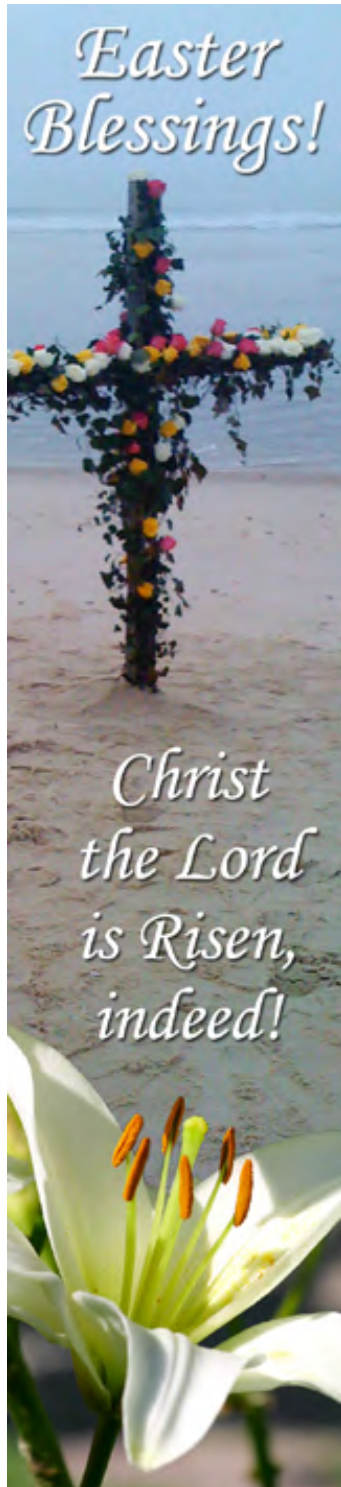


"Write the vision clearly on the tablets, that one may read it on the run." – Habakkuk

# THE VISION

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

March 2015



Episcopal Bishop Stacy Sauls, left, looks on as interim NYAC Bishop Jane Allen Middleton presides over Holy Communion.

## UNITED METHODISTS & EPISCOPALIANS Celebrating Ecumenical Bonds

BY JOANNE S. UTLEY  
Editor, *The Vision*

In celebration of the ecumenical bonds developing between two denominations, members of the United Methodist and Episcopal churches came together to share in Holy Communion early this month at the John Street UMC in lower Manhattan.

Some 50 people joined New York Area Interim Bishop Jane Allen Middleton and Episcopal Bishop Stacy E. Sauls in the worship service to commemorate the churches' recent interim eucharistic sharing agreement. The John Street church was chosen for its historical significance as the "mother church of American Methodism," and the date—March 3—is celebrated as the feast day of John and Charles Wesley in the Episcopalian tradition.

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Rev. Jason Radmacher, from left in back, Rev. Denise Smartt Sears, and Bishop Sauls offer the elements of communion.



### 3/19 Pre-retirement Seminar

This session for clergy who are retiring or considering it will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact Sally Truglia at 914-615-2220, or [struglia@nyac.com](mailto:struglia@nyac.com).

### 3/21 16th UM Men's Luncheon

Rev. Charles Ferrara, retired NYPD lieutenant and pastor of the Bellmore UMC, will speak about "Community Policing = Building Bridges," at this annual event from noon to 3:30 p.m. at the New Rochelle UMC, 1200 North Avenue, New Rochelle, N.Y. Suggested donation is \$35. For more information, contact: Royston Bailey, at 516-485-3723 or [Roystonbailey27@gmail.com](mailto:Roystonbailey27@gmail.com); or Ernie Searle at 347-512-9933 or [EMS\\_III@yahoo.com](mailto:EMS_III@yahoo.com).

### 3/21 United Methodist Women's Retreat

This conference retreat is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Church Center for United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, Manhattan. Contact Susan S. Kim, UMW conference president at [nycumwpresident@gmail.com](mailto:nycumwpresident@gmail.com), or 914-997-1081.

### 3/23 Statistical Reports Deadline

The GCFA reporting Tables I, II and III to collect data from each church for 2014 are to be completed by this date by the pastor, finance committee chair, and/or local church treasurer. Details and instructions can be found at [www.nyac.com/tables](http://www.nyac.com/tables).

### 4/4 Spiritual Growth Retreat

The Oratory of the Little Way will host a guided retreat, "Leaving and Arriving," from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Leave winter behind, arrive in spring, and learn about your personal spiritual growth patterns with Bishop Alex McCullough, the Oratory's spiritual director. A freewill offering is suggested for the day; lunch is provided. To register, call 860-354-8294, or email: [oratory1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:oratory1@sbcglobal.net). The Oratory is located at 8 Oratory Lane, Gaylordsville, Conn.

### 4/11 Deacon Day @ Drew

Deacon Day @ Drew is an opportunity to explore the identity and call of the deacon and to become familiar with the Master of Arts in Ministry program at Drew Theological School. The 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. day begins with "Seminary Saturday," where participants may choose between two

seminar-style offerings, "Living in Solidarity with the Poor: Theologies of Downward Mobility" or "Soaking Prayer Ministry." Lunch follows and then an afternoon with Rev. Victoria Rebeck, director of Deacon Support, Provisional Programs and Certification Studies at GBHEM. Come for part, or all, of this free day. For more information and to register, go to: [www.drew.edu/calendar/event/deacon-day-drew/](http://www.drew.edu/calendar/event/deacon-day-drew/).

### 4/11&18 Metropolitan Lay Servant School

Christ Church UMC will host the annual lay servant school on two Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The basic course will be offered in English; advanced courses in English, Korean and Spanish. The \$40 fee includes the required text, and breakfast and lunch both days. Christ Church is at 524 Park Avenue in Manhattan. Registration deadline is February 28; details can be found at: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/561619](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/561619).

