

"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

May 2016

Deportation Plan Focus Of Prayer Service

BY LINDA BLOOM
UM News Service

Tereza Lee, a straight-A student in Chicago's public schools, was so dedicated to her education that she won a savings bond for having perfect attendance from kindergarten through eighth grade.

It was only when Lee tried to cash the bond that she discovered what else separated her from the other students: she was undocumented.

Call her the original "dreamer"—inspiration for the U.S. Senate legislation, also known as the DREAM Act, which would stop the deportation of young people who arrived in the United States illegally.

Being undocumented was a terrifying reality that potentially could split Lee's Korean family who had emigrated from Latin America when she was 2 years old.

"If we were separated, I would be sent to Brazil, which is completely foreign to me; my parents sent to Korea and my brother, who was born here, to foster care somewhere in Chicago," she remembered.

The threat of family separation and deportation was highlighted during an interfaith prayer vigil for immigration reform, held April 25 at the United Methodist Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew

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Fred Brewington (at microphone) asks the General Conference to apologize to fellow delegate Dorothee Benz (second from right) after she was ruled out of order while trying to speak about issues of human sexuality in an earlier session.

The Highs & Lows of GC2016

BY JOEY BUTLER
*UM News Service, with
additional local reporting*

Believe it or not, General Conference 2016 spent more than twice as much time debating a Rule of Order than the hot topic of human sexuality. After almost three days of considering an alternative method for discussing legislation, The United Methodist Church's top legislative body referred its most difficult subject—sexuality—to a study commission and moved on to other matters.

A move to adjourn at 6:30 every night meant no late-night sessions and hopefully healthier, less stressed attendees. During 10 days in Portland, delegates passed an increased budget, celebrated a number of church milestones and voted to create a new version of the hymnal.

No to Rule 44

The first three days of General Conference offered



UMNS PHOTOS



Members of the I.M.A.G.E. choir from Vanderveer Park UMC in Brooklyn sing during a morning worship service.

a live demonstration of just how difficult following its rules of order can be as delegates wavered back and forth on using Rule 44, a proposed group-discernment process to deal with particularly complicated and contentious legislation such as

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For a full lineup of events, go to: www.nyac.com/conferencecalendar.

6/4: Safe Sanctuaries Training

This Safe Sanctuaries Workshop, at Canaan UMC in Canaan, Conn., is designed for congregations who don't have a written policy. The workshop prepares a core team of 4-5 to work with the congregation to write a policy, as well as provides information on how to train trustees, teachers, parents and pastors on the implementation of that policy. Check-in begins at 9:30 a.m.; workshop from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. To register: www.nyac.com/eventdetail/4656697.

6/8-10 Annual Conference

Clergy and laity will gather for the 217th gathering of the New York Conference at Hofstra University on Long Island. More information and registration details can be found at www.nyac.com/2016annualconference. Clergy can register for the health screening at annual conference by selecting HealthFlex/WebMD and Quest Blueprint for Wellness online at www.gbophb.org. See related story on Page 4.

6/18 Come Celebrate with Song & Dance

Grace UMC in St. Albans is hosting a gospel concert to benefit the ministries of the United Methodist Center in Far Rockaway, Queens. The 3 p.m. concert at 200-08 Murdock Avenue, St. Albans, will feature the Shepherd's Singers, God's Anointed Dancers from Springfield Gardens UMC, and Pure Praise Dancers from Kings Highway UMC. The fundraising goal is \$5,000.

6/19 Father's' Day Rally Invitation

The United Methodist Men are encouraging participation in the Prostate Health Education Network's eighth annual "Father's Day Rally Against Prostate Cancer." Congregations are invited to plan a rally in their church in support of this important initiative. More information is available.

July & August Conference Office Closing

Throughout July and August, the conference offices that have relocated to Greenwich, Conn., will be closed on Fridays. The offices will also be closed on Monday, July 4, for the holiday.

7/11-15 NEJ 2016 Conference

"Quilted by Connection" is the theme for the quadrennial gathering of the 10 annual conferences in the Northeastern Jurisdiction of the UMC. Bishops for the jurisdiction will be elected and assigned during this meeting at the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square, Lancaster, Penn. More information and registration details can be found at www.nejumc.org/2016conference.html.

7/22-24 "Mission u" On the Move

"Mission u" will be meeting all under one roof at the Stamford Hilton in Stamford, Conn. The studies will include the Bible and human sexuality, Latin America, and climate justice. Additional details will be available at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/3167094.

8/29-31 Global UM Clergywomen Gathering 2016

Under the theme: "ONE: Birthing a Worldwide Church," United Methodist clergywomen will gather at the World Methodist Conference at the Hilton-Americas Hotel and Conference Center in Houston. This gathering will serve as the culmination of regional gatherings of United Methodist clergywomen that have taken place throughout the connection. If you have any questions please contact clergy lifelonglearning@gbhem.org.

10/1 Prison Ministry Symposium


The Conference Board of Church & Society will present a conference-wide symposium entitled, "I Was In Prison And You . . ." from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Grace UMC, 125 104th St, N.Y., N.Y.

11/7-9 Revitup! For Young Clergy

The "revitup for a Lifetime of Ministry" gathering will help young clergy strengthen personal, financial and leadership skills to improve their lives and sustain their ministries. The event, sponsored by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, is planned for the B Resort & Spa in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Continuing education credits are available. Check for more details and registration info at www.gbophb.org/events/revitup/.

Vision Deadlines for 2016

The Vision is a monthly online publication of the New York Conference. Deadlines are always the first Friday of the month, with posting to the web site about 10 days later. The deadlines for 2016 are as follows: June 3, July 1, Aug. 5, Sept. 2, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, and Dec. 2. Please send any stories, photos, ideas, or questions directly to vision@nyac.com.

 <p>The Vision</p> <p>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</p>
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Prayer Service Focuses on Deportation Plan

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in Manhattan. Currently, there are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S., and 2.5 million have been deported during the past seven years.

Sponsored by the New York Conference and the New Sanctuary Coalition, the prayer vigil included testimonies, prayers, hymns and a call to action led by Emma Escobar, a grassroots organizer for immigration with the United Methodist Board of Church and Society.

A week earlier, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments regarding the legality of two immigration policies of the Obama Administration that would defer deportation for about 5 million immigrants. The policies are the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents program (DAPA) and an expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA).

Gifts of Immigrants

“One of the greatest gifts migrants bring is that of diversity... that’s what has made this country strong through the years,” said New York Interim Bishop Jane Allen Middleton. To exclude those gifts of immigrants “is to diminish what this nation can be.”

Those who have citizenship may find it hard to imagine the fears, uncertainty and anguish that the undocumented face every day, she noted, in a political landscape that has fostered “a strange kind of xenophobia” targeting anyone considered to be an “other.”

