



January/February 2008

# The Courier

## Catskill Hudson District New York Annual Conference

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### A Word from the D.S.

#### “Come and See”

My devotional reading recently took me to the first chapter of John, and I found myself challenged and intrigued by some simple words of invitation, spoken first by Jesus and then by Philip, the words “Come and see.”

At first reading there’s nothing especially profound about Jesus’ use of these words, as found in John 1:39. Two of John the Baptist’s followers come to meet Jesus, and when they ask him “Rabbi, where are you staying?” he replies “Come and see.” That’s not a particularly “spiritual” moment, but they follow him and spend the rest of the day in his company. The gospel writer doesn’t tell us anything about their conversation – one of many places in the Bible where I’d love to know more details - but by the end of the day these two men are convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and they are ready to follow as disciples.

The phrase pops up again a few verses later (John 1:47), but this time in response to a sneering, skeptical question. Philip has followed Jesus, and with much eagerness he says to Nathanael, “We’ve found the One who was foretold by Moses and the prophets! It’s Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.” Nathanael’s reply is a classic put down - “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” – but Philip doesn’t bother to argue. All he says is, “Come and see,” and after Nathanael has spent some time with Jesus he also finds himself convinced and ready to follow.

“Come and see!” The religious encounters described here are not of the sort that most people would call “inspirational.” This is not Paul on the Damascus road being struck down, blinded and confronted by the risen Christ. This is not Isaiah in the temple encountering the living God, hearing the call, and responding, “Here am I, send me.” Here people are being invited to encounter Jesus in the prosaic and the ordinary, even in the previously discounted places of life.

I've had a few "Damascus road" style encounters with God in my life – a few of those life-changing moments of inspiration with God – but nobody, in the Bible or in our world, experiences God in that way on a daily basis. More often, if we have the eyes of our hearts opened, we encounter God in the invitation to "come and see" in the prosaic or even unworthy places of life. But how consistently do we see?

The problem, for me at least, is my frequent lack of curiosity and my pre-formed attitudes about where God is likely to be found. I suspect that I miss a lot of invitations from God to "come and see" what God is doing in the lives of ordinary people, in places whose outward appearance is uninspiring, and in situations that don't initially present themselves as "God moments." I would like to look more deeply, more searchingly and more trustingly into the things of life, in hopes that I might encounter God in ways that are significant and real.

On the day that I began mulling about these things I wrote the words "Come and see" on an index card and placed it in my pocket. Each time I saw the card I paused to remember my intention, my hope of looking for Christ in the ordinary and the prosaic. I can't say that anything life changing happened, but it was a good day. I've put the card in my pocket in subsequent days as well, and hope that I can continue to foster an attitude of expectancy so that it will become more habitual and the card won't be needed.

I truly believe that God is to be found in the ordinary as well as in the mountain top experiences, because I've had it happen in those moments when I've been sufficiently aware. I identify so well with the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning who was reflecting on the story of Moses and the burning bush and wrote

*Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes –  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

My hope, for myself as well as for many who read these notes, is that we will have the expectant eyes and open hearts that can hear God's invitation, "Come and see" and that we will encounter our Lord in the experiences of life around us.

Jim Moore, DS

### **Shared Ministry Apportionments: Thank You!**

As of this writing (Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>), I am looking over the most recent financial printout from the Annual Conference and am grateful to see that the vast majority of our Catskill Hudson churches have paid their Shared Ministry Apportionments in full for 2007. This is an incomplete report, but it appears to me that as a district we paid about 91 or 92 percent of the total asking. I know that some churches have struggled mightily to meet their asking, and others struggled mightily to pay a portion of what was required, and I want to affirm and thank everyone for their efforts.

As I have tried to say at many charge conferences, apportionments are a way of participating in God's work in ways that single congregations would find impossible. We believe that hospitals, colleges, seminaries, chaplaincies, missionaries, etc. are important, but none of our churches could generate such missions on their own. Together, through the United Methodist connection, we make such ministry happen, with each of us contributing a share.

