

"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 20, 2011



Preview 212th Annual Conference

Gathering With Hearts Warmed for Mission

Bishop Jeremiah Park is getting pumped up! Are you?

In just a few short weeks, clergy, lay members and guests of the New York Annual Conference will gather again at Hofstra University to celebrate that "For Such a Time as This: We Are Heart Warmed United Methodists in Mission."

This year's holy conferencing takes on the added

importance of electing delegates to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional conferences. The election process will begin for both clergy and laity in the separate Wednesday afternoon sessions, and continue on Thursday and Friday as needed. The voting will be conducted with a mix of paper scanning and handheld devices managed by professional

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ERTs Needed For South Cleanup

Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, conference mission coordinator, is finalizing plans to begin sending Emergency Response Teams to help in the storm-stricken areas of the South. Read the information below and then contact him at 914-615-2233, or email jewoodzie@nyac.com, to volunteer.

Requirement: Only those with ERT badges can join at present time.

Where are we going? Raleigh, Snow Hill or Sanford, N.C.

Total cost per person: \$500 includes airfare from New York to Raleigh, N.C., local transportation and meals.

What are we going to do? Debris removal, cleaning, deconstruction, office work at the MERCI call center, and whatever else we are asked to do.

Lodging: Church fellowship hall; electricity and showers available

What to bring: Pack light. Air mattress, sleeping bag, toiletries and personal items.

Meals: We will cook our own meals at the church kitchen.

You may also support UMCOR's response by donating at: <http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations/umcor/donate.cfm?code=3021326>



At a worship station on Friday night, participants painted scenes on a white umbrella to symbolize God's protection.

Helping Kids Interact With God

BY LYNDA GOMI

NYAC Children's Ministry Consultant

The conference's first ever children's summit, "And a Child Shall Lead Us," offered a sensory playground of exploration for the participants—God's children of all ages.

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SAVE THE DATE

Catskill-Hudson Camp Meeting

May 21: The churches of the Catskill-Hudson District will gather for a day of food, fun and fellowship (not to mention excellent music and the world's shortest district conference) at Camp Epworth, High Falls, N.Y. Events begin at noon with a bring-your-own lunch, and will conclude with a barbeque at 5:15. Pre-registration requested for the barbeque; cost is \$5. There will also be a laity versus clergy volleyball game, and new lay speakers and emergency response teams will be honored.

Learn to Lead VIM Teams

May 21: Would you like to know more about Volunteers In Mission? Are you interested in leading a VIM team? Then the VIM Leadership Conference is the one place to get the information about everything you need to know. Join Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, conference mission coordinator, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Conference Center in White Plains. Presenters will include VIM team leaders to Bolivia, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, and Mozambique. Lunch will be provided, so registration is required by May 15. Email Ewoodzie, at jewoodzie@nyac.com, or call, 914-615-2233.

Concert at Highland Mills

May 21: New York City's Premiere Symphonic Choir and Orchestra, "The Symphony Chorus," will perform for free at 7 p.m., Highland Mills UMC, 654 Route 32 (at Ridge Road), Highland Mills, NY 10930. Donations appreciated to support the chorus. For more information: 845-928-9249.

Richmond Hill Marks 90th Anniversary

June 12: Join in this joyful celebration beginning with 11 a.m. worship, which will include Holy Communion. Rev. Kenny Yi, superintendent of the LIW District, will be the featured speaker. A

catered meal will follow at 1 p.m. Historical displays and special presentations are planned. For more information, call the church, located at 112-14 107th Ave., Richmond Hill, N.Y., at 718-843-4841.

Time for Holy Conferencing

June 8–11: Under the theme, "For Such A Time as This: We Are Heart-Warmed United Methodists in Mission," the NYAC will meet at Hofstra University. For information on registration, go to: <http://www.nyac.com/pages/detail/1641>. Also see preview stories on Pages 1 and 4.

Cooperative School of Mission

July 28–30: "All Things Made New," is the focus for the conference Cooperative School of Christian Mission at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. Housing is available at the Ethan Allen Hotel. The three studies available are: "The Journey: Forgiveness, Restorative Justice and Reconciliation," "Haiti: Challenges and Hope," and "Joy to the World: Mission in the Age of Global Christianity." The school is open to clergy and laity, with special classes for children, youth and young adults. Registration info will be available soon; Rev. Sonia A. Jermin serves as dean.


<small>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</small>
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Recent New Appointments

Sandra Mantz
Setauket/LIE

Daniel Dong-il Chang
First Korean (Flushing)/LIW
Chang currently serves
at Valley UMC,
California-Pacific
Annual Conference.

Cynthia Major
First UMC of Hartford/CT

Wesley Daniel
Calvary (Bronx)/MET

Young Shik Kim
Branford/CT

Nelson Kalombo Ngoy
District hire, Community
(East Norwich)/LIE

Judy Stevens
Bellmore & East Meadow/LIE

Alpher Sylvester
Bethany/(Brooklyn) LIW

Hwi Joon Park
NY Nam San Korean (Brooklyn)/LIW

Kwang Won Kim
West Granby & Copper Hill/CT

Huiping He
Smithtown/LIE

Vicki Flippin
Associate, Church of the Village
(Manhattan)/MET

Jin Choi
UMC Putnam Valley/NYCT

Scharlise Dorsey
Wappinger's Falls/NYCT

JUNE 19/PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY Special Offering Supports Local, Global Efforts

BY REV. JEFF WELLS

This year's Peace with Justice Sunday will be officially observed on June 19. However, congregations are encouraged to celebrate Peace with Justice Sunday on whatever date works best for them. The special offering taken on this Sunday supports programs that address burning social issues, and advocate for peace and justice at home and around the world.

While Peace with Justice Sunday was designated primarily as a day to take the special offering, the Board of Church and Society (CBCS) encourages local churches to also use this as an opportunity to highlight and celebrate their own social concerns ministries and those of our annual conference.

