



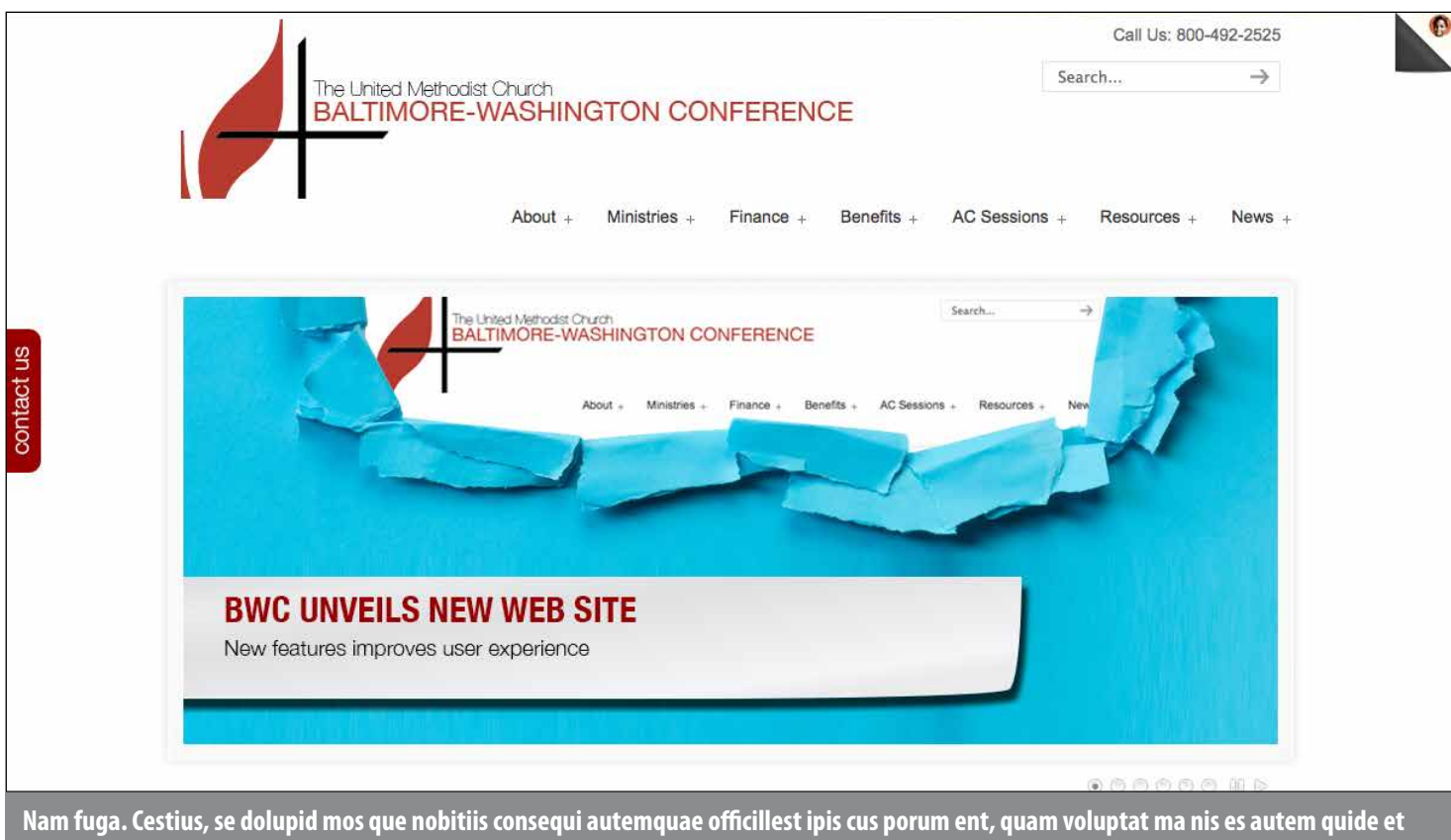
# UMCConnection

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 9 • September 2014

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## BWC unveils new web site



BY MELISSA LAUBER  
UMConnection Staff

**T**HE PEOPLE OF the Baltimore-Washington Conference have a newly designed virtual home at bwcumc.org. Throughout the redesign process, BWC's technology team dedicated itself to an "old school meets new school" approach to better connect church leaders, the conference, the community and the denomination as we seek to become fully alive in Christ and make a difference in an ever-changing world.

In developing this online ministry tool, the BWC's technology team paid special attention to increased security, expanded functionality and improving the navigation and organization of information. With this in mind, the decision was made to move away from the Drupal open source content management platform and to build this site using WordPress, the world's most popular online publishing platform.

"Simply put, this new site is supercalifragilisticexpialidocious," said Harrison Zepp, the conference webmaster and architect of the redesign. "This site is a gathering place for information and resources for the people of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. It should reflect the character and priorities of the conference and be an expression of its 171,000 members."

Zepp stressed that since The United Methodist Church is known as a faith community that is never complete, but "always beginning," the site should be viewed in the same light. He encourages everyone

that has a voice or ministry on the site to take pride and ownership over the information and how it is presented.

"If you feel something is missing or needs to be revised," he said, "then we want to know, so we can take of it. All the forms needed to make these requests are located on the new site under Resources > Forms, Reports & Requests."

From the banner to the intentional use of a white, black and red color scheme that symbolically represents the gravitas of the historic and institutional nature of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, this site serves to act as a virtual pioneer of Methodism in America and the Pentecost spirit that burns bright in its churches today.

Zepp encourages local church leaders and members to begin exploring the site. Of particular interest to them, he said, will be the new and updated features as follows:

### Church/Clergy Locator

The most visited page on bwcumc.org has been upgraded and improved. This enhanced feature now offers users an at-a-glance view of all 641 churches using Google maps, as well as allows them to interact with the map to narrow down their search. In addition, the locator offers enhanced search capabilities by allowing users to search by church and/or clergy name and by district and ZIP code. When searching by ZIP code, this tool allows for users to set the radius in which they want their search to reach when providing results. Each church is also represented with their own page that

*See Website, page 3*

## Comedian's death opens doors to difficult conversations

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

**T**HE SHOCKWAVES OF comedian Robin Williams' self-inflicted death Aug. 11 are still rumbling. In their wake, people are asking questions about depression, bi-polar illness (which Williams had, according to published reports) and suicide. And many who have been touched by depression and suicide are taking to social media to bring this painful subject to the fore.

What they are saying: help is available; you are not

alone.

Suicide is the second-leading killer in the United States, according to statistics provided from the American Association of Suicidology. In 2011, more than 39,500 people died by suicide, or 108 per day. There were 3.6 male deaths for each female death, they note, and most of those were middle-aged (between 45 and 64) white men. By comparison, homicides contributed 16,238 deaths in 2011, vehicle accidents accounted for 35,303, and breast cancer, 39,520.

The Rev. Sarah Andrews Schlieckert, pastor of Arden UMC in Martinsburg, W.Va., knows the impact

of suicide on those left behind. Her brother, Dan Andrews, also a United Methodist pastor, committed suicide last June.

"I do not believe suicide is either a valiant or predictable action," she wrote in an Aug. 12 blog post. "I believe that if you are struggling today with stresses, illness and burdens that seem overwhelming, you can find help and live a life not controlled by those. It may (and likely will be) some hard work."

Schlieckert wrote that she had been pondering what to say about suicide for some time, but that Williams'

*See Suicide, page 3*

# ... well said

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

BY MANDY SAYERS

Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

IN SEPTEMBER, THE month of “back-to-school,” I’ve definitely made the shift from student to parent. I bless other people’s backpacks in Sunday worship. I enjoy the peace and quiet of an empty house, or the office without a middle-schooler in it. Camps are expensive and no one can cover all summer, you can trust me on this.

I graduated from seminary 4 years ago, and I am one of those folks that loves school. Seminary was soul-feeding and wonderful, an opportunity to study the subjects I love most with ‘nary a math formula in sight. I was the happiest person at graduation, not because I was glad to leave, but because I savored all of it. Friends worried I would miss graduate school so much, I’d immediately have to go back.

