Clinton and Chelsea Clinton were welcomed at Foundry United Methodist Church, the church they attended growing up, on the Sunday morning of her 200th anniversary.

Hillary Clinton and Chelsea Clinton have attended the church since they were children.

“Little Rock was left unharmed. Giving thanks, he “provided for a new church for Washington Methodists,” according to the church’s history booklet. Foundry was founded in 1813.

“None who are, where you come from, what’s your income, your race, your religion, your gender, your age, your ability, you have value, you have dignity, you have something to offer God and the world,” the Apostle Paul said. The Paul’s letter to the Romans, Clinton said, also helped to encourage men and women to consider God’s call to ministry and preparing them for leadership.

By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

Bishop invites clergy to day apart

Bishop Marcus Matthews is inviting all clergy in the Baltimore-Washington Conference to an Advent “day apart,” on Tuesday, Nov. 17, starting at 9:30 a.m. The event will be held at First UMC in Hyattsville.

The day apart, the bishop said, is designed to give clergy a spiritual boost just prior to the busy days of the Advent and Christmas seasons. Bishop Matthews holds these special days with clergy twice a year: just before Advent and just before Lent.

The speaker for the day will be the Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson, president of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. McAllister-Wilson has focused his preaching, speaking and consulting in an effort to revitalize the mainland Protestant church.
Welcome to the world! I imagine it's a bit chillier and noisier out here than what you are used to, and ear little one:

Welcome to the world! I imagine it's a bit chillier and noisier out here than what you are used to, and

Remember your prior residence, in your mother's womb, was your place of growth and protection. God already knew all about you, even now, you know. Did you hear God's voice, all muffled, even there? When you feel all helpless, when you are sick or in the hospital, when you are grieving or in pain, may those spaces become like wombs, places you can grow and heal and be carried by God's love. Sometimes God calls us to float.

Remember being wrapped like a burrito and held close to a chest, and the-champ-sha-bump of the heartbeat. Remember how when you were scared and cold and felt like you were falling, was the chest and the heart and the embrace. Remember the rocking and the swaying and the feeding and the sleeping. Remember the deep sleep of the Totally Reliant on Someone Else. God gives to God's beloved, sleep, that's in the Bible. When you are older, you may worry about things, but God's got you. Jesus is close to the Father's heart and so are you, baby. So much you will be afraid of, you don't need to be afraid of. Give it to the Lord in prayer and sleep like a baby.

Remember the wonder. Remember the first colors and sounds, and the first taste of mashed banana. This world is an amazing gift. Every day there is a sunrise, so full of God's Easter YES it makes you hear angels sing. Don't forget to look up to see it. Every day there is this precious moment, and the chance to see the holy in it. Don't miss the holy in the moments of your life. Love God and love others, learn how to be loved back. Take risks like Jesus. Find the gifts God has given you that make your heart sing and use them to bless others. That's why you're here. (Don't tell anyone I gave it away. Act surprised when you sing and use them to bless others. That's why you're here. God's Easter YES it makes you hear angels sing. Don't forget to look up to see it. Every day there is this precious moment, and the chance to see the holy in it. Don't miss the holy in the moments of your life. Love God and love others, learn how to be loved back. Take risks like Jesus. Find the gifts God has given you that make your heart sing and use them to bless others. That's why you're here. (Don't tell anyone I gave it away. Act surprised when you sing and use them to bless others. That's why you're here.

By Mandy Sayers
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

By Daryl Williams
Pastor, St. Paul UMC, Oxon Hill

CORRECTION:
In the September UMConnection, in a sidebar featuring the Rev. Sandra Taylor, we mistakenly reported her husband, David, had died. In fact, it was her son, Dave, who has passed away. We deeply regret the error.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Our Multimedia Producer – and the person who lays out this newspaper each month – Alison Burdett, gave birth to Eleanor Leigh Burdett on Oct. 5. We asked our “…well said” writers to offer a word of welcome to the new baby. I hope you brought extra tissues.
Bishop’s legacy to be honored with Africa U. facility

By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

At Africa University in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, when classes finish for the day, students have very few options for fun or recreation. Some of the students hitch a ride or take the bus into town, where temptations loom large. Some students stay on campus, in their rooms or huddled in the library.

