Keeping in Touch
A Magazine for United Alumni/ae

Spirit Led, Renewing the Church!
United Theological Seminary • 4501 Denlinger Road • Dayton, Ohio 45426
United in a Global Church
Letter from the President

Dear alumni/ae and friends,

I am grateful for every one of the many times you express prayerful appreciation for the work and mission of United. I share your gratitude for this great school.

However, I want to turn this appreciation right back on you and God. This is because you are United. The United community extends as far as its students, alumni/ae and friends in both time and place, from Dayton, Ohio, in the USA, to Vietnam in Southeast Asia, to Sierra Leone and other countries in Africa and beyond.

The God who called this school into being in Dayton in 1871 through the work of the Holy Spirit and faithful believers is still the Great Creator, Mover and Shaker in our midst. We are grateful for the privilege of serving in the various capacities and places to which God is still calling United, its students, graduates, faculty and staff!

Not surprisingly for a Spirit-led organization, you will find United doing some of the same, but also some new things. United is in traditional, but also new places. In the pages that follow, we will introduce you to some of the ways the United community is learning from and expanding its outreach in the global Church, both here in Ohio and to the ends of the earth.

Thank you again for your prayerful support and for your participation in United’s God-given mission: to recruit and educate faithful leaders for the mission of Jesus Christ in the world!

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Wendy J. Deichmann, President
Oct. 15 – 16
Heck Lectures 2013
Tuesday, Oct. 15
Noon – 4 p.m. | Decade Reunion Events: Classes of '43, '53, '63, '73, '83, '93 and '03
Cost: $12
6 p.m. | Alumni/ae Banquet: Class of '73 to be inducted into the Eckels Society; Effective Ministry, Outstanding D.Min. Alumnus/a, and Distinguished Alumnus/a awards to be given.
For more details and registration visit www.united.edu

Wednesday, Oct. 16
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Lecturer: Rev. Kenda Creasy Dean, Ph.D., is an ordained United Methodist pastor in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference and Professor of Youth, Church and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary, where she works closely with the Institute for Youth Ministry. She is a graduate of Miami University (Ohio) and Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC.

LECTURE 1 | In Search of a Younger Church: Ministry After the National Study of Youth and Religion
LECTURE 2 | Rethinking Theological Education for a Younger Church: How Teenagers and the Makers of Prozac Are Changing the Christian Leadership Formation
PANEL DISCUSSION

Nomination Form for 2013 Alumni/ae Awards
Submit information online at: www.united.edu under the Alumni/ae section or mail this form to: United Theological Seminary, Rev. Brice Thomas ’04, Director of Alumni/ae Relations and Development, 4501 Denlinger Road, Dayton, OH 45426.

FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2013

Your Name: ___________________________ Your Phone: (_________) Your E-mail: ___________________________

Name of Nominee: ___________________________

Select one award for recognition:

☐ Effective Ministry Award: Nominee has developed outstanding (new or unique) ministries, is engaged in a particular local expression of ministry and witness, and serves in challenging areas of ministry defined by characteristics such as geographic region, cross-cultural appointments, etc.

☐ Outstanding D.Min. Alumnus/a: Nominee has developed an outstanding program or ministry outreach as a result of effective work in United’s Doctor of Ministry program.

☐ Distinguished Alumnus/a: Nominee has obtained denominational, ecumenical, or professional distinction

Reason Nominee’s Ministry Merits Recognition (please include websites or literature explaining nominee’s accomplishments):

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**Class of 1959**

Rev. James Allen, Joliet, IL, a retired UMC pastor, is serving as President of the Community Service Council of Joliet.

**Class of 1963**

Dr. Vernon K. Robbins, Decatur, GA, is currently teaching a class to undergraduates at Emory University on healing and early Christianity to help them understand the links between faith and healing. The students, mostly pre-med, have responded to the class positively and are learning more about how faith and healing work together for patients.

**Class of 1965**

Rev. David H. Brice, Appleton, WI, had a great trip Down Under with his brother and sister-in-law as part of their 50th wedding anniversary. The trip was a three-week long cruise with side trips.

**Class of 1968**

Rev. Guy Camp, Greencastle, PA, is serving as President of the Greencastle Kiwanis Club.

**Class of 1972**

Rev. Lowell L. Peters, Oak Harbor, OH, retired in May 2012 from Trinity UCC in Elliston, OH, where he served for 13 years.

**Class of 1959**

Rev. Joseph Easley, Evansville, IN, retired July 1, 2012, after 40 years and six appointments. He is traveling in his retirement and volunteering in community development and campus ministry.

**Class of 1975**

Rev. Dr. Jamie Potter Alvarez, Somerset, PA, reports that while spending the winter in Celaya, GTO, Mexico, she and her husband discovered a Methodist Church where they worshiped and assisted the local pastor. The church where her husband is a member (Grace UMC) has adopted the Celaya church in a sister relationship and is offering a great deal of support, financial and other, to enrich their ministry. The Bishop of that area has asked her to assist by preaching in two new church starts of English-speaking congregations in two nearby towns.

**Class of 1976**

Dr. Joe Bottorff, Greenwood, IN, retired in June 2012 from Smith Valley UMC in Greenwood.

Rev. Dr. Donald L. Russell, Mercer, PA, went to New York in April to help rebuild after Sandy.

**Class of 1983**

Rev. James Truelove, Richmond, IN, is retired but is still pastoring a two-point charge.

