

A Day Of Service

By Melissa HInnen and Linda Unger*

New York, NY, April 17 — Directors and staff of the General Board of Global Ministries concluded their semi-annual board of directors meeting last Saturday and climbed aboard two buses, one headed to New Jersey, the other to Long Island, NY, to bring a sign of hope and solidarity to Superstorm Sandy survivors.

Dressed in jeans, sneakers, and the brightly colored tee-shirts typically worn by volunteers with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)—the disaster-recovery arm of Global Ministries and The United Methodist Church—directors and staff were ready



Bishop Schol joins members of the GBGM Staff and Board of Directors in cutting drywall to be hung at Grace UMC in Union Beach, NJ as part of GBGM's day of service on Saturday, April 13, 2013.

Members of the GBGM Staff and Board of Directors from all over the world came together to help repair Grace UMC in Union Beach, NJ as part of a day of service on Saturday, April 13, 2013.

Photos by Heather Fullerton.

sionaries and all the field workers: what they go through, what they do for people," Kamara said. "It makes us alive to other people's sufferings."

For Joan Young, an administrative assistant with UMCOR's Global Health program, participating in the voluntary day of service was something she'd long wanted to do. "I jumped at the opportunity because, you know, when you help someone else, it's like your living is not in vain," she said. "And it's what God would have us do!"

In all, a combined total of 53 staff and directors participated in the day of service, including board president Bishop Hope Ward, of North Carolina, and her husband, Michael, and UMCOR board president Wisconsin Annual Conference Bishop Hee-Soo Jung.

Once they reached either Long Island or New Jersey, they again split into two groups in order to maximize their time at different sites. In New Jersey, half the group got down to work at Grace United Methodist Church in Union Beach, while the other half assisted a homeowner in Sayreville.

Grace

At Grace UMC, during the storm, floodwater rose four feet in the fellowship hall. Because the sanctuary is slightly higher, it was spared significant damage and became a shelter for Sandy survivors exiled from their homes in the days immediately following the hurricane.

"The fellowship hall is a central gathering place for this community," Greater New Jersey Conference Bishop John Schol told the Global Ministries team. "It's important it become functional again." He was joined at the site by key staff of the conference's "A Future with Hope" Sandy-response program.

Terry Shipley was there, too.

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to get their hands dirty in a day of service.

"When the board decided to come out today and do a day of service in the New York area, I was all for it," said Timothy Crisler, a first-term director from the Mississippi Annual Conference, who joined his colleagues headed to Long Island.

"So many people reached out to the Mississippi folks when we went through our disaster (Hurricane Katrina, 2005). We saw firsthand the church at work—God's people coming from everywhere. And that's what we're about," he said. "Mission. It's all about mission."

Yeabu Kamara of Sierra Leone, a director in her second term, expressed

gratitude for the opportunity to be of service—however limited by the single afternoon—to communities impacted by Superstorm Sandy—a departure from the usual round of three-day meetings.

"It is good for us because we are giving service to humanity, and then we appreciate more the work of our mis-

Messages of caring and hope for Boston

A UMNS Report By Heather Hahn*

Editor's note: United Methodist Communications, the global communications agency of The United Methodist Church, is publicizing a message of caring and hope in Boston area media. The denomination also is asking people around the globe to leave prayers for those affected by the attacks in Boston on their Facebook page at facebook.com/unitedmethodistchurch.

Evil struck Monday, but by Tuesday it was clear evil did not have the last word.

United Methodists in Boston and around the globe testified to the ways they saw God in action after two explosions shattered the peace of the Boston Marathon, claiming at least three lives and leaving more than 170 injured.

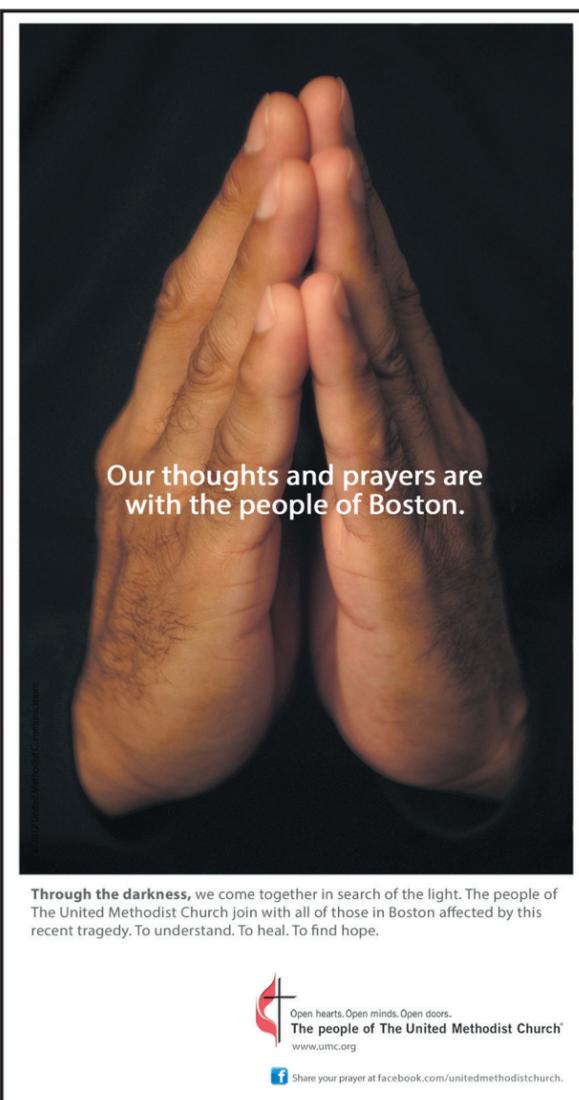
"In our world, evil is alive and well," said the Rev. Jim Kinder. "The reality is that that one act of evil ... began an onslaught of just the hands and feet of people doing the work of God, right here loving people and caring for people."

The pastor at Christ United Methodist Church in Mobile, Ala., completed the Boston Marathon about an hour before the bombs detonated. It was his first time at the event, which drew participants from 96 countries.

"As soon as I got out of the shower, my phone was lit up with people texting and calling me," he said. "In fact, my senior pastor, (the Rev.) Jeff Spiller, was the first person to text me and asked if I was all right."

He said he could see God at work in the faith community reaching out to check that he was safe. He also witnessed God among the people of Boston.

After the attack, he said, people at the race could



Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Boston.

Through the darkness, we come together in search of the light. The people of The United Methodist Church join with all of those in Boston affected by this recent tragedy. To understand. To heal. To find hope.

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church
www.umc.org

Share your prayer at facebook.com/unitedmethodistchurch.

not get back to their checked bags, so locals downtown helped people find cabs and even offered strangers places to stay.

"The people of Boston have been incredible," he said. "You walk around in your race jacket, and everybody is really going out of their way."

United Methodist response

Boston Area Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, who leads the New England Annual (regional) Conference, said in a letter to the conference that the "outpouring of love and support from friends and colleagues in our United Methodist connection has been overwhelming and wonderful."

Even before the bombings, United Methodists around the Boston area were cheering and volunteering along the marathon route.

Union United Methodist Church — about a 10-minute walk from the finish line — opened its sanctuary Monday afternoon to those needing warmth, comfort and prayer, said the church's lead pastor, the Rev. Jay Williams.

"Although most of the runners/spectators had left the area, we did receive a handful of folk," he said. "We are in process of coordinating our long-term response now."

Janjay Innis, a student at United Methodist Boston University School of Theology and ministry associate at Union, said the students at the seminary wore running shoes to class on Tuesday as a sign of solidarity with the marathoners. The students also plan to hold a prayer vigil Tuesday night.

Innis plans to join thousands of students from the Boston area universities who will run five miles on Friday to honor those who because of the attacks could not complete the race.

Devadhar noted that on Tuesday night and in the coming days, United Methodist churches around Mas-

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A Message from the Bishop



John Wesley believed conferencing was a means of grace because conferring with each other is a means that opens us to God's truth, grace, and growth in faith and spiritual maturity, forgiveness, and humility.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This May 30 – June 1, 2013, GNJ at its annual conference session will engage in spirited conversation about the future of the Greater New Jersey Conference. The conference will be held at the Wildwood, NJ Convention Center.

More than 1,200 people have registered to engage in worship, fellowship and Holy Conferencing. During the time together, the conference will consider 28 pieces of legislation.