Thank you to all pastors and church members who have helped our Methodist connection to serve God in so many significant ways!

JWM

### **Game Night at the District Parsonage, Feb. 29th**

Holly and I would like to invite any and all of our pastors (along with husbands, wives or significant others) to come for an evening of socializing and board games on Friday, February 29<sup>th</sup>.



We'd like those who are coming to bring either an appetizer or a dessert, along with any board games you like to play. We'll send another reminder by e-mail, closer to the date, along with a request for an RSVP. Whether we have 6 people or 40 who can come, we look forward to a relaxed time of having some fun together. Please save the date and try to join us! We'll celebrate Leap Year together!

JWM

### **District Training Day and District Conference, April 19<sup>th</sup>**

More details will be coming soon, but please mark your calendars and plan to be present at the Kerhonkson church for the annual District Leadership Training Day on April 19<sup>th</sup>. We will also hold the District Conference on that same day, at 2:30 in the afternoon, so as to avoid an extra day of traveling to a meeting.

### **Superintendent's Schedule**

D.S. Moore will be on vacation from February 10-16<sup>th</sup>. Several of the other superintendents will be on call, and we will notify the pastors by e-mail about who is covering, should you need to speak with a D.S. Beginning in February the Cabinet will be meeting for two days each week, Tuesday morning through Wednesday afternoon, as we enter the appointment-making process.



*Wise Men  
Still Seek  
Him*

*Have a blessed  
New Year!*

### **Wanderings . . .**

A blessed New Year to you! In 2008, I am embarking on the Natural Church Development journey, at both my home church in Walton, and as a coach for another church in our district, along with many of you in our sister churches. Health assessment teams are in place, and I anticipate that for many of us, this year will be full of promise as we use the results from the surveys to examine our “minimum factors” and begin the work of action planning.

From my work in the NYS public school system, I know that this type of data-driven planning generates some quality conversations and invites a grass-roots approach to change. However, the conversations are sometimes painful for small groups as they answer the question, “Why do we do it this way?”, and as they question the answer, “Because that’s the way we’ve always done it.”

Whether or not you are participating in Natural Church Development, the new year (and the nature of the ecumenical cycle) will probably give you pause to reflect on your personal and collective spiritual journey. May God richly bless you with insight, courage, renewed purpose, and steadfast faith for the journey.

In Christ,  
Diane Meredith, District Lay Leader

**A new column ... stories of bright new ideas from our District Churches.** If you have something to share in a subsequent Courier please let us know.

### **This Worked For Us:**

“Why don’t people go to church?” It’s a question that every person in a leadership position of a church has pondered. The leadership of the Federated Church of Kerhonkson tackled that question. One solution was to increase visibility. One of the ways we did that was an advertising campaign. The ad campaign consisted of a three point approach: a website, a billboard, and a postcard mailing to everyone in our zip code. Through our advertising and website, we wanted to portray our congregation as a welcoming, hospitable church.



It’s hard to say this early on how well it has worked. But two things I will say: Christmas Eve service was packed and we had a ton of hits on our website the same weekend the postcards were mailed. As I was greeting visitors leaving on Christmas Eve, I gathered some feedback. Here are

two examples: One woman said, “My husband and I live in the city during the week, but we knew we’d be welcome here because you had weekenders on your postcard.” After greeting a visitor and thanking her for being with us, she replied, “Thank you for inviting me. I got the postcard.” Sometimes just letting people know they are welcome is a good start.

Rev. Sara Thompson Tweedy  
Pastor of Kerhonkson Federated Church

### **UMW News**

The Northeastern Jurisdiction UMW Quadrennial Meeting will be held on April 11-13 in Springfield, Massachusetts. Registrations are due at the end of February. Visit this link for more information: <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/nejumw/>. If you are interested in attending, you may contact Pat Wager ([WagerPatricia@optonline.net](mailto:WagerPatricia@optonline.net)) or Terry Smith ([terrysmith@optonline.net](mailto:terrysmith@optonline.net)).

