

# THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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No. 10

## God's Grace Abounds At Train Stops

By Jeff Wolfe

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Part of the mission of the church is to meet people where they are. With nearly one half-million passengers riding trains throughout Greater New Jersey each weekday, The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey decided to meet people on their journey during the Advent season.

As a part of the All Aboard for Advent Ministry, pastors and lay leaders who live near train stations were called to bring communion to daily commuters at train station platforms.

"I think it ties in with our belief of having a ministry without doors," said Rev. Frederick Boyle, the senior pastor at Old First UMC in West Long Branch. "To give communion to commuters will come as quite a surprise to them for sure. But I think spreading God's blessing is important and we need to do that whenever and wherever we can."

Boyle committed to give communion during the first four Tuesdays of December during the early evening hours at the Long Branch Station. He says he lives about two miles from the station,

Read a GNJUMC person's opinion about the All Aboard for Advent campaign. **Page 4**

which is not uncommon for many. There are approximately 140 stations in the state with commuter train lines that run through eight of the nine of Greater New Jersey districts.

The campaign to bring communion to the train station generated a great deal of commentary around the conference and throughout the denomination. Some people felt that it was not consistent with United Methodist doctrine. Drew McIntyre, a blogger in North Carolina, posted a story on it headlined, "10 Advent Outreach Ideas Better Than Train Communion". The conference also received letters of support.

To help address the concerns, Bishop John Schol sent a letter to all clergy with resources including a specially prepared liturgy, research on John Wesley's use of communion and a copy of Wesley's sermon, "The Duty of Constant Communion".

"Primarily two groups of people ride the train: working people, both white and

*Continued on page 4*



Bill Patterson and Rev. Bob Crouthers, who are with St. Andrews UMC in Spring Lake, offered communion to commuters at the Spring Lake Train Station on Dec. 3.

## Camping Board Decides To Open Pinelands Center



The GNJ Camping Ministries Board has announced there will be three weeks of camp at the Pinelands Center at Mount Misery in the summer of 2015.

By Carolyn Conover

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Camping is making a comeback in the GNJUMC.

The GNJ Camping Ministries Board, a separate nonprofit corporation, approved a plan at its November meeting to open the Pinelands Center at Mount Misery for three weeks in the summer of 2015.

This latest decision came as good news to GNJ Executive Director of Camp and Retreat Ministries Jestie Higgins. She thinks it will be good news for those who wish to attend, too.

"One of the most beautiful things about the camp experience is that it has the limitless ability to meet people wherever they are in life and touch all people in a unique way," Higgins said. "I cannot

even begin to fathom all the positive impacts that camp has on young people. One of the most beautiful things about the camp experience is that it has the limitless ability to meet people wherever they are in life and touch all people in a unique way."

The decision came after the board reviewed recommendations from the Strategic Oversight Committee, which was appointed to review camping ministries last spring, and a feasibility report from Higgins.

The Strategic Oversight Committee worked for months and established subcommittees to evaluate the land, buildings, finances, staffing, programming and marketing. The committee concluded that reopening Pinelands Center in 2015

was viable and that Aldersgate has deferred maintenance requiring significant investment before proceeding. This comes after the decision to not open either camp in 2014.

"We have taken the time to be much more intentional about a lot of things than we have been able to be in the past," said Higgins. "I think last summer's break was a great opportunity to be honest with ourselves, to step back, and to really examine what our mission and vision are going to be as we move forward."

Higgins' feasibility report recommended three weeks of camping as a way to transition into 2015. She recommended two weeks to be dedicated to youth with separate programming aimed at elementary students, middle schoolers and teens. A third week will be dedicated to specialty camps like Niños Para Cristo which traditionally has had high enrollment and potential for growth.

The next steps are to finalize programming and start marketing the program to parents and youth in the conference. Registration and programming information should be available later this month.

Higgins is just glad that a camping experience will be available for youth that will give them an opportunity to create new memories in a different setting and atmosphere.

"Getting away from the norm, slowing down, and taking the time to connect in deeper ways is extremely important for our young people," Higgins said. "In a world full of constant technology and social media, bullying epidemics, and pressures to succeed; camp is a safe place to take a breather."

Rev. Jessica Stenstrom, who is on the Camping Ministries Board, also pointed out that camps allow youth to have a spiritual time away from the usual church setting.

"The conference camping program offers children and youth an experience that's impossible for local churches to offer," Stenstrom said. "Being at camp helps young people connect in an authentic way with God in the midst of Creation."

## Conference Responds To Ferguson

By Jeff Wolfe

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When a St. Louis County grand jury decided not to indict Ferguson, Mo., police officer Darren Wilson in the shooting and killing of unarmed teenager Michael Brown, the decision wasn't only felt in the immediate St. Louis area, but provoked strong feelings throughout the nation.

The grand jury's decision and reaction in Ferguson generated conversation, prayer and concern throughout Greater New Jersey, which is considered one of the most diverse United Methodist Conferences in the United States.

Prior to the decision, Bishop John Schol called the conference to a time of prayer. Following the decision, conference leaders began to discuss how to engage the conference in continued learning and understanding.

"When Ferguson came, it was such a big issue and as I was praying about it, I felt we needed to do something," said Rev. Vanessa Wilson, J.D., the pastor at Magnolia Road UMC in Pemberton and chairperson of the GNJ Commission on Religion and Race (CORR). "We need to bring people together. What happened

*Continued on page 4*

### What's Inside...

St. Peter's UMC's Pie Girl raises money for missions. **Page 3**

Renew, Relax, Retool is theme for Bishop's Convocation. **Page 5**

Princeton UMC's Cornerstone Kitchen feeds the hungry. **Page 6**

# A Message from the Bishop



## All things can be done... - Mark 9:23

Part 3 of 3 in a series of articles on expectations of United Methodists in Greater New Jersey.

We believe God's love heals and transforms lives. God's love is encountered in followers of Jesus who passionately share faith, hope and justice. Vital congregations form and shape passionate disciples. We equip spiritual leaders to make disciples and grow vital congregations so that God's love heals and transforms the world.

In the ninth chapter of Mark, there is a story of healing and Jesus says all things can be done for those who believe. People in our communities need healing and our congregations and disciples are the vehicles for this healing as we give ourselves fully to the ministry of Christ.

I have been sharing that there are high expectations for our conference, congregations, and disciples. Participating in the vision of God raises expectations.

In the first two articles of this series I shared that:

1. Expectations have always been a part of ministry,
2. There have been unspoken expectations,
3. The conference is becoming clearer about what are the core expectations,
4. Congregations and clergy can expect that the conference will provide quality resources, service and support for meeting expectations, and
5. The conference expects that congregations and pastors will serve together to grow the vitality of their congregation so that God's healing can be at work in and through you.

In the most recent measures, GNJ increased in vitality. We grew in the number of disciples in small groups, mission engagement and giving to mission. We had the second largest percentage of congregations growing among all conferences in the United States and 34 percent of our congregations are highly vital which is up from 16 percent in 2010.

Our congregations and pastors are serving well together to grow the vitality of their congregations.

We are finding that congregations with high expectations are meeting them because they are shaping their ministry to meet those expectations.

I recently learned that one of our congregations increased the number of small groups by stopping ministry that was not moving their mission forward. They recognized that the only way to increase small group ministry was to stop ministry that took people's time away from small groups. Small group ministry is such an important part of a vital congregation, maybe we need to stop doing things that are not accelerating our mission in order to grow small groups.

Another congregation wanted to reach "secular" people as they made new disciples. They changed everything they did to reach secular people, including the design of their building to be friendly to people who were not familiar with church. This is one of our strongest congregations in making new disciples as evidenced by the number of people who join by profession of faith.

Another congregation wanted to do more mission in the community. They stopped organizing bazaars and flea markets to raise money for mission and started engaging their people in hands on mission in the community. Miraculously mission and giving grew.

