

"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

October 15, 2010

4 Clergy Share Experiences of Leadership

BY REV. JOANNE S. UTLEY
Editor, The Vision

If you're searching for examples of strong leadership, you need look no farther than the boundaries of the New York Annual Conference. During the late September tri-district retreats with Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, four clergy members shared their experiences and tips on pastoral leadership. Reverends Joong Urn Kim, Stephen Bauman, Darlene Kelley-Walters, and Cecil Stone each offered unvarnished insights into their pastoral experiences in churches ranging from small rural settings to multicultural urban congregations.

For the last 12 years, Rev. Kim has pastored the First Korean UMC of Flushing, which at 2,000 members is the largest church in the NYAC. Prior to 1998, he had served the Mid-Hudson Korean congregation in Poughkeepsie. Despite that background, he admitted that he was standing before the audience in "anxiety and fear."

Rev. Kim's tenure at First Korean began in a whirlwind: the bishop called on Thursday, he met with staff-parish relations committee on Monday, assumed the job on Wednesday and met with the administrative council on Friday. The congregation that he found was in crisis with deep financial problems. Although it was "a strong church," he said, "It was unhealthy."

Among his first tasks were helping the congregation mourn the loss of their previous pastor, and to restore its connectionalism to the UMC. To help accomplish the first, he researched the hymns and sermon topics of the previous three years and modeled his worship on what he found.

To revive the connection to the UMC, he used the pulpit to stress the message of fiscal health and denominational obligations. "What's not up for discussion?" he asked. "Paying our apportionments."

Other tips from Kim included:

- Initiate programs and events to build up the morale of the church.
- Invest in your neighborhood to gain the respect of the community.
- Use theocracy and democracy together; work and make decisions together.
- Your weakness is not the end; turn it around



Rev. Stephen Bauman, right, explains how Christ Church assembles committees to fulfill specific goals and tasks.



Rev. Wally Robinson, right, talks with Rev. Cecil Stone after his presentation.



Rev. Joong Urn Kim, of First Korean UMC of Flushing.

to strength. Kim told his congregation that his "English is poor, but I have a point." Listen well. Let people know that you understand.

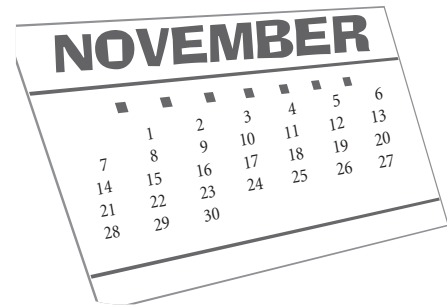
- Timing is important; opinions will take some time to arise. In a new church, deal with the easy stuff first to achieve some quick success.

Kim concluded his session with the following thought: "In difficult times, don't count the money. Look to the Lord and pray."

Like Kim, Rev. Bauman believes that understanding one's individual strengths and weaknesses is a key to good leadership. He holds

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SAVE THE DATE



Interfaith Music Feast

October 17: A 5 p.m. potluck gathering of Christians, Jews and Muslims to share food and our cultural traditions. Sponsored by St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, and the American Society for Muslim Advancement. Open to all ages. RSVP: Rev. K Karpen at, K@stpaulandstAndrew.org.

Safe Sanctuaries Workshops

October 23: Hempstead UMC: Register at 8:30 a.m.; training from 9 a.m.–noon.

November 11: Windham UMC: Register at noon; workshop from 12:30–3:30 p.m.

December 11: Community UMC, Jackson Heights: Register at 9 a.m.; workshop from 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Register by contacting Lynda Gomi at, learningcenter@nyac.com, or (914) 615-2219.

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: "Fishbowl Living" led by Daryl Norman. 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., New York Conference Center, White Plains, N.Y., Conference Room 115. For details, <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2833>.

Conversation With Bishop Park

October 30: Members of the Conference Vision Table (CMVT) and mission and ministry exhibitors at Annual Conference on Saturday are invited to a discussion with Bishop Park about how we keep the momentum going. 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Conference Learning Center, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606. Lunch is included. RSVP: apearson@nyac.com.

Ignite Early Registration

October 31: Register at www.umyouth.com by this date for the bargain price of \$149 for the "Ignite" youth weekend for all teenagers in the NYAC. Then mark your calendars for January 21-23, 2011, at Taconic Retreat Center, Poughkeepsie.

