With a focus on promotion of education, health and spiritual development, the Baltimore-Washington Conference has started work on a new framework for partnership with the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area (ZEA) of The United Methodist Church, which encompasses two annual conferences.

To kick-off the discussion on a new partnership agreement, the Rev. Joseph Daniels, chair of the Zimbabwe Partnership and superintendent of the Greater Washington District, and the Rev. Maidstone Mulenga, BWC Assistant to the Bishop, met with their counterparts at the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area head office in Harare March 18. During the meeting, the two sides agreed on the need to continue the partnership that originally started in December 1997, and to refine it to address current needs in both BWC and ZEA, especially in regard to pastors' training, education, community health and leadership development.

ZEA Deputy Assistant to the Bishop, the Rev. Alan Gurupira, noted that one of the sure benefits of the partnership was the success of the Pastors' School, held every two years at Africa University with BWC providing most of the support in resources and instructors. The next one is set for July 2015.

"The partnership must continue," said Gurupira, who is also the director of Connectional Ministries. "There has been great fruit and we are inviting See Zimbabwe, page 3

Conference strengthens Zimbabwe Partnership

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It's taking holy risks for the Gospel. It's living gratefully and boldly with folks at the end of their rope, in need of new life, in the loose. Alive.

It's Easter, sending new life cascading into every dead place. Easter is the ultimate breathing of new life into an old, dead world, because in the resurrection of Jesus, we all can know what it is to be truly alive. For a Christian, there is Easter, sending new life cascading into every dead place. On Easter, God moved. God moved to free humanity from everything that would enslave and kill us. God moved the stone away from the dry bones place, and Jesus was on the loose. Alive.

As nature itself comes alive in spring, let us embrace the valley of dry bones. It's taking holy risks for the Gospel. It's living gratefully and boldly with folks at the end of their rope, in need of new life, in the loose. Alive.

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As nature itself comes alive in spring, let us embrace what it means to be alive in Christ. It's more than merely respiration and perspiration. It's sharing Christ's love with folks at the end of their rope, in need of new life, in the valley of dry bones. It's living gratefully and boldly and sacrificially. It's taking holy risks for the Gospel.

Because of what God did on Easter morning, being alive will never be the same again. Church, Easter is coming. It's time to come alive!

### EVENTS

#### Walk the Stations of the Cross
Camp Manidokan, Knoxville
April 19, sunrise to sunset
Participate in a self-guided tour through the stories of the last hours of Jesus's life. Cost: $150. For more information, visit www.manidokan.org.

#### The BWC Young Adult Council mission trip
New Jersey Sandy relief
April 24-26
Participants will drive to New Jersey and assist in building repair. Participation is limited. Cost is $600. For more information, contact Cheryl Cook at ccook@bwcumc.org.

#### Order of Elders
April 29, 11 a.m.
Grace UMC, Hagerstown
The order is exploring teleconferencing and live streaming. Learn more at the Order’s website: www.bwcorderofelders.weebly.com.

#### Older Adults Day Away
West River Center
April 30, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
The Rest: Wayne Decker, Director of Church Relations for Ashbury Communities, will be the speaker on “Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century.” Cost is $28 per person. Register at http://www.bwcumc.org/VRDDayAway_files/OADA_Spring_2014_onepage.pdf.
Zimbabwe: Partnership benefits all, leaders say

From page 1

you to continue the partnership,” Through the Rev. Austern Chepiri, who is in charge of mission projects, the Zimbabwean side also expressed appreciation for the support from the BWC in terms of projects that were accomplished through the Hope Fund, which included construction of several parsonages and sanctuaries throughout Zimbabwe.

Daniels noted that the Baltimore-Washington Conference has also benefited greatly from the partnership, especially in spiritual growth among young adults — is a reminder that God calls us to mission projects, the Zimbabwean side also expressed partnership, especially in spiritual growth among

those who have taken mission trips to Zimbabwe and participated in the Pastors’ School. “Many people are actualizar their dreams through this partnership and still others are being summoned to ministry,” Daniels said.