The conference will consider three pieces of legislation that will shape the direction of the conference. This includes a new strategic ministry plan, a new conference center, and a mission fund campaign to raise \$12 million dollars for Sandy Relief (\$7 million), Imagine No Malaria (\$2 million) and mission through our congregations (\$3 million).

Ordinarily, I would think this is too much for a conference to consider and engage in at one time. But I have experienced the faith, giftedness and fruitfulness of GNJ and we are ready for God sized visions. I have seen how congregations and the conference have responded to Superstorm Sandy. We have been a leader recognized by the State, foundations, community leaders and those most impacted by the storm. We have mobilized an impressive God sized plan and are moving the plan forward.

These are also urgent times for the church. We need a strategic direction to reverse trends and reach new generations of believers in our communities. There is a hunger for meaning, purpose, mission and salvation and we have more than 550 congregations strategically located across the Greater New Jersey Area. We also have exceptional clergy and lay spiritual leaders. I meet new people every week that offer themselves to our greater vision because of their faith in God and their faith in the Church.

John Wesley the founder of Methodism believed that Christians should come together to conference. We gather in charge conferences (setting a congregation's direction) annual conferences (setting the direction of regional bodies of United Methodists), Jurisdictional Conferences (identifying bishops to lead the church), and General Conference (setting the direction of the worldwide United Methodist Movement). Wesley saw conferencing as a *means of grace*. He experienced that when we come together through worship, prayer and holy conversation, we would mature in our faith, grow spiritually and experience the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I believe this begins with prayer. I call all GNJ United Methodists to begin praying today so that there will be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on GNJ so that we will make new generations of disciples, repair 300-500 homes of low income families, work with others to bring an end to deaths by malaria and do important mission work in our communities.

Keep the faith!
John Schol, Bishop

Sandy Relief Ministry



Superintendent Jisun Kwak and Bishop John Schol receive a \$20,000 contribution from Rev. Jung-Suk Kim pastor of Kwanglim Methodist Church for our Sandy Relief Ministry. Bishop Schol and Superintendent Kwak were in South Korea for our sister conference the Seoul Annual Conference session. During the visit, \$60,000 was pledged and donated to GNJ for our Sandy Relief Ministry.

God Calls Zimbabwe Native To Fight Malaria

By Adlene Kufarimai

In my family of eight children in Zimbabwe, none of us died due to malaria because our mother, a village health worker through the World Health Organization, always put us on the malaria preventative medication before the peak season of the mosquito-borne disease. Sometimes, I would try to hide the pills because of their bitterness, but – thank God! – I was fortunate because of my mom's work.

My mother spent most of her time going from village to village, inspecting areas around homes that could be breeding areas for mosquitoes. She also educated villagers on preventative measures such as covering stagnant water, protecting water wells and taking the full course of malaria medication. A village health worker for more than 20 years, she saved many lives.

When I was growing up, people in our village came to our home nearly every day for malaria pills. We children found it frustrating to see so many sick people. Often, our mother sent us home from the fields to get the medication because she was also working hard in the fields for the family. Our father, a truck driver, was on the road all the time.

My early years influenced my future vocation.

Currently, I help with the children and youth ministry at Glen Addie Community Church, a United Methodist mission in Anniston Ala. My husband, the Rev. Tiwirai Kufarimai, is the senior pastor. However, in June, I will be com-

missioned as a provisional elder of the North Alabama Annual (regional) Conference, and the *Imagine No Malaria* field coordinator position will be my full-time appointment.

My district superintendent, the Rev. Sherill Clontz, asked if I was interested in going for the *Imagine No Malaria* training in Nashville, Tenn. My week of learning gave me the opportunity to reflect on my life as far as malaria is concerned. It made me appreciate my mother's work. The stories shared during the training strengthened my resolve to save others for the sake of Jesus Christ and challenged me to continue to put my faith into action.

Malaria is a killer disease, but it is preventable and treatable. Last year, I almost lost my young sister, who lives in Malawi, to cerebral malaria. As a mother of two children, I can only imagine how it feels to lose your precious ones.

I believe God has put me in this position for a reason. The death rate due to malaria calls me to participate with enthusiasm and passion to the call of saving lives because mine has been saved, and I am thankful.

Coming on board with the *Imagine No Malaria* Initiative has been a life-changing experience for me. I thank God that I agreed to be part of this global ministry.

Kufarimai earned a Master of Arts in Christian education (2003) and a Master of Divinity (2005) at Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta. Now she is working on a Doctor of Ministry degree at Samford University: Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Ala.



John R. Schol, Resident Bishop
The Greater New Jersey Conference ~ 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

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ALL NEWS ARTICLES, photos, letters and viewpoints should be sent to the Editorial Staff member serving your district or agency, at the listed address.

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The UNITED METHODIST RELAY is published monthly except January and August by the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Office of Publication: Office of the Bishop, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733. Periodical Postage Paid at Ocean, NJ and additional entry offices. Mailed free to selected Charge Conference members and clergy of each church. Others may subscribe at the rate of \$9.50 per year. Back issues may be obtained as available at \$1.50 for first copy and 50 cents for each additional copy sent in the same wrapper. POSTMASTER: Send Address changes to UNITED METHODIST RELAY, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733.

United Methodists Mourn Bob Edgar

By Kathy Gilbert

The Rev. Bob Edgar, a United Methodist pastor and a "tireless defender of the poor and an advocate for justice," died unexpectedly April 23 of a heart attack at his home in the Washington area. He was 69.

Edgar, who was top executive of Common Cause, is the former top executive of the National Council of Churches and a former six-term member of Congress from Pennsylvania. He was president of United Methodist-related Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology from 1990 to 2000.

Jim Winkler, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, was a close friend and colleague.

"Bob Edgar was a close personal friend of mine. I cannot believe we have lost him. He was a great servant of Christ, possessor of a magnanimous and positive personality, and a faithful United Methodist. Those of us who knew him have been sharing our sadness and our fond memories of him all day."

'Tireless defender of the poor'

"Bob was a valued friend, social progressive and committed Christian leader," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communications. "He brought a wonderful sense of humor to any gathering in which he was present. He was a tireless defender of the poor and an ad-



The Rev. Bob Edgar

Photo courtesy of Common Cause.

While depictions of sex and violence on television are a measure of morality, so are "hunger, illiteracy, disease, war and environmental degradation," he wrote.

'Faithful majority must have the courage'

As Edgar defined it, the "Middle Church, Middle Synagogue, Middle Mosque" that he addressed in the book represent "the many millions of faithful people who do not always connect their spiritual values with political issues and whose voices are, as a result, often drowned out by the far religious right.

"This faithful majority must have the courage to confront their government when it makes bad decisions and have enough confidence in their own judgment not to believe unquestioningly the 'expert' political leaders, who most Americans assume know more than they do," he wrote in the preface.

The Rev. Cynthia Abrams, a director with the Board of Church and Society, said she and her father graduated from Claremont together while Edgar was president.

"All through seminary and in our frequent interactions here in D.C., he has always been a mentor and friend. He was also a great friend and supporter to Native Americans, supporting the move and re-establishment of the National United Methodist Native American Center at Claremont," she said.

The Rev. Don Messer, director of the Global AIDS Fund and former seminary president of United Methodist Illiff School of Theology, remembered Edgar for his "warmth and wit and puns" when they served together as seminary presidents.

"Courageous, compassionate, and prophetic, he dared to speak the truth in Washington these days as president of Common Cause. His leadership in The United Methodist Church and the National Council of Churches as well as the United States Congress was remarkable," Messer said.

Paul Fanlund, editor of The Capital Times, interviewed Edgar just 11 days ago.

"As we finished and said our goodbyes, I recall watching Edgar, marveling as he purposefully bounded away down University Avenue, on to the next conversation about the big problems with electoral politics in 2013 America."

Funeral arrangements are pending.

*Gilbert is a multimedia reporter for the young adult content team at United Methodist Communications, Nashville, Tenn. News media contact: Kathy L. Gilbert, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

A Day Of Service

Continued from page 1

Shiple, a member of Grace for more than 50 years, is living in the parsonage while her storm-ravaged home is still being repaired. She said Sandy destroyed the church's digital records and has kept many of its leaders occupied with personal challenges of their own.