Brooklyn Home Honors Shillady

November 3: Brooklyn United Methodist Church Home's 23rd annual awards dinner dance. Celebrating 127 years of service, and honor

HealthFlex Packets Are in the Mail

Mark your calendar now for the 2011 HealthFlex Annual Election:

- **Starts Wednesday, November 3, 12:01 a.m.**
- **Ends Thursday, November 18, 11:59 p.m.**

During annual election, you have the opportunity to indicate your health plan preferences for 2011. You can:



- Choose a health plan—if your plan sponsor offers a choice of HealthFlex plans;
- Set aside pretax dollars into a flexible spending account (FSA) for 2011 medical or dependent care expenses;
- Add a dependent up to age 26 to your coverage—even if the dependent is no longer a student, is married, lives outside your home or is no longer a "dependent" on your income taxes;
- Add or drop HealthFlex coverage for a spouse or child; and

Annual election details are also available online. Go to www.gbophb.org, click on "HealthFlex/WebMD" and log in. Then choose "HealthFlex Plan Benefits" in the left column to reach the Ceridian benefit election web page.

four individuals, including Rev. Bill Shillady, who will receive the William C. Kirkwood Humanitarian Award. For detailed information on the event at Russo's On The Bay, or to order tickets, go to: <http://www.bumch.org/pages/dinner-dance.htm>.

Day of Mindfulness

November 11: The Commission on Christian Unity and Interfaith Concerns invites all United Methodists, laity and clergy, to a "Day of Mindfulness" at the Bluecliff Monastery, Pine Bush, N.Y. Learn about Buddhist traditions and practices, have a silent meal with the monks and nuns of Bluecliff, and connect with God and yourself as you spend the day at this peaceful place. Contact Mandy Iahn at amandamarieiahn@yahoo.com, or 609-240-2210 to attend.

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

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Ghana Team: Clinic, Construction & Kids

Here are a few reflections from the Volunteers in Mission team that traveled to Ghana last month. More postings from the trip, and photos, can be found at <http://nyac.com/blogs/author/8>.

September 9

I was deeply touched by the community workers—the mothers and fathers with babies tied to their backs, taking bricks, carrying mortar and water. What a beautiful picture. This will live with me for always. As I watched and served with the nurses my pain melted, and I took on the pain of the people . . . God bless Ghana and God bless its people.

—*Fluerette Reid*

September 18

We begin very early only to learn the lesson of patience and flexibility. After a rain delay, paint delay and personnel delay we finally begin in earnest. The nursery/kindergarten receives a new coat of paint inside and half of the outside in the school uniform colors of cream and brown.

The medical clinic saw 70–80 villagers and ran out of blood pressure and malaria medications. We had to turn people away at the end of the day.

The children begin school on Tuesday. Today was a day of fun and play with them. It began with ball games inside due to the rain, followed by coloring and learning the new crafts of making friendship bracelets.

We remind ourselves to rejoice at the end of the day for what we have done and for the simple sharing back and forth the people of Awombrew.

—*Ann Grisward*

September 20

The day started with Bruce reading from 1 John 3:16–24. Verses 17 and 18 are key to me. They say, “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love not in words or speech, but in truth and action.”

So into action we went. Unlike Saturday’s multiple delays, today we were alerted at breakfast that there were people lined up and waiting for us at our medical clinic.

The weather kept the kids inside doing crafts. There were probably about 25 kids coming and going. They got a bit unruly at times—just like American children.

Some of us continued painting . . . The villagers are working along side us. They are also



Two VIM team members make fast friends, above left, as others assisted in the medical clinic.



well into installing the bathroom. This will be the first indoor toilet, shower, sink in Awombrew. Major progress!

We left sweaty, dirty, thirsty, hungry and tired by American standards. By Ghana standards, this was just another ordinary day. That’s something to pause and ponder.

—*Ellen Sicinski*

September 22

It is true that Ghana is the land of extreme irony. A stirring example of this was when we reached Elmina Castle. There are miles of beautiful beaches flowing into colored water and palm trees swaying in the breeze—paradise.

Further up the beach lies Elmina Castle, a chilling reminder of mankind’s darkest hour. As a 28-year-old, American-born, Caucasian male, I can only begin to imagine the atrocities that took place here. As I listened to the tour guide, I felt sad, angry, and confused as to how this could possibly happen and be accepted in society.

The entire castle had a chilling affect to it.

The walls had peeling white paint, algae and dust covering them. It was almost as if you could feel the pain, suffering and death that these walls had seen over the years.

It’s sad to think that African kings and leaders sold out their own people to the slave trade. Growing up, I always thought it was just the white man coming in and conquering/capturing the slaves. Instead it was a combination of factors and races led by greed, fear and selfishness.

