



# UPPER NEW YORK UNITED METHODIST ADVOCATE

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Being God's love with our neighbors in all places

A PUBLICATION OF THE UPPER NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2, Issue 4 - April 2011

## \$1 million cornerstone

### Scholarship at Africa University proposed as mission base

By Maidstone Mulenga\*  
Advocate Editor

A \$1 million campaign for establishing a scholarship fund for Africa University has been proposed as the missional cornerstone of the Upper New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

According to the petition submitted by Africa University Task Force, the conference is being asked to create the Upper New York Annual Conference Scholarship Fund for Africa University initiated by a \$1 million campaign that would begin immediately upon passage of the resolution in June.

The fund would be invested through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Investment Committee as part of the Africa University Endowment Fund, with a prudent and appropriate amount used annually to provide scholarships to AU students.

Under this proposal, Africa University would provide an annual report to the Upper New York Annual Conference on the students assisted by this fund and the performance of the endowment.

The conference would en-



The Jokomo/Yamada Library at Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe, provides a variety of library resources and world-class study facilities that complement classroom teaching and learning as well as research.

File photo by Maidstone Mulenga 2010

courage scholarship recipients to contact the conference in order to foster mutual communication and support.

The campaign would be initiated and managed by the Bishop's Special Task Force for Africa University.

The rationale behind the proposal stems from the fact that the United Methodist Church is a global community of faith and has a historic commitment to education as a practical expression of hope for the future.

Africa University was established by resolution of the 1988 General Conference in response to the urging of Bishop Arthur Kulah of Liberia and Bishop Emilio J. M. de Carvalho of Angola in order to provide educational opportunities for students

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from all corners of Africa, to produce good leaders for Africa, and to recognize and support the growth of United Methodism in Africa.

Africa University, opened in 1992, has realized ongoing success, with alumni in leadership positions throughout the continent. Africa University still needs the active interest and financial resources of the global United Methodist community to provide the scholarships needed by almost all of its students.

The proposal is being presented to the newly formed conference that united four former annual conferences, each with a significant his-

tory of ministry and mission, and many different ways of approaching common objectives.

“Like the many countries and cultures and peoples of Africa, the churches, and districts and people of our new Upper New York Annual Conference have both the challenge and the opportunity to learn to work together as we begin our spiritual journey to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places,” according to the proposal.

\*Maidstone Mulenga is the director of communications for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [maidstonemulenga@unyumc.org](mailto:maidstonemulenga@unyumc.org).

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## Episcopal, Conference in new offices by May 1



The movers are booked and the boxes are packed – well, almost.

But the last-minute packing will get done, and the Upper New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, the Upper New York Area Episcopal Office and the Crossroads District offices all will be in their new location by May 1.

The new offices will be housed on the second and third floors at University United Methodist Church in downtown Syracuse (the Ruth Stafford Peale office space).

Centrally located near I-81 and I-90 and adjacent to Syracuse University, the new offices are located in a

growing and active area.

The move will bring together the Conference office – currently located in the Cicero United Methodist Church – with Bishop Marcus Matthews' office, which is located at the Baldwinsville United Methodist Church, approximately 11 miles away.

“We were given a vision articulated by Bishop Matthews” that took into account the need for visibility in the community, met space needs and the need for a training and gathering center for the leadership, said Tom Clemow, president of the Board of Trustees, about the reasons for the move.

The Rev. Thomas Wolfe is a member of the Conference Board of Trustees, who, early in his career, was the Protestant chaplain at Syracuse University.

Wolfe believes there is symbolic value in the church housing the offices.

“... There is a long-standing history of (The United Methodist Church) supporting institutions of higher education and supporting the needs of urban communities,” he said. “University United Methodist Church is at one of those intersections.”

New contact info, Page 2

## How to Reach Us

As of May 1, the Conference, Episcopal Area and Crossroads District offices will be in their new space in downtown Syracuse. Here's is the new contact information:

### BISHOP'S OFFICE

Upper New York Area Episcopal Office  
of The United Methodist Church  
324 University Ave., 3rd Floor  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
Phone: (315) 422-5027  
Fax: (315) 422-5304

### MAIN CONFERENCE OFFICE

Upper New York Annual Conference  
of The United Methodist Church  
324 University Ave., 3rd Floor  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
Phone: (315) 424-7878  
Toll Free: (855) 424-7878  
Fax: (315) 424-0975

### CROSSROADS DISTRICT

Upper New York Annual Conference  
of The United Methodist Church  
324 University Ave., 3rd Floor  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
Phone: (315) 424-7878  
Toll Free: (855) 424-7878  
Fax: (315) 424-0975

### DISTRICTS

**Adirondack District**  
396 Loudon Road  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-5332  
Office Phone: (518) 584-8214  
Fax: (518) 584-8378  
Email: AdirondackDistrict@unyumc.org

**Albany District**  
568 Loudon Road  
PO Box 557  
Newtonville, NY 12128-0557  
Office Phone: (518) 391-2325  
Fax: (518) 618-0521  
Email: AlbanyDistrict@unyumc.org

**Binghamton District**  
53 McKinley Avenue  
Endicott, NY 13760-5497  
Office Phone: (607) 748-0662  
Fax: (607) 748-0549  
Email: binghamtondistrict@unyumc.org

**Cornerstone District**  
15 Morris Lane  
Jamestown, NY 14701  
Office Phone: (716) 665-2423  
Fax: (716) 665-3763  
Email: cornerstonedistrict@unyumc.org

**Finger Lakes District**  
1 Franklin Sq., Suite 301,  
Geneva NY 14456  
Office Phone: (315) 781-0188  
Fax: (315) 781-0199  
Email: fingerlakesdistrict@unyumc.org

**Genesee Valley District**  
1100 South Goodman St  
Rochester, NY 14620  
Office Phone: (585) 340-9525  
Fax: (585) 340-9526  
Email: geneseevalleyumc@crcls.edu

**Mohawk District**  
105 Genesee Street  
New Hartford, NY 13413  
Office Phone: (315) 797-1777  
Fax: (315) 797-5702  
Email: mohawkdistrict@unyumc.org

**Mountain View District**  
65 E. 1st Street  
Corning, NY 14830  
Office Phone: (607) 962-8047  
Fax: (607) 962-8045  
Email: mountainviewdistrict@unyumc.org

**Niagara Frontier District**  
131 John Muir Drive  
West Amherst, NY 14228  
Office Phone: (716) 564-2316  
Fax: (716) 564-2365  
Email: niagarafontier@unyumc.org

**Northern Flow District**  
PO Box 272  
Heuvelton, NY 13654

Office Phone: (315) 344-6493  
Fax: (315) 344-6494  
Email: northernflowdistrict@unyumc.org

**Oneonta District**  
PO Box 668  
Oneonta, NY 13820  
Office Phone: (607) 441-5102  
Fax: (607) 441-5102  
Email: Oneontadistrict@unyumc.org

### RESOURCE CENTERS

**Amherst Office**  
131 John Muir Drive  
West Amherst NY 14228  
(800) 461-1174, (716) 564-2316

**Endicott Office**  
53 McKinley  
Endicott, NY 13760  
(607) 757-0608

## Meet Vicki Putney, Conference benefits officer

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

Popular old English dog names include Elzie, Loudon and Merrick. Being named one of these is probably great ... if you are a dog.

Vicki Putney's given name has two origins: a beloved family pet (Vicki Dog) and her father's middle name, Victor.

It could have been worse, she joked during a recent interview, it could have been a female version of Clifford. Cliffette? Cliftonia? she guessed.

Putney currently serves the Upper New York Annual Conference (UNYAC) of The United Methodist Church as the benefits officer/director of human services, but it is a role she has evolved into.

In 1983, she began her professional journey with the Central New York Conference as administrative assistant. She served on the design team for the merger of the Central and Northern New York conferences, and most recently was the director of Ministry Support for the North Central New York Annual Conference.

