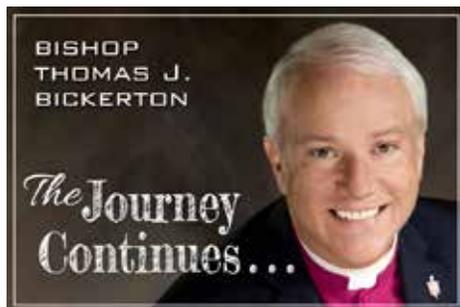


"Write the vision clearly on the tablets, that one may read it on the run." – Habakkuk

THE VISION

The Newspaper
of the New York
Annual Conference
of The United
Methodist Church

October 2016



Making An Impression For Change

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression."
—Will Rogers

A few weeks ago I was standing on the street corner of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard and 129th Street in Harlem wondering about making a first impression. It was moments before the service of welcome and installation for me as the new bishop of the New York Conference. As I moved among the clergy standing in the processional line, I wondered about how others were feeling about my presence among them, and I was curious about how I would feel during and after this service filled with first impressions.

As I made the way to my place at the back of the line, there were two women who walked by, gazing at the massive structure of Salem UMC and curious about the long line of clergy in white robes and stoles. As they slowed their pace, Bill Shillady, the co-chair of our Episcopacy Committee, and I began to engage the women in a conversation. When they inquired about what was happening, we shared with them about the worship that was about to take place. We talked about the clergy who would process, the diverse music that was about to take place, and the hope we had that this would be a meaningful and blessing-filled service. We found out that they were visiting the United States from Denmark

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INSTALLATION OF BISHOP BICKERTON

We Need to Hear Message of Love

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY

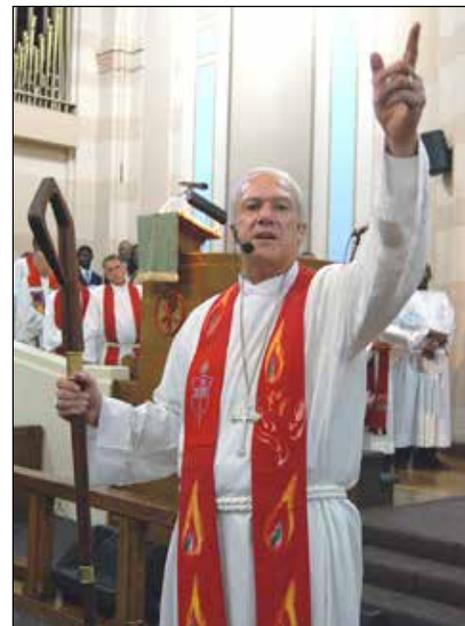
Editor, *The Vision*

In a service that highlighted much of the diversity of the New York Conference, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton was officially welcomed and installed in a September 25 service at Salem United Methodist Church in Harlem.

The celebration was filled with music from beginning to end and it ran the gamut from traditional hymns to ZZ Top. Special music was provided by the Cantico Nuevo choir, the Methodcats, the Ghana UMC Junior Choir, The Shepherd's Singers, Pastor Wendy Paige, and the Salem Sanctuary Choir.

Conference Lay Leader Roena Littlejohn offered a word of welcome followed by an energetic danced introit by the young members of the Spirit Builders troupe just before the clergy processional. Rev. Marvin Moss, Pastor of Salem UMC, offered greetings from his congregation, and then led the invocation.

Special guests and members of the interfaith community were introduced and welcomed by Evelyn Brunson and Rev. Bill Shillady, co-chairs of the NYAC episcopacy committee. Bishop C. Hopeton Clennon, speaking on behalf of the Moravian Church in North America, said he was "delighted to be a part of any commitment to building bonds with Christians of different backgrounds." (The UMC, whose history includes the Moravian influence on



Bishop Bickerton offers the benediction.

John Wesley, approved a relationship of full communion with the Moravian Church at the 2016 General Conference.)

In what became a reoccurring bit of levity during the service, Rev. Moss went to the pulpit and announced the need to move three cars double-parked on the street.

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Rev. Melvin Boone performs "Rain Down" with The Shepherd's Singers.



For a full lineup of events, go to: www.nyac.com/conferencecalendar.

10/16 Installation of DS Julia Yeon-Hee Yim

Rev. Yim will be installed as superintendent for the Long Island East District in a 4 p.m. service at Bible Korean UMC, 1201 Carl's Straight Path, Dix Hills, N.Y. Clergy are asked to gather at 3:30 p.m. for the processional; requested attire is a white or light-colored robe with red stole. A light dinner will follow the service.

10/18–19: Anti-Racism Training

The NYAC Commission on Religion and Race will host the workshop, "Effective Christian Leadership in a Multicultural World." This training is mandatory for all clergy, and members of district committees on ministry and BOOM. The session, which runs from 8:30 a.m. on the first day until 4 p.m. on the second day, will be held at the Bishop Molloy Retreat Center, Jamaica, N.Y. [Register](#) on the conference web site. Contact Rev. Sheila Beckford at Sheila.Beckford@nyac-umc.com with any questions.

10/22: Sunday School Director Training

Are you the new director of children's ministry or Sunday school at your church? Have you been a director for a while and need some new ideas? Come and meet with a group of directors to learn some new things, share some stories and make connections. Meet from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Danbury UMC, 5 Clapboard Ridge Rd., Danbury, Conn. For more information, contact Cassandra Negri at childrensministry@nyac-umc.com.

10/22: Local Pastors' Day Apart

Join the Fellowship of Local Pastors & Associate Members for a preaching clinic and lunch from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at New Milford UMC, 68 Danbury Rd., New Milford, Conn. [Register](#) on the conference web site; questions to Rev. Eileen Daunt at Eileen.daunt@nyac-umc.com.

10/29 The Matthew 25 Project

This special Catskill Hudson District program invites all middle and high school students and youth leaders to come learn what it means to serve their neighbors. The event runs from 4 to 6 p.m. and will offer a worship time and food, hosted by St. Mark's UMC, 68 Clinton Street, Napanoch, N.Y. Contact Pastor Mike Sparrow at 845-647-5343 or mspa76@yahoo.com for more info and to register.

11/7–9 Revitup! For Young Clergy

The "revitup for a Lifetime of Ministry" gathering will help young clergy strengthen personal, financial and leadership skills to improve their lives and sustain their ministries. The event, sponsored by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, is planned for the B Resort & Spa in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Continuing education credits are available. More details are available on the [registration](#) site.

11/12 UMM Annual Meeting

The United Methodist Men of the conference will gather at 10 a.m. at the New Rochelle UMC, 1200 North Ave., New Rochelle, N.Y. The event will include an election of officers, budget discussion, and a free breakfast. All chapters and pastors are encouraged to attend.

11/12 Advent Worship Arts Workshop

Jorge Lockward will assist local worship teams to prepare for Advent 2016 using the year A lectionary readings. \$20 workshop fee per church team includes continental breakfast and lunch. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Ardsley UMC, 525 Ashford Ave., Ardsley, N.Y. [More information and registration form is available on the www.nyac.com calendar](#). This workshop is sponsored by a Learning Center Grant.

