New staff meet changing needs of conference

By Rev. Jason Mackey

More than 60 young clergy, represented 34 annual conferences, participated in this year’s Young Clergy Leadership Forum held in February. This year’s featured speaker was Shane Claiborne, a founder and board member of The Simple Way, a faith community in inner-city Philadelphia. He writes and travels extensively and is perhaps best known for his book, “The Irresistible Revolution.” Claiborne connects faith in Jesus Christ with peacemaking and working for social justice.

The forum was held in the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The building sits directly across the street from the United States Capitol and beside the Supreme Court. These are the halls of power where the critical decisions are made each day that impact the lives of many throughout the world. Claiborne’s message reminded Young Clergy “of the reign of God and the call of Christ, a reign and call that challenges every society of our human preconceptions.”

Participants in the forum heard from several other speakers who also connect their faith with the work for justice. Church and Society partnered with the General Commission on Religion and Race to guide a conversation on racism and the church. Participants also spoke with Church and Society’s general secretary, The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, and Bishop Marcus Matthews, executive secretary for the Council of Bishops, who discussed a number of the challenges facing both the church and society. The group also met with the chaplain of the U.S. Senate, the Rev. Dr. Berry Black, The Rev. Dr. Kik VanGilder of Gallaudet University and Dr. Sayyid Syeed, national director of the Office of Interfaith Alliances at the Islamic Society of North America.

Claiborne challenges us to look at our communities and individuals on the margins of society in new ways. Instead of talking “underemployed,” imagine saying, “People who work two to three jobs just to put food on their family’s table.” Similarly, instead of calling those who are being released from prison, “formerly incarcerated individuals,” imagine calling them, “returning citizens.”

I was also convicted during a discussion on racial justice with the question (in the context of the church), “Why are we talking about racism instead of talking against racism?” These discussions challenged us to look at our communities and individuals on the margins of society in new ways. So often the church stays away from discussions on the biggest political issues of today for fear of creating tension or division. However, Jesus was very political and longed for the church to seek justice and peace.

This forum reminded me that the church is at its best when it engages with society and the current issues of today. I’m so grateful I was able to go and represent Susquehanna Conference with Nick.”

Young Clergy Leadership Forum

By Rev. Clayton Childers

I n June, Cindy Weaver will fill the role of administrative assistant in the office of Equipping Vital Congregations beginning July 2. Cindy comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience from the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District Office. Cindy’s husband, the Rev. Gary Weaver, was recently appointed to serve at Camp Hill UMC beginning in July.

By Rev. Larry L. Leland Jr., Lewishburg District Superintendent

I am excited to share with you that Rev. David Dearing and Rev. Jennifer Parks-Snyder will begin serving as the assisting elders in the Lewishburg District. Revs. Dearing and Parks-Snyder will each continue to serve in their local churches, while sharing the responsibilities of the 20-hours-per-week assisting elder position, held for five and one-half years by Rev. Dick Leonard.

The assisting elders serve as an extension of the Office of District Superintendent. They will provide administrative support to churches and pastors, presiding over charge conferences, answering questions, and offering resources for particular situations, including questions of vital mergers, church closures, etc. They will assist with providing pastoral care to both active and retired pastors and their families as needs arise.

Using their God-given gifts, training, knowledge, and ministry experiences, Revs. Dearing and Parks-Snyder will work with me to continue moving forward in our vision of building a culture of vitality, in which all churches are moving toward their disciple-making potential, and pastors and laity are being equipped as transformational leaders.

Susquehanna LINK is downloadable at suslink.org
We thank God for working through us to give hope and provide compassionate care that is “exceedingly, abundantly, beyond all that we can imagine or think.” Ephesians 3:20

The Golden Cross Offering dates back to the earliest days of church planting in America, and initially supported church-related hospitals and long-term healthcare facilities. In recent years, it has expanded to include a variety of ministries serving all ages across the denomination, with a focus on aiding those most in need.

In the Susquehanna Conference, the monies from this offering benefit the Benevolent Homes. Your support is critical to the continuing ministry provided to the young and the old who are served in Christ’s name.

God works through your prayers and financial support in acts of mercy to bless the lives of individuals cared for in our Benevolent Homes at all ages and stages of life. Please give your gifts to continue this compassionate care that Paul refers to as “exceedingly, abundantly, beyond all that we can imagine or think.”

If your church receives this special offering, please make your gift at that time. If it does not, please make your check out to: Susquehanna Conference, with Golden Cross Offering in the memo line, and mail it to: Finance Office, 303 Mulberry Dr., Ste. 500, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050.

Bethany Village
bethanyvillage.org

Normandie Ridge Senior Living Community
NormandieRidge.org

Quincy Village
quincylvillage.org

RiverWoods Senior Living Community
RiverWoods.org

United Methodist Home for Children
umhcservices.org

www.susumcamps.org
2018 CAMPS AND RETREATS
An Unforgettable Experience!

One in four people will suffer from some form of mental illness this year.

May is Mental Health Awareness month in the U.S.

May 20, 2018, is Mental Health Awareness Sunday in the Susquehanna Conference.

Your offerings to Conference Advance #4050 support the ongoing efforts to educate our members about mental health issues through Mental Health First Aid.

tinyurl.com/susumcMH

For the latest news and event information, visit the Susquehanna Conference Web site at www.susumc.org
CREATIVE INSIGHTS
JANELLE WALKER, Assistant Director of Communications Ministry
Ask for peace

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Life’s anxieties and overwhelming feelings oftentimes overshadow the big picture. Preparing for events, new adventures, or a change in life can bring too much focus on our temporary circumstances and take away from what brought you there in the first place.

God can put you in unimaginable circumstances that can cause an immense amount of stress on you and others around you. But pulling focus from God in those times can lead you through even more hardships. Recovering from the stress of the stress is sometimes more stressful than the original. Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians about not being anxious for anything, but through thankful, thoughtful, and humble prayer and supplication God can deliver an inexplicable peace that can protect you from the stress. Or at least ease your mind to the point where it feels better. The thought of God being so powerful, but at the same time so caring, to bring peace to a situation that you made more worrisome, can be comforting and maybe a little scary at the same time. It’s comforting to know that He will take care of you; scary to think of the sovereignty He has over your life and how often you take that for granted. Paul also says in Philippians 4:6 to focus on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, or worthy of praise. Take time to think about what is good and going right. Yes, you will get stressed. And yes, you may long for that peace and rest. But remember that you can ask for peace.

As I sit down to write this last article as the Director of Connectional Ministries, there are many songs running through my mind. One was the theme song from the brilliant comedy-variety show of Carol Burnett. Her husband at the time, Joe Hamilton, wrote the lyrics for the song. A short part of the song says, “I’m so glad I had this time together...before you know it the time we have to say so long.” It was the way she closed her show for 11 seasons. There is another song, a gospel song, that became one of the most popular songs of Vestal Goodman. Vestal and her husband were regular singers with the Guther Homecoming Team. One of her biggest hits, which became one of her testimony songs, was, “I wouldn’t take nothin’ for my journey.” In some ways it is the way I feel – I’m so glad I’ve had the total of 10 years as the Director of Connectional Ministries working with you the people of the former Central Pennsylvania Conference, and now the Susquehanna Conference. It has been a privilege beyond anything I could have imagined to walk with you as we explored some new territories of work that we’ve worked and labored together for Christ and His kingdom.

