

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

# THE VISION

November 2018



**Bishop Bickerton encourages the congregation to look “outward” during groundbreaking for First UMC in Middletown; below at center, Pastor Young Choi, explains the mission of the UMC of Westville.**

## Cabinet Tours Connecticut District

**BY REV. ROBERT WALKER**

Assistant to the Bishop

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton and the cabinet recently spent three days meeting and touring the Connecticut District, from October 29–31. District Superintendent Rev. Alpher Sylvester was an able and enthusiastic tour guide and provided a variety of experiences for the group.

On October 29, the cabinet met at First UMC in Meriden. This recently renovated church in this scenic town was an excellent setting for an all-day meeting. Rev. Rick Hanse and a dozen women in the church offered hospitality and provided a wonderful lunch.

On Tuesday, the day began with a delightful “West Indies” style breakfast at North Hartford



UMC. Rev. Hugh Hamilton and 20 congregation leaders enjoyed salt fish, collard greens and plantains. Following breakfast, Rev. Sylvester took the cabinet on a tour of five different churches and one future church site.

In Middletown, they joined Pastor Barbara Marks and members of First UMC for a groundbreaking service at the future site of their new building. After lifting a few shovels of soil,

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## First-Time Reflections On PR Work

Maria, a retired nurse, had been unable to use the back two rooms in her small home for the past 13 months—a direct result of Hurricane Maria. While the team assignment was to replace the back portion of the roof, we succeeded in replacing nearly the entire thing. Maria, who shares the home with her two sons, referred to the team as, “my angels.”

**Michael Butler (Torrington):**

This was my first experience with a mission trip. I think UMCOR’s experience and expertise was evident with everything from initial planning, to flight arrangements, accommodations, transportation, and picking a job to match the team. It was a great week of fellowship and ministry. We had a team of seven that prior to this had never met one another, but by God’s providence the chemistry worked. It was the right mix of experience (old/mature), humility, and the ability to adapt that allowed this team to come together as servants of Christ through our gift of labor.

Our accommodations in Patillas were excellent and the camp staff took excellent care of us. Our initial work project in Patillas was to repair a section of roof, but that turned into a complete roof replacement to include rafters, cement work to seal a brick wall and prevent further water damage, replacing

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

### **11/22–23 Conference Office Closed**

The NYAC office in White Plains, N.Y., will be closed in observance of Thanksgiving.

### **11/26 Fall Bishop's Days on the Districts**

Bishop Bickerton will again be making the rounds in the districts. Please register for the appropriate gathering by clicking on the district names below. Others to come.

- [Catskill Hudson](#): 6–9 p.m., November 26, St. James UMC, Kingston, N.Y.
- [New York/Connecticut](#): 5:30 p.m., November 27, Danbury UMC, Danbury, Conn.

### **11/27 Giving Tuesday**

United Methodists will come together to support vital ministry projects and missionaries around the world on #GivingTuesday as they generously #GiveUMC. Giving through The Advance empowers hundreds of dedicated project leaders and missionaries to share the love of Christ in meaningful, life-saving ways. As always, 100 percent of all giving will support the designated Advance ministry! Find a project or missionary to support on the [UMC Mission website](#).

### **12/1 Hulapaloozas to Come**

Churches across the conference are joining in the denomination's "Abundant Health" initiative by sponsoring health and fitness expos for their communities. Wendy Vencuss, the NYAC's Abundant Health coordinator, has worked with churches to plan the following "Hulapalooza" gatherings:

- **December 1:** Huntington-Cold Spring Harbor UMC, 180 West Neck Rd., Huntington, N.Y.
- **March 2019:** Tremont UMC, 1951 Washington Ave., Bronx

Check the NYAC [calendar page](#) for more details, or contact [Wendy Vencuss](#) to plan your own event.

### **12/24–25 Conference Office Closed**

The NYAC office in White Plains, N.Y., will be closed in observance of Christmas.

### **1/5 Orientation to Ministry Event**

Inquiring, exploring and certified candidates are encouraged to attend this gathering sponsored by the Board of Ordained Ministry from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the White Plains conference center. [Registration](#) is required for this free event; lunch will be served. Contact Gail Douglas-Boykin at 914-227-9847 with any questions.

### **1/14–16 Bishop's Convocation**

This annual gathering for clergy and spouses will be moving this year to Honor's Haven Resort and Spa in Ellenville, N.Y. The guest speaker is Tod Bolsinger, author of "Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory." More details to come.

### **4/26–28 "Converge" Youth Retreat**

All youth in the Long Island East and West, and the Metropolitan districts are invited to this weekend at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island. The event starts Friday at 7 p.m. and concludes at noon Sunday. Register through your local church by March 31; details can be found [here](#).

### **7/10–14 Youth 2019 Registration**

"Love Well," the national gathering for United Methodist youth and their leaders in Kansas City next July 10–14, promises four days of discipleship, worship, Bible study, big-name musical artists, service opportunities and life-changing fun. Early bird registration is available through Jan. 31, 2019, and includes a discounted rate, plus a free spot for every 10 paid registrants. YOUTH 2019 is for youth grades 6–12 and their leaders. For more information, go to <http://youth2019.com> or @youth2019 on all social media platforms.

### **Vision Deadlines for 2018**

The Vision is a monthly online publication of the New York Conference. Deadlines are always the first Friday of the month, with posting to the web site about 10 days later. The final deadline for 2018 is December 7. Please send any stories, photos, ideas, or questions directly to [vision@nyac.com](mailto:vision@nyac.com).

 <p>The <b>Vision</b></p>
<p>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</p>
<p>Bishop: <b>Thomas J. Bickerton</b>          Editor: <b>Joanne Utley</b>          New York Conference of The United Methodist Church          20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606          Phone (888) 696-6922          Fax (914) 615-2244; Website: <a href="http://www.nyac.com">www.nyac.com</a>          Vision e-mail: <a href="mailto:vision@nyac.com">vision@nyac.com</a></p>

# In Face of Evil, Sharpen Message of Hope

*This column was written on October 28, before the most recent shootings of 12 in a California bar.*

When the reports starting coming in yesterday regarding the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, my mind began to flood with thoughts:

I wonder how many lives have been affected?

Lord, be with the victims and their families.

I wonder if there were any children involved?

I know this place! I have been past this synagogue dozens of times!

Have they apprehended the shooter?

Oh no, not again.

