



# **UMC***Connection*

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Becoming fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world • [www.bwcumc.org](http://www.bwcumc.org) • Volume 25, Issue 11 • November 2014

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## Washington Conference remembered



From left to right: Bishops Forrest Stith, retired, Warner Brown Jr., San Francisco Area, and Marcus Matthews, Baltimore-Washington Conference, prepare to greet guests at the 150th anniversary celebration of the former Washington Conference.

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
 UMConnection Staff

**O**NE-HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS ago, a racially segregated Conference was created in the then Methodist Episcopal Church under the auspices of giving black people their own governance in their own church. The organizational meeting of "The Washington Conference of Colored Members" began Oct. 27, 1864, at Sharp Street Station Church in Baltimore. It ended on Oct. 31.

The next day, Nov. 1, 1864, slavery ended in Maryland.

Bishop Levi Scott stated this fact plainly in his closing remarks to the newly-formed Conference: "...the day on which the first Annual Conference of Colored Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church ever held in the State of Maryland closes is the day on which the dominion of Slavery ceases. Ninety thousand of your brethren will lie down tonight — if they do indeed lie down, with the manacles of slavery upon them, but when the midnight hour shall strike,... so shall their chains fall off."

The new Washington Conference encompassed "Western Maryland, the District of Columbia and the territory south," according to the minutes of the 1864 General Conference, meeting in Philadelphia.

In 2014, in a chandelier-lit ballroom, more than 450 ancestors of the Washington Conference gathered outside Baltimore to remember, rejoice and renew their commitment to Christ and each other as they commemorated this anniversary.

"It really is a good thing when you come through a difficult and dangerous journey to look back and remember what you've come through,"

said Bishop Warner Brown, Jr., keynote speaker for the event and bishop of the San Francisco Area. Brown is also president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, "the highest position an ordained Elder in our church can attain," said Bishop Marcus Matthews in his introduction of Brown.

And Brown is a child of the Washington Conference.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Brown felt the call to ordained ministry at the age of 13. He was ordained a Deacon in the Baltimore-Washington Conference in 1973, and graduated from Wesley Theological Seminary in 1974.

"Who would have known that, at the 2016 General Conference, a son of Ames Memorial in Baltimore, a church in the Washington Conference, would rise up as the president of the Council of Bishops and call the General Conference to order? None but the Lord," he said.

Brown, accompanied by his wife, Minnie, and 40+ relatives at the event, offered prayers and thanksgiving for not only the Washington Conference but for the "partners we've had on the way."

"Our history," he said, "gives us lessons for how to prepare for and live into the future."

Brown noted that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was preaching against slavery as early as the 1730s. The church has struggled since then, he said, with the question asked by Bishop Earl Cranston of the Washington Conference: "What of the Negro?"

Within three years of the Washington Conference being born, it claimed 14,261 full members. By 1874, it recorded 24,272 full members. In 1873, when the Conference met in Washington, D.C., for its tenth session,

*See Remembered, page 4*

## Judicial Council upholds Bishop's decisions of law

BY ERIK ALSGAARD & MAIDSTONE MULENGA  
 UMConnection Staff

**T**HE UNITED METHODIST'S highest court – the Judicial Council – has upheld Baltimore-Washington Conference Bishop Marcus Matthews two rulings of law following actions at last May's Annual Conference Session.

The first ruling addressed the resolution, "Agree to Disagree on Issues Pertaining to Gender and Sexual Minorities."

After the Session voted to approve the resolution,

a question was raised if portions of it violated the church's Book of Discipline, or book of church law.

Specifically, three paragraphs of the resolution were questioned:

"Therefore, let it be resolved that the Baltimore-Washington Conference be strongly encouraged to:

1. Support LGBT lay members who marry and to consider refraining from filing complaints against pastors who perform marriages between gender and sexual minorities; and
2. Consider refraining from using its resources to investigate or enforce a ban on marriages

3. between gender and sexual minorities, or for church trials, or for otherwise disciplining clergy that perform same-sex marriages; and
3. Consider refraining from using its resources to investigate the gender or sexual orientation of a minister or candidate for ministry and consider refraining from using its resources to enforce a ban on the certification of an LGBT candidate for ministry, or the ban on ordination of an LGBT minister."

The Judicial Council agreed with Matthews' ruling

*See Judicial Council, page 3*

# ... well said

(a chance to express what that word means to you.)

By MANDY SAYERS  
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

WHEN I WAS growing up, my family would announce, as vacations would begin: “All right, we are on vacation! That means everyone can do what they want to do. If you want to take a nap, you can. If you want to go swimming, you can. If you want to read a book, you can.” I can remember the little leap in my heart that would happen. No rules. Just hanging out. No schedules. Thank the good Lord.

My husband’s family, when they go on vacation, looks forward to scheduled things. Compulsory card games. Mandatory shopping trips. Specific things to do at specific times. A hike at precisely 1:15. Alrighty then! It was very hard for this freewheeling nap-taker to adjust. It was a clash of traditions.

In the church, we talk about tradition as one of the tools we use to help us decide what to do. Scripture is the primary source of authority, but it is “illuminated by tradition.” Very often, the church has let its traditions get in the way of needed change and has bumped up against prophetic voices, crying out that the truth of the gospel must triumph when tradition has misinterpreted it. And those prophetic voices become part of our tradition, too.

Tradition means so much more than “the way we’ve always done it.” Tradition includes all the dissenting voices that stand with us to say, “You think you have no other options? Think again!” So many times, the church throws up its hands and says its out of options, and so many times, the saints, the martyrs, the brothers and sisters gone before, say to us, “Maybe what you have, church, is a failure of imagination.”

As we settle in to the traditions of Thanksgiving — family, football and food — let’s look at the traditions at our churches. How can we honor the radical nature of the gospel in a new way, as we enjoy the craft fair and Sister Loretta’s amazing pound cake? How is God calling us to be faithful to the “tradition” of being a royal pain in the neck to the emperor this Advent? The possibilities are endless, you know. It’s who we are. It’s our tradition.

Ancient church mothers and fathers often greeted one another with the phrase, “Give me a word.” This greeting led to the sharing of insights and wisdom. Today we continue this tradition with this monthly column.

By DARYL WILLIAMS  
Pastor, St. Paul UMC, Oxon Hill

IT STARTED OUT as an experiment. We wanted to do something different. Nobody was sure that it would work, but we figured we didn’t have much to lose. So, we stepped out on faith and tried something new. It was exciting, different and it actually worked. It wasn’t perfect but it worked. We were only supposed to do it once, but we knew we would have to do it again, only better. So we did it again. We learned from our mistakes and low and behold, it was better. We did it until we perfected it, now we look forward to doing it again, every time.

One day, somebody came and said we should do something else. We had to explain to them that we have been doing it this way for a long time. People like the way we have been doing this. For years, we have been doing it this way and we know it works. It is a part of the fabric of who we are. In short, it is tradition and tradition means something.

Tradition reminds us of who we are and where we have come from. Tradition makes us comfortable. Tradition brings back fond memories of days gone by and people we miss. We’re sorry, but we simply can’t change tradition for an experiment.

Tradition is great, but we have to remember that every tradition started out as an experiment. It was something that we tried once, that we enjoyed, so we did it again. We built fond memories with it and repeated it often, but it was never supposed to be permanent. Over time traditions are supposed to evolve. They are supposed to get new life, bring in new people and sometimes give way to new experiments that become new traditions.

