equip you."

She told Bishop Lyght she would stay with the new bishop until he got on his feet.

"Now it is eight years later," she exclaimed. She thanked the conference for their love, support and kindness. And the body responded with a standing ovation.

**Saturday Monitoring Ministry Report**

Of the 51 people who spoke, excluding Bishop Park, the statistics are as follows in all categories:

- Asian, 2 percent; Black, 51 percent; Hispanic/Latino, 2 percent; and White, 45 percent
- Gender: Female, 39 percent; male, 61 percent
- Clergy, 24 percent; laity, 76 percent
- Age: Youth, 57 percent; young adult, 8 percent; adult, 31 percent; and old age, 2 percent.

—Roena Littlejohn,  
Chair, CORR

## BY THE NUMBERS

**\$4578**

Thursday offering for Black College Fund

**\$4569**

Wednesday offering for Women's Advocate Ministry

**\$400,000**

Church pledges for Imagine No Malaria Campaign announced by Bishop Park on June 9.

**\$182,787**

Saturday gifts for Imagine No Malaria, including a \$50,406 donation from the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund.

**\$5223**

Saturday offering for Ministerial Education Fund

**3771**

Health kits collected



The praise band is all decked out in "No More Malaria" t-shirts for Saturday's celebration.

## Malaria Beware! We Do Care

Continued from page 11

Malaria. The efforts in prevention and education thus far have dropped the death rate from one every 30 seconds to one every 60 seconds.

Bishop Jeremiah Park announced that eight churches had committed to raise \$50,000 each over the next few years—giving the campaign \$400,000 in pledges to start. Several other churches had committed amounts ranging from \$5000 to \$20,000. The offering brought forth during the event brought in \$182,787, including a \$50,406 donation from the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund.

As she was ending her message, Bishop Dyck shared that the

Minnesota Conference had initially set a goal of \$1.8M.

"We'd never raised that much for any effort before," she said. "But God can do more than Sally Dyck can imagine."

"Surely you can outshine the Minnesota Conference," she said, "You're New York!"

"New York are you with me?" she shouted. "Go make a difference in the world—wipe out malaria!"

\*\*\*\*\*

There's still time to get the "No More Malaria" t-shirts from annual conference. But you need to order and pay by July 13. Go to the NYAC web site to order, <http://nyac.com/registrations/register/77>.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE WRAPUP

# DeLong: Authenticity Can Stem Discrimination

BY DARLENE L. KELLEY

With humor, grace and bold courage, Rev. Amy E. DeLong addressed a packed house at the annual Methodists in New Directions luncheon on June 8 at Hofstra USA. Originally, the luncheon was planned for the Greenhouse, but the enthusiasm generated by MIND's work and the intense interest in this year's speaker forced the organizers to move to a larger space.

People were still filing in as DeLong proclaimed, "Do all you can! Break all the rules you need to because authenticity is the only known cure for discrimination."

Pointing out the differences between prejudice—the feelings we have about people—and discrimination—the result of putting those feelings into action, DeLong spoke of the "incredible burden" that comes with the responsibility of "changing every heart."

DeLong spoke of her local UM church that sits on the border between Wisconsin and Minnesota. There is room there for both Packers' fans and Vikings' fans in the same congregation, she noted, so is total agreement a requirement for membership in our church?

"I don't care how people feel about me," DeLong declared, "but I do care that people believe their prejudice gives them a right to discriminate."

DeLong was born into the United Church of Christ, but fell in love with the Wesleyan way after visiting a United Methodist church.

"I fell in love with the grace, the theological openness and the fact that I didn't have to leave my mind outside the door. I fell in love with John Wesley and the fact that he preached in all the wrong places to all the wrong people" she said with a big, bright smile.

"And a Disciple Bible study changed my life," she said. "I felt called to ordained ministry, and I fell in love with the woman sitting next to me at

the Bible study."

DeLong was ordained as a deacon in 1997, and as an elder in full connection in 2000. In 2011, DeLong made headlines as she endured a church trial after performing a same sex marriage; that action prompted her district superintendent's charge that she was no longer appointable.

Author of the book, "The Loyal Opposition: Struggling with the Church on Homosexuality," DeLong told the gathering that she could no longer keep her "gay self hidden."

"For eight years I felt pulled in two," she explained. Whenever a new parishioner asked if she was married, Amy felt like she was betraying her partner Val.

"The church takes our gifts and our graces, our service and our money as long as we pretend to be straight," she said. "I could not live with the amount of lying I had to do . . . The truth will set you free, but first it will shatter your sweet, safe life."

Many progressives suffer from "niceomania," DeLong suggested.

"Niceomania is the notion that systems of oppression will miraculously crumble if we are just nice enough," DeLong explained, but that's not following the example of Jesus.

"He overturned the tables, he worked to end injustice, he ignored the religious rules," she said. And the "fundasexuals" may not change their minds without a little help.

"It's been long enough," she declared as

she expressed gratitude for all who have come before, and frustration at the continued harm and pain caused by the church's policies and practices.

"We can not submit to laws that we know are dead wrong," she said. "We need intentional actions to dismantle those unjust laws. We need to band together and step wobbly-kneed into the struggle. You don't have to choose between being your authentic self and the church."

DeLong, a clergy member for 14 years in the Wisconsin Annual Conference, was charged with violating The United Methodist Church's ban on non-celibate, gay clergy and its prohibition against clergy officiating at same-sex unions. In her trial before Wisconsin UM clergy, she was acquitted

of being a "self-avowed practicing homosexual," and found guilty of celebrating a same-gender union in 2009. During the trial's penalty phase, DeLong declined to promise that she would never again perform such a union.

