



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 10 - October 2011

Now the real work begins

Volunteers helping with flooding cleanup, rebuilding

By Maidstone Mulenga
Advocate Editor

The smell hits you first – the stench of damage left by flood waters. Then you hear the sound – the clamor of water pumps and tools of relief work. And then the sights overwhelm you – mountains of debris at curbside that once were valued property.

Welcome to the disaster zone also known as flooded Southern Tier.

From flooded food pantries and youth rooms to waterlogged pastors' offices, dozens of United Methodist churches in the Upper New York Area suffered severe flooding damage in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene.

When Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews toured the area to see first-hand the storm damage, it was apparent that recovery for some of the churches is only just beginning. Worst hit were Binghamton, Oneonta, Mountain View and Albany districts.

Bishop Matthews toured parts of the Southern Tier to assess the damage and to give support and encouragement to those who lost valuables in the recent flooding. He also offered his gratitude to all who are working to clean up the debris as the victims begin the long process of recovery.

"We thank God for the men and women who are working diligently in the recovery efforts," Bishop Matthews said, adding that it is likely to be years before the work is complete.

It is hard to single out the damage sustained by one church.

Yet the devastation was more than evident at the Owego United Methodist Church (Binghamton District), where it took firefighters two days to pump water out of the church building. The more than 10 feet of water left mud on everything, and most of the church's property has to be thrown out.



Other nearby churches did not suffer as much damage, and took on the critical role of helping others.

Pastor Mary Jean Simonin opened her Apalachin UMC as a Red Cross shelter during the worst days of the flood. Rev. Sara Baron, pastor at nearby

Park Terrace UMC, spearheaded a campaign in partnership with the Apalachin Fire Department.

At the Newark Valley First UMC, the flood waters damaged Sunday school and nursery school spaces, but the

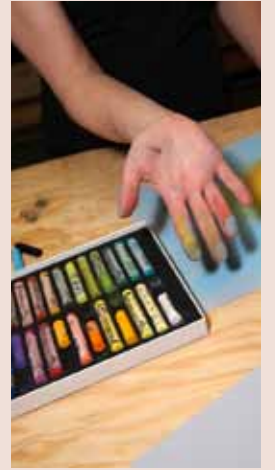
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Photos by Maidstone Mulenga

ABOVE: Flood-damaged contents from Owego UMC are piled in front of the church. **LEFT:** Newfield United Methodist Church member Cindy Schulte helps in the cleanup work at Owego UMC. Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews toured the area last month.

FOR MORE ON THE FLOODING, INCLUDING PHOTOS OF THE AFFECTED AREAS, SEE PAGES 6-9.

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Art Divina ministry uses creativity to foster a relationship with God

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Crossroads District Superintendent

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Urban Ministry Summit I

Those with a heart for urban ministries will gather to discuss the joys and challenges of their work

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Lend a hand to HANDS4NY Oct. 15-16

HANDS4NY is the Upper New York Area's year-long campaign to combat hunger in Upstate New York. In the communities our churches serve – the places where we all live, work, go to school and worship – there are people facing hunger and food insecurity every day.

The churches of the Upper New York Annual Conference are – and have been for many years – working to fight hunger through many ministries.

The HANDS4NY project is a chance for us to learn about all the good work that's being done, and assess its impact in real numbers.

We will be keeping an ongoing tally of how many

people we feed in the year beginning June 2011. Our goal: To feed 1 million people in that 1 year.

The Impact Day events happening Oct. 15, and continuing on Oct. 16 with CROP Walks and other events throughout the Upper New York Area, are designed not only to help those in need, but to raise awareness both within our own Upper New York Area and among the public about the profound – and ever-growing – need for food support.

Hunger is a big problem, but with our faith and hard work, we have the means to make a difference.

On pages 4&5 learn how you can help.



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

How to Reach Us

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) 422-5024

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 x312

Toll Free: (855) 424-7878

Fax: (315) 424-0975

ADVOCATE STAFF

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Rev. Maidstone Mulenga
Director of Communications
315.424.7878 x307
maidstonemulenga@
unyumc.org

DEPUTY EDITOR

Beth DiCocco
Conference
writer/editor
315.424.7878 x319
bethdicocco@
unyumc.org

DESIGNER/WRITER

Christian Vischi
Communications
associate
315.424.7878 x313
christianvischi@
unyumc.org

E-ADVOCATE/WEB

Ashley VanSickle
Multimedia/
Web Coordinator
315.424.7878 x320
ashleyvansickle@
unyumc.org

ADMIN. ASST.

to the director
Karen Campolieto
315.424.7878 x304
karencampolieto@
unyumc.org

MARKETING ASSOC.

Rebecca Lo Kohler
315.424.7878 x321
rebeccakohler@
unyumc.org

IT MANAGER

Clyde Wolford
315.424.7878 x322
clydewolford@
unyumc.org

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, send us an e-mail and let us know about it.

If you have a story idea for the *Advocate*, e-mail bethdicocco@unyumc.org and tell us about your idea. Please include a phone number so that we can follow up.

You also 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.

DISTRICTS

Adirondack District

396 Loudon Road
Saratoga Springs, NY
12866-5332
(518) 584-8214 x11
Fax: (518) 584-8378
Email: AdirondackDis-
trict@unyumc.org

Albany District

396 Loudon Road
Saratoga Springs, NY
12866-5332
(518) 584-8214 x10
Fax: (518) 584-8378
Email: AlbanyDistrict@
unyumc.org

Binghamton District

53 McKinley Ave.
Endicott, NY 13760-5497
(607) 748-0662
Fax: (607) 748-0549
Email: binghamtondis-
trict@unyumc.org

Cornerstone District

663 Lakeview Ave.
Jamestown, NY 14701
(716) 665-2423
Fax: (716) 665-3763
Email: cornerstonedis-
trict@unyumc.org

Finger Lakes District

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

Genesee Valley District

1100 South Goodman St.
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 340-9525
Fax: (585) 340-9526
Email: geneseevalleyumc@
crcds.edu

Mohawk District

105 Genesee St.
New Hartford, NY 13413
(315) 797-1777
Fax: (315) 797-5702
Email: mohawkdistrict@
unyumc.org

Mountain View District

65 E. First St.
Corning, NY 14830
(607) 962-8047
Fax: (607) 962-8045
Email: mountainviewdis-
trict@unyumc.org

Niagara Frontier District

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

Northern Flow District

95 E. Main St.
Gouverneur, NY 13642
(315) 535-5149
Fax: (315) 535-5151
Email: northernflowdis-
trict@unyumc.org

Oneonta District

66 Chestnut St.
Oneonta, NY 13820
(607) 441-5102
Fax: (607) 441-5102
Email: Oneontadistrict@
unyumc.org

RESOURCE CENTERS

Amherst Office
131 John Muir Drive
West Amherst NY 14228
(716) 564-2316
sheilarader@unyumc.org

Endicott Office

53 McKinley Ave.
Endicott, NY 13760
(607) 757-0608
dianealexander@unyumc.
org.

Meet Darryl R. Barrow, Crossroads DS

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate writer

Hitting something may not seem like a great way to build fellowship, but Crossroads District Superintendent Darryl R. Barrow said that's exactly what he does when it's time for some renewal and relaxation.

Barrow plays congas. He performs African, Caribbean and jazz music, and has led and participated in many drum circles.

The drumming circle, Barrow says, is a place to practice listening to one another; participants have a chance to build strong community fellowship.

"You concentrate on what you are doing and on what the person next to you is doing," he said. "It creates a synergy."

As someone whose sched-

ule includes 78 charge conferences in 90 days and being a delegate to the 2012 General Conference, Barrow can likely use a little down time.

But he doesn't see charge conferences as a chore, he said; just the opposite, in fact.

"I don't see those as a burden so much as a celebration of churches where people have stories to tell about what they're doing for God and with God; (they are) a place for the celebration of ministries," said Barrow, who came to this position after serving as director of spiritual leadership and the resource center for North Central New York Conference.

As for General Conference, it, too, is a place to hear people's stories and forge connections, he said, even if members are divided over some issues.

"The greatest gift God gives to this Church is the rich diversity of people and theological perspectives. General Conference reminds us of the beauty and richness of that diversity," he said.

The father of two sons says that the tensions in the

Church can't be ignored, but are not unlike those that occur in families.

"It's like a family that has tension," he said. "No two kids are alike, but they have to live together, love each other and find ways to live together."

