

Welcome to Our Sacred Space

Read Luke 2: 6-14

Wow! As a young girl, I remember Christmas pageants in church and school when we learned these sacred lines of scripture. What memories these words bring to my mind. What excitement, reading about shepherds working, angels singing and a baby being born. The joy of knowing something special was happening in the world. God moves in an extraordinary supernatural way to bring salvation to the world.

Indeed, Christmas reminds us that in our daily life, in the midst of our fears, faults, and failures we are reminded that we are not alone. God is with us. One hymnist wrote "Go tell it on the mountain and everywhere Jesus Christ is born."

Today, and in the days to come, be ready to tell the good news proclaimed by the angels on that special night, "For to you is born this day in the town of David a Savior, who is Christ (the Messiah) the Lord." (Amplified Bible Luke 2:11-12) These are words of blessings to those who mourn, who are lonely, hungry, homeless and feel forgotten, persecuted and abused. These are words of comfort for persons in the throes of war, threats of unemployment, high cost of energy and medical bills. These are



Rev. Elaine B. Ayres

words of hope for those in prison, hospitals, and shelters because of various disasters in the world.

I was too young to really know what happened that wonderful day, and how it would shape and change my life and the world. I only knew I had wanted to tell somebody. Perhaps we, like the shepherds and the angels, need to share this good news with someone else. Perhaps as we listen to the scripture we'll realize we are responsible to be a blessing to someone else; comfort those who need comfort and proclaim God's shalom through word and deed to the world.

May this Christmas fill your heart with God's love, peace, and joy and the gift of a blessed New Year.

Elaine

Exploration Day at Wesley Theological Seminary

On Thursday, January 5th Wesley will have a day to explore two new Doctor of Ministry Degree programs. Clergy who wish to be considered as candidates for upcoming programs are invited to the campus to learn about two new focused programs "Life Together: Spirituality for Transforming Community" and "Preaching in the 21st Century."

For more information and to register, visit their website at www.Wesleysem.edu or call Dr. Lew Parks, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, at dmin@wesleysem.edu or 202.885.8670.

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Notice to Treasurers – Financial Secretaries

YEAR END DEADLINE FOR REMITTANCES:

Financial year 2005 ends December 31, 2005. Final 2005 remittances must be received by the Business Office no later than **Wednesday, January 4, 2006**, in order to receive credit in 2005. **DO NOT** use the postal service for 2005 remittances after December 28, 2005. The Bishop Felton Edwin May Resource Center will be closed on December 30, 2005 and January 2, 2006; however, there is a mail drop in the front door of the building if you wish to hand deliver your final remittance. If you have any questions, please call the Business Office at 302.674.2626. Thank you for your cooperation.

From Your Wesley College Chaplain

One exciting thing that has happened this past semester has been the coming of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) to campus. The FCA has an inspired nationwide ministry to athletes, coaches and anyone affiliated with sports. It strives to serve local communities as it equips, empowers and encourages people to make a difference for Christ. Randy Chambers is the FCA Area Director for Delaware and the Maryland Eastern Shore. He began to receive his call while he was a Department Manager at MBNA and God led him to choose FCA over a career with an insurance company. The Lord has truly blessed him with the gifts and graces to work with athletes. It is wonderful to watch his rapport

with them! He has begun his initial work with the football team (which as of this writing has entered into the Division III semifinals for the first time ever!) and you can see the response in the picture of the team praying together. I think the FCA will have quite an impact on our athletic program.

The initial Bible studies began in the Chapel. It was one of my first opportunities to meet and be with athletes as a group. I didn't know how that would work. It is not the most familiar of surroundings for student athletes! One of them took me by surprise though. He said that he liked being there. It was quiet. That made me stop and think. Students have plenty of opportunities to do at Wesley. There is a wide spectrum of sports. There are lots

of groups and activities. Of course, there are their studies as well! But students need time to be quiet, to "chill," or, in the psalmist's words, to "be still and know that I am God." This is what I found with high school youth as well. Wesley's student athletes have to be just that. They have to be students – which takes a lot of time and can be stressful; and they have to be athletes – which takes a lot of time and has its own stresses. You can pray a prayer of thanksgiving for us that Randy is here for our athletes to help them find Christ as their spiritual center that will hold everything together and make it fulfilling. You can pray for all of our students to find that spiritual center and that I can help them in their search.

FYI – If you want to find out more about FCA, please visit their website at www.fca.org. Randy can be reached at 302.222.9397.

Your Brother in Christ
Mark

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Mark Pruett-Barnett



Ware-Diaz Speaker for 2006 Symposium

The Martin Luther King Symposium committee has announced the guest speaker for the event will be Suanne Ware-Diaz who works at the General Board of Religion and Race and is the Associate General Secretary for the North Central Jurisdiction and Native American Constituency.