At the request of then-Conference Treasurer Ron Salyer, Putney began attending

pension conferences and "that's how I came about," she said.

Her new position – she was officially named as a senior executive on July 1, 2010 – brings both challenge and reward.

"The biggest challenge is trying to right-size our benefit program. By that I mean, the balance between the benefit provided and the cost of that benefit to the local churches," Putney said. "The biggest reward is when I see that a benefit we have provided brings something unexpected, yet appreciated to a participant, like a death benefit or a pension that sustains a comfortable lifestyle."

A more indirect joy is attending the Annual Conference sessions.

"My joy is the people. Seeing all the people at Annual Conference. It's not really related to the Benefits Office, but I feel really connected to the people when we go to Annual Confer-



ence."

Along with the one-year anniversary of the UNYAC this summer, Putney is also excited at the upcoming move of the conference offices from Cicero to Syracuse.

"Having the Benefits Office physically closer together is an atmosphere that fosters teamwork," Putney said. "We're a little more creative when we're together, and we continue to build efficiencies in our office ... (which will allow me to) connect more with clergy and retirees to promote health and wellness."

Although Vicki may not be quite as adventurous as her sister, who lives in the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, and on the St. Lawrence River, one of her passions is travel. She would love to explore the world more, she said.

Putney has a quiet home, giving her time to read a morning devotional over her first cup of coffee.

"I'm addicted to that first cup of coffee in the morning at home. When the weather's nice there's nothing better than having that cup of coffee outside."

The devotional read can come from a variety of sources, and then gets passed on to her daughter, Tamara, 25, is a sales associate

for AM Castle in Cleveland. Vicki's family also includes her 92-year-old mother, who resides in Florida.

Despite being a dog lover (perhaps because of her namesake), she allowed her two cats and a beagle rule the roost; they passed within the past year, however, and have not been replaced, yet.

Who knows, maybe an old English dog will grace her porch for that morning coffee. Although the question is, what would she name it?

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at christianvischi@unyumc.org.

“My joy is the people. Seeing all the people at Annual Conference. It's not really related to the benefits office, but I feel really connected to the people when we go to Annual Conference.”

– Vicki Putney



**UPPER NEW YORK  
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RESIDENT BISHOP Marcus Matthews  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER  
Rev. Maidstone Mulenga  
Director of Communications

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# Africa University Choir brings unique sounds to Upper New York

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

This summer, the Upper New York Annual Conference will essentially play host to artists-in-residence the Africa University Choir. This premier vocal ensemble performs in more than 18 languages.

Their tour kicks off on June 3 with a 7 p.m. performance in the Mohawk District at the Trinity UMC in Whitesboro.

Over the following two weeks, the choir will zigzag across the conference, including spending four days at the Annual Conference Session in Rochester.

Africa University is a United Methodist-related institution located in Mutare, Zimbabwe, and its 16-member touring choir features a select group of international singers who perform sacred and secular choral music drawn from the Western and African repertoire.

According to university publications, the choir is seen as a forum for developing future music leaders in Africa's churches and communities.

Their tour of the conference is physically demanding for the members, who will perform 20 concerts in 16 days.

It is financially challenging as well. Host churches will provide an evening meal; recruit host families for overnight accommodations, breakfast and lunch, and receive an offering to help offset the transportation costs among other expenses.

Congregations and individuals that are not directly hosting the choir are invited to fund the conference tour with financial gifts made to the conference with the notation of "Africa University Choir" in the memo line.

Africa University opened as an institution in 1992 with 40 students. Today, the university serves an enrollment of 1,300 students from 28 countries,

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at christianvischi@unyumc.org.

Upper New York Area tour of  
**AFRICA UNIVERSITY CHOIR**

Date	Time	Location
Friday, June 3	7:00 pm	Trinity UMC, 8595 Westmoreland Road, Whitesboro
Saturday, June 4	7:00 pm	Covenant UMC, 1124 Culver Road, Rochester
Sunday, June 5	8:30 & 10:00 am	Asbury First UMC, 1040 East Ave., Rochester
Sunday, June 5	7:00 pm	Kenmore UMC, 32 Landers Road, Kenmore
Monday, June 6	7:00 pm	East Aurora UMC, 345 Main St., East Aurora
Tuesday, June 7	7:00 pm	Bath Centenary UMC, 3 W. Washington St., Bath
Wednesday, June 8		Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Thursday, June 9		Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Friday, June 10		Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Saturday, June 11	11:00 am	Rochester Riverside Convention Center
Saturday, June 11	7:00 pm	Broad St. UMC, 74 N Broad St. Norwich
Sunday, June 12	10:30am	High St. UMC, 1288 Vestal Ave., Binghamton
Sunday, June 12	7:00pm	Rotterdam UMC, 1915 Helderberg Ave., Schenectady
Monday, June 13	7:00 pm	Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, 30 2 <sup>nd</sup> St., Troy, NY
Tuesday, June 14	7:00 pm	Newcomb UMC, Route #28N, Newcomb
Wednesday, June 15	7:00 pm	Malone UMC, 345 W Main St., Malone
Thursday, June 16	7:00 pm	Watertown Asbury, 327 Franklin St., Watertown
Friday, June 17	7:00 pm	Christ Community, 3474 Stiles Road, Syracuse
Saturday, June 18	7:00 pm	Erwin UMC, 920 Euclid Ave., Syracuse

## May 1 is deadline for those interested in serving as delegates

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

Applicants interested in the 16 delegate positions for the next General and Northeastern Jurisdictional Conferences have until May 1 to submit their materials to the Committee on Petitions and Resolutions.

The revised deadline gives laity and clergy applicants who meet Disciplinary eligibility requirements more time to apply as delegates for the

2012 General Conference session – April 24-May 4 at the Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Fla., and the 2012 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference – July 18-20 in Charleston, W.Va.

The Upper New York Annual Conference has also revised the process for submitting applications by those who wish to be considered as candidates for election.

Candidates can now complete and submit their Candi-

date Information Sheet online at the conference's website ([www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org)).

The form, which can be completed online, includes the applicant's contact information and membership status; a statement of ability to serve; a listing of past and present responsibilities in The United Methodist Church; and a statement of why he or she is offering herself or himself as a candidate.

The candidates' informa-

tion will be posted on the conference website following a review by the Committee on Petitions and Resolutions.

The laity and clergy candidates will be introduced at their respective portions of the annual conference session. Balloting will be conducted from the first day of the conference session until all delegates are elected.

The General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Method-

ist Church, and meets once every four years to consider revisions to church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs for the next four years.

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at christianvischi@unyumc.org.

