

"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

April 15, 2014



'Coloring Beyond the Lines'

As children, we're often taught to "color between the lines," but thanks to a United Methodist agency grant, clergy and laity in the New York Conference are exploring what it means to color beyond the lines to include all of God's children.

In early March, some 36 participants, representing clergy and laity from 13 churches, attended a weekend retreat entitled, "Coloring Beyond the Lines." The program was funded through a \$13,650 grant from the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR).

Metropolitan District Superintendent Denise Smartt Sears saw the grant invitation in a weekly email from the conference, and submitted a proposal. Her goal was to strengthen the cultural competency of selected clergy and laity teams within the NYAC. Participating clergy and laity would create strategic plans to actively cross racial and cultural

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ABOVE: A team works on creating a covenant of behavior during the "Coloring Beyond the Lines" retreat at Camp Olmsted in Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y.



RIGHT: The weekend was bathed in prayer seeking the inclusion of all God's children.

Discussion on Sexuality, Clergy Covenant Set

Bishop Martin D. McLee has issued an invitation to the forum, "The True Nature of the Covenant That Binds Us Together and Matters of Human Sexuality," on Saturday, May 10.

This forum, at the Westchester Marriott from 10 a.m. to noon, is part of the recent "Just Resolution" of the case of Dr. Thomas Ogletree. It will provide an opportunity to hear different perspectives on the issues of our United Methodist clergy covenant and human

sexuality.

"The purpose of this forum will be to contribute to healing within the body and greater understanding among those who are affiliated with the New York Annual Conference. McLee intends that persons would listen deeply to one another in an atmosphere of Christian respect," as quoted in the March 10 "Just Resolution" document.

The focus of this forum is to have a reasoned conversation

about the issues that divide and unite United Methodists. Some questions that will be discussed are: What is the true nature of the covenant that binds us together? In what authority is our covenant grounded? How do we resolve the conflict between justice issues and our covenant? When, if ever, is it justified to break this covenant? How do human sexuality issues impact our covenant?

Bishop Martin D. McLee and

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4/26 'Workshop of Wonders' VBS Preview

Come and take part in an exciting hands-on workshop to see what we can "Imagine and Build with God." Activities will include crafts, music, games and much more. Make connections with other churches to share resources and supplies for VBS. Refreshments will be served. This event is free, but registration is required. All workshops will be from 10 a.m. to noon.

- **April 26:** UMC of Waterbury, 250 Country Club Road, Waterbury, Conn. Reserve by April 19; contact Debbie Mecca at, debmecca1@aol.com.
- **April 26:** Vail's Gate UMC, 854 Blooming Grove Tpk/Route 94, New Windsor, N.Y. Reserve by April 19; contact Cassandra Negri at, childrensministry@nyac-umc.com.

5/10, 17 & 31 Sunday School Director Training

Are you a new Sunday school superintendent? Workshops are being offered at various locations throughout the conference on a Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Topics to be discussed include: planning, budget, curriculum, recruiting volunteers, training volunteers and staff, discipline, and safe sanctuaries.

Cost: \$20 per church, bring as many people as you would like.

Breakfast will be served.

Each participant will receive a flash drive filled with information.

- **May 10:** Hicksville UMC, 130 W. Old Country Road, Hicksville, N.Y.
- **May 10:** UMC of Waterbury, 250 Country Club Road, Waterbury, Conn.
- **May 17:** Clinton Avenue UMC, 122 Clinton Avenue, Kingston, N.Y.
- **May 31:** Poughkeepsie UMC, 2381 New Hackensack Road, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Registration info is on the Children's Ministries page at, www.nyac.com/childrensministries. Or contact Cassandra Negri via email at, childrensministry@nyac-umc.com.

5/3 & 10 Sower: Seeds of Faith & Finance

Ed Ruppman, a strategic planner, and John T. Henderson, an attorney, offer this program in financial planning with a Christian perspective. Both men consider this free service as ministry; nothing will be sold at these sessions.

May 3: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., UMC of Hyde Park. Contact Steve Ackerman at 845-452-5863, or stevea@sailleackerman.com.

May 10: 9 to 11:30 a.m., Hampton Bays UMC. Contact Pastor Lillian Hertel to register at 631-728-1660, or hbumc1@optimum.net.

5/15 Anchor House Banquet

The Anchor House's annual fundraising celebration begins at 6 p.m., at the Grand Prospect Hall, 263 Prospect Ave., Brooklyn. Tickets are \$70, and can be obtained by contacting Emily Falero by phone at 718-771-0760, or email at: efalero@anchorhouseinc.com.

5/18 City Society Annual Meeting

Scheduled speaker is Jennifer Jones Austin, chief executive of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, and co-chair of NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio's transition team. The event at the Church of Saint Paul & St. Andrew UM, 263 West 86th Street, will begin at 3:30 p.m.

5/22-26 Community Nursing Training

Having a qualified nurse on a parish's staff can enhance the church's efforts to integrate whole person health. The parish nurse/faith community nurse is prepared to evaluate, and advocate on behalf of the congregation and the community concerns especially in whole person health and wellness. Sponsored by: the New York Conference, Parish Nurse Ministries of New York, and Trocaire College of Buffalo. The event is planned for the Edna Macy Conference Center in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. Questions? Contact either: Claris Skerritt at, Claris.Skerritt@nyac-umc.com, or 718-324-8386; or Ann Marie Mac Isaac at, ammacisaac@aol.com, or 716-655-1163.

6/4-7 Annual Conference Gathering

The annual meeting of NYAC clergy and lay members runs from Wednesday to Saturday at Hofstra University, Hempstead, N.Y. In addition to the business sessions and times of celebration, this year's agenda includes the election of clergy and lay delegates to jurisdictional and general conferences. The call to conference packets have been mailed, and online registration is now available at, www.nyac.com/ac. Everyone must register in advance this year. Please see related story on Page 4.

7/24-26 Mission "u" Returns

Studies for the 2014 session in Danbury, Conn., will include the church and people with disabilities, the Roma of Europe and "how is it with your soul." The one-day Saturday Sampler will again be offered on July 26. Please see related story on Page 10.

<small>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</small>	
Bishop: Martin D. McLee 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	

United Methodists Clear 80 Percent of Malaria Goal

Imagine No Malaria announced April 10 that United Methodists are 80 percent of the way toward reaching their goal of raising \$75 million by 2015. In the past year alone, the people of the United Methodist Church have made contributions and pledges of more than \$28 million, boosting the total raised to more than \$60 million.