Middleton’s immigrant great-grandparents “didn’t live in fear of their family being torn apart by deportation,” she said. “They found a welcoming community. This is what I wish for fellow migrants who are now among us.”

The prayer service leaders particularly encouraged immediate action against two bills related to onerous new requirements on



Participants, above, join hands in a call to action during an interfaith prayer service for immigration reform at St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC. Tereza Lee, far left, and Angelica Idrovo shared their immigration stories.

refugee resettlement—H.R. 4631, a bill that has passed committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, and New York Senate Bill 6253.

Learning to cope

Lee coped with her family’s lack of status by doing what she does best—playing the piano. A rich parishioner gave her a piano as a thank-you to her father, a Presbyterian pastor, for his ministry. “I practiced and practiced and practiced as if my life depended on it,” she said.

At the age of 17, she finally revealed her family’s status to a music teacher pushing her to apply for college. Lee and the teacher eventually contacted their U.S. senator about her situation.

“Senator Dick Durbin was

sympathetic and he wanted to help, but there was no legal remedy as of yet,” Lee recalled. “So he began to write a personal bill... which eventually became known as the DREAM act.”

Lee and a few others were scheduled to fly to Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, to testify at a Senate hearing the next day. Both the flights and the hearing were cancelled after the terrorist attacks. “Fifteen years later, today, we are still fighting for immigrant reform,” she said.

Now 33, Lee is married, a U.S. citizen and working on a doctorate at the Manhattan School of Music. But she remains active in the fight for other undocumented families. “I do believe in prayer,” she said. “I also believe in awareness and

becoming educated about what is really going on.”

Twenty-year-old Angelica Idrovo—who came to the United States from Ecuador when she was 12, along with her parents and two brothers—also has done her best to cope.

Despite being a straight-A student, her legal status closed most scholarship opportunities to her, so she has worked two jobs while attending community college. She will graduate with an associate’s degree this spring.

“The difference between me and you is just paper,” Idrovo told those at the prayer service.

Bloom is a United Methodist News Service multimedia reporter based in New York.

Many Ways to Worship at Annual Conference

This message is the fourth in a series from Director of Connectional Ministries Matt Curry detailing what happens at annual conference.

*Ascribe to the Lord... glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.*

—Psalm 29:1–2
New International Version (NIV)

An integral part of each annual conference is the opportunity for the NYAC community to worship together. This year's worship team led by co-chairs Rev. Heather Sinclair, First UMC in Greenwich and Rev. Alex da Silva Souto, New Milford UMC, is comprised of more than 25 lay and clergy members of our conference, in addition to a music team led by Raymond Trapp, Vanderveer Park UMC. These talented individuals have shared many gifts to create exciting multi-sensory worship.

Annual conference begins at 1 p.m. on Wednesday with opening worship that includes a message and singing from historical figures from the New York area of the Methodist Church. Bishop Middleton will be preaching. Her sermon title is 'Sent Forth by The Spirit'.

Worship continues Thursday morning at 6:15 a.m. with communion led by those who will be ordained as elders this year. At 8:30 a.m., the day officially begins with opening prayer led by our six district superintendents. The Service of Remembrance and Holy Communion is held before lunch. After lunch, the conference recognizes those who are

retiring in the Celebration of Retirement Service.

Worship on Friday also begins with the 6:15 a.m. communion led by the class of 2016 commissioned and provisional members. At 8:30 a.m., a time of prayer led by Rev. Laurel Scott, UMC of Port Washington, and the NYAC prayer team gathers the body for the day ahead. Before lunch, the body will participate in a special service, "Come to the Table: A Service of Repentance and Reconciliation for the Sins of the Church Against People of African Ancestry." The day concludes with the service of healing and anointing led by Pastor Debbi Mygatt, Jesse Lee Memorial UMC, and the NYAC anointing teams.

Annual conference concludes on Saturday with the ordination/commissioning/recognition service. Ordination is an important service for clergy because it provides them the opportunity to renew their vows and recommit themselves to their ministry. During that service, four local pastors will be given their license; four deacons and nine elders will be commissioned, and one deacon and 13 elders will be ordained! Bishop Minerva Carcaño of the California-Pacific Conference will preach a message entitled, "Go . . . In Jesus' Name."

Opportunities to worship the Lord in splendor abound. Many of the services will be live-streamed so please join us virtually if you are not able to be present. You can find the link on our web page, www.nyac.com.



Solitary Confinement Cell Replica at Conference

The Conference Board of Church and Society (CBCS) extends an invitation to experience a project to raise awareness about conditions in our prisons and to work for change in the criminal justice system.

Acknowledging that the very first ministry of John Wesley was visiting the prisoners at Castle Prison in Oxford, the CBCS is partnering with the National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT) to bring a life-sized replica of a long-term solitary confinement cell to annual conference next month.

The cell replica will be on view in the exhibit area at Hofstra University from June 8–10. People will be able to enter the cell, hear testimony about the effects on the minds, hearts and souls of those therein confined, and learn about ways to work for change in the system that perpetrates this method of imprisonment.

Many organizations around the country are actively working to end long-term solitary confinement, which the United Nations has defined as torture. The CBCS is sponsoring a 2016 resolution to support a bill currently before the New York State Legislature—Humane Alternatives to Long Term solitary (HALT). In addition to displaying the cell replica, CBCS will be organizing a campaign to push the NYS legislature to enact this bill, which is considered a model piece of legislation for the country.

The presence of this cell replica on Long Island offers the opportunity for nearby churches to visit and learn more about current criminal justice issues. Youth groups, study groups, women's and men's groups are invited to organize a field trip to the Hofstra arena to take advantage of this hands-on learning experience. For more information, contact Sheila Peiffer, coordinator for CBCS' social justice organizing, engagement and advocacy, at 203-269-5317.



PHOTO COURTESY JESSICA BRENDLER NAULTY
Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty sits in a replica solitary confinement cell set up at the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference on May 24.

“Year of the YAM” Dinner Celebration

In honor of 12 years of ministry, the Youth Ambassadors in Mission (YAM) program invites its alumni to a dinner celebration on Friday, June 10. All YAM participants—from 2005 through 2016—are invited to the 5 p.m. dinner at Hofstra University during annual conference for this “Year of the YAM” event.

The Youth Ambassadors in Mission ministry focuses on one simple purpose: making disciples for Christ. This is accomplished by nurturing young leaders in the Christian faith, teaching them how to love and serve God's children anywhere in this world, and instilling a Wesleyan/holiness spirit of evangelism and social responsibility.

During the event, YAM alumni will share stories of the ways in which the experience changed their lives. Many YAMs have gone on to serve in a variety of ministries. Some accepted the call into fulltime ministry and are attending seminary; others are serving in the missionary field.

