

Please join us for Sunday worship at 8:30 and 11:00
Christmas Eve Worship at 5:00 and 8:00 PM

THE LUMC December 2007

Sunbeam

lansingunited.org



Lansing United Methodist Church

Pastor: Bill Gottschalk-Fielding • Program Associate: Marilyn Paradise • Youth Coordinator: Kevin Dunn



His name shall be called...Prince of Peace.

—Isaiah 9:6

Advent and Christmas 2007



From the Pastor

2007 in Retrospect

Editor's note: Pastor Bill submitted this report at the annual charge conference meeting, November 17.

Much has happened this past year in my ministry for which I am grateful. I would like to offer just a few highlights. In doing so, I am conscious of the many places where the pronoun "I" shows up in these reflections! I know this is necessary because these reflections are seen through my eyes and are subject to that limited perspective. That said, reader beware: the work of ministry is always a shared project in the church: clergy, laity and (most importantly), God. I take responsibility for my mistakes and am grateful for whatever contributions I have been able to make, but trust whatever good has been accomplished among us this year is the work of many. I am grateful to be part of this team!

With that in mind, let me share highlights of some particular ways I have sought to contribute to LUMC's ministries:

- From January to the end of November, I preached 30 out of 42 Sundays (I was out of the pulpit for 8 Sundays on Sabbatical, took 2 Sundays off as vacation, and did not preach at the Children's Musical or the Charles Wesley Celebration).
- I co-led (with Dianne Walter and Christa Salmon) the 4-month Confirmation program for 8 youth.

- I led the Adult Forum through a 4-week study of Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright's *The Meaning of Jesus* and also spoke three times about my Sabbatical experience
- I presided at the funerals of 14 persons and officiated at 4 weddings
- I attended 2 or more meetings each week on average
- I visited the hospital once a week on average and made other pastoral calls to those in need
- I served as convener of the Lansing Older Adult Program (L.O.A.P.), as a member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) and the District Committee on the Superintendency, chaired the Conference Boundaries Task Force and am a member of the Jurisdictional Conference Boundaries Committee.

Of my work beyond the local church, my efforts to shepherd a "New Conference Recommendation" to adjourned session on October 6th were particularly demanding and fulfilling. This three year process stretched and challenged my leadership skills, taught me a tremendous amount about our Church at the conference, jurisdictional and general levels, and convinced me as nothing else has that we are living in a time of dramatic change. It also provided one of the

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Greening the Church Party

On Friday, December 7, you are invited for dinner and a greening party. We'll meet at 6:00 for dinner, which will be provided. You don't have to bring a thing.

Then we'll construct wreaths and other greenery to decorate our church for the second Sunday of Advent. All materials will be on hand, but you might want to bring garden gloves or other work gloves and perhaps some shears for working with the greens.

Join us for a fun evening and help decorate our sanctuary.

Certified Lay Ministry Training Offered

Beginning in January, a training course for those interested in exploring becoming a Certified Lay Minister will be conducted in Freeville. Participants will meet a couple of times per month through May. Those who might be interested in such a course are asked to contact Dale Austin, pastor at the Freeville United Methodist Church, either by phone at 607-844-8760 or at daustin002@twc-ny.rr.com. Details will be available from him. You will be asked to pay a \$25 fee for materials and registration, payable to the NCNY Conference. Further information and forms are available through the conference website, ncnyumc.org/CLM/index.html.

Prayer Chain

Prayers for Healing

Brian Cleveland, % 18 Lakeview Dr.
(in Roswell Park)
Kelly Deprisco, 2475 E. Stephens St.,
Gilbert, AZ 85296
Jim Evans, 681 Ridge Rd.
Deforest Heffron, Elcor Health, 48 Colonial Dr., Horseheads
Amber Heimbuecher
Pat Neimi
Casey Phlegar
Harry Reinhart, 615 Ridge Rd.
Helen Rounds, Groton Healthcare Center
Frannie Sampson, 1138 Auburn Rd.
(Groton)
Robin Sundquist, 51 Concord Dr., Buffalo
14215-1905
Tom Skroback, 401 Fenner Rd.
Tori Swanson, 57 Brickyard Rd.