**Class of 1984**

Rev. Dr. C. Franklin Brookhart, Helena, MT, was consecrated a Bishop in the Episcopal Church in 2003 and currently serves the diocese of Montana.

**Class of 1989**

Dr. Douglas S. Widdowson, New Lexington, OH, serving as Pastor of New Lexington Calvary UMC and New Lexington First UMC.

**Class of 1991**

Dr. Michael S. Donahou, West Bend, WI, earned his Ph.D. From Marquette University in Wisconsin, and he currently teaches religious studies at Cardinal Stritch University.

**Class of 1992**

Rev. Michael C.R. Nabors, Kalamazoo, MI, was appointed Gateway Community Health’s Board Chairman. The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Fellow has served as senior pastor of Detroit’s New Calvary Baptist Church since 1997, as well as more than 25 religious and community leadership boards in Michigan and New Jersey including the Board of the Detroit Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and former president of the Trenton, New Jersey and Princeton, New Jersey chapters of the NAACP.

**Class of 1993**

Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan Jr., Greensburg, PA, was the baccalaureate speaker at Bethany College in Bethany, WV, on May 17, 2013. Rev. Dr. Sullivan received an honorary doctorate during Bethany College’s Commencement on May 18, 2013.
Class of 1995

Rev. Mark Shover, Waynesboro, PA, is currently serving his sixth year at Faith UMC in Waynesboro. He and Heidi have two girls, who are in college.

Class of 1996

Rev. Toussaint K. Hill, Atlanta, GA, is pastoring and an adjunct in Homiletics at Interdenominational Theological Seminary in Georgia.

Rev. Dr. Aaron L. Dobynes, Shreveport, LA, is pastoring at Shreveport. He pastored in Selma, AL, and was mentored by Samuel Proctor.

Rev. Dr. Ozzie Smith, Flossmoor, IL, is an adjunct professor and a D.Min. adviser at McCormick Seminary and pastors a church he started 16 years ago.

Class of 1999

Rev. Dr. Macie O. Tillman, Baltimore, MD, is retired but is serving as the Director of Prison Ministry for the United Baptist Church of Maryland.

Rev. Karen E. (Helton) Johnson, Springboro, OH, is now Pastor at Dorothy Lane American Baptist Church in Kettering, OH.

Class of 2000

Rev. Dr. Teresa Snorton, Birmingham, AL, was appointed Bishop of the Fifth Episcopal District of the CME Church on March 15, 2011. She was originally appointed Bishop of the 11th District in 2010 becoming the first woman appointed as a Bishop in the CME Church.

Class of 2004

Rev. Stephen Russell, Owings Mills, MD, was inducted into the Edinboro University Athletic Hall of Fame on Saturday, April 27, 2013, for his football performance at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania.

Class of 2008

Rev. Michael Dawes, Loysburg, PA, was reappointed in 2012 to the Northern Bedford County Charge in Loysburg.

Rev. Dr. Cartha McDowell, Hazel Crest, IL, is serving as an Assistant Pastoral Care Counselor and is an Associate Minister at Calvary Baptist of Glenwood. She established a ministry called “Called to Care” with her family.

Class of 2009

Dr. Johnny M. Wilson, Springfield, MA, was honored at the First Baptist Church in America in Providence, RI, in April 2013 for his 30 years since his ordination anniversary. It was 30 years ago that Chaplain Wilson completed Chaplain School at Newport, RI, and entered active duty. Pastor Wilson is Senior Pastor at Olney Street Baptist in Providence, RI.

Class of 2010

Rev. Dr. Gregory V. Baker, Norcross, GA, reports that his church in the Atlanta suburbs is continuing its rapid growth, and leads churches in the state in its denomination with the ratio of its congregation that is baptized.

Rev. Dr. Jocelyn M. Roper, Loveland, OH, was appointed Director of Diversity Initiatives in the West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church, effective July 1, 2013. As a part of the conference Connectional Ministries team, Dr. Roper will be responsible for key diversity initiatives, as well as new and continued growth of new multicultural communities in the conference.

Class of 2012

Rev. AfI M. Dobbins, Madison, WI, is currently serving as pastor for two churches, Marshall United Methodist and Fall River United Methodist.

Rev. Jamie Slone, Salyersville, KY, has become a Chaplain at Signature Health Care, while remaining the pastor at Prater UMC.
Mrs. Mildred Barth, who died on October 16, 2012. She was the wife of Dr. George Barth ’39, who died on July 8, 2003. Online condolences can be left at www.thegroffs.com.


Mrs. Shirley Bias, who died on November 9, 2012. She was the mother of Rev. Tim Bias ’92. Condolences may be sent to Tim and Kim Bias at 2928 Alpine Terrace, Cincinnati, OH 45208.

Mrs. Deborah Phillips, who died on November 11, 2012. She was the wife of Rev. Dr. George Phillips ’73. Condolences may be sent to George at 739 Sonya Court, Monroe, OH 45050.


Mr. Obie Nicollini, who designed multiple items for United, such as the pedestal used during Wednesday Chapel, died on November 19, 2012. Online condolences for the family may be sent via www.bakerhazelsnider.com.

Rev. Herbert Landis ’67, who died on November 24, 2012. Online condolences for the family may be sent via www.meaningfulfunerals.net.

