

*"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

August 20, 2010

## Labor & Love Fill Week at UM ARMY

**BY JOANNE S. UTLEY**  
Editor, The Vision

For a week in late July, an army of 100 youth, men, and women descended on the imposing stone edifice that is the First UMC, in

Melrose, Mass., and took over the place. They weren't there to divide and conquer, but to rebuild and repair, laugh and learn. The group, which included members from eight NYAC churches, was armed with shovels, rakes and power tools for a week of work with UM ARMY.

UM ARMY, which stands for United Methodist Action Reach-Out Mission by Youth, has been holding work camps for more than 30 years to serve people in need while promoting spiritual growth and leadership development in youth.

The organization has chapters in the Texas and Southwest Texas conferences, in addition to the Northeast Chapter that serves eight states with camps in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The camps give youth, college students and adults an opportunity to experience Christian growth through mission, worship and fellowship. Participants combine their skills and energy to do home repairs for those unable to help



**The Blue E team poses with one of their clients before the Client Night Dinner. She said that these young ladies give her hope for the future.**

themselves. Approximately 4,000 participants sign up to work on some 1,700 projects each year. As the demand has grown, UM ARMY has added weekend camps as well as ones during Christmas and

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PHOTOS BY VALORIE KOLITZ

**Tracie Nixon, far right, works with her team to remove a railing so they can begin to make this home more accessible for the elderly clients.**



**Pastors Carol Downs, from left, Linda Kay Nealon, and Westley Villazon celebrated the completion of the Course of Study in a July 22 service in Washington, D.C.**

## 3 Complete Course of Study

**BY REV. EILEEN DAUNT**  
NYAC Local Pastor Registrar

Three local licensed pastors from the NYAC—Westley Villazon, Linda Kay Nealon and Carol Downs—graduated from the Course of Study School at Wesley Theological Seminary on July 22. Downs serves St. Andrew's UMC in New Haven, and Villazon pastors Bakerville, both in the Connecticut District; and Nealon is appointed to Tarryton UMC in the Metropolitan District. These dedicated pastors have been working for the past five years to complete the 20 classes required in the Course of Study.

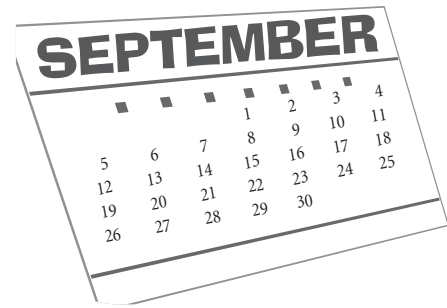
The service, held at Metropolitan Memorial

UMC in Washington, D.C., was a jubilant occasion as a few of the class members sang "I'll Fly Away" and "I Saw the Light." The class processed to "Lift High the Cross." A sermon entitled, "Congratulations and Now the Next Steps," was delivered by Dr. Ellis Larsen, a member of the Wesley faculty and director emeritus of the Course of Study. Larsen encouraged the graduates to continue their educations and become associate members in their home conferences.

The Course of Study is a year-round experiential and classroom learning process for

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# SAVE THE DATE



## Ignite Early Registration

**August 31:** Register at [www.umyouth.com](http://www.umyouth.com) by this date for the bargain price of \$139 for the "Ignite" youth weekend for all teenagers in the NYAC. Then mark your calendars for January 23-25, 2011.

## Upcoming VIM Trips

### Haiti Disaster Response Mission

Sept 21–29; and Oct 18–26

Apply through: [nyacdisaster@gmail.com](mailto:nyacdisaster@gmail.com).

### January 7–19, 2011/Cambodia

Leader: Laura Galbraith, [Pastorlaura.g@sbcglobal.com](mailto:Pastorlaura.g@sbcglobal.com)

### January 11–23/Ecuador

Leader: Judy Stevens, [Jas116@aol.com](mailto:Jas116@aol.com)

Leader: Oscar Destruge, [juan316@aol.com](mailto:juan316@aol.com)

### February 16–28/Youth Ambassadors

Leader: Donna Jolly, [jolly\\_donna@hotmail.com](mailto:jolly_donna@hotmail.com)

### June 24–July 9/Bolivia

Leader: Carl Franson, [Cfranson417@comcast.net](mailto:Cfranson417@comcast.net)

### August 6–22/Mozambique

Leader: Annette Griffith, [annettegriffith@earthlink.net](mailto:annettegriffith@earthlink.net)

### September 5–17/Ghana

Leader: Joseph Ewoodzie, [jewoodzie@gmail.com](mailto:jewoodzie@gmail.com)

## Anchor House Benefit Concert

**September 10:** The multi-gifted musical artist Rev. Dr. Jason Alvarez will be featured in this 7 p.m. concert along with Ernest Trueblood, the New Life Fellowship, and the Bay Ridge Christian Center Youth Team. The location is the Bay Ridge Christian Center, 6324 7th Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y., 11220. Donation: \$25.

## John Wesley on Leadership

**September 11:** A program on leadership and early Methodism for lay leaders, lay speakers and all laity and clergy led by lay speaker and Wesley scholar Jerry Eyster. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Jesse Lee Memorial UMC, Ridgefield, Conn. Check the conference web site at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2947> for registration information.

## Far Rockaway Fundraiser

**September 18:** Join in this walk-a-thon along the beach to help support the ministry and feeding programs at the United Methodist Center in Far Rockaway, Queens, N.Y. See related story on Page 8.

## MIND General Meeting

**September 26:** The fall kick-off meeting of Methodists in New Directions, a reconciling ministry of the NYAC, is at 3 p.m. at the Church of St. Peter and St. Andrew, 263 W. 86th Street, Manhattan. Bring your ideas for events and elect a new steering committee.

