



The people of The United Methodist Church™

Two Sections, Section A

VOLUME 153 NUMBER 41

043000

MAY 25, 2007

The Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference

# Communicator

an edition of

# The United Methodist Reporter

## Rev. Dr. James T. Seymour To Retire

**B**ishop Marcus Matthews, Episcopal leader of the Philadelphia Area, has, with deep appreciation and gratitude, accepted the request for retirement from the Rev. Dr. J. T. Seymour, Director of Connectional Ministries of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. Rev. Seymour's retirement will become effective July 1, 2007.

Rev. Seymour's journey in the ministry began in August of 1961 when Rev. Seymour encountered God in an unforgettable experience and finally answered "yes" to the call to full-time ministry.

Rev. Seymour graduated Magna cum laude from Union Theological Seminary in Kingston, Jamaica in 1966, from London University in England in 1967 and received his Doctorate of Ministry from Drew University in 1978.

He was Ordained an Elder in the Bahamas in 1969. He served Methodist Circuits in Jamaica and Grand Bahama in the Bahamas from 1967 to 1973 and was Superintendent of the North Eleuthera Circuit (also in the Bahamas) from 1973 to 1976. His first appointment in this conference was the Snow Hill-Ebenezer United Methodist Charge where he served from 1976 to 1981. The Peninsula Conference (as it was known then) accepted his credentials in 1980.

In 1981 he served as pastor of Ezion-Mt. Carmel UMC on the Wilmington District and was appointed to the Cabinet as a District Superintendent in 1989 where he served the Wilmington District. In 1995 he was appointed to Hockessin UMC in the Wilmington District and to the position of Council Director (Director of Connectional Ministries) at



Rev. Dr. James T. Seymour

the Conference Resource Center in 1999.

He has served the Peninsula-Delaware Conference for 31 years where he has been on numerous task forces, boards and agencies. He has also been a clergy delegate to General and Jurisdictional

Conferences, represented the conference on Jurisdictional Boards such as the Multi-Ethnic Center Board, the Episcopacy Committee, and the Vision Table. At the General Conference level he has served on the Board of Church & Society, the Commission on Religion & Race, the Commission on Central Conference Affairs and the Interagency Task Force on Legislation.

Rev. Seymour is married to Jean. They will be celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary this July. They have two sons, Christopher James and Andrew Graham and four grandchildren.

In his statement to the conference as a nominee for the 2008 General and Jurisdictional Conferences he says that he wants to "contribute a perspective that is rooted in Scripture, responsive to God's

sovereignty, sensitive to human well-being, conscious of cultural shifts in a changing world and open to the Holy Spirit's leading." I think that this also sums up his service to our conference in his last 8 years as the Conference Director. On the announcement of his retirement, he commented "I feel truly blessed in both family life and ministry experiences because of the many wonderful persons with whom I have had the joy of sharing the journey of ministry over the years."

Rev. Dr. James T. Seymour – you have given your whole being to the work of our Lord through your many years in ministry and especially through your position as the Director of Connectional Ministries for the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. We say THANK YOU J. T. and wish the best for you and Jean in the next phase of your life.

## Rev. Dr. Sandra Steiner Ball Appointed Director of Connectional Ministries

**B**ishop Marcus Matthews, Episcopal leader of the Philadelphia Area, is pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Sandra Steiner Ball as the Director of Connectional Ministries for the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. The appointment becomes effective July 1, 2007.

Rev. Ball continues a family tradition of conference leadership. Her father, Mr. Ed Steiner, was the conference treasurer who encouraged the conference to

hire a business manager. The conference moved forward, hiring Mr. Ted Briggs as the first business manager. Mr. Steiner voluntarily stepped down as treasurer when Mr. Briggs began.

Rev. Ball grew up and was active in Avenue UMC in Milford, Delaware. She graduated cum laude in 1984 with a BA in religion studies from Dickenson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She attended Duke Divinity School where she received her Master of Divinity degree in 1987 and in 2002 she

was awarded her Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary. She has been a member of the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference for 21 years where she was ordained a deacon in 1986 and an Elder in 1989.