Prayers for Strength

Mourning family of Tom Payne

Please pray for those in our armed services:

Ken Allen	Travis Potter
Richard Butler	Nick Prabhavat
Matthew Cornell	Josh Randles
Scott Cowles	Matthew Ravas
Steven Cowles	Vanessa Valentine
David Ferris	Monica VanEvery
Robert Gudbranson	Michael Wolfe
Daniel LaBar	
Trevor Judd	
Shaun McCray	

From the Pastor (concluded)

best experiences of team leadership I have ever had.

In addition to the work described above, I was privileged and blessed with the opportunity to take a Sabbatical leave to focus on missional leadership through the eyes of St. Aidan and John Wesley in June and July 2007. I spent a wonderful month in England and Scotland with my family visiting “holy places” like Wesley Chapel and Holy Island. During my time back “in the States,” I visited different churches, read books on Wesley, Aidan, and missional churches, and pondered what God might be up to in me, in the Church, and in the World. The time with family, the time abroad, the time for reading, the time for rest and deeper thinking and praying were life-changing in ways I am still discovering. I am grateful for the ways the people of LUMC “carried on” so ably in my absence. A special note of thanks to Pastors Rollie Ryan and Dave Nicholls for filling in for me while I was on leave.

With regard to the work ahead of us, I am eager to help the congregation make a decision about whether or not to expand our church facilities. It is a question I feel we need to answer one way or another in the year ahead. I am also aware of both a “time famine” and a “leadership crunch” in our congregation. As our church calendar amply reflects, we are a busy church. I am hoping we can move toward a schedule where we do “fewer things well” while at the same time increasing participation among those who may currently be on the margins. At the base of both of these issues is our sense of mission, that is, what is God’s desire for us in this time and place.

My plan for ministry for the year ahead reflects this question and is framed by the list of “7 Pastoral Roles” I have used to help guide my ministry.

1. Grow spiritually,
2. Be faithful to family,
3. Capture, carry and communicate the vision for our future to the congregation,
4. Recruit, equip, and empower staff and volunteer leaders for ministry,
5. Be the primary worship leader Sunday mornings,
6. Be a channel for the healing touch of Christ in the lives of hurting people, and
7. Be a positive influence in the larger UMC connection.

The numbering reflects a re-prioritization made in consultation with SPRC this fall aimed at switching the order given to “worship leadership” and “leadership development.” This reflects a growing consensus among LUMC’s current leaders that we need to develop new leaders and deepen current leaders. I will not be leading worship any less, but will look for ways to shift some planning to other persons and groups to focus on developing leaders.

Serving this congregation is a precious gift. God is doing wonderful things among us everyday. It is a privilege and a pleasure to share all of this with you!

+Grace and Peace,

Pastor Bin

Christ Is the Heart of Christmas

Advent spiritual guide books flood our mailboxes here at church this season suggesting that we might pause, ponder, and pray that we find Christ in the personal traditions that help us to prepare for Christmas. For example, whenever you light a candle, perhaps you could say out loud, “Jesus is the Light of the world.” When you hear church bells, hand bells, doorbells, perhaps you can think to yourself, “Jesus is coming.” When you bake Christmas cookies, perhaps bake a few heart shaped and add a cross to the center. *Christ is the Heart of Christmas* devotional booklets, by Rev. Arden Mead, make other suggestions in keeping Christ the main part of our preparations. Booklets are available in the narthex for your home use. Advent calendars are also available for the children as a daily reminder of the true meaning of the season.

