



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

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A first for Rochester's Asbury First Shafer first female pastor to lead conference's largest church

By Christian Vischi
Advocate writer

In 1957, Perry Young, Jr. became the first African-American to pilot a commercial flight. That year, Ellen Louks Fairclough became Canada's first female Secretary of State.

It was also the year The Rev. Susan Shafer, who would become another "first," was baptized, and when the 12 year old experienced her first calling to the ministry.

Standing on the groundwork laid by many women over decades, Shafer made history on July 1, 2011, when she was appointed senior pastor at Rochester's Asbury First United Methodist Church, the Upper New York Area's largest church, with 2,295 members and a worship attendance of 698. She is the first woman to serve in that role.

Of her appointment, Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews said: "Susan is a gifted and caring pastor. It was a blessing to appoint her as senior pastor at Asbury First. She

has already done a wonderful job and I believe she will continue to do so." According to the General Council on Finance and



Photo by Matthew Williams

The sanctuary at Asbury First United Methodist Church in Rochester. Rev. Susan Shafer is the first woman to serve as senior pastor at the Upper New York Area's largest church, which has 2,295 members. This photo was taken during the Laity Convocation in June.

Administration, there are 35,275 local churches nationwide; only 735 of those have worship attendance of 500 or more parishioners.

Shafer is not the first woman to lead a "mega" church; however, to understand how rare Shafer's current appointment is – only 22 of those 735

churches have female pastors. That puts Shafer in the 3 percent of 2 percent category; a woman is three times more likely to catch a ball at a Major League baseball game than to repeat Shafer's success.

But ultimately that is Shafer's goal.

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"I will be culminating my ordained career as a senior pastor, and if other women look to that, I will have succeeded in helping other women know that we can achieve the goals we have. I think I have been able to balance being a wife, mother and now a grandmother ... women need to know that we do not necessarily have to choose one over the other – with support and balance we can be called fully to ministry."

– Rev. Susan Shafer, senior pastor at Asbury First UMC in Rochester



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Sun power

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in Buffalo installs
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Thank you for helping HANDS4NY

United Methodists from across the Upper New York Annual Conference came together on Oct. 15-16 for HANDS4NY Impact Day events.

Churches hosted a variety of activities from food collections to gleanings and hot meals – all with the goal of feeding 1 million people in one year.

If you haven't done so already, please send us your photos and information about your HANDS4NY event; e-mail: news@unyumc.org. Thank you to everyone who helped make HANDS4NY a success.

See photos from events across
the Upper New York Area
on pages 4-7



Amelia Waldrop was one of the children who sold lemonade and baked goods at North Chatham UMC to help HANDS4NY. As a result, 40 pounds of food was collected and \$150 will be sent to Kaater-skill UMC for Thanksgiving baskets. Photo courtesy of North Chatham UMC.

REMINDER: ITEMS SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION ARE DUE ON THE 5TH OF EACH MONTH FOR THE FOLLOWING MONTH'S ISSUE.

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Meet Mountain View DS Cathy Stengel

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate writer

When Mountain View District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Cathy Hall Stengel headed to seminary in 1980, she didn't admit to anyone – even herself – that she was following a call to ministry.

"I told myself I was going to learn the history, things I didn't know," said Stengel.

Stengel and her identical twin were

born in Boulder, Colo.; they were baptized United Methodist, but didn't attend church growing up. She found the Church as an undergraduate at SUNY Genesee.

"The Church matched my values in terms of equal rights, inclusivity," she said, and she began to attend Genesee UMC, "where the famous Rev. Len Sweet was the pastor."

But even as she continued learning about her faith, she had never seen a female pastor or know of any, and she wasn't sure such a path was possible for her.

"I didn't dare say I wanted ministry," she said. "I thought everyone would laugh."

Upon arriving at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill., she realized that there were many women like her.

"When I went to seminary and it was 40 percent women, it was such a revelation," she said. "Through that first year, I saw some really gifted women ... oh my gosh; I slowly started thinking maybe I could do that."

So the summer after her first year, the young woman who had only recently learned the Lord's Prayer decided she had better find out exactly what a pastor does, and she sought out an internship.

When she made inquiries in the former Western New York Conference, she didn't realize her request was unusual.

She spent that summer as an assistant to Bob O'Dell, who was pastor at a Feder-

ated Church in Jasper.

"I felt like a circus attraction," Stengel said, describing how as they drove around meeting members of the congregation, O'Dell would roll down the passenger-side window and introduce Stengel by saying: "Guess who this is? We got ourselves a lady pastor."

"Now, I understand why what happened happened," Stengel said, but at the time, she found the attention she got unnerving. "I was only 22; I wasn't so worldly that I knew how to handle all that kind of feedback."

For 24 years, Stengel served churches in the former Western New York Conference before becoming a DS in 2007. During that time, she earned a doctorate in pastoral supervision, and got "the tools that could be used in the superintendency."

Stengel said she has always been involved with the Board of Ordained Ministry, local pastors licensing school and shepherding candidates through ordination process; "it's really a passion of mine," she said.

She and husband, Matthew,

who is also a pastor, have three children: son Marty and daughters Katie and Jordan. The flexibility that comes with being pastors is a big help in raising children, Stengel said, but it's still work balancing the roles of mother and pastor.

"The ministry can be challenging," she said. "It calls us to parent a whole lot of other people, shepherd them, and there are times when there's a draw on both ends – children and the church – and it becomes a challenge."

When it comes to being DS, the travel time away from home would have been "painful for me" if her children were still at home, and she acknowledges that her male counterparts don't always have to make the same kinds of difficult choices.

But with her children grown, Stengel says she's enjoying her role and her new colleagues. The conference appointed five new district superintendents in July.

"(They have) infused a lot of laughter," Stengel said. "There are real comedic people in the Cabinet. It's very therapeutic to laugh together. They are all very gifted."

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STORY IDEAS?

The Advocate is always looking for news and story ideas.

If your church is doing something you would like to share with Advocate readers, let us know about it.

If you have a story idea for the Advocate, e-mail bethdicocco@unyumc.org.

Please include a phone number so that we can follow up.

Or you can call (315) 424-7878 ext. 319.

To submit photos, e-mail them to the same address.

