



18 Retiring Clergy Celebrated

By Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

“Hoo-Be-Lah-Sea-On,” Luisa Martinez told Ginny Carle. “Hoo-Be-Lah-Sea-On!”

“Who’s on first?” Ginny responded, and Abbott and Costello had nothin’ on them.

Adorned with colorful garlands around their necks, 14 of 18 retiring clergy members processed into Hofstra Arena while the congregation sang “Freedom Is Coming.” Then Rev. Luisa Martinez and Rev. Virginia (Ginny) Carle opened the festivities with a routine that sent waves of laughter through the crowd.

“In Spanish, the word for retirement is Jubilacion,” Luisa informed Ginny, “a word that does not speak of retreating or being set aside, but rather speaks of life and joy.”

Indeed, the whole ceremony was joyful from the music to the comedy, from the videos to the “high five” that Taka Ishii exchanged with spouse, Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii.

“Retire, Rejuvenate and Live,” the congregation sang, and this year’s retirees shared their memories and their plans. The group represents more than 503 years of faithful service to God and the church; they were an impressive and unique assembly.

“This is a very special group,” announced Rev. Eumin Kim, the retiree coordinator, and he knew at least one of them very well. Eumin’s father, Rev. Joong Urn Kim, sat on the stage behind Bishop Jeremiah J. Park waiting for his

son to call his name.

“There are four district superintendents in the group,” Eumin noted, “and a clergy husband and wife retiring, Taka and Jeannette.”

As Eumin Kim called out their names, the retirees rose to receive a warm hug and a gift of gratitude from Bishop Park. The class of retirees includes: Fred A. Allen, Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii, Magaly Beltre, Wilbert Taylor Bradley, Byung Chul Choi, George Englehardt, Mary Hoynes, Takayuki Ishii, Roy E. Jacobsen, Ovid Jermin, Johnny Johnson, Joong Urn Kim, Betty LeGeyt, Janet Porcher, Josephat Rungu, Raymond Santos, Jane McCulloch Sibley and Dennis Winkleblack.

Yet, retirement may not be as restful as some imagined. Minutes after the ceremony ended, Bishop Park called Winkleblack onto the stage and back to work. Rev. Winkleblack may be retiring, but his position as the Bishop’s assistant will not end. “Retirement is also an appointment!” the bishop declared, and the congregation laughed one more time before returning to the work of the conference.



Rev. Luisa Martinez and Rev. Ginny Carle, above, shared their comedic skills to introduce the retirement service. Below, Dennis Winkleblack and the bishop watch his retirement video.



Engelhardts Receive Dale & Gwen White Award

By Tom Coddington

A couple who have dedicated their lives to social justice issues, in the New York Annual Conference and beyond, received special honors from the Methodist Federation for Social Action chapter at its dinner on Thursday.

Carolyn Hardin Engelhardt and her husband, Rev. George Engelhardt, were introduced, respectively, by Revs. Jessica Anschutz and Taka Ishii.

“She really lives her faith, with dedication and commitment!” Anschutz declared. “She inspires everyone with her ministry, and she is connected throughout the world. She is known for her hospitality and her welcoming nature.”

Carolyn responded, “Everyone has an ‘Esther’ location in the world,” liking her role to that of the biblical Esther. “In our suburban churches, we have a lot of social justice systems. We need to be good stewards, and



Kevin Nelson, from left, Jessica Anschutz and Taka Ishii congratulate Carol Hardin Engelhardt and George Engelhardt at the MFSA dinner.

willing to do it.

“We need to be advocates for the poor and we need to have rainbow hospitality. I feel that I am called to be at my ‘Esther’ location,” she said.

Ishii referred to George Engelhardt as “an easy target for peace. His commitment is genuine, and he is driven by a genuine passion for

social justice. George has always been a first responder to volunteer to help defend everyone’s rights.”

