

"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

December 2016

SPONSORING SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY

"The Only Wrong Thing, Was to Do Nothing"

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY

Editor, *The Vision*

While many take for granted the ability to be home for the holidays at this time of year, a Syrian refugee family is learning to call a new country home and discovering what it means to celebrate some American holidays.

Mohammed and Noor and their two young children are being resettled in Connecticut through

the Westport Interfaith Refugee Settlement (WIRS) project which was initiated last fall through the leadership of Rev. Ed Horne, pastor of the United Methodist Church of Westport and Weston. Horne's church and six other faith communities in the Westport-Weston Interfaith Council have come together to provide shelter and support for the family who fled their worn-torn country along

with an estimate 4.5 million others since the start of the conflict five years ago.

An anti-government uprising in March 2011 that targeted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has since spiraled into a bloody and devastating civil war in the Mideast country. More than 400,000 Syrians have been killed, according to the United Nations,

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

12/21 Return to Conference Center

The long-awaited return of the staff to the renovated conference center has come. Some of the exterior site work is to be completed, but the building is ready to be occupied again. A re-dedication of the building will be scheduled for after the first of the year.

12/23–26 Conference Center Closed

The NYAC offices will be shut for the Christmas holidays.

1/6–8 Quinipet Winter Weekend

This year's Winter Weekend for 12- to 17-year-olds will dive into the parable of the Good Samaritan with all the fun of camp. The "Go and Do Likewise" weekend will offer morning chapel, evening vespers and camp games, in addition to ice skating and winter hiking—weather permitting. Dinner on Friday, breakfast Sunday and accommodations are included in the \$225 per person cost. For additional details or to [register](#), go to the Camp Quinipet web site.

1/10–12 Bishop's Convocation

This time of spiritual renewal for clergy and spouses will once again be held at the Villa Roma Resort in Callicoon, N.Y. The event will revolve around the theme of Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton's book, "What Are We Fighting For? Coming Together Around What Matters Most." A book is included

in your registration costs. [Registration](#) is open on the NYAC web site; sign up before January 6 for the early bird rates; it's \$30 more after this date. The convocation begins with a 3 p.m. reception Tuesday and concludes after lunch Thursday. Free childcare will be available. Cokesbury will be on site also.

2/6–10 Clergy Health Clinic

There are still spaces available for active clergy and/or their spouses in this health clinic and seminar at New York Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn. Overnight accommodations and virtually all expenses beyond a \$50 registration fee are covered by the hospital. Where else can you receive \$1000s in medical exams and testing for \$50? Give yourself this gift to check out your health. Find the [details](#) on the NYAC website, or contact coordinator, Rev. [Elizabeth Braddon](#) by email, or at 203-481-2789.

2/25–26 BMCR Weekend

More information will be forthcoming on the conference [calendar](#) for this Black Methodists for Church Renewal weekend event in Mount Vernon, N.Y.

6/7–10 2017 Annual Conference

Stayed for more details about this [event](#) for laity and clergy at Hofstra University on Long Island.

Vision Deadlines for 2017

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. Deadlines for 2017 are: January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1. Please send any stories, photos, ideas, or questions directly to vision@nyac.com.

		
The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church		
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Haiti Planning for January VIM Teams

December Newsletter

12/2/2016

BY TOM & WENDY VENCUSS

Last Monday (November 21) we returned from a weeklong, whirlwind trip to Haiti. Much of our time was spent in meetings, formal and informal. We met with Eglise Méthodiste D'Haiti (EMH) leadership, Lauren James from UMCOR, Dr. John and Sharon Harbottle, the EMH head engineer, the UMCOR agriculture specialist, Pastor Ezaus, and so many of our friends. While the visit was great, it was also hard, as Haiti is once again going through a difficult time as they recover from the effects of Hurricane Matthew. We were also in country for the first round of the presidential elections. While things seemed to go as smoothly as possible, discretionary travel was restricted.

On Friday, we had the opportunity to travel to Jeremie with Brulan Jean Michel, the guest house manager and EMH-VIM coordinator who is overseeing and coordinating much of the EMH recovery effort. With our trusty driver, Spana, we made the 9½-hour trip each way to Jeremie by way of Petit Goave and Cayes without incident.

