

"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

January 2016



January 30 Prayer Vigil

See details on Page 3

Yim Named To Lead LIE District

Dear Beloved Sisters and Brothers:

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ!

I am pleased to announce that Reverend Julia Yeon-Hee Yim will be appointed as superintendent of the Long Island East District effective July 1. Rev. Adrienne Brewington will completing her 8-year term as Long Island East District superintendent this year. I know that Rev. Yim will follow the legacy that is left to her with similar zeal and commitment.

Rev. Yim, who pastors the Warwick United Methodist Church, has served a variety of churches, has held many district- and conference-level leadership responsibilities, and most of all, brings a passion to serve Christ and the people of God.

She is respected by clergy and laity as one who truly loves Jesus. She currently serves as member



Rev. Julia Yeon-Hee Yim

of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Board of Ordained Ministry and as chair of the NY/CT District Committee on Ordained Ministry. Rev. Yim is a graduate of Barnard College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

During this transition, please pray for Reverend Yim, for the congregation of the Warwick UMC, and the LIE District.

In Christ's love,

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton

THE PHILIPPINES

Missionaries Raise Up A Choir & Chickens

This December newsletter comes from Revs. Grace and Jay Choi, originally from South Korea, who are missionaries of the General Board of Global Ministries. They are assigned at Harris Memorial College (HMC) and Union Theological Seminary (UTS), respectively, both in the Philippines.

For Grace, donations may be made through Advance #13974Z, and for Jay, #13973Z.

Before, Christmas in the Philippines was about *simbang gabi* ("night mass") and *parol* ("an ornamental, star-shaped Christmas lantern"). It is now about jam-packed malls and traffic. It seems like people are searching for something. We pray that they find Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. In this season, we listen to a silent Eucharist prayer from First Clement: "Master, be our helper and protector. Save those

among us who are in distress; have mercy on the humble; raise up the fallen; show your self to those in need; heal the sick; turn back those of your people who wander; feed the hungry; ransom our prisoners; raise up the weak; comfort the discouraged. Let all the nations

know that you are the only God ..."

Choraliers on TV

The Choraliers, the representative choir of Harris directed by Grace, sang at Unang Hirit, a nationwide morning news and talk show

aired by GMA Network.

The celebration was not only of the Choraliers but also of all Harrisians. The students who participated were filled with excitement for the once in a lifetime experience. Not only that, the alumni of Harris Memorial College, serving in all over the Philippines,

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Missionaries Grace and Jay Choi



A hut and garden at Goshen was a backdrop for discussions on God and land.



1/12–14 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.

1/18–19 Conference Office Closed

The New York Conference Center in White Plains will be closed for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

2/18, 25 & 3/3 Mercy and Justice Webinar

From food pantries to global missions, faith communities are known for their acts of mercy and charity that benefit their broader communities and the world. But what does it mean for people of faith to address the root causes of injustice? Katey Zeh will offer a three-part webinar, "When Mercy and Justice Meet: Advocacy for Clergy and Congregations," hosted by the Drew Theological School. Each session will provide the practical steps needed to develop and execute an action plan, including building partnerships, setting goals, engaging volunteers, and working with policymakers. Cost is \$20 per session, and .5 CEU credits are available for \$17.50. To register, go to drew.edu/advocacy.

2/20 Immigrant Welcoming Training

Join the journey to become an immigrant welcoming community where churches will be equipped to travel from mercy to justice, from service-only to incarnational friendship, from ministering to be transformed alongside. This event, sponsored by the NYAC Immigration Task Force, is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the NYAC Learning Center in White Plains. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Register by February 8 at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/2122536. For more information contact: Bruce Lamb, assistant coordinator, Social Justice, Engagement and Advocacy bruce.lamb@nyac-umc.com

2/20 Lay Servant Training Begins

The Long Island East District will hold training sessions for local church and certified lay servants at the Westbury and Hamptons Bays

churches on February 20, 27, and March 5, 12 and 19. Contact the LIE District office at 631-366-2396, or liedistrict@nyac-umc.com.

