

*And so we watch, and wait, and stay alert,
waiting again for the coming of Jesus.*

*And we light a candle in preparation
for that glorious day.*

Blessings of the Advent Season!



"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

November 18, 2011



PHOTO BY MELISSA HINNEN

Supporting Occupy Wall Street Protestors

Rev. Vicki Flippin, second from left, presides over a service of Holy Communion near Zuccotti Park in lower Manhattan. More than 50 UMC clergy and laity gathered on October 23 to add their voices to the Occupy Wall Street protest. For story and more photos, go to Page 3.

Program Tackles Immigration Myths

BY XIMENA DIAZ-VARAS
NYAC Taskforce on
Immigration

After almost a year of
preparation by event leaders,

a diverse group of United
Methodists gathered on
October 22 in an open and
safe environment for a

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Blessings of Connection Arise in Irene Recovery

As winter begins to creep into the Catskill Hudson District, there is still much to be done as the region recovers from the flooding caused by Hurricane Irene in August. And yet there are moments to celebrate the vital web of connection that makes us the United Methodist Church:

- Thanks to the efforts of at least three conference volunteer teams, an elderly couple who live just east of Prattsville, N.Y., will be back in their home for Thanksgiving.
- \$50,000 has been donated to the Hurricane Irene Relief Fund by the Mississippi Conference as a direct result of the NYAC's five-year commitment to the rebuilding after Hurricane

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11/21: Compensation, Taxes & the IRS

Keith Muhleman of the Frontier Foundation will present these workshops for clergy and spouses. There is no charge, but registration is required. 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; lunch is provided. To register, go to: <http://nyac.com/events>, and click on the date you would like to attend.

11/21: St. John's UMC, Valley Stream, N.Y.

11/24–27: Holiday Closing

The NYAC office in White Plains, N.Y., will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.

12/23–26: Holiday Closing

The NYAC office in White Plains, N.Y., will be closed for the Christmas holiday.

1/17–19/2012: Bishop's Convocation

Bob Farr, author of "Renovate or Die: Ten Ways to Focus Your Church on Mission," will be the guest speaker. New location is the Villa Roma Resort & Conference Center in Callicoon, N.Y.

<http://www.villaroma.com/>.

1/20–22: IGNITE 2012

Group registration is now open for "Raising the Belief," a weekend event for all teenagers in the NYAC at the Taconic Retreat and Conference Center. Per person cost is \$179 and covers housing, five meals,

and a T-shirt. Features the HYPE praise band and special guest speaker, Pastor Emily Peck-McClain. For more information and to register, go to:

<http://umyouth.com>.

1/7–3/31: NY-CT Lay Speaking Classes

A series of seven Saturday sessions for beginning and advanced lay speakers from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Jesse Lee Memorial UMC in Ridgefield, Conn. Go to: <http://nyac.com/events/detail/3631> to check out the schedule. Contact Elaine Winward, director of Lay Speaking Ministry, at 914-669-5264, or ewinward@optonline.net.

3/10: Black College Fund Luncheon


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

4/16–19: Elders Retreat

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

4/24–5/4: General Conference 2012

"Making Disciples of Jesus Christ to Transform the World" is the theme for the quadrennial gathering of the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church, to be held at the Tampa Convention Center. The 1000-member assembly will consider revisions to church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. For additional information, go to: <http://nyac.com/events/detail/3578>, or www.gc2012.umc.org. See related stories on Page 23.


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

UMs Provide Occupy Wall Street Support

BY MELISSA HINNEN

“We support measures that would reduce the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. We further support efforts to revise tax structures and to eliminate governmental support programs that now benefit the wealthy at the expense of other persons.”

—From the United Methodist Social Principles

Rev. Wongee Joh, pastor of Holmes United Methodist Church, posted a Facebook reflection about the United Methodist Social Principles, and in a status update mentioned the possibility of visiting Occupy Wall Street. Less than two weeks later, more than 50 United Methodist clergy and laity gathered with her across the street from Zuccotti Park (now called “Liberty Plaza”) for a communion service and participated in an interfaith “Occupy Faith NYC” service later that afternoon.

Following the Arab Spring model, Occupy Wall Street began on September 19 when hundreds of demonstrators arrived at Zuccotti Park in New York City’s financial district. They have stayed in the privately owned park day and night expressing their frustration with injustice in the United States. The movement has spread to other parts of the country with demonstrations



Some of the United Methodists who gathered to offer their support and care to the protesters.

taking place in more than 70 cities. There have been reports of clashes with police in places like Oakland and Denver; however the Occupy Wall Street movement has been largely non-violent. Protesters have developed a community that includes working groups to raise awareness, maintain security, keep the park clean, and organize for food, clean water, clothing, and toiletries. Volunteers offer medical care, counseling, and chaplaincy.

Solidarity and Reconciliation

The “United Methodists at OWS” service on October 23 was held in solidarity with the protesters’ emphasis on economic justice while also standing in a spirit of reconciliation. The Wall Street occupation is described as representing the 99% of Americans who are struggling during the nation’s economic crisis while the wealthiest 1% have more than doubled their share of income in the United States. Leading up to the gathering,



PHOTO BY MELISSA HINNEN

LEFT: Rev. Jennifer Tiernan offers bread during the communion service.

United Methodists engaged in online dialog about Jesus and the 99%. Being intentional to not vilify people, the invitation for the United Methodist gathering said, “We are the people of the United Methodist Church. We believe in practices of faith and justice. We seek a united 100%.”

Rev. Vicki Flippin of the UMC of the Village believes the voice of the faith community in the Occupy Wall Street movement is important and must include steps toward reconciliation.

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UMs Provide Occupy Wall Street Support

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Quoting Dr. Martin Luther King she said, “[Nonviolence] does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his[/her] friendship and understanding . . . The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness . . . It is evil that we are seeking to defeat, not the persons victimized with evil.”

Occupation Love

Rev. Sheila Beckford led the group in singing as they gathered in a circle with a handcrafted wooden cross and flame in the middle. As they sang, the crowd became large enough that police asked them to not block the sidewalk. Because the protesters at Occupy Wall Street do not have a permit for amplification, they use a “human microphone” system. The speaker announces a message in concise sentences and the group closest to the speaker repeats it for the rest of the crowd to hear.

Rev. James F. Karpen of St. Paul and St. Andrew used this style for his sermon incorporating humor and creativity with a message of love and solidarity. Explaining how he approached a form he was filling out that asked him to include his occupation he reflected, “There’s just one occupation, according to the Bible. What should occupy your heart? What should occupy your soul?



PHOTO BY MELISSA HINNEN

Rev. Doug Cunningham leads the group in singing with his guitar.

What should occupy your mind?
Nothing but love!

“Next time someone asks me to write ‘occupation above,’ I’ll know what to write, I’m gonna write love! Gonna love my God by loving my neighbors. When it comes down to it, that’s what we’re here for! Karpen said.”

Flippin prepared the Great Thanksgiving and the group communed together. The service concluded with a street performance by New Day Church. Many dispersed into the park and had meaningful conversations with the protesters.

Joh later enthusiastically reported to the Facebook group, “I’m still feeling like a human mic. :-) “Lover!”. Thank you everyone. I was full of joy standing at OWS today. It would not have been the same without all of us present. I

felt things unfolded in Spirit.”

Congregational Support

Churches who are interested in strengthening the social justice goals of Occupy Wall Street have a number of options. As the weather get colder, material donations are much needed. Insulated gloves, wool hats, foot warmers, sleeping bags, and metro cards are all helpful for the people who are staying outside all day and night in the park. Donations can be brought to the comfort station at Liberty Plaza or mailed via the UPS Store, Re: Occupy Wall Street, 118A Fulton St. #205, New York, NY 10038.