God has been so amazing in the experiences, the ministries, and the work that we have been able to do as a conference that, in fact, I wouldn’t take nothin’ for this journey. It has been beyond anything I could have imagined. We know as a conference it’s not always been easy and it certainly won’t be easy in the next two years. But God has been faithful beyond all else and we can depend on God’s faithfulness in the ways he will guide us. I remember Bill Eassum in a prayer he prayed when he was preaching at Wesley College that if God never does another thing for me, God has done more than I deserve.” That is exactly what I prayerfully move into this next part of my journey.

Someone asked me if I was sad at deciding to retire. I can unequivocally say absolutely not! It’s time – time to retire and time for a new person with a new vision, and new leadership ideas to lead the conference into the next faithful step of God’s call. The staff of the Connectional Ministries is poised to follow Christ and Jason into the next chapter of mission and ministry. I’m so grateful to God and to the bishop for appointing Jason Mackey to be the next DCM. I look forward to seeing where God will lead Jason and the conference. I know that Jason is creative, forward looking, always open to and being on the cutting edge of mission and ministry. That’s where the annual conference is, and I believe Jason is the best person to lead the staff and the annual conference forward. I’m so glad we’ve had this time together as DCM and as a conference. I’m so grateful to God for all the people that I’ve walked beside. I would, however, be remiss if I didn’t ask forgiveness to anyone along this journey I might have offended, was short with, or did not live up to CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

PATHWAYS OF DISCIPLESHIP
KEVIN WITT, Director of Camps & Retreat and Discipleship Ministry
Why camps and retreats make powerful pathways of discipleship

Did you know that the United Methodist Church has one of the strongest and most extensive networks of camp and retreat ministries of any denomination? One hundred ninety nine camps now serve over one million persons annually in the U.S. The United Methodist affinity for this unique pathway of discipleship can be traced in part to the very beginning of the Methodist Movement. The Wesleys make a radical choice for their day to move faith formation outdoors through “Field Preaching,” in order to reach new people, deepen the faith of those already engaged, and extend the presence of the faith community into the wider society.

We are blessed in the Susquehanna Conference to have five United Methodist camp retreat centers serving in partnership with our congregations. Today, camp retreat ministry happens in partnership with our congregations. Today, camp retreat ministry happens in a myriad of new and emerging forms to meet the changing needs and landscape of Christian faith formation. I encourage you and your congregation to connect and develop from there. Let’s explore some ideas with your colleagues in ministry Joe Sprekel at Camp Penn (sprekel@ susquehanna Susquehanna Conference), the Reverend20 Claire Green Hills (crevemiersusquehanna.org), Patty Weidman at Mount Asbury (pweidman@ susquehanna.org), the Reverend20 Jill Irwin at Sky Lake (matt@skylakecenter.org), and Emily Slink at Wesley Forest (eslinki@susquehanna.org).

Why camps and retreats make powerful pathways of discipleship

Jesus invites us to follow him and learn about his teachings. Learning – learning innovators! And we become innovators as a result of our learning. Instead, let’s all strive to be learning – learning innovators and not just learning. “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” W.B. Yeats.

We have become great collectors of knowledge, but we many times fail to do anything with our newly found knowledge. We fill our heads with good information, yet often we fail to take the steps to put this information into practice. We sometimes keep the information to ourselves and do not share it with our colleagues, peers, other leaders, and congregations. Have you been lighting the fire with the new information you are learning? Learning is only the first step. Doing something with it is the second step and we must apply our learning. Then, running, I would like to challenge all of us to stop and slow down. Instead of all strivings to be learning innovators. In other words, let’s not only create and sustain a culture of “continuous learning” but let’s just mind the road map of what we are and what we practice;” but also become innovators as a result of our learning – learning innovators.

As learning innovators, we will be learning and sharing new ideas and information. We will be early adopters. We will become more comfortable in experimenting and trying new ministries out of the current methodologies of our current ministries. We will constantly be raising our bar of excellence in our present programs and ministries and be moving the disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We will become more effective, efficient, and focused on our mission.

Too many times our churches lose touch with their community and their local context. In other words, the culture around the church changes, but the church lags behind in adapting and keeping up with culture. Before we know it, we have become culturally irrelevant. We become foreign to our own neighborhoods. This leads to frustration and sometimes hopelessness. We cling to yesterday and become antiquated when our neighbors have moved ahead. This fall the Susquehanna Conference will be launching new learning opportunities for both laity and clergy. Our purpose and hope is for all lay leaders and ministers to take some sort of learning opportunity, share the information back in their local communities, and to use these steps in relationship to the learning.

“Action speaks louder than words but not nearly as often.” Mark Twain

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FROM WHERE I SIT
REV. DR. TOM SALTZGERVER, Director of Connectional Ministries
So glad we had this time together

We all know the importance of continuous learning. There are studies after studies showing the need and return on investment on continuous learning. Our tribe traditionally reads a whole lot and attends lots of seminars and workshops. Many practice continuous learning. Yet we often stop too soon. We do not complete the cycle.

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The United Methodist Church was officially formed on April 23, 1968, with the unification of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church, along with the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction, a segregated group of African-American congregations. Fifty years ago, 1,300 delegates and 10,000 visitors met in Dallas, Texas, on April 23, 1968, to celebrate the formation of the newly-constituted United Methodist Church. This merger of 10.3 million Methodists and 750,000 members of the EUB Church resulted in one of the largest Protestant denominations in the world. Flags from fifty-three countries testified to the breadth of the new reality. The United Methodist Church in Pennsylvania” 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.

Check out our latest issue of Susquehanna LINK online at tinyurl.com/SUSUMCstaff.
Global Young People’s Convocation

Global Young People’s Convocation is an international quadrennial (every four years) ministry opportunity for youth, young adults, and adult youth workers in the United Methodist Church. Each Jurisdiction or Central Conference elects 12 voting delegates to represent them at the convocation. The Northeastern Jurisdiction elected two youth and one adult youth worker from the Susquehanna Conference. We have raised such quality young leaders in our conference, that one quarter of the NEJ voting delegation will come from our Young People’s Ministry Council.

GYPC supports Susquehanna Young People’s Ministry’s continued commitment to equip student leaders to make disciples. One of the goals of GYPC is to strengthen leadership skills of young people. Intentional leadership development will happen when student leaders attend workshops, share ministry stories from their contexts, and learn from their peers who come from different countries and cultures. Additionally, the Legislative Forum will place young people in small groups to discuss significant issues being faced by the church and the world. These small groups will produce legislation that will go directly to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. Through this, our young people will lead the church.

