Better Together: Unity in the Midst of Diversity

By Rev. Rebecca L. Holland

The opening worship for Annual Conference 2019 was held at Hershey Lodge on Thursday, May 30, 2019 at 2:00 PM. In attendance were about 2,000 people, both clergy and laity, representing about 890 churches throughout the Annual Conference.

“We are gathered for such a time as this,” Bishop Park stated, “The United Methodist Church is at a crossroads... the theme of our Annual Conference is, ‘Better Together: One With Each Other.’ But what will this look like?” He went on to emphasize our unity in Christ. The entire opening worship service placed an emphasis on the beautiful harmony that can be achieved when different voices and different people remember the unity that is grounded in our baptismal covenant.

Harmony Illustrated Through Liturgy

There is something powerful in hearing 2,000 voices lifted together in song. The unity of the body of Christ is strongly evident when the congregation worships together. It is fitting that the logo for Annual Conference 2019 depicts the hands of a conductor. An orchestra needs all of its instruments just as just as the body of Christ cannot exist without all its members. Different voices and different people demonstrate what faithful discipleship is about as they constantly offer so freely their gifts and graces to the ministry of the church... Thanks be to God for you!”

“You Are of Sacred Worth”

Bishop Park also made space to recognize the pain and anguish that many people on both sides of the divide are feeling within the United Methodist Church, both here and throughout our global connection. “This is the first time we have gathered since the 2019 General Conference in February,” stated the Bishop. He said that this is a “painful,” moment in the journey of our church.

The Bishop then read an extended quote from a letter which was sent to him from the parents of children who identified part of the LGBTQ community. “Many parts of society are difficult for LGBTQ people,” read the Bishop. “As the parents of two such children, we are keenly aware of this. We have always wanted church to be a place where our children could find a balm for the harsh cruelty of the world... the results of the special General Conference 2019 have brought the cruelty of the larger world sharply into focus. We are wondering what the right answer is for our family.” After reading these words, the Bishop stated, “The hurt is real and deep. To our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, and to you the parents of LGBTQ children, I want you to hear from me that I am sorry. I am sorry for the hurts and pains that you live through because you and your loved ones have been made to feel less than God’s beloved children. You are of sacred worth to God. You are God’s beloved. My prayers will continue to be with you for the grace...”

What’s Your Legacy?

By Rev. Bethany Wood

The Susquehanna Annual Conference gathered in prayer and remembrance as the stirring strains of “It Is Well With My Soul” sounded through the worship space. Chaplain Colonel Jerry Sieg led the congregation in the call to worship and prayer, setting the tone for the evening. Following the singing of “Rejoice in God’s Saints”, a very special saint was remembered by her grandson, Ian Haverton, whose grandmother was the beloved long-term treasurer of the Susquehanna Conference, Zedna Haverton, gave a heartfelt tribute to the woman who was as much a part of this annual conference as breathing. He read the New Testament lesson, Hebrews 12:1-3, which, he said, reminded him of her.

Dr. Frank Darby and Rev. Dr. Brand Eaton led in the remembrance of those who have gone on to glory since our time together last year. Gifts of Bibles and stoles will be given to brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone, remembering both lay and clergy honored this might. With the tolling of the bell, the names were read, followed by prayer.

The epic hymn “For All the Saints” was sung. Hope Harrison, granddaughter of Rev. Charles and Mrs. Nancy Zimmerman, read Philippians 1:3-11. Harrison gave tribute to her grandparents, reminiscing that they...
Preachers' Aid Society (9035) has existed since 1869 to provide aid to clergy of our Conference, their spouses, and children in times of emergencies. In 2015 a Seminary Debt Program was initiated because we became aware of the number of clergy, especially younger ones, who had substantial debts related to their seminary work. The Society offers annual grants as funds are available to help reduce these debts and help clergy pay them off more quickly. This offering will support The Society's ministry.

SPECIAL OFFERING FOR TODAY
Celebration of Ministry Service, Friday, May 31, 2019

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By Skip Spangler
Susquehanna Daily LINK Editor

Back in the day, I was in my High School's marching band, and we were having a miserable practice. The music was an accidental fugue. The formations were ragged. The marching was a shuffle. It was hot. We were tired. We wanted to go home. We fumbled our way through the show. At long last, we stood in silent attention. Relief was only three words away. Our band director lifted the bullhorn to his mouth, and he said: “Okay, people. Let’s do it again.” We all said it. One band. One sound. We all said: “Not Again!” Our band director didn’t miss a beat. He snapped his bullhorn to his mouth. Next thing we heard was: “Not again! Better!”

Church works that way. It was Christmas Eve. Three services as usual. It was late. The crowd was small. It was snowing. We were worried. We were tired. Christmas was an hour away. We all wanted to go home. We circled for prayer. All was silent. All was not calm. A lone voice spoke: “Let’s do it again.” I didn’t miss a beat: “Not again!” I said. “Better!”

The Bible says that. In his letter to the Philippian Church, Paul wrote "I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:12-14)

Paul wrote those words to a church that provided him with hospitality, stuck with him when others had not, and hearing that he was in jail again, did Paul one better. They had sent him a friend to provide food and company. Over time, Paul learned that for all its vitality, the church in Philippi was anxious. Key leaders were at odds. Others turned the gospel into serving their own agendas. There was envy. There was rivalry. There was conceit. Paul had it seen all before. He urged the church one better: "Make my joy complete… Do nothing out of selfish ambition… in humility value others above yourselves… have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:3-5)

We are here again not to be some same church again. We are here to be a church God makes perfect in love by doing the faithful work of gathering in holy conference again.