Rev. Leon Mindt ’68, who died on December 8, 2012. He was the father of Rev. Dr. Aryls Fogt ’07. Condolences may be sent to Rev. Dr. Fogt at 6 Golden Eagle Court, Piqua, OH 45356.


Mrs. Dorothy Jacobs, who died on January 11, 2013. She was the wife of Rev. George Jacobs ’45. Condolences can be sent to the Rev. and Mrs. Jack (and Carolyn) Hartman, 2506 Clallam Court, West Lafayette, IN 47906.

Barbara Jean (Wolfskill) Bahrt, mother of Rev. Steven C. Bahrt ’99, died on January 13, 2013. Condolences can be sent to the Rev. and Mrs. Steven Bahrt (Pamela) Bahrt, 1910 Stacey Lane, Kendallville, IN 46755.

Mrs. Kay Parent, who died on January 14, 2013. She was the wife of Rev. John Parent ’97. Condolences may be sent to John Parent at 3313 Waltham Ave, Dayton, OH 45429 or at kjparent@hotmail.com.


Rev. Gene Risch ’65, who died on January 28, 2013. Condolences may be sent to his wife, Gladys, at 114 Lampfliter Village, Clarkdale AZ 86324.

Dr. John G. Swank ’57, who died on February 3, 2013. Condolences may be sent to Rev. Swank’s family at 3311 Whalen Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46227.

Rev. Earl Goodwin ’54, who died on February 10, 2013. To express a condolence or share a memory with the Goodwin family, please visit www.dilleylasater.com.

Mrs. Myrtie L. Walker, mother of Dr. Robert Walker ’95, died on February 18, 2013. Condolences may be sent to Dr. Walker at 4516 College View Drive, Dayton, OH 45417 or at r.charleswalker@gmail.com.

Mrs. L. Louise Doyle, who died on February 21, 2013. She was the wife of Willard Doyle ’45, who died in December 1984. Condolences can be sent to the Rev. and Mrs. John C. (and Ruth) Doyle, 500 Washington Avenue, Evansville, IN 47713-1529.

Mr. J. Richard Shapland ’55, who died on February 25, 2013. Condolences may be sent to Dorothy and David Shapland, 910 Fourteenth Avenue, Holdrege, NE 68949.

Mr. Tor Jansen, father of Rev. Ted Jansen ’86, died on March 7, 2013. Condolences can be sent to the Rev. and Mrs. Ted (and Sue) Jansen, 1203 E. 7th St., Auburn, IN 46706.

Mr. Lyle Rasmussen, father of Rev. Stephen Rasmussen ’79, and Rev. Timothy Rasmussen ’80, and a retired Elder of the Indiana Conference, died on March 13, 2013. Condolences can be sent to Mary Ann Rasmussen, 10 Cindy Kay Drive, Washington, IN 47501, the Rev. and Mrs. Tom (and Serena) Rasmussen, 10190 North College Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46280, the Rev. and Mrs. Steve (and Becky) Rasmussen, 8647 Driftwood Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46240 and the Rev. and Mrs. Dan (and Julie) Rasmussen, 7619 Shasta Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46217.

Rev. Don Bumgarner ’47, who died on March 15, 2013. Online condolences may be left at www.brashearsfuneralhome.net.

Ms. Ingrid McFarland, who died on March 15, 2013. Ingrid worked at United from the early ‘80’s through the mid-90’s, in the business office, managed financial aid, and provided administrative support for the MARC program prior to leaving United.

Rev. Dr. Charles Peckham Sr. ’54, ’62, who died on March 28, 2013. Dr. Peckham’s wife, Arline Peckham, died on August 29, 2012. Condolences may be sent to their daughter, Elizabeth Stearns, at 457 Fox Run Place, Monroe, OH 45050.

Chaplain Carl Huffman Zigler ’72, who died on April 7, 2013.

Mrs. Jane Colaw, wife of Bishop Emerson Colaw, died on April 16, 2013. Condolences may be sent to Bishop Colaw at Twin Lakes: 9840 Montgomery Rd. #2224, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

Rev. Josiah H. Werner ’59, who died on April 27, 2013. Memorial contributions can be sent to Cornwall Manor or Covenant UMC. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mrs. Beatrice Werner at her home address: P.O. Box 125, Cornwall, PA 17016.

James “Richard” Neikirk ’08, who died on May 4, 2013. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.mccolaughfuneralhome.com.

Mrs. Beverly Ann Coahran, who died on May 15, 2013. She was the wife of Rev. J. Alan Coahran ’62, who died on December 12, 2011. To leave a condolence message for the family, please visit www.newcomerindiana.com.
Martha “Marti” Anderson – Registrar
May 9, 1948 – March 27, 2013

On March 27, 2013, United lost one of its own beloved employees, Martha “Marti” Anderson, the Registrar. Marti was a longtime member of the United community, joining United in 1988. She is survived by her siblings, Carolyn Anderson of New Orleans, LA, Rick Anderson and his wife Xiaoshi (Joy) Bi of Fairfax, VA, and many friends. In addition to a brief service for the United community on March 27, United also held a celebration of Marti’s life on April 10, with a tree planting ceremony. The tree selected for Marti’s memory was a Norway Spruce, with the choice of an evergreen tree in honor of Marti’s love of Christmas and of the beauty of winter. It was placed near the Red Maple that was planted in memory of Edna Ebersole in respect for the close friendship they shared for many years.

