**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 2:00PM. 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 function without all its members. The scripture reading, Ephesians 4:1-6, was offered in multiple languages by Miriam Andrews (Trinity UMC, New Cumberland), JR Rodriguez (Damascus Charge, Damascus), Jonathan Olloe (The Journey, Harrisburg), and Sarah Kim (W. Decatur/Wallaceton Charge, West Decatur).

A deeply moving rendition of “How Great Thou Art,” was offered by Rev. Randall G. Bennett, Jr. from Christ Community Church, Selinsgrove. Bennett’s rich deep voice was full of emotion. After his hymn concluded, the gathered congregation erupted in heartfelt applause and provided the singer with a standing ovation.

Throughout the entire worship service, Bishop Park was an energetic and passionate worship leader. His sermon was punctuated by lively singing and the repeated refrain of his favorite “Amen,” chorus. Bishop Park’s sermon was entitled, “Made One With Each Other.” His message emphasized the beauty and harmony inherent in the “one-ness” of our foundation in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

“We are a church alive in Christ together,” Bishop Park told the gathered congregation. He emphasized his love for the “dedicated and mission-minded,” people of Susquehanna Conference. “God’s people continue to 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 feel 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...”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

**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 Havestrook, whose grandmother was the beloved long-term treasurer of the Susquehanna Conference, Zedna Havestrook, 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, reminding that they...
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.

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.

Preachers’ Aid Society (9035)
FOR TODAY

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

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 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 strain ing 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 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 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.
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 Christians need to be one and very much enhanced...One-ness is not exact likeness. It is unity and diversity and one-ness of one. Many others alive when everyone in the community understands that each one has a part in the larger picture – and each one has a 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."

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**We Are One**

According to Bishop Park, God's people should emphasize that the theme of "one-ness" and unity was clearly evident in his selected scripture in 1 Corinthians 12:4, "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 epistle of scripture. "Seven is a perfect number that signifies completion...Christians, God's people, who are one in Christ, everywhere be 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."

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**Christ’s Love Unites Us**

According to Bishop Park, God's people, 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 any one of us... We all want to be loved. We have an innate insatiable appetite to be loved." As "God's love is not dependent on anything that we can be or can do," 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 we are, 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 than one person can do for another than assure them that they are accepted by...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. Each one of us is made one in our baptism. Regardless, we have a common identity." Baptism is a covenant between us and God. We are God's beloved.

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**Lead Us in Unity**

Leigh explained that the small "c" in "catholic" meant the church universal.

Leigh added that one of her favorite Christian groups is Casting Crowns and her favorite song is "Only Jesus." The song speaks of worldly legacy as "make it count, leave a mark...dream big, go to the edges of your life..." She added that there is always hope with Jesus Christ.

"In the midst of our difficult journey as a denomination, it is important that we hear that hope is alive...At this moment it is timeless, living, being served and impacted in our church each day. Many people find hope through the ministry of the United Methodist Church. God is not finished with this church yet! Fear not. God is not with us.

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**Unity in the Midst of Diversity**

_Continued from Page One_
Rev. Karen W. Atanasoff
Rev. Atanasoff was recommended for ministry by St. Paul United Methodist Church, Harrisburg. She was ordained in 1985 and 1988. She served Half Moon; Julian-Mattha; Axemann-Weaver; Rolling Hills; Town Hill; Millersburg First; Hershey First; Williamsport Pine Street; Rockville. She also served as Assisting Elder, Harrisburg District.

Rev. Atanasoff and her husband, Steven, will reside at 1605 S. Geers 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 that this calling is more than a job, it is a joy. Thank you to my colleagues, sisters and brothers on this journey, your gifts and grace have enhanced my life. Thank you to those with whom I have been appointed to be with in ministry, your presence on this journey has stretched and strengthened me. Thank you to my husband and children, you are gifts beyond measure. May we all be one in the spirit.

Rev. Arlene P. Beechert
Rev. Beechert was recommended for ministry by Norton Hill United Methodist Church, Greenwood. She was ordained in 1989 and 1992. She served Greenville-Norton Hill; Cosxackie; Fiskhill; Curwensville; and Muncey. She also served as Superintendent, Williamsport District.

Rev. Beechert 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 joy of community, 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 Wellington: Moore's Chapel/St John; Laurel; Rock Hall; Keystone Perry; Trinity Charge; Walnut Bottom.