She said what really helped her family and others after the storm was the fact they were together. "We could go to the church and the parsonage to be safe and together. We ate together, prayed together, and walked in the dark together," she said, referring to widespread and days-long power outages provoked by the storm.

While the Global Ministries team put up drywall in the fellowship hall, Shiple expressed her gratitude for all the volunteers who have come to New Jersey to help over the course of the six months since the hurricane.

"We are thankful to be alive, and we are thankful for how gracious people have been. God has been present in the storm and after it," she said.

Sayreville

In the town of Sayreville, Global Ministries directors and staff spent the afternoon painting the interior of the home of an 80-year-old survivor of Superstorm Sandy.

Soon after the storm, volunteers had mucked out the elderly woman's home, which had been impacted by floodwater in the basement and up to three feet on the main level. When case managers followed up, they connected her with UMCOR to have her home repaired.

The damage was extensive, and the homeowner has limited resources. She is unable to remain in the house during the reconstruction.

The Greater New Jersey Conference has been strategic in how it uses a range of volunteer skills to coordinate the reconstruction of homes. Last month, 20 volunteers from the Upper New York Annual Conference—itsself still recovering from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee of 2011—put up the sheetrock that the Global Ministries team painted last Saturday.

Bishop Ward prayed with the New Jersey volunteers and conference staff.

"We give thanks for the opportunity to offer ourselves in this small way to this great work," she said. "We pray that you would continue to send volunteers in large numbers and that all will see the goodness of the Lord through caring for God's people."

Long Island

New York Annual Conference Bishop Martin McLee greeted the Global Ministries directors and staff at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Rockville Centre—one of several New York Conference relief centers. After a brief orientation, the team left to work on storm-damaged homes in Oceanside and Freeport.

One of those homes belongs to Paula, a septuagenarian Holocaust survivor. Back in October, when she had learned that Superstorm Sandy was on its way, she hunkered down in the den of her modest home.

"I have a tree in the back that was planted when my last son was born, and everyone told me to sleep in the den in case it fell on the house," she said.

So she settled into the den—formerly a garage a half-dozen steps below the level of the kitchen—and put on the TV. Suddenly, she said, "I looked to my right, and there was water com-



Water poured into this Rockville Centre den during Superstorm Sandy. Global Ministries personnel apply a bleach solution to keep mold away. Photo by Felipe Castillo

ing in through the fireplace!" It rose several inches in the den, ruined the carpet, and put the room at risk of mold.

Paula's son had helped her rip out her soggy carpet, so that only the skeleton of a floor was left. The Global Ministries staff and directors sprayed the entire area with a bleach solution, which would impede the growth of mold. Yeabu Kamara stayed a while after the spraying was done and listened to Paula talk.

"She was happy just because we were there and we were listening to her," Kamara said. "I think it is something—just talking to somebody is something. We thought we did not do much, but we did so much for that lady because she was able to talk to us, to express herself."

Freeport

Yvonne, a retired school superintendent, lives at the end of a canal in Freeport with her 21-year-old son, who is wheelchair-bound. She had been preparing for years for her retirement, only to have Superstorm Sandy come rushing up through the Jones Beach Inlet and push canal water throughout her house.

She had been told to evacuate the day before the storm, so she had bundled up her son, and the two of them went to the New York City borough of Queens to ride out the hurricane. A month would pass before they could even get back to see their home; six months after Sandy, they are still living in a hotel.

The first thing Yvonne noticed when she returned to see the damage was the stench of dead fish. "And there was oil everywhere," she said. "People had boats, and the boats had flipped over, spilling their oil. There was a green layer of it, and mildew, on everything—the grass, streets, sidewalks."

The Global Ministries staff and directors helped Yvonne put some of her belongings into some semblance of order. Bishop Jung said, "I collected some of her things and put them into a bag. I know some of these things are treasures for the family, and I blessed them."

For Jung, the Global Ministries presence in this day of service with Superstorm Sandy survivors was one of solidarity.

"I think we shared the pain in doing this work with them," he said. "That's the main thing. I don't know how helpful we were, but we shared solidarity with them and helped out. I think that's the journey."

Your gift to **Hurricanes 2012, UMCOR Advance #3021787** supports UMCOR's ongoing work to support recovery efforts following Superstorm Sandy.

*Melissa Hinnen is director of Content and Public Information, and Linda Unger is senior writer for the General Board of Global Ministries.



The Rev. Bob Edgar (center) walks to the U.S. Capitol to raise his voice on behalf of the poor and vulnerable as Congress debates budget cuts in this 2011 file photo.

Photo courtesy of Common Cause.

vocate for justice. His voice will be missed." Edgar was a former member of United Methodist Communications' governing board.

Edgar became top executive of Common Cause, a national advocacy group with more than 400,000 members and 35 state organizations, in 2007. While there he "oversaw the re-launching of at least seven state chapters, traveled tirelessly to meet with and recruit Common Cause supporters, and raised the organization's national profile and its critical mission to strengthen our democracy," Common Cause said in a news release announcing Edgar's passing.

"We are deeply saddened and shaken today by the passing of Bob Edgar," said Common Cause board chair Robert Reich. "Bob will be remembered for his decency, kindness, compassion and humor. His deep commitment to social justice and strengthening our democracy is his greatest gift to Common Cause and the nation. Our hearts are with Bob's family, his wife Merle, and sons Andrew, David and Rob, and their families."

Edgar led the National Council of Churches for four terms from 2000 to 2007. He brought the council, which now has several million dollars in reserve, through a financial crisis and initiated a major campaign against poverty.

In 2006, he wrote "Middle Church: Reclaiming the Moral Values of the Faithful Majority from the Religious Right," published by Simon & Schuster as a wake-up call to restore America's moral values.

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Global Relay

Brief Reports from around the world
via United Methodist News
Service and Newscope

It is well with the souls of West, Texas

WEST, Texas (UMNS) — “In the midst of all the chaos in those first few hours following the blast, I saw people helping people, over and over and over again,” the Rev. Jimmy Sansom, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church, told his congregation Sunday, April 21. “People from (West FUMC) helping other people! There were no strangers — only God active in us and through us.”

United Methodist Men send devotionals to first responders

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — United Methodist Men shipped copies of its newly published Strength of Service for God and Community devotional for first responders to Boston and to West, Texas, last week. There is to be a presentation of 250 copies in Newtown, Conn., this weekend. The devotional was introduced last month.

Husband-wife team leads fast-growing Hispanic congregation

SEVIERVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Three years ago, Susana Lopez was a translator in a furniture factory. Wilmer Lopez made a living out of laying tile and carpet. Today, the two are co-pastors of what might be the largest Hispanic congregation in east Tennessee and one of the fastest-growing Hispanic churches in the United Methodist denomination.

In split decision, church's top court rules on Western Pennsylvania/East Africa dispute

SEATTLE — A 10-year financial dispute between the Western Pennsylvania Annual (Regional) Conference and the East Africa Annual Conference that wound up before The United Methodist Church's top court has ended with a split decision that likely will not please everyone. The Judicial Council agreed with only one of Western Pennsylvania's three questions — an item concerning \$3,000 owed to a pastor in South Sudan, a fraction of the more than \$100,000 involved in the overall dispute.

United Methodists pledge China earthquake relief

SHANGHAI (UMNS) — A United Methodist delegation visiting Christians in China said the denomination, through its United Methodist Committee on Relief, will assist in providing relief to the earthquake survivors in southwest Sichuan Province. The current toll of the April 20th earthquake, centered in Ya'an, is 188 people reported dead, 25 missing and 11,460 injured. As the delegation met April 22 with officials and staff of the China Christian Council, Thomas Kemper, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, pledged a grant of \$10,000 to the council's Social Service Department along as well as a \$10,000 grant to the Amity Foundation, a Christian organization and long-time partner.

Church and Society advocates on gun bills

WASHINGTON (UMNS) — The United Methodist Board of Church and Society, which advocates for the denomination's social positions, is not giving up on U.S. legislative efforts to prevent gun violence, despite a recent filibuster of an amendment to enact background checks. Polls have shown nearly 90 percent of Americans support background checks for gun purchases.