In the past 4 years in ministry, I’ve found that being a pastor feeds my soul just fine and is full of learning opportunities. Every day, in fact, is a learning opportunity. Early on in my pastorate (like the first week), I thought, “Well, that’s it then. I’m a total flop at this.” I blamed myself for any imperfections in the church (ahem, as if there were any...), and thought that every meeting was somehow a failure and my fault.

In prayer, in my car, asking God to help me get a job at Baskin-Robbins, I had an epiphany. In my spirit, God said, “Baby girl,” (God calls me that sometimes), “did you learn anything today?” I started to smile. What if a key to longevity in ministry is to get less twisted up about failure and to be more excited about learning? There is, after all, a whole lot to learn, all the time, about God and the love of Jesus, about humanity and grace, and about compassion and mercy. Every single day, in my prayers, I can honestly thank God that I learned something today. And my “worst days” become “days when I learned a whole lot.”

Discipleship is not about perfection out of the gate. It’s a sanctification journey; it’s about learning and growing by God’s grace. After all, they called Jesus “rabbi” and “teacher.” Maybe every day following Jesus is “back-to-school” Sunday. So, you can keep your M.Div., at least for now. I’m learning something new every day.

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

SOME OF US live in a very big world. We take the opportunity to see everything that we can. We go to places that are unfamiliar, talk to people that we do not know and experience things that are new to us. We do all of this in the effort to open our minds, find out more and learn.

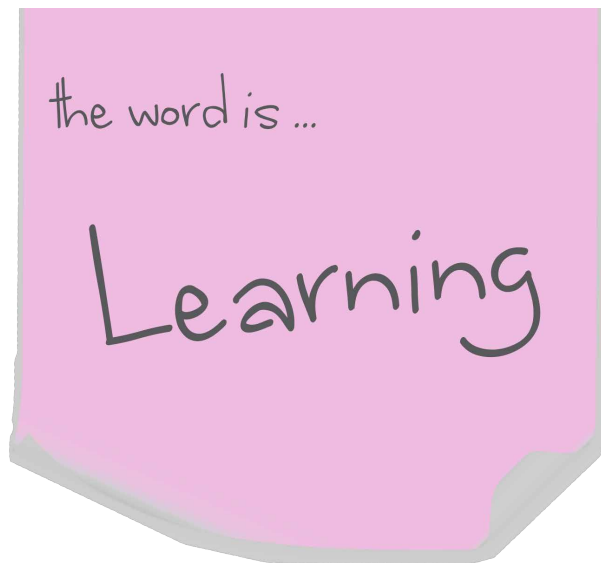
By contrast some of us live in a very small world. We make the decision that we are going to stick to the familiar. We are not going to go to new places. We are not going to try new things. We certainly are not going to make any new friends. We like our world neat, tidy and small.

No matter if you like being a part of a big wide world or a small tidy one, you are always learning. Learning is just the process of changing our behaviors based on our experiences.

When we decide that we want to have vast and different experiences, we learn vast and different things that change who we are and how we see the world. When we decide that we want to have neat, tidy and repeated experiences, we reinforce the same ways of seeing the world and reinforce who we currently are.

There comes a time in life when we have to decide which world we want to live in. Do we want to live in a small tidy world where we are the expert and have learned all we will ever need to know, or do we want to live in the big diverse world where there is always something new to learn?

Like everything else, learning is a choice. We can continue to learn what we already know or we can work to learn something new every day. It is our choice if our world gets bigger, smaller, or stays the same. The choice is yours. What will you be learning today?



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

FIND US ON FACEBOOK



facebook.com/BWCUMC

... well said

... well said

## EVENTS

### ROCK in September

**Towson UMC, Towson**  
Sept. 12, 7 p.m.

Preston Centuolo, the keynote speaker at ROCK 2014, and the band Urban Street Level will come together with the youth of the Baltimore-Washington Conference to raise money for the rebuilding of Northwood-Appold UMC, which was destroyed in a fire. Cost is \$20. Register at <http://bwcumc.org/bwcumc-website-master-calendar/rock-to-benefit-the-rebuilding-of-northwood-appold-umc/>.

### Safe Sanctuary Training:

**BWC Conference Mission Center**  
Sept. 13, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

In 1996, General Conference delegates passed a resolution requiring all conferences to adopt policies to safeguard children and youth. This workshop will provide guidance for making ministry areas safe and secure for children, youth and volunteers. No cost, but you must register online to attend. Visit <http://bwcumc.org/bwcumc-website-master-calendar/basic-lay-servant-4-2-3/>.

### Inaugural Plumline Lecture:

**Foundry UMC, Washington, DC**  
Sept. 15, 7-8:30 p.m.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) is hosting the Rev. Alan Storey as the speaker. Storey pastors the Central Methodist Mission (CMM) in Cape Town, South Africa. Tickets for the lecture are \$12. To purchase, go to

[www.eventbrite.com/e/plumline-lecture-rev-alan-storey-tickets-12545139851](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/plumline-lecture-rev-alan-storey-tickets-12545139851).

### Science & Religion retreat

**West River Conference Center**  
Sept. 19-20, 7:30 Friday – 4:30 Saturday.

Explore questions of science on the image of God, our thinking about humanity, what brain science has to say, and others. Cost is \$61.50 to cover meals and lodging. Sponsored by WesleyNexus. For details and registration, go to [www.wesnexus.org/](http://www.wesnexus.org/).

### Bishop’s Dinner for Scouting

Sept. 22, 6:30-9 p.m.  
**Baltimore-Washington Conference Mission Center**

Guest speaker is Larry Coppock, National Director of Scouting Ministries for The United Methodist Church. Registration is \$20. For information and to register, contact Pam Bowen, [pbowen@bwcumc.org](mailto:pbowen@bwcumc.org).

### Susanna Wesley House annual event

**Tremont House, 225 N. Charles St. in Baltimore**  
Sept. 27, 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The annual Fall Luncheon and Silent Auction is to support Susanna Wesley House in its mission to provide a safe, clean home for women and children in need. Tickets are \$50. For tickets and information, call 410-837-3787, or e-mail [susannawesley@verizon.net](mailto:susannawesley@verizon.net).

WONDERING  
WEDNESDAYS

Ever wonder how Photoshop works? Or how our editors know when to capitalize ‘bishop’ and when not to? Or...?

Join us for FREE trainings on the third Wednesday of each month from 12-1 p.m. at the Conference Center. Visit your district blogs for more info or e-mail Alison Burdett at [aburdett@bwcumc.org](mailto:aburdett@bwcumc.org).



## FORGOT TO ORDER YOUR JOURNAL?

Pre-order your 2014 Conference Journal today

Go to [getumsocial.com/2014-journal-order-form](http://getumsocial.com/2014-journal-order-form) Reserve before the Sept. 1 deadline.

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# Suicide: Ijadjfoiasjdfoiajsdfiajsdfiasdfjiasdpfkaposdkf

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untimely death brought the topic to people's minds.

"My prayer is that losses like Dan and Robin Williams," she wrote, "though they can never be redeemed or made right for those left behind, can become an impetus for us to talk openly about mental health, become aware of resources out there, make us compassionate towards one another, and understand that we have meaningful choices to make that have consequences not only for our own lives but for the lives of those around us and indeed the world."

Amy Kulp is Deputy Director of the American Association of Suicidology (<http://www.suicidology.org/>), based in Washington, D.C., and a member of Wesley Freedom UMC in Eldersburg. The organization's goal is to better understand and prevent suicide. She said that churches could help by making the topic of suicide more comfortable to talk about openly.

"Most if not all congregations have people who have thought about suicide, lost a loved one to suicide, or known people who have thought about it," Kulp said. She suggested that churches could start support groups or offer space for existing support groups, for people who have contemplated suicide or for those whom it has affected.

She urged pastors to be on the lookout for warning signs and risk factors for suicide, especially as media coverage of Williams' death continues.

Among the risk factors Kulp mentioned are untreated mental illnesses; a close relative who has completed suicide; certain physical illnesses which can pre-dispose a person to suicide.

Warning signs are sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle, she said. The signs can run from a person suddenly making a will and starting to give away personal possessions, to stockpiling medicine or purchasing a gun.

"Sometimes a person will come in and talk to their pastor about what the Bible says about suicide," Kulp said, "because they're worried about their eternal life."