Photos should be at least 300 dpi at full size.



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Friends:

It's that time of the year again. Advent arrives on the calendar demanding response from us. With great anticipation, excitement and joy, we await the Coming of Jesus Christ. Even in the midst of tough economic times and disasters, Advent offers us hope – the hope that God still cares and loves us all.

Advent, as you know, is the spiritual four-week pre-Christmas season; the first Sunday of Advent this year is Nov. 27. It's a time of quiet reflection, a time of repentance. It's the time to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and to ensure that there is "room at the inn" of our souls to receive the King of kings.

Advent is a season of discernment; therefore, my brothers and sisters, please reserve Advent for prayer and transformation of our hearts.

Just as we are preparing for winter season, we must make ready our hearts to warm up to the joy of anticipation of the coming of Christ as the light for this world. As Christians, we must offer that light of hope to the world through our prayers and deeds. As we enter Advent season, I ask you to prayerfully consider doing this three things:

- 1.) Take at least 5 minutes every day during Advent to **pray**. Give to God your requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving. Please offer special prayers for our friends who are recovering from floods and other natural disasters. Remember to pray for families who are struggling without jobs in these tough times. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 *Thessalonians* 5:16-19)
- 2.) Take one day each week during Advent to **fast**. Like Lent, Advent is also a time of repentance and preparation. What better way to do it than to fast! "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (*Isaiah* 40:4)
- 3.) **Donate** the funds saved by the fasting to your local church for missions and ministries. You could also donate the funds to help the flood recovery efforts. Together, we in the Upper New York Annual Conference have embarked on HANDS4NY, a project to feed 1 million people in one year. HANDS4NY is about making connections. Connect with that young couple struggling today. Connect with the elderly who just need a compassionate ear. Connect with a child whose father or mother has just passed away. "May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy." (*Psalms* 126:5)

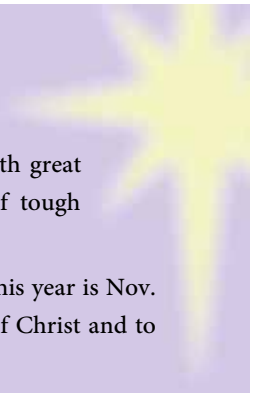
When we have done these things, celebrating Christmas will be a great joy to us. We will bask in the elation of shepherds. We will join the chorus of angels announcing Christ's birth. We will adore the proclamation: "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace." It will be with glee when you can, like Linus, say: "That's what Christmas is all about."

So this Advent, as we prepare for Christmas, tell someone how important they are to you. Give someone hope. Light up someone's future. Thank someone for what they have done for you. Show God's love. "I thank my God every time I remember you." (*Philippians* 1:3)

Doing so will indeed prove that we are **living the Gospel of Jesus Christ and being God's love to all our neighbors in all places.**

Thank you, everyone, for all the wonderful work you have done this year.

Merry Christmas and blessings to you all,
Bishop Marcus and Barbara Matthews



This Advent, help those recovering from flooding

In a few short weeks, we will find ourselves in the midst of Christmas preparations. This season, called Advent by the Church, is packed with many joys: Advent hymns and Christmas carols, gift giving, Christmas trees and favorite Bible stories of a Savior's birth.

Yet, it can also be a disturbing time as we find ourselves swept up in the frenzy of consumerism. The contrast between the bustle of the local shopping mall and the silence of Bethlehem's stable may leave us feeling out of sync with the true meaning of Christmas. How can a season inspired by the story of a baby born to a displaced family sheltered in a barn be about getting everything on our Christmas want list?

This may explain why many of us seek extra opportunities during Advent to shift the focus from our wants to the needs of others.

This Advent in particular, we won't have to glance far. Indeed, all we have to do is look at our sisters and brothers whose homes, churches and communities were devastated by Hurricane Irene and Tropi-

cal Storm Lee. These friends and neighbors have lost so much. Doesn't it make sense for those of us who can help to do so? Isn't that what Christmas is really about?

I'd like to challenge you and your congregation this Advent to make a financial gift to our conference's Disaster Recovery Fund. Helping our friends and neighbors rebuild their homes and lives will require us to be generous. Carl Chamberlain, conference's disaster response coordinator, created the "Twelve Days of Recovery" (right) to help us understand the cost of rebuilding.

You can send a check directly to the conference or arrange for your congregation to dedicate an offering from a Sunday in Advent or Christmas Eve collection. Our generous giving this Advent will help flood victims reclaim their lives and all of us reclaim the true meaning of Christmas.

Please make checks payable to Upper New York Annual Conference with Disaster Recovery Fund # 4200 noted on the memo line.

– Bill Gottschalk-Fielding
Director of Connectional Ministries

On the first day of recovery, our conference gave to help ...

(To the tune of Twelve Days of Christmas)

- 1 bit of hope after the flood Priceless
 - 2 hours of VIM labor \$40
 - 3 cans of paint \$35.94
 - 4 bedroom doors \$447
 - 5 sheets of dry-wall \$34.50
 - 6 kitchen cupboards \$1,098
 - 7 sheets of flooring \$139.86
 - 8 new light bulbs \$17.94
 - 9 rolls of insulation \$89.82
 - 10 pounds of nails \$19.96
 - 11 (hundred) sq. ft. of floor tile \$129.60
 - 12 electrical outlets \$12.96
- Total \$2,065.58

HANDS4NY

United Methodists from across the Upper New York Annual Conference came together on Oct. 15-16 for HANDS4NY Impact Day events. These are some of them:



1

1. The United Methodist Flames, a group of eight to 10 women at **Mooers UMC** in the Adirondack District, expanded its ministry of making tote bags from recycled clothing to create bags decorated with their hand prints (and those of children in the congregation) for HANDS4NY. Folks were invited to take a bag and fill it with food for the local food pantry. The effort collected 750 pounds of food. 2. **Park UMC in Pulaski**, (Northern Flow District), fed 592 people and raised \$5,592 for the CROP Walk; \$477.75 was given to the local Community Cupboard. 3. **At The Road @ West Genesee** in Syracuse volunteers helped pack food bags for Delaware Elementary School in the city. Also in that district, First UMC of Mexico filled 453 Blizzard Bags for Meals on Wheels. 4. **The Broad Street United Methodist Church of Norwich** (Oneonta District) held a food collection at seven sites. The day's tally included 864 pounds of food and \$35 in donations that will benefit the Roots & Wings Food Pantry and Our Daily Bread Food Closet. 5. **Pepsi Beverage Co.** created this structure at the Can Construction event on Impact Day at Chautauqua Mall in Lakewood. 6. **Clinton Street UMC** in Lockport, Niagara Frontier, District, hosted a pancake breakfast and collected breakfast cereals for My Brother's Keeper food pantry.