Drug and alcohol addiction counselors or doctors are especially requested, as well as mental health and counseling professionals. Health professionals

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Listening to Stories Key Part of Care

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministry

A reporter was interviewing a 104-year-old woman: "And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?"

Her reply: "No peer pressure."

Humorous response! But much more than that, it reveals a deeper truth about aging. It is the inevitable loss of family and friends who helped define the person's sense of self and belonging in the world. One of the most common comments I hear from older adults can be summed up in a poignant comment my mother made several years before she died. "I know more people 'up there' than I do 'down here' these days." That is a truth people who reach old age know all too well. Loss is a common theme in their reminiscing.

Any one doing ministry with older adults will likely share the same observation. Some people



GOD'S GIFT OF LONG LIFE

seem to cope well with loss, moving on, regrouping, redefining the all-important sense of self and belonging, continuing to stay involved in life. Others seem to get stuck in their losses. Unresolved

grief is a common phenomenon. We miss it too often, assuming "old people" are just cranky, difficult to please, and other such negative assumptions. When we do so, we often miss a golden opportunity to minister in a life affirming way.

I have heard many adult children scold their mother or father. "You 'ought' to go out more!" "You 'ought' to invite friends in!" "You 'ought' to take part in more activities rather than sitting in your room all day." The list could go on. The "oughts" miss the point.

My experience suggests that most older adults ultimately know they "should" do these things, but just do not have the energy necessary. That lack of energy often disappears when they are

allowed to express the continuing pain of loss.

One of my greatest joys is seeing a resident emerge from the grief and move back into life. Often that happens after I, or someone else on our staff at United Methodist Homes, have sat patiently and listened to that resident's life story, including all the losses, releasing, in the telling of that story, the pain. How often a resident has said: "I haven't said anything like that in years. My family was tired of hearing me repeat the same story, so I just stopped telling it."

Telling the story is a need of people in grief. When we don't recognize it in older adults, we are likely to get frustrated and, more importantly, we are bound to miss an opportunity to enable new life to be found.

Listening! Enabling story telling! Growing comfortable with repetitions! These are all ingredients of a vital ministry with older adults.

UMs Provide Occupy Wall Street Support

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who want to volunteer can go to the medical station in the park. Chaplains, clergy, seminarians, and others trained in pastoral care who are interested in serving as protest chaplains can send an email to: ProtestChaplainsNYC@gmail.com.

Churches can be open and vocal about systemic injustices. Visit Liberty Plaza and listen to the stories of the people living there. Gather a group on Sunday afternoons to attend the Interfaith Service on the front steps of Liberty Plaza at 3:30. To

organize with a coalition of religious leaders, contact OccupyFaithNYC@gmail.com.

PBS Religion and Ethics Newsweekly reported on the voices of faith at Occupy Wall Street. They filmed parts of the United Methodist worship service and interviewed some of the participants. The segment is available for viewing via this shortened link for PBS: <http://to.pbs.org/u504cS>.

Melissa Hinnen is a lay member of The United Methodist Church of the Village, and a second year M.Div. student at New York Theological Seminary.



ABOVE: Panelists Thomas J. Mills, Carol Barton, and Jay Godfrey explored the UMC's policies on immigration along with the biblical foundations. **RIGHT:** Participants offer the words of Leviticus 19:33–34 in six different languages.



PHOTOS BY XIMENA DIAZ-VARAS

Symposium Challenges Myths About Immigration

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candid discussion on immigration. The daylong symposium, entitled, “Know Your Neighbor, Know Yourself,” was held at the Memorial/Central Korean United Methodist Church in White Plains, N.Y., and focused on countering myths and misinformation about immigrants.

The day started with worship filled with inspirational prayers and a scripture litany that reminded those in attendance that the Bible is filled with stories about immigration. Singing in multiple languages was a beautiful reminder of the diversity of God's creation.

A panel discussion explored the historical, legal and Biblical aspects of immigration, as well as the official position of the UMC. The panel was comprised of Carol Barton, the Women's Division executive for community action; Jay Godfrey, a seminar designer for the United Methodist Seminar Program on National and International Affairs; and Thomas J. Mills, an attorney with UMCOR's Justice For Our Neighbors. This presentation pointed out the complexity of immigration issues. We were reminded that human rights do not end when a person crosses the border and that we are obligated

to care for the poor, the least, and the last—regardless of their immigration status.

In the afternoon, there was time for small group discussion, and powerful personal histories as immigrants from different parts of the world shared their stories, their struggles and their hopes. This powerful witness moved the immigrant issues from a number to personal connections.

The day ended with high energy and a room full of heart-warmed United Methodists ready to engage in action for the transformation of the world. Leviticus 19:33–34 was read in six different languages, and everyone then recited a creed for immigrants sealing the commitment to engage in ministry with the immigrants of our conference.

This day was made possible through the collaboration of the NYAC's Task Force on Immigration, Board of Church and Society, Commission on Religion and Race, and Justice for our Neighbors; Methodists in New Directions (MIND); and the New York Chapter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

For resources and more information go to the NYAC task force of immigration at: <http://www.nyacimmigrationtaskforce.org/>.

What Must Jesus Think Of His Church?

One of the things I love best about America is the way she opens her doors to people of other nations. I have a pretty personal reason for appreciating that; I was born in Japan, and immigrated here when I was 22 years old. My parents are Japanese, not American. Yet I am an American citizen. Our nation allows people who were not born here or whose parents were not born here to come to this country, and eventually, to become citizens, with all the privileges and responsibilities that entails—save one. I cannot become president of the United States, but at this point, I am not sure whether I count that as gain or loss.

I think it's amazing that I was able to become a citizen. That could not have happened in Japan. You're only a citizen in Japan unless one of your parents is a citizen of Japan.

The words are not empty. Go to Ellis Island, and see how many of the world's tired and poor were received into this nation. Read through the phone book, and notice the rich international heritage that is represented in our own community. Go to New York City, and learn what it means to see a Korean grocery, next to



Rev. Ishii

COMMENTARY

a Columbian restaurant, next to an Indian Sari shop. Hear the languages on our subways, and we know that the invitation has not been an empty one. I believe God smiles on America for many reasons, this openness not the least among them.

You might imagine my distress, then, at the recent changes to immigration laws in Alabama, Arizona, Utah, Indiana and Georgia.

What makes America so great, I believe, is to provide public education and medical care to children even if the parents are undocumented immigrants. We all know that much of our economy depends on the labor of undocumented immigrants. Our society finds those willing laborers not among American citizens, but from those south of the border. We want the porous border, because that is how we get laborers to fuel our economy. Furthermore, it is not true that undocumented immigrants pay no taxes. If they spend money, they pay sales taxes. If their employers are honest, taxes are withheld from the workers' paychecks.

Undocumented immigrants have not been drawn to this country by our rich social services. They have been drawn here by the promise of work. And work they have been doing.

They have filled in the gaps, and continue to fill in gaps in the labor market, doing jobs that are unattractive to Americans. They are farm workers and nannies, lawn-care workers, construction laborers and restaurant workers. The undocumented immigrants get jobs with forged papers, and pay taxes under assumed names. But they rarely draw on social services, because they are too afraid of drawing attention to themselves.

