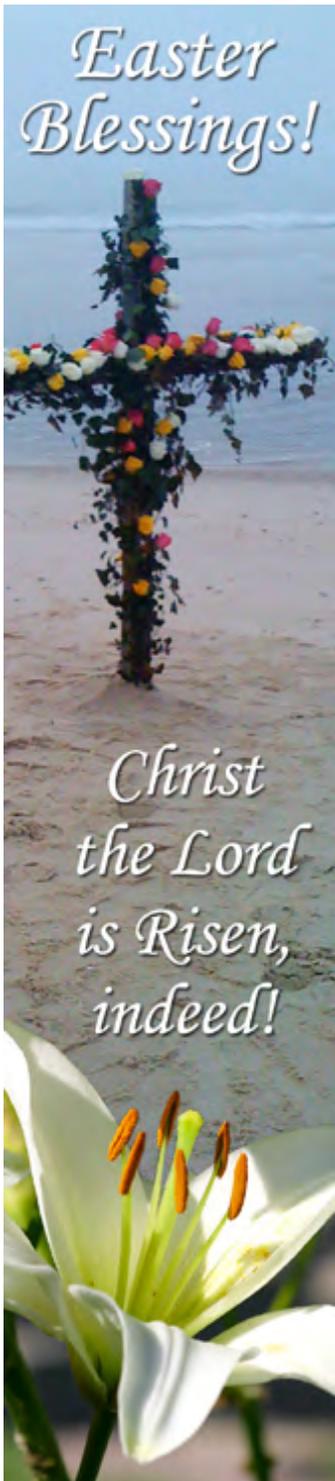


"Write the vision clearly on the tablets, that one may read it on the run." – Habakkuk

# THE VISION



April 2017



## 4 Merge to Build North Fork UMC

**Editor's note: The "Gone Vital" column will highlight ministries that are helping to create or revive churches and communities.**

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

When Thomas MacLeod was a member of the Cutchogue United Methodist Church, he worked as a carpenter and contractor. Now, in his second career as a pastor, he'll soon be overseeing the construction of the new home of the North Fork UMC, a merger of the churches in Cutchogue, Southold, Greenport and Orient.

While the blending of the four struggling congregations has not been without issues, MacLeod said, it came about because the churches refused to accept their demise.

"They still want to share the message of Jesus Christ in their communities," he said. "They're excited about what's going on. It's changed the way they talk about church, ministry and community." The current focus is on building fellowship, with members from three of the four congregations



PHOTO BY JULIA YH YIM

**Bishop Thomas Bickerton prays with other Long Island East clergy on the site in Southold, N.Y. where a new home for North Fork UMC will be built. Rev. Thomas MacLeod, pastor of the church, stands to the bishop's right.**

now worshipping together in the Cutchogue church. The four communities encompass more than half of the 30-mile North Fork site that stretches out along the Long Island Sound.

The church hopes to get approval from the Southold Planning Board in May so that

they can take the next steps for the new facility on 2.45 acres at the intersection of Horton Lane and County Road 48. The site was purchased in May 2016 for \$775,000. MacLeod hopes to break ground by mid-fall. That timeline all depends on getting the further

**Continued on page 4**

## SPSA Partners With Sanctuary Coalition

**BY CHRISTIE R. HOUSE**

When members of St. Paul and St. Andrew (SPSA) UMC in Manhattan saw the storm of discontent brewing against immigrants, they began to worry about each other and their neighbors.

In any given week, hundreds of immigrants pass through the

doors of SPSA. Some come daily to prepare or deliver meals to elderly residents on the Upper West Side through the Westside Ecumenical Ministry to the Elderly. Others come for rehearsal as part of the New York Arabic Orchestra. A few come to catch a West End Theatre play, while others come to perform in or produce the play.

Some immigrants enter the doors to volunteer for the church's food pantry, the West Side Campaign Against Hunger. Others come seeking enough food to get their families to the next paycheck. On Wednesdays, most of the children who come for afterschool tutoring are immigrants. On

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For a full lineup of events, go to: [www.nyac.com/conferencecalendar](http://www.nyac.com/conferencecalendar).

#### **4/17 Immigration Prayers**

Join the NYAC Immigration Task Force for a time of prayer for our country and immigrant brothers and sisters on Monday nights from 7:30–8 p.m. until further notice. Call-in number: 641-715-3580; group code: 780843#. Contact Pastor [Ximena Varas](#) for more information.

#### **4/22 Disaster Response Forum**

Greg Forrester, president and CEO of National VOAD, will be the featured speaker at this one-day forum, “When Disaster Strikes—the Church Responds.” The 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. forum will be held at the White Plains Conference Center. Presentation topics will include the role of the church in a disaster, understanding the big picture, and toward a district-based disaster response ministry. Breakout sessions planned are ERT recertification class, nuts and bolts of leading a response team, caring for the community and developing care ministries. Light breakfast foods, beverages, and snacks will be provided. Please bring a bag lunch to allow for a working-lunch.

[Register](#) on the NYAC website and indicate a preference for one of the breakout sessions. Contact [Tom Vencuss](#) for more information or with questions.

#### **4/24–6/2 Prayers for Annual Conference**

The NYAC Board of Laity is sponsoring 30 days of prayer leading up to this year’s annual conference. The five-minute call-in devotion and prayer time will begin at 6:55 a.m. each weekday from April 24 through June 2. Each of the districts will sponsor one week of the devotions. To join in, call the free teleconference number: (605) 475-4700, code: 191759#. Questions about the devotions may be sent to Warren Whitlock at [wgw1009@yahoo.com](mailto:wgw1009@yahoo.com).

#### **4/24–28 Clergy/Spouses Health Clinic**

Active clergy and/or their spouses are eligible for this health clinic and seminar at NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital (formerly New York Methodist Hospital). Overnight accommodations and virtually all expenses beyond a \$50 registration fee are covered by the hospital. Give yourself this gift to check out your health. Find the [details](#) on the NYAC website, or contact coordinator, Rev. [Elizabeth Braddon](#) by email, or at 203-481-2789.

#### **4/25–26: Anti-Racism Training**

The NYAC Commission on Religion and Race is sponsoring a session of “Effective Christian Leadership in a Multicultural World” training. This training is mandatory for all clergy, and members of district committees on ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry. The sessions, which run from 8:30 a.m. on the first day until 4 p.m. on the second day, will be held Quinipet Camp & Retreat Center, 99 Shore Rd., Shelter Island Heights, N.Y. [Register](#) on the conference web site at least one week beforehand. Contact Rev. Sheila Beckford at [Sheila.Beckford@nyac-umc.com](mailto:Sheila.Beckford@nyac-umc.com) with any questions.

