Love offering creates fitness center

An artist's rendering shows the proposed fitness center on the campus of Africa University, in Zimbabwe. A "love offering" for Bishop Marcus Matthews is going towards building the facility. Visit bcwms.org/love to learn more.

Eunice Mathews remembered

In Memorium

LOVE. REVERENCE. APRIL.
It’s hard to think about the life story of Eunice Jones Mathews without feeling the compelling love of Christ shine through.

Bishop Susan Johnson called her “the last of the Methodist royalty.” Daughter of the world-renowned missionary E. Stanley Jones and wife of Bishop James K. Mathews, who as a child played with monkeys and fell asleep reading under the moon in India, Eunice Mathews died Feb. 27.

She was 80 years old.
She was a member of Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington, D.C. In 2004, Mathews was called before the General Conference in Pittsburgh so that United Methodists from around the world could celebrate her life and wish her Happy Birthday.

In response, Mathews simply said, she did not want to be defined by her relationships, “I am free to be myself,” she said, “a Christian I have in Jesus Christ.”

This freedom, wrote Martha Ganuska Chamberlain in a biography of Mathews and her mother, manifests itself in the outspoken manner Mathews adopted and carried with her throughout the years. “It is not I, but Christ within me.”

Over the years, Bishop Marcus Mathews developed a special relationship with Eunice Mathews. “She saw in me, what I did not always see in myself my early days of ministry. She was brave. She spoke truth even when it placed her at odds with others. She was a person of integrity. She was never silent when it came to issues of justice.”

These values were instilled in Mathews when she was a girl, growing up in India. In the book, “A Love Affair with India,” Chamberlain explores how Eunice, born on April 25, 1926, in Lucknow, India, was able, with the help of her Muslim cook, Bibalan, to sneak her curries to eat. She had a pet monkey she taught to do tricks, and a mongoose named Bikiki, who desired poisonous snakes from the family’s home.

Growing up, Mathews was deeply influenced by her faithful and indomitable mother, Mabel, also a Methodist missionary who was a pioneer, creating and leading a boy’s primary school in northern India.

After taking a typing course, Mathews brought a valuable gift to her father, E. Stanley Jones, editing and typing 25 of his books.

Her father’s writings changed the world, influencing such thinkers as Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In addition to inspiring a non-violent approach to dramatic social change, Gandhi shared with Jones that Christians needed to live more like Christ, practice their religion without losing it down, emphasize love, and find the good in non-Christian religions.

As she grew into an adult, Mathews did all of these things.

In 1939, she met the Rev. Ian Mathews, who was 25 and a new pastor, serving as a missionary. He went to bear her famous father speak and admitted that at his first meeting with Eunice, he was “amazed when she walked into the room and into my life.”

In 1944, she married the Rev. Ian Mathews, who was 25 and a new pastor, serving as a missionary. He went to bear her famous father speak and admitted that at his first meeting with Eunice, he was “amazed when she walked into the room and into my life.”

Not too much later, Mathews sold his typewriter and used the money to help buy a wedding ring. The couple married June 3, 1949, and began a partnership of love.

Church uses author’s life to reach youth

AS A PASTOR, the Rev. Vivian McCarthy is always listening for who’s going on in the life of the community as it unfolds around Reisterstown UMC. Recently, she heard a story that was helpful to shape the moral imagination of the people in her church and beyond.

The story was sold in a New York Times best-seller, "The Other Wes Moore." Two young boys named Wes Moore were born in Baltimore, just blocks apart, within a year of each other. Both grew up in similar troubled neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods. One of them, the author, grew up to be a Rhodes scholar, a decorated veteran and a White House fellow. The other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence in jail.

Their common journeys, how their paths diverged and the relationship they forged forms the foundation of the book.

“The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates,” was featured in Franklin High School’s “One Book, One Community,” initiative last summer and read by every student and teacher in the Reisterstown school.

Reisterstown UMC was going through some struggles and McCarthy decided she needed to preach a series on coping. The story of the two men named Wes Moore came to mind.