### 4/11&18 Discover Your Spiritual Gifts

The New York-Connecticut District Lay Servant Ministries are offering this course that will help participants understand their spiritual gifts and how the church can use them to fulfill its mission. Participants will also learn what it means to be a spiritual leader and be equipped to lead others in exploring and using their gifts. 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m., at Pine Plains UMC, 2023 E. Church St., Pine Plains, N.Y. Cost is \$15, plus cost of the book, "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts," by Charles V. Bryant, that can be found on the Cokesbury or Amazon web sites. Read chapters 1–5 prior to the first class. Please bring a lunch; beverages and snacks will be provided. Register by April 4. Contact Marie Bell with questions or about registration at [bell541721@aol.com](mailto:bell541721@aol.com).


### 4/13–17 Clergy and Spouse Clinic

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

### 4/17 Spiritual Extravaganza

Come experience God's presence in an evening of music and preaching at Pawling UMC, 2 Dutcher Ave., Pawling, N.Y. 7 p.m. Guest preacher is Rev. Dr. Marjorie Nunes. Music by Saved by Grace praise band, Shining Stars steel drum band, and the North Hartford Sanctuary Choir. Freewill offering. For questions, call the church at 845-855-5350.

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 <p>The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church</p>
<p>Bishop: <b>Jane Allen Middleton</b></p> <p>Editor: <b>Joanne Utley</b></p> <p>New York Conference of The United Methodist Church 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606</p> <p>Phone (888) 696-6922</p> <p>Fax (914) 615-2244; Website: <a href="http://www.nyac.com">www.nyac.com</a></p> <p>Vision e-mail: <a href="mailto:thevision@nyac.com">thevision@nyac.com</a></p>

# Bishop Taps Riss as Superintendent

Dear Beloved Sisters and Brothers,

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

I am pleased to announce that Reverend Tim Riss will be appointed as District Superintendent of the Catskill Hudson District effective July 1, 2015. He brings a great deal of experience to this position, as a pastor (three of his appointments were in this area) and as a leader in many areas of the life of the New York Annual Conference. At the General Church level he has been elected to General Conference many times and is the head of the clergy delegation this year and is also a Director of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Tim has a heart for ministry, particularly town and country ministry, which will be a gift to this district. His knowledge of the church and his passion for Jesus Christ will be a gift to the conference as he serves in this position.

I know you will pray for Reverend Riss and his family during this transition, for the



**Rev. Tim Riss at the podium during a recent annual conference at Hofstra University.**

congregation of the Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church, for the Catskill Hudson District and for Reverend Jim Moore who has served this district for the past eight years and will retire this year.

In Christ's love,  
*Bishop Jane Allen Middleton*

## **Middleton has also announced the following appointments:**

**Stefanie L. Bennett** to First of Amityville; Bennett currently serves the First of Middletown (CT).

**Melissa Hinnen** to Asbury in Croton-on-Hudson; Hinnen currently serves Asbury less than full time.

**Stephen Bauman** to Broadway Temple; Bauman will continue in his appointment at Christ Church in Manhattan.

**Bryan Hooper** to Broadway Temple as associate; Hooper will continue in his appointment as associate at Christ Church in Manhattan.

**Roslyn Lee** to Cheshire; Lee currently serves Grace in Lindenhurst.

**Halley Low** to North Shore; Low is currently appointed to Wesley in Franklin Square, N.Y.

**Iwy Patel-Yatri** to Shrub Oak; Patel-Yatri is currently appointed to Great Hill.

**Peter Preiser** to West Granby as a district hire; Preiser is currently unappointed.

# Lent: A Time to Give Up, Take Up and Receive

Dear Beloved Sisters and Brothers,

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

It was Good Friday 20 years ago. I had just finished preaching at the Interfaith Good Friday Service that was held that year at the Presbyterian Church. On my way back into my office to make preparations for the evening service and for the several services on Easter Sunday I met the music director coming out of the church. When he asked the usual "How are you?" I said, "I think I have Holy-week-itis." He replied with words I've never forgotten, "Jesus must have felt that way, too!"

Suddenly my whining was put in perspective. I was stunned and ashamed. I thought I was being so faithful in all of my busyness but in reality I had forgotten who Jesus was and is.

The Lenten season offers us an opportunity to allow Jesus to walk with us in new ways, to keep Jesus at the center of all that we do, to remember to focus on Jesus, and Jesus alone.

We often think of Lent as a time to sacrificially "give up" that which is important to us as a means of understanding in a deeper way the ultimate sacrifice which Jesus made. Giving up in a prayerful way is indeed an important spiritual discipline which can make our faith more real. Whether fasting from food or from other practices, one's spirit is opened in new and powerful ways and a closer walk with God becomes possible.



**Bishop Jane Allen Middleton**

Another way to observe Lent is to "take up" a new spiritual or lifestyle practice. This year we are encouraging you to use Lent in order to take up a renewed emphasis on "Imagine No Malaria." To be prayerfully active can change your life and the lives of others. On the NYAC website we have posted a calendar which makes daily suggestions for drawing closer to Jesus by participating in saving lives. ([www.nyac.com/files/Imagine\\_no\\_malaria/2015givingfromabundancecalendar.pdf](http://www.nyac.com/files/Imagine_no_malaria/2015givingfromabundancecalendar.pdf))

I want to suggest a third practice which is, in a sense, included in the previous two: being open to "receive from Jesus" during Lent. I want to suggest that when you focus intentionally on the presence of Jesus in your life:

- what you receive in return is the fulfillment of the promise: you are never alone.
- what you receive is the possibility of living a grace-filled life in new ways.
- what you receive is that by drawing closer to the light of Christ; this light will then shine through you.
- what you receive is a deeper awareness of the call to serve the marginalized, the poor, and the broken-hearted as Jesus did.
- what you receive is blessing upon blessing.

