



The Connection

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From left, Shirley Readdean of First United Methodist Church in Schenectady, Blenda Smith, Wyoming Annual Conferenece Lay Leader, Michelle Marchese of Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, Schenectady, N.Y., and Dave Johnston, Exeuctive Director of Sky Farm Camp in Warrensburg, N.Y., study photos used by the Rev. Eric Law of the Kaleidoscope Institute during the "Building Community in a Diverse and Changing World" retreat at the Dominican Retreat Center in Niskuyana, N.Y. The photos are one of the tools Law uses to examine cultural "icebergs," cultural differences, that can create roadblocks in personal and institutional diversity. The late April workshop was the third led by Law in Troy Conference and was sponsored by the Conference Board on Religion and Race and The River.

Vermont congregation serves community with a variety of ministries

By Cynthia Lovely

If you ask a member of Hedding United Methodist Church for information about their outreach efforts, be prepared to listen for awhile. They are unable to give you a brief description because they have a long list of impressive programs, they are genuinely excited about what God is doing in their midst, and they love to share it with others.

The 400-member congregation is located in a downtown urban environment in Barre, Vt. Through the years the neighborhood around the church has changed, resulting in changing needs in the community. By the year 2004, the congregants of Hedding United Methodist Church were faced with a decision: to remain a closed-in small congregation and ignore the needs all around them or to break beyond their comfort zone and implement an enthusiastic outreach program to address those needs and impact their local area.

Teen Center continued page 4

New England answers FAQs for Vermonters

Courtesy www.neumc.org

In July 2010, Vermont churches will officially be a part of the New England Conference! While this is definitely exciting, it is also a lot of work, and there are already plenty of questions about the "nuts and bolts" of this transition.

At this stage in the process, the answer to many questions is going to be "we're working on that." This material provides some basic information about what is happening.

Districts

What is the process for deciding on new Districts or altered District boundaries? Who decides?

The "new" New England Conference will vote to determine the number of districts in the conference. The Bishop decides what the boundaries of each district will be. Earlier this spring, Bishop Weaver convened a process involving persons from Vermont and the rest of New England, district lay leaders, mem-



bers of district superintending committees, current district superintendents and others. This group established a process that invited all clergy and laypersons in Vermont to offer thoughts and suggestions for this process.

What is the plan for new or altered District boundaries?

From the process outlined above, the input from Vermont pastors and laity was gathered and the group called to-

FAQs continued page 6

Navigating the Future

A special pull-out section with news about the three new conferences

Pages 7 through 10

Bishop Weaver announces Vermont district suggestion

Bishop Peter Weaver of the Boston Episcopal Area released the following statement on Friday, May 15:

God is doing a marvelous new creation as the United Methodist people of Vermont and the New England Conference come together to serve Christ throughout this region. While we officially will not be one conference until July 1, 2010, many teams and taskforces of people from Vermont and the New England Conference have been working together on issues related to this transition under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

One of those issues is the number

and boundaries of districts for the conference. After consultation with Bishop Hassinger, Bishop Weaver of the Boston Episcopal Area called together a taskforce of lay and clergy leaders from Vermont and the New England Conference to conduct a listening and survey process in Vermont and to make a recommendation concerning district configurations.

Factors that were considered in this process included the missional needs of communities, strategies for resourcing local churches, historic and current

Vermont district continued page 6

Inside ...

I wonder as I wander ... An encounter with Jesus Page 2

VIM team blogs to share Irish experiences Page 14

Summer programs director is homegrown 'kid' Page 16

I wonder as I wander ...

An encounter with Jesus

Have you ever had an experience so vivid that it came back to mind repeatedly for several weeks? That's what happened to me on Tuesday, May 5, during the Council of Bishops meeting.

Before 6:30 a.m. those who wished to, gathered in the lobby of the hotel where we were meeting in Bethesda, Md. All of us had been given white t-shirts emblazoned with red letters: "ReTHINK Church." On this chilly spring morning we also sported red jackets with the logo, and some wore the red baseball caps that communicated the same message.



Bishop Hassinger

Quickly we were sorted into three groups of 30 or more each, and transported to two different sites in Maryland, or one in northern Virginia. As we neared our destination, the sign at the corner of the street read "Temporary Workers Site." On a barren plot of land stood a moderate-size bare metal building, with steps leading up to two doors.

Outside the building we were greeted by a pastor whose ministry is working with immigrants seeking day labor jobs. He explained briefly how he sensed God calling him to this mission, growing out of his own experience as an immigrant.

He invited us to enter, and as we did we observed, around two sides of this overgrown trailer rows of old metal and plastic chairs on which were sitting mostly men, possibly 60 or so. They had registered with the small office on one corner of this building, where they were waiting to be called for today's work.

Gradually we began to move among the workers. We exchanged smiles or a few words in Spanish or English. Those who were fluent in Spanish had more extended conversations, as they listened to what had brought the workers to this place and what life was like for them.

My Spanish is "muy pocito" (very little). So I extended greetings to several. Towards the end of a row, I heard one of the Filipino bishops speaking with one young man, in English. The young man had a Filipino step-mother and a Salvadoran father. As the other bishop moved on, I bent over to speak with him. He offered that his name was "Will," and shared that he had been in this suburban Washington, D.C. area for about three years, trying to sustain himself by finding day jobs – sometimes landscaping, sometimes moving furniture, sometimes construction, whatever was available. Sometimes he would go several weeks without getting a job. Other times it came more frequently.

After a brief time of conversation, "Will" asked me why we were there. I told him that we just wanted to come and be with them, to share that we were interested in and cared about those who struggle to survive in this economy. I noticed that he was looking at the ReTHINK Church logo on the 2XL red jacket that hung on me. He asked what that was about. I told him that we believed that church was not just for inside church buildings, but that Jesus was everywhere, and we wanted to go where Jesus was, not just stay inside the four walls.

Will got a quizzical look on his face, and there was silence between us for what seemed like a long moment. Then he looked down a bit, and mentioned that he also believed in Jesus, he mentioned that he prayed, but that he didn't go to church, and that Jesus was with him.

About that time, two of the men who were waiting for a job brought out guitars and played some music for us. Others who were staff of the project or volunteers told a bit more about their ministry. Then, after the pastor brought out three long, slender loaves of bread and some grape juice, Bishop Minerva Carcano offered a brief Eucharistic prayer in Spanish. Together we communed, day laborers and bishops and spouses, bound together by our love for and commitment to the Jesus who loved us to the end, the Jesus who leads us outside the walls. The Lord's



United Methodist Bishop Susan Hassinger visits with Wilfredo Calderón at the Gaithersburg (Md.) Workers Center, where services are provided for area day laborers. Hassinger was part of a delegation of bishops and their spouses who visited the center. The visit was part of the kickoff of a \$20 million advertising campaign called "Rethink Church." A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

Table was a long rough table, around which workers sometimes gathered to learn English-as-a-second-language.

After the communion, several of the men moved outside, and shortly our group also exited in order to head back to our hotel and meetings. As we did so, we observed the laborers lining up to pass by tables and pick up a breakfast sandwich and a bottle of juice, their breakfast for the day. This daily ritual, feeding of another sort, was part of the ministry outreach.

As we headed down the steps, I saw "Will" standing at the bottom of them, waiting to enter the line. As I approached him, I held out my hand. He smiled a broad smile and shook it. I thanked him for the conversation, and said that I very much appreciated our talking together. I also indicated that I would pray for him.

At least once daily since that time, I have visualized the smiling face of "Will," a 23-year-old who is seeking a better life, and I have prayed for him. For me, on that day, in that face I saw the face of Jesus.

While we went to bear witness to ReThink-ing Church, it was I who received that witness. Jesus was already there.

Corrections

The photograph on page 20 of the April *Connection* was of members of the Colchester, Vt., Energy Task Force taking part in a Fourth of July parade.

Walter Taylor was the Executive Director of AUMS from 1976-1989, and followed Executive Director Martin Cornman.



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Adam Hamilton to speak at New England Conference Session

Bishop Peter Weaver invites New England and Vermont United Methodists to attend Adam Hamilton's *Leading Beyond the Walls* presentations Thursday, June 18 at 6:30 p.m. and Friday, June 19 from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at Memorial Chapel at Gordon College, Wenham, Ma. Though the event is free, registration is required. Register at www.neumc.org.

