

"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

September 10, 2010



Sharing Christ in Bolivian VBS

With a big smile on her face, Susan Biggart, second from left in second row, is surrounded by children who attended the Vacation Bible School at Iglesia Emmanuel in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The Volunteers in Mission team led VBS programs at four churches in the community and completed other work during their recent trip. See related story and more photos on Page 3.

Are You Ready for A Challenge?

Members of the New York Annual Conference will again be participating in the HealthMiles All Healthflex Challenge from September 22 to October 27. Participating in a fitness challenge can help you build muscle, lose fat, lower blood pressure, and find ways to incorporate more physical activity into your daily routine.

The NYAC team will compete with 30 other UMC conferences and employer groups to see who can earn the most activity HealthMiles, instead of the most steps. This

change will create a more even playing field, allowing participants whose activities are not accurately reflected on pedometer readings—such as swimmers, bikers and those with physical disabilities—an opportunity to join the winner's circle. Last year's NYAC team of 68 walked their way to second place among the 30 conferences.

You can earn a maximum of 100 activity HealthMiles daily—but you don't have to be a marathon runner to reach the highest level of competition. Points can be earned

by uploading activity from a GoZone pedometer or a Polar Heart Rate Monitor that is connected to your Virgin HealthMiles account, by making activity journal entries—or a combination of methods.

You don't have to overdo it and push for the maximum. Earning even 60 HealthMiles per day will help our team and put you on track to earn bonus HealthMiles.

Please remember to record your activities daily to the "Activity Journal" on your account at Virgin

Continued on page 7

Bishop Responds To Mosque Controversy

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they will be called children of
God.*

(Matthew 5:9)

Dear United Methodists of the New York Annual Conference:

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer, the Prince of shalom, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world!

The controversy over constructing the 51 Park Islamic Community Center and mosque near the Ground Zero site has generated a heated dispute. Understandably, emotions run high as it touches the nerves of both the sacredness of the ground, and one of our most fundamental national principles. Among the diverse voices expressed are those that reflect racism, religious discrimination, and hate: these must be rejected for they cause harm and undermine the very foundation upon which this nation is built.

I resonate with the voices that express sensitivity toward the families and friends of the victims of 9/11 by questioning the appropriateness and wisdom of the choice of location of the building. I believe that some of these voices come out of a sincere desire to preserve the sanctity of the Ground Zero site, to seek justice with regard to those who are responsible for the atrocity, and to build a bridge among the Muslims and the Islamic

Continued on page 6

SAVE THE DATE



Upcoming VIM Trips

January 7–19, 2011/Cambodia

Leader: Laura Galbraith, Pastorlaura.g@sbcglobal.com

January 11–23/Ecuador

Leader: Judy Stevens, Jas116@aol.com

Leader: Oscar Destruge, juan316@aol.com

February 16–28/Youth Ambassadors/Cambodia

Leader: Donna Jolly, jolly_donna@hotmail.com

June 24–July 9/Bolivia

Leader: Carl Franson, Cfranson417@comcast.net

Far Rockaway Fundraiser

September 18: Join the walk-a-thon along the beach—9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.—to support the ministry at the United Methodist Center in Far Rockaway, Queens, N.Y. To register as a team, or individual, email Delores Coleman, 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 be mailed to: Far Rockaway Mission, PO Box 900875, Far Rockaway, NY 11691-0875

MIND General Meeting

September 26: 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. Paul 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 3 northern districts will meet at Mt. Alphonsus in Esopus, N.Y. Monday, 9:30 a.m. through Tuesday lunch. Cost will be \$100 (commuter or overnight). Make check payable to Catskill Hudson District and send with your contact information to: Bob Johnson, 540 Joslin Blvd., Apt. 103, Hudson, NY 12534.

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. Wednesday, 10 a.m. through Thursday lunch. Cost is \$130; \$95 for commuters. Please register in advance; no walk-ins accepted. Deadline is September 15. Contact your district office for a registration form.

“Unwrapping the Sacraments”

October 2: All laity are invited to this 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. workshop to learn about the gifts of grace in the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. Contact Elaine Winward, director of NY/CT District Lay Speakers Ministry, at ewinward@optonline.net, for a registration form, and a link to the reading materials. Lay speakers can earn six credits at the workshop at Jesse Lee Memorial UMC, 207 Main St., Ridgefield, CT 06877. Cost is \$15, plus \$5 for lunch.

Hartford Marathon “Race for Mission”

October 9: The conference team will be running again in the 5K, relay, half-marathon, and marathon categories. Go to www.hartfordmarathon.com for registration information. If you're not a runner, you can support the bishop or any other participant by sending a check made out to NYAC to the conference office; write “Race for Mission” on the memo line. See related story on Page 4.

Fall Clergy Day Apart

October 14: Clergy Day Apart at the Memorial/Central Korean UMC in White Plains. Begins at 9 a.m., and ends by 3 p.m. Plan to join this sacred time together for spiritual renewal and growth. See invitation on Page 9.