11/14–16 Faith and Guns Forum

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society invites United Methodists to share and learn about gun violence, gun control legislation, and strategies for coalition building and mobilizing congregations to be the change God calls Christians to be. The forum will be at the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill in Washington. To register or for additional information, click [here](#). Fee is \$200 for those who need housing; \$75 for those who do not.

11/19 Laity Convocation

Laity from around the conference will gather to explore the theme, "We Are Called...!" with Rev. David Gilmore, NYAC director of congregational development and revitalization. The day will run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Stamford Hilton in Connecticut. Cost is \$25 per person; or \$75 for every four people from the same congregation. A continental breakfast and lunch are included. [Register](#) by November 9.

11/24–26 Conference Office Closed

The NYAC office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Vision Deadlines for 2016

The Vision is a monthly online publication of the New York Conference. Deadlines are always the first Friday of the month, with posting to the web site about 10 days later. The deadlines for 2016 are as follows: Nov. 4, and Dec. 2. Please send any stories, photos, ideas, or questions directly to vision@nyac.com.

		
<small>The News of the New York Conference of The United Methodist Church</small>		
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Website: www.nyac.com Vision e-mail: vision@nyac.com		

Message of Love

Continued from page 1

“Welcome to New York, bishop,” he said with a smile. “We parked them so well that we now need to move them.”

Rev. Tim Riss and Fred Brewington, members of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Episcopal Committee, presented Bickerton to the gathering and introduced his wife, Sally Bickerton. Bishop Herbert Skeete, the cabinet, and a number of clergy and laity participated in the covenant service and the presentation of the symbols of episcopal ministry.

The gathering responded in laughter when Bishop Skeete accidentally addressed Bickerton as “Bishop Discipline” while presenting him with the Book of Discipline. Both bishops laughed, too, and Skeete said, “Well, that’s what it’s all about.”

In his opening remarks, Bishop Bickerton reiterated the words he said he’d been praying for the last 18 months: “Lord, send me to the place that needs me the most.

“But what I haven’t shared with you until now was the second part of that prayer—send me to the place I need the most,” he said. “It’s wonderful to see the answer to my prayers. We’ve never felt so welcomed and loved.”

Bickerton noted that his family was not complete that day because they had gathered just seven days prior at the passing of his mother-in-law. Besides his wife, Sally, son T.J. and his fiancée Claire, and daughter Elizabeth and her boyfriend, John, were in attendance. Sons Ian and Nick were unable to attend the service.

The bishop began his sermon, entitled “Blowing the Roof Off!” with a story about Mother Teresa telling a group of lepers that they were loved by God and a gift to the rest of us. One of the lepers asked her to repeat what she had said because it had done him so much good to hear it.

“We need to say things we’re not hearing in our world,” Bickerton said. “It’s a simple message, but an important one. Do you realize how much you are loved by God and a gift to one another?”

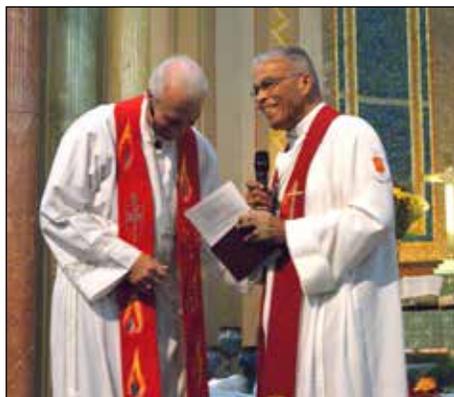
He marveled at his recent experience at the Anchor House graduation where the choir sang the song “Worth” that includes the lyrics “You thought I was worth saving. So, You came and changed my life.”

“We may not be addicted to drugs, but we may be addicted to a limited view of God,” he said. “We are a joy-challenged people . . . We’re trying to fit God into my box, rather than allowing God to fit us to what he wants us to do.”

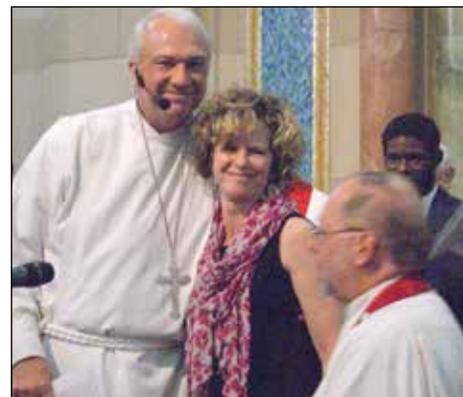
Bickerton said that he has simple game plan for the conference and knows that he will



Bishop Bickerton greets children in the Ghana UMC choir at the end of the procession.



Bishop Bickerton shares a laugh after Bishop Herbert Skeete presented the Book of Discipline.



The bishop introduces Sally Bickerton, his wife and ministry partner.

frustrate some people during his tenure.

“I’m going to love you and remind you everyday that you are loved. You are a gift to all of us.” Bickerton said.

He shared that he was picked on in junior high school because he was a short, fat kid. After school, he would run straight to the safety of a car a block-and-a-half away—a green 1963 Wildcat. Inside the car was his grandfather.

“I was safe, secure and accepted in that car,” Bickerton said. “I long for a church that looks like a ’63 Wildcat.”

In referencing the Mark 2:1–12 story of Jesus healing a paralytic who was lowered through the roof, Bickerton suggested that today’s church would have too many issues with removing the

roof so that healing may occur. Questions would arise about whether the room was too full for the fire marshal, and what would it cost, and would it be approved by the trustees.

“I’ve been accused of being a naïve optimist,” Bickerton said. “But God is doing more than we can imagine. So I say one thing to you: What do you say we blow the roof off this place?”

“Let’s rip the roof off of all 455 churches because we can’t wait for people to come in,” he said to cheers and applause. “. . . Let’s fall in love with God again and be the people God made us to be.”

Worship continued with Holy Communion and the renewal of the baptismal covenant.

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Churches Urged to be Prison Ministry “Lifeline”

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY
Editor, *The Vision*

Through worship, workshops, testimonies, and panel presentations, some 85 participants came together on October 1 to learn about prison ministry opportunities. The daylong symposium, sponsored by the conference Board of Church and Society, addressed both how to be in ministry with those who are incarcerated and their families and how to confront and reform the criminal justice system.

Some of the most compelling information came from the “returning citizens” who are now working to help others. During the opening worship, George and Amie Chochos both offered a profound witness about how crime and addiction led them separately to prison and how faith rescued and redeemed their lives. The former couple were recently reunited and then married with their 18-year-old son as best man.

George Chochos, who was sentenced to 14 years for his crimes, remembers being handcuffed with about 80 other men on a department of corrections bus.

“It was like we were on a slave ship being sent to a new plantation,” he recalled.

But a new found trust in God lead him to educate himself in prison through programs offered by New York Theological School and Bard College. Once out, he enrolled at Yale Divinity School.

