

Something Old, Something New for the Thirteenth Session of the GNAC

When the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference travel to Valley Forge at the end of May, they will find in the familiar setting a facility that has a new look and some long-debated controversial features. The addition of casino gambling to the Valley Forge Convention Center has altered not only some of the functioning of the building, but its structure as well. Returning members will find the main entrance has been completely renovated and that even the sign by the road bears the new name: Valley Forge Casino Resort. The hotel that used to be known as the Scanticon is now called the Valley Forge Casino Tower.

The primary way in which the changes affect the GNJAC is that sessions will return to the lower level of the convention center where they were formerly held. The Sessions Team has been working diligently to address all of the potential issues involved with the move back to the lower level. The Hospitality and Site Teams will be working hard to make sure that members of the conference are able to find their way and tend to the tasks at hand.

As was the case last year, there will be wellness screening available during the conference sessions. There will also be signing during plenary sessions for the hearing impaired. The event will also be live-streamed via the internet and available through the conference website at www.gnjumc.org so that those not actually attending will still be able to follow the proceedings as they happen.

As always, the conference will begin on Thursday, May 31, with the Service of Tribute and Holy Communion.

The featured speaker for the conference is J. Michael Lowry, bishop of the Fort Worth Episcopal Area of the Central Texas Conference. (See Bishop Lowry's biographical sketch elsewhere on this page.) Leading the breakfast Bible study this year is the Rev. Dr. Joy J. Moore who serves as associate dean for Black Church Studies and Church Relations at Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C. and teaches in the area of homiletics and the practice of ministry. (Dr. Moore's information is also elsewhere on this page.)

Expected highlights of the conference include the Celebration of Ministry and Service of Commissioning, the Service of Ordination, the Celebration of Appointments, approval of the conference budget for 2013, additional inspiring worship services, enthusiastic singing, generous giving, reports by the Lay Leader and District Superintendents, presentation of Awards and Scholarships, Taize worship, nominations and elections, and the presentation of the General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation.

One resolution among many that will be brought for discussion and vote comes from the Board of Ordained Ministry. The resolution states that each church in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will be encouraged to have a time of Celebration during a worship service for those from their church in full-time Christian service. This would include: clergy, laity and missionaries. The rationale says, "This would provide an intentional opportunity to recognize those from our church who are serving the Lord in ministry

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THOMAS' PRAYER

A Prayer for Dark and Fearful Moments

Lord, come to me
amid the obscurity of my nighttime
when darkness shrouds my day
and overlays my heart;
when fear locks the door to real living
and life hangs tentatively, uncertainly.



Come, breach the barrier
Come, stand before me.
Come, speak Peace, your Peace,
to calm my troubled heart.
Come, show me your wounds,
reminding me that you
shared our humanity and
felt our pain.

Breathe upon me;
let your Spirit penetrate every pore,
cleansing and transforming
my unforgiving heart.

Come to me in my unbelief.
When doubt clouds my eyes,
sweep away the cataracts.
Equip me with the clarity of vision
that enables me to discern your presence
in every time and place.

Grant to me the imagination
to reach out and touch you
beyond mere flesh.
And in wonder and delight,
with wide eyes and hushed whisper,
I will say,
"My Lord and my God!"

Robin VanCleeef

*Have a Joyous
and
Blessed Easter!*

*From the staff of
The RELAY*

Bishop Lowry Named Conference Speaker



J. Michael (Mike) Lowry was born in Aurora, Illinois. He graduated from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana in 1972 with an A.B. degree; received a Master of Theology degree from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in 1976 and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1985 in Evangelism and Church Growth.

Bishop Lowry was elected to the Episcopacy in July of 2008 and assigned to the Fort Worth Episcopal Area, The Central Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. He began his ministry with the Friends (Quakers) providing pastoral leadership for Rich Square Friends Meeting. He was ordained a Deacon in the Northern Illinois Conference in 1974 and ordained Elder in the Southwest Texas Conference in 1978. Before being elected to the Episcopacy, he served as Executive Director for New Church Development and Transforma-

tion for the Southwest Texas Conference, University UMC in San Antonio, Bethany in Austin, Asbury in Corpus Christi, Wesley in Harlingen, St. Paul's in Kerrville and as an Associate Pastor at Plymouth Park in Irving.

Bishop Lowry has held numerous offices including Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, Chair of the Board of Global Ministries' Committee on Church Extension, and Chair of the Council on Church Revitalization and Church Extension. While serving at the Executive Director for New Church Development and Transformation, he led a successful conference capital campaign to fund new church starts. He was awarded the B'nai B'rith Award in Social Ethics by Perkins School of Theology. Churches under his leadership have received the Habitat for Humanity Award (2004), the President's Award from Huston-Tillotson University (2004), and the Churchmanship Award from the San Antonio Community of

(Continued on Page 3)

Annual Conference Members Will Have Moore for Breakfast



The Rev. Dr. Joy J. Moore, PhD serves as associate dean for Black Church Studies and Church Relations at Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C. and teaches in the area of homiletics and the practice of ministry.

Moore serves on the board of directors for ZOE Ministries, an empowerment program that provides a comprehensive approach to transforming the lives of African children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, war, disease, famine and other causes. She is also on the advisory board of the Center for Reconciliation. Founded in 2005 to inspire, form, and support leaders, communities, and congregations to live as ambassadors of Christ's reconciliation, the Center has become a leading voice in shaping a distinctly Christian vision of reconciliation, with a desire to equip the Church for reconciliation, justice, and peacemaking in a divided world.

Moore's research interests focus primarily on understanding the critical issues influencing contemporary culture

for community formation. Examining these interests in biblical studies, practical theology, homiletics, narrative hermeneutics and social media, she is known for loving to tell stories with a theological twist! Her chapter in Andrew C. Thompson's *Generation Rising: A Future with Hope for the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), calls for preaching that takes seriously the story of Scripture over the moralisms we choose to impose on its stories.

Moore became a John Wesley Fellow in 2001, and is a member of the Society for Biblical Literature, the Academy of Homiletics, the American Academy of Religion, and the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists. She joined the Administration at Duke in July of 2008 first as Associate Dean for Lifelong Learning. Prior to moving to Duke University, Moore was Assistant Professor of Preaching at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore,

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A Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Greetings in the precious name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It is recorded in the gospel according to Luke, "Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:25-27). On the day of resurrection, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ talked as a stranger with two confused disciples about what had happened to Jesus, and engaged them in a powerful and heart-warming study of the Scriptures! In that walking Scriptural study he reminded them of what Moses and the prophets had taught them about the Scriptures and he interpreted the Scriptures to them. It reminds us that these disciples were clueless because they had not understood the Scriptures.

Two thousand years after the first Easter morning, under a title, "Six Reasons Young Christians Leave the Church," Barna Research Group indicates that part of the reason "...young people depart church as young adults is that something is lacking in their experience of church. One-third said, 'church is boring' (31%). One quarter of these young adults said that 'faith is not relevant to my career or interests' (24%) or that 'the Bible is not taught clearly or often enough' (23%). Sadly, one-fifth of these young adults who attended a church as a teenager said that 'God seems missing from my experience of church' (20%), and 'Church is like a country club, only for insiders' (22%)"¹

What has happened to our witness as a Church? How do we react to



the study by the Barna Group? The challenging question for all Easter people is this: If a stranger to Christianity were to say, "Tell me or show me how He lives within your heart," do we have the ability to do so? What are the marks in our lives that we can show? Are we well-versed with Scriptures? How much time do we invest in Bible study as individuals and as a Church body? How do we respond to the challenge of young adults who say, "The Bible is not taught clearly or often enough"? When visitors appear in our sanctuaries on Christmas and Easter do they hear more about Santa Claus and Easter bunnies than the birth and resurrection of our Lord? When they appear in our churches do we look like a "country club, only for insiders" as some young adults claim, or do we look like the disciples who took time to engage in dialogue with a total stranger on the first Easter Day? When they did this, they realized and celebrated the true power of the Resurrection. It came to them through a stranger who was not stranger at all, but the Resurrected Christ Himself!

May God fill us with the compassion and love of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit as we take time to reflect on this Scriptural passage throughout the Easter season and always.

Kindly keep praying for our beloved Church, The United Methodist Church, as delegates and leaders gather together at Tampa, Florida, for the General Conference later this month. May it be a Holy Conference, one that shows the world that we are truly an Easter Church and Easter people.

My family joins me in wishing you, your loved ones, and everyone a happy and blessed Easter! Let us celebrate with power and gusto the Easter, and may that celebration be magnified through our service and witness.