This is the most extensive global gathering of United Methodist young people. It is a time for young people from different social, economic, cultural, political, and even theological backgrounds to come together to worship and form lasting relationships. The transformative power of these young leaders will be palpable not only during this event, but also when they return home to continue the work of the kingdom.

GYPC initiates students into the life of a global connection. Bringing together the voices of young people from around the world, these strong leaders will develop a global perspective of the United Methodist Church. This global perspective will give them the experiences to understand how their discipleship journey extends beyond the walls of their local church and the boundaries of their school district, and will empower them to open the eyes of fellow disciples on the journey.

The Young People’s and Camp and Retreat Ministries, the Young People’s Ministry Council are grateful for the youth and adult leaders who choose to spend their time with us. From October to April, we got to worship, play, study, and serve with 162 students and 73 adult youth leaders from around our conference.

The goal of our time with each other was to give young disciples a chance to grow their faith, think about faith for themselves, and explore their path with God. These comments from young disciples, written on our evaluations, lead us to believe that we accomplished our goals:

“God is asking me to focus on exploring my path, because I don’t know where I’m going. I want to figure out our future. One thing I will do differently is be a leader to those around me.”

“I think God is asking me to focus on thinking for myself and standing firm in God’s word. Even if it means being alone.”

“I feel as though I need to explore different things, because there are still bumps in the road that I think He can flatten.”

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“I will believe in myself more, and talk to God more often.”

“God is asking me to focus on growing in my faith by giving more time to God and making Him my top and first priority.”

We thank God for the work that is being done in and through the young people who are open to the Holy Spirit and are recalculating their relationships.

Foundations in Youth Ministry

Partnerships produce excellence. The Young People’s Ministry has initiated a partnership with Perkins School of Youth Ministry and Discipleship Ministry’s Young People’s Division to provide professional training for youth leaders in the Susquehanna Conference.

For thirty years, Perkins School of Youth Ministry has been coordinating and leading specialized training programs exclusively designed to resource those in the church whose ministries focus on youth and young adults. Until now this training has been exclusively offered in Dallas, Texas. This August, with the support of Camp and Retreat Ministries, the Young People’s Ministry is bringing this training to Mt. Asbury Camp and Retreat Center in Newville, Pa.

Among many extraordinary opportunities for relationship development offered during the training, participants will have the option to have personal conversations with the senior editor of Youth Ministry Partners, a division of the UM Publishing House. Additionally, a panel discussion with members of the Connectional Ministries executive staff will provide opportunities for exploring new partnerships between the conference and participants’ congregations.

Along with a certificate of completion from Perkins School of Youth Ministry, participants will walk away from the training with a deeper understanding of the theology of youth ministry, practical tools to help grow a vital youth ministry in their local context, a challenge to continue to develop meaningful partnerships within the conference, and a commitment from Discipleship Ministries for two online follow up sessions in the ensuing year.

The Young People’s and Camp and Retreat Ministries desires to build deeper partnerships with youth leaders from around the conferences, so that we might continue to work together to explore new opportunities to grow young leaders.

Space for the event is limited to ensure that the trainers will be able to give personal attention to participants. Open registration begins May 19, 2018. The cost of the retreat, including meals and lodging, is $240. For more information about registration or the event, visit www.igniteyoungpeople.org.

AUDREY WILDER, Director of Young People’s Ministries

Christina McDermott, Northeastern Jurisdiction GYPC Co-Chair

Hannah Carter, Chief Community UMC, Selinsgrove

Alexander Clark, Fall UMC, Mechanicbug

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“I feel as though I need to explore different ministries through the church to find where I am most called.”

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The worldwide death toll due to malaria in 2017 was 445,000, about the same as what it was in 2016. While some countries succeeded in eradicating malaria or made huge gains against it, eleven countries reported an increase in malaria incidences and malaria-induced death. Why is this happening? The U.N. Dispatch (http://www.undispatch.com) gives four reasons: (1) Lack of consistent streams of money to poor countries to support prevention, communication, education, and treatment strategies against malaria; (2) conflict and crises that disrupt the effectiveness of health systems in countries that have a malaria problem; (3) climate change leading to destabilizing weather patterns which make it more difficult to eliminate mosquito habitats and which may cause expansion of mosquito habitats; (4) resistance among mosquitoes to the insecticides used in bed nets and indoor spraying and resistance in the malaria parasite itself to the drugs used to treat the disease. The WHO states that it is vital that we step up all aspects of the fight to eradicate malaria so that all the gains we have made against the disease are not undone. To put it another way, there are people living today in malaria-prone countries because of your generous and sacrificial giving. That’s part of our legacy of generosity. Don’t let that legacy be undone. Now is the time to ramp up.

The big BPIM event for the first half of this year has been Bishop Park’s brain child - a “Miles for Missions Walk/Run-a-thon” that is held in every one of the seven districts in the conference. You can read details at http://tinyurl.com/BPIM. By the time this article goes to press, five of the seven districts would have already held their Miles for Missions, the final two districts to complete their event shortly before Annual Conference. We are looking forward to celebrating the successes of all the districts at Annual Conference.

Please keep in mind that at Annual Conference, there will be a special offering taken for BPIM Saturday at the ordination service. You may have had a special offering or fundraiser around World Malaria Day (April 25). Bring your offering to Annual Conference and join the hundreds of others who will show their commitment to saving lives and restoring hope by supporting the BPIM fund. See you at Annual Conference.

Note: Checks should be made payable to Susquehanna Conference UMC with the memo line: BPIM, Advance #7090. Please mail to BPIM, Susquehanna Conference UMC, 203 Mulberry Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-3179.

Peter left Albright in July 2011 to become pastor at Tunkhannock United Methodist Church. However, he returned to RiverWoods in the summer of 2014 to serve as chaplain. When asked what drew him back to RiverWoods, Peter said, “I have cherished the mission and ministry of this organization from the first time I visited The Home way back in 1984. And I’ve always said that I have a personal investment in our maintaining the highest level of care because one day I may very well find myself a resident here.”

Peter experienced first-hand many changes over the years, including two corporate name changes, the opening of the Amanda Ridge Senior Living Community in York and the transition of CEOs.

In October of 2017, the garden at the Memory Care Residence at RiverWoods was dedicated to the Reverend Peter F. Geschwindner by former President & CEO at Albright, the Rev. Seneca Foote and his wife, the Rev. Rebecca Foote. At the dedication ceremony, Seneca said, “The thing that makes this space come alive are the people who serve, and the staff here are a symbol of what is magical about community.”

Peter announced his retirement effective June 30, 2018. He will be greatly missed by the Albright family, as he offered compassion and care to the residents and staff of the entire community, in addition to having a significant impact on the expansion of the Fund Development program. The Rev. Peter F. Geschwindner is a shining example of being called to serve, and Albright is proud that he is part of our family. Albright 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.
Art for the heart: children’s grief group

By Carolyn Kimmel

One Saturday a month a group of volunteers from Calvary United Methodist Church in Dillsburg, Pa., are restoring hope to children who have suffered loss, and helping them to realize they will be happy again.

