



Upper New York
ADVOCATE

A publication of the Upper New York Conference of The United Methodist Church

**God's love
in all places**



REACHING REFUGEES | DISASTER RESPONSE | MINISTRY ON THE GO

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Vendors sell fresh produce at the Sodus Farmers' Market.
Read more on page 6.
Photo by Nancy Ghertner.

FROM *the* PUBLISHER

What it looks like to be God's love in all places

The vision statement of the Upper New York Conference is "To live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places." There is a lot to unpack in that statement, but ultimately it is the same as we have been called to do since the first followers of Jesus were sent into the world. We are called to not just talk about God's love, but to be God's love to the hurting people who so desperately need it.



This looks very different depending on the place or the people. Generally, we have an idea of what it looks like in an average church on an average Sunday morning, but this is a very small percentage of the places we are called to be God's love.

What does it look like to be God's love for someone who has never been inside a church? What does it look like to be God's love for someone when they are coming to the end of their lives? What does it look like to be God's love for someone on the other side of the world, for someone who lost everything in a disaster, or for someone who had to leave behind everything they had and everyone they knew?

This issue of the Advocate explores these questions and many more. The hope is to provide a snapshot of the ministry our own Upper New York Conference is already providing as we strive to live into our vision, and perhaps to inspire new ministry. Amazing things are happening through God, but there is definitely further to go to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

Stephen J. Hustedt, Editor/Publisher

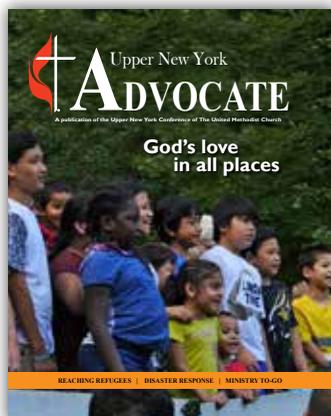
On the cover

Methodists from Around the World in Pulaski, New York. Read more on pg 16. Photo by Mary Dalglish.

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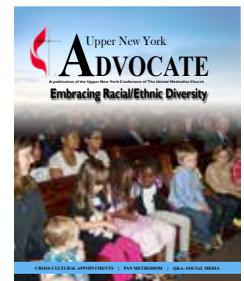


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From the desk of Bishop Mark J. Webb

John Wesley had a vision for the Methodist movement – “to reform the Continent, and especially the Church, and spread scriptural holiness throughout the land.” That’s a pretty radical vision. It is part of our heritage. Upper New York continues that heritage, as we attempt to live the mission of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” Like Wesley, we have a vision of what the world and Church will look like when we faithfully and diligently live our mission. The vision statement of Upper New York since its birth has been clear – “to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be God’s love with our neighbors in all places.” As we strive to live out our purpose, we will see that vision become a reality – we will be a radical, Christ-following, Gospel-centered, missional Church.



Not too long ago I read a blog written by Rich Robinson, who is a part of 3DMovements. 3DM is a missional movement led by Mike Breen and others that seeks to train churches and Christian leaders to do discipleship and mission in an increasingly post-Christian world. I encourage you to check out their website <https://3dmovements.com/> and learn about the work they are doing.

The blog that I read outlines what it means to have a M.I.S.S.I.O.N.A.L. culture. Let me elaborate and while I do, envision how you can be more MISSIONAL, how your church can be more MISSIONAL, and how UNY can be more MISSIONAL!

Robinson explained that the M stands for missional mindset. These are people who understand that they are “sent;” they live sacrificially and are comfortable with risk and change as they work outside the church walls.

The I stands for Incarnational lifestyle, meaning people who look to be the Good News in whatever setting they are in (neighborhood, work, golf club, pub, etc.); they do not “minister to,” rather they exemplify what it means to be a faithful Christian.

The first S indicates being scripturally-based, or grounded in Scripture.

The second S means to be Spirit-Led, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The second I stands for Intercessory Prayer; these are people who are fueled by prayer.

The O indicates people who Orbit the Center, They are resourced, trained, and sent from the church into larger communities.

The N represents Neighborhood or Network; these people know the precise demographics of people they are called to share the Good News with.

The A stands for Active Participation. These are people who go far beyond being at church on Sundays.

Lastly, the L is for Lay Led. These are lay leaders who step up to the plate; they are not dependent on pastors to call them up to bat. They take responsibility for whom and where they are called to live.

Check out Rich Robinson’s full blog at <http://bit.ly/missionalculture>.

All across the Upper New York Conference, God is calling congregations to engage in a missional culture, to engage in such a way that our vision will indeed become a reality. I hope you will read every story in this issue of the *Advocate*, but more importantly, I hope you will begin to imagine what God desires to do in your life, the life of your congregation and the life of your community. We are a movement! We are a Missional Movement! Let’s embrace the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit. Let’s be people who together live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and are God’s love with our neighbors in all places.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark J. Webb".

FOLLOW BISHOP WEBB ON TWITTER  @BishopMarkWebb



M	Missional mindset
I	Incarnational lifestyle
S	Scripturally-based
S	Spirit-led
I	Intercessory prayer
O	Orbit the center
N	Neighborhood
A	Active participation
L	Lay-led





Fresh, local food offered to the Sodus community

By Sandy Hall
Manager, Sodus Farmers' Market

Ten years ago, a Sodus United Third Methodist Church member, Nancy Ransley, attended our outreach Team meeting to share a vision she had for the community. Her vision has come to fruition! She could see the need and benefits to the community having a farmers' market. Nancy spent several winters in Florida. She said, "There were farmers' markets all over the place (in Florida). And I couldn't think of any around here. I thought that would go over well here as we have the farmers' produce to sell."

Nancy's idea was applauded and the planning began. A mission statement was designed: The purposes of this market are to provide an opportunity for local farmers, vendors, and crafters to offer their fresh produce, homemade crafts, and other products to the residents of the community and to provide a shopping opportunity for community members.

Interviews with two local farmers who attended markets, contacts with the NYS Department of Agriculture, calls to the church insurance agent, conversations with village officials, and an experimental market was held with a



Sodus Farmers' Market team from left to right: Ruth Fisher, Sandy Hall, Sandi Hamilton, Mary Ann Riker.

Photos courtesy of Sandy Hall and Nancy Ghertner.

handful of local farmers in 2008. It was an immediate success and the community asked "When is the next farmers' market?" Dates were chosen, mailings to local farmers sent out, and the market began in earnest in 2009 with seven dedicated farmers/vendors.

Held every Wednesday from mid-June to mid-October from 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Sodus United Third Methodist Church parking lot, the market is run by a team of five volunteers – each as important as the other!

I am the market manager and I am responsible for taking care of paperwork and requirements. I do all of the communicating with the Department of Agriculture and Markets in Albany and make sure that we have bona fide farmers here. We go and inspect farms and their crops. The farmers need to give us their crop plan and let us know whether or not they will accept FMNP (Farmers Market Nutrition Program) that people with certain qualifications can get.

I plan our meetings, which start in February; we have brief meetings each day of the market and then we have a wrap-up meeting when the market ends each year. I also plan our vendor meeting, which happens just before the market starts. I invite all the vendors to come and go over all the rules and regulations.

