New York Annual Conference Celebrates 250 years of ministry
by Beth Patkus

In New York City in the autumn of 1766, Philip Embury, an immigrant local preacher who had been converted to Methodism in Ireland, preached to a small group of five (including two servants) in his home, at the behest of his cousin Barbara Heck. Seeing that some of her fellow emigrants had begun to give up Methodist ways, Barbara famously broke up a card game, threw the cards into the fire, and reminded Embury of his responsibilities!

From this first small group would come Wesley Chapel (later John Street Church) in 1768. Throughout 2016 the NYAC CCAH, in cooperation with John Street UMC, is celebrating the 250 years of New York area United Methodism that followed this first class meeting.

To begin the year, we have developed educational posters that tell the stories of 25 luminaries whose influence has been felt in the New York Conference over the past 250 years. The posters detail each person’s life and accomplishments and provide discussion questions useful for Bible study, confirmation classes and sermon preparation. Each biography is also available in a bulletin insert format. Those profiled include men and women; bishops, clergy and laity; and they come from varied racial and cultural backgrounds. Please visit www.nyac.com/250years to find a link to the biographies.

We are also preparing a 2016-2017 calendar that will highlight historic places within the New York Conference. Both the biographies and the calendar will be distributed to attendees at our Annual Conference in June. We are also in the process of designing a large timeline banner and organizing celebratory activities at Annual Conference, which will highlight some of the luminaries during worship services and via short videos.

Boehm’s Chapel celebrates 225th anniversary
by Dolores Myers

A celebration of 225 years of faith will be held Sunday, June 26 at historic Boehm’s Chapel, 13 West Boehms Road, Willow Street, PA. The old stone chapel designed by Bishop Richard Whatcoat was erected in 1791, as the first church in Lancaster County built for the use of the religious society called Methodists. It was called Boehm’s Chapel because it was erected on land owned by the Boehm family, members of which aided with construction.

The official opening and a walk-through of the Chapel Society’s new auxiliary building will be held in the early afternoon, followed by the burying of a time capsule near the new site. The event will be followed by the annual Chapel Society business meeting and recognition of Boehm descendants.

Bishop Peggy Johnson will preach at 4 p.m. Representatives of the Board of Bishops of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, district pastors including Pastor Joe Garber of Byerland Mennonite Church and Bishop Steve Weaver, will announce the recently passed resolution regarding the remission of the censure of excommunication of Martin Boehm, which occurred in approximately 1775.

Special music, participants in period dress, a circuit rider on horseback and members of the Colonial militia will be on hand to provide a feeling of the eighteenth-century lifestyle. Additional information will appear on the chapel website at www.boehmschapel.org prior to the June 26 celebration. For more information, see the website or call 717-872-4133.

2016 Annual Meeting

It’s not too late to register for the May 24-26 2016 Annual Meeting. A registration form is included in this issue of the Bulletin. If you need more information, contact Barb Duffin at barratts@aol.com or 302-335-5544. See you in Delaware!
Letter from the President

Greetings to all of my friends in Archives and History!

I hope everyone is doing well as we move into Spring. I know we are all excited about that. As the seasons of the year change, we are reminded of God’s role in Creation. Psalm 107 reminds us that, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love endures forever.” It is always good to give thanks to God throughout all seasons of the year. That Psalm goes on to remind us that, “Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story.” We as historians are always looking for the story of how events happened. Specifically as church historians, we are looking to tell the story of what God has done in our history.

I want to thank all of you for your help and support throughout the last four years. It is hard to believe that my term as President is already coming to an end. I think of all of the people I have gotten to know through being involved in the Northeastern Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History. I also think of all of the places we have traveled, especially during my time as President, to New Hampshire in 2013, to New Jersey in 2014, and to Connecticut in 2015. We will gather this year in Delaware for the last meeting of this quadrennium. I hope to see all of you there.