The two sides also talked about the possibility of pulpit exchanges between pastors, new possible topics for the pastors’ school, a collective focus on youth and young adult ministry with a possible forum during the school being established, the need for literature on UMC polity, and for attention to be devoted to growing junior church schools in Zimbabwe.

The two sides agreed to explore how the partnership would help in the revitalization and upgrade of the hospitals and rural clinics in Zimbabwe through partnerships with the Zimbabwe Health Board, ZEA Conference leadership and UMCOR.

Apart from the Pastors’ School and mission projects, the two sides also talked about the possibility of creating scholarship funds to help with the education fees for students in UMC schools and to encourage individuals, churches or organizations to contribute to the timely payment of the base salaries for pastors in ZEA.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference will continue to work with its local churches to recruit, equip and deploy Volunteer in Mission (VIM) teams throughout Zimbabwe in support of schools, hospitals, clinics and local churches. The ZEA leadership said their conferences will incorporate the key elements of the covenant relationship agreement into the long term strategic mission priorities and its annual operating plans.

The Rev. Z.T. Mawenwego, the senior assistant to the bishop, announced that the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area is focused on “BEB”: the first “B” standing for bringing more souls to Jesus Christ; “E” for Ebenezer Convention, which the ZEA will host in August; and the last “B” for building new conference centers. Later, Daniels and Mulenga were taken on a tour of the new conference center, under construction in a residential area in Harare.

The meeting was also attended by members of the Board of Ordained Ministry, who are in charge of the Pastors’ School. They will draft the initial plan for the 2015 Pastors’ School and share it with the BWC team before it is finalized.

The BWC side will draft the new partnership agreement and share it with the Zimbabwean team and then present a finalized version for approval by Bishop Marcus Matthews and his counterpart, Bishop Eben Nhiwatiwa.

Shift: Young adults learn to navigate life-changes

From page 1

“Vocation is the work of discovering and living into the answers of the questions ‘Who am I?’ ‘Who will go with me?’ and ‘What am I to do?’” Lannicelli shared her own personal story of how she came to be a Christian at the young-adult age of 33. Her then four-year old son prompted her to go to church one Saturday, and by Tuesday — after having cold-called that church that Sunday morning — she knew the answers to those questions for the first time in her life.

“I felt love and forgiveness wash over me, and that I had found new life,” she said. From that moment on, she knew her vocation was to “go and tell.”

After going over some steps of discernments, Lannicelli reminded her audience that vocation always brings life, not death; that your life has purpose; and that we are to live into the answers of the questions ‘Who am I?’ ‘What am I to do?’ ‘Who will go with me?’ and ‘What am I to do?’” Lannicelli shared her own personal story of how she came to be a Christian at the young-adult age of 33. Her then four-year old son prompted her to go to church one Saturday, and by Tuesday — after having cold-called that church that Sunday morning — she knew the answers to those questions for the first time in her life.

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After going over some steps of discernments, Lannicelli reminded her audience that vocation always brings life, not death; that your life has purpose; and that we are to hear and do, and look for a clue. “Vocation is never boring,” she said. “It will take ALL of you.”
F
or the past 21 years, Thomas Curcio has gone to work each day with one goal in mind: making life better for children.

“With a mantra of “children first,” Curcio has done exactly that as CEO of the Board of Child Care of The United Methodist Church. Curcio is retiring July 1, after leading the organization through a sea-change of expansion and growth.

When Curcio arrived at the BCC in 1993, the agency had an annual budget of $3 million and served 50 youth, all in one location. Today, the BCC has multiple locations in three states and serves more than 2,000 youth and families every year.

“Tom Curcio is an innovator, an entrepreneur, a pioneer and a miracle worker. He transformed our Board of Child Care from a custodial system into a cutting-edge, much-imitated resource for children in need and their families,” said Bishop Marcus Matthews, Episcopal leader of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. “Tom is a leader of great integrity, vision and generosity.”

