

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

# THE VISION

May 2020



A message of gratitude drawn by a Sunday school student on the front walk of the UMC of Mount Kisco. Below, Dan Haughie is a nurse at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital training other nurses to work in Covid-19 units.

## Working the Front Lines With Faith, Courage

*"I see God's hand even in this dark, dark time, I hear that God's still speaking to us."*—Faith Ball

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY  
Editor, *The Vision*

Countless numbers of people are working on the frontlines of the Covid-19 pandemic across the New York Conference. The stories of nine of these essential workers are highlighted below. While their jobs may greatly vary, they all share a passion for their work and a need to rely on their faith. Here are some of their stories:



PHOTO COURTESY OF MSK FACEBOOK PAGE

### Training is fruitful

Early on in the coronavirus pandemic, Dan Haughie, put together an information session at his church, the Bayport UMC, to diffuse some of the misinformation about the virus and to explain prevention protocols like wearing

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### CORONAVIRUS UPDATE FROM THE BISHOP

## Leaning on Faith, Plans to Re-Open

May 8, 2020

*Dear Friends & Colleagues,*

Grace and peace to each of you. I pray that this latest update finds you blessed and centered on the grace of God available to us all.

As we continue working our way through this pandemic, there are some clear realities still very much in play around us. The level of pain and death all around us is sobering. When you look at maps and projections, it is clear that we are at the epicenter. Within our context of life and ministry, we are having to deal with the magnitude of this virus on a scale found nowhere else on planet Earth. It has affected our families, friends, and local churches. It has highlighted injustices, people on the margins, and revealed the depth of systemic racism that has lessened the importance of certain individuals at the expense of the privileged who maintain control and power—whether it is found in the safety of our homes or in the ability to stockpile food or to have access to services to

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While the conference center in White Plains, N.Y., remains physically closed, meetings and events are being held through phone or video conferencing. NYAC staff can still be reached by email or their conference phone numbers.

### 5/16 UMW Communion Brunch

Join the United Methodist Women of the Metropolitan District from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for the 40th Annual Communion brunch. The theme is "Jesus is Calling Us." Rev. Dr. Allen Pinckney will be the guest preacher. [Click here](#) for the Zoom video conferencing information. Questions? Contact Monique R. Blount, president of the Metropolitan District UMW, via [email](#).

### 5/20 Planning for VBS?

Is VBS a big part of your church's ministry? Do you look forward to VBS every summer? Are you thinking of cancelling your program because of the Covid-19 virus? There are ways to hold VBS this summer. Programs may just not look like the way we have done them in the past. Join in a discussion from 7 to 9 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing. For more information or to register, contact Cassandra Negri via [email](#).

### 5/21 Stewardship Post Covid-19

The COVID-19 crisis has forced churches to adapt to a situation no one could have foreseen. When quarantines are over and churches are open and people can safely leave their homes, will the church be the same as it was before March 2020? Probably not,

but that may not necessarily be a bad thing. Ken Sloane, director of Stewardship & Generosity for Discipleship Ministries will lead the 7:30 p.m. webinar. [Click here](#) to register.

### 9/30 Blueprint for Wellness, HQ Deadlines

The deadlines for completing the Blueprint for Wellness screening and the online Health Quotient survey have been extended to September 30, 2020, because of the coronavirus pandemic. Participants in the HealthFlex insurance program must register by phone or online to take the Blueprint for Wellness at a Quest Diagnostics lab. (Quest is requiring that face masks be worn to the appointment and they will check your temperature when you arrive.) Register by calling

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## Special Offering Supports Advocacy for Peace & Justice

Peace with Justice Sunday, one of six special Sundays with offering for the UMC, is the first Sunday after Pentecost, June 7. Gifts received on this day fund programs that advocate for peace and justice in the United States and around the world. These programs empower United Methodists to speak out for removing structures and systems that harm God's children globally.

As a connectional church, the UM churches combine resources to have a larger impact in the world. In 2019, congregations

gave \$433,437 toward ministries funded by the Peace with Justice Sunday offering. Fifty percent of the offering remains in the annual conference to support local and regional justice efforts, and 50 percent supports justice ministries through the General Board of Church and Society.

A resource kit for pastors and church leaders can be found by clicking [here](#). Donations may be made via check through the local church or can be given online at this [link](#).

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

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# NYAC Responds to Increased Need for Emergency Food

Images of New York City residents standing on food lines, some as long as 20 city blocks, are all too reminiscent of photos from the Great Depression. In other areas of the country, people wait in mile-long queues of cars for emergency food supplies. In many places this has become the “new normal” as the coronavirus pandemic has created a significant increase in families and individuals in need of food assistance. For many, this food insecurity is a first-time—and difficult—experience. The need also knows no bounds as urban, rural, and suburban areas are all, in some way, affected.

A recent report stated that more than one third of the 1,000 New York City food pantries have closed down, a result of increased demand, decreased donations, a drop-off in volunteer support, and safety concerns. Others throughout the New York Conference report a doubling or tripling of requests for food. These situations are not unique to the New York area either. In addition, a number of food ministries report that they have adequate food supplies but lack funding for additional administrative and program oversight as well increased utility costs.

The NYAC Missions office, working with the cabinet, and district food ministry representatives, has been holding meetings to identify existing conference food ministries,



**Above: Some clients practice social distancing as they wait outside the Bushwick Parish UMC for the food pantry to open; First Spanish UMC and Pastor Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé have joined forces with other groups to feed the vulnerable in their East Harlem neighborhood.**

under-served and vulnerable populations, as well as gaps in existing services. The leadership team and the districts they represent include MET: Dorlimar Lebron, LIW: Gia Hall, LIE: Hall Low, CH: Ed Mackey and Margaret Howe, CT: Herron Gaston and Ed Dayton, and CT/NY: Nikki Edleman, and Steve and Nan Ernst.

“Given the diversity and presence of our local churches in so many communities, we have the opportunity to make a significant impact on the overall well-being of those individuals and communities impacted by the coronavirus,” said Tom Vencuss, director of NYAC Missions and Disaster Response.



Vencuss acknowledged that while we cannot address every need and situation, many of our churches currently sponsor or support local food ministries that provide a critical ministry to their community.

“As we hold our meetings and I hear what is going on, I’m really amazed and proud at the incredible work that so many of

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# NYAC Responds to Increased Need for Emergency Food

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our churches are doing in the areas of food insecurity,” Vencuss said. Many operate on shoe-string budgets, with small or no permanent staffing, but dedicated volunteers. Many are connected with state or regional banks, local restaurants and supermarkets, as well as receiving support from parishioners and the local community.

## NYAC COVID-19 Emergency Food Ministry

As part of the NYAC response, an emergency food task force has established several short-term goals for moving forward:

- Identify existing food ministries which are considered most critical and to provide direct assistance for a short period of time.

- Put out a Conference-wide appeal for Emergency Food support (please see below).
- Send out a survey to all congregations and to compile a directory of food ministries. This will be expanded to include other emergency-response resources which could be used for future disaster response efforts.

The long-term goal is to continue to work with the six districts to monitor and support our food ministries for the duration of the pandemic.

### What can you do?

- Support the local food ministry at your church or neighboring church
- Support the NYAC COVID-19 Emergency Food Response with a check made out to the

NYAC with “Emergency Food Response” in the memo line.

- Make an [online donation](#) through the conference website, and designate it for use in the emergency food response.

In addition, the conference has received funds from the United Methodist City Society, a Northeast Jurisdiction multicultural grant to Connectional Ministries, and has applied for an UMCOR COVID-19 Rapid Response grant.

The New York Conference has a long history of rising to the challenge of addressing emergency/disaster response needs within its borders, and throughout the nation and world. We are now confronted with a disaster the likes of which few have ever seen.

The UMCOR Connecting Neighbors training includes the following statement:

“All disasters are local: the local church is a major thread in the overall fabric of a community’s disaster preparation and response. The visible presence of the church is essential in any time of disaster. Disaster response is an effective ministry through which we become instruments of God’s healing and hope. By becoming the hands and feet of Christ, we share in a commitment to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of people in a time of crisis.”

This, once again, is our time.

## Latest New Appointments

Resident Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton has announced the following 2020 appointments, effective July 1:

**Tisha Michelle Branch** to First UMC, Mount Vernon, N.Y. (MET)

**Lydia Lebron-Rivera** to Epworth UMC, Bronx (MET)

**Pearlena Lobban** to Island Park UMC (LIW); she will continue to serve First UMC, Oceanside, N.Y.

**Charles Ryu** to Morningside UMC, Manhattan (MET)

**Laurel E. Scott** to Wakefield

Grace UMC, Bronx, N.Y. (MET)

**Rhonda R. Taylor** to Golden Hill UMC, Bridgeport, Conn. (CT)

**Seung Kwon (Joseph) Yang** to Chinese UMC, Manhattan (MET)

**Jessica Anschutz** to Vail’s Gate UMC; she will continue to serve Gardnertown and Trinity Parish in Newburgh, N.Y. (NYCT)

**Agnes Saffoury** to Gardnertown, Trinity Parish and Vail’s Gate churches

**Crystal Paul Watson** to UMC of Hartford



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

*Clergy and congregations from around the conference continue to reach out to their communities—some with new ministries and others with tweaked versions of existing programs. If you'd like to tell us what your church is doing, please email: [shareyourstory@nyac.com](mailto:shareyourstory@nyac.com).*

**Live from the Hospital**  
 Federated Church of  
 Athens/High Hill UMC (CH)

Rev. John Capen didn't let an unexpected stay at the hospital to have a defibrillator implanted interfere with leading worship on April 26.

He put his clergy collar on over his hospital gown and, with a little help from the nursing staff and his family, live streamed worship to [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) for his two congregations. Some

members of High Hill were ready to worship in socially-distanced cars parked at Dutchman's Landing in Catskill, N.Y. His daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters have been providing live music each week.

"This day and age you can do it [virtual worship]. Today, it's just par for the course," said the 82-year-old Capen, who was released from the hospital on April 27.

**Dora, the Talking Dog**  
 Stony Brook Community Church (LIE)

A Golden retriever named Dora has nabbed a starring role in the children's messages being videotaped by

her dad, Rev. Chuck Van Houten. In episode four of the [videos](#), Dora explains that she really doesn't understand this "Emmaus" thing that the pastor has been talking about on their morning walk.

