Palm Sunday speaker heads UM Global Health Effort

The end of Lent is fast approaching as Palm Sunday begins Holy Week on March 24.

Our Palm Sunday speaker, in the tradition of the Rev. Donald Wright lecture-ship thanks to Phyllis Wright, is the Rev. Gary R. Henderson.

Henderson is executive director of the Global Health Initiative of the United Methodist Church.

Henderson was born and raised in Jackson, Miss. He is a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn., and the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

He has primary responsibility for Imagine No Malaria, the denominational focus that targets the reduction of death and suffering from malaria by 2015 in alignment with the U.N. Millennium Development Goals.

Primary to his role in Global Health is awareness building, communication, education, advocacy and fund-raising.

The United Methodist Church has specific involvement in 16 African countries with malaria ministry, They include Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Burundi.

On Maundy Thursday, March 28, a service will be held at 7 p.m. in The Gathering Room in the tradition of the Lord’s Supper where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Attendees may choose between hand and feet washing.

On Good Friday, March 29, again this year the sanctuary will be open for meditation and prayer from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rev. French will be present with materials for your use.

For our 10:30 a.m. Easter worship on March 31, handbells will accompany the organ on the opening hymn. The flower display will include the annual begonias in memory of Mary Clark Taylor and Kenneth Taylor. The service will end with the “Hallelujah Chorus,” open to all to participate.
It’s the first time I’ve done something like this. I came back from the national Circles™ training conference two weeks ago and immediately placed the conference program booklet, along with my workshop notes, in the briefcase that I carry every day as a constant reminder of the new insights and thinking that had been triggered by the conference.

The conference’s keynote speakers and workshop leaders had been exceptional, but that was not the sole or even primary reason for keeping my notes close at hand. The reason for doing so was much more personal.

Simply put, that three-day conference turned my thinking around as no conference had ever done before. My experience there was akin to watching pieces of a puzzle suddenly line up together to form a complete picture.

It was not so much about exchanging old ideas for totally new ones, but about taking what I already knew and believed and seeing it all in a brand-new way.

Clearly it wasn’t just about the conference, but about the conference happening at precisely the right moment to serve as a catalyst for several overlapping ideas to come together and gel.

My first key “aha moment” was about Circles itself: What if we stopped talking about “doing Circles” and started talking about “being Circles”?

That is, instead of thinking about ways to get church members more involved in Circles — especially in terms of volunteering as allies for individuals striving to move themselves out of poverty toward economic stability ... what if we began to frame and organize everything we do around the core principles of Circles, especially in terms of breaking down the barriers between economic classes (poverty, middle class, wealth) by spending time with, relating to, getting to know and understand, getting to appreciate and value and care about one another?

We may not live in gated communities, physically separated and walled off from persons with different economic backgrounds and levels, but practically speaking, many of us have only limited contact with persons in poverty outside of what happens here on Friday morning and Sunday morning.

What better place to break down those dividing walls than here at church!

Our faith, in fact, teaches us that this is not “social work” but Godly work. As the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, “from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

What if we were to take that message to heart and distinguish ourselves by becoming one of those (few) congregations that deliberately and intentionally dedicates itself to tearing down the racial/ethnic/economic/sexual identity walls that seek to keep God’s people apart?

Another “aha moment” came recently for me, when three of us met with ProLiteracy staff on behalf of UUMC’s Outreach/Missions committee. Championed by Ann Milner, the group sought to explore the possibility of adding literacy classes to the Friday Community activities.

What ProLiteracy wanted to talk about was a pilot project for a literacy training program that has been used successfully around the world, but which is only now making its way into the U.S.

Unlike the traditional one-on-one or computer-based literacy training, this is a group model that brings people together who live near each other.

From that starting point, the group identifies a common need or concern about their neighborhood, then works together with trained volunteers to develop and implement an action plan.

Literacy is not just an end in itself, but a tool for community action — all because people spend time listening to each other and working together.

Our first training session comes next week:

See EVERYONE Page 4,
This month will be a time of celebration. March 21 will be the Ministry Persons (Volunteers) Luncheon. This year the focus will be on spring. This is the time of the year when many things happen in the country. For those states affected by wintry weather, we look forward to the coming of spring; for the states in the South, it is time to experience many persons visiting from the North to the beaches as many spend their spring break there. As it affects baseball, it is time for spring training. We hope everyone invited will enjoy the meal.

Volunteer

The next ministry person that I want to focus on is Memory Mungure. Memory is a UUMC member. She is married with two children. Memory may be seen with her children each week at church.