There comes a time when we have to remember that our favorite tradition started as an inspired experiment that someone gave us the opportunity to try. So this year let’s have an experiment again. Let’s start a new tradition.



... well said

... well said

## EVENTS

### ROCK registration now open

**Ocean City Convention Center**  
**Feb. 6-8, 2015**  
Featuring Reggie Dabbs and music by BJ Putnam and Jimmy Needham. Added this year is an “Adults-Only Room” (for adults 18 and over without chaperoning responsibilities). For more information, contact ROCKretreat2015@aol.com.

### 25 years of art

**The Dadian Gallery at Wesley Seminary**  
**Now through Dec. 19**  
“The Dadian@25” will show art works from 25 years of past exhibitions. Visit [www.wesleyseminary.edu/LCAR/Gallery/Exhibitions/](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu/LCAR/Gallery/Exhibitions/).

### Youth Leadership Retreat

**Skycroft Conference Center, Middleton**  
**Nov. 14-15**  
Leadership training for youth grade 6 through grade 12 to learn about the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (CCYM). Contact Pam Bowen: [pbowen@bwcumc.org](mailto:pbowen@bwcumc.org), or 410-309-3427.

### Bishop’s Advent Day Apart with Clergy

**Trinity UMC, Frederick**  
**Nov. 18**  
Theme of the day: ‘Son of David, Son of God: O Come, Emmanuel...’ with guest preacher, Rev. Bruce Birch. Cost is \$15. Register at <http://bit.ly/1x3EtXS>.

### United Methodist Student Day

**All churches**  
**Nov. 30**  
This Special Sunday with Offering calls the church to support students as they prepare for life by uniting faith and knowledge. The offering provides scholarships and student loans for qualified United Methodists. Information and resources, including bulleting inserts, available at [www.umcsgiving.org/give](http://www.umcsgiving.org/give).

### UMC #Giving Tuesday:

**All churches**  
**Dec. 2**  
Involve your church in this online giving opportunity to fund United Methodist ministries around the world. Last year, more than \$6,000,000 was given. For information on how to give go to [http://www.umcmmission.org/ArticleDocuments/150/GivTues%20Toolkit\\_ADV%20PROJ\\_rev.pdf](http://www.umcmmission.org/ArticleDocuments/150/GivTues%20Toolkit_ADV%20PROJ_rev.pdf). Also available for download are banners, worship resources, graphics and other ideas.

### Statistics report training

**BWC Mission Center**  
**Dec. 1, 2-4 p.m.**  
**Dec. 3, 2-4 p.m. & 7-9p.m.**  
**Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to noon.**  
For all who need help with completing the annual statistical reports, specifically for those who may be new to this reporting position. For information, contact your district administrator.

## Resolutions and petitions due Jan. 15

Resolutions to be considered by the 2015 session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference and petitions to be considered for the 2016 General Conference, are due to the Conference Secretary, the Rev. Mary Jo Simms ([msims@bwcumc.org](mailto:msims@bwcumc.org)) by Jan. 15.

Conference rules require that each resolution address a single issue. The form for submitting resolutions, along with guidelines for submitting petitions, can be found at <http://bwcumc.org/ac-sessions/2015-session>.

Those submitting resolutions and petitions are encouraged to keep them short. Proposed additions should be underlined in the text, and proposed deletions to existing rules, policies or disciplinary provisions should be struck through.

Resolutions that have financial implications will need to be reviewed by the Council on Finance and Administration and those that amend the rules of the session must be reviewed by the conference Rules Committee.

The 2015 annual conference session will be held May 28-30 at the Waterfront Marriott Hotel in Baltimore. Pre-conference briefings will be held on Saturday, May 16 from 8:30 a.m. to noon at Damascus UMC and from 2 to 5:30 p.m. at First UMC in Hyattsville.

## UMConnection

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UMConnection is the newspaper of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, whose vision is to become fully alive in Christ and make a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world

The UMConnection (ISSN 005386) is owned and published by the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759-2594. Telephone: (410) 309-3400 • (800) 492-2525 • fax: (410) 309-9794 • e-mail: [mlauber@bwcumc.org](mailto:mlauber@bwcumc.org). Subscriptions are \$15 per year. The UMConnection is published monthly. To subscribe, email [kspears@bwcumc.org](mailto:kspears@bwcumc.org). Postmaster: Send address changes to: UMConnection, 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759-2594.

# National Korean UMC offers a house of prayer for all

By MELISSA LAUBER  
UMConnection Staff

As a Christian leader, every morning at 4:15 the Rev. Seung-Woo Lee rises. He does his personal devotions and then at 5:30 a.m. meets members of his congregation for daybreak prayers. “If you did this once a year, it might be difficult waking up. But every day, it becomes a life,” he said.

worshippers each week. Two years ago they completed a building effort that essentially tripled the size of the church. Unique pews with shelves to hold Bibles and hymnals were imported from Korea, a child-size chapel was created, and spaces for prayer were set aside, including a small set-apart prayer center that is open 24-hours, seven days a week. The church is a house of prayer, said Lee. It is also

among other topics, Lee offers three sets of classes. Members can join the NBA, or National Bible Academy, to explore the Bible; SOS, or School of Service, to teach church leaders to be in ministry within the church; and the LAB, Living as a Believer. In the church’s 15 class meetings, members also participate in mission projects that expand their faith. Lee has pastored in the Baltimore-Washington Conference for 23 years. He heard his call to ministry when he was in junior high school in South Korea where his father was a pastor. “I loved listening to my father’s sermons,” he said. After he was ordained in 1976, Lee served as a chaplain to South Korean Marines and then as an associate pastor at a large church in Seoul. He came to the U.S. in 1986 for further education, and the late Bishop David Lawson talked him into serving the Korean community in Wisconsin. There were 43 Korean households in the community, Lee recalled. Forty-two of those families attended his church.



The children's choir from Francis Asbury National Korean UMC in Rockville sing “This is the Day that the Lord has made.”

Living lives of prayer is part of the church culture at Francis Asbury National Korean UMC in Rockville. But this fall the church intensified its spiritual disciplines by embarking on a three-week focus on prayer. “God is acting in the world and in our lives all the time,” Lee said. In the prayer initiative, “we are intentional about noticing God’s presence and giving thanks.” During the past few years, God has been especially active at the church, which draws approximately 200

“Christ for the world.” As such, the congregation opens its doors regularly to the high school across the street for testing space. It provides \$2,000 in college scholarships each year for students from the school. The church also distributes CDs of Lee’s sermons in stores and other places where the Korean community gathers. Approximately 80 percent of the congregation’s new members are initially drawn to the church by those CDs. In all of the church’s ministries, providing a spiritual haven for first, second and even-third generation immigrants is important. At Francis Asbury National Korean UMC, classes in Korean are offered on Sunday to help preserve the language and culture. While some see immigrants as marginal, Lee and other church leaders embrace them. Too often immigrant or ethnic churches are seen as partners or good friends of the larger mainstream church family, Lee said. But these churches are part of the family too, often playing a unique and vital role. “We bring together edges of the East and West,” Lee said. “We can be a bridge.” This idea of uniting different cultures and ways of thinking is part of our history, said Lee. “Methodists seek harmony and balance.” To help his church understand this balance between social action and personal holiness, the role of suffering and grace in our lives, and the importance of ministry,



National Korean UMC in Rockville celebrated its 19th anniversary in worship on Sunday, Nov. 2.

