

*"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  
of The United  
Methodist Church

July 2014



## Bikes Bound For Guatemala

Grace United Methodist Church in Southington, Conn., recently collected 108 bikes and three sewing machines for the Pedals for Progress program. A volunteer crew from Grace's Missions, Outreach, Evangelism (MOE) Committee prepared them for shipment by truck to New Jersey, where the items will be sent to Guatemala by Pedals for Progress. Bikes are used for basic transportation in Guatemala, so this effort provides an industry for those who distribute and service the bicycles in the country. For more info on the program, go to: [www.p4p.org/](http://www.p4p.org/).



## Cunningham to Serve as 2-Year Missionary

Nora Asedillo Cunningham, daughter of Rev. Doug Cunningham and deaconess Rebecca Asedillo, was commissioned July 19 as a Generation Transformation Global Mission Fellow of the General Board of Global Ministries. The commissioning service took place in Tagaytay, Philippines, as part of the UMC's Global Young People Convocation.

Cunningham was one of 42 young adults

from 11 countries selected to serve with organizations in 15 countries, sharing God's love through acts of mercy and piety. In preparation, the group spent three weeks training with mission staff—engaging in prophetic, vocational exploration while living together in a faith community. This year, the training coincided with the convocation. Bishop

Continued on page 3

## Bishop McLee Takes Leave; Bishop Irons Named Interim

Dear New York Annual Conference Family:

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:4-7 NRSV)

From my most recent letter to you, I have learned that the "prayers of the righteous folk of the NYAC and beyond availeth much!"

(Adapted, James 5:16, KJV). One of my prayer partners revealed to me that I have had more than half of the English-speaking world praying for me and the global community praying for me in their first languages. I certainly have felt the bombardment of heaven on my behalf.

I write to inform you that the Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church has approved my request for a Leave of Absence under paragraph 410.1 of the 2012 *Book of Discipline* in order to continue my time of healing and restoration. The leave is granted for up to six months, beginning retroactively July 1, 2014. This request was supported after consultation with the New York Area Committee on the Episcopacy and approvals from the Northeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops and Committee on the Episcopacy.

The Executive Committee also approved



**Bishop Neal Irons**

Continued on page 4



### **7/24–26 Mission “u” Returns**

Join the journey from “hole-ness to whole-i-ness” with studies on the church and people with disabilities, the Roma of Europe, and “how is it with your soul.” The one-day Saturday Sampler will again be offered on July 26. Registration and additional info about the event at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury be found at: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/77887](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/77887).

### **7/25–26 Korean Peace Vigil and March**

Join in this effort in Washington, D.C., to end the 61-years-long Korean War and wage peace. This idea was initiated in the NYAC and approved by the 2012 General Conference; the reunification committee of Korean United Methodist Church, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches and many other ecumenical partners have joined this call for peace. We will gather to witness the human cost of the unended Korean War, walk and pray together to raise our voice to end the war and establish peace for the people of two Korea and the world! For additional details, go to: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/123065](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/123065).

### **8/2 Ministry With Young Adults**

Ron Bell Jr., a founder and lead pastor of the Arise Church, will share insights from his ministry at this event titled, “It Was All a Dream.” Starting at 9:30 a.m. at the New Rochelle UMC, the free event is for young adults and those looking to start or nurture a ministry with them. The first 50 who register will get a copy of Bell’s book, “Bigger than Hip Hop: 7 Questions for Effectively Reaching Young Adults in Ministry.” For registration forms or event questions, go to: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/alladream-123070](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/alladream-123070).

### **8/3–6 Camp Lead for Youth**

Camp Lead is a youth-led leadership training program for teens entering 8th–12th grade at Epworth Camp & Retreat Center, High Falls, N.Y. Churches sponsor their youth with potential for leadership to attend the four-day event; cost to the church is \$300. A recommendation from the pastor must accompany registration. For more information, go to: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/124827](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/124827).