After my immediate reaction of concern for the families, the synagogue, and the community, my mind began to race through the places where violence has had a deadly and massive affect:

- Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, Fla. (2018)
- Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas (2017)
- Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas (2017)
- Pulse Nightclub, Orlando (2016)
- Emmanuel African American Episcopal Church, Charleston, S.C. (2015)
- Sandy Hook, Newtown, Conn. (2012)

These incidents, which rank among the most deadly shootings in history, have all taken place within the past six years. And these are only a few of the dozens that have taken place in that time span. Every time another event takes place, the ones before them fade a little bit more from our consciousness. And, every time another shooting happens, it tempts us to want to believe that this is the “new normal,” and we become numb to the lingering pain and agony that innocent people live with for a lifetime when yet another gun is fired.

When I heard the reports coming in from Pittsburgh, I tried my best to discipline my mind to not only pray for the victims at the Tree of Life, but for families and friends, and communities and churches where their incident of violence has not faded and their pain has not been healed.

As the reports continued to develop and the number of fatalities continued to grow, I found myself crying out like the psalmist of old:

*How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?*

*How long will you hide your face from me?*

*How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?*

*How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

*Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.*

(Psalm 13:1–4, NRSV)

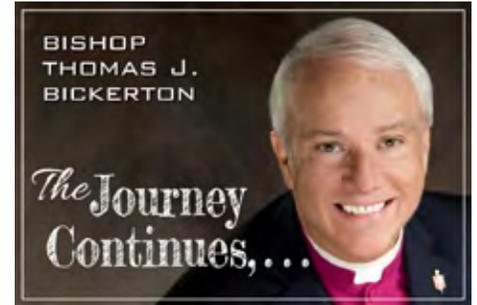
It was just earlier in the week that pipe bombs sent anxiety across the nation as yet another misguided soul tried to take matters into his own hands. And the week before that another random shooting took place. And the week before that another rape, another kidnapping, another hate crime. The list is endless. And in the midst of that growing list, it becomes harder and harder to maintain our hope and preserve our joy. We, like the psalmist, find ourselves crying out, “How long, O Lord, how long?”

I have found myself writing a similar message recently. The message has been about the rhetoric of fear and anger that has dominated the landscape on all levels in our country—from the highest office in the land to the halls of Congress to the communities of everyday citizens who feel enabled when persons of power set the tone with messages that breed hatred and cynicism.

Those messages though, have also been



about us, the community of faith called the church. The halls of our denomination have also been filled with vile and anger, doubt and despair. Yet, we are a people with a message that is a counter to every hate-filled speech ever given. We are a people with a rhetoric that is a rebuttal to every bullet that is fired and every life that is taken unnecessarily. It is time, dear friends, on every level of the church’s life and with every ounce of faith that we can employ, to no longer be silent with our message of hope and promise.



You see, the writer of Psalm 13 did not stop with the verse stated above. The psalmist did not cower in the midst of his own self-doubt and anxiety. He caught himself in mid-psalm and did not finish his writing without saying these critical words:

*But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.*

*I will sing to the Lord,*

*because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

(Psalm 13:5–6, NRSV)

“I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation . . .” This is an ultimate statement of faith, a counterbalance to doubt, a gut check in the midst of violence, a vivid reminder in the midst of anxiety. “I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.” And as a result, I start to cry out, “How long, O Lord, how long?” How long will it be before we have such faith, that even in the midst of weekly violence and injustice, that we will proclaim a higher belief and a better way?

We dare not cower in fear over this recent shooting or in the midst of a growing sense of evil that is expressing itself in hate and violence. This is a time to increase our prayers, deepen our courage, and sharpen our message of grace and hope.

Mahatma Gandhi once wrote these words: “When I despair, I remember that all throughout history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end, they will always fail. Think of it, . . . always.”

Think of it always, pray for it always, believe in it always.

The Journey Continues, . . .

*Thomas J. Bickerton*

Thomas J. Bickerton  
Resident Bishop

**Puerto Rico Team #7 with leader Craig Fitzsimmons, far right, Michael Butler, David Crompton, Mae Orkisz, Christopher Wilson, Tom and Wendy Vencuss.**



## First-Time Reflections on PR Work

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a section of wall that had termite damage, and to daily greet the homeowner 'Maria' with encouragement. Maria, in turn, always greeted us with a welcome smile and thankfulness for our presence.

Our team was supplemented with an interpreter and a work foreman. Our interpreter Stephanie's value was immediately evident, and our foreman, Luiz, provided instruction, humor, and a sense of connection.

The landscape of Puerto Rico is speckled with blue tarps (mere roof band aids) and you realize there is so much more to be done. But this week we helped Maria, and my prayer is that we left the people of Patillas with a seed of hope and reassurance that they are not alone.

I took a step of faith in joining this team and came with little expectation but to work hard. Next time my expectations will be higher. I had a great experience and look forward to another trip wherever the Lord leads. It's a wonderful thing to find the family of God wherever you go in this big world.

### Christopher Wilson (Island Park)

We all met at Kennedy Airport in NYC. I had only met Wendy Vencuss before and had no idea about who anyone else was. Tom, Mike, Craig, Mae, Wendy, Dave and I all said "hello," and it seemed that God-ordained relationships started. We were all friendly and graceful to one another. All seven of us had no trouble communicating comfortably. After a four-hour flight, a short stop at headquarters in San Juan where love and appreciation were evident in all the staff, and lunch, we made the 1½-hour drive to Patillas. The wonderful staff at the camp welcomed us and we were well taken care



**The team works to put a roof on a home in Patillas.**

of during our stay. We met another group from North Carolina that invited us to worship and praise God with them each morning.

Work started the next morning—after the awe and appreciation of a beautiful sunrise and good breakfast. We arrived at a small community in Patillas where many houses were in inhospitable shape. Our project involved taking off part of a roof to fix a year-old leak over a bedroom. We ended up removing and replacing most of the roof and supporting structures on most of the house and part of one wall. Unexpected problems were revealed as we removed more of the structure.

Determined to be a blessing to the

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## Upcoming Mission Trips

### January 10–16, 2019: Haiti Orientation Mission Journey

In 2019, Mountains of Hope for Haiti (MHH) will recognize 17 years of mission in Haiti and 15 years serving the mountain village of Furcy and three surrounding communities. MHH is planning a weeklong orientation mission specifically designed for first-time individuals or churches that would like to know more about Haiti and possibly establish a mission connection.

This week will include several days in Furcy, including worship; meetings with church leaders; a visit to the National Museum; attendance at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Rebuild Globally sandal factory. Cost, including airfare, is \$1,200. For more information, contact [Wendy Vencuss](#) or [Tom Vencuss](#) at the NYAC Mission office.

### February 16–23, 2019: Older Teen/Young Adult Disaster Recovery Team:

Ross Porter (UMC of Mount Kisco) and Tom Vencuss will lead a youth/young adult team to either the Carolinas or Florida, depending upon local needs and team requests. The trip, during what will be a break week for many students, is for those 16 to 21 years old. The cost is \$400, and several team meetings, including skill-building sessions, will be required.