The Financial Secretary, Mary Ann Riker, takes care of collecting and recording vendor fees, paying bills, and setting up and running the EBT station.



Vendors at the Sodus Farmers' Market.

Our “Friends of the Market” is handled by Sandi Hamilton, who also collects any weekly vendor fees, keeps attendance, and makes sure all paperwork (insurance, application, permits/licenses, etc.) are collected and filed.

Assigning vendor locations is the responsibility of Ruth Fisher. Ruth said, “Vendors who come year after year often want their same spot so I arrange for that. There are also some farmers who are only here seasonally, like our blueberry farmer.” Ruth also schedules farm inspections.

Nancy Ghertner maintains our Facebook page and takes photos at the market. She also writes



Vendors sell fresh produce to the community.

articles for local papers about our market and profiles on some of the farmers.

Now in our ninth year, the market has changed and grown. The market typically features 20+ vendors and several special events weekly. Once a month for June, July, and August the market features “Health and Wellness Days” and local agencies are contacted to participate. On those days, the market lot is packed to overflowing!

The response from the community (and surrounding communities) continues to astound the market team. We can expect to have over 700 visitors on any Wednesday. The market is a happy, social event. The vision has been fulfilled! Visit our web page (<https://www.sutmc.org/sodus-farmers-market>) and our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SodusFarmersMarket/>) to see more photos of the market in action.

To learn more about this ministry, watch the video online:

<https://vimeo.com/uppernewyork/sodusfarmersmarket>



To view UNY's full library, visit:
<https://vimeo.com/uppernewyork>



Strengthening Camp and Retreat Centers

By Pam Harris
Director, Run River Enterprises

My work through an Extension Ministry appointment is to serve as a consultant to faith-based camp and retreat centers. In 19 years of working with camp and retreat ministries, our organization has worked with nearly 300 sites of ministry in almost 200 organizations. We have worked with nearly all denominations, in most US states, and three Canadian provinces. Some projects result in strategic, long-range plans, which guide the ministry into the future they envision for themselves. Some projects help a denomination to make decisions concerning the viability of a ministry. Some projects focus on helping a Board to be stronger, or create a plan for fiscal viability, or enable a ministry to raise capital funds.

Like most forms of ministry, there is an almost infinite variety in the tasks to be done. In any given month, I lead worship, talk with church leaders about where God is calling them in ministry, talk with young adults about how God is a part of their life, perform data analysis using statistical and GIS analysis, create business and marketing plans, develop site maps, draft building concepts, and write reports. In a typical year, I drive 40-50 thousand miles and work with 15-18 ministries.



Campers have opportunities to participate in physical activities such as rock climbing.

Photos courtesy of Pam Harris.

My work helps to extend the ministry of the Upper New York Conference throughout the United States and Canada. Countless lives are impacted each year at camp and retreat centers, as children, youth, and adults discover God's love, discern direction for their lives, and commit themselves to lives of faith.

One of the aspects of my ministry that is most important to me is to help organizations deepen their theological understanding of Camp and Retreat Ministry. For me, these ministries are

deeply sacramental, and increasing our understanding of that helps to remind us that these ministries are essential to what it means to be the church in the world.

Camp is an expression of the ministry of baptism. We are marked as children of God at our baptism, and we spend our whole lives learning how to live into that identity. Camp is a place where we can more fully realize that identity. Retreat and Conference ministries are ministries of the Lord's Table, an expression of the hospitality that God extends to the entire world. In Jesus Christ, God opens his arms and welcomes the world, and we reflect that welcome as we open our sites to guests and groups.

There is so much involved in helping camp and retreat centers successfully exemplify how to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

A strong mission is critical. To sustain a strong mission and accomplish meaningful programs, ministries must be strong as organizations. Often, we work in strengthening Boards, helping organizations to increase resources, and helping to establish strong management practices.

Keep in mind that Camp and Retreat Ministries are ministries that almost always involve a physical setting. Sometimes those settings have been neglected and must be dramatically improved. Sometimes those settings limit the ways a ministry might serve and new facilities are needed to expand the impact.

There have been some changes in the past 19 years. Increasingly, Camp and Retreat Ministries must rely less on subsidies from denominations and more on revenue from programs and gifts from donors. Financial management is increasingly sophisticated and effective marketing is essential.

It is always immensely rewarding when we are invited to the groundbreaking or dedication of a new facility we helped to plan, or we hear that a new program has succeeded or a ministry has met its financial goals for a year.

Camps and Retreat centers are communities of spiritual practice. Sometimes, those practices which enable us to live out our identity as children of God seem like an overlay on our routine lives. At camp, or on a retreat, those practices are integrated into everything we do. It is truly an experience where "everything is done in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Camp and Retreat Ministries is more than the programs and experiences that happen at these sites of ministry. One project that I am just beginning is a way to document the amount of land for which we in the church have stewardship through these sites of ministry. It is a significant act of caring for God's earth to preserve these spaces of beauty and grandeur.

I am grateful to be able to serve the church in this way. As we all seek to follow where God may lead, and create a faithful future for the church, Camp and Retreat Ministries is an essential part of that.



STAND OUT



FROM THE CROWD

By the Rev. John Martin
FoundationUMC

Too small, too busy, too tired, too much to be done. These are just a few of the things many of us point to when confronted with a world that is indeed broken. The truth is, as members of a mainline denomination in the United States, we are also a part of rapidly declining (some would suggest dying) breed. Statistics and anecdotal information both confirm this reality, and yet there is Good News! The Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ for a hurting and broken world, remains true and is just as powerful as it was 2,000 years ago. And our unique Wesleyan approach to living out and sharing our faith with others gives us an advantage!



Rev. Martin

“Because of the service, by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ...”

2 Corinthians 9:13

The above passage is at the core of the DNA of our new church, FoundationUMC. We understand this passage to be necessarily connecting missions (doing good things) and evangelism (sharing good news) for followers of Jesus Christ. We see these activities as two sides of the same coin and inseparably linked in concept and practice. For this reason, we began hosting monthly mission opportunities even before we were holding weekly worship!

At FoundationUMC, we believe you can't tell people how much God loves them, without showing them and people will never know God loves them, no matter how many good things we do, if we don't tell them. This practice of keeping the two together fits nicely with John Wesley's emphasis on personal and social holiness, as well as his insistence for a faith of both head

and heart. It's this "both/and" approach that allows United Methodists to truly stand out from the rest.

Why am I telling you this? Because in light of a broken world, a denomination in decline, and Sunday mornings filled with competition like never before, we have an opportunity to truly stand out from the crowd! While our congregation, located in Vestal, NY, is surrounded by other congregations bigger, better established, and wealthier than us, we have an advantage. They might have a cooler band, a newer building, and more to offer people who are simply looking for what a church can do for them, but we offer them a chance to truly make a difference each and every month. Our emphasis on monthly, hands-on missions and understanding that these missions (showing God's love) allow us to truly share God's love in a way that is compelling.



Members of FoundationUMC participate in a shoe cutting party.