“Twenty-one years ago, when I accepted the position as CEO, my colleagues did not understand why I would go to a smaller agency than where I had been for 10 years,” Curcio said. “After my visits, I formed a vision as to what the Board of Child Care could become as a high performing agency providing out-of-home care.”

Curcio said he is proud of his legacy of expanding the BCC’s programs and the quality of care.

“We have provided thousands of children the opportunity to better themselves,” he said, crediting the whole staff of the BCC. “The programs will remain to help many more for years to come. I believe my mantra, children first, has been accomplished.”

Jay Hayden, chair of the board of directors of the BCC, announced Curcio’s retirement March 14 in a press release. Hayden specifically noted Curcio’s commitment to children.

“We have been blessed to have such a visionary leader over the past 21 years,” Hayden said. “Tom’s commitment to children and youth is beyond extraordinary.”

During Curcio’s leadership, the Board of Child Care has received several honors, including Organization of the Year Award and Best Practice Award for Innovative Programming from the United Methodist Association. In 2009, Curcio was named Administrator of the Year by the same group.

“It has been an honor to be part of this healing ministry,” Curcio said, “and to be able to serve the needs of our youth. I am proud of the success we have been able to achieve as an organization and consider it a privilege to have had the opportunity to work with so many skilled clinicians, dedicated caregivers and committed staff.

Accolades for Curcio’s work are coming in from many corners of the church. In addition to praising Curcio for the work he has done with the area’s neediest children, Bishop Matthews applauded him for the spirit of innovative partnership he has created. “Under Tom’s leadership, funds were made available to finance the conference’s new Mission Center in Fulton, and an ambulance was purchased to serve a community in Zimbabwe. Wherever there is need, wherever young people are hurting, Tom is there with a plan that makes a difference,” Matthews said.

“Our relationship with the Baltimore-Washington Conference has improved over the years where I believe it is a true partnership,” said Curcio. “We have assisted the Conference in financing the Mission Center, the camping program, the Russia Initiative, and provided grants to churches to open up day care and after school programs.”

Longtime BCC board member and now bishop of the Philadelphia Area, Bishop Peggy Johnson, said in a statement that she was grateful to Curcio for his outstanding service. “He has expanded BCC into new programs and set a new standard for service and outreach for youth throughout the region,” she said.

“I look forward to retirement,” said Curcio. “My wife and I plan to travel and spend more time with our family, especially our four grandchildren and one on the way.”

Curcio said that he will also continue to coach his granddaughter’s and grandson’s basketball teams. “I often have said if I was not in child welfare, I would have been a coach,” he said.

The BCC began as three orphanages in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; they merged in 1960 to become the Board of Child Care.

The BCC’s board of directors has formed a search committee that will conduct a national search for the next executive. More information is available at http://www.boardofchildcare.org/.

Thomas Curcio addresses graduates at the BCC Falling Waters campus in West Virginia.
New disciple-making community starts in Dundalk

By Eric Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

To be clear, the Rev. Dred Scott knows that this is not the normal way of starting a church. Biblical, yes; but not what contemporary Christians might recognize as “church.”

“It’s all about making disciples, not churches. “We’re creating a discipling culture,” said Scott, “where disciples make disciples who make disciples. It’s counter-intuitive to the present church culture, which maintains that churches make disciples. That doesn’t work too good.”

Scott is working with a small group of disciples — a “huddle” — in the Dundalk area near the Port of Baltimore. In the shadows of large shipping cranes, huge boats and more cars than you can count sitting in massive parking lots, the group is small but growing.

“If you look at churches today,” said Scott, “they might make a disciple or two. But if you use Christ’s model, where disciples make disciples who make disciples who make churches, you’re always going to get the church. So, if you make a disciple, you’ll get the church; if you use the church, you might get a disciple.”