The trial court voted to suspend DeLong from her ministerial functions for 20 days beginning July 1, 2011, and sentenced her to a more detailed process for a year after her suspension to "restore the broken clergy covenant relationship."

DeLong currently serves as executive director of Kairos CoMotion, a non-profit organization she co-founded in 2000 that is dedicated to progressive theological education and advocacy.



Rev. Amy DeLong

## If You Need More . . .

To read the Daily Vision Updates from conference, view photos and videos:

**On the NYAC web site:**

<http://www.nyac.com/pages/detail/1641>

**On Facebook** search for "New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church."

**Audio downloads and DVDs/CDs**

Go to the DVDs and CDs online store at, <http://www.gntv>.

info. Select "New York AC" from the Categories menu, then scroll down to the bottom of the offerings until you see the red dove illustration for the 2012 gathering. All of the worship services, ordination and Bible studies are available. Remember . . . the DVDs and CDs will not include any copyrighted music or hymns from the service.



# What Happened to Holy Conferencing?

BY TONY BECK

Christ Church

At this year's Annual Conference, the continued decline of the UMC was discussed. Call to Action, incubator training, Natural Church Development, and other programs have been initiated to reverse this downward trend. While these initiatives address some problems, they will make little difference. Why? Because our problem is spiritual. The cause of our decline was clearly demonstrated at both the General Conference and the Annual Conference.

## Divisions

Jesus said in Mark 3:24-25: "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand." (NRSV) As we all know, there are deep divisions within the UMC. There will never be complete agreement on every issue when you have a diverse gathering of people such as we have, but there should be respectful and civil dialog. If we continue with this acrimony and divisiveness, the UMC will continue its slide into irrelevance and eventually oblivion.

## Making Disciples

Moreover, the UMC isn't making the main thing the main thing. All four Gospels, Acts, and the Book of Discipline all tell us what the main thing is. Jesus said it clearly in Matthew 28:19-20a: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (NRSV) While we talk about "making disciples for the transformation of the world," we aren't actually doing it, as our declining numbers clearly indicate. So much time and energy is devoted to one or two social issues that we have little left for evangelism.

## Conforming to the World

Lastly, we aren't following God's command given through the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect." (NRSV) We aren't being the kind of disciples Jesus has called us to be. Shouldn't we be setting godly examples of shalom, cooperation, and handling differences well? Where is the transformation?

## COMMENTARY

There were some things that occurred at the Annual Conference that prompted me to write this article.

### Celebrating Women

The conference started out with a worship service to celebrate the remarkable progress women have made in the 40 years since the establishment of the GCSRW. The talk, however, was mostly negative and critical about the alleged lack of progress. The speaker neglected to mention that 56 percent of the students at Wesley Theological Seminary are women. She elevated women at the expense of men. Her mocking and derogatory statements offended many. That was not holy conferencing.

### Negativity about General Conference

The General Conference (GC) delegates, in their report, characterized their opponents as unloving, criticized the GC process and the church in general, and further contributed to the spirit of negativity. Regardless of how you feel about the issues, their negativity and critical attitude were not consistent with holy conferencing.

### Olive Branch Rejected

An "Olive Branch" petition was put forth in an attempt to promote more civil dialogue, tone down the rhetoric, and lay the groundwork for working together on issues that we can all agree on. The petition was in the spirit of Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (NRSV) Sadly, it was rejected. Some would rather see the UMC continue to be torn apart and continue its decline than follow Jesus' teachings to be peacemakers.

### Syria

A petition was put forth that called for the UMC to sell its shares of HP stock because that company might be profiting from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Where was a petition condemning the massacre of women and children in Syria? Where were petitions condemning bullying in schools? We remain silent about Syrian atrocities and bullying but

condemn HP? I don't understand.

### False Accusations

Lastly, why must people who claim to be Christians put down those who may not completely agree with their agendas? For example, opponents of some initiatives are accused of being unloving, homophobic, evil, etc. Some on the other side use equally hateful words. What many fail to realize is that there are many people, including the majority of United Methodists I would guess, who fall in the middle of the spectrum. I wish both extremes would give a little and compromise, meeting in the middle where workable solutions exist. Then maybe God will finally be glorified by our actions.

### Conclusion

Given the tone of the AC, I can't imagine what first-time lay members felt witnessing such a display of unchristian behavior. If you were there on Friday evening, did you notice how many seats were empty? I suspect people were weary from this, and rightfully so. It's wearing us down rather than building us up.

Jesus wrote to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:4-5: "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place." (NIV)

The UMC has lost its first love: making disciples for the transformation of the world. We must realize the world will only be transformed by faith in Christ, not through human efforts.

How far we have fallen from our heritage of tent revivals, which focused on evangelism and discipleship, and the church grew. What are *you* going to do to change the situation before it's too late? I've got a suggestion – how about getting on our knees, seeking God's forgiveness, and getting back to our first love.

No matter how noble or urgent you believe your cause is, don't destroy the UMC over it. Like it or not, change comes slowly, and if the cause is in God's will, it will ultimately succeed. Think William Wilberforce. In the meantime, let's try to get along, be civil, and return to disciple making. Then we will glorify God.

*Tony Beck is the pastor of Christ Church United Methodist in Beacon, N. Y.*