### **8/15–17 Healing of Addictions**

The Oratory of the Little Way will offer a three-day workshop, The Healing of Addictions and Co-Dependency with Jesus, at the their Gaylordsville, Conn., location. Psychotherapist, Gail Paige-Bowman,

LCSW, will lead the exploration. Registration closes August 8. Call the Oratory for more information at 860-354-8294, or email: [oratory1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:oratory1@sbcglobal.net).

### **8/21 & 28 Powerpoint in Worship**

This “how-to” workshop is being presented as a two-part lay servant course at New Paltz UMC. Rev. Bette Johnson Sohm will explore equipment, costs and setup, and how to use this visual tool to enhance meaningful worship. Meetings are from 6:30–9 p.m. For more information, go to: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/129150](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/129150).

### **9/6 Sunday School Director Training**

This event will include an open house at the Perkins Learning Center. 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Conference Center, White Plains. Contact Lynda Gomi at [lgomi@nyac.com](mailto:lgomi@nyac.com), for additional info.

### **9/12–14 Launchpad for Church Planters**

LAUNCHPAD is a three-day training event for leaders and teams planting new faith communities sponsored by the Upper New York Conference and PATH 1. The training is in Albany, N.Y., and will be led by Paul Nixon, Sam Rodriguez, and Emily Reece, among others.

For more information or to register, go to: [www.unyumc.org/launchpad](http://www.unyumc.org/launchpad).

### **9/20 Basic Lay Servant Course**

This course in the Connecticut District will be held at the Plainville UMC on three Saturdays, September 20, 27, and October 4. Fellowship will be at 9 a.m.; classes begin promptly at 9:30 a.m., ending by 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$15, and participants should read the first two chapters of the “Lay Servant Ministries Basic Course Participants Book” before the first meeting. For more information, or to register go to: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/125299](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/125299).

### **10/2–4 Older Adult Camp**

Calling all . . . young at heart, wise in soul, and graced with years for this experience at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island, N.Y. Come for a time of worship, sacred play, learning, and fellowship. The cost is yet to be determined, but will include housing and meals. For more information, go to: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/115535](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/115535).

### **10/25 Deacons Day Apart**

Deacons of the conference will gather from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Learning Center, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, N.Y. Contact Sonia Jermin at [bronxjermin@verizon.net](mailto:bronxjermin@verizon.net) for additional information.

	
<small>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</small>	
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# Cunningham to Serve as 2-Year Missionary

Continued from page 1

Hope Morgan Ward of the North Carolina Conference and president of Global Ministries presided at the commissioning which was live streamed on the GBGM web site.

Cunningham will be serving for 20 months in the Philippines with the Kapatiran-Kaunlaran Foundation (KKFI), a United Methodist social service and development organization in Manila, Philippines. She'll be working with an after school program and a drug rehabilitation program.

The Global Mission Fellows program takes young adults ages 20-30 out of their home environments and places them in new contexts for two years of mission service. The program grew out of the faith and justice emphases of the historic United Methodist US-2 and Mission Intern programs. Global Mission Fellows become part of their new local communities. They connect the church in mission across cultural and geographical boundaries. They grow in personal and social holiness and become strong young leaders working to build just communities in a peaceful world.

Cunningham is from New York City and a member of New Day UMC, a congregation her father planted and pastors in the Bronx. Her mother has served as a social justice educator, and is working at GBGM as the regional execu-



**Nora Asedillo Cunningham**

tive for Asia and the Pacific.

"My faith journey growing up was one of nurture and care," said Cunningham. "God's love for me and desire for me to pursue my purpose in life was modeled to me by the love and purpose of my parents. I was always shown that faith in Christ was a safe and healing space.

"As I entered adulthood, I began my path of a more individual experience of faith. I met people who had felt hurt by church, had lost faith in

God, or had grown up with traditions that ran contrary to my own. I had to wrestle with these experiences, and really decide what I believed in . . . and how to find integrity and authenticity in my faith and my faith community.