Chochos, who is now a Baptist pastor and has found himself preaching on some of the same street corners where he dealt drugs, related that at his lowest moment he tried to jump out a window to kill himself. But he believes that the hand of God held him back.

In urging churches to get involved in prison ministry, Chochos noted that he and other “returning citizens” were helped by programs



Amie Chochos offers her testimony about redemption.



Rev. George Chochos, standing above, moderates a panel focused on assisting the incarcerated and their families that included the NYAC’s Rev. George McClain, center. The praise band, at left, from New Day UMC in the Bronx led the singing.



brought into the prisons, not those offered by the state.

“You are the lifeline, the means by which real change happens,” he said.

Amie Chochos, who was offering her first ever testimony, spoke about the difficulty in finding work after release.

“If you mark the box that says felon, they don’t want you,” she said. It took her two years before she found a job—at a United Methodist Church near Albany. The pastor there helped her search for George, her son’s father.

“George convinced me not to run from my prison experience—it’s no shame,” she explained.

Panelists during the morning session dealt with helping those who are incarcerated and their families, and included Rev. George McClain, a NYAC pastor who has taught in the Rising Hope Prison Ministry.

“The men covet dignity” which has been stripped away from them when they’re assigned a prison number, McClain said. “Men take on new names for themselves as a way of claiming a bit of freedom and dignity.” He added that Rising Hope can offer its students a “redemptive

community” to rely upon inside the prison.

The morning workshops included ones with representatives from the Fortune Society, the Kairos Outside program of Kairos Prison Ministry, and Lifelines to Solitary pen pal program. The “outside” program provides a Christian weekend for women with family or friends who are, or have been, incarcerated. The Fortune Society helps support the reentry process from prison and works to promote alternatives to incarceration in the first place.

Lifelines, a grassroots effort of Solitary Watch, works to connect letter writers to those forced to live in solitary confinement. Many mistakenly believe that solitary confinement is a measure imposed during sentencing, but it is rather a punitive action taken to control individuals once they are imprisoned. The United Nations has classified more than 15 days in solitary confinement as “torture,” yet some spend years living under the restriction.

The afternoon workshops focused on advocating for criminal justice reform on such issues as raising the age of criminal responsibility in New York, ending systemic

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Bishop: We All Need to Hear Message of Love

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With pine branch in hand, Bickerton scurried about trying to reach as many as possible in the cavernous church with a sprinkle of water.

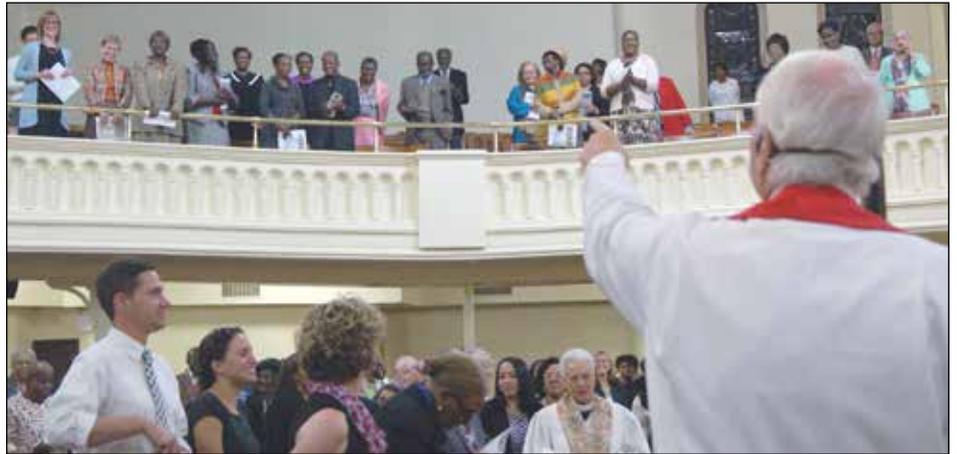
As the service drew to a close, Bickerton returned to the story of Mother Teresa and the lepers. And as if on cue, a woman standing in the balcony called down to him, “Bishop, can you say that again?”

With a huge smile on his face, Bickerton pointed up to the woman and asked her name.

“Olga Alveranga,” she replied.

“Olga, I’ve been waiting for you all day!” he said.

You can listen to the [bishop’s sermon](#) and the covenant service, and see additional photos on the conference web site.



The bishop points to Olga Alveranga in balcony who called down and asked him to say again, “You are loved by God and are a gift to one another.”

Making an Impression for Transformation

Continued from page 1

and were just walking the streets of Harlem taking in the sights and culture around them.

As the procession began to move, Bill and I invited Tina and Henriette to join us in worship. We parted company and headed into the church. Not long after we entered the church, we noticed that the two women were sitting in the balcony! They had taken us up on the offer and had joined us in worship. And as the service ended, they were still sitting among us.

A few days later, Rev. Marvin Moss, the pastor of Salem, received an email from these two visitors from Denmark. Here are some of the words they wrote:

“We had 3 fantastic hours in your beautiful church, and with the most fantastic people!! We will never forget the warm and extremely welcoming atmosphere, all the friendly people, the clear message about everyone is welcome in your church—culture, age, color or nationality—and the joyful and especially wonderful unpretentious atmosphere. Thank you very much for inviting us in! It was an experience we will never forget. If we

had churches and worship like yours in Denmark, it would be wonderful.”—Tina and Henriette from Denmark

I started the day a little bit worried about making a good first impression on the people of my new annual conference and a whole lot curious about the first impression my new annual conference would make on me. I started the day worried about us. I ended the day thankful to be reminded that the work we do and the calling we live out has little to do with us but instead has a whole lot to do with the people who walk and drive by our churches every day.

How easy it is for us to get consumed with our own “first impressions” and forget about the impression we are called to make on a world where people are looking for a place to feel welcome in a joyous and unpretentious atmosphere! How easy it is for us to worry more about the service of worship than about the service we are called to offer to the people of our communities longing for someone to invite them to belong.

In those moments, when making a good impression on our constituency outweighs

making a good impression on the world, we run the risk of losing sight of the mission that drives who we are as a church.

That mission statement says that we are called to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” On a sunny day in September, that mission statement just may have gotten more specific. By the providence of God, in the spontaneity of the moment, we were called to “make disciples of Jesus Christ in Harlem for the transformation of two women from Denmark.”

You see, when we make our mission statement personal and live it out in the moment, that’s when we really have a chance to transform the world. That is my hope and my prayer as we begin our new ministry together.

I think Will Rogers was right. “*You never get a second chance to make a first impression.*” I’m really glad we had that chance the other day in Harlem.

And oh, by the way, you’ve made a wonderful first impression on me. Thank you.

The journey continues . . .

Churches Urged to be Prison Ministry “Lifeline”

Continued from page 4

discrimination against formerly incarcerated people, and stemming the use of long-term solitary confinement.

Janis Rosheuvel, the racial justice executive for the United Methodist Women, offered a primer for beginning a social justice ministry in churches.