Contact [Tom Vencuss](#) at the NYAC Mission office for more information.

### Teams are also scheduled for the following work destinations:

**November/December:** Beaufort, N.C.; led by Terry Temple (Hyde Park UMC)

**January:** Young adult team to Puerto Rico; led by Rev. Bill Pfohl (Jesse Lee Memorial UMC)

**January:** Connecticut District team to Puerto Rico; led by Jill Wilson (Bristol UMC) and Steve Koltz (New Milford UMC)

# Significant Progress Made in NYAC Fossil Fuel Divestment

## BY PAUL FLECK

At its annual gathering in June 2017, the New York Annual Conference made a commitment to fulfill its 2016 goal of complete fossil fuel divestment as follows: "... each committee, board, or other entity of the NYAC that invests conference funds shall report in October and April to the NYAC secretary, treasurer, chief financial officer, and chairman of Church & Society and the

president of CF&A the status of their fossil fuel investments and the rationale as to why funds continue to be invested in fossil fuel production."

Those conference entities with significant investments have done an outstanding job in reporting. Equally outstanding is the commitments made by various entities at the 2018 Annual Conference toward reducing their carbon footprint in investments.

In particular, Conference Finance & Administration and Parish Development have reduced their carbon investment footprint by half. Camping and Retreat Ministry was able to reduce from 2.93 percent invested in fossil fuels to 0.46 percent.

Indicated below is a summary of the reporting of various entities in April and October of 2018:

[See related Wespath story on Page 11.](#)

CONFERENCE ENTITY	AMOUNT INVESTED APRIL 2017	OCTOBER 2017 % IN FOSSIL FUELS	APRIL 2018 % IN FOSSIL FUELS	OCTOBER 2018 % IN FOSSIL FUELS
<b>Board of Pensions</b>	<b>\$23,374,768 (MAF)</b>	<b>3.51 %</b>	<b>3.54 %</b>	<b>Approx. 5% across all funds</b>
	<b>\$16,670 (FIF)</b>	<b>2.39 %</b>	<b>2.15 %</b>	
	<b>\$807,355 (STIF)</b>	<b>1.04 %</b>	<b>2.52 %</b>	

**EXCERPT from October 2018 report:** "Based on our desire to follow the guidelines while also maintaining our fiduciary responsibility of the UM Book of Discipline, we are monitoring the fossil fuel investments in those accounts. However, the amount of exposure to fossil fuel corporations is very minimal. We hold NO direct investments in fossil fuel producing corporations. We have also decided not to invest in the newly created accounts at Wespath that do not contain fossil fuels as they are too new to properly evaluate effectiveness and returns." (MAF is multiple asset fund, FIF is fixed income fund; and STIF is short term investment fund.)

<b>Trustees</b>	<b>\$10,000,393</b>	<b>3.14 % (8-31-17)</b>	<b>Less than 4 %</b>	<b>3.62%</b>
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**EXCERPT from October 2018 report:** "We will work closely with Wespath to track the performance of their new offerings. By June of 2019 these offerings will have a 2-year track history. As they develop that track history where characteristics of the funds including volatility and returns can be analyzed, we will work to use these offerings to transition our funds to a fossil-free platform, consistent with the action of our Annual Conference."

<b>Finance &amp; Admin.</b>	<b>\$3,183,650</b>	<b>3.14 % (8-31-17)</b>	<b>3.54% (3-31-18)</b>	<b>1.8% (8-31-18)</b>
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**EXCERPT from October 2018 report:** "Overall, less than half of our funds are invested in a fund that includes companies that extract/produce fossil fuels. CF&A holdings of fossil fuel investments stand at roughly \$60,488 out of a total investment of \$3.3 million or 1.8 percent of total funds invested.

CF&A reduced its holdings of companies involved in the production of fossil fuels by 50% in April. As of the current reporting period, CF&A has chosen to monitor the performance of its investments and has chosen not to modify its holdings any further at this time. Natural volatility in market performance will lead to small shifts in carbon intensity."

<b>Parish Development</b>	<b>\$4,256,222</b>	<b>2.94 %</b>	<b>2.85 %</b>	<b>2.07%</b>
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**EXCERPT from October 2018 report:** "At our Parish Development Committee meeting on October 2, 2018, Ellen Knudsen made a presentation regarding the committee's decision to divest funds from companies involved in fossil fuels and to invest in fossil free companies. She stated that currently there is less than 50 percent (about 48 percent) invested in multi asset funds, and 52 percent invested in fossil free funds. The committee recommended that the Frontier Foundation continue to report twice per year to Parish Development and Church and Society, in April and October, on the status and percentages of these investments. Chair Marjorie Nunes recommended that a re-balancing of the investment percentages, that is 50/50 percent, was not necessary at this time. A motion was subsequently made to re-balance the funds on a quarterly basis keeping the funds at a 50/50 percentage spread, which should be done automatically. The motion was unanimously approved."

<b>Camps Ministries</b>	<b>\$244,278</b>	<b>2.93 %</b>	<b>0.46 %</b>	<b>0.85%</b>
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**EXCERPT from April 2018 report:** "In January, by vote of the UMFF Board, all UMFF donor-designated funds were moved to the Growth & Income Fund, which is 50% stocks and 50% bonds. As such, the aggregate fossil fuels exposure for the NYAC Camps Fund has fallen from 2.93% to 0.46%."



**Clockwise from above: Ground is broken for the First UMC in Middletown; Nelson Pinos, second from right, talks about his time in “sanctuary” at First and Summerfield UMC in New Haven; in between stops in Connecticut, Bishop Bickerton and the cabinet held some productive limousine meetings.**

## Finding Vitality In Connecticut Churches

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Bishop Bickerton picked up some moist earth, rubbed it in his hands, and admonished the congregation to “get your hands dirty” in doing God’s work in the community. The bishop then invited everyone into a circle facing outward, a visible sign of reaching out into the community.

Next, the cabinet traveled to First and Summerfield UMC in New Haven, one of the conference’s “sanctuary” churches. Nelson Pinos, an immigrant from Ecuador, has been living in sanctuary there for nearly a year. Pinos, whose spouse and three children are U.S. citizens, was in the process of applying for a green card when he was told by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials that he would be deported to Ecuador. Pinos shared his story

with the cabinet while Rev. Vicki Flippin, pastor of the church, and two congregation members explained how they have supported Pinos in his quest to remain in this country.

Other churches on the tour included Westville UMC in New Haven, a thriving Korean congregation; Derby UMC, a congregation that has many new members from Ghana; Newtown UMC, which is still helping people deal with the aftermath of the Sandy Hook school tragedy in 2012; and North Canton Community UMC.

