

# THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

Volume LIX

APRIL 2015

No. 3

## Endless Experiences Available At Camp

By Jeff Wolfe  
[jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

That list of activities to take place during camp this summer at the Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery isn't quite endless, but they may well lead youths to have an experience they want to never end.

Archery, hiking, canoeing, gaga ball, lake swimming, mud hiking, campfires, nature studies and fishing, are just a few of the things that campers can experience during four consecutive weeks of camp beginning July 12.

"All of our programs will give campers the opportunity to participate in a variety of age-appropriate camps activities," said GNJ Director of Camps Jestie Higgins. "We are always developing new activities." Higgins hopes one of those new activities will include accessing Lebanon State Forest and Brendan Byrne State Park, which each border the camp.

"My hope is that we can use our local setting a lot better now," she said. "We are right next to a state park and there are trails that literally border our property. We need to take advantage of the fact that we live in the Pine Barrens and all of the cool things that we can visit."

Higgins said there will be a lot of cool things for children and youth of all ages to do at camp. The youngest eligible to be at camp are those who complete first grade this school year, while the oldest are current seniors in high school.

No matter what the campers ages are, Higgins says her love of nature and how it relates to God always provides for teachable moments.

"I have my master's degree in Ecological Theology, so that is always important to me," she said of viewing nature as God's creation. "We want to teach the kids about the natural surroundings in a way that we can connect to God. It's not just what things are and that they are only in the Pinelands, but why they are important to the ecosystem. We want to teach them that it is not just important for us as people, but that as Christians we need to respect and care for our creation. That's always a really big component for me."

### Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery Summer Camp Schedule

#### JULY 12-15:

Taste of Camp: Grades 1-3

#### JULY 12-18:

Camp-A-Palooza: Grades 1-5

You Can't Do That at Camp!:  
Grades 6-8

Soul Survival Outpost: Grades 6-8

Leaders-In-Training: Grades 9-12

#### JULY 19-25:

Aldersgate Music Camp at

Pinelands: Grades 6-12

Ninos Para Cristo y Jovenes Para

Cristo: Grades 1-12

#### JULY 26-29:

Taste of Camp: Grades 1-3

#### JULY 26-AUG. 1:

Camp-A-Palooza: Grades 1-5

Pioneer Adventure Outpost:

Grades - 3-5

You Can't Do That at Camp!:

Grades 6-8

Veg n' Venture: Grades 9-12

#### AUG. 2-8:

Delaware Canoe: Grades 6-12

Email: [pinelands@gnjumc.org](mailto:pinelands@gnjumc.org)

And being a Christian camp, the spiritual component will also be emphasized in more intentional ways each day. After breakfast in the morning, there will be a morning meeting, which will include introducing the day's theme.

"That is the centering moment of the day," Higgins said. "We will go through one of our Bible passages and it allows us to start the day on the right foot and to think about the theme through all the rest of the activities that we do."

There will also be Bible studies split up by age groups during the day, and then another campfire wrap up with everyone in attendance at the end of the day.

"That is a time where we can sit and



GNJ Director of Camps Jestie Higgins (front) shares a fun moment with music campers last year. GNJ will have four weeks of camps at the Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery beginning July 12.

talk about what we learned for the day," she said. "It can be an inspirational thought or story or something that relates to scripture. I think it's important for us all to be together to learn our takeaways for the day and share a little bit about life."

The first and third weeks of camp, July 12-18 and July 26-Aug. 1, will have the same offerings. There will be a three day Taste of Camp for children who have completed grades 1-3. The full week offerings will be Camp-A-Palooza for grades 1-5; You Can't Do That At Camp for grades 6-8; Soul Survival Outpost for grades 6-8 and Leaders in Training in Week 1 and Veg n' Venture in Week 3 for grades 9-12.

The second week, July 19-25, will be the Aldersgate Music Camp at Pinelands for grades 6-12 and the Ninos Para Cristo y Jovenes Para Cristo for grades 1-12. The final week of Aug. 2-8 will be the Delaware Canoe camp for grades 6-12, which will include spending one day at Pinelands to learn how to canoe, then spending the rest of the week on the Delaware River in North Jersey on a

canoeing and camping excursion. All of the camps are overnight.

Each camp will finish with a Friday night worship service that will include communion served by clergy.

"That gives the kids a glimpse of the church that they think only happens away from camp," Higgins said. "I think it's important to bridge that gap and let them know that church can be a part of camp."

Higgins hopes, too, that the experience is so good that they all will want to be part of camp for years to come. That's one of the ideas behind the leadership in training program, where the high school aged groups will be trained to help lead younger ones at future camps.

"That program is going to be part of what we need as a church in general and what our young people need," she said. "It has the potential to be a really enriching experience, not only to do camp, but from the lens of learning how to lead."

Higgins said she is also looking for volunteers to help enrich the camp experience by helping with projects before

*Continued on page 9*

## Stop Hunger Now An Impact Event

By Jeff Wolfe  
[jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

At least one activity at Annual Conference will have an immediate and direct impact the world. Attendees of the May 28-30 conference will help pack 30,000 packets of food to help feed as many as 150,000 people in the world as a part of the Stop Hunger Now mission project.

"It's really something we can do that will feed a lot of people," said GNJ Lay Leader Rosa Williams. "It fits right into the call for us to help other people in need and to feed our neighbors."

This is the third year for a Stop Hunger Now project at annual conference.

"This year we hope we can get 300 or 400 people to help," Williams said.

The food packing will start immediately after the regularly scheduled conference business session on Friday to allow people to join an assembly-line style setup. That should leave plenty of time to reach the goal.

"We can set up more stations and then we can get more work done," Williams said. "Our goal is to have it done in about an hour and a half."



Stop Hunger Now was founded by a United Methodist pastor in Virginia in 1998 and the organization makes sure the food goes to people in need.

"Last year we sent it to Haiti," she said. "This year it will go to wherever the need is."

In 2015, Stop Hunger Now is expected to deliver 45 million meals and more than \$9 million in donated aid, mainly vitamins and medical supplies. The organization distributed meals through feeding programs run by partner organizations in developing countries that promote education, encourage children to attend school, improve students' health and nutrition, address gender inequalities, stimulate economic growth, fight child labor, and are part of the movement to address global issues.

Stop Hunger Now is based in Raleigh,



Packing food to help others can be fun, as shown here during last year's Stop Hunger Now event at Annual Conference.

N.C., and has meal-packaging programs at 19 cities in the U.S., South Africa, Malaysia, Italy and the Philippines.

### What's Inside...

UMCOR Celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Atlantic City. **Page 3**

Annual Conference Awards, Workshops. **Pages 4-5**

Phil Wickham coming to IGNITE. **Page 6**

Small churches capable of doing big things, too. **Page 8**

## GNJ Shares Good News On Finances

The 2014 year was a strong financial and ministry year for the conference. According to John Bishop, President of the Council of Finance and Administration, "there's only one way to view the latest financial results for the conference, and that's positively."

Apportionment collections rose from 78.7 percent in 2011 to 82.7 percent in 2014. We are also seeing increases in our billing collection. Our Clergy Pension Program collection rose from 88 percent in 2012 to 95 percent in 2014. Health insurance rose from 88 percent in to 98 percent. Property insurance rose from 90 percent to 96 percent

"I would say the financial situation is improving due to the increased stewardship in local churches," said Bishop, who has been President of the CCF&A since the fall of 2000. "We are improving and we are very grateful for that."

*Continued on page 9*

## A Message from the Bishop

### Mind, Yet, Next



In the next three issues of The Relay, I will be writing about three key words for our future as leaders, congregations and a conference. Sometimes a single word such as “mind, yet, or next” can speak volumes.

I have had the opportunity to travel on the Tube or Underground in London. If you have ever traveled on the Tube, you know that when the doors of the train open you will hear the announcer say, “Mind the gap”. It is a British expression that means, watch your step as you enter or leave the train and be careful of the gap between the train and the platform.

### Mind

*Mind the gap.* We are inviting congregations through *Team Vital* to mind the gap between your congregation’s current reality and who God is calling you to become. In each of our churches there is a gap. Congregations who are not “minding” the gap are getting further and further away from God’s preferred future.

To mind something means to think about it, consider it, or to pay close attention to it. There is a lot to pay attention to in our congregations. Here are a few things:

1. Trends – What are the trends that have occurred over the past 5-10 years? Are more people dying than you are replacing with new disciples? Is worship attendance growing, staying the same or declining? Who is moving into your neighborhood and how is the congregation connecting with the new residents? Are offerings going up, down or staying the same? *Mind* the trends.

2. Ministries – Are your ministries connecting with the people living in your community? We often do a better job assessing how our ministries are connecting with current worshippers rather than looking to the mission field in our communities. Does our worship and programs connect with the people in the community? *Mind* your ministries.

3. Enthusiasm – Are people enthusiastic about your church and its ministries? Are people talking with others about the congregation – its worship, people, ministries, mission – or are people not enthusiastic about the church? *Mind* the enthusiasm.

