



Communicator

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The United Methodist Reporter

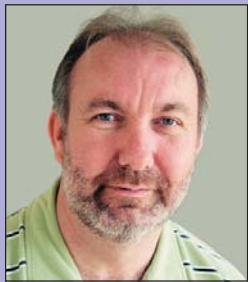
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Vision Statement

The Peninsula-Delaware Conference, as the body of Christ, will live out the ministry and teaching of Jesus Christ – boldly, cooperatively, and inclusively – through life-changing communities of compassion.

The Peninsula-Delaware Conference Board of Laity has announced that Bishop Violet Fisher, Episcopal leader of the New York West Area, will be the guest speaker at its annual Clergy/Laity banquet on Friday, May 12, 2006.

Bishop Fisher is originally from the Denton, Maryland area and still has many family members and friends in both Maryland and Delaware, including her brother, Rev. George W. Fisher, Sr., pastor of Millsboro: Friendship on the Dover District.

Bishop Fisher's call to ministry came at the age of 16. Though her roots were in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the affirmation for her ministry as an ordained clergy member came through The King's Apostle Holiness Church of God. In this church, she served as National Evangelist, and was the first woman to be ordained. During these years, she also taught in the public school systems of Virginia and Maryland.

Her journey brought her back to the church of her birth, and in 1988 she was ordained a deacon and in 1990 an elder in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Bishop Fisher served St. Daniel's UMC in Chester, PA and Sayers Memorial UMC in Philadelphia. From July 1994 to July 2000, she served as district superintendent of the Mary Lcleod Bethune District, and during her tenure on the district, was twice appointed dean of the cabinet.

Reflecting on her consecration



Bishop Violet Fisher as Bishop in July 2000, Bishop Fisher stated, "This affirmation speaks to all women, especially women of color."

Awards she has received include the Martin Luther King Freedom, Philadelphia Congress Stellar Service, National Sojourner Truth Meritorious, and The United Methodist Church Denman Evangelism Award. She was named Black United Methodist Preacher of the Year for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and has received many other awards, honors and citations.

Within the structure of The United Methodist Church, Bishop Fisher served as President of the Northeastern Jurisdiction College of Bishops, is a member of the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union, serves on the Audit Committee and Hope



Photo courtesy of UMNS — Mike DuBose

for the Children of Africa Committee of the General Board of Global Ministries, continues her work with the General Board of Discipleship Committee on Older Adult Ministries, and remains a member of Black Methodists for Church Renewal. She previously served on the General Board of Church and Society. Bishop Fisher was the keynote speaker for the International Prayer Conference for Wesleyans in Renewal, held in Singapore in June of 2004. Between 1990-99 she was Dean of the Northeastern Jurisdiction School of Evangelism. In addition, Bishop Fisher served as a short-term missionary to Kenya, Uganda, Haiti, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic. Bishop Fisher is profiled in the new book compiled by Bishop Judith Craig, *The Leading Women: Stories of the First Women Bishops of The United Methodist Church*. Her sermon, "The Day Jesus Took a Short Cut," is published in the Spring 2004 issue of *The African American Pulpit*. She is a contributor to AAP, *The Women of Color Study Bible*, and the *Women of Spirit Devotional*.

Bishop Fisher holds two Master's Degrees – one in Education and the other in Divinity and she has a Doctorate

in Divinity. Along with her brother, she has a son, Marcus, her mother, sister and brothers that are included in her extended family still residing in Maryland and Delaware.

The Clergy/Laity Banquet will take place on Friday, May 12, 2006 at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover, Delaware beginning at 6:00 p.m. Ticket price and additional information will be forthcoming. Mark the date in your planner and join us for a wonderful evening of food, fellowship and The Word.



Photo courtesy of UMNS — Mike DuBose



World Day of Prayer — March 3

Record Giving by United Methodists

United Methodists gave more generously than ever before, surpassing the previous year's total giving by more than 50%. This assessment of 2005 giving was reported today by Sandra K. Lackore, general secretary and treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) of The United Methodist Church.

Lackore stated, "In a year that brought much natural devastation to so many of our local congregations around the globe, we have a great deal to celebrate."

"We celebrate the overwhelming generosity of the people of The United Methodist Church," said Lackore. Explaining that total giving in 2005 was \$85 million more than 2004, a 53.6% increase, Lackore reported that \$80 million of the increase was given for tsunami and hurricane relief efforts.