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7. **The Schuylerville UMC** (Adirondack District) hosted a free lunch on Oct. 15 as its HANDS4NY event. The food collected there was going to SAFER (Schuylerville Area Food and Emergency Relief), the ecumenical food pantry that serves their community. The event featured a variety of chili as well as live music. 8. **Oneonta's First UMC** has hosted Saturday's Bread, a free hot lunch program, since 1992. It has fed an average of 130 to 160 each week during the past 19 years. During the Hands4NY Impact Day event, Saturday's Bread's 24 volunteers served approximately 130 guests. 9. **The Rushville United Methodist Church** (Finger Lakes District) has been assisting Friendship House, the local food pantry, since its inception. The church's representative to Friendship is Roberta Stillman (pictured); in August the church decided to "Fill Roberta's Trunk." It's estimated the food will serve more than 600 people.

HANDS4NY

1. Mount Vision UMC (Oneonta District) hosted a food drive, specifically seeking canned items. As part of the Hands4NY Impact Day, members of the church arranged the food items into the shape of their church. **2.** For its HANDS4NY Impact Day event, the **Utica East Side Mission** in the Mohawk District hosted a bring a bag/take a bag event along with a cook-out. At the event, 137 pounds of food was distributed to those in the community. **3.** As part of HANDS4NY, volunteers participated in the **Annual Finger Lakes Gleaning**, which took place in Seneca Castle. **4. Some of the 500 pounds of cabbages** harvested in Seneca Castle.



5. Mount Vision UMC (Oneonta District) collected a net weight of nearly 253 pounds of food, the equivalent of feeding 200 people. **6. Oneonta First UMC** has hosted Saturday's Bread, a free hot lunch program, since 1992. On Hands4NY Impact Day, 24 volunteers – many of them from SUNY Oneonta's Phi Kappa Psi fraternity – served approximately 130 guests. **7. The Burnt Hills UMC** (Albany District) hosted "Rethink Hunger – Overcoming Obstacles of Hunger." The event included displays about nutrition and hunger resources, music, a bake sale and free food. The highlight was an obstacle course representing the challenges faced by those who are food insecure. Each stop represented another challenge, such as how tough it is for some folks to get to a grocery store and get back home with their purchases.



8. Quaker Springs United Methodist Church in Schuylerville (Adirondack District) recently held a roast pork supper and had a silent auction of donated items. They raised \$790 for SAFER, the Schuylerville Area Food Emergency Relief. Pictured from left are: Michael McLoughlin, SAFER president; Rev. Joyce DeVelder, Dutch Reformed Church and SAFER, board member; Linda Campbell, Quaker Springs UMC lay leader, and Rev. Jim Knapp, pastor of Schuylerville and Quaker Springs UMCs. **9. Christ First UMC** in Jamestown created Noah's Ark at a Can Construction event on Impact Day at Chautauqua Mall in Lakewood.



10. The Arkport, South Dansville Bishopville and Avoca United Methodist churches teamed up for a gleaning project on Sept. 11. Mountain View District Lay Leader Joel Stauring's house is surrounded by acres of crops. Last year, he noticed green bean harvesters leave nearly 20 percent of the crops behind; so he organized this gleaning. Nine adults and three children picked five bushels of green beans before a thunderstorm hit. Most of the beans went to feed 150 families at the Avoca UMC Mobile Food Pantry. Three other bags went to families from the churches. **11. Eight Rochester-area churches** North Ontario UMC, Spencerport UMC, Victor UMC, Webster UMC, Penfield UMC, Geneseo UMC, Allen's Hill UMC and Aldersgate UMC were Turkey Drop sites on Oct. 15; the turkeys, 1,492 pounds worth, were donated to the Foodlink in Rochester.



HANDS4NY *A year-long effort to feed 1 m*



1

Oct. 15-16
Impact Day
events



2



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4



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6



11

1. **Oneonta First UMC** has hosted Saturday's Bread, a free hot lunch program, since 1999. The Oneonta area offers a hot meal somewhere in the city every day of the week. 2. For its 10th anniversary, **Utica East Side Mission** hosted a bring a bag/take a bag event along with a cookout. At the event, food was distributed to those in need in the community. 3. **Walkin' with Bill** took place Oct. 16 at Oneonta, which marked its 10th anniversary this year, is held in memory of the late Rev. Bill Stanton, a pastor at several churches in the area and was the executive director of the Broome County Council of Churches. Food collected at this walk goes to CHOW, the Community Hunger Outreach Walk, in honor of Rev. Stanton's.

4. **Niagara Frontier District Superintendent Rev. Wayne Butler** and his wife, Molly, enjoyed the pancake breakfast at **Clinton Street UMC** in Lockport; the church also collected breakfast cereals for **My Brother's Keeper** food pantry. 5. Volunteers went to **Matthew 25 Farm in Tully** (Crossroads District) to glean the fields of carrots. The nonprofit farm donates its produce to area food pantries. 6. **Trinity UMC in Clay** (Crossroads District) held a canned food drive – Yes We Can – 350 bags with an informational flier were distributed ahead in the community, and 889 pounds of food was collected.



12

How logistics and religion impacted my life ...

By Nelson Johnson

This is the story behind "Help Keeping Faith," my video for the Youth Video Contest, which tells the story of my good friend and of God's plan.

I was always that one oddball in school who loved math and used it anywhere I went; 95 feet to the school bus stop divided by the 67 steps to get there was 1.418 feet per step. My classes were easy to pass and more importantly life was easier to understand.



JOHNSON

Everything was just fantastic. Everything, except religion, made 100 percent sense to me. I had always figured religion was like a calculator, unless you intend on

spending years memorizing every little detail about it, you'll never fully understand it.