#### **4/26 Petition, Reports Deadline**

The deadline for submitting all commission/committee reports, petitions or resolutions for consideration at the 2017 annual conference is Wednesday, April 26. Contact Conference Secretary [Margaret Howe](#) by email or call 914-615-2231 office or 845 943-8962 home.

#### **4/29 Understanding Elder Abuse**

NYAC Older Adult Committee will sponsor the event, “Elder Abuse: Recognizing, Responding and Prevention,” from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Memorial UMC, 250 Bryant Ave., White Plains, N.Y. Bring a sandwich for lunch; drinks and dessert will be provided. View the [flyer](#) on the YAC web site; contact [Rev. Jim Stinson](#) with questions.

#### **4/29 Disaster Spiritual Care**

This UMCOR basic care training for disaster emotional and spiritual care will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the conference learning center. [Register](#) on the conference web site. Please contact [Pastor Wendy Vencuss](#) with questions.

#### **4/29 & 5/6 Bishop’s Confirmation Rallies**

Join with other confirmation classes from across the conference for worship with lots of praise music, some time with Bishop Bickerton, the assembly of 1,000 health kits, and a catered lunch. There are two venues for these no-cost events from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for all confirmands and chaperones.

- **Sat., April 29:** Grace UMC, 21 South Franklin Avenue, Valley Stream, N.Y.
- **Sat., May 6:** Poughkeepsie UMC, 2381 New Hackensack Rd., Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Please [register](#) on the NY Conference calendar.

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The **Vision**

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

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# Getting Ready for Annual Conference #218

## Call to Conference

Lay and clergy members should be receiving their invitations in the mail. Online early-bird [registration](#) at \$225 is open until April 30; late registration at \$250 begins May 1. The last day to register is May 24.

## Reports, Petitions, Resolutions

All reports, petitions and corporate resolutions to be considered by the annual conference shall be in the hands of the conference secretary six weeks before the beginning date of the annual conference in order to be included in the pre-conference reports booklet. Please email your document to [Margaret Howe](#), conference secretary, by April 26. See the conference rules (Section X, Rule 27) in the [2015 Journal](#) for exceptions to these deadlines.

## Request to be Excused

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton expects that all clergy and elected laity will be in attendance at the 2017 Annual Conference Session. All those who need to be absent must submit the reason in writing to [Conference Secretary Margaret Howe](#) by May 26.

## Guest Speakers

Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, general secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, will speak at the laity session on Wednesday, June 7 engaging the laity in an interactive event based on the theme "Pathways & Possibilities: The Journey of Disciple Making."

Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest who works with Los Angeles street gangs as the founding director of Homeboy Industries, will preach at the Thursday memorial service and the Friday commissioning service.

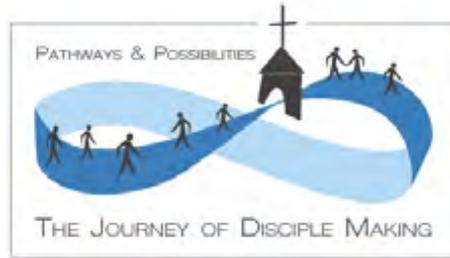
Bishop Bickerton will preach at the opening

## Schedule a Wellness Screening

It's time once again for those who participate in HealthFlex to take the "Blueprint for Wellness" screening. By completing the screening between April 1 and July 31, participants will receive personalized data on 30 health factors, and earn \$100 in *PulseCash* and up to 120 Wellness Points.

Screenings will be offered at the Hofstra University Student Center during the New York Annual Conference. Register for the screenings that will take place from 6–8 a.m. on June 8 and 9 in one of two ways:

- Phone: Call 1-855-623-9355, and when prompted for the "employer group" say



worship at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, and at the Saturday morning ordination service.

## Telling Our Stories

The Commission on Archives and History will be recording Methodist stories at annual conference and would like to hear from you. The plan is to record video stories with two participants at a time, one interviewer and one storyteller in conversation with each other. Visit the [CAH web page](#) for more information and to sign up.

## Day of Dance Conference

The 3rd Annual Day of Dance Conference will be held from on May 5–6. All are welcome. No experience is needed. Some dance pieces will be used to minister throughout the conference. Please contact [Rev. Sheila M. Beckford](#) for more information.

## Annual Conference Choir

All are invited to sing God's praise with this year's choir for the ordination service on Saturday, June 10. Saturday's rehearsal time is 8:45 a.m.; the service begins at 10 a.m. Anyone interested should contact Raymond Trapp, director of music or Ian Wharton, coordinator, at [music.worshipnyac@gmail.com](#).

## Worship Team Assistants

The worship team invites all clergy and laity

HealthFlex or United Methodist Church.

- Online: Go to <https://www.webmdhealth.com/gbophb/> and log-in to HealthFlex/WebMD; then select "Quest Blueprint for Wellness."

There is no cost for the screening if taken at annual conference or at a local Quest Diagnostics facility. Participants should fast the night before for the most accurate results. Ask your doctor or other primary care provider if it is safe for you to fast. Your confidential results will be mailed directly to you.

with gifts and passion for creative and inspiring worship to join in planning various services for annual conference. If you are interested, please contact co-chairs, [Rev. Heather Sinclair](#) or [Rev. Alex da Silva Souto](#).

## Babysitting & Children's Programming

The conference is offering Safe Sanctuaries-certified babysitting (infants and pre-schoolers) and children's programming (school-aged) free of charge. Sign up for this option when you register; Cassandra Negri, NYAC children's ministries consultant, will contact you with more information.

## Display Tables

Ministry display tables on the upper level of the arena are available with reservations through Rev. Matt Curry. Please email your request to [mcurry@nyac.com](mailto:mcurry@nyac.com) or in writing to: Rev. Matt Curry, NYAC, 20 Soundview Ave, White Plains, NY 10606-3302. Space is offered to conference and church agencies on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Health Kits

Health kits provide basic necessities to people who have been forced to leave their homes because of human conflict or natural disaster. These kits will be collected on Wednesday and Thursday in the arena. Assemble all health kits using these [instructions](#) from UMCOR.

Continued on page 13

## Recent Appointments

It is the intention of Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton to make the following appointments effective July 1, 2017:

**Kirk Lyons** to Vanderveer Park, Brooklyn (LIW)

**Mendis Brown** to First, Jamaica (LIW)

**Carlos Figueroa** to Peekskill, (NY/CT)

**David Collins** to Port Washington (LIE)

**Romana Abelova** to Port Washington (LIE)

**Juhye Hahn** to First & Summerfield, New Haven (CT)

**Kenneth Kieffer** to Cheshire (CT)

# Merger Prompts Plan for New Home for North Fork UMC

Continued from page 1

approval of the town and the Long Island East District as needed.

MacLeod credits his predecessors in the churches—Lorraine DeArmitt, Paul Smith and Jin Kim—with laying the critical and prayerful groundwork for the mergers. He noted that he was initially appointed to Cutchogue and Southold to “do the plan that had already been set in motion.” A previous plan for the congregations to consider combined ministries was put forth by the conference in the 1980s, but quickly died because of a lack of interest from the churches.