Four conferences to sponsor Rethink Church training in fall

Registration has opened for the National Rethink Church training event, which is sponsored by the North Central New York, Troy, Western New York and Wyoming annual conferences, on Sept. 12 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Whitesboro, N.Y. A training event for those interested in becoming local Rethink Church trainers will be held on Friday, Sept. 11, in the same location. Rethink Church Welcoming Training offers three ways to help your congregation become more actively engaged with spiritual seekers in your community: Welcome. Connect. Identify. In the day-long training experiences, participants will begin to Rethink Church and open hearts, minds and doors. These interactive, high-energy sessions will help you begin to plan how your congregation can more effectively communicate with—and meet the needs and interests of—people under age 40.

New ACT seeks visionaries for six critical questions teams

The New Area Conference Team (New ACT) seeks interested persons to meet with brothers and sisters from across the upper New York area and explore six critical questions based on the vision and purpose statement. Members should be visionary, passionate, risk-takers, willing to commit time and energy to meetings and work and to serve for 18- to 24-months.

There are six Critical Questions:

- Spiritual Formation: How shall we grow in our relationship with God?
- Ministry: How shall we be the body of Christ within the world?
- Discipleship: How shall we live in accordance with the example of Jesus Christ?
- Local Church: How shall we engage, equip and empower?
- Leadership: How shall we encourage and develop leadership?
- Outreach: How shall we build and sustain relationships with our neighbors?

If interested in serving on one of these teams, download the online nomination form at www.upperNewYork.org or contact Holly Nye at (518) 584-8214, ext. 18, or (800) 684-9377 ext. 18 or hnye@troyac.org.

Book of daily devotions provide comfort to troops in Middle East

A copy of a book of daily devotions that provided comfort and guidance to troops during World War II and the Korean conflict was discovered by Evan Hunsberger, a California Boy Scout, and updated and published by United Methodist Men. Read more about this on www.StrengthForService.org. Churches are invited to host a Strength for Service Sunday. Chaplains say that, after the Bible, Strength for Service is their most requested book. Special arrangements have been made with the UMM so that these books may be acquired in quantity for your local armory at \$4.50 each. For more details telephone Rev. Martin Fors at (802) 626-9085 or Lyndonville United Methodist Church at (802) 626-5057.

Golden Cross offering benefits health ministries in conference

Each May, congregations are asked to participate in a special Golden Cross Offering. This year's offering will be distributed in 2010 to Wesley Health Care in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. (40 percent) for the extra transportation needs for residents to attend worship services; Charlton School in Burnt Hills, NY (10 percent) for assistance with teenage girls in the residential care; and Gateway Longview (10 percent) for assistance with residents there. The remaining 40 percent is designated to make grants to local churches for health and wealth projects of the community.

God is Still Creating (Us)

The 178th Session of
Troy Annual Conference
June 10 through 13, 2009
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

What's new at Annual Conference this year?

By Holly Nye

What can you expect when you come to Annual Conference this year? You can expect to sing, celebrate, pray, learn... and eat, together with brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the earliest church, the followers of Jesus "... committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers.... They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals ..., every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God." (Acts 2, **The Message**). Annual Conference is our time to commit ourselves to one another and to God, in prayer, study and celebration.

Annual Conference session begins after supper on Wednesday evening, with a Memorial Communion Service at 7 p.m. on June 10. This is similar to last year. The Service of Ordination, on the other hand, moves to a Saturday morning time – the capstone of our time together, with music beginning at 10:15 and the service, with full processional, at 10:30 a.m. The Ordination service is powerful time of worship, and ALL United Methodists (and others!) are welcome to come to the Saratoga Springs City Center to be a part of the celebration.

Visitors are welcome, in fact, at all the services of worship, including Wednesday evening's memorial; Thursday evening's Retiree Celebration and Commissioning of new ministers; Friday evening's recognition of two persons for Spiritual Formation Certification; daily morning worship at 8:30; and, for the truly intrepid, early morning worship at 6:30 a.m. daily. In addition, the "Friday Fun Night" will return, in fairly brief form, at 8:30 p.m. Friday.

With the awareness that this will be our final "full" session of Annual Conference before becoming new conferences (a one-day Troy Conference



session is scheduled for May 22, 2010, in Glens Falls, N.Y.), conference planners chose "local talent" to celebrate the gifts of God to the people of God here in our region. Bishop Hassinger will lead the body in Bible Study experiences on Thursday morning, Friday morning, and Friday after supper. Our song leader is the Rev. Jill Robinson, accompanied by pianist Ann Rowell of Middlebury, Vt. Preacher for the ordination service is Bishop Marcus Matthews; at the Wednesday Memorial Service, the Rev. Rebecca Clark of Montpelier, Vt.

Some "housekeeping details" will be a bit different this year. Most notably, meal tickets will be required for admission to all meals. Meal tickets will be given to each member with registration materials. The meals included with full registration at conference are: three meals Thursday; three meals Friday; and breakfast only on Saturday (lunch will not be served, but the city center's Broadway location makes it quite simple to find a sandwich nearby before traveling home.)

In the area of legislation, Troy Conference will join all other annual conferences in voting on ratification of proposed changes to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Information on these changes is included in the pre-conference journal, and online at www.umc.org

Explore call to ministry at 'Exploration 2009'

Young people, high school seniors through age 24, can explore whether or not they are being called to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church at 'Exploration 2009,' Nov. 13 through 15, in Dallas, Texas.

Participants learn that all baptized Christians are called to ministry, and that some people are called to ordained

ministries of Word, Sacrament, Order and Service through the church. The ordained ministry of deacons and elders offers opportunities for service in a variety of settings such as in the local church, campus ministry, hospital or military chaplaincy.

For more information, visit www.gbhem.org.

Teen center builds dignity in each child *from page 1*

They chose the latter. The results have made a positive impact upon the congregation and upon the community.

One of the first programs created met an important need: a ministry of feeding the hungry. A free community dinner was offered and now every Friday evening the church feeds over 100 people. This event draws many newcomers inside the church, and those who may be hesitant to attend a church service are introduced and welcomed into the building in an informal setting.

"Some of the people come because of the meal, some come for the social interaction," said the Rev. Ralph Howe, pastor. "We encourage people to become involved with the setup and cleanup so they can feel a part of the group."

The menu is healthy. It consists of artisan breads, organic salads, spaghetti with meat sauce, a beverage and dessert. Often there is piano music or background entertainment which adds a warm ambiance to the friendly atmosphere. The dinner runs from 5 to 6 p.m. and the chapel is available for quiet prayer and meditation from 6 to 7 p.m.

The dinner is a popular program which becomes a springboard to other ministries, support groups and bible studies. The church also offers a Food Shelf led by volunteers from the congregation which feeds up to 250 families a month.

In an effort to help street kids and disadvantaged youth, the congregation

created a different ministry: a Teen Center at the church officially opened its doors to teens and tweens in 2007. As an after school program, the Center is open Monday through Thursday, from 3 to 6 p.m. and Fridays from 3 to 5 p.m.

Howe said, "The mission of the Center is to provide youth with a safe environment, with informal adult mentoring, assisting with life issues and school, addressing the material, spiritual, physical, psychological and educational needs of each youth."

He stressed the need of building relationships. "In order for kids to have a full life, they need to have a relationship with God," he said. "But for that to happen, they need to have healthy relationships with adults first. When we're helping a child with homework, we're building a relationship. We're helping them to experience life differently than what they experience at school or at home."

The Center is directed by Vivian Wortham, who leads a group of about eight to ten students who attend regularly. Activities offered include: homework assistance, basketball, air hockey, football tables, Wii, board games and cooking lessons. There's also a computer lab, and the teens/tweens are offered nutritious snacks.

There have been programs on space, the human body, gardening, carpentry, and reading skill building. There is also an Advanced Computer Geek program for middle school through college age students.

Wortham seeks to break through the

attitudes of "I can't" or "I'm not good enough" that some of the youth have when they come to the center.

"Our approach is to build and support the dignity in each child and to help them realize how to work, to learn and gain confidence—to believe they can achieve, that they have something to offer the world," she said.