Fifteen annual conferences were recognized for participating at the 100% level of all apportioned funds, an increase of three conferences over 2004. These conferences included:

Alaska Missionary (per adjustment in 2006)
Baltimore Washington
Central Pennsylvania
Desert Southwest
Detroit
Illinois Great Rivers
New York
North Carolina
Northern Illinois
Oklahoma Indian Missionary
Peninsula Delaware
Red Bird Missionary
Rio Grande
Texas
Wisconsin

Six additional annual conferences were recognized for participating at the 90% level or higher of all apportioned funds. These conferences were:

Arkansas Area
Holston
Louisiana
Oklahoma
North Texas
Southwest Texas

Lackore noted the faithfulness of the denomination to the connectional covenant of apportioned giving, citing the Mississippi and Louisiana Conferences that, in the midst of extreme devastation and hardship, maintained their apportioned giving at or slightly above their 2004 levels. The Alabama-West Florida, Florida, and Texas Conferences—greatly impacted by the hurricane season as well—were recognized for maintaining or slightly increasing their participation rate in apportioned giving.

In closing her report Lackore concluded, "We celebrate the faithfulness of so many local congregations and conferences in meeting their commitment to the apportioned general funds in 2005. These funds drive the financial mission statement of our denomination. By working together and fully participating in the general apportioned funds, we make possible the mission and ministry of Christ."

Lackore communicated these findings with annual conference communicators in a live Web cast coordinated by United Methodist Communications.

Conference Youth Activities

Thanks and Glory to God . . .

As I write this, it's my last article as the Director of Young People's Ministry of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the UMC. I have enjoyed writing articles, challenging the reading audience and listing activities for young people on the Delmarva Peninsula and beyond over the last 5 and a half years.

My employment and ministry serving on the conference staff will cease in March as I have accepted a new position. On March 22nd I begin a new journey serving on the staff of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association in Ocean Grove, New Jersey as the Director of Young People's Ministry.

In this new position I will cast vision and implement ministry for the age level ministries of youth, children, and young adults for a historic camp meeting in the Wesleyan Holiness tradition on the northern Jersey shore near Asbury Park, NJ. I will supervise, train and equip a staff that consists of a youth director, children's director, young adult director as well as about 20 additional staff members during the summer season. In addition I will produce two summer concerts (this summer is Mercy Me and Chris Tomlin) as well as beach festivals. The staff will implement a daily breakfast club, open gym nights, Missions 101 weekend, youth group meetings, bible studies, various events and worship experiences for children, youth and young adults.

As I close out this chapter in my life and ministry all I can say is thanks and glory to God. The initial thanksgiving goes to almighty God for faithfulness and favor in min-

istry. Praise the Lord for a youth rally that has grown from 1700 to over 4600 youth and adults. When I step back and look at the youth rally I am amazed at the faithfulness of God and the reality and power of the Holy Spirit. Thanks soooooo much for bringing youth groups to One, What If, What it Takes, Guarding the Priceless, Who Do You Serve and All or Nothing. Special thanks to Rev. David Bennett for providing a firm and healthy foundation so that as a team we could build an event that would change people's lives.

Special thanks to a great team of people who served Jesus sacrificially with plenty of sweat equity on the design team, conference council on youth ministries, district youth coordinators, and youth rally support team. The names are too numerous to mention (and if your name is not mentioned in this article please forgive me) and their labor is not in vain as the word of God will not return void.

Thanks so much for attending numerous training events, Confirmation rallies, Spring Cleaning Youth Worker Training, network meetings with other youth ministers, regional youth events, district activities, and conference wide ministries for young people.

Thanks so much to those pastors who had the courage to share their pulpit with me even though they would sit there and say, "Did David Burke say that?" Thanks so much for those youth leaders and pastors who asked numerous questions about resources, curriculum, and various issues and consultations about youth and young adult ministry.

A special feature in the min-



David Burke

istry was that I was so blessed to build a team of dedicated staff members who constantly had to experience my visionary dreaming and lack of details in the real world. I was always working on the youth rally for the next year or even two years in advance even during the week of the current youth rally every January. This was extremely frustrating for Penny Carney, Jenna Johnson, Megan Faulkner, Janet Keskemity, and Jeani Logan but somehow they were extremely faithful as we all worked together to impact the kingdom of God.

In closing, I covet your prayers for the future ministry that God has in store for me in Ocean Grove, New Jersey. Please keep the future young people's ministry of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference in your prayers that the ministry can grow and go to the next level. On behalf of my wife, Kathryn, our 3 children, Jonathan, Katie and Emily, we say THANKS AND GLORY TO GOD!

Communicator

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WHAT CAN WE BE?

