



UPPER NEW YORK UNITED METHODIST ADVOCATE

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Being God's love with our neighbors in all places

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Volume 2, Issue 9 - September 2011

Going out on their own Young clergy say first appointments can feel isolated

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate Writer

Location, location, location. That's the classic line about what's important when it comes to real estate, and it's also a critical issue for young clergy in the Upper New York Area, says Rev. John Martin, who, at 29, is the youngest ordained pastor in the Upper New York Annual Conference. "Young clergy do not have a lot of seniority; appointments tend to be more challenging, which is the worst case scenario," Martin said. "A person brand new with limited experience shouldn't be placed out in the middle of nowhere, but that's the way it works out."

Martin was among the young clergy who met with Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews at a forum in March, and said he asked the bishop: "Is this even on your radar when making appointments? The bishop said 'yes.' But, obviously, we're in an imperfect world."

To compensate for that imperfection, young clergy are turning to the Internet to help them connect and combat any sense of isolation.

Jenny Smith, 29, associate pastor at Anchor Park UMC and East Anchorage UMC in Alaska, and a contributor to the UMC Young Clergy Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/umcyoungclergy>), says the Internet helps.

"(The Facebook page) has connected young clergy," said Smith. "People were feeling isolated and needed support, someone to talk to when they are out there serving in a rural town."

"It's almost as if we are in ministry in neighboring communities," Martin said of reaching other clergy using Skype and Facebook. "We can share advice."

"It's a tremendous base for pastoral care – see how people are feeling, check in with each other," Smith said. "It's a chance to connect – witnessing and telling the story of God and the Church."

Talking to each other offers a form of support young clergy



Photo illustration by Beth DiCocco

Young clergy say they sometimes feel as if they're all alone, but they often get support from each other by connecting on the Internet. (Background photo by Salvatore Iovene/pulpit photo by UMCOM).

if our new conference was going to come together, to build relationships.

"The relationship piece is the most important. All the structures are established, but if people don't know each other, you're not going to build the foundation you need," she said.

Martin, who has attended the retreats, likes the lack of structure.

"One meeting the group went sledding," he said. "Really

gy do not get from mentors or older clergy, Martin said.

"You don't feel like you have to know everything; you can share not only your strengths, but your weaknesses," he said.

When talking with more seasoned colleagues, said Martin, "You don't want to look as if you don't know how to do your job or are groping around in the dark."

Ten young clergy, including Smith, were invited to Nashville, Tenn., by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in March 2009 to discuss "how we could help young clergy connect."

The result was the United Methodist Young Clergy website (<http://umcyoungclergy.com>), but even as one of its founders, Smith said she's relieved to see that people don't see the Internet as a replacement for face-to-face interaction.

Face to face, she said, will "always be the number one way (to connect); the way Jesus was with people."

Rev. Beth Quick, pastor at East Syracuse UMC, seems to agree with that idea. For the past couple of years, Quick has been organizing retreat-like gatherings for young clergy in the emerging Upper New York Conference.

"It was just something I had in mind," said Quick, 32. "I felt it was important,

Continued on pages 4 & 5



HANDS4NY on the menu for October

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate Writer

Around the Conference work is under way to prepare for the upcoming HANDS4NY impact day events.

We talked to coordinators in the Crossroads and Oneonta districts about what they will be doing on Oct. 15.

Other districts are still finalizing plans, but their ideas demonstrate just how many ways there are to fight hunger, and that the many projects offer virtually everyone – of all ages and abilities – a chance to participate.

Here's some of what's being planned:

Crossroads District

They're dividing the district into three sections – north, central and south – and hope to do gleaning in each of those three areas, said Rev. Elyse Skiles, who is leading the effort in the Crossroads District. At this writing, Skiles and the committee were working to find other farms to participate.

Gleaning is the process of gathering any produce that's left in the field after the farmers have done their harvesting. There will be a project planned at Matthew 25 farm for the morning.

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

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STORY IDEAS?

The *Advocate* is always looking for news and story ideas.

If your church is doing something you would like to share with *Advocate* readers, 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.

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Meet David Masland, Binghamton DS

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate writer

Binghamton District Super-
intendent Rev. David Masland
is a dog lover.

Masland didn't say whether
his two dogs – a golden
retriever, Eli, and a beagle
named
Rosie –
know the
command
"speak,"
but they
have led
him into
some in-
teresting
discus-
sions
about faith.



MASLAND

"My wife, Leslie, and I
have an interest in dogs that's
brought us into relationship
with dog lovers," he said; and
the "informal dog park" near
their home is a weekend gath-
ering place for dog owners,
who get a chance to talk while
their pets enjoy a run.

"The biggest group gathers
on Sunday mornings," Masland
said, "and it's been interesting

to get to know those people.
In our conversations ... it's not
that they're not interested in
faith, but the church is not
the place they're going to get
their 'God time.'"

Spending time with these
folks who get their God time
out in the field with their
dogs has, for the Maslands,
been "an opportunity for us
to build relationships outside
the church."

Masland said that every-
one's hobbies can present
similar opportunities.

"That can happen for
anybody in the church – if
they're in a golf league or fish
or hike or quilt or whatever,"
he said, "and those passions
bring them into contact with
people. (We need to) see
those as potential church con-
tacts; opportunities to engage
in conversations about faith."

"It should not be hard" to
get those conversations going
and, he said, "it should be
natural to use your interests
and hobbies and passions."

David and Leslie Masland
celebrated their 29th an-

niversary in July. The couple
has two sons; Josh, 26, who is
serving as an assistant pastor
in Carlisle, Pa.; he is married
to Ashlinn. Mark, 24, has a
writing degree and is looking
into nursing. Mark was to be
married this summer.

Seeking and finding God
outside of a church building is
something Masland likes about
his job, he said. He enjoys
the process of creating new
churches. "Not new build-
ings, he said, but "new faith
communities in places where
people already gather, public
places."

"I really believe that's
where God is calling us pas-
tors and lay people to build
relationships with people
in our neighborhood," said
Masland.

And while the creation of
a new Annual Conference
comes with some growing
pains, he said, such as adjust-
ing to its much larger size,
there are opportunities.

One of those is a vision
statement that puts the em-
phasis outside the Church.

"God is calling us to get
less focused on ourselves
and more focused on peo-
ple around us outside the
Church," he said. "God is
working in the lives of people
outside the Church; and I
really believe as we build re-
lationships with those people
and we see what God is al-
ready doing in their lives, and
kind of come alongside them
in what God is doing – instead
of trying to get them to come
to our church – there'll be a
lot more joy in our ministry."

But it can be a challenge,
he said, because it's something
"we don't know how to do."

"What we know how to
do is do church, do church
stuff, and we don't know how
to do what I'm talking about,"
he said. "It's intimidating
for us. That's what makes it
hard."

That's where the dog walk-
ing – or knitting or whatever
someone's hobby is – comes
in.

"We just need to jump in
and use our passions to build
relationships," Masland said.



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Walking the labyrinth helps member "get ready to face the world..."

Elma UMC says walk this way ...

LABYRINTHS

- Despite sharing a name with the confusing maze that contained the Minotaur of Greek mythology, labyrinths have only one entrance and exit; there are no dead ends or crossing paths.

- The Romans adapted the ancient labyrinth symbol as a decorative floor pattern. Christian artists of Medieval times adapted that Roman pattern to use on the floors of cathedrals – most famously at Chartres Cathedral in Northern France.

- It is unknown exactly what these labyrinths were used for, but they symbolize the path of the soul through life. Medieval pilgrims re-enacted this, following the path of the labyrinth in the cathedral on their knees as a means of prayer, or to symbolize the journey to Jerusalem, and sometimes as a ritual to mark the end of a pilgrimage. People walked it on the eve of their baptism or confirmation or as an aid to contemplative prayer in Holy Week, and as an illustration both of the life of the Christian and of the life of Christ.

- After medieval times, labyrinths fell into disuse; many were destroyed during the 17th to 19th centuries.

- In recent years, labyrinths have been rediscovered as a Christian spiritual tool, most notably through Dr. Lauren Artress at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco (www.gracecathedral.org).

Source: www.labyrinth.org.uk

That's Shirley Schildkamp, chairman of the Memorial Committee at Elma UMC (near Buffalo), talking about the labyrinth the church dedicated one year ago this month.

"It's hard to explain how truly enriching it can be," she said of walking the labyrinth. "(As I've) grown older, (and have) so much on my mind, it helps me to focus my thoughts, and I feel my prayers are more effective ... the labyrinth helps my spiritual life – I know when it's time to walk the labyrinth. It puts things in perspective for me."

Despite the labyrinth's origins in Greek mythology as a complex maze, the Elma UMC labyrinth, which is about 40 feet across, is not a complicated pattern. The design is their own, based in part on a photo in a magazine and some books on labyrinths. It was built by a local contractor.

The labyrinth was created using pav-

ers, making it, Schildkamp said, "practically maintenance-free."

The idea for the project came after a few church members attended Catch the Spirit, hosted by the former Western New York Conference.

"There was a woman with a canvas labyrinth," Schildkamp said. "We became enamored with the idea."

So the project took shape on a vacant lot beside the church. A memorial walk leads from the labyrinth to the church; the sale of dedicated bricks along that path helped raise money for the project, which got the go-ahead when two-thirds of the needed funds were raised. Construction began in July 2010.

While some may not be familiar with the labyrinth as a Christian spiritual tool, Schildkamp stresses that it's very easy to walk the labyrinth, and the church has posted a sign with simple instructions for those who haven't done it before.

"We suggest that people say the Lord's Prayer or think of one word – such as love, peace, forgiveness – and repeat it," Schildkamp said; there are "so many ways" to use the labyrinth, she said.

"You can stay in the center for as long as you want," she said. "You slowly exit, ready to face the world – or more equipped to face the world."

The labyrinth, which is near the Elma Village Green, is open to the public and is wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.

"There's no wrong way to walk a labyrinth," she said. "Every time you do, the experience will be different."

While she's never timed herself, Schildkamp estimates that she spends 15 to 20 minutes when she walks the labyrinth. "It depends on how much time I spend in the center," she said. "There are days when I don't want to leave the center."

– Beth DiCocco, Advocate writer



Photos provided

ABOVE RIGHT: Church members gather for the dedication of the labyrinth on Sept. 26, 2010. **BELOW:** Folks demonstrate walking the labyrinth for the local NBC affiliate WGRZ, which did a segment for *The Today Show* on Aug. 10, 2010. **BELOW LEFT:** The first bricks were laid on July 8, 2010. Using pavers to create the labyrinth made it less expensive and easier to maintain, said Shirley Schildkamp, chairman of the Memorial Committee that led the project.



ELMA UMC LABYRINTH

WHEN: The labyrinth is open to the public and is available at any time.

WHERE: 2991 Bowen Road, Elma, N.Y. (Niagara Frontier District)

VISIT: To make arrangements for a group visit with a short talk, contact the church at (716) 652-5427

SEE IT: The following links offer photos and video

A link to a WGRZ news report on the labyrinth: <http://www.wgrz.com/video/default.aspx?bctid=506949817001#/Elma+Church+Builds+a+Labyrinth/506949817001>

A link to the Elma UMC blog about the labyrinth: <http://elmaumclabyrinth.blogspot.com/>



Photo by Maidstone Mulenga

Some of the Upper New York Annual Conference's young clergy members met with Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews (far left) and Director of Connectional Ministries Bill Gottschalk-Fielding (far right) in March to talk about the issues and challenges they face.

Young clergy connect, find support

Continued from cover

very refreshing, gathering in a way that was not structured or worship oriented. ... (it) seems to be a ripe opportunity to build those relationships and have those conversations."

That's important, the young clergy say, because a sense of isolation can be caused as much by a distance in years as a distance in miles.

Young clergy are "dealing all the time with people who say 'you are the same age as my child or same age as my grandchild;' you want to be respected as a person, and not judged on your age or face," Martin said.

Martin said some of his congregants are "amazed I can string three sentences that make sense together." It's easy, he said, to "leap over the bar set for me" because it's pretty low.

But he knows that showing people who you are and what you're capable of necessarily takes time.

"That's reality," he said. "That respect and credibility — they're earned."

Still, he'd say to those who focus on his age: "Don't judge me until you have the opportunity to work with me."