Coming from the Caribbean – Barrow came to the U.S. from Trinidad in 1996 – he said he's an outdoors person. He enjoys having four distinct seasons, but admits that May to October is when he "can enjoy the outdoors; long walks, picnicking, getting in some golfing."

As for dealing with the snow, he called it an "adjustment," but, he adds, in his six years in Syracuse he's noticed that the "locals don't adjust to the snow either."

The weather isn't the only big difference between here and his homeland, he said; the pace of island life is slower.

"Ministry (there) is demanding, but it does provide a place for things to go at a slower pace," he said. "We don't look at our watches as much ... we're laid back, not inefficient; we build relation-

ships and take time to be in community, and that slows down the day."

Barrow said he misses some of that, and intentionally builds some of that into his ministry.

The faster pace of life in the U.S. has its advantages, he said; for example, "It allows you to focus on the things that you have to make a priority. There's a clear focus on that, because you have 1,000 things to do; you have to decide in a timely fashion: 'What are those missional priorities?' and delegate more. Also, 'There is a greater desire for outcomes and for producing fruit.'"

But whatever our differences, Barrow says there is one important thing that brings United Methodists together.

"The love of Christ must prevail. We stand under a banner of the love of Christ that unites us," he said. "Even those difficult issues – human sexuality, issues that deal with racial justice and issues of the poor – must not divide us, because the love of Christ constrains us."



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RESIDENT BISHOP Marcus Matthews

EDITOR/PUBLISHER Maidstone Mulenga.

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HANDS4NY

A year-long effort to feed 1 million people in the Upper New York Area

Events are happening across the Area on Oct. 15-16

From farm gleanings and hot meals to food drives and turkey drops, the churches of the Upper New York Area are hosting a number of activities on Oct. 15 – HANDS4NY Impact Day. And many churches are participating in CROP Walks and other events on Oct. 16 as well.

The point is, there are a lot of ways to make an impact on hunger in your community; so check out the list at the right (or online at www.hands4ny.org) to find a way you can help lend a hand to help fight hunger in Upstate New York.

Impact events

Due to our publication deadline, this is not a complete list. For full details and the most up-to-date list, visit the website at HANDS4NY.org.

ALBANY AREA

Community Lunch
Schuylerville UMC
Schuylerville
Contact: Linda Campbell, 518-584-0446, home or 518-232-6952, church

CROP WALK
1888 Building
Ticonderoga
Ticonderoga UMC
Contact: 518-585-7995

Rethink Hunger: Overcoming Obstacles of Hunger
Burnt Hills UMC
Burnt Hills
Participating: Alplaus UMC; Faith UMC; McKownville UMC; Newtonville UMC; Scotia UMC
Contact: Rev. Dolly Waxman, dwxman@nycap.rr.com or 518-399-1240

BINGHAMTON AREA

Walkin' with Bill
Otsiningo Park,
Binghamton
Contact: David Black, bfuddle@yahoo.com or 607-797-3938, x117

ELMIRA-CORNING AREA

Chemung County CROP Walk
Trinity Episcopal Church
Elmira
Contact: Bonita Bates, 518-654-8036 or 518-654-2521

JAMESTOWN AREA

Week-long food collection
Panama UMC
Panama, N.Y.
Tabetha Butler
ashvillelib@stny.rr.com
(716) 763-4032

Canstruction!
Chautaugua Mall
318 East Fairmont Ave.
Lakewood
Contact: Charlie Hodges, chash51@yahoo.com (716) 969-6407

CROP WALK
Victory Tabernacle Church
314 Cherry St.
Jamestown
Wesley UMC, Cattaraugus UMC
Contact: Linda Schumacher, (716) 257-3757

ONEONTA AREA

Saturday's Bread – community hot meal
First United Methodist Church of Oneonta

Oneonta
Contact: Teresa Sivers, fumc@firstumc-oneonta.org

ROCHESTER AREA

Food collection at local grocery stores
Walmart, Tops, Canandaigua; Dollar General, Bliss, Manchester; Dollar General, Breens, Palmyra; sponsored by the Manchester and Palmyra UMCs.
Contact: Rev. Penni Farrington, packerfan1952@yahoo.com

Turkey Drops
North Ontario UMC, Ontario; Victor UMC, Victor; Webster UMC, Webster; and Spencerport UMC, Spencerport.
Contact: Dot Norsen, danorsen@aol.com or 585-924-7516

SYRACUSE AREA

Filling Food Bags/Information Fair
West Genesee UMC
Syracuse
Contact: Rebecca Laird, revlaird@hotmail.com

Work day/Gleaning at Matthew 25 Farm
Matthew 25 Farm
Tully
West Genesee UMC
Contact: Rebecca Laird, revlaird@hotmail.com

Filling Blizzard Bags
Mexico, NY
Mexico UMC
Contact: Bill Palmer, revbillpalmer@gmail.com

Food collection
Dugway UMC
Dugway
Contact: Ed Bennett, 518-584-0446

Mission Sunday: Neighborhood Food Drive/lunch
Clay Trinity UMC
Clay
Contact: Cathy Bryant, claytrinity@cnymail.com, 315-652-9186

CROP WALK
Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church
Dewitt
Contact: Carol Keller, 315-682-8021

WATERTOWN AREA

Clergy and Community Gathering
Brownville UMC
Brownville
Contact: Brian Homan, 315-298-5454

Hear the diverse voices of our HANDS4NY radio campaign

Within the next hour ... 23 families in Upstate New York will not have a meal ...

Did you know ... 1 in 3 children in Upstate New York get their meals from an emergency food program? For some ... their school lunch is the only substantial meal of the day ...

Right this second ... someone in your neighborhood is going without food. And not by choice ...

Those are some of the startling facts that radio listeners across New York will learn when they hear radio spots produced by the Upper New York Annual Conference as part of the HANDS4NY campaign. The campaign, conducted in partnership with Rethink

Church, is an effort to help change these numbers. Through the Impact Day events and ongoing programs, the churches of the Upper New York Area are making a difference. HANDS4NY is an effort to draw attention to that work and to help find volunteers and donations for the critically important feeding ministries in your community.



SKILES



WOLFE



JOHNSON

The folks listed here are some of the voices of the HANDS4NY radio campaign, and if you don't catch them during your commute or on your way to soccer practice, you can listen to all of the spots on the conference website at www.unyumc.org.

Listen for ...

Adirondack
Linda Campbell
Jim Knapp

Binghamton
David Black

Cornerstone
Charlie Hodge

Crossroads
Thomas Wolfe
Nelson Johnson
Elyse Skiles
Rebecca Laird

Finger Lakes
Ashley VanSickle
Aaron Bouwens
Mike Kelly

Genesee Valley
Dot Norsen
Susan Shafer

Mohawk
Brian Fellows
Sharon Rankins-Burd
Margot Rankins-Burd
Colleen Pruninger

Mountain View
Joan Evingham
Mike Weeden
Lynn Spence

Niagara Frontier
Nicole Mason

Northern Flow
Dorrie Young
Donna Kay

Boston University chaplain
Bob Hill (former pastor at Asbury First UMC in Rochester)



UMCOM archive photo

HANDS4NY

The United Methodist Church's work combating hunger in our communities, around the country and around the world is a long-standing effort. The year-long HANDS4NY project seeks to quantify those ongoing efforts by Area churches. During the year, we will be highlighting some of the work being done by churches and individual members in the hope that sharing these ideas may inspire others to start projects of their own. If you have a story you'd like to share, contact Advocate Editor Beth DiCocco at bethdicocco@unumc.org or at (315)424-7878 ext. 319.



Church spreads its 'peanut butter ministry'

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate writer

There's an old expression that says there's no such thing as a free lunch.

But don't tell that to the members of Camillus First UMC.

Every Monday this summer the church offered just that – a free bag lunch – to anyone who wanted one, no strings attached.

"We were looking for something to do in honor of our bicentennial," said Jean Whipple, the church member who led the effort. "We wanted to do something that is not just internal, something with outreach."

The program began on June 27 and continued through Aug. 29; each week they served between 28 and 62 lunches, including meals for a preschool program that meets at the church.

Whipple said that first Monday they were "praying for 25 people and a sunny day."

They got the sunny day – and 52 people.

"Somebody was praying very hard," Rev. Marcia Wickert, pastor at Camillus First, said with a smile.

The original target for the program was children who get free or reduced-cost lunch during the school year, but lose that support during the summer break. Wickert said they soon realized that there were many adults in need as well, and they saw a variety of people coming for lunch.