It seems that we want it both ways. We want undocumented immigrants to continue coming, continue working in our vineyards and potato fields and orange groves, continue caring for our children, continue paying taxes, but we want to deny a vote, and government services to those workers and taxpayers.

Christians are called to serve the poor and needy regardless of who they are! We do not ask people how much they contribute to the church nor do we ask about their immigration status when they come to us for help. Can you imagine how awful it would be if pastors had to ask people's immigration status when they come forward to receive communion and receive anointing during the healing service? How awful it would be for us to ask the immigration status of people who come for the soup kitchen!

I could not help but wonder what Jesus must think of these

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CFO Grove Found Her Mission at City Society

When Trudy L. Grove retires as chief financial officer of the United Methodist City Society at the end of December, she'll have spent 47 years working in the mission field that is New York City.

Grove, who had planned to become a missionary when she graduated from college, began working for the society in June 1964 after she was considered "too green" for mission work. So she put her accounting degree to use working with then executive director, Henry Whyman. When she was later approached by Avery Manchester, the head of missions for the Methodist Church, Grove made the decision to remain at the society, according to her current boss, Rev. Dr. Bill Shillady.

Grove says she stayed all those years because "I believed in the work and the mission of the City



UM City Society Executive Director Bill Shillady leads the audience in thanking Trudy L. Grove during the final day of annual conference in June 2011.

Society and its subsidiaries, and I liked the people I worked with."

In those 47 years, Grove has witnessed tremendous growth at the City Society.

"The first change was opening the Head Start programs around the city," she recalled. "Then came Five Points Mission, and what that has become. Also seeing the Chinese United Methodist Church and Chinese Methodist Center grow and become a vital part of Chinatown with the services that are provided to the children and adults."

The list continues with the Anchor House program that grew from one building serving 20 residents to two sites, now serving 50 men and 20 women.

"My life has been touched by the stories of the residents . . . seeing how the program has enriched and changed the lives of so many people," she wrote in an email.

Then there was working with the Linden Hill Cemetery in

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What Must Jesus Think Of His Church?

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immigration laws. What must Jesus think of the judges and the government officials who decide to wield the power of the majority vote to put down people who cannot vote? What must Jesus think of people who encourage workers to come to this country, undocumented, but who want them to leave their families across the border? There are similarities in this situation to that of the blacks in South Africa before the end of apartheid. They were allowed to work in South Africa,

but the workers' families were not allowed to live in South Africa. What would Jesus think of these immigration laws?

Pilate may have assumed that Jesus was before him because he had gone too far in pressing the boundaries of his power. If so, Pilate was wrong. Jesus was before Pilate, precisely because he knew no boundaries. He ate with sinners; he healed outsiders; he ignored the privileged positions of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus offended people, because he failed to recognize the boundaries

between those deemed to be entitled and those who were not. This was the nature of God's Reign, a reign that does not belong to the world, but which most certainly belongs in the world.

As the church, as the body of Christ, we must be vigilant against these offensive immigration laws. If we aren't, what will Christ Jesus think of us?

Grace and Peace,
Taka Ishii

Retired United Methodist Clergy
www.onethousandpapercranes.org
www.senbazuru.net



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CCCNY



COUNCIL HONORS PARK

Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, above center, accepts the outstanding executive leadership award from the Council of Churches of the City of New York. Park, who was honored for his ecumenical work, is flanked by council leaders, Rev. Dr. A. R. Bernard, Sr. and Rev. Dr. Jimmy Lim. At left, Bishop Park chats with fellow honoree, His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop Emeritus of New York, during the celebration at the ballroom of Saint Vartan Armenian Cathedral in Manhattan on October 13.

Grove Retiring After 47 Years at City Society

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Queens, and the establishment of the Children's Program that helps churches doing after-school programming in their communities.

Grove wrote that "the future for the United Methodist City Society can only be to bigger and brighter in doing what it does best—servicing the needs of others and assisting churches to better serve their congregations and the neighborhoods around them."

Shillady noted that Grove's in-depth knowledge of the financial and property issues related to the work of the society has been a great asset. She provided the group's "corporate memory." When asked what he would miss most about Grove, he wrote back, "Her strong opinions on everything . . ."

Grove serves as treasurer on the boards for both the Five Points Mission and Anchor House. In addition, she serves on the Linden Hill Cemetery board, and

has been the City Society's representative to the Chinese Methodist Church Corporation Board.

Outside of her work with the City Society, Grove is a member of the Church of the Village, a progressive congregation, that she played a role in forming with the merger of Metropolitan Duane, Washington Square, and the Church of All Nations.

Grove admitted that she will miss her co-worker friends, but not getting up at 5 a.m. And what's the first thing she plans to do in retirement? "Sleep, read the many books that I have accumulated over time, and enjoy New York City and all that it has to offer in the way of entertainment," she wrote, "and then some traveling to visit family, and for pleasure."

The outgoing CFO will be honored during a celebration on Friday, Dec. 2, at the Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Dr., Manhattan. The drop-in reception will be held in rooms C-D from 4 to 6 p.m.; please RSVP to Leticia Johnson at 212-870-3084.

MOZAMBIQUE CONNECTION

Continued VIM Efforts Bring Progress

Although I have been to Beira to work on the bishop's parsonage/conference center building before, there are always new people, new places and new experiences each time we visit our friends in Mozambique.

During our mission in August, we were able to see the country through the eyes of two youth, Alex Arnold and Sam Gray, from my church, the UMC of Monroe. Quintin Brantley, also from Monroe, felt drawn to the continent of his ancestry. Enid Watson from Floral Park UMC and John Olszewski from Warwick UMC are both seasoned Mozambique volunteers. John brought 150 dresses made by his congregation, while Enid was eager to see the progress at the English School she helped establish several years ago. I wanted most to see the conference center, the computer workstation, the scholarship students and the Lichinga Farm project. But what you expect to accomplish is only a small part of the experience that you have. God always has more surprises in store.

Our first blessing was that—for the first time in all our trips—all our luggage made it with us to Beira. Our friend, Judge Jone, a provincial judge and a fellow United Methodist, arranged an apartment for our stay. These were the most luxurious accommodations we have ever had and we were very grateful. After



LEFT: The United Methodist Church in Gondola hosts a well for the community, eliminating the eight-hour trips for water that had been made in the past. RIGHT: John Olszewski, right rear, presents some of the 150 dresses made by Warwick UMC.



24 hours of travel, including the 16-hour flight, we enjoyed a good night's rest.

Each morning began with devotions led by a Mozambican or one of our team members. In this time for reflection and prayer we realized a common bond through our faith.

Alex and I worked together to show Pastor Jacob how to use Microsoft Excel to create a report on the parsonage project. Alex was a wonderful teacher and Pastor Jacob was a quick study. By Wednesday, we sent the report to Martha Nelson, our Mozambique Connection treasurer, and requested that the funds to complete the five-year project be sent. It was a joy to know that the building will soon be used, and we will be on to a new project in 2013.

The computer workstation was begun three years ago. An American sponsor agreed to pay for a high-speed connection for



The VIM Team: Sam Gray, Enid Watson, John Olszewski, Annette Griffith, Alex Arnold, Eurico Gustavo, and Quintin Brantley.

the church office if the donated computers were available to students, clergy and church members. The six computers—much faster laptops—we brought this year will supplement those already in use.

Our translator, Eurico Gustavo, is one of the teachers at the English school. Eurico attends Africa University in Zimbabwe on scholarship and is studying

Continued VIM Efforts Bring Progress

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theology to become a pastor. We went to observe his English class, just outside of Beira. The classes are in addition to those in public school, giving students extra practice. Students also often come to church, sometimes with their families, after attending the English classes.

