“Forget about what’s happened; don’t keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I’m about to do something brand-new. It’s bursting out! Don’t you see it? There it is!”

Isaiah 42:18-19 THE MESSAGE
VOLUME 9  NUMBER 1

Susquehanna Conference

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www.susumc.org

SUSQUEHANNA Annual Conference
2017 - 2020
This phrase reflects what a connectional church such as ours is all about.
It affirms and celebrates the stronger and bigger mission and ministry we can
accomplish as a connectional church. It also points to the mandate of
unity for Christian witness as it sums up the spirit and the focus of
Jesus’ prayer for the oneness of his disciples.
In the Gospel of John chapter 17, Jesus repeats these words of prayer:
“They may be one as we are one.”

Prayer connects the people of faith to God’s way and God’s future.
Prayer is an unequivocal expression of faith that, no matter what we go through,
we put our trust in God and we know that God is in charge. As we face the
unprecedented challenge of the unity of our church, we are to rely on God for a
breakthrough by the gift and power of prayer more than anything else.

In sync with the ardent prayer of Jesus for oneness,
each year we will lift up a prayer that we offer at the Lord’s Table as a theme:

2017-18 - “Better Together: Make Us One”
2018-19 - “Better Together: One with Christ”
2019-20 - “Better Together: One with Each Other”
2020-21 - “Better Together: One in Ministry to All the World”

I believe that God has plans to give our church hope and a future. I excitedly
anticipate what God has in store for the Susquehanna Annual Conference.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in God,
so that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 15:13)

With You in Christ’s Ministry, Bishop Jeremiah J. Park
Moved to PRAISE
Our response to God’s call continues.

The foundation of The United Methodist Church has always been to follow God’s call of making disciples of Jesus Christ. We do that in many ways and many places. Yesterday. Today. Forever.

Learn more at umc.org/movement
vision, it’s the watch word in industry and corporate planning. It seems fancy and abstract, but it’s not that complicated. Put plainly, we have to give our churches a clear picture of what they’re supposed to be doing. With our kids, we teach them how to worship. We teach them about the Bible and Jesus. We teach them how to follow Jesus. We might call it Sunday School or Children’s Ministry or even Discipleship, but at its core it’s vision casting. We are giving them a clear picture of what they’re supposed to be doing.

For that past six months, I’ve found myself in a very different role. I cannot tell you how strange it is to go from being a pastor serving a local church for the past 10 years, only to one day wake up and find yourself on the other side of the pulpit. I no longer call the shots. I no longer know all the work that went into every decision. I no longer am asking people to follow me, rather I’m trying to follow others. And I’m finding out every day how important it is to cast a clear vision.

I have sat in worship and wondered, “What’s going on? Where are they reading those hymn lyrics? And are we supposed to be standing or sitting?” Other times I’ve been amazed at the skill with which the pastor has handled sensitive prayer requests or created such a welcoming culture by their very presence. At the end of the day, I believe our successes and failures come back to our ability to communicate vision. What is it that we want people to do and how are they supposed to know to do it?

As leaders we must show them, we must tell them, we must teach them. Sure we could host a workshop or a Saturday morning training, and that might help, but vision leaks. They’re only going to learn so much and they’re likely to forget 80% by Sunday morning.

We could produce great newsletters and bulletins and other church communications to tell them about it, but vision leaks. The average person needs to see or hear something seven times for it to register. The bulletin and worship announcements are only two. Where are the other five?

We could even model it for them. By our own example and participation, we could show people what they’re supposed to do and that’s great for those who come in close contact with you, but then the church will only grow as far as you can reach.

All these strategies are important, and they are all vision casting, but for me, the approach that I come back to the most is, “You replicate what you celebrate.” If you make a big deal out of something, people are naturally curious to learn more and see how they can be part of it.

Some of us hold annual membership classes and the new members all join on the same Sunday. It gives a little bump in attendance and a little momentum from the excitement, but what if you could spread it out over a few weeks. When people see new members joining week after week, it builds excitement and they wonder how they can get in on the action. You replicate what you celebrate.

If we are trying to recruit new liturgists, you could call around and get one person to commit to reading every week, or you could line up six people who would each be willing to read one week. Then during worship, you can make a big deal out of “Patti” who is serving as liturgist this morning. “We are so blessed to have her share with us this morning, thank you Patti. If you’re interested in serving, please see me after worship this morning.” You replicate what you celebrate.

It works with worship, missions, giving, small groups—everything we do in the church! It’s vision casting. If we show people what we want them to do and celebrate it, you will replicate what you celebrate. Go celebrate disciples building the kingdom!
During these past weeks, I have been thinking about the twelve disciples and their journey. I have been trying to imagine how they might have felt when Jesus asked them to leave everything behind (family, possessions, comfort, the known, etc.) to follow Him. What a scary time that must have been and yet how faithful those disciples were to follow him having no idea what this new life might be like. I can’t imagine that the decision to leave all behind was an easy decision. Yet, it was the decision their faith called them to make. They stepped out in faith.

Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon (later called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It was their regular work. Jesus said to them, “Come with me. I’ll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I’ll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass.” They didn’t ask questions, but simply dropped their nets and followed.

