Bishop encourages laity, clergy on each District

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

YOU ARE the one. We are the ones that can make a difference in this part of God’s world, Bishop Marcus Matthews is telling the clergy and laity of the Baltimore-Washington Conference as he joins in conversation with them at district meetings over the next several weeks.

Drawing on the wisdom of a statement from Hopi Elders, titled “We Are the Ones We’ve Been Waiting For” (see sidebar, page 3), Matthews is encouraging the people of the Baltimore-Washington Conference not to look to their colleagues, the conference staff or some ill-defined hero who will save the day. Rather, we must be aware that “we are God’s plan. “God is depending upon each of us,” the bishop said. “God needs you to do something. It’s good to come and worship and say, ‘amen.’ But we don’t need people standing on the sidelines. God needs you engaged. Our vision is to become fully alive and make a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world.”

On Feb. 18, Matthews spoke with the clergy and laity of the Greater Washington District at First UMC in Hyattsville and on Feb. 25 he met with the clergy of the Annapolis District at St. Mark UMC in Hanover.

The focus of the conversations was on allowing people in the pulpits and the pews to share their thoughts with the bishop, who opened the sessions with a few remarks on the character of United Methodists.

United Methodists, he said, live out a faithful blending of personal holiness and social action. “They seek a right relationship with God, but are also...” See Districts, page 3

Rich church or poor: which are you?

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

TWO MANY United Methodists today still love money more than Jesus. That’s one of the primary reasons they give, on average, only a percent of their income to the church. But churches can change that, said giving guru Cliff Christopher.

The Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation sponsored the Rev. Christopher to speak to more than 100 local church leaders at Glen Mar UMC Feb. 25. Drawing from his new book, “Rich Church/Poor Church,” Christopher confided to those present that “a failure to articulate our mission and how we’re accomplishing that mission is our greatest failure.” Debt, low expectations and a lack of effective leadership are among the other causes for people failing to give to United Methodist churches.

But the fault is not in the people. Most Americans are giving generously to non-profits, they’re just not giving to your church, Christopher said. Discovering why not takes one into an exploration of what it means to be a rich church. “This is not about big or little budgets. A rich church is a church that is able each day to focus its attention on mission and ministry, while a poor church must focus its attention on getting money.”

Throughout the day-long session, Christopher illuminated the difference between the two types of churches.

Rich churches, said Christopher, focus on their members’ discipleship. Poor churches focus on appeasement and making members happy. Rich churches tell compelling stories of transformed lives. Poor churches tell about facts and budgets. Rich churches avoid debt. Poor churches work without a financial safety net. Rich churches are comfortable talking about and asking for money. Poor churches want to please people at all costs.

Rich churches model humility; poor churches model arrogance and harbor an expectation that their members “owe them.” Rich churches have high expectations of their members, believing that tithing is a transformed lives. Poor ones don’t. In rich churches pastors know what each member gives and leads from facts. In poor churches they guess about their members’ giving and lead from a sense of hope. Rich churches look...See Christopher, page 3
Youth Lay Servant Training
March 22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
BWC Mission Center
Registration fee is $20; includes lunch and snacks. For more information, contact Dee McCrae at darmccrae@aol.com or 443-254-2083.

Early Response Team (ERT) training
March 22, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Miss UMC, Parkville
ERT is for volunteers who want to assist survivors in a greater area. The training cost is $25, lunch is included. For more information, contact the Rev. James Dement at pastor@jamesdement.org.

COSORW Spring event
March 29, 2 to 5:30 p.m.
BWC Conference Center
The theme is “The Sandwich Generation.” The keynote speaker is the Rev. Wayne A. DeHart and worship will be led by the Rev. Terri Rae Chatten. Register online at www.bwcumc.org.

Pre-Conference Briefings
Clergy - May 15, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
At Towson UMC in Towson; Laity - May 17, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
John Wesley UMC in Hagerstown.
Pre-Conference Sessions will include conversations about the resolutions, budget and other important issues coming before the Annual Conference Session in May. The mandatory Clergy Executive Session will be held during the afternoon of May 15.

230th Session of the Baltimore- Washington Conference
May 29-31
Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Baltimore
The theme of this year’s conference is “Building Bridges: Be Love.” Learn more and register at www.bwcumc.org/events/annual_conference_2014/

BISHOP’S DAYS ON THE DISTRICTS
District
Day
Church
City
Baltimore Metropolitan
MARCH 25
PAXSON UMC
Dundalk
Baltimore Suburban
APRIL 1
Mt. Zion UMC
Bel Air
Frederick
APRIL 2
MEDLEY UMC
Medley
Washington East
APRIL 8
JOURNEY OF FAITH
Waldorf
Central Maryland
APRIL 9
carus UMC
Mt. Airy

EVENTS

Bishop Marcus Matthews
Maitedone Mulenga
Melissa Landre
Ariel Alsgaard
Allison Bennett
Linda Worthington
Harrison Zapp
Kepea Spears
Communications Associate
Communications Associate
Communications Associate
Communications Associate

UMConnection is the newspaper of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, whose vision is to seek to become like Christ as we call, equip, send and support spiritual leaders to make and cultivate disciples, grow vital congregations and transform the world.