During her ministry, Rev. Ball has served in three appointments. She served as the first full time associate pastor at Kent Island United Methodist Church from 1987 to 1992. Her second appointment was pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in St.

Michael's, Maryland where she served from 1993 to 2000. From 2001 to the present, Rev. Ball has served as the Peninsula-Delaware Conference Superintendent, appointed to the Dover District, where she has the distinction of being the first female Dover District Superintendent.

Throughout her ministerial career, Rev. Ball has served on numerous District and Conference Teams, Boards, Committees and

See Ball appointment page 5



Rev. Dr. Sandra Steiner Ball

## Rev. Charlotte A. Nichols Appointed Dean of the Cabinet

**B**ishop Marcus Matthews, Episcopal leader of the Philadelphia Area, is pleased to announce the appointment of Rev. Charlotte Nichols, Peninsula-Delaware Conference Superintendent appointed to the Salisbury District, as Dean of the Cabinet, effective July 1, 2007. Rev. Nichols brings much experience, deep spirituality and enthusiasm to this position of leadership and responsibility. She will continue her appointment as Salisbury District Superintendent while serving as Dean.

As Dean of the Cabinet she will work closely with Bishop Matthews in providing leadership to the other District Superintendents in our conference, and helping order the work of the Superintendency. In addition, as Dean of the Cabinet she will be working closely with the Conference staff and will be providing leadership to assist with the Healthy Churches Initiative as we live into the vision of this program.

Rev. Nichols is serving as a District Superintendent for the second time in her career. She first

served the conference from 1990 to 1996 as a District Superintendent assigned to the Easton District. She has the distinction of being the first female District Superintendent in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference as well as the first African American woman to be appointed to this position in the United Methodist Church. She was appointed to the Salisbury District as Superintendent in 2005.

She has served the Church in many different capacities during her career. She is a dual degree graduate of Wesley Theological

Seminary, graduating with Master's Degrees in Divinity and Religious Education. Serving as Education Assistant at Jones Memorial United Methodist Church in Washington D.C., Rev. Nichols gained valuable experience as a leader in the church. She was ordained Deacon in 1979, and ordained Elder in 1981. In her undergraduate work, she earned an Associate's Degree in Elementary Education from Wesley College, and then completed her Bachelor's Degree in Ele-

See Nichols appointment page 5



Rev. Charlotte A. Nichols

## Welcome to Our Sacred Space

Greetings,

It's good to be back in the office because for the last few weeks, I was on a renewal leave. During that time, I was able to reflect on my life and my walk with God and take some time for revitalization. This had been an exciting time in many ways but also a challenging time in my ministry and personal life.

I thank God for all of your prayers. You have reminded me of how blessed it is to be a member of the community of the faith, particularly the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. I can sincerely echo Paul's words, "I thank God every time I remember you in all my prayers. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Being very confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:3-6) What a blessing you are to me.

In my reflections, I was reminded of the love and support we give to each other in this conference. How we are and continue to be blessed with the gifts of the clergy and the laity in the various ministries we have served together.

I was able to spend a great deal of time with family and friends but most of all I was able to spend uninterrupted time with God and God's creation. I probably started this renewal time not really know-



Rev. Elaine B. Ayres

ing how important it is to take time for God and self. How important it is to withdraw from one's daily schedule and gain a new holistic perspective on Christian journey. Perhaps this is what the psalmist was seeking in Psalm 13.

God is so good to us! He has shown his faithfulness through giving us our daily bread, keeping us from evil, extending grace and mercy and providing an abundance of priceless treasures. He has provided wonderful people on our life's journey, past and present, and given us the gift of eternal life.

During my renewal leave God reminded me that the past is behind us, the future is before us, but our gift each day is the present. He reminded me to be thankful each day for all my blessings and "trust in his unfailing life." Paul also reminds us that each day is a gift from God, so thank God in all things. (Philippians 4:4-9) It's good to be back!