One success story includes a young boy who is the first in his family to graduate from high school and who will be attending college.

The Center has become a refuge for teens and tweens who are unwilling to return to an empty house, waiting for their parents to return from work. It provides a safe setting and a wonderful alternative to hanging out in the streets.

To continue their evangelistic outreach, the church applied for and was awarded a General Board of Church and Society Ethnic Local Church fund grant. The \$7,000 grant was given as a "local church multi-racial initiative to confront systemic white privilege."

They have also received a Critical Issues Grant from Troy Conference for \$10,000 for outreach resources and special events.

As a result of these grants a student intern, Aislinn Bowles, will be working within their community. Her duties will involve door to door contacts to build relationships, and organizing local events to connect the community and the church. She will assist the church in working toward racial reconciliation and in addressing racial, social and economic privilege issues. Within the

church, she will lead Bible studies with instruction on moving outside the walls to meet the needs of their local neighborhood. Bowles also hopes to develop a stronger ministry to the elderly who are homebound.

A "Vet-to-Vet" support group is yet another ministry offered at Hedding. The program originated with Richard "Doc" Schroeder and is still hosted by the church. A non-profit organization to establish a facility for transitional programs and housing for homeless veterans has been an outgrowth of the ministry. This \$1.4 million facility, funded by VA grants, Hedding United Methodist Church and other local groups, is set to open in June 2009 with 26 available beds.

The active congregation is focused on being "Church by experiencing together the love and praise of God, as we intentionally form disciples of all members. Who shall be committed to Christ and the Church, to receive the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, through the means of grace, which include both: inner spiritual development and discipline, and outward service, resources and witness. That produces the fruit of the Spirit, in living, thinking, feeling and doing the good, and avoiding and working against known evils, as we engage in relevant ways with our cultural context, to spread the love of God and scriptural holiness, for the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen."

Putting their vision into practice has become an essential component of the ministries of Hedding United Method-

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When newcomers respond to our "Open hearts" messages, they especially check out the people. The real test of our advertising happens when seekers encounter "The people of The United Methodist Church." That's why training is one of the key components of Rethink Church.

Rethink Church Welcoming Training offers three ways to help your congregation become more actively engaged with spiritual seekers in your community: Welcome. Connect. Identify.

In our day-long training experiences, you will begin to Rethink Church and open hearts, minds and doors. These interactive, high-energy sessions will help you begin to plan how your congregation can more effectively communicate with—and meet the needs and interests of—people under age 40

Rethink Church Welcoming Training

New York West & Albany Areas

Saturday, Sept. 12

Trinity United Methodist Church, Whitesboro, N.Y.

Register on-line at www.rethinkchurch.org>Training>Welcoming National Training Events

Or contact Sandra Brands . (800) 684-9277, sbrands@troyac.org. Registration Deadline: 9/6/2009

New ACT worships with youth from four conferences

By Marilyn J. Kasperek

Exciting, energetic, dynamic, life changing worship was a vital part of the 2009 4Word gathering of youth from the Wyoming, Western New York, Troy, and North Central New York Conferences, and the New Area Conference Team experienced some of it on April 25.

New ACT purposefully scheduled time shared with youth attending 4Word into their time together, first at worship, and then some one on one time over lunch.

"We are here to listen to you," Bishop Marcus Matthews told the youth as he greeted them. The youth-led event included worship, workshops, and many opportunities for community building. With excitement, an announcement was made that youth leadership from all four conferences will come together shortly to continue to look at what their journey together into the new Conference might look like.

Reluctantly, members of New ACT returned to their work following their time with these current and emerging young leaders in upper New York, to hear reports from sub teams, update timelines, and prepare for reports at Annual Conference sessions. Convener Bill Gottschalk-Fielding led the team through their work.

Safe space

Creating safe space to listen to diverse voices is part of New ACT's ongoing work. Under development is a model which allows serious listening among those with different perspectives. The model will be used by New ACT in their discussions, as well as in sub teams, including those which will address a number of critical questions. Guidelines for the conversations and guidelines to insure that groups are diverse will be written, and training provided for critical question team leaders. New ACT member Darryl Barrow noted the guidelines will develop "a posture of listening." The foundation for this work will include information from "Building Inclusive Community," a multi-Conference Retreat in which some members of New ACT recently participated, with Eric H. F. Law of Kaleidoscope Institute. An overview of that training was shared with the entire New ACT at their April 25 meeting.

Team report

The Asset Allocation Team report brought a number of questions back to New ACT regarding their work, including responsibilities, timeline issues, and budget concerns. Suggestions out of this sub-team included moving up the decision as to new AC conference center administrative office location and adding an Executive Director for camping to the list of staff needed in place July 1, 2010. Work on the Shared Ministry Formula is moving in the direction of using local

church income as opposed to expenses or use of membership/average attendance. The subcommittee looking at that suggestion is gathering the necessary data to determine what that would look like for local churches.

Clarification was requested on the responsibilities for development of the 2010 and 2011 budgets between Asset Allocations and New ACT. All of the suggestions were received with no action at this time.

Team to be elected

The Joint Distribution Committee is defined by The Book of Discipline and members will be elected by each of the six—Central PA, New England, North Central New York, Troy, Western New York, and Wyoming—annual conference sessions this spring. Until the election takes place, the appointed committee is gathering information such as service records of active and retirees; looking at the possibility of special grants for retirees; and gathering information on health care coverage so members have the information they need to begin work once elected. Timelines, equity, and justice questions impact this committee's work. Bishop Marcus Matthews (New York West Area) and Bishop Susan Hassinger (Albany Area) are meeting with the General Board of Health and Pensions this week to clarify some of the issues impacting the work of the Joint Distribution Committee. Bishops Matthews and Hassinger are also meeting with the Conference Chancellors to discuss the actual date incorporation needs to take place.

BOOM

A report from the Board of Ordained Ministry sub-team indicated the primary concern currently expressed is who those in process should contact. The determination was to continue to talk to who they have been until notified a change has been made.

Programs

Questions around how to care for initial programs and ministry in the New Conference were raised and New ACT plans to address them later this summer.

Sessions

A report from the interim sessions team indicated a number of sub-teams will be in place to address financial planning, worship, agenda, details (including hospitality), technology related to worship and communications pieces for the new Annual Conference sessions.

Teams

A Spiritual Formation team was suggested to lead people in the new conference with prayer and study. Communications Task Force is working on strategy, marketing, and IT resources needed. Timelines and a Strategy Document are being developed and a

newspaper will be distributed at Annual Conference Sessions. Communicators were asked to assist in the development of a report for Annual Conference.

Appointments to the Interim Leadership Development and Interim Personnel Committee will be made by Bishop Matthews and Bishop Hassinger. The names will be processed

through the cabinet and efforts made to have diversity.

Thank you

Bishop Matthews expressed appreciation for the work of Convener Bill Gottschalk-Fielding and Administrative Assistant Anne Hutchins for their work on behalf of New ACT.

DOORS TO JUSTICE

PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY
Empowering United Methodists to work for peace, love and compassion for God's children everywhere.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."
John 3:17, NRSV

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Peace with Justice Sunday June 7

The special offering supports general and local church justice work and empowers United Methodist to work for peace, love and compassion for God's children everything.

Peace with Justice Sunday resources are available at www.umcsgiving.org.

FAQs *continued from page 1*

gether by Bishop Weaver reviewed and discussed all the possibilities. At this point, the recommendation appears to be that the churches in Vermont will constitute a single district following July 1, 2010.

Missions and Programs

Vermont has a camping ministry. What will happen to this site?

Covenant Hills Christian Camp is located in Cabot, Vt., and has been a ministry of the Troy Annual Conference together with the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ for 20 years. This mostly summer camp will continue to grow in ministry with the direction of Todd Marlow, its active Site Committee, and the dozens of staff and volunteers who are part of this program each year.

How can we begin to establish relationships and connections between Vermont and New England churches?

Good question! First, invite each other to events, particularly when they are geographically accessible. To communicate a district or conference event, send the information to the communications director in your current conference, and they will provide the information to those you wish to invite. We have already had Vermont folks join in NEAC events such as Pastors Assembly and the School of Congregational Development. There have also been United Methodist Foundation events held in Vermont.