Please join us on Sunday, December 9, during the 11:00 AM Service of Worship, for the **Annual Children’s Christmas Pageant**. The Pageant, entitled “TOO-OO-OO-OO BUSY!!,” takes you away to an average American town where Christmas is just around the corner and preparations are in

full swing. Amidst the holiday hustle and bustle in this little town children are asking, “What is Christmas all about? Why do we celebrate Christmas anyway?” However, they are having difficulty getting anyone to listen to their questions. The congregation is invited to come and listen as the children present the message. A dish-to-pass luncheon and Happy Birthday Jesus Party will follow the Pageant in the Fellowship Hall.

Advent Study for adults begins on Sunday, December 2, during the Sunday School hour with the book *Manger and Mystery*. Pastor Bill leads a 3-week study reflecting upon what the birth of the Christ Child means in our busy, contemporary lives.

I just want to take a moment to express a special thanks to all of the Sunday School children for making holiday greeting cards and packages for the folks on our prayer list and for bringing in canned goods for the Food Pantry as a holiday mission project. Your valuable efforts are appreciated!

So let’s pray this holiday season is that the love of Christ fills our heart today, during this season and always.—*Marilyn Paradise*

Caroling, December 15



Calling all Carolers...especially Junior & Senior youth. The holiday is fast approaching! Come sing (no special talent needed) from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Enjoy good times, while visiting local nursing homes. Bring the whole family and meet at the church by 2:00 pm, December 15. Car pooling will be available.

Advent and Christmas Worship



The theme I've come up with to guide my reflections during Advent this December is "Practicing Christmas." I came up with that phrase for a couple of reasons. First, I wanted to get your attention by using the word "practicing." It's probably not the word most of us associate with Christmas. We surely have a lot to get done for Christmas: baking, gift wrapping, decorating, and even caroling, but these aren't things we need to practice. We know how to do them; the challenge will be finding the time! But maybe this year it would be good to stop and think about what we're doing and why. This might allow us to become more intentional and attentive to what we've got on our Christmas "to-do" list. The main idea behind the phrase "Practicing Christmas," though, has to do with some things we might have left off "to do" list. As you'll see below, worship each Sunday is focused around a particular spiritual practice: wakefulness, repentance, testimony, and discernment. Our Christian sisters and brothers of earlier times found practicing these things life-changing, not just at Christmas, but through out their lives. We'll be encouraged to follow their example this Advent as we make ready for Christmas.

December 2, First Sunday of Advent—A Time for Wakefulness. In a passage scholars label as "apocalyptic," Jesus challenged his disciples to "keep awake." Even a quick reading of this passage reveals its rich symbolic character. Jesus isn't asking his disciples to give up naps; he's asking us to stay focused and alert this Advent to the new thing God is doing in our lives. Are you awake enough to see this? (Holy Communion will be shared this morning). Read: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; and Matthew 24:36-44.

December 9, Second Sunday of Advent—A Time for Repentance. John the Baptist makes one of his two regular Advent appearances in this morning's gospel. Knowing him, you can bet he has not stopped by just to have a bite of peanut brittle and admire our tree! "Repent" is his clarion call to us. Change your living and the world in which you live! Note: Pastor Bill will preach only at the 8:30 service. The children will present this year's Christmas pageant at the 11:00 service. Perhaps you'll want to plan to

attend both! Read: Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; and Matthew 3:1-12.

December 16, Third Sunday of Advent—A Time for Testimony. Jesus challenges followers of John the Baptist to not only see what God is doing, but tell others about it. How are we with sharing the good news about Jesus this Christmas? Can we say something more than "Merry Christmas?" Read: Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10; James 5:7-10; and Matthew 11:2-11.

December 23, Fourth Sunday of Advent—A Time for Discernment. Mary's husband had a difficult decision to make, a decision which would shape the future of many. How did he make that decision? How do we? What does it mean to say we "discerned" a matter rather than "decided" it? Read: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; and Matthew 1:18-25.