On Tuesday evening, the group met with about 50 pastors and spouses from the Connecticut District at the Chowder Pot restaurant in Hartford. The bishop and each cabinet member received a gift bag filled with newly picked



apples and other goodies.

One of the unique features of the Tuesday tour was holding meetings in between stops in a 14-passenger van. Surprisingly, quite a bit of business got done in these “van meetings.”

On Wednesday, October 31, the Hartford Korean UMC hosted the group for a delicious breakfast featuring kimchi, japchae and bulgogi. Rev. Samuel Lee (along with spouse Iris, and son

James) and several leaders from his congregation shared in the breakfast.

When Bishop Bickerton asked the cabinet about the three-day experience, there was unanimous agreement that Rev. Sylvester had shown the great diversity of the Connecticut District in terms of cultures, food, and ethnicity. Everyone enthusiastically agreed with the statement, “We’d do it again!”

# Paul Cruise: History, Scripture & Wonder

From October 14 to 25, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton hosted some 90 members and friends of the NYAC for a “Journeys of Paul” cruise aboard Royal Caribbean’s “Jewel of the Seas.” The cruise stopped in Italy and Greece. A few members of the group, who sat at Table 416 for meals, share their reactions to the trip below:

## Joanne Hall, UMC of Mount Kisco

- I traveled on the journeys of Paul cruise after seeing the brochure at Annual Conference this past June, I read the itinerary and saw that Bishop Bickerton would be on the trip and I truly love listening to all his wisdom. He is also so approachable. When I came home from the conference and called a friend from my Bible study group who said “yes” she wanted to go, and could finance the trip right away (since we were at the deadline for reserving at the quoted price), I knew it was meant to be.
- After the journey and lectures from Peter Walker I now want to read the books of Acts and Corinthians with greater understanding! (Dr. Peter Walker is professor of Biblical Studies at Trinity School for Ministry in Pennsylvania.)
- Being in so many sites that Paul went to spread his love of Jesus Christ was truly a once in a lifetime experience for me. How far he walked—seemed so impossible!

## Beth Collins, Golden Hill UMC

- I went because I was interested to see the ancient sites. I thought it would be a great opportunity to have a Christian perspective

on the tour.

- My favorite port of call was Pompeii because of the amazing access to the city that was so well preserved from millennia ago. I was most surprised to have such close access to these ancient places.
- I will be more aware that even though the years go by, people are the same today and many years ago in the times of Christ and Paul. Paul had a difficult time delivering his message of love then as we do today.

## Rev. Marjorie Nunes, Hicksville UMC

- With all excitement and fun of the “Journey of Paul Cruise,” the lectures by Rev. Dr. Peter Walker were one of my most favorite section—that made the cruise different from other cruises I had taken. I was already a dedicated student of the Apostle Paul, his letters, and ministry. Hence, the lectures added tremendously to my understanding and knowledge of a humble, faithful, servant of Jesus Christ . . . Dr. Walker talked about “expanding the circle view” of Paul, which would entail looking at Paul as being a truly humble human being—not just as the brilliant lawyer and writer of two-thirds of the New Testament . . . through the lectures I was drawn closer to Paul because I had a glimpse of his heart.
- These words from Apostle Paul to the church at Roman have meant so much to me, but now they take on an even more powerful and fulfilling meaning: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will

hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35–39)

- One could say that these words epitomized the ministry of Paul, “I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.” I pray that in my lifetime I can do a fraction of what Apostle Paul accomplished for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Shirley Bollin, Yorktown UMC

- It’s hard to say what my favorite port of call was, but I believe it would be Corinth. It was very moving to be standing where Paul did, and to realize the passion he must have had to travel such a distance to that place.
- I definitely was inspired to reread the writings of Paul, and I will have a new perspective on the readings.
- It was a delight to be traveling with Bishop Bickerton as he was engaged with everyone, and gave wonderful devotions at Corinth and Mars Hill.



Above, Bishop Bickerton shared a meal with Table 416, including Rev. Marjorie Nunes, Joanne Hall, Shirley Bollin and Beth Collins; right, exploring the sights and history in Corinth.



## First-Time Reflections

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homeowner, we pulled together in God's faith and power, and worked with blessed effort to put a new roof on Maria's house. We were certainly blessed to be working together as we were truly the hands, feet, and love of Jesus in Puerto Rico.

Despite my inexperience at anything that was being done and never having participated in such an undertaking before, I found myself at ease and able to fit in easily to our group effort. Worship, praise, devotion and hard work were the daily offerings along with good food and God's beauty all around us. The fruits of the Spirit were amply evident in both teams and all the staff at camp, the local Methodist Church and the staff at headquarters in San Juan.

I'm already planning to return to Puerto Rico to witness further the joy and blessings of helping people who don't have most of the things we take for granted. Flexibility, compassion, endurance, stretching yourself to new heights, and trusting in God's help and favor are some things I found necessary to enjoy my experience.

I sincerely felt blessed and positioned by God to be exactly where I was. What a powerful name it is, Jesus Christ our King.

### Mae Orkisz (New Fairfield, Conn.)

This trip to Puerto Rico was my first mission trip and it exceeded my expectations. The team leader was organized and did a great job of matching my skills and abilities to appropriate tasks. I also had the opportunity to learn some new skills such as using a circular saw and cordless drill. Our team worked tirelessly tearing off the old roof and putting on a new one. Although most of our time was spent working we did have a little free time to explore Old San Juan. My favorite memory of the entire trip is the homeowner's smile that greeted us every morning. It was a truly rewarding experience.

## Task Force Offers Grants for "Sanctuary" Churches

The New York Conference Task Force on Immigration is offering three capital improvement grants of up to \$500 each to churches seeking to upgrade their spaces in order to become a sanctuary church. The grants could be used to install a shower, upgrade kitchen facilities, or provide living quarters for an immigrant under imminent threat of deportation.

Grant applications must include the following information:

- A history of the congregational process in deciding to become a sanctuary congregation.
- A description of how the facilities will be upgraded, with both an income and expense budget for the changes being made.
- A discussion of how the congregation will support the individual in sanctuary (i.e., food, laundry, overnight stays, recreational opportunities).
- Explanation of any networks, either with other congregations or activist organizations, that will help support a public campaign on behalf of the individual in sanctuary.

Preference will be given to applications from congregations willing to offer some capital investment in the project as well. Applications should be sent to the attention of Rebekah Forni, Co-Chair, NYAC Immigration Task Force at [rebekah.forni@nyac-umc.com](mailto:rebekah.forni@nyac-umc.com) by December 1, 2018.

