March 2018

Mackey appointed DCM, July 1

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Susquehanna Conference, grace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, Healer of Our Brokenness, and Hope of the World!

Joyfully, I want to share this very exciting news with our entire conference family. Rev. Jason R. Mackey will be appointed as the new Director of Connectional Ministries and Administrative Services for the Susquehanna Annual Conference, effective July 1, 2018. Jason will be a member of the Extended Cabinet in his new role.

Rev. Mackey is currently serving as the senior pastor at Trinity United Methodist Church, Hummelstown. During his time as their pastor, the Trinity congregation has demonstrated a strong ability and witness as a vibrant, vital congregation, and is experiencing significant growth spiritually, as well as numerically. Prior to this appointment, Jason was one of the pastors at CrossPoint United Methodist Church. While on staff, he was instrumental in the establishment of Perking Point, a coffee house ministry in Hummelstown. Jason’s first appointment was Stevens Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Harrisburg.

Rev. Mackey has also been serving as the chairperson of our conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. His knowledge and leadership of these very critical areas is greatly appreciated and will continue to be a huge asset to the conference. He has also served on the Sessions Committee. Jason is a transformational leader who is very excited about what God is birthing today. In each of his appointments, Rev. Mackey has been intentional and instrumental in helping each congregation connect with their neighborhood. The same capacity and spirit will flow into his new ministry setting and flourish. He will respond to the demanding responsibilities with competence, confidence, and grace. I know that God has many wonderful things in store for the Susquehanna Conference in and through us, with outstanding gifts in ministry.

I would like to ask you to uphold Jason, his wife, Christy, and their children Eli and Christian in prayer. Also, please pray as well for the Trinity congregation during this time of transition. God is faithful and will continue to be with us for such a time as this.

With You in Christ’s Ministry,
Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

Commission on a Way Forward

The moderators of the Commission on a Way Forward are urging United Methodists to engage in reflections on where they see mission at the heart of the denomination as well as seeing mission as significant for resolving conflict. Below is the statement from Bishops David Yemba, Sandra Steiner Ball, and Ken Carter.

Mission and the Way Forward in the Season after the Epiphany

At the conclusion of the recent meeting of the Commission on a Way Forward, the members were asked to share three words that expressed their prayer for mission and the way forward. The 32 persons reflect the global nature of the denomination where they see mission at the heart of the denomination as well as seeing mission as significant for resolving conflict.

For reflection:
• What does it mean that the commission sees “mission” as key to way forward?
• What if mission became the primary framework for our work in resolving conflict?
• What three words would express your prayer for the church in the present moment?

Commission moderators emphasize mission as key to way forward

In the Mission, Vision and Scope given to the Commission by the Council of Bishops, we are seeking to “design a way for being church that maximizes the presence of a United Methodist witness in as many places in the world as possible”. This vision is deeply rooted in the movement of the gospel from a small village in Bethlehem to the ends of the earth. The revelation of the Christ to the Magi (the gentiles) in Matthew 2 signals the church’s calling to share the good news with all people. At our best, this has been the vocation of a missionary church and is the root of a global church, where we are sent “from everywhere to everywhere” in the name of Jesus.

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Moving our church into the future

By Shawn Gilgore, Director of Communications Ministry

The 2018 Bishop’s Retreat for Clergy Families was held January 15-17 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. The retreat was a time away for clergy and their families to be able to re-center on God and to learn more ways to be fruitful for the people of the Susquehanna Conference. Keynote speaker was Rev. Tom Berlin, lead pastor at Floris United Methodist Church in Herndon, Virginia. Rev. Berlin’s theme for the retreat was, ‘Bearing Fruit: Ministry with Real Results.’ Monday evening’s opening worship, which was on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, featured guest preacher Rev. Greg Milinovich, pastor of St. Paul’s United Methodist Church in State College.

His message spoke to the mission statement of the Annual Conference: ‘To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.’ “It isn’t just something we say,” said Milinovich. “It’s about living the way Jesus loved and loving the way Jesus loved … if we love in action, we march toward freedom.”

Later in his sermon, Milinovich found a rallying call for all of us to come together in Christ. “It’s the brokenness of Jesus in unconditional love. It’s in that, that the community of faith could have a common purpose – they could rally around something – a guiding force, a unifying power that would bind them together. That in the darkness of death and despair, in the utter darkness of the death of Jesus, we meet the one who is the light and who is love … and there is nothing that can separate us from that love.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -
Monday, February 26, 2018

Let’s be open to Christ changing our minds, Bishop Ough tells fellow bishops

DALLAS - Council of Bishops President Bishop Bruce Ough has urged his fellow bishops to be open to Christ changing their minds as they counter disagreements and to be prepared to lead The United Methodist Church into unchartered territories.