There were parts of Christianity that I have always found illogical and unnecessary. So church, like math class, was spent going through the motions knowing that later on in life I would probably forget it and would continue life knowing the basics for what I loved doing. Everything was perfect and every plan was going to go my way ... except it wasn't.

See, what I failed to realize is that not everyone is as eccentric or happy or privileged as I was. Yes I knew of poverty, how many people have been affected by it, as well as teen suicide and other tragedies. I honestly did not care, nor did I feel sorry for them because I figured that it's life and it just made

The 2011 Youth Video Contest asked youth and young adults of the conference these questions: **What would you say if Jesus gave you a three-minute audience? What can make today's church more relevant to you? How do you "hang" with God?**

Nelson Johnson was the youth category winner and Maddie Forrester won in the young adult category.

See all the videos at www.unyumc.org/pages/detail/1480

sense. I was pretty arrogant and had never lost anyone I loved or any of my friends. I quickly learned that as Counting Crows once said, "You don't know what you've got till it's gone."

At camp Casowasco I met Justin, an awesome friend with whom I kept in touch with since camp. We chatted on Facebook; he was good friends with one of my friends and always cared about others before himself. The last time we were face to face was during a winter retreat, and we had promised each other to definitely meet up at the same camp and we'd have as much fun as before. We were in high spirits. Skip forward to March and you'd find me in a great mood. Justin had messaged me on Facebook to chat. I blew him off and said I was tired and that I would chat later on.

April 1 rolls along and I get a text message asking if I had heard about Justin. I replied with a simple no and got a message explaining something I didn't think I'd hear for years. At first, I thought it was an April Fool's prank, but it was official news. On March 31, Justin had committed suicide. I couldn't

breathe, move, or do anything. My heart was racing and I felt there was nowhere to turn to. Everything I knew that was logically good and logically correct within my world had just been shattered by his decision to take his own life.

After attending the funeral, I felt like there was nothing to do anymore. I felt alone. It's within these dark times that God truly says I am here for you. He says when your logical plans have failed you, try Mine. "Be strong and take heart, all who hope in the LORD (Psalms 31:24)." It was his wake up call to me that not only do I need to step up and keep faith, but also to go and help others.

For the longest time I avoided a girl who would cut herself to feel better. Through it all, I was able to befriend her and understand the pain she was feeling.

Logically, religion to me now is a tool to help others who are suffering before it is too late. And I encourage everyone to find their calling. Thank you, Justin.

In loving memory of Justin.



Coming Attractions

Keep an eye out for details about the Upper New York Annual Conference's 2012 Youth Video Contest.

Buffalo's Asbury Shalom Zone shines

\$155,000 in solar panels installed in Buffalo

By Maidstone Mulenga
Advocate Editor

Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews saluted the Asbury Shalom Zone (ASZ) in Buffalo for taking a leap of faith and installing solar panels on its building.

"This was stepping out in faith," Bishop Matthews said when he visited the Zone on Saturday, Oct. 8, to bless the solar panels. "You have put great faith in God that God would provide your cost for the panels and installation, and that God will provide the needed sunlight."

Thanks to a \$155,000 contribution from commu-

nity partner Solar Liberty, an energy systems company, the solar panels were installed on the roof of the Asbury Shalom Zone building at 520 7th St. near downtown Buffalo. The company not only donated the panels, it also provided the labor to install them.

Asbury Shalom Zone's main mission is to provide adult education for primarily non-English speaking adults, providing GED and computer classes. It also offers a soup kitchen, food pantry and thrift store, and hosts Cub/Boy Scouts and HIV/AIDS education and testing facilities.

Bishop Matthews thanked the ASZ for embracing a clean, renewable energy source:

"What is even more exciting is that instead of benefitting the electric company, the resources saved by these solar panels can be directed toward the programs of the Zone, like your computer classes, soup kitchen and thrift store," he said.

A shalom zone is an area within a community where churches work toward systemic change by collaborating with community organizations and residents to develop economic prosperity, coordinate resources, and empower leaders and residents to plan for their community's future.

Asbury Shalom Zone was established in 1996 at the suggestion of a local church, Primera Iglesia Metodista Unida, which serves a neighborhood with a large population of refugees and immigrants.

One of the main challenges for ASZ is keeping maintenance costs low; its electricity bills hovered around \$3,600 a month, hence the quest for alternative energy sources. With the solar panels, ASZ expects to cut its energy bill in half, said Ben Matta, chair of the ASZ board.

Retired Rev. Merle Showers, ASZ volunteer director, thanked Solar Liberty officials for their contributions, and hailed them as a

great example of a community partner.

"This solar installation will help us fulfill our mission by reducing our expenses, and allowing us to use our gifts from the churches and individuals to better serve the community," Showers said.

For more, visit www.aszonline.org.



UNY Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews shakes hands with members of Primera Iglesia Metodista Unida, the church that initiated the creation of the Asbury Shalom Zone in Buffalo. The bishop visited ASZ to bless the newly installed solar panels. Also pictured are Ben Matta, chairman of the ASZ board, and the bishop's wife, Barbara Matthews. Photos by Maidstone Mulenga

poverty war terrorism hunger the economy unemployment abuse addiction healthcare depression violence racism sexism isolation bankruptcy crime war terrorism poverty hunger the economy racism unemployment abuse addiction healthcare depression violence racism sexism isolation bankruptcy crime

Where do you see reality?

crime poverty war terrorism hunger the economy unemployment abuse addiction healthcare depression violence racism sexism isolation bankruptcy crime

The women and men who enroll in the **Master of Divinity program at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School** come from diverse faith traditions and communities.

However, they share the belief that Christ's greatest calling is to **engage the real world** as it is in order to **transform it**.

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Opinion

GUEST REFLECTION

Faith in hard times

By Rev. Jerry Piper

While channel surfing, looking for the football game on a recent Monday night, I caught a segment of Jim Cramer's *Mad Money*. He was doing his normal preaching about the market, but this time he was targeting those who were panicking. I'm telling you what I heard, which may or may not accurately represent what Cramer said.

He was addressing people who are afraid because of the unstable stock market. He said that there are many who get rich in times like these by taking advantage of people who panic and make foolish financial decisions. The intuition of the fearful causes them to bail out when the market crashes. They try to save what they have left and in doing so, lose a fortune.