Whipple said many Camillus residents don't realize that there is real hunger in a suburban community like theirs.

"They think there's no



Photo by Beth DiCocco

Volunteers at Camillus First UMC help prepare free lunches for the community. The new program ran Mondays from June 27-Aug. 29. They hope to expand the program to two days each week next summer. ON THE COVER: A Camillus First volunteer makes a baloney sandwich.

Learn how they did it

Rev. Marcia Wickert, pastor at Camillus First UMC, said she will happily share the church's notes/template for its bag lunch program. Reach her at the church by calling (315) 672-3051

poverty, and that's not true," she said.

Whipple said keeping things simple contributed to the program's success. They offered two kinds of sandwiches – PB&J and baloney and cheese – along with fruit, chips, cookies, juice, snack crackers. They were prepared with options for those who need gluten-free meals or who have peanut allergies. The brown bags were pre-packed assembly-line style, and people stopped by a table out in front of the church to pick up one up.

They posted flyers in the library across the street, but mostly relied on word

of mouth and their presence in front of the church to get word out about the program. For example, one Monday,



WHIPPLE

of it as the participants, according to Whipple.

"Everyone has embraced it," Whipple said, "I haven't heard anything negative."

a couple of kids on bikes rode by and asked about the lunch; they returned with a group of friends.

The volunteers seem to be getting as much out

Those who volunteer have felt a sense of fellowship, she said, adding that "everybody's willing to do whatever."

As shown by the day a group of kids returning from a field trip asked about lunches at 12:50 – just 10 minutes before the end of service – the volunteers "hopped to," she said, and provided them with lunch.

Whipple says it doesn't matter to her whether the people who came for lunch are really in need or just seeking a freebie. We are here to love one another, she said, and if people aren't honest about their need, it's their responsibility.

"We're doing the right thing," she said.

But for those who truly are in need, the program can help put them in touch with appropriate services. Whipple spoke of one man who came in regularly to get a lunch not for himself, but for his son. They met with his social worker and helped connect him with a food pantry.

The free lunch is part of what Wickert called the church's "peanut butter ministry." The church also provides peanut butter sandwiches to a group for kids who need a place to go after school. And they plan to expand this program to two days a week next summer.

Wickert said she "tells everybody I run into" about the program. It says a lot about the church and gives people food for thought about what they can do. It shows that something as simple as PB&J can make a difference, she said.



ABOVE: Volunteers at Camillus First UMC pack brown-bag lunches for anyone in the community who asked for one. The lunches were distributed from a table in front of the church (left) on Mondays from June 27-Aug. 29. This was the first year for the program.

Your work counts

HOW TO COUNT

Food collections:

Pounds of food divided by 1.3 equals the number of meals, which equals the number fed

Example: 25 lbs of food/1.3 = 19 meals or 19 people fed

Feeding programs:

Number of people served = Number of people fed

Cash donations:

\$2.50 = 1 meal = 1 person fed

Pantry packaging:

Example: 3-day package: 3 meals/day x 3 days x # people in family = people fed

To learn more visit: www.hands4ny.org

To enter totals from your church's feeding program/s: <https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHBL5kFsbGFnc3R5LXVHUI3TndEYmc6MQ>

We have fed

506,333 people

Reported as of Sept. 27



Urban centers at the heart of upcoming summit

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate writer

"My passion and interest in urban ministry is because it's been my experience that's where I find Jesus," said Rev. Ann Kemper, pastor at Covenant UMC in Rochester, "that's where I experience a living presence."

Kemper one of the organizers of Urban Summit I (there are plans for two others) for those, like herself, who feel a call to serve in the Upper New York Area's urban centers.

Urban Summit I will be Nov. 11-12 at Covenant UMC.

Kemper also helped organize a luncheon during the Annual Conference session in April to talk about issues and begin the planning for Urban Summit I.

"I am looking forward to working with other like-minded people who are passionate about the urban center to develop some sort of urban strategy to move the conference into more productive ministry with churches in urban center," Kemper said.

It was at that luncheon that Rev. George Nicholas, who is now pastor at Lincoln Memorial UMC and Metropolitan UMC in Buffalo, said he agrees United Methodists can do more.

"I am not undervaluing the great work people in this room are doing," he said, "but by in large, the United Methodist Church is invisible in dealing with issues impacting urban American. ... We need to make it a priority step up our game."

The summit, Nicholas said, is an opportunity to make sure that issues relevant to those in urban ministry are on the agenda.

"We want to hear from you guys; what are the key areas?" he said.

Kemper agrees the strategy going forward, whatever it is, has to come from the local churches.

"My sense is our new Annual Conference has so many things on the plate to put in order ... it would welcome



This photo illustration was created using images provided by these photographers via flickr.com: J. Danvers, Andy Arthur, Dottie Mae, Ardyiii and Jeffrey Hsu.

About Urban Summit I

Critical components of Urban Summit I are to:

- get to know those from across the conference who have a passion for urban ministry
- identify what is working and models of ministry that are making a positive impact
- identify key areas of concern that inhibit fruitful ministry in urban centers across the Upper New York Area and their root causes.
- set the date, time, and place for more conversation at Urban Summit II

Agenda: A continuation of Urban Summit I conversations

- Begin development of a strategic plan to resource ministry in creative and fruitful ways.
- Set date, time, and place for Urban Summit III, to draft strategic plan for presentation to UNYAC.

a strategy." But, she said, it should be one that comes from the urban churches themselves along with "people who are passionate about them – that can be anyone who has a passion."

And while there are many outside the urban centers who want to help, Kemper is firm when she says it's not just about charity.

"... as a denomination and a conference we tend to over-emphasize charity; stopping at charity is counterproductive to solving very complicated, systemic issues of poverty," she said. "I think, until we're ready to place priority on relationships rather than on

addressing short-term needs, we just will not fulfill what I consider to be the Gospel's message."

Building a sustainable, mutual relationship has to be part of an urban ministry, she said.

"I was hired to find ways to connect the faith community with the neighborhood," she said. "We base our ministry on relationships, so we don't engage as charity, but as a reciprocal relationship."

That means not making assumptions, not making judgments and trying to value everyone equally, Kemper said. It also means "recognizing that sometimes we benefit

(from the relationship) more than our friends in the neighborhood."

People who live outside the city don't know what it's really like, Kemper said. What most people know about the urban center is what they know from the news – which is often negative and scary. They need to educate themselves, said Kemper, who describes herself as a "country girl from Nebraska."

The people she works with don't all fit the stereotypes; they include loving parents who want best for their kids and educated professionals who make the city their home.

If you go ...

WHAT: Urban Summit I, a gathering of those working in and interested in ministry in the urban center

WHEN: 6:30 - 9 p.m. Nov. 11 and 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Nov. 12

WHERE: Covenant UMC, 1124 Culver Road, Rochester
MORE INFO: (585) 654-8115 or e-mail Rev. Ann Kemper at anncovenant@frontiernet.net.

REGISTRATION: Information about registering for Urban Summit I and the registration form can be found on the conference website at <http://www.unyumc.org/news/detail/804>

"It's a beautiful mix of wonderful people; what we tend to think is it's drug dealers, people toting guns; that's not the case," she said. "I don't want to say it's not there, but it's not the majority."

Even so, urban ministry can be difficult. Kemper admits many urban churches are in "crisis mode." A survey of pastors in urban ministry conducted in April, found that pastors working in urban centers feel they lack training and resources (see story below).

"I think if the Upper New York Annual Conference makes urban ministry a priority – on all kinds of levels – I really think there are opportunities for ministry that would just be rich and rewarding and sustainable and be the results of things I know Jesus would want us to do," Kemper said.

Kemper hopes Urban Summit I will be the start by helping bring issues of urban ministry some attention.

"This is very complicated stuff; there are no simple solutions," she said. "It has to start with us making it a priority as a conference and as people of faith."

Findings from the Upper New York Urban Pastor and Ministry survey

In April, 40 surveys were distributed to pastors who serve in urban areas of the conference – Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Niagara Falls, Binghamton, Utica and others.

Nine surveys (about 20 percent) were returned.

The response was less than expected, according to the Metro Branch of the Genesee Valley District, which is seeking to develop a strategic plan to support urban ministry, but it was enough to identify some trends.

Respondents were asked to rank the priority of the following on a scale from 1 to 6, with 6 being highest.