Jesus told us all things can be done if we believe and focus our attention on what God desires for our life. (Mark 9:23) There are five markers of vitality:

1. Growing disciples in worship,
2. Small groups,
3. Mission engagement,
4. Giving to mission
5. And engaging disciples to make new disciples.

To fully engage in these markers of vitality, it means stopping other activity to focus on the things we expect will happen.

We have made strong progress in growing vitality since the denomination started to emphasize it in 2010. The expectations have gotten clearer and spoken more directly, congregations have been setting goals and working toward the markers of vitality, and God has been blessing our ministry with fruitfulness. Thank you for all you have been doing and I encourage you to press on toward the goal that is before us – to allow God's love to work through us to heal the world and change lives as we make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow vital congregations for the transformation of the world.

Beverly and I wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Keep the faith!

John Schol, Bishop

## Changes for The Relay

Last month, Rev. Glenn Ferguson and Rev. Robin Van Cleef resigned their positions on The Relay staff triggering a change in management and structure.

Both men have served the Relay with their time and talents so that throughout the conference, leaders could keep abreast of the latest news and information that affect United Methodists and our mission field. Ferguson served as editor for the last 14 years. He took over this position from Van Cleef in 2000 who continued as associate editor until last month.

"Under the leadership of Glenn Ferguson and Robin Van Cleef, The Relay shared stories of hope and transfor-

mation that shaped the ministry of the conference," Bishop John Schol said. "Their impact and years of service will be missed and I am grateful for all they did through their service to the Relay."

Working in cooperation with the Commission on Communication, The Relay staff has been reorganized to be led by the communication department at the conference and the Rev. Jessica Stenstrom who will continue as a contributing writer.

If you have story ideas or information for The Relay, contact Jeff Wolfe, Editorial Manager at [jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org) or at 732-359-1047.



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## Dates Set for Future Annual Conferences

The dates for the next four GNJUMC annual conferences at the Wildwood Convention Center have been set. The 2015 annual conference will be May 28-30, a Thursday through Saturday.

Starting in 2016 the annual conferences will begin on Sunday evenings and last through Tuesday. The dates are May 22-24, 2016; May 21-23, 2017; and May 20-22, 2018.

**The February Issue  
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## THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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# Na Brings Personal Experience To Youth, Young Adult Ministry

By Jeff Wolfe

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Rev. Matthew Na spent months preparing and organizing the first IGNITE Youth Conference.

But despite planning every detail, he wasn't prepared for what he experienced during the Saturday night worship service of the three-day event.

The GNJUMC Director of Professions of Faith and Youth/Young People went to the top of the bleachers at the Wildwood Convention Center to take a picture, but got a completely different take on the night.

"When I got up there, I just started to weep," Na said of watching approximately 500 youth renewing or making a first-time commitment to their faith. "That service wasn't just for the kids, but it was for me, too. I went up there to get a picture, but I got personally filled with a sense of awe, gratitude and thankfulness."

In addition to organizing IGNITE, Na is helping continue the spiritual momentum of youth and church groups, many of whom were affected by experiencing IGNITE.

"Already what we are seeing is that groups of churches have created hubs and are getting together," Na said. "They experienced such fervency from that event that the kids are wanting more and re-creating the passion in their local churches, one with another."

Na, who started his current position last April, hopes those types of groups can continue as planning for next year's IGNITE is underway. The dates have been confirmed for Oct. 2-4 and program announcements will begin after the new year.

While Na fully believes in the importance of youth ministry, he also has a passion for helping young people continue that growth as they enter adulthood.

"We are looking at young adults as highly positioned people that have the vitality of youth, but found in professional positions of influence," Na said. "We are looking at how, as a conference, we can support and encourage our churches especially in the area of young adult



**Matthew Na dedicated his first few months organizing the IGNITE Youth Conference that took place in October. Youth ministry is just one his roles as part of the Connectional Ministries Team for the conference.**

ministries, to raise them up and disciple them."

Na said part of the focus will be to find ways and places for young adults to become a community. That may include

a conference retreat as well as creating regular places for them to gather and connect.

"Getting young adults together in larger group settings, offering inspiration

and vision while giving them opportunities to connect is what we need to do," Na said. "We also need to help churches create places for young adults not only to come to church, but to make their homes, their families, their passions, in these congregations."

"Young adults are uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge between youth, with whom they understand language and culture, and older adults, with whom they've entered shared space of work, family, heart, and home. Young adults are a key strategic area of discipleship for our local churches"

Na has key experience in youth and young adult ministries. He served in various ministry areas over the past 15 years, including the previous 10 years at Arcola Korean UMC where he began an English ministry called the Arcola Covenant Community (ACC). ACC grew out of a youth group and into a young adult and adult ministry with close to 300 in attendance each Sunday that was involved in global mission projects, and was also a congregation that gave 50 percent of its working budget to missions and outreach projects. That experience of starting a new church is something Na also will use in his current position. One of his roles is to identify areas and leaders for new faith communities and new church plants for the conference. GNJ's strategic plan calls for two new faith communities in each district and five districts with five new congregations. Na will play a vital role in making that happen.

Na is careful to point out that it will take more than one kind of strategy to work for churches of different types and sizes, no matter which area of ministry is involved.

"It's not just about heaping one large program at them and seeing what will stick," Na said. "Each person and place has its own story and in that story, a set of stages. We want to prayerfully and faithfully work together so as to make meaningful impact that will last for the Kingdom. My fellow staff colleague, Rev. Hector Burgos recently posted an African proverb which said: 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' This is true then and there and here and now."

# St. Peter's 'Pie Girl' Uses Pastries to Fund Missions

By Jeff Wolfe

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They call her the "Pie Girl."

But behind the cute nickname and sweet pastries that Cat Gleason has made and sold is an unmistakable motivation to serve in a way that belies the sensibilities of most teenagers. Gleason, who along with her family attends St. Peter's UMC in Ocean City, raised more than \$20,000 for missions by selling her specialty pies at the Ocean City Farmer's Market one night a week during each of the last three summers.

"All along it was not about me," said Gleason, an Ocean City High School graduate who started school at the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., earlier this month. "It was about others and what I could do for people who needed the money."

Gleason found her passion for helping people and pie making while volunteering at God's Kitchen on the last Wednesday of each month at St. Peter's.

"It is a lunch feeding program and sometimes my mom would let me skip school to help with that," Gleason said. "I always knew how much I loved cooking and baking. I don't remember the day, but we decided we should start selling pies. I took the two things I loved the most, helping people and baking, and put them together."

The act of putting together the pies to sell each week was no small feat. Gleason and her family, usually her mom Karin, younger sister Grace and dad Rob, were regulars in the St. Peter's kitchen on



**Cat Gleason, who attends St. Peter's UMC in Ocean City, earned the Pie Girl nickname after selling her pies at the Ocean City Farmer's Market the last three summers. She has donated more than \$20,000 to missions through her pie sales.**

pie and a pie layered with tomatoes and bacon. Gleason's menu also included some made in quiche or cobbler style as well.

"Some weeks we would make too many because

there wouldn't be a lot of people at the market," Cat Gleason said. "It was always hard to tell. But the pies were never just thrown out. They were given to someone, or sold through the church."

The whole pie making idea didn't just happen in a day. While Cat Gleason knew she wanted to do something with her love for baking, she experimented before her pie making volume hit full force.

After she discussed the possibility with then pastor Rev. Brian Roberts, now the Cape Atlantic District Superintendent, they decided to test the pie market one spring.

"I talked with Pastor Roberts and he really liked the idea," Gleason said. "He said let's give it a trial run. The first sale we had was an Easter sale and we just

had three varieties of pies. But that went so well, we decided to do the summer."

The Gleasons went through the steps of first being able to reserve the kitchen at St. Peter's for the pie making days, and then through the application process to get a booth at the Farmer's Market, which is open from mid-June until mid-September.