Cramer encouraged his listeners to take a counter-intuitive approach in hard times. He said that history tells us that the low times are the times to invest, not bail out.

This isn't about playing the stock market, and I am not encouraging anyone to listen to me or Cramer. This is about a spiritual parallel to Cramer's comments: I see churches following the intuitive path.

We all know that times are hard, and as a result churches are cashing in their stock of ministries. Our people listen to all the negatives and seek to conserve their resources. This usually means they reduce their giving and hang on to their resources.

This, in turn, touches off a very negative spiral. Reduced giving causes the church to cut back on mission and ministries. This in turn causes other ministries and agencies to cut back. Then the very ones who started the downward spiral see churches and ministries cutting back, and this reinforces their world view that the sky is falling. The strongest preservationists then cling to what little is left in a desperate attempt to salvage something in the church.

I serve a little church that lives in the counter-intuitive. Knapp Creek is a small congregation that sits on top of a mountain south of Olean. The building only seats 60 people, and the average attendance is about 30, but somewhere along the line they forgot how to think small. Year after year, the church gives away \$2,000 to \$4,000 of mission money, and in four months they raised over \$1,000 to help UMCOR with the disasters.

Out in the community, we have given UMCOR such positive reviews that in times of natural

disasters, like Katrina and the recent floods, the Knapp Creek Fire Department gives to UMCOR through our church instead of to the Red Cross.

We have the simple faith that God will show up when we step out.

We handed out five-gallon buckets so people could make up Flood Buckets for UMCOR. One member explained what we were doing to a store manager and asked for a reduced price on the items. The manager said she had a better deal: The store had collected four pallets worth of products for flood relief at their cash registers and couldn't find an agency to take them. We knew what to do with it, and on Sept. 23, we delivered 4,800 items and two Flood Buckets to Hornell.

Trust me, I'm not bragging on Knapp Creek; nothing would make us happier than for this story to inspire 25 other churches.

God designed the Church to be counter-intuitive. Out of our own need, we give to others, trusting in God. Luke 6:38 says, "Give and it will be given unto you ..." Malachi 3 tells us to put our whole tithe in the storehouse and watch what happens.

This is not the time for Christians to be shrinking back. Now is the time to believe God and be the city on a hill.

There is a store manager out there who is totally dazzled because a tiny church knows how to get four pallets of product into the hands of needy people when the big boys couldn't be bothered. Next time, she is calling us first.

Think about it. If we had decided that we were too small to get involved with filling 10 Flood Buckets and couldn't afford to do this kind of ministry, one man would never have walked into that store with the audacity to ask the manager for a good price, and we never would have experienced the joy of having God supply the needs of dozens of families through us.

We serve a big God who is still in the business of doing big things through people who believe. We just proved that it isn't about us and our resources. The glory goes to God. It's counter-intuitive. This all started because a tiny church released another round of giving.

Now is the time for church people to believe and reach out, not shrink back and conserve. People are watching to see if we actually believe what we preach.

Piper is the pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Knapp Creek.

E-mail: news@unyumc.org. with "letter to the editor" in the subject line.

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

LETTERS

The *Advocate* accepts letters to the editor. Letters should be kept to 250 words (longer letters may be published when space allows).

We reserve the right to reject or edit letters. Letters must include your name, address and a daytime phone number. Letters can be published using only a first name if the writer requests.

Shafer makes history

Continued from cover

"I think if I had any dream in the ministry as far as being a woman, it was that I could open doors for other women and be a model for them as to how you share your gifts in such a way that other lives are deeply enriched," said Shafer. "I am always grateful for those footsteps that I walk in, and if I can leave footsteps for others to walk in then I will feel like my life journey is an answer to prayer."

Barbara Moore, D.Min., interim dean of Women and Gender Studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (CRCDS) in Rochester, agrees that Shafer has the opportunity to open doors.

"All in ministry are in a rarified role by virtue of their response to the call. (But) I do hope that her appointment will open doors for others and that we will look at a person's gifts rather than their gender," Moore said.

Shafer, who is a CRCDS alumna, and her family joined Asbury in 1972. In 1981, she was ordained a deacon and in 1983 she was ordained a full elder. Her only experience outside the United Methodist Church was between 1979 to 1981 when she had student ministry at the First Baptist Church of Brockport; her grandfather was an American Baptist pastor.

Although she concluded her MDiv. many years ago, she pointed out that her walk – anyone's walk – with the Lord is an experience of continuing education.

"I have the opportunity to grow in leadership in both the life of this church and in the conference in a way I have not before," Shafer said. "At age 66, I am still learning things about myself and about God's spirit in me. I think it is an amazing thing to continue to grow in the spirit of God."

Gifts

Liturgical skills are one area that Shafer is gifted in, according to Moore.

"Susan ... is well known for her liturgical skills. I am delighted for her that this call came, and that she can use her many pastoral gifts to serve this congregation," Moore said. "For so many women, the journey has been a long one, and one in which gifts have not been recognized. Susan's appointment and call are a reminder that God's grace is ever present and at work. My prayer is that this call will open doors for other gifted and committed women."

Moore also lists Shafer's experience, fidelity to the community and pastoral care as having equipped her well for this role.

Whether they take the form of hospital or nursing home visits or in-home care, relationships, no matter how extended or brief, help inform good preaching, Shafer says.

"I think the hospital visitation and being at the bedside with prayer – both before and after surgery – bringing the presence of Christ at those times makes Christ's love tangible," Shafer said. "I think my knowledge and passion for pastoral care prepares me best, because I think you need the knowledge of the congregation, the interaction with the congregation to be a good preacher... and I think that informs God's word in how you preach."

Over the past 30 years, Shafer has had a lot of interaction with the parishioners of the church. But her new role establishes new corporate relationships with many in the church. With the Rev. Dr. Mark Ralls' departure for the senior minister position at the Centenary United Methodist Church in North Carolina, the staff now led by Shafer includes a second full-time pastor, a part-time pastor, two directors of children's ministry, a director of communication, a financial director, a campus care coordinator, a dining-caring center director and an administrative assistant.

In the past year, the church served over 25,000 meals, given away free clothes to more than 6,000 people and, each week, distributed 50 bags of groceries to parishioners in need at area churches.