Our guide, whose grandmother was an indentured servant closed the tour with, “We forgive, but we still never forget.”

—*Nathaniel Shay*

September 30

Today, as everyday here in Ghana, our eyes were opened to new and wonderful experiences.

What a delight to see such well-behaved children who started their school day off in prayer, singing their national anthem and saying their pledge, marching in sync to their classrooms. Even the little, little ones kept in step as they marched in order with the older children. Their warm and beautiful smiles touch our hearts.

Once seated in their respective seats, our team gave out pencils, pens and crayons. We were told that if they don’t have a pencil, they might be sent home until they can afford to come back to school with a pencil. Praise God for the churches that donated items for us to give to these children. It just brought such joy to their faces and to our hearts.

—*Marion Ryan Hubbard*



Worship at St. Joseph’s Methodist Church.

Sharing “Burden” of Truth May Offer Freedom

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministry

“I don’t like being a burden to my children. That’s the most difficult thing about being old and frail. I need so much help and they get the burden of being that help for me.”

If I had a penny for every time someone has said that to me, I’d be a rich man. No one likes being a burden for someone else. It hurts to feel that way and often leads to frustration and despair, making an already difficult situation more so. In fact that thought often complicates the healing process, slowing it down, sometimes bringing it to a halt.

I got to thinking about the numbers of people who have shared such a sentiment with me. It has always given me pause, wanting to say the right thing, but fearful of sounding trite and dismissive if the wrong words are used.

“You’re not a burden! We’re happy to be able to help you!”



GOD’S GIFT OF LONG LIFE

“Think of all you have done for us, it’s your turn to get the attention.”

“Don’t feel that way, we’re not complaining.”

And the list goes on of words I have heard adult children say to their parent or loved one, and of words I have used myself.

When I’ve had the opportunity to follow up with the person needing attention, it is almost always the same response. “I know my kids mean well, but I also know I am a burden. My needs take them away from their spouses and their family. There is no way that is not burdensome.

The hard truth is that caring for someone

you love can and does (at times) become burdensome. And, the person needing care knows it. It disrupts life routines, making an already busy life style even more so. Pretending otherwise only adds to the sense of guilt for being needy. And so I wonder, would it not be better to listen to the person feeling this way and affirm what they already know to be true? Would it not be better to say something that acknowledges the facts, but shares the feelings? For instance, how about words to this effect?

“There may be times when your needs will be a burden, but I want to care for your needs, because I love you and I feel better when I do.”

“I don’t like seeing you this way and feel so helpless unless I can do something to help. Helping you helps me as much as it does you.”

“The truth will make you free!” Free to honestly share feelings; free to show the depth of your love; free to let your loved one know that she/he is not alone.

LOL Can Help Teens Bust Stress

Stress. It’s everywhere. Learning how to deal with stress is a part of growing up, but your teen will need your help. Here are seven tips from Denise Witmer’s book, “Parenting of Adolescents,” that will help you guide your young adult.



- Be available to talk. Take time out of your own busy schedule for some one-on-one time.
- Encourage healthy escapes from the daily grind of school. Physical activity is known to relieve stress. Creativity will also help relieve stress.
- Laughter can get rid of stress just as much as exercise and is another healthy escape. Rent movies with a comedy theme. You can also teach your children to laugh at themselves, using humor to take the stress away from normal human mistakes that happen.
- Build your teenager’s confidence and self-esteem with praise. Make this a habit by finding something your teenager did right—everyday.
- Teach your teenager how to keep things in perspective. Taking a situation and looking at it from different points of view and seeing how it relates in the whole scheme of life is a skill your teenager will need to learn.
- Show your teenager how to focus on the positive aspects of a situation. Have him list the benefits and opportunities created, rather



than the problems.

- Be wary of negative roadblocks. Often teenagers who do not learn how to deal with stress appropriately turn to drugs and alcohol. Talk to your teen often about these roadblocks and remember the warning signs.

For more information on the Children’s Home, call toll free at 800-772-6904, ext. 131 or visit the website at www.chowc.org. Campus tours available. To order wristbands, borrow a video or to schedule a presentation about the Children’s Home, please contact Rebecca Mebert, ext 131. Please feel free to send donations directly, or use our New York Conference Advance number, 60-0588.

“Harmony For Habitat III” Concert

November 7: A concert to fund a third Habitat house is planned by the “Methodist and Friends Build Committee” in Newburgh, N.Y. Grace UMC will host the event with several area church choirs at 3 p.m. Elissa Zahn, minister of music at Grace, is organizing the concert which will include performances by individual choirs as well as selections by the 80-plus voice combined choir, conducted by Ken Pick of Vails Gate UMC, and Bruce Winslow of Monroe UMC. A freewill donation will be received at the door, and a reception will follow in the church’s community room. For information, contact Zahn through the church office at, 845-561-0176.

