

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

# THE VISION

The Newspaper  
of the New York  
Annual Conference  
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Methodist Church

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## Jamaica VIM: Teaching & Helping Build a School

**JUNE 16–23:** Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, the conference mission coordinator, led a mission team sponsored by Golden Hill UMC in Bridgeport, Conn., to help people in a mountain village in Jamaica. Several members of the team had grown up in Jamaica. Below are excerpts from their blogs posted at, [www.nyacvim.blogspot.com](http://www.nyacvim.blogspot.com).

### Welcome to Jamaica

We left for Jamaica this morning at about 2:30 a.m. The flight was 3.5 hours long, but it seemed to go by much faster. Surprisingly, we got through customs relatively quickly and met Jacqui, one of the mission organizers in Jamaica. A van was waiting for us to take us up to Mt. Osborn, but first we went to get lunch.

On the coast near Montego Bay, many of the houses are fancy and there are more resorts and tourist attractions, but as soon as you head into the mountains, the jungle swallows you and the poverty of the country becomes apparent. The road was winding but well kept, and the view was fabulous.

After a market stop in Santa Cruz, we arrived at the hotel in Santa Crest. Mt. Osborn Methodist Church is on top of a giant hill, which is so steep that I wasn't sure the bus was even going to make it up. The church is very pretty, and we have lots of pictures of it. The people there to greet us were very friendly, and one man . . . brought Sean a bunch of mangos to share with us.



We had a reception at the church and were pleasantly greeted by the members with prayers, songs, and food.

*–Signing off, Maya*

P.S. It is VERY hot here.

### Contrasts and Joyful Work

After breakfast, we headed to the Mt. Osborn church with 15 of us packed in the van with the driver. On the way, we passed many run-down yet colorful Jamaican houses, but there was one mansion . . . It was striking to see this mansion among so many poor—a personal castle for show.

We first met with the children from the preschool who sang songs and recited lines they had learned . . . it reminded many of our mission group of their childhoods in Jamaica.

**A bucket brigade made moving concrete to pour foundations and walls a much easier task, especially across such an up and down route.**

Then Opal and Byron led a story and song for the kids before they went back to school.

After that we prepared to start work. There were a few men there to help us which was more than we expected. One man was even standing on the cement wall working in flip-flops. At first we weren't sure what to do because no one was there to tell us, but we figured it out quickly with the help of brother Lewis who is a great carpenter.

*–John Machledt*

### Digging in to the Work

The plan today is to mix and pour the cement into the forms we made yesterday. We'll be at Mt. Osborn all day for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The cultural program that had

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### 7/23–25 Mission u

This year's program will explore "Journeying to Wholeness, Holiness, and Happiness," as it convenes at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. Studies will include "Created for Happiness: Understanding Your Life in God," a geographic look of Latin America, and "The Church and People with Disabilities." The Saturday sampler for those looking for a one-day program will also be offered. This year there are two housing options: stay on campus for \$325 or make your own reservation at the Ethan Allen Inn and register as "a commuter" for \$235. For additional details and to register by July 1, go to [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/910766](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/910766). Gail Ross is serving as registrar, and can be contacted at [ross4som@yahoo.com](mailto:ross4som@yahoo.com).

### 7/25 CBCS and Immigration Meet

There will be a joint meeting from 10 a.m. to noon between the New York Annual Conference Board of Church & Society and the NYAC Task Force on Immigration at Memorial UMC/Central Korean UMC, 250 Bryant Avenue, White Plains, N.Y.

### 7/25 "Finding and Using Your Gifts"

The Oratory of the Little Way will host a "spiritual growth day retreat" with Bishop Alex McCullough from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. For more information, please call 860-354-8294, or email: [oratory1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:oratory1@sbcglobal.net). The oratory is located at 8 Oratory Lane, Gaylordsville, Conn.

### 8/2–8 Camp Lead for Youth

Camp Lead is a youth-led leadership program held at the conference's Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island. Attendees are required to currently be in grades 8-11 and must be a first time participant. Each church is allowed a maximum of two participants; each attendee should have a letter of recommendation from the pastor or church council. The church will support the attendee by paying the \$495 registration fee. For details, go to [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1036958](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1036958).