"What this church is is a church with a very tall steeple and a beautiful building; but best of all, it has a hand outstretched to the city and beyond, and that is who we are," Shafer said. "To be entrusted to lead that is a sobering responsibility and an awesome opportunity. I believe this is where God has called me and I believe it is where my deep passion and the world's hunger meets."

The Rev. Dr. Robert Allan Hill, dean of Marsh Chapel and chaplain to Boston University, as well as professor of New Testament and pastoral theology, served for many years as the senior pastor at Asbury First. A lecture series there is named after Hill.

Although there may be more faces in the crowd on Sunday morning, Hill said large and small church ministries have a lot in common.

"Large church ministry in one sense is like all ministry – preaching the Gospel, loving the people, and placing oneself in the service of others. In another sense it requires particularly careful attention to organizational complexity, stewardship, personnel, consensus building, and evangelism."

Her most profound gifts of deep personal faith, proven excellence in pastoral care, and insightfully creative spirituality will nourish and support her ministry, Hill said. "Her roots in Rochester, education at Ohio Wesleyan, experience as a leading professional woman, and familiarity with the congregation will inspire and inform her preaching. The conference is fortunate to have Asbury First and Asbury First is fortunate to have Susan."

Although Shafer is only a few years away from retirement, she is far from accepting status quo in terms of the vitality of her church. Her goals for the next five years are: to grow the member base to 3,000 members; increase the endowment to \$1 million; engage 200 children in the church's children's ministry; expand the youth group from the current 50 participants; and offer a fourth worship service – a neo-orthodox-type, possibly offsite, similar to a Celtic worship experience.

Family

Shafer and her husband, John, are both professors at Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester. Their three children, who all attend Asbury First, have chosen "helping professions," according to Shafer: physician, educator and social worker.

And she credits her family with helping her: "One cannot do what I am doing without the support of family," she said.

In addition to the three Sunday morning services at 8:30, 10 and 11, Shafer can also be heard on radio station WYSL 1040 AM, which traditionally broadcasts Asbury's service from 11 a.m. to noon; podcasts of sermons can be downloaded from Asbury's website at www.asburyfirst.org.

"I would like us to explore new ways without giving up what we already do," Shafer said. "We have a phenomenal opportunity here, and I would like us to be known as the place where people can come and grow in their spiritual journey."

UNY Conference hires flood recovery director

The Upper New York Annual Conference has hired Greg Forrester as the recovery director for flood recovery operations in areas affected by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Forrester served the upstate New York area for 10 years as a New York State Trooper, and has operated a construction/remodeling company in the Cortland area since 1988.

In 1999, he was hired as the Volunteer In Missions coordinator for the Northeastern Jurisdiction and continues to serve in that capacity. He has attended the UMCOR Basic Academy, taught the Emergency Response Teams (ERT) course following Hurricane Katrina, and received certifications from the Red Cross for both domestic and international disaster response.

In his new role as recovery director, Forrester will lead, oversee and coordinate operations of the disaster recovery stations housing and sending volunteers in service with the affected communities.

"As such, one of his primary responsibilities will be



Photo by Beth DiCocco

The UNY Annual Conference has hired Greg Forrester to serve as recovery director for flood recovery operations in the Area. Many of the conference's churches and members were affected by the flooding that followed Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Here Forrester is talking with high school students who were volunteering to help clean up homes in Apalachin, in the Binghamton District.

COMING IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE:
A DAY ON THE JOB WITH GREG FORRESTER.

to direct our Conference's efforts to recruit, train, equip and deploy volunteers for the ongoing recovery process," said Conference Director of Connectional Ministries Bill

Gottschalk-Fielding when he announced the position on Oct. 3.

"Greg will also serve as our primary linking person with our many partner

organizations working in the affected area."

In conjunction with this new position, the Conference Board of Trustees has agreed to make the former Wyoming Conference Center in Endicott available to serve as a Volunteer Center to assist with the recovery effort. This facility will be used to house volunteer teams and provide an operational center for the multi-county recovery effort.

Gottschalk-Fielding said the hiring of a recovery director and the opening of the Volunteer Center in Endicott signifies the ongoing commitment of the Conference to "be God's love with our neighbors" in places where high winds and severe flooding have disrupted so many lives.

Your help still needed

The cleaning process continues, and Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews urges United Methodists in the Upper New York Area to consider making a donation to help those who have lost so much:

•Monetary donations can

be sent to the UNY Conference office, (324 University Ave., Syracuse, N.Y. 13210) designating your gift to fund #4200 (Upper New York Conference Hurricane Recovery).

The focus will be helping Area churches, communities and individuals after other resources are exhausted. "Please remember that 100 percent of all gifts through our United Methodist Church are available for recovery work," said Bishop Matthews.

•Cleaning Buckets and Health Kits (formerly known as Flood Buckets) are also welcome. These 5-gallon buckets contain supplies that enable people to begin the overwhelming job of cleaning up after a flood or hurricane. For details about how to create a Cleaning Bucket, visit the UMCOR website at: <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/flood-bucket/>

•Local churches are also asked to consider hosting flood relief fundraisers, receiving special offerings or tithing a portion of an existing event. — *Maidstone Mulenga*



Flood work can provide lessons for the Church

I'm learning some things from our experiences this fall that I believe have implications not only for flood response, but for the ministry we do every week through our congregations.

Here are a few:

Help starts with listening. Our neighbors include people who have different dietary and cultural needs, different standards of privacy, differing ways that families function, etc. How will we learn about our neighbors so that our ministry reflects God's love specifically for them?

Needs can change quickly, and we must be ready to adapt. More than once, people have arrived to help and found the need was different than they anticipated. For example, Broad Street UMC in Norwich brought dinner for a large group to Sidney, and no one was there. They adapted by going into the street and inviting people to come. (Hmm – I think I recall a story Jesus told like that!) We may come prepared with buckets and find the mucking out is done, but someone needs to be listened to.

Making our church affiliation visible makes God visible. Whether true or not, many people will state that the Church has become irrelevant to people's real lives and needs. Wearing our church shirt or other identifier while we work helps people see that God's love is present through us. The Rev. Peggy Eller, pastor of Mt. Upton and Guilford UMCs, reports having very different conversations with people when they know she is with the United Methodists and a pastor.