4/4–8 Pastors/Spouses Health Clinic

Twice a year, New York Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn opens its doors to 12 clergy and/or spouses for a four-day clinic in which major diagnostic tests and consultations are made available. To apply for the next clinic, download a brochure and registration form at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/198565, or contact Rev. Elizabeth Braddon at elizabeth.braddon@gmail.com, indicating your interest. Registration is very limited, so do not delay.

7/22–24 "Mission u" On the Move

"Mission u" will be meeting all under one roof at the Stamford Hilton in Stamford, Conn. The studies will include the Bible and human sexuality, Latin America, and climate justice. Additional details will be available at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/3167094.

8/29–31 Global UM Clergywomen Gathering 2016


Under the theme: "ONE: Birthing a Worldwide Church," United Methodist clergywomen will gather at the World Methodist Conference at the Hilton-Americas Hotel and Conference Center in Houston. This gathering will serve as the culmination of regional gatherings of United Methodist clergywomen that have taken place throughout the connection. Meeting in conjunction with the World Methodist Conference will strengthen the Methodist identity and understanding of the United Methodist clergywomen, as well as provide them with additional leadership-building education and networking. Use this shortened link, <http://bit.ly/1YYvhkh>, to go to the registration page. If you have any questions please contact clergy lifelonglearning@gbhem.org.

10/1 Prison Ministry Symposium

The Conference Board of Church & Society will present a conference-wide symposium entitled, "I Was In Prison And You . . ." from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Grace UMC, 125 104th St, N.Y., N.Y.

Got an Event to Share?

We welcome the opportunity to help publicize events that have a wide appeal to people across the conference in *The Vision*. To make it easier to publish your event, please send the information as a simple Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx suffix). Do not send it as a completed flyer, poster or as a PDF. Your event information will most likely appear on the "Save the Date" page. Email the event details directly to vision@nyac.com, and be sure to include contact information. The deadline for all 2016 issues is the *first Friday* of each month, with posting to the web site approximately 10 days later.

 <p>The Vision</p>
<p>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</p>
<p>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</p>

Challenge to Tackle Prison Ministry

Did you make a New Year's resolution? For many of us, January brings pledges of better health habits, renewed dedication to prayer, goals for improvement of mind. As we move through this month, the Covenant Prayer of Watch Night, said with such gusto on the eve of 2016, now needs means of fulfillment. How can we be "put to doing?"

The 2013 annual conference prison initiative resolution can help! As Rev. John Collins says, "The prison initiative offers churches and individuals an opportunity to respond to one of the most pressing domestic issues, that of mass incarceration, through prison visitation, corresponding with prisoners, teaching in prison, receiving prisoners into our churches and generally supporting re-entry into society for the formerly incarcerated." The resolution can be found at this shortened link, <http://bit.ly/10ForPr>.

When passed by the conference in 2013, this three-year plan invited a broad-based participation in a "prison initiative covenant." As we enter the last year of this initiative, the Conference Board of Church and Society will be highlighting a number of challenges and opportunities for churches



and individuals, culminating in an all-day symposium on prison ministry issues entitled, "I was in prison and you . . ." on October 1, at Grace UMC, 125 W. 104th Street, Manhattan.

One of the provisions of the covenant calls for "setting up church study groups using books such as "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander, or "The Cross and the Lynching Tree" by the Rev. Dr. James Cone. A new study guide on Dr. Cone's book developed by the CBCS, makes a great Lenten group study and will kick start your prison initiative covenant. It's available on the web site at www.nyac.com/cbcs.

So, don't let your New Year's resolutions languish. Take up the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer challenge by reading the prison initiative resolution and picking a few things that you and your church can do. Engaging in a study of "The Cross and the Lynching Tree" will give you a base of discussion, prayer and reflection so that this covenant made on earth will be "ratified in heaven."

If you have any questions, please contact CBCS coordinator Sheila Peiffer at churchandsociety@nyac-umc.com.