Average rankings:

- 4.13 Appropriate staffing in a 21st-century urban church
- 4 The building/physical plant (utilities, maintenance, modernization)
- 3.88 Support a full-time pastor
- 3.5 Median income of parishioners and neighborhood
- 3.5 The perception of urban ministry and its

unique challenges

2.13 Clear conference and district strategy for urban ministry

Other concerns:

- Crime, gangs, drugs, violence
- We need to know the people and communities better
- We need clearer mission and vision
- Spiritual needs of people
- The poverty cycle for children and families
- Communities are discouraged, lack of hope

Prior to your appointment, what specific training in leading an urban congregation was afforded to you?

- Training for large-membership churches through Nashville
- Some urban ministry classes in college
- M. Div from Howard University with an urban focus
- Course of study related to urban ministry
- None (4 respondents, 44 percent)

What conference-wide strategies should be implemented to support and grow local churches and ministries in urban areas?

- Listen to local church, abandon top down strategies
- Provide resources to urban local churches
- Plant new non-traditional urban congregations
- Eliminate old buildings and old systems
- Provide financial support for risk taking urban congregations
- Identify and support training opportunities for urban pastors and laity
- More financial resources
- Offer more tangible help
- Training for urban ministry
- Incentives should be provided for urban churches and ministries
- Networking of urban pastors
- Ongoing training for urban churches and ministries.
- Closure of ineffective churches and consolidation of congregations
- Dedicated funding stream for urban ministry

Bishop tours affected areas

Continued from cover

church is now doubling its food pantry to help the overwhelmed community.

"Normally, we help out about 60 families a month," Rev. Nancy Adams, pastor at the church, said as she and church member Helen Homa showed the food pantry to Bishop Matthews. "We expect that number to rise significantly."

The damage at Owego UMC tells the poignant story of loss that is playing out at many Area churches.

The once vibrant youth room has lost all its new furniture. The chapel's pews, piano and fixtures are all destroyed. Diplomas and degrees are the only things hanging in what was the pastor's study. The ruined books and reference materials have been tossed outside. The library looks more like a muddy cavern, devoid of books that sat at the curb with the trash. A 10-foot high ring in the fellowship hall marks the water's high point.

"A few more feet and the sanctuary would have been flooded too," Sandy Berwald, administrative assistant, told Bishop Matthews as he surveyed the damage. Even so, the sanctuary is unusable because the extensive water damage below makes it unsafe to worship in the building.

Still, Rev. Alan Jagger, the pastor at Owego UMC, is determined that the congregation will once again use the building — no matter how long it takes to rebuild. Apart from the losses in his study at the church, Jagger and his family also suffered major losses when the parsonage was flooded.

As church members and volunteers worked to clean up the debris, they were joined by members from other churches including Cindy Schulte, a member of the Newfield UMC, who took days off from work to help with the cleanup at Owego.

Schulte, a certified lay minister and member of the Board of Ordained Ministry, was helping clean up the offices.

"It is a testimony to our connectionalism — we help each other," Schulte said, as she lugged heavy bags full of wet books and other materials to the curb.

From the mountains of debris that

have been thrown out are emerging warm stories of recovery.

For example, Donna Taylor Martin, a local pastor serving Tioga Center/Smithboro. Her husband, Dan Martin, is also a local pastor; five of the six buildings they use (churches, parsonages and their own home) were impacted by the floods.

In one report, she said:

"I wish there were words that could really help you understand what my people are going through — what I am going through, but the problem is that even the pictures being taken can't express the pain you feel when you see it in person.

"Today, I had invited both congregations to come and get a first look at the work that has been done, to begin to envision the work still left to do. This was not easy for any of those who came — as you know — church is a building, but as I have said before it is our building. In spite of how difficult this was, it helped everyone begin to understand the enormity of what we have been through. I believe we will be a stronger, humbler people when this is said and done."

Youth groups — such as the group from the Fairview UMC — have also pitched in to help. They went across town to the south side of Binghamton (near a middle school that was flooded out) where they set up a grill and started cooking hot dogs, giving them away to anyone who was nearby.

They went door to door seeking people who were working hard to clean up and mud out, and everyone invited came and had a hot dog.

"The youth ended up having meaningful conversation with many families in need," said Binghamton District Superintendent David Masland.

Just as he did at each stop he made, Bishop Matthews offered a prayer with the pastor and the workers doing the recovery work at Owego UMC.

As he got into the car to drive to another devastated church, the smell of flood waters, the din of water pumps and the sight of mountains of debris at curbside loomed higher, as if seeking for an answer from above.

Little church with a big desire to help others

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate Writer

Let's look at Reynoldsville United Methodist Church by the numbers:

10 youth members.

40 total members.

About \$8,000 in all the church's accounts.

\$1,310.

That last figure is the amount the church has spent on mission work in the last month.

Rev. Mike Kelly, pastor at Reynoldsville, said the church is "reaching out because our friends and our neighbors need it." And, he said, he doesn't accept the idea that being a small church means you can't make a big difference.

The \$1,310 went to a number of causes, including to help those who suffered in the recent flooding. About a week before the flood hit, the church saw a need advance notice online regarding the drought in Somalia, and sent \$300 to that effort. Kelly said the church has adopted missionaries Mike and Glenda Miller, and sent \$300 to them in the same week.

Then when the flood hit, the church sent \$500 to the conference to aid those affected. The youth, Kelly said, decided they wanted to help too, and sent an additional \$110 — about two flood buckets worth, Kelly estimates. Then the church's United Methodist Women donated \$100 to a family in Candor, about 35 miles from Reynoldsville.

So why does this little church have such a large spirit of mission?

"We preach regularly that we try to live the vision of Christ and try to do our part as disciples by being that good neighbor," Kelly said.

When this is all happening in

our backyard," Kelly said, referring to the flooding that occurred about 40-50 miles away. "We look at helping that neighbor."

The congregation, Kelly said, believes in the idea of the church being at the center of the community. Even in a small church, even during some tough economic times, nothing should hold the faithful back from reaching out to that community, Kelly said.

"God will provide," he said. "We just have to be the carriers for that."

It was just a couple of years ago, Kelly said, that there was talk of closing Reynoldsville UMC, but the attitude has changed.

"Everything is really, really positive," Kelly said. "We're proud. It's a proud time. (The church) has been strong in the past. It's been wonderful to rebuild that to where we're at."

Rekindling that vitality in large part means thinking about things differently, and not accepting "we can't do this" when it comes to performing mission work.

"It's a wonderful blessing," Kelly said. "You have to change the attitude from 'woe is me' to 'we can do this.'"

And, Kelly said, "we" is the operative word when it comes to being able to support mission work in the way Reynoldsville has done.

"It doesn't happen with just the pastor. It happens with people from the church committing themselves."

Kelly said that he's "really proud" of Reynoldsville UMC.

"At a time when we're called to react, this church is really good at reacting," he said. "I'm sure we're not done."



Pictured are Schoharie County landmarks the George Mann Tory Tavern (left) and the Old Stone Fort as painted by Clayville watercolor artist Polly Blunk.

Schoharie scenes for sale to benefit flood relief

Clayville artist Polly Blunk has offered to sell two original watercolors depicting landmarks in Schoharie County to benefit flood relief efforts in that area. Blunk and her husband are members of Sauquoit Valley UMC.

The paintings of The Old Stone Fort and The George Mann Tory Tavern are priced at \$600 and \$800 respectively. They are matted and framed. Blunk will pay the sales tax.

Blunk writes: "My husband and I were in Schoharie just prior to the flooding, and we've had first-hand accounting of the flood damage from friends. Flooding was experienced in our area, too, but nothing like the Schoharie area! Our church has been keeping the people in the Schoharie area in our prayers. My husband and I would love to grab a shovel and head to your area to help people clean up, but physical disabilities keep us from doing so. We know from personal experience what it is to lose a home and possessions. We'll never forget the help and compassion shown to us at that time."

Interested buyers can contact Blunk at (315) 839-5548 or by e-mail at Landmark-Studio-3@Juno.com.

Get certified to help children who are coping with disasters

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) is a Church of the Brethren Disaster Ministry (www.childrensdisasterservices.org) in which volunteers provide a calm and reassuring presence in the aftermath of disaster. Volunteers set up and operate special child care centers in disaster locations; these allow parents to apply for assistance and begin to put their lives back together, knowing their children are safe.

There will be a Children's Disaster Services volunteer training workshop 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 21, to 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 22, at the First United Methodist Church, 106 East Main St., Victor. Volunteers must be 18 or older.

