

*And so we watch, and wait, and stay alert,  
waiting again for the coming of Jesus.  
And we light a candle in preparation  
for that glorious day.  
Blessings of the Advent Season!*



*"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 17, 2013

## Team Vital: Learning Opportunities abound

As part of the New York Conference's continuing efforts to revitalize our congregations, more than 320 laity and clergy participated in two recent daylong workshops. The first, in October, featured Shannon Odell and targeted ministry in rural settings. In November, DJ del Rosario, senior pastor at Bothell UMC in Bothell, Wash., offered guidance on implementing and dealing with change.

Del Rosario's enthusiastic, hopeful approach to transition was definitely contagious at the November 16 event at the Edith Macy Conference Center in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.

The pastors and leadership teams from 23 churches were challenged to step away from "inadequate ministry" to relevant ministry.

Using the metaphor of a tree, he said, a change doesn't mean that you cut the tree at its roots and begin again, but as a tree constantly reaches out with new growth so should our ministries—realizing, of course, that it takes constant attention to help a tree flourish.

Del Rosario also told a story about the car he drove from age



**Margaret Howe, left, who is the Catskill Hudson District director of Lay Servant Ministries, listens to the presentation of Rev. DJ del Rosario at the Edith Macy Conference Center.**

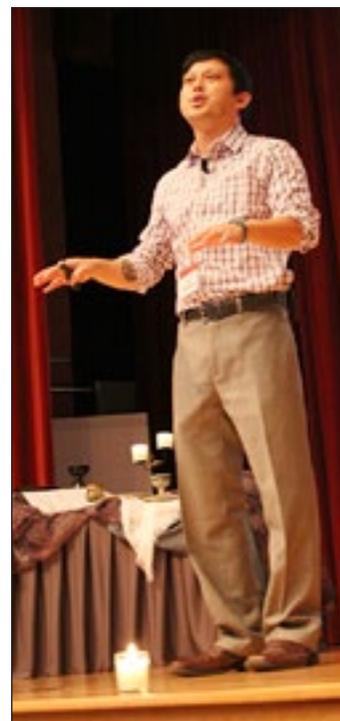
17 until the birth of his first child, when reliable transportation became a major concern. Although he understood why he needed to get a new car, the longtime relationship with the vehicle made the change very difficult.

On the first drive in his new car, he was surprised to discover that his old car's tendency to pull to the left had altered his driving posture. He'd been leaning to the left for so long that he hadn't realize it wasn't normal to drive that way. He

noted that's one reason we need to change. We get so caught up in the old ways that we don't even know how to appreciate something new.

During the workshop church teams had time to plan together, exploring the dynamics of team planning and executing a plan. The teams were asked to convince others about their overall intention and plan, and the best were rewarded with a cash grant to support the new ministry.

Among the best ideas



was a "free market" planned by First UMC in Jamaica to provide a shopping experience for the disadvantaged in the neighborhood. New Paltz UMC created a plan to sponsor a parade—complete with floats—that will lift the gifts and graces of those who are disabled. By involving the State University

**Continued on page 7**



**12/24–25 Conference Office Closed**  
Christmas holiday.

**1/1/2014 Conference Office Closed**  
New Year's Day holiday.

### **1/11 Safe Sanctuaries Workshop**

This three-hour Safe Sanctuaries Workshop is designed for congregations who don't yet have a written policy. The workshop prepares a core team of 4 or 5 to work with the congregation to write a policy, as well as providing information on how to train trustees, teachers, parents and pastors on the implementation of that policy. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m.; workshop at 10 a.m. at Clinton Avenue UMC, Kingston, N.Y. Snow date is January 25. Go to [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/77871](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/77871) to register; email Cassandra Negri at [ChildrensMinistry@nyac-umc.com](mailto:ChildrensMinistry@nyac-umc.com) with questions.

### **1/11 Resource Day for Larger Parishes**

The Catskill Hudson and NY/Connecticut districts will hold a day of training for pastors and laity leaders of cooperative parishes at New Paltz UMC. Rev. William Mudge, superintendent of the Adirondack District of the Upper New York Conference, will share his experiences in a cooperative ministry that included 14 churches. Fellowship and refreshments begin at 9 a.m., with worship at 9:30. The day will conclude at 4:30 p.m. There is no cost for district participants. Contact the district offices to reserve a space by January 4.

### **1/14–16 Bishop's Convocation**

"A Glimpse of God: Worship & Fellowship" will feature worship designer Dr. Marcia McFee and the Nat Dixon Jazz Band. The convocation begins with 2 p.m. registration on Tuesday and ends at 1:30 p.m. Thursday. Double occupancy is \$575 before Jan. 6, \$605 after. Single occupancy is \$355 before Jan. 6; \$385 after. Childcare is available at no additional cost. Bus transportation will be available for a fee from New York City and White Plains to the Villa Roma Resort and Conference Center, 356 Villa Roma Road, Callicoon, N.Y. The Villa Roma Resort and Conference Center offers downhill skiing, indoor tennis and racquetball, indoor swimming, spa services, arcade and game rooms and more. To register, go to: <http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/76823>. For more information, please contact registrar, Rev. Ken Coddington, at [kedocama4@gmail.com](mailto:kedocama4@gmail.com), or 845-594-3233.