Bishop Ough issued the challenged Sunday, February 25, 2018, at the opening of the special meeting of the Council of Bishops as the top leaders in the denominations began to receive an updated report from the Commission on a Way Forward.

In a sermon entitled "On Changing Our Minds," which also dubbed as his presidential address, Bishop Ough called on his colleagues to unbind Methodists and guide them home.

“Let’s help our people empty themselves of the need to control one another. Let’s help our people empty themselves of their fear of the future and their fear of a changed church. Let’s help our people empty themselves of their obsession for security. Let’s not hinder or harm one another. Let’s take our people off the map. Let’s be open to Christ changing our minds,” he said.

The full text of Bishop Ough’s address can be found at tinyurl.com/ye79gfl

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+++ PATHWAYS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Offering intentional pathways of discipleship dramatically increases the likelihood that people will begin and continue growing in Christian faith and action. Pathway infers that discipleship involves journey and movement. When Jesus made the invitation, “Come, follow Me,” he wasn’t speaking metaphorically.

People literally left routines and preoccupations of their lives to explore what life can become by walking with God. Recall how much of the Bible highlights journeys and encounters as avenues of God’s presence and formational opportunities for growth.

I think this speaks to the nature of Christian discipleship itself. What do we mean by our shared mission together – “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?” Jesus provides clarity in response to a question.

One of the religion scholars came up. Hearing the lively exchanges of question and answer and seeing how sharp Jesus was in his answers, he put in his question: “Which is most important of all the commandments?” Jesus said, “The first in importance is, ‘Listen, Israel: The Lord your God is one; so love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy. And here is the second: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’” — Mark 12:28-31

Relationship is where love happens. Love calls us into new frontiers of connection, even with ourselves. Love outdistances the pondering of ideas. It surpasses even belief, because it moves and calls us to embody, not just think. God’s gracefull compassion is a life force that fuels us to reach out and expend our energy for the good of all, especially the most vulnerable. Love is experiential and transformational — seen in the giving and receiving. Our faith and practice arises from the affirmation that “God is Love.”

With this understanding in mind, Jesus’ Great Commission for all of us makes so much sense.

“Go 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 28:19-20

This new column in the LINC, Pathways of Discipleship, will highlight stories and ideas from congregations, extension ministries, and people’s lives that reveal a network of paths, journeys and relationships, which encourage persons to powerful intentionality in going deeper and wider in loving God, loving those we know, loving strangers, and loving the world. What are new pathways and possibilities that your congregation can implement to continue growing in Christian faith and love? Stay tuned for the next installment – Why camps and retreats make powerful pathways of discipleship.

FROM WHERE I SIT

REV. DR. TOM SALSEGGER, Director of Connectional Ministries
Status, privilege, and church membership

This last year has been incredibly busy. I’ve had more flights to meetings and stayed in more hotels than probably almost any time in my recent memory. I must admit that the only perk for being on the road is that I now have “status” on one of the airlines and with one hotel chain.

It sounds more glamorous than it really is. But I must admit that with the airline, I don’t have to pay for my first checked piece of luggage. It also means that I can board the airplane with group four instead of waiting until group six or seven. The perk with this is, if I have a carry-on to go in the overhead bin, there is room when you’re with group four, and not always with group seven.

And, occasionally, not often, I can get upgraded to first class (which I must admit is great).

With the hotel chain, I’m not charged for things like internet use, and with some, I get free breakfast. And with the hotel chain there is reserved parking right out front.

I must admit these are nice perks, but they certainly don’t define who I am or what I believe, or even how I act when I travel.

I’m reminded of an old TV advertisement that says, “With membership comes privilege.” While that may be true with credit cards, hotel chains, and airlines, it isn’t, nor should it be the case for those of us who belong to the church.

I wonder how many persons believe that in their local church, church membership has privileges. How many of us believe that because I’m a member I can claim the same seat week after week – and even heaven help the visitor who doesn’t know that’s my seat.

How many of us think that on Easter, Christmas Eve, and other crowded Sundays, the privilege of sitting in a seat means I can spread my coat out and save seats?

Maybe some of us think that because of our long-term association with the church we attend, or because of how much we give, our privilege is that we deserve to be on boards or make decisions.

Three examples of this come from personal experience as a pastor and as the DCM. It was late summer and we were working on the slate of officers and committees for the new year. We came to discussion about the Board of Trustees and I made a few suggestions of new persons who had the skill and desire to serve as trustee. The discussion of the committee made this very clear: “they haven’t been here long enough to know how we do things.”

Another example was when I was working with a church that was considering Matthew 28. We got to the question of what the next step is. If we aren’t on the committees, what do we if this new people do something we don’t like?” (Again, I can’t make this up).

