

Please Note: We have a new email address: nyctnyac@aol.com. Some are still using the old email address, which delays our seeing it.

THE NEW YORK/CONNECTICUT DISTRICT CONNECTOR

A publication of
The New York/Connecticut District, of the
New York Annual Conference, of the
United Methodist Church

February, 2006 Edition

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Reflections of an Itinerant Preacher i.e., A Word from the D.S.

Dear Sisters and Bothers in Christ:

No, your eyes do not deceive you: this is a district newsletter! It is been a while since the last one, hasn't it?

Since the reduction in districts has increased by 50% the number of churches and pastors in each District, your Superintendents have been experimenting with what should be retained, and what must be let go. Each of us has made different decisions, and some of us have learned that some of our decisions were unwise.

I experimented with a different form of communication: instead of a district newsletter, I sent out short e- blurbs in the hopes that that would be a decent form of communication. In the redistricting, we lost our district newsletter editor – Barbara Stinson, by the way – so putting together a monthly letter became more time consuming for the office.

The experiment, however, was not well received; people missed the newsletter as a means of connecting. Since connectionalism is a high priority in the United Methodist Church, I have reconsidered, and will make every attempt to be faithful in putting out a monthly publication.

The purpose of this is, in part, to knit the fragments of the old districts of which we are made, into one well-oiled faith-promoting, healthy-church-building district! To do this, we need your help. Send us information – camera ready, if you please – about your church, cluster, family, concerns, etc. We will make every effort to include your contribution.

In the meantime, please give some thought to what can be let go – individual charge conferences? - universal one-to-ones with clergy? – district organization? – cabinet responsibility to implement conference resolutions?

Blessings,
Jeannette

Dates to Remember

Feb. 17-19: Snow Camp. Too late to register (sorry) but keep the campers in your prayers.

Feb. 25: Re-training and training for members and new members of the **Vitality Assessment Team**, at the Conference Center, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Feb. 26: Focus Groups for Visioning at Danbury U.M.C., 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. This is for persons invited to participate by Bishop Park.

Feb. 25: Lay Speakers' Training (Basic) (Taconic East), Ridgefield, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

March 2: District Committee on Ordained Ministry: 9:30 – 3:00, Danbury UMC

March 4: Black College Fund Luncheon at the Brooklyn Marriott, 12:30 p.m.

March 5: Lay Speakers' School (Taconic West): Interested in becoming a Lay Speaker? The Taconic West branch of the Lay Speakers' School will meet each Sunday evening in Lent for potluck, and training. Contact Jim Schoonmaker (holyguitar@hvc.rr.com) for more information.

March 5: Lenten School: A long-standing tradition in the northern regions of our conference, Lenten School has classes for basic and certified lay speakers. There is also a class that is merely for enrichment (not for lay speaker training) that continues for all six weeks, and an additional class called *Pot Pouri* that presents a discreet lesson each week (i.e., you don't have to attend every session – each week there is a new topic.) Dinner is pot-luck, and, as always, delicious!

March 11: Lay Speakers' Training (Basic) (Taconic East), Ridgefield, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

March 12: Lay Speakers' School (Taconic West) – see March 5.

March 12: Lenten School: - see March 5.

March 13: Probationers' and Local Pastors' Meeting at Dover Plains UMC. Please R.S.V.P., and read the next Chapter in *Studying Congregations*.

March 19: Lay Speakers' School (Taconic West) – see March 5.

March 19: Lenten School: - see March 5.

March 25: Lay Speakers' Training (Basic) (Taconic East), Ridgefield, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

March 26: Lay Speakers' School (Taconic West) – see March 5.

March 26: Lenten School: - see March 5.

March 27: District Committee on Buildings and Locations

Please Note: Every Wednesday and Thursday, the D.S. will be on a Cabinet overnight. If you need to contact her on Wednesday or Thursday, please call during office hours so that Chan can forward your message.

Out and About on the District
i.e., What's happening in our churches & clusters

The **Central Valley United Methodist Church** presents *The French Spirit: Music for Violin and Harp* on Sunday, February 26, at 3 o'clock – suggested donation: \$10

The United Methodist Men of the **United Methodist Church of Peekskill** will celebrate Black History Month by presenting *A Tribute to African Americans* on Sunday, February 26, at one o'clock. Admission and refreshments are free.