In the coming weeks, five more annual conferences will launch fundraising efforts, joining 19 other active conferences including the New York Conference. The Holston, Illinois Great Rivers, Minnesota and Western Pennsylvania conferences have all exceeded their goals, and the NYAC is making a big push with its April 25 skydiving and July 19 basketball events.

Bishop Martin D. McLee has designated the Imagine No Malaria Initiative, and meeting the NYAC's \$1.2 million pledge, as the conference's primary mission focus for this year.

Since 2006, United Methodists have focused on the challenge of saving lives at risk from malaria—a preventable disease that still kills a child every 60 seconds. In the past eight years, the church has helped cut the death toll in half.

Next month in Sierra Leone, the UMC will take part in a national distribution of 3.49 million nets. The new nets will replace nets provided through the church and its partners in 2010. The invitation to participate in the second nationwide distribution and the complementary maternal and child health initiatives is an affirmation that the Sierra Leone government recognizes the UMC as a key partner and stakeholder in an impressive network of innovators, implementers and donors.

Donations to Imagine No Malaria have also aided UM health facilities in Africa to improve their capacity to treat malaria, both directly and indirectly. Partnerships with other malaria organizations and the establishment of UM health boards have made it possible to secure additional funding from outside sources. For example, the Health Board in the Democratic Republic of Congo has received funding for two grant proposals from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria. In Zimbabwe, a two-year grant will fund an innovative pilot project to test the use of mosquito repellent creams as a prevention tool. Incorporating social media is a key communications goal in the pilot.

Donations have been raised one dollar at a time, one member at a time, one church at a time—ranging from children donating pennies to major individual gifts of \$500,000 in Iowa and \$1,125,000 in California-Nevada.

The NY Conference has two big fundraising events coming up:

- On April 25, World Malaria Day, Long Island East District Superintendent Adrienne Brewington, a

New York Annual Conference Spring Fundraiser

C'mon team! Let's get our jump on for malaria!

Take a leap!
Put your faith in action & donate TODAY!

Support the NYAC team led by LEE DS Brewington

Support Imagine No Malaria and your favorite jumper at:
<https://ny-reg.brtapp.com/leap>

IMAGINE NO MALARIA
Our Faith In Action.
The people of The United Methodist Church

seasoned skydiver, will host, “Take a Flying Leap,” a tandem skydiving event. Skydivers are collecting pledges from family, friends, their churches and communities. Those who raise \$5000 or more will jump for free. To pledge online, go to www.nyac.com/inm, and choose one of the skydivers listed or write in another name. Show your support for your district skydiving representative by selecting from the drop down list. Visitors are welcome to cheer the skydivers on at Skydive Long Island, 400 David Court, Calverton, N.Y.

- On July 19, the Hofstra University Arena will be filled by the basketball prowess and hilarious antics of the Harlem

Wizards for “Jump, Shoot & Score Against Malaria.” Tickets for the 2 p.m. event will be available online beginning May 1, and are \$20 adults; \$10 children; \$100 Courtside; and \$50 VIP seats. Tickets can also be purchased at annual conference, where the Wizards are planning an appearance. Each church is challenged to sell between 75 and 100 tickets for the event. Or just maybe you'd like to put up your basketball skills against the Wizards. Lynda Gomi is looking for individuals or teams willing to play for a 15-minute quarter.

For more info on these Imagine No Malaria events, please contact Lynda Gomi at, lgomi@nyac.com, or 914-615-2228.

What's Happening at Hofstra in June

2014 Retirees

Richard E. Allen	Lee Barton Madinger
Harold Andrews	Ralph Merante
Duane D. Buddle	Delroy Murdock
Ronald Cox	Ann Pearson
Lorraine DeArmitt	Thomas Theilmann
Jong Sung Kim	John William Thomas
Jin H. Kim	Ronald D. Tompkins
Richard Lenz	Westley Villazon

Health Screenings

Once again, participating in the Blueprint for Wellness Screening is easier than ever for New York Conference HealthFlex members (and spouses). Quest Diagnostics will be available from 6–9 a.m. on June 5 and 6 during annual conference at Hofstra University.

To pre-register, call 1-866-908-9440 (employer group: "HealthFlex" or "United Methodist Church," or go online to | www.gbophb.org, log into WebMD and select "Quest Blueprint for Wellness." Walk-ins will be limited! To receive the most accurate results, you should fast overnight.

By taking the screening, you can earn \$100 in HealthCash, plus up to 90 of 150 additional wellness points on your path to \$150 more in HealthCash.

Some other reasons to participate in the Blueprint for Wellness are:

- The screening is open to clergy and spouses in HealthFlex active or retired clergy previously enrolled in Virgin Pulse programs.
- Free if taken between April 1 and July 31 at annual conference or at a local Quest Diagnostics facility.
- Earn 15 wellness points for each of six health measures (possible 90 total) that meet the American Heart Association's "healthy" guidelines, or for showing improvement over your 2013 Blueprint results.
- The Conference Board of Pensions will reimburse you for the cost of a new Virgin

pulse max activity tracker that allows you to upload your activity wirelessly. That's a \$40 value!

Worship Team Needs You!

The Annual Conference Worship Team is seeking visual design team members to transform the Hofstra Arena into a worshipful space through altar and prayer station design. They're also in need of gifted actors to perform during the opening worship service on Wednesday, June 4. If interested in either of these opportunities, please contact Worship Team co-chair, Heather Sinclair at, heather.sinclair@nyac-umc.com or (203) 913-8148.

Church & Society Speaker

Rev. Doug Walker has agreed to speak at the Board of Church & Society dinner on Friday, June 6. Doug Walker serves with the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church as National Coordinator in the Office of Civil and Human Rights. He works with Bill Mefford to coordinate the movements among United Methodists to stop mass incarceration and end gun violence.

The General Board of Church and Society is partnering with Healing Communities, a Philadelphia-based ministry that provides a framework that our church members can use to engage with people returning from or at risk of incarceration, as well as their families and larger community.

At last year's gathering, the annual conference adopted legislation calling on our churches to join a conference-wide Prison Initiative, with each church developing its own covenant to engage in at least two types of prison ministry. The conference Board of Church and Society has been working to identify existing prison ministries, and connect those experienced practitioners with those who would like to begin or expand a prison ministry.

Noble to Plant, Revitalize for NYAC

Dr. Derrick-Lewis Noble has been named to the new conference position of director of church development and revitalization, effective July 1. Noble is a veteran church planter and trained coach in the church development field. He has served as a pastor in Texas and currently leads Crenshaw UMC in Los Angeles, Calif.

A graduate of Morehouse School of Religion, he earned a doctor of ministry degree from Ashland Theological Seminary.