The honoree remarked, “We need a commitment to inclusiveness, at any space, wherever we are. Sometimes it comes naturally and sometimes, out of necessity. We also need a commitment to

God.”

Engelhardt also compared the situations in a royal courtyard with those in a brickyard, and noted that his congregation in Cheshire has “grown to value diversity. Dialogue is important. Everyone’s gifts and graces should be witnessed to, with no time outs.”

Veteran Pastor Shares Tips for Improving Church

By Tom Coddington

With an apology to John Wesley, Rev. Tom Carney offered “21 Simple Suggestions” for improving churches to the Town and Country Association at its annual Thursday breakfast. Rev. Steve Peiffer presided over the gathering in the absence of the association’s prime mover, Rev. Doug Osgood, who underwent surgery last week.

Rev. Carney, who has served 31 years as pastor of the Greenville-Norton Hill UMC – one of the northernmost churches in the conference – spoke of the success his church has had during his tenure. First of all, he noted, “The Greenville and Norton Hill churches had just merged, and I wanted to buck the trend of what usually happens



Rev. Tom Carney

with mergers. In most mergers, within a year, the attendance shrinks to what the larger church had.”

Using some of the suggestions in the booklet he passed out, he said, “The church now has an average attendance of 200 in worship.” He credited several church leaders who, over the years, have made the success possible.

“We have a great people network,” he said. “It’s a seven-day-a-week ministry, and someone is

there all the time. We are always sharing ideas to improve the programs we have. Any idea that helps people is a good idea.”

Rev. Carney commented on how Easter used to bring the most people to the church. That’s not the case any more; our

biggest attendance is on Christmas Eve, when we pull out all the stops.”

The Greenville-Norton Hill church has four five-day-a-week programs: Day care, universal pre-kindergarten, nursery school and a thrift shop ministry with emphasis on recycling and community outreach. Young people are an important part of church life, and become committed through a 40-week confirmation class, and Sunday school is a priority.

He urged those present to “dream big,” and “don’t be afraid to go into debt for the right reasons.” In the latter case, the former Norton Hill building (the Greenville building was sold), has been expanded twice during his tenure. In addition to advertising of programs, which he does regularly, he also suggested that, when a church is getting a new pastor, “It’s time to advertise that.”

Speaking from his own experience, Rev. Carney stressed the importance of continuity of church programs. “There are a lot of blessings in continuity,” he concluded.



Rev. Tisha Jermin offered a series of liturgical dances during Thursday morning's memorial service.



Bishop Park congratulates Roy Jacobsen on his retirement.



Taka Ishii, from left, Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii and Bishop Park during the retirement celebration.



VOTING UPDATE

Clergy: Five more ballots on Thursday provided only one additional delegate, Rev. Adrienne Brewington, superintendent of the Long Island East District. But the field has narrowed considerably.

Laity: Voting was more fruitful with two additional delegates by day's end: Jorge Lockward and Carolyn Hardin Engelhardt.

Delegation leaders: Rev. Bill Shillady and Fred Brewington, as the first clergy and lay delegates, respectively, will lead the NYAC team.

Delegation numbers: Five clergy and five lay members will make up the team for General Conference on April 24-May 4, 2012, in Tampa, Fla. Those 10 will be joined by five more clergy and five more laity for the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, July 18-20, 2012, in Charleston, W. Va. Alternates will also be selected.

Memorial Service Honors Lives of Departed

Rejoice and be glad!

Blessed are you, holy are you!

Rejoice and be glad!

Yours is the Kingdom of God!

– The Beatitudes – A Time to Remember

In a service that embraced the need to remember who we are, the New York Annual Conference gave thanks for the lives and Christian service of members of the clergy, their spouses, widows and widowers, and children who have died in the past year.

Rev. Noel Chin led the call to worship and opening prayer following the processional to “The God of Abraham Praise.”