On Jan. 25, she preached the sermon, “Keep Calm and Trust God.” In her preaching, she stressed Moore’s quote: "The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine, the tragedy is that my story could have been his.”
By Manley Sawyer
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gethsemani

I heard John Mayer's song, "Waiting on the World to Change" on the radio today. I really didn't like that song. It's whiny. It's about a generation that isn't old enough to take the lead, so they're just waiting on the world to change. It sounds a bit like a cop-out to me. I'll grant you that it's hard to know how to lead when the man you're following was crucified by the powers that be. It's hard to lead people like Jesus would have led because that sort of leadership tends to end with nails and a cross. When the Son of God took the form of a servant and modeled a leadership that looks like washing feet, well, that's hard thing to put on a bumper sticker. That's a leader that's neither 'decisive' nor 'likely to make America great again.' (Note the bipartisan name of the reference.) But God has always been in the leadership development business. The one God needs to choose are often just average; Moses stammered; Jeremiah was too young; Sarah was too old; Saul prosecuted Christians; and David... well, he violated all in the commandments. Consider all the prophets that God woke up in the middle of the night, all the people God called to lead when even the church didn't recognize their call — people like Selahamai, Truth and Jeremia Joc. God is still raising up leaders, who at first may not know they are leaders. When the great "I Am" whispers, so often the response is "but who am I to go and lead anybody? I'm just waiting on the world to change." That's where the church can step in — nurturing spiritual gifts and grace, training and encouraging new leaders, being an ELCA to help a Samuel recognize God's voice.

Leading sometimes means doing the hard thing, the unpopular thing. It sometimes means speaking truth to power. It sometimes means making your mind up about leadership. Leadership is both skill and art, requiring a curious balance of courage and humility. Servant leadership in the name of Jesus requires knowing that "leaders" are also first and foremost "followers." We follow Jesus and we lead others to him. We follow the Servant whose greatness of being was about being a servant of all.

Leading is about speaking up and speaking out and taking risks in Jesus' name. Leading is about discipling washing feet, breaking chains, sowing hope. They're not waiting on the world to change. They're disciples of Jesus. It's their job to change the world.

LEARN. LIFT. LEAD.
A love offering to celebrate the ministry of Bishop Mark Matthews

EVENTS

"Weird Church" Workshop
April 6, 10 a.m. to 12 noon
BWC Mission Center, Fulton

Authors Paul Nixon and Beth Ann Estes will speak about their new book, "Webird Church: Welcome to the 21st Century." Weird Church offers a clear vision of a good future, so long as church leaders are willing to live into a few critical shifts. Includes a reading from the book for signing. Free. Register at http://bwccumc.org/events/"weird-church-workshop-and-book-signing/".

Bishop's Farewell Gatherings
United Methodists across the conference will have the opportunity to honor Bishop Marcus Matthews this spring as he plans to retire in September. Regional gatherings will begin at 3 p.m.:

- Baltimore Region: April 9 at Epworth Chapel UMC in Baltimore;
- Frederick Region: April 10 at Middletown UMC near Frederick;
- Southern Region: April 16 at Westphal UMC in Upper Marlboro;
- Washington Region: April 17 at Ashby UMC in Washington, D.C.

Pre-Conference Briefing
April 30, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
First UMC, Hyattsville

This symbol appears with stories that show your apocalypse dollars at work, making a difference in people's lives.

ABSYR BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE

It was 200 years ago this spring that Francis Asbury, the first bishop of the Methodist Church, died. His life and legacy will be celebrated Sunday, April 5. The observance begins at Lovely Lane UMC in Baltimore, where the Rev. Fred Day, chief executive of the General Commission on Archives and History, will preach.

Later in the day, there will be a pilgrimage to the Bishop's Lot at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Baltimore. To mark this historic remembrance, the BWC Board of Trustees and Historical Society are creating a new monument to Methodism's first bishop.

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All clergy and lay annual conference members are encouraged to attend the Pre-Conference Briefing. This informative session will include an overview of the proposed budget, a glimpse at proposed legislation and an opportunity to ask questions about Annual Conference business.

BWC Annual Conference
June 1-4
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, D.C.

Churches are advised to budget for attendance for their clergy and lay members. The cost for a three-night stay, including registration and parking but not including meals, is $495. Breakfast at the hotel is $26. Lunch is $13, and dinner is $45. More information about the Annual Conference Session is on page 1 of this issue, or online at http://bwccumc.org/annualconference/.

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Wes Moore: Reaching out to the community through story

From page 1

McCarthy remembers when Bishop Felton May, then the resident bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, “This was very important,” Eichelberger added, “because it helps them to offer more personalized customer service. They are coming in with a missional purpose.” Customer service was also important in the new contract, Eichelberger said, along with GCFA’s ability to work remotely with BWC staff to resolve any problems. Moore, he said, provides IT support for the church’s missionaries around the world, “so they specialize in this remote access which we knew was the new model for IT.”