*Mind the gap. Think. Consider. Pay attention.* We are working with congregations to assess their present state and God’s preferred future. We are helping congregations identify and take the steps to pursue and reach God’s vision. I invite you to mind the gap. Identify the gap and identify the steps you can take to close those gaps.

Our *Team Vital* resource will help your congregation assess the gap, identify the steps to take and equip and support you to take those steps.

If you would like to learn more about *Team Vital* so that your congregation is making disciples, growing vitality and connecting with the community, contact Beth Caulfield at [bcaulfield@gnjumc.org](mailto:bcaulfield@gnjumc.org).

Keep the faith!

John Schol, Bishop  
The United Methodist Church

### SUBSCRIBE NOW

The Relay is sent to lay leaders and clergy throughout Greater New Jersey Conference of the United Methodist Church. You can receive a yearly subscription for \$9.50 by sending your request to:

Send in your subscription order now.

UNITED METHODIST RELAY  
1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

Please enter my subscription to the United Methodist Relay. Enclosed is my check for \$9.50.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

New Subscriber  Renewal

# THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

John R. Schol, Bishop

The Greater New Jersey Conference  
1001 Wickapecko Dr.  
Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

Rev. Christopher Heckert, Chair, Commission on Communication  
973.763.7676 • [heckert@morrowchurch.org](mailto:heckert@morrowchurch.org)

#### RELAY STAFF

Jeff Wolfe, Editorial Manager  
732.359.1047 • [jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

Carolyn Conover, Director of Communication and Development  
732.359.1016 • [cconover@gnjumc.org](mailto:cconover@gnjumc.org)

Brittney Reilly, Online and Digital Communication Manager  
732.359.1040 • [breilly@gnjumc.org](mailto:breilly@gnjumc.org)

Rev. Jessica Stenstrom, Contributing Writer  
609.397.2333 • [jessica\\_stenstrom@yahoo.com](mailto:jessica_stenstrom@yahoo.com)

New Subscriptions, renewals, address changes, and corrections should be addressed to Beverly Karlovich, [bkarlovich@gnjumc.org](mailto:bkarlovich@gnjumc.org) or by mail to:

United Methodist Relay • 1001 Wickapecko Dr. • Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

#### FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION and PLACEMENT

Jeff Wolfe, [jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

The UNITED METHODIST RELAY is published monthly except January and August by the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Office of Publication: Office of the Bishop, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733. Periodical Postage Paid at Ocean, NJ and additional entry offices Mailed free to selected lay leaders and clergy of each church. Others may subscribe at the rate of \$9.50 per year. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to UNITED METHODIST RELAY, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733.

#### GNJUMC HAS PARTNERED WITH

# PAYCHEX

**Paychex brings essential products & services at a fraction of the cost to you. Paychex is a leading national provider of payroll and HR outsourcing solutions. The company’s staff of highly trained professionals delivers solutions to our ministries to growth.**

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 1- 5 EE’S  
MONTHLY FEE \$215.00  
ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST \$2,589.00

*Paychex delivers solutions that are accurate, confidential, and affordable.*

Live HR Support • Handbooks • Payroll • Employee Pay Options  
Workers Compensation • Free Mobile and Online Access

**Let Paychex focus on the details, so you can focus on your Ministry.**

**Save 40% on HR and Payroll Services for your church today.**

*Please note: in order to take advantage of the discount negotiated for the UMC affiliates, church must call Nicole or Tom below. Any Church that meets with Nicole or Tom by April 15th will receive a FREE Federal Labor Poster as well as \$100 credit toward their set-up fee!*

#### CONTACT PAYCHEX TODAY!

NICOLE DIGUGLIELMO  
[ndiguglielmo@paychex.com](mailto:ndiguglielmo@paychex.com)  
908.770.5488

TOM ESPOSITO  
[tesposito@paychex.com](mailto:tesposito@paychex.com)  
609.204.8058

The May Issue  
Deadline is April 15, 2015

### STAY CURRENT

Sign up for our weekly newsletter and get Conference updates and news sent to your email each Wednesday. The Greater New Jersey Digest is full of news that affects our Conference, meeting announcements, job openings, and more.



GNJDIGEST  
The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

To sign up, simply send your email address and request to [gnjdigest@gnjumc.org](mailto:gnjdigest@gnjumc.org)

## UMCOR Celebrates 75th At Atlantic City Church

By Jeff Wolfe  
[jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

When the United Methodist Committee on Relief was formed in Atlantic City 75 years ago, its mission to help others in the world was clear. Just who was going to accomplish that mission was more of a gray area.

For the organization known as UMCOR, that answer has become crystal clear since then.

“We are UMCOR,” Greater New Jersey Bishop John Schol said to the about 250 in attendance at UMCOR’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at Asbury United Methodist Church in Atlantic City in March. “When people hurt, United Methodists are there to help.”

UMCOR’s help to Greater New Jersey has been needed and felt in many instances. Most recently it has been with ongoing recovery from Superstorm Sandy in 2012. UMCOR’s funding and partnership has helped A Future With Hope, an arm of the GNJUMC, continue to rebuild damaged and destroyed homes. A Future With Hope has rebuilt 133 homes in all with more than 9,000 volunteers. In Atlantic City, A Future With Hope has rebuilt 33 homes with more than 1,800 volunteers.

Those volunteers have come from all walks of life, many with housing construction experience and some with little or no such experience.

“God calls the unlikeliest people to do amazing things,” UMCOR Deputy General Secretary Denise Honeycutt said. “And I see a lot of unlikely people out here.”

Some of the people in the audience were UMCOR President Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, who leads the Wisconsin Annual Conference, Atlantic City Mayor Don Guardian, representatives from the New England, Susquehanna and Eastern Pennsylvania Conferences and New

Jersey Assemblyman Vincent Mazzaio.

Bishop Schol emphasized to everyone in attendance that UMCOR’s call is not just about constructing houses and buildings, but also developing relationships with those in need. He told a story of two Atlantic City families who were helped by A Future With Hope. One family could only live on the second floor of its home due to damage from Superstorm Sandy. After A Future With Hope volunteers restored the first floor, the family offered to rent the newly refurbished first floor to another family in Sandy recovery who was working with A Future With Hope.

“We’ve done more than just rebuild two homes,” Bishop Schol said. “The people we help pass forward the love and care we have shown them. We’ve helped create new bonds and relationships that will last after we have helped them recover.”

Honeycutt reminded the audience that recovery was likely on the mind of Bishop Herbert Welch at the first United Methodist General Conference in 1940 in Atlantic City. He, at the age of 78, had the vision to create the relief organization in the midst of World War II and was UMCOR’s executive director until he was 86. Honeycutt named some of the nearly 100 countries and places that UMCOR has worked in since then, including South Sudan, Darfur, Burundi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, China, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Ecuador, Haiti, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Armenia, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Ukraine.

The work has included assisting in Ebola treatment, rebuilding homes, providing prosthetics to land mine survivors, funding clean water and sanitation projects, preventing children malnutrition, establishing refugee camps, preparing sewing kits, and responding to war torn areas, just to a name a few things in more



Photo by Sandra Engstrom

GNJ Bishop John Schol (right) presents a check from the conference’s One Great Hour of Sharing offering to UMCOR President and Wisconsin Conference Bishop Hee-Soo Jung and UMCOR Deputy General Secretary Denise Honeycutt at UMCOR’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Atlantic City in March.

recent years.

Honeycutt, added too, that UMCOR is present in the United States when needed.

“You all know too well the devastation caused by a superstorm like Sandy, or the destruction of a wild fire or tornado, or chemical plant explosion,” she said. “In the U.S., UMCOR is there to partner with conferences, training volunteers and offering financial support – all made possible because of faithful church members like you.”

UMCOR has been faithful in serving Greater New Jersey in the aftermath of other disasters, not just Superstorm Sandy. Those have included after Hurricane Agnes in 1972, Hurricane Floyd in 1999, the Healing, Encouragement and Advocacy Response in Tragedy

(HEART) Unit after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Irene in 2011.

Bishop Schol showed Greater New Jersey’s faithfulness to UMCOR by presenting a symbolic check of \$75,000 from the conference for One Great Hour of Sharing, one of UMCOR’s major fundraisers. Honeycutt finished her remarks by saying she expects UMCOR to continue to do major work in the future.

“When Methodists are united we can be about the transforming of the world,” she said. “When Methodists are united we can be about that new thing that God is calling us to. When Methodists are united we can be united through the work of UMCOR. We can indeed bring good news to the poor, release the captives and bring recovery of sight to the blind. That’s something to celebrate.”

## Volunteers Return To Finish Pleasantville Kitchen Project

By Chris Carter  
[ccarter@afuturewithhope.org](mailto:ccarter@afuturewithhope.org)

Alex’s house is nestled between the highway and the bay in Pleasantville and during Superstorm Sandy, the water rose, flooding her home, damaging pipes, and heralding mold. This past January volunteers from the Wellspring-Karitas group from Devon, Pa., working with A Future With Hope, did extensive demolition work, tearing old and damaged floors and walls away to make room for the new. After meeting Alex and hearing her story, the volunteers decided to come back to help her and her family move back home.

