

## VI. 2013 REPORTS, PETITIONS & RESOLUTIONS

### A. LEGISLATIVE SECTION REPORTS & PETITIONS

#### SECTION 1: MINISTRIES OF WITNESS

All items were approved by the indicated votes and were included in the consent calendar affirmative vote. The votes shown are those from the legislative section for each item. There were no petitions in this section.

#### COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY

##### Ms. Stephanie Parsons, Chair

*Concur: 91, Non-Concur: 0, Abstain: 0; 100% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. This committee was formed by the 2008 General Conference and is outlined in ¶653 of the 2012 *Book of Discipline*. In 2011, NYAC voted on the membership of this committee for the first time. As there are no specifications outlined in the *Discipline* (i.e. no term limits, set number of members, etc.), in many ways, this committee is still in the process of forming.
102. The Accessibility Committee was created for and is dedicated to advocating for, being aware of, encouraging ministries of/for, and promoting inclusion of/for persons with special needs. These are not the limitations of our committee, but rather our starting points.
103. Goals for the NYAC committee include the following:
  - 1) Encouraging awareness of the need for ministries that are inclusive of people with special needs,
  - 2) Developing a database of churches accessible to different populations, possibly one that can be accessed through the NYAC web site by anyone church shopping (i.e. which churches have ASL interpreters, which churches are completely wheelchair accessible, which churches offer programs for developmentally disabled, which churches serve gluten-free communion bread),
  - 3) Developing an Accessibility Survey that will be included in the packets sent to each church from the district superintendents to be used in charge conferences,
  - 4) Assisting churches in determining the needs of their communities in relation to those with special needs, and
  - 5) Finding/creating resources for churches developing ministries for those with special needs.
104. These are just a few things our committee hopes to achieve. However, if there are accessibility needs or suggestions for your ministries, districts or local churches, we would be most happy to receive them.
105. At this moment, the Accessibility Committee is a team of four. Over the course of this past year, our elected chairperson had to step down after moving out of the conference. Rev. Evy McDonald was our driving force and has been greatly

missed. However, we hope to carry on with the passion, energy, and excitement she brought to this committee.

106. On that note, we are looking for committee members! If you are passionate about advocacy and equality for those with special needs, please consider joining us! If you know someone in your faith community who is called to this ministry, point us out to them! There is so much we can accomplish through God's grace and open hearts.

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## COOPERATIVE SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

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### Ms. Patricia Knebel, Assistant Dean

*Concur: 91, Non-Concur: 0, Abstain: 0; 100% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. The 2012 Cooperative School of Christian Mission worshiped, studied, struggled with, and celebrated the theme "That All May Have Life" July 19 to 21, 2012, at Western CT University. Ninety-two participants spent three days being challenged and inspired by this year's three mission studies: Immigration in the Bible, Haiti, and Poverty. And in between classes, we fellowshiped, worshiped, sang, ate, and more. Thursday evening's revival service was led by the Rev. Kenny Yi and Friday evening we were led by the youth class. On Saturday, an additional 53 Saturday Sampler participants arrived to spend the day in an intensive class on the Poverty study.

102. Teachers for the 2012 School were:

#### *Immigration in the Bible*

- The Rev. Dr. Jacob Dharmaraj
- The Rev. Paul Moon (in Korean)
- The Rev. Lydia Lebron-Rivera (in Spanish)

#### *Haiti*

- The Rev. Guerschon Saint Ange
- Ms. Gail Boykin (Youth class)
- Ms. Michelle Stanley (Youth class)

#### *Poverty*

- Ms. Mary Ellen Kris
- Ms. Linda Mellor
- The Rev. Hermon Darden, Jr.
- The Rev. Rhonda Taylor
- Ms. Soonae Kang (in Korean)
- Dr. Nancy Ayala (in Spanish)
- Ms. Karen Prudente (Saturday Sampler)
- Ms. Nazgul William (Saturday Sampler)

#### *Children's Class*

- Ms. Diana Collier
- Ms. Deborah Jenkins

103. **The School of Christian Mission will change its name to Mission u!** Effective 2013 we will become *Mission u: Learning Together for Transformation of the World*. The new name keeps the identity with mission and reflects the personal learning experience (u as in university and u as the text and web language for you). The tag line reflects the community aspect of learning and the mission goal of transformation. **New name—continued life-changing learning!** I am blessed to be chosen as dean for the first Mission u of the New York Conference!