# No increase in spending for 2012

## CFA proposes budget that keeps ministry shares at 2011 levels

### Ministry Share Budget For the year ending December 31, 2012

EXPENDITURES		
1		
2	<b>GENERAL CONNECTIONAL MINISTRY</b>	
3	World Service	\$ 1,217,640
4	Ministerial Education	\$ 403,990
5	Black College	\$ 161,133
6	Africa University	\$ 36,063
7	Episcopal	\$ 370,898
8	Interdenominational Cooperation	\$ 31,978
9	General Administration	\$ 139,067
10	Jurisdictional Administration	\$ 29,532
11	<b>SUBTOTAL GENERAL CONNECTIONAL MINISTRY</b>	<b>\$ 2,390,301</b>
12		
13	<b>CONFERENCE CONNECTIONAL MINISTRY</b>	
14	Conference Benevolences	
15	Conference Leadership Team	\$ 15,800
16	Empowering Local Churches Ministry Oversight Team	\$ 279,250
17	Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development Ministry Oversight Team	\$ 315,000
18	Reaching Our Neighbors Ministry Oversight Team	\$ 266,250
19	Archives and History	\$ 17,500
20	Camp and Retreat Ministries	\$ 820,754
21	Connectional Table	\$ 19,500
22	Disability Concerns	\$ 7,000
23	Disaster Response	\$ 21,750
24	Higher Education and Campus Ministries	\$ 132,000
25	Laity	\$ 18,800
26	Native American Ministries	\$ 7,000
27	Older Adult Ministries	\$ 7,000
28	Religion and Race	\$ 7,000
29	Media Resource Centers	\$ 117,184
30	Status and Role of Women	\$ 7,000
31	Volunteers in Mission	\$ 50,000
32	Youth Ministry	\$ 14,000
33	Sessions 2012	\$ 179,260
34	<b>SUBTOTAL CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCES</b>	<b>\$ 2,302,048</b>
35		
36	<b>Ministerial Support</b>	
37	District and Parsonage Operations	\$ 592,055
38	Cabinet	\$ 1,395,842
39	Board of Pensions and Health Benefits	\$ 19,830
40	Equitable Compensation	\$ 305,000
41	Board of Ordained Ministry	\$ 183,300
42	Sexual Ethics Team	\$ 31,500
43	Episcopacy Committee	\$ 1,150
44	Episcopal Office	\$ 176,950
45	General and Jurisdictional Conference Travel Reserve	\$ 7,500
46		
47	<b>SUBTOTAL MINISTERIAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$ 2,713,127</b>
48		
49	<b>Conference Administration Ministry</b>	
50	Operations of Director Connectional Ministries	\$ 212,771
51	Leadership Development and Nominations Team	\$ 4,650
52	Operations of Director Communications	\$ 597,928
53	Communications Team	\$ 7,700
54	Computer Services	\$ 252,336
55	Operations of Director of Benefits	\$ 317,123
56	Personnel	\$ 5,925
57	Operations of Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services	\$ 528,978
58	Conference Office Operations and Support Services	\$ 309,320
59	Council on Finance and Administration	\$ 5,000
60	Board of Trustees	\$ 97,110
61	<b>SUBTOTAL CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY</b>	<b>\$ 2,338,841</b>
62	<b>SUBTOTAL CONFERENCE CONNECTIONAL MINISTRY</b>	<b>\$ 7,354,016</b>
63	<b>TOTAL PLANNED EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 9,744,317</b>
64		
65	Ministry Share Reserve	\$ 974,085
66	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 10,718,402</b>
67		
68	<b>INCOME</b>	
69	Ministry Shares	\$ 10,718,402
70	Net Income (Shortfall)	\$ 0

## Budget highlights

Main points to the 2012 budget:

- The total budget is same for 2012 as it was 2011; the ministry shares are the same as well; and there is a new ministry share formula.
- No ministry share will change more than 10 percent up or down from 2011 to the proposed 2012 level.
- Apportionment calculation is 15 percent of your church's operating budget, that's the only element

of determining the formula, it is without regard to expenses or attendance. (See graphic at right).

- There are no new positions added in this budget; in other words, no change in the number of positions being funded between 2011 to 2012.

**For more detailed information, see the Pre-Conference Booklet, pages 27-38.**

## Get pre-conference info

The pre-conference materials for the Second Session of the Upper New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church are available to download on the conference website.

It is available as a PDF from the conference's website at <http://www.unyumc.org/pages/detail/1505>.

The materials include the agenda for the 2011 session in Rochester; reports and action items by the committees and task forces of the conference; information about the equalization member policy; General Conference/NEJ elections procedures; and a breakdown of the proposed fiscal budget for 2012.

Also included in the pre-confer-

ence booklet are the shared ministry formula proposed by the Committee on Finance & Administration along with recommendations from the Board of Pensions & Health Committee and the Conference Committee on Communications.

The booklet also contains reports from Nominations & Leadership, the Districting Task Force, the Clergy Compensation Task Force and the Safe Sanctuaries Task Force.

There is also a resolution on Africa University Scholarship; a report from the Conference Leadership Team; and questions and responses from Critical Questions Teams.

## Shared Ministry Formula Proposal for 2012 fiscal year

Basic Formula: 15% of 2010 "Operating" income

Source of Operating Income: Church reported amount on Line 67 of Table III from the 2010 GCFA Statistical Report

Cap on change for 2012: Change to the ministry share amount for each church will be limited to a 10% increase or 10% decrease from the 2011 ministry share figure

Important note: Accurate, complete and timely reporting of statistical information

Invoicing: An individual church's ministry share will be invoiced on a monthly basis

# Repositioning the Golden Cross

## Pensions board asks that funds benefit health, welfare ministries

By Beth DiCocco\*  
Advocate Writer

Among the items on the agenda for the Annual Conference session in Rochester are a series of proposals by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB), which is seeking conference approval for the responsibility of redistributing funds collected by the Golden Cross Offering within the conference.

The CBOPHB supervises and administers retirement plans, investment funds, and health and welfare benefit plans. Participants are active and retired clergy, surviving spouses, and lay employees of the church.

The Golden Cross Offering already supports chaplaincy programs within the conference, and the hope is to fund these as well as other ministries.

The Golden Cross program began early in the history of Methodism in America, primarily to support church-related hospitals and long-term health care facilities. The Evangelical United Brethren Church also collected offerings to support its health-care institutions. When the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged in 1968, the Golden Cross Sunday offering was continued as a way to support the new denomination's health-care ministries.

**The following are highlights of the CBOPHB recommendations; to read the full report, see pages 39-45 in the 2011 Pre-Conference Booklet:**

**PAST SERVICE ANNUITY RATE:** The Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits recommends that the Past Service Annuity Rate for Pre-82 pension payments to retired clergy of the Upper New York Annual Conference be set at \$564 per service year for the year 2012. This represents a 2.2 percent increase over the 2011 rate and is 1.02 percent of the Denominational Average Compensation.

**REVISION TO PRE-July 1, 2010 RETIREE PREMIUM:** Clergy who retired prior to July 1, 2010 will pay on the same scale as previously approved for those who retire after July 1, 2010. Conference obligation is based on years of service at 3 percent of actual premium per full-time equivalent years of service up to 30 years and five years vesting.

**REVISION TO RETIREE CONTRIBUTION POLICY** for under age 65 retirees: Conference obligation is based on years of service at 3 percent of actual premium per full-time equivalent years of service up to 30 years and 5 years vesting. In addition, the clergyperson will pay 5 percent of premium for each year the clergyperson is under age 65. At age 65, the retiree will pay the years-of-service formula only.

**REPLACE RETIREE HEALTH SUBSIDY (non-conference plan) WITH RETIREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** to provide financial assistance to retirees for any purpose, including health insurance, when total income from all sources is less than the conference minimum salary for local pastors, up to \$5,000 annually. (Read more below).

### Retired Pastors' Emergency Assistance

Another program being proposed by the CBOPHB is an emergency grant program to provide financial assistance to income-eligible retired pastors and their surviving spouses.

Each of the former conferences had policies or procedures for providing financial assistance to help retired pastors, surviving spouses and pastors on Incapacity Leave who were facing unexpected financial needs.

In addition, this program will "fold in" financial assistance with health insur-



ance costs (premiums and/or other out-of-pocket expenses).

The total amount available for grants each year would be determined by the CBOPHB. Funding would come from reserves, a special offering received in the local churches, or a combination. The actual amount of individual grants would be determined by the number of eligible requests and the funds available.

The program would be based on financial need, therefore the recommendation includes a total income eligibility minimum and a maximum grant of \$5,000.

Eligible are retired pastors of the UNY Annual Conference with an annual income from all sources less than the current minimum Equitable Compensation for a full-time local pastor established annually by the annual conference is eligible to receive a grant(s) not to ex-

ceed \$5,000 annually. Surviving spouses with an annual income from all sources less than 75 percent of the minimum Equitable Compensation for full-time local pastors are also eligible.