We offer ourselves with humble, respectful and open hearts. Being on the giving end is easier than being on the receiving end. One person impacted had to ask repeatedly that people not take pictures of her ruined home. By contrast, one of our VIM teams sent a note to the homeowner thanking him for the privilege of working with him, and learning the history and stories of his home. That meant a whole lot.

— *Rev. Jan Rowell, Oneonta District Superintendent, from her daily reflection.*



ROWELL

Helping hands

Mike Huber, associate director of Camp and Retreat Ministries, led a flood-relief work trip of 11 NOMADS, who were at Casowasco Camp and Retreat Center for three weeks doing volunteer service, and five Casowasco staffers. NOMADS, usually retired or close to retirement, provide volunteer labor for United Methodist organizations. NOMADS work for three weeks, four days a week at various sites. If you are interested, contact them at 866-466-6237 (866-4NOMADS), or visit the website at www.nomadsumc.org. Photos courtesy of Mike Huber.



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



MOP 2011 – Nicaragua Bound!

By Rev. Ted Anderson

The Mission of Peace is a yearly journey of discovery and Shalom to nations in our global community sponsored by the Northeast Jurisdictional Council on Youth Ministries of the United Methodist Church.

Each year, every annual conference of The United Methodist Church in the Northeastern Jurisdiction may select up to three youth to share in this experience.

On each MOP, participants worship in churches, meet youth in churches and civic organizations and share with people who have a similar longing for peace and understanding. These times have been the high points of each MOP experience.

The MOP is a life-changing experience! It is a journey that leads each participant to discover God's Spirit at work in the world. It is an experience of God's extended family. It is a journey of discovering God's Shalom. It is primarily a people to people experience in which we learn from our hosts how they live



UMNS photo by Clay Kisker.

Scavengers comb through mounds of garbage at the city dump in Managua, Nicaragua, searching for food and recyclable materials to sell. Project Chacocente, started by United Methodist missionary Cheryl Avery, moves families to fertile farmland outside the city. Many of the 2,000 people who search the city dump daily are children. In 2009, some 175 families made their homes there.

as disciples of Jesus Christ in their country. It is a mission which has brought us closer to God's hoped for community where all are sisters and brothers.

Each year the youth who represent our Upper New York Annual Conference of

the United Methodist Church must raise the money which supports their MOP. In the spirit of Shalom, our Conference Council on Youth Ministries humbly asks each church, UMW unit, UMM unit, UMYF, and individuals for prayerful consideration of

a monetary gift to the Conference MOP participants.

Each youth who journeys on the Mission of Peace is expected to share their experience at least five times upon their return. Each MOP'er is looking forward to telling their story of Shalom. They may be contacted individually or through the Conference Youth Coordinators.

Those who have journeyed on the Mission of Peace give thanks to God and to all who have made it possible for us to make this journey. We pray daily for Shalom, for understanding between people, and that there may be the chance that others can journey on a Mission of Peace.

Inspired by the preaching of Bishop Dale White, the Mission of Peace was brought into existence by the Northeastern Jurisdictional Council on Youth Ministries (NEJCYM) Legislative Session at Albright College, July 28-31, 1984.

Each year since, the NEJCYM Legislative Session has affirmed the priority of the Mission of Peace in order

that new understandings of community and shalom might continue to develop.

The MOP has traveled to the USSR (86-88, 90), The People's Republic of China (89, 97, 01, 06, 11), Eastern Europe (91,92), Zimbabwe (93, 96, 99), Guyana (94), India (95, 00, 05, 10), Nicaragua (98, 03, 07, 12), Brazil (02, 04), Cuba (08, 13), and South Africa (09).

Our UNY MOP'ers journeying to Nicaragua this year are:

Margot Rankins-Burd – Sauquoit Valley UMC;
Erynn Motak – Eden UMC;
Meghan Mitchell – Calvary UMC in Latham;
Julia Keiper – Alexander UMC;
Stacey Rogers – Kenmore UMC;
Lydia Hall-Lochmann Van Bennekom – Dansville UMC;
Zach Stahlsmith – Hurlbut UMC;
and Judy and Tony Hipes and Mary and Ted Anderson.
Please hold us in your prayers as we travel!

Anderson is Genesee Valley District superintendent.

Youth reflect on the theme 'God is Here' Fall Gatherings are this month

God is HERE is the theme for this year's Fall Gatherings taking place in the Albany and Rochester areas this month. Here are reflections on that theme by CCYMer's:

By Tony Hipes

My world came crashing down
On that day so long ago
Filled with pain and betrayal
A day all was lost or so it seemed.
Where was God?
A new day dawned
Prayer, silence, meditation, more prayer Revelation God was here God had never left, God was always here Love, hope, joy, peace God is ... HERE!

By Vita Rice

My dear children, let's not
Just talk about love;
Let's practice real love (1 John 3:18)
Stick with what you learned and Believed, sure of the integrity of your teachers (2 Timothy 3:14) Throw yourself into this work for Christ (2 Timothy 2:1) and with Open arms welcome fellow believers Who don't see things the way you do (Romans 14:1).

Let grace, mercy, and peace be
With us in truth and love from
God (2 John 3).

Let us continue to love each other
Since love comes from God,
And everyone who loves is born of
God. (1 John 4:7)



Youth 'I was 'More Than' ...

By Anna Malone

Hundreds of youth groups gathered in eager anticipation.

According to the clock on the screen, there were 10 minutes left to go. As the countdown reached zero, the youth (and adults, too) screamed their excitement as

the room went black.

Lights came on and music started playing.

Youth 2011 had begun.

This summer, in two locations (Purdue University in Indiana, and Sacramento, Calif.) The United Methodist Church held two enormous, national youth conventions,



MALONE

known as Youth 2011.

The theme was "More Than," and this was certainly more than just a convention. Thousands of youth discovered the truth that God's love is more than we can ever imagine!

There were workshops, small-group discussions, worship services, moving keynote speakers, amazingly talented musicians, and, of course, the undeniable presence of God.

Brad Whittemore (a youth representative to the DMYP and also a fellow Upper New York CCYMer) and I were blessed to be on the Design Team for this event. Because of this, we went to both events in Purdue and Sacramento.