## Bowes Takes Job With ASP

Neal Bowes, who has served as conference consultant on youth ministries, is moving to Tennessee to become the director of spiritual programming for the national Appalachia Service Project organization.

Bowes has served as director of youth ministry at Jesse Lee Memorial UMC in Ridgefield, Conn., for the last 16 years. Throughout those years, he has helped shepherd ASP's teams that are made up of church and community members. The 2018 team numbered some 240 youth and adults.



## Shared Eucharist with Episcopal Church Moves Forward

ST. SIMON'S ISLAND, Georgia—The Council of Bishops has authorized the preparation of legislation to deal with the full communion proposal between The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church.

The bishops took the initial action on the proposal, called "A Gift to the World: Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness," after receiving the proposal during the bishops' November meeting at Epworth By the Sea Methodist Center.

The bishops will review the legislative proposal at its May 2019 meeting and make a final decision regarding the submission to the 2020 General Conference.

It is the responsibility of the Council of Bishops to act as the "primary liaison for The United Methodist Church" in its "formal rela-

tions with other churches" (2016 BOD, ¶431.1) and to oversee the bi-lateral dialogues of the denomination. However, a formal full communion relationship can only be established by the action of the General Conference.

A "full communion" relationship is one in which two or more churches publicly and visibly recognize one another as members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. In such agreements the parties recognize each other's sacraments, offices of ministry, and Christian mission as fully valid and authentic, while also maintaining the autonomy and distinctive gifts of each church. "A formal 'full communion' relationship," states the *Book of Discipline*, "commits the churches to working together as partners in mission toward fuller visible unity" (¶431.1c).

The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church each have separate full communion agreements with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Moravian Church in America. An agreement between The UMC and The Episcopal Church would complete this circle, giving the four communions overlapping relationships of full communion.

Additionally, The United Methodist Church is in full communion with the Uniting Church in Sweden and the following member churches of the Pan-Methodist Commission: The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church.

# Court Ruling Propels GC2019 Strategizing

**UMNS** | The United Methodist Church's top court has clarified what parts of legislation heading to the 2019 General Conference pass constitutional muster.

Now it's up to plan supporters to decide how they will respond to the Judicial Council's ruling.

"Whether a piece of proposed legislation is a good idea or not, that's outside the purview of the Judicial Council," said the Rev. William B. Lawrence, former Judicial Council president and one of the United Methodists who filed a brief in the case.

"The Judicial Council is only authorized to rule on if something is constitutional as proposed legislation."

Put another way, the church court did not endorse any proposed legislation but instead ruled on whether the denomination's constitution allows General Conference to enact such legislation in the first place.

The Council of Bishops asked the Judicial Council to rule on the constitutionality of the three plans contained in [the Commission on Way Forward report](#)—the One Church, Traditional and Connectional Conference models. The bishops appointed the commission to find ways for the denomination to stay united amid strong differences around homosexuality. The three plans all offer different directions for the denomination.

Next February, a special General Conference in St. Louis will consider the proposals as well as any other petitions deemed "in harmony" with the call for the special session.

In [Decision 1366](#), which was unanimous, the church court found most of the One Church Plan constitutional. The court identified more constitutional problems with petitions in the Traditional Plan.

Because the Connectional Conference Plan already includes eight proposed constitutional amendments, the Judicial Council ruled that the plan fell outside its jurisdiction.

General Conference delegates who support the One Church and Traditional plans will have to decide whether they want to simply delete the parts deemed unconstitutional, transform those parts into potential constitutional amendments, or go in an entirely different direction.

Ratifying an amendment to the denomination's constitution requires at least a

two-thirds majority vote at General Conference followed by at least two-thirds total votes at annual conferences around the globe.

The deadline for submitting petitions has passed, which means any changes to submitted legislation will need to take place at the General Conference meeting. Delegates can propose amending legislation on the floor or ask fellow delegates to consider substitute legislation.

The *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's policy book, currently bans "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy and officiating at same-gender unions. The One Church Plan would leave questions of ordination up to annual conferences and weddings up to local churches and individual clergy.

Judicial Council found the 17 petitions in the One Church Plan to be constitutional, except for one individual sentence each in Petitions 4, 8 and 13.

"I think our game plan is in place," said the Rev. Mark Holland, a delegate from the Great Plains Conference who started the unofficial group [Mainstream UMC](#) to advocate for the One Church Plan. He joined with other One Church Plan supporters to file a brief in the case.

Holland said none of the sentences ruled unconstitutional is critical. He hopes the denomination's bishops, a majority of whom support the One Church Plan, will recommend the adjustments needed so the plan could pass without constitutional amendments. Bishops don't have a vote at General Conference.

The Rev. Tom Berlin, a Way Forward Commission member who championed the One Church Plan before the Judicial Council, was heartened by the court's decision.

"The unanimous Judicial Council established that Wesleyan connectionalism does not require strict uniformity on all issues," said Berlin, who is also a delegate from the Virginia Conference.

The Traditional Plan seeks to enhance enforcement of current bans related to homosexuality, including imposing mandatory penalties on violations. However, the Judicial Council ruled that certain portions of the plan strayed from the constitution on matters of due process and by elevating adherence to requirements related to homosexuality above all other requirements.

## Registration Open For GC2019

Guests and observers to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference may now [pre-register online](#). General Conference will meet in St. Louis, Mo., at the America's Center February 23–26, 2019.

Guest and observer registration is required to attend the General Conference sessions.

There is a suggested badge fee of \$7 for early registration and \$10 for on-site registration to offset the costs of the credentialing process. Early registration is now available through January 31, 2019.

Advance registration is not required and guests and observers may also register onsite. Registration desks will be located inside Entry B of the Dome at America's Center. On-site registration opens at 2 p.m. February 22

United Methodist Communications will be handling applications for media credentials beginning in December. More information about the media credentialing process will be forthcoming.

## Advance Advocate Available Online

The Advance edition of the *Daily Christian Advocate* (ADCA), the official journal of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, is set to be available in a bound and printed format by November 26, with a PDF of the 2019 ADCA [accessible online now](#).

The *Book of Discipline* requires that the ADCA be available to delegates at least 90 days before the opening day of General Conference. For the 2019 Special Session, which officially opens February 24 in St. Louis, that date is November 26.

The ADCA is published in English, French, Portuguese and Kiswahili. Together with the *Daily Christian Advocate* published during General Conference, it serves as the record of those who have been elected to serve as delegates, the legislation submitted, and the decisions made by the General Conference.

Anyone interested in purchasing a printed copy of the ADCA may preorder them at [Cokesbury.com](#).

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# WCA Plans New Methodist Movement

**UMNS** | The Wesleyan Covenant Association began working on a contingency plan for a Methodist movement within or outside of The United Methodist Church—a plan that depends on the decisions coming from the 2019 General Conference.