Scott is convinced that in today’s church culture, people say they are Christian, but the concept of being a “disciple” never comes up.

“Jesus never said that,” said Scott. “Jesus said, in response to Peter, ‘I will build my church’... he didn’t ask for any support systems or church programs – he didn’t ask for any of that. Jesus said ‘I’ll build the church; you make disciples.’ That’s what we’re focusing on.”

What Scott is doing is a unique — to say the least — way of church planting. There is no building the church calls “home”; no mortgage; there is no worship, per se; there are no bulletins. This is not a “parachute drop” form of starting a new church.

What this is is small group ministry with high involvement and high commitment expectations.

Scott said the idea for this gained traction in the United Kingdom as an attempt to revive the church there and across Europe. Mike Breen, an Anglican priest, brought his ideas to the United States. Breen, said Scott, saw that the book of Acts provided the blueprint for building church, that of understanding the culture and building community.

“You start with the understanding from Matthew,” Scott said, “where Jesus gives two commands: One in the fourth chapter, where Jesus says ‘come, follow me, and I’ll make you fishers of men’. And in the 28th chapter, he says, ‘Go into the world and make disciples of Jesus Christ, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and teaching them.’”

Scott said that he is using this “come and go” matrix to make disciples.

Last September, Scott started a “huddle.” This small group of four people is the mechanism for discipling, he said. “It starts with recruiting, then we train, then we deploy, and then we revise,” said Scott. “That’s how we do leadership development.”

“The huddle is leadership development, but it’s not based on whether or not a person is saved,” he said. “If you carefully look at (Matthew 28), discipling goes on with folks who are not yet believers. Most people just read the 18, 19, and 20 verses, but verse 17 says, ‘Many worshipped him, but some doubted.’ This was the disciples they were talking about; they weren’t yet believers, but he was still discipling them.”

And as the huddle grows, it becomes a missional community of about 20 to 40 people. Scott said when it gets that big, it creates a new one.

Scott’s current missional community meets Thursday nights at Dundalk UMC. At a recent gathering, about 25 people gathered in the church’s Fellowship Hall.

“We seek to bring in the local community,” said Scott, “and give them the foundation for what happened in Acts, which is ‘iko’si,’ a Greek word that means ‘family,’ or ‘extended family.’ That’s kind of our mantra.”

You could see that as soon as the gathering began. One woman interrupted at the start to share an announcement: “I’m pregnant,” she said.

The group applauded. Scott used the moment to teach, noting the wonderfulness of life and what an amazing God we have that brings forth newness.

He then turned to the Bible, reading the text aloud while interspersing comments and observations while welcoming questions.

“We use story form,” Scott said, “where you have abbreviated stories of Scripture, and you start with the beginning. You read the story — only one narrator — and let it inform the group.”

The group listened intently, learning about Moses, Pharaoh and the Exodus.

“We’re not asking people to do anything extra,” said Scott. “We’re asking people to be intentional in being a disciple. You see, most people eat 21 times a week. So, for example, during several of those 21 times, you become intentional – you eat with a bunch of people; that’s what we do here; that’s why we come here.”

Scott said that these huddles and missional communities are not “microwave” fast.

“This is crock-pot ministry,” he said, meaning this way of doing “church” takes time. “We have the support of our bishop, my district superintendent, the Cabinet, and Andy Lunt with Vibrant Communities, giving this an opportunity to gain momentum. Because right now, we’re failing. I’m talking about the church universal... we’re failing. And so, this is a biblical standard and model. All we’re doing is incorporating what Jesus said... high invitation, high challenge.”

Young Adult Volleyball Tournament

May 4 from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. rain or shine at Glen Mar UMC

Cost: $10 preregister / $15 at the door to benefit IMAGINE NO MALARIA

Register as a team of 4-6 people, or as an individual player

Pre-register by April 27, Contact Martin Brooks at 410-465-2919, ext. 12, or martin@bethanyum.org

By Andy Lunt
Director of Vibrant Communities

Not every pastor is called or gifted to plant a new church starts.