Peace with Justice was established by the 1988 General Conference as "a faithful expression of shalom in the Bible." The UMC believes 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" and when "structures and systems that reflect economic exploitation, war,



political oppression, and cultural domination no longer exist."

Half of the offering collected each year is retained by the New York Annual Conference to fund our social concerns and social justice ministries. This is the sole source of funding for the NYAC Board of Church and Society. There is no line in the conference budget for our "church and society" ministry. So please plan for the Peace with Justice offering in your church on June 19 or another Sunday.

At last year's annual gathering at Hofstra University, CBCS hosted a large display at the Festival of Ministries, and distributed nearly 800 free copies of the Social Principles of the UMC. We also hosted a dinner at which we publicized the "Healthy Families, Healthy Planet"

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With Hearts Warmed For Mission

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electronic voting companies.

Bishop Jeremiah Park will officially open the conference at 7 p.m., Wednesday, June 8, and will follow with some undoubtedly Spirit-filled preaching. The opening will be streamed live on the Internet as will most of the times of worship and celebration.

In a change from previous years, the bishop will deliver his Episcopal address during the Friday morning session at 10:45 a.m. Special guests scheduled to preach and speak during the June 8–11 event include Bishop Violet Fisher and Thomas Kemper, general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries.

But this year's morning Bible studies will rely on the gifts and graces of two of our own. Jerry Eyster, a lay speaker from the Westport UMC, is a Wesleyan scholar and will share



Bishop Park will be hitting the stage again to raise funds for the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund on Saturday, June 11. How many pushups will he do?

his understanding of what it means to be “Heart Warmed United Methodists,” at 8:30 a.m. Thursday. And on Friday, at the same time, Rev. Randy Nugent, senior pastor at Vandever Park UMC in Brooklyn and former top staff executive of the General Board of Global Ministries, will offer some scriptural reflections.

Later on Thursday, Rev. Adrienne Brewington,

superintendent of the Long Island East District, will preach at the memorial service to honor the clergy, spouses and children who have died in the past year. And that evening, the gathering will celebrate the years of service given by those clergy who are retiring: Fred A. Allen, Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii, Magaly Beltre, Wilbert Taylor

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Let Your Fingers Do the Voting

BY REV. DENNIS WINKLEBLACK

Assistant to The Bishop

This is a special year for United Methodist conferences as delegates will be elected to the 2012 General Conference, April 24–May 4 in Tampa, and the 2012 Jurisdictional Conferences, July 18–20, in Charleston, W.Va.

We will be electing five clergy and five lay delegates to

General Conference for 2012 and an additional five clergy and five laity to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference. Those elected as GC delegates will also be delegates to Jurisdictional Conference—for a total of 10 clergy and 10 lay jurisdictional delegates. By our rules, the additional jurisdictional delegates, in order of their election, will be reserve delegates to the General

Conference. Additionally, we will elect three clergy and three lay reserve delegates to Jurisdictional Conference.

In accordance with Conference Rule 76 that specifies that “Electronic balloting will be used for the election of clergy and lay delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference,” we have hired several professional

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NYAC Clergy Marriage Policy Ruled Invalid

From UMNS Reports Supplemented by local reporting

A policy adopted at the 2010 New York Annual Conference—but not yet implemented—that essentially would have allowed clergy to marry someone of the same sex has been declared “null, void and of no effect” by the UMC’s top court.

The United Methodist Judicial Council ruled that the NYAC resolution and policy allowing clergy “to marry at their own discretion” is “neither valid nor constitutional.”

Meeting April 27–29 in Detroit, the council upheld the church’s current prohibition against same-sex marriage and pastors who are “self-avowed practicing homosexuals,” found in Paragraph 2702 of the Book of Discipline.

While an annual conference can adopt rules and regulations for its own governance, the council wrote in Decision 1185, the conference “may not legally negate, ignore or violate provisions of the Discipline with which they disagree even when the disagreement is based upon conscientious objections to those provisions.”

The rationale for the New York policy is that same-sex marriage is legal in Connecticut; that such unions performed legally elsewhere “are legally recognized by state agencies in New York;” and that the church’s Articles of

Religion—doctrinal standards found in Paragraph 103 of the Book of Discipline—state that it is “lawful” for clergy “to marry at their own discretion.”

Contending that the Articles of Religion take precedence over other church laws outside the church’s constitution, the New York Conference declared: “we believe that any... provision (in the Discipline) denying marriage to some clergy is unconstitutional and contrary to the Articles of Religion...” In particular, Paragraph 103 would take precedence over Paragraph 2702, the conference said.

Seeking ‘declaratory decision’

Before enacting the policy, however, the conference resolution asked the Judicial Council to make a “declaratory decision” about its validity.

Council members initially considered the NYAC petition at its October 2010 meeting in New Orleans, but deferred a decision to the April meeting. Implementation of the policy was stayed pending the court’s decision.

Because the petition appeared on both the October and April dockets, supporters and an opponent of the policy appeared before the council during oral hearings at both meetings.

During the oral hearing in October, NYAC lay members J. Ann Craig and Nehemiah

Lockett—who identified themselves as gay—argued that Article XXI of Paragraph 103, declares marriage is “a moral structure available to all.”

At the April oral hearing in Detroit, Kevin Nelson, chairperson of the N.Y. chapter of Methodist Federation for Social Action who identified himself as “a straight person who supports full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons,” argued that when John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, wrote the Articles of Religion, he did not define marriage as heterosexual.

Both Craig and Nelson noted that Wesley was well aware that issues of class, race and status could be used by society as an attempt to block marriage. “Although John Wesley may not have considered marriage for same-gender couples in Article XXI, the discretion of clergy to marry whom they choose can be understood on the face of it as a challenge to arbitrary social categories and prejudices,” Craig said at the October hearing.