Many of our congregations in Upper NY are already doing good work in their local communities as well as throughout the world. To those congregations, don't be afraid to see those missions as an opportunity not only to love people, but to tell them they are loved. These missions are an easy way to invite your friends, relatives, and neighbors into the fold and truly stand out by making a difference! For those of you who think you are too small, too poor, or too inexperienced to really stand out, know that our baby church (we were less than one-month old when we partnered with Sole Hope) not only managed it, but it caught the attention of people all over our area who would never normally walk through the doors of a church. Be encouraged, be inspired, be challenged, and stand out from the crowd by showing people God loves them with your actions as you tell them about God's love with your words!



Molly Rice and Elizabeth Williamson create shoes for children in Uganda.
Photos courtesy of Rev. Martin.

Several months ago, we partnered with an organization called Sole Hope, who provides health care and footwear to children in Uganda who have neither. For the cost of \$100, we were able to get a shoe cutting party kit and after about two hours of work, we had created 100 shoes! Partnering with Sole Hope not only allowed our church to provide shoes for children who have none, but also be a part of providing medical care for the kids and jobs for Ugandan shoe makers. This is just one of many projects we've undertaken as a new church in order to make our presence known, share the good news of Jesus and of course allow people the opportunity to make a difference. Each month, we take on a project (either local here in Vestal or more globally-focused) that gives our people the opportunity to show God's love with their actions, to invite friends, family and neighbors to join in, and of course share the good news of Jesus.



Youth at FoundationUMC show off their shoemaking skills.

Faithful Gyaani

By Deirdre Zimmerman

Nutritionist and Missionary, Kathmandu, Nepal

Until last October, Gyaani was just one of a number of middle-aged, somewhat overweight women who populate the back row at our Nepali church. But her well-dressed, confident demeanor cracked when she got some medical results showing high blood sugars. The pastor's wife referred her to me for dietary advice for diabetes. I spoke with her after church one Saturday; she was anxious to understand what she needed to do and (somewhat unusually) her eagerness translated into real action.

Gyaani adopted an early morning walk of 90 minutes each day and cut back drastically on the amount of oil she was cooking with. Within months, her weight had reduced significantly, and her blood-sugar levels returned to normal. She became a strong advocate for healthy diet, sharing copies of the diabetic diet sheet with friends and relatives struggling with diabetes.

I became friends with Gyaani. It was some months later, walking together one evening, that Gyaani told me her life story.



Gyaani.

Photo courtesy of Deirdre Zimmerman.

Gyaani was nine years old when her alcoholic father died of cancer and her family was put out on the street because of the bad karma associated with a widow. Gyaani's mother found a new room, but left the children for extended periods. Gyaani assumed that her mother was working long hours as a domestic servant, but in fact she had fallen in love and soon abandoned her children altogether.

At age 10, Gyaani became responsible for her younger brother and sister. She worked as a construction laborer by day and in a carpet factory until midnight. Gyaani prayed at Hindu temples that her mother would return. She once took her brother and sister to seek help from their mother, but they were beaten by the new husband and sent away.

At age 15, a rich factory-owner became interested in this resilient young woman. Impressed by his family's wealth, Gyaani was drawn to the possibility of a better life. She met his parents who assured her that he was not already married. Before Gyaani could make a decision, she was kidnapped by the family and forced to accept her position as the man's wife.

Eighteen months later, her husband's child bride appeared at the house and overnight Gyaani's position became that of a servant. Severe mistreatment at the hands of her mother-in-law and the other wife led Gyaani to attempt suicide, swallowing down a mix of kerosene and agricultural insecticide.

Gyaani finally left her husband and sought refuge in her uncle's house. She was very depressed, but her husband asked to visit her and moved her into a room in his family's second house, where his visits often included beatings and abuse. Gyaani raised three daughters in that house.

Nine years ago, Gyaani's husband emigrated to America and took her two teenage daughters with him. Gyaani's eldest daughter remained with her, and her well-paying job paid the bills when Gyaani became ill and needed gynecological surgery for some growths.

On the morning of her operation, an elderly woman in the bed beside Gyaani told her that she was a Christian and offered to pray for her. Gyaani refused, but the woman set her hand on Gyaani's bed and prayed anyway. As Gyaani was taken into pre-op, she herself prayed to a God whose name she did not know. After a final pre-op assessment, the surgeon told her that the growths had shrunk and the operation was cancelled.

Gyaani felt sure her healing was related to the Christian prayer and began to look for a church to visit. Her daughter was appalled and threatened Gyaani with eviction. But when renters in the house turned out to be Christians, Gyaani was able to meet with them and one day followed them to church. The renters were thrown out, but Gyaani continued to sneak away regularly to the large church they attended.

When Gyaani became ill again, and was visited by some Christian ladies, she heard about our smaller church located close to her home. She began to understand more of the gospel message and decided to be baptised.

Her daughter was horrified that Gyaani would abandon her family's traditional religion; she beat Gyaani and threw her clothes and personal belongings out of the house. Gyaani was distraught but eventually proceeded; that same afternoon, her daughter received a visa to move to America.

“I live alone. But God has been with me since the time I was in my mother's womb. Even if everyone leaves me, God will always be with me. I have suffered, but Christ also suffered for us.” – Gyaani.

Gyaani now lives alone, but regularly invites relatives to her house to meet friends from the church.

At Christmas, Gyaani's mother's husband fractured his leg; Gyaani looked after them both until the elderly man died of complications. She tirelessly supported her mother during her grief, while resisting participation in Hindu death rites. Gyaani's mother now struggles with illness herself and attends our church when she can.

Gyaani stayed with her mother during a recent hospital admission and shared the news about Jesus with others on the ward. Seven people committed themselves to Christ.



Church of the Bells: *Responding to natural disasters*

By Jerry Sabattis
Lay person, Immanuel United Methodist Church

Immanuel United Methodist Church (aka, “The Church of the Bells” located in Camillus, NY, just west of Syracuse) was called to extend its service to God’s mission as a result of Hurricane Katrina, which occurred in 2005. The most devastating natural disaster in the nation’s history, Katrina resulted in more than \$100 billion in property damage and displacement of over a million residents in Gulf Coast states. New Orleans was the hardest hit metropolitan area, mostly due to the failure of numerous levees that appeared to be under-designed to protect against flooding of the magnitude caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Federal and state disaster recovery resources were taxed beyond their capabilities. A nationwide call for help from volunteer organizations ensued. Non-government organizations such as the Ameri-

can Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) responded to the call. After the levees were repaired and unsafe areas were secured, volunteer groups began to organize trips to New Orleans to help restore thousands of flood damaged homes whose owners did not have the financial means to cover costly repairs and who often were displaced due to unacceptable living conditions.

In 2007, Immanuel UMC organized a mission team of a dozen volunteers to travel to New Orleans and devote their time and skills to help rebuild homes in need of major repairs. The task was daunting. Many of the conveniences we take for granted, such as electricity and nearby food and building supply establishments, were not to be had in most instances. The sweltering heat and humidity were physically challenging for folks used to Upstate New York’s cooler climate.