Van Houten said the videos have provided "a way of dealing with the craziness going on and connecting with the kids" in the church who know Dora from visits to the parsonage. The kids are emailed a link to watch the videos every week with their parents before being posted to the church Facebook page. Van Houten readily admits

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**Clockwise from above: Dora the golden retriever has a starring role in the kids' message at the Stony Brook Community Church; Rev. John Capen leads virtual worship during a short hospital stay; Simsbury UMC used volleyball nets set up in the church yard to hang hundreds of face masks offered to the public for free.**



Continued from page 5 that he got the idea of the talking dog from a clergy colleague, Rev. Roy Grubbs, at Centerport UMC.

With a photo of Dora and the “My Talking Pet” app on his phone, Van Houten is able to record a message that is then converted into sound and movement that appears to be coming from the dog. The tone and pitch of the voice can be altered in the app.

“It definitely lifts my spirits,” Van Houten said. “It gives us all something to laugh at because everyone feeling this.”

**“My Church Loves Me. . .”**  
Bayport UMC (LIE)

In an [amusing video](#) entitled, “Strange Happenings at Bayport UMC,” Rev. David Czeisel, shared some of the things that have been going on in the empty spaces and hallways in the church building on Long Island’s south

shore.

One of the main reasons Czeisel made the video was to encourage donations to the pastor’s discretionary fund in anticipation of an increased need to help people through the financial hardships of the pandemic.

But he also realized that people just needed a laugh amid some of the worry, exhaustion, frustration, and isolation of staying at home. “Watching the bishop and cabinet’s funny Zoom bloopers reminded me just how much I wanted to laugh, and inspired me to do the same for those I could reach,” he said. “I figured Jesus would do the same.”

**Face Mask Giveaway**  
Simsbury UMC (CT)

Two active groups at Simsbury UMC, Quilts Beyond Borders and Girls for Days, joined forces and launched a mask-making stream that has created more



**Above: Rev. David Czeisel brushes his teeth in the church bathroom as part of a lightheartedly video for his members; below: El Nido Esperanza continues to provide food for families in their program.**



than 2,000 of the face coverings.

The distribution was initially to about 60 at-risk members of the congregation, but quickly spread to institutions that provide healthcare and nursing needs, services for the homeless, grocery store workers,

and individuals in need in the greater Hartford area.

Church members Karen Matheson and Jan Baker rallied some 30 members of the congregation to cover every step of the production—from cutters and sergers to

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delivery.

When Connecticut required that face masks be worn in public, the group reached out to provide masks for the rest of the SUMC community. All of the masks are given away for free.

On Sunday, May 3, the church hosted a “face mask giveaway” on the front lawn of the church. The masks were hung on volleyball nets and guests were carefully routed through a pre-determined path to maintain social distancing.

#### **Dinner is Delivered**

Southeastern Dutchess Cooperative Parish (NYCT)

For several years the Pawling UMC had been hosting “Cook’s Night Out,” a free community meal on Wednesdays cooked and served by members of the congregation. But when the coronavirus shutdown began, they converted the ministry to a parish “meals-on-wheels” ap-

proach with the backing of the other three churches in the Southeastern Dutchess Cooperative Parish: Poughquag, Dover and Verbank.

The first week, the cooking team prepared and packaged about 40 meals to be delivered, and they have seen the numbers grow steadily to nearly 100. Some families are provided with multiple meals depending upon need. One of the six drivers is a nurse who has also advised people about virus prevention and provides blood pressure checks on request.

The ministry has been “just about self-sustaining so far” because of donations from a few of the recipients, the congregations and community, according to Pastor Parker Prout.

#### **Soup to Go**

Olivebridge & Samsonville UMCs (CH)

The food pantry at the

Olivebridge UMC always served a lot of people, but since the “stay in place” orders in New York, it’s been much more active, according to Pastor Karen Squires. The pantry closet in the foyer of the church is always open for people to take what they need—day or night.

This shared ministry with Samsonville UMC is funded by individual and church donations. They supplement any food donations that they receive with buys from big box stores in the region. Squires has been restocking the closet about four times a week, and has added books and movies from the church thrift store in recent days.

When the churches had to cancel their once-a-month free community suppers,

they shifted gears to offer homemade soup each week. On Sundays, the soups and some bread are available in the Olivebridge parking lot. On Tuesdays, deliveries are made throughout the community to the elderly or homebound in about 10 households.

When she makes the deliveries, Squires wears a mask, knocks on the resident’s door and leaves a bag with the soup on the step. After she leaves, the bag is picked up and taken inside. Since March 22, the churches have given out 300 pints of soup. Squires makes a lot of the soup herself, but has some devoted helpers.

“We’ve got four parishioners making soup as well as a Boy Scout troop leader,” she said. “The scout leader gets all the boys working on their cooking badge to help, too.”

#### **Sharing the Wealth**

Bushwick Parish & Sheepshead Bay UMCs (LIW)

“We just thank God that he keeps providing for us so we can provide for others,” said Rev. Sharon Petgrave-Cundy about the groups and



**Olivebridge UMC offers a variety of homemade soups and bread to anyone who needs the food.**

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companies coming together to feed and care for the community around her two churches.

The food donations that come to the Bushwick church are from any number of

sources: fresh produce from the nearby Amazon warehouse, dry goods from Madison Square Garden (MSG), and 250 prepared meals from a catering crew affiliated with CBS-TV. Face masks have also been donated by the Brooklyn

borough president, and toiletries from the NYPD 83th Street precinct.

The Bushwick food pantry has remained open five days a week for take-aways—food staples on one day and a hot meal on another. They serve at least 200 people a day, according to Petgrave-Cundy. Police officers from the 83th have helped pack bags of groceries and then delivered the food to senior centers and to individual homes. A group of Marines also

bring food to veterans in the area.

The pastor is learning how to navigate the streets of Brooklyn with the 20-foot rental trucks that are often needed for pickups.

“When we go pick up big donations, I call the other UM churches in our cluster to come and get stuff,” Petgrave-Cundy said. “I call other denominations to take food back to their communities so we can serve a wider part of central Brooklyn.”

## Free Guide for Pastoral Transitions During COVID-19 Crisis

The Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary has released “The Right Start: Beginning Ministry in a New Setting—COVID-19 Supplement.” This free guide—[available for download](#)—provides practical advice for pastors ending ministry in one congregation and beginning ministry in another during the COVID-19 crisis.

In late April, the Lewis Center surveyed a trusted group of pastoral leaders and judicatory leaders to gather their ideas and

thoughts about making a successful transition in this challenging time. Their recommendations are summarized in the COVID-19 supplement.

“Many congregants are sheltering in place, many churches have suspended in-person worship, and normal patterns of engagement and activities are disrupted,” said F. Douglas Powe, Jr., director of the Lewis Center. “This guide covers the unique implications for pastoral transition in the areas of leaving well; parsonages, offices, and moving; entering a new congregation and

getting acquainted; preaching and worship in the first months; and congregational and community financial stress.”

To further assist pastors, the Lewis Center

### Time for Centering, Reflection

To care for clergy and laity in these uncertain times, the New York Conference is providing a opportunity for centering, **prayer, and reflection each Thursday at 12:30 p.m.** via Zoom. The sessions, led by conference staff members, offer a time for church leaders to

is offering its time-tested “The Right Start: Beginning Ministry in a New Setting—Pastor’s Version” [video toolkit download](#) for \$25 for a limited time. The regular price is \$59.

connect and prepare for the essential work ahead. [Recordings](#) from each week are available to view on the conference website.

For login information to attend the Zoom webinar, contact Nikki Rose in the conference office by [email](#) or phone at 914-615-2226.

# Leaning on Faith, Making Plans to Re-Open

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keep us healthy.

Some days it seems like too much. And yet, there are inspiring stories of determination and hope that give us reason to believe that God is at work in and through us to truly make a difference in the people we are called to serve.

## Getting Back to “Normal”

One of the realities we are facing is that we are beginning to enter another phase in this pandemic. It is a phase that you can see emerging across the country related to, “When can we get back to normal?” It is a phase where tensions and anxieties and outbursts are beginning to happen on the steps of state capitols and in the living rooms of our homes. Whether it’s the desperate need for a paycheck or the simple reality of cabin fever, some days it seems like it’s too much to handle and the outbursts appear to be more about our anxiety than about the particular issue being raised.

I truly worry about us in this next phase, especially as it relates to our mental health and our spiritual well-being. I worry about us falling into the trap of unnecessarily focusing on things that are minor in the midst of this big major that we are dealing with. I worry about doing harm through the words we inappropriately speak or the actions that we don’t intend to do but can’t find a way to avoid



**Bishop Bickerton takes a moment to reflect in the garden behind the conference center.**

because we are smothered by emotions and anxieties about our world and our lives being turned upside down.

It reminds me of the dilemma Paul described in Romans 7: “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. (Romans 7:15, 18–19)

It is so important for us, in this vulnerable time, to breathe, think before we speak, be in touch with our inner drivers, and set as an intentional pattern the need to be careful with one another each moment of the day.

## Time for Self-Care & Sabbath

I want to remind each of you to take good care of yourselves. If you are having a tough time, confide in a friend or a therapist. If you don’t know where to turn, reach out to us and we’ll help you find the assistance you need. And, remember to find time for quiet reflection, solitude, prayer and

reading. Think twice about your reactions and over-reactions. Just breathe.

As you are aware, our annual conference session has been postponed until this fall. We are still working out the details of this much abbreviated session and will let you know about the dates and plans as soon as we know.

But the postponement of annual conference gives us a window for the renewal and rest I have been talking about. Our annual conference was scheduled for Thursday, June 11 to Sunday, June 14. Those are dates that should already be marked on your calendar, dates when pastors were already expected to be away from their pulpits and away from their day-to-day activities.

I am announcing that the dates originally scheduled for annual conference, Thursday–Sunday, June 11–14, are being set aside for a period of pastoral respite and renewal. I am asking for local churches to support their pastors taking these four days for

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# Bishop: Remain Centered in United Methodist Values

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rest, renewal and reflection. Our conference staff will be organizing an online worship service on that Sunday, June 14, to be made available as a substitute for every worship service across the conference so that our pastors and their worship teams can have a break from their preparation on that Sunday.

