

# THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

Volume LIX

JULY 2015

No. 6

## Groveville's Gains Lead To One Matters Award

By Jeff Wolfe

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Rev. Rupert Hall doesn't see himself as some brilliant preacher, but rather someone who has been in the right place at the right time at Groveville United Methodist Church.

Groveville has been awarded the 2014 One Matters Discipleship Award for the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey which recognizes congregations who celebrate the joy of inviting others into life with Christ. Groveville had seven new professions of faith in 2014, which put it among the top 15 congregations in Greater New Jersey in that category. Groveville has had 20 percent increase in attendance the past two years and paid 100 percent of its shared ministries for the first time in six years in 2014.

"I would like to say it was my magnificent preaching," Hall said with a laugh, "but other people had planted the seed and yet others had watered it. I was blessed enough to be the one who harvested it."

Hall, who has been at Groveville for two years, understands that he and the

### One Matters Award

**2014 GNJ winner:** Groveville UMC

**What is One Matters?:** It is a new award given to a church in each conference that is turning zeros into positive numbers with a renewed focus on discipleship.

**How it Started:** This award originated from Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church.

**Financial Reward:** Along with a plaque, each winning church receives \$1,000 to help ministries within the church continue to grow.

people in his church may be planters for some new worshippers attending church now.

"Some of the seeds we plant may not be ready to grow in the next 10 or 15 years," Hall said. "Our job is to plant seeds and also be ready to harvest seeds somebody planted 20 years ago."

Some of the seeds that Hall and his congregations planted came at an apartment complex about 300 yards from the church.

"This past October we set up camp right at the entrance to the complex and handed out water bottles and gave out brochures and invitations to church," Hall said. "Some of those people expressed a desire to join us. That type of activity has helped us."

As a result of the outreach, Hall said visitors began coming to the church and at least some of those have become regular attenders.

"We found a lot of people who were



Rev. Rupert Hall (right), who was appointed as the pastor at Groveville UMC two years ago, accepts the One Matters Award from Ken Sloane during Annual Conference in May at Wildwood.

visiting and I started talking to them about where they were in their faith walk," Hall said. "I told them I think the Lord is saying something to you and you might want to consider joining us. By God's grace,

seven adults said yes."

Hall sensed he and the congregation saying yes to each other was the right choice even before he officially started. He made a visit to the church the week

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## Pinelands Cancels 2015 Summer Camps

Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery has cancelled the 2015 camping season because of low camper registration. The decision follows the recommendation of the Director of Camping Ministries and is based on concern for the quality of experience of campers.

As of June 30, 52 children ranging in age from 6 to 17 were registered for the four weeks of programming. We were also still short on volunteer counselors. The week long camping experience would not be viable or valuable for such a small number of children each week. Those who signed up for camps will be given a full refund for any money that was paