

Groundbreaking Ceremony for United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey on Jumping Brook Road, Neptune

On Thursday, May 22nd, Bishop John Schol and the leaders of the United Methodist Church in Greater New Jersey, together with public officials from Neptune Township and Monmouth County, broke the ground for a new conference center on Jumping Brook Road in Neptune.

The conference office administration provides support for the more than 580 United Methodist Churches and 50,000 worshippers in the Greater New Jersey region.

The conference center also serves as the administrative headquarters for A Future with Hope, the nonprofit organization started by the United Methodist Church to help people in the region recover from Superstorm Sandy. A Future with Hope has become a leader in Sandy recovery around the state and to date has rebuilt 42 homes with an additional 62 under construction.

"United Methodists continue to show their leadership in the region by providing vital service programs in their local communities, around the world, and through A Future with Hope which has provided safe and secure homes for hundreds of people who had nowhere else to turn," said Bishop Schol, "We are a growing church and the new conference center reflects our need to support our local churches to continue to engage their communities in new and necessary ways."

The 19,200 square foot building was designed by Shore Point Architecture, PA in Ocean Grove and is being built by Jack Green Construction also in Ocean Grove. The first floor of the conference center will include an area that will accommodate worship services and meetings for area leaders, a media center and library, and a video production studio.



Bishop John Schol (middle) breaks ground with conference leaders (left to right): Paul Zorn, Rev. Lou Strugala, Rosa Williams, and Rev. Vicki Brendler

Our thanks to the participants of the groundbreaking who, along with Bishop Schol, turned the soil:

Conference Leaders: Rev. Lou Strugala, Chair Board of Trustees, Mrs. Rosa Williams, Conference Lay Leader, Rev. Vicki Brendler, Chair Connectional Table, Paul Zorn

County and Town Officials: Vito Gadaleta, Business Administrator for Neptune Township, Randy Bishop, Committeeman Neptune Township, Sharon Davis, Planning Board Vice Chairperson for Neptune Township

Building Personnel: Jack Green, Contractor, Steve Carlidge and April Horvath Architects

Conference Staff Reps: John Cardillo, Treasurer, Bobbie Rambach, Dean of the Cabinet, Carolyn Conover, Director of Communication and Development, Bruce Hartman, Director Connectional Ministries, and District Superintendents

Visiting Clergy included: Father Richard Townley, Ecumenical Director of the Episcopal Church of New Jersey and Rev. Virginia Samuel, Dean of the Theological School, Drew University

History Is Connecting Factor for Bob Williams

By Linda Bloom



The Rev. Robert J. Williams, backed by a video image of John Wesley, discusses the work of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History during the denomination's 2012 General Conference in Tampa, Fla. Williams retires Aug. 1, 2014. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS

NEW YORK (UMNS) — For as long as he can remember, the Rev. Robert Williams has been passionate about God, history and the Jersey Shore.

A United Methodist pastor in New Jersey since 1970, Williams has been both a student and teacher of church

history. He was ordained an elder in 1974. Now, he is retiring — effective Aug. 1 — after nine years as the top executive of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History at Drew University in Madison, N.J.

One of the benefits will be spending

more time at his home in Ocean City, where nothing is better, he says, than strolling the beach or having a backyard dinner with friends on a gorgeous summer night.

Founded as a Methodist camp meeting in 1879, Ocean City is the place that binds his faith and the rest of his life together. It's a town where the church's roots are so deep, William notes, that alcoholic beverages still are not sold in public places.

Last year, he had the privilege of preaching at St. Peter's United Methodist Church there to mark the 50th anniversary of his joining the church. He met his wife of 44 years, Renee, on the beach in Ocean City, when he was 19 and she was 18. His two daughters and three grandchildren spend time at their Ocean City duplex.

"I've been returning to Central Avenue in Ocean City at least every summer my whole life," he says.

Church needs its memories

Just as important to him as the memories of those summers are the memories of The United Methodist Church, which, he believes, help guide the denomination's present and future.

"Without our memory, the church can't be the church," Williams declares.

But it's hard to draw attention to the history and stories "that can stimulate or shame us," he acknowledges. "I think what we're up against is extreme competition for people's time."

While there seems to be an enormous interest in history — the popularity of ancestry.com and other genealogy websites, the History Channel on cable television and the feature film, "Lincoln" come to mind — there continues to be a struggle in the life of the church "to get our history known and to get it known accurately."

For Williams, books were as much of a draw as the beach in those early days. He was fascinated by American history, even though he made the decision not to pursue it as a vocation. "In college, I majored in math and science because my dad said, 'Math teachers get jobs; history teachers don't,'" he explains.

But his plans to teach high school chemistry — he earned a master's degree in education from the University of Pennsylvania in 1970 — did not materialize once he decided to go to seminary.

Continued on page 4

A Message from the Bishop



Part 4 - From 14 to 41%

This article is part four of a five part series about growing 41% of our congregations to be highly vital by 2018. Vital congregations are vibrant congregations whose disciples are testifying how they, the congregation and the community are changing because of God's movement in and through the congregation. These congregations are also growing worship, professions of faith (new disciples), small groups, community justice and mercy ministries, and giving to mission.

There are five movements congregations need to be exploring:

1. From membership to discipleship
2. From static to vitality
3. From activity to transformation
4. From manager to turnaround spiritual leader
5. From wandering to metrics

Today I will explore from manager to turnaround spiritual leader.

There is a difference between a manager and a leader. The leader sets the vision and defines reality. The manager works on organizing people and dollars to achieve the vision. Both are important to the life of the church but a church with all managers and no leader (s) does not have a future.

In his 1989 book "On Becoming a Leader," Warren Bennis offered a list of the differences:

- The manager administers; the leader innovates.
- The manager maintains; the leader develops.
- The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people.
- The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust.
- The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective.
- The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why.
- The manager has his or her eye always on the bottom line; the leader's eye is on the horizon.
- The manager imitates; the leader originates.
- The manager does things right; the leader does the right thing

Churches need good managers and they also need turnaround spiritual leaders. Let's unpack this.