Please add the following dates to your calendar:

**May 3, 2007:** District UMW Spring Day Apart at Kerhonkson

**July 24-27:** School of Mission at Western Conn. State University, Danbury, CT

**Sept. 27:** District UMW District Fall Meeting

## Opportunity for Personal Retreats at Epworth



How can you lead where you have not gone? Take time to come into the wilderness to listen to your own spirit and the Spirit within. Free Christian leader retreats at Epworth weekdays throughout the winter. Call: 845-687-0215 or write: [info@epworthcenter.com](mailto:info@epworthcenter.com) and come away, Beloved.

Taken from The Methodist Herald, newsletter of the Southern Delaware Charge

### **Human Relations Day is January 20th, a United Methodist Designated Offering**

Human Relations Day is one of the opportunities for United Methodist Churches to celebrate our connectional work. It supports Community Developers, United Methodist Voluntary Service (UMVS), and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program. The first two programs are administered through the General Board of Global Ministries.

In the United Methodist Church calendar, Human Relations Day happens the Sunday immediately following the observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday. The juxtaposition of these two very special days is not a coincidence. The United Methodist Book of Discipline describes the purpose of Human Relations Day as a call to "the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other."

The Community Developers program is one of the most exciting opportunities through which United Methodist churches assist ministries in ethnic communities throughout the United States. Local congregations initiate the work of a community developer, create effective responses to specific community needs, create a network of community developers that resource each other, and provide training and resources for them. The result is that these congregations begin to provide services in their communities, ranging from education and substance abuse to employment training, affordable housing, at-risk youth programs, HIV/AIDS testing and counseling, and much, much more.

Through the United Methodist Voluntary Service, Global Ministries seeks to be in supportive relationship with community organizations that work through volunteers to challenge oppression and injustice and to improve the lives and fulfill the potential of those whom Jesus called the "least of these."

## Racial Ethnic Clergywomen's Consultation: 'Rising From Our Common Ground'

Rev. Joyce Wilkerson of Catskill UMC attended the recent gathering of the Racial Ethnic Clergywomen's Consultation in California. She sent us this reflection.

*Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old  
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth,  
Do you not perceive it?  
Oracles of Second Isaiah, 43:18-19a (NRSV)*

This text from the prophet Isaiah was the general theme of the United Methodist Racial Ethnic Clergywomen's Consultation in Los Angeles, January 2- 5. The gathering was the first for this representative group of United Methodist clergy in twenty-five years. It was an awesome event where a group of sisters (approximately 300 strong) from our five jurisdictions gathered to praise God through Jesus Christ, dialogue about our common ministries and share the joys and challenges of our call. It is without apology that we claim the name of the One who is the center of our being as we respond to mission and ministry on behalf of the United Methodist Church.

We were representative of all phases of professional ministry – bishops, district superintendents, conference council and other extension ministry staff, deacons and parish clergy.

Six separate clergywomen's caucuses, African-American, Caucasian-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, Hispanic/Latina and Native-American, met for lunch and history was made with the creation of the Pacific Islanders Clergywomen's Association. What a marvelous feat! In our unity, we affirm and recognize our unique and wonderful place in God's kingdom.

Rev. Cynthia Wilson, from the North Georgia Conference, Women of Color Scholar, gifted singer and musician, spoke of the 'HOLY GHOST' experiences during our times together. What better way to express the worship arts, preaching and theological reflection we will be able to revisit for a time to come. You *oughta* been there!

We were blessed to have four clergywomen, The Reverends Hikari Kokal Chang, Sonia Jermin, Tisha Jermin, Constance Pak and me representing four districts of our conference.

No doubt you will be hearing from all of our general agencies and commissions concerning issues raised, reports given and recommendations that relate to the work of our church and, specifically, racial ethnic clergywomen. I commend two documents, *a must read*, as you commit to join in further partnership with our sisters: 1. Report: United Methodist Ethnic Minority Clergywomen's Consultation, 1982 and 2. The Status of Racial/Ethnic Minority Clergywomen in the United Methodist Church, 2004 (GBHEM). Your consciousness will be raised as you affirm and share the gifts and graces of all individuals with those whom you are called to serve.