A notice sent each year in January to all retired pastors and surviving spouses would include the purpose of the grant program, income eligibility figures, and application process including a simple application form and a deadline. The grants would be confidential with only the Benefit Officer and one member of the CBOPHB reviewing the applications and deciding the grants.

### Pre-retirement seminars

In consultation with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the CBOPHB sponsored three Pre-Retirement Seminars in December 2010; about 50 pastors participated. The seminars were led by a GBOPHB staff member.

Many of the participants thought future events should provide more time to digest all the information presented. Plans are underway for an overnight retreat in the late fall to assist clergy in financial and retirement planning. Watch for future announcements regarding the details.

### Pension billing

The centralizing of the 2011 pension billing using one formula was accomplished without too many glitches. The board's recommendations to the 2011 session include the establishment of the 2012 Past Service Rate (for pre-1982 years of service) and the required Pre-82 Pension Funding Plan. Also, there is the annual resolution designating all UMC pension and disability payments in 2012 as a housing/rental allowance.

### Learn more

Information and forms concerning pensions, health insurance and retirement can be found on the GBOPHB website ([www.gbophb.org](http://www.gbophb.org)) and on the Upper New York Annual Conference website: [www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org) (under Business & Administration).

Inquiries are also welcome at the Conference Benefits Office; call toll free (800) 699-8715 or send an e-mail to [BenefitsOffice@unyumc.org](mailto:BenefitsOffice@unyumc.org) or to Bill Lasher, chairperson, [duniiry@aol.com](mailto:duniiry@aol.com).

**See more on specific proposals on page 6**

\*Beth DiCocco is writer/editor for the Upper New York Annual Conference. She can be reached at [bethdicocco@unyumc.org](mailto:bethdicocco@unyumc.org).

## Communications team: Technologies help tell our stories

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

In order for the new conference to carry out its mission of Living the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of being God's love to all our neighbors, the Conference Committee on Communications is encouraging the body of the Upper New York Annual Conference (UNYAC) to adopt a resolution to further communication technology in the conference.

One way of carrying out the conference's mission is telling the stories of the vibrant ministries within the UNYAC.

In following the tenet of the 2008 Book of Discipline (Paragraph 162) that states that access to information

communication technology is a basic right, the communications committee is asking for a resolution assuring three key communications tools:

- Churches in the conference who have the resources should provide the church office and the pastor access to Internet services provided at an affordable price;
- Each church should have an email address to use for electronic communication; and
- Each church should name a person to serve as a communications coordinator to help in guiding the communication strategy of that individual church.

With the Conference Committee on Communications, the Director of

Communications Maidstone Mulenga has been working to help identify, equip and coordinate the work of a communications team that includes paid staff, consultants and volunteers.

The team has been developing strategies for effective communication among annual conference agencies, districts and local churches. The team has been actively promoting the activities of the conference through the Advocate and the e-Advocate, the print and electronic news publications of the annual conference.

In the coming year, the team will work to provide guidance and training in effective communications for annual conference, district, and/or

local church leaders, thereby guiding conference leaders in developing and implementing an effective communication strategy.

A key part of the communication team, and is encouraged by the resolution put forth, is the use of new and emerging technologies as tools for ministry. Realizing the disparity in the availability and use of technology in a large and diverse conference, the communications team will be working to maintain the right balance between print and electronic means of communication with the churches and districts.

Submitting the resolution is the Conference Committee on Communications, consisting of committee members:

Daun Nicholas, James Fenimore, Jennifer Castle, Eleanor Collinsworth, Sharon Bassett, Holly Cargill-Cramer, Jill Magnuson, Matthew Williams, Nelson Price and Patience Kisakye; and communications staff members: Karen Campolieto, Beth DiCocco, Rebecca Lo Kohler, Ashley VanSickle, Christian Vischi and Clyde Wolford.

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [christianvischi@unyumc.org](mailto:christianvischi@unyumc.org).

**See Pre-Conference Booklet, page 46-47**

# Clergy minimum cash salary proposed at \$35,000

By Beth DiCocco\*  
Advocate Writer

The Upper New York Annual Conference convened a "Blue Ribbon" Clergy Compensation Task Force composed of individuals assigned by the Bishop, related to the Conference Leadership Team, and including representatives of the cabinet, clergy (both ordained and licensed) and laity.

The Task Force was charged with discerning, deliberating and determining the following:

- A plan for standardizing minimum compensation across the new conference;
- Recommendations regarding what elements should constitute a complete clergy compensation package;
- Consideration of what constitutes a missional full-time appointment;
- Recommendations regarding compensation levels with respect to years of service;
- Recommendations regarding benefits and reimburs-

able matters;

- Consideration of pre-tax contributions by clergy to health insurance and other benefits; and a plan of interpretation for clergy and laity.

After months of prayerful and faithful deliberations, the task force is making the following recommendations:

## Minimum base salary

A standardized minimum base compensation will be established for the Upper New York Annual Conference that includes a base salary of \$35,000 for all full-time clergy persons.

Credential increment based on status is recommended as follows:

- Full connection: 10 percent (\$3,500) or \$38,500
  - Provisional: 8 percent (\$2,800) or \$37,800
  - Associate: 6 percent (\$2,100) or \$37,100
  - FT LP completed Course of Study: 4 percent (\$1,400) or \$36,400
- Additional increases:

• Time in Grade (i.e., number of years in credential level): \$200 per year up to 15 years.

• Number of churches on pastoral charge: An additional \$500 for each church over one.

## Phase-In

The task force is aware that for some churches, providing the 2012 minimum base compensation will be difficult and is providing a phase-in recommendation for churches/charges where the 2011 level is lower than the 2012 Minimum Base Compensation:

Affected churches/charges may take up to three years to attain each year's Minimum Base Compensation established by Conference, according to this schedule:

2012: Increase by one-third of the difference between the 2011 Base Compensation and the 2012 Minimum Base Compensation.

2013: Increase by two-thirds of the difference between the 2011 Base

Compensation and the 2013 Minimum Base Compensation.

2014: The full 2014 Minimum Base Compensation will be paid.

## ARP

All pastors appointed within the Upper New York Annual Conference are entitled to an Accountable Reimbursement Plan (ARP) for professional expenses incurred while performing pastoral duties.

A minimum annual ARP budget for a full-time pastor would be \$3,500 for a single church appointment and \$4,500 for a multi-church appointment under this proposal.

Churches with pastoral appointments of ¾ time, ½ time or ¼ time would budget and pay an ARP proportional to this standard for full-time appointments.

Additionally, congregations are encouraged to budget ARP above the required minimum in consideration of location-specific mileage needs and other factors.

## Time Off Policy

Clergy Vacation Policy – 4 weeks for all clergy with 5 weeks for those with more than 20 years of service.

Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth (as per ¶ 351.1 & 351.2) – Full time clergy shall have at least 2 weeks/year of Continuing Education/Spiritual Growth. Furthermore once every quadrennial period (every four years) there should be one year where an additional month of Continuing Education/Spiritual Growth is undertaken.

Full time pastors are encouraged to give a week annually to a Conference camping ministry.

There will be no prescribed sick leave for clergy. Short and long term disability will be in place as needed.

## See Pre-Conference Booklet, pages 66-71.

\*Beth DiCocco is writer/editor for the Upper New York Annual Conference. She can be reached at [bethdicocco@unyumc.org](mailto:bethdicocco@unyumc.org).

## Safe Sanctuaries policy is proposed

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

Over the past six months, the Safe Sanctuaries Task Force of the Upper New York Annual Conference has been meeting, with the goal of establishing the UNYAC as a Safe Sanctuaries Conference by Dec. 31, 2012.

To that end, the task force has drafted a Safe Sanctuaries Resolution and Minimum Standards Policy. All local churches, programs and ministries of the conference would reaffirm and revise, as necessary, the Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures they have had in place; for those where there was no previous policy and/or procedures, one will be put into place.