And, he points out, age and experience are not the same thing. While younger pastors can be underestimated by their congregations, second-career pastors, who are older but don't necessarily have more experience, can face the opposite challenge.

"There are a whole bunch

of clergy who are new, but don't look young," Martin said. "Those people need the same amount of attention. The local church doesn't see them as new," and he said, doesn't give them the same benefit of the doubt that's given to younger new clergy.

Smith, who is on track to be ordained next year, said that a review of her performance indicated as a weakness relating to those much older than she.

"Young clergy should be placed where their strengths are," she said. "If it's my strength to relate to college students and young parents, I should be placed in that context."

"... I can listen and offer a hug and a prayer, but can't pretend to understand (an older person's experiences)," she said.

That's why, Smith said, younger clergy need "healthy, dynamic older pastors."

"We need that encouragement, experience and wisdom — even if we butt heads," she said.

Some of the challenges young clergy face are concerns shared by pastors of all ages, Quick said.

"Young clergy, as are all clergy, are concerned about trying to balance their family needs and appointment needs," she said. "Like the rest of the country, really, we're concerned about health care and benefits and putting it all together and paying the bills."

But there are joys, too.

For Smith, it is the relationships.

"People told me that was what it was all about," she said, and she finds that's true.

"It's just unbelievable," she said. "The responsibility and opportunity to preach and speak into someone's life for 20 minutes each Sunday. I have an increasingly growing reverence for that."

"(I used to think the) sermon was about me and what I can say that was profound," she said, "but sermons have become about helping (the congregation) become closer disciples of Christ, and helping me to do that."

"I think realizing that you're actually impacting someone's spiritual life during many of life's milestones," Quick said, is "overwhelming."

"As a young person going into ministry, realizing that as a pastor you'll be at all those significant moments in people's lives is very powerful," she said. "Experiencing it for the first time, there's nothing quite like that ... The first time you get to be in a certain situation ... getting to say those words 'I baptize you' is overwhelmingly wonderful."

On July 1, Martin headed to Lake Placid from his current post with two rural churches — McDonough UMC and Oxford UMC.

He characterized his experience with appointments as "wonderful," but the move holds some promise, too.

"There are nine churches in Lake Placid," he said, "plenty of clergy."

Some advice

We asked the young clergy members we spoke to about the advice they would give to those who are entering their first or second appointments. Here's what they had to say:

Rev. John Martin

"Ministry, like life, is filled with highs and lows, peaks and valleys," he said. "Persevere, continue on; you'll want to achieve those peaks, but know that those valleys are part of the journey."



He also said it's important to make connections with other clergy.

"In Oxford, we have the connection with other clergy, not necessarily United Methodists," he said, adding that one of the biggest sources of connection for him is the Episcopal priest in town.

"We need to be ecumenical in our connection with other clergy," he said.

Rev. Beth Quick

Quick agreed with Martin that relationships are critical. Not necessarily with other young clergy, she said, but with other colleagues in general.

Otherwise you can feel isolated. "You feel like it's you and the congregation, and you're out there on your own," she said. "It's heightened in geographic areas where new pastors are appointed.



In towns a little more isolated (it can be a very different) experience after seminary where they're in community all the time.

"Be intentional about building relationships (with) people you know you can turn to when you have struggles, otherwise it's a sure way to burn yourself out," she said.

And, Quick advises, learn to set boundaries; something she thinks many find difficult in their first appointments.

"Congregations want healthy pastors, they want pastors to take vacation and be ongoing about their self care, but pastors themselves can create a situation (where they work too much) and if they set the model, the congregation is going to follow," she said. "The world will not fall apart if you're not working 20 hours a day."

Rev. Jenny Smith

Smith said she feels as if she's still taking advice, but told a story about arriving at her new appointment in Alaska:

We had driven from Ohio — through Canada — and we were just exhausted. The people of the parsonage had filled the house with food, it was freshly painted, with some new stuff; we felt so welcome by these people.

The first pastor's wife had planted rhubarb, and it was coming up everywhere. I'm not a big garden person; I had no idea what to do.

The women at the church said, we'll teach you how to make rhubarb pie.

"I accidentally made it with Splenda," she said. "It was horrible. I was so proud, but it didn't taste well."

"I was so empowered by trying," she said. "Now, this summer, we're planting tons of things."

The lesson, she said, is to remember that "You are learning the culture and values of where you are" when you come to a new appointment, and that "(your) culture is not at the center of the world."

CLERGY AGE TRENDS — A 2010 STUDY

There are more young clergy than 10 years ago, according to a 2010 study by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Between 2009 and 2010, the number of young elders, deacons and local pastors (those younger than 35) increased. (Visit <http://www.churchleadership.com/> and click on "Clergy Age Trends 1985-2010" under recent research).

However, for the first time, more than half of the active elders in the United States are now between the ages of 55 and 72. Elders who are 35 to 54 comprise only 45 percent of the nation's 17,293 elders.

Highlights of the 2010 Report

Average Age of United Methodist Clergy Reaches a Historic High

- For the first time, just over half of active elders are between age 55 and 72.

- The median age of elders is 55, the highest in history, up from 50 in 2000 and 45 in 1973.

- As expected, the total number of clergy retirements went down dramati-

cally in 2009 because of the economic downturn (811 compared to 1,113 in 2008).

- Even with fewer retirements in 2009, the average retirement age still went down by half a year to 64 in 2009.

The Percentage of Middle Age Elders has Shrunk Dramatically Since 2000

- The percentage of elders aged 35 to 54 continues to shrink, from 65 percent of all active elders in 2000 to 45 percent in 2010.

The Number of Young United Methodist Clergy Grew in the Past Decade

- There are more young elders, deacons and local pastors than 10 years ago.
- While fewer in number than young elders, young deacons and local pastors are growing in number faster than young elders.

- In 1985, there were 24 young elders for every one young local pastor. In 2010, there are just two young elders for every young local pastor.



Facebook keeps young clergy in touch

The UMC Young Clergy Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/umcyoungclergy>) offers a way for young clergy to connect with peers in their conferences and across the nation.

A couple of posts offer some advice to those entering their first or second appointments.

Andrew Amodei, associate pastor at First Broad Street United Methodist Church in Kingsport, Tenn., October 2010.

“Don’t be afraid to be who you are. You’re young, ambitious, eager, and most of all, following your calling. Follow where Christ is leading you. Seek out the wisdom of those who have come before you. Listen to your laity. Serve God and serve your people. If serving both falls in line with the system count it as a blessing.”

“Take Captain Kirk’s advice, ‘Don’t let them promote you. Don’t let them transfer you. Don’t let them do anything that takes you off the bridge of that ship, because while you’re there ... you can make a difference.’ Translation: don’t seek to be a district superintendent or a bishop. Enjoy being the pastor God has called you to be. Be the next (insert your name here), not the next Rob Bell or Adam Hamilton. Your ministry is important.

“You are still flesh and blood, weak and subject to human frailty. Most temptation doesn’t seek us out, we lead ourselves into it. Take all of your vacation days. Work hard when you’re not on vacation so that your church will grant you more. Honor your family. It is likely you made covenant with them months if not years before you did with your annual conference. Set boundaries, not so that you won’t become close to your people, but in order that you may not betray those who love you the most.

“Build community with other pastors – enjoy time of continuing education with other clergy. Don’t stop learning and adapting or in 30 years you’ll have to deal with another group just like we are today! And please, leave your church better than you found it. The next pastor will thank you. Finish the nominations process before he/she

takes over. Roll out the red carpet for them. Lead your congregation through a transition. Pray they love the next pastor so much that they are thankful you’re gone. Don’t be offended when a former pastor sends a card or does a funeral or wedding during your tenure.

“Do not take yourself seriously, it’s not about you. It’s about Jesus. In the end, after all, it’s really about what Jesus thinks. Honor Christ above all else. The rest will work out.”

Alex Stroud, pastor at Mt. Bethel UMC, McDonough, Ga., October 2010.

“If you feel that God is calling you to be a Senior Pastor or a Lead Pastor, take an appointment as an Associate Pastor for at least a year.

“A year is long enough to learn what you’re going to. Two years will tattoo those lessons to your very being. If you can, choose to serve under a well-respected, solid Senior Pastor that is willing to disciple you and let you take on some real responsibilities. Be ambitious. Use that time to take some of the biggest risks and make the biggest mistakes.

“I wasn’t meant to be an Associate Pastor. God didn’t wire me that way, but the things I witnessed and learned prepared me for appointments where I would be calling the shots. It also gave me a great appreciation and respect for anyone who will one day serve as an Associate Pastor with me.

“You are one minister in a long line. Many come before you and hopefully many will come after you. Be the strongest link in the chain that you can be. Learn to preach from the best. Learn pastoral care from the best. Learn church administration from the best.

“As long as your (sic) challenged and stretched, stay in that role. Once you become comfortable, move on – chances are it will be time for you to take on greater challenges with your own church. Even after you transition, don’t just keep close to the pastors around you that are like you. Find a couple of older, even retired, pastors that will pray for you, encourage you, and hold you accountable.”

Discussing Christianity with a ‘Yankee Jewish feminist’

New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine, author of The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus, will be coming to Sky Lake Camp & Retreat Center Sept. 16-17 to present “Understanding Jesus By Understanding First Century Judaism,” an ecumenical seminar for clergy and laity.

We asked Levine about what Jews and Christians can learn from each other. Here’s what she had to say:

You’re Jewish. What made you choose the New Testament as your life’s work?

My parents taught me that Jews and Christians share much in common, from Scriptural texts to many theological beliefs to moral mandates. Then, when I was 7 years old, a classmate said to me, “You killed our Lord.” I did not understand how, given the connections between Judaism and Christianity, such a view could arise. I started asking questions. Today I am still asking questions of both the Old Testament/Tanakh and the New Testament, but I also have the critical knowledge needed to provide some answers.

You have written: “Do not seek artificial connections in interfaith dialogue” Can you offer an example of an artificial vs. a genuine connection?

Interfaith dialogue falters when participants seek only points of harmony rather than have the courage to explore differences. There are points where Jews and Christians will not agree; indeed, there are points where Jews disagree with Jews, and Christians with Christians; it’s sometimes said that “United Methodist” is an oxymoron, and if I do not disagree with my rabbi about something once a month, one of us is not listening closely. The important step here is that we attempt to understand these alternative views, and that we do not demonize the people who hold them.

“In the differences that have kept us apart lie the seeds that ultimately can bring us together.” Can you talk about what those seeds are?

The understanding of Jesus of Nazareth is a major point of division between Jews and Christians. Yet perhaps today he can serve as a bridge between Synagogue and Church. For Christians, Jesus has to be more than simply a first-century rabbi, but he has to be that as well. Understanding Jesus in his first-century context can help Jews and Christians recover our common roots.

What makes you hopeful that Christians and Jews will be able to come together and examine their faith traditions in peace?

I have had the privilege of participating, across the globe, in programs that bring Jews and Christians together to explore commonalities and differences. I have seen first-hand how a deeper understanding of what we share and how we came to separate leads both to mutual respect and to deeper knowledge of our own traditions.



Amy-Jill Levine at Sky Lake

WHEN: Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16 & 17; arrive 1 p.m. Friday for coffee and fellowship. Event concludes at 1:30 p.m. Saturday

WHERE: Founders’ Lodge, Sky Lake Camp and Retreat Center, Windsor, N.Y. Sky Lake is conveniently located between exits 80 and 81 of Route 17/ Interstate 86, approximately 6 miles east of Windsor. Visit: www.skylakecenter.org/directions.

REGISTER: Space is limited to 200. To register online visit www.skylakecenter.org and click on upcoming events.

It is safe to say that most Jews know more about Christianity than most Christians know about Judaism. How can Christians seeking that knowledge best go about finding it?

Too many people today are religiously illiterate; we do not understand our neighbors’ beliefs and practices, and often we do not understand our own. Worse, we are sometimes afraid to ask for fear of being perceived to be ignorant or bigoted.

You’ve talked about how Jews and Christians may read the same text and take something very different from it. For example, many Christians point to Galatians 3:28: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus,” as a message of tolerance. Can you talk about another interpretation of that passage and how to be more sensitive to that when reading Scripture?

