

"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

October 2015



Bishop Allen Middleton offers a blessing for Rev. Tim Riss during his installation service. Riss received a set of pompons as a reminder to encourage clergy and laity in the Catskill Hudson District.

Riss Installed as Superintendent

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY
Editor, *The Vision*

After describing him as a pastor of great compassion and vision, Bishop Jane Allen Middleton formally installed Rev. Timothy J. Riss as the new superintendent for the Catskill Hudson District on September 27.

In her introduction of Riss, the bishop stressed his familiarity with the district. Riss' first appointments were in the Catskills region and he served for some 17 years in the district's churches. Before he began his new appointment on July 1, Riss was pastor at the Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church. The bishop also praised Genie Abrams, Riss' wife, who is serving as his administrative assistant.

Rev. Dale Ashby, chair of the district superintendency committee, welcomed the gathering to the Sunday afternoon celebration of Riss' appointment, which was hosted by the Reservoir UMC in Shokan, N.Y. While the church's bell choir performed the lively "Shake, Rattle and Ring" the rest of the music took on an extra special significance for Riss as his son, Jonathan, offered the prelude and postlude and



accompanied the hymns on the organ.

In the presentation of signs of district superintendency, Riss was given the traditional items like a Bible, hymnal, *Book of Discipline*, globe and stole by members of the superintendency committee and others from the district. But Al and Diane McDowell, who are district lay leaders from Saugerties UMC,

Continued on page 6

700 Emerging NEJ Leaders Meet To 'See Know Love'

BY ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff
With local reporting

More than 700 United Methodists from around the Northeastern Jurisdiction gathered for a first-of-its-kind event focusing on transformational leadership on October 2-4 in Hershey, Pa. "See Know Love" sought to target the church's youngest leaders, both clergy and laity, according to the Rev. Ann Pearson, former director of Connectional Ministries for the New York Conference and chairperson of the design team.

"We were trying to get us to the edginess that this generation is looking for," she said. "The young practicum leaders here this weekend are able to do their incredible ministry because no one said 'no' to them along the way. They're following their call and their ministry is extraordinary."

Pearson said that these leaders modeled transformation that the whole church could benefit from, and she's hoping the church will

Continued on page 5

Doing "Good News" In Sandy Efforts

BY REV. TOM VENCUSS

When people ask me, "What are you doing these days," and I respond, "Doing Sandy recovery work," so often the immediate response is, "Oh, I didn't know that was still going on."

Well, it is; and the estimates are that the recovery will continue for another 7 to 10 years, and even longer for some.

In many ways, this recovery effort has been forgotten; and when the media does focus on it, it is often to describe what hasn't been done or to highlight a negative story. Unfortunately,

Continued on page 3



10/24 Local Pastors, Associates Gather

There will be a gathering of the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members at the conference center in White Plains. The event begins at 9:45 a.m. with worship at 10. Lunch will be provided; closing is at 2:30 p.m. Bishop Jane Allen Middleton will attend. For more info and to register by October 20, go to www.nyac.com/eventdetail/2102336.

10/24 35th Annual Men's Retreat

This one-day training event is intended to generate interest and increase effective men's ministry in our churches. Congregational leadership teams are coached to develop a plan to reach more men, and enable their spiritual growth. The day begins sharply at 8 a.m. and ends at about 5 p.m. at the Olmsted Center, 114 Bayview Avenue, Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y. Cost is \$65 per person and includes training materials, breakfast, lunch and ice-cream social. For more information, contact Royston Bailey at 516-485-3723, or via email at roystonbailey27@gmail.com; or Ernie Searle at umc_nyac_umm@yahoo.com. To register, find the form online at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1570149.

10/24 & 11/7 Safe Sanctuaries Workshops

This workshop is designed for congregations who don't have a written Safe Sanctuaries Policy. The workshop prepares a core team of 4 or 5 people to work with the congregation to write a policy, as well as providing information on how to train trustees, teachers, parents and pastors on the implementation of that policy.

- **Saturday, Oct. 24:** Vanderveer Park UMC, 3114 Glenwood Road, Brooklyn, N.Y. Begins at 11 a.m. with leader Elizabeth Christie. Details at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/2102186.
- **Saturday, Nov. 7:** Pine Plains UMC, 2023 East Church Street, Pine Plains, N.Y. Begins at 10 a.m. with leader Cassandra Negri. Details at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/2235591.

10/24–25 Mark Miller Workshop & Concert

Composer, musician, educator, and social justice advocate, Mark Miller, will lead a workshop on "Music and Social Justice" from 4–6 p.m., October 24 at Community UMC in Massapequa, N.Y. A dinner will follow and then Miller will lead a concert featuring his own music and that of other composers. On Sunday, Oct. 25, Miller will preach and lead worship for the congregation. The church has joined with the conference

Connectional Ministries office and the Conference Board of Church and Society, to sponsor this event. Cost of the event is \$10 in advance of October 19, and \$15 at the door. To register, go to www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1864954.

10/29–30 Anti-Racism Training

"Effective Christian Leadership in a Multicultural World" will be held at the Olmsted Center in Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y., from 8:30 a.m. Thursday to 4 p.m. Friday. If you are clergy, a lay pastor, or a member of a District Committee on Ordained Ministry or conference Board of Ordained Ministry and you have not fulfilled your anti-racism requirement, this is your opportunity. You must be present the entire time to receive credit for completion of the training. The cost to participate is covered by the Committee on Religion and Race. Register at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1817631 by October 23.

11/2 Sexual Ethics Training

This training on boundaries will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the conference learning center in White Plains. Please contact Barbara Atchison in the Long Island East District office at 631-366-2396, or LIEdistrict@nyac-umc.com, for more information.

11/14 Starting a Healing Ministry

This workshop at Jesse Lee Memorial UMC is for all church leaders and pastors who would like to know more about starting or strengthening a Christ-centered healing prayer ministry. Topics will include prayer guidelines and Scriptural basis for physical healing and inner healing, and how to train and commission prayer teams. The workshop in the Carriage House at the Ridgefield, Conn. church is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with registration at 9:30. The \$15 fee includes lunch. Contact Pastor Debby Mygatt at dhmygatt@sbcglobal.net for registration information.