### 8/11 Older Adult Ministry Webinar

The UMC's Discipleship Ministries is hosting a live webinar to explore ways to minister to, for and with older adults through worship. The hour-long event, "Seasons: The Liturgical Year Opportunities for Older Adult Ministry," is at 10 a.m. This webinar will look at liturgical seasons and special days that will draw out the unique gifts and desires of older adults

in worship. Themes such as the purpose and meaning of life, the changing nature of calling, and legacy through story, will be explored in this live event. The webinar will be recorded and will be available in a webinar archive for those who cannot attend the live event. To register, click on this shortened link, <http://bit.ly/1HhYYBN>.

### 9/10–12 Local Pastor Licensing School

The Board of Ordained Ministry will hold its second licensing school for local pastors at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, Conn. The four modules will meet on September 10–12, October 8–10, November 5–7, and December 3–5. Attending all four modules is necessary to complete the licensing requirements. Clergy instructors will train these soon-to-be pastors for a firm foundation for local church pastoral ministry. For further information about the school, contact Rev. Eileen M Daunt, local pastor registrar, at [Eileen.Daunt@nyac-umc.com](mailto:Eileen.Daunt@nyac-umc.com).

### 9/12 Lace Up to Fight Hunger


The United Methodist Center Far Rockway Mission is in great need of your help to fight the war on hunger. On Saturday, September 12, the center will host their annual walkathon along the beach on Beach 9th Street from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Register as a team or an individual to support this important cause. The center, which has served the community for more than 25 years, feeds the hungry, provides clothing to those in need, and offers spiritual guidance. Donations can also be made online at [www.farmission.org](http://www.farmission.org), or mail to UM Center of Far Rockaway, PO Box 900875, Far Rockaway NY 11691.

### 10/2–4 NEJ Leadership Conference

The Northeast Jurisdiction is providing a high-energy training opportunity for emerging leaders with the "See, Know, Love" conference at Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Penn. The keynote speakers for this transformational leadership conference will include:

- Fiona Haworth, a spirit-filled, hospitality-driven corporate executive who brings the best of the boardroom to the church
- Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, a visionary, boundary-breaking Lutheran pastor
- Leaders from The Chapel, a United Methodist church that is revolutionizing discipleship

Costs include: \$25 for registration, and \$140 for the meal plan. Rooms are \$159 a night. Scholarships for young emergent leaders are available. For additional information and to register, go to: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1007904](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1007904).

 <p>The <b>Vision</b></p>
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# Jamaica: Bucket Brigade Gets It Done

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been planned has been switched to Sunday.

Breakfast at the church arrived a little late, but for the coffee drinkers, there was an ample supply. They served eggs and sausages, plantains and fried breadfruit as well as fresh pineapple.

Mize, Sean, Matt and Elijah did the devotions for the preschool, telling the story of Noah and the significance of the rainbow. They had also prepared a craft but because of all the work going on, the teachers decided to do it back at the school next door.

To Americans used to cement mixers filling the forms, the whole process was very different. The local workers began mixing the sand, small stones and cement in a big circle in front of the church door on the parking area. Once it was sufficiently mixed with water, we started the bucket brigade. Buckets . . . were passed along a line up stairs and up a ladder to be poured in the forms. The buckets were heavy and it was hard, messy work, but luckily with everyone working the first part was done in 1.5 hours.

Then we had to stop to make more wooden forms for other beams. The local men, especially brother Lewis, were definitely the experts! None of us, with the exception of Bob and Mize, had done any construction quite like this. However, we were good, cheap labor.

Meanwhile the ladies of the church were cooking and preparing lunch and dinner for us—curried chicken and escovitch snapper and ackee. After a full day of moving cement, the team came back to the hotel, tired but feeling good about the progress we made on the building.

Our only casualty was Opal's sprained ankle (she is recovering). When she was injured, we called for help in the bucket bridge. Three women from the church stepped forward and worked with as for the afternoon.

Would that the whole world could find a way to work together with mutual respect and God's love.

*-Phyllis Machledt*

## Mize's Bucket Brigade

After a day of relaxing at YS Falls, we were back at work again moving cement at Mt. Osborn. We were more efficient after Mize helped with a training session for the bucket brigade. Since the line had to extend pretty far back to reach the ladder, we were a little shorthanded so Brother Lawrence recruited four more women from his church. They really made the difference. The ladies stayed all day and spent some time telling us about their families and Jamaican schools.

The neighbor children . . . helped bringing back the buckets. We were able to accomplish even more than we did on Thursday in terms of concrete mixed and moved.

We discovered that some of the men working were volunteers from other churches and some were paid professionals—which is good because we don't have the particular skills needed for this type of construction. brother Lewis, the chief carpenter, will be there on Monday to finish with the forms.

