

CONNECTIONS *News*

201 Session of New York Central Annual Conference

2009 Edition Volume 1 Issue 1



A “new attitude” encouraged as Bishop addresses United Methodists in North Central NY

The Rev. Dr. Marcus Matthews, resident Bishop of the New York West Area, encouraged members of the North Central New York Annual Conference to live the “new attitude” that comes with a relationship with Jesus Christ as he addressed them early Friday morning, May 28, 2009.

This is the first North Central New York Annual Conference Session led by Bishop Matthews. Bishop Matthews was assigned to the New York West Area, which includes North Central and Western New York Conferences of The United Methodist Church last July, assuming leadership in September of 2008. His offices, currently in Rochester, NY, will be relocated to Syracuse, NY later this year.

United Methodists from throughout North Central New York have gathered to worship, celebrate their history, ordain elders, and make decisions around program initiatives and their ministry together this week.

During his Episcopal Address, “It’s A New World”, Bishop Matthews, shared scriptural and personal examples of how the “attitude change” that comes with a relationship with Jesus Christ can make a difference when lived out in our congregations, communities, and throughout the world.

Bishop Matthews said that he has heard the gospel sounded in voices of children in this area. “Voices of youth talking about how God made a difference in their lives,” Bishop Matthews said, noting that they have moved from darkness to hope because of clergy, lay leaders, and others sharing Christ, and have made an about face in their lives.

“I have been excited about what I’ve heard,” Bishop Matthews said. “God’s marvelous grace saves us day by day, turns us around to the right direction.”

Referring to the Apostle Paul’s face-to-face encounter with Christ and the major attitude adjustment that ensued, Bishop Matthews said, “With God’s grace there was a major shift - a holy and bold attitude change.”

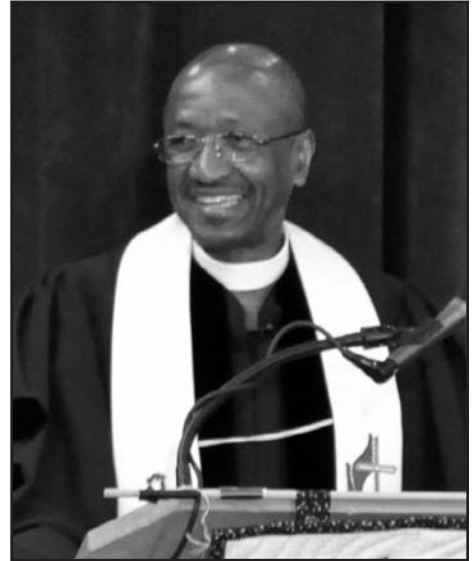
“Our attitude, more than anything, determines our capacity for leadership,” he said.

Again referring to the Apostle Paul, “What a story of an attitude change that needs to be shared over and over.”

Bishop Matthews challenged United Methodists in North Central New York Annual Conference to turn some new pages in history; to set goals to move toward the vision of healthy and alive congregations motivated at all levels to help make difference in local communities. “We need attitudes where love and care work with and to serve those broken and hurting,” he said.

“What will take to be in love with our neighbors in all places – what is the vision for this Conference, for your own personal life?” Bishop Matthews asked. He encouraged those gathered to dream big and to set lofty goals. “Most often we have little dreams and we achieve them, aim low and hit the target, set low goals and reach them,” Bishop Matthews said.

Quoting the book, “A slave child is born,” Bishop Matthews said, “Life is lost day by day, minute by minute, often by living for the moment instead of for a lifetime.”



Bishop Matthews

“We have the gifts to make a difference, do we have the will and attitude to make a difference? he asked. “Minimum efforts will give minimum results.”

“We will continue to build this Conference when someone notices a difference in us and asks what happened to us and we proceed to share what Jesus did in our lives – touched us and made us whole, never the same again. There is nothing more timely than telling story of Christ in our lives.”

Bishop Matthews called on all to live our faith - from Rome, to Geneva, to New Hartford; from the streets of Syracuse to Watertown, and to the ends of the earth. “Sharing in one another’s burdens, we should be just as concerned about abused children; bright young adults who study hard but who, in this economy, can’t make ends meet; genocide in Darfur; and anywhere we can demonstrate the power of the resurrected Christ – witnessing to our faith,” Bishop Matthews said. “This is one of strengths in connectionalism. We need to work collectively – God doesn’t bless us to keep to just ourselves but to be a witness and blessing to others, what one church can’t do alone, we can do together.”

“Our task is to offer hope to people, to share good news,” Bishop Matthews said. “simply putting faith into action.”

“Like Paul the scales must first come off of our eyes. We need to have had an experience with Jesus touching us. Once God has touched us we can never go back to the old way,” Bishop Matthews said.

“There is not a fast, quick solution,” Bishop Matthews said. “It requires discipline, mindset, and lifestyle. A new attitude of boldness and capacity to peak through the curtain of heaven and glimpse God’s future.”