It is hard to describe the situation in the greater Jeremie area. The mountain road leading from Cayes to Jeremie was passable, but precarious at times, due to rockslides,



PHOTO BY XINHUA/BARCROFT IMAGES

ABOVE: The city of Jeremie lies on the western tip of Haiti where the full brunt of Hurricane Matthew was felt. RIGHT: Members of the Furcy church enjoyed a meal of chicken, rice, and beans with a VIM team from New Hope UMC in Maryland.



mud, and rain. Young children were often present on the roads begging for food and money. Trees were either blown over, uprooted, or had their tops lopped off. Many homes, and other structures, are standing, but missing roofs. Wooden structures were completely destroyed. Debris litters the ground. At the Methodist Guest House in Jeremie, the adjacent wooden building was destroyed. The pastor said they were leaving

the debris in place for a while in case people needed whatever salvageable materials for their own homes.

One of the biggest issues facing many communities is food insecurity. The storm destroyed fields, gardens, crops, and livestock. It is estimated that as many as 1.5 million are at risk. With the current rainy season due to end shortly, and the next rains not due until spring, it is critical

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Haiti Planning for January VIM Teams

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that seed be provided as quickly as possible. Lack of clean water, exposure, and cholera, are also concerns.

Looking out into the ocean, there is a clean line of demarcation—brown, where the storm pushed down soil and debris from the mountains, and further out, blue, where the ocean water begins. Fishing in this area has also compromised.

The EMH, in collaboration with other agencies, and VIM support, has sent several convoys of relief supplies to the recovery areas. These convoys. Additional convoys—that are often accompanied by armed guards—are being organized.

The Response Continues

The EMH has established a relief committee and is working

with VIM coordinators, including us, to develop a volunteer response structure, and plan for teams in the recovery area beginning in January. Meanwhile, convoys will continue to provide relief supplies including food, water, tarps, seeds, and medical supplies.

With Brulan, we were able to deliver relief supplies to a cholera clinic, operated by Heart to Heart, about 20 miles into the countryside. Water filters have been provided to local communities through VIM teams. The EMH Health Committee has provided medical supplies as well as mobile health clinics.

Furcy

Our meeting schedule, and then the elections, prevented us from travelling to Furcy. However, we were able to

meet with Pastor Ezaus at the guesthouse. A MHH partner team from New Hope UMC (Maryland) was in Furcy in October and has provided a report of the amazing things they were able to do.

While Furcy was spared much of the brunt of the storm, there was still a loss of crops and livestock. Pastor Ezaus reported that the greatest need at this point is for seed and fertilizer to take advantage of the remaining rains. This is reminiscent of 2008 when four successive hurricanes caused extensive damage that led to widespread crop loss and food insecurity. It was the impetus for the creation of the Furcy/MHH Farmer's Association.

MHH Support

Thanks to the amazing support of New Hope UMC, we were able

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2 Volumes of Wesley Sermons Published in Spanish

The United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) have published two compilations of John Wesley's sermons translated into Spanish.

The addition of "Sermones de Juan Wesley, Tomo I and Tomo II" to GBHEM's publishing ministry is one of many steps the agency is taking to serve all those who are pursuing higher education and/or ordination within the church. The books will serve Hispanic and Latino students seeking education within the Wesleyan tradition, including Hispanic Course of Study and programs in Latin America.

GBHEM and the Wesley Heritage Foundation (WHF), a global nonprofit with the purpose of prompting the Wesleyan revival among Spanish

speakers throughout the Americas, partnered to publish the translated sermons.

"As we work to provide the resources and tools for all who are seeking to become clergy and leaders within our church, it is vital that we offer resources to match the diversity in languages of our global church," said David Martinez, director of specialized programs of theological education at GBHEM. "As we have expanded Spanish and Portuguese Course of Study offerings, publishing the 'Sermones de Juan Wesley' is another great step in meeting the needs of all those we serve worldwide."

"Sermones de Juan Wesley, Tomo I" and "Sermones de Juan Wesley, Tomo II" are available on Amazon.com and Cokesbury.com.



PHOTO BY EVA TOFT



ABOVE: Celeste McGeehan, center, chats with other members of the Westport Interfaith Refugee Settlement project. LEFT: Ellyn Gelman, from left, Janis Liu and Brenda Maggio prep a Norwalk apartment for a Syrian refugee family sponsored by WIRS.

Coalition Requires Commitment, Communication

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with some 6.5 million people displaced from their homes inside the country. Much of the capital city of Damascus lies in ruins and recent fighting has targeted Aleppo and environs.

