Bishops uphold values of mission, unity, space, contextuality in interim report on Way Forward work

Rev. Dr. Maidstone Mulenga
Director of Communications
Council of Bishops

Placing emphasis on the values of unity, space and contextuality — all for the sake of mission — the Council of Bishops is exploring sketches of three models as possible directions for a way forward for The United Methodist Church over LGBTQ inclusion.

With the mission of God through the risen Christ at the core, the bishops, in November, received an interim report from the Commission on a Way Forward that offered three sketches of models that would help ease the impasse in the church, noting that the power of the Holy Spirit trumps and guides all the church’s activities. The commission serves the COB, helping prepare the COB to fulfill its mandate to make a recommendation for a way forward to the General Conference.

Just as the commission did not express a preference for any of the models in its interim report to the COB in order for the bishops to fully do their work, the COB is also not now expressing a preference for any model, while engaging deeply with them and the implications for their church and their leadership. This will provide the space bishops need to teach and engage leaders in their episcopal areas.

After receiving the interim report of the sketches of the three possible models, the bishops engaged in prayerful discerning and offered substantial feedback to the commission, but did not take any vote on any of the sketches. The moderators of the Commission on a Way Forward noted that the values highlighted in any one model also live within the fabric of the other models. Values expressed by any one model are not exclusive to one or absent in another. The values that may be associated with the identity of any one model are there because it may be a value lifted to a higher level of preference or differentiation among the models.

“Operate with a heart of peace and an openness. All three models grew out of mission, vision, and scope. Each one of these models connects to a story and experience that is represented in this body,” Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, one of the moderators told her fellow bishops.

She added: “As we talk about it, let’s be respectful of each model. When we speak about one of the models in a less than respectful way, we are speaking of someone’s experience or someone’s conscience. How we talk about these models is important because they are representative of where people are standing and how people are experiencing the church.”

The commission and the COB acknowledge the interaction between the values of unity, space and contextuality, and the tension this interaction often creates, as part of what completes the UMC as a denomination rather than what

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Christ UMC Selinsgrove rises from the ashes

On Monday night, May 4, 2015, at 9:45 p.m., a report came to the 911 center that Christ United Methodist Church in Selinsgrove was on fire. Nine companies responded to the scene. The whole community gathered beside members of the congregation who watched their beloved church building burn until nearly 2 a.m. But church members had a solid understanding of the following: The last thing is never the worst thing. The church is the people. God gives beauty for ashes and a future with hope.

Rev. Karen Weiss

A little series of yeses.

I, like many people, was very reluctant to answer God’s call to professional ministry. In June 2007 I had what I call my ‘zapping moment’ or ‘come-to-Jesus moment’ where Jesus asked me if I was going to follow Him. And not some kind of half-hearted thing that I had been doing before, but a true commitment that would transform my life in ways that I couldn’t imagine.

So I said ‘yes’ to Jesus, albeit reluctantly.

And after June 2007, in July and August I felt the nudge to learn more about Scripture. So I wandered into my church office and found Eric Shaffer, who led me to the library and gave me a commentary. “Here you go, Karen, read this.” I wondered what I was in for. Then I said ‘yes’ to Disciple Bible Study.

Six months after getting zapped I felt the not-so-gentle nudge to go back to school. Let’s be clear – I had less than zero percent interest in going back to school. I was an engineer, I’m fine, I thought. So I tried to escape. I looked at all kinds of other different things, but after a couple months I was reminded that I had said ‘yes’ to Jesus, and I wasn’t willing to go back on my word. And then my senior pastor, Rev. Dr. G. Edwin Zeiders, said, “Karen, you are on my calendar.” I couldn’t escape meeting with him.

He asked me to consider that not only was I being called back to school for spiritual formation — I didn’t know what

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
These words are from the chorus of the hymn written in 1897 by Johnson Oatman, Jr. Many of you might remember singing them as a child.

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bethanyvillage.org
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NormandieRidge.org

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quincycamputie.org
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RiverWoods.org
United Methodist Homes Wesley Village Campus
Unitedmethodisthomes.org/location/Wesley-village-campus

For the latest news and event information, visit the Susquehanna Conference Web site at www.susumc.org
Assistant Director of Ministry

What God was telling me; not just missing was a clear connection to in my daily life. What was intending to put it into practice and always had the greatest of my list and move on with my when I was too busy for small with God this week? A friend answering that question. In many answering that question. In many of my church do not regularly have first-time visitors, nor can they count many even in a one-month or three-month period. Another issue is that many churches have first-time guests who don’t ever return after one visit. Or maybe they return for a second or third time, but then stop. If churches notice at all that they don’t have visitors, or that second-, third-, or fourth-time visitors don’t stay, they think it must be a disciple’s problem, not theirs. Maybe churches think that the visitors just didn’t fit in, or they just weren’t committed enough. Rev. Larry Leland, District Superintendent of Lewisburg said he heard a great saying: “If a church doesn’t have enough first-time visitors, there is an evangelism problem. If a church doesn’t have enough returning visitors, there is either a hospitality, a worship, or a connection problem.” Does your church track the number of first-time guests who come to your church? If you do, what in the world do you do?

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REV. DR. TOM SALISBURY
Director of Communication Ministries

How many visitors does your church have? How many return more than once?