Those who attend will receive a yearbook with photos and stories chronicling their mission experiences. Pastors, parents, family, and friends are invited to attend this YAM celebration.

Please register online for the dinner scheduled for the Multipurpose Room in the Student Center at Hofstra. The cost is \$25 for adults, and \$10 for youth 18 and under.

THE PROCESS OF ELECTING UMC BISHOPS

Conference Must Decide If, and Who, to Endorse

BY MARGARET HOWE
Conference Secretary

During the last couple of weeks, many of us have been watching the activities, actions and reactions taking place at General Conference in Portland. We have been praying, liking, sharing, and commenting on what we have read and seen. And, all of us love our United Methodist Church—may peace and love prevail among us.

At the New York Annual Conference, which meets June 8–11, several important decisions concerning episcopal leadership will be made. The body will vote:

- Whether or not to endorse any episcopal candidates,
- If yes, how many candidates to endorse, and then,
- On the actual candidates to endorse according to our conference rules.

As this event occurs only once every four years, it is important to review and become familiar with the process so that all will be unified and smooth.

You should refer to the 2015 Journal, Section X—Conference Rules. In Section X scroll down to item L—Endorsement of Episcopal Candidates. Rules 99 to 102 detail the process.

Members of the annual conference may submit the names of any UMC ordained elder to be considered as a candidate

for the episcopacy, following the information outlined in Rule 99. The form for episcopal endorsements is available to download. It is imperative that this form be completed correctly and that all lay and clergy signers are voting members of the annual conference. Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

Petitions for episcopal candidates will be received until the conclusion of verbal nominations during Wednesday afternoon of the annual conference session. Send petitions to the conference secretary by June 1 via email to confsecy@nyac.com. After June 1, endorsement petitions must be hand delivered to the conference secretary at Hofstra University.

The conference secretary will prepare the written ballot with the names of candidates for whom there are valid petitions. A majority of the valid ballots cast (50 percent + 1) shall be required for endorsement. The rules for balloting shall be in accordance with Rules 91-97. Voting will take place on Friday morning.

When something is not part of our daily routine, we forget the sequence of activities, so please take the time to review the process. If you have any additional questions, please email me at confsecy@nyac.com.



Sandra Steiner Ball, kneeling, and Martin D. McLee, seated, are consecrated as bishops on the final day of the 2013 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in Charleston, W.Va.

Bishops Elected, Assigned At Jurisdictional Meetings

When the five jurisdictional conferences in the United States gather to meet on July 11–15, their main priority will be the election of new bishops. The Northeastern Jurisdiction (NEJ) will meet in Lancaster, Penn., to elect two new bishops for its nine episcopal areas encompassing 10 annual conferences. The conferences in the NEJ, in addition to New York, are: New England, Upper New York, Susquehanna, Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware-Peninsula, West Virginia, Baltimore-Washington, and Virginia.

The departures of Bishops Jane Allen Middleton and Marcus Matthews will leave two vacancies in the NEJ episcopal areas. Middleton is completing her term as interim for the New York area following the death of Martin McLee. Matthews, who serves the Baltimore-Washington Conference, is retiring at the end of August.

There was a possibility that the NEJ would need to reduce the number of bishops from nine to eight due to its declining

membership rolls. The threshold number for retaining nine episcopal areas is 500,000; the Northeastern Jurisdiction claims about 440,000 United Methodists, according to 2014 worship attendance numbers from the General Council on Finance and Administration. But the 2016 General Conference enacted resolutions submitted by the NEJ Committee on the Episcopacy (COE) to put a moratorium on reducing the number of bishops.

The episcopacy committee has released the following announcement:

“The NEJ Committee on Episcopacy’s missional request for nine residential bishops for the 2016–2020 quadrennium was strongly supported by the Inter-Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy during General Conference 2016. The adopted episcopal fund budget supports this recommendation. The Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in July 2016 will elect two new episcopal leaders.

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Candidate Interviews

Listen to the [audio interviews](#) of nine of ten candidates that the NYAC’s delegation to General and Jurisdictional conferences questioned on January 30.

GBHEM Releases New Candidacy Guidebook

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has released a new candidacy guidebook, “Answering the Call: Candidacy Guidebook.”

Designed for group candidacy mentoring, this resource provides a more robust discussion of United Methodist beliefs, and defines the sharp distinction between the discernment and the application processes. It includes a guide to assist mentors as they lead discussions and prepare mentor reports.

The guidebook features two new chapters, “Health and Wholeness,” and “Financial Literacy” to help candidates fully understand health considerations and educational expenses.

“Our hope with this new edition is that we have been responsive to conferences as they have developed a model for mentoring in candidacy

groups as well as addressing some of the emerging needs of candidates regarding health and financial literacy,” noted Rev. Meg Lassiat, editor of the guidebook and director of Candidacy, Mentoring, and Conference Relations for the Division of Ordained Ministry at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Candidates who have begun using the 2009 Guidebook, *Fulfilling God’s Call*, may complete that edition rather than changing books midstream.

Candidates and conference representatives can order the new guidebook through the United Methodist Candidate and Record Entry System (UMCARES). An electronic version of the guidebook is currently available. For additional information, please contact the Candidacy Office at candidacy@gbhem.org.

Jurisdictional Conferences Elect Bishops

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“Persons exploring nomination or persons endorsed by annual conferences or approved ethnic caucuses can find the biography forms on the NEJ web site’s episcopal candidates information links below the rules information. With late annual conferences this year, please review materials in advance if you are a potential nominee and note important dates.”

Candidate Interviews

Each episcopal nominee will complete an information form that is reproduced and sent to each NEJ delegate, reserve delegate, youth representative, and the College of Bishops.

On Tuesday, July 12, the candidates who have been endorsed by annual conferences, one of the recognized UM caucuses, or self-nominated will appear before eight groups of clergy and lay delegates and youth representatives to make the case for their selection.

The analogy could be drawn that the process is a little like “speed-dating.” The candidates move from group to group following a timed schedule. The interview groups are designated by the jurisdiction and represent a mix of geographically diverse clergy and laity. They will have predetermined questions to ask the candidates, who must be ordained elders in the UMC.

Usually the candidates will walk through the process with a trusted supporter or confidante by their side. The companion will often introduce the candidate to each group of delegates. After the interview process, the laity and clergy will meet in plenary to begin the voting process.

Election Process

The voting is similar to that at annual conference with the use of electronic devices. It may take several rounds of voting before an

election is attained. At the 2012 NEJ Conference, it took 35 ballots to elect three new bishops, including Martin D. McLee. The delegation from each conference may choose to vote collectively for one candidate, or they may split their votes. As each round moves forward, only those with a pre-determined number of votes continue on the ballot.