More than 120 volunteers have committed to the refugee project that includes the sponsoring congregations of Saint Luke Parish, Temple Israel, Saugatuck Congregational Church, and Green's Farms Church, all in Westport; the Society of Friends in Wilton; and an area Muslim community of 15 families.

Volunteers have learned about life and culture in Syria, and some have even learned a little Arabic. They have also been trained to be sensitive to the challenges and trauma the family has already undergone, and what they may experience in a new country.

Rev. Horne says the project has energized many of the members in

his church.

"Quite a few have become involved in an intensive way for the first time," he wrote in an email. "Also . . . they believe deeply that this is an important statement to make in this time of anti-immigrant sentiments across the country and beyond. They have bonded around putting their belief about Christ's inclusive welcome into action to provide a home and a future for this beautiful young family."

John McGeehan, who serves as co-chair of WIRS with his wife, Celeste, was moved to action after seeing the nightly images last fall of refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

"I thought about how privileged I've been to be born here," he said. "I want the same things that they want for their families . . . But the challenge is how do you help the plight of two million people? You help one family at a time."

He knew that his church had helped to settle a Bosnian family in the 1990s and they had learned the importance of having partners in the mission. So after discussions with Pastor Horne, McGeehan reached out to the interfaith council and then contacted the three refugee resettlement agencies in Connecticut. Organizations that want to apply as sponsors for refugee resettlement in the United States must work through a local or regional organization certified as a refugee resettlement agency.

"The only wrong thing to do, was to do nothing," McGeehan said. WIRS agreed to become a contractual co-sponsor in partnership with [Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services](#) (IRIS), based in New Haven, Conn., and are responsible, in accordance with federal guidelines, for helping the family

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Faith Coalition Supports Refugee Family

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to become economically self-sufficient within six to nine months or less, when federal health benefits and other assistance typically ends.

In mid February 2016, the congregations met and the coalition began to be form. The seven faith organizations signed a letter of participation that included some very explicit obligations, according to McGeehan. “We went a little corporate,” he said. They set up a steering committee with representatives from the faith groups and created task groups including pre-arrival/home, transportation, community guides, translators, health care, public services, employment, and education.

“This is not something one congregation can do. Organization really matters . . . you need depth . . . you need a bench,” McGeehan said. “Without the coalition this would not have happened.”

IRIS required that the group conduct their own self-assessment process to determine what level of support they could offer and how large a family they would be willing to receive. The coalition was accepted in April 2016, and the family arrived in July. Since fleeing to Egypt five years ago, the young family had been sheltered in more than 20 different temporary residences. But now they are at home in Norwalk, Conn., where Hala, 8, and Yahya, 5,



2015 PHOTO BY UNHCR/MARK HENLEY

Refugees, mostly Syrian, wait in the rain to cross from Hungary into Austria.

attend public school.

Although the family goes through a rigorous vetting process by the State Department before being allowed to enter the United States, the coalition received very little information about them before they arrived. The key to building trust, and doing it quickly, was day-to-day contact with Celeste McGeehan, a social worker, and an Arabic-speaking male from the Muslim community. The two were able to help the family navigate the inevitable early problems, introduce volunteers, and explain any of the social services. The parents were also quickly ensconced in English as a second language programs for two to three hours a day, six days a week during the summer.

Janis Liu, a member at Westport and Weston since 2005, was eager to help and offered to head the

housing task group. One of her biggest challenges was accepting just the right amount of donated furniture to fill the house and organizing its delivery on the same day from six or seven locations.

“It was a joy to see how the house came together perfectly . . . and the overwhelming appreciation from the family,” she wrote in an email.

The Syrian family also got their first taste of an American Thanksgiving in Liu’s home.

“They were lovely guests,” she wrote, noting that they were shocked at the size of the 19-pound turkey. “I have three kids, one the same age as their daughter and they all got along really well . . . They took lots of pictures of the food—especially the turkey. I think the kids’ favorite thing was the whipped cream in a

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Faith Coalition Supports Refugee Family

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can. They couldn't get enough."

Securing employment is key to the family's self-sufficiency, and Bob Trinka, another of the more than 20 volunteers from the Westport and Weston UMC, has worked directly with Mohammed on that issue. Trinka helps to facilitate a job search group at the church so it was a natural decision to volunteer for the employment task group. After the family first arrived, he devoted one afternoon a week for nearly two months to help Mohammed find a job. He took him to the library to fill out applications and then drove him to

job interviews.