Suanne is a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles and is pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Religion at Wesley School of Theology. She is also in the ministerial candidacy process to become a Deacon.

She has a long history in the United Methodist Church and



Suanne Ware-Diaz

has been active at the local, conference and national levels. Suanne is a member of Culver-Palms United Methodist Church in Culver City, California where she was active in worship and

served as chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee. She is a member of the California-Pacific Conference Committee on Native American Ministries, is a certified lay speaker, and was a Los Angeles District Delegate to her Annual Conference. As a Board Member of the General Commission on Religion and Race, she chaired the Native American Concerns Committee.

Proud of her Kiowa heritage, Suanne is passionate in addressing the rights and issues of Native Americans. As a person of blended background, Kiowa and White, she

See Symposium on page 5

Conference Calendar of Events

December 2005

- 23 **BFEM Resource Center – Closed–Merry Christmas**
- 26-27 **BFEM Resource Center – Closed–Merry Christmas**
- 30 **BFEM Resource Center – Closed–Merry Christmas**

January 2006

- 2 **BFEM Resource Center – Closed – Happy New Year**
- 3 **Equitable Compensation Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:00 p.m.
- 5 **Spiritual Formation Task Force Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 6-8 **Youth Rally**, Ocean City, MD.: Roland E. Powell Convention Center
- 9 **Board of Ordained Ministry Meeting**,

Centreville, MD: Centreville UMC, 9:00 a.m.
Credit Union Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 1:30 p.m.

- 12 **Commission on Archives & History Meeting**, Frederica: Barratt's Chapel, 10:00 a.m.
- Communications Commission Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:30 a.m.
- 14 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium**, Millsboro: Long Neck UMC, 3:30-6:00 p.m.
- CLOSED-Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observed**
- 16 **Bishop's Mid-Winter Retreat**, Rehoboth, DE.: Atlantic Sands Hotel
- 26 **Annual Conference Sessions Meeting**, TBD, 6:30 p.m.
- 27-29 **African-American Clergy Mini-Convocation**, Ocean City, MD, Grand Hotel

Interfaith Resource Center

VBS Workshops 2006

It will soon be that time, so mark your calendar! I will join Madeline Beall for another exciting sneak peak at the upcoming VBS programs in 2 locations. For all our Wilmington participants, we will hold a workshop and IRC open house at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, 913 Wilson Road in Brandywine Hundred on Saturday, January 28 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We will repeat the workshop at Wesley United Methodist Church in Dover on February 11. In addition, Madeline will offer a display and answer questions at the Easton District Lay Academy on February 4 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 100 Peachblossom Road in Easton. There will be a modest workshop registration fee of \$5 per person or \$10 for 3 persons from one church. We plan these events to coincide with Cokesbury Value Days, when Madeline is able to give significant discounts on orders. Look for our VBS brochures in the mail in early January. Please contact me at the IRC at 1.800.336.6152/1.302.



Paula Hartzell

477.0910 or email me at resource.ctr@dol.net to have your name added to our mailing list.

New Resources

The Changing Face of Worship: The Church in a PostModern World explores the changing expressions of modern-day worship as churches use visual arts, edgy music or even a chat room online to offer experiences that are both culturally relevant and theologically responsible. This 55-minute DVD visits a variety of churches creating these alternative worship ministries.

The treasured series **Davey and Goliath** is now available on

DVD. We have four volumes with six 15-minute segments and a seasonal 30-minute feature. Each 15-minute segment addresses moral issues such as caring for others. In addition, we have **Davey and Goliath's Snowboard Christmas**, a 55-minute feature film.

In **Bad Girls of the Bible**, Liz Curtis Higgins brings her best-selling book to vibrant life in this funny, fast-paced hour-long video with ten of the Bible's most infamous females and one enthusiastic audience. Bible characters include Jezebel, Rahab, Delilah, Sapphira, Michal, Potiphar's wife, & the woman with the alabaster jar.

Jesus in the Gospels is a study, in 2 DVD's, which looks at the Jesus of the Gospels. It examines the way each Gospel writer presents events and teachings and studies the picture of Jesus that emerges in each of the Gospels. The program contains 30 segments with leader's guide, study manual, & Bible comparisons book. With the exception of Segment 30, all videos are in 2 parts: scholarly presentation and a section of art, words, & music to support the segment.

Health Ministries

Managing those "Holiday Blues"

By Maurice K. Egnor MSN, RN

The Christmas season is a time of joy and celebration, as we remember the Birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is a time when we celebrate our family, and the relationships we have with others. Also, with the approach of the New Year, we look back at our achievements and look forward, with anticipation, to our opportunities for the coming New Year.