What’s Up for Today
8 a.m. – Second Plenary
Get your workbook out and have your pen ready. Our morning includes ballots to elect General Conference delegates, and action on recommendations from annual conference commissions and boards.

Noon – Lunch
Lunch will be served in the Chocolate Ball Room and the Red Ball Room.

Noon – Awards Luncheon
will gather in Cocoa Terrace / Cocoa 1

Noon – The Deacon’s Luncheon
will gather in Cocoa Suite 2

Noon – The Wesley Theological Seminary Luncheon
will gather in Wild Rose A

1:30 p.m. – Third Plenary
Refreshed and renewed, we return to an afternoon of prayerful conferencing that will feature celebrations of connectional ministries, General Conference ballots, and action on various resolutions.

5:30 p.m. – Dinner
5:30 p.m. – The Ministry Night Dinner
will gather in Cocoa Terrace / Cocoa 1

7 p.m. – The Celebration of Ministry
Tonight we will honor the ministry of 25 retiring clergy with a combined total of over 790 years of service.

Drop your tools and equipment at the Disaster Response table outside of the Great American Hall. Your financial support can also be dropped off there or sent directly to the Conference office noting Disaster Response Ministry Advance #8055.

Details and registration available at susumc.org/navigate

$199 Early bird registration pricing ends on June 1! (Lodging and meals separate)

If you are unable to attend all three days you can register for Saturday only for just $69!

Susquehanna Daily LINK - May 31, 2019
of assurance, strength, perseverance, healing, and wholeness." Bishop Park stated that General Conference 2019 confirmed a fundamental difference in the United Methodist Church. "Global unity seems to prevail over denominational unity at this time," said Bishop Park, "but Christ is emphasized seven times in the Act of Union. ‘We have,’ stated Bishop Park, ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God.”

Bishop Park noted that our unity with Christ is emphasized seven times in this brief excerpt of scripture. "Seven is a perfect number that signifies completion...Christians, God’s people, which church are we? We are convinced that you are one as the followers of Jesus Christ? As the church you cannot be anything else but one.”

Bishop Park spoke about the sacrament of baptism as the foundation of our unity. "Regardless of how our future journey may be shaped, each one of us should carry in our hearts a biblical truth that we are made one in our baptism...Baptism confirms that we are one people who have a common identity.”

**Christ’s Love Units Us**

According to Bishop Park, as the people of Christ, we also share one destiny. Baptism is a covenant between us and God. We are God’s beloved. "The love that matters most, no one can take it away from one of us...We all want to be loved. We have an innate insatiable appetite to be loved.” Bishop Park continued as he emphasized the beauty of God’s love. "You are mine and I am yours. We are not what the world says we are. We are what God says you are. Baptism, God’s beloved, yesterday, tomorrow, and forever.”

"In this world where so many people are searching for their identity and seeking love. There is no greater thing that one person can do for another than assure them that they are accepted by God...and formed by God in their sacred worth...Each one of us is loved by God unconditionally with God’s infinite love now and forever. There is always hope with Jesus Christ.” Bishop Park concluded his sermon by asking the congregation to consider, “How can we place a hope, at the center of our life and work?”

Hope Lives

Bishop Park concluded his sermon by reflecting that as he was preparing her message, the word “legacy” kept cropping up. "Legacy” encompasses the following questions, “What will people say about you? What will people say about that there will be a resurrection in our church?” Bishop Park then invited the congregation to know that there will be a resurrection in our church.”

He expressed his concern about the need for harmony and one-ness out of many…Harmony comes alive when everyone in the community understands that each one has a part in the larger picture - and each one has sacred worth. Bishop Park used Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 12 to remind us that there are many parts but only one body, "Our church must be a witness to the harmony that Christ makes in and through us. No matter what the path of our church may be, God’s people, keep harmony in mind.”

**We Are One**

Bishop Park continued to emphasize that the theme of “one-ness” and unity was clearly evident in his selected scripture. "Seven is a perfect number that signifies completion...Christians, God’s people, which church are we? We are convinced that you are one as the followers of Jesus Christ? As the church you cannot be anything else but one.”

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**Leigey’s Love for Grandmother**

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Rev. Karen W. Atanassoff

Rev. Atanassow was recommended for ministry by St. Paul, Harrisburg. She was ordained in 1985 and 1988. She served Half Moon; Julian-Martha; Axemann-Weaver; Rolling Hills; Town Hill; Millersburg First; Hershey First; Williamsport Pine Street; Rockville. She also served as Assistant Elder, Harrisburg District.

Rev. Atanassow and her husband, Stevan, will reside at 1605 S. Geyer Church Rd., Middletown, PA 17057-4302.

The gift of being in ministry has been undergirded by two very United Methodist hallmarks: connection and grace. I say, "Thank You." Thank you first and foremost to Jesus, the ONLY reason I have been in ministry. I have shared the Good News of Jesus, laughed, cried, struggled, overcome, succeeded and failed alongside God’s faith-filled people. My colleagues and friends have helped to shape my ministry.

Rev. Arlene P. Beecher

Rev. Beecher was recommended for ministry by Morton Hills Greene. She was ordained in 1989 and 1992. She served Greene-Town Hill; Coxsackie; Fiskville; Curwensville; and Muncey. She also served as Superintendent, Williamsport District.