Apostolic gifts – Successful church planters tend to have a strong focus on the “great commission” to make disciples, and behave more like a missionary than a pastor or shepherd. They are more concerned with reaching people “out there” than caring for those already “in here.”

Exceptional ability to network and to meet new people – Planters are far more comfortable ‘hanging out’ in restaurants, coffee shops, shopping malls, and even bars, where they are able to interact with those who have not yet developed a relationship with Jesus than they are sitting in an office. Planters do not have to be extroverts; they just have to be committed to being with people. As consultant Jim Griffith is fond of saying, “church planting is a contact sport.”

Passion to take initiative – Successful planters don’t need external motivation, but tend to be self-starters who are driven to reach new people

Strong work ethic – With no supervisor or Staff Parish Relations Committee keeping track of their hours, church planters have to want to put in the long hours required.

Demonstrated entrepreneurial experience – past behavior is a strong indicator of future fruitfulness. Successful church planters almost always have a track record of launching new things — new businesses, groups, classes, activities in their past.

Strong affinity with those in their mission field – Planters have to like and be able to relate well to the people they are trying to reach. Not every planter can be successful in every mission field.

Self-confidence – it may take many months, or even years, before planters begin to see tangible results, so they must have confidence in their ability to produce fruit.

Good health – All ministry is hard work, but planting a church is especially demanding, calling for long hours with little or no viable reward or accomplishment.

If married, a healthy marriage – even more than most ministries, the demands involved in church planting can strain the best of marriages. The planter’s spouse must be equally committed to the endeavor.
**Church enrolls homeless in health care**

ANNAPOLIS – Homeless people came to Asbury UMC on a recent Saturday for a free lunch, but they got much more, the opportunity and guidance to enroll in health insurance plans. The church regularly serves lunch on Saturday and found it was the perfect time to also help uninsured people to sign up with qualified health plans and Medicaid.

Church leaders Yolanda Perry and Rhonda Green planned the enrollment event. “Our church’s mission is to serve the last, the least and the lost,” they said, so the Affordable Care Act enrollment event was a perfect collaboration for the church.

Asbury UMC again offered the opportunity March 22. The church worked with certified navigators from Chatman, a partner with Healthcare Access Maryland, charged with reaching the uninsured, educating them about what was available and all details, then enrolling some right on the spot.

One who was enrolled was Franklin Johnson, the church’s part-time custodial engineer. The church, like many small businesses couldn’t afford to provide insurance for part-time employees.

“It’s a great relief to me,” said the Rev. Carletta Allen, “now that (he) has quality health insurance.”

“I look forward to going to see a doctor,” Johnson said.

**Church dedicates large new expansion**

OLNEY – March 30 was a big day for Oakdale-Emory UMC. The congregation and community celebrated the opening of a large new expansion of the church.

Dorothy Park, spoke at the dedication service of the building, which was the culmination of a planning process that began more than a decade ago. Construction has taken place over the past 15 months, according to Anne Jordan, communications director. The 13,000-square feet, two-story facility was built for $14.5 million.

When people attend functions at OERUMC, they will enter through a new way. The prominent new entrance is now on Georgia Ave. and includes a Welcome Center and social gathering place with coffee bar, using the proceeds for missions. The expansion also includes a new nursery, music room, expanded kitchen, restrooms and classrooms and has state-of-the-art audio-visual and music equipment.

Park challenged the congregation not to keep the new facility to themselves, but to have the doors open to the community seven days a week.

**Making Sense of the Bible: An Evening with Adam Hamilton**

Foundry UMC, Washington, D.C.
April 23, 7 p.m.