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Suggestions for Supporting Our Soldiers

Many people wish to send holiday greetings and expressions of appreciation to our wounded service people. However, the past practice of sending mail to Any Wounded Soldier or A Recovering American Soldier was discontinued in 2001 by the Department of Defense. This decision was made to ensure the safety and well being of patients and staff at medical centers. In addition, the U.S. Postal Service is no longer accepting packages sent to Any Service Member or A Recovering American Soldier. Mail thus addressed that is deposited into a collection box will not be delivered.

The following are ways that you can still express your appreciation for the sacrifice our soldiers have made.

You could consider making a donation to one of the more than 300 nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping our troops and their families listed on the "America Supports You" website, www.americasupportsyou.mil.

Other organizations that offer means of showing your support for our troops or assist wounded service members and their families include:

www.usocares.org/
www4.army.mil/ocpa/tooursoldiers/
www.redcross.org

Christmas Services

Monday, December 24, 5:00 and 8:00—Christmas Eve: Celebrate the birth of Jesus with song, prayer, and story. Two services are offered tonight:

- 5:00 **Candlelight Family Service** planned especially with children in mind (with a dramatic "retelling" of Christmas story)
- 8:00 **Candlelight Communion Service** (with Holy Communion). Read: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20.

December 30, First Sunday after Christmas Day. One service at 9:30 AM only. Come sing carols and hear Christmas stories with friends and family. Read: Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; and Matthew 2:13-23.

Walter Reed Army Medical Center will continue to receive process and deliver all mail that is addressed to a specific individual. Walter Reed's officials stated: "The outpouring of encouragement throughout the past year has been incredible. Our Warriors in Transition are amazed at the thanks and support they receive from their countrymen."

Another possibility for supporting our service people comes by sending a book of devotions made available through the United Methodist Men at www.gcumm.org/. At that site, click on the Strength for Service to God and Country tab. This book of devotions was inspired by a World War II soldier and has been updated and printed by his grandson as an Eagle Scout project. To date over 300,000 of these booklets have been delivered to our military personnel.—*Ted Johndrow, United Methodist Men*

This suggestion came from a member of the Army Reserve, who is also member of our Conference: Go to www.anysoldier.com. This site was set up specifically to address the policy banning the "any soldier" mailing. You will find the names of soldiers who volunteered to accept mail for "any soldier." They will deliver it to soldiers whom they feel do not receive enough mail from home. Friends say it works really well.—*Steven Weller, Lt. Colonel, US Army Reserve*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>2 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT Worship 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship 11:00 Junior Choir 12:00 Children's Ministry 12:00 Pageant Rehearsal 4:30 Disciple 6:00</p> 	3	4 Quilt Bee 9:30 Staff Parish 7:00	5 Women's Bible Study 9:30 MOPS 10:00 Bells Angels 6:00 Choir 7:00	6 Methodist Men 10:00 Senior High Youth 7:00	7 Greening of the Church Preparation Dinner at 6:00	1 Mens' Breakfast 7:00 8 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 2:00
<p>9 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT Worship 8:30 Outreach 9:45 Sunday School 9:45 Christmas Pageant 11:00 Junior Choir 12:00</p> 	10	11 Quilt Bee 9:30 Church Council 7:00	12 Women's Bible Study 9:30 Bells Angels 6:00 Choir 7:00	13 Senior High Youth 7:00 Trustees 7:30	14	15 Mens' Breakfast Linda's in North Lansing 7:00 Christmas Caroling 2:00 SUNBEAM DEADLINE 12:00 Midnight
<p>16 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT Worship 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship 11:00 Food Pantry Setup Lectionary at Bakers' 6:30</p> 	17 Food Pantry Holiday Distribution 4:00 Haiti 7:00	18 Quilt Bee 9:30	19 Women's Bible Study 9:30 MOPS 10:00 Bells Angels 6:00 Choir 7:00	20 Senior High Youth 7:00	21	22 Mens' Breakfast 7:00
<p>23 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Worship 8:30 Worship 11:00</p> 	24 CHRISTMAS EVE Family Service 5:00 Communion 8:00	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Church Office Closed	27	28	29 Mens' Breakfast 7:00
30 CHRISTMASTIDE Worship 9:30 only	31		<i>December 2007</i>	<p>Note: This calendar is current as of November 20. For updates to all LUMC events, visit lansingunited.org to see our virtual church calendar, and check the bulletin when you're in church on Sunday.</p>		 <p>Lansing united methodist church</p>