### **1/18 & 25 Learn to Lead Small Groups**

This 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. course, open to all laity, blends knowledge about the dynamics of small groups with our call to form disciples. This is an advanced lay servant class with a three-year certification upon completion. Fellowship and sign-in begins at 8:30 a.m. at the UMC of Waterbury, 250 Country Club Road, Waterbury, Conn. Fern Blair Hart, a certified lay minister, will lead the sessions. All class participants should purchase and read Thomas R. Hawkins' book, "The Christian Small Group Leader" before the first session (currently available at Amazon.com). Cost for this two-session course sponsored by Connecticut District Lay Servant Ministries is \$15. Please mail your check payable to "CT District," along with your name, address, phone number, email, district, and church to: Dorothy Chamberlain, CT District Office, 20 Broadfield Rd., Hamden, CT 06517. For further details, please contact Mary Brevigleiri, CT District Lay Servant Director, at [mbrevigleiri@perrytechnology.com](mailto:mbrevigleiri@perrytechnology.com), or 860-307-4611. Please bring a bag lunch.

### **2/15 Emergency Response Team Training**

This eight-hour training is for anyone new to ERT, or as a renewal for those previously certified. Certification is good for three years. 9 a.m.–5 p.m. at Mary Taylor Memorial UMC, 168 Broad St., Milford, Conn. Trainer is Rev. Dr. M. Craig Fitzsimmons, UMCOR certified trainer and pastor at the Clinton (CT) UMC. A complimentary lunch will be provided by the host church. Cost: \$10 to cover required background check. Registration deadline is February 10. For more info, contact Mary Lou Kampert at [mtmumc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mtmumc@sbcglobal.net), or 203.874.1982, ext. 10.

### **2/15, 22 & 3/1 Basic Lay Servant Class**

A lay servant is an active, supportive member of a United Methodist congregation who is eager to be in ministry through the church. Lay servant ministries offers training opportunities for laity who would like to use their witness, leadership, and service to inspire others to a deeper commitment to Christ and a more effective discipleship. Course meets on three Saturdays at Trinity UMC in South Meriden, Conn.; fellowship at 8:30 a.m.; classes begin promptly at 9 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. Cost is \$15. Contact Mary Brevigleiri, Connecticut district lay servant director, at [mbrevigleiri@perrytechnology.com](mailto:mbrevigleiri@perrytechnology.com).

### **3/15 & 22 Living Our Methodist Beliefs**

This is an advanced lay servant ministry class certified by the General Board of Discipleship as one of the required classes towards lay speaker designation. Jerry Eyster will lead the class from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fellowship and sign-in begin at 8:30 a.m. at the United Methodist Church of Westport and Weston, 49 Weston Road, Westport, Conn. Cost is \$15. For details and registration info, go to: <http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/76820>.

	
<small>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</small>	
<b>Bishop: Martin D. McLee</b> Director of Connectional Ministries: <b>Ann A. Pearson</b> Editor: <b>Joanne Utley</b> New York Conference of The United Methodist Church 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606 Phone (888) 696-6922 Fax (914) 615-2244; Website: <a href="http://www.nyac.com">www.nyac.com</a> Vision e-mail: <a href="mailto:thevision@nyac.com">thevision@nyac.com</a>	

# \$6.5M Donated to Advance Ministries

Thanks to the generosity of United Methodists around the world, more than 880 projects and missionaries will receive a financial boost to help them meet their mission goals. The denomination's General Board of Global Ministries announced that the first-ever UMC #GivingTuesday generated a record \$6.5 million online on December 3. Nearly 11,000 donors in 34 countries gave more than 16,300 gifts through [The Advance](#) to mission and ministries they believe in. Global Ministries matched the first \$500,000 received.

Building on the recent US shopping traditions of Black Friday, Local Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday, UMC #GivingTuesday offered an opportunity to start the holiday season by giving instead of getting, while supporting



UMNS PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

**Disaster relief is just one of many ways the UMC helps those in need around the globe**

organizations that are transforming the world.

"We were overwhelmed by this giving that went far beyond our dreams," said Thomas

Kemper, the head of Global Ministries. "The people called Methodists once again have exceeded themselves in love and solidarity."

A final accounting of the distribution of gifts is expected by December 16. Kemper thanked the staff who connected Global Ministries with the national #GivingTuesday campaign, helped promote the event, and made it technically possible to process more than \$6.5 million online. He hopes that UMC #GivingTuesday raised awareness about the impact that United Methodists have in the lives of people served by Advance projects. "While Giving Tuesday is just one day, these ministries are transforming the world all year around," he said.

Gifts to support Advance projects and the missionary community can be made online at any time at [www.umcmmission.org/give](http://www.umcmmission.org/give).