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 available online at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/3043>. Permission slips and information at <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., with Rev. Noel Chin, Rev. Joanne Utley, Rev. Walter Barton Jr., Rev. Johnny Cesar, and Lajjazz Hooker Jr. Registration for three meals and lodging is \$110 double, \$150 single. Register by October 21 to avoid late fee. Checks made payable to “NYAC UMM”, can be mailed to: John Lemon, 645 West Chester Ave., Apt 17C, Bronx, NY 10455. See <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2542> for registration form.

Clergy Spouses' Day Apart

October 30: 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., New York Conference Center, White Plains, N.Y., Conference Room 115.

		
The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church		
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		



The team pauses for a photo with Wilson Boots, retired UM missionary to Bolivia, on the fringes of the Amazon forest in the Chapare region. Team members are Carl Franson, Rachel Bird, Ed Dayton, Ginny Stevenson, Bob Stevenson, Kathy Silva, Holly Johnston, Rod Wendt, Dawn Mauro, Chris Freeman, Susan Biggart, Linda Mellor, Dan Abbott, and Donna Holt.

Growing Closer to Christ, One Mission at A Time

BY DONNA HOLT
Darien UMC

What does an encounter with Christ actually look like? Between my first VIM Bolivia trip to Cochabamba in 2002 and my sixth in 2010, I've seen and spoken the trip's subtitle, "Encounter with Christ," countless times. Yet—encountering Christ face to face? As much as we long for such an intimate spiritual relationship, I am secretly glad such moments are usually relegated to saints' visions and the mountaintops Moses used to frequent. It might turn out to be more awful than awe-filled to be in the penetrating sightline and presence of God. How to experience such love, such holiness, such grace and forgiveness alongside my own inabilities, with my own unforgiving and imperfect self?

Yet mission trips give us the gift of practicing such a meeting. The changes of culture, language, geography, food and routine all work

to scrub off the scales of familiarity from our eyes, revealing anew that which is so overlooked in our day-to-day blindness back home. Whether looking at another human being, gazing upon the wonders of creation, or searching inward to the depths of our own spirits, we will encounter the Christ who loves us, the God who created us, and the Spirit who inspires and binds all life.

Our VIM Bolivia team met Christ in the many ways pictured here, and in countless

others not captured digitally, but embedded in our hearts. May you be inspired to seek out such encounters with next year's team to Bolivia, or simply as you go about your daily routine, with fresh eyes staying open to encountering the everyday, everlasting Christ.

If you feel led to join the 2011 VIM team to Bolivia, please contact Rev. Carl Franson at, cfranson417@comcast.net, or by phone, 860-379-2157.



Donna Holt of Darien UMC, above, became fast friends with this Bolivian boy. Below, a group of women in Cochabamba.



Will You Run With the Bishop?

Bishop Jeremiah Park will be on the starting line at the ING Hartford Marathon and a number of NYAC church members, youth and clergy will join him to raise funds for the Bishop's Partners in Mission. The bishop will run in the 5K race for the third year in a row; other race events on Saturday, Oct. 9 include a full marathon, half marathon, a 26.2 mile relay and a kid's run.

Even if you aren't able to run this year, you can support those who are by sending a check made payable to "New York Annual Conference" to Ross Williams, New York Annual Conference, 20 Soundview Ave., White Plains, NY 10606. Write "Race for Mission" and the runner's name in the memo field. Registration for the race is open until September 25; that information and forms may be found at www.hartfordmarathon.com. The race begins at 8 a.m. in Bushnell Park in Hartford.

As a sponsoring organization, the NYAC is looking for 25 adult and youth volunteers to serve in various ways the day of the event. You can volunteer for the whole day or a half day. Youth groups and adult chaperones are invited to stay overnight Friday at Wethersfield UMC,



Bishop Jeremiah Park, fourth from left, stands with adult and teen members of the NYAC "Race for Mission" team at the 2009 ING Hartford Marathon.

Wetherfield, Conn., for fun and fellowship. For more information about volunteering at the marathon, please contact Maggie Carr at 203-284-8278, or jcarr01@snet.net.

Once again, the UMC of Hartford will host a

pre-race carbo-load pasta dinner on Friday, Oct. 8, 5:30-7 p.m. The church is at 571 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT 06105. Please RSVP to: Rev. Bryan Hooper, at 860-523-5132, or bryan@umcofhartford.org.

Discovering the Gift That is Camp Olmsted

On Saturday, July 24, I had the privilege of riding up to Camp Olmsted with Wendell Harris, chairman of the United Methodist City Society. Each year, members of the society board tour the facility and visit with campers and the staff on "manager's day." Traveling with Mr. Harris afforded me, as a new member on the board, the opportunity to learn more about the City Society and share goals and aspirations.