There is much being asked of all of us. I pray that we can be supportive of this need to provide our leaders with an intentional time of rest and that our leaders can take advantage of this opportunity.

## Remaining Centered on our Values

One of the things that I frequently celebrate is being able to claim my faith as a United Methodist Christian. The combination of the gospel message and directives of Jesus to love God and love neighbor with the unique features of our Wesleyan understanding of faith based on personal holiness and social holiness, as well as the directive to do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God, and the core principles of saving grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace; these cause me to celebrate how I have been formed and am being formed into the likeness of Christ every day.

When I walk outside and witness the beauty of God's creation emerging in the springtime, as a United Methodist Christian I im-



**The New York Conference hung a banner of support and had lunch delivered to the staff at the New York Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital.**

mediately begin to think about our emphasis on the stewardship of creation and need to care for the earth that God has provided.

When I read the paper or listen to the news and hear about how the people on the margins—the immigrant, the vulnerable in the nursing homes, the people victimized by systemic racism—and others who are suffering greatly from the effects of the coronavirus, I immediately begin to draw upon my Methodist upbringing and our emphasis to be involved in transmitting the gospel through acts of social justice, dismantling racism, and care for the poor.

When I look at a communion chalice or a baptismal font, I immediately begin to celebrate a Methodist theology of acceptance, inclusion, and welcome for everyone to join us at the table

and on the journey toward Christ-like holiness.

When I see an offering plate, I immediately begin to draw upon a faith that says that for those who have been given much, much is required. That tithing and faithful giving, even in the midst of hardship and uncertainty, will be blessed by God.

And when I stand in a pulpit, I immediately begin to focus on the opportunity to transmit the word of God in some way that will create a spark, light a fire, or cause someone to find hope and joy as we evangelize the world for Christ.

Those are the values we hold dear as United Methodist Christians and they are the values that will continue to inform every decision we make moving forward in the midst of this pandemic. We cannot do anything less than that.

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# Bishop: Clergy Moving Day Delayed to Aug. 1

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## Specific Actions Moving Forward

That leads me to some specifics related to where we are and where we are going as an annual conference.

As you know and as you feel, the question about when to re-open our churches is a burning question. As I have stated before, we are going to take our lead from the state governments in New York and Connecticut. In those governments there are game plans being developed for a gradual re-opening based on the fulfillment of certain criteria. We will comply and follow those guidelines completely. Here are some specifics:

- Our churches will remain closed through at least the end of May.
- We are in the process of working with the government guidelines to create our own plan for potential re-opening.
- We do not have a specific date set for a re-opening.
- We are in a very unique situation. We are not Florida or Georgia. We will plan according to the extremities of our context.
- Our plan is to do a phased-in approach depending on the region, very much like what is being planned in New York and Connecticut.
- We are currently working on guidelines and protocols for each of our churches to

follow on how to re-open when the time comes. Those will be in your hands in the next week or so once they are completed.

- We know that it is important to you, as it is to us, to re-gather at some point in our local churches. But we will only do so at the appropriate time with the strict guidelines for cleaning, social distancing, and smart strategies. We have to remember that a large portion of our membership falls into the category of the most vulnerable. We also know that some of the biggest spikes of the virus and some of the biggest indiscretions of in-person gatherings have happened in churches.

Most of all, we will draw upon our values through it all:

- We will not do harm to others.
- We will act smartly but lean

heavily on our faith that God will guide our paths and see us through.

- We will love deeply, even if it means further sacrifices.

As a result of the major impact on our region due to the coronavirus, there are several announcements I am making:

## Move Day

Normally our move day for pastors is July 1. We have greatly reduced the number of moves this season by nearly 50 percent. Still, churches have vacancies and they are filled by our itinerant system and process. But, since our churches have been closed for some time and will need to be re-started and re-focused at the appropriate time, I am moving move day from July 1 to August 1 to give pastors in their current settings a chance to get the church back on its feet before leaving. Churches will need to prepare

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## Technology Assistance Needed

The New York Conference is looking for tech-savvy individuals willing to volunteer their time to assist churches with technology matters. This pandemic has elevated the use of technology almost overnight to levels never seen before. Technology is now being used to communicate with each other in new ways, hold virtual worship services and committee meetings, and in many

other ways.

Specifically, guidance is needed in a variety of areas including how to set up high-speed internet service, how to strengthen internet service in sanctuaries, video and computer equipment, and facilitating conference calls and Zoom video conferencing.

To volunteer, contact Ross Williams via [email](#) or by calling 914-615-2212.

# Re-Imagining Work, Life of NY Conference

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to receive their new pastors and pastors moving will need to make plans for their transition on August 1.

## Retirements

Retiring pastors are being asked to remain in place as well during that interim period. Since annual conference is being delayed, pastors will be officially retired *ad interim* on July 1 so that they may begin to receive their pensions at the appropriate time. They will then be officially retired when the annual conference convenes this fall.

## UMCOR/Impact Grants

Through the generosity of UMCOR, the Northeast Jurisdiction Multi-ethnic Center, a re-allocation of annual conference funds, and the UM City Society, we are preparing to make significant contributions to feeding and outreach ministries of local churches in parts of our annual conference where ethnic and racial minority and other vulnerable populations are being disproportionately affected by the coronavirus. We are currently working to organize these grants and will be making distributions to identified areas/programs within the next seven to 10 days.

## Technology Grants

We are continuing to develop online training and webinars on how to improve online

worship, Zoom meetings, and other ministries that are being developed in the “new normal.” A redistribution of our funds is being made to provide grants to continue to grow our outreach and to make deeper connections with the people we are reaching through livestream and other internet technologies. We need to be planning for this form of outreach and evangelism to continue long after we have permission to regather in person. Guidelines are being developed regarding the parameters around how these grants can be secured.

## Re-Imagining NYAC

I am forming a Re-Imagining NYAC Task Force of laity and clergy to help us think through what we have learned from these past few months and what we need to set in place as a re-imagined annual conference. I pray that this will be a very open and engaging conversation about how we must adapt many of the norms and protocols of our ministry as a result of the pandemic and its life-changing and culture-changing impact.

What all of this means is that in some areas we are moving quickly (outreach and intentional caring ministries) while in other areas we are moving slowly and methodically (re-opening and intentional steps to take extreme care for how we re-enter once again).

In the midst of it all I urge you to: breathe, remember our values, treat each other with grace and patience, and in every situation you face, especially in the places where you are tempted to react in ways that may do harm to others by the words you say or actions you take, demonstrate your deep love for God and for one another.

In his unique book, “Guerillas of Grace,” Ted Loder writes:

O God, complete the work you have begun in me.

Release through me a flow of mercy and gentleness that will bring:

Water where there is desert,  
Healing where there is hurt,  
Peace where there is violence,  
Beauty where there is ugliness,  
Justice where there is brokenness,

Beginnings where there are dead-ends.

Waken in me  
Gratitude for my life,  
Love for every living thing,  
Joy in what is human and holy,  
Praise for you.

Renew my faith that you are God

Beyond my grasp but within my reach;

Past my knowing but within my searching;

Disturber of the assured,  
assurer of the disturbed;  
Destroyer of illusions, creator of dreams;

Source of silence and music,

Continued on page 14

# Pandemic Tests Church's Justice Commitments

BY HEATHER HAHN  
UM News

For something that can't be seen with the naked eye, the coronavirus has a way of magnifying longtime injustices in the world.

The impact of the virus is visible in the nursing home resident isolated from loved ones and in the migrant laboring to put food on people's tables. It's in the long lines of cars at food banks and the disproportionate death toll among racial minorities.

Bishops spent much of their online meeting May 1 discussing how the Covid-19 pandemic aggravates problems The United Methodist Church has long sought to alleviate. Those problems include poverty, racism and mistreatment of migrants.

"Covid-19 has made our world more vulnerable," Bishop Minerva Carcaño said.

She and other bishops discussed how United Methodists could show love of their neighbors and relieve suffering.

Specifically, bishops pointed to the United Methodist Committee on Relief's "[Sheltering in Love](#)" Covid-19 response fund. UMCOR is using the fund to address the health concerns, food insecurity and other pressing needs of vulnerable populations worldwide.

The fund had raised about \$200,000 as of May 1, said Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, who leads the bishops' missional engagement team. However, he and other

bishops said much more is needed from those who can afford to give.

Carcaño, who leads the California-Nevada Conference, is the chair of the denomination's Immigration Task Force. She spoke about how the pandemic was [affecting migrants](#) around the globe.

She noted that under the cover of Covid-19, the United States has deported thousands of migrants "without any due process of law or any thought for their health and well-being or that of anyone else." Some of those deported were sick with Covid-19 and have carried the disease to countries with already strained health care systems.

Even as some countries increase deportations, the bishop pointed out that many rely on migrants to toil in fields and meat-processing plants to keep people fed.

Her hope is that in the wake of this crisis, United Methodists and other people of faith would create "a mighty movement" to provide fair treatment for migrants. She also hopes to see church members work to reduce the economic hardships that often drive people to leave their home countries.

"If you welcome the migrant, Jesus said, 'You welcome me,'" the bishop said, referencing Matthew 25. "On this day, friends, it is a good day to welcome the migrant—Jesus Christ himself—into our lives."

The May Day bishops' meeting



Through the COVID-19 Response Fund, the United Methodist Committee on Relief plans to release grants to equip partners who assist vulnerable populations around the world affected by COVID-19. That includes helping racial/ethnic and indigenous communities in the United States.

UMCOR plans to distribute grants of up to \$20,000 to address pressing needs in the areas of health, food insecurity, water, sanitation and hygiene and economic instability. To give or apply for a grant, click [here](#).

reminded Bishop Sally Dyck of the distress call "mayday."

"The mayday that calls for rescue is French for 'Help me,'" she said, referring to the call that began as *m'aidez*.

She leads the bishops' justice and reconciliation team that aims to help the church to hear such calls.

Dyck, who also leads the Northern Illinois Conference, emphasized that Covid-19 is exacerbating problems beyond

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# Pandemic Tests Church's Justice Commitments

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U.S. borders.

In the Philippines, she said, governmental forces have arrested more than 20,000 people since March 17 on accusations of violating quarantine.

She also noted that the disease was increasing educational, racial and economic disparities worldwide. In her home city of Chicago, she said, African Americans comprise about 29 percent of the population but 70 percent of the city's Covid-19 deaths.