In addition, visit www.neumc.org/vermont for information on events and activities, church and people profiles in the "Getting to Know You" section, and how to establish a sister church relationship.

What kinds of joint activities are already happening?

As noted above, there have already been connections made at Pastors Assembly, UMFNE seminars, and the School of Congregational Development. In addition, United Methodist Women have been meeting and discussing together, New England and

Vermont will each have presence at each others' upcoming Annual Conferences, and the list continues to grow. Share a story of connections you've made at www.neumc.org/vermont.

In the fall, the New England Conference Leadership Committee and Vision Table will be adding members from Vermont to begin participating in these important conversations.

Finance and Benefits

What is New England's Health Insurance Plan?

All charges with at least a three-quarter-time pastor must participate. Their plan is with HealthFlex (as is Troy's). Their premium is blended (as is Troy's). No dental coverage is included.

The premiums are paid partially by the church and partially by the pastor. For 2009 the church portion is \$1,096 per month (\$13,152 for the year), with a 5% discount offered if automatically paid each month via "ACH" (automated clearing house)—a potential savings to the church of \$657.60 for the year.

The premium for the pastor is \$175 plus \$38 ("benefit stabilization") per month less \$50 if both pastor and spouse (if there is one) complete the health assessment. This adds up to \$2556 (or \$1,956 if health assessments are done) from the pastor. If these premiums aren't paid for three months, letters are sent; if not paid for six months the insurance is cancelled. The church is continued to be billed for its portion, and before insurance can be reinstated for the pastor of that church all arrears must be paid.

Retiree premiums are slightly higher than Troy's (again, no dental coverage), at \$615 per month for someone under 65 and \$354 per person (\$705 per couple) for those over 65. These are subsidized IF the pastor served at least 10 years and was in HealthFlex for five consecutive years immediately preceding retirement; the subsidy is 3.3 percent per year of qualified service.

Is there a Property Insurance plan in New England?

There is a mandatory conference

plan for all local churches.

What about Federated churches?

Federated churches are handled the same in New England as they are currently in Troy. All finances to the conference are based on percentage of members that are United Methodist. Non-United Methodist pastors are expected to be covered by their own denomination for pension and health insurance.

Other items of interest:

Preachers' Aid Society does a lot for folks in New England, has some housing for conference retired clergy; they have invited those in Vermont to apply for this housing. Visit www.preachersaid.org.

District Councils on Finance. New England doesn't currently have District

Councils on Finance, however, both New England and Vermont folks feel that district programming will be important in the larger conference. This may be one of those exciting ideas and functions that New England learns from Vermont.

The conversations continue. The Joint Distributing Committee is continuing to meet and plan for a smooth transition as we seek to integrate the complexities of the realities and expectations of church and conference finance and benefits. There is also an Asset Allocation Task Force as well as the Vermont-New England Team that is meeting regularly to make sure that the many details of this process are being attended to.

More information on the work of these teams will be available at www.neumc.org/vermont often

Vermont district *continued from page 1*

relationships, geography, number and type of churches/charges, and what would facilitate superintending and lay leadership in a district. In all things our central focus and mission is how best to support "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

On April 23, in a spirit of discernment and prayer, the District taskforce met to reflect on the excellent responses to the listening/survey process conducted in Vermont and to discuss districting in the light of the missional challenges and opportunities ahead of us. We were also aware that many other planning decisions depend on this districting recommendation.

It was the unanimous consensus and recommendation of the taskforce that all of the Vermont churches of the Troy Conference be in one district. This "Vermont District," along with the current eight districts of the New England Conference would create a nine-district conference beginning July 1, 2010.

This recommendation, as required by The Discipline, will go for vote by the "new" New England Conference at its



Bishop Peter Weaver

constituting session in June, 2010. Let us keep all of these unfolding processes in our prayers. In the words of John Wesley, "Best of all, God is with us!"

The members of the taskforce were: Peter Weaver, Gary Shaw, Paul Hudson, Debbie Estey, John Blackadar, Evie Doyon, Brigid Farrell, Liz Dallas, Bob Lowenthal, Jim McPhee, Wendy Brousseau, Heidi Chamberland, Jeanette Merren, Jan Rowell, and Bill Burnside.



**Visit the new Vermont page at
www.neumc.org/vermont**

new web page provides ongoing information about the progress of the transition. Visit www.neumc.org/vermont to see the new things that we are doing in planning - and in action - with our brothers and sisters in Vermont!

Spiritual Formation

By Evie Doyon



Forget me not

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6 NSRV

I recently discovered a seed packet near some mail on the kitchen table. “Forget-Me-Not” printed on a colorful picture of forget-me-not flowers was all that was on the front side of the packet. I turned it over for a clue as to its source. On the reverse, the words I could quickly focus on said “A Gift from Vermont.” Why was Vermont sending me a packet of seeds?

Continuing my gaze, my eyes saw “Custom packed by” and closer inspection revealed a seed company in New York! Holding the packet more closely, I could see there was an organization’s name in tiny print under “Vermont.” My first thought was an indignant: why weren’t these seeds packed in Vermont? How silly to have a Vermont promotional provided by a New York company.



A while later, after doing some preparation for this year’s Annual Conference, the seed packet took on new and deeper meaning. The theme for Annual Conference is “God Is Still Creating.” This will be our last full session as Troy Conference, and the theme speaks to God’s continual creative work in and among us, even when the change that is going on is still in process and things do not have a recognizable form.

One image that will be used in worship at conference is that of seeds. Seeds hold hidden promises, promises of life that is begun but not complete. When we sing the song, “God Who Began a Good Work in You” based on Philippians 1:6, we sing of the promise of God’s faithfulness to complete this good work.

Seeds and faithfulness remind me of the vision Julian of Norwich (a 14th century English mystic) had of gazing at a small hazelnut in the palm of her hand and “seeing” all that has been created. “It is so fragile and insignificant, why did it not crumble?” she wondered. She was given the knowledge that it lasts and always will for God made it, God loves it, and God keeps it.

The work of transitioning to new conferences is not complete and it will not be for a while, but God is in the midst of this creative work. And God is faithful. God is making, loving, and keeping us, lest we forget.

Forget? Is the packet of seeds a reminder from God? Forget me not: I am the promise of new life. Forget me not: I am faithful. Forget me not: I am creating.

I will plant the forget-me-not seeds, and when they bloom, I will remember. I will remember custom-packed seeds of faith shared between folks in New York and folks in Vermont. And I will remember God’s creating work.

There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

Philippians 1:6 The Message

Doyon is the Faith Formation Coordinator for Troy Conference.

Celebrating 20 Years of Christian Loving & Caring at Covenant Hills

20th Anniversary Celebration Saturday, Aug. 22

Schedule for the Day

- Noon Bring picnic lunch
- 1 p.m. Tours, Hikes, Swimming and Games
- 3 p.m. Dedication Celebration
- 5 p.m. Booster Dinner

Keynote address

Reverend James McPhee
Assistant to the Bishop
New England Conference of
the United Methodist Church

Music by Steve Lindholm

Booster Dinner Vision Pond Pavilion (In Faith Lodge in case of bad weather)

Reservations required for the Booster Dinner
\$35 per person or \$60 per couple
\$170 for a table of six

Checks payable to “Covenant Hills” and send to
David Murphy
49 Haggett Road
Montpelier, Vt. 05602

News Notes

News about Troy Conference churches and people



Judith S. Bulova, Senior Vice President of TD Banknorth, Glens Falls, left, presented a check for \$2,500 to Gail Davis, Pastoral Care Assistant, center, and the Rev. Kelly Warner of South Glens Falls United Methodist Church, N.Y. The check will help support the church's Food Ministry Program.

Jane Stratton, MS, RN, a member of **Round Lake United Methodist Church**, N.Y., is the Faith Community Nurse Coordinator for the newly launched **Faith Community Nurse Network** at **Saratoga Hospital** in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. The network helps registered nurses and local faith communities create and sustain holistic health care ministries. Faith community nursing is a specialty practice combining professional nursing and health ministry, recognizing the connection between body, mind and spirit. For more information, call Saratoga Hospital's Pastoral Care Department at (518) 580-2625. Monthly meetings of the Faith Community Nurse Network will be held 6:30 to 8 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month starting June in the hospital's Conference Room D.