"He's willing to work hard, but it's not easy to just drop into our society on a parachute—especially where we live," Trinka said. Mohammed currently works for a grocery retailer, but is being encouraged to explore other job skills he has for working in an export/import business or as a translator.

Part of the ESL assignments has been to watch television, and Mohammed has expressed some concerns about the anti-Muslim rhetoric he heard throughout the presidential campaign, but Trinka has sought to relieve some of

those fears.

"This church is ready to stand and hold hands around his house to protect them," he said. "This family is so lovely and the children are so lovely despite the atrocities they have endured," Trinka said, noting that this experience with a refugee family has brought members of his church and the coalition closer to the Muslim community. The strength of the relationship was evident at the recent interfaith Thanksgiving service at Temple Israel when Mohammed offered a reading from the Koran.

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Haiti Planning for January VIM Teams

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to provide almost \$8,000 in funds for relief supplies to the recovery areas. We also received a \$500 donation from a supporter, which will be combined with \$1,400 remaining in our Farmer's Association funds, to provide seed and fertilizer to the greater Furcy community. We are truly blessed.

Our plan is to return to Haiti in early January to assist with the development of the volunteer response plan.

Heartfelt thanks to all for your continued support and prayers.

Tom and Wendy

MHH Updates

- Kathy Ahmad, from New Jersey, has a team of five scheduled to supply 100 water filters to Furcy in January.
- Jack Agnew is continuing to work on his Eagle Scout Project—providing water filters for the greater Furcy community. From his effort, his church, Newtown UMC, is considering

sending a team as well.

- The Hyde Park/Mary Taylor dental/medical/construction team scheduled for late February continues to take shape. Additional funding was made available from the NYAC Quadrennial Missional Fund which will allow the team to both support a dental clinic and conduct first aid training for the greater Furcy communities.
- The Wethersfield UMC youth team scheduled for July has more than 20 persons signed up.
- Like the [MHH Facebook](#) page; Terry Alger is the administrator.
- Laura Madden continues to faithfully work on our web site that we expect to roll out shortly.
- Check the NYAC web site for [updates](#), too.

In other news, Haiti now has a new president, Jovenal Moise ("neg bannan"—the banana man). He comes from the rural north and has a background in agriculture and rural development. Let us hope and pray that he will bring prosperity and growth, with peace and justice, to Haiti.

Dreams to Scale Up Refugee Support Program

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McGeehan, who has found ways to keep the project volunteers updated through newsletters and audio interviews with Mohammed, says he has two goals: first, a successful assimilation for Mohammed and his family, and secondly, “not waiting 20 years to do it again.”

He believes that the coalition, which renews its commitment every six months, has the resources to increase what they’re doing. In addition to the state and federal support, the coalition raised \$12,000 to finance the family for the first six months.

“It needs to be a mix of money and time to scale it up,” McGeehan said. Connecticut is seen as a welcoming state for refugees after Gov. Dannel Malloy accepted Syrian families who had been turned away on arrival in other states. In 2015, 500 refugees were resettled in Connecticut; by the end of 2016, the number is expected to reach 650. McGeehan says the increase is due to co-sponsorships, like the coalition’s through IRIS. The United States admitted 84,995 refugees from around the world in fiscal year 2016, the most since 1999, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of State Department data.

“After, five months we’re in a remarkably good place,” McGeehan said. “If we brought in another family, they [Mohammed

and Noor] would be our first volunteers.”

Rev Horne has seen his congregation step up in ways that reinforce their commitment to Christ and the Wesleyan way of service to all of God’s children.

“They have also grown greatly in the cultural awareness, and have come to appreciate the challenges that non-majority people and newcomers face on a daily basis,” Horne said.

McGeehan has spent a lot of time with the family and has grown close to them.

“I could imagine taking those risks for my own family . . . when we help change the life of someone close to us, we change our own lives,” he said. “I hope we’re friends for life.”

For information on the coalition and their efforts, contact [John McGeehan](#), or the [Rev. Ed Horne](#) at the United Methodist Church of Weston and Westport, Westport, Conn. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also has information available on their [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) web site.

Getting Started

The coalition of the Westport Interfaith Refugee Settlement is open to sharing its origination documents with those considering sponsoring refugees in their communities. Some other bits of advice are:

Rev. Ed Horne

- Do the necessary planning and preparation to be ready to host a family in the most supportive ways.
- Organization and lines of communication/responsibility need to be as clear and mutually-agreed upon as possible. We developed a memorandum of understanding/covenant that all sponsoring churches/synagogues signed, so that everyone knew what they were buying into.
- It’s also important not to make the family too

dependent on the sponsoring group, but to help them move towards self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.