Camp Olmsted is nestled in historic Croton-on-Hudson in the shadow of the Storm King Mountain, overlooking the serene Hudson River. From one of the vantage points on our trip, the view of the river and the mountains is absolutely spectacular! Camp Olmsted which is both a camp and a retreat facility, is owned and operated by Five Points Mission, with oversight by the UM City Society.

Members of the board were warmly welcomed and made to feel at home by Carla Maisonet, retreat center director; Mastura Medina, camp director; camp nurse Jane Mecine, and all the counselors and campers. We were given a brief description of the exciting events of the camp, and then we toured the new kitchen. I wanted to linger in the new walk-in freezer. It was cool and was stocked with food. What more could I ask?



The campers seemed genuinely happy, and responded with respect and warmth to their camp director and counselors. There was order and discipline, learning and sharing. I observed campers exchanging warm spontaneous hugs with the director, counselors and with our own April Callender, associate executive director of the City Society.

We lunched with the counselors feasting on mouth-watering chicken, scrumptious spare ribs, mashed potatoes, rolls and a delicious crisp salad. After lunch, we were entertained by the campers, each of five groups doing either a dramatic presentation, a dance or a combination of both. Those young campers are budding actors and actresses with so much potential. Those boys can dance! And those girls can step! We enjoyed the show immensely.

As we were leaving, the campers were preparing to head to the town to attend a fair, made possible by a generous donation by the daughter and son-in-law of the camp nurse. The couple was visiting from Florida.

Readers, you can share in the year-round fun, and refreshing times that Camp Olmsted has to offer. Here are a few ideas:

- Encourage your church or other group to use the Camp Olmsted facilities for retreats.
- Attend any, or all, of the upcoming retreats, "Get Away to God" on October 15-17; "Gratitude Pilgrimage" on November 5-7; or "How Does Your Garden Grow" on January 15-17.
- Make a monetary contribution to the United Methodist City Society. Your contributions enable the wonderful work at Camp Olmsted to continue and to grow.
- Pray for the staff and for the programs offered as well as for the work of the City Society under the leadership of the Rev. Bill Shillady.

For information about using the camp facilities, or attending any of the retreats, call 845-534-7900, or visit the website at www.campolmsted.org.

Creating a Dialogue Around Full Communion

BY REV. TOM BEVERIDGE

*The time has come, the Walrus said,
to speak of many things:
of shoes, and ships, and sealing wax,
and cabbages and . . . full communion.**

United Methodists and Episcopalians have been offered a wonderful opportunity to learn what it can mean to work together as disciples of Jesus Christ. Our two denominations have jointly issued a call for local churches to enter into dialogue. We now have an interim agreement on eucharistic sharing. These dialogues are intended to help pave the way towards a full communion agreement. The goal is to bring the conversation out from the denominational offices and into the places where the people of both churches live and worship.

Of course, this raises questions like, "What is full communion?" Full communion is not a denominational merger. Both denominations retain their separate identities and organizational structure; both ordain their own clergy, and keep their own practices for worship and the sacraments.

What full communion does mean is that two denominations have recognized the validity of the ordination of each other's clergy. They have agreed that baptism and Holy Communion in both churches are theologically grounded and mutually acceptable. Full communion also means that, according to missional needs, the ministries of ordained clergy may be exchanged between them. However, those clergy remain accountable to their own denominational rules.

Full communion is not new to United Methodism; in 2009, we entered into an agreement with The Evangelical Lutheran Church. The ELCA also has a full communion agreement with The Episcopal Church.

To foster conversations between local churches, a study guide entitled, "Make Us



"One with Christ," has been published by the ecumenical offices of both denominations. In a series of seven sessions, members of participating congregations get to know one another, share their histories, and explore the faith they have in common. They talk about how each other's churches are structured and the rules that guide them. They also discuss about ministry and how planning for a life of full communion might proceed. Finally, led by ordained clergy from the two churches they celebrate Holy Communion together.

The study guide also includes instructions on offering feedback to the ecumenical officers of both churches, and how to communicate what the experience of talking together has meant to those who participated. It is hoped that this feedback can be received prior to our 2012 General Conference and the 2012 General Convention of The Episcopal Church. Although it does not appear that there will be a vote for full communion in either body at that time, such feedback will be important to the ongoing process.

The study guide, "Make Us One with Christ,"

is available in two ways. Download and print it yourself at, <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/MUOCFINAL.pdf>. Or copies may be ordered from Cokesbury for under \$3 at, <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=645573>.

So, why is all this important? Why make time in our busy schedules and programs to talk about full communion with people from the Episcopal congregation across town? There are many reasons; four come readily to mind:

- We all need to grow as disciples throughout our lives. This is a wonderful opportunity to do that.
- People in the denominational offices work for us. They need to know what we think about things they talk about all the time. They need to hear from us.
- Ministry needs have never been greater or more challenging in our lifetime; therefore we cannot afford to neglect any opportunity to come together, work together and share together as Christian disciples.
- Christ prayed that his people might be one. This can be an important step in that direction. It can help lead us past a 226 year-old division to wholeness for ministry in the 21st Century and beyond.