Karitas returned in mid-March, and after a hard-working, productive week threw Alex a ‘Kitchen Shower’ on the 13<sup>th</sup>, celebrating the beginning of her recovery’s home stretch. Volunteers donated kitchen goods such as pots, pans, utensils and other culinary tools to help re-stock what had been lost 28 months before. With a working kitchen for the first time since the storm hit in October of 2012, an overjoyed Alex was already planning on bringing her family home.

“I can’t wait to show my boys, they won’t believe it,” she said upon seeing the rebuilt room.

Volunteers had set up a tarp in the kitchen doorway to make the reveal more dramatic, and upon seeing her kitchen finally restored, Alex broke into tears of joy.

Karitas was established through community ties. The founding members were neighbors, friends and members of the same church, St. John’s Presbyterian in Devon. The organization is “100 percent committed to realizing dreams of community,” Pastor Howard Friend, the group’s leader, said.

Karitas volunteers have made 25 trips

A FUTURE WITH  
**HOPE**  
The People of the United Methodist Church

related to Sandy recovery rebuilding homes from Staten Island to Pleasantville. They worked with several recovery agencies before teaming up with A Future With Hope and are, as Rev. Friend puts it, “glad to have a partner with the resources and organization to let us put our skills to work.”

To get the kitchen ready in time for the shower, students from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., joined up with Karitas. In just four days the kitchen went from exposed floor joists and studs to completed dry-wall with cabinetry, bamboo floors, and a working sink and range.

For many of the students, mission was a new experience, but at the end of the week they told AFWH their only regret was that they couldn’t do more. To make sure everything was ready on time, the university group even decided to forgo a day they had planned to use for sight-seeing.

“The kids were absolutely awesome,” said several of the Karitas volunteers.

Working together, the group of skilled volunteers and eager youth put in a monumental effort to help a family rebuild. Alex’s cocker spaniel, Kylie, inspected the ‘new’ room closely as refreshments were shared. The scent of sawdust drifted from the makeshift backyard workshop into the kitchen, it was the first day with a clear, blue sky since winter.



Photo by Chris Carter

Alex, her daughter Lily, A Future With Hope Construction Foreperson Katie Quigley, and Rev. Howard Friend from Wellspring-Karitas, of Devon Pa., help celebrate Alex’s new kitchen as her dog Kylie hopes for her own piece of cake.

# Annual Conference Award Winners Announced

The following is a look at awards that will be given at Annual Conference in Wildwood, N.J., on May 28-30.

## Denman Evangelism Award – Youth: Brielle Hohn



Hohn

Brielle Hohn attends Medford UMC and has been active in that church since 2001. She has piloted the B-1 program by joining with youths from several churches to raise awareness of hunger and poverty, raise funds for United Methodist Advance projects and even asked school teachers to sponsor her. Hohn also participates in such local events as the CROP walk, a bike-a-thon to raise awareness for people with cerebral palsy and helped organize a county pumpkin event to raise awareness and funds for ALS. This past summer she was part of the Global Justice Volunteers through the United Methodist Church Global Ministries. She worked with the Women's Work Board in Manila, Philippines, where she saw first-hand the effects of a typhoon and HIV/AIDS.

"Brielle has pushed youth leaders to risk by going beyond the comfort zone, challenged youth leaders to make a new path, and encouraged her peers to stand in areas of peace and justice. It is part of her DNA as she takes the church to the people in schools, peer groups and other organizations." – Rev. Debbie Barnett, GNJ Youth Chairperson.

## Denman Evangelism Award – Laity: Charlie Burch



Burch

Charlie Burch attends First UMC of Toms River and has been active there for 26 years. He has taken part in week-long youth mission trips to South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New Jersey. He has also facilitated six long-term Disciple Bible Study groups and six short-term Bible studies in the past 13 years. He is also a regular overnight host when the church is a host in the Interfaith Hospitality Network. He has also been active in the Garden State Walk to Emmaus and has sponsored 22 Pilgrims since he took that walk in 1998. He has also served in various lay leadership roles in the church.

"Charlie has witnessed and shown the love of Jesus not only to the youth but also to clients by doing home repairs during those trips. He is a true disciple of Jesus Christ." – Scott Bilquist United Methodist Men's President at First UMC Toms River.

## Denman Evangelism Award – Clergy: Rev. Frank Davis



Davis

Rev. Davis is currently the senior pastor at the UMC in Spring Valley, N.Y., and before that also had full-time appointment at Covenant UMC in Plainfield. In each instance, the churches led by Davis have grown. At Covenant, worship attendance grew from 68 to 120 in four years. At his current appointment, attendance has grown from 40 to 75.

"Rev. Davis has a deep faith, a passionate commitment to make disciples for Jesus Christ, and a vision to continue to serve Christ and his church in his community and around the world. His willingness to serve God and the church where he is called has been seen in the energy



Manasquan UMC was one of the hosts for the 10 Commandments Hike where Boy Scouts and others walked to 10 different churches in the community to learn about different faiths and religions.

he has brought into turning churches around, growing them in their love and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and bringing them hope and a new vision for the future." – Palisades District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Steve Bechtold.

## Bishop's Congregation Award – Manasquan UMC

The Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns has selected Manasquan UMC as the winner for this honor. Manasquan UMC has been a leader in its community and helped host a key event last year called The Ten Commandments Hike. It is one of many ways communities can experience how much all people and religions have in common. This second year hike between 10 host church sites had 275 participants. The event occurred with the collaboration of the All Faiths Committee of the Monmouth Council of Boy Scouts of America. It has committees that represent Jewish, Islamic, Catholic, and Protestant faiths, along with Manasquan UMC. The 15 Churches of the Manasquan Ministerium are also working on another two-mile hike for the fall.

## Christian Unity Award Clergy – Rev. Jackie Burgess



Burgess

Rev. Jackie Burgess is an Elder currently serving the Avon and Ballard UMCs. She is a member of the UM Disability Ministries Committee, the Advisory Board of Peace Islands Institute, Asbury Park Community Development Initiative, Asbury Park Community Action Network, Chaplain of the Avon Fire Department and the Monmouth Council of the Boy Scouts of America and runs a Cub Scout Pack in her neighborhood school.

She has been the vice-chair of the Board of Church and Society, the Chair of Churches Uniting In Christ and the Chair of the Disability Inclusion Ministries. She has also served as president and vice president of the NJ Council of Churches. "Rev. Burgess has been instrumental in the ecumenical movement for over a decade. She has exemplified what it means to be an ecumenist. She has also demonstrated a passion for interfaith work.

From her local church to her work with organizations like Peace Islands Institute, she has shown what it means to be a powerful witness to our neighbors." – Rev. Jessica Campbell, Chairperson for the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

## Helenor Alter Davison Award – Rev. Dr. Jisun Kwak



Kwak

Rev. Dr. Jisun Kwak is currently the Delaware Bay District Superintendent and has been given this honor for being an outstanding woman for leadership and influence throughout the conference. Kwak's influence has been evident throughout the conference. She has previously served as the Gateway North District Superintendent before moving to Delaware Bay in 2014. She also has served as the pastor at Centenary UMC in Metuchen as well as in Methodist churches in Mendham, N.J., and Thiells, N.Y.

"She continues to impress me with her intelligence, spirituality, administrative ability, communication skills, social justice stands and commitment to progressive ideas. Dr. Kwak over the years nurtured many young women under her pastoral guidance to be exceptional leaders as part of their identity in order to make a difference in the world.

But her ministry did not stop with just women. Her ability to preach, teach and living her core values showed the way to many men to rethink, understand and change and resulted in many of the males under her pastoral wing to change their attitudes, conceptions and interaction with women regardless of their place in society." – Mark Shenise,

the Associate Archivist for the General Commission of Archives and History for the conference.

## Francis Asbury Award – Rev. Don Gebhard



Gebhard

Rev. Don Gebhard has won this honor for Fostering United Methodist Ministries in Higher Education through his work as chaplain at Centenary College. Gebhard, who is also an associate pastor at Trinity UMC in Hackensack, has been the chaplain at Centenary since 2002. The various offerings for students at Centenary include campus worship on Tuesday nights and food and faith on Thursday nights. The office of chaplain also offers service opportunities such as The Zone, Trunk or Treat, Valentine's Day Cards for local senior citizens and assisting in Trinity's food pantry and thrift store. Also for the third straight year, more than 20 students have attended the off campus spiritual retreat.

Recent Centenary graduate Kevin Dufrense wrote this about the campus food and faith ministry in an article for Campus Alive: "There are various spiritual experiences Pastor Don Gebhard shares . . . We do not just delve in Bible studies or strict teaching because the importance of community in faith is far more appreciated."

