



UMC*Connection*

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Becoming fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world • www.bwcumc.org • Volume 25, Issue 3 • March 12, 2014

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Taking Ash Wednesday to the community



Alison Burdett

Several Baltimore-Washington Conference churches took ashes into their communities March 5, to observe the beginning of Lent. The Rev. Stephanie Vader of Emmanuel UMC in Scaggsville places ashes on the forehead of Stashia Goray at McDonalds in Maple Lawn.

Rich church or poor: which are you?

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMC*Connection* Staff

TOO MANY UNITED Methodists today still love money more than Jesus. That's one of the primary reasons they give, on average, only 1 percent of their income to the church. But churches can change that, said giving guru Clif Christopher. The Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation sponsored the Rev. Christopher to speak to more than 100 local church leaders at Glen Mar UMC Feb. 25. Drawing from his new book, "Rich Church/Poor Church," Christopher confided to those present that "a failure to articulate our mission and how we're accomplishing that mission is our greatest failure." Debt, low expectations and a lack of effective leadership are among the other causes for people failing to give to United Methodist churches.

But the fault is not in the people. Most Americans are giving generously to non-profits, they're just not giving to your church, Christopher said. Discovering why not takes one into an exploration of what it means to be a rich church. "This is not about big or little budgets. A rich church is a church that is able each day to focus its attention on mission and ministry, while a poor church must focus its attention on getting money."

Throughout the day-long session, Christopher illuminated the difference between the two types of churches.

Rich churches, said Christopher, focus on their members' discipleship. Poor churches focus on appeasement and making members happy. Rich churches tell compelling stories of tranformed lives. Poor churches tell about facts and budgets. Rich churches avoid debt. Poor churches work without a financial safety net. Rich churches are comfortable talking about and asking for money. Poor churches want to please people at all costs.

Rich churches model humility; poor churches model arrogance and harbor an expectation that their members "owe them." Rich churches have high expectations of their members, believing that tithing is a part of discipleship; poor ones don't. In rich churches pastors know what each member gives and leads from facts. In poor churches they guess about their members' giving and lead from a sense of hope. Rich churches look



Melissa Lauber

See Christopher, page 3

Bishop encourages laity, clergy on each District

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMC*Connection* Staff

YOU ARE THE one. We are the ones that can make a difference in this part of God's world, Bishop Marcus Matthews is telling the clergy and laity of the Baltimore-Washington Conference as he joins in conversation with them at district meetings over the next several weeks.

Drawing on the wisdom of a statement from Hopi Elders, titled "We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting

For" (see sidebar, page 3), Matthews is encouraging the people of the Baltimore-Washington Conference not to look to their colleagues, the conference staff or some ill-defined hero who will save the day. Rather, we must be aware that "we are God's plan."

"God is depending upon each of us," the bishop said. "God needs you to do something. It's good to come and worship and say, 'amen.' But we don't need people standing on the sidelines. God needs you engaged. Our vision is to become fully alive and make a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world."

On Feb. 18, Matthews spoke with the clergy and

laity of the Greater Washington District at First UMC in Hyattsville and on Feb. 25 he met with the clergy of the Annapolis District at St. Mark UMC in Hanover.

The focus of the conversations was on allowing people in the pulpits and the pews to share their thoughts with the bishop, who opened the sessions with a few remarks on the character of United Methodists.

United Methodists, he said, live out a faithful blending of personal holiness and social action. "They seek a right relationship with God, but are also

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... well said

(a chance to express what that word means to you.)

By MANDY SAYERS
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

ONCE UPON A time, I thought remembering was merely a matter of the intellect, like when I ponder my daily to-do list, or go to the store mumbling to myself, “Quart of milk, loaf of bread, stick of butter” over and over. As I age, I see how tenuous this sort of remembering can be. My amnesiac process started, I think, with the birth of my first child, come to think of it...

When I started taking Communion regularly, I heard “remember” a great deal. “Do this, as often as you do it, in remembrance of me” and “in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Christ Jesus...”

A pastor once explained this “remembrance” as more than just an intellectual recollection. She explained remembering also carries with it a sense of putting something back together, “re-mem-bering” it.

At the Lord’s Table, we re-member God’s mighty acts of salvation, and we pull God’s past faithfulness into our present time. We also get a foretaste of the heavenly banquet and a re-mem-bering of God’s future, a sort of glimpse of God’s coming kingdom. We are most fully Christ’s body when we re-member it, at the Lord’s Table.

If remembering is more than just a mental recollection, then folks who have no memory of their baptisms as babies can be told, “Remember your baptism, and be thankful.” This kind of remembering calls on God to keep God’s promises, and gathers the “great cloud of witnesses” that cheer us on and hold us accountable.

That kind of remembering calls all of us to see options where we thought there were none, and keeps us from a failure of holy imagination. “Come on, sweetie,” say the martyrs, “I endured persecution and peril and sword. Yes, you CAN take a lasagna to the shelter on Thursday.”

May our Lent be a time of remembering, and re-mem-bering, as we commit to a holy and transformative journey together. Jesus, remember me, when you come into your Kingdom and help me remember you, Jesus, to be your hands and feet. Help me remember who I am and whose I am, and that will make this a Lent to...remember.

... well said

Ancient church mothers and fathers often greeted one another with the phrase, “Give me a word.” This greeting led to the sharing of insights and wisdom. Today we continue this tradition with this monthly column.

By DARYL WILLIAMS
Pastor, New Hope Fellowship UMC, Upper Marlboro

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN jealous of people with a great memory. People who can meet someone once and remember their name forever. People who hear or read something and have perfect recall have always been the object of my sincere envy. I always wondered just how they were able to keep so many things trapped in their minds and available for almost instantaneous recall.

I would like to blame my poor memory on the aging process, except it has been a problem from my earliest days. My spelling tests from elementary school were absolutely abysmal. Names and dates on a history test, absolutely no chance. It is because of this challenge that I am very careful with what I commit to memory.

Since I don’t remember a lot of things, I try to stick to remembering the most important things in life. When I feel that something is going to be important and life changing, I do all I can to remember every detail.

I remember every detail of my wedding day, because I don’t want to forget a minute of it. I remember every detail of family celebrations because I know those moments will never happen again. I remember every worship service where I ever felt the presence of God. It is because of those memories that when fear and doubt try to take up space in my head, I remember that I am not alone, always loved, and that yes, God is real.

No matter if you have a good memory or a poor memory, there are some things we need to remember. In tough times we have to remember that weeping endures for a night but joy comes in the morning. In times of confusion, we have to remember that God has a plan for our futures, to prosper us and give us hope. In times of fear, we have to remember that God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and love and a strong mind. I don’t remember everything, but everything I remember brings me back to a place of wholeness, peace, faith and love.

So today I have something new for you to remember: God loves you and so do I.

... well said



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EVENTS

Engaging Local Schools Conference

March 22, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wesley Theological Seminary

For both laity and clergy, conference is designed to guide congregations in considering how to support and engage local schools. To learn more, to register and to purchase resources, go to [www.churchleadership.com/servingyourneighbor/Engaging local Schools.asp](http://www.churchleadership.com/servingyourneighbor/Engaging%20local%20Schools.asp).