Tired from the hard physical labor during the day, the team all went to bed early. During reflection everyone expressed satisfaction in what together we had accomplished.

*-Phyllis Machledt*



**Building a frame for concrete foundation.**



**The children of the preschool sing songs to welcome the VIM team.**



# Nicaragua VIM: Working to Aid Medical Care

Below are excerpts from the Volunteers in Mission team blog that can be found in its entirety at [www.nyacvim.blogspot.com](http://www.nyacvim.blogspot.com).

## JUNE 25–JULY 4 A Beautiful Start

The lodging we normally stay at was completely booked, and as God would have it, we ended up at the cutest little posada, with the friendliest staff, and the best food I've had in Nicaragua, and guess what? The front gates were decorated with butterflies! Butterflies have been iconic for us since Holy Week, and it seems to be a constant on our path of faith.

We spent this Sabbath morning by a cradle lake called Laguna de Apoyo. We frolicked in the refreshing emerald waters of this volcanic lake then enjoyed a delicious lunch while "feasting" on the beauty of God's creation.

After breaking bread with great joy, we headed out to the Masaya artisan market. There, our team members had a chance to witness the craftsmanship of Nicaragua, and support the local economy by bringing some souvenirs back home.

Sunday evening tends to be the prime time service for the week, and we were blessed to worship with the devoted members of the "Iglesia," Evangelical Methodist Church of Nicaragua, at Los Laureles Sur. We were received with typical generous hospitality and invited to praise God for the lives of the fathers in the church and the "MaPas"—mothers that are also fathers for their children.

We did quite a bit of driving today; which exposed us to many different realities of our siblings in Nicaragua. We even passed by a festive pride parade, and our missionary, Belinda, said that they were very brave LGBTQI and allies.

Tomorrow we start the day by joining the Christian Medical Action (AMC) weekly devotional



... After devotional we get back to our hammers, power saws, brushes, brooms and other tools of concrete ministry [pun intended].

May your week start and unfold with God's perfect will,  
*Pastor Alex  
(da Silva Souto)*

## The Wonders of Cement and Managua

After a night of rest here in Nicaragua, I regained all my sleep.

After breakfast we went straight to work at AMC (Acción Medica Cristiana). Carlos, Henry, and Alberto took the time to teach us

**The team, above, including Pastors Martha Vink and Alex da Silva Souto, gather outside the structure they have been working on for Acción Medica Cristiana. At left, measure twice, cut once!**

how to properly put the cement mixture on the wall. They were very patient with us. The work was challenging at first, but once you got an idea and a flow of it we got better. The first coat was rough for the most part and it was very hard to get it smooth on the wall. Leann and I were given the opportunity to redeem ourselves from yesterday's okay work of putting the first coat on, by putting the second finishing coat. This made us worry since this one had to be perfect and flat. Luckily for us, we were able to wet the wall and smooth it out after

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# Cementing A Future Of Hope

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the last coat. I got into it and was covered in cement.

After we were done working for the day . . . We went to Somoza's Palace (Lomas Tiscapa) where we were able to see the old and new Managua on either side. We even went downstairs to the torture room where Samosa kept all his enemies. From there, we went to the original Roman Cathedral Church (Catedral Santiago de Managua) . . . the presidential palace, which was turned into a national museum, and the three graves of the revolutionary martyrs. After that, we went to a boardwalk location (Paseo Xolotlan) to enjoy ourselves a bit in and walk around. There was a plane in the middle of the field for people to enter. For most of the people in Managua, that would be the only time they would enter a plane.

We talked about our God moments and just conversed and laughed while enjoying dinner (seriously, the food here is great! 10/10 would eat again). God is truly working through us and is visible through how we can connect and show our true selves with one another and with others.

-Ximena B. Varas

## Building A Legacy of Hope

Acción Medica Cristiana (AMC) began in 1984 as a grassroots organization founded by a group of medical students in Nicaragua, who recognized the need for a Christian presence in a place where poverty was very widespread.

AMC reached out to communities in remote areas, focusing largely on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua—an area that did not have access to medical care. AMC provided medical care in these hard-to-reach communities, and began training community leaders to provide their own



Mixing up concrete to trowel on the walls was not always an easy task.

medical services.

Thirty years later, AMC has expanded its outreach to 230 communities, and provided assistance to more than 200,000 people. The organization has three areas of focus: community health, food and nutritional security, and risk management. Projects include determining sources of clean water, providing low-cost medicine through networks of pharmacies, and teaching communities to prepare for emergencies.