A few months ago I was talking with another director of connectional ministries. We were talking about visitors and hospitality, and I discovered that even though this person was in another denomination, and in a different jurisdiction, many of our churches shared the same issues about visitors. Talking, we discovered a couple of things. Many of our churches do not regularly have first-time visitors, nor can they count many even in a one-month or three-month period. Another issue is that many churches have first-time guests who don’t ever return after one visit. Or maybe they return for a second or third time, but then stop. If churches notice at all that they don’t have visitors, or that second-, third-, or fourth-time visitors don’t stay, they think it must be a disciple’s problem, not theirs. Maybe churches think that the visitors just didn’t fit in, or they just weren’t committed enough.

Happy New Year from the Office of Growing Effective Churches!

There is much buzz and excitement as we head into 2018. Great momentum is building, and there is a bunch of things to share. First, let me suggest you put April 28 on your calendar for the first Navigate. You will not want to miss this top-notch, conference-wide event. Mike Schreiner and Ken Willard, authors of “Sirod,” along with some other awesome workshop leaders, will be bringing us a jam-packed day of equipping disciple-makers. All attendees will encounter a worship experience demonstrating how to weave discipleship throughout the entire worship experience. They will also learn how to create a discipleship pathway for their size of church. This event will be held in the brand-new Lewisburg High School. We are expecting a large crowd for this can’t-miss event, and there is limited seating. So grab a team from your church and register today.

Here are some other really exciting things going on here in the Office of Growing Effective Churches, according to your eyes peeled for some of these exciting opportunities:

1. Basic Coach Training. Don’t miss out on gaining this essential tool of learning the coach/approach to ministry. Whether or not you ever use coaching in a formal coaching relationship, knowing how to use the coach/approach to ministry is a must-have tool for today’s leader. Think “coach approach to supervisory and marital coaching, and coaching your ministry/leadership team. Both lay and clergy are encouraged to attend. Sign up for this indispensable training to be held February 20 at Christ Community, Selinsgrove.

2. A variety of pre-Conference workshops will be offered at Trinity, Hummelstown, Wednesday, May 30, from 1-5 p.m. Workshops on hospitality, worship planning, small church vitality, Fresh Expressions, vital mergers, re-starts, visioning, youth, finance, and more will be offered. Registration for these workshops will be available when you register for Annual Conference. Watch for details to come.

3. M3 – Moving from a local continuous learning community for your church

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

BEHIND THE SCENES

In awe of God’s work

Several weeks ago, my wife, Meghan, and I were spending time with both sets of our parents andExtended coverage. It was a great day. We had breakfast at the same hotel that we were married. We then spent time together, catch up, and really look forward to the future. It was a day neither of us will forget.

Now, I know, you might be thinking, “Meeting family for breakfast, that’s the most exciting or memorable event!” But it was after breakfast that we all got to share in finding out something amazing.

Meghan and I are having a daughter.

Through the past few months, I’ve found myself struck by how incredible God’s work is in each one of us. Our daughter started out as two differentfundamentally different cells that fused together and started growing all on their own. Over time we could see all these distinct parts that were developing and forming. Each one built to serve a specific purpose.

And as I’ve said before, I really feel God moving in small ways over periods of time, instead of those ‘A-ha!’ moments that others experience. And nowhere has that been clearer than watching our daughter grow. She’s growing, literally in her mother’s, care, but also in God’s care, too. We could try to watch her grow using an ultrasound, but the changes would be far too small to comprehend if we watched her constantly.

But every day we check in on her.

Meghan has an at-home doppler that allows us to hear the baby’s heartbeat. And it’s in those moments where it feels like everything else melts away and we are just in awe of God’s work and His blessing for our family. So I encourage you to listen out for God’s work in your life. It may not be the loudest sound, or even the one that captures most of your attention. But He is there. And especially in moments where you may feel like you don’t know what you are to do or where you should go next. Like each part of a body, YOU were made for a distinct purpose. All you have to do is listen carefully.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

CREATIVE INSIGHTS

New year, new connections

How much time did you spend with God this week? A friend of mine would always ask that when I was too busy for small group. I always had a tough time answering that question. In many ways, it seemed impossible and in others I knew I would always come up short. It’s not like I wasn’t putting in the time. Yeah, sometimes my prayer life was lacking and my time in the Bible seemed scarce. But for the most part I was able to keep myself on track. However, I think the real question was, “Am I connecting with God?”

Reading the words on the pages of my Bible and like enough. I could check it off my list and move on with my day. I understand what I read and always had the greatest of intentions to put it into practice in my daily life. What was missing was a clear connection to what God was telling me; not just discernment and application, but wholehearted belief and sacrifice; thanking God for His word and the knowledge He had given me; asking God to show me how to use His word in my life and the lives of those around me; truly speaking with God regularly and listening to His response. Making connections with people in your life can be achieved in similar fashion. Sincerely speaking with individuals and actively listening to their responses; thanking them for their time and sharing their thoughts. Imagine approaching relationships with family, friends, congregations, and communities in the same way. Communicating with purpose, honesty, and reverence to individuals and groups can change the dynamic of many disconnected relationships and give them new life to grow into true connections.