Scriptural passages always take on new meanings, since all readers read through their own lenses. For example, many of my students celebrate Galatians 3.28, which proclaims that in Christ Jesus there is “no longer Jew or Greek.” As a Jew, I find the erasure of that identity highly problematic. Here dialogue can help: It is always good to hear through each other’s ears.

How should the faithful – both Jewish and Christian – deal with the ugly, misogynistic, sometimes hateful material found in their respective texts? How do we end the practice of holding up those bits as a defense for intolerance, yet accept the other teachings?

All religions have problematic elements. But theology does not stop in the past, or at the close of the scriptural canon. What matters ultimately is how people who claim those texts understand them today. Put in theological terms, revelation continues within the communities of faith.

How do you reconcile your faith and your New Testament work with your feminism?

Feminist interests as I define them – for example, that women’s interpretations be heard, that questions of gender and sexuality be addressed with honesty and compassion, that the text be used as a rock to stand upon rather than as a rock thrown to do damage – inform my readings of the Bible. Feminism and biblical studies are, in my view, complementary rather than contradictory.

What do you want people who attend the September event to come away with?

At the end of the weekend, Jews and Christians should have greater knowledge of our commonalities and of how to correct the false witness we through ignorance bear against each other. Ideally, our increased knowledge will lead to deeper respect for our neighbors, enriched familiarity with our own tradition, and further conversations about where we agree, why we disagree, and how we can work together.

Social media

UMC Young Clergy Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/umcyoungclergy>)

United Methodist Young Clergy website (<http://umcyoungclergy.com>)

Rev. Jenny Smith said she’s one of four or five who post articles, and “there’s more that could be done if people have vision and excitement and passion.”

If you have that “vision and excitement,” contact Smith via e-mail at jkbsmith@gmail.com

World Methodist Conference – Durban, South Africa

There's hope for world healing – just ask Methodists

By Maidstone Mulenga

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA – When thousands of Methodists and Wesleyans from across the globe converged on the beautiful seaside city of Durban, South Africa, in the second week of August, it was an unprecedented assembly of leaders from churches that share the Methodist tradition.

From the worship moments through plenary sessions to workshops, the World Methodist Conference – with the theme “Jesus Christ – for the Healing of the Nations” – provided much evidence that there is still hope for the world.

About 3,000 delegates from 58 countries attended the conference, organized by the World Methodist Council, which is made up of 77 member churches in 135 countries representing 75 million people.

The seven delegates representing the Upper New York Annual Conference were: Lay Leader **Scott Johnson**, Conference Director of Connectional Ministries **Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding**, Conference Treasurer **Sherri Mackey**, **Rev. Natalie Hanson**, **Rev. Marti Swords-Horrell**, **Rev. Rebecca Laird** and Conference Director of Communications **Rev. Maidstone Mulenga**, who was also working as a media resource person.

Dean of Cabinet **Rev. Dick Barton** and Area Resident **Bishop Marcus Matthews** traveled as members of the World Methodist Council, the governing body.

Crossroads District Superintendent **Rev. Darryl Barrow** served as one of the worship leaders.

The conference also ushered in new leaders for the World Methodist Council. The newly elected World Methodist Council leaders are:

WMC Staff:

- General Secretary: Bishop Ivan Abrahams of the Methodist Church of South Africa.
 - Geneva Secretary: Bishop Heinrich Bolleter, United Methodist Church of Switzerland.
 - Young Adult Coordinator: John Thomas III, African Methodist Episcopal Church of the USA.
- Officers of the WMC:
- President: Bishop Paulo Lockmann, Methodist Church of Brazil.
 - Vice President: Bishop Sarah Francis Davis, AME.

• Treasurer: Kirby Hickey, UMC, USA

Regional presidents:

- Rev. David Bush, Methodist Church of New Zealand
- Bishop Lindsey Davis, UMC, USA
- Gillian Kingston, Methodist Church of Ireland
- Dr. Won Jae Lee, Korean Methodist Church
- Dr. George Mulrain, Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas
- Joshua Rathnam, Church of North India
- Archbishop Michael Stephen, Methodist Church of Nigeria
- Youth representative: Lauren Matthew, South Africa

The election of Bishop Lockmann and Bishop Abrahams as the new president and general sec-



Photos by Maidstone Mulenga

The Upper New York Annual Conference delegation to the World Methodist Conference, from left, back row: Bishop Marcus Matthews, Barbara Matthews, Bill Gottschalk-Fielding, Sherri Mackey, Darryl Barrow, Doug Mackey, Scott Johnson, Rebecca Laird, front row: Natalie Hanson, Marti Swords-Horrell, Gloria Barton, Dick Barton; kneeling: Maidstone Mulenga.

retary respectively, reflect a significant shift in Methodism, one noted by outgoing WMC Council President John Barrett in his opening remarks.

“We have to recognize that the center of gravity of world Methodism is moving south,” Barrett said.

The council noted the admission of the Wesleyan Australian and New Zealand churches. The council also voted to receive the Tanzanian, the Gambian, and the Nepalese Methodist churches into its membership.

The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women elected Ann Connan (Australia) as their president. The World Fellowship of Methodist and Uniting Church Men elected Larry Malone (United States) for a second term as their president. The World Methodist Council approved a new constitution and new by-laws.

One of the highlights of the conference was the presentation of internationally-respected Methodist Peace Award. Recipients are chosen for their work for peace, justice and reconciliation. Past winners include former South African President Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and the grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina.

This year's winner is Rosalind Colwill, a champion of mental health care in Nigeria.

Colwill serves as a mission partner from the British Methodist Church on assignment with the Methodist Church in Nigeria. Colwill, a trained social worker, gathered support – locally and internationally – for a project called Amaudo, or Village of Peace, in the small village of Itumbauzo in southeast Nigeria. Beginning in 1990 she developed a holistic and community-based approach to care; Amaudo Itumbauzo has since become known internationally as a pioneer of mental health care in the region.

The Methodists at the conference also showed their concern about the problem of hunger in the world by donating 100,000 meals to hungry children through international NGO Stop Hunger Now. The delegates donated R200,000 (about \$30,000), which equates to 100,000 meals for vulnerable children.

UNY delegate reflects

Marti Swords-Horrell, pastor/project director, Syracuse Westside Urban Mission at Brown Memorial UMC, described her experience this way:

“It was such a privilege to be able to attend the World Methodist Conference in Durban, South Africa, (last) month to worship and learn with representatives of our sister and brothers in the Wesleyan movement, 75 million strong across the globe. I think so often in this country we tend to shrink our horizons till “the parish is our world”. The WMC was an awe-inspiring reminder of John Wesley’s vision: “the world is our parish!”

“High points certainly included Archbishop Elias Chacour’s speech to the plenary: ‘I thank God I was not born a Christian ... I was born a baby.’ Here in Durban, where Mahatma Gandhi honed his method of nonviolent social change fighting for the rights of the Indian minority for 20 years, Chacour, bishop of Galilee, Melkite Greek Catholic Church, called the assembly to remember that all

persons are born of one blood, whether they now claim the faith of Islam, Judaism, Christianity or none at all. Look Archbishop Chacour up on YouTube to hear more.

“Workshop presenters included the General Board of Global Ministries’ Dr. Neal Christie who led an exploration of the social principles as a gift

of the UMC to the world. Inspiring as well was the visit to the Kwesi HIV and AIDS Ministry at the Wesleyan Centre in Durban, whose mission is ‘building an HIV and AIDS free nation.’ In this nation where 60 percent of the adults are already infected, this church-based ministry aims to help those who test negative to stay negative through early detection and condom distribution. Outreach to vulnerable children is also a priority, since child-headed households due to the deaths of adults from AIDS are 2% of total households and rising in southern Africa.

“Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the WMC for me was the many conversations I would never have had at home: with Bishop Rosemarie Wenner of Germany, learning about a youth-run church in Karlsruhe (near where my sister and family live); with Rev. Jill Vandegeer of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, an open and affirming church that runs its conferences totally by consensus; and hearing more – in Spanish – from Bishop Mario Martinez of the Chile Methodist Church about the cleanup still going on from last year’s earthquake.”

I feel so honored to be part of this worldwide mission-minded family who loves God and our neighbors with such passion and exuberance! Praise God for this vision of one family, drumming and dancing and singing praise across the globe!”



Rev. Marti Swords-Horrell



Members of the Upper New York Area delegation were among the 3,000 Methodists and Wesleyans who gathered in mid-August for the World Methodist Conference in Durban, South Africa.



The Africa University Choir, which toured the Upper New York Area in June, performed during the opening worship and at a special AU celebration.



Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews and his wife during dinner with the UNY delegation. Barbara Matthews laughs after having her face painted with traditional South African markings.



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



'God is Here'

The Conference Council on Youth Ministry (CCYM) has chosen *God is Here* as the theme for its Fall Gatherings. God is here. Love matters here. Peace begins here. Joy abounds here. Hope lives here – are all part of the theme.

ALBANY AREA First UMC Schenectady Nov. 11-12

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

Registrations must be postmarked on or before Nov. 1

ROCHESTER Radisson Riverside Nov. 18-19

Accommodations, including programming: \$140, single; \$110 each, double or triple, and \$80 each quad or quint. All meals are on your own. Registrations must be postmarked on or before Nov. 8.

Send all registration forms (below), including payment, to:
Judy Hipes, 91 Park St., Binghamton, NY 13905
Registration questions? Contact Hipes at: tandj3905@hotmail.com or at (607) 624-2145.

Please complete ALL information on the registration form for ALL individuals attending.

Make checks payable to: Upper New York Annual Conference



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

GUEST REFLECTION

Does tithing mean giving money?

By Rev. Thomas Pullyblank*

During our financial discussions at Annual Conference, much was said about the scriptural basis of tithing.

From the podium and from the floor, speakers for and against the proposed resolutions affirmed that this particular biblical notion was the one that should guide our discussion, our prayer, our parliamentary action and/or subsequent generosity.

This is nothing new.

Tithing, specifically defined in the contemporary context as giving one-tenth of our gross income to the church, has been the guiding measure for giving since at least the beginning of the 16th century, when in Europe, and eventually America, our current consumer-based economy was born.

And therein lies the problem, a problem that nagged me throughout our discussions; a problem I am only now able to fully articulate after several weeks of Bible study, prayer and reflection.

The simple fact is that ancient Israel, whether in the time of the Pentateuch or the Gospels, did not have a consumer-based economy. When the concept of "tithing" was referenced in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, as well as in Nehemiah, Amos and Malachi, it always, with only one exception, meant giving one-tenth of the people's agricultural produce, of the grain threshed on the floor and milled to flour, or of the juice pressed from the grape.

Tithing is closely related in all these passages to the giving of first-fruits or the firstborn, produce (again) or animals that are offered to the community's religious officials. The one exception is in Deuteronomy 14:24-26, which requires a giver to exchange his crops for silver only if "that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your tithe" (Duet 14:24, NIV).

The measure "one-tenth" is also used several times in the Hebrew Bible, again mostly in the Pentateuch, and it refers to the amount of the "finest flour" to be added to the sacrificial bread cakes – indeed, a gift more worthy than silver or gold.

The meaning of tithe, or tenth, remains consistent in the New Testament – crops, usually, or first-born animals. We see a twist in the Gospels, however, as putting tithing ahead of other religious obligations is used as an example of how not to structure one's spiritual life.

Jesus says to a group of Pharisees, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former" (Matt 23:23, also Luke 11:42, NIV).

More emphatic is Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 18:10-14, NIV).

We might keep this particular parable in mind when we congratulate ourselves or castigate others over that published list of what churches did and did not pay their apportioned ministry shares to the Upper New York Annual Conference.

But the ambivalence about tithing as an appropriate scriptural basis for our contemporary financial decisions goes far deeper than this. We live in an industrialized, consumer-based economy. The ancient Hebrews did not. We have taken the Hebrew idea of tithing and have redefined it in terms of cash (or checks or credit cards), in terms of the stuff that makes our

economy work.

The problem is that our economy, our way of living by making money and spending it, has left many of our people and churches both financially and spiritually damaged. Yet we, as the Annual Conference, are requiring our people and churches to make money and spend it. Is this spiritually appropriate? Is it scripturally sound? Should our contemporary practice of giving be based on a redefined ancient practice that, in its redefined form, may do injustice to people and churches that have been displaced by our industrialized, consumer-based economy?

