

Planting and nurturing seeds of faith

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, But God made it grow."

St. Paul (1 Corinthians 3:6)

BY IRVING COTTO

For the last three years I have enjoyed seeing God at work through the emerging communities of faith that have sprung from eleven new church starts since 2008. Leading these communities are women and men who love Christ and love people. Of course, planting a church is serious business and requires time, dedication, and above all commitment. But the fundamental issue is that when people truly have a passion regarding their faith in Jesus Christ and a firm conviction that people will open their hearts to Him if they are given an opportunity, it is possible to attract others to become a part of a new fellowship for prayer, worship, and service.

Each of our most recent new church starts has faced enormous challenges, yet they all have stories to tell about the way in which people join a new community through the one-on-one contacts, and the neighborhood events each new church start has carried out. Get to know these missional pastors and their new church start projects: Pastor Wendy Orzelek at NorthStar in Exeter Township; Pastor Lilian Cotto at Casa del Pueblo in Hatboro; Pastor Byung Cho at Light-house Korean in Glenside; Pastor Lydia Munoz at Plumblin Fellowship in Narberth; Pastor Myra Maxwell at Restoration Worship Center, 5th and Snyder Streets in Philadelphia; Pastor Angel Lopez at La Hermosa Christian Community in Easton; Chris Eden at Front Porch in Downtown Lancaster; Pastor Kevin Babcock at Progressive UM Church in South

Media, and Pastor Avery Kelleher, Transformation Christian Center, a United Methodist congregation in Parkside.

These are missional pastors who have done door knocking, hospital visits, community affairs, phone calls, individual and family conversations - impact events to offer Christ to the neighborhood and also see Christ in the lives of the people they have encountered.

Can you see yourself or your congregation being a part of this glorious adventure? We are searching for partners; partners in prayer, cooperative efforts, and financial support. None of our present missional pastors have started with 100% financial support, yet they have faithfully displayed a true surrender to this work. Their efforts give people from all walks of

life an opportunity to be embraced by a network of love and acceptance, where they can be themselves, and find an invitation to follow Jesus as a disciple.

One of our denomination's four areas of focus is "creating new places for new people." And our denomination's mission is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." (Matt. 28:20). We can all be a part of this effort by joining those who are at the forefront of church planting. As a leader in your congregation, you can encourage your congregation to adopt one of our new churches as its mission project.

Salary support, program money, printed materials, training and coaching of planters, assisting in a Bible class, home visitation, small group studies, worship services are among the most pressing needs facing our church planters.

Your local church can join with other local churches in your area to adopt and nurture a new church. A team of parishioners pledging to worship with the new faith community on a regular basis

Continued on page 6



March

THURSDAY, MARCH 8

Crisis Communications Planning:

The Church and the Media. Login for the visual portion at <https://umpct.ilinc.com/join/thrskfm>. Call in for the audio portion at 1-800-598-7441. Code: 5596370. Participants are encouraged to join in twenty minutes early.

FRIDAY MARCH 9 - SUNDAY MARCH 11

Marriage Encounter United Methodist: The Four Points Sheraton in York. Info: Rich & Tammy Fritz at 717-252-3937 or email rjfrtiz1@comcast.net.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9 - SATURDAY, MARCH 10

UMCOR Disaster Case Management Training: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. Montgomery County Public Safety Training campus, 1175 Conshohocken Road, Conshohocken, PA 19428

SATURDAY, MARCH 10
Building a Hopeful Financial Future Conference: 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. DVD/CD Resource Guide is available through March 10, 2012, at <http://www.churchleadership.com/funding/resource.asp>.

SUNDAY, MARCH 11
District Days – Financial Seminars with Bishop Peggy Johnson: 3:00-5:00 pm – Valley Forge: St. Matthews UMC (Central), 600 Walker Road, Wayne, PA 19087 and 7:00-9:00 pm – Mohnton: Calvary (Central) (near Reading), 1 West Wyomissing Avenue, Mohnton, PA 19540

MONDAY, MARCH 12
General Conference Listen-

ing Session: 6:30 to 9:00 pm at Ephrata: First. Please note: If using mapquest.com or a GPS do not enter the church address (68 N. Church St., Ephrata, PA), enter the intersection (Church St., and Locust St., Ephrata, PA)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14 AND THURSDAY, MARCH 15

The Meaning of "The Abba-Prayer" (the Lord's Prayer):

Wednesday, March 14 at 7 p.m. and Thursday, March 15 at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. at Miller Chapel Sanctuary, Lebanon Valley College. Register for free: 867-6135 by Monday, March 12.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15

Retiree Seminar: 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch provided. Cedarville United Methodist Church, 1092 Laurelwood Road, Pottstown, PA 19465. More information: (800) 828-9093 or mglopez@epaumc.org.