The group held its first global legislative assembly on November 2 and passed four resolutions, including one that said adoption of the One Church Plan would be “untenable and would force us to leave.” The One Church Plan is one of several proposals that will be considered by the General Conference when it meets in February.

After the legislative gathering for delegates, more than 2,500 WCA members gathered for a celebration that included presentations from bishops, a medical doctor, pastors and theological professors.

The gathering at Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church in Marietta, Ga., was simulcast at 105 sites hosted by the association, which represents 125,000 people in 1,500 churches.

At the legislative assembly, the Rev. Carolyn Moore preached to the delegates before voting started. She led the assembly in praying on their knees for God to provide a “fresh dose of faith,” a “supernatural ability to love,” and a spirit of perseverance in staying engaged in every conversation as long as God tells them to stay in it.

The delegates endorsed a modified [Traditional Plan](#) and voted on [Empowering Preparations for Next Steps, doctrinal standards, features and principles of a new denomination](#), and a statement offering radical hospitality and genuine community to all persons.

Ethan Oltremari, a delegate from Mississippi, introduced the radical hospitality statement that says in part, “We long for and are working for a church that offers radical hospitality and genuine community to all persons.”

Oltremari told United Methodist News Service the Mississippi delegation wanted to let people who are struggling with their sexual identity know that the church still wants them.

“Even though we do not affirm their lifestyle, we still want them to know they are welcome to worship with us,” he said.

The Rev. Jeff Greenway, WCA council chairman, read a [statement](#) by the council that said the adoption of the One Church Plan, with its “changing of the definition of marriage and the changing of ordination standards,” would force WCA members to leave The United Methodist Church.

The denomination’s Judicial Council, meeting last month, ruled that several parts of the Traditional Plan violated the church’s constitution. However, the Rev. Keith Boyette, the association’s president, said the plan will be brought into conformity with [Judicial Council Decision 1366](#).

The association also supported a proposed gracious exit that would allow congregations and institutions wanting to leave the denomination to leave with all their property and assets.

Delegates voted to form a working group to prepare a plan for a new “revitalized Methodist movement within or, if necessary, outside the UM Church.” The group will meet monthly beginning in December and submit its proposals to the association by February 20. The Wesleyan Covenant Association Council will decide whether to convene a special conference of the association to be held within 60 days of the adjournment of the 2019 General Conference.

Boyette said WCA chapters are being incorporated in every annual conference, and international chapters are being formed in the central conferences.

## Leaders Affirm Move Toward New U.S. Structure

Denominational leaders unanimously approved a move toward forming a church decision-making body that deals exclusively with U.S. matters.

The Connectional Table in its November 2 vote gave the go-ahead for one of its subcommittees to detail a process [leaders hope will lead to such a structure](#). The 64-member church leadership body acts as sort of a denominational church council coordinating ministry and money.

Much of the group’s discussion focused on how much time General Conference spends on decisions that only affect the church in the United States.

The Rev. Brian K. Milford, the top executive of the United Methodist Publishing House, used the examples of pensions and U.S. clergy compensation.

“There are a lot of issues we have to discuss at General Conference because the United States doesn’t have a mechanism for discussing them apart from General Conference,” said Milford, a veteran General Conference delegate. He and the 12 other top agency executives serve on the Connectional Table with voice but not vote.

Instead, he and other Connectional Table members want to see

General Conference focus on matters that affect the denomination’s global mission.

To get to that point, the Connectional Table is looking at a two-step process.

The first step would either be adding a General Conference legislative committee to deal with U.S.-only legislation or creating a General Conference standing committee that can meet between legislative sessions. The Connectional Table is looking to propose one of these possibilities in time for the 2020 General Conference.

Creating a new legislative committee would be up to the Commission on General Conference, which plans the big meeting. Creating a new standing committee would be up to the majority of General Conference delegates. Such a standing committee already exists for matters that affect central conferences—church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

Either way, any committee decision would need the approval of the General Conference’s full multinational plenary before it could go forward.

# Court Ruling Propels GC2019 Strategizing

Continued from page 9

Of the plan's 17 petitions, the court ruled seven unconstitutional and identified unconstitutional portions in two others.

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, a Way Forward Commission member who spoke on behalf of the Traditional Plan at the Judicial Council, said he was disappointed in the ruling and plans to ask the court to reconsider at least part of the decision.

But he too is looking forward to the special General Conference.

"Based on the ruling, it appears that the Council of Bishops accountability process will not be constitutional, so we will be focusing on perfecting the alternative accountability process for bishops that is in the [Modified Traditional Plan](#)," Lambrecht said.

That legislation, submitted on behalf of the Renewal and Reform Coalition, creates a new global episcopacy committee to hold bishops and conferences accountable.

The Rev. Alexandre da Silva Souto, General Conference delegate from the New York Conference and a leader in the unofficial UM

Queer Clergy Caucus, said The Judicial Council's ruling gave him hope. He praised the ruling for identifying what he sees as injustices in both the Traditional and One Church plans. However, he is hoping delegates give the Simple Plan a serious look. [That plan](#), which he and other United Methodists submitted, eliminates all restrictions in the denomination's Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality.

"My prayer is that at General Conference we will choose a less harmful way forward, which I believe can be achieved through the Simple Plan," he said.

Lonnie Brooks, a reserve delegate from the Alaska Conference, filed a brief questioning parts of both the One Church and Traditional plans.

"While nothing is ever unsalvageable, the task of salvaging the (Traditional Plan) in the face of these rulings is a daunting task, indeed," he said.

However, he noted that that the Judicial Council did uphold the constitutionality of a portion of the Traditional Plan that allows

annual conferences to leave the denomination.

Traditional Plan backers also are looking to support an exit strategy for churches.

The Wesleyan Covenant Association, an unofficial traditionalist group of United Methodists that has not been shy about the possibility of breaking from the denomination.

"We are committed to the adoption of the Traditional Plan and to the provision of a gracious exit path for churches and pastors who disagree with whatever decision is made by the special General Conference," the Rev. Keith Boyette, president, [wrote in the group's newsletter](#).

Patricia Miller, a member of the Commission on a Way Forward, spoke on behalf of the Connectional Conference Plan at the Judicial Council. That plan restructures the denomination to include three values-based connectional conferences. Annual conferences would align with one of those, based on theology or perspective on LGBTQ ministry. She emphasized that the plan is still properly before General Conference voters.

## Pension Agency Touts New Low-Carbon Investment Strategy

Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) and BlackRock, Inc. have launched a new approach to low-carbon investing. The "Transition Ready" strategy seeks to deliver long-term competitive financial returns relative to standard performance benchmarks and directs capital to companies best positioned to facilitate the global transition to a low-carbon economy.