Nelson, a home missionary, declared that allowing other parts of the Discipline to supersede Article XXI is “anti-Wesleyan” and ignores the ministry of Jesus to the marginalized, “a marginalization that in today’s world and in the case of gay and lesbian persons is all too often perpetuated by the very Christian

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NYAC Clergy Marriage Policy Ruled Invalid

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churches that have been charged by God with opposing it.”

Noting that “there is no acceptable place between humiliation and respect,” Nelson asked council members to “take a controversial but clearly proscribed stand” to uphold the church’s constitution and affirm the New York Conference policy.

Opposing the policy

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, a Wisconsin pastor representing Good News, an unofficial UM evangelical caucus, spoke in opposition of the policy at both the October and April hearings.

In April, he called the New York petition one “in a string” of actions over the years by various annual conferences to urge Judicial Council to circumvent General Conference, the church’s top legislative body, and change the denomination’s stance on homosexuality.

The Book of Discipline already has defined marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and an annual conference “does not have the right to legislate on the duties of clergy,” Lambrecht added. Nor can it unilaterally change the definition of marriage in Article XXI to include same-gender marriage without General Conference action, he said.

Supporters of the New York Conference policy mainly use experience and cultural tolerance

as the basis for their support, he contended. “Such arguments may be somewhat persuasive in a legislative arena, but they show how weak the legal standing of this policy is,” he told council members.

Because marriage between one man and one woman was the norm in Wesley’s time, there was no need for him to define marriage in the Articles of Religion, Lambrecht argued.

While heterosexual marriage was the norm then, Nelson replied, Wesley was well aware of other restrictions on marriage related to class and race. “Wesley did not set a definition in Article XXI, he set a principle,” he said.

Attempt at immunity

In its ruling, the Judicial Council found that Paragraph 2702.1 does not “revoke, change or alter” the Articles of Religion or establish new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to established doctrinal standards.

The New York Conference policy, however, is in conflict with the Discipline and “could arguably be advanced as some safe haven from the complaint process for those clergy who choose to enter into a same-sex marriage at their discretion . . .,” the court said. A conference has no authority to offer such immunity by adopting a policy “that is clearly contrary to the Discipline.”

Judicial Council does not

consider state recognition of same-sex marriage to be a factor in this case. “The church has a long tradition of maintaining its standards apart from those recognized or permitted by any civil authority,” the decision said. “The church’s definition of marriage as contained in the Discipline is clear and unequivocal and is limited to the union of one man and one woman.”

In a concurring opinion, four council members—Rev. Katherine Austin Mahle, Rev. F. Belton Joyner Jr., Angela Brown and Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe—wrote that the council’s decision does not comment “on the appropriateness of the disciplinary language related to marriage being between one man and one woman. We only say that there is no constitutional block to such language.”

The Articles of Religion came about when Wesley “revised, redefined, and adapted” the 39 Articles of the Church of England to fit the context of the newly formed Methodist church in the United States.

“It is possible to change and interpret the Articles of Religion in light of the Christian mission for our times,” through votes requiring specific majority approvals by General Conference and the denomination’s annual conferences, the opinion noted.

Beth Capen, a NYAC

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Special Offering Supports Local, Global Efforts

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initiative of the General Board of Church and Society. In the fall, we co-sponsored and helped to fund the "My Brother's Keeper" hate crimes symposium. CBCS has been instrumental in promoting the NYC "Living Wage" campaign throughout our conference.

The conference Board of Church and Society has three main areas of work: 1) Poverty/Hunger/Peace, 2) Care for Creation/Environmental Concerns, and 3) Healthcare.

In addition, half of the Peace

with Justice offering is remitted to the GBCS to help fund U.S. and global work in social action, public-policy education and advocacy. GBCS is headquartered in the United Methodist Building in Washington, D.C., directly across from the Capitol. This puts the staff in a position to be in regular contact with legislators, and influence important social legislation, advocating according to the UM Social Principles. GBCS also provides training around the globe for UM pastors and laypersons. GBCS makes grants

each year to conferences, districts and local churches for education and advocacy around social concerns.

You can make a gift toward the work of the Board of Church and Society at any time through your local church. Note on the check that it is to go toward the "Peace with Justice" funds. You can also donate by going to www.umcgiving.org and clicking on "Donate," and then selecting "Peace with Justice Sunday." This web site also offers support materials for preaching and teaching about the Special Sundays.

NYAC Board of Church & Society to Hire Consultant

Over the past year, the NYAC Board of Church and Society (CBCS) has been working with Bishop Jeremiah Park and the cabinet on a plan to hire a part-time consultant to organize and promote social advocacy ministries in our conference. A description of this position will be posted shortly on the conference web site, www.nyac.com. The board will continue to meet regularly and commit itself to social action and social justice ministries, but believes it can be more effective and accomplish more if there is someone devoting more time on a weekly basis to organizing this work.

The board anticipates that

this person will work an average of eight hours per week. The funding for this position will come exclusively out of money collected through the annual Peace with Justice Sunday offering in June. This money is held by the Conference treasury and administered by CBCS. For a more complete explanation of the purpose and importance of the Peace with Justice Sunday, please see the accompanying article.

CBCS hopes that having a consultant will bring more attention to the social concerns advocacy work of the conference, get more local churches involved in it, and therefore, generate more contributions to the Peace with Justice offering.

Marriage Policy Ruled Invalid

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laymember who sits on the Judicial Council, recused herself, and Jay Arthur Garrison, first lay alternate, participated in the proceedings instead.

The Judicial Council also acted on other items, including requests for reviewing past decisions. Those decisions, Nos. 1182-1189, can be found at, http://archives.umc.org/interior_judicial.asp?mid=263&SN=1100&EN=1189&JDMOD=VWL.

To read Nelson's full oral argument, go to: http://mfsaweb.org/?page_id=5611. And to see the MFSAs response to the Judicial Council decision, go to: <http://mfsaweb.org/?p=5615>.