Another factor in making the decision to go with GCFA, Eichelberger said, was that they are situated in Nashville, Tenn., home to numerous technology companies. “There’s an over-abundance of IT professionals that they can tap into,” he said. As part of the United Methodist Church, GCFA is non-profit so they don’t add a built-in profit margin to their costs, Eichelberger added.

“The decision, he said, wasn’t just driven by cost; the people at GCFA made the difference. The enthusiasm of Derek Preston, who heads the Shared Services area, along with Shannon Logan, Shared Services Specialist, was contagious. Both Preston and Logan, along with other Shared Services staff, were on-site at the BWC Mission Center for 13 days in early February as the new IT solutions were rolled out. For Logan, working to help conferences throughout the connection with IT needs is part of her ministry.

“Our purpose at GCFA is to work in the ministry of administration,” said Logan. “It’s our vision and what we feel we’ve been called to do. Under the leadership of our General Secretary, Moses Kumar, his desire is to make administration, financial services and IT truly a ministry and a way to serve the connection.”

Kumar started the Shared Services department several years ago, Logan said, and branching out to serve annual conferences is the next step in its progression. At present, Shared Services does not offer assistance for local churches. For the BWC, Shared Services is providing information technology solutions and managing the conference’s IT needs.

“We’re assisting with everything from managing your firewall to hosting your servers,” Logan said. “We’re also making sure you have the most up-to-date software on your computers.”

Logan’s Shared Services department is also working with the New England Annual Conference. “In the end, it’s all about how we can save dollars for the conferences so that they can use the extra monies that they can use in the conference,” she said.

The start-up with GCFA took place “at the worst possible time,” said Eichelberger, when the Mission Center was closed for five days during the January snowstorm. But the closure helped prove a point: “All that snow didn’t deter anything,” Eichelberger said: “they just treated us like we were missionaries in some far-off country.”

“I love that, because of my job, I’m able to get out and meet people throughout the connection,” Logan said. “I think that sometimes we get in our own little world. If you forget how many people are out there that are connected because of this connection. There’s a lot of good that goes on in this church, and I get to see that.”

The other Wes Moore: Reaching out to the community through story

From page 1

McCarthy led the congregation through the truth highlighted in the book that “small decisions become big choices.”

The story took on an extra and tragic poignancy because the man who was killed in Wes Moore’s robbery was Baltimore County police Sgt. Bruce A. Prothero, a loving husband and father of five who was a member of Reisterstown UMC.

According to the Baltimore Sun, Prothero was shot three times Feb. 7, 2000, as he chased four men out of a jewelry store during a robbery at the store, where he was working a second job as a security guard.

Moore was convicted of felony murder later that year, based on testimony that he and his half-brother held a clerk at gunpoint while two accomplices smashed jewelry cases and fled with more than $400,000 in watches.

His executive assistant heard McCarthy’s plea and Moore agreed to waive his more than $23,000 speaking fee.

The church paid a portion of Moore’s travel expenses and bought each student a copy of his new novel for young adults.

The money came from a grant managed by the church library at Reisterstown UMC.

On Feb. 8, Moore spoke at Franklin High School. “The kids were entranced,” they were riveted on what he said,” McCarthy reported. “Wes answered questions and the kids stood in line, some for an hour-and-a-half, to get their books signed. He took pictures with the kids and talked to them like they were the only person in the room.”

The next Sunday, Reisterstown UMC had more than 260 people in church, significantly more than the 241 who regularly attend worship. Many of the visitors had teenagers with them.

McCarthy doesn’t know if they attended because of the church’s involvement in bringing Moore to speak to the high school students, but she celebrates the church being willing to reach out and be a part of the community’s story.

At one point in the book, the other Wes Moore visits his mother’s church and is unable to connect. He recounts a moment of despair and anger where he says, “If he does exist, he sure doesn’t spend any time in Westminster.”

McCarthy is glad the church is willing to genuinely wrestle with the difficult realities facing the community. “It is truly a God moment,” she said.

In the promotional materials for the book, it’s noted that in December 2000, in the same issue of the Baltimore Sun, there was a small story of Wes Moore receiving a Rhodes scholarship and, just pages away, the story of a manhunt for the killer of a police officer — one of whom was named Wes Moore.

As she worked on her sermon and Moore’s speaking engagement, the factors that led these boys to live out such different stories fascinated McCarthy. It’s her prayer that the church will be present in ways that illuminate good choices for today’s youth.

“Our daily life is what we have to give back to God,” she said. “It’s often messy and doesn’t always sound very spiritual, but it’s our gift to God nonetheless.”