The UMConnection (ISSN 005388) is owned and published by the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church, 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759-2594. Telephone: (410) 509-3400-800-402-2225 fax: (410) 509-9734 e-mail: umconnection@bwcumc.org. Published 11 times per year. The UMConnection is published monthly.

Subscriptions are $15 per year. The UMConnection is published monthly.

To subscribe, email kspears@bwcumc.org.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: UMConnection, 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759-2594.

Take the bus to Annual Conference!
Avoid the headache and expense of parking at the hotel.
Another option — express hotel check-in and register on the bus!
Sign-up online: bwcumc.org

Baltimore Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church
March 12, 2014
Christopher: Churches need to offer ‘narrative of hope’

From page 1

at the taking of the offering as a high moment in the worship experience. Poor churches see it as a time to collect funds, Christopher said.

His list of differences were summarized with: rich churches look for commitments, poor churches look for contributions. In rich churches, they know that giving changes people; it transforms lives. In poor churches, they give primarily to balance the budget.

In giving, Christopher stressed, there are three chief reasons why people give where they do. First, they believe in the mission, they give where they see success occurring in a mission they value. They want their money to make a difference.

Second, they have regard for the leadership. They know that building and programs don’t change lives, people do. So they give money to people they have developed a relationship with and who they trust. Third, they give to churches they believe are fiscally responsible. People don’t give to sinking ships, Christopher said. They don’t throw their money down the rat hole of a mission in decline, and that includes churches. No matter how righteous the cause, no one wants to prop up a dying church by giving it all their money. Churches need to share a narrative of hope and of lives transformed by Christ, he said.

This stewardship event with Christopher was sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic United Methodist Foundation, an independent IRS 501c3 non-profit that serves as a financial resource for churches in the Baltimore-Washington, Peninsula-Delaware and Eastern Pennsylvania annual conferences.

And third, they give to those they believe are able to multiply God’s work in the world. For more information, visit www.midatlanticfoundation.org or contact Robert at 410-309-3475.

Districts: ‘We are the ones, bishop says

From page 1

engaged. Where people are hurting in the world, we ought to be the ones making a difference,” the bishop said. United Methodists also have Wesley’s three rules to do good, do no harm and to stay in love with God. And, they live in an ever-changing community, with a living polity in one of the largest around, becoming covenantal, convivial and connectional.

As United Methodists, our ministries are focused in four areas: global health, ministry with the poor, leadership development and creating new spaces for our people. At the last annual conference in May 2013, Bishop Matthews called upon the Baltimore-Washington Conference to undertake three initiatives: to be prayer stations, to invite each member to bring someone to Christ and to form school partnerships in their community.

He encouraged these three initiatives, which are transforming churches, and he called on every United Methodist “to pray for and do a new thing.” Bishop Matthews said. “I miss this opportunity, if we miss the very present moment God has given us, it will be a sad day for the church of Jesus Christ.”

At the first two district sessions, those present had a number of questions for the bishop, ranging from his thoughts on same-gender marriage and recent church trial to the importance of Sabbath leave and how the church is addressing issues of poverty and violence within our Conference.

In speaking on same-gender marriages, Matthew affirmed his role as a bishop in upholding the Discipline. However, he also expressed his personal feelings that church trials seldomly solve what they seek to address. “Nobody wins in trials,” he said. “I pray we find a better way.”

The bishop also stressed the importance of clergy practicing self-care and the need for taking Sabbath leave. “These are challenging times,” he said. “I encourage you to rest, study, be anchored in prayer and to find a support group to be in.”

The bishop became animated when talking about the need for United Methodists to address issues of poverty and violence in their communities.

“I know, I often think that God is being preached from our pulpits on Sunday,” he said. “I often wonder, are we saying anything about the children being killed? What are we doing on Sunday?” Until we use these pulpits to really spread the Word of God, we will not be relevant. … It doesn’t help to have people coming Sunday morning if we feed them a watered-down Gospel. Go call us at that area. Our job is to speak the Gospel the best that we know it. How’s it for us to do what God has laid on our hearts and minds.”

These conversations with Bishop Matthews will continue. Information about the times and dates of the remaining district meetings is on page 2.
We even put up a sign on the street and community folk were dropping off bags of students to carve out time for different things,” he said. “I think this school is like many students are. Relationships.

When his wife became a graduate student at the University of Maryland in College Park, he stepped the opening for campus ministry at the university, and applied.

In the few months since landing on campus, Pinder said that he has learned several differences between parish work and campus ministry, but also several similarities.

One of the key similarities is the importance of relationships. “Just getting together with students for coffee or lunch has been very important,” he said. “The students’ relationships among themselves and with the Wesley Foundation are very important, too. I think students are looking for a place to belong. I think creating a place that fosters building relationships is a real need.”

Pinder said that he’s been surprised by how busy the students are.

“What has been surprising is the weight of students’ schedules,” he said. “I think this school is like many others, where it draws students who try to find a competitive edge. It’s surprising how hard it can be for students to carve out time for different things.”

One of the big differences? “The students I work with don’t fund the ministry; we may go on a ski trip, they can probably do that. They’ll do some fundraising to go on a mission trip this coming spring. But a lot of the ongoing things, they’re just not in a position to pay for.”

