

THE COURIER

Catskill Hudson District New York Annual
Conference

<http://www.gbqm-umc.org/catskillhudson>

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FROM THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

A Word from the DS: "Tending the Soil We've been Given"

My morning devotional time today included Jesus' story traditionally called "The Parable of the Sower." I read from the 8th chapter of Luke, but it's also found in Matthew and Mark, along with something that seldom accompanies Jesus' parables, namely an explanation about what the story means.

As you remember, the farmer goes out to sow his seeds – which Jesus tells us is a symbol for God's word. He throws the seeds everywhere, like the God who offers grace to all people, with full awareness that he will be getting uneven results and that some of his labor will be wasted. Some of the seed falls on the hard-packed paths where it doesn't stand a chance of penetrating, and the birds come down and gobble up those grains. Some falls in the rocky soil, where it manages to take root and begins to produce a bit of feeble growth, but the barrenness of the ground and the lack of moisture doom these plants to early death. Some seeds fall among weeds and thorns, and the competition for nutrients stunts their growth. But some of the seeds manage to find their way into fertile soil, and these seeds take root and grow, producing a bumper crop and making the sower's work worthwhile.

The seed of God's Word and of God's gracious love is always offered freely, but some lives and some settings are like those unproductive patches of ground. I've been aware of this as I think about our district churches, and about the churches where I worked as a parish pastor. I suppose I could be called a "successful" pastor, because each of the three appointments I served experienced growth in numbers and activity. But I have to admit that I was blessed to be sent to places of fertile ground, to places where it was relatively easy for the seed of God's Word to take root. Each of my churches had a decent core of committed laity, a reasonable financial base, and a pleasant community nearby, unlike some of the church settings we see in our district. None were burdened with long, bitter church-destroying conflicts. The majority of my parishioners were of my ethnic and cultural background, so that I didn't have to work on the extra challenges that pastors and congregations face in cross-cultural settings. I think I did good work, but any bragging I might do would have to be tempered with the honest admission that I'd been fortunate to be sowing in pretty good soil.

Some of our pastors work in much tougher situations, sowing God's seeds amidst hardened paths, rocky soil and weed-infested patches. Some deal with congregations that seem tough and resistant to their efforts, or with churches in which the resources of money and people are few, or amidst prosperous communities and individuals whose lives are so over-crowded with the modern American rat race that there doesn't seem to be room for the seeds of faith. It's not easy to be planting in some of these situations – but some of our churches and pastors have found a way in spite of the rocks and weeds.

The key is that we have to see ourselves as more than mere sowers. If we toss out some seeds of the gospel and they don't germinate we can't just shrug our shoulders and say "Oh well, what could anyone do with soil like this?" No, if our soil isn't so good we have to work with it. We need to pull the rocks, deal with the weeds, fertilize and nurture and water, and do whatever we can to make the soil we've been given more receptive to the seeds of grace.

I've seen some signs of such gardening efforts in our district, in churches where merely tossing the seeds of faith probably wouldn't work, but where pastors and laity have somehow found a way to make things grow. I've seen a warm and appreciated welcome being offered to newcomers from the neighborhood who are racially and culturally different from the long-time Church members, and tears in the eyes of such a young woman – with a tattoo on her arm - who was welcomed as a new member..... I know of congregations who have discovered that having a pastor of another ethnic group brings challenges but also many happy surprises, and who eventually discover that in Christ we are simultaneously the same and different..... I've seen churches with only a handful in attendance at worship, who see their smallness not as a sign of weakness but as an opportunity for deep spiritual sharing..... I know of churches with scant financial resources that are doing very creative mission.....

In none of those churches I'm thinking of is successful ministry a given. I don't think much would have happened if pastors and lay people had been content to toss out some random seeds of faith, passively hoping that the miracle of God's growth would take over. They've worked with their soil, trying to make a place where grace can be received and faith can grow, and some shoots of faith have indeed come forth.