The aim of the policy is two-fold: provide for the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our churches and conference; and provide safeguards for adults who work with them.

Citing the social principles of the United Methodist Church that state "... children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse" and the General Conference's resolution "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church" the Safe Sanctuaries Task Force's resolution identifies five areas that the UNYAC intends to keep:

- Follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers;
- Implement prudent operational procedures in all program and events;
- Educate all of our work-

ers with children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding the use of appropriate policies and methods;

• Have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and

• Provide for crisis response, crisis intervention and media inquiries should an incident occur.

The resolution also calls for the creation of Safe Sanctuaries Committees at the local level; having a copy of each group's Safe Sanctuaries policy on file in the Office of the Director of Connectional Ministries; and mandating that the minimum standards and procedures are implemented by Dec. 31, 2012 and reviewed annually.

The policy was written, in part, to direct the conference in the recruiting, screening and selecting of workers, and details the hiring or appointment process.

The policy also specifies procedures for conducting ministry programs and events, and requires the establishment of a standardized training program to "educate all of our workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding the use of appropriate policies and methods."

## See pages 59-65 of the Pre-Conference Booklet.

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [christianvischi@unyumc.org](mailto:christianvischi@unyumc.org).

## Retired clergy to get uniform policy on moving expenses

Among the items on the agenda for the annual conference session in Rochester is a series of proposals by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB), including creating a uniform policy for moving expenses for retired clergy.

### Who makes arrangements for a retirement move?

The retiree is required to secure two bids which are to be sent to the benefits officer. The benefits officer will issue a purchase order to the carrier based on the grant (see below). The retiree can then follow through on final arrangements.

### Who moves the retiree?

A licensed carrier whose costs will include replacement cost insurance coverage. While not recommended, a retiree may move themselves, but in these cases the retiree will pay all related expenses and submit receipts to be considered for reimbursement.

### What is included in a funded retirement move?

Reasonable household furnishings and library are included. Retiree is to pay for moving extensive material considered hobbies, collectibles or separate business items. Second cars, recreational vehicles and utility trailers are the responsibility of the retiree. Questionable items should be discussed with the benefits officer.

**Who packs?** The retiree, except for those items the carrier is required to pack under



insurance regulations (i.e. mirrors, mattresses, marble tops, etc.). Packing supplies may be provided by the mover. The retiree may negotiate with the carrier for the carrier to do additional packing, with the retiree responsible for any such added costs.

**Who pays?** The Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits will pay for one retirement move for clergy members who are retiring from a local church appointment or conference staff appointment, according to the approved schedule (see below). The retirement move shall occur one year prior to retirement or up to two years after retirement. Any variation from the schedule must be recommended by the district superintendent and approved by the Conference Board.

The benefits officer will is-

sue a purchase order to the carrier for the amount of the grant, or the estimated costs, whichever is less. If the estimated cost of the move is more than the grant, the retiree is directly responsible to the carrier for the balance due.

For each year of service in the Upper New York Annual Conference (and four former conferences), 3% of the following amounts will be paid toward the retirement move:

- **Full-time** (at time of retirement) \$3,000 (\$90 per year of service)
- **Three-quarter time** \$2,250 (\$67.50 per year of service)
- **Half-time** \$1,500 (\$45 per year of service)

## See Pre-Conference Booklet, page 43

# Understanding equalization membership

By Maidstone Mulenga\*  
Advocate Editor

The term “annual conference,” refers to any one of the following: a regional body, an organizational unit or a yearly meeting.

**As a regional body,** the Upper New York Annual Conference covers most of New York State, covering 48,000 square miles in 49 of the 62 counties in the state. This body has 937 churches in 12 districts.

**As an organizational body,** the Upper New York Annual Conference has a central office (now in downtown Syracuse) and a professional staff that coordinates and conducts ministry and the business of the conference. Members of the senior

executive staff at the conference office are the director of connectional ministries, the conference treasurer, the director of communications and the benefits officer.

**As a yearly meeting,** the Upper New York Annual Conference meets each year – usually in May or June. This year, the meeting or (the session as it is known) will be June 7-11 in Rochester. Members will gather to worship, fellowship, and conduct the business of the conference. Members also will hear Tuesday, April 12, reports of past and ongoing work; adopt future goals, programs and budgets; ordain clergy members as deacons and elders; and elect delegates to Jurisdictional and General Confer-

ences.

The following are deemed members of annual conference:

**Clergy membership:** The clergy membership of the annual conference consists of deacons and elders in full connection, provisional members, associate members, affiliate members and all local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment to a pastoral charge.

**Lay membership:** The lay membership of the annual conference consists of a professing member elected by each charge, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, and home missionaries. Each charge served by more than one clergy member under appointment shall be entitled to

as many lay members as there are clergy members under appointment.

**Equalization members:** As required by the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, the number of lay members of the annual conference is augmented through the addition of “equalization members” so as to equal the number of clergy members.

The Conference Secretary Jeff Hodge has determined that the number of equalization lay members needed at the upcoming session of the annual conference is 358. This is because there were 1011 clergy members at the end of 2010 and there are 653 lay members from churches/charges.

Those who qualify as

equalization members include lay persons in roles of leadership of the various functioning conference-level agencies defined in *The Book of Discipline 2008*.

Also included as equalization members are the most recently elected lay delegates to General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The remaining equalization lay membership is divided as equally as possible among the 12 districts of the conference.

\*Maidstone Mulenga is the director of communications for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [maidstonemulenga@unyumc.org](mailto:maidstonemulenga@unyumc.org).

# Districting Task Force seeks more time

By Beth DiCocco\*  
Advocate Writer

The Districting Task Force recommends the following actions for this session of The Annual Conference:

1. The Upper New York Annual Conference empower each District Lay Leader, in consultation with their District Superintendent, to form a District Lay Leadership team to enact the provisions outlined in Paragraph 660 of The Book of Discipline (at right).

This will ensure cohesive and consistent lay leadership across the conference and facilitate effective communication between the laity, local church, District Superintendents, and Conference Leadership structure.

2. The Upper New York Annual Conference authorize the continued work of the Districting Task Force under the direction of the Bishop and the Conference Leadership Team, with funding provided by the Conference Leadership Team.

The task force was empowered with the task of discerning, articulating, and offering recommendations to the Bishop, the Cabinet and the Annual Conference regarding:

- The Role of the District Superintendent as supervisor and pastor;
- The necessary number of Districts;
- The staff and support services needed for each District;
- The boundaries for each district;

During its meetings, the task force has spent considerable time and energy discussing the roles and functions of Districts, District Superintendents and District Lay Leaders.

Particular emphasis has been on the importance of districts for keeping churches

and their lay and clergy representatives connected to the Annual Conference and to one another. It was stressed that effort must be made to strengthen the connections at the district level as a way of strengthening the local church and living out the vision of our annual conference, and

The primary concern identified by the Task Force is the need to address the issue of the relationship between District Lay Leaders, the local churches, and the District Superintendent; and secondly, has recommended that the work of this Task Force be continued so that further discussion and exploration of issues can be undertaken.