Youth Lay Servant Training

March 22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

BWC Mission Center

Registration fee is \$20; includes lunch and snacks. For more information and registration, contact Dee McCrae at darmccrae@aol.com or 443-254-2083.

Early Response Team (ERT) training

March 22, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hiss UMC, Parkville

ERT is for volunteers who want to assist survivors in a disaster area. The training cost is \$25; lunch is included. For more information, contact the Rev. James Dement at pastorjaychris@yahoo.com.

COSROW Spring event

March 29, 2 to 5:30 p.m.

BWC Conference Center

The theme is “The Sandwich Generation.” The keynote speaker is the Rev. Wayne A. DeHart and worship will be led by the Rev. Terri Rae Chatten. Register online at www.bwcumc.org.

Pre-Conference Briefings

Clergy - May 15, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

at Towson UMC in Towson;

Laity - May 17, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

John Wesley UMC in Hagerstown.

Pre-Conference Sessions will include conversations about the resolutions, budget and other important issues coming before the Annual Conference Session in May. The mandatory Clergy Executive Session will be held during the afternoon of May 15.

230th Session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference

May 29-31

Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Baltimore

The theme of this year’s conference is “Building Bridges: Be Love.” Learn more and register at www.bwcumc.org/events/annual_conference_2014/

Baltimore County Christian Work Camp (BCCW),

July 20-25

Hunt’s Memorial UMC, Towson

BCCW’s 31st annual work camp counts on volunteers to help repair and refurbish 30 homes in Baltimore County during the five-day blitz. Fee is \$25/week or \$6/day. Church groups are asked to donate at least \$100 for building materials. See www.bcchristianworkcamp.org for details.

These and more conferencewide events may be seen in greater detail at www.bwcumc.org/news/econnection.

BISHOP’S DAYS ON THE DISTRICTS

District	Day	Church	City
BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN	MARCH 25	PATAPSCO UMC	DUNDALK
BALTIMORE SUBURBAN	APRIL 1	MT. ZION UMC	BEL AIR
FREDERICK	APRIL 2	MIDDLETOWN UMC	MIDDLETOWN
WASHINGTON EAST	APRIL 8	JOURNEY OF FAITH	WALDORF
CENTRAL MARYLAND	APRIL 9	CALVARY UMC	MT. AIRY

*CLERGY MEETINGS WILL BE FROM 9:30 AM TO 12 NOON

*LAITY MEETINGS WILL BE FROM 6:30 TO 8:30 PM

TAKE THE BUS TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE!

Avoid the headache and expense of parking at the hotel! Another option – express hotel check-in and register on the bus Advantage, you!

Sign-up online: bwcumc.org



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Districts: ‘We are the ones,’ bishop says

From page 1

engaged. Where people are hurting in the world, we ought to be the ones making a difference,” the bishop said.

United Methodists also live by Wesley’s three rules to do good, do no harm and to stay in love with God. And, they live in an ever-changing community, with a living polity that centers around being conciliar, covenantal and connectional.



Melissa Luther

As United Methodists, our ministries are focused in four areas: global health, ministry with the poor, leadership development and creating new spaces for new people.

At the last annual conference in May 2013, Bishop Matthews called upon the Baltimore-Washington Conference to

undertake three initiatives: to be prayer stations, to invite each member to bring someone to Christ and to form school partnerships in their community.

He encouraged those present to continue these initiatives, which are transforming churches, and he called on every United Methodist “to pray for and do a new thing.”

“We are the ones,” Bishop Matthews said. “If we miss this opportunity, if we miss the very present moment God has given us, it will be a sad day for the church of

Jesus Christ.”

At the first two district sessions, those present had a number of questions for the bishop, ranging from his thoughts on same-gender marriage and recent church trials, to the importance of Sabbath leave and how the church is addressing issues of poverty and violence within our Conference.

In speaking on same-gender marriages, Matthew affirmed his role as a bishop in upholding the Discipline. However, he also expressed his personal feelings that church trials seldom solve what they seek to address. “Nobody wins in trials,” he said. “I pray we find a better way.”

The bishop also stressed the importance of clergy practicing self-care and the need for taking Sabbath leave. “These are challenging times,” he said. “I encourage you to rest, study, be anchored in prayer and to find a support group to be in.”

The bishop became most animated when talking about the need for United Methodists to address issues of poverty and violence in their communities.

“You know, I often wonder what is being preached from our pulpits on Sunday,” he said. “I often wonder, are we saying anything about the children being killed? What are we doing on Sundays? Until we use these pulpits to really spread the Word of God, we will not be relevant. ... It doesn’t help to have people coming Sunday morning if we feed them a watered-down Gospel. God is calling us at this time. Our job is to speak the Gospel the best that we know how. It’s time for us to do what God has laid on our hearts and minds.”

These conversations with Bishop Matthews will continue. Information about the times and dates of the remaining district meetings is on page 2.

We Are the Ones We’ve Been Waiting For

— The Elders of the Arizona Hopi Nation

You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour.

Now you must go back and tell the people that this is The Hour.

And there are things to be considered:

- Where are you living?
- What are you doing?
- What are your relationships?
- Are you in right relation?
- Where is your water?
- Know your garden.
- It is time to speak your Truth.
- Create your community. Be good to each other And do not look outside yourself for the leader. This could be a good time.

There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart, and they will suffer greatly.

Know the river has its destination. The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, keep our eyes open, and our heads above the water. See who is in there with you and celebrate.

At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally. Least of all, ourselves. For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt.

The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves! Banish the word struggle from your attitude and your vocabulary.

All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.

Christopher: Churches need to offer ‘narrative of hope’

From page 1

at the taking of the offering as a high moment in the worship experience. Poor churches see it as a time out, Christopher said.

His list of differences were summarized with: rich churches look for commitments, poor churches look for contributions. In rich churches, they know that giving changes people; it transforms lives. In poor churches, they give primarily to balance the budget.

In giving, Christopher stressed, there are three chief reasons why people give where they do. First, they believe in the mission, they give where they see success occurring in a mission they value. They want their money to make a difference.

Second, they have regard for the leadership. They know that building and programs don’t change lives, people do. So they give money to people they have developed a relationship with and who they trust.

And third, they give to those they believe are fiscally responsible. People don’t give to sinking ships, Christopher said. They don’t throw their money down the rat-hole of an organization in decline, and that includes churches. No matter how righteous the cause, no one wants to prop up a dying church by giving it all their money. Churches need to share a narrative of hope and of lives transformed by Christ, he said.

This stewardship event with Christopher was sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist

Foundation, an independent IRS 501(c) non-profit that serves as a financial resource for churches in the Baltimore-Washington, Peninsula-Delaware and Eastern Pennsylvania annual conferences.

In 2013, the foundation, which manages more than \$75 million in assets, paid more than \$5.5 million directly to its clients’ ministries and provided matching grants of \$30,000 in ministry support.

In the Baltimore-Washington Conference, Frank Robert does training, consulting and investing work to help congregations become financially healthy so that they can multiply God’s work in the world. For more information, visit www.midatlanticfoundation.org or contact Robert at 410-309-3475.