In 1991, Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel invited Lee to serve a Korean mission in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Over the years, a number of church changes and mergers have taken place among the United Methodist Korean community in Rockville. On Nov. 2, National Korean UMC celebrated its official 19th year of ministry.



The Rev. Seung -Woo Lee, pastor of Francis Asbury National Korean UMC, greets a parishoner after worship.



Prayer, mission and a focus on preserving cultural traditions are cornerstones of the congregation.

## Judicial Council: ‘Circles of Grace’ process upheld by top court

From page 1 that this resolution was “aspirational, not prescriptive” in nature. (See full text of Judicial Council ruling #1283, below.) The second decision upheld by the Judicial Council dealt with procedures during the Annual Conference Session, specifically the “Circles of Grace” process used for discussion and voting on five resolutions on human sexuality. The Judicial Council ruled that “The Bishop’s decision is affirmed in part and modified in part. The Judicial Council does not have jurisdiction in parliamentary matters. Annual conference rules that make no distinctions because of race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition and apply to all members are not discriminatory.” The conference voted in May, with a two-thirds majority, to suspend its rules so that it could use a holy conferencing process, called Circles of Grace, to discuss and vote on the resolutions.

In his question, the Rev. Stephen Ricketts of the Providence-Fort Washington Charge in Fort Washington asked if the voting “was legal and in compliance with the Book of Discipline since we did not have the chance to offer amendments.” He also claimed the “structure did not provide protection against discrimination.” BWC Bishop Marcus Matthews ruled that “the procedure and process used by the Annual Conference to vote on the five human sexuality resolutions was lawful and did not violate the Discipline.” In his analysis, Matthews noted that General Conference has empowered each annual conference to adopt rules and regulations for its own government so long as they are not in conflict with the Book of Discipline. Matthews also noted that every member of the annual conference who was present was given a chance in the Circles to vote on all the resolutions; thus the Circles of Grace process was consistent with United Methodist policy on the elimination of discrimination.

The Judicial Council, in its ruling, agreed. In a separate decision, the Judicial Council also upheld an appeal committee’s decision allowing the Rev. Frank Schaefer to retain his clergy status. Schaefer was defrocked by church trial in late 2013 for conducting the same-gender wedding of his son. An appeal committee overruled that verdict, saying Schaefer was defrocked unlawfully. “The penalty as modified by the Committee on Appeals stands,” the court said.

Read the text of the Judicial Council’s BWC decisions by scanning QR code or by visiting <http://bwcumc.org/judicial-council-upholds-bishops-decisions-of-law/>.



# DC church takes on a marketplace of exploitation & pain

By ADAM BRIDDELL  
Special to the UMConnection

Seven days a week, the streets around Asbury UMC in downtown Washington are a marketplace, with pimps selling young people and buyers lined up around the block to purchase, to “rent,” human beings.

We at Asbury, where I serve as Associate Pastor, are convicted by our belief that traffickers, buyers, victims and survivors are all people of sacred worth. God loves everyone out on our corner in the early morning hours.

For as long as this economy is on our doorstep, we believe we are called to be about God’s transforming work in the community.

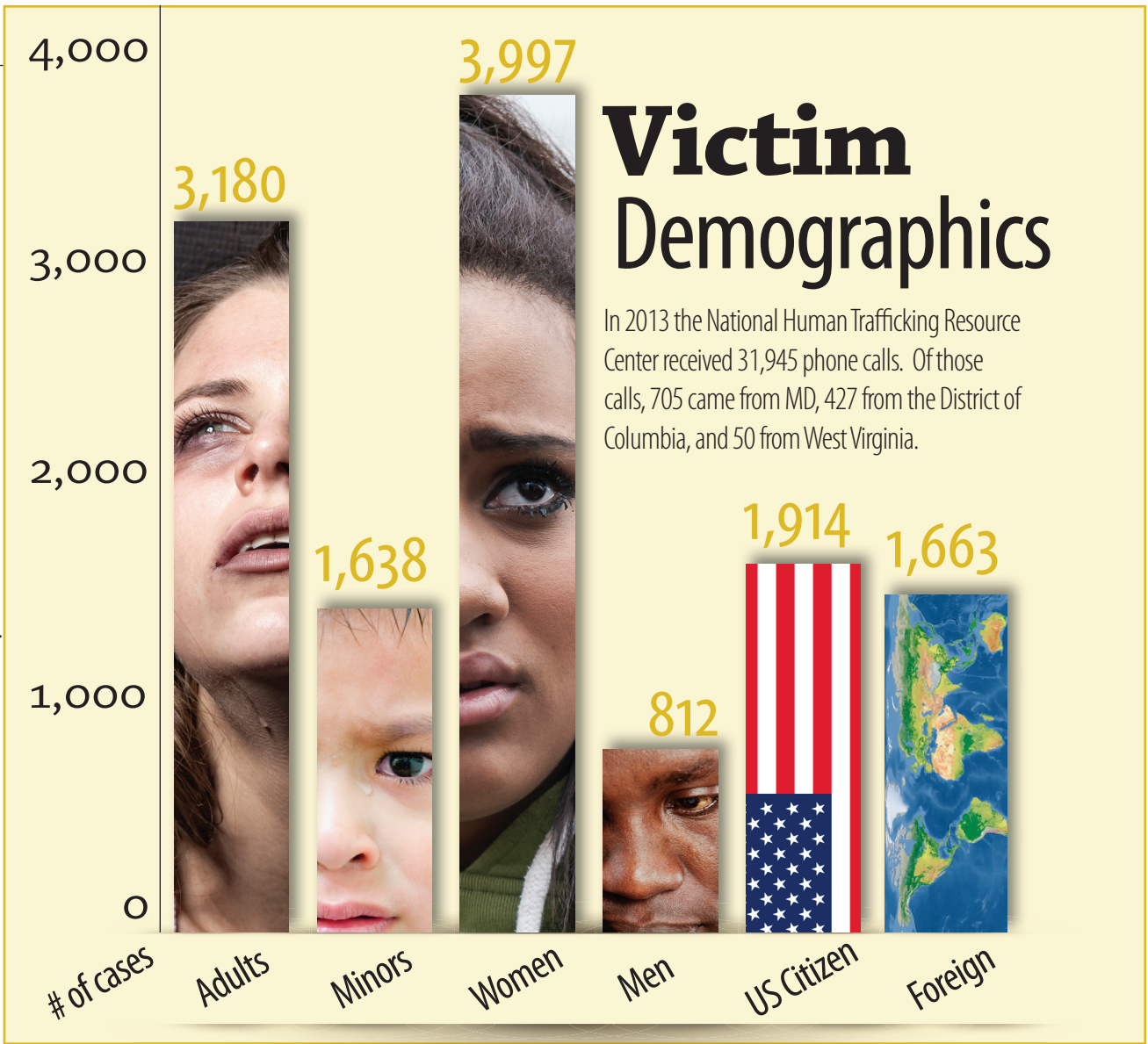
At Asbury we are committed to a ministry of raising awareness, advocacy and direct action — all to serve the young men and women being sold on our corner.