The other part of the process that benefited the Gleasons is that Cat's older siblings, Liz and Thomas also would join in at times. So while the pie making was to ultimately help others, it also helped bond the Gleason family.

"Without a doubt it did that for us," said Karin Gleason. "Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday we would be together. We spent hours and hours together. Laughing and even fighting sometimes."

Karin Gleason said it was their daughter Liz who first drew them into attending St. Peter's about three and a half years ago.

"She was like, hey there is this really cool church I want to try, will you come with me?" Karin Gleason said. "When your teenager says something like that, you don't say no to it."

While that decision certainly influenced the Gleasons' lives in many ways, just what it will mean for the long-term is impossible to measure. That's because one day Cat Gleason hopes to have her own restaurant as well as a soup kitchen to help feed those in need.

"That's my dream," Cat Gleason said. "I definitely don't want to lose my mission."

# Communion and Commuters Go Hand in Hand

By Linda Ellwein  
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Most Americans participated in Holy Communion as a child - and many haven't since. It's likely tucked away somewhere, embedded in their spiritual memory. They probably can't say why it moves them and stirs something within - but it does.

For others, it may not stir a thing. Either way, meeting people where they are by offering a face to face, sensory and spontaneous experience of Holy Communion during the season that celebrates the birth of Christ is not only a creative gesture, but a most holy outreach.

I hear rumblings this sacrament is only to be practiced where a community is gathered, in the most reverent of circumstances. This begs the question, have these naysayers commuted to and from work daily via Grand Central or Penn Station? I have. Are they all believers? I don't know, but I don't know that for

## Commentary

sure in church the first Sunday of each month either.

Commuters may not talk much but are, in fact, a community. Each morning they gather on the platform - usually the same people for the same train - often sitting in the same car. When someone's missing, it's noticed. Individuality may be lost once in Grand Central or Penn, but a difficult to define camaraderie and sense of community exists here. When something special occurs while commuting, whether it's a moving "street" performance, a wonderful and spirited ticket taker, a medical emergency, etc., commuters draw together in this shared experience just as they do in their home neighborhoods. They are neighbors on a train.

This is especially true during the holiday season. People lighten in spirit. They welcome a kindness or events that

celebrate the season. There is a unity among the collective. What could be more "in the spirit" than offering an opportunity for Holy Communion? Offering this holy and sensory experience that might stir a longing that's gone ignored or pushed aside for life's many demands is a beautiful gesture drawing Christ right into Christmas in the most reverent way we know.

Paul asked us not to take this lightly, and as a church, we do partake with solemnity. But is it that we need always be solemn, or is the intention of the sacrament to be an experiential and authentic connection to Christ? If people are asked to direct their hearts with true intention to Christ and "on earth as it is in heaven," is it enough? All this said, this seems an outreach for those who feel the spirit's prompting.

It's refreshing to think of an outreach not guilt-tripping people, asking for money, or trying to shove religion down their throat. If I was stepping off a train and saw

someone sharing communion, I can imagine my likely response. I might suddenly realize it is something I've been missing in my life or wonder about who these people are who are bringing us this gift. I might connect with my past or wonder about the future. I may or may not share in communion but it would get me thinking.

If doing this is a miss-step, we will learn from it. But holding the reins too tightly rarely ends well. Especially when the horse needs to move forward.

From where I sit, no matter how reverently we hold the sacraments, placing the legality of our sacraments above meeting people where they are is a clear indicator we've lost touch with the heart of Christ's message - not to mention, his example. To suggest this is irreverent or compromising to the sacrament is equivalent to saying we are too good for them.

I think we should give people an opportunity to remember who they are. The Holy Spirit will do the rest.



## God's Grace

Continued from page 1

blue collar, who take the train to work, and low income and poor people who need the train as a means of transportation," Schol said. "I think these are exactly the people God wants to reach and the people that the church too often does not reach."

Some churches decided to participate in other ways. Absecon UMC in the Cape Atlantic District handed out 102 goodie bags containing muffins and information about the church's worship services. The church members also took prayer

requests and prayed with several people.

"What a wonderful time we had at the train station this morning," said Barb Sabbath, of Absecon on Dec. 1. "We are going back next Monday with even more to give them. This was definitely a blessing for us."

Boyle emphasized that there is good reason to pause and remember why this time of year means so much to so many.

"We really need to put in people's minds that this is the Advent season," he said. "With all of the commercialization, I think that offering communion at a train station says that it is in the unexpected places that God shows up."

## Ferguson

Continued from page 1

in Ferguson has different meaning to different people. We need to give them information and give them tools."

Bishop Schol met with African American clergy from around the conference to hear their concerns and listen to their counsel. He consulted conference leaders and in a letter to the conference shared joint agreements about how we would continue to learn and grow as multicultural conference.

"The church and our nation must continue to heal the wounds of racism and address racism in our communities, congregations and conference," Schol said. "I call all of us to be engaged to bringing an end to racism and discrimination and to work for God's justice."

GNJ CORR scheduled a worship service and discussion, *A Time for Prayer and Reflection for Justice and Peace*, for

Sunday, Dec. 7 to specifically discuss the Ferguson reaction. The meeting was a follow up to their *Just In Time Conversation About Race* that took place just after the shooting occurred in August and demonstrates a long term commitment to confront racism and the violence it causes in our society.

The event was cosponsored by three other conference groups including: Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Board of Church and Society, and Commission on Strengthening the Black Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Scheduled speakers included De'Travius A. Bethea, Esq. and Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell.

The *Conversation About Race* was initiated in 2013 by the GNJ CORR as a safe forum for clergy and laity to discuss issues of race, ethnicity and culture, as well as to gain tools to build bridges for full and equal participation of racial and ethnic people in the total life of The United Methodist Church.

## COSROW Offers First Time Award

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women in the GNJUMC is taking applications for the Helenor Alter Davison Award, a new honor to help recognize the important role that women play in the mission of The United Methodist Church. The award is named for the first woman ordained in the UMC tradition.

Things to consider for a nominee include being an active member of The United Methodist Church (either clergy and laity); being active in the local church, in their community, district and/or annual conference; exhibiting work and ministry supporting the vitality of the church by empowering women and minorities; and exemplifying strong leadership skills, demonstrating vision, passion, resilience, sense of purpose, inclusiveness, perseverance, and willingness to work with and stand for the status and role of women in ministry.

The deadline for receiving applications is Jan. 31. For more information about the application, contact Michelle Ryoo at 201-213-6827 or at [MichelleMRyoo@yahoo.com](mailto:MichelleMRyoo@yahoo.com).

## 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.



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

## Applications for Seese Scholarship Being Accepted

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey pastors are invited to apply for the Harry A. Seese Memorial Scholarship for continuing education. Each year this award is given to a pastor whose plans for continuing education have led to strengthening his or her ministry in the local church.

Guided by Rose Seese of Gibbsboro, Harry's widow, and supported by ongoing gifts, the scholarship honors her late husband, the Rev. Harry A. Seese, who died while serving Medford UMC. Application procedures and eligibility requirements can be obtained by contacting Ginny Kaiser at the GNJ Connectional Ministries Team, (732) 359-1043, or (877) 677-2594, ext. 1043 or at [gkaiser@gnjumc.org](mailto:gkaiser@gnjumc.org).

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# Clergy Can Connect at Bishop's Convocation

By Jeff Wolfe  
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No one can quite understand what a pastor's job is like, except for, of course, another pastor. That's one of the reasons why the GNJ Bishop's Convocation can be an important time in the life of a pastor. The Convocation is designed for clergy to connect and share their experiences with each other.

The Convocation's theme is Renew, Relax and Retool and will take place Jan. 26-28 at the renovated Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch, N.J. Another part of the Convocation will include "The Coach Approach" training style, led by Chris Holmes, who has served in ministry for 33 years. All nine of the GNJ District Superintendents and all five of the GNJ Connectional Ministries Team members received The Coach Approach training earlier this year and came away impressed.