As a worker in the clothing area, Memory has learned how to serve the friends and store the clothing. She says she has learned how to work with other members of the team.

She is developing a better understanding of and operating in the culture through various discussions.

Memory hopes to pursue graduate studies at Syracuse University, and her prayer this Lent is that God will provide a scholarship for her.

Feinstein Challenge

Last year we participated in the challenge, and I am inviting us to contribute again.

The Feinstein Challenge is an annual $1 million giveaway to fight hunger.

The Feinstein Foundation will match money and food donated March 1 through April 30, up to $1 million nationwide to participating groups.

Please donate any amount of money or food during this time. We will report the donations to the foundation and they will respond to us in dollars by July.

Individuals or groups may contribute by sending checks or food (valued at $1 per item). Please note on your check that it is for the Feinstein Challenge and identify food you donate in the same way.

Last year we received $150 from this giveaway.

Spring

Spring will be here soon. Here is a spring poem, “Spring is like a perhaps hand,” by e.e. cummings:

“Spring is like a perhaps hand (which comes carefully out of Nowhere) arranging a window, into which people look (while people stare arranging and changing placing carefully there a strange thing and a known thing here) and changing everything carefully.”

Let us welcome and enjoy the season of spring.

— Rev. Joseph Smythe, Friday Community chaplain

Congregation OKs new leadership roles at charge conference Feb. 3

Leadership changes were approved by the congregation Feb. 3 at the charge conference.

The following are leaders approved: Vito Sciscioli, chair, Governing Board; Gwen Tillapaugh-Fay, Mind ministries leader and representative on Governing Board; Dave Sacia and Don Koten, trustees; Jim Wiggins, chair, Staff-Parish Relations Committee; Nelson Price, Joyce Flynn and Eileen Schell, SPRC members; Christine Doran, Worship Committee chair; Billy Klutitz, Worship Committee member; Janet Sciscioli and Ed Tillapaugh, Nominations & Leadership Committee members.

Many thanks to Bob Dewey for his service as chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and Cynthia Steinem for her service on SPRC; Lynn Steenberg, for her leadership as chair of the Governing Board; and Dave Sacia, for his chairing the Worship Committee for many years.
Everyone welcome in small groups

CONTINUED from page 2

Wednesday, March 20, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the church. Lunch will be provided at no cost.

At this stage, our goal is to get 10 to 20 persons trained ... so I invite you to join us. At the end of next week's training time, you'll be free to decide if you want to continue on or not.

Yet another “aha moment” came during the weekend training event that several of us attended last fall in Columbus, Ohio. Immediately after Sunday worship (with a quick stop at the coffee bar), the congregation divided into three groups: a men’s group, a women’s group and a prayer group.

The prayer group picked up on prayer concerns that had been mentioned during worship. The other two groups provided a safe space where each person was welcomed warmly by name and where the agenda was pretty simple — first, a check-in for everyone to say how their life and soul had been over the past week, and then a chance to tell how the worship and sermon had spoken to them that day.

The group’s laughter, stories and honesty all clearly said this was a group where everyone belonged and where everyone could be themselves.

We’ve been testing a version of that during Lent with our Sunday noon video series and study on poverty, after worship. The group has included persons from several different economic levels, and the discussion has been lively, as a result. I’d love to see us do more of this on a regular basis — perhaps including a group for those who mostly want to chat over coffee, plus some kind of group or activity for children and families.

As you can tell, I’m excited about these possibilities ... about how they connect to and support each other. It’s really all about creating relationships that are life-giving and life-transforming. We could talk, in traditional terms, about small groups and Wesleyan class meetings. It’s all the same thing.

And as the Outreach Sustainability/Futuring task force continues its work, it may well be the “glue” that will be at the heart or center of our future — not just a church with a number of good programs and ministries, but a church that knows how to tie everything and everyone together in Christ. If we get it right, we’ll experience an Easter beyond compare.

— Craig

Save the Date: April 28, Tent of Abraham

On Sunday, April 28, UUMC will participate, as we did in 2007, in a Women Transcending Boundaries event called the Tent of Abraham. The event is a nearly two-mile walk on which participants stop for about a half-hour each at sites of faith traditions and hear about that place’s traditions.

It’s scheduled for 1:30 to 6 p.m., and UUMC will be one of those sites. Look for more information in the next Chimes.

Finance Corner

Figures for 2013

Total pledges for 2013 are $253,190.