Many years ago I was leading a Bible Sunday school and someone brought the passage of, “in my Father’s house are many rooms.” As we talked about that a woman (who was very faithful to the CONCLUDED ON PAGE 9

PATHWAYS OF DISCIPLESHIP
KEVIN WITT, Director of Camp & Retreat and Discipleship Ministries
The nature of Christian discipleship

In every church, every pastor and leader say they desire their congregation to grow. Yet we struggle mightily with what appears to be some big obstacles.

Despite our desire, eighty percent of our congregations are plateaued, slowly declining, or rapidly declining. Though there are many facets of the life of our given congregations that could be improved, it is obvious we are not connecting with people we don’t know outside of our congregations. If we don’t figure out how to connect with new people and the mission field around our buildings, the rest of the facets of the life of the congregation are all for naught.

We will continue to lose ground and decline. It is easy to get bogged down in the day-to-day operation of running our church. We lose sight of our purpose, our priorities, and of the very mission of the church - build relationships with God, with each other, and with other people we don’t know.

The first step in reaching new people we do not know is to create and extend radical hospitality beyond the church walls. Hospitality is a part of the day-to-day operation of running our church - build relationships with God, with each other, and with other people we don’t know.

It’s all about relationships.

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It’s all about relationships.
Susquehanna LINK is a regular e-mail broadcast service for clergy and lay persons of the Susquehanna Conference that highlights breaking conference-related news, events, job and classified postings, and more.

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Michelle Schwartzman (above) is the new Harrisburg District Administrative Assistant. You can contact Harrisburg District office at:

harrisburg@susumc.org
717-766-8124

Mary Beth Mattson will be the new Administrative Assistant in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District starting in June. You can contact District office at:

scrantonwilkesbarre@susumc.org
570-901-1569

Just Imagine…

Your gift to the Bishop’s Partners in Mission will be split equally between Mission Central and the global United Methodist Imagine No Malaria campaign.

Together we can Imagine No Debt and Imagine No Malaria!

Michelle Schwartzman will be the new Administrative Assistant in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District starting in June. You can contact District office at:

scrantonwilkesbarre@susumc.org
570-901-1569

for your information

As of January 1, 2018, the conference office is no longer using 1-800 toll-free numbers. Please refer to the list at right for contact information.

Volume 8 Number 2

USPS 763-180
Periodicals postage paid at Mechanicsburg, Pa. and additional mailing office.

Susquehanna LINK is published bi-monthly by Connectional Ministries, Susquehanna Conference, The United Methodist Church, 303 Mulberry Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 Phone: 717-766-7441 or e-mail link@susumc.org

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to Susquehanna LINK
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Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-3179

Regular Subscription $6 per year, 6 issues
SUBSCRIPTION FORM page 11

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Printed by Susquehanna Printing

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The Young People’s Ministry Council is comprised of student and adult youth leaders from around the Susquehanna Conference. The mission of the YPMC is to equip student leaders to empower their peers to make disciples. In May 2018 the YPMC will graduate two student leaders, who, while having not served many years, have made an impact on the lives of many of their peers.

Hayden only officially joined the YPMC in the summer of 2017, but he has been attending Annual Conference for many years, making him part of the family by default. Hayden is a deep thinker, always smiling, and a marvelous musician. His positive attitude and willingness to do whatever is necessary has made him a valuable member of our team.

Alex has been on the YPMC since 2016 and has grown not only in leadership in our group, but also in his local church. At Annual Conference 2017, Alex accepted a calling into ministry and will be pursuing that calling at Eastern University in the fall. We thank these students who have been confirmed in the United Methodist Church and are members of a congregation in their local church. The YPMC tries to help demonstrate to students the breadth of the United Methodist connection far beyond their local church youth group.

Applications to join our leadership team will be available online at igniteyoungpeople.org from April 1, 2018, through July 1, 2018. We use applications to help the team understand the skills present and those that need to be developed in each applicant. We seek students who have been confirmed in the United Methodist Church and are members of a congregation in the Susquehanna Conference. We love to have students who have little experience leading, and those with lots of experience. We love students from big youth groups and students with no youth group at all. If you know a teenager God is calling to leadership, we have a place for them at our table. Please send us these leaders of our conference and for your church.

We currently have five rising seniors that will graduate and leave our team in May 2019. Several of these members have been with us since middle school, and have taken the YPMC in new directions. While we have a stable group of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to continue our missions, we are hoping to bring in more students to be mentored by our strong senior class.

Applications to join our leadership team will be available online at igniteyoungpeople.org from April 1, 2018, through July 1, 2018. We use applications to help the team understand the skills present and those that need to be developed in each applicant. We seek students who have been confirmed in the United Methodist Church and are members of a congregation in the Susquehanna Conference. We love to have students who have little experience leading, and those with lots of experience. We love students from big youth groups and students with no youth group at all. If you know a teenager God is calling to leadership, we have a place for them at our table. Please send us these leaders of our conference and for your church.