UMCOR responds to Texas emergency

NEW YORK (UMNS) — After a powerful explosion on April 17 at a fertilizer factory in West, Texas, flattened homes and caused dozens of casualties, the United Methodist Committee on Relief approved an emergency grant to the Central Texas Annual (regional) Conference to assist in relief efforts. UMCOR also requests people help by donating blood at a local center or by assembling cleaning buckets, which will soon be in great need, and health kits. These relief kits can be shipped to any of the eight depots in the UMCOR Relief-Supply Network.



“Let me use a modern translation,” I said.
But Oh, *nooo*; not Mr. “It’s King James – or-nothing.”

Cross Triumphant at First UMC of Montclair



First UMC of Montclair gathers around the cross triumphant on Easter Morning. The cross had been used on Good Friday when members nailed “their sins” upon it. Pictured are: Rev. Gene Hamilton, Conference Evangelist and Consultant in Worship Arts, Arlene Stewart, Hilda Taylor, Avrille Nicholls, and Pastor Earl Kim.

Church Librarians Seek Training, Fellowship At Annual Conference

By Laura Dallas

Media Center Associate at the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church - April 4, 2013

Lake Junaluska, NC – The Church and Synagogue Library Association (CSLA), an ecumenical professional organization for church and synagogue librarians, is hosting their 46th annual conference at the Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center in North Carolina, July 28–30. The conference theme is “Librarians at the Lakeside: Enrichment, Reflection, Renewal.”

Along with networking opportunities, the conference offers formal training in the School for Beginning Librarians, as well as 16 different workshops that cover topics such as library skills, technology, book recommendations, life skills, and involving youth and children in the library.

Popular Christian authors including Nancy Robinson Masters and Missy

Buchanan will join the conference, as well as Karen Greenwaldt, who just retired from leading the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church.

Other highlights include exhibitors, a silent auction, software demonstrations, and a worship service. Two special events, tours of nearby congregational libraries and the Cherokee Nation, are also open to families of participants who are welcome to enjoy all that Lake Junaluska has to offer.

First-time attendees to the conference will be paired with a seasoned mentor who will enrich the conference experience. CSLA also offers continued mentoring support for new church librarians, some of whom may have no previous library experience or formal training.

Registration and additional conference information is available on the CSLA website at <http://cslainfo.org>.

Correction to 2012 Shared Ministry Giving and Conference Billings Payments

In the March 2013 issue, the Shared Ministry giving and Conference Billings payments for 2012 were incorrectly published for Turning Point Church in Trenton, NJ. Below are the corrected percentages for 2012.

Church	2012 YTD Shared Min %Pd	2012 YTD Billings %Pd
Trenton: Turning Point	100.00%	100.00%

**The June Issue Deadline
is May 5, 2013**

PRAYER FOR STRENGTH IN A TIME OF CRISIS

*Oh good and gracious God,
be with our nation, our people, indeed each of us,
as we struggle to understand this crisis,
and why so many innocent people have to suffer... to die.*

*Strengthen us in our frailty as we seek to understand
and embrace our world where so much life has been desecrated,
so much potential destruction sown, so many dreams crushed.*

*As a people we long for peace, and our world is troubled,
we long for unending seasons of full harvest,
but have experienced a plague before the ripening.
In short, we desire your kingdom on earth,
but find ourselves always simply looking towards
your kingship from within our troubled world.*

*We ask that on one hand you guard us from the temptation
of falling into a hopeless cynicism, and on the other
from running towards all "quick" or "final" solutions
that would snuff out the very freedoms we seek to guarantee.
Finally deny us the temptation to mount holy wars
that serve the thirst for vindication, but not your demands
for just and humane outcomes, much less a sustainable peace.*

*And so Eternal Presence,
may your transcendent and timeless power assist us
in the healing of our wounds, in the formulation of our plans,
in the deliberations of our president with world leaders;
...and most of all, may your still small voice
invade the sanctuary of our souls and bring quiet.*

*May we understand even as did Abraham, and Isaac, Isaiah,
Mohammed, and our Jesus
that the road to peace must often pass through a time of testing.*

Oh, Jesus, be both our strength and our peace. Amen.

Wayne W. Conrad (9-19-01)

ed. note: The poem above was written by retired clergy Wayne Conrad and was originally published in the Relay after the attacks of September 11, 2001. We thought in light of recent events in Boston that we would run it again.

Messages of caring and hope

Continued from page 1



Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar addresses the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. Devadhar said in a letter to the New England Annual (regional) Conference following the bombing at the Boston Marathon that the outpouring of love and support from friends and colleagues in our United Methodist connection has been overwhelming and wonderful.

UMNS file photos by Mike DuBose.

sachusetts will — like Union — be opening their sanctuaries and offering prayer services.

The bishop told United Methodist News Service that one of the best things people can do to help right now is: "pray, pray, pray."

He urged United Methodists to take comfort in the words of Isaiah 58:9: "Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I."

Forgiveness and fear

But Devadhar and others acknowledged that people still have questions about how such a tragedy could occur and how people can forgive those responsible.

Germany Area Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, the president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, issued a statement calling for prayer for God's presence "with the victims, their families, and those who seek to heal the wounded and bring order to chaos." She also called for prayers for the perpetrators.

Ecumenical responses

Ecumenical organizations in the United States and worldwide have issued statements in response to the tragedy.

- World Methodist Council
- Massachusetts Council of Churches
- U.S. National Council of Churches
- World Council of Churches

"Even though we are aghast because of this brutal act of violence, as

followers of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, we do not satisfy our desire for revenge," she said.

It is natural for people to feel fear after these acts of violence, said the Rev. Rebekah Miles, a United Methodist elder and professor of ethics and practical theology at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas.

"But sometimes it's a fear that is exaggerated," she said. Miles knows from experience. When she was 9, she and her family witnessed a terrorist attack during a 1970 trip to the Old City of Jerusalem. Her family was about a block away from the bombing. "I think love is always the response to fear."

Miles said she sees the presence of God's love in the people who ran to help immediately after the explosions. It's worth remembering, she said, that no matter how many people were involved in planning the attack, far more rushed in to provide aid.

Kinder said he also saw God in the sense of community that's followed the tragedy.

"When disaster happens, we just hang up our labels and we come together," Kinder said. "I think that is the work of God in us. It doesn't matter if you are white, black ... Jewish, Christian. That's the Spirit of God that he created in us."

**Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service. News media contact: Heather Hahn, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.*

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Stewardship Stories

By Rich Hendrickson
Coordinator of Stewardship Education
and Development, GNJAC



Another Top Ten List of Stewardship Strategies:

- (1) Impress upon your members how their giving is making a difference in the lives of people here at home and around the world.
- (2) Use storytelling to make your point.
- (3) Touch the hearts of your donors with photos, DVDs and video presentations.
- (4) Make a point to say thank you to the faithful core of your congregation.
- (5) Help your congregation to understand that they are not an isolated church, but are connected to United Methodist churches around the world.
- (6) Dramatize the need for gifts of all sizes to support mission and ministry.
- (7) Use Sunday bulletins, newsletters, testimonials, and mission moments to tell stories that will help motivate your congregation to give.
- (8) Talk with other churches about the successful strategies they employ.
- (9) Touch the lives of donors by involving children in the appeal.
- (10) Demonstrate your personal commitment as a pastor.

Youth Learn the Roots of Methodism on Confirmation Retreat

Over 100 youth from around the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference filled the sanctuary of the Historic St. George's United Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on April 20th for the annual confirmation retreat. The visit to St. George's adds a unique experience to learning about Methodism. Rev. Alfred T. Day, III, pastor of St. George's, took the students on a journey through Methodism starting at the very beginning in America. Actors gave life to the story as they portrayed historic characters who told stories of long ago and how the Methodists went from being "United Societies" to The United Methodist Church of today.

After spending time together in the sanctuary, the group split into three different areas. One group went to discuss social justice issues facing the church in the 1700s as well as today. Another group spent time in the museum of the church discussing the history and "General Rules of the United Societies." The final group had the opportunity to work with a local musician, discussing and practicing the art of song in worship.



Youth from the GNJ listen attentively and sing during Confirmation Retreat.

The youth and chaperones finished their day exploring Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, also in Philadelphia, founded by Richard Allen.

At the end of the experience, one student said, "I finally get it...I get why we're The United Methodist Church."

St. Patrick's Day Festivities in Millville



The Rev. Jack Schaser, pastor of West Side Church in Millville on the Delaware Bay District, proudly wears his Campbell Clan kilt on St. Patrick's Day.