FRIDAY, MARCH 16

A Holistic Approach to Addressing Substance Abuse for Families, Churches, Communities & Related Violence: Mother African Zoar Church, 1204 Melon Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123. Cost is \$25 and .5 CEU's will be earned for attending. Contact: Felicia Anderson 215-878-8054 or fanderson@epaumc.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 17
American Sign Language and Music CONCERT: :3 PM at Lima United Methodist Church, 209 Middletown Rd., Lima, PA.. Carol Stevens at 443-794-6499 or carolstevens100@hotmail.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 17
NEJ-UMCD Conference for Deaf Ministries: 8:30 to 4 pm, Lima United Methodist Church, 209

N. Middletown Rd, Lima, PA. Information: Carol Stevens at carolstevens100@hotmail.com or 443-794-6499.

SATURDAY, MARCH 17

Youth Conference - A Holistic Approach to Addressing Substance Abuse for Families & Related Violence: Mother African Zoar, UMC, 1204 Melon Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123 Info: Felicia Anderson at 215-878-8054 or fanderson@epaumc.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 17

Spark Retreat: Crescentville UMC, Phila Pa Bring your youth for a day of worship, games, food and mission. The cost is \$5 per person. Contact: youth@epaumc.org

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

Sunday Youth Group Event: 5:30pm - 8:00pm. Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center, 87 Old Mine Road, Lebanon, PA 17042. www.gretna-glen.org.

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

District Days – Financial Seminars with Bishop Peggy Johnson: 3:00-5:00 pm - Lebanon: Kochenderfer UMC (Northwest), 1105 Kochenderfer Road, Lebanon, PA 17046 and 7:00-9:00 pm – Frackville: First UMC (Northwest), 25 S Balliet Street, Frackville, PA 17931.

MONDAY, MARCH 19 - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

Nurturing Wholeness In Community – Level 1: Pecometh Camp and Retreat Center, Centreville, MD. Two Continuing Education Units will be available for those requesting them.

TUESDAY, MARCH 20

Women in Professional Ministry Lenten Morning Apart with Bishop Johnson: 10:00 am to

12:00 noon at St. Matthew's UMC of Valley Forge. Information: Mandy Standley Miller, mandystanley@yahoo.com or Dawn Taylor-Storm, pastordawn@stmatthewsvf.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

Prison Ministry Program: 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.. St. Matthew's UMC, 600 Walker Road, Wayne, PA. More information: www.StMatthewsVF.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

Partners in Action: Deacons, Pastors and Laity Responding Together to the Bishops' Call to Action: Aldersgate UMC, 2313 Concord Pike, Wilmington, Delaware 19803. Cost: \$25 per person, which includes lunch. Contact: Rev. Susan L. Worrell, 610-436-9298 or susan.worrell@hopeccrm.org.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27

Advanced Sexual Ethics - The Elephant in the Sanctuary: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Camp Innabah, 712 Pughtown Rd., Spring City, PA 19475. Cost: \$30. Credit: 0.5 CEUs. More information: Beverly Andrews, hopejourney@juno.com, 215-260-3304.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30 - SATURDAY, MARCH 31

2nd Annual Laity Retreat: Camp Innabah, 712 Pughtown Rd. Spring City, PA 19475; www.innabah.org. Contact: Dr. Mary White at 215-236-0304 or mwhite9891@aol.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

Immigrant Welcoming Congregation Kick-off Retreat: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Lunch will be provided, donations accepted. Wesley United Methodist Church, 101 West Windsor Street, Reading, PA 19606. 610-376-3419.



The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of
The United Methodist Church
980 Madison Avenue, Norristown, PA 19403

Bishop Peggy Johnson - Philadelphia Area Bishop
Suzy Keenan - Director of Communications
Sarah Young - Graphic Design and Layout

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A Word from the Bishop

New Life Waiting

Recently I visited Campbelltown United Methodist Church where I was chatting with a laywoman from the church who told me that she would be preaching the following Sunday about the "Legend of the Daffodil." According to the legend the daffodil



first appeared in the Garden of Gethsemane as a sign of great sorrow but also a reminder of the resurrection to come. The daffodil is sometimes known as the "Lenten Lily" for that reason. Then the woman told me a scientific fact about a daffodil bulb that for me had the greatest message of

all: within every bulb the next season's flower is already prepared and waiting inside in miniature. The tiny flower inside the bulb is surrounded by layers of plant food that give it energy burst into bloom.

What a lovely story of new life as we await the coming of spring. New life is all around us in the bulbs, the buds on the trees and the ever-so-faint shade of green appearing in the new grass. Resurrection is what Christianity is all about as well. Jesus brings us new life as he rose from the dead. We have new spiritual life as we receive his pardon and saving grace. As Christians we are to share the good news with others so that more people might experience conversion and spiritual re-birth.

In this issue of the New Spirit we are showcasing new church starts and church redevelopment in the Eastern PA Conference. We are finding out that the best way to start a new faith community is through a mother church giving birth to a new church. Like this tiny flower inside of every daffodil bulb every church has the

potential to start a new ministry, a new out-reach, a new Bible study, or a new seeker's group. Like the layers of plant food that surround the tiny daffodil inside of the bulb our existing churches need to nourish new ministries with resources, prayer, encouragement and sacrificial support.

What new ministry is waiting to be born in your church? Seek the Lord's guidance and nurture something new. As Dr. Lovett Weems, of Wesley Theological Seminary reminds us that we need to be reaching out to "new people, younger people and more diverse people." This is the season of life; go sprout some new flowers for the kingdom!

Peggy A. Johnson



In Memoriam

Mr. John H. Johnson

Word has been received of the death of John H. Johnson, 80, husband of the Rev. DeLois Johnson, Licensed Local Pastor, on February 5, 2012.

Rev. Johnson has served the following appointments: Philadelphia: St. Johns, Phila: Hancock Street, and Phila: Hancock St. Johns.

He is survived by his wife, DeLois.

Condolences may be sent to Rev. DeLois Johnson, 2928 Sussex Road, Trevoise, PA 19053.