The 27-hour workshop will train participants to recognize and understand the emotions children experience during and following a disaster and how child-led play and various art can help start the healing process. Participants will experience a simulated shelter. Participants can seek to become a certified Children's Disaster Services volunteer by providing two per-

sonal references and a criminal and sexual offender background check.

The training is \$55 or \$25 for retraining; meals and overnight accommodations are provided. Participants are asked to bring clothing suitable for sitting on the floor, camping gear (sleeping bag or blankets, pillow, air mattress, flashlight), and personal items (towel, washcloth, toiletries.)

Local CDS representative Dot Norsen, who has responded to hurricanes, floods, snowstorms and plane crashes as a CDS caregiver, said only people who have been trained by CDS are allowed to open and work in child centers at Red Cross Shelters, and urges others to get trained and certified.

For more information, contact Norsen at (585)924-7516 or the CDS office at (800)451-4407, option 5, or at [cgs@brethren.org](mailto:cds@brethren.org).

Since CDS was founded in 1980, over 2,900 volunteers have worked with more than 84,500 children while serving at 212 disaster sites.

Upper New York Area hard hit by flooding

Photos by Maidstone Mulenga

Owego UMC was heavily damaged by the flooding that followed Hurricane Irene. Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews toured the area as cleanup efforts were under way last month. LEFT: The dark line on the wall in this photo shows just how high the flood waters were at their peak.



Tropical storms bring devasta



Photos by Maidstone Mulenga
ABOVE: Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews offers a hug to Rev. Alan Jagger, pastor at Owego UMC, during his tour of some of the areas hardest hit by flooding. **CENTER:** The dark marks on the wall were left by receding flood waters.

tion to Upper New York Area



BELOW: The waters caused extensive damage to the woodwork around Rev. Alan Jagger's office at Owego UMC. **BELOW CENTER:** Helen Homa, a member of Newark Valley First United Methodist Church, shows Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews some of the food donated to flood victims.



New District Superintendents welcomed

To see the full gallery of photos from each of these services, visit the Upper New York Annual Conference's Facebook page (search for Upper New York Annual Conference).

All photos were taken by conference Director of Communications Maidstone Mulenga.



Rev. William Mudge was welcomed as the new Adirondack District Superintendent on Sept. 24 at Ticonderoga UMC.



Rev. Dr. Sherri Rood was welcomed as the new Cornerstone District Superintendent on Sept. 17 at Christ United Methodist Church in Olean.



Rev. Dr. Brolin Parker was welcomed as the new Albany District Superintendent on Sept. 25 at Jonesville UMC in Clifton Park. At right, his son, Nathan Heafield, who suffered burns in a fire earlier this year, helps with robing his father.



Rev. Wayne Butler was welcomed as the new Niagara Frontier District Superintendent on Sept. 11 at Clarence UMC.



Rev. Rebekah Sweet was welcomed as the new Northern Flow District Superintendent on Sept. 10 at Gouverneur UMC.



Services filled with heart ... and humor

By Maidstone Mulenga
Advocate Editor

Brolin Parker sends you laughing with his holy hilarity. Bill Mudge leaves you all warm with fuzzy with his hallowed affection. Sherri Rood charms you with her consecrated commitment. Wayne Butler keeps you motivated with his sanctified jollity. Rebekah Sweet draws you in with her sacred fervor.

Say hello to your newest district superintendents in the Upper New York Annual Conference.

The five took office July 1, but their formal welcome ceremonies were held in September. And it was at these ceremonies that the newest members of Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews' Cabinet showed their unique personalities.

At his ceremony at Jonesville UMC in Clifton Park on Sept. 25, the Rev. Dr. Brolin Parker told the gathering that humor would be part and parcel of his role as the Albany District Superintendent.

He had the audience cracking up as he told of an 1826 annual conference gathering that ratified that a person can serve as a district superintendent for two terms, adding "it says right

here that Bishop Matthews was in attendance."

Even during those moments of holy hilarity, Parker's love for his family, especially son Nathan Heafield, shone through. Nathan, who read on of the texts, thanked the conference and all who had kept him and his father in prayers. Nathan is recovering from burns sustained in a fire while Parker has battled cancer during the last several months.

Another poignant moment was the song 'Power of Love (Casts out Fear),' written especially for the celebration noted hymn writer, Rev. Dr. Brian Wren. The tune was written by Rev. Dr. Susan Heafield, Brian's life partner and Nathan's mother; she is pastor at Sydney UMC.

In his message, Parker challenged the notion of fear, telling the gathering that nothing should be able to separate members of the new conference from Jesus Christ, regardless of our skin color, how deep our pockets are or any other differences.

A day earlier, Rev. William Mudge was welcomed as the new Adirondack District Superintendent in a ceremony flowing with emotion at the First UMC in Ticonderoga. As Bishop Matthews introduced Mudge's family

— particularly his wife and his mother — few eyes were dry.

Mudge affectionately referred his family and thanked the clergy and laity in the district for welcoming him with love.

In his message, Mudge called on the Church to put "First things first," emphasizing showing the love of Christ to all people over worrying about things that we may disagree on.

A week earlier, at Christ UMC in Olean, the Rev. Dr. Sherri Rood was hailed as the new leader of the Cornerstone District in a ceremony that was packed with family, clergy and laity.

Lay member Juanita Jackson sang "If I Can Help Somebody," supporting Rood's call for commitment to serving each other in the Church and community.

In her message, "Yoked in Christ: We're All in This Together," Rood reminded the audience that Christians are called to serve together in all aspects of the ministry.

In a ceremony that also remembered the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the Rev. Wayne Butler was welcomed as the new Niagara Frontier District Superintendent at Clarence UMC.

The ceremony was graced by the ministry of Music from Rev. Angela Stewart and a celebration of dance by Primera Iglesia Metodista Unida.

In his message, Butler dared himself and the audience to be like David and dance for the Lord by getting rid of any inhibitions they have about ministry. Poking fun at himself, Butler said dancing would free us up for ministry as it clears our fears.

A day earlier, Rev. Rebekah Sweet was celebrated as the new Northern Flow District Superintendent in a ceremony that was attended by her father, a former district superintendent.

In her message about the community, Sweet encouraged clergy and laity in the district to heed the call of Christ that binds Christians together in love.

At each service, the new district superintendents affirmed their commitment to their special ministry of supervision and leadership.

At the close of each service, Bishop Matthews handed each new district superintendent, the crozier, the official symbol of the episcopal office, reminding them of their obligation as the leaders of the districts in the Upper New York Annual Conference.

Rev. Lake is ordained — at last



Rev. Lawrence Gary Lake, who missed the ordination service at Annual Conference Session in June due to illness, was ordained by Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews on Sept. 25 at Lake's church — Saranac UMC. Lake brought out his friend Buddy, the bear puppet, during the children's moment, where he was flanked by his two of his five children.



More photos on the Upper New York Annual Conference's Facebook page (search for Upper New York Annual Conference).



Knowledge flows across continents

UMC pastor from Uganda to make month-long visit here

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate Writer

The Upper New York Area and Uganda are an ocean apart, but it's water that's helped bring United Methodists in both places together.

For the last two years, the Honeoye Falls UMC has been working with Community Church of Faith UMC in Jinja, Uganda. The relationship began when the church's international mission project raised money to purchase a water tank for Community Church of Faith, which also hosts an orphanage. The tank provided access to clean water without the need to travel long distances.

Pastor Samuel Magumba, who leads Community Church of Faith, will be visiting the Upper New York Area. He is expected to arrive on Oct. 23, and will be staying in Upstate New York for about a month.



MAGUMBA

Rev. Matthew French, Honeoye Falls pastor, is inviting clergy and lay members from Area churches to meet Magumba and learn more about Ugandan culture and the ministry happening there.

French said the flow of knowledge will go both ways, as Magumba has expressed interest in learning from pastors and congregations while he's here.

From a letter inviting churches to participate in the visit, French writes: "Pastors do not typically receive formal training in Uganda because of the cost and lack of opportunity. He would like to learn from example some tips to take back with him to his home community."

French's letter quotes Magumba as saying: "I am hoping this trip to be an exposure moment in my personal life and ministry. It's also going to be a learning trip of how things are done over that side compared to what I know here in Uganda."