"You know the greatest thing about coaching is that it's all about the person being coached," said Rich Hendrickson, the Director of Stewardship and Visioning for GNJ. "As a coach, my job is to

## Bishop's Convocation

Where: Ocean Place Resort & Spa,  
Long Branch, N.J.  
When: Jan. 26-28  
Theme: Renew, Relax, Retool  
Costs:  
Register By Dec. 10:  
Double room - \$250; Single room - \$350;  
Commuter - \$125;  
By Dec. 31:  
Double room - \$275; Single room - \$375;  
Commuter - \$150.  
By Jan. 15:  
Double room - \$300; Single room - \$400;  
Commuter - \$175.

help the coachee discover the answers, insights, strategies, etc. to whatever it is that they want to work on. I do that by listening deeply, asking powerful questions, expanding the possibilities, and helping them to create an action plan. We are all creative, resourceful, and whole and coaching brings out the best in us."

Holmes says his coaching style makes a point to be sensitive to the indi-

vidual needs of clergy.

"Coaching is the art of coming alongside a pastor, helping the pastor get sharply focused on what needs to happen and then helping them move purposefully forward toward those goals," said Holmes. "I coach the being of the person as well as their ministry goals."

Holmes will also bring three other trained members of his team to help with the coaching in Rev. Dr. Karin Walker, Rev. Chris Owens and Rev. Dr. David Argo. Holmes' team, along with the GNJ Connectional Ministries staff and district superintendents, will serve as coaches at the convocation.

"At the heart, the coach approach to ministry is coming alongside another person in a way that is highly relational, deeply intentional, and always contextual to lead toward transformation," said GNJUMC Bishop John Schol. "It is a way of being present with others - listening deeply, asking helpful questions, expanding possibilities and forwarding action on the God-sized things in ministry and in life."

Some of those things include each part of this year's theme.

## Renew

To renew means to revive your spirit through worship and conversation so you can re-center yourself for ministry.

## Relax

This means to relax your soul though ocean views, good meals, games, recreation and fellowship with colleagues so that you can re-energize for family, friends, and ministry. Some of the completed renovations at Ocean Place include an indoor pool, a full service spa and a giant chess board in the lobby.

## Retool

This means to retool through learning so that you have new resources to use in your ministry, family and colleague relationships.

Another major goal of the Convocation is to help clergy have continued joy in their ministry, or if needed, to rediscover the joy in their ministry.

The Jan. 26 session will start at 1 p.m. with sessions and breaks until a 6:30 p.m. dinner. Day 2 will begin with worship at 8:30 a.m., with sessions and breaks throughout the day until dinner at 6 p.m. The final day will also begin at 8:30 a.m. with a closing worship session at 12:15 p.m.

## A Look At The Coaches For Bishop's Convocation

**Rev. Dr. Karin Walker:** She has served as the lead pastor at Fallston UMC in Fallston, Md., for the last 18 months. She has served four pastoral appointments in the local church, each of which has grown under her leadership. Prior to Fallston, she served as a District Superintendent, leading leadership development efforts including large church staffing, the small church initiative, and the Appreciative Inquiry approach to change. She was a founding Director of Just Peace and has served as a mediator for 15 years working with churches in conflict. She has coached 30 pastors toward growing healthy congregations and also mentors new pastors. Walker leads clergy and laity in the BWC and Eastern Pennsylvania conferences in dialogue about LGBT issues in various settings promoting healthy conversations. She also is the architect for the Financial Leadership Academy, being sponsored by the Mid Atlantic Foundation, which seeks to help clergy develop greater knowledge about church finances and stewardship. Walker also coaches track and field at the local high school.



Walker

**Rev. Chris Owens:** He is the Regional Missional Strategist for the Southern Region of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. In that role he serves as a coach, trainer and consultant for church leadership, growth and missional engagement for the churches in his region. Owens has been under appointment for 13 years having served churches in rural, suburban and urban areas, having also served multicultural and multiracial congregations. He received coach training and mentoring through the Coach Approach Skills Training courses and currently devotes nearly half of his ministry to coaching clergy and laity into leadership excellence. When not pastoring and coaching, Owens is a local musician, singing and playing bass in two successful rock bands.



Owens

**Rev. Dr. David Argo:** He has served a broad range of congregations during his 31 years of parish ministry - a three congregation rural circuit, a declining urban congregation, an ex-urban growing congregation, a community engaged urban congregation and a large suburban congregation with a multi-person staff. While he was District Superintendent for the Greater Washington District, professions of faith, worship attendance and apportionment payments went from a consistent decline to increases in each of these areas. He is now a consultant for the Texas Methodist Foundation. His interest and experience with organizational systems has proven to be an asset as he works with pastors, congregations and judicatories.



Argo

**Rev. Chris Holmes:** Holmes is a full-time coach and trainer throughout the United Methodist Church and other denominations. He served for seven years as the Annapolis District Superintendent in the Baltimore-Washington Conference as part of his 33 years in ministry. Holmes is a graduate of the Coach Training Institute and is certified by the International Coaching Federation as a "Professional Certified Coach." He is serving two years as President of the Maryland Chapter of the International Coaching Federation and is endorsed for the ministry of coaching by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency. Holmes is also an accomplished watercolor artist.



Holmes

## How Does Coach Approach Help Pastors See Potential?

By Chris Holmes

A slight shift is underway in how pastors lead congregations — toward a way of leading that asks great questions rather than gives good answers, a way that is more "come along side" than top down. It respects the natural giftedness of the laity and intentionally helps lay persons channel their passion into ministry. This shift is called the "coach approach" to ministry.

In his book, *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality* Gary Collins says,

"Someday 'training Christians to coach' will be common parlance and a valuable ministry in the church, even as coaching has become widely accepted in the larger secular community. Someday people in the church will recognize that effective leadership is coaching and that the most effective Christian leaders — and the most effective Christians — must be effective coaches.

Here are some key aspects of the Coach Approach to ministry:

1. It is different from counseling, mentoring, consulting or spiritual direction.
2. It is a set of skills most pastors have in their ministry tool kit but need to strengthen.
3. It is not used for remedial work with low performers who struggle with effectiveness.
4. It is for the highly motivated and for solid leaders who are striving to be even better.
5. It helps people move from where they are now to where they want to be.
6. It honors each person's inner expertise and wisdom.
7. It moves from talk to action to celebration.
8. It helps leaders get specific about the God-sized things that need to happen in ministry.
9. It helps leaders stay accountable to themselves and to God.

## Commentary

The coach approach in ministry helps individuals consider a wider number of perspectives, develop larger goals, set clearer objectives, move into action and stay focused on the big picture. It helps individuals be more productive and experience fulfillment in more aspects of their lives and ministry. What would it look like for a pastor to lead with a coach approach to ministry?

1. Pastors utilizing this approach would spend more time in one-on-one conversations listening deeply to key church leaders focusing on their passions, objectives, and accountability.
2. Pastors would take a "come alongside" posture in leading rather than the posture of "directive leadership" in most instances. The role of the pastor becomes one of continually eliciting from the laity passion and initiative for ministry.
3. Pastors would help leaders set clear ministry or committee objectives, help them stay on track with their objectives, hold them accountable for progress toward their objectives, and celebrate their successes.

At its heart, this approach embraces a deep appreciation for the ownership of ministry residing with the laity and respects their resourcefulness and giftedness. It also frees the pastor from the myth that he or she is the expert in all things.

The coach approach is a skill set and a mindset which every pastor can employ to help persons identify their passions for serving God and follow through to make a difference in God's transformation of the world.