Rev. Beecher will reside at 1669 Route 81, Earlton, NY 12058-2040.

My greatest joy throughout my ministry has been to walk with people on their faith journeys. To stand with them as they face the challenges of life, when they are most vulnerable in the Valley. To rejoice with them as they celebrate the joyous moments and life together. Above all to watch them grow in faith and to claim Easter hope.

Rev. Harold Artis Bolyard, Jr.

Rev. Bolyard, Jr. was recommended to ministry by Kirkwood, DE. He was ordained in 1986 and 1988. He served Moyers’ Chapel/STohn; Laurel; Rock Hall; Keystone Perry; Trinity Charge; Walnut Bottom.

Rev. Bolyard, Jr. and his wife, Dianne, will reside at 4816 Tri Par Dr., Sarasota, FL 34234-4123.

I have been truly blessed during my 34 years of pastoral ministry in the Pennsylvania-Delaware, Central Pennsylvania, and Susquehanna Annual Conference. I have been taught much, experienced much, and loved much. I have been challenged and changed, enthralled and disappointed, joyous, and stressed out. Being a pastor has been an experience I wouldn’t have wanted to miss. I praise God for His calling and each blessing He has given me.

Pastor Andrew A. Bucke

Pastor Bucke was recommended for ministry by Cemetery Ridge. He was licensed to preach in 2011. He served Dresslers Ridge.

Pastor Bucke and his wife, Ruth, will reside at 14 Cherry Rd., Liverpool, PA 17045-9221.

It has been a joy to take up the mantle of ministry that has been such a central part of both my and my wife Ruth’s families. Since childhood I have felt surrounded with love by pastors and church laity who have supported and cherished me in whatever I was doing. That continued when I was also able to feel that love and support from the congregation I served. What a blessed opportunity.

Rev. Joan S. Dodson

Rev. Dodson was licensed to preach in 2000 and became an Associate Member in 2012. She served Pleasant Mount; Scranton Urban Ministry; St. Peter’s and Throop; Lake Winola; and Montandon/ Northumberland Christ.

Rev. Dodson and her husband, Don, will reside at 29 Walnut Ridge Estates, Middletown, PA 17742-7836.

I began the journey to serve the church as a pastor answering God’s call to ministry in 2000. I have always found joy in the journey of life. Once I answered God’s call to ministry, I realized a peace that passed all understanding. In ministry I have shared God’s love through Jesus. I am closest to God when I share that love with others.

Rev. Ralph B. Hartenbach

Rev. Hartenbach was recommended for ministry by Coudersport Park. He was ordained in 1979 and 1982. He served Genesse-Ulysses; Catawissa. First; Buckhorn; Rupert; Good Shepherds/Buckhorn; Berwick Bower Memorial; Berwick Bower Memorial/St Pauls.

Rev. Hartenbach and his wife, Julie, will reside at 1001 Holly Dr., Berwick, PA 18003-2410.

By the grace of God, I have been privileged to stand in the breach for the Lord and for the conference to share the Gospel in the Northern Tier. This has been both a great challenge and a great blessing. The Lord’s people’s welcome and whom to whom I have ministered have proven to be the same exceptional people. Both my wife and I are grateful.

Rev. Marian E. Hartman

Rev. Hartman was recommended for ministry by Gettysburg. She was ordained in 1980 and 1982. She served Doylestown; Hawai‘i; Grace; McKeytown; Lenhart Mt; and retired in 2006. She returned to active status and served Wellsboro; Trucksville; and also served the Superintendent, Scranton/Wilkes-Barré District.

Rev. Hartman will reside at 438 W. High St., New Bloomfield, PA 17008-9643.

It has been an amazing journey. I may have learned more from the people I have served than they have learned from me. I have shared the Good News of Jesus, laughed, cried, struggled, overcome, succeeded and failed alongside God’s faith-filled people. My colleagues and friends have helped to shape my ministry. My life has been, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.” I pray that my feet have been – beautiful feet. It has been a privilege and a blessing to serve Jesus in the calling.

Pastor Sandra R. Hemker

Pastor Hemker was recommended for ministry by Whitewylie. She was licensed to preach in 2012. She served Valley Community Parish (formerly Elkland); Whitewylie.

Pastor Hemker and her husband, Allan, will reside at 2427 Charleston Rd., Mansfield, PA 16933-8857.

My ministry over the past 46 years has included children’s ministry, chaplaincy, associate pastor with the Assembly of God Church; as well as 9 years with the United Methodist Church.

Pastor Robert F. Henry

Pastor Henry was recommended to ministry by Trinity Clearfield. He was licensed to preach in 2005. He served as Chaplain at the State Correctional Institution; Houtzdale. He also served Cearfield Trinity and Greater Shawnee Parish.

Rev. Dale L. Hemeny

Rev. Hemeny was recommended for ministry by Trinity Cumberland. He was ordained in 2012 and 1988. He served Milroy; Fairbrook; Lebanon Grace; York Aldergate; and Milton St Ann's.

Rev. Hemeny and his wife, Janet, will reside at 535 North Rd., York, PA 17406-3257.

Early in ministry a parishioner referred to me as a “dispenser of hope.” I never tried to shake off that description. I have been honored to serve the Lord and the people of God. Throughout the ministry I have met brothers and sisters in faith, found new challenges and new friends, and felt the presence of the Lord guiding my way. I have had the great joy of sharing the gospel of love and salvation and of seeing people come alive as they too felt the presence of the Lord in their lives. Through it all God has given me a song in my heart. I am waiting to see where the Spirit will lead next.

