



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 • Volume 25, Issue 10 • October 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

The Word is 'Story'.....	p. 2
Conference Events	p. 2
Life-Changing Technology...	p. 3
Scouting Celebrated	p. 4
MAUM Foundation	
Hits Milestone	p. 4
New Historic Sites	p. 5
Ward's Chapel UMC Grows..	p. 5
Making a Difference.....	p. 6
Camping Commentary	p. 7
Addressing HIV/AIDS	p. 7
Benefit for Fire-Damaged	
Baltimore Church	p. 8
Hispanic Celebration	p. 8

Metropolitan honors Bishop Mathews



Eunice Mathews, age 100, the widow of Bishop James K. Mathews, sits by the plaque dedicated at Metropolitan Memorial UMC.

BY ERIK ALSGAARD
UMCConnection Staff

SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE gathered Sunday, Oct. 5, to pay honor and tribute to the late Bishop James K. Mathews, who died in 2010, and his wife, Eunice, who turned 100 years old this past April.

A plaque was unveiled in the sanctuary of Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington, D.C., by Bishop Marcus Matthews of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, and the Rev. Charlie Parker, senior pastor of Metropolitan, a place the Mathews called home for more than 80 years.

And you could say that it all started with rice.

As a newly-ordained Methodist minister in the mid-1930s, Mathews heard a lecture by the bishop of India at Boston University School of Theology, where he was studying for his master's degree in theology. He decided to become a missionary, withdrew from school and sailed for India in 1938.

He had originally considered going to China, but decided on India because he didn't like rice. Mathews received quite a shock upon arriving: rice is a staple of the Indian diet, too.

But because he landed in India and not China, Mathews met Eunice Jones, the daughter of famed Methodist evangelist and missionary, E. Stanley Jones. They fell in love and were married in 1940, a union that would last for 70 years.

In 1956, while serving the then Methodist Board of Missions in New York City, Mathews was elected bishop of India. He declined

the honor because he thought Indian Methodists should be led by an Indian bishop.

In 1960, Mathews was again elected bishop, this time in the United States, thus becoming what is believed to be the only person ever elected twice as bishop in the Methodist tradition. His election took place at American University in Washington, D.C. – where Eunice had graduated with an English degree in 1937 – and he was consecrated bishop at Metropolitan Memorial, just across the street.

After his election, Bishop Mathews served the New England Area and the Baltimore-Washington Conference. He retired for the first time in 1980. He came out of retirement in 1985 and served for one year in Zimbabwe where he helped establish Africa University. He also served after retirement in the Albany Area and New York City, finally retiring a second time in 1996.

"I remember being 8 years old and watching them confirm my father as bishop," said Stanley Mathews as he stood in the sanctuary of Metropolitan after the plaque was dedicated. "I didn't understand what it meant at the time, but today's events help bring closure to that."

The dedication of the plaque brought Stanley Mathews, his sister, Anne Mathews Younes and Eunice Mathews back to Metropolitan, along with dozens of other family members and friends.

"We are all deeply moved by having this plaque in the church sanctuary," said Younes. "It honors the commitment of my parents."

The plaque mirrors a similarly-designed plaque on the opposite

See Mathews, page 3

BWC awaits Judicial Council decision on Circles of Grace

BY MAIDSTONE MULENGA*
UMCConnection Staff

WHEN THE JUDICIAL Council meets later this month, the Baltimore-Washington Conference will be watching the proceedings to see how the highest court in The United Methodist Church will decide on two cases that focus on actions taken at the 2014 Annual Conference.

Two questions of law were presented at the BWC 2014 Annual Conference Session, which met in May. According to church law, all questions of law and

rulings by bishops are automatically referred to the Judicial Council for review.

In the first BWC case, the Rev. Stephen Ricketts of the Providence-Fort Washington Charge in Fort Washington requested a ruling regarding the conference's voting procedures and process on five resolutions on human sexuality.

The conference voted, 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, Ricketts questioned 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

See Judicial Council, page 3

... well said

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

By MANDY SAYERS
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

TELL A LOT of stories in my preaching. Mostly they are stories from my life or the church's life. The stories that you find when you search on Google or, God forbid, from sermon anecdote books, make my flesh crawl. My actual life is way more interesting than those stale Saltines.

Stories have always been important to me. They are the way I learned lessons, from the time I was a wee tyke. Family stories, mostly, that all start with "The Time..." — like "The Time Mama Rowe Wanted to Learn to Drive," "The Time Uncle Roscoe Shot the Rope," and "The Time Daddy Left Me in the Tree."

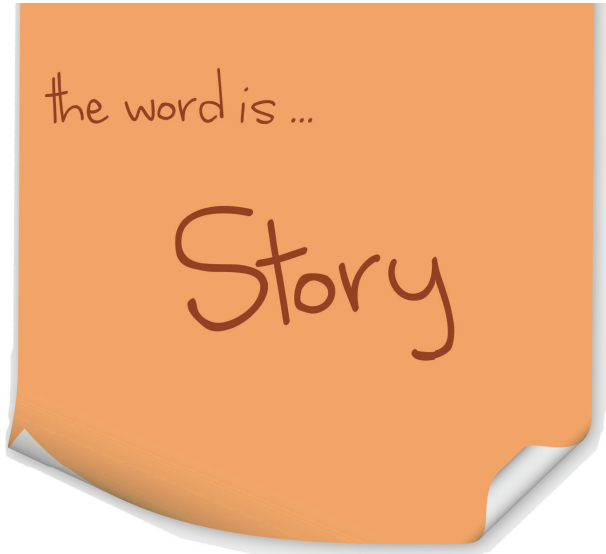
Stories, to be good ones, had to have recognizable, fallible, flawed, hopeful characters, somehow kin to me, moments of great conflict and satisfying resolutions. From those stories, I learned who I was, where I came from and what was important in life.

So much of the Gospel is told in story form. Scripture is, at base, a story of God and people, a story of covenant and consummation and the life and work of Jesus Christ. In that larger story, we see ourselves and, when preaching works, we come to see that the story of faith is our story. We see ourselves in Israelites and Egyptians, in Peter the Doubter and Peter the Rock.

The best part of the preaching moment is when we come to see how the Jesus we hear about in Scripture is the Jesus who woos us and works in and on us today. It's a wide-eyed recognition that, in the blink of an eye, we are the women running from the tomb, running from the sanctuary saying, "He's not here. He has risen."

In every church, we must tell the story of the Gospel and we must tell how the Gospel is being lived out in our midst. What are some of your church's stories of God at work?

I promise: you have a story to tell about God's love and mercy, about faults and failures and God's redemption. You have a story because God had a story first...that "old, old story of Jesus and his love."



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



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

WHEN YOU LOOK back over your life, what do you see? Do you see a string of great accomplishments? A long road of disappointments? Perhaps, some golden memories and some things you would rather forget.

Do you see yourself as hero, villain, victim, victor, sinner, saint, achiever or failure? Perhaps you look back, depending on the day, and you see yourself as any one of these and occasionally all of them at the same time. The question is which one of these is the real you.