"In the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise, give me Jesus."

May this season of Lent be a time in which Jesus lives in your life in new and wonderful ways.

In Christ's love,  
*Bishop Jane Allen Middleton*

# Volunteers Grateful for Work & Welcome

Last December, Pastor Chuck Stutsman came to Long Island with seven volunteers from the Mountain City UMC in Georgia. The team worked on the home of Dawn Hughes in Lindenhurst, who was flooded out by both hurricanes Irene and Sandy. Here is the note he sent with his impressions of the work done:

We were blessed to work not only with the folks of the New York Annual Conference UMC, but also with the folks who were affected by Hurricane Sandy.

What a blessing we received from all our northern brothers and sisters. From our initial greeting by the folks at Grace UMC to the morning gathering of the retired (wisdom) folks at McDonald's we felt like we were at home.

It always amazes me how our God is able to put together just the right people for an effective mission team. As the pastor of a rural small membership United Methodist Church, I couldn't be more satisfied that we were able to share some of God's grace (or southern hospitality) to some folks who were obviously still hurting from the devastation of the storm . . .

I have been to three different countries and several states building churches and doing hurricane renovations and I have got to say that this was one of the best trips that I have been on. As the team's pastor, I couldn't be more thrilled with the results of what was accomplished. I told the team before we left that we always go



**Pastor Chuck Stutsman and his team from the Mountain City UMC drove some 820 miles to spend five days helping homeowners recover from Hurricane Sandy.**

thinking we will be the blessing to others, and I'm confident we were, but in reality we all agree that we were the ones blessed. It is true that it is a blessing to be a blessing and to serve others.

It is great news that Ms. Hughes' renovations are about complete. She was such a gracious host for our midday meal. She definitely went overboard while feeding us southern boys. We pray that her house and her life return to normal soon . . .

I would also like to thank you and your team for making our visit effective and memorable. My prayer is that we can assemble another team

to continue the work of putting folks lives back together one house at a time.

Grace, Peace and Love of Christ,

*Chuck Stutsman*

Pastor, Mountain City UMC

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Get in on "March madness" with the Done In A Day program by contacting Peggy Racine at 516-795-1322 to volunteer your team for a Saturday.

## Connectional Ministries Director Sought

The New York Annual Conference is seeking a director of connectional ministries (DCM) to begin work on July 1.

The director of connectional ministries invites and equips leaders and churches to align passion and resources for the transformation of lives, communities and the world. The Office of Connectional Ministries plans, executes and supports programs and ministries throughout the conference to enhance the United Methodism connection with all churches, clergy and lay members of all ages. A full job description can be found at [www.nyac.com/classifieddetail/811805](http://www.nyac.com/classifieddetail/811805).

Compensation includes a salary, housing allowance, reimbursement account, and full health and pension benefits.

Interested applicants should submit a detailed cover letter and resume addressed to "DCM Search Committee" at [jobs@nyac-umc.com](mailto:jobs@nyac-umc.com) by the April 2 deadline.



**Rev. Ann Pearson is serving as a consultant until the DCM position is filled. You can reach her at [apearson@nyac.com](mailto:apearson@nyac.com), or 914-615-2230.**

## Nissen Leaving Camps Helm

Dear Friends,

After serving the New York Annual Conference for 12 years as director of Camping and Retreat Ministries, Greg Nissen has decided to leave the organization. He will be taking a position that will allow him to concentrate more on his passion for sailing, which he shares with his wife, Amanda Clark.

The Camps Governing Board cannot thank Greg enough for his passionate stewardship of the ministry and its properties, and the overall improvement and growth of the camps during his tenure. His accomplishments will be enjoyed by camp visitors for many years into the future. There will be more information to come on a celebration of his ministry. If you wish to reach out to him personally, he can be contacted at [gwnissen@hotmail.com](mailto:gwnissen@hotmail.com).

Greg's last day will be April 30, but he will continue in a consulting capacity until May 31. The Camps Governing Board will have a search committee in place shortly to identify a replacement. Peace and blessings always,

*Beth Ann Graf*, chair

*Leslie Vachon*, vice chair

NYAC Camps Governing Board

# United Methodists Return for “Bloody Sunday” 50th

SELMA, Ala. (UMNS)—Every year, retired United Methodist Bishop Woodie White gets to see the story of the civil rights movement through fresh eyes: those of his students.

This year, White and his students, along with other United Methodists, joined an estimated crowd of 80,000 who packed Selma, Alabama, March 7-8 for a weekend of events marking the 50th anniversary of “Bloody Sunday,” including a speech by President Barack Obama and the annual march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

White, bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, takes students from his “Methodist Church and Race” class on an annual pilgrimage, with stops in Alabama cities where pivotal moments of the movement occurred.

The trip always culminates with a march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, where a violent confrontation between police and peaceful marchers occurred March 8, 1965. The clash helped bring about passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

White said one of the things he wants his students to gain insight on is “how much people sacrificed and gave. However imperfect we are right now, I want them to see where we were and I want them to have from this a sense of responsibility that they now have a job to do.”

Amber Lea Gray, a first-year student at Candler, said it was eye-opening to get to meet and hear stories from original Freedom Riders, such as what it was like to be on a bus when it was bombed.

“I’m from Mississippi and live in the South, and there’s a whole culture that I was unaware of, being a white female—a hurt I wasn’t aware of, and a passion for justice,” Gray said.