The number of votes needed to elect a bishop is determined by each jurisdictional conference, but the church’s *Book of Discipline* recommends that at least 60 percent of those present and voting be required to elect.

Assignment of Bishops

After the election of new bishops, the NEJ Committee on Episcopacy will continue the discernment process of matching bishops to episcopal areas. They will use the profile reports developed by each episcopal area as well as their interviews with the current and new bishops to determine assignments for 2016–2020. The current NEJ episcopacy committee is made up of one clergy person and one lay member from each conference that has served for the last four years. Rev. Bill Shillady and Fred Brewington represent the New York Conference.

Bishops are assigned to serve a geographical area for four years at a time, and normally will serve the same area for two terms. They can continue in a third term for missional reasons with special approval of the committee on episcopacy. Their assignments begin on September 1 following their election.

Bishops who have served at least two terms in their current assignments are Thomas J. Bickerton of the Pittsburgh Area (12 years), and Peggy A. Johnson of the Philadelphia Area (eight years.) Bishops Sudarshana Devadhar, Jeremiah J. Park, John R. Schol, Mark Webb, and Sandra Steiner Ball are all completing the first four years in their assignments.

The tradition has been that new bishops are not assigned to the area where they were a clergy person for at least four years after their election. According to ¶406 of the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, this restriction can be ignored by a two-thirds vote of the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy and a two-thirds vote of the jurisdictional conference.

Even though there was a petition at General Conference to limit the terms of bishops, the measure failed when it did not receive a two-thirds majority required for a constitutional change. So U.S. bishops are elected for life, but must retire if they reach age 68 on or before July 1 of the year of jurisdictional conferences. This ensures that no bishop is serving under appointment beyond his or her 72nd birthday—the current mandatory retirement age in the UMC. They may choose to retire earlier.

Consecration of Bishops

Following their assignment to specific episcopal areas, the bishops will meet with the gathered members of their new conference/s for introductions and questions. This occurs on Friday morning of the jurisdictional conference.

Newly elected bishops are then consecrated in a worship service through the laying-on-of-hands by the bishops present. The president of the College of Bishops (all active and retired bishops who have served in the jurisdiction) usually presides over the consecration service. Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, episcopal leader of the West Virginia Area, is the current NEJ College of Bishops president.

In the United Methodist tradition, clergy are not ordained as bishops, but are elected and consecrated to the office of bishop. They remain elders in the denomination, but become ordained members of the Council of Bishops instead of an annual conference.

—Recent New Appointments—

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton intends to make the following appointments at the 2016 session of the New York Annual Conference, to be effective July 1:

Peggy Fabrizio to Zion's Hill UMC (LFT). Fabrizio currently serves Poughkeepsie UMC.

Lillian Hertel to West Hills UMC (LFT). Hertel currently serves Hampton Bays UMC (LFT).

Steve Kim to UMC of Huntington-Cold Spring Harbor (LFT). Kim currently serves Zion's Hill UMC.

Michelle Lewis to the New Rochelle UMC. Lewis currently serves the Catskill UMC.

Gene Ott to an emerging ministry called New Ministry to New People (LFT). Ott will continue to serve the Yorktown UMC (LFT).

Jessica Anschutz to an emerging ministry called New Ministry to New People (LFT). Anschutz will continue to serve the Open Doors Cooperative Parish (LFT).

Michael Cobb to the Yorktown UMC (LFT)(DH).

Dorett Johnson-Agu to East Meadow UMC (LFT). Pastor Johnson-Agu currently serves Church of the Good Shepherd UM (LFT) and the South Floral Park UMC (LFT).

Gia Hall to Church of the Good Shepherd UM (LFT) and the South Floral Park UMC (LFT). Hall currently serves the West Hills UMC.

Sun Lee to the UMC of East Berlin (LFT)(DH). Lee is currently unappointed. (This appointment is effective August 1, 2016).

Sharon Petgrave-Cundy to the UM Parish in Bushwick (LFT). Petgrave-Cundy will continue to serve Sheepshead Bay UMC (LFT).

George Mangan to Christ UMC in Beacon, NY (FT). Mangan currently serves Christ United Methodist Church (LFT) and Wicoppee Community UMC (LFT).

Adam Neal to Mid-Hudson Korean UMC (Associate) (LFT)(DH). Neal is a member of the North Georgia Conference and currently unappointed.

Kairya Greer to First UMC in Stamford (DH). Greer is currently unappointed.

Nikki Edleman to Red Hook and Rhinebeck UMCs. Edleman is currently unappointed.

Elizabeth Abel to Woodycrest UMC (DH, LFT). Abel is currently unappointed.

Suhee Kim to Aldersgate UMC in Dobbs Ferry (LFT). Kim will continue to serve Pleasantville UMC (LFT).

Wayne Lavender to Faith UMC in North Haven. Lavender is currently appointed in an extension ministry.

St. Clair Samuel to the UMC of Hempstead. Samuel currently serves New Rochelle UMC.

Dora Odarenko to the Western Catskills Parish.

Odarenko currently serves the Long Hill UMC in Trumbull.

Linda Willey to Wicoppee Community UMC (LFT).

Willey will continue to serve Fishkill UMC (LFT).

Angela Redman to First UMC of Hollis. Redman is currently unappointed.

OBITUARIES

Rev. Richard A. Simmons

The Reverend Richard A. Simmons died surrounded by his family on May 13 at the Masonicare Hospice in Wallingford, Conn.

Simmons was born in Downingtown, Penn., on April 16, 1931, the son of Howard and Edith Norris Simmons. He was a graduate of Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Penn., and Drew Theological School in Madison, N.J.

He began his parish ministry in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference serving Arch Street Church in Philadelphia, Gap Church in Gap, and Lancaster Avenue Church in Lancaster. Simmons moved to the New York East Conference in 1960, where he served churches in Waterbury, Conn., and Babylon, N.Y. From 1966 until his retirement in 1997, he served the Yalesville United Methodist Church.

Simmons is survived by Shirley, his wife of 59 year; a daughter, Laura Simmons Merola; and a son, Daniel R. Simmons, all of Wallingford; two grandchildren, Vincent Richard Merola of Wallingford and Emily (Brian) Merola Volpe of Massachusetts; a sister, Dorothy Ezard of Lancaster; two sisters-in-law, Jackie Haught and Phyllis Bloom; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held May 21 at the Yalesville UMC. Online condolences may be made at www.wallingfordfh.com.

Memorial donations may be made to the Wallingford Public Library, 200 North Main St, Wallingford, CT 06492; Yalesville UMC, 8 New Place

St, Yalesville, CT 06492; Master's Manna, 46 North Plains Industrial Rd, Wallingford, CT 06492, or Wallingford Emergency Shelter, PO Box 1747, Wallingford, CT 06492.