In it, Hamilton digs deep to illuminate the meaning within the Bible, addresses hot-button issues, and answers pertinent questions on the subjects of violence; the Bible, homosexuality and gay marriage; women and leadership in the church; the discrepancies between creation stories and science; and why the Bible’s Book of Revelation is not a guide to the end times.

This is a free event, but tickets are required at www.foundryumc.org.

You can also purchase discounted books and package deals when you register. Hamilton will be signing copies of his book after the event.

**Historic golf tournament helps building fund**

HAGERSTOWN – Otterbein UMC has held a unique golf tournament since 2001, when it was begun as a means to raise money for the Building Fund. It has raised $189,000 so far, divided by the 13 tournaments to date shows an average raised each year of more than $14,500.

Church journalist wins award

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Adelle Banks, a member of Asbury UMC, is receiving a Wilbur Award from the national Religion Communicators Council for her journalistic work on the March on Washington project. Banks is national correspondent for the Religion News Service where she has worked for many years.

The RCC announced 25 Wilbur Awards March 5, to honor excellence by individuals in communicating religious issues. Banks’ award was one of three RNS received. It was for a multimedia package on the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s March on Washington.

The award is in the form of a handcrafted stained-glass trophy. To learn more, go to http://projects.religionnews.com/marchonwashington/.

**COSROW presents 'The Sandwich Generation’**

FULTON – People from throughout the conference gathered at the Conference Mission Center for the spring event of the Commission on the Status & Role of Women March 29. The Rev. Terri Rae Chattin led worship on “The Sandwich Generation,” the theme for the event. Many attended to find out how to cope with being “caught in the middle” of caretaking for older parents and younger children, and living busy lives of their own. Chattin gave assurance that whatever caretaking they had to do, that each person present had received “a calling (to be) in this time and place.”

The Rev. Wayne DeHart, director of Church Relations for Asbury Communities, was the keynote speaker. He shared a wide scope of statistics, demographics and trends that made clear the church working to counteract its decline can do more than court young people and young adults, that with Boomers “turning 65 at the rate of 10,000 a day,” there is “an opportunity to shift our ministry toward older adults.”

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As many of you know, I begin each day with the prayer, “Lord, make me better today than I was yesterday.” This simple heart-felt plea draws me deeper into an Easter faith. Over the past few months, I have been meeting with people on our eight districts and I am encouraged. But I sometimes wish our churches would adopt this daily prayer – that God would make them better this week than they were the last. The world needs us to be fully alive and making a difference in an ever-changing world. The world needs the promise of hope and the Good News that Christ is risen. This Easter, I wish you joy. I wish you peace and grace, but most of all I wish for you the certainty of hope, born anew each time we seek the presence of God. Christ is risen. Alleluia! Amen!

Joseph Daniels is district superintendent of the Greater Washington District and senior pastor of Emory UMC in Washington. He is author of the book “Walking with Nehemiah: Your Community Is Your Congregation,” coming fall 2014 from Abingdon Press. This piece is excerpted, by permission, from Circuit Rider Magazine.
United Methodists have been doing exegetis of the Bible for centuries, critically examining and interpreting scriptural texts to search for meaning. But recently, the Greater Washington District set out to exegete its communities, exploring the logic and claiming ZIP codes as they bring geography, faith, and mission together to make disciples and transform the world.

The first exegetical walk was held in the Silver Spring area March when lay and clergy people representing Silver Spring Cooperative Parish, Hughes, St. Paul’s and First India UMCS, along with the Rev. Joseph Daniels, the district superintendent, began to connect with their neighborhoods.

They adopted a set of prescribed steps for exegeting one’s community:

Step one: Pray. Fervently and with good intention.
Step two: Open the church doors, the wider the better.
Step three: Step outside, intentionally observing the people and world around you.