The Rev. Dr. Bruce C. Souders

Word has been received of the death of the Rev. Dr. Bruce C. Souders, 91, on February 12, 2012.

Rev. Souders served the following

appointments: two churches in Ohio, and Former Lebanon: Memorial. While appointed to Extension Ministries, 1947-2006, he served as professor and director of Public Relations at Lebanon Valley College, and then moved to Shenandoah College, Winchester, VA, as head of the Humanities, English, and Philosophy Departments.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Patricia, and son, Gregory.

Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Patricia Souders, 208 Stafford Drive, Winchester, VA 22602-7431.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Epilepsy Foundation, 8301 Professional Place, Landover, MD 20785-7223.

Obituary and online condolences: <http://www.ompsfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Bruce-Souder/#/Obituary>

The Rev. Robert S. Smethers, Jr.

Word has been received of the death of the Rev. Robert S. Smethers Jr., 96, re-

tired Elder, on Friday, February 17, 2012. He lived at Luther Acres retirement community in Lititz.

He served Fleetwood: Emmanuel (E.U.B.), and Reading: Central Park. He was appointed to Extension Ministries in 1955, and served at Albright College as Director of Church and Public Relations and in various other positions. He served Rothsville: Salem United Methodist Church, 1965-1987, and West Lawn United Methodist Church near Reading. He retired in 1985.

Rev. Smethers is survived by his daughter, Nancy Smethers of Lancaster, and son, David, husband of Joan Smethers of Tucson, four grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions in his memory may be made to Salem United Methodist Church, c/o Memorial Fund, 1744 Old Rothsville Rd., Lititz, PA 17543.

Online condolences: www.stradlingfuneralhome.com.

Sharing our love of Jesus

BY CHRISTOPHER KURIEN

With a mission to make disciples, laity and clergy in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference are reaching out to new people in their communities. As a result, congregations are being revitalized and new communities of faith are being planted. This special edition of NEWSpirit is devoted to the stories behind our New Church Start efforts.

My first experience with new church starts was as a child of parents deeply committed to a church planting ministry in Parkal Mission, India. Over a twenty year period my parents planted nearly twenty village churches with hundreds converted to Christianity in the Parkal Mission. Most people in the Parkal Mission area were non-Christians (Hindus). Unfortunately many of the newly-Christian converts had to undergo persecution from their families and community members because of their conversion to Christianity. My parents were persecuted as well. They put their very lives at great risk. Bibles were snatched from their hands and torn in front of their eyes. However, they persisted and God blessed their efforts. Today the Parkal mission not only has local church ministries but also has one church-owned High school, two medical clinics and three orphanages. Funding to support these ministries, and for the construction of the churches and parsonages, came from partner churches in the Kerala region.

While serving the East Parade Church (1992 to 1997), a former Methodist mission in Bangalore, India, I had my first opportunity to lead a congregation in establishing a new faith community. Today this new faith

community has a fulltime pastor. With a ministry focused on evangelism, the church also employs a fulltime missionary to reach out to nearby slum dwellers. The church also runs a free medical clinic and a center for brain-injured children – remarkable work!

While in graduate school, I was blessed to be the founding pastor of a Church of South India congregation in Detroit, MI. It was a joy to see the congregation being born, and ministries with children and youth thriving. Many of the congregants were new immigrants looking for a place to gather to be in community. We began to worship in the basement of a house and then moved to a space in a very welcoming United Methodist Church in the Detroit Conference. Today it is a thriving congregation with a fulltime pastor. I have seen God blessing these efforts to move forward because there was commitment and passion behind it.

I believe that in the early years of Methodism – the time of John Wesley and Francis Asbury – Methodists had a great desire to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and to gather them in new faith communities. Methodism grew in the United States due the hard work and passion of early Methodists. Today, most of our Jurisdictions in the United States report a decline in membership, which calls for the need to recapture our original vision to revitalize, as well as start new faith communities - otherwise we will perish.

Have we become too complacent in matters of faith and faith sharing? Do we simply want to be recipients of the faith –and not sharers of the faith too? How can we recapture our original vision and get the passion for sharing our love of Jesus Christ today? The fastest growing religious group in the U.S. is the Church of Latter Day Saints, because each member commits to faith-sharing missions throughout their life.

So, what is it about your faith in Jesus Christ and about your church that brings you joy? With whom can you share it?

Remember our faithful calling as Christian disciples according to the Great Commission: "All authority in



The Rev. Dr. Christopher Kurien

heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Each of us has a responsibility to share our faith as individuals and as congregations. Let this Season of Lent be time of prayer, reflection and rededication around this matter of faith-sharing and revitalizing our congregations. May our prayers especially lead to a plan of action that will engage us in ministries that reach out to our neighborhoods and communities.

Also, there are some among us who have taken great risks to establish new faith communities. We want to thank God for each of our new church start pastors and their commitment to living the Great Commission. Let us also find ways to support their efforts. In the January meeting of the Congregational Development Team, we decided to find partner churches to support our new church start efforts. Would you consider becoming a prayer partner or a financial partner for one of our new church starts or a revitalization effort?

CHRISTOPHER KURIEN IS THE DIRECTOR of Connectional Ministries for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference United Methodist Church.



Front Porch UMC



Pastor Chris Eden has lived in a city all of his life. He grew up in Wichita, KS, and moved to Lancaster three years ago. He has a heart for the city, and a calling for ministry in the city.