Amount paid to date: $27,903.

Non-pledge contributions: $3,166. Prepaid pledges: $58,300.

“SOS” Update

The securing of updated quotes for the sound system upgrade (plus the addition of video capabilities) is under way with the hope of starting the process soon. Additional funds will likely be needed to complete the project. Thank you to all who have contributed to date. Additional contributions are most welcome.

Creation Stewardship

Film for Climate Change Group

The Climate Change Study Group will meet again at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 19, in the Chappell Room.

Please join us for a screening and discussion of the film, “The Hungry Tide,” which highlights vulnerable communities on the front lines of climate change.

This film focuses on the people in the central Pacific nation of Kiribati and how they are coping as global warming changes a way of life they've known for thousands of years.

We will also continue planning for a churchwide activity and discussion on global climate change. We look forward to seeing you!

Questions? Please contact Stephanie Hitztaler shitztal@umich.edu or Peter Swords pswords@ocmsinc.org.

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Governing Board report

Following is a report with discussion highlights from the March 4 meeting of the UUMC Governing Board:

The Outreach Sustainability Task Force has begun meeting to brainstorm and develop a long-term plan for the sustainability of UUMC’s diverse outreach ministries. The task force includes members of UUMC as well as several external representatives from the community, including David Mankiewicz from University Hill Corp. and the Rev. Marti Swords-Horrell of Brown Memorial UMC. Additional representation is being sought from Hendricks Chapel.

Concerns were raised about unsupervised children in The Gathering Room and elsewhere during the service and the need to ensure their well-being as part of our Safe Sanctuary covenant. It was also noted that several people have voiced concern for the safety of church members with mobility or balance issues around energetic children during coffee/refreshment time after the service. The board decided to shift the coffee and juice tables against the wall as a first step toward enhancing the safe flow of “traffic” and to continue exploring additional ideas in consultation with families, education leaders and other stakeholders.

The Palm Sunday speaker will be the Rev. Gary Henderson, of Global Health Initiative, who will be speaking at no cost other than lodging. Pastor Craig suggested that in lieu of the speaking fee, a contribution be made to “Imagine No Malaria,” a United Methodist Church initiative working to curtail the high mortality rate from malaria throughout Africa. Pastor Craig also agreed to look into the possibility of hosting a Saturday teach-in event, possibly in collaboration with Hendricks Chapel.

Vito Sciscioli reported on space needs, including the UMC conference request for additional space in the church building and the need to relocate and renovate space for Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Pastor Craig gave an update on the status of our intern, Lyndsey Graves, now that Grace House has discontinued its internship program. It was agreed that for the remainder of her time here, Lyndsey will focus on student ministry.

— Carol Boll

UUMC Refugee Family

UUMC will welcome a refugee family later this month, the 18th family/individual the congregation has welcomed to the U.S.

Household items are needed such as dresser, coffee table, towels, sheets and personal items. A complete list is posted in The Gathering Room.

We will need help moving in and setting up the apartment. This is an enriching experience as we give support in settling the family into their new home.

Contact Margo Koten, 446-0649, if you can help.

Thanks for Book Display

Thanks to Jo Ann K. May for loaning books from her library for the Black History Month display in the Peale Entrance display case.

Guild Meeting

The next Guild meeting will be 1:30 p.m. March 27 at the home of Bobbie Hemphill. Jill Sarkodie-Mensah will speak about her beading creations. Please let the hostess know if you are unable to attend.

All-County Performers

Kelsey Youmell, who attends Jordan-Elbridge High School, and David Magowan, who attends C.W. Baker High School, were part of the chorus at the Senior High All-County Festival at Marcellus High School in January.

Train the Trainer Literacy Event

On Wednesday, March 20, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. a free Pro-Literacy training session will be held at UUMC. Lunch will be provided. At the end of training, participants will decide whether to continue. This approach aims to overcome poverty with action-based literacy. Pro Literacy says it’s based on the idea that through literacy people are empowered to make changes that they identify and are important to them. It uses a group model, rather than one-on-one instruction. Call the church office, 475-7277, to register.
A scant three weeks ago a major component of my life in Syracuse — my intentional living community — disappeared without warning.

The house I lived in, the community I’d invested in, gone on a Tuesday morning.

The circumstances of my life haven’t been so out of my control since I left home for college.

The formula for earning a stable home and community life — perform internship, attend functions at two churches, engage in Monday formation, pursue healthy relationships with housemates — had not yielded the promised result.