The Revs. Kent Millard and Don Messer were students at Boston University School of Theology in 1965 when the call came from the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. for seminarians, laity and clergy to join in the march for freedom in Selma. They joined a group of 83 seminary students who traveled by bus to participate in the Selma-to-Montgomery march but it was delayed for several days. Instead, they were part of other marches throughout Selma protesting illegal arrests and demanding voting rights for all.

“We left Selma, but the spirit of Selma went with us,” Messer said. “We were challenged to commit our lives to the continuing work of securing human rights for all people.”

Millard showed a photograph of King speaking at Boston University, with himself in the background acting as a bodyguard.

“Dr. King asked me, when I met him at Boston University, ‘Mr. Millard, what are you going to do for civil rights in your lifetime?’ That is the question I continue asking myself.”

Messer, coming back to Selma for the first time since 1980, said that while remembering the violent clashes of 1965 is somber, the atmosphere now has an air of celebration.

“When you sing gospel songs and freedom songs, there is always a



UMNS PHOTOS

## Marchers come and go across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.

spirit of celebration,” he said. “We have a lot to be proud of, as President Obama said, but we do have a long way to go. We have to face up to the reality of the evil of racism in ourselves, our families, our society and our church. It’s an unending struggle and we need to be ever alert and active.”

Elizabeth Pollard, a third-year student at Candler, said it was “a powerful experience to walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge and think of all who went before me. It’s bittersweet because I’ve been able to live to see the result. To think about how this bridge on the original day was covered in blood—I appreciate the sacrifice and I don’t take it lightly that I was able to participate 50 years later.”

While marching across the Edmund Pettus for yet another year, White was asked if the experience ever gets old.

“No. Never. It’s new every time we do it.”



**UMC Bishop Woodie W. White, center, and his wife Kim, right, cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., during the 50th anniversary observance of the “Bloody Sunday” protest march seeking voting rights for African Americans.**

# Bishops Consider Realignment of Conferences

## BY MELISSA LAUBER Baltimore-Washington Conference

Anticipating a decline in membership that could lead to loss of an episcopal area, the Northeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops has begun a proactive study to address the missional needs, strengths and challenges of annual conferences in this region.

“While the statistics to determine if the Northeastern Jurisdiction will be asked to go from nine active bishops to eight are not yet in, the college wants make sure it is aligning leadership and resources in the most effective manner possible as we strive to make disciples for the transformation of the world,” said Bishop Marcus Matthews, who leads the Jurisdiction’s Vision Table and led the College of Bishops when this study was announced at a meeting in Baltimore Feb. 13.

“No decisive actions have been taken,” Matthews said. “However, the bishops feel it is our role to act faithfully and strategically in looking at the way we align our areas to best serve the church and its people. Initial indicators seem to point to a few possibilities for realignment that we’ll be investigating in the months ahead.”

In particular, the bishop said, the potential and challenges of realigning the Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula Delaware Conferences is beginning to be seriously investigated.

The Northeastern Jurisdiction, which stretches from West Virginia to Maine, has 10 annual conferences and nine episcopal areas and is home to 450,734 United Methodists. Changing borders and restructuring annual conferences requires the action of the lay and clergy Jurisdictional Conference delegates, who meet every four years. Realigning episcopal areas is under the authority of the regional College of Bishops.

At the Feb. 13 meeting, Matthews noted that a complex and detailed demographic analysis was shared that outlined and ranked the size and complexity, capacity for mission, and present and potential fruitfulness of each annual conference in the Jurisdiction.

Compiled by Bishops John Schol of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball of the West Virginia Annual Conference and Bishop Mark Webb of the Upper

New York Annual Conference, the Episcopal Supervision Assessment report provides an in-depth look at 23 factors that range from number of churches, pastors and conference staff, to theological and ethnic diversity to apportionment collection, mission participation and more.

The analysis indicated that:

- The fastest de-churching culture is in Upper New York, New England and New York annual conferences. New England is the most challenged conference in the jurisdiction.
- West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania and Susquehanna annual conferences have the most churched culture in the jurisdiction, but all three show challenges in the area of fruitfulness.
- The greatest strengths in the jurisdiction are in Baltimore-Washington and Greater New Jersey annual conferences.
- Three of the five smallest conferences by worship attendance—Eastern Pennsylvania, New York and Peninsula Delaware—show potential for growth and turnaround.

“We’re seeing this as an opportunity to renew our efforts to grow churches,” said Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, interim leader of the New York Annual Conference. “We want to carefully consider the best way to provide episcopal leadership and to configure our conferences for maximum growth potential.”

The bishops are developing a number of

strategic initiatives based on the findings in the assessment. However, one immediate measure is the initiation of a study on aligning the Baltimore-Washington Conference and the Peninsula Delaware Annual Conference as one episcopal area.

The two conferences shared a bishop prior to 1988. Bishop Matthews, Bishop Peggy Johnson, who leads the Peninsula Delaware and Eastern Pennsylvania Conferences, and retired Bishop Forrest Stith were given the task of forming a study group to explore how such an alignment could best take place.

Following their consultation, the trio will report back to the college. Based on their recommendations, the realignment could take place in 2016 or 2020. However, there is an initial feeling the changes will not occur until 2020.

Later this spring, the statistics from 2014 will be officially compiled. If the membership drops significantly, there is a possibility that the jurisdiction will be required to move from nine to eight bishops in 2016.

However, members of the college suggested, the alignment of Peninsula-Delaware and the Baltimore-Washington Conference may multiply mission resources and be beneficial to both conferences and could go forward either way, depending on what the study group finds.

A copy of the Episcopal Area Supervision Assessment is available at <http://bwcumc.org/the-united-methodist-church-northeastern-jurisdiction/>.

