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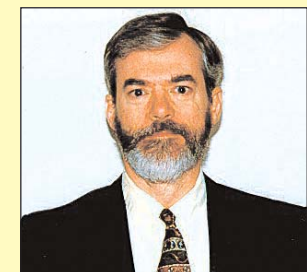
JANUARY 19, 2007

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.



Welcome To Our Sacred Space Page 4



Mission Ideas for 2007 Page 5



For more information on the origin of the logo, please go to www.pen-del.org and click on the logo in the right-hand column.



By Tamara Ward

The 2007 Lenten Day Apart for clergy will be held on Tuesday, February 20th from 8:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Wilmington, Delaware.

This year's Day Apart will feature Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, Episcopal leader of the Western Pennsylvania Conference and president of United Methodist Communications.

Bishop Bickerton became the spiritual leader of the almost 900

It's All About Dialogue

United Methodist congregations on September 1, 2004 having been elected that previous June in Syracuse, New York during the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference. He is one of the youngest bishops in active ministry today.

As a student pastor in West Virginia, he served a six-point charge and was appointed to a church with 85 members after being ordained. In the six years he served this church, the membership grew to 225. He then began a nine year ministry at a church with 585 members and when he was appointed District Superintendent in 1998, the membership had grown to 1368.

Bishop Bickerton is a 1980 graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan College with a degree in psychology and sociology, he earned his master of divinity degree at Duke Divinity School and his doctor of

ministry at United Theological School where he serves as an adjunct faculty member teaching Wesleyan doctrine and church polity.

Upon his election to the episcopacy, Bishop Bickerton became the leader of United Methodist Communications and is very active with all aspects of this area. Just recently (January 4th) he was in New York for the Global Launch of the Malaria Prevention Campaign (read more about this campaign in the February 2nd issue of this publication). He shared the launch with NBA legend Sam Perkins, Sports Illustrated columnist, Rick Reilly and others for the launch of the 'Nothing But Nets' anti-malaria campaign at the NBA store on Fifth Avenue. The launch also included activities at the New Jersey Nets-Chicago Bulls basketball game the following day.



Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton

The Day Apart will begin with a fellowship time and continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and will continue with a presentation and time for questions/answers with Bishop Bickerton followed by worship and Holy Communion where he will bring the message.

Bishop Matthews shares "as you prepare for this Lenten season, re-read those passages recorded of the two disciples and Jesus walking to Emmaus. Hear their conversations. Feel the 'heat' that burned in their hearts. Share the story. The Lord is risen indeed!"

Military Chaplains, God's Call – A Special Passion for Ministry

By Tamara Ward

The Endorsing Agency for the United Methodist Church is part of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry. On their website (www.gbhem.org/chaplains) you will find a good source of information for this program of the ministry of chaplains and pastoral counselors. On the site it states "War is inimical to the teachings of Jesus, but the role of a military chaplain is not to justify war. A chaplain's task is to minister to the emotional and spiritual needs of service members in war and in peace. The chaplain serves units that not only prepare for war but a number of other deployments as well. The military services are involved in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations both domestic and international. Counseling takes place on flight lines, in motor pools, aboard ships, and in field positions. In addition, worship services are conducted in beautifully appointed chapels on military posts and bases in the United States and overseas. Programs of religious education and youth ministry are provided for the service member and his/her family."

This past summer, following the World Methodist Council Meeting, Bishops Gregory Palmer and Marcus Matthews along with Dr. Mary Ann Moman, Associate General Secretary of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and their spouses visited chaplains in Korea and Hawaii representing the Endorsing Agency. As Bishop Matthews said "The visit was primarily a pastoral call from (them) to convey our support and appreciation for their ministry, to establish more effective communication and to give testimony of the interest and concern that The United Methodist Church has for chaplains and their presence in the armed forces."

In Korea they met with a Rear Admiral, two Major Generals, and several Colonels both United Methodist as well as other denominations and visited the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), an ancient Buddha atop a mountain with a view of the East Sea (a very old and well preserved and meaningful place to the culture and history of Korea), and attended two changes of Command (one chaplain shares that these were big events with lots of soldiers and military history and tradition). Lieutenant Colonel

Michael D. Charles, Command Chaplain for the 19th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) in Taegu, Korea commented after the trip that he thought that they "truly showed the breadth and depth of the Republic of Korea, a fascinating country with many layers of being."