She worried what months without schooling means for youngsters all over the world who cannot join in online learning because their families cannot afford the internet.

## New Connectional Table Website

The Connectional Table (CT) of The United Methodist Church has launched a new [website](#) in a user-friendly platform designed to provide a clear understanding of the group's work. The website also provides resources to support the ministry of United Methodists throughout the connection.

The new website is an effort to provide a one-stop shop for information about the Connectional Table and about issues important to the denomination's whole connection. It explains the CT's vision, mandates, impact, and history, and includes information on its key partners, such as the agencies, Council of Bishops, and

The disease has also had a personal impact on the bishops. Retired Bishop Alfred Johnson's wife, the Rev. Sherrie Dobbs Johnson, died of complications related to the virus on March 27. Bishop Johnson led the Church of the Village in Greenwich Village from 2005 to 2015. Other bishops have family members who are ill with the disease.

Holston, who also leads the South Carolina Conference, asked for prayers for his daughter who is a registered nurse in Atlanta. She tested positive for coronavirus and was in quarantine for a time, but is back on the front lines, working with Covid-19 patients.

In prayer, in giving and if at all possible, in staying home, United

Standing Committee. It provides access to key resources, like the group's agency evaluation report, and budget reports, as well as links to a variety of other reports. In an effort to ensure transparency, the website includes dates of upcoming CT meetings and internal CT documents such as bylaws and meeting minutes.

The new website also features a page on the General Conference, which includes articles about its postponement, as well as links to the official General Conference page. In addition, annual conference leaders can easily submit annual conference journals to the CT through its new website.

Methodists can show love for their neighbors, bishops said.

"We protect the most vulnerable among us by flattening the curve—those in prison, those in nursing homes, those essential workers doing work on our behalf," said Bishop Kenneth Carter.

## Re-Imagining NYAC

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community and solitude,  
light and darkness, death and  
life.

O Keeper of Promises,  
composer of grace

Grant me

Glee in my blood,

Prayer in my heart,

Trust at my core,

Songs for my journey,

And a sense of your kingdom.

I like that. Glee in our blood.  
Prayer in our hearts. Trust at our  
core. Songs for our journey. And a  
clear sense of God's kingdom.

That is my prayer for you.

Be well. Stay healthy. And know  
that you are loved.

The Journey Continues, . . .



Thomas Bickerton  
Resident Bishop

[Click here](#) to download the letter  
from Bishop Bickerton and view  
the accompanying video.

# Addressing Grief, Regaining Joy During COVID-19

By **JACOB DHARMARAJ, Ph.D**

President, Retired Clergy and  
Spouses Fellowship

One of the familiar hymns sung on Mother's Day, "Now Thank We All Our God," was originally written in German as "*Nun danket alle Gott*" by Martin Rinkart, a young German pastor, who had lived through plague, war, the deaths of his wife, parents, and four of his five children, as well as a long period of unemployment.

During the height of a plague in 1637, Rinkart was the only surviving pastor in Eilenburg, Germany, conducting as many as 50 funerals a day. He performed more than 4,000 funerals in one year, including that of his own wife. Yet his hymn never falters in testifying to the hope and comfort found for centuries in Christ Jesus. What governs this hymn is not proximity to death but the best bits of living. Nowness is felt throughout.

The world around us today is broken, wide-eyed, and fearful. Some of our friends, colleagues and fellow congregants have lost their dear ones to COVID-19. A few are still in the hospital. These circumstances make us wonder how we can best minister to those families and help rebuild the battered families and their communities with all their inefaceable scars and wounds. This is no longer a time for self-preservation or missional isolation for the church.

During uncertain moments

## COMMENTARY

Christians cannot contort themselves to look more like everyone else. Rather, we should drill down into the wellspring of what made us faithful and steadfast to begin with. We are not prisoners of the past, nor are we condemned endlessly to repeat it. That we functioned a certain way before does not mean that we will act in the same way again. There is an asymmetry between past and future: The past is fixed, the future is not; the past is bolted, the future is wide open. Future is inherently changeable, incomprehensible and discontinuous.

Since future is unknowable, we are inclined to believe that what is here today will be here tomorrow. We, therefore, need to unhook ourselves from the highly regimented nature of collective and pessimistic fears written in yesterday's memory book and move forward as our forebears have done with our faith deeply grounded in Christ Jesus.

### Lighting the Hope Candle

Any sensible person knows grief is a long-term project. Grief is circular, until suddenly it abates. Life continues. Loss endures, even as grief slowly departs.

Under the current circumstances, many will be

afraid of returning to public places and transport links, and congregating in large numbers. This fear will also manifest itself from job security to worship attendance which will have a negative cash flow for our mission, ministry even to take care of the real estate.

With the flow of money much reduced, many charitable organizations including churches will be weakened. It will take a long time before we reach the communal landscape of "business as usual." Until then, the members of the faith community will have a vital role to play, despite their own vulnerability.

The famous author and teacher Joseph Campbell—who was born and raised in White Plains, N.Y.—said that the conquest of fear of death is the recovery of life's joy. The church today, as it has done myriad times in the past, can indeed help communities and families regain life's joy. The church can indeed help the fearful push back the present darkness by lighting the hope candle – for the language of salvation and hope in the Bible is written in future tense.

COVID-19 is an equal opportunity pathogen and an equalizer. It doesn't discriminate when it comes to race or socio-economic status even though its impact is greater among the most vulnerable. Patients die alone in hospitals with no family

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# Addressing Grief, Regaining Joy During COVID-19

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members present. Healthcare providers and hospital chaplains are the ones who often facilitate communications between dying patients and living family members. Consequently, many families of the deceased are devastated and traumatized. Paralyzing fear continues to run through communities like a steady rip current.

## Trauma-Informed Ministry

Medical professionals say that trauma is an emotional response of an individual following an emotionally or physically harmful event—such as an accident, sexual violence, war or natural disaster—with lasting effects on their normal functioning and well-being. Shock and denial frequently follow these events. If untreated, the end result will be detrimental.

The church today is invited to engage in “trauma-informed ministry” by moving from mutuality in mission to mutual aid in mission thereby walking alongside the traumatized to provide help and serve as their agent when needed. Most importantly, the church needs to help validate their feelings by journeying through their loss and grief, offering not pieties but grace, reassurance and empathy,

without attempting to fix their situation.

Since trauma-informed ministry promotes a culture of safety, trust, empowerment, and healing, it offers frameworks, structures, rituals and prayers. It has already become the expectation, not the exception in situations such as racial reconciliation, domestic violence therapy and suicide-prevention.

Trauma-informed ministry is as much about social justice as it is about spiritual, emotional and physical healing. Too often trauma survivors who seek out support find themselves re-traumatized by the very systems designed, or persons assigned, to help them. Therein they need mutual aid. They need informed advocates and ambassadors who could accompany them on their way to healing by offering empathy, empowerment, and enrichment.

During stressful times and when resources are in short supply or they become scarce, those in authority or leadership make ethical decisions on a daily or an hourly basis. Some of them are sincere and straightforward. Other times certain extraneous factors come into play. Age, gender, race, and class take overriding place. Who will be the

guardian here and who has the ultimate power to make the split-second decision?

Trauma-informed ministry certainly can create a more helpful and therapeutic environment to promote safety, inclusion, dignity, and respect in the healing of toxic trauma.

One other thing COVID-19 has taught those of us who serve the church is that all our recoveries are always partial. Empathy is necessary but not sufficient. What we need today is learning, training, and the practice of trauma-informed ministry with a willingness to boldly stand for justice and compassion and turn our attention from survival to adaptation. Christians must stand in support of one another to build a peaceable and caring community.

I believe there is safety in community—solace in the company of other people that makes it all right for ghosts to enter the neighborhood, and our grief to well up inside us. Together, we will overcome and sing, “. . . *with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us, to keep us in God’s grace, and guide us when perplexed, and free us from all ills, of this world and the next.*”

# Working the Front Lines With Faith, Courage, Stamina

Continued from page 1

masks and keeping six feet apart.

Haughie, who's been a nurse at Memorial Sloan Kettering in Manhattan for 13 years, should know. As a nursing professional development specialist, he'd been called on to train nurses and new employees for redeployment in coronavirus units in the hospital.

His job requires a lot of encouragement and support both as the nurses begin to learn about working with COVID-19 patients and while they're in the middle of providing care, according to Haughie. His goal has been to be the voice of reason explaining what the hospital would look like, even as protocols and procedures were changing on a daily basis. His encouragement has often extended to coaching the nurses right in the patients' rooms.

"Getting those nurses who were so anxious to round on the floors and provide really good care for the patients means my time and effort had been fruitful," said Haughie.

The most difficult times on the frontlines come when people don't get well, Haughie said.

"It's extremely difficult with no family there with them. The nurses are filling their medical role, but also that of the family member," he said. "We're trying to use technology so families and patients can interact, but if the care doesn't go well, you're the only one in the room."

Haughie has found a bit of



PHOTO COURTESY OF WMC

**A delivery donated to feed frontline workers arrives at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, N.Y.**

solace and consistency in his church life. Online worship offers a comfortable familiarity and his daughter has been able to continue her confirmation classes with Pastor David Czeisel through Zoom. Haughie's also one of about six people designated in the church to make weekly calls to check in with other parishioners.

## Realizing what's important

As a registered nurse case manager in the emergency department of a Newburgh hospital, Sarah Horn helped homeless people in the underserved community get medical services, outpatient care and drug or alcohol rehabilitation. But since the arrival of coronavirus, walk-ins by the homeless at Montefiore St. Luke's Hospital have all but disappeared. So instead she is working with the inpatient population to get them released to home or into rehab

settings.

She became a nurse after her grandmother got sick and passed away, but said that the coronavirus has made it a very scary time to be in healthcare.

"When it was just me, I didn't really have to worry," she said, "But now I have a 2-year-old and I'm so worried that I might make him sick. I worry about my whole family."

As a single mom, Horn said that any time she can spend with her son, especially when they can be outside, allows her to relax and not worry about going back to the hospital for her three 12-hour shifts a week.

Being able to listen to the music and the recorded sermons from Gardnertown UMC have also been a source of comfort.

"Pastor Jessica's [Anschutz] sermons always feel like they hit the right point just when you need

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# Caring for Children of Other Essential Workers

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it,” Horn said.