“Share the Harvest” Event

November 11: Long Island Council of Churches will host a special fundraising event, “Share the Harvest: Helping Neighbors in Need,” to raise funds for its Riverhead Emergency Food and Community Resources Center. Event is 6:30–10:30 p.m. at Giorgio’s, 100 Fox Hill Dr., Baiting Hollow, N.Y.

4 Clergy Share Experiences of Leadership

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to a short mantra: “Know yourself”—words that have guided him well in the 23 years he has served Christ Church UM in Manhattan, where he is the senior pastor.

Bauman, who readily admits that he’s not sure why he first went to seminary, worked for Covenant House in New York City, before serving several rural congregations. When he came to Christ Church he was just 34 years old, and would soon realize what desperate shape the church was in. He noted that two dead trees flanking the front of the church on Park Avenue symbolized what was going on inside.

So he began to ask the question, “Could you partner with me in bringing this place back to life?” He took newcomers to lunch or breakfast, and cultivated relationships one by one. As the church began to attract a diverse congregation, Bauman worked with whoever showed up.

He offered these other ideas about successful church leadership:

- Determine the mission, values and vision for your congregation. Take your time doing this. Let it be an organic process.
- Focus on outcomes, not the process. Work to produce excellent outcomes; only do the things that you can do well. Ask yourself, “What can we deliver as a congregation?” It may take many years to see the fruits of your leadership.
- Think and learn about young people. Become informed, talk about things that matter to them. Young people want an excellent experience—one that is “spiritually relevant and spiritually challenging.”
- Pastors need powerful mentoring relationships for themselves. Don’t wait for it to happen. “Develop relationships that love us into healthy personal and professional states.”
- Campaign to get everyone into covenant groups. We need to be held accountable.
- Be opportunistic; take advantage of the opportunities and the people that come your way.

Pastor Kelley-Walters, who leads the Clinton Avenue UMC in Kingston, N.Y., also relies heavily on her trust that God will give you what you need. Sometimes that comes in the form of a pianist who can help start a Sunday School, a recovering addict who becomes a trustee, or in a van that she’s driven to pick up worshippers from a halfway house. With a broad smile on her face, Kelley-Walters said, “When you’re clueless, you pray!”

And she has fled to the highest most point in her church to do just that in dealing with a community caught up in a web of poverty. Kelley



Rev. Darlene Kelley-Walters, kneeling at center, works with congregation members to plant a flowerbed.

is well acquainted with the church soup kitchen, the jail, the back alleys and the flophouses of Kingston. She’s gone to the places where Jesus Christ would be. “But I know that God wanted me to invite people to church.”

Those invitations led to two communities in the church: the old guard and the newcomers. “God was working there,” she said. “Radical hospitality had to become part of our identity.” She set the tone by genuinely shaking the hand of the homeless and embracing the drug addict.

Kelley-Walters’ intention to lead by example was evident in her other suggestions:

- It pays to have moxie and humor. “I thought I was hip, but I had ‘clueless fool’ written on my forehead” when it came to dealing with hardcore addicts.”
- Building community is about connecting, encouraging, taking risks and rejoicing in the imperfections.
- Don’t take “no” for answer. Change is hard and getting things done isn’t easy.
- Create optimism. Have fun. Be a cheerleader and a salesman.
- Breaking through physical barriers can be tough, but cutting through the chains on our hearts is much more difficult. Remember: “It’s all about love, and it starts with us,” she said.
- “Keep praying, fear not and imagine a glorious future.” As she concluded, Kelley said, “I trust everyday that God knows what we’re doing there.”

The final presenter, Rev. Cecil Stone, pastors both Springfield Gardens in Queens, and Hanson

Place in Brooklyn. And although he admits that he loves to preach in the urban streets, he says he is “not a preacher, but a worshipper,” who connects to the sacredness of all God’s creation. “God has called me to love them.”

Hanson Place has been a most challenging assignment for Stone with multiple lawsuits over financial and environmental problems. But there he has found a handful of faithful people willing to meet at 7 a.m. for prayer and Bible study. “I could have been so overwhelmed by the demands of the structure, or choose to believe what I preach,” he said.