# Workshops Will Offer Variety Of Teachings

As a way of further resourcing conference leaders, workshops that help equip leaders and make vital congregations will be offered during Annual Conference this year.

Sign up for one of the following workshops when you register for Annual Conference. Each workshop will take place between 2 and 3:30 p.m. on Friday, May 29.

## Time Management for the Christian Leader presented by Ken Willard

"God gives each of us the same amount of time each day, week, month and year. Why is it that some leaders seem to spend their time more effectively and more efficiently than others?" asks Ken Willard. "Are you tired of trying to get blood from that turnip? Maybe it's time to throw your net on the other side of the boat!"

Willard will discuss some of the key concepts from his book, *Time Management for the Christian Leader: Or How to Squeeze Blood from a Turnip*. Each section will include practical applications along with a strong focus on biblical principles.

Ken Willard is a certified coach and author. His most recent book, *Time Management for the Christian Leader: Or How to Squeeze Blood from a Turnip*, will be published in May. He has over 20 years in the business world in leadership training and development before transitioning into full-time church consulting, coaching and leadership development.

## Communicating Faith in the 21st Century presented by Jennifer Rodia

During the training, leaders will work together to expand each participant's knowledge and skills to communicate faith in the 21st century using current and emerging communications tools and storytelling principles. Based on the book, *We Must Speak: Rethinking How We Communicate*

*Faith in the 21st Century*, by Rev. Larry Hollon, this training is a blend of traditional and digital communications technology. This training will teach how to effectively communicate in today's society and to equip the faith community to share transforming stories.

The workshop focuses on the importance of telling stories as a part of individual and shared responsibility to be a voice of peace, justice, hope and wholeness in the public media and to help the church fulfill this mandate.

Jennifer Rodia directs the Communications Strategy Team at United Methodist Communications overseeing the church's national advertising and engagement campaign – Rethink Church, the management of the United Methodist brand, the United Methodist Communications' training program, and the program for information communication technologies for the developing world. Prior to joining United Methodist Communications, Rodia worked in multiple aspects of film, television, and commercial production.

As an active member of The United Methodist Church, she has served as teacher, speaker, liturgist, and all-purpose volunteer.



## Covenant Discipleship Groups for Local Churches presented by Rev. Dr. Vicki M. Brendler

Small groups that help people grow in their discipleship and in their experience of the grace of God were the backbone of the Wesleyan movement. "How is it with your soul?" was one weekly question for the early Methodists. "Have you been faithful to reading of scripture, participating in worship and devotion, been intentional in performing acts of mercy or in working toward justice?" was another. The practice of Accountable or Covenant Discipleship is a way in which to capture the spirit of the Wesleys today through a balanced approach to growing in the practice of our life of faith. This workshop will teach how you can use this as one model for small groups to help grow vitality in making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Rev. Vicki Brendler is currently serving as the Senior Pastor of Bridgewater United Methodist Church. Prior to her appointment there in 2004, she served as Raritan Valley District Superintendent, and pastored churches in rural, urban, and suburban settings. Her doctoral work at Wesley Theological Seminary was in the area of Covenant Discipleship under the guidance of Dr. David Lowes Watson. Her project focused in addressing issues of continuing clergy health and passion for Christ through the participation in Covenant Discipleship groups, monthly with colleagues and weekly within their congregation. She has previously served as Chairperson of the denomination's Council for Accountable Discipleship, an affiliate organization of the General Board of Discipleship.

## Preparing the Banquet: Workshop Planning as Hospitality presented by Jorge Lockward

This workshop will explore practical ways pastors, musicians and worship leaders can collaborate in creating hospitality for both those who are already a part of the worshiping community and those who God is bringing in to the Feast.

Jorge Lockward serves as Director of the Global Praise Program of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church.

He is passionate about worship that brings people together across the divides of ethnicity, social class, age, gender identity and more.

## The Irresistible Church presented by Rev. Matthew Na

It has been said and witnessed that churches are losing membership. Some churches are getting older, smaller, out of touch. The church has even been described as "irrelevant." When talking about evangelism and discipleship as it relates to inviting people back into churches, that talk is about creating an environment that is relevant. What would happen if it went a step further? What would it look like to create "irresistible environments" in church?

The goal is to make the environments so irresistible that people will want to come back and participate. This workshop will ask essential questions about first impressions, presentation, rethinking approach, contextualizing, the weekend worship, rules of engagement and more.

Rev. Matthew Na is the Director of Professions of Faith and ministry to Youth and Young Adults for the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. Na has served in various ministries in Greater New Jersey for the past 15 years. He is the lead organizer for GNJ's IGNITE Youth Conference in October. He previously spent 10 years at Arcola Korean UMC and is an ordained elder in full connection with the GNJUMC.

## The Joy of Giving presented by Rev. Dr. Rich Hendrickson

This is not stewardship 101. Participants should be those who seek to grow deeper in their understanding of generosity as a way of life, giving as a spiritual discipline, and desire to be more faithful in their own giving practices. The opportunity to give to God's work and presence in the world, whether through time, talent, or treasure, should put a smile on people's faces and joy in their hearts. People ought to seek out and embrace the joy of giving each and every time God invites them to participate in God's work. Is the offering a moment of celebration and joy for each congregation?

This workshop will dig deeply into just what it takes to create a healthy, robust spiritual foundation for giving in personal lives and in ministry. It will take an in-depth look into what the scriptures say about the connection between giving, generosity, thankfulness and discipleship. It will also explore the practical implications for what it means that all giving begins with God, giving puts God first, and that giving is an act of worship.

## GNJ Secretary Dr. Wiley Publishes Book On Mark

The politics of the book of Mark is the focus of a new book published by GNJ Secretary Rev. Dr. Dave Wiley III. *Why Mark: the Politics of Resurrection in the First Gospel* is Wiley's first book and he hopes the book resonates with the critically thinking people of faith.

"It began as a study as to why Mark failed to include resurrection appearances at the end of his gospel, and grew into a study of the person of Mark and why he wrote," Wiley said. "I discovered that Mark wrote for reasons political as well as theological, and that the omission of resurrection appearances after the story of the empty tomb (a seemingly theological issue) had political implications I hadn't expected."

Bishop John Schol recommended

the book. "Writing with the critical eye of faith, Dave offers an important and fresh look at the author of the first gospel and challenges us to reexamine our understanding of the first followers of Jesus." Schol said. "Dave's conversational style is engaging for seasoned pastors, scholars, and lay persons who are seeking to better understand Mark's gospel."

The book was published by CSS Publishing of Lima, Ohio and is available at [www.csspub.com](http://www.csspub.com).

Urban Missions presented by Rev. Faith Fowler

This workshop will present and explore ministry innovations in areas of concentrated poverty. Using examples from

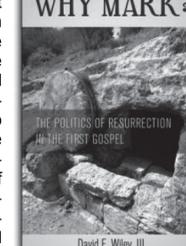


Fowler

Cass Community United Methodist Church and Cass Community Social Services in Detroit, workshop participants will discuss strategies and tactics that may be applied to their ministry context. Workshop requirements include: a great sense of humor and a desire to transform the world, one community at a time.

Rev. Faith Fowler is an innovative urban spiritual entrepreneur, who with God's help has radically transformed the Cass community in Detroit. The Detroit Free Press describes Fowler as, "not your typical pastor. She is funnier. And more blunt. And, Lord, does she get things done. Tireless, humble, with a shock of white-blonde hair and a cackling laugh that sounds like a parrot being roasted. She houses people, feeds people and has created 85 full-time jobs for once-struggling Detroiters who now, among other things, turn old tires into sandals. She is the most important currency of (the) city, a loving, egoless, inspiring leader who doesn't see color, doesn't see class, who looks at our poorest, most neglected citizens and sees only hope and opportunity."

## WHY MARK?



David E. Wiley, III

conversational style is engaging for seasoned pastors, scholars, and lay persons who are seeking to better understand Mark's gospel."

The book was published by CSS Publishing of Lima, Ohio and is available at [www.csspub.com](http://www.csspub.com).

An Online Book & Gift Store

# HisKingdomForever.com

Adult Study Programs • All Occasion Cards • Bibles • Books  
Bulletins • Candles • Communion Supplies • Envelopes  
Music • Robes • Sunday School/VBS kits and much more!

VALUE PRICED • SHIPS NEXT BUSINESS DAY

20% OFF SELECT CHURCH SUPPLIES

[www.hiskingdomforever.com](http://www.hiskingdomforever.com)

For More Info  
Call Lisa: 732.264.5984 or Email: [hkf.info@gmail.com](mailto:hkf.info@gmail.com)  
Visit us on Facebook

## Backpack Crew's Success Fed By UMC of Red Bank

By Jeff Wolfe  
jwolfe@gnjumc.org

It wasn't a small still voice that motivated Suzanne Dice to help those who were feeling the effects of Superstorm Sandy nearly a year after it had slammed the New Jersey coast.

It was her own internal storm that led her and her family to start an organization that helps feed those in need on weekends.