Over the past two months the Young People’s Ministry has lead two youth rallies in the southern and northern areas of the conference. We started the new year on January 7 with a youth rally at Shepherdstown UMC. There were 58 students in attendance, and they brought 25 leaders with them. Worship was led by Fishburn UMC worship band, consisting of four students and five adults. YPMC student leader Julia Briselli of Grace UMC Hummelstown delivered a message about the importance of staying connected to God. Throughout worship there were many opportunities for students to be in leadership with peers from their own district.

Following worship, the students participated in small group discussion and mission projects. The students prepared two quilts, which will be given to a VIM team going to Florida. The quilts are gifts to the families the VIM team is assisting. Students also made over 40 Valentine’s Day cards that were delivered to the United Methodist Home for Children in Mechanicsburg to be delivered to their residents. Through these mission projects, these students had the opportunity to be a part of the United Methodist connection far beyond their local church youth group. The YPMC tries to help demonstrate to students the breadth of the United Methodist Church and how their service and ministry here impacts the lives of others they may never meet.

February brought the YPMC to Shavertown UMC. The student and adult members of the congregation, along with Rev. Judy Walker, provided a hospitable environment to come into out of the ice and fog. Students from six area churches gathered with Kevin Witt and Emily Siski from Camp & Retreat Ministries for high-energy icebreaker games and team building activities. Later, the gifts of the members of the YPMC were further utilized as Pastor Scott Miller and student leader Jacob Drexler led an acoustic worship service. Along with playing the cajon (drum box), Jacob also delivered the message emphasizing the importance of choosing to follow Christ even when times are difficult. Again, students were separated into small groups to have discussion and participate in a mission project. Shavertown UMC member Cathy Berteck offered an information session about how their church supports children with hearing impairments at a specialized school in Dakar, Senegal, in West Africa. The attendees then had an opportunity to make prayer bead bracelets to be taken by Shavertown missionary Susan Roese and distributed at the boarding school in March. Students enjoyed the opportunity to make something themselves that would provide joy for someone their age half way across the world. We also celebrated the joy of supporting a local church in their mission to love children they may never meet.

The YPMC has one more Recalculating Youth Rally left. We hope that many of you will join us at Watsontown UMC, Sunday, April 8, from 3-7 p.m. Registration will remain open until Wednesday, March 28, 2018. Holy Week is a busy week, but still remember to register at igniteyoungpeople.org for the youth rally.
Volunteers Keep the RiverWoods and Normandie Ridge Auxiliary Thriving!

The auxiliaries at Normandie Ridge and RiverWoods are very active, having members from many area United Methodist Churches and as well as residents from each campus. The purpose of the auxiliaries is to enhance the lives of the residents. The RiverWoods Auxiliary’s primary source of income is through their gift shop. In 1971, they opened a gift shop in the nursing care center. When RidgeCrest Commons opened in 2003, space was included to display gift shop items for sale, increasing their visibility and income. Beautifully handcrafted items from the woodshop and studio are also sold at both locations.

The recent addition of the Adams Center for Transitional Care and Rehabilitation included the renovation of the gift shop. Due to the retirement of Jan Bender as manager at the end of 2017, a newly established committee of auxiliary members has taken over its management and is making some changes. A grand opening is planned for later this spring.

The Normandie Ridge Auxiliary was founded in 1993. Each year, on the second Saturday of October, an Anniversary Celebration is held on campus. For the past 17 years, Flo Weibright has been chair of the auxiliary committee that plans and carries out the celebration, with the help and support of many local church volunteers in addition to residents and staff. It is a day filled with music, delicious food, crafts, and books for sale, and themed baskets in a silent auction.

Four years ago, the auxiliary added a spring fashion show as an annual event which is attended by residents and guests. Residents model the clothing and a percentage of the sales total is donated by the vendor. Donated themed baskets are placed in a silent auction to raise additional funds. Each auxiliary uses the funds raised for the purchase of equipment and funding of programs that are used at all levels of care. Recent purchases include Automated External Defibrillators, electronic tablets, specialty wheelchairs, therapy equipment, and flat screen televisions. In 2016 they contributed to fund the printing of the recent centennial book, “Memories, Reflections and Dreams: an Illustrated History of Albright Care Services.” The book is for sale at each campus. In addition, they donate to the Benevolent Care Fund, which is used to help pay for food, housing, and medicine for residents who outlive their financial resources.

We are grateful for all that the auxiliaries do for residents, and invite you to continue your mission by becoming an auxiliary member. Membership dues are currently $5 per calendar year and membership is open to anyone interested in the well-being of the residents. Visit www.albrightcare.org for information on senior living, day programs, giving, or volunteering.