Rev. Dennis A. Hummel

Rev. Hummel was recommended for ministry by Grace Lewistown. He was ordained in 1970 and 1974. He served Loganville; Williamsport Ball’s Mills; Rose Valley; Charing; Hallifax; Linglestown; Dillsburg Calvary; and Yorkshire.

Rev. Hummel and his wife, Patricia, will reside at 4170 Greedys Dr., York, PA 17402-3344.
I am in awe that God called me to Christ even longer and farther! In claiming "the world as my parish," love and grace, while serving a single so many more lives and extend God's has given me the opportunity to touch secular and parachurch occupations, Pastor Kocek and his wife, Patty, will reside at 316 Sterling Dr., Muncy, PA 17756-8344.

A parishioner once told me it was obvious that I didn't choose to be a pastor, God chose me. When it comes to the meaning of my ministering over the years, one word comes to mind, "Unexpected." No one really expected me to become an ordained minister. I have always thought of myself as a reluctant and somewhat rebellious servant — totally amazed that God could use me. It’s been an unexpected journey into the lives of God’s people. "Lately it occurs to me what a long, strange trip it’s been. It’s time to hang it up and see what tomorrow brings." ("Truckin"); Lyrics by the Greatful Dead!

Pastor Frank J. Kocek
Pastor Kocek was recommended for ministry by Wesley Mont Alto. He was licensed to preach in 1998. He served Mont Alto Wesley; Warfordsburg.

Pastor Kocek and his wife, Patty, will reside at 28 Reynolds Ave., Mont Alto, PA 17237-9613.

Having served the Church as my 'avocation,' while employed in other secular and parachurch occupations, has given me the opportunity to touch so many more lives and extend God’s love and grace, while serving a single charge for the entirety of these decades. Thus, I am able to identify with Wesley in claiming "the world as my parish," and hope to ever continue to proclaim Christ even longer and farther!

Rev. Bradley E. Marple
Rev. Marple was recommended for ministry by Archer, Allen Dale. NJ. He was ordained in 1989 and 1992. He served Scott Valley and Warren Center.

Rev. Eugene W. McCallips
Rev. McCallips was recommended for ministry by Grace Lewistown. He was ordained in 1980 and 1983. He served Lewistown Grace (Associate); Thompsonstown; Middlesex; Fairbrook; and Fairbrook Extended. He also served as Assisting Elder, State College.

Rev. McCallips and his wife, Cheryl, will reside at 2038 Pine Cliff Rd., State College, PA 16801-2404. I was amazed to discover that a purely secular 24-year old, that God does indeed speak to both corporately and individually. I’ve spent these past years encouraging the people of God to listen for his voice and to find contentment in joyful obedience to God's revealed will for our lives.

Rev. Doug H. Posegate
Rev. Posegate was recommended to ministry by Lake Hopatcong, NJ. He was ordained in 1985 and 1990. He served as a second class West Conference: Wesley; Attleboro School; Marathon; North Central NY Conference: Emmanuel; Scranton Urban Cooperative Ministries; Myrtle Street; Scranton Urban Cooperative Ministries, Director/Myrtle Street, Daleville; Methodist Urban Ministries/Fireco Carbendale & Jermy; Carbendale; and Court Street/Embury. He also served as Assisting Elder, Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District.

Rev. Posegate and his wife, Dianne, will reside at 1325 S. Webster Ave., Scranton, PA 18505-1728.

Jesus’ example in John 13:15 provides a ready reminder of God’s calling on my life. Serving the Lord for this duration, is testimony to God’s patient, steadfast love. If it caused the saving souls, or did further the in-breaking kingdom, then God’s sure to be praised. Filling short, I call upon God’s mercies. Failures taught me well! I especially thank short, I call upon God’s mercy. Failures did further the in-breaking kingdom, my ministry has simply been in response to my conversion experience as a teenager and to the call to the ordained ministry affirmed by my pastor. Throughout my ministry, I have focused on being a servant of Christ seeking to love and serve others with the hope that they would love God and music and have and the greatest relationship anyone can ever have, which is the relationship with Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and Savior.

Rev. L. Fitzgerald "Gere" Reist, II
Rev. Reist II was recommended by Rockville Harrisburg. He was ordained in 1972 and 1978. He served Elders-Fowlers Valley; Union Deposit-Shirk’s Church; Millerton-Daggett; Harrisburg Grace (Associate); Machine-Daggett Grace; Albena Fairview; Harrisburg, State Street; Shippensburg Messiah; and Harrisburg Grace. He also served as Supervisor over Williamsport District; General Conference Secretary, Commission on the General Conference; General Conference; and as Superintendent, and Congregational Development for the California-Nevada Conference.

Rev. Reist II and his wife, Betty, will reside at 1252 Stony Fork Rd., Wellsboro, PA 16901-7307.

I believe that all ministry is obedience to the command of Jesus that we love one another. There is to be no one outside of that love. I do not suggest that I have been perfect in love, but I have sought perfection in love. At one time I had this thought that meant giving up a lot, but I have found that I have been given everything, the love of my wife, Beth, and daughter, Rowan, of family and of friends in ministry and of Christians around the world. I have given the world I have seen the world.