In Hawaii they met with Chaplain Nester Nazario who was, at the time, serving at the Kaneohe Marine Base. They also met with Chaplain Stephen Linehan, Command Chaplain at the Marine Corp Base Hawaii Chapel and received a tour of the brand new facility, including a PowerPoint brief on the Command Religious Program. They also met with Chaplain Michael Schutz who gave them a brief on the submarine community and a tour on a Japanese submarine at the Naval Station Pearl Harbor. They also received a personalized historical boat tour by the Commanding Officer, Navy Region Hawaii on the Admiral's barge as they toured Pearl Harbor and visited Arizona Memorial.

On both visits the Endorsing representatives and their guests were invited to share in the history and culture that the military chaplains live in while they are



Dr. Mary Ann Moman and Bishop Matthews with military member in front of Coast Cutter Ship

stationed at the bases. This was the purpose of the visits from the standpoint of the visitors. Bishop Matthews stated that "traveling with these chaplains gave all of us a reality check as to how similar yet different the ministry within the military community and civilian community are." He went on to say that they (Endorsing Team) "especially appreciate the unique nature of chaplain ministry. It is a rare breed. One won-

See Military Chaplains, page 8

Welcome to Our Sacred Space

Read Matthew 6:25-34

Greetings,

Where does the time go? Just as you find yourself adjusting to last month, last week or yesterday, new possibilities appear on the horizon, a Brand New Year. A few weeks ago, we celebrated the birth of the Christ child and through him, the birth of hope, the gift of salvation, the gift of peace and joy given to all. Most of us enjoyed good food, good fun with family and friends and special church services and some of us have spent time trying to minister and bring cheer to those less fortunate.

Yes, the holidays can be great especially when things are going well. But, I'm reminded that things don't always go well. Just like in the past, our life will have ups and downs, hills and valleys, joys and disappointments in 2007. Therefore, in the midst of the days and nights ahead of us I offer these words, we can never really live in the past or the future. The present is all we have and try as we may we can never get away from it.

A person shared with me a few weeks ago, "life is a bunch of days in a row and we live them one day at a time."

Often we live our lives through pages of the calendar or daily planner racing from event to event bypassing the seconds, minutes, and hours of each day. We often forget to take intentional time for prayer or praise to God. Except for special occasions we seldom take time to give thanks for the priceless gifts we receive each day.. the rising or setting of the sun or moon; the beauty of the earth, water and all creation; and we even take for granted the air we breathe. We often also take for granted family, friends, the church, our jobs, and our health. If we're not careful, like our calendars, we move quick-



Rev. Elaine B. Ayres

ly through each hour and discard each day like it really wasn't important until days become months and months become another year, another memory, gone and never to return again.

Maybe Jesus was simply saying to us in Matthew 6:25-34 stop worrying about the possibilities of what might happen over things you have no control but use your time and energy in the present where you can make a difference. Stop and smell the roses, enjoy loved ones and a Christ-filled life. Trust God more and lean less on your ability, possessions or understanding. Remember that each day is a gift from God. This gift is given in precious seconds and minutes of each day. So make each day count by being the best you can be and doing the best you can do while trusting in the sufficiency of God's grace, mercy, power and love. Let's pray for one another that we will have Christ-filled days and a God Blessed New Year.

Shalom, Elaine

The Summons: An Invitation to Spiritual Formation . . .

By Rev. C. Karen Covey Moore

Welcome to "The Summons: An Invitation to Spiritual Formation." This column is a ministry of the Conference Spiritual Formation Team. We are so excited about God's invitation to draw us close and form us into the image of Christ that we offer these musings once a month to provide an opportunity for all of us to contemplate God's love and presence in our lives. The title of the column comes from the song, *Take O Take Me As I Am* by John Bell of the Iona Community. The words are:

Take, O take me as I am
Summons out what I may be
Set your seal upon my heart
and live in me.

Beginnings . . .

Isn't it interesting that one of the first celebrations in the New Year for us is the Baptism of the Lord? The New Year offers us a clean slate. Another year to live and heal and grow is ours. Another year of opportunities to experience the wonder of God's love in our lives awaits.