STUDY GUIDE AVAILABLE

For many of her sermons, the Rev. Vivian McCarthy compiles a weekly study and devotional guide to supplement that week’s message. A copy of her Jan. 10 sermon and the guide for “Keep Calm and Trust God: The Other Wes Moore” is available at http://rbumcweb.org/worship/sermons/keep-calm-and-trust-god-the-other-wes-moore.
Calvary UMC’s re-birth a lesson for churches in conflict

By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

T he Rev. David Simpson is set to retire – again – at the end of June. He tried to retire once before, in 2015, but ended up being called by Bishop Marcus Matthews to help out a church in need.

That church, Calvary UMC in Frederick, has made a drastic turn-around in the past 15 months under Simpson’s leadership. It’s a story any church facing conflict and decline can replicate.

Simpson was appointed to Calvary in late February 2015. The bishop asked him to serve as an interim pastor for four months in addition to his then-duties of being on Conference Staff and co-leading the Imagine No Malala campaign.

When Simpson arrived at Calvary, a cathedral-like church built in 1929-1930 in downtown Frederick, he found the congregation in chaos. There was no vision, no goals, no objectives, he said, and the church was losing both members and money.

“It was really ugly,” he said. Various groups in the church were in “open warfare.”

The first thing Simpson did was establish a four-point plan: stabilize, create order, establish a vision, and promote healing and reconciliation.

“Everything starts and ends in worship,” Simpson said. “I had to stabilize worship, so I preached every Sunday. The church needed to see the same person in the pulpit every Sunday.”

He then set about to stabilize the staff. Simpson informed the staff that everyone’s job was safe, but they had four months to prove they belonged at Calvary. He began holding staff meetings every Tuesday, but with intentional changes to the agenda. Instead of diving straight into business, the meetings opened with prayer and times of what Simpson calls “loving on each other.” They also shared a meal together at every meeting.

Simpson also sought to stabilize the church’s finances. Staring at a projected deficit of $50,000 in a $460,000 budget, Simpson simply asked from the pulpit: “We need your support,” he said, “and people responded.”

He also made numerous one-on-one visits with people who used to support the church both with their presence and their gifts but who had left in the midst of the troubles.

At the same time as this was being done, Simpson worked on “order.” For example, he said, the order of worship was not dependable from week to week. He placed this ministry in the hands of the Rev. Jake Wilson, a Deacon serving at Metropolitan Memorial UMC as part of a service team.

Simpson also sought to stabilize the church’s vision. “Some people had just forgotten that.”

In the spring and summer of 2015, Simpson preached on what it means to be church and what it means to be a child of God. He knew that, like every church, there were three groups in the church: those on either “extreme” end of an issue or subject, and the vast majority in the middle. He needed to address the people in the middle of the issues, he said, and assure them of God’s never-ending love.

In addition to the sermons, he met one-on-one and in small groups with those on the edges, spending 12 hours per week meeting with those people.

To emphasize that the church is one family, Simpson turned to a portion of worship that makes many people cringe: the passing of the peace.

“I became directive” during this part of worship, Simpson said. “I would say, ‘Find someone you don’t know and talk with them.’ Or, ‘Find someone you’ve had a disagreement within the church and talk with them.’ I didn’t allow this time to be perfunctory.”

Simpson also helped the church decide to combine their worship services for the summer. All of this, he said, in an effort to show people that they were one body, one church.

He also sought to bring about reconciliation through creating projects that would bring people together. He recruited two women, for example, who were on opposite sides of an issue, and invited them to lead the effort to refurbish the church’s library. The church’s fellowship hall was repainted, which, again, brought people together to work side by side.

Perhaps the largest project is the church’s pipe organ, a source of pride for the congregation along with its carillon bell peals. The organ is on its last legs, Simpson said, and a study committee is working on recommendations for replacing it which may cost $1.5 million.

Even with the success of getting people back to working together on a common project, the danger in all this, Simpson said, is that the church may become too inward-focused. “I don’t want them to forget,” he said, “that it’s not about us; it’s about the people in our community and in our neighborhood.”

Simpson said that he could not and did not do this ministry alone. He cited the support and work of two retired pastors working alongside him, the Revs. Harry Cole and Ken Humbert, who have provided pastoral care and visitation ministries to the congregation.

“I asked my staff to step it up,” he said, “and they did.”

Slowly but surely, the changes have worked.

As Simpson prepares to retire and hand over the reins to a new pastor July 1, the church’s worship attendance has stabilized at 500 and is beginning to grow again. The church’s finances are such that, for 2015, they will finish with a surplus of about $400,000 with all bills paid.