Rev. Dr. Nancy E. Topolowski
Rev. Dr. Topolowski was recommended to ministry by First Presbyterian Wilkes-Barre. She was ordained in the Presbyterian Church and transferred to the United Methodist Church in 1989. She became a full member in 1993. She served Cars Home, Covenant House, Parish/Flemingsville/Kirkwood; and Vestal Center.

Rev. Dr. Topolowski and her husband, John, will reside at PO Box 188, East Lempster, NH 03605-0188.

Ministry? A GIFT? Blessings abound! Marriage (1970); built our NH home (1976); second woman ordained (1978) by Lackawanna Presbytery; Presbyterian congregations; Ashley and Warrior Run, PA; champion Lake Loring; transferred to Wyoming Conference (1989); appointments: Flemingville, Kirkwood, and Vestal Center, NY; Administrative Assistant to Oneonta DS; volunteering ( 2006-ongoing) Good Shepherd UMC in Newport, NH; Interacting cura animarum with scholarship at Wilkes, Princeton Seminary, and Drew University, and as Assistant Editor (2006-ongoing). Honored to be honored with Jack by UM Historical Society’s Ministry of Memory Award (2018). Thanking God even for disability leave- and wouldn’t change a bit.

Rev. Robert George Wood
Rev. Wood was recommended to ministry by Port Crane, NY. He was ordained in 1984 and 1986. He served Hombrack: Appointed to School of Divinity, West Valley; Greene/Smithville Center; Wilkes-Barre Albright; Duryea; Tunkhannock; Vestal Calvary; Upper New York Conference: Whitmore Hill; Dallas; and Berwick First.

Rev. Wood and his wife, Marianne Czernysz, will reside at 317 N. Maple Ave., Apt, A, Kingston, PA 18704-3362.

I was inspired to enter the ministry by the example of the following: Rev. Robert Wood; Rev. Gary Burt, Rev. Gary Doupe, Rev. William Bouton, and Rev. Paul Gere. They were all leading the church in progressive movements. (Guy was a freedom rider. Bill lead one of the first Reconciling Churches in the nation). They were all leaning toward hospital chaplaincy - carrying then around as babies and teaching them sanctity as youth and young adults. What does the next chapter bring? Who know ... but God does.

Rev. Dr. Deborah K. Westbrook
Pastor Deborah K. Westbrook was recommended for ministry by Mt. Victory. She was licensed to preach in 2006. She served Oakville.

Rev. Bethany Patton Wood
Rev. Wood was recommended for ministry by Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), IL. She was licensed to preach in 1989. She served Claystown; York Zion, Associate; Shepherd; and Hughesville Bethany; and Town Hill.

Rev. Wood and her husband, James, will reside at 55 Heather Brooke Estates, Muncy, PA 17756-6537.

When I experienced my own call to ministry - echoing that of my Dad and Grandpa – it was little uncertain as to how that call would be shaped. Initially leaning toward hospital chaplaincy where women were more accepted at the time. God planted me firmly in the United Methodist Church and the pastorate. The joys have been profound and the difficulties fleeting. The most impactful; ministry has been with kids – carrying then around as babies and teaching them sanctity as youth and young adults. What does the next chapter bring? Who know ... but God does.

Rev. Robert George Wood
Rev. Wood was recommended to ministry by Port Crane, NY. He was ordained in 1984 and 1986. He served Hombrack: Appointed to School of Divinity, West Valley; Greene/Smithville Center; Wilkes-Barre Albright; Duryea; Tunkhannock; Vestal Calvary; Upper New York Conference: Whitmore Hill; Dallas; and Berwick First.

Rev. Wood and his wife, Marianne Czernysz, will reside at 317 N. Maple Ave., Apt, A, Kingston, PA 18704-3362.

I was inspired to enter the ministry by the example of the following: Rev. Robert Wood; Rev. Gary Burt, Rev. Gary Doupe, Rev. William Bouton, and Rev. Paul Gere. They were all involved in anti-war and other progressive movements. (Guy was a freedom rider. Bill lead one of the first Reconciling Churches in the nation). They were all leaning toward hospital chaplaincy in a healthy and loving direction. I am grateful to the United Methodist Church for allowing us to do the ministry following their example.
Two Options to be Dressed
Better Together

Annual Conference Polo & T-shirts for sale

Proceeds from the polo & t-shirt sales will be used to fund Youth scholarships to Annual Conference.

Polo Shirt
Adult Small, Medium, Large, and X-Large - $24
Adult 2XL and 3XL - $27

T-Shirt
Adult Small, Medium, Large, and X-Large - $20
Adult 2XL and 3XL - $23

Visit the Young People’s Ministry Table to get yours today!

YSF is the UM mission fund that is raised by youth, administered by youth, for the benefit of youth ministry and mission locally, nationally, and globally.

Information about 2019 YSF Grant Recipients are on the tables in the dining areas.

Apply for a YSF grant online by visiting igniteyoungpeople.org, deadline October 31, 2019.

FUNDRAISING GOAL for AC 2019 = $11,000

Candy Change Challenge
Hershey Kisses vs. Twizzlers
We what to know which one is your favorite. Drop spare change or loose bills into the bucket for the candy you would like to see win our change challenge. The candy with the most money will win and there will be a sweet reward. The competition will end Saturday at 11 a.m. Come vote for your favorite candy!