Connectional Table prepares resolutions for Annual Conference

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff

NEARLY 100 LAY and clergy leaders from throughout the Baltimore-Washington Conference came together as the Connectional Table on Saturday, Feb. 22, to help guide the ministry and mission of the conference.

The main task for the group at this meeting was to go over each of the 15 proposed resolutions coming to the Annual Conference Session in May. Connectional Table members broke into seven small groups to consider two or three of the resolutions. After the small groups met, each resolution was presented to the full group for a vote of concurrence or non-concurrence.

Two resolutions received votes of non-concurrence. One resolution seeks to have The Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference “implore the Council of Bishops to cease trials of United Methodist Church clergy for same-sex marriage...”

This resolution was submitted by Suzanne Forsyth, Chair of Reconciling Ministries Committee, and approved by the Church Council of Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington, D.C. (which includes Wesley UMC, Crossroads, and Metropolitan Memorial). The vote of non-concurrence was 42-29.

The other resolution receiving non-concurrence – 56-17 – is one that would require the BWC to “immediately stop and instruct asset managers to stop any new investment in fossil fuel companies.”

This resolution was brought by Mike Koob of Middletown UMC and endorsed by the Conference Board of Church and Society and Middletown UMC Justice for All Journey Group.

All 15 resolutions, whether they receive concurrence

or non-concurrence from the Connectional Table, will be voted upon at the Annual Conference Session in May. The resolutions are presented in front of the Connectional Table, which is made up of members from the Conference’s boards and committees. Its concurrence or non-concurrence is intended to help annual conference members in their discernment process as they consider how to vote.

In the area of human sexuality, a resolution titled “Inclusive Conference” received a vote of concurrence from the Connectional Table by a vote of 43-27.

Presenter Mittie Quinn, of Dumbarton UMC in Washington, D.C., said that passing this resolution would enable the BWC to “continue in our role as a leader in the areas of inclusion.”

Part of the language in the resolution states that the BWC “declares its opposition to all provisions in the Book of Discipline that discriminate against or restrict the participation of LGBT people in The United Methodist Church, and commit itself to work for the full civil and ecclesiastical rights and privileges of all persons, including LGBT persons.”

A second paragraph of the resolution states that following the Book of Discipline does “harm and injustice” to “our LGBT brothers and sisters, and places us in an impossible situation of following the Gospels and the Wesley Quadrilateral of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience OR the Book of Discipline.”

One member of the Connectional Table asked if this resolution was potentially out of order, since it could be seen as a statement that the Conference was going to disobey the Discipline.

“What we’re saying,” said Quinn, “is that we don’t support the language of the Book of Discipline. This

simply says we disagree with it, not that we’re going to disobey it.”

Another resolution calls for the removal from the Book of Discipline of all language that “discriminate(s) against or restrict(s) the participation of laity or clergy based on their sexuality identity.”

Submitted by Douglas M. Schmidt, a lay member of Grace UMC in Baltimore, and supported by the Reconciling Committee of Grace UMC, the resolution received a vote of concurrence by 49-32.

The resolution states that “the BWC declares its opposition to all provisions in the Book of Discipline and Social Principles that discriminate against or restrict the participation of laity or clergy based on their sexual identity. Be it further resolved that the BWC empowers our bishop and conference representatives ..., to work ... toward the eventual removal of all discriminatory references and policies in the Book of Discipline ...”

The narrowest vote for concurrence — 37-34 — was on a resolution seeking to have the Conference divest its stock holdings in Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett Packard, “until these companies end their involvement in the Israeli occupation.”

The full listing of the 2014 Annual Conference Session resolutions is posted on the conference website and published in the Preconference Booklet, which will be sent to all annual conference members.

The clergy Pre-Conference Session will be held May 15, at Towson UMC in Towson. The laity Pre-Conference Session will be held May 17, at Hagerstown UMC in Hagerstown.

Online registration for both Pre-Conference Sessions, and the 2014 Annual Conference Session, is available at www.bwcumc.org/events/annual_conference_2014.

Campus Ministry at Univ. of Maryland is about relationships

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff

THE REV. BRETT Pinder has the coolest office in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Sure, Bishop Marcus Matthews has the big corner suite at the Conference Mission Center, and there are offices throughout the Conference with views of lakes, rivers, valleys and parking lots.

But Pinder has a spiral staircase in his office. And a loft.

Pinder, since July 1 of last year, has been the United Methodist chaplain on campus at the University of Maryland in College Park.

His office sits in Memorial Chapel, one of about a dozen or so rooms for ecumenical campus ministry that happens here.

Pinder, a Provisional Elder, is a 2011 graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., and this is his first time serving as a campus minister.

He is “on loan” from the Peninsula-Delaware Conference, he said, where he served in parish ministry at two churches, both half-time: Perryville UMC in Perryville, and as associate pastor in Elkton.

When his wife became a graduate student at UMBC, Pinder began to look for an appointment in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. At one point, he spotted the opening for campus ministry at the university, and applied.

In the few months since landing on campus, Pinder said that he has learned several differences between parish work and campus ministry, but also several similarities.

One of the key similarities is the importance of relationships.

“Just getting together with students for coffee or lunch has been very important,” he said. “The students’ relationships among themselves and with the Wesley Foundation are very important, too. I think students are looking for a place to belong. I think creating a place that fosters building relationships is a real need.”

Pinder said that he’s been surprised by how busy the students are.

“What has been surprising is the weight of students’ schedules,” he said. “I think this school is like many others, where it draws students who try to find a competitive edge. It’s surprising how hard it can be for students to carve out time for different things.”

One of the big differences?

“The students I work with don’t fund the ministry, we

do,” Pinder said. “They can support some of them: we go hiking, they can pay the fees to get in the park; we



The Rev. Brett Pinder serves as United Methodist chaplain at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Erik Alsgaard

We encourage any local church that is near a college or university to be reaching out to the students in their communities. The college years can be a time of life when people especially need God and, as the church, we want to be there for them.”

At Maryland, Pinder offers a main worship service on Wednesday nights, and a fellowship time Thursday evening. The worship experience seems to make him smile.

When he preaches, it’s not a typical sermon. Rather, Pinder writes discussion questions and helps facilitate a conversation among the students. He has tried to keep the worship services to under an hour, but because of these conversations, most worship services run 90 minutes or more.

“They wrestle with many of the same issues we wrestle with,” he said. “I’m not sure students are searching for answers so much as taking up the questions. Not that they’re not trying to find answers.”

Pinder said that the students designed the worship service several years ago.

“They get most engaged around ... the conversation, especially if it is something theological or scriptural,” he said. “They’ve really engaged in searching for meaning in the text.”

SECOND OF A FOUR-PART SERIES ON CAMPUS MINISTRY IN THE BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

Pinder said that churches located close to campus ministries could help support them by building relationships with the ministry and finding out what the students particular needs are, whether that be trying to offer intergenerational opportunities of service or fellowship.

“The campus ministries are the place that cares for the young adults when they’re away from their home churches,” he said, “providing safe places for students to explore what faith is about. It’s a real important time for them.”