11/12–14 Bishop's Convocation

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton invites NYAC clergy and spouses to join her in a time of spiritual renewal at Villa Roma Resort in Callicoon, N.Y. Deb Clifford, the founder of Inspired Church, will lead three sessions for clergy on "The Pastor as Coach." Clifford works with leaders, teams, and church organizations to become strong, vibrant and inspired. Dr. Mackie Norris will lead three sessions for spouses and one joint session with clergy and spouses on health and wholeness. Register at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/1818625 on or before January 4 to receive the "early-bird" rates. Sign up for the Wednesday night talent show by contacting Enrique Lebron at lefam2k2@yahoo.com, or 631-805-1966.



The **Vision**

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

Bishop: **Jane Allen Middleton**

Editor: **Joanne Utley**

New York Conference of The United Methodist Church

20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606

Phone (888) 696-6922

Fax (914) 615-2244; Website: www.nyac.com

Vision e-mail: vision@nyac.com

Many Still Await Return Home After Sandy

Continued from page 1

there is much that remains to be done; and some have had some absolutely awful experiences during their recovery.

But today, as we approach the third anniversary of the storm, I'd like to focus on some good news, the good work that is being done; and especially the good work being done by the volunteers and staff of the NYAC Sandy Recovery Ministry.

Supported by grants from UMCOR, the American Red Cross, Newsday/McCormick, donations from individuals and churches, and the efforts of hundreds of volunteers from around the country, we have assisted almost 800 homeowners in their recovery in the last two years. In some cases we may have provided something as simple as a washer or dryer, and in other cases a near complete rebuild. We have provided disaster case management, emotional and spiritual care, and a "presence" in the midst of chaos.

With a number of volunteer and rebuild organizations either scaling down or "sunsetting" at the end of this year, we will be one of the few remaining through 2016.

This summer we were looking for a way to re-energize the NYAC Sandy volunteer effort. I brought the idea of our "Done in a Day" program to the bishop and extended cabinet for their consideration and participation.

At the meeting Bishop Jane Allen Middleton asked, "Why a day? Why not a week of service?" So, this past July the bishop and extended cabinet spent a week working on homes in Connecticut and Brooklyn, and visiting sites in Far Rockaway. It was a great experience for all; and everyone who participated said that they would go home and encourage others to be a part of this effort. Well, word has gotten around.

To date, we have more than 20 groups from different NYAC churches signed up or committed to serve as Done in a Day teams this fall. That is fabulous!

In closing, I could offer my thanks to the many who have supported this effort and encourage both new and repeat teams. And I do. But rather, let me close with the grateful words of a homeowner:

Continued on page 11



Tom Vencuss and Hannah Arnett discuss with Emily Bauer, right, their collaboration with the Friends of Rockaway, where Bauer is the client services manager.

Queens Coordinator Works To Make Homes, Future Safe

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY

Hannah Arnett, the conference's disaster recovery coordinator in Queens, works hand-in-hand with the Queens Recovery Coalition to rebuild the hurricane-damaged (and mostly neglected) areas of the borough. The group's taskforce brings together case managers, rebuilding agencies, and fund sources to expedite a homeowner's safe return. As of late September, the group had implemented the rebuilding of 53 homes in 2015; well of the way to meeting the goal of 60.

Arnett, who has a history of working with non-profits, began working for the conference in late January 2014.

At the time, while there was rebuilding going on, there was no structure of cooperation.

"We walked into a mess," Arnett said. So she jumped right in and found out where the meetings were being held and came to the table



Homes in Far Rockaway, like this one on the bay side, are still in need of repair nearly three years after Hurricane Sandy.

offering the resources of the conference and UMCOR. Since that time, conference volunteers and UMCOR funding has helped put 14 families

Continued on page 11

Beginning October 22—one week before the third anniversary of Hurricane Sandy—we will roll out a series of video interviews and stories about the continuing work of the conference to help families recover. Most of the stories are done by Rev. Art McClanahan, a former member of this conference, now handling communications in Iowa.

Tri-District Retreats: Learning To Say 'Yes'

In back-to-back clergy retreats in mid September, Bishop Robert Schnase shared strategies from his new book, *"Just Say Yes! Unleashing People for Ministry."* Schnase, who is the resident bishop for the Missouri Conference, challenged congregations to move from being a church that always says "no" to being a permission-giving church that welcomes new ideas, ministry initiatives, and creative people.

In her introduction of Schnase, Bishop Jane Allen Middleton challenged those gathered to work for the change to "be Christ loving, Christ proclaiming, be the church that God has called us to be."

In the sessions on September 14-16, Schnase met with the three northern districts on Monday and Tuesday, and the three southern districts on Tuesday and Wednesday at the Stony Point Retreat Center in Stony Point, N.Y.

Bishop Schnase suggested that churches find hundreds of ways to say "no," and that clergy need to identify the systems and attitudes that restrain and control ministry in order to change them. Sometimes it might be an individual, a committee, or "tradition" that is hindering new ministry. Even pastors can be guilty of saying "no."

Setting a clear mission and vision for the church can begin to move the culture in the right direction. He warned about getting bogged down in what he called "analysis paralysis" when considering new opportunities. Schnase cited examples of churches that embraced new ideas and experienced revitalization with refocused energy and an explosion of joy.

"Leaders of growing churches say yes to ministries that declining churches say no to," he noted. Schnase added that some of the best ideas for mission come not



Bishop Robert Schnase, above, said getting a church to say "yes" may be a slow process that needs lots of prayer and study together. Bishop Middleton, below left, and members of her cabinet offer communion at the close of the northern districts retreat.



from the center of church leadership but from the fringes.

"You don't fulfill mission at meetings, meetings should be about the margins," he said.

But he did admit that sometimes "no" is the right answer, especially if the activity or event does not align with the church's mission and priorities.

At the conclusion of Schnase's

session, Rev. Matt Curry, director of Connectional Ministries, asked clergy to name one thing that they would say "yes" to in their lives or ministry. Each pastor then paired with another to be held accountable for his or her decisions.

The retreats ended with the celebration of Holy Communion, presided over by Bishop Middleton.

5 Named Assisting Elders

In June, the annual conference voted to establish the position of assisting elder in each of the six districts. These assisting elders will work under the direction of the district superintendent to build covenantal community among clergy and lay leaders. This part-time, paid position is supported by the conference budget and subject to the policies developed by the conference personnel committee. The conference allotted \$20,000 per district, per year for this new position.