104. The 2013 Mission u will take place August 1-3, 2013, at Western CT University with Saturday Sampler on August 3. Adult studies will include: *The Call: Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly* (in English, Korean and Spanish); *The Roma of Europe* (in English, Korean and Spanish); and *Poverty* (in English). Children and youth studies will be on the theme *Migration*. Saturday Sampler participants will choose between *The Call: Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly* or *The Roma of Europe*.

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## CONFERENCE COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS

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### Rev. Robert E. Kersten, Chair

*Concur: 91, Non-Concur: 0, Abstain: 0; 100% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. While our clergy, laypersons and churches have been actively involved in local and regional ecumenical and interreligious activities, our CCCUIC has been mostly dormant while waiting to see how the 2012 General Conference decision to dissolve the CCCUIC and create a new office within the Council of Bishops will play out.
102. An article in *the methoblog*<sup>1</sup>, dated February 22, 2013, by Linda Bloom, UMNS, offered this helpful information:

After a denominational vote by the 2012 United Methodist General Conference, the formerly independent General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) has become an office on ecumenical and interfaith ministries lodged within the United Methodist Council of Bishops.

The Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, which began Jan. 1, is supported by an 11-member steering committee of lay and clergy representatives and the council's leadership team on ecumenical and interreligious relations. Heading that team are Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, chair; Bishop Michael Watson, secretary; and Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, ecumenical officer.

The new office, led by the Rev. Stephen Sidorak Jr., ecumenical staff officer, will remain in New York with previous staff members of the commission.

During a Jan. 24-26 organizational meeting of the steering committee, bishops, staff and transition team members, Dr. Sidorak reminded the group that the restructuring proposal was initiated by the commission as a way to "strengthen and enhance" the denomination's efforts toward the unity of Christ's church.

Bishop Devadhar, a former director of the GCCUIC, noted that while the world is diversifying religiously and culturally, some United Methodists are still arguing over "who is in and who is out" on church membership rolls.

He expects the bishops' new Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships will provide "a new opportunity for us to do new ecumenism."

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1 Linda Bloom, *The United Methodist Reporter: UMC launches new ecumenical, interfaith office* [http://methoblog.com/3\\_0/2013/02/umc-launches-new-ecumenical-interfaith-office/](http://methoblog.com/3_0/2013/02/umc-launches-new-ecumenical-interfaith-office/), 2/22/2013

103. We continue to rejoice in all the ways that we have developed relationships with our neighbors. We also celebrate the number of United Methodist clergy who are executive directors of local councils of churches or their equivalents, or are elected officials of local, regional or statewide religious ecumenical bodies. Thanks be to God.

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## HISPANIC AMERICAN COUNCIL

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### Ms. Gladis I. Lobato, Chair

*Concur: 91, Non-Concur: 0, Abstain: 0; 100% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. Pastors and Laity may the peace and joy of God be with you.
102. The year 2012 brought challenges and achievements, and in all we were victorious in Jesus Christ. The council met on March 9, 2013 to review the work done during the previous year.
103. Our purpose and commitment as the council is to work in unity for the spiritual wellbeing and development of those whom we serve. The executive committee of the council met several times during the year to plan the special events for the Hispanic congregations in our conference:
104. Lenten Services:
- February 29 Grace UMC, Rev. Lydia Lebron-Rivera, pastor
  - March 07 Jackson Heights UMC, Rev. Enrique Lebron, pastor
  - March 14 Nueva Jerusalem UMC, Pastor Milagros Solorzano, pastor
  - March 21 Primera Hispana UMC, Rev. Dr. Luisa C. Martinez, pastor
  - March 28 Co-Op City UMC, Rev. Dr. Milca Plaud
105. With great joy we share with you the achievements of our leaders in the different work areas of work:
- April 2-4 - Workshop “Following Jesus’ Steps” held Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week. This was led by Rev. Magaly Beltre and it was held at Jackson Heights UMC.
  - June 2012 - Participation at annual conference - we led an early morning Worship Service and had a display table with information about the Interpreter in Spanish, the Hispanic Family Camp, Annual Concert, and others.
  - June 8 - Hispanic Council Dinner at annual conference where we celebrated the ordination of Rev. Hector Rivera, and expressed our gratitude for the years of ministry to Rev. Dilca Lebron-Mazariego and Rev. Dr. Alicia Fils-Aime Wentler who retired.
  - June 16 - The Hispanic United Methodist Men met at Grace UMC in Manhattan.
  - June 23 - Dinner Concert - special fundraiser to provide scholarships for children to attend the Hispanic UM Family Camp. We thank Grace UMC in Manhattan and Rev. Lydia Lebron for hosting this important event.
  - July 19-21 - School of Christian Mission – we continue to encourage the women of our congregations to attend and to support this important event of our Conference.
  - August - MARCHA (Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans) - this is the UM National Hispanic Caucus of which we are members.