One afternoon was spent with our scholarship students and Pastor Filimao, who coordinates the scholarship program. One of his goals is to organize the students who have benefited from an award to sponsor a scholarship student of their own.

It was a joy to visit a local clinic and see that medical care is greatly improving. The buildings were clean and painted; there were pre- and post-natal visits by mothers and healthy child visits for new babies. There were still long lines to see medical personnel but treatment was free and medications were affordable.

Sam asked our cooks if it was possible to visit their homes; it was an eye opening experience. Although the new members of our team were struck with the poverty, the three of us who had visited the rural areas on previous visits kept thinking of how much less those in the mud huts have.

We surveyed the Gondola Training Center in the northern conference, one of Bishop Joaquina Nhanala's high priorities—and probably our next project. The center includes one classroom building, one for short-term housing, and a parsonage for the director. A kitchen is under construction; a well is needed and electricity is not yet available. It was near the training center site that we visited church members living in mud huts. That kind of poverty reminded us of why we were here, and how much more needs to be done. Rev. Torres, the director of the Gondola Training Center, was our translator and

accompanied us to the next leg of our trip—Gorongosa National Park.

John and I had been to Gorongosa before but had not seen any large animals. This time we were not disappointed. We saw two groups of elephants, the second with young ones, and two sleeping lions.

Things are improving in Mozambique. There are still many problems, but there is also hope. The government is on the side of the people. There is improvement in education, health and infrastructure.

The Mozambique Connection is made up of past VIM team members, family, friends and others who want to help our brothers and sisters in Africa.. For more information or an application to come with us in 2013, feel free to contact me at: annettegriffith@earthlink.net.

Peace be with you,
Annette Griffith

Catskills Keep Heads Above Waters of Adversity

BY REV. L. LAWRENCE DUNLAP
Upper Catskills Parish

As Hurricane Irene was coming up the eastern coast, the news media was predicting that New York City would be devastated. I thought that Irene would be like a lot of other hurricanes that have come to the Catskills before. Most of them were mere shadows of their mighty beginning.

Then as the rains fell in torrents, it became clear that the Upper Catskills Large Parish, which includes the churches of Andes, Fleischmanns, Halcott,



This carving of a black bear that survived the floodwaters left by Hurricane Irene is symbolic of the spirit of the people who live in the Catskills.

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Catskills Keep Heads Above Waters of Adversity

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Margaretville and Roxbury, had to respond to the coming storm. Sunday morning we decided we didn't want to put people in danger as they traveled to and from worship. So pastors Adrian Todd, Lana Antar and I, along with our church leadership, decided to cancel worship.

Hurricane Irene brought more destruction to the Catskills than to the city. Quickly our brave firefighters went into action rescuing those caught in Irene's fury; pulling some out second floor windows, or even from their roofs.

What is amazing is how quickly neighbors came together to help those in need. Even before the storm passed, contributions were pouring in. People headed to the firehouse and brought food, medical personnel brought their healing gifts, and the fire station set up a shelter. The shelter was quickly filled so the Margaretville UMC and the Advent Christian Church became places for overflow. Cots were set up, coffee made and food delivered.

Then reports from Prattsville, Roxbury and Fleischmanns came in. The Delaware River was crushing anything in its widened path. Homes and businesses up and down the river were destroyed. We heard that a motel in Fleischmanns was floating away, and that Leah Stern, a survivor of the Holocaust, died in that motel. About the same time we heard how the CVS and the Freshtown grocery store were destroyed—their contents floating down the river. This storm was not at all a mere shadow of its former self.

We were very relieved when the Red Cross brought food and water and set up a center in the social hall of the UMC. Twenty-five to 30 adults and children were given temporary shelter.

The strength of a community comes to the forefront during a crisis such as this one. After the flood of 1996, Rev. George Carpenter in Margaretville and I, in Walton, called the NYAC office to see if the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) would come to help our communities clean up and rebuild. Unfortunately, the conference leadership left the same day for a trip to Israel.

However, out of that disappointment came the idea to form the Disaster Response Team in conjunction with UMCOR. Since then hundreds of people have been trained, teams organized and the conference became prepared for the next disaster.

I believe that UMCOR is United Methodism at its best. The organization is like the United Methodist version of the Red Cross; except UMCOR stays on until survivors find a new normal. In fact, nine weeks after the flood, UMCOR is still in Margaretville, Arkville, and Clovesville helping residents clean up their homes.

About 75 to 80 families were displaced because of the flooding. Though most of the businesses have reopened, Bridge Street and a portion of Main Street are still closed. Some businesses have relocated to Main Street. The Freshtown grocery store has announced that they will reopen in about three weeks.

However, many families are still living in temporary dwellings, and those survivors that were renting are dependent on their landlords to apply for help from FEMA. Many homes still need cleaned of the muck and mold. We do not need clothes or food because plenty have been donated. However, we do need beds, bedding, furniture and volunteers.

Black bears are plentiful in the Catskills. In the year and a half I have lived in Margaretville, I have seen three. One just a few feet from me as it rummaged through my garbage cans.

In the parking lot of the Freshtown store stands a chainsaw carved sculpture of a black bear, which is symbolic of the Catskills and its people. These bears move in a rhythmic, surefooted way and can run at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour. Black bears feature prominently in the stories of some of America's indigenous peoples. One tale tells of how the black bear was a creation of the Great Spirit.

These highly dexterous and intelligent creatures are a fitting symbol of the people of the Catskills. The people of the Catskills are a highly flexible, resilient and intelligent people. We are surefooted, and like the black bear who survived three ice ages, we will survive this flood and will be better than before—because we too are a creation of the Great Spirit.

Blessings of Connection Arise in Irene Recovery

Continued from page 1

Katrina.

- UMCOR has awarded a \$100,000 grant to be used for case management and the repair of homes in the affected areas.

From 2006 to 2010, hundreds of volunteers from the NYAC traveled to Biloxi to assist in the recovery effort there. In an email to Bishop Park dated October 20, Mississippi Bishop Hope Morgan Ward noted that special bond:

“Here in Mississippi we continue to keep you and your conference in our thoughts and prayers as you recover from the devastating floods last month . . . Just as we have been helped by the overflowing generosity of the New York Conference in the recovery from Hurricane Katrina, we want to be engaged with you in this time of need.”

In announcing the \$100,000 grant from UMCOR, Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie also stressed the continued need for work teams. “We can’t accomplish the goals of this grant without more volunteers,” he said.

The grant will help finance initial needs assessment and case management, the repair and rebuilding of homes, the managing of recovery volunteers, and ongoing disaster spiritual care to persons in the affected areas.

According to Mike Weinlein, a member of the Conference Disaster Assistance Committee from the Valhalla UMC, sections of the Prattsville church are still drying out while other areas have been sanitized and some sheet rock has been hung.

The Prattsville congregation has been gathering for worship in their upstairs fellowship hall. Church members and the community came to together one recent Friday night to pack 131 gift boxes for Operation Christmas Child, a program of Samaritan’s Purse.

The parsonage in Prattsville has been gutted, and awaits funding for its renovation. Those funds will come from the special Irene recovery fund set up by the conference because UMCOR monies



Work goes on both inside and out as a team from Valhalla UMC repairs a home in Prattsville, N.Y..

cannot be used to repair churches or parsonages. Pastor Elliott Oakes, who also serves the Lexington-Westkill UMC, has moved temporarily to Lexington.