"Along my journey, I have developed an understanding of the intersection of faith and justice as a part of Jesus' mission. I can feel the call for me to develop my faith in spiritually centered communities that are working for justice in God's creation."

"My call to mission is rooted in a need for justice, fueled by abundant love and maintained by persistent faith. Mission to me means to live my purposes from God and work for justice by opening the way for faith and love to conquer all."

Cunningham holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and educational studies from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. In 2013-2014, she served as a corps member of City Year, New York. City Year brings together young people of all backgrounds for a year of full-time service to keep students in school and on track for graduation.

To support her work, go to [www.umcmmission.org](http://www.umcmmission.org), click on the red "Give Now" button and enter her Advance #3022020 for Nora Cunningham; or to donate to KKFI, enter their Advance #302058.

## "Mission u" Tackles Hunger Hands-On

BY ELAINE MACKAY

UMW Spiritual Growth Coordinator  
Christ Church UMC

If you are looking for an a way to help others that can involve all ages, develop a sense of community, sharing and caring, amid a party-type setting, then I have just the event for you.

Last year at "Mission u," more than 10,000 meals were packaged for distribution to Haiti through the Stop Hunger Now program. This year's participants will be trying to top that amount on July 25 during the gathering at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury.

Although last year's event was a first for "Mission u," I have participated in Stop Hunger Now packaging at my church on three previous occasions. I was delighted to see ages seven to 70 plus working together in 2013. Stations were set up to pack, weigh and then move the filled bags to sealers and packers. The assembly process combines rice, soy, dehydrated vegetable and a flavoring mix with

21 essential vitamins and minerals into small meal packages.

The packages are shipped to 65 countries around the world to support school feeding programs and crisis relief. The food stores easily, transports quickly and has a shelf life of five years. Stop Hunger Now provides all the materials including gloves, hairnets, packaging supplies and the food in addition to a representative to answer questions. Our cost—besides our labor of love—came to just 29 cents a meal.

If you missed last year and are coming to "Mission u" this month, don't miss the Stop Hunger Now program. If your church or group is interested and would like more information, please go to: [www.stophungernow.org/how-to-host](http://www.stophungernow.org/how-to-host).

It's estimated that 35 to 40 volunteers can pack 10,000 meals in two hours. More than 145 million total meals have been packaged as I write this. Their vision is our vision: "A World Without Hunger."

## Missionary Visiting From Cambodia

Helen Camarce, a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries, is currently visiting with various churches in the conference.

Camarce, a native of the Philippines, currently is serving as treasurer of the agency's Cambodia and Southeast Asia Missions (Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam). She provides support services for the missionary communities, local church partners, episcopal leaders, an expanding number of clergy, and denominational interests.

She has made presentations at Asbury UMC, Bayville UMC, and Prospect UMC. Camarce can be contacted during her itineration through Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, conference mission coordinator at 914-615-2233.



## Join Picketing In D.C. On Immigration

The conference Immigration Task Force is working with the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) in Washington, D.C., to organize a large-scale civil disobedience action at the White House on July 31–August 1. GBCS is working with other faith organizations as well in this effort. It is the board's position that in light of the lack of action by Congress, President Obama can and should grant administrative relief from deportation and expand deferred action for additional undocumented persons.

Individuals committing to this action would need to secure their own transportation and lodging, as well as bring funds to cover the fine after arrest, estimated at between \$50 and \$100.

Please call Rev. Paul Fleck, co-chair of the Immigration Task Force, at 203-676-0005 to participate in the endeavor.

## Pastoral Care Training For Clergy, Laity

Help your community discover God's love through the care ministry of a team trained to reach out to the grieving, the stressed, the sick, and others in need of visitation.

The pastoral care specialist training program is accepting applications for the new class that is beginning September 15. This two-year program is designed for pastors and priests, and the lay people who assist them, who desire to deepen and broaden their pastoral care skills.