For any congregation, keeping in prayer the young adults who surround the campus ministries is great support. Financial support is also always welcome.

What brings Pinder the most joy? He pauses.

“I really have a heart for designing worship services,” he said, “and the fact that the students really get engaged in the worship service brings me the most joy in my ministry.”

Clean Closets for Campers

By ANDY THORNTON
Director of Retreat and Camping Ministry

WITH AN INNOVATIVE, new fundraiser, the simple act of cleaning out your closet can send a child to summer camp.

Andy Thornton, the director of the Baltimore Washington Conference’s Retreat and Camping Ministry, encourages every church to think about how they can use the Clean Closets for Campers project and, in simple and creative ways, contribute to the campership program. Camperships send children in need to summer camp at West River, near Annapolis, and Camp Manidokan near Harper’s Ferry.

The idea is simple. Local churches collect used clothing, bedding, shoes, purses and hats. Once there are about 75 to 100 bags of goods, Mission Partners pick them up and takes them to a facility that sorts the items. They are resold to thrift stores, made into reusable rags or sent abroad to companies that create jobs in the resale of affordable clothing. Fifty percent of the selling price is then returned directly to the church to be used for camperships.

Fallston UMC has already collected more than 250 bags of used clothing and goods to raise money for camperships.

“Our congregation got very excited about this project,” said the Rev. Karin Walker. “We even put up a sign on the street and community folk were dropping off bags of clothing to help. The Confirmation Class took the lead in gathering the clothes and storing them in the church.”

This is a relatively new program. Started in 2012 in the Western Pennsylvania Conference by a family dedicated to the camping program, they wanted to find a way to make summer camp more affordable. In 2013, more than \$30,000 was raised for camperships in the Western Pennsylvania Conference through the Clean Closets program.

To sign up, click on the link on the Retreat and Camping Ministries web site, www.bwccampsandretreats.org, and complete the simple form.

The RCM office will get you in contact with Mission Partners and then start collecting clothes.

For more detailed information, see the web site or contact the RCM office at camp.registrar@verizon.net, or call 800-922-6795.

Bridging the past and future



Courtesy of National Park Service

The theme of the 230th session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference is “Building Bridges: Be Love.” The logo features a bridge from every region in the Conference. From the Western Region, comprised of the Cumberland-Hagerstown and Frederick Districts, is the Burnside Bridge at Antietam Battlefield, near Sharpsburg (above).

Built in 1836, the 125-foot, three arch stone and masonry bridge played a key role in the Civil War Battle of Antietam. On Sept. 17, 1862, one of bloodiest days in American history, the Union Ninth Corps, under the command of Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, faced the daunting task of attacking Confederate infantry and artillery located on the far side of the bridge. The task of crossing the bridge in the face of a stubborn Confederate defense took five hours, during which more than 500 Union troops were killed or wounded.

The Cumberland-Hagerstown District, led by Superintendent Conrad Link, has 85 churches, including 20 multi-point charges; 59 clergy; 18,681 members and an average worship attendance each Sunday of 6,131.

The Frederick District, led by Superintendent Edgardo Rivera has 93 churches, 94 clergy, 22,041 members and an average of 8,100 in worship.

Church leaders testify to lawmakers in Annapolis

By ERIK ALSGAARD & MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

AS THE 2014 Maryland General Assembly session begins its final few weeks, Bishop Marcus Matthews and other Baltimore-Washington Conference leaders have been making their voices heard and presence felt in Annapolis.

The bishop, along with Conference Chancellor Tom Starnes, and several other conference leaders testified before committees of the state Senate and House of Delegates in an effort to preserve state support of the trust clause of The United Methodist Church.

The trust clause, outlined in paragraphs 2501 and 2503 of the 2012 Book of Discipline, states that while local churches own and upkeep properties, they do so holding them “in trust” for the benefit of the entire denomination.

During this legislative session in Annapolis, Senator C. Anthony Muse and Representative Aisha Braveboy introduced SB 347 and HB 840 in an attempt to remove language supporting the trust clause that appears in Maryland Law. Muse is a former clergy member of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Matthews explained to the legislators that United Methodists have a polity and a structure that is “connectional.” It is not hierarchical, with centralized power, like the Roman Catholic Church, he said, nor is it congregational, like Baptists, where congregations are almost entirely autonomous.

“The trust clause ensures that all the goods of the body would be held in trust for the benefit of all the members, and all the branches would be kept connected with the true vine that they might bear great fruit,” Matthews said. “The trust clause, then, is all about connectivity, not power or authority. ... It is about the many members forming one body.”

While church law is clear on the issue of property returning to the Conference if a congregation chooses to leave the denomination, having Maryland law uphold the trust clause provides clarity about ownership and helps avoid wasteful litigation, Matthews said.

“Sections 5-326 and 5-327 of Maryland law,” said the Rev. Antoine Love, chair of the conference trustees, “give clear public notice of the Conference’s interest in local church property, improve certainty of property ownership, clarify the history of denominational

mergers that have resulted in The United Methodist Church we know today, and help avoid or speed up wasteful litigation.”

Love and the bishop also disputed allegations from some of the witnesses at the Senate committee hearing that the conference has aggressively pursued a strategy of eliminating small churches. “This is simply untrue,” said Matthews, who noted that members of White Rock UMC would be welcomed “back into the fold” whenever they wished.

White Rock left the denomination two years ago, and its pastor, the Rev. Doug Sands, has spoken out against the trust clause in two previous sessions of the Maryland General Assembly.



Bishop Marcus Matthews, front, left, waits to testify with other BWC leaders at a recent hearing in Annapolis.

He and Muse have been asking for the repeal of these laws, citing a need for the separation of church and state, and the unnecessary nature of singling out The United Methodist Church for special protection under state law. “Return a measure of religious freedom to the Free State,” Sands urged the legislators.

Sections 5-326 and 5-327 have been unchanged since 1953, when they became a part of Maryland law. Changing them would be wrong, said Starnes. They are “legitimate and perfectly constitutional mechanisms

of affirming and enforcing the property interests of religious associations, pursuant to the rules that the religious association and its members have adopted to govern themselves,” he said.

In addition to the trust clause, United Methodists lent their voices to thousands of Maryland workers who do not have access to paid sick leave. More than 700,000 people who live in Maryland do not have access to this benefit, and across the United States, about 40 percent of all private-sector workers lack it; the level reaches 80 percent of low-wage or minimum wage workers who do not earn paid sick days.

Last year, the Baltimore-Washington Conference passed a resolution in support of legislation that would require employers to allow workers to earn a limited number of annual paid sick days. The Maryland State Assembly is considering a bill — HB 968 — that would create just such a benefit.

At its annual Legislative Day gathering Feb. 19, sponsored by the Conference United Methodist Women and Conference Board of Church and Society, more than 60 United Methodists came to Asbury UMC in Annapolis to learn more about HB 968 and to be trained before they visited state lawmakers in the Capitol.

Melissa Broome, Senior Policy Advocate with the Job Opportunities Task Force, told the group that the United States is the only industrialized country in the world that does not mandate paid sick leave for employees.