The United Methodist Church, in its Social Principles,

teaches that suicide "is not the way a human life should end," and that "The church has an obligation to see that all persons have access to needed pastoral and medical care and therapy in those circumstances that lead to loss of self-worth, suicidal despair, and/or the desire to seek physician-assisted suicide." (§161N)

Above all, the church teaches that nothing, including suicide, "separates us from the love of God." (Romans 8:38-39)

"Suicide is preventable in most cases," Kulp said. "We need to reduce the stigma of depression and start the



Robin Williams at the premiere of Happy Feet Two in 2011.

conversations."

The Rev. Chris Owens, on staff at the Baltimore-Washington Conference, is thankful his wife started a conversation with him a few years ago. He wrote in his blog Aug. 12 (<http://pastorchrисowens.wordpress.com/2014/08/12/robin-you-are-never-alone/>) that he shares a kinship with Williams and depression. After donating a kidney three years ago, Owens fell into a depression that nearly ended in suicide.

"I'm here today because my wife noticed a grave shift in my behavior and insisted on knowing what was going on," he wrote. "I said that nothing was wrong (a lie, but

easier than talking about the truth). She gently pushed more. And then I spilled it all out. We decided that I would more openly communicate how I was feeling, especially if I had thoughts of hurting myself. Shortly afterwards I underwent a long round of medication and therapy."

Owens wrote that he was sharing his struggles now so that others would not think they were alone. He also offered some facts on his blog about depression:

- It does not indicate character, moral or spiritual defects.
- Depression does not indicate weakness. In fact, some of history's strongest people suffered from depression. I'm in good company with the likes of Abraham Lincoln.
- Depression is a medical condition to be treated like any other medical condition – therapy, medication and self-care.
- Depression does not have to define who a person is, but it can bring about the opportunity for tremendous growth, healing and strengthening.

"I truly hope that Robin Williams' death will shed some more light on the reality of depression while sweeping away untruths and misconceptions," Owens wrote. "Robin, you are finally not alone. There are many of us who suffer like you did and we will choose to live on together in hope, healing and in God's love and light. Rest in peace, my friend, and thank you."

If you are struggling with depression or having thoughts of suicide, help is available. The suicide prevention hotline is 1-800-273-8255. Or you can visit <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. Schliekert notes that many local communities and college campuses also have their own hotlines as well. If you feel on the verge of hurting yourself, she wrote, call 911.

"If you are dealing with a loved one who is struggling with mental illness," wrote Schliekert, "or you, like me, have lost someone to suicide, there are also many resources for you. Find a counselor or support group in your area. Don't keep it in. You do not walk this journey alone. Ever."

## Website: Updated site enhances user experience

From page 1

articulates the history, ministries and service times, and is illustrated by uploaded images and embedded videos to give visitors a better sense of the church's offerings when seeking a church to call home. This new feature also allows users to obtain directions simply by inputting their starting location into the field provided.

### Local Church Classifieds

Churches now have a spot where they may search or advertise their church and community happenings and employment opportunities, as well as for sale or free items they wish to sell or donate. Registration takes place online, and once approved, users are eligible to post their classifieds, upload photos and make revisions 24 hours a

day. All posted classifieds will remain active for 30 days unless extended or modified by their author.

### Events and Trainings Calendar

Unlike the prior site, this calendar contains ALL events and trainings occurring throughout the conference. No longer are the days of hunting and pecking to find what you are looking for or clicking on a master calendar that only had one or two random events each month. Users are allowed to search the calendar, see dates where activities are taking place and register with the click of a mouse, as well as obtain directions simply by inputting their starting location into the field provided.

### #highlights (formally known as e-connection)

No longer are the days of an e-connection page that scrolls forever. Instead, with #highlights, information is

organized and presented in a responsive timeline.

The new site should be seen as "never complete" and "always beginning." Therefore, scheduled later this fall is a new online resource created by the BWC's Guides and missional strategists that will provide a vast array of cutting-edge tools focused on growth and spiritual development. To bring in the New Year, we will also be offering a BWC app. This app will both complement the new site as well as allow our church leaders and members to stay better informed in a more timely fashion.

For questions about or feedback on the new site, click on the "Contact Us" button in the left hand margin of the homepage. We look forward to hearing from you.

Until then...happy clicking!

## Churches join forces to save money

By PAUL HAZEN\*

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS in the United States have supported the creation of co-operatives for decades. Organizations and individuals of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish traditions all have provided critical help to the co-operative movement for economic and social justice. Now these same faith-based organizations have organized a co-operative for their own benefit.

One church was paying \$2,000 a month for trash hauling; it now pays \$300. Another institution saw its monthly copier bill drop from \$2,400 to \$600. In both cases, the organizations had no idea their previous contracts had such unfavorable terms.

Having spent most of my career promoting co-operatives at the national and international level, I have found it rewarding to work with a new co-op called the Community Purchasing Alliance (CPA) in developing what we hope is a model that can spread across the nation.

For many years, I sat in the pew of Foundry UMC thinking about how we could harness the economic power of faith-based organizations for social justice. In CPA, I believe we've made an important step toward fulfilling our missions together in a way that makes each congregation more environmentally and economically sustainable.

Faith organizations suffered a significant drop in contributions in the 2008-09 recession. This was certainly the situation for the UMC. According to BWC Treasurer Paul Eichelberger, congregations in the BWC saw an average of a 5 percent decline in contributions. This situation repeated itself across the faith-based community.

In response, a group of religious leaders in Washington, D.C., gathered to discuss forming a purchasing cooperative to cut costs.

In 2011, a dozen congregations purchased electricity together and saved nearly \$100,000.

By 2012 there were more than 110 participants and soon they were expanding to other services. The co-operative was formally incorporated in March of this year.

CPA has three goals: saving money for its members through bulk purchases; organizing for social change; and aiding the environment. Rebates and dividends are used for investments in sustainability, worker equity and community organizing. While it's not always possible, the cooperative tries to support only vendors who engage in business practices consistent with the group's values and social mission.

The co-operative has achieved major savings in contracts for electricity, natural gas, trash hauling, copier services, heating and air conditioning, cleaning supplies and solar panels. With many members having

large sanctuaries, utility bills have been a particular source of savings. Priority is given to local vendors that show a commitment to worker fairness, economic justice, concern for community, renewable energy and environmental sustainability. More than 150 institutions have participated in CPA purchasing programs, with average annual savings of over \$8,000.

"If all 600-plus churches in the BWC joined the CPA, our collective savings would be \$4.8 million, money that could be used for ministry and mission," stated the Rev. Joe Daniels, Greater Washington District Superintendent and an early supporter of the CPA.

Most of the facilities of these organizations are managed by people with little experience in negotiating contracts. An early participant, the Rev. Donna Claycomb Sokol of Mount Vernon Place UMC in Washington, put it this way: "These are not the kinds of things that are taught at seminary."

The purchasing decisions of these organizations can have a significant impact. In addition to houses of worship, CPA members may own schools, rental housing, daycare centers, retirement communities and community centers. Their shared values and concern for their community binds them together.

\*Paul Hazen is the Financial Development Committee Chair at Foundry UMC in Washington, D.C.

# Mulenga preaches to 55,000 in Zimbabwe

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

**F**IVE MEMBERS OF the Baltimore-Washington Conference were in Zimbabwe recently to join the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area in the celebration of the Ebenezer Convention, a nationwide revival that started on Friday, August 15.

The five — Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Maidstone Mulenga, Charlie Moore, David Bonney, Jim Gourley and Sue McCann — took time on Thursday, Aug. 14, to tour the new Zimbabwe East Conference Center being constructed in Harare. BWC contributed financial support to the project. They were accompanied by Bishop Nhwatiwa of Zimbabwe and Bishop Scott Jones of the Great Plains Annual Conference.

At the Ebenezer Convention, more than 55,000 people packed the sports stadium in Harare for worship, prayer and fellowship, Mulenga said. Last Friday, he pronounced the benediction for the day's service which ended at 10 p.m.

The next morning, Mulenga gave a presentation where he highlighted the partnership between the Baltimore-Washington Conference and Zimbabwe.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference has given \$100,000 for the new conference center," Mulenga said. The news was greeted with a standing ovation. Mulenga and the others in the group also presented a gift to

Mrs. Nhwatiwa on behalf of Barbara Matthews, Bishop Matthew's wife, and the women of the BWC.