May God bless all of you,
Matthew Loyer, President

From the General Secretary

Dear Friends,

I was privileged to address the denomination’s Pre General Conference Briefing in Portland, Oregon in early January. Heads of delegations and annual conference communicators heard a speech I entitled “The Power of Through.” (http://www.gcah.org/history/the-power-of-through) “The Power of Through” asserts that taking a longer view of denomination’s history and the actions of its General Conferences shows significant impacts far greater than single snapshots in time. From this perspective, not only are there major accomplishments to observe and celebrate but also the clear sense that the Church, while not spared FROM serious challenges, differences, and difficulties, has experienced new life THROUGH them.

A few weeks afterwards, I attended the Richard Allen commemorative stamp dedication at Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. That was not only a great way to kick off Black History Month, but it was also one more amazing experience of the “The Power of Through.” The dedication day began with hundreds of people singing “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Immediately thereafter, without missing a beat, the standing-room-only congregation burst into a spine-tingling rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” In that moment, God’s through-way in redemption history, expressed in the words of Poet James Weldon Johnson, hit me yet again.
Joint Annual Meeting
Northeastern Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History
Historical Society of The United Methodist Church
May 24 – 26, 2016
Whatcoat United Methodist Church
341 Saulsbury Road
Dover, Delaware
Hosted by the Commission on Archives and History of the Peninsula-Delaware Conference

Program Schedule

Tuesday, May 24
8:00  Registration at Whatcoat UMC
9:00  Opening Worship with Bishop Peggy Johnson preaching
10:00 Opening Session of Historical Society
10:30 Break
10:45 History of host church
11:15 Report of the General Secretary on actions of General Conference and other items of interest
12:00 Lunch
1:00  Presentation by Joe DiPaolo on the life of Bishop Levi Scott
2:30 Break
3:00  NEJCAH Business Session
5:00  Dinner – Following dinner Historical Society will present the Saddlebags Award and the Ministry of Memory Award

Wednesday, May 25
8:00  Busses leave hotel for all day tour featuring
   • Historic Dover
   • Barratt’s Chapel
   • Old Union Church, Odessa, DE, the home church of Bishop Scott
   • Lunch at Ebenezer UMC, Delaware City, followed by afternoon tour of Fort Delaware State Park with a visit from a Civil War chaplain
   • Dinner at historic Asbury UMC, Smyrna [Duck Creek], DE

Thursday, May 26
9:00  Joint session of Historical Society and NEJCAH, including an open forum to discuss actions of General Conference
11:00 Closing Worship
12:00 Boxed lunches available to eat at church or take with you on the road

1 CEU will be available for those attending all 3 days of the meeting.
**LODGING:** Hotel rooms are **not** included in the registration. A block of rooms has been reserved at Dover Downs Hotel, 1131 N. DuPont Highway, Dover. Deluxe king/ double rooms can be reserved for $129 per night. **This rate is guaranteed only until April 23.** Call the hotel directly at 866-473-7378 and ask for the rate for “Historical Society of The United Methodist Church”.

Note: Dover Downs Hotel is part of a large entertainment complex which includes a gambling casino. A variety of other lodging is available in the Dover area. Those attending the meeting may choose to make reservations in other hotels. Contact the registrar for more information.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Dover is easily accessible from the north or south by US Rt. 13 and Delaware Route 1. US Air provides regular service to Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico Regional Airport (SBY), and Amtrak serves Wilmington, DE. The host commission can arrange transportation from either of these locations. Limousine service and car rentals are also available at Philadelphia and Baltimore-Washington Airports. For more information contact the registrar.

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Send registrations and all other correspondence to the registrar:

Barb Duffin, Curator  
Barratt’s Chapel & Museum of Methodism  
6362 Bay Road  
Frederica, DE 19946  
302-335-5544  
barratts@aol.com

Make checks payable to “Barratt’s Chapel”

**REGISTRATION** including all meals except breakfasts

| Early Registration by April 25 | $160 | _____ |
| Registration after April 25    | $185 | _____ |

**Donation to NEJCAH** (optional)  
[The NEJCAH depends on individual contributions for a significant part of its funding. If you would like to contribute, any amount you record on this line will be forwarded directly to the NEJCAH.]