She said that one of the most important steps when meeting with government officials is to share comments as a person of faith and to

offer information that they may not know they need to have. She also encouraged those seeking change to practice their scripts and be prepared to address potential sticking points. And she added to “follow up, then follow up again” and “escalate as needed.”

The free symposium was hosted by Grace United Methodist Church on West 104th Street in Manhattan. The praise band from New Day UMC provided the music while their pastor, Rev. Doug Cunningham led the opening worship.

Parts of the worship service and the closing communion liturgy were written by men and women who are part of the Partnership for Religion and Education in Prisons (PREP) program at Drew University.

If you missed the symposium or would like more information about prison ministry opportunities, contact Sheila Peiffer, coordinator for social justice organizing, engagement and advocacy for the NYAC, at ChurchAndSociety@nyac-umc.com.

Working Hard at “Serving Effortlessly”

⁵ *The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”⁶ The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.*

⁷ *“Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here at once and take your place at the table?’⁸ Would you not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink?’⁹ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded?¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’”*

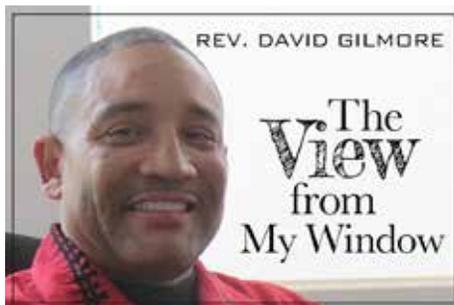
—Luke 17:5–10 NRSV

Some of the recent events have caused me to remember a few lines from Watty Piper’s “The Little Engine That Could.” Some of you may remember the little engine transforming from one who says “*I think I can... I think I can*” to “*I know I can... I know I can*.”

Contrary to what some may believe, a pastor’s workweek does not begin and end on Sunday morning during the worship celebration. A pastor’s response to God’s calling on their life is demanding and sometimes costly.

Between caring for families in crisis, visitations to the hospital, preparing for church meetings, attending district meetings, attending conference meetings, engaging in the life of the neighborhood, preparations for Bible study and the Sunday sermon, trying to spend quality time with loved ones, making sure bills get paid, and, trying to remain or get back into shape, it sometimes seems like there are more things we have to do than there are hours in the day! In a seven-day week there are 168 hours. Just this last week, between the church, family, and school, I had a total of 28 hours for personal time. Of course, my personal time was the time I slept; but... it was personal.

I don’t tell this story for sympathy. I understand that all of us have busy schedules and that our “supply” does not always meet the “demand!” I understand! I understand how sometimes our patience becomes shorter as the requests become longer. I understand! I



also understand how all too often it seems like we have to cram 10 pounds of “stuff” into a two-pound sock! I understand! However, I also believe that we might need to seriously consider becoming more like the “little engine that could”... with a twist!

Prior to our Gospel lesson, Jesus has told his disciples (that’s us) that we are not only responsible for our actions, but also for rebuking (and forgiving) our sisters and brothers! I guess the thought of having to forgive—of not being able to hold that grudge—of having to care about someone else caused some problems with Jesus’ followers.

These were hardcore followers; the kind who scared the establishment, yet they (we) struggled with “turning the other cheek” and “loving everyone.” For whatever reasons, these disciples go to the person they know can help them. The apostles tell—not ask—but tell Jesus to “increase our faith!” And, to this seemingly innocuous request, Jesus uses illustrations of a mustard seed and servitude to teach. I wonder how many “believers” today know Jesus commands, yet make excuses as to why it may not happen... *I think I can!*

Many of us, like the little engine looking at that big mountain, may think there is no way we can do this. Who are we to make a difference? We are the ones to say something is impossible, however, Jesus teaches us that just a little faith—not a lot—just a little faith leads us into a transformational belief that “yes—we can!” It’s not that we need more faith, but rather a question of what are we doing with the faith we already possess... *I know I can!*

How much faith do we need to invite someone to the church house? How much faith do we need to care enough to become engaged

with and to our community? How much faith do we need to be intentional in providing safe spaces for ALL of God’s children? How much faith do we need to “know” we can be all that God has purposed us to be?

I have always believed that God’s grace and our faith make anything we do, that is of God, blessed by God! God has called us to be “little engines” that know “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!” (Phil. 4:13)

If we want to become transformational representatives of Jesus Christ, try becoming “the little engine that could.” *I know I can... I know I can!* I know I can stand up against racism. I know I can face up to racial profiling. I know I can speak up against hate crimes. I know I can take some time away from the golf course and spend it mentoring a teenager, or visiting someone imprisoned, or helping our elderly. I am encouraging you to exert a little less effort trying to get out of serving and a little more effort into serving effortlessly. *I know I can... yes... I know I can!*

When we live lives that show the world that God’s grace is amazing, and God’s mercies are tender, and God’s love is divine, then the world will hear our “whistle” blow and maybe—just maybe—believe that we believe in the One who blessed with that mustard-sized seed of faith in the first place. I can hear a whistle blowing and know we can—with Christ. What about you?

Stepping away from my window... shalom!

Gilmore, who officially began his ministry as director of congregational development and revitalization for the New York Conference on July 1, is a native son of the NYAC. His father, Rev. Don Gilmore, served churches in White Plains and Pine Bush, N.Y. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Gilmore most recently served Centennial UMC in Kansas City, Mo.

Laity Convocation

Hear Rev. David Gilmore discuss the theme, “We Are Called...!” in a daylong event November 19 at the Stamford Hilton. [Register](#) by November 9.

Resources Help to ‘De-Mystify’ Apportionments

Our shared ministry apportionments are often one of the most misunderstood parts of what it means to be a United Methodist. Conference Chief Financial Officer Ross Williams has recently put together information that may be helpful in understanding and/or explaining how shared ministry apportionments are calculated and used by both the NYAC and the denomination. The [document](#) is available on the web site and topics include:

- Apportionment basics
- The formula for calculating apportionments
- Apportionment adjustments
- Where does the money go?
- Seven funds apportioned by the general church

According to Williams, one of the most important things to know is that when churches pay apportionments they are automatically participating in the mission and outreach ministries of our denomination.

“Did you know that approximately one-quarter of all apportionment dollars sent to the conference are remitted to the denomination to support seven apportioned funds?”

The Office of Connectional Ministries is also again offering a series of [bulletin/newsletter inserts](#) highlighting the many different ways that our connectional giving helps nurture and care for the family of God in our communities and around the world.

The best result for the local church would be to download the bulletin inserts and include copies for Sunday bulletins. Our hope is to demonstrate how each and every local church ministry is part of a greater whole.

In addition, each quadrennium, the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) publishes the “[Financial Commitment Book](#)” on the budgetary decisions made by the General Conference. *The booklet* provides details about the financial support for the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church for 2017–2020. It contains narratives explaining the rationale for general church funds and includes tables outlining expected expenditures.

In short, these documents explain how your church apportionment dollars are used for the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church.

Together we can accomplish more than any one individual can! That’s what connectional giving, known as shared ministry apportionments, is all about.