The spread of the virus has also made her realize what and who are really important in her life.

“We’re seeing people my age with young children dying,” said the 35-year-old. “This is scary. It’s not something that you could ever imagine. When they tell you to stay home it’s for everyone’s sake. Cherish being home with your family.”

## Chef switches hats

Elizabeth Richards was also prompted to change her usual role when the coronavirus hit. For more than two years she has been the program director for a free program that trains people to get jobs in the culinary field, one of the ministries housed at St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. When that program shutdown March 12, she quickly began to coordinate emergency food distribution with the West Side Campaign Against Hunger.

The first two weeks they tried to do the work without volunteers, but soon discovered they needed many more hands to pack enough bags. The volunteers came back to work with all the personal protection equipment (PPE) they needed, and soon filled the pews of the church with bags of food.

Some 1,600 households are being fed through distribution at the church, and at least another 3,000 households through the

mobile pantry that makes stops at senior centers, housing complexes, and a couple of hospitals.

Individual deliveries to some seniors are being done through Door Dash, who is donating the drivers’ time. And they are pondering how to extend their reach even farther.

“Most of us didn’t sign up to be on the front lines . . . look at the grocery store workers. Look at the sacrifice they are making for New Yorkers,” she said. “Many people are going above and beyond what they ever thought they would do.”

Richards said that one of her challenges is being part of such an affectionate community at SPSA.

“It’s hard not to hug people. There are days when all you want to do is give people a really big hug,” she said. “For the moment, we’ve lost the way we traditionally display love to one another.”

Staying connected to her faith is helping her cope, as well as online group chats with her students.

“I miss my students, but I’m being trusting. . . things are out of my control, but knowing that there’s a plan helps,” she said. “And I’d suggest to be easy with one’s self when you don’t get everything done that you want to do.”

## Teaching the kids

Valorie Kolitz is just one of the people making it easier for essential workers and those working from home to balance family and job in her role as



**Mother and daughter, Valorie and Brinna Kolitz, are both essential workers, a daycare teacher and a hospital chaplain, respectively.**

a part-time teacher at The Education Center at the New Milford UMC. Although the center has remained open, the number of kids has dropped to about 20 from the usual 100 as more and parents are furloughed. Teachers’ hours have been reduced, but the director is working hard to make sure everyone still has a job, according to Kolitz.

“We’re wearing masks, and washing hands as much as we ever did,” Kolitz said, “but we’re cleaning much more intensely at the end of the day.” Some protocols have also changed; parents are no longer allowed in the building. Instead children are dropped off and picked up at the church door.

School-aged kids bring their electronic tablets and get help with their distance-learning. While the older kids—4th and 5th graders—are somewhat aware of what’s going on, the younger children simply tell Kolitz that “the world is sick.”

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# Bringing Practice of Prayer to Covid-19 Units

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Kolitz admits to being quite worried as the pandemic began and missed the strong spiritual connection she usually experiences during Lent. But some extra intentional time spent in prayer and meditation have helped greatly.

“I’ve used the extra time to center myself for 15 to 20 minutes at the beginning of the day, Kolitz said. “I reflect, count my blessings and take stock of what I’ve got and what I have to go back to when it’s normal.”

Her husband, Steve, who’s also dealing with reduced work hours, has jumped in to run the church’s weekly food pantry so that the older volunteers can remain at home. They are reaching out to local farmers to provide some fresh items like milk, yogurt and lettuce for the pantry.

## Firehouse Camaraderie

For Devin Schiller, a New York City firefighter based in the South Jamaica section of Queens, the EMS runs for his house have increased dramatically in the past two months. And every call that his company, Engine 275, takes is assumed to be Covid-19 related. That means full-on personal protection equipment for each run, and then the decontamination of all equipment and apparel on the return to their house.

Schiller, who is 26 and a member of the Centerport UMC on Long Island, said that one of



**Faith Ball in her hospital unit now designated for COVID-19 patients.**

the main ways he’s coping is to get more exercise. As the weather has grown warmer, he’s putting more and more miles on his bicycle. The camaraderie in the firehouse has also been essential. Schiller said that Engine 275/Ladder 133 on Merrick Boulevard is known as a “busy house” so the camaraderie among the 11 firefighters helps keep everything positive during the 24-hour shifts.

## What greater love . . .

When the coronavirus hit the New York area, Faith Ball’s work environment transformed overnight. What had been a nine-bed pediatric recovery room and an adjoining adult recovery room at Long Island Jewish Medical Center-Northwell Health in New Hyde Park was turned into a 39-bed Covid-19 unit.

Ball has worked at the hospital for 26 years and most recently has served as the unit receptionist caring for children who would be moving to a hospital room or going home after surgery. Few of

the children would stay overnight. But now, each day, she watches doctors and nurses working feverishly to save patients, few of whom will get to go home. The stress can be overwhelming; no one was prepared for the volume of people dying, she said.

One of the most difficult tasks for Ball has been to receive the anguished phone calls from families as far away as Pakistan or Jamaica.

“I talk to them as gently as I possibly can knowing that I’m limited on what I can say,” Ball said. “I give someone hope . . . to stay encouraged because there’s someone here that cares about their loved one. I let the Christ in me come through the phone.”

Despite the difficult circumstances, Ball is building relationships with the new nurses, aides and doctors she now works with.

“Everybody is working together. What we wouldn’t normally do, everyone is; the Covid docs were on the shift the whole time I was there,” she said. Ball has also taken to sharing her faith in a more public way by offering prayers over the unit intercom each morning

“I never did that in the peds room, but I felt led now to offer a prayer for the patients, the staff, for all of us,” she explained. She also includes those working behind the scenes at the hospital in her prayers—like the housekeepers, lab technicians,

**Continued on page 20**

## Lab Technicians Toil Unseen: 'This is Our Crisis'

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hospital management, and the nutrition department.

She said that dealing with the coronavirus has made her faith stronger and prayer has been her “place of sanctity, a place of release . . . I find peace in it.”

One of Ball’s chief fears is the possibility of bringing the virus home. Ball is married to Rev. David Ball, who serves St. John’s UMC in Valley Stream; the couple’s two daughters, who live separately, both work in hospitals.

“People are actually putting their lives on the line for total strangers—just like it says in John 15:13,” Ball said. “Someone loves us as God loved us. What greater love than to put your life on the line for someone else. It’s worth the struggle, but it is a struggle without a doubt.

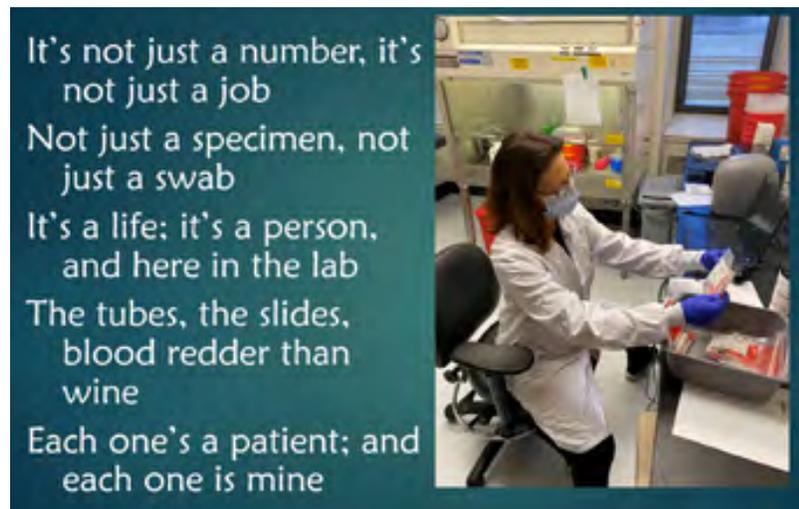
“It’s rewarding when one person comes off a vent, when one family member says ‘I appreciate you,’ when doctors and nurses and nurses’ aides appreciate you,” she continued. “Then it’s worth everything you gotta go through, if you can help just one person.”

### “It’s been our crisis”

Dr. Sheldon Campbell wants to call attention to all the people who are out of sight working on the crisis, like those in the clinical lab that he oversees at the Veterans Administration Health Care facility in West Haven, Conn. Campbell is a clinical pathologist who also teaches laboratory



Dr. Sheldon Campbell uses his musical skills in worship and to sing the praises of the technicians in his clinical lab at the VA Hospital in West Haven, Conn. A video of the song can be found on YouTube.



medicine at Yale University.

“This is the most stressful, and most exciting event of my professional life,” he said. “Clinical microbiologists are at the forefront . . . but one of the major limiting factors is having enough tests. We’ve had to bring on new testing methods and instruments and procedures. It’s all-Covid, all the time right now.”

He said clinical labs are frantically trying to gear up to meet the testing needs which he estimates will increase tenfold. The labs are doing their regular work in addition to the coronavirus testing. Campbell lamented the scarcity of everything from swabs to testing instruments, compounded by the

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## Chaplain Finds New Opportunities to Offer Care

Continued from page 20

shortage of medical technologists beforehand.

“The patient load may slack off, but the testing load will not,” Campbell said.

Campbell has also found the duration and intensity of crisis to be most challenging.

“We don’t see patients, but the load of specimens and of new problems is relentless,” he said. “Whoever would have thought that we could run out of swabs?”

Early on in the pandemic, Campbell met with Rev. Brian Bodt and other leaders of the Hamden Plains UMC to create a plan of action for the congregation.

“Our little church is my extended family; it’s been important to be a part of that community and to still participate in worship and study, even at a distance,” he said. “Faith is a big part of my life period.” He and his wife and daughter have been pre-recording about half the music for Hamden Plains’ virtual worship services.

For Campbell, singing is his daily spiritual practice; it’s how he prays. And he’s [written and recorded a song](#) dedicated to the unsung lab technicians and posted it to YouTube.

Despite the stress and uncertainty of the moment, Campbell said he feels very fortunate.

“This family’s breadwinner is still employed, others are not so lucky.”

### Opportunities for care

Brinna Kolitz had been greatly anticipating her last semester at Drew Theological School and the graduation procession across campus with her classmates. But the closing of all schools and colleges in the region because of Covid-19 forced a change in those plans. Her graduation was celebrated online in a Zoom video conference instead.

“The change in the end of my seminary life took an emotional toll,” she said. “But that’s a very small problem—people are dying. I had a little pity party about that and then moved on.”