“These churches are older than the [New York] conference,” MacLeod said. “Any change in rural ministry like this has to come from within.”

And eventually they did embrace the possibilities. In 2014, after two years of active conversation, Southold and Cutchogue merged to create [North Fork UMC](#). Greenport UMC then joined the merger in July 2015, and Orient a year later.

Orient came on board after discussions with the congregation and community about the benefits of merging the church rather than closing it. The merger would allow any proceeds from the sale of the property to be retained locally for ministry; if closed, the use of most of the funds would be determined by the New York Conference.

MacLeod has been impressed by the maturity of faith he has found in the church members.

“They’re already moving to the next level to do everything that they can to make this work,” he said. “They’ve put personalities aside to work for the common good . . . it’s a very mature body of Christ.”

Under the guidance of the conference and the district, both the Southold and Cutchogue buildings were put on the market in fall 2014, and the Greenport property in September 2015. Despite the age and condition of the structures, there was hope that the potential sales—amid a rising real estate market on Long Island’s East End—would provide the resources necessary to build a new church.

In late July 2015, the Southold church was sold for just over \$1 million. That sale allowed the church to hire a much-needed administrative assistant for MacLeod. They were also able to “come off of life support,” MacLeod said. “No more equitable compensation. We’re paying our apportionments and our bills. We hope to ride that excitement into the new building.”

Much of the community response has been



positive, MacLeod said, but notes that there are those who are concerned about historic structures being changed into something new. The former Southold church building, its façade intact, is being used as an opera house, where both lessons and performances are offered.

In January of this year, the family that has rented the Orient parsonage for more than 10 years was able to purchase the home for \$367,000. Since the time of the merger, North Fork UMC has been in discussions with several Orient community groups who may come together to purchase the church for museum space.

On February 9, the NFUMC trustees sold the Greenport property for \$950,000.

The new church building will have all the assets a church of the 21st century needs, according to MacLeod. That includes a one-level, barrier free space with a low carbon footprint. The interior plans for the 7,600-square-foot building call for a sanctuary to seat 144 people, two offices, a nursery space and two classrooms, an open kitchen and a function room, and two accessible bathrooms. A temporary disaster shelter will include space for a shower and washer and dryer. Outside plans include solar

panels on the roof and a 48-car parking lot on the site that backs up to Peconic Land Trust property.

One key goal of the merger is to continue to have or to create a ministry presence in each of the communities. One of the food pantries formerly housed in the church has moved into a storefront in the community.

“We’re worshipping with 60 souls now, but we’re anticipating growth in our new location,” MacLeod said. “We’re getting excited about new ministries that can pop up in the community. People have caught fire about going to the community—and then maybe we can move people to church.”

One unexpected benefit of the merger has come in giving away things that the churches were holding onto. Flatware from Southold was given to a shelter for veterans, and other items have been donated to the Community Action Southold Town. While MacLeod laughed about needing multiple dumpsters to clean out the churches, he also noted that the “shedding of things has been a blessing.”

An associate member of the NYAC, MacLeod is no stranger to constructing new churches. While serving in Sag Harbor, N.Y., MacLeod led the congregation through the discernment process of selling their old structure and building a smaller, energy-efficient church, which held its first services in October 2011. In December 2016, the LIE District suspended worship at the church to reassess the ministry potential in the community.

## So You’re Thinking About a Merger?

Pastor Tom MacLeod offers some helpful tips:

- Prayerfully ask the congregation where they see themselves in five years.
- Look at the ways the church has positively impacted the community. What would be lost if it just closed?
- Consider the ways the church building might be limiting growth: accessibility barriers, lack of parking, inadequate lighting, poor heating and air conditioning systems. Understand that the peeling paint and stained carpets may turn people away, too.
- Realistically look at the sums of money and the people power spent just to maintain older buildings and how that could be limiting how the church helps those in need
- Consider that a merger may provide strength in numbers and finances—allowing those who are tired to step away from a job in the church and to undertake a new ministry.
- If the vision calls for building a new church or using an existing more centrally located church, remember that bigger isn’t always better. Find ways to keep the church’s footprint in the community by renting a storefront for the food pantry or thrift store. Continue to be a positive presence in the community by going to the people.
- Remember that this is a grassroots effort—one that the body of Christ must be willing to take on.
- The pastor and the lay leaders must keep the vision of this new beginning in front of the people.

# SPSA to Provide Immigrant Accompaniment

Continued from page 1

Sunday mornings, the congregation is peppered with the accents of members who come from many places around the world—Ghana, Haiti, Argentina, Brazil, Pakistan, South Africa, the Philippines, Puerto Rico . . . and many others.

“In a way, immigration is a central justice issue,” said Mary Ellen Kris, a member of SPSA who also serves on the New York Conference’s immigration task force. “It gets to the heart of Christian theology and the intersection of oppressive systems. Economic injustice, violence, gender disparity, all of that comes together in the immigration issue.”

None of the immigrants at SPSA are asked for their documentation or whether they are in this country legally. Hungry families still need food and children still need help with schoolwork, no matter what their immigration status. The church’s doors are open to everyone.

## Jumping into Ministry

Jessica Tulloch chairs the church’s Mission/Church and Society committee.

“I hope we move on to concrete advocacy, raising awareness about this vulnerable population,” she said. “New York is an immigrant city and thousands are affected. They are afraid of being deported—separated from their families and especially their children. They live in fear every day, and they are



PHOTO COURTESY JAMES “K” KARPEN

**Ravi Ragbir of the New Sanctuary Coalition of New York conducts a training session at the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew in Manhattan.**

disappearing into the shadows. How can we use our privilege to support our neighbors in need?”

A few members were already involved in helping a Christian refugee from Pakistan gain asylum status and the documentation needed to stay and work in the city. Others were urging the congregation to get involved with the [New Sanctuary Coalition](#) of New York City.

Jim Melchiorre, who coordinates the

women’s shelter for SPSA, among other mission ministries, said: “I am attracted to the New Sanctuary Coalition because there are several entry points. Helping people fill out documents, accompanying folks during hearings, providing actual physical sanctuary—that increases the chance that more people can get involved.”

## Accompaniment Process

As it happened, SPSA already had a connection at Judson Memorial Church, where the New Sanctuary Coalition is headquartered in Greenwich Village. Rebekah Forni, who grew up in the SPSA congregation, was in the middle of a student internship at Judson and was available to talk to her home church about the work of the coalition. Forni is a divinity student at Drew Theological School and hopes to be ordained in the United Methodist Church.