As we remember the Baptism of Jesus, we also have the opportunity to remember our own Baptism and to renew the vows that we took or that were taken on our behalf. And indeed, Baptism is the beginning of our Christian journey – just as Jesus'

Baptism was the beginning of His earthly ministry.

New beginnings can be exciting, but they can also be sort of scary as we do not know what lies ahead. Experience tells us that all may not be rosy. In fact, immediately after Jesus was Baptized, He was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan – not particularly the way I would want to start any venture. But that is the way it happens sometimes.

The wilderness can be:

A barren desert – where protection and nurture are non-existent – a place where our physical beings are pushed to their limits -
Uncharted territory where there is not a clear path.
One might feel lost and unsure of what lies ahead.

A place where choices are not always clear and safe.

What is your wilderness? Are you being pushed to your physical limits by illness or just plain trying to do too much? Is there barrenness in your soul? What is your uncharted territory? Does it seem that the path of your life is unclear? What choices and decisions make you feel confused? Are you feeling lost and unsure? What causes you to feel fear and isolation?

Often we fill our lives with "busy-ness" and "things" to try to hide our sense of being in the

wilderness. Sometimes we simply try to deny the pain of the wilderness and pretend that it doesn't exist. In the end that only compounds the problem and makes the wilderness more oppressive and the temptations more desirable.

Jesus faced His wilderness and temptations head on and in complete dependence on God and God's Word.

It is only as we honestly face the barrenness and isolation, the fear, anxiety and uncertainty of our lives completely dependent on God and God's Word, that we can make our way through the wilderness. It is when we recognize our limits and our need for guidance and care that we open our hearts and minds to the reality of God's love –

to the wonder of the
Incarnation
God-with-us
Emmanuel.

And this is the truth that brings us to this New Year – and our Baptism.

When we recognize that God is present in the midst of our wilderness – in our pain – it is then that the temptations do not feel so overwhelming and the wilderness is not so frightening and we can indeed begin to live and heal and grow and experience the wonder of God's love in our lives. That is what Spiritual Formation is all about.

Congratulations! We Have Our Winners!

The Health Fair Committee is proud to announce that Anna Foster and Patricia Frick are the winners of the Lighten Up Contest.

During the 2006 Annual Conference Health Fair, Rev. Foster and Rev. Frick weighed in and went through the stations set up under the tent to begin their 'Journey to Wellness' and a healthier lifestyle. Altogether, approximately 250 persons participated in the Health Fair that weekend. Their weigh-in during the week of November 27, 2006 (persons had the opportunity to

weigh-in at the Advent Day Apart or stop by the BFEM Resource Center) was a milestone for both pastors but, hopefully, it was an opportunity for them to realize that a healthier lifestyle is the main goal, not just what they could do in 5 months.

The next time you see Rev. Foster or Rev. Frick, be sure to congratulate and encourage them

to continue on their Journey to Wellness. We hope that everyone that participated in the Health Fair at Annual Conference will continue their 'Journey to Wellness' too.

Now it is time to evaluate the program and see what the future will bring. The Health Fair Committee will be deciding what direction to take, if any, for the 2007

Annual Conference during a meeting at the BFEM Resource Center.

We need your input!!! If you have any ideas, suggestions, etc. that you would like to share with the committee, please e-mail Elaine Moreland at emoreland@pen-del.org.

Thank you to all who participated in the Health Fair.

Health Fair Committee

Communicator

United Methodist Reporter
Peninsula-Delaware Conference,
139 N. State Street,
Dover, DE 19901
e-mail: tward@pen-del.org
Website: www.pen-del.org
Phone: 302.674.2626
Or toll-free: 1.877.736.3351
Fax: 302.674.1573
Marcus Matthews, Bishop
James T. Seymour, Director of
Connectional Ministries
Tamara Ward, Editor
Communications Coordinator
Linda Stimel, Layout & Design
Linette Warren, Subscriptions
Individual subscriptions,
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Dr. Sandra Steiner-Ball weighs in

Conference

Calendar of Events

January 2007

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 20 | Conference United Methodist Women Mission Team Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 9:00 a.m. | 3 |
| | Dover District Lay Speaking, Harrington: Asbury UMC, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. | 5 |
| 22 | Embracing The Black Church Sub-team, BFEM Resource Center, 1:30 p.m. | 8 |
| 24 | Communications Commission Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 6:30 p.m. | |
| 25 | Committee On Native American Ministries Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 9:00 a.m. | |
| 31 | Vision Team Budget Sub-Team Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 9:30 a.m. | |
| | Annual Conference Sessions Team Meeting, Princess Anne, MD: UMES, 3:00 p.m. | 10 |

February 2007

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Resource Development & Management Team, BFEM Resource Center, 9:30 a.m. | |
|---|---|--|

Leadership Development Resource Team Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.