Annual Report for 2007 from Church Council

This past year has been an exciting year for LUMC. In addition to continuing all of our traditional programs and ministries, which are discussed below, 2007 was a year of challenge, growth, and change. Pastor Bill Gottschalk-Fielding took a well-deserved and productive sabbatical and study leave to England. This was greatly facilitated by congregational members Dave Nichols and Rollie Ryan, who are both retired UM pastors and who covered the pastoral and preaching duties during Bill's absence with great skill and compassion. LUMC's Sunday morning worship attendance continues to grow and, to accommodate the larger numbers, we now offer two Sunday morning services.

LUMC's external missions are numerous and strong. They include missions to Haiti, where we support several schools and provide scholarships for children, to Johns Island, where work teams repair and rebuild housing, and youth mission trips to Guatemala, which transform the lives of our high school youth. Closer to home LUMC puts on worship services for the girls living in the Lansing Residential Center (NY State School for Girls), provides a home for the Lansing Food Pantry and a Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPs) group, and co-organizes the Lansing CROP Walk, to mention a few missions.

For our congregation, in addition to Sunday morning worship services, LUMC has an adult forum, Sunday school, adult choir, children's choir, women's bible study, a quilting group, a hand bell choir (Bell's Angels), vacation bible school, Youth group, and a men's Saturday morning breakfast at Linda's diner.

LUMC is particularly proud of its children's and youth programs. Marilyn Paradise continues as our Program Associate, gracefully leading our children's and adult programs. We are fortunate to have been able to add Kevin Dunn to our staff this year as Youth coordinator. He arrived just in time, as our Sr. High Youth group now has nearly 25 members!

Of course all this growth and activity puts stress on our people, our finances, and our space. In response, LUMC's Church Council is exploring ways to enlarge and enhance our pool of leaders, ways to optimize usage of our existing space, and potential capital projects to renovate or expand our space, and the congregation has been very generous in its service, pledges, gifts, and responses to fund raisers.—*Respectfully submitted by the LUMC Church Council, Joel Brock, chair.*

Trustee "Tidbits"

I would like to remind the congregation that it is our LUMC Policy to "reserve" the use of the church, for both members and non-members. We have recently revised the "Church Use Policy" and "Conditions for Church Use" forms. They are available in the church office. To plan for heat, room space, etc., we ask that you first check with the office manager or a Trustee to schedule your event on the master calendar. With the form on file, there should be no misunderstanding regarding timing, space, and resources needed, and we'll have contact information if needed. Church members may wish to borrow items from LUMC (notably, tables, chairs, and cooking pots). This is allowed, but this must definitely be approved and signed-out via the church office, and updated if the original request changes in any way. This will also prevent misunderstandings for other groups using our facility. There is a notebook and copies of the church use form on the outside bin of the office door. We appreciate your cooperation.

Some of you may have noticed that we have an additional 12 lightweight tables at the church. These are much easier to move about. They were recently purchased thanks to a generous donation!

Each Trustee has a designated area of responsibility, but all can be involved wherever, as needed. Please feel free to let us know if you have a concern or question about the facility. It is everyone's responsibility to help keep our beautiful facilities in the best shape possible, so if you see something that needs to be done, feel free to pitch in and help out. We often are looking for others to assist with the outside appearance and gardens, and other various larger projects that require extra assistance. Please let us know if you have

Updates on LUMC Finances

Finance Committee would like to know: What kind of periodic update would you like to receive from the finance committee to keep you informed about how LUMC is doing regarding income and expenses during the year? For example:

*Would you like a quarterly update on income and expenses (or more or less often)?