Kindly remember, God loves you all and so do I!
In Christ's love,

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

¹ Barna Group, "Six Reasons Young Christians Leave Church," <http://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/528-six-reasons-young>

VIEWPOINT

Vital Congregation in Vital Times

by Rev. Anna Thomas

Some times we delude ourselves into thinking that these are difficult times and so ministry of the church should suffer. But when we are passionate about who we are and what we are called to do, it transforms our ways of doing things. We learn to become a Vital Congregation for Vital Times such as these. God has called us to be empowered by his Holy Spirit and work to bring the kingdom of God on earth. Resurrection people are people who experience a resurrection in their lives but use that to transform others.

Friends, how do we see the world today and interact with it to make ministry happen? Are we distant and superficial in our actions or are we engaged and learning new ways of relating to the world around us? It is a joy to know that Centenary Church in Metuchen is using different resources to connect to people and ministries beyond the local church by employing modern technologies. We are a relevant church in relevant times. Every Sunday Centenary takes time to celebrate mission in the local church, community and mission around the world.

On Sunday, March 4, in the morning worship service we used Skype technology to connect live to a young missionary in Fargo, North Dakota. He is part of a mission program run by the United Methodist mission agency, the General Board of Global Ministries, for young adults between the ages of 18-30. This program allows youth to be in mission for 2 years in the USA or different places in the world. They train and equip them and send them out into the mission field. William Wilson is from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. He belongs to Chews UMC in Glendora, NJ. It was a joy to have Will worshipping with us on Sunday through the use of technology. Will Wilson thanked us in an e-mail and expressed that it was his first time to be Skyped in a worship service.

The recent tornadoes in Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee left a path of tremendous destruction and devastation to life and property. It was on major television networks like CNN. On Sunday March 11th, we were able to connect via Skype with Bonnie Albert who is a volunteer-in-mission coordinator for the Indiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. She was able to share about the amount of destruction caused and how UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) gave \$10,000 immediately to help in the recovery and relief work even before government agencies could pitch in. Our Sunday March 18th offering for One Great Hour of Sharing will support and help UMCOR in these kinds of works. We were able to pray together and be in connection with our brothers and sisters who had lost everything. That was a wonderful experience for our congregation in mission together. We plan to skype with congregations around the world who speak a different language than ours. Imagine the possibilities of ministering and worshipping with people around the world.

Resurrected people bring the Resurrection in the world!

Rev. Anna Thomas
Pastor Centenary UMC

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Sudarshana Devadhar, Resident Bishop
The Greater New Jersey Conference ~ 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

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FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION and PLACEMENT

Glenn C. Ferguson
924 Middletown-Lincroft Road
Middletown, N.J. 07748 • Phone (732) 671-0707 e-mail: mumc.pastor@comcast.net

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Glenn C. Ferguson
Editor
924 Middletown-Lincroft Road
Middletown, NJ 07748-3104
Phone: (732) 671-0707
e-mail: mumc.pastor@comcast.net

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Capital & Cape Atlantic Districts
Hector Burgos-Nunez
205 Northfield Ave., Northfield, NJ 08225-1949
Phone: (609) 484-1141
e-mail: HectorABurgos@aol.com

Delaware Bay & Gateway South Districts
Rob Tomer
506 West Broad Street, Gibbstown, NJ 08027-1071
Phone: (856) 423-1196
e-mail: rwtomer@comcast.net

Gateway North and Raritan Valley Districts
Glenn Ferguson
924 Middletown-Lincroft Rd., Middletown, NJ 07748
Phone: 732-671-0707
e-mail: mumc.pastor@comcast.net

Northern Shore District
Robin E. Van Cleef
1 Mayflower Court, Whiting, NJ 08759
(732) 350-6444
e-mail: revrev@verizon.net

Skylands & Palisades Districts
Jessica Stenstrom
PO Box 115, Denville, NJ 07834-0115
Phone: (973) 627-1041
e-mail: jstenstrom@drew.edu

Web Address: www.UMRelay.org - Send all NEWS and PHOTOS to the staff member serving YOUR district or agency.

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 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.

Dumont Interfaith Prayer Service

What started as an ecumenical activity between three Christian churches in Dumont "went global" on Sunday, March 4. The Interfaith Prayer Service and Supper which was hosted by Dumont UMC and attended by more than 125 people of various faiths and traditions "grew from a desire to join in prayer during the season of Lent," said Rev. Elaine Wing.

She said the conversation started in January when Ms. Wing met with Father Dominic Ciriaco of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, and Rev. Dick Vander Borgh of Old North Reformed Church; and together they decided that the spiritual discipline of prayer was a perfect focal point for a shared event. When they found that the most convenient day on their calendars fell close to March 2 when "World Day of Prayer" is celebrated, the ecumenical event took on an interfaith theme.

The service was both spiritually meaningful and informative by its design. Seven world religions were represented in the hour-long program which included congregational hymns, a sung prayer by Cantor Ronit Josephson of Temple Avodat Shalom, and the sung prayer of St. Francis of Assisi by choir members from St. Mary's RCC.

Each speaker was asked to first explain how prayer was expressed within their religion before leading or offering a prayer along a predetermined theme such as "the environment," "healing," "children," "justice," "forgiveness" or "peace." Rev. Peggy Niederer, pastor of the Holy Spirit Lutheran Church and a leader in the Interfaith Brotherhood-Sisterhood Council of Bergen County, gave a thorough explanation of prayer within Protestant (Christian) Churches. Her explanation was followed by an inspiring prayer citing contemporary national concerns by Rev. Vander Borgh and an equally informative understanding of prayer within the Roman Catholic (Christian) Church by Father Ciriaco and Deacon John Sylvester.

During her opening remarks Ms. Wing said, "prayer is both a common denominator and a point of diversity"

and this was evident at the March 4th service. By all the faith communities represented - Christianity, Judaism, Jainism, Hinduism, Islam, Baha'i, and Sikh - there was a call for all peoples to respect and embrace the divine within each individual and belief system. A slide show providing a visual tour of people praying in different postures, locations, dress, and style around the world was presented prior to voices raised in the closing hymn, "Let There Be Peace on Earth."

A supper of breads, soups and salads reflective of the different cultures gathered followed the prayer service and was attended by a large crowd. Many people encouraged the organizers to make this an annual event, incorporating other world religions and traditions such as the Eastern Orthodox Church which is also represented in Bergen County.

"It is my hope that we build on the success of this event and the Interfaith Service that was held on the tenth anniversary of 9/11, because Dumont has seen such a large increase in cultural and ethnic diversity in the last five years," said Ms. Wing. "The borough was settled by people of Dutch ancestry and then was populated by persons from a few other European countries. Our complexion has changed and so has our cultural and religious composite so understanding each other's core beliefs is very important."

Participants in the program were solicited from members of the Interfaith Brotherhood-Sisterhood of Bergen County and they included: Rabbi Neal Borovitz of the Jewish Community, Mr. Vinay Vakani of the Jain Community, Mrs. Jyoti Gandhi of the Arya Samaj of the Hindu Community, Ms. Pat Kinney of the Baha'i Community, Imam Saeed Qureshi and a representative of the Peace Island Institute, both from the Islamic Community, Rev. Bonnie Strain of the Christian Community as well as those previously mentioned. The audience was comprised of children, youth and adults from Bergen, Morris, and Rockland Counties in New Jersey.

Let Justice Prevail! World Day of Prayer 2012

On March 2, 2012, four United Methodist Churches in Burlington County joined together to celebrate the World Day of Prayer at First Church in Mt Holly. The three other churches were: Lumberton, Smithville, and St. Paul's. World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. Each year a different country serves as the writer of the World Day of Prayer worship service. The theme for 2012 was Malaysia, located in the Pacific Ocean in Southeast, Asia. For 2012, the World Day of Prayer Committee of Malaysia developed the theme: Let Justice Prevail!

The women who prepared the service for 2012 open with the greeting "Selamat datang" which means "peace and welcome". The women name fair and just governance as the basis for

peace. A clear message emerged: It takes courage, compassion and active engagement for justice to prevail. The stories that were read by women of the participating churches from the worship service about the Malaysian women's experience gave credence to the suffering that empowers their prayer. We learned about the extent of violence perpetrated against the Malaysian women. Oppression of women cuts across class, creed, age and profession. It is rampant not only in the secular world; it appears in the structures of churches and religions too. At the end of the worship those who had gathered for the service stood in a circle and held hands in a sign of solidarity with the women of Malaysia. Prior to the service a dinner reflecting the Malaysian diet was served. The Church is called to continue to be in prayer for the courageous women of Malaysia.

'Fitness with Faith: Connecting Body & Soul' Is Northern Shore Resource Day Theme

WEST BELMAR — Transformation from the inside out will be the goal of Northern Shore clergy who respond to an invitation to a day of "fitness with faith: connecting body and soul," April 18 at the West Belmar church.

The Rev. Faith Evans, who with her husband, David Evans, co-pastors in the Boonton Church, will lead the workshop.