Nicaragua is currently ranked #4 on the climate risk index, meaning that when a natural disaster occurs, it is likely to become an emergency situation. The organization has received support from the United States and Europe, but this support is declining and more restrictions are being placed on funding. Although the majority of people in Nicaragua live on about \$4 a day, the country is perceived as being "less poor" than previously, and international aid is being reduced.

We're helping AMC complete a training center and meeting room at their central headquarters in Managua. This project was abandoned for several years due to

lack of funding, but the hope is to complete construction within the next few months.

Our group will be finishing walls and windows, installing flooring, and painting, all to make this space usable to AMC. There is a great deal of work to be done in the next week, but we are blessed with an amazing team at AMC and with the prayers, love, and support of our friends and family back home. *Todo lo puedo en Cristo que me fortalece*; I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me.

-Leann Misencik

## Special Care for Special Children

My group, Daryl, Ximena, our interpreter Freddie, and Oscar, a representative from NRN, went to San Dino. Daryl sponsors a special needs little girl through NRN. Her name is Ruby. In her school, there are eight students, one principal, two teachers, and one young man who volunteers. They all wear uniforms . . . the name on the uniform is Agape.

We arrived at the school around 9:30. The students were all working on different lessons, depending on what level they were on. After

snack, some played ball, while others found Minecraft on my phone. Imagine, they recognize and know how to play Minecraft here.

The children loved having their pictures taken. They had a chance to take pictures with our phones. School ended at 11 . . . While we were waiting for the children to go home, three butterflies "fluttered" by—one for Daryl, Ximena, and myself.

I thoroughly loved my visit to Ruby's school. I felt right at home. I met a beautiful little girl named Crystal, who is 8 years old. Luckily for me, she does not have a sponsor. How great is that!

We took Ruby and her mom to lunch at Tip-Top, a chicken restaurant. At Ruby's house, we met her grandmother, uncle, and brother Ian. Ruby's grandmother's house was very spacious; it had a front porch, three bedrooms, a living room, and kitchen. They were cooking in the back. It smelled so good. Her grandmother let us taste some. They also have two corn grinders; one for corn meal to make tortillas and one for cereal. Ruby's grandmother earns some money when people come from the

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# Black Churches Balance Safety, Openness

UMNS—At predominantly black Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, many members have roots in the Deep South, and some look specifically to South Carolina as home.

Not surprisingly, Holman remains hard hit by the June 17 shooting deaths of nine black people at a Bible study at Charleston, South Carolina's Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"The distance between Los Angeles and Charleston is nonexistent for us now," said the Rev. Kelvin Sauls, Holman's senior pastor. "That's how close people feel."

As his church grieves, it's also working through how to make sure people feel both welcome and safe on its campus in the aftermath of a highly publicized, horrific attack on a fellow black church.

"We are looking at how we balance hospitality and security," Sauls said. "That's really a huge piece for me."

Across the United States, churches have responded to the Emanuel AME killings with everything from prayer vigils to donations to political activism. But security reviews have been a big part of the mix.

That's particularly true at African-American churches, given that the young white man charged with the crimes, Dylann Roof, had a well-documented preoccupation with white supremacy.

Even as word of the Charleston tragedy was getting out, Rev. Robin Dease, superintendent of the South Carolina Conference's Hartsville District, was thinking about church safety.

"The minute that news hit the airwaves I did an email to all of my pastors in the Hartsville District, asking them just to be diligent and aware of their surroundings, and also making sure that persons going in and out of the church are safe and not alone," Dease said.

Dease, an African American, has in the wake of the Charleston shootings heard from pastors whose church members have asked if they should bring a gun to worship. She's glad the pastors have discouraged that.

"We're not going to live in fear," she said. "It's still about the church being a beacon of hope and life."

But for her, common sense dictates "stepping up our game" in security.

That's been the approach at New Francis Brown United Methodist, a predominantly black church about a 10-minute drive north from Emanuel AME. One big change has been with the Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday night Bible studies.

"We're locking the doors as a basic safety

measure," said Rev. Harold Gordon, New Francis Brown's pastor. Strangers can come in, but he screens them first.

## Reviewing protocols

Church security, like home security, has long been a big business, involving alarm systems and consultants and addressing everything from natural disasters and theft to visits by the mentally ill or sexual predators.

Even the Federal Emergency Management Agency is involved, putting out a "Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operation Plans for Houses of Worship," which includes what to do in the case of an active shooter.