Turnaround – Today, many of our congregations are in need of a turnaround. The direction they are headed has a limited future. It is not that the direction is bad, it is just the wrong direction for 2014. The direction many of our churches are headed worked perfectly well in a previous generation. Today's generation is looking for something quite different in the church. There is no one turnaround or solution. It is much more contextual. Understanding what is important to the people in the community is essential for the turnaround.

Spiritual – The church requires spiritual leadership. Spiritual leaders ask first, God what do you need from me and how can I best lead your people. Spiritual leaders rely on prayer and good secular leadership principles; they rely on scripture and the latest leadership best practices. For instance, today's spiritual leaders understand how God was at work through Moses to lead the people through the wilderness and understand how God wants us to lead people through today's wildernesses – cultural change, connecting with young people, technology, the sociology of the community, and a host of other challenges the church faces today.

Leader – Leaders are individuals who are not interested in maintaining the present state of the church but who are seeking God's call for what the church is to become. Leaders are never satisfied with what is, but yearn for God's calling.

Turnaround spiritual leaders bring three things to leadership

1. Zest - Holy Spirit inspiration and passion
2. Grit - a thick skin and perseverance, and
3. Heart - a deep faith and caring spirit for people, the church and the world.

Bringing leadership zest, grit and heart is necessary because we are faced with challenges that we have not experienced before. Today's leaders tell a new story of a God-sized vision for what we are called to become.

Through the years, my leadership experience has been like that of the prophet Joshua. When Joshua led the people to rebuild the temple and the foundation was laid, half the people were joyous and half mourned the loss of the old temple. Both saw the same thing and had different reactions. Aren't these the times we are living in? Leaders are finding that half the people appreciate where they are leading and half are frightened or are feeling a sense of loss. It can make challenging ministry even more challenging. And so we walk and lead together, encouraging and supporting each other as we lead with zest, grit and heart. I fully anticipate that as you put forth God-sized visions some will leap for joy and some will mourn. So let's go together and encourage and support one another.

Keep the faith!

John Schol, Bishop
The United Methodist Church
Greater New Jersey

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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.

DREW APPOINTS THE REV. DR. JAVIER VIERA NEW DEAN OF THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL



The Rev. Dr. Viera has been named the new dean of the Theological School at Drew.

Madison, NJ – Noted for his experience as a minister and administrator and recognized for his global vision and record of strategic relationship building, the Rev. Dr. Javier A. Viera has been chosen to be the next dean of the Theological School, announced Drew President Vivian A. Bull.

"I am very pleased that Dr. Viera has chosen to come to Drew," said Bull. "He brings great experience in the church and in community outreach that will enrich the work of our colleagues in the Theological School, as well as in the whole university," she said.

Viera's appointment was approved by the Executive Committee of the Drew Board of Trustees. He will begin on July 1.

Currently, Viera is executive minister of Christ Church in New York City and holds advanced degrees from Duke, Yale and Columbia. In addition to his pastoral duties at Christ Church, Viera spearheaded efforts to form partnerships with the Methodist Church in Colombia, promoting economic development projects and cross-cultural efforts to build health clinics, churches and job training centers. Viera has also served on the governing boards of two university-based divinity schools, at Yale and Duke.

Viera was selected as dean of the Theological School after a four-month international search process launched in late November 2013, undertaken with the assistance of AGB Search, the Washington, D.C. - based recruiting firm that assisted in Drew's recent presidential search. Viera will succeed the Rev. Dr. Virginia Samuel T'75, associate dean of contextual learning for the Theological School, who has served as the interim dean since the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Kuan departed in 2013 to become the seventh president of Claremont School of Theology.

"Javier Viera is a dedicated pastor, an exceptional administrator, a devoted teacher, and a person of great integrity," said Dr. J. Terry Todd, associate professor of American religious studies, who headed the dean search committee, "Dr. Viera will guide our Theological School with grace and confidence into a rapidly changing future."

The Theological School at Drew University has its roots in the Methodist tradition and serves an ecumenical student body of around 460, a population so diverse that not one ethnic or cultural group claims a majority.

"Javier has spent his professional life

building bridges between the church and higher education," said Todd. "He has a proven track record in leading complex organizations, including extensive experience in fundraising, and has a vision for the future of theological education that holds great promise for us in these challenging times."

In his letter of application, Viera touched on this very issue. "I am of the mind that ours is a moment in history ripe for creativity, ingenuity and daring. Having the opportunity to build upon Drew's international legacy is something that energizes me and builds upon my prior professional experience."

The committee felt strongly that that Viera's increasing visibility within the denomination made him the ideal candidate to lead the Theological School in building and maintaining ties to a rapidly globalizing church.

Viera earned his bachelor's degree from Florida Southern College, his Master of Divinity from Duke University and his Master of Sacred Theology from Yale University. In 2012, he completed his doctorate in adult learning and leadership at Columbia University. He was recognized as a Canon Scholar at Yale and a Dean's Scholar at Duke. He currently advises and co-directs doctoral student dissertations at Teachers College at Columbia University. He has delivered sermons at both Harvard and Yale, and has done scholarly work on interreligious relations and comparative religions. Viera is also a Fellow at the Shalom Center's Christian Leadership Initiative in Jerusalem.

Before joining the staff of Christ Church, Viera served as senior minister at Mamaroneck United Methodist Church in New York.

One of the first projects Viera will undertake at Drew is leading the faculty in its revision of the Theological School's flagship Master of Divinity curriculum. He also will be responsible for supervising the training of ministers, religious leaders, and scholars, supporting faculty scholarship and development, and strengthening the Graduate Division of Religion.

Viera is a native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, has two daughters and counts tennis and baseball among his hobbies.

About the Theological School at Drew University

Founded in 1867, Drew Theological School has a distinguished international history in training clergy for the United Methodist Church and other Protestant denominations. With a full-time faculty of 23 and a student body of 461, the Theological School is also a center of ecumenical scholarship and social action. Degree programs include the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, Master of Arts in Ministry, Master of Sacred Theology and Doctor of Ministry. The Doctor of Philosophy degree is offered through the Graduate Division of Religion, housed within the Theological School. The Theological School is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and is one of three schools within Drew University in Madison, N.J.