Rev. Bolyard, Jr. and his wife, Dianne, will reside at 4816 Tr Pri 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 Conferences. I have been taught much, experienced much, and loved much. I have been challenged and changed, elated 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.

Rev. Andrew A. Bucke
Pastor Bucke was recommended for ministry by Liverpool. 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 family lives, since childhood I have felt surrounded with love by pastors and church laity who have supported and encouraged me. First, it was Bucke. 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 Ministries; First/Fair haven and Three Lakes; Lake Wico; and Montandon/ Northumberland Christ.

Rev. Dodson and her husband, Don, will reside at 29 Walnut Ridge Estates, Middlesburg, PA 17842-7836.

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 precious children, even those who feel lost, unloved and unwanted because of their sins. I know with Christ beside me I will continue to find JOY in the journey.

Rev. Ralph B. Hartenbach
Rev. Hartenbach was recommended for ministry by Coudersport Park. He was ordained in 1979 and 1982. He served Genesee- Ulysses; Eastwawa; First; Bicknell; Rupert; Good Shepherd/Buckhorn; Berwick Bower Memorial; Berwick Bower Memorial/St Pauls.

Rev. Hartenbach and his wife, Julie, will reside at 1001 Holly Dr., Berwick, PA 18603-2410.

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 with whom and to whom I have ministered have proven to be the same exceptional people. Both my wife and I are grateful.

Rev. Marilan E. Hartman
Rev. Hartman was recommended for ministry by Gettysburg. She was ordained in 1980 and 1982. She served Doylestown; Hanover; Grace; McKeytown; Lemont Mt. Nittany; and retired in 2006. She returned to active status and served Wellston; Trucksville; and also served as Superintendent, Scranton/Wilkies-Barre District.

Rev. Hartman will reside at 438 W. High St., New Bloomfield, PA 17068-9643.

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.

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

Pastor Hemker and her husband, Allan, will reside at 2476 Charleston Road, 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 Clearfield Trinity and Greater Shawville Parish.

Dale L. Hinensteel
Rev. Hinensteel was recommended for ministry by Trinity Clearfield. He was ordained in 1986 and 1988. He served Milroy; Fairbrook; Lebanon Grace; York Aldergate; and Milton St Andrews.

Rev. Hinensteel 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. Walking with people through the highs and lows of their lives has been an incredible privilege. Being called and equipped to share the Gospel, and then witness its power to transform, never ceases to be wonderous and humbling. Serving and serving with God’s people, shepherding God’s flock where appointed, has been a journey of God’s amazing grace.

Rev. Dr. James A. Houck, Jr.
Rev. Dr. Houck, Jr was recommended for ministry by First United Methodist Church, Hanover. He was ordained in 1999 and 2002. He served Hanover First; Brogue Bethel; Harrisburg Harris Street; Mechanicsburg Hope. He served in the Eastern PA Conference as interim pastor for Limeville and Malvern. He also serves as Professor, Pastoral Counseling Education & Supervision at Neumann University, Aston, Pa.

Rev. Dr. Houck, Jr and his wife, Angela, will reside at 115 Westmoreland Dr., Coatesville, PA 19320-4302.

For me, being open to hearing the cries of the emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual wounds of others has always been my inspiration for restorative justice towards the disenfranchised. This motivation has led me to seek the unconventional, going beyond systems that perpetuate pain and stereotypes, and looking for new ways to bring familiar gospel messages to a world that searches for authenticity.

I am grateful for the many individuals and families who have helped me to serve. Your love for God has touched my soul.

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Ann Houser
Pastor Henry was recommended to ministry by Valley View United Methodist Church. She was ordained in 1994 and 1997. She served Clayburg; Morrisdale-Palestine; Altoona Schum/Lysewy; Williamsburg; Cumberland Valley, and Dushore/Laporte.

Rev. Dr. Houck will reside at 207 Governors Park Rd. Burn, Bellefonte, PA 16823-2534.

God has blessed me with a call 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 Lewestown. He was ordained in 1970 and 1974. He served Loganville; Williamsport Ball's Mills, Rose Valley; Charing; Halifax; Linglestown; Dillsburg Calvary, and York.

Rev. Hummel and his wife, Patricia, will reside at 4170 Greywood Dr., York, PA 17402-3344.

Connect with the Susquehanna Conference through Social Media.
Retirees’ Ministry

I am in awe that God called me to Christian ministry. The wonder and excitement that life with God’s people has brought my family and me is remarkable. I am immeasurably grateful to have been a part of the history of the churches I pastored. Being a servant of the Savior has been my delight.