FEMA provided copies of the guide to historic Asbury United Methodist, a predominantly African-American church in Washington in the wake of the Charleston shootings.

Well before those shootings, Saint Mark UMC in Wichita, Kansas, had made security a priority. One reason is that it's about three miles from Reformation Lutheran Church, where in 2009 George Tiller, a doctor who performed late abortions, was shot to death while handing out bulletins as a church usher.

At Saint Mark, there's a buzzer system to get into the church during the week, and men of the church, dressed in red, provide a visible security presence at worship services, said Rev. Junius Dotson, pastor.

For Dotson, the Emanuel AME shootings—combined with police misconduct against black residents of Ferguson, Missouri; Baltimore; Charleston and other cities—mainly represent more evidence of persistent racism.

"We have come a long way," Dotson said. "We absolutely have made progress. But the South Carolina event just reminds that we have a long way to go."

## Offerings and Hymns

United Methodist churches have responded in various ways to the June 17 shootings at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

Myers Park UMC in Charlotte, has raised money to help rebuild nearby Briar Creek Road Baptist Church, which was deliberately set on fire. While authorities are still investigating the motive, this arson of a black church has been one of several in the Carolinas in the general time frame of the Charleston tragedy.

"Our people are feeling a kind of holy rage against the racist hatred and violence out there, so helping a church right here is a small step in what we hope will be a larger journey for all of

us toward a more just society," said Rev. James Howell, pastor of Myers Park.

## 'A level of urgency'

The Emanuel AME tragedy prompted Braden UMC in Toledo, to host a June 24 prayer vigil attended by members of United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion and Christian Methodist Episcopal congregations.

"When we look at what happened in Charleston, that could have happened anywhere," said Rev. Wynston Dixon, pastor of Braden United Methodist, a predominantly African-American church.

But Dixon has been working through the question of balancing security and hospitality, and is leaning hard toward the latter.

"The house of God should always be open to anybody who wants to come," he said. "I thought about it, but I have not made a (security) move, and I don't think I will be making one."

Dixon wants his church, and The United Methodist Church, to clear its throat.

"The issue of race and racism, even in the church, needs to be addressed more openly, more often," he said.

## Faithfulness and backlash

Back in South Carolina, the tension level has remained high, in part because of a series of black church fires there and in North Carolina. The most high profile was the Mount Zion AME Church in Greeleyville, S.C. That church was burned by the Ku Klux Klan in 1995, but authorities believe the recent fire probably owed to lighting.

Rev. James Friday, an African American and superintendent of the Greenwood District of the South Carolina Conference, said last week that he plans to meet with local sheriffs to push for greater patrolling of rural churches.

Friday is encouraged by what he's heard from his district's black churches since the Emanuel AME shootings.

"They will not allow anyone to keep them from worshipping God," he said. "The sentiment is, 'That's what the enemy wants.'"

Friday also believes that security vigilance is going to be needed for the long term—in part because he feels a backlash coming to efforts to remove the Confederate flag from the South Carolina Statehouse grounds as one tangible response to the Charleston church shootings.

Friday has often driven by a home in his district where the owner flew a single Confederate flag in the yard.

"Now he has 10."

# Petition #2015-GC307: What Would Wesley Do?

Submitted by Rev. Philip Hardt on behalf of the Wesley Fellowship leadership team

The sixteenth chapter of Luke's gospel contains the parable of Lazarus and the rich man who ignored his suffering. After his death, the rich man is told by Abraham that a wide gulf (RSV says "great chasm") has been fixed between Lazarus, who is being now rewarded, and himself. Sadly, the same thing could be said of the majority who voted in favor of Petition #2015-GC307, "Amend Book of Discipline Paragraph 161.F on Human Sexuality." A wide gulf has now been fixed between those who voted for that petition and the Word of God and John Wesley!

## COMMENTARY

That petition sought principally (among other things) to eliminate the current disciplinary language that "sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage" and that (homosexual) "practice is incompatible with Christian teaching." Further down, the authors of the petition stated that "an examination of scriptural principles" and "an application of the tenets of Wesleyan theology" would "mandate welcome to all God's people within the life of the church."

Yet, the petition did not give any specific scriptural principles and tenets of Wesleyan theology. It simply made the assertions without any biblical or theological supporting evidence. Its supporters apparently thought, perhaps naively, that they can be found at a later date and so we were being asked, in good faith, to take their word for it. This hardly seems like the correct way to proceed on such important issues. Even more importantly, an examination of scriptural principles and the tenets of Wesleyan theology such as John Wesley's interpretation of Scripture do not support the deletions.