What is my most valued learning from this experience? *Today, I am more than I was yesterday. Yet, my possibilities have not been fulfilled for God is continually working on my tomorrows.*

As we collectively seek change, I share these powerful words from Johnetta Johnson Page's stirring "I Will Do a New Thing".

*"I will do a new thing in you; I will make the old things brand new  
And I will give you the power to do what's right,  
But by my Spirit, not by your might.  
I will bring the high places down, I will place your feet on higher ground.  
Yes, I will! Yes I will! Thus said the Lord."*

## Youth News



# Ignite!

"3-n-1"

**February 1-3**

**The Crowne Plaza  
White Plains, New York  
66 Hale Avenue**

This 3-day all-youth event will feature awesome music, great speakers, fun activities, and so much more. Plus, there will be small-group activities, workshops, and opportunities to meet and mingle with other kids from around the Conference!



"Fusebox" led by Dove Award nominee Billy Buchanan will be the featured musical group

Go to [www.UMYouth.com](http://www.UMYouth.com) for all the information.

- **Conference Youth Event, and Confirmation Rally Feb. 1-3**

The Annual Conference is hosting a major 3-day youth event at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains, on Feb. 1-3, 2008. A dynamic speaker (Stacey Foster) and a powerful musical group (Fuzebox) will be a part of the program. Complete information, including costs, can be found at the Conference's youth web site: <http://www.umyouth.com>.

The annual **Bishop's Confirmation Rally** will coincide with this event, taking place on Saturday from 2:00 till 5:00. Confirmation groups can come for this part of the event alone, at no cost, with an option to buy tickets for dinner and to the Fuzebox concert which will take place that evening.

- **Chrysalis "Son Seekers" is calling all youth** in grades 10-12 to join them in either the Girls' Weekend (January 19-21) or the Boys' Weekend (February 16-18). Weekends are held at the Hicksville UMC. The purpose of Chrysalis is to provide a 3-day experience in Christian community in which young people can receive the gospel of God's love and forgiveness, respond to the offer of new life in Christ and dedicate themselves to the ministry of Christian love in the power of the Holy Spirit. Chrysalis is a part of the Walk to Emmaus program, a program of the General Board of Discipleship.
- **YouthNet Update** is a newsletter from the United Methodist Publishing House. Check it out by going to [http://www.lead youth.com/article\\_reader.asp?ID=153](http://www.lead youth.com/article_reader.asp?ID=153)

### Young Adult Leaders Summit

As most of our churches are well aware, we have very few young adults in our congregations. By God's grace, this may be about to change. The New York Annual Conference is blessed with gifted and dedicated people, clergy and laity, who are willing to give their resources, expertise and passion for developing young adult ministry in our churches. As you may have heard, the first of what planners intend to be an annual event, The New York Annual Conference Young Adult Leaders Summit, will be held on Saturday, January 19, 2008 from 11:00 – 3:00 at the Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 600 Broadway in Dobbs Ferry, New York. Register on-line at <http://www.nyac.com/resources/pdfs/YoungAdultLeaders.pdf>

### Christian Education

- **Bright Ideas: Tips for Teachers** is a Cokesbury site for Sunday School teachers. To view the latest edition of the newsletter, for children, go to <http://www.sundayschool.cokesbury.com/content.aspx?dyn=1311> for youth go to <http://www.sundayschool.cokesbury.com/content.aspx?dyn=1312> and for teaching tools for adult classes, go to <http://www.sundayschool.cokesbury.com/content.aspx?dyn=1313>
- **iTeach: Monthly Information for Christian Educators** is a newsletter sent out by email free of charge from the General Board of Discipleship. It is a "toolbox of wisdom to develop, nurture and encourage teachers, small group leaders and pastors in their teaching ministry." Go to <http://www.gbod.org/education/> to subscribe!