The reading of the names recalled the ebb and flow of life, and the promise of new life received in baptism through a powerful mixture of song, dance and scripture readings. Rev. Fred Jackson and Rev. Adrienne Brewington read the names of the deceased as they drew water from a large silver font draped in blue. The calling of the names was punctuated by the liturgical dancing of Rev. Tisha Jermin, and the singing of “The Beatitudes – A Time to Remember” by the praise band and the gathered body. Rev. Lee Gangaware and his wife, Polly Gangaware, read scriptures offering care and comfort.

In her sermon, Rev. Brewington noted that we had not gathered to mourn, but to recognize the deceased for who they were in the community of faith, for their lives and their work. Their legacy would be honored because of their “fidelity to cause of Christ.”

Brewington carried with her a West African statue of a griot. The griots are a hereditary class charged with learning the history of the community and telling it in story, song and dance. She said that people remember who they are because of the griot. “And having it in my home, helps me remember who I am in a greater context.”

She recalled the importance of storytellers in her own family – especially her mother and father. Hearing those tales of family triumphs and trials made the stories real for her.

“Hearing the scriptures are like hearing old family stories,” she said. “I claim Abraham and Isaac, and all the tribes in my family tree.” In remembering, we understand who we are, she added. Brewington would repeat that mantra many times throughout her message.



Rev. Fred Jackson and Rev. Adrienne Brewington lift water from a baptismal font as each name is read during the memorial service on Thursday night.

She noted how the stories of Moses and Mary had shaped her understanding of her own call to ministry. God equipped Moses with all that he would need; Mary submitted her body and soul to God’s divine plan.

“The call to follow the Savior of the world has no casual components,” she explained. “It demands radical loyalty. Every other obligation has to be subordinate to it.” We must remember that Christ made the sacrifice for us, and promised the Holy Spirit to be with us until the end of the age.

“To remember is to know who we are. God takes care of God’s own,” Brewington said –without demanding what we think we are worth, or demanding that we deserve better and more.

Charles B. Powell Sr., a member of the Shepherd Singers, offered a powerful rendition of “You Raise Me Up,” as a prelude to Holy Communion.

Before the sacrament was offered, Bishop Park called for a moment of silence in honor of Shirley Parris, a beloved former NYAC member who had served the conference as lay leader. (After the sacrament, the bishop received a note of that the son of Rev. Sarah Diane Ford, Thomas, had passed away, and asked for prayers for the family.)

Bishop Park and Bishop Alfred Johnson invited the gathering to Holy Communion. Laity joined members of

the 2011 ordination, commissioning and retirements classes to serve the elements throughout the arena.

Those who were remembered in the service are:

Clergy: William A. Robbins, Ellen Oliveto, Charles A. Melano, Hak Nee Nam, Jodey R. Williams, Henry C. Abiola Bernard, Elemit A. Brooks, Paul Wilson Bowles, Wallace T. Viets, Robert A. Traina, Frank A. Horbert, Sr., Julian Norris Hartt, Albert J. Hillard, Robert Pearsall, R. Marston Speight, Merritt Barnum Queen, Alfred Liberatore, and Thomas Irwin Vaughan.

Spouses of Clergy: Sylvia Dietlin Olofson, Martha “Margie” Cheeks Oakes, Mary Ellen “Susi” Morrison and Rose Mildred Menninger Richmond.

Widows and Widowers of Clergy: Edna Woodward, Sidney B. Robinson, Doris Carroll, Maryon H. Kelley Hall, Margaret A. MacKenzie, Thelma Allen, Lorla M. Nothdurft, Fannie Ellis Baker Bailey, Charlotte Palmer Randall, Juanita Edwards Mercer, Elinor N. Hartt, June Butler, Magdalene Takaro Law, and Anita L. Bennett Boeck.

Children of Clergy: Sally Marie Nothdurft Galion, Jonathan W. Speight, Henri Fils-Aime, Katrina Snow, and Jocelyn Gilles Day.

Special Remembrance: George Backofen