New Overtime Rule Means Church Changes

Check out the [blog](#) from the NYAC’s Chief Financial Officer Ross Williams entitled, “*New Payroll Rules—Fair Labor Standards Act*,” for additional information.

UMNS | A new federal rule that increases the number of U.S. workers who are eligible for overtime pay could have an impact on your church’s payroll.

Most church employees who are not clergy are among those affected by the new regulation—currently set to take effect December 1.

Under the new [U.S. Department of Labor rule](#), most workers earning up to \$47,476 annually (\$913 per week) will qualify for overtime pay. That roughly doubles the current cutoff, set in 2004, of \$23,660 annually (\$455 per week).

The changes mean more white-collar salaried workers can earn time-and-a-half wages (that is, 1.5 times their hourly rate of pay) for each hour they put in beyond 40 per week.

In addition to raising the ceiling, the overtime-eligibility regulation provides for automatic updates every three years to keep pace with U.S. wage growth. It also strengthens protections for workers already entitled to overtime.

For churches, the rule’s big exceptions are likely clergy and possibly some individuals with the education and duties of clergy such as youth pastors. The U.S. Department of Labor manual exempts clergy from minimum wage and overtime requirements.

However, the rule potentially applies to a variety of other church

employees, including administrative assistants, Christian educators, custodians, daycare workers and musicians. The U.S. Department of Labor calculates that the expansion makes an additional 4.2 million U.S. workers eligible for overtime pay.

Steve Lambert, the general counsel for the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration, cautions, “Making generalities about these rules is fraught with peril.”

He said a variety of factors contribute to a worker’s overtime eligibility.

For instance, if a church includes a preschool, and that preschool is not a separate employer entity, its employees are covered by the new rule.

The rule also covers employees involved in any interstate work, which can include such routine tasks as using the internet, exchanging emails and making phone calls across state lines.

The General Council on Finance and Administration—the denomination’s legal and finance agency—is working with [ComplianceHR](#) software to help churches determine who qualifies for overtime pay and to reclassify employees if needed. Churches will need to pay \$60 for each employee to determine whether the worker is exempt or non-exempt from overtime pay.

Lambert’s office also has been working with conference treasurers to help United Methodists comply with the regulation. He said his office has handled more than 100 inquiries to date about the changes.

“People are taking this very seriously,” Lambert said. “But they aren’t panicking. There are definitely ways to manage the changes.”



**Together We Make
A Difference Through Shared
Ministry Apportionments!**

SCHOLARSHIPS

Thanks to your support of the extra offerings taken on United Methodist Student Day and World Communion Sunday, students in the New York Conference can receive scholarships and loans for college and graduate school.

Each year at our annual June gathering at Hofstra University, the recipients are announced and honored for their achievements. The recipients range in age from high school grads heading off to college to adults pursuing advanced degrees.

World Communion Sunday is one of six Special Sundays that The United Methodist Church provides annually as opportunities to share beyond our regular gifts to our local churches.

Thanks to your commitment, a portion of these funds is then returned to benefit the conference by educating our own UMC students who are considering careers in ministry.

Responding to Haiti, Hurricane Losses

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, Brulan Jean-Michel, the manager of the Methodist Guest House in Petionville, Haiti, summarized what many were thinking when he wrote in an email: "I want to thank each and everyone for their thoughts and prayers as Hurricane Matthew passed over Haiti. It has been, and still is, a very difficult situation to deal with due to the fact that we have not yet completely recovered from the devastation caused by the earthquake of 2010. I sometimes find myself asking, Why Haiti again? Then I realize that this is the geographical position God assigned to us so we have no choice."

No doubt each one of us has asked that question at one time or another—and asked it again this past week as reports of the physical damage and the death toll continued to rise.

However, in true Methodist fashion, the other question that has been asked by Methodists from the New York Conference and throughout the country is, "What can we do?"

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has been in contact with Bishop Gesner Paul of the Methodist Church of Haiti (EMH) and pledged both their prayers and financial assistance to the relief and recovery effort.

Bishop Paul reported on October 7 that a full assessment of the damage by Matthew was not yet possible because of the difficulties with communications and transportation. Brulan Jean-Michel did have the opportunity to visit several of the affected areas. Bishop Paul is hoping to visit the south and western parts of the country, the most heavily affected, as soon as safe travel is possible.

UMCOR will also assist Bahamas Methodist Habitat with a grant in response to Matthew's damage to that part of the Caribbean. UMCOR immediately [responded](#) to the natural disaster with emergency supplies,



Damage in Haiti following Hurricane Matthew.

food and health kits.

Rev. Tom Vencuss, NYAC Disaster Response Coordinator, who served three years in Haiti as the coordinator of the UMCOR/VIM earthquake response program, has also been in phone contact with Bishop Paul and Brulan Jean-Michel. As we receive more details and information we will make them available to the annual conference and work with Bishop Bickerton and conference leadership to determine an appropriate conference response. More information, including a [letter](#) from Bishop Gesner Paul and updates from UM personnel on the ground are available on the NYAC web site.

A financial gift to UMCOR's disaster efforts can be made to international [Advance #982450](#) or United States' [Advance #901670](#) to respond to the needs generated by Hurricane Matthew.

Volunteers Tuck Kingswood in for Winter

BY JANE WAKEMAN
Deaconess

While many folks turn their attention to returning to school or coming home from vacation in September, the volunteers at Camp Kingswood are swinging into action.

September is time to put the camp away for the winter. You could be forgiven for thinking that means folding up some tents and boxing up kitchen supplies, but that would be far from the truth. Packing up Kingswood for the winter is the work of more than 50 valiant souls who are carefully organized and focused. And they have fun.

According to camp administrator Holly Moore, and Cheryl Winship, volunteer coordinator, first comes Senior Camp week, from September 5–8 this year. This group sterilizes the tableware and seals it in plastic and scrubs down of the tables. They check every stove and bleach every cooler. They take down the windbreaker flaps around the kitchen areas. They put the chuck boxes (where the kitchen supplies are stored) in order. They clear out the Oasis bathhouse. Some of the volunteers come to do the cooking for the group.

Over the weekend, the group takes on the bigger challenges. The barn is made ready to receive everything—the rolled-up tents, bunk beds, mattresses, firewood (including freshly chopped firewood for next year), craft wagons, and the winterized mowers. The water line is drained and checked for low spots where water might get trapped and freeze. The dock and swim lines are brought out of the lake. Trail markers, signs, chapel materials and the boats are brought into the barn along with all the



machinery. The hot water heater is turned off. The farmhouse is prepared for retreat groups—cobwebs are removed, windows are cleaned, floors are scrubbed. After all, youth groups, confirmation classes, small church retreat groups and even families will be renting the farmhouse for their own programs over the winter. Kingswood volunteer and camper Pat Schlegel has even celebrated New Year's Eve there with her family.

All this takes a tremendous amount of organization and planning, a process that has evolved over the years as the camp has grown. To get everything to fit into the barn, the barn itself is rearranged so that it looks nothing like what the campers see in the summer.