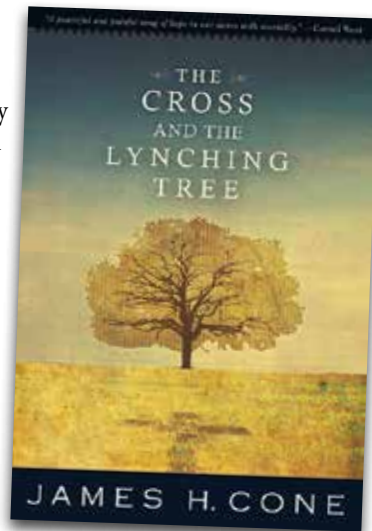
Lenten Study Guide Offered for Cone Book

"*The Cross and the Lynching Tree*" by Dr. James Cone provides a provocative and relevant Lenten study for small groups in church congregations. Not only is the book a timely reflection on racism in this time of "Black Lives Matter" and tragedies like the Charleston church massacre, but also this theological work provides deep insights into what our primary Christian symbol really means and how the paradox of the cross informs our faith and contemporary experience.

Cone, known as the founder of black liberation theology, is the Charles A. Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

The Conference Board of Church and Society has prepared a simple but comprehensive study guide for a six-week program that includes everything you need in one downloadable booklet: discussion questions, prayers, hymns and a video. This "powerful and painful song for hope" is a perfect fit for Lent! The

free download is available on the CBCS page on the conference web site at www.nyac.com/cbcs. If you have any questions, please contact CBCS coordinator Sheila Peiffer at churchandsociety@nyac-umc.com.



Conference Prayer Vigil To Lift Up GC2016

On Saturday, January 30, individuals, groups, and congregations from across the New York Conference will lift up prayers for the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, which meets May 10–20, in Portland, Oregon.

The observance comes at the invitation of the Council of Bishops for all 131 annual conferences to host a 24-hour prayer effort on a specific date, with the intent of creating a groundswell of prayer in the days leading up to the General Conference. The vigils began on December 31.

As the spiritual leaders of the UMC, the Council of Bishops conceived the plan for a prayer vigil as a meaningful way to focus spiritually on the experience, as well as to surround the delegates and church leaders with prayer for a General Conference that inspires us in our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton is encouraging the members of the NYAC to go to the web site to sign up for a specific time during the 24-hour period. The number of people who can sign up for any one hour is unlimited. Please consider including all of the various age groups in your church in this vital ministry.

Also coming on the web site will be sample prayers, the names of our GC2016 delegation members, and a bulletin insert for church use. These resources can be found at www.nyac.com/eventdetail/3468891. Social media will also be used to encourage involvement and offer prayers for this endeavor.

When You Need to Retreat, Think NYAC Camps

By DEACONESS JANE WAKEMAN,
Member of NYAC Camps Governing Board

A relative of mine once said, "I hate driving the same roads to work each day. I always find myself thinking the same thoughts... there's the house with the new roof, there's the broken mailbox, there's where I had that fender bender 3 years ago..."

Sometimes, developing new perspectives or even thinking new thoughts requires leaving our familiar surroundings.

Otherwise, we are often trapped in the same old thoughts. To retreat is to

depart from the familiar sights, sounds, routines and even people. To retreat is to search for a new way to hear God's voice in our lives and discover different ways to hear the Bible teachings that are so familiar. Indeed, to retreat is to follow in Jesus' very footsteps.

Both Kingswood and Quinipet camps offer exceptional spaces for retreat. The farmhouse at Kingswood sleeps 22 and is open all year round. Quinipet has a variety of spaces, plentiful heat and kitchen space as well as room for whole-group gatherings. Quinipet retreats offer meal service, linen service, and Wi-Fi as well.

Even if you have experienced either or both of these two places in the summertime, you still haven't fully explored their richness and beauty unless you have seen them blanketed in snow



The sun sets on a snow-covered Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island, Long Island.

or walked in the cold, crisp, refreshing air of fall, spring and winter. Every season presents a new and different experience of the beauty of God's creation in nature.