Newton FUMC performs "Seven Last Words of Christ" on Palm Sunday



On the afternoon of Palm Sunday, area churches joined together to prepare for Holy Week participating in a rendition of *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Dubois at First Church, Newton. Community singers joined together to prepare this inspirational presentation for the beginning of Holy Week. Singers joining the Methodist choir were from the Newton Presbyterian Church as well as other churches from the surrounding area. Director Henry Repp led the thirty-four voice ecumenical choir as he accompanied from the three-manual Peragallo pipe organ. The prelude was *Fantaisie in A* by Franck. Merynda Adams, harpist, joined Mr. Repp for *Aria in Classic Style* by Grandjany. Her harp music also added to the beauty of *The Seven Last Words of Christ*. The concluding anthem was *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* by Gilbert Martin. Rev. David Young, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Newton, eloquently sang the last words spoken by Jesus as he died on the cross. Joining him were John Meredith, tenor and Shirley Spooner, soprano. This ecumenical endeavor brought many together to experience the true meaning of Holy Week.

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Vineland Church Celebrates 150 Years

By Joseph P. Smith (originally published in *The Daily Journal*; reprinted with permission)



First United Methodist Church is marking its 150th anniversary at Seventh and Landis in Vineland, pictured Tuesday April 2, 2013.

Staff photo/Cody Glenn, *The Daily Journal*

*This article has been edited from a story first appearing in *The Daily Journal*; used by permission.*

VINELAND The hand-carved stone, towering stained glass windows and gothic styling give the impression that First United Methodist Church has stood forever at Seventh Street and East Landis Avenue.

It hasn't, although the institution is almost as old as Vineland itself.

The congregation got off to a slow but determined start, though flourishing for most of its existence. The church, which now has about 125 families, also has passed through fire, literally, only to come back revived and inspired. Now, the church is taking an institutional deep breath to reflect on and update its story of growing up. Recently the congregation celebrated the 150th anniversary of its official founding, and it marked the start of a series of celebratory events. About every 50 years, members take official stock of where their church stands and how to respond to contemporary Vineland.

In 2013, the area of Seventh and Landis area is a changed place, and

Methodists are a significantly smaller segment of Vineland's diverse population. Members still see opportunities, however.

"Sure we are! Sure we are!" the Rev. Susan L. Flicker said when asked if the church is in the right place downtown. "God plants us where God sees ability for us to be in ministry, and our job is to see where God is at work and join in that work."

Flicker said the church needs to keep young residents in its flock. "We need to be continually reaching out to the neighborhood," she said.

In February, a seven-member committee formed to wrestle with details of the church's sesquicentennial celebration. The preparations extend to renovating and expanding the Nichols Library, adding books and memorabilia.

The historical items already in its collection range from a massive Bible that dates to roughly the church's founding, to restored photographs of prominent members and past ministers, to souvenirs from the 100th anniversary in 1963. And then there is the picture of Abraham Lincoln that sits on a bunted mantel.

"Honest Abe's' picture is here be-

cause he was president when the church was founded - which is kind of cool when you think of it," church historian Roger Scull said.

There's also a place on the shelves for "Dr. Welch and the Great Grape Story," an illustrated storybook about one of the church's most famous members. It's been a church favorite for years. Thomas Bramwell Welch was a Communion steward here well before he invented his signature grape juice for use at services. His picture is on a wall. Welch, a physician and dentist who lived on Wood Street behind the church, subscribed to the Temperance Movement. While living in Vineland, he invented his unfermented juice as a substitute for wine. "Probably the first time Welch's grape was ever served in public was in this building, in our church," Scull said.

The first Methodist sermon reportedly was preached in a barn not far from the present church. Methodists then shared a schoolhouse with other

Dec. 18, 1931, conflagration destroyed the original building. In architecture, the first church on the site was a very different structure. It was built more in the style of an amphitheater. By 1931, the wood-frame structure had been expanded and improved with a stone facing, among other features.

The church was rebuilt over the next two years and dedicated in 1933. An adjacent Sunday School, just finished when the fire struck, had light damage and ended up as an interim church. It still stands.

Since 2012, Townsend said, the church has carried out or started a number of renovations and relocations.

The pastor's office was returned to the rear of sanctuary in an upstairs area. An elevator was installed, returning a feature the church once had.

In August and September, memorabilia from the newly established History Hall, which includes a "Pastors Row" of photographs of past and current ministers, and the church library will be on



A view from the balcony of the historic First United Methodist Church, where they are celebrating 150 years, located at Landis Avenue and Seventh Street in Vineland.

Staff photo/Cody Glenn, *The Daily Journal*

denominations. In 1864 the congregation committed to erecting a small church on donated property at Seventh Street and Landis Avenue. A cornerstone was laid on June 29, 1864 and the first sermon was delivered on Nov. 27, 1864 in a partially completed building.

Construction was largely complete in 1868, though a steeple and a church bell were missing. Construction and furnishing finally wrapped up in January 1874, and the church was rededicated.

Fire figures prominently in First United Methodist Church's history. A

display at Vineland Public Library, 1058 E. Landis Ave.

On Sept. 15, the Philadelphia Brigade Band will perform. The band has more than 20 members who dress in authentic Civil War-era uniforms and play music of the era on historic or historically accurate replicas of instruments. Participants also will wear period clothing, including ball gowns.

On Nov. 16, a Sesquicentennial Celebration Dinner will be held at 5 p.m. in Crossley Social Hall.

Broken to Beautiful Cross

Members of the Denville Community Church recognized their own human brokenness and the power of God's transformative love through Jesus during the Lenten season. On Ash Wednesday worshippers were invited to bring a dinner plate that was smashed during a Liturgy of Brokenness. Various members of the church community then helped create beauty from the brokenness. One member built a wooden cross form. The youth group painted it. And then Rising Hope, an innovative and creative worship experience that meets on Thursday nights, placed the broken pieces in response to sermons that examined how interactions with Jesus brought transformation to people of the Bible - bringing



them from places of brokenness and fragmentation to beauty and purpose in God's kingdom. During the worship series, character studies of the Woman at the Well and Saul who becomes Paul were presented through dramatic readings and sermons. Finally, the pastoral staff added caulk between the broken pieces. The "Broken to Beautiful Cross" made its debut on Easter morning at a sunrise bonfire service and has been in the sanctuary since. "It was awesome to see so many members of the church working together to create beauty from the broken plates on Ash Wednesday," said Jessica Stenstrom, youth pastor at the church. "It was a tangible way for people of all ages to recognize and celebrate the transformation that God's love offers each of us through Jesus."

Serving The Underserved



One of the churches in Camana was transformed into a Dental Clinic. The ten day mission served more than 1500 men, women, and children.

On March 1 a team of 14 ventured to Camana Peru, for ten days, with the mission of providing basic dental care in two dentally underserved towns providing basic care including fillings, extractions and oral hygiene education as well as fluoride treatments to over 1500 children. In the evening the team had the pleasure of conducting worship services in three different churches. The team did skits, puppetry, testimonies, and preaching. Hundreds of lives were touched through physical and spiritual healing; smiles were restored visibly and inwardly to persons of all ages.

Six of the team members were from United Methodist Churches in New Jersey other team members were from Colorado, Ohio and one from Canada.

They were: Rev. Jim and Mary Ann Davis (Whiting UMC), Dr. Dale and Carol Whilden (Ocean Grove UMC), Walt Hewitt (Hightstown UMC), Heike Graef (Toms River UMC)

GNJAC Prepares for Annual Conference Return to New Jersey

After nearly a decade of annual conference sessions being held outside the boundaries of the conference, the 2013 Session of Annual Conference will be held at the Wildwood, NJ Convention Center.

"After thorough research and prayerful discernment, the Sessions Committee was unanimous in its decision," said Reggie Albert, chairperson of the Sessions Committee. "The committee selected the Wildwood Convention Center and hotels not only because they would better serve our needs, but the move to this location saves money for individual registration fees and the conference mission budget," Albert added.

The sessions committee has planned the May 30 - June 1 conference using input from the last several annual conference evaluations. The committee has planned an agenda which will further the mission of the GNJAC, inspire participants in worship, accomplish the important business of the conference and provide time for community building and connecting with colleagues and friends. Fellowship time will be built into the schedule and Bible studies will be held during the session. Families are encouraged to attend and there are special hotel rates for families and individuals who want to arrive early or stay later. Also, no hotel will be more than a mile from the convention center.