Bus Fire Threatens Summer Program At Neighborhood Center



A burned out bus poses a serious obstacle to the Center's ability to carry out its summer program.

For more than 100 years, The Camden Neighborhood Center has offered comprehensive childcare, afterschool, and summer camp programs for children in the city of Camden, NJ, one of the poorest and most dangerous cities in the United States. One of the benefits of their programs is that they are able to pick students up from school or their homes with their bus, ensuring that they arrive safely at the campus without being exposed to the negative influences found on the streets of the city. But they have suffered a tragedy and are in need of everyone's help in order to continue serving the children of Camden. Just a few weeks ago the Center's bus was destroyed in a fire, and they need to raise \$100,000 to purchase a new bus as quickly as possible - school is about to let out and summer camp is just around the corner!

What They Need & What You Get

To continue to provide programs that meet the needs of children in the community, they need to purchase a new 54-passenger bus; without a bus they are unable to provide a safe haven for children after school and during the summer months.

All funds raised by this campaign will be used for the purchase of a new bus, guaranteeing that students who attend The Neighborhood Center will have safe, supervised access to their programs. Any funds raised in excess of what is needed will be placed in a "bus trust", ensuring that they are able to maintain the new vehicle throughout its lifetime.

In addition to making a powerful investment in the children of Camden, supporters will receive a personalized "thank you" from The Neighborhood Center based on their level of support. Most importantly, their students will be one step closer to having a safe way to get to the campus!

The Impact

Since 1913, The Neighborhood Center has served our community by working to meet the basic needs of families and individuals living in the city of Camden. The mission of The Neighborhood Center is to "love our neighbors as ourselves with abundant hope and service today and every day," specifically, they pursue this mission by:

- Making it easy to be a parent in the neighborhood by offering comprehensive childcare programs for children of all ages
- Making it difficult to go hungry in the neighborhood by providing children and adults consistent access to fresh, healthy food
- Building a network of good neighbors through intentional community outreach and year-round volunteer service opportunities

Since their founding, services for infants, children, and teens have been the primary focus of The Neighborhood Center, and continue to be a vital part of the support network of families in the community. By helping them to purchase a new bus, you are ensuring that the next generation of students in the city of Camden have access to a safe and welcoming place to grow, learn, and thrive.

Other Ways You Can Help

The Neighborhood Center has always depended on the support of its friends and community partners to create change in our neighborhood - please help to share the story (and the need) with your friends and family. For more information about The Neighborhood Center, please visit their website at www.ncicamden.org.

YES, YOU ARE BEING DIGESTED!

By now, you have probably discovered the weekly GNJ Digest, your conference's electronic newsletter 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 become a part of our "digested community" to gnjdigest@gnjumc.org.

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Water issues in West Bank, Gaza

JERUSALEM (UMNS) - The lack of clean water and adequate sanitation in the West Bank and Gaza is a critical problem for Palestinian residents and farmers, says the Ecumenical Water Network. Representatives of the network of churches and Christian organizations, which promotes people's access to water around the world, recently spent 10 days in the region.

Breeding a better goat in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (UMNS) - Two years ago, the United Methodist Committee on Relief and the Methodist Church of Haiti launched a pilot goat-raising program they hoped would strengthen local farmer incomes. In July, a team will return to provide training based on the needs reported in an assessment last month.

UMC Giving launches new website

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) - United Methodist Communications has launched a redesigned website, umciving.org that helps local churches see the impact of United Methodist generosity. The new site offers a biblical perspective to help United Methodists across the globe align their giving practices with their personal faith. The site also includes a section dedicated specifically for church leaders and pastors that offers tools and downloadable resources to help inspire giving within local churches.

Reassessment prompts sale of pension stock

GLENVIEW, Ill. (UMNS) - After an investment in G4S, a London-based security corporation, prompted concerns about human rights and prison-related issues, the United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits reassessed the purchase this spring and recently sold the stock.

Cokesbury offers VBS kit

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) -- Churches looking for vacation Bible school material for the summer of 2015, might want to consider Cokesbury's "G-Force VBS Puts God's Love into Action." Based on Acts 17:28a ("In God we live, move and exist"), participants learn that a life with God is one of movement. Each of the five sessions is based on an action word (Move! Act! Care! Follow! Share!). Sessions include kid-friendly transportation such as skateboards, running shoes and inline skates.

Syrian church leaders back humanitarian aid

ETCHMIADZIN, Armenia (UMNS) - Syrian church leaders and representatives have called for restrictions on funding humanitarian aid in Syria to be lifted, along with an end to the flow of arms and funding to all parties to the conflict. The group met June 11-12 in a consultation at the invitation of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, in cooperation with the World Council of Churches.

July march to promote peace in Korea set for D.C.

WASHINGTON (UMNS) - United Methodists and other U.S. Christians will join the reconciliation and reunification committee of the National Council of Churches in Korea in a "Peace Rally and Prayer for Peace on the Korean Peninsula" July 25-26. Foundry United Methodist Church is the host site for the event, which takes place on the 61st anniversary of the Korean War Armistice.

Retelling the King Saul story

DALLAS (UMNS) - John C. Holbert, professor emeritus at United Methodist-affiliated Perkins School of Theology, is the author of a just-published novel, "King Saul," about the Old Testament figure. "Holbert has raised not just Samuel from the dead, but Saul and all the hosts of Israel as well," said Roy Heller, associate professor of Old Testament at Perkins, in an endorsement.

'Local option' draws support, pushback

DALLAS (UMNS) - The Rev. Adam Hamilton's proposal to give churches and annual conferences leeway to depart from church law regarding homosexuality is drawing support as well as heated opposition. The website for the proposal has added about 2,100 names of endorsees, but a group of clergy, theologians and laity has published an open letter, saying the idea would merely shift conflict to the local level, while also eroding Methodist connectionalism.

Israel-related concerns cited in pension board sale

NEW YORK (UMNS) - United Methodist Kairos Response, an advocacy group, reports that the denomination's Board of Pension and Health Benefits has sold its shares in G4S, "due in part to concerns about the company's involvement in human rights violations in the Israeli prison system and the military occupation of Palestinian territories. David Zellner, chief investment officer for pension board, told United Methodist News Service the shares were sold for reasons related to a number to the company's business activities.