Jane Stratton, right, and Richard Hoffman, of Saratoga Hospital's Pastoral Care Services, were instrumental in developing faith-based nursing at the Hospital.

As a director of The United Methodist Church's **General Board of Global Ministries** (GBGM), **Brooke Conklin** of **Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church**, N.Y., attended the director's meeting in Stamford, Ct., April 27 through 29. The board approved steps toward a major restructuring of the international mission agency. The objective is "more effective ministry." Few details of the pending changes were released, but the directors endorsed the "direction" of a restructure proposed by an outside management firm. They also approved several taskforces, which will report back in October 2009, and other implementation measures.

Two Troy Conference churches received **Ethnic Local Church Grants** from the **General Board of Church and Society** (GBCS). **Hedding United Methodist Church** in Barre, Vt., received \$7,000 for a local church multi-racial initiative to confront systemic white privilege. Invitational events, ecumenical partnerships, community-based gathering events and creation of a Council on Racial Reconciliation will be employed to realign existing ministries to address racism. GBCS monies will support an internship and resources for the community events. **Social Justice Advocacy for Refugees** in Albany, N.Y., was awarded \$5,000. A multicultural leadership team at **Emmaus United Methodist Church** leads the ministry. A total of \$185,231 in Ethnic Local Church Grants was split among 13 programs in the five U.S. jurisdictions of the denomination. The programs are spread among nine annual conferences, one ethnic caucus and a cooperative program between a general agency and general commission.



Photo by Nick Morrow

Rene Wilbur of Tinmouth United Methodist Church, Vt., left, the Rev. Randy Nugent, former Executive Director of the Albany United Methodist Society (AUMS) and Bishop Susan Hassinger of the Albany Episcopal Area help celebrate AUMS 50th anniversary. AUMS works to empower residents of the West Hill neighborhood in partnership with the City of Albany, N.Y., and the congregations of Troy Annual Conference. Among the ministries and missions AUMS offers are a food pantry, a summer camp for neighborhood children and an afterschool program.

Judith S. Bulova, Senior Vice President of **TD Banknorth**, Glens Falls, N.Y., presented the **South Glens Falls United Methodist Church** Food Ministry, N.Y., \$2,500 to help support a project that provides a wash bin or bag of supplies to those in need in the community. The supplies consist of items people living in temporary housing provided through the **New York Department of Social Services** don't have, such as dishes and utensils, says **Gail Davis**, Pastoral Care Assistant. The idea for the ministry came when a young couple came to the South Glens Falls Food Pantry at Christmas time for help and were unable to take any food items requiring tableware or even a can opener.

The Last Supper was portrayed by members of the **White River Junction United Methodist Church** in Vermont congregation on Maundy Thursday. A special table was made and Biblical dishes and food were displayed on the table. The congregation also presented the Stations of the Cross on Good

Friday. Seven members of the Sunday school performed a liturgical dance during Easter services.

Rutland United Methodist Church has made the move to renewable energy. The congregation made the decision to replace windows and install a new, more efficient furnace in the 80-year-old parsonage. They also decided to convert from heating with oil to heating both the parsonage and church with pellet-fed stoves. Three 80,000 BTU pellet-fed stoves were installed.

The congregation of **Malta Ridge United Methodist Church** in New York, like many churches, holds church suppers throughout the year. Two years ago, member **Mary S. Evans** realized that the suppers did more than just feed people—they produced a bounty of compost. Evans collects the compost, which she brings home to feed to her free-range chickens and adds to her compost heap, which she uses in a garden that feeds her family of six.



Nia Lowe, Elizabeth Ticehurst, Heather and Sarah Illingworth, and Madelin, Isabelle and Sarah Joy Walker of the White River Junction United Methodist Sunday School in Vermont offered a liturgical dance as soloist Johnna Foley sang "Lord of the Dance" during Easter services at the church.



A publication of the Central Pennsylvania, New England, North Central New York, Troy, Western, and Wyoming Conferences of the United Methodist Church

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE

Timeline

Bringing together six annual conferences to form three new annual conferences is not an easy task but through God's grace, the work involved blessing us. Here are some key dates in the past and in the future.

Fall of 2007

Decision made to permit creation of new conferences

July of 2008

Northeastern Jurisdiction affirms plan Name new Area Upper New York

November 2008 to March 2009

Development of 2009 budget

January 2009 to 2009 A.C. sessions

Select name of new conference

January 2009 To July 2010

Shared worship opportunities

January 2009 until complete

Fusions, property, financial, administrative conventions

March 2009 to December 2009

Development of 2011 budget

March 2009 to July 2010

Development of IT: data support, finances, web/ video-conferencing, etc.

March 2009 to March 2010

Inventory property, assets, facilities, etc.

April 2009 to August 2009

Define model for effective ministry

(continued on page 4)

Bishops excited about the future

When God lets us do a new thing, the Almighty always provides able leadership. Four Bishops are leading six annual conferences as they become three new annual conferences. Here is their vision in their own words.



Bishop Susan W. Shupe
Troy Conference

 I have never heard that in the past we are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

Having people who are passionate about serving the Church of Christ is people of our denomination.

The systems of New England, the systems of Central Pennsylvania, and the systems of the Wyoming Conference is working with us in the process.

In every generation people have to find ways of serving the Lord and serving people who are in need. We are called to do that.

The process of sharing lives and resources is a great opportunity for us. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

Bishop Susan W. Shupe
Troy Conference



Bishop Marvin Matthews
New York West Area

 We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

When God lets us do a new thing, the Almighty always provides able leadership. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

I believe God is giving us a great opportunity to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

Bishop Marvin Matthews
New York West Area



Bishop Peter D. Weyer
New England Conference

 We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

The releasing of the Holy Spirit is a great opportunity for us. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

Bishop Peter D. Weyer
New England Conference

We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

We hope to create the new conference in the Upper New York Area for the people of the state of New York. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

Bishop Peter D. Weyer
New England Conference



Bishop Rose Allen Matthews
Central Pennsylvania Conference

 When I think of wisdom of God in the life of the Holy Spirit, I think of the work of our Holy Spirit. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

I am so grateful that we in the new Central Pennsylvania Conference are participating in the work of the Holy Spirit. We are being asked to do things that we have never done before. It is the work of our Holy Spirit.

Bishop Rose Allen Matthews
Central Pennsylvania Conference



QUESTIONS? QUESTIONS? QUESTIONS? QUESTIONS!

Navigating the future as United Methodists chart a new course

Compiled by Melissa Johnson
Covered — Commission Task Force

An United Methodist church in western New York prepares to welcome a new member, while those in Toronto get ready to join with those in New England and a new covenant is being made in Central Pennsylvania, several questions have already been answered since the last general conference.

What is happening to my conference?

The 2004 general conference closed June 2nd in Chicago with many decisions that will affect the future of the United Methodist Church. At the time of the 2004 General Conference, several questions have already been answered. Here are some of the key issues that were discussed:

What happened at the 2004 General Conference?

Delegates to the 2004 General Conference met in Chicago from June 1-5, 2004. The 2004 General Conference was the 100th anniversary of the General Conference. The 2004 General Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois, from June 1-5, 2004. The 2004 General Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois, from June 1-5, 2004.

What did the annual conference approve for the 2004-2005 year?

The 2004 General Conference approved several resolutions for the 2004-2005 year. These resolutions include: 1) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year budget. 2) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year plan of action. 3) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year report.

What were the major decisions of the 2004 General Conference?

- 1) Creating a new annual conference structure for the United Methodist Church.
- 2) Creating a new General Conference structure for the United Methodist Church.
- 3) Creating a new Discipleship Plan and a new Discipleship Commission for the United Methodist Church.

What are the plans for creating new members from other denominations?

- Creating a new Discipleship Plan and a new Discipleship Commission for the United Methodist Church.
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What are the plans for...

One of the primary reasons for the 2004 General Conference was to address the needs of the United Methodist Church in the 21st century. The 2004 General Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois, from June 1-5, 2004. The 2004 General Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois, from June 1-5, 2004.

What General Conference resolutions were approved for the 2004-2005 year?

