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# Instant Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference



FEBRUARY 4, 2010



## Immigration Task Force Travels to Sonoran Desert This Week

Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. will lead a February 3-7 delegation to the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. The objective of the trip is to learn about border ministries and to bear witness to Christ's love and concern for our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Accompanying the bishop will be members of the Immigration Task Force of the California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, along with representatives from conference districts.

The hope is that each of the district representatives will be able to serve as official "resource" people when they return home.

"One of the challenges that has consistently faced task force members is that we are often called on whenever an immigration concern arises," says the Rev. Brenda Vaca, chair of the task force and pastor of Ministerios Nueva Vida (New Life Ministries), or Nueva Vida United Methodist Church, in San Francisco.

"And these calls happen quite frequently throughout the conference," she says. "Equipping and educating official resource people will allow the work of the task force to expand into the work of a larger network. This is a significant development in our ministry and we praise God for it!"

Vaca encourages all who are interested to follow the progress of the delegation's journey to the borderlands by visiting [www.strangersnolonger.blogspot.com](http://www.strangersnolonger.blogspot.com).

"We will try our utmost to post daily with our reflections and photos of our experience," she says.

Along with Bishop Brown, Vaca, and Phil Bandy, interim director of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) for the conference, members of the delegation are: the Rev. Jola Bortner, the Rev. Kathryn Dunning, Lilian Guasing, Lydia Gutierrez, Katherine Kim, Linda Kuruhara, and the Rev. David Niu.

"Please keep them in prayer for their safety, good health, and an open heart and spirit as they journey to encounter the Migrant Christ," Vaca says.

(The blog page also provides information for those interested in making a donation to the work of the task force – and to help offset some of the costs of this border trip, in particular.)

## **Read Blog Posts From Israel, Palestine on Communications Facebook Page**

Doug Smith of the Israel-Palestine Task Force of the California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is taking part in a corporate engagement trip to Israel and Palestine, February 5-12, sponsored by the Ecumenical Action Group for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine.



He is the only Cal-Nev representative. His participation was funded in part by a grant from the Conference Board of Church and Society.

During the week-long trip, Smith will interview American-owned companies and document the impact of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, as part of the process of implementing the resolution passed at Annual Conference Session in June.

Item 16, adopted in Plenary, calls for the task force to "examine and submit to investment managers for United Methodist congregations and institutions in the ... Conference a list of companies that support in a significant way the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories." It stipulates that the task force shall write to those companies requesting a change in their relationship to the occupation. If no change in policy is reported within 90 days, the company's name is to be placed on a divestment list – and all UM churches and investment managers will be urged to consider divesting from the companies on that list.

In addition to developing recommendations for divestment by the conference and individuals, Smith will gather material for workshops at local churches.

He will share his observations and reflections during the trip by blogging on the Conference Communications Office [Facebook page](#) - where he also will post photos.

Visit the Communications [Facebook page](#) daily, February 5-12, and click on the "**Just Fans**" button to catch Smith's blog entries and view his photos from Israel and Palestine.

## **President of Methodist Church of Haiti Gives Rough Timetable for Volunteer Efforts**

The President of the Methodist Church of Haiti has written to Bishop Joel N. Martinez, Interim General Secretary of the Board of Global Ministries, and Bishop Janice R. Huie, Chairperson of Health and Relief for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), expressing thanks and giving a broad outline of how relief efforts will play out in coming weeks and months.

In a February 1 memo, the bishops write,

"We urge you to share this letter with your local churches and volunteer networks. The letter is helpful in clarifying both the need for volunteers in the future and the wisdom of responding at the most appropriate time.

"We invite you to continue your prayerful support and encouragement for the people of Haiti as we continue planning for the most effective response by the United Methodist Church."

Read [Rev. Paul's letter](#) here (in PDF format).

Phil Bandy, interim director of the California-Nevada UMVIM office, reassures those in this conference who are eager to respond to the devastation in Haiti, that "Volunteers are needed and will be deployed to Haiti when it is time."

"Please register at the UMCOR Volunteer Site, [www.umrespond.org/haiti](http://www.umrespond.org/haiti)," he says, "and I will collect your names and contact you to form teams in the near future.

"Please see the [10 Steps to Haiti](#) [on the UMVIM "Urgent Needs" page] as a guide to prepare yourselves. New training specific to Haiti is being prepared for volunteers to receive before deploying, so team leaders should include this in their plans."

### **Health Kits for Haiti Relief Relay Scheduled for End of Month Los Altos UMC to Be Drop-off Point**

Los Altos United Methodist Church will be a one-time drop off point, at the end of February, for health kits to be trucked to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) warehouse in Salt Lake City – and the Conference is asking for five other churches to jump in and do the same.