Submitted photos

At right is Pastor Samuel Magumba, pastor at Community Church of Faith UMC in Jinja, Uganda. Magumba will be making a month-long visit to the Upper New York Area beginning Oct. 23, and hopes to talk to clergy and laity about their work as well as about his own work in Uganda. Here he is pictured with the cement base of a water tank that was funded by the Honeoye Falls UMC through the nonprofit Ugandan Water Project. Below is the completed water tank.

French said he expects that Magumba will be surprised to find how much Area churches have in common with his.

"(Our churches also) find way more to do than we have resources for," French said, and the question "How do you do without all the financial resources you had?" is one that's faced by churches everywhere.

Community UMC has a congregation of about 60 people and an orphanage that houses 21 children, but with sufficient resources, it could host as many as 40 kids, French said.

Magumba will also be exploring new partnerships through ministries in churches here.

Magumba's church has a number of outreach ministries, French said; evangelism, leadership training and empowerment programs for youth and children are among the areas the of focus for the church.

French offers suggestions in his letter about how churches can be part of Magumba's visit; among them are: hosting him for Sunday or weeknight worship, a mission event, a small-group Bible study, luncheon or coffee. Members of the congregation could host a small dinner party for Magumba.

For a story in the May issue of the Advocate, we talked to French about how the church got involved in the Ugandan Water Project, and how the relationship between his church and Magumba's came into being.

The Ugandan Water Project is the brainchild of James

Meet Pastor Samuel Magumba

For more information or to participate in Pastor Samuel Magumba's visit, contact Rev. Matthew French, pastor at Honeoye Falls UMC:
E-mail mfrench.hfumc@gmail.com
or call (585) 314-2868.

Harrington of Lima, N.Y., George Nsamba of Kawanda, Uganda, and Derek Joseph of Avon, N.Y.

French went to college with Harrington, but said that wasn't enough to make him sign on to help the project.

"I talked with James, and even though we are friends, I really grilled him pretty well on what they were doing," French said.

Going beyond just providing water was important, French said, adding that the church wanted to be part of an effort that was sustainable and would not end up costing the Ugandans more in upkeep than if the church hadn't helped.

"As a church," French said, "we try to focus mission efforts (in terms of international projects) to find a project we can support, but with the possibility to extend relationship if there was good energy there, and to support United Methodists as well."

The church wanted to partner with a United Methodist Church, French said, and a pastor in Uganda suggested Community Church of Faith.

"In Uganda, a personal relationship is so important," French said.

Honeoye Falls UMC raised money to put windows and doors in the cinder block

worship space, and has been getting regular updates, about every three or four weeks, from Magumba about the progress of the church and the children it serves ever since.

Honeoye Falls UMC member Jessica Albright, an elementary school teacher, traveled with a mission team after the water tank was installed, French said, and has talked to the congregation about her experience there.

Now Magumba is coming here, and French hopes churches will take advantage of the opportunity to meet him and expand and deepen the relationship between Methodists in both nations.

French said when it comes to reaching out around the world, the members of Honeoye Falls UMC wanted go beyond just writing checks, and about two and a half years ago, starting brainstorming ideas about how they could "go deeper." Their work with Community Church of Faith UMC, which French called a blessing, has provided that.

"We found a place where we can do all of it," French said, "and now we're hosting a pastor from another part of the world. It's been great seeing how the spirit is working and moving and responding to our faithfulness."

Printed materials

Appointment list for 2011 can be requested

Due to the large number of churches in the Upper New York Area, the conference will not be producing a printed listing of the 2011-2012 clergy appointments.

Those appointments, as well as the appointments for the previous year, appear on the conference website at www.unumc.org, under News and Publications.

However, those individuals who do not have access to the Internet can request a printed copy of the appointment list by calling Karen Campolieto in the Communications Department at (315) 424-7878 ext. 304. There will be a nominal charge to cover the copying and mailing costs.

2010 Journal now available

The Upper New York Annual Conference 2010 Journal is available by request. The Journal, which is in two volumes, is approximately 1,200 pages.

The journals are free online; \$18 per volume or \$35 for the set.

They are available by contacting Karen Campolieto in the Communications Department at (315) 424-7878 ext. 304 or by e-mail at karen-campolieto@unumc.org.

Get information on Holy Land tour

Learn more about Lands of the Bible Cruise 2012 during an informational meeting at 7 p.m. Oct. 25 at Little Utica UMC at 1459 Lamson Road in Phoenix, N.Y.

Travel to the Holy Land and walk the same land that Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and our Lord & Savior walked; follow the path and journey of Saint Paul.

The 13-day tour, which will include Italy, Greece, Turkey, Israel and Egypt, departs Nov. 9, 2012.

Leading the trip will be Rev. Caroline Simmons, Rev. Dennis Lawton and Donald R. Day, Educational Opportunities Holy Land Tours host and lay leader at Little Utica UMC.

Registration is open through September 2012.

Another information night is being planned for sometime in January; details to be announced later.

For more information, contact Day at (315) 598-6327.



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



'God is Here' Fall Gatherings Approach

The CCYM is hard at work planning some awesome worship and workshop times for your youth group to attend! Fall Gatherings are Nov. 11-12 at First UMC Schenectady and Nov. 18-19 at the Riverside Radisson in Rochester.

Worship times at the Fall Gatherings will feature great youth speakers on our theme God is Here, Love matters Here, Hope lives Here, Joy

abounds Here, Peace begins Here.

This year, we will also feature testimonies from both youth and some adults!

Expect the Barefoot Band to make their annual appearance on stage leading us in song. And expect the unexpected as you are greeted at Schenectady by emcees Ezra Kim and Chelsea Aiosa, or at Rochester by Jefferson Dedrick and Laura Tingley,

and as you attend the "Here Is..." workshops offered throughout the weekend.

New this year from YSF (the Youth Service Fund): the Hands4NY challenge! Bring non-perishable food items to donate to a local food pantry, and during the YSF "Here Is..." workshop time, you'll be scrambling to build a crazy structure using the cans that have been brought.

Also new from YSF, an after-hours

café and sundae bar, including coffee, tea and hot cocoa, with the entertainment coming straight from YOU! So dust off that ukulele, brush up on that favorite song, rehearse that joke you love to tell, and bring your friends!

God is HERE! Spread the word! Visit www.unyumc.org/pages/detail/1033 to read more about the Upper NY CCYM, or to download additional copies of the registration form.



Albany area: First UMC Schenectady • Nov. 11-12, 2011

The registration cost of \$35 includes floor space at the church and all programming. All meals are on your own.

The registration deadline: Postmarked on or before Nov. 1, 2011

Send registrations (must include payment) to: Judy Hipes, 91 Park St., Binghamton, NY 13905

Make checks payable to the Upper New York Annual Conference

Church _____ District _____ Attending Advisor(s): (Please note M/F) _____

Street: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Please room attending Advisor(s) as well.

Total # Adults _____ Youth _____ Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

(Male/Female) (Adult/Youth)	(Male/Female) (Adult/Youth)
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____

Attach an additional sheet if necessary for additional adult/youth registrants.



Radisson Riverside in Rochester • Nov. 18-19, 2011

The registration cost includes your room and all programming. All meals are on your own.

Single Room \$140

Double or Triple Room \$110/person

Quad or Quint Room \$80/person

The registration deadline: Postmarked on or before Nov. 8, 2011

Send registrations (must include payment) to: Judy Hipes, 91 Park St., Binghamton, NY 13905

Make checks payable to the Upper New York Annual Conference

Church _____ District _____ Attending Advisor(s): (Please note M/F) _____

Street: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Please room attending Advisor(s) as well.

Total # Adults _____ Youth _____ Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Room 1 (Male/Female) (Adult/Youth)	Room 2 (Male/Female) (Adult/Youth)
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____
M / F A / Y Grade _____	M / F A / Y Grade _____

Attach an additional sheet if necessary for additional rooms.

Opinions

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Scripture is clear about issue of homosexuality

After reading several articles in the Advocate, I felt a need to express an opinion on the subject of homosexuality and gay marriage.

Let's start by referring to scripture. Leviticus 18:22 identifies homosexual sex as an "abomination" or a terrible sin. Romans 1:26-27 says that homosexual desires and actions are shameful, indecent, unnatural and lustful. First

Corinthians 6:9-10 says the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor the thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, etc.

Then what about Sodom and Gomorrah? Two angels appear, and tell Lot and his family to escape before the rain of hot sulfur destroys the cities completely. Was the behavior in those cities in God's favor? I think not.

My interpretation is that this behavior is clearly wrong and unnatural.