**NAME** ________________________________

**ADDRESS** __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**PHONE** _________________  **EMAIL** ________________________________

*If you have any special needs please contact the registrar.*

**NOTE:** Photographs will be taken during the meeting. Some of these may be used for publicity by the HSUMC and/or the NEJCAH. Also a list of registrants will be made available for the private use of those attending the meeting. If you do not want your photo used, or do not want to be included in the list please notify the registrar when you register.
After the first verse sings about “a song of the faith that the dark past has taught us, A song full of the hope the present has brought us,” then comes the middle verse:

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast’ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died,
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
Come to the place which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears have been watered;
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last,
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

As a white male, I recognize that my experience of “the power of through” is different from that of African American sisters and brothers and people from other global climes and cultures. Different, yes – but not necessarily divergent. The “Stony roads” and “chast’ning rods” of our respective sojourns into faith and life may not be the same but we have all known dead hopes, weary feet, and exhausted sighs. A wise mentor once suggested that if people would risk “deepening into their differences” together, instead of allowing them to be divisive and conflicting, they might well discover commonalities in life-jarring hurts, dying hopes, paralyzing anxieties, and painful rejections. Maybe then, our world-weary souls can be drawn together into a more profound unity.

What draws us together then, what lifts every voice to sing, is not the experience of hurts, hopelessness, anxiety and rejection alone but God’s tireless way of coming THROUGH them. It is God’s relentless grace that insists life WILL have the last word over death, freedom WILL have the last word over oppression, hope WILL overtake despair and transformation WILL come right-on-through situations in which we, if left to our own devices, will allow to succumb to road blocks or dead ends.

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” is just such a history in 6/8 time signature. It is why this hymn gave me goose bumps at Mother Bethel a few weeks ago and gives me the energy jolt of a Red Bull every time I sing it.

As we approach General Conference in May, 2016, we United Methodists are mid-verse in more than the faith we sing. As the days towards the “holy conferencing” of our quadrennial gathering draw nigh, we come with different experiences of past and present hurts, not to mention hopes for the future. Through it all, may we see with the sweep of history pointing towards a future that---struggles and all---

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far along the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might,
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.

And native church.

Fred Day

P.S. In the last edition of this Bulletin, I shared a list of talking points for use in conversation with General Conference delegates in the wake of petitions (most notably Plan UMC, Revised) asking to restructure GCAH from the status of independent agency to subordinate of GCFA. I trust you are using them. If you need copies, please email me at atday@gcah.org.
Words from Wesley

“Some years [ago], God began a great work in England. But the laborers were few. At first those few were of one heart. But . . . first one fell off, then another, and another . . . this prevented much good and occasioned much evil. It grieved our spirits and weakened our hands. It gave our common enemies huge occasion to blaspheme. It perplexed and puzzled many sincere Christians . . . It grieved the Holy Spirit of God.”

“As labourers increased, disunion increased. Offences were multiplied. And instead of coming nearer to, they stood farther and farther off from each other. Till at length those who were not only brethren in Christ, but fellow-labourers in his gospel, had no more connection or fellowship with one another . . .”

“But ought this to be? Ought not those who are united to one common head and employed by him in one common work, to be united to each other? . . . “

“But what union would you desire among these? Not an union in opinions. They might agree or disagree touching absolute decrees on the one hand and perfection on the other. . . . Is it not a most desirable thing that we should . . . Not judge one another, not despise one another; not envy one another? . . . Never speak disrespectfully, slightly, coldly, or unkindly of each other. . . . Never say or do anything to hinder each other’s usefulness, either directly or indirectly. . . . Is it not a most desirable thing that we should Love our brethren? Think well of and honour one another? . . . Each help the other on in his work and enlarge his influence by all the honest means we can? This is the union which I have long sought after. And is it not the duty of every one of us to do so?”

John Wesley to William Legge, 2nd Earl of Dartmouth, 19 April 1764