## The Summons: An Invitation to Spiritual Formation . . .

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.

One of the responsibilities of the Spiritual Formation Team is to let everyone know about opportunities to participate in events that will promote and facilitate spiritual growth and bring you into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Three such opportunities are coming up: **SOULfeast**, the **Academy for Spiritual Formation**, (see June 22 issue) and the **Peninsula-Delaware Conference Contemplative Retreat**.

**SOULfeast** is an annual event at Lake Junaluska Conference Center, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina sponsored by the Upper Room of The United Methodist Church. This year **SOULfeast** will take place July 15 to 19. You're invited to come and listen with your heart at **SOULfeast**. During our four days together, we'll experience Sabbath rest, engaging worship, fresh insight for the journey, and community connection. Bring your family, your leadership team, and your desire for rest and inspiration. Whether you are clergy or laity, young or mature, coming solo

or with family, you'll find space and guidance at **SOULfeast** for creative engagement in spiritual practices that foster attentiveness to God's voice. Workshops, both new and familiar musical worship, the natural beauty of western North Carolina, energizing teaching, challenging resources for leaders, and opportunities to play with family and new friends combine to make **SOULfeast** a rich listening experience. Expect something fresh at **SOULfeast** 2007 as we hear the questions God asks and listen together for God's affirmation. You may find more information and register for **SOULfeast** at [www.UpperRoom.org/soulfeast](http://www.UpperRoom.org/soulfeast) or call 1.800.972.0433.

**Peninsula-Delaware Conference Contemplative Retreat:** The Spiritual Formation Team of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference is sponsoring a contemplative retreat at Bethany Beach, Delaware **October 4-6, 2007**. The Retreat Leader will be the Rev. Larry Peacock, author of *Openings: A Daybook of Saints, Psalms, and Prayer*; *Heart and Soul: Spiritual Formation in the Local Church*; *The Getting Started Guide to Companions in Christ*; *Water Words: Inclusive, Fresh Liturgy for Worship*; and articles in *Weavings, Alive Now, and Alternatives*. He was a contributing writer to the *Spiritual Formation Bible* and *Sourcebook of Worship Resources, vol. 1, 2, and 3*. Rev. Peacock is currently serving as executive director of Rolling Ridge Retreat Center in North Andover, Massachusetts. He is married to author and pastor, Anne Broyles, and is the father of two wonderful children and two foreign exchange daughters. Registration information will be available soon. So save the date! And let your soul be nourished.

## Six Churches Co-Sponsor Native American Ministry Sunday

On Sunday, April 29th, for the first time in our conference, six churches in the Smyrna area – Asbury, Centennial, Daybreak, Ewell's-St. Paul, Kenton, the Cheswold Charge (Immanuel, Cheswold and Downs Chapel) and the Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) came together to sponsor, celebrate and participate in a Native American Ministry Sunday event. Held at Daybreak Church in Smyrna, the beautiful trees and green grass provided a wonderful, natural setting to celebrate and worship our Creator God with the traditions of the Native people.

Participants sharing their gifts came from our two Native American Churches, Immanuel and Indian Mission, CONAM members, tribal members from the Lenni-Lenape and Nanticoke Nations, the Nanticoke NDN Stix Chix, and young Anthony McClymont, sharing his playground experience of standing up and supporting no Indian mascots.

Open to the public, this event was well attended. Sitting among the lawn chairs and blankets were our supporting church pastors and our Dover District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Sandra Steiner Ball.

CONAM would like to thank everyone who opened up their hearts and contributed their gifts to make this event meaningful and special.



Participants at the Native American Ministry Sunday in Smyrna



Anthony McClymont reads about his experience on supporting No Indian Mascots.



Mary Ann Sammons

### Change In Annual Conference Schedule

The "Changing Lives for a Changing World" Annual Conference Session's schedule will be arranged slightly different this year.