There's an old preachers' tale about a couple who bought a run-down, abandoned farm that needed a lot of work. They poured themselves into the effort of clearing overgrown fields, rebuilding broken walls, painting ramshackle buildings and planting beautiful gardens, and eventually brought about a wonderful transformation. One day they had a visit from their pastor, who looked at the beautiful fields and gardens and said, in a slightly over-pious way, "Isn't it wonderful what our Lord the creator can do?" The couple responded, "Well you should have seen this place when the Lord had it all to himself!"

God is the giver of all good gifts and the source of growth, but we've been given our roles to play too. Not merely as sowers, but as people who work the soil and try to make space for grace, we all have a share in building up a fruitful kingdom of God.

Bless you in your work for our Lord.

Jim Moore, D.S.

Please Join Us for ...

*A Celebration of Ministry for Our New
Catskill-Hudson District Superintendent
Reverend James Moore*

*Sunday October 21, 2007
Overlook United Methodist Church
Woodstock, New York*

*4 p.m. Worship
Dinner and Fellowship to Follow*

RSVP for dinner reservations by October 15th to:

Please note that seating for dinner is limited to the first 120 persons.

*Reverend Bridgette LeConey,
Chairperson Committee on the District Superintendency
9 Long Drive
Liberty, NY 12754
834-282-6517
bblec@verizon.net*

*Please Remit \$10.00 per person and indicate your choice of
entrée:*

_____ *Vegetarian Chili*

_____ *Apricot Chicken*

WANDERINGS... by Diane Meredith, District Lay Leader

Rally Sunday, off to college, back to school, Charge Conference, Crop Walk, hardy mums, scarecrows, and pumpkins. Fall arrives--another transition.

Every change of season provides the opportunity to reflect on beginnings and endings. At my home church in Walton I notice that as we prepare for Charge Conference, we look back with pride and ahead with hope.

I had a wonderful visit with our DS, Rev. Jim Moore. He is thoughtful and a good listener, dedicated to traveling the district getting to know us. Please attend your local Charge Conference to let him share in both your challenges of the present and your vision for the future. We are both excited about the possibilities for connectionalism within the Catskill Hudson District.

I also had the opportunity to attend a meeting of the District Layspeaking Committee this month. We hope to utilize local lay leaders to assist in distributing information about upcoming layspeaking classes. We are fortunate to have knowledgeable, devoted cluster leaders who work to keep everyone informed. Nonetheless, some scheduled classes have been canceled due to lack of enrollment. Current cluster leaders are: Gerry Rosenberger, North; Ruth Kelder, Northwest; and Margaret Howe, Southeast. The Southwest Cluster does not have a leader at this time. If you are interested in serving, please contact the Director of the District Committee on Layspeaking Ministries, Rev. Joyce Wilkerson at Revwilkerson1@yahoo.com. The Committee is hosting a breakfast for all Catskill Hudson Clergy and Layspeakers at the Saugerties UMC on October 27th at 9:30 AM. Our District Superintendent will be the guest speaker. For more information, contact Gerry Rosenberger at GROSENBERGER@hvc.rr.com.

I hope to see you at the upcoming installation of District Superintendent Jim Moore on October 21st. Have a happy, blessed autumn season.

Peace,

Diane Meredith
District Lay Leader

Kindly visit the NYAC website (nyac.com) for *Lay Speakers' Annual Reports*. Click on "TOOLS FOR LAY SPEAKERS" and you will find the form and other information for lay speakers - local church and certified. Thank You!

**CATSKILL HUDSON DISTRICT
COMMITTEE ON LAY SPEAKING MINISTRIES**

**Rev. James Moore, District Superintendent
Rev. Joyce Wilkerson, Director**

FALL BREAKFAST FOR CLERGY AND LAY SPEAKERS

Date: October 27, 2007

Time: 9:30 a.m.