Normally at Legislative Day, advocates would work on two or three bills before lawmakers, said Sherie Koob, chair of the BWC Board of Church and Society and a Guide in the Western Region. This year, however, the group was working on just this one bill.

Bishop Matthews brought devotions for the group, encouraging them to continue to be a sign of the church.

“Go forth,” he said, “be that sign of the church; be a voice for those who are often not heard in Annapolis. It is up to people like you and me to make the slope a little bit easier to climb.”

“Today, you will be witnessing on behalf of the church,” the bishop said. “Let this day be a time to remember that we are heirs to the throne, not because of what we’ve done, but because of what Christ has done for us.”

D.C.’s Douglas Memorial UMC a testament to shared ministries

By MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

SMALL CHURCHES DON’T have to do small ministries. At Douglas UMC, just six years ago, the building was in grave disrepair and the 19 members could barely keep the doors open. Today, after creating a number of partnerships, including an innovative, new Ecumenical Cooperative Parish, the church is still small, with 50 in worship, but it’s thriving in mission and ministry.

On Sundays, the church is brimming with activity and people from a variety of faith traditions, it hosts a community preschool on weekdays, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has made it a Women’s Veterans



The Rev. Helen Fleming

Resource Center, youth mission groups visiting and working in Washington set up their headquarters in the church’s new 50-bed bunk room, and local businesses are investing in making the church a vibrant presence in the community.

At the center of it all is the Rev. Helen Fleming, who believes in the spirit of entrepreneurship and claiming

opportunities in the name of Jesus.

When Fleming arrived at Douglas, she quickly realized that the predominantly black congregation now sat in the middle of the increasingly multi-ethnic Atlas neighborhood. With no parking, she would have to draw new members from the community. In addition, statistics showed that in recent years, Ward 6 in D.C. had seen growth of more than 13 percent. “The opportunities were there,” Fleming said.

At this same time, the Rev. Kevin Lum, a pastor of an independent church, was looking for a city in which to start a church. He thought he’d prefer a warmer climate, but when he and his wife came to D.C. they knew they were where God was calling them to be. He wrote letters to area churches introducing himself and telling them about his vision.

Fleming was the first to respond and a partnership emerged.

The Table Church, Lum’s new congregation, describes itself as fun, thought-provoking, challenging and socially engaged. Worship is a creative mix of old and new, pulling from elements of historic faith practices, while still remaining casual and accessible. The congregation also operates a Fresh Stop ministry, a farm share program which provides fresh, locally grown food on a sliding scale to the congregation and community.

Fleming met with Lum and instead of signing formal contracts, the pair entered into a Covenant of Shared Ministry. The Table Church pays 30 percent of its offering into the parish ministry. Leaders from each of the congregations oversee the building and its outreach.

Each church also works hard at transforming the building, which just a few years ago was in grave disrepair.

When Fleming was sent to Douglas, the church had recently undergone a major split. “The building looked like it had been abandoned,” she said. “But I saw hope in the eyes of the 19 members who remained.”

The congregation voted to sell the church parsonage to fix the leaky roof and make other renovations. In a spirit of shared ministry, they gave \$20,000 of that money to neighboring churches.

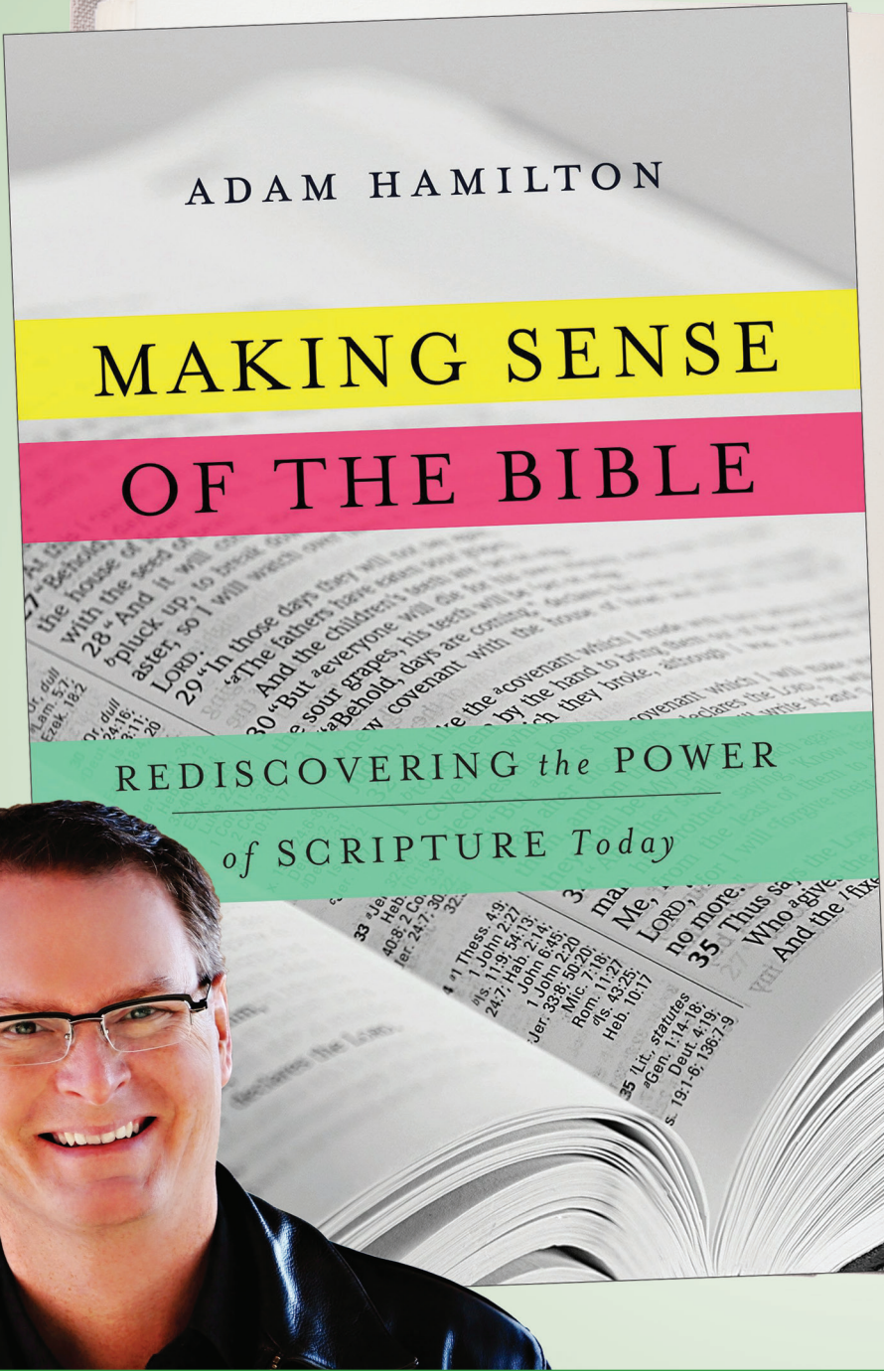
In a continuing search for partnerships, Fleming was able to secure a \$14,000 grant from Home Depot and 60 to 70 people who converged at the church to put down laminated flooring, renovate the bathrooms and improve the church yard.