The truth of the matter is they are all you. None of us are completely one thing or another. At our best, we are the conquering hero, fighting on the side of justice and righteousness until we are victorious. At our worst, we have all done things we regret, said things we wish we could take back and been on the wrong side of history. None of us are completely perfect, and none of us are completely corrupt. The truth always lies somewhere in between.

The mistake that we often make in life is pretending to be all hero or all villain. We tell people that we are all victor or all victim. Our real story has times that we applaud and times we wish we could take back. Our real story casts us as both winner and loser. Our real story is what makes us who we really are today.

Today, all of us are people who have done great things, learned lessons from mistakes, survived failure and come back to be winners. No matter where you have been, where you are or where you are going, that is your story.

So tell the whole story, the good and the bad. That is what makes you authentic, makes you real. I have been sinner and saint, victim and victor, hero and villain. Through faith in Jesus Christ and His love, I'm not perfect but I am working towards perfection. I make mistakes, but I am forgiven. I fall down but I get back up and Jesus has made all the difference in my life. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Now, go tell your story.

... well said

... well said

EVENTS

Washington Conference anniversary

Martin's West, Windsor Mill
Oct. 18, 1-5 p.m.

"Remember. Rejoice. Renew." will observe and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the former Washington Conference. Keynote speaker is Bishop Warner Brown Jr., a Baltimore native and president of the Council of Bishops. Reservations required for luncheon banquet. \$50 per person. For details, go to www.bwcuc.org, click under "Events."

Children's Sabbath celebration

Board of Child Care
3300 Gaither Road, Randallstown
Oct. 18, 9:30 a.m.

Discover new ways to make a difference in the lives of children and youth. The cost is \$5 for adults. To register go to www.eventbrite.com/e/2014-childrens-sabbath-celebration-registration.

UMM Annual Meeting:

Westphalia UMC
9363 Darcy Road, Upper Marlboro
Oct. 18, 8 a.m. to noon

The United Methodist Men of the Baltimore-Washington Conference will hear guest speaker, Gil Hanke, the General Secretary of the General Commission of UMM. Cost is \$20. To register, go to www.bwcumm.org.

Laity Sunday

Churches throughout BWC
Oct. 19

The third Sunday in October is designated as Laity Sunday in The United Methodist Church. The General Board of Discipleship offers a number of resources. See <http://www.gbod.org/resources/laity-sunday-worship-and-music-resources>.

Imagine No Malaria benefit

Oakdale Emory UMC
3425 Emory Church Road, Olney
Oct. 25, 2 p.m.

The National Christian Choir will perform two concerts to benefit the BWC's Imagine No Malaria campaign. Tickets start at \$20 for general admission. For more information and tickets go to www.bwcumc.org. (Tickets for the 6 p.m. show are no longer available.)

Clergy Benefits workshops

Oct. 28, Washington Square UMC, Hagerstown
Oct. 29, BWC Mission Center, Fulton
Oct. 30, Union UMC, Upper Marlboro
All workshops will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Clergy Benefits workshops will be held for clergy and their spouses to learn about the benefits available and how to use them. Deadline for registration for each is Oct. 13. Register at bwcumc.org/resources/calendar-of-events/.

WONDERING WEDNESDAYS

Ever wonder how Photoshop works? Or how our editors know when to capitalize 'bishop' and when not to? Or...?

Join us for FREE bi-monthly trainings at 12 p.m. at the Mission Center. October 22 will be led by Sandi Johnson on American Sign Language. Come learn a new way to communicate. RSVP, e-mail Alison Burdett at aburdett@bwcumc.org.

We're also looking for people interested in leading a workshop of your choice.

UMConnection

Bishop Marcus Matthews Maidstone Mulenga	Resident Bishop Assistant to the Bishop
Melissa Lauber Erik Alsgaard Alison Burdett Linda Worthington Harrison Zepp Kayla Spears	Director of Communications Managing Editor Graphic Designer Communications Associate Webmaster Communications Associate

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. Subscriptions are \$15 per year. The UMConnection is published monthly. To subscribe, email kspears@bwcumc.org. Postmaster: Send address changes to: UMConnection, 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759-2594.

Communication summit hails life-saving technology

By KATHY L. GILBERT AND JOEY BUTLER*

A MOBILE PHONE WON'T save a baby's life, but a phone call could connect a doctor with a mother having a difficult delivery. A solar computer can't put food on a table, but it can give someone an education that will lead to a living wage.

Mobile banking won't keep a husband from beating his wife and taking her cash, but she will still have money at the end of the day — even if he smashes her mobile phone.

Suddenly technology — mobile phones, solar computers and digital development — starts looking a lot more like life-changing tools instead of like gadgets for the affluent or devices for social media. There's a name for this field, ICT4D, which stands for "information and communications technology for development."

"At its core, ICT4D is about connecting humans to one another. Talking to someone on a cell phone is a magical experience, and I want everyone to have that," said Wayan Vota, co-founder of Kurante and one of the speakers at the Game Changers Summit, a conference hosted by United Methodist Communications. More than 240 people from nine countries attended the Sept. 3-5 conference, including several from the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

"The Game Changers Summit was a very informative and eye-opening event," said the Rev. David Simpson, Coordinator of Global Initiatives for the BWC. "There is an expanding network of NGO personnel who are studying, experimenting and testing new technologies that will improve the effectiveness and expand the possibilities of what we are able to accomplish in a global mission setting."

Simpson said that he was excited to learn the scope of the church's collaboration with other global partners

and the expansion of practical products available to assist others.

For the Rev. Faith Lewis, pastor of Mount Harmony UMC in Lower Marlboro, her experience left her inspired.

"The Summit challenged the North American viewpoint that technology is a luxury item for self-indulgence," she said, "and turned the conversation around to envisioning how technology can connect us globally for serving others."

Lewis said that she has tried to implement text-messaging as one way of interacting with her parishioners, but that there was push-back.



A Goal Zero portable solar power kit is demonstrated at the Game Changers Summit.

"At the conference," she said, "we saw how United Methodist missionaries and agencies distribute life-saving messages without push-back because getting a text about safe drinking water is vital to their survival."

ICT4D was front and center at the conference, which focused on devices that work on the ground in places where there is no electricity, no running water, no Internet connection and no money in an average household budget.

For three days, some of the leading innovators in

technology for education, medical needs and global economy shared their success stories with United Methodist leaders who want to become game changers.

The Rev. Betty Kazadi Musau, a United Methodist clergywoman from the Democratic Republic of Congo and a public health care worker, said technology that makes sense for the people who need it makes all the difference.

"Before I help someone, I need to identify their need," said Musau during a panel on using mobile technology for health. Musau pointed out the harsh reality for many in Africa: "We only have 10 doctors (in the North Katanga Conference of Democratic Republic of Congo)."

