



# UMC Connection

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church • Becoming fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world • www.bwcumc.org • Volume 25, Issue 4 • April 9, 2014



An Easter message of hope from Bishop Matthews – p. 7

## Young adults explore 'shifting' lives



Jamaal Newman, of Queen's Chapel UMC, paints as part of the Shift Happens worship March 15. Painting, spoken word poetry, music and conversation were all part of the experience for young adults who explored a variety of shifts in their own lives.

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMCConnection Staff

**A**LL THAT YOUNG adults want today, according to the Rev. B. Kevin Smalls, pastor at Queen's Chapel UMC in Beltsville, is to meet a Samaritan along the road.

In other words, what they want is what every other human wants: authentic relationships.

Smalls spoke March 15 at the first-ever "Shift Happens" event, designed by and for young adults in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. More than 100 people attended the day-long gathering at Smalls' church, which featured workshops, music by American Idol's "Kurtis Parks & The Anthem," a live Twitter feed, and off-the-hook food.

"I think the biggest hope for young adults is to discover authentic, meaningful relationships," he said, adding that you can hear that hope laced throughout popular music, both secular and religious.

"A lot of the songs now sound like love ballads to God," Smalls said. "That comes out of a desire to move beyond the divorce that we went through, to move beyond the family disappointments, to move beyond 'I didn't know my father,' to move beyond 'I was abandoned by my mother.' I'm really determined to meet a Samaritan on this road."

Smalls, of course, is referencing Luke 10:25-37, best known as

the parable of the Good Samaritan and the Scripture for the 2014 Baltimore-Washington Conference Session in May.

"Even if the priest walks past me, even if the Levite walks past me, I will build community with the one that stops and helps me along the way," Smalls said. He said that this parable is at the crux of young adult life: the community is on the road, boundaries are going to get tested, and we're going to find out who stops.

"Young adults today are more than willing to build bridges with people outside of their race, people even outside of their religion," Smalls said. "The neighborhood is becoming globalized every single day."

The problem, as Smalls sees it, is that many churches are unwilling or unable to keep up with the shifts. As a result, many young adults see the church as being too closed and simply stay away.

Or, as Smalls said, using Luke 10 language, young adults are phrasing it: "You're upset with me that I have a friend who is a Samaritan when *you* didn't even stop. And then when I bring my Samaritan friend to church, you don't make room for him or her!"

Loreal Scott, from Shiloh Community UMC in Newburg, said that she was ready for a shift in her life.

"I want to learn more about God," she said, "and I want to learn more about where I'm going now that I'm a young adult." Scott had attended a workshop on relationships, taught by Smalls.

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## Conference strengthens Zimbabwe Partnership

BY MAIDSTONE MULENGA  
UMCConnection Staff

**W**ITH A FOCUS on promotion of education, health and spiritual development, the Baltimore-Washington Conference has started work on a new framework for partnership with the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area (ZEA) of The United Methodist Church, which encompasses two annual conferences.

To kick-off the discussion on a new partnership

agreement, the Rev. Joseph Daniels, chair of the Zimbabwe Partnership and superintendent of the Greater Washington District, and the Rev. Maidstone Mulenga, BWC Assistant to the Bishop, met with their counterparts at the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area head office in Harare March 18. During the meeting, the two sides agreed on the need to continue the partnership that originally started in December 1997, and to refine it to address current needs in both BWC and ZEA, especially in regard to pastors' training, education,

community health and leadership development.

ZEA Deputy Assistant to the Bishop, the Rev. Alan Gurupira, noted that one of the sure benefits of the partnership was the success of the Pastors' School, held every two years at Africa University with BWC providing most of the support in resources and instructors. The next one is set for July 2015.

"The partnership must continue," said Gurupira, who is also the director of Connectional Ministries. "There has been great fruit and we are inviting

See Zimbabwe, page 3





# ... well said

(a chance to express what that word means to you.)

BY MANDY SAYERS  
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

**W**HEN GOD SHOWS Ezekiel the valley of dry bones and asks if these bones can live, Ezekiel gives probably the best answer one could give, "O Lord God, you know." He could've said, "No way. What's done is done. There's no way these old things can have new life." He could've said, "Absolutely. You watch and see and I'll do it. You don't have to lift a divine finger. Watch and see what I can do."

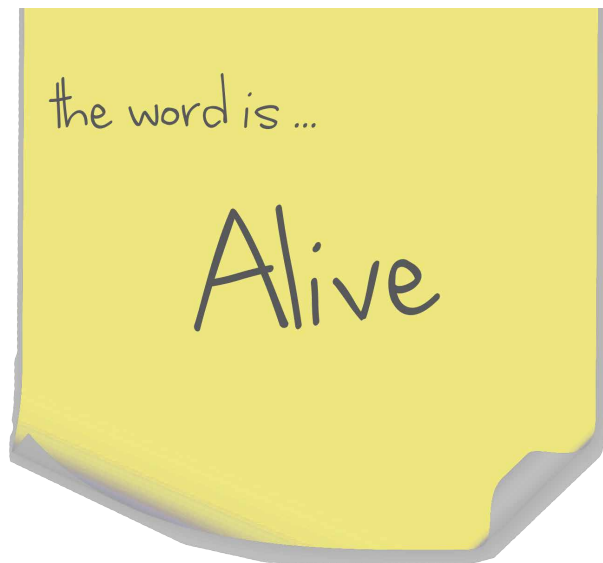
Instead he puts the ball back in God's court. "O Lord God, you know." In other words, he trusted God to be God, tried to follow God's leading hand, and waited in the valley of dry bones for God to move, or move him.

And God wasn't absent, or angry, or weak, or vindictive, or far-off. God gets to work in the valley of dry bones. Just like in Genesis 2, where we see God kneeling in the dirt, shaping humankind out of earth and breathing into humankind the breath of life, God gets busy taking what looks dead and gone and shaping it into something new and alive.

Easter is the ultimate breathing of new life into an old, dead world, because in the resurrection of Jesus, we all can know what it is to be truly alive. For a Christian, there is Easter, sending new life cascading into every dead place. On Easter, God moved. God moved to free humanity from everything that would enslave and kill us. God moved the stone away from the dry bones place, and Jesus was on the loose. Alive.

As nature itself comes alive in spring, let us embrace what it means to be alive in Christ. It's more than merely respiration and perspiration. It's sharing Christ's love with folks at the end of their rope, in need of new life, in the valley of dry bones. It's living gratefully and boldly and sacrificially. It's taking holy risks for the Gospel.

Because of what God did on Easter morning, being alive will never be the same again. Church, Easter is coming. It's time to come alive!



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION



... well said

BY DARYL WILLIAMS  
Pastor, New Hope Fellowship UMC, Upper Marlboro

**T**O BE HONEST, I have never been a fan of winter. From late November until around April, I simply am not at my best. There are a lot of things that I don't like about winter. The days are shorter; it gives you less time to get things done; and I am not a fan of the cold weather. You have to bundle up, wear layers and even with all of that you are still uncomfortable.

Most of all, I don't like the lack of life that winter provides. No flowers. No grass. From the time that the last leaves fall from the trees to the return of spring, winter gives me a feeling of desolation and lack of life that is just down-right depressing.