In addition, Fleming has had Volunteers in Mission teams working at the church and she signed up with the court and offenders services to enable people to perform their court-ordered community service at the church. One person from that program was a contractor with an immense knowledge base who had 1,000 hours to work off. “He is an absolute God-send,” Fleming said. “He can fix anything.”

While the two congregations are meeting in the same building and doing outreach together, there has been a small learning curve and Fleming and Lum have led some informal racial reconciliation sessions. “Some of our white sisters are very open and straight forward. They know how to take charge,” Fleming said. “I helped them to see that they have to be more personable and friendly, and I helped our black members to stop being so sensitive. We are learning that we are all the body of Christ, coming together to build the Kingdom of God.”

One of their landmark ministries is their outreach to women veterans and the training and resources they provide to these women. The program has been so successful that it has received recognition from the White House.

There’s always something more that we can be doing here, Fleming said. In Judges 6-8 is the story of Gideon, a man who accomplished things against such incredible odds, that people have to understand that God is in charge, that God is acting. “We’re a Gideon church” said Fleming. “All of this is God at work through us.”



Making Sense of the Bible: An Evening with Adam Hamilton

Foundry UMC, Washington, D.C.
April 23, 7 p.m.

Join pastor and best-selling author, Adam Hamilton, for an evening of teaching and conversation on his latest book, "Making Sense of the Bible."

In it, Hamilton digs deep to illuminate the meaning within the Bible, addresses hot-button issues, and answers pertinent questions on the subjects of violence; the Bible, homosexuality and gay marriage; women and leadership in the church; the discrepancies between creation stories and science; and why the Bible's Book of Revelation is not a guide to the end times.

This is a free event, but tickets are required at www.foundryumc.org.

You can also purchase discounted books and package deals when you register. Hamilton will be signing copies of his book after the event.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Missionary shares stories of Liberia

FULTON — Victor Doolakeh Taryor, a Baltimore-Washington Conference supported missionary, shared stories of his ministry at the Ganta United Methodist



Hospital in Liberia during a Feb. 18 visit to the BWC Mission Center. One out of three people who visit the hospital are there because of malaria, said Taryor, who is a registered nurse and the hospital's chief administrator. "We don't turn anybody away," he said. "Our hospital is a mission hospital. Our mission is to care for people in extreme poverty. If we don't have it (a piece of equipment, a medicine, or a treatment), it's because we don't have the money. But through the grace of God, we are able to improvise."

Young clergy attend GBCS forum

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Three young pastors from the Baltimore-Washington Conference were among 53 people from 28 conferences who attended the 12th annual Young Clergy Leadership Forum at the United Methodist Building in Washington, DC, in February. They were Joey Heath with the Silver Spring Cooperative Parish; Kara Scroggins who serves at Bethesda UMC in Bethesda; and Shannon Sullivan who serves at Presbury UMC in Edgewood. Sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society, the forum provided information about advocacy on key legislative issues on Capitol Hill. They met with the Rev. Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain,

and Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., who is a clergyman in the Missouri Conference.

"What is truth?" explored at forum

FULTON — About 80 people gathered in the Conference Center Feb. 9 on "Evolution Weekend" to explore the intersection of religion and science, one of dozens of observances across the country. A lively presentation and discussion furthered audience perception of "What is truth?" Taking as its theme the title of a James Moore book, "Daddy, is that story true or were you just preaching?", four scientists noted that "religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth." Sr. Ilia Delio, a Franciscan Sister of Washington and Senior Fellow at Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, brought the disciplines of faith and science together. "Truth is meaningful as a concrete expression of living reality that deepens life," she said. WesleyNexus, which sponsored the event, is an online resource to explore questions of religion and science. "What we attempt to do," said the Rev. Maynard Moore, a co-founder, "is provide resources and information to clergy and laypersons ... so they can actually talk about the "big questions" that all thinking Christians have." To learn more go to www.wesleynexus.org.

Church goes to the dogs

SMITHSBURG — When he preached on Jan. 26, the Rev. Al Deal at Mt. Zion UMC had a congregation not just of children and grown-ups, but also dogs. It was the launch of a pet-friendly service once a month. As his family struggles with the pain of an aging pet with physical issues, Deal said they realized that, "like people, our pets only live for so long." He said that pets are part of the family, "so why not invite them to church?" The church regularly worships at 8:30 a.m. followed by Sunday School. He held the canine service at 11 a.m. and will continue to offer it the last Sunday of the month. "It's very important for the church to recognize the deep connection between people and their pets if they want to minister to the whole person," Deal said. To learn more, go to the story posted on the web site at www.bwcumc.org/news/mt_zion.

Church member runs for state office

CHEVERLY — In 2006 Jolene Ivey ran for the Maryland House of Delegates from Prince Georges County. And won. The active member of Cheverley UMC, a choir member, and for 16 years a stay-at-home mom to her five sons, is now running for lieutenant governor on a ticket with Democratic gubernatorial candidate Doug Gansler.

Oakdale Emory in mission in Chile



OLNEY — A Volunteers in Mission team from Oakdale Emory UMC has just returned from helping to rebuild La Viña del Señor Methodist church in a high-risk area in Santiago, Chile. The previous church building had burned down in Dec. 2011. This project was unique because it included the participation of six members from Second Methodist Church in Lota, Chile, where Oakdale VIM teams helped to build a two-story addition in 2012 and 2013. A week before the Santiago mission trip, the Lota church also experienced a fire, which destroyed the upper level of the new addition and the sanctuary roof, as well as 22 homes in the neighborhood. Their time there was "such a blessing," said Marti English, staff member at the church. The team learned from and marveled at the people's spiritual and practical resiliency and response to the disaster.

Food for (Lenten) thought: The sin of gluttony

By ALISON BURDETT
UMConnection Staff

WE’VE ALL HEARD that expression, “a glutton for punishment,” but does it have anything to do with gluttony? What exactly is gluttony anyway? I know it’s a sin. I know it’s considered one of the seven deadly sins. But I don’t remember being taught much about it throughout my church up-bringing.

I am an overweight woman. I always have been. Even when I was a teenager playing field hockey six days a week, I always felt overweight compared to the other girls my age. I’ve always wanted to be thin and fantasized about what that kind of look would do for me, but I never really committed to losing weight. Ever. Yes, I tried Weight-Watchers, NutriSystem, Atkins, etc., but I never stuck with it. I love food too much.

Every year for Lent, I try to give up French fries. I usually make it a few weeks before I convince myself that giving up something that is bad for me isn’t really a sacrifice for God, it’s selfish for me, because I’ll reap the benefits, so I give in, and eat some French fries, “punishing” my body for my selfishness.

Like most women in America, I made a New Year’s Resolution to get healthier. Everyone has various ways: diet, exercise, drink more water, get more sleep, etc. I decided to give up ALL fast food. I figured I’d be more likely to stick with it, because I know going in, it IS selfish, rather than during Lent when it’s supposed to be selfless. How wrong is that logic? Anyway, it occurred to me, early in the New Year, that overeating is a sin. So why do I have such a hard time believing that eating healthier is for God? 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17 tells us, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred...”