Musau said that during the cholera outbreak last February, messages sent through Frontline SMS, a free text-messaging system that does not depend on Internet connection, stopped unnecessary deaths. "A woman told me (that) messages to the villages to wash their hands before breast-feeding and before handling food worked to save lives," she said.

The Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communications, said knowledge builds jobs and better economies.

"The human spirit flourishes when people are empowered to share in constructive ways with others. It flowers less when it is the subject of charity," he said.

Lewis agreed.

"Technology can include and connect people across cultures," she said. "Rather than just make the statement that The United Methodist Church is 'open to people of all ages, nations and races,' we can live it out in a whole new way."

**Gilbert is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service, and Butler is a multimedia editor/producer for United Methodist Communications. Erik Alsgaard contributed to this report.*

Judicial Council: Bishop's rulings of law on October docket

From page 1

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.

"Nothing in the Discipline precludes an annual conference from adopting the commonplace parliamentary practice of allowing two-thirds of all members voting to suspend their own rules for a particular purpose, including obtaining conference action on resolutions of the type that were being presented for the body's consideration in this instance," the bishop said.

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 second BWC case involves a request for a ruling of law that came from Matthew Sichel, a lay member from Wesley UMC in Hampstead, who wanted to know if the

resolution, "Agree to Disagree on Issues Pertaining to Gender and Sexual Minorities," violated the Discipline or conflicted with other decisions of the Judicial Council.

Conference members had passed this resolution with a vote of 549 in favor and 304 opposed.

Sichel specifically questioned if the resolution was in compliance with paragraphs 2702.1(b), 2704.2(a) and 324.13 of the Discipline and Judicial Council Decisions 1111, 1115, 1120 and 1218.

In his ruling, Matthews ruled that the resolution does not violate the Discipline, nor does it conflict with the decisions of the Judicial Council.

The resolution, the bishop ruled, was aspirational since it uses qualifying words as "encouraged to support," or "consider refraining," and does not have prescriptive force.

In addition, Matthews said, "the Judicial Council's admonition against resolutions that 'negate, ignore or violate the Discipline' does not mean that an annual conference must stand silent when it decides, as a body, that its collective conscience is calling it to speak out, including by announcing its disagreement with

provisions adopted by the General Conference, by advocating that the Discipline be changed, and by encouraging all Conference members, in the meantime, to be in ministry with all of God's children."

In a brief filed after the rulings were submitted to the Judicial Council for review, Sichel asked the court to declare null and void parts of the resolution, which he said expresses support for conduct which is prohibited in the Discipline.

The Judicial Council, which will meet Oct. 22-25 in Memphis, Tenn., will also review several similar decisions of law from other bishops on annual conference resolutions related to sexuality.

The Judicial Council will also consider other cases, including an appeal of a decision to reinstate the Rev. Frank Schaefer, an Eastern Pennsylvania Conference pastor who had lost his clergy credentials after performing a same-sex marriage ceremony for his son.

**The Rev. Maidstone Mulenga is the Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Global and Media Affairs in the Baltimore-Washington Conference.*

Mathews: Honoring the faith of two great leaders

From page 1

side of the sanctuary honoring John Wesley's 300th birthday. Younes said that the entire family helped with the wording, but that her mother wanted to make sure there was more space on it for her husband than for herself.

"This has been a lovely day to see my friends," said Eunice at a reception following the worship service. "I'm indebted to this church. We've been a part of this church for 80 years, and they have been so loving, caring and gracious."

Bishop Marcus Matthews served as the service's preacher, remembering fondly his connections with Bishop James Mathews.

"It's a special honor for me to be preaching today," Matthews said. "For me, this is very personal."

The two men shared connections on many levels, Matthews said. They first met before Matthews' was even thinking about ordained ministry, he said. Mathews ordained Matthews and, later, laid hands on him at his consecration as bishop in 2004. Both men served the Baltimore-Washington Conference as bishop and share a passion for the global church.

"We joked that we were cousins," said Matthews. "He had the single 't,' I had the double 't.'"

Matthews said that for James Mathews and Eunice, the world "truly was their parish" and that it was appropriate to celebrate their service on World Communion Sunday.

Mathews, it is said, crossed the Atlantic Ocean more than 220 times, and not all by air. He visited Africa nearly 30 times, along with Korea, Latin America and Japan.

Looking at the plaque to be dedicated, Matthews asked the congregation to consider the legacy they would be leaving for others.

"A building? A collection of rare books? An endowment? A scholarship?" he asked. "Those are all good things. But let me raise the question this morning: is that all we really want to leave behind?"

Preaching from 1 Peter 1:3-12, Matthews said that Peter would

testify that buildings can be destroyed and books can be torn. There is, he said, something more enduring: "Leave a legacy of hope."



The Rev. Charlie Parker, left, stands with Bishop Marcus Matthews at the dedication of the Bishop James K. Mathews plaque.

Most people, Matthews said, want to pass something along to the next generation but many merely dabble in plans big in quantity but small in quality.

"We give thanks today for the witnesses to our faith in James Kenneth Mathews and Eunice Jones Mathews," said the bishop. "We, too, can pass along an inheritance."

In retirement, Eunice and Bishop Mathews came full-circle, living near the church where his ministry as bishop began.

"They attended here many years," Parker said. "Bishop Mathews had a long and rich relationship with this church. It was a good and right thing to dedicate this plaque today."

Scouting transforms lives, UM leader tells BWC

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

BISHOP MARCUS MATTHEWS gathered together area Scouting leaders Sept. 22 to thank them for their good works and encourage United Methodists to become more involved in hosting and providing leadership to Scout programs.

The church and Scouting share a common call to love God and neighbor, the bishop told the more than 120 Scout and church leaders at a dinner at the Baltimore-Washington Conference Mission Center. They also share the wearing of uniforms.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts wear uniforms “to openly show their commitment to the ideals of Scouting. The uniforms display Scouting spirit and character,” Matthews said. “For Christians, love is their uniform. People will know we are Christians by our love and the way we live our lives. ... We honor those who continue to wear the uniform.”

The United Methodist Church, through its United Methodist Men, have a rich history of encouraging local church involvement in civic youth-serving agencies as an outreach ministry, said Larry Coppock, the denomination’s chief executive for Scouting.



Girl Scouts sing “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.”

There are five agencies with which the denomination partners, Coppock explained. They include the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Big Brothers Big Sister Amachi Partnership, Camp Fire USA and 4-H. More than 4,837 United Methodist churches host Cub

Scout packs and Boy Scout troops and 988 churches have co-educational Venturing crews. In the United States, about 27,000 United Methodist churches host Girl Scout troops and 127,000 girls participate in troops meeting at those churches.



L-R: Larry Coppock, UMC director of Scouting; the Rev. Ken Lyons, president of PRAY; and Bishop Marcus Matthews.

Reaching out to and nurturing children and teens and incorporating them into the life of the church can have a transforming effect on the Scouts, their families and the congregation, Coppock said.