What’s missing is a place for 1,200 students to gather for indoor activities, like basketball, volleyball, lifting weights, or simply having a lounge where they can grab a coffee, gather and talk.

Baltimore-Washington Conference leaders learned the urgency of this need last July when a delegation visited Africa University and met with Vice Chancellor, Professor Munahwe Furusa. The BWC has been in a 20-year partnership relationship with the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, which includes teaching at the ZEA Pastor’s School and other ministries.

“Right now, there is no student union, no common area for the students to gather,” said Furusa. As part of the school’s master plan, a health and fitness facility will be built. Having facilities for recreation is an important part of a student’s life, he added, and an important part of “selling” the university to prospective students.

Where the funding will come for the new building is where the BWC comes in. Bishop Marcus Matthews himself is an avid runner and long-time supporter of Africa University, will be retiring when it meets in July 2016, as is normal when a bishop retires, gifts of love and appreciation are often given. Bishop Matthews, however, has been clear: no gifts.

Instead, the 2015 BWC Annual Conference Session established a legacy campaign in the bishop’s honor with all gifts going to Africa University to build the health complex. “Learn, Lift, Lead,” as the love offering is called, will see all gifts honoring Bishop Matthew’s ministry go to this new building project.

When Bishop Matthews met in person with the Vice Chancellor last July, he said that “his dream has become our dream. The Baltimore-Washington Conference has stepped up to the plate at Africa University in many, many ways.”

We take this challenge knowing that God is able.”

In a letter to BWC clergy, the Rev. Melissa Rudolph, chair of the Order of Elders, invited clergy to be among the first to contribute to the love offering.

“As a district superintendent and since becoming bishop,” she wrote, “Matthews has continued to lead others to share in this work and capture the vision of all that Africa University can be.”

At Africa University, she noted, because students come from 22 different countries and going home means thousands of miles of travel, students “make Mutare their home and rarely leave to go to their own countries. Having facilities for recreation will help to keep them healthy in body, mind and spirit.”

As Bishop Matthews prepares to retire, he will be visiting each of the four regions in the conference for a time of farewell. Churches and individuals will be encouraged to present their contributions to the love offering at these events. Rudolph writes, “The celebrations of ministry will be held, from 3 to 5 p.m., on:

• April 3, Epworth Chapel in the Baltimore Region;
• April 10, Middletown UMC in the Western Region;
• April 16, Westphalia UMC in the Southern Region; and
• April 17, Asbury UMC in the Washington Region.

HOW TO GIVE: Visit bwcumc.org/about/bishop-matthews-love-offering

Checks may be sent, marked “Bishop’s Love Offering,” to the BWC Treasurer, 11711 E. Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759.

Process for nominating episcopal candidates begins

By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

The election of bishops is one of the key responsibilities of the delegates to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, which meets July 11-15, 2016, in Lancaster, Pa.

The first step along the road to this election begins this month, as the members of the Baltimore-Washington Conference are called to a time of discernment.

During October, lay and clergy members are asked to consider which ordained Elder in our conference for a time of prayer and discernment.

Based on the discernment process, a candidate may nominate themselves or be nominated by another person.

The 24-member delegation and alternates will hold an interview with the candidates and bring a recommendation to the clergy and lay members of the 2016 annual conference about who, if anyone, they think might be called to serve as a bishop.

The annual conference members may vote to endorse a candidate(s), who will go forward to be on the ballot at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

At a Sept. 19 meeting, the delegation members considered what qualities and characteristics they believe are most essential in a bishop.

They reviewed the requirements for bishops set forth in the 2012 Book of Discipline in paragraphs 414-416, on pages 310-312. After discussion, they developed five distinct requirements based on the kind of leader that might best lead the people and churches of the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

These include:

1. Biblical, theological, and spiritual groundedness is at the very core of the candidate’s life and ministry and evident in the candidate’s personal wholeness and authenticity, rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus.

2. Prophetic, visionary, courageous, relational, risk-taker with a track record for galvanizing others to be the church — bringing together the evangelical and social gospels — in new and compelling ways, fueled by the Holy Spirit and informed by our United Methodist (Wesleyan) heritage.

3. A demonstrated commitment to removing systemic oppression and discrimination of any and all people (including racial/ethnic, sexual orientation, economic, theological, age, and ability). Additionally, a candidate must prove a track record of:

• Racial/ethnic justice and reconciliation;
• Full inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer/Questioning persons in accordance with BWC policy.