The Baltimore-Washington Conference, through its office of Connectional Ministries, supports the ministry of Pinder and three other campus ministries: at American University, Howard University, and Frostburg State University. “Providing opportunities for these young adults to grow in their faith and discipleship is an essential ministry of the BWC,” said Sandy Ferguson, the Conference Director of Connectional Ministries. “But we don’t limit our outreach to just these four campuses.

We encourage any local church that is near a college or university to be reaching out to the students in their communities. The college years can be a time of life when people especially need God and, as the church, we want to be there for them.”

At Maryland, Pinder offers a main worship service on Wednesday nights, and a fellowship time Thursday evening. “The worship experience seems to make him smile.

When he preaches, it’s not a typical sermon. Rather, Pinder writes discussion questions and helps facilitate a conversation among the students. He has tried to keep the worship services to under an hour, but because of these conversations, most worship services run 90 minutes or more.

“They wrestle with many of the same issues we wrestle with,” he said. “I’m not sure students are searching for answers so much as taking up the questions. Not that they’re not trying to find answers.”

Pinder said that the students designed the worship service several years ago.

“They get most engaged around … the conversation, especially if it is something theological or scriptural,” he said. “They’re really engaged in searching for meaning in the text.”

SECOND OF A FOUR-PART SERIES ON CAMPUS MINISTRY IN THE BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

Pinder said that churches located close to campus ministries could help support them by building relationships with the ministry and finding out what the students particular needs are, whether that be trying to offer intergenerational opportunities of service or fellowship.

“The campus ministries are the place that cares for the young adults when they’re away from their home churches,” he said, “providing safe places for students to explore what faith is about. It’s a real important time for the students.”

For any congregation, keeping in prayer the young adults who surround the campus ministries is great support. Financial support is also always welcome.

What brings Pinder the most joy? He pauses.

“I really have a heart for designing worship services,” he said, “and the fact that the students really get engaged in the worship service brings me the most joy in my ministry.”

Campus Ministry at Univ. of Maryland is about relationships

The Rev. Brett Pinder serves as United Methodist chaplain at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Clean Closets for Campers

BY ANDY THORNTON

Director of Retreat and Camping Ministry

With an innovative, new fundraiser, the simple act of cleaning out your closet can send a child to summer camp.

Andy Thornton, the director of the Baltimore Washington Conference’s Retreat and Camping Ministry, encourages every church to think about how they can use the Clean Closets for Campers project and, in simple and creative ways, contribute to the campership program. Camperships send children in need to summer camp.

The idea is simple. Local churches collect used clothing, bedding, shoes, purses and hats. Once there are about 25 to 50 bags of goods, Mission Partners pick them up and take them to a facility that sorts the items. They are resold to thrift stores, made into reusable rags or sent abroad to companies that create jobs in the resale of affordable clothing. Fifty percent of the selling price is then returned directly to the church to be used for camperships.

Fallston UMC has already collected more than 250 bags of used clothing and goods to raise money for camperships.

“Our congregation got very excited about this project,” said the Rev. Karin Walker.

“We even put up a sign on the street and community folk were dropping off bags of clothing to help. The Confirmation Class took the lead in gathering the clothes and storing them in the church.”

“This is a relatively new program. Started in 2012 in the Western Pennsylvania Conference by a family dedicated to the camping program, they wanted to find a way to make summer camp more affordable. In 2013, more than $30,000 was raised for camperships in the Western Pennsylvania Conference through the Clean Closets program.”

To sign up, click on the link on the Retreat and Camping Ministries web site, www.bwccampsandretreats.org, and complete the simple form. The RCM office will get you in contact with Mission Partners and then start collecting clothes.

For more detailed information, see the web site or contact the RCM office at the University of Maryland in College Park.

The theme of the 95th session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference is “Building Bridges: Be Love.” The logo features a bridge from every region in the Conference. From the Western Region, comprised of the Cumberland-Hagerstown and Frederick Districts, is the Burnside Bridge at Antietam Battlefield, near Sharpsburg (below).

Built in 1836, the 25-foot, three arch stone and masonry bridge played a key role in the Civil War Battle of Antietam. On Sept. 17, 1862, one of bloodiest days in American history, the Union Ninth Corps, under the command of Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, faced the daunting task of attacking Confederate infantry and artillery located on the far side of the bridge. The task of crossing the bridge in the face of a stubborn Confederate defense took five hours, during which more than 300 Union troops were killed or wounded.

The Cumberland-Hagerstown District, led by Superintendent Conrad Link, has 85 churches, including 20 multi-point charges; 59 clergy; 27,685 members and an average worship attendance each Sunday of 6,131.

The Frederick District, led by Superintendent Edgardo Rivera has 93 churches, 94 clergy; 22,041 members and an average of 8,100 in worship.

Bridging the past and future
Church leaders testify to lawmakers in Annapolis

By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

A s the 2014 Maryland General Assembly session begins its final few weeks, Bishop Marcus Matthews and other Baltimore-Washington Conference leaders have been making their voices heard and presence felt in Annapolis.

Bishop, along with Conference Chancellor Tom Starres, and several other conference leaders testified before committees of the state Senate and House of Delegates in an effort to preserve state support of the trust clause of The United Methodist Church.

The trust clause, outlined in paragraphs 2921 and 2923 of the 2012 Book of Discipline, states that while local churches own and upkeep properties, they are holding them “in trust” for the benefit of the entire denomination.