The Children’s Bereavement Art Group, or CBAG, began meeting at the church last fall as a place for children facing loss due to things such as death, divorce, or abandonment to unite over art, fellowship, and faith.

“The children come so beaten down, at such a low point because of their loss, but bringing these kids together is so powerful,” said Cathleen Lerew, owner of Under the Horizon art studio in Gettysburg and founder of CBAG. “It helps them know that there is somebody else going through it, and that while their journey is unique to them, they are not unique in the spectrum of things.”

And most importantly, she said, children begin to sense that it’s possible to heal from their loss. What better time to share the good news that God cares and wants to walk with them through the healing journey?

Rev. John Estes, pastor at Calvary United Methodist, said he’s excited about the outreach that CBAG offers to community children. “In Dillsburg we don’t know what kids are grieving for, with the drug epidemic here; it could be loss of brothers and sisters, divorce. This is an opportunity for kids to get together in a non-hostile environment and meet other kids who are going through the same thing they are,” he said.

Several volunteers from Calvary knew right away they wanted to be involved in the ministry. “I love kids, and I want to help wherever I can,” said Cindy Estes. John Allison, a retired school guidance counselor and superintendent, said he got involved as a way to continue to pour into the lives of children.

“It’s rewarding to see these youngsters leave us with a smile on their face,” he said. Volunteer Dusty Kaisley said she came to help make a positive impact on the children’s lives, but she finds herself changed as well. “I am just overwhelmed by how open these kids are to our questions, which are pretty deep about life and loss. They are finding a bigger joy, both they and us,” she said. Volunteers have been surprised at how openly the children share their hurts, how receptive they are to hearing about hope, and how much they look forward to returning each month.

Lerew is quick to point out that CBAG is not art therapy, but it has a therapeutic benefit. “The art projects are guided, easy, and attach to some type of lesson,” she said. “Instead of saying, ‘here are all the supplies; go at it,’ we provide a lesson tied back to faith.” For example, a painting of a rainbow after the storms suggests that, “Even though you’re in a bunch of junk now, there is something beautiful in your future,” she said. A child’s hand, made from pottery with palm up and a dove etched inside, suggests the idea of being cupped safely in the palm of God’s hand.

The group also attracts volunteers from the community at large, such as Lori Peters, who is working on her master’s degree in counseling from Shippensburg University.

“I like helping people, particularly those suffering from grief, because there’s a special need there. Grief gets swept under the rug. It’s important to address it.” — Lori Peters, volunteer
Tuning in to AC 2018

Dear brothers and sisters of the Susquehanna Conference, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Prince of Peace, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world.

On Thursday, May 31, we will gather at Hershey Lodge for the 2018 Susquehanna Annual Conference. As we consider our theme this year, Better Together: One in Christ, we are drawn to a symbol of unity, the tuning fork. In his piece The Pursuit of God, A.W. Tozer writes:

“How is it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned not to each other, but to another standard by which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshippers met together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be they to become ‘unity’ conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.”

Friends, when we gather in May, we will tune our hearts to the standard of Christ. It is by that standard that we will celebrate the oneness in Christ, for we are Better Together.

“Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” Hebrews 12:2

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and one mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:5-6

Are you ready to join together like finely tuned instruments? We will experience excellent times of worship, witnessing, learning opportunities, and fellowship.

I am looking forward to meeting you at Annual Conference.

In the name of Jesus Christ, unifier, and the tone by which we tune our lives.

Amen and Amen.

— Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

Pre-Conference workshops

H ere is your chance to grow, be equipped, and connect with one another as part of your Annual Conference experience this year. We are bringing in nationally recognized speakers and local experts to provide you with excellent learning opportunities to meet the needs of our leaders and congregations. Don’t miss this opportunity to take advantage of these workshops and learn from specialists. Space is limited, so be sure to register today.

Workshops
- Track A: Communicating Vision with Jason Mackey
- Track B: Ruts in the Discipleship Path with Jason Mackey
- Track A and B: Fresh Expressions of Church - The Five Ws with Audrey Warren
- Track A: Spark: Vital Mergers - You Don’t Have to Start From Scratch: with Paul Nixon
- Track B: Spark: Re-Starts - You Don’t Have to Start From Scratch: with Paul Nixon
- Track A and B: Fresh Expressions of Church - The Five Ws with Audrey Warren
- Track A: Spark: Vital Mergers - You Don’t Have to Start From Scratch
- Track B: Spark: Re-Starts - You Don’t Have to Start From Scratch
- Track A: Opioids and Teenage What’s New with Lauren Hokamp
- Track A: Opioids and Teenage Disciples with Kayt Hughes
- Track B: Pathways to Spiritual Leadership with Kevin Witt
- Track A: 5 Things Your Visitors are Thinking But Won’t Ask with Jason Moore
- Track B: Worship That Sticks: Creating Worship that Lasts Beyond Sunday with Jason Moore

The workshops are being hosted at Trinity UMC, Hummelstown, Wednesday, May 30, from 1 till 5 p.m. The cost to attend is $25 per person, with an offering of .35 CEUs. Parking is limited. We are offering shuttles to/from Hershey Lodge to Trinity for your convenience. Look for the shuttle signs.

Notice that some workshops will last the entire afternoon (both Tracks A and B) while other workshops are shorter in duration (only Track A or B) and will allow you to take two workshops.

We encourage you to attend these workshops, but they are not required for Annual Conference.

More information at suscumc.org/workshops

2018 Susquehanna Annual Conference

May 31 - June 2 at Hershey Lodge, Hershey, Pa.

Annual Conference

When you hear the term “annual conference,” it could be referring to any one of three things. The annual conference as a regional body, an organizational unit, and a yearly meeting.

Many of these yearly meetings happen in the U.S. in May and June. You can read reports from the 2014 Annual Conference Session on our Annual Conference Reports page.

The annual (sometimes referred to as ‘regional’) conference is described by the church’s Constitution and (other parts of the ) “Book of Discipline” as the ‘basic unit’ of the church.

In the United States, an annual conference may cover an entire state, only part of the state, or even parts of two or more states. There are also three missionary conferences in the United States, which rely upon the denomination as a whole for funding.

The United States has 57 annual conferences, which are supervised by 46 bishops. There are 76 annual conferences in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, which are supervised by 20 bishops.

Annual Conference sessions

Each year an equal number of clergy members and lay members attend their conference’s Annual Conference Session for worship, fellowship, and to conduct the business of the conference, which may last 3-5 days. During these sessions members of the Conference hear reports of past and ongoing work; adopt future goals, programs, and budgets; ordain clergy members as deacons and elders; and elect delegates to jurisdictional and General Conferences (every four years). The bishop presides over these meetings.

Annual Conference Membership

The clergy membership of an Annual Conference shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection, provisionally accredited members, affiliate members, and local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment to a pastoral charge.

The lay membership of the Annual Conference shall consist of a professorship elected by each charge, diocesan, annual conference, diocesan, home missioners, the conference presidents of: United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, Young and Young Adult Ministries, the conference bishop and diocese district lay leaders, one youth (age 12-18) and one young adult (age 18-30) from each district, and the chair of the conference college student organization.

If lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the Annual Conference, the Annual Conference shall provide for election of lay-equalization members.

Lay members must be members of, and active in, the United Methodist Church at the time of election (with some tenure requirements).

The above mentioned have voice and vote at the Annual Conference Session. Other representatives (¶ 602.9) are given privilege of the floor without vote.

It is the duty of every member of the Annual Conference to attend its sessions and furnish such reports in such forms as the “Book of Discipline” may require.

What is an Annual Conference?
A brief history of United Methodism in Pennsylvania

The United Methodist Church was officially formed April 23, 1968, with the unification of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical Brethren Church, along with the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction, a segregated group of African-American congregations.

Susquehanna Conference Historian Dr. Myron Loyster recently offered some insight into the beginnings of United Methodism as we know it.

What were the reasons behind the Methodist and EUB uniting in 1968?

There were two reasons - one spiritual and one practical.

The spiritual reason, I think, was for the unity of the church. Jesus prayed that his believers would be one. The merger of the Methodist Church (English roots) and the Evangelical Brethren (German roots) was a natural spiritual union; though speaking different languages (English vs. German) they had the same discipline, same practices, same book, same theology, and similar spiritual roots — there was no reason why they should remain separate.

For many years the Methodists, because of their circuit-riders and their outreach, had been the largest Protestant denomination in America. In the 1960s they began to decline. There were about nine million Methodists and roughly a million EUBs — from a practical point of view a merger would restore them as the largest Protestant denomination. Additionally, the EUBs were a national denomination, they were not very strong in the South, the West, the Southwest, the Northeast, and the New England states, so it made sense from a practical point of view to become part of a larger body that had name recognition and was very similar.

How did the union help us in Pennsylvania?

The church is always people. One thing that the union did, is it brought together different people with Wesleyan roots; EUBs were strong in theology, through Jacob Albright, a Pennsylvania German Lutheran who converted to Methodism then started the Evangelical Church (so he could preach in German); Philip Otterbein, German born and raised in the Lancaster Reformed Church; Carlisle United Methodist Church, and a friend of Francis Asbury (a Methodist Episcopal Bishop in the U.S.) and started the United Brethren in Christ with Martin Boehm (Pennsylvania German-raised in the Mennonite Church) based on Methodist classes, but German-speaking. The Evangelical Church and United Brethren in Christ merged in 1946 to become the Evangelical United Brethren Church; Methodists in turn learned of this and merged in 1968 with the EUBs.

What kinds of changes took place in Pennsylvania after the merger?

For two years after the merger in 1968 there were free and overlapping conferences in Pennsylvania - former EUB Conferences and a former Methodist Conference. But in Pennsylvania there was a great spirit of unity so in the entire state of Pennsylvania all the face change constructively, honestly, prayerfully, and realistically, then I believe God has a good future for us.

How did they handle other differences after the merger?

There were a number of differences between the two denominations.

Language was no longer an issue as all congregations were now English-speaking.

What happened to all the buildings?

In many places the former congregations united into one church building but in many towns, there may be two or more United Methodist Churches, such as Mechanicsburg, where there were three...or a former Evangelical, one a former United Brethren, and a former Methodist church. Carlisle also had three churches from the former denominations that became Alliance, Grace, and First United Methodist Churches — they recently merged into one congregation to become Carlisle United Methodist Church, and are planning to build a new church building.

In a number of suburbs and towns there are two United Methodist churches across the street from one another, each with a vibrant congregation and distinct ministry niches.

What should we learn from our history?

We should remember that the church shouldn’t be afraid of change and that we can be dynamic. There were good reasons for each denomination to remain separate, and some people wanted that. But the merger taught us that change can be good. We gained more than we lost. We’re a stronger church for it. If we can get along, we can do it together.
Religion and Race celebrates 50 years

By Joey Butler, UMNS

A

part of the 1968 merger that brought together Methodists and Evangelicals, United Methodists began as a

create The United Methodist Church, the racially segregated Central Jurisdiction was abolished.

Knowing that the simple act of abolishing the segregated jurisdiction of the South was not going to solve the new denomination’s race relations issues, the 1968 General Conference created the Commission on Religion and Race.

The four-year commission was tasked with overseeing the merger of white and black conferences and “the opening of all churches for worship to all without regard to race or ethnic background.”

...and that became our role. White pointed out that the commission mirrored its new role in its staff. Each member of the original five-person staff was of different ethnicity.

White served as the commission’s top executive until his election to the episcopacy in 1972. He still has a role in his church in the commission’s integration efforts to be the most rewarding of his ministry career.

“...I felt I was doing something significant when I went in these little towns and churches and met with bishops,” he said. “It was a success and I knew I was doing something right, so I was encouraged.”

As the Commission on Religion and Race celebrates its 50th anniversary, its focus has expanded to a more global emphasis while continuing to provide resources for local churches.

Some of the resources the commission is developing include online curriculum on anti-racism, diversity and unconscious bias; a book on developing multicultural ministry; and a web-training series featuring local leaders talking about their best practices reaching across racial, cultural, genderal and socioeconomic lines.

“Our primary goals focus on engagement — connecting more with local churches and providing resources that impact them, and expanding that connection to the church outside the U.S., said Erin Hawkins, who assited in the commission’s top executive since 2007.

Hawkins said one of the most challenging issues churches request resources for is cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments. The agency is developing a manual on the topic for clergy and lay and will host Facing the Future 2018, a gathering of clergy serving in such settings, May 7-9 in Newark, New Jersey.

“As we close churches, as we get smaller but the pool of ethnic groups grows, the possibility of a cross-racial appointment will only increase. But we’re not prepared for that,” Hawkins said.

The commission’s increasing global emphasis leads it to also confront issues of xenophobia, tribalism, ethnic discrimination and violence in the central conferences — church regions in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Hawkins cited anti-tribalism work in the Democratic Republic of Congo and a cultural competency conference for clergy in the Bahamas.

In a climate where racism seems to be either making a comeback or at least not going away, Hawkins considers the commission’s work to be vital as ever.

“Despite tremendous advancements in the diversity of the church, 50 years later there are still churches that refuse to accept a person of color as their pastor. Our churches still struggle with reaching people who do not look like the average United Methodist.”

Fifty years after he helped get the Commission on Religion and Race off the ground, White sees progress — but not as much as he hoped.

“I’ve always felt the local church would be the last place where we saw significant change in terms of attitude toward the elimination of racism,” he said. “What I see today is obviously what we see in the country: a slipping of reality, can you say the same way you went forward, and I feel in some ways we’re not as intentional as we were 50 years ago.”

That “slipping” is what Hawkins values the church’s role in advocating for peace, justice and inclusivity within historically marginalized communities.

“If we cannot find a way to peace and unity in the microcosm of the church,” Hawkins said, “how can we ever serve as a beacon of hope of the world?”

Beyond baptism: What confirmation means to United Methodists

Any lifelong United Methodists have fond memories of the Confirmation class. Sometimes during adolescence, they met with a group of their peers, guidance leaders and their pastor. They may have gathered weekly in the church basement, during a youth school day, or perhaps for a weekend retreat at a campground.