Wespath, which invests over \$23 billion on behalf of United Methodist pension participants

and institutions, has committed \$750 million across US domestic and International equity market accounts, replacing a portion of its market cap-weighted index exposures. "As a fiduciary, we believe companies positioned to benefit from the transition to a low-carbon economy are attractive long-term investments," said David Zellner, Wespath's Chief Investment Officer. "Capturing a return premium associated with these risks and opportunities required a new and innovative approach."

BlackRock will manage the new Transition Ready investment strategy in separate accounts for Wespath, and will offer the strategy to other BlackRock institutional clients. Wespath's participants and institutional clients will benefit from this strategy by investing in funds managed by Wespath. BlackRock and Wespath plan to focus next on developing enhanced Transition Ready analytics and additional strategies.

## 7 United Methodist Seminaries Recognized

The Center for Faith and Service at McCormick Seminary recently announced its annual list of [Seminaries that Change the World](#) (STCTW). STCTW highlights a select group of seminaries and divinity schools offering innovative courses, programs, and opportunities for students seeking to engage in social justice and service work while in seminary.

As part of its selection process, the Center looks for schools that are providing scholarship

support to students engaged in community-based service, innovative degree programs, field education internship opportunities, issue-based courses, and job placements in both traditional and new expressions of ministry.

"This year's list represents a theologically and geographically diverse group of schools," noted Alison Burchett, Managing Director of the Center for Faith and Service. "These schools are leaders in innovation and we are excited to see the ways they continue to challenge theological

education to grown and change as they help students integrate justice and service into their work as faith leaders."

The United Methodist institutions listed are Boston University School of Theology, Drew Theological School, Duke Divinity School, Emory University's Candler School of Theology, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Iliff School of Theology, and Wesley Theological Seminary.

# OBITUARIES

## Beatrice Blanche Capen

Beatrice Blanche Capen, 81, died suddenly of a massive stroke on October 25, 2018. She was born July 9, 1937, to Blanche and George W. Newton of North Granby, Conn.

She was the wife of Rev. John Capen, a retired NYAC elder who is currently appointed to Athens Federated Church and High Hill UMC. Previous to his retirement, the couple served North Canton Community and Washington Hill UMCs in Connecticut; Rondout Valley and Kripplebush UMCs, both in Stone Ridge, N.Y.; and Gardnertown UMC in Newburgh, N.Y. Their daughter, Beth Capen, is a member of the Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church.

Capen began her schooling in a one-room schoolhouse in North Granby, Conn. She graduated from Simsbury High School in 1955 and went on to receive both a bachelor's and master's degree from SUNY New Paltz.

She began her professional career at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft, rising to the position of executive secretary, but her love for education brought her to teaching as professor and chair of the English Department and co-president of the faculty union at SUNY Ulster. While at SUNY Ulster, she received a special award from the Modern Language Association.

Capen served on the Rondout Valley School Board of Education for nine years in various capacities, including vice-president. She was a leader for her daughters' Girl Scout troop, president of the Newburgh Lions Club (2007-08), and a member of various committees at the local, district, and conference levels of The United Methodist Church. She also sang with her church choir.

She was an avid reader and a NY Yankees fan. She loved traveling and camping, as well as the annual family reunion on Cape Cod. At the age of 68, Capen surprised many by taking on the sport of sky diving.

Capen's spirit of generosity continued after her passing with the donation of two of her organs.

In addition to her husband of 60 years, Capen is survived by her "Little Women" daughters, Beth Capen, Meg (Aerin Burke) Capen Amy (Mike Polcari) Capen and Joanne (Joseph) Sorbello; and her four grandchildren, Beatrice Capen-Guldy, Jacob Lovegren, and John and Julia Caster; sisters Marcia Martin, Cathryn Woodruff Grahn, and Deborah Newton McKeon. She was pre-deceased by her sister, Phyllis Dauphinais Sheak.

A memorial service was held November 11 at the Rondout Valley UMC. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her honor to [Marbletown First Aid](#), Rondout Valley Lions, [Rondout Valley Education Foundation](#), or Rondout Valley UMC (PO Box 295, Stone Ridge NY 12484). Messages of condolence may be sent to John and her daughters at 18 North Franklin St., Athens, NY 12015.

## Rev. Barbara J. Mungin

The Reverend Barbara J. Mungin died October 17, 2018. She retired from ministry in 2015.

She was born March 5, 1947, in New York City to John Mungin and Martha Parker-Mungin of Beaufort, S.C. Mungin was raised in Harlem and educated in the New York City public schools.

She attended Kings County Nursing School from 1965-66, and received a master of arts in special education from City College of New York in 1972. She also earned a master of science in educational psychology from New York University in 1977 and a master of science in administration/supervision from City College of New York two years later.

Mungin worked for more than 20 years with the New York City Board

of Education, beginning in January 1972. Her roles ranged from teacher to supervisor of special education, and from staff development specialist to principal at both Day elementary and junior high schools.

In 1994, Mungin answered a call to ministry, and was appointed to her first church as assistant pastor of Metropolitan Community UMC in Manhattan, and then as assistant pastor at Epworth UMC in the Bronx. She earned her master's of divinity from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in May 1997.

In July 1998, she was appointed associate pastor of Salem UMC in Harlem and three years later as pastor of Asbury UMC in Mount Vernon, N.Y. In July 2002, Mungin returned to Epworth UMC as the pastor. Appointments followed at Hempstead UMC on Long Island, Asbury UMC in Croton-on-Hudson, and Faith UMC on Staten Island.

The progress of Alzheimer's disease prompted Mungin to retire in January 2015.

Mungin is survived by three daughters, Melanie Mungin, Ayanna Martin-Williams and Maia Mungin-Oriol; eight grandchildren: Seanika Ladson, Aniqqa Garrison, Tileyah Williams, Lexus Martin, Jaylin Gary, Dylan Apson, Ashlyn Oriol and Phillip Stradford; sisters Connie Mungin and Sadie Mungin; nieces, Sharon Parker and Sandra Parker; and a host of great nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A funeral service was held October 26 at Salem UMC, 2190 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd., New York, N.Y. Messages of condolence may be sent to Maia Mungin-Oriol, 1023 Longwood Ave., #1, Bronx, N.Y. 10459.

## Rev. Dr. Richard A. Thornburg

The Reverend Dr. Richard Addison Thornburg, 91, died October 22, 2018, in Peabody, Mass.