We are working with DC Stop Modern Slavery to help raise awareness that the young people on our corner are better engaged as victims and survivors of human trafficking than as prostitutes. Human trafficking exists where there is force, fraud or coercion, and on a pimp-controlled “track,” force, fraud and coercion are rampant.

We are committed to a ministry of advocacy — working with DC MPD and elected officials to advance greater protection for survivors, meaningful diversion programs, and more creative enforcement tools.

We are committed to direct action — being a place of safety for survivors, supporting street outreach by survivor-led nonprofits, deterring buyers and building relationships with pimps.

This ministry has led us into deep relationship with our neighborhood elementary school, DCMPD, community residents and people who work downtown. Together we are working for a more safe and just neighborhood at 11th and K.



# Remembered: Hundreds gather to honor Washington Conf.

*From page 1*  
Bishops Edmund S. Janes, Matthew Simpson and Edward R. Ames met in the White House with President Ulysses S. Grant, who promised to do all in his power to make blacks “citizens in full.”

The debate over how inclusive a church The United Methodist Church will become continues, said Brown.

“We have debated how and when we will recognize the gifts

When the best you can get is tolerance, the bishop said, remember there is a God who love you.

“Remember who you are so you can be who you need to be,” he said.

“God is still working on us,” Brown said. “When I look at that person that has gotten on my last nerve, that person who embodies all of the stereotypes I’ve been taught to fear, I have to hear that still small voice that says, ‘Warner: see that person



Barbara Ricks Thompson, former General Secretary at the Commission on Religion and Race, reads a litany by Bishop Stith.

for ministry God has given women,” he said. “We waited way too long. It is really a matter of perspective, and it’s easy for all kinds of nonsense to be embraced if nobody helps you see it a different way.”



Lay Servants from Balt. learn more about their heritage.

you’re thinking thoughts about? God says, ‘I love them; they’re mine; they got something to teach you.’”

Out of the times of remembering and rejoicing, Brown said, comes the push forward towards renewal.

“Where there is to be renewal, we have to live like we believe it,” the bishop said. “When we touch or kiss the broken places in our society, do it in a way that repels cynicism that has grown from a long season of watching (Christians) do something else.”

Barbara Ricks Thompson, who grew up at Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Georgetown, was the last youth president in the Washington Conference before integration. The union of the Baltimore and Washington Conferences took place in June 1965, at what is now Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington, D.C. Bishop John Wesley Lord presided at the Uniting Conference.

Thompson, who was the first General Secretary of the



The Rev. Cary James hosts the celebration.

Commission on the Status and Role of Women (1972), and served as General Secretary for the Commission on Religion and Race from 1990-1996, remembers the many youth activities the Washington Conference undertook in those days. The “fellowship” was what she remembered most.

“We had the Youth Institute at Morgan College,” she recalled, and there would be week-long retreats at camps. “We would go by car to various events, even cross-country. We would attend as ‘fraternal delegates’ just to show other people that we were human. It was just part of what we did.”

Bishop Forrest Stith, who served in the BWC for 26 years before being elected to the episcopacy in 1984 and who was a member of the 150th celebration committee, offered the closing prayer at the banquet.

“Once more we have gathered,” he prayed. “Once more we have remembered. Once more, we have rejoiced. Once more we have committed ourselves to renewal. And the best of all, ‘God is with us yet.’”

Some historical information is taken from “Those Incredible Methodists: The History of The Baltimore Conference.”



L-R: First Ladies Barbara Matthews, Josephine Stith and Minnie Jones Brown pose at the Washington Conf. dinner.

# Human Trafficking

## Trafficking is modern day slavery. It ruins lives. The church must act.

By MELISSA LAUBER  
UMConnection Staff

**A**TATTOO ARTIST’S SKILLS may seem like an odd gift for ministry. But at the Samaritan Women’s house in Baltimore, some of the women residents, who were held in slavery and forced to prostitute themselves, were branded. Removing those brands is one step toward healing. There are a thousand others.

It is the self-proclaimed job of Jeanne Allert to find these steps to meet the very specific, and sometimes very different and difficult needs, of each of the 10-14 women in the Samaritan Women’s program and help them find their way out of the darkness of human trafficking.

With a small and devoted staff and a cadre of volunteers, she promotes health, healing and hope in a Christian setting that draws upon some of the cutting edge clinical methodology and thought in the field of complex trauma recovery.

But mostly Allert is kind. She is authentic and she refuses to give into fear in situations that might overwhelm the average person. She and the others at the Samaritan Women’s House call themselves “abolitionists” because they view human trafficking as modern day slavery. The work of freeing people from this bondage often breaks their hearts. It also feeds their souls.

### Trafficking flourishes in our backyard

Raising awareness of human trafficking is one of the missions of the Samaritan Women that is shared by The United Methodist Church. On Feb. 28, 2015, Allert will be the featured speaker at the Baltimore Region Leadership Days at the Connexion School in Baltimore.

According to statistics, in 2013 worldwide, there were 29,800,000 victims of human trafficking; an underground business that generates roughly \$150 billion for traffickers each year. Of those being trafficked, 79 percent are sexually exploited, 27 percent are children.

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 20,000 people are being trafficked in the U.S. The target age for recruitment in this country is 11-13. The average predator in the U.S. can make more than \$200,000 a year off one young girl.

Some experts report that the 50-mile radius around BWI Airport is the third most lucrative area in the nation for human/sex trafficking. In 2014 the FBI reported that 49 girls were rescued from trafficking situations in Maryland during an 18-month period.

On the other end of the equation, statistics indicate that 1 in 14 men in the U.S. report paying for sex at some time in their lives. Of the men arrested in prostitution cases, 53 percent were married; 47 percent were college graduates, 53 percent also claimed a regular church affiliation. Authorities say much of the sexual contact takes place in mid- to high-priced hotels, which seem safer to prospective clients.

“The church cannot ignore this issue. We cannot be silent or pretend that this issue is not affecting our daughters, our sisters, our families and the most vulnerable of God’s children. We must begin to pay attention. Lives are at stake. Our churches cannot be silent. We are called to act,” said the Rev. Laura Easto, superintendent of the Baltimore Suburban District.

### ‘Groomed for Vulnerability’

In 1988, Bill Hillar, a member of Severna Park UMC, learned that his daughter had been pulled off a train in Southeast Asia and forced into sexual slavery. Her harrowing tale and his search for her became the basis of the movie “Taken.” Hillar

became an advocate for anti-trafficking work and his efforts have energized a social justice movement.

But the Samaritan Women are not the same as those in “Taken,” with comfortable lives and families who love them, Allert said. “Our more representative storyline is a child who has been made increasingly more vulnerable, molested at home, abandoned, neglected, abused, perhaps introduced to drugs or gangs so that in mid- to late adolescence she is a target with a big red sign over her head. We look on her as a bad girl, a drug addict, promiscuous, but we miss that she’s been almost groomed for vulnerability so that when a trafficker comes along, she’s just an easy target.”

The details of the lives of the 32 women who have gone through the Samaritan Women’s program in the past two-and-half years have all been different. But they all shared that long season of vulnerability, said Allert.

As a result, the healing will be for the rest of their lives. “The church needs to understand that this is not going to be a quick fix,” Allert said. “We’re not going to build a well and the whole village will be fine. That’s a great ministry, but that’s not this work. This is going to be part of undoing a lifetime of damage and rebuilding her life from the get-go.”