Unfortunately, for many of us, winter is not just a season on the calendar. Sometimes winter is a season that we seem to be going through in life. We feel that there is just not enough time in the day to do all the things that we have to do. We feel like there are just layers and layers of things that are burdening us and holding us back, making us uncomfortable every day.

Worse yet, in winter seasons of life, we may begin to feel as if things are dying. We may feel like all of the life has gone out of our hopes, dreams and aspirations.

Luckily, winter is not the last word.

As Christian, we know that no matter how bad winter looks, it simply is not the end. We know that in darkness we can find the Light of the world. We know that in cold times, we can feel strangely warmed. We know that when we are uncomfortable, a comforter has come. We know that where others expected to find death, early one morning, a faithful group of women found life. We know that winter is not the end because, in the spring of every year, we have a reminder of life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

My brothers and sisters, take heart. The winter seasons of our life have been overcome. There is no more death. There is no more struggle. There is no more heartache. Your hope is still ALIVE. Your faith is still ALIVE. Your dreams are still ALIVE. You are still ALIVE. All things are still possible for you, simply because Jesus is still ALIVE.

... well said

## EVENTS

### Walk the Stations of the Cross

**Camp Manidokan, Knoxville**  
**April 19, sunrise to sunset**

Participate in a self-guided tour through the scenes of the last hours of Jesus' life. Warm beverages and snacks will be provided. For more information, contact Chris Schlieckert at 301-834-7244 or manidokan@gmail.com or visit www.manidokan.org.

### The BWC Young Adult Council mission trip

**New Jersey Sandy relief**  
**April 24-26**

Participants will drive to New Jersey and assist in building repair. Participation is limited. Cost is \$60. For information, contact Cheryl Cook at ccook@bwcumc.org.

### Order of Elders

**April 29, 11 a.m.**  
**Grace UMC, Hagerstown**

The order is exploring teleconferencing and live streaming. Learn more about the Order at <http://bwcorderofelders.weebly.com/>.

### Older Adults Day Away

**West River Center**

**April 30, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.,**  
The Rev. Wayne DeHart, Director of Church Relations for Asbury Communities, will be the speaker on "Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century." Cost is \$28 per person. Register at [http://www.bwccampsandretreats.com/WRDayAway\\_files/OADA\\_Spring\\_2014\\_onepage.pdf](http://www.bwccampsandretreats.com/WRDayAway_files/OADA_Spring_2014_onepage.pdf).

### How to Reach New People

**May 3-4, Brook Hill UMC, Frederick**  
**May 3, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; May 4, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Workshop sponsored by BWC Vibrant Communities. Pastor must attend with team. Registration required. Deadline is April 23. To register, go to [http://www.bwcumc.org/events/how\\_reach\\_new\\_people\\_2](http://www.bwcumc.org/events/how_reach_new_people_2). For information, contact Jo Chesson at [jchesson@bwcumc.org](mailto:jchesson@bwcumc.org), or 800-492-2525, Ext. 490.

### Turning Tippers into Tithers'

**May 10**  
**BWC Mission Center**

Workshop sponsored by BWC Vibrant Communities. A one-day workshop offering biblically-based, practical insights for helping to make stewardship of resources a way of life in congregations. For the pastor and members from the finance, stewardship or leadership team. \$15 per person. Registration deadline is May 2. To register, go to [http://www.bwcumc.org/events/turning\\_tippers\\_tithers](http://www.bwcumc.org/events/turning_tippers_tithers). For information, contact Jo Chesson at [jchesson@bwcumc.org](mailto:jchesson@bwcumc.org), or 800-492-2525, Ext. 490.

### UM Family Fun Day

**Kings Dominion**  
**May 17**

A full day of fun, food and United Methodist fellowship at this 30th anniversary event. Tickets must be purchased online. Log in as: username - KDUMC; password- KDUMC. Information at [www.kingsdominion.com](http://www.kingsdominion.com).

1814-2014  
**FOUNDRY**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
Celebrating 200 years  
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## Robtel Neajai Pailey

**Sunday, April 27, 2014**  
(9:30 AM & 11:00 AM services)

Pailey served as special assistant for communications to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia. Her children's book *Gbagba* was published to acclaim in 2013 when she was also named one of "99 under 33 influential foreign policy leaders" by the *Diplomatic Courier*.



1500 16th Street NW ~ Washington DC 20036  
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## UMConnection

**Bishop Marcus Matthews**  
**Maidstone Mulenga**

Resident Bishop  
Assistant to the Bishop

**Melissa Lauber**  
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**Alison Burdett**  
**Linda Worthington**  
**Harrison Zepp**  
**Kayla Spears**

Director of Communications  
Managing Editor  
Graphic Designer  
Communications Associate  
Webmaster  
Communications Associate

UMConnection is the newspaper of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, whose vision is to become fully alive in Christ and make a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world

The UMConnection (ISSN 005386) is owned and published by the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church, 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, MD 20759-2594.

Telephone: (410) 309-3400 • (800) 492-2525 • fax: (410) 309-9794 • e-mail: [milauber@bwcumc.org](mailto:milauber@bwcumc.org).

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

To subscribe, email [kspears@bwcumc.org](mailto:kspears@bwcumc.org).

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



# Zimbabwe: Partnership benefits all, leaders say

From page 1

you to continue the partnership.”

Through the Rev. Austern Chepiri, who is in charge of mission projects, the Zimbabwean side also expressed appreciation for the support from the BWC in terms of projects that were accomplished through the Hope Fund, which included construction of several parsonages and sanctuaries throughout Zimbabwe.

those who have taken mission trips to Zimbabwe and participated in the Pastors’ School. “Many people are actualizing their dreams through this partnership and still others are being summoned to ministry,” Daniels said.

The two sides also talked about the possibility of pulpit exchanges between pastors, new possible topics for the pastors’ school, a collective focus on youth and young adult ministry with a possible forum during the

The two sides agreed to explore how the partnership would help in the revitalization and upgrade of the hospitals and rural clinics in Zimbabwe through partnerships with the Zimbabwe Health Board, ZEA Conference leadership and UMCOR.

Apart from the Pastors’ School and mission projects, the two sides also talked about the possibility of creating scholarship funds to help with the education fees for students in UMC schools and to encourage individuals, churches or organizations to contribute to the timely payment of the base salaries for pastors in ZEA.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference will continue to work with its local churches to recruit, equip and deploy Volunteer in Mission (VIM) teams throughout Zimbabwe in support of schools, hospitals, clinics and local churches. The ZEA leadership said their conferences will incorporate the key elements of the covenant relationship agreement into the long term strategic missional priorities and its annual operating plans.

The Rev. Z.T. Marewangeo, the senior assistant to the bishop, announced that the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area is focused on “BEB”: the first “B” standing for bringing more souls to Jesus Christ; “E” for Ebenezer Convention, which the ZEA will host in August; and the last “B” for building new conference centers.

Later, Daniels and Mulenga were taken on a tour of the new conference center, under construction in a residential area in Harare.

The meeting was also attended by members of the Board of Ordained Ministry, who are in charge of the Pastors’ School. They will draft the initial plan for the 2015 Pastors’ School and share it with the BWC team before it is finalized.