Chris is in the pre-planning stage of starting a new church: Front Porch United Methodist Church. In Lancaster, he saw a disconnect between established churches and the neighborhoods around them. After studying the city he saw an opportunity to plant a new kind of faith community that is primarily planted and led by laity. This will be a new faith community, a hybrid, targeting the southern half of Lancaster City, which is a very diverse and economically pressured area.

Front Porch will target youth and young adults who are unchurched or marginally churched, and will be intentionally multi-cultural and multi-racial.

"I am going to rely on mutual cooperation with multiple faith communities," Chris said. "The initial phase is incarna-

tional outreach – an interconnected mutual support ministry among the people who live in those neighborhoods. As



Pastor Christopher Eden

that develops, we will draw a church plant team from the group, so that the mission outreach is in the DNA of the church from the beginning. Start with the neighborhood, and that forms into the worship community."

Chris is currently forming relationships among partner faith communities, including Covenant United Methodist Church, Grandview United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, and others. "We're in the VERY early stages of pre-planning, so there is no worship community or building yet," said Chris. Chris also serves half-time at Boehms United Methodist Church, 13 Boehms Road, Willow Street, PA, in the Southwest District.



To support Front Porch United Methodist Church please contact Pastor Chris Eden, 717-598-8495 or chris@frontporchinc.org.



Socially Responsible Investments

"Why can't our church invest in fixed income, equity, or indexed mutual funds?"

Our socially responsible investment philosophy is what sets the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation apart from many traditional investments. As a socially responsible investor, all of our investments are screened according to the investment policies adopted by the United Methodist Church General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits and our board of directors, in accordance with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.

Section 716 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church details "Socially Responsible Investments." These policies specifically exclude investments in companies earning significant revenues from gambling or from the manufacture, sale or distribution of alcoholic beverages, tobacco-related products, pornography, weapons, or the management or operation of prison facilities.

For a current list of excluded companies please visit www.gbophb.org/sri_funds/SRIIndex.asp

For more information on the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation's Genesis Investment Funds or to schedule a comprehensive review of your church investments and investment policies please contact:

Jack Brooks
Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation, Inc.
800-828-9093
jbrooks@epaumc.org

Planting and nurturing seeds continued from page 1

can help establish a positive connection between the new church with its community, and develop a critical mass of worshippers. Eventually those parishioners could return to their home church.

This, in return, has the potential of revitalizing the parent church by becoming open to new people, and offering people Christ. As new people begin to walk into our church facilities our parishioners become comfortable with sharing their faith. Strangers, family members, neighbors, co-workers, and people from all backgrounds come to know Jesus through their witness and love. We are simultaneously a blessing unto others while being blessed by the new people we encounter.

St. Paul reminds us that God will back up our efforts by bringing growth. However, it is our task to take the initial steps to plant the seed of the gospel in our communities, in the hearts of all people, and then it requires that some of us come up to the plate to avail resources in order for the new plant to have a chance to develop and become a blossoming tree. Jesus shares his vision with us, and invites us to see the world from his perspective: a place ripe for new people to participate in the Reign of God. But, workers are needed. Will you respond today?

Become a partner! If you are interested in knowing more about new church starts, becoming a partner with a new church start, or beginning a new faith community, please contact me.

DR. IRVING COTTO IS DIRECTOR of Congregational Development: 610-666-9090, Ext. 218; 215-470-2234 (cell); or icotto@epaumc.org.



BY WENDY ORZOLEK

"Go home to your own

people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." Those words from Mark 5 (v19) leapt off the page when I read them in August of 2008. God had been speaking to me for some time about planting a new church. (I know it was God because it would not have been my idea to do something so challenging and out of my comfort zone!) But where?

Exeter Township, southeast of Reading, had come up in prayer and conversation as a possible location, but it wasn't until the Spirit spoke to me through this Scripture that I was certain that Exeter was indeed where I was being called to plant a new community of faith—for this is where I was born and raised.

I had moved away after college and never expected to return. But I had family and connections in the area. Plus I knew it well. Having an affinity with the people is critical as Bill Easum and Jim Griffith note in Ten Most Common Mistakes Made by Church Starts.

While knowledge and affinity have been helpful—especially in Berks County—I have found that Paul Nixon (United Methodist author of I Refuse to Lead A Dying Church) is right in that it takes "[two years] to network and gain trust in many communities, even if you are good at networking and trust-building!"

From the start, NorthStar UMC has been passionate about connecting with the community and has built serving into our DNA. Knowing most people see the church as irrelevant, we reach out to meet people where they are and get involved in things they care about, letting them know we care about this community, and creating

NorthStar UMC



an opportunity for them to get to know us.

NorthStar was instrumental in working with other churches and individuals to start a local food pantry. And we have built great relationships with the school district—donating school supplies and winter gear, raising money to help with needs outside the budget, and serving in a variety of ways. And we are nurturing a relationship with the township, where we have joined forces

for May Days, Fall Hayride, Festival of Lights and other events.

Seeing how involved we are with the community, the Muslim owner of the local Dairy Queen invited us to hold a Live Nativity there—a huge gift as we do not have a dedicated physical location. We rent space in the schools, community center, and library. Many of the people who are part of NorthStar UMC have met us through one of these events, and want to be part of a church that is serving in the community.