So why is it so easy to dismiss making the right food choices? With all these questions, I decided to dive deeper into what exactly gluttony covers.

According to Wikipedia, “Gluttony means over-indulgence and over-consumption of food, drink or wealth items to the point of extravagance or waste. In some Christian denominations, it is considered one of the seven deadly sins — a misplaced desire of food or its withholding from the needy.”

Great. This creates more questions than answers. So as long as I give to the needy, am I okay to have a desire for food? Or am I just reading too much into it so I feel less guilty about my late-night French-fry indulgence?

Perhaps we have become so bountiful that

gluttony is no longer considered a sin, or at least not as bad of a sin as it was in biblical times.

Can one sin outweigh another? For example, if you went against one of the 10 commandments, is that a worse sin than over-eating? Or is a sin, a sin, creating an equal threat of eternal damnation?

Wow, eternal damnation. That will certainly help put on the breaks before I hit up the next drive-thru window. It’s just hard for me to wrap my head around.

After doing more research, I loop back to what I originally knew: gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins. So what does Wikipedia have to say about those seven?

“In Christianity, ... gluttony can be interpreted as selfishness; essentially placing concern with one’s own

interests above the well-being or interests of others.”

If it were as simple as that, I get it. *Is it as simple as that?* Perhaps I should be referencing what the Bible says about gluttony rather than what Wikipedia says about gluttony.

It scares me to acknowledge what Proverbs 23:2 says: “Put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony.” Proverbs 23:21 goes on to say, “gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.” And Proverbs 28:7, “... a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.”

Those are some pretty rough statements to “swallow.” But what is it actually saying? WHY is gluttony so shameful? I think it’s a test of self-control. For me, it’s one of the hardest tests of self-control. And perhaps all sins are a test of self-control (lust, greed, etc.).

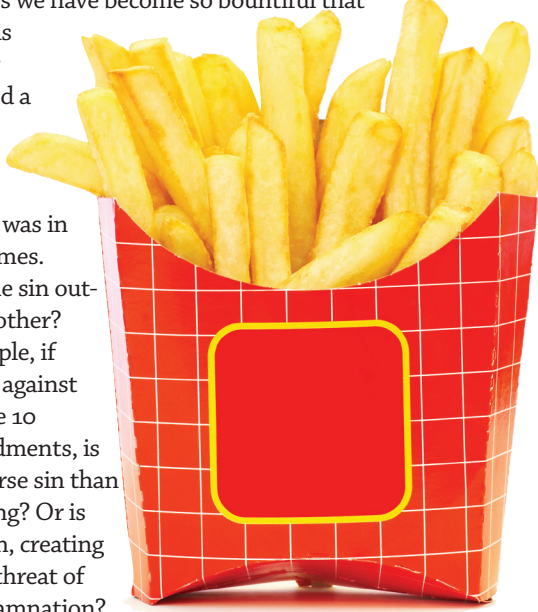
Self-control can be a very calming and peaceful experience. Some might even say it can feel spiritual, especially if you are practicing it for a godly life. 2 Peter 1:5-7 talks about how to “receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior.” It says, “...make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.”

Galatians tells us that to be able to say no to things in excess, to express self-control, can be a wonderful way to experience the “fruit of the Spirit.”

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:16, 22

Practicing this form of self-control is going to continue to be a struggle for me, but it is also a perfect opportunity for sacrifice. So this year for Lent, I’ll not only give up French fries, I’ll also try to add more “fruit.”

— Alison Burdett is the graphic designer in the Ministry of Communications. This is her first article in print.



Disciple Multiplication Is the Main Thing

By CHRISTIE LATONA
Missional Strategist, Washington Region

TO LIVE OUT our mission in relevant and vibrant ways, two things are required of us: to multiply disciples and to innovate. We can’t manage, restructure or cut our way out of our decline. This is a spiritual problem. Too many leaders no longer believe in the power of prayer or that God will show up when the body of believers assembles.



Instilling a culture of multiplication begins in faith communities. This requires shifting to multiplying disciples rather than trying to grow churches or ministries. A culture of multiplication is less about managing an institution and more about fanning a kingdom movement. Faith communities with multiplication DNA don’t focus on maintaining

the status quo. They are seeking to live out the great commandment and the great commission, bringing change from the inside-out.

If we look at the mountains of research conducted in the last decade across Christian denominations and cultures, we see vast amounts of information about what propels a Christian church to thrive in a region. There are many accounts of “how we did it” in places that have multiplied disciples. Recently, Paul Nixon (with Path 1) and I distilled that research and identified key factors that influence the rate of multiplying disciples.

Prayer and Discernment

Churches that multiply their kingdom impact pray about everything. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a “professional.”

Abundant Evangelism

People who encounter Jesus cannot help talking about it. This personal faith sharing tends to result in new people brought to the movement, regardless of whether the movement is theologically right, left or center. People

can’t help but talk about what God is doing in their lives or their church.

The church seeks to get the word out about how its ministries are changing lives, but most of these stories are geared more toward our own people rather than those who need to hear the Good News. Evangelism is rooted in relationship.

High View of Scripture

This view has nothing to do with fundamentalism. Rather, people with a high view of Scripture have a sense of expectancy that when the Word is read, God is in the room and is going to say something fresh and new to the people gathered and reading. Therefore the Bible is used easily and freely in every type of gathering.

Theological Simplicity

Not to be confused with theological stupidity. We are not “dumbing down” the Gospel. In the churches that multiply, we find widespread consensus and clarity on the relationship between the Gospel of Jesus and God’s expectations for human beings. The multiplying community manages to get its collective brain around some key principles that tie it all together. They know what a disciple of Jesus Christ is and how that is relevant to the lives of people who don’t yet have a relationship with Jesus Christ. They are able to explain, without jargon, what they believe and why that makes a difference in what they practice.

Economical Approach

In the affluent Western world, we have mastered the art of expensive church. However, there is a continuum in the economy of excellence, and we are wise to stay in the middle of the continuum more often than not.

In the new places where multiplication happens, we see a plain, functional meeting space, often leased or bartered but rarely expensive. And volunteers do more of the work—even some of the pastoral work. Smart economics means giving much of church leadership back to ordinary people. Jesus was essentially homeless for the three years of his active ministry. He didn’t invest significant financial resources to start this movement called Christianity.

High Level of Trust

In churches that multiply, we see trust at every level – among leaders, between leaders and followers, between clergy and laity, and, in all cases, foremost between people and God. Trust is earned when roles are clarified; decision making is transparent; the people of God speak truth in love, without inserting more drama; and the people consistently seek God to bring unity and order as needed.