Do you have a favorite funny story about seminary, picture or memory you’d like to see in the next issue of Keeping in Touch?

E-mail it to alklosterman@united.edu for publication!

United Bookstore
Open for Business

On Wednesday, July 10, United Theological Seminary opened and dedicated the United Bookstore, a new venture offering books, fair trade items, United brand merchandise and in the near future, refreshments.

With the closing of the Cokesbury brick and mortar store at United in April, United is transforming the former Cokesbury space into its own shop, offering physical and virtual shopping opportunities designed to serve the needs of the United community and beyond.

While the store’s online shopping site is not yet up, Ms. Helen Riley, United Bookstore Coordinator and United Bookstore associates can order books for students.

Find more details on United’s website www.united.edu or contact Ms. Riley at hriley@united.edu 937.529.2399.
In 2007, Rev. Carrie Jena ’09, a pastor at First United Methodist Church in Middletown, OH, started a new worship service, The Gathering, as a place to welcome those who were trying to get their lives back on track. What started as a third worship service now serves people from Middletown’s two homeless shelters and from its low-income housing.

“We put a pot of coffee on and got a band together and said, ‘Come as you are,’” Jena said. “We opened the doors one night to the fellowship hall and really didn’t do a lot of planning. We kind of wanted to see what was going to happen. The goal was just to bring people in, feed them. If they hear something about Jesus while they’re here, that’s great. There wasn’t a lot of structure to it.”

A few years later in 2009, Jena was appointed as pastor of The Gathering, and in 2010, The Gathering moved out of the church to downtown Middletown between the city’s two homeless shelters. After almost a year and a half, it was time for The Gathering to move again.

“God began to send people from all over, people from a multitude of different neighborhoods who really had a heart to serve in a missional environment,” Jena said. “He began sending people who were able to lead, and I think He was preparing us to structure ourselves as a new church. And that’s exactly what happened.”

On Easter Sunday 2012, The Gathering was chartered as a United Methodist Church, and that very same Sunday, it moved to its current building in Middletown. “The one thing we hear people say is ‘We’re accepted here,’” said Jena. “I tell them, ‘We accept you, but God doesn’t want to leave you where you are, he’s going to grow you, too.’ So it’s also about discipleship.”

While a student at United, Jena’s concentration was in church renewal, something that she said she has been able to use with her work with The Gathering.

“I was able to really use much of what I learned through classes at United, particularly my church leadership class,” she said, noting a class she took with Rev. Mike Slaughter that was helpful. “And just having that focus of the work of the Spirit in the Church has been very important for us because we really feel Spirit-led.”

The Gathering’s average attendance is approximately 125, and it provides a multitude of small groups and support groups that meet throughout the week: Multiple 12-step recovery groups, a women’s abuse survivors group, two Bible studies, a men’s book study group, a women’s anger management class, a celebrate recovery class, a community garden with garden work parties, block parties, a talent night, a game night and a weekend marriage support group.

“One of the things we try to do is provide something all through the week for people who are really trying to get their lives back on track,” Jena said. “We want to create a place that is full of people who are pursuing recovery and who are trying to live and stay on track.”

For more information about The Gathering, visit umgathering.org.
On Dec. 1, 2012, Rev. Dr. Jessica J. Davis ’05, of New Brunswick, NJ, was elected President of the Faith and Public Policy Institute Inc., a charitable, religious and educational nonprofit organization located in Princeton, NJ.

Dr. Davis is the former Dean of Students and Assistant Professor of Ethics and Public Policy at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. She is a member of the American Academy of Religion and a member of Turning Point United Methodist Church in Trenton, NJ. She is also a member of the Covenant Ecumenical Fellowship and Cathedral Assemblies Inc. in Perth Amboy, NJ.

Dr. Davis earned a Doctor of Ministry from United, with a focus on social justice in Appalachian communities. She earned a Doctor of Law from Boston University School of Law, after receiving a Master of Divinity in philosophical theology and social ethics from the School of Theology at Boston University. She is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Southern Illinois University Carbondale with a dissertation focus on diversity strategic planning of ATS accredited mainstream Protestant theological schools.

The mission of the Faith and Public Policy Institute is to educate the faith community on domestic and foreign policy.

Pohly Center Returns to Australia

Roger and Marilyn Evans, Co-Directors of the Kenneth H. Pohly Center for Supervision and Leadership Formation, returned to Australia in January 2013 to lead two week-long workshops on Covenantal Supervision for the Uniting Church of Western Australia. Seminary professors, judicatory leaders, chaplains and pastors from several states traveled to Perth to hone their ministry skills in supervision. Participants learned the signature process for supervisory conversations developed at United Theological Seminary. A Pohly Supervision Certification program in Western Australia was established in 2012 as a partnership between the Pohly Center and Perth Theological Hall.
Trip to Southeast Asia Heightens Understanding

United students Joseph and Allyssa Graves stand with a guard at the Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand.

United student Ma Linh Koyon poses with Bishop Bruce Ough, former Bishop of the West Ohio Conference UMC.
By Dr. David Watson

Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Associate Professor of New Testament

In January of this year I had the privilege to travel with five United students and my son, Luke, to Thailand and Vietnam. The experience was nothing short of amazing.