"I was just driving down the street, and seeing all of the loss and destruction still there, it was like a punch in the stomach," said Dice, a UMC of Red Bank member who lives in Middletown. "I could not, not do something."

That feeling was reinforced during a church service at Red Bank when an elementary teacher stood up and asked for prayers because she knew some families were still struggling from the effects of Sandy. In the fall of 2013, during a dinner conversation among Suzanne, her husband Keith, and children Amanda, Aidan and Jake, the Backpack Crew was born. "We were brainstorming one night and my son Aidan, who was 10 at the time, said what about the backpack crew," Suzanne Dice said of where the name originated. "It kind of stuck with us and we just liked it."

The next step was finding a place for the Backpack Crew. At first, that was the Dices' home.

"We had some room in our basement, but we had no idea how this was going to go," Suzanne Dice said. "It was kind of scary. We had no idea what kind of response we would get from the school and the families. We contacted the school nurse who was a complete stranger and it just kind of came together really quickly."

The Dices began taking food donations and putting them in backpacks for a local school to give to those in need

each Friday. The requests went from three during the first week to 25 by the third week. The idea is to make sure that children who are on a reduced or free school lunch program during the week can also have good meals every day.

"We pack backpacks so we can feed an entire family over the weekend," Suzanne Dice said. "We keep it as healthy as possible. There are two options for breakfast, lunch and dinner plus snacks."

The backpacks are delivered every Friday to a school nurse, who distributes them to the families in need. The Dices and others who help prepare the backpacks don't actually know who gets them.

What the Dices did know rather quickly was their basement was going to be too small for what needed to be done. The Backpack Crew's new home soon became the UMC of Red Bank.

"The church is our main support system," said Suzanne Dice. "They constantly have a food drive and we have a shopping cart by the backdoor. As the word spread, different businesses around town have put boxes in their lobbies for donations, too."

Dice also mentioned that there have been financial donations from various organizations such as Girl Scout troops giving money from cookie sales and other groups doing coin drives.

"It's really just a matter of connecting the donations with the kids in need," she said. "It's been amazing the amount of people that have stepped up and are wanting to help. To have people in the community step up, that is what has been so fulfilling. And we are so lucky to have the support of the church. It makes me feel like I can't fail."

The Backpack Crew has been ongoing of a success that a second school was scheduled to start in March and a third school was in the process of being added on as well.



Suzanne Dice and her husband Keith started the Backpack Crew in their basement. The idea to feed those in need has grown and the Backpack Crew is now housed at the United Methodist Church of Red Bank.

"As time has went on, we realized this is truly everywhere, Sandy or not," Dice said of the need. "It keeps us motivated because there are so many people out there who want help."

Dice added those who help include several people inside the UMC of Red Bank.

"Since we moved into the church,

there are so many different groups who are wanting to help," she said. "Since we have our own pantry in the church, the youth group helps on Wednesdays and we have a group from Kohls that comes too. "It's hard to believe that we were doing it all on our own in the beginning."

For more information about the Backpack Crew go to [www.backpackcrew.com](http://www.backpackcrew.com)

## IGNITE Lands Phil Wickham To Lead Worship

By Jeff Wolfe  
jwolfe@gnjumc.org

Internationally recognized singer, songwriter and worship leader, Phil Wickham, will headline the IGNITE Youth

Conference for Greater New Jersey Oct. 2-4 in Wildwood.

"We are thrilled that Phil will be joining us at IGNITE," said Matthew Na, Director of New Disciples for GNJ and the organizer of IGNITE. "He has such broad



appeal and his music really speaks to the youth movement. Phil leading worship will help build on the momentum of IGNITE Conferences."

Wickham has released seven CDs which have landed him on the iTunes Top Christian Albums Chart. He also has led worship at the Soul Survival Christian festival in England which regularly has more than 25,000 in attendance.

The worship journey for Wickham started when his dad, a pastor, overheard him practicing a song he had written and told him they would use it in church.

"I was 13 or 14 and too young to realize what it even meant when he said that," Wickham said. "I wasn't really writing with the goal of getting these songs sung in churches. I just loved to write. It was satisfying to me to just write songs and put melodies with them. For my dad to say that, I thought, well, maybe I will try to write another one."

Wickham has been writing ever since and is in the midst of recording a new album that will be released in the fall. The title of that album for the moment, Wickham says, is Children of God, though he

admits that could change.

"I started leading worship in home fellowships and youth groups and then eventually got a chance to lead worship in big churches," said Wickham, whose current hit heard on Christian radio is called, "This Is Amazing Grace." "It's just been trying to figure out where I could go and where God can direct me."

When it comes to leading worship, Wickham knows it can't be about him, but about assisting the audience into having a Godly experience.

"The more we step back and let the truth echo in people's hearts, that's when I feel like people can remember who God is and remember what he has promised," he said.

And he says, no matter the age group, that idea doesn't change.

"The age difference has mattered less and less to me over the years," he said. "Young people have just as big of a capacity to worship God as anybody. The big thing is to not treat them like young people, but treat them like they are a bunch of hearts and to treat them like they want God in their life."



FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

[www.twitter.com/gnjumc](http://www.twitter.com/gnjumc)



Photo by Trever Hoehne, Harvest Ministries

International Christian music star Phil Wickham has been leading audiences of all ages in worship since he was a teenager. He will bring his encouraging music to the IGNITE Youth Conference in October.



The conference rolled out an NJ Transit bus ad campaign that will last until the first week of May. The conference is asking churches to update their Find-a-Church page on [umc.org](http://umc.org) in conjunction with these advertisements.

## Bus Ads Prompt People To "Find Joy" In Churches

The Conference has rolled out a comprehensive bus advertising campaign on major transportation routes for Lent.

The campaign, which features ads with the headlines, "Do you want to FIND JOY?", "Do you want to SAVE A LIFE?", "Do you want to BUILD COMMUNITY?" and "Do you want to MAKE A DIFFERENCE?" focuses on the service of the United Methodist Churches in Greater New Jersey and invites readers to find a church.

The idea behind the campaign stemmed from the All Aboard for Advent Campaign which encouraged churches to serve communion at train stations during Advent. People going about their daily routine responded to the inspiration that was offered. Also, the people most willing to accept communion and hospitality were the people who depended most on public transportation.

The Lent campaign features an invitation to find a church. It is focused on buses with routes starting in Atlantic City, Camden, Trenton, New Brunswick, and Newark. One bus was already seen crossing the Delaware River into Philadelphia.

Started in March, the ads will be visible through the month of April.

"The goal of the campaign is to meet people where they are and invite them to join GNJ churches in transforming the world," said GNJ Director of Connectional Ministries Rev. Hector A. Burgos. "It is very important to let people in the community know that we exist for them."

Positive comments from worshippers have already started coming in through social media.

"This is great news to be seen on a side of a bus!" wrote Teresa Byer, who attends the UMC of Summit, "Finally, the real good news on the side of a bus!"

Others were also excited to see the advertisements.

"Joy is a beautiful thing to always have, even the smallest slice!" wrote Christine Kropac, a resident of Belmar. "Thank you, great idea."

In conjunction with rolling out the ad campaign, the conference is asking churches to update their Find-a-Church information on [umc.org](http://umc.org). The promotional ads prominently feature a link to the denomination's [umc.org](http://umc.org) website and its Find-a-Church resource. At Find-a-Church, visitors can enter a zip code to see a map with all UM churches within a specified radius.

To update your church's information, visit [www.umc.org/find-a-church](http://www.umc.org/find-a-church), scroll down the page, find your church's current information, and, if updating is needed, go to the bottom of the page where an

"Update Church Information" link is available. After submitting a brief form with your contact information, you may add or update the following:

- Worship and Sunday school times
- Languages Spoken
- Ministries in which your church is involved
- Spiritual Growth programs that your church offers
- Upcoming Events
- Church web site and email addresses
- Additional information about what makes your church unique

The UM Communications staff will verify the new information then post it for all to see. This is a fast, easy and free service to help introduce your church to potential worshippers. Be sure your church is ready.

## Flat Wesleys Find Way Around GNJ



Anna and Geoffrey Tillisch display the Flat Wesleys at Walnut Valley UMC. Walnut Valley was among the first round of churches to host the Flat Wesleys, caricatures of Methodism founders John and Charles Wesley.

By Jeff Wolfe  
jwolfe@gnjumc.org

John and Charles Wesley, two of the founders of Methodism, haven't returned to life, but their likenesses are resurrecting the church's history and the significance the brothers played in the denomination's birth.

The United Methodist General Board of Discipleship has started a campaign for children in United Methodist churches to learn more about the overall church's origin by sending out Flat Wesleys. The laminated book-sized photos have been requested by about 700 churches and some Flat Wesleys have been circulating throughout the UMC of Greater New Jersey.

One GNJ church that was among the first round of churches to host the Flat Wesleys was Walnut Valley UMC in Blairstown. The Flat Wesleys arrive with a letter to children from John and Charles Wesley along with instructions on how and where to send the Flat

Wesleys for Round 2 of their tour. Spring Valley sent the Wesleys to First UMC of Cullman, Ala.