In the bible you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5
VIM Opportunities

VIM Training
February 10, 2018
Trinity UMC
210 W. Main St.
Hummelstown, PA 17036
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Refreshments and light lunch provided.
No Fee.
Ken Mengel - Facilitator
To register, send an e-mail to jrecrede3@gmail.com or call 717-215-7047

2018 VIM Trips
January 4-14, 2018
Where: Costa Rica
Contact: Ed Letch
ed@lurch.com
Cost: $1,500
Work: VBS and construction
Sponsor: Grace UMC-Lewistown
January 16-25
Where: Costa Rica
Contact: Ron Lucas
ronk1976@comcast.net
$1,600
Work: Construction
Sponsor: Sierra Leone Initiative
January 26 - February 8
Where: Sierra Leone
Contact: Rev. Jeff Fisher
jfisher@susumc.org
$3,700
Work: Relationship
Sponsor: Sierra Leone Initiative
March 15-26
Where: Haiti
Contact: Jodi Crimmel
t.crimmel04@gmail.com
Work: Construction
Sponsor: Haitian Partnership
October 20 - November 3
Where: Tarapoto, Peru
Contact: Curt Knouse
cknouse@susumc.org
$2,400
Work: School and construction
Sponsor: Susquehanna Conference

CONFERENCE CENTER
PHONE NUMBERS

MAIN NUMBER:
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CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRY
717-766-7995
CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES
717-766-7141
DATETIME MINISTRY
717-766-7868
EPISTOLAR OFFICE
717-766-7871
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
717-766-5275
GROWING EFFECTIVE CHURCHES
717-545-0255
HARRISBURG DISTRICT
717-766-6124
HARRISBURG EPISopal AREA
717-545-0520

PHONE EXTENSIONS

NAME ...........................................
EXTENSION

EPISCOPAL OFFICES
Cherly Mackey.................................3100
Bishop Jeremiah Park..........................3100
Greg Myers....................................3103
Kristin Sample...............................3104
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
Larry McCaff.................................3106
Nate Miller..................................3107
GROWING EFFECTIVE CHURCHES
Peggy Spencer...............................3111
Koa Kotas.................................3112
HARRISBURG DISTRICT
Lori Haagen.................................3200
Karen Atanasoff.........................3201
Barry Robison...............................3202
DISCOVERY PLACE
Joni Robison.................................3400
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Kelly Cox....................................3401
Jane Roach..................................3500
Amy Walter................................3501
Lauren Harkness............................3502
Andru Haverstock.......................3503
Darlene Eisenhart.........................3504
Theresa Hunter.........................4104
CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES
Amy Wynn.................................3000
Curt Knouse...............................3602
Lisa Bender...............................3600
Tom Salajove...............................3601
Patricia Frye...............................3602
Kevin Witt.................................3603
Audrey Wider..............................3604
Shawn Gilmore.............................3607
Sharon Keefau.........................3608
Stacy Eckert.............................3609
Saul Poffen..............................3612
Janelle Walker..........................3613
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Check us out on Facebook for the latest news, resources, classifieds, events, and more ...
We’re using social media to engage and equip
the local church in making disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world.
Over $9,000 was raised for Youth Service Fund at Annual Conference 2017. Such wonderful generosity has led to the ability of the Young People’s Ministry Council to give grants to six Susquehanna Conference congregations, and two Susquehanna Conference youth attending Global Convocation. Award amounts for these eight applicants equal $4,388.11. The YPMC also will be sending 30 percent, or over $2,800, to the National YSF to assist UM youth nationally and internationally. The stipulations on these funds is that they be used to assist in rebuilding youth ministries devastated by natural disasters. Per UM Discipline guidelines, the YPMC will also be sending 30 percent, or over $2,800, to the National YSF to assist UM youth nationally and internationally. The change in location also brings a significant decrease in price to attend. The cost of the trip, including travel, lodging, meals, and work supplies is $250 per person. Scholarship assistance is available to first time VIM attendees. The deadline to apply to Curt Knouse, Director of VIM, is February 1, 2018. The team size will be 15 adults ages 18-35. Contact Curt at cknouse@susumc.org for questions and to get an application.

Young Adult Mission Trip revamped!

The Young Adult Mission Trip scheduled for Costa Rica has a NEW location — North Carolina. Maybe not so exotic, but certainly a community in need. The VIM Young Adult trip will now be to Tarboro, N.C., March 4-10, 2018. The team will continue to help the area rebuild following the devastation of Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. Matthew brought widespread flash flooding and record river flooding to eastern North Carolina, where hourly rainfall estimates from radar were as high as seven inches per hour.

Top ministry resources for the new year

As we begin the new year, why not add a few of these great books to your reading list this year. While maybe not hot off the presses, these are helpful books to add to your libraries and to practice in ministry.

1. Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church, by Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, Baker Books 2016. A game changer in youth ministry. This is a great book to read with as a youth leader team, discipleship team, or even small group. While it’s a good book to read solo, it is more powerful and effective when you’re able to work through it with a ministry group.

2. One Body: Integrating Teens into the Life of Your Church, by Sam Halverson, The Youth Cartel 2014. I very often hear, “We don’t have enough youth for a youth group.” Despair no more! Halverson’s book is a great answer to small churches with few youth, or large churches with siloed ministries. This inclusive and practical way of doing youth ministry points out all the intuitive things you’ve been doing and gives you incentive to try more.