Please let the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns know of your plans for local dialogues so that we can share that with others via The Vision and the web site. Send this information to the Commission Chair, Rev. Dennis Winkleblack at: dwinkleblack@nyac.com.

Rev. Tom Beveridge is a retired elder and serves on the New York Conference Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

** Words adapted from the poem, "The Walrus and the Carpenter," by Lewis Carroll.*

New Retreats at Camp Olmsted

The following three weekend retreats will be led by Sheila Peiffer, who has more than 20 years experience in directing religious education and spiritual workshops, and teaching theology on all levels. For more information, call the Olmsted Center at 845-534-7900, or visit the web site at www.campolmsted.org.

October 15–17: "Get-Away to God" offers a time apart to rejuvenate and discover new ways to connect with God. Explore the true meaning of sabbath and learn strategies to reclaim peace in yourself and your surroundings. Reflections, lectio divina, meditation techniques

and other simple practices will be included.

November 5–7: "Gratitude Pilgrimage" is an exploration of gratitude, an important foundation for prayer and source of happiness and peace. Journaling, lectio divina, color prayer, centering prayer and other spiritual practices will enhance the ability to say thank you to God.

January 15–17: "How Does Your Garden Grow?" will use the garden as a metaphor for spiritual life. This weekend will encompass many tools to foster new spiritual growth and get your spiritual garden blooming, despite the weather.

Church Records, Archives Workshop

October 16: This workshop at the New York Conference Center is intended to support and assist pastors, administrative assistants, trustees and local church historians by introducing participants to basic archival concepts. Hands-on activities will be included. Lunch is provided at noon; the workshop runs from 1–4 p.m. Attendance is limited to 25. To register, contact Mary Robison at archives@nyac.com; toll free: 1-888-696-6922 or direct at 914-615-2128.

Support Pakistan and Be Lulled to Sleep

Soprano Courtenay Budd Caramico has been using her incredible singing talents to raise funds to support the disaster recovery work of the United Methodist Committee of Relief. Budd, who is a member of the Poughkeepsie UMC, has raised more than \$3500 in relief for Haiti and Chile through the sale of a compilation of lullabies entitled, "Sleep is Behind the Door: Lullabies for Disaster Relief." Proceeds from the CD sales during the months of August and September will be sent to UMCOR to help Pakistan recover from record flooding.



Courtenay Budd Caramico

Budd, who is a Georgia native, had been to Haiti with a couple of mission teams as a teenager. Her father had also served at one time on UMCOR's Board of directors. When the earthquake and tsunami hit Indonesia at Christmastime 2004, Budd felt compelled to do something to help. Initially, she asked a friend to organize a yard sale to benefit the victims. But her friend, who is a visual artist, had another idea. "Why don't we do a CD?" she suggested, volunteering to do the artwork.

The lullaby CD was released in December 2006, and features 27 lullabies in 12 languages with

musical contributions by Budd, fellow soprano Sylvia McNair, clarinetist Todd Palmer, violinists Corey Cerovsek and Daniel Phillips, flutist Tara Helen O'Connor, guitarist Oren Fader, cellists Alisa Weilerstein and Claire Bryant, pianists Molly Morkoski and Paul Greenwood.

To purchase the album, which offers comfort for both child and adult, send a tax-deductible check made out to UMCOR to the following address:

Lullabies for Disaster Relief
c/o Poughkeepsie UMC
2381 New Hackensack Rd.
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Cost is \$15 per CD. A separate check for \$4.95 made out to Courtenay Budd to cover USPS Priority Mail shipping is not required, but appreciated. To preview the lullabies, go to, <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/courtenaybudd>.

Budd's soprano, praised as "a voice for connoisseurs," has been heard with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the National Symphony, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and repeatedly at Carnegie Hall, Spoleto USA, and the Grand Teton and Bard Music Festivals. Her operatic performances include Ilia in "Idomeneo" at Alice Tully Hall, Amy in "Little Women," Laurie in the "Tender Land," and Marie in "The Daughter of the Regiment." For more information on Budd and her music, visit www.courtenaybudd.com.

Bishop Responds To Mosque Controversy

Continued from page 1

community with the larger community. Other voices have expressed fear and resentment, and the opinion that the diabolic extremists who brought death and destruction on 9/11 could claim the building as their trophy. Arguments can be made that granted the right intentions, building an Islamic center and mosque near the Ground Zero site can have the opposite effects.

However, denying the fundamental right of a religious community—as long as it fulfills the same legal requirements applied to all other religious communities—by singling it out for the wrong reasons, compromises the integrity of who we are at our core. If allowed, a serious crack opens in the foundation of our nation. Once opened in one place, soon more will be opened in other places. It makes us less as Americans and weaker as a nation. America cannot afford it.