If you use your imagination, you can think up many excuses for a retreat, and any number of groups that would benefit from a time apart. For starters, there are youth groups, church staffs, women's and men's groups, special interest groups, singles, couples, and etc. Quinipet

hosts a weeklong family camp retreat open to anyone (not just families) at the beginning of each summer. Each of the camps has work weekends that have been joyful and meaningful, in addition to helping the camps prepare for the summer and closing up in the fall. Retreats are a great way for first-timers to get to know the camps so that come summer, they will be ready to book a spot!

For further information and contact details, visit the camps web site at www.nyaccamps.org.

Missionaries Raising Up Choir, 'Holy' Chickens

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watched and shared the joy. Harris is more known in the Philippines with the promotion.

UGAT Ministries

Shalom's hut looks serene with Goshen's garden of fully-grown yellow gingers. Thanks and glory to God for the completion of another school semester. The students of geothology enjoyed fresh air and nature at Goshen, even though they had to wrestle with new biblical and theological ideas about God and land. We are so pleased because the ATESEA (Association of Theological Education in South East Asia) accreditation team gave a special mention about geothology and UGAT ministries last October.

UGAT produced another one hundred

"holy" chickens (Healthy Organic Living in our Yard). We are now preparing a new site to build a more worker-friendly facility for a better and steadier production.

Pastors Alan and Minerva Cabas and Jay are still looking for a proper school for Shalom, a child with Fragile X Syndrome, an extreme case of autism. We have a list of special schools nearby the seminary, and hopefully there will be a school for him next year.

During the itineration last June and July, several people shared their love for Shalom. The gift (\$400) will be seed money for Shalom's educational opportunity.

In November, Jay had a car accident on the expressway going to UTS. Although the car has been totally wrecked, Jay was unharmed. Thank

you for all your intercessory prayers. Thank God.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to those individuals and churches that received us with Christian hospitality during our itineration in June and July. It was an occasion that affirmed the connectional nature of the United Methodist Church, which is geared to God's salvific mission to the whole world. We would like you to know that your care and love empowers us to serve the people in the Philippines with the heart of the Christ.

To view the full newsletter, go to www.nyac.com/files/mission/2015-dec-grace-and-jay-choi-newsletter.pdf. To learn more about missionaries supported by the NYAC and to read their stories, go to www.nyac.com/mission.

News Poll: Racism Voted Top 2015 Story

UMNS—The continuing struggle against racism in the United States—which occupied United Methodists in protests, prayer and peace building—was the biggest story in the denomination in 2015, according to a United Methodist News Service poll of communicators.

Church communicators chose the continuing struggle against racism in the U.S. as the top United Methodist news story of 2015, followed by the migrant crisis, the church debate over sexuality, Ebola and the rise of licensed local pastors in the church. View a slideshow of all these stories.

That struggle received 16 first-place votes out of 26 ballots cast by church communicators in the United States, Africa and Asia, along with news-service staff. The denomination's response as hundreds of thousands of migrants continued to flee Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and various parts of Africa for Europe, was second, followed by the denominational debate over sexuality. The lingering Ebola epidemic in Africa was fourth and the rise of licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church rounded out the top 5.

First: The struggle against racism

In cities around the U.S.—including Baltimore, Cleveland, North Charleston, Staten Island and Chicago—where young African-American men died at the hands of police, United Methodists called for justice and an end to racism.

“It is not enough for us to remain silent. We’re dealing with principalities and powers, I believe,” Bishop Warner Brown Jr., told the Council of Bishops in May in an emotional address. The council unanimously issued a pastoral letter that affirmed that “all lives are sacred and that a world free of racism and xenophobia is not only conceivable, but worthy of our pursuit.”

The Rev. Cynthia Moore-Koikoi joined other clergy in a march for

peace on April 27 as riots broke out across Baltimore after Freddie Gray died of a spinal cord injury suffered while in police custody.

“When we pray, ‘Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,’ we are committing ourselves to the work of community building,” said Moore-Koikoi, superintendent of the Baltimore Metropolitan District of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

United Methodists mourned the massacre at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church by a young man who told police he hoped to ignite a race war. South Carolina Bishop L.