3. Thriving Youth Ministry in Smaller Churches (2009) AND Smaller Church Youth Ministry (2016), both books are co-written by Stephanie Caro and explore ways of doing youth ministry in a smaller context. Both offer practical, real-life examples of effective ministry done in the unique culture of smaller churches and ask helpful challenging questions to improve your ministry with teens.

2018 Youth Service Fund grant recipients

2018 Grant Recipients:
- St. Paul’s UMC, Mountain Top: Congolese Youth Group Start
- First UMC, Millersburg: Mission Trip
- Runville UMC Charge: Mission Trip
- St. Paul’s Calvary UMC, Williamsport: Kid’s Club
- HERSHEY and Hummelstown UMC’s: UNITE Youth
- Eatonville UMC, Tunkanhown: Youth Rising After School Program
- Hannah Carter: Global Young People’s Convocation, South Africa
- Alex Clark: Global Young People’s Convocation, South Africa

Youth leader certification retreat

Perkins School of Youth Ministry is partnering with Susquehanna Young People’s Ministry to offer an intensive training weekend for youth leaders. During the three-day retreat, attendees will participate in 15 credit hours of hands-on learning lead by youth ministry experts from Perkins School of Theology. Some of the 12 teaching modules offered will include: Organizing Your Ministry, Trips & Event Planning, and History of Youth Ministry. Each of the courses, youth leaders will receive a certificate in Foundations Youth Ministry from Perkins School of Theology.

The certification retreat will be held Friday, August 17, through Sunday, August 19, 2018, at Mt. Asbury Retreat Center. Cost for the event, covering training, personal workbooks, lodging, and meals, will be $300 per person. Those interested in more information or attending should email Audrey Wilder, Director of Young People’s Ministry, awilder@susumc.org.

UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

Christian Love in Action!

Young Adult Mission Trip revamped!

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Northeast Jurisdiction Council on Youth Ministry

Mission of Peace

The Mission of Peace is a yearly journey of discovery and Shalom to nations in our global community, sponsored by the Northeast Jurisdiction on Youth Ministries. Each year, every annual conference in the Northeastern Jurisdiction may select up to four youth to share in this experience. On each MOP, participants worship in churches, meet youth in churches and civic organizations, and share with people who have a similar longing for peace and understanding.

The Mission of Peace for 2019 will be to the Philippines, December 28, 2018 - January 15, 2019. This trip promises to be an outstanding experience. It is the hope of the NEU CYM that each conference of our NEU will participate in the Mission of Peace 2019. The Susquehanna Conference last sent a youth on a Mission of Peace in 2012. We would love to send some in 2019. If you have a youth that is interested, please contact Audrey Wilder, awilder@susumc.org, for an application. Applications are due March 1, 2018.
Conference students earn college scholarships from UM-Higher Ed

Congratulations to the following Susquehanna Conference students who were awarded college scholarships for the 2017-2018 academic year from our General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) in Nashville:

Lissa Aronson, AErica Bender, Wyatt Bumbarger, Emily Buonocore, Asleigh Clarke, Rebekah Forshay, Peter Gingrich, Gillian Hamsher, Rayanne Hawk, Kacie Hopkins, Rebecca Hosker, Jacey Johnson, Hanna Jones, Darby Kasper, Kimberly Klick, Tiffany Manning, Christian McBride, Gloria Montgomery, Tanner Rodarmel, Brian Sevion, Rachel Shafer, Abigail Storer, Dennis Wilk, and Special congratulations to Rayanne Hawk, Kacie Hopkins, and Rachel Shafer, who received the Susquehanna Annual Conference Merit Award directly from funds collected through Susquehanna Conference offerings.

Thank you for your support in recognizing United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday, and Native American Sunday, which help fund a portion of these loans and scholarships. The remaining funds for these awards come from gifts, annuities, and endowments GBHEM has invested and administered for decades.

GBHEM offers United Methodist students better options for funding education

Student loan debt is not always avoidable for those pursuing higher education. Interest rates for educational loans can vary from lender to lender, and federal student loan interest rates have been increasing year-over-year. Thankfully, United Methodist students do not have to worry about increasing interest rates. Through Office of Loans and Scholarships, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) offers United Methodist students an interest rate for student loans in the U.S. GBHEM loan interest rates range from 3.75 percent to 6.00 percent (fixed interest option) or 4.45 percent to 7.00 percent (variable interest option). GBHEM is proud to offer United Methodist students lower interest rate options to minimize debt levels. Higher interest rates and lengthened repayment periods for lower monthly payments increases debt levels, explained Allyson Collinson, executive director of the Office of Loans and Scholarships at GBHEM.

United Methodist loan rates are:

- 3.75% fixed for the Smart Loan non-deferred rate, in which the student begins repayment within the month after the loan is disbursed.
- 4% fixed deferred rate for students attending a United Methodist college or university. No early repayment is required for this rate.
- 5% fixed deferred rate for United Methodist and non-United Methodist institution with no early repayment required.

Current Federal student loan rates (based on loans disbursed between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018) are:

- 4.45% fixed for Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans (Undergraduate Students)
- 6.00% fixed for Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans (Undergraduate Students)
- 4.45% fixed for Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans (Graduate or Professional Students)
- 6.00% fixed for Direct PLUS Loans (Parents and Graduate or Professional Students)
- 5.00% fixed for Perkins Loans (Undergraduate and Graduate or Professional Students)

United Methodist students can pursue the educational track they choose, explained Allyson Collinson, executive director of the Office of Loans and Scholarships at GBHEM.