## Bishop's Retreat with Clergy/Northern Districts

**September 27–28:** Clergy in the Northern districts will meet at Mt. Alphonsus in Esopus, N.Y. More information will follow.

## Bishop's Retreat with Clergy/Tri-Districts

**September 29–30:** Clergy in the tri-districts will meet at Bishop Molloy Retreat Center, Jamaica, N.Y. More information will follow.

## Hartford Marathon

**October 9:** The conference team will be running again in the 5K, relay, half-marathon, and marathon categories. Have you begun training yet? More details to come.

## Fall Clergy Day Apart



**October 14:** Clergy Day Apart at the Memorial/Central Korean UMC in White Plains. Begins at 9 a.m., and adjourns by 3 p.m. The Order of Elders sponsors this event, but it is open to all clergy members. Plan to join this sacred time together for spiritual renewal and growth.

## Confirmation Kickoff at Camp Epworth

**October 15–16:** Overnight event for teens beginning their confirmation journey is from dinner Friday through lunch Saturday. Cost: \$55 per person, includes three meals, accommodations, ropes course, and tribal hunt. Neal Bowes, NYAC's youth ministries consultant, is the leader. Registration deadline is Oct 6; space is limited. Registration will be available soon online at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/3043>. Permission slips and important information will be posted at [www.umyouth.com](http://www.umyouth.com).

## UMM Annual Retreat

**October 29-30:** NYAC men's retreat, "Building A Faith-Based Community," at Stony Point Retreat Center, Stony Point, N.Y. Email John Lewis for more details at, [asherod@aol.com](mailto:asherod@aol.com).

		
<b>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</b>		
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# 6 + 12 + 12: NYAC Needs Vision Bearers

Thirty new churches in the next three years! Rev. Kenny Yi, leader of the NYAC's Vision Bearer Task Force, made that incredible announcement on the closing day of annual conference before a packed house at Hofstra Arena. Six new faith communities have been designated for 2010, and the search is on for vision bearers to begin 12 more in each of the following two years.

The NYAC formed its Vision Bearer Task Force to coordinate efforts to start new churches and revitalize existing ones in conjunction with the General Board of Discipleship through their Path 1 initiative. Path 1 is a denominational movement focused on re-evangelizing the United States by creating a national strategy to train and equip church planters to reach more people, more young people, and more diverse people for Christ by creating new places for new people. In addition, existing congregations that are ready to be renewed into vital, vibrant churches will be energized with a passion for living out the Good News. Rev. Paul Nixon, who has spoken at conference clergy retreats, is a member of the Path 1 team. (For more information about the Path 1 movement, go to <http://www.path1.org/>.)

According to a Vision Bearer project report, the United States has more than 180 million unchurched people, making it the third largest mission field in the English-speaking world, and the fifth largest globally.

In addition to Yi, the task force includes Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, Director of Connectional Ministries Ann A. Pearson; clergy members: Albert Hahn, Samuel Arhin, Chris Yount, Arturo Maine, Magaley Beltre, Karen Karpow, Kristina Hansen, and Zhaodeng Peng; and cabinet members: Adrienne Brewington, Jim Moore, Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii, Kenneth Kieffer and Noel Chin.

## Six New Starts

The church starts designated by the task force for 2010, and the vision bearers who will direct them, are:

### Sara Giron-Ortiz Green Point Spanish Mission, Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Green Point section of Brooklyn is known for its large Polish population, but it also has a significant number of Spanish-speaking inhabitants. The outreach will also extend into the adjacent Sunnyside and Williamsburg neighborhoods.

Giron-Ortiz, who pastors the San Pablo UMC in Long Island City, plans to target those age 18-55 with a consistent string of worship and/



**Prayers are lifted for Robert Tetteh, from left, Paul Moon, Karina Feliz, Susan Woodworth, Sara Giron-Ortiz, and Delores Barrett, who will lead six new communities of faith in the conference.**

or invitational events before beginning weekly services. The new church will share space with the Green Point Polish-American Church on Meserole Avenue.

### Susan Woodworth Sullivan County, New York

This new church will reach out to the unchurched in the rural communities of Neversink, Hasbrouck, Loch Sheldrake, Woodbourne, and Divine Corners (including Fox Croft Village) to offer opportunities for worship, fellowship, Christian education, and mission. House meetings were to begin this summer, with larger more visible gatherings quarterly leading up to weekly meetings/meals in Lent 2011. Woodworth's goal was to garner support and participation from the clergy and laity of area UMC churches.

### Robert Tetteh Ghana Bethel/Queens (Primera Iglesia UMC)

Ghana Bethel initiated their ministry in Lefrak City (Corona, Queens) and moved into Primera Iglesia UMC as a new church start. The church was started by Rev. Dr. Samuel Arhin in 2000. Average attendance is 20 to 30 people. Worship is in English and the Akan languages. The move to Primera Iglesia has caused transportation problems for some, but the church is planning to get a van for the 15-minute drive.

Le Frak City is a sprawling apartment complex along the Long Island Expressway. There is a strong Ghanaian presence there as well other West Africans, both English and French speaking.

### Delores Barrett Riker's Island (Queens) and other correctional facilities

Rev. Barrett will be working to provide incarcerated inmates and their extended families with life support services that will enable them to understand that there is hope in the Word of God. The ministry hopes to address not only spiritual issues, but also the physical and educational needs of those who are incarcerated. It will deal with issues that affect both inmate and family, such as the transition to and from prison, and feelings of separation and isolation.

### Karina Feliz Vanderveer Park UMC/Brooklyn

This new start is announcing its presence to the Spanish-speaking/Latino community by distributing flyers and walking the streets to meet people. The five core values for the church are: Christ-centered, cultural relevance, praise and worship, creativity and innovation, and fellowship. Feliz plans to begin Saturday night weekly worship services beginning in September in the chapel of its host UMC church.