Based upon what is known at this time, I support the building of the 51 Park Islamic Community Center and mosque. Our hearts break over the sacrifice of the dead from 9/11, and the pain and suffering of their loved ones and our country. However, to truly honor them, to truly preserve the historic significance of Ground Zero, and to truly triumph over the evil forces of 9/11, it is necessary to stand firm on what America believes in and be willing to pay whatever price to protect and preserve freedom and equality for all. Our resolve to do it must grow stronger for such a time as this. It is my prayer that someday peoples of all religious communities and faith traditions will embrace the vision of liberty, peace and justice in reconciliation, harmony and mutual respect, and it is incumbent upon us to do whatever we can today to hasten that day. I ask you to continue to pray that our conversation will be a positive force that reflects who we are as responsible citizens, as well as faithful Christians.

In Christ,
Jeremiah J. Park

UMCOR Seeks Aid for Flood Victims

Heavier than usual monsoon rains have provoked flooding across Pakistan, killing as many as 1,600 people and affecting up to 4 million—the country's worst floods in 80 years—according to news reports, the United Nations, and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) partners in Pakistan. And as the floodwaters recede there are grave concerns about the spread of disease, and the devastating loss of crops and employment.

UMCOR is working with the following (trusted and known) partners: Church World Service, Church of Pakistan, GlobalMedic, and Muslim Aid. Grants to these partners are providing clean water, food assistance, emergency shelter and medical aid to some of the most severely impacted communities.

Bishop Jeremiah J. Park and the New York Annual Conference have encouraged concerned United Methodists to support the people of Pakistan through The Advance, an accountable, designated-giving arm of the UMC that ensures 100 percent of each gift reaches its intended mission or ministry.

Donations to UMCOR Advance #982450, Pakistan Flooding, can be made by placing a check in your church's offering plate, or by going to the following link: <http://secure.gbmg-umc.org/donations/umcor/donate.cfm?code=982450&id=3019041>.



REUTERS PHOTO COURTESY OF ALERTNET.ORG

Women wade through flood waters with their children while evacuating from Nowshera, located in Pakistan's northwest Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province Aug. 1.

For The Living of These Days: September 11

BY GLORY E. DHARMARAJ

“Grant us wisdom, grand us courage for the living of these days.”

UM Hymnal #577

“There will be no peace among the peoples of this world without peace among world religions. There will be no peace among the world religions without peace among the Christian churches. The community of the Church is an integral part of the world community.”

—Hans Küng

This month marks the ninth anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. In our living memory, 9/11 has become a landscape of untold loss and withheld sadness. We still have not gotten over the raw woundedness of the painful tragedy inflicted on our nation.

The community in which I live lost nine of its own on that fateful day. Those families and their friends are still struggling to cope with the loss and tragedy. The recent developments of the mosque close to Ground Zero have ignited outbursts of indignation and raw emotions. Voices are raised and opinions are expressed from many sides on behalf of the living and the dead.

I have been listening to, and reflecting on some of the emotional debates for the last several weeks. And I am still trying to make sense of it. The motivations behind these tensions are multivariate and interconnected: issues of identity, blaming others, religious differences, and a generalized fear of “the other.”

In the maelstrom of debates, what alarms me the most is the flood of presumptuous statements from various camps on behalf of the dead. How would they know?

I am aware that the impact of 9/11 is still felt in the psyche of various communities. Nonetheless, moving into a safer future is vitally

COMMENTARY

important. Connecting with people’s pains is like connecting with God’s pain.

When the 9/11 tragedy was unfolding, my office was situated at the Church Center for the United Nations, which is close to the site of the tragedy. Every day, I listened to the stories of the survivors, the heroic efforts of the firefighters, and experienced the resilience of the volunteers.

In that close human space and time, I also heard the media reports of the last-minute conversations that the victims had with their families. Many of them said, “I love you” and “take care of the children.” None of them, in my understanding, asked the living to execute vengeance.

I realize that those who perished came from many religious and cultural backgrounds. They came from more than 70 countries and spoke many different languages. Their stories and messages to their families should shape our consciousness for a glorious present and a new future, not hatred and abhorrence. Pushing aside thoughts about their own safety, they gave the world, and the church, a vision of agape love and selflessness. There is no time for hatred. Only to be aware that the time we have on this earth is so transitory and fragile.

In his novel, “The Shoes of the Fisherman,” Morris West describes the visit of a newly elected pope to the streets and apartments of Rome. He comes across a dying man. The family has waited too long to seek help. The man has no hope. The pope tries to comfort the family in the face of impending death. A young woman who has been taking care of the dying man says, “They can cope with death. It’s the living that defeats them.”

Friends, it is the living that often defeats us,

too. In death, we are the same.

- Only living people can have a dialogue among themselves.
- Only living people, out of our own various contexts, can build bridges of understanding.
- Only the living among us can find a seat for peace in the midst of the religious emotions that stomp in and out of the physical place and mental space called 9/11.
- Only the living can make time become an ally of all that is life giving.
- Only the living can make a place for prayer pilgrimage between opposed realities and forces of stagnation in one’s mind.
- Only the living can be the messengers who make constitutional and emotional sense.
- Only the living can realign themselves with peacemaking instincts.