When the classes were complete, they had stood before the congregation where the pastor and others put their hands on them while a blessing was said. Some then received a special lunch or a gift from their church.

Public profession of faith

Although confirmation is not a sacrament in The United Methodist Church, it is an important marker along our spiritual journeys.

At baptism, we are initiated into the new covenant in Jesus Christ and membership in the Church, Christ’s body in the world. For many, this happens when they are very young.

We recognize children are members of their human families, but no one expects them to “bean their church” and sit in the dishwasher until much later. In the same way, “baptized infants are members of the Church—the family of faith—but are not yet capable of sharing everything involved in membership,” By Water and the Spirit, The United Methodist Church’s official statement on baptism, teaches.

Confirmation is an opportunity to respond to the grace of God available to us, as acknowledged in baptism, and to promise to live as a person of faith. “What God offers us must be accepted and used for good,” it states.

Service of Confirmation

Because confirmation is so closely linked to baptism, blame for the service is contained within Baptistical Covenant I in the front of The United Methodist Hymnal.

After the confirmands answer for themselves the same questions their parents and/or sponsors asked when they were baptized, the pastor will say to the confirmand, “Remember your baptism and be thankfulness.” This is The United Methodist Liturgy states. “Confirmation and reaffirmation are our responses of commitment, profession of faith, and/rededication.”

The Service of Confirmation is a time for a congregation to celebrate their young people’s commitment to “live as a faithful disciple of Christ” and to renew their commitment to do the same.

Readiness is key

Parents and church leaders often ask what age is most appropriate for young people to participate in confirmation. The issue is not so much about a chronological age, but rather about one’s readiness to assume the vows of proferring membership.

“When you think about what’s required to live out these vows with integrity,” Burton-Edwards says, “it requires a measure of adult agency.”

At what age that happens varies among individuals and cultures.

“If you ask the oldest point at which we give adult responsibilities,” Burton-Edwards explains of the culture in the U.S., “it’s the driver’s license.”

This might indicate that a good time for people in the U.S. to consider confirmation is about the age of 16. For others it might be sooner.

The ability to live into the vows is the key factor, not a particular age.

A renewed beginning

“Confirmation includes three aspects,” This Is Your Liturgy summarizes. “a) God confirms the divine promise to those who were too young to grasp what God was doing in their baptism, b) they respond by professing their own acceptance of the grace they have received and their own faith in Christ, c) the Church, as represented by this congregation, confirms the commitments they make.”

Confirmation is not a destination. It is more of a way station, a place where we renew our commitment to the journey we have been traveling under the care of others.

“It is the first time that persons publicly declare their intention to live out the vows of the baptismal covenant,” Burton-Edwards teaches. “It is not intended to be the last time. It’s just that confirmation is the label we put on the first time.”

It is also a time for a congregation to celebrate their young people’s commitment to “live as a faithful disciple of Christ” and renew their commitment to do the same.

Kuechen Pfeiffer was confirmed at Aldersgate UMC, Mechanicsburg, in 2017 by Rev. Troy Howell, with his youth leader Sheryl Rehe and mentor Chris Kiehl, laying on hands.

A UMC.org feature by Joe Iovino

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A letter from Bishop Park re: North Korea

April 27, 2018

“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”

Ephesians 2:14

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ, Grace and peace to you in the most precious name of Jesus Christ the Risen Savior!

My heart was overwhelmed by what I saw on TV that showed the incredible moment when the two leaders of South and North Korea crossed the demarcation line and shook each other’s hand. It was not even conceivable a few months ago. It is surreal, as well as an emotional moment. I imagine what went through the minds and hearts of the Korean people as they witnessed this amazing and historic moment. It was a “Wow!” moment and “divine moment” combined in a very special way to so many people. Particularly, it was an intensely personal moment to those who have been separated from their loved ones for over 70 years. It was also a very special and personal moment to me. On October 11, 2014, thirty-five of us from the Susquehanna Conference were right there in that space where Moon of the South and Kim of the North walked together.

I know that this is only a beginning toward the long and challenging goal of peace and reconciliation in Korea. The agreements made are aspirational in many aspects at this point. But an incredible game-changing step was taken on an unprecedented fashion. There seems to be a real season of change as the dream of ending the Korean War, the total removal of nuclearized military capability, and permanent peace becomes more alive than before. We are seeing a dramatic reversion from a rapid escalation towards an unavoidable war by irrevocable forces on a collision course, to a renewed commitment by both sides to drawing a road map to peace. I pray and urged others to pray for peace in Korea out of sense of desperation and despair before, but now I pray with a renewed sense of hope. We are in Eastertide now, but we are perpetually Easter people by always joining the revival of hope even in the midst of deep despair. Indeed, we worship and serve the God of hope. Our God can make a way out of no way and bring life out of death. So we never ever give up on hope. I solicit your prayers that the peace agreement signed in Korea will be a gift not only to the Korean people, but also to the rest of the world. As our prayers are consummated for such a time as this, God raises the tide of peace higher, breaking the dividing wall of hostility everywhere.

In the name Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world. – Bishop Jeremiah J. Park

By Rev. Peggy Spangler

The NAVIGATE Conference took place Saturday, April 28, on a beautiful spring day that did not distract 350 people from coming out to learn how to create discipleship pathways in their church. The conference was “bathed” in prayer as the team gathered at 6:30 a.m. for prayer before preparing the Lewisburg High School for the day, including praying over the auditorium (row by row), the cafeteria, and the other breakout room, as well as the hallways. Bishop Jeremiah Park was present to greet us and prayed over the entire community gathered that we would learn and grow in our commission to be the Body of Christ in the Susquehanna Conference.

The hospitality team of over 25 people including our district superintendents and the Navigate Planning Team demonstrated what “radical hospitality” would look like in their local church. One person commented that this was an “excellent conference, from the greeters to the food to the materials, the sessions, facility. All was much more than was expected.”

Our keynote speakers were Mike Schreiners and Ken Willard from Morning Star UMC in Missouri. Mike is an ordained minister, at the Missouri Conference who accepted a call to plant a new church in 1998. Ken is a lay person with gifts in coaching and a member of the Morning Star church. Both Mike and Ken demonstrated radical hospitality by mingling with all of the participants during breaks and lunch. In talking with Mike, I found him to be warm, interested, and fun-loving. Please pray for him and his wife as they begin our next steps, ask more questions, and for pastors and laity to come and refine their next steps, ask more questions, and be re-inspired with the knowledge and passion that a discipleship journey can take place in their church. Register at tinyurl.com/y86roztj by May 18.
2017 Shares of Ministry by Susquehanna Conference Churches at 100% and 90%
The importance of mental health awareness and training

By Sharon Engdahl

Ten years ago I became one of the first 100 people trained in the country as a Mental Health First Aid Instructor. After five days of 8-hours-per-day instruction, I returned home from Florida nationally certified as Mental Health First Aid USA Instructor. To maintain this prestigious certification, I was required to teach at least three Mental Health First Aid classes per year.