### Paul Moon Broken Builders' Ministry/Village Church

This Korean ministry was welcomed by the Church of The Village in July 2009, and has been steadily growing ever since. The church, founded as a UM mission church in November 2008, focuses on two simple but vital channels: praise and worship ministries, and small group ministries. More than 50 percent of its members

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# First Fruits: Hand Delivered or Electronic Transfer?

**BY REV. GEORGE ENGELHARDT**  
NYAC Stewardship Consultant

We are deep into the dog days of summer. Folks are off on vacation and others have been lured from worship by summer pursuits. Along with this reality comes a challenge: When people do not come on Sunday, financial support of the church falls off. Dwindling cash flow becomes a real problem.

The church treasurer prioritizes the bills to be paid. We hope and pray for a mild autumn that will delay having to fire up the furnace, and we cling to the hope that once school starts, the people will be back! But will folks who have fallen behind in their giving catch up? Experience indicates that once weekly support of the church falls a month or more behind, the chances that the shortfall will be made up diminish.

This is a reality for our congregations, especially in the northeast. It adversely affects not only the local church, but also our connectional giving, necessitating a scramble by the conference to meet the financial responsibilities.

There is a widespread mentality in our churches that undergirds the habit of giving only when we are present. This is especially true for people who do not make a formal commitment to the church. This mentality—not indifference to our ministries—is what causes people to fall behind in their support. When folks feel connected to the ministries of their church and see how they are making a difference for Christ in the world, they want to give.

We can create opportunities for parishioners to keep current in their giving apart from their attendance. We do this through offering and educating around electronic giving as means of faithful stewardship.

One of the easiest ways is to encourage parishioners to set up regular automatic payments to the church through their banks. Many people are already paying some of their bills online—mortgages, utilities, student and car loans, and newspaper subscriptions. And many more are using credit cards to make countless numbers of secure online purchases. The payment to the church may be transferred electronically, or via a paper check that the bank sends directly to the church. The parishioner saves the cost of postage, too.

Some churches in the conference have added donate buttons on their web sites that enable electronic or credit card payments for either pledges or special donations—see Mamaroneck UMC, <http://www.mamaroneckumc.org/>, and



Faith UMC in North Haven, <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/faithumc1/>, as just two examples. The UMC's General Council on Finance and Administration offers an electronic fund transfer program that is administered by VANCO Services. Information about that program and other resources on electronic giving can be found on the web site, <http://www.gcfa.org/financialservices.html>

These methods of giving become an important new emphasis in our stewardship campaigns when we promote them as the preferred way of supporting our ministry. For the church, this creates a continual income flow that remains unaffected by attendance.

There are compelling advantages for parishioners who set up automatic payments, too. Obviously, it is convenient, but it also encourages “first fruits giving.” Our commitment to discipleship ministry does not come out of whatever is left over; our pledge to the church becomes a priority. Research also shows that people who use automatic payments are more likely to increase their giving once the habit has been established. The average United Methodist household gives about 2 percent of their income to the church. Automatic giving can become a way of assisting faithful Christians on their way toward tithing.

Fostering the habit of automatic payment for our church family makes sense—biblically, theologically, and practically. With all there is to gain, is it not worth pursuing?

Here are some ways to begin:

- Talk to your church council about the advantages and get their endorsement and enthusiasm.
- Work with a core group—beginning with the pastor—who will make automatic payments and testify to its ease and success.
- Ask a banker in the congregation or one from the community to explain the simple steps in setting up the program.
- In your stewardship campaign, include testimonies that encourage automatic payment.

One additional detail: For those who do make their contributions through automatic giving, the Sunday morning offering is no longer the means of expressing their stewardship or seeing their tithes and gifts consecrated. To recognize this change, provide a “giving card” in the pews that can be used in lieu of an envelope or loose offering. The purpose of the card is publicized to the congregation, and honored by tellers as an indication of automatic giving. Use of these cards discourages people from feeling they have to put an extra “token” offering in the plate.

Studies indicate how important it is to provide faithful Christians with opportunities to support their church beyond simply passing the Sunday plate. We need to unpack just what this may mean. But surely, implementing automatic payment as a preferred way of giving in a congregation is one effective alternative.

# Labors Of Love At UM ARMY

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spring breaks, to their usual summer schedule.

The Massachusetts camp, from July 18–24, was made up almost entirely of NYAC members with participants from Connecticut churches: First UMC in Torrington, Memorial UMC in Avon, Mary Taylor Memorial in Milford, New Milford, Wethersfield and Westport; and New York congregations: Yorktown Heights and Centerport. The teens were divided into 15 color-coded and numbered teams of four or five, with an adult supervisor. All participants are required to take tool and safety training before coming to the camp.

UM ARMY has become a family tradition for Tracie Nixon of New Milford UMC, now that all five members of her family have participated in the camps—most of them multiple times. Nixon was at her third camp, husband Tom at his fourth, daughter Emily at her second; and oldest daughter, Cate, at her first. Cate was pressed into service as a work team adult just two days before the group was scheduled to depart. “She had some difficult times, but she kept her sense of humor and helped her team keep theirs,” said Tracie Nixon. “Her testimony and love for UM ARMY is inspiring.”