Rev. Arnold C. Miller III

The Reverend. Arnold C. Miller III died on May 2 in North Fort Myers, Fla.

Miller was born in Baldwin, N.Y., on May 20, 1928, to Emily and Arnold C. Miller II. He received a bachelor's in science degree from New York University in 1949; a master's in divinity from Drew University in 1954; a master of arts from New York University in 1956, and, finally, a doctorate in ministry from Drew University in 1977.

Miller pastored churches in Westport, Conn., and East Moriches, East Meadow, Valley Stream, Greenwich, Patchogue, and Hampton Bays, all in New York. He also served in extension ministry with the New York Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn as a field chaplain and director of church relations.

After retirement in 1990, Rev. Miller was on the staff of First Methodist Church of Fort Myers as minister of membership care. He also served as resident chaplain at Old Bridge Park, where he resided.

Miller is survived by his wife of 66 years, Johnnie; three children, and five grandchildren.

Preparing for Those End-of-Life Decisions

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant, Older Adult Ministries

It has to be one of my least favorite things to do. It also happens to be the most spiritually moving thing to be asked to do.

It is a request I've heard more than once. This time it began with a phone call.

"Jim, could you meet us at the hospital. Mom is doing very poorly and we have decided to remove her from life support. We would so appreciate it if you were there when that happens."

I hurriedly cleaned up, got dressed and headed for the hospital, where I was greeted with a question that, I believe has no good answer.

"Do you think we are doing the right thing? We know Mom never wanted to be on life support. She even left a living will saying just that. But we thought it would only be for a short time and she would be breathing on her own and on the way to recovery. The doctors are now certain that will not happen. She will never recover."



Every caregiver who has ever faced the need to make such a decision will immediately recognize the trauma and spiritual upheaval such a need encompasses. I would hope no pastor or counselor would ever answer it for another person. It is a deeply personal decision. If I, the pastor, give a definitive answer, there may well be a lingering angst within the one who must answer the question, "Did he give me the right advice?" The decision has to be owned by the one making it.

That said, what is the role of the one counseling, the one the family member or friend trusts? Briefly, it is to be there, holding hands (so to speak), offering assurance of God's grace and freedom to decide, and offering comfort

and support for whatever decision is reached. It is not the job of anyone to make the decision for someone else. Doing so runs the risk of imposing one's own theology and morals on someone else. That can be spiritually damaging to both parties.

How important it is for churches to offer opportunities to their parishioners and neighbors to explore this issue as a faith community before the need arises. Think adult education classes, forums on death and dying, sermons on the meaning of life, or lay leadership training. It is an issue that is not going away and goes to the heart of what we believe.

What does it mean to trust in a loving, forgiving, God?

What does it mean to declare God the Lord of life and death?

Individually, wrestle with the issue on a personal level. What if I had to make that decision?

Above all, empathize with those who must make such difficult choices.

Consider Donation to Camps' Nissen Scholarship

Summer is here already. If your NYAC camping plans have not been made, it is time to commit! Please visit www.nyaccamps.org for general information and links to Quinipet, Kingswood and Olmstead. You will find everything you need there including online registration with Paypal links as well as lots of options for donations.

Sunday, June 12, has been designated Gregory W. Nissen Scholarship Sunday. Nissen served as the director of Camping and Retreat Ministries until last summer. The scholarship has been named to honor him for serving the camping and retreat programs so well and with great devotion.

Funds donated through this Sunday morning offering can remain with the individual churches for scholarship help, or may be sent to: Gregory W. Nissen Scholarship Fund, PO Box 549, Shelter Island Hgts., NY, 11965, for use by children and youth from anywhere. Will you please consider donating to help children exchange a week of stress, video games, boredom and isolation for a week of fun, personal growth, teamwork, faith and nature?

Highlighted this month is Camp Kingswood's Woodsmoke.



Woodsmoke offers a weeklong camping experience for children and youth entering grades 5 through 12 in September 2016. This year it will take place July 17-23. The Woodsmoke program's mission includes five core aims: development of life values, exploration of strengthening of spirituality, development of outdoor skills, involvement and understanding of environmental

stewardship, and a focus on service and outreach. Volunteering is a theme among all of the activities—a tradition that began 22 years ago. With all of that, there is still plenty of time for hiking, canoeing, swimming in beautiful Hathaway Pond. Anyone too old to be a Woodsmoke camper is encouraged to apply for positions available among the staff and volunteers.

For more information about registering, directions, pictures and a more complete explanation of the five mission aims, please visit www.KingswoodCampsite.org or follow the links at www.nyaccamps.org. And please, help make someone else able to experience any of our excellent camps by making a donation on June 12, or at any time through our web sites.

Pina to Lead LICC as Goodhue Retires

The Long Island Council of Churches has appointed the Rev. Dyanne Pina as executive director, effective June 1. She succeeds Rev. Thomas Goodhue, who has served in the position for more than 17 years, and will retire from the United Methodist Church at the end of June.

The LICC is the coordinating body for the ecumenical work of nearly 800 faith communities throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties. For more than 35 years, the LICC has been a center for the coordination, referral and assistance for low-to-moderate income Long Islanders.

Pina is currently serving as assistant to the senior pastor at the United Methodist Church in Islip, N.Y. She is an ordained Baptist minister and is in the process of transferring to the United Methodist Church. Pina earned her master's of divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary in California.

Stamford First UMC Switches to LEDs, Solar

BY REV. DR. DOUGLAS A. MCARTHUR

Senior Pastor, First UMC, Stamford, Conn.

The First United Methodist Church in Stamford, Conn. is demonstrating their commitment to reducing their carbon footprint and being financially responsible with the recent completion of several energy-conserving measures. Newly installed solar panels on the roof began producing electricity on February 25; all lights were replaced with energy-efficient LED bulbs and fixtures, and thermostats dating back to the construction of the building in the 1960s have been replaced with programmable ones controlled by a computer.

Connecticut's electric utility rates are the second highest in the nation, and in both 2013 and 2014 utility rates increased more than 20 percent, with the trend expected to continue.

In an effort to reduce energy costs the church's Board of Trustees undertook a study during the summer of 2015 with the goal of reducing their electricity consumption. Honeywell Building Solutions oversaw the upgrading of the lighting and heating control systems. The new light bulbs and fixtures use substantially less electricity. The new thermostats allow church staff to monitor and schedule them individually in-house versus paying for off-site control.

A third project involved the generation of power. This project was developed and overseen by Kingspan Energy, a multinational company, with its local affiliate American Solar & Alternative Power in Stamford. It was designed to operate seamlessly with First Methodist's electrical system while maintaining connectivity to the power grid. In addition to the positive environmental impact the system creates for the church, we were also able to secure a favorable 20-year lease agreement with the Connecticut Green Bank.