*If so, would you just like to know total income and total expenses for that time period, or would you a more detailed breakdown?

*Is there other information you would like?

You can help us know what people would like to read by sending an e-mail to Dave Stoyell, chair of the LUMC Committee on Finance and Stewardship and let us know what you would appreciate being published and how often (peganddave@juno.com).

Fall Stewardship Campaign. A report on the response to this fall's Stewardship Campaign will be printed in next month's Sunbeam. If you have not yet submitted your estimate of giving for 2008 (pledge card), it is not too late. Please drop it in the collection plate on Sunday or mail it to the church office in an envelope marked "2008 Pledge."

an area of interest that you'd like to donate some time to. We love it that the church is used by outside groups throughout the week, in addition to our own busy usage, but with that, we **all** need to make sure it's cared for carefully and consistently.

The listing of Trustees is posted in a few locations around the building, feel free to ask any one of us the questions that you may have, or let us know if you have any suggestions. Thank you—*Nan Makela, Chair*

Congo

By Joy Cruikshank

Editor's Note: Former LUMC member Joy Cruikshank took a mission trip to Congo in October. Here is her detailed report.

I want to thank everyone for your belief in me, who sent me to the Congo. I felt honored. Thank you.

Rev Jack Abel, of Epworth United Methodist Church, Rehobeth, Delaware, was our leader, one with so many gifts and graces. Including Rev Jack there were nine of us. Out of the nine, five were nurses, and one an EMT. Tim, an electrician and one other, who had been to Congo, helped organized the trip.

We were on our way, mission possible. We were able to take with us an overnight bag and one other piece of luggage. Keep in mind, we would also be carrying supplies.

Packing was a challenge, limited space. Yet we needed to take: a bed net, bug spray, bedding, a water filter, medicine in case of diarrhea or upset stomach, antibiotic cream, benadryl, cortisone, Tylenol, and Band Aids. Also, gifts for the children and adults.

We left Philadelphia late Monday afternoon and arrived late Tuesday, in Kinshasha. They brought portable stairs so we could depart from the plane. I thought we were back in the sixties! We were told no pictures at the airport or any government building. The military was there to remind us. While getting our luggage, we were packed closer than sardines. One of the nurses could not verify her yellow fever vaccination. She had it done, but it was on another piece of paper, which she did not have with her. Technically, they should not have let her in the country. Thank

God they did. A bribe was offered and accepted for this purpose.

With all the luggage the driver took out the back row seats and tied it on top of the van. It was late driving through Kinshasha, hundreds of people walking, burning small fires from tires, some to cook from. The blowing dust was incredible. Noticed the trees from the ground up half way up had an irridescent shine. The reason was to keep people from running into them. I think there is no such thing as a driver license. On this ride, I often thought God did not have us make this long journey, only to end up in an accident. Police at places directing traffic. They stopped us due to the seat on top of the van. He let us go after we paid him a bribe. However, the police thought nothing of a goat tied to the top of a vehicle. Passed a firetruck that had about eight men in a open back. They blew whistles for their sirens.

We stayed our first night at the Christmas Hotel. Bishop Yumbo met us there and welcomed us. We were sticky and tired. Temperature was in the highs 90s, with matching humidity. Water trickled out of the faucets. We were told not to drink the water or eat fresh fruit or vegetables. About a week before we left for our trip, we read in the Star Democrat of a plane crash in Kinshasha. It had killed 40 people. Also on that plane was our solar panels to provide electricity for our eye surgeries. Since that did not work out, we purchased a generator in Kinshasha.