The Church exists to save people from sin and to strengthen their faith in God's Word, not to bend the Word of the Lord because of the few who claim to be discriminated against. Jesus came here to save sinners, yes, but those people were repentant of their sins and trying to turn their life into a new Christ-like direction.

Also, the phrase that "God is unchanging" comes to mind. Scripture tells us that God is everlasting, infinite, the same today as well as tomorrow, and

incorruptible. Well, if in the Old Testament, God sees homosexual behavior as an abomination, then in the year 2011, God sees this act as still sinful.

Is the homosexual gratification of the flesh worth all the penalty of not entering the kingdom of heaven?

I hope the Methodist Discipline remains unchanged as to accepting these persons as children of God, but not accepting their behavior, actions or lifestyle.

**Karl
Peterboro UMC**

GUEST REFLECTION

Rev. Kenneth Dodd remembered

This tribute to the late Rev. Kenneth A. Dodd, pastor at Indian Falls United Methodist Church from 1996-2011, was written by Laurie Castiglione in June 2011.



Photos courtesy of Laurie Castiglione



The Chair Beneath the Cross

The chair beneath the cross holds three things Pastor dearly loved; His service to us completed, he has been called to our Father above.

These holy symbols of his faith, we have seen and know so well;

The Robe, the Chalice, the Frame each has a story to tell. The Robe filled with Pastor's spirit, from this church it was a gift;

Its arms cradled baptized babies, to the Lord each one he would lift.

It has witnessed sacred wedding vows and blessed youth confirmation;

Bible studies and Sunday sermons, sharing The Word with his congregation.

The Robe collected the copious tears, as loved ones gathered near;

To share a story and tender memory, of our Pastor, oh so dear. Family and friends celebrated his life, choir music filled the air; For comfort and healing, we sent to the heavens, heartfelt fervent prayer.

The Chalice held the Savior's blood and salvation promise to all;

Pastor offered this Good News to us, from the symbol of his answered call.

We know he truly loved the Lord, he wanted for us the same;

To be filled with the Holy Spirit, and tell others of Jesus' name.

The Frame holds the image of Jesus, his head tossed back in laughter;

We forever remember this same look, on the face of our dear friend and Pastor.

So always envision our Pastor, resting in the arms of Jesus' loving embrace;

Two wonderful, heavenly, beaming smiles, at last meeting face to face.

The chair beneath the cross holds three things Pastor dearly loved;

His service to us completed, he has been called to our Father above.

It is time to continue God's mission, spreading the Gospel of the Son;

Until we too hear Our Father's voice, "My precious child, well done!"

LETTER GUIDELINES

The Advocate is accepting letters to the editor. You can discuss specific content in the Advocate or any issues within the Conference or Church.

Letters should be kept to 250 words (longer letters may be published when space allows).

We reserve the right to reject or edit letters. The deadline is the

fifth of the month for the following month's newsletter.

Letters submitted must include your name, address and a daytime phone number.

Letters can be published using only a first name if the writer requests, but the full details listed above must be included with the letter for verification purposes.

E-mail: news@unyumc.org. (Please put "letter to the editor" in the subject line) or mail to:

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

'Green Team' member attends justice training

By Dorothy Scott Fielder

Dorothy Scott Fielder, or Scott, as she prefers to be called, joined more than 250 United Methodist Women members from around the country for four days of training and action for justice in Birmingham, Ala.

National Seminar is a social justice leadership development event held every four years where United Methodist Women members renew their commitment to know God and to join in the local and global mission of justice and advocacy.

Throughout the event, participants engaged in Bible study, workshops, worship, field trips and actions to develop a critical analysis of the national and global issues that affect women, children and youth. Under the theme and practice of reconciliation, participants envisioned a new kingdom on earth related to immigration, climate change, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

The UMW national Green Team, of which Fielder is a member, was invited to attend as part of their annual training. The Green Team was established in 2005 with 26 members (the group is smaller now). Fielder is one of the original members and one of two in the Northeast Jurisdiction.

Green Team members may work on local issues and various topics, but its top priority is climate change, one of the issues studied at National Seminar.

"As a member of the Green Team, I attended primarily for annual training with other Green Team members on the climate change issue, but I gained so much more during the seminar. Touring the Civil Rights Institute and informal discussions afterwards were quite meaningful to me," said Fielder, who lives in Oneonta.

On Aug. 16, National Seminar participants led a series of actions around the Birmingham area which included: A prayer vigil for immigrant rights held at First United Methodist Church in Birmingham; Collage making on the topic of violence against women; and an Intergenerational Rally for a Sustainable Accessible Future.

"I participated in the latter, and I marched to Linn Park while helping to carry the climate change banner that UMW representatives carried in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the climate change conference in 2009. That was pretty exciting," Fielder said.

United Methodist Women, with a coalition of other organizations, rallied with the theme "Invest in Alabama's Future – Sustain Our State" by assuring healthy clean water and air and real public transit.

Green Team members and others interested in the climate change topic heard speakers on Birmingham's and the world's environmental problems.

"The duties of Green Team members include learning about environmental concerns and the relevant UMC policies and positions; education of others; communication, to share what we have learned and what we are doing; advocacy, responding to Action Alerts and advocating for the environment at various levels; and organizing, such as establishing Conference and District Green Teams," Fielder said.



‘The arts have a real power to incarnate God; that’s why they’re so powerful for us.’

– Rev. Meredith Vanderminden

Art Divina: A creative ministry

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate Writer

Stained-glass windows, murals, hymnals filled with music, the buildings themselves. Art can be found all over our churches, and the arts, says Rev. Meredith Vanderminden, can help promote our spiritual growth.

“The arts hit us in a very deep place,” she said. “(Art) gets us out of our brains; our brains are important, we need them, but there are whole other parts of ourselves that we don’t focus on so much; the arts help us get to that place.”

Vanderminden is the founder and executive director of Art Divina (www.artdivina.com), an extension ministry that began about a year ago, and is described on the site as “an on-line community that offers spiritual guidance for all seeking to nurture a more centered, sacred life with the Divine. Prayer and creative expression are the twin foundations of all that we do at Art Divina.”

“I wanted to create a place where Christians could come explore arts, explore their relationship with God,” she said.

The site offers classes – such as a poetry class “Love Poems to God,” which was offered in person in May, and is now available as a web class – mini retreats that can be done at home, as well as in-person retreats and workshops along with reflections such as the “deepening” pages.

Deepen Your Relationship with God is one; each of the pages offers a prayer, a passage from Scripture, a reflection, questions to think about and a “creative invitation” to make a quick art project or write a poem. The website offers a variety of different materials, many of which are free, to support spiritual growth and connection with God.

For a retreat that includes a hands-on activity such as making a collage, Vanderminden brings her “slew of National Geographics” and says: “Here’s your scripture; What words are coming out? What images support those words?”

Vanderminden says she makes sure the events

are “not crammed full so that you don’t have time to rest.”

“When you’re talking about prayer, you need some time to be with God, to be still,” she said.

She leads retreats all over the country; she’s been to Massachusetts, Florida, Ohio, and California. Vanderminden sees advantages to both the in-person activities and those that are strictly online.

“The benefit of being together – community building with each other – (is) learning from each other’s body language, how we carry (ourselves); (making) personal connections,” she said. “We can see how God is working in each other when we can be present with each other.”

Online classes don’t have that, she admits, but do have other advantages – primarily convenience: “In a busy culture, (participants) don’t have time to leave their house, job, ministry, to find a few moments during the day to focus on God.”

While working online requires being self-motivated, the Internet does allow the people she’s worked with in person to stay in touch afterward and continue that journey together.

Mixing art and faith

The Web is a relatively new development, but Vanderminden points to Protestant churches’ strong affinity for music as one example of how the arts and faith have a long tradition together.

“... Ask anyone, from 89 to down to whatever age, what their favorite hymn is, and they’ll be able to tell you,” she said.

The two have been together as a part of her own life, too.

“All my life I’ve been a creative person,” she said. “It was just a part of who I was. I knew early in seminary I had two areas of interest: arts and spiritual formation.”

Vanderminden earned her Master’s of Divinity from Drew Theological School in 1999. She is also a fused-glass artist.

“I love taking something inanimate and changing it into a different form ... with heat and gravity, you can form glass into all kinds of things,” she said of working with glass; her father was a stained-glass artist.