Board of Stewards Meeting, Centreville: Camp Pecometh, 9:30 a.m.

Credit Union Annual Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 11:30 p.m.

Embracing The Black Church Task Force Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 1:30 p.m.

Advocacy Resource Team Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 2:00 p.m.

Conference Hispanic/Latino Task Force Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.

Enabling Ministries Resource Team Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.

Dover District Trainings For Lay & Clergy, Milford: Avenue UMC, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Volunteers In Mission Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 3:00 p.m.

Peter D. Weaver Congo Mission Team Meeting, BFEM Resource Center, 6:00 p.m.

Interfaith Resource Center

Going Digital

As many of you now know, the IRC published its first e-news in early January. We published in PDF format which is easily accessible with Adobe Acrobat Reader which is available as a free download. The beauty of this format is that it comes to you exactly as we created it. Best of all, the publication can include color, which makes it a bit easier and certainly more fun to read. Although we did send out some traditional paper copies by snail mail, we distributed the newsletter by e-mail through judicatory distribution lists and through e-mail contacts to specific e-mail addresses that you have shared with us. With our next edition, we expect to be prepared to do the delivery entirely through a list serve service. We don't want to miss anyone. If you would like to be added to our e-mail list, please send us an e-mail with "IRC e-news subscription" in the subject box. If there are members in your congregation that should be included, please encourage them to subscribe as well. Of course, you have our pledge that all e-mail addresses will be kept in the strictest confidence. And you will be welcome to unsubscribe at any time. Please email me at resource.ctr@dol.net.



Paula Hartzell

You Come First

Although our budget has tightened, we want you to know that you, the IRC user, come first. We have successfully honored all reasonable requests for purchases of new resources in the past two years and plan to continue that commitment in 2007. Our acquisitions will be entirely on a "requests first" basis for the entire year. In that way, you can count on us making every effort to have resources available when you want them. We benefit too, because we will be buying the resources that you want, not those that draw dust on our shelves. So don't hesitate to call me at 1.800.336.6152 or locally at 302.447.0910.

New Resources

Invitation to Romans joins the other short-term Disciple

Bible Studies (*Invitation to the Old Testament, Invitation to the New Testament, and Invitation to Genesis*) on our shelves. These programs were designed with the busy person in mind; one who would like to deepen their understanding of the Bible, but simply is unable to make the longer commitment of the original Disciple programs. Unique features include a dramatic performance of the reading to be discussed, scholarly discussion, and a segment that looks at how other theologians have responded to the passage. Available in DVD or VHS formats.

Nooma is a series of short DVD's, featuring Rob Bell, designed to reach late teen to young adult audiences. The name is an English spelling of the Greek word *pneuma*, meaning spirit or breath. Each DVD is approximately 10-15 minutes long and deals with topics that are relevant and deeply spiritual. Filmed on location in Grandville, Michigan where Bell is pastor of the Mars Hill Bible Church, the videos are vibrant, compelling with a sense of authenticity. Intended as discussion starters, they include a 32-page guide of personal reflection and questions.

Health & Welfare Ministries

Wholistic Health What Does the Bible Say?

Wholistic health is being whole in body, mind and spirit. A person is neither isolated or one dimensional, but a human being who is three dimensional, is someone who lives their lives in relationship with God, other people, and all of creation.

As Christians seeking wholistic health, we look to scripture to provide a strong foundation for understanding health. In the Hebrew tradition there was unity of body and soul with God in the living person-*shalom*. Concepts of health, healing and wholeness are found in the old and new testament.

The following are some scripture verses congregations may find helpful as they explore a ministry of health and healing:

Psalm 23:	God's healing presence
Psalm 103:	God's healing love, grace and compassion
Luke 4:18-19	"And He sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal"
John 10:10	"I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly"
James 5:13-18	Effective healing prayer
John 13:1-20	The healing ministry of touch and servanthood
Matthew 26:6-13	A woman ministers to Jesus

Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families

Christian Community Celebrates Week of Prayer for Christian Unity With Ecumenical Service of Worship and Prayer

Christians representing a variety of traditions will come together in late January to pray for unity and to celebrate the ongoing work of ecumenism.