## Health Seminar Focuses on Brain, Conflict

The Center for Clergy and Congregational Health and Wholeness at Drew Theological School will welcome Rev. Dr. Wesley Wildman on April 9 to discuss his research on the brain that helps explain the differences between liberal and conservative thought and the need that liberals and conservatives have for each other. His ideas are helpful in all kinds of conflict situations and pave the way for understanding a reduction of emotional responses that escalate conflict. Dr. Wildman’s research, relevant across denominational lines, has led

him to coin the phrase “empathy through understanding.”

Distance need not be a limiting factor as Wildman’s presentation, “Conflict and the Brain,” will be live streamed. Registration is \$10 for the 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m. event in Crawford Hall; continuing education credit is available for an additional \$17.50.

All the relevant details for registration, watching via live stream, or viewing an archived copy of the presentation can be found at [www.drew.edu/calendar/event/clergy-health-day-2/](http://www.drew.edu/calendar/event/clergy-health-day-2/).

# Teaching Our Children How to Pray

**BY REV. WILLIAM TOWNSEND**  
Director of Spiritual Life

Recently I was completing a spiritual life Assessment on a 10-year-old boy who had just been admitted to our agency. One of the questions on the assessment is, "Do you pray?" The young man looked a bit bewildered and asked, "What is pray?"

I explained that prayer is simply conversation with God. Just as he and I were having a chat about his life and his faith,

he could have a conversation with God about anything that was on his mind.

"So, do you ever just talk with God?" I asked. Still seeming a little puzzled, he said, "Well, I talk with the judge, and I talked with Officer Jones. He was kind of mean."

How sad that at such a young age this child knew about talking with a judge and a police officer, but didn't know anything about talking with God.

The hymn, "What a Friend We Have In Jesus," contains a line that says, "Oh what peace we

often forfeit, or what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." Too many people, young and old alike, miss out on the peace and comfort that only comes from spending time in the presence of a loving, caring, listening God. Because the Children's Home takes seriously the spiritual needs of the young people we serve, I was able

to have that meaningful conversation and begin to introduce this child to the concept of prayer.

It is my prayer that all young people would come to know a God who is always ready and willing to listen, and would understand that a prayer doesn't have to be wrapped in fancy words or religious thought—or expressed at all, for that matter. We can simply chat with God whenever and however the Spirit moves us.

Wouldn't it be nice if every child could spend less time talking with judges and police officers and more time talking with God? Pray it would be so!

*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). To schedule a presentation about the Children's Home, contact Margaret Tatich ext 131. Please feel free to send donations directly, or use the New York Conference advance number 60-0588.*

## 2 Clergy Face Suspensions for Same-Sex Weddings

(UMNS)—Two Virginia United Methodist clergy will face suspensions for officiating at same-sex weddings under resolutions reached in each complaint, Virginia Area Bishop Young Jin Cho announced March 6.

Both resolutions said they are "an effort by all parties involved to maintain the unity of the church and to settle their differences through the resolution process rather than through a costly and time-consuming ecclesiastical trial."

Under the *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's law book, officiating at same-sex unions is a chargeable offense and clergy who do so could face the loss of credentials. This move eliminates that possibility.

"We worked for four months in an attempt to reach just resolutions," Cho said in a statement. "We experienced many challenges, pain and difficulties along the way, but everyone involved earnestly and prayerfully sought to be open to each other and to the leading of the Holy Spirit."

Rev. John D. Copenhagen Jr., professor emeritus of religion and philosophy at United Methodist-related Shenandoah University in Winchester, Va., will undergo a three-month suspension. He officiated at the wedding on Oct. 7 of two longtime friends and Shenandoah colleagues, DeLyn and Sarah Celec.

Rev. Amanda Miller Garber, pastor of RISE,

a new church start in Harrisonburg, Va., will be suspended from ministerial duties for one-month with no pay. She performed the ceremony November 1, of Brittany and Lindsay Caine-Conley, a couple who met through their involvement in RISE.

Both complaints were filed by the elders' respective district superintendents, Rev. Tommy Herndon and Rev. Larry Thompson. Neither immediately returned requests for comment.

During their suspensions, neither Copenhagen nor Garber will be able to preach or administer the sacraments, and Copenhagen said he will likely decline at least one invitation to preach as a result. Both have committed to use the time for reading, prayer and reflection.

Cho said the length of suspensions differed because of consideration of Garber's ministry setting and the fact that Copenhagen is retired and, therefore, faces no financial impact.

The penalties mark a departure from similar clergy complaints settlements in recent months. Since early 2014, church leaders have resolved complaints against clergy who officiated at same-sex weddings or unions in Iowa, Michigan, eastern Pennsylvania and New York—as well as the complaint against retired Bishop Melvin G. Talbert—without any suspensions.

Reconciling Ministries Network, an unofficial

United Methodist advocacy group, also on March 6 announced that it was supporting Garber out of its clergy defense fund. "A check is being sent today in the full amount Rev. Garber would have otherwise lost," the group said in a statement.

"I think this is the best resolution we could agree on," Copenhagen told United Methodist News Service. Those involved, he said, made a number of compromises to reach an agreement.

"I respect my bishop, my district superintendent and all those who have worked on this process. We have worked hard. Given our differences, I am pleased we were able to have a resolution at all."

Garber said she is relieved that the complaints are not going to trial, but she is also sad.

"I am experiencing great grief for my denomination that I love and I am sad for the LGBTQ community who continue to receive the message that they aren't loved and they aren't welcome," she said. "This entire journey is about more than two pastors. This is about beloved children of God."

She also worries for her young congregation of about 170 people.

"I knew this would come at a cost," she said, "but I also firmly believe this was what God was calling me to do."