To put it differently, by requiring individuals and churches to give money – and only money – are we as an institutional Church limiting the ways in which our people and churches can faithfully respond to God's call to give and to care?

These are the questions that were coming together in my mind as I heard the pained and painful comments during our financial discussions at Annual Conference.

At this point, you readers from country churches might start dreaming of delivering one-tenth of your best hay or one-tenth of your fattest broilers (butchered, plucked and cleaned, please!) to the Annual Conference office in Syracuse. While this may not be the most practical option, or the most desirable one, it would be the one closest to what the ancient Hebrews referred to when they practiced tithing.

Sadly, the apparent absurdity of suggesting it in 2011 shows how limited our authorized means of giving, whether by tithe or by some other measure, has become.

May God have mercy on our self-imposed limitations. May we have mercy on those persons and churches who cannot give one-tenth in cash. And may God guide us to recall another biblical image that can also be used as a basis for our giving, perhaps as usefully as the tithe: The poor widow who gave two small copper coins, and was thus blessed by Jesus (Luke 21:1-4).

*Rev. Thomas Pullyblank is pastor of the Fly Creek and Schuyler Lake United Methodist churches.

Churches will

Churches around the Upper New York Annual Conference will mark the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks with special services and events. For details about the events, contact the host churches. For the most complete, up-to-date list, visit the conference website at www.unyumc.org.

Hannibal UMC, of the E.J. Thomas Cluster, is hosting a service to honor firefighters and EMTs at 7 p.m. Sept. 11 as part of its commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. An honor guard of Hannibal firefighters will enter the sanctuary to place their flag. A bagpiper will then lead the Hannibal and six other fire companies, whose members will be in their dress uniforms, into the sanctuary. There will be refreshments downstairs after the service. The church is located at West and Church streets in Hannibal; it's part of the Crossroads District.

Endwell UMC on Watson Boulevard in Endicott will host a Service of Remembrance and Hope at 9 a.m. Sept. 11. The service will include special music witness from one who went on a mission endeavor shortly after the bombing, and the lighting of candles of hope. The service will take place outside on the Watson Boulevard lawn, weather permitting.

The Lowell UMC will include a time for remembering and healing through scripture, special music and prayer during the morning worship 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 11. Also that day, is the dedication of an Angel Garden to remember those lost on 9/11 and other friends and family who have gone on to be with the Lord. The garden will include stepping stones, plants, pin wheels, angels and other remembrances. The garden will be dedicated at 11 a.m. on Sept. 11. Everyone – including firefighters and police – is invited to this time of remembrance and healing. There will also be a time for fellowship and refreshment. The church is located at Lowell Road and Route 26 in Lowell.

On Sept. 11, **Fonda-Fultonville UMC** is planning a remembrance service during its regular worship hour and to honor service providers in the community during worship and after worship at a light brunch. Worship is 9:15 a.m. followed by brunch at 10:15. Representatives from local volunteer fire departments, the sheriff's department and others have been invited to participate. The church is located at 11 Montgomery St., Fultonville.

Nearby Salem UMC East Stone Arabia at 1254 East Stone Arabia Road, Fort Plain, will have a remembrance during its 11 a.m. worship service that day.

The Otego United Methodist Church plans to hold a dessert concert of remembrance on the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001. "Tribute To America" will be at 7 p.m. Sept. 24, and 2:30 p.m. Sept. 25 in the Church's fellowship hall. Patriotic music will be presented by the choir and instrumentalists as well as poems, narration and a PowerPoint presentation. Choice of desserts and beverages will be offered. Tickets are adults \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door; youth 12 and younger, \$5 advance, \$6 at the door, and are available from any choir member or by calling Helen Groves at (607) 988-2225, Joyce Shultis at (607) 432-8698, or the church at (607) 988-2866 (leave name and phone number). The church is located on Church Street in Otego.

Watertown: Asbury UMC will host a Service of Remembrance, Healing and Hope from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Sept. 11, which will include videos, readings, music and a PowerPoint presentation. Individuals are encouraged to come and go as they choose. The church is at the corner of Parker, Stealing and Franklin streets. The service will acknowledge these specific times of remembrance:

8:46 a.m. – American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center
9:03 a.m. – United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center
9:37 a.m. – American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon
9:59 a.m. – The South Tower collapsed
10:03 a.m. – United Airlines Flight 93 crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pa.
10:28 a.m. – The North Tower collapsed

Letters to the editor

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.

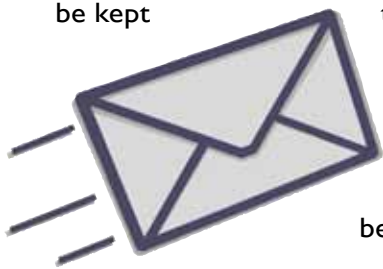
Letters submitted must include your name, address and a daytime phone number.

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 send letters to:
Upper New York Annual Conference
324 University Ave.
3rd Floor
Syracuse, NY 13210

Attn: Letters to the Editor



I remember 9/11 with services and events



File photo by John C. Goodwin

This December 2001 file photo shows the 45-foot-high billboard in the Wall Street district of Manhattan, just two blocks from Ground Zero, that offered passersby a word of encouragement from United Methodists.

The **Moers UMC** will be holding a 9-11 service at 7 p.m. Pastor Al Johnson will share his experience of losing his nephew, Jemal, who was Muslim, when the South Tower of the World Trade Center was hit, and of subsequently sharing "a sacred meal" with Jemal's mom. She was in New York City to receive treatment for cancer; and God's love entered into that period of profound grief to comfort her and Johnson in an amazing way. The church is located at 12 East St. in Moers.

The **Living Waters Parish** will participate in a special worship at 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 11 at Douglas Park in Oriskany Falls. All four of the churches: Oriskany Falls, Bouckville, Deansboro and Madison United Methodist churches – will be worshipping together that day. Other churches in the communities are being invited as well. The American Legion will serve a chicken barbecue following the service.

Penfield UMC is combining the commemoration of Sept. 11 with a CROP Walk. This ecumenical, community-wide event will commemorate the day, but also do something that will make a difference in people's lives. The church is located at 1795 Baird Road, Penfield. The community event is being organized by PEAC, the Penfield Ecumenical Association of Clergy.

First United Methodist Church of Northville, 303 South Main St., will host a community service of remembrance at 7 p.m. on Sept. 11. Churches in the community will participate.

In **Natural Bridge**, plans are under way to have a community-wide heroes appreciation event on Sept. 11. The two churches in town, the Natural Bridge UMC and the SDAC, will co-host a parade down Route 3 and dinner for the town fire department, ambulance corps, police, snowplow crews, and Fort Drum soldiers/families; all of whom will receive small tokens of appreciation for their service to the country and the community.

Local artist Dorothy Woodworth, who is active in the Natural Bridge UMC, has been commissioned to paint a banner in thankful tribute to the local heroes, and it will be dedicated that day and thereafter hang in the community center.

The E.J. Thomas Cluster will be doing a worship service for its churches at 7 p.m. Sept. 11 at **Hannibal UMC**. The service will honor the EMTs, firefighters and police of its communities, and gift certificates will be given.

Rev. Stephen G. Maddox, pastor of the **Camden**

and **Cleveland United Methodist churches**, and Father Paul Mathis, pastor of St. Mary's and St. Bernadette's Roman Catholic churches in Cleveland and Constantia, are planning a joint worship service on Sept. 11 at St. Mary's, which is across the street from the Cleveland UMC. Following the worship service there will be a community memorial service.

At **First United Methodist Church of Oneonta**, 66 Chestnut St., both morning worship services (8:30 and 11 a.m.) will be Services of Remembrance and Hope.

At 4 p.m., First UMC will host a community event, "The Celtic Mass for Peace." This musical liturgy was composed by Sam Guarnaccia and J. Philip Newell (link: <http://www.samguarnaccia.com/>). A professor from Hartwick College will direct the Mass and the band director from the high school will arrange the instrumentation. Local artists are being asked to contribute artwork about peace for an art show in the church; a reception is planned for 7 p.m. Sept. 9.

Sept. 11 services at **Ogdensburg and Morristown United Methodist churches** will honor first responders and remember the anniversary of 9-11.

Services are 9 a.m. at Morristown UMC and at 11 a.m. at Ogdensburg First UMC. All first responders are invited, including local fire departments, ambulance squads, local police, Sheriff's Department, State Troopers and Border Patrol.

In remembrance of Sept. 11, 2001, The **McGraw and Virgil United Methodist churches** will be acknowledging and thanking their local first responders – fire, law enforcement, and medical emergency personnel – who are invited to a special worship service at 9:30 a.m. on Sept. 11 at the McGraw UMC, 20 E. Main St. Everyone is invited to wear their uniforms/badges to this service – including military, legion, scouting and auxiliary personnel as well as firefighters and law enforcement. A special offering will be taken to help support the fire departments' ongoing efforts. Following this service, the McGraw Fire Department will lead a parade of fire apparatus to the McGraw Village Park, where a Blessing of The Fleet and a moment of remembrance of 9/11 will take place. There will be a chicken barbecue from noon until 4 p.m. in the McGraw UMC fellowship hall; there will also be many activities and informational demonstrations throughout the day at the village park.

Andrews Memorial United Methodist Church in North Syracuse will host a 9-11 Concert put together by John Harnois. The concert will be at 3:30 p.m. Sept. 11 at the church at 106 Church St. This is the concert's ninth year. An offering for Somalia relief, through UMCOR, will be collected at the concert.

The Apalachin's Park Terrace Community and Apalachin United Methodist churches, Endicott's Campville UMC, Little Meadows UMC, Owego's Gibson Corners and Whittemore Hill United Methodist churches will take part in a Special Remembrance Community Service on 9/11 that will include reflections from speakers who went to Ground Zero to help others during that difficult time, including EMTs with the Apalachin Fire Department. The service will be at 7 p.m. Sept. 11 at the Apalachin UMC, 303 Pennsylvania Ave.

Christ United Methodist Church in Sherrill will present a mini cantata titled *God Bless America; Affirming Our Faith and Freedom* in remembrance of the 10th anniversary of 9/11. The music, arranged by Tom Fettke and based on the original score by Irving Berlin, incorporates patriotic music and hymns. Revenue from sales of this cantata go directly to The God Bless America Fund to benefit American youth; these funds are allocated for New York City children affected by the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001. The Chancel Choir will perform during morning worship at 10:30 a.m. Sept. 11. At noon, the city of Sherrill will hold a remembrance service at the gazebo that will include participation by local churches as well as civic leaders and other members of the local community.

On Sept. 11, **Round Lake UMC** at 34 George Ave., Round Lake, will remember the events of that Tuesday morning, Sept. 11, 2001, during morning worship with the theme Remember. "God has continually called God's people to remember how God has been present in the difficult times to bring us back into relationship. We will remember God's saving works throughout all times. We will celebrate the saving life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, with the Sacrament of Holy Communion," wrote Rev. Jane Baker. At 7 p.m., the Malta area faith communities, in conjunction with the village of Round Lake, will lead a *Time to Remember, Renew and Refresh* in the Round Lake Auditorium, where the Methodist Camp Meetings were once held. The service will include the presentation of the colors, singing, recognition of the many involved in community service, readings and blessings from the faith traditions ending with candle lighting for peace. Refreshments will follow.

The **Fields of the Lord Cooperative Parish**, which includes the Greenwich-Centenary Methodist Church, North Cambridge "Stump" Church and Easton Methodist Church, will join together for their annual Homecoming on Sept. 11 at the Knickerbocker Mansion historic site, 132 Knickerbocker Road, Schaghticoke. Coffee hour will begin at 9, the service at 10 a.m.; a picnic lunch will follow the service. Those attending are asked to bring a dish to pass and table setting.

The Vale of Peace program at the Tree of Peace site will be a commemoration of the history of seeking peace and its relationship to the Sept. 11, 2001 tragedy. There will be music by Rural Felicity. For more information, contact Rev. Susan Cox at (518) 796-8793 or coxwave2@gmail.com.