Classes will meet at Arumdaun Presbyterian Church in Bethpage on Mondays from 9:15 a.m.–1 p.m. For information or to apply, contact Rev. Dr. Penny Gadzini at 917-287-0583, or [pennygadzini@aol.com](mailto:pennygadzini@aol.com).

## UMs Bring Malaria Message to Congress

### FROM GBCS REPORTS

"It is not enough for United Methodists to just raise money to fight malaria," says the Rev. Paul Fleck, pastor of New Milford (Conn.) United Methodist Church. "We need to encourage the U.S. government to keep up the fight as well."

Two groups of United Methodists, representing the denomination's Imagine No Malaria campaign, recently partnered with representatives from the U.N. Foundation's Nothing But Nets and Junior Chamber International to pay visits to congressional offices in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Fleck and Mitch Underwood, both of the New York Conference, represented Imagine No Malaria in a June 19 visit to the New Britain office of U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Esty, D-Conn. Underwood is Connecticut District lay leader and associate lay leader of the conference.

Bonnie Marden, the Imagine No Malaria organizer for the New England Conference, accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Abraham Waya, pastor of Brockton United Methodist Church, visited the Boston offices of U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass. They were joined in these visits by representatives from NBN and JCI.

The United Methodist Church has a long

history working with Nothing But Nets, but the connection to JCI is new.

"The partnership makes a lot of sense for all of us; it amplifies our message," said Liz Wing of Nothing But Nets. "When we go into a congressional office it is really impressive for



them to see the breadth and diversity of support for the fight against malaria."

The U.S. government gives more money to fight malaria than any other entity in the world. Support for critical malaria funding is primarily budgeted through annual appropriations for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria and the President's Malaria Initiative.

Congress has been supportive of the global health accounts and other critical development aid in the past, but there is the possibility of funding cuts in the current FY2015 budget, which is being debated.

## Bishop McLee Takes Leave; Bishop Irons Named Interim

### Continued from page 1

Bishop Neil Irons, retired, for ad interim service (Paragraph 818.12) in the New York Area during my leave. Bishop Irons has graciously consented to come out of retirement and offer his well-experienced gifts of episcopal leadership to the New York Area. Bishop Irons has served twelve years as the resident bishop of the New Jersey Area, and then eight years as the resident bishop of the Harrisburg Area, retiring in 2004. In 2009, Bishop Irons was asked to serve as the Executive Secretary of the Council of Bishops. Bishop Irons brings a great depth of experience to the office of bishop. I am grateful

that he will be able to lead our Area.

Know that while I am praying for you, I will not be available to you while I'm on leave. I will be focusing all of my energies on my healing and recuperating.

"Somebody prayed for me, had me on their mind,

Took the time to pray for me.

I'm so glad they prayed, I'm so glad they prayed,

I'm so glad they prayed for me."

*All my prayers,  
Bishop Martin D. McLee*

# Schaefer Moves to Calif. After Reinstatement

## From UMNS Reports

Just days after being reinstated by a United Methodist regional appeals committee, Rev. Frank Schaefer transferred to the California-Pacific Annual Conference (CPAC) and was appointed to serve the UMC student outreach program in Isla Vista, California, effective July 1. Bishop Minerva Carcaño, CPAC's episcopal leader, had invited Schaefer to become a member of her conference after his defrocking in December. Bishop Peggy Johnson of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference agreed to the transfer for Schaefer, who had served as pastor at the Iona UMC in the conference.

Carcaño said Schaefer will be responsible "for leading the administrative work of this congregation and reaching out to the large college community that lives, studies and works at the doorsteps of this church." She also noted that she believes Schaefer can be a force for healing in the community that continues to struggle with May's deadly attacks at the University of California Santa Barbara.

The denomination's Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals restored his credentials on June 23 and ordered the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference to compensate Schaefer for all lost salary and benefits dating from Dec. 19, 2013.