Stone offered these suggestions while admitting that ministry has often taken him outside his comfort zone:

- Authority and power come in relationship to God.
- Be honest, candid and vulnerable.
- View the church as an “organism, not an organization.”
- “I hope you can genuinely love people and stay focused on where God is leading you.”
- When trying to balance administration and evangelism, “remember that Jesus says, ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God.’”

Stone believes that vital churches are a combination of high expectations, pastoral leadership, strong lay leadership and dynamic worship. The new people coming into his church are coming from all over the world. He ended by saying that we need to let go of the idea that we know it all and have seen it all. “If we just walk out and trust God, radical things will happen . . . I don’t understand it all, but I believe it all.”



Several UMC choirs joined in Baldwin's "Celebration of Faith" concert.

200 Years for Baldwin

First Church of Baldwin United Methodist will culminate its 200th anniversary year with a special worship service on Sunday, October 24. Bishop Jeremiah J. Park will preach at the 10 a.m. service. A dinner celebration at the Links Country Club in Rockville Centre will follow from 2 to 7 p.m.

In their yearlong celebration, the church has marched in the Memorial Day Parade, sponsored a "Celebration of Faith" concert, and held a potluck picnic. They also created church Christmas cards and sun catchers, and published a church history. Historical narratives have been shared during church services and at special luncheons.

In 1810, Bethel Chapel was established as the first house of worship in South Hempstead. Its founder, Christian Snedeker, a local farmer and member of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Hempstead, felt the need to organize a class in Baldwin.

The society met in an old schoolhouse in an area that was known interchangeably as Sodom or Bethel. For many years, the



The steeple of First Church has been a beacon of faith in Baldwin.

building was used as both church and public school. A Sabbath School was begun in 1811; the first trustees of the church were elected in 1839.

Eventually a new church was built on the south side of Merrick Road in 1843. It was a

simple wooden building with two doors—one for men and another for women.

As the community grew, so did the church. The Baldwin family, after whom the town is named, donated land on the north side of Merrick Road, where the present church stands. The cornerstone for the colonial sanctuary was laid in 1871, and the structure dedicated in 1872. The beautiful steeple, hand-built by the church forefathers, was a South Shore landmark often used as a beacon by ships at sea.

A second addition was added in 1926 giving more space for Sunday School classes, adult Bible classes, and a much needed kitchen. Other expansions occurred in 1949–50, and then in 1956, a new fellowship space, Whyman Hall, was erected.

The church has grown from a small cluster of families worshipping in an abandoned schoolhouse into an energetic congregation worshipping in a beautiful colonial church. Throughout the years, the church's tall spire has been a symbol of enduring faith.

Anniversary Prompts Gifts To Mission

When Pat and Rod Herris, longtime members of the Woodmere-Lawrence United Methodist Church, were planning their 50th wedding anniversary they made an unusual decision. In lieu of gifts, they would ask their guests to bring a bag of food for the UM Center in Far Rockaway.

The gathering of friends and family for the Saturday event was a great blessing, but it didn't end there. The next morning after worship the Herris' church family, and friends from the Woodmere Fire Department, gathered to help fill two vans with donated food.

There were also gift certificates and cash that the Herris family elected to use toward the Saturday breakfast program that is a joint ministry project of St. Paul's UMC in Inwood and Woodmere-Lawrence UMC.

Film About Muslim Children Available

The Interfaith Alliance is offering to bring the film, "Abraham's Children," to churches, synagogues, mosques, and other venues across Long Island. "Abraham's Children," tells the stories of a diverse group of Muslim children through their own voices. The film follows six families from the Bronx, Yonkers and Long Island, and as the children talk about their everyday lives, they shed a positive light on Islam. These children face the same issues that all youngsters face growing up in this culture, plus the additional burden of being first generation children of Muslim immigrants.

Visit <http://www.abrahamschildrendoc.com/trailer/> for a preview of this 77-minute documentary. If you are interested in hosting a viewing, contact Rich Tibbets at 718-343-6823, or richard.tibbets@verizon.net.

Electronic Giving Helps Smooth Cash Flow

In the August issue of The Vision, Rev. George Engelhardt explored some of the theological and practical reasons for electronic giving. This follow-up shares the experiences of four churches in the conference using Vanco's UM Electronic Fund Transfer program.

BY REV. JOANNE S. UTLEY Editor, The Vision

Some 18 churches in the NYAC have been using the UM EFT system in 2010, according to statistics made available from the UMC's General Council on Finance and Administration. In those churches, there were a total of 159 households that had given \$195,253, as of July 31.