"The Saturday session," said Mulenga, "ran from Saturday morning through to Sunday morning; over-night."

blessed to share God's word with our friends and partners in Zimbabwe."

On Aug. 18, Mulenga traveled to Zambia, his birth country, to meet with conference staff and preach in four different churches throughout the week.

*Ti del imustibus, non re estibnatur aliat eniet que natur?*

Early Sunday morning, Bishop Nhwatiwa invited Mulenga to preach the closing sermon at 6 a.m. "He said he felt that there was fire in me and wanted to share the pulpit with me," said Mulenga. "I felt

To learn more about the Baltimore-Washington Conference's partnership with the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, visit [http://www.bwcumc.org/news/conference\\_strengthens\\_zimbabwe\\_partnership](http://www.bwcumc.org/news/conference_strengthens_zimbabwe_partnership).

# Rules and Tips for Submitting Resolutions and Petitions

BY JEN IHLO  
Rules Committee Chair

**T**O SAY THAT Annual Conference 2015 will have a jam-packed agenda may be an understatement. Members will attend to the usual agenda: engaging in Bible study, participating in worship, hearing reports, passing a budget, and considering any number of resolutions. In addition, during Annual Conference 2015, we will consider petitions to General Conference and elect delegates to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences, both of which will meet in 2016.

Needless to say, we will need to be extremely mindful of time — which includes consideration of resolutions AND any petitions to General Conference. Consequently, Annual Conference 2015 is a good year to consider:

- whether you really need to file multiple resolutions,
- whether you need to submit both a resolution and a petition on the same topic,
- and whether your resolution or petition is clear enough to allow for consideration without lengthy debate.

Once you've decided that you are going to submit a resolution or petition, it is important to know the rules associated with each. This article provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions about resolutions and petitions, as well as offers some tips for writing and submitting both resolutions and petitions.

If you have a question that is not addressed here, please send it to our communications staff ([mmlauber@bwcumc.org](mailto:mmlauber@bwcumc.org)). It will be answered and posted on the Conference website, along with these questions and answers:

**Q: Who may submit resolutions or petitions?**

A: Any congregation, clergy member or lay member from a congregation within the Baltimore Washington Conference (BWC) may submit a resolution or petition. Although "any organization, clergy member or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference," (§ 507, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012 (hereinafter "Discipline")), only those affiliated with the BWC may submit petitions for our Annual Conference to send to the General Conference.

**Q: What is the difference between a resolution and a petition?**

A: A resolution is a document submitted to the Annual Conference that seeks to create, delete or amend our rules and/or BWC policies. The subject matters of Resolutions pertain specifically to the BWC.

A petition is a document that pertains to The United Methodist Church and is submitted to the Annual Conference with a request that the petition will be submitted to the General Conference by the BWC.

Resolutions may be submitted annually to the Annual Conference. Petitions are submitted and considered by the BWC only in the year in which General and Jurisdictional Conference delegates are elected.

**Q: Are there different formats and where do I find them?**

A: The BWC Rules require that each resolution address a single issue, using the format and length designated on a form provided by the Conference Secretary. The form is posted on the Conference website at [\[link\]](#)....

The procedures and format in the current Discipline should be used for petitions. Be certain you are referring to the 2012 Discipline, and not one from a previous year. As required by the conference rules, the Conference Secretary will provide a form for petitions that includes instructions and an example of how to prepare a petition. This information is also posted on the Conference website at [\[link\]](#)....

**Q: Are the BWC rules different for passing resolutions and petitions?**

A: Generally, no. We typically follow the process that is outlined in our Rules, which includes, for example, amendments, speaking for/against, and voting. Last year, we used the "Circles of Grace" process for consideration of some of our resolutions, which worked very well.

**Q: What is the deadline for submission?**

A: The deadline for submission for both resolutions and petitions is Jan. 15, 2015.

**Q: To whom and how do I submit a resolution or petition?**

A: Both resolutions and petitions should be submitted to the Conference Secretary, the Rev. Mary Jo Sims, by e-mail at [msims@bwcumc.org](mailto:msims@bwcumc.org). Remember: the firm deadline is Jan. 15, 2015.

**Q: What happens to the resolution or petition once it is submitted to the Conference Secretary?**

A: It will be reviewed for compliance with our Rules and consistency with the Book of Discipline. If the document (resolution or petition) needs editing, the Conference Secretary may send suggested edits to the writer or suggest that the writer edit the document. If the resolution or petition requires review by the Council on Finance and Administration (if the resolutions has financial implications) or the Rules Committee (if the resolution seeks to amend the Rules of the Session), the Conference Secretary will forward the resolution to the appropriate Committees for their review.

The resolution or petition is then sent to the Connectional Table (CT), which will consider each according to a format developed by the Conference Lay Leader, who is the chair of the Connectional Table. CT members will vote to concur or not concur with each resolution or petition, which will be reported with the resolution or petition in the Pre-Conference booklet.

**Q: At the last Annual Conference (2014), writers of resolutions were allowed to edit or amend resolutions based on feedback from the CT. Will that be allowed this year?**

A: No. We tried that last year in hopes of allowing the writers to perfect their resolutions but it became too confusing. For instance, the PreConference booklet included the originally submitted resolution with the CT's concurrence/non-concurrence recommendation but the Annual Conference, in some instances, considered/voted on a different version.

**Q: What happens if I miss the deadline?**

A: For resolutions, you may resubmit by the deadline for the next Annual Conference. Petitions to General Conference do not require Annual Conference adoption for submission, so you may submit directly to the General Conference, by their deadlines: July 1, 2015, for petitions without digital media; October 13, 2015, is the final deadline. The Instructions for Petitions to the 2016 General Conference are posted on the BWC website at [\[link\]](#).

**Q: Are there any common tips for writing resolutions AND petitions?**

Yes.

1. Keep them short and succinct. Your resolution or petition is not the only one that the members of Annual Conference will need to read and consider. Short usually equals clarity.

2. Each resolution or petition should address a single issue. Petitions to General Conference that amend the Discipline differ slightly, so be sure to review the Instructions for Petitions to the 2016 General Conference.

3. Use single underline for proposed additions and ~~strike through~~ for proposed deletions to existing rules, policy, or *Discipline* provisions.

4. Do not use Track Changes.

5. Plan ahead. Resolutions to amend the Rules of the Session must be reviewed by the Rules Committee; resolutions with financial implications must be reviewed by CFA. The sooner you submit these to the Conference Secretary, the sooner she can refer them to the appropriate committee.

You will want to seek review of the Rules Committee and/or CFA well in advance of the filing deadline. This will be particularly important if the reviewing entity disagrees or recommends needed edits to your resolution. Resolving any problems, if possible, prior to submission or the resolution will save much needed time during Annual Conference and may well make passage of your resolution more likely.

# BWC Guides offer resources for church vitality, growth

By ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

AS SEPTEMBER ARRIVES, church programs are starting back in earnest. With that in mind, UMConnection asked the Guides of the Baltimore-Washington Conference to share the resources they're recommending to their congregations right now. We asked, specifically, what books they are recommending; what programs they're urging churches to use; what techniques for church growth and vitality they're teaching; and what churches/pastors are NOT doing right now that you wish they were.

Some of the answers may surprise you.

## BOOKS

The Rev. Barbara Suffecool, who serves as one of four part-time Guides in the Western Region and Minister of Music at Hancock UMC, recently finished reading "Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner and Saint." It tells the story, she said, of a young woman's spiritual journey and life as the pastor of an unusual congregation. "If you're offended by language, this is not the book for you," Suffecool said. "But I found the book very moving."

The Rev. Chris Owens, Guide in the Southern Region, recommends three books. First is "Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church," by Reggie McNeal. "The author lays out a vision for churches to be missional," said Owens. Second is Bob Farr's "Renovate or Die: 10 Ways to Focus Your Church on Mission." And last is "Rich Church, Poor Church: Keys to Effective Financial Ministry," by J. Clif Christopher. "This has nothing to do with how much money a church has," said Owens. "Rather, it has everything to do with the attitudes churches have towards money, giving and especially, mission."