In its written decision, the committee was unanimous that the defrocking penalty was, in fact, a violation of church law. Schaefer received

## 36 Clergy Named in New Complaint

United Methodist Bishop Peggy Johnson, episcopal leader for the Philadelphia Area, said she has received a complaint against the 36 pastors who officiated at the Nov. 9 same-sex union of two men at Arch Street United Methodist Church, but added the matter is confidential and will be "prayerfully" considered.

In a statement released by her office in the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference, Johnson said, "We are following the Disciplinary process as outlined in paragraph 363 of the 2012 *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church and are prayerful that a just resolution can be achieved. As

United Methodists, we are committed to seeking peace and reconciliation as a model for society. May it be so."

A list of the 36 pastors has not been released and a spokesperson for the group said the pastors were abiding by the bishop's wishes not to make any statements or speak to the media at this time. The names of the person or persons filing the complaint also have not been made public.

In the November wedding, Richard Kevin Taylor and William Robert Gatewood, both longtime members of Arch Street United Methodist Church, were blessed by more than 40 faith leaders at their union.

that penalty for not being able to uphold the *Book of Discipline* "in its entirety."

The nine-member panel unanimously ruled the lower church court's penalty against Schaefer was "illegal." An eight-member majority of the committee supported a penalty modification to the 30-day suspension Schaefer had already undergone. The committee's ruling still could be appealed to the Judicial Council, the denomination's top court.

Schaefer was defrocked after a November 2013 church trial found him guilty of violating

The United Methodist Church's *Book of Discipline*, by conducting a same-sex marriage ceremony for his son. He also was found guilty of violating the church's order and discipline.

In the penalty stage of the trial, the court suspended Schaefer from his ministerial duties for 30 days and declared that if he could not "uphold the Discipline in its entirety" at the end of the suspension, he would surrender his credentials. He refused to do that, and on Dec. 19, the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Board

**Continued on page 6**

## Poll: Making Disciples Tops Priorities; Sexuality Ranks Low

A recent poll of United Methodists in the United States shows that issues related to human sexuality rank significantly lower than other concerns, and members want the church to engage on this issue and bring a positive perspective to the discussion.

Creating disciples of Christ, spiritual growth, and youth involvement are among the top priorities, according to the survey, commissioned by United Methodist Communications. The research is based on a May 30–June 1 survey.

"We found that regardless of a person's position on homosexuality, members felt strongly that the church could offer a positive and different voice to the broader conversation occurring in society today," said John Deuterian, president of Corporate Research, who conducted part of the polling. "They overwhelmingly reject the idea that the disagreements over this issue were justification for splitting the church."

Seventy-six percent of members said the

church "should engage and bring positive perspective" to society's discussion of issues related to sexuality.

More than 90 percent of respondents said the United Methodist Church should not split over issues related to human sexuality. Sixty-three percent said the issue of sexual orientation and same-gender marriage is "diverting the church from more important things." They ranked it 8th in importance among issues facing the church today.

The most important issues, according to members, are:

- Creating disciples of Christ (39 percent of respondents ranked it as first or second in importance)
- Youth involvement (27 percent)
- Members' spiritual growth (24 percent)
- Decline in membership (19 percent)
- Poverty (17 percent)
- Children at risk (17 percent)
- Social injustice (16 percent)

- Sexual orientation and same-gender marriage (11 percent)

"This poll shows what really matters to the members of The United Methodist Church," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, general secretary of United Methodist Communications.

"It also clarifies that the people in the pews are more concerned about faithful living and changing lives for Christ than they are about some of the other issues that we hear so much about."

The poll is helpful as the church looks ahead to the 2016 General Conference, Hollon said. "As the church wrestles with issues related to human sexuality leading up to 2016, this is a hopeful reminder that our connection is strong and that people in the pews are neither ignoring this discussion nor letting it distract from our effort to answer Christ's call."

The research by Corporate Research of Greensboro, N.C., and Research Now of Dallas, had a 4.4 percent margin of error.

# Schaefer to Serve in Campus Ministry

Continued from page 5

of Ordained Ministry asked him to give up his credentials.

In a statement immediately after the decision was released, Schaefer expressed happiness over his “refrocking” by the committee.