During this legislative session in Annapolis, Senator C. Anthony Muse and Representative Aisha Braveboy introduced SB 347 and HB 840 in an attempt to remove language supporting the trust clause that appears in Maryland Law. Muse is a former clergy member of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

Matthews explained to the legislators that United Methodists have a polity and a structure that is “connectional.” It is not hierarchical, with centralized power, like the Roman Catholic Church, he said, nor is it congregational, like Baptists, where congregations are almost entirely autonomous.

“The trust clause ensures that all the goods of the body would be held in trust for the benefit of all the members, and all the branches would be kept connected with the true vine that they might bear great fruit,” Matthews said. “The trust clause, then, is about all that many members forming one body.”

While church law is clear on the issue of property returning to the Conference if a congregation chooses to leave the denomination, having Maryland law uphold the trust clause provides clarity about ownership and helps avoid wasteful litigation, Matthews said.

“Sections 5-326 and 5-327 of Maryland law,” said the Rev. Antoine Love, chair of the conference trustees, “give clear public notice of the Conference’s interest in local church property, improve certainty of property ownership, clarify the history of denominational mergers that have resulted in The United Methodist Church we know today, and help avoid or speed up wasteful litigation.”

Love and the bishop also disputed allegations from some of the witnesses at the Senate committee hearing that the conference has aggressively pursued a strategy of eliminating small churches. “This is simply untrue,” said Matthews, who noted that members of White Rock UMC would be welcomed “back into the fold” whenever they wished.

White Rock left the denomination two years ago, and its pastor, the Rev. Doug Sands, has spoken out against the trust clause in two previous sessions of the Maryland General Assembly.

He and Muse have been asking for the repeal of these laws, citing a need for the separation of church and state, and the unnecessary nature of singling out The United Methodist Church for special protection under state law. “Return a measure of religious freedom to the state, and the unnecessary nature of singling out The United Methodist Church is up to people like you and me to make the slope a little bit easier to climb.”

“Today, you will be witnessing on behalf of the church,” the bishop said. “Let this day be a time to remember that we are heirs to the throne, not because of what we’ve done, but because of what Christ has done for us.”

D.C.’s Douglas Memorial UMC a testament to shared ministries

By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

S mall churches don’t have to do small ministries. At Douglas UMC, just six years ago, the building was up for graffitied and the 19 members could barely keep the doors open. Today, after creating a number of partnerships, including an innovative, new Ecumenical Cooperative Parish, the church is still small, with 50 in worship, but it’s thriving in mission and its pastor, the Rev. Helen Fleming, has spoken out for the repeal of these laws, citing a need for the separation of church and state, and the unnecessary nature of singling out The United Methodist Church for special protection under state law. “Return a measure of religious freedom to the Free State,” Sands urged the legislators.

Sections 5-326 and 5-327 have been unchanged since 1953, when they became a part of Maryland law. Changing them would be wrong, said Starnes. They are “legitimate and perfectly constitutional mechanisms for us.”

“At Doug UMC, we are a community of just 50 people, and we are becoming a vibrant community of faith again,” Fleming said. “We are people who believe in the spirit of entrepreneurship and claiming opportunities in the name of Jesus. When Fleming arrived at Douglas, she quickly realized that the predominantly black congregation now sat in the middle of the increasingly multi-ethnic Atlas neighborhood. Without a parking space, she would have to draw new members from the community. In addition, statistics showed that in recent years, Ward 6 in D.C. had seen growth of more than 13 percent. “The opportunities were there,” Fleming said.

At this same time, the Rev. Kevin Lum, a pastor of an independent church, was looking for a church in which to start a church. He thought he’d prefer a warmer climate, but when he and his wife came to D.C. they knew they were God was calling them to be. He wrote letters to area churches introducing himself and telling them about his vision.

Lum was the first to respond and a partnership emerged.

The Table Church, Lum’s new congregation, describes itself as fun, thought-provoking, challenging and socially engaged. Worship is a creative mix of old and new, pulling from elements of historic faith practices, while still remaining casual and accessible. The congregation also operates a Fresh Stop ministry, a farm share program which provides fresh, locally grown food on a sliding scale to the congregation and community.

Fleming met with Lum and instead of signing formal contracts, the pair entered into a Covenant of Shared Ministry. The Table Church pays 50 percent of its offering into the parish ministry. Leaders from each of the congregations oversees the building and its outreach.

Each church also works hard at transforming the building, which just a few years ago was in grave dispair.

When Fleming was sent to Douglas, the church had recently undergone a major split. “The building looked like it had been abandoned,” she said. “But I saw hope in the eyes of the 19 members who remained.”

The congregation voted to sell the church parsonage to fix the leaky roof and make other renovations. In a spirit of shared ministry, they gave $20,000 of that money to neighboring churches.

In a continuing search for partnerships, Fleming was able to secure a $14,000 grant from Home Depot and $10,000 from the Washington Convention Board to replace a section of the roof, put down laminated flooring, renovate the bathrooms and improve the church yard.

In addition, Fleming has had Volunteers in Mission teams working at the church and she signed up with the court and offenders services to enable people to perform their court-ordered community service at the church.

One person from that program was a contractor with an immense knowledge base who had 1,000 hours to work off. “He is an absolute God-send,” Fleming said. “He can fix anything.”