4. A proven track record of growing vital churches and/ or ministries and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

5. A non-anxious presence, gifted in conflict transformation, technologically comfortable and with the ability to manage complex organizational and financial systems.

These qualifications are expected to be used as guidelines for prayer and discernment.

In November, prospective candidates must submit a written statement of qualifications that does not exceed 500 words, to the delegation secretary, Jen Bko (jef626@gmail.com). The deadline for submission is midnight on Nov. 30.

Questions about the nomination process for episcopal candidates can be addressed to the delegation’s leaders: Delores Martin at littlonee.marting@verizon.net, or the Rev. T.R. Chattin at spartan@spaulskyesville.org.

Currently, the Northeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church is expected to elect one new bishop when it meets in July 2016.
700 emerging NEJ leaders meet to ‘See Know Love’

By Erik Alsgaard
UMConnection Staff

Throughout the Northeastern Jurisdiction, the number of people experiencing homelessness continues to rise. The most recent Homeless in Washington, D.C., report (May 2015) showed 11,623 people were homeless in the nine regions that comprise the District of Columbia. This represented a 2.7% drop in one year. The report stated that the whole church could benefit from, and she’s hoping our citizens will have an affordable place to live.

Lyles, pastor at Brighter Day. “This property has the opportunity – to be in ministry. Parkway Overlook. They came following a worship service at Brighter Day that highlighted the need – and the opportunity – to be in ministry. ‘We’re trying to call attention to the need for affordable housing in our city,’ said the Rev. Earnest Lyles, pastor at Brighter Day. ‘This property has been vacant since 2007 and we want the city to move expeditiously in getting this property developed so that our citizens will have an affordable place to live.’

According to the report, the committee called the “Homelessness in Washington, D.C.”, report (May 2005), 11,623 people were homeless in the nine regions that comprise the Metropolitan D.C. area when the Jan. 28 enumeration was taken. This represented a 3.7 percent drop in one year, the report stated. In the District itself, homelessness declined by 6 percent. An estimated 2,738 people listed as ‘homeless.’ Still, that number is 11 percent higher than the 2011 enumeration, the report noted.

‘A lack of affordable, permanent housing opportunities remains the most significant and persistent obstacle to ending homelessness in our region,’ the report states.

The Rev. Nadia Bolz Weber speaks during the ‘See Know Love’ event

“Increases in the region’s already-high rents make it very difficult for extremely low income households to find or maintain housing that they can afford.”

For the Rev. Charlie Parker, senior pastor at Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington, the day’s events were a way to keep the process moving. Metropolitan, which is in partnership with Brighter Day, has made ending homelessness in the District one of its ministry priorities.

“When we started this two years ago,” he said, noting that the mayor of D.C. and other government officials were present. “There was a lot of exciting, initial movement, and then it has sputtered since.”

Parker and Lyles decided that an event of some sort was needed to “kick-start” the process again, and more than 100 people gathered that Sunday afternoon to worship and hear from former residents of Parkway Overlook about the need for affordable housing.

As a result, even before the worship service occurred, "as soon as the invitations were sent out to the mayor and the D.C. City Council," Parker said, "that week, the D.C. Housing Authority called and said that they had the pre-development work all finished." A meeting between former residents and city officials also occurred, Parker said. Parker also stressed the importance of this event as highlighting what he called “cross-river partnerships.”

“I really do think that this is a model that we would love to see other churches in our connection replicate,” he said. “It’s been a great, great gift.”

This complex is not alone. They are called ‘cross-river partnerships.’ The Rev. Earnest Lyles, top left, and Charlie Parker (to his left) participate in a prayer service at Parkway Overlook.

Cross-river partnership targets homelessness in DC

The Rev. Lindsay Flick, a member of the New England Conference, said she was going to find out.

“I’ve learned a lot about how to encourage the people that I minister to who aren’t necessarily in the same place I’m in,” she said. “Instead of wanting to just be about hanging out with each other, (we can) reach out more and do more work in the community and having that be because of love of God, not just because they want to be nice people.”

Fiona Haworth, former Director of Talent for Southwest Airlines, spoke about “vision” at the event, challenging leaders to always be curious.