Elders are appointed to this position with the understanding that they will give first priority to the local churches they serve. Specific duties may include representing the district superintendent at certain events, support to churches with building projects, training and mentoring, conflict resolution, and supporting certified lay ministers.

Assisting elders announced thus far are:

Catskill Hudson District

- Dale Ashby of the Western Catskills Parish
- Karen Monk of the Kaaterskill and East Jewett Charge
- Charles Ryu of St. Paul's Church, Middletown, N.Y.

Metropolitan District

- William Smartt, retired

New York Connecticut District

- Vicky Fleming, serving the Larger Central Valley Parish

NEJ Leaders Urged to be Authentic, Vulnerable

Continued from page 1

grow as a result.

The NYAC made up the largest part of the gathering with some 100 members in attendance. Bishop Jane Allen Middleton said the group was encouraged to acknowledge the strengths of the conference with its gifted laity and clergy, and its unique location with New York City at its geographic center.

“We cannot ‘do’ ministry as we have always done it,” Middleton said. “It is clear that we need to be a permission-giving conference. And we must engage in radical love, the kind of love that can only be achieved through prayer.”

Pearson noted that the Northeastern Jurisdiction had never before had such a conference as “See Know Love.” The NEJ is made up of nine annual conferences from Maine to West Virginia. In addition to the weekend event, on Thursday, Oct. 1, about 200 bishops, district superintendents and other cabinet members came together for a day of learning and conversation.

Bishop Marcus Matthews of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, who is chair of the NEJ Vision Table, the group that sponsored “See Know Love,” said one continuous thread throughout the event was the reminder of the need to change.

The only way to stem the tide of church decline, the bishop said, is to work collectively. One of the big pieces of “See Know Love,” he said, was the chance for leaders to come together and learn from one another about what works, what doesn’t work, and how to lead effective transformation.

Leaders were challenged on Saturday by the Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, a Lutheran pastor from Denver, who is perhaps most famous for her many tattoos and the use of profanity during her sermons and speeches.

One of the key elements of transformational leadership, she said, was to be vulnerable and



PHOTOS BY JOHN BLOSSOM; BOLZ-WEBER PHOTO BY STEPHANIE PARSONS

Clockwise from above: NYAC members Jay Williams and Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé, first and fifth from right, help lead the closing communion service; Bishop Middleton participates in a table discussion; and speaker Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber.



authentic. Candid about being a member of Alcoholics Anonymous for 22 years, and her battles with drug addiction and depression, Bolz-Weber said that in the recovery groups who meet in the church basement, “sometimes, people are speaking more honestly there and connecting to God more there, and developing a life of prayer and connecting to a community there than they are in our sanctuaries.”

Bolz-Weber urged the church to increase its emphasis on witnessing to the faith.

“The Gospel is real,” she said. “Testimony has power when it’s based in the truths of our lives and how the Gospel relates to that.”

Rev. Albert Mosley, president of Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, offered theological reflections following each keynote presentation. He noted that transformational leaders have to be truth tellers.

“When you are authentic,” he said, “you can equip God’s people to speak truth about issues affecting the community and the world. When we are vulnerable and open

to our people, we can start the art of truth-telling.”

Mosley also stressed the need for leaders to have a vision, not only for their ministry, but also for their life. Aspirations are not vision and transformational leaders need to be disturbed by God to have that vision, he said.

“Transformational leaders encourage the congregation and themselves to reach out to the community,” Mosely said. “If you do that, what could happen?”

Fiona Haworth, former director

Continued on page 9



LEFT: Rev. Tim Riss urges the gathering not to be timid in their witness. ABOVE: A massed choir sang "Sanctus" during the offering.

Riss: Get Rid of Timidity, Speak Up

Continued from page 1

brought an unexpected symbol to Riss.

"Tim, take these pompons, and encourage us and cheer us in ministry," the couple said as they presented the shiny red gifts. Riss accepted the pompons with a grin and shook them above his head, a gesture that drew laughter and applause from the gathering.

In his message, Riss focused mainly on a reading from Esther and cautioned about being tentative as followers of Christ.

"When I look at my name, I think of the word timid," he began. "And I don't want to be a timid follower of Christ."

He noted that when we're unsure of our footing as Christians, we might find ourselves

being quiet in the world. People become afraid to speak up, afraid of what others may say about them. Esther faced the challenge of speaking up to save her people; it was a gesture that might cost her life. She responded tentatively.

"Esther was not as forthright as I'd like," Riss said. "She didn't say that this (the plan to massacre the Jewish people) was an injustice. Instead she appealed to the king's ego.

"We're not much better when we face the problems of the world," he noted. "We don't appeal to our strengths. We look for other people's weaknesses."

He suggested that church evangelism has slid into a place of timidity. Churches offer people a place where they will be comfortable,

and never challenged. And churches have gotten good at getting people to leave.

"We don't need scapegoats no matter what side of change you're on," Riss said. "We exclude people who are bothering us . . . because we want to be comfortable.

"We have all that we need [to speak up]. We just need to get rid of timidity," he concluded.

A massed choir made up of singers from across the district sang, "Sanctus," as the offering was received. The offering was to be divided between the Caring Hands Soup Kitchen of the Clinton Avenue UMC in Kingston, N.Y., and the Imagine No Malaria initiative.

The celebration ended with a time of fellowship and refreshments in the social hall.

Discover How Your Church Can be a Mission HUB

The New York Annual Conference is hosting a summit on November 7 to introduce churches to the unique ministry of being a "mission hub."

HUBs were first conceived at Mission Central, a ministry of the Susquehanna Conference, as a way to involve more people in disaster recovery and outreach efforts. Mission Central, based in Mechanicsburg, Penn., distributes the thousands of health kits, flood buckets, and school kits collected by the New York Conference. A HUB is a smaller version of Mission Central that is directed and managed by churches answering a call to expand their outreach ministries.

"The creation of a HUB is a powerful, faith-filled way to fulfill the gospel mandate to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," said Bishop Jane Allen Middleton,

who previously served the Susquehanna Conference. "I have witnessed churches coming alive in ministry through the creation of HUBs."

A HUB can be a storage space in a church or garage, a building no longer being used for other ministry, a barn or any facility that could serve such purposes.