The New Sanctuary Coalition in New York is headed by Ravi Ragbir, who is himself an immigrant facing a deportation order. Ragbir came to SPSA and offered training in the [accompaniment process](#). In addition to SPSA members, the 40 participants included members of B’Nai Jeshuran Synagogue, Shoring up Racial Justice, Uptown Jews Against Hate, Indivisible, the Synagogue Coalition on Refugees, and Methodists in New Directions.

New Sanctuary coordinates accompaniment for immigrants at their court hearings and check-ins with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency at 26 Federal Plaza

## What is the Sanctuary Movement?

According to the [New Sanctuary Coalition](#) of NYC’s web site, they are an interfaith network of congregations, organizations, and individuals, standing publicly in solidarity with families and communities resisting detention and deportation in order to stay together. We recognize that unjust global and systemic economic relationships and racism form the basis of the injustices that affect immigrants. We seek reform of United States immigration laws to promote fairness, social and economic justice.

The Immigration Accompaniment Program helps support families who are going through the immigration process in three ways:

- Provides a support structure to strengthen those caught in immigration proceedings
- Keeps family members informed at every step of the process as their loved ones move forward
- Holds legal officials accountable for providing accurate information and serving due process

The program pairs immigrants in final removal proceedings with volunteers who accompany them to their required, periodic check-ins with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP).

It is a concrete way to extend sanctuary for the most vulnerable among us. Sanctuary is not a physical entity but the spaces wherein all of us can breath freely and in dignity.

We are building a movement that cares and protects the other, not matter where they are from or who they are. We are opening sanctuary spaces on every block where people can feel safe and welcome.”

Continued on page 6



PHOTO COURTESY JAMES "K" KARPEN

Members of St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC in Manhattan take part in the March 11 Jericho Walk with the New Sanctuary Coalition. Rebekah Forni and Peggy Griffin-Jackman are third and fourth from left.

## SPSA Will “Accompany” Immigrants

Continued from page 5

in lower Manhattan. The coalition matches U.S. citizens with an immigrant to accompany him or her through the deportation process. As is the case in dealing with most institutions, showing up with friends can often alter the outcome.

Accompaniers are there to observe and offer support. They do not give advice or try to act as lawyers; they engage in a ministry of presence. They are especially important if the outcome of a hearing is immediate deportation. ICE is under no obligation to inform the immigrant’s family, but accompaniers can take notes and ask questions to inform family members about what has happened to their loved one.

In addition to accompaniment, New Sanctuary will occasionally rally people to show up for Jericho Walks, a nod to the biblical story in Joshua when the Israelites marched around Jericho to bring down the city walls. On one of Ragbir’s most recent court dates, more than 500 people showed up to circle the ICE building seven times during his hearing. But Ragbir was released before they finished walking and praying. His deportation was recently stayed until January 2018.

By mid-March, SPSA members were signing up for accompaniment.

### Ways You Can Help

1. Apply for and use the New York City ID card. If only undocumented residents use it, then authorities know whom to target. But if all residents use them, it will be difficult to know the citizens from the undocumented.
2. Write letters of support. Although only a few accompany an immigrant, when an accompanier witnesses a deportation, the whole congregation can write letters seeking to reverse the decision.
3. Contact [New Sanctuary Coalition](#) for more information. Several members of the NYAC have also been trained by the coalition to offer the accompaniment training. Check the [Immigration Task Force](#) web page for details and scheduled sessions.

*Christie R. House is a member of St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC and mom to Rebekah Forni. She also serves as the editor of New World Outlook magazine for the General Board of Global Ministries.*

## New Haven Church Offers Sanctuary

United Methodist congregations from across the connection are stepping up as sanctuary churches to shelter and protect immigrants in danger of being separated from their families or being returned to countries that they fled.

In the New York Conference, First & Summerfield UMC in New Haven, Conn., has announced that it will offer needed sanctuary. The congregation made the decision after several of its members attended the Task Force on Immigration’s March 5 informational session on sanctuary churches at the New Rochelle UMC.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Gye Ho Kim, pastor at First & Summerfield noted that shortly after President Trump’s first travel ban was announced, the lectionary reading was from Matthew 5:13–20. Kim said that he asked his church how they could become “salt and light” for the world, and challenged them to become a sanctuary church. He described the small congregation as a very progressive one, noting that they had become a reconciling church in the 1990s.

When the possibility came before the church council, the vote was unanimous.

“I’ve never seen such a positive response in 22 years of ministry,” Kim said. “We have every reason to be proud—even though we’re a small congregation . . . it makes me proud to be a United Methodist pastor.”

The church, which hosts about 40 people in worship each week, formed a sanctuary church team of six. To start, they will provide a temporary safe haven as the church does not have a shower. Members of the congregation will also serve in the accompaniment program.

## Training Available

The NYAC Task Force on Immigration has been working to offer informational sessions on the New Sanctuary Coalition and training in the accompaniment program. Thus far nearly 230 people have attended the sessions or been trained.

Six members of the conference are now available to offer the accompaniment training: Rev. Karina Feliz, Rev. Paul Fleck, retired Rev. Elizabeth Bradden, Wally Robinson, Pastor Ximena Varas, and Jorge Varas.

Check the [Immigration Task Force](#) web page for details and scheduled sessions.

## Lobbying, Progress to Halt Solitary Confinement

Since the last New York Annual Conference, the Board of Church and Society has been leading a concerted effort in both New York and Connecticut to reduce the conditions of torture that prolonged solitary confinement constitutes.

In June 2016, the annual conference passed a resolution to support the Humane Alternatives to Long Term Solitary (HALT) bill in the New York State legislature. Although it did not pass last year, it is once again before the legislature and the CBCS will be lobbying on Tuesday, May 2 in Albany to see that it passes this year. Those interested can [register](#) for the CBCS bus from the Memorial UMC parking lot in White Plains—with a pickup at Exit 18 on the NYS Thruway (New Paltz)—to spend the day visiting representatives, testifying at a hearing, and swelling the ranks of a major rally against torture.

In Connecticut, the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, Scott Semple, has been gradually working on creating more humane practices regarding solitary confinement. This year, CBCS has joined with the American Civil Liberties Union

(ACLU), Yale Law School, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) and many other reform groups to create and raise a bill that will make these changes to implementation of isolated confinement a state law. A major victory has been achieved in getting HB 7302 through the judiciary hearing process and to the floor. United Methodist clergy testified at this hearing, along with survivors, family members, advocates, experts and others. (Video of this hearing is [here](#); go to 6:02 for our testimony.)

Limiting the use of solitary confinement creates a safer environment for all—both prisoner and guards, according to articles from the [American Friends Service Committee](#) and [TakePart](#) digital magazine. Equally important, it also acknowledges our foundational belief in human dignity and that all people are children of God. Whether you live in New York or Connecticut, your voice is needed to abolish torture in our mass incarceration programs.