“I never did understand the severity of my punishment for an act of love for my son Tim,” Schaefer said. “The committee of appeals understood that my defrocking sought to penalize me not for what I did but for what I might do in the future.”

Tim Schaefer, Frank’s son who now lives and works in Boston, said he knew something significant had happened “because my phone would not stop vibrating on my pocket for almost an hour with texts, calls and Twitter updates.”

“I am thrilled about the decision and I’m incredibly proud of my dad for fighting to remain with The United Methodist Church to be an advocate for LGBTQ community,” he said.

## Errors of church law

The committee’s 11-page ruling stated that “errors of church law vitiate the penalty imposed by the Trial Court,” including “the mixing and matching of penalties that are designed to be distinct” and predicating the imposition of a penalty on “a future possibility, which may or may not occur, rather than a past or present act.”

Just as civil courts cite precedent, the appeals committee cited previous rulings by the Judicial Council, including one from the 1960s, in support of its decision.

In its ruling, the appeals committee also noted that like other United Methodists, its members “have diverse views on issues related to human sexuality.”

However, the ruling said, every committee member takes seriously the bishops’ statement at the beginning of the Discipline that the law book “represents the current statement of how United Methodists agree to live their lives together,” and that it “defines what is expected of its laity and clergy as they seek to be effective witnesses in the world as a part of the whole body of Christ.” The committee added the emphasis.

“Most importantly, the Committee is profoundly united in the belief that the objective this Committee has been charged to pursue in this case

## N.C. Church Awarded “Culture of the Call”

The Foundation for Evangelism has recognized Denver United Methodist Church in Denver, N.C., with the 2014 Culture of the Call Church Award. This award is given annually to recognize one local congregation of The United Methodist Church with a history of helping young people age 35 or younger experience God’s call to full time Christian service as a result of affiliation with that church.

Denver United Methodist Church utilizes the MACTrack program, an internship program, and local church ministry positions to create a culture that enables young adults to hear and respond to God’s call. In nominating Denver UMC, Rev. Sally Queen writes, “They currently have 22 youth who have experienced a call to ministry or are open to experiencing a call to ministry who meet 8 times per year to reflect on God’s call.” In addition to the 22 young persons in the MACTrack program, five college students state they are seriously contemplating entering full-time ministry.



PHOTO BY MELISSA LAUBER, BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

**Frank Schaefer speaks to media Friday, June 20, after a hearing before the Northeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals in Maryland.**

is nothing less than a resolution that is just,” the ruling said.

## Reaction to ruling

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, the vice president and general manager of the unofficial evangelical caucus Good News, said he was “disappointed but not surprised” at the committee’s decision.

“The appeals ruling leaves no room for trial courts to give grace to those found guilty of an offense. When Rev. Schaefer declared during the trial his refusal to uphold the Book of Discipline, he was renouncing his ordination vows, and the removal of his credentials was an appropriate step to take,” he said.

The trial court gave him 30 days to reconsider his decision, Lambrecht said. “An act of grace on the part of the trial court is now deemed to be inappropriate.”

Many will see this as another example of bishops and clergy not being held accountable to “live with the parameters of our covenanted way of discipleship,” he added.

“This ruling will unfortunately only strengthen the calls for some form of separation, in an attempt to resolve the current crisis in our theology and church government.”

The Rev. Scott Campbell, counsel for Schaefer, praised both the decision and the pastor he represented.

“Frank Schaefer’s faithful, hope-filled, loving journey continues to inspire the rest of us, breathing new life into every corner of the church—even corners that contain trial courts and appeals committees,” Campbell said. “I know that I speak for countless others when I say that we are grateful and overjoyed at this outcome.”

“I am aware of the fact that these steps on our journey to wholeness may be troubling to some among us,” Carcaño added. “This burdens my heart, but we must be the church of Jesus that excludes no one. I will continue to hold up for all of us the need to be servants of Christ of the highest moral character whether we are straight or gay.”