Rev. Dr. Donald N. Hurley

Rev. Dr. Hurley was recommended for ministry by Grace Lewistown. He was ordained in 1987 and 1990. He served Centre Line; Leesburg; Emigsville; Mackeyville; Curwensville; and Riversisde St. Peter’s.

Rev. Dr. Hurley and his wife, Katherine, 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 understanding the meaning of our ministry 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 relativly 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. Kokec

Pastor Kokec was recommended for ministry by Wesley Mont Alto. He was licensed to preach in 1998. He served Mont Alto Wesley; Warrordubs.

Pastor Kokec 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, Allendale, NJ. He was ordained in 1989 and 1992. He served Scott Valley and Warner Center.

Rev. Eugene W. McCollips

Rev. McCollips 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, Ceryn, will reside at 2038 Pine Cliff Rd., State College, PA 16801-2404.

I was amazed to discover as a purely secular 24 year-old, that God does indeed speak to us 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 for ministry by Lake Hopatcong, NJ. He was ordained in 1985 and 1990. He served Second West Conference: Wesley; Attend School; Marathon; North Central NY Conference: Emmanuel; Scranton Urban Cooperative Ministries; Myrtle Street; Scranton Urban Cooperative Ministries, Director/Myrtle Street; Daleville; Methodist Urban Ministries/Finvair; Carbondale & Jermy; Carbondale; 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 a testimony to God’s patient, steadfast love. If it caused the saving souls, or did further the in-breaking kingdom, then God’s surely to be praised; Falling short, I call upon God’s mercy. Failures taught me well! I especially thank God for my family, colleagues, friends, and strangers – both emerging leaders, and Counsel-Direct Special Needs UMC, Camp programs; Prison Ministries; food distribution events; Emmaus walks; nursing home worship; and recycling durable medical goods, locally and worldwide through Project C.U.R.E.

Rev. L. Fitzgerald “Gere” Reist, II

Rev. Reist II was recommended for ministry by Rockville Harrisburg. He was ordained in 1972 and 1978. He served Enders-Royal Union Union; Deposit-Shirk’s Church; Millerton-Dagger; Harrisburg Grace (Associate); Mechanicshurg Grace; Albona Fairview; Harrisburg State; Steppenshi Messiah; and Harrisburg Grace. He also served as Superintendent. Williamsport District; General Conference Secretary, Commission on the General Conference; Commission on the General Conference; and as Superintendent, and Congregations- Development for the California-Nevada Conference.

Rev. Reist II and his wife, Betty, will reside at 1292 Stony Fork Rd., Wellsboro, PA 16901-7367.

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. By the grace of God, my wife, Betty, and daughter, Rowan, of family and of friends in ministry and of Christians around the world, I have been given the world and I have seen the world.

Rev. Dr. Nancy E. Topolewski

Rev. Dr. Topolewski was recommended for ministry by First Presbyterian Wilkes-Barre. She was ordained in 1989 in the Presbyterian Church and transferred to the United Methodist Church in 1989. She became a full member in 1993. She served C winding River Minis; Community Grace; Parish/Fleming; Williamsport; and Vestal Center.

Rev. Dr. Topolewski and his husband, John, will reside at PO Box 188, East Lemonport, NH 03605-0188.

Ministry? A GIFT! Blessings abound: Madison (1977); built our NH home (1978); second woman ordained (1978) by Lackawanna Presbytery; Presbyterian congregations; Ashley and Warner Run, Pa.; chaplain Lake Angola; transitioned to Wyoming Conference (1989), appointments; Fleming; Williamsport, Vestal Center, NY; Administrative Assistant to Oneonta DS; volunteering ( 2006-ongoing) Good Shepard UMC in Newport, NH Integrating cura animarum with scholarship at Wilkes, Princeton Seminary, and Drew University, and as Assistant Editor (2008-ongoing) of Methodist History honored with Jack by UUM Historical Society’s Ministry of Memory Award (2018). Thanking God even for disability leave- and wouldn’t change a bit.

Rev. Dr. Donald Rodney Slabyaugh, Jr.

Rev. Slabyaugh, Jr. was recommended for ministry by Yorkshire. He was ordained in 1978 and 1983. He served Hustontown; Westfield; State College St Paul’s (Associate); Sunbury; Wright; Winfield; Trinity/New Berlin; Winfield; New Cumberland Trinity; and York Asbury.