- August 19 - Farewell Worship Celebration for Bishop Jeremiah J. Park - members of the council, and the Hispanic Consultant Rev. Arturo Maine attended.
  - August 31-September 3 - Hispanic Family Camp Committee worked with dedication planning this important event that is a blessing to all the participants.
  - October 21 - Laity Sunday Celebration – this year it was held at Primera Iglesia Hispana MU (111th & Lexington). At this celebration a lay person chosen by his or her congregation is given recognition for the work done during the year. We are grateful to the congregation and their pastor, Rev. Dr. Luisa C. Martinez for their hospitality.
  - October 28 - Celebration to Welcome Bishop Martin D. McLee – the council attended this event.
  - November 12 - In solidarity with the victims of Hurricane Sandy, the Hispanic Council sent a love offering of \$300.00 to UMCOR.
106. In addition to all these events, the present chair has represented the council at different conference meetings.
107. We congratulate Ms. Daisy Tavares, a member of the council, who was elected as one of the directors of the Women’s Division at their meeting on June 14, 2012, held in Hershey, Pennsylvania.
108. Brothers and sisters, the task ahead of us is challenging; let us continue to seek God’s direction in the struggles that we face in our communities. Let us look forward and concentrate our efforts and energy in what we need to do. In doing so we will find the answer God has for us.
109. This is my last report as chair, giving thanks to God first who has given me health, strength, and energy to do the work in the best way possible and to keep you informed about all the matters of the Hispanic people. Thank you to every member of the executive committee of the council and to the pastors and laity for your support. I love you all in the name of Jesus Christ! I also thank all the congregations for inviting me to be a part of their celebrations and special events.

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## COMMITTEE ON NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES (CONAM)

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### Ms. Myrna Clinton, Chair

*Concur: 90, Non-Concur: 0, Abstain: 1; 100% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. The conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) was established following last year’s NYAC. Myrna and Walter Clinton are the chair and co-chair. It is one of ten such committees in the Northeastern Jurisdiction. The purpose of CONAM is found in the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, Paragraph 654, page 458, wherein a task force was established to bring attention to, “the issues, needs, gifts and talents of the Native American people, tribes, organizations and communities within each CONAM conference.” Myrna and Walter are excited about, “setting up a framework to reach out to the Native American population and to help connect them to the services that are available on all levels,” reported Bill Hunt, editor of *the Messenger*, newsletter of the First & Wesley UMC (West Haven) in its June-July 2012 edition. Myrna and Walter told Bill that, “The Native American population is perhaps the last remaining minority without a voice. They are truly the invisible people. They suffer from social stigma, high unemployment, substance abuse, domestic violence and

everything else that afflicts our society. [However,]...because they have no voice we turn a deaf ear to their suffering.”

102. The CONAM team will help craft the United Methodist response and create the outreach programs which will hopefully bring the peace and justice of Christ into the lives of those in need. Since its inception, the committee has reached out to the Pennsylvania and Delaware committees for guidance, organized a local task force, and met three times to establish goals and objectives. Of current interest are the *Two Row Wampum Belt* Campaign (symbol of a 400-year-old peace treaty); *the Shawl Project*, to create awareness of and prevent domestic violence against Native American women; *Walking with Our Sisters*, a support network for Native American women; and *Idle No More*, a program to protect the rights of indigenous peoples, especially protecting the environment from exploitation.
103. Native American Ministry Sunday was celebrated by committee members at Jesse Lee Memorial, with Rev. Doug Osgood and Elaine Winward sharing the service and at First and Wesley with Myrna and Walt sharing the service. Walt and Myrna made a “guest” appearance at the Jesse Lee service.
104. One objective for 2013 is to develop communication with church communities within the boundaries of the conference. Our goal for this year is modest: we would be thrilled to establish permanent contacts with three additional congregations who will help us spread the word of our work with Native Americans. We look forward to visiting churches throughout the area and welcome inquiries from anyone interested in joining CONAM. The Conference will be requested to publicize this goal by digital communication.
105. The collective Native American Ministries were instructed to hold an annual meeting to continue training and relationship building, bringing native peoples and church communities together to “maintain these connectional relationships.” Please visit CONAM’s table at conference this year.