Charging Station
Long sessions, short battery life, or lost power cord - we've got you covered. Check your mobile device at the charging station in the Great American Hall and we will get you powered back up. (suggested donations $5 per phone, $10 per tablet/iPad, $20 per laptop)

Gift Basket Silent Auction (20 Baskets)
Bidding on gift baskets will be open until 9 a.m. on Saturday. There are over 20 baskets that will be waiting to go home with you! Place a bid on your favorite baskets at the YSF display table.

By giving generously our youth can continue to be vital in their communities and the world.

Thank You!
what happened, he said before every study, he would spend time praying, and he

Brother Seymour went into isolation and would not speak about the

Before We Do Anything

By Debra Steransky

Rev. Kibbey, who serves on the West Ohio Conference’s executive staff as

Rev. Kibbey asked, “What would happen if your church prayed like this?

What would happen if your church prayed like this?

susumcamps.org
Delegates from the 2019 special called session of General Conference gave the first report of the 2019 Susquehanna Annual Conference plenary sessions. Head delegate Lisa Bender related that St. Louis was indeed a “challenging conference.” She indicated that all members of the Susquehanna Conference delegation are willing to have conversations with both clergy and lay members who have questions about the proceedings and votes.

First-elected clergy delegate Larry Leland introduced a video report compiled by United Methodist Communications. The video offered sound bites from General Conference delegates from around the world. One delegate expressed the importance of “this time in history” for the United Methodist Church. Another confessed the many anxieties and fears over “what might come out of [the decisions].” One commented “we have more in common that we disagree about.”

The video recounted several of the General Conference’s voting outcomes. The vote to adopt the One Church Plan received 438 Yes votes and 436 No votes; the One Church Plan was not adopted. The vote concerning the Traditional Plan received 386 Yes votes and 384 No votes and was thus approved by the General Conference.

The video report concluded with additional sound bites. One person expressed that each organization plan inherently contained divisive elements. Another concluded by offering thanks for the delegates’ forgiveness, graciousness, and work done.

Rev. Tom Saltsgiver offered remarks clarifying the judicial council decisions on the Traditional Plan and the provisions adopted for the process of disaffiliation.

Regarding the Traditional Plan, the wording of ¶304.3 and the footnote regarding self-identity of LGBTQI persons was deemed constitutional. Also constitutional are the language prohibiting the officiating of same gender weddings, prohibiting the ordination and commissioning of self-avowed-practicing homosexual persons, and prohibiting of District Committees on Ordained Ministries and Board of Ordained Ministers from passing self-avowed-practicing LGBTQI persons. The penalties for officiating a same gender wedding were also deemed constitutional.

The judicial council’s decision over unconstitutional sections of the Traditional Plan are summarized as follows: members of BOOM are not mandated to make a formal pledge to uphold the Book of Discipline; bishops are not mandated to make a formal pledge to uphold the Book of Discipline, and members of BOOM may not inquire of candidates based on one specific section of the Book of Discipline.

The judicial council’s rulings on disaffiliation can be summarized as follows. First, a church that wishes to disaffiliate with the denomination must achieve a 2/3 majority at a session of church/charge conference called for that purpose. Second, it is up to the Annual Conference to set the terms and conditions of such disaffiliation. Third, ratification of disaffiliation at Annual Conference is done by simple majority, much in the same way that the Conference body votes on the discontinuance of churches. Finally, churches that petition to disaffiliate must cite “reasons of conscience” related to the decisions of the Special Session of General Conference.

By Rev. Ryan Krauss

Delegates to the 2019 General Conference report on its actions to the Annual Conference.

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The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation

Doing the Impossible

“Write the song you cannot play. I know you can’t, but what if you could?” Inspiration speaker Mike Rayburn took what he knew how to play on his guitar and transformed it into songs that seemed impossible to do. This doing the impossible is what we get to do in our churches every day, God gives us what we need “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” We act in concert for through God all things are possible, not just new ways to make music.

What seems impossible to you? Fire dances to music in Ruben’s tubes, Ringing Rocks (a few hours’ drive from here) offer us natural xylophones, and the Flight of the Bumble Bee can be played in only thirty-eight seconds. That’s just what we can do.

We can do better together, blessed to be a blessing through our God’s power. What if we could pray for God to equip the church to do even more impossible things and believe he will answer our prayers? I know you can’t, but what if you could?

Our music continues for we are baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. Even when those on the Road to Emmaus didn’t recognize Jesus among them, “they said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?’” The Holy Spirit breathes that warming light into our hearts too. Let’s use our pitch to build an awesome fire for his glory.

The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation
3901 Hartzdale Dr. Suite 110
Carlisle, PA 17011
Phone 717-766-7343
Toll Free 800-272-0113
sfcpa@umstewardship.org
The Leadership Team of the Susquehanna Conference presented a report that invited the annual conference to be bound together in Christ.

Rev. Dr. Kathy Kind, Superintendent of the Altoona District, explained how a symphony is a mismatch of jumbled sounds as they tune up, but they come together as the conductor taps the baton to begin the music. She then likened this to Christ calling us to come together to serve, citing Colossians 3:12-17 as the unifying scripture.

Following a prayer of confession, led by Rev. Barry Robison, Superintendent of the Harrisburg District, examples of being Better Together were presented from The Beacon, Christ Community United Methodist Church, Open Door and Calvary United Methodist Church.

Over a thousand backpacks were then filled with notebooks, pencils, crayons, rulers, paper and various other school supplies. The moment was designed to bring the annual conference together in service for those they had not met.