The **First United Methodist Church** of Greenwich sent a full team to Biloxi to help repair homes affected by the hurricane devastation.

The **United Methodist Church of Mount Kisco** sent a team of sixteen people to Biloxi to assist in the recovery of the area from last fall's storms. This team includes eight adults and eight youth!

The **New Milford/Edenville United Methodist Church** has a new pastor, and the members are delighted. Please be sure to find a way to welcome Matt Scaper, a student at Drew and a local pastor from the OK Conference to our area. Matt serves half time at New Milford/Edenville. Welcome Matt!

Speaking of new, and not-so-new pastors to our district, we have a couple of post-appointment season additions to our district. I hope you have had the opportunity to welcome **Kwang Won Kim** who recently added Stamford Korean to his pastoral responsibilities; **Gordon Bienvenue**, who recently added Tompkins Corners to his pastoral responsibilities; **Bette Sohm** – yes, the Conference Archivist – to Pine Plains; **Keith Muhleman** to Vail's Gate; and **Kajogo Ignua** to Mountainville.

Mid Hudson Korean UMC has a very effective class system in their church. All members, in addition to belonging to the church, also belong to a "house church", through which they have devotional worship together, bible study, and mission projects. Sounds very Wesleyan, doesn't it!

The **Warwick UMC, Vision Faith Community, Bellvale UMC, and Sugar Loaf UMC** recently cooperated in a class using the United Methodist Bishops' study, *In Search of Security*.

A number of our pastors in Orange county, organized and directed by Bruce Younkin, had the distinct pleasure of seeing the men they had been teaching for three years receive their **M. Div. degrees**. What is unique is that the graduates are all prison inmates.

What is teenagers, laughter, prayers, singing, horse play, snow, bible study, fellowship? It is **Snow Camp**, a long-running, and very popular program of fun and Christian development. It started out for teens only, but became so popular with the adult chaperones that a Snow Camp for adults is also an annual event. This year's Snow Camp leaves February 17, and kids return February 19.

Resources & Opportunities!

The Rural and Migrant Ministries, Inc. has a directory of legal services which can be used as a tool by those working with immigrant communities throughout New York State. The directory can be purchased by contacting RMM at 845-485-8627, or by email at hope@ruralmigrantministry.org.

The **Stewardship Academy** is coming to our district on April 8 at the Poughkeepsie UMC. Lynda Byrd, Assistant General Secretary, Director of development of GBGM will be the featured presenter. Watch for flyers, which will go out soon. The time of the event is ten a.m. to three p.m. There is a \$5 fee, and instructions to bring your own lunch.

Financial Planning with a Christian Perspective: A new schedule for the Stewardship in Action seminars is beginning to take shape. These seminars are for lay and clergy alike who want to get on solid financial ground with proven programs that work! Anyone may sign up to attend the most convenient date and location. Please pre-register by sending an email to smitchell@nyac.com or calling 888-696-6922, ext. 228, and indicating which seminar you plan to attend. Click on the date in the list below to download a flyer describing each of the workshops scheduled so far for this winter:

Saturday, [March 4](#) at the Naugatuck UMC, Connecticut

Sunday, [March 12](#) at the **Warwick UMC, New York**

For more information, see below.

Books by Terry Tekyl: Those who attended the Bishop's Convocation in January heard a lively presentation by Terry Teykl. Terry is a strong advocate of encouraging every church to be a prayer-based church. He has authored several books, and has graciously donated one copy of each to the district office. You are, of course, welcome to borrow any of these:

The Presence Based Church

How to Pray after You've Kicked the Dog

Making Room to Pray: How to Start and Maintain a Prayer Room in Your Church

Blueprint for the House of Prayer

A Pilgrimage with the Bishop to the Holy Land

You will soon receive a brochure describing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Bishop Park. The trip is scheduled from February 11 to 20, **2007**. All are welcome to participate! Watch for the brochure!