NorthStar launched weekly worship on September 18, 2011 and has been growing steadily—both in numbers and in spiritual depth. When I was diagnosed with cancer four days after we launched weekly worship, the people of NorthStar stepped up and carried the church admirably while I was out for surgery for 6 weeks. It is an amazing gift to see God so at work in our lives corporately and individually. Our plans for this year are to continue to grow stronger, to expand the ways we serve, and to host a Vacation Bible School outreach. Your prayers would be a blessing!

To support NorthStar United Methodist Church please contact Rev. Wendy Orzolek at wendyor23@gmail.com.

PlumbLine Fellowship



BY LYDIA E. MUÑOZ

Small coffee tables dressed with soft glowing candles, jazz and alternative music flowing through the air, the smell of fresh brewed coffee and happy conversation and fellowship is in the air. No, this isn't Starbucks, it's worship at PlumbLine Fellowship, a new church start in Narberth, PA, that developed out of an existing United Methodist congregation.

The focus of PlumbLine is to attract and reach nominally religious and unchurched people who would never grace the doors of a church, however would come in for coffee, pastries, and conversation about Jesus. Each of the worship experiences or faith discussion groups at PlumbLine are laced with signs of ancient worship: a Eucharist table, cross, icons and candles, and juxtaposed with prayer stations, modern interpretations of ancient hymns and contemporary music, and sermons that not only come from a preacher standing at a podium, but also from the entire worshipping community. The mission and vision of PlumbLine is to provide people with opportunities to come to know and deepen their relationship with God, and become committed disciples creating equity in the world. The vision from PlumbLine comes from Amos chapter 7:8 "Look, I am setting you as a PlumbLine in the midst of my people." God placed Amos to stand as a voice in the midst of the people to speak truth, justice, and call people to turn to God.

PlumbLine has taken this mission and vision to heart, creating a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural community of faith that welcomes and affirms all people as persons of sacred worth. This is reflected in its outreach to families at our Narberth Community Food Bank, providing counseling to immigrant families

through its Circles of Care program, and its Thursday night children's program and ministries. The Emergent Worship reflects and celebrates this diversity, as children serve as communion stewards, and as the use of a variety of language in worship includes Shona, Spanish and English. On average, 45 people gather each Sunday and hold as a value to love each other and to see God in each person. People who had never had a relationship with Jesus before, even former atheists, gather around the Eucharist table and experience acceptance for the first time in a community of faith. Young adults and baby boomers, alike, sit around the table engaging with the Scriptures and talking about ways in which they become a living document, through the works of faith that need to be done. Currently, PlumbLine has added eight new United Methodist members to the Narberth charter and is currently in the process of training a new set of members.

PlumbLine is a community that is growing in reach and developing a broader vision for the entire area of Lower Merion community in collaboration with the longstanding United Methodist witness in the area, seeing these congregations as partners and collaborators. Our view is that this ministry is not just our ministry but an initiative to create new places for new people of the entire Central District and our Conference. Thanks be to God!

To support PlumbLine Fellowship/Narberth United Methodist Church please contact Rev. Lydia Muñoz at lydiaem0501@gmail.com.

Cokesbury

I REFUSE TO LEAD A DYING CHURCH!
BY PAUL NIXON

Excerpt: "I invite you ... to join me in refusing, ever again, to lead a dying church ... This commitment entails six critical choices: Choosing Life over Death, Choosing Community over Isolation, Choosing Fun over Drudgery, Choosing Bold over Mild, Choosing Frontier over Fortress, and Choosing Now rather than Later." Discount price: \$13.60 (20% discount).

THE FORGOTTEN WAY
BY ALAN HIRSCH

How did the number of Christians in the world grow from as few as 25,000 one hundred years after Christ's death to up to 20 million in AD 310? In *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*, Alan Hirsch reveals the significant insights he discovered as he delved into that question. Hirsch uses DNA as a metaphor for what he calls "missional DNA"--those integral features of the church that it is forced to rediscover when its survival is threatened. Discount price: \$14.99 (25% discount).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.cokesbury.com or contact Steve Toombs, Cokesbury Sales Representative, stoombs@cokesbury.com or 888-900-0900.

Bishop Peggy Johnson announces the following appointments, effective July 1, 2012:

- James D. Anderman to Springfield: Covenant
- Monica Guepet to Ackermanville
- Joy Bagwell to Allentown: Salem
- Sharon Barley to Wyomissing: CalvaryCandy LaBar to Richmond
- Eva Johnson to Evansburg
- Brian Reading to Schuylkill Haven: First

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9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Held indoors at Cornwall Manor,
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~Hot Dogs, Toppings, Drinks
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Conference of The United Methodist Church*



Progressive UMC



BY KEVIN BABCOCK

Progressive United Methodist Church, based in Lansdowne, Delaware County, is a house-church started less than a year ago, in September 2011. Much like a Progressive Dinner moves from home to home, the church is planting its ministries in the homes of its members and partners in the local business community.

The church has taken in eleven members, four adults and seven youth, all by profession of faith, since its founding. Their youth group meets weekly for a lesson, service, fellowship, and of course snacks and fun. The adults also gather weekly for their keeping-it-spiritually-real conversations on the pastor's porch or around the pastor's fireplace. New ministries in the works are a Children's Ministry and a Young Adults Ministry.

Active in the local community, the church assists in hosting a popular weekly spiritual-themed coffee house. The church also gave out hundreds of Thanksgiving cards and went Christmas caroling to introduce themselves to their community.

As a mission-minded church, they also sponsor a blanket making ministry, participate in local service projects and regularly reach out to the hungry and homeless.