INVESTMENT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

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

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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 a 3% interest per annum (the “Exchange Offer”). This Exchange Offer is available only to those church members 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 finsecf@susumc.org.

This does not constitute an offer to sell nor a solicitation of an offer to buy any of the Certificates. The offering is made only by the Offering Circular.
Charge puts Health Ministries Grants to work

In 2017 Rouzerville UMC and Wesley Chapel UMC, Rouzerville Charge, each received a $500 Health Ministries Grant from Susquehanna Conference Congregational Health Ministries.

Rouzerville UMC
Rouzerville UMC joined the Global Ministries Abundant Health Initiative’s 10,000 church challenge, committing to promote activities in areas of health as a practice of their congregation, such as:
• Providing opportunities for physical activity
• Promoting healthy diet and nutrition
• Supporting those who are dependent on or impacted by addictive substances to quit or recover
• Promoting mental well-being of our congregants and community.

Their efforts started with a drug prevention program for youth from the two charge churches, plus another United Methodist youth group in the area. Eighteen youth attended. The presenter was a health advocate from the Charge Health Ministries Team who is also the mother of a drug-addicted child. The youth really engaged with what she had to say. They received drug awareness pamphlets (purchased with grant money) and information that should not only help them, but perhaps their friends, too.

The Health Ministries Team then challenged 23 youth from the three churches to a Pedometer Challenge. Each youth received their own pedometer (purchased with grant money) for the challenge. The purpose of this program was to increase each youth’s activity and awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The Pedometer Challenge included presentations on the following topics:
• Healthy eating - Cynde Overholtzer, RN parish nurse
• Importance of exercise - Rita Caviness, RN parish nurse
• Importance of water/fluid intake - Becky Buffington, RN parish nurse
• Spiritual health - Missy Miller, health advocate
• How to use the pedometer - Donna Beard, health advocate

The winners of the Pedometer Challenge were announced at the youth Christmas party in December. The first place winner received a FitBit, the second and third place winners received a $25 gift card. The prizes were purchased with grant money.

“We hope the youth have a better awareness of a healthy lifestyle physically, mentally, and spiritually,” said Becky Buffington, RN parish nurse. “We hope they can be disciples of Jesus and share the information they’ve learned with other youth in the community.”

In an effort to “create a healthy society where children ... experience abundant health,” they participated in Waynesboro Market Days in October 2017. With a “Drink Less Sugar” display and a game, they educated children in the community about healthy eating and drinking choices, and also about Jesus. After the game each child received healthy snacks, water, and ‘spiritual’ gifts.

Wesley Chapel UMC
As part of the Health Ministries Team of the Rouzerville Charge, Wesley Chapel UMC strives to educate and inform their members and the community about health and wellness.

Their recent three-year focus was disaster preparedness. In 2015 they focused on personal preparedness. In 2016 they taught about church preparedness. Their goal in 2017 was to reach out to the community with disaster preparedness education.

The funds from the Health Ministries Grant allowed Wesley Chapel to provide information and programs to help both charge churches and the community be better prepared for a disaster.

They also participated in Waynesboro Market Days in October 2017, where they had a booth to promote information about disaster preparedness, plus information about the churches and how they are trying to be disciples of Jesus.

The Health Ministries grant money was used to purchase:
• Scripture cards and action Bible cards that are in the churches’ disaster-preparedness bins, to be used by members and children for spiritual comfort during a disaster.
• “Making Sense of Suffering” pamphlets for both churches, which will be used in the churches and community in the wake of a disaster.
• Medical supplies for disaster preparedness bins for both churches
• Materials to educate the community on disaster preparedness as part of the 2017 outreach. These materials were used at both the health fair and Waynesboro Market Days booths.

“Our Health Ministries Team has been such an exciting mission. We know our Lord led us in this direction,” said Buffington.

Find out more about Susquehanna Conference Congregational Health Ministries at tinyurl.com/susconfCHM and Mental Health Ministries at tinyurl.com/susconfMHM
Active Shooter Training video and resources

After the recent mass shooter events in locations around the country and the world, it has become all the more important for local congregations to be prepared for these kinds of situations.

In cooperation with the Harrisburg Police Department, the Communications Ministry of the Susquehanna Conference has produced an Active Shooter Training video for congregations to use. A special thanks to Deputy Chief Deric Moody for coordination and to Lt. Terry Wealand, Det. Kirk Aldridge, and Ofc. Mark Hall for their help in presenting this material.

The video can be viewed at tinyurl.com/susconfASTslides and supporting slides can be found at tinyurl.com/susconfASTslides.