Calvary UMC, Simpson said, has a bright future in Frederick, a city, he said, that is growing, vibrant and alive.

“Every church is a family; we’re God’s people,” Simpson said.

“Some people had just forgotten that.”

Mathews: ‘A life-giving force in our church; she will be missed’

From page 1

General Commission on Archives and History.

In 1972, Jim and Eunice Matthews moved to the Baltimore-Washington Area, where he was assigned to serve as bishop. As an American citizen with no hometown, Mayor Donald Schaefer made Eunice a citizen of Baltimore.

In 1975, Bishop James K. Matthews ordained Marcus Matthews as an Elder in the Baltimore Conference.

Thirty-seven years later, in 2011, having himself become a bishop in The United Methodist Church, Bishop Marcus Matthews walked down the aisle of Metropolitan Memorial UMC as part of a service celebrating his becoming the leader of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Over the years, Eunice Matthews had welcomed Marcus Matthews and his wife, Barbara, into their home, sometimes to dine with ambassadors and other dignitaries. “Eunice had the gift of global hospitality,” he said.

Bishop Matthews walked the length of the gothic sanctuary and on the altar turned and saw Eunice Matthews. He didn’t hesitate. The bishop walked back down the aisle and embraced her.

“She was a tremendous presence, a life-giving force in our church,” the bishop said upon learning of her death. “She will be a missed.”

A Memorial Service will be held for Eunice Jones Matthews Saturday, March 19, at Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington, D.C.

By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

In 1960, while service as the Associate General Secretary of Global Mission, Jim Matthews went on a trip to the (then) Belgian Congo. When he returned home to New Jersey, his family seemed shaken and Eunice broke the news to him.

The Jurisdictional Conference had met. He had been elected a bishop in absentia. Unable to contact him, they informed Eunice. The family packed quickly and drove to Washington, D.C., arriving at 3 a.m. Chamberlain wrote that morning they were presented to the Conference and learned of Jim’s appointment to the Boston Area.

As ministries leaders in the church, their work took them to every state in the U.S. and six continents. Together, they spoke to presidents, Queen Elizabeth II and Pope Paul VI.

Mathews authored the book, “Drug Abuse: Summons to Community Action,” and co-authored with her father, the book “The Divine Yes.” Later, she was elected as the first female vice-president of the denominations
Bill Weller’s marble ministry a sign of God’s love

By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

S
mile to try to follow Bill Weller around. But the
laughter has a purpose, it helps connect people to
God’s love.

Weller, the president of the Baltimore-Washington Conference United Methodist Men, is quick with a joke. He also shares his faith with a Marble Moving Ministry.

This is how it works. He stocks up on marbles at the dollar store and carries them in his bag or pocket. When he sees someone who
would like to share his faith (and he likes to share his faith with everyone), Weller approaches them and says, “Hi, there.”

He then launches into a simple scripture: “I want to share with you that in my church I am part of a group of people who are called Marble Movers. When we find someone that has helped us or we can just tell them an encouraging word, we give them a gift.”

Have the marble already in your hand, Weller explained, and extend your hand so they can tell you want to give them something. As you place the marble in their hand and gently fold their fingers around the marble you say, “When you feel this in your pocket, when you’re not looking and find it as than you, it will remind you. Have a blessed day.”

It feels right, Weller invites people to join him in getting a positive start on each day with a morning prayer group that meets on the phone.

“Each day at 5:55 a.m., there are about 20 of us that try to move a marble every day. We need a scripture and have a meditation,” he said.

The number for the prayer group is 605-263-3005. The
PIN is 799042.

As president of the conference United Methodist Men, Weller’s ministry is one of being a prayer advocate and alerting people to possibilities that come with God’s love.

“Men’s ministry is critical to the vitality of our churches and communities,” he said. Those interested in learning

Bishop Marcus Matthews, left, receives a marble from Bill Weller.
Bishop’s Farewell Gatherings

United Methodists across the conference will have the opportunity to honor Bishop Marcus Matthews this spring as he retires on September 1.

Regional gatherings will be held at 3 p.m. on:

Saturday, April 9: BALTIMORE Region
Epworth Chapel UMC, 3317 St. Lukes Lane, Baltimore

Sunday, April 10: WESTERN Region
Middletown UMC, 7108 Fern Court, Middletown

Saturday, April 16: SOUTHERN Region
Westphalia UMC, 9363 Darcy Road, Upper Marlboro

Sunday, April 17: WASHINGTON Region
Asbury UMC, 926 11th St. NW, Washington, DC

LEARN. LIFT. LEAD.
A love offering to celebrate the ministry of Bishop Marcus Matthews

Throughout his ministry, Bishop Marcus Matthews has been led by the love and imagination of God. As he retires later this year, that sense of love and creativity will live on in an innovative building project.