“It’s not the vision itself that’s important,” she said, “but what the vision does.”

Also speaking at “See Know Love” were leaders of The Chapel, a United Methodist church in Brunswick, Ga., who offered insights into accountable discipleship making.

At the closing worship service on Sunday, Bishop Sandra Steiner-Ball of the West Virginia Area preached on World Communion Sunday.

“We are invited to a table that changes our lives,” she said. “We are never the same again.”

“In my plan to keeping part of this Jurisdiction,” Bishop Matthews said, “this is the first (even) to my knowledge where we pulled together bishops, district superintendents, treasurer and executive staff persons in an arena where we have a conversation about how we can take this stuff as leaders and make it happen.”

As the various ministry groups meet beyond the event, the bishop said, it is the hope of the Vision Table that the experience of “See Know Love” continues to shape and grow the church. “The possibilities of what we can do together,” he said, “are unlimited.”
Foundry: 200 years of ministry in nation's capital

By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

S
ome churches take a while to create. Community with a Cause, which held its first worship service on Oct. 3, may actually have begun 30 years ago, when Don and Cindy Geller gave birth to their son Gregory. Greg's seizure disorder and other disabilities created an unexpected kind of family full of daily challenges. A foundation of well-tempered hope forever changed the way Don thinks about God and God's church.

On Sept. 12, Geller's hopes came to life when more than 60 people gathered in the fellowship hall of Lexington Park UMC for a preview of a new worshiping community designed especially for people with disabilities.

This church-within-a-church has been named Community with a Cause. It is an initiative of the Baltimore-Washington Conference's Vibrant Communities. It also has the blessing of the conference Committee on Persons with Disabilities.

In laying the groundwork for this endeavor, Geller conducted research on this mission field. In a Launchpad Training Report, he noted that approximately 64,000 people live within a seven-mile radius of Lexington Park in southern Maryland and approximately 7,000 of them have a disability of some sort. Within this affinity group, he wrote, “the majority of those family members and caregivers are not worshipping at a local church because they were ashamed or embarrassed whenever their special needs son or daughter acted out.”

“To do something,” Geller said, “individuals with disabilities are treated as outcasts and their parents or caregivers are told they are no longer welcomed to worship at a given church. They are given the usual excuses such as, ‘the congregation is not adequately staffed or equipped with trained volunteers who can meet the disabled person's individual needs.’ They are urged to find some other faith community that might be better equipped to accommodate their special needs son or daughter, even though no such faith community exists in southern Maryland.”

In his first sermon, Geller promised those gathered that the worship experience will be designed specifically with them in mind – relevant for and catering to people with disabilities, their families and caregivers.

“The vision of this new community will be to restore hope that God understands their struggles and has heard their prayers and to reassure them that God has not forgotten them nor their disabled family member,” he said. He stressed the touchstone Scripture passages of every parent with a special needs child, “God works for good for those who love God,” and “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

This was the first sermon Geller has preached. But then, he said, “everything we do here will be a first as we share the struggle with those whom God has gifted differently.”

He encouraged those present to be willing to do things differently and be a new kind of faith community that truly welcomes and includes all people. “Let the spirit speak to you,” Geller said.

Geller graduated last year from Wesley Theological Seminary and has been assigned to the new church initiative. He continues to gather all the knowledge and experience he can about leading a new faith community. But he is not without experience in this endeavor.

In February 2008, following a Walk to Emmaus retreat, Cindy and he formed the Agape Club at Lexington Park. The club is a ministry which provides a space, meal, activity and spiritual program for about 50 adults with a wide variety of disabilities. Together with volunteers from Lexington Park UMC, the Gellers created an outreach ministry that has had a significant impact on people’s lives. But it’s not just those who are served who are affected.

“You have to see Christ on the faces of these disabled individuals in order to understand that we may actually be the ones with a disability,” he said. “God be the glory!”

Several people from the Agape Club came to the preview worship of Community with a Cause.

“What they want, what we all want, is for the world to love them just as they are,” Geller said. “One in five people in the United States has a disability and most of them do not have a church family. Let’s change that. … Community with Cause will stand in the gap with Christ.”

The next bi-weekly worship service of Community with a Cause will be held Saturday, Oct. 17, at 4 p.m., at Lexington Park UMC.
Where religion and the public square meet is a place of potential discord and great possibility. This space where faith and citizenship meet is rich in ideas and actions and it is this intersection that Wesley Seminary will explore during its Second Monday lectures this academic year.