#### **Churches in the Los Altos area are asked to drop off kits (and raw materials for them) on Sunday, February 28, from noon to 2 p.m., at Los Altos UMC, 655 Magdalena Avenue in Los Altos, California.**

"We need at least five more churches to be collection points," says Phil Bandy, Interim Director of the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Office for the California-Nevada Annual Conference. In addition, Bandy says, "We need churches to partner up and form 'pony express' relays to get the kits to those collection points."

Los Altos has made arrangements with a transport company to pick up the shipment in the afternoon on March 1. Bandy hopes to arrange for churches that will be on the route to Salt Lake City to prepare to add to the Los Altos truck as it passes through.

"We can fit 20,000 kits into a single 18 wheeler!" he says. "We will set up similar runs starting in Bakersfield, Redding, Eureka, San Ramon, and Sacramento."

The UMCOR warehouse in Salt Lake City already has sent 23,000 health kits to Haiti and has put out an urgent request for more. Families, community groups, and churches are encouraged to help re-supply the warehouse with health kits and the materials for them.

A Health Kit includes these items (and nothing else), inside a sealed one-gallon plastic bag.

- 1 hand towel (15" x 25" up to 17" x 27" – NO kitchen towels!)
- 1 washcloth
- 1 comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)

- 1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
- 1 bath-size bar of soap (3 oz. and up)
- 1 toothbrush (single brushes only, in original wrapper; NO child-size brushes)
- 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages

Completed kits may be put into boxes (3-cubic-foot boxes preferred). Please note, on the outside of the box, the number of health kits it contains.

In addition, UMCOR requests a check for \$2 per kit to cover the cost of providing toothpaste and shipping to the final destination. Please put "Advance # 901440" on the memo line of the check (and note your church's GCFA number in order for your church to receive credit for the donation). The check may be placed in an envelope, which then should be taped to the outside of the box.

Individuals or groups also may ship boxes of health kits directly to the warehouse at: UMCOR West Office and Depot, 1479 South 700 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84104-1605.

In addition to monetary contributions to relief agencies operating in Haiti, the health kits provide a tangible way for people to contribute to the relief efforts. Los Altos UMC has already sent more than 500 health kits to the Salt Lake City warehouse and is continuing to collect and assemble health kits. By taking care of the cost of shipping the kits to Salt Lake City, the church hopes to enable more people to participate in the effort.

### **Emergency Help Requested: Flooding in Mexico's Northwest AC Is 'Local Tragedy'**

Bishop Vasquez of the Northwest Annual Conference of Mexico has alerted the United Methodist Joint Commission/Hands Across the Border that emergency assistance is needed for the San Quintin Valley, south of Ensenada, due to flooding.

"This is a local tragedy," according to Murray Hawkins, President of the UM Joint Commission. "There are many people who live in this area and who are within the service area of our three Methodist churches. [They] live a marginal existence in the best of times, either in agriculture or fishing. Now the need is great and I hope that your church can respond quickly in some way."

The area's District Superintendent, Rev. Armando Bautista V, says, "The rains left great damage and there were towns that disappeared . . . food, propane gas, water, gasoline, are scarce due to the fact that there is no access to the area, and due to the fact that some prices are rising a lot.

"Thank God that our brother Murray [UM Joint Commission] left some sacks of beans and rice, and with them we have been able to help some families."

Hawkins says, "The amount of food that we were able to leave with them just before Christmas totaled only 200 lbs. of pinto beans and 100 lbs. of rice. We expected that it would be used for emergency use by families who needed food for only a few days at a time."

Since it is difficult to get food across the border, "Money is the best option" for providing assistance, Hawkins recommends. He says funds can be deposited by wire to an account in a bank in the San Quintin Valley.

In addition, "[We] request your prayers for the Valley of San Quintin," Rev. Bautista says.

For more information contact Murray Hawkins, President, UM Joint Commission/Hands Across the Border, at [murray@mexicomissionproject.org](mailto:murray@mexicomissionproject.org) or 909.793.5171 – or visit the UMVIM site for the Western Jurisdiction at [www.umvimwj.blogspot.com](http://www.umvimwj.blogspot.com).

### **As We Rethink Church, What Is the Role of Lay Leadership?**

Here in the California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, we are taking seriously our call by God to reach out, make disciples, and transform the world. Some churches are trying to be more fruitful with the Five Practices. Our pastors are meeting and appointed in circuits for prayer, study, and discussion around ministry challenges. District superintendents are traveling to new churches. We are talking about effectiveness and accountability and vitality.

What's next? And how do our wonderful, faithful congregation members and leaders fit into the emerging vision of our work together?

At the San Jose District's next Quarterly Conference, three Conference leaders will join district leadership in sharing their ideas. The Rev. Ted Virts, Conference Superintendent, and Gayle Shearman, Conference Co-Lay Leader, will be take on the topic, "As we rethink church, what is the role of lay leadership?" on Saturday, February 13 at the Korean United Methodist Church of Santa Clara Valley in San Jose.