A Gathering of All Clergy
April 28, 2006 — Whatcoat UMC — Dover

Do you ever have the feeling that God is not finished with us as the United Methodist Church — or even in our own lives and ministry? There are signs that God is working within the church reshaping the nature of ministry, which can potentially have a positive impact on our effectiveness as clergy. Are you interested in knowing more about the changes that are happening? About "What we can be?"

This question is the theme for a Gathering of Clergy being held on April 28, 2006 at Whatcoat UMC in Dover. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. Leadership is being provided by The Rev. Bob Kohler, Assistant General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry who is the most knowledgeable person around about the changes that are occurring. He is presently conducting a Study Of Ministry through a survey, which can be found at <http://www.gbhem.org> and click on The Study of Ministry Survey. You are encouraged to go on-line and take the survey. Results will be shared at our meeting.

God bless you and your ministry,
Martha Callaway- Chair, Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Ministers
Sharon Graves- Chair, Order of Deacon
Sterling Green- Chair, Order of Elder

The purpose of this gathering is to look carefully at the rapid changes that are occurring in ordained ministry within the United Methodist Church and how these changes impact our ministry. We will explore ways of strengthening our effectiveness in ministry individually and collectively as we strive to be faithful to our unique calling.

See Registration form on page 5

An Exciting New Resource for Adult Christian Education

Bishop Wilke: "The perfect follow-up to DISCIPLE Bible study!"

"Imagine combining the scholarship of some of the church's best theologians, the opportunities for learning that arise in Sunday school classes and other small groups, and books on topics proven to inspire and provoke," said New Testament scholar Dr. Craig C. Hill.

That sums up the Wesley Ministry Network, a ministry of Wesley Theological Seminary, which uses modern technology to bring the best of theological education to groups of lay people. Its mission is to strengthen churches by providing them with substantive, high-quality adult education curriculum. In less than two years, churches across the United States have helped to make WMN one of the largest lay-education programs in the country, with several thousand participants. Additionally, WMN courses are being used by congregations on three other continents. Beginning in May, WMN will be distributed by Cokesbury, greatly expanding their use throughout the Church.

A Methodist himself, Hill

believes the UMC is hungering for WMN courses: "The UMC attempts to hold to tradition with one hand and to the modern world with the other. That is no easy task. It requires both knowledge and discernment, which is to say, it requires education." Instead of cultivating unorthodox views, Hill and other instructors "ask people to hold the middle ground, for example affirming God as creator while learning from science about the manner of creation."

Bishop Richard B. Wilke, creator of the DISCIPLE Bible study curriculum, has embraced the Wesley Ministry Network as "the perfect follow-up" to DISCIPLE. Each course operates like DISCIPLE, but the video lessons are more substantial and the time commitment is lower. WMN courses work in Sunday school, Bible study, or book club settings. In addition, each course has its own optional website, on-line discussion group, and weekly email from the instructor.

Existing courses cover topics as varied as eschatology, ethics, the Psalms. The next course, due in May, is titled *Serious Answers to Hard Questions*, and includes

ten leading scholars (e.g., N.T. Wright, Richard B. Hays, John Polkinghorne and Amy-Jill Levine) confronting ten issues that present obstacles to faith for many. Topics include evil, religion and science, and other religions. The host is Bishop Kenneth Carder.

Wesley Ministry Network courses are the perfect solution for overworked church staff, clergy who feel they lack the experience or gifts for teaching, or even for experienced teachers struggling to make do with adult education materials that are outside the mainline theological tradition, too simplistic, or too generic. WMN takes the burden off the local church by providing a consistent and reliable source for excellent adult curriculum representing the broad theological mainstream of our church, and by making courses easy to teach.

Please visit www.WesleyMinistryNetwork.com to read about different courses, watch a full-length lesson, download sample materials, or donate to the not-for-profit ministry. The WMN also accepts telephone inquiries at 202.885.8607 and email inquiries at courses@wesleyministrynetwork.com.

Cokesbury Connection

Have you ever wondered how Vacation Bible School curriculum comes into being? I thought I would share with you how Cokesbury creates its VBS.

The process begins a year ahead with a team of Christian Educators from around the country who travel to Nashville to spend a week with the development team. From this meeting three different theme ideas are put forward. These theme ideas go into testing with Christian Educators from around the country. From that feedback it is determined which theme to develop. Then it goes into title and design testing where we get feedback again from customers on logo design. From that stage the curriculum is written. Before it is fully printed it is tested in five churches around the country. Those churches actually work the curriculum as if it is their VBS for that summer. They give feedback about how easy the leaders found the material to teach, how well the children like the activities, did the material fit the time frame, and did the children learn something. The development team takes this feedback, makes any necessary



Madeline Beall

changes to the curriculum and then it goes to print! Quite a thoughtful and creative process! I hope you have had a chance to examine Cokesbury's VBS for this year: *Adventure of the Treasure Seekers* and the Afro-Centric VBS: *Journey Into the Hush Arbor*. Remember, VBS is one of the most valuable outreach ministries your church can have. It is also a great team builder for your members and an opportunity for fellowship. Give VBS a try...and you can always count on Cokesbury to give you a good one.