After successfully completing its first disaster recovery mission trip, Immanuel UMC made five additional trips to New Orleans. It was immediately obvious that the continued success of these mission trips would rely on the use of a large trailer to carry tools, equipment, and supplies. Immanuel initially used rented and borrowed trailers; then, we launched a fundraiser at the church to procure the church's own mission trailer. Immanuel's members responded generously, and enough funds were raised in just a few weeks to buy a dual axel heavy-duty enclosed trailer in June 2009. Thousands of miles have been logged on Immanuel's mission trailer, making this a very wise investment.



Volunteers repair floors of flood-damaged New Orleans home. *Photos courtesy Immanuel UMC.*

Following six successful trips to New Orleans, a flooding disaster struck in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, so Immanuel embarked on three disaster recovery trips to Cedar Rapids in the 2009-2010 timeframe.

Flooding disasters are ceaseless, and on the heels of the Cedar Rapids disaster, a devastating flood struck Tennessee in May of 2010. Immanuel helped restore a number of homes in Centerville, Tennessee in 2011.

Later in 2011, disaster struck closer to home as torrential rains caused by Tropical Storm Irene resulted in record-high flooding in several communities located in the Susquehanna River basin in New York's Southern Tier. Eight mission trips to the Southern Tier were accomplished in the 2012-2013 timeframe, with teams as large as 35 volunteers.

Since the New York Southern Tier trips, Immanuel has restored several flood-damaged homes in Oneida, NY, only 40 miles east of Camillus. Subsequently, two mission trips were accomplished in the Columbia, South Carolina area, and Immanuel also has worked on several homes in New Jersey impacted by Super Storm Sandy through the course of three separate mission trips.

Since it began its disaster recovery mission work, Immanuel has worked on over 30 homes. Our volunteers have logged over 12,600 hours of volunteer time over the course of all of these mission endeavors.

Our team members have had a wide range of experience, including people who have only done a limited amount of painting, to those with contractor level experience in carpentry, electrical or plumbing skills. All are welcome, especially young people who add to the already high level of energy and enthusiasm. We have had the pleasure of having many volunteers not from Immanuel join our team, including one gentleman from Illinois.

We have come to call ourselves "Team Get-R-done" adopting the salutation made famous by comedian, Larry the Cable Guy. A debt of gratitude is owed to the generosity of team member Tom House who has bought us hats and shirts with the Team Get-R-done logo on them. On the last day of our mission trips we often don attire that says, "Got-R-done".

Immanuel's perspective regarding its disaster recovery mission program is driven by the realization that we are fortunate to be in an area less prone to the types of natural disasters that have devastated families across the nation. By the grace of God our members are not subject to the financial hardship that can render families homeless for extended periods of time, should a disaster strike. We owe it to God to help these less fortunate people to the best of our abilities in order to return them to their cherished homes. We are greatly rewarded whenever we actually get to meet the grateful homeowners.

Mike Block, Immanuel's disaster recovery mission coordinator, best summarizes the experience shared by all who have participated, "It is so gratifying to be a part of such an awesome team. The spiritual and moral interactions we experience on this mission further strengthens our desire to continue giving back."



2007 Mission trip to New Orleans.



The Congregation at Lao Westover United Methodist Church.
Photo by Mary Dalglish.

Turning refugee “basement churches” into thriving congregations

By Shannon Hodson
Writer/editor, UNY Conference

Onondaga County welcomes many refugees each year; for example, in 2014, Onondaga County had the third largest intake of refugees in the country. Many of these refugees settle in Syracuse’s North Side; in fact, there are refugees from over two dozen countries living in this neighborhood where Butternut and Lodi Street intersect.

Three of the predominant Asian countries that refugees living in Syracuse’s North Side include: Nepal, Burma, and Bhutan. How do refugees find a community of faith when they come to Syracuse?

Meet Pastor Sonexay (Sean) Chanthasone; he is a local pastor at Lao Westover UMC in Binghamton, NY, and a new church starter at Karenni Good News and New Hope UMC in Syracuse. Sean’s passion for the Lord and commitment to following a calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ has resulted in two vibrant church communities for refugees from Syracuse’s North Side; one that is Nepalese and one that is Karenni.

Pastor Sean’s personal story and the story of his outreach efforts beautifully showcase what can be accomplished by being God’s love with our neighbors.



Pastor Chanthasone

Pastor Sean was born in Laos; his family were Buddhist and part of the Ancestor Spirit Faith. When Laos became Communist after the Vietnam War, Sean and his family became separated, and at the age of 15 or 16, Sean moved in with his uncle.

The hardship in Vietnam prompted Sean and one of his friends to try to escape one evening by swimming across the Mekong river, which borders Thailand. He didn’t know he needed legal documents to enter Thailand; the Thailand Police arrested Sean and his friend, imprisoning them for six months, and then they were transferred to a refugee camp that held refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Sean said, “The refugee camp is where I found Jesus Christ. I became good friends with a missionary from the United States; he helped me and introduced Jesus Christ to me.

I grew up with Buddhism and the Ancestor Spirit, but I didn’t understand it, whereas Jesus Christ developed peace in my heart. I felt, this is the God I have been looking for.”

Sean started feeling as though the Holy Spirit was working through him. He prayed for a way out of the refugee camp. Sean said, “The conditions of the refugee camps are very bad; you’re always looking for food, you have to protect yourself and develop safety; it’s like a prison for many people. I was there for six years. I asked God for an open door and in April 1987, God answered my prayer.”

A family in Buffalo, NY sponsored Sean to come live with them. The host father was a pastor. They helped put Sean through school and taught him English.

In 1990, Sean heard a missionary from Vietnam speak and instantly felt a call to be a missionary himself. He wanted to go back to his homeland and introduce everyone he knew to Christ.

He completed high school and then went on to Bible School. Once Sean finished high school he applied to go back to his homeland; he said, “Unfortunately, the door was closed because Christians were not allowed to go back. My vision was stalled...so I thought, ‘What am I going to do?’”

Praying to God about this incessantly, God answered Sean by saying, “Well, if you cannot go back to your homeland, how about starting a mission church in our country?”

And Sean did just that. He started a Lao church in Northeast Georgia. Sean said, “We started with two or three families in a basement apartment. It took us about four years until it became an organized church with about 15 families.”

Sean’s church had a relationship with the Lao church in Johnson City, NY. They did a youth program together. And that is how Sean ended up back in New York State.

Sean met his future wife through the youth program; she was also a youth teacher. She was a United Methodist and her father told Sean that if he were to marry his daughter, he needed to be a United Methodist. Sean gladly accepted.

Soon after Sean moved to Binghamton, the pastor of the Lao church resigned. Sean volunteered to help and became the pastor of the church.

Through this position, Sean met the Rev. Brad Hunt of Andrews: Memorial in Syracuse and developed a close friendship with him. He learned of the New Faith Community that Pastor Brad helped start with the Sudanese population and became inspired to do the same with the Laos who lived in the same neighborhood as the Sudanese in Syracuse’s Northside.

Little did Sean know, that he would be creating New Faith Communities for Karenni and Nepalese people!

Sean said, “Within a year, I packed my stuff and came to Syracuse and camped out in Pastor Brad’s church. I would come to Syracuse from Monday through Saturday for three months doing Evangelism door-to-door in Syracuse’s Northside.”