This love offering will build a health and fitness facility at the United Methodist-affiliated Africa University in Zimbabwe that will provide a much needed place to heal the body and soul of future leaders.

Send your contributions, marked Bishop’s Love Offering, to the Conference Treasurer at 11711 E. Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759. bwcumc.org/love

Making a Difference

Asbury youth visit Board of Child Care

Members of Asbury Jessup UMC pose with Easter bags at the Board of Child Care.

JESSUP — On Saturday, Feb. 27, youth and their adult leaders from Asbury UMC journeyed to the Board of Child Care in Baltimore as part of their Mission Project during Lent. This was the first mission project for the youth. While at the Board, they learned about the partnership between them and the BWC and had a tour of the campus.

The Asbury youth unanimously voted to visit the Board of Child Care after contributing to the 2015 Christmas Giving Project, according to their pastor, the Rev. Gaye Green-Corden.

While at the Board, the youth created personalized Easter bags for the residents. One of the youth leaders, Derry Matthews, made 60 colorful blankets. The youth also provided photos, candy and other goodies to fill the Easter bags.

Bethel delivers 45,000 pounds of potatoes


About 70 volunteers from Bethel and other churches distributed 45,000 pounds of potatoes.

“God gives blessings to us, so that he can give blessings through us,” said Mark Claybourne, a member of Bethel UMC. “We’re just thankful that we’re able to use as a way to do this ministry and to reach out to those that are less fortunate.”

Claybourne said the Society of St. Andrew sent a tractor-trailer with 400, 50-pound bags of potatoes to Bethel. Volunteers unloaded the potatoes and packaged them into 5-pound bags for distribution to senior citizen apartment complexes. Remaining bags were picked up in the parking lot by food banks and rescue missions.

Roger Gordon, a member of Asbury UMC in Frederick, picked up bags of potatoes to take to low-income residential areas and senior citizen complexes.

“I just made a call to one senior citizen residence to let them know we’ve got the potatoes and we’re on our way to deliver. The lady was so happy the start crying on the phone,” Gordon said. “We just want to thank God and thank this church for allowing us in Frederick to help the community.”

Church makes snow days into fun days

HAMPSTEAD — After three days of school closings in January due to heavy snowfall, the North Carroll Church of the Nazarene in Hampstead provided a huge snow day fun day for the community.

“Part of the fun, Rudolph said, was that the idea was conceived, planned and implemented in 24 hours. Thursday, Jan. 28, from 9 a.m. to noon was set as the time.

A social media campaign let the community know in the event of a Thursday closure, there would be something for the kids to do. By the time the phone calls and e-mails alerting families that school would be canceled again, dozens had already RSVP’d.

Eighty-seven children turned up, more than half from the larger community, Rudolph said.

“We’re right in the heart of the community, so we opened our doors,” Rudolph said.

Imagine No Malaria impacts global health

The General Board of Global Ministries reported that in 2016, working together in mission in 36 countries, 1,226,540 people were able to protect themselves from malaria because they received mosquito nets. 65,348 were successfully treated for malaria and 679 community health workers received training to serve thousands of people without access to health care. The PWG was part of this effort, with the $2.1 million raised in 2017.

Leaders of the BWC’s Imagine No Malaria effort celebrated raising $2.1 million in 2017.
By Jared Jones*

Have you ever thought, “I’m sick and tired of all this mess in politics” and feel like someone ought to do something about that? Well I do, and I’m doing something about it. We Can Do Better.

On Groundhog’s Day, I signed up to be a candidate for the United States Congress in the 8th District of Maryland, which includes parts of Montgomery County, Frederick County and Carroll County. The primary is Tuesday, April 26.

So far I can tell, there are four others doing the same. When I was first motivated to do this, there weren’t any. Now it’s going to be a lot more work.

I am running because I really was sick of the gridlock in Congress. I was upset with the apparent staking of claims and not being willing to hedge or compromise or move off the position that brought us here, even if it meant the government could be shut down.

I’m also really sick of the treatment some people are getting from some candidates about gun control, immigration, health care, and the list just seems to keep on going. We Can Do Better.

I’m running because of my faith. There is a time to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s. There is a time when we remember that St. Paul admonished us to pray for our government leaders because it’s ordained by God that when it’s good, it defeats against evil and protects the poor and needy. I don’t feel that is what our government is doing anymore. So I’m putting prayers into action.