Thanks to generations of folks who dedicate their time and love to this beautiful area, when the time comes for set-up weekend in May, everything is in order and ready to be placed for the new season. These folks are the unsung heroes of camp.

If you feel you missed a great opportunity, follow the links to Kingswood Campsite on the [camps web site](#). You will find links there about all of the great opportunities to get involved. Perhaps we will see you in May.



A dedicated crew of volunteers pack up the tents and haul them and the mattresses away to the barn for storage over the winter.

Lessons on Leadership at District Retreats

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY

Editor, *The Vision*

Bishop Thomas Bickerton continued his introductory tour of the New York Conference at the Tri-District Retreats where he told clergy, “My desire is to be as accessible to you as possible . . . You need to know that I have your back. I need to know that you have mine, too.”

Rev. David Gilmore, director of congregational development and revitalization, joined the bishop and the two brought a program on nurturing effective leaders and more vital congregations. The northern districts—Catskill Hudson, New York/Connecticut and Connecticut—met on September 27–28 at the Stony Point Center in Stony Point, N.Y.; and the southern districts—Metropolitan, and Long Island West and East—met September 28–29.

In a few moments of personal privilege, the bishop noted that after 12 years in the Western Pennsylvania Conference he knew everyone’s name

“I’m a bit of a perfectionist. I set my bar very high,” he said. “When I fail at your name or place, please forgive me,” he said. He also shared about the challenges he and his family were facing in dealing with an unexpected major adaption for his parents.

“We didn’t plan for these changes, but leadership requires that we adapt to new situations,” Bickerton said.

“We have to have the ability to constantly learn and adapt in ministry. There are no easy answers anymore,” he said. “We need a willingness to grow and to be held lovingly accountable.

“Ministry is too often done singularly. Who is nurturing your ministry?” the Bickerton asked.

The bishop focused his remarks around the writings of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks’ on leadership. Using biblical characters from the Old Testament, he explored the following qualities of being a leader:

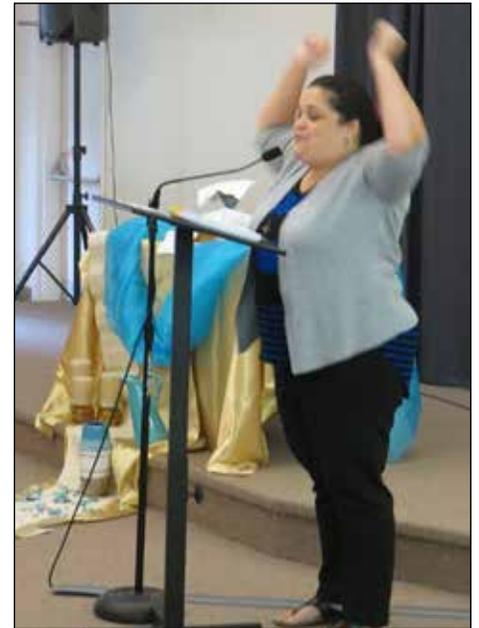
- Leadership is service: It’s not about us, it’s about the God we serve. Moses is often described as a servant of the Lord.
- Leadership is taking responsibility: In Genesis, Adam and Eve denied personal responsibility; Cain denied moral responsibility. God will not call us to something that God does not provide the resources to do.



Bishop Thomas Bickerton, left, and Rev. David Gilmore take questions during the second day of the northern districts’ retreat at the Stony Point Center in late September.

- Righteousness (being good) is not leadership: Noah had to separate himself from his environment to maintain his righteousness, but it’s our job to speak up and act. “Morality demands that we ignore probability and focus on possibility. . . . How much time are you spending in places you wouldn’t normally go?” the bishop asked.
- Leadership is listening to the inner voice: Leaders do not follow what others follow. God sent Abraham from his homeland to a place he would show him. “We are called to follow the Holy Spirit . . . leaders have a vision of what is,” Bickerton said. “we need to get out of our comfort zone and go to a new place.”
- Leadership is finding light, and yourself, in dark times: the story of Jacob
- Leadership is bring able to dream big dreams: the story of Joseph

In his presentation, “Passion and Compassion: It’s a Love Thing,” Gilmore challenged the clergy to rededicate themselves and their congregations to the “greats”: the great commission, the great commandment and the great compassion. He urged that love must once again be connected to our ministry and to our lives.



Pastor Karina Feliz leads the closing worship on Wednesday morning.

“Folks need to be loved from the pulpit as well as the back door,” he said. Gilmore stressed the need to partner with the community to determine where the church fits into the needs of the places they serve.

Gilmore announced that the Pastoral Excellence Group model, or PEG, would soon be used to form groups for laity called LEGs. Gilmore said he believes that the PEGs, which bring together clusters of clergy to discuss and envision vital ministry, will turn the conference around with the help of the laity.

He said another process will help to identify vital congregations and those “on the verge of being vital” throughout the districts, so that “the DNA of vital churches” can be shared. Churches will need to commit fully to be a part of this Missional Church Consultation (MCC) training. Those who apply will need the recommendations of the district superintendent and director of congregational development and revitalization before receiving an invitation directly from the bishop. Conference resources will be directed to churches that agree to the four-day training process.

PowerPoint files and PDFs of both [presentations](#) from the retreats are available on the NYAC web site for use with your churches.

Way Forward Commission Makeup Challenged

UMNS | Some United Methodist laity are calling for equal [representation to a special commission](#) that will look at the church's teachings on homosexuality and issues of church unity.

"It is one of the most important conversations of our time," states an online petition calling on the bishops to reconsider the makeup of the commission.

The executive committee of the Council of Bishops announced on October 5 that the [list of nominees to the commission](#) includes eight bishops, 13 clergy and eight laity. Letters sent to nominees ask them to prayerfully consider whether they are willing and available to respond.

A group of laity started an online petition (now closed) that states: "We find it unacceptable that only 28 percent of the commission are laity." As of October 11, more than 440 names had been added to the petition.

A group of mostly current and former lay leaders is drafting a response to the bishops addressing concern about the commission's makeup, saying that General Conference guidelines on membership of commissions and other agencies call for one-third clergy (including bishops), one-third lay women and one-third lay men. However, at least one lay leader defended the right of the bishops to configure the commission as they deemed best.

Bishop Bruce R. Ough, president of the Council of Bishops, said the nominating process is in the early stages.

He also pointed out that the special commission will not be making the final decisions but will submit recommendations that the bishops

will then take to General Conference.

"This whole process is predicated on the fragile hope and possibility that a group of people from across the church can actually help the church think about a way forward," he said.

Role of laity

Laity are foundational to the United Methodist Church, said Irene R. DeMaris, one of the lead organizers of the petition. A lay member living in Alexandria, Va., she has a master of divinity from Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry.

"The Wesleyan movement has been fueled by the faith of our laity and therefore it is vital for our voices to be a part of one of the most important conversations of our time," she said.

Darlene DiDomineck, a deaconess at Arch Street UMC in Philadelphia, and a signer of the petition, said in addition to equal representation by laity, the voices of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people should be included.