First, the scriptural principles support the current teaching of the [United Methodist] Church. For example, chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis state that God created them male and female and told them to multiply. Jesus himself reaffirmed this teaching in Matthew 19. Moreover, Romans 1:26–27, the pivotal passage on this topic, refers to same-sex physical activity as degrading passions, unnatural intercourse and shameless acts.

In addition, the most widely respected commentators upon scripture in the early church such as Augustine, Tertullian, Origen, Chrysostom, and others all viewed homosexual activity as incompatible with Christian teaching.

Second, a quick examination of Wesley's understanding of scripture and its interpretation strongly supports the current teaching of the UMC. For example, Wesley believed that scripture was the primary source for doctrine. Regarding its interpretation, in his sermon, "Of the Church,"



Wesley stated, "We are never to depart from the plain, literal sense, unless it implies an absurdity." In addition, he believed that Christian antiquity or the ancient Christian writers or simply what is called tradition confirmed the Word of God. Thus, he would also support the early church's view that homosexuality was incompatible with the Christian life.

In his sermon, "On Corrupting the Word of God," Wesley also warned about those who might ignore or dilute the meaning of scripture. His text was 2 Corinthians 2:17: "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God." In that sermon, he said that the third mark of one who corrupts it is to take or subtract from it. They "take either of the spirit or substance of it away, while they study to prophesy only smooth things, and therefore palliate and color what they preach, to reconcile it to the taste of their hearers. And in order to do this the better, they commonly quite let those parts go that will admit of no coloring; they quite wash their hands of those stubborn texts that will not bend to their purpose, or that too plainly touch on the reigning vices of the place where they are."

It seems that Romans 1:26–27 is one of those "stubborn texts that will not bend to their purpose." In that same sermon, Wesley said, "Let the hearers accommodate themselves to the Word. The Word is not...to be accommodated to the hearers."

In conclusion, this petition and several other similar ones that were passed unfortunately place themselves in opposition, and not conformity, to an examination of scriptural principles and the tenets of a Wesleyan understanding of scripture starting with Wesley himself. Tragically, these misguided petitions have simply "accommodated the Word to the hearers" rather than accommodating themselves to the Word.

Petition #2015:GC307: What would Wesley do? Obviously, he would vote against it!

## Conference Center Renovation Moves Forward

The NYAC Board of Trustees is proceeding with the renovation of the White Plains conference center, according to a June 26 email to the staff from Ross Williams, chief financial officer and director of administrative services.

Planning for the project and lining up vendors is underway now until late winter 2016. Peggy Dannemann, a parishioner at New Canaan UMC and a certified architect, will serve as project manager. Pre-construction work will begin next spring but will generally be limited to the exterior of the building.

After the 2016 annual conference, construction work will begin and extend through early September. During this period, the staff will need

to find alternate ways and spaces in which to work, such as moving temporarily into the Learning Center or utilizing rooms in a local church.

The largest element of the renovation will involve replacing the existing window and wall system with a more airtight and modern alternative. In addition, the project will address other functional areas including heating and air conditioning, the parking lot, security, exterior lighting, walkways and signage. Interior cosmetic upgrades such as new carpeting, painting, and changes to the ground-floor lounge are envisioned.

"In the end we will have a building that is a more suitable and comfortable place to work—one that we can again be proud of," Williams wrote.

# Web Site Launched for Clergy Families

A new web site is now available to help support clergy, their spouses and their families, [www.gcsr.org/Resources/ForClergyFamilies.aspx](http://www.gcsr.org/Resources/ForClergyFamilies.aspx).

Launched in mid-June by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW), the web site is a result of a clergy-family-care summit held last November. The Chicago meeting brought together clergy, clergy spouses, adult children of clergy and general agency staff.

The 23 participants noted the high expectations placed on the children of clergy, special problems encountered by two-clergy families, commuter marriages and difficult housing situations.

Summit participants also noted the struggles of racial/ethnic clergy families, cross-cultural appointments and physical health problems. There are also occasions when the need for mental health care arises; that need is frequently accompanied by concern about future appointments when district superintendents discover problem areas.

Dawn Wiggins Hare, top staff executive of the commission says, "A generation ago, the majority of clergy spouses were women, so it was natural that GCSRW would lift up their needs and concerns. That traditional make-up is no longer the norm. With the increase in the number of women clergy, the importance of offering support for clergy families and clergy spouses is even a more direct missional link to our

mission of supporting women at all levels of leadership."