"Tired? Overweight? Feeling sluggish or unhealthy?" asks the intriguing invitation from Ms. Evans who has a passion for transformation, both physical and spiritual, offering "wellness and health through connection of body and soul."

The one-day event will begin with an 8:30 a.m. Gathering. Breakfast goodies, nibblers and beverages will be served. Opening worship at 9 a.m. will launch the formal part of the program which will end at 1 p.m.

The West Belmar Church is located at 1000 17th Ave., Wall Twp.

Something Old, Something New

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and help our congregations remember that God has called and continues to call people from our local churches into service for God's kingdom. This would also remind the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee of one of its Primary Tasks: to identify and support individuals from the congregation whom God seems to be calling into vocational ministry. ¶ 258.2(g)9. A preview of other legislation expected to be

brought to the Annual Conference will be published in the May edition of the Relay.

The Thirteenth Session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will adjourn on Saturday, June 2, sending laity and clergy alike back to their local churches, renewed and reinvigorated for ministry to make disciples and transform the world.

Bishop Lowry

(Continued from Page 1)

Churches (2003). Asbury UMC was awarded the Moore Award in Evangelism three times while he was serving as senior pastor.

He was first elected to serve as a delegate to General Conference in 1996, where he served on the Church and Society Legislative Committee. In 2004, he served on the Committee on Conferences Legislative Committee; in 2008 on the Committee on Faith and Order Legislative Committee.

Bishop Lowry serves the larger connection of The United Methodist Church as a member of the Texas Methodist Foundation Board, the United Methodist Publishing House Board of Directors, Trustee for Southwestern University and Texas Wesleyan University, the Methodist Children's Home and Harris Methodist Hospital Board among others.

He is a regular contributor in *The Abingdon Preaching Manual and Circuit Rider*, and his *Generous Living* sermon was published in *Best Stewardship Sermons* of 2005. In addition, Bishop Lowry writes a regular blog entitled *This Focused Center* which may be found at the www.bishopmikeblowry.com. He has taught classes at Local Pastors' Licensing School, mentored candidates for ordained ministry and been the spiritual director for 24 Emmaus Walks/Chrysalis Flights.

The bishop and his wife Jolynn married in 1976. They are the parents of a son, Nathan, living in the Boston area and daughter Sarah and son-in-law Steven Meek living in Washington D.C. His deep passion is advancing the work of Christ through evangelistic outreach and missional involvement in love, justice, and mercy.

Rev. Moore

(Continued from Page 1)

Kentucky, where she has previously served a Director of Women's and Ethnic Ministries and later as Director of Student Life. She has served as Chaplain and Director of Church Relations at Adrian College, Adrian, Michigan, a church-related liberal arts college. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church West Michigan Conference, Moore has served as the associate and the senior pastor in congregations in rural, urban and suburban Michigan. 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.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Rev. Moore's desire to teach led her to study at National Louis University in Evanston, Illinois, from which she received a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Mathematics. She holds a Master of Divinity from Garrett-Evangelical Seminary. Moore earned a PhD. from Brunel University, London, England in practical theology with an emphasis in Homiletics and Theological Hermeneutics.

A frequently featured preacher, Bible study leader and teacher at workshops, conferences, and worship services around the country, 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. Moore is an avid fan of books by David Baldacci, and, when she is not teaching, enjoys traveling, watching reruns of Babylon 5, and reading.

APPLICANTS SOUGHT FOR SEESE SCHOLARSHIP

Greater New Jersey pastors are invited to apply for the Harry A. Seese Memorial Scholarship for continuing education. Each year this award is given to a pastor whose plans for continuing education have led to strengthening his/her ministry in the local church.

Guided by Rose Seese of Gibbsboro, his widow, and supported by ongoing gifts, the scholarship honors her late husband, the Rev. Harry A. Seese, who died while serving the Medford Church.

Application procedures and eligibility requirements can be obtained by contacting the Rev. Sung H. Ahn, Director of Connectional Ministry, in the Conference's Ministries Team Office, (732) 359-1041, or (877) 677-2594, ext. 1041.

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Global Relay

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Bishop candidates visit black caucus

LAS VEGAS (UMNS) — Twenty endorsed episcopal candidates from three jurisdictions addressed the 45th annual meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. U.S. Rep. James E. Clyburn, (D-S.C.), the assistant Democratic leader of the U. S. House of Representatives, also participated in a town hall meeting on March 2.

Finance group stands by \$603.1 million budget

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Despite membership losses increasing at a faster rate than previously expected, the governing board of the finance agency recommended that the General Council on Finance and Administration stay with the \$603.1 million budget for seven general church funds for the 2013-16 quadrennium.

Group offers 'Plan B' for church structure

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — A group of church leaders is calling for an alternative to the proposed reorganization of The United Methodist Church's general agencies. An international ad hoc group of laity and clergy have put together a restructuring proposal they call "UMC Plan B," combining contributions from people in 15 annual (regional) conferences in four U.S. jurisdictions and two central conferences outside the United States.

UMCOR OKs funds for 2011 disasters

PLANO, Texas (UMNS) — By prioritizing its work and further developing existing partnerships, the United Methodist Committee on Relief is "perfectly poised for what is yet ahead," said the Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey, UMCOR's top executive, during the March 21 board of directors meeting. Directors approved \$2.1 million for recovery work in annual (regional) conferences affected by Hurricane Irene and other devastating weather events in 2011, along with \$150,000 to rebuild homes in Haiti and \$280,000 to help the Methodist Humanitarian Aid Team of the Methodist Church of Chile prepare for disasters.

School focuses on church growth

ST. LOUIS (UMNS) — Registration is now open for the 2012 School of Congregational Development, a United Methodist event for laity and clergy to learn how to grow and develop local churches. The event on Aug. 16-19 in St. Louis is sponsored by the United Methodist boards of Discipleship and Global Ministries as well as Path 1: New Church Starts. Fees range from \$375 to \$475.

United Methodist coalition decries shooting

SANFORD, Fla. (UMNS) — The United Methodist Love Your Neighbor Common Witness Coalition, composed of two ethnic caucuses and three unofficial United Methodist groups, issued a statement expressing shock and sorrow over the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Florida. "As a Christian coalition that works at the crossroads of issues, we must challenge all race-based profiling. It only leads to heartbreak and disaster," said Steve Clunn, director of the coalition. Martin was shot by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch person, on Feb. 26. Martin was unarmed. The Sanford police chief, Bill Lee Jr., who oversaw the investigation into Martin's death announced March 22 that he was temporarily stepping down, the New York Times reported.

Bush, Johnson Sirleaf at opening

DALLAS (UMNS) — U.S. President George W. Bush, former first lady Laura Bush and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, will participate in the launch of the Freedom Collection at the George W. Bush Presidential Center. The Bushes and Johnson Sirleaf are United Methodists. The Freedom Collection is an effort to document the struggle for human freedom and democracy around the world. The event will be at 6-6:45 p.m. CDT March 28 at the AT&T Performing Arts Center in Dallas. Livestreaming of the event will be available online at www.bushcenter.com.

Condolences offered for Coptic leader

NEW YORK (UMNS) — Directors and staff of the United Methodist Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns "express their deepest condolences to Coptic sisters and brothers who mourn the loss of their leader and friend, Pope Shenouda III." The spiritual leader of the Egyptian Coptic Church since 1971 died March 17. "Christians everywhere were blessed by his humble strength and courageous leadership," the commission's statement said. "His lifetime commitment to peace with all of God's children and the spiritual well-being of his people are a shining example of courageous faith." In a March 18 letter, the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, top executive of the World Council of Churches, paid tribute to Shenouda's unwavering pursuit of Christian unity and peace throughout the Middle East and the world. He served as a world council president from 1991 to 1998.

June 10 – Walk for All Ages

NEPTUNE—United Methodist Homes 18th annual *Walk for All Ages* in Ocean Grove. Registration at Great Auditorium Pavilion, 12 noon; Walk begins 1:00 pm. Lunch, entertainment, guided tent tours, awards, and more. To pre-register and donate online, visit www.umhfoundation.org. Call 732-922-9802 x121 for additional information.

175th Anniversary of the First Session of the New Jersey Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Occurs This Spring

by Bob Williams

It was Wednesday morning, April 26, 1837, when the New Jersey Conference "commenced its first session at Newark, New Jersey" with Bishop Beverly Waugh in the chair. The conference met in Halsey Street Church, then known as the Wesley Methodist Chapel and was located at 54 Halsey Street. The handwritten minutes, housed in the conference archives in the Methodist Archives Center at Drew University, read, "The conference was opened with reading the 2nd chapter of 2nd Timothy, singing and prayer by Bishop Waugh. After some appropriate introductory remarks by the Bishop the Conference proceeded to the election of their secretary by ballot, when Wm A. Wilmer was elected." Thus, the Methodists of New Jersey were no longer a part of the Philadelphia Conference but had an identity of their own.