- You are probably already planning your Lenten worship and small group experiences for the Lenten season (which, incidentally, begins on February 6). The Learning Center is one of many sources of materials. To see a sampling of what we have specifically on Lent in the Learning Center, click on <http://www.nyac.com/resources/pdfs/Lent.pdf>.
- Please discover the amazing web sites that just get better and better that are put together by the General Board of Discipleship (<http://www.gbod.org>) Worship Connection (<http://www.worshipconnection.cokesbury.com>), a web site out of Cokesbury, is terrific!

## Lay Speakers' Corner

- Save the dates:  
**Basic and Advanced Classes** – Monday, April 7, 14, 21, 28, and May 5 – 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Trinity UMC in Hudson. Registration forms will be available in early January.

**Be sure to see** the movie *The Great Debaters*. It chronicles the true story of the 1935 debate team at Wiley College in Marshall, TX. Wiley is one of our United Methodist historically Black Colleges supported in part by our apportionments. For more information go to [UMEA@gbhem.org](mailto:UMEA@gbhem.org).

## The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2008

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18-25. Free resources as well items available for purchase to assist you in your preparations may be downloaded or ordered at <http://www.geii.org>

The Intercessory Prayer for 2008 is available for you to download. Click on <http://www.nyac.com/resources/pdfs/20081231PrayerCalendar.pdf> to receive the new calendar. Each week the people of your church are asked to pray for the members of 8-10 sister churches in our annual conference. By the end of the year, each and every church - from Alberton to Yorktown Heights - will be lifted up to God in a spirit of thanksgiving!

### **Standard Mileage Rates increased:**

Beginning Jan. 1, 2008, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (including vans, Pickups or panel trucks) will be:

**50.5 cents per mile for business miles driven;** 19 cents per mile driven for medical or Moving purposes; and 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

For the full IRS article go to <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=176030,00.html>

# *The Groundhog's Ball*



*A Fund Raiser for The Caring Hands Soup Kitchen  
at The Clinton Avenue UMC*

**Saturday, February 2nd at 7:00 p.m.**  
Glory Road *(from the St. James UMC)* will be performing.

**Great Music! Great Food! Great Fellowship!**  
**And a worthy cause!**  
**All are invited!**



**Tickets available. Donations accepted at the door.**  
**845-331-7188**  
**122 Clinton Avenue (corner of Clinton & Liberty Streets in Mid-town Kingston)**



## Round and About the District



- ***New Paltz United Methodist Church*** raised the most money in the annual New Paltz CROP Walk. The total amount collected by 18 giving units was \$13,799. NPUMC unit was responsible for \$2,110. Congratulations!

New Paltz United Methodist Women hung the annual Christmas Angel Tree and the congregation of NPUMC prepared 78 angels for the women at the Richard C Ward Center in Middletown. In addition, the congregation and LAF (Ladies Afternoon Fellowship) each adopted a secret family from Family of New Paltz and presented gifts for those parents and children.

NPUMC is very excited that Amy Mellor will be part of the Mission trip to Costa Rica February 16-23. Amy is a junior at NPUMC, an active athlete, a Sunday School teacher, and very active in church activities.

- Women from the ***Stamford Harpersfield*** UMW had their annual “Christmas Gift Box” packing event. They packed boxes of cookies, candy, microwave popcorn, individual beverage packages, and fresh fruit for distribution to those in their community and to member of the church family who are no longer able to get out and about as they once were.
- For the second year, the ***First United Church of Walton*** sponsored a free Christmas Baked Ham Dinner for folks in the community that have no where else to go. About 300 meals were served or taken out. This involves a huge commitment from church members, as they miss their Christmas Day at home in order to do the cooking and serving. Pastor Mark Del Guidice says it’s a wonderful witness to the unchurched. This year he led everybody in Christmas carols after the meal.