Each HUB is encouraged to determine the scope of its individual ministry, based on the facility space they have, the number of volunteers available and the interests and service focus that is most important to that HUB location. Most HUBs collect and assemble UMCOR Kits that are used for disaster response and in support of mission work—locally, nationally and internationally. HUBs learn what is happening locally in their area and seek to find out how they can help fulfill basic

human needs . . . many times in support of other ministries and outreach projects in their area. Every HUB shares the common value of fellowship, service to God and service to others as their primary focus. How God calls each location to fulfill this focus is an exciting part of being a HUB.

God may be calling your church to do even more for your community and in ministry to the world by becoming a HUB.

For more information about the summit that will run from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the conference center, and to register, please contact Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, conference mission coordinator, at jewoodzie@nyac.com, or 914-615-2233. For more info on Mission Central and HUBs, go to <http://missioncentral.org/hubs/>.

GC16 Team Prepares for Legislative Assignments

The delegation from the New York Annual Conference has received their legislative committee assignments for the 2016 General Conference to be held May 10–20 in Portland Oregon. The team, led by Rev. Tim Riss and Fred Brewington, was elected in 2014 and includes lay members Carolyn Hardin Engelhardt, Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé, Dorothee E. Benz, and clergy, William Shillady, Noel Chin, and Denise Smartt Sears.

A main responsibility of General Conference is to address petitions submitted by any agency, organization, clergy or lay member to amend or add to *The Book of Discipline* or *Book of Resolutions*. General Conference will also set the general church budget for the coming quadrennium.

Each delegate is assigned to one of 12 legislative committees. With 864 total delegates in 2016 that places 72 people on each committee—with a balance of laity and clergy.

The legislative committees, their assignments, and the NYAC representative are:

1. **Church and Society 1:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the Board of Church and Society and the Social Principles, with the exception of paragraphs in *The Book of Discipline* dealing with the nurturing community and the social community. **NYAC delegate:** Rev. Denise Smartt Sears, Metropolitan District superintendent and first-time delegate.
2. **Church and Society 2:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the nurturing community and social community sections of the Social Principles. **NYAC delegate:** Lay person Dorothee E. Benz is a member of Memorial UMC in White Plains, former chair of Methodists in New Directions and a first-time delegate.
3. **Conferences:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the composition and activities of the General, jurisdictional, annual, provisional, missionary and district conferences. **NYAC delegate:** Lay person Carolyn Hardin Engelhardt, a member of Cheshire UMC and a veteran of three General Conferences.
4. **Discipleship:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the Board of Discipleship. **No NYAC representative.**
5. **Faith and Order:** Petitions relating to “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task,” “The Ministry of All Christians” and the meaning of ordination and conference membership. **No NYAC representative.**



6. **Financial Administration:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the Council on Finance and Administration, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the United Methodist Publishing House. The budget and recommendations prepared by the General Council on Finance and Administration are reviewed by this committee. **NYAC delegate:** Rev. William Shillady, executive director of the United Methodist City Society, is a GC delegate for the second time.
7. **General Administration:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the Connectional Table. **NYAC delegate:** Lay person Frederick K. Brewington is a member of Westbury UMC, co-chair of the delegation, and a GC delegate for the third time.
8. **Global Ministries:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the Board of Global Ministries. **NYAC delegate:** Rev. Timothy J. Riss, Catskill Hudson District superintendent, is attending his fifth General Conference as a delegate and serves as NYAC co-chair.
9. **Independent Commissions:** Petitions and resolutions relating to commissions and ecumenical concerns. The commissions include Archives and History, Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Communications, Religion and Race, the Status and Role of Women, and United Methodist Men. Ecumenical concerns relate to the denomination’s membership in or relationship with the World Methodist Council, the National Council of Churches, other councils and consultations of churches, and the American Bible Society. **NYAC delegate:** Lay person Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé, a first-time delegate, is a young adult representative who is attending Boston University School of Theology.
10. **Judicial Administration:** Petitions and resolutions relating to judiciary concerns and investigations, trials and appeals. **No NYAC representative.**
11. **Local Church:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the organization of the local

church and its membership, programs, boards, councils, commissions and committees, and local church property. **No NYAC representative.**

12. **Ministry and Higher Education/ Superintendency:** Petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of Ordained Ministries, Higher Education, Schools of Theology, the Division of Chaplaincy and Related Ministries, and to the work of superintendency and the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships and membership or relationship to the World Methodist Council, Councils and Consultations of Churches, and the American Bible Society. **NYAC delegate:** Rev. Noel Chin, pastor of First UMC in Mt. Vernon, N.Y., is a GC delegate for the third time.

During the first week of General Conference, the legislative committees prepare their recommendations to the full body regarding the petitions they have reviewed. In the second week, daily plenary sessions are conducted to receive recommendations of the legislative committees regarding the petitions they reviewed. A legislative committee may have recommended:

- Adoption, meaning it supports the petition “as is;”
- Adoption as amended, meaning it supports the legislation as amended; or
- Rejection, meaning it does not support the legislation.

With some recommendations, particularly the more controversial matters, the committees often present majority and minority recommendations to point out key points of disagreement.

Any committee items with fewer than 10 votes against can be put on the consent calendar with other items to be voted as a group. If an item is not removed by a written request of 20 delegates, and if it does not involve funding or a constitutional amendment, the entire consent calendar is approved with a single vote. This process enables the assembly to quickly deal with hundreds of legislative proposals.

Those petitions not on the consent calendar are considered separately by the plenary. Once the committee’s report and recommendation have been presented, the issue is open for floor debate, which alternates between speeches for and against through three rounds, at which point a vote is taken.

In general, all petitions require a majority

Continued on page 8

Worship in the Presence of ‘Coolest Pope Ever’

Maureen Dowd’s article in *The New York Times* provided evidence to support the T-shirt slogan, “Coolest Pope,” found on New York City streets. Think about it: Pope Francesco was once a nightclub bouncer, and now he turned the city upside down.

Nuns were seen tailgating before the Mass, and even pets were wearing miters as they went for their morning walk. This gentle awe-inspiring man came to share a word of hope to a city that is in great need. Scripture says that prophets are not welcome in their own hometown, but Pope Francis was compelled to come to these United States of America and speak a word of peace!

I, along with Bishop Jane Middleton, Rev. Dr. William Shillady, and Rev. Dr. Stephen Bauman had the privilege of attending the multi-religious gathering, “A Witness of Peace,” at the 9/11 Memorial Museum with Pope Francis. We sat among some religious leaders of New York City with a handful of politicians and engaged in a dialogue of the heart. We arrived very early in order to get through security screening which provided time for dialogue with representatives of various faiths. I had a meaningful conversation with a Rabbi Diane Gerson.