District Chaplains

Pastors and their spouses sometimes have pastoral needs, and the D.S. is charged with the responsibility to provide for that pastoral care. Yet this is sometimes an awkward relationship because the D.S. is, of course, also the boss. To address this need, several trusted colleagues have been asked to serve as chaplains. They have been instructed that unless someone confesses to theft or fraud against the church, or against the people of their church, or to sexual predation against anyone, and/or to sexual misconduct or abuse of a minor, the chaplains are NOT to report to the D.S., and are to keep the conversations confidential. The chaplains are: Ginny Hoch, Goshen UMC; Ernie VanderKruik, Harriman UMC; Jim Moore, Hyde Park UMC; Peggy Ann Sauerhoff, Fishkill UMC; Bill Pfohl, Jesse Lee UMC, Ridgefield, and Kim Bosley, First UMC, Norwalk.

Taize Worship Opportunity for Confirmation Classes and Youth Groups

Sunday, March 26 at 3:00 pm.

At Diamond Hill U.M.C., Greenwich, CT

Youth groups, confirmation classes, and all who are interested, are invited to experience Taize prayer at Diamond Hill United Methodist Church in Greenwich, CT. Following an introduction to the Taize tradition and worship style, the gathered will enter into a half-hour service of prayer. Afterwards, participants will share fellowship and pizza together. The candlelight Taize worship consists of short meditative sung prayers, scripture and prayerful silence.

This is a great opportunity for your youth to experience an alternative style of worship; many who came last year commented that it was their favorite event of the year. Please let Sarah Vetter know if you are coming so that food can be planned for. Folks are asked to bring \$5 to contribute towards pizza.

Because We Care:

Please be in prayer for **Bev Risi**. Bev mourns the recent death of her husband.

Kirt Watkins is recovering from recent surgery. Please keep Kirt in your prayers.

Glad to see **Henry McCarter** back in action after a recent auto accident.

Sylvester McClearn is home from the hospital, but please keep him in your prayers.

Help Wanted

In December, Larry Smith, our volunteer **district web master/computer fixer** will be moving out of the area. If there is anyone who feels called to this task, please call us at the district office: 203-348-9181. Of course, the job could be divided, especially if someone is willing to serve as web-master, but does not live near enough to provide the computer fix-it help we need from time to time.

By popular demand, we are, once again, sending monthly newsletters. However, because of limited office time, the Superintendent would be very pleased to have an editor for the district newsletter. Again, the number to call to volunteer is 203-348-9181.

Whether or not someone volunteers to edit our monthly newsletter, it would be helpful if churches can email camera-ready (or insert ready) material about their church events to the district office nyctnyac@aol.com. We would very much like to include news about your church, so send in the information!

Words of Appreciation!

Special thanks to the **Danbury UMC**, who continues to host so many district events – DCOM meetings, DCOOM meetings, the Visioning Focus Group, etc. In addition, we thank **Trinity UMC in Newburgh**, and **Jesse Lee UMC in Ridgefield** for hosting this year's Lay Speakers Schools.

The New York-Connecticut District
Committee on Lay Speaking
Invites you to share in the 2006

LENTEN SCHOOL OF RELIGION



WHERE?: *Trinity United Methodist Church
1 Owens Road, Newburgh, NY*

WHEN?: *Sunday evenings during Lent.
March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 2, 9
5 P.M.-- 8 P.M.*

HOW DO I JOIN IN? *Since materials must be ordered for Lay Speaking courses, **pre-registration/pre-payment is required.** Please fill out, detach and mail the form below by 2/24/06*

WHAT HAPPENS?: *Each evening will begin at 5 with a soup and sandwich supper. Classes run from 5:30 until 7:30, followed by closing worship.*

COURSES

- +Lay Speakers Basic Course
- +Lay Speakers Preach (Advanced)
- +Lay Speakers Lead Small Groups
- +Lay Speakers Lead Prayer
- +Lay Speakers Lead in Worship

- + Potpourri (Topic changes weekly, perfect for those who can only make a few classes.)