The restrictions put in place to stem the spread of the virus have also greatly altered how she does her work as a chaplain at the Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital in Morris Plains, N.J.

In normal times, she would be meeting patients face-to-face in individual and group sessions to offer spiritual care, leading worship and Bible study in a multi-faith setting and collaborating with other staff members to provide well-rounded care. Teleconferencing and pre-recorded worship have become the norm.

“With Covid-19 everything is compounded,” Kolitz said. “Anxiety is multiplied 100 times. Paranoia is palpable. We need a lot of calming practices, prayers . . . just trying to breathe through it. It feels very different right now, but there

are lots of opportunity to offer care.”

Any active Covid patients have been moved into separate units and the staff there work in full PPE. Face masks have been required in all other areas of the hospital.

“We’re trying to contain the spread, but it’s hard when everyone lives so close together,” Kolitz said. “It’s not gloomy, just a new current normal.”

The hardest part for her has come in seeing all the pain and grief and feeling like there’s very little she can do. To deal with the void of “not doing,” she’s been knitting, reading, connecting with nature, and has started volunteering as a virtual chaplain for veterans in New Jersey hospitals.

“The biggest thing I can do is to heed the warning of the doctors and scientists, and stay at home,” Kolitz said.

Virtual worship services have given her the chance to worship with New Milford UMC, her home church in Connecticut.

“It’s good to be in community with them, the faces I grew up with,” she said. “Having that sense of home is good.”

“It’s a very important time to be in ministry,” Kolitz said, noting the long-standing systemic problems that are being spotlighted by the pandemic. “What we’re doing and how we’re doing it is important . . .

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# Coronavirus Gets Too Close When It Hits Home

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we need to deeply reflect on what is happening.”

## Caring for co-workers, family

For the last two months, Jennifer Ruff has been dressed head-to-toe in protective gear: head covering, N95 mask and another mask on top of that, glasses, face shield, gown, gloves and shoe coverings. It's become the norm for those treating Covid-19 patients in hospitals, including the trauma intensive care unit at the Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla where Ruff works. For much of the last two months, the 17 beds in the unit have held patients on ventilators.

Ruff has been a nurse for more than 41 years, and has spent the last 13 in the trauma ICU. She noted that in the first month of treating coronavirus patients they “were just constantly going”—there was no time to call families, to eat lunch or even take a bathroom break during her shift that usually extended beyond the scheduled 12.5 hours. It was only when groups began to send food to the hospital that the nurses took a break to eat.

Ruff says she feels blessed by the



**Nurse Jennifer Ruff in full personal protection equipment at the Westchester Medical Center.**

support of her co-workers, family, and church, and the outpouring of encouragement from the community. Everyone rallied around a co-worker on her team who got sick and ended up in their unit.

But she worries about the mental health of those on the front lines in the wake of the coronavirus.

“We see each other get sick, see family members get sick. Some of my co-workers are struggling; it's like being in a war zone,” Ruff said. “Every now and then we all have our down time. I have that strength to persevere, but I know

others don't.”

Maybe the most difficult time for Ruff came when her daughter, who is also a nurse at WMC and lives with her mother, came down with the virus.

“When Samantha got sick, it made me realize how close I am to the disease,” Ruff said. “I work in it, I live in it. It was too close to home. All of us know someone who had it.” Ruff was checked after her daughter became ill, but tested negative. Her daughter recovered at home, and when she completed her isolation, went back to work.

After particularly hard shifts, Ruff remembers to offer a prayer of gratitude.

“I am appreciating the fact that at end of the day, I am not in the bed,” she said. “I have nothing to complain about when I think about the family members who are unable to visit their loved ones.”

Ruff, who is a member of the United Methodist church of Mount Kisco, trusts that her faith will never fail her.

“Life is like a rollercoaster,” she said. “We go up to top of the world and then life takes us down. Sometimes we scream and hold on to the ride. We can hold onto your faith or let go and let God.”

# Easter Missionary Reports from Ecuador, Ukraine

April 10, 2020

*Dear Friends,*

Greetings in the name of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

... This year we gather for worship and Holy Week virtually—Sunday reflections, devotions, and community prayer each day at 3 p.m. are done via Whatsapp. We follow the news of the virus as it spreads around the world and in the United States as well as other countries. Please know that we include you in our daily prayers and hope that you are well and cautious.

Ecuador was one of the first countries in South America to be affected by the virus . . . Ecuador has been under a lockdown for four weeks now with strict circulation restrictions in place as well as a curfew from 2 p.m. to 5 a.m. each day and has closed its borders.

Guayaquil is the city most affected by the virus, 70 percent of the cases are in the Guayas Province. You may have seen international news about the lack of coffins and collection of the deceased in Guayaquil. In response to this crisis, the government of Ecuador has put in place strict regulations and sent more resources to Guayaquil to cope with the serious local situation there.

Today more than ever the words of Jesus on the cross break our hearts . . . thousands of families in Ecuador are saying as he did—I am thirsty, I am

in pain, I am afraid—and they look to God asking, why have you forsaken me? We know that the Lord is the one who accompanies us in the midst of pain, alongside those who are alone on their death bed . . .

For the time being, the church offices and places of worship in Ecuador are closed in compliance with government regulations that have canceled all meetings of more than 10 people. We are working from home, supporting the communication network between the pastors and 26 local congregations in Ecuador; the temples are closed but the church is still functioning . . . Many pastors have been reaching out to support their communities with food and hygiene items for families in extreme need with personal money and offerings of their members.

This crisis has caused a shortage in funds to pay our pastors and to sustain the volunteers at the church's children's programs. Many of the pastors and the volunteers do not have other sources of income at this time and need whatever help we can provide during the pandemic to ensure that they can support their families and especially support the children and family ministries helping the more vulnerable population in our communities.

We pray that God may bless and keep each one of you during this difficult time and that you will join

us in prayer each day at 3 pm. Our faith is strong, and we pray as in Psalm 33:22—“Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.”

**Sara Flores and Dakin Cook**  
UMC Missionaries to Ecuador

*If you would like to support the Methodist Church in Ecuador, please make donations to the Advance projects listed below:*

- [Pastoral Support in Ecuador #3021092](#): This fund helps to provide a basic salary and social benefits for pastors.
- [Integral Ministry for Children, Ecuador #3021530](#): Promotes development of children in need, especially in urban neighborhoods and indigenous communities.

April 7, 2020

*Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,*

As we enter this most holy week, I send you greetings and peace from Ukraine, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

In these last difficult weeks, as cases of Covid-19 have risen across the globe, you and your loved ones have been in my prayers. From our location in Ukraine, we watch with alarm as the virus continues to spread across the United States, and increasingly strict measures are being taken by government officials to . . . slow the rate of infection. May God bless these efforts, and grant each of you a

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## Easter Missionary Reports from Ecuador, Ukraine

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measure of peace and hope in these difficult days.

Here in Kyiv, we are also in a strict lockdown regime. Since early March, all schools are closed; all commercial activity is suspended except for food shops, pharmacies, and other essential needs; and public transport is only for critically needed workers. Face masks must be worn at all times outside, and no one may gather in groups larger than two persons.

As other communities worldwide have experienced, there is a hope that social distancing already has had a positive effect. Compared with other countries, the number of infected in Ukraine remains relatively low – only 1,462 cases and 45 deaths as of April 7. However, testing is not widespread, so there is a sense that the true reach of the virus is still unknown.

And as in other places, across Ukraine all religious gatherings remain canceled. Thankfully, for the past year the congregation of Kyiv UMC has been livestreaming on Facebook all Sunday worship services. So when church gatherings were first canceled last month, Pastors Yulia and Oleg Starodubets continued to preach Sunday sermons and deliver inspiration messages online, allowing church members to stay

connected with one another and to hear the word of God proclaimed.

Then starting last week, as the social distancing measures were extended, we enhanced our online presence to include weekly Bible study and community worship on Sunday. Last Wednesday, we held our first English-language group Bible study via Zoom. Eight members of the congregation, representing five different nationalities, gathered online to study God's word and support one another in prayer.

This past Sunday, more than 30 persons—church members here in Ukraine, as well as friends in India, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia—joined together for a two-hour worship service . . . It was a blessing to gather virtually with so many others, to share our concerns, and to join in worship and prayer.

Recently, the Superintendent of the Ukraine District, Pastor Oleg Starodubets, shared a message of faithful solidarity with members of the churches in Ukraine and our friends and partners around the world. Please allow me to share an excerpt from his message:

*At present, 80 percent of our churches have been conducting online services for the past few Sundays. In spite of these hardships, we are witnessing the Spirit of God being shared in new and exciting*

*ways:*

*After our church leaders in Kamyanytsa record the worship service online, our youth bring the recording to the homes of older people and help them watch the service.*

*Our church in Lviv has started an online Sunday school for children.*

*The congregation of Kyiv UMC now holds all ministry programs via Zoom.*

*During this quarantine, many members have lost their jobs. The collection of church offerings has almost stopped, and we are faced with the question of how to support pastors and pay utility bills. But all our congregations are trying to share their resources and provide financial support to large families, the unemployed, and the elderly.*

*. . . I pray that the peace of God will be with you. Despite the ongoing social distancing that separates us, may we be united in spirit through our shared faith in the risen Christ.*

Yours in Christ,

**Rev. John Calhoun**

Multicultural Ministries leader,  
Kyiv, Ukraine

(To make a secure online donation via credit card in support of my service as a Global Ministries missionary in Ukraine, click [here](#).)

# Planting Seeds to Cultivate Faith, Celebrate Creation

BY MICHELLE OKABAYASHI

“Mom has been saying for 10 years now how important it is for us to start collecting original seeds,” explained Pastor Crystal Paul Watson. Crystal and her mother, Lavanda Paul, were both commissioned as Global Ministries EarthKeepers last fall.

EarthKeepers is a Global Ministries and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) program designed to equip United Methodist clergy and laity to lead their communities in environmental stewardship. All EarthKeepers are expected to launch an environmental project in their communities as part of their work. For Watson and Paul this is the Harmony Creation curriculum for youth and young adults. The mother-daughter team is collaborating cross-country with Paul in Mobile, Ala., and Watson in Warwick, N.Y.

“When we went to the [EarthKeepers] training, it just nurtured the idea. We were able to see how fruitful it was going to be for us to be able to do it together,” explained Watson.