Making a Difference One Step at a Time

Rockaway - One young adult here has found a unique way to make a difference in the lives of others. As of the middle of May, Chelsea Kowal had donated: 4.26 bed nets to protect from malaria through Nothing But Nets, 631 meals for hungry people, 9 pairs of glasses to those in need, 29 pairs of shoes, 41 antiretroviral pills to treat HIV/AIDS, 82 pieces of lumber for Habitat for Humanity, 1797 minutes of education for children worldwide, 6 polio vaccines, 22 vaccines for puppies/kittens through the ASPCA, \$96.07 for cancer research, \$37.80 for Parkinson's research, \$19.04 for veterans, \$18.14 for Alzheimer's research, \$14.17 for disabled athletes, and \$4.35 to help stop deaths during childbirth. And she didn't spend a penny.

"My youth pastor told me about this free app called Charity Miles through which you can walk, run and bike for charities," said Kowal. "I am always looking for innovative ways to raise money for charities, but I don't have too much money." She started walking for cancer research when someone who had blessed her life went into surgery for a brain tumor. "I wanted to make a difference and bless them in the same way they had blessed me," said Kowal.

She has also gotten very involved with Charity Miles because of her own mental illnesses. "I realized that walking helped me stay out of the hospital by exercising. It has helped me mentally, physically and spiritually." She said she has currently been out of the hospital for 13 months, which she attributes to walking, taking her medications and going through treatment.

"I love Charity Miles because it is an easy way to make a difference around the world. I have walked almost 1500 miles in the past year alone and helped hundreds, maybe thousands of people, worldwide," said Kowal. Her current goal is to walk across the country through this app, by walking 3300 miles.

"We do not need to do good works to please God. However, I believe that we need to bless those around us and those we may never meet. Charity Miles is one of the easiest, most convenient, most powerful ways to make a difference," said Kowal.

For additional information, check out Charity Miles by visiting them at www.charitymiles.org.

Bob Williams

Continued from page 1

He earned his master of divinity degree from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1973.

Doctoral studies at United Methodist-related Drew University allowed Williams to return to his first love, history, as he wrote a dissertation on "A Century of Compromise: New Jersey Methodists and the Status and Role of Blacks in the Church and Society, 1836 - 1939."

"I was just interested in being as educated as I could be in pastoring," Williams recalls. "What it allowed me to do for many years was to teach the United Methodist courses at Princeton seminary."

Avoid Wesley clichés and other advice

As the top staff executive of the denomination's archives, Williams often is asked to provide a historical context to church-wide issues and debates.

Here are a few general observations that he shared with United Methodist News Service:

- Don't reduce the teachings of John Wesley to misused and misattributed quotations that begin with "Do all the good you can." More important, he points out, are Wesley's words on salvation, holy living and caring about the least.
- Don't forget about Philip Otterbein and Jacob Albright, founders of what became the Evangelical United Brethren Church, which merged with Methodists to form the United Methodist Church in 1968. "I know those of the EUB heritage think we're always talking too much about Wesley," he says.
- Keep the memory of African-American Methodism alive. A concern about losing that part of history led to the establishment of the African-American Methodist Heritage Center. Williams also be-

lieves, for historical reasons, that the U.S. church's jurisdictional system should be eliminated. "It was created so the African-American conferences would be segregated into a separate structure," he says.

- Remember the various ways that culture and Christianity have interfaced in the past. In the early 19th century, for example, the U.S. church "didn't buy into the cultural standards of its day," Williams noted. By the end of that century, however, American Methodism was taking on trappings "of being the most American church," as Methodist Bishop Matthew Simpson's influential friendship with President Abraham Lincoln demonstrated.

Williams and the archives staff have worked hard to expand their resources on the denomination's Central Conferences outside the United States.

Part of the historical context for the current struggles as United Methodists try to live into being a global church, Williams says, is the fact that the central conferences grew out of the missionary movement and then became indigenous churches.

"That's what creates the questions today of how we govern internationally," Williams points out. At issue is how churches outside the United States can be partners with the U.S. church "and not have any sense of second-class status."

Williams will be succeeded at the Commission on Archives and History by the Rev. Alfred T. Day III, pastor of historic St. George's United Methodist Church in Philadelphia.

*Bloom is a United Methodist News Service multimedia reporter based in New York. Follow her at <http://twitter.com/umcscribe> or contact her at (646) 369-3759 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

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**The September Issue Deadline
is August 5, 2014**

Youth Awards Show at Sicklerville



The Sicklerville youth pose for a photo during the church's annual awards program.

For the past five years the youth group at Sicklerville UMC has had its own awards show to wrap up their year of ministry. Students, youth leaders and parents dress up in a variety of suits, prom dresses, tuxedos, and bridesmaids dresses to walk the red carpet and take pictures before the show. Once in the sanctuary the show begins with the Youth Pastor Dan Ulrich hosting. He introduces youth leaders who present awards to each student varying from "Youth Group Dedication Award" to "Most Excited to Hit Someone with a Dodgeball Award." The youth leaders give out homemade trophies while sharing funny and endearing stories of each student. In between the awards being presented there are performances by praise teams and individual youth as well as videos with pictures from the last year's retreats, mission trip, and programs. To end the night there is a slideshow shown of the high school seniors who are about to graduate. Tears are shed as seniors and their parents watch pictures of the seniors in youth group as they grow and mature from little seventh graders to who they are today. After the slideshow Ulrich makes a personal remark or two about each graduate and presents them with their "Lifetime Achievement Award." After the show ends everyone gathers together for a big group picture. The Sicklerville Youth Group has found this to be a fantastic way to wrap up the year and make their students feel cared for and loved.

United Methodist Women from Branchville Collect Donations



United Methodist Women from the Branchville church collected baby and mother items for Birth Haven in Newton, with help from the entire congregation. Through the congregation's generosity, donations were recently delivered to Birth Haven, a 501-(c)3 organization which provides transitional housing to young pregnant women who are without a safe or suitable living environment.