GCEA began to look into electronic giving about 10 years ago, and first tested it in a couple of markets. In 2002, they designated Vanco Services as the UMC's authorized vendor, according to Jan Palmer, senior sales representative for the company. Vanco specializes in electronic payment programs including electronic fund transfer (EFT), credit/debit card payments, online donations and check scanning. They provide their services to more than 10,000 churches and non-profit organizations nationwide.

Of the four churches that responded to an email survey—Mamaroneck, Great Hill (Seymour, Conn.), Faith (North Haven, Conn.), and Smithtown—all expressed a desire to improve the church's cash flow, especially during the summer months. Most of the NYAC churches have opted for the direct debit program that allows for transfer from a checking or savings account to the church account.

Smithtown UMC on Long Island has been using the direct debit program on a trial basis for about a year, according to William Schmidt, chairman of the finance committee. Schmidt, Pastor Albert Hahn and one other member of the finance team enrolled early in the program. This fall the program will be pushed out to the whole congregation.

"I got tired of the before-summer pleas to maintain giving," said Schmidt, who brought the idea to the church. "It's fast, safe, and cheap," he said, "as safe as sending a check in the mail."

The church will address the issue of physically not putting anything in the offering plate by providing laminated cards stating, "I gave electronically." The plan is to place the cards at the sanctuary entrance where they can be picked up and reused. "I feel a little funny not putting my offering in the basket, especially as a finance chair," Schmidt said.

Reports are emailed regularly to the key financial officers, but are also available anytime online, Schmidt said. People can be added or information changed immediately via the UM EFT web site.

Pastor David Piscatelli at Faith UMC said his church began offering the online donation program in December 2009 as "a positive way to put giving to God first." After a six-month trial, the church will highlight the option during their upcoming stewardship campaign.

"We've tried to just let it grow organically. I still think we probably covered the cost of the program though—or at least offset most of it," Piscatelli wrote in an email. The church pays a one-time per giver authorization fee of 50 cents, and a per transaction fee of 25 cents for direct debit. Fees to use credit or debit cards range from 2.75 to 3.5 percent per transaction.

Faith UMC uses only the online giving option, which requires the giver to create an online profile and login with an email address and password. It's accessed via a "donate" button on the church web site.

While only a handful of members have been using the option for regular giving, some others have used it to give memorial gifts. And non-members found the service convenient to pay for Vacation Bible School, or to contribute to a church mission trip.

The worst thing, according to Piscatelli, has been a lack of involvement by even some who thought it was a good idea. But overall, the church has benefited. "There hasn't even been any arguments about the program," he said.

Faith Williams, treasurer at Great Hill UMC, suggested electronic giving to her congregation "as a way to not get behind on my own personal pledging." She also believed it would be a good way to offer a payment option with which younger churchgoers would feel very comfortable.

"For people who are growing up online, it makes the church a relevant place to donate your money," she wrote. Pastor Jane McCulloch Sibley promoted the direct debit program using Vanco's prepared print items for the bulletin and newsletter. Plus, Williams shared in front of the congregation that she was personally going to use the method.

"We are a small church and did not want to incur any additional fees than necessary; plus we wanted to see what the response was to this first step," she said. "We went from six in 2009 to 12 in 2010."

Age also seems to have played a role in the program coming to Mamaroneck UMC when a



"For people who are growing up online, it makes the church a relevant place to donate your money."

—Faith Williams
Treasurer at Great Hill UMC

younger member of the congregation proposed the idea to Pastor Richard Allen. After some research by the church treasurer, they went with Vanco. "We found that they were less expensive than a local bank, and they understood churches and our needs," Allen wrote. The church also has a "donate" button on its web site where it accepts direct debit and credit cards.

They first offered it to the congregation during last year's stewardship program, and got a better than expected response. "I think we have about 8 to 12 families participating just now," Allen said, "And they range in contribution level from \$10 a week to \$750 per month." He noted that some of the larger givers seem to be interested in earning their credit card's reward points, too.

And while the church plans to put some "I'm an Electronic Giver" cards in the pews, Allen is not sure they will be necessary. "Actually, folks in my church are no longer bashful about not putting anything in the plate as it goes by. I'd say that we live in a different world, in that sense, than the one I remember from my childhood 50 years ago."

For information about the UM EFT program, go to: http://www.electronicdonations.com/GCEA/gcfa_home.htm. Also available is a free guide, "A Church's Guide To Electronic Giving," which provides methods and materials to help promote an electronic giving program. It can be found at: http://www.electronicdonations.com/GCEA/gcfa_resources.htm

Pay It Forward

Churches Can Help Others by Paying All or Part of Ecclesiastical Mortgages

In the book and movie, "Pay it Forward," 12-year-old Trevor McKinney believed in the goodness of human nature. Like many other kids, he was determined to change the world for the better. Unlike most other kids, he succeeded. The expression "pay it forward" is used to describe the concept of asking that a good turn be repaid by having it done to others instead. Trevor used this concept to begin the process of transformation for his life.