On average, he continued, 25 percent of the Scouts that meet in United Methodist churches are United Methodist, 25 percent come from other faith groups and 50 percent are from un-churched families. “Scouting provides a tremendous tool for serving and evangelism. Scouting brings youth to the church and the church to youth,” Coppock said.

In addition to being service oriented, Scouts also define themselves as “reverent,” pointed out the Rev. Ken Lyons, chair of the conference Scouting Committee. One way churches can get involved in significant ways with Scouts is through the Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY), which offers training and awards, through the God and Me, God and Family, Church, Life, Service and World, and through the Girl Scouts “My Promise my Faith” pin.

Lyons, retired BWC clergy, is the president of the National Board of Directors of PRAY.

Following formal presentations, the Scouting Committee leaders led table talks, encouraging churches to become chartering organizations for Scouting groups.

Information about Scouting ministries can be found at www.gcumm.org/ministries/scouting.

Lyons also encouraged those interested to attend one of two faith-based Scout Training events which will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at the BWC Conference Center in Fulton on Nov. 3, and at Girl Scout Headquarters at 4806 Seton Drive in Baltimore on Nov. 10.

This seminar, Lyons said, will introduce people to the various programs that draw Scouts closer to God and provide detailed information on recruiting for, networking and presenting PRAY awards. He invites anyone with questions about Scouting in the Baltimore-Washington Conference to contact him at kedolyons@comcast.net.



Mid-Atlantic UM Foundation triples assets in four years

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff

IMAGINE WHAT YOU could do with \$29 million in 2010 that, four years later, had grown to more than \$82 million. That’s what happened to the assets of the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation, Inc.

And it happened through a difficult economic period and recession.

“The Foundation’s ministry calling is to engage individuals and congregations in financially supporting the making of Christian disciples,” said Jack Brooks, the executive director. “Every dollar we manage and invest came through the generosity of someone responding to an invitation.”

The Foundation has made this astounding growth primarily through acquiring new assets to manage, as churches have become aware of the benefits for setting up endowments or investment and capital accounts, explained Frank Robert, associate director of the Foundation, whose office is in the Baltimore-Washington Conference Center. They also manage BWC ministry funds from the camping program and other ministries.

The Foundation, headquartered in Valley Forge, Pa., was formed in 2010 from a merger approved at the annual conferences of the Eastern Pennsylvania-Penninsula UM Foundation and the United Methodist Stewardship Center and Foundation of the BWC. The combined assets at that time were \$29 million.

MAUMF’s territory includes 1,800 churches in the three conferences, which have pooled the resources under the management of MAUMF for more than 392,000 United Methodists.

MAUMF charges 1 percent for its services, said Tom Black, the chairman of the board of directors and a member in Hockessin, Del. That 1 percent currently generates about \$800,000 a year for the Foundation; one-half of this money pays the banks and brokers who do the investing, while the other half is used for the three full-time and one part-time staff, rental space and

costs of doing business, and for ministry to and for the churches.

George Monk, who was appointed to the board in 2013 and serves on its stewardship committee, is a lay person from Chevy Chase UMC, where he is a member of the Board of Trustees. He cites CCUMC as an example of the way churches and the Foundation work together.

His church accepted MAUMF’s invitation to manage its endowment fund and two smaller funds. “In the old way (prior to 2010), such funds were given to the conference, which had a small group of people to administer the funds,” Monk said. “Now our church pays annually a fee of only 1 percent of its managed funds to the Foundation,” he explained.

Prior to this arrangement, CCUMC’s endowment fund was managed primarily by one person in the church. “When Sam leaves or dies, there would be no one to take



Staff of the Mid-American UM Foundation, L to R: Frank Robert, Tracy Brown and Jack Brooks.

over,” Monk said. “As it now is, MAUMF will handle it.”

“When we have a need, we get a fast response from MAUMF,” he said, noting that the Foundation sends monthly investment performance reports.

MAUMF meticulously follows the *Book of Discipline*, screening all investments against the General Board of Pension and Health Benefit’s list of restricted securities and following the UMC’s social principles.

“Our goal is to... provide additional ministry and mission resources to the Annual Conferences we serve, strengthen the financial health of The United Methodist Church and make disciples of Jesus Christ,” Brooks says in a FAQ. In 2013, the Foundation distributed over \$5.5 million in ministry funding.

That ministry includes workshops and financial leadership courses throughout its three conferences and consulting to individual churches on how best to manage their financial resources, grow their assets and establish endowment accounts, Robert said.

The Foundation offers consultation or training on a wide range of possibilities from outright gifts of cash, bequests and charitable remainder unitrusts, to gift annuities that benefit the church. Many of the vehicles for giving also offer tax incentives and some offer income for life to the giver.

“There are better ways to give to the church than just writing a check,” Robert said, and providing that information and education is what MAUMF does.

Robert tells of a very small African-American church which asked for a consultation. They had \$3,000 to begin to set up an endowment for the future. “The next year they added \$100,000,” he said, and two years later received an estate gift of \$200,000.

That church had many needs, but saw the wisdom in setting up an endowment fund to assist the church far into the future.

“The more assets we have to manage, the more mission and ministry we can do for the churches,” Robert added.

To set up an appointment, contact Robert at 800-492-2525, or FrankRobert.mafoundation@gmail.com.

One of the Foundation’s goals is to promote excellence in clergy financial leadership. Starting in January 2015, it is offering a Financial Leadership Academy, which includes seminars, peer groups and coaching for clergy over a two-year period in six quarterly weekend sessions. To learn more, contact MAUMF at maumfleadership@gmail.com or go to www.maumf.org.

First Historic Site in D.C. one of six added in Conference

UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BWC
Excerpted by permisison

OVER THE NEXT year, the Baltimore-Washington Conference Commission on Archives and History hopes to dedicate markers at six new United Methodist Historic Sites. They join four other Historic Sites and five Heritage Landmarks already on the Register, maintained by the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History.

The newly registered sites are:

- 490: Perry Hall Mansion (Baltimore County)
- 491: Robert Strawbridge Cluster (Carroll County)
- 492: Georgetown Cluster (District of Columbia)
- 493: Morgan College and Christian Center (Baltimore City)
- 494: Sharp Street Memorial Church (Baltimore City)
- 495: Asbury Church (Washington D.C.)

The designation is the means by which an Annual Conference may lift up to the church as a whole what the Book of Discipline calls “buildings, locations or structures that are specifically related to a significant event, development or personality in [that conference’s] history.”

If the significance is found to be “for the denomination as a whole,” the General Conference may lift up the site as a Heritage Landmark. Of the nearly 500 United Methodist historic sites, fewer than 50 have been designated as Heritage Landmarks; of those, five are in the bounds of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Conference Commissions on Archives and History may also keep Registers of Historic Places which may be lifted up to the whole conference. The BWC Commission on Archives and History has a list of 56 such Historic Places.

Four of the six new sites are to be recognized in this sesquicentennial year of the Washington Conference.