Jonathan Holston represented The United Methodist Church at the memorial service where President Obama eulogized the Rev. Clementa Pinckney and the eight church members who died.

Second: Migrants and terrorism

Methodist leaders in Europe called on their countries to welcome refugees.

“The right of individuals from all countries to ask for asylum is under threat,” said United Methodist Bishop Rosemarie Wenner of Germany. “We as people of faith have to make use of the fact that the reality proves the failure of the current regulations to work not only for humanitarian aid but also for more just procedures for those who come to Europe.”

After Nov. 13 terrorist attacks in Paris killed 130 and provoked a political backlash against refugees that included efforts by U.S. governors to block resettlement of Syrian refugees in their states, United Methodists called for compassion.

Bishop Gary Mueller of the Arkansas Conference said of efforts to ban Syrian refugees that it “solves nothing to categorically exclude a group of people whose lives have been torn apart.”

In the Great Plains Conference, at least 35 United Methodist



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN BARRY, UMNS

Marie Campbell, assistant director of education at the Scarritt-Bennett Center, holds a sign reading, “Black Lives Matter” at a demonstration in Nashville to show support for immigration reform and racial justice.

churches agreed to sponsor at least one Syrian refugee family, while church efforts to resettle refugees in New Jersey continued.

Bishop Patrick Streiff, who oversees the small number of United Methodist congregations in France as the episcopal leader of central and southern Europe, pointed to his horror over “the depth of violence despising human lives” and to his conviction of the need to follow the model of Christ as peacemakers.

Third: Sexuality debate intensifies

The denomination's debate over sexuality intensified in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex civil marriage in all 50 states.

While the ruling did not change church law, which prohibits pastors from conducting and churches from hosting “ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions,” it fueled the debate at annual conferences.

The Great Plains Conference representing United Methodists from Kansas and Nebraska, voted to ask the 2016 General Conference to acknowledge there are “diverse beliefs regarding homosexuality,” as well as to eliminate restrictions on homosexual clergy and

penalties for officiating at same-sex marriages. The Rev. Rob Schmutz, United Methodist Church at Park City, Kansas, who spoke against the petition, surrendered his ministerial credentials to Bishop Scott Jones after it passed.

The New York, Baltimore-Washington, Virginia, Northern Illinois, Greater New Jersey and Desert-Southwest conferences voted to delete language saying homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching from the *Book of Discipline*. These and other conference proposals could be considered by General Conference when it meets in Portland, Oregon, May 10-20, 2016.

The denomination's top lawmaking assembly will also receive other sexuality proposals, including the Third Way plan from the Connectional Table, the Covenantal Unity Plan and proposals for how delegates might better discuss sexuality-related proposals.

A complaint against retired Bishop Melvin Talbert for officiating at a same-sex union ended with a just resolution. Other resolutions on same-sex marriages in 2015 included two clergy in Virginia who were suspended. Cases also were resolved in

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News Poll: Racism Voted Top 2015 Story

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Tennessee and Iowa without trials.

But in Michigan, the Rev. Michael Tupper refused to sign a just resolution, saying he would plead guilty at a church trial and would not contest any penalty determined by a jury of his clergy peers. His hope is that his case will spotlight what he sees as an unjust church law.

African bishops called on the denomination to hold the line on church teachings that affirm sexual relations only in monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

Fourth: Deadly Ebola lingers

First Guinea, then Liberia, was declared free of Ebola. Finally, on Nov. 7, Sierra Leone was declared free of the deadly virus that killed more than 11,300 since it began. But church and health officials cautioned that watchfulness was still needed, as Guinea reported a new case in October, then Liberia had three new cases in November.

The effects of Ebola are lingering, too. With a disproportionate number of health care workers among the dead, there could be a sharp rise in maternal and infant mortality.

Liberia began reinstating routine vaccinations of children, suspended during the outbreak for lack of resources. The United Methodist Church in Liberia launched a campaign to monitor Ebola orphans, who are at-risk for human trafficking.