This had come about as the Philadelphia Conference felt that the conference should be divided. At its 1836 session it approved a resolution to go to the General Conference of 1836 that it should be granted permission to divide itself by self-determination. Even though that resolution was defeated at the General Conference, action was taken as part of the listing of conference boundaries that announced that the "New Jersey Conference shall include the whole State of New Jersey, Staten Island and so much of the state of New York and Pennsylvania as is now included in the Asbury District." These appointments in the Asbury District included Nyack, Haverstraw, and Milford. From the very beginning the conference included churches in Pennsylvania and New York.

No evidence may be found of Evangelical Association or United Brethren work in New Jersey in 1837. German missions would come much later in the century. However, there was Methodist Protestant work beginning in 1829, one year before the Methodist Protestant Church formally organized. There is minimal evidence that a New Jersey Conference was organized in 1837 at Centreville but it may have been a combined meeting of the Centreville and Glassboro Quarterly Conferences. Parts of New Jersey were at times in the Pennsylvania Conference and New York Conference. For a year there was a New York-New Jersey Conference and 1843 is the traditional date for the organization of the New Jersey Conference.

The question we are confronted with at the time of an anniversary, why is it recognized at all?

One year flows into the next and the

174th year is as important as the 175th year. We do know that in our numerical system, anniversaries on a 5 or 10 or 25 or 50 or 100 year cycle catch our attention. It is a time when we can hold together both awareness of continuity and change. They are never held in perfect balance as one may prevail over the other. But if only one persists to the exclusion of the other, life will get out of balance.

In looking at the handwritten minutes and the list of preachers from the 19th century, there is continuity. Preachers were received on trial, brought into full connection, one was dismissed under charges, and others transferred. All these activities are still occurring. Reports were received and appointments made. Place names sound familiar. Some of the churches are still serving and others no longer serve in the same place. There is continuity over 175 years of proclaiming the gospel, enabling hearts to be converted, and efforts at "reforming the continent" to be ongoing.

Change has also marked our life together as an annual conference. The 1856 General Conference divided New Jersey into the New Jersey and Newark Conferences, thus the Newark Conference held its first session in 1857. In 1864, African American congregations were organized into the Delaware Conference and for the first time African American clergy could be received into conference membership, albeit in a racially segregated conference that would endure for 100 years. Laity was fully included in annual conferences in 1939. Up until that time the Lay Conference was a separate organization but would at times meet with the preachers. The number of persons attending a conference session has increased dramatically and any photograph would illustrate that it is more representative membership wise of the church.

Isaiah 51:1-2 reads: Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many." We look to the quarry of faith which has brought us thus far, we recognize our connection with those who have gone before, and continue to shape the change so that generations to come will be blessed.

(Mr. Williams is the General Secretary of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History and a clergy member of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.)

Aldersgate Sunday Service 175th Anniversary

The GNJ Commission on Archives and History will host their annual Aldersgate Sunday service on May 20th at 4 p.m. at Chews UMC in Glendora. This year's theme will be celebrating the 175th anniversary of the first New Jersey Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. Bill Wilson will be the keynote speaker. This is a great teaching opportunity for confirmation classes on the history of the United Methodist denomination. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. For additional information contact either Mark Shenise at mshenise@gcah.org or (973) 408-3194 or Bill Wilson at pastorbill@chewsumc.com or (856) 939-1007.

The May Issue Deadline is April 5, 2012

EDITORIAL

Eliminating Security of Appointment a Flawed Idea

The preliminary report of the Study of Ministry Commission that will be presented at the 2012 General Conference in Tampa contains the following recommendation: "In order to create a more nimble system that will facilitate a more missional appointment process, we recommend modifying the appointment process in the following ways: 1) allow for less than full-time appointment for elders in good standing and 2) allow elders who will not receive appointments to be in the transitional leave status."

This recommendation seeks to take away the historic covenant the Church has had with elders in good standing with respect to "security of appointment." The 2008 Book of Discipline states: "All elders in full connection who are in good standing in an annual conference *shall be continued* under appointment by the bishop unless they are granted a sabbatical leave, an incapacity leave, family leave, a leave of absence, retirement, or have failed to meet the requirements for continued eligibility..." (*Paragraph 337.1, italics added*)

As might be expected, the recommendation by the commission to change the language in this provision for pastors in good standing from "shall be appointed" to "may be appointed" has raised a plethora of voices in protest. There are a number of flaws in the recommendation as it stands. The "challenge," according to the commission is along the following lines:

"Security of appointment, commonly called guaranteed appointment, has become a barrier to fulfilling the church's mission.

- Security of appointment limits the ability of the church to respond to the primacy of missional needs.
- Security of appointment sometimes emphasizes the clergy person's needs instead of focusing on the church's mission.
- Security of appointment restricts flexibility of appointments.
- Security of appointment is not financially sustainable, as it does not allow for the unequal supply of clergy related to available appointments."

The statements above bear some scrutiny. Anyone who has been involved in the appointment process knows that missional concerns rule the day. Our bishop and the cabinet already make appointments according to the missional needs of the local churches and the gifts of the pastors available. That is why both church and pastoral profiles are meant to be kept current. While the clergy person's needs are a part of the discussion in appointment making, they do not have priority over the needs of the churches. Pastors are expected to be fully itinerant, even in the face of spouse's jobs that are far from an appointment site. Appointments are not made on the basis of salary. Some move and take pay cuts.

The church's mission comes first. In addition, it is not clear that security of appointment restricts the flexibility of appointments. Recruitment, training, supervision, and creativity on the part of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and a good working relationship with the bishop and cabinet should afford the appointment process all the flexibility it needs. Our bishop has made a priority of having that kind of relationship with BOOM and the effort is indeed bearing fruit.

The issue of financial sustainability is one that does need to be addressed, but it does not necessarily need to be at the cost of security of appointment. In recent years, many churches that are suffering from the downturn in the economy and diminishing attendance in worship have made the decision to reduce their salaries and many pastors have been asked to accept reductions in their pay as they have been moved. Some pastors have opted to request less than full-time appointments. Circuits have been formed. Equitable salary and supplemental salary funds have been used to address financial needs of churches and pastors. Some have even suggested that one way to remedy the problem is to go to a centralized, uniform salary for each annual conference.

There are other concerns that are brought to the fore by the commission's recommendation. The commission says, "Guaranteed appointments are a major contributing factor to mediocrity and ineffectiveness." It is certainly true that there are pastors who are ineffective, but there is already a process in place for handling that problem. The Discipline outlines a process for dealing with ineffective clergy; one that also affords clergy the right of appeal. The Discipline currently permits annual conferences to remove pastors who have demonstrated a pattern of being unable effectively and competently to perform their duties. If the recommendation of the commission is adopted, clergy would be liable to indiscriminate actions on the part of bishops with no right of appeal. "I have a healthy enough view of the sinfulness of the human condition that I have some angst about changes that open the door to episcopal action against the freedom of the pulpit," said the Rev. Carl Schenck, senior pastor of Manchester United Methodist Church in suburban St. Louis. (*Excerpted from a UMNS story reprinted elsewhere in this issue.*)

Additionally, many feel there is a danger inherent in doing away with the guaranteed appointment with respect to the ministries of women, people of color, and older clergy. The concern is that these clergy persons would be pushed to the periphery in the appointment making process or cut out of it altogether in disproportionate numbers. The current system actually came into being because some bishops were refusing to appoint fully-ordained women Elders.

There is a checks and balances system built into the Discipline with respect to clergy accountability that, while sometimes cumbersome, provides the Church with a way to remove ineffective clergy. At the same time it provides clergy with protection from indiscriminate dismissal. It would surely be an improved system if there were clear guidelines as to what constitutes effectiveness, and it would be helpful to have a more streamlined system for dealing with ineffective pastors, but by simply doing away with the "guaranteed appointment" the Study of Ministry recommendation takes away an important check on the system and shifts too much power into the hands of too few. When coupled with the possibility of reduced clergy retirement benefits, this proposal will surely not be helpful in recruitment of younger clergy.

—GCF

VITAL CONGREGATIONS

Personal Invitation is the best 'marketing' plan ever

By Douglas Ruffle

Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC



A month ago Lovett Weems reported good news for the U.S. church. In his March 7th *Update* (Lewis Center for Church Leadership, see www.churchleadership.com) Weems mentioned several friends living in different parts of the country who have returned to church. Such a movement towards the church goes against recent trends, which point to an overall decrease in attendance. Weems underscored a key point for the persons returning: they were invited by a friend.