The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, general secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, opened the lecture series, which is held each month, with breakfast at 7:30 a.m., lecture at 8 and dismissal promptly at 9 a.m.

Henry-Crowe, whose first doll was actually named “City Hall,” explored the “vexing and perplexing role of the public square in history and its changing role in our lives today.”

Citing the United Methodist Book of Resolutions and the Board of Church and Society’s work on Capitol Hill and beyond, Henry-Crowe asserted that, “The church is not making political statements; they’re really Gospel statements,” she said. “Gospel statements have political impact.”

In future months, speakers will include seminary faculty and invited guests who will explore ethics for sojourners, political discourse, exile and trauma, healthcare, the military, race, and global citizenship.

The lectures, crafted to help those present explore new ideas and build their faith, are centered around Jeremiah 29:7, “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

This year, those who attended five of eight Second Monday lectures can earn .5 CEU.

Check out the whole series at https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/newsandevents/secondmondays.

**West River plants trees to save the bay**

CHURCHTON — In on-going efforts to “live green” and care for God’s creation, the BWC’s West River Center recently participated in the Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake program, “Our Trees For Sacred Places.” On Sept. 16, camp staff joined with students from Broadneck High Schools, volunteers from the U.S. Air Force stationed at Ft. Meade and others to plant 200 trees on the camp’s property.

**One investment still helping churches**

FULTON — Strawbridge Lodge in the BWC Mission Center recently resembled Pentecost as United Methodists speaking English, Korean, Spanish and Mizo gathered to receive awards to small churches from a fund of the Methodist Foundation. The fund had grown nearly three-fold from when Vivian Otto first contributed it as a memorial to her late husband.

Otto stipulated the gift be used for small churches, since as the then Washington West District education secretary for many years, that’s where her heart and attention focused.

The Rev. Miguel Balderas accepted the award for the Mizo Fellowship UMC, which meets in Rockville. The congregation has been described as a bicultural Millian Memorial UMC in Rockville. He said it would be used for a musician at the Latino service.

The Rev. Biak Chuunga heads the 10-year-old Mizo Mission Center recently participated in the Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake program, “Our Trees For Sacred Places.” On Sept. 16, camp staff joined with students from Broadneck High Schools, volunteers from the U.S. Air Force stationed at Ft. Meade and others to plant 200 trees on the camp’s property.

**Youth ready to S.E.A.R.R.**

WEST RIVER — The Conference Council on Youth Ministry youth team held their fall retreat in September at West River Camp. Four of the six District Youth Leaders were present and led the spiritual lessons during the retreat.

When the other two districts, Frederick and Baltimore Metro, identify a DYL, someone from there will be added to the CCYM team.

The retreat was a working time. Don Haaprich worked with the youth officers to develop the CCYM’s mission and goals during the retreat. The youth developed their mission statement and identified a cause they want to champion.

The mission statement was shortened to S.E.A.R.R. in order for the youth to remember and explain its purpose: Support, Educate, Advocate, Represent and Resource the local churches on the issues and needs related to youth.

CCYM meets on the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon at the Conference Center. All youth in 6th through 12th grades are welcome to attend and participate in CCYM activities.

**Three local authors publish books**

LA PLATA — “Is God poking you?” asks Dan Brennan, a member of LaPlata UMC, in a book he recently wrote. It is a compilation of weekly columns Brennan wrote for church newsletters over the course of the 10 years he’s been in church administration. His observations include humor and elicit the reader’s reflection.

“Is God Poking Me? Observations From the Church Office” is available on Amazon and in the Kindle Lending Library.

John Mayden, pastor of Mt. Zion UMC and a prospective foster/adoptive parent resource trainer with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services recently published the book “The Victorious Life: Prayers for Every Season of Life.”

And Leo Yates, a pastor at Calvary UMC in Frederick, is also the author of a new book on Deaf Ministry, also available on Amazon.
Visit to Korea provides new insights for BWC pastor

By Michael Parker
Pastor of AMES Memorial UMC

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is was a song that I learned as a child growing up in the Ames Memorial UMC. Even as a child, I could sense that these words weren’t just lyrics but prophetic reminders of what God had in store for my life. I could feel that God was leading me somewhere, but never in a thousand years did I imagine God would lead me to places across the world to be in and learn from ministry.