John McGeehan

- Find ways to tell the entire arc of the refugee story—from arrival, to the start of paying taxes, and maybe, even paying it forward. Educate people about the difference between economic immigrants and refugees.

Janis Liu

- When you’re setting up the house keep in mind that items you take for granted might not be easily understandable by people from elsewhere.
- Label things and explain how even simple things are used. It was several months before I discovered that the family didn’t understand how to work the mini blinds.



Warren Whitlock, standing at right, leads a small group at the Laity Convocation. Rev. David Gilmore, below, stressed the need to engage others with both mercy and an expansive understanding of mutuality.

Laity Learn That Each One Can Evangelize

Some 150 laypersons turned out at the Stamford Hilton to explore what it means to engage their communities in ways that transform lives at the Laity Convocation on November 19. Rev. David Gilmore, conference director of Congregational Development & Revitalization, led the group in discussion about a Wesley-inspired evangelism through use of the acronym, C.O.M.M.U.N.I.T.Y.

Jennifer Harmer, a lay member from the Wappingers Falls United Methodist Church, attended the convocation and answered some questions that were posed to her.

Why was it important for you to attend the convocation?

For me it, was important because I had missed the last few



laity convocations. I attended the very first one, but then other things cropped up when the other convocations were scheduled. I love attending events where we can get together, especially with other laity, to talk about things and learn from each other. I was the only one who attended from my church, but plan on sharing information I gathered with my congregation as a whole.

What was the most important thing you learned during the day?

I learned that many of our congregations, whether they are small or large, do similar things to evangelize and sometimes face similar struggles and successes. It was great to hear, in smaller groups and then as a larger group, just how related everything is, even when focusing on the different aspects of C.O.M.M.U.N.I.T.Y.

What is the #1 take-away for you?

The theme for the Laity Convocation was “We Are Called . . . (Fill in the Dots).” Throughout the day we were encouraged to “find our dots” or find where we fit in terms of evangelism, how we go about

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Sharing the Light to Lift Blue Christmas

BY JIM STINSON

Older Adult Ministries

Consultant

Elvis got it right—at least for a lot of people. For many different reasons, his version of “Blue Christmas,” hit and still hits, a responsive chord in many. You, no doubt, recognize the lyrics.

I'll have a blue Christmas without you.

I'll be so blue just thinking about you.

Decorations of red on a green Christmas tree

Won't be the same if you're not here with me.

At this time of year, with windows and stores glistening with lights and decorations, with carols playing constantly in stores, with flashy advertisements, with people with plans to be with their extended families and friends, it seems as if everyone ought to be in high spirits. But all are not.

Even our own memories don't always allow us to experience the joy. Memories of loss and pain come roaring back at this time of year for many. The trappings of the season can easily lull the church into forgetting its stories of faith—stories of closed doors, lack of shelter, of danger, and what have you. Stories of angels calming frightened shepherds, of wise men coming to see a new baby in a manger and leaving the manger fearful of returning home because their experience will likely cause the powers of the day to become all the more menacing. All of them capped by the real news of the season. Emmanuel, God is with us.

That is not only the headline; it is the whole story. It was and is a story meant for all the dispossessed,



the lonely, and frightened of the day. It is the headline and story that needs to be heard again by the church, so that it becomes the living, visible proof of a God who is always with us.

We are the church. Our mission is to be the embodiment, the visible proof that God is with us. We are called to live as Christ, giving of ourselves so that others might not only not have a blue Christmas, but that they might have a joyous Christmas every day of the year.

So for those of us involved in older adult ministries we have a specific mission to those who often feel especially blue at this time of year, our older adults. Emmanuel needs to be seen in us as we go about our lives and ministries. God is with us! That is our message to all who are lonely, sad, despairing, wondering where the Christmases of other years have gone, and hoping for one this year.

Spreading that message is also our task. So may we hear our task and may we be about it. Bring them God who shines within and through us.

Laity Learn That Each One Can Evangelize

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doing it. Just like each person is given a different gift by God, we are also called to do evangelism in different ways.

How will you approach/practice evangelism differently?