In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the church officials worried about the disease re-emerging as well as how the church helps in recovering from an outbreak that closed schools and devastated the economy.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief and its partners are now working to address the long-term effects of the epidemic by strengthening the healthcare capacity in West Africa.

Fifth: The rise of local pastors

Local pastors—who are not ordained, and in most cases without a seminary degree—are growing in number and taking on more roles in The United Methodist Church.

United Methodist News Service examined the overall trend, including the rapid growth of part-time local pastors, the use of local pastors in Hispanic outreach and the challenges faced by local pastors in the central



PHOTO BY PAUL JEFFREY

Refugees landed on a beach near Molyvos by local and international volunteers, then proceeded on their way toward western Europe. The refugees paid Turkish traffickers huge sums for the boat ride to Greece.

conferences.

The upward trend with local pastors comes as ordained elders are becoming more rare.

The denomination's General Council on Finance and Administration reports that from 2010 to 2015, the number of ordained elders and provisional member elders serving churches dropped from 15,806 to 14,614. Though the denomination was shrinking in the United States, local pastors appointed to churches climbed from 6,193 to 7,569 in that time. Both full-time and part-time local pastor numbers grew, with the latter growing faster.

Selecting the top 5

Conference communicators and editors, as well as United Methodist News Service staff, vote each year on what stories were the biggest news in the denomination.

A first-place vote counts five points, second place four, and so on. If two stories get the same number of points, the number of first-place votes is used as the tiebreaker.

Haiti Mission Still Filling Medical, Schooling Needs

In December, the Mountains of Hope for Haiti (MHH) sent out an update on their mission efforts and an appeal for funding.

As this mission of the New York Conference moves into its 12th year, MHH will continue to focus on the following areas:

- Support for the Furcy clinic and medical care for the community
- Scholarship support for both primary and secondary education (MHH currently supports 60 students at the Furcy Primary School and 45 students in the secondary scholarship program. MHH also provides hot meals for the students two days a week; UMCOR provides meals for the other three days.)
- Clean water
- Agricultural support



- Development of a sewing ministry
- Continued UMCOR micro-credit training
- Community/church support and development
- Volunteers in Mission team development—especially around medical/dental, agriculture, education-enrichment, and clean water.

With a donation of as little as \$70 you can provide a water filter which will serve a family

for 10 years; \$150 will provide a primary scholarship for one year and \$300 a secondary scholarship for one year; a \$200 donation will pay for a weekly doctor visit and nursing care for a year; and for \$100 seed, fertilizer, and tools for a year. If you would like your donation to go to a specific area, please indicate that on the check.

All Mountains of Hope for Haiti donations can be sent, at any time, to:
Sally Evans, Office Manager
Frontier Foundation of the New York Annual Conference
20 Soundview Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606

For additional information or questions, contact Rev. Tom Vencuss at tvencuss@gmail.com or 860-324-1424; or Rev. Wendy Vencuss at wvencuss@gmail.com or 860-324-1429.

How Thick is the Stained-Glass Ceiling?

By **HEATHER HAHN**

UMNS—A woman's place can be behind the wheel of race cars, at the front of corporate boardrooms and along the U.S. presidential campaign trail. But for many U.S. congregations, a woman still has no place in the pulpit.

Even as U.S. congregations become more ethnically diverse, a new analysis of Duke University's National Congregations Study shows that women hold only a small minority of those faith communities' top leadership positions.

Women serve as senior or solo pastoral leaders of just 11 percent of U.S. congregations — indicating essentially no overall increase from when the study was first done in 1998. These women-led communities contain only about 6 percent of the people who attend the nation's religious services.

"That's one of the most surprising non-changes in our data," said Mark Chaves, who directs the study. He is a professor of sociology, religious studies and divinity at United Methodist-related Duke University and Duke Divinity School.

"When I first saw this result, I thought it had to be wrong. But it's accurate. The 'stained-glass ceiling' is real."

His report, released December 9, uses data from the 2012 National Congregations Study, a nationally representative survey of 3,815 congregations. The study included not just the Christian majority but also Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and other non-Christian faith communities. A National Congregations Study previously took place in 1998 and again in 2006–2007.