## Train for Disaster Care, Recovery

Are you looking to:

- Recertify your ERT badge
- Lead an Early Response Team
- Lead a VIM disaster recovery team
- Develop a Disaster Response Care Team
- Serve on a District Disaster Response committee
- Engage your church in local disaster response ministries

All of these opportunities are available to you at the NYAC Disaster Response Forum from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., April 22, at the conference center in White Plains. Find more information and the registration form [here](#). Contact [Tom Vencuss](#) by email for more information.

### Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care “Basic” Training

This training from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat., April 29, provides an overview for the development of disaster emotional and spiritual care teams. UMCOR-trained disaster response “care teams” are faith-based, ongoing teams with standardized training. They work closely with their annual conference and district disaster response ministries to help survivors and others connect with spiritual, emotional, and basic life resources.

A light breakfast, beverages, and snacks will be provided throughout the event at the N.Y. Conference center. Please bring a bag lunch to allow for a working-lunch. [Register](#) on the conference web site; email [Wendy Vencuss](#) with any questions.

### Disaster Response Ministry Camp Work Days

Calling all early response teams (ERTs), long term recovery volunteers, DESC-trained personnel. Come for a Saturday workday at either Camp Quinipet on April 29 or Camp Olmsted on May 13. During the day we will put our disaster response and general skills to work by assisting with projects and helping to prepare the camps for their summer programs. The camps will provide meals so there is no cost to volunteers.

Quinipet projects will include: painting the gazebo, establishing a garden with fencing, replacing the knee wall around an outdoor patio, and building plywood storage units for two cabins.

Olmsted projects will include: Setting up three tents, rebuilding the deck on a cabin, painting, and general woodwork repair.

If you can assist, please contact [Tom Vencuss](#) by email or at 860-324-1424.

## New Program Seeks to Thwart Conflict

BY JENNIFER BERRY

Everyone is beginning to look forward to summer. Hot days and balmy nights may bring all manner of joy. However, as people come out after the cold, the heat can also cause tensions to rise in our communities.

In the wake of many stories about police-community tension and violence, the Conference Board of Church and Society has determined to address the issue from a faith perspective. This month, a new program, Churches, Activists and Police for Loving Outspoken Communities (CAPSLOC) was awarded a start-up grant of \$7,500.

The purpose of CAPSLOC is to bring together police and those who may fear law enforcement in order to develop a keen understanding of how tense and dangerous moments are created and to train people on both sides how to eliminate them. The ultimate goal is a mutual understanding that police advocate for new approaches to stops or arrests and community members

advocate for better resources and training for police.

CAPSLOC workshops will begin with work to understand the message we all take in from media sources and how it influences our perception of each other and ourselves. The training will include several scenarios with police and civilians reversing roles to enhance their understanding. Participants will have an opportunity to share their insights, and work together to devise strategies specific to their community.

CAPSLOC is not designed to be a solution, but rather as a way to create entirely new relationships. Church and Society will endeavor to resource groups as they decide how to move forward together.

For more information on the program or to request a workshop, contact Jennifer Berry, assistant coordinator of social justice organizing, engagement and advocacy at [Jennifer.Berry@nyac-umc.org](mailto:Jennifer.Berry@nyac-umc.org) or 267-978-3082.



# Ordinands' Pilgrimage To England With Bishop



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NYAC PILGRIMS



**Clockwise from above: Bishop Thomas Bickerton and ordinands in Epworth—early in their March 26–April 4 journey through Wesley’s England; Rev. David Gilmore strikes a pose in the New Room pulpit in Bristol; part of the group of 29 travelers wait for the bus in Oxford; Rev. Matt Curry and the bishop open a canal gate in Stratford-upon-Avon; ordinands Elisa Vicioso and Milagros Solorzano with the bishop in Christ Church Cathedral where John and Charles Wesley were ordained.**



# Quinipet Marks 70 Years of Ministry Service

BY JANE WAKEMAN

There are several exciting events coming up at both of our camps, Quinipet and Kingswood. Besides the expected flurry of activity like recruiting staff, campers, and sprucing up the grounds, both camps are getting ready for some really special events.



This year, Quinipet will be celebrating its 70th anniversary. Imagine, 70 years of spiritual formation, community building, skill building and outdoor (and indoor) fun. August 25–27 will be the weekend to celebrate this milestone. All those who have been involved with Quinipet, or just want to celebrate its existence, are invited to spend the weekend with like-minded folks for plenty of special activities for everyone.

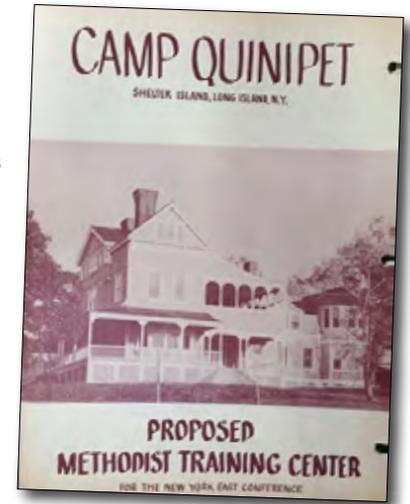
Quinipet will also update its sailing fleet with the purchase of three new American 18 Daysailers, and as always, assistance is needed to keep the sailboats afloat and in good shape. If you can help with this endeavor, please go to the [sailboat fundraiser](#) page. Gifts, small and not-so-small, are appreciated.

Two service weekends are planned for the spring. The traditional Kingswood setup will be held on Memorial Day weekend, May 27–29. This is a time for people with all kinds of skill levels (and all kinds of skills) to take part in getting this wonderful camp up and running for the summer. If you want a taste of Kingswood before planning a whole vacation there, this is a great opportunity to capture the spirit that moves throughout the 766 acres.

Quinipet will also host a service weekend April 28–30. The cost for lodging and food for the entire weekend is a mere \$60. This is a great way to launch into vacation mode!

Our camping and retreat ministries are ever mindful of the need to develop creation care and appreciation, the fourth of the seven foundations developed by the United Methodist Camping and Retreat Ministries. Each of these seven opportunities expresses an aspect of caring for God's creation. We care for the people who come to our camps, but we also practice, and teach, care for the space and the beauty of the gift with which we have been entrusted.

Just as John Wesley preached in the open air so that he could reach those outside the church, and just as Jesus taught outside the synagogues and on the hillsides, we bring out into the open air our love of Christ and our gratitude for every living thing. How easy it is, standing by the water's edge or deep in the cool forest, to rejoice with the psalmist, "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!" (Psalm 150)



An old brochure promoting Camp Quinipet.

## OBITUARIES

### Marion Rossman Thorn

Marion Rossman Thorn, 96, of Shelton, Conn., died on April 7, 2017. Born in Hudson, N.Y., on November 6, 1920, she was the widow of Rev. Ralph S. Thorn, Jr.