Under contract law, more specifically, the concept is that the creditor (obligee) offers the debtor (obligor) the option of "paying" the debt *forward* by lending it to a third party instead of paying it *back* to the original creditor.

Grace UMC in Lindenhurst on Long Island, is paying it forward. On September 26, as part of the celebration of the 84th anniversary of the congregation, Ralph and Josephine Andrews used a fund their family had established to repay an ecclesiastical mortgage of \$6,800 to the United Methodist City Society.

The ecclesiastical mortgage was issued on June 30, 1931—in the midst of the depression—by the Brooklyn and Long Island Church Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church to help Grace purchase land to build a church. The



Ralph and Josephine Andrews spearheaded the effort to pay back the grant money to the UM City Society.

congregation had been meeting since September 1926 at a local Lutheran church. The Church Society had been instrumental in providing support to the congregation since its founding, but in the economic climate of the 1930s, this mortgage helped the congregation to build its current building and become a significant witness in the community.

After seeing their name listed in the annual conference report of the UM City Society (like the list at right), the church voted to repay this mortgage so that the funds could be freed up to help another congregation. They "paid it forward." Grace calculated that they would have owed \$38,000 in interest on the 5 percent rate of the mortgage had the congregation ceased to exist or if they left the United Methodist fold.

The worship celebration followed a service from a 1930s Book of Worship and some of the congregation dressed in clothes of the period. Pastor Lee Gangaware invited Rev. Dr. William S. Shillady to explain the work of the UM City Society. Shillady presented Chuck Sotice, Grace lay leader, with a certificate of full payment. The original documents will now be processed through Suffolk County for the full satisfaction

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Grace UMC Lay Leader Chuck Sotice receives a certificate of full payment from Rev. Dr. Bill Shillady, right, and Pastor Lee Gangaware.

Mortgage Balances For NYAC Churches

The UM City Society reported these ecclesiastical mortgage balances as of September 30. In parentheses is the date of the grant. The amounts total more than \$1.08 million.

Asbury, Mt. Vernon (11-19-92): \$15,000
Christ, Brooklyn (8-84): \$5,625
Community, E. Meadow (4-27-56): \$10,000

Community, Massapequa (1-11-50): \$5,000

Community, Ozone Park (6-18-87): \$5,570

Elton Avenue, Bronx (10-31-72): \$16,024.67
 (12-31-02): \$170,000

Epworth, Bronx (6-30-70): \$97,000

First Spanish, Manhattan (12-30-67): \$86,295.50

Fordham, Bronx: \$20,000

Ghana, Bronx (8-31-10): \$50,000

Good Shepherd, W. Hempstead (6-28-00): \$24,698

Grace, St. Albans (3-05-01): \$40,000

Hicksville (8-15-49): \$4,500

Janes, Brooklyn (3-31-59): \$18,600
 (5-9-72): \$13,068.69
 (12-31-86): \$48,370

Korean, Manhattan (12-30-50): \$8,000

Merrick (10-28-63): \$32,000

Metropolitan Community, Manhattan (11-20-46): \$10,000
 (10-31-54): \$10,000
 (4-14-80): \$7,000
 (7-10-98): \$50,000

Mt. Calvary, Manhattan (1-28-73): \$129,443.33

Polish-American, Greenpoint (1-31-81): \$6,216

Pound Ridge (1-05-55): \$1,890

St. Luke's, New Rochelle (3-23-00): \$45,110.45

St. Mark's, Brooklyn (12-31-80): \$15,000
 (12-31-90): \$10,000

St. Mark's, Manhattan (12-31-57): \$42,918.26
 (2-25-02): \$15,000

St. Paul's, Hartsdale (5-12-55): \$5,000
Tremont, Bronx (5-16-28): \$17,184.08

(12-08-98): \$7,000

Trinity, Richmond Hill (12-20-50): \$1,000

Uniondale (12-31-31): \$1,000
 (1-17-47): \$1,000

Wesley, Franklin Sq. (5-31-50): \$16,000

Woodhaven (1-30-27): \$15,603.54

Woodycrest, Bronx (2-27-13): \$5,000

Former NYAC Bishop “A Spiritual Giant”

Dear United Methodists of the New York Annual Conference:

You may have heard about the death of Bishop James K. Mathews at age 97 on September 8. Bishop Mathews served as the resident bishop of the New York Conference from 1995–1996. I hope you will keep his wife, Eunice, in your prayers. It will be my privilege to be present for a memorial service [September 25] at the Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.