The study includes congregations from traditions, such as the Roman Catholic Church and Southern Baptist Convention, which do not ordain women pastors.

However, Chaves said he was surprised that increases of women clergy in traditions that do ordain women was not enough to improve the trend lines.

How United Methodists fare

The Methodist movement, in particular, has a tradition of women lay preachers going back to John Wesley's day. The year 1866 saw the Rev. Helenor Davisson ordained as a Methodist Protestant deacon, the earliest known woman's ordination in the Methodist tradition.

The United Methodist Church, like other mainline Protestant denominations in recent decades, has seen its ranks of clergywomen grow.

According to the United Methodist



PHOTO FROM GLIDE MEMORIAL WEBSITE

Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto has been Glide Memorial Church's senior pastor for nearly eight years.

Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 27 percent of the denomination's 54,262 active and retired clergy in 2014 were women. That's more than double the 11 percent of women clergy the denomination had in 1992.

However, the number of United Methodist women clergy has stalled since 2009, said Dawn Wiggins Hare, the commission's top executive.

"For us to move from this number, we need to make the full inclusion of women into *all* areas of leadership in the life of our church a systematic priority as a denomination," she said.

Of the UMC's 66 active bishops, 13 are women. Female senior pastors also remain rare. Of the 100 largest United Methodist congregations in the U.S., only one—Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco—is led by a woman.

"Isn't that astounding?" said the Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto, Glide's senior pastor for nearly eight years. "In the larger church, for women, authority isn't automatically earned by office. It has to be earned because there's a scrutiny of women's leadership." (Oliveto grew up on Long Island and has served churches in the New York Conference.)

While bishops appoint clergy in the United Methodist Church, Oliveto noted that bigger churches tend to have more say in the clergy they receive. Many are reluctant to ask for a woman senior pastor, she said.

That tracks with what Chaves' research found in religious communities nationwide. He said many women are assistant pastors or fill secondary leadership roles, especially in

mainline Protestant and Catholic churches. He added that the proportion of female master of divinity students seems to have peaked in the early 2000s, and many of those graduates are less likely to seek to become pastors.

"The obvious strength is that our denomination affirms our place as spiritual leaders," said the Rev. Carolyn Moore. "That also ends up being our challenge."

Moore in 2004 planted Mosaic United Methodist Church just outside Augusta, Georgia. The church now has an average attendance of 225, and Moore is working on a doctoral project about the practices women church planters can use to overcome the hurdles they face.

"Because bishops and district superintendents as a whole have a high level of acceptance, there may not be a conscious acceptance of the challenges women still face," she said. "To say, 'We love you and you're doing a great job' isn't always the most helpful thing. Women also need advocates who will acknowledge the barriers that still exist and help coach past them."

Cracks in the ceiling

The denomination is seeing some cracks in the stained-glass ceiling, with denominational leaders working to cultivate more women leaders.

The United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry launched the Lead Women Pastors Project in 2008 to provide networking and continuing education opportunities for women pastors of churches with 1,000 or more members. The project helped the pastors explore their leadership styles, exchange ideas and prepare to be coaches of other women leaders.

Since the project got under way, the number of women lead pastors of large churches has grown from 68 in 2009, to 116 in 2014, said the Rev. HiRho Park, who led the project for the agency. The denomination has about 1,070 such congregations in the United States. She also co-edited a book about the effort, "Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling."

Among the newest women pastors of a "tall-steeple" church is the Rev. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, who in 2014 became the first woman senior pastor of Foundry United Methodist Church in the nation's capital. The congregation, with about 1,200 members, celebrated its 200th anniversary this year.

"It's been a wonderful reception," Gaines-Cirelli said. "The leadership at Foundry were

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OBITUARIES

Ella Griffin

Ella Griffin died on November 24, 2015, at age 88, at her home in Tryon, N.C. She was the widow of Rev. Reese Griffin who served our conference for over 40 years.

Griffin was born in Chester County, S.C., the daughter of James and Nancy Goudelock. She was preceded in death by her husband of 60 years in 2008, and a son, Reese Griffin Jr., in 2002.