*Rev. Chris Holmes is a full-time coach and trainer throughout the United Methodist Church, served in ministry for 33 years and is a graduate of the Coach Training Institute.*



## RELAY ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Back issues of the Relay are available at  
[www.gnjumc.org/news/issue](http://www.gnjumc.org/news/issue)

# Princeton UMC Takes Lead as Community Kitchen Host

By Jessica Stenstrom  
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What started with some soup leftover from a canceled church event, God has blessed and grown into a feeding program that serves an average of 110 meals each week.

Larry Apperson, said that many years ago, a church he attended in Atlanta had a feeding wagon that took breakfast to the streets. The model stuck in the back of his mind for years and eventually inspired the creation of Cornerstone Community Kitchen, a ministry of the Princeton United Methodist Church which feeds the hungry in the community every Wednesday night; rain or shine, holiday or ordinary day.

Apperson said the first attempt was just by chance when inclement weather canceled a scheduled event at the church and he and another couple decided to offer the planned meal - soup - to the hungry. He said they placed signs outside the church and even walked the streets, but couldn't find any hungry to feed. The lesson taught them two things: that they would need to advertise well and that they would also need to be consistent.

Years later, these two principles stuck as Princeton UMC launched Cornerstone Community Kitchen on June 6, 2012. Apperson said under the leadership of Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, senior pastor, the church took a step of faith when they received a phone call from the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen [TASK] looking to start another satellite site, and asking if the church would be interested.

On that first night, TASK provided all of the food: a hot entrée, vegetables, salad, and drinks and the church supplied the workforce and space. Together they fed 12 people. Today TASK still provides the hot entrée, but Cornerstone Community Kitchen provides the rest of the meal to serve those 110.

Apperson said not only are more people being fed through Cornerstone Community Kitchen, more volunteers are joining the task of feeding the hungry. With a database of 110 volunteers, only 30 percent being church members, the kitchen joins people from all walks of life.

"The greatest unexpected pleasure that's come from our service has been the coming together of people from



Joan Klass (from left), a Princeton UMC member, works with Joanne McGann, a community volunteer, and George Lee, a Princeton UMC team captain at the Cornerstone Community Kitchen on a Wednesday night.

throughout the community to serve," said Apperson.

While planning begins on Monday and set-up and preparation occurs through much of Wednesday, weekly teams of people from the church, scout troops and other religious, community and volunteer organizations make it all possible. Apperson calls it "a work of love".

Many people do not associate the city of Princeton with hunger, but it's there, said Dennis Micai, executive director of TASK.

"Through this satellite site, we will be able to provide meals to people who may not be able to make it to our locations in Trenton or Hightstown," Micai said.

A woman who takes the bus to a job in Princeton and is a regular at the meal reiterates that message. "Some of us who have jobs; we can't get help from the government, but we still have trouble paying our bills," she said.

Feeding the hungry was not the only

motivation for starting Cornerstone Community Kitchen, said Purkis-Brash.

"I very much heard a message from God about the importance of finding a way to build community within the wider community," she said. "This is not a Soup Kitchen it's a Community Kitchen where a single senior citizen can share a meal and fellowship, where a woman learning to speak English can come and practice with others who offer encouragement, where a student who is used to having dinner with his mom can come for a nutritious meal and tender care from a mom who is volunteering."

Apperson agreed, saying that while there are no religious (or political) messages shared at Cornerstone Community Kitchen, he has seen many people grow.

"We see people changing," he said.

He shared that for him one of the God moments was hearing a young boy say that he loves to eat at Jesus' restaurant.

In many ways Cornerstone Community Kitchen is just like a restaurant with dinners being served on fine china by waiters and waitresses with live piano music playing in the background. Apperson shared that another woman who frequently attends, enjoys it because it is one of the only places she can just sit and be served.

In addition to the feeding program, Cornerstone Community Kitchen also runs a clothes closet, free clothing that clients can select during the dinner. Princeton UMC also contributes to and helps run a clothes closet (Threads of Hope) at Chambers Street United Methodist Church.

When asked if he has any advice for a church that may be feeling led to having a feeding ministry of their own, Apperson encourages taking the leap of faith.

"Do it," he said. "On a local level, even if you feed just one person, you've made an impact."

## Shoeboxes For The World



Cookstown UMC was one of several churches in Greater New Jersey that participated in collecting and filling shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Cookstown collected 185 shoe boxes, with eighty of them coming from elementary school aged children. The boxes are distributed throughout the world by the Samaritan's Purse Organization.



*The spirit of Christmas is always near; it shines like a beacon throughout the year. Don't look in a store or high on a shelf, for sharing and giving are found in yourself.*

--Unknown

May the beacon of sharing and giving shine in your heart and home this Christmas season, bringing you abundant blessings in 2015.

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# A Future With Hope helps Lorenzo Family Return Home for Thanksgiving

By Jeff Wolfe

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TOMS RIVER – Two years ago on Oct. 29 the Lorenzo family nearly lost its house during Superstorm Sandy.

And like many since then, the Lorenzos felt lost in their effort to rebuild as well.

But that's when they found A Future With Hope, which with other organizations, had the family of five back in their home for Thanksgiving.

"To get this house put back together has been a long journey," said Chad Lorenzo on the storm anniversary, who along with his wife Angie and three children are happy to be back home. "We've just been in awe of how everybody has worked together."

The Lorenzos' home was one of the stops for New Jersey First Lady Mary Pat Christie on Oct. 29 to commemorate the second anniversary of the storm to celebrate recovery for some and send a reminder that there are thousands more who have not returned to their homes.

Other groups involved in the rebuilding of the Lorenzos' home include the Ocean County Long Term Recovery Group, the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund and the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

"It takes partnerships for things like this to happen," said GNJ Bishop John Schol, who is also on the board of trustees for A Future With Hope. "We all need to continue to work together."

Angie Lorenzo felt she was working by herself to try and begin her family's recovery process. It was when she became more than frustrated that she found A Future With Hope.

"Before A Future With Hope helped us, we were just lost," she said. "My sister-in-law kept telling me to call this number she had. After I called and talked to people, I was like why didn't I call this number four months earlier?"

Christie is also the chairperson for the Hurricane Sandy NJ Relief Fund, which has given \$750,000 to A Future With Hope. It was part of that money that went directly toward rebuilding the Lorenzo's home.

"This is a great day," Christie said. "We've grown a lot in two years. The fact that the Lorenzos have used a number of touches on this house is great."

Ocean County Long Term Recovery



Chad and Angie Lorenzo and their children are joined by New Jersey First Lady Mary Pat Christie and Bishop John Schol on the Second Anniversary of Superstorm Sandy. The Lorenzo's moved home in time for Thanksgiving.

Group Executive Director Susan Marticek said that over 100 volunteers have worked on the Lorenzo home, with some coming from as far as Nebraska. In all, she said the volunteers performed about 2,300 hours of work worth about \$65,000. "The only way to navigate this road to recovery is through collaboration with other organizations," Marticek said. "We need the government, businesses and non-profits to work together and today is a celebration of that."

The second anniversary of Sandy also marked a significant day in the history of A Future With Hope as it announced the completion of its 100<sup>th</sup> house. A Future

With Hope, which has had more than 8,500 volunteers, has a goal of rebuilding between 300 and 500 houses that were damaged or destroyed by the storm.

"While sometimes we get all caught up in the numbers and budgets and subcontractor management, it is so very important to remember that 100 represents 100 families who are now one step closer to their new normal," A Future With Hope Executive Director Bobbie Ridgely said.

Leaders of each of the organizations echoed the importance of not forgetting the thousands of more people whose lives have not returned to normal because of Superstorm Sandy.

"It takes people like the volunteers who have done an amazing job and we want to say thank you to them," Schol said. "But we also want to say that the recovery is not finished."

Schol emphasized that it will take faith for more recovery journeys to end in success.

"What we have learned through this disaster is that when we go through deep waters, our hope is in knowing God goes with us," he said. "We have also learned that by working together we are stronger when people need us most. We have become a hopeful future for thousands of people."