1. Sharp Street Memorial Church (no. 494) was built in 1898 by the congregation with a history dating to 1795 when Bishop Francis Asbury mentioned its inception in his Journal. At its Sharp Street site, the congregation hosted the first Washington Annual Conference in 1864; opened the Centenary Biblical Institute in 1866; and laid plans for such important conference institutions as the N. M. Carroll Home for the Aged and Mt. Auburn Cemetery. At its present

site, it continued its leadership role, especially in the modern Civil Rights Movement, and hosted the office of the conference’s presiding bishop after 1940.

2. Asbury Church, Washington, D.C. (no. 495) has occupied the same location in downtown Washington since 1836. Here it hosted the second Washington Annual Conference in 1866 in its second building which opened that year. The present building was built in 1915 during the pastorate of the Rev. Matthew Wesley Clair, who would be elected bishop five years later. Asbury Church and the Georgetown Cluster are the first Historic Sites designated by The United Methodist Church in the District of Columbia.
3. Georgetown Cluster (no. 492) traces its roots to 1772 when, as William Watters recalled in 1806, “Mr. [Robert] Williams preached to a large room full of inhabitants who gave some attention to the things that were said and behaved with decency.” On Christmas Eve that year, Robert Strawbridge arrived, accompanied by Richard Owings. Georgetown soon became part of the Frederick Circuit and, in 1795, Bishop Asbury came to dedicate a church on Montgomery Street with members both black and white, enslaved and free. In 1801, Georgetown became a station.
 - a. The Old Methodist Burying Grounds were purchased in 1809. Forty years later, Oak Hill Cemetery was opened west of the grounds.
 - b. Lorenzo Dow’s grave was among those moved to Oak Hill; he was one of the most famed evangelists of his day; he died in 1834.
 - c. Dumbarton Church opened in 1849, replacing the church on Montgomery Street. It was commandeered as a military hospital during the Civil War, and President Abraham Lincoln came to hear his friend, Bishop Matthew Simpson, preach at its re-consecration in 1863.
 - d. Old Congress Street Church (now Fifth Church of Christ Scientist) was built by defectors from the Montgomery Street Church. Its separate existence

ended with the Methodist reunion of 1939.

- e. Mt. Zion Church began after the War of 1812, the first African-American church of any kind in the District. In 1868, the church hosted the fourth Washington Annual Conference, the first to elect delegates to General Conference.
4. Morgan College and Christian Center (no. 493) is the successor to the Centenary Biblical Institute, chartered in 1866 and opened in the Sharp Street Church the next year. The college for the former Washington Conference, Morgan helped to open a Delaware Conference institution at Princess Anne on Maryland’s eastern shore, in 1886. Morgan moved to this present site in 1917. Two years later, the state took over the institution at Princess Anne. Ultimately, it would become the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

The two remaining sites to be marked recognize history from the earliest days of Methodism:

- Perry Hall Mansion and the Robert Strawbridge Cluster.
5. Perry Hall Mansion (no. 490) is mentioned in Bishop Thomas Coke’s writings as being “the most elegant in the state.” Priscilla Ridgely Gough joined the Methodist Society in 1775. Her husband, Harry Gough, became a Methodist a year later. The estate was a plantation based upon slavery and many of those enslaved became Methodists. There was a chapel attached to the home where Mrs. Gough held daily services led by visiting preachers. Constructed as a five-part Georgian structure, three-fifths of it was lost to fire in 1839.
 6. Robert Strawbridge Cluster (no. 491) consists of the Log Meeting House, Bethel Church (New Hope UMC), Sam’s Creek, the Stone Chapel at Pipe Creek, the Andrew Poulson House, the Henry Willis House, and the John Evans House.

This article excerpted by permission from “Third Century Methodism.” United Methodist Historical Society of the BWC; www.lovelylanemuseum.org; e-mail: archives-history@bwcumc.org.

Ward’s Chapel ‘leans into Jesus’ with new additions

BY ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection Staff

THE MEMBERS OF Ward’s Chapel UMC in Randallstown have smiles on their faces these days. They can’t help it: a new, \$2.3 million addition to their church, dedicated a few weeks ago, has everyone beaming with pride and possibility.

In mid-September, the Rev. Laura Easto, superintendent of the Baltimore-Suburban District, toured the new facility, which incorporates the original 1869 sanctuary and basement into the overall plan, along with a fellowship hall built in 1975 and an adjacent building, built in 1949.

“I am relieved and thankful,” said the Rev. John Nupp, the church’s pastor since 2009. “It really is amazing to see how all the parts have come together.”

“The architects did a great job of using the old space,” said John Feezer, a member of the church’s Board of Trustees. He gave Easto a guided tour of the new facility, along the way pointing out the classrooms, restrooms, elevator and added space for the church’s pre-school.

“The best part,” said Wendy Miller, a church and choir member, “is that it looks like it’s always been here. There’s a logic to it; everything flows.” She quickly added that she likes that she can now walk from the choir room to the sanctuary without having to go outside, meaning

her hair stays in place from one room to the next.

The church has hosted the pre-school for years, Feezer said, and they currently have 85 children enrolled. He said it was just part of their community outreach and hospitality ministry.

“We are loving it,” said Donna Gill of the new space for the pre-school. She’s the Office Administrator for the pre-school, and has worked here for more than 30 years. “I never thought I would see this.”

The new pre-school space is open, modern and inviting. The “old” space was cramped, Feezer said, with various classes meeting in tiny spaces that often overlapped one another.

Gill said that she’s not normally a person to take a leap of faith. But that’s what the church did, she said, and she’s glad they did. “In the end, it was worth the money.”

Barbara Charnock, a member of the church for 75 years – “since birth,” she said – has been waiting for this addition all these years. She’s excited for the new possibilities.

“We have a new excitement in this church, because now we have the big area downstairs, we can expand our intergenerational ministry,” she said. “Before, we had a pre-school down there.”

The new design, said Nupp, allows for connections, both physically and spiritually. “Welcoming space connects to worship, and worship space connects to discipleship and service in ways that allow all ages and all abilities to participate,” he said.

Charnock said that Ward’s Chapel is “big” on being intergenerational. “We have family night, game night, and everybody from 92 to 6 months comes. And with the bigger space downstairs, we can include a lot more people.”

The new space opens up new opportunities for mission and ministry said Laura Bateman, a church member. “We now have rooms for multiple choirs, including the possibility for a children’s choir. We have

space for growth.”

Nupp said that financing the project came without the assistance of an outside lender.

“Since the 1980s,” he said, “forward-thinking people



Barbara Charnock and John Feezer stand in the new addition at Ward's Chapel.

contributed to a Heritage Trust Fund that had grown to a principle of more than \$1 million.” The pastor added that combined with sacrificial gifts, estate gifts from saints of the church like Leonard Miller and others, and the investments in the Trust fund, the church has “only” a \$275,000 debt, payable to the Trust Fund.

“Since our beginning, Ward’s Chapel has been a laity-driven congregation,” Nupp said. “They are passing that same spirit of enthusiasm and dedication to the next generation, which is so exciting to be a part of.”