The purpose of the director of church development and revitalization is to provide visionary and passionate leadership for new church starts and church revitalization for the conference. For the first 18 months, the Parish Development Committee will fund the position, which was approved at annual conference in 2013.

Noble has planted a new church, Impact UMC, in Port Arthur, Texas. Under his leadership Abundant Life UMC in Lufkin, Texas, grew from less than 40 persons to more than 400 members in two years, earning it the Copeland Award for Evangelism.

Noble brings with him a "30-60-90 Day Action Plan" that includes building relationships with pastors, laity and new church planters; conferring with national leaders in church development/revitalization; scheduling training events focused around personal spiritual renewal, increased homiletical effectiveness and leadership development; working with Path 1 to find opportunities to develop new faith communities.

Discussion on Sexuality, Clergy Covenant Set

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Dr. Ogletree will make statements, but not serve as panelists. The panelists, who were chosen for their diverse viewpoints, are:

- Kim McLarin (moderator), assistant professor of writing, literature and publishing at Emerson College, and author of critically-acclaimed novels, "Taming It Down," "Meeting of the Waters," and "Jump at the Sun." She is also a regular panelist and moderator on Basic Black, produced by WGBH in Boston.
- Dr. Bill T. Arnold, Paul Amos professor

of Old Testament interpretation, Asbury Theological Seminary and author of upcoming book, "Seeing Black and White in a Gray World: The Need for Theological Reasoning in the Church's Debate Over Sexuality."

- Dr. Pamela R. Lightsey, associate dean for community life and lifelong learning, clinical assistant professor of contextual theology and practice at Boston University School of Theology, ordained elder in the Northern Illinois Annual Conference.

- Rev. Drew McIntyre, pastor of West Bend

UMC in Asheboro, N.C., and an elder in the Western North Carolina Conference. He is a contributor to the blog Via Media Methodists, dedicated to offering an alternative perspective beyond the current polarization and advancing the conversation in the UMC.

- Dr. Althea Spencer-Miller, assistant professor of New Testament, Drew University Theological School and provisional elder in the New York Annual Conference.

Registration will be capped at 200; register online at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/96782.



Some of the pastors and lay members of the conference who gathered at Camp Olmsted to create strategic plans to actively cross racial and cultural boundaries.

Workshop Pushes for Boundary Crossings

Continued from page 1

boundaries in their communities to work toward racial justice and equity.

“Too often we tolerate each other instead of learning how to work together and build a true community,” she said via an email. “The NYAC grant offered us an opportunity to deepen the conversation of race, gender, and cultural differences and equips us to be ‘culturally competent’ in an ever changing world.”

Some of the clergy had gathered under a previous grant to strengthen their cultural competency, and then had covenanted together to include more clergy and laity in the next round. The second grant included training sessions on how to become a “coach” and developing a design team to organize the retreat.

Smartt Sears led the design team that included NYAC pastors Wongee Joh, Vicki Flippin, Iwy Patel Yatri, Jessica Anchultz, Won Tack Lee, Matthew Curry, and Lisa Cunningham, who is a seminary student.

They were joined at the retreat by facilitators Rev. Giovanni Arroyo from GCORR; Rev. Stephen Handy, pastor of McKendree UMC in Nashville and the design team’s trainer; and Rev. Dr. Traci West, an elder in the NYAC and professor of Christian Ethics at Drew Theological School.

The participants worshiped together and were offered workshop components that were educational (learn something new), practical

(engage and plan), reflective (what was your experience), and change-oriented (how to work through process of change). The clergy and laity also worked on developing a covenant as well as initiating a Mission Action Plan.

The goals for the event at Camp Olmsted included:

- Transforming the culture of congregations
- Encouraging clergy to lead culturally conscious worship
- Breaking down walls of separation by removing linguistic and racial barriers
- Creating new spaces for all of God’s people

Rev. Jessica Anschutz, who is pastor of Central Valley UMC and was part of the original covenant group of clergy, will be coaching a congregation to become more culturally competent.

“In my current setting, it’s apparent that those who gather in the church do not look like all those who live in our community,” she wrote in an email. “So, there’s work to be done . . . in order to be effective in ministry in an intercultural community, our ministries, worship and community life must be culturally conscious.”

After the retreat, the clergy and laity who created covenants will be coached through two more sessions in the upcoming months. Part of the coaching sessions will discuss the progress of their mission action plans.

The required participation of laity in the Coloring Beyond the Lines model is one of the reasons that Rev. Matthew Curry, pastor of Grace UMC in Valley Stream, got involved.

“In order to attend this CBTL event, pastors had to bring at least one layperson,” Curry wrote in an email. He also believes that the commitment of the coaches to rigorous and intentional engagement with their assigned churches is critical.

“The added qualities of laity involvement and a coaching relationship will give it a greater chance to make a lasting impact for the churches involved and the conference as a whole,” he said.

Members of the design team will also share their newfound learning about culturally-conscious worship and strengthening cultural competencies with pastors in new appointments at the May 31 orientation at New Rochelle UMC.

Rev. Smartt Sears admitted there is so much work still to be done.

“We hope to continue this work though another grant in order to increase the number of clergy and laity growing in cultural competency, to help our clergy and laity transform the culture of their congregations,” she wrote.

This story was primarily written by Rev. Wongee Joh, and augmented by Vision Editor Joanne S. Utley.

Prophetic Church: Pray, Talk and “Be” About It

Our theme for annual conference is one of action and relates to how we should be living out our lives daily. I am mindful of that even as I make some suggestions and share some information about annual conference.

Let’s pray about it: As in former years, the Board of Laity reminds everyone to be in prayer about all aspects of our upcoming annual conference. As usual, we will be having a five-minute devotional at 6:55 a.m. each weekday from Monday, May 5 through Friday, May 30. Join us by dialing 1-605-475-4700, and entering the access code, 191759#. (Please note: This is not a toll-free number.)

Let’s talk about it: Lay members, please make every effort to attend your district conferences. Your superintendents, I am sure, will have annual conference preparation on the agenda. Visit the conference web site (www.nyac.com/ac) regularly and keep abreast of the agenda, reports, and other information related to annual conference. Also, refer to the lay member guide to annual conference that is



also on the site.

Be about it: When we gather in the arena for the laity session at 1 p.m., Wednesday, June 4, we will meet and hear from the lay nominees to the 2016 General and Jurisdictional conferences. The deadline for declaring candidacy has passed. However, nominations can be made from the floor during the laity session. Persons nominated from the floor must provide copies of their biographies to all lay members. The biographies of those who have already declared their candidacy are being prepared by the office of the conference secretary and will be available to lay members when they get to Hofstra.