But of course this has happened before, in smaller or less immediate, material ways — I’ve studied hard for tests I failed, damaged relationships with the very best intentions, had projects yield unintended consequences — all the while protesting it’s not my fault!

In my mind at these times, God tends to become conflated with Aladdin (I hope that is OK with God). Where he glides up to the balcony to offer the princess the adventure of a lifetime — a journey on a magic carpet — but first she must answer the question: Do you trust me?

If I’d gotten a normal job in the South where things were familiar, and an apartment on the safe side of town with a lease and no roommates to eat my food, I wouldn’t have to trust God. I wouldn’t have stepped foolishly onto an unproven, flimsy vehicle headed who-knows-where that could, and did, collapse at any moment.

I am not always a proponent of foolish decisions, but as I look back on that last semester of college, I remember I couldn’t get away from Matthew 6.

All that nonsense about lilies and birds and your heavenly father knowing what you need, and I remember writing about hearing that question — trust? — over and over: “I’m tired of it, especially when I keep rounding corners and it smacks me in the face like a low-hanging lamp at a trendy restaurant. And besides, I have some great excuses. After you graduate, unemployment isn’t cute anymore — it’s your new job to worry.”

But somehow I knew that I would move away, I knew I would find a place to serve and I kept looking and interviewing until I landed here, not only undeterred but even drawn by the uncertainty and excitement of a new program.

A bit of a worst-case scenario occurred, but at this “new opportunity for trust,” I didn’t even have time to decide whether to worry. There was a mad scramble of a couple days, and suddenly everything fell into place.

An apartment materialized out of a connection with Darya, the manager of Copper Beech, and people from UUMC showed up with notes, kind words, moving help, offers of household items and even groceries.

Amidst hurt, panic and confusion, the message was clear: You are cared for.

I am so very grateful to be a part of a community that heeds the call of God to be a haven for the vulnerable.

My illusion of control was shattered and my life turned to chaos, yet I found myself clothed and housed and fed like the birds of the air, and even this is not my fault.

May we all rediscover dependence.

— Lyndsey

Lyndsey is our mission intern. She will be with us through July.

Outreach Sustainability/Futuring Task Force examines neighborhood

The Outreach Sustainability/Futuring Task Force has met a couple of times now, most recently on Monday.

The group has begun to look at the changing demographics of the neighborhood.

At its next meeting, March 25, it hopes to have a resource person to lead a discussion on that aspect.

Members also did an exercise on organizational lifecycles led by the Rev. Marti Swords-Horrell that opened up several new ways of thinking about how healthy institutional changes take place.
THANKS
• Thank you for your concern and prayers. I’ve finally been diagnosed and feel like I am on the road to recovery, from Betsy Wiggins
• Thank you to Maddie Horrell for sharing her time and talent with us today, from Martha

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR:
• Those in military service: Nathan Miller, Jim Pettyjohn, Alex Saxby and Matt Fischer
• Cynthia Landis, who fell
• Josh, Tiffany and family as they cope with his sudden injury. May they experience the support and care that brings joy and healing, from Peter
• Jesus the Prophet, guide your servants to restore integrity with courage, from Elise
• Tiny baby Bowen and his mom, Sarah, my best friend
• Those suffering through the end of winter and longing for sunshine
• I want to pray that there is no more war. Why can’t we collect love from everyone’s hearts to stop war games?

From Grady
• For the gift of lifelong learning — and the ways we can apply new knowledge in our roles helping people under stress, from Peter Swords
• Doctors and nurses and for all UUMC staff and members, from Russ
• For my brother to have a speedy recovery and rehabilitation after fracturing his neck in a fall, from Fred
• Prophet Jesus, Guide your servants to direct our personal talents creating positive outcomes, from Elise
• Lyndsey, in her move
• Alex
• Peg Harrigan, who is in hospice care
• Those suffering from depression
• My brother-in-law as he struggles with recurrent cancer
• National budget priorities, starting with people and including an end to wasteful weapons, from Peter Swords
• Blessings to those who have died, prayers for our leaders, from Russ

PHRASES REQUESTED FOR:
• Happy birthday to Lydia, who is 2
• Birthday wishes to Johanna MacDonald

BIRTH
• Welcome to our great-grandson, born on Feb. 9, to our granddaughter Erin and husband Dan, from the MacDonalds