### A Place of Hope

Working with the women means sorting through the evil and darkness of human trafficking. The pain is so deep. Tell me why anyone would want to have sex with a six-year-old, Allert implored. Tell me how women live through layer upon layer of trauma, she said. “There was one girl here. When she was 8, she was sold by her mother. She was addicted to drugs, trafficked most of the time. There is no rational reason that woman is alive. Except that she had this audacious hope that her life might change, that things might be better.”

The women who stay in the house get nicknames. This woman’s nickname became Hope. She lived with an irrepressible human spirit, for which there is no logical explanation, said Allert.

Being able to provide reasons for hope is the foundation of the program. The women who come there have to be drug free. They agree to a five phase program, the first of which is the most difficult.

During the first 90 days, the women are not able to leave. It’s a time of “detoxing” themselves from the thoughts, behaviors and relationships that harm them. Most women who choose not to stay, leave during this phase.

After that comes a phased program of creating and meeting goals that lead to wholeness and independence.

“Every person who comes through here is different,” Allert said. “Everyone comes in as a mystery. Sometimes literally, law enforcement just drops her off. We don’t know if she has any diseases, if anyone is looking for her. It’s a matter of discovery. What is going on with her?”

“Often these women are trained to tell you or do exactly what they need to say or do to get what they need today, at that moment. Just as Christ did in John 4, we try to meet the woman where she is, Allert said.

### ‘Somebody Needs to Do Something’

This process of discovering is a difficult one, steeped in Christian caring. It’s something Allert never dreamed she’d be doing.

For the first part of her life, she was “having a lovely, affluent life as an Internet consultant.” Then she found herself cast into a four-year dark night of the soul as she thrashed around looking for meaning and purpose.

One day in the midst of that depression, she accompanied a friend who was doing a ministry with prostitutes. She found herself sitting on a stoop with a slight, 90-pound woman who told her about being violated all day, every day. The woman took 10 to 20 oxycodone a day. “She was telling me about the kid she lost and what she was like when she was a little girl. She told me about her childhood bedroom, which had Tinkerbells on the walls – Tinkerbells! It ripped my

heart out,” she said. “I was a wreck for several days. It started a holy rage and I thought somebody needs to do something about this.”

It wasn’t long before Allert realized she was that somebody. She told God, “Take me, I’m yours.”

### ‘Work In the Pond God’s Put You In’

The Samaritan House is working with Mt. Zion UMC to expand its ministry by opening another house and providing programing for an additional six women.

Much of their ministry depends on financial gifts from individuals and churches.

It cost \$26,200 to care for and work with a woman for one year, Allert said. The cost of incarcerating a woman for a year in jail is \$37,000.

Money is always desperately needed.

But so, too, are people willing to share their time and talents with the women. Maybe it’s a tattoo remover, or maybe dentists, doctors, printers, debt counselors, chefs, lawyers or tutors.

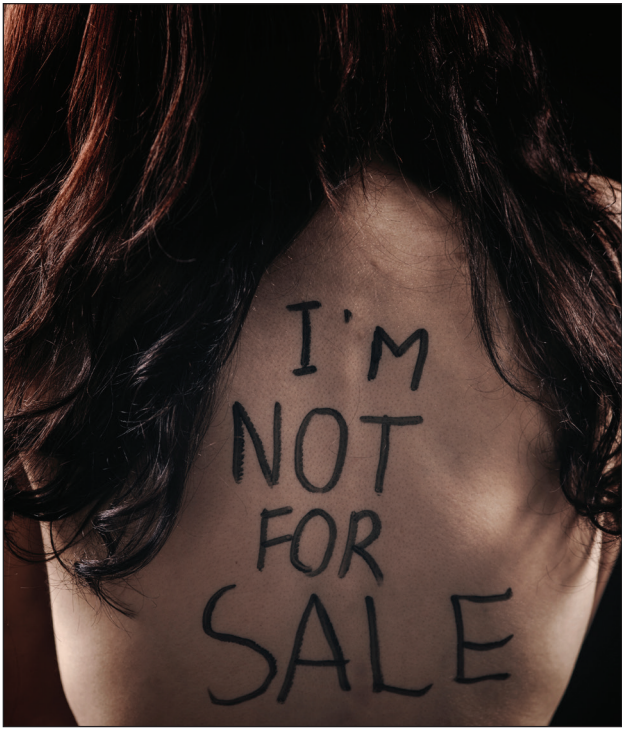
Three of the women in the house now are in college, three have gotten their GEDs, one is getting prior convictions expunged from her record, one is addressing medical issues for the first time, three are learning to drive, two are paying off debts – all with the help of people who are willing to share their time.

Allert encourages people to get involved. She also encourages people to become involved in their own communities. “Work in the pond God’s put you in,” she said.

But Allert also offers a sobering word of caution.

“Our goal is not that she’s healed,” Allert said. “Our goal is that we help her build up enough resilience so she won’t be victimized again. Some of these wounds they’ll carry with them, but can they walk wounded? We want them to walk as well as they can in their woundedness.”

The first group of women to be survivors are beginning to leave the house. They’re walking well, Allert said, and I sense that some of them could become leaders in the abolitionist movement. They’ll be like the Samaritan woman who went back and told the whole village about her encounter with Christ. “And many were saved because of these words.”



For more information visit, <http://thesamaritanwomen.org/> or [www.polarisproject.org/](http://www.polarisproject.org/)

Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text to BeFree (233733) to report a potential case of human trafficking. This is a confidential, 24-hour hotline. Interpreters are available.

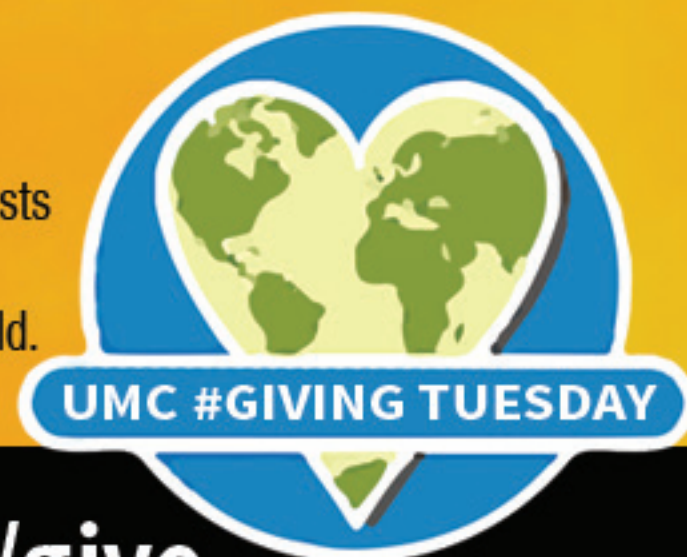


# WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

On UMC #GivingTuesday last year, gifts from United Methodists totaled \$6.5 million. That means 16,300 gifts given through The Advance reached mission and ministries around the world.

What's next?



[www.umcmmission.org/give](http://www.umcmmission.org/give)

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

#### Missionaries grow church in Tanzania



Missionaries Kabaka Ndala Alponsine and Mutwale Ntambowa, center, stand with Sandy Ferguson, left, and Sharon Letterman, right, on a recent visit.