I think by trying to remember that there are so many different ways to evangelize, and each person in my own congregation does it differently. Though we may have larger “projects,” there are different things that each person can do as they fill in their own evangelism dots to see how God is calling them to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

Giving Tuesday Nets \$853,909 for UMC

More than 2,550 persons in 19 countries contributed a total of \$853,909.78 to United Methodist mission projects and missionary support through the 2016 UMC #GivingTuesday campaign.

“This is an outcome to celebrate, especially since this year we did not offer any matching grants as we have done on the past three annual Giving Tuesdays,” said Thomas Kemper, chief executive of the denomination’s worldwide mission agency, the General Board of Global Ministries, which includes the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Of the total this year, \$751,281.57 was given for 446 mission projects and 156 gifts totaling \$102,628.21 for missionary support through The Advance, the United Methodist designated mission giving channel. One hundred percent of every Advance gift goes to the designated ministry.

In terms of overall mission giving, the 2016 UMC #GivingTuesday result was almost twice that of any single day’s non-Giving Tuesday receipts of the past. That record was set by \$492,000 contributed to UMCOR on one day in response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

“United Methodists believe in the support of God’s mission around the world,” Kemper said, “and Giving Tuesday has become an important occasion to show that commitment. Also,

the annual event has become a teaching instrument for helping Advance projects develop their own fundraising tools, including matching grant programs.”

Kemper also noted that Global Ministries was one of the first faith-based organizations to use Giving Tuesday as a way to provide public education on its work and as a convenient means for giving to worthy causes online. “We are pleased to have helped to lead the way in the productive development of Giving Tuesday for religious purposes.”

Last year, Giving Tuesday brought in \$2.8 million, with

Global Ministries matching the first million. The 2014 amount was \$2.5 million, with match. In 2013, Global Ministries led the Giving Tuesday field with more than ten thousand gifts totaling \$6.5 million, with the first \$500,000 matched.

This year, the donors made 3,792 gifts. The 19 countries or territories represented include Argentina, Austria, Chile, Cote d’Ivoire, Fiji, Guam, Ireland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Last-Minute Giving Ideas

If you’re still searching for that perfect gift for someone, why not consider an online donation to one of the many United Methodist related causes. To give, just click on any of the links below:

- [New York Conference](#) mission and causes
- United Methodist Committee on Relief ([UMCOR](#))
- United Methodist City Society [programs](#)
- [Camp Quinipet](#) on Shelter Island
- [Kingswood Campsite](#) in the Catskills
- [United Methodist Center](#), Far Rockaway, Queens
- [The Children’s Home](#), Binghamton, N.Y.
- [United Methodist Women’s](#) service and advocacy
- United Methodist alternate giving [catalog](#)



Examining Goals of Camping Ministries

BY JANE WAKEMAN

Camping & Retreat Ministries

This month begins a series of articles related to the seven principles of camping and retreat ministries promoted by [The United Methodist Camp & Retreat Ministries Association](#) (UMCRM). These principles should govern camping and retreat ministries and programs, according to The United Methodist Church Discipleship Ministries. These seven principles are:

- Provide sacred spaces apart
- Nurture Christian Faith and Discipleship
- Teach creation care and appreciation
- Extend Christian hospitality and community
- Partner with United Methodist churches and agencies
- Develop principled spiritual leaders
- Inspire and equip lives for love and justice

The NYAC Board of Camping and Retreat Ministries has recently begun to explore the many ways in which our camping and retreat programming already supports these principles, and which efforts might be made to further each of these tenets of our ministry.

Each of these principles as



stated seem fairly obvious, yet each contains several, deeper facets as they are developed on the UMCRM web site. For instance, the first principle, to provide sacred spaces apart includes time for Sabbath rest, to “encourage guests and participants to receive through letting go . . . to hear the Divine Word in silence . . . to act on God’s behalf by resting.” It includes offering times of silence and solitude without fear that it will become boring, or be intimidating to campers.

We can be intentional about keeping schedules open with opportunities for prayer and community without packing it full of activities. Connecting deeply with God can be encouraged

in the out-of-doors through simple living in ways that resorts and other destination vacation locations cannot.

By the way, by visiting the UMCRM web site, visitors will find a host of camp and retreat-related opportunities for those who would like to delve deeper or become more involved. Events are listed, including the national gathering, “Waters of Grace,” on January 30 to February 3, 2017, in Texas. This web site also has information regarding core training and a pathway to para-professional certification in camping and retreat ministries.

Of course, for all things related to the two NYAC camps, please visit the [camps web site](#).