# “Growing Pains” Can Come at Any Age

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministry

Some years ago we took our nearly teenaged son to the doctor. We did so because he was complaining of aches and pains all over his body. He was not showing signs of sickness or any overt reason for feeling as he reportedly felt. Yet we were convinced that his pains were real. With some trepidation, we awaited the results of the examination.



With a smile on his face, the doctor announced there was nothing wrong with him other than “good old fashioned growing pains.”

Who knew there was such a possible diagnosis from a medical doctor? We had heard the expression, and likely used it ourselves, but a medical diagnosis? Wow!

I heard echoes of the diagnosis some years later when I took my mother to see her doctor. She was complaining of aches and pains all over her body. Again we were convinced that her pains were real, but we could not see any physical reasons for them. She went into the doctor’s office with fear of what she would hear and came out with a big smile. “The doctor said there is nothing wrong with me. So I asked him what the aches and pains were all about? Do you know what he said?”

“No, what did he say?”

“He said Marion, there is nothing wrong with you—you are just old.”

Who knew? A medical diagnosis for pains from growing old! Wow!

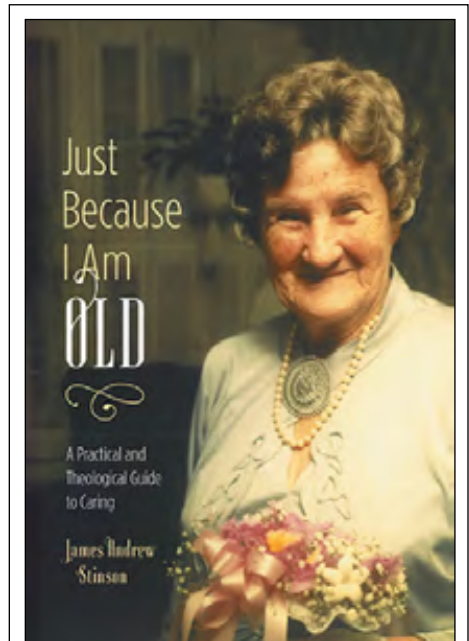
On so many levels, growing old pains are real. They can be expressed physically, psychologically, and spiritually. They can be expressed through aching bodies, cranky, impatient personalities, and despair and a sense of being disconnected from one’s spiritual moorings. Just knowing that can bring a smile as we relax knowing nothing is wrong, we just have “growing old pains.” We can deal with them with a sense of calmness when we know that what we are feeling is often just part of the process of life.

Having said that, let me add that aches and pains—physical, psychological or spiritual—should be assessed by a competent professional, before being dismissed.

Remembering that growing old pains can be real is an important piece of information as we care for older adults. It will allow us to use humor in a helpful way with those who might find the aches and pains diminishing in importance as we laugh with them.

So enjoy the aging process as much as my friend Kathleen did. In her late eighties at the time, she was having lunch with her friends at the church, when I was aware of loud laughter coming from the room. Playfully, I went into the room and asked what all the noise was about and Kathleen said, “We are laughing at the silliness of old age.”

Laughing at old age is a useful insight as we seek to help those we care for and about with the growing old pains.



On March 21 and 28, Rev. Jim Stinson will be offering the course, “Just Because I Am Old,” as part of the lay servant training program at the Huntington UMC in Shelton, Conn. The course runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. both Saturdays, and costs \$10. Full details and registration information can be found at: [www.nyac.com/eventdetail/815687](http://www.nyac.com/eventdetail/815687).

## JOB OPENINGS

### EPA Conference Treasurer

The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church is seeking candidates for conference treasurer/director of administrative ministries.

The job description provides these details:

- Serves as the principal financial advisor to the bishop and Council of Finance and Administration.
- Manages all fiscal and administrative affairs relating to the conference operating budget, trusts, memorials, legacies, investments, insurance, and property.
- Monitors the use of all funds that flow through the conference office in Valley Forge, Penn.
- Provides financial support to all boards, agencies and committees related to the conference.
- Supervises the conference staff.
- Is a member of the bishop’s extended cabinet.

Send resume by email to search committee at [treasurersearch@epaumc.org](mailto:treasurersearch@epaumc.org) on or before March 27. Additional information is available on the conference web site at [www.epaumc.org/news/classifieds](http://www.epaumc.org/news/classifieds).

### Aldersgate Director

Aldersgate Renewal Ministries is currently seeking a spirit-filled individual—lay or clergy—to serve as executive director. The mission of the Aldersgate ministries is to bring renewal to the United Methodist Church by equipping local churches to minister to the world in the power of the Holy Spirit. The executive director is a fulltime position with a full benefit package and will be based at the Aldersgate offices just outside of Nashville.

The search committee is looking for a visionary with strong leadership skills and experience with fund development. The candidate must also have strong verbal and

written communication skills.

For further inquires and to submit resumes, contact Rev. Ric Wright at [connection@aldersgaterenewal.org](mailto:connection@aldersgaterenewal.org).

### Freeport Church Secretary

The Freeport United Methodist Church, Freeport, N.Y., is looking for a church secretary with a minimum of three years experience. Must be an independent worker, proficient in MSWord, familiar with graphics and MS-Excel, and be organized and neat.

The work schedule is 20 hours per week, and flexible: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Salary depends on experience

For more details or if you or anyone you know are interested, please contact Ermine Binns, SPPRC chairperson, at 516-867-9278, or [ebinns@msn.com](mailto:ebinns@msn.com); or Rev. Edward Norman at 516-378-0659.