## Giving for Malaria

Looking for a gift with special meaning for someone special to you? Please help support the Imagine No Malaria Initiative and the NYAC Season of Hope Alternative Giving for Advent 2013. Purchase a card on our web site for a donation, starting at \$10, to honor someone who has blessed you. You can choose to have the cards sent directly to the recipient by submitting their names and addresses, or have them sent to your home to send out personally. All money collected will go directly to Imagine No Malaria as part of the NYAC pledge.

To purchase cards that will be delivered to you, go to: <https://ny-reg.brtapp.com/INM-Cards-Bulk>.

To purchase cards that will be mailed to your recipients, go to: <https://ny-reg.brtapp.com/INM-Cards-Indv>.

## Continuing The Care

Eleven homeowners still recovering from the ravages of Superstorm Sandy recently received care baskets from the Long Island Sandy Recovery Ministry. Stephania Petit, client disaster advocate, and Pastor Wendy Vencuss delivered 10 Thanksgiving baskets of food, and one basket of toiletries. In the photo, Petit, (from left) Peggy Racine, Rita Coughlin, and Barbara Garofolo prepare the baskets in the office at Community UMC in Massapequa, N.Y.



## Bullying Not a Part of True Friendship

*Adapted from a sermon by Rev. William Townsend, Children's Home director of spiritual life*

The movie "Bully" has started an anti-bullying movement that has spread across the country and around the world. The movie follows the real-life saga of five kids and their families over the course of a school year.

One of those kids is a young man named Alex, the victim of chronic physical and emotional bullying. In one touching scene, Alex's mom confronts Alex about the bullying, asking why he allows his so-called "friends" to continue to cause him so much pain.

Trying to understand her son's thinking she asks, "Have you gotten used to it, do you enjoy it?"

Then she lovingly says to Alex, "Friends are supposed to make you feel good. That's the point of having them. Your only connection to these kids is that they like to pound on you."

Alex's response to his mom is heartbreaking. With sadness and confusion on his face he softly responds, "If you say those kids aren't my friends, then what friends do I have?"

Imagine being so desperate for friendship and inclusion that you are willing to endure an onslaught of physical and emotional torture.



For Alex, the pain of being ignored and excluded was a worse fate than the pain of being bullied. In one way, Alex has it right. Human beings are meant to live in community. We need each other. But at what cost does friendship come?

John Wesley's "rules for living" give us additional guidance on how we should treat one another. Wesley calls on the faithful to:

*Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.*

John Wesley would agree, I believe, that friends help each other and make each other feel good. We could all be better friends if, before we act, we were to stop and think.

Human beings are, indeed, meant to live in community. We really do need each other. But no child, youth or adult should ever be in a

situation of needing attention and inclusion so badly that they have to endure physical and/or emotional pain in order to have that need met.

What more precious gift could we offer to the wondering soul in search of belonging than the assurance that Jesus is our constant friend? What a wonderful gift we have to offer to the child who is being battered, abused and ignored by the very people who should call him or her, "friend." While friendship starts with Jesus, it need not end there. A song written by Bill and Gloria Gaither says, "I am loved, I am love, I can risk loving you, for the One who knows me best loves me most." Secure in the friendship of God, each of us can risk allowing others into our life and risk being a friend to others.

Jesus is that kind of friend. Won't you be that kind of friend too?

For details and educational materials on the "Bully" documentary, go to: <http://www.thebullyproject.com>.

*For more information on the Children's Home, call 607-772-6904 (or toll free 800-772-6904), ext. 131; or visit the web site at [www.chowc.org](http://www.chowc.org). Please feel free to send donations directly, or use the New York Conference advance number 60-0588.*

# Storytelling Can Open New Life Chapters

“Do you remember when Grandma . . . ?”

As my family was waiting for Thanksgiving dinner to be ready they were doing what most families do at holiday time. They were reminiscing. Since “Grandma” always lived with us she was a source of many memories, especially as she grew older and had ever-greater senility. No one was ever sure what she would say or when she would say it. Consequentially the stories and the memories are plentiful.

While we were sharing stories I got to thinking about how often the folks who live at the United Methodist Homes (where I work as the director of spiritual life) tell their stories. This can sometimes become tedious listening to the same stories day after day. But when I am at my best, I listen to them as if it was the first time I heard them. For I know the storytelling serves a need and a purpose. Which is what I want to discuss.

Storytelling and story listening are a vital part of caring for and about older adults. Storytelling validates the value of the years they have already lived. In a time when so many of their loved ones and family members have died, it is a way of reconnecting with important, life-defining, relationships and connections. In a time of decreased opportunities to forge new relationships it is important to know that they have been important to others, that their lives have made a difference.



Telling the stories allows them to feel connected again with the ones being remembered as well as to sense the connection with the one interested in hearing the story. There is no more important aspect of working with older adults than taking an active interest in their stories.

Storytelling also often motivates a person to move on to the possibility of creating new opportunities for their stories to continue. I have been privileged to be a part of our Vital Life Story program at the UMH whereby we solicit the life stories of our residents. After hearing their stories and sharing the written story with them my favorite act follows. I tell them how impressed I am with their story and wonder what the next chapter will be about. It is often the first time they have been asked or thought about such a possibility. The discovery that more is still possible and still expected comes as a great surprise to them. But the real surprise is the frequency with which they share dreams they still have and still hope to fulfill. It is often the beginning of a new outlook on the future.