Every year the Walton UMC Youth Fellowship puts on a Living Nativity. It is well appreciated by the community, with passing cars slowing down to see the sight and to hear the Christmas carols being sung. What a wonderful reminder to all of the true meaning of Christmas.

- The UMW at ***St. James UMC in Kingston*** will have a “Re-gifting Boutique” in February, along with a Soup and Sandwich Luncheon. Everything will be reasonably priced and all proceeds will be used for outreach and missions. What a great use for those gifts received that are “just not you”, that are the wrong size, or for which you have no place!

St. James has a Fair Trade Project. Fair Trade items such as coffee, teas, dried and sweetened cranberries, tamari roasted almonds, and roasted pecans are available through the church. Through this project, more of the money spent on the items goes back to the farmers and not to the middleman. This is a way to buy while supporting global social justice and environmental sustainability.

- From the *White Sulphur Springs* newsletter: Wise men aren't necessarily from the east. Wise men and women are those that cross boundaries. – Rt. Rev. Lois Wilson, Canadian senator and former Moderator of the United Church of Canada.
- The *Saugerties* Messenger reminds us of the new [www.UMC.org](http://www.UMC.org) site. Through this site you can privately and conveniently submit a prayer request to the Upper Room Living Prayer Center and their Covenant Prayer Groups. Just click the “Pray” button on the site or submit a prayer request over the phone by calling 1-800-251-2468.

The Saugerties UMC folks participated in an Advent Walk through their town. The walk began at the Lutheran Church, proceeded to the Congregational Church, the Reformed Church, the UMC, and then ended with a tree lighting at the Catholic church. The services at each church were about fifteen minutes long. Those participating in the walk were asked to bring a child's gift for abused children of Ulster County. A social hour was held immediately following the last service.

- *East Branch/Harvard UMC* will hold a Song and Supper event open to all in their community. This informal event will be a time of fellowship, eating, and singing.
- *Colchester Community UMC* will be observing Mardi Gras with decorations, refreshments, beads, masks, and entertainment. This will be an ecumenical evening of fellowship.

As a way of putting their faith into action, the Colchester Community UMC will be sponsoring two children at the Helping Honduras Kids (HHK) Hogar de Amor (House of Love) Children's Home for the year. This is a program that helps orphaned and disadvantaged children by bringing them food, shelter, medical care, and education. The congregation is very excited. More information at [www.helpinghonduraskids.org](http://www.helpinghonduraskids.org).

- *Monticello UMC* began an Epiphany-New Year tradition this year called *Chalking the Door*. In some parts of the world, there is a custom of gathering in places of residence, work, or worship to ask God's blessing on those dwellings and all who inhabit them. The *Chalking the Door* service is a way of marking the church home with sacred signs and symbols as God's blessing is asked upon all those who worship and serve at the church. The tradition began at the time of the Exodus when the Israelites marked their doors with blood so that the Lord would pass over their homes. In this service, the church doors are marked with chalk as a sign that God's presence and blessings have been invited into the church home. As congregants left, each was given a piece of chalk and a printed liturgy for use in chalking the doors of their homes or work places.
- *Delhi United Ministry* offered new ideas for holiday gift-giving with their Alternative Holiday Market. Instead of giving “things”, members could check out the Church World Service catalog and choose gifts like village wells, seeds, tools, a water buffalo (or part of one!), oral rehydration therapy, micro credit loans, etc. This Best Gift Catalog offers these and many other opportunities to bring hope and health to our brothers and sisters around the world who struggle to survive.

- **Overlook UMC of Woodstock** is excited to send Laura Speers on a mission trip to Costa Rica as a youth ambassador.

November was Overlook's month to run the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen in Woodstock. The Youth Group got involved as well.

They participated in the Angel Tree Program, which provides Christmas presents for children who have parents in prison. The children get gifts for Christmas and gifts are also given to the caregivers of these children. This is a way for these children to know that their parent in prison loves them.