The mission of the Progressive United Methodist Church is to pro-

vide a non-traditional opportunity for unchurched people to build Christian friendships, deepen their faith, and find a contemporary and relevant spiritual home for themselves.

To support Progressive United Methodist Church please contact Rev. Kevin Babcock at (484) 461-3690 or friarbabcock@yahoo.com.



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(Matthew 25:40)

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↑ LEADERSHIP

Making a Way for ALL →

The Eastern Pennsylvania 2012 Annual Conference will be held May 17-19, 2012 at the Philadelphia Expo Center, Oaks, PA.

Noted Native American storyteller, author/illustrator, and United Methodist leader, Ray Buckley, will preach for Opening Worship on May 17. Ray is the interim Director of the Center for Native American Spirituality and Christian Study. Buckley has served The United Methodist Church as a staff member of The United Methodist Publishing House, Director of the Native People's Communication Office (UMCom) for nine years, and Director of Connectional Ministries for the Alaska Missionary Conference. Buckley is the author/illustrator of five books: God's Love is Like... (1998, Abingdon Press), The Give-Away: A Christmas Story in the Native American Tradition (1999, Abingdon Press), The Wing (2002, Abingdon Press), Christmas Moccasins (2003, Abingdon Press), and Dancing with Words: Storytelling as Legacy, Culture, and Faith (Discipleship Resources, 2003).

Eric H. F. Law will lead learning sessions on Friday, May 18. Law, an ordained Episcopalian priest, is founder and director of the Kaleidoscope Institute (www.ladiocese.org/ki), established to develop competent leadership in a diverse, changing world. He is an internationally known consultant and trainer in multicultural ministry and the building of inclusive communities. He is also a photographer, playwright, and composer of church music.

Bishop Alfred Johnson will preach for the Memorial Service. Bishop Johnson was ordained deacon and elder in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. He served as Pastor-Director of the Chester Missionary Project of Chester, PA; at Tioga United Methodist Church in North Philadelphia; in a cross-racial appointment as pastor of Leola UMC in Leola, [Lancaster

Continued on page 11

Transformation Christian Center

BY AVERY KELLEHER

In order to demonstrate a new or renewed United Methodist presence in the 1 sq. mile town known as Middletown, located between the hustle of Granite Run Mall and the city of Chester, PA, Parkside UMC has prayerfully changed its name to Transformation Christian Center.

Since our startup in July of 2011 we have seen the hand of God on many levels. We began holding Positive Sundays, a 6pm to 8pm evening service to appeal to those that have had a call to move from their present church but were afraid to take the first steps. We began holding these services on October 2, 2011, and continue on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

We followed this up with a Halloween alternative called Hallelujah Night. As our first full-fledged outreach, we hoped for 200-300 people to attend. Well, God had other plans... and we concluded the night by welcoming over 1500 people to the church on Oct 31, 2011. (Yes, 1500!)

We began our morning services on Dec. 18, 2011, and hold them every Sunday at 10:30am. While we still have the best attendance during our Positive Sundays, God continually brings new people almost every Sunday. We have an



average attendance of 40-50 on even Sundays. There are presently two worship teams for these services: contemporary acoustic worship in the mornings, and a full band in the evenings.

We began receiving clothing donations shortly before the New Year. This led to a ministry that we call "Free Day" - on the 3rd Saturday of every month. We turn our social hall into a Goodwill-like store that is used to bless the community with all the donated items being given out for free. Since this ministry's inception on January 21, 2012 we have had 15 people come through and been able to introduce them to Jesus Christ - "the ultimate FREE gift" - and give them clothes. This outreach has inspired donors, and we have had the contents of three houses (yes, houses - furniture and all) donated to the church. We are cur-



rently looking for clothing racks to make setup and tear down easier.

We were able to bless a woman that had slept on her floor for two years due to numerous surgeries and the inability to hold a job, with an entire bedroom set. Her tears of gratitude were simple enough to remember Mat 25:45. There are various other testimonies like this one.

We started a couples ministry called "Date Night." We use an open forum to discuss issues that Satan may otherwise use as a device for strife, and open it up to dialogue. During the first Date Night, attended by nine couples, we tackled the issue of Communication. This month we had thirteen couples.

One of our goals for this spring is to host a KidFest where we will invite the community to see the church in its new image and draw young families into a relationship with our Savior.

We are very close to putting a school into operation in the building and have considered partnering with a local school that is looking for more room in an attempt to reach the community faster with the love of Christ and the ability to provide strong biblical foundation for their children.

To support Transformation Christian Center please contact Avery Kelleher at (610) 876-5259 or truthmagnet@hotmail.com.

Lighthouse Korean UMC



BY BYUNG WOO CHO

We give glory to God and thank Him for all of the great things He has done for Lighthouse Korean United Methodist Church. In Glenside, worshipping at Lighthouse Fellowship UMC, our congregation has been blessed with love and prayer. It has been a great two and a half years since we opened, and we are grateful for the support the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference has provided to help our church grow.

Lighthouse Korean Church has grown in both number and in spirituality as well. With prayer at the start of dawn each day, our church is maturing spiritually. And with the Lenten season upon us, we will be holding special prayer meetings for the next 40 days while exploring the Book of Exodus. We firmly believe that prayer lends strength to our spiritual life.