It has never been more important for church people to invite friends. Many church going people feel uneasy about extending such invitations, yet simply put: there is no better strategy for marketing and no greater result from the practice. Lyle Schaller said years ago that 86% of newcomers to a church service responded to a personal invitation. The statistics would hold up today.

If we feel uneasy about inviting others, I would encourage our churches to offer training on how to do it. An excellent resource for such training is available now from Cokesbury. *Catch: A Churchwide Program for Invitational Evangelism* provides training on how to invite (and keep) visitors to the church. Written by Church of the Resurrection's Adam Hamilton and Debi Nixon, the resource includes DVDs, a participant book, Leader's Guide and implementation guide.

We live in challenging times. Our churches can provide the safe space for people to come into a deeper relationship with God. For many of these people, the only thing lacking is an invitation. Personal invitation is not really about a 'marketing plan.' It is about sharing the love of God with others so that they might come to know the joy of being in Christian community.

The Office of Congregational Development exists to help the local churches of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference to be as vital and alive as God intended them to be. Don't hesitate to contact us at any time (732-359-1046).

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Respite care enables seniors to live in any of the Homes' five full service communities for the short term. It offers a "trial run" to see if it is the right choice or an opportunity to regain skills needed for independent living.

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Volunteers Finish Church Mosaic in Moorestown

A roughly finished wall outside First Church in Moorestown always bugged church member Max Fisher. So, tired of looking at the coarse stucco, Fisher several years ago proposed an art project — a mosaic to cover the unattractive, two-sectioned wall at the Camden Avenue church. After years of planning, design and construction by local artists, church members and other volunteers, a glass mosaic will be unveiled on April 1, Palm Sunday, at 6:30 p.m.



"It was quite a challenge," said Fisher, a member of the property committee. "Some of the volunteers had worked with glass before but other artists and other volunteers never had." The modern designs depict the sun emitting rays toward a dove on a triangular, 19-foot-long upper wall. Some sunbeams are directed downward toward a cross on the 11-foot-long lower wall. The glass shards are in vibrant and contrasting colors — from pearlized white to bright orange, reds, blues, purples and yellows. A closer look also reveals different textures to the glass surface, from bumpy to smooth.

Senior Pastor Steve Donat said he has been excited about the project from the beginning. "We're very much a church of lay parishioners and we've encouraged members to express their faith through art," he said. Church

member and artist Beverly Heusser created the design, which she said presents easily understood images.

"It has been an exciting journey, but I was somewhat intimidated with the scale of the project," said Heusser, a 63-year-old painter and former teacher at Baker Elementary School and the Perkins Center for the Arts, both in Moorestown. "We have created something everlasting and hopefully the church members will enjoy it as much as we enjoyed putting it together." She

said the glass was bought from MTS Glassworks, a glass studio in Merchantville, and then was cut into irregular shapes by volunteers in Fisher's workshop. The shapes were pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle onto panels, which were screwed and cemented onto the walls.

The construction process began in the fall. Heusser said she had never worked with glass before, but that two of the church's artists had. One of them is township library employee Marsia Mason. "It was very painstaking to cut the glass and without a doubt everyone added a little blood to the mosaic," she said. Mason said she is thrilled with the result and noted that the project also allowed her to work together with other volunteers. "Now we will always be part of the church and that is special," she said.

Bishop Devadhar Travels to South Korea



Bishop Devadhar and Conference lay leader Rosa Williams took some time for a stroll along a country road in South Korea.



Pictured is the group of 26 persons traveling with Bishop Devadhar and GNJ Conference Lay Leader Mrs. Rosa Williams on a trip to South Korea. The trip was a cross cultural journey of insight and education. It was also a spiritual pilgrimage and time of fellowship. The travelers enjoyed the gracious invitations of the Bupyeong Methodist church and their Evangelism and Mission education program.

Save the Date...

Summer Music Institute 2012

Two Days! - Thursday - Friday, July 26 & 27

You're Invited to....A Praise Party!

What if our invitations to worship in our local church sounded like this one, inviting everyone to a praise party? Would people come expecting to sit quietly in their pews and sing softly out of hardbound hymnals and pray with hands folded and heads bowed. Or would they come ready to shout, laugh, dance, cry — and sing with mouths wide open and voices raised in a community roused by joyful choirs and worship leaders? This year's Summer Music Institute will feature engaging and exciting techniques of song leading, liturgical design and aesthetics that renew our passion for worship. Worship that is focused on a Holy Spirit-filled, Justice-driven liturgy, Our hope is that the worship at SMI will create and model for its participants an intentionally diverse community passionately welcoming all people. **More information to follow!!! Mark your calendars today!**

Questions? Contact Nancy VanderVeen, Director of Theological Lifelong Learning, at nvanderveen@drew.edu, or 973-408-3084.

Springtime Equals New Beginnings



Like dormant roots resting underground, endowments can blossom into tangible benefits for your church. The United Methodist Foundation helps churches preserve and grow ministries through endowments.

We're the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference's partner for planning, consultation, education, and training. These services are provided free of charge to GNJAC churches.



For additional information contact
K. Edward Jacobi, President
at 732-747-4891 or
ejacobi07739@yahoo.com
or Jay Kim at the
GNJAC Office 732-359-1032.

Pastors Say Job Security Part of Covenant

A UMNS Report - By Heather Hahn*

New clergy may face greater uncertainty if the church ends guaranteed appointments for elders in good standing. A UMNS file photo courtesy of e-Review Florida.

The Rev. Pam Estes has led a charge of three tiny churches in rural southern Arkansas and a small city church in Little Rock. Altogether, she has served Arkansas United Methodists in ordained ministry for 21 years, always going where her bishop sends her.

That is the covenant the church has had with its ordained elders: Serve where you are assigned and you always will have an appointment. Now that promise could be threatened: The denomination's 2008-2012 Commission to Study the Ministry has made a preliminary recommendation of doing away with clergy job guarantees.

Estes worries about the uncertainty that she and other pastors will face if such a proposal is approved by the 2012 General Conference, the denomination's top legislative body.

"What will happen if my next appointment doesn't work out?" she said.



New clergy may face greater uncertainty if the church ends guaranteed appointments for elders in good standing.

A UMNS file photo courtesy of e-Review Florida.



During EXPLORATION 2006, more than 300 young people came forward to pray with clergy.

A UMNS file photo by Vicki Brown.

"Would I just be let go? By 2012, I would be 60-plus years old, and I'm a single woman."

Estes represents a number of United Methodist ordained elders who expressed deep misgivings about a preliminary recommendation to end "guaranteed appointments" for elders in good standing while retaining the ability of bishops to move clergy to different assignments.

Guaranteed appointments are a major contributing factor to mediocrity and ineffectiveness, the ministry study commission told the United Methodist Council of Bishops at its recent spring meeting. The commission's recommendations are included in an interim report, but the group will not release its final report for the 2012 General Conference until next year.

United Methodist elders agree incompetent clergy should be removed

from their ranks. But many say there is a process in place now for such action, one with rights of appeal.

They fear the commission's proposal would leave them open to arbitrary dismissal, compromising their freedom to speak hard truths to troubled congregations. In addition, they worry that such a shift would leave women and ethnic minorities more vulnerable to discrimination.

"I have a healthy enough view of the sinfulness of the human condition that I have some angst about changes that open the door to episcopal action against the freedom of the pulpit," said the Rev. Carl Schenck, senior pastor of Manchester United Methodist Church in suburban St. Louis.

"I wish to protect the church from laziness and incompetence," he added. "But I also want to protect the church from discriminating against gifted pastors."

Estes said she knows from experience that women still face resistance from some congregations.

"There are churches that don't want pastors who are women, or only want pastors who are married," she said. "If you happen to get a first appointment that isn't a strong one, what happens then?"

Due process for pastors

The United Methodist Book of Discipline states elders in good standing who honor their ordination covenant to the itineracy and who effectively fulfill their ministerial duties and attend to their annual continuing education requirements "shall be continued under appointment by the bishop."

The ministry study commission in its interim report recommended changing the language from "shall" to "may" continue to be appointed.

The Rev. Ivan Corbin, senior pastor of Peace United Methodist Church in Orlando, Fla., wondered whether such a change is necessary, even as he acknowledged the harm that can be done to congregations by moving pastors from church to church.

The denomination's Book of Discipline currently permits annual conferences to remove pastors who have demonstrated a pattern of being unable effectively and competently to perform their duties. The due process for handling such complaints against clergy can be lengthy.

The issue goes beyond basic competence, the commission said. Commission members said guaranteeing all clergy appointments restricts the flexibility of bishops to appoint the most effective person for each congregation. At a time when some churches are fighting for survival, and there is an oversupply of ordained clergy in some conferences, "guaranteed appointments" have become a barrier to the church's mission, according to the commission.