Off to Kananga, where we stayed at the Methodist Guest House. The house had a

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Congo (continued)

large dining table, and rooms of bunk beds. Our food was cooked and brought in by local minister and family. Everything is cooked on an open fire. No refrigeration, we had powdered milk. No electricity; just candles. Tim cobbled up electricity in the main room. We had flash lights for other rooms. We rise with the rooster call and settle in after sundown. No twilight. We went from light to dark in an instant. Also had a guard 24/7 there. He stays in a small hut next to the Methodist house.

To Wembo Nyana, we flew on a Methodist plane, similar to a puddle jumper. We went in shifts, as the plane only holds three passengers. I rode in the co-pilot seat, got a little nervous when the pilot would take his hands off the wheel!. Arrived in Wembo Nyana to a spectacular greeting. Ministers, staff from the hospital, and hundreds of kids greeted us. What an honor, just beautiful. One clergy told all of us how brave we were. When they heard of the plane crash, they did not think we would come. Wembo, what a village. Had all dirt roads, no automobiles, had a few motorcycles, one of the doctors would give me a ride to nearby market. They had schools for kids of all ages. The Methodist hospital consists of approximately 10 connecting buildings, including O.R., post op, X-Ray, examining room, medicine. The medicines there were mostly outdated. Using the supplies we brought in, we started immediately cleaning and setting up the O.R. Their O.R. was vastly different from ours. People could come in and out while the doctor was performing surgery. The windows were opened to let air in. Outside a small brush fire had started and some smoke came in.

They dispose of gauzes and needles in one place, on the floor where they were operating. We made a make-shift basket, and tried to separate the needles from gauze. They wanted to know which is good. In fact, the doctor asked us nurses what and how could they improve their O.R. room. As we did not want to overwhelm him, we started with the needles, placing them in a plastic bottle. As soon as we finished setting up the O.R, the doctor was ready to start. People waiting for surgery formed a long line. Some had journeyed over two weeks on foot. The doctor, before we arrived, had prescreened patients. The doctor worked endlessly into the night and early the next morning. He had the "spirit" within him. He did 83 surgeries, all of us nurses assisted. Our electrician, Tim, had provided electricity. Tim worked with a Congolese person, Peter. Tim showed him new and different ways about electricity. Peter, so thankful, that he drew a picture of everything Tim showed him. What a beautiful job he did.

When we left there, Tim left all his tools and supplies—over \$600 worth—with Peter. Peter, along with other Congolese people in the village, were in tears with happiness. Our last day there the UMW provided a grand meal. The UMM, children with their music, the two doctors, and staff from their hospital presented us with gifts. Hand made woven backpacks, which are beautiful. They have so little, yet give to us.

We who think we have it all, but are really lacking in generosity, compared to the Congolese. When I think of the Congolese people, I vision their beautiful broad smile and their pure happiness.

We also visited Mpsa Nutritional Center, outside of Kinshasha. It is a smaller village

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Congo (concluded)

than Wembo Nyana. The female doctor delivers hundreds of babies every year, and routine surgeries. It takes her two hours from her home to get there every day. She would so desperately like a car and emergency vehicle. Many patients she cannot treat, as they have to be taken to a bigger hospital, which is two hours away. Many do not make it there in time. They have on small OR room, using supplies from our (Eastern Maryland) Conference. That morning before we came she had done an appendectomy. They are building a concrete addition. There are hundreds of children there. Food supplies are low. They do grow what they eat. Also have goats, some dogs, wild cow, which they eat. They have a manual pump for water. Also have a generator, but no fuel.

Just a few trivia: some speak a little English, most know some French, but they mainly speak their tribal language. Their \$500 bill is equal to our \$1.00.

One of the Congolese men asked Rev. Jack to take his daughter with him. She is blind and the father knows his daughter would get the right care in the U.S.A. and be able to see. A little boy said to me, "My name is Bless; please don't forget me."

Children under 6 years old were scared of us. We were the first white people they had seen since the rebels came through 6 years ago.