As of November 8, \$164,210 has been raised, with \$59,210 coming from NYAC churches and communities. (This amount does not include the \$100,000 UMCOR grant.) While many have been very generous, the need is still great. Congregations and individuals across the conference are urged to raise funds and make donations, especially during these seasons of gratitude and giving.

TO DONATE

Online at:

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

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

Updates from the field posted by volunteer work teams can be found at <http://nyac.com/blogs/topic/6>.

TO VOLUNTEER

Telephone: 914-615-2226

Email: nyacdisaster@gmail.com

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE DEBATE

Editor's Note: The United Methodist Church's ban on same-sex marriage and the Book of Discipline's language on homosexuality will be among the topics of discussion during General Conference next spring. Passions run high on the issues here in the New York Annual Conference, as well as elsewhere in the denomination. During the plenary session at Hofstra in June, our conference sent five resolutions and three amendments addressing these issues on to consideration at General Conference.

Those who support the Discipline and those who want change both claim a faithfulness to their calling as Christian clergy and laity as the foundation for their beliefs and actions.

More than 2,500 UM clergy and 11,400 laity have signed petitions calling on the Council of Bishops to issue a statement promising to enforce the Book of Discipline against clergy who say they'll officiate at same-sex unions. That letter can be found at www.faithfulumc.com.

And more than 1,000 UM clergy across the denomination have promised to perform same-sex unions by signing statements similar to "The Covenant of Conscience," that was launched last month by Methodists In New Directions (MIND).



UMNS PHOTO

In a November 10 letter, the Council of Bishops upheld their faithfulness to the Book of Discipline.

"At times like these we call upon each other to remember and renew our covenant with God and with one another as United Methodist Christians. As bishops chosen,

consecrated and assigned by the Church, we declare once again our commitment to be faithful to this covenant we have made. As the Council of Bishops we will uphold the Book of Discipline as established by General Conference," the letter stated. The full text can be found at: <http://nyac.com/news/detail/245>.

The Book of Discipline can only be changed through the actions of General Conference. The subject of homosexuality has sparked discussion at every session of the quadrennial meeting since 1972. Delegates consistently have voted to keep the language identifying homosexuality as "incompatible with Christian teaching."

But the ability to have an open and honest dialogue, draped in love and respect, is key to who we are as United Methodists Christians. With that in mind, below are two pieces about the same-sex marriage debate. Past stories can also be found in the September and October issues of *The Vision*, at <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1552>.

WESLEY FELLOWSHIP

Group Responds To Covenant of Conscience

[Wesley Fellowship is an orthodox group of laity and clergy within the New York Annual Conference.]

On October 17, Methodists in New Directions (MIND), a group of clergy and laity in the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, that supports same-sex marriage, issued a statement

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Clergy Explain Actions To Defy Marriage Ban

Rev. Sara Lamar-Sterling
First & Summerfield UMC, New Haven;
coordinator, "We do! Methodists Living Marriage Equality"

"I signed the Covenant of Conscience because I am called to minister to everyone. This is about pastoral care. It is about my ordination vows to

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SAME-SEX MARRIAGE DEBATE

■ Response To Covenant

Continued from page 14

entitled, “A Covenant of Conscience,” to announce their initiative called “We do! Methodists Living Marriage Equality.” 164 United Methodist clergy and six congregations signed the statement indicating their availability to conduct same-sex marriages in New York and Connecticut. Some 732 laity in the conference also offered their support of the initiative.

Out of concern for the unity of the church, the Wesley Fellowship has issued the following statement:

“First, as clergy and laity who believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God; and who have pledged to uphold the provisions of The Book of Discipline and membership vows in our local United Methodist Churches, we do not support the position of MIND and MFSA (Methodist Federation for Social Action) and firmly reject it as an act of ecclesiastical disobedience.

“Elders in full connection have an obligation to uphold the teaching of the Church. The Book of Discipline says that by virtue of their ordination, elders “. . . are bound in special covenant with all the ordained elders of the annual conference. In the keeping of this covenant they perform the ministerial duties and maintain the ministerial standards established by those in the covenant” (Book of Discipline, ¶ 333.1). At ordination candidates agree to support and maintain our church government and polity (Book of Discipline, ¶ 336). An example of breaking this covenant or “unauthorized conduct” is conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions or conducting them in our churches (Book of Discipline, ¶ 341), which subjects the pastor to a judicial complaint.

“Second, General Conference is the only body that can change the position on conducting same sex ceremonies. Since the 1970s, the General Conference has reaffirmed the Church’s teaching that homosexuality is incompatible with the Christian

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■ Clergy Defy Ban

Continued from page 14

“seek peace, justice, and freedom for all people.” As a pastor, I’m expected to care for my entire flock, without prejudice or bias. The Covenant of Conscience is way to do just that. For 30 years our Annual Conference has supported resolution after resolution to welcome and include LGBT people in the life and ministry of the Church. The Covenant of Conscience is a way to bring those resolutions to life. It is a concrete way for clergy, laity, and congregations in the NYAC to proclaim the good news of God’s justice, equality, and grace-filled welcome to all people.”

Rev. Jeff Wells

Community UMC, Massapequa, N.Y.

As a follower of Jesus, I am called to serve God and humanity by fostering of love and justice in all that I do. As a pastor, I must reach out to extend God’s love and care to every human person. Signing the Covenant of Conscience is simply a step toward ministering to and including everyone in the wide circle of God’s embrace.

I love the United Methodist Church and its tradition of vocally advocating for social justice and standing with the downtrodden and marginalized. In opposition to that honorable tradition, I believe that the General Conference’s hurtful and exclusionary attitude toward lesbians and gays is doing great spiritual harm to the church. Being gay or lesbian or bisexual or transgendered or heterosexual are simply among the variety of expressions of human sexuality, which is a gift from God, and it’s long overdue that the church recognize this.

As I know from my own family experience, sexual orientation is not a “lifestyle choice,” but simply the way that God creates us. The Covenant of Conscience community is helping to revitalize the church—this project has generated intense theological and pastoral reflection and it is helping

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SAME-SEX MARRIAGE DEBATE

■ Response To Covenant

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life. A recent example is the April 2011, decision of the Judicial Council which again upheld the Church's current prohibition against same sex marriage. The Judicial Council said that even if same sex marriage is legal, it does not affect the Church's policy. The Council wrote: "The Church has a long tradition of maintaining its standards apart from those recognized or permitted by any civil authority. 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." (*Editor's note: Judicial Council Decision #1185 can be found at this shortened link: <http://bit.ly/tx7MG4>.)*

"We applaud the laity of our great Church who have signed the letter to the Council of Bishops. The letter states:

'We believe that a minority within The United Methodist Church is attempting to hold the whole church hostage to its determination to change over 3,000 years of Judeo/Christian teaching on the nature of marriage and sexual morality. We support our church's gracious, loving, and truthful position on the nature of marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman, and that sexual relations be reserved only for heterosexual marriage. Our church's position is a balanced reflection of the teachings of Scripture and portrays the mind of God on these matters. We are grieved that a minority has abandoned the process of "holy conferencing" that has characterized our church's deliberations on these issues. We see these actions as an affront to our United Methodist connection and a betrayal of clergy vows of ordination.'

"Third, based on the Church's teaching, we will hold any clergy accountable who defies the ban to conduct same sex marriages. We will then seek that the individual(s) be charged according to Book of Discipline ¶ 2702.1, which says, "A clergy

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■ Clergy Defy Ban

Continued from page 15

to make the church relevant again to many who had written it off. It has reached hundreds of thousands of LGBT people through extensive coverage it has received in LGBT media—people whose experience of Christianity has largely or solely been one of condemnation."