The **Saranac Lake Ecumenical Council** is sponsoring a Service of Remembrance at 4 p.m. Sept. 11 at St. Bernard's Roman Catholic Church, St. Bernard Street, Saranac Lake. During the interfaith service a candle will be lighted for every 10 people who lost their lives on that day. The Rev. Michael H. Richards, of First UMC, and The Rev. Ann Gaillard, rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, are writing the liturgy.

Homer First UMC and the Homer Congregational Church will have a community time of remembrance on the Green from 8:45 to 9:15 a.m. Homer First has invited the Homer Volunteer Fire Co. to its 9:30 a.m. service, which will include a time of special remembrance and candle lighting. A reception will follow.

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.

Pastor's 82-pound loss is a big gain for those in need

By Beth DiCocco
Advocate Writer

Rev. Nate Lange weighs 82 pounds less than he did in February.

And by going public, he's helped make sure that those facing hunger have gained something from his loss – an estimated 25,000 meals.

Lange, who is pastor at Ontario Street UMC in Buffalo and Trinity UMC in Grand Island, decided that he could combat two problems at once by blogging about his weight loss and accepting per-pound pledges for the nonprofit Feed My Starving Children.

"I recognized a health issue and one that wasn't special to me; a lot of people – a lot of clergy – have the same health issue," said Lange, who weighed 369 pounds. Unlike a walk or other hunger fundraiser, he said, this idea allowed him to improve his health and fight hunger at the same time.

So on Feb. 16, he started a blog (<http://redistributeweight.blogspot.com/>) and, working with a doctor, he set a goal of losing 70 pounds in six months.

Members of his church, friends and others made pledges ranging from a few cents to \$6 per pound. Feed My Starving Children (<http://www.fmcs.org>) can provide a meal for just 24 cents, Lange said, and that maximizes his efforts. He estimates he's raised more than \$6,000. (At this writing the final count was not in).

When he reached his goal a month early, he gave people the option of cashing out, but he kept losing through the final weigh-in on Aug. 17, and surpassed his goal by 12 pounds.

The public nature of the fundraiser worked as a motivator for his weight loss, which he achieved primarily through diet (two young children and a two-point Charge leaves little time for exercise he says); he gave up simple carbs and starch. "I cut out pop, chips, white bread."

"As a good Wesleyan, I'm concerned with accountability," he said, and facing his congregation every Sunday, as well as those following his blog and on Facebook, had "built-in accountability," but was also a source of "tremendous encouragement" and support.

Still, Lange admits it isn't easy to be so open about his weight-loss journey.

"It takes a little vulnerability," he said. "You have to say, 'I weigh this much'; that is the most difficult part. If you need to lose weight, you probably don't want to tell people how much you weigh."

Other than that, it's pretty simple, he said, and he hopes it catches on. A couple members of his congregation have begun their own challenges, and his goal is to see others turn this into a real movement.

"I see a lot of potential ... if two people on Facebook join in, then two of their friends, etc., it becomes an enormous effort," he said, adding he'd like to see it "take on a life of its own."

A simple sign-up sheet – including a start date, end date, target weight, name, donation per pound pledged – that you can take to work, family events, church, will get you started he says.

Lange would like to lose another 40 pounds or so, but is going to let his weight stabilize for awhile first.

It seems, for Lange, the weight loss is just the means to an end:

"I'm excited about having lost weight, but I'm even more excited about (providing) 20,000 meals to people who are starving," he said.



Submitted photo

Rev. Nate Lange wearing the pants he wore to preach during the first week of his weight-loss challenge.



Young people help out Brownville UMC

Photo provided

This winter, a member of the congregation of Brownville UMC, Dorrie Young, came up with the idea to have a Sunday School Veggie Garden with the produce being donated to needy families and the Watertown Urban Mission Food Pantry. Young, a math teacher, and the children planted and nurtured the garden. During the church's VBS, Aug. 15-19, Young had the children in the garden picking beans, corn, cucumbers, etc. to be donated, along with some non-perishables, to the Urban Mission Food Pantry. Six families in the Brownville area have been receiving fresh produce this summer from the garden. – Rev. Patti Walz

Stand up and be counted

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:

<http://uppernewyork.rethinkchurchevents.org>

To enter totals from your church's feeding program/s:
<https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHBL5kFsbGFnc3R5LXVHLUI3TndEYmc6MQ>

We have fed 220,932 people

Reported as of Sept. 1

Elma UMC

Photo provided

The Mini Youth Group from the Elma UMC hosted a Work Camp for grades five to eight from July 26 to 29. Each morning, camp began with devotion, music, and prayer. One trip the group made was to Central City Café in Buffalo, a soup kitchen and community garden project. The kids made a meal and served 221 people. Not only did the kids serve the meals, wash the dishes and prepare the food, some of the kids went out among the people to talk with them and listen to their stories. After each day of work, the group came together for a fun activity, dinner, and a chance to talk about their day and share their most challenging and spiritual moments. During the camp, the group also performed a number of cleaning/landscaping tasks at various sites. – Deb Coatsworth, Elma UMC Christian education & youth director.



HANDS4NY

Districts gearing up for Oct. 15

Continued from cover

It's hard work, Skiles admits, but fields can yield quite a bit of food that can be put to good use. She gave the example of the United Methodist Men's annual gleaning in the Geneva area.

"They do a big push in Geneva," she said, "with some 100 folks, and they never even get those farms done."

This year's late planting will mean a later harvest, and could mean that some farms are not ready to be gleaned on Oct. 15; Skiles said in that case, they will look at another day for that project.

In the meantime, they have another, less physical way to help: Blizzard Bags.

Folks, most often the elderly, who are dependent on delivered meals can be left out in the cold when bad weather cancels Meals on Wheels or similar programs' deliveries.

Blizzard Bags are decorated gallon bags of non-perishable, prepared or easy-to-prepare foods that can be delivered in good weather so they are on hand when seniors need them.

Skiles said they are hoping to prepare and fill 1,500 of these bags.

Prior to Oct. 15, they will be collecting items such as soup, microwaveable meals, oatmeal, cereal bars, pudding cups, fruit cups, cocoa or tea bags.

In the HANDS4NY tally, each bag feeds one person.

Mexico First UMC, Onativia UMC and West Genesee UMC are the three sites.

Bags will be made from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Starting at 11 a.m., there will be an education fair with information about where the local food pantries are and how to apply for food stamps; representatives from WIC, nutritionists, and the CROP Walk will be there; and there will be a couple of demonstrations to help those who receive food learn about the ingredients and how to use them. There will also be a demonstration on container gardening.

Between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. bands will perform and food will be served.

The events together make for something that people of any age or any ability can do, Skiles said.

"Kids can decorate the Blizzard Bags or put stuff in the bag," she said. "I am not able to glean, but I can put items in a bag."

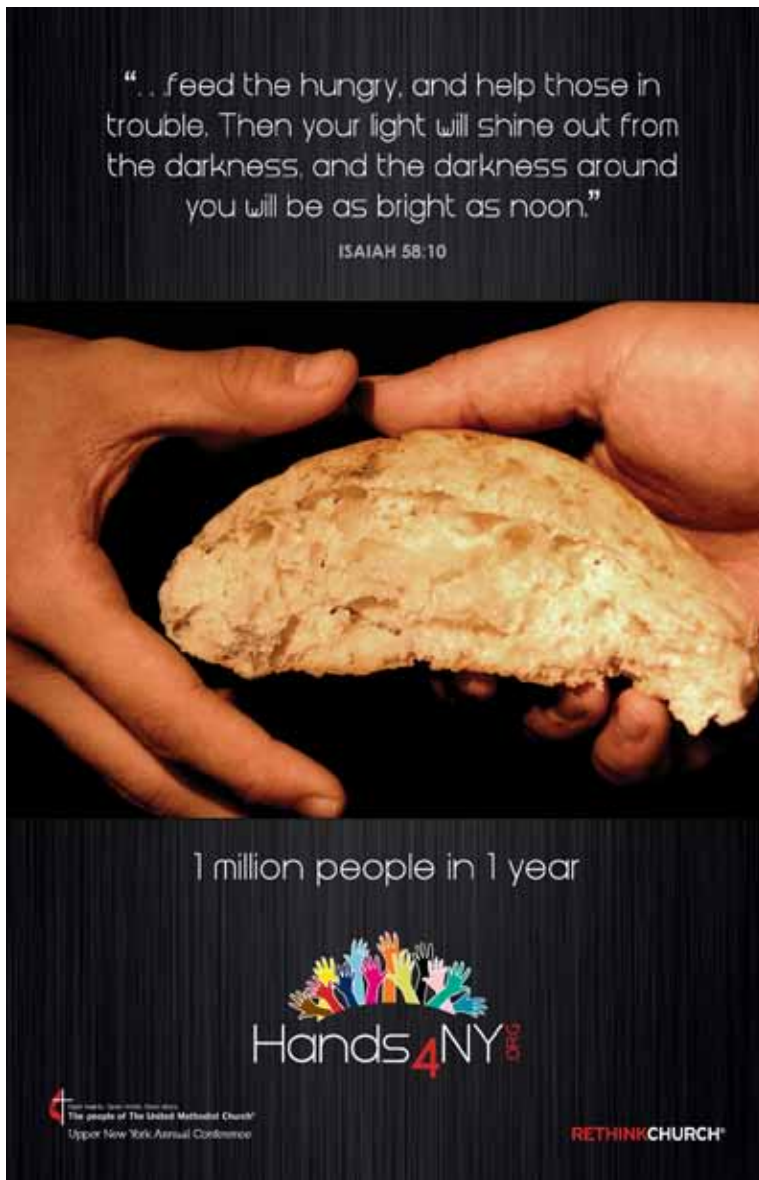
Skiles is pastor of the North Syracuse: Andrews Memorial, Oswego Center and Southwest Oswego United Methodist churches.

To participate, reach her via e-mail at pastorskiles@twcny.rr.com or call her at (315)963-8599 or go to the HANDS4NY website.

Oneonta District

"We have a lot of feeding programs (in the city)," said Rev. Teresa Sivers, pastor of First Oneonta UMC.

In fact, through various groups, including her church, there is a free hot meal provided somewhere in the city every day. At First UMC, that's Satur-



day's Bread.

Every week a group of about 30 volunteers prepares and serves a meal. Service is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (volunteers work from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; some do food prep work on Friday). In addition to the meal, there's a takeout meal and sandwiches to take home. There are also "freebies," day-old breads and desserts donated by local supermarkets.

Saturday's Bread was started 30 years ago after a confirmation class saw a similar program during a trip to Boston.

"The program serves not only those who are hungry, but those who are lonely ... the elderly who live alone," Sivers said. "It's almost like a family reunion Saturday ... (people are) not only fed physically but emotionally and spiritually as well."

In addition to finding volunteers to help with the Saturday's Bread program, The Hunger Task Force of Oneonta will set up a booth at the Oneonta Farmers Market, which "gets a huge crowd," to offer information to the wider community about hunger needs and feeding. The event will possibly coordinate with the local CROP Walk; there is a route mapped out that goes by all of the city's feeding programs.

The goal for the Oct. 15 event, Sivers said, is to raise awareness not only about the resources available but about the fact that hunger is an ongoing problem.

"People get busy and forget," she said. "It's helpful several times a year to remind them. People need food all year round, not just at Christmas ... in midst of summer if you have an abundance of zucchini, a hot meal program can make it part of their meal; it's wonderful to give.

"We can always use more volunteers and more supplies for food pantries," she said, adding that those supplies can include things such as toiletries and diapers.

To get involved, call Sivers at (607)432-4102 or e-mail her at siverstm@gmail.com.

Here's what some other districts have planned:

Albany District

Burnt Hills UMC will be hosting an event with an Obstacle Course theme. At each spot on the course will be information that brings awareness regarding hunger – perhaps about how many people are going hungry in Upstate New York, where to get help, etc. Each UMC in the capital area is invited to set up a booth to inform the community of how they are helping to alleviate hunger.

Representatives from the food bank will be there along with food pantry personnel. Volunteers in Mission will be providing food.

Northern Flow District

The churches of the Sunrise Sub-District are planning an event on Oct.