Matthew 4:19-20 (MSG)

Can you imagine how these disciples must have felt? Can you imagine the sacrifice it must have taken for them to leave everything behind (homes, family, friends, jobs, possessions) and follow Jesus? As followers of Jesus, we are not always called to take the easiest path or the path of least resistance. Instead, we are called to be faithful — to leave all behind, if so called — and follow Jesus. We as the Susquehanna Conference along with our brothers and sisters in Christ in other conferences and other denominations are in the same sort of season. What we have known, what we have always done, and what feels comfortable may need to be left behind to follow Jesus. And Jesus charged us with the Great Commission:

Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20 (MSG)

As leaders of faith communities, we find ourselves in what might feel like the wilderness. A time where we are all working really, really hard, but fruitful ministry is much more difficult than ever before to produce and harvest. We are in a time where our tried and true practices are no longer working. We find ourselves in a time where we are called upon to be creative, innovative, and drop all we have known to follow Jesus. We find ourselves in a situation much like the disciples of sacrificing for the sake of following Jesus. We find ourselves in a time that the really tough decisions are not necessarily popular decisions, but yet they are discerned as the faithful decisions that allow us to follow Jesus.

We are walking through a season of transition particularly in the Harrisburg area. With the reality of the population of approximately 50,000 people, our United Methodist presence has dwindled to reaching less than one percent (many who do not live or do life in the city or the immediate surrounding area), we knew we must recommit ourselves to the great people of the area and our hearts must once again break for those who have yet to know Jesus. Through an initiative called IMPACT! Harrisburg (https://tinyurl.com/ycduea5d), ten church teams along with a resource team have gone through a season of prayer, city-wide worship, assessments, and discernment resulting in a new vision for Harrisburg and the surrounding areas for “a dynamic city-wide movement to be a multi-site diverse community of believers who meet the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors, invest in the lives of our neighbors, and offer hope to our neighbors.”

In order for this new vision to be realized we find ourselves facing a difficult decision for the need to consolidate resources in order to expand our witness. We realize consolidating resources is a very painful process for those committed 359 people who have served the churches for the past few decades. We mourn with the people who now worship in these ten buildings. We continue to pray for the 359 souls who are being asked to consider giving up all they have known to follow Jesus in a new way. Difficult decisions are not always popular. Yet, as leaders of faith communities, the resource team is committed to the vision that they have discerned is God’s preferred future for the area that will result in a movement with a God-sized impact.

We ask for prayers for the people in these ten churches, the journey before us, the new leadership who will be called to live into this vision, and for the people in the area who have yet to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
Happy New Year!

Let’s kick of 2019 with our own resolution. This year we challenge each and every one of our congregations to start a Fresh Expression of Faith! What’s a Fresh Expression of Faith, you ask? A Fresh Expression of Faith is a gathering of non-believers to gather for a common cause to build relationships and explore faith together. They take us outside our church buildings and into the community. This might be a gathering of people in a gym, coffee shop, or a park. A ministry that meets people where they are already gathering in new, exciting ways for Christ.

To help you to start a fresh expression in your local community, there will be two workshop opportunities. One workshop will be held on March 30th in Williamsport. A second workshop will be conducted at the pre-conference workshops on May 29th and 30th. Visit the Equipping Vital Congregations website for more information.

Let’s do this together! And, let’s have some fun along the way. Challenge the other churches in your area and district to join. Use #SUSUMCChallenge on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter to show everyone what you’ve been working on. Visit www.susumc.org/bishopschallenge to keep up to date with the challenge!
On Saturday, December 8, the Susquehanna United Methodist Conference, laid out our plan to open unified multi-site campuses throughout the City of Harrisburg.

To do that, we need to consolidate our ten existing churches in the city. “This is an initiative to dream bigger than any current individual congregation. This is an opportunity for each church to assess their congregation’s ministry potential and to unlock resources through our connection with and through one another. This is the time to apply adaptive solutions and design thinking in order to be faithful in reaching new and more diverse people in new ways in Harrisburg for Christ. People from the ten participating churches will have the opportunity to collaborate together in order to be a greater witness in and around Harrisburg”, Rev. Barry Robison, Harrisburg District Superintendent.

With the vision of having our churches reflect the community around them we plan to build a God sized impact in the City of Harrisburg. Working in collaboration with community leaders and organizations to resource neighborhoods, provide connection, and develop faith-based encouragement throughout the city, we will leave a lasting imprint.

We are exploring several potential sites in Downtown, Uptown, Midtown, Penbrook, and Allison Hill for our new campuses. These multi-site unified faith communities in the city, will strive toward inclusivity in our churches. We will implement an intentionally diverse, driven, and community focused pastoral and leadership team to spearhead these new missions. This team will work together to form cohesive and neighborhood focused congregations. These congregations will not only be worshiping on Sunday mornings but also engaging, connecting, and embedding themselves in the community throughout the week. Working toward being part of the lives of the people in those immediate areas and not just weekly visitors.

These churches have been a part of the city landscape for years, they have served their congregations and families well, but now it is time to serve the community. By recommendation of the Impact Harrisburg task force of the Susquehanna Conference, as of April 22, 2019, Derry Street UMC, First Harrisburg UMC, Grace Penbrook UMC, Riverside UMC, Rockville UMC, St. Mark’s UMC, and Trinity Penbrook UMC, will all be under the direction and leadership of the Susquehanna Conference Board of Trustees. Special discernment and consideration will be given to Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell UMC and Grace Harrisburg UMC due to the historical nature of these buildings.

We are working with community organizations and leaders to maintain that vital ministries will continue to operate during this time of transition.