## Calvary Korean Festival Raises Big Funds for A Future With Hope

By James Lee

Calvary Korean United Methodist Church might have been a well-kept secret in East Brunswick.

But that all changed on Oct. 18.

That was the date of the church hosting its first Korean Food and Cultural Festival which had about 2,000 people attend and while raising \$38,000 for A Future With Hope.

"It seems that our Korean population is not much known to the East Brunswick folks," Calvary senior pastor Rev. Sang-Won Doh said. "We are just next to the East Brunswick Library and the municipal court, so this is one of the central places. People just pass by the church all the time. They don't have very much interaction with the Korean population."

As Calvary Church approaches its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next year, the church decided to celebrate by opening its doors to the local community by hosting the festival.

"I think East Brunswick is one of the most diverse communities, as it is always good to know the different cultures," Doh said. "People tend to think that small ethnic groups are isolated from the main society, but they are not. We are sharing



Traditional Korean dances such as buchaechum were featured during the Korean Food and Cultural Festival at Calvary Korean UMC in East Brunswick in October.

the concerns of Sandy together."

The church's two main goals were to change its image by sharing its culture with the community and to also raise funds for A Future With Hope, an organization founded by the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey to help

those affected by Superstorm Sandy who are unable to receive aid. After the event, most agreed that Calvary had succeeded in both goals.

Among those to attend the festival were East Brunswick Mayor David Stahl and Middlesex County Assemblywoman

Nancy J. Pinkin. GNJUMC Bishop John Schol could not attend, but did welcome attendees through an engaging video message. Also in attendance were many Korean War veterans, whom Calvary Church was honored to host.

The food and entertainment featured many Korean traditions. Various Korean foods such as kimchi burger and bulgogi tacos were on sale. Also, performances in the church's main sanctuary featured Korean traditional dances such as buchaechum, a traditional dance performed with fans, and Tae Kwon Do demonstrations. A large yard sale was held throughout the day as well.

The festival was so well received that many in attendance asked if there were plans to hold it next year. Those who attend Calvary and helped make the festival happen also experienced a unity that crossed language and cultural barriers as members of all ministries of the church joined together with the shared vision to reach out to the community and raise funds for Sandy victims. Calvary Church plans to continue the movement towards being an active body and witness of Jesus Christ in East Brunswick.

James Lee is the associate pastor at Calvary Korean United Methodist Church



## GLOBAL RELAY

*Brief Reports from around the world via United Methodist News Service and Newscope*

### United Methodists gather to remember Sand Creek

EADS, Colo. (UMNS) — The 150th anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre is “not a celebration; it is a commemoration,” the Rev. Michael Dent, pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Denver, said during the Prayerful Preparation gathering held Nov. 29 at Eads United Methodist Church.

### Tattoo ministry: Expression of Christian commitment

OCALA, Fla. (UMNS) — A tattoo parlor is hardly the likeliest place that Christians would be found on a Saturday morning studying the Bible. But nearly 40 members of Wildwood United Methodist Church met at Fat Kats Artistry and about a dozen members, including the Rev. Michael Beck, got the United Methodist cross and flame inked onto forearms, hands and, in at least one case, a foot.

### Bishops to get 3 percent raise in 2015

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Most United Methodist bishops will see a 3 percent salary boost next year, a higher raise than they’ve seen in five years. The board of the denomination’s finance agency decided on the pay increase based on a bishop compensation study and trends in the secular workforce.

### Filipino church members walk for accountability

CABANATUAN CITY, Philippines (UMNS) — Some 500 church members and students from The United Methodist Church in the Philippines, led by Manila Area Bishop Rodolfo A. Juan, gathered Nov. 17 to express their indignation about graft and corruption.

### Kassig remembered for humanitarian service

INDIANAPOLIS (UMNS) — During an interfaith memorial service at Butler University, Abdul-Rahman Peter Kassig was remembered for his dedication to serving others. The 26-year-old Indianapolis native lost his life while providing humanitarian aid in Syria.

### African women earn money via cellphone subscription

ABIDJAN, Côte d’Ivoire (UMNS) — Cellphone subscriptions are generating income that women of The United Methodist Church in Côte d’Ivoire hope to use to start small businesses. The Côte d’Ivoire United Methodist Women received a check this month for \$1,000 U.S., earnings on a social media network.

### Religious groups support EPA rules on carbon pollution

WASHINGTON, D.C. (UMNS) — The United Methodist Board of Church and Society was among the 17 religious organizations whose representatives met Nov. 18 with Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy to show support of the EPA’s proposed rules to address carbon pollution from power plants.

### ‘My Carolina Today’ features church’s malaria fight

RALEIGH, N.C. (UMNS) — Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, who leads the North Carolina Conference, shared with a television audience the work the denomination is doing through Imagine No Malaria. The conference also aired 30-second commercials to promote Imagine No Malaria through Dec. 2.

### Liberia Partners in mission together

DETROIT (UMNS) — Eighty participants from 14 conferences, including two bishops and three missionaries, gathered to focus on the needs of Liberia beyond Ebola. The Liberia Partners Summit heard from missionaries who have returned to West Africa and stressed that the emphasis now needs to move beyond crisis to focusing on schools, health safety, and other prevention and development issues.

### Iowa clergyman faces complaint for same-sex wedding

DES MOINES, Iowa (UMNS) — The Iowa Conference cabinet filed a formal complaint against the Rev. Larry Sonner for officiating at a same-sex wedding. “I invite you to a season of prayer as the supervisory response to Rev. Sonner’s action is directed toward a just resolution,” Bishop Julius Calvin Trimble wrote in a pastoral letter to the conference.

### Mozambique women celebrate 50th anniversary

INHAMBANE, Mozambique (UMNS) — More than 750 members of the Women’s Association of the South Mozambique Conference celebrated the group’s 50th anniversary Jubilee at the Chicouque Mission. Representatives from six countries joined Bishop Joaquina Filipe Nhanala, the only woman bishop in Africa, in honoring the group’s work on issues affecting women in the church and in the community.

### Exemplary United Methodist laywoman Alice Lee dies

MONROEVILLE, Ala. (UMNS) — Though known to the broader world as the older sister of Harper Lee, author of “To Kill a Mockingbird,” Alice Lee earned recognition and deep respect in United Methodist circles for decades of service at the local church, conference and general church level. Alice Lee, also a female legal pioneer in south Alabama, died Nov. 17 at age 103.

### Clergy Family Care Summit offers ways to support families

CHICAGO (UMNS) — The United Methodist Church gathered experts to discuss issues facing clergy and their families and to suggest ways the church can help improve their lives. The 23-member task force made recommendations on how bishops, annual conferences, district superintendents and others can help support clergy families. The summit was convened by the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women.



Haitian children enjoy playing a game with former Rutgers football star and UMVIM team member Brian Leonard during a mission trip to the island of Gonave last March.

## Rutgers Students Join UMVIM Team in Haiti

By Kathy Ahmad  
[kahmad@comcast.net](mailto:kahmad@comcast.net)

Some jobs get started and never get finished.

When the GNJUMC United Methodist Volunteers in Mission went to Haiti last March, one of their goals was to continue a job that started 20 years ago.

The 10-member team, which included six Rutgers University football players, had the goal of completing Zabricot Methodist Church on the island of Gonave, which is off the west coast of Haiti. Construction on the church had started 20 years ago, but due to the lack of funds, work was stopped before the roof was put on, causing most of the work which had been accomplished to be destroyed by weather throughout the last two decades.

The UMVIM team worked side by side with Haitians who were members of the community and the work was directed by a Haitian site boss. With project funds provided by the UMVIM team, construction materials were purchased and Haitian workers were hired. The hiring of the Haitian workers was an important aspect of the mission because unemployment on Gonave is even more severe than for most of Haiti. By the end of the week, significant progress was made on the walls of the church.