"The web page can provide resources to family members, often spouses, who might be reluctant to go to a district superintendent for help," says Northern Illinois Conference Bishop Sally Dyck, a participant in the summit. "It can be a 'first call for help' location for clergy families in transition."

"In addition to clergy family members themselves using the [web page] resources, this page is intended for use by those in congregations and annual conferences who support clergy and their families," said MaryJane Pierce-Norton, associate general secretary of Discipleship Ministries.

"Clergy self-care continues to be of critical importance for the health of the clergy and his or her family," Hare said. "The itineracy system is stressful, especially for couples with two careers and school-aged children. Living in a fishbowl is not easy, especially for teenagers. Being able to read, to share, to connect with others on the journey is a way that we can offer resources to support our clergy."

Bishop Dyck added, "Having the web page can contribute to a good start between clergy and churches. Many laity haven't moved in years—if ever—and really don't [understand] the trauma that even a desired or accepted move brings in terms of relocating—everything from: 'Will my stuff arrive?' 'Will the house be ready?' to 'Where do I find a doctor or someone to cut my hair?'"



## Acronym Focuses Church Development

Global Ministries missionaries David and Cynthia Ceballos, who serve in Panama, offered this "P.R.A.Y." acronym in a recent article of the May-June issue of *New World Outlook* magazine. P.R.A.Y. has served the Ceballos as a three-fold guide for their church development ministry by setting values, guiding priorities, and determining strategy.

**P** stands for establishing a presence where there has not been a Methodist presence before. We are engaged in incarnational ministry. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." (John 1:14 NRSV)

**R** represents relationship. We have a vocation of building relationships both with God and with our neighbors. That is what the greatest commandment and the second, which is like it, are all about.

**A** stands for adaptability. The context in which we work determines the strategy and ministries we need. We have to remain adaptable to our circumstances rather than rely on preconceived programming.

**Y** represents our Yes. "Yes, Lord, here am I, use me if you can." We are guests on planet Earth, and God has asked us to participate in telling the redemption story. So, we pray with humility and respond with "Yes." Nothing in the acronym P.R.A.Y. says anything about building something, doing something, or organizing something. Those things are secondary at this stage of development.

## Garrett Offers Community Organizing Degree

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is launching a new doctor of ministry (DMin) track in community organizing. Community organizing trains and equips clergy and community leaders with the knowledge and skills to analyze the power dynamics within a community, develop strategic relationships, and direct and focus the physical, theological, spiritual, and moral energies of the people within a community to create extraordinary changes for good.

"As I have been speaking with various leaders of the church, one of the primary concerns that keeps emerging is the need for leaders who 'can get something done,'" said Garrett President Lallene J. Rector. "The skills required for effective community organizing translate directly into being able to set contextually sensitive goals and to work in ways that actually result in transformative change."

The DMin in community organizing is a 30-credit-hour program that students can complete in as little as three years or as many as six. Classes are offered in a hybrid model of on-campus and online courses, offering high quality theological education in a flexible format to meet student's needs.

The first cohort for the DMin in community organizing begins January 2016. Applications are due by October 1, 2015. To learn more about the program, go to [www.Garrett.edu/DMinCO](http://www.Garrett.edu/DMinCO).



## OBITUARIES

### Carol Hope Davison

Carol Hope Davison died on June 30, at age 83. She was the wife of Reverend E. Burton Davison, who served more than 40 years in ministry in the New York Conference.

Daughter of the late Milton and Marjorie (Roth) Gillespie, Davison worked as a music teacher after graduating from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. As a clergy spouse, she was active in the music programs at the United Methodist churches her husband served. She also enjoyed writing.

The couple lived in Long Island, Brooklyn, and Kingston, N.Y., before moving to Langhorne, Penn., six years ago. Rev. Davison retired in 1997.

Davison is survived by her husband; two sons and daughters-in-law Daniel (Vivian) Davison of Falls Township, Penn., and Michael Davison and Xiu (Sunnie) Chen of Brooklyn; one daughter and son-in-law Ellen Davison and Chris Wright of Rail Road Flat, Calif.; seven grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Services were held July 2 at the Morrisville United Methodist Church, 501 W. Maple Ave., Morrisville, Penn.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Multiple Sclerosis Society at the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter, 30 South 17th Street, Suite 800, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

### Margaret (Peg) Bloom

Margaret (Peg) Bloom died May 3, at age 82. She was the wife of the Reverend Arthur Bloom, who served 40 years in ministry in the Susquehanna and New York conferences.