Kay Kotan
Director of Equipping Vital Congregations

Please contact Shawn Gilgore, Director of Communications for the Susquehanna United Methodist Conference, sgilgore@susumc.org or 717.766.7441, with questions.
On the eight Sundays leading up to General Conference (from January 6 through February 17), please take the time in worship to pray for our church. Consider carving out five minutes every Sunday to intentionally and collectively bring our prayers before the throne.

To help guide this time of reflection, we have created some resources for your use. Pastors from across the Conference have written prayers—some are one voice while others are responsive reading. In some churches, you may discern that your congregation simply wants to observe a time of silent meditation. Our team has created a template for a candle or collection of candles that may be displayed in your altar area as a visual reminder.

**The Susquehanna Conference Cabinet**

Prayer Invitation and Prayer Lists:
https://tinyurl.com/y7qtnnky

Praying our Way Forward Altar Candle Instructions and Graphics:
https://tinyurl.com/y97u83pf

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**A WAY FORWARD IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH: A Conversation of Prayer & Possibilities**

**Way Forward Updates...**

www.susumc.org/wayforward

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**Wednesdays, Jan 9 - Feb 28**
10 - 11:30 a.m.
Camp Hill UMC, Room 125
417 S. 22nd St, Camp Hill, PA.

This eight-week gathering welcomes all who desire to know more about the work of The United Methodist Commission on a Way Forward in preparation for a Special General Conference in St. Louis from February 23 - 26, 2019. Pastors Gary Weaver and Anna Layman Knox will facilitate the weekly sessions, as Pastor Anna prepares to serve as a delegate to the Special General Conference. During each gathering, we will together look at the possible futures of the global United Methodist Church and how those possibilities may affect the mission and ministry of local United Methodist Church.

Weekly, we will watch a short video followed by prayer and holy conversation. Through this prayerful and intentional process, we hope to come to a greater understanding of where we are as a church and of who we are, as siblings in Christ, as together we lead the church forward amid the present impasse related to LGBTQ inclusion and resulting questions about the unity of the church.

Please call 717-737-5631 to reserve a space. Childcare is provided.

We strongly encourage all who have a heart for the United Methodist Church’s ministry to attend.

Questions? Contact Pastor Gary Weaver at gweaver@camphillumc.org or Pastor Anna Layman Knox at aknox@camphillumc.org.
2019 Special Session of the General Conference

The Council of Bishops has called a Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church to be held February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri. The purpose will be to receive and act on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops. The 32-member Commission was authorized by General Conference 2016 and appointed by the Council of Bishops to examine paragraphs in The Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and exploring options to strengthen the unity of the church.

Final Report from the Commission on a Way Forward
Read or download the report in English: https://tinyurl.com/y7z56mxp
Read or download the report in Spanish: https://tinyurl.com/y9p442to

General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church. The General Conference 2020 will take place May 5-15, 2020, at the Minneapolis Convention Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Our Delegation to the 2019 General Conference
Please pray for our delegation and all of those involved in the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference.

Clergy Delegates

Rev. Larry Leland Jr. lleland@susumc.org
Rev. Matthew Lake mlake@susumc.org
Rev. Beth Jones bjoness@susumc.org
Rev. Dr. Thomas Salsgiver tsalsgiver@susumc.org
Rev. Anna Layman Knox aknox@susumc.org

Laity Delegates

Lisa Bender lbender@susumc.org
Milton Loyer loyer@lycoming.edu
Layne Miller lmiller@susumc.org
Anne Horton ahwildlife@gmail.com
Kirby Hickey kkhusc@comcast.net

The Movement Continues
The foundation of The United Methodist Church has always been to follow God’s call of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We do that in many ways and many places.

At https://tinyurl.com/UMmovement you will find stories of United Methodists responding to their own calls and more about our Wesleyan heritage as the people of The United Methodist Church.

General Conference 2019 Information and Resources:
Prayer resources: www.umcprays.org

Find news, press releases, and resources related to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference at https://tinyurl.com/UMGC2019
New Conference Chancellor

November 15, 2018

The role of Conference Chancellor is to serve as an advisor to the Resident Bishop and Cabinet. Louise Hutchison has served tirelessly as our Interim Chancellor for years following Robert Knupp’s retirement, offering excellent counsel whenever called upon. As of October 1, attorney Hutchison’s season as Interim Chancellor came to a close and we thank her for all she has done for the Susquehanna Conference.

After a time of transition, it is now my joy to announce that The Honorable Ray Hamill, an active member of our Central Honesdale United Methodist Church has agreed to serve as the Interim Chancellor for the Susquehanna Conference. Judge Hamill officially began serving on Monday, November 12, 2018.

Judge Hamill has served both The Church and The Court with distinction, integrity, and with a willing Christian spirit. He was elected four times as a delegate to General Conference from the Wyoming Conference and one time as alternate delegate. Two of the four times, Ray chaired the delegation. He has also served on the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee, eight years on the Connectional Table and ten years as the Conference Lay Leader for the Wyoming Annual Conference.

Ray and his wife Donna are very active in their home church, Central Honesdale. In 2016 both Ray and his wife received the Harry Denman Evangelism Award. Ray has taught Disciple Bible study and has served on most committees in his local church including SPPRC, Chair of Ad Council and the Church Visioning Team.