# Forum Explores Ways to Combat Community Violence

More than 100 people, including community and faith leaders, gathered recently in Hartford to explore ways to combat violence in their communities. Educators from Yale University, the mother of a Sandy Hook victim, and a man paralyzed by a gunshot wound shared their experiences at the June 26 conference entitled, "Building a More Peaceful Connecticut: Tools, Models and Initiatives that Promote Non-Violence."

Dr. Elizabeth O'Byron and Kathryn Lee from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence explained a program called "RULER" that teaches children better social and emotional skills. The curriculum, which was developed at the center, is being used in schools across Connecticut and other parts of the country.

RULER focuses on developing five skills:

- Recognizing your own emotions and the emotions of others)
- Understanding the causes and consequences of those emotions)
- Labeling, or developing a rich feeling vocabulary so you are better able to regulate
- Expressing at the right time, right way, right place)
- Regulating one's emotions.

Dr. O'Bryon noted that as the emotional intelligence of children increases they have less anxiety, less depression, are less likely to abuse alcohol, bully others, and are generally less aggressive.

The RULER presentation especially resonated with New Milford UMC Pastor Paul Fleck, who was one of the organizers of the event under the auspices of a newly formed, The Peace in Connecticut Coalition.

"As [psychiatrist] Victor Frankl tells us, there is a space between stimulus and response. In that space lies our ability to choose a response. And in our response lies our growth and freedom," Fleck said.

Mary Ellen Kris, chair of the NYAC Board of Church & Society (CBCS), noted that the program provided a forum aligned with the conference's "Beating Swords into Plowshares Initiative" that seeks to encourage dialogue and creative action to address the epidemic of violence in our communities, especially gun violence. The BCS is a member of the Peace in Connecticut Coalition.

Nelba Marquez-Greene, whose daughter, Ana Grace, was killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School, gave an emotion-



**Holding the banner and working for peace are Steve Derby, left, of the CBCS and Hartford UMC, Tom Tibbatts of New Milford UMC, Rev. Paul Fleck of New Milford UMC, and Rev. David Baird, who is chaplain of the Connecticut State Senate and a United Methodist.**

filled presentation on common sense recommendations for dealing with violence-induced trauma.

"At the end of the day, I didn't get to choose what happened, but I do get to choose my response," said Marquez-Greene, a social worker who began the Ana Grace Project that explores responses to trauma.

She also spoke out for the survivors of less-publicized incidents of gun violence and murder.

"How do you think it feels for others who have not received a similar outpouring of support to see Sandy Hook and what happened there?"

Marquez-Greene emphasized the importance of providing a "ministry of presence that includes deep listening," rather than offering one's own solution. She also cautioned those present not to overpromise more than one can reasonably provide.

She especially encouraged extending grace to the perpetrators as well the victims and survivors of trauma.

"We can't talk about peace and not talk about Nancy Lanza and Adam Lanza," she said. "It's so much easier to talk about the "angels of Sandy Hook.

"Think about grace for Adam. It's not just grace for the 26 angels of Sandy Hook. But it's about grace for Adam and grace for Trayvon and grace for Tanisha."

Conference participants also had the opportunity to attend several different workshops. In the "Breaking the Cycle" session, Tom Tibbatts, a member of New Milford UMC, listened to a young, African-American man tell of having been shot, which left him paralyzed. Tibbatts said afterward that he was totally humbled by this young man's story of how he learned to forgive and how it saved his life.

Steve Derby, from Hartford UMC and a member of the CBCS, was similarly enthusiastic about the experience, stating, "I want our local churches to get involved in assisting the efforts highlighted at this event. There are lots of opportunities to serve and support organizations involved in these efforts."

Kris agreed. "The Conference Board of Church & Society hopes that this . . . may inspire and help resource others in this conference to develop programs and coalitions in their communities to discourage violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution," Kris said. Members and churches interested in trying to address violence in their communities are invited to contact Kris about their efforts at [mekris@nyc.rr.com](mailto:mekris@nyc.rr.com).