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR CROSSROADS DISTRICT CHURCHES AND PASTORS:
• April 7: Phoenix, Joseph Kim
• April 14: Chittenango, Michaela St. Marie; Hannibal Center/South Hannibal, Greg Beasley
• April 21: Cazenovia & Nelson, Robin Blair
• April 28: Oswego Trinity UMC, Steven Eddy

CARE AND SHARE MINISTRY ASKS PRAYERS FOR:
• April 7: Lyndsey Graves, Liz Pruchnicki, Norma Goel
• April 14: Matt Gress, Billy Kluttz, Charlotte Martin
• April 21: Martha West, Andy Crooks, Greg Koop
• April 28: Vera Gaskin, John Ginn, Patricia Gill, Nathan Sumrall

April birthdays
1 - Matthew Steenberg
2 - Ted Holmes, Jereline Weah
5 - Ralph Best, Diamond Weah
6 - Connor Fay
8 - Russ Young
9 - David Houston
11 - Sheila Murphy
13 - Merylyn Mungure, Doug Coutts
14 - Marty Nicholas
16 - Julie Pedro, Ryan Steenberg, Eleanor Frank, Jeff Huard
19 - Dr. Richard Phillips, Gale Youmell
20 - Corinne Upcraft, Rev. Valma Brock
22 - Princess Weah
23 - Golden Duru
24 - Carol Dawes
25 - Cheryl Brown
29 - Genn Thuma, Ginny Knight, Janet Sciscioli
30 - Vera Gaskin, Dennis Triggs

50-Year UUMC Member Dies
Longtime UUMC member Alma Treen died Friday at age 84.

The family will have a reception at 10 a.m. this Saturday, March 16, in The Gathering Room. A gravesite service will follow at 11 a.m. at Oakwood Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to a charity of your choice.
Altar flowers

Flowers were given by Lynn and Matt Steenberg, Nancy Hough, and Mike and Gwen Tillapaugh-Fay.

Flowers were given to Bob and Ginny Dewey, Starke Donnally, Jo-anne Zinsmeister-Yarwood, Steve Bacon, Mary Klepper, Barb Cook, Maddie Horrell and Josh Arrowood.

Flower deliverers were Ernie and Bobbie Hemphill and Tiffany Steinwert.

WEEK OF MARCH 17
Sunday the 17th
9:30 a.m. Sunday School, ages 5 and up
9:30 a.m. Contemporary Issues
10:30 a.m. Worship, UUMC No-Fault Orchestra; Sunday School, ages 3-4
11:45 a.m. Fellowship - Gathering Room
Noon Poverty Lenten Study Group
Tuesday the 19th
5:30 p.m. Climate Change Study Group
7 p.m. Stephen Ministry
Wednesday the 20th
11 a.m. Literacy Training
Thursday the 21st
11:30 a.m. Volunteer Luncheon
6 p.m. Staff-Parish Relations Committee
6 p.m. Handbell Choir
7:30 p.m. Senior Choir
Friday the 22nd
10 a.m. - noon Friday Community

WEEK OF MARCH 24
Sunday the 24th: Palm Sunday
9 a.m. Community/Church Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Contemporary Issues
10:30 a.m. Worship; Sunday School, ages 3-4
11:45 a.m. Fellowship - Gathering Room
Wednesday the 27th
11:15 a.m. Staff meeting
6 p.m. Connections Committee
Maundy Thursday the 28th
7 p.m. Service - Gathering Room
7:30 p.m. Senior Choir
Friday the 29th: Good Friday
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Sanctuary open for meditation and prayer
10 a.m. - noon Friday Community

WEEK OF MARCH 31
Sunday the 31st: Easter
9:30 a.m. Contemporary Issues
10:30 a.m. Worship
11:45 a.m. Fellowship - Gathering Room
Wednesday the 3rd
11:15 a.m. Staff meeting

Bishop’s Crossroads District Day Scheduled for March 19 at Camillus Immanuel Church

Bishop Mark Webb will gather with clergy and laity of the Crossroads District from 6:30 to 8 p.m. March 19 at Camillus Immanuel United Methodist Church, 303 Kasson Road, Camillus, for a time of worship, conversation and fellowship.

This gathering with provide another opportunity to focus on our mission to “live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God’s love with our neighbors in all places.”

The theme of the worship and conversation will be “Shaping Our World, by Sharing Our Story.”

All laity and clergy are encouraged to attend.
UUMC members serve and share Communion.
Jacob helps his mom, Corinne, at orchestra practice. The UUMC No-Fault Orchestra will play for our service this Sunday, March 17.
Oliver and his mom, Stephanie, in church.