Missionaries Kabaka Ndala Alponsine and the Rev. Mutwale Ntambowa, met Oct. 20 with members of the BWC's Board of Global Ministries to share news of their ministry in Tanzania. The pair, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, are supported in their missionary work of church planting by St. Paul's UMC in Lusby.

Since United Methodism was introduced to Tanzania in 1992, 63 churches have been created, Ntambowa said. In their presentation, Alponsine also told about her outreach to women, teaching them skills like sewing, with which they can earn an income.

The denomination is working to build a guest house, sanctuary, church office and conference offices in Tanzania, along with schools, a health center and orphanage.

Those wishing to support these missionaries can contact the BWC Mission Secretaries Sharon Leatherman at [bwcmissionsec@aol.com](mailto:bwcmissionsec@aol.com) or Jane Grays at [ladyjanegra@aol.com](mailto:ladyjanegra@aol.com). For more information, visit [www.umcmmission.org](http://www.umcmmission.org).

#### Scholarships to honor Bishop Yeakel awarded

AFRICA UNIVERSITY- Fabiola Nizigiyimana of Burundi and Jeremy Shungu Djamba of the Democratic Republic of Congo are the recipients of scholarships to Africa University, a United Methodist pan-African university in the Valley of Hope at Old Mutare, Zimbabwe. The scholarships are from the Baltimore-Washington Conference Endowed Scholarship Fund in honor of Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel.

Fabiola is a first-year student enrolled in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; Jeremy is a second-year student enrolled in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

In a letter to Bishop Matthews, Elaine Jenkins from Africa University said, "Because of the faithfulness and generosity of the (BWC) Annual Conference, the young men and women of Africa, like Fabiola and Jeremy, are being given the precious gift of a first-rate university education, which will enable them to transform their lives, communities and nations."

Student enrollment at the university is 1,274, comprised of 55.1 percent women. Twenty-two of the 55 nations of Africa are represented in the student body.

#### Older adults grow spiritually

WEST RIVER - Older Adults Day Away met Oct. 7 to hear the Rev. Byron P. Brought, a retired United Methodist Elder, speak on spiritual growth, reading from his newly published book, "Offerings: Thoughts on What Matters Most." "God is present every moment and God is at work in human history," he said.

The day after he turned 30, Pastor Michael Parker, who serves Ames UMC in Bel Air, led opening worship for 90-some post-retirement adults.

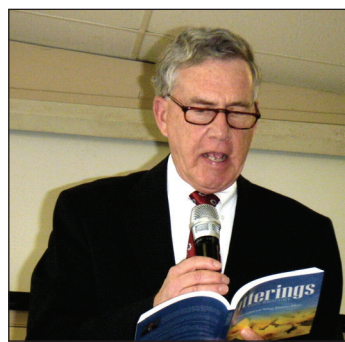
Brought touched on themes of sacred ground and sacred moments.

"A god outside of history cannot save us," Brought said, but because God came into a birth and death among us, "he can save us," he said in the reading from "Christmas."

After lunch, the attendees met in workshops, among them, two on spiritual formation: one, led by Rev. Mary Dennis on "Spiritual Journaling," and one by artist Ruth Bailey on art as a spiritual discipline.

"Where did you see or hear God today?" Parker asked at the closing worship.

"I didn't want to come," said one first-timer, "but ... I've enjoyed every part of the day."



The Rev. Byron P. Brought reads from his new book, 'Offerings.'

#### Pioneers celebrate church anniversary



Therman Rexroad, 97, Pastor Patrick Buhrman and Nellie Rexroad, 96, celebrate the 75th anniversary of Dawson UMC in Rawlings. Therman helped dig the foundation of the church with his team of horses and plow in 1939.

#### Members march on climate change

FREDERICK: Calvary UMC members Pat and Dave Herber were in New York Sept. 21, when they learned of the People's Climate March. "We were in the city for the weekend and didn't know about this until we saw the news coverage and decided to join in," said Dave, who teaches environmental science to high school students.

They and 300,000 others were part of the event coinciding with the United Nations Climate Summit. The massive march kicked off on the Upper West Side along Central Park before winding its way through the city on a two-mile route.

#### Singers 'catch fire' for justice at RMN concert

WASHINGTON, D.C. - "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," sang the gathered choirs and soloists at the Catching Fire concert Oct. 17 at Metropolitan Memorial UMC. It was one of nearly 20 moving spirituals that expressed the "Songs of Justice, Songs of Hope, Songs of Praise," program.

The Rock Creek Singers, the Friends of Charles Wesley Choir, the Wesley Chapel Choir and choir members from the sponsoring churches, made up the large group of singers. Dr. Eileen Guenther, Professor of Church Music at Wesley Theological Seminary, was the musical director for the event, which she built on the spirituals of the Civil War and the civil rights struggle.

The Baltimore-Washington Area Reconciling Ministries (BWARM), and area churches sponsored the event, which raised \$25,000 for the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN), celebrating its 30th anniversary.

"This night is a living sign of God's justice," said Matthew Berryman, the president of RMN, as he spoke to the audience that filled more than half of the church's large sanctuary.



One of the choirs and soloists at the 'Catching Fire' concert.

#### Just Peace receives grant to build networks

WASHINGTON, D.C. The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) recently awarded more than \$1.2 million in grants to fund bold, innovative initiatives across and within annual conferences, seminaries and churches.

The grants are scattered across the country and to Central Conferences. The ministry funded in the Baltimore-Washington Conference is Just Peace Resource Networks in Conflict and Cultural Competency. The grant of \$60,000 will help cultivate, support and provide training for a project that will sustain a real and virtual network of leaders in up to five conferences.

# Taking a walk with Nehemiah

Book Review: Joseph W. Daniels Jr.  
“Walking with Nehemiah: Your Community is Your Congregation,” published by Abingdon Press.

**I**N 444 BCE, despite great opposition from his enemies, Nehemiah, who was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia, rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.

During that same time in history, on the Peloponnesian peninsula, Athens was preparing to fight Sparta. The Athenians sent a message to their enemies: “If Athens defeats Sparta, not a stone will be left standing.”

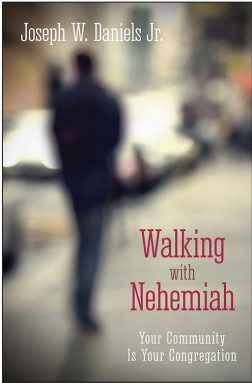
The Spartans’ response was spectacular: “If.”

The audacity of this idea of “if” is one embraced by the Rev. Joseph W. Daniels Jr. in his new book, “Walking with Nehemiah: Your Community is Your Congregation.”

What if the church rises to the challenge to connect with the community around it in meaningful ways? What if people realize that the mission God has called them to begin is just outside the church’s doors? What if we realized that heartbreak is really a call to action? What if the church surrendered itself, if it took outlandish risks to serve people, if it aligned itself with God, if it dared to extend an invitation to work that was really an invitation to grace?

What if church and mission field became one?

“If the church is going to effectively engage with the community around it, which by biblical origin we have been commanded and shown how to reach, we must spend time seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, embracing and loving our mission field,” Daniels wrote. “We must behave as if the community is our congregation. The streets are our sanctuary. The back alleys are our altars of blessing. Farmlands are our fields of opportunity. New housing developments become our narthex through which new life is ushered. And strip malls of suburbia become creative places for leading people to salvation.”