Unfortunately, there are many who see the holidays differently. They feel sadness, loneliness and have great anxiety about the future that lies before them. They live with feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Many factors can lead to Holiday Depression or as many call it "The Holiday Blues." A primary element that can lead to this depression may be the loss of loved ones and lost relationships. These losses may be from the near or distant past. Other contributing factors may be over commercialization, financial constraints, shopping, unrealistic expectations, as well as undue stress and fatigue.

Even those who don't see themselves as depressed may manifest signs and symptoms of stress such as headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating, and difficulty sleeping. Many also experience post holiday let down after the New Year. This may come from feelings of disappointment, due to

unachieved goals and unmet expectations.

It is important to know that if you are experiencing these feelings you are not alone, and there are some things you can do to help yourself get through these "Holiday Blues."

First and foremost, we can pray. Remember that through our acceptance of Christ as our Savior, we are forgiven people and have eternal life with our Father in heaven.

Other tips for coping during these times are:

- Make expectations for the holiday season manageable and realistic.
- Leave yesterday in the past and look forward to the future.
- Enjoy activities that are free.
- Try something new.
- Celebrate in a new way.
- Spend time with supporting and caring brothers and sisters.
- Do something for someone else.
- Volunteer, there are many activities and out reach ministries that need your help.
- Limit the drinking of alcoholic beverages, it increases feelings of depression.
- Do something for yourself.

As we continue through this Holy time of the year I pray for your joy, peace and happiness, through the ONE who makes all things possible.

Substantiation of Contributions

Remember to provide statements for donor substantiation for 2005. The rules effect single contributions totaling \$250 or more. A written acknowledgement of the contribution must be provided by the church. The donors canceled check will no longer be sufficient to substantiate a contribution of this size.

The acknowledgement must include:

1. The donor's name.

2. A listing of each individual contribution of \$250 or more.
3. A description of any non-cash property contributed.
4. A statement that no goods or services were provided to the donor in exchange for the contribution. It is suggested that all church statements reflecting money contributions, such as quarterly giving reports, contain the following disclaimer:

"Pursuant to Internal Revenue Code requirements for substantiation of charitable contributions, United Methodist Church provided no goods or services in return for these contributions."

The written acknowledgement must be provided to the donor **prior** to the date on which the donor's tax return is filed or **prior** to the due date for filing, **whichever is earlier**.

To All Churches: Africa University Sunday Gifts

Please remit your AU Sunday gifts to the Conference office before the end of 2005. Use line 60.9 on the Benevolence Transmission form.

Camping And Retreat Ministry

Pecometh Enters 60th Year

The year 2006 brings Pecometh's 60th Anniversary as a Christian summer camp ministry. Mark the weekend of July 14-16, 2006 on your calendar to come and join us in the celebration. The weekend will include many opportunities to visit with long-time friends, enjoy old and new camp activities and get caught up with the goings-on at Pecometh. The high point of the weekend will occur on the evening of Saturday, July 15, when the Charlie Barton Rec Hall, which has been recently renovated, will be re-dedicated. The re-dedication will be followed by a special Galilean service in the Outdoor Chapel, with Bishop Marcus Matthews preaching. Make sure to set aside this time to come and celebrate the life-changing ministry of Pecometh. Details on lodging and food options will be provided by late winter.

Pecometh Adds "Giant Swing"

Picture yourself being harnessed to a high-strength cable, then being hauled by your fellow participants via pulley as high as 65 feet above the Pecometh Riverside marsh. Then, when you have the nerve, you pull the "rip-cord" and swing back down over the ravine at breathtaking speed. That's the Giant Swing and it's the newest element on the Pecometh Challenge Course.

Funded by a pledge from Hockessin UMC, the Giant Swing will be used by summer campers, retreat guests and outdoor school participants and sure to become a favorite challenge course experience. Located adjacent to the Low Challenge Course, the Giant Swing hurls the participant out over the ravine that feeds the Riverside Marsh, accentuating the sense of "free fall." Thanks, "Hockessin" for making this exciting expansion of the challenge course possible.

Summer Camp Brochures Available Soon

It's already time to be thinking about summer camp. Summer Camp brochures will be mailed out to current campers no later than the first week of January 2006. Churches will be mailed additional supplies shortly thereafter. All information, including registration, will be available online at www.pecometh.org. Get ready . . . 2006 will be the best summer ever at Pecometh.

Pecometh Looking for Outdoor Program Staff

Are you ready to share your love of God's creation with students? We are looking for local Christians with an interest in teaching students in the out-of-doors, on an "as-needed" basis. Training is provided and the salary ranges from \$75-\$165 per day. For more information, contact Dan Ashe, Director of Outdoor Programs, Camp Pecometh 410.556.6900 x102; www.dan Ashe@pecometh.org; www.pecometh.org