Craft Group Makes Donation to Children's Cancer Hospitals



The Crafts for Good group of First Church, Moorestown put together 16 pillowcases to be donated to the Million Pillowcase Challenge for children's cancer hospitals. The pillowcases are all ironed and bagged up by church member Beth Fisher, ready for church member and group founder Cindy Cope to take to The Village Quilter in Mount Holly, which is the local drop off point for ConKerr Cancer, who then distributes the pillowcases to local hospitals.

IGNITE WILL LIGHT UP THE FALL

"IGNITE is more than a conference. It's more than bands and speakers. It's about a movement – a movement of young people who are ready to step into our world and step up to the challenge of claiming it for Christ. IGNITE is about reminding every person that they are unique; that there has never been and never will be another "you" in the history of our world. Claiming that uniqueness by God, equipped for this time, and now joining in and stepping up is what we're called to IGNITE!" says

the Rev. Matthew Na, Director of Professions of Faith & Youth/Young Adults for the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey. But what does that really mean?

IGNITE is the evolution of the Greater New Jersey UMC youth weekend. Everything about the weekend has been transformed and updated. Traditionally held in Ocean City in the first week of September, the Conference adopted the name, IGNITE, and moved it to the Wildwoods Convention Center October 3-5.

Na speaks passionately when he talks about conference. "Changing the venue and date is only just the beginning. The goal is to turn this event into a movement. In Wildwood, we can take advantage of the larger capacity of the convention center and its ability to provide a full scale experience that will inspire, energize and

invigorate our youth."

Na expects this conference to grow in attendance from a few hundred to a few thousand over the years. Although the primary audience is United Methodist youth from Greater New Jersey, starting in 2014 the Conference will promote IGNITE to Christians of all denominations throughout the region and all young people between the ages of 12 and 18 looking for something more in their lives.

Worship and music will be led by the in-demand Christian band, Starfield. The group has songs and albums that have charted in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They have won multiple awards and nominations including the Prairie Music Award for best Christian album.

Preston Centuolo will be the featured speaker. Centuolo speaks naturally right to the heart of youth, helping them see beyond pressing obstacles to seize their own unique purpose. He will expertly address common issues facing youth and demystifies confusing, mixed messages that come from all directions in today's technological era.

Other special guests include the Splatt Experience, a performance art ministry and the 321 Improve comedy group.

More information can be found on the website www.ignite.nj.com.

IT'S ABOUT CARING

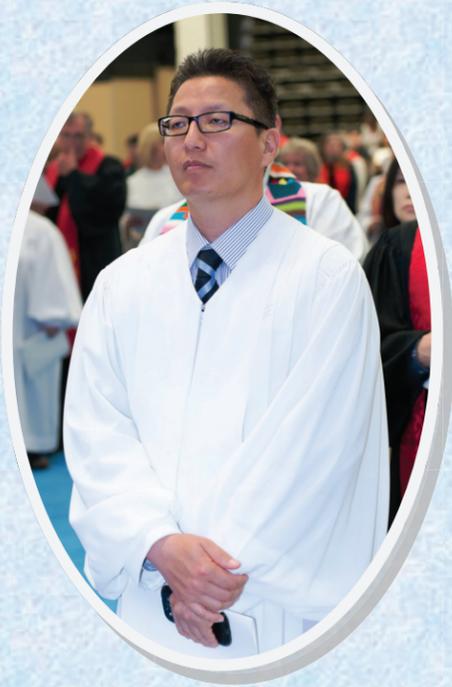


From left to right: Lay Servant, Shirley Carvatt, Maxwell Mazuca, Jimin Park, Joseph Park, and Pastor Sean Park

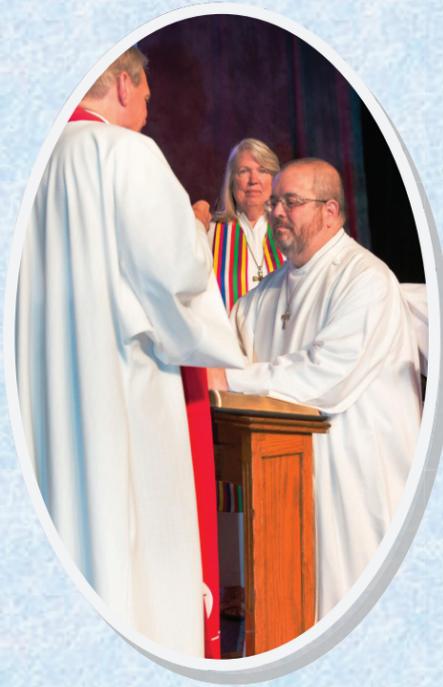
Under the leadership of Pastor Sean Park and Lay Servant, Shirley Carvatt, Cokesbury Church in Tewksbury Township, Hunterdon County, has been collecting blankets since early this year for Spirit Lake Ministries in Sheyenne, North Dakota. Spirit Lake Ministries partners with six reservations in the Dakotas and Minnesota, providing clothing, food pantry, youth programming, and other ministries to at-risk native populations. Cokesbury UMC also Partners with Spirit Lake Ministries in their annual Shoebox Christmas Gift Program.

On June 15 all of the collected blankets were assembled at the morning worship service and blessed by Pastor Park. After the service, church members and friends assisted in packaging the items and loading into Ms. Carvatt's van for personal delivery to Spirit Lake Ministries.