The NYAC Board of Church & Society, along with the Office of Black Catholic Ministries for the Archdiocese of Connecticut, and Connecticut Against Gun Violence, underwrote the cost of the conference which was held at Trinity College.

## 2015 Youth Ambassadors Bound for Antigua

The 2015 class of Youth Ambassadors for Mission will visit the Methodist Church of Antigua Circuit from February 13–22. High school students in the conference who are age 15 to 17 are eligible to apply to be part of the team.

The Youth Ambassador program is intended to strengthen the faith journeys of our youth, and to provide a cross-cultural experience for sharing and learning from young people around the globe. This mission trip continues to be a life-changing experience for the teens in the conference

Assignments in country will include construction work, afterschool activities with children, and visits to historic, religious and political sites.

The total cost of \$2100, is split between the student, their church and district. It includes airfare, local transportation, lodging and meals. Application deadline is September 30. For more info and an application, go to: <http://tools.nyac.com/vim/detail/14>. For questions, call the office of Conference Mission Coordinator, Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, at 914-615-2233.

## Final Apportionments Posted on Web Site

The final 2015 shared giving amounts for each church have been posted on the NYAC web site at: [www.nyac.com/apportionments](http://www.nyac.com/apportionments). Also available are the treasurer's remittance forms to download, and an article about how the 2015 budget fits together.

## United Hosts Women's Ministry Conference

United Theological Seminary will hold the second "Deborah's Daughters" Women in Ministry and Leadership Conference on October 22–24, 2014, at the seminary's main campus in Dayton, Ohio and a nearby hotel.

This year's conference, "Take Back Your Temple—Emotional, Spiritual, and Physical Wellbeing," is designed to provide women (and men) with the tools they need to be healthy, and to develop the skills that can help their ministries become the fruit of being with Jesus. Foundational to this conference is the understanding that in order to love and serve others, we must love and take care of ourselves.

Conference speakers will include bestselling author Geri Scazzero, and church planter Beverly Martin. For more details, and to register, go to: [www.deborahsdaughters.com](http://www.deborahsdaughters.com). Course credit, CEUs and a one-day streaming option are also available.



## Dealing with “Waiting” That Comes with Aging

BY JIM STINSON  
Consultant of Older Adults

I was thinking of a hundred and one things I 'had to do' that day. I was told he would be there between 7 and 9 a.m. It was only 7:30 and I was already chomping at the bit.

“When will he get here?”

“I bet it will be closer to 9 a.m.”

“It seems like I am always last on the list.”

And on I went! At one point in my fussing and fuming I remembered something I've heard many times over the years from older people, including my mother and mother-in-law.

As one of them waited for me to drive her to a doctor's appointment, she said, “It seems as if all I do is wait. I know I depend on others to help me get places and should not complain, but I just don't like waiting.” (BTW—no one likes to wait.)

While not sure of my verbal response, I am sure of what I was thinking when she said that!

“You're darn right. You should not complain. Be glad there's someone who cares enough to get you places.” But hopefully, the response was more gracious and restrained.

“It seems like all I do is wait!”

One of the issues of aging is often a growing sense of dependence on others to do for us what “we always did for ourselves.” Understandably others cannot always be at our beck and call. But the seeming impatience of older people is understandable. There is truth to the complaint. What to do about it is another issue.

A challenge for caregivers (family members and others) is to understand the challenge even while holding the older adult to accountability. He or she is not the only one who has to give. The one(s) for whom we care need to be accountable for their own attitude. How much better could the waiting time be used? Reading, crossword puzzles, enjoying old pictures, or jotting notes to friends might be some of the ways waiting time can be given meaning.

Those who care for or about older adults are doing them a real favor by reminding them the time waiting does not have to be wasted or useless. It may even be a welcome gift to them to provide a “goody bag” of things to do while waiting.

So empathize, but don't feed the feeling by acquiescing or feeling guilty. Witness to the value of waiting time.