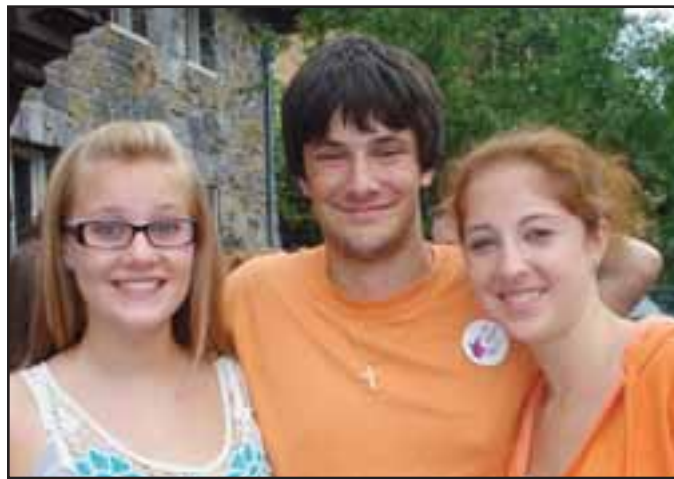
Nixon, 46, wrote in an email that this year’s theme of “Surrender,” helped her learn to surrender her fears to God. “I was put on a construction team with little construction skill. I learned so much . . .” she said. “I was overwhelmed when we finished our project in just one week without any arguments, and we overcame our lack of skill with grace.”

The camp was also a family affair for Rev. Ed Horne and his son, Will, from the UMC of Westport and Weston, Conn. They were both first-timers in the group of four teens and 2 adults from the church.

Horne was inspired just to be around the teens. “They had great spirit. They wanted to do it right,” he said. “They had us doing things that weren’t even asked of us.”

He was also impressed by the spiritual renewal that took place over the course of the week. Each day was wrapped in the Holy Spirit. “We started the day with worship, had lunchtime devotionals, and ended the day with worship again.”

The only downside was ending the week a



At left: Devin Schiller hangs out with new friends Haley Sluboski, left, and Jenna Grant of Wethersfield UMC. Below, worship is integral part of the UM ARMY Camp. Every morning and evening, the camp came together to pray, sing, share and draw closer to God.



little tired. “We didn’t get much sleep the last night because the kids were so determined to stay up,” he said with a laugh.

Several members from the different churches came together to create a praise band for worship, including Rev. Tom Vencuss, who has taken a leave of absence from his parish duties at Wethersfield to head up the NYAC rebuilding efforts in Haiti. Wethersfield UMC has welcomed UM ARMY camps before and hosted a mixed age camp the next week.

Devin Schiller, of the Centerport (NY) UMC, found out about the camp after talking to Rev. Roy Grubbs in one of the mission booths at annual conference. Grubbs, of Yorktown Heights UMC, serves as UM ARMY coordinator for the New York Annual Conference, and brought 26 teens and young adults and 4 adults to the camp.

Schiller, who has done VIM trips to Costa

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Below, Tom Vencuss shows his work team how to replace a door hinge while they took an ice pop break.



# 6 + 12 + 12: NYAC Needs Vision Bearers

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participate in small groups. The average age of its members is 27; and nearly 75 percent are students. The church holds starting new communities of faith at the core of their mission. Their motto is: "Broken hearted, but building together on the rock of Jesus Christ."

Many of the other new church starts under consideration would meet the needs of immigrant or foreign-language populations, such as Manchurian Korean Chinese, Korean, Ghanaian, Brazilian, Russian, Haitian, and Indo-Pakistani. Others would target young multi-ethnic generations and prison populations, or create a revamped campus ministries program.

## Existing Church Revitalization

*Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*

Isaiah 43:18-19

At the recommendation of the district superintendents, six to 12 congregations will be selected each year to examine the aspects of an "extreme makeover" for the church. This revitalization process will consider many different ways of execution, such as merging, yoking, training, reshaping, and investing. The goal is to turn the church around by creating a place that is 1) a welcoming church, 2) a teaching church, 3) a worshipping church, 4) a missional church, 5) a praying church, and 6) a

loving church.

## Vision Bearers Needed

If you sense God's call to serve as a "vision bearer," the application deadline for the first recruitment is August 30. The vision bearers—both laity and clergy—will be trained over a seven-month period beginning September 18, and matched with a mentor. Training includes 10 successive Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; attendance at all sessions is required. An application and further info can be found at <http://www.nyac.com/news/detail/148>. The Vision Bearer Task Force will review the applications, screen the credentials and interview the qualified applicants.

# Labors Of Love At UM ARMY

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Rico and Biloxi, worked on the home of a widow who was unemployed. His team demolished the wheelchair ramp that her husband had used and built a whole new stoop, and did some painting in the house and garage.

"She was one of the most gracious people ever, Schiller wrote in an email. "She'd come out, watch us work and always ask us if we needed anything... and she kept saying, Wow!"

The 16-year-old was surprised at how easily he was accepted by the other teens. "All the other kids up there were so friendly and took me in as a friend. I went up there knowing no one but the pastor of one church," he wrote.

For Allan Bush, 57, the favorite part of the week was "helping the kids build something they didn't really think they could do." But the learning wasn't confined to the youth. Bush, who is a member of the New Milford UMC, wrote in an email that he discovered that "God does care about me; I am not a worthless person."

In addition to the spiritual awakenings and

all the work, there was plenty of fun built into the week. Each night offered a different activity like a camp Olympics and a 1980s dance party. Thursday night was reserved for a special dinner with the clients—a love fest, really, where both homeowners and team members could express their gratitude to one another. On the final night, the group watched a movie and shared about their experiences and testimonies about the week.

As Schiller put it, "My faith grew stronger because this showed me there's still good left in the world, and that you can really make a big difference."

To check out ways to volunteer for, or support UM ARMY, go to the northeast chapter web site at, <http://www.umarmy.org/conference/northeast/>. Or contact any of the following:

Rev. Roy Grubbs at [revroyumc@verizon.net](mailto:revroyumc@verizon.net); or Rev. Stefanie Bennett, pastor at First UMC in Middletown, Conn., who is on the UM ARMY National Board of Directors at 860-346-3689; or Linda Stroud, a member of the Simsbury UMC,



**Does this look like a match? On the first night, the youth were given puzzle pieces to fit together to find their team.**

who serves as president of the organization's northeast chapter and is on the National Board of Directors, [linda.stroud@comcast.net](mailto:linda.stroud@comcast.net).