The guest speaker at the laity session will

be our own Rev. Ann Pearson. She is retiring this year after 13 years of dedicated service as our conference’s first Director of Connectional Ministries. Her ministry has blessed all of us, and we are so happy that she has graciously accepted our invitation to speak.

Nominations are also being accepted for the Shirley Parris Service Award. Shirley served faithfully and with distinction in various leadership positions in her local church, as well as on the district, conference, jurisdictional and general church levels. Deadline for nominations for the 2014 award is May 1. For more information, please use the web link listed above.

The deadline is upon us for The Harry Denman Evangelism Award. Information and nomination materials can be found at <http://www.nyac.com/evangelism>. Nominations must be received by April 15; please mail to: Rev. Ann Pearson, Director of Connectional Ministries, New York Annual Conference, 20 Soundview Ave., White Plains, NY 10606.

Debt Assistance Program for Young Clergy

Applications are now available online for those who wish to be considered for the new Young Clergy Debt Assistance Program that was announced by Bishop Martin McLee.

In a letter dated March 13, the bishop wrote, “This idea was born out of a desire to provide financial support to clergy aged 40 years or younger serving in the New York Annual Conference and saddled with educational debt . . . while this . . . will not eliminate the academic debt, the awarding of \$2,000 to \$5,000 mini-

grants will provide much needed support.”

The goal is to accrue a dedicated fund of \$300,000 that will provide a percentage of its value in grants aimed at reducing the educational debt of young clergy. The bishop noted that \$180,000 had already been contributed thanks to a lead gift of \$100,000 from Christ Church UMC and \$80,000 from additional sources.

Churches and individuals may support the initiative with checks made payable to the

NYAC with a memo notation indicating, “Young Clergy DAP.” Those checks should be sent to the bishop’s attention at the N.Y. Conference Center in White Plains. Individuals may also choose to donate appreciated stock, the value of which is tax deductible, and should contact Ross Williams (rwilliams@nyac.com) about that possibility.

The guidelines and 2014 application, which is due by April 27, can be found at www.nyac.com/young-clergy-dap.

Latest New Appointments

Edward Norman to Freeport; he currently serves Salem UMC.

Peola Hicks to Naugatuck; she currently serves as associate pastor at New Life Community.

In Koo Chung to Huntington, Conn.; he currently serves as associate pastor at First in Flushing.

Alpher Sylvester to Grace, St. Albans; he currently serves Bethany in Brooklyn.

Dong Hyun Choi to Windham-Hensonville and Ashland Community; he currently serves Memorial in Shandaken.

Carole Paynter to Smithtown; she currently serves the Bethel in Brooklyn.

Judy Stevens to Mamaroneck; she currently serves at

Bellmore and East Meadow.

Sabrina Johnson Chandler to Woodycrest (LFT).

Susan Goodman to Sugar Loaf as district hire.

Jennifer Tiernan-Bindler to Drew Cooperative; she currently serves at Red Hook.

Karina Feliz adds Sloatsburg her current appointment to Highlands.

Wendy Modeste to Bay Shore; she currently serves the UM Parish in Bushwick.

Kevan Hitch to Nichols, Trumbull; he currently serves at Valhalla.

Julia Weidemann Winward to Cornwall; she currently serves Springdale and Diamond Hill.

Conference Youth are SWAG'ed Up & Ready

BY DORLIMAR LEBRÓN MALAVÉ

We laughed, we screamed, we played games, we cried, we danced, we worshipped, we took “selfies,” and we experienced the transformative manifestations of God’s presence.

The New York Conference Council on Youth Ministries, under the leadership of Dana Dudkewic from the Hicksville United Methodist Church, met diligently throughout the year to prepare for the annual youth retreat, IGNITE, which was held at Camp Quinipet. This youth-led experience consisted of four worship services featuring youth and adult preachers; a dynamic and spiritually-centered praise band, H.Y.P.E.; indoor and outdoor activities like sumo wrestling and giant bouncy twister, workshops on leadership in the United Methodist Church, singing, dance, clown ministry and social justice.

Young people from all over the conference came together at Camp Quinipet for a weekend filled with the yearnings of a generation that is desperate for understanding and to be understood—desperate for a voice, for identity, change, purpose, and love.

IGNITE 2014 affirmed once again God’s unmerited and unwavering love that sees only the best in us! Young people shared testimonies and preached around the theme of the armor of God from Ephesians 6:10–20—or what after this weekend became known as, “S.W.A.G.” The message being that more than just putting on the armor of God, we must be *Standing With the Armor of God*. This weekend I witnessed eyes filled and ignited with strength, courage and boldness to stand with the armor of God.

Bishop Martin D. McLee joined us Sunday and affirmed that the young people of our conference were rocking the boat, creating waves and leading our United Methodist Church towards God’s future. He has recently also challenged the young leaders to put our S.W.A.G. into action. Bishop McLee challenged the young people from our conference to organize projects to raise funds for the Imagine No Malaria campaign. (See story at right.) Every church youth group that raises \$100 or more will be listed in the online newsletter, *The Vision!* The church group that raises the largest amount between now and July 31, will get a personal visit from the bishop at one of their worship services!

We heard a lot of powerful words spoken during the weekend and whenever God speaks powerfully, God acts powerfully. So when we speak powerfully, I believe we too will follow through with powerful, transformative acts! I look hopeful toward the fruits that will bear from IGNITE. We are a fearless and bold generation of United Methodists that are unashamed and in courageous pursuit to make God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven!

Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé is the youth ministries coordinator at Community United Methodist Church in Massapequa, N.Y.



H.Y.P.E. band member Jordan Velazquez “photo-bombs” the IGNITE selfie taken during the weekend event at Camp Quinipet.

Youth Challenge From the Bishop

Dear Young Leaders:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the great experience of worship and fellowship at the recent IGNITE 2014 event held at Camp Quinipet. I still smile when I think about the great worship, fun games, and my introduction to “selfies.” I am also writing to offer a challenge.

As you may know, the New York Annual Conference is participating in the denomination’s Imagine No Malaria campaign. We are raising money to purchase bed nets that will prevent people from contracting malaria. I invite the youth of the Annual Conference to participate in the following way:

- Organize projects to raise funds for Imagine No Malaria. Every church youth group that raises \$100 or more will be listed in our online newspaper, *The Vision*.

The church group that raises the largest amount between now and July 31, will receive a personal visit from me at one of your worship services (with the support of your pastor) where I will present a personal rap about what God is doing in our lives.

I hope you will take on the challenge I have outlined. If you have any questions about Imagine No Malaria, please contact Lynda Gomi at, lgomi@nyac.com.

Let the journey begin!