Since 2009, because of special offerings collected for mental health programming, members of the 900-plus churches have had the opportunity to take the class, at no cost, to be nationally certified in Mental Health First Aid.

Wow! God is so good! He goes before us, knowing the future, using us to do his will. The Susquehanna Conference was chosen to be a leader in this work.

This leadership resulted in so many wonderful works. By providing up to four Mental Health First Aid classes for the conference each year, we expanded our trainings to other organizations. I founded the Mental Wellness Awareness Association Inc. in Pennsylvania. The MWAA grew quickly. We received several state grants to begin the MHFA Instructor Training to the commonwealth four times. A huge undertaking and quite costly. The outcome: nearly 120 people trained as MHFA instructors: each instructor teaching up to three eight-hour classes per year. Do the math. It’s fantastic.

Mental Health First Aid USA now has over 10,000 instructors and over one million people nationally certified as mental health first aiders. There are many audience-specific Mental Health First Aid courses: Youth; Basic Adult; Older Adult; Higher Education; Law Enforcement and Corrections; Fire and EMS; Military Members, and Veterans and their Families. Those who take the MHFA class:

- Learn mental health problems are medical conditions that need early medical treatment.
- Grow their knowledge of signs, symptoms, and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions.
- Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental health or addiction problem;
- Increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress.
- Show increased mental wellness themselves.

More good news. In 2016 we expanded to become the American Mental Wellness Association Inc, a one-stop hub on mental wellness and mental health problems. The AMWA is to brain health as the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, American Heart Association, et al. are to their various health areas.

Both the AMWA and the MWAA promote prevention and early intervention of mental health problems, which includes substance use disorders for the holistic health of the individual and society. The Lord owns these non-profits. We are simply running them optimally for His glory.

Over the past years we have brought an educational program to various school districts in Pennsylvania and are now expanding it across the country. It’s the Schools Mental Wellness Initiative: A Comprehensive Approach to Mental Wellness. Our young people are asking for it. We are providing it. To know more about us and what we’re doing to improve lives throughout Pennsylvania and beyond, please see our websites: www.mentalwellnessawareness.org or www.americanmentawellness.org.

The Susquehanna Conference has designated May 20 as Mental Health Awareness Sunday. After nine years of providing the Mental Health First Aid Training at no cost to United Methodist Members, the funds are nearly depleted. Your financial support for the special offering taken May 20 is necessary to keep the program alive. Please give generously. If you are interested in bringing this valuable training to your church staff, volunteers, members, and your community, contact the Mental Wellness Awareness Association at mwaaw@mentalwellnessawareness.org or by phone at 717-957-3432 to schedule a training.

As the hands and feet of Christ we must remember effective churches don’t simply meet the spiritual needs of their congregations, but also the psychological, social, and physical needs.
WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

The definition of a container is "an object that can be used to hold or transport something." There are so many containers in this world. Cups, bowls, buckets, Cars, planes, trains.

If you made a list, you would start to see almost everything can be considered a container. A musical instrument is a container for music to be played. A piece of paper is a container for ideas. An event is a container that holds people together in one time and place. Even we are containers, containers of God's blessings.

Do we, as containers of the grace and love of God, share what we have? How do we follow Matthew 6:19-21 to "Become the kind of container God can use to present any and every kind of gift to his guests for their blessing." (The Message)

Ironically, another version of this same verse offers us the answer: "If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use for every good work. (NLT)

My prayer for this upcoming Annual Conference is that all that we bring to fill this event will be made pure and holy by God. Praise God that we will come together soon in Hershey. We'll celebrate by presenting our best selves to each other in our fellowship and collaborative ministry for we are blessed to be blessings.

Yet God’s love and purpose for us cannot be contained there at Annual Conference. Although we will gather to encourage and strengthen each other, in the end we are the containers of Good News that God chooses to pour out into the world. It is all about God’s purpose, not what we can do or say. To God be the glory that his loving light is a treasure we hold and transport. Let us give thanks and give in thanks for this honor.

As you read this, Annual Conference is fast approaching. We encourage you to visit the Discovery Place display at Annual Conference to see what’s new in Discovery Place. In a separate location we will also have a “give-away” table at which you can find resources to take home for free. Check us out.

Discovery Place will be closed May 21-23, and Annual Conference May 31 and June 1.

This month we are featuring a series called, That the World May Know. Renowned teacher and historian Ray Vander Laan takes the viewer on location in the Middle East and elsewhere to illustrate the historical, geographical, and cultural context of the sacred Scriptures. This series will transform your understanding of God and challenge you to be a true follower of Jesus.

There are fifteen lessons in this series. View full descriptions of each study in our online catalog at www.discovery-place.org. Search "Faith Lessons" under title to see each different study. The titles are: Promised Land, Prophets and Kings, Life & Ministry of the Messiah, Death & Resurrection of the Messiah, Early Church, In the Dust of the Rabbi, Walk as Jesus Walked, God Heard Their Cry, Fire on the Mountain, With All Your Heart, The Path to the Cross, Walking with God in the Desert, Israel’s Mission, The Mission of Jesus, A Clash of Kingdoms.

Also featured this month is the unique Deeper Connection series. Unlike any other Bible study available, this visually stunning DVD series is written and taught by biblical experts – six professors with specialized areas of knowledge. Don’t let the word “deeper” scare you. These engaging and accessible studies are for everyone who wants to deepen their understanding of God’s Word while being faithfully and effectively.

Hosted by Jarrett Stevens, each session is introduced from Israel. Sessions are filmed in locations as diverse as the Rocky Mountains, Gloucester Harbor, the California coast, Boston’s Old North Church and Chippewa’s lakeshore. Each volume consists of six fascinating sessions. Each session is taught by a different teacher and consists of three components: Historical and cultural background; An engaging, close look at the biblical text and its meaning; Accurate, encouraging, and challenging applications of the Bible’s message to life today.


Full descriptions of these can also be viewed in our online catalog.

As always, we invite you to visit Discovery Place at the Conference Center, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. weekdays with other hours by appointment. Check out our website at www.discovery-place.org, e-mail discovery@usumc.org, or call us at 717-766-7968. We look forward to hearing from you.

Serving Christ with you, Joni Robinson

OUR HERITAGE

May – 100 years ago

On May 26, 1918, the Pleasant Grove (aka East End) United Brethren congregation on the Red Lion circuit laid the cornerstone for their new church building, replacing the original 1890 structure that had been destroyed by a chimney fire the previous December 30. Sunday school was in session when the fire broke out, but the building was evacuated and the members were able to save the pulpit and the organ. The new sanctuary was dedicated in September. The five-point Red Lion circuit of 1918 consisted of Adamsville, Chapel Church, Longstown, Pleasant Grove, and Zion and became a four-point circuit in 1925 when Longstown was moved to the Springett charge. All five congregations are now part of the Susquehanna Conference. From 1917 to 1940 the circuit was served by M.B. Heiland, pastor of Chapel Church’s Heiland Cemetery.