# 3 Complete Course of Study

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licensed local pastors. The program is normally completed in five years by fulltime local pastors; part-time local pastors may take up to ten years.

The program meets for four weeks each summer and on weekends. Each course requires classroom attendance, and reading and assignments that are completed in advance. Students try to make courses in sequence from Year 1 to Year 5. To attend the Course of Study,

students must have a high school diploma or equivalent, obtain recommendations from their district superintendent and conference local pastor registrar, and have completed licensing school. Local pastors are often in their second career and have completed more education than required to participate in the Course of Study program.

In addition to Wesley, the Course of Study program is offered at most of the UMC-affiliated

seminaries: Perkins School of Theology, Candler School of Theology, Claremont School of Theology, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Saint Paul School of Theology, and Duke University Divinity School. For more information on the course of study, see the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry web site at, [http://www.gbhem.org/site/c.lKSL3POLvF/b.3508459/k.691C/Licensing\\_\\_Course\\_of\\_Study.htm](http://www.gbhem.org/site/c.lKSL3POLvF/b.3508459/k.691C/Licensing__Course_of_Study.htm).

# Care Offers Independence, Dignity, Choice

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministries

We have a governing philosophy of care at The United Methodist Homes called Planetree. It is relationship centered, focusing on all areas of connection in the lives of our residents. We pay attention to family members, staff members, other community members, as well as the individual residents, firmly believing that when any of these relationships are weak, the residents' health and wellbeing suffer. One of our guiding principles is expressed in three words: independence, dignity and choice. These words guide what we do with each individual resident and how we do it.

Our goal is an environment in which each resident, despite his/her limitations, is seen as a unique individual who needs to be valued as such. Thus our question is always, "Does this approach, this program, this activity, reflect that goal? Is each unique person afforded the opportunity of making choices, of choosing menus and meal times, deciding when to go to bed, when to get up, of having a wide variety of activities from which to choose, of even being able to choose if he/she will participate in any



activity." This concern for independence, dignity, and choice extends to spiritual care and growth, as well as being able to choose specific medical care and physicians. It is a tall order that is not always filled, but it is a goal to which we're working, and toward which we've come a long way.

One of the questions frequently asked as I visit churches, preaching and leading workshops centered on ministry with/to older adults is, "How do we get started?" A corollary to this question is, "What are the goals of such a ministry; where do we focus?"

Ministry in Jesus' name—in the name of one who saw the person beneath the circumstances, who saw the potential in his disciples long before they did, who saw Zacchaeus as something more than a tax collector, who saw Mary Magdalene

for who she was, rather for what she did—is ministry that begins with total respect and acceptance. The principles guiding Planetree are valid in any ministry with older adults. There is no single way to create such a ministry, no one set of programs to institute. But there is a guide; it is the way of Jesus—the way of acceptance and love of the other.

So, ask yourself these questions regarding your ministry with/to an individual or group of older adults in your congregation and community.

- Am I, are we, seeing the person, rather than a category of people, as plans for ministry are being made?
- Is the individual, with his/her specific needs and likes and dislikes, being taken into account?
- Is there room for the person to make choices, or is it a pre-packaged approach?
- Does the person(s) receiving the ministry feel valued?
- Is the ministry allowing the person to claim his/her inherent dignity and sacred worth? Independence, dignity, choice: Ingredients for a successful, effective ministry!

## MIND Puts Hate Crimes Front & Center

A symposium to examine the diverse communities and people targeted by hate crimes is being planned by Methodists in New Directions, a reconciling ministry of the NYAC, on November 20. The program will look at the full spectrum of people affected by these crimes including lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people; immigrants; people of color; and women.

The symposium hopes to bring the issue and the victims to light by educating church

communities in a way that provides an opportunity for dialogue and a mandate for Christian response.

Grace UMC at 125 W. 104th Street, Manhattan, will host the event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The symposium includes a panel of speakers—Terry Todd, Rosario Quinones and Fred Brewington—and a performance of the play, "What Killed Marcelo Lucero?" with a discussion afterwards with Teatro Experimental actor-activists. There will also be worship, small group discussions,

safe spaces for participation and healing. Active participation by youth groups is also planned.

This initiative is co-sponsored by the New York Chapter of MFSA, the Conference Board of Church and Society and the conference's Task Force on Immigration. MIND is also actively seeking additional sponsoring organizations and more volunteers for their planning team.

For more information contact Kristen Dunn at [kristen.dunn@comcast.net](mailto:kristen.dunn@comcast.net), or Dorothee Benz at [drbenz3@verizon.net](mailto:drbenz3@verizon.net).

## JOB OPENINGS

### Stony Brook Youth Coordinator

Stony Brook Community Church is seeking a children and youth coordinator to begin work in early September. Candidate should be grounded in the Christian faith, open-minded, experienced in work with children and youth, and prepared to be part of a ministry team. The position requires 10 hours a week for 11 months of the year in a small UM church on Long Island. Responsibilities include planning and supervision of the Sunday School; organizing youth activities and special events for children; and working with the pastor to provide a comprehensive ministry with children, youth, and parents.

A profile of the church can be found at [www.stonybrookcommunitychurch.org](http://www.stonybrookcommunitychurch.org). Please send letters of interest and resumes to Pastor Elizabeth Braddon at [elizabeth.braddon@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.braddon@gmail.com), or to Stony Brook Community Church, 216 Christian Ave., Stony Brook, NY 11790, Attn: Elizabeth Braddon.

### Massapequa Young Adult Minister

Community United Methodist Church on Long Island is looking for an entrepreneurial pioneer to build a program for young adults, ages 20 to 40. Initially, the minister will help develop and lead a new Sunday evening worship service, and organize social and spiritual growth opportunities among the young adults in the congregation. The position is available immediately, and will require 8 to 10 hours per week.