"The convention center is located on the boardwalk and is an ideal setting for holy conferencing, community building and being one with God's creation and those impacted by Sandy," Albert said.

The Bible study teacher will be Dr. Karoline M. Lewis, the Alvin N. Rogness Chair of Homiletics, Luther Seminary at St. Paul, MN. The preachers for annual conference will be Dr. Joy Moore, an outstanding preacher and writer, associate dean for African American Church Studies and assistant professor of Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA and Bishop John Schol. Bishop Schol, a gifted preacher and story teller, will preach during the Ordination/Commissioning Service.

The agenda for the conference will be as follows:

The Greater New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church
We make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Session

Building a Future with Hope

May 30 - June 1, 2013

Wildwood, NJ

Thursday, May 30:

11:00 a.m. Opening Worship
12:30 p.m. Clergy Lunch and Executive Session
12:30 p.m. Laity Lunch and Session
2:30 p.m. Praise and Worship
2:45 p.m. Organizing the Conference
3:00 p.m. Episcopal/State of the Church Address
3:45 p.m. Nominations Report, Conference Center Report, Legislation
6:30 p.m. Adjourn for the day, dinner on your own

Friday, May 31:

7:00 a.m. Breakfast on your own; Group prearranged breakfasts (groups to sign up by April 15)
7:45 a.m. Communion on the Beach
8:30 a.m. Praise and Worship
8:45 a.m. Bible Study
9:30 a.m. Leadership Report
10:10 a.m. Holy Conferencing
11:00 a.m. Service of Remembrance
Noon Celebration Lunch – Honor Discipleship Fruitfulness
Noon Bishop's Luncheon with memorial service families
1:45 p.m. Praise and Worship
2:00 p.m. Legislation – Budget, Legislation
3:15 p.m. Adjourn – Fellowship and Sabbath – Dinner on your own (group dinners can be arranged for a meal at the convention center)
7:00 p.m. Ordination and Commissioning Service
8:45 p.m. Reception

Saturday, June 1:

7:00 a.m. Breakfast on your own; Group prearranged breakfasts (groups to sign up by April 15)
7:45 a.m. Communion on the Beach
8:30 a.m. Praise and Worship
8:45 a.m. Bible Study
9:30 a.m. Service of Passage and Reading of the Appointments
10:15 a.m. Legislation
1:00 p.m. Adjournment

RELAY MISSION STATEMENT

The **mission** of the *United Methodist Relay* is to provide print communication to the leadership and membership, clergy and lay, of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. It shall be a **vehicle** to tell the church's story and a **forum** for the exchange of ideas regarding Christian Faith and Practice.

In fulfillment of this mission, its **purpose** is:

- to inform the readership of events and resources at local, district conference, area and denominational levels
- to promote the mission of the annual conference, the area, and the general church
- to invite discussion of and response to important and controversial key issues facing the church
- to encourage readers to grow in their commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in church and society
- to inspire readers to grow in their faith and commitment to Christ and the Church

In pursuit of this mission and purpose, we will endeavor to be: Accurate * Informative * Interesting * Stimulating * Motivating * And sometimes, Provocative.



Karoline M. Lewis
Assoc Prof, Biblical Preaching and The Alvin N. Rogness Chair of Homiletics; Chair, Leadership Division

Karoline M. Lewis joined the Luther Seminary faculty as assistant professor of biblical preaching in 2007. She has held adjunct faculty positions at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Candler School of Theology in Atlanta and Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. She was also adjunct faculty in the Bible division at Luther Seminary from 1994 to 1995 and in 2006.

Ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in 1999, Lewis was associate pastor of worship and education at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church in Lawrenceville, Ga. (1999-2002). She is a member of the American Academy of Religion, Academy of Homiletics and the Society of Biblical Literature, for which she also serves as president for the Upper Midwest Region. She has served as associate editor for the journal *Word & World* and is in her second term as the chair of the leadership division at Luther Seminary.



Joy J. Moore
Associate Dean for African American Church Studies and Assistant Professor of Preaching School of Theology

The Rev. Dr. Joy Jittaun Moore joined the faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary in September 2012 as Associate Dean for African American Church Studies and Assistant Professor of Preaching. She came from Duke University Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina, where she served as Associate Dean for Church Relations and Associate Dean of Black Church Studies. Previously she was Assistant Professor of Preaching, Director of Women's and Ethnic Ministries, and later Director of Student Life at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, and was Chaplain and Director of Church Relations at Adrian College, Adrian, Michigan.

Moore's research interests focus primarily on understanding the critical issues influencing contemporary culture for community formation. A frequently featured preacher, Bible study leader and teacher, she is currently conducting research on the impact of various media forms on how we assimilate information and what it does to our religious imagination. Her chapter, "Preaching: Telling the Story in a Sound-bite Culture," in *Generation Rising: A Future with Hope for the United Methodist Church*, edited by Andrew C. Thompson (Abingdon, 2011), calls for preaching that takes seriously the story of Scripture over the moralisms we choose to impose on its stories. Her book *Text Messaging: Ancient Stories for a Cyberspace Future* is forthcoming with Bristol Books.

An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, Moore has pastored congregations in Michigan since 1988. A characteristic of her work has been to provide opportunities for the Christian hope to be explained and practiced so others are welcomed to accept their vocation as representatives of the reconciling love of God—practicing hope, hospitality, and honesty.

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How Old Is Too Old To Join The Clergy?

A UMNS Report By Heather Hahn

The Texas Annual (regional) Conference has proposed changing its minimum standards for clergy to discourage people over 45 from becoming candidates for ordained ministry.

The conference's board of ordained ministry is seeking feedback through September this year and does not plan to make any final decision on its standards until October.

But the possible changes have already sparked debate across the United Methodist blogosphere. Some call it an example of blatant age discrimination, while others hail it as a welcome consideration for serving the needs of tomorrow's church.

According to a number of longtime church observers, the Texas Conference is believed to be the first to make such a proposal for age guidelines.

The proposal comes at a time when Texas and other U.S. conferences have increased emphasis on recruiting younger clergy even as they also deal with people joining the clergy as second careers.

"This doesn't surprise me, and it wouldn't surprise me to see other conferences move in a similar direction," said Jan Love, the dean of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta. "One must always remember that leadership skills are not always defined by age."

But she added that she sees the Texas plan as an important step in more strategic thinking about church leadership. Whether it's the right step is debatable, she said.

"The reason I think it's an interesting strategic move that needs to be thoughtfully considered is that having someone become ordained is a huge investment of institutional resources," she said.

Those resources include financial support for education, pension and health benefits. The mandatory retirement age for United Methodist clergy is 72.

The Rev. Carol Bruse, the chair of the conference's 70-member board of ordained ministry, said the aim of the proposed standards is to help the conference plan for future needs. The policy would not affect current clergy or clergy candidates in the Texas Conference.

"It's not just the call of God on people's lives. What we have to discern is the call of the church," said Bruse, the senior pastor of West University United Methodist Church in Houston. She entered the candidacy process herself at age 35, after years working in construction and as a stay-at-home mom.

"Of course God calls every Christian," she said. "But who does the church need at this particular time at this location? That's the hard part. We don't have it all figured out but we're doing our best."

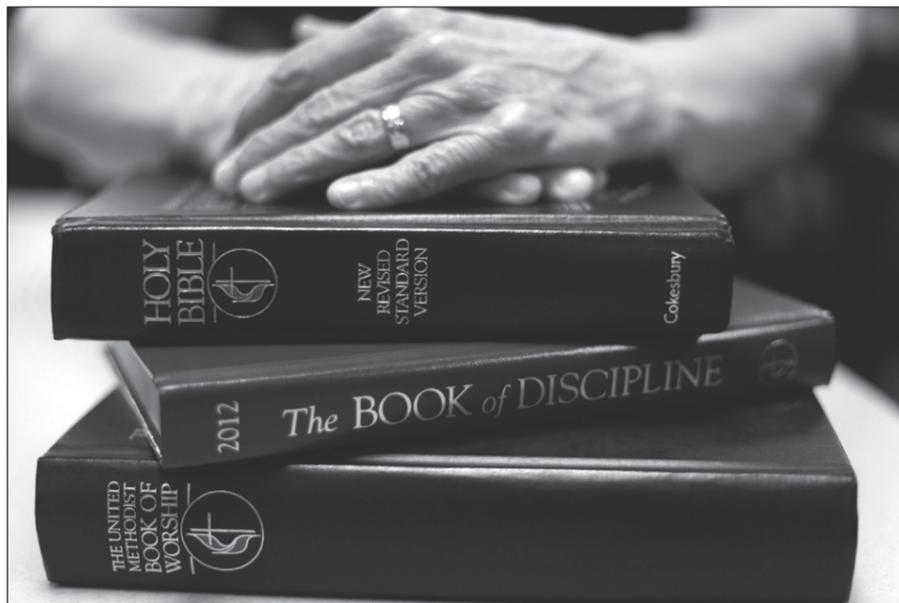
Even if the board of ordained ministry ultimately adopts this policy, Bruse and other board members stressed that it would only serve as a guideline — not an outright ban on all older candidates.