The BWC side will draft the new partnership agreement and share it with the Zimbabwean team and then present a finalized version for approval by Bishop Marcus Matthews and his counterpart, Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa.



Bishop Marcus Matthews, left, and the Revs. Joseph Daniels, Ianther Mills, Beth Ludlum and Maidstone Mulenga, in Africa.

Daniels noted that the Baltimore-Washington Conference has also benefited greatly from the partnership, especially in spiritual growth among

school being established, the need for literature on UMC polity, and for attention to be devoted to growing junior church schools in Zimbabwe.

# Shift: Young adults learn to navigate life-changes

From page 1

“You need to have a relationship with God before anyone else,” she said. “Your love needs to be in God before you love anybody else.”

Scott said that she attended Shift because it was important to her to move forward with her life, and to be able to share her story with others.

Charlene Pinkney, who came with Scott and her friend Tyrika Ford to the event, said that she had learned about a big shift in her life: money.

“Remember, the reason that you have the money you have is through God,” she said. “God deserves a lot more than what we already give.” She said that the subject of tithing — giving 10 percent to God — was a good reminder for her on how to set one’s priorities.

Gary Derr, with Crown Financial Ministries for the past 26 years, was the workshop leader where Pinkney was reminded of tithing. He shared biblically-based principals on how to manage financial shifts.

“As Christians, we can’t separate our finances from our spiritual life,” he said. “There’s a better way, a better purpose, that God has for our material possessions than what many of us do now.”

Derr said his goal in teaching the workshop with young adults was for them to understand that people of faith need to recognize that God is the owner of “everything.”

“Because of that,” he said, “we need to change our mindset from one that says ‘we are the owner’ to one that is ‘we are the steward.’ That means we’re going to manage the things God gives us.”

Derr said that he is struck by how young adults today haven’t been taught how to deal with finances.

“A lot of that is because it’s a hard area for a lot of churches to go into,” he said, “because of past failures of some Christians in high standing.” Derr added that financial conversations are often difficult because of the “owner” mindset prevalent in today’s society, even in the church.

Derr said his message for all Christians — not just young adults — is a reminder that God calls us to faithfulness, not success, in our finances.

Washington East District Superintendent, the Rev. Rebecca Iannicelli, delivered a keynote address during Shift, talking about the differences between work, jobs and vocation.

“Vocation is not your work or your job,” said Iannicelli.

“Vocation is the work of discovering and living into the answers of the questions ‘Who am I?’ ‘Who will go with me?’ and ‘What am I to do?’”

Iannicelli shared her own personal story of how she came to be a Christian at the young-adult age of 31. Her then four-year old son prompted her to go to church one Saturday, and by Tuesday — after having cold-called that church that Sunday morning — she knew the answers to those questions for the first time in her life.

“I felt love and forgiveness wash over me, and that I had found new life,” she said. From that moment on, she knew her vocation was to “go and tell.”

After going over some steps of discernments, Iannicelli reminded her audience that vocation always brings life, not death; that your life has purpose; and that we are to “hear and do, and look for a clue.”

“Vocation is never boring,” she said. “It will take ALL of you.”



Kurtis Parks, a former contestant on American Idol, leads worship at Shift Happens.

Did you know the Young Adult Council has a Facebook page? Follow them at [facebook.com/groups/bwcyac](https://facebook.com/groups/bwcyac) to be the first to hear of events and mission trips for adults ages 18-35!





# Thomas Curcio to retire from Board of Child Care July 1

BY ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

**F**OR THE PAST 21 years, Thomas Curcio has gone to work each day with one goal in mind: making life better for children.

With a mantra of “children first,” Curcio has done exactly that as CEO of the Board of Child Care of The United Methodist Church. Curcio is retiring July 1, after leading the organization through a sea-change of expansion and growth.

When Curcio arrived at the BCC in 1993, the agency had an annual budget of \$3 million and served 50 youth, all in one location. Today, the BCC has multiple locations in three states and serves more than 2,000 youth and families every year.

“Tom Curcio is an innovator, an entrepreneur, a pioneer and a miracle worker. He transformed our Board of Child Care from a custodial system into a cutting-edge, much-imitated resource for children in need and their families,” said Bishop Marcus Matthews, episcopal leader of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. “Tom is a leader of great integrity, vision and generosity.”

“Twenty-one years ago, when I accepted the position as CEO, my colleagues did not understand why I would go to a smaller agency than where I had been for 10 years,” Curcio said. “After my visits, I formed a vision as to what the Board of Child Care could become as a high performing agency providing out-of-home care.”

Curcio said he is proud of his legacy of expanding the BCC’s programs and the quality of care.

“We have provided thousands of children the opportunity to better themselves,” he said, crediting the whole staff of the BCC. “The programs will remain to help many more for years to come. I believe my mantra, children first, has been accomplished.”

Jay Hayden, chair of the board of directors of the BCC, announced Curcio’s retirement March 14 in a press release. Hayden specifically noted Curcio’s commitment to children.

“We have been blessed to have such a visionary leader over the past 21 years,” Hayden said. “Tom’s commitment to children and youth is beyond extraordinary.”

During Curcio’s leadership, the Board of Child Care has received several honors, including Organization of the Year Award and Best Practice Award for Innovative Programming from the United Methodist Association. In 2009, Curcio was named Administrator of the Year by the same group.

“It has been an honor to be part of this healing ministry,” Curcio said, “and to be able to serve the needs of our youth. I am proud of the success we have been able to achieve as an organization and consider it a privilege to have had the opportunity to work with so many skilled clinicians, dedicated caregivers and committed staff.”

Accolades for Curcio’s work are coming in from many corners of the church. In addition to praising Curcio for the work he has done with the area’s neediest children, Bishop Matthews applauded him for the spirit of innovative partnership he has created. “Under Tom’s leadership, funds were made available to finance the conference’s new Mission Center in Fulton, and an ambulance was purchased to serve a community in Zimbabwe. Wherever there is need, wherever young people are hurting, Tom is there with a plan that makes a difference,” Matthews said.

“Our relationship with the Baltimore-Washington Conference has improved over the years where I believe it is a true partnership,” said Curcio. “We have assisted the Conference in financing the Mission Center, the camping

program, the Russia Initiative, and provided grants to churches to open up day care and after school programs.”

Longtime BCC board member and now bishop of the Philadelphia Area, Bishop Peggy Johnson, said in a statement that she was grateful to Curcio for his outstanding service. “He has expanded BCC into new programs and set a new standard for service and outreach for youth throughout the region,” she said.

“I look forward to retirement,” said Curcio. “My wife and I plan to travel and spend more time with our family, especially our four grandchildren and one on the way.”



Thomas Curcio addresses graduates at the BCC Falling Waters campus in West Virginia.

Curcio said that he will also continue to coach his granddaughter’s and grandson’s basketball teams. “I often have said if I was not in child welfare, I would have been a coach,” he said.

The BCC began as three orphanages in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; they merged in 1960 to become the Board of Child Care.

The BCC’s board of directors has formed a search committee that will conduct a national search for the next executive. More information is available at <http://www.boardofchildcare.org/>.