Throughout the three years we have been planning, I have seen God work in so many ways through so many different people. Being on the team has been a blessing, yes, but simply being at the events was a huge blessing as well.

Youth 2011 was a beautiful, emotional, amazing, indescribable gathering, and I would not trade anything in the world for that experience.

In brief ...

AU Scholarship bulletin insert

The work of the Africa University Scholarship Endowment Fund Task Force is well under way.

Let your congregations know about what's coming up in the three-year campaign to raise \$1 million for scholarships to AU, a Methodist-founded institution in Mutare, Zimbabwe, with a prepared bulletin insert, appropriate for use throughout the fall.

The insert is available for download in black and white and color versions on the website at: www.unyumc.org/auscholarship.

VIM team leader training offered

Volunteers In Mission (VIM) teams are needed in flood-damaged areas and those teams need qualified leaders to assemble and lead them. The conference is offering two day-long VIM leadership training workshops on Saturday, Nov. 19.

Training is required for all first-time United Methodist VIM team leaders, but all those interested are invited to attend this comprehensive training offered by seasoned team leaders.

Sessions will be:
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Camillus Immanuel (Church of the Bells)
303 Kasson Road, Camillus
Course facilitator: Sylvia Reimer, Medical Missionary, UMC GBGM.

Cost: \$25, includes manual, lunch and snacks.
Registration deadline is Nov. 4; contact Mike Block via e-mail mblock@wwdb.org or call the church (315) 487-117.

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

First UMC Schenectady,
603 State St., Schenectady
Course facilitators: Jay and Cathie Dunkleberger, and Pete and Jan Huston

Cost: \$15 for manual, \$10 for lunch.

To register, contact the Dunklebergers at jdunkleb@nycap.rr.com or (518) 371-7071.

Pastor performs to benefit flood recovery efforts

Rev. Judy Humphrey-Fox, pastor at Lake Luzerne First and South Corinth UMCs in the Adirondack District, will perform a concert at 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 13, at First UMC, 24 Main St., Lake Luzerne.

An offering will be taken to benefit the work of the Emergency Relief Teams from the Upper New York Annual Conference that are helping with flood recovery and rebuilding work in the wake of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

If you would like to post a flyer announcing the concert at your church or business, contact Humphrey-Fox via e-mail at llscumc@frontiernet.net.

Tell us your favorite children's moment story

The children's moment is a wonderful point in the worship service. It can be very spiritual – sometimes our littlest ones offer the biggest thoughts – or it can be Sunday's funniest moment.

We're doing a story about the children's moment for an upcoming issue of the *Advocate*, and would like to feature your stories.

So tell us – in 150 words or so – about one of your favorite children's moments. It can be funny or moving; it may be something that happened recently or that you remember from years ago.

Send your stories via e-mail to: news@unyumc.org, subject line: children's moment. Please include your name and the name of your church.

Sweet previews book



Photos and brief by Rebecca Lo Kohler, marketing associate.

The Casowasco Camp & Retreat Center was the perfect place to feel the spiritual connection of our life with God. The beauty of the autumnal forest overlooking Owasco Lake was both restful and invigorating. It was here that a group gathered to be a part of "First Followers Advance," a retreat with world-renown theologian Len Sweet (above), who unveiled his book *I am a Follower: The Way, Truth, and Life of Following Jesus*. At First Followers, which took place Oct. 17-19, Sweet discussed the concepts of the "Orthodoxy of Paradox" – or how the Bible and Jesus embody contrasts and paradoxes; for example, Jesus is both son of man and son of God and passages such as Matthew 20:16 "... the last will be first, and the first will be last." Sweet has authored more than 200 articles, over 1,200 published sermons, and some 50 books.



Dates to remember

For the most complete, up-to-date information, check the conference calendar at www.unyumc.org.

Nov. 11-12

CCYM Fall Do-ing: Flood cleanup in Schoharie County.

Nov. 12

Communications Workshop
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Trinity UMC
8595 Westmoreland Road, Whitesboro
Contact: Karen Campolieto at (315) 424-7878 ext. 304.

Nov. 18-19

CCYM Fall Gathering in the Rochester area at the Riverside Radisson.

Dec. 12

Upper New York AC Trustees meeting
Conference offices
324 University Ave., Syracuse

December 2011 to January 2012

Annual Conference registration opens

April 24 - May 4

2012 General Conference Session

May 18, 2012

Retirement luncheon – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

May 19

Pre-Conference Briefing – 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Laity Session – 12:30 to 5 p.m.
Clergy Session – 12:30 to 5 p.m.

May 31 - June 2

Annual Conference Session, Syracuse

July 18 - 20

2012 NEJ Conference

Old Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine speaks at Sky Lake

In 2009, Blenda Smith had the opportunity to hear noted author and New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine speak in Helena, Mont. During a lively dinner discussion on Levine's book, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, Smith found herself asking Levine, "Would you ever consider coming to Upstate New York to talk about this topic?" Levine said, "Yes!"



SMITH

Fortunately for the almost 120 individuals who made their way to the Sky Lake Camp and Retreat Center Sept. 16-17, the Voices of Faith Lecture Series Committee of the former Wyoming Annual Conference continued its work through the Upper New York Annual Conference.

Smith's fellow committee member Rev. Mark Marino said the committee

felt it was important to continue its work in order to allow others to gain insight into first-century Judaism from someone who is Jewish.

"(Levine) presents a point of view that Christians are often unable to convey, because we are not as familiar with the Jewish traditions out of which Jesus came," he said.



LEVINE

Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, of Temple Concord in Binghamton, agreed. She and her congregation's director of education took time out of their busy pre-Shabbat service preparations to attend Levine's Friday afternoon sessions.

"I'd heard Amy-Jill speak before, and I wanted to be a part of this experience. I especially appreciated gaining new insights from her into what the



two faith traditions call their sacred scriptures. It was also a great opportunity to learn about our commonalities and differences and how this can help us work together," Goldman-Wartell said.

"The intimacy of the Sky Lake setting and the continued good response

to these events has me already looking forward to the lecturer our committee might bring to the area in 2013," said Marino.

– Photos and brief by Matthew Williams, member of the Upper New York Annual Conference Communications Committee.