Rev. Vicki Flippin

Church of the Village, New York, N.Y.

I have signed the Covenant of Conscience because I have committed acts of discrimination in the name of my church, and I never want to do it again. When people ask me why I am a pastor, I always say, as though it should be obvious, "So that I can change the world!" I became a faith leader to follow in the footsteps of Dr. King and Malcolm X and Gandhi and Dorothy Day.

But in 2009, I committed a sin in the name of the church that I love. A young couple, who had been rejected by their previous churches because of their sexuality, had found welcome in our justice-loving United Methodist church. One day, they sat in my office, full of joy about their future together, to ask their pastor to perform their wedding. And I told that couple—who thought they had found a sanctuary from discrimination and hate—that they were not welcome to be married in their sanctuary by their pastor.

Today, thanks to the Covenant of Conscience community, I am choosing a different path, one that allows me to be faithful to God, my call as a pastor, and my church. I am choosing to be faithful to my ordination vows to "seek peace, justice, and freedom for all people." And I am choosing to be faithful to the example of John Wesley and the long history of social action by the people called Methodists, by following Christ's call to minister to "the least of these."

■ Response To Covenant

Continued from page 16

member of an annual conference . . . may be tried when charged with . . . conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies. Our Bishop, Jeremiah Park, in his letter to the conference of June 27, reminded us that the Book of Discipline declares that ceremonies celebrating homosexual unions shall not be conducted in our churches.” (Book of Discipline, ¶ 341.6) We are saddened by the willingness of pastors within our New York Annual Conference to reject their ordination vows and the teaching of our church that goes back to Jesus and the apostles and to disobey the clear directive of our own bishop. Although we acknowledge the passion of their conviction, we feel bound to hold to the covenant that binds us as a church.

“We concur with more than 2,400 United Methodist pastors who have signed a letter to the Council of

Bishops that states:

‘We sincerely believe that the future of The United Methodist Church is at stake. [What this MIND initiative] and others are proposing will lead to anarchy—and the end result will be the demise of the church we love. We write not as members of any board or caucus group, but as United Methodist pastors who have committed our lives to this great denomination and who treasure our Wesleyan heritage. We believe there is a way forward—and that way requires that pastors and congregations live by the Book of Discipline, and that our Episcopal leaders maintain its integrity by enforcing it unapologetically.’ (Please see www.faithfulumc.com for the full text of both the laity and clergy letters.)

The Wesley Fellowship, NYAC

Clergy Signatures:

Rev. Tony Beck, Christ, Beacon, N.Y./NY/CT
Young Chul Cho, New Hyde Park Korean/
LIE

Oscar Destruge, El Camino/NYCT
Chuck Ferrara, New Life Community/CT
Lee Gangaware, Grace/LIE

John R Gerlach, Trinity Windsor/CT
Richard L. Hanse, West Hartford/CT

Dr. Philip F. Hardt, Glendale Maspeth/LIW
Marion Hubbard, Gaylordsville/CT

Kent F. Jackson, Trinity Parish/CH
Roy Jacobsen, Retired, Charlestown, RI
Kwang Won Jung, Korean Church of Staten
Island/MET

Chong Kim, Bible Korean/LIE
Young Sik Kim, Branford/CT

Chermain Lashley, Kings Highway/LIW

Jong Bum Lee, Queens Central Korean/LIW
Jae Joon Lee, Copake & Craryville/CH
David W Mantz, First Port Jefferson/LIE

Sandra B Mantz, Setauket/LIE
Delroy Murdock, St. Paul’s Brooklyn/LIW
Marjorie E. Nunes, Summerfield/CT

Randy Paige, Christ Port Jefferson Station/
LIE

Narcisse (Cherie) Philips, Peekskill &
Wiccopee/NYCT

John V. Roy, Westhampton/LIE
Sung Mo Song, Stamford Korean/NYCT
Francis Waite, Rockland Area Parish/CH

Kirtland M. Watkins, Sea Cliff/LIE
John. S Williams, Rhinebeck/CH

Min Suk Yang, Korean UMC/LIW
Julia YH Yim, Farmingdale/LIE

\$3M Grant for Malaria Fight

The United Methodist Church will get a surge of support for its work to eliminate deaths and suffering from malaria in Africa, thanks to a \$3 million supplemental grant from the United Nations Foundation.

“The United Methodist Church brings a unique piece to solving the global puzzle of malaria and maternal and child health: Faith . . . It transcends challenges, political boundaries and even deadly diseases,” said Bishop Thomas Bickerton, who chairs the UM Global Health Initiative.

The grant will support administrative costs for the denomination’s Imagine No Malaria campaign, an effort to raise \$75 million to empower the entire African continent to achieve a sustainable victory over malaria through prevention, education, communication and treatment.

To date, the UMC has raised more than \$18 million to support the fight against malaria. These funds have already been utilized in Africa, providing more than 588,000 bed nets, establishing 15 in-country health boards and training more than 3,500 local health workers.

Germany's Wenner to Lead Bishops

UMNS REPORT

Bishop Rosemarie Wenner of Germany will be the next president of the Council of Bishops, marking the first time a woman from outside the United States will lead the global body.

The council on Nov. 2 unanimously elected Wenner president, and Bishop Warner H. Brown Jr. of the California-Nevada Annual Conference as the president-designate.

Wenner will start her two-year term on the third day of General Conference, the denomination's top-lawmaking body. Brown will succeed her in 2014.

Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster, the current Council of Bishops president, said he thinks Wenner will bring "a great spirit" to her new role. Goodpaster has worked closely with Wenner in the past two years during her time as president-designate.

"She has a great grasp of United Methodism around the world and is just a wonderful person to work with," said Goodpaster, who also leads the Western North Carolina Annual Conference. "I think she brings some really positive leadership to the whole church."

The council president is responsible for presiding over the bishops' executive committee and the twice-yearly council meetings. Goodpaster said the president



UMNS PHOTO

Bishop Rosemarie Wenner is the first woman from outside the United States to be elected president of the Council of Bishops.

has a responsibility to guide the bishops in their deliberations and remind them of their mission to make disciples.

Only General Conference can speak officially for The United Methodist Church. However, the council president sometimes is called on to speak to journalists and others within and outside the denomination on behalf of the bishops and church teachings.

The president also often takes a leading role in council initiatives. Goodpaster, Wenner and Illinois Area Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, Goodpaster's predecessor as president, all have been involved in the denomination's Call to Action process, aimed at fostering more vital congregations.

Wenner said she hopes to lead

the council and her fellow United Methodists by "modeling what it means to be a Christian."

She has asked her fellow bishops for prayer and support. "I am trusting in my colleagues because it is a team effort," she told United Methodist News Service.

The council presidency typically rotates around representatives from each of the five U.S. jurisdictions and a representative from the central conferences—church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. Council presidents have come from outside the United States before. Bishop Emilio de Carvalho of Angola, for example, who served from 1991 to 1992, was the first African bishop in that position.

Wenner, 56, is a trailblazer in her own way. When she was elected bishop of Germany in February 2005, she became the denomination's first woman to be named to the episcopacy outside the United States.

"I hope just the fact I am coming from the central conferences is seen as a sign that the church lives in this reality of a global church," Wenner said.

Only in working together as a global church, she said, will United Methodists fulfill the church's calling from God.