Currently we are growing our college ministry. During the fall semester, we hosted a Welcoming Party for college students to kick off the start of the school year. We had seventeen students join us for a night of food, fellowship, and praise. We have started a Bible Study on Friday nights where we meet at the apartment of one of our college students, with ten students joining us on a weekly basis as we break bread together, sing praise songs, dive into the Word, and pray for each other. We had our first college student come to Christ this year, with a baptism in our church on Christmas Day. We are grateful for the Dewees Grant for \$5000, which

will help us build this ministry.

On September 11, we hosted a revival with guest speaker, Rev. Chongil Kim of Long Island Bible Korean United Methodist Church. Lighthouse Korean UMC was immensely blessed by his words and empowered to build up the Body. To celebrate our second anniversary, the Rev. Dr. Dorothy Watson Tatem came to our Sunday service to give us her blessing and provide us with encouraging words. Over sixty people attended to celebrate what God has done over the past two years and will continue to do.

Lighthouse Korean UMC is committed to improving our lay leadership by working hard through the induction of eleven new leaders who are attending a thirteen-week Discipleship training so that they can mature spiritually and be better equipped to help others.

There are still many challenges ahead for Lighthouse Korean UMC. We started by the "parachute drop" method, without any seed members. We have made much progress, and through continual labor and prayerful dependence on the Lord, we will start seeing the fruits of our labor and more growth in the church.

**To support Lighthouse Korean UMC contact
Rev. Byung Woo Cho,
(215) 884-5251 or
byung4815@yahoo.co.kr.**

↑ LEADERSHIP Making a Way for ALL →

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County] PA; as Conference Consultant to local churches and conference agencies; and as Executive Director of the United Methodist Metro Ministries, Inc., and as district superintendent in Philadelphia. Rev. Alfred Johnson was elected to the episcopacy in July, 1996, and assigned the New Jersey Area. As a bishop he was assigned to the General Council of Ministries, NEJ Urban Steering Committee and the Multi-Ethnic Center. He has been a frequent presenter and workshop leader in the areas of human relations, urban ministries, race relations, leadership and church planning.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson will preach for the Service of Ordination. She was elected a bishop of The United Methodist Church at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in Harrisburg, PA, on July 17, 2008, and was assigned to The Philadelphia Area. She leads nearly 900 churches in The Philadelphia Area, comprised of the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conferences. Bishop Johnson believes in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, "not just to welcome them, but to be co-ministers in the priesthood of all believers! Often we think we're going to help people with disabilities - but no - they help us see things with wonderful new perspective and add to the giftedness of the Body of Christ. Without them we're not fully complete; we need their gifts for being the fully functional Body of Christ." Bishop Johnson believes that the most important role as a bishop is to pastorally empower and encourage the church to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The role also includes the presiding duties of ordering the life of the annual conference and the denomination and also to be a prophetic voice for justice in the church and the world.

Now online: DEADLINES FOR 2012 ANNUAL CONFERENCE and Vendor Information (Display and Vendor Tables) and **ONLINE REGISTRATION.**

WWW.EPAUMC.ORG/EVENTS/ANNUALCONFERENCE

Make Facebook your "friend"

BY SUZY KEENAN

From Wikipedia: "As of February 2012, Facebook has more than 845 million active users. According to Social Media Today, in April 2010 (2 years ago) an estimated 41.6% of the U.S. population had a Facebook account." In Wesleyan theory, our objective is to meet people where they are, and offer them Christ. Well... people are on Facebook!

In many ways, Facebook is better than a website, and offers a place for your church to build community, and it is FREE! If you are not on Facebook, then you are missing out on a huge opportunity to meet people where they are, and to share your faith and opportunities in your church.

Please "Like" the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference: www.facebook.com/epaumc

Here are some of our likes:

United Methodist Women, Stop Hunger Now, UMC Young Clergy, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference United Methodist Youth, UMCOR - United Methodist Committee On Relief, United Methodist Communications, OurChurchVideos.com, UMNS, Imagine No Malaria, The United Methodist Church

Sign up for a username and password and create your profile. Create a Fanpage: Click on the bottom of the page where it says "Create a page." Then click on "Company, Organization, or Institution." Then select "Church/Religious Institution." Then name your church correctly where it says Company name. Add information to your Fanpage about your church, pictures, and videos. Set your URL to www.facebook.com/yournameumc.

Invite people in your church and community to "Like" you on Facebook. Hang a sign on the front of your church that says "Like us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/yournameumc."

Keep adding posts to your wall, photo albums, videos, events, etc. And keep your fan base growing!

Casa del pueblo

Casa del Pueblo (The People's house) is a new church start and the Latino outreach of Lehman Memorial United Methodist Church in Hatboro, Pennsylvania. Then pastor of Lehman, Rev. Tom Haugh, had a vision for the face of the church to look like the face of the community. Since its inception the Casa del Pueblo ministry has celebrated the richness and diversity of Latino culture.

In July of 2008 Casa del Pueblo began to reach out through home Bible studies, or "faith communities," held at the home of Pastor Lilian (Luky) Cotto. Five such communities are the foundation of Casa del Pueblo's ministry and outreach, as many attendees cannot participate in the Sunday service, due to transportation issues and work schedules,

Sunday Worship Service is at 6:00 p.m. every Sunday at Lehman UMC, which is preceded by Bible study for a growing number of adults and children; members also come together every Thursday morning for prayer.

Casa del Pueblo offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and a tutoring program to cater to parents who bring their children, Monday through Thursday, so these families can improve their English and continue their academic studies together.