After all, growing up in my neighborhood, the now infamous Sandtown-Winchester community and center of the 2015 Baltimore riots, traveling to places outside our community wasn’t realistic. Most of those in my community suffered from the effects of urban blight and the pains of urban crime and drug activity. As a result, dreams of being able to see the world were almost as unrealistic as not being impacted by the surrounding issues. However, in the midst of this, God sprang up hope. I have been a recipient of that hope.

As I prepared for the journey to Korea, my prayer was that God would allow me to experience God’s presence in new ways and that God would birth new, fresh, and innovative ideas for ministry back in my ministry setting.

Even greater, I was excited to reconnect with the pastor I had the joy of hosting last summer. As I tried to spiritually center myself for the journey, I found myself consistently refueled throughout the trip. It was also in those moments that I got a new perspective on partnerships in ministry, as I relied on interpreters to assist me in the preaching moments. This reminded me that we each bring something unique and special, and that God indeed, to all the world.

At the end of the day, we are the glue. We have to know a little bit about everything and if we don’t know something, we need to know how to get the answer. We have to smile even when we are having a bad day. We have to answer the same question over and over again, and not get frustrated.

I love to preach and to be blessed to share God’s Word not once but three times in Korea, each in a different church, was life changing. In those moments God reminded me that I was called to reach people everywhere and be in ministry, indeed, to all the world.

I work with 76 churches in the Central Maryland District. Two of them are St. Paul’s UMC in Laytonville and Mr. Carmel UMC in Brookeville. Joanne Burnough has given 40 years of service to St. Paul’s (and Mr. Carmel when they became a charge in 2009) in her ministry as the office administrator. Her church says that she has patiently, wisely and lovingly led them through their required tasks and obligations through many changes and challenges and has kept them on track all these years. Just last month they celebrated her ministry with a handsome in her honor.

At the end of the day, we are the glue. We have to know a little bit about everything and if we don’t know something, we need to know how to get the answer. We have to smile even when we are having a bad day. We have to answer the same question over and over again, and not get frustrated.

I know it isn’t April, when we normally celebrate Administrative Professionals’ Day, but I ask that each administrative professional throughout our Conference take a few moments to celebrate their ministry today and every day. We are God’s vessels doing God’s work; what a great thing to celebrate!
Seven young girls empower a church building project

By Melissa Lauber
UMConnection Staff

At Sharp Street UMC in Sandy Spring, someone forgot to tell the girls of the church that they are made of “sugar and spice and everything nice.” They believe they’re created in the image of God, with power, strength, purpose and hope. And now, they’re acting on that belief.

The seven girls, who range in age from 10 to 17, started meeting together in January for Sunday school. They decided they wanted a larger space to meet.

And so they began a $50,000 building campaign.

On their own.

In secret.

They just thought $50,000 was a good amount, they said in unison, finishing each other’s thoughts and building on each other’s enthusiasm. It’s easy to imagine them as a force with confidence and you’ll get them.”

Holt made them T-shirts with the name on the front and their favorite numbers on the back.

The group named itself “Walking with Confidence.” Holt made them T-shirts with the name on the front and their favorite numbers on the back.

Instilling confidence is important, she said.

“These girls are at a hard age,” Holt said. “They live with bullying, wanting to fit in, cyber that, worrying about grades and a constant cell phones and cyber this and that. They think they’re not good enough under pressure to please everyone. One in four girls, physicians report, suffer from either depression, eating disorders, cutting, anxiety, or a combination of these disorders.

Belonging to church doesn’t change these challenges. But being together and centered in God, is “definitely worth the time.”

Ford hopes the girls learn that “when you start off with faith and then act out of that faith, God can do anything.”

Throughout his ministry, Bishop Marcus Matthews has been led by the love and imagination of God. As he retires in July 2016, that sense of love and creativity will live on in an innovative building project.

You and your congregation have the opportunity to create a health and sports complex on the campus of Africa University. Your gift will transform the lives of the school’s 2,500 students and honor a man who has given his life to the ministry of The United Methodist Church.

This love offering will build a complex 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, or give online at bwcumc.org/about/bishop-matthews-love-offering/.