The photovoltaic system consists of 99 Hyundai solar panels located on the south-facing roof of the church's education building and the accompanying inverters located on the north facing exterior wall of the lounge. The system capacity is 30.89 kilowatts with an estimated annual production of 36,183 kilowatts. The church's annual current consumption is 50,560 kilowatts. The projected utility offset is about 70 percent, saving an estimated \$158,000 across 20 years. The solar panels First Methodist Stamford installed are among the most efficient design available, with a



Solar panels installed on the education building at Stamford's First UMC have been generating power since February.

wattage production rating of 310W.

Members and visitors can track the solar energy production via a monitor installed in the church, which provides real-time details of the system's operation, including how many kilowatt hours of electricity have been produced since it began operating, and comparison measures of trees saved and gasoline not burned.

First Methodist Stamford is proud to have a long-term reliable clean power production which supports the community's environmental initiatives. The system reduces the church's "carbon footprint" by approximately 19 tons of carbon emissions annually, equivalent to planting 5.2 acres of trees, 48,023 miles not driven in cars, and 2,009 gallons of gasoline not burned.

Cutting Church Energy Costs

In the August 2015 edition of *The Vision*, the United Methodist City Society announced a partnership with BlocPower to provide a free energy assessment of New York church property, including parsonages.

NYAC Move to Temporary Home During Renovations

The conference center is undergoing a renovation that has been years in the planning by the NYAC Board of Trustees. Through September, the office have relocated to temporary space on the Greenwich/Port Chester border. The renovation will address functional issues in the current building, including the installation of better-insulated walls and windows, repaving of the parking lot, and a redesign of our largest meeting space, the Perkins Learning Center.

Please see important details below about how to contact us during this period. We look forward to continuing to serve you during this time and look forward to welcoming you to our

new and improved conference center next fall.

Mail: Continue to send mail to 20 Soundview Avenue address in White Plains. It will be picking up daily and brought it to the new location.

Package or overnight delivery:
Use the following address: NYAC, Attn: _____, 55 Old Post Road #2, 2nd Floor, Greenwich, CT 06830.

E-mail and phones: Both will remain the same at the new location.

Faxes: All fax numbers have changed. The number for the receptionist is now 914-401-0693; or consult with the appropriate staff member for their new, permanent fax number.

Meetings: No meetings will be scheduled at the conference center until we reoccupy the building sometime in September.

Visits: The temporary office is extremely small with almost no space for meetings. So we encourage you to call or email with any questions or needs during this time. Nonetheless, if you require a face-to-face meeting, please let us know in advance so that we can make arrangements, which may include meeting off-site.

If you have any questions, please contact Ross Williams at rwilliams@nyac.com, or call, 914-615-2212.



Members of the NYAC delegation gather round Bishop Jane Allen Middleton as the 10-day conference was winding down.

Below, Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé sings at a May 9 orientation for women delegates.



Looking Back On the Highs And the Lows

Continued from page 1

sexuality. Ultimately, they voted against it.

The Commission on General Conference recommended Rule 44 at the request of the 2012 General Conference, which sought an alternative process to Robert's Rules of Order for certain topics.

Sexuality debate deferred

Late afternoon May 18, delegates voted to accept the recommendation of the Council of Bishops to delay a debate on homosexuality at this gathering and let a proposed commission study church regulations.

"We accept our role as spiritual leaders to lead The United Methodist Church in a 'pause for prayer'—to step back from attempts at legislative solutions and to intentionally seek God's will for the future," said Council of Bishops president Bishop Bruce Ough in announcing the recommendation.

The announcement came after rumors of schism and news on social media that bishops had been meeting with large-church pastors and representatives of special interest groups to discuss possible resolutions to the debate.



Delegates on both sides have mixed emotions to the decision to refer. The bishops' proposal defused some of the tension, though advocates for change held a handful of demonstrations that were largely not disruptive.

The bishops suggested they might call a special General Conference in 2018 or 2019 to deal with such proposals, Ough said. Questions about that cost caused a blip during the May 19 afternoon plenary session.

However, the denomination's top finance executive offers assurance that the church can pay for the bishops' plan without altering the 2017-20 general church budget.

The finance agency estimates a special General Conference session would cost \$3.39 million for two days and \$4.12 million for three days. To offset the cost, Moses Kumar recommended shortening the 2020 General Conference by the number of days used for any special session.

On May 2, just days before General Conference began, 15 clergy and clergy candidates in the New York Conference came out

as lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer in an open letter to the people of the UMC. That prompted A Love Letter to Our Church from an additional 111 clergy and candidates a week later, and then a pastoral response from a group of 28 active and retired bishops.

Budget increase passes

Delegates on May 20 approved a general church budget of \$604 million for 2017–2020, a slight increase over the \$603.1 million approved in 2012. It's also an increase over the \$599 million budget proposed to the 2016 General Conference delegates, which would have been denomination's lowest in 16 years.

Native American mascots

Delegates overwhelmingly approved a resolution calling on United Methodist agencies to raise awareness about the harm caused by sports teams that use mascots or symbols that disrespect Native Americans. The Discipleship Committee amended the petition, deleting language that would have called on United Methodist groups not to meet in cities that have sports teams with such mascots or symbols, which previous church resolutions contained.

Sand Creek massacre lamented

Concerns about legislation were set aside as delegates focused instead on a historic tragedy with deep Methodist involvement. The 1864 Sand Creek Massacre was the subject, and speakers included a historian and descendants

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UMNS PHOTO
Rev. Jacob Dharmaraj, far left, joins participants in a May 13 immigration rally outside the 2016 United Methodist General Conference in Portland.

Below: Members of the NYAC delegation relax over dinner.

Plan UMC Revised Gets Mixed Review

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of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian survivors of the attack.

Mountain Sky Area Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky had joined the descendants in planning the event, the latest effort yet by the denomination to atone for the Sand Creek Massacre. “We’re here to listen and to tell the truth,” Stanovsky told delegates.

“We now extend our hand in friendship to the Methodist Church,” said William Walks Along, a Northern Cheyenne descendent of massacre survivors. “We have developed a measure of trust, respect and honor for each other.”

Judicial Council decisions

Imposing a mandatory penalty during the “just resolution” process for clergy who admit to committing a chargeable offense is unconstitutional, the UMC’s top court ruled. A just resolution “can be an alternative way of handling chargeable offenses,” but the call “for a specific penalty in creating a just resolution is also unconstitutional as it denies the clergyperson the specific right to trial and appeal,” the Judicial Council’s decision stated.