Rev. Thorn served the New York Conference for 38 years from 1942 to his retirement in 1980. The churches he served in New York included: LaGrangeville and Pleasant Valley, Garrettson and Hillside in Rhinebeck, Castle Heights in White Plains, Cold Spring and South Highland, St. Luke's in New Rochelle, Asbury-Crestwood in Tuckahoe. In Connecticut, he served St. Paul's in Hartford, and the UMC of Westville in New Haven. Rev. Thorn died in 1995.

Thorn was an active member of the Spring Glen United Church of Christ in Hamden, Conn. She retired as an accountant from Yale University, having served the departments of public health, molecular biophysics, and biochemistry. She also taught piano lessons in her home for more than 40 years and continued playing for her assisted-living community in various plays and church services. One of her favorite pastimes was playing bridge with her friends.

In addition to her husband, Thorn was predeceased by daughters, Pamela Reader and Nan Thorn-Clements, and her sister, Alyce Duntz.

She is survived by sons, Jeff (Norma) Thorn of Orange, Conn., and Paul Thorn of North Haven, Conn.; grandchildren, Cassi (Rob) Clough and Matt Clements; great-grandchildren, James and Isabelle Clough, and Olive Clements; and nieces and nephews.

A memorial service celebrating Thorn's life was held April 18 at Spring

Glen UCC, 1825 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Conn. Interment will take place at a later date in the Cedar Park Cemetery, Hudson, N.Y.

Memorial contributions may be sent to The Pamela Thorn Memorial Humanities Scholarship, West Virginia Wesleyan College, 59 College Ave, Buckhannon, WV 26201. To send condolences to the family, visit [www.beecherandbennett.com](http://www.beecherandbennett.com).

### Gwendolyn Ruth White

Gwendolyn "Gwen" Ruth White died Monday, March 27, 2017, at Rivercrest Wellness & Rehab in Concord, Mass. She was 92, and the wife of Bishop C. Dale White.

White was born on October 24, 1924, in South Sioux City, Neb., to Rev. Samuel N. Horton and Nellie (Welch) Horton. She graduated from Belden High School in Nebraska with national music honors in voice and composition. She attended Wayne State Teachers College in Nebraska, Buena Vista College in Iowa, Morningside College in Iowa, and Colorado State College of Education, receiving her teacher's certificate in Iowa in 1944.

In 1946, she married C. Dale White and they moved to New England where her husband earned a doctorate at Boston University School of Theology.

Wherever ministry took the couple, White became involved in the music programs in the local school. She also played the organ, sang in, and directed church choirs. After her husband was elected a bishop

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# Way Forward Group Ponders Structural Changes

**BY HEATHER HAHN**

**UMNS** | The 32 members of the Commission on a Way Forward are getting down to the business of doing what their name says—helping a denomination deeply divided over homosexuality move toward some sort of future together.

That future could end up looking very different than how The United Methodist Church operates at present.

“After meetings of building relationships and team building, the commission is now delving deeper into its intended task—finding a way forward for the church,” said Mazvita Machinga, commission member and a dean at United Methodist Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

“There is high optimism that a way forward will unwind itself as the team works together,” she added.

The [multinational commission](#) held its third meeting April 6–8 at the United Methodist Building in Washington. Just as was true with its first two meetings, the commission’s third gathering was closed to reporters.

The sole New York Conference member on the commission, Myungrae Kim Lee, summarized the meeting in this way:

“We all spent difficult time together at this meeting. We laughed and cried together to create new possibility for our UMC. This is a necessary step we must pass through to direct ourselves to a new future of UMC. I believe that the Holy Spirit was with us.”

The commission, [authorized by General Conference 2016](#), is looking at new ways to be a global church where many United Methodists view the practice of homosexuality as a sin while many others view restrictions on LGBTQ individuals as sinful.

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht likens the work to putting together a puzzle. The group has laid out pieces on the table and is trying to figure out how the pieces might fit together. The challenge is the group has no set picture or diagram to go by.

“We’re acknowledging that there are deep-seated differences in the church, and there are parts of the church that are not able to live

together in a closed connection,” Lambrecht said. “So we are looking at ways to loosen the connection. What form that might take, we don’t know yet.”

Matt Berryman agreed with Lambrecht’s assessment. “What we’re contemplating is loosening the connection in the face of conflict over whether there needs to be uniformity of practice and belief around LGBTQ people,” Berryman said.

Scott Johnson of Upper New York cautioned not to get too carried away with the idea of “loosening the connection.”

“I think there is no question we still see a connected United Methodist church,” he said. “We’re working toward unity.”

The group brings together clergy and laity from nine countries and of diverse perspectives. At least three members, including Berryman, are openly gay. Still others, like Lambrecht, have long advocated for maintaining the bans on same-gender unions and “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy.

“We are trying to think about and model the new behaviors that will help leaders who deeply care about the church to see new forms and structures that will allow for differing expressions of the global church,” Florida Area Bishop Ken Carter, told UMNS. He is one of three bishops who is moderating the commission’s work.

The group is not only looking at a way through the impasse around homosexuality but also how to increase vitality of local churches and strengthen the church’s mission.

According to [a press release about the meeting](#), the commission members indicated they are leaning toward a simpler structure “with clearer processes for decision-making and accountability.”

The Rev. Tom Berlin, lead pastor of Floris United Methodist Church in Herndon, Va., said the commission still doesn’t know what “simpler” would look like.

“We just have a sense that it’s a lot more complicated than it needs to be,” he said. “That’s why you are hearing people say, ‘simpler’ and ‘looser.’”

Berlin added that in his experience, The

United Methodist Church is “a denomination that likes the tension of different perspectives.”

Commission members also discussed what connects them together. They heard from Houston Area Bishop Scott Jones, chair of the denomination’s Committee on Faith and Order, who specifically highlighted what United Methodists share in common.

His committee has put together the document [“Wonder, Love and Praise,”](#) which explores how United Methodists understand what it means to be the Church.

Jones reminded the group of three distinctive convictions that bind United Methodists. The church believes the saving love of God is “meant for all people,” is “transformative” and “creates community.”

Alice Williams, a commission member from Florida, said Jones’ presentation really resonated with her.

“For me, moving forward as I think about this work, those will be three things that will be my touchstones,” she said.

The commission met less than a month before the Judicial Council, the denomination’s top court, [will hold a hearing](#) related to last summer’s election of Mountain Sky Area Bishop Karen Oliveto, the denomination’s first openly gay bishop.

Commission members stressed that whatever the Judicial Council rules, their work continues. The commission moderators plan to release a separate statement on the church court hearing.

David Field, a commission member from Switzerland, noted that the Judicial Council’s decision would use the denomination’s present Book of Discipline. In contrast, the commission is looking at the Discipline with an eye toward possible revisions.

“I remain hopeful that we will find a positive way forward that will release the church to focus the time and energy we have spent fighting each other on mission,” he said.