"Flat Wesleys teach disciples of all ages, who the Methodist movement founders are and how their gifts, in mission and music, have helped spread God's love and grace in the U.S.," said Walnut Valley pastor Wen-Ling Lai. "Hopefully children learn and believe that we are all together on this journey toward perfection as they saw my pictures of the Wesleys going to clergy lectionary study group, chapel worship and General Commission on Archives and History at Drew Theological School, hospital visits and other places."

The Flat Wesleys were also at Bethel UMC in Green Creek, Dias Creek UMC and Montville UMC in mid and late March.

"They've sat in on a UMW meeting, attended Sunday School and were introduced to the congregation during

Continued on page 9

Personalized Pathways to Healing...

**UNITED METHODIST Homes**  
[www.umh-nj.org](http://www.umh-nj.org)

**Bristol Glen**  
Newton  
[www.bristolglen.org](http://www.bristolglen.org)  
973.300.5788

**Collingswood Manor**  
Collingswood  
[www.collingswoodmanor.org](http://www.collingswoodmanor.org)  
856.854.4331

**Francis Asbury Manor**  
Ocean Grove  
[www.francisasburymanor.org](http://www.francisasburymanor.org)  
732.774.1316

**Pitman Manor**  
Pitman  
[www.pitmanmanor.org](http://www.pitmanmanor.org)  
856.589.7800

**The Shores at Wesley Manor**  
Ocean City  
[www.theshoresretirement.org](http://www.theshoresretirement.org)  
609.399.8505

**Rehab at United Methodist Homes**

For more than a century, thousands of seniors of all faith backgrounds have trusted United Methodist Homes. Rehabilitation complements our longstanding service to seniors. Regardless of which community you choose, a plethora of resources under one roof improves outcomes.

The combination of environment, therapeutic tools and technologies, high clinical standards, and collaborative multi-disciplinary teams, can successfully treat a broad range of prevalent geriatric conditions. We match professional services with the needs and preferences of individuals rather than a "one size fits all" approach. Give us a call today.

INDEPENDENT LIVING • RESIDENTIAL LIVING  
ASSISTED LIVING • MEMORY SUPPORT • RESPITE • SHORT-TERM REHAB  
SKILLED NURSING • HOSPICE

## Small Churches Work Together To Do Big Things

By Jessica Stenstrom  
[Jessica\\_stenstrom@yahoo.com](mailto:Jessica_stenstrom@yahoo.com)

Many of Greater New Jersey's smaller congregations are finding creative ways to connect with their communities, become more vital and serve the mission field.

Two of those congregations are Bernardsville UMC and the UMC of Gladstone.

This month the two congregations will join together to pack meals for Stop Hunger Now, not only meeting a basic human need of food, but also connecting with the community in a big way.

"We realized that we had three organizations that were church sponsored, but the congregation was not connecting with them at all; our two Boy Scout organizations and The Palmer School, which is the church run preschool," said Rev. Kyle Cuperwicz, pastor of both churches. "All of these organizations have a large number of participants that reside in Bernardsville and the surrounding towns."

Mount Horeb and Basking Ridge are also partnering with the efforts, along with Bernardsville's pre-school and other members of the surrounding community including students who were in need of community service hours.

"We needed help to make this event a reality," Cuperwicz said. "So I approached the leaders of the Boy Scouts about partnering together, and they thought the idea was awesome."

Cuperwicz said both Bernardsville and Gladstone have been giving large amounts financially toward the meal packing event, and that partnering organizations have helped greatly as well. A recent fundraiser at the local Friendly's in town attracted people from outside the church and the scouting community allowing the church to further connect with a local business.

"The members of the congregation



Harmony Hill UMC has combined with the First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater to work together to help those in need in their community.

are excited, and they have a greater understanding of what it means to be in mission," Cuperwicz said. "It's exciting to see everyone sharing what their church is doing and inviting others to participate."

Participation in mission projects such as Stop Hunger Now is a one of the keys to becoming a vital congregation and small churches are proving that they can have big impacts.

Tansboro UMC, another smaller congregation, has a list of community driven missions. It supports Soles for Souls, blood drives, food baskets at Easter and Thanksgiving, purchasing Christmas presents for 10 children in the local school, supporting the Ronald McDonald house and hosting a head-shaving event to raise money for St. Baldrick's. The

church also has a monthly movie night which is kid-friendly and open to the community.

"With God all things are possible," said Frank Friend III, one of the church's leaders.

Winslow UMC's outreach has a free community breakfast after worship.

"The breakfast was started by some newer members of the church, who formed a new small group, to cook, serve, and clean up," said Pastor Debbie Barnett. "It is a breakfast where everyone feels comfortable. It is multi-generational and come as you are."

Harmony Hill UMC in Stillwater is also working with its community.

"One of the many highlights for us has been what has become known as

the Joint Christian Community Outreach (JCCO)," said Harmony Hill Pastor Rev. Todd Lattig. "It started out of a deep commitment of mine to reach out to other clergy in my area in order to work together to mutual community builders."

Lattig reached out to Rev. Tim Florence of the First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater to come up with ideas for how churches could reach out to the people of Stillwater Township and the surrounding areas. Out of that meeting came a Senior Luncheon for residents.

"The luncheon was completely free and was sponsored by both of our churches," Lattig said. "The seniors that came out to it were so thankful for the breakfast and the members of both churches were so moved by the experience that they, on their own, decided to form a joint committee between both the churches that would seek to find ways to work together in order to help those in need within our community. That was the birth of the JCCO."

Since then the JCCO has gone on to host an annual 5K run in partnership with the town historical society which pays for all of the advertising and gives the churches a free table at the Annual Harvest Festival at the end of September.

"The 5K now kicks off that Festival and raises hundreds of dollars to go toward helping the "least of these" in our community," Lattig said.

Proceeds from the 5Ks have gone to help a family that lost everything in a fire, pay medical bills for people who have no means to pay for themselves, and to help others in need.

"What's awesome about this committee is that a few people from both of our churches have crossed denominational lines to intently work together to get other people from our community and across our county to come together to help others," Lattig said. "It's a real community builder."

## Little Falls' Commitment A Part Of CUMAC's Magic

By Jeff Wolfe  
[jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

While CUMAC has provided food, clothes and uncountable magic moments for thousands in need since its beginning 30 years ago, there has never been a magic formula to the organization's success.

That was especially true in the early days for the Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community when food appeared not magically, but through donations from local churches. One of those faithful givers back in the beginning, and still today, has been the UMC of Little Falls. It, along with the UMC of Franklin Lakes and Alpine Community UMC, helped fill empty cabinets and empty stomachs to give the nonprofit organization the foundation to build upon.

"Their commitment and the individual churches that have helped, really helped

sustain our organization and grow the organization," said Pat Bruger, who is in her 25<sup>th</sup> year as the executive director of CUMAC. "Poverty stricken communities often feel abandoned, so the simple but loving act of bringing food to help the community helped those communities feel that they are not alone."

Little Falls UMC church member Robin Hofgesang says her church gives consistently because the donations do not come from one or two people acting alone. In fact, Hofgesang says the church rarely needs to have special food drives or donation days for CUMAC, which helped feed 38,000 people last year. While there are reminders of specific needs that appear in the Little Falls' weekly bulletin, she says the donations just come in, sort of magically.

"It has been going on for years and people just know to bring extra food," she said. "They just bring it every week



UMC of Little Falls Pastor Woo Min Lee (right) helps Bob Gritman load donated food into his SUV for Gritman's weekly trip to the CUMAC food pantry in Paterson.

when they feel like it. A lot of people are involved in different ways."

One of those involved people at Little Falls is Bob Gritman. Every week he fills his SUV with food and makes a donation trip to CUMAC. Bruger says just the act of delivering the food to CUMAC's main building in Paterson is significant.

Gritman is continuing the loving act started by two of CUMAC's founding board members, Henry Banfield, of Franklin Lakes UMC and Henry Coxe, of Alpine UMC, who did similar things in those early days.

"They were two persons and professional men who came in from the suburban areas on a regular basis," Bruger said. "They would bring food and resources, or even take people to the grocery store."

Bruger says the support of suburban churches and organizations is essential for CUMAC's effectiveness.

"Let's face it, the suburban communities have more resources than the urban communities," she said. "The need keeps getting bigger and expanding. It is requiring more people to help."

Bruger also says it has generally been her experience that churches willing to help others also thrive themselves.

"Churches and individuals need to stay the course," she said. "That's one way that they can grow. They have been terrific for us." And she especially appreciates the churches and groups who have been with CUMAC since those early days.

"It's been the groups that stay with a mission like CUMAC that continue to provide strength and continuity and the connections we need," Bruger said. "We say thank you to small groups that have done big things. Those small groups who donate thousands of hours a year to us is how we function."

## Camp

Continued from page 1

camp starts.