- **Coxsackie UMC** had a Mitten and Hat tree in the back of the church during the Christmas season. Donations kept some little hands and heads warm.
- **Reservoir UMC** supported the Latino Center housed in West End UMC, which addresses the needs of some of the poorest children in New York City. Money was donated to these immigrant families. They also donated frozen turkeys to the Kingston Women's Shelter in December.

Reservoir has completed a year of using Listening Circles to obtain feedback about their ministries. The method is based on a book from the Alban Institute called Closing the Circle. They've had quarterly gatherings after worship of six to ten worshippers to share and reflect on that day's experience of worship. Through guiding questions, it is heard how each person experiences worship, what their needs are, what really touches them and what deepens the sense of God's presence for them. Three of the Listening Circles focused on the worship experience, while one was on Christian Education. The staff who is involved in the ministry is present during the discussion and sometimes unexpected opportunities for ministry come out of the discussion.

- The women of the UMW of **Trinity UMC in Hudson** wrapped gifts for the Advent bags for shut-ins.
- The **Rondout Valley UMC** collected gifts for children at the Methodist Children's Home in Binghamton. This facility serves about 400 children from the New York and Wyoming (west of us) Methodist Conferences. These children come from broken and/or abusive homes and for some this was the first Christmas that they have received a gift.
- The **Hobart UMC** hosted a meeting of the Fellowship of Christian Farmers in October, which included a program of Christian Gospel music.
- **Catskill UMC** has started a Secret Pal program. It will run for the entire 2008 year and end at Christmas next December. Each participant completes a form that tells about any special interests or hobbies they might have and their favorite color.

Catskill held a 12<sup>th</sup> Night Party, beginning with a covered dish supper and then a game night.

- *Lexington-Westkill and Prattsville UMC's* have been collecting money to purchase Arabic language Bibles to send to Lebanon. They see it as their way of “fighting” the way against terrorism, by taking the terror out of the hearts of people by sharing with them the truth of Jesus.
- *Gilboa UMC* held a Blue Christmas Service on December 21<sup>st</sup>. This is a special service for people who have suffered any kind of a loss and who feel drained instead of uplifted by Christmas. It's a time of recognizing what is of importance in the season and remembering the real reason we celebrate. Time is spent looking back and praying over their losses. Then the Christ Candle is lit, giving the reminder that Christ is our light. Quiet carols are sung as a reminder of the peace of Christmas.
- Christmas Eve services at *Ashland UMC* and at *Windham-Hensonville UMC* opened with a reading about coming into the light, with the lighting of the Advent candles and the Christ candle, and then with five women dressed all in black wearing golden wings doing a sacred dance to the song “On Paths of Radiance”. The sacred dancers, led by Kathy Lenz, have been very well received.

A new group, called A Spiritual Path to Wellness, is beginning. This group will open with prayer and devotions and then and the sharing of where the members are physically, mentally, and spiritually. Then dancing to music will be used for stretching and exercise. The group will focus on healthy eating, exercise, and life-style changes that honor this temple that we call our body.

- The Sunday School program at *The United Church of Roscoe* was extended to include the summer months last year. The musical “Life of the Party” was presented in the park by an intergenerational cast. The musical celebrates the story of the friendship of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus with Jesus. In Advent, an intergenerational play called “Tree-mendous Love” was presented to the congregation during worship.

Roscoe had an “Alternative Gift” table set up in the entrance way of the church. The offered coffee, teas, Christmas ornaments from many parts of the world, and a cross necklace made of olive wood from Palestine. This allowed a greater share of the profits from the sale of these goods to go to the actual producer, rather than the middle man.

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## Calendar

**Jan.17:** District Lay Speaking Committee at Reservoir, 6:30 p.m.

**Jan. 19:** Young Adult Leaders Summit in Dobbs Ferry, NY, 11-3

**Jan.20:** United Methodist Human Relations Day

**Jan. 22-24:** Bishop's Convocation at Hudson Valley Resort in Kerhonkson. Bishop Robert Schnase of the Missouri Annual Conference will speak on "Five Principles of Fruitful Congregations."