**Baltimore Metropolitan District C.A.R.E.S!**  
Compassionate Actions Reaching Each Soul

## Bring Care Kits to Annual Conference

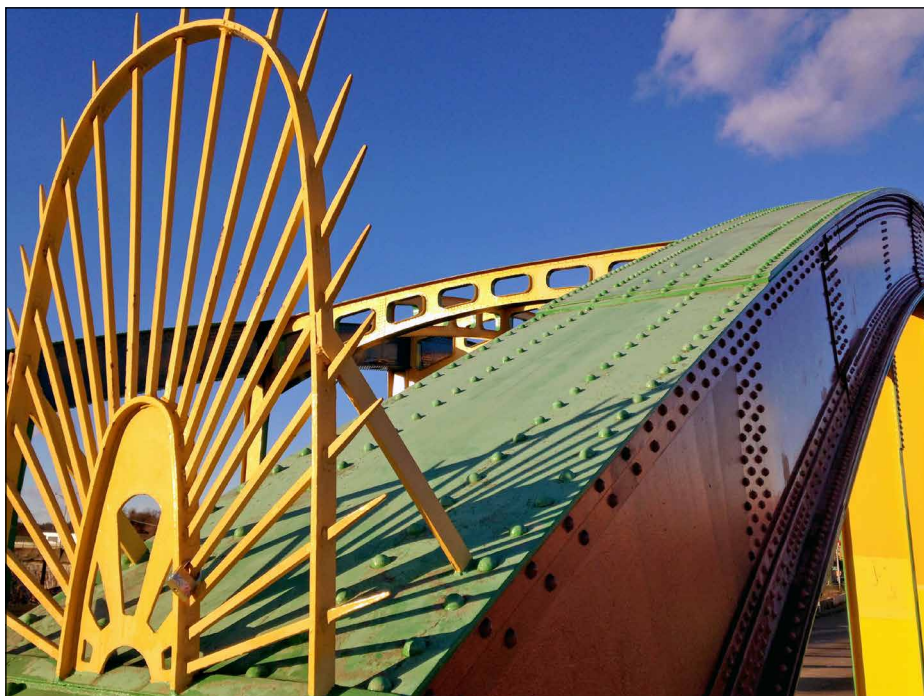
Each church in the Baltimore-Washington Conference is invited to make 10 care kits to help the un-housed in Baltimore City.

You can make a difference in people’s lives by filling each kit with basic necessities (toothpaste, shampoo, etc.).

The Baltimore Region team will collect the Care Kits at Annual Conference and distribute them to shelters. For information on the contents of the kits, visit [www.bwcumc.org/carekits](http://www.bwcumc.org/carekits)

Questions? Contact Christine Kumar at [ckumar@bwcumc.org](mailto:ckumar@bwcumc.org).

## Bridging diverse cultures



**T**HE THEME OF the 230th session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference is “Building Bridges: Be Love.” The logo for this year’s session features a bridge from each of the four regions of the conference. Last issue, we featured the Burnside Bridge at Antietam Battlefield, located in the Western Region of the Conference. This issue, we come to the Baltimore Region and a colorful icon of the City of Baltimore: the Howard Street Bridge.

Built in 1938 by the J. E. Greiner Company — one of the most influential bridge building companies of its time, with credits today of engineering both the Denver and Tampa airports — the bridge carries more than 17,000 vehicles every day.

In 2003, the Howard Street Bridge was orange, with peeling paint and rust showing through. It had not been painted in 25 years. Then mayor of Baltimore, Martin O’Malley, wanted to paint the bridge Kelly green. City officials wanted to paint it “rust brown, green and blue with a splash of yellow,” according to a newspaper article at the time.

O’Malley called that paint scheme “God-awful,” and conducted an internet poll where voters could choose between two color schemes: his, and the city planners. On Nov. 1, 2003, the results were announced: the mayor lost, 2,689 to 2,450.

“I submit to the will of the people,” O’Malley said at that time. “To paraphrase Jefferson, I fear for my countrymen, that they may receive the bridge colors they deserve.”

The Baltimore Metropolitan District is home to 19,212 United Methodists, with 6,834 worshippers. The Rev. Cynthia Moore-Koikoi serves as the superintendent.

The Baltimore Suburban District is led by District Superintendent, the Rev. Laura Easto, and is home to more than 22,300 members, with 7,981 worshippers each weekend.



# New disciple-making community starts in Dundalk

By ERIK ALSGAARD  
UMConnection Staff

**T**O BE CLEAR, the Rev. Dred Scott knows that this is not the normal way of starting a church. Biblical, yes; but not what contemporary Christians might recognize as “church.”

It’s all about making disciples, not churches.

“We’re creating a discipling culture,” said Scott, “where disciples make disciples who make disciples who make churches. It’s counter-intuitive to the present church culture, which maintains that churches make disciples. That doesn’t work too good.”

Scott is working with a small group of disciples — a “huddle” — in the Dundalk area near the Port of Baltimore. In the shadows of large shipping cranes, huge boats and more cars than you can count sitting in massive parking lots, the group is small but growing.

“If you look at churches today,” said Scott, “they might make a disciple or two. But if you use Christ’s model, where disciples make disciples who make disciples who make churches, you’re always going to get the church. So, if you make a disciple, you’ll get the church; if you use the church, you might get a disciple.”

Scott is convinced that in today’s church culture, people say they are Christian, but the concept of being a “disciple” never comes up.

“Jesus never said that,” said Scott. “Jesus said, in response to Peter, ‘I will build my church...’ he didn’t ask for architectural support systems or church programs — he didn’t ask for any of that. Jesus said ‘I’ll build the church; you make disciples.’ That’s what we’re focusing on.”

What Scott is doing is a unique — to say the least — way of church planting. There is no building the church calls “home;” no mortgage; there is no worship, per se; there are no bulletins. This is not a “parachute drop” form of starting a new church.

What this is is small group ministry with high involvement and high commitment expectations.

Scott said the idea for this gained traction in the United Kingdom as an attempt to revive the church there and across Europe. Mike Breen, an Anglican priest,



Rev. Dred Scott

brought his ideas to the United States. Breen, said Scott, saw that the book of Acts provided the blueprint for building church, that of understanding the culture and building community.

“You start with the understanding from Matthew,” Scott said, “where Jesus gives two commands: One in the fourth chapter, where Jesus says ‘come, follow me, and I’ll make you fishers of men.’ And in the 28th chapter, he says, ‘Go into the world and make disciples of Jesus Christ, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and teaching them.’”

Scott said that he is using this “come and go” matrix to make disciples.

Last September, Scott started a “huddle.” This small group of four people is the mechanism for discipling, he said. “It starts with recruiting, then we train, then we deploy, and then we review,” said Scott. “That’s how we do leadership development.”

“The huddle is leadership development, but it’s not based on whether or not a person is saved,” he said. “If you carefully look at (Matthew 28), discipling goes on with folks who are not yet believers. Most people just read the 18, 19, and 20 verses, but verse 17 says,



new church starts

‘Many worshipped him, but some doubted.’ This was the disciples they were talking about; they weren’t yet believers, but he was still discipling them.”