Children carry their own chairs to school. Most schools have benches. Methodism is growing in the Congo. Again, thanks for your support: both spiritually & financially.—
Joy

Proposed Merger Would Create Upstate New York Methodist Conference

When delegates to the Northeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church meet next July, they could decide to merge two episcopal areas, folding four conferences into one.

The jurisdictional boundaries committee is expected to consider the proposal—coming from four United Methodist annual (regional) conferences largely based in New York—when it meets in February.

The new episcopal area and its one conference essentially would replace two current episcopal areas—New York West and Albany—and reduce the number of bishops in the jurisdiction from 10 to nine. The four conferences that would merge are Western New York, North Central New York, Wyoming, and Troy. These are currently among the smallest conferences in the United Methodist Church.

Wyoming refers to the valley in Pennsylvania which is at the center of the conference that extends from Binghamton to Scranton; the Troy conference embraces the eastern Adirondacks and the Green Mountains of Vermont. An open question is whether the Pennsylvania and Vermont sections of those conferences would realign with conferences in their own states or remain with the new New York conference. The proposed date for the change is in 2010.

On October 6, members of the four annual conferences in Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont linked together electronically and overwhelmingly approved the resolution in a historic special session. Speaking from Liverpool, Bishop Violet Fisher told the group: "Three years ago, our four conferences

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Christine Doran leads singing as Bishop Violet Fisher joins in during the North Central New York Annual Conference special session. UMNS photo by Sharon Fulmer.

*Information for this story was provided by directors of communications for the four conferences: Sandra Brands, Troy; Sharon Fulmer, North Central New York; Don Perry, Wyoming; and Marilyn Kasperek, Western New York.

es began a dialogue which revealed a strong commitment and desire to respond effectively to Christ's claim upon our lives and service. We have been engaged in a spiritually grounded and prayerful process of discernment. We have been listening attentively for God's will for our lives...for our future."

The Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding, chairperson of North Central New York Conference's boundaries task force, said the four conferences believe the new episcopal area with its one conference can fulfill a new mission strategy for the region.

"We look toward the creation of a new annual conference which is strong enough to recruit and deploy leaders creatively, to support the ministries of its local churches and to communicate powerfully beyond our church walls," he said.

UMCOR works to help with Hurricane Noel flood recovery

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) remains in contact with partners in the Dominican Republic and Mexico to assist them in the initial phase of recovery from damage caused by Hurricane Noel. UMCOR has issued emergency grants and long-term recovery plans are underway with Action by Churches Together partners, as they further assess the situation. In the Dominican Republic, UMCOR is working with the Evangelical Dominican Church to provide the people with food, medication and other needed items. UMCOR is also supporting the Methodist Church in Mexico with a similar emergency response. Hurricane Noel has caused severe flooding across the Caribbean and Mexico and have left many people in distress. You can help by giving to Hurricanes 2007, at the gbgm.umc.org site or by writing a check to LUMC with the memo UMCOR Advance # 982511 or just Hurricane Noel. Remember, every penny goes to its intended purpose. UMCOR deducts no overhead.

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The Sunbeam

December 2007
Lansing United
Methodist Church

Inside:

Christmas Worship
5:00 and 8:00 PM

Children's Christmas Pageant
December 9

Lansing United Methodist Church

32 Brickyard Road, Lansing, NY 14882
one mile north of the stoplight on Route 34B in
South Lansing.

Church office: 607-533-4070

Fax: 533-4070 (during office hours only)

E-mail: lumcoffice@twcny.rr.com

To reach the pastor at home: 533-4191
pastor32@twcny.rr.com (in confidence)

www.lansingunited.org

The Sunbeam is published each month by
Lansing United Methodist Church.

Please send your news to Glenn Withiam, editor,
at grw4@cornell.edu, or use the Sunbeam folder
tucked away near the church office.

Deadline for the next issue is December 15, 2007.