However, the week was not all work. Many children do not go to school on Gonave due to the inability of families to pay tuition and buy uniforms, which are required by all schools. This meant a lot

of children were hanging around waiting for team members to take a break so that they could play soccer and jump rope. As soon as school let out, more children joined in the soccer and jump rope activities which continued into the evening.

The final night included a party with all of the children and workers. Local women prepared a meal of chicken and rice with juice and cookies for more than 100 people. The children played with UMVIM team members until late into the evening and everyone was sad to leave the next day for their return trip to the U.S.

Nearly all of the team members were affiliated with Rutgers. Team members included Rutgers football players Ryan Brodie, Quentin Gause, Quanzell Lambert, Bryan Leoni, David Miliewski, and Gary Nova, Brian Leonard, a former Rutgers football player, John Mauer, campus director of Athletics in Action at Rutgers, Tariq Ahmad, Director of Recruiting Operations for Rutgers Football and Kathy Ahmad, the GNJUMC UMVIM coordinator.

Many of the team members said the trip was a life changing experience. The UMVIM philosophy of mission emphasizes building relationships with the members of the community where it serves and showing the community that it is not forgotten by Methodist brothers and sisters in the United States, a purpose that was clearly fulfilled on this trip.

The GNJUMC UMVIM team will be returning to Haiti again on March 14-21.

## Construction Continues On New Conference Center



Construction is well underway on the new conference center that received final financing approval at a special Annual Conference session in September. The new building in Neptune, N.J., is expected to be completed by the spring of 2016.

**The February Issue  
Deadline is January 15, 2015**



## STEWARDSHIP STORIES

by Rich Hendrickson, Director of Stewardship & Visioning

### Accentuate the Positive

Herb Mather and Don Joiner in their book "Celebrate Giving" make the point that when parishioners give their money to the church they are more interested in what their money does than anything else. People give to support dreams and visions and they get more excited about mission and ministry than they do about bookkeeping. Stories are much more interesting than numbers.

While a line-item budget is absolutely necessary for managing church funds, don't be surprised if a numbers budget alone doesn't motivate giving. You need something else; you need the ministry stories behind those numbers to stir people's eagerness to give.

So when you present your ministry plans for the coming year to your church members and participants, present them as **goals to be reached, programs to be carried out, ministries to be offered, missions to be fulfilled, people to be served, and lives to be transformed.** Belief in the church's mission is the No. 1 reason people give. Tell the story of your church's mission all year long.

If you need help telling your church's story contact the Stewardship Coordinator at [RHendrickson@gnjumc.org](mailto:RHendrickson@gnjumc.org).

## Special Christmas Events

**Saturday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m., Jackson UMC:** There will be live nativity outside the church that will have actors who are young adults with special needs. The event is part of Jackson UMC's Christian Friends Forever fellowship, which also includes other churches in the area. There will also be a 6 p.m. soup and bread supper prior to the nativity beginning. The Christian Friends Forever group meets the first two Mondays of each month at Jackson UMC.

**Thursday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m., North Hunterdon UMC:** Rachel's Circle: A Service of Remembrance, Healing and Hope. This is a service for those who have experienced infertility, had a miscarriage or experienced infant loss and are seeking comfort, healing, and hope during this holiday season.

**Sunday, Dec. 21, 7 p.m. Middletown UMC:** A special Blue Christmas Worship service will be held on the longest night of the year.

**Tuesday, Dec. 23, 6:30 p.m., 8 p.m., Sharptown North UMC:** The church will host two Christmas Eve Services in a heated tent at Locke Avenue Park in Woolwich Township. The services are traditional candlelight events.

**Thursday, Dec. 25, 1-4 p.m. Wantage UMC:** The church will be one of the hosts for the Fourth Annual Free Christmas Dinner at First Baptist Church located at 4 E. Main Street in Sussex. The dinner will consist of a full turkey dinner with all the fixings. Lasagna will also be offered to those who wish for something a bit different. Refreshments, coffee, desserts of all kinds, fellowship and songs of the holidays will be offered. For more information or to make a donation, contact Melissa Fortuna at (973) 997-1822.

## Conference Happenings



Former Magnolia Road UMC pastor Rev. Raymond H. Gough (from left), current Magnolia Road pastor Rev. Vanessa M. Wilson, and Josephine Rousseau, wife of the deceased former pastor Rev. Horace W. Rousseau, were together at the church's anniversary celebration.

**Magnolia Road celebrates anniversary** - Magnolia Road UMC in Pemberton Township celebrated 80 years of continuous service in one location in an October Homecoming Celebration. The event brought together past and present members, pastors and community residents to enjoy refreshments and conversation as they viewed a display of the church's rich history, beautiful quilts and shared the vision for the future.

**Service benefits Allen Project** - A service of prayer, praise and thanksgiving sponsored by the The Asbury Area Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Church on Nov. 22 benefited Allen Project Homeless Prevention. A dozen churches, A.M.E., Baptist and UMC raised \$2,000 with an afternoon of choirs, sacred dance, a children's skit, solos, and inspired speakers.

**Space Available** - Community UMC of Roselle Park is interested in renting its facility to a Christian group on Sundays and possibly other times during the week. The church has a sanctuary that can hold more than 200 people, has a large kitchen and basement, has ample parking and is within a short walk from a train station. For more information, contact Milt Woodruff at 1-908-245-1424.

**GNJ Theologian honored** - Dr. Frederick Mills, a member of the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey was named an honorary alumnus of LaGrange College in Georgia. He has been a member of the GNJ conference since 1953 and has been a full professor at LaGrange, a liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church, since 1973.

**Haleyville celebrates anniversary** - Halleyville UMC celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special service and dinner. The current pastor at Haleyville is Mark O'Shields, who is the 43<sup>rd</sup> pastor in the church's rich history.

**Church helps with Sandy Relief** - Christ UMC in Lakewood was a breakfast place for a group of volunteers from Florida, called Team Effort, this past summer for eight weeks. The church served dinner for the volunteers each Wednesday. The church also hosted a group of over 100 volunteers from Avon Lake (Ohio) Church of Christ for one week. Former Lakewood mayor Ray Coles presented the church with a plaque for its service.

**Galilee celebrates anniversary** - Galilee United Methodist Church in Englewood celebrated its 101<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Nov. 16. The theme for the occasion was "Reborn, Rejuvenated, and Ready to Regenerate, Galilee United Methodist Church: 101 Years of Serving the Community." The speaker was the Honorable Lizette Parker, the first African American female mayor of Teaneck and Bergen County.

**Trinity UMC in Hackettstown has women's retreat** - Trinity UMC in Hackettstown had 54 women attend its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Women Growing In Faith retreat in the last weekend of September. The Rev. Renee McCleary, former district superintendent of the Skylands District, led the retreat, which nurtured souls, enriched lives, fostered fellowship, and boosted spiritual growth, said Trinity lay leader Susan Manhire.

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The husband and wife missionary team of Rev. Matwale Wa Mushidi and Kabaka Ndala Alphonsine hope to continue to expand their ministry in Tanzania. They are joined here (from left) by Rev. Jessica Naulty, of the UMC of Red Bank, Rev. David LeDuc, of Vincent UMC in Nutley, GNJ Bishop John Schol, Red Bank UMC members George and Janie Schlidge, and GNJ Lay Leader Rosa Williams.

## Conference Center Next Goal For Tanzania

The husband and wife missionary team of Rev. Mutwale Ntambo Wa Mushidi and Kabaka Ndala Alphonsine helped establish the United Methodist Church in Tanzania in 1992. Now the two missionaries for the General Board of Global Ministries want to see the church thrive in the East Africa country. The Greater New Jersey and the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conferences are the two conferences in the U.S. supporting Mushidi and Alphonsine in their call.

Mushidi says his primary function "is to proclaim Christ to the world while working for God's reign of grace, peace, and justice."