Ray’s law practice was in Wayne County PA. In 1984 he was elected District Attorney of Wayne County and served in that capacity until 1991. In 2007 Ray was elected Common Pleas Court President Judge and served in that capacity until 2017. Ray is currently serving as Senior Judge and he is semi-retired. Ray’s passion and compassion is shown in his work with convicted persons who are addicted. He has developed ground breaking work with persons with addictions and the way convicted persons receive treatment.

Ray has been married to Donna for 38 years. They are the parents of two children, James and Meredith. James and his wife Melody are the parents of Ray and Donna’s grandchildren Cagney and Prudence.

I give thanks to God that Ray has said yes to work with the Susquehanna Conference in this capacity. Ray brings enormous legal skill, a passion for the Church and a love for our denomination. Ray brings resourcefulness, legal expertise and compassion to his role particularly as we face General Conference 2019 and beyond. Indeed, God has provided our conference with a chancellor for just such a time as this!

As we welcome Judge Hamill to this special ministry with our conference, I would like to ask that you lift Ray, his wife, Donna, our conference and our beloved denomination up in prayer.

In Christ’s ministry with you,

Jeremiah J. Park

New VIM Coordinator

December 5, 2018

The Susquehanna Conference is pleased to announce Michelle Schwartzman as our new Volunteers in Mission Director.

Michelle has a wide range of experience in the missions field including serving as house parent in India for six-months, short-term missions in the Florida Keys and New Mexico, coordinating the York City Day Camp program, and volunteering with AmeriCorps.

Michelle most recently served our Conference as the Harrisburg District Administrative Assistant and is a clergy spouse to Pastor Jason Schwartzman who serves at Grace, Lemoyne. She has a wealth of experience and knowledge in and around our Conference, including serving as a camp dean at Wesley Forest - even showing her creativity this fall during the first ‘Accio Fun!’ Harry Potter-themed retreat! Her network of connections throughout the camping program will serve her well!

For information about Volunteers in Mission contact Michelle at mschwartzman@susumc.org or 717-766-7441 x3105.
Kathy A. Palmer - altoona@susumc.org

Hello Susquehanna Conference! I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome I have received as the new administrative assistant to Altoona District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Kathleen Kind. My career background is as a Registered Dietitian, and I am always willing to provide any nutritional advice, education, etc. Most of my career has been in long-term care and I dearly loved working with residents in these types of facilities. My being offered this position came about purely through God and His will for me.

I am married to my wonderful husband, Jim. We have three grown children, Alyssa, Devon, and Shane. We are blessed with three grandchildren, Scarlette, Victoria, and Killian, who brighten our lives and keep us young! We live in Coalport, Pa. I grew up and was a member in the Allemansville UMC (Ramey Charge), but have recently become a member at Juniata UMC in Altoona.

I look forward to getting to know all of you better and thank you once again for the warm welcome!

Kaiti Gallaher Lucente - harrisburg@susumc.org

I am so excited to be a part of the Conference administrative staff for the Harrisburg District and to be working with such wonderful people. Some little facts about me are that I grew up as a pastor’s kid. Professor (Messiah College) and retired pastor, Rev. Dr. Stephen Gallaher is my father. I have been attending Camp Hill United Methodist Church since I was 7 years old and I am currently an active member of CHUM.

My favorite hobbies are primarily surrounding music. I sing, play guitar and write my own music. I love various outdoor activities like hiking and kayaking. Makeup artistry is also something that I really enjoy doing for fun and professionally.

I graduated from Shippensburg University in 2012 with a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work. I am so blessed to have married my amazing high school sweetheart and best friend, Brian. Together we live in the Mechanicsburg area with our two cats.
2019 CAMPS & RETREATS

Register for summer camp by May 1 for the $25 Early Bird Discount!

REGISTER ONLINE TODAY!

susumcamps.org
New Center Director at Camp Penn

Sam Richardson is the newest member of the Camp and Retreat Ministry team as the new Center Director of Camp Penn, located in Waynesboro, Pa.

Sam is from Bradford, Pennsylvania, where he grew up as an active member of the Western Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church. Sam attended Edinboro University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in secondary education. After spending his summers working at Wesley Woods Camp & Conference Center during college, he joined the year-round staff at Wesley Woods as the Program and Marketing Director in 2013. He and his wife, Sara, met and were married in the chapel at Wesley Woods.

In 2016, Sam and Sara started the Camp to Camp project. They had both experienced the transformative power of Christian camping in their own lives and wanted to share the value of this ministry with as many people as possible. Over two years, they traveled to camps around the country, working alongside and learning from other camping professionals. They shared their experiences through a blog and YouTube channel, and collected footage for a short-form documentary highlighting the amazing stories of camp. During this time, they also built a creative content business, providing marketing services, design, photography, and virtual tours to camps and other nonprofits.

Sam believes that Christian camping is an amazing opportunity to offer people a safe place to explore their faith, seek answers to big life questions, and learn to trust others. Even after growing up in a Christian home, camp was the place he learned what it really meant to know Jesus and follow His path. Sam is excited to be joining the dynamic team of camping professionals and volunteers in the Susquehanna Conference and will work hard to honor the legacy of Camp Penn.