Congregation Security Workshop

The South Central PA Task Force will present a Congregation Security Workshop Saturday, April 7, 2018, at Milton Hershey School in Hershey, Pa. This workshop will cover developing emergency plans, proper responses to active shooter incidents, crime prevention tips for local churches, and more.

Registration is free. Lunch will be provided, with special thanks to the South Central PA Task Force and Milton Hershey School.

Information: tinurl.com/setFASTreg

This event will also be videotaped and shared as a resource through the YouTube page at tinyurl.com/susumcYT

Community outreach spreads further than planned

By Ann Geyer and Dana Myers

As an expression of its mission to share the love of Christ with its community, Mount Zion United Methodist Church in Enola began the new year by inviting members of the congregation to collect gently used flat shoes, coats, sweaters, hats, scarves, and gloves for Downtown Daily Bread in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The church’s Fund Raising Committee coordinated the effort.

As word of the outreach spread on social media, persons from across the local community, and as far away as New York and Oklahoma, sent bags of winter wear to the church. Shoes were placed next to the pews, coats were laid on the altar of the church’s sanctuary, and many more items filled bins placed in the church’s gathering area. These items were blessed before they were delivered to area ministries.

The overwhelming response meant that Mount Zion Church was able to expand this outreach to include Bethesda Mission, New Digs Ministries in Mechanicsburg, and a domestic shelter in Lebanon, which made fourteen bags of clothing available to families displaced from Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria.

The value of ALICE training

By Rev. George Reynolds

Armed intruders are a part of our lives. Sadly, this reality is one we will all have to accept for the time being. But we can be prepared. We must be prepared, because it can happen anywhere.

Recognizing the threat and acknowledging the need to be prepared, Linglestown Life in the Harrisburg District has engaged a number of steps to be proactive for our community of faith. This has included training through the South Central PA Emergency Task Force - Congregation Security Workshop; revising and updating our Emergency Response Plan for the church and nursery school; and engaging the services of ALICE Training Institute to train and equip our staff and volunteers.

That’s the value of ALICE. ALICE teaches participants a proactive, options-based plan for civilian response to a violent critical incident. ALICE authorizes and empowers individuals to utilize human action, building infrastructure, and communication options to increase their chance of survival. Simply put, ALICE’s mission is to save more lives.

Churches wanting to learn more about the ALICE Training programs can explore their website at www.alicetraining.com.
T

Twenty clergy and lay persons from Susquehanna Conference attended the United Nations Seminar on "United Nations Seminar in NYC" in February 4-7, 2018. The 2018 United Nations Seminar caught my attention when I read the theme was to be Terrorism, Violence, and Peace. For many years I had wanted to stand in the space of the United Nations building in New York City — where people from countries throughout the world dared to work toward peace. Touring the United Nations I "felt" was to be Terrorism, Violence, and Peace. For many years I had wanted to stand in the transformational leaders. We consistently myths above:

- The 2018 United Nations Seminar caught my attention when I read the theme
  of making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World

- While working on a consultation

- People don’t come to church because of a program. People come to church for a genuine experience that gives its life hope and grace. While working on a consultation team a few years ago, I encountered one of those pivotal moments of truth as transformational leaders. We consistently challenged ourselves to be in relationship with the people in their own community of God—whoever they are, wherever they live, and no matter their age.

- Our privilege has nothing to do with status, seating, or the expectation that the pastor will care for me first. However, it has everything to do with living out a life that follows Jesus without regard to race, color, creed, where people have come from — without regard to sexual orientation, size of the house, or the neighborhood someone lives in.

- The privilege of our call and commitment is to walk in the footsteps and the shadow of one and to emulate the one who cared so deeply and so fully that He gave His life for all.

- God’s Blessings. — Tom

**Jubilee of the UMC**

By Rev. Fred Day, General Secretary General Commission on Archives and History

Fifty years ago, Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Bishop Rueben H. Mueller and Methodist Bishop Loyd W. Wicke joined hands over a table laden with symbols—the Bible, hymnals, books of Discipline and a 307-page "Plan of Union." 1,300 delegates and 10,000 visitors met in Dallas, Texas on April 23, 1968 proclaiming the formation of the newly constituted United Methodist Church. 10.3 million Methodists and 750,000 members of the EUB Church merged into one of the largest Protestant denominations in the world. Flags from fifty-three countries testified to the breadth of the new reality. At the same time, the systematic racism of the former Methodist Church's segregating Central Jurisdiction began dissolving.

That same year, the United Methodist Council of Bishops signed a concordat with the British Methodist Conference committing to ongoing dialogue and increasing shared experiences saying "men and women separately belong together and British and American Methodists are the same family."