The Clergy Session (previously held in Dover on the Wednesday before Conference) will be held on Friday morning on the University of Maryland – Eastern Shore campus (Student Center Theatre). At the same time, the Laity will be conducting their own session across the hall in the Student Center Ballroom.

Holy Conferencing will begin at 1:00 p.m. in the Ella Fitzgerald Center.

On-site registration for the conference will be available Thursday evening and Friday morning in the Student Center (prior to the Clergy/Laity Sessions) in the hallway between the theatre and the ballroom. After the sessions begin, registration will be moved to the Ella Fitzgerald Performing Arts Center.

Changing Lives



for a Changing World

### Communicator

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## Interfaith Resource Center

### Tony Campolo to Speak at Interfaith Resource Center Event!

The Rev. Dr. Tony Campolo, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University in Pennsylvania, will present *Working Together in a World That's Falling Apart* on Saturday, July 7 at 7:00 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church. He will also teach a seminar for pastors at 2:00 p.m. the same day. Dr. Campolo is a leading evangelical writer, professor, minister and founder of Urban Promise. His books include *Letters to a Young Evangelical* and *The Church Enslaved: A Spirituality of Racial Reconciliation*, co-authored with the Rev. Dr. Michael Battle. He is featured in numerous video lecture programs, including *Wrestling with Angels*, the IRC's top resource the past three years in a row! Tickets will be available at the IRC offices, go to [www.interfaithresourcecenter.com](http://www.interfaithresourcecenter.com) or call us at 1.800.366.6152 or 302.477.0910. The IRC encourages churches to consider purchasing a block of tickets for their group.

### The IRC is Now a Designated GoodSearch Charity

GoodSearch is an online search engine much like Google with one important exception. When you use GoodSearch, you can designate a charity to receive



Paula Hartzell

a small donation. The donation works out to be about a penny per search. Here's how: go to <http://www.goodsearch.com/default.aspx> and enter Interfaith Resource Center into the charity designation and click "verify." Interfaith Resource Center (Wilmington, DE) will appear. Now enter your search query in the search box. Use GoodSearch every time you are searching for something online. Please note: GoodSearch considers using it as a vehicle to get to the charity's website as fraudulent and will disqualify charities in which that is a frequent occurrence. Call me if you have any questions and thanks for your help.

### New Resources

Tired of routine and self-centered church life that makes little impact on the surrounding world? *On Earth As It Is in Heaven* is a study that presents a Biblical ag-

enda for a mission-oriented church, understands the call of the gospel to participate in God's work in the world and mobilizes believers to see their essential role in the advancement of the reign of God. DVD kit includes 12 20-minute sessions and two alternative 20-minute introductions on two DVDs.

**Opening Ourselves to Grace: Basic Christian Practices** explores the basic practices of Christian faith and life from a Wesleyan tradition. Through this video and Bible study, you will experience the historic spiritual disciplines (compassion, justice, worship, devotion) and you will grow in your love of God and neighbor. The program includes one DVD and accompanying CD-ROM: a 4-session video presentation of Wesley's understanding of spiritual practice; a 6-week Bible study; a discussion guide for group leaders; and additional resources.

Former BBC Everyman presenter Peter France used to scrutinize religion from the outside. Now the searcher has come inside. In *Journey: A Personal Exploration*, in seven 15-minute episodes, he reveals his own remarkable journey to Christian faith. He takes us from his childhood in a Yorkshire mining village to a time of question, skepticism, desperation and planned suicide, from his search for and discovery of the truth to his eventual baptism at age 57 on the Greek island of Patmos.

## Ball appointment

Continued from page 1

Agencies. In 2004, she was elected the first reserve clergy delegate to the General Conference and was a delegate to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

When asked about her new appointment, Rev. Ball replied "Be-

cause I am so passionate about the present and future ministry of the United Methodist Church, it has always been my desire to serve the Peninsula-Delaware Conference in any capacity. This appointment allows me to continue to do so."

Rev. Ball is married to Rev. Barry Ball. They have two daughters, Sarah Elizabeth Ball, age 17 and Sandra Rebekah Ball, age 13. Also part of their family is Oscar, the Miniature Schnauzer and Dusty, the big grey cat.