Using the story of Nehemiah, Daniels provides a game plan, a permission slip, a springboard and a map to help churches fulfill the best parts of this “if/then” proposition to create revitalized churches that truly matter.

Combining practical, step by step instructions with the biblical story of how Nehemiah “experienced the hand of God” the book creates potential for those willing to dive into the “ifs.”

Daniels advises:

1. “Feel your heartbreak. It isn’t until you know for whom or what your heart breaks that God can reveal where in the community and with whom your ministry needs to be done.
2. “Pray for next steps.
3. “Give it your all. ... At some point God’s call to engage yourself in transformative work is going to require that you be passionately ‘all in.’
4. “Take the risk. ... When we surrender our agenda to God’s agenda, God can use our position to turn things around for the better.
5. “Inspect your mission field. ... Too often we identify a need based on statistics of what we think needs to be done, instead of building relationships with those in the community and letting them tell us what they will partner with us to accomplish.
6. “Gain commitment.
7. “Get to work. ... People need to know what their assignments are and what is expected of them. Additionally, folks need to learn how to stay in their lane while supporting the common good.
8. “Expect opposition. ... It is critical to keep your attention on those who are engaged and not be distracted by others.
9. “Build momentum.”

As superintendent of the Greater Washington District and lead pastor of Emory Fellowship in Washington, Daniels often signs his e-mails, “Stay Encouraged.”

That might be a tenth step in the Nehemiah journey of church transformation.

If you’re seeking a pathway for your church to move toward wholeness, “Walking with Nehemiah” is a very good start.

- Reviewed by Melissa Lauber

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### EMBRACING THE SUPREMACY OF SCRIPTURE

Recently, I submitted my 62nd charge conference report to the Rev. Ann Laprade at Potomac UMC. My first was as a student pastor in the fall of 1952. I still feel very strongly that pastors and laity should give an account of their Christian stewardship.

I wanted to find our historical and doctrinal roots; therefore, I searched the Discipline for guidance in this age of catastrophic perils. The doctrinal statement that stood out was the supremacy of Scripture. This led me to consider Mark 1:14b-15: “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, ‘the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.’”

What will be the direction of The United Methodist Church at the next annual conference in 2015, and especially the General Conference in 2016?

My prayer is the Gospel and the Holy Spirit will lead us into a new age of personal Christian experience of forgiveness and redemption. By grace we are a redeemed people. By grace we shall bear the fruit of the Gospel in the coming years.

Prayers, grace and peace;  
I am yours in Christ,  
Rev. Edison M. Amos, retired

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION



# Board of Child Care brings hope, healing, to thousands

BY MELISSA LAUBER  
UMConnection Staff

**T**HE BOARD OF Child Care, which addresses the needs of more than 1,300 area youth and their families, is entering a new age of partnership with the Baltimore-Washington Conference, said its new executive director Laurie Anne Spagnola.

“Our historic partnership with the church, which I hope continues to grow, is grounded in hope for the future, power in the present,” Spagnola said.

This spirit of hope and empowerment was celebrated at a Children’s Sabbath Oct. 18 at the Board’s main campus in Randallstown, where the Rev. Stacey Nickerson led worship and a series of conversations and activities designed to deepen commitment.

New to the program this year are almost 50 non-resident youth, who fled their homes in Latin America to immigrate to the United States. The Board of Child Care is providing shelter for this group of mostly boys and helping them find a path for their futures, said Kristian Sekse, director of development and communications.

The Board also provides residential programs in Randallstown, in Denton, Md., and in Martinsburg, W.Va., for abused, abandoned and neglected children who are dealing with emotional and behavioral issues; community-based group home programs in Maryland and Virginia; mental health services; foster care and adoption services and an early childhood education center in Washington.

The Board’s \$32 million outreach to children, which began as three Methodist orphanages in the 1800s and early 1900s, is now acknowledged nationally for its cutting-edge expertise.

Amid this expertise, Spagnola, Nickerson and Sekse hope to bring a renewed sense of spirituality and increased participation of Baltimore-Washington Conference churches.

During the worship at the Children’s Sabbath celebration, the Rev. Craig McLaughlin of Mt. Zion UMC in Bel Air, shared the emotional story of his daughter Hannah, her addiction to heroin and her death by overdose in March.

Amid the horrors and heartbreak of Hannah’s

story, McLaughlin poured out his heart and his deep conviction that followers of Christ need to be bold in their outreach. “We are called to see each and every child as precious in God’s sight and renew our commitment to do all that’s in our power for the least and the forgotten,” he said. “We need to be setting audacious goals, huge goals to double or triple our children’s ministries, and then we need to pray. God will work miracles,” he said.

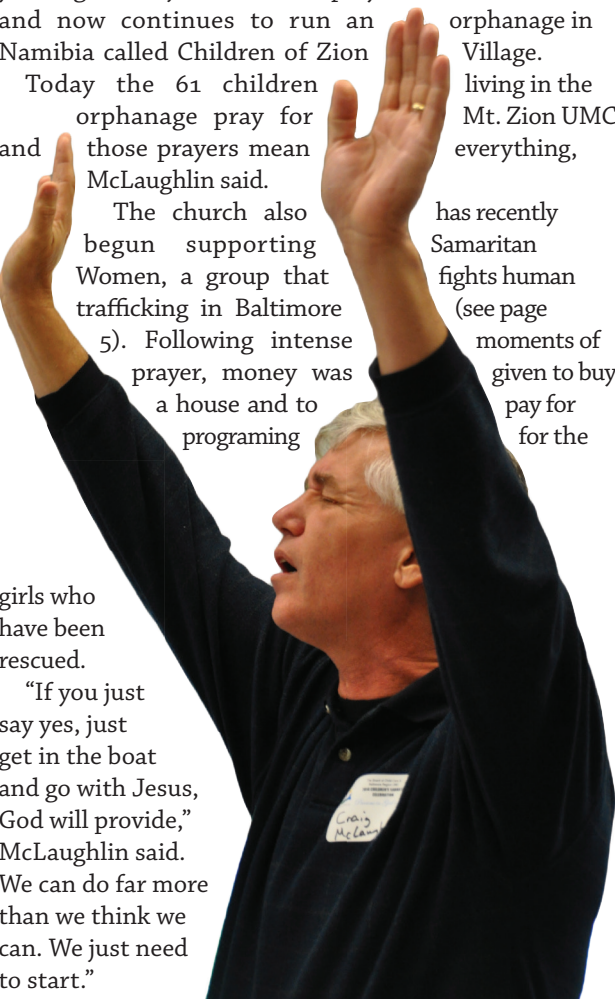
McLaughlin is familiar with miracles in ministry. Ten years ago, with just one man’s prayer, Mt. Zion started and now continues to run an orphanage in Namibia called Children of Zion Village.

Today the 61 children living in the orphanage pray for those prayers mean everything, McLaughlin said.

The church also has recently begun supporting Samaritan Women, a group that fights human trafficking in Baltimore (see page 5). Following intense prayer, money was given to buy a house and to pay for the programing for the

girls who have been rescued.

“If you just say yes, just get in the boat and go with Jesus, God will provide,” McLaughlin said. We can do far more than we think we can. We just need to start.”