The commission’s next meeting will be July 17–21 in Chicago.

For any of its proposals to become reality, the commission needs the assent of General Conference delegates. Bishops are considering calling a special General Conference in 2019.

# Court Sets Oral Hearing on Gay Bishop Issue

**UMNS** | An oral hearing on a petition questioning whether a gay pastor can serve as a bishop in The United Methodist Church will open the spring meeting of Judicial Council, the denomination's top court.

The hearing—set for 9 a.m. Tuesday, April 25, at the Hilton Hotel at the Newark Penn Station in Newark, N.J.—is the only portion of the council's April 25–28 meeting that is open to the public.

The petitioner and respondent in the case will have 60 minutes each to present their oral arguments. In addition, members of Judicial Council will have two 15-minute sessions to ask questions of the petitioner and respondent, with a 15-minute break in between the two presentations.

Any decision on that petition could affect Bishop Karen Oliveto, the denomination's first openly gay bishop, [who was elected in July](#) by the U.S. church's Western Jurisdiction. She currently serves as bishop of the Mountain Sky Area, which encompasses Colorado, Montana, Utah, Wyoming and a church in Idaho. Oliveto grew up in the Babylon UMC on Long Island and served churches in the NYAC before moving to California.

Oliveto, who was serving as senior pastor of Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco when she was elected, has been legally married to Robin Ridenour, a United Methodist deaconess, since October 2014.

She is [facing "multiple" complaints](#) filed since being elected bishop. The Book of Discipline, the denomination's book of policies, since 1972 has asserted that all people are of sacred worth but that the practice of homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching."

Since 2004, the book has listed "not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage" and "being a self-avowed practicing homosexual" as chargeable offenses under church law.

Dixie Brewster, represented by the Rev. Keith Boyette, is the petitioner. The respondent is the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops, represented by Richard A. Marsh.

On July 15, 2016, during the South Central Jurisdictional Conference in Wichita, Kansas, Brewster made a motion that the conference request a declaratory decision from Judicial Council.

Her question was whether "the nomination, election, consecration, and/or assignment as a bishop of The United Methodist Church of a person who claims to be a 'self-avowed practicing homosexual' or is a spouse in a same-sex marriage" is lawful under the denomination's Book of Discipline.

The motion by Brewster, a lay delegate of the Great Plains Conference, was passed by majority vote. The South Central Jurisdictional Conference claimed authority to bring the petition because it pertains to matters affecting jurisdictions or jurisdictional conferences.

"Specifically, the petition addresses action by the Western Jurisdiction in electing the Rev. Karen Oliveto, reported to be an openly gay clergy member, as a bishop," wrote Louisiana Area Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, in a letter to Judicial Council. Harvey was chairing the conference session when the motion was passed.

"Accordingly, the petition will directly affect Bishop Oliveto, her qualifications and the efficacy of her election as bishop," the letter said. "More generally, the petition will affect all jurisdictions and jurisdictional conferences . . . who have an interest in the election and appointment of bishops in The United Methodist Church."

This is [one of seven docket items](#) that will be considered by Judicial Council in April. None of the decisions will be released until after the



**Bishop Karen Oliveto, center, is applauded by Big Sky Area Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, left, and Los Angeles Area Bishop Minerva Carcaño shortly after her consecration to the episcopacy in July 2016.**

meeting has concluded.

Among other items of business, council members will review the decisions of law related to gay clergy and conference boards of ordained ministry in the New York and Northern Illinois conferences. At its October 2016 meeting, [the court ruled that bishops must answer all questions of law](#) that are properly before them.

Bishop Jane Middleton, now retired from the New York Conference, and Northern Illinois Bishop Sally Dyck, [submitted their responses](#) before the end of 2016 to Judicial Council, as required.

Also under review is a bishop's decision of law from the 2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. A "Stop the Trials" resolution—calling for the jurisdiction's College of Bishops to stop church trials—[was debated, amended and "untitled" before being approved by delegates](#) on July 14.

But a clergy delegate from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, the Rev. Jeffrey Raffauf, then requested a ruling on whether the resolution was "in order" with the Book of Discipline and several past Judicial Council decisions.

On Aug. 4, Bishop Mark Webb ruled the untitled resolution out of order because it requests that annual conferences and their councils on finance and administration violate church law. The resolution also "negates, ignores and violates the Discipline and Constitution" and is unconstitutional, Webb ruled.

The 2016 General Conference, the denomination's top legislative body, submitted its own request for a declaratory decision from the court. The petition on the April docket asks if [Judicial Council Decision 1318](#)—which was issued during General Conference and found that mandatory penalties against clergy violate the intent of the just resolution process—applies to Petition No. 60805 in regard to complaints against bishops.



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### **5/2 Lobbying Day in Albany**

Join the Conference Board of Church & Society in Albany for a rally and visits to legislators in support of the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act. Since this legislation is considered a model for the entire country, people from outside New York are welcome to help with this effort. Bus transportation is available from both White Plains and New Paltz. [Register](#) soon as space is limited on the bus.

### **5/4–7 Walk to Emmaus**

The men's Walk to Emmaus will be held at Montfort spiritual Center in Bay Shore, N.Y., on Long Island. The Walk to Emmaus experience begins with a 72-hour course in Christianity beginning on Thursday night and ending on Sunday. Additional details and [registration info](#) are upcoming. The women's walk is slated for October 19-22 at the same location.

### **5/5–6 Day of Dance Conference**

The third annual Day of Dance conference will focus on the “young-at-heart”—age 40 plus—but welcomes all ages. There will be workshops to suit all levels of experience. Participants will learn dances to minister at annual conference 2017. Please note that an adult must accompany all minors. The program at St. Paul's UMC, 3714 Avenue D, Brooklyn, runs 6–9 p.m. Friday, and from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Saturday. Cost per person is \$25, or \$20 per individual for groups of five or more. Deadline to register is May 1. Contact [Rev. Sheila Beckford](#) for details. [Register](#) on the NYAC web site.

## Heritage Sunday Focuses on Local Church

To celebrate Heritage Sunday this spring, the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History's History and Interpretation Committee is urging congregations to discover and then celebrate their own history. Heritage Sunday will be observed on May 24, Aldersgate Day, or the Sunday preceding that date. That date is May 21 this year.

Heritage Sunday has been set aside for remembering our legacy as United Methodists. It is an ideal time for local churches and Annual Conference Commissions on Archives and History and Historical Societies to develop programs and projects reflecting the importance of history in congregational formation and casting the future.

### **5/20 Missional Community Engagement Forum**

Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe, Jr., author of “Transforming Community,” will facilitate this 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. training event at the Doral Arrowwood Conference Center, 975 Anderson Hill Rd., Rye Brook, N.Y. This is primarily a follow-up to the Laity Convocation in November, but the invitation to attend has been extended to all laity and clergy are invited to attend. David Gilmore, director of congregational development and revitalization, is coordinating the event. A \$50 fee covers materials, lunch and snacks; [register](#) online by May 5. Questions to [Carol Merante](#) in the conference office.