Rev. Jason Mackey explains how the body will be creating over 1,400 School Kits for Mission Central during the “Leadership Experience”
A New Vision for Church Planting

By Shawn Gilgore

New Fresh Expressions of Faith are being created all throughout our Susquehanna Conference. In the coming months, you’ll see some new communities of faith around our Conference, and today, we wanted to give you a deeper look into what exactly a “Fresh Expression of Faith” really is, and how they are reaching new people for Jesus.

Often, it’s a big step in faith to go forward in a Fresh Expression. Pastors Kris Sledge and Deb Port of The Journey, a Vital Merger said: “This process has been exciting, challenging, and a testimony to the amazing things that God can do. The vision for the future is to create life-giving communities both in and around Harrisburg. God will do this as we connect new people with Jesus and invest in and love our neighbors.”

Tim Parker, of The Valley, a new church plant in State College, shared: “We are a diverse community of broken people who are driven to see God’s love break through the darkness.”

These communities of faith have begun in a variety of places and locations serving an entire range of people who are looking for places to connect with God and with the rest of their communities. At The Open Door, a ‘church within a church’ launching from Calvary UMC in Dillsburg, Chrisanna Rogers is leading a team of people on fire for what God is doing in their community. She says, “God brought along this opportunity, I did not seek it out. He gave me the chance to see something new begin from scratch and watch it grow. I was excited at the prospect of ‘something new’.

And even though feelings of apprehension tend to be felt, Tim Parker has felt those feelings, but trusts in Jesus. “It may be uncomfortable to put yourself out there and walk by faith. But if we truly believe that the gospel has power and that people need saving then this a no brainer. There is no risk when the risk is in Christ.”

Matt Verstraeten is launching The Well, a new cooperative parish, made up of three churches, all in one movement. He says, “Jesus sent the disciples out and gave them authority to do some radical and miraculous things, but they were never sent out alone. Jesus sent them two by two. There’s incredible power and potential in collaboration.” The Well begins on July 1st of this year.

These fresh expressions are new ways that the churches of the Susquehanna Conference can reach out to new people in new places. Tim Parker hopes that the people in the communities that surround The Valley will know that God wants to be part of their stories. “God wants to use them to impact their neighbors. Even if it is something small or impermanent. Our job is to be faithful.”

The Journey in Harrisburg is “a work in progress! New people can pour into a ministry area where God is calling them and help to form that ministry for the future.”

Chrisanna Rogers promises that The Open Door is looking forward to helping their communities learn more about their faith. Walking people through their first steps of faith is an honor, and one we can’t wait to take on.

All of these Fresh Expressions will be part of our Conference later in 2019, you can connect with them at www.opendoordillsburg.com, www.thejourneyhbg.com, and www.thevalleysc.org.

Worship events help ‘The Open Door’ reach out to the community before their official launch, September 9th, 2019.

The Valley is home to a diverse group of people throughout the year, including events around their surrounding communities.

(Left) Pastor Kris Sledge speaks with members of ‘The Journey’ on their first Sunday of worship. (Right) ‘The Journey’s first worship service was held on April 28, 2019.

Check out the Cokesbury store in Cocoa Suite 4 and 5
### Fresh Expressions of Faith

**Church**
- Dinner Church
- Refresh Church
- YMCA Church
- Yoga Chapel
- Budget Inn Community Center
- Worship Music & Prayer at Max’s Bar
- Wednesday Night Dinner Church
- Heart-to-Heart with Jesus
- Motor Cycle Church
- Dinner Church
- Ecumenical Youth Group
- Campfire Church
- Neighbourhood Worship (Walnut St)
- Neighbourhood Worship (Ravine Rd)
- Neighborhood Worship (Walnut St)
- IF Table
- Rugby Church
- Fit Faith
- Fishing & Bible Stories
- Fit Church
- Messy Church
- IF Table
- Campfire Church
- FarmTable

**District**
- Altoona
- Harrisburg
- Lewisburg
- Scranton/Wilkes-Barre
- State College
- Williamsport

> AND there are more than 20 Fresh Expressions in the exploration stages, stay tuned!

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*Check out the table displays outside the Great American Hall and in the Chocolate Lobby.*
Thank You Rev. Elaine Shafer-Stroud, for your years of ministry

Bishop Park has regretfully accepted the resignation of the Rev. Elaine Shafer-Stroud as Convener of the Bishop’s Response Team. Thankfully, while Elaine will no longer be the Convener, she will continue to be a member of the Response Team.

Elaine has served on the Response Team for over 17 years, 3 years as the Convener. Elaine has not only spent countless hours working with the team, she has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to care for all persons impacted by sexual misconduct in the local church. Elaine as the convener and the entire team are diligent and caring as they provide support and nurture helping persons move from brokenness to wholeness.

After prayerful consideration, Bishop Park has asked Rev. Marian Hartman to serve as the Convener of the Bishop’s Response Team. Marian has been an active member of the Response Team. She brings to this important task the needed skills to care for persons affected by sexual misconduct. Marian also brings important skills needed to continue to lead the team in their work.

The Annual Conference along with the Cabinet and Bishop Park are indebted to Elaine for her commitment to the Response Team. It is with gratitude for the gifts of Marian that the Response Team will continue its critical work. The Bishop’s Response Team is also known throughout the Annual Conference as The Care Team.