Rev. Griffin began his pastoral service in the North Georgia Conference where he received his license to preach in 1940; was ordained a deacon in 1947, and an elder in 1960. Reese became a full member of the NY Conference in 1962 and served congregations in Monroe; Bayside; Plainville; Winsted and New Milford, N.Y. He was appointed as the coordinator of the Upper Catskills Larger Parish in 1984, and served in that position until his retirement in 1988.

Mrs. Griffin is survived by two sons, William Griffin of Tryon, N.C., and James Griffin of Lester, N.C. The funeral was held on December 19.

Rev. Joseph A. Gillespie

Rev. Joseph A. Gillespie, 88, of Huntington Station, N.Y., died on December 12, 2015.

Rev. Gillespie was ordained a deacon in the New York Conference in 1982 and an elder in 1984. In 1982, he served the Islip United Methodist Church, and from 1983 to 1992 he served the West Hills UMC in Huntington Station. After retiring in 1992, he served two Vermont churches in the Troy Conference.

Gillespie is survived by a large, loving family of children and grandchildren.

The funeral was on December 17 at St. Elizabeth Church in Melville, N.Y. Burial was at Pinelawn Memorial Park, Farmingdale, N.Y.

2015 Journal Available

Online Version

The 2015 NYAC Journal and Yearbook is now available online along with the 2007–2014 editions at www.nyac.com/journal.

Compact Disc Version

The conference will send, without charge, one 2015 journal and directory on compact disk to each church, retiree, clergy widow/widower and clergy member serving in an extension ministry. The estimated ship date is March 15.

Print Version

Printed journals are available for purchase online via CreateSpace, an Amazon company. This “on-demand” printing option will allow you to place your journal order directly and receive the printed copy within days of your order. The price for the 2015 edition is \$11.65 plus shipping, with several shipping options available.

To order extra copies of the CD or the print version, go to the link above and follow the instructions.

Few Women Lead Large UM Churches

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clear it was time they received a woman as their senior pastor. Work had been done prior my arrival.”

The congregation takes her seriously, she said, and treats her in a way she thinks would be no different than a man in the same position.

Foundry is unusual in that its two top clergy leaders are women. The Rev.

Dawn M. Hand, the church’s executive pastor, said she and Gaines-Cirelli show that women in leadership can work well together. She said each of their appointments was a prophetic move.

“The only way that we’re going to lift up women as an equal part of this called ministry is to show that,” she said. “The only way to honor your commitment and your faith is to act on it.”

Bouncing Baby Boy for 2016



Little Giovanni Navarro-Caraballo became the first baby of 2016 delivered at New York Methodist Hospital when he arrived at 12:09 a.m. on January 1. The newborn, the son of Chris Caraballo and Tricia Navarro-Caraballo of East New York in Brooklyn, weighed in at 9 pounds and 2 ounces and measured 19¾ inches long.

Global Ministries Receives \$500,000 Grant

GBGM—The William I.H. and Lula E. Pitts Foundation awarded Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church a \$500,000 grant in support of Global Ministries’ establishment of its new home in Atlanta, Georgia. The grant will be used to support the renovation and construction project of Global Ministries’ new offices at 458 Ponce De Leon Avenue in midtown Atlanta. The move to Atlanta—a catalyst for envisioning new ways to connect the church in mission—is a pivotal moment in the life of Global Ministries and the people with whom it serves.

The Pitts Foundation grant-making process is deeply rooted in a family history of charitable giving dating back to the early 1900s. William I.H. Pitts and Margaret Adger Pitts, founders of the Pitts Foundation, have given away millions to Methodist causes and institutions, including the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Open Door Community House, United Methodist Children’s Homes and Vashti Center for Children and Families.

Of particular significance in Atlanta will be the new Center for Mission Innovation and the new unit facilitating training. These two entities will 1) activate the exploration of best practices in missions both locally and globally, 2) equip individuals and groups to be relevant mission innovators in their own communities, and 3) develop learning experiences and collective wisdom in cutting edge priority areas of being the church.