16 called Love Outside the Box. Various projects are being considered, including:

- Small maintenance or grounds work projects at the local school.
- Singing and/or cooking at a local nursing home or senior center.
- Collaborating on a Habitat for Humanity project.
- Preparing Blizzard Bags for Meals on Wheels
- Sponsoring an educational event celebrating the services of the local Food Pantry
- Sponsoring a gleaning event
- Creating a prayer ministry

At Brownsville UMC, the event will include a video celebration of what churches are already doing and a recognition of plans for expanding hunger ministries.

Adirondack District

The Quaker Springs, Schuylerville, Easton, Stump, and the Greenwich-Centenary United Methodist churches are sponsoring a free luncheon of vegetarian or meat chili, cornbread, beverages and dessert, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Schuylerville UMC. Admission is a monetary or non-perishable food item donation. There will be entertainment beginning at 1 p.m.

The luncheon will benefit S.A.F.E.R. (Schuylerville Area Food and Emergency Relief), an organization serving Schuylerville School District residents by providing a community food pantry and emergency assistance for individuals and families in need.

Mountain View District

The Elmira Area CROP Walk will be Oct. 16, and Mike Weeden and Karen Petersen are working on plans.



Participate Oct. 15

Can you help feed 1 million people in one year?

Yes, and here's how you can be part of your district's impact event on Oct. 15:

- Contact your district coordinator on how you can support area projects (see list below).
- Promote the event in your congregation.
- Invite your neighbors!
- Register to volunteer at www.Hands4NY.org

For more information, contact your district coordinator or e-mail Sharon Bassett, Hands4NY conference coordinator, at hands4ny@unyumc.org.

District Coordinators

Elyse Skiles
Crossroad District
pastorskiles@twcny.rr.com

Charlie Hodges
Cornerstone District
chash51@yahoo.com

Dot Norsen
Genesee Valley District
danorsen@aol.com

Mike Kelly
Finger Lakes District
chefkell@empacc.net

Carlton Doane
Northern Flow
cldoane@verizon.net

Mike Weeden
Mountain View District
ewmw8307@gmail.com

David Black
Binghamton District
bfuddle@yahoo.com

Linda Campbell
Adirondack District
lindacamp81@yahoo.com

James Brown
Niagara Frontier
jbrown_14105@yahoo.com

Brian Fellows
Mohawk District
stpaulspastor@twcny.rr.com

Teresa Sivers
Oneonta District
siverstm@gmail.com

Dolly Waxman
Albany District
dwaxman@nycap.rr.com

Meet our newest class of clergy

Stephen Robert Crowell

Provisional elder

Residence: Rushford

Family: Wife, Kristan Crowell; children Stephen Jr., Seth, Charissa, Justin Peck, Jesse Peck, Connor and Ian

Current appointment: KonXions (Centerville, Delevan, Limestone and Rushford UMC)

MDiv: United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, 2010

"I felt God's call early in my life. I had the privilege of growing up in a family that lived out in their daily activities with Jesus at the center of their lives.



... My mother wrote Sunday school lessons for the Wesleyan Church and my father was an ordained minister in the Wesleyan denomination. Throughout my childhood I can remember having very deep theological discussions with them. I was honored to work alongside of my father in two different churches as an assistant pastor. He became a trusted mentor for me as I began my ministry. ... I look forward to many years of fruitful labor in the fields that are ready for the harvest."

Peggi Jo Eller

Provisional elder

Residence: Endicott

Family: Son Drew and daughter Jami

Current appointment: Mt. Upton UMC and Guilford UMC

MDiv: Drew University, Madison, NJ, 2009

"My formative Christian experiences did not begin until 1998 when baptism was required by the school for my son to attend a Catholic kindergarten. At that time, I was working as an aerospace engineer and really had no need for or desire to attend church. It was in looking for a church to baptize my son, I was drawn to a local United Methodist Church whose hospitality and welcoming atmosphere dispelled my earlier vision of church as only for the 'holy rollers.' It is in that context of 'not needing church' that I best understand my call to ministry. I sense my call as that of bringing the beauty of a relationship with Christ to those who are, in some way, put off by church. ..."



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Eric Lauren Jensen

Provisional elder

Residence: Johnson City

Family: Wife, Shelley Jensen

Current appointment: Westover UMC and Vestal: Calvary UMC

MDiv: Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, 2011

"(In preparation for commissioning) I am reminded of a Ray Boltz song about Heaven. Boltz sings of a person that has entered Heaven and finds a long line of people who desire to thank this person for living a life unto the Lord while alive on earth. It was this person's faithfulness as a believer that brought these people to live a life of faith as well. While I have no plans of entering Heaven anytime soon, I can cast a similar scenario in my mind and heart of sisters and brothers in Christ that have supported, encouraged, prayed, gave guidance, insight, wisdom, and a lot of love to bring me to this humbling, exciting time in my ministry. It is my prayer and desire to come alongside others on the journey we call faith and to be a vivid example of love and faithfulness as others have done unto me. To God Be The Glory!"



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Patricia M. Molik

Provisional elder

Residence: Ballston Spa

Family: Husband, David Molik; sons Jonathon, Nicholas and Samuel; daughter, Sarah Vidulich

Current appointment: Sanford's Ridge UMC

MDiv: Drew University, Madison, N.J., 2012



Molik writes that it was during her years of service as laity that she heard the call to full-time ministry. She has served as a Stephen Leader for two congregations and as founder/director of The Capital District Military Family Support, Inc.

Colleen Hallagan Preuninger

Provisional elder

Residence: Oneida

Family: Husband, Nicholas Scott Preuninger

Current appointment: Oneida First UMC; coor. pastor Hamilton: Park

MDiv: Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., 2009

"As a lifelong Methodist and summer camp kid, I am pleased to say that I received my call to ministry at Casowasco Summer Camp in August of 2006. My time at camp, first as a camper and then as a member of the summer staff, was formative for my faith and maturity as I learned by example and practice the meaning of servant leadership. ... I understand (commissioning) to be a mile marker along the journey that stretches out ahead of me. ... I look forward to the future day when I can stand before the body of Christ as a fully ordained member of the order of Elder in The United Methodist Church."



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Catherine Louise M. Lee

Deacon

Residence: Homer

Family: sons Daniel and David, daughter Amy

Current appointment: Chaplain at Folts Homes, Herkimer

MDiv: Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, 2008



"I seemed to have had a heart's desire to serve God in a unique way for many years, and as a lay person in the Church I gradually developed skills that would lead me to discerning the call to minister to ... the older and elderly adults. ... the call was further defined to serve in older-adult ministry where I found a great desire to encourage older persons to live out their lives fully and with purpose in serving Christ, however they were called to express their gifts. Hearing the stories of the elderly brings out their wisdom, which, for me, are holy moments in my life."

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Douglas Robb Childress

Full elder

Residence: Alexander

Family: Wife, Küilli Toniste, children Karl and Kristofer

Current appointment: Alexander UMC, Darien UMC and Warsaw: Immanuel UMC

MDiv: Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., 2004

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David John Cooke

Full elder

Residence: Belfast, N.Y.

Family: Wife, Heather Cooke; children Benjamin and Charlotte Grace

Current appointment: Belfast UMC and Caneadea UMC

MDiv: Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, 2003

"... I was in physical therapy school and serving as a volunteer in my local church 12 years ago, when I sensed God tugging on my heart to explore full-time Christian ministry. Since then I have taken one step at a time toward ordination by working on my Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees and by serving in youth and pastoral ministry. I count it as a joy and privilege to walk alongside others as they develop a relationship with Christ and receive his mercy, grace and forgiveness. I am grateful to all who have supported and encouraged me along the way."



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Kim Marie Goodrich

Full elder

Residence: Waterford

Family: Husband, Robert Goodrich

Current appointment: Waterford UMC and Clifton Park UMC

MDiv: Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass., 2008

"By the time that I was in middle school, I knew that I wanted to be a math teacher. By the time I graduated high school, I also knew that my faith and church would also be a part of my life. I thought that I would be involved with youth group, music ... During my early 30s, I realized that my soul was restless ... Through friends, reading, and an Emmaus weekend, I came to the realization that God was indeed asking me to look into a call to ministry. Two days after accepting that call to ministry, I met the man that would become my husband. He has been supportive of me throughout the process and helps to keep me true to following God's path. ... Through my coursework, being a student pastor, and Clinical Pastoral Education at Albany Medical Center, my desire to serve God in the church grew and my call was affirmed. ..."

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Janet Adele McGaughey James

Full elder

Residence: Orchard Park

Family: Husband, Robert A. James, step-children Kathryn W. James Basson, Robert A. James Jr., Amanda M. James

Current appointment: Orchard Park UMC

MDiv: Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, 2008

"For me, ordination is recognition by my peers of the gifts and graces God has given me; that I am 'walking the walk' with God and am suitable to share my journey with both believers and nonbelievers; that I am ready to serve and guide others closer to God. This call began when I was 17 as a daughter (Rev. Melvin R. McGaughey) and granddaughter of United Methodist ministers. The first woman pastor in my family, God has given me many experiences to bring to ministry. I now begin this new phase of my journey seeking God's will and guidance. Thank God! I love my life."



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experiences to bring to ministry. I now begin this new phase of my journey seeking God's will and guidance. Thank God! I love my life."

The Upper New York Annual Conference ordained, commissioned and welcomed 19 clergy in at its second Annual Conference session in June. If you haven't met them, here's a chance to get to know them – in their own words.

Lawrence Gary Lake

Full elder
 Residence: Saranac
 Family: Wife, Sarah Lake; daughters Heather Choquette, Rachel Lake and Rebecca Lake; sons Patrick and Matthew
 Current appointment: Saranac UMC, Morrisonville UMC and Peasleeville Zion UMC
 MDiv: Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, Ohio, 2004

"... Throughout my life, God has been molding and preparing me through hardships and joys for a life of servant-leadership as an ordained minister.



God has seen me through the difficult times of two failed marriages, the unsure times of a return to school and career change, and the loss of my mother in 1995. Through these life-changing experiences I have learned to let go of my human pride and walk humbly with my God. At my lowest point, God lifted me up. When I didn't

think I could help myself, God called me to ordained ministry and service to others."

James Scott Pegan

Full elder
 Residence: Boonville
 Family: Wife, Susi Pegan, son Jimm and daughter Kati Park
 Current appointment: Boonville UMC and New Creations Ministries
 MDiv: Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., 2009



"I have been working toward ordination as an elder in the United Methodist Church for 10 years, and am delighted to have reached this significant milestone in my ministry journey. I would like to thank all of the people in my family and church family that have helped me to answer God's call to ministry in a time in which the Church is crying out for

leadership. I humbly offer myself to the Lord's work wherever that takes me."

Michael Allen Smith

Full elder
 Residence: Arkport
 Family: Wife, Kristen Smith
 Current appointment: Arkport UMC
 MDiv: Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., 2007



"I am greatly honored that the conference has affirmed my call to ordained ministry in the Upper New York Annual Conference. This is an important moment in a life-long journey. The call to ordained ministry is one of humility and service, and I pray every day that God will be known to the world through my care. I've been blessed at every step in this journey by guides, mentors and fellow travelers. Nobody gets to this place by themselves. I'm grateful for all those who have been, are currently and will be a part of my journey."

Steven Matthew Taylor

Full elder
 Residence: Panama, N.Y.
 Family: Wife, Stacy Lyn Taylor, children Benjamin and Abigail
 Current appointment: Panama UMC
 MDiv: Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., 2009

"Jesus Christ is alive and leading the Church today. Through the power of the Holy Spirit in our congregations and our lives, we are equipped and challenged to follow Christ more fully each day. The historic confessions of faith in Jesus Christ, trust in the Word of God, and reliance on the Holy Spirit will continue to center us, even as we seek new ways to present the Gospel message. Ordination, for me, is an affirmation through the community that nurtured me in the faith, and a continued call to be a change agent for the Lord and The United Methodist Church. Together, we will make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."



Patricia Lee Walz

Full elder
 Residence: Dexter
 Family: Husband, Victor Walz, Jr., children Nathan, Jesse, Heather, Stefanie, Lisa, and Patrick
 Current appointment: Dexter UMC and Brownville UMC
 MDiv: Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, 2008

"Ordination as an elder is a privilege and a commitment that I will take very seriously. It has been a long journey; first a profound calling that was life-changing and affirming, then 10 years of seminary as a part-time student while teaching public school full time and raising a family. Through God's grace, the support of my family, parishioners, and clergy friends, and the blessing of The United Methodist Church and the Upper New York (Annual) Conference, I look forward to a lifetime of service in apostolic ministry."