A book that the Rev. Sarah Dorrance is recommending and using with her own church council is "Deep and Wide," by Andy Stanley. Dorrance serves as another part-time Guide in the Western Region and pastor at Taylorsville UMC in Mt. Airy. "Our congregations are getting older," she said. "Our 'ways of doing things' have not been effective over the past few years. We HAVE to do things differently."

Stanley's book, she noted, is particularly good for growing new leaders and defining "the win."

Another book she recommends is "Sticky Faith," by Powell, Griffin and Crawford. This book, she said, is a good one for bettering youth ministry.

Christie Latona, Guide for the Washington Region,

recommends "Make or Break Your Church in 365 Days: A Daily Guide to Leading Effective Change," by Paul Borden. "This is a great starting point for pastors (and those that love them) who are seeking to spend their time more wisely in order to grow God's Kingdom," she said. Latona also recommends "Begging for REAL Church," and it's leaders' book, "Power of REAL," both by the Rev. Joe Daniels, superintendent of the Greater Washington District. The books begin the process of transforming congregations into a "Relevant, Enthusiastic, Authentic and Loving expression of Christ," Latona said.

## PROGRAMS

Owens said that the BWC has contracts with two "powerful programs" that can help churches learn how to be more vital and engaged in their communities.

The first is "Readiness 360." This, said Owens, is an assessment tool for congregation that measures how ready and able churches are to multiply their ministry impact in the community and beyond. "This is a self-survey tool that measures a church's spiritual vitality, relational dynamics, missional alignment and cultural openness," said Owens. He highly recommends that churches use the services of their Regional Guides to take them through the process. In the Southern Region where he serves, it is a requirement.

"Mission Insite" is a demographics tool, Owens said, that helps congregations understand the make-up of their communities. "Businesses pay thousands of dollars for this kind of information," he said.

"Thanks to your apportionment dollars, we already have this information right at our fingertips."

To access either of these programs, contact Jo Chesson, Vibrant Communities Project Manager, at [jchesson@bwcumc.org](mailto:jchesson@bwcumc.org).

Suffecool said that if a church isn't already doing Disciple Bible Study, this is the program she would recommend. She noted that short-term Disciple Bible studies are available, too.

"I have an allergy to the word 'program,'" said Latona, "because we really should be focused on building processes." The difference? "Programs meet a need; processes result in a ministry that takes people/congregations from where they are to where God wants them to be."

## TECHNIQUES

Dorrance stresses with her congregations the need for a change in leadership styles. "Some of our pastors

are great shepherds," she said, "but they are not great leaders. We live in a culture that needs great leaders." She recommends some of the one-day workshops offered by the BWC's Vibrant Communities office, as well as the Willow Creek Leadership Summit, and the Church of the Resurrection Leadership Institute.

Dorrance also checks into blogs on a regular basis. She suggested [www.careynieuwhof.com](http://www.careynieuwhof.com) for topics that church leaders face on a daily basis. She also visits [www.facebook.com/clergycoachingnetwork](http://www.facebook.com/clergycoachingnetwork).

As Owens works with congregations, he's noticing a trend: they need "three internal keys." The first is a passionate Kingdom vision – something that builds the Kingdom of God in the world. But in order to do that, they need the courage to let go of the baggage of defeatist attitudes, low self-esteem, painful past history, and a handful of "influential problem people who consistently get in the way of change."

In order to move towards God's vision and away from crippling baggage, Owens said a congregation then needs to be diligent enough to set and keep some concrete SMART goals (specific, measurable, audacious, realistic and timely). He suggests the Church Council (or other governing board) setting these goals.

## NOT DOING

Latona said, in general, her churches are relying on preferences and their own logic to determine ministry strategy. She'd like to see more prayer. "All major Christian movements are undergirded with significant amounts of prayer and discernment," she said.

"I don't think we're doing enough listening," said Suffecool. "Pastors don't listen to their congregations; laity don't listen to the pastor or to each other; and a lot of us shut out the voice of God. Very rarely does the voice of God come only to one person, so very rarely does only one person have all the answers."

"I so desire pastors and congregations to throw out fear," said Owens. "It's as if pastors and churches live in this constant fear of being – for lack of a better word – screwed. Our trust, our hope and our strength are in God, not in circumstances, the past or even the future. Churches that grow and thrive possess a lot of courage."

For Dorrance, she wishes that more pastors would take advantage of the free "gift" of coaching. "I am trained in coaching as are many of my Guide colleagues," she said. "This is a free resource and, unlike previous models in the conference, remains fully confidential."

# Mission u gathers people to pray, learn and transform

By LINDA WORTHINGTON  
UMConnection Staff

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that ... you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)*

WITH THOSE WORDS, Zilpha Pinkney, Dean of "Mission u," greeted more than 175 people gathered at the Bethesda Marriott Hotel Aug. 8-10 for the annual United Methodist Women's and Board of Global Ministries' educational and inspirational event.

Mission u, formerly called the School of Christian Mission, had as its theme, "Learning Together for the Transformation of the World."

The name of the event may have changed but the mission has not – to help clergy and laity, women and men, deepen their knowledge of the mission and missions of the church. This year the geographic study was on "The Roma of Europe" and the social issue was on "The Church and People with Disabilities."

Keith White, a layperson from the Journey of Faith Church in Waldorf, led three plenary sessions on the Spiritual Growth study, "How is it with Your Soul?" He structured his study around prayer, learning and mentoring, and transformation, which directed participants "to be transformed by the power of your Word in Scripture and in the lives of each other."

White pointed out that at the time of Pentecost, the disciples were in the Upper Room where "they were waiting (as Jesus instructed them), praying and studying," which led to them "proclaiming God's mighty acts" and starting the church.

He asked, "How can we tell God's story if we haven't studied Scripture and prayed ourselves?"

In addition to the Spiritual Growth plenary sessions, each participant chose one of the two studies, which met four times.

The Rev. Johnsie Cogman and Cynthia Taylor each led sessions on "The Roma of Europe." This was the second year for the Roma study.

"Anyone who is being mistreated, we should have a heart for," Cogman said, as she gave background, occupations and misconceptions of the Romani people, often disparagingly referred to as "gypsies." The 10-12 million Romani throughout Europe are the largest minority, and they have always been discriminated against. Only a few thousand Romani in Germany survived the Nazi genocide during the Holocaust.

The Romani are again in a migration from east to west because of wars, famines, lack of opportunity, dangerous societal values and the pull of finding a better life, Cogman said. The United Methodist Church of Central and Southern Europe is set to respond. "One of the objectives of The United Methodist Church is to be in ministry with the poor, just as Jesus was," says its 2012 "Strategy of Ministry with the Roma."

Four teachers led separate sessions of "The Church and People with Disabilities," the new study this year, attended by nearly 100 participants. They were the Revs. Sandi Johnson and Kirk Van Gilder, Dr. Kathleen G. Charters, commissioned this year as a Provisional Deacon, and Brenda Connelly, now retired from the Board of Global Ministries. Adding a distinct voice to the learning experience was the presence of blind and deaf participants, as well as some in wheel chairs.

Johnson led her classes in Sign language as well as

spoken, emphasizing the disabilities of hard-of-hearing and deafness. Inclusion was a big point. "Just because you have a translator (for the Deaf) doesn't mean they're included," she said.

"Our job is to remove the barriers and open the doors to all people," she stressed. "Does your church make it easy to be involved for hard-of-hearing?" If the worshipper can't hear the pastor, he or she will stop coming.

Johnson urged churches to do an accessibility audit each year.

Co-leaders of the conference Board of Global Ministries, Sharon Leatherman and Jane Grays, updated missions, ministries and services and Mission u provided training for officers of the United Methodist Women.

While the adults were attending the study groups, 20 youth were having their own sessions with Dean, the Rev. Michael A. Parker II. For their spiritual growth study, Bresean A. Jenkins, assistant to the pastor at Queen's Chapel UMC, led the youth in understanding the innate power in each Christian. Minister to Youth at St. Paul UMC in Oxon Hill, Rashida C. Walker, taught the youth-focused classes on Disabilities.