### **6/7–10 2017 Annual Conference**

The call to conference has gone out to all lay and clergy members, and [registration](#) is now open online. The theme for the 218th session is “Pathways & Possibilities: The Journey of Disciple Making.” A related story can be found on Page 3.

### **7/7–8 UMM National Gathering**

Registration is open for the United Methodist Men's 12th National Gathering, “Discipleship: The Contact Sport,” at St. Luke's UMC in Indianapolis. Speakers include Bishops James Swanson Sr. and Jonathan Holston, as well as the Rev. Kevin Watson, Candler School of Theology professor, and Shan Foster, national director of MEND, the YWCA program combatting domestic violence. To register, go to the [UMM web site](#).

### **7/14–16 Mission “u”**

This year's event will be held at the Stamford Hilton, 1 First Stamford Place, Stamford, Conn. Watch the conference [calendar](#) as additional details become available.

### **9/28 Anchor House Banquet**

On Thursday September 28th, 2017 @ 6:00pm we will be hosting our annual Graduation Banquet. Anchor House invites you to join us, as we celebrate our clients that have successfully completed treatment. We will be celebrating them in style at the Grand Prospect Hall with an evening filled with hope, fun and fellowship. We hope to see you there!

### **Vision Deadlines for 2017**

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. Deadlines for 2017 are: May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1. Please send any stories, photos, ideas, or questions directly to [vision@nyac.com](mailto:vision@nyac.com).

Each congregation's history—in parts or as a whole—is an untapped resource. In its invitation to churches, the commission wrote, “We think this is tremendous opportunity for church leaders and congregation to uncover, examine and take inspiration from your local church's story. We want to encourage you to lift up the defining people, events and special moments that stirred, ignited and continue to shape the mission and ministry where you are.”

This commission has provided [resources](#) online to assist churches in celebrating their local history.

# OBITUARIES

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in The United Methodist Church in 1976, they lived in the Princeton, N.J., area for eight years. In 1984, he would be appointed bishop of the New York Conference.

White served on the Commission on the Status & Role of Women in the South New England Conference, on the North New Jersey Task Force on Spiritual Formation, and the New York Conference Task Force on Spiritual Formation. She was also a delegate to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 1976. She was an honorary board member of Ehwa Women's University in South Korea, and served for two years as director of spiritual formation at the Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville.

White taught in regional and conference schools of Christian mission, and wrote for Methodist publications and an ecumenical publication for clergy spouses. She was a nationally known retreat and workshop leader for more than 25 years and a member of the Guild for Spiritual Guidance. In 2015, she received a Lifetime of Discipleship Award from the Preachers' Aid Society of New England in honor of her many decades of service to the UMC in New England and throughout the world.

In addition to her husband, White is survived by children: Hazel (Leland) Lescallet of Newark, Ohio; Rebecca (John) Blair of Hebron, N.H.; Tura Beach of Australia; David (Beth) White of Gouldsboro Maine; Teresa (Daniel) Kuczynski of Salisbury Vt.; and Lisa Remde of Jacksonville, Texas. She is also survived by grandchildren: John Tracy, Chris Tracy, Matt Blair, Kate White, Eve White, Sean Pendl, and Karina Lucia; 10 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by a brother, Lloyd Horton, and a son, Gerald W. White.

A funeral service for White was held April 11 at Lexington UMC, Lexington, Mass. Online condolences may be made at [www.concordfuneral.com](http://www.concordfuneral.com).

Memorial donations in her name may be made to the [Preachers' Aid Society](http://www.preachersaid.org) of New England, 51 Charles Wesley Court, Wells, ME 04090; the

Spiritual Life Center at [Rolling Ridge Retreat](http://www.rollingridgetretreat.com) & Conference Center, 660 Great Pond Rd., N. Andover, MA 01845; [Amnesty International USA](http://www.amnestyusa.org), 322 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10001; or [St. Joseph's Indian School](http://www.stjosephsindianschool.org), PO Box 326, Chamberlain, SD 57326.

## Doris May Clayton

Doris May Clayton died on March 15 at Adams Place in Murfreesboro, Tenn. She was 88. Clayton was born July 21, 1928, in Hicksville, N.Y., to Edward Christopher and Florence Mabel Rave.

She was the widow of Rev. James Clayton who served several Long Island churches in the 1950s and 1960s. Rev. Clayton, who had a long career as a professor of religion at Sewanee University of the South in Tennessee, retired in 1991 and died in November 2016.

Clayton received a bachelor's degree in 1949 from the State University of New York at New Paltz. She taught in elementary and middle schools on Long Island, N.Y., and in Brookline, Mass., before moving with her family to Sewanee in 1970.

She continued to teach middle-school English until her retirement in 1985. As late as December 2016, Doris spoke with great pride of her earliest teaching and school administration experience, helping to set up an elementary school in the new and expanding community of Levittown, NY. After retirement, Clayton kept busy in a variety of community roles and took particular joy in traveling to visit children and grandchildren.

Clayton was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, James Winston Clayton. She is survived by her children, Douglas Clayton of Acton, Mass.; Susan Lewis of Murfreesboro, and Deborah Lister of Malvern, U.K.; a niece, Mary Rifenburg of Fort Myers, Fla.; eight grandchildren: Amanda Day; Collin Lewis; Charles, Emily and Anna Lister; Benjamin, Noah and Henry Clayton; and two great-grandchildren, Oscar Lister and Marshall Day.

A memorial service will take place at a later date. For further information and an online guestbook, go to [www.woodfinchapel.com](http://www.woodfinchapel.com).

# Getting Ready for Annual Conference #218

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## Live Streaming

All events in the arena (where the worship and plenary sessions take place) will be live streamed and include captioning for the hearing impaired. Live streaming begins with the opening worship on Wednesday, June 7. The link to the live stream will be posted on the NYAC web site.

## Shirley Parris Award

Shirley Parris Service Award is given for exceptional, uncompensated service to the United Methodist connection. Nominees should exemplify the selfless and loving example of Parris, whose lifelong devotion to Jesus Christ was expressed through her service to the local church, the New York Annual Conference, and the jurisdictional and general conferences. The

[nomination](#) form is available on the laity resources page of the NYAC web site.

## Volunteers Needed

Ushers are needed for general duty and in a variety of other capacities for communion, taking offerings, and voting. Please sign up for these positions when you [register](#) online. There will be a set of instructions for each type of usher. There will be a required "walk through" for communion ushers prior to the opening worship.

During registration there is also an opportunity to sign up to assist in other ways, such as hospitality/greeter, stagehand, or assisting with the "Telling Your Story" project.