New Year’s Resolution: Update Disaster Response Plan

Douglas Hoy, Disaster Response Coordinator

Entering a new year means something different for each of us. Some make resolutions to improve their health. Others resolve to re-connect with old friends or develop new relationships. The Disaster Response Ministry team is working to improve emergency preparedness throughout the Conference. In the coming weeks, we plan to launch an updated response plan with the goal of providing additional information, education, and opportunities to learn about how to be prepared for disasters, big and small, that we may face throughout the year.

One of the goals of our “resolution” is to improve your congregations’ preparedness and response efforts. The updated Conference plan will include a number of new elements to aid you in creating or updating your own emergency preparedness and response efforts.

Part of that plan will include offering additional training to address disaster preparedness and response within your congregations and communities. Furthermore, we will provide you with some tools to reach into the community and form relationships prior to a disaster.

We will also be increasing our ability to communicate, specifically through an expanded presence on social media. By using multiple formats, we hope to provide you with critical information you may need to prepare for the cold weather, snow and ice storms, and flooding so prevalent to our area.

Finally, we will begin to collaborate with local governments throughout the conference to promote the use of their emergency alert and notification systems to further expand the distribution of that critical information.

By doing so, we hope to develop and/ or expand our ability and capability to cooperate in a response effort when disaster strikes, with the ultimate goal of providing RELIEF to a community that is suffering by:

- Revealing God’s protections
  - 2 Kings 6:16
- Embracing a community in need
  - James 2:16
- Loving our neighbors unconditionally
  - John 13:34
- Introducing compassion in the midst of tragedy
  - 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
- Emphasizing hope
  - Romans 15:13
- Fostering restoration, both physically and spiritually
  - 1 Peter 5:10

If you have any questions, contact

Douglas Hoy
Disaster Response Coordinator
Susquehanna Conference UMC
303 Mulberry Drive
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17050
office: 717-766-7441, extension 3402
email: drc@susumc.org
Fresh Expressions of Faith training

Saturday, March 30, 2019
Pajama Factory
1307 Park Avenue
Williamsport, PA 17701
$45 entire event

SPARK: 9am to Noon ($20)
Are you being called to kindle new relationships in your community to reach new people in new places for Christ? If you are ready to start a spark with a fresh expressions of faith, you want to attend this event. Gather your team and come explore the first steps in developing a fresh expression of faith. This is for people who are exploring or just beginning the first steps. This event is an equipping opportunity for both clergy and laity.

IGNITE: 1pm to 4pm ($20)
Have you already launched a fresh expression of faith and have a desire to ignite this initial spark to burn even brighter for Christ? If you are ready to fully ignite your fresh expression, come discover and explore the steps in the development pathway which will enable your fresh expression to reach more people and grow deeper in their love of Christ.

IMMERSION: Lunch and Learn: Noon to 1pm ($10)
If you would like to take an experiential deep dive into an active and growing fresh expression of faith, join us for a lunch and learn experience. Hear about the development of this unique fresh expression of faith at the Pajama Factory from its organizer, Mitch Marcello of the Acts Network from First Williamsport UMC.


2020 General Conference Resolutions Deadline

Friday, February 1, 2019
The opportunity is here once again for you, your congregation or any of its members to offer a resolution for consideration at the 2019 session of Annual Conference.

At our upcoming 2019 Annual Conference meeting, the Mission and Outreach Team, on behalf of the Susquehanna Conference, is receiving resolutions to be considered at the 2020 General Conference.

Be sure to follow recommended format for resolutions when submitting, which can be located on the United Methodist website by https://tinyurl.com/m8fmtd9.

Resolutions are to be clearly printed and sent together with supporting documentation. It is preferred that all resolutions be received electronically via email. You can email them to: ksledge@susumc.org. And, if you are unable to email the resolutions, you may mail them to:

Mission and Outreach Team
Kristopher Sledge
PO Box 277
State Line, PA 17263

Please indicate a contact person should we need to contact the petitioner for clarification.

Resolutions must be submitted no later than February 1, 2019.

Kristopher Sledge
Chair Mission and Outreach Team

Lay Members at Large Needed for Annual Conference 2019

Important information regarding how to submit your name to serve

The 2019 Susquehanna Annual Conference, Better Together… One with Each Other, will be held at Hershey Lodge and Convention Center May 30-June 1, 2019. If you would like to attend as a Lay Member At Large and you do not serve as any of the following:

• District Representative
• the elected lay member or elected alternate member representing your church/charge
• a Certified Lay Minister serving a church, or
• attending conference due to some other lay leadership role

You may do the following:

Contact your District Office no later than January 18, 2019 with

• your name
• address
• phone number
• email address
• church/charge name

If you have any questions, you may contact the Coordinator of Lay Equality, Diane Konieczny, by email at aclaity@susumc.org

Better Together
One with Each Other
While the leader was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.” — John Wesley, May 24, 1738

God calls us to tell our story so that others may come to know Jesus Christ. “Hearts Strangely Warmed” was created to share these stories about transformational encounters with the Living God.

Allison Francesco

Allison Francesco is a United Methodist Deaconess from Beach Lake, Pennsylvania, in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District.

A United Methodist Deaconess takes a vow of love, justice, and service; it is a consecrated position of laity within the United Methodist Church. Allison’s consecration as Deaconess was affirmed at the 2019 Susquehanna Annual Conference.

Allison enjoys teaching and advocates for education, health and wholeness for all, particularly in the area of addiction.

As the parent of a child with dyslexia and an auditory processing deficit, Allison learned that she had to be ever-persistent in advocating for her daughter while navigating through the sometimes exasperating educational system; it was a tiring yet rewarding experience, and she felt God calling her to be an advocate within the educational system as a teacher.