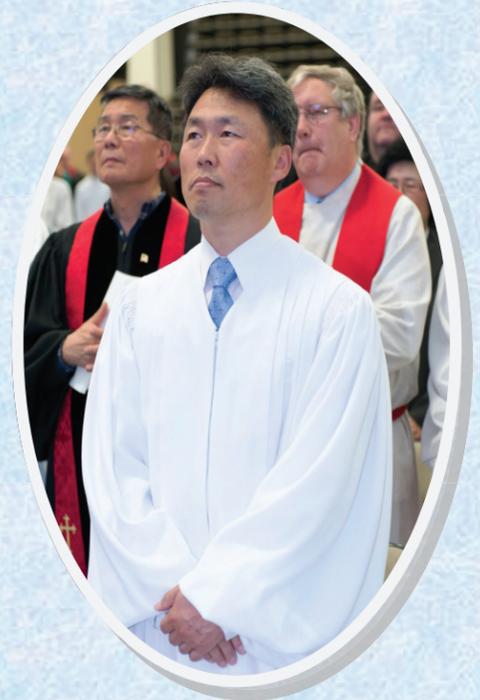
Ordained as Elders at 2014 Session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference



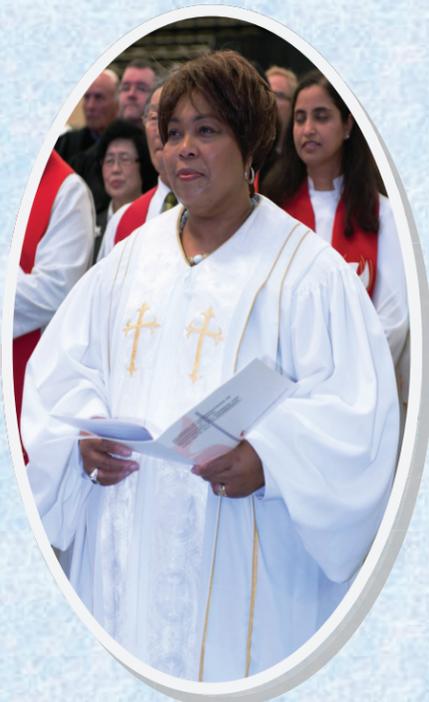
YoHan Baik



Donald Stevens



Sanghoon Choi



Hillary Johnson Crute



Seokman Park



Brian Neville



Iraida Ruiz de Porras



Michael Smith



Vijaya Kumar
Transferred from Church of South India

Elected as Provisional Elders and Deacons (D) at the 2014 Greater New Jersey Annual Conference



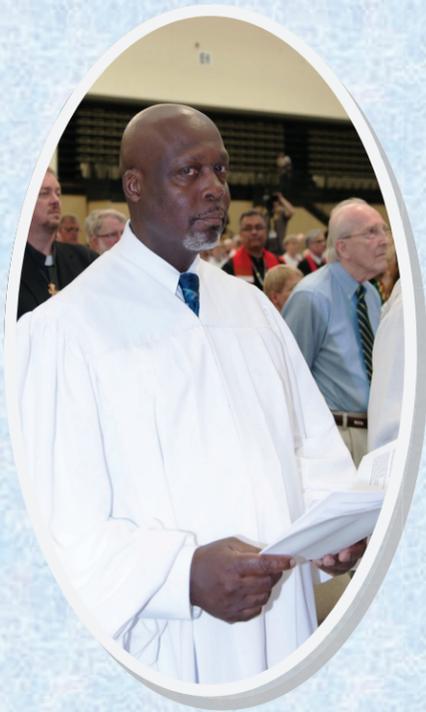
Anna Gillette



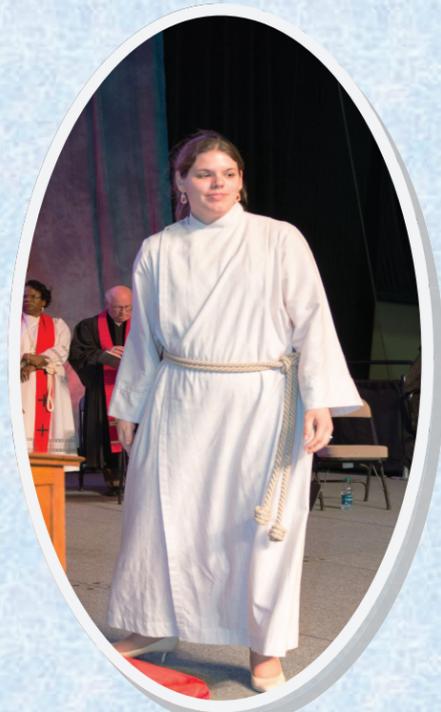
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Todd Lattig



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Overbey**



**Kaleigh
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**Kristin
Helms (D)**

Update: Frank Schaefer Reinstated as United Methodist Pastor

By Kathy L. Gilbert and Heather Hahn

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) —

Editor's Note: This story was updated June 25 to include comments from Jen Ihlo, the chair of the appeals panel, on the decision-making process, as well as reactions from the Rev. Rob Renfroe, president of Good News, and the Rev. Scott Campbell, who represented Frank Schaefer in the appeal.

The Rev. Frank Schaefer had his ministerial credentials reinstated by a United Methodist regional appeals committee June 23, three days after a hearing held near Baltimore.

The denomination's Northeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals restored his credentials and ordered the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual (regional) Conference to compensate Schaefer for all lost salary and benefits dating from Dec. 19, 2013.

The nine-member panel unanimously ruled the lower church court's penalty against Schaefer was "illegal." An eight-member majority of the committee supported a penalty modification to the 30-day suspension Schaefer had already undergone. The committee's ruling still could be appealed to the Judicial Council, the denomination's top court.

PROCESS BEHIND THE DECISION

Jen Ihlo, chair of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals, said she wished the decision-making process could have been more public.

"How we held our conversations could be a model for the church," she said. "We ought to be able to have loving, respectful conversations about hard subjects and still part as friends."

How the committee got to that point required every member's time and effort.

In March, the committee members met with a representative from JustPeace, who led them through a process to help them stay focused and centered on their work. JustPeace was created in 1999 by the denomination's General Council on Finance and Administration to help find new ways of dealing with church conflict. Since 2004, it has worked as a separate entity in Washington.

"In hindsight," said Ihlo, "this helped the committee bond together. It helped us build trust and respect for each other. I really appreciate the way our committee worked and how seriously we took our task."

Ihlo said doing that groundwork was important as the committee moved forward. They became clear what their job was: to decide whether the penalty given Schaefer was in violation of church law.

In its written decision, the committee was unanimous that the defrocking penalty was, in fact, a violation of church law. Schaefer received that penalty for not being able to uphold the Book of Discipline "in its entirety."

"You can't punish someone for future behavior," Ihlo said.

Ihlo said there were no "Twelve Angry Men" moments during the committee's discussion, referring to the 1957 movie starring Henry Fonda. "The committee members were saying, 'Help me understand where you're coming from,'" she explained. "At the end of the day, we parted ways saying, 'gosh, we hate to leave.'"