The Rev. Jim Bryan, senior pastor of Missouri United Methodist Church in Columbia, Mo., and a former district superintendent, said sometimes the most gracious and loving thing is for church leaders to help ineffective pastors find their true calling outside pastoral ministry.

Others express concern about the lack of protection from the misuse of episcopal authority.

Schenck said he knows that the procedures for firing poorly performing pastors can be cumbersome.

"In my own heart, I am not closing the door to change," he said. "If we can find a way to protect prophetic speech

and protect the ministries of those outside the majority from arbitrary dismissal, then I am open to changes."

A deeper problem

A number of pastors said there are deeper issues of mutual responsibility. In social media responses to a UMNS article on the topic earlier in the week, clergy shared stories of alleged inequitable treatment by bishops and districts superintendents, saying it would have a chilling effect on ministry if they had to worry personal biases could cost them their jobs.

"Nice. After being assigned for the last 30 years to clean up behind broken colleagues, suffer abuse at the hands of clergy-killing congregations with no intervention from the superintendent, questionable appointment practices, and never once complaining or requesting reconsideration, making multiple salary concessions and living in substandard housing that I would spend up to six years renovating, I am now... serving a system that has NO reciprocal obligation to care for or support me," one person wrote.

Another person said the appointment process has little to do with gifts and skills, and more to do with "climbing the church ladder."

There is a basic issue of trust, some clergy said in interviews.

"I think we live in a culture of fear," said the Rev. Eric Van Meter, the campus minister of the Wesley Foundation at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro.

"Now you don't just have to worry, 'Where do I get moved?' but 'Are they going to get rid of me altogether?'"

When he was ordained, Van Meter said one of the first pieces of advice he received was to be careful what he said to fellow pastors. One of them could be his district superintendent one day.

"The root problem is mistrust," he said, "and this isn't going to help much."

Estes said simply getting rid of guaranteed appointments lets bishops, district superintendents and laity off the hook.

"I would assert that mediocrity is bred by the annual conferences... by the lack of positive, productive supervision of pastors, and the unwillingness of a congregation to address their own ineffectiveness as disciples," she said.

She said congregations often can make their pastors better.

"I always tell congregants that they can absolutely improve their pastors in how they hold us accountable," she said, "and how they encourage 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.*

"Now you don't just have to worry, 'Where do I get moved?' but 'Are they going to get rid of me altogether?'"

—The Rev. Eric Van Meter

Stewardship Stories

By Rich Hendrickson

Coordinator of Stewardship Education
and Development, GNJAC



2012 Stewardship Webinars for Local Church Leaders
Mark your calendar now for this important series of stewardship webinars offered **ONLINE** by The General Board of Discipleship.

Thursday, March 8, 7:30pm ET
Telling Our Mission Story: Put a Face on Your Apportionments

April 12, 7:30pm ET
How Online Giving Can Raise Your Church's Income

Thursday, May 17, 7:30pm ET
Introducing "Extravagant Generosity" to Your Congregation

Thursday, July 12, 7:30pm ET
Are You Raising Funds or Raising Generous Disciples?

Thursday, September 13, 7:30pm ET
Five Key Elements in Successful Stewardship Strategies

Thursday, November 8, 7:30pm ET
In the Financial Homestretch: Ending the Year Strong

To get a more detailed description of each webinar and/or to find out where to go to register go to: <http://www.gnjumc.org/news/detail/62>

The Rev. Howard William Washburn

The Rev. Howard William Washburn, 89, died Feb. 21, 2012, at Lima Memorial Health System.

He was born Oct. 27, 1922, in Hackensack, N.J., to Adlagunda Bellm and Russell LeRoy Washburn Sr., who preceded him in death. He was raised by his grandparents, John and Christina Bellm, who also preceded him in death. His wife, Barbara Washburn survives.

The Rev. Mr. Washburn was an all-state first baseman at Hackensack High School, Hackensack, N.J., in 1941 and received a tryout with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Thoughts of professional baseball were interrupted by Pearl Harbor and the onset of World War II. He enlisted in the Army, serving in the South Pacific Theater, including New Guinea and Leyte. He was present when Gen. Douglas MacArthur landed on the beach at Tacloban, freeing the Philippines.

After the war, he attended college on the GI Bill at Drew University, Madison, N.J., and Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. While in college in Iowa, he served as a Methodist supply minister to two small churches in Iowa. After undergraduate school he was assigned as pastor of the Methodist Church in Brighton, Iowa, while he began seminary at Garrett Theological Seminary at Northwestern University. He transferred to a Methodist Church in Jersey City, N.J., completing his divinity degree at Drew University, graduating summa cum laude and becoming ordained as an elder in the Methodist Church. He became interested in and widely known for the Methodist Church's ministry to older persons. He served as an administrator of Methodist Homes in Texas, New Jersey and California, and on the national board of the Methodist Church in charge of homes for the aged. For the last 26 years he has served as an administrative and special adviser to the president/CEO of Otterbein Homes in Ohio. He was a founder of Leading Age, the national organization of the not-for-profit services to the aging, receiving its highest award for service in 2001, and was a special honoree at Leading Age's 50th Annual Meeting in 2011. He received Otterbein's Outstanding Service to the Elderly award in 2001 and the United Methodist Association's prestigious Olen Oeschger Memorial Award in 2004, among many other awards. He was a leader and a mentor to many of the nation's caregivers to the elderly throughout his ministry.

Survivors also include two sons, John (Denni) Washburn and Jim (Chris) Washburn; four stepchildren, Brian (Leanne) Jewett, Andy (Suzie) Jewett, Karen (Skip Lindo) Jewett and Glen (Wanda) Jewett; several grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; a cousin, Elaine Anderson; and a daughter-in-law, Sherrie Vissotski.

He was preceded in death by a son, Mark Washburn; a brother, Russell LeRoy Washburn Jr.; and a sister, Beatrice Washburn Miller.

Memorial services will begin at 11 a.m. Saturday in the Myer Community Room at Otterbein Senior Lifestyle Community, St. Marys. The Rev. George Campbell and the Rev. William McOmber will officiate. Burial of the cremains will be in Otterbein Cemetery, Lebanon.

Friends may call one hour prior to services Saturday in the community room.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Otterbein Senior Lifestyle Community Benevolent Fund, 11230 state Route 364, St. Marys, OH 45885.

Condolences may be expressed at bayliffandson.com.



Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS)

April 24, 2012 - Lunch/Meeting

11:00 a.m. Francis Asbury Manor, Ocean Grove

Speaker: Dr. Laurel Kearns,
an Associate Professor at Drew

Topic: "A Christian Looks at the Environment"

Lunch: \$11.00 - call Gary Hope to reserve - 609-291-5003

"A Christian Looks at the Environment" Topic at ARMS Spring Meeting

Dr. Laurel Kearns, Associate Professor of Sociology and Religion and Environmental Studies at Drew Theological School and the Graduate Division of Religion of Drew University will present the topic, "A Christian Looks at the Environment" at the Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS) Spring Meeting on April 24, 2012 at Francis Asbury Manor, Ocean Grove. She has researched, published and given talks around the globe on religion and environmentalism for over 20 years. In addition to helping found the Green Seminary Initiative, she has been a board member of GreenFaith since 1995, and is now serving on the Sustainability Committee of both Drew University and the American Academy of Religion, where she also chaired the Religion and Ecology Steering Committee. Her research is focused on religious, particularly Christian, involvement in ecological issues and movements in the U. S., nature spirituality, and religious responses to global warming.

The meeting will begin with fellowship at 11:00 a.m., followed by lunch, program and election of officers. The cost of lunch is \$11.00 and reservations can be made by calling Gary Hope at 609-291-5003.

NORTHERN SHORE DISTRICT CLERGY AND SPOUSES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND...

A SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT:

"DRAWING CLOSE TO THE HEART OF GOD"

The post Easter weeks are often the times when the stranger to whom we need to be hospitable and available is one's self. It is difficult to model a rich, healing, and prayerful presence to others when you need all the oil for yourself. You are invited to a time of community as well as a time of soulful quietness where you can bask in the abundance of God's love. We will claim the words of Jesus for ourselves when he said, "I came that you might have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

— Rev. Gerri Fowler

WHEN:

Sunday, April 22 - arrival time 3-5 p.m. retreat starts with supper 5:30 pm.
to Monday, April 23, 3 p.m. (overnighters must vacate rooms by 10 a.m.)
Commuters may arrive by 9 a.m. on Monday, April 23, to participate in one full day.*

PLACE: Stella Maris Retreat Center, 981 Ocean Ave., Elberon, NJ 07740

RETREAT LEADER: Rev. Gerri Fowler, retired elder/GNJAC. After taking early retirement, Gerri was founder and Executive Director of Balm in Gilead Ministries, Inc., a spiritual formation ministry. She is a trained retreat leader and spiritual director, and has led workshops, retreats, and healing services on the local, district, and conference level. She attends Medford United Methodist Church while in New Jersey and is an active part of the ministry of a mission UMC in High Point, North Carolina, where she and her husband spend half of the year.