CUMC is located in Massapequa, N.Y., and has a growing number of young adults, many families with young children. Membership is roughly 400 persons with average Sunday attendance at 120. The church is seeking to develop a solid foundation for a vibrant young adult ministry.

The ideal candidate will have experience leading worship, working in a church with young adults and experience with Christian education or spiritual formation/covenant groups. Candidates who can play piano and/or guitar well enough to lead singing are preferred. Please email a resume and cover letter to [massapcumc@aol.com](mailto:massapcumc@aol.com), or fax to (516) 541-1694.

# Shillady Co-Officiates at Clinton Wedding

## A UMNS REPORT

The Rev. Bill Shillady, executive director of the New York City Society and an NYAC clergy member, co-officiated at the July 31 wedding of Chelsea Clinton and Marc Mezvinsky in Rhinebeck, N.Y. Shillady performed the ceremony with Rabbi James Ponet, the Jewish chaplain of Yale University.

"It was a wonderful honor to be part of this special day in Chelsea and Marc's life," Shillady told the United Methodist News Service.

Although her parents—former President Bill Clinton and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton—are constantly in the public spotlight, Chelsea Clinton is not. Little information regarding the wedding-related events was officially released, either before or after the nuptials.

The proud parents did issue a short statement expressing their happiness over the union. "We could not have asked for a more perfect day to celebrate the beginning of their life together, and we are so happy to welcome Marc into our family," the statement said.

Before the wedding—sometimes referred to as the event of the season—the media speculated about the guest list of 400 to 500 and detailed why people were betting (correctly) that the ceremony would take place at Astor Courts, a historic Beaux Arts pavilion built for John Jacob Astor IV at the beginning of the 20th century.

In the pre-wedding gossip, one topic—religion—drew as much discussion as whether Oprah would attend (she did not) and who designed the wedding dress (Vera Wang).

Like her mother, Chelsea Clinton, 30, is a United Methodist. Mezvinsky, 32, comes from the conservative Jewish tradition, which frowns on intermarriage. Was it possible she would convert? If not, would a rabbi be part of the ceremony?

Those questions were answered—with a no and a yes—by the participation of both Shillady and Ponet in the wedding.



**Rev. Bill Shillady**

Shillady said he could not speak publicly about the wedding or his relationship with the Clintons. But sources at Park Avenue UMC in Manhattan—where Shillady served as senior pastor for nine years—said Chelsea Clinton had occasionally attended the church. The Sunday after Hillary Clinton announced on Jan. 20, 2007, that she was running for president, all three Clintons attended at Park Avenue, along with Mezvinsky.

Ponet, a Reform rabbi, has been on staff for nearly 30 years at Yale University, where Bill and Hillary Clinton met. He also is a visiting lecturer on the subject of Judaism at Yale Law School, the executive director of the Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale and director of the Yale Hillel Foundation.

The newlyweds live in New York City, where Chelsea Clinton recently earned a master's degree from the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Mezvinsky works at G3 Capital Management, a Wall Street hedge fund. He is the son of Edward Mezvinsky and Marjorie Margolies, former U.S. representatives from Iowa and Pennsylvania, respectively.

# CH Women & Robins Enjoy A Day Apart

## BY JEAN B. GUICE

The open fields and rolling hills of Kingswood campsite provided the backdrop for a day apart for United Methodist Women of the Catskill Hudson District. On July 13, a nest full of robin fledglings—accustomed to their own solitude and privacy—spent six hours of the day watching a dozen women relax and renew.

In the quiet of the pavilion at the tent and trailer circle, retreat leader Sheila Peiffer opened the day in prayer based on Psalm 8, then offered a breathing exercise and meditations on the nature poetry of Wendell Berry. The circle and the nearby beaver pond provided space for individuals to fan off for short walks to mull and ponder before gathering again for lunch.

The robin chicks clamored for their own lunch while the women ate burgers at tables clustered just below the nest in the corner rafters. The mother robin repeatedly flew low and darted away in frustration during the human lunch hour. After the meal, Peiffer introduced another devotional discipline called "Praying in Color," based on a book by the same name by Sybil MacBeth. She gave the group time to use the process to explore memories, thoughts and feelings.

Holly Moore, summer program director and Carol and Jon Sidworthy, volunteer managers for the week, provided equipment and guidance to



Photo by Tony Northrup

help make the area useful and comfortable. Near the main parking area, the women discovered a "hey" wagon awaiting them. Jon Stidworthy drove they group through some of Kingswood's 700-plus acres to view campsites and the Stone Ministry, amidst the fern and tall deciduous trees.

Closing prayers at the site completed the day apart. Prayers were lifted in thanksgiving to

God for the time and space to spend amid the refreshing greenery, mountainous landscape, and recently cooled air with other women, panicked robins and all of God's local creatures.

The second Kingswood Day Apart was scheduled for August 18 with Francis Reed. Dates for 2011 are July 12 and August 17. Please contact Joan Johnson at 845 887-4071 for information.

## Walking to Help End Poverty

Walkers will again take to the boardwalk to help stamp out poverty on Saturday, Sept. 17, in support of the Far Rockaway Center's annual walkathon. For more than 25 years, this UM mission has daily served the needs of all who come to its door. The center has recently moved into an improved space at 1032 Beach 19th Street, which has allowed the feeding program to expand and also for the resumption of Sunday morning worship.

This year's event will include a banner parade starting at 9:30 a.m. from the boardwalk at Beach 9th Street in Far Rockaway. Churches and organizations are asked to display a banner as a sign of support for the anticipated media coverage. If you do not plan to walk in the banner parade, you can walk in the walkathon anytime between 8:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. To register as a team, or individual, please email Delores Coleman, [dcoleman24@nyc.rr.com](mailto:dcoleman24@nyc.rr.com).