“Everything just fell into place. The Holy Spirit was leading and it worked out,” Watson recalls of those early days, imagining how the Harmony Creation curriculum would take root.

When Watson returned from the EarthKeepers training she sat down with her youth group and asked them about their goals in the coming year. There were

two: start a community garden and serve a monthly church breakfast. These goals fed into the core components of the Harmony Creation curriculum: connecting care for the earth through gardening with the ways God cultivates human hearts and sharing ways to include all at the table through physical and spiritual food.

The Harmony Creation curriculum is nearly complete and will soon go to design and press. Paul and Watson are introducing it to the young people they already work with in both states. Watson also has several clergy members in her network who were planning to implement the Harmony Creation curriculum in their congregations this spring.

When asked about her role in the project, Paul declares with a chuckle, “I am the master gardener!” Born and raised on a farm in Alabama, Paul’s ties with gardening and the earth run deep. She has a passion for collecting and preserving original seeds and growing them in her home garden. Each lesson in the Harmony Creation curriculum includes a story from Paul that shares her knowledge of seeds.

Her excitement for collecting and preserving shows up when she talks about how the majority of watermelons today have no seeds.

“I have always made it a point to teach young people that watermelons come with seeds,” she said. “I don’t know why it’s so



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRYSTAL PAUL WATSON  
**Pastor Crystal Paul Watson of New York and her mother, Lavanda Paul of Alabama, attend the EarthKeepers training together in August 2019 in Chicago.**

important to me. Maybe when I get to heaven, I’ll find out why it’s so important to me to let all my children know that watermelons have seeds.

“You can prefer a seedless watermelon, but every person should know that God made it to have seeds in it. Because, that’s God’s design,” Paul explained.

The first lesson in the Harmony Creation curriculum discusses the idea of an original seed. That, when God created those first fruits and vegetables in the Garden of Eden, God placed a seed within them, so planting and harvesting could take place again and again.

Watson brings this back to the watermelon: “When you have a seedless watermelon, you cannot reproduce it.”

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## Planting Seeds to Cultivate Faith, Celebrate Creation

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In their hopes for the long-term impact of the Harmony Creation curriculum, Watson and Paul want to see multiple generations grow in their love for the earth and gardening. This spring has seen many challenges with Covid-19 limiting their ability to meet in person with their communities

and youth groups.

A year from now, Watson and Paul hope to have branched out from the small network of churches that are currently participating to share the Harmony Creation curriculum with local schools and other community groups. They want to see community gardens beyond

those established by the church. These gardens can connect generations and different cultures to one another to show how we are all tied to God's good earth and our role in caring for it.

*Michelle Okabayashi is a freelance writer for the UMC's General Board of Global Ministries.*

## Harvey First Woman of Color to Lead Bishops

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, who leads the Louisiana Conference, became president of Council of Bishops during their early May online meeting.

She is the first Hispanic woman and woman of color to hold the leadership position.

Harvey comes to her new role as the denomination faces the devastation of a global pandemic, deals with its first postponed General Conference and contemplates a split along theological lines. She succeeds Bishop Kenneth Carter, who leads the Florida Conference.

Harvey follows Bishop Ken Carter of the Florida Area, who had led the Council of Bishops (COB) since 2018. Bishop Harvey, who has served as president-designate since 2018, was elected president at the November 2019 meeting of the bishops.

Other new COB officers are:

- President-designate: Thomas J. Bickerton of the New York Area
- Secretary: Tracy Smith Malone of the East Ohio Area
- Executive secretary: Bruce Ough of the Dakota and Minnesota Area
- Ecumenical officer: Sally Dyck of the Chicago Area
- Immediate past president: Bishop Carter

The April/May meeting of the Council of Bishops also received leadership reports regarding immigration, ecumenical relations, racism, disaster relief, and other mission and ministry work around the global denomination.

At the meeting, the bishops:

- Agreed that the General Conference to be held in 2021 should be referred to as the postponed 2020 General Conference.

- Approved a motion to support the young people's call for the Commission on the General Conference to consider school/college schedules in setting the dates for the postponed 2020 General Conference.
- Supported a global letter calling on the U.S. government to rescind its decision regarding funding of the World Health Organization.
- Designated the Colleges of Bishops, in consultation with Jurisdictional/Central Committees on Episcopacy, as the appropriate bodies to provide coverage of vacancies in episcopal areas dues to retirements, with final approval by the Council of Bishops.

## OBITUARIES

### Rev. John J. Olofson Jr.

The Reverend John J. Olofson Jr. died May 4, 2020, at his home in Clinton, N.Y. He was 91.

Olofson was born in New York City on August 26, 1928, to John and Julia (Riordan) Olofson and attended schools in Brooklyn and East Northport, N.Y. He joined the Navy near the end of World War II, serving on the aircraft carrier USS Princeton, and was later stationed on Guam.

He attended Syracuse University, graduating in 1953 with a degree in philosophy. That same year he married his first wife, Carolyn Noble. Following his 1956 graduation from Yale University School of Divinity, Olofson was ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church.

During his 40 years of ministry in the New York Conference, he served the following Connecticut churches: Westville UMC in New Haven, Darien UMC, Simsbury UMC, First Church of Round Hill in Greenwich, Nichols UMC in Trumbull, North Canton and Washington Hill UMCs; and in New York: Pound Ridge Community Church and Sellecks Corners UMC, and Valhalla UMC. John was an inspiring preacher and a much sought-after counselor who oversaw large membership drives and expansion projects at a number of his churches.

During many of these years he also served with local fire departments and ambulance crews as an emergency medical

technician. Following Olofson's retirement in 1995, he worked as an out-placement counselor for Drake Beam and Morin, a career transitions business.

He enjoyed reading history and detective fiction, gardening and playing tennis. He was also an avid birdwatcher, and organized vacations to visit birding spots.

Olofson is survived by his children, Margaret (William) Thickstun, Joan McDonald, Anne (Christopher) Carpiniello, and Susan (Richard) Brandolino; step-daughters, Elizabeth (Richard) Collins and Nancy (David Williams) Dietlin; as well as grandchildren, John and Charles (Russ) Thickstun, Max and Conrad McDonald, Blake and Katherine Carpiniello, Cary and Elizabeth Brandolino, and step-grandchildren Hannah and Samuel Collins.

Olofson was predeceased by his second wife, Sylvia Dietlin, and siblings, Joan Muller, Bernard Olofson, and Henry Olofson.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

### Anne Katherine Schnell

Anne Katherine Schnell, 88, died at home on April 20, 2020. She was the widow of Rev. Dr. Phillip O. Schnell, who died in 2017.

Schnell was born in Union City, N.J., the daughter of Sven and Katherine (Hansen) Johnson. She was raised in Dumont, N.J., and graduated from high school there.

She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology from Drew University. It was there that she met her husband.

Rev. Schnell's ministry took them from Madison, N.J., to churches in the New York Conference including Goldens Bridge, Purdys and North Salem; First UMC in Beacon, Setauket UMC, Grace UMC in Newburgh, all in New York; and Prospect UMC in Bristol and Newington UMC, both in Connecticut.

Together, the couple led trips with Educational Opportunities to the Holy Land and as well as ecumenical trips to places of religious significance in the world. They retired to Westerly, R.I., in 1998, before moving to West Simsbury, Conn., in 2013.

Schnell enjoyed putting together the yearly family photo calendar as well as baking and cooking.

She is survived by sons, Phillip A. Schnell of Southington, Conn., and Robert L. (Martha) Schnell of Mt. Vernon, N.Y.; daughters, Linda A. Torrey of Strafford, Vt., and Amy (Len) Bobinski of West Simsbury, Conn.; grandchildren, George Hill, Lenny Bobinski, Skyler Bobinski, Jodee Adams, and Kim Kosiorek; and great-grandchildren, Ashlee Santoro, Meagan Barrette, Brandon Barrette, Joshua Barrette and Jakub Kosiorek. In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by a daughter-in-law, Sandra Schnell,

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## OBITUARIES

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and grandchild, Paul Barrette.

A memorial service will be held at a later date at Simsbury UMC in Simsbury, Conn.

### Rev. Dr. William H. Waters

The Reverend Dr. William “Bill” Harold Waters died at his Cambridge, N.Y., home on April 18, 2020, at the age of 92.

Born in Watertown, N.Y., on September 13, 1927, he was the son of Rev. Barber L. Waters and Rachel E. Saxton. Waters graduated from Watertown High School in 1947 and then from St. Lawrence University with a bachelor of arts degree. He earned a doctor of divinity degree from the Theological School of St. Lawrence University, and pursued additional studies at Boston School of Theology, and Christ Church College in England. He received his elder’s orders in 1955.

Waters married the girl next door, Margaret “Peg” Ann Duffany, who was a registered nurse. The couple traveled extensively for Educational Opportunities Tours, twice leading groups to Israel. She died on January 2, 1999.

Waters served in both the North New York (now part of the Upper New York Conference) and the New York conferences. He came to the New York Conference in 1955 and served the following churches: Woodbury, Cold Spring Harbor and West Hills; Glendale, Center Moriches, Wappingers Falls, Yorktown, and Sea Cliff, all

in New York; and Lakeville and Ridges UMC in Stamford, both in Connecticut. After retirement in 1989, he moved back to the Troy area, where he served until 2003.

He was instrumental in raising funds to build a new church in Woodbury, N.Y., and was involved in merging churches on three separate occasions. Waters also served as a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry and as chair and stewardship chair of the Board of Discipleship.

Waters worked tirelessly for housing for the poor, participated in the Selma march in 1965, and supported the New York City School Board’s plan to integrate the schools. He led students at Vassar College against the Vietnam War, and opposed the war in Iraq. Waters supported giving women an equal place in ministry, and fought for decent salaries and benefits for clergy.

Waters made many contributions to his community, including serving as Hudson River Salvation Army secretary, Protestant chaplain of the Castle Point Veterans Administration Hospital, interim chaplain of the Hudson River State Hospital in Poughkeepsie, and as chaplain of the police and fire departments in several of the places he served.

In April 1978, he was surprised with a “Bill Waters Day” celebration in Wappingers Falls, N.Y., which included a church service, parade, and banquet.