Social Justice plays an important part in the life of this developing congregation and its leader. Pastor Luky was the founder of EIRENE Immigration Center at Asbury UMC in Camden, NJ. Her passion concerning the pressing issue of immigration has now extended into Casa del Pueblo where she often refers families in the community to EIRENE services.

Social ministry includes Family Night, where people from the community are invited to join Casa del Pueblo at Lehman UMC for an evening of fun with games, food, musical performances, and fellowship. Several local businesses have joined families to contribute special gifts, services, and partake in the festivities. And once a week six students gather to learn how to play both religious and cultural songs, with hopes of developing musicians for worship and community events.

Casa del Pueblo has been celebrating different cultural events: The Independence of Central America and Mexico,



Hispanic Heritage, Posadas and Parrandas (Latino versions of "Christmas caroling"). Every program is an outreach event. For three years the children of Casa del Pueblo have been participating of the Vacation Bible School with Lehman church, involving more than 10 mothers who have served as volunteers as well as 9 youth.

Last June and July more than 40 children and 11 volunteer mothers participate in a children's summer program. In addition, 20 children and youth participated in summer camps at Gretna Glen for the Semana Latina (Latino Week), and at Carson Simpson's Day Camp. Six youth have been participating in F.O.H.S. (Full of the Holy Spirit), a Latino Youth gathering that meets every three months in different churches around the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Pastor Luky encourages everyone to visit Casa del Pueblo. She said, "When you are looking for a mission project to support either individually or as part of the missions your congregation, please prayerfully consider supporting Casa del Pueblo as a mission partner."

**To support Casa del pueblo
please contact Pastor Luky
Cotto at luky728@aol.com or
(215) 470-2229.**

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MID-ATLANTIC

United Methodist Foundation, Inc.
Stewardship and Investment Management

Every Church Can Have an Endowment, But How Long Will the Money Last?

BY JACK BROOKS

When working as an Investment Advisor I was frequently asked by pre-retirement clients for the magic number of dollars needed to assure a comfortable retirement. "If I retire, how long will the money last?" At the heart of this discussion are two similar but different objectives: First, establishment of a goal amount in dollars that needs to be reached in order to be in a position to retire; Second, agreeing on a percentage to be taken for retirement income that will supplement other retirement sources and meet projected annual living expenses during one's retirement years without depleting the account. This withdrawal percentage is often called "Safemax," or safe maximum annual withdrawal percentage. For years financial planners cited a withdrawal rate of 4% a year in the first year following retirement, with ongoing adjustments for future inflation and as living costs increase. The 4% figure is usually attributed to American certified financial planner, William Bengen, as cited in his book Conserving Client Portfolios During Retirement.

Today with record-low interest rates well below 4% and volatile stock markets, more advisors are questioning if this figure is still truly safe. A recent paper in the "Journal of Financial Planning" suggests the 4% withdrawal rate will cause portfolios to run out of money or fail with an 18% probability. This probability is higher than previously believed. They suggest a safe annual withdrawal rate today may be as little as 2.5% based on building a conservative yet well diversified portfolio of equity, fixed income, and cash investments.

A similar discussion is being held when the Mid-Atlantic United Method-

ist Foundation is asked by a church, "What should we budget to withdrawal from our Permanent Endowment Fund so we can supplement our ministry or mission budget but never deplete this valuable resource." In this way a permanent endowment fund is similar to one's retirement account.

Unfortunately for a church, the answer is not universal and perhaps far more complex than working through retirement withdrawal projections. The church has many additional variables to consider. These include the publicly stated purpose of the endowment, payment restrictions, donor gift restrictions, the established investment policies, and the long-term outlook of the church and its membership. Each item will have a direct impact on an endowment account's withdrawal percentage.

The Foundation's consulting approach with a church is to first guide a review of the formal endowment plan documents. Every church endowment should have a formal Endowment Plan document that outlines at a minimum the purpose of the endowment, a spending policy, the types of gifts that may be accepted, and history of the fund. Additionally the endowment should have a separate Investment Policy Statement that will affirm the Socially Responsible Investment Policies of the United Methodist Church, outline permitted investments, and identify investment allocation targets. How an endowment is permitted to invest clearly has the most direct impact on anticipated investment returns and therefore any annual income withdrawal.

I feel there is an additional calculation to consider that is too frequently overlooked, yet has more impact on the general financial health of a church and

the mission of its permanent endowment fund than anything previously mentioned. This is far more important than investment returns or spending percentage to the long-term distributions. This calculation is what I call the church and endowment's Legacy Growth Percentage. Simply stated, "What is the projected annual percentage rate the permanent endowment fund will grow from the current membership making planned legacy gifts into the endowment fund?"

Historically many of our United Methodist Churches were not built on tithes, offerings, and capital campaigns but on planned gifts made as a Christian testimony in a will for perpetuating the United Methodist Church. Is your church actively promoting opportunities for legacy giving? Is the congregation well informed in the concepts of making Planned Gifts? The Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation offers many valuable resources that can help you get started. One great way is to suggest naming the church as one additional beneficiary of a retirement account.

What percentage can you withdrawal from your endowment? Or, what is the future Legacy Growth Percentage of your endowment fund? I would argue the second question is the key to properly maintaining a church's permanent endowment fund. How this question is addressed by the congregation today has far more impact on the future life of your church and funding ministry than annually reviewing investments and making projections for distributions.

JACK BROOKS IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation: jbrooks@epaumc.org or 610-666-9090.

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