Rev. Slabyaugh, Jr. and his wife, Kathy, will reside at 220 Myers Ln., New Cumberland, PA 17070-2327.

Like the Prophet Amos, there was nothing special about my background. 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 with me, and have the greatest relationship anyone can ever have, which is the relationship with Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and Savior.

Rev. Dr. Robert George Wood

Rev. Wood was recommended for ministry by Port Crane, NY. He was ordained in 1984 and 1986. He served Hombrook: Appointed to School; Davenport/West Davenport; Greene/Smithville Center; Wilkes-Barre; Albright; Duryea; Township; Upper New York Conference; Whittemore Hill; Dallas; and Berwick First.


I was inspired to enter the ministry by the example of the following: Rev. Ken H. Outer, Rev. Guy Burt, Rev. Gary Doupe, Rev. William Bouton, and Rev. Paul Gore. They were all involved in various capacities through many other progressive movements. (Guy was a freedom rider. Bill lead one of the first Reconciling Churches in the nation). They were all leading the church in a healthy and loving direction. I am grateful to the United Methodist Church for allowing me 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 want 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!
“God Wants Us to Pray Before We Do Anything at All”

By Debra Steransky

Rev. Kibbey, who serves on the West Ohio Conference’s executive staff as Director of the Office of Missional Church Development, leads the Missional Church Consultation Initiative, a rigorous coaching and training effort for select congregations and their pastors who have been invited to participate as a way to jumpstart new life into congregations.

In her book, “Floodgates”, she outlines seven ways to accomplish that, but the most important and most effective way is prayer. She said that if a church does nothing else to restore their vitality, this one leads to a renewed spiritual journey.

She told the story of William Seymour, a Texas born and raised brother in faith with no formal education. In his thirties, he felt called to move to Los Angeles to start Bible studies. The attendance at the Bible studies grew too large for the building to gather. It was said that the room was filled with the Holy Spirit when he preached. Bible study began with a song, and Brother Seymour would come from the back of the room wearing a cardboard box on his head. After three and a half years of growth, the congregation began to dwindle until there were no more. Brother Seymour went into isolation and would not speak about the closure until he was very elderly. Finally, during an interview when he was asked what happened, he said before every study, he would spend time praying, and he used the cardboard box to focus on his prayer. Eventually he stopped wearing the box and when he stopped wearing it, he lost his focus.

She then noted that Oswald Chambers said we need prayer like we need food. We need the spiritual nourishment, and we need to treat it like a feast rather than a snack. “We pray when there’s nothing else we can do,” Chambers said, “but God wants us to pray before we do anything else at all.”

Congregations hoping to make changes toward vitality need to pray with expectation and hope. Their hearts must be committed and unafraid of change. When we pray and go deeper beyond joys and concerns, Kibbey noted, we can experience breakthroughs.

Rev. Kibbey went on to outline some of the practices that she writes about in her book “Ultimate Reliance: Breakthrough Prayer Practices for Leaders.” She began with a video in which Dan, a video communicator, told the story of how he learned to use lighting in a new way when he had the chance to work in Lebanon under less than ideal circumstances. He learned that the Lebanese videographers used a much smaller light than he, and still were able to produce amazing results. From that lesson, he realized that metaphorically adjusting light shows us God’s way.

Rev. Kibbey asked, “What is your prayer life like when things are foggy?” She encouraged us to ask for whatever light is needed to see our next step, and maybe the light that God provides will be just enough to see the next step, and maybe it will be a clear path. Lay members were given a small card that Rev Kibbey called the “Let There Be Light Card” and were invited to write a short phrase or word to pray that would keep God’s direction at the center of their lives. Then she introduced a second small card, she called the “Pickleaxe Prayer Card.” Jesus told his followers to keep praying and to keep asking and the door would be opened to you. Pray like you are using a pickleaxe at rock, she said. Pray corporately as leaders of your church to set an example.

When leaders pray like that, things can change, and miracles can happen as it did in Forest Chapel in Cincinnati. The church was struggling when they welcomed a new pastor whose first move was to institute a more meaningful prayer life in the church. Though the leadership team followed the pastor’s example, many members left. Faced with a $36,000 shortfall in their budget, the leaders prayed together at the end of a meeting for an answer, and the next day a preschool approached them and asked if they could move their students to the church. They offered the church $3,000 a month rent. Exactly the amount the church needed. Now the church is growing and is diverse across generations, race and income.