**At right, the Very Rev. Kurt H. Dunkle and Bishop Jane Allen Middleton offer communion elements during the shared Eucharist at the John Street UMC.**



# Middleton Presides Over Interim Shared Eucharist

Continued from page 1

For the past 10 years, the United Methodist and Episcopal churches have been in talks to deepen their expression and practice of Christian unity. This move toward “full communion” involves two denominations developing a relationship based on a common confessing of the Christian faith—it does not mean that the denominations will merge. This relationship involves the mutual recognition of members, of ordained clergy, and the sacraments; the joint celebration of Holy Communion/Eucharist; and a common commitment to evangelism, mission, and service. Both the UMC and Episcopal Church already share full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but not with one another.

In welcoming the gathering to the church he leads, Rev. Jason Radmacher noted that the early Methodists in New York were dependent upon the local Anglican parish for the sacraments. They would come to what was then the Wesley Chapel on John Street for preaching and singing, and then walk to St. Paul’s Chapel of the Trinity Parish to receive the sacraments.

That all changed after the American Revolution when the Methodists separated from the Church of England. The Methodist Episcopal Church was founded at the Christmas Conference of December 1784; the first proper Eucharist was celebrated at John Street in January 1785, with Bishop Thomas Coke presiding.

“May tonight help revive those ties that have lain dormant,” Radmacher said.

As he began his message, Bishop Sauls

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**Clockwise from above: Bishop Stacy F. Sauls offers a message about the church’s need to be powerless; soloist Megan Thomas; and Ann Wareham, a member of the John Street UMC reads from Isaiah 49.**

## OBITUARIES

### Rev. Paul Allen Godburn

The Reverend Paul Allen Godburn died March 5 at Connecticut Hospice following a long illness.

He was born August 3, 1940, son of Robert and Mathilda Godburn, and completed his undergraduate work at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. He earned his master of divinity degree at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Center, Mass., and began work toward a doctorate at Drew University in New Jersey.

Faithful to God's call, Godburn was ordained a deacon in 1967 in the New York Conference; three years later he received elder's orders. His pastoral record includes service to the following congregations: West Granby and Copper Hill, Conn.; Highland and Lloyd, N.Y.; Uniondale, N.Y.; Branford, Conn.; Winsted, Conn.; Bayside, N.Y.; and an interim appointment to St. Andrew's in New Haven. He retired in 2012.

He brought to his ministry a deep desire to help people. His greatest delight was delivering sermons on Sundays. Godburn maintained a lively interest in current events, history, opera and classical music, model trains, and Hitchcock furniture.

Godburn's survivors include his wife, Elna Chandler Engelke, and three children; Walter (Carol) Godburn of Colorado; Jill (James); Holly (Neil) of Branford, Conn., as well as grandchildren.

A memorial service was held March 7 at St Andrew's UMC, 1230 Townsend Avenue, New Haven. Officiants included Revs. Robert Noblett, and Kenneth Kieffer, district superintendent, and Pastor Ximena Varas. A reception followed in the church hall.

Condolences may be sent to: Elna Godburn, Hemingway Cove, 924-2 Quinnipiac Avenue, New Haven, CT 06513.

### Arline Priscilla Johnson

Arline Priscilla Johnson, widow of Rev. Courtney Johnson, died on February 13, at age 90. Born on May 13, 1924 in Brockton, Mass., Johnson graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago.

At age 56, she earned a master's degree from St. Joseph's College in West Hartford and taught at Westbrook High School from 1966 to 1989. In 1987, was named the Connecticut home economics teacher of the year. In her retirement, Johnson was employed as a mentor to starting teachers by the Connecticut Department of Education and volunteered as an English-

language tutor for eight years with Literacy Volunteers in Westbrook.

Johnson was a long-time member of the Clinton United Methodist Church. Her pastor, Rev. Craig Fitzsimmons, noted that she was an active member of the choir and the Clever Crafters, and a participant in Bible study groups and mission projects. Johnson introduced the Swedish Festival of St. Lucia to the Clinton church, an annual celebration observed in early December.

Johnson was predeceased by her husband in 1972, and is survived by four sons, Burton Johnson of Las Vegas; Douglas (Carolyn) Johnson of West Bend, Wis.; Adrian Johnson of Clinton; and Clifford (Nadine Horenstein) Johnson of Washington, D.C.; a daughter Cheryl (Stephen) Bayes of Lebanon, N.H. Also surviving are seven grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, her brother, Emery Hanson, and her brother-in-law, Paul Norling.

A memorial service was held at the Clinton church on March 14, with Rev. Fitzsimmons officiating. Memorial contributions may be made in Johnson's name to the Clinton UMC, 12 Commerce Street, Clinton, CT 06413.

### Eleanor R. (Ellie) VerNooy

Eleanor R. (Ellie) VerNooy, the widow of Rev. David P. VerNooy, died at home on February 11 at age 81.

Her career spanned many years in New York as a middle school science teacher and a social worker. After retirement, she was active with local charities, and spent time with her grandchildren. The VerNooy's enjoyed foreign travel, including four mission trips to Haiti, Ireland, Bolivia and Guatemala. She loved her family, dancing, beaches and her cabin in the Pocono Mountains.

VerNooy is survived by four children; Linda (A.M. Noel) VerNooy, Diane (Daniel) Gallagher, David (Nancy) VerNooy, and Crystal (Frank) Mayer; nine grandchildren; Gwendolynn, Jason, Rebecca, Michael, Katherine, Saraswati, Brittany, Stephanie and Jeevan; and one great-grandson, James, as well as several nieces and nephews. A grandson Ryan VerNooy, her brother Donald and a sister Janice predeceased her.

A memorial service was held February 14 at Christ United Methodist Church, Beacon, N.Y. Donations in her honor may be given to the General Board of Global Missions, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115, or Habitat for Humanity, 125 Washington St. Newburgh, NY 12550.