The Spirit Moves—Sometimes By Bicycle

BY REV. HAL LOW
Associate Pastor,
Greenville and Norton Hill
UMC

One of the things I love most about the United Methodist Church is our understanding of the importance of “connectionalism.” We recognize that the Body of Christ is not an isolated phenomenon, but a universal happening unfolding in every corner of the world; connected just as a body is connected, many parts, one goal—serving the unfolding kingdom of God.

The Spirit recently moved the 6th and 7th grade Sunday school class at the UMC of Greenville and Norton Hill to experience firsthand what it means to be a “connectional church.” This spring, they had been using Rueben Job’s wonderful little book—“Three Simple Rules.” The Holy Spirit work through that book to inspire something truly connectional.

The teacher, Sue Bowman, spoke to me about how the kids had been inspired by the book and wanted to live out what it means to “do good,” and “stay in love with God.” So I told her about a mission project at a nearby church, the Clinton Ave. UMC in Kingston, N.Y. They run this phenomenal community outreach program called Caring Hands Soup Kitchen. Though it provides hot meals to people six days a week, it’s much more than just a soup kitchen because it also provides a free legal clinic and a GED program. Soon it will offer

a place for unwed pregnant teens to live and learn skills enabling them to be good mothers and productive members of society.

Now the Spirit moved Ms. Bowman to speak to her class about the ministry and the kids wanted to see it. So one Sunday, a couple of adults and a few of the kids attended

worship at Clinton Ave. The pastor, Rev. Darlene Kelly, really touched the souls of the teacher and the kids. They came back and wanted to do something concrete to help out the Caring Hands ministry, which operates on a shoestring budget and a lot of love.

They decided to hold a bike ride called, “Wheels for Meals,” to raise money to help the struggling ministry. They created handmade posters announcing the event, and T-shirts to wear for the ride. They got people to pledge money for each mile—the ride would be about 10 miles long. When April 9 arrived, about 12 kids on their bikes gathered at the church, along with some helpful parents, a couple of pickup trucks, a couple of cases of water, and, of course, teacher Bowman on her bike ready to lead the course.

Now I thought this was a great idea, and hoped that maybe the kids would be able to raise \$100



Sunday school teacher, Sue Bowman, leads a group of her 6th and 7th graders out of the parking lot of Greenville and Norton Hill UMC to begin the “Wheels for Meals” fundraising ride.

or \$200 for Caring Hands. But the Spirit moves as it wills, and produces more than we usually expect. The ride didn’t raise \$100, or even two. Seems the Spirit was working overtime and the ride raised fivefold that amount—\$538 in less than 1½ hours. Thanks be to God!!!

But the Spirit isn’t finished working in the kids or their teacher. Next year they plan to do it again, only they want to spread the spirit of connectionalism to other UMCs in the area. They plan to expand the ride and invite other local United Methodist Churches to join them in connecting our hearts and feet for “Caring Hands.” Truly the Spirit moves as it wills—let it move you and connect with us for “Wheels for Meals” 2012.

Those interested may contact Ms. Bowman via the church office at 518-966-4181, or send a letter to her attention to PO 599, Greenville NY 12083.

And a Child Shall Lead Us

Making Church a Place of God's Love, Protection

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After the sounding of a shofar called the participants to the opening worship for the March 25–26 event, the children and adults were encouraged to experience God in different ways by visiting four unique worship stations created by Pastor Sabrina Chandler.

“The garlic reminds me of the big pot of spaghetti the youth group prepared and shared on Sunday nights. Garlic is community!” came one response to the “aroma of God” station, where the group was asked to inhale different aromas and reflect on memories that associated that smell and God. Participants were able to record comments in a journal.

“The smells remind me of walking through the streets of Jerusalem . . . All the different foods we saw makes me think of the meals Jesus had with his disciples,” wrote one. “Coffee reminds me of coffee hour after Sunday service! Congregations coming together to socialize is one way of honoring God,” wrote another.

Six members of the NYAC joined with two national leaders in children's ministry, Melanie Gordon and the Rev. Dr. Leanne Hadley, to offer 10 different workshops on Christian education ranging from incorporating children in worship to bullying. Gordon is the General Board



LEFT: Rev. Dr. Leanne Hadley challenged the educators to teach their children about the meaning of the various parts of worship. RIGHT: Melanie Gordon is the GBOD's Director of Children's Ministry.



LEFT: Rev. Ann Pearson guides young participants through a worship station. RIGHT: Participants experienced God through the sense of smell.

of Discipleship's Director of Children's Ministry, and Hadley is president and founder of First Steps Spirituality Center in Colorado.

The summit, held at a hotel in West Harrison, N.Y., was the brainchild of Rev. Ann Pearson, director of Connectional Ministries for the NYAC.

“The idea comes out of getting the words of Jesus off the page

and realizing that listening and reading are not the only way we learn and often are not the preferred ways to learn. I believe we lose our children because we don't connect with the way they learn,” Pearson said.

The unusual style for the summit—including children as participants and running interactive workshops that

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Making Church a Place of God's Love, Protection

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engaged both the adults and children—has become the model for interactive learning that the General Board of Disciples (GBOD) employs with other conferences.

Worship continued on Friday night with the word shared by the Hadley, a UMC elder who has specialized in area of children's spirituality for more than 25 years. Her topic was, "God's Loving Protection," and she asked us to imagine church as the place where we feel God's loving protection.

"What if church was a place that made you feel safe?" Hadley asked. She reminded us that it was a safe place for Jesus; when he was lost, his parents found him at the temple. The question for each of us is how do we, as Christian educators, engage the children in our churches and in our community in a way that makes 'church' synonymous with 'God's loving protection.'