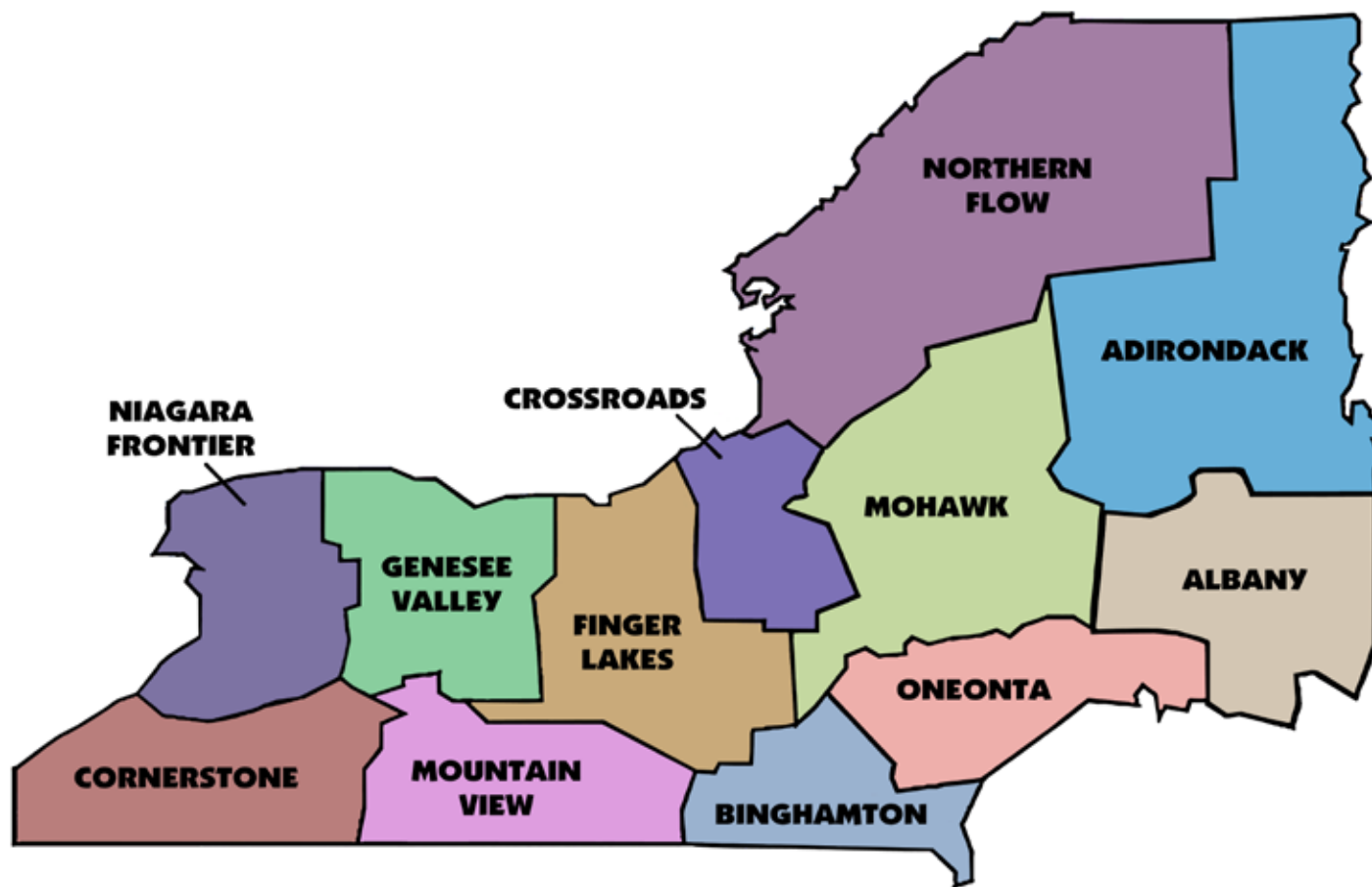
## Resolutions

• The Upper New York Annual Conference empower

each District Lay Leader, in consultation with their District Superintendent, to form a District Lay Leadership team to enact the provisions outlined in Paragraph 660 of The Book of Discipline. This will ensure cohesive and consistent lay leadership across the conference and facilitate effective communication between the laity, local church, District Superintendents, and Conference Leadership structure.

• The Upper New York Annual Conference authorize the continued work of the Districting Task Force under the direction of the Bishop and the Conference Leadership Team, with funding provided by the Conference Leadership Team.

See pages 56-58 of the Pre-Conference Booklet.



\*Beth DiCocco is writer/editor for the Upper New York Annual Conference. She can be

reached at [bethdicocco@unyumc.org](mailto:bethdicocco@unyumc.org).

## Book of Discipline Para 660

Each district of the annual conference may organize to develop, administer, and evaluate the missional life, advocacy needs, and ministries of the Church in and through the district. It shall maintain connectional relationships, organize to develop and strengthen ethnic ministries, including ethnic local churches and concerns, provide encouragement, coordination and support for local churches in their ministries of nurture, outreach and witness in accordance with the mission of the United Methodist Church. Every board, standing committee, commission, council, and work area of the district shall designate one of its members as its coordinator of witness ministries. These persons shall help the groups of which they are members to engage in witness ministries, and in particular, to ask “How are we intentionally reaching new people grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ through our ministries and areas of responsibility?”

# What to expect in Rochester



*You're Invited...*

Join us at the Second Session of the Upper New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

**Music:** Enjoy the golden voices of the Africa University Choir as it spends the week in residency at the conference session. Also joining us is Mark Miller, director of music at the Drew Theological School and lecturer in the practice of Sacred Music at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University.



A "**Block Party**" to celebrate how the Spirit is moving among us.

**Ordination/Commissioning:** Come celebrate with us as we welcome the newest men and women who have been called to clergy leadership in our denomination. Let's encourage them as they prepare to proclaim the Gospel to new persons in new places.

**Mission Celebration:** Upper New York Area Bishop Marcus Matthews made a challenge to the churches of the conference to bring at least one person to Christ during the past year. On Wednesday, June 8, Bishop Matthews will celebrate those names brought to the conference session with his Opening Worship of "Celebrating a Soul Come to Christ!"

*The UMC celebrates*

*a soul*

*for coming to Christ April 24, 2011*



Upper New York Annual Conference  
of The United Methodist Church

# OPINIONS

## Pre-conference webcast a hit

For those who were unable to attend one of the five the Pre-Conference Briefing Sessions that were held April 9-10 and 16, the Upper New York Annual Conference created a web-based Pre-Conference Briefing.

The briefing was recorded live Tuesday, April 12, in the conference office in Cicero; the session ran approximately 75 minutes.

The briefing began with an information session fol-

lowed by a question-and-answer session (questions were submitted via e-mail).

While there were some technical difficulties – the live feed cut in and out – this first conference webcast was deemed a success by both viewers and staff.

An archived version of the webcast is posted on the conference website at: [www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org).

## Advocate accepting letters & columns

Readers have expressed an interest in writing letters to the editor, and now the Advocate is going to begin accepting letters from readers.

You can discuss specific content that you see in the Advocate or any issues within the conference or the church that you would like to discuss.

In order to help assure that there's room for everyone who would like to write, letters will be limited to 250 words. The publisher reserves the right to reject letters or edit them for clarity.

Letters can be submitted anytime, but to ensure inclusion in an upcoming issue, the deadline is the fifth of the month for the following month's newsletter; for example, May 5 for the June newsletter.

We will also be accepting guest columns on topics that require a little more depth. To propose a column topic, please submit an e-mail in advance to the address listed below describing what you'd like to write about; please include a phone number where you can be reached in case we have questions. Columns will vary, but most should be 500 to 700 words.

To submit a letter or guest column proposal, e-mail to [news@unyumc.org](mailto:news@unyumc.org). E-mail is the best way to submit a letter, but we will accept letters by mail sent to:

Upper New York Annual Conference  
324 University Ave.  
3rd Floor  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
Attention: Letters to the Editor

Get your keyboards and pens warmed up, we are looking forward to some lively discussion and debate.

## From the various perspectives:

Thank you for the pre-conference briefing done online; it was an excellent use of my time, and saved on fuel. Great beginning and a solid introduction to a future way of communicating.

– Carol

... I do want to thank you for offering this webcast. ... (the technical difficulties) did seem to get straightened out by the end and we were all able to PRAY TOGETHER, and that is most important!

What I really want to thank you for is the attempt at this. With the price of gas as it is, the trip to any of the locations would have been outrageous, so I grateful for this option. I would guess that it went as well as any "first" would go. Thank you.