I am enough of a realist to know that this is an incredible challenge, but we can do better, and I want to try in this election. Running as a Republican in a heavily Democratic district is crazy too. But…. I will have some time to ask people to remember that we ought to govern as Jesus said so well, so that from this Earth no government will perish that “is of the people, by the people and for the people.”

I’m running because we need some good brought back into the system that determines so much of our resources. John Wesley was so right when he said, “Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”

I feel that for the time leading up to the primary election, I may get a chance to practice what I’ve done my whole ministry: build a foundation for good, work as a bridge builder, and help couples and congregations work through the differences to come to a good place. I want to use my experience with coaching, scouting, community service projects, and rehabilitation challenges, to apply it to our government. I hope that there may be some good publicity generated in this campaign that would get people thinking about common sense and the common good for us all.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8, NKJV).

That’s my story and I’m sticking to it. We need a fresh voice to proclaim that we will have dreams. To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., that we will count, not because of “the color of our skin, or our country of origin, but by the content of our character.” I believe that someone should say, “Can’t we all just get along?” and recognize what is the best for our nation in the long run. We Can Do Better.

Therefore, I put my hat in the ring. I am now certified — or certifiable (as some may say) — but I love this country and I’m at the age and place where maybe I can use my years of service to serve in another type of parish.

Blessing to you all.

*The Rev. Jared Jones is pastor of North Bethesda UMC in Bethesda.

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Young Adult Ministry: Learnings from going undercover

By Mike Beiber*

Or are the guilty pleasures of being clergy is visiting other churches “undercover” where nobody knows that I’m a pastor. I get to sit in a pew and worship like everyone else, and I get to experience the welcome and fellowship of a church.

One thing I find particularly interesting is the welcome that I, my wife and our son receive as a young family. I always feel bad, because there is no way I’m coming back next Sunday. I’ve got my own church people to see and my own sermons to preach, thank you very much.

Wonderful as these welcomes may be, there is often a certain flavor to them that disturbs me both as a visitor and as a pastor: the flavor of desperation. Sometimes it comes across subtly but often it is blatantly obvious through remarks like, “We’re so glad you’re here — we need young people in our church!” (When there basis, I’m just visiting — I’m not taking vows of membership just yet!)

Then there were the folks that asked for our home address so they could pick us up for Bible study — and offered to stay at our house to watch our son. (I’m pretty sure I saw something like that on an episode of “Criminal Minds” — so no thanks.)

One person even used the term “fresh blood” in their conversation with us. (Thanks for the imagery, well-meaning but creepy church person, we will show ourselves to the exit now.)

It feels that they did not see us as people in need of a community in which we could come to know and follow Jesus. Rather it felt as if we were a rare prize to them that they were clawing at, hoping to catch and keep as their own.

The Rev. Jeff Jones, who is putting his faith into action by running for Congress.

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Therefore, I put my hat in the ring. I am now certified — or certifiable (as some may say) — but I love this country and I’m at the age and place where maybe I can use my years of service to serve in another type of parish.

Blessing to you all.

*The Rev. Mike Beiber is pastor of Mt. Zion UMC in Myersville.
Capitol Hill UMC pays tribute to local law enforcement

By Carol Anderson*

Photo sensation Adelle wasn’t only at the Grammys. She also appeared represented as a Capitol Hill police station. At the 17th Annual Police Valentine’s Break, a group of church and community members turned Adelle’s mega-hit “Rolling in the Deep” into “Patrolling City Streets,” and honored many officers by name in the lyrics. Soloist Dan Felton handled the more acoustic parts of the song, with everyone singing the choruses. A second song for the officers, titled “Anytime We Need to Call,” was sung to the tune of “Ain’t No Sunshine.”

Each February, members of Capitol Hill UMC, Ebenezer UMC, and other community leaders descend on the First District Substation (1D1) at 16th & E St., SE, in Washington, D.C., to thank neighborhood police for their dedicated service. They surprise police officers with valentines, good food, gag gifts and songs written in their honor. Each time an officer heard his name, a loud “That’s not!” rang out.

“This annual tradition is a great way that neighbors share a heartfelt thank-you to the men and women of our city’s police department for the hard work they do each and every day on our behalf,” said Ward 6 D.C. Councilmember Charles Allen, who regularly attends the celebrations.