LIVE Streaming Schedule

The 2019 Susquehanna Annual Conference will once again be broadcast LIVE via susumc.org

Friday, May 31, 2019
8 a.m. – Plenary Two
1:30 p.m. – Plenary Three
7:30 p.m. – Ministry Night Celebration

Saturday, June 1, 2019
8 a.m. – Plenary Four
1 p.m. – Ordination Service

What are your God-given dreams?

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Whether God is calling you to a master’s or doctoral degree, pursue a seminary education from wherever you live with options to fit your busy schedule.
To learn more or schedule a personal tour, visit RiverWoods.org and NormandieRidge.org

Normandie Ridge and RiverWoods are proudly affiliated in faith with The United Methodist Church.

At RiverWoods Senior Living Community in Lewisburg and Normandie Ridge Senior Living Community in York, you’ll find numerous ways to continue your mission of service including:

- Auxiliaries (membership is open to residents and non-residents)
- On-campus church services & Bible studies
- Meals on Wheels at RiverWoods
- Music Ministry (Chorus/Choir)
- Woodshops and Craft Studios
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Libraries on campus

One with Each Other

To register for these retreats please fill the form out below and send it with your check to: The Center For Spiritual Formation - 45 South West Street, Carlisle, PA 17013

Retreat Name: _____________________________________________
Name: __________________________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________
Phone: _________________________    Email: _______________________________________
Dates: ______________________________________________________________________
Notes: ______________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Questions? Contact: Kevin Witt - kwitt@susumc.org or Ron Swift - rswift@susumc.org
Register for this retreat ONLY Online at susumcamps.org/register

Step away from the world’s preparation for a worldly holiday. Put Christ at the center of your Christmas from the beginning of the season with a time of solitude and centering on the meaning and message of a Messiah who comes to us and is with us.

Preparation for His coming with Debbie Heisley-Cato at Orchard Hill Route 17 & Orchard Way, Millerstown, PA
Friday, November 29, 6:30 p.m — Saturday, November 30, 4 p.m.
Cost: $100 includes meals, lodging, material, and 1.5 CEU’s

Please come get away to nurture your spirit and explore the waters of Penn’s Creek - one of the truly great trout streams in Pa at the Wesley Forest Camp/Retreat Center - 58 Wesley Forest Lane, Weikert, PA 17845. Whether a complete novice or veteran fly fisher, this weekend is for you. What could be more fulfilling than growing with God, making friends, and discovering new aspects of fly fishing and fly tying.

Questions? Contact: Kevin Witt - kwitt@susumc.org or Ron Swift - rswift@susumc.org
Register for this retreat ONLY Online at susumcamps.org/register

The Ministry of Spiritual Direction will:
- Provide basic instruction in sensitivity toward, and insight into the workings of the Holy Spirit;
- Advocate the need for a greater connectedness between the inner life of the Spirit and the outer life of faithfulness to the Spirit’s direction;
- Facilitate a deepening prayer life and a greater contentment with silence and solitude;
- Equip trainees to deal with strong emotions, and maintain relationships over time;
- Require trainees to undergo Spiritual Direction and aid them in accepting personal weakness as the basis for compassion.

Visit centerformation.org for more information - keyword “Spiritual Direction”

Bible Studies and Worship Services provide spiritual fulfillment and fellowship.

Let Your Life Shine - Brighter Together!

Purposeful Living Solutions

Normandie Ridge and RiverWoods are proudly affiliated in faith with The United Methodist Church.
Preaching Festival

January 20 - 22
Hershey Lodge

susumc.org/festival

Monday, January 20
3:30 pm  Gathering & Registration
4:30 pm  Session 1: Welcome & Effective Communication with Bishop Park
Including - Sermon Writing/Teaching Notes with Jason Mackey
6:00 pm  Dinner
7:00 pm  Christmas Worship
Including - Sung Communion/Candle Light
8:00 pm  Unpacking Worship

Tuesday, January 21
6:30 am  Breakfast
8:30 am  Holy Thursday/Good Friday
Including - Seated Communion
Spouse: Life in the Fishbowl with Christy Mackey
9:45 am  Unpacking Worship
10:30 am  Session 2: Designing Worship with Michelle Whitlock
Including - Liturgy, Bulletins, Space, Fresh Expressions
Spouse: Cooking with Chocolate with Hershey Lodge
12:00 pm  Lunch
1:00 pm  Optional Workshop: Media in Worship with Janelle Walker
Optional Workshop: Persons with Disabilities with Rebecca Holland Torres
Optional Workshop: Painting Workshop with Michelle Bodle
Afternoon Free time
5:30 pm  Dinner
7:00 pm  Stewardship Worship
Including - Children’s Message/Small Groups with Jay Jones
8:00 pm  Unpacking Worship

Wednesday, January 22
6:30 am  Breakfast
8:30 am  Session 3: Taking Worship Home with Lori Goldman
Including - Hospitality & Follow-up
Spouse: Painting Workshop with Michelle Bodle
10:15 am  Baptism Worship
11:15 am  Closing Send-Off

January 20 - 22
Hershey Lodge

susumc.org/festival

Same rates as last year!

Peace with Justice Sunday - June 16, 2019

“Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere.”

Martin Luther King Jr.
CONSIDERING SEMINARY BUT WORRIED ABOUT DEBT?

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We’re pleased to extend this commitment to every qualified prospective student who pursues United Methodist candidacy as an elder or deacon and applies to a master’s degree program by July 1 for the 2019-20 academic year. Speak with an MTSO admissions rep for details.

Let’s talk.
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Susquehanna Daily LINK - May 31, 2019

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