"Much of the work tasked to the commission deals with human sexuality and many deeply committed laity in our church are folks who have been turned away from ordained ministry because of their sexual orientation," she said.

Prayerful supporter

One lay leader called on the church to give the commission a chance.

"As the person who gave the last speech before the vote on this at General Conference, I would hope we would allow this process to work out and to participate as prayerful supporters of what is coming next," said Mathew Pinson, North Georgia Conference lay leader.

Pinson said he does know that the Book of Discipline has recommendations for the makeup of large church groups, but said this commission is "unlike anything the church has ever done before," he said. "For them to go about this in a new and different way is their prerogative."

Pinson said he did think the commission was "short-sighted" in only selecting eight laity but added that he was more committed to honoring the process than criticizing.

"Human life is at stake. United Methodists have such a powerful global witness for Christ around the world through health care initiatives, mission work and projects that make people's lives better in the United States and abroad. I am not willing to gamble ... We need to quit playing politics," he said.

Laity feel underrepresented

But Dr. Steve Furr, past president of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, was more disturbed by the commission composition.

"I got almost physically sick. I never dreamed this would happen. I thought at most it would be 50-50 lay and clergy. I expected it to be based on General Conference," Furr said. The association of lay leaders is not involved in writing or circulating the petition, but members have been discussing the makeup of the commission since it was announced.

"We don't know who those eight lay people are, but laity are clearly underrepresented," Furr said. "They need to hear our voice on this. It's hard for us to trust the process when we don't feel represented. This is not the polity of the United Methodist Church."

Evangelical Group Plans for 'New Day' in Church

UMNS | With some 1,800 people in attendance in Chicago, the new Wesleyan Covenant Association officially launched October 7 and declared its intention to lead Methodism in a more evangelical direction.

Organizers announced their hope is to do this work within The United Methodist Church, while leaving open the possibility of moving outside it.

Chief among their concerns are growing challenges to the denomination's bans on same-gender unions and the ordination of "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy.

"We believe that we are planting seeds today that when full-grown will bear fruit of a vital Wesleyan witness and dynamic, spirit-filled Methodism around the globe," said Rev. Jeff

Greenway, lead pastor of Reynoldsburg United Methodist Church near Columbus, Ohio. He also is one of the leaders of the new group.

Since 1972, the denomination's book of law and teachings—has said that all individuals are of sacred worth but the practice of homosexuality "is incompatible with Christian teaching."

The new Wesleyan Covenant Association holds the church's teaching on homosexuality to be essential to biblical orthodoxy.

The denomination has long been home to a number of unofficial advocacy groups — some working to change church restrictions related to LGBTQ individuals and others working to hold the line.

What differentiates the [Wesleyan Covenant](#)

[Association](#) from other similar affinity groups is that rather than relying on donations, it charges membership fees. For individual lay and clergy members, the membership fee is \$100 per year. For congregations that join, the cost is \$1.50 per member per year. In cases of financial hardship, these fees may be reduced.

Association members also must commit to [a statement of faith and moral principles](#) and declare a willingness to cooperate in ministry through the association.

Rev. Ryan Barnett, senior pastor of First UMC in Kerrville, Texas, was among the speakers urging participants to join.

"By joining the WCA," he said, "you will send a clear message that no matter what happens

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Age Shouldn't Negate Call to Serve One Another

BY JIM STINSON

Older Adults Ministry Consultant

I had the privilege of performing the wedding ceremony for my great nephew and his fiancée this past weekend. He was not the first niece or nephew, nor the first great nephew nor great niece who have afforded me such a privilege. Indeed I will have the same privilege for my great niece in November.

As weddings tend to do, I was reminded of the passage of time. After all, I met his mother the day she was born and here was her son getting married. I attended her baptism and performed her wedding ceremony some years ago. I found myself asking, "Where does the time go?" Then came the reminiscing about the many moments of privilege that life has given, and continues to give. Questions about the passage of time are often asked by people as they grow older. Aging brings an inevitable set of questions with it. "Have our lives so far made the difference we thought it would when we were younger and filled with dreams?" "Have we become the persons we imagined ourselves to be?"

Having spent 13 years of my life ministering primarily with and to older adults, perhaps I

have heard this question more than most people.

Sometimes it is a painful question to ask. It often reminds us of too many painful moments and missed opportunities. Sometimes the question brings a smile to the one asking. Looking back, they feel good about the life they have lived.

The ones who ask the question with the sense that they have nothing left, except to wait for death, are the most disturbing to deal with. How does one respond? The response may be obvious for those who believe that all of life—regardless of age or ability—is sacred and has value. That is certainly a tenet of our faith. But how do we convey that response in a loving and life-giving way? That is our challenge as laity and pastors.

Our message is one of life and of hope. It is at the foundation of our faith, which we are called to deliver. Empathy with aging folk in our congregations and in our wider circle of care is step one. But too many of us, believing we are being kind, listen with empathy and neglect step two. We shy away from challenging the assumption that "I have nothing left to offer."

In my time as director of spiritual life for

United Methodist Homes, I found it useful to listen first, and then to reframe the assumption.

Doing so often began with, "Have you considered . . .?" Always the question ended with a specific need, which appeared the person could help meet. Joining a prayer shawl ministry, praying daily for specific people, calling or writing notes to shut-ins, even if the person is a shut-in himself or herself.

One's call to serve others never expires. It is good to be reminded that we are always needed to help to someone else. As individuals and as a congregation, we are challenged to speak the truth in love. Perhaps if we did so, the question would arise with wonder and satisfaction. "Where does the time go?" Perhaps, if we reframed it to, "What can you still do?" some older adults would see their value in a new way. Caring for and loving others involves challenging older adults to see the possibilities instead of being depressed by the aging process.



GOD'S GIFT OF LONG LIFE

Evangelical Group Plans for 'New Day' in Church

Continued from page 10

next in The United Methodist Church, we will walk forward together with brothers and sisters near and far who are committed to the Wesleyan expression of the Christian faith."

Nearly 1,000 individuals or churches had signed up as members by the end of the meeting and organizers ran out of membership forms.

Turning point

The new association is forming just as the denomination's longtime debate about homosexuality appears to be reaching a turning point.

"For the first time in our denomination's history, pretty much everyone agrees that change is coming," Barnett said.

In recent months, 111 United Methodist clergy and candidates [have come out as gay](#). The New York Conference has ordained or commissioned [four openly gay clergy](#). Five other conferences and two jurisdictions have passed resolutions [urging noncompliance with church prohibitions related to homosexuality](#). The Western Jurisdiction has [elected and consecrated Bishop Karen Oliveto](#), who is openly gay and married to a deaconess.

Meanwhile, the bishops are forming The

Commission on The Way Forward, charged with reviewing and possibly recommending changes to church teachings on homosexuality and working toward church unity.

Greenway used the image of a stretching rubber band to describe the tension between progressivism and traditionalism that he sees happening in The United Methodist Church.