Several one-hour Focus Groups added to the knowledge attendees could soak up. The first to fill up was on Line Dancing. Other classes were a bit more serious, including Rev. Brian Jackson on Prison Ministry, Kathleen Charters on the Charter for Racial Justice, and Brittney Drakeford taking on Social Media.

"Prayerfully, we will (have) experienced a transformation through our personal learning experiences, so that we can begin to transform our world," Pinkney said.

# Simpson begins Global Initiatives ministry for BWC

By ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

**T**HE REV. DAVID Simpson is certainly no stranger to the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Most recently pastor of Bethany UMC in Ellicott City, he has also served as Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministry.

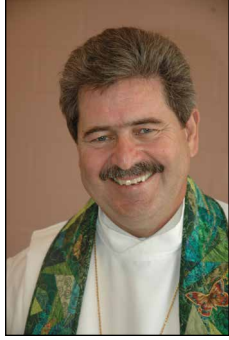
Simpson re-joined conference staff July 1 as the new Coordinator of Global Initiatives, a new position created by Bishop Marcus Matthews. He said he's excited to re-join the conference staff and getting used to the rhythm of being away from parish life.

"No funerals, no weddings, no hospital visits," he said with a chuckle.

His new focus of ministry, he said, has two major pieces: the first is as Field Coordinator of the Imagine No Malaria campaign which Simpson and his wife, Sylvia, have led for the past 12 months.

The second piece is the new aspect, he said, which involves the conference's global partnerships. Simpson said his new role will be to help align ministry partnerships and make sure communications is happening between the two partners.

At this point, Simpson said, the BWC has four different international partners in ministry: the Russian Initiative, which will now be called the Eurasia Partnership, that works with the Black Soil District in Russia; the agreement with the South Conference of the Korean Methodist Church (see UMConnection, August 2014); the partnership with the Zimbabwe Annual Conference, which is the BWC's longest-standing alliance; and a new partnership agreement in the works in Latin America, which is focused on Puerto Rico and, in particular, the island of Vieques.



"Several of these partnerships have been in effect for a number of years," said Simpson. "We need to take a look at them and say 'How can we build on our past successes and do a better job of connecting the churches and members of the Baltimore-Washington Conference with the churches and members of those annual conferences around the globe.'"

What happens, Simpson said, is that people will get these wonderful, inspired ideas about doing ministry in some location around the world. The genesis for most of these ideas is due to direct, people-to-people contact where a person from the BWC already knows someone else from another area.

"But these often aren't coordinated between episcopal offices," Simpson said. "While our intentions may be good, it may not be in keeping with the vision and mission of the resident bishops in areas where we want to go. They and their Cabinets, of course, have the best handle on what needs to be done."

Simpson makes it clear that these partnerships are not a one-way street.

"We want to promote the exchange of information and ideas both ways," he said. "The idea is to share our best practices with each other. For example, the Korean emphasis on personal prayer and piety is something we could learn lots from. The Russian experience of developing Christian community in places where none exists; that's something we don't have to deal with but it could become a problem for us in the future."

Simpson lifts up the Africa University choir tours as one example of how the partnership works to bring ministry here. The recent visit by the Korean delegation to the Annual Conference Session is another.

"Individual pastors are visiting local churches, too," he said. "One of the Russian Initiative pastors has been here a couple of times."

Simpson also noted that international students from the partnership areas come to this area to attend school. Churches and members are encouraged to keep the

ministry partners in prayer, Simpson said, and if they want to get involved to contact the chairpersons of the respective partnership teams or contact Simpson himself (see sidebar).

"We know that a lot of our churches are involved in mission and ministry around the world," said Simpson. "Sometimes these are United Methodist, sometimes they're not. We're not trying to limit folks from doing this, but we also want to encourage them, to let them know that there are opportunities with United Methodist partners."

With the Imagine No Malaria campaign, Simpson is optimistic that the conference will exceed its goal. "We are very close to achieving our goal of \$2.1 million," Simpson said. "We want to finish working with the churches to get their pledges in so we can meet that goal."

## Want to be involved in one of the BWC's global partnership initiatives? Here's how:

For Zimbabwe, contact the Rev. Joe Daniels, superintendent of the Greater Washington District, at [jdaniels@bwcumc.org](mailto:jdaniels@bwcumc.org).

For Eurasia (Russia), contact the Rev. Charles Harrell, retired pastor, at [carolus101@gmail.com](mailto:carolus101@gmail.com).

For Korea, contact the Rev. JW Park, superintendent of the Central Maryland District, at [jpark@bwcumc.org](mailto:jpark@bwcumc.org).

For information on any of the Global Initiatives, contact the Rev. David Simpson at [dsimpson@bwcumc.org](mailto:dsimpson@bwcumc.org).

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Christine Kumar, left, and the Rev. Rebecca Iannicelli work on the herb garden at Camp Manidokan near Harpers Ferry.

### Emmanuel UMC is certified "cool"

LAUREL - Interfaith Power & Light recently announced that Emmanuel UMC in Laurel is one of the first 20 congregations nationwide to be designated a Certified Cool Congregation. It is the only United Methodist Church on the list, and the only one from Maryland.

Emmanuel achieved a 30 percent carbon reduction certification. The church operates on 100 percent renewable energy without solar or wind on their premises. They also implemented several projects of energy efficiency such as a lighting upgrade to more efficient bulbs. The 30 percent reduction means 70 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> is not generated.

The 20 Certified Cool Congregations jointly prevented 2.2 million pounds (1,000 metric tons) of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere every year, said IPL in a press release. This is the equivalent of asking Americans to drive 2.3 million miles less every year, "and that's just 20 congregations." The nation has 370,000 congregations.

"Witnessing the great work that Interfaith Power and Light offers faith based communities, keeps us inspired and active in educating and promoting sustainable lifestyles," said the church's Green Team chair, Liz Feighner.

For more information on how to go about it, contact Feighner at [eumcgreenteam@gmail.com](mailto:eumcgreenteam@gmail.com).

### Welcome home, troops, and thank you

EASTPORT - Thirty-nine folks got together to make welcome home/thank you cards for troops returning through BWI airport on July 12. The event was organized by Eastport and John Wesley United Methodist Churches with others joining in from Asbury UMC and Mt. Winans UMC in Baltimore.



Christine Kumar, left, and the Rev. Rebecca Iannicelli work on the herb garden at Camp Manidokan near Harpers Ferry.

Members and friends dropped in throughout the day to craft the cards, said Joyce Conley. Altogether they made 1,076 cards. They gave the completed cards to Operation Welcome Home Maryland ([www.operationwelcomehomemd.org](http://www.operationwelcomehomemd.org)) for their use in welcoming home troops returning to the U.S.A. through BWI Marshall Airport.

### Balloon launch makes ice cream special

WOLFSVILLE - Since 1980, Salem UMC, like many churches, holds an Ice Cream Social in the summer in July. But for the past 10 years, they've added an exciting touch: a balloon launch. All at once, 150 to 200+ red, yellow, blue, green, pink and orange helium-filled balloons are let go. Each bears a small laminated yellow card with the launcher's name and address of the church so that the person who finds it can mail it back to the church.

Whose balloon traveled the farthest? This year seven balloons were returned and they'd drifted to Nottingham, Pa. and Freeland, Md. Some years, balloons were returned from Delaware, Virginia and Ohio. The church keeps a record, which is on the church website at [www.salemchurchwolfsville.org/ice-cream-social/](http://www.salemchurchwolfsville.org/ice-cream-social/).

### Young Adult Clergy receive grant

FULTON - Projects aimed at increasing the number of young clergy in the denomination recently got a \$5.5 million boost from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Baltimore-Washington Conference received a \$15,000 grant from the board as part of the GBHEM's Young Clergy Initiative grants.

Of the 164 Young Clergy Initiative grants applications received, 75 were granted, ranging from \$100,000 to \$5,000, bringing the total to \$5.5 million of a \$7 million fund created by General Conference 2012. The money comes from the World Service apportionment fund.

The Rev. Ianther Mills, pastor of Asbury UMC in Washington, vice president of GBHEM, and chair of the Division of Ordained Ministry, gave the report of the grants during the GBHEM Board of Directors meeting Aug. 6-8.

Sandra Ferguson, conference Director of Connectional Ministries, applied for the grant, which she said will be used for "Young Adult Clergy from different cultures working in ministry as global partners; developing mutual understanding; building on a common Wesleyan tradition and strengthening pastoral ministry."