I submit here for your consideration the thought I shared with my colleagues on the first anniversary of September 11:

The God of the Christians is a “betrayed” God. The God of the Christians is a “Crucified God.” In Jesus of Nazareth, God entered the victims of the world. God in Christ makes life for the “crucified peoples” of the world. Where is God? God is with the victims—before September 11, on 9/11/ and in the post-9/11 world here and elsewhere.

We, the living, are wounded and yet resilient. We are called to be “wounded healers.” Let us ask God for wisdom and courage for the living of the hour, and continue to engage in dialogue of life with people who follow other religious faiths.

Dr. Glory E. Dharmaraj is director of spiritual formation and mission theology for the Women’s Division of Global Ministries.

Are You Ready for A Challenge?

Continued from page 1

HealthMiles. You can get at least 20 health miles a day by adding two activities to your routine. Even if it is your walking, it can count as an activity. What about morning stretches or a tennis game? They count as activities that can get you 10 Health miles each day, in addition to uploading your steps.

To earn rewards:

- Sign up and upload your activity at least five days per week during the five weeks of the challenge—earn 100 HealthMiles,

and

- Maintain a high activity level throughout the challenge to get bonus HealthMiles—earn 300 HealthMiles for averaging 60 HealthMiles per day or 500 HealthMiles for averaging 80 HealthMiles per day in the challenge.

So sign up by September 20—and get revved up—for the All HealthFlex Challenge! Everyone will get bonus miles for your participation. And let’s get the NYAC to be in First place this challenge.

Our NYAC team leaders are ready to answer any questions. You may contact them via email: John Capen at JohnECapen@aol.com, and Kent Jackson at GodCares@hvc.rr.com.

For questions about the Virgin HealthMiles program, call Virgin HealthMiles Customer Service at 1-800-830-4312, or go to the web site at, <http://us.virginhealthmiles.com/pages/home.aspx>.

See related story about health incentives on Page 10

New School Year Comes With New Anxiety

By the time you read this, the 2010–2011 school year will have begun. And while most kids may not be particularly happy to be back in the classroom, some kids truly dread it. Anxiety about making new friends, being in a new school, facing bullies, feeling “uncool,” or coping with academic pressure can make even a well-adjusted child anxious. That anxiety or fear can build up in a child’s mind, leading them to act on it in many ways and possibly even refusal to go to school. Below are some tips from the University of Michigan Health System for dealing with these issues.



For young children:

- Talk to your child about school experiences and expectations, and about their thoughts and feelings about school.
- Help children connect with their school by visiting it before classes start, especially if it’s a school they haven’t attended before.
- Shop together for supplies, and use the shopping trip as a time to talk about what to expect at school.
- Try to connect your child with future classmates. Knowing someone who is going to be in the same classroom can greatly reduce apprehension and fear.

Making the transition from a small elementary school to a bigger middle school with different classes and more difficult work can be a big hurdle for some pre-teens. This age also comes with added social pressures about clothes and appearance. Children who withdraw from friends or family, seem sad or less energetic, or just “aren’t themselves” may be experiencing issues about school or something



more serious such as depression.

For older teens, the fear of starting high school and thinking, “Where do I fit in, what will people think of me, and will there be peer pressure to do things I don’t want to do,” can be quite overwhelming as a freshman, or even later.

- Keep the lines of communication open by talking to teens about their friends, their interests and activities, and anything else that might help a teen share what’s on their mind.
- Teens with anxiety issues may also have trouble sleeping, or frequent headaches, dizziness, nausea and muscle aches that don’t seem to have any cause.
- Watch for major changes in your teen’s

behavior and attitudes, loss of interest in things that once held their attention, large drops in their grades, aggression or irritability, or withdrawal from friends and family.

- Don’t hesitate to talk to school counselors and teachers, and mental health professionals if need be, to figure out what might be done.

For more information on the Children’s Home, call 607-772-6904 (or toll free 800-772-6904) ext. 131 or visit the website at www.chowc.org. Campus tours are available, or to schedule a group presentation, please contact Rebecca Mebert ext 131.

Diverse Writers Sought for Bible Study

The United Methodist Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence (SPSARV) is creating a Bible study entitled, “Hope, Healing, Health and Wholeness,” to provide a biblical basis for our denomination’s compassionate response to substance abuse in our global community. SPSARV is a general church initiative that works to raise awareness and equip church leaders to effectively respond to alcohol, other drugs and related violence worldwide.

A diversity of voices is being sought to write a global resource that offers biblical study and reflection on four themes: hope, healing, health and wholeness. Each study brief should be 500 to 600 words, including discussion questions.

Writers are encouraged to use their creativity and ingenuity in developing the study brief. A United Methodist bishop will write an introductory reflection on each theme.