So encourage the stories. Listen closely! Encourage the next chapter. As the saying goes, help them to discover, “It ain’t over ’til the fat lady sings.” Help them to discover that no matter the infirmities and the limits there is always the possibility and the joy of creating and building new relationships.

## GCFA Responds to Clergy Housing Case

On November 21, a federal district court judge in Madison, Wisc. held that a portion of Section 107 of the tax code is unconstitutional. Section 107 is the provision dealing with tax-favored housing benefits for clergy. Specifically, the court held that Section 107(2), which permits clergy to receive a tax-free cash “housing allowance,” is unconstitutional because it violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion . . .”). Section 107(1), which allows clergy to reside tax-free in a church-provided parsonage, was not affected by the court’s decision.

In the case, *Freedom From Religion Foundation, et al. v. Lew, et al.*, the United States government was the party that defended the constitutionality of Section 107, a federal law enacted by Congress many decades ago. As the losing party, the government must now decide whether it wants to appeal this decision to the next level of the federal court system, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago. GCFA believes an appeal is likely.

The court in Wisconsin delayed the implementation of its decision until any appeals that may be filed by the government are concluded or until the deadline for filing an appeal has passed, whichever is later. GCFA understands that the government will have 60 days to file an appeal, and so the district court’s decision will have no effect until sometime in 2014 at the earliest. If an appeal is filed, it is certainly conceivable that this case could take several more years to be finally decided.

GCFA is tasked by the *Book of Discipline* with the responsibility to protect the legal rights and interests of the United Methodist denomination. However, it is too early to fully understand the impact of this case, or to predict the chances for this decision to be reversed. GCFA will continue to actively monitor the case as it develops, and will take the appropriate actions at the appropriate times to represent the interests of the denomination.

If you have any questions, please email them to [legal@gcfa.org](mailto:legal@gcfa.org).

## Need Help Preserving Church Historical Records?

Do you know where your church’s historical records are stored? What condition are they in? Are they in need of preservation?

The NYAC Commission on Archives and History (CAH) and the C. Wesley Christman Archives can help! The CAH is offering a grant program to assist local churches with the preservation of historical records. United Methodist churches within the bounds of the

New York Annual Conference are eligible to apply.

Grants totaling \$1000 will be available, with each grant being at least \$300. The amount of the grant must be matched 1:1 by the local church; e.g., the amount requested must equal the amount the church will contribute to the project.

Activities that contribute to the long-term

preservation of the church’s historical records are eligible. These might include, but are not limited to: purchase of storage furniture and/or enclosures, equipment to improve the environment in a records storage space; and preservation microfilming of records.

For more information and an application, go to [www.nyac.com/archives](http://www.nyac.com/archives), or email Conference Archivist Beth Patkus at [archives@nyac.com](mailto:archives@nyac.com).

# The Global and Local: Mutuality of Exchange

BY GLORY E. DHARMARAJ, PH.D.  
Shrub Oak UMC

In his famous epic, *Odyssey*, Homer captures two key instincts, homing and roaming, and molds them into two timeless characters. One, Penelope, and the other, Odysseus. The former stays at home weaving her masterpieces, while her husband Odysseus, undertakes long and arduous travels, and plays a heroic role in the Trojan War. The rootedness of Penelope and the roaming of Odysseus form a key dialectic in this epic. One has no existence without the other. In fact, Penelope even sets up a game plan to ward off her suitors saying that she has to complete weaving a shroud before she marries again. She weaves by day and unravels her woven piece by night, and repeats it until Odysseus comes home.



Glory Dharmaraj

In light of today's patterns of travel and migration, Penelope and Odysseus are no longer singular monolithic subjects representing changeless principles of rootedness and roaming. Today travel and migration constitute complex, multi-directional, and unprecedented patterns in history. This impacts our traditional notions of *global* and *local* and how we negotiate them.

## Christian mission as journey

In this context, it is imperative to conceptualize Christian mission as a journey, and not a place where we arrive one day. Mission is neither a destination nor a program strategy, but a pilgrimage. This journey allows us to "tap parts" of the self that are generally obscured by chatter and routine, and also to realize how subjective our certainties can be. Certainties such as the world, the self, and the other can at best be subjective, and no longer be universal. Negotiating the global and the local constantly are key dialectics in this journey. This dialectic is more pronounced in Christian mission than ever before.

## The encounter between the global and the local

Global realities such as the flow of capital, information, and technology have resulted in lop-sided power relations in a fast-paced world. The homogenizing instinct of globalization and the resisting instinct of the local cultures no longer fall under neat and absolute categories.

## COMMENTARY

Within the occurrences of globalization and localization—which sociologist Roland Robertson calls "glocalization,"—global migration emerges as a force, in unprecedented scope and scale, to reckon with.

Diasporas situate multiple identities, not based on the mere local or the totalizing global. The eruption of African, Asian, and Latin American diasporas into the United States and Europe is a response to the push and pull factors of migration. War, famine, economic globalization, terrorism, natural disasters, and etc., push peoples away from their local habitats. Cheap labor and the opportunities available for the gifted people are pull factors into the developed countries.