Harold James Wheat

Full elder
 Residence: Norfolk
 Current appointment: Brasher Falls UMC, Norfolk UMC and coor. pastor Buckton UMC
 MDiv: Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., 2008

"Throughout the many seasons of my life, God has been leading me to strive to live according to the words of scripture and wisdom of Christian community. Whether I was twisted under a sink struggling to mount plumbing hardware or enveloped in the silence of the library reaching for the understanding of an ancient scholar, I was able to depend on the knowledge that I belong to God. ... As I searched for ways to thank God for the goodness I have tasted, the call to lead others in Christian community has grown in my heart. ... Ordination is so filled with meaning for me because it is such a privilege to be able to become a recognized agent of God's healing work in our hurting world. I want to say to everyone, 'Come see what God has done!' (Psalm 66:5) I am glad to be part of the Church that is making God's goodness known."



Leanne Marie Zeck

Full elder
 Residence: Le Roy
 Current appointment: Le Roy UMC and Stafford UMC
 MDiv: Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., 2009

"My call began when I was a young child. While my grandparents were Methodist, my parents attended denominations which were not as supportive of women in ministry. I struggled for many years with the call to ministry. When I finally fell on God's grace and was able to follow God's call, I came to The United Methodist Church through my grandparents. It felt like I had come home – theologically, spiritually, emotionally and physically. To me, ordination is many things. It affirms God's grace in my life and God's call on my life. Ordination is an entering into a covenant – a relationship of mutual support and accountability. Ordination to me is a new beginning in this journey of faith."



Ray Michael Noell

Associate member
 Residence: Medina
 Family: Wife, Donna Noell; daughters Heather Pawlicki and Julie Lehr
 Current appointment: Knowlesville UMC and Millville UMC

"I responded to God's Call and began the process of becoming a United Methodist pastor in January 1996, at the age of 45. I had felt many 'nudgings to explore ministry' by God and others in my United Methodist church, for more than 30 years prior to accepting that call. After engaging in many various careers, and after many attempts to 'do it my way,' I finally made a commitment to fully seek and respond to God's will for my life. I really enjoy being a pastor and look forward to continuing to follow the path that God has laid out for me ..."



Nola Merlene Greig-Anderson

Welcomed from another Methodist denomination
 Residence: Rochester
 Family: Husband, Andy Anderson, son Asriel
 Current appointment: Rochester: Grace UMC and West Avenue UMC
 United Theological College of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, 1999

"I was born in the country of Trinidad and Tobago. I grew up in the Methodist Church and had a passion for ministry since childhood. At age 12, I began to teach Sunday school ... I have always had a desire and passion to serve the Lord and to live for him. It is out of that desire and passion for God's work that I responded by answering 'yes' to God's call on my life to enter full-time ministry. ... Eight years ago, I migrated to the United States of America. ... After much prayer and thought, my family has decided to permanently reside in the USA. It is therefore my desire to have my membership transfer ..."



Resource Centers news

A harvest of stewardship materials for fall

By Diane Alexander and Sheila Rader

Fall is usually the time of year when churches think and talk about stewardship the most. It's when many churches run their annual stewardship campaigns to support their ministry for the coming year. First and foremost stewardship is about our relationship with God. The Media Resource Centers offer a variety of studies for churches to use; but remember: stewardship happens all year long and not just once a year.

Our newest study is **Extravagant Generosity – The Heart of Giving**. An innovative stewardship program designed to move the entire congregation toward goal-oriented, mission-minded giving. The program includes: Program guide, overview timeline, 28-day devotional, small group leader guide, and DVD with meditations for small group use and 60-second worship videos. You may also choose to do the small group study of Extravagant Generosity found in *The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* with Bishop Robert Schnase.

Change the World – In this four-session DVD, Mike Slaughter guides leaders in visioning for themselves ways to transform their congregation of believers into a movement of disciples living out

Jesus' mission in the world. Together you can lead your congregation to focus its time, its energy, and its budget to work for real change in a hurting world. The sessions include: The Call to Mission, Growing People for the Mission, Resourcing the Mission, Multiplying the Mission. *Change the World* is also offered as a six-week small group study.

Serving From the Heart (updated this year) – Finding your gifts and talents for service: A journey in self-discovery and service. Does your ministry match who God created you to be? God's plan for the church calls for each member of the body of Christ to play a vital role. God wants us to find joy and fulfillment when we serve. That happens when we serve in a role that matches who God created us to be.

Irresistible Invitation is a stewardship resource for churches of all sizes. It's a church-wide program that will guide your congregation through 40 days of spiritual growth. By inviting your church family to become partners in the Gospel, this journey into God's extravagant love will renew individual members and unite your church in a fresh commitment to giving and service. This program kit includes:

The book *Irresistible Invitation: Responding to the Extravagant Heart of God*, participant's workbook, leader's guide with DVD, campaign handbook, and campaign media CD-ROM toolkit. The program is six sessions.

Enough – Discovering the Joy Through Simplicity and Generosity – an invitation to rediscover the Bible's wisdom on prudent financial practices. Find the keys to experiencing contentment, overcoming fear, and discovering joy through simplicity and generosity. This study could change your life by changing your relationship with money.

Other studies available are **Upside Living in a Downside Economy, Treasures of a Transformed Life, New Consecration Sunday, Wesley on Giving, Faithful and Wise-Becoming a Good Steward** and more. The **Widow's Mite** makes a great one-week discussion with a 27-minute video and question guide.

You can find these studies and more by going to www.unyumc.org and clicking on Tools & Resources, and then Media Resource Centers, and searching the catalog.

*Alexander is director of the Media Resource Center's Endicott office and Rader is director of the Amherst office.

Recommended ...

9/11 What a Difference a Day Makes – Ten Years Later

Ten years after what has simply become known as 9/11, we revisit a book that provides words of encouragement and inspiration to many during difficult times.

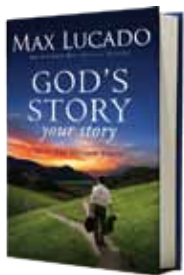


James W. Moore explores in an honest reassessment of priorities prompted by the events of Sept. 11. In his new introduction, Moore gives voice to our feelings on the passage of time. As you read, you will find that the words of encouragement and inspiration shared in 2001 still ring true today. He again

helps us recognize that life is a fragile, precious gift and that we are grateful for every moment. He reminds us that hope is found in Jesus' words and God's promises – promises that assure us that we are loved by God.

God's Story, Your Story

In this six-session video study, pastor and bestselling author Max Lucado reveals how your life story is part of a grand, overarching narrative, helping you see between the lines to witness God's hand at work. With contemporary anecdotes and New Testament stories, *God's Story, Your Story* traces your Savior's unchanging, loving pursuit of you through the chaos of life.



A Guide for Rotational Learning with Children

With PowerXpress, Cokesbury's rotation format curriculum, children will experience the Bible story in many different ways. When

children see AND hear AND do, they retain 90% of the experience. As a result, the Bible story and its meaning for them will stay with them for life! Adults in your congregation who have never been involved in children's Sunday School can and will communicate the Bible story to children using our complete lesson plans for: Art, Computer, Cooking, Games, Music/Movement, Science, Storytelling, and Video.

Why? Making Sense of God's Will

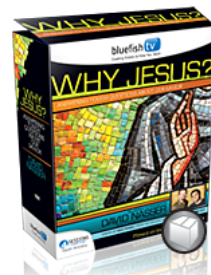
Where is God when the innocent suffer? Where is God when my prayers go unanswered? Why is God's will so hard to understand? The 4 sessions include: Why Do the Innocent Suffer?, Why Do My Prayers Go Unanswered?, Why Can't I See God's Will for My Life?, and Why God's Love Prevails.

Why Jesus?

Culture is blurring the lines between different faiths. It is increasingly difficult for people to grasp how their faith in Jesus Christ is unique. In this four-part video series, David Nasser addresses the tough questions that people have about Jesus and points them back to the scriptural truths about our Savior. Filmed on location all throughout Israel and includes teaching from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Sea of Galilee, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives and the Mount of the Beatitudes.

Sessions include: What's the Big Deal about Jesus? Was Jesus God or Just a Good Man?

Were Jesus' Miracles Just an Illusion? Is Jesus the Only Way to Heaven?



2 churches awarded Conservancy grants

By Christian Vischi
Advocate Writer

For the Albion First and Cooperstown United Methodist churches, \$54,000 in New York Landmarks Conservancy grants will help fund much-needed building repairs.

The New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites program is one of the few in the country dedicated to the preservation of historic religious properties. The Sacred Sites Program assists religious organizations

through two statewide matching grant programs: Sacred Sites Grants and Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge Grants.

The Cooperstown UMC was awarded a \$4,000 Sacred Sites Grant for replacement of the church's west side roof, gutters and downspouts.

The Albion First UMC was awarded a \$50,000 Robert W. Wilson Sacred Sites Challenge Grant to stabilize and restore roof trusses that were extensively altered in 1914 when the sanctuary was reconfigured to what is known as the Akron plan – an east, west direction.

The church received an additional \$500 for a structural engineering assessment to determine a reinforcement method to enable trusses to support the roof.

But representatives from both churches point out that those grants are only a small part of the funding picture.

Merrilyn R. O'Connell, secretary of the Board of Trustees for the Cooperstown UMC, noted that while the church is appreciative of the grants they have received, they only cover a small portion of their actual project costs.

"In our case, it is about 8 percent," O'Connell said. "At the United Methodist Church of Cooperstown, the greatest credit goes to the congregation and special events, which have funded 92 percent of restoration costs to date."

The Sacred Sites program typically awards grants of 15 to 20 percent of the cost of the project, she said.

"... These grants do provide an incentive for the congregation and friends to help raise matching funds," she said.

The Rev. Vonda Fossitt, pastor of the Albion First UMC, said the grant "eases the financial burden on the congregation," but it only provides half the project cost, as there is a matching



Photo provided
A previous Conservancy grant helped fund the restoration of stained glass windows at Cooperstown UMC.

Other grants

Other churches in the conference have received funds from The New York Landmarks Conservancy's Sacred Sites program in the past five years:

- **Asbury First UMC in Rochester**, \$10,000 in 2008 for restoration of the steeple;
- **Cooperstown UMC**, \$2,250 in 2007 for a building conditions survey;
- **Dryden UMC**, \$2,000 in 2007 for a conditions survey;
- **Harpurville UMC**, \$3,000 in 2006 for repair of tower roof and masonry;
- **Dundee UMC**, \$3,500 in 2006 for stained glass restoration.

component to the grant. "We are in the process of raising the \$50,000, which is the matching portion for us," Fossitt said. "We have increased our fundraising initiatives, including refocusing our capital campaign for this goal."

It's important to remember some of the resources that are most important to a project's success are the intangible ones, Fossitt said, such as "(our) caring for each other."

Still, the church has concrete ministries with real costs: a hospitality table outreach for those who are waiting to take a New York State Department of Motor Vehicles road test, and a Christian Education Ministry to and with children.

The grant funding allows them to continue those ministries without having to divert dollars to building stabilization. "(This grant will) instill hope and encouragement to the congregation as we move forward with God," Fossitt said.

To date, the Sacred Sites program has helped more than 660 religious institutions of all denominations across New York with \$6.7 million, leveraging overall projects of \$497 million.

Camp & Retreat Centers series: Findley

Campers, staff drawn back year after year

By Christian Vischi
Advocate Writer

CLYMER – It sounds like the directions on a treasure map: up the hill, past the soccer field, through the woods and up the steps just shy of the ravine. But the treasure for 20 campers at the Findley Lake Camp & Retreat Center was dinner in the camp's tree house.

Unique amenities like the tree house and a powerboat-pulled inflatable "shark" are examples of what makes Findley Lake Camp & Retreat Center a summer mecca for youth.

During a mid-July excursion to Western New York for a camp that is just two hours from Cleveland, Ohio – less than half the travel

time to Syracuse – the first stop was an introduction to Interim Camp Director Aliechia Post, the guide for the



POST

day. Post navigated during a 5-minute drive to Faith Haven Stables, whose owners Greg and Liz Sambor have partnered with the camp to offer four weeks of "Equine Experience" this summer. Although the camp housed its own equine program several years ago, the advantages of partnering with an offsite equine facility outweighed the converse.