Charnock added that the church has always been an open and inclusive congregation, and she’s anticipating with joy what might come next. “We’re formulating ideas to include a lot more people,” she said.

The addition is the realization of a long dream, said Easto. As a person who has served churches in the area for years, Easto has witnessed the construction driving to and from the office. “I want others to feel your momentum,” she said to church members. “I’m glad to see you lean into Jesus.”



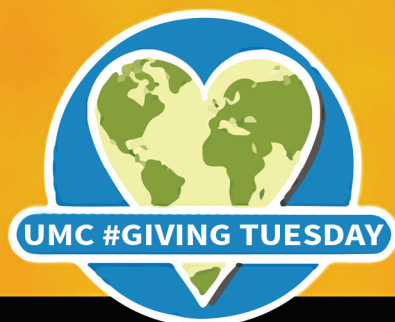
Ward's Chapel building exterior view.

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

ROCK

ROCK 2015

February 6-8, 2015

**Ocean City Convention Center,
Ocean City**



ROCK is a powerful and fun-filled weekend in Ocean City. The event allows youth and adults to take a step back from their busy lives and learn about the amazing love of Jesus Christ. It is an awesome experience for folks to more fully connect with God and their friends while listening to great bands and speakers. You will leave ROCK renewed and ready to spread the word about God's great love for us. Added this year is an "Adults-Only Room" for adults 18 and over without chaperoning responsibilities.

featuring:
REGGIE DABBS

with

BJ PUTNAM & JIMMY NEEDHAM

**ROCK registration now open
Register online: bwcumc.org/rock/**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Hiss UMC: serving the community 175 years



Current pastor, the Rev. Timothy Dowell, left, stands with former pastors, the Revs. Lon Chestnutt, Mark Smiley, Margery Schammel and Ken Dunnington.

PARKVILLE – Hiss UMC celebrated its 175th anniversary Sept. 21 with more than 325 people in a combined worship service, including all former pastors and District Superintendent Cynthia Moore-Koikoi.

The church was recognized and given citations by the Maryland House of Delegates by church member Delegate John Cluster; by Senator Kathy Klausmeier for the Maryland Senate; and by Baltimore County Council member David Marks.

The congregation is involved in mission and ministry throughout the community and world, such as support of Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, Manna House, Baltimore County Christian Workcamp, Habitat for Humanity and a food pantry. They send mission trips each year to Central America to assist with construction, Bible studies, home repairs and medical care.

The Rev. Timothy Dowell's message was "Work in Progress" and the worship service was inspired by all four of the church's choirs performing.

At a luncheon following, 225 people shared their remembrances and stories, including members of the Hiss family. Their memories were piqued by seeing a video produced by Hiss members Matthew and Dale Salah that highlighted the past and present of the church. To learn more, go to <http://www.hisschurch.org/newsevents.html>.

Faith and science topic of discussion

WEST RIVER -- On the weekend of Sept. 19-20, 35 people from 17 congregations gathered at the BWC

campground for science and religion discussions. The event was hosted by WesleyNexus, a conference-recognized organization.

Getting the discussion off to a good start Friday evening was a one-hour video, Brianne Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker's "Journey of the Universe: An Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth and Human Transformation." It covered Earth's story from "the big bang to the symbol-using, meaning-seeking *sapiens* that we are," reported Rick Barr, secretary of WesleyNexus's board of directors.

In the discussion following, the group noted the absence of language of the sacred.

Dr. Connie Bertka, from the Smithsonian Institution and a lecturer at Wesley Seminary, gave the keynote from her perspective as an astro-biologist and a theist. "I not only accept an evolutionary origin of all living things, but also celebrate the awareness it can awaken in us that we are part of an interdependent web of existence. We are not alone, even when we think otherwise," she said.

Breakout sessions gave small groups opportunities to speak and to listen to others' perspectives. "I learned a great deal and made new friends at the same time," Barr said.

Not stopping with looking at the distant past, a plenary explored how to reach young people within the faith and science dialogue, led by David Hosey, a chaplain intern at Metropolitan Memorial UMC. See www.wesleynexus.org.

Church harvests veggies for the hungry

HUNTINGTOWN – More than 45 members of Huntingtown UMC gathered on July 29 to help harvest more than a half-ton of potatoes and turnips. The produce



Members of Huntington UMC harvest potatoes from the church garden.

came from the church's "Hungry Hearts and Souls" garden.

With more than 10,000 families in Calvert County relying on local food pantries each month, the church members felt they could do more than donate non-perishable food items to the Calvert Community Food pantry, as they have for 22 years. So two years ago, the church decided to use a small parcel of land between the parsonage and church as a garden. "God calls us to feed the hungry both physically and spiritually," said Dan Yoder, HUMC's Garden Coordinator.

Members from 2 years old to 80 contributed to the garden effort, cultivating, planting, weeding between rows, planting flowers to keep the birds away and finally harvesting the crop.

On harvest day, it took less than an hour to harvest 1,080 pounds of potatoes and turnips, then all were treated to grilled hot dogs and homemade ice cream.

'Brrrr, it's cold!'

FULTON – The Rev. Tony Love, Director of Vibrant Communities for the BWC, shivered and shook as he took the Ice Bucket Challenge in front of the conference center Sept. 4. Pat Thomas and Joyce King dumped the icy water over him. Love challenged several others to follow suit or make a contribution to ALS, referred to as Lou Gehrig's Disease.



Way to go!

BALDWIN – A member of Union UMC is a champion. James Thomas won Champion in the 4-H Tractor Operators Safety Event at the 2014 Maryland State Fair. He's now off to Lafayette, Ind., to represent Maryland at the 2014 National Youth Engineering Challenge.

Impact of camping ministries measured beyond dollars

By ANDY THORNTON*

WAS SADDENED RECENTLY to see that the Missouri Annual Conference has moved to close all four of its camping and retreat centers. Even with \$435,000 of apportionment support, the sites collectively were running at a deficit and there was a need for more than \$2.5 million in capital improvements. It is not clear yet what will be done with the properties. They are looking at creative alternative means to provide this important relational ministry within the Annual Conference.

This news came on the heels of the announcement this spring that the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference closed its camping program for this summer. There was a long outstanding deficit and registrations were too low to justify the expense of the program. The sites remain open for retreats but summer camp is up in the air for future years.

Other Annual Conferences are selling and decommissioning sites and consolidating their camp and retreat program. Within our own Annual Conference bounds, other denominations have recently sold their sites.

All of these actions are initiated by fiscal realities. It is funny that “ministry” is seldom questioned until programs and churches start to bleed red ink. But aging buildings with deferred capital investment makes these facilities less and less attractive as places to send a child for a week of camp or to get away for a time of retreat, fellowship and faith formation.