While the two congregations are meeting in the same building and doing outreach together, there has been a lot of learning and growing curves. “Some of the most challenging was some informal racial reconciliation sessions. “Some of our white sisters are very open and straightforward. They know how to take change,” Fleming said. “Helped them be more personable and friendly, and I helped our black members to stop being too sensitive. We are learning that we are all the body of Christ, and coming together could be Kingdom work.”

One of their landmark ministries is their outreach to women veterans and the training and resources they provide to these women. The program has been so successful that it has received recognition from the White House.

There’s always something more that we can be doing here,” Fleming said. It’s a lot of work, a man who accomplished things against such incredible odds, that people have to understand that God is in charge, that God is acting. “We’re a Godchurch” said Fleming. “All of this is God at work through us.”

March 12, 2014
Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church
UMConnection
They met with the Rev. Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain, and 53 people from 28 conferences who attended the 12th annual Young Clergy Leadership Forum at the United Methodist Church Goes to the Dogs.

Church member runs for state office

CHERRY — In 2006 Jolene Ivey ran for the Maryland House of Delegates from Prince Georges County. And won.

The active member of Cheverly UMC, a choir member, and for 16 years a stay-at-home mom to her five sons, is now running for lieutenant governor on a ticket with Democratic gubernatorial candidate Doug Gansler.

Oakdale Emory in mission in Chile

Members of Oakdale Emory UMC helped to build a church in Santiago, Chile.

OLNEY — A Volunteers in Mission team from Oakdale Emory UMC has just returned from helping to rebuild La Vida del Señor Methodist church in a high-risk area in Santiago, Chile. The previous church building had burned down in Dec. 2011. This project was unique because it included the participation of six members from Second Methodist Church in Lota, Chile, where Oakdale VIM teams helped to build a two-story addition in 2012 and 2013.

A week before the Santiago mission trip, the Lota church also experienced a fire, which destroyed the upper level of the new addition and the sanctuary roof, as well as 22 homes in the neighborhood.

Their time there was “such a blessing,” said Marti English, staff member at the church. The team learned from and marveled at the people’s spiritual and practical resiliency and response to the disaster.

Missionary shares stories of Liberia

FULTON — Victor Doolakeh Taryor, a Baltimore-Washington Conference supported missionary, shared stories of his ministry at the Ganta United Methodist Hospital in Liberia during a Feb. 18 visit to the BWC Mission Center. One out of three people who visit the hospital are there because of malaria, said Taryor, who is a registered nurse and the hospital’s chief administrator.

“We don’t turn anybody away,” he said. “Our hospital is a mission hospital. Our mission is to care for people in extreme poverty. If we don’t have it (a piece of equipment, a medicine, or a treatment), it’s because we don’t have the money. But through the grace of God, we are able to improvise.”

Young clergy attend GBCS forum

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Three young pastors from the Baltimore-Washington Conference were among 53 people from 28 conferences who attended the 12th annual Young Clergy Leadership Forum at the United Methodist Building in Washington, DC, in February. They were Josy Heath with the Silver Spring Cooperative Parish; Kara Scroggins who serves at Bethesda UMC in Bethesda; and Shannon Sullivan who serves at Presbury UMC in Oakdale. Sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society, the forum provided information about advocacy on key legislative issues on Capitol Hill. They met with the Rev. Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain, and Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., who is a clergyman in the Missouri Conference.

“Why is toda the Bible?" explored at forum

FULTON — About 80 people gathered in the Conference Center Feb. 9 on “Evolution Weekend” to explore the intersection of religion and science, one of dozens of observances across the country. A lively presentation and discussion furthered audience perception of “What is truth?” Taking as its theme the title of a James Moore book, “Daddy, is that story true or were you just preaching?”, four scientists noted that “religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth.”

Sr. Ilia Delio, a Franciscan Sister of Washington and Senior Fellow at Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, brought the disciplines of faith and science together. “Truth is meaningful as a concrete expression of living reality that deepens life,” she said. WesleyNexus, which sponsored the event, is an online resource to explore questions of religion and science. “What we attempt to do,” said the Rev. Maynard Moore, a co-founder, “is provide resources and information to clergy and laypersons ... so they can actually talk about the ‘big questions’ that all thinking Christians have.” To learn more, go to www.wesleynexus.org.

Church goes to the dogs

SMITHSBURG — When he preached on Jan. 26, the Rev. Al Deal at Mt. Zion UMC had a congregation not just of children and grown-ups, but also dogs. It was the launch of a pet-friendly service once a month.

As his family struggles with the pain of an aging pet with physical issues, Deal said they realized that, “Like people, our pets only live for so long.” He said that pets are part of the family, “so why not invite them to church?”

The church regularly worships at 8:30 a.m. followed by Sunday School. He held the canine service at 11 a.m. and will continue to offer it the last Sunday of the month.

“It is very important for the church to recognize the deep connection between people and their pets if they want to minister to the whole person,” Deal said.

To learn more, go to the story posted on the web site at www.bwumc.org/news/mt_zion.

Making a difference

Missionary shares stories of Liberia

FULTON — Victor Doolakeh Taryor, a Baltimore-Washington Conference supported missionary, shared stories of his ministry at the Ganta United Methodist Hospital in Liberia during a Feb. 18 visit to the BWC Mission Center. One out of three people who visit the hospital are there because of malaria, said Taryor, who is a registered nurse and the hospital’s chief administrator.