The lessons learned, Ihlo said, were that it's important to build trust and respect for one another before entering into hard conversations. "We spent a lot of time trying to understand each other, to know each other, as well as the matter before us."

Ihlo, a federal prosecutor who works for the Department of Justice and is a member of Dumbarton United Methodist Church in Washington, said she entered into the process having no idea what to expect.

"These committees don't meet that often," she said. "There was really no prototype to follow."

— By Erik Alsgaard, Baltimore-Washington Conference

The former pastor of Iona United Methodist Church in eastern Pennsylvania, Schaefer was defrocked after a November 2013 church trial found him guilty of violating The United Methodist Church's Book of Discipline, the denomination's law book, by conducting a same-sex marriage ceremony for his son. He also was found guilty of violating the church's order and discipline.

In the penalty stage of the trial, the court suspended Schaefer from his ministerial duties for 30 days and declared that if he could not "uphold the Discipline in its entirety" at the end of the suspension, he would surrender his credentials. He refused to do that, and on Dec. 19, the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Board of Ordained Ministry asked him to give up his credentials.

In a statement immediately after the decision was released, Schaefer expressed happiness over his "refrocking" by the committee.

"I never did understand the severity of my punishment for an act of love for my son Tim," Schaefer said. "The committee of appeals understood that my defrocking sought to penalize me not for what I did but for what I might do in the future."

The Rev. Christopher Fisher — who served as counsel for the church, the equivalent of a prosecutor — said he will "be prayerfully examining the appeal ruling to determine if it is in compliance with church law." Fisher said he had no further comment.

Tim Schaefer, Frank's son who now lives and works in Boston, said he knew something significant had happened "because my phone would not stop vibrating on my pocket for almost an hour with texts, calls and Twitter updates."

"I am thrilled about the decision and I'm incredibly proud of my dad for fighting to remain with The United Methodist Church to be an advocate for LGBTQ community," he said.

Errors of Church Law

The committee's 11-page ruling stated that "errors of church law vitiate the penalty imposed by the Trial Court," including "the mixing and matching of penalties that are designed to be distinct" and predicating the imposition of a penalty on "a future possibility, which may or may not occur, rather than a past or present act."

The 2012 Book of Discipline (in Paragraph 2711, Section 3) allows church courts to impose a range of penalties, including revoking a person's credentials.

The appeals committee identified what it saw as two problems with the church court's penalty in Schaefer's case.

1) The possible consequences delineated in the Book of Discipline, the ruling said, "are discrete — with each of the 'alternative penalties' having a 'different severity.'" The "Trial Court is not free to mix and match" a 30-day suspension with loss of credentials.

2) The ruling also said the church court's penalty "cannot be squared with the well-established principle that our clergy can only be punished for what they have been convicted of doing in the past, not for what they may or may not do in the future."

Just as civil courts cite precedent, the appeals committee cited previous rulings by the Judicial Council, including one from the 1960s, in support of its decision.

In its ruling, the appeals committee also noted that like other United Methodists, its members "have diverse views on issues related to human sexuality."

However, the ruling said, every committee member takes seriously the

Continued on page 9

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Update: Frank Schaefer Reinstated

Continued from page 8

bishops' statement at the beginning of the Discipline that the law book "represents the *current* statement of how United Methodists agree to live their lives together," and that it "defines what is *expected* of its laity and clergy as they seek to be effective witnesses in the world as a part of the whole body of Christ." The committee added the emphasis.

"Most importantly, the Committee is profoundly united in the belief that the objective this Committee has been charged to pursue in this case is nothing less than a resolution that is just," the ruling said.

Reaction to Ruling

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, the vice president and general manager of the unofficial evangelical caucus Good News, said he was "disappointed but not surprised" at the committee's decision.

"The appeals ruling leaves no room for trial courts to give grace to those found guilty of an offense. When Rev. Schaefer declared during the trial his refusal to uphold the Book of Discipline, he was renouncing his ordination vows, and the removal of his credentials was an appropriate step to take," he said.

The trial court gave him 30 days to reconsider his decision, Lambrecht said. "An act of grace on the part of the trial court is now deemed to be inappropriate."

Many will see this as another example of bishops and clergy not being held accountable to "live with the parameters of our covenanted way of discipleship," he added.

"This ruling will unfortunately only strengthen the calls for some form of separation, in an attempt to resolve the current crisis in our theology and church government."

The Rev. Rob Renfroe, president of Good News, echoed that sentiment.

"This ruling is unfortunate and will only add to the chaos engulfing The United Methodist Church," he said. "I believe

this decision is a willful misreading of the original verdict which graciously extended every opportunity to Schaefer to avoid being defrocked."

The Rev. Scott Campbell, counsel for Schaefer, not suprisingly, praised both the decision and the pastor he represented.

Campbell described Schaefer "as a country preacher from a modest church in Pennsylvania" who "is leaving veterans of the movement to change The United Methodist Church shaking our heads in amazement."

"Frank Schaefer's faithful, hope-filled, loving journey continues to inspire the rest of us, breathing new life into every corner of the church — even corners that contain trial courts and appeals committees," Campbell said. "I know that I speak for countless others when I say that we are grateful and overjoyed at this outcome."

Schaefer's Bishop Responds

Bishop Peggy Johnson, the episcopal leader of Schaefer's regional conference, said she was informed of the committee's decision and intends to return Schaefer to service as an ordained clergy member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Johnson referred the complaint filed by a member of the Iona United Methodist Church to a counsel of the church. According to the denomination's law book, a trial occurs only after mediation, or other steps fail to provide "a just resolution."

"This has been a challenging judicial process, and I express my heartfelt appreciation for the diligent efforts made to ensure due process and uphold our United Methodist Discipline with respect, understanding and compassion for all involved," the bishop said.

"I also ask for continuing, supportive prayers for the Rev. Schaefer, his family, and the members and churches of our conference and our denomination, as

we struggle gracefully to find common ground."

Heading to New Conference

Bishop Minerva Carcaño, episcopal leader of the California-Pacific Annual (regional) Conference, In December invited Schaefer to become a member of her conference.