**Jan. 25-27:** District UMW Retreat at St. Joseph Villa in Saugerties

**Feb. 1-3:** IGNITE – 3-day all-youth event in White Plains

**Feb. 7:** District Council on Ministries at Kerhonkson, 5:00 p.m.

**Feb. 10-16:** D.S. on vacation

**Feb. 29:** Game Night at the District Parsonage, 7:00 p.m. (R.S.V.P.)

**April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5:** Basic and Advanced Lay Speaking Classes at Trinity UMC in Hudson

**April 8-11:** Order of Elders Retreat

**April 11-13:** Northeast Jurisdictional UMW Quadrennial Meeting in Springfield, MA

**April 19:** District Leadership Training Day and District Conference at Kerhonkson

**May 3, 2007:** District UMW Spring Day Apart at Kerhonkson

**June 11-14:** Annual Conference at Hofstra University

**July 24-27:** School of Mission at Western Conn. State University, Danbury, CT

**Sept. 27:** District UMW District Fall Meeting

Please freely **post** and **distribute** this copy of the COURIER. Contact the District Office ([cathudnyac@aol.com](mailto:cathudnyac@aol.com)) if you would like to delete yourself from or add yourself to our database for receiving the COURIER online.

**The deadline for the March-April Courier will be February 29, 2008.**

### News from the Wider Church

#### **Quinipet 2008 Camp Staff Needed**



**Quinipet is seeking college age young adults who have a Christian commitment and are filled with fun loving energy.** Good candidates will have some experience working with youth and good references. Lifeguard Certifications, special music skills, worship planning, experience working with diverse populations and past camp experience will be given extra considerations. **June 25 to Aug 17<sup>th</sup> time commitment.** Plan to make about \$1700 - \$2000 for entry positions. **18 and over a must.** Leadership

positions for more salary are still available. Make a difference this summer!

Please call (631) 749 0430 or email [greg@quinipet.org](mailto:greg@quinipet.org) for more information - go to <http://www.quinipet.org/> and visit our staff recruiting page.

**Greg Nissen ~ Director ~ Quinipet Camp and Retreat ~ Shelter Island, NY ~ 631 749 0430**

## **Mission Information**

You can keep on top of all things mission in The United Methodist Church by going to the United Methodist Committee on Relief Hotline website at <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/>

## **Mission Teams to Biloxi**

The New York Annual Conference has relief teams going to Biloxi, Mississippi to continue the rebuilding of this area so devastated by Hurricane Katrina. We are looking for volunteers to join in this very rewarding work and fellowship on this mission. The cost to volunteer is \$500. This will cover your airfare, food and ground transport while in Biloxi. Most trips are 8 days in duration. Click on <http://www.nyac.com/resources/pdfs/BiloxiSchedule.pdf> to see which teams are still accepting team members. If you are interested, or want detailed information, please contact Daryl by email at the Conference Center: [dlindholm@nyac.com](mailto:dlindholm@nyac.com).

## **Haiti Mission Trips**

There are still openings for two upcoming Haiti trips: February 8 through 16, 2008 and May 29 through June 6, 2008. For more information about our Haiti mission or upcoming trips, please contact Tom or Wendy Vencuss at [info@wethersfieldchurch.org](mailto:info@wethersfieldchurch.org).

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## **2008 VOLUNTEER IN MISSION TRIP TO BEIRA, MOZAMBIQUE**

**AUGUST 5-19, 2008**

The MOZAMBIQUE 2008 VIM Trip has been scheduled for August 5<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>. Cost for the trip will be about \$3,300 depending on fluctuation of airfare. This includes airfare, housing, most meals, travel and other expenses. (It does NOT include personal expenses. Participants can expect to spend \$400 more by the time you add the cost of immunizations, tips, and meals not covered.) Pre- and post- trip options are available for an additional fee. Application due date is January 15<sup>th</sup> with a \$200 deposit. Balance is due March 15<sup>th</sup>. **Contact [mccarte@optonline.net](mailto:mccarte@optonline.net) for more information.**