To volunteer at the Board of Child Care, Kristian Sekse recommends a visit to discover what needs or programs most excite you. The Board offers countless ways to assist children, he said. To learn more, contact the Rev. Stacey Nickerson at [revstaceynickerson@gmail.com](mailto:revstaceynickerson@gmail.com). Some ideas to make a difference in the lives of children include:

1. Start a Saturday morning breakfast for children at your church.
2. Visit [www.opentable.com](http://www.opentable.com) to learn about this unique ministry in which eight people become a board of directors of one vulnerable youth, and help him or her find their way for a year.
3. Create a sexual abuse prevention ministry. Teach kids to be safe.
4. If you don’t have a Vacation Bible School, start one. It’s okay to begin small.
5. Start an evening Sunday School for children and youth.
6. Start a music and arts camp.
7. Start a sports camp.
8. Start anything that kids will express an interest in.
9. Start a Celebrate Recovery program, called The Landing for youth or Celebration Place for children.
10. Partner with a school.
11. Find ways for youth and young adults to get involved with anti-trafficking programs.
12. Learn about the Conference Council on Youth Ministries (<http://bwcumc.org/ministries/conference-council-on-youth-ministries/>) and get involved.

# Creativity sparks Imagine No Malaria fundraising efforts

By ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

**A** GAME OF TOUCH football in Carroll County recently saved 40 lives. This past summer, a camper near Chesapeake Bay, buying snacks at the camp store, saved one-third of a life in one week. And walkers at a West Virginia church recently saved 220 lives, all in one afternoon.

How is this possible?

Thanks to the creative efforts of these groups, and other like-minded individuals around the Baltimore-Washington Conference, the goal of raising more than \$1.9 million for Imagine No Malaria is nearing completion.

Imagine No Malaria is a denominational effort to eradicate the disease in Sub-Saharan Africa. So far, United Methodists worldwide have raised \$62 million towards a goal of \$75 million. Most of the money goes to buy and distribute insecticide-treated bed nets, which families use to prevent mosquito bites. Imagine No Malaria also offers educational and communication resources to help stop the disease.

The efforts are paying off. Since 2000, malaria deaths have been reduced 42 percent globally, according to the World Health Organization. However, in 2012, according to WHO, 90 percent of all malaria deaths occurred in Africa, mostly among children under 5 years of age.



At the Hampstead Cooperative Parish, the Rev. John Rudolph simply put two and two together to come with a way to raise money for INM.

First, there was a need.

In the northern part of Carroll County, he said, there are two well-run competitive football leagues for children 8th grade and under. However, both involve full body contact. Playing this way, he said, requires large commitments of time and money from parents and children, as well as an increased risk of injury.

Rudolph began brainstorming with his 10-year old son, Asher, looking for an alternative to the full-contact version of the sport.

"Dad," Asher asked, "why doesn't our church sponsor a league?"

Thus was born an adapted version of 7 on 7, non-contact, all-passing football that is popular in Texas and Florida. Rudolph adapted the rules and made it 4 on 4 – one quarterback and three receivers, with no linemen and no rushing the quarterback. The QB had 5 seconds to throw the ball or he was "sacked."

By August, he had four teams lined up. Each player paid a \$20 registration fee, which kept with Rudolph's goal of keeping the league low-cost.

"The parish sponsored all the costs," said Rudolph, "including t-shirts and footballs." Six young adult men from the church helped coach the teams, even though only one of them had a son playing.

"We played our games in our cemetery at our Greenmount location, so that didn't cost us anything," Rudolph said.

The first two Wednesday's in August, the teams



Members of the National Christian Choir donated their time and talents to raise money for Imagine No Malaria.

practiced, then they played for six straight weeks.

The player registration fees totaled \$400, Rudolph said, and all that money went to Imagine No Malaria "because it was our youth and kids ministry initiative" for the parish.

"Excitement and awareness grew as the season went on," Rudolph said. "I look forward to having 50 or more kids next year."

Located on the banks of Chesapeake Bay, West River United Methodist Center hosts hundreds of campers in an idyllic setting every summer.

Part of the charm of summer camp is the Camp Store, where everything from t-shirts to candy bars can be purchased. For a kid away from home, maybe for the first time, it's a big step in learning how to manage one's money.

Director at West River, Andy Thornton, said that the camp offers help in that area by putting limits on how much a child can spend each day. The child's money is placed on deposit at the beginning of the week. At the end of the week of camp, the child has the choice: get their money back OR contribute it to the camp's mission project, which in 2014 was Imagine No Malaria.

Their goal for 2014: \$600.

"We simply told the kids, 'if you don't claim your money at the end of the week, it will go to Imagine No Malaria,'" Thornton said. "We talked about bed nets and mosquitoes. I think the kids could relate to the mosquitoes because we have them here."

West River saw more than 600 overnight campers this summer, Thornton said. Throughout the summer, during times of devotions and on posters and conversations, campers learned about Imagine No Malaria, thanks to Alyson Griesse, one of the counselors this year and a member of Friendship UMC in Southern Maryland.

"A few summers ago," Griesse said, "the VBS program at my church focused on raising money to buy mosquito

## BWC NEARS GOAL

As of Nov. 5, the Baltimore-Washington Conference was \$15,750 away from reaching its \$2.1 million goal for Imagine No Malaria, according to the Rev. David Simpson.

Simpson recently hosted the National Christian Choir at Oakdale Emory UMC. A packed church enjoyed the music as they gathered to combat this beatable, treatable disease.

Simpson, who along with his wife Sylvia chairs BWC's fundraising effort, praised the more than 50 percent of BWC churches who have contributed to the campaign and prayed for those churches who still have not yet made pledges to eradicate malaria in Africa.

For information on the National Christian Choir, visit [www.nationalchristianchoir.org](http://www.nationalchristianchoir.org). To learn more about Imagine No Malaria and make a pledge, visit <http://bwcumc.org/ministries/imagine-no-malaria>.

nets. When I heard the mission project at camp was the same, I was moved to learn more."

Using images available on the Imagine No Malaria web site (<http://imagineenomalaria.org/>), Griesse said that she and other staff members set up a mosquito net with clothespin mosquitoes in the dining hall, and made it a point to describe the mission project every week as part of morning praise time.

"Most days, I would see kids playing in and around the net," Griesse said. "Quite a few climbed under it and sat on the cot. They were adorable."

By the end of the summer, West River had raised more than \$1,800 for Imagine No Malaria, one child at a time. This was, Thornton said, the most ever for a mission project.

It was January 2014. The youth of Pikeside UMC in Martinsburg, W.Va., had just returned home from the long trip to Ocean City, Md., the site of the annual ROCK retreat. They decided they had to do something to raise money and awareness for Imagine No Malaria.

Their goal: \$1,000.

According to Kathleen Schaner, the youth determined to do a walk and ask for donations.

"Skeeter Scamper" was the result, replete with t-shirts, sold and worn for the walk.

Twenty-two runners, bikers and walkers attended, along with 11 church family members who came out to support and cheer them on.

After the walk, on Sept. 6, the total amount raised was announced: \$2,200. The check for Imagine No Malaria was presented to the Rev. Edgardo Rivera, superintendent of the Frederick District, at the church's charge conference on Oct. 11.



Andy Thornton, director at West River, checks out the Camp Store which raised \$1,800 for Imagine No Malaria.