Before the prayer service began we were informed that the pope would process down our aisle, and since I was seated in the second seat

in the row, I gracefully extended my hand into the aisle. Pope Francis grasped my hand and with his right hand and blessed me. I looked into his eyes for one fleeting moment and knew that I was part of something wonderful, incredible, and only God could get the glory!

Once the service began Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove and Iman Khalid Latif moved to the center of the stage and embraced with an endearing hug and proceeded to their respective podiums to offer their prayers. What an act of peace! Pope Francis began his prayer by seeking peace for all those who had died on this hallowed ground, and for those who suffered the loss of loved ones.

“God of peace, bring your peace to our violent world: peace in the hearts of all men and women and peace among the nations of the earth.

*Turn to your way of love
Those whose hearts and minds
Are consumed with hatred
And who justify killing in the name of
religion.”*

Pope Francis preached against elitism both in and out of the Catholic Church. In a manner of speaking, he was challenging “the old boys club” as well. I believe there is still hope. Pope Francis said in his message on Friday that it is possible for us to speak together through differences of language, religion, and culture; to



PHOTO BY WILLIAM SHILLADY

Pope Francis enters the 9/11 Memorial Museum for an interfaith service on September 25.

throw away feelings of hatred, to listen to one another so as to live in peace.

On this day Pope Francis’ presence brought together Jews, Muslims, Greek Orthodox, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Janis, Zoroastrians, members of six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy and Christians.

What a tremendous blessing, sense of hope and inspiration Pope Francis brought. I shall always treasure that blessed day!

Peace,

Denise Smartt Sears

#CTTalks Launched to Prep for GC2016

The Connectional Table is launching a series of weekly videos in October to help inform United Methodist church leaders and General Conference delegates leading up to the 2016 General Conference next May. The videos are part of an online forum called #CTTalks.

“#CTTalks is intended to provide a way of engaging information about General Conference, rather than simply reading it,” said the Rev. Dr. Amy Valdez Barker, executive secretary of The Connectional Table. “Our goal is to invite people to engage in the conversation before we get to Portland.”

The #CTTalks forum is designed to be used by delegations and annual conferences as they study and discuss issues that will be addressed at General Conference 2016. These weekly posts will include interviews with United Methodist bishops, Connectional Table members, and other leaders from across the denomination.

A one-page conversation sheet will accompany each video with FAQs on the topic, as well as questions for delegates to use to continue the dialogue. The videos and the

conversation sheets will be available at www.umc.org/who-we-are/cttalks-conversations-about-general-conference.

Delegates are invited to ask questions of the interviewees in advance via Twitter using the hashtag #CTTalks. Individual delegates and entire delegations can use the resource to help prepare for General Conference.

The following is the proposed schedule for #CTTalks topics:

- October: General Conference Culture for 2016
- November: Christian Conferencing
- December: Vital Congregations—Paragraph 120
- January: Worldwide Nature—Our Theology
- February: Worldwide Nature—Our Organization/Structure
- April: Stronger Together: VC—Four Strategic Directions for 2017–2020
- May 6: Welcome to Portland

General Conference will be held May 10–20, 2016, in Portland, Oregon.

NYAC Submits 19 GC Petitions

Continued from page 7

approval of the voting delegates; changes to the constitution require a two-thirds majority approval and subsequent ratification by two-thirds of the members of the annual conferences.

Any vote taken by General Conference that produces a change to *The Book of Discipline* or *Book of Resolutions* either goes into effect at the start of the next calendar year unless the motion on the floor specifies that it takes place immediately.

A legislation tracker for the 2016 General Conference, will be linked to the web site, www.umc.org/who-we-are/general-conference-2016, in April 2016. To read the 19 petitions that the New York Conference submitted to General Conference, go to: www.nyac.com/files/fileslibrary/2015-nyac-approved-2016-general-conference-petitions.pdf.

Working to End What Hinders Abundant Life

BY REV. WILLIAM TOWNSEND
Director of Spiritual Life

What would you wish for? If you could make one wish that you knew would be granted, what would that wish be?

Three men were marooned on a desert island. As the days slowly went by, they dreamed of what it would be like to be at home with their friends and family and to be back at their jobs doing the things they loved. One day one of the men found a bottle that contained a genie. He opened the bottle and the genie announced that he would grant each of them one wish.

One of the men said, "Boy, I wish I was back in Seattle with my wife and kids." POOF, he was gone.

The second man immediately said, "I wish I was back in Portland with my fiancé." In a flash he also was gone.

The third man was left all alone sitting on the sandy beach, staring out to sea. He said, "Boy, it's really lonely with my friends gone. I sure wish they were back here with me again." And POOF, they were back!



What if you could wish one thing for the children around you? What would that wish be?

One child recently offered a suggestion: "I wish for the kids at the Children's Home to have a good life and a happy ever after." Wouldn't it be wonderful if every child in every corner of the world could live a good and happy life? Who could wish them anything less?

No matter how troubled or troubling the child, would you wish anything but happiness, contentment, and success for each and every one of them?

Individually as children of God, and collectively as the church, we are called to join with Jesus in his mission to bring abundant life to all God's people, and especially to the children. That means that we must first pay attention to what is robbing the children around us of life in all its fullness—things

like poverty, abuse, addiction, crime, mental illness, bullying, and learning disabilities.

Then we must stand with the young people against those forces so that they might have not just life, but life in abundance. For at-risk children and youth, an abundant life might be moving to a foster home or finding an adoptive family. It might be living in an environment with consistent expectations and predictable outcomes.

Abundant living might be a warm bed or a hot meal. It might be freedom from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. It might be release from dependence on drugs or alcohol.

Ultimately, abundant living is having a sense of security, identity, and belonging. Together, as the people of God, we can begin to turn their wishes into reality.

For more information on the Children's Home, call 800-772-6904, ext. 131, or visit the web site at www.chowc.org. To schedule a presentation about the Children's Home, contact Margaret Tatich, ext 131. Please feel free to send donations directly, or use the New York Conference advance number 60-0588.

NEJ Leaders Urged to be Authentic, Vulnerable

Continued from page 5

of talent for Southwest Airlines, spoke about "vision" at the event, challenging leaders to always be curious.

"It's not the vision itself that's important, but what the vision does," she said,

Also speaking at "See Know Love" were leaders of The Chapel, a United Methodist church in Brunswick, Ga., who offered insights into the accountability of discipleship making.