Breakthrough corporate prayer is vital to any congregation.

Rev. Kibbey asked, “What would happen if your church prayed like this? What would be your church’s pickaxe prayer? Would it be to continue? To go forward? For endurance? To remember? Or to be faithful?”

“God Wants Us to Pray Before We Do Anything at All”

By Debra Steransky

Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey

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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 384 No votes; the One Church Plan was not adopted. The vote concerning the Traditional Plan and the provisions adopted for the process of disaffiliation, the vote to adopt the One Church Plan, and the vote on the Judicial Council’s rulings are available on the conference website.

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

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Bind Us Together

By Pastor Richard DeMarte

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.

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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 is 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 to 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.opendoorhbg.com, www.thejourneyhbg.com, and www.thevalleysc.org.

Check out the Cokesbury store in Cocoa Suite 4 and 5
**FRESH EXPRESSION** | **CHURCH** | **DISTRICT**
--- | --- | ---
Dinner Church | Hicks UMC | Altoona
Refresh Church | Camp Hill UMC | Harrisburg
YMCA Church | Camp Hill UMC | Harrisburg
Yoga Chapel | Camp Hill UMC | Harrisburg
Budget Inn Community Center | Fishing Creek Salem UMC | Harrisburg
Worship Music & Prayer at Max’s Bar | Halifax UMC | Harrisburg
Wednesday Night Dinner Church | Halifax UMC | Harrisburg
Heart-to-Heart with Jesus | New Cumberland Churches | Harrisburg
Motor Cycle Church | St. Andrew’s Valley View UMC | Harrisburg
Dinner Church | Good Shepherd UMC | Lewisburg
Ecumenical Youth Group | St. Paul’s Lewisburg UMC | Lewisburg
Campfire Church | Watsontown UMC | Lewisburg
Family Group | Watsontown UMC | Lewisburg
Spiritual Reflection | South Gibson UMC | Scranton/Wilkes-Barre
Ponder & Paddle | Tunkhannock UMC | Scranton/Wilkes-Barre
Bibles at the Bar | Trinity UMC | State College
Dinner Church | Trinity UMC | State College
Forest Therapy Walking | Faith UMC | Williamsport
Pajama Factory (Monday Dinner) | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Contemplative Prayer | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Neighborhood worship Ravine Rd | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Ride for Triumph (Motorcycles) | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Puffs and Pontification (Lycoming Campus) | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Lycoming College Staff | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Neighborhood Worship (Walnut St) | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
IF Table | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Rugby Church | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Fit Faith | First UMC Williamsport | Williamsport
Fishing & Bible Stories | Mainesburg UMC | Williamsport
Fit Church | Pennsdale Trinity Huntersville | Williamsport
Messy Church | Wyalusig Charge | Williamsport

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

Check out the table displays outside the Great American Hall and in the Chocolate Lobby.
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

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.

Thank You Rev. Elaine Shafer-Stroud, for your years of ministry
The Ministry of Spiritual Direction

Upcoming Trainings & Retreats

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A two-year training course which assists laity and clergy to sharpen their listening skills, clarify their graces, and acquire the disciplines essential to caring for souls in love.

**Y E A R  O N E** focuses on the history, traditions & models, Biblical roots & theological foundations of Spiritual Direction. It stresses the difference between psychological counseling and Spiritual Direction, and demonstrates a contemplative approach to God.

**Y E A R  T W O** focuses on the actual practice of Spiritual Direction: developing listening and assessment skills; becoming familiar with displacement and projection, transference and counter-transference; acquiring a working knowledge of the life-stages of faith development; cultivating an increased awareness of the power of prayer and healing; and learning the importance of supervision.

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”

**F A I T H & F L Y F I S H I N G R E T R E A T**

**A Christian Retreat for Men**

Co-Sponsored by the Center for Spiritual Formation, Inc. and SUSUMC Camp/Retreat Ministry

Friday, October 4, 6:30 p.m — Sunday, October 6, 2 p.m.

$175 with own fly fishing gear

$195 with rental gear from TCO

prices includes meals, lodging

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 - 5B 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

**Silence at Advent**

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 3.5 CEU’s

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.

Visit susumcamps.org/register for more information.

To learn more or schedule a personal tour, visit RiverWoods.org and NormandieRidge.org

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

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**Peace with Justice Sunday - June 16, 2019**

"Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere."

*Martin Luther King Jr.*

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**susumc.org/festival**
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