Bishop Mathews was truly a spiritual giant and a pillar of Methodism. Born into a parsonage in Pennsylvania, his legacy of service to Christ and Christ's Church is legendary. The son-in-law of the world-renowned evangelist, E. Stanley Jones who was also a confidant of Gandhi and other prominent figures, Bishop Mathews first heard the call to missionary life while a graduate student at Boston University. Following several years in India as a pastor and district superintendent, he served in the army during World War II and then joined the staff of what is now the General Board of Global Ministries. During his time in New York City, Bishop Mathews completed his Ph.D. at



UMNS photo

Retired Bishop James K. Mathews speaks to the “Servant Leader Symposium” in Washington, D.C. in April 2010.

Columbia University, doing his dissertation on Mahatma Gandhi, which was later published in India.

He was first elected to the episcopacy in 1956 by the Southern Asia Central Conference, but declined the position. He was elected again in 1960 and served for twelve years in the Boston

Area and eight years in the Washington Area before his retirement in 1980. Of course, Bishop Mathews never fully retired, being called back into episcopal leadership for short periods in Zimbabwe, the Albany Area and our New York Area. In every place he went, Bishop Mathews brought a passion for mission, social justice and interfaith cooperation and witness.

It was indeed my privilege to have had the personal opportunity to know Bishop Mathews and his incredible legacy in and through the College and Council of Bishops.

We will miss Bishop Mathews personally and his abiding influence, even in retirement, on the Council of Bishops. We give thanks to God for giving the world the faithful follower of Jesus Christ, James K. Mathews.

In Christ,
Jeremiah J. Park

Editor's note: Memorial gifts can be made in Bishop Mathews' honor for missionary work in India through the E. Stanley and Mabel Jones Foundation at the General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

Churches Can Help Others by Paying All or Part of Ecclesiastical Mortgages

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of the mortgage.

In the past three years, Grace has grown from 65 people in worship attendance to an average of 149 at three Sunday services; 64 new members have also been added. The UM Men's Group has gone from one to 15 members, has rechartered, and now meets monthly for breakfast. The church has also been able to increase its apportionment payments from 30 percent to 100 percent. Pastor Lee Gangaware says, “All thanks to God and God's people.”

An ecclesiastical mortgage is really a grant that is given to a church for capital projects or property purchase. An ecclesiastical mortgage can be given by other church agencies, such as the General Board of Global Ministries. Grants made are protected by this mortgage in case the property is no longer used as a church or the congregation leaves the United Methodist denomination. Most mortgages then need to be paid back with interest.

The UM City Society, the successor agency of the original Church Society, can now pay these funds from Grace forward to another new church building or purchase of church property.

Trudy Grove, who has worked with the

Society for 46 years and currently is the chief financial officer, remembers that the Pound Ridge church paid a part of their ecclesiastical mortgage during the pastorate of Rev. Frank Denton. Bayshore's Pentaquit UMC had a mortgage from 1959 for \$500 that was satisfied in 1964. The Fordham UMC paid a portion of their grant when they sold some property. Grace UMC in St. Albans, under the leadership of Rev. Elemit Brooks, had the church repay their 1950 mortgage of \$3,000 before they started a new church building. The new church received a mortgage of \$40,000. When the Washington Square UMC was sold, their 1986 mortgage of \$8,500 was satisfied in 2005.

In August, the UM City Society gave a \$50,000 grant to the Ghana UMC for the completion of their new worship facility in the Bronx. The congregation has signed an ecclesiastical mortgage document.

Would your church like to pay it forward? Just think if we could pay forward a few hundred thousand dollars. Many congregations probably are unaware that this opportunity exists, so check for your church in the accompanying list. Please contact Rev. Bill Shillady, chief executive officer of the UM City Society, to “pay it forward.”

Confronting Hate Crimes

November 20: “My Brother's Keeper: People of Faith Confront Hate Crimes,” a symposium to examine the diverse communities and people targeted by hate crimes is planned at Grace UMC, 125 W. 104th Street, Manhattan, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 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.

Speakers include Terry Todd, Rosario Quinones and Fred Brewington, and a performance of the play, “What Killed Marcelo Lucero?” There will also be worship, small group discussions, safe spaces for participation and healing. Active participation by youth groups is encouraged.

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, and Methodists in New Directions. For more information or to register, go to <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/3092>.