Pipeline Protest Supporters Cheer Re-Route Ruling

UMNS—United Methodists who supported the Standing Rock Sioux protest of the Dakotas Access Pipeline cheered the federal government’s [decision](#) to deny a construction easement under a dammed section of the Missouri River, and to look for alternative routes.

“We’re so excited over the decision, and mindful of all the people who have worked so hard to get to this point,” said the Rev. David Wilson, superintendent of the Oklahoma Missionary Conference.

The Standing Rock Sioux of North Dakota began [their protest](#) months ago, arguing that the pipeline as planned would threaten lands sacred to the tribe, as well as water safety.

Based at a growing camp near Cannon Ball, N.D., the protest has drawn support from many other tribes, as well as environmentalists, religious groups and even U.S. military veterans.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced December 4 that it would not permit the pipeline to

go under Lake Oahe, a section of the Missouri River, and that another route would be sought.

President-elect Donald Trump has voiced strong support for the pipeline, raising questions of whether the decision might be reversed. But United Methodists who joined the protest were upbeat anyway.

“We want to celebrate this win,” said the Rev. Mike Flowers of the Dakotas Conference’s Spirit Lake Ministry Center, which has helped supply protesters. “What better time to be rejoicing than Advent?”

Other United Methodists noted the complexity of the situation, especially for residents of the Dakotas.

“We must be careful to not assume that everyone is opposed to the pipeline or that everyone is making money in big oil,” said the Rev. Kermit Culver, district superintendent for the Sakakawea District serving Bismarck, N.D., and the Bakken Oil Field.

The 1,170-mile Dakotas Access Pipeline is a \$3.8 billion project of Dallas-based Energy Transfer

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Holmes Celebrates 250th

Clergy, past and present, joined the congregation in celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Holmes, N.Y., United Methodist Church during the weekend of October 22 and 23. Saturday included a hymn sing and history exhibit; Sunday’s worship began with the arrival of a horse and rider in the spirit of circuit rider John Reynolds who served the church. Past pastors in attendance were William Wendler, Robert Sorozan, William Hawes, and William Resling. The current NOW parish pastors in attendance were Wongee Joh, David Collins, Jin Kim, and Enock Yatri.



OBITUARIES

Rev. James Winston Clayton

The Reverend James Winston Clayton, 89, died November 20, 2016, at St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Clayton was born on August 17, 1927, in Soddy-Daisy, Tenn. As the child of a Methodist pastor, he moved several times during his early years. After completing high school in White River Junction, Vt., his family moved to Hicksville, N.Y. He earned a bachelor's degree of arts in English from New York University, and then a bachelor's degree of divinity Union Theological Seminary.

Clayton served several Long Island Methodist churches between 1948 and 1955: St. John's in Brooklyn, Cold Spring Harbor, First Methodist in Glendale, and Stony Brook. In 1955 he returned to Union Theological Seminary and earned a master's degree of sacred theology. Jim then served at Lucien Memorial Methodist Church in Kings Park from 1956–1960 and at New Hyde Park Methodist Church from 1960–1966.

While at Union Theological Seminary, Clayton studied with theologians Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, who would continue to influence him for the rest of his life. From 1966–1970 he attended Harvard University, earning his doctorate in 1971. Jim went on to have a rewarding career as a professor of religion, beginning for two years at McKendree College in Lebanon, Ill., and continuing for 23 years at Sewanee, University of the South in Sewanee, TN.

In addition to teaching, Jim contributed in many ways to the community and college life at Sewanee. In the early 1980s, a minority student affairs committee was created; Jim served on that committee as a member and also as its chair. The committee led to the appointment of a director of minority student affairs and later to the establishment of the Ayres Multi-Cultural Student Center and the Summer Scholars program. For Jim, this work grew out of a deep commitment to equal rights and tolerance, which had been sparked decades earlier when, with a small group of people with whom he worked as a Methodist minister, he participated in the March on

Washington and heard Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Jim is survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, Doris R. Clayton. Jim and Doris shared interests in history, literature, music and art, making their life together rich in experiences and happiness. After many years of retirement in Sewanee, Jim and Doris moved to Murfreesboro, TN in 2011.

He is also survived by three sisters, Mary Kohn of Fairfield, Penn., Patricia Milnes of Walnut Creek, Calif., and Irma Kaslow of Chambersburg, Penn.; three children, Douglas Clayton of Acton, Mass., Susan Lewis of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Deborah Lister of Malvern, United Kingdom; eight grandchildren, Amanda Day, Charles Lister, Anna Lister, Emily Lister, Collin Lewis, Benjamin Clayton, Noah Clayton, and Henry Clayton; and two great-grandchildren, Oscar Robin James Lister and Marshall James Day.