Saturday was divided into three workshop sessions and finished with worship. The first session included four workshop options: "Covenant Groups for Kids" with Rev. Dr. Hadley, "Living the Liturgical Year at Home" with Elizabeth Christie of Long Island, "Thinking Inside the Box: Creative Use of Space" with Debbie Mecca of the NY/CT district, and "A Hymn, Psalm or Jingle" with Pastor Chandler and Carol Arrucci of the Metropolitan District

led. Each of the workshops incorporated interactive learning, and demonstrated how that style of learning can occur in Sunday school classes every week.

The second workshop session offered two options: "Bullying" led by Gordon of the GBOD, and "Multi-sensory Storytelling" led by Rev. Ann Pearson. Gordon shared her experiences of working with children who were being bullied. She challenged the participants to "be proactive in showing our children what it means to love one another." She said that all children need support to build healthy relationships: the targets of bullying, the children who bully, and even those who quietly stand by. More information about this topic can be found on Gordon's website at <http://www.gbod.org/children>.

The third and final session begun with Hadley challenging those who both support and oppose children in worship

services to find ways to teach children about worship and the meaning of the different parts of worship. Three interactive learning workshops continued with the theme as Elizabeth Christie led "One Bread, One Body: Communion is for Children, Too," Debbie Mecca led "Acting Out in the Classroom" and Lynda Gomi, the NYAC Children's Ministry consultant, offered ideas on "Prayer."

Closing worship also began with the sounding of the shofar. Under Pastor Chandler's leadership and Carol Arrucci's musicianship, the group sang favorite Christian children's songs followed by Gordon's message entitled "Who is the Greatest?"

Participants headed home Saturday afternoon energized to find more ways to connect with the children in their churches and in their communities—fully aware that the children are the present and future of the church.

Young People's Images Sought For 2012 GC

UMNS—The Young People's Ministries division of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship is soliciting videos and images reflecting the diverse ministries of the church's youth and young adults. The material will be featured in a presentation at the 2012 General Conference in Tampa, Fla. The division also is seeking two young people to host the presentation.

One-minute videos or pictures with narration about youth/young people's ministries are due by Oct. 31; applications for on-stage presenters are due by Aug. 1.

For more details, go to: <http://globalyoungpeople.org/young-people%E2%80%99s-address-at-general-conference-2012/?tr=y&aid=8255202>

Colombia VIM Helps Lay Foundation of Hope

BY REV. WILL NICHOLS

A group of 12 UM Volunteers in Mission spent the last 10 days of March in northeast Colombia as guests of the Iglesia Colombiana Metodista to work at a school site in the village of Vista Hermosa, and at the new UMCOR-supported Clinton Rabb Health Clinic in nearby Las Brisas del Mar. The area has suffered greatly due to years of paramilitary domination and it is extremely poor. As a member of the team, it was exciting to witness the powerful work being done by the Colombian Methodist Church to bring hope and a better life to these communities, and elsewhere in Colombia.

Our team was organized by the Rev. Rick Edwards, a retired member of the New York Annual Conference, who had served with the Peace Corps in Colombia in the 1960s and had taken another VIM team to Colombia last summer to work on the clinic. The team included three others with NYAC connections—Rev. Cathy Schuyler, who formerly served in our conference and who is married to Rick; my wife, Janice Holleny, and myself. The other eight team members hailed from near and far: Pennsylvania, Montana, and Minnesota. Rick is organizing another team to go some time this coming fall.

The new clinic is named after the Rev. Clinton Rabb, one of the two General Board of Global Ministries staff members killed in the Haiti earthquake in January



The team, from left: Rodger Cragun, Gretchen Geer, Lexie Cieluch, Bruce Gillis, Katie Gillis, Charis Edwards, Clayton Ohlin, Janice Holleny, Cathy Schuyler, Melinda Ninfeldt, Rev. Rick Edwards, and Rev. Will Nichols.



LEFT: The Clinton Rabb Medical Clinic in Las Brisas was built by the Methodist Church of Colombia, with support from UMCOR. It serves a remote poor rural area that had no easy access to health care. It is named after the GBGM director of volunteer ministries, who died in the Haiti earthquake last year, and was instrumental in getting the work on the clinic started. LEFT: Work begins on the foundation for two new classrooms—the digging done by hand.



2010. Clint had been instrumental in getting the clinic started and in sending VIM teams down to help build it. His brother, Robert Rabb, a building contractor from Texas, took on the completion of the clinic in tribute to his brother. Robert was there with us and

proved an invaluable resource!

A highlight of the week was the grand opening of the health clinic. Hundreds and hundreds of people from surrounding villages came to Las Brisas for the celebration that was held outdoors because the

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NCIS Star Joins Malaria Battle

UMNS—Pauley Perrette, well-known for playing Abby Sciuto on the hit CBS TV show, NCIS, has generously agreed to share her talent and celebrity to help generate support for Imagine No Malaria, while raising awareness and money to fight the disease.

Perrette's support for Imagine No Malaria includes starring in several public service announcements, calling for action and generosity in the fight against malaria. (Watch here.)

She also provides narration for the Imagine No Malaria documentary, "A Killer in the Dark: An Extraordinary Effort to Combat Malaria." The program, which began airing on NBC affiliates May 1, documents the daily struggle in Africa against



Actress Pauley Perrette

malaria and highlights the work of Imagine No Malaria to wipe out a devastating disease that's killing 2,000 people every single day. Details are available at www.imagenomalaria.org.

A video message from the campaign is being shown in Times Square every hour through

July 5. The 15-second message underscores the urgency of fighting the disease, which kills nearly a million people annually.

"The video links malaria's tragic toll with our ability to make an impact by using a mobile device to make a donation," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communications. "It's truly an amazing opportunity to save a life with something as simple as a text message."

A \$10 donation can be given by sending a text message with the word "MALARIA" to 27722.