Returning from the Dallas break, I found a copy on my desk of Albert Outler’s sermon “Visions and Dreams” prepared at the United Methodist-General Conference. It was a reminder from a faithful staff member that it was time to begin preparations for Heritage Sunday to be held this year on May 20. This year’s theme is “JUBILEE: The 50th Anniversary of The United Methodist Church.”

Outler’s sermon celebrates the April 23, 1968 birthdate of The United Methodist Church with “an aura of hope,” as the new church gathered at the threshold of a new horizon.

My first read struck me powerfully with the sense of the moment in time when the sermon was delivered in 1968—Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy’s assassinations April 4 and June 5, the sexual revolution, Chicago Democratic National Convention, Vietnam War and protests, the last and order period of the Brown Newspaper Nixon elections—times as turbulent, divided, fearful, discontented and disillusioning as any since. Using the biblical text for Pentecost (Acts 2: 2-21), Outler calls the new Church to a bond of union of the whole congregation once again become familiar with a faith, sharing process that was not so scary. This is exactly how one of our books, “Get Their Name,” came to be. Through hundreds of consultations, we discovered that most churches have some very common blind spots. Those common blind spots include lack of vision, no intentional discipleship pathway, lack of genuine hospitality, no connection process, lack of leadership development, and worship that is not compelling to the mission field. To reach new people in our communities we most likely need to re-think “doing church” in a different way than perhaps we have done before. Addressing our blind spots means we get outside our walls and learn to be contextually relevant with our neighbors. It moves us outside our comfort zones of having “them” come to us, instead of us going to be a part of the community we are called to reach.

I encourage you to sit down with other leaders in your church and evaluate how your church is doing when it comes to building relationships—with one another, Christ, and new folks. Where are the gaps? What you need to start doing differently?

By understanding the past, General Commission on Archives and History helps envision the future. www.gch.org
Anticipating God’s preferred future

This month I asked Rev. G. Edwin Zeiders to share a reflection. I am grateful for his wisdom; this is what he wrote:

One of my friends talked enthusiastically about glimpsing God’s preferred future for the United Methodist Church. Looking into the future is usually reserved for prophets or optimists but Christians in particular, like my friend, benefit from a keen sense of urgency about things yet to be.

Facing the future personally, and in our families, is not much different. Living into God’s preferred future is a meaningful manifestation of Christian discipleship no matter our age or perspective. We live with certainty that God is with us. We have assurance that we are not abandoned and confident that leading “wonderful works of the gospel” fulfills God’s vision for us.

But a necessary part are those periodic glances backward because to celebrate and celebrate the measure of what God has done through us. We may look back with gratitude for all those who have loved us and cared for us and rejoice in the ways God has deployed us into the mastery and mystery of God’s own will. A holy retrospection is prayer and humility is a good thing indeed.

Planning for those who follow after us is a substantial way of leaving a legacy that assures a measure of continuity and support for things that have mattered to us. Planning deferred gifts in our estate makes it possible for others to live, labor, pray, and “love the world forward.”

All that God has done yields a life of praise and contemplation. A love well lived is the fulfillment of the prayers of previous generations and their commitment to inspire us. A planned estate gift is not something to fear or shy away from; rather, such a commitment celebrates how God has embraced and deployed us.

We leave a gift because we first received the gifts entrusted to us. Together we live in anticipation of God’s preferred future. Our gifts now, and our gifts left for others are how the transformation of the world actually happens.

Resources by Andy Stanley

This month we are featuring resources by Andy Stanley. Andy is a pastor, communicator, author, and founder of North Point Ministries Inc., with three campuses in the Atlanta area, at which 20,000 adults attend worship each Sunday. If you have never experienced any of Andy’s DVD studies, you’re in for a treat.

Christian: It’s Not What You Think – In this study you will learn what one word should be descriptive of every disciple, how Jesus’ followers should treat those who are outside the faith, and why people love Jesus but can’t stand His followers. In this 5-session study, Andy challenges us to change the name and reputation of Christianity by building a group of followers characterized by one thing.

Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith – Imagine what it would be like to have perfect faith. This 6-session study establishes the biblical case for five things God uses to grow big faith.

Faith, Hope, and Luck – When our prayers are answered, our faith soars. When God is silent, it becomes harder to trust Him. This 5-session study is guaranteed to transform your thinking about faith. You will discover the difference between faith and luck, and Andy explains what we can expect of God every time we come to Him with a request.

Breakaway: Because You Didn’t Set Out to be Just Like Everybody Else – None of us sets out to be like everybody else, but it happens. Life begins to squeeze us into a mold until one day we wake up feeling trapped.

This 6-session study is designed to get you thinking by exposing you to four core beliefs that have the power to change the trajectory of your life. Breakaway illustrates how our core beliefs dictate our decisions, which dictate the outcomes of our lives.