At the time, Andrews: Memorial would often solicit volunteers to pass out food and clothing to the refugees in Syracuse’s Northside. Sean gladly volunteered and one evening, God literally opened doors for Sean to find Asian Brothers and Sisters in Christ who were already worshipping the Lord. Sean refers to this evening as his doughnut ministry.

Sean said, “One family that I passed out a box of doughnuts to was a man named Tu Law; he told me, ‘I am from Burma and I also speak Thai.’ I immediately became excited and interested because I could speak Thai so we were able to have a conversation and he shared with me how he was looking for someone to help him learn English. I gave him a box of doughnuts and said I’d like to get to know him more and could I come again tomorrow, and he agreed to meet me the next day.”

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Children at Karenni Service in Mattydale, N.Y.

Photo by Shannon Hodson.

Sean continued, “That’s how our relationship began...deep in my heart, I felt that the Holy Spirit opened the door for me and that he (Tu Law) would be the key for me to open the door for this new ministry. The Lord was right!”

Sean said, “I found out that he (Tu Law) was a leader in the community and by being bilingual, he could help spread my message...so the Holy Spirit led me to the right house. A month after we met, he introduced me to four or five families that were also Christian and had small groups meeting in their basements.”

One of the individuals that Tu Law introduced Sean to was Par Reh, a 57-year-old man of Karenni descent. The Karenni are a population from a poor, rural section of Burma. Par Reh and his family fled Burma in 1999 and lived in a refugee camp in Thailand. They then moved to the United States in 2009.

Par Reh became a Christian in 2000 and attended a church at the refugee camp. He became a leader in that church. When he moved to Trenton, NJ, he went to an American church. Soon, he moved to Syracuse, NY, on the Northside for medical reasons.

Par Reh’s son, Sai Shwe said, “I believe God’s reason for my dad to move to Syracuse was not because of his health; it was to start his own church to bring people to God.”

Par Reh started his home church with other Karenni families and wanted credibility that he was a rightful Christian leader. This is when Sean entered his life. Sai said, “My dad started going

to a local pastor’s school with Sean. He received a certificate and at that point was ready to go forward. He put the certificate all over the walls to show people.”

At that time, more and more Karenni on Syracuse’s Northside were yearning to know Jesus. Sean helped them find a larger place to worship at a church building in Mattydale, and also helped find transportation to get them there. This was the start of the Karenni Good News and New Hope UMC.

Unfortunately, Par Reh passed away in 2014 because of cancer. Sai said, “I wondered, ‘Why did my dad have to pass away before he finished the job he wanted to do?’ A lot of people wanted to follow my dad before he died. So after my dad died, my wife, sister, and I stepped up to lead the church.”

Sai continued, “My dad started out with two to three families; we now have about 70 people attending every Sunday at Karenni Good News and New Hope UMC. I just want to keep moving forward; the Lord created the moon and the stars and the sun; he’s the one I want to work for.”

At a Karenni service, there are several youth and children whose primary language is English. Sean gives the sermon in English and Sai translates in Karenni.

With excellent attendance at the Karenni service, Sai’s focus is now outreach. For example, every Saturday, they have a women’s small group that meet at each other’s homes, and they also have a youth group.



Nepalese Service in Mattydale, N.Y.

Photo by Mary Dalglish.

Praemoe Phobya helps lead the Karenni women's small group. She said, "We have women come to my house or our pastor's house at 10 a.m. on Saturdays and we help them learn more about God."

Since starting the women's group last year, Praemoe said that about four additional families have started attending the Karenni church regularly because of their outreach.

Through his door-to-door evangelism, Sean also met Sai's neighbor Manoj, who was from Nepal, and attended a Nepalese Christian small group who met in basements. Manoj's Uncle Tara Sunwar and a man referred to as Pastor Phillip lead that group.

In seven months, Sean has helped grow the Nepalese group to nearly 50 people, who meet at 8:30 a.m. every Sunday at the Karenni Good News and New Hope UMC.

As is important in their conservative heritage, the women sit on one side of the congregation and then men sit on the other side.

The Nepalese service centers on jubilant singing and dancing. For example, on a sunny August morning, three women with matching floral dresses, a guy on a hand drum, and another on a drum-set, lead the congregation in song in their native language. Manoj said, "Singing and dancing is how you get close with your Christian family, so you see that a lot in our church services."

During prayer, the Nepalese are asked to say their individual prayers aloud, much like the Tongsung Kido, a type of Korean prayer which we featured in Volume 9, Issue 2 of the *Advocate*.

Pastor Sean is confident that both the Karenni and Nepalese church groups will grow.

The Rev Dr. Dave Masland, UNY Conference's Director of New Faith Communities said, "The Karenni Church is incorporated in New York State...but we have not officially chartered it yet. They are close."

Pastor Sean is so passionate about his calling to bring more refugees into a relationship with God. He said, "We depend on the Holy Spirit to bring everything together. This is just the beginning of our friendship. We get stronger every year."

Methodists from Around the World

Did you know that Methodists from Around the World is an annual event held in Central New York? Refugees from all over the world come together to share their many different cultures and worship as one. And it's not just for the refugees. All are welcome!



This year's event took place on July 16th in Pulaski, NY. To learn more about this event, watch the full video:

<https://vimeo.com/uppernewyork/maw>



Each year, Methodists from Around the World is concluded with the releasing of balloons.

Photo Courtesy of Beth Jordan.



“Compassionate hospitality can reveal Christ in God moments...”



Driver from Wisconsin with Chaplain Maxwell.

Photos courtesy of Chaplain Maxwell.

By Chaplain Bruce Maxwell
*Deacon of Upper New York
 serving in Susquehanna Conference*

The Breezewood, PA Trucker and Traveler Ministry is a highway workplace ministry at a crossroads in South Central Pennsylvania. We endeavor to live out a gospel witness in a very public setting guided by the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Chaplaincy is a Christian outreach of prayer, presence, counsel, hospitality, and emergency assistance to truck drivers, their families, travelers, and local area employees.

Local business, civic groups, and churches/ regional church bodies are partners in the chaplaincy providing numerous resources for ministry. We operate within the two Breezewood

Travel Plazas (office location at the Gateway Travel Plaza, across from TV lounge) providing a space for counsel and prayer, as well as helping to support meals, lodging, gas, and transportation for those in need. Partner churches provide resources for Travel Plaza hospitality tables, faith literature/devotionals/CDs/ Bibles, and hygiene traveler care packages- among other forms of outreach. Additionally, we serve as a ministry location for Wesley Theological Seminary “Immersion” students.

Serving as Chaplain in this setting has unfolded a calling of Deacon (class of 1997), providing daily opportunities to build bridges of faith in a very commercial- marketplace setting. God is alive on the highways, as we hear and share stories of Christ’s love and redemption among the many precious souls we encounter.