Planning is also under way for distributing 100,000 mosquito nets and training 550 community health workers in Mozambique in July. An estimated 36,000 children

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Colombia VIM Helps Lay Foundation of Hope

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local Methodist church—the only church in the community—could not hold such a huge gathering!

The excitement was due to the fact that the people will have direct access to health care for the first time. There is no public transportation to the other nearest medical facility, and it takes hours to get there over bad roads. Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona and many of the Methodist clergy were in attendance, as was Rev. Cynthia Harvey from UMCOR, who was the preacher for the day. Bishop Cardona, who spent much time

with us, explained the beginnings of this indigenous church for the poor some 20 years ago and its struggles to combat entrenched poverty and economic exploitation.

In Vista Hermosa, the team helped get construction started on a simple concrete-block two-room school building so the village can add 10th and 11th grades to its program. I had been doubtful that we could make much progress in such a short time, but working alongside volunteers from the village and even some of the older students, we were able to get a foundation in so that the next

team will have something to build upon (1 Corinthians 3:10)! We were also able to conduct health classes with the students and provide some cultural/recreational exchange.

I have learned that another NYAC-related effort is underway in Colombia, spearheaded by Christ Church, Manhattan, which involves the construction of a church and community center near Cartagena. I believe their next team will be going this summer. Christ Church is also funding a theological education program for Colombian pastors.

Task Force Speaks for Conn. DREAM Act

Below is the statement presented in April by Pastor Paul Fleck before the Connecticut Senate and House Higher Education Committee in support of legislation that would grant in-state tuition to children of undocumented immigrants. Fleck testified on behalf of the NYAC Immigration Task Force, and the nine Connecticut clergy and 18 laity who signed the statement. If you would like to add your voice to this effort, please contact Fleck, at 860-354-4596.

Esteemed Senators and Representatives:

We come to you today as people of faith in support of Proposed Governor's Bill 6390 and/or Senate Bill 40, the Connecticut DREAM Act, which would provide in-state tuition for children of undocumented immigrants. We do not come only because it makes sound economic sense to do everything we can to insure that all of Connecticut's workforce, both documented and undocumented, have the skills necessary to compete and be gainfully employed in the 21st Century. We come most of all because the biblical witness compels us to speak out on behalf of the resident alien in our midst.

We feel compelled to make this statement because we know that immigrants, like all of us, are individuals of sacred worth made in God's image. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were cast out of the Garden of Eden to live an

alien existence in a land that was not originally their own. We know that Abraham and Sarah—the father and mother of the nations—were immigrants. Moses was an immigrant in the land of Midian. He led the Israelites, who were immigrants in the land of Egypt, out of bondage. Ruth the Moabite, mother of the Davidic line, was an immigrant in ancient Israel. We know that David fled from Saul and became an immigrant among the Philistines. Esther, who went on to become Queen of all of Persia, was a Jew, the daughter of immigrants.

We know that Jesus was an immigrant in the land of Egypt as a young boy, and that his family eventually settled in Nazareth as immigrants to avoid persecution by Herod Archelaus in Judea. When Jesus became a man, he immigrated to Capernaum by Galilee. Jesus is known for saying, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20)

The Hebrew Bible is overrun with laws and proscriptions to

treat the resident alien within our midst as we would ourselves. Consistent throughout is the view that because the Hebrew people were once aliens in the land of Egypt, they should not oppress the resident alien. Exodus 23:9 reads: "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." I would ask you, as Senators and Representatives, if any of your forebears were once aliens in this land.

With respect to the legislation before you, the ancient authorities recognized a sort of Golden Rule. Leviticus 19:33–34 reads: "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." In all things, the Hebrews recognized aliens' equality before the law, as in Leviticus 24:22: "You shall have one law for the alien and the citizen: for I am the Lord your God."

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NCIS Star Joins Malaria Battle

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under age 5 die from malaria each year in Mozambique, according to the National Malaria Control Program.

The Imagine No Malaria team from the United Methodist Committee on Relief will work

in partnership with The Global Fund, Nothing But Nets, the Missouri Annual Conference and community organizations. Bishop Joaquina Nhanala of Mozambique said she is looking forward to the program. "This allows us to be the church we need to be."

Task Force Speaks for Conn. DREAM Act

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In ancient Israel, there was a practice called gleaning. It meant leaving out spare sheaves of grain, not reaping to the very edges of one's field, and allowing fallen and left over grapes to be gathered for the benefit of the resident alien and the poor. (Leviticus 19:9–10, 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19–22). The modern economy does not always have fields in which to glean, *per se*. But this in-state tuition bill is a perfect example where modern-day gleanings can be made available for the alien in our midst.

We therefore ask and pray

that you will give favorable consideration to Senate Bill 40.

Sincerely,

Pastor Paul A. Fleck

New Milford United Methodist Church

Ximena Diaz-Varas

Co-Chair, Immigration Task Force of the New York Annual Conference of The UMC

Rev. George Englehardt

Rev. Mel Kawakami

Rev. Kun Sam Cho

Rev. Dennis Winkleblack

Rev. Iwy Patel-Yatri

Rev. Woodrow W. Eddins, Jr.

Rev. Dr. Won Geun Kang

Rev. Kristen Dunn

Jorge Varas

In Koo Chung

Carolyn Hardin Engelhardt

Leslie Egensteiner

Cynthia Merritt

Michael Gardner

Robert Hoburg

Janet Schnitzler

Andy Schnitzler

Nora Tigner

Joseph Tigner

Phyllis Franz

Ethel Anderson-Krenkel

Donna D. Calvey

Martha McMahan

Carol Blascovich

Lillie Allen

Welding Camp for Adults at Kingswood Camp

Kingswood Campsite is offering a special 4½-day camp for adults who want to learn to weld, or sharpen their skills in the craft. The June 27 to July 1 event for novice and experienced welders includes instruction and hands-on experience in welding your own metal sculpture or project. If you're an artist, express yourself and create a beautiful welded sculpture!