Sponsorship sheets are available online at <http://nyac.com/events/detail/3042>.

Donation checks made payable to the Far Rockaway Mission, may also be mailed to: The Far Rockaway Mission, PO Box 900875, Far Rockaway, NY 11691-0875, Attn: Delores Coleman, Registrar.

## Health Summit Targets African-American Clergy

A self-care covenant workshop will be the focus of the African-American Clergy Health Summit, scheduled for September 27 and 28, at Lake Junaluska, N.C. The self-care covenant workshop, designed specifically for African-American clergy, reflects the health summit's theme, "Wanting to Heal and Be Healed," which is inspired by John 5:1-9.

Summit attendees will evaluate personal dimensions of health and wellbeing related to their daily life and work. They will have an opportunity to examine current choices in all areas of health—mental and emotional, physical, social, and spiritual.

"The continual giving expected of pastors takes its toll over time," said Dr. Carl Arrington, Director of African-American Ministries at Lake Junaluska. "As ministers, we want to reach out and heal others, but we must also take care of ourselves in order to be healers of others. Participants in the self-care workshop will develop a self-care covenant, create a plan for positive changes, and establish an accountability plan."

The summit and workshops will be led by Rev. Dr. Embra Jackson, assistant to the bishop of the Mississippi Annual Conference, and Edmond Pienkosz, health and wellness manager of the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (GBOPHB).

Early registration is open until August 31. For details, visit [www.lakejunaluska.com/health-summit](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/health-summit) or call 828-454-6656. The summit is sponsored by the Office of African-American Ministries, and the GBOPHB.

## Time Is Running Out, Take the HQ Online

All participants and spouses covered by HealthFlex active plans will now need to complete the online HealthQuotient (HQ) questionnaire by August 31 or pay a \$250 individual/\$500 family deductible before your physicians will receive reimbursements in 2011. There is nothing that can change this. Those who do take the online HQ will continue to have no deductible. If only one person in a family covered by HealthFlex active plans takes the HQ, the deductible will still be charged at \$500.

Active plans include all EPO, PPO, EPO/OOA and PPO/OOA plans, regardless of current employment status. This change does not involve Medicare companion plans.

This change eliminates the previous \$100 bonus for taking the HQ. You can complete the HQ online at [www.gbophb.org](http://www.gbophb.org), after you have registered for an account with WebMD.

## OBITUARIES

### Rev. Jodey Williams

The Rev. Jodey R. Williams, died in Hempstead, N.Y., following a heart attack on July 24. Rev. Williams, who was 60, served the Bellmore UMC, Bellmore, NY, and was greatly loved by the congregation.

She is survived by her father, William H. Williams; two brothers and sisters-in-law, Wayne and Margaret Williams and Willard (Jerry) and Monique Williams, all of Florida. Also surviving are two nieces, Elizabeth Katz of Germany, and Erin Williams of St. Petersburg, Fla. Rev. Williams was preceded in death by her mother, Verda M. Williams, in January 2009.

A memorial service was conducted July 27 with the Rev. Adrienne Brewington, Long Island East district superintendent, officiating at the Bellmore UMC. Following the service a reception was held in the fellowship hall.

Messages of condolence may be sent to: Wayne E. Williams, 201 SE Crosspoint Dr., Port St. Lucie, FL 34983; and Willard Williams, 201 Pelican Way, Panama City, FL 32408.

Memorial gifts may be given to: Bellmore UMC, 2657 Clarendon Ave., Bellmore, NY 11710.



### Mrs. Sidney B. Robinson

Sidney B. Robinson died on July 23 in Wintergarten, Fla., at the age of 94. Her husband, the late Rev. Harry D. Robinson, Jr., served New York churches in East Hampton, Seaford, East Meadow, Massapequa, Bellmore, Mt. Vernon, Kingston, St. James, and East Kingston, and Connecticut congregations in Stamford and Harpersfield.

Survivors include son and daughter-in-law, David and Adrienne Robinson of Clermont, Fla.; two daughters, Martha Morris of Howes Cave, N.Y., and Janet Launcelott of South Miami, Fla.; five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

A private funeral service was held. Messages of condolence may be sent to: David Robinson, 3027 Chavez, Clermont, FL 34715

Memorial gifts may be made to: Catskill Area Hospice, 1 Birchwood Dr., Oneonta, NY 13820.

# Protests Get Action to Stop Bronx Foreclosure

With songs praising the power of a God who can move mountains, New Day UMC recently celebrated with a church member whose home had been saved from foreclosure. On July 25, the congregation lauded the victory of 61-year-old Edda Lopez over Bank of America, the mortgage holder that had threatened to put her house up for auction in May.

Lopez, who has lived in her Devoe Terrace home in the Bronx since 1995, had fallen behind on her mortgage payments after her husband died in 2005, and she herself became ill and was unable to work. She now uses a motorized wheelchair to get around and rents out part of her home for income.

Despite several attempts to lower her monthly payments by refinancing, Lopez found herself an unwitting victim of predatory lending practices with a sub-prime mortgage that she could not fully pay each month. In October 2009, she made yet another attempt to rectify her situation.

As her pastor, Doug Cunningham, tells the story, "She applied for a loan modification through the Homeowners Affordable Mortgage Protection plan (HAMP), a federal program designed to help homeowners in the mortgage crisis. She was accepted, and her mortgage was modified to a rate of \$2100 a month that she paid faithfully. Then in May 2010, she learned that Bank of America (who had bought her mortgage from her previous lender) was not accepting that modification, that she was in



**Edda Lopez, front, processes under the New Day UMC banner during the Momentum of Ministry parade at annual conference June 12.**

foreclosure and that her house was going up for sale in a couple weeks."