“Let us then like Paul, John Wesley, and all the prophets and prophetesses – see the world differently, because Jesus Christ touched us.”

Bishop Matthews was greeted with a standing ovation by the over 700 United Methodist laity and clergy attending the Annual Conference session at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Liverpool, New York.



Bishop Matthews welcomed Bishop Daniel Wandabula, (right) resident bishop of the East Africa Episcopal Area, who brought greetings to the North Central New York Conference of The United Methodist Church on Thursday morning.

Photo by Ken Kasperek

Resident Bishop of East Africa shares greetings with United Methodists in NCNY Conference

Bishop Daniel Wandabula, resident bishop of the East Africa Episcopal Area, brought greetings to the North Central New York Conference of The United Methodist Church on Thursday morning.

Bishop Wandabula, present to celebrate the ordination of his sister, Patience Deborah Kisakye, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share with members of Annual Conference and for knowing Bishop Marcus Matthews.

Bishop Wandabula noted that as people of God we are the agents of change and in order to be agents of change, the change needs to start within us. He expressed his appreciation for being able to serve as a bishop and to serve in this connectional church.

He noted that United Methodists are making a difference around the world. He requested that we try to work within the systems we have – the Bishop's office, Board of Global Ministries – to maintain accountability and transparently.

Bishop Wandabula wished NCNY good deliberations.

Rev. Daniel Wandabula serves as resident bishop for East Africa, which includes Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda.

He was elected, at the age of 41, on May 27, 2006 during a meeting of the denomination's Africa Central Conference on the Africa University campus in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Delegates were quick and decisive, giving Wandabula 81 percent of the vote on the second ballot.

Bishop Daniel Wandabula replaces the late Bishop J. Alfred Ndoricimpa.

Wandabula was consecrated May 28 at the Elnes Memorial Church at the Old Mutare UMC Mission Center. He and his wife, Betty, married in January 2005.

He was ordained an elder in The United Methodist Church in 1994 and studied for a Beeson International Leaders Doctor of Ministry degree with Asbury Theological Seminary. He earned both his master of divinity degree (1997) and master of theological studies degree (1998) from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary



in Evanston, Ill., and holds a diploma in practical theology from the Methodist Training Institute at Kenya Methodist University.

Before going to the United States for graduate studies, Wandabula served as administrative secretary to the Methodist Church in Uganda from 1991 to 1994 and as project manager for the Methodist Youth Association in Jinja, Uganda, from 1986 to 1988.

Love offering to meet needs throughout the world

A LOVE Offering at the 2009 gathering of United Methodists in North Central New York will be divided locally, nationally and globally.

The offering came during the opening worship of the 201st session of Annual Conference on Thursday morning and totaled \$12,326.90

United Methodists from throughout North Central New York are gathered to worship, celebrate their history, ordain elders, and make decisions around program initiatives and their ministry May 28-30 in Liverpool, New York.

Locally one third of the offering will be equally divided to assist the ministries of the Syracuse Westside Urban Mission and the Utica Eastside Mission. SWUM continues to reach out with the hope of Jesus Christ to the people of the neighborhood around the Brown Memorial UMC in Syracuse.

As a new project last year, the Utica Eastside Mission has grown in its ability to reach out to the fast growing refugee population around the Asbury UMC in

Utica. Through this portion of the LOVE Offering people in inner-city Syracuse and Utica will be blessed by the ministries of these missions.

Nationally one third of the offering will be equally divided to support the national UMCOR warehouse at Sager Brown in Louisiana and Mission Central, the regional warehouse in Mechanicsburg, PA. For several years United Methodists in North Central New York have collected and shipped flood buckets, all the various types of kits and school bags to needed areas in this country and around the world. This portion of the LOVE Offering will help to keep these UMCOR relief supplies flowing to those in need.

Globally one third of the offering will go, in connection with the offering of the Wyoming Annual Conference, to strengthen their partnership with Haiti. This year they are hoping to raise over \$40,000. This portion of North Central's LOVE Offering will assist them to support a clean water project and continue work on the

parsonage/VIM guest house in the village of Hermitage. They hope to provide ongoing funding for a very successful micro-credit program established in 2005 and establish a hot lunch program at the school.

Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton, resident bishop of the Michigan Area of The United Methodist Church, will speak and lead a Bible study during this Annual Conference. He will bring the message during the Memorial Communion Service in addition to leading a Bible Study on Friday morning.

A service of Ordination and Commissioning was held in Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University at 7:00 p.m., May 28. Ordained were the Reverends Patience Kisakye, Rebecca Laird, and Diane Walker. Commissioned for ministry was Patricia Lee Walz.

They were honored at dinner on Tuesday, May 26 in North Syracuse.

Also honored at that dinner were retiring clergy: Michael Comer, Allan Ferguson, Patrick Holder, Wesley Jenks, Elizabeth Mowry, Mary Olson, Dora Schneider, and Marcia Wickert.