And as the huddle grows, it becomes a missional community of about 20 to 40 people. Scott said when it gets that big, it creates a new one.

Scott’s current missional community meets Thursday nights at Dundalk UMC. At a recent gathering, about 25 people gathered in the church’s Fellowship Hall.

“We seek to bring in the local community,” said Scott, “and give them the foundation for what happened in Acts, which is ‘oikos,’ a Greek word that means ‘family,’ or ‘extended family.’ That’s kind of our mantra.”

You could see that as soon as the gathering began. One woman interrupted at the start to share an announcement: “I’m pregnant,” she said.

The group applauded.

Scott used the moment to teach, noting the wonderfulness of life and what an amazing God we have that brings forth newness.

He then turned to the Bible, reading the text aloud while interspersing comments and observations while welcoming questions.

“We use story form,” Scott said, “where you have abbreviated stories of Scripture, and you start with the beginning. You read the story — only one narrator — and let it inform the group.”

The group listened intently, learning about Moses, Pharaoh and the Exodus.

“We’re not asking people to do anything extra,” said Scott. “We’re asking people to be intentional in being a disciple. You see, most people eat 21 times a week. So, for example, during several of those 21 times, you become intentional — you eat with a bunch of people; that’s what we do here; that’s why we come here.”

Scott said that these huddles and missional communities are not “microwave” fast.

“This is crock-pot ministry,” he said, meaning this way of doing “church” takes time. “We have the support of our bishop, my district superintendent, the Cabinet, and Andy Lunt with Vibrant Communities, giving this an opportunity to gain momentum. Because right now, we’re failing. I’m talking about the church universal... we’re failing. And so, this is a biblical standard and model. All we’re doing is incorporating what Jesus said... high invitation, high challenge.”

## What makes a successful new church start pastor?

By ANDY LUNT  
Director of Vibrant Communities

**N**OT EVERY PASTOR is called or gifted to plant a new faith community. Those who are able do so successfully tend to share certain inclinations and behaviors. Among them:

- *Apostolic gifts* — Successful church planters tend to have a strong focus on the “great commission” to make disciples, and behave more like a missionary than a pastor or shepherd. They are more concerned with reaching people “out there” than caring for those already “in here.”
- *Exceptional ability to network and to meet new people* — Planters are far more comfortable “hanging out” in restaurants, coffee shops, shopping malls, and even bars, where they are able to interact with those who have not yet

developed a relationship with Jesus than they are sitting in an office. Planters do not have to be extroverts; they just have to be committed to being with people. As consultant Jim Griffith is fond of saying, “church planting is a contact sport.”

- *Motivation to take initiative* — Successful planters don’t need external motivation, but tend to be self-starters who are driven to reach new people
- *Strong work ethic* — With no supervisor or Staff Parish Relations Committee keeping track of their hours, church planters have to want to put in the long hours required.
- *Demonstrated entrepreneurial experience* — Past behavior is a strong indicator of future fruitfulness. Successful church planters almost always have a track record of launching new things — new businesses, groups, classes,

activities in their past.

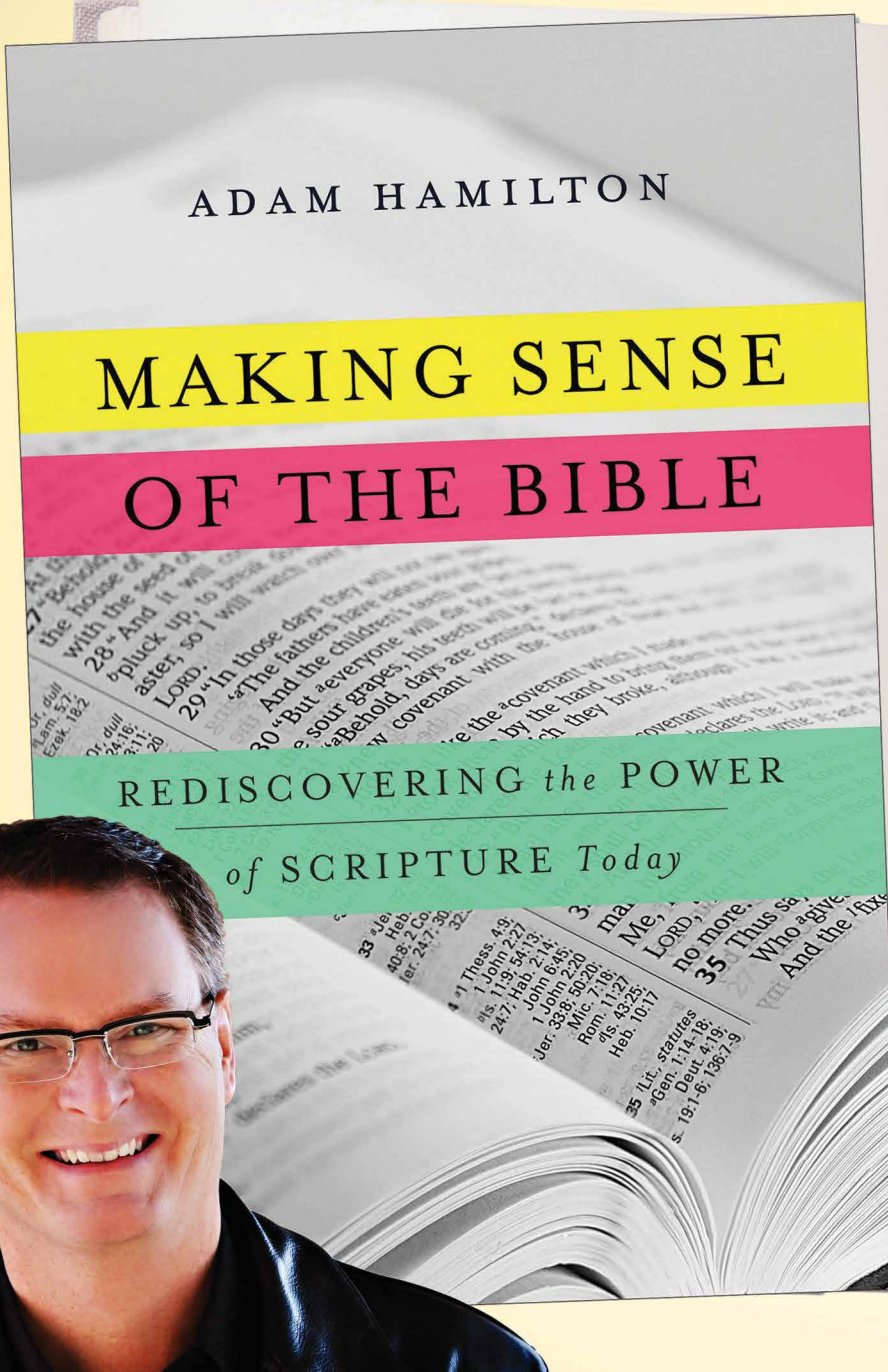
- *Strong affinity with those in their mission field* — Planters have to like and be able to relate well to the people they are trying to reach. Not every planter can be successful in every mission field.
- *Self-confidence* — it may take many months, or even years, before planters begin to see tangible results, so they must have confidence in their ability to produce fruit.
- *Good health* — All ministry is hard work, but planting a church is especially demanding, calling for long hours with little or no visible reward or accomplishment.
- *If married, a healthy marriage* — even more than most ministries, the demands involved in church planting can strain the best of marriages. The planter’s spouse must be equally committed to the endeavor.