All my prayers,
Bishop Martin D. McLee



Teaching Kids To Help Protect Themselves

As adults, one of our most important responsibilities is keeping children safe. We can give our children skills to help them stay safe and act wisely with strangers, bullies, and people they know. The skills they practice may be able to stop some abuse, abduction, assault, and bullying.

Children can practice:

- Assessing situations to know what their safest choices are
- Moving their bodies in order to create more space between themselves and people who might cause problems for them
- Making safe choices about talking to or taking things from strangers
- Checking in with adults in charge before they change the plan about where they are going, what they are doing or who they are going with
- “Emergency only” skills of using physical techniques as a last resort to escape from danger
- Making and following a safety plan for how to get help in public including if they get lost
- Being clear in telling trusted adults when they have a safety problem and persisting until they get the help they need
- Using their voices loudly to attract attention if a situation becomes threatening
- How to deal with hurtful words and stop teasing and bullying from peers
- Techniques to increase their self-esteem by protecting themselves from the hurtful or damaging things they might say to themselves

At the Children’s Home we offer safe environments and opportunities to help children and families learn that they have strengths they can apply to give them safety.

For more information on the Children’s Home, call 800-772-6904, ext. 131, or visit the web site at www.chowc.org. Please send donations directly, or use the New York Conference advance number 60-0588.



YAMs Shine in Cambodia

The 2014 crop of Youth Ambassadors in Mission and their adult leaders take a photo on the steps of Angkor Wat Temple in Cambodia. The team’s trip in late February included work on a school foundation and with the village children. As Zoey wrote in the team’s blog on February 27: “We need to start seeing ourselves as missionaries and ambassadors of Christ in everything. And here’s the awesome part, all of this stuff we created doesn’t just go up in smoke as soon as we leave. It will be a part of the fully restored and redeemed city of God. Gods working to build this church and looking to make this town; all he asks is if we want in.” The full blog is at, <http://nyacvimcambodia.blogspot.com/>

Fundraiser Set For Olmsted Campers

Spencer C. Disher, president of the board of Five Points Mission, and the United Methodist Women of the New York Annual Conference will be honored at the Camp Olmsted Camper Scholarships Benefit on May 1.

Disher and the UMW will be recognized for their commitment to the service of children and their relationship with Olmsted Center and its programs. The 6 p.m. event at Park Avenue United Methodist Church in Manhattan will include refreshments, a short program and a silent auction.

Camp Olmsted is located in Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y., and often provides boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 13 years with their first opportunity to experience the world

outside of New York City. Last year, more than 70 percent of these children received financial assistance toward the camper fee of \$395. Donations from local churches, agencies and individuals help Five Points Mission provide scholarship support to these campers and to subsidize the real cost of \$900 per camper.

If you are interested in attending this event or providing scholarship support to Camp Olmsted, go to: www.umcitysociety.org

For more information about the camp program, visit the web site at www.campolmsted.org or contact April Callender, Associate Executive Director at acallender@umcitysociety.org, 212-870-3938.

Coordinator for Children, Families

Pound Ridge Community Church in Pound Ridge, N.Y., is seeking a part-time salaried coordinator of children and family ministries. The position will oversee existing programs, including Sunday school, and assist in outreach to families and community. The ideal candidate will have a strong personal faith, a love for children, and a track record of developing or growing ministries to children and their families. For more information, contact Rev. Lori Miller at, pastor@poundridgecommunitychurch.org.

Change the World: Five Years & Still Running

On May 17–18, United Methodists from across the country and around the world will pull together for an event to help Change the World in both large and small ways. For the fifth year, local churches will take on service projects that improve the circumstances of others and spark public interest in volunteer activities.

On Change the World Weekend, hundreds of United Methodist churches and thousands of church and community volunteers will deploy to parks, homeless shelters, food pantries, schools, health centers and more, to do what they can to help others. Since 2010, when the global service project began, countless volunteers from the United States and countries in Africa and the Philippines have completed more than 14,000 projects.

Churches look forward to Change the World weekend and end up developing projects that are sustainable by incorporating them into the life of their church and community. Congregations in the New York Conference have repaired and built homes, cleaned up parks, cemeteries, and roadways, planted flowers, painted houses, written letters to service personnel, sung at nursing homes, fed the homeless—just to name a few.

“Over the past five years, hundreds of thousands of United Methodists have rolled up their sleeves to take action to help local



Change the World projects in the conference have often included cleaning up local parks and waterways.

communities or those around the world,” said Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive at United Methodist Communications. “Change the World is an occasion to join hands and serve.”

Five years ago, the Rev. Mike Slaughter, United Methodist pastor and author, challenged church leaders to stop worrying about getting people into their church and start finding new ways to move people who are already there into God’s service.

With that invitation, United Methodist Communications began an effort to get congregations to move outside the four walls of sanctuaries and Sunday school classrooms to help others on a common weekend. So began the annual Change the World event.

Register your project now at

umcom.org/changetheworld. Churches who register their project(s) now can receive a free promotional kit while supplies last. The kit includes sermon starters, a lawn banner, a Rethink Church t-shirt, and more. After registering for the event, you can submit new details or edit your event anytime by emailing changetheworld@umcom.org.

Change the World is part of United Methodist Communications’ initiative to Rethink Church, which uses outreach events to encourage churches to make a positive difference in the world beyond church doors and provide opportunities for others to serve as well.

And please send your stories and photos, to: vision@nyac.com.

Encouraging Trust in the Wisdom of God

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministry

“How did the visit to the doctor go today?”

“Nothing is different that the last time, which means I’m still dying. I might not go back for my next appointment. What’s the use, my days are numbered anyway.”

A discussion followed about the results of making that decision. If he were seeing the doctor, would the doctor still prescribe the medicine that was keeping him comfortable? Might something other than his current diagnosis pop up that the doctor might easily treat? And on it went! The conversation ended with an observation and a reference to scripture.

It was Psalm 90:12.

After speaking of an eternal creator, who can and does “sweep us away like grass,” and of human fragility and God’s power, the Psalmist realizes that the only wise choice for him is to go with the will of God. “So teach us to measure our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Working and ministering with older adults every day, and increasingly becoming an older adult myself, it seems apparent that there is wisdom in this psalmist. As we age, it often becomes difficult to hold on to the old “certainties.” The canned responses learned in our younger years often prove false or unusable.

“Things will get better, they always do” becomes more difficult to believe as bodies and minds begin to fail. “God still has a purpose for you”



is more difficult to hear when you are confined to a bed or a wheelchair, dependent on others for help with the simple needs of life that you used to meet automatically.

“You’re still a vital part of this family, this group, this church, this community...” doesn’t feel likely when you can’t participate as fully as you once did.