In this travel-plaza setting, how do we know where to go, what to say, what to do? God has been gracious in opening doors for a ministry presence and arranging divine encounters within the numerous businesses of Breezewood; we are here by invitation and we don’t take that for granted. Our conversations, emergency assistance offers, and prayer opportunities happen at coffee counters, in a garage, general store, restaurant, parking lot, TV lounge, laundry room, or outside a motel room in the transient community of Breezewood. This place is known

as “the town of motels” or the “gateway to the South,” where Interstate 76 (PA Turnpike), meets Interstate 70 and Route 30 (the original Lincoln Highway).

We seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit, as a core group of 15 board directors, we discern and chart a course of mission and ministry in the world of truckers and travelers.

Compassionate hospitality can reveal Christ in God moments, such as offering a listening ear as a trucker unloads the frustrations of interstate commerce, or providing food and lodging to a foot traveler, or steering a “run-away” spouse back to his/her family.

Bible study discussions can bring insights to encourage a sagging faith, or pastoral conversations in the ministry office can unleash cleansing tears, affirming hope in a healing prayer.

Plaza ministry may be unique, but isn't all ministry unique? Fresh expressions of ministry are being birthed anew in every time, place, and season! Each day in trucker/traveler ministry is a new chapter written in real time.



Everett United Methodist hosting hospitality table.



Traveler Ed and Wesley Seminary student Evelyn.



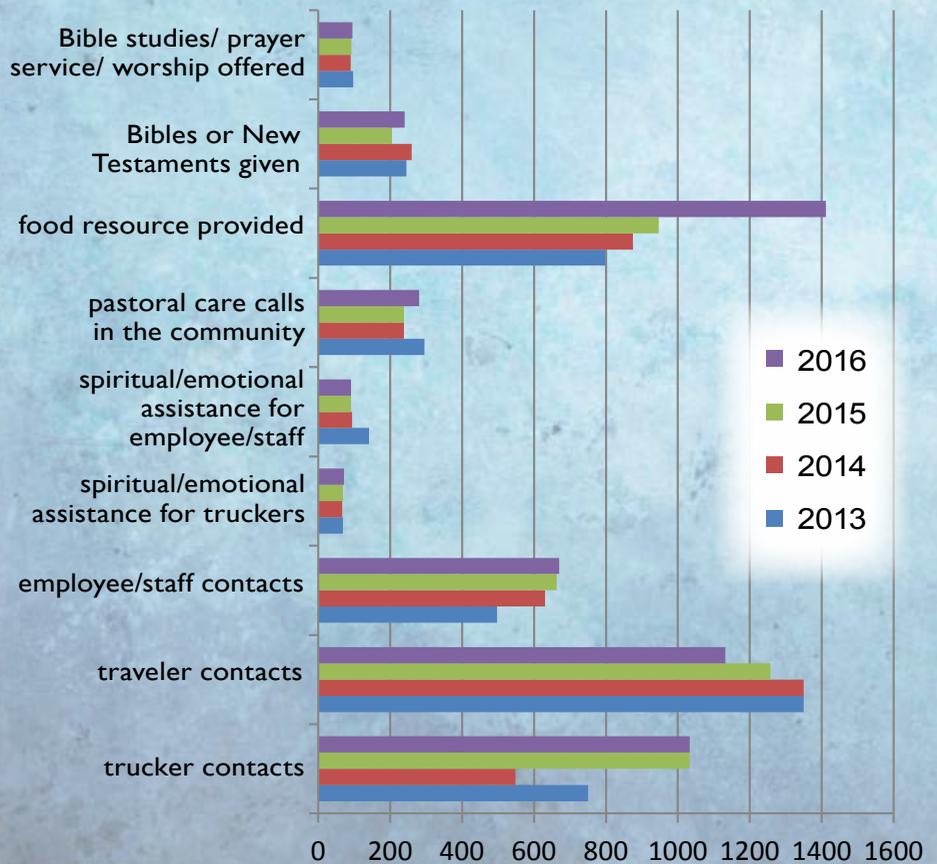
Mechanics Caleb and Jason in plaza garage with youth from hospitality table.



Plaza Bible study.

The years in review

The Breezewood Trucker and Traveler Ministry has been hard at work over the years. Here's a breakdown of just a few of the things this unique ministry has accomplished from 2013-2016.



Called to be a Hospice chaplain



Rev. Naber

By the Rev. Becky Naber
Baker Memorial UMC

My first eight months as a Hospice chaplain have been full of wonder, surprise, and joy. How is this possible given that my patients are at the end of their lives? As Christians, we speak of a peace that surpasses all understanding. Such divine peace allows for a good passing from this life to an eternal life with God. And peace--physical, emotional, and spiritual peace--is the goal of Hospice. A choice for Hospice is a decision towards better quality of life through comfort measures and away from curative treatments that have become ineffective or too much to physically bear.

As a Deacon appointed to Hospice Buffalo, I work on an interdisciplinary team consisting of a physician, nurse, and social worker. My role is to serve as a channel of God's grace in the spiritual care of the terminally ill patient and their loved ones. While many people speculate that Hospice work must be terribly dreadful and emotionally overwhelming, I full-heartedly love my job and my calling to this ministry of compassion and reconciliation. For although we live in a death-denying culture, I have found the last months, days, and even hours of life can be the most transformative and peaceful should we embrace God's gift of assurance.

Blessed assurance brings peace and meaning at the end of life. In his works on Christian Perfection, John Wesley said that wholeness is possible in this life as we respond and grow in God's grace and become more and more Christ-like in our love and actions. But our ability to know the fullness of God's love and to perfectly reflect the love of Christ most often occurs at the hour of our death. A terminal diagnosis accelerates the desire for the assurance of one's salvation.

A terminal diagnosis reorders one's life. When a person is faced with impending death, many questions arise concerning life's meaning and spiritual beliefs. In other words, confronting our mortality radically shifts our perspective; much that has been important in the past may either grow significantly or diminish in its relevance to our well-being. During this sacred and intense time of reflection and spiritual exploration, religious beliefs and practices may be of great comfort and provide meaning to a patient's illness and decline. Or, past spiritual hurts and disappointments may result in anger or extreme fear of the Divine. As a chaplain, I listen to spiritual unrest in such questions as "Why me?" or "I deserve this for all the bad things I have done." Spiritual anguish can be caused by a multitude of things, but most likely it develops out of a need for reconciliation in our relationships or a desire to continue caring for loved ones. Either way, patients find themselves in need of a deeper connection with God's forgiveness and love.

The Spirit leads me to holy ground. Each morning I receive a list of new patients as well as my schedule for the day with established patients (many people are in Hospice care for many months). I meet with five to six people a day. They are persons of all ages, all faiths, all denominations, and in all stages of belief and emotional balance. With each patient's name and the entry of their address into my car's GPS, I leave the office filled with wonder for what God has in store for us (the patient and me):

- Will this family receive me as a stranger bearing God's hope into their household?
- Will my patient be at spiritual peace and ready to die when they are called home to the Lord? Or, will they be spiritually broken, longing for reconciliation with God, with the church, with a spouse, with a child or a sibling?
- Will they need help in seeing God's presence throughout their life?
- Or will they want to hear Psalms of God's love and promises?

The questions go on and on in my mind, and so does my surprise as to where and how God calls me to share divine love and hope.