**Place: Saugerties UMC
Washington Ave & Post St.
Saugerties N Y 12477
Dr. Duane Buddle, Pastor
845/246-7802**

REGISTRATION FEE: \$5.00

Guest Speaker: District Superintendent Rev. James Moore

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Kindly return this portion of the flyer along with your registration fee for the **Breakfast** to:
G. Rosenberger, 2 Willow Lane, Saugerties, N Y 12477 on or before **October 15, 2007**.
For additional information – Grosenberger@hvc.rr.com

Please make your check payable to *G. Rosenberger*

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Church _____

Concepts in Leadership

(A course designed to be a refresher course for Local Lay Speakers)

*It now has become an **absolute requirement** for Local Lay Speakers to remain on the District's Local Lay Speaker List. The course is also recommended for all church leaders.*

Leaders (including all Lay Speakers) in the church are called upon to be spiritual leaders who set an example for those whom they lead. This short course is designed to prepare church leaders to focus on their role as spiritual leaders and to function as role models or examples for others in the congregation.

We trust that by transforming church leaders into spiritual leaders, the church will be renewed and the laity will take on the roles in ministry to which God calls them.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course the participant will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of prayer in the life of a spiritual leader.
2. Formulate a prayer appropriate for a group and lead prayer in a group.
3. Prepare an agenda for a meeting to ensure time for Christian conferencing.
4. Demonstrate the use of small group dynamics including use of conflict transformation principles.

This is the first offering of this course in the Catskill-Hudson District.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have events from your church you'd like to highlight, please send them to the District Office to be included in the Courier. Also, those events can be forwarded to Sheri Bunt to be put on our website.

A word of wisdom from one of our elders: Bill Hunter, a retired pastor living in Kingston, does a lot of hospital visiting, and has this helpful counsel for our pastors: *When clergy are hospitalized, they usually need rest as part of their care. Often they become tired out by well-meaning members of their congregation, and colleagues, who "over-visit:" Too many people for too long a time. Complicating this is that clergy being who they are, they are reluctant to say "Thanks for coming, but I need my rest." A suggestion: That the patient's family choose a chaplain from among her/his colleagues, then limit other visitors to the bedside. Something to think about before need is present.*

Bill also recommends a useful publication called New York Interfaith Power and Light, which can help churches with utility costs. Their web site is www.nyipl.org.

Welcoming Barbeque: Pastors and spouses who are newly appointed to churches in our district were invited to a welcoming barbeque at the district parsonage last week. Everybody got to know each other better over appetizers and dinner. It soon became clear that some have a competitive streak as we played ladder ball and croquet. We had a rich time of fellowship.



District Advent/Christmas Dinner: Dec. 14th at Rondout Valley UMC

Our pastors, along with their spouses or other guests, are invited to the annual Advent/Christmas Dinner which will be held at the Rondout Valley UMC on Friday Dec. 14th. Appetizers will be served at 6:00, with dinner at 6:30, followed by a program of Christmas music, stories and prayer led by Holly and Jim Moore.

The cost is \$10 per person. Checks should be made payable to Rondout Valley UMC and sent to Rev. Caroline Berninger, PO Box 295, Stone Ridge, NY 12484.

EVENTS

October 1- 2: Bishop & Clergy Retreat for Northern Districts at Mt. St. Alphonsus.