Waters enjoyed painting,

calligraphy and writing. A painting of Jesus was displayed in the sanctuary of the Furman Street UMC in Syracuse, N.Y. With his calligraphy skills, he produced certificates of ordination for five UMC Conferences over the course of 15 years. He also wrote the text, “Two-Thousand Years of Methodism in the Hudson East,” a history of early Methodism in the Hudson Valley. This work was followed by drawings and histories of the 64 churches in the Hudson East District.

Rev. Waters is survived by four children: Elizabeth C. Waters of Arlington, Vt.; David A. (Donna) Waters of St. Johnsville, N.Y.; Richard N. (Suzanne) Waters of Lagrangeville, N.Y.; and Julie L. (Frank) McGinty of Hoosick, N.Y.; 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. His brother, the Rev. Dr. Raoul “Ray” Waters of Cambridge, N.Y., died on May 2, 2020.

Burial was in the Stump Church Cemetery in North Cambridge, N.Y. The family suggests that memorial donations be made to one’s local food bank.

### Rev. Robert E. Richmond

The Reverend Robert E. Richmond, died April 16, 2020, at the La Vida Assisted Living Residence in Mission Viejo, Calif.

Originally from Flushing, N.Y., Richmond attended undergraduate school at Queens College of New York

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## OBITUARIES

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City University and successfully completed his theological training at Union Theological Seminary. He was ordained as a minister in 1963 in a ceremony at Riverside Church.

He was an unwavering advocate in encouraging the churches he led to serve their own communities. His biggest achievement was the nutritional health center, with its accompanying Meals on Wheels program, begun at the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The center fed more than 250 seniors daily, while also providing a social and health program for hundreds of others.

Rev. Richmond was active in the New York State Masonic Lodge for more than 30 years and served the group as the grand chaplain.

In addition to serving St. Paul and St. Andrew UMC as both associate pastor and lead pastor, Richmond served Park Slope UMC in Brooklyn, Highland and Lloyd UMCs, St. James UMC in Lynbrook, and Fishkill UMC. He retired from the New York Conference in 1999.

Rev. Richmond is survived by children, Elizabeth (Daryl) Eden, Dr. Ronald (Lisa) Richmond and Evelyn (Greg) Haegele; five grandchildren, including Lt. Jr. Grade Joshua (Lena) Moss of the Coast Guard, Evelyn and Christian Bolanos; Andrew Richmond; Jessica and Max Haegele. Rev. Richmond's wife, Rose, predeceased him in 2011.

Because of social distancing requirements, Rev. Richmond's funeral will be private. Donations may be made to [Habitat for Humanity](#), a charity that the Richmonds supported through the years.

### Ruth Almgren Spoor

Ruth Almgren Spoor, 92, died April 13, 2020, at the Wilson Health Care Center, Asbury Methodist Village, Gaithersburg, Md.

Born on September 14, 1927 in Worcester, Mass., Spoor was the daughter of O. Philip and Lillie Almgren. She graduated from Green Mountain College in Vermont and from Boston University with a degree in liberal arts. She went on to receive her masters of education from Boston University.

Her professional career included serving as dean of women at Endicott Junior College in Beverly, Mass., and work at State Mutual Life of Worcester. She also served as director of the Katherine Gibbs School in New York City, and later worked for the chairman of American Express. An active member of the choir at Christ Church in Manhattan, she met and married Rev. Ralph Spoor in 1967. She continued to stay active in the UMC, organizing flower festivals and other events to assist her husband in his ministries.

Rev. Spoor served churches in the New York Conference

beginning in 1948, including Ossining Heights UMC; Trinity and Chelsea UMCs in Beacon, N.Y.; Ellenville UMC; Tarrytown UMC; Christ UMC in Manhattan (associate pastor); Nichols UMC in Trumbull, Conn.; Mary Taylor Memorial UMC in Milford, Conn., and Southhold UMC on Long Island. He also served as superintendent of the Connecticut Central District (1969-1975) and as executive director of the United Methodist Development Fund.

The couple retired in 1987, and traveled by Airstream trailer and Matthews Cruiser to many parts of the United States and Canada. When not traveling, they wintered in Fort Myers, Fla., and summered at their Lake Groton, Vermont, camp.

Spoor played the piano, and was skilled at flower arrangements. She also arranged international travel tours. The Spoors moved to Asbury Methodist Village in 2003 to be closer to their three daughters, who were all living in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Ralph; daughters, Nancy (Jim Conley) Spoor, Cindy (Dale Thorenson) Spoor and Sue (Charlie Stek) Spoor; grandchildren, Alex Stek, Maureen Conley, Kelly (Amber) Thorenson, Jennifer Thorenson and Meghan (Kyle) Gabriel; and great-grandchildren, Ava, Abi

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## OBITUARIES

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and Eden Thorenson, and Kaiden, Knox and Macalister Gabriel. She was preceded in death by two sisters, Lynn Jenkins and Helen, and a brother, Herbert.

The family extends their deep appreciation to the staff of Kindley Assisted Living and the Wilson Nursing Center for the compassionate care they provided to the Spors during this time that was made especially difficult by the need for social distancing.

Memorial service plans will be finalized at a later date.

Donations in Spoor's name can be made to [Asbury Foundation](#), 5285 Westview Drive, Suite 200, Frederick, MD 21703.

### Rev. F. Kennon Moody

The Reverend F. Kennon Moody, 86, died April 11, 2020, at his home at the Fountains in Millbrook, N.Y.

Moody was a master story teller who enjoyed telling tales about himself and his friends and family, the most memorable of which centered around life in Cotton Valley, La., where he was born in 1933. He was the youngest of four children of John and Nell Moody. Moody was valedictorian of his high school class and attended Centenary College in Shreveport, La., earning a bachelor's in history. In 1958, he received a master's of divinity from Yale Divinity School.

In that year he also married

Mary Law and the couple moved to Williston, Vt., where both of their children were born. He served the Federated Church in Williston.

In 1963, the Moody's moved to Lagrangeville, N.Y., where he pastored the Trinity UMC. While at Trinity, Moody worked with a group of parishioners to launch Dutchess Rural Housing Corporation, a non-profit that built homes for low-income families. He left Trinity to join the South Forty Corporation, a non-profit organization assisting prisoners and recent parolees. While there he developed a college program for inmates and taught at Green Haven Correctional Facility. From that time on, he spent his career in extension ministry.

Moody left South Forty for Dutchess Community College, initially as a history professor and ultimately as dean of student services. While at Dutchess, he obtained a doctorate in American history from SUNY Albany, where he wrote his dissertation on Franklin D. Roosevelt. Rev. Moody retired from the New York Conference in 1997.

In retirement, Moody acted as a professional Roosevelt researcher and contributed to more than a dozen books, a PBS special, and ultimately, authored his own book, "FDR and his Hudson Valley Neighbors." He also became a

master gardener, hybridizing new variants of daylilies.

The couple were active travelers, going to Scotland, Ireland, France, Republic of Georgia, Kenya, Serbia and Greece as well as multiple trips to South Africa. From the time he left Trinity, the Moodys were members of the Freedom Plains Presbyterian Church.

Throughout his life, Rev. Moody served on a host of boards, including the Mental Health Association of Dutchess County, United Way, the Arlington school board, and the Dutchess County Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Moody joined his wife in her long-term involvement in CROP Hunger Walk, by serving for many years as the chair of the Dutchess County chapter.

He is survived by son, David (Eileen Guilfoyle) Moody, daughter, Laura (Dan) Hoskins, and grandchildren, Sophie and Gus, Min Ho and Madeleine. His wife of 60 years, Mary Law Moody, died March 28, 2019. His three siblings, John, Dan and Nell Barnwell, also predeceased him.

A memorial service will be scheduled at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to the Dutchess Interfaith CROP Hunger Walk to Crop Hunger Walks, PO Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515, or online at <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/Donate>.



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855-623-9355 and indicating one's employer group as HealthFlex or the United Methodist Church. To register online, go to [www.wespath.org](http://www.wespath.org); click on "Health & Wellness Benefits" and log into the HealthFlex WebMD site, then select: "Quest Blueprint for Wellness." Choose your desired location, day and time. Any questions should be directed to [Sally Truglia](mailto:Sally.Truglia) by email, or by calling 914-615-2220.

### Vision Deadlines for 2020

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 remaining deadlines for 2020 are June 5, July 3, August 7, September 4, October 2, November 6, and December 4. Please send any stories, photos, ideas, or questions directly to [vision@nyac.com](mailto:vision@nyac.com).

## Union UMC Aids Community After Sewer Backup

After a sewer main backup in South Ozone Park, Queens, caused untreated sewage to flood into the basements of some 80 homes, the Union United Methodist Church formed a task force and began to help the displaced families.

Homeowners woke up to find four feet of sewage in their cellars, covering personal property, walls and floors, and destroying heating and electrical equipment. The stench and toxicity of the backup—caused by a collapsed pipe—made it impossible for residents to stay in their homes after the massive spill in late November 2019. Some found temporary shelter in hotels, with family or neighbors, and some took to sleeping in their cars.

The evangelism team at the church, which is led by Rev. Bernadette Logan, began by providing cooked meals to the displaced at the hotels and providing prayer at the affected homes and on the street. As frustrations rose over who would

pay for the necessary cleanups, the church attended town hall meetings and advocated with elected officials for the residents.

According to Rev. Logan, the families still living in hotels as of April 1 were granted permission by the government to remain until their homes are repaired and inspected. She called it a major victory for the families of Jamaica, Queens.

The church has a solid history of rising to meet the needs of their community.

"As community activists we have learned how to advocate for those who are unable to for themselves—seniors, children, homeless families and others," Logan said in an email. The church's commitment to the community has included providing housing for those who about to lose their homes, as well as food and clothing.

"It is an amazing opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ," Logan wrote. "This is what social justice is all about; justice, mercy, and truth."

## 2020 U.M. ARMY Re-imagines Summer Work Camps

Did you have had a mission trip planned for this summer, but as a result of the pandemic had to cancel the trip? United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth (U.M. ARMY) might be able to help with two new models—U.M.

ARMY Local and U.M. ARMY® Home—this summer for groups, individuals and/or families. The cost is minimal and provides a structure for mission work in one's own communities. Learn more about these opportunities,

by clicking [here](#).

The theme for the summer is "All In." Contact Gina Grubbs, regional director NE North, by [email](mailto:) or phone, 914-330-2599 to explore how your group might be able to participate.