- + Bible study (A comprehensive, interactive 6 week study group.)
- + In Search of Security (Methodist Bishop's thoughts on dealing with life in an insecure world, interactive 5 week study group)

Name _____ Phone# _____

Home Church _____

Class Choice (check one) ___Lay Speaker Basic Course (\$25) ___Lay Speakers Preach (Advanced) (\$35)

Lay Speakers Lead in Worship (Advanced) (\$35) Lay Speakers Lead Prayer (Advanced) (\$35)
 Lay Speakers Lead Small Groups (Advanced re-cert) (\$35) Potpourri (free) Bible Study (free)
 In Search of Security (free)

Please make check or money order payable to: "Jim Schoonmaker -- Committee on Lay Speaking"
Please mail form and payment to: Grace UMC, PO Box 2556, Newburgh, NY 12550, attn: Lay Speaking

**For even more news,
Keep on reading!**



Volunteers in Mission to Mozambique 2006
New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
July 13 – 27*

Church Building in Beira

WHO is a Volunteer in Mission?

A Volunteer In Mission (VIM) is a person who chooses to travel beyond their local church to help others in need as directed by the host UMC conference. The VIM movement is the fastest growing and most exciting mission program offered through the United Methodist Church today.

WHERE will we go?

Members of this year's VIM team will travel again to Beira, the capital of Sofala Province, on the Indian Ocean. This summer's trip will be the 11th from our conference, and will continue the ministry begun when Bishop Forrest Stith led a delegation in 1994.

We will be living, eating and working with the people of Mozambique, as we build a community of faith together.

Mozambique was a colony of Portugal for centuries until gaining its independence in 1975. Their struggle for

independence was immediately followed by a 16 year civil war over control of the country, which left the nation deeply

scarred. In 1993 the United Nations declared Mozambique "the fourth poorest nation in the world." Much of the

progress that was achieved in recent years has been severely set back due to devastating floods in the spring of 2000.

Still recovering from the war and natural disasters, the people are in desperate need of schools, hospitals, churches

and basic human needs.

WHAT have we done in the past?

We do what the people of Mozambique feel they need most. Each year our teams have included some trained

carpenters and other trades people who help teach their trades and skills to the people of Mozambique.

Past projects

include rebuilding a warehouse roof that was destroyed during the civil war; rebuilding educational, medical, and

church facilities; repairing new and old roofs on orphanage dorms; and replacing screens on doors and windows, just

to name a few.

Some people help with the construction, although those with computer, medical or technical skills are in great demand

also. Library skills, teachers of computer skills, singers, musicians, craftsmen, nurses, housewives, students, pastors

– all have had successful VIM experiences.

In fact, whatever your walk in life, you will find countless ways to share your time, talent and Christian love with our

brothers and sisters in Mozambique. VIM teams have traveled to Niassa province Mozambique, where we helped with

a new church building in Lichinga, as well as a new parsonage in Cuamba.

In 2005, we helped to start construction of an Episcopal residence, needed because of the rapid growth of Methodism

in Mozambique. Most important is the sharing of ourselves with the Mozambicans. Our presence is more highly

valued than our presents!

WHY are we going?

Because they need us, and we need them. The United Methodist Church of Mozambique has many needs, and we

can help them. The United Methodist Church of the United States has many needs as well, and we can learn from this

experience. All who have participated in this mission program have been changed by their experiences - there is so

much to learn as we gather around a common table, to worship and work together. The New York Annual Conference

- Mozambique Annual Conference Sister Conference Task Force has made the evangelization efforts in the

Mozambique – North Conference area our VIM focus for the next four years.

For 2006, the Mozambique – North Conference has asked us to continue to work with them on the new Conference

Office and Parsonage in Beira.

· dates depend on final flight schedules

WHO Should Go?

Members, lay and clergy, of the New York Annual Conference, as well as anyone else who feels led to go.

The trip may be particularly of interest to:

- Anyone interested in mission work.
- Persons looking for personal growth in a unique Christian community.
- College age students seeking career decisions.
- Persons of African - American ancestry who would like to learn more about the continent of their ancestors.
- Pastors wanting to ignite their congregations by learning how the Mozambique conferences have grown six-fold in 15 years.

Applicants must be willing to travel, live and work together side by side for two weeks, including a 14-hour flight from

New York to Johannesburg, South Africa. Team members will be asked to share their experiences with others and to

promote the Sister - Conference relationship when they return.

People of all walks of life, all ages, and all backgrounds will be needed to make this year's VIM mission a success.