She has been an educator with Wallenpaupack Area School District since 2005, and currently teaches eighth grade English Language Arts and serves as the Volunteer Club advisor as well as the track and field announcer.

Allison is also certified in elementary education, English as a second language (ESL), and in middle grades social studies, math, and science. She graduated from Penn State with a degree in criminal justice, and has two masters from the University of Scranton in marketing and elementary education. She formerly worked for Wayne County Human Services, the administrative agency for the Area Agency on Aging, Children and Youth, and the Drug and Alcohol Commission.

Working with children and youth is her passion. Allison and her husband served as an intensive treatment family for foster children for nearly a decade, and Allison recently retired as youth director at her home church, Beach Lake United Methodist Church, after fourteen years. She believes every person has value and worth, and that children are indeed our future. Her mantra is “Education is Power”(from her Schoolhouse Rock days!), and believes God has called her to be a missionary in her community, teaching, empowering, and advocating for those without voice.

In July of 2017, Allison completed her Health Ministry Certificate through Wesley Theological’s “Heal the Sick” program. For over five years, Allison has been a co-leader of Beach Lake’s First Place 4 Health ministry, a Biblically-based health and fitness program which focuses on Christ as the center of the balanced four-sided person. Through participation and training in this program and by the grace of God, Allison was able to move past her disordered eating to achieve peace and better health. She is a Networking Leader through the National First Place 4 Health Program and is now serving as the facilitator for BLUMC’s new Health Ministry.

Allison also serves as a Lay Leader for Beach Lake UMC, and as a certified Lay Speaker within the district. She is a proud member of United Methodist Women and has served as an officer locally, and at both the district and conference levels. She is also completing her third term as dean of Susquehanna Conference’s annual Mission u, a school of Christian mission for children, youth, and adults. Currently, she is president of the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton United Methodist Women.

She is excited to see what the Lord has in store for her in the future, and relies on his Word to guide her: “I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord; plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11.

Find out more about the ministry of Deaconess at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/dhm
Giving: In the New Testament

By Rev. Paul Stambach

The tithe has no place in the NT teachings! The tithe is the rule for giving in the OT, but not in the NT. The word, “tithe” is found only seven times in the NT. Five of those times the word is used by the writer of the Book of Hebrews who in 7:4-9 tells of Abraham’s giving to Melchizedek a tithe of the spoils from the battle with the five kings. This Melchizedek event took place centuries before Moses or the giving of the Law. The only other places in the NT the word is found is in Luke 11:42 (and parallel passage Matthew 23:23) where Jesus amid his excoriating the Pharisees, say “you tithe the mint and cumin,” then adds “as you should.” It is the only compliment Jesus gives the Pharisees in that entire severe chapter! Concerning Jesus’ comment re: the Pharisees keeping the tithe. Jesus was complimenting them for their faithfulness in keeping the law of the tithe, even though they were pushing their obedience to the extreme. I sense no indication that Jesus was affirming the law of the tithe. In the rest of that chapter, Jesus criticizes the Pharisees not for their meticulous keeping of the law, but for their hypocrisy and their disinterest in caring for others when the law does not require it. Let’s look at what the NT does teach about giving. Jesus’ teachings about giving include the following directions:

- Give readily (Matthew 24:45)
- Give quietly (Matthew 6:2)
- Give to those who ask/beg (Matthew 5:42)
- Give to the poor. (Matthew 19:21)
- Give generously (Luke 19:21)

Jesus also teaches that the left hand should not know what the right hand does. (Matthew 6:3) Jesus said this in reference to one’s giving alms. It is safe to conclude that this rule would apply to all giving. However, the practice of love must be understood as Jesus’ ultimate guide for one’s giving as well as for one’s living. So, we can conclude that the tithe has no place in Jesus’ teachings about giving. When we desire a further guide for our giving, we need to turn to St. Paul. In 2 Corinthians 9, he sets forth the following counsel:

- Do not give (“sow”) sparingly 9:6
- Let your giving be fully your own decision 9:7

Thus, the NT says even though we must give an account for our giving, there is no law guiding our giving, except for our Lord’s Law of Love. Final observation: Some Christians are not able to find peace in their present level of giving. Although the NT does not cite or recommend the tithe, except for Jesus’ brief comment noted above, that standard forgiving can provide a guide beyond which one can grow into giving as St Paul instructs.

Rev. Dr. Paul Stambach is a retired pastor in the Susquehanna Conference who is also a noted scholar and theologian. The Stewardship Foundation is grateful for his guest post written for this issue.
Get Your Lenten Studies Now!

As we approach Lent, one of the most meaningful seasons of the church year, consider one of these studies for small group or church-wide use.

New to Discovery Place:

**Simon Peter: Flawed But Faithful Disciple:**
This is Adam Hamilton’s newly-published study on the life of Simon Peter, an ordinary fisherman who heard an extraordinary call. Filmed on location in Israel and Italy, the DVD shows key sites in Simon Peter’s life. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, book, and leader guide. Children and youth studies also available.)

**Other resources available:**

**What Makes a Hero? The Death-Defying Ministry of Jesus** – Looking at pop culture heroes through the lens of faith, author Matt Rawle shows how Jesus turned the concept of hero on its head. Learn how Jesus redefines what it means to be a hero. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, book, leader guide. Children and youth books also available.)