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## UNITED METHODIST MEN

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### Mr. Royston Bailey, President

*Concur: 91, Non-Concur: 0, Abstain: 0; 100% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. The New York Annual Conference United Methodist Men began the year with a focus on improving their ministry in areas of leadership, mission, organization, prayer, scouting, membership, unity and finance.
102. **Unity & Leadership:** On February 11, District Resource Day, eight men attended the Long Island West District training. Six churches were represented: Corona, Bethany, St. Marks, Peoples, St. Albans Grace and Richmond Hill. On June 23 at the Long Island East District Men’s elections, Rev. A. Erik Rasmussen preached on Unity. Nine men were present, representing Freeport Hispanic, Port Jefferson, Lake Ronkonkoma, Smithtown, Hempstead English and Central Islip. On June 30 at the Long Island West elections, Rev. Lawrence Charles preached on Unity. Fourteen men, including District Lay Leader Seymour Thomas, were present representing Vanderveer Park, St. Marks, Richmond Hill, Cuyler-Warren St., Brooks Memorial and Jamaica First. On September 8 at the Connecticut District Men’s Day Apart held at Woodbury UMC, DS Rev. Ken Kieffer preached on “Unity as Men of Faith in a Seemingly Godless World.” Twenty-one men were present, representing eight churches, including Pastor Robert Booth, Rev. Gabriel Akinbode and Rev. Sim.

103. **Organization:** On June 23 the UMM organized the Long Island East and Long Island West Districts. Officers for the Long Island East District are Mr. David Clark, president; Mr. Wayne Carty, vice president; Mr. Richard Cox, secretary and Mr. Clem Westney, treasurer. Officers for the Long Island West District are Mr. Graham Greaves, president; Mr. Ernie Searle, vice president; Mr. Dennis Gordon, treasurer; Mr. Paul Jefferson, interim secretary and Mr. Selwyn Cumberbach, prayer advocate.
104. **Missions:** The UMM reconnected with the Cooperative School of Mission, now Mission u, and were able to publicize the Vietnam Bus Project at the August 19-21 event. We joined forces with those around the nation to help raise over \$128,000 to support this project. After Hurricane Sandy, the UMM provided a generator and finances to the Roosevelt UMC to help with heating the sanctuary for Sunday worship.
105. **Prayer:** On May 3, the National Day of Prayer, the UMM held our first prayer vigil at East Meadow UMC. Ten people attended, including Rev. Barbara Mungin and Pastor Gia Hall. On October 27 at our Annual Men's Retreat, the theme was "Brothers in Prayer." Rev. Thomas Albin, Upper Room Prayer Ministry Director, taught us ten different ways to pray. Fifty men attended the event; and Rev. Denise Smartt Sears led the Bible study. Our prayer ministry has shown some small improvements; more local men's units are recruiting prayer advocates as part of their executive committee.
106. **Membership:** The UMM recruited two new members for the executive committee: Graham Greaves was elected to serve as the coordinator of Mission u, and Ernie Searle joined the Communications Team. New Charters: New Rochelle and East Quogue became new members of the United Methodist Men. New EMS/*Men's Magazine* subscribers: Our EMS/*Men's Magazine* subscribers increased by 14 new members; Brooklyn: Janes and Croton-on-Hudson: Asbury led the way with seven and five new subscribers respectively. The NYAC UMM received an award from GCUMM for having the second most new subscribers in the nation.
107. **Scouting:** Scouting continued to be our most difficult ministry to organize; however, with the selection of our first Scouting Ministry Specialist Mr. Jim Thomas, Poughquag UMC, there are some signs of improvement in the New York Connecticut District.
108. **Finance:** The UMM's first "Methodist Night at the Mets" was very successful. 167 people representing 21 churches celebrated at Citi Field. We raised \$1,100 for our ministry. Our Communion Breakfast held at Westchester UMC had 54 people in attendance, including Rev. Gordon Edwards, Rev George Haigler, Rev. Camella Fairweather and Conference Lay Leader Ms. Renata Smith. We raised \$525.00 for the ministry. We received financial disbursements from GCUMM, donations from members of the committee and the Conference Connectional Ministries Vision Table, thanks to Rev. Ann Pearson; we were able to meet our budget.
109. **District Men's Organizations:** The Metropolitan District continues to lead the way with outstanding Bible study. The average attendance at their monthly meetings is 11 men. The executive committee continues to visit different churches to spread the good news and value of the United Methodist Men. The Long Island East District and Long Island West Districts, organized in June, used the balance of the year planning their 2013 calendar of events. The