Living in more than one world, the locality of their country of origin and the country of their residence, has become an everyday reality for most of these diasporas. Peggy Levitt, author of *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing Religious Landscape*, says, "People who live transnationally are the face of the future."

Hyphenated, bifurcated, bi-local, and multi-local diasporic persons happen to be Christians, also. Their new congregations, worship settings, and spiritual practices span more than one locality metaphorically and otherwise. Their remittances to their countries of origin and the support of the Christian communities back home are often hidden from the mainstream denominational landscape. Immigrant, migrant, and refugee churches have networks and linkages often not visible to the majority eye view. When the hopes and fears of migration have met in the diasporic Christian communities in the midst of us, it is imperative to recall the words of a scholar in migration and mission that every migrant Christian is a potential missionary.

## Business Mileage Rate Decreases for 2014

The Internal Revenue Service has issued the 2014 standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business or charitable, medical or moving purposes.

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2014, the standard mileage rates will be:

- 56 cents per mile for business miles driven. This rate represents the maximum rate an organization can reimburse an employee without having the reimbursement treated as taxable income to the employee.

## The pilgrim church

I submit that as a church we undertake efforts to receive the flow of mission insights from those who are on the move. We incorporate the global-local insights as bottom-up approach, that the immigrants and migrants bring as agents of mission at a time such as this, and cultivate tools to engage in this mission.

We also realize that in this journey theology is complexly context-specific, and hence it is not transferrable.

We engage ourselves in mission in obedience to the gospel and the promptings of the Holy Spirit in a given context.

Christian mission and ministry is in the context of difference and diversity. It is biblical, global, contextual, multi-lateral, multi-structural, cross-cultural, polyphonic, and ecumenical.

There is no normative Christian mission. It constantly and continually cross-pollinates with that of our sisters and brothers from the global south. No denomination can afford to lose what the global Christian community can bring to our local church's mission, ministry and worship.

That engagement in mission is a journey and a movement together, as the recent World Council of Churches Assembly has themed it: "God of Life, Lead us to Justice and Peace."

Unwriting the monolithic constructs of Penelope and Odysseus, moving beyond the oppositional paradigm of stasis and movement, and reconstructing mission from the margins in this multi-directional journey is a fearful and exciting engagement.

*Dharmaraj wrote this reflection after returning from the WCC Assembly held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from October 30 to November 8. She is the executive secretary for justice education for the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.*

- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations. This represents the rate an individual (not an employee) can use on their tax return to deduct miles driven in service of a charitable organization.

The business mileage rate decreased one-half cent from the 2013 rate. The charitable rate remains the same as in 2013. The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile.

—Ross Williams



The praise band from the Harriman UMC provided musical inspiration for the day in Kingston, N.Y.

## Team Vital: Tackling Rural Ministry, Change

Continued from page 1

of NY and the Department of Social Services, they hope to raise awareness about the needs of the disabled among us and to emphasize their talents.

Del Rosario is on the leadership team of Spark 12, a faith-based catalyst that provides funding, coaching, and resourcing to bring to life the ideas of entrepreneurs to transform the world. Some of his advice included:

- New growth can be good because it honors what is sustaining it. Not all new growth is meant to last.
- Use of the media resources available at the web site, [www.theworkofthepeople.org](http://www.theworkofthepeople.org). He noted the Pacific Northwest Conference media center has one license that can be shared with churches with permission.
- Every spring, could provide a retreat for church leaders to connect
- Don't be afraid to fail, as long as you are willing to learn from the failure.
- A fundraising model from a church start in the Desert Southwest Conference that works with local firms



Speakers included retired Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, left, and Shannon Odell.

to "covenant" with them to bring them business through Bible studies, and meetings.

- Church leaders and clergy should be tour guides of all that God is doing through the church and community.
- Assess what your communities are doing. Is everyone providing the same VBS curriculum? What can you offer that feeds them spiritually in a different way?

Shannon Odell, who pastors the Brand New Church in Harrison, Ark., was the featured speaker at the "Reinvigorating the



Local Church" workshop at the Garden Plaza in Kingston, N.Y., on October 26. He noted that being "rural-minded" was not just a matter of location, but the product of a limited mindset.

He cited the example of Moses and the burning bush. God only spoke when Moses moved toward the bush.

"You have to move so God can see that you're serious about this," Odell said. "God wants to use us to build his church—you are the tools, but you've got to move."

"What's stopping you from believing what God can do?" he asked the gathering of 170 clergy and laity, adding that while most people acknowledge a "great big

God of creation," we envision a "midget God for the day to day."

He urged the group to eliminate the things that do not add value to their ministries. He spelled out "value" this way:

- **Vision:** Pastors must provide vision. "God can work ahead more than one week," he said, with a laugh. We've got to remember, "It's not come and get it, but go and get them."
- **Attitude:** Beware of a cynical spirit. "You can't be spirit-filled and be negative."
- **Leadership:** In following God, we must lead outward, lead by example. Be the best tither in the church.
- **Understanding:** Realize that as Christians we are under the standing of God. We need to lead theocratically, not politically.
- **Excellence:** Striving for excellence in all that we do can bring about revival.