The 2004 General Conference approved several resolutions for the 2004-2005 year. These resolutions include: 1) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year budget. 2) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year plan of action. 3) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year report.

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What is the difference between an Episcopate and an annual conference?

The 2004 General Conference made several key decisions. These decisions include: 1) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year budget. 2) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year plan of action. 3) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year report.

What will be the impact of the 2004 General Conference?

The 2004 General Conference will have a significant impact on the United Methodist Church. These impacts include: 1) The 2004 General Conference will create a new annual conference structure. 2) The 2004 General Conference will create a new General Conference structure. 3) The 2004 General Conference will create a new Discipleship Plan and a new Discipleship Commission.

What will members be asked to do in the...

Members will be asked to do several things in the coming year. These things include: 1) Members will be asked to support the 2004-2005 year budget. 2) Members will be asked to support the 2004-2005 year plan of action. 3) Members will be asked to support the 2004-2005 year report.

What are the major decisions of the 2004 General Conference?

The 2004 General Conference made several key decisions. These decisions include: 1) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year budget. 2) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year plan of action. 3) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year report.

What is the 2004-2005 year budget?

The 2004-2005 year budget is a key document for the United Methodist Church. It outlines the financial needs of the church for the coming year. The 2004-2005 year budget is a key document for the United Methodist Church.

What is the 2004-2005 year plan of action?

The 2004-2005 year plan of action is a key document for the United Methodist Church. It outlines the strategic goals of the church for the coming year. The 2004-2005 year plan of action is a key document for the United Methodist Church.

What is the 2004-2005 year report?

The 2004-2005 year report is a key document for the United Methodist Church. It provides a summary of the church's activities and achievements for the coming year. The 2004-2005 year report is a key document for the United Methodist Church.

What are the major decisions of the 2004 General Conference?

The 2004 General Conference made several key decisions. These decisions include: 1) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year budget. 2) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year plan of action. 3) The 2004 General Conference approved the 2004-2005 year report.

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Attending "Living Faith, Seeking Justice: Reclaiming Social Holiness for United Methodists," held at First United Methodist Church in North Andover, Ma., were, from left, Heather Smith of Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church, Schenectady, N.Y.; the Rev. Steve Smith, co-chair of the Troy Conference Board of Church and Society and pastor of Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church in Schenectady, N.Y.; Ed Bennett, co-chair of the Troy Conference Board of Church and Society and a member of Jonesville United Methodist Church, N.Y.; the Rev. Bob Long; Virgia Phoenix, Troy Conference Peace with Justice Coordinator; and Professor Emeritus Tex Sample.

The Rev. Kathryn Johnson, Executive Director of The Methodist Federation for Social Action, and The Rev. Dr. Tex Sample, Professor Emeritus of Church and Society at

the Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo., spoke at "Living Faith, Seeking Justice: Reclaiming Social Holiness for United Methodists," held at First United Methodist

Church in North Andover, Mass. The two-day training event was co-sponsored by the New England and Troy conferences Boards of Church and Society.

SLF study leaders named

The Planning Team for the 2009 Summer Learning Fellowship has announced the study leaders for this year's courses. The school will be held at the Holiday Inn in Rutland, Vt., from the evening of July 16 through noon on July 19.

The theme of this year's Summer Learning Fellowship will be "Together at the Table." According to the United Methodist Women's web site about the 2009 School of Christian Mission, known as the Summer Learning Fellowship in Troy Annual Conference, the table has been an important symbol for the gathered community. It is around the table that food is shared, discussions are held, decisions are made, crafts are created and board games are played.

Christians are reminded of the significance of the table in Jesus' life and ministry.

All along his journey, Jesus shared meals in the home of friends. In the temple, he overturned the tables of injustice. On the eve of his death, around the table with his disciples, he broke bread and set forth a means of grace for all who would believe.

Yet, there are contradictions for those gathered at the table. There is feast and there is famine; there is hope and there is doubt; and there is peace and there is conflict.

Courses reflecting the theme include:

"Native American Spirituality: Giving Our Hearts Away" led by Pearl Thomas, a Creek Indian from Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. Thomas led the course last year in the West Gulf Regional School and other conference schools.

"Food and Faith," led by Carol Sutor of Winooski, Vt. Currently, Sutor is the Spiritual Growth Coordinator for Green Mountain District.

"The Beauty and Courage of Sudan: Why a Dream of Peace is Possible," be led jointly by Carl Markussen of Wynantskill, N.Y., and Karen Elmendorf of Saratoga, N.Y. has traveled in the war-ravaged country of Sudan. Elmendorf is the Coordinator for Membership, Nurture and Outreach for the Troy Conference United Methodist Women.

Registration forms for Summer Learning Fellowship will be available at UMW Day on June 10 at Jonesville United Methodist Church, N.Y., and at the annual conference session in Saratoga Springs from June 10 through June 13. Forms may also be obtained by contacting the registrar, Marie MacDougall, at 19 Eastern Avenue, Barre, Vt. 05641, (802) 461-4452, or macdome@juno.com.



Markussen

Weaving a Web of Connections

Using Internet Technology for Effective Ministry

Saturday, Nov. 7

Pine Grove United Methodist Church
1580 Central Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12205

Explore a variety of options for creating a dynamic Web ministry and learn how to use Internet technology for effective ministry. Conducted by United Methodist Communications. Hosted by Troy Annual Conference Communications.

Registration fee \$75, includes meals, materials, and presentations.

Take advantage of registering for a basic web site assessment by Weaving a Web of Connections trainers. The cost is \$45 for course participants.

Praise for 'Weaving a Web of Connections'

"This was a helpful hands-on experience that enabled me to ask questions that applied to my church and empowered me to go home and do the work."

Rev. Harriette Cross, Cornerstone UMC, Illinois

"This event gave my church the tools to respond to the Great Commission being a witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth electronically!"

Renee Howell, Tabernacle UMC, Dothan, Alabama

"What a great connectal ministry to see the great things The United Methodist Church can do using the Internet. Help is out there just a click away."

Rosemary Prumer, St. Johns UMC, Lubbock, Texas

"Hold on to your seats! This is a fast-paced Internet-exploring seminar that will take you to the next generation of Web technology."

Lori Richey, First UMC in Marianna, Florida

"Not just high tech information but practical, affordable options that can be implemented by any church, regardless of size, staffing or budget."

Martha Taylor, Highland Valley, Arkansas

Visit www.umc.org > Tools For Ministry > Web Ministry > Weaving a Web of Connections

Team keeps blogs about mission trip to Ireland

A Volunteers-in-Mission Team from Troy Conference spent a week in Belfast visiting the Spring Field Road Methodist Church and Forthspring Inter-Community Center. It is the fourth time a VIM team from Troy Conference has visited the Belfast-based peace ministry. The team kept a blog during the eight day trip, which can be read at http://web.me.com/pmthomas6/Belfast_VIM_Peace_Project_2009/Welcome.html

Another VIM trip to Belfast is planned for next year, May 4 through May 13.

Upcoming VIM opportunities

Certification Training for Early Responders, Nov. 6 at Shenendehowa United Methodist Church in Clifton Park, N.Y. This certification will permit those trained to assist in the early response stages of a disaster. Contact Jay Dunkleberger at jdunkleb@nycap.rr.com or at (518) 371-7071 to register

VIM Rally, Nov. 7 at Shenendehowa United Methodist Church in Clifton Park, N.Y., 9:30 a.m. There will be some introductory training on Safe Sanctuaries and Diversity as they apply to VIM teams.

Upcoming VIM projects

A team will be going to **Nicaragua** early in Feb. 2010 for two weeks. The expectation is that the group will go to the northeastern region of the country and will work with Nicaraguan people to provide health care and education and to do construction. The size of the group will be limited to 12 to 15 people. If interested, contact the leaders, Jan and Pete Huston at hustonjp@sprynet.com or (518) 399-0919 by July 1 to receive an application. More information will be available after specifics are



The peace wall in Belfast, Ireland (above). The Rev. Jim Knapp, like many of the team, added his signature to the wall.

determined.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa Oct. 10 through 18. Jack Hill will lead another large team to continue working on recovery from the severe flooding. The estimated cost is \$250 to \$300, including land transportation, meals, and lodging. No experience is needed. On the job training is provided. Contact Jack Hill at vfhill@yahoo.com or (518) 753-4779 to reserve a place on his team.