"The band of this denomination we call United Methodist is so stretched and strained that it's very difficult even to recognize," he said. "Most of us in this room are here holding onto the stake that's been placed in the ground of historic, orthodox, evangelical, Wesleyan Christianity."

On the other end of the band, he said, are United Methodists with whom he and other evangelicals hold "increasingly little in common."

"We read the same Bible; we pledge to support and hold the same Discipline; we even quote the same (John) Wesley sermons; but we're talking about a different expression of faith," he said.

During the one-day meeting, speakers repeatedly described the emerging association as true heirs to Methodism's founder John Wesley's teachings and practices.

Those in attendance worshipped, recited [the Nicene Creed](#) and took Holy Communion together, with Bishop Mike Lowry and retired Bishop Robert Hayes Jr. officiating. They heard presentations on ministry with the poor and building Christian community.

Most also stood or said "Amen" together to affirm organizers' plans for the group including electing its initial 22-member leadership council. The packed schedule allowed no time for questions or discussion.

With a boom of "Amen's," [those assembled also approved](#) a statement addressed to the still-being-formed bishops' commission.

[That statement](#) calls on the commission to develop a recommendation "that would definitively resolve our debate over The United Methodist Church's sexual ethics and its understanding of marriage." It also calls for a special meeting of the denomination's top lawmaking assembly, General Conference, in 2018 to take up that recommendation.

The Rev. Rob Renfroe, a leader of the new association, told those assembled to applause that they are building something "that will outlive everyone of us in this room."

"There is a new day coming," he said.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

What's the Fuss About Gluten? Having an Open Table

All this fuss over a little wheat. What's the problem? After all, we have eaten bread forever. Why should we change now? Surely a little piece of bread won't make any difference.

According to "Beyond Celiac" web site, as many as 18 million Americans (six percent of the population) may have non-celiac gluten sensitivity. Another three million (one percent of the population) have celiac disease. And there are a few more people (listed as extremely rare) who have [wheat allergies](#). In comparison, about three million people report peanut and/or [tree nut allergies](#).

Churches have little difficulty deciding to be a peanut-free zone, but something about gluten puts our backs up. We refuse to see it as a serious problem. We think it is simply about a little stomach discomfort.

According to Healthline.com, symptoms of wheat allergy include nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea; irritation of the mouth and throat; hives and rash; nasal congestion; eye irritation; and difficulty breathing.

Symptoms related to a wheat allergy can begin within minutes of consuming the wheat or may not begin until up to two hours later. The symptoms range from mild to life-threatening. Severe difficulty breathing, known as anaphylaxis, can sometimes occur. Your doctor will likely prescribe an epinephrine auto-injector (such as an EpiPen) that can be used to prevent anaphylaxis if you accidentally eat wheat.

There are other long-term symptoms for celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity.

So how much gluten is too much?

One study showed that consuming just 1/5th of a slice of regular bread (about 625 milligrams of gluten) one time is enough to cause nasty symptoms, including severe diarrhea and vomiting, and increase villous atrophy in your small intestine.

That makes a delicious-looking gluten-filled cookie a bit less appealing.

Of course, many of us have experienced symptoms from *way* less gluten than that. Two [older studies](#) found symptoms coupled with increasing intestinal inflammation (but not necessarily villous atrophy) in people who consumed just 24 to 30 milligrams of gluten—about 1/145th of a slice of conventional bread (otherwise known as a crumb)."

Which is why I get so upset when I see churches that deny people

communion by refusing to serve gluten-free bread, or threaten their health by not understanding how to make communion safe.

The best way to make communion safe is by serving only gluten-free bread. There is no risk of cross contamination. Everybody shares in one loaf.

My congregation, New Paltz United Methodist Church, serves a [communion bread](#) that is gluten, dairy, and egg free that was created by Linda Mellor. Most people find it delicious, and in fact, adults and children alike look to help clean up after worship! This is the bread that has been served at annual conference at Hofstra for the last couple of years. The recipe will be adapted once more, for those who have told us they are allergic to xanthan gum. (For this new recipe, please contact newpaltzumc@gmail.com).

If you choose instead to have two stations, please remember that there must be no cross contamination. This means separate cups for dipping, separate breads on separate plates, [separate cloths for covering the elements]. These must be handled by a designated person who has not touched anything else. You may not handle the bread, then pick up the basket of crackers and offer them—you are transferring crumbs. If you have broken the bread with gluten, touching the cup can also transfer the crumbs. It is true, most people will not become severely ill with only a crumb of contamination, but the choice to receive Christ's gift should not carry with it the threat of severe cramping/bloating and diarrhea.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it breaks my heart that this is not considered worth the effort. Seven out of one hundred people will turn from the table because of the threat of this, or will accept the gift wondering how much pain it will cause them. That is one out of fourteen. At my church, it was a 5-year-old child who brought my attention to this issue. But when we went gluten free, I discovered there was a woman who hadn't communed in years because it made her ill, who started to come. Two other people have been diagnosed since then. Others who have come since then are surprised and delighted to learn that here is a church that welcomes them.

What will you do this day? As for me and my house, we will work to make our table open to all of God's children.

—Bette Johnson Sohm

OBITUARIES

Jayne Carpenter

Jayne Ellen Carpenter, 77, died on October 4, 2016, in Mechanicsburg, Penn. The daughter of the Clifford W. and Anna A. (Jacobs) Low, she was born October 21, 1938 in Baldwin, N.Y.

Carpenter is survived by her husband of 58 years, Rev. Dr. George H. Carpenter, who retired from the New York Conference in 2001. He served Marlboro UMC, Middle Hope UMC of Newburgh, First UMC of Port Jefferson, all in New York; Newtown UMC in Sandy Hook, Conn.; and as coordinator of the Upper Catskills Larger Parish in New York.

She was a Girl Scout leader on Long Island for many years, but spent the majority of her life as a partner in her husband's ministry. She sang with the choirs in every church that her husband served and was the first female member of the Bethany Village Men's Chorus. She was a current member of First UMC in Mechanicsburg.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by son, Joel H. (Karen) Carpenter of North Carolina, and daughter, Ruth E. Carpenter of Mechanicsburg. She was preceded in death by her brother, David Low.

A memorial service will be held at Bethany Village at a future date.

Burial will take place privately in the Stanford Cemetery in Stanfordville, N.Y.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to either the [Asbury Foundation Bethany Village Care Assurance Fund](#), 325 Wesley Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055; or to the Rev. Dr. George and Jayne Carpenter Endowed Scholarship Fund, Wesley Theological Seminary, 4500 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, D.C. 20016.

Condolences may be sent to Rev. Carpenter at 307 Asbury Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055.

Mildred Versteeg

Mildred Versteeg, 94, died on September 15, 2016. She was the wife of retired associate member, Rev. Joseph E. Versteeg, who served the New York Conference in the following churches: Hillsdale, North Hillsdale, West Taghkanic, Glenco Mills, and Millerton in New York; St. Andrews in New Haven, and Canaan in Connecticut. Rev. Versteeg retired in 1984.

There was no additional information available at the time of publication.