**Restored: Finding Redemption in Our Mess** – Author Tom Berlin encourages us to reflect and meditate on our own brokenness, showing us that it is only when we focus on the cross as a place to surrender control that we can leave our mess and find true redemption. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, book, leader guide. Youth book also available.)

**Final Words from the Cross** – Adam Hamilton examines Christ’s dying hours and His final words as seen and heard through the eyes and ears of those who stood near the cross. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, book, and leader guide.)

**24 Hours that Changed the World** – We travel to the Holy Land with Adam Hamilton, to visit the sites where the earth-shaking events of the last 24 hours of Jesus’ life took place. Each session is designed to help us experience and understand the significance of Jesus’ suffering and death in a new way. (7 sessions. Includes DVD, book, leader guide, and 40 Days of Reflection booklet.)

**The God We Can Know: Exploring the “I Am” Sayings of Jesus** – Author Rob Fuquay explores the “I am” statements for Jesus found in the gospel of John, to help us answer the most essential question in the Christian faith: “Who do you say I am?” (7 sessions. Includes DVD and book.)

**The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus** – Author Adam Hamilton follows in the footsteps of Jesus from His baptism to the temptations to the heart of His ministry, including the people He loved, the parables He taught, the enemies He made, and the healing He brought. (6 sessions. Includes DVD, book, and leader guide.)

Other resources you may want to consider: A Place at the Table: 40 Days of Solidarity with the Poor, John: The Gospel of Light and Life, Faith Lessons The Path to the Cross, The Easter Experience, and Faith Lessons on the Death & Resurrection of the Messiah.

Complete descriptions of these and all our other resources can be found in our on-line catalog on our website: www.discovery-place.org. You may place an order directly through our on-line catalog, e-mail discovery@susumc.org, or call 717-766-7968. Our hours of operation are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with other hours by appointment. We look forward to hearing from you!

Serving Christ with you,

Joni Robison
HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

Through your generous gift today, you strengthen community outreach and empower at-risk youth.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2019

“Being a community developer gives me the opportunity to live my faith and help my church connect with the community.”

— Cheryl Reagan, Community Developer, Wesley Community Services Center, San Diego

Please make check payable to your local church or give online at www.umcgiving.org/giveHRD.
Retired State Police Captain to Oversee Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg’s Youth Protection Programs

Editor’s note: Janet McNeal is a member of Bethany UMC in Milton, where her husband Rev. William McNeal serves as Pastor.

Reprinted from www.hbgdiocese.org

HARRISBURG – A retired Captain who successfully ran the Megan’s Law Section of the Pennsylvania State Police will run the Roman Catholic Diocese of Harrisburg’s Safe Environment program. Retired Capt. Janet A. McNeal, through her firm Law and Grace Consulting, will review the Diocese’s current youth protection programs, develop programs and policies to make any needed improvements and will serve as our Safe Environment Coordinator.

“Captain McNeal brings a wealth of experience with her,” said Bishop Ronald W. Gainer. “As a contractor with the Diocese, she is a neutral party, with no conflicts of interest, who has dedicated her entire professional career to seeing that justice is served and survivors of a range of crimes, but specifically sexual crimes, are heard and supported.

“As part of her role, Capt. McNeal will review every clergy child abuse case reported to the Diocese, in order to evaluate what went wrong and help us continue improving our youth protection policies and trainings, as a means of reducing the risk for future abuse.”

McNeal brings 26 years of law enforcement investigative and policy development experience to this position. She has a three year contract with the Diocese and will operate independently, reporting her recommendations directly to Bishop Gainer. McNeal has been granted complete access to all the Diocese’s records. In addition to reviewing every case reported to the Diocese, McNeal will also meet with survivors to hear their stories and determine what stage they are at in the healing process.

“I’m a mother, a grandmother, a police officer, a Protestant and I’ve dealt with sex offenders for most of my career,” McNeal said. “I’m here for the survivors. I want to hear their stories, learn what stage of healing each survivor is at and work with them so they are no longer a victim of abuse, but are victorious at finding healing.

“I’ll be dealing with the past, present and future of sexual abuse in the Church,” McNeal added. “I’ll be reviewing every case reported and will speak with the survivors. Already in my short time working with the Diocese, it is clear that Bishop Gainer is serious about correcting the mistakes of the past, ensuring survivors receive the support they need and the safety of our children.”

McNeal will operate as a contractor and be independent of the Diocese. In addition to reviewing all previous abuse reports and supporting survivors, McNeal will also work with parish pastors/administrators, parish staff, school administrators/principals and appropriate Diocesan department heads to ensure that all adults who come in contact with minors are effectively screened and trained, according to the Diocese’s regulations, policies and procedures. She will also ensure that children in the Diocese’s Catholic schools and Religious Education programs participate in the required Safe Environment training program.

“I truly believe that I’ve been called to do this,” McNeal said. “I’ve been involved in the church my entire life. I’ve been married to a member of the (Methodist) clergy for 45 years. My role is to determine where we need to improve and make sure survivors are finding healing.”

During her 26 years with the State Police, McNeal was assigned as the chief administrator for the Megan’s Law Sexual Offender Registry for the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In this role, she oversaw the entire operations for this department, including developing policies and procedures, developing a plan to automate the offender registration process and overseeing the development of the offender website.