## Students Return After Ebola Threat

UMNS—Students at J.J. Roberts United Methodist School, one of 60 schools the denomination operates in Liberia, were eager to return to classes after schools closed in late July because of Ebola.

"When you sit home for too long, catching up with courses can be very difficult, therefore it was important for schools to reopen because we were at home for seven months," said Alfred Morris, a 10th grader, after students returned to school on March 2.

Ebola still casts a shadow over schools, where students worry about physical contact and principals struggle to meet government mandates about hand-washing and safety.

While the last known Ebola patient in Liberia has been released from treatment, the World Health Organization warns that fresh outbreaks could occur. Ebola has claimed nearly 10,000 lives, mostly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, and as of March 5, nearly 24,000 cases of the disease

have been reported in those countries.

Many questioned if schools could be opened safely, since both private and public schools are often in deplorable condition, with poorly constructed buildings, overcrowded classrooms, and limited or no access to water and bathrooms. That means carrying water in for multiple hand-washing stations.

Protocols put in place by the Ministry of Education include that schools providing a room for "safe sitting" for students showing high fever or suspected symptoms of Ebola. Schools must have a health staffer, although not a nurse or doctor.

International organizations such as UNICEF and USAID have targeted resources toward helping schools re-open and are leading trainings on safeguarding students and staff.

# Middleton Presides Over Interim Shared Eucharist

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confessed that he, “like many Episcopal bishops,” had grown up as a Methodist.

“My mother would be very proud to see me standing in a Methodist pulpit tonight,” he said as the gathering responded in laughter.

Sauls, who is the chief operating officer for the Episcopal Church, explained that he had not come to talk about Christian unity, but about how the church is using the power and authority it has been given to fulfill the gospel of Jesus Christ. He said that the main problem before the church is not a crisis of authority, but rather one of “powerlessness.”

“We need to become powerless so that we can call upon the authority of God through the Holy Spirit,” he said. “The sooner we realize that, we will receive power over and above all our imagination.”

Sauls explained that the gospel comes as a surprise to many because the message of Jesus is found not in power, but in “our powerlessness.”

“The one thing we need to do tonight is to call on the help and inward power of the Holy Spirit,” he said. “We [Methodists and Episcopalians] are not called together because of what we can give one another . . . we’re called to turn to the needs of the world.”

Following the sermon, Bishop Middleton, who began leading the New York Annual Conference on January 1, presided over the sacrament of Holy Communion. In a nod to the traditions of the two denominations, both grape juice and wine were served as part of the holy feast.

“It was a great joy for me and, I think, for everyone present to join together the best of both our denominations in the celebration,” Middleton said after the service. “I believe John and Charles Wesley would be very pleased to see that we’re in a special relationship of shared communion.” The Wesley brothers, though branded as the founders of Methodism, never intended to break from the Anglican Church.

The liturgists represented both laity and clergy from the two denominations: Nicholas Birns, a member of Grace Episcopal Church, and the Very Rev. Kurt H. Dunkle, dean and president of The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church; and Ann Wareham, a member of John Street UMC, and Rev. Denise Smartt Sears, Metropolitan District superintendent of the New York Annual Conference.

Following the service, the gathering enjoyed a time of fellowship on the lower level of the church that also houses its collection of 18th and 19th century church artifacts.

According to Rev. Radmacher, the 2016 General Conference plans to honor John Street UMC on the occasion of the congregation’s 250th anniversary. The church web site explains its history this way: the “John Street Church has been at witness for God’s love in the heart of New York City since our first worship service in 1766. In nearly two and a half centuries of ministry we have served soldiers wounded in the American Revolution, investors who lost everything in the Great Depression, and a neighborhood devastated by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.”

The dialogue concerning “full communion” will continue with the final decision to be made by the governing bodies of both denominations.

“My hope for future will be that our General Conference will indeed confirm the shared communion relationship in 2016,” Middleton said. The Episcopal General Convention will consider the matter two years later in 2018.



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## 4/29 Boundaries & Sexual Ethics Training

Long Island East District Superintendent Adrienne Brewington will lead this training, which is mandatory for all clergy, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the NYAC Learning Center, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, N.Y. Contact Brewington at [RevyBrew@aol.com](mailto:RevyBrew@aol.com) for additional details.

## 5/16 Mozambique Luncheon

The Mozambique-NYAC sister connection will be celebrated with a lunch from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the NYAC Learning Center, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, N.Y. Contact Annette Griffith, at [annette.griffith@earthlink.net](mailto:annette.griffith@earthlink.net), for additional details.

## Got an Event to Share?

We welcome the opportunity to help publicize events that have a wide appeal to people across the conference in *The Vision*. To make it easier to publish your event, please send the information as a simple Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx suffix). Do not send it as a completed flyer, poster or as a PDF. Your event information will most likely appear on the “Save the Date” page. Email the event details directly to [vision@nyac.com](mailto:vision@nyac.com), and be sure to include contact information. The deadline for all the remaining 2015 issues is the *first Friday* of each month, with posting to the web site approximately 10 days later.

## Dharmarajs Pen New Book on Mutuality

The United Methodist Women has published the latest book by Glory and Jacob Dharmaraj, *A Theology of Mutuality: A Paradigm for Mission in the Twenty-First Century*, as a mission study resource the denomination.

Jacob Dharmaraj serves as pastor of the Shrub Oak UMC, and Glory Dharmaraj is executive director for the Interfaith Mission Institute for the Asian American Federation.

This book deals primarily with mission from the margins and intercultural competency—updated terminology for cross-racial and cross-cultural ministries. It can be purchased through [www.umwmissionresources.org](http://www.umwmissionresources.org).