The council also ruled unconstitutional a proposed establishment of a “Standing Committee on Strategy and Growth” funded by



\$20 million taken from denominational coffers. The court’s decision noted that the amended petition did not include how committee membership “is to be determined nor how the \$20 million is to be spent,” adding that such a committee also “cannot dictate the duties, functions or responsibilities of the general agencies.”

In a May 9 ruling, the Judicial Council declared that Plan UMC Revised, one of the proposed plans to realign the structure of church, “contains components that fail the test of constitutionality and components that are, as stated, entirely constitutional.” Some of the constitutionality concerns were over issues of authority. Plan UMC Revised would have given

new authority and power to the Connectional Table, a church coordinating body; realigned the general agencies and eliminated three commissions.

Stirring worship

As the only time the entire global church is together every quadrennium, General Conference always features festive and moving worship services. The opening worship service began with a drum welcome from indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest and a cacophony of “alleluias” in many languages.

Every worship service featured sermons by United Methodist bishops, and a running

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Rev. Scott Summerville, from left, Rev. Vicki Flippin, and Jayson Dobney join other demonstrators wearing rainbow gags on May 14 to protest what they believe is an attempt to silence LGBTQ voices. Below, Timothy Riss offers his input during an afternoon session of calendar items and petitions.



John St. UMC Celebrated; OK for New Hymnal

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theme for the event was to stay humble, serve others and be the church that Christ wants us to be. Chicago Area Bishop Sally Dyck urged United Methodists to do as Pope Francis said, Go; learn mercy. Sierra Leone Area Bishop John K. Yambasu issued a challenge “to dismantle the demons of all sorts of inequalities in our world.” Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams, top executive of the World Methodist Council, reminded delegates that Methodism was founded on a commitment to those on the margins. “Conference,” he asked, “is this still true for us today?” On the last day, Bishop Elaine Stanovsky reminded those attending that “we will not leave divided because God is not finished with us yet!” (Transcripts of sermons and addresses are available to download.)

Presentations, celebrations

General Conference 2016 celebrated a few notable milestones. They included the 60th anniversary of the Methodist Church granting full clergy rights to women, the 200th anniversary of Francis Asbury’s death, the 250th anniversary of John Street Church in New York City, the 30th anniversary of DISCIPLE Bible Study, the upcoming 25th anniversary of Africa University, and a whole day dedicated to United Methodist Women, which will soon turn 150.

The May 18 morning session celebrated the Imagine No Malaria initiative launched in 2008. The 12-minute celebration debuted “Able,” a song commissioned as a gift to United Methodists

across the globe. Jeremy Rosado, a contestant on “American Idol,” performed the song.

General Conference turned May 19 to a presentation and video on the Korean War and on efforts, including by United Methodists, to bring about peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula.

United Methodists forged new relationships with the Moravian Church and the Uniting Church in Sweden as they marked Ecumenical Day on May 17. The UMC has approved a “full communion” agreement with the northern and southern provinces of the Moravian Church in North America that recognizes each other’s ministries and encourages witness and mission work together.

The 2016 General Conference marks the

40th anniversary of members of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference being granted voting rights in the top legislative assembly. Although recognized as a conference by the 1972 General Conference, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference had voice but no vote until the 1976 General Conference, which also met in Portland.

New hymnal project

The church is on track to get its first new hymnal since 1989, and this one will be Internet-cloud based and print-on-demand—the first high-tech hymnal for a mainline denomination. General Conference 2016 approved a petition authorizing the creation of a 15-member Hymnal Revision Committee.

Central Conference issues

Africa will get five more bishops, but not before 2020. On May 16, delegates narrowly defeated an effort to add two bishops immediately, in Nigeria and in Zimbabwe. Instead, they favored the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to add five bishops after General Conference 2020.

Delegates approved a petition to create new provisional central conferences in Rwanda and Southeast Asia/Mongolia.

During budget deliberations, delegates voted to add \$5 million to double to \$10 million the denomination’s Central Conference Theological



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Rev. Hector LaPorta, fourth in line at right, processes in with 28 others to be commissioned as a missionary on May 19.

Below: Revs. Kun Sam Cho (left) and James Chongho Kim hold crosses symbolizing the two Koreas, during a report from the Committee on Peace by the Korean Association of the United Methodist Church May 19.



Liberian to Lead Judicial Council

Continued from page 12

Education Fund, which supports United Methodist schools, pastors and pastors-in-training in Africa, Asia and Europe.

For the first time, a member from outside the United States has been elected president of the Judicial Council. N. Oswald Tweh Sr., a lay member from Liberia, will lead the denomination's top court for 2016–20. Beth Capen of the NYAC remains a member of the council.

As Africa University approaches its 25th anniversary, delegates took a few moments May 16 to celebrate one of the denomination's high points. "The university matters because a relevant and holistic education generates a living legacy that changes everything," said Munashe Furusa, vice chancellor. "You and The United Methodist Church have answered a call to witness through this transforming ministry."

A small group of Lumads—indigenous people of Southern Philippines who have been the target of cruelty for decades—attended General Conference and were featured in a video about their plight.

Quick hits

There were a few initial bugs to work through



UMNS PHOTOS

with the new electronic queuing system, and delegates had to go "old school" a few times by waving placards to get the presiding bishop's attention, but the system was overall a success.

When you are a bishop, you're a bishop all the way—at least in the United States. Term limits for bishops got strong support in a May 17 vote, but fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to change the church constitution, 482 in favor of term limits to 332 opposed. Some bishops outside the United States are already subject to term limits.

Several petitions of interest to Hispanic-Latino United Methodists were passed. They included a resolution against the U.S. embargo of Cuba; requests for government support for people in the Puerto Rican island of Vieques who suffer from chemical pollution and a high rate of cancer that has been attributed to the

Navy's use of the island as a bombing range; approval of a new strategy to work with Latin American autonomous churches; and a request for the liberation of Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican nationalist and the longest-serving political prisoner in the Western Hemisphere, convicted in the United States in 1981 for "seditious conspiracy."

A petition to withdraw

denominational general agency membership from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice was passed, as was a second petition to remove language supporting the coalition from the Book of Resolutions. The United Methodist Church was a founding member of the organization in 1973, and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and United Methodist Women are currently members.

An amendment offered May 20 during debate on socially responsible investing that sought to divest from illegal settlements on occupied lands failed 559-167. But delegates adopted a petition on behalf of a Palestinian village, Wadi Foquin. Delegates chose not to add a fossil fuels investment screen for the Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

One Great Hour of Sharing will now be

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Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky preaches during a May 20 worship service at the 2016 United Methodist General Conference. The NYAC's Todd Pick created all the background visuals for the UMC gathering.