While our mission project is of a construction nature, applicants need not be skilled trades people.

Everyone lends a

hand, but also finds other avenues for their own God given talents. The physical project is a communication vehicle to

show the depth of our commitment to our brothers and sisters in Christ, while our physical presence is a testament to

God's love in the world.

All applications must include a \$100 deposit, with the check made out to "Frontier Foundation."

Team members **must attend team building sessions** scheduled by the New York-Mozambique Sister Conference

Task Force **regardless of prior VIM experience.**

It is our hope that this year's team will reflect the racial, social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds of our conference.

WHEN Will We Go?

The 2006 VIM Team is tentatively scheduled to depart from JFK airport on July 13 and return July 27th.

This is "winter"

in Mozambique, with daily highs of 75° - 80° and nighttime lows of 60°.

HOW MUCH will this cost?

The cost will be about \$3700 depending on fluctuation in 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.

NYAC Volunteer in Mission to Mozambique Application 2006

Name _____ Phone _____ email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Occupation _____ Skills, Hobbies, Talents to share _____

Circle Age Group: Under 18 18-30 31-50 51 and over Were you a VIM prior years? _____

Local Church _____ District _____

Pastor _____ Pastor's Phone _____

Health Limitations _____ Passport # and Expiration Date _____

Send a letter about why you want to go, and a **\$100 application fee** payable to: Frontier Foundation.

Mail to: **Annette Griffith, 35 Mountainside Rd., Monroe, CT 06468**

annettegriffith@earthlink.net

For even more news,

Keep on reading!



**Financial Planning
from a Christian Perspective**

with Ed Ruppmann and John Henderson

Sunday, March 12

4:00 PM to 6:30 PM

Warwick United Methodist Church

135 Forester Avenue, Warwick, NY 10990

A potluck dinner will be served ...please call the church at 845-986-1030 if you are coming to the dinner.

Ed Ruppman is a NYAC trustee, LIE District Stewardship Chair and VP at Citigroup. He has 33 years of experience

in strategic and financial planning. John Henderson is a Lay Leader and Trustee at Centerport UMC and Attorney.

He has a law practice that specializes in Elder Care and Estate Planning.

What's Unique About This Program?

No Sales Pitch – **voluntary program – you execute plan**

Plan for yourself - **don't allow others to decide for you**

Get a free **1st or 2nd opinion**

Topics Ed and John will cover are:

Planned Living for Planned Giving

Get on solid financial ground – proven programs that work

Don't be caught short - Retirement & College Savings plans

Protect your savings – receive Government paid nursing care

This district-wide event is for both pastors and laity concerned about their finances. Everyone should bring lunch.

Pre-registration is necessary!

Call 888-696-6922, ext. 228 or 230, or e-mail smitchell@nyac.com



For Such a Time as This:
We Are the Church Together

The 2006 Annual Conference Session will be held on June 7-10 at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. The Call to Conference has been mailed to all clergy and will be mailed

in the next couple of days to all elected lay members of the New York Annual Conference. (Registration forms and other information will also be posted on the conference website - <http://www.nyac.com/> - for downloading.) This, however, is an invitation from Bishop Jeremiah Park to all persons in our conference to attend the on Saturday, June 10, when we will celebrate the ministry of the local church.

1. The Ordination Service will also be on Saturday, June 10, at 2:00 PM.
2. Choirs from all of our churches are invited to join the mass choir for this service. Choirs wishing to join this mass choir must contact Ann Pearson (apearson@nyac.com; 888-696-6922, ext. 230) so she may be sure that sufficient preparations are made. The two pieces of music choirs will need to prepare in advance are "How Lovely Are the Messengers" by Mendelssohn and the "Hallelujah Chorus" by Handel. One copy of the Mendelssohn piece is available from Ann Pearson (apearson@nyac.com; 888-696-6922, ext. 230). We have been given permission to duplicate this piece for this event. Choirs will need to bring their own copies of the the "Hallelujah Chorus." Rehearsal will be at 12:30 PM in the arena

"Ask Me!" Volunteers Needed

If you're planning to attend annual conference and would like to volunteer to assist with helping people with directions and general information, please contact Ann Pearson at apearson@nyac.com.