McNeal has also served on crisis response teams and ecumenical taskforces for the United Methodist Church and is a licensed private investigator.

To learn more about McNeal and the steps the Diocese’s has taken to reduce the risk of abuse, please visit www.YouthProtectionHBG.com.
**January – 100 years ago.**

A most impressive memorial service was held Sunday evening, January 26, 1919, in the Bellwood Methodist Episcopal Church [now Trinity UMC], Blair County. More than 1200 persons crowded the church, and many more were turned away for lack of room. Being remembered were two young men of the church – PFC John Max Anderson and CPL John Wesley Colabine, both of whom fell in action in France at the battle of Chateau Thiery, the only ones of the 150 WWI soldiers from Bellwood that were known to have died to that point. The main speaker was prominent attorney and active Methodist layman Harry A. Davis of Altoona. Personal tributes were offered by former Sunday School teachers of the boys as they were growing up – Joseph C. McKerihan of Altoona and Thomas P. Gheer of Bellwood. John Anderson was son of Bellwood pastor Joseph F. Anderson, who had formerly served the Altoona Simpson congregation.

**February – 50 years ago**

The February 1969 issue of the United Methodist Women’s Response magazine reported the death of retired Methodist deaconess Florence O. Vann at the Bancroft-Taylor Home in Ocean Grove NJ. Born in Detroit MI in 1889, Miss Vann had retired in 1954 after a career that included Central Pennsylvania Conference service at Hazleton and Berwick. The work in Hazleton began in 1913 as the Anthracite Slavonic Center and was renamed the Blodgett Memorial Community House in 1926 when it moved to a building constructed at Twentieth and Peace Streets with money provided by Gertrude Blodgett. Miss Vann was one of the key persons that built up the original mission and guided the transition into the Blodgett House. Following a few years at a Community House in Barre VT, Miss Vann returned to Central Pennsylvania to serve at the Unity Mission in Berwick in the 1930’s. That mission at 910 Warren Street in Berwick, which building is still standing, began in 1919 as an off-shoot of the work in Hazleton. Miss Vann then moved to the McCarty Settlement in Cedartown GA, from which she retired.
Pastor James E. Cloer of Lexington, NC, Retired Local Pastor, died on Tuesday, November 20, 2018.

Pastor Robert J. Eddinger of Berwick PA, Retired Local Pastor, died Saturday, November 17, 2018. Among his survivors is his wife, Katherine Eddinger.

Mrs. Barbara A. (Hess) Gaither of Brogue, PA, widow of Rev. Golden A. Gaither, died on Saturday, December 1, 2018.

Rev. Raymond M. Kingsborough of Carlisle, PA, Retired Elder in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, died Sunday, November 25, 2018. He previously served at the former New Bloomfield Charge, which had included the Trinity, Dellville and Snyder’s United Methodist Churches.

Rev. Byron K. Krapf of New Oxford PA, Retired Elder, died on Friday, November 23, 2018. Among his survivors is his wife, Yvonne Krapf.


Rev. Donald E. Mummert of Lewisburg, PA, retired Elder, died on Tuesday, November 27, 2018.

ERRATUM
In the November 2018 issue of Susquehanna LINK we mistakenly published Rev. Jerry Reese as a former pastor of Messiah UMC in Shippensburg (Troy Howell’s DS Installation address “God is faithful” p.10) - it should be Rev. Gere Reist. We apologize for the mistake.

In the article about the 175th anniversary at the Plains UMC, p. 12 November, 2018, a photo listed Tait Stahovic as 11 years old. He was 10 years old at the time of printing.

Please send corrections to link@susumc.org
HUMAN RELATIONS DAY — JANUARY 20, 2019
The Human Relations Day offering supports neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy in the United States and Puerto Rico through United Methodist Voluntary Services, and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.
Download resources: www.umcgiving.org/DownloadHRD

UMCOR SUNDAY (FORMERLY ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING) — MARCH 31, 2019
Gifts to UMCOR Sunday lay the foundation for all United Methodist Committee on Relief work by covering the costs of doing business. This means all contributions designated to specific programs can go 100 percent to those programs because UMCOR’s basic expenses are covered.
Download resources: www.umcgiving.org/DownloadUMCOR

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY — MAY 5, 2019
The Native American Ministries Sunday offering supports Native American outreach within annual conferences, provides seminary scholarships for Native Americans, and strengthens, develops and equips Native American rural, urban and reservation congregations, ministries and communities.
Download resources: www.umcgiving.org/DownloadNAMS

PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY — JUNE 16, 2019
Gifts on Peace with Justice Sunday fund programs that advocate for peace and justice in the United States and around the world. These programs empower United Methodists to speak out for removing structures and systems that harm God’s children globally.
Download resources: www.umcgiving.org/DownloadPWJS

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY — OCTOBER 6, 2019
The World Communion Sunday offering funds graduate racial-ethnic World Communion Scholarships, with at least half of the annual amount reserved for ministries beyond the United States. Donations also provide for undergraduate U.S. Ethnic Scholarship and Ethnic In-Service Training programs.
Download resources: www.umcgiving.org/DownloadWCS

UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY — NOVEMBER 24, 2019
Gifts to the United Methodist Student Day offering help deserving United Methodist students continue their education and their faith journeys as they strive to make a difference in the world and discern what God has called them to do.
Download resources: www.umcgiving.org/DownloadUMSD