The Bible study will enable congregations to study the biblical basis for being in ministry with individuals who are dealing with addictions and their families. The resource will be widely circulated throughout the UMC’s global connectional system. For additional information, go to the web site: <http://www.umspсарv.org/news/2010/writers-needed-global-bible-study>. Or if you have any questions, please contact Rev. Cynthia W. Sloan, SPSARV Program Associate, at CSloan@gbgm-umc.org.

Online Theological Courses Offered

United Methodist theological schools will offer 11 online continuing education classes for clergy and laity beginning in this fall. The Online Continuing Education Consortium aims to provide theologically sound, financially affordable and easily accessible continuing education programs. All 13 of the United Methodist theological schools are expected to participate. Five seminaries are offering classes this fall. An online catalogue and links to each theological school offering classes is available at www.gbhem.org/continuingeducation.

Keep Communication as “Normal” as Possible

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministries

It wasn't very long after she arrived that it became apparent Helen was having trouble adapting to her new situation. She had moved from her home of many years. The time came when her physical condition made it unwise for her to live alone. Persuaded by the fact that her five adult children still lived in Connecticut, where they had been raised, Helen took up residence at Wesley Heights, an assisted living community of United Methodist Homes in Shelton, Conn. She struggled to adjust, and for a while it seemed as if she would not succeed.

One day she said something that led me to say to her, with a smile on my face, “Helen, are you sure your name isn't trouble? You seem to like stirring things up.” Without missing a beat, she responded, “My name may be trouble, but you are surely “trouble's helper.” Something changed with that exchange; she began to open up and again be the woman others had known. She was strong



and opinionated, yet loving and caring.

I took a strong liking to her and discovered that one of the things she missed was “bantering” with anyone about anything. At Wesley, she was missing that means of communication. She was being treated with kid gloves because we believed she was fragile emotionally. We bantered back and forth many days, sometimes about nonsense, but often about family, religion, life and death.

Eventually Helen moved to Wicke Health Center and became a hospice patient. Even then “Trouble” continued to talk to me about the

important issues in her life.

What an important lesson learned! Loving someone enough to enter their world, to use their language, their means of communication, can—and does—change lives for the better. Far more is accomplished for the older adult when those caring for him or her meet the person where she or he is.

Older adults, as most people, want to be accepted for who they are. They do not need to be coddled or infantilized. Despite any limitations they might have, they are still the unique individuals they have always been.

Congregations, pastors, lay persons, family members and friends, too often let the frailty or illness of a person get in the way of relating to the whole person. Any effective ministry to or with older adults should seek to create an environment where this attitude is banished, and replaced with one where age and frailty are not a reasons to relate to the person any differently than before.

Clergy to Hear Former Sing Sing Chaplain

Dear Elders and All the Clergy Members of the New York Annual Conference:

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ!

As we look ahead to our fall schedule, we call your special attention to the Clergy Day Apart on Thursday, Oct. 14, at the Memorial/Central Korean United Methodist Church in White Plains, N.Y. We will gather at 9 a.m., and adjourn by 3 p.m. This event is open to all clergy members of our conference. Please plan to join our sacred time together for our spiritual renewal and growth.

The Reverend Canon Petero A. N. Sabune will speak on a theme of “Beyond the Walls.” Canon Sabune will help us break through the barriers that hinder our vision, and guide us to see God's world beyond our imagination.

A native of Uganda and the son of a priest, he has followed a very unique path as an Episcopal priest. Sabune had been the Protestant chaplain at Sing Sing Correctional Facility since 2004, but was named Africa partnership officer for the Episcopal Church on May 17, 2010.

He is the former vicar for outreach at St. James' Church on Madison Avenue, and dean of St. Phillip's Cathedral in Newark. Canon Sabune has been a candidate for bishop in the dioceses of Long Island, New Jersey and Newark, and is currently a member of the Episcopal Church's Executive Council. As a well-known speaker and spiritual leader, Sabune has lectured and led numerous retreats around the world. Additionally, he is the adopted son of our colleague, Rev. Richard Parker.

Please send in your registration, including the \$15 fee, by October 9. Checks should be made out to New York Annual Conference, and sent to Rev. Thomas Theilmann, Trinity-Boscobel UMC, 277 Church Street, Buchanan, NY 10511-1599. If you have any questions, please call Theilmann at 914-737-8912/6227, or e-mail him at revtheilmann@gmail.com. Breakfast will be provided, in addition to drinks, fruit, and snacks. However, please bring your own “brown bag” lunch. The schedule permits only 40 minutes for lunch.

We look forward to seeing you then. Many blessings on you and your ministry! Shalom!

Sincerely,

Constance Y. Pak

Chairperson of the Order of Elders
pastorconstance@msn.com

Apportionment Bulletin Inserts Available

Together we can accomplish more than any one individual can! That's what connectional giving, known as Shared Ministry Apportionments, is all about. The Office of Connectional Ministries is once again offering a series of bulletin/newsletter inserts highlighting the many different ways that our connectional giving helps nurture and care for the family of God in our communities and around the world.