“While many people speculate that Hospice work must be terribly dreadful and emotionally overwhelming, I full-heartedly love my job and my calling to this ministry of compassion and reconciliation.”

God places me in roles I never before imagined, over and over again. Reconciliation is a common end-of-life need; and I've been tasked with reuniting estranged loved ones with a patient for their peaceful passing. Other times, I've been called to homes to offer God's comfort and promises as I gather a family around the bed of a loved one who has passed or is about to cross through the veil. I've been given the

Continued on page 24



privilege of hearing beautiful parting words of love between spouses. I've heard confessions, anointed the sick, and prayed with patients who long for a deeper sense of the Lord's nearness and for God's protection over their loved ones in their absence.

Of the multiplicity of roles, one of my favorites is to pray with patients who long for God's blessing of assurance—they long to be pardoned and justified; to know they belong to the Lord and abide with Christ. Whatever the day may bring, my joy is seeing the transformative work of God in patients as they are spiritually healed and as they peacefully pass from this life toward the glory that awaits them in the next.

Some situations require an ever closer walk with God. Pediatric chaplaincy is one example. I serve as the chaplain for the Essential Care Unit, which provides Hospice and palliative care to ill children and their families. In this work, I provide spiritual care to women who struggle with difficult perinatal diagnosis. I walk with them through their pregnancies, birth, and afterwards. I also visit with parents and children all ages who have a life-threatening chronic condition or terminal diagnosis. Here too are questions concerning God's presence (or perceived absence), of God's love and mercy, and here too I share God's love. More often than not, I share the tenants of our hope in God and how these children radiate God's goodness and show us how to

love—in simple and in extraordinary circumstances. Yet sometimes, words cannot capture the pain of a parent; standing in solidarity with them, wrapped in divine love is all that I have to offer as my heart prays they find hope and peace in our compassionate God.

Hope and blessed assurance are part and partial to our Methodist roots. While we often sing this beloved 19th century hymn in worship, its realization of a peace that surpasses all understanding is most relevant in the face of the unexpected and the end of one's life. Assurance counterpoises our fears and doubts. Assurance undergirds our belief that we each are a beloved child of God—that God's greatest gift to us is Christ and that the Lord delights to abide with each one of us.

And assurance draws us deeper and deeper into the love of God towards our prize of perfection. At the end of my day's work at Hospice, my evening prayer for each of my patients and their families is for them to claim God's promises, and for them to know the joy of salvation in this life in preparation for an eternity to come. For each day as this hymn resonates in my mind, I find myself awestruck by the mystery and compassion of God's grace in birth, throughout life, and in death. And it is with great joy and humility that I am called to guide Hospice patients towards "a foretaste of glory divine."

Scriptures for those facing end of life

(taken from NRSV)

Recommended by Rev. Becky Naber

I often turn to Scripture to help those who are facing the end of life as well as their family. Keep in mind; we must always be sensitive to our use of Scripture for spiritual healing/growth and comfort. Learning how to do a spiritual assessment and then turning to the Holy Spirit for discernment can frame how a particular Scripture is helpful in the following situations.

Spiritual Anxiety:

Psalm 31: 1-10, 14-25

Psalm 91: 1-16

Psalm 139:1-18

Fear of the Unknown/Afterlife:

Revelation 21: 1-7; 22: 1-5

Matthew 11:28

Forgiveness/Redemption:

Psalm 130

Trust/Confidence/Assurance:

Psalm 23

Psalm 91: 1-16

Psalm 121

Psalm 145

Matthew 11:28



Empowering women and children in Colombia

By Gracie Lynn Besse
Former Global Mission Fellow



“Through their methodology of ‘learn by doing,’ CEPALC is helping to create vital leaders in Colombian communities.”

I had the amazing opportunity to be part of the General Board of Global Ministries' mission as an International Global Mission Fellow. I was placed in Bogotá, Colombia as media and program facilitator/instructor working with CEPALC, the Latin American Center for Inclusive Communication. CEPALC's team is made up of dedicated individuals who are passionate about helping women and children realize their full potential. They do this by teaching about their rights and providing many different forms of media, including radio, magazine, and YouTube videos to express their concerns, opinions, and interests in their own voice through alternative media. Through their methodology of "learn by doing," CEPALC is helping to create vital leaders in Colombian communities.

Colombia struggles with a very machista culture. That is to say, people have ways of thinking that are both patriarchal and chauvinistic. CEPALC helps to empower women, teaching them, that they have a right to voice their opinions, with the hope that they pass this down to their children to create a more peaceful future.

I had many different roles within CEPALC. I helped to lead workshops for children, youth and women; occasionally wrote articles for their magazine *Encuentro* (meaning meeting); participated in three different radio shows ranging from kids' rights to politics; created a show called *Mirrored Voices* about gender issues in society; and taught about peace at a local elementary school.



Gracie stands with children in Bogotá, Columbia.
Photos courtesy of Gracie Lynn Besse.

One of the workshops that was most powerful for me was with more than 80 children speaking about gender in society. Gender equality is such a difficult topic for some kids to grasp because they have already been exposed to all of the social constructs that their parents, teachers, and society have taught them. For example, they are taught that boys need to be strong, can't show emotions, should be good at sports, and should like the color blue. Girls are taught that men will take care of them, that they should be good at cooking and cleaning, that they should be lady-like, and should like the color pink.

After posing some questions for the kids like "How do we express gender?" and "Is one gender superior to another?" They discussed their opinions in small groups. Colombia is mostly Roman Catholic, with some very conservative views; however, these young people were eager to discuss, listen, and learn about something that is often taboo to talk about in their society. At the end of the workshop, we asked for their reflections. One young girl said "This was one of my favorite workshops because we learned about Flora Tristan's story...how she defended women's rights because before that, women couldn't do anything and thanks to her and other women, things have changed."

Even though CEPALC now operates as a secular organization and is not directly affiliated with any church, they are most definitely living out God's word and creating a more accepting and peaceful country. As we United Methodists partner with organizations already in place in many countries around the world in order to be in mission with the people of those nations, we have the opportunity to witness to our faith by spreading God's love, and working toward peace everywhere. I am so thankful that I was able to be a part of this important work.

If you would like to learn more about CEPALC and the people they help, you can go to cepalc.com. To learn more about Global Mission Fellows, visit www.umcmmission.org. You can also check out our podcast of *Mirrored Voices* on the iTunes podcast application and on Stitcher for android devices.

Pastor on Duty

What I learned on the street corner

By the Rev. Gregg Stierheim
Wesley's Place/ Williamsville UMC

Last July, I was appointed to serve at Williamsville UMC and to begin a New Faith Community, Wesley's Place, near the Buffalo/Niagara Medical Campus in downtown Buffalo. It is a unique combination of people living in four distinct communities. Three of those areas are going through rapid gentrification; the other is desperately grasping to maintain its historical identity.

This fall, the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine will be relocated right in the middle of it all. Nearly 70% of the population in the area identifies as being "spiritual, but not religious." How does a New Faith Community connect with an eclectic blend of empty nesters, young professionals, young families, college students, and refugees?



Community block party in Buffalo, NY.