There will be an ecumenical service of worship and prayer on **Sunday, January 21**. This is the last day of the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, an annual observance of ecumenical aspiration in the American Christian community. This year's service will be held at **Peninsula-McCabe United Methodist Church, 2200 Baynard Boulevard, Wilmington, Delaware beginning at 4:00 p.m.**

Preaching at this year's service will be **Rev. Monsignor Joseph F. Rebman, STL, JCL** Vicar General of the Diocese of Wilmington. The host pastor is **Rev. Cheryl Taylor Jensen**, a member of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference of The United Methodist Church. Other congregational and judicatory leaders from the Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations will participate in the service.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is coordinated each year by the **Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute**, a community of religious groups devoted to unity located in Garrison, New York.

Paul Graymoor is respected as one of the founders of the ecumenical movement in America. This is the 99th annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in this county.

The **Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families** is providing administrative support for the observance in Greater Wilmington.

For More Information:
Reverend Robert P. Hall,
Executive Director
Delaware Ecumenical Council
on Children and Families
302.225.1040
deccf@aol.com



Peninsula-Delaware Conference Deaths

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family members and friends of those that have gone on to the church triumphant.

Mildred E. White (passed away December 1, 2006)
Priscilla Maxham (passed away December 24, 2006)

Order of Deacon/Diaconal Ministry Celebration Scheduled

An event in celebration of ten years for the Order of Deacon and 30 years for UM diaconal ministry will be held April 19-22 in Orlando, Florida. Sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the event will bring together individuals from around the world for Bible study, mission, and professional development and sabbath-keeping workshops. For more information visit <http://www.gbhem.org/convocation07>.

Mission Ideas for 2007

Right now local church Finance Committees across our Annual Conference are counting up the results for 2006. While they worry about balancing budgets, will they also measure whether their church gave more to mission outreach projects in 2006 than they did in 2005? Let's hope so as churches that grow in the outreach giving also find their internal ministry income increases.

Here is a brief overview of how your church can be in mission outreach outside your hometown.

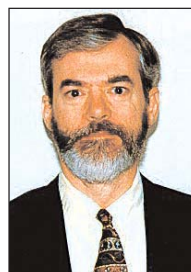
- Support the Annual Conference initiatives. In 2007, these will include:
 - Completing the scholarship endowment at Africa University. An upcoming article in the *Communicator* will let everyone know where we stand against that goal.
 - Raise \$60,000 for the Central Congo Partnership. While the final figures are not in for 2006, it appears that we only received about 60% of our goal. Biggest accomplishment was working with UMCOM to install a communications center in the DRC and train its users. We expect to receive photos soon!
 - Start raising the \$94,000 requested by the 2004 General Conference to help fight AIDS here and around the world. You will be hearing from both Rev. Elaine Ayres and the Advocacy Resource Team about this effort over the next two years.
 - Support the Conference Advance Special Sunday at the start of Lent. Contact me for a poster and bulletin insert you can use for this promotion.
 - Support the Annual Conference Appeal. At this time, the offerings will support Africa University, the Central Congo Partnership, and the Global AIDS effort. An additional offering

will be received for the Board of Ordained Ministry Scholarship Fund.

- Support a missionary sent by the General Board of Global Ministries. For \$5/member (capped at \$2500/church), you can enter into a Covenant Relationship with a person working in the United States or overseas. Less than 10% of our AC churches support a missionary. There might even be a single family in your church willing to donate the entire amount. One Pennsylvania church has eight missionaries supported in that fashion. Visit the Conference website for missionaries currently supported by a church in our Annual Conference (www.pen-del.org/missions)
- Find ways to get your members "hands dirty." Studies show that people who give of their time are more likely to give of their money, both to charities and their home church. The Conference website lists contacts for Volunteer-in-Mission trips or contact Rev. Donald Hamilton for contact data. (mildon@comcast.net)

As Pastor, Missions chair, or Lay Leader, you hold the key that can open the world of missions to your congregation(s). You can toss our requests or share them and see how God responds in the hearts of the people you serve. See what God has in store for you as you open your resources to the benefit of all.