Burial took place in Sewanee on December 2 following a family service at St. Augustine's Chapel at Sewanee, University of the South. Condolences may be sent to the online guestbook at www.woodfinchapel.com.

Rev. Dr. Robert G. Barnes

The Reverend Dr. Robert G. Barnes, 83, died November 12 at his home in Kingfield, Maine, with his wife and dear friends at his side.

Rev. Barnes was born on May 7, 1933, to Albert J. and Irene Barnes in Philadelphia, and graduated from Central High School there. He attended Temple University and graduated with a bachelor of arts in English in 1957. Barnes continued his studies for a year as a seminary student, transferring to United Theology Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, where he graduated in 1959 with a bachelor of divinity.

In 1955, Barnes was licensed by the Atlantic Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and was ordained in 1959.

Barnes went on to earn his master's of divinity from Temple University in 1975. He completed a required short-term study at Yale University and earned his

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OBITUARIES

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doctorate of ministry in 1976 from Drew University. Barnes served the Emmanuel EUB Church in Brooklyn from 1959–1964; Calvary EUB/United Methodist Church in Queens Village from 1964–1971; Christ UMC in Port Jefferson Station from 1971–1978, and the Commack UMC from 1978–1998.

While serving at Emmanuel EUB, he was a port representative for the entry process of missionaries for the Board of Missions. He served as chaplain of Bethany Deaconess Hospital until it closed. While serving at Commack UMC, Barnes organized a peaceful demonstration after the destruction of the athletic field the night before high school graduation. He was always considered a “peacemaker.”

In 1958, he married Nancy Heisler, whom he met when he served as the assistant pastor at her home church in Philadelphia.

Barnes retired in 1998 and the couple moved to Kingfield, Maine. He served on the Kingfield budget committee and was chair of Kingfield Water District before the loss of his eyesight forced him to retire from both committees.

He was predeceased by his sister, Dolores Greth.

Funeral services were held November 16, 2016, at the Wiles Remembrance Center in Farmington, Maine. Interment was at Sunnyside Cemetery, Kingfield, Maine.

Condolences may be shared on the memorial wall at www.wilesrc.com. Memorial donations may be made to “Gifts of Love,” c/o Shelby Banks, 18 Ca-boose Lane, Kingfield, ME 04970.

UMM Elect Officers

The United Methodist Men of the conference recently elected the following executive officers:

- President: Benjamin Nelson, the Bronx
- 1st Vice President: Wayne Carty, Huntington, N.Y.
- 2nd Vice President: Graham Greaves, South Ozone Park, N.Y.
- Treasurer: Eric Williamson, Ledgewood, N.J.
- Secretary: Ernie Searle, Glendale, N.Y.

Protestors Cheer Ruling

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Partners, intended to bring crude oil from North Dakota to a shipping point in Illinois. The pipeline is nearly finished. The only work left in North Dakota was to have been the segment under Lake Oahe.

Supporters have touted the pipeline as a safe, job-producing project that has followed the government’s permitting procedures and will increase U.S. energy independence. They decried the Corps’ Dec. 4 announcement.

[President Obama addressed the issue in November](#), saying he hoped to accommodate the Native Americans’ concerns and that an alternate route was under consideration.

Bishop Bruce Ough of the Dakotas Conference also has visited the camp site, as have the Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, other church agency leaders and United Methodist clergy and laity.

Henry-Crowe praised the Corps’ decision.

“This victory demonstrates the power of peaceful, prayerful resistance,” she said [in a statement](#).

Book Proceeds to Help Refugees

Everyone knows the story of how Jesus was humbly born in a manger when there was no room at the inn. But the new book, “Refuge,” offers a lyrical depiction of what came next: the new family’s travels through the desert, fleeing Herod’s soldiers in order to find a safe place to welcome their son into the world. A refreshing look at the classic Christmas story that’s never been more relevant, “Refuge” asks readers to consider the modern day implications of being forced to flee your home country.



From now through December 31, 2016, Cokesbury will donate three dollars from the sale of each book sold to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), a non-profit organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering.

The publisher, Little, Brown & Company, will separately donate one dollar from each copy of retail net sales in the United States, to the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, through September 2017.