Follow – Religion says change and you can join us. Jesus says join you and you will change. Jesus doesn’t expect us to be perfect. He just wants us to follow Him. In this 8-session study Andy uses the Gospels to explain Jesus’ teaching on what it means to follow.

How To Be Rich: It’s Not What You Have. It’s What You Do With What You Have – Andy is convinced that most of us are richer than we believe. We can become rich without knowing what it is, feeling it, or acting like it. This 4-session study encourages us to not just be rich, but to learn to be good.
On to Glory

Rev. Dr. Calvin H. Cole Sr., Retired, of Wetherburn Road, Enola, Pa., died Monday, January 8, 2018, in Church of God Nursing Home, Carlisle, Pa. Among his survivors is his wife, Janet L. (Miller) Cole. Memorial services were held Wednesday, January 17, 2018, in Richardson Funeral Home, Enola, Pa. Interment was in Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, Annville, Pa.

Mr. Wilbert B. Eshelman, of Hillenwood Road, Millsboro, Del., died Saturday, February 10, 2018, in Cadia Rehabilitation Renaissance skilled nursing facility, Long Neck, Del. Among is survivors is his wife, Rev. Linda O. Eshelman. Memorial services were held Saturday, March 3, 2018, in Long Neck United Methodist Church, Millsboro, Del. There was no interment, as his body was donated to medical science.

Rev. Dr. Dennis R. Gable, of Butter Road, Dover, Pa., died Saturday, January 6, 2018, in York Hospital. He was preceded in death by his wife, Rev. Patricia C. Gable. Memorial services were held Saturday, January 13, 2018, in Otterbein United Methodist Church, Emigsville, Pa. Interment was in Salem Union Cemetery, Dover, Pa.

Mrs. Geraldine Marie (Bowker) Heilman, died Thursday, January 11, 2018, at RiverWoods Nursing Home Center, Lewisburg, Pa. She was the widow of Rev. Gerald G. Heilman. Memorial services were held Sunday, January 14, 2018, in St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, Lewisburg, Pa. There was no interment, as her body was donated to science.

Mrs. Louise (Sims) Hickok died Friday, February 16, 2018, in Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, Pa. Among her survivors is her husband, Rev. Fred C. Hickok, her step-son, Rev. Fred E. Hickok, and a grandson, Pastor Joshua T. Beben. Memorial services were held Saturday, February 24, 2018, in Madisonburg United Methodist Church, Rebersburg, Pa. Interment was in Mon Valley Memorial Park, Donora, Pa.

Mrs. Betty T. (Vordy) Hopkins, of Lewisburg, died Tuesday, February 13, 2018, at RiverWoods, Lewisburg, Pa. She was the widow of Rev. Henry F. Hopkins. Memorial services were held Saturday, February 17, 2018, in Jerre Wirt Blank Funeral Home, Sunbury, Pa. Interment was in Northumberland Memorial Park, Stonington, Pa.

Mrs. Sylvia Anne (Ford) Mentzer, formerly of Mount Pleasant Mills, died Saturday, December 16, 2017, at the home of her daughter, Barbara Swartz, of Middletown, Indiana. She was the widow of Rev. Dr. Junior C. Mentzer. Memorial services were held Saturday, December 23, 2017, in George P. Garman Funeral Homes Inc., Mount Pleasant Mills, Pa. interment was in Ebenezer Cemetery, Selinsgrove, Pa.

Mrs. Barbara Ann Shover, of Wilson Lane, Mechanicsburg, Pa., died Wednesday, December 20, 2017, at the Oaks, Bethany Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa. Among her survivors are her husband, Rev. Dr. Donald R. Shover Jr., and her son, Rev. Mark R. Shover, both clergy in Susquehanna Conference. Memorial services were held Wednesday, December 27, 2017, in First United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg, Pa. Interment was in St. John’s Cemetery, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Mr. Lloyd S. “Bucky” Treat, of Race Street, Westfield, Pa., died December 1, 2017, at home. He was the husband of Pastor Nettie B. Treat, Retired. Memorial services were held Monday, December 4, 2017, in Kenyon Funeral Home, Westfield, Pa. Interment with full military honors was in Brookfield Cemetery.

Rev. Malvin F. Warntz, Retired, of RiverWoods Nursing Home, Lewisburg, Pa., died Friday, February 2, 2018. Memorial services were held Tuesday, February 6, 2016, in Trinity United Methodist Church, Woodward, Pa. Interment was in Fairview Cemetery, Millheim, Pa.

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 Courtesy Photo: Laurie Felder

March 2018

“Theology serves the Church by interpreting the world’s needs and challenges to the Church and by interpreting the gospel to the world.”

2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline ¶105. Section 4

Bishop Jeremiah Park reminded our pastoral leaders of the work they are called to at the Bishop’s Clergy Retreat 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 - “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