There are Local Projects that need teams for one to several day periods. Emmaus Church in Albany is one of these that has had extensive help, and more is scheduled. Contact Pete Huston if you are able to help here at hustonjp@sprynet.com or (518) 399-0919.

Other projects are in the pipeline for which work is being defined. If you have some time and are interested in a short term effort, contact Jay Dunkleberger at jdunkleb@nycap.rr.com or (518) 371-7071, and a leader will be identified and a team formed.

Volunteers-in-Mission



The team stands with Cabill Boylan, a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Northern Ireland's governmental body, on the stairs of the Parliament Building. A member of Sinn Fein, Boylan took the team to a committee room where he explained the organization and operation of the legislature.

Find-a-Church is most visited, dynamic feature of 10thousanddoors.org

Since the launch of www.10thousanddoors.org in April, more users have accessed the Find-a-Church feature of the web site than any other section, according to tracking devices. The Web site is featured prominently in The United Methodist Church's new Rethink Church advertising.

"Getting viewers of our advertising to visit www.10thousanddoors.org and to use its Find-a-Church feature is a major goal of our campaign," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "Our advertising says that local United Methodist churches offer countless opportunities for persons to become engaged with the world around them, and Find-a-Church is where a visitor to www.10thousanddoors.org sees those opportunities at the local level."

Hollon says it is critical for local churches to update their Find-a-Church profiles with their program offerings and schedules, a personal welcome, Web site links, and more. Even churches with Web sites should keep their Find-a-Church profiles updated, as the profile is a tool for directing people to the church's Web site, via Find-a-Church's involvement opportunity search criteria. Hollon offers an example of why

that is important.

"One of our television spots highlights The United Methodist Church's commitment to improving global health," said Hollon. "If that spot resonates with a viewer down the street from your church, who then visits www.10thousanddoors.org, then that viewer has an opportunity to search for your church's involvement in medical missions – if your church's profile has been updated to include that."

Hollon likens Find-a-Church profiles to a virtual "welcome mat" for United Methodist churches.

"Find-a-Church is where people come to us, seeking out opportunities within our churches," said Hollon. "But they'll never know what those opportunities are if they aren't listed."

Update a Find-a-Church listing by logging on to www.find-a-church.org and clicking on Update Your Page Now. No Internet programming knowledge is required, and "Help" icons are available throughout the site.

If you have questions about updating your Find-a-Church information, contact United Methodist Communications at FAC@umc.org or call (800) 251-8140.



Troy Conference pays 100 percent of World Service Fund

Troy and Western New York conferences, along with Iowa and Kansas East annual conferences met their 100 percent apportionment obligations to the World Service Fund, the General Council on Finance and Administration announced.

The World Service Fund is one of seven apportioned funds that support ministries and mission throughout the world: World Service, Africa University, Ministerial Education, Black College, Episcopal, Interdenominational Cooperation and General Administration.

The General Conference establishes budgets for the denomination's general funds which are divided among annual conferences, based on a specific formula. Each conference, using its own approved formula, divides these fund requests, along with conference administrative and benevolence fund requests, among local churches. In addition, individuals, local churches, districts and annual conferences may make monetary gifts to the designated funds, of which 100 percent goes directly to a specific project or ministry.

Seventeen of the denomination's 63 annual conferences paid 100 percent of all apportionments in 2008. They include Alaska Missionary, Baltimore-Washington, Central Pennsylvania, Central Texas, East Ohio, Eastern Pennsylvania, Illinois Great Rivers, Greater New Jersey, Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma Indian Missionary, Peninsula-Delaware, Red Bird Missionary, Rio Grande, West Michigan and Wisconsin.

These conferences account for \$34,151,073 in apportioned dollars that will help to educate clergy and laity, build new churches, pay missionary salaries, expand Bible studies, provide leadership for church ministries, work with members of other faiths, support the denomination's colleges and universities, and more.

Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, whose Illinois Great Rivers Conference paid all its apportionments, understands it is not easy to meet financial goals in today's economic climate. "Every day, we hear more and more disturbing news about the U.S. and global economy. The problems and threats are real," Palmer said. "In reality, in hard economic times, the ministry of local congregations and of United Methodists connectedly is needed even more, not less."

Arkansas, Iowa and New England managed to support the Black College Fund at 100 percent. Thirty-two conferences paid 100 percent of their apportionment to the Africa University Fund.

Thousands of individual churches throughout the United Methodist connection also met the 100-percent apportionment goal; however, data will not be available until this summer.

2009 First Quarter Honor Roll

The following churches are paid in full for the year in all apportioned funds.

<u>Adirondack</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Embury</u>	<u>Green Mountain</u>
North River UMC	Albany Emmaus UMC	Brownsville UMC Pownal UMC	Bloomfield UMC

The following churches are paid in full for the first quarter in all apportioned funds

<u>Adirondack</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Embury</u>	<u>Green Mountain</u>
Ballston Spa UMC	Alplaus UMC	Averill Park: Church of the Covenant UMC	Bethel UMC *
Blue Mountain Lake UMC	Amsterdam UMC	Barnerville UMC	Bradford UMC
Bolton Landing UMC *	Barnerville UMC	Boyntonville UMC *	Burlington UMC
Chestertown UMC	Bleecker UMC	Brattleboro UMC *	Cabot Federated *
Crown Point UMC	Central Bridge UMC	Easton UMC	Chelsea West Hill UMC
Dannemora UMC	Cobleskill UMC	Melrose UMC	East Middlebury/Ripton
Essex UMC *	Delanson UMC *	Mendon UMC	Enosburg Falls UMC
Fortsville UMC *	Delmar UMC	Poultney UMC	Essex UMC
Glens Falls: Christ UMC	Dorloo UMC *	Proctorsville UMC	Ferrisburg UMC *
Glens Falls: Queensbury UMC	East Greenbush UMC	Rutland UMC	Georgia UMC
Granville UMC	East Stone Arabia UMC *	Shenendehowa UMC	Grand Isle UMC *
Lake Luzerne UMC	Fonda-Fultonville UMC *	Tinmouth UMC	Groton UMC
Lake Placid UMC	Freybush UMC	Troy/Christ UMC	Hinesburg Federated *
Malta Ridge UMC	Green Island UMC	Troy/Hope UMC	Jericho UMC
Middle Grove UMC	Grosvenor Corners UMC	United Church of Ludlow	Korean-American UMC of Vermont
Moriah UMC	Hagaman UMC	West Arlington UMC	Lyndonville UMC
Morrisonville UMC	Hyndsville UMC *	West Hebron UMC *	Marshfield United Church *
Newcomb UMC	Malden Bridge UMC	Windsor UMC *	Monkton Federated UMC
Plattsburgh UMC	Mayfield UMC		Montgomery UMC
Pottersville UMC	Middleburgh UMC		Montpelier UMC
Quaker Springs UMC	Northampton UMC *		Morrisville UMC
Raceville UMC	North Chatham UMC		Rice Hill UMC
Riparius/Wevertown/Johnsburg UMC	Rensselaer: Broadway UMC		Riverton UMC *
Sanford's Ridge UMC *	Rotterdam UMC		Shelburne UMC
Saratoga Springs UMC	Schenectady: First UMC		St. Albans UMC
South Glens Falls UMC	Schenectady: Carman UMC		St. Albans Bay UMC
Speculator UMC	Schenectady: Eastern Parkway UMC		St. Johnsbury UMC
West Fort Ann UMC *	Schenectady: Faith UMC		Underhill United Church *
Whitehall UMC	Slingerlands UMC		Union Village UMC
Wilmington/Whiteface UMC	Voorheesville UMC		United Church of Thetford *
Wilton: Trinity UMC	Wells UMC		Waterbury Center UMC
			Waterville Union
			Williamstown Federated *
			White River Junction UMC *

*The following churches are paid 100% for the year in the apportioned funds listed***