"In my 40-plus years of being a part of this jurisdiction," Bishop Matthews said, "this is the first (event) to my knowledge where we pull together bishops, district superintendents, treasurers, executive staff persons in to an arena where we have a conversation about how we can take this stuff as leaders and make it happen."

As the various ministry groups meet beyond the event, the bishop said, it is the hope of the Vision Table that the experience of "See Know Love" continues to shape and grow the church. "The possibilities of what we can do together," he said, "are unlimited."

Bishop Middleton was also hopeful about the possibilities.

"I left this event more committed than ever to partnering with our conference in seeking a spiritual revival which will inspire all that we do," she said. "We must, most of all,

depend on Jesus!"

A handful of NYAC clergy in attendance shared what they took away from the conference:

Pastor Romana Abelova

As followers of Christ and his church, we strive to be aware of what is happening in our society and around us. We struggle to be aware when we lock ourselves in our beautifully decorated churches and offices. *(From Dr. Albert Mosley)*

Rev. Wongee Joh

Transformational leadership is one in which the power is effective because the personal narrative witnesses to the Gospel. We know way too often that power can do much harm. *(From Nadia Bolz-Weber)*

In sermon writing, she listens for how the Good News challenges her or takes her where she does not want to go. She is open to being called out and facing that exposure (making her vulnerable) which is what holds her accountable . . . Her authenticity/powerful witness to the Gospel is based on her practice of accountability to the Gospel and her response (responsibility to be a bearer of that Good News. *(From Nadia Bolz-Weber)*

Nadia Bolz-Weber's phrase, "The Holy Spirit doesn't give a shit!" provides a tool that I can use in my own discernment as I make decisions as a person in leadership. It challenges me—especially when I operate under powers other than the Holy Spirit . . . It can help . . . challenge me to make responsible and accountable decisions in the presence of the Spirit.

Rev. Gene Ott

Being vulnerable as a pastor allows the church to move past the illusion that everyone here today is okay, even though we all know we're not. *(From Nadia Bolz-Weber)*

Pastor Susan Chupungco

The good news is that the God we serve can use broken, sinful, people to do amazing things. The good news is always about God, not about us. It is never our own merit, but the external power of God that does the work. *(From Nadia Bolz-Weber)*

We need authentic leaders because every time young people look behind the curtain they find scared little men and women pretending to be big. As leaders we should never apologize for who we are (especially women) and we must admit when we are wrong. *(From Nadia Bolz-Weber)*

Changing Christian Mission for Global Diaspora

Editor's note: Representatives from various United Methodist agencies met Sept. 26–27 in Washington, D.C., to share information about what is being done regarding the immigration crisis in Europe and in the United States. The Immigration Task Force, led by Bishop Minerva Carcaño, gathered representatives from seven United Methodist general church groups: Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Committee on Relief, Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Communications, MARCHA (Hispanic Caucus) and Middle Eastern Caucus.

BY JACOB DHARMARAJ, PH.D.

Having a conversation about the current global diaspora in order to find a speedy solution is like trying to nail JELL-O on a tree, as everything about human diaspora is fluid and flowing. That was how I felt this past weekend when I was in Washington, D.C., for the denomination's Immigration Task Force meeting.

There is much complexity in the cause, process, and consequence of global diaspora, and no single discipline can explain the cause or offer solutions. Diaspora mission is interdisciplinary, vast and varied. It involves national geography, cultural anthropology, political demography, mass communication, globalization, urbanization, ethnic and race relations, and active participation of multi-religious groups and communal agents at all levels. Most importantly, diaspora mission is multi-directional and it demands multilevel coordination and collaboration.

Now that the global community has come to realize that governments around the world must act immediately to alleviate the sufferings of the immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the United Methodist Church, along with its ecumenical partners and connectional components, is also determined to step in and take an active role in this vital ministry.

Diaspora and Migration

Migration is a phenomenon that has accompanied humanity since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. But the recent forced migration has been accelerated by modern-day globalization, wars, natural disasters, and intense persecution of vulnerable minorities because of their religious convictions and racial or ethnic identities.

Today, a little more than three percent the world's population lives in a country other than where they were born. That is estimated at 250



UNHCR PHOTO/MARK HENLEY

Refugees, mostly Syrian, waiting in the rain for permission to move into a yard to take buses for their onward journey into Austria, as more continue to arrive behind.

COMMENTARY

million, up from 195 million in 2005. Females account for 49 percent of the total. Six out of every ten international migrants (130 million) reside today in developed countries, and the majority of those (75 million) originated in developing countries. This reality has deep implications not only for interactions among peoples and their religious beliefs but on Christian mission as well.

Diasporic mission is a relatively new area of mission engagement for the church. It defies conventional modes of mission engagement which is lineal and mono-directional—sending rather than receiving, absorption rather than incorporation, assimilation rather than amalgamation. Unlike traditional mission, diaspora mission puts human physical needs ahead of spiritual needs, advocacy ahead of evangelism, and contextualization ahead of church planting.

Diaspora mission operates from a non-spatial, transnational, global, and “de-territorialized” zone. The missional approach, therefore, is mobile and flexible. In other words, the site of mission engagement in diasporic context is without social, cultural and religious boundaries, which are normative in traditional mission activities.

Believers Being *In-Betweeners*

The current cultural, social, linguistic and religious divides are a formidable and complicated ball of wax. They call for people who have both skill and will to transcend culture, language, and other barriers; those who can serve as “in-betweeners” to build bridges of understanding, mediate relationships, and negotiate partnerships in ministry, as Paul Hiebert, a missionary and a mission theologian has said.

What our changed world expects from the church today is to focus its attention from mere relief work to justice and advocacy ministries beginning with addressing the root causes of the problem.

The changed world demands a changed methodology. Just like the government agencies that alert and prepare people long before tsunami, tornado, earthquake, and all forms of natural disasters occur, or even before human health crises break out, Christian mission groups can set up one or more research centers and prepare an ongoing database to alert the appropriate mission agencies and groups about the looming or emerging problems. This can easily be in collaboration with our ecumenical partners and secular prophets like environmentalists, human-rights activists and others.