“We don’t turn anybody away,” he said. “Our hospital is a mission hospital. Our mission is to care for people in extreme poverty. If we don’t have it (a piece of equipment, a medicine, or a treatment), it’s because we don’t have the money. But through the grace of God, we are able to improvise.”

Young clergy attend GBCS forum

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Three young pastors from the Baltimore-Washington Conference were among 53 people from 28 conferences who attended the 12th annual Young Clergy Leadership Forum at the United Methodist Building in Washington, DC, in February. They were Josy Heath with the Silver Spring Cooperative Parish; Kara Scroggins who serves at Bethesda UMC in Bethesda; and Shannon Sullivan who serves at Presbury UMC in Oakdale. Sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society, the forum provided information about advocacy on key legislative issues on Capitol Hill. They met with the Rev. Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain, and Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., who is a clergyman in the Missouri Conference.

“‘What is truth?’ explored at forum

FULTON — About 80 people gathered in the Conference Center Feb. 9 on “Evolution Weekend” to explore the intersection of religion and science, one of dozens of observances across the country. A lively presentation and discussion furthered audience perception of “What is truth?” Taking as its theme the title of a James Moore book, “Daddy, is that story true or were you just preaching?”, four scientists noted that “religious truth is of a different order from scientific truth.”

Sr. Ilia Delio, a Franciscan Sister of Washington and Senior Fellow at Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, brought the disciplines of faith and science together. “Truth is meaningful as a concrete expression of living reality that deepens life,” she said. WesleyNexus, which sponsored the event, is an online resource to explore questions of religion and science. “What we attempt to do,” said the Rev. Maynard Moore, a co-founder, “is provide resources and information to clergy and laypersons ... so they can actually talk about the ‘big questions’ that all thinking Christians have.” To learn more, go to www.wesleynexus.org.

Church goes to the dogs

SMITHSBURG — When he preached on Jan. 26, the Rev. Al Deal at Mt. Zion UMC had a congregation not just of children and grown-ups, but also dogs. It was the launch of a pet-friendly service once a month.

As his family struggles with the pain of an aging pet with physical issues, Deal said they realized that, “like people, our pets only live for so long.” He said that pets are part of the family, “so why not invite them to church?”

The church regularly worships at 8:30 a.m. followed by Sunday School. He held the canine service at 11 a.m. and will continue to offer it the last Sunday of the month.

“It is very important for the church to recognize the deep connection between people and their pets if they want to minister to the whole person,” Deal said.

To learn more, go to the story posted on the web site at www.bwumc.org/news/mt_zion.

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.

Making Sense of the Bible

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.
Food for (Lenten) thought: The sin of gluttony

According to Wikipedia, “Gluttony means over-indulgence and over-consumption of food, drink or wealth items to the point of extravagance or waste. In some Christian denominations, it is considered one of the seven deadly sins — a misplaced desire of food or its withholding from the needy.” This creates more questions than answers. So long as I give to the needy, am I okay to have a desire for food? Or am I just reading too much into it so I feel less guilty about my late-night French fry indulgences? Perhaps we have become so bountiful that gluttony is just hard for me to wrap my head around. If I considered a sin, or at least not as bad of a sin as it was in biblical times. Can one sin outweigh another? For example, if you needed against one of the 10 commandments, is that worse sin than being over-eating? Or is a sin, a sin, creating an equal threat of eternal damnation? Wow, eternal damnation. That will certainly help put on the breaks before I hit up the next drive-thru window. It’s just hard for me to think of me head to church. After doing more research, I loop back to what I originally knew: gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins. So does Wikipedia have it right? “In Christianity, … gluttony can be interpreted as selfishness, essentially placing concern with one’s own interests above the well-being or interests of others.” If it were as simple as that, I get it. Is it as simple as that? Perhaps I should be referencing what the Bible says about gluttony rather than what Wikipedia says about gluttony. It scares me to acknowledge what Proverbs 22:1 says: “Put a knife to your throat if you give to gluttony.” Proverbs 23:1 says on to say, “gluttony becomes poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.” And Proverbs 28:3, “… a companion of gluttonies disgrace his father.” Those are some pretty rough statements to “swallow.” But what is it actually saying? WHY is gluttony so shameful? I think it’s a test of self-control. For me, it’s one of the hardest tests of self-control. And perhaps all sins are a test of self-control (lust, greed, etc.).

Self-control can be a very calming and peaceful experience. Some might even say it can feel spiritual, especially if you are practicing it for a godly life. Peter 5:5-7 talks about how to “receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior.” It says, “… make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.” Galatians tells us that to be able to say no to things in excess, requires self-control, can be a wonderful way to experience the “fruit of the Spirit.”

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh … the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22, 23

Practicing this form of self-control is going to continue to be a struggle for me, but it is also a perfect opportunity for sacrifice. So this year for Lent, I’ll not only give up French fries, I’ll also try to add more “fruit.”

Alison Burdett is the graphic designer in the Ministry of Communications. This is her first article in print.