"Everything you do has to bring people to Jesus Christ," he said. "Everything you do has to reach people for Jesus Christ . . . Would a lost person even walk into church?"

## Council Takes Action Following Same-Gender Ceremony

Following the action of a retired bishop to conduct a same-gender ceremony in violation of church law, the United Methodist Council of Bishops took a series of actions to address the issue during their annual meeting this week in Lake Junaluska, N.C.

The Council requested that Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, president of the Council, and Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett of the North Alabama Conference file a complaint regarding Bishop Melvin Talbert's action, for "undermining the ministry of a colleague and conducting a ceremony to celebrate the marriage of a same gender couple."

"When there are violations of the *Book of Discipline*, a response is required," the bishops said in a statement.

The Council also voted to initiate a task force to lead conversations about human sexuality, race and gender in a global perspective. The goal of this effort is to come to a shared theological understanding amid diverse opinions in the church about these issues.

These actions followed days of prayerful discernment and conversation about the action it would take after retired Bishop Melvin Talbert conducted a ceremony on Oct. 26 celebrating the marriage of a same-gender couple in Center Point, Ala.—a chargeable offense for United Methodist clergy.

Church law says that, "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches."

Both the presiding bishop of the North Alabama area where the ceremony took place, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett, and the Executive Committee of the Council had requested that Bishop Talbert not perform the ceremony.

Under church law, the College of Bishops—which is constituted of the bishops in a jurisdictional or central conference—has authority and accountability for processing complaints against a bishop who serves (or served) in that area, which would be the Western Jurisdiction in this instance.



PHOTO BY THE REV. LAURA ROSSBERT

**United Methodist Bishop Melvin Talbert (center) marries Joe Openshaw (left) and Bobby Prince at Covenant Community United Church of Christ in Center Point, Ala.**

Earlier this week in the President's Address, Bishop Wenner acknowledged there is diversity of opinion about many issues in the church. "We have to lead together although we are not one minded. We do not need to hide that we are diverse," she said. In the address, she also noted, "Serious conflicts have to be brought to the tables where leaders are present," an acknowledgment that supports the plan for further discussion of the issue through a task force.

In a statement, the Council said that when followers of Christ and people of conscience hold conflicting views, honest and respectful conversation and prayer are needed throughout the church. The Council expressed pastoral care and concern for all people.

## Bishop McLee Responds to Council Decision

11/16/2013

Beloved New York Conference Family and Friends:

As a result of Bishop Melvin Talbert's decision to celebrate the marriage of an already lawfully married same-gender couple and the ensuing controversy, the Council of Bishops has released a statement. Let me be clear, the Council engaged in honest, critical, prayerful and reflective dialogue as it worked to craft this statement. Moreover, all who wished to speak had voice and were heard. While the statement was adopted by the Council, it was not adopted without dissent. As is the case with The United Methodist Church at large, the Council is not on one accord on matters of human sexuality.

I have been clear in enunciating my objection to the current church doctrine and polity that excludes same-gender loving persons from full participation in the life of the church. I will continue to do what I can as a bishop of the church to make a difference in this ongoing struggle. As I have previously indicated, there are other areas that I also feel called to offer objection to as well. The short list includes: xenophobia, gender discrimination, and the unfinished work in the fight against racism.

As we continue in our journey to live as the "beloved community," I invite you to join me in the following ways:

- Let us reason prayerfully and not react in condemnation as we journey together.
- Let's distinguish what is factual from that which is rumor and innuendo concerning the recent meeting of the Council of Bishops.
- Let us each discern how God calls us to lead on matters of human sexuality and on the myriad other issues facing the church.
- Let us remember that The United Methodist Church is a "community of all," where we each have a voice.
- "Let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we will reap if we faint not." Galatians 6:9.

Beloved, I urge you to continue in prayer for all bishops, for Bobby Prince and Joe Openshaw (the couple whose marriage was celebrated by Bishop Talbert), and for us all as we grapple with finding a way. It is my hope that at the end of the day, "Love will prevail."

All my prayers,  
*Bishop Martin McLee*

# OBITUARIES

## Ernest Swiggett

Ernest Swiggett, former treasurer of the New York Annual Conference, died December 2 at age 79 at Manhattan's Mount Sinai Hospital. A memorial service will be held later this month, details will be announced when they are received by the Secretary. He is survived by a godson Darrin Glymph.

At the time of his death, Swiggett served the church of Christ in a variety of NYAC ministries, including the Committee on Episcopacy, and the Metropolitan District Committee on the Superintendency. He is best known for his 23½ years of service on the conference staff as business administrator and treasurer. Following several years as church administrator of Salem UMC in Harlem, he joined the conference staff in 1987.