Bangkok was our first stop. Nothing I can write here can adequately capture the experience of this complex and ancient city. Boiling over with activity day and night, Bangkok offers a constant barrage of sights, sounds and smells. The tropical air is thick and hot, with an unhealthy dose of pollution from the millions of cars, motorbikes and “tuk-tuks” (three-wheeled motorcycles with a place for passengers in the back and a cloth roof to provide shade). The Buddhist temples are awe-inspiring. You can read about Buddhism and learn about it as an outsider, but to walk through the temples, sit beside its adherents and observe their practices, hear the chants of monks and the bells and gongs rung by devotees conveys a deep sense of cultural and religious difference that one must acknowledge before real learning can begin.

Our last three days in Thailand were spent with a team from the West Ohio Conference and its former Bishop, Bruce Ough. We met up with a group of pastors from Vietnam who were seeking elder’s orders in the United Methodist Church. We spent an entire day interviewing candidates, which was only possible because of the remarkable skill of two translators, who must have been exhausted by the end of the process. To hear the stories and testimonies of these faithful pastors was a great privilege and an exercise in humility. Their sacrifices for Christ have been monumental. The next day, though, we worshipped together and the bishop laid hands on 12 new missional elders of The United Methodist Church. It was a time for celebration.

Next we flew to Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. While crowded and bustling, it is a much more orderly place than Bangkok. Elegant and beautiful, it combines Asian and European (particularly French) sensibilities. While there, we visited the United Methodist Center, met again with a number of the pastors we had seen in Thailand, and learned a great deal about the fragile relationship between various churches and the communist government of Vietnam.

We traveled by bus into the Mekong Delta and stayed in the city of Cantho, a much smaller city over which a giant statue of Ho Chi Minh stands vigil. People rely upon the Mekong River for fish, irrigation, travel and commerce in this beautiful agrarian area. There are floating markets in which vendors in boats will latch onto other boats to conduct business. At night, it seems the whole city comes out to sit in the area around the river under the watchful gaze of Ho Chi Minh. They sit and talk, smoke, eat food purchased from street vendors and generally enjoy life.

On the way back to Ho Chi Minh City we stopped by a shop run by United Methodist ministers who sell wooden products made by people with disabilities, with the profits going to fund a ministry for people with disabilities. Two pastors and their family run the disability ministry, which by Western standards is a bare-bones operation. The people with disabilities who work there live there as well, sleeping in wooden beds without mattresses and working in a corrugated steel building with fans but no air conditioning. We left there prayerful for the saints of the church who oversee and work in this ministry, as well as for the people with disabilities with whom they minister.

By the time it was over, each of us was ready to head home, but we were all changed by the experience. Thailand and Vietnam are remarkable places with long histories and rich cultures. Each of us who went returned with a heightened understanding of the Church in its global context, and, I hope, a longing to learn more.
Sierra Leone: Warm Welcome to a Beautiful Country

By Ms. Maria Bellini and Dr. Peter Bellini

Editor’s Note: The Bellinis were part of a United group invited to Sierra Leone’s Annual Conference by Bishop John Yambasu. The group also included Rev. Stephen Crowell and Dr. Wendy Deichmann, who spoke at the conference session. The theme was “Keeping the Dream Alive.” For more information about United’s historical connection with Sierra Leone, please visit www.united.edu in the About section under the President’s Messages.

When we visited Sierra Leone in March, we were overwhelmed to arrive on the coast from which thousands once left in chains and tears, some never to return.

Historically, the West has not been kind to Sierra Leone, which was at the heart of the West African triangular slave trade. Bunce Island, Sierra Leone, was the main West African holding station of slaves for the slave trade. The vast majority of slaves coming to the colonies would come from this port, including the descendants of Gullah people today, who live on the islands and mainland of the Carolinas and Georgia. The capital city of Freetown was founded in 1792 by John Clarkson, an abolitionist, as a land for freed African American slaves from the British colonies in the West Indies. Thousands would return to their homeland through the Sierra Leone Company over the next few decades.

As United Brethren missionaries from Ohio once left for these golden shores over 140 years ago, so did our group. We were warmly welcomed on these brilliant blue shores to a land rich, not only in diamonds and gold, but even more so in kindness, hospitality, warmth, wisdom and inviting smiles. The pristine and flourishing color of Africa’s Eden is still there, ready to be rediscovered. Yet it can only be done with a humble heart.

The trace of sorrow is very visible in this place. The culture, tradition and soul of beautiful and precious human beings were nearly stolen amidst a history of colonization, war and poverty. Still, all of that is not lost. We embraced and were embraced by brotherhood and sisterhood as of a distant family and beheld what could never be subdued. I saw the will to live and the will to eternal life especially in the eyes of a beautiful, young United Methodist woman who touched us deeply.

Her name is Joycee Pormai. She is 21 years old and comes from a family of six – parents, two sisters and a brother. Joycee lives with classmates; her sisters live at a boarding school; her brother and father live together and her mother lives alone. We did not want to be intrusive and inquire, but our guess was that this arrangement was made for economic reasons. Most Sierra Leoneans live on less than a dollar a day, and even white collar workers make less than $300 a year. The Pormai family is rich in faith and is a deeply committed Christian household. It did not take us long to see this depth in their prayers, words, testimony and actions. Joycee and Maria prayed together and talked often about Jesus and her call to serve Him.