Disciple Multiplication Is the Main Thing

By Christie Latohna
Missional Strategist, Washington Region

To live out our mission in relevant and vibrant ways, two things are required of us: to multiply disciples and congregations. This requires shifting to multiplying disciples rather than trying to grow churches or ministries. A culture of multiplication is less about managing an institution and more about fanning an kingdom movement.

This kind of community requires multiplication DNA to fuel the movement. This DNA is the contagious growth of groups that are healthy, growing and multiplying ministry. Multiplying DNA is the people that allow the church to give the best of themselves and the resources they have to the kingdom. Multiplication DNA is the people that are self-sacrificial and relationship-driven.

High Level of Trust

In churches that multiply, we see trust at every level – among leaders, between members and followers, between clergy and laity, and, in all cases, foremost between people and God. Trust is earned when roles are clarified, decisions are made transparent, the people of God speak truth in love, without inserting more drama, and the people consistently seek God to bring unity and order as needed.

Simple Systems with Noncompeting Priorities

Places that multiply ministry keep the main thing as the thing. Multiplying disciples trumps all other concerns. A multiplying church may explicitly limit the types of activity that it will directly sponsor. The structure also needs to help keep the focus on this main thing. As a church we need to actively commit to a cultural change with everything focused on multiplying disciples — no rearranging of the deck chairs will help us. We must discern the will of God and claim bold visions for the future.

Some bold visions rally people toward new behaviors that begin the work of culture change and fruitfulness. When people of God come together to discern the will of God, amazing things happen. We can do this, by the grace of God.

This article is excerpted from the Feb./March/April 2014 issue of Circuit Rider magazine, by permission. For a copy of the entire article, visit www.ministrymatters.com/all/article/entry/64/30/disciple-multiplication-is-the-main-thing

By Alison Burdett
UMConnection Staff

We’re all heard that expression, “glutton for food and/or shame.” But does it have anything to do with gluttony? What exactly is gluttony anyway? I know it’s a sin. I know it’s considered one of the seven deadly sins. But I don’t remember being taught much about it throughout my church up-bringing.

I am an overweight woman. I always have been. Even when I was a teenager playing field hockey six days a week, I always felt overweight compared to the other girls my age. I’ve always wanted to be thin and fantasized about what that kind of look would do for me, but I never really committed to losing weight. Ever. Yes, I tried Weight-Watchers, NutriSystem, Atkins, etc., but I never stuck with it. I love food too much.

Every year for Lent, I try to give up French fries. I usually make it a few weeks before I convince myself that giving up something that is bad for me isn’t really a sacrifice for God, it’s selfish for me, because I’ll reap the benefits, so I give in, and eat some French fries, “punishing” my body for my selfishness.

Like most women in America, we can’t manage our weight, restructure or cut our way out of our demise. This is a spiritual problem. Too many leaders noblinger believe in the power of prayer or that God will show up when we need it. Too many leaders nolonger believe into what exactly gluttony covers.

For example, if you need against one of the 10 commandments, is that worse sin than being over-eating? Or is a sin, a sin, creating an equal threat of eternal damnation? Wow, eternal damnation. That will certainly help put on the breaks before I hit up the next drive-thru window. It’s just hard for me to think of me head to church. After doing more research, I loop back to what I originally knew: gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins. A sin, a sin, creating an equal threat of eternal damnation.

High View of Scripture

This view has nothing to do with fundamentalism. Rather, people with a high view of Scripture have a sense of expectancy that when the Word is read, God is in the room and is going to say something fresh and New to the people gathered and reading. Therefore the Bible is used easily and freely in every type of gathering.

Theological Simplicity

To be contained with theological stupidity. We are not “dumbing down” the Gospel. In the churches that multiply, we find widespread consensus and clarity on the relationship between the Gospel of Jesus and God’s expectations for human beings. The multiplying community manages to get its collective brain around some key principles that tie it all together. They know what a disciple of Jesus Christ is and how that is relevant to the lives of people who don’t yet have a relationship with Jesus Christ. They are able to explain, without jargon, what they believe and why that makes a difference in what they practice.

Economical Approach

If we look at the mountains of research conducted in the last decade across Christian denominations and cultures, we see vast amounts of information about what people a Christian church to thrive in a region. There are many obstacles, but does it have anything to do with multiplying disciples. Recently, Paul Nixom (with Path s) and I distilled that research and identified key factors that impact the rate of multiplying disciples.

Prayer and Discernment

Churches that multiply their kingdom impact pray about everything. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group. Prayer is the main strategy. It is not perfunctory or a ritual performed only by a select group.

A multiplying church may explicitly limit the types of activity that it will directly sponsor. The structure also needs to help keep the focus on this main thing. As a church we need to actively commit to a cultural change with everything focused on multiplying disciples — no rearranging of the deck chairs will help us. We must discern the will of God and claim bold visions for the future.

Some bold visions rally people toward new behaviors that begin the work of culture change and fruitfulness. When people of God come together to discern the will of God, amazing things happen. We can do this, by the grace of God.
**Imagine No Malaria**

Imagine Saving Millions of Lives

By Linda Worthington

UMConnection Staff

Malaria is an old, old disease. It’s been killing for thousands of years, since the time of King Tut. But the United Methodist Church believes it is the time to stop the death and suffering by this disease.