<u>Adirondack</u>	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Embury</u>	<u>Green Mountain</u>
Argyle UMC 6	Albany: McKownville UMC 6	Bennington UMC 6	Barre UMC
Bloomington UMC 1*	Albany: Trinity UMC 6	Center Brunswick UMC 1*	Binghamville UMC 6
Champlain Three Steeples UMC 6	Broadalbin UMC 23456	Clifton Park UMC 13456	Bristol Federated 6
Ellenburg/Ellenburg Center UMC 6	Burnt Hills UMC 6	Eagle Bridge UMC 6	Elmore UMC 2345*
Hartford UMC 126	Edinburg UMC 6	Grafton UMC 12345	Essex Junction UMC 23456
Keene UMC 6	Esperance-Sloansville UMC 12345	Johnsonville UMC 6	Fairfax United Church 6
Keeseville UMC 2345	Fort Plain UMC 345	Jonesville UMC 6	Greensboro Bend 1
Long Lake UMC 6	Gallupville UMC 345	Mechanicville UMC 16	Hardwick United 1*
Mooers UMC 6	Gloversville: Foothills UMC 45	Pittstown UMC 16	Highgate UMC 12345
North Creek UMC 6	Gloversville: North Main UMC 3456	Round Lake UMC 6	Lincoln United 1*
North Granville UMC 6	Huntersland UMC 1*	Shaftsbury UMC 16	Middlesex UMC 6
Peru Community Church 345*	Latham UMC 16	Shushan UMC 1*	New Hope UMC 12345
Reber UMC 12*	Mineral Springs UMC 1*	South Cambridge UMC 6	Northfield Parish 6
Saranac UMC 13456	Niverville-Chatham Center UMC 5*	South Reading UMC 6	North Ferrisburg UMC 12345
Saranac Lake UMC 6	Northville UMC 6	South Royalton Federated 6	Rochester Federated Church 2*
Schuylerville UMC 16	Ravena UMC 6	Troy: Cornerstone Community 6	Swanton UMC 6
South Corinth UMC 126	Schenectady: Stanford UMC 13456	Troy: Pawling Ave UMC 12345	West Addison UMC 12345
Ticonderoga UMC 3456	Scotia UMC 6	Valley Falls UMC 16	West Burke UMC 6
Upper Jay UMC 6	South Bethlehem UMC 6	Weston UMC 6	Wolcott UMC 6
Warrensburg UMC 6		West Sand Lake UMC 6	

**1=Admin. Apportionment; 2=World Service & Conf. Benevol.; 3=Ministerial Ed. Fund; 4=Black College Fund; 5=African Univer. Fund; 6=Pension Fund

*Church is not responsible for pension payment because it either doesn't have a pastor or is being served by a pastor from another denomination or annual conference.

The Honor Roll reflects payments received in the Treasurer's Office by the quarterly report deadline. For questions or concerns, contact the Treasurer's Office at (518) 584-8214 or (800) 684-9377, ext. 16, or e-mail lrobinson@troyac.org.

Camp Summer Programs Director is homegrown 'kid'

By Sandra Brands

As a child, Katie Taylor spent summers at Covenant Hills Camp near Cabot, Vt. As a teen, she was a Counselor-in-Training (CIT). Eventually, she became a counselor, then the volunteer director of the camp as well as a supervisor for the counselors.

This summer, Taylor will be the Summer Programs Director, overseeing the camping ministry at Covenants Hills while Executive Director Todd Marlow and his family head to Australia and New Zealand for the summer—or rather winter.

"She's really a homegrown kid," said Marlow. She also helped the camp earn its accreditation through the American Camp Association in 2007, he said.

His leave won't change the operation of the camp. "I will still be Katie's supervisor, long distance," he said. "We're going to maintain communications over the summer through cell phone and e-mail."

Taylor said she's very excited about her new position at the camp, in part because it will allow her to spend the entire summer at the camp.

For the last two years, that hasn't been possible. Her job with the Frost Valley, Vt., YMCA prevented her from spending the entire summer at the camp.

Taylor, a member of the Barre Congregational Church, graduated from Castleton State College in 2005 with a degree in Sociology and a license to teach kindergarten through sixth grade students.

"After that, I spent a year traveling in Australia and New Zealand," she said, adding she was accompanied by two people she worked with at Covenant Hills and they visited one of the camp's international



Swimming is a favorite at Covenant Hills Camp in Vermont. The Christian camp offers a variety of traditional and not-so-traditional camps beginning June 28.



Katie Taylor

staff while traveling. She worked as a nanny and a swim teacher while traveling, then took advantage of the location to visit New Zealand where she taught swimming.

As the Summer Programs Director, Taylor will oversee the running of the camp, working with both permanent and volunteer staff as well as with campers. She will also help run all camp events.

"I really enjoy watching [children] have new experiences they can't have at home," Taylor said. "I work with younger kids and when they pass the swim test, the look on their faces—they're so happy and their excitement about being at camp is infectious."

"I'm really looking forward to the summer," she said. "I think it's going to be a great summer for both campers and staff."

Great summer planned

Marlow agrees with Taylor's assessment.

"We have some neat camp programs," he said.

"Kids for Peace will be returning to Covenant Hills. Right now they are seeking volunteers and volunteer donations to support the program."

Kids for Peace is camp designed to meet the behavioral and mental health needs of children, pre-adolescents and teens facing crisis in their lives.

Camp Agape, a camp for children whose parent or parents are incarcerated, will also return.

"It's the second year we're fully covenanted with Camp Agape," Marlow said. "Last year, we formed a covenant with the program to provide two weeks of camp for the children."

And, of course, there will be traditional—and some not-so-traditional—camps such as Chef's Special, Coastal Camp, Medieval Quest, Rock Band Camp and cheerleading.

Celebrating 20 years

One of the major events happening at Covenant Hills Camp this summer is its 20th anniversary celebration, "Celebrating 20 Years of Christian Loving and Caring," which will be held on Saturday, Aug. 22.

Covenant Hills Camp is a joint program of Troy Conference of The United Methodist Church and the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Both groups committed to providing the children of Vermont with a Christian, non-denominational camping program, Marlow said. It is one of the only camping programs in the United States jointly run by two denominations, he added.

Looking to the future

The camping program will not only celebrate the success of its first 20 years, it will celebrate the next 20 years, when it becomes part of the New England Annual Conference, Marlow said.

"We're closing out the chapter with Troy Conference," he said, "and we're going to deeply miss the people and boards we've worked with; we've had a great relationship with Skye Farms, and with Harold [Shippey, former Executive Director of the Troy Conference Camping and Retreats Ministry] over the years."

In July 2010, Troy Conference will divide along

state lines. The conferences' New York churches will become part of the Upper New York Episcopal Area, while the churches of Vermont will join the New England Annual Conference. Conversations with representatives of the New England Conference program have been positive, Marlow said.

"We are close to the Connecticut River Valley of New Hampshire and some of our campers from New Hampshire are less than an hour away," he said. "With the transition, there seems to be a feeling that there won't be a change overnight. We'll be changing conferences, but not necessarily doing things differently. There will be some transition but that will be over time."

Over the next year, Marlow said, Covenant Hills Camp and the four New England Conference camps and retreats will begin promoting each other's programs. Covenant Hills will be added to the New England Annual Conference web site, and the New England camps—Camp Aldersgate in North Scituate, R.I., Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop, Me., Rolling Ridge Conference and Retreat Center in North Andover, Ma, and Wanahee United Methodist Center in Meredith, N.H., will be included on Covenant Hill's web site.

"It's a brand new start for us," Marlow said.

On June 29, the Rev. Jim McPhee, Assistant to Bishop Peter Weaver of the New England Annual Conference, will spend a day at the camp and will experience "how we do things when the camp is in full swing with kids," Taylor said.

McPhee will also be the keynote speaker for the event. Music will be provided by Steve Lindholm

Visitors will have a chance to tour the camp, go hiking and swimming and play games.

The camp's annual booster dinner will be held at Vision Pond Pavilion beginning at 5 p.m. Tickets for the dinner are \$35 per person, \$60 per couple. Reservations are required for the dinner. To make reservations, send a check, payable to Covenant Hills, and send it to David Murphy, 49 Haggatt Road, Montpelier, Vt. 05602.

Learn more about the summer program at Covenant Hills by visiting the Troy Conference web site at www.troyac.org.