### Old shoes gain a purpose

CROFTON - Among its many ministries, Community-Trinity Cooperative Parish collects worn out athletic shoes. They're particular, they want them size 6 or more.

The shoes are for the Perpetual Pumps Program, which refurbishes them, then sells them and uses the profits to bring irrigation pumps to the dry lands of Africa.

# Needed next steps following Ferguson, Mo.

COMMENTARY FROM THE REV. JOE DANIELS\*

**F**ERGUSON, MISSOURI, IS a stark reminder to us: those who believe that America is in a post-racial era really need to take their heads out of the sand.

Racism is alive and well.

Not only is our president racially harassed and mimicked globally, but “stop racism” advertisements pervaded the World Cup in Brazil.

And here in the United States, not only are we struggling to address the establishment of fair immigration policy, but after YEARS of Jim Crow and racial discrimination and profiling, young black boys from New York to Florida, Ohio to Missouri and beyond are losing their lives to citizens and police who shoot without cause.

At least six bullets into the body of a youth for simply jaywalking makes no sense.

What the movie “The Butler” called us to deal with (and the Oscars sought to ignore) is that we still have major civil rights issues in this country that need to be addressed NOW. And, that as much as we would seek to run from the problems within our nation while rushing to cure the problems of others abroad, we must have the courage to enter into -- yet again -- a national dialogue on race and class.

Community leaders of all kinds need to initiate it.

The president and Congress need to initiate it.

Above all, the Church ought to be demanding it and leading it in bold, healthy, safe and creative ways.



Ti del imustibus, non re estibernatur aliat eniet que natur?

The militarization of the police against a segment of society which has deep history, anger and pain regarding those who wear the badge is not the answer. Never has been; never will be. Prayer, dialogue, constructive activism and sustained, concrete steps to justice and

fairness for all is the process that will lead to peace. #Godhelpus! #stayencouraged!

\*Joe Daniels is superintendent of the Greater Washington District of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

# What have we wrought? – the legacy of kjkajsdlijfapsdfj

BY REV. C. ANTHONY HUNT

**G**ROWING UP IN the Methodist Church, it often puzzled me as to why and how there came to be so many Methodist Churches located in such close proximity to one another. St. Paul Methodist Church — the church in which I was baptized as an infant — was a small church, all of whose members were black. Although I was regularly taken to church by my parents and grandparents, the problem of race in the church really didn't dawn on me until 1969 when I was seven years old.

That was the year that St. Paul received its first white minister. That was also the year that there began to be discussions and outward overtures from the white Methodist church around the corner (Oxon Hill), about shared ministries and possible merger. Up to that point, the two churches seemed to exist in two separate worlds. Although they were less than a mile apart, in the same denomination and supposedly worshipping and serving the same God, the churches were, in fact, essentially invisible to each other.

It was at the point when serious talks of merger and shared ministry began that the realities of racial division in the church came to the surface for the members of both St. Paul and Oxon Hill churches. Up until 1968, St. Paul, one of the oldest Methodist churches in Maryland, had been a part of the Washington Conference and the Central Jurisdiction — all-black sub-structures that had been created within the larger denomination with the uniting of Methodist factions in 1939 — while Oxon Hill had been an established and well-regarded member of the Baltimore Conference and the broader Methodist Church.

The creation of The United Methodist Church in 1968 with the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church, and the subsequent elimination of the Central Jurisdiction — and effectively the Washington Conference — offered what seemed to be new hope that congregations like St. Paul and Oxon Hill, which had up to that point remained segregated, could heal their racial wounds and work towards reconciliation and eventual union.

Despite the hope engendered by these circumstances, the talk of congregational merger brought the often unspoken wounds of race division painfully to the fore. Who would be the pastor of the newly merged racially integrated congregation? Would she or he be black or white? How would the committees of the new church be established? How would power and leadership be shared? How would finances be handled? In what style would the new congregation worship? The talks of merger eventually ceased, and today these two congregations continue to co-exist less than a mile apart from one another.

The experiences of St. Paul and Oxon Hill United

Methodist Churches are not unique within the historical context of Methodism.

In October, we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of emancipation in Maryland and the creation of the Washington Conference. Bishop James Thomas intimates in the title of his book on the story of the Central Jurisdiction that its existence was Methodism's “racial dilemma.” At the meeting at which the Washington Conference was established as a part of the Central Jurisdiction, it has been said that Bishop Edgar Love asked, “What have we wrought?”

For black Methodists, the results of the “Uniting Conference of 1939” in Kansas City and the establishment of the Central Jurisdiction (and subsequently the Washington Conference) effectively meant the establishment of a “denomination within a denomination — a church within a church.”

Dr. William B. McLain, in his 1999 article, “When a Dream is Deferred,” intimates that the creation of the Central Jurisdiction was yet another effort of the Methodist Church to rid itself of the race problem by sweeping it under the church's “rug,” as was evident with the 1939 Plan of Union and the compromises among the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Protestant Church. One of the selling points of the establishment of an all-black jurisdiction and conferences was that black Methodists would be able to elect their own bishops and build their own institutions.

In 1968, at the dawn of the formation of The United Methodist Church and the elimination of the former Central Jurisdiction, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. eloquently and prophetically cautioned that with the

elimination of the Central Jurisdiction, there existed the possibility of black Methodists “being integrated out of power.” Some 46 years later, we are left to ponder the profundity and accuracy of King's observation. McClain asserted that notwithstanding the 1968 merger, the legacy of segregation has continued to plague The United Methodist Church.

What have we wrought? Indeed, the effects of church segregation of the past persist in United Methodism today. In fact, the vast majority of United Methodist congregations across racial, ethnic and geographic lines remain essentially segregated. The legacy of racial segregation is most evident in the decline of many black United Methodist congregations. Over the past 50 years, this decline is apparent in consistently decreasing membership, worship attendance, stewardship, and diminished vitality in worship and witness in many churches.

And yet today, a biblical-theological prospect, as rooted in a question raised by the prophet Ezekiel in the 6th century B.C.E., is before us: “Who will stand in the breach? I looked for anyone among them who would repair the wall and stand in the breach...but I found no one.” (Ez. 22:30)

As one who is counted among those who are products of the Washington Conference, and as a committed United Methodist, I stand with many others on the legacy of our segregated past with a hope rooted in the promises of God. As we who are of many hues continue to work together towards truly becoming the “United” Methodist Church, this is a hope that with God's help, our future will outshine our tragic past.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Why the apportionment report?

As a new pastor, I was shocked by the decision to publish the progress on apportionment payments of every church in the conference (UMConnection, August issue). What was the intent of publishing this information? To celebrate churches that have improved from last year or that pay 100 percent? Then why not simply publish the names of those churches? Or was it to put pressure on or publicly shame underpaying churches?

I fully support our church's apportionment process, but tactics like this only widen the rift between local, especially smaller, congregations and the wider church. That dynamic was further highlighted by the publication of this list in counterpoint with the story of the bishop's cabinet's “goodwill trip” (which might look like a vacation to some members — did apportionments pay for it?) to Korea and Japan.

What we have here is a tale of two conferences: one for the elite, the wealthy and those in the know; and one for the struggling, the marginalized and the forgotten.

Please reconsider this ill-advised and potentially divisive practice.

Rev. Mark Gorman  
Pastor, Centre UMC  
Forest Hill

# Concerts planned to benefit Northwood-Appold

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

**J**ACK AND MAUREEN Danz met at Northwood-Appold UMC before it was United Methodist. Now married 51 years, the Danzes were part of the church's vibrant youth ministry in the 50s and 60s.

When Northwood-Appold UMC burned two days after Christmas last year, the Danzes were on site that afternoon, taking in the tragic scene. Thankfully, no lives were lost nor injuries sustained in the blaze, but all that remained were the outer brick walls of the church.

Today, Jack and Maureen are members of Grace UMC in Baltimore, but they're leading an effort to raise money for the rebuilding of their former church. A benefit concert is planned for Saturday, Oct. 25, at 7 p.m., at Grace UMC in Baltimore, featuring the music of the Maryland Boychoir and the chancel choir of Grace UMC. The Danzes said Grace holds 500 people and they would love to have a full sanctuary.