Jim Dolan, a certified welder and welding inspector and the New Jersey chairman for the American Welding Society, will lead the event. Dolan, who holds degrees in metallurgy and material science, has 50 years experience in welding. His company has been chosen to certify the welders who will create the World Trade Center Memorial in New York City.

Participants will learn welding processes, basics and safety, then practice under Dolan's guidance. Materials for small sculptures can be supplied, or you may bring your own small project—about the size of a five-gallon pail. The group may also choose to weld

a metal sculpture for the camp, using pieces of old farm equipment and other materials from the fields around the barn.

Cost for the program is \$375, 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.

Participants need to bring a sleeping bag, or sheets, a blanket and pillows, towel, clothing for warm and cool weather, a rain jacket, a bathing suit, and a camera. Cotton long sleeve shirts and slacks (no cuffs), cotton

socks and boots or high-top shoes are required while welding. Welding goggles, a face shield and gloves will be provided.

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 for updates.



With Hearts Warmed For Mission

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Bradley, George Engelhardt, Mary Hoynes, Takayuki Ishii, Ovid Jermin, Roy E. Jacobsen, Johnny Johnson, Joong Urn Kim, Rev. Janet Porcher, Josephat Rungu, Raymond Santos, Jane McCulloch Sibley, and Dennis Winkleblack.

Legislative sessions will meet Thursday afternoon to begin work on some 25 petitions, 15 of which are intended for General Conference consideration. The petitions cover a range of issues, from maternal health and labor unions to gun show loopholes and hate crimes to agency restructuring and the ban on homosexual clergy. Five of the General Conference petitions are seeking marriage equality through amendments to the Book of Discipline's language.

The corporate session scheduled for late Thursday evening will consider four resolutions concerning the conference center and two of NYAC's three camps, Quinipet and Epworth.

Bishop Fisher, the first African-American woman to be elected to the episcopacy in the Northeastern Jurisdiction, will be the preacher for Friday night's Celebration of Ministry. Ten candidates will be ordained during the service beginning at 7 p.m. Those to be received as elders in full connection are: Ebenezer Aduku, Jessica

To keep up with what's happening during conference:

- Check for Daily Updates of The Vision on the information tables beginning on Thursday morning. And they will be posted on the web site, too.
- Joanne Utley, editor of The Vision will be blogging during the sessions at <http://www.nyac.com/blogs/author/1>
- Look for posts, photos and videos on the New York Annual Conference FaceBook page (Are you a fan yet?)
- Follow our tweeters by searching for the hashtag #nyac2011 through your Twitter account.
- Catch the live stream on the Internet of most of the worship services at: <http://gntv.info/live/ny/>. Please let your congregations, family and friends know about this opportunity to watch the conference live from home.

Anschutz, David Czeisel, Vicki Flippin, Cathy Gilliard, Roger Jackson, Gertude Nation, Kwangwon Jung, Cherie Philips, and Carmen Denise Pickett. Two local pastors, Carol Downs and Tom MacLeod, will be received for associate membership.

The candidates to be commissioned as provisional members during the same service on an elder's track are Sheila Beckford, Paul Fleck, Wongee Joh, Bernadette Logan, Jennifer Pick, Anil Singh, Chris Yi, and Hyo jung Dawn Yoon, and on the deacon track: Jennifer Nunno.

Saturday morning is reserved for the presentation of scholarships and awards, the introduction of the new Vision Bearers and the celebration of charter congregations.

The Celebration of Mission begins with a boxed lunch and then churches will carry their

banners into the arena beginning at 1 p.m. The bishop has asked each congregation to create a special banner with their message of mission and ministry. To register for the celebration and lunch by June 1, go to: <http://nyac.com/events/detail/3403>.

And let's not forget the Bishop's Pushup Challenge! Bishop Park has promised to do 120 pushups again this year, and has challenged every church in the conference to donate \$1 for each one to the Bishop's Partners in Mission Fund.

The conference is scheduled to wrap up at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Registration and housing details as well as the conference agenda, various committee reports and legislative and General Conference petitions, and information on health kits can all be found online at: <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1641>.

Nov. Peace Conference Examines Poverty's Roots

UMNS—A former presidential nominee and a prominent anti-poverty advocate are slated to speak at the Nov. 13–15 Lake Junaluska Peace Conference, “Poverty, Abundance and Peace.” Speakers will include George McGovern, a United Methodist, former U.S. senator and 1972 Democratic presidential nominee; the Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, a United Methodist partner agency, and United Methodist Bishop Nkula Ntambo of the Katanga Conference in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This year, the conference will focus on seeking economic justice for all of God’s children. In keeping with the conference’s commitment to interfaith peacemaking, the conference also will feature a panel of Jewish, Muslim and Christian scholars on the topic “Our Sacred Texts Speak to Us in Regard to Peace, Justice and Economics.”

For more information, click on the “Upcoming Events” tab on the web site: <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/>.

Let Your Fingers Do the Voting

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electronic voting companies to manage our elections:

Voting mechanics

- **Handheld devices:** Upon checking in at Hofstra Arena, all members of conference will receive a handheld voting device in their registration packets. These devices by Ubiquis will allow the votes to be tallied in near real time. However, this solution is limited to 99 names on the ballot, so a scanner (see below) will be used for the first one or two rounds of balloting for clergy—until the number of names on the ballot drops below 100. Instructions for the handheld devices will be included in your name badge holder in your registration packet. We will receive instruction and practice before casting of any official ballots.
- **Scanner system:** Originally created specifically for conferences to vote for general and jurisdictional delegates in 1984, this system is in use by more than 30 UMC Annual Conferences. This system relies on the marking of paper ballots.
- **Backup systems:** The backup to the

handheld device will be the scanner. The backup to the scanner will be paper ballots.