Knowing the officers love attention from the kids, Capitol Hill’s Deacon of Discipleship, Troy Sims, kicked things off by presenting a “bouquet” of valentines from the church’s Sunday school kids, which were stuffed inside a big paper boat they had made especially for the police. Sims then gave a brief homily and concluded by leading children and adults in singing an energetically choreographed “Pharaoh, Pharaoh.”

The Rev. Alisa Wailoo, pastor at Capitol Hill, encouraged the officers to come to CHUMC for breakfast or lunch, where they would be warmly welcomed with hearty food and fellowship.

“We are grateful for the officers of 1D1,” said Wailoo. “From the moment I arrived on the Hill in 2008, there has been a beat officer ready to partner with us to help those in need and to keep our community safe. We deeply appreciate how you sacrifice for and serve our neighborhood.”

After the music, officers dove into the food or started checking out the gag gifts — or both. Suddenly bubbles appeared everywhere as they realized their “light sabers” were really bubble-making wands. But the 1D1 crew gave as good as they got. They presented the church kids with a box-load of individual bags of candy they had put together as a thank you gift.

“The kindness and generosity of the members of Capitol Hill UMC and Ebenezer UMC will long be remembered,” said Captain Mark Beach, interim chief of 1D1. “We are humbled that you would bring our community together to show support and appreciation for the officers who serve this community.”

Beach said that the church’s efforts don’t go unnoticed by the police.

“For the 17th straight year now, this outpouring of love and kindness resonates deeply as America struggles to maintain strong relationships between police and the citizenry,” Beach said. “It has been my honor to work with such an outstanding group who are committed to serving others. Thank you all so much.”

Echoing Beach, Robert J. Contee, the new First District Commander, said he, too, was grateful for the show of generosity toward the officers.

“The kids were as excited as the cops. One little boy said, ‘I’ve been inside a hospital. I’ve been inside a fire station. Now my wish has come true — I’ve been inside a real police station!’

“Carol Anderson is a member of Capitol Hill UMC and coordinator-founder of CHUM Women, which organizes the police tribute each year.”

Inventive ‘mompreneur’ puts faith into action

Special to the UMConnection

When self-described special needs “mompreneur” Isabella Yosuico gave birth to her son Isaac, who has Down syndrome, she could never have imagined where it would lead.

Today, Yosuico, who attends First UMC in Berkeley Springs, W.Va., (pastored by the Rev. Doug Hoffman) with husband Ray and sons Pierce and Isaac, is marking two major milestones for the company inspired by Isaac. MightyTykes is starting 2016 off having landed its first international retailer as well as leading online retailer walmart.com in January.

Yosuico was told at her 12-week prenatal check-up that Isaac was likely to have a genetic condition. When a diagnosis of Down syndrome was confirmed shortly after Isaac’s birth in 2010, Yosuico learned more about the challenges he would face, including hypotonia or poor muscle tone, common in kids with Down syndrome and many other conditions.

Inspired by the wrist and ankle weights she often used while running on her treadmill, she created a tiny set of weights with some leftover fleece and sandbox sand and started using them with tiny Isaac, soon seeing results. Isaac’s physical therapist was impressed and urged Yosuico to explore manufacturing them. After much research, Isabella developed some prototypes to share with parents and therapists at hospitals from the US News & World Report Honor Roll of Top Children’s Hospitals.

Yosuico soon learned that the weights could help with many different conditions and challenges including prematurity, autism-spectrum disorders, sensory processing disorder, toe-walking, cerebral palsy, tremors and simple weakness. Encouraged by the positive response, she developed a business plan to secure an economic development loan, launching a company called MightyTykes in May 2014.

In just 18 months, sales have steadily increased and the company has enjoyed a growing following, accolades and extensive media coverage including being singled out during West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin’s 2015 State of the State address, having its story featured in Guideposts magazine in July 2015, and securing several national catalog resellers.

In December, MightyTykes also received a substantial order from international reseller exploreyoursenses.com and U.S. mega-retailer walmart.com.

“This has been an extraordinarily challenging, humbling and really rewarding experience,” Yosuico said. “Hearing how the weights are helping kids all over has kept me going during the low points and God has been so faithful, even when I wasn’t.”

Yosuico explained that she has clearly seen God’s hand in the process all along.

“God continues to reveal himself to me,” she said, “from seeing how he’s personally prepared me to do this, marshalling all my life experience and faith, his miraculous provision of resources and amazing people to help, and just doing exceedingly and abundantly more than I could ask for or imagine.”

MightyTykes has also afforded Yosuico some speaking and writing opportunities through which she’s been able to share the Gospel and her own testimony, which she feels is an awesome privilege.

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