In a letter announcing Ernest's retirement in 2010, Bishop Jeremiah Park wrote, "To be very sure, in his witness that extends beyond his conference role, Ernest is known as a committed Christian, faithful disciple and, not least, a most gifted preacher. Through his membership and leadership in his beloved Salem Church, his extensive Jurisdictional and General Conference responsibilities (he has been a General Conference delegate since 1988), Ernest has been the face of the New York Annual Conference for many."

"His absence will be deeply felt, his shoes difficult to fill," Park wrote.

The celebration of the life and witness of Swiggett is planned for 11 a.m., Saturday, January 4, at Salem UMC, 2190 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. New York, N.Y.

Messages of condolences can be sent to Swiggett's godson, Darrin Glymph, 1823 Quincy St., Washington, D.C. 20011, or at [Dglymph@orrick.com](mailto:Dglymph@orrick.com).

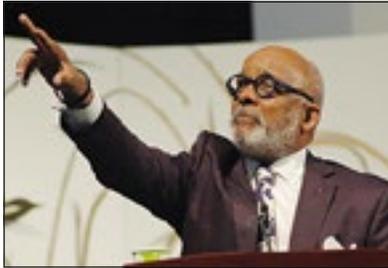
## Margaret Rosalie Howlett Jones Monkman

Margaret Rosalie Howlett Jones Monkman, wife of Rev. Richard S. Monkman, died on November 27 at her daughter's home in Lagrangeville, N.Y. She had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for the past five years.

Monkman, who was born in England in 1932, spent six years of her childhood under bombing raids and evacuation assignments during World War II. In 1993, she would write, "Bombs and Lambs", a depiction of her childhood wartime years.

She moved to France where she taught conversational English to French students for one year, and later graduated from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where she met her future husband, the American, Richard Monkman. She also spent a year in New York City working at the United Nations on published nuclear development materials.

After they were married in London, Mrs. Monkman began a lifetime career as a clergyman's wife and partner as her husband served first in Scotland, and then in the New York East and New York conferences at Lynbrook, Cannondale, Bronx: Wakefield Grace, Inwood, Torrington, and for 21 years in Pound Ridge. She also taught in various private schools, including 25 years at the New Canaan Country School. Rev. Monkman retired in 1993.



**Ernest Swiggett speaks during his retirement celebration during the 2010 annual conference.**

In addition to her husband, Monkman is survived by three children: Richard, Jonathon and Elisabeth; seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild, as well as family members in England.

Funeral services were private for the family. Gifts in her memory may be sent to the United Methodist Church of New Canaan, 165 South Avenue, New Canaan, CT 06840. Condolences may be sent to Rev. Richard Monkman, 2131 Meadow Ridge, Redding, CT 06896.

## Rev. John Edwin Swords

Reverend John Edwin Swords died November 22, at age 93. His final day is described as "peaceful" with visitations from children and grandchildren, while listening to them sing many of his favorite hymns and German folk songs accompanied by viola and violin.

Swords was born in Rheineck, Switzerland, in 1920 to Rev. Albert E. Swords and Lilly Gertrude Funk Swords. He and his five siblings were raised in eastern Germany between the two world wars—a time of great economic and political turmoil.

He immigrated to the United States in 1940, working as a toolmaker to earn passage for the rest of the family, who joined him in 1942. After serving in the U.S. Navy from 1944–1946, Swords married Alison Moore in 1948. He attended Cornell College, earned degrees from the University of Denver and Drew University and completed a master's degree in pastoral counseling from the New York Theological Seminary in 1972.

Rev. Swords had more than 36 years of service as a United Methodist pastor. He was granted a local preacher's license in 1948 through the Upper Iowa Conference; and was eventually ordained in 1953 as an elder and became a full member of the NYAC.

His appointment history began in 1949 to a five-point charge of Long Eddy, Goulds, Rock Valley, Pea Brook and French Woods. Swords went on to serve Modena and Clintondale, Central Valley and Highland Mills, Cutchogue, Christ on Staten Island, Goshen, First German, Highland Avenue in Ossining, Bethel on Staten Island, Emory in Hancock, until retiring in 1986. Highlights of Rev. Sword's ministry include helping establish camping programs at camps Epworth and Kingswood.

In 2003, he was predeceased by his wife of 55 years, Alison. Swords is survived by his brother and sister-in-law; children, Peter, Mary, Marti, Sarah and Andrew, and their spouses; 11 grandchildren and many nieces and nephews including Rev. Jim Moore, Superintendent of the Catskill Hudson District.

A memorial service was held November 29 at the University United Methodist Church, 1085 E. Genesee Street, Syracuse, N.Y. The committal service will be held in the spring at Highland Mills Cemetery in Highland Mills, N.Y. The family encourages donations to University UMC, Peace Action of Central New York, or Syracuse Habitat for Humanity.

## Rev. Madeline L. McDonald

Reverend Madeline L. McDonald, a retired elder of the New York Conference, died November 7 after a short illness. She was 84.

McDonald earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and education from Adelphi University and a master's of divinity in practical theology from Union Theological Seminary. Prior to her ordination, she was employed as a teacher in early intervention at United Cerebral Palsy.