## Nichols appointment

Continued from page 1

mentary Education from Salisbury State College (Salisbury University). Prior to entering the ministry, she worked as a Press Operator at Maryland Plastic and was a teacher in Dorchester County.

She has served in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference for 27 years. Her diverse career has included pastoral appointments on the Girdletree Charge on the Salisbury District; the Miles River Charge on the Easton District; and Metropolitan United Methodist Church on the Salisbury District. While at Metropolitan she was also the Director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Rev. Nichols has also served the Conference and the Church as a delegate to the Jurisdictional Conferences in 1984, 1988, and 1996. In addition, she was a General Conference Delegate in 1992; a member of the Salisbury and Easton District Committees on Ministry; a member of the Conference Equitable Compensation Committee; Chair of Embracing the Black Church; member and chair of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Boundaries Committee; member and vice chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry; member of the Northeast Jurisdiction Partnership Table; Delegate to the World Methodist Con-

ference in Seoul, South Korea in 2006; and member of the Board of Trustees of Wesley College.

Other involvements include: Life Member, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Harry Hosier Life Member, Black Methodist for Church Renewal, Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference; and member of the Board of Visitors of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. In responding to this appointment, Rev. Nichols commented, "I count it a privilege serving God, the Bishop and the Conference in this way, and will do my best to be faithful to the task."

## Health & Welfare Ministries

### Remember the Men

By Maurice Egnor

Men are invincible; most of us feel that unlike Superman, we are not even vulnerable to Kryptonite. So why would we even think about going to see a health care professional when we don't feel bad? It's all we can do to see a physician when we are sick. Ladies, have you ever heard this before? I, unfortunately, fall into the group I just described. Even as I see friends who are suffering from heart attacks, strokes, cancer and an assortment of other ailments, did I mention bad backs? I hesitate to call a doctor. I thank God daily for giving me a wife who looks after my best interests, even when I don't. June is Men's health month. Men, and those who love them, consider consulting your health care provider during the month of June. If you are over the age of 50 you should

have an annual physical exam. If you are under 50 you should consult your physician at least every other year. When you do this your doctor will see that you get the screenings that you need for your age and medical history. If you are interested in getting information about various screenings, consult with your health care provider or your parish nurse. Some of these screenings include, a complete physical exam, blood pressure, TB skin tests, blood tests, urinalysis, EKG, PSA blood test, and Colorectal screening, to name a few. God gave us our physical bodies to house our spirit while we are on this Earth, and we should treat them as the temple that they are, rather than a tent. In order to be whole and healthy we must care for our whole self: mind, body and spirit. May God bless us all as we strive to be whole and healthy in Him.

## PERCEPT Training Session

There will be a PERCEPT Training Session with Robert Clary, PERCEPT Representative, in two locations on **Thursday, May 31st.**

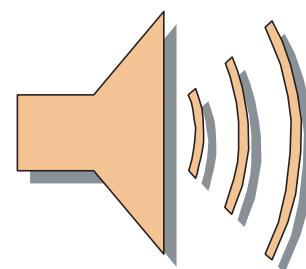
The training is an opportunity to provide you with access to use demographical information about your community and surrounding areas around your church. You can choose the most convenient location from the two choices.

If at all possible, please RSVP to the BFEM Resource Center by

calling 1.877.736.3351 or by e-mail to [jseymour@pen-del.org](mailto:jseymour@pen-del.org) or [Imagill@pen-del.org](mailto:Imagill@pen-del.org). This is to ensure that there will be ample materials on hand for each session. If, however, you are unable to RSVP, walk-ins will be accepted.

**North Location:** 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. – Cornerstone UMC, 3135 Summit Bridge, Road, Bear, DE

**South Location:** 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. – Gethsemane UMC, Delaware Route 20 – State Line, Seaford, DE



15th Annual  
African-American  
Clergy And Laity Summit  
"Building A Place  
For God's People"  
Wednesday And  
Thursday June 6-7, 2007

Wednesday, June 6, 2007: Registration At 1:00 p.m.