It takes skill, determination, and courage—born of faith—to grow old trusting the wisdom of God, rather than our own rather limited wisdom. We do well to “measure our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” We do well to know we don’t have all the answers about the meaning and purpose of our lives and of the various ways they draw to a close.

One way I’ve discovered to help people see that wisdom, born of the awareness that their days are numbered and that there is a need to measure our days, came when seeking an answer to the woman who always seemed to be grouching about how old age “stinks,” and how limited she has become.

One morning she said, at breakfast, “I don’t know why I am still here.” “Neither do I,” was the reply, “but the fact is the fact, you are still here. The only question is what are you going to do about it. How are you going to live this day? Perhaps the question is better phrased, if I can’t do what I used to do, what can I still do that feels of value to me?”

“So teach us to measure our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” What a simple prayer! What a powerful reminder to those of us working and ministering with older adults. Our task is not to offer all the answers, but to offer a direction in which wisdom might be found.

‘Mission u’ Will Focus on Roma, Accessibility

Mission u 2014 is coming July 24–26 to the Western Connecticut University in Danbury. Don’t miss your opportunity to worship, learn, work, sing, and have a great time with fellow mission-minded United Methodists. As one of last year’s participants commented,

“As always, it has been a rich experience as we pray together study together, laugh and cry together. It was a privilege to be a part of the first ‘Mission u’.”

Studies available this year are:

How Is It With Your Soul?

Pray, learn, mentor and transform as an individual, church and world. Gain insights on these actions from biblical texts, Wesley and the early Methodists, and spiritual practices. Commit to these actions in your daily spiritual walk and become a more vibrant disciple of Christ. This study will be offered in English and in Korean.

The Roma of Europe

Learn about the lifestyle and spirituality of these Eastern Europeans, and investigate ways the church and other organizations are working alongside the Roma to combat a history of oppression and enslavement. This study will be offered in English.

The Church and People with Disabilities

This study will address issues of awareness,



Participants in the 2013 “Mission u” program package food for Stop Hunger Now.

accessibility and advocacy. What attitudinal and architectural barriers do individuals with disabilities encounter and how might the local church accommodate full participation of persons with vision, hearing and mobility loss? Also, how the church can become more welcoming to those with disabilities? This class will be offered in English, Korean, and Spanish.

Children’s and Youth Studies

Children and youth will explore their own versions of the people with disabilities study. Three classes will be available for children going into grades: K–4, 5–8, and 9–12 with lots of

age-appropriate activities. Bring children from your church and turn them on to mission.

Mission u will also host a hands-on mission fair and a meal-packing event for Stop Hunger Now, along with a resource room, lively worship, and lots of fun. More information, printable registration forms, and on-line registration are available at <http://nyac.com/missionu>.

One of last year’s students said, “One thing I did not like as much was . . . there actually wasn’t anything I didn’t like. Really enjoyed myself.”

How about you? Will we see you there?

Worth Reading: Walter Wink’s “Just Jesus”

BY REV. THOMAS W. GOODHUE

This reviewer should confess at the outset that I cannot possibly be an objective critic of Walter Wink’s memoir, “Just Jesus: My Struggle To Become Human.” (New York: Image, 2014). Walter Wink was my seminary professor, my thesis adviser, and my friend. My wife and I listened to parts of this volume as Walter struggled to write it in the face of advancing dementia.

Still, even allowing for my own biases—and one thing he taught was that it was better to recognize the limitations of your perspective than to pretend to be an objective observer—I think this is an amazing book.

Henri Nouwen said that ministers are called to be “wounded healers,” and Wink bravely lays bare his own wounds: those inflicted in youth, those delivered by his seminary colleagues, and those suffered from progressive illness as death drew near.

Some of these scars should serve as cautionary tales for the church. He describes the liberating, shattering Pentecostal experience he had as a young man, a transformative event that his church-related college and its chaplain viewed with deep suspicion. He tells us how nobody would publish the groundbreaking study of homosexuality in the Bible that the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church asked him to do in 1979, no doubt because he showed how we might agree with at most four of the sexual morays upheld in Scripture, while rejecting 16 of them.

I have taken many courses and workshops with Walter and his wife June over the past four decades, and “the communal exegesis” approach to Bible study was the best thing I ever did in parish ministry. Yet I still learned new things about him in this brief memoir. I also found some important contributions he has made to our understanding of the Bible that I have not seen before in print, such as his analysis of how Jesus is teaching uppity nonviolent resistance, not passive acceptance of injustice, when he urged downtrodden people to turn the other cheek and “go the second mile.”

There was also a more complete account than I’d heard before about how he snuck into South Africa from Lesotho in 1988 to teach nonviolent resistance to foes of apartheid, but there is much to learn in Just Jesus but there is also much inspiration for all of us who struggle to follow Jesus and become fully human.

Rev. Thomas W. Goodhue is executive director of the Long Island Council of Churches. You can reach him at, tomgoodhue@optonline.net, or 516-565-0290.



Why is it So Hard to Take Care of Ourselves?

BY REV. THOMAS W. GOODHUE

For many years my current appointment, the Long Island Council of Churches, has helped our neighbors with prescription assistance whenever we have the funds to do so, has helped educate health care professionals about how to understand their increasingly diverse patients, and has supported health care reform. Recently, with so many Long Islanders uninsured or underinsured, we have begun regularly sending out information on where people could turn for free and inexpensive health care.

The Apostle Paul reminded the young church in Corinth, “Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which you have from God? So give glory to God in your body.” It is not easy, though, for many of us to take care of the temple.

But recently I took advantage of one such option. Each year New York Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn offers weeklong stays at almost no cost to United Methodist clergy and their spouses. As the health plan for parsons requires higher deductibles, greater co-payments, and more burdensome “co-insurance fees” (the latter having absolutely nothing to do with co-insurance and everything to do with HMOs shifting costs to customers) the exams, tests, and consultations offered by New York Methodist Hospital would otherwise cost each of us thousands of dollars. And given the tendency of clergy to care for others better than we take care of ourselves, many of us would never get around to many routine health screenings.

As part of the program, we also toured the pediatric emergency room, talked with a pair of cardiac surgeons, learned about good nutrition, and heard about the important ministry of chaplains at NYM. These clergy and spouse clinics are a wonderful program, the staff at New York Methodist Hospital was terrific, and I am deeply grateful to the hospital.

It is a pity that more of my colleagues do not sign up. (The next clinic for clergy and spouses is Oct. 27–31.) You might encourage those to do so and to generally take care of themselves. As one pastor said at our clergy clinic, “I realized today that if I am cheerful and healthy it helps the church to be cheerful and healthy.”