Joycee is studying in Freetown to become a nurse and wants to be an expert in understanding malaria in order to help her people. Every morning, she walks two miles to the school after fetching water for her roommates and sweeping her dirt floor with little more in her stomach than a small cup-full of rice. At school she has no lunch. An A student, she studies hard and takes extensive notes because she cannot afford to buy books. After school, she walks two miles home where another small cup of rice awaits her. She then continues to study until midnight, then goes to sleep on a hard floor, fearful of being bit and catching malaria. We hope to welcome Joycee into our home next year so she can continue her education at a university in the States.

Although we were in Africa for just a short time, we had a wonderful taste of its beauty, color, aroma, its land, its rich culture and tradition, like no place we have ever been. Our visit, we hope, will not be our last. We have heard a call from which we cannot turn away. We are excited that United will be welcoming new students from Sierra Leone in the near future. This is a needed investment and a wonderful opportunity for students to eventually return to their own country to further the Kingdom.

We are not sure what God has planned, but we know it will be a new thing and a good thing.
In early 2013, United launched its Hispanic Christian Academy (HCA) with more than 20 students – a three-year online program offering ministry certification in Spanish.

“This is part of our community,” United President Wendy Deichmann said. “I’m proud of United for having taken the lead on it. We are here to serve the church, and if the church is Spanish speaking, we have to find a way to serve it.”

HCA, under the leadership of Dr. Peter Bellini, Director of Non-Degree Programs, offers a basic theological course of study in Spanish for Hispanic laity and clergy. The courses are offered in an online format, which allows students to attend class wherever there is Internet access while remaining in their own location to practice ministry.

United launched the new Academy in February in partnership with Global Empowerment Ministries (GEM), a Kentucky-based Hispanic ministry organization led by United alumnus Dr. Iosmar Alvarez ’11. GEM will provide resources for the new program by making student referrals, assisting with fundraising and translating course materials.

“The work in Kentucky is just a first step,” said Dr. Bellini, who spent 2012 working on the project. “We plan to establish partnerships with four other campuses by the end of the year to offer the Academy nationally.”

Recently, United also partnered with the Northwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, and in the fall, students will be enrolling for this program from both conferences. United also recently hired a coordinator of the HCA, Erin Gildner, who began June 1. Ms. Gildner has experience in Spanish language education, as well as in administration and ministry coordination.

HCA’s goal is to impact the local church through equipping and training leaders to serve as local pastors, associate pastors, church planters, evangelists, missioners and other roles of ministry.

“This is such an important ministry, and I think by working together we will take things even to a next step. Only God can imagine and envision truly the impact this will have in the life of the church,” President Deichmann said.
Since United moved to its current location in 2005, it has partnered with the city of Trotwood and the local YMCA to operate the outdoor pool on its property for the benefit of the Trotwood community.

“We love having our outdoor pool packed with kids in the summer,” United President Wendy Deichmann said. “This is one way United can contribute to the wellbeing of the surrounding community—especially the children.”

While United provides the pool, the city of Trotwood currently pays the YMCA $40,000 annually to manage and operate the pool.

“The pool benefits each entity, students and staff of United, YMCA patrons and Trotwood residents,” said Terry Lodge with the city of Trotwood Parks and Recreation Department, adding the role of the pool has expanded over the years: A site for the Youth Triathlon, part of the curriculum for the summer camp sponsored by all three agencies and part of the YMCA’s Health and Nutrition program.

“We couldn’t do this if United didn’t do their piece and the city didn’t do their piece,” said Gayle Horton with the YMCA. “We couldn’t do it, and they couldn’t operate it or manage it without us—United doesn’t have that skill set and the city doesn’t have that skill set, but we do.

The YMCA offers multiple day camps for approximately 500 children, with all of the children participating in swim lessons before the pool opens to the public. The children also participate in other fitness activities and do some gardening in what was formerly the children’s pool.

“Two years ago, we took out the bottom of it and left the drain open and made raised garden beds,” Horton said. “Five Rivers MetroParks comes out and they bring us a trailer every year and they donate mulch and dirt and manure and we fill the beds back up. The kids in our after-school programs before school’s out get it going and help us plant. They learn about nutrition and healthy eating and fruits and vegetables.”

To use the pool, which opened to the public this year in early June, visitors do not have to be a resident of Trotwood, patron of the YMCA or student or staff of United, but those patrons enjoy discounted memberships.

“This arrangement is unique,” Lodge said. “There is not one that I know of in the State of Ohio with this type of arrangement. While other cities are closing their pools due to finances, we have been able to keep this one open. It is also a very good marketing tool for United, the YMCA and the city. It shows a positive side to living in Trotwood.”
International Students: Fulfilling United’s Mission

This fall, United expects around a dozen new international students among its growing student body. United has always welcomed international students to its classrooms, but during the past 10 years or so the number had declined.

How can we fulfill our mission “to recruit and educate faithful leaders for the mission of Jesus Christ in the world without plenty of international students?” asked President Wendy Deichmann.

The rapid growth of The United Methodist Church beyond North America is a contributing factor. More than half of the new students are United Methodist candidates for ordained ministry from Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Korea and the Philippines) and Africa (Sierra Leone and Democratic Republic of Congo) where the church is growing rapidly and resources for United Methodist theological education are limited.

“Where the Church is growing most readily is exactly where the seminary’s resources are most needed,” President Deichmann commented. “Meanwhile, we American Christians have much to learn from our sisters and brothers who are working alongside the Holy Spirit to bring new life, hope, salvation and growth of the Christian community in remote and diverse cultures. I look forward to working with and learning from these colleagues, as well as to sharing the many resources we have been given with them.”