"I bet there will be a 67-year-old in every ordination class until the end of time because God is just weird like that," Bruse said. "You've got your Davids who are young, your Pauls who are in their 40s and your Abrahams who are beyond childbearing years."

What the proposal says

Under the proposal, the Texas Conference board of ordained ministry would encourage candidates seeking credentials as:

- an elder over 45 "to pursue licensed ministry, certified lay or



A UMNS photo illustration by Kathleen Barry.

- other expressions of lay ministry
- a deacon over 45 "to pursue other expressions of ministry"
- a licensed local pastor over 60 "to pursue certified lay ministry or other expressions of lay ministry"
- a certified lay minister over 70 "to pursue other expressions of lay ministry"

is unprecedented in the denomination's history, he said.

The center does not track the ages of those entering. But as late as 2009, the center found that about 25 percent of those in the provisional process were baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964).

"The best thing about the Texas

What The United Methodist Church says

In the Book of Discipline, the denomination's law book

- Called to Inclusiveness
- Rights of the Aging
- Qualifications for Ordination

In the Book of Resolutions, which outlines the denomination's social positions

- "Aging in the United States — The Church's Response"

From the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry

- An overview of different kinds of full-time, paid ministry in The United Methodist Church

For too long, Bruse said, the board of ordained ministry would ordain anyone who finished seminary and passed the required psychological and background checks.

The Texas Conference, with more than 284,000 lay members as of 2011, is the largest conference in the South Central Jurisdiction and one of the largest in the United States. But conference research projects that in the next 15 to 20 years it will have fewer, bigger churches seeking longer-tenured pastors, she said. The policy change would give the board and others in the conference a way to tell some people "no."

It would also serve as a reality check for those considering becoming clergy about the time and financial commitment involved.

Earning a master of divinity degree typically takes three years for a full-time student and longer for part-time. Ordination candidates then must complete two to three years as provisional members of their conferences before being fully ordained. It can take another eight to 10 years for a pastor to become proficient at the craft.

"When candidates come in, they can be clueless about our system," Bruse said. "They come in and spend their life savings on seminary, and they don't want to leave their hometown."

The Rev. Lovett H. Weems Jr., professor of church leadership and director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, consulted on the Texas Conference plan.

His center annually tracks clergy age in the denomination. As of 2012, elders 35 or older made up more than 94 percent of all provisional and ordained elders, and 53 percent of all elders were age 55 or older, Weems said. That percentage of older clergy

Conference proposal is that it takes the initiative in spelling out the clergy needs for the United Methodist witness in their area," Weems said.

"Their proposal may seem jarring to some. It can, however, be a starting point for a process to help potential candidates explore what is their best avenue into ministry. Age is one of many factors conferences should consider in helping persons discern where their gifts can best serve the church."

Is it discriminatory?

The proposal has plenty of detractors.

The Rev. Jeremy Smith, who regularly blogs about issues facing young clergy, calls the Texas proposal "outright ageism."

"To lose the perspective of new middle-aged and senior clergy in an annual conference, especially those that bring interdisciplinary expertise from their first careers, would be tragic indeed," he wrote on his blog Hacking Christianity. Smith is the minister of discipleship at First United Methodist Church in Portland, Ore.

"I can name quite a few effective clergy leading vital congregations that were commissioned after age 45. I bet you can name several as well."

Richard H. Gentzler Jr., director of the Center on Aging and Older Adult Ministries at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, said the denomination's Committee on Older Adult Ministries is reviewing the proposal and plans to send a response to the conference.

The Rev. Gwen Purushotham, who leads the Division of Ordained Ministry at the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, expressed her own misgivings about the possible standards.

"My personal opinion, I think the primary thing we should think about is the mission of the church and what kind of leaders do we need for that mission," she said. "I would personally ask the question whether limiting that to certain age groups for certain (ministerial) orders is going to serve that mission."

Retired Bishop D. Max Whitfield, who is bishop in residence at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, said he can see the pros and cons of the proposal.

He said the benefits include the focus on helping younger and more diverse people respond to God's call to ordained ministry. However, the proposal "fails to acknowledge the effective ministry performed by extremely capable persons who respond to God's calling later than their early years of life," he said.

Whitfield also wondered whether the document meets the standards of the Book of Discipline, the church law book, which requires "openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the Church, the community, and the world."

"The church must deny 'every semblance of discrimination,' and this document fails that test," he said.

For the Rev. Mark Whitley, the proposal has personal resonance. He grew up attending church only sporadically and only discovered The United Methodist Church as an adult. After years of working with the American Red Cross, he entered the candidacy process at 43 and was ordained an elder in 2011 at 53. His wife, Susan, was ordained an elder a year later.

Today, Whitley is the senior pastor of Verdigris United Methodist Church in Claremore, Okla. His wife is the pastor of Skiatook First United Methodist Church in Skiatook, Okla..

Whitley said he and his wife are "all in," having spent virtually all their savings in preparing for their pastoral call. But he said the two have no regrets. Before becoming a pastor despite his career advances, he said he always felt a "gnawing sense of emptiness."

"Every pastor understands the pain of ministry," he said, "but the pain of leaving my call right now would far exceed whatever pain I feel as a pastor. It's who I am."

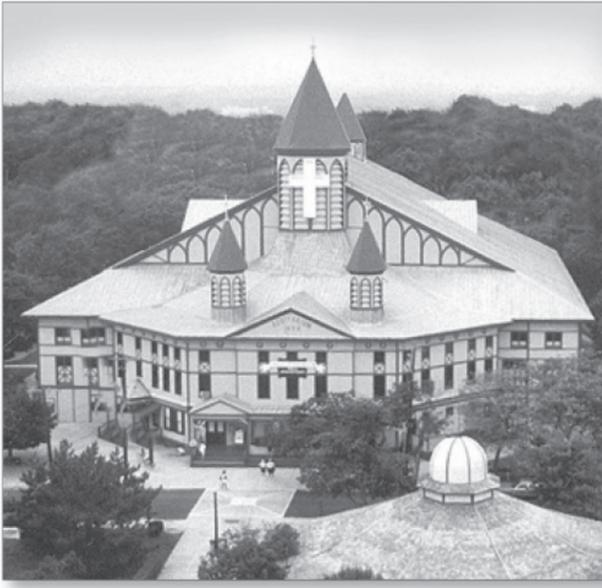
He added that to turn someone away because "they've reached an arbitrary age seems deeply, deeply disingenuous."

Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service. News media contact: Heather Hahn, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OCEAN GROVE 2013 SUMMER SEASON

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SUNDAY SERVICES

- June 09-10:30am- Dr. Haddon Robinson, past President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and is the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching
- June 16-10:30am & 7:00pm- Dr. Mitch Glaser, President, Chosen People Ministry, New York City, NY
- June 23-10:30am & 7:00pm- Pastor Skip Heitzig, Senior Pastor, Calvary Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM.
- June 30-10:30am & 7:00pm- Will Graham, Founder, Executive Director of the Billy Graham Training Center at the Cove, Associate Evangelist, Asheville, NC
- July 07-10:30am- Rev. Nancy Beach, Speaker/Teacher, Lead Coaching Associate SlingShot Group, Barrington, IL
- July 14-10:30am - Rev. Dr. Alistair Begg, Senior Pastor, Parkside Church, Chagrin Falls, OH

7:30pm 59th ANNUAL CHOIR FESTIVAL

Directed by Dr. Jason Tramm

- July 21-10:30am & 7:00pm- Rev. Dr. Michael Youssef, Founding Rector of the Church of the Apostles, "Leading the Way" Radio Broadcast, Atlanta, GA

144th ANNUAL CAMP MEETING WEEK

- Fri. July 26-7:00pm - **Mike Huckabee, Former Governor, Host of Fox News' "Huckabee" Daily ABC Radio Show**
- July 28-10:30am & 7:00pm -Rev. Dr. David Ireland, Senior Pastor, Christ Church, Montclair, NJ
- Aug. 04-10:30am & 7:00pm- Rev. Stephen Wende, Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Houston, Texas
- Aug. 11-10:30am & 7:00pm- Rev. Dr. Tim Tennent, President of Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY
- Aug. 18-10:30am & 7:00pm- Rev. Dr. Tony Campolo, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Eastern University, St. Davids, PA
- Aug. 25- 10:30am -Dr. Duffy Robbins, Professor of Youth Ministry, Eastern University, St. David, PA

7:30pm SACRED MASTERWORK CONCERT

- Sept. 01-10:30am & 7:30pm- Dr. Luis Palau, International Christian Evangelist, Luis Palau Association, Portland, OR
- Sept. 08- 10:30am - Salvation Army, Commissioner William Francis Retired Territorial Leader for the Canada & Bermuda Territory

BIBLE HOUR

9:00-10:00am Monday through Saturday
Bishop Janes Tabernacle

- June 24-28- Pastor Tommy Miles, Senior Pastor, Macedonia Baptist Church, Neptune, NJ
- June 29- Pastor Robert Fuggi, Toms River Community Church, Toms River, NJ
- July 01-06- Rev. Dr. J. Ellsworth Kalas, Senior Professor of Homiletics, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY
- July 08-13- Rev. Randy Smith, Pastor of Grace Tabernacle Church, Allenwood, NJ
- July 15-20- Pastor Ty Choate, Senior Pastor, The First Baptist Church of Red Bank, Red Bank, NJ
- July 22-27- Pastor Rodney Finch, Senior Pastor, Calvary Chapel Cary, Apex, NC

144th ANNUAL CAMP MEETING WEEK

- July 29-Aug. 3- Chaplain John W. Groth, Lt.Col (ret) USAF, Director of Gallantry in Action, Inc
- Evening Sessions:- Rev. Rob Cruver, Senior Pastor, Zarephath Christian Church, Zarephath, NJ
- Aug. 5-10- Dr. Gerald Mills, Retired Presbyterian Pastor, Chatham, NJ
- Aug. 12- 17-Pastor Lloyd Pulley, Senior Pastor, Calvary Church, Old Bridge, Old Bridge, NJ
- Aug. 19-23- Dr. James Fleming, Director of the Biblical Resource Center, LaGrange, GA
- Aug. 24- David Scott, Executive Director of the Market Street Mission, Morristown, NJ
- Aug. 26-Aug. 30- Rev. Roger Casey, Retired Senior Pastor, Rock Church, New York City, NY

THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



August 8th & 9th- Join 100,000 leaders for this annual injection of vision, skill development and inspiration simulcast to OG.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Biblical Resources Seminar:** "Our God Present During Difficulty."
Mon. Aug. 19 to Fri. Aug. 23, 10:30 am -12:30pm
Community Room. Led by Dr. James Fleming. Seminar fee \$125. Continental Breakfast
- Saturday, September 14- 9am Beth Moore- Live Simulcast Held in the Youth Temple, \$25.00 per person see our website

Christian Shows in The Great Auditorium

- June 21- Bridgefest Concert Event- www.bridgefest.org
- August 10- 8pm Francesca Battistelli & Sanctus Real -
- August 31- 8pm Tenth Avenue North

BEACH FESTIVAL

- June 21st & 22nd- Bridgefest w/ Bridge FM- www.bridgefest.org.

MONDAY EVENINGS ON THE BEACH

July 1, 8, 15, 22 & Aug. 5-7:30pm "Under the Umbrella" Open to all women. A relaxing time of fun, friendship and a focus of God! Look for the pink striped umbrellas on the beach in front of the Boardwalk Pavilion.

TUESDAY EVENINGS ON THE BEACH

Tuesday Evenings in July, 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 7pm: Bible Study with Rev. David Cotton, Chaplain, Jersey Shore Medical Center. On the beach just south of the Beach Office.

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF ALL EVENTS

CALL OGCMA At 732 775-0035

Purchase tickets online on our website:

www.oceangrove.org.

OBITUARIES

GORDON W. BAUM, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died on Sunday, March 31 in New Milford, Pennsylvania. A Memorial Service was held at Montrose United Methodist Church on April 6.

He was a graduate of Dickinson College and Drew Seminary and served churches in Union City, NJ, Staten Island, NY, Rahway, NJ, Butler, NJ, and Hopatcong, NJ before he retired in 1992.

Please make memorial donations, in lieu of flowers, to the Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society, c/o Greater NJ Conference, 1001 Wickapecko Drive, Ocean, NJ 07712. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to his widow, Mrs. Doris Baum, 2813 School Road, New Milford, PA 18834.

ROBERT J. GENTILE, retired Elder of the Greater NJ Conference, died on April 8 in Jacksonville, Florida. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2013 at 11:00 am at Satellite Beach United Methodist Church, 450 Lee Avenue, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

In lieu of flowers, gifts of remembrance may be made to North East Florida Community Hospice, 4266 Sunbeam Road, Jacksonville, FL 32257. Messages of condolence may be sent to his widow, Alice Gentile, 4078 Briarforest Road, E. Jacksonville, FL 32277.

ANACLETO 'NITO' PEREZ-TORRES, husband of Retired Associate Member, the Rev. Noemi R. Perez, died on Thursday, April 11, 2013. Mr. Perez-Torres was an At-Large Member to the Annual Conference and father of Rev. Lyssette Perez. A Celebration of Life service was held at Oasis United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to the Oasis United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 595, Pleasantville, NJ 08232. Messages of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Noemi R. Perez, 99 Baltusrol Drive, Mays Landing, NJ 08330.

JAMES S. TILLER, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died on January 4 at Westminster Village, Spanish Fort, AL. A memorial service was held at the Foley United Methodist Church, Foley AL on January 21.

His 33 years of ministry was completed at the Madison United Methodist Church. During 11 years of which he also served as President of the Madison Rotary Club and a member of the Drew University Board of Trustees. During his retirement he taught an 85 member Questers Sunday School Class at Foley United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Foley United Methodist Church, 915 North Pine Street, Foley, Alabama 36535 or Odyssey Hospice.

GAIL A. EISENLOHR, at-large lay member to the Annual Conference and member of the Brooklawn United Methodist Church, died on Monday, April 15. A Celebration of Life service was held at the Brooklawn United Methodist Church on April 22.

In lieu of flowers, gifts of remembrance may be made to the Brooklawn United Methodist Church Missions Fund, address above. Condolence messages also may be sent to her church family at the Brooklawn UMC.

*Flemington United Methodist Church
invites you to 5 nights of*

REVIVAL!

May 13 –17, 2013

7:00 PM

116 Main Street

Flemington, New Jersey

GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

- Mon. Rev. Dr. Jerry Carter
Calvary Baptist Church, Morristown, NJ
- Tue. Rev. Robert W. Cruver
Zarephath Christian Church, Zarephath, NJ
- Wed. Pastor Tim Lucas
Liquid Church, Morristown, NJ
- Thu. Pastor Jim Walker
Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community, Pittsburgh, PA
- Fri. Rev. Darrell Armstrong
Shiloh Baptist Church, Trenton, NJ

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Please call (908) 782-1070 for additional information
www.FlemingtonUMC.org

Are You Being Digested?

Did you know the communications coordinator published the GNJ Digest, an electronic newsletter, several times each week? Each week there are multiple editions full of Announcements, Events, Celebrations, National News and Conference Calendar Updates. There are also special letters from the Bishop and notifications of deaths among members of the Annual Conference. If you are not currently on our e-mail list and would like to be, please send your request to join our list to communications@gnjumc.org.



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Leadership training in the United Methodist Church is supported through the World Service Fund. All this — and so much more — is possible when we pay 100% of our apportionments.

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**Ask your Church Treasurer about your church's progress
 toward full participation in our Shared Ministry!**

For more information go to UMCGiving.org and click on Shared Ministries