Continued on page 12

Never Too Old to Be Faithful Example

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministries

She is 89 years old and is the secretary of the church. I had no idea of her age when I arrived there as the interim pastor about a month ago. All I knew of her was that the Staff Parish Relations Committee had told me, "If you need to know anything we have not told you about the church, ask Lois." Obviously they have a great deal of love and respect for her wisdom and ability. In just the month I've worked with her it is clear why they feel this way. How I discovered her age was when she told me she was thinking of cutting back from four half days a week to three. She was certain it might save the church a little bit of money. Besides, she said, "I am 89 years old." Wow! Good for you Lois.

Good for anyone who knows that aging may bring limitations, but does not necessarily bring an end to contributing to life. I've been thinking of so many older adults who defy the notion that it is necessary to stop doing so because a certain birthday has been reached. My years spent as director of spiritual life at United Methodist Homes has allowed me the privilege of meeting so many who "just keep going"—living life fully and meaningfully.

What really got these thoughts going was the arrival of Pope Francis in the United States. Here is a 78-year-old speaking words of truth to power, moving his flock and so many others to see from a different vantage point. Do I agree with every position he takes? No, I do not. But he unequivocally demonstrates ways of putting flesh on the commandment to love our neighbor. He pointedly says the immigrant is our neighbor and God's gift to us. He directly challenges us to be aware that Jesus' teaching about peace making is still the way. He shows a vitality of faith that is unwavering. He is inspirational and we can hope, transformational. And he is 78 years old.

Now most of us might never be able to influence so many, no matter our age. But all of us, regardless our age, can influence some, because of our faith-inspired life and attitudes. We, the church, too often forget this truth and fail to challenge everyone of every age to speak and live the truth we find in Jesus. We can do better!



PHOTO BY JOANNE UTLEY

Rev. Tom Vencuss , left, listens in as NYAC coordinator for Queens, Hannah Arnett, right, leads a session of the Queens Recovery Coalition in Far Rockaway. The coalition brings together case workers, labor and funding to get people back into their homes more quickly.

Sandy Victims Grateful For Help to Return Home

Continued from page 3

Dear Pastor Tom and the people of the United Methodist Church,

As some of you know, my life has been turned upside down over the last several years by the events of Hurricane Sandy. It is only through the unselfishness and kind, caring thoughtfulness of the people and volunteers, that I was able to get through this with my sanity and move forward. It is always amazing to see people helping each other in times of need, though I never thought it would be me who needed help.

I would like to express my appreciation for all those who spent much of their free time helping with the rebuilding of my home. It has really made a huge difference. Without your help

I would still be living in one heck of a mess.

I finally finished completely this June and am currently waiting for my home to be raised. As I once said to Tom, "You people put your money where your mouth is; you don't just talk about doing good, you do it." God bless you all! I THANK YOU.

Sincerely,
Tom K.

That's Good News.

If you would like to schedule a Done in a Day team, please contact Barbara Burnside at sandyrecovery@nyac-umc.com. If you know of a Sandy-affected family in need, contact Tom Vencuss at tvencuss@nyac.com.

Working to Make Homes, Future Safe

Continued from page 3

back in their homes in Queens.

When Hurricane Sandy hit in 2012, Arnett was living in Brooklyn and felt a strong call to help in the recovery. As the daughter of a Methodist pastor, she went online and researched UMCOR.

"I liked the message," she said. "It fit with my values."

Arnett sees advocacy as a key part of her work. She loves to see people return to their homes, but also wants the community better

prepared to handle similar disasters in the future.

"Advocacy can lead to more money to help people get back into their homes," she said. "Early on in the recovery, lots of money didn't go where it was needed," she explained. Her goal is to work with other groups to create an infrastructure to deal with disasters in the future.

"What happens in the storm is only the first of many disasters to come" for these families, she said.

OBITUARIES

Pastor Arlene Penney

Pastor Arlene Penney, who had served as a local pastor, passed away on September 21 in St. Augustine, Fla. A former resident of Summitville, N.Y., she died just days before her 92nd birthday.

A lifelong member of the United Methodist Church, Penney returned to college at age 62 to pursue her dream of becoming a pastor. She attended Wesleyan Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., and served churches in Catskills including Ridgebury, White Sulphur Springs, Philmont, Mountain View, and Narrowsburg, N.Y. Penney was known for her ability to weave together current events and scripture into meaningful sermons.

After her retirement in 1992, Penney moved to St. Augustine where she continued her ministry in outreach and visitation at the First United Methodist Church.

Penney was involved in the Wurtsboro Historical Society and Mamakating Ambulance Corps. She was an avid genealogist and historian. Penney's home was a welcome place for family, friends and the many dogs she adopted.

She is survived by two sons, Larry and Frank; and a daughter, Laura; nine grandchildren; a brother Harold and a sister Gale; and several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life was held at September 28 at the First UMC in St. Augustine, with Pastor Pat Turner-Sharpston officiating. Donations in Penney's memory may be made to the St. Augustine Church, 118 King Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084, or to your local animal shelter.

Amy Beveridge

Amy Margaret Anderson Beveridge died at home on September 9, at age 72. She was the widow of the Rev. Dr. Thomas F. Beveridge, who retired from the New York Annual Conference in 2002 and died in October 2014.

She received a bachelor of arts degree from Drew University and a master of arts degree from Vermont College of Norwich University. Beveridge worked for 23 years at the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ and was a member of the Order of Saint Luke. The couple were dedicated members of Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford where they served in many capacities; she as a lay pastoral care coordinator.

Beveridge also supported the work of Church Street Eats, the cathedral's feeding program for the homeless. She was active in the women's global mission group that helps bring attention to issues such as human trafficking.

She enjoyed gardening, calligraphy, and knitting, and was a member of several book and knitting groups.

She is survived by her son, Thomas Andrew Beveridge, of Wilmington, N.C.

A funeral was held on September 15 at Christ Church Cathedral with burial in the cathedral's Memorial Gardens.

Gifts in Beveridge's memory may be made to Church Street Eats, Christ Church Cathedral, 45 Church Street, Hartford, CT 06103. Condolences may be sent to the Beveridge family at PO Box 891, Bloomfield, CT 06002.

Home Depot Helps Pay for 'Strength for Service'

A total of 1,017 United Methodist Churches have spent \$1.12 million at Home Depot stores.

Under an agreement arranged by the General Council on Finance and Administration, those purchases will produce \$45,000, an amount that will provide 6,428 spiritual treasures to members of the U.S. Armed Services, fire fighters, police officers, and other first responders.