Bishop Lyght to Retire Dec. 31

Ernest S. Lyght, resident bishop of the West Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church, has announced that he will retire from the active episcopacy on December 31, 2011. Lyght has served as bishop there since 2004, and was resident bishop of the New York Annual Conference prior to moving to West Virginia.

In a letter to more than 700 active and retired clergy in the W.Va. region, the bishop acknowledged that he is asking for early retirement due to health issues he has struggled with since last February.

“It has been an immense privilege and awesome opportunity for me to serve as a bishop in The United Methodist Church since 1996,” said Bishop Lyght. “I have thoroughly appreciated the years of service in the West Virginia Conference.”

On Nov. 3, the Council of Bishops named retired Bishop William Boyd Grove to return to West Virginia as an interim from Jan. 1 through Aug. 31, 2012, until a new episcopal leader is elected by the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

Grove was elected to the episcopacy by the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 1980 and served the West Virginia Episcopal Area and the Albany (NY) Episcopal Area before retiring from the active episcopacy in 1996.



UMNS PHOTO

Bishop Ernest Lyght at the 2008 General Conference.

NYAC, Drew Receive Racial Justice Grants

The New York Annual Conference is one of 13 recipients who will share in more than \$300,000 in racial justice grants recently announced by the United Methodist Church's General Commission on Religion and Race.

The NYAC's award of \$18,200 will be used to foster cultural competency for clergy serving cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments through pulpit exchanges, lectures and monthly meetings in culturally diverse settings.

Seven conferences, five United Methodist seminaries, and a jurisdictional organization received the CORR Action Fund (CAF) awards for projects ranging from developing intentional multicultural community, forming immersion programs, leading book study, creating cultural competency training for clergy and lay leadership, and for one seminary the complete redesign of the school's theological program.

This latest CAF priority provided awards in two categories:

- Racial Justice Grant for Clergy Leadership of up to \$20,000 for clergy and programs within districts and annual conferences that support efforts to dismantle racism by promoting the values of diversity, inclusiveness, multiculturalism and cross-racial/cross-cultural work
- Racial Justice Grant for UM Seminaries of up to \$80,000 for efforts by faculty, staff or students to improve racial, ethnic and cultural intergroup relationships and/or bringing about organizational, institutional and system changes in the church, seminary, and in society.

A \$75,000 grant awarded to Drew Theological School in Madison, N.J., will be used as seed money to revamp the school's curriculum, according to Rev. Dr. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan.

“We want to provide the students we are preparing today with the competency to be multicultural religious leaders tomorrow,” Dean Kuan said.

He added that revamping the school's 20-year-old curriculum had been a priority for faculty and staff and the grant positions them to move forward in concrete ways, including the creation of a new set of goals for a multicultural masters in divinity curriculum.

Announcement of the recipients came at GCORR's fall Board meeting in Detroit in early October. The CAF Grants are offered for one calendar year and funds are distributed in two stages.

For more information, and a full list of the recipients, go to this shortened link for the GCORR web site:

<http://bit.ly/vKePNp>.

Opening Our Hearts to Adopt a Child

You can make a difference in the lives of children waiting in foster care. November is National Adoption Awareness Month, and the Children's Home is partnering with many other adoption agencies to raise awareness on behalf of the more than 114,000 children nationally who are growing up in the U.S. foster care system without a permanent family.

These children are in foster care through no fault of their own as victims of abuse, neglect or abandonment. They often move three or more times in foster care, are frequently separated from siblings, and may wait five years or more to be adopted. Five years is a lifetime to a child.

Nearly 81.5 million Americans have considered adopting a child. If just one in 500 of these adults adopted, every waiting



child in foster care would have a permanent family. But foster care adoption is often misunderstood, preventing children from finding forever families.

National Adoption Day is held each year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving (November 19, this year). On this day during National Adoption Awareness Month, judges across the country make it a priority to finalize pending foster care adoptions. In 2010, 4,500 children were adopted and supporters hosted more than 350 events to celebrate the spirit of this special day.

Grace had been in foster care for nearly five years and had been in more than 10 placements. She first entered the system because

of neglect, physical abuse and substance abuse by her caregivers. Grace is now part of a family, complete with her photo on the mantel.

In 2011, 30 adoptions were finalized for children in the Children's Home "Close to Home" program. You may be the key to helping a child like Grace find a forever family.

For more information about adoption, contact the Children's Home or your local Department of Social Services.

At the Children's Home we believe "Every Child Deserves a Safe Place." For more information on the Children's Home, call 800-772-690, ext. 131 or visit our web site at www.chowc.org. Please feel free to send donations directly, or use our New York Conference Advance number, 60-0588.

Young Clergy Forum On Justice Advocacy

The 9th annual Young Clergy Capitol Hill Leadership Forum sponsored by the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) is February 8-10, 2012, at the historic United Methodist Building, next door to the Supreme Court and across the street from the U.S. Capitol.

Annual conferences are urged to send up to two persons, age 35 and under, who may be either elders or deacons, and serving full-time. The conference director of connectional ministries should approve the two candidates from his or her conference.

The Young Adult Clergy Leadership Forum will provide creative and participatory ways to teach the Social Principles of the UMC in congregations. There will also be an opportunity to talk with Jim Winkler,

GBCS general secretary. GBCS advocacy staff will discuss key legislative issues being debated on Capitol Hill.

There will also be worship in the historic Simpson Memorial Chapel at the United Methodist Building, and time to network with other young clergy from across the connection

Registration is limited to 50 persons; the fee is \$120. Attendees or their conferences are responsible for covering travel expenses to and from Washington, D.C. GBCS will pay hotel, meals and program costs in Washington, D.C. 1.5 One and ½ continuing education credits will be awarded for this training event. To register online, go to this shortened link for the GBCS web site: <http://bit.ly/svYQFy>.

“The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”

BY KIM WILSON OWENS

First UMC, Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

I am a baby boomer. That means that I was born after the end of World War II and grew up in the 60s and 70s. I lived through the end of the Jim Crow era, the Civil Rights movement, Women’s Liberation, the assassinations of President Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, and the turmoil and devastation of the Viet Nam War. During my youth, I experienced the invention of color television, microwave ovens, handheld calculators, personal computers, touch tone telephones and the Internet just to name a few.

I thank God that I have lived to see many social and cultural events thus far in my life.

When I heard of the death of poet-musician Gil Scott-Heron back in May it impacted me in a profound way. Scott-Heron was a prolific writer of poems and songs that were especially popular in the 70s. One of his more popular songs, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised,” is considered by many as a protest song. In this and other songs, Scott-Heron protested the superficiality of television and mass consumerism.

When I heard of Gil Scott-Heron’s death, I was reminded of our country’s struggle with race relations and issues concerning class and gender equality. The Viet Nam War was being fought and many questioned the involvement

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of the United States in this conflict that did not seem to directly affect us here at home.

We continue to struggle with these issues in our country though they now seem to have been overshadowed by our financial concerns.

But much of what Scott-Heron said in his protest poem-song may still have relevance:

The revolution will not be televised.

It will not put a tiger in your tank .

The revolution will not be televised.

It will not go better with coke ...

it will not give your mouth sex appeal .

The revolution will not be televised.

There will be no highlights at 11,

and no instant replay .

The revolution will not be televised.

It will not fight germs that cause bad breath.

The revolution will be live.

I do not know if the general culture experienced the revolution as suggested by Scott-Heron. However, his death started me thinking about revolution, in general, and especially the revolution that we as Christians experience.