Metropolitan U.M.C. in Princess Anne, Md.

2:00 p.m. Bible Study

7:00 p.m. Worship Service

Thursday, June 7, The Student Services Center  
Princess Anne, Md.

Worship! Praise Dancers! Workshops!  
Preaching! Communion!

Contact: Brenda O. Gaines For Registration:  
1.877.736.3351 Ext. 10

## Camping And Retreat

## Ministry



### Inaugural Pecometh Day a Huge Success

The first ever Pecometh Day took place on Saturday, April 28, with a full slate of activities intended to commit the ministry to prayer, introduce people to Pecometh, and raise money for camperships and capital improvements for existing facilities.

### Day of Prayer



The Day of Prayer focused on a prayer vigil in the north meadow on the site of the proposed adult retreat center. Participants prayed for the summer camp, retreat ministry, the design, permitting and construction of the adult retreat center, the capital campaign, as well as all the volunteers on the capital campaign team. The pastoral setting, water view and chorus of songbirds made it a special time to commit Camping & Retreat Ministries to prayer.

### Open House

The inaugural Pecometh Day coincided with the annual Open House Weekend. Nearly 100 families visited during the Open House. Visitors were able to watch an informational video about the summer camp program, take a tour led by a summer staffer, ask questions and even register for summer camp. Open House is always a great time for prospective campers and parents to see Pecometh firsthand so they can get excited about summer camp.

### Pecometh Auction

Pecometh Day was highlighted by the Pecometh Auction, which included both a Silent Auction of donated goods and services and a live Quilt Auction. The latter featured 55 donated quilts from quilting guilds and local churches from across the conference. The day began at 10:00 a.m. when the dining hall was opened for the displayed quilts to be previewed. Prospective bidders could then make Silent Auction bids, grab a bite to eat at the food tent, enjoy the property and even take an Open House tour. The live Auction began at 1:00 p.m. with spirited bidding

and some surprising prices. All in all, the Pecometh Auction raised \$5,500 to be used for camperships and capital improvements to existing facilities.

Many thanks are in order for this successful fundraiser. Bill Middleton from Marshall Auctions donated his services. Barbara Kelly chaired the Auction Committee, which included Kate Breeding and Katie Laing. Thanks also to our great volunteers Janice Barkley, Ray Breeding, Beth Campbell, M.L. Kaczka, Ken Laing, Anne Pruett-Barnett, Mary Servon, Michelle Stacey and Loretta Washburn. Finally, the Pecometh Day/Auction would not have been possible without the great work of the Pecometh staff, Ann Ashe, Richelle Darrell, Buddy Landing and Ken Whaley.

Bishop Marcus Matthews and the Cabinet have declared the fourth Saturday of April each year as Pecometh Day. So, mark your calendars for April 26, 2008. Plans are already underway. If you'd like to work on the planning committee, volunteer to help or donate a quilt, please contact Jack Shitama at 410.556.6900, x101 or jack@pecometh.org.

### Summer Camp Still Available

A lot of people don't realize that campers sign up for summer camp all the way through the summer. So, if you've been putting it off or simply forgot, don't despair. There's still time to register a child for Camp Pecometh. In fact, there are still openings in some of our most popular programs, including Splashdown and Horseback. Don't let the cost discourage you. There are camperships available. To download a brochure and register online go to [www.pecometh.org](http://www.pecometh.org) or contact Richelle Darrell at richelle@pecometh.org, 410.556.6900, x103.

### Check Out the Pecometh Blog

Want to check out interesting Pecometh news as well as post your comments? Then check out the Pecometh blog by going to [www.pecometh.org](http://www.pecometh.org) and clicking on the Pecometh Notes link. You can also subscribe to an RSS or Email feed to keep you up-to-date on any new posts.