Bobby Smith, an executive with Home Depot, told the Strength for Service Board members that if more churches would register, the possibilities of providing spiritual support for thousands of veterans, active troops and first responders is enormous.

Meeting Sept 25–26 at the offices of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, Smith told the non-denominational board the agreement to provide three percent of the purchase amounts spent on local church programs will extend to Dec. 31, 2017.

"The dynamics and commitment of this board is unbelievable," said L.W. Smith, a South Carolina United Methodist layman, who chairs the 12-member board of directors. "Our mission to 'serve those who serve' is in good hands. We look forward to communicating how everyone can participate and assist to make our resources available to our military and first responders. God is good."

To learn how to register for the program, go to: www.strengthforservice.org/home-depot-taps-strength-for-service-as-recipient-of-rebate-program/.

Changing Christian Mission

Continued from page 10

I am not saying that this is a utopian project, but at least it will help those who are interested in the future of the church. A new methodology might look something like this:

- Create a "data lake" for mission that will specifically focus on global diaspora. It should be primarily designed for storing unstructured and semi-structured migration data and their causes. It can be used as repositories for data the church is not using presently but may need to access in the future and will help when we will be leveraging it in the future.
- Create a "data pond": After a data lake program is up and running, we can find some specific people to analyze that data and give us some insights in the denominational level so that the UMC can pick up a few manageable projects.
- Create a "data basin" at the conference level. This basin will be a lot more manageable than a data lake or data pond.
- Create a "data bowl" or "data cup" for the local church/individuals so that the local congregation may engage in bite-size, achievable, and realistic projects.

In the final analysis, diasporic mission is not about doing the same thing in a better way. Better is a mirage. It keeps us tethered to doing the same things that others do. Better is temporary. It is a flimsy edge that can easily be tumbled over.

Diasporic mission is all about avoiding the crises that can take on epic proportions. This requires a different missiological paradigm from which new mission strategies and action plans are developed with the help of our ecumenical partners and multi-faith alliance. Addressing the root causes of the problem is to strive for long-term solutions and avoid Band-Aid relief.

Rev. Dr. Jacob S. Dharmaraj is president of the National Federation of Asian American United Methodists.

To assist in the crisis by donating to UMCOR, go to: www.umcor.org/umcor/programs/disaster-response/international-disaster-response/europemigrants.

GBGM Joins Global Health Strategy for Women, Kids

The General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church is one of the earliest faith-based participants in “Every Woman Every Child: The Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health,” an initiative of the United Nations.

“We were asked to apply and are gratified to be identified with Every Woman Every Child, which directly relates to the global health focus area of The United Methodist Church and to our emerging health emphasis, Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children,” said Thomas Kemper, chief executive of Global Ministries, in announcing the relationship.

“We pledge to the world to reach one million children with life-saving interventions between 2016 and 2020, and we are asking the 2016 United Methodist General Conference, which legislates for the church, to endorse the campaign,” Kemper said. The announcement

came on October 5 during the annual meeting of the directors of the global mission agency.

“We want governments, foundations, and corporations to know that physical, as well as spiritual and emotional health, are priorities for our church and has been for more than 250 years,” he said. “We stand ready to collaborate with a wide range of health agencies interested in providing preventive and palliative services in just, caring, humane ways.”

Global Ministries this year reconstituted a distinct unit on global health that consolidates a number of existing programs, adds new staff, and widens health outreach. The renewed emphasis on health was inspired in part by the enthusiastic United Methodist response to Imagine No Malaria, a program through which the church worked through its own contacts and other partners in reducing deaths from malaria in Africa.

UMC Hosts Evangelism Conference

Denominational leaders, seminary faculty and local church practitioners from the United States and Canada, who either work or teach in the field of evangelism, will convene in Nashville at the end of this month for a historic meeting to discuss how to reclaim evangelism in today’s world.

“The United Methodist Church and Discipleship Ministries are proud to be hosting the first-ever ecumenical conference in North America that includes representatives from the Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic faiths,” said Dr. Timothy L. Bias, general secretary of Discipleship Ministries.

The event, “Reclaiming Evangelism: Celebrating Change and Collaboration,” will be held Oct. 29–Nov. 2 at the Discipleship Ministries office. The group of about 60 people also will include representatives from Pentecostal denominations, Orthodox Christians and Catholic theologians. The conference is being organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC), in consultation with the Canadian Council of Churches and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.

The impetus for the conference came from

the Geneva-headquartered WCC, which is organizing similar events in South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

“The WCC brought us together in Atlanta to dream about what topics we should discuss,” said Heather Lear, director of Evangelism Ministries at Discipleship Ministries. “The topics are contextualized, so the things we’ll be talking about here might not be the same things they are talking about at the Asia conference.”

Each day’s presentations and discussions will center on one of three primary topics: reclaiming evangelism—theological reflection, sharing inspiring evangelist practices from our communities, and reclaiming evangelism in theological education.

JOB OPPORTUNITY: Music Director

Fishkill United Methodist Church seeks a part-time music director proficient in piano and organ to direct, accompany and coordinate music for Sunday morning and special worship services; and direct a vocal choir and provide leadership for the music ministry. The candidate will participate in worship planning. Music training and experience required. Salary is \$11,000 a year. Please submit letter of interest with resume to fishkillumc@yahoo.com, or Fishkill UMC, 38 Broad St., Fishkill NY 12524.

Appointments Change for 3

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton announces the following appointments which were effective October 1:

Daniel Cho to First UMC, Flushing, associate; he had been serving Island Park UMC (LFT) and United Methodist Korean Church of Astoria (LFT).

Prince Donkor to Island Park United Methodist Church (LFT); Donkor had been serving Andrews UMC (LFT).

Samuel Arhin to Andrews UMC (LFT); will continue to serve Ghana Wesley UMC (LFT).

Wespath Backs Riverhead Housing

Wespath Investment Management, through its Positive Social Purpose Lending Program and in partnership with the Community Preservation Corporation, purchased a participation in a loan to help finance an assisted living development at 260 West Main Street in Riverhead, N.Y. The development will offer 50 studio apartments for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. The project benefits from an annual contract through The New York State Office of Mental Health that funds services for residents as well as debt service payments of the property.

Wespath is the investment management division of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. This lending program promotes affordable housing, community development and expanded loan opportunities in poor, under-served communities around the world, and has loaned out \$1.8 billion in 20 years.