It is sad, though, that an institution affiliated by my denomination needs to fill the yawning gaps in the health insurance provided by my denomination to those who have committed



The participants in the March clergy and spouses clinic at New York Methodist Hospital were still smiling after four days of medical tests and screenings. From right are: Joanne Utley, Elizabeth Braddon, George McClain, Denise Pickett, Dottie Morris, T. Anne Daniel, Won Guen Kang, Tom Goodhue, Bob Kersten and Susan Woodworth.

their lives to its service. Even worse, many people who work in the health care industry have no coverage at all. As the car mechanic in that old ad for air filters put it, “You can pay me now, or you can pay me later.”

Why don’t all HMOs pay for preventative care that in the long run saves us all much money and heartache? Why should home health care aides or nursery school teachers or pastors have to worry about whether or not they can afford the a test their physician wants them to have? Do we really want the people who care for the elderly, those who teach the young, and the cleric who serves you the sacraments

to be sick? Do we want them to spread germs they caught from the kids, the elderly, or their parishioners to new people because they haven’t met their deductible yet and consequently fear the expense of seeing a doctor? Do we want them to delay diagnosis and treatment end up far worse, suddenly leaving our parents, our children, and our congregations in the lurch?

I am not a fan of the Affordable Care Act enacted by Congress, which somehow came to be called “ObamaCare” even though they pretty much copied what Mitt Romney did in Massachusetts. Yes, the ACA guarantees some coverage of preventative care and is making

insurance affordable to many Americans, but it does little to contain medical costs and is making coverage less affordable for many people. I wish that the president and Congress had copied Canada’s plan—or Hawaii’s, or Britain’s, or France’s, or Germany’s, or almost anyone other than Romney’s. I might even have preferred a libertarian approach to making insurance affordable by addressing the ways in which government actions make health care more expensive—instead of giving away the store, and our tax dollars, to special interests.

If you would like to be on the distribution list for e-blasts from the Long Island Council of Churches about health care resources, please send me your email address. If you are a physician, chaplain, or other health care professional and would like us to do a workshop on how to better serve diverse patients, give me a call. And if you feel as I do that our health coverage system is not working, let your elected officials know that they need to fix it.

If you’re interested in the fall clinic, contact Rev. Elizabeth Braddon at elizabeth.braddon@gmail.com, for more information. Registration is limited to 12.

Rev. Thomas W. Goodhue is executive director of the Long Island Council of Churches. You can reach him at tomgoodhue@optonline.net or 516-565-0290.

COMMENTARY

OBITUARIES

Rev. Jack Larry Sharpe

The Reverend Jack Larry Sharpe, who served as a U.S. Navy chaplain for some 25 years, died March 31. He was 74, and lived in of Matthews, N.C.

Sharpe was born in West Point, Ga., but attended high school and Birmingham Southern College in Alabama. While attending Duke Divinity School, he met fellow student Jean Clark; they were married in 1965 in the Duke University Chapel.

He was ordained as an elder in 1968 in the North Alabama Annual Conference. After serving churches in Alabama, he became a chaplain at Norwich State Hospital in Norwich, Conn., which prompted a transfer to the New York Conference in 1970.

After his appointment to Ridges UMC in Stamford from 1970 to 1972, he joined the U.S. Navy as a chaplain, serving until 1997 when he retired at the rank of captain. During his long naval career, he served with USMC infantry battalions and on board naval vessels including the USS Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier. He served various shore commands also that included hospitals, the Chaplain Resource Board, and the Armed Forces Staff College.

Sharpe took on one last pastoral appointment to Sayville UMC in Connecticut, before retiring from the NYAC in 2002.

Three years later, the Sharpes moved to North Carolina to be near their children and grandchildren. Rev. Sharpe loved to play golf, sports, reading and gardening.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Jean Clark Sharpe; daughter Beth Sharpe of Charlotte, and her daughters; their son, Chris Sharpe (Kristen) of Indian Trail, and their children. He is also leaves two sisters, as well as several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held April 5 at St. Stephen UMC, 6800 Sardis Road, Charlotte, N.C., 28270. Rev. Tom Latimer officiated. Memorial gifts may be made to St. Stephen Church.

Evelyn Cole Viets

Evelyn Cole Viets died on March 24 at the Bishop Wicke Health Center in Shelton, Conn., in the company of her children. A native of West Haven, Conn., she attended Larson Junior College and graduated from New Haven State Teachers College in 1944. She later earned a master's degree in early childhood education from Southern Connecticut State College and C.W. Post College.

She married Rev. Wallace T. Viets, a United

Methodist pastor from Schenectady, N.Y., in 1944. The couple met in 1938 at Geneva Point Camp on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire.

During World War II, Viets directed a care center for children whose parents worked in arms factories. Her teaching career spanned 40 years and included pioneering research into the inequities of racial and cultural bias in early childhood aptitude testing. Her love of children endured throughout her life and extended to volunteering in the pediatric unit at Griffin Hospital after her retirement.

The couple raised four children, making homes in New York and Connecticut during pastoral appointments in the Troy and New York Conferences. They retired to Wesley Village in Shelton in 1983 where they enjoyed an active retirement with extensive travel, choir singing, and reading for Recording for the Blind. She moved to the Bishop Wicke Health Center in 2008 where she was known for her high energy and enthusiasm.

Rev. Viets pre-deceased his wife in 2010, after nearly 66 years of marriage. She is survived by four children: Raymond (Victoria) of Vienna, Va; Robert of Waitsfield Vt.; Wesley (Marian) of San Jose Calif.; and Marian (Philip) Carter, Fair Haven, N.J; and five grandchildren: Ryan and Whitney Viets, and Christopher, Mattison and Bradley Carter.

A service celebrating her life is planned for this spring. Burial will be at the Grove Street Cemetery in New Haven.

Memorial donations can be made to the Bishop Wicke Health Center, 584 Long Hill Ave, Shelton, CT, 06484.

Lois Anderson

Lois Anderson died March 21 at St. Raphael's Hospital, New Haven, Conn.

She attended Prospect, Conn., schools and graduated from Wilby High School in 1960.

Anderson was preceded in death in 1997 by her husband, the Reverend Mark Anderson, former pastor of the UMC of Branford.

An active member of St. Andrew's Church, New Haven, Anderson was the chairperson of the church missions/outreach committee, a member of the board of trustees, and served on the staff-parish relations committee.