Clergy delegates are elected by clergy members; lay delegates are elected by lay members. All clergy in full connection shall be eligible for election on any ballot. Voting for clergy delegates will begin during the executive session in the Hofstra Playhouse at 1 p.m. Wednesday afternoon using paper ballots and a scanner system. Additional rounds of voting will continue as needed during plenary sessions in the Hofstra Arena using handheld devices.

Laity will start their election process after the introduction of prospective delegates during the laity session at 3 p.m. Wednesday. Additional nominations may be made from the floor. Voting will continue as needed in the arena on handheld devices.

Prospective lay delegates are required to have been a member of a United Methodist Church for at least two years, and active participants for at least four years in a church in the New York Annual Conference. One does not have to be a lay member of Annual Conference to be nominated.

For a full description of balloting logistics, please visit www.nyac.com/voting.

Keeping Faith Amid Much Change

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministry

Spring is here. The trees are popping; the flowers are blooming. Life is as it should be!

Spring is here. Tornadoes are rampant and random. Floods are threatening homes, crops, and wellbeing. Life is not as it should be!

Kate and William are finally married, giving millions of people a few hours of believing in fairy tales. Life does go on happily ever after!

Osama bin Laden is dead. The world's most notorious terrorist is no longer a threat. Yet the pundits are already warning that retaliation—or at least attempts at retaliation—is most likely in our future.

“How are you this morning?” “I couldn’t be any better.” What a good thing to hear from someone for whom you care deeply. It’s going to be a good day. “Jim, we just heard that she is terminally ill.” What happened to: “It’s going to be a good day?”

Life is like that, isn’t it? Nothing seems as certain as we would have hoped.

Nothing seems as secure as we would like to believe. Life



truly changes on a dime. Is there nothing that is sure and unchangeable? Is there nothing in which we can believe?

People wrestle with these questions all the time! We wrestle with these questions all the time! I wrestle with these questions all the time. Can we even begin to imagine the wrestling an older adult has to do as she/he faces

the inevitable changes of life? Spouses die. Lifelong friends move to be near family. Adult children leave the area. Health concerns mount in importance. Physical and mental ability often decrease. Moving from the home we love is often the only viable option. And the list goes on.

How to minister to folks wrestling with such serious changes is not always apparent. What is apparent is that this wrestling is deeply spiritual, involving questions of identity, faith in God, and the reason and the purpose of growing older. The church, including all those seeking to minister to older adults, needs to be clear that the changes in life bring pain and grief to many older adults. That clarity helps frame the way we do ministry.

Older adults are not necessarily intransigent when they balk at doing “what’s best for them.” They quite often are dealing with pain and grief. All ministry—including to and with older adults—begins with empathy about their situation. It begins by being open to talking and listening to the pain. It is hard work, but it pays big dividends for the older adult who often feels misunderstood and unappreciated.

Bishops to Change Ecumenical Agency

UMNS—United Methodist bishops have voted overwhelmingly to support folding the denomination's ecumenical agency and its work into the Council of Bishops.

The May 2 vote came at the urging of the Rev. Stephen J. Sidorak Jr., the top executive of the agency, the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

Under the proposal, the agency would cease to exist as a separate entity, and its staff members would work for the council as part of the newly created Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships. The proposal also calls for transforming the commission's 38-member board of directors into a 15-member oversight group that includes laity and clergy.

The proposal does not call for a reduction of the agency's four executive staff and three full-time administrative staff positions.

Sidorak said the change will deepen the relationship between the ecumenical and interreligious staff and the denomination's bishops and its ecumenical officer, a position now held by retired Bishop Sharon Z. Rader. He also said it will help the ecumenical staff build strong connections with annual (regional) conferences and give staff members direct access to bishops in central conferences outside the United States.

"We sure think that the Lord

is calling us rather clearly to a deeper interreligious engagement not only in the United States but around the world," Sidorak said. "Religiously motivated violence alone is a serious theological concern that our church has to take much more seriously than it is."

To take effect, the proposal needs approval from the majority of delegates at General Conference, the denomination's top lawmaking body, which next meets in 2012. If the legislation passes, a discernment/transition team will develop a plan to establish the new office by 2013 or 2014.

If General Conference does not approve the change, the commission will continue to exist but with a board still reduced to 15 members. Sidorak said reducing the size of the board will

save the denomination \$500,000 in travel, meals and lodging costs every four years.

The bishops' vote comes on the heels of the Call to Action Steering Team's report, which the Council of Bishops endorsed in November. The report said the status quo of a shrinking and aging U.S. church is "toxic" and unsustainable. It also criticized the sense of distance between the people in pews and church leaders, particularly the denomination's 13 general agencies.

—The meeting of the bishops—was the first such gathering to be paperless. Bishops viewed reports and proposals either on their own electronic tablets or laptops or on one of 74 Nooks purchased for this and future bishop meetings. The estimated cost savings is \$4,000 per meeting.

OBITUARY / Rose Mildred Richmond

Rose Mildred Richmond, wife of Rev. Robert Richmond, died May 3 in California at age 77.

Besides her husband, she is survived by a son, Dr. Ronald (Lisa) Richmond, Mission Viejo, Calif.; and two daughters: Elizabeth (Daryl) Eden of Laguna Beach, Calif., and Evelyn (Greg Haegele) of Stony Brook, N.Y. Five grandchildren also survive.

Rev. Richmond served at Park Slope in Brooklyn; St. Paul & St. Andrew, Manhattan; St. James in Lynbrook; and Highland, Lloyd,

and Fishkill, New York, before retiring in 1999.

A celebration of life and resurrection was held May 7 at Laguna Country UMC, Laguna Woods, Calif.

Expressions of concern may be emailed to Rev. Richmond at robrose6219@gmail.com, or sent to: 3498-3D Bahia Blanca W, Laguna Woods, CA 92637. Memorial gifts may be sent to: Hospice of Saddleback Valley, 24022 Calle De La Plata, Ste 200, Laguna Hills, CA 92653.