

# Briefly noted

News in the [October 16, 2007](#) issue

**New Jersey state officials** have revoked the tax-exempt status of a Methodist-run seaside pavilion that church officials have said is off-limits to gay and lesbian civil union services. Lisa P. Jackson, who heads the state's Department of Environmental Protection, withdrew the tax-exempt status for Green Acres because "it is clear that the pavilion is not open to all persons on an equal basis." Several lesbian couples were denied permission to hold civil union ceremonies in the boardwalk gazebo overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The Methodists call the open-sided structure a chapel and say civil unions conflict with Methodist doctrine.

**Recent renovations** to historic Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama—where four black girls were killed in a 1963 bombing—are nearing completion, said pastor Arthur Price. "The exterior is pretty much done. We're going around tidying up," Price said. An official open house and unveiling for the public will probably be held next year, said Carolyn McKinstry. As a 14-year-old girl, she survived the September 15, 1963, bomb that killed four other girls—her friends—as they prepared for Sunday services at the church. The campaign to renovate Sixteenth Street Baptist raised nearly \$3.7 million in pledges.

**Churches in Bulawayo**, Zimbabwe's second largest city, have begun to supply residents with water for domestic use, in an attempt to lessen the effects of shortages made worse by a struggle over control of the water supply. "As the water situation worsens, we have started placing water bowsers at our churches and also at such places as police stations and city council offices accessed by many people," said pastor Ray Motsi, the convenor of Churches in Bulawayo, an interdenominational group. The city authorities have imposed water-rationing measures that permit residents access to water for only a few hours every three days.