COST: Per person - \$115 for Sunday through Monday participation
*\$70 for Monday only (commuter participants) (Use your continuing education funds!)

Please make checks payable to Northern Shore District and send to the Northern Shore District Office by March 22 to reserve your place.

PLEASE CONTACT REV. FRANCIE PRESTON FOR QUESTIONS/
MORE INFORMATION: pastorfrancie@gmail.com or 732 449 5147.

**The May Issue Deadline
is April 5, 2012**

Raise the Roof Challenge Update: A BIG "Thank You" from CUMAC

Valentine's Day 2012 is one CUMAC's staff and volunteers will always remember with joyful hearts. They report, "It's a day when your outpouring of love – for our mission, the people we serve, and for the aging building that houses our work-gifted us a badly needed new roof. With your incredible generosity, the CUMAC family, our food and material resources, and the equipment we use to provide for close to 2,600 clients each month is safe and secure! We could not be more grateful for everybody who helped make it happen."

When the number of people coming for food support skyrocketed in 2008, CUMAC made a decision never to cap the number of individuals they serve, but rather to provide for every last person who walked through their doors in need of help. With that decision they anticipated many challenges: finding the food resources needed to meet this record need, serving all who came their way with a limited and largely part-time staff, and keeping the building running despite an extremely tight budget. They did not anticipate rapid roof deterioration leaving them to feed record numbers while struggling just to protect the supply of food from water damage.

Assistant manager to the warehouse, Bobby Davis, and AmeriCorps volunteer, Tom Davis (*no relation*), recounted how difficult it has been these past few years to operate around roof issues. "Every time it was bad out," Bobby Davis reminisced, "we'd spend all day moving food from one dry spot to the next. We'd be scrambling all morning to find enough buckets and containers for all the leaks. How do you get your work done and feed this many people when you spend rainy and snowy days just protecting your food supplies?" Truly CUMAC was struggling just to get by.

After October's freak nor-easter staff came into a warehouse that, in the words of Reverend Patricia Bruger, "sounded and looked as though our roof's faucets had been turned on." Significant damage had left water pouring into the building and in just one day a steadily mounting problem had turned

into a crisis. They knew they needed help and immediately turned to their friends at the GNJAC.

When CUMAC put out an appeal for help replacing the roof last November, they never dreamed they'd see such a positive response. Soon after the cry for help went out, donations began streaming in. Churches organized "Raise the Roof" fundraisers, volunteers began emptying the change from their pockets upon observing our struggle, and countless individuals mailed whatever they could spare. The generosity CUMAC witnessed was just amazing and made all the difference; by February 2012, construction had begun and they were on their way.

Today CUMAC is proud to report that after a month under the new roof, they've not seen a single drop of unwanted water and are operating at full capacity: with food items safely stored as they make their way to the dinner tables of families and individuals who might otherwise have gone without. Thanks to those who agreed to it, they even have funds left over for other facility needs and have plans to repair or replace the walk in freezers that are so critical to housing fresh produce and meat. Ms. Bruger comments, "Working without the added stress of a leaking roof has been a huge relief; truly we are blessed to have such staunch support in our ministry to the poor."

CUMAC would like to extend their sincere thanks to everybody who helped them through this great challenge. "Words can never express our gratitude for your outpouring of generosity, but please know that as we're busy at work in our newly dry and secure building you are in our hearts and we are so grateful." For any who would like to see their contribution in action, call or e-mail and schedule a tour with Volunteer Coordinator, Stephanie Ames. She can be reached at 973-742-5518 or via e-mail at volunteer@cumacecho.org. If you can't make it down, you can always find pictures at www.facebook.com/cumacfeedspeople. The staff would love an opportunity to show you what a meaningful effect you've had on their mission to feed people and change lives.

Girl Scout Sunday at Wanaque New Jersey

The Midvale Church, Wanaque Charge, hosted Girl Scout Sunday on March 11 for the various Girl Scout Troops in the community. The service, anticipating the centennial of Girl Scouts USA the next day, resulted in a full house; three times the average attendance.

Girl Scouts led the service with a procession, flag salute and Girl Scout Promise. A quartet of scouts signed the Girl Scout Promise. A children's sermon utilized two damaged bikes as Pastor Don DeGroat talked about taking a trip and tying it in with our need for God as our guide, ala Proverbs 4:5. To the delight of the congregation the Daisy and Brownie Scouts loudly protested the pastor riding a little pink girl's bike. The regular sermon utilized a Girl Scout theme, "To Get Her There," with video

clips and examples of famous and yet to be famous Girl Scouts. The story of Miriam from the Hebrew Bible provided text and story line for Girl Scouts to lead and worship God. With Miriam's example, a quintet of Girl Scouts played tambourines as the congregation thanked Almighty God for Girl Scouting. An anniversary cake accompanied by (what else?) Girl Scout cookies, at Fellowship Hour provided a happy and delicious conclusion to the celebration.

As is a Wanaque custom, Girl Scout Troops brought their collection of Baby Bundles for use by the borough nurse in the care of babies to local at-risk families. Over one hundred boxes of diapers, formula, clothes, and baby toiletries were collected this year.



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Ethnic Groups Add Voices to Inclusion Calls

A UMNS Report - By Kathy L. Gilbert*

The National Federation of Asian American United Methodists and Black Methodists for Church Renewal have joined with a 2012 General Conference coalition that supports all people regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation in The United Methodist Church.

This will be the first time two of the denomination's ethnic caucuses has joined with the Love Your Neighbor Common Witness Coalition, founded in the mid-1990s by Affirmation, Methodist Federation for Social Action and Reconciling Ministries Network, three unofficial United Methodist organizations.

Several United Methodist bishops, retired and active, as well as ordained elders, deacons and laity have signed a statement to "embrace unity in Christ in the midst of diverse opinions" during the gathering of the denomination's top lawmaking body. The United Methodist 2012 General Conference will be April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla.

Leaders throughout the church have signed the "For Love of God and Neighbor" statement, said the Rev. Steve Clunn, Common Witness Coalition coordinator.

"In the past they have typically done so as individuals. However, this is the first time that individual leaders have signed on our witness statement and in addition, whole organizations are signing on and have pledged to work as full coalition partners," Clunn said.

Focus on racial justice and inclusiveness

This coalition focuses on racial justice and full inclusiveness, said Pamela Crosby, executive director of Black Methodists for Church Renewal.

"Many decisions at the 2012 General Conference potentially directly affect churches/communities of color. This coalition means we will have common goals in ensuring the voices and ministries of justice, inclusion, global connection are valued, heard and respected," Crosby said.

Don Hayashi, president of the National Federation of Asian American United Methodists, said Asian Americans often are overlooked.

"We wish to be valued for who we are and the contributions we make," he



A UMNS photo courtesy of the Love Your Neighbor Coalition.

"We know what it is like to experience discrimination, so working in coalition with others for the elimination of discrimination ... is part of the way we are living in to the Great Commandment of loving God and Neighbor together."

— Kathy Thomas-Sano

said. "Our faith dictates that we respect all creation for we are all created in the image of God. We have no higher calling than to love God and our neighbor."

Signers of the Love Your Neighbor statement pledge to, among other things, work for racial justice, welcome gender diversity and include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in full membership and ministry in The United Methodist Church.

"This is not BMCR's first advocacy for LGBT rights. Last year at BMCR's national meeting, the caucus endorsed 'A Statement of Counsel to the Church,' the 2011 statement from retired bishops," Crosby said.

Advocating for full inclusion

"I think it is important for us to work with groups that are advocating for full inclusion of LGBT and all of God's people in the life of the church. We have worked together in informal ways in the past, so formally working together now just seems to be a natural progression of who we are and what we do," said Kathy Thomas-Sano, a member of the Asian-American caucus.

"We know what it is like to experience discrimination, so working in coalition with others for the elimination of discrimination in the church against LGBT persons and anyone else, is part of the way we are living in to the Great Commandment of loving God and Neighbor together," she said.

Affirmation was formed more than 40 years ago, "when the church decided some people were 'incompatible with Christian teaching,'" said Tim Tennant-Jayne, Affirmation co-spokesperson.

"It has been inspiring to see the growing partnerships that embody a deep appreciation for our God-given diversity," said Jill A. Warren, executive director of Methodist Federation for Social Action. "Each of our groups has a long and storied history of speaking out when it would have been easier to be silent. Together we will speak out about what is possible through the love, grace and reconciliation of Jesus Christ."

* 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.