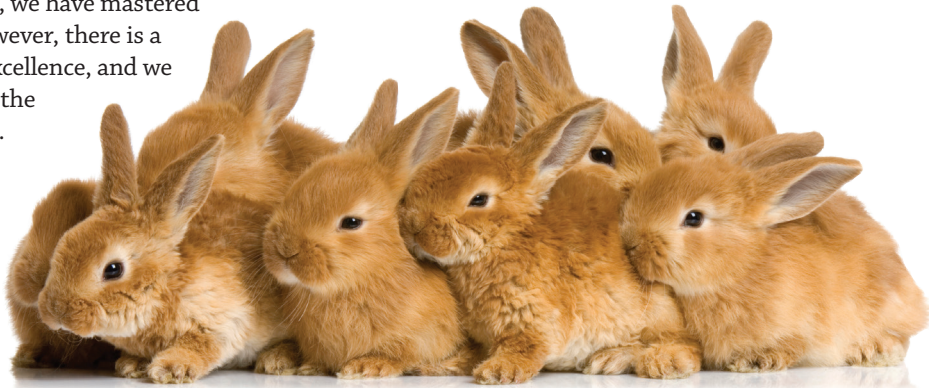
Focus on Finding and Apprenticing Discipling Leaders

Each one teaches one. Great churches are all about developing ordinary people to live out God’s dreams in new ways.

Simple Systems with Noncompeting Priorities

Places that multiply ministry keep the main thing as the main thing. Multiplying disciples trumps all other concerns. A multiplying church may explicitly limit the types of activity that it will directly sponsor. The structure also needs to help keep the focus on this main thing. As a church we need to actively commit to a cultural change with everything focused on multiplying disciples — no rearranging of the deck chairs will help us. We must discern the will of God and claim bold visions for the future.

Some bold visions rally people toward new behaviors that begin the work of culture change and fruitfulness. When people of God come together to discern the will of God, amazing things happen. We can do this, by the grace of God.



This article is excerpted from the Feb./March/April 2014 issue of Circuit Rider magazine, by permission. For a copy of the entire article, visit www.ministrymatters.com/all/article/entry/4683/disciple-multiplication-is-the-main-thing

IMAGINE NO MALARIA

Imagine Saving Millions Of Lives



You're Invited!

Every church in the Baltimore-Washington Conference is invited to host a Pancake Breakfast between April 25 (World Malaria Day) and April 28 (Be the Change Weekend), to raise money for, and awareness of, Imagine No Malaria.

BWC is nearing its goal of raising \$2.1 million to fight malaria. Your involvement saves lives.

Visit <http://www.bwcumc.org/pancake.pdf> for a detailed planning guide on how to host this event.

Conference efforts continue to fight malaria in Africa

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff

MALARIA IS AN old, old disease. It's been killing for thousands of years; since the time of King Tut. But The United Methodist Church believes now is the time to stop the death and suffering by this disease.

"Our goal is to raise \$75 million for this fight against malaria," said Pittsburgh Area Bishop Thomas Bickerton, who heads the campaign for the denomination. Already the denomination has reached \$60,000,000, mostly as a result of grassroots efforts.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference has pledged \$2.1 million as part of that overall commitment and has \$800,000 more to raise, said David Simpson, who with his wife Sylvia Simpson is coordinating the BWC campaign.

"Our goal is to have every church be involved," he said.

To that end, they have organized each district to have five or six key organizers who can provide ideas and resources for each church.

If every church would raise \$30 per average worshipper, Simpson said, the conference would meet its \$2.1 million goal. Simpson said that the endpoint for the goal is for commitments – either checks or pledges – to be submitted at this year's Annual Conference session.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 24 percent of all early childhood deaths are due to malaria. That's a

staggering number, but unless you have had malaria or seen someone in the grip of the disease, it's hard to imagine the suffering.

The Rev. Cecil Mudede of Glen Mar UMC, knows what it was like.

"I suffered from malaria when I was about 9 years old and later on when I was a high school student at United Methodist Church School, Murewa High," he said. "The symptoms were high fever with extreme body temperatures." He also experienced headaches and nausea, he said.

\$10 buys a life-saving, insecticide treated bed net
\$20 pays for the cost of food and treatment of anemia in a pregnant woman with malaria
\$50 provides malaria medication to treat ten adults
\$100 covers the cost of an anti-malaria campaign in a local school
\$200 trains traditional birth attendants in malaria prevention and treatment
\$500 provides all the resources for a one-day community leader training for 35-40 people on malaria prevention
\$28/month over three years adds up to a pledge of \$1,000 that will save 100 lives - that's a whole community!

Most of his family members suffered at one time or another. The disease, in the 70s, was treated with chloroquine, as is still the case today. Malaria parasites enter the body through the mosquito bites, and then live in body tissues such as red blood cells or the liver. Chloroquine prevents the development of malaria parasites in the blood.

The Rev. Bruce Jones, who serves LaPlata UMC, was raised in a missionary family in what was then the Congo from 1956 to 1961. He also had malaria when he was 5 years old. He also reported about the high fevers and extreme chills, but what he really remembers was the terrible medicine.

"I remember how awful quinine was," he said; he had to take it for many weeks. "If you don't get the meds, it can cause death."

Though children are the most vulnerable, malaria is no respecter of persons. Last year the grown daughter of United Methodist bishop Gabriel Unda Yemba of the East Congo Episcopal Area died of malaria. Her mother had also died of malaria in 2007.

This work in Africa is our United Methodist faith in action, Simpson said. As you join in the campaign, expect to change the world.

The UM Imagine No Malaria suggests several fronts on which to attack malaria and be part of the campaign, in addition to raising the necessary funds:

For more information, visit www.bwcumc.org/ImagineNoMalaria/resources.

Churches to set goals for Imagine No Malaria campaign

BY THE REV. DAVID AND SYLVIA SIMPSON
INM COORDINATORS, BWC

DURING THESE PAST six months, we have been all around the Baltimore-Washington Conference encouraging people to imagine being a part of the United Methodist vision of eliminating death and suffering from malaria, a disease that is preventable, treatable and beatable.

In that time our hearts have been strangely warmed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the churches and people of the Conference. The warmth is generated by the stories we hear of children, youth, men and women responding creatively and generously to raise funds to combat this killer disease. Through your efforts, we are now more than half way to our Conference goal

of raising \$2.1 million dollars. Thank you.

As your local church begins to engage with the Imagine No Malaria campaign, and as it considers its act of generosity that will be offered at the Annual Conference Session in May, one of the first places we want you to start is by prayerfully discerning your church's potential commitment. We invite every church to consider setting your sights high!

A goal of saving at least three lives per worshiping member of your church is a great place to start. That would be a commitment to raise \$30 for each one of those people. If your church has a worshiping community of 50 – that would be a goal of \$1,500 to be paid by the end of 2015. If your church worships with 300 people – that would be a larger goal of \$9,000.

We want every church to dream big and to make

a huge impact through this campaign; we will help support and resource you to accomplish these goals! Once your church council or mission team has determined what your goal is and how many lives you plan to help save, we want you to officially affirm your goal through the Affirmation of Goal form, available at www.bwcumc.org (look under "Imagine No Malaria" box). This is not a pledge, but a statement of your best intentions. You might not reach that number or you might surpass it, but knowing what your church goal is can help us give you the support you need to achieve it.

Thank you for joining hands with United Methodists everywhere to save lives. And remember, "Dream no small dreams, for they have not the power to stir the souls of men and women." (Goethe)