29 Tagged As Missionaries

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known as UMCOR Sunday. Offerings for the special Sunday, observed annually on the fourth Sunday of Lent, cover the United Methodist Committee on Relief's overhead. Two other special Sundays, Women's Ministry Sunday and Volunteer in Mission Awareness Sunday—both without offering—were approved as well.

On May 19, The United Methodist Church sent new missionaries from 11 countries to serve in 16 lands. The liturgy of commissioning was believed to be the first at a United Methodist General Conference. One of the new missionaries, Rev. Hector LaPorta, has been serving in the NYAC at the Church of The Village. He will serve as a professor at the Dr. Gonzalo Báez Camargo Methodist Seminary in Mexico City.

During the May 17 afternoon plenary, delegates approved calendar items related to the Asian American Language Ministry Plan, the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan, the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry and the Korean Ministry Plan as well as Accessibility Grants for Churches and the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund.

Deacons now have fewer hoops to jump through to request permission to administer sacraments. A petition passed that allows deacons to contact their resident bishop directly to ask for permission. Previously, the pastor-in-charge or the district superintendent had to



UMNS PHOTOS

Members of the United Methodist Judicial Council for 2016–2020 met briefly during General Conference 2016. From left are the Rev. Dennis L. Blackwell, Beth Capen, Rev. J. Kabamba Kiboko, N. Oswald Tweh Sr., Ruben Reyes, Rev. Øyvind Helliesen, and Rev. Luan-Vu Tran. Not pictured are Deanell Reese Tacha and Lídia Romão Gulele.

make the request on the deacon's behalf.

In a May 12 ceremony, before episcopal leaders from around the globe, Dakotas-Minnesota Area Bishop Bruce R. Ough was formally installed as president of the Council of Bishops. Bishop Warner H. Brown Jr., outgoing president of the Council of Bishops, "passed the gavel" to Ough.

A petition calling for a mandatory vote of proposed legislation sent to General Conference was approved by a vote of 406 to 361. All

petitions submitted to General Conference "shall receive the vote of a legislative committee" and all petitions approved by legislative committees "shall receive a vote by the plenary session at that year's General Conference." Considering how many petitions weren't voted on before this General Conference ended, one wonders if GC2020 will need to last a month.

Butler is a multimedia editor/producer for United Methodist Communications. Contact him at newsdesk@umcom.org or 615-742-5470.



Bishops Offer Post-GC Letter

To the people of The United Methodist Church:

The Council of Bishops brings you greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has called us to be servant leaders of the church. In 1812, Bishop Francis Asbury, Bishop William McKendree and General Conference Secretary Daniel Hitt sent the first letter to churches following General Conference. This letter seeks to revive that tradition. Many bishops will also be communicating individually with their own areas.

Hundreds of lay and clergy delegates from around the world gathered in Portland, Oregon, along with bishops and pastors, church members and staff, volunteers and visitors, to engage in Christian conferencing, to make decisions for our church's future, to affirm our global connection, to worship and to celebrate God's faithfulness.

We celebrated the success of our Imagine No Malaria initiative, which seeks to raise \$75 million in the fight against malaria, a disease that takes the life of a child in Africa every two minutes. We celebrated our ecumenical partnerships as we move into full Communion with the Uniting Church in Sweden and toward full Communion with the Moravian church. We celebrated our heritage: the 250th anniversary of our oldest church, John Street United Methodist Church, the 200th anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the 150th anniversary of United Methodist women, the 25th anniversary of Africa University and others.

We continued in our acts of repentance with a presentation from the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes about the Methodist involvement in the 1864 Sand Creek massacre. We shared in the consecration of deaconesses and home missionaries and the commissioning of missionaries. We moved toward a global *Book*



of Discipline and global Social Principles. We voted to add five new bishops in Africa after 2020, and approved a church-wide study on our ecclesiology.

The Episcopal address set the tone for the event, focusing on humility and lifting up our accomplishments. We heard from our laity an invitation to members to be more involved in making disciples and getting involved in ministries to bring the love of Christ to others. We heard our young people say they “are engaged in Christ’s journey with energy and love.” We also heard them say clearly that they do not want a divided church and urged us to “be in unity even if we do not have unanimity.” They give us hope for our future.

The body had difficult and challenging work before it as we acknowledged our differences over human sexuality. Amidst those differences, the delegates affirmed they want their bishops to lead and we found ourselves with an opportunity for a holy moment. We spoke candidly about what divides us and what our church might look like in the future if we dared to consider new possibilities. We offered a way forward, postponing decisions about sexuality matters and committing to having a different kind of global conversation that allows all voices to be heard.

Our differences do not keep us from being the body of Christ. They do not keep us from doing good in the world. They do not keep us from making a difference – and so we set forth bold new goals: to make a million new disciples of Jesus Christ; to engage 3 million new people to make a difference in the world; to transform 400 communities for vital abundant living; to reach a million children with lifesaving health interventions; and to double the number of vital congregations.

Most importantly, we affirmed our commitment to stay united. We proved that we are more than debates and divisions, more than rules and resolutions. We stood together as the body of Christ. As we reflect on our time in Portland, our prayer is for unity in the church for the advancement of our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

As John Wesley reminded us, “Best of all, God is with us.”

Signed on behalf of the Council of Bishops,
Bishop Bruce R. Ough
President of the Council

What Happened To NYAC Petitions?

The New York Conference submitted or joined in submitting 14 petitions for consideration in the legislative sections at the 2016 General Conference. Of that number, only one was adopted in the plenary—petition 60534: “Racism and Economic Injustice against People of Color in the U.S.”

Two were rejected in committee in favor of another petition:

60174: Avoid Investment in Production of Petroleum, Coal, and Natural Gas was rejected for petition 60036: Sustainable and Responsible Investments

60943: Inclusiveness was rejected for petition 60163: Inclusiveness of Gender and Age

Five were not supported in committee:

60016: Candidates with Disabilities
60175: Investment Ethics
60182: Joint Committee Membership
60017: Non-Discrimination in UMC Employee Disability Benefits
60759: Petroleum and Natural Gas Investment Policy

Six were not considered in committee:

60944: Human sexuality
60532: Impact of Racism on Health of People of Color in the US
60018: Meeting Accessibility
60019: Non-Discrimination in Disability Compensation
60534: Racism and the Mass Incarceration of Persons of Color
60942: Religious Liberty

According to NYAC delegation co-chair Rev. Tim Riss, a report is made on the petitions that were not “considered in committee” and they are treated as if they were voted down and on a consent calendar. If 20 delegates feel the petition deserves a hearing before the plenary, they can be lifted out of the “not considered” category, and the plenary will be forced to deal with it. The petitions that are not considered just die.

To check on the action taken on any of the petitions submitted to General Conference, go to: www.umc.org/who-we-are/legislation-tracking.