Rockin' Away in the Rockaways

A night of Contemporary Christian Music will be presented by The Gospel Project and Samhill Road on Saturday, June 9th at 5PM at The United Methodist Church of the Rockaways located at 1 Hoagland Avenue, Rockaway, NJ. Tickets are priced at \$10 each or two for \$15 and can be purchased by contacting pastorlbvumc@yahoo.com or (973) 271-1280. Food will be available for purchase. All proceeds from the evening will benefit the mission work of CUMAC (Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community) located in Paterson, NJ.

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OBITUARIES

Esther J. Morgan, widow of the Reverend Raymond G. Morgan, died on Thursday, March 1. A funeral service was held on March 6 at Trinity United Methodist Church, in Millville.

Born in Millville, she had lived in the South Jersey area all of her life. Mrs. Morgan worked for the Millville Savings and Loan on High Street in Millville for more than 25 years. She served as the assistant treasurer of the bank for more than 16 years. She was a lifelong member of the Trinity United Methodist Church and was very active at the church. Mrs. Morgan taught Sunday school for many years, and was a member of the Louisa Newcomb Sunday school class. She also was a longtime member of the Eastern Star Shekinah Lodge No. 82.

Memorial donations may be made to the Trinity United Methodist Church Memorial Fund, 100 South Second Street, Millville, NJ 08302. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to her son, Raymond G. Morgan, 17 Union Street, Millville, NJ 08332.

Lloyd Rogers Applegate, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died on Friday, March 2. A funeral service was held at Hamilton United Methodist Church, Neptune on March 6.

Prior to his ordination he worked as a news editor of the Ocean County SUN, was the Toms River area reporter for the New Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press and was a secretary and administrator of the Lacey Township school district.

Mr. Applegate was ordained a United Methodist elder/pastor in the class of 1962. He served as pastor of North Wildwood and Burleigh, Richwood, West Warwick and Hope, R.I., Collingswood, Allentown, Highlands and Sea Bright, Sicklerville, (where he oversaw the building of a new church) and New Brooklyn, and Hamilton, Neptune. Following retirement in 1989, he served interim pastorates in Squankum, South Amboy, Keyport and Union Beach, and Beach Haven. He also worked for several years at the Ely Funeral Home, Neptune.

He earned degrees from Temple University (B.S. in education with honors); Crozer Theological Seminary (Master of Divinity with top honors); and Boston University School of Theology and Graduate School (Master of Sacred Theology) in ecumenics and world religions.

Mr. Applegate founded the Allentown Association of Churches, headed the ecumenical office in the former Southern New Jersey Methodist Annual Conference, and served as vice president and president (1978-1982) of the one-million member, 15 denominational New Jersey Council of Churches. In 1986 he also received the Bishop's award for outstanding work in the field of Christian Unity.

Condolence messages may be sent to Rev. Applegate's widow, Pat Applegate, 202 Lions Head Blvd.

South, Brick, NJ 08723 and his son, Gary L. Applegate, 48 Stonehenge Drive, Lincroft, NJ 07738. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the American Lung Association, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20004.

Walter C. Jordan, retired Elder (Honorable Location) of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference died on Sunday, March 11 in Hackettstown. A Memorial Service will be held on April 10, 2012 at 2 p.m. at Heath Village, 422 Schooley's Mountain Road, Hackettstown, NJ 07840.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Fellowship Fund at Heath Village, 422 Schooley's Mountain Road, Hackettstown, NJ 07840. Messages of condolence may be sent to his widow, Mrs. Beverly Jordan, 78 Heath Village, Hackettstown, New Jersey 07840.

Maxwell George Tow, former member of the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference and District Superintendent of the Southern District, died on March 22, 2012 in New York. A Memorial Service was held on March 31 at the First United Methodist Church of Windsor, Windsor, NY.

He graduated from the University of Iowa under an ROTC scholarship, where he studied foreign relations. After airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and marrying his wife Geraldine (Geri) Van Houweling, he attended Drew University seminary school in 1957, and, upon his graduation, was appointed by the Bishop to serve in inner city ministry as the pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Paterson.

During this time Mr. Tow was an advocate for minority rights in both Paterson and the country at large. He traveled to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to encourage African Americans to register to vote, and participated in many local protests on behalf of those whose rights were denied. He served the church and community of Paterson for twenty years before being appointed to serve a suburban church in Maplewood, where he stayed for four years. The bishop then appointed him to become a district superintendent for sixty churches in central New Jersey.

He took a sabbatical year in 1989 to write a book about his experiences as an inner city minister in Paterson, entitled Grit and Grace, and to co-author a book about his professor at Drew University, Dr. Franz Hildebrandt, Mr. Valiant for Truth. After his sabbatical, he was appointed to the Windsor United Methodist Church in New York, from which he retired after serving for five years.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the First United Methodist Church of Windsor, P.O. Box 36, Windsor, NY 13865, the Heifer International Foundation or Catskill Hospice. Messages of condolence should be sent to his widow, Geraldine Tow, 28 Main Street, Deposit, New York 13754.

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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

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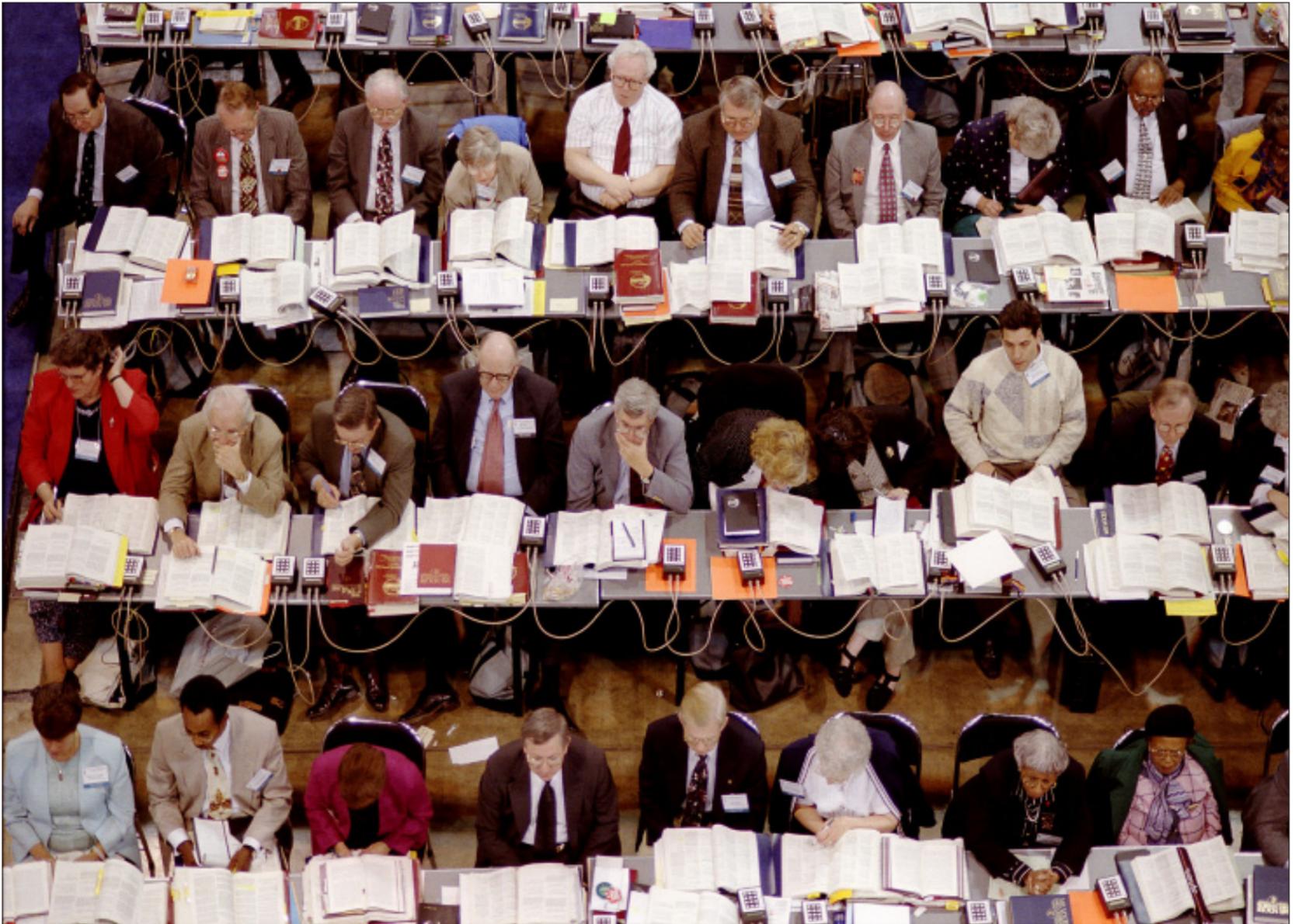
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