conference executive committee, with the help of District Superintendent Ken Kieffer, continues working hard to organize UMM in the Connecticut District. We were unable to put any effort into organizing the New York/Connecticut and Catskill Hudson Districts.

110. **Thanks:** The UMM were honored for the opportunity to speak at the annual conference; this gave us a greater visibility throughout our conference. We were humbled to be able to present Bishop Jeremiah Park with the Society of John Wesley Award; thanks to Brooklyn: Bethany, Croton-on-Hudson: Asbury, Inwood: St. Paul's, St. Albans: Grace, Manhattan: Salem, Elmont/Valley Stream: St. John's, Richmond Hill, Brooklyn: Newman Memorial, Brooklyn: John Wesley, Brooklyn: Janes and Hempstead UMCs for their donations.
111. Special thanks to all the pastors who served with us throughout the year, and our executive committee: Mr. Paul Jefferson, Mr. John Lemon, Mr. Doug Nicholson, Mr. Ernie Searle, Mr. Graham Greaves, Mr. Earlwyn Benjamin, Mr. Greg Holder, Mr. Herb Brown, Mr. Benjamin Nelson, Mr. David Clark, and Mr. Preston King for their dedication and hard work this year.

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## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

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### Ms. Susan S. Kim, President

*Concur: 91, Non-Concur: 0, Abstain: 0; 100% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. United Methodist Women became an independent agency of The United Methodist Church at the General Conference held in Tampa, Florida in April, 2012. Accordingly, new changes are on the way: our national office is now called United Methodist Women, Inc. instead of "Women's Division," and "Cooperative School of Christian Mission" is now called Mission u. However, our vision for turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world remains the same.
102. In anticipation of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Meeting in June with the theme "Come to the Party" based on Luke 14:17, a conference-wide retreat was held at Memorial/Central Korean UMC in March. Rev. T. Ann Daniel led the retreat with a theme, "Everything is Ready, Please Come." It provided a spiritual prelude for over 150 women including those who attended the national young women's seminar, "Limitless: Redefine Tomorrow" in 2011.
103. Quadrennial Northeastern Jurisdictional Meeting in Hershey, PA, June 14-16 was celebrated with 780 women from 10 conferences participating. Two busloads of women from Long Island West District and one from Metropolitan District and several carloads from other districts totaling about 180 brought vitality and enthusiasm into this inspirational gathering. Participants worked at several different local mission sites, urged The Hershey Company to participate in the fair trade for importing of cocoas from Africa, and collected Layette Kits for UMCOR. Ms. Gail Douglas-Boykin from Long Island West District was elected as one of the 25 directors for the United Methodist Women, Inc.
104. Upper Atlantic Regional School was held at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania for the conference team and the study leaders of Mission u. Mission u was held at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, CT in July. It is an exciting opportunity for the annual conference and United Methodist Women to work together utilizing our connectional system and resources. Clergy and laity of all ages come and share their testimonies and

expand their concepts of mission. The Josephine Gibson Scholarship is available to first-time participants.