She is survived by her daughters, Deanna Legg of West Virginia and Laura Machnicz of Wallingford, Conn.; her son Jeffrey Marslano of West Virginia; six grandchildren including Paige Machnicz whom Anderson raised for 14 years; two sisters, Sandra Holland of Florida and Sarah Medes of Prospect and a brother Fred

Desjardins of Maine, as well as several nieces and nephews. She is also predeceased by a brother, Rene (Curly) Desjardins of Maine.

A memorial service and celebration of life was held at the UMC of Branford on April 5. The family requests that memorial gifts in may be sent to the UMC of Branford, 811 E. Main St., Branford, Conn., 06405.

Rev. Lewis C. Johnson

The Reverend Lewis C. Johnson died March 7 at Calvary Hospital in New York City, after a long illness. He was an Episcopal priest, pastoral psychotherapist, and husband of the Reverend Thea Crites, deacon in the New York Annual Conference.

Father Johnson was a pastor, therapist and consultant on behalf of the Episcopal Diocese of New York to many parishes on matters of congregational life, development and mission. He was ordained a priest in 1981, and after a curacy in Massachusetts, came to the Diocese of New York in the mid-1980s, serving parishes in Montgomery, Walden and Monroe.

Drawn to the ministry of both counseling and parish priesthood, he completed his education at the Blanton-Peale Institute in 1989 and began a concurrent psychoanalytic practice. From 2000 to 2005, he served as assisting priest at St. Michael's Church in New York City, and then, from 2005 to 2013, as vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd on Roosevelt Island.

A requiem eucharist was held March 22 in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in Manhattan.

Condolences may be sent to Crites and his son, Peter Johnson, at hithea2012@gmail.com. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in his name to City Harvest, at www.cityharvest.org, or (646) 412-0643.

Rev. William Forest Rogers

The Reverend William Forest Rogers, former member of the New York Conference, died on December 19, 2013, at the age of 89.

In 1946, he married Ruth Allen, who survives in Catskill, N.Y.

Known as "Bill" to his family and friends, he served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Rogers answered God's call to ministry at about age 34, and received his elder's orders in the former New York East Conference in 1963. His appointments included East Berlin and Rocky Hill, both in Connecticut, and congregations in New York: Cairo Charge (Cairo, Round Top and South Cairo),

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'Three Simple Rules' for Social Media

In his book "Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living," retired United Methodist Bishop Rueben P. Job uses John Wesley's three general rules to give Christians a guide for living a faithful life. The book is published by the United Methodist Publishing House.

The rules from Wesley, the founder of Methodism, are simple: "Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God."

These rules also apply to how we live our online lives in social media. Rev. Dan Gangler, director of communications in the Indiana Conference, expanded on Job's ideas in his article "3 Simple Rules for Social Media." Michael Rich, communications coordinator in Western North Carolina Conference, did the same in his article "Social Media—3 Simple Rules." Both advise ways to follow the rules when using social media.

Rule #1: Do no harm.

Job writes, "To do no harm means that I will be on guard so that all my actions and even my silence will not add injury to another of God's children or to any part of God's creation." Doing no harm means respecting the cultures and life situations of those with whom we minister.

When we engage with others online, we may forget that living, breathing people with thoughts and feelings are on the other end of the digital conversation. With almost 70 percent of all communication being nonverbal, we may easily misunderstand what someone is trying to convey or how another interprets our intentions. It is easy to focus so much on proving a particular point that we cause unintended harm.

When engaging in social media activities, take the time to discern both the intention and the potential consequences of online engagement:

What is the intent of the post? Does it show Christ's love or does it focus on judgment and condemnation?

OBITUARIES

Continued from page 12

Woodstock, and Ravena

Rev. Rogers transferred his conference membership to the Troy Conference (now Upper New York) along with the Ravena Church in 1977. He retired in 1987.

Other survivors include, sons, Forest A. Rogers of Connecticut, and William L. Rogers of Hannacroix, N.Y.; three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Do I speak disparagingly about anyone involved? Do I try to use facts and opinions to manipulate others to my viewpoint?

Could this post "do harm" to the reputation of Christ, the church or another person or organization?

Could someone interpret the post as harmful, offensive, rude or distasteful?

Does this interaction recognize each person involved as a "loved child of God—a recipient of love unearned, unlimited and underserved—just like myself"?

Rule #2: Do good.

Job writes, "My desire to do good is in response to God's invitation to follow Jesus, and it is in my control. I can determine to extend hospitality and goodness to all I meet." Doing all the good we can means to engage others proactively in a way that "nourished goodness and strengthens community." Assess every word and act to determine if it brings God's grace and goodness to others.

Whether it is Facebook, Instagram or something else, social media very quickly embeds us in other people's lives. How we engage online can have a profound effect on the people with whom we connect. Use social media to extend hospitality and goodness to all or to demonstrate God's love to digital neighbors.

Whether engaging as an individual or as a representative of your church, think about every status update, comment or post as an outlet of "doing good."

Would you describe the post as "good"? Does it reflect God's interest or your own self-interest or will? Does it serve the good of the community and those in it?

Will it help God's reign and fellow believers? How will those outside the church perceive it?

How will people of different cultural or faith backgrounds receive it?

Do you communicate effectively by asking questions and providing information?

Rule #3: Stay in love with God.

Job writes that as we stay in love with God, we "find our moral direction, our wisdom, our courage, our strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustains us, and sends us into the world as witnesses who daily practice the way of living with Jesus."

Social media can be a powerful channel to "re-present" Christ to the community outside the church building. Stories can show how God transforms lives, communities and the world. Social media provides ways to share those stories that help all of us to "stay in love with God."

Social media, like other ministry, can lead to emotional burnout and exhaustion. We can overextend ourselves in too many people's lives or engage in too many concerns. We must find a balance between sharing God's love and sustaining efforts over time.

What stories can you tell or share online to help others stay in love with God?

How does social media help you to stay in love with God? How does it hinder you?

How can your social media contribution help others stay in love with God?

Handle with care

Social media is another channel to minister to those around us, but it must be used carefully. Words or comments posted online can go viral in a matter of hours. Focusing on "doing no harm, doing good and staying in love with God" can help ensure that we make a positive impact in the world.

Josiah Pens Book on Aging

Rev. Winson C. Josiah, a retired elder in the New York Annual Conference, has written a book dealing with life and relationships from the cradle to the grave.

According to a book summary, "Aging, Embrace It!" offers "how to" applications on how to make life changes by developing a personal character. The book . . . gives "hope and peace in the midst of ailments, discouragement, bereavement, old age, loneliness, and approaching death. It is about caring for yourself as a human being, while you are alive!"

As a licensed marriage and family therapist, Josiah provides pre-marital and marital counseling, helping couples and families to enjoy the gift of life in relationships.

The book is available through www.xulonpress.com.