**Young Adult Volleyball Tournament**

May 4 from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. rain or shine at Glen Mar UMC  
Cost: \$10 preregister / \$15 at the door to benefit **IMAGINE NO MALARIA**  
Register as a team of 4-6 people, or as an individual player

Pre-register by April 27. Contact Martin Brooks at 410-465-2919, ext. 12, or martin@bethanyum.org





**ADAM HAMILTON**

**MAKING SENSE OF THE BIBLE**

**REDISCOVERING the POWER of SCRIPTURE Today**

**Making Sense of the Bible: An Evening with Adam Hamilton**

Foundry UMC, Washington, D.C.  
April 23, 7 p.m.

Join pastor and best-selling author, Adam Hamilton, for an evening of teaching and conversation on his latest book, "Making Sense of the Bible."

In it, Hamilton digs deep to illuminate the meaning within the Bible, addresses hot-button issues, and answers pertinent questions on the subjects of violence; the Bible, homosexuality and gay marriage; women and leadership in the church; the discrepancies between creation stories and science; and why the Bible's Book of Revelation is not a guide to the end times.

This is a free event, but tickets are required at [www.foundryumc.org](http://www.foundryumc.org).

You can also purchase discounted books and package deals when you register. Hamilton will be signing copies of his book after the event.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### Church enrolls homeless in health care

ANNAPOLIS – Homeless people came to Asbury UMC on a recent Saturday for a free lunch, but they got much more, the opportunity and guidance to enroll in health insurance plans. The church regularly serves lunch on Saturday and found it was the perfect time to also help uninsured people to sign up with qualified health plans and Medicaid.

Church leaders Yolanda Perry and Rhonda Green planned the enrollment event. "Our church's mission is to serve the last, the least and the lost," they said, so the Affordable Care Act enrollment event was a perfect collaboration for the church.

Asbury UMC again offered the opportunity March 22. The church worked with certified navigators from Chatman, a partner with Healthcare Access Maryland, charged with reaching the uninsured, educating them about what was available and all details, then enrolling some right on the spot.

One who was enrolled was Franklin Johnson, the church's part-time custodial engineer. The church, like many small businesses couldn't afford to provide insurance for part-time employees.

"It's a great relief to me," said the Rev. Carletta Allen, "now that (he) has quality health insurance."

"I look forward to going to see a doctor," Johnson said. "A big weight has been lifted from my shoulders."

### Historic golf tournament helps building fund

HAGERSTOWN – Otterbein UMC has held a unique golf tournament since 2001, when it was begun as a means to raise money for the Building Fund, writes the Rev. Wilson A. Shearer in a mini-history of Otterbein's annual event.

That first tournament had 83 participants, both members and non-members, and after a fun-filled day and all expenses were paid, including prizes, the Building Fund was \$6,900 richer.

A few years ago, the tournament moved to the Washington County course at Black Rock, where it has the reputation of being one of the best organized in the county. Registration for this year's event opened April 1, with an \$85 fee paid in advance to guarantee a space. Since 2004, it has always been sold out.

Each player gets a door prize, a bag lunch, soft drinks

and water, a chance to win a new car with a hole-in-one, and a sit-down meal at the end of the day, provided by Outback Steak House since 2005.

The church has stuck with its decision to turn over all receipts after expenses to the Building Fund. It has raised \$189,000 so far, divided by the 13 tournaments to date shows an average raised each year of more than \$14,500.

### Church dedicates large new expansion

OLNEY – March 30 was a big day for Oakdale-Emory UMC. The congregation and community celebrated the opening of a large new expansion of the church.

District Superintendent, the Rev. JW Park, spoke at the dedication service of the building, which was the culmination of a planning process that began more than a decade ago. Construction has taken place over the past 15 months, according to Anne Jordan, communications director. The 13,000 square feet, two-story facility was built for \$4 million.

When people attend functions at OEUMC, they will enter through a new way. The prominent new entrance is now on Georgia Ave. and includes a Welcome Center and social gathering place with coffee bar, using the proceeds for missions. The expansion also includes a new nursery, music room, expanded kitchen, restrooms and classrooms and has state-of-the-art audio-visual and music equipment.

Park challenged the congregation not to keep the new facility to themselves, but to have the doors open to the community seven days a week.



Oakdale-Emory UMC in Olney, with its new expansion.

### Church journalist wins award

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Adelle Banks, a member of Asbury UMC, is receiving a Wilbur Award from the national Religion Communicators Council for her journalistic work on the March on Washington project. Banks is national correspondent for the Religion News Service where she has worked for many years.

The RCC announced 25 Wilbur Awards March 5, to honor excellence by individuals in communicating religious issues. Banks' award was one of three RNS received. It was for a multimedia package on the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington.

The award is in the form of a handcrafted stained-glass trophy. To learn more, go to <http://projects.religionnews.com/marchonwashington/>.



Adelle Banks

### COSROW presents 'The Sandwich Generation'

FULTON – People from throughout the conference gathered at the Conference Mission Center for the spring event of the Commission on the Status & Role of Women March 29. The Rev. Terri Rae Chattin led worship on "The Sandwich Generation," the theme for the event. Many attended to find out how to cope with being "caught in the middle" of caretaking for older parents and younger children, and living busy lives of their own. Chattin gave assurance that whatever caretaking they had to do, that each person present had received "a calling (to be) in this time and place."

The Rev. Wayne DeHart, director of Church Relations for Asbury Communities, was the keynote speaker. He showed the trends in an aging population and, by a show of hands, ascertained that almost half of those in the room were Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, the generation most related to being the "Sandwich Generation."

He shared a wide scope of statistics, demographics and trends that made clear the church working to counteract its decline can do more than court young people and young adults, that with Boomers "turning 65 at the rate of 10,000 a day," there is "an opportunity to shift our ministry toward older adults."



# Bishop Matthews: 'The Easter miracle is ours to live'

BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**T**HIS IS THE Good News: Christ is risen. Hope is born anew.

Yet often during the betrayal, loneliness, suffering and death of Holy Week, we forget to remember that we are an Easter people. Our lives often reflect this attitude, too: fear guides us. We allow darkness to shape our thoughts and actions. We get caught at the foot of the cross and fail to move on to the wonder, joy and promise of the empty tomb. Christ is risen. That matters. It is the essence of who we are.

Many people in our midst today live very hard lives. It's easy to see why we get caught in everyday trials and why hope sometimes seems elusive. But in Easter, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, we have a hope that is forever new. Because of Easter, love renews and triumphs, we are able to forgive and be forgiven, peace is possible and new life is ours to claim. In our everyday Easter living, we not

only experience a moment of grace, we are able to have lives brimming and overflowing with grace. This is our Easter miracle and it's ours to live everyday of our lives.