Nearly 20 years ago, the Baltimore-Washington Conference made a dramatic shift in the way funding is provided for Retreat and Camping Ministries. Conference funds were designated for capital expenses for site improvements and to pay the property insurance, not to be put in the operating budget. The thinking was

that, ultimately, the physical plant and the liability were the purview of the Annual Conference. The budget for the day-to-day operations was to come from current income, fees from camp and retreats. In addition, in the late 90s, a campership endowment was established through the generosity of people committed to the ministry. These steps laid the foundation for a secure fiscal footing.

This structure has allowed us to build the Retreat House at Harmison, two new lodges at Manidokan and the Dining Center at West River. In addition, a large number of improvements were made to the existing facilities and added other features, such as new zip lines, climbing walls, watercraft and other programming activities.



There have been some years that the operating income did not meet the expenses and the deficit was picked up by the Annual Conference. Fortunately, as a Conference, we have been fairly healthy. But last year Retreat and Camping Ministries showed a surplus and some of those funds were channeled back into the Annual Conference budget. (About half of the surplus was designated for camperships.)

While they may not meet everyone’s hopes or expectations in levels of comfort, our sites have a sound infrastructure, are well cared for and offer up-to-date technology for meetings and retreats. I am also pleased to report that the endowment, managed by the

Mid-Atlantic Foundation, has grown to nearly \$300,000 and provides a constant source of funding for summer camperships for the long term.

Usage is on the rise. Retreat usage through August is up 11 percent. Summer camp saw a dramatic rise of 18 percent at Manidokan. West River residential camps grew by only 2 percent, but there was a 60 percent growth in the day camp program.

But more important than the numbers is the impact that summer camp and retreats continue to have on those who participate. I am still convinced that when we partner with local churches to send youth to summer camp and provide opportunities for folks to be apart from the pressures and issues they face on a day-to-day basis, transformation happens. Being in a closer element with creation and in the presence of others seeking to grow in their faith creates a fertile bed for deeper fellowship and making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Summer Camp also gives teens and young adults a place to put on the mantle of spiritual leadership. Campers rise to be Junior Counselors and Counselors, guiding others in their spiritual journeys. There are many people who have been a part of this leadership experience that are now serving in key roles as lay and clergy leaders throughout our conference and denomination.

The BWC has long been supportive of Camp and Retreat Ministry through its participation, gifts, presence and prayers. That support is reflected in the vibrancy of the ministry and the effectiveness in which the gospel is shared. For that, I am humbled and very grateful.

**Andy Thornton is director of Retreat and Camping Ministries for the Baltimore-Washington Conference.*

BWC pastor calls on UMC to help eradicate HIV/AIDS

By ERIK ALSGAARD*
UMConnection Staff

“TODAY IS THE day; there will never be another today.” That was Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey of the Louisiana Area, speaking on the work of eradicating the HIV/AIDS epidemic during the opening of the “Countdown to Zero: Just Save One” conference Sept. 11 in Denver.

The conference, sponsored by the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund, provided participants with knowledge, resources and inspiration to take action in eliminating the AIDS virus. The UNAIDS 2013 Global Facts Sheet states that about 35 million people worldwide currently live with HIV. And since the start of the epidemic, around 75 million have been infected with it.

“Often HIV/AIDS is referred to as an ‘issue,’” said Harvey, “but it’s about people. People made in the image of God. What are we — you and I — willing to risk to save just one?”

The need to care for people affected by HIV/AIDS was echoed by other conference leaders, with Bishops Elaine Stanovsky (Mountain Sky Area), Warner Brown, Jr. (San Francisco Area), Ann Sherer-Simpson (retired) and Albert “Fritz” Mutti (retired) offering calls to action during opening worship.

Following worship, conference attendees were split into track sessions on different topics. The Rev. Don Messer led the discussion of “Working Towards an AIDS-Free World,” stating the need of the church to embrace



the science behind HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.

Messer said part of the challenge is that religious groups and their teachings fuel stigma and discrimination, and the church has difficulty in addressing human sexuality. “Without our engagement, UNAIDS and the world will never get to zero infections,” he said.

Rachel Steinberg, of UNICEF, also spoke during the session about her organization’s efforts to prevent and treat the transmission of HIV from mother to child. She said that some 700 children globally are infected with HIV every day.

However, UNICEF is working to improve services. “Faith leaders play a particularly powerful role,” Steinberg said. “Your core values are to save and protect children.”

The opening of the conference was capped off with a dinner and keynote address by Dr. Benjamin Young, who is the chief medical officer of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care. He said 5,700 people today will acquire HIV, with 4,100 dying from it. He stressed the importance of treatment as prevention. “Access to universal treatment is a human right,” Young said.

He pointed to statistics and studies that showed reductions in infections when treatment is successfully administered. However, he added that helping people with HIV/AIDS can’t work unless there are non-judgmental settings and continued efforts to emphasize the immediate testing and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

At the closing worship on Sept. 13, the Rev. Joan Carter-Rimbach, pastor of First UMC in Hyattsville and a member of the Global AIDS Fund Committee, delivered the sermon.

“If CVS can take dramatic action in eliminating the sale of cigarettes in their stores, I believe that the UMC can take the same actions eradicating HIV/AIDS,” she said. “We all know that we can’t go home from here and live the same lives that we came in here with. We have to leave out of here with a dramatically different focus for our actions or we have wasted our time.”

Preaching from Luke 14:17-23, Carter-Rimbach used the image of a banquet to address the need for action.

“We are not going to rest until we eradicate this HIV/AIDS disease,” she said. “Isn’t that why we are here at this conference? Just as the Master sent his servants out three times, so we have persistence as the key characteristic. The Banquet Hall needs to be filled!”

Carter-Rimbach said that the banquet is not a private party. Instead, it’s a world-wide celebration and “it’s not going to be complete until everybody is a part of it.

“Maybe there are some who will refuse the invitation,” she said, “Maybe some will refuse because of the stigma/shame that has been attached to HIV/AIDS. Maybe some will refuse because they think they are above it. Maybe some will refuse because of denial of who they are. But there are an awful lot of others who would just love to be there. And WE have to go out and get them.”

Carter-Rimbach noted that 30 years ago, HIV/AIDS was considered a gay man’s disease. Today, she said, the highest increase of HIV-infected persons are women.

“Women of color; young women of color,” she said. “This is not a gay man’s issue, or a woman’s issue. This is not a Black or White or Brown, Latino or Native

American issue. This is not just America’s issue. This is a world-wide issue. Therefore, every country, every continent, every nation – every race, age, gender and creed must make this an urgent priority now. It’s time



The Rev. Joan Carter-Rimbach preaches at the closing worship service at the recent HIV/AIDS conference in Denver.

for all of us to step up.”

The pastor urged her listeners not to hesitate. “When we leave from this place, if we let this focus get out of our sight because of all of the distractions of everyday life, we have done a disservice to those who have called us together and led us,” she said.

“We have to leave from this place and create spaces in our lives, in our communities and in our world for anyone living with and affected with HIV/AIDS, and they must be spaces of love, spaces of compassion, spaces of listening, spaces of healing, spaces of hope. And as we create these spaces, the stigma and fear and judgment that so many live with will disappear.”