Post said the program is specifically named "Equestrian Experience" because it shows the campers the full experience of having a horse for a week. They assist in feeding the horses, grooming them and tacking up for a riding session.

Although the program is advertised for those "who already have a love of horses and would like to improve their riding skills," at least one of the campers – all were grades five through eight – had less than two weeks of riding experience prior to the start of camp.

During this mid-week session, the eight campers were watching Liz – the head instructor and trainer at Faith Haven Stables – practice a series of maneuvers on her horse Moon as part of dressage.

"Can anyone tell me what dressage is?" she asked the campers. Although she had partially given the answer only a few minutes prior, there was silence from the crowd.

Dressage is a French word, meaning training, according to Liz. She mounted up and road through a dressage routine while her assistant called out the maneuvers from a hand-



About the series

Lydia Hall-Lochmann Van Bennekom paced the short dock. Slowly, methodically, she skimmed the water's surface at Findley Camp & Retreat Center with her eyes. As a first-year lifeguard at the camp, Van Bennekom was making sure this hot mid-July day had no interesting tales from the waterfront for the staff retreat later in the day.

Van Bennekom is one of dozens of lifeguards hired by the six Camp & Retreat Centers of the Upper New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. There are also hundreds of counselors, kitchen staff, worship leaders and program directors that serve the sites, and thousands of campers from age three-years-old and up that attend each summer.

A six-part series will be published online that highlights a day-trip to each location. From the Adirondack showcase of Skye Farm Camp & Retreat Center to the modern Manor at Asbury Camp & Retreat Center, each camp offers a unique set of amenities and staff, and a strong spiritual center on God.

held device after each pass Liz took in front of the seated campers. "Half canter... circle right... extended walk..." were a few of the calls. Just moments later the campers had their opportunity at the maneuvers.

At the lake

With the day's temperature rising, a return to the camp's lake front swimming area showed how important the water aspect is for a camp. The youth took advantage of two water areas: a roped-swimming area and the greater lake itself. Those venturing out on the lake took a ride on "The Red Shark" – a large inflatable device pulled



Photos by Christian Vischi

The Equine Experience program at the Findley Lake Camp & Retreat Center (pictured above) is more than just a riding camp, said Interim Camp Director Aliechia Post. The program involves all aspects of equine management, from grooming and nourishment to shoeing. BELOW: After a morning in the stalls at the offsite equine facility of Faith Haven Stables, summer campers cool off at the waterfront.

behind a power boat. The swimming area is kept safe with a buddy system and a "check-in" board that shows the lifeguards the number of campers in the water at all times.

After two hours of focusing on the swimming area, Lydia Hall-Lochmann Van Bennekom, a first-year lifeguard at the camp, took a few minutes to discuss her new role. In 2010, Van Bennekom was an attendee of Senior High Camp and was an equine camp regular for the five years prior to that. Although she loves horses, it's something else that brings her back to Findley year after year.

"I like to learn about horses (although) I don't have a horse, but I didn't even come back for the horses. I came back for God and the people here," she said. "Last year, during the Senior High Camp fire, 15 kids accepted God. It was awesome to see that."

Van Bennekom will be a senior this fall at Dansville High School, and she said she had to attend camp this summer. "Camp is my saving grace," she said. To explain that further, she said "because

I am always happy when I'm here. I love the people here and the kids.

"It's a lot more stressful (being a lifeguard versus being a camper), but you get to see it from a different point of view. You get to see how much they grow. This is a rewarding experience in general. Even if at the end it was tough, you can still see them grow... you know you made a difference."

In terms of the staff, she said, the experience is about forming bonds. "It is more than just a working relationship. You become closer with the staff, you become one."

Post echoed those sentiments when speaking about her new role, which she assumed in January.

"I have seen them mesh really, really well together," Post said. She gave an example: When the staff noticed that the maintenance truck needed to be painted, they went right to work – without any prompting.

"I am seeing a whole lot more of people stepping into where they are needed and also being really focused on the kids this year, she said.

Post has a history with the camp, having most recently served in the summer camp director role; the interim camp director position, however, has a split focus between the summer camp and the retreat season, "and that's what I am learning a lot about right now," she said.

A job unlike any other

Even during a stressful morning, Post and her staff have an enviable opportunity. "(It is wonderful) that we are surrounded by this natural beauty. If I need to step out, I can sit right here next to the lake."

But the natural beauty is more than that, Post added. "You can see that we are not just surrounded by God's creation, but we're in a job that brings focus on God's creation."

Although Post is new in her position, she has already begun implementing some changes and has long-range plans as well. The Senior High Camp, this year, was held for one week, bringing the campers together all at once, with activities geared toward them. The snack bar and chapel times were moved to later in the evening, and the campers even watched fireworks on the Fourth of July for the first time in years.

"The kids loved it," she said.

For the future, she would like to add new staff positions: someone with a photography background, a technology-savvy individual, and a person for planning and leading worship.

Second-year Counselor Sean Brosius said this job gives him an opportunity to explore his two passions: "my love for the ministry and my love for the kids." That admiration is reciprocated, as many remember Brosius from camp season 2010. "Every week so far I have had kids that recognize me," he said.

"I have been looking forward to Senior High Camp. I come to camp for those kids. I really enjoy working with the older group. You can really challenge them a lot more in their spirit, their faith and physical challenges. That's the week I look forward to the most: senior high."

The North Tonawanda native is a full-time student at the University of Buffalo, majoring in health and human services leading into a master's degree in social work. Although Brosius could be exploring internship opportunities in his field, he said the counselor experience is rewarding. In expressing a sentiment shared by many of the staff members, he said:

"It is something you don't want to give up. I am hoping to come back next year."

Briefly ...

Area to celebrate our new district superintendents

The five newly appointed district superintendents of the Upper New York Annual Conference took office July 1, but their formal welcoming ceremonies are set for September. Area Resident Bishop Marcus Matthews and the Full Cabinet plan to attend each of the services. Members of the public are invited to the celebration services.

Unless otherwise noted, ceremonies begin at 3 p.m.

The new district superintendents are:

Rev. Rebekah Sweet as the new Northern Flow DS – Sept. 10, Gouverneur UMC, 34 Grove St.

Rev. Wayne Butler as the new Niagara Frontier DS – Sept. 11, Clarence UMC, 10205 Greiner Road

Rev. Sherri Rood as the new Cornerstone DS – Sept. 17, Olean: Christ United Methodist, 633 Linwood Ave.

Rev. William Mudge as the new Adirondack DS – Sept. 24, Ticonderoga UMC, 1045 Wicker St.

Rev. Brolin Parker as the new Albany DS – 5 p.m., Sept. 25, Jonesville UMC, 963 Main St., Clifton Park.

Communication training sessions for churches continue

Do you want to promote your church or church events in the community? Is social media a bit of a mystery? Would you like to improve your church's website?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes or you'd just like to learn more about how to better communicate – internally and externally – we, the Upper New York Annual Conference Communications Team, invite you to attend one of the training sessions we have planned around the conference area.

The free workshops, which take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the following Saturdays, are designed to help local churches communicate with the news media, church members or the community using both new and traditional media.

The remaining sessions are as follows:

Sept. 17 – Fredonia UMC, 25 Church St.

Oct. 1 – Geneseo, 4520 Genesee St.

Oct. 22 – Saratoga Springs, 175 Fifth Ave.

Wifi is available at each site and lunch will be provided. The sessions are free, but 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



Photo provided

From left are: Perry Kelts, Deb Simmons of the Watertown Wizards, Rev. Leon VanWie (Asbury United Methodist Church), Linda Elliot (Kelts' sister) and Paul Simmons, of the Watertown Wizards. Kelts' received a new bike after his was stolen from in front of the church during a Sunday service.

A gift for Perry

On June 5, Perry Kelts rode his bicycle from his home on Breen Avenue to worship at Asbury United Methodist Church in Watertown – something he does nearly every Sunday.

Perry, a Jefferson Rehabilitation Center client, is a familiar sight riding his three-wheeled bike around town. On that Sunday, he arrived at church and realized his padlock was not in the basket.

He could have returned home, but decided to go into church for worship. When he came out, his bike was gone. One of Asbury's neighbors saw a man take the bike and raced after him, but lost him. The Watertown City Police have not been able to locate the bicycle.

Fred Knapp, Post Commander of the Brownville American Legion Post #588 who worked with Kelts to place American flags on veterans' graves for Memorial Day was impressed with Perry's work ethic and wanted to help. Paul Simmons, CEO of the Watertown Wizards collegiate baseball team, also wanted to express appreciation to Kelts, who hardly ever misses a home game.

During the July 11 service Kelts was presented with a new bicycle. Rev. Leon VanWie, along with Kelts' sister Linda Elliott, and Paul and Deb Simmons presented the bike.

Through their combined efforts Kelts has a new three-wheeled bike and Watertown residents will once again see Perry peddling around.

– Rev. Leon VanWie

Urban Summit I rescheduled for Nov. 11-12

“Urban Summit I,” a two-day event focused on urban ministries – previously referred to as the Urban Ministries Summit – has been rescheduled for Nov. 11 and 12 (previous dates were Sept. 23-24).

The purpose of the event is to develop an Urban Ministry Strategic Plan for the Upper New York Annual Conference. Urban Summit I will

take place at Covenant UMC, 1124 Culver Road, Rochester.

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 fruit-

ful ministry in urban centers across Upper New York and what are the root causes

- Set the date, time, and place for more conversation at Urban Summit II

Registration forms are available on the conference website (www.unyumc.org). To learn more or to register, contact Rev. Ann Kemper at anncovenant@frontiernet.net.

Mini grants for older-adult ministries offered

Local churches that are seeking to enhance or begin a ministry for older adults are invited to apply for a mini grant through the Upper New York Conference Older Adult Ministries (UNYOAM) Team.

The team is offering grants of between \$200 and \$400 – as well as advisory and consultation assistance – to help develop intentional older-adult ministries by, with and for seniors in the congregation or community. The team also encourages churches to consider joining with other churches in your community to provide joint programming.

The mini grant program seeks to:

- Provide support to adapt existing elder-care programs or start new programming.

• Encourage churches to learn what community services are available to seniors – for example from county Offices for the Aging or the Alzheimer's Association, etc.

- Create a collaborative database through which churches can share insights and program ideas.

As a place to start, the UNYOAM Team recommends resources from the older adult recommended booklist, particularly Dr. Richard Gentzler, Jr.'s books *Designing and Older Adult Ministry* and *Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century*. These books are available from the Resource Center, the UNYOAM Team or Cokesbury.

United Methodist churches in the Upper New York

Conference, including any church that is affiliated with the conference, are asked to submit the application form along with a one- to two-page proposal (guidelines are included in the application form) by Oct. 31. Awards will be announced by Nov. 30 and funds will be available by Dec. 31.

To get an application form or more information, contact Winona Stonebraker at (716) 694-4211 or via e-mail at nthsl6@hotmail.com. Send completed applications to: UNY Older Adult Ministries Team, c/o Winona Stonebraker, 16 Forbes Terrace, N. Tonawanda, NY 14120 or via e-mail at the above address. All applications must include the cover sheet.

Circuit rider to visit for Fredonia UMC 200th

The First United Methodist Church of Fredonia is celebrating 200 years of faith and fellowship this year. This milestone is being commemorated in a number of ways throughout the year.

One of those events is a Sunday morning worship service that will be reminiscent of a service from the time when the itinerant preacher would ride into the settlement.

The itinerant preacher's

visits were an event that would bring people from far and near. He would perform marriages, baptisms, and have a worship service for all that gathered.

On Sept. 11, “circuit rider” Pastor Steve Wiggers, attired in an old-fashioned frock suit, will arrive at the church with his trusty steed and lead his congregation in the morning worship.

In addition to the morning message, old-time hymns

(all music and words written before 1811) will be sung to the accompaniment of an 1866 Carhart & Needham Portable Melodeon from the Barker Historical Museum in Fredonia.

A Melodeon, or cabinet organ, is a 19th-century reed organ; its advantages included being inexpensive and easy to maintain and transport. The organ was restored by church member Charles Erbsmehl in October 2001.