The Rev. Jane Jamison Receives Servant Leadership Award

Each year at Albright Care Services’ Annual Meeting, the Best of the Best staff awards are presented. In 2012, the Seneca St. Foote Servant Leadership Award was created in honor of Seneca St. Foote who served as Albright’s president and CEO from 2004 until 2011. This award honors an employee who demonstrates compassion, moral authority and a collaborative work style on a daily basis.

This year, the Rev. Sue Jamison was the recipient of this award. Sue is an ordained Elder in the Susquehanna Conference and in an Extension Ministry appointment as the Annual Fund Director at Albright Care Services, a position she has held since 2006.

In her introductory remarks, Vice President of Fund Development Frank Ashley commented, “A servant leader at her core puts people first. Leading by example, showing compassion, listening, appreciating diversity of thought— these are the qualities of our 2017 servant leader.”

Shawn Smith, President & CEO of Albright, stated, “Sue’s friendliness, cordiality and cooperation are widely recognized. Her dependability in accomplishing her responsibilities has gained the respect of residents, co-workers and management. Her positive attitude towards her job and her loyalty to the organization are noted as an example for her co-workers. Her willingness to ‘go the extra mile’ is an outstanding quality. Sue represents the initiative, enthusiasm and dedication which make Albright Care Services’ communities a special place for our residents and guests.”

In accepting the award, Sue expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to support Albright’s mission. “It takes a team to tackle all that we are tasked with doing in order to achieve the mission of ensuring that everyone who is part of the Albright family is taken care of, regardless of their ability to pay. I continue to do this work because I value that mission,” said Sue. She ended her remarks with this advice: “Be kind. Find something to be grateful for every day. And when you hear music, get up and dance!”

Albright, celebrating 100 years of service to the Susquehanna Valley, invites you to continue your mission by joining us at one of our six locations. Visit www.albrightcare.org for information on senior living, day programs, giving or volunteering.

Preaching with Power 2017 graduates honored

On December 6, six pastors and a lay leader completed the eighth Preaching with Power program offered by Dr. Dilip Abayasekara and his associate, Tony Crocamo. The graduation luncheon program was held at the site of the fall PwP, Christ United Methodist Church in Selinsgrove, with Lewisburg District Superintendent Rev. Laryl LeJard Jr. and State College District Superintendent Lori Steffensen present.

This rigorous 36-hour program takes preachers through the theory and practice of preparing, constructing, and delivering sermons. PwP’s key tenets are that it is a program of preparing, constructing, and delivering sermons. PwP’s key tenets are that it is a

award was created in honor of Seneca St. Foote Servant Leadership Award in 2017. Pictured with her are Vice President of Fund Development Frank Ashley (left) and Shawn Smith (right), President & CEO of Albright.

A video message from Bishop Jeremiah Park was well-received, and so was an address by District Supervisor Rev. Laryl LeJard Jr. Each of the graduates gave a five- to seven-minute sermon prior to receiving certificates of completion and CEU certificates. Commenting on the quality of the participants, Dr. Dilip Abayasekara said, “The conference should be very proud of each of the participants who went through the program. They are committed to their call and applied themselves to make their task — to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.” Shawn Gilgore, Director of General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, was present to take photos.

Rev. Sue Jamison (center). Annual Fund Director at Albright Care Services, was the recipient of the Seneca St. Foote Servant Leadership Award in 2017. Pictured with her are Vice President of Fund Development Frank Ashley (left) and Shawn Smith (right), President & CEO of Albright.

PHOTO: SHAWN GILGORE
Christ UMC Selinsgrove rises from the ashes

By Shawn Gilgore

On May 5, 2015, Rev. Ryan Gephart returned home after praying with a church member, when his phone rang.

“The church is on fire!” the caller said. Gephart responded, “No, the church can’t be on fire, I was just there!” He raced to the church and found that it was in flames.

“That night was rough,” Gephart says. Firefighters arrived and began working on the building. Gephart was struck by what he noticed in the chaos of that night. “The one thing that was evident right away was, people were praying. Praying for the firefighters, praying for everybody; and we didn’t know what was going to happen next for a while. But we knew God was with us.”

After the chaos of that night and through the past two years, the community and congregation of Christ UMC worked to rebuild. Jaime Carpenter is Christ United Methodist’s Director of Lay Ministries. She has been with the church for 13 years and says that the fire, in a certain way, helped propel them into action. “We were all part of the dream and the vision to build a new church. To buy the property, and then to construct the outdoor worship center. But we never would have expected that a fire would be what propelled us to really get serious about moving forward.”

The construction process brought together volunteers from across the congregation and the community. “Every time I think of this place, I can’t help but see hundreds of people who labored here.” And even on Sunday mornings when Gephart leads worship services, he feels a special connection to all those who helped.

“What I always remember when I walk up here to preach — and this is the neat thing — is that, through the dedicated people in this church, there were Volunteers in Mission who came from all over the country and they built this stage … that’s what sticks in my mind. This is a labor of love for God.”

That process of moving forward brought the congregation to November 19, 2017, when their new building was consecrated by Bishop Jeremiah J. Park.

Hundreds of worshippers attended the rededication service, which set Christ United Methodist Church on a new path forward.