We experience a revolution in our life when we accept Jesus Christ. It may not be sudden, but it is a radical and complete change. The changes asked of us by Jesus are nothing short of revolutionary. Jesus calls his followers to leave

family, friends, safety and security to follow him. Jesus expects that we will change how we live and how we do business. This change is such that we call it as being reborn or being born again.

This initial change, the acceptance of Christ is not the end of our Christian journey but the beginning. And this ongoing revolution is the core of our spiritual growth and development.

The revolution will not be televised because the revolution is live. Once we join the family of Christ, the revolution is now reflected in our attempts to stay in a relationship with Jesus as our center. This dynamic revolution involves our whole self, all the time, every day. We could keep our saved, changed life for Sundays and times when we need to be on our best behavior. But what Jesus requires when He says “follow me” is that we leave our comfort zone. He calls us to live not by the world’s standards, but by asks but by his standards.

It almost seems impossible. And in fact, it is an impossible task working under our own power. But we have received everything we need to be successful in this life.

Jesus says in Matthew 11:29–30: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

A yoke is a wooden plank that was used to connect weak and

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OBITUARIES

Lois H. Cave

Lois H. Cave, wife of Rev. Robert J. Cave, died on August 29 in Wellington, Fla., at the age of 81. The Caves would have been married 50 years on September 1, 2011.

Rev. Cave served in the New York Conference at St. Andrew's in New Haven, Conn.; Bridgehampton and Sag Harbor, N.Y.; Wesley and Woodrow on Staten Island. He retired in 2000 from Hillside UMC, New Hyde Park, N.Y.

In addition to her husband, Cave is survived by two sons: Robert J. (Susan) Cave, Jr., of Claremont, Calif., and John Stephen Cave of Parker, Colo.; and four grandchildren.

A celebration of her life was held at the Weigand Brothers Funeral Home in Williston Park, N.Y., with burial at the National Cemetery in Calverton, N.Y.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to: Rev. Robert J. Cave, 2680 Country Golf Drive, Wellington, FL 33414. Memorial gifts may be sent to the American Cancer Society.

Lynn Margaret Ary

Lynn Margaret Ary, daughter of Rev. Joseph and Faye Ary, died October 15, in Accord, N.Y. Ary, 52, was a speech language pathologist who specialized in working with children.

In addition to her parents, she is survived by husband, Alan Gill; a brother, Joseph Wesley (Dru) Ary, of Hillsdale, N.Y.; and two nieces, April Jo Ary Whalen of Millerton,

N.Y., and Hollie Ary of Hillsdale.

A memorial service was held October 21 at the Copake United Methodist Church, with Rev. Gerard Pollock officiating, assisted by Rev. Jae Joon Lee.

Expressions of concern may be sent to Rev. Joseph and Mrs. Ary, PO Box 684, Copake, NY 12516. Memorial gifts may be given to the Copake UMC, P.O. Box 127, Copake, NY 12516-0127; Smile Train, PO Box 96208, Washington, DC 20090-6208; or Hospice Inc., 374 Violet Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

Thursa Mae Minnich Brackbill

Thursa Mae Minnich Brackbill died October 19 in New Holland, Penn. at the age of 91. She was married to the late Rev. Edwin C. Minnich, who died in 1987, and the late Hershey L. Brackbill, who predeceased her in 2005.

Rev. Minnich served Glendale UMC in Queens, and Central UMC in Yonkers, in addition to Pearl Street, Telford, Pottsville, Allentown, and Quarryville in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. The Minnichs spent many years supporting youth ministry and summer church camping. She was well known for directing church dramas and speaking at United Methodist Women's events and occasionally Sunday worship.

She is survived by a son, Chaplain Lt. Col. Ronald Edwin Martin-Minnich and his wife, the Rev. Dr. Terry Martin-Minnich;

two grandsons, Anthony (Tammy) Martin and Daniel Minnich; one great-grandson, Jackson Martin; a niece, Linda (Arthur) Salhanick; and nephews David (Sharon) Neff, and James (Heidi) Neff.

A memorial service was held October 28 at Pearl Street UMC, Lancaster, Penn. Chaplain Martin-Minnich delivered the eulogy. Interment was at Millersville Mennonite Cemetery. Memorials in Brackbill's memory may be sent to: Garden Spot Village Benevolence Fund, 433 S. Kinzer Avenue, New Holland, PA 17557.

Rev. Paul C. Baresel Jr.

Rev. Paul C. Baresel Jr., died at age 80, in Greenwood Lake, N.Y., on October 18.

Baresel served in the Navy on the submarine USS Conger, and worked with the New York Bell before beginning his ministry career. He served the following parishes in the New York Conference: Pine Bush, Walker Valley, Hillsdale, North Hillsdale, West Taghkanic and Glenco Mills and Woodhaven; Epworth Parish, Callicoon, Fremont Center, Hankins and North Branch, Pine Plains, Highland and Lloyd, all in New York.

After retiring in 1994, he was active in the community serving with the Monroe Ambulance Corps, as an emergency medical technician with the Pine Bush Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Harriman Fire Department,

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Pray for General Conference 2012

When delegates to General Conference meet in Tampa next April, persons around the world will be able to join them in a concert of prayer, seeking God's will for their decisions.

The Upper Room, a division of the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), will once again provide a prayer guide for delegates, participants and guests of the General Conference.

Unlike at previous General Conferences, however, the 2012 guide also will be available free of charge on The Upper Room web site for all 12.3 million United Methodists worldwide. The use of technology will help the entire church surround the elected delegates, Council of Bishops and general church staff with prayer.

A prayer web site maintained by GBOD (www.gbod.org/prayer_initiative) contains information, guidance and suggestions to help United Methodists pray together in new, meaningful ways.

OBITUARIES

Rev. Paul C. Baresel Jr.

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Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties. He was invited to offer the opening prayer at the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., in June 1981.

Baresel is survived by a son, Paul C. (Susan) Baresel III of Greenwood Lake, N.Y., and a daughter, Donna Lee Forbes (Dwight Jr.) Patch of Whitefish, Mont.; four grandchildren, Rachel Baresel, Paul C. Baresel IV, Dreux Patch and Dwight D. Patch III; and a brother, James Baresel of North Carolina. His wife, Nancy, predeceased him in 2005.

A memorial service celebrating his life will be held at 2 p.m., November 19, at the Iron Dale Cemetery in Millerton, N.Y.

Condolences may be sent to: Paul C. Baresel III, PO Box 891, Greenwood Lake, NY 10925. Memorial gifts may be made to: Red Bird Mission, 70 Queendale Center, Beverly, KY 40913.

Walker Appointed Interim at Memorial, White Plains

Bishop Jeremiah J. Park has appointed Robert Walker to serve as interim pastor at Memorial UMC in White Plains, N.Y., beginning November 1, and continuing for the remainder of the conference year. Rev. Walker replaces Rev. Larry Pickens.

Walker, a clergy member of our annual conference, is on the faculty of Iona College and will continue his teaching duties while serving Memorial UMC on a part-time basis.



Rev. Walker

“The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”

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strong oxen together. We are told by Jesus to take His yoke so that we can do all that we are called to do. Connect yourself to me. Keep me and my Father at the center of your life and your world; I have a better way he says.

There are other instructions ... to love God and your neighbor as yourself and to pray without ceasing ... among them.

Yes, I believe the revolution will not be televised. Our faith revolution is live and current. And for those of us who call ourselves Christians it is not powered by Time Warner, Vonage, Verizon, or any other artificial source. There will be no sequels or prequels. Our revolution is powered by the Holy Spirit. It is real and live and will lead to spiritual maturity. We have been especially equipped and supported for this challenge.