There will be time for worship, for listening, and for discussing together. San Jose District Lay Leader Nina Klepac and District Superintendent Kristie Olah will also help lead the discussions.

Download [flyer with registration](#) (in PDF format) for schedule and additional information.

Please share it with your congregation. Register by February 8 with Pam McKee, San Jose District, 729 Morse Street, San Jose, CA 95126; phone 408.295.5341; FAX 408.286.5889; email [sjdist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sjdist@sbcglobal.net).

### **Living out Our Faith: Making Room for Relaxation, Prayer on Campus**

What are congregations in the California-Nevada region of The United Methodist Church doing to live out their faith?

As United Methodist Church congregations are being called to "Rethink Church," the Wesley Foundation, Merced is leading the way. Wesley received materials and inspiration from the Rethink Church campaign to create an event on the University of California/Merced campus. Four students worked together with campus minister, the Rev. Jennifer Goto, to host a Relaxation and Prayer Room on campus the week before finals. For two evenings, December 8 and 9, 5:30-7:30, they took over a room on campus and transformed it into Holy ground.

Eighty students showed up at the event.

It's another story of how we're "Living out Our Faith in California-Nevada."

Watch for a special section for this feature in the coming weeks, but for now, click on "[Living out Our Faith in California-Nevada](#)" under "What's New," in the lower right quadrant of the Home Page at [cnumc.org](http://cnumc.org) to read more about the Wesley Club at UC/Merced.

## **Application Deadline for Hunger Justice Training is March 12**

Do you have what it takes to be Hunger Justice Leader? Or do you know someone who does?

Bread for the World is looking for the best and brightest 20- to 30-year-old advocates to join their next Hunger Justice Leaders training class, June 12-15, 2010 in Washington, D.C.

Two years ago, 75 young leaders came to the nation's capital for intensive training in advocacy for hungry and poor people. Since then, they have served as powerful agents of change in their communities.

Selected participants will attend an - all expenses paid - advocacy training workshop where they will learn to lead advocacy efforts in their own communities.

Please **apply now** to take part in this powerful opportunity to:

- Gain skills in advocacy, team-building, and community organizing.
- Connect with like-minded young leaders from across the United States.
- Explore the biblical foundations of faith and justice.

Speak out on Capitol Hill by visiting members of Congress.

The application deadline is March 12, so don't wait. [Apply now](#).

*June H. Kim, executive secretary of the World Hunger/Poverty and Sustainable Agriculture and Development programs of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), serves on the Bread for the World Board of Directors as secretary.*

## **What's New on the GBOD Worship Website?**

New worship resources are now available to download from the Center for Worship Resourcing at the General Board of Discipleship [Worship website](#).

The GBOD Worship website offers an extensive set of worship, preaching, and music planning resources in support of *The Revised Common Lectionary* (RCL). Suggestions and resources for planning sermons, selecting appropriate hymns and songs from the various United Methodist hymnals and *The Faith We Sing*, worship and liturgical resources, are also available.

[Worship Planning Helps: Feb. 7, 2010](#)

[Preaching Helps: Feb. 7, 2010](#)

[Lectionary Hymns: Feb. 7, 2010](#)

[21<sup>st</sup> Century Worship Resources: Feb. 7, 2010](#)

[Music Musings #228: Doxology for Haiti](#)

[A Contemporary Service for Ash Wednesday](#)

[Hymn: "Earth-Shaken People"](#)

[Prodigal Worship Conference, Baltimore-Washington](#)

[A Prayer with Survivors](#)

[Church of the Week: Hedding UMC, Barre, Vermont](#)

**Also available:**

[Music Scholarships from The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts \(FUMMWA\)](#)

- Applicant must be:
  - a music degree candidate intending to pursue a career in sacred music, either entering as a freshman or already enrolled in an accredited university, college, or school of theology; OR be pursuing academic education in worship or the arts related to worship.
  - be a member of The United Methodist Church or be employed in The United Methodist Church.
- Application deadline is **March 1, 2010**.

**Remember to Nominate for 2010 Talbert Award**

Individuals and churches - please remember to make a nomination for this year's Bishop Melvin Talbert Award for Racial Justice.

Please submit a one-page letter to support your nomination.

The California-Nevada Annual Conference Commission on Religion and Race makes this award annually to a person within the conference who best exemplifies a proactive stance in addressing, and working toward dismantling, racism in the church and society.

Send nominations by April 1, 2010 to:

Dr. Jeffrey Kuan,  
Chair, CORR  
Pacific School of Religion  
1798 Scenic Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94709

Email: [kjkuan@psr.edu](mailto:kjkuan@psr.edu)

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[Instant Connection Submittal Form](#)  
by 5 PM on Tuesday of desired week of publication.**

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