"We are always looking for help from people who have gifts and talents to help us build new things or who can make financial contributions for program equipment," she said.

The other kind of volunteer contribution that is important is having leaders during camp. They can volunteer for one week at a time and there will be an application process and training for them.

Higgins also pointed out that clergy who are ordained elders who wish to volunteer do not have to count their week at camp as vacation.

"This will be an opportunity for people of all ages to connect with camp again," she said. "They can come back not just as campers, but as leaders to help make this all possible."

For more information about camp, contact Jestie Higgins at [jhiggins@gnjumc.org](mailto:jhiggins@gnjumc.org) or at 1-609-893-3354 or go to the new camps website at [www.pine-emergency.com](http://www.pine-emergency.com).

## Finances

Continued from page 1

Bishop said that the positive outlook is due to more of churches paying 100 percent of their shared ministries and billed services. In 2014, about 69 percent of churches paid 100 percent of shared ministries contributions and about 86 percent paid 100 percent of their billed services. That is the most Bishop can remember in either category.

"Both of those are high water marks in recent memory," he said.

From 2013 to 2014, there was more than a six percent increase in the number of churches fulfilling their shared ministry.

Bishop said those numbers are important because it keeps the conference on solid financial ground when important decisions have to be made.

"The improving finances give you greater and greater stability," Bishop said. "It removes the need to take

emergency action if you have to and do things that are not in your best long-term interest. Right now we can support our programs and staff."

"We are grateful to our congregations and their pastors and lay leadership," said Superintendent and Dean of the Cabinet Gina Hendrickson. "Leadership has made the difference."

Superintendents have also been meeting with churches that are not paying their full shared ministry and billed services to help them develop a plan to reach 100 percent within three years. The superintendents are committed to working with congregations to assist them in strengthening their giving.

Shared ministries are the funds that assist the United Methodist connection to support mission and ministry in the Greater New Jersey area and around the world. Recently the conference granted \$834,799 to congregations and mission partners to serve the mission of Christ in our communities.

## Flat Wesleys

Continued from page 7

the children's sermon," said Montville UMC pastor Heather Valosin. "They even helped us understand how I will be a little like a circuit rider next year pastoring two churches. The kids might be expecting me to ride a horse between the two churches."

Churches in each annual conference and each central conference can request to receive laminated copies of the Flat Wesleys during the program, which will continue through September.

"The end result of this project is for children to have the opportunity to practice compassion, justice, worship and devotion, to really pay attention to how they are doing that, and to be able to share their experiences with other children across the Methodist connection," said Melanie Gordon, the Director of Ministry with Children at Discipleship Ministries.

The idea for Flat Wesleys, which is based on the youth literature character Flat Stanley, came from a desire by

children's ministry leaders to inspire covenant discipleship with children.

When studying Methodist heritage, congregations can request a set of Flat Wesleys. The children will make their own Flat Wesleys, and carry them to worship services.

"They will have the Wesleys with them in prayer, and they will take them when they go out and do an act of service in the community," Gordon said. "This offers them something concrete to help them look for ways of living out their faith."

Teachers and children will then write a letter about what the children experienced while they had the Flat Wesleys and send it to another congregation along with the laminated Flat Wesleys.

"Our hope is that the teachers (at the church receiving the letters) will then read to their children about what the Flat Wesleys did where they were previously, and then the process will start again," Gordon said.

Congregations interested in participating in the Flat Wesleys project can contact Discipleship Ministries by email at [childrensministry@umcdiscipleship.org](mailto:childrensministry@umcdiscipleship.org).

## JENKINS & ASSOCIATES FINANCIAL PLANNING SERVICES WELCOMES YOU:

### The Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

May 28 – 30, 2015

The Wildwood Convention Center  
 501 Boardwalk, Wildwood, New Jersey 08260

Visit Our Booth and Receive a Gift!

Register now for one of our VIP Breakout Sessions:

Breakout Session #1: "Can You Survive Your Parsonage?"  
 Breakout Session #2: "How Secure Is Your Retirement?"

To register for a VIP Breakout Session or make other inquiries, email Jenkins & Associates at [Ljenkins@c1s.net](mailto:Ljenkins@c1s.net) or call 609-587-0081.

Visit us at: [www.JenAndAssociates.com](http://www.JenAndAssociates.com)

Breakout sessions are sponsored in cooperation with **Change Ministries, LLC (501c3)**.

Jenkins & Associates Financial Planning Services, 2271 Hwy 33, Suite #105, Hamilton, NJ, 08690. Securities and Advisory Services Offered Through Client One Securities, LLC Member FINRA/SIPC and an Investment Advisor. Jenkins & Associates and Client One Securities are not affiliated.

## IGNITE CONFERENCE 2015

### JUST ANNOUNCED PHIL WICKHAM

Christian musician and singer Phil Wickham has been announced as the worship artist for the IGNITE Conference on Oct. 2-4 in Wildwood.

Find out more  
[www.IGNITENJ.org](http://www.IGNITENJ.org)



# Taize Brothers Scheduled To Visit New Jersey

Greater New Jersey congregations have been making spiritual journeys to Taize to inspire youth and young adults for generations. In April, the roles will be reversed as three of the Brothers of Taize are making the journey to New Jersey.

Brother Emile, Brother John and Brother Emmanuel will be part of a special gathering called "A Conversation With The Brothers of Taize" at 7 p.m. on April 16 at Chatham UMC.

"The Brothers of Taize are authentic, humble and wise representatives of the Christian faith, who have deeply influenced me for the past 25 years of ministry, and influenced the global church in extremely gracious ways," said Chatham UMC senior pastor Rev. Jeff Markay. "I hope hundreds of people can come to this rare opportunity to spend a few hours with the Brothers of Taize."

Part of the time together will include having the Brothers, with assistance from musicians from Chatham, lead a Taize prayer in the sanctuary.

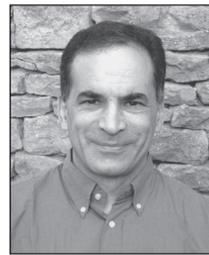
People from around the world flock to The Community of Taize, France to



Brother Emile



Brother Emmanuel



Brother John

grow in their understanding of the global church, monastic prayer, contemplative worship and enjoy the life-long friendships that form in small groups. There are about 100 Brothers, from the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox traditions, who make up the core community that welcomes church leaders and youth to Taize with the hopes of being a living parable of community, simplicity, authentic faith and reconciliation.

Taize chants have been sung in

various church traditions throughout the world, and their ministry of reconciliation has built bridges between faith traditions. Pope Francis recently cited Taize as a model for the future.

"It is precisely the young who today implore us to make progress towards full communion," Pope Francis said. "I think for example of the many Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant youth who come together at meetings organized by the Taize Community. They do not do this

because they are not aware of the differences which still separate us, but because they are able to see beyond them. They are able to embrace what is really important and what already unites us."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu had similar praise for Taize.

"We are all children of God and in Christ there is no Rwandese or Congolese, there is no Burundian or Kenyan, no Nigerian or South African: we are all one in Christ Jesus," Archbishop Tutu said. "I know that this is the message that the Taize Community also proclaims and that they are in solidarity with us as we press this message home in South Africa, across the whole continent of Africa and in the rest of the world where 'fear of the stranger' still needs to be turned into friendship and reconciliation and trust."

For those wishing to come to the special service, parking is in the Chatham Middle School lot behind the church. For more information go to [www.chathamumc.com](http://www.chathamumc.com) or visit the Chatham UMC Facebook page. For more information about Taize go to [www.taize.fr](http://www.taize.fr)

## Bishop Schol Visits Districts

Each year, the Bishop visits the nine districts in Greater New Jersey with a goal of meeting clergy and laity throughout our diverse conference

"We appreciate the time he takes when he visits the individual churches," said Gateway South District Superintendent Myrna Bethke. "It is good that he can hear their stories and the impact they are making on their communities."

So far in 2015, Bishop Schol has visited the Northern Shore, Cape Atlantic, Gateway South, Delaware Bay, Capital and Skylands districts. He is scheduled to visit Raritan Valley on April 16, Gateway North on April 28, and Palisades on May 14.



Photo by Andrew Ryoo

Clergy in the Northern Shore District gather to pray after meeting with Bishop John Schol during his Day on the District in mid-March.

## Volunteers Return To Finish Pleasantville Kitchen Project

By Chris Carter

[ccarter@afuturewithhope.org](mailto:ccarter@afuturewithhope.org)

Alex's house is nestled between the highway and the bay in Pleasantville and during Superstorm Sandy, the water rose, flooding her home, damaging pipes, and heralding mold. This past January volunteers from the Wellspring-Karitas group from Devon, Pa., working with A Future With Hope, did extensive demolition work, tearing old and damaged floors and walls away to make room for the new. After meeting Alex and hearing her story, the volunteers decided to come back to help her and her family move back home.