She married husband, Russell McDonald in June 1949; he preceded her in death in 2011. In 1983, McDonald received elder's orders as a full member of the New York Conference. She served for 12 years before

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retiring in 1991.

Rev. McDonald's appointment history began in 1978 at Center Moriches, and two years later she took a sabbatical leave. The next appointment was to Highland Falls and Fort Montgomery before moving on to Grace Church in Valley Stream, N.Y., as an associate pastor. McDonald would then be appointed "coordinator" of the Upper Catskills Larger Parish, joining two other pastors to serve Andes, Pleasant Valley, Margaretville, Halcottsville, Roxbury, Fleischmanns and Halcott Center churches, until 1991.

Following retirement, the McDonalds moved to Whitesboro where she served churches in the Upper New York Conference—including Taberg, Lee and Maynard—for more than two decades. In 1994, she began to serve as the local church consultant for the Mohawk District. The work that was closest to her heart was the prison ministry at Walsh Medical Center and her involvement with New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

## JOB OPENINGS

### Music Director Needed

The Valhalla United Methodist Church is searching for a well-qualified director of music to serve as organist and director of both the chancel and bell choirs. Openness to musical diversity is a requirement. Interviews begin in January. Send letter of interest and resume to:

Valhalla United Methodist Church  
200 Columbus Avenue  
Valhalla, NY 10595  
Attn: Staff Parish Relations Committee

### Appalachian Ministry Seeks Director

The United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network (UMAMN) is seeking an executive coordinator to implement the goals and objectives of this Appalachian Ministry. In partnership with the network members, the successful candidate will help develop strategies to implement a Christian response to social justice issues facing individuals and communities throughout Appalachia.

An applicant for the executive coordinator position should be highly industrious and self motivated. Desired qualifications are a college degree along with non-profit experience or equivalent. Additionally, knowledge of United Methodist theology and structure is important.

The office is currently located in Buckhannon, W.V., adjacent to West Virginia Wesleyan College. However, if necessary, the office can be relocated within Appalachia.

The compensation package is flexible and negotiable based on the applicants needs including whether the position is full or part time. If you are interested in this position please contact Search Committee via e-mail at [umamn@yaho.com](mailto:umamn@yaho.com), by February 28, 2014.

Survivors include four daughters, Susan Montrose, Deborah Frank, Laura McDonald and Karen McDonald, and eight grandchildren.

A memorial service was held November 14 at the Clinton UMC, 105 Utica Road, Clinton, N.Y. Rev. Jeff Hale and Rev. Myra Kazanjian officiated.

### Sarah Marion Droppa

Sarah Marion Droppa, wife of the late Rev. Ernest Droppa, died November 6 in Gainesville, Va.

Droppa graduated from Whitesboro High School, Whitesboro, N.Y., and furthered her education at Houghton College. Proud of her Welsh heritage, she enjoyed singing in the Gymanfa Ganu, and was a life member of the St. David's Society of Utica, N.Y.

Rev. Droppa, who died in 2010, served the following congregations in the North Central New York Conference: Norfolk-Raymondville, Little Falls and Paines Hollow; in the New England Conference, Maple Street; and in the New York Conference: Cairo, South Cairo and Round Top churches.

In her later years, she was a member of the Trinity United Methodist Church in Whitesboro, N.Y.

She is survived by a son, Robert Ernest Droppa Sr., six grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and a sister, Jean Lauer.

Memorial donations in her name may be made to Providence Christian Academy, 6872 Watson Court, Warrenton, VA 20187.

## “Find-A-Church” to Connect Churches Globally

Find-A-Church, the online directory of United Methodist churches, is going global. A mapping project is expanding Find-A-Church to include information on churches outside the U.S. for the first time.

The church's online directory ([www.find-a-church.org](http://www.find-a-church.org)) will begin to provide a resource for global communities by collecting church names, locations, GPS coordinates, names of pastors, local cell phone numbers and other information for United Methodist churches in Africa, Europe and the Philippines – data that has never before been accessible (even within the church).

Over the past year, United Methodist Communications, the denomination's communication agency, has spearheaded a mapping pilot project that will begin allowing congregations outside the U.S. to access and share information, beginning with the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Philippines. By the beginning of 2014, the mapped areas will extend to other countries within Africa and throughout the Philippines.

The goal is for people looking for United Methodist churches, hospitals and educational facilities in Europe, Africa and the Philippines to be able to locate them online, while churches will be able to share information about their ministries, from eliminating deaths from malaria and training health workers to educating children and providing communication technology.

There are an estimated 13,000 congregations outside the U.S., but the likelihood that there are many more unmapped United Methodist ministries around the world has driven the church communications agency to take on the challenge of literally putting unidentified churches on the map.

The software will also allow developing communities to report on real-time crises like earthquakes and other natural disasters. The public will be able to report what they see and then share that information online.

## A New Site for You!

The conference has launched a new version of the web site at [www.nyac.com](http://www.nyac.com). Have you checked it out yet? We're hoping that you'll find it more helpful, easier to use, and more appealing. There are still a few bugs to work, so if you find any problems or broken links, please email Barbara Eastman at [website@nyac.com](mailto:website@nyac.com).