Lopez sought help from lawyer Justin Haines, who handles foreclosure cases for the Legal Aid Society's Bronx division. Haines got the sale date postponed until June. In the meantime, New Day mobilized its congregation and the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition to stage two protests, the first at the Fordham Road

branch in the Bronx, and the second at the Bank of America Tower in Manhattan. BOA, based in Charlotte, N.C., is the nation's largest bank by assets and also the largest mortgage servicer in the country.

"Bank of America's CEO's office called us on the day of each of those demonstrations offering to settle," Cunningham wrote in an email. "The second time they Fedexed a deal to her which she signed."

Haines, who has worked with hundreds of foreclosure cases, was surprised by the speed and the quality of the offer. He called the turn of events "a miracle," and attributed the success to the demonstrations, according to Cunningham.

"As Dr. King used to say, 'we are woven into one garment of destiny,'" Cunningham told the Norwood News. "When she gets treated this way, we all get treated this way."

The protest at the BOA headquarters in Manhattan drew a great deal of media coverage from the Bronx neighborhood Norwood News to the New York Daily News to PBS. For a story about the protest, go to <http://www.norwoodnews.org/story/?id=1958>. To see a video of the protest with Lopez and

Cunningham, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gbc2oAfVyo>. For a video of the victory celebration, go to <http://vimeo.com/13684464>.

As Lopez told PBS' Nightly Business Report, "Don't stay quiet. This is the problem. A lot of people, they don't know that they have any kind of power . . . don't walk away and let people take your home."

## Delegates Sought for South Africa Gathering

The year 2011 will mark the 20th gathering of the Methodist/Wesleyan family from more than 132 countries at the World Methodist Conference in Durban, South Africa. Participants in the Conference will gather August 4–8, 2011, under the theme "Jesus Christ—for the Healing of the Nations." If you and/or a member of your church are interested in attending as a New York Conference delegate, please contact your district superintendent by August 31. Attendees must bear all the costs of the conference, including housing and transportation.

The conference is sponsored by the World Methodist Council, a Christian World Communion, that brings together member churches in the Methodist/Wesleyan tradition for support, education, the sharing of ideas and resources for ministry, to provide a common witness, and to hold each other accountable for making disciples of Jesus Christ. The ministries of the Methodist/Wesleyan family touch the lives of more than 75 million people today.

Additional information is available at: [www.worldmethodistcouncil.org](http://www.worldmethodistcouncil.org).

## Conference Recordings Available

You can purchase audio CDs, video DVDs and downloadable MP3 files of many of the events at annual conference, including the ordination/commissioning service, and the daily Bible studies. You may order online at [www.gntv.info](http://www.gntv.info). GNTV is a ministry of the South Georgia Annual Conference.

# Churches Warned About Directory Scams

There are increasing reports of a nationwide scam being perpetrated on businesses and churches involving what appear to be listings for “yellow pages” and other business directories. An email sent out to chancellors of the UMC annual conferences warning of this scam detailed what happened at one church in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference:

*A fax was sent from the company, Yellow Pages BV, offering a free online listing to the church. Anyone at the church can sign the form and fax it back to the company. Once the fax is returned, the church was billed for more than \$1000 in services that cannot be cancelled. When the church refuses to pay, the debt is forwarded to a collection agency.*

Although this company often uses the familiar “walking fingers” logo, it is not affiliated with Yellow Book, the company that prints the widely used phone directories. Yellow Pages BV has an “F” rating with the New York Better Business Bureau (BBB) because of 139 complaints that have been filed against it.

A similar scam by a company calling itself United Directories has also been reported in

New York, California and Florida. In a phone call, the church is asked to update or verify its contact information for a free online listing. That innocent inquiry begins the process leading to the fraudulent charges.

In an alert posted on their web site in May 2009, the Federal Trade Commission reports that this form of fraud is on the increase. “Small and medium-sized businesses, churches, and not-for-profit groups have been hardest hit. Many will pay the bogus invoices in the mistaken belief that it’s simply a misunderstanding. But it’s not. It’s a growing form of fraud run by international scam artists.”

Lawrence McGaughey, New York Annual Conference Chancellor, says that churches that think they may have fallen prey to this fraudulent practice should refuse to pay any invoice for services they did not intend to order. If they have a copy of the solicitation which states it was for a free listing, that will help if they are pursuing a refund.

The FTC and BBB recommend these steps to protect your company/church from business directory fraud:

- Educate your staff about how this scam

works. In addition to your regular receptionist, talk to everyone who may pick up the phone. Mention it in a staff meeting.

- Inspect your invoices. Encourage the people who pay the bills to develop a “show me” attitude when it comes to unexpected invoices from companies they’re not familiar with. Don’t pay for products or services you’re not sure you ordered.
- Verify to clarify. Before paying, check them out for free at [bbb.org](http://bbb.org), and read the BBB’s report on them.
- File a complaint. If a scammer is sending you bogus bills, speak up. Visit [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) to complain to the BBB. And let the FTC know by filing a complaint at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov), or calling 877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). Many companies will simply drop the matter—and may even provide a refund—if they know you’ve complained to the BBB and law enforcement.

For details on how this scam works, go to: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/business/alerts/alt024.shtm>. To take a look at a suspicious fax and read other info about the scam, go to: [www.yellowpagescam.blogspot.com](http://www.yellowpagescam.blogspot.com).



## Collaboration Creates 106 Health Kits

Four congregations on Long Island’s South Fork—Bridgehampton, Sag Harbor, East Hampton and Southampton—came together to create 106 health kits that were delivered to annual conference in June. Each church supplied two items for the kits. About 35 people gathered at Bridgehampton UMC after worship on Sunday, May 23, to assemble them, and share in a luncheon. Pastors Juyhe Hahn, Tom MacLeod, and Joanne Utley supervised the packing party.