Karitas returned in mid-March, and after a hard-working, productive week threw Alex a "Kitchen Shower" on the 13<sup>th</sup>, celebrating the beginning of her recovery's home stretch. Volunteers donated kitchen goods such as pots, pans, utensils and other culinary tools to help re-stock what had been lost 28 months before. With a working kitchen for the first time since the storm hit in October of 2012, an overjoyed Alex was already planning on bringing her family home.

"I can't wait to show my boys, they won't believe it," she said upon seeing the rebuilt room.

Volunteers had set up a tarp in the kitchen doorway to make the reveal more dramatic, and upon seeing her kitchen finally restored, Alex broke into tears of joy.

Karitas was established through community ties. The founding members were neighbors, friends and members of the same church, St. John's Presbyterian in

Devon. The organization is "100 percent committed to realizing dreams of community," Pastor Howard Friend, the group's leader, said.

Karitas volunteers have made 25 trips related to Sandy recovery rebuilding homes from Staten Island to Pleasantville. They worked with several recovery agencies before teaming up with A Future With Hope and are, as Rev. Friend puts it, "glad to have a partner with the resources and organization to let us put our skills to work."

To get the kitchen ready in time for the shower, students from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., joined up with Karitas. In just four days the kitchen went from exposed floor joists and studs to completed dry-wall with cabinetry, bamboo floors, and a working sink and range.

For many of the students, mission was a new experience, but at the end of the week they told AFWH their only regret was that they couldn't do more. To make sure everything was ready on time, the university group even decided to forgo a day they had planned to use for sight-seeing.

"The kids were absolutely awesome," said several of the Karitas volunteers.

Working together, the group of skilled volunteers and eager youth put in a monumental effort to help a family rebuild. Alex's cocker spaniel, Kylie, inspected the 'new' room closely as refreshments were shared. The scent of sawdust drifted from the makeshift backyard workshop into the kitchen, it was the first day with a clear, blue sky since winter.

## Make Your Advertising \$\$\$ Go Farther

Every month the Relay goes into the homes more than 7,000 leaders, clergy and laity across the Greater New Jersey area!

These are decision-makers in the church, the home, the community.

In a day when more than ever, every dollar counts, you want to be a good steward of your resources.

That's why you need to consider the UNITED METHODIST RELAY as an advertising vehicle!

For more information call 732.359.1000 and ask for Jeff.

**THE RELAY**  
The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

## CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

**First UMC Somerville Hosting Northeast Cross+Gen** - The Northeast Cross+Gen Worship Conference on April 10-11 is open to all worship and education leaders interested in creating new worship and educational experiences bringing together all generations. For more information [www.fumcsomerville-new.org](http://www.fumcsomerville-new.org) or call 1-908-725-1473.

**Palisades Spring Men's Gathering Set** - Grace UMC in Wyckoff will host the Palisades District Men Spring Gathering from 8:30 a.m. to noon on April 11. The theme is from Proverbs 27:17 and the speaker will be Grace UMC pastor Scott Bostwick. For more information contact Sugandh Salvi at [sugandhsalvi@yahoo.com](mailto:sugandhsalvi@yahoo.com) or 973-632-8475.

**CUMAC to have Motown Night** - CUMAC will host a fundraiser featuring the YouChooseBand playing traditional Motown hits on Saturday, April 25. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door and a barbeque dinner is available for an additional \$15. It will be at the Ukrainian American Cultural Center, 60 North Jefferson Road, Whippany, NJ, 07981. For more information call 1-973-742-5518 or email [events@cumacecho.org](mailto:events@cumacecho.org).

**Order of St. Luke Retreat** - The Order of St. Luke will host its spring retreat at St. Marguerites House at the Community of St. John the Baptist, 82 W. Main Street, Mendham, N.J., May 5-7. The Retreat begins with dinner on May 5 at 6:30 and ends May 7 after lunch. For information, contact Jeanette Block at [revblock@aol.com](mailto:revblock@aol.com). To register, contact Evan Rohrs-Dodge at [evanwdodge@gmail.com](mailto:evanwdodge@gmail.com) or Shirley Mitchell at [samitch1.sm@gmail.com](mailto:samitch1.sm@gmail.com) so that meals are properly prepared. The deadline to register is April 30.

**Magnolia UMC Bicentennial Celebration** - Magnolia UMC will have its Bicentennial Celebration at 10 a.m. on Sunday, May 17 during a special service. There will be a luncheon and activities following the service. The church is located at Evesham and Barrett Avenues, Magnolia, NJ, 08049. To RSVP or share special memories about the church, contact Pastor Chereese Evans at 856-739-1052 or [mumcnj@yahoo.com](mailto:mumcnj@yahoo.com) or contact Deanna Ballinger at 215-823-0736 or at [ballingerfamily@comcast.net](mailto:ballingerfamily@comcast.net).

**Dorchester UMC hosts Undie Sunday** - The Dorchester UMC United Methodist Women's group hosted an Undie Sunday to assist the local shelter in Cumberland County. The items collected included new underwear for men, women and children, socks, blankets, hygiene items, towels and washcloths. Two packed vans were needed to deliver the items to the shelter.



## OBITUARIES

**JUNE STRICKLAND**, wife of E. Douglas Strickland, retired Associate Member of the Greater NJ Annual Conference, died on February 28. A memorial service will be scheduled at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please send memorial donations to The American Heart Association or The American Diabetes Association.

Messages of condolence can be sent to Rev. E. Douglas Strickland 123 Edison Drive, Hutto, TX 77634.

**FREDERICK D. HOFFMAN**, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference died on March 7. A funeral service was held March 28 at The Strauch Funeral Home in Scranton, PA.

Donations in Rev. Hoffman's honor may be made to: St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 605 Herbert Street, Scranton, PA 18505 or the United Church of Christ, 23 Central Square, Keene, NH 03431.

Messages of condolence may be sent to his son Stephen Hoffman at 51 Acrebroule Road, Keene, NH 03431.

**VERNA W. PINE**, the surviving spouse of Rev. Harry R. Pine died on March 10. A memorial service will take place on Saturday, April 4, 2015 at 11 a.m., followed by a lite luncheon in the Fellowship Hall at: Trinity UMC, 1985 Pennington Road, Ewing, NJ 08618.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to a charity of your choosing. Messages of condolence may be sent to: her granddaughter Verna Cornish at 139 Baker Ave., Atco, NJ 08004.



## STEWARDSHIP STORIES

by Rich Hendrickson, Director of Stewardship & Visioning

### Storytelling Is An Engaging Tool



Everywhere you turn these days storytelling is all the rage. Without a compelling story, we are told our product, idea, or our ministry doesn't stand a chance. When we start to tell a story people sit up and listen. They uncross their arms, look straight at you, move to the edge of their seats, and so on. Simply put, people love stories!

So, why are stories so powerful?

Psychologists argue that entering the world of stories "radically alters the way information is processed."

When we read dry, factual arguments, we read with our defenses up. We are critical and skeptical. But when we are absorbed in a story we drop our guard. We are moved emotionally and this seems to leave us open to new possibilities.

Storytelling is a uniquely powerful form of persuasion. We might be tempted to think that wisdom, and intelligence are the most important traits to exhibit and that we can best persuade others with a dispassionate presentation of costs and benefits. But we are creatures of story, and the process of changing one mind or the whole world usually begins with, "Once upon a time..."

Effective stewardship is about telling the story of how God is continually working out salvation, healing, mercy, justice, and wholeness in our lives and in our churches and how we are invited into that story through the giving of our time, talent, and treasure.

So, pastors, laity, local churches, districts, annual conference leaders, become great storytellers! United Methodists of Greater New Jersey don't be content with just hearing the stories, enter the story and become part of God's work and presence in the world.



## Correction



We incorrectly identified Rev. Don Stevens (middle) in last month's edition of The Relay as he talks with Rev. Fran Noll (left) and Bishop John Schol in the days after Superstorm Sandy. Rev. Stevens' response to our apology is printed below.

I appreciate and accept your apology, although it's probably not even necessary. It's the best laugh I've had all week. I'm certainly not offended in the least because I know it was an honest mistake. I appreciate your work as a journalist for the Relay and your desire to get it right. I just hope Tom isn't offended for being lumped in with me! Truth is, that was part of a period in my life that is unforgettable and yet I'd love to be able to just forget it. All that debris on the lawn behind me is stuff out of my house - personal possessions that can never be replaced. Those first couple weeks after Sandy were a blur of "what-do-we-do-next" moments. My prayer is that because of what we all learned from those days and experiences, we're all better prepared if it ever happens again. Again, thanks and keep on keepin' on!

Rev. Don Stevens  
Central UMC  
Point Pleasant Beach, NJ

# FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH.

Jesus fed 5,000 by sharing all he had.

At Annual Conference the offering will be committed to the Mission Fund. Congregations are encouraged to share their loaves and fish during this special offering.



 **A FUTURE WITH HOPE**  
MISSION FUND CAMPAIGN

A FUTURE WITH  
**HOPE**  
The People of the United Methodist Church

**IMAGINE NO**   
Our Faith In Action.  
**MALARIA**