"The proceeds will go to Northwood-Appold," said Jack Danz, "to help with replacing their 'soft stuff'. Yes, the church had insurance, but they also need to replace things like Bibles, hymnals, Sunday school materials... 'soft stuff'."

The goal, he said, is to get the church back up and going again. All that was saved from the church after the fire was the cross on top of the steeple. "We want to get that cross back up where it belongs," said Jack.

Today, a tarp covers the roof of the church and reconstruction efforts have yet to begin. Danz said that the church has held several meetings with members of the community so that when the church rebuilds, it will better meet their needs.

"The re-building of Northwood-Appold is moving forward," said the church's pastor, the Rev. Cecil Gray. "It's slower than we desire, but at God's pace, we are sure."

Gray said that the trustees of the church meet

frequently as they travel what he called a "journey" of restoration, resurrection, rebirth and new birth.

"We can only be thankful that God has chosen us to travel this journey," he said, "and we are certain that God is leading and guiding us to the victory."

Gray said that the Danz's and the congregation at Grace UMC are "incredible people." He also thanked the Rev. Amy McCullough, Grace UMC's pastor, and the Rev.



Ti del imustibus, non re estibernatur aliat eniet que

Nancy Webb, Grace's former pastor, for their support.

"I am humbled and thankful for the benefit concerts for the rebuilding of NAUMC," Gray said.

The October concert is a partnership between the two congregations, said Maureen Danz. She recalled going to the church in the 50s and 60s when Northwood was the fastest growing church in the Baltimore Metropolitan area, and the center of everyone's social network.

"Even if you didn't attend Sunday services there," she said, "you attended one of their many other activities during the week."

The benefit concert came about, Jack said, after a lunch the Danzes had with the church's pastor, the Rev. Cecil Gray, and his wife, Sonya, soon after the fire. At

that meal, it was noted that the Maryland Boychoir had recently moved into a renovated church building; they had, in turn, offered that building as a possible worship location for Northwood-Appold.

Church leaders had respectfully declined the invitation, preferring to worship across the street at the church's Charter School location.

But, said Jack, if the choir was willing to offer their building, maybe they'd offer their services instead. Thus was born the idea of the October concert.

Maureen Danz said that one of the tragedies of the fire was the loss of all the church's archives and history. She encouraged anyone with old photographs, bulletins, letters or other documents who would be willing to donate them to bring them to the concert.

When asked why she and Jack were putting all this work into raising money for a church they used to attend, Maureen said: "We just needed an outlet for our emotions. This is it."

## One Night ROCK

In addition to the benefit at Grace UMC, a special One Night ROCK will be held on Friday, Sept. 12, at 7 p.m., at Towson UMC in Towson. Preston Centuolo, the featured speaker at the annual ROCK youth retreat last January, along with Urban Street Level, will be performing. Tickets and registration information are available at [http://www.bwcm.org/events/rock\\_benefit\\_rebuilding\\_northwood\\_appold\\_umc](http://www.bwcm.org/events/rock_benefit_rebuilding_northwood_appold_umc).

To buy tickets for the Maryland Boychoir benefit concert at Grace UMC on Oct. 25, e-mail [office@graceunitedmethodist.org](mailto:office@graceunitedmethodist.org), or call Northwood-Appold UMC at 410-323-6712.

# Amid storm and controversies youth learns to love

BY EDDIE MCWILLIAMS  
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**I**N THE wee hours of July 16, I arrived at the retreat center in the Philippines where the 2014 Global Young People's Convocation was to be held. I then found my room on the top floor of a dormitory building and settled in. I met my two roommates: Bob from Uganda, and Charles from Zambia.

I rested for a few hours until a man came to the door and instructed us that we needed to relocate to the ground floor due to a heightened level of danger from Typhoon Rammasun, or "Glenda."

Soon after sunrise we were instructed to move to Isaiah Hall which was to be our meeting area. We spent our time meeting delegates from across the world, playing games and singing songs. The leadership periodically updated the assembly about our situation and if we were going to find a new place to live. After dinner, we were told that we had a place to spend the night and we soon moved.

The third day, July 18, we had morning worship which went over schedule by 45 minutes. We had a workshop session and I attended a talk about discipleship-making in which we shared our personal experiences from our own church ministries. It was a good time to meet people from other churches and learn about their youth programs and mission work.

On our fourth day, after helping to pack bags of food for families affected by the typhoon, I returned to the assembly. The petition being discussed called for the inclusion of the term "sexual orientation" into Article IV of the Book of Discipline, which deals with membership discrimination. It was amended to also include the term "gender."

Sexual orientation is a very controversial issue and there were only three speeches allowed in favor of any petition, and three speeches allowed against a petition. People still wanted to speak for and against the petition, however, so they asked questions that were rhetorical, and truly just hidden speeches. The petition was eventually voted upon and failed to pass, according to a report I have read about the conference. At the conference, I thought people said it had passed. Sometimes it was difficult to follow along with the proceedings due to people talking in the assembly.

As the final session approached its ending time of 8:45 p.m., a movement passed to extend the session until all

legislation was finished. This end time would be around 2:00 in the morning, but I went to bed at 10:30. Before I left, however, a second petition was argued. It called to allow clergy to marry homosexual couples. This petition was very controversial.

Many argumentative questions were asked. A common question was: "How can we pass this legislation when the Bible clearly defines marriage between a man and a woman?"

Finally, an African helped to sway the vote with his question. He asked what the African churches were supposed to do when their communities disowned them, or tried to murder them? I'm not sure how many people from outside of Africa know of the murders and executions of homosexuals and gay rights supporters on that continent. I have read about them online for years, and my roommate Bob expressed his concern for the violence against homosexuals in his home country of Uganda.

The second vote resulted in the petition not passing. I went to sleep after that legislation, but was woken up around 2a.m. by the voting delegates returning to the cabana. They said they finished all of the legislation but it had gotten heated. During a debate about homosexuality, one delegate called another a rat and was ushered out of the assembly.

The final day, July 20, we moved to Manila and attended local church services.

At the service I attended that evening, someone read a statement to the convocation. It was a statement of unity among the young people of the church. It was presented to the assembly to be voted as an official statement by the young people that we do not want to see a schism in the church, that we respect our differences and our brothers and sisters in faith. It passed unanimously and then we started the church service.

This was the first time that I have ever been so connected to people from other countries. I have had many international students in my classes in high school and at my university, but this experience was much more personal.

I've been to Israel and China for tourism, and I met interesting people from those countries, but at GYPCLA, I had the opportunity to live with my global peers. It's a very personal experience to wake up with peers from Uganda and Zambia, and then to eat breakfast with friends from Germany and the Philippines.

For me, the fellowship was the best part of the trip. We are one body in Christ and this was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet the other parts of that body. This assembly made me proud of my faith and its values. Our main job in this assembly was to listen to one another. We were supposed to hear the opinions of our brothers and sisters from across the planet about the issues presented before us, and then vote on those issues.

I took it farther than that, and I know many others did also. We didn't just listen to each other about the petitions; we listened to our friends' problems. Bob told me about his difficulty finding work. He says in Uganda there aren't many jobs. He studies information technologies when he can earn enough money to pay for a semester of classes. In the meantime, he tries to practice his skills by doing work on computers for pay.

In doing all of this listening, I felt the message of Jesus. He would eat with the sinners and touch lepers, people who were ignored or harassed by the society they lived in. At GYPCLA we crossed geographical, cultural, and racial boundaries. No one was ignored because they were different. I was welcomed to eat with the Russians or play games with the Ugandans. We were one body and the togetherness that our faith brings us affected me deeply.

During a bus ride, a friend I met, Anton, and I were discussing U.S. and Russia relations. After discussing the anger and suspicion between our nations, he said he doesn't think the governments ever represented the people. He traveled to the U.S. some years ago and met many good, friendly people. He doesn't think all Americans are war mongers or mass murderers like he hears about in the news. I told him I never thought all Russians were Commies trying to sabotage our national treasures like I'd seen in the movies.

We agreed that it is the people of Russia and the U.S.A. who should meet each other and learn to love one another.

I think that was what I took away most from GYPCLA: To love your neighbor.