105. “Ubuntu Mission Day” was held in August at Alma Matthews House, one of the United Methodist Women’s national mission sites where the early immigrants stayed. “Immigrants and the Bible,” the spiritual growth study at Mission u was led by Carol Barton in the morning. Hands-on mission in the afternoon included hemming new drapes and curtains, cleaning hidden corners and sprucing up the building by 35 women from all six districts. The article about this event was published in the 2013 April issue of the “Response” magazine.
106. “Youth in Mission” took place at Grace UMC in Manhattan in partnership with the Conference Council on Youth Ministries. A diverse group of 100 youth and adults from five districts attended the morning praise and worship led by Paul Lee and, in the afternoon, there were seminars on racism, bullying and human trafficking.
107. Conference Annual Meeting was held on October 27 at Greenville-Norton Hill United Methodist Church in the Catskill Hudson District with the theme, “Moving Mountains with Faith” based on Luke 13:31-32. It was a blessing to have more than 300 women together and rejoicing regardless of the long distance they had to travel. District Superintendent Rev. James Moore welcomed us, Rev. Elizabeth Tapia spoke about the theme and Ms. Liz Calvin and Ms. Bridget Cabrera led international and national mission workshops respectively. We hope to have 400 women at the next meeting at Grace UMC in Valley Stream on October 26, 2013.
108. Our mission includes Appalachian Mission, Unity House, Far Rockaway Mission and Red Bird Mission through the prayers and the monetary gifts from the local units. Knitted and crocheted premie hats made during Mission u were sent to the Family Birthing Center in Connecticut and a \$135,000 pledge was made to our national office. We voted to support the End Child Prostitution and Trafficking’s (ECPAT) Code of Conduct, and to educate the travel and tourism suppliers which we use about the Code and ask them to consider signing it. We are urging our national office to request its travel agencies and hotel suppliers to participate as they are preparing 2014 Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky. Information on ECPAT’s Code of Conduct is found at <http://www.ecpatusa.org>.
109. With this year’s theme, “Leap Boldly with Faith” in mind, we were able to leap boldly with faith in two challenging situations. One was the discovery of long misunderstood nominations procedure for the board of directors’ position at the national office. Appropriate procedure for the future was clarified eventually. The other was inappropriate management of the funds over a significant period of time that brought the person involved to resign; restitution is being sought.
110. We are blessed with the following conference team members:
111. Ms. Karen G. Prudente, vice president; Ms. Hazel McIntosh, treasurer; Ms. Joann McClam, chair of nominations; Ms. Rose King, membership, nurture & outreach coordinator; Ms. Nazgul William, social action coordinator [editor’s note: Ms. Williams passed away shortly after annual conference]; Ms. Judith McRae, education & interpretation coordinator; Ms. Debra DeMerritt, program resources coordinator; Ms. Cynthia Plater, communications coordinator; Ms. Gail Douglas-Boykin and Ms. Daisy Tavarez, board of directors; Ms. Sharon Noisette-Jenkins, vice president of Northeastern Jurisdiction UMW; Ms. Patricia Knebel, dean of Mission u; Ms. Barbara Sanborn, Catskill-Hudson district president; Ms. Roena Littlejohn, Connecticut district president and

Appalachian ministry representative; Ms. Grace Bryant, Long Island East district president; Ms. Patricia Newton, Long Island West district president; Ms. Helena Cooks, Metropolitan district president; Ms. Linda Nicholson, NY/CT district president; Ms. Dorothy S. Kim, Korean language coordinator; Ms. Alfida Figueroa, Spanish language coordinator; and Ms. Rebecca Adjei-Ofori and Ms. Victoria Kusi, Ghana representatives; extended team members: Ms. Gladis Lobato, Mujeres Metodista president, and Ms. Sunghea Rhim, Korean United Methodist Women Network president.

## WALK TO EMMAUS

### Mr. Dennis Subbiondo, Community Lay Director

*Concur: 90, Non-Concur: 1 Abstain: 0; 98.90% concurrence, NYAC conference session: adopted*

101. I made my Walk to Emmaus<sup>2</sup> in 1994 at Montfort Spiritual Center, Bayshore, NY.
102. The Walk to Emmaus, according to the *The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus*, “is a spiritual renewal program intended to strengthen the local church through the development of Christian disciples and leaders. The program’s approach seriously considers the model of Christ’s servant hood and encourages Christ’s disciples to act in ways appropriate to being a ‘servant of all.’”<sup>3</sup>
103. According to The Upper Room<sup>4</sup>,