As many of you know, I begin each day with the prayer, "Lord, make me better today than I was yesterday." This simple heart-felt plea draws me deeper into an Easter faith. Over the past few months, I have been meeting with people on our eight districts and I am encouraged. But I sometimes wish our churches would adopt this daily prayer – that God would make them better this week than they were the last. The world needs us to be fully alive and making a difference in an ever-changing world. The world needs the promise of hope and the Good News that Christ is risen.

This Easter, I wish you joy. I wish you peace and grace, but most of all I wish for you the certainty of hope, born anew each time we seek the presence of God.

Christ is risen. Alleluia! Amen!

*Marcus Matthews*

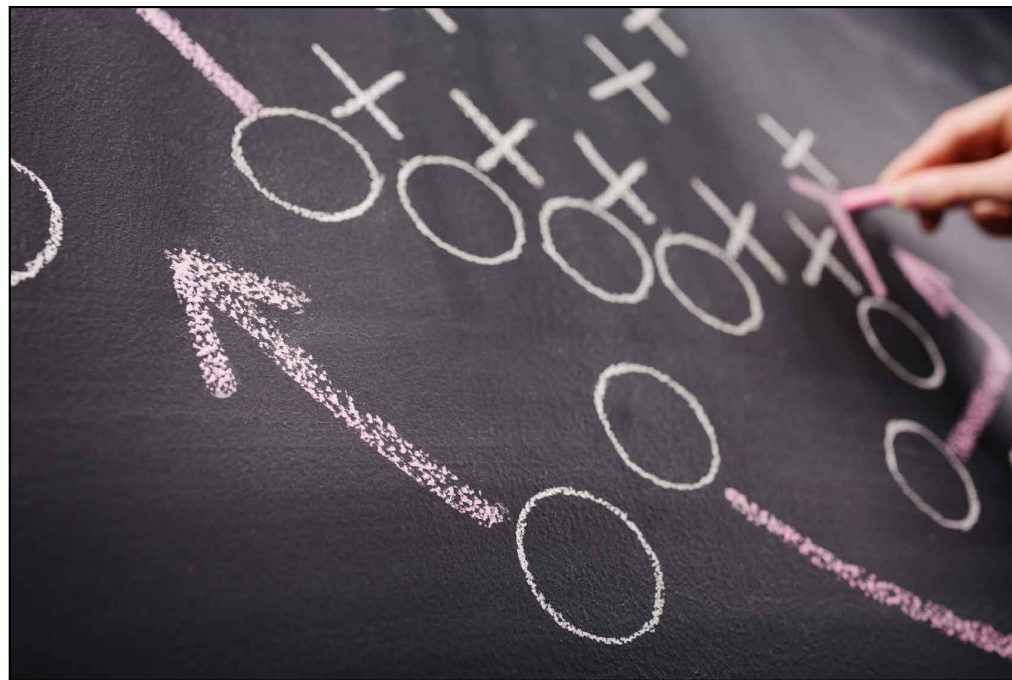
## 'We win or lose in the trenches,' superintendent says

BY JOE DANIELS

Superintendent, Greater Washington District

**M**Y 22-YEAR-OLD SON Joey was a phenomenal multisport, multi-position athlete in high school. He had the intangibles necessary to win — a big heart, a perceptive mind and a tough spirit. The sport he loved best was football and his favorite position was defensive end.

Joey learned a lot about life playing on the defensive line. I did, too, by listening and watching. One thing I learned is that football games are won or lost in the "trenches." The trench is the place and space where leverage is gained or lost, where advance toward victory or retreat toward defeat is achieved or taken away. In football, if you don't have a strong offensive and defensive line, or if either of those lines plays poorly in a game, you lose.



In The United Methodist Church, we are losing the game in the trenches. We're losing the battle to make learners and followers of Jesus Christ in the places and spaces that matter most — in the streets, in our communities, with nontraditional families, and the like — the places and spaces where Jesus invested almost all of his time and energy, where critical masses of people hang out daily, and where we as a collective church don't spend much time witnessing.

How do we change this? How can we creatively win the war in the trenches?

**Move our best players and coaches to the trenches.**

When the superintendent in the Texas Annual Conference asked Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell what it would take to turn around a downtown Houston church with nine members remaining in the trenches, Caldwell sent

the best lay leader from his thriving south Houston congregation. Twenty years and 6,000 changed lives later, Rudy and Juanita Rasmus, lay folks at the time with a call and a passion, showed us what can happen when we move our best people to the trenches. World changing things can happen.

We need to reposition all of the leaders who know their "Romans 12" giftedness into the places and spaces where the harvest is ripe but the laborers are few. This includes empowering laity with "Ephesians 4" giftedness to plant new faith communities, start new congregations, and do something different in neighborhoods and communities where the trenches are loaded with potential.

**Implement prayer and fasting strategies to win battles.**

Nearly 15 years ago, after inviting pastor Dennis Blackwell of Asbury UMC in Camden, New Jersey,

to lead a prayer weekend, Emory UMC implemented a prayer and fasting ministry called "Jehoshaphat." We were motivated by the story in 2 Chronicles 20 where King Jehoshaphat, surrounded by enemies on every side, called the nation of Israel into a season of fasting and prayer, petitioning God to intercede for them as they faced a heavy period of conflict.

The results of this ministry were so powerful that we began to use the

prayer and fasting process along with sermon series and teaching opportunities to unite and align the congregation when facing opposition within and beyond our ministry. When led by the Holy Spirit, victories were won in the trenches.

One reason we are losing in the trenches is that we don't have a deep bench in The United Methodist Church. Some would even argue that we have no bench and therefore can't compete when our starters get tired. We are losing out in the field because we are relying on a system of recruitment that is limited, expensive, outdated, and in some cases not developing the skills needed in the trenches. We need cost-effective, alternative ways of preparing leaders who are called to the five-fold gifts of ministry in Ephesians 4 (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers).

**Challenge churches to claim their ZIP codes for Christ.**

ZIP codes were established in 1963 by the US Postal Service for mail to reach its destination or delivery point in a more efficient and expeditious manner. ZIP stands for "zone improvement plan."

What if your church had a commitment to getting out into its ZIP code to deliver good news? Those with a zone improvement plan make it a practice to get out into the streets and neighborhoods, meet people, build relationships, and, after developing relationships and street cred, share what Christ has done in their lives. They sit where people sit, feel what people feel, listen when people talk, and then cast a community-wide vision that engages people in the trenches with life-changing transformation.

**Operate from a position of strength.**

One of my favorite vocal artists is Jill Scott. On one of Jill's albums, "Beautifully Human," she sings a song called "Talk to Me" twice — back to back. It's the same love song sung to a man whose attention she's been trying to engage with little success. The first song is sung in a R&B manner, but she can't seem to get the man's attention so she tries another tactic. She then sings the very same song, this time in jazz and big band style, and wins the man over. Same lyrics; different genre.

Our denomination needs to stop bitching and moaning and "try another tactic." We've been operating from a position of defeat rather than a position of strength. And we've been bitching and moaning instead of using our strengths more boldly and creatively to establish and do new things.

Rather than selling our buildings, for example, we need to find creative ways to leverage our physical resources, including land leasing, multipurpose usage, and collaborative partnerships. Some strategies may require churches to start nonprofit community development organizations to obtain grants and funding from secular sources. We need to operate from a position of strength rather than constant contraction.