“Our goal is to raise $75 million for this fight against malaria,” said Pittsburgh Area Bishop Thomas Bickerton, who heads the campaign for the denomination. Already the denomination has reached $60,000,000, mostly as a result of grassroots efforts.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference has pledged $2.1 million as part of that overall commitment and has $800,000 more to raise, said David Simpson, who with his wife Sylvia Simpson is coordinating the BWC campaign.

“Our goal is to have every church be involved,” he said.

To that end, they have organized each district to have five or six key organizers who can provide ideas and resources for each church.

If every church would raise $50 per average worshipper, Simpson said, the conference would meet its $2.1 million goal. Simpson said that the endpoint for the goal is for commitments—either checks or pledges—to be submitted at this year’s Annual Conference session.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 24 percent of women responding creatively and generously to raise funds to combat this killer disease. Through your efforts, we want every church to dream big and to make a huge impact through this campaign; we will help support and resource you to accomplish these goals!

Most of his family members suffered at one time or another. The disease, in the 70s, was treated with chloroquine, as it is still the case today. Malaria parasites enter the body through the mosquito bites, and then live in body tissues such as red blood cells or the liver. Chloroquine prevents the development of malaria parasites in the blood.

The Rev. Bruce Jones, who serves LaPlata UMC, was raised in a missionary family in what was then the Congo from 1956 to 1961. He also had malaria when he was 5 years old. He also reported about the high fevers and extreme chills, but what he really remembers was the terrible medicine.

“I remember how awful quinine was,” he said, “and that it took for it for many weeks. ‘If you don’t get the meds, it can cause death.’”

Though children are the most vulnerable, malaria is no respecter of persons. Last year the grown daughter of United Methodist Bishop Gabriel Unda Yemba of the East Congo Episcopal Area died of malaria. Her mother had also died of malaria in 2007.

This work in Africa is our United Methodist faith, in action, Simpson said. As you join in the campaign, expect to change the world.

The UM Imagine No Malaria suggests several fronts on which to attack malaria and be part of the campaign, in addition to raising the necessary funds:

- **Pancake Breakfasts:**
  - A goal of saving at least three lives per worshiping community!
- **Pledge Campaigns:**
  - A goal of paying for the cost of food and treatment of anemia in a pregnant woman with malaria
  - A goal of providing malaria medication to treat ten adults
  - A goal of covering the cost of an anti-malaria campaign in a local school
  - A goal of training traditional birth attendants in malaria prevention and treatment
  - A goal of providing all the resources for a one-day community leader training for 30-40 people on malaria prevention
  - A goal of monthly over three years adds up to a pledge of $1,000 that will save 100 lives—that’s a whole community!

By The Rev. David and Sylvia Simpson

In Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 24 percent of all early childhood deaths are due to malaria. That’s a staggering number, but unless you have had malaria or seen someone in the grip of the disease, it’s hard to imagine the suffering.

The Rev. Cecil Mudede of Glen Mar UMC, knows what it was like.

“I suffered from malaria when I was about 9 years old and later on when I was a high school student at United Methodist Church School, Murewa High,” he said. “The symptoms were high fever with extreme body temperatures.” He also experienced headaches and nausea, he said.

$10 buys a life-saving, insecticide treated bed net
$20 pays for the cost of food and treatment of anaemia in a pregnant woman with malaria
$50 provides malaria medication to treat ten adults
$100 covers the cost of an anti-malaria campaign in a local school
$200 trains traditional birth attendants in malaria prevention and treatment
$500 provides all the resources for a one-day community leader training for 30-40 people on malaria prevention

$12/month over three years adds up to a pledge of $1,000 that will save 100 lives—that’s a whole community!

**Churches to set goals for Imagine No Malaria campaign**

By the Rev. David and Sylvia Simpson

BWC Coordinators, BWC

During these past six months, we have been all around the Baltimore-Washington Conference encouraging people to imagine being a part of the United Methodist vision of eliminating death and suffering from malaria, a disease that is preventable, treatable and beatable.

In that time our hearts have been strangely warmed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the churches and people of the Conference. The warmth is generated by the stories we hear of children, youth, men and women responding creatively and generously to raise funds to combat this killer disease. Through your efforts, we are now more than half way to our Conference goal of raising $2.1 million dollars. Thank you.

As your local church begins to engage with the Imagine No Malaria campaign, and as it considers its act of generosity that will be offered at the Annual Conference Session in May, one of the first places we want you to start is by prayerfully discerning your church’s potential commitment. We invite every church to consider setting your sites high!

A goal of saving at least three lives per worshiping member of your church is a great place to start. That would be a commitment to raise $50 for each of those people. If your church has a worshiping community of 50—that would be a goal of $2,500 to be paid by the end of 2015. If your church worships with 300 people—that would be a larger goal of $9,000.

We want every church to dream big and to make a huge impact through this campaign; we will help support and resource you to accomplish those goals! Once your church council or mission team has determined what your goal is and how many lives you plan to help save, we want you to officially affirm your goal through the Affirmation of Goal form, available at www.bwcumc.org (look under “Imagine No Malaria” box). This is not a pledge, but a statement of your best intentions. You might not reach that number or you might surpass it, but knowing what your church goal is can help us give you the support you need to achieve it.

Thank you for joining hands with United Methodists everywhere to save lives. And remember, “Dream no small dreams, for they have not the power to stir the souls of men and women.” (Goethe)