The Walk to Emmaus is an adaptation of the Roman Catholic Cursillo (pronounced cur-SEE-o) Movement, which originated in Spain in 1949. Cursillo de Cristiandad means “little course in Christianity.” The original Cursillo leaders designed the program to empower persons to transform their living and working environments into Christian environments. During the 1960s and 1970s, Episcopalians and Lutherans, along with several nondenominational groups, such as Tres Dias, began to offer Cursillo. In 1978, the Upper Room of the General Board of Discipleship adapted the program for a primarily Protestant audience and began to offer it under the name The Upper Room Cursillo. In 1981, The Upper Room made further adaptations and changed the name of the program to the Upper Room Walk to Emmaus. In 1984, The Upper Room developed a youth expression of Emmaus called Chrysalis.

In 1991, the UMC brought it to the NYAC.

104. During the three days of the weekend retreat:

**Faith is re-explained** as the two disciples Walk to Emmaus. Jesus joins them as a stranger and explains to them the meaning of the scriptures concerning himself. Likewise, during the Walk to Emmaus, our faith is re-explained through fifteen talks and discussions, which address important facets of God’s grace and Christian discipleship.

**Grace is re-experienced** upon arrival in the village of Emmaus, when the disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread and remember how their hearts had burned within them as they walked with him on the road.

2 Walk to Emmaus is a registered trademark of The Upper Room (a ministry of the Global Board of Discipleship)

3 *The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus*, Copyright The Upper Room

4 *FAQ: What is the History of the Walk to Emmaus and Chrysalis?*, <http://emmaus.upperroom.org/faq>, Copyright The Upper Room.

Likewise, during the Emmaus three days, grace is re-experienced through rich worship services, daily Holy Communion, the support of a caring Christian community, and other expressions of God's love.

**Christian community is realized** when the disciples return immediately to the little Christian community in Jerusalem to share their story and to hear their friend's stories of having seen the risen Christ. Likewise, on the Walk to Emmaus people live in Christian community for three days and have opportunities to share their lives in fun-filled moments as well as serious moments, small-group discussions, common meals, singing, worship and daily participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

**The body of Christ is renewed** when the disciples together become the body of Christ in the world, supporting one another over the long haul as they walk in the spirit of Jesus and share the gospel of grace with those around them. Likewise, during the Emmaus event, the body of Christ is renewed as church members experience revitalization of their commitment. Their renewed discipleship is sustained after the three-day Walk with a strong follow-up emphasis that we call the "Fourth Day." This emphasis involves participation in church, and in small, weekly support groups (Group Reunions) for mutual encouragement, guidance, and accountability.

105. "The Walk to Emmaus offers today's disciples a parallel opportunity to rediscover Christ's presence in their lives, to gain fresh understanding of God's transforming grace, and to form friendships that foster faith and support spiritual maturity. While Emmaus provides a pathway to the mountaintop of God's love, it also supports pilgrim's return to the world in the power of the Spirit to share the love they have received with a hurtful and hurting world."<sup>5</sup>
106. During the years that I have been involved with Methodist ministries, I heard many times how pastors have been looking for something to encourage their flock, to inspire their future church leaders, to bring life back into Christ's church. Well here it is folks; it is right in front of your eyes and has been one of the greatest kept secrets of the Methodist churches around the country.
107. I must interject this one important item. The Walk to Emmaus IS NOT a church. Emmaus encourages its' participants to go back to their respective churches and ask the pastor, "What can I do to help here?" We are here to develop Christian leaders for their churches, not to be a church.
108. Since last year (NYAC 2012) we have prepared two women's weekends and two men's weekends (fall 2012 and spring 2013). However the men's fall weekend was cancelled due to Hurricane Sandy and damage to our regular venue for the weekend.
109. We would like to encourage NYAC clergy to realize the potential of Emmaus to help their church meet the goals they are setting for the Call to Action. Our community spiritual director, Rev. DaleEllen Krazmien feels that this is the best kept secret in promoting the vitalization of a church. We are always in need of clergy to partner with Emmaus both by attending and serving on a weekend and in encouraging and sponsoring parishioners in the church they serve to attend an Emmaus weekend. It is can be a life changing experience which can infuse new life and vitality into the people who participate.
110. More information can be found on our web site: [www.nyacwalktoemmaus.org](http://www.nyacwalktoemmaus.org)