

# Center for Health

## Newsletter

YOUR PATH TO WELL-BEING

July – September 2017

Volume 2 • Issue 3

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## My Doctor Said "Get Out!"

Research has long shown that sunlight can ease depression, especially seasonal affective disorder (SAD). New studies are expanding those findings to show that any activity outdoors, whether walking in a park or gardening in the backyard, improves mood, self-esteem and motivation.

Many health care researchers and practitioners say that ecotherapy\*, or nature-based healing, can have regenerative powers, improving mood and easing anxiety, stress and depression.

But that's not all. According to WebMD, health care providers are also giving their patients "nature prescriptions" to help treat a variety of medical conditions, from post-cancer fatigue to obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.

The point is: **Get outside—it's good for you!**

\* Ecotherapy is a term coined by pastoral counselor Howard Clinebell in his book *Ecotherapy*, 1996.

Sources: The University of Essex and WebMD



The Center for Health focuses on improving five dimensions of well-being—physical, emotional, spiritual, social and financial—for clergy and laity of The United Methodist Church (UMC) and their families. Among the Center for Health's offerings are well-being programs, an interactive website, trends and research, educational opportunities, and connections to the UMC Health Ministry Network (UMCHMN) and related resources.



### SPOTLIGHT

## Well-Being the Wesley Way

Through his sermons and writings, John Wesley advocated for a holistic approach toward spiritual and physical health, emphasizing vigorous exercise, fresh air and a healthy diet.

Wespath does not take this direction lightly. The Center for Health's well-being efforts apply Wesley's words into action. New projects focus on 'Well-Being the Wesley Way' with Deskercise videos, stretch breaks at meetings and educational events, and toolkits to help you combat diabetes, quit tobacco, lose weight and more! See the *Resources* section (page 4) for links to these helpful tools.

Wesley said...

“ It will be a double blessing if you give yourself up to the Great Physician, that He may heal soul and body together. ”



a general agency of The United Methodist Church

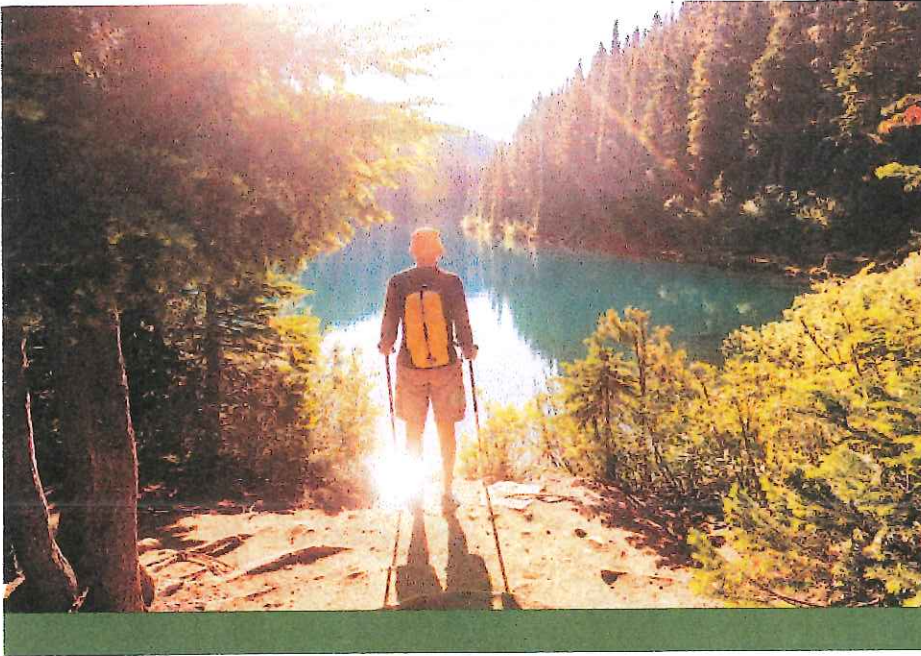




### ASK A PROFESSIONAL

**Rev. Dr. Shelly Brooks-Sanford**

Wellness Program and Outreach Manager, Center for Health



## Even Jesus Needed Time Away

A number of years ago, while serving as pastor of a local congregation, I came across a simple prayer in a preaching journal. This prayer struck me with its simplicity, truth and invitation to me as a leader in the Church: "Dear God, the Church is yours. I'm going to bed."

Whether you serve the Church as a pastor, lay staff, faithful member, volunteer, administrative leader or in some other capacity, you can benefit from such a reminder. The Church belongs to God, and was brought into being and is sustained through God's Holy Spirit. Although we play a critical role in the Church as disciples of Jesus Christ, there is grace, humility and peaceful rest in trusting the Church to God's keeping while we sleep, rest or even take a vacation.

I found this prayer to be quite helpful to my spiritual well-being as a leader in the Church. I even printed it, framed it and put it at my bedside! In my current work with the Center for Health, I offer a printed copy of this prayer to participants when I do a self-care workshop for clergy or other Church leaders.

I share this prayer with you in hopes that it may strengthen your own spiritual well-being. After a day of giving yourself in service to the Church, go to sleep in peace, trusting the Church and the results of your work to God's care. Be sure to take a regular day off, observe a Sabbath and take your vacation time to be renewed. The Church can go on without you for a while. Even Jesus needed time away!

**"Dear God, the Church is yours. I'm going to bed."**

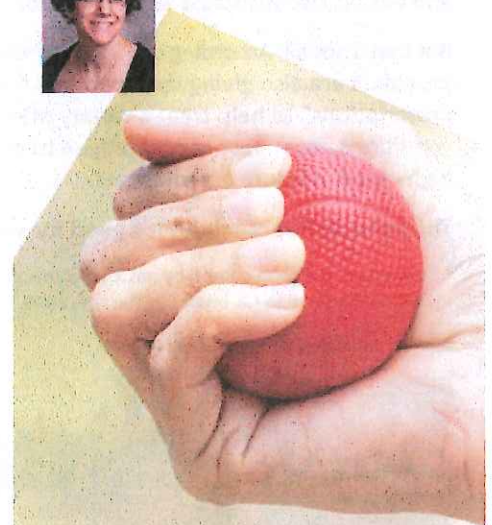
### PERSONAL SUCCESS STORY

## Gaining Tools to Handle Stress

I was dealing with some stress due to transitions at work and decided to reach out to talk to someone from the Live and Work Well [Employee Assistance Program (EAP)] program, since it was included in our HealthFlex plan coverage. The EAP person I spoke to (Richard) was amazing and gave me great resources to deal with the stress I was facing—giving me tools I had never thought of before. At the end of the call he also went over all the other benefits that we have through Live and Work Well that I didn't even know about.

**Michelle B.**

Clergy, Susquehanna Annual Conference



“The [EAP] person I spoke to gave me great resources to deal with the stress I was facing.”

**HealthFlex participants and dependents  
can call the EAP anytime at  
1-800-788-5614**

*Participation in HealthFlex well-being programs is voluntary.*