He was born in Chicago to Amos A. and Elizabeth Sutherland Thornburg, but raised and educated in Providence, RI, graduating from the Moses Brown School. After graduation from DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., Thornburg followed a call to ministry and attended Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Thornburg became a provisional member of the New York Conference in 1949, serving South Highland and Van Cortlandtville Community UMCs. He was ordained a deacon in the New York Conference in 1950 and became an elder in full connection the following year. He was appointed to Trinity UMC in Richmond Hill, Queens, followed by appointments to Southampton UMC and the UMC of Floral Park, both in New York, and Norwalk UMC in Connecticut. In 1978, he was appointed district superintendent of the Connecticut West District.

After six years as district superintendent, he was appointed to Memorial UMC in White Plains, N.Y. His last appointment was to Memorial UMC in Avon, Conn., in 1990; he retired in 1994 after more than 45 years in ministry.

In 2004, Thornburg moved to Brooksby Village retirement community in Peabody, Mass. He was the co-founder of the Benevolent Care Fund at Brooksby, as well as a and champion of the village's student scholarship. He served as chair of the resident advisory council for many years and provided a weekly television program. He also enjoyed singing with the Protestant choir there.

Thornburg was preceded in death by his wife, Joyce, in 2016, and by his twin brother, Robert Thornburg, who was also called to a life of service to God. He is survived by his sons, Richard W. (Lynette) Thornburg of Suffield, Conn., and John D. (Elizabeth) Thornburg of

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# OBITUARIES

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Dallas; grandchildren, Kate (Dave) Betz of Austin, Jonathan (Amanda) Thornburg of Charlottesville, Va.; Jennifer (Noel) Osowiecki of Windsor, Conn., and Stephanie Stone, also of Windsor. He also leaves eight great-grandchildren; a sister, Mary Elizabeth Cooper of Rochester, N.Y.; a sister-in-law, Ann Thornburg of Eau Claire, Wis.; and several nephews and nieces, including Amy Lidstone.

A funeral was held on October 26 at Brooksby Village chapel. Memorial donations may be made to Brooksby Village, c/o Resident Care Fund, 100 Brooksby Village Dr, Peabody, MA 01960.

## Rev. Donald Earl Collier

The Reverend Donald Earl Collier died September 30, 2018, in Des Moines, Wash.

Although he was born in Lakewood, Ohio, on February 7, 1935, to Earl and Florence (Dunn) Collier, the family moved to Westchester County, N.Y., when he was quite young. Collier received his bachelor's degree from Ohio Wesleyan University and his master's from the Yale School of Divinity.

He became an elder in the New York Annual Conference in 1960, pastoring Trinity UMC in LaGrangeville, St. Paul's UMC in Peekskill, and Rye UMC, all in New York. From 1968 to 1974 he served as associate program director for the New York Conference before returning to parish ministry for five years at Meriden UMC in Connecticut. In 1979, he was appointed to United Methodist Communications, where he served as assistant general secretary and later as associate general secretary for the Division of Program and Benevolence.

In the mid-1990s, Collier worked at Creative Connections in Media in Rhinebeck, N.Y., and served as an interim pastor at the UMC of Peekskill and at Asbury UMC in Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. In 1998, he was appointed to the UMC of Peekskill, where he served until his retirement in 2002. After retirement, he also worked as a communications officer for the NYAC.

Collier was active in the pastors' associations in many of the locales he served, as well as social justice causes including civil rights, peace, and women's rights throughout his life.

He was passionate about all kinds of music, both sacred and secular, and trains. He often played the hymns on either the piano or organ at meetings. Collier often found a way to travel for work or pleasure via the rails.

He is survived by his wife, Diane; daughters, Linda (Randy) Floren, and Donna (Tony) Witts; a stepdaughter, Maurie (Christian) Wiswell; grandchildren, Katherine, Stephen, Drew, and Nathaniel; a brother Glenn (Ann) Collier; and his first wife, Maybeth Lyman.

Collier's life was celebrated on October 21, 2018 at the Des Moines UMC in Des Moines, Wash., where he worshiped and sang in the choir. Interment will be at Asbury Crestwood UMC, Yonkers, N.Y., in the spring.

Memorial donations in Collier's memory can be made to the [Alzheimer's Association](#) or [United Methodist Committee on Relief](#)

(UMCOR). Messages of condolence may be sent to Diane Collier at 816 S. 216th St, TC101, Des Moines, WA 98198-6331.

## Rev. William R. Siktberg

The Reverend William R. Siktberg died after a brief illness on September 20, 2018, in Kokomo, Ind., at age 95.

The third of four brothers, Siktberg was born March 23, 1923 in Bennetts Switch, Ind., to Con and Hazel Siktberg. He worked in his father's general store, played baseball for Kokomo High School, and lived in the house that he had helped his father build in 1937 up until four weeks before his death.

Siktberg attended Taylor University in Upland, Ind., where he charted a course to be a minister. He met Laura Herber there and the pair married after he graduated.

He then went to New York City to earn a bachelor's degree from New York Theological Seminary (then known as Biblical Seminary). He received his license to preach and was ordained a deacon in the North Indiana Conference and returned to Indiana to serve the Bennetts Switch, Miami, and Cassville Methodist churches. He returned to New York to pursue a master's degree from Union Theological Seminary, serving as pastor of Bethany Methodist Church in Brooklyn from 1949 to 1952. He was ordained an elder in 1951.

In 1953, Siktberg moved with his growing family to Wesley Methodist Church in Franklin Square on Long Island. During his 13 years there, he was a promoter of youth ministry, steadfastly supported the civil rights movement, and participated in the Billy Graham crusades. He was then appointed pastor of Fishkill UMC, which he served for 22 years.

He returned to Indiana each summer with his family throughout his ministerial career. After retiring in 1988, he returned to Bennetts Switch and served as pastor of the Miami parish for several years.

Siktberg studied Hebrew and Greek Bible texts with his brother, Carl, even as the pair were into their 80s; the brothers also traveled together to Israel to explore the Holy Land. He loved the U.S. national parks, and was a photographer and woodworker.

He nourished family connections, hosting reunions involving cousins from far and wide. He visited Sweden several times with his son, David, and relished walking the Stockholm streets where his grandparents had lived.

In addition to his brother, Carl of West Springfield, Mass., Siktberg is survived by two sons, David (Jennifer Christian) of Wayland, Mass., and Stephen (Lainey Rudolph) of Hyde Park, N.Y.; grandsons Stephen and Michael; step-grandchildren, Sam, Peter, and Annie. He is also mourned by Tuan Ton and his children, DaLam and Katie of California. Ton was sponsored by the Siktbergs to come to the U.S. in the 1970s. Siktberg's wife, Laura, passed away in 2010, and their daughter, Deborah, died in 2008.

A memorial service was held October 9 at the Bennetts Switch Community Church. Memorial donations may be made to the church building fund at 2261 West State Road 18, Kokomo, IN 46901.