Bloom met her husband when he was an assistant minister for her father. Together they served in five United Methodist churches. Even after retirement in 1992, Rev. Bloom continued to preach with his wife by his side.

She was a gifted educator teaching four- and five-year-olds with special needs. Bloom was involved in the churches her husband served in numerous ways including as secretary, Sunday School teacher, committee leader and pianist.

The couple enjoyed more than 20 years of retirement, splitting their time between their camp on Groton Pond, Vt., and Rio Valley Estates in Texas.

Bloom's husband of 61 years survives, as well as children, Bryan and Joyce.

A service of celebration was held May 7, at the Rio Valley Estates in Texas. Condolences may be sent to Rev. Bloom at 715 N. Westgate #142, Weslaco, TX 78596.

## Cementing A Future Of Hope

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neighborhood to grind their corn. Her son cuts hair on the side to earn extra money. They are not afraid to work.

Peace to everyone,  
*Angela Moore*

### Days of Grace and Progress

*This is the day that the Lord has made.*

*Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*This is the day; this is the day that the Lord has made.*

Every day and moment of our time in Nicaragua is a blessing. We are truly thankful to be in this place of beauty, surrounded by friendly, caring, and loving people.

After breakfast, we headed for a full day at AMC. We were invited to join the staff for their weekly devotional, coordinated and led by Dr. Francisco Gutierrez, director of organizational development and the pastoral leader. We each joined one of three groups for study and discussion of material, presented along a timeline from the beginning of creation. My group focused on the time of Moses, his life, and his being chosen to lead the Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt.

The devotional ended with prayer . . . Please pray for the Tasha Pri (which means "free land") AMC site and its coordinator, Edith. The site's water supply is being threatened by a gold mining project and some unrest has occurred. Pray also for the churches that have burned in the U.S., . . . those killed at the Emmanuel AME church in Charleston.

We spent the rest of the day working . . . Wood was cut for framing windows, mortar was spread on walls, inside and out, and we began to paint the primer on walls that were ready. Carlos, the contractor, was his usual, patient self. It seems that even with mistakes, we are accomplishing much more than they could do on their own! We had more laughs when the rain began. We were not only very dirty, but now soaked! We had to admit that it felt good.

## Aldersgate Seeks Associate Director

Aldersgate Renewal Ministries (ARM) is currently seeking a Spirit-filled individual to serve as their new associate executive director. Aldersgate Renewal Ministries is located outside of Nashville, Tenn., and seeks to bring renewal to the United Methodist Church by equipping the local churches to minister to the world in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The associate executive director is a fulltime position with a benefits package. The search

Tomorrow we will participate in a national disaster evacuation drill. More on that to follow!

Grace and peace,  
*Daryl Fitzgibbons*

### Going Home, Counting Blessings

We are on our flight from Miami to LaGuardia feeling richer and tremendously blessed by the mission journey we just had. There were many moments of grace and deep encounters with Christ Jesus manifested in people we met, reflections we shared, work we did, nature, prayer, meals, and other unexpected ways.

Everything would have been absolutely perfect hadn't three of our team members gotten ill, but even those moments of challenge were infused with the love of Christ and the faith that they would get well soon . . . We were just five minutes from a fantastic lab. Additionally, our mission partner is none other than AMC [Christian Medical Action], so we had the best care available in Managua.

Last night we got to the hotel a bit late and as we were finishing our packing some of us felt a quick tremor under our feet. It was a 5.1 earthquake; which is a common occurrence, so we even joked that it was the land of Nicaragua missing us already.

May Nicaragua never miss us too much and our sister and brothers there be safe from all natural disasters. God knows that have already suffered enough.

Pastor Martha Vink got to spend some more time with her Nicaraguan family at the airport while the rest of the team did some shopping, and a light lunch before going through security.

In one hour we land in LaGuardia, but the journey continues as God keeps calling us to partner in the transformation of the world, and in the deepening of our relationship with the Divine in all there is . . . beautifully and wonderfully made.

I thank God every time I think of you,

*Pastor Alex*

committee is looking for someone with the ability to oversee the daily operations of a dynamic ministry and diligently lead a staff in fulfilling the mission of ARM. The individual must have strong verbal and written communication skills; and also possesses strong project management skills. For further inquiries and to submit resumes please contact, Rev. Jason Everson, at [connection@aldersgaterenewal.org](mailto:connection@aldersgaterenewal.org).