Following this simple exegetical process, the group of 20 soon learned that questions and curiosity deepened in his congregation. He was inspired by his high school thinking about a way to tell the Easter story to children caring for the world and humanity’s place in it come to self, or to the children in your life, the story of God’s perspective rather than the perspective of one’s community:

Pastor tells Easter story through the eyes of a bunny

Christopher Bunny met Jesus on his way to the cross. Want to know what happened? The Rev. Bruce Jones, pastor of La Plata UMC, can tell you.

He has just written and published a 44-page children’s book, “The Story of Christopher Bunny: A Hare Raising Tale.”

Clergy publish many books, but they’re usually non-fiction and delve into some aspect of theology or social principles. “Christopher Bunny” is no exception. It’s a different viewpoint but as one reads it to his or her adult reader, or to the children in your life, the story of God’s caring for the world and humanity’s place in it come to the fore, as does Jesus’ death and resurrection.

It began three years ago. Jones was praying and thinking about a way to tell the Easter story to children in his congregation. He was inspired by his high school daughter’s long-kept rabbit to tell the children of Christ’s resurrection through the bunny’s eyes. And so, the bunny went to church.

In the story, Christopher Bunny takes on the responsibility for his sister, Christine, who is deaf. She often gets in trouble because she can’t hear the danger around her.

One day, she’s nibbling grass in the path of a cross-bearer trudging on the path smashes Christopher into the ground. At this point in the story, listeners (or readers) may shed some tears, or engaging is the story. But there’s more. Jesus sees the fate of the poor little rabbit, sets his own cross aside and picks up the body and brings him back to life.

“It was almost overwhelming, the reaction to the story,” Jones said. Parents and grandparents asked where he’d gotten the storybook so as to get it for themselves. It was then he decided to pursue publishing, something entirely new for him, “to see where God leads me.”

Part of the charm of the book is the illustrations, done in pastel colors, lending a softness to the story. When Jones had finished writing the text, through research he discovered a network of children’s book illustrators.

After many dead-ends, he found Kim Merritt, and later learned she is a United Church of Christ pastor’s wife in New Hampshire.

“It was a miraculous process,” he said.

In addition to their contract, which covers each page of art, they have a deal that 15 years down the line, after finding out if the book becomes a long-time keeper, they’ll renegotiate their agreement, which covers a percentage of royalties for the artwork. Jones now owns the paintings and has all the original artwork.

The book is written in simple language, easy enough for second-graders to read themselves.

“The book is written in simple language, easy enough for second-graders to read themselves. It’s a unique and heart-warming story,” said a reader.

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It’s a unique and heart-warming story, said a reader. “It is a really sweet story to teach about the power of God and God’s love.”

The soft-cover book, in a 11” x 8.5” format, is available from Amazon.com or from WestBow Press, a division of Thomas Nelson and Zondervan.

Help bring about the end of malaria...

...bring your church pledge card May 15 to the clergy session at Towson UMC

Download a pledge card at: www.bwCumc.org/ImagineNoMalaria

Larry White shares needs in a gentrifying community.

Ministries (MUM), shared how gentrification of this region is challenging groups seeking to assist the poor and those in crisis. MUM’s facility, for example, is slated in the next five years to be demolished to make room for a park.

Following their walk, the group met at Hughes UMC to debrief their two hours of observation. The question “what did you notice that breaks your heart,” steered their conversation. Those around the table took much of what they had seen to heart. Some talked about feeding people as a gateway to addressing need, others focused on how to provide larger systemic changes, and some felt called to more intense discernment.

“We’re in dangerous waters, folks,” said the Rev. Rachel Cornwall of Silver Spring Cooperative Parish. “In dangerous waters, there are deep possibilities.”

The group agreed to take the remainder of Lent to think about how their exegetics of the community might influence future ministries. But each came away with the certainty Daniels had hoped they would find. “Our communities are our congregations,” he said. “We must step outside the doors of the church.”

The Story of Christopher Bunny

A Hare Raising Tale

A story by Bruce A. Jones with Illustrations by Kim Merritt

Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

By Melissa Lauber
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By Linda Worthyington
UMConnection Staff

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