“I have a studio in the bottom of my house; when I’m not working, I’m down there,” she said. “It’s really a prayer for me. Time kind of stops. ... All art belongs to the spirit first, and we’re just the midwives who bring it into existence.”

I’m no artist

Not everyone has Vanderminden’s talent and skill, but she emphasizes that it’s not necessary to be an artist or a poet to get something out of an Art Divina experience.

During the workshops, she said, time is spent talking about what “our inner critics” do to us. And the creative exercises used are “expressive arts,” which don’t require any specific skills.

You really don’t have to have artistic talent to try this out. Referring to collage, she said, “Anyone can look at a magazine and say, ‘I like that picture.’ ... Even if you don’t think you’re a poet, you can move through this and write something surprising and wonderful at the end.”

“It’s been great to see people grow in this particular kind of way,” she said.

While creative people tend to gravitate to this kind of work, Vanderminden said: “My mission is to help people who think they’re not creative recapture that.”

She continues to work on the Art Divina website, but would like, someday, to have an actual retreat center.

“I still hope to have funds available to have a physical place,” she said. “We have all kinds of art materials ... (it would) be a restful place, come and get some in-depth work, spiritual formation and creativity.”

Meanwhile, she has this advice: “Stay open, and let God work where God is going to work.”



RIGHT: Amy Rich participates in a retreat titled “Weaving Together Body, Mind and Spirit.” **LEFT:** Kim Harvish’s completed weaving from that event. Photos courtesy of Meredith Vanderminden. Paintbrush photo by minka6.



Visit Art Divina at: <http://www.artdivina.com>

In brief ...

LeRoy's 'Come One, Come All' gets grant

United Methodist annual conferences, UM-related institutions and congregations – including LeRoy UMC – have received grants totaling \$75,000 to support a variety of caregiving ministries that help older adults directly and provide assistance to family members and local churches who minister to seniors.

LeRoy UMC, in the Genesee Valley District, was awarded \$1,500 in September.

Every last Sunday of the month, Le Roy UMC holds the "Come One, Come All" Community Dinner. This is a free meal for anyone in the community. The ministry specifically focuses on the elderly as the end of the month often finds them having to make a choice between food and their medication. The pro-

gram is coordinated by Betsy Darby.

This dinner also provides social interaction for many of the senior citizens who attend. Church members intentionally look out for anyone who comes in alone so they can sit with him or her and provide conversation and friendship.

LeRoy has four apartment complexes that provide some type of senior living, and the church also provides meal delivery service. In most cases, enough food for two meals is provided with each delivery; anyone who eats at the church can take a second meal home.

The \$1,500 grant from the GBOD will be used to provide a greater variety of healthier foods. LeRoy UMC

is also going to try to expand its ministry by offering presentations by organizations such as the local Office for the Aging or those who provide nutritional and healthcare services following the meal. Another idea is to offer community musical opportunities such as the LeRoy Band or a hymn sings.

"We are grateful to the United Methodist Church for entrusting us with this grant as we seek to reach out to the senior citizens of our community," writes Rev. Leanne Zeck, pastor at LeRoy UMC.

The grants are administered by the Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries at GBOD. Grant funding is provided by the United Methodist Committee on Older Adult

Ministries, which is administratively related to GBOD.

A total of 76 grant applications seeking more than \$234,000 were submitted, said the Rev. Dr. Richard H. Gentzler Jr., the center's director. The committee approved and funded 45 applications, including 10 for the North Central Jurisdiction, four for the Northeastern Jurisdiction, eight for the South Central Jurisdiction, 21 for the Southeastern Jurisdiction, one for the Western Jurisdiction and one for the Central Conference.

Visit www.gbod.org for more information or call the Communications Office at (877) 899-2780, Ext. 1726.

– United Methodist Communications

Host an Older Adult Recognition Sunday

A Boomer is turning 65 years old every 8 seconds. Older adults are an increasing part of both our active and inactive church membership. We take the time to recognize our youth each year. Let's give a similar recognition to our older persons, said Upper New York Older Adult Ministries Team Chair Winona Stonebraker.

Churches in the Upper New York Area are encouraged to include an Older Adult Recognition Sunday on your church worship calendar.

The 2008 General Conference Resolution 2023 states: "United Methodist Church observe an annual Older Adult Recognition Sunday ... The day is to recognize and celebrate the gifts, talents and contributions older adults make within and beyond the local church."

There are many ideas to make your worship recognition meaningful. Include seniors in the service from ushering to Scripture reading to greeting. Hold a reception or luncheon following the service. Provide transportation for those who are usually not able to come to church. Ask the young people to help with honoring the seniors. The General Board of Discipleship, Center on Aging has other assistance and ideas, Stonebraker said.

The day should also provide the opportunity to learn more about aging issues. Involve older persons in the planning and leadership of the special recognition. Emphasize the many contributions of older adults and the opportunities in your church community for all generations to worship, work and



Photo by Kathleen Barry, UMCOM

play together. The primary characteristic of the older adult population is diversity. Programs for seniors should not be just for them but planned by and with the older adults.

Let each local church find a way to honor the wisdom, life experiences and contributions of our older adults. Although, it is suggested that you plan this Sunday for May, please plan the day for when it fits your worship schedule.

For further information, contact Stonebraker via e-mail at: nths16@hotmail.com.

News of note ...

Native American Ministry Sunday grants available

The Upper New York Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) is accepting applications for Native American Ministry Sunday grants. Applications are due Oct. 15.

Grants can be used to fund Native American missions, ministries, and communities to support native churches, community outreach, leadership training, education, and cultural survival projects.

Individuals, churches, and organizations are encouraged to apply.

The application can be downloaded from the CONAM website, <http://www.unyumc.org/CONAM>, or contact Rev. Sue Shields at sshields@echoes.net or at

(607) 467-3728.

Funds for the grants are provided by Native American Ministries Sunday contributions, one of six special churchwide Sunday offerings.

Volunteers needed for videotaping

The Binghamton District will host its first Leader Development Institute, which is designed to "engage, equip and empower local churches to be in ministry; to encourage and develop leadership; and to build relationships with our neighbors."

The Nov. 5 event will be videotaped and archived on the Web.

To make that happen, the district is seeking tech-savvy people who can help videotape the presentations and make them available to

mission/ministry leaders via YouTube.

Volunteers are needed who are skilled and willing to run digital video cameras on Nov. 5 (cameras will be provided by UNY Conference Communications Team) and/or who are willing to edit these large digital files to prepare them to be uploaded to the Internet.

Conference Communications Director Maidstone Mulenga would like to come down to train a handful of people from the district if you are interested in volunteering or learning more, contact the District Office or District Superintendent Dave Masland davidmasland@unyumc.org.

Session added to training series

The Upper New York Area Communications Team's

training series for local churches has added a new session. The training will be offered in the Mohawk District on Nov. 12. The location will be announced shortly.

Training sessions focus on ways to promote your church or church events in the community and to the media, using social media and working with graphics and images.

The free workshops take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the following Saturdays:

Oct. 22 – Saratoga Springs, 175 Fifth Ave.

Nov. 12 – Mohawk District, location TBA

Wifi is available at each site and lunch will be provided. Registration is appreciated.

To sign up or to learn more, call Karen Campolieto at (315) 424-7878 ext. 304 or e-mail her at karencampolieto@unyumc.org

Dates to remember

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

Oct. 15

Connectional Table Meeting
9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
University UMC, Syracuse
Contact: Anne Hutchins at anne@unyumc.org

Oct. 17-19

First Followers Retreat with Len Sweet
Casowasco Camp & Retreat Center
Contact Casowasco at info@casowasco.org or 315-364-8756.

Oct. 22

UMW Annual Meeting 2011
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Clifton Springs UMC
Contact: Patricia Briggs at Trish5420@aol.com

Communications Workshop
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saratoga Springs UMC, 175 Fifth Ave.
Contact: Karen Campolieto at (315) 424-7878 ext. 304.

Nov. 11-12

CCYM Fall Gathering in the Albany area at First UMC Schenectady.
See page 13 for details

Nov. 12

Communications Workshop
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Mohawk District. Location TBA.
Contact: Karen Campolieto at (315) 424-7878 ext. 304.

Nov. 18-19

CCYM Fall Gathering in the Rochester area at the Riverside Radisson.
See page 13 for details

December 2011 to January 2012

Annual Conference Registration opens

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.
Lay Session – 12:30 to 5 p.m.
Clergy Session – 12:30 to 5 p.m.

May 31 – June 2

Annual Conference Session, Syracuse