As Carpenter says, “I would like to say it’s a completion of a vision, but I feel like we are only getting started. So, I think as the church grows and as we are gaining hearts and we’re making disciples of Jesus Christ, I think there’s a possibility we could even go more from here. Build more. And whether it’s through the building, or it’s through just building systems in the community to help people, so they can hear the hope of Jesus Christ.”

Right: Bishop Jeremiah J. Park and children from the congregation pray over the offering and bless the communion elements.

After a devastating fire in 2015, Christ UMC in Selinsgrove rebuilt and recently dedicated their new church building.


What are the Four Areas of Ministry Focus?

The Four Areas of Focus express the vision and yearnings of the people of The United Methodist Church. Narrowing our focus to these four areas allows churches to use their resources effectively as they live out God’s vision for the church.

Engaging in Ministry with the Poor — Christ calls us to be in ministry with the poor and marginalized … standing with those who are regarded as “the least of these,” listening to them, understanding their needs and aspirations, and working with them to achieve their goals. It also means addressing the causes of poverty and responding in ways that lift up individuals and communities.

Improving Global Health — Knowing that poverty and health are intertwined, The United Methodist Church has been a key player in fighting diseases such as malaria and AIDS and promoting initiatives that improve well-being. The church is nearing its goal of raising $75 million to provide education, infrastructure, communication, and prevention measures to defeat malaria. A new “Abundant Health” campaign for the denomination would reach one million children with lifesaving interventions by 2020.

Developing Principled Christian Leaders — The church needs leaders rooted in Christ, who have a vision for changing the world. Today’s young people have fearless hearts, vibrant ideas, and a passion for ministry. Their talents should be nurtured to shape the church’s path into the future. The church must recruit young people — including women and people of color — and respond in ways that lift up individuals and communities.

Creating New and Renewed Congregations — Around the world, United Methodists are innovating with what it means to be the church, planting new congregations, and revitalizing faith communities in every kind of setting. United Methodists seek to re-evangelize the world so that we can reach more people, especially the young and those from diverse backgrounds.
Yeon honored for years of ministry and service

U

pon his retirement, Rev. Dr. Paul Yeun was honored October 14, 2017, at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Chambersburg, for his 18 years of service as a chaplain at Summit Health Pastoral Services, which includes all the health agencies of Summit Health and Chambersburg and Waynesboro Hospitals.

Rev. Yeun has trained one of the largest groups of pastoral service volunteers in the U.S. over his 18 years in Chambersburg. At the retirement dinner, Paul received honors from the volunteers, the Summit Health Community, and from the State of Pennsylvania.

Representative Rob Kauflman and Representative Paul Schemel presented Rev. Yeun with a citation honoring his ministry to his country and to pastoral services. The commission is entered into the records of the State of Pennsylvania.

Summit Health Service honored Chaplain Yeun with a prayer, which now is on the wall at the entrance to Chambersburg Hospital Chapel.

Rev. Yeun is an adjunct professor at three seminaries, and prior to his hospital chaplany, served 20 years as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force.

Rev. Yeun is available as a guest preacher and to teach congregations how to do pastoral care and counseling, particularly hospital and nursing visitations. “Being a Healing Presence: I Want to Help, but Teach Me How,” is a short course on teaching laity to visit patients effectively at hospitals and health care institutions. He has taught and trained hundreds of lay people and local pastors over the last 18 years at the Chambersburg Hospital. Their pastoral care program received the first ever Achievement Award from the Hospital and Health System Association in Pennsylvania.

His doctoral concentration was on pastoral care of the older persons, and he also has a presentation entitled, “Ministry to the Spiritual and Emotional Needs of the Aging.”

Contact Rev. Yeun at pyeun@summithealth.org or call 717-360-1616 for more information.

Bishops ... interim report on Way Forward work

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that was at the time – but also to deacons ordains. I am pretty sure, as I remember it, that I laughed out loud at him! But he convinced me to start the exploration process, and he assured me that at any time if I was not interested or felt that this is not for me, that I could back out. So I said ‘yes’ again.

What it came down to, was that even though I had a super-long list of objections, the commitment I made to Jesus in 2007 overruled them all. I have come to understand that in answering my call to deacons orders I was saying ‘yes’ – to freedom in Christ, yes to my authentic God-created self, that was buried under the scars from, and expectations of, both myself and the world.

If I wanted to experience the freedom that we all have in Christ, I had to live into the call to be a deacon. So I said ‘yes’, over, and over, and over again. I wouldn’t change my choices for anything. I am overwhelmingly grateful for every step and misstep I have had along the way.

I leave you with this, and hopefully you can answer yes to this as well. There’s a song from Bethel Music called “No Longer Slaves,” and the chorus goes like this:

"No Longer Slaves," and the chorus goes like this:

“Regarding the ordination to deacon...

It is the recommendation of the COB, and the Bishops, that at this time we continue on a journey toward ordination over the next few years. We can do this by remaining in ministerial succession, while continuing our work as deacons. The commission and the COB are not ready to conclude our journey at this point.

Your ordination to deacon will be contingent upon the following:

1. You have been ordained a deacon in full connection for at least two years.
2. You have completed a significant portion of your theological education.
3. You have demonstrated leadership and service in your congregation or other church bodies.
4. You have received endorsement from your Bishop and/or your designated Bishop Visitor.