October 9: District Committee on Ministry at Saugerties UMC, 9:45

October 13: District Council on Ministries at Kerhonkson, 9:00-1:00

October 12-13: Pastoral Crisis Intervention Workshop for Disaster Spiritual Care Volunteers at the Conference Center, 8:30-5:00

October 12-13: Confirmation Kick-off at Camp Epworth

October 16: Elders Day Apart at Asbury Crestwood UMC

October 18: Parish Development at Modena, 7:00

October 21: Installation of new D.S. Jim Moore at Overlook UMC at Woodstock, 4:00

October 24-25: Bishop's Meeting with churches under 30% level of apportionment payments at the Conference Center

October 27: District Lay Speakers Breakfast at Saugerties UMC, 9:30

October 27: UMW Annual Meeting at Grace UMC in Valley Stream, 9:30-3:00

October 27: Hope Beyond Hammering Disaster Spiritual Care at Hyde Park UMC, 8:30-5:00

November 3: Concepts in Leadership (Layspeakers Course) at Catskill UMC, 9:00-3:30

November 2-4: UMM Retreat, Camp Olmstead

December 14: District Advent/Christmas Dinner at Rondout Valley UMC, 6:00

January 22-24: Bishop's Convocation at Hudson Valley Resort in Kerhonkson

January 25-27: District UMW Annual Retreat at St. Joseph's Villa, Saugerties

Pastors: Remember to send a copy of your church newsletter to the District Office.

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

FLYERS

Please scroll down to read the following flyers:

- Hope Beyond the Hammering announcement
- Hope Beyond the Hammering Registration Form
- Pastor Crisis Intervention Workshop flyer
- Pastor Crisis Intervention Workshop Registration Form
- 2008 Youth Missions Ambassadors Trip

Hope Beyond the Hammering:

Physiological, psychosocial, and spiritual effects of trauma

Why don't we "just get over it?"

Date: Saturday, October 27, 2007

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Venue: Hyde Park Methodist Church
1 Church Street, Hyde Park, NY 12538
845-229-2114**

(Registration fee \$25 and deadline October 19)

This 5 hour workshop is planned for Disaster Spiritual Care volunteers by NYAC Disaster Academy on trauma healing. This is one of two advance workshops required for the certification as NYAC Disaster Spiritual Care volunteer.

Both clergy and laity are invited to participate.

"Hope Beyond the Hammering" workshop is a portion of the STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) program and will focus on:

- * **Common effects of trauma on body, mind, spirit, and relationships**
- * **Holistic interventions that promote recovery**
- * **Factors that promote resilience in individuals and communities**
- * **Strategies to minimize the ripple effects of trauma**

Presenter: Ruth Wenger, STAR New York

Complete the appropriate attached registration form and send in as instructed for the workshop of your choice.

For further information - contact Barbara Vaccaro at NY Annual Conference Center, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606 914-615-2226 or e-mail disaster@nyac.com

"Hope Beyond the Hammering" workshop is a portion of the STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) program and will focus on: (a) Common effects of trauma on body, mind, spirit, and relationships; (b) Holistic interventions that promote recovery; (c) Factors that promote resilience in individuals and communities; and (d) Strategies to minimize the ripple effects of trauma.

Hope Beyond the Hammering Registration Form

Please complete the registration form and return it to Barbara Vaccaro, NY Annual Conference, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606 with \$25 check payable to NYAC.

Name: _____ Date of Workshop: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home _____ Cell _____

Email: _____ [] \$25 registration fee enclosed

Check as many as applicable to you.

[] I am a pastor. Church: _____

[] I would like credit for Continuing Education (for pastors).

[] I am a lay person and attend _____ (church).

[] I would like to be certified as Disaster Spiritual Care volunteer.

[] I have completed NYAC Disaster Response Volunteer in Mission training in the past.

[] I served as a VIM in the past. Team _____ Location _____

Date of Service _____

[] I work in the mental health field. Specify _____

Name: _____ Date of Workshop: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home _____ Cell _____

Email: _____ [] \$25 registration fee enclosed

Check as many as applicable to you.

[] I am a pastor. Church: _____

[] I would like credit for Continuing Education (for pastors).

[] I am a lay person and attend _____ (church).

[] I would like to be certified as Disaster Spiritual Care volunteer.

[] I have completed NYAC Disaster Response Volunteer in Mission training in the past.