Kevin Goodwin
Conference Missions Resource
302.453.1169
MissionsCzar@aol.com



Kevin Goodwin

Military Chaplains

Continued from page 1

ders why they chose this vocation. But as I listened to the chaplains that represent our United Methodist Church and other faith groups with the special love for persons serving in the military. One could see their hunger to be a witness for God in extreme life and death situations as well as in times of an uneasy peace." Lt. Col. Michael Charles also told me that it "is definitely a calling, serving as a military chaplain, but if it truly is your calling; it is the best job that a person can have."

Bishop Matthews commented "how many of us even think of military chaplains? If we think of them, what is the image that comes to mind? Naiveté before this visit was an image of Father Mulcahy from the television series, "M.A.S.H." Chaplains are vital to the success of any mission. The more dangerous the more they are needed. These men and women live through traumas that few civilians like me will ever experience including preparing soldiers to fight in wars and other conditions without losing their souls. Helping families left behind get through emotional and financial hardships and helping men and women re-enter the lives of their families after serving in unfriendly hostile situations. They see a side of humanity that bishops and pastors serving in appointed conferences and churches never see. They not only serve the soldiers and sailors but commanding officers as well."

After talking with Bishop Matthews and hearing about his trip, I was curious to find out more about the life of a military chaplain. I contacted two of the chaplains the Endorsing Team met with and they were gracious enough to share some of their experiences and thoughts about military chaplains. Revs. Michael Charles (Seoul Korea) and Nestor Nazario (stationed in Hawaii at the time of their visit but has since been transferred to the Naval Air Engineering Station in Lakehurst, New Jersey) have both been chaplains for over 18 years. They have lived, literally, all over the world and both said that was one of the most rewarding aspects

of the job, the travel and other opportunities to live in different parts of the world and to "be involved in the preservation and welfare of the place in which (they) are serving." As Chaplain Charles put it "I am not just (in Korea) for two weeks to eat kimchi – I practice ministry here times three and a half years."

With the rewards also comes drawbacks and both said that even though the traveling/living abroad is rewarding it is also a drawback. All of the traveling and deployments mean long separations from immediate and extended family members and friends. "If you say bye and see you later – it usually means 'much' later and, if deployed, you may find yourself absent from important life events like the birth of your child or the death of a grandparent."

Both men concurred that there isn't a 'typical day' in the life of a military chaplain. Chaplain Charles said that "if we are awake and aware, we'll have numerous opportunities to practice great ministry in the workplace, on the airborne drop zone, in the field or in someone's home." Chaplain Nazario also said that the days vary according to the setting to which the chaplain is assigned and the mission of that command. He explained the different assignments including the Recruit Training Command, where the chaplain spends most of their time providing counseling to recruits who are making the transition of adjusting to a military lifestyle to an assignment to an operational command such as a Navy ship or Marine Corps battalion where the chaplain will be involved in offering pre-deployment and returning home briefs to Marines and Sailors which assist them in coping with deployment and reunion stressors. The chaplain, in this situation, would be deployed with their command for at least six months and would spend a considerable amount of time doing space visitation to talk with and listen to Marines and Sailors. During foreign port visits, chaplains are usually tasked with organizing volunteers to do community relations projects with

orphanages and schools, and may also be in charge of coordinating tours to assist in keeping morale of the command high. But, no matter what their assignments, chaplains in the military are there to provide for the free exercise of religion and to assist in meeting the religious and spiritual needs of the troops and family members. So, according to Chaplain Nestor, "a 'typical day' for a chaplain in the US Navy may start off by mustering at 0600 (6:00 a.m.) in the morning and end at 2200 (10:00 p.m.) after the evening prayer while the ship is underway. Somewhere in between, exercise is either highly encouraged or mandatory."

This is not the first visit by the Endorsing Agency as proven by the fact that both chaplains have had more than one experience with members from the Nashville, TN based office. When asked about their expectations of the visit, both were very positive of the outcome and thankful for the opportunity for pastoral support from the Team and also the opportunity to share their unique ministry stories and an added bonus was that it gave the Methodist Chaplains the opportunity to meet for fellowship and to strengthen their bonds. Both expressed their gratitude for the individual attention that each of the three (Bishops Matthews and Palmer and Rev. Moman) gave to them during their stay.