**HERE IS WHAT CURRENT AND RECENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE AT UNITED:**

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**Elizabeth Green: Canada**

Elizabeth Green serves as a priest in Canada and travels to United for the Doctor of Ministry intensives twice a year, and says it is a privilege for her to be at United.

“There are any number of seminaries, schools in North America that offer a Doctor of Ministry, including the Toronto School of Theology,” Green said, noting she chose United for her Doctor of Ministry because of her mentor, Tom Boomershine.

“As I conclude the first phase, I do so with a tremendous sense of gratitude and appreciation for Tom and for all the staff and faculty at United,” she said. “The care and support I have received continues to be superb. It is truly a blessing to be a part of United.”

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**Migwe Kimemia: Kenya**

Migwe Kimemia is a doctoral student who came from Kenya to study at United because of its affordability and its global ministry program. He advises other international students coming to study in the U.S. to make sure the seminary they choose offers a longer-term program.

“It’s not always easy to change, and therefore, they have to really make sure they have a program they can pursue at a masters and doctoral level in the same seminary,” he said. “United has been a package for me, I was blessed to have both masters and doctoral programs available at United. I didn’t have to move to another seminary, and I have been very happy with the seminary, and the staff, the faculty, everything is all inclusive. It’s a one-stop shop for me.”

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**Hye Sook Kim: South Korea**

Hye Sook Kim graduated in May 2013 with a Master of Divinity degree. She said she came to United because of a family friend, Dr. Andrew Park, Professor of Theology and Ethics.

“Dr. Park explained how great the school is and how comfortable it is to study here because of the online and hybrid classes, and now we have the FLEX also,” she said.

Kim said she feels blessed to have attended United.

“The most important thing I learned here was how to love and how to serve others more than I expected,” she said.

“I’ve met so many beautiful people and so many pastors. They showed me how to respect different people.”
**Faculty News**

**Dr. Lisa Hess**, Associate Professor of Practical Theology, was installed as Moderator of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley (PCUSA) at the presbytery meeting held at United Theological Seminary on Tuesday, May 14. This is an elected office of liturgical and ecclesial-council leadership for the next 12 months. There is no equivalent in UMC polity terms, but it has aspects of DS and Bishop leadership.

**Dr. Peter Bellini**, Assistant Professor in the Practice of Missiology in the Vera Blinn Chair, presented the paper “Missio Trinitatis, Theosis, and the Logoi of Culture” at Wesleyan Theological Society in Seattle in March. He also went to Vietnam and Sierra Leone to teach and recruit. He also spoke at the Annual Conference Evangelical Fellowship of West Ohio meeting during the West Ohio Annual Conference on June 11 at Lakeside.

**Dr. David Watson**, Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, spoke at the 2013 national meeting of the Association of United Methodist Ministers with Disabilities from July 10 to 12, 2013.

**Dr. Richard Eslinger**, Professor of Homiletics and Worship, won the Academy of Homiletics Lifetime Achievement Award on Nov. 17, 2012, in Chicago, IL. This is a significant honor, one that very few academicians in the field of homiletics ever receive, and past recipients of this award represent a very select group.

**New Faculty**

**Dr. Scott Kisker** will join the United faculty as Professor of the History of Christianity this fall. Dr. Kisker comes to United from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. Dr. Kisker is an elder in the Iowa Annual Conference, and he has served as Senior Pastor of Colesburg United Methodist Church in Colesburg, IA. Before coming to Wesley Theological Seminary, he served as the director of the Charles Wesley Heritage Centre in Bristol, United Kingdom, and as Associate Pastor for the American Protestant Church in Bonn, Germany. He has a BA from Swarthmore College, an M.Div. from The Divinity School at Duke University and a Ph.D. from Drew University.

**Dr. Joni Sancken** will join the United faculty as Assistant Professor of Homiletics in January. Dr. Sancken comes to United from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, VA. Dr. Sancken grew up at First Mennonite Church in Urbana, IL. She graduated with a Ph.D. in Homiletics from the Toronto School of Theology in 2009, earned an M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2004 and a B.A. from Goshen College in 1998. Dr. Sancken completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Practical Theology and Religious Practices at Emory University in May 2010 and was appointed as Director of Eastern Mennonite Seminary’s Preaching Institute.

**Staff News**

The following people have recently joined United’s staff: **Daina Levine** as Instructional Design and Media Specialist; **James C. Mallory** as United Bookstore Sales Associate; **Shannon G. Rose** as United Bookstore Sales Associate; **Karen Selker** as Coordinator of Student Recruitment; **Suggar Getter** as Student Billing Coordinator; **Gerald Young** as Student Recruiter; **Howard Roberts** as Student Recruiter; **Steven Kleiner** as Associate Registrar; **Helen Riley** as United Bookstore Coordinator; **Carol Duffield** as Coordinator for Course of Study; **Erin Gildner** as Coordinator of the Hispanic Christian Academy.

The following people have been promoted: **Tesia Mallory** to full-time as Worship Coordinator; **Jayne Corrigan** to Coordinator of Scholarships and International Enrollment; **Dan Gildner** to full-time status as Co-director of the Contextual Ministries Program.

**Michele Engling’s Design Wins Award**

United’s Graphic/Web Designer, **Michele Engling**, won a Gold level 2013 Print Excellence Award from the Printing Industries of Ohio – N. Kentucky for her design for United’s 2011 Christmas card.