[] I served as a VIM in the past. Team _____ Location _____

Date of Service _____

[] I work in the mental health field. Specify _____

Pastoral Crisis Intervention

October 12 & 13, 2007

NY Annual Conference Center
20 Soundview Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
914 615-2226

Registration deadline: Oct 5th Materials & lunch Cost: \$ 55

A two-day workshop is planned for the NYAC Disaster Academy on Pastoral Crisis Intervention. For both clergy and laity, this workshop will focus on the faith-based resources in healing during disasters and crisis.

Pastoral Crisis Intervention may be thought of as the combination of faith-based resources with traditional techniques of crisis intervention. Pastoral crisis intervention represents a powerful addition to traditional community and organizational psychological support resources. The purpose of this two-day workshop is to assist the participants in learning how pastoral interventions and traditional psychological crisis interventions may be effectively integrated. Chaplains, pastoral counselors, mental health professionals, ministers, and anyone interested in the use of faith-based resources in healing should find this course of interest.

This is a Continuing Education course worth 1.3 CEUs.

Day 1:(8:30 am - 5:00 pm)

- Nature of psychological crisis
- Crisis Intervention
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
- Overview of faith-based healing: Nature and research
- Applications of pastoral crisis intervention
- Pastoral crisis assessment: The "crisis of faith"
- Psychological triaging
- Common psychological reactions during crisis

Day 2:(8:30 am - 5:00 pm)

- Mechanisms of pastoral crisis intervention
- The role of religion
- Mechanisms of traditional crisis intervention
- Indications and contraindications
- Practice in pastoral crisis intervention
- Most challenging applications
- Common problems encountered in pastoral crisis intervention

PRESENTER—Rev. Julie Taylor, CTR, is the Executive Director of Disaster Chaplaincy Services in New York City, and an ICISF approved instructor

Pastoral Crisis Intervention Registration Form

October 12 & 13, 2007

**NY Annual Conference Center
20 Soundview Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
914 615-2226**

Registration deadline: Oct 5th Materials & lunch Cost: \$ 55

A two-day workshop is planned for the NYAC Disaster Academy on Pastoral Crisis Intervention. For both clergy and laity, this workshop will focus on the faith-based resources in healing during disasters and crisis.

Please complete the registration form and return it to Barbara Vaccaro, NYAC, 20 Soundview Ave. White Plains, NY 10606. with \$55 registration check payable to NYAC / Disaster Response.

Registration Form

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home _____ **Cell** _____

Email: _____

Check as many as applicable to you.

- I am a pastor
 - I am not a pastor
 - I would like credit for Continuing Education (for pastors)
 - I work in the mental health field
 - I would like to be certified as Disaster Spiritual Care volunteer
 - I would like to be certified as NYAC Disaster Response volunteer
 - I may be interested in overnight accommodations. Please call me at _____
- Or e-mail me details at _____

New York Annual Conference
YOUTH MISSION AMBASSADORS TRIP 2008
Siquirres, Costa Rica

- PARTICIPANTS:** Two Youths (15yrs - 17yrs) from each district
- The Date:** February 13 -23, 2008
- The Location:** Siquirres, Costa Rica
- The Project:** To be determined prior to the trip with the help of the community we will be serving.
- The Purpose:** Bring Hope and support to the youth in the community.
Address teenage pregnancy through youth activities.
Provide youth ambassadors a cross-cultural experience.
Sharing and learning from different young people
- The Total Cost:** \$1500 (NYAC participants);
- The Funding:** Participants pay \$500 deposit plus any medical costs
District support \$300
Local Church and family support
through donations and fundraising \$700

Application and deposit Deadline is November 1, 2007
Full payment is due on December 1, 2007

For more information contact
Donna L Jolly, 1315 Lucas Ave Ext, Rosendale, NY 12401
jolly_donna@hotmail.com; (845) 853-8662

or

Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie, Conference Mission Coordinator
jewoodzie@nyac.com; (914) 615-2233