Mushidi and Alphonsine, natives of DR Congo in Africa, have helped establish 63 United Methodist congregations in Tanzania. One of their current goals is for a conference center to be built for the UMC in Dar es Salaam, the largest city in Tanzania.

With the help of Greater New Jersey churches such as Red Bank and Vincent in Nutley, 15 acres of ground was purchased for the conference center. The next goal is to raise \$200,000 to build a guest house in Phase One of the construction. The guest house is being built first to provide lodging for volunteer groups, workers and guests and to provide a source of income to help with the rest of the project.

Other goals include turning the Tanzania Conference from provisional to full and to have the UMC be recognized as a viable denomination in the country by establishing a headquarters. The two

primary religions in Tanzania are Christianity and Islam.

"It was hard for us, a sacrifice for our families," Mushidi said of relocating to Tanzania from the Congo. "I knew God was moving through my ministry because we did not stop the mission; God was encouraging us."

Mushidi is the director of church development and evangelism for the United Methodist Church in Tanzania, while Alphonsine is the coordinator of women's activities and training for the United Methodist Church in Tanzania and director of the United Methodist preschool in Dar es Salaam, where Kiswahili and English are the two primary languages. Some of the other ministries Mushidi and Alphonsine are focusing on include dealing with refugees and immigrants, feeding and educating orphans, giving training in HIV/AIDS and Malaria prevention.

"People are changing according to God's word; refugees are being consoled," Mushidi said.

The levels of giving for the project range from \$10 that buys a cement block, \$250 for a ceiling fan, \$500 for a bedroom ceiling and up to \$20,000 for a dining hall.

Donations can be made through the local Advance #12635N, or through the General Board of Global Missions at [umcmmission.org](http://umcmmission.org) by entering Advance #12635N and clicking on GIVE NOW. The local contact for Mushidi and Alphonsine is Rev. David LeDuc of Vincent UMC in Nutley, N.J., who can be reached at 973-667-5440 or at [dleduc.vumc@verizon.net](mailto:dleduc.vumc@verizon.net).

## OBITUARIES

**ADA "DOT" TONKINSON**, widow of Cecil Frank Tonkinson, local pastor of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., on Nov. 8. A memorial service was held Nov. 14 at Pond Eddy UMC, Pond Eddy, N.Y.

Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers) can be sent in Dorothy's name to Pond Eddy United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 135, Pond Eddy, NY 12770. Messages of condolence may be sent to Dorothy's family, in care of daughter Lynn Brent and son Kenneth Tonkinson, online at [www.knight-auchmoody.com](http://www.knight-auchmoody.com).

**CARLTON G. JOHNSON JR.**, former local pastor and lay member to the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference representing Sharptown United Methodist Church for several years, died on Monday, Nov. 17. A memorial service will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12, 2014 at Sharptown United Methodist Church, 24 Church Street, Pilesgrove, NJ.

In lieu of flowers, please send memorial donations to West Jersey Grove Association, c/o Malaga Camp (specify Chapel Repair Fund) 4488 Arbutus Avenue, Newfield, NJ 08344 or to Sharptown United Methodist Church (specify Mission Fund). Messages of condolence may be sent to his daughter, Connie R. King, 1702 Spruce Street, Newfield, NJ 08344.

**DALE SHERROD**, retired elder of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died Oct. 26. A Memorial Service was held on Nov. 22 at Faith UMC, Fort Myers, Fla.

Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers), can be made to Faith UMC, 15690 McGregor Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33908.

**MARTHA CHENEY**, wife of retired elder Rev. Edward B. Cheney of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died on Nov. 7. A memorial service was held Nov. 11 at Sea Isle City UMC.

Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers) can be made to The Fellowship Fund of the UM Homes of NJ Foundation, 3311 State Route 33, Neptune, NJ 07553.

Messages of condolence may be sent to Rev. Edward Cheney, PO Box 562, South Seaville, NJ 08246.

**ELIZABETH LYNCH**, wife of retired elder George J. Lynch Jr. of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died on Nov. 7. A Memorial Service was held Nov. 11 at Custer Road UMC, Plano TX.

Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers) can be made to Ranch Hope, PO Box 325, Alloway, NJ 08001

Messages of condolence may be sent to George J. Lynch Jr., 6606 Mapleshade Lane, Apt 4A, Dallas, TX 75252.



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# CUMAC Runners Raise Money And Awareness

By Rev. Jessica Stenstrom  
 Jessie43082@aol.com

What do hunger, running shoes and bright green shirts have in common?

Eight runners shared those traits on a chilly morning in October for the Trenton Half Marathon to raise funds for CUMAC. Some of them were avid runners. Others not so much. Some trained hard. Others squeaked by, fitting in what they could. All together, they ran 104.8 miles and raised more than \$4,000 while raising awareness that hunger is an issue while supporting CUMAC's mission and outreach.

The running team included two of CUMAC's staff members, Lynn Bruger and Adrian Diaz, and six others committed to CUMAC's mission of fighting hunger by providing food and resources to those who are hungry.

"It was nice to all come together to help fight hunger," Diaz said. "Something so simple, coupled with something people enjoy (running) and we were able to spread the word about hunger."

In addition to training to run 13.1 miles on race day, each team member was responsible for raising a minimum of \$200 through crowdrise.com, a popular fundraising site. The team surpassed its goal by raising \$4,334 according to Diaz. CUMAC also supplied volunteers for the expo or on race day. Those volunteers handed out water at mile 7 and again when runners looped back around at mile 11.

"We had an awesome volunteer crew," said Bruger, who said seeing familiar faces later in the race was encouraging. "It was helpful to hear their voices cheering us on."



Several CUMAC volunteers showed up to hand out water at what was the mile No. 7 and mile No. 11 water table during the Trenton Half Marathon in October. Eight runners competed to raise funds for CUMAC.

Bruger who had run a half marathon in the past, said at mile 10 of that first half marathon, she promised herself she'd never do it again. In the weeks leading up to this half marathon, she was expecting to run the 10K, but donors had another plan. She issued a challenge to potential donors through crowdrise and social media, saying if they raised \$1,310 - \$10 for every tenth of a mile, she would run the half. Bruger said most of the donations were made right at the end, so she had about one week's notice that she'd be running the half.

Not a distance runner, she committed to the team for two reasons: to lead by example as the development coordinator for CUMAC, not wanting to ask volunteers to do something she wouldn't do, and because she needed something to focus on after the tragic loss of her brother Pete and a close friend within a short time frame.

"It was personally fulfilling knowing that the money went to support such vital services at CUMAC," she said.

Barun McArthur and Krystal Ndoni both made their half marathon debut on

CUMAC's team, too. Only having run one 5K before, in May of 2013, McArthur jumped into training and fundraising.

"Although, I am a member of the Hackensack UMC and often hear about the different activities that our church does for CUMAC, I am not able to participate in some of the activities because I live in Mount Laurel," McArthur said. "Since the run was in Trenton, I was able to help out without driving up to Hackensack or Paterson."

Ndoni, joined the team with her friend Raksha Urs.

"She is passionate about CUMAC and alleviating hunger and invited me to come along," Ndoni said.

As a first time half marathoner, she said the excitement and encouragement of people on the sidelines, kept her going. When that wasn't enough she kept telling herself "it's for CUMAC" to keep going.

Diaz, a seasoned runner who immediately volunteered to run, said that CUMAC was invited to participate as a charity partner by the Trenton Half. He said if invited again, CUMAC would participate and also encouraged more people to run.

"If I can do it then you can definitely do it," said McArthur. "For avid runners: It is for a good cause. For people that are starting out or just not so seasoned, the team has runners of various levels and so there is guidance available."

CUMAC plans to make another running experience available in the fall of 2015 with a Halloween 5K. Bruger said that while the date, time and place are still being arranged, the fundraising race will be in Passaic County.

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