Here is what some of that looks like for us:

Show up

We spend a ton of time building relationships with local businesses and organizations. Through this effort, we received a donation of excess water bottles. A local print shop printed and donated stickers with information on Wesley's Place. We put the stickers on the bottles and gave out over 250 of them at a community block party. Information on Wesley's Place put directly in someone's hand at no cost to us.

We were able to be a part of the block party through building relationships with the Buffalo/Niagara Medical Campus Corp. Through a partnership with the University at Buffalo (UB), our ministry opportunities are publicized in the UB Community Newsletter and they contact us with ways that we can be in service to UB. Without dedicating time with these community organizations, Wesley's Place would have lost out on the opportunity to share the love of Jesus and invite people into a relationship.



Wesley's Place water bottles.
Photos courtesy of Rev. Stierheim

Move in

Another lesson has been the importance of becoming part of the community in which we are called to ministry. Wesley's Place is currently a church that has no physical location. This has been both a blessing and an area for growth. The number one question I hear is "where are you located?" My response of "everywhere" is frequently met with a blank stare, a furrowed brow, or someone waiting for the punch line.

As people of faith we have somehow gotten caught defining "church" as a physical building. I understand this because the majority of people that I am in ministry with do not regularly sit in a pew. They want to be part of a world changing movement, not part of an institution. They too have grown to see church as a building. By persistently being present, I believe that we can change that perception. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus to transform the world- we have to be present to do that.

Until we have a consistent space for gathering, Wesley's Place utilizes the relationship that we have built with business owners. On any given day you can find me walking neighborhoods, chatting in a park, fraternizing in a tavern or restaurant. My office hours rotate between four restaurants that people frequent during lunch. A "Pastor on Duty" sign greets them. Our small group ministry takes place in the same places. Not having any walls pushes me to move in among the community.

Translate. Translate. Translate.

Last Ash Wednesday, Wesley's Place set up a table in a local park in the heart of the medical campus. It was a simple folding table with a camp chair, a bowl, and a sign that read "Get Ashed." Since we do not have a place for worship, this would be our opportunity. The first person that approached me was just leaving the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. He had just received a diagnosis of stage-4 cancer. He grew up in the Catholic tradition and when he read the sign, a chord was struck deep inside his being. His name was Michael and I prayed with him. I placed ashes on his head in the form of a "T" to remind him that he was already taken by a loving God. We still pray for him today.

What I learned from talking with people that day was that pretty much across the board people were clueless about what Ash Wednesday is all about. I was using church language that I was familiar with and thought everyone would be familiar with it. We had a translation problem. Upon realizing this I began to talk about our mortality, our imperfections, our desires to improve the world around us, and forgiveness. People gravitated to that message immediately.

That evening I went to the Ash Wednesday service at Williamsville UMC. The church is located on a very busy stretch of Main St. 40,000 cars a day drive past the church. We had posted a sign out front inviting people to the Ash Wednesday service. My heart broke. I felt like I had failed. We thought we were doing a great job inviting people to the service, but based on what I had just experienced, those cars driving by did not even know what we were inviting them to. As a church, we constantly have to translate our church language into language that is commonly understood. I have found that to be true on street corners, in bars, and even in many of the churches that I have preached at about Wesley's Place.



Table in a local park for Ash Wednesday.

If you are interested in learning more about Wesley's Place or some of the other things we have learned, visit <http://gstierheim.wixsite.com/mysite> or find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/wesleysplaceBNMC](https://www.facebook.com/wesleysplaceBNMC). Snail mail may be sent to Wesley's Place in care of Williamsville UMC, 5681 Main St. Williamsville, NY 14221.



Resources to inspire

There is a plethora of ways to be God's love to your neighbors. Looking to start a new ministry or seeking to reinvigorate a current ministry? Perhaps the following resources will inspire you!

Websites:

Let's stop fixing
CHURCHES,
and start seeing the people
GOD calls us to reach.

#SEEALLTHEPEOPLE

www.seeallthepeople.org

#Seeallthepeople's tagline is "Let's stop fixing churches and start seeing the people God called us to reach." This website has informational videos and free books that you can download to help you and your church develop amazing discipleship ministries.

Fresh Expressions

Watch this complete YouTube Channel dedicated to learning about the Fresh Expressions of Church Movement around the world: www.youtube.com/user/freshexpressions

Acts 29

Learn about a diverse, global family of church planting churches and find out how you can get involved: www.acts29.com

Seedbed

This great ecumenical website is given entirely to teaching/inspiring people about planting new churches: www.seedbed.com/4-church-planting-networks-know

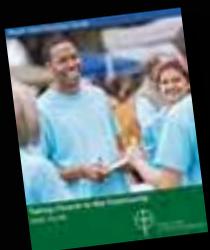
Books:

Engaging Local Schools



Increasing numbers of churches are considering how they can best support and engage their local schools. Through videos, presentations, and supplemental materials, the *Engaging Local Schools* resource guides your congregation in considering questions that are critical to the success of a school-focused service initiative: How can your church express more fully a heart for the needs of children and schools? How can you discern a vision for a school partnership that responds to the needs present in your context and utilizes the unique gifts your church has to offer? What are models and best practices for ministries that support students and teachers?

Taking Church to the Community



No longer can we simply ask, “What can we do to get people to come to our church?” We must also consider, “How can we go into the world to encounter those in need of the gospel?” Through engaging videos, presentations, and supplemental materials, *Taking Church to the Community* explores strategies your congregation can use to reach beyond its walls with worship, community events, ministries, and service — meeting community members where they are and moving them toward discipleship.

Connect with Your Neighbors



Learn to connect with your church's neighbors through understanding, engagement, and service. This resource includes video and PowerPoint presentations you can use for self-study or with groups in your church as well as supplemental resources to help you reach new disciples.

Don't Invite Them to Church



Moving from a Come and See Church to a Go and Be Church- If you love your neighbors, you should invite them to church, right? Wrong.

Loving your neighbors isn't about getting them to join you on Sundays. It's about living your faith right where you are and BEING the church to the people around you.

This flexible guidebook will help you, your small group, or your church get started in neighborhood ministry and missional living. It includes ideas for group meetings, practices to help you develop a better spiritual life, and real-life ideas for reaching out to your neighborhood. If you really want to know your neighbors and love them like Jesus would, don't invite them to church. BE the church.

The Passionate Church

By Rev. Mike Slaughter



Rev. Mike Slaughter, pastor emeritus of Ginghamburg UMC in Tipp City, OH served for nearly four decades as the lead pastor of Ginghamburg UMC. When Rev. Slaughter became the first full-time pastor of the church in 1979, there were approximately 90 people in attendance. Today, the church has three campuses with over 5,000 church members.

How did Rev. Slaughter accomplish this? In *The Passionate Church*, Rev. Slaughter uses Ginghamburg UMC as an example of doing effective ministry using the four areas of focus that the United Methodist Church emphasized at the 2008 General Conference as important ministries for churches to engage in as a way to revitalize. These areas include:

- Engaging in Ministry with the Poor
- Improving Global Health
- Developing Principled Christian Leaders
- Creating New and Renewed Congregations



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