## Conference Calendar of Events

May 2007  
28 **Memorial Day Observed – BFEM Resource Center Closed**

June 2007  
4 **Credit Union Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:30 p.m.  
6-7 **African-American Summit**  
8-10 **Annual Conference**, Princess Anne, MD.: University of Maryland-Eastern Shore  
12 **Congregational Development Corporation Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:00 a.m.  
16 **Conference United Methodist Women Mission Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 9:00 a.m.  
18 **Enabling Ministries Resource Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.

19 **Conference United Methodist Men Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 7:15 p.m.  
21 **Committee on Native American Ministries Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 9:00 a.m.  
21-23 **New Church Development for Urban Ministry Workshops**, Grace UMC & Zion-Mt. Carmel UMC (Wilmington District)

### July 2007

4 **Happy 4th – BFEM Resource Center, Closed**  
12 **Advocacy Resource Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 2:00 p.m.  
13 **CARE Team Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
17 **Equitable Compensation Committee Meeting**, BFEM Resource Center, 1:00 p.m.

The United Methodist Church  
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Episcopal Office  
(Eastern Pennsylvania  
and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences)  
Bishop Marcus Matthews



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FAX: (610) 666-9181



Dear Clergy and Lay Members  
to the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference,

Last year at the Annual Conference, you heard an initial presentation of my Healthy Church Initiative. That presentation was based on some conversations that I was beginning to have with the cabinet, staff, and other conference leaders that indicated that there was a necessity to place the health of the Local Church and the needs of the Local Church back at the center of how the Annual Conference accomplishes its ministry. Laity and Clergy alike, from those dealing with the finances to those dealing with mission, ministry, and education; large and small churches; ethnic and anglo churches; all seemed to indicate that there was an urgent need for more effective, healthy ministry in our Local churches and that the Conference should be more effective in resourcing those needs.

Over the past year and a half, the cabinet and I have been spending hours praying, reading, studying, researching, and discussing the urgent and very real needs of our Local Churches and Annual Conference. I have had District Meetings with both Clergy and Laity on each District to listen and gather information so that the work on the Initiative was not done in a vacuum. There have been conversations with Conference staff and with Conference Leadership. In this past year and a half there have been lots of pieces of information collected by my cabinet members and me. A few months ago the time came to take the pieces of this Healthy Church Initiative and begin putting them together in one coherent picture so that the work done thus far could be shared at the upcoming Annual Conference. In order to put this picture together I appointed a task force consisting of cabinet members, Conference staff, and Vision Team Leadership, six members in all. The charge I gave to this task force was to pull all the pieces together into a presentation that would share the picture of where the Annual Conference is heading in this initiative and to call the Annual Conference to get on board with the Healthy Church Initiative as we put the needs, ministry, effectiveness, and health of the Local Churches back at the center of how we function together as an Annual Conference. This task force has done a tremendous amount of work pulling together the pieces of the past year and a half of work in a short period of time and has shared their work with the Vision Team and other Conference leadership along the way for feedback and revision.

On Friday night of the Annual Conference there will be a presentation on the Healthy Church Initiative and one resolution to help facilitate the way ahead for this Initiative. I hope that you will make every effort to be present and hear about the direction and the journey on which the Healthy Church Initiative will begin to take us as an Annual Conference. In the presentation, which is still in process, some of the pieces of the picture and the direction forward will be clear. Other pieces of the picture and forward direction are still under prayerful consideration and development. The Vision Team will coordinate and dream about the direction and work of the Initiative. The Vision Team will be taking on leadership for the Initiative's success with specific criteria, some of which will be developed along the way since we are in the beginning stages of this new way of doing ministry together. The Vision Team, the cabinet and I are heeding the words and moving forward in the promise of Isaiah, "Behold, I am doing a new thing, now it springs up, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19a). The purpose of this initiative is to intentionally organize and carry out our Conference work, mission, and ministry in a way that enables healthy, vital, congregations to spring forth all over the Conference to effectively make and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ. Join us Friday night and get on board!

Grace and Peace,

Bishop Marcus Matthews