– Karen

Blessings abound! Thank you so much for making available an online resource to "attend" the pre-conference



**Bishop Marcus Matthews speaks during the webcast Pre-Conference Briefing on April 12. The live webcast allowed those who could not attend a briefing in person to get briefing information. See the webcast at the conference website at [www.unyumc.org](http://www.unyumc.org).**

briefing. Even with the technical difficulties, this capability has meant that I did not have to leave my husband alone (with our 8-year-old son) as he experiences the after effects of his course of chemotherapy treatment for leukemia. Thank you again for your consideration and for making this meeting TRULY accessible!

Blessings,

– Heidi

Thank you. It's a new thing for everyone.

Glad you're trying it and working on it!

With patience,

– Matt

Now this is the way to conduct a pre conference briefing! Kudos!

Blessings,

– Todd

Hello Friends:  
I've just watched the live streaming presentation and thought it was very useful. Having the printed material in front of me while someone

referred to it was very helpful. Even the technical glitches were OK – we're not national TV, after all.

Thank you so much for using this technology and letting me watch from home.

I think it's a great idea!

– Merry

Dear Bishop and Team,

This was a great experience and good stewardship for those who were unable to travel.

Blessings,

– Cassandra

Great job. I am so glad to be a part of this! Sound is awesome but video is going in and out - kicked off several times.

Again, thanks so much for using this technology!

– Mark

Thanks so much for helping us connect! Bless you all! We'll get there!

– Jackie

# Summit asks: Are we willing to change?

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

Over 1,000 United Methodist sites from around the world participated in an online Leadership Summit focusing on how best to prepare the United Methodist Church for the congregations of today – and tomorrow.

The Tennessee Annual Conference hosted the video presentation; featuring panelists Emcee Bishop Larry Goodpastor, president of the Council of Bishops; Erin Hawkins, general secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race; Lay Member Ben Boruff, a Connectional Table member; Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer of

the Illinois Area, and Bishop Rosemarie Wenner of the Germany Episcopal Area.

The goal of the global holy conferencing was to tackle questions about ministerial effectiveness in the years to come.

Bishop Goodpastor opened the discussion with how the Church needs to "continue to align our efforts around the four areas of focus," including by

- developing passionate leaders;
- creating new places for new people;
- engaging in ministry with the poor;
- and by combating diseases of poverty by improving

health globally.

"The most significant arena for disciple-making is the local church," Bishop Goodpastor said. "(We need to have) fruitfulness in church planting in Europe and the United States. We have to turn around decades of decline, and we need to revitalize existing churches. ... We also have the opportunity to make a profound difference on the global scale ... and we can combine resources so that God can use us more fully and effectively."

A video shown quoted a 2010 study that identified key factors in a sampling of 32,000 churches in U.S. that set churches apart:

- worship service and specifically the multiple ways that congregants can become a part of a church family;
- pastors and their important need to listen, discern and decide what is best for their church; and
- small groups and programs, including bible studies, choir, volunteer work and special interests ministries.

"Vital congregations have to be relevant to the changing demographic populations that we see ... the changing cultural realities that young people bring," said Hawkins. "We need spiritually mature, faithfully alive laity to help make disciples for the transformation of the world."

Goodpastor echoed that statement, saying: "Our mission is clear: make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

"The question before us is whether all of us ... are willing to change ourselves so that we can help the church change."

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [christianvischi@unyumc.org](mailto:christianvischi@unyumc.org).

**The Summit can be viewed in its entirety online at: [www.umc.org/leadershipsummit](http://www.umc.org/leadershipsummit)**



# F.O.O.D. for youth (faith outside our doors)



By Sharon Rankins-Burd\*  
It's now just a pleasant memory, but on the second weekend of April, UP!WORD '11 was "rockin' the house" at the Liverpool Holiday Inn. More than 400 youth brought their adult advisors to a sleep-deprived, junk filled weekend of fun and

faith. The Convention Center teemed with teens as they heard bands and speakers, played games and Bible trivia, and generally laughed themselves silly! The weekend's theme was "GRACE: No Exceptions to God's Acceptance,"

and emcees Paul Sweet and Alex Howland kept things on track with their own blend of comedy, entertainment and information. The service featured a lot of music, including the Barefoot Band (a CCYM trademark), and the Praise Band from Liverpool First UMC.

Ezra Kim was the featured speaker, sharing his own thoughts about the grace of God and reflecting on Psalm 100. Closing worship on Sunday included Communion and hand/foot washing. Ephesians 2:1-10 served as the Scripture to direct our thoughts. Anna Malone shared her faith story.

Chelsea Aiosa offered a message of grace. The service closed with hand washing and Communion, which all were invited to take part in. Then it was time to say goodbye for another year and head home. Until we meet again!  
\*Sharon Rankins-Burd is the pastor at Cedar Lake UMC.

# 'God told me to go to Peru'

## 19-year-old cherishes mission opportunity

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

Since age 13, JoAnn Wood knew she wanted to be a missionary. She has a special place in her heart for Latin America, where she had longed to travel to; to be an instrument of change for the people there; and to bring healing.

Little did she know that during a recent mission trip she would be the one ultimately transformed.

The Hudson Falls native said she fulfills whatever role is needed at her home church, the First United Methodist Church of Hudson Falls. "I do whatever I can. I'm in the choir. I am a lay speaker, and I basically do whatever needs doing," she said. But the 19-year-old's true passion lies in missions.

Disenfranchised with the non-Christian college she had been attending, she asked her mother for a reprieve. "I was down to rock bottom and my mom said I do not have to go back (for the next semester)," Wood said.

She recalled several visits by representatives of Youth With A Mission (YWAM, pronounced "WHY-wham") to her school, performing dramas and the like, and said she knew that was what God wanted her to do.

Her immediate task was funding and prayer support. She had family members and supporters contribute financially to her YWAM experience, but she still had to use some money left over



from college. With plenty of prayer support, Wood began her first stage of the YWAM Discipleship Training School (DTS).

For three months, Wood stayed in a "mansion" - as she described it - in the small city of Rockford, Minn., approximately 30 miles west of Minneapolis, Minn. This period included weekly lectures on a variety of topics, morning classroom sessions, small groups, afternoon work duties, and worship and inter-



**JoAnn Wood, of Hudson Falls, (center) and some of the children (here and below) that she worked with during a mission trip to Peru.** Provided photos

"We go where we feel God is telling us. ... and I feel pretty strongly that I am going to (one day) live in Latin America. I feel that God wants me to go back, my passion in life is to work with street kids in Latin America. ..."

**- JoAnn Wood**

"On Tuesdays we had local outreach," Wood said. "We had two options: to work in a trailer park helping youth with their homework (or reaching) unreached people - their kids came to an afterschool program and we helped teach them Christian morals."

Having traveled to 14 countries, her next decision was potentially the easiest for her: Peru or Russia. She didn't think twice and was headed for the Amazon.

"I prayed and God told me to go to Peru. The music, the food, the culture, I love Peru, and I knew I wanted to do that one," Wood said.

Following vaccinations for yellow fever and typhoid, Wood and a team of seven others left on Dec. 31, 2010 for Iquitos, Peru. For the next two months, she and her team would dig two wells, pass out "a lot" of deparasitizing medicine, perform refinishing work on established churches and an abandoned building - transformed into a ministry space, and evangelism, spend-

ing two weeks at a time in the jungle before returning to the civilization of a city for a week.

"The jungle was not exactly the funnest thing. People are like it was a great vacation, right? No, it wasn't (I would tell them). Most of the time (we didn't even have a) wall around us, we only had mosquito netting."

Another issue with the jungle?

"We went on a lot of prayer walks, but every time

we went on one it would start raining."

For as many difficulties as her team faced, from lack of electricity and communication at times and the unwelcomed feeling received from some Peruvians, Wood said she is no longer the same person that left in late December.