What if the coaches and players in The UMC — our pastors and laity — dove creatively into the trenches?

I believe we'd start seeing the bloom of revival. I believe we'd gain the leverage we need to win. I believe a whole lot of hearts and lives would be transformed with the mind of Christ. Do we have the guts to dig in, try something different, and refuse to lose? The game is won in the trenches by the people on the frontline.

*Joseph Daniels is district superintendent of the Greater Washington District and senior pastor of Emory UMC in Washington. He is author of the book "Walking with Nehemiah: Your Community Is Your Congregation," coming fall 2014 from Abingdon Press. This piece is excerpted, by permission, from Circuit Rider Magazine.*



# Washington District performs 'exegesis' of their community

BY MELISSA LAUBER  
UMConnection Staff

UNITED METHODISTS HAVE been doing exegesis of the Bible for centuries, critically examining and using scholarly methods to interpret scriptural texts to search for meaning. But recently, the Greater Washington District set out to exegete its communities, exploring clusters and claiming ZIP codes as they bring geography, faith and mission together to make disciples and transform the world.



Church leaders ride a Metro bus as they exegete the Silver Spring and Wheaton areas.

The first exegetical walk was held in the Silver Spring area March 9 when lay and clergy people representing Silver Spring Cooperative Parish, Hughes, St. Paul's and First India UMCs, along with the Rev. Joseph Daniels, the district superintendent, began to connect with their neighborhoods.

They adopted a set of proscribed steps for exegeting one's community:

Step one: Pray. Fervently and with good intention.

Step two: Open the church doors, the wider the better.

Step three: Step outside, intentionally observing the people and world around you.

Following this simple exegetical process, the group of 20 soon learned that questions and curiosity deepened

the experience.

Question: How do people on the street corners learn to twirl those billboard signs? Answer: There are classes. Question: How do you get a paper transfer on the city bus when you're using your plastic Smart Card? Answer: It's computerized, you can get on as many buses as you want in a half-hour time frame. Question: How much do the many new luxury apartments cropping up around Silver Spring and Wheaton cost to rent? Answer: Probably too much. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a person earning minimum wage would need to work four full-time jobs to live in an average-two bedroom apartment in Montgomery County.

As the group walked and rode a bus around the streets of downtown Silver Spring and Wheaton, they kept Daniel's prayer that they attempt to "claim their ZIP code for Christ" in mind. Most found themselves on the lookout for needs and began to ask themselves how God might be calling them and their churches to respond.

Along the walk, the group met with two people who work with the homeless.

Montgomery County is one of the 11 most affluent counties in the nation. But standing on a street corner on Colesville Road, by the Discovery Building, Sandra Miller, an administrative coordinator of Interfaith Works, was able to point out several of her clients. In this rich county, 1,004 people live on the streets; 229 of them are children; and an alarming and growing number are young adults between the ages of 18 and 28, Miller said.

As part of the exegesis, the group learned that the homeless in their backyards can not be stereotyped. "The face of homelessness changes all the time," said Miller. They also learned how vulnerable the homeless are at night, how they can never sleep through a night, and how they're compelled to keep moving most of the day. Case workers note that after living for 48 hours on the street, symptoms of mental illness often begin to appear.

On a street corner on Veirs Mill Road in Wheaton, Larry White, executive director of Mid-county United



Larry White shares needs in a gentrifying community.

Ministries (MUM), shared how gentrification of this region is challenging groups seeking to assist the poor and those in crisis. MUM's facility, for example, is slated in the next five years to be demolished to make room for a park.

Following their walk, the group met at Hughes UMC to debrief their two hours of observation. The question "what did you notice that breaks your heart," steered their conversation. Those around the table took much of what they had seen to heart. Some talked about feeding people as a gateway to addressing need, others focused on how to provide larger systemic changes, and some felt called to more intense discernment.

"We're in dangerous waters, folks," said the Rev. Rachel Cornwall of Silver Spring Cooperative Parish. "In dangerous waters, there are deep possibilities."

The group agreed to take the remainder of Lent to think about how their exegesis of the community might influence future ministries. But each came away with the certainty Daniels had hoped they would find. "Our communities are our congregations," he said. "We must step outside the doors of the church."

# Pastor tells Easter story through the eyes of a bunny

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON  
UMConnection Staff

CHRISTOPHER BUNNY MET Jesus on his way to the cross. Want to know what happened?

The Rev. Bruce Jones, pastor of La Plata UMC, can tell you.

He has just written and published a 44-page children's book, "The Story of Christopher Bunny: A Hare Raising Tale."

Clergy publish many books, but they're usually non-fiction and delve into some aspect of theology or social principles. "Christopher Bunny" is no exception. It's a different viewpoint but as one reads it to his or her adult self, or to the children in your life, the story of God's caring for the world and humanity's place in it come to the fore, as does Jesus' death and resurrection.

It began three years ago. Jones was praying and thinking about a way to tell the Easter story to children in his congregation. He was inspired by his high school daughter's long-kept rabbit to tell the children of Christ's resurrection through the bunny's eyes.

And so, the bunny went to church.

In the story, Christopher Bunny takes on the responsibility for his sister, Christine, who is deaf. She often gets in trouble because she can't hear the danger around her.

One day, she's nibbling grass in the path of a procession carrying three crosses to Golgotha. She doesn't hear the crowd around her and Christopher hops to rescue her. He succeeds, but alas! One of the three

cross-bearers trudging on the path smashes Christopher into the ground.

At this point in the story, listeners (or readers) may shed some tears, so engaging is the story. But there's more.

Jesus sees the fate of the poor little rabbit, sets his

own cross aside and picks up the body and brings him back to life.

"It was almost overwhelming, the reaction to the story," Jones said. Parents and grandparents asked where he'd gotten the storybook so as to get it for themselves. It was then he decided to pursue publishing, something entirely new for him, to "see where God leads me."

Part of the charm of the book is the illustrations, done in pastel colors, lending a softness to the story. When Jones had finished writing the text, through research he discovered a network of children's book illustrators. After many dead-ends, he found Kim Merritt, and later learned she is a United Church of Christ pastor's wife in New Hampshire.

"It was again a miraculous process," he said.

In addition to their contract, which covers each page of art, they have a deal that 15 years down the line, after finding out if the book becomes a long-time keeper, they'll renegotiate their agreement, which covers a percentage of royalties for the artwork. Jones now owns the paintings and has all the originals.

The book is written in simple language, easy enough for second-graders to read themselves.

"It is a unique and heart-warming story," said a reader. "It is a really sweet story to teach about the power of God and of God's love."

The soft-cover book, in 11" x 8.5" format, is available from Amazon.com or from WestBow Press, a division of Thomas Nelson and Zondervan.



## The Story of Christopher Bunny

### A Hare Raising Tale

A story by Bruce A. Jones with  
Illustrations by Kim Merritt

# Help bring about the end of malaria...



...bring your church  
pledge card May 15  
to the clergy session  
at Towson UMC

Download a pledge card at:  
[www.bwcumc.org/ImagineNoMalaria](http://www.bwcumc.org/ImagineNoMalaria)