To learn more about the United Methodist Church’s fight against HIV/AIDS, and the “Just Save One” initiative, visit <http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Programs/Global-Health/HIV-AIDS>.

**Alsgaard is editor of the UMConnection. The Rocky Mountain Conference communications department contributed to this story.*

One-night ROCK raises money for Northwood-Appold

By MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

// SWITCH” WAS THE theme when 300 youth gathered for a one-evening ROCK event that raised more than \$6,000 to rebuild Northwood-Appold UMC, which was destroyed in a fire last December.

“We are the definition of tragedy turned triumph,” a video proclaimed as those gathered at Towson UMC recalled the story of the fire on Dec. 27, when more than 100 firefighters and 30 pieces of equipment fought the four-alarm blaze for more than five hours.

Fire officials still have not determined the cause of the fire. Members of the church have still not stopped talking about how the cross and the wooden steeple stood tall, even as the rest of the church was destroyed.

Longtime-member Pauline Norman, 83, who lived across the street from the church, remembers thinking she could take a hose and bucket and put the fire out. It broke her heart to see the church destroyed before her eyes on that freezing morning.

Watching the congregation rally, she is convinced, she said, that the answer for everyone, and probably everything, is “try God.”

A few weeks later, Norman, who has served as a security person at ROCK for 16 years, attended this

retreat for more than 5,000 youth in Ocean City. Talking with Becki Price, the director of the event, about the church fire Norman said, “My father’s house burned.”

Those words struck Price, who was determined that the “ROCK family” would help Northwood-Appold rebuild. Two former Conference Council of Youth

Street level to provide the music and evangelist Preston Centuolo to deliver a message.

“It doesn’t matter that we fell down,” Centuolo said, “it matters what we do when we get up.”

Encouraging the crowd with stories from his own life, Centuolo assured the youth that “when you want to connect with Jesus, everything can change.”

“All of life is deciding what we’re going to switch and what we’re not going to switch,” he said. “When you decide to switch from your problems and circumstances and look to God, that’s a switch. God is bigger than all our problems; God is bigger than all our circumstances.”

“We never know when fire will come,” Centuolo concluded. “Fire tests who we are. Fire always proves what we’re made of. We’re made of Jesus. ... If we’re willing to say that word tonight – to claim Jesus -- the world will switch.”

At the close of the service, five youth came to the altar to make a switch and claim Christ as their savior. They were then joined by more than 100 other youth and adult leaders who dedicated themselves to choosing Jesus.



Evangelist Preston Centuolo speaks at the special One Night ROCK.

Ministries presidents, Christine and Nick Poole, are members of Northwood-Appold and many of its members attend the annual Baltimore-Washington Conference event.

Price, working through her organization, Joyful Noise, brought back former ROCK performers Urban

ROCK 2015 will be held at the Convention Center in Ocean City Feb. 6-8. To learn more or register, visit www.bwcumc.org/rock.

BWC celebrates Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month

By ERIK ALSGAARD
UMConnection

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH was celebrated with a *gran fiesta* in the Baltimore-Washington Conference Saturday, Oct. 4. Festive worship, music and food was shared at Hughes-El Buen Samaritano UMC in Wheaton.

This was the fourth annual celebration, said the Rev. Eliezer Valentin-Castanon, pastor at Trinity UMC in Frederick and chair of the conference’s Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries. On behalf of the committee, he welcomed people to the worship service and festival on a bright, sunny fall afternoon.

Bishop Marcus Matthews introduced the preacher for the worship service, General Secretary of the Commission on Religion and Race, Erin Hawkins. She challenged the conference to continue to reach out to those whom others in society might reject.



Erin Hawkins, General Secretary of the Commission on Religion and Race, preaches at the worship service.

Using the biblical account from Matthew, where Jesus rebuked his disciples for trying to prohibit children coming to him, Hawkins said the story is much more than a reminder about being nice to children. The story,

she said, is one of justice.

Noting that one in five children today live in poverty in the United States, Hawkins asked her listeners where they found themselves in the story: like the children, like the disciples or like Jesus?

“The children did not show up seeking Jesus on their own,” Hawkins said. “They were led. Who do we have the power to bring to the feet of Jesus?”

The disciples, she said, were the biggest sinners of all in this story: Jesus rebuked them.



Diana Rojas-Balderas, age 2, and Isabella Nunez, age 6, join with a group of children in singing ‘Jesus loves me’ at the end of the worship service.

“Rebuke’ is a very strong word,” she said, “usually reserved by Jesus for demons or demonic forces. But this is what happens when our egos become too large.”

Hawkins said that more than 70,000 young people will cross the border from Mexico into the United States this year, fleeing violence, abuse and poverty.

“It hurts my heart to hear that some of the most hateful, hurtful comments and actions about these young people are coming from disciples of Jesus,” she said. “Instead of rebuking the evil powers and principalities responsible for creating this situation, they rebuke the people affected.”

Then, addressing several stacks of Spanish-language Bibles that were dedicated earlier in the service, and which are ear-marked for Spanish-speaking children at the Board of Child Care in Baltimore, Hawkins said, “Dedicating these Bibles is an act of defiance. It speaks against the demonic powers of this world that would say to these children, ‘You have no place here.’ Instead, these Bibles say to them, ‘You have a place here; you have a future with hope.’”

Hawkins said that it is the church’s job not only to welcome those whom society would cast away, but to touch them; to lay hands on them like Jesus did and bless them; to not just say words of welcome, but to do actions that show love. She invited the congregation to

look around in their own lives for someone in need of an embrace or a touch. “You are blessed,” she said, “to be a blessing.”

Valentin-Castanon said that the celebration of Hispanic heritage was meant for the whole conference. He said he would like to have a greater attendance of other, non-Hispanic members of the conference in future gatherings.

“We are in the best position possible for growth,” he said. “We have a bishop who is very supportive, and he has the vision that, if the church is to move forward, Latino ministry has to be a part. Indeed, we are the only population that is growing.”

For now, less than one percent of BWC membership is Hispanic/Latino, said the Rev. Leo Rodriguez, Coordinator of Hispanic and Latino Ministries for the BWC. However, he said, the Hispanic presence is growing and getting stronger.

“The harvest is here,” he said amid a festive dinner following the worship service. “We believe we are called to bring revival to the church.”

Rodriguez said that the Latino culture, food and faith would bring a new day to the church. He also said that a new type of clergy is needed to bring about the harvest.

“We need clergy...who will go out and live and be in ministry with the people, not be in ministry for them,”



The Rev. Leo Rodriguez, left, speaks with the Rev. Giovanni Arroyo at the Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month celebration. Rodriguez is the Coordinator of Hispanic Ministries for the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

he said. “We need pastors who will be ‘amigos,’ but more than that, mid-wives, helping to give birth to a new day in God’s Kingdom.”

Hispanic/Latino ministry has been formally a part of the BWC since 1984, Rodriguez said.

“We propose to revitalize the whole church,” he said. “There is much to do.”