"(The trip) changed my life. I was talking to one of my good friends yesterday and he said I have a really different outlook on my life. I went to Peru expecting to help people, heal people. But my group was all about humbling ourselves, doing everything with God. God showed me I need Him in everything I do, and I have learned that when I go directly to God things get fixed quicker."

Working two jobs, Wood is currently fundraising and preparing for a School of Ministry Development (SMD), a graduate school of sorts to the DTS.

The SMD starts in June and is eight months long, the culmination of which Wood would lead a DTS group likely back to Peru.

"We go where we feel God is telling us. With me, honestly I would like to go to Japan right now," Wood said. "I was praying about this when I was leaving (Peru the first time) and I feel pretty strongly that I am going to (one day) live in Latin America. I feel that God wants me to go back, my passion in life is to work with street kids in Latin America. God told me I am going to go back, but in His time."

Anyone wanting to support Wood in her upcoming ministry can e-mail her for more information at joannwood777@gmail.com.

She also has a newsletter that individuals wishing to follow her missionary adventures can receive by joining her mailing list.

YWAM is an international volunteer movement of Christians from many backgrounds, cultures and Christian traditions, dedicated to serving Jesus throughout the world.

They are currently operating in more than 1,000 locations in over 180 countries, with a staff of over 18,000.

For more information about YWAM, visit them online at [www.ywam.org](http://www.ywam.org).

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [christianvischi@unyumc.org](mailto:christianvischi@unyumc.org).

# Muck raking

## ERT course trains clean-up volunteers

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

In the aftermath of a natural disaster, Emergency Response Teams (ERT) provide the critical immediate care to help get families and communities on the road to recovery.

ERTs are a specialized unit within the Upper New York Annual Conference's Volunteers in Mission (VIM). Whereas VIM teams often provide longer-term disaster recovery - such as rebuilding a home or church, ERTs provide immediate intervention for damaged homes such as cleaning out basements, removing debris - trees mostly - and putting tarps on roofs.

On June 4, UMCOR-certified ERT trainers Tom and Linda Cooper and Charlie Hodges will be leading an ERT training program at the Westfield United Methodist Church, Route 20 (Main Street), Westfield (across from the McDonald's).

The conference Disaster Response Coordinator the Rev. Carl Chamberlain, pastor of Warrens Corners UMC, said this upcoming training is important for both ERT veterans and

those wishing to join the ranks.

"Successful completion of this class allows participants to be part of a pool of trained responders from (our) conference who will be called on for an early response to disasters in our conference and elsewhere as invited," Chamberlain said. "This will also serve as a refresher course for those who have an ERT ID that will expire this year."

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.; the program is expected to end at 4:30 p.m.

The \$25 registration fee is due by May 30, and covers materials, snacks, lunch, a background check and a participant's identification card.

Checks should be made payable and mailed to: Christ First UMC, 663 Lakeview Ave., Jamestown, NY 14701.

For more information, contact Charlie Hodges at (716) 969-6407 or via e-mail at [chash51@yahoo.com](mailto:chash51@yahoo.com).

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [christianvischi@unyumc.org](mailto:christianvischi@unyumc.org).

# Basketball offers hope for orphans

By Christian Vischi\*  
Advocate Writer

"Basketball is a metaphor for life," wrote Chuck Skala, a United Methodist volunteer in mission appointed to the Front Porch Orphans of Zambezi, Zambia.

That metaphor could include the luck of a basketball hanging on the rim and then, almost be sheer will, ducking into the net. Or it could be about the underdog trumping the expected winner - think the NCAA tournament. But instead, Skala is talking about something off-court; something intangible.

"We have an opportunity to bring much needed beaming hopeful energy to Zambezi. Something our whole community can rally around and get excited about," Skala said. "We believe this can happen through basketball. High school basketball. Boys and girls high school basketball."

The school in Zambezi is seeking to establish a vibrant basketball program and they have recruited Rita Njobvu as their new basketball coach. She is a member of the Zambia National Women's Team - a team that competes internationally.

"Njobvu has a lot of skill

and enthusiasm to bring to the job," Skala said. "We have student-athletes who are eager to learn and compete (and) we have a core of parents-boosters who want to be supportive and help promote their team."

But, he admitted, the program needs resources to get off the ground. At the top of the list: funds to repair the crumbling court surface and to purchase or fabricate new wooden backboards. They also need basketballs, uniforms, warm-ups and shoes, and he said they would appreciate surplus equipment.

"We could certainly make very good use of it here. Not just our players or just our high school, but our whole village of Zambezi could get energized to put our team on the court. ... Our basketball season here starts in May. So we are eager to begin. This is not merely a school project or a United Methodist project, but a community project."

Contact Skala at [chuckireneskala@hotmail.com](mailto:chuckireneskala@hotmail.com).

\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [christianvischi@unyumc.org](mailto:christianvischi@unyumc.org).



2ND SESSION OF  
**Upper New York Annual Conference**  
 June 7-11, 2011 • Rochester, NY  
 MOVING WITH THE SPIRIT  
 PROMISE • POWER • WITNESS

## AC 2011 agenda

The tentative schedule for the Second Session of the Upper New York Annual Conference in Rochester includes:

- Monday, June 6**  
 6 PM Celebration of District Superintendent Service
- Tuesday, June 7**  
 1:30-5 PM Clergy Session/Radisson Ballroom  
 1:30-5 PM Laity Session/Asbury First UMC  
 5:30-8:30 PM Retirement Dinner/Radisson Ballroom
- Wednesday, June 8**  
 8:15 AM Ballot Testing  
 9 AM Opening Worship with Bishop Matthews  
 Holy Conferencing  
 7-9 PM Mission Celebration featuring AU Choir
- Thursday, June 9**  
 8:15 AM Music for Gathering  
 8:30-9:30 AM Bible Study with Bishop McCleskey  
 9:30-10 AM Laity Address  
 10 AM-Noon Table Talk  
 Holy Conferencing  
 9 PM Ordination Rehearsal
- Friday, June 10**  
 8:30-9:30 AM Bible Study with Bishop McCleskey  
 Holy Conferencing Continues  
 7 PM Memorial Service with Bishop McCleskey
- Saturday, June 11**  
 8:30 AM Worship and Reading of Appointments  
 10 AM Ordination/Commissioning Service

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GET CREATIVE - SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS APRIL 29!

### Cokesbury will attend the Annual Conference session

*By Christian Vischi\* Advocate Writer*

Although the last brick and mortar location of Cokesbury in Central New York has been shuttered (the Syracuse store was one of five that closed last fall), a company representative reassured us that the Christian bookseller will continue to serve churches of the Upper New York Annual Conference.

And one significant event is already inked into her planner: June's annual conference session in Rochester.

Kathryn Hackney, a Cokesbury sales representative for the Upper New York Annual Conference based in Albany, said regardless of not having a physical presence in the area, her goal is to continue the company's relationship with the conference.

"Cokesbury will have a large display at the 2011 Annual Conference," Hackney said.

The Cokesbury display will provide a variety of supplies, gifts, official United Methodist Resources, and a large selection of books and clergy apparel.

"... following Annual Conference, I will continue to visit local churches to directly assist with any of their resource needs," she said.

Cokesbury is the retail division of The United Methodist Publishing House. Founded in 1789, the house is publisher and distributor to The United Methodist Church and the greater Christian community.

Products range from curricula, books, consumable supplies, apparel for clergy and choir, church furnishings, altarware, seating for sanctuaries and fellowship halls, and classroom furnishings.

For more information about Cokesbury's offerings, Hackney can be reached via phone at (518) 266-9108 or e-mail at [khackney@cokebury.com](mailto:khackney@cokebury.com) or visit [www.Cokesbury.com](http://www.Cokesbury.com).

*\*Christian Vischi is the communications associate for the Upper New York Annual Conference. He can be reached at [christianvischi@unyumc.org](mailto:christianvischi@unyumc.org).*