Carcaño announced June 24 that at Schaefer's request, she and Johnson have agreed to transfer Schaefer to the California-Pacific Conference. Carcaño said she will appoint him to Isla Vista Student Ministry in Santa Barbara, California, a ministry that will build on the work of Santa Barbara Korean United Methodist Church in that community.

Schaefer will be responsible "for leading the administrative work of this congregation and reaching out to the large college community that lives, studies and works at the doorsteps of this church," Carcaño said. The transfer will be effective July 1.

"I am aware of the fact that these steps on our journey to wholeness may be troubling to some among us," Carcaño added. "This burdens my heart, but we must be the church of Jesus that excludes no one. I will continue to hold up for all of us the need to be servants of Christ of the highest moral character whether we are straight or gay."

Schaefer called the decision "a hopeful sign for our LGBTQ community" because the committee "recognized that I was wrongfully punished for standing with those who are discriminated against."

Many in the church already have been "moving toward love over legalism," he said.

"Indeed, people throughout the United Methodist Church, who invited me into their pulpits, sat with me at their dinner tables and supported my family with their donations, have refrocked me already. Their movement of love embraced me, and together we are moving forward to bring about that day when our denomi-

nation no longer excludes any of God's beloved children. And I will continue to work toward that goal."

Since 1972, debates over the denomination's laws regarding homosexuality have surfaced every four years at General Conference — the denomination's top lawmaking assembly. General Conference has consistently voted to keep the language identifying homosexual practice as incompatible with Christian teaching, and over the years, the assembly has expanded on restrictions against gay clergy and same-gender unions.

Gilbert and Hahn are multimedia reporters for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tennessee.

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Lee Weaver, retired UMC clergy, Greater New Jersey Conference, is enjoying a second career as playwright and actor. He has been performing all over the country, receiving considerable acclaim for his last three dramas, which he wrote and presents as One Person Shows. He received, in 2013, recognition as North Florida's Outstanding One-Person Show Presenter.

Weaver has been selected to present his *The Secret - The Spanish Inquisition in Old St. Augustine* at the 2014 NYC International Fringe Festival this August. This is an extraordinary honor bestowed on a very few select artists.

In his latest, *The Box*, which he will be presenting this summer at Pax Amicus Castle Theater in Budd Lake, NJ, "Jack" lives in the woods of St. Augustine, FL, and calls his box, "Home Sweet Home." He is coaxed out of his box to give an interview to WGAC's Sandy Shores (Lee's wife, Nanette, heard but not seen). During the interview he relates his tales of life on the road. He is a philosopher, a theologian, a humorist, a lover and a fighter and all of his stories come through his PTSD ravaged mind.

The Box has been filmed by Eclipse Recording Studios, using five cameras and is now in post-production. A late summer release is anticipated.

Bob Feldheim, North Florida's premier reviewer wrote the following:

"Weaver commands the stage for two intense, brilliant, soul-and society-searing hours, in two acts, recounting his story. It's an unforgettable emotional powerhouse, a mind-bending experience, a theatrical work of towering genius.

Weaver wisely interjects periodic humor for relief. Jack has come to terms with life. He spends a good deal of his time in the library. He's conjured clever, effective panhandling signs. He explains his personal religious philosophies. Jack pulls no punches; he survives."

The Box brings the very timely issues of homelessness and PTSD to the stage in a uniquely sensitive and informative way. *The Box* will make you laugh and cry, think, question and perhaps commit in new and profound ways. Persons of all faiths, it has been suggested, need to see this extraordinary theatrical event.

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OBITUARIES

RUTH SHRADER BEEMER, widow of the Reverend Albert L. Beemer, died on Wednesday, June 11th in Neptune. A funeral service was held on June 16th.

Messages of condolence may be sent to her family, in care of son, John Beemer: 78 Franklin Avenue, Ocean Grove, NJ, 07756 or online at www.oceangrovememorialhome.com

Gifts of remembrance, in lieu of flowers, may be made to: Lycoming College for the Ronald A. Beemer Scholarship Fund, Lycoming College, 700 College Pl, Williamsport, PA 17701.

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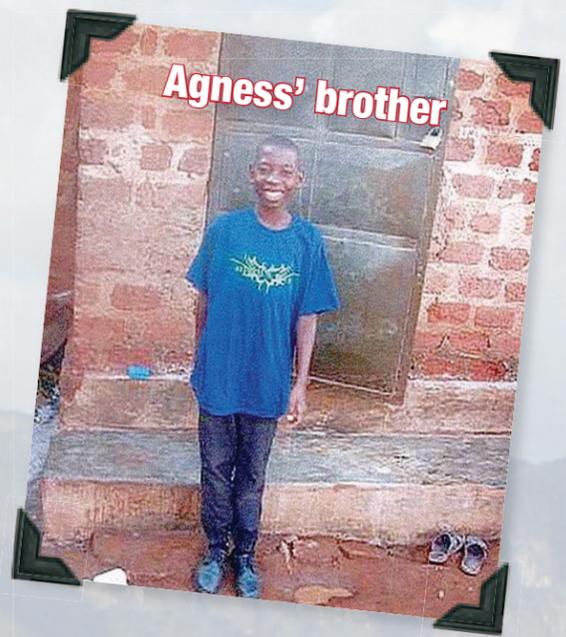


I have supported education programs in Africa for decades, focusing on helping individuals one on one. Most recently, I have helped Agness in Uganda with her secondary and vocational education so that she gets the skills she needs to support herself.

Last year, at the age of 80, I got the chance to travel to Africa for the first time.

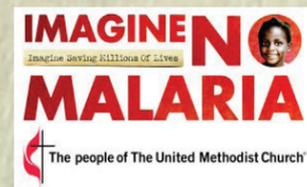
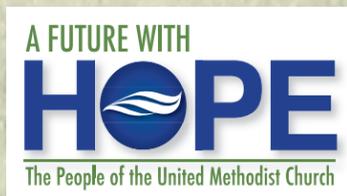
I met Agness and saw how my support made a difference in her life.

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Nancy Mossop, Friendship-Finley UMC in Bridgeton

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