The commission continues to believe that ordination is an important next step in your Christian calling. We encourage you to prayerfully consider this recommendation, and to continue to discern God’s call on your life in the months and years ahead.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am here to support you in your discernment process.

Rev. Dr. James Fox
Commissioner on a Way Forward

Community Garden and Blessing Box

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that have clearly defined values such as accountability, contextualization, and justice.

Each sketch includes a gracious way of exit for those who feel called to leave the denomination. The values underlying these proposed models are found in two documents: The Mission, Vision, and Scopes document, which was affirmed by the COB; and the Status Report of the Commission, released in July 2017. As part of the ongoing discernment within the church, resident bishops are being equipped to lead discussions in episcopal areas by emphasizing the values of the proposed models as found in these two important documents.

The commission will process the feedback received by the bishops at the Lake Junaluska meeting and will continue to welcome further input from members of the church through conversations and discussions with their respective bishops on the strengths and limitations of each model. The basic resources for these conversations were shared in a handbook with the bishops, and this handbook will be available on the Commission on a Way Forward’s website as a PDF.

The COB and the commission have a series of meetings scheduled for early 2018 designed to continue the preparations for the Special Session of the General Conference in 2019. This includes commission meetings in January and March; an additional COB meeting in February before a final report is discussed at the May meeting of the COB.

The COB is committed to prayerfully seeking God’s future for the UMC as the church continues to invite the entire church to be engaged in praying for a way forward.

“Pray for the work of the commission and for the bishops as they continue to discern God’s plan for the future of the UMC; a future that shows love for all of God’s people and a future with hope,” said COB President Bishop Bruce R. ough.

For a booklet with information about the three proposals visit tinyurl.com/3yfd7vo2o

By Noelle Long

P

pressor may have noticed a few new things growing by Christ United Methodist Church in Northumberland last summer. A community garden was started to simply share God’s bounty with everyone. There were no income restrictions and no limit to the amount people could take. Produce was placed on a stand near the flagpole on the King Street side of the park, free for the taking for anyone who would like some fresh veggies at their meal table.

Last year’s harvest included sweet corn (which some claimed was the best they ever had!), eggplant, Brussels sprouts, zucchini, hot peppers, green peppers, banana peppers, tomatoes, cilantro, dill, basil, green beans, and fresh-cut flowers.

This year’s plans for the garden have been in the works for months. The CUMC family and community partners have worked on or plan to:

• Prepare the beds for composting during the fall and winter months.
• Signage to be installed with the CUMC logo.
• Install brick pathways.
• Handcrafted stepping stones will be made to be installed in the paths throughout the garden.
• Garden expansion. The new footprint will double the garden’s current size, allowing for a more diverse crop selection and more produce.
• A stone prayer wall will be built for anyone to utilize, complete with lighting, a bench, and landscaping.

The CUMC Blessing Box has also been added as yet another outreach to the community. Blessing Boxes are in many different sizes offering a variety of items such as non-perishable food goods, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene products, diapers, and more. CUMC encourages anyone in the community to "Take what you need and leave what you can.

If you want to learn more, contact the CUMC office at 570-473-8543.
Town Hill UMC hosted the 2017 Lewisburg District United Methodist Women Annual Day on October 7. We were truly blessed to have Lori Ssebulime and Joanne Kerstetter from Christ Community UMC’s Uganda Mission team share about their experiences with the Town Hill UMC UMW.

Lori Ssebulime (left) and Joanne Kerstetter (right) from Christ Community UMC’s Uganda Mission team shared about their experiences with the Town Hill UMC UMW.

INVESTMENT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

The Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church (the “Conference”) is pleased to offer the following investment certificates (the “Certificates”):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment Certificate</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
<th>Minimum Investment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Rate One Year Term</td>
<td>1.50% per annum</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Rate Two Year Term</td>
<td>1.40% per annum</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Rate Five Year Term</td>
<td>2.25% per annum</td>
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The Certificates may be purchased only by means of an Offering Circular dated November 1, 2017 and an executed subscription agreement contained in the Offering Circular by:

- United Methodist Churches located within the Conference in Pennsylvania;
- Individuals who certify that they are members of a United Methodist Church located within the Conference in Pennsylvania and are at least 18 years of age and a bona fide resident of Pennsylvania; and
- Clergy (as defined in the current Book of Discipline) of the Conference and who are bona fide residents of Pennsylvania.

Proceeds from the sale of the Certificates are used to support the mission of the Conference’s Loan Committee which extends loans to United Methodist churches in the Conference to acquire, construct, renovate and repair church property (including parsonages).

SPECIAL EXCHANGE OFFER: Until December 31, 2017, the Conference is offering to exchange outstanding Demand Certificates previously issued by the Conference for a Three Year Term Fixed Rate Investment Certificate that will earn 3% interest per annum (the “Exchange Offer”). This Exchange Offer is available only to those churches and individuals who currently hold a principal amount of $50,000 or more of Demand Certificates previously issued by the Conference.

To obtain a copy of the Offering Circular or more information about the Exchange Offer, please contact the Conference Finance Office at (717) 766-5275 or send an email to lhokamp@susumc.org.

Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World
WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

The wisdom of the Magi

The Magi were wise for recognizing Jesus and journeying to find him. As stewards, they, in their wisdom, lay the very best they had at his feet. At the end of Nate Bemeking’s book, The Vile Practices of Church Leadership, he admonishes the church not to be the servant that buries its talent or carelessly wastes it. This is the antithesis of the Magi, something we don’t want to wish. As Bemeking argues, burying the riches one is given can not only be out of fear of risk but can also be out of convenience. It is easiest not to try, simpler to not take the journey into the unknown. This is a waste of opportunities. It might be easiest to stay inside our comfort zone, protecting one’s past and holding onto one’s present at the expense of the future. But we are called to do more.

Yet there is a lack of wisdom in the other extreme too. It is not wise to spend without an intentional plan or to travel without an envisioned destination. It is easiest to say “we’ve tried and risked much as our lack of thoughtfulness in the past or present set up our failure in the future. It is a waste of resources. It might be easiest to buy into the superficial, glamorous quick fixes without focusing on the depth of devotion one needs to recognize Jesus and journey to find him. But we are called to do better.

This Epiphany season may Jesus find us to be wise as the Magi, seeking to lay the best, our very best, before him. May the church dig its buried and lost talents too, courageously and intentionally taking the wise route to follow the Magi’s example on the long and rewarding road to worshipping our King.

Start the new year right and let the Light of Jesus guide our hearts and actions.

Time to start thinking about Lent

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.

Two resources that are new to Discovery Place (reserve early, as copies are limited):

- 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 two of Jesus’ life took place.

- of the future. Each session is designed to help us experience and understand the significance of Jesus’ suffering and death in our own lives. 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 Faigy explores the “I am” statements of 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?” (6 sessions. Includes DVD and book.

The United Methodist Foundation

The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation

303 Nubury Dr. Ste. 400
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
717-766-7980 or 800-682-2615
www.discovery-place.org

The Boards of Evangelism in the Susquehanna Conference sponsored two renewal events in 1968. A February 19-20 Conference on Preaching Evangelism at Faxon- Kemthen Methodist Church in Williamsport led by G. Ernest Thomas of Birmingham, Mich., attracted 120 pastors. A February 29 Lenten Retreat at First EUB Church in Mechanicsburg led by James Singer of Washington, D.C., was attended by 160 clergy and lay persons. In addition, pastors F. Louis Barth and Paul E. Myers represented the conference at the February 5-7 biennial meeting of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and were elected chairman of the Committee on Community Evangelism and executive secretary of the Division of Evangelism respectively.

For questions about the history of the Susquehanna Conference and its predecessor conferences, contact Dr. Milton Loyer at loyerj@lycoming.edu
Mrs. Sue Ellen (Sheibley) Adams, of Ridge Hill Road, Mechanicsburg, Pa., died Thursday, December 14, 2017. Sue was the Susquehanna Conference Loan Fund Administrative Assistant from 2010 until she went on disability leave in February 2017 as she bravely faced and fought cancer. Among her survivors is her husband, Ted Adams. Memorial services were held Wednesday, December 20, 2017, in Trinity United Methodist Church, New Kingstown, Pa. Interment was in Longsdorf Cemetery, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Mr. Emil Allgeier, of Mountainview Road, Newfoundland, Pa., died Tuesday, November 21, 2017, at home. He was the husband of Pastor Margaret A. Allgeier, who serves White Mills UMC. Memorial services were held Saturday, November 25, 2017, in White Mills United Methodist Church, White Mills, Pa. Interment was in Hollywood Memorial Park, Union, New Jersey.

Rev. Cordella J. Brown, Retired, of Naamans Road, Wilmington, Del., died Thursday, November 23, 2017. Since she wanted no service or celebration, her family and friends encourage you to honor her life and ministry by being more kind and loving extravagantly in these troubled times.

Rev. Dale L. Russell, Retired Associate Member, of Pleasant Grove Road, Red Lion, Pa., died Friday, December 15, 2017, at SpiriTrust Lutheran, York, Pa. Among his survivors is his wife, Ellen G. (Hess) Russell. Memorial services were held Thursday, December 21, 2017, in Bethany United Methodist Church, Red Lion, Pa. Interment was in Bethlehem Stonepile United Methodist Church Cemetery, Red Lion, Pa.

Mrs. Roberta Ann (Guinivan) Warntz, of Ridgecrest Circle, Lewisburg, Pa., died Monday, October 23, 2017, at RiverWoods Senior Living Community, Lewisburg, Pa. Among her survivors is her husband, Rev. Malvin F. Warntz, Retired. Memorial services were held Saturday, October 28, 2017, in Heller-Hoenstine Funeral Home, Burnham, Pa. Interment was in Black Oak Ridge Cemetery, McClure, Pa.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES!

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  - $50/yr - 5 copies/issue • $100/yr - 10 copies/issue • $150/yr - 15 copies/issue

Mail this completed form together with a check made payable to Susquehanna Conference to Susquehanna LINK, 303 Mulberry Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-3179.
Sunday, January 14, 2018

“(The Social Principles) invite us to step out of our comfort zones and take care of the world we live in, just as Jesus cared for it.”

The Rev. Irvin Mapes, Superintendent of the Moshannish District

Better Together

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:

“That 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 - “Better Together: Make Us One”
2018 - “Better Together: One with Christ”
2019 - “Better Together: One with Each Other”
2020 - “Better Together: One in Ministry to All the World”

I believe that God has plans to give our church hope and a future. I am already beginning to excitingly 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