Blessings on your ministry,
Madeline Beall
Cokesbury Consultant
Toll Free: 1.877.792.5410
Email: mbeall@cokesbury.com

Conference Calendar of Events

March 2006

- 3 **Small Membership Church Task Force Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:30 p.m.
- 4 **Dover District Lay Academy**, Georgetown: Wesley UMC & Betel UMC, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- 5 **Confirmation Rally**, Smyrna: Asbury UMC, 4:00-6:00 p.m.
- 6-8 **Nurturing Wholeness In Community Retreat**, Rehoboth Beach, DE.: Atlantic Sands
- 9 **Commission on Archives & History**, Frederica: Barratt's Chapel, 10:00 a.m.
- Nominating Task Force Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 11 **Dover District Lay Academy**, Georgetown: Wesley UMC & Betel UMC, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- 13 **Credit Union Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:30 p.m.
- Volunteers In Mission Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
- Congo Partnership Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- Vision Team Meeting**, Dover: Whatcoat UMC, 7:00 p.m.
- 14 **Annual Conference Sessions Meeting**, Wesley College-Rm. # 206, 6:30 p.m.
- Black United Methodist Preachers Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:00 a.m.
- 50th Anniversary Clergy Women Task Force Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 2:00 p.m.
- Methodist Action Program Leadership Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 3:00-4:30 p.m.
- Conference Board of Lay Ministry Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:15 p.m.
- 16 **World Methodist Conference Delegation Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 18 **Community of Shalom Training**, Dover: Whatcoat UMC, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

- 20 **Congregational Development Corporation Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:00 a.m.
- 21 **Equitable Compensation Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:00 p.m.
- Conference Hispanic/Latino Ministries Task Force Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 23 **Communications Commission Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:30 a.m.
- 25 **Conference-wide Stewardship Training**, Dover: Sheraton Hotel, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- 28 **Small Group Task Force Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:00 p.m.
- Enabling Ministries Resource Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.

April 2006

- 1 **Black United Methodist Preachers Leadership Workshop**, Dover: Wesley UMC, 8:30 a.m.-1:00p.m.
- Safe Sanctuaries Training**, Dover: Whatcoat UMC, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- 3 **Credit Union Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:30 p.m.
- 4 **Advocacy Resource Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 3:00 p.m.
- 6 **Resource Development & Management Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 9:30 a.m.
- Spiritual Formation Task Force Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 10 **Volunteers In Mission Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
- Congo Partnership Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- 14 **Good Friday, BFEM Resource Center, Closed Council on Finance & Administration Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 9:30 a.m.

Our Mission

The Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the United Methodist Church exists to:

- Bring into being congregations which answer God's call to become disciple-making communities committed to:
 - Reaching out to people where they are and welcoming them in Christ's name.
 - Developing and deepening their relationship to God, Spiritually nourishing and equipping one another, and Empowering each person to live out the love of Christ actively in their communities and beyond;
 - Discover, develop, supply and support leadership For mission and ministry in local areas and beyond.

A Gathering of All Clergy April 28, 2006 Whatcoat UMC — Dover

Registration Information

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____
 e-mail _____
 I am:
 _____ Elder
 _____ Associate Member
 _____ Deacon
 _____ Local Pastor

Cost \$15 for lunch and snacks

Make checks out to Peninsula-Delaware Conference and send to: Clergy Convocation, Dover District Office, 122 South Bradford Street. Dover, DE 19904

(.5 CEU Credit Available)

Scenes from Bishop's Retreat 2006



The annual Bishop's Retreat was held at the Atlantic Sands Hotel in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware January 17-19, 2006. The Retreat is a time for pastors and their spouses from both the Peninsula-Delaware and Eastern Pennsylvania Conferences to come together for fellowship, refreshment and renewal. There is a planning committee that gathers each year to work on a program but the intent is not to "work" but to "rest and refresh" for the three days.

Bishop Marcus Matthews, seen here to the left, as well as others took time to walk along the beach (we understand that the weather was very nice that week). During their time together they fellowshiped with one another, shared their voices in music, and came together as one group to share the bread and the cup in Holy Communion.

The Bishop's Retreat is held each year around the middle of January. If you know of a pastor that didn't attend this year, encourage them to do so in 2007.