The first three weeks are available as PDFs on the web site at <http://nyac.com/pages/detail/1666>. Except for the first week, the inserts are designed for half of an 8.5" x 11" page. The first one is a full 8.5" x 11" page and introduces the series by looking at how the 2010 budget is divided to fund the work and ministries of the conference.

- Series introduction: Connected in Giving (full page insert)
- Youth Ministry
- Clergy Benefits

Inserts will be supplied to cover the 16 Sundays between September 12 and December 26. The inserts for October will be available by late September for inclusion in your monthly newsletter, if you choose that option for your church.

If you have any questions about the inserts, please contact Joanne Utley, Vision editor, at thevision@nyac.com.

Getting Healthier, Cutting Costs = Win-Win

A UMNS Feature

Eighteen months ago, the Rev. Mark Del Giudice and his wife, I Hyong “Song,” were overweight, had Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure, took several medications and needed frequent physician visits.

Then they heard about the Virgin HealthMiles physical activity program, which the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits was piloting. Excited about the opportunity, the New York couple completed a health-fitness questionnaire.

“We discovered that we were both in a fitness category just above ‘fair health.’ It gave us a wakeup call,” recalled Del Giudice, who serves Bloomville and Walton United Methodist churches in the New York Annual Conference.

“In 18 months,” he said, “I have lost 90 pounds, taken 14 inches off my waist, lowered my blood pressure and sugar to an acceptable range, eliminated the use of medications, and now I only need to see my physician once a year for a wellness exam. Song has lost 61 pounds, 10 inches off her waist, reduced her prescription meds and only needs to see her physician on a six-month follow-up basis.”

In January 2009, the pension board’s Center for Health introduced the program to annual conferences and employer groups that sponsor the HealthFlex insurance plan. In 2010, the program expanded to include any UM conference that wanted to offer it.

“To date, more than 12,000 clergy and lay participants from 36 annual conferences and three employer groups are enrolled in HealthMiles—a 43 percent participation rate,” noted Kelly Piepenbrink, health and wellness program manager.

With HealthMiles, participants receive pedometers to track their activity. Via a USB cord, they upload the data to the program’s website. Participants can earn rewards (up to \$300 in 12 months). Articles and other encouragement provide additional support.

Rewards are contingent upon individual achievement, but groups of individuals or annual conferences can challenge each other to “step-offs.” From September 22 to October 27, the NYAC will compete in the HealthMiles All Healthflex Challenge with 30 other conferences around the country.

For HealthFlex participants, HealthMiles works hand-in-glove with other program offerings to support overall wellness. The WebMD HealthQuotient assessment raises awareness of health risks, and health coaching helps participants address those risks. Biometric screenings and wellness exams focus



Rev. Mark Del Giudice and his wife, I Hyong, lost a combined 151 pounds in 18 months through the Virgin HealthMiles program.

on prevention, early detection and treatment, and HealthMiles promotes increased activity as a means to improve participant health.

HealthMiles success also is driven by participants’ enjoyment and, more importantly, by results.

“It is not only doable, but (also) is fun to do,” said Del Giudice. The couple looks forward to their walks and fun competitions, he admitted. “We have saved time and money and, more importantly, we have improved our overall fitness.”

Taking a similar tack, staff at several United Methodist agencies in Nashville, Tenn., along with four bishops, jumped on the treadmill for “Witness to Fitness” (W2F). The 12-week competition involved 184 people eager to quit grabbing a fast food burger and fries and calling it a meal.

Almost 40 percent of the staff of participating organizations signed up to compete in the W2F Team Challenge. For the competition, they broke into 46 cleverly named teams. While weight loss was not the emphasis, 36 teams reported losing 662.9 pounds collectively.

Team members reported lower cholesterol, higher energy and a newfound commitment to health. Even participants who regularly exercise reported they were able to “take it up a notch”

when given the support of team members.

W2F encourages friendly competition and counts on team member support.

The teams used a point system based on steps taken, water consumption, exercise, healthy eating and sleeping habits, dental care and vitamin use. The three teams with the highest points received awards. First prize was a one-time \$200 reduction of participants’ health-care premium.

A quartet of bishops—Thomas Bickerton, Sally Dyck, John Hopkins and John Schol—got on board the “Sag Wagon.” “The Defiant Ones” was a cross-agency team. Members of both teams travel extensively, yet found creative ways to maintain established walking and exercise routines.

“This idea will work anywhere—in local churches, districts or annual conferences,” said Rhonda Manous, United Methodist benefits administrator. “It’s really very simple.”

The only essentials are a budget for prizes and an event coordinator to enroll participants, send motivational e-mails and track weekly team logs.

The team concept, which was at the very core of W2F, almost guaranteed success. “Time after time, contestants reported they would have quit,” Manous said, but they did not want to disappoint their teammates.