When asked what Annual Conferences could do, in addition to the work of the Endorsing Agency, to support the military chaplains and, in doing so, support our troops, Chaplains Charles and Nazario offered a few suggestions.

Chaplain Charles – "First, and most importantly, the Annual Conference needs to see military Chaplaincy as a vital, recognized and encouraged ministry. Second, if the United Methodist Church fails to increase our numbers of serving UM Chaplains, our UM sons and daughters in the military will be served by other denominations. Third, and perhaps more important than the first point; America's military goes where America's elected leaders tell them to go and do what those leaders tell them to do. The election of the leaders is politics. The standing military is not politics. It is the guardian force of our freedoms and our heartland. The ministry to that force is the purview of the military chaplain. That is ministry, not politics. Therefore, an appointment to the military ministry of the Chaplaincy is a vote for shepherd's care to America's United Methodist sons and daughters – not a vote for or against the politicians or current operations around the world."

Chaplain Nazario – For those



Bishop Matthews and Dr. Mary Ann Moman with others aboard Cutter Ship

service members living far away, he applauds the success of the international calling cards issued by the Endorsing Agency of the United Methodist Church for deployed service members to contact their loved ones. He also encourages preparing care packages with items such as toilet paper, baby wipes, toothpaste and toothbrushes, deodorant, magazines, books, snacks, CD's, etc. Holiday postcards and/or letters of support sent to any service member, or a banner prepared by a local church to a specific deployed unit is another way that Annual Conferences can support our troops. And he also suggests that we need to increase the awareness among our local congregations of the need to provide support to church members who may have a loved one deployed overseas. "Nothing brings more peace of mind to a deployed service member than to know that their family has a good support system back home if needed."

For those service members living in the United States, Chaplain Nazario suggests that UM Churches near military bases may want to encourage members from their congregations to invite single service members for a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner at their homes. They may also try to create opportunities for service members to do volunteer work out in the community, and

to recognize and pray for service members during worship services on special occasions like Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

Bishop Matthews also added that he hoped visits by the Endorsing Agency could be more frequent, Episcopal offices should find ways to intentionally have regular contact with our chaplains, and while traveling to an area that has a military base, if appropriate, request to visit with a chaplain.

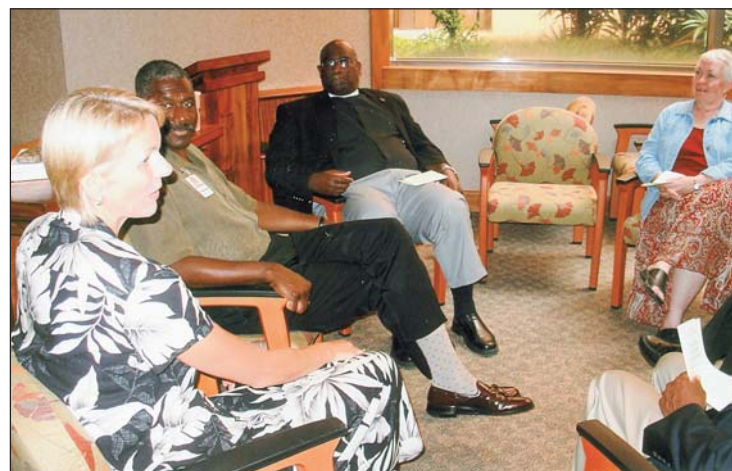
I hope that this article is just the tip of the iceberg for a new and rewarding relationship between our Annual Conferences and our military chaplains. More information can be gathered by visiting the Endorsing Agency's website (www.gbgm/chaplains) or contacting them by phone at 1.615.340.7411. Our family members are supporting our freedom; let us show our love by supporting them.

Chaplain Charles summed up his career in the military by saying, "it is an honor and a privilege to walk among the fine soldiers of today's Army and sister military branches. We get one life to live, one span of ministry within which to practice and hone our art. It has been a great and sacred path to have been presented – all under the banner of ministry."

(Editor's Note: A special Thank You to Chaplains Michael Charles and Nestor Nazario for their willingness to contribute to this article.)



Bishops Palmer and Matthews visit Aloha Gardens



Visit during tour of Queens Medical Center