June – 50 years ago

Due to the recent Methodist-EUB denominational union in June 1968, there were two overlapping United Methodist Conference in the area. For more efficient ministry, the Susquehanna Conference (former EUB) meeting June 3-6 at Albright College voted to transfer the following congregations to charges in the Central Pennsylvania Conference (former Methodist): Arnold’s, Upper Strasburg, York Bethlehem, and Brynsville. In addition, it voted to merge its Dillsburg congregation into its Central Pennsylvania Conference counterpart. In return, the Central Pennsylvania Conference meeting June 19-23 at Dickinson College voted to transfer the following congregations to charges in the Susquehanna Conference: Wellsville, New Oxford and, apply in the addition it voted to merge the following congregations into their Susquehanna Conference counterparts: Gettysburg, Rehoboth.
Ministry opportunity: Conference Fund Specialist

Susquehanna Conference is seeking to fill the position of fund specialist as part of the Finance/Loan Fund team in Mechanicsburg. The conference maintains a Loan Committee which is tasked with administering a separate account within the conference designated as the Loan Fund (the “Fund”). The Fund is operated by a staff at the conference consisting of an executive director and conference treasurer/comptroller reporting to the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church the Loan Committee and a staff of Fund specialists. The Fund staff is together tasked with administering the Fund on a daily basis. The Fund exists primarily to extend loans to United Methodist churches within the conference to acquire, construct, renovate, and repair church property (including parsonages). The Fund does not extend loans to individuals nor does it make operating loans.

**JOB SUMMARY**

Full-time. Non-exempt. Location: Mechanicsburg. Requires travel. The fund specialist provides a wide range of support to the executive director of the Fund. This position is responsible for processing daily loan and investment transactions, maintaining electronic and paper account files, interacting with borrowers and account holders, and ensuring compliance with fund policy and procedure.

**When to apply:** For full position description and application information, visit: tinyurl.com/yaggpren. Application deadline is May 18, 2018.

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**SAVE THE DATE: Bishop’s Day Apart**

* **T**his is a required continuing education event for all full-time clergy under appointment. All other clergy and CLMs are invited.

**Location:**
- **Lightstreet United Methodist Church**
- **Watsontown UMC**

**Time:**
- **Saturday, August 4, 2018**
- **9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**CEUs:**
- **6.5 CEUs will be available.**

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

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**NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES!**

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  - $100/yr - 10 copies/issue
  - $150/yr - 15 copies/issue

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**T**his is a required continuing education event for all full-time clergy under appointment. All other clergy and CLMs are invited.

This is an exciting opportunity for those discerning a call to ministry. (If you are in the candidacy process, this is a requirement for certification. This is also a requirement for those in the process of becoming a certified lay minister.)

Enroll now by downloading the God’s Calling brochure found on the front page of the conference website at www.susumc.org or go to the Board of Ordained Ministry website at sbcom.org link onto Resources. Rev. Sandy Kraft at skraft@susumc.org for additional information.

**Location:**
- **Lightstreet United Methodist Church**
- **Watsontown UMC**

**Date:**
- **Saturday, August 4, 2018**
- **Time:** 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Cost:** $20, includes materials and lunch

**REGISTER NOW**

(Registrations due by July 1, 2018)

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Have you ever wondered, “God, are you calling me?” Have you ever wondered, “What is the difference between an ordained elder, an ordained deacon, a local pastor, and a certified lay minister?” Do you know the various certified ministries affirmed by the United Methodist Church? You are invited to join us Saturday, August 4, 2018, at Lightstreet United Methodist Church in Bloomsburg for the “God’s Calling Event” presented by the Enlistment & Interpretation Committee of the Susquehanna Conference of the Board of Ordained Ministry. This is a J for latties as together we examine the ministry of the ordained elder, ordained deacon, local pastor, and certified ministries of the church. This event will include information in regard to scholarship and grant availability, educational requirements, seminaries, and other pertinent information.

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For Laities exploring the question: “God, are you calling me?”

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**On to Glory**

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For Laities exploring the question: “God, are you calling me?”

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Rev. Dan P. Cole, Retired, of Drake Avenue, Evanston, Ill., died Sunday, December 10, 2017, at home. Among his survivors is his wife, Catharine A. (Crowding) Cole. No information about a service or interment is available.

**Mrs. Sue Ann Garvin,** of Laketield Road, York, Pa., died Thursday, April 19, 2018, in York Hospital. She was the wife of Rev. Roland E. Garvin. Memorial services were held Tuesday, April 24, 2018, in Calvary United Methodist Church, York, Pa. Interment was in Prospect Hill Cemetery, York, Pa.

**Mrs. M. Lois Higgins,** of Wilson Lane, Bethany Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa., died March 18, 2018. She was the widow of Rev. Rayborn Higgins. Memorial services were held Thursday, April 24, 2018, in Calvary United Methodist Church, York, Pa. Interment was at the convenience of the family.

**Mrs. Ruth E. Matthews,** of Main Street, New Milford, Pa., died Friday, February 23, 2018. She was the widow of Rev. Russell Matthews. Memorial services were held Thursday, March 1, 2018, in First United Methodist Church, New Milford, Pa. Interment was in New Milford Cemetery, New Milford, Pa.

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**Rev. Paul R. O’Brien,** Retired, of South Lincoln Avenue, Tyrone, Pa., died Tuesday, March 13, 2018, at Epworth Manor, Tyrone, Pa. Memorial services were held Friday, March 16, 2018, in Bald Eagle United Methodist Church, Tyrone, Pa. Interment was in Bald Eagle Cemetery, Tyrone, Pa.

**Rev. David Keith Robb,** Retired, of Veterinary Lane, Howard, Pa., died Wednesday, March 14, 2018, in Mount Nittany Medical Center, State College, Pa. Among his survivors is his wife, Susan (Schaeffer) Robb. Interment was private at the convenience of the family.

**Mrs. Mona Thompson Shaffer,** widow of Rev. Paul C. Shaffer, died Tuesday, February 27, 2018, in Hickory House Nursing Home, Honey Brook, Pa. Mrs. Shaffer was an ordained pastor, and was one of the first women ordained in the former Central Pennsylvania Conference. Memorial services were held Saturday, March 10, 2018, in Mardorf United Methodist Church, Altoona, Pa. Interment was in Grandview Cemetery, Altoona, Pa.

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**For Laities exploring the question: “God, are you calling me?”**

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**REGISTER NOW**

(Registrations due by July 1, 2018)
“May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 15:5-6

See Annual Conference information on pages 8-9.

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 connected church. It also points to the mandate of unity for Christian witness as it sums up the spirit and the focus of Jesus’ prayer for the oneness of his disciples.

In the Gospel of John chapter 17, Jesus repeats these words of prayer:

“They may be one as we are one.”

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

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

2017-18 - “Better Together: Make Us One”

2018-19 - “Better Together: One with Christ”

2019-20 - “Better Together: One with Each Other”

2020-21 - “Better Together: One in Ministry to All the World”

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

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

(Romans 15:13)

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