**Phyllis Ennist Appointed as ATS-TTEG Chair**

United’s Assistant Dean for Distance Education, **Phyllis Ennist**, recently accepted an appointment by the Association of Theological Schools as chair of the Technology in Theological Education Group.

**Jean Brindel Completes Leadership Program**

United’s Director of Major Gifts, Rev. **Jean Brindel ‘76**, recently completed the Executive Leadership Program at The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.
Faculty Publications

Dr. Jason Vickers
Associate Professor of Theology and Wesleyan Studies


Dr. David Watson
Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Watson published Key United Methodist Beliefs with Dr. William Abraham, the Albert Cook Outler Professor of Wesley Studies at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX. (Abingdon Press, 2013).

Alumni/ae Publications

Rev. Ernie Bringas ’66
Rev. Ernie Bringas, Mesa, AZ, published JESUGATE: A History of Concealment Unraveled, which reveals the deception of people of faith by Christian leaders since the days of the earliest church.

Rt. Rev. Dr. C. Franklin Brookhart ’84
Rt. Rev. Dr. C. Franklin Brookhart, Helena, MT, published Living the Resurrection: Reflections After Easter, in October 2012 by Church Publishing Inc. and is available through Cokesbury. The book features a review on the back cover by United Professor Emeritus Dr. Kendall McCabe.

Rev. Bob Callender ’84

Rev. Dr. Leanne Hadley ’87

Rev. Dr. Janice Blackmon Smith ’07
Rev. Dr. Janice Blackmon Smith, Mobile, AL, published Awakening Sleeping Beauty: How Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse Can Reclaim Their Birthright of Wholeness, which is available at Amazon.com and at BarnesandNoble.com.

Rev. Dr. Leary E. Bonnett, D.Min. ’08
Rev. Dr. Leary E. Bonnett, Brooklyn, NY, published Even When Bad Things Happen, God is Good, which addresses the philosophical question: Why is there tribulation in the world if God is good? The book is published by Destiny Image, www.destinyimage.com.

To submit a publication, please visit www.united.edu and click on Alumni/ae. Select “News and Notes Form” from the left menu, fill out the form and submit it to United.
AUGUST 5 – 16
FLEX Weeks

AUGUST 7, 2013
Opening Convocation
11:30 a.m. at Precious Blood Catholic Church in Dayton, OH. Dr. Emma Justes is the featured speaker, bringing the address, “Unexpected Undercurrents: Secrets We Discover in Ministry.”

AUGUST 9, 2013
Celebration Concert
7 p.m. at Concord UMC, 1123 S. Main St., Englewood, OH. This concert will celebrate the winners of New Songs and Hymns for Renewal: A Competition, featuring the Jeremy Winston Chorale and winning entries of the competition.

AUGUST 13 – 15, 2013
Preaching Retreat: Preaching Biblical Narrative

SEPTEMBER 30 – AUGUST 4, 2013
Gathering Week

OCTOBER 15, 2013
Open House for Prospective Students
Beginning at 9 a.m., the Open House will include: Opening worship with President Wendy Deichmann, a student panel on the United experience, getting started at United, a faculty panel with breakout sessions, a campus tour, closing worship and a student mixer. For more information, contact admissions@united.edu.

OCTOBER 15 – 16, 2013
Alumni/ae Banquet and Heck Lectures
(See page 3 for details)

DECEMBER 6, 2013
Holy Spirit Seminar: Signs and Wonders

DECEMBER 20, 2013
Advent Commencement

D.Min. Intensive: Honoring Samuel DeWitt Proctor

Deborah’s Daughters: Women’s Ways of Leadership and Ministry
This conference will focus on the ways that women are and can be in leadership and ministry in every aspect of church life and is designed for both clergy and laity. For more information and to register, e-mail Dr. Felicia LaBoy for more information at fhlaboy@united.edu.
May 2013 Commencement

Three Spring Commencement graduates stand for a photo after the ceremony, held on May 25 at Precious Blood Catholic Church. There were 71 graduates at commencement, with 23 Masters students and 48 Doctor of Ministry students receiving their degrees. Bishop Peggy Johnson delivered the address.

Tennessee Annual Conference

Twelve attendees of United’s alumni/ae lunch on June 12 during the Tennessee Annual Conference stand with President Wendy Deichmann and Karen Payne, Senior Director of Enrollment Management.

United Students in Italy

There were 27 United students and faculty who traveled to Italy for an immersion trip from Dec. 31 to Jan. 9. Here, they pose in Pompeii.

Detroit Annual Conference

President Wendy Deichmann poses with 11 attendees of United's Detroit Annual Conference alumni/ae gathering at the WOW Restaurant in the Arrington Ice Arena in Adrian, MI, on May 18.
Keep In Touch with United

To submit any of the forms below, please do one of the following:
Visit www.united.edu and click Alumni/ae. Select “News and Notes” from the left menu, fill out the form and submit it to United.
Or mail to: United Theological Seminary, 4501 Denlinger Road, Dayton, OH 45426.

1. Update Your Contact Information
Please fill out the whole form if any of the information below has changed

Your Name:   Grad Year:
Address:
City:  State:  Zip:
Home Phone: (        )  Office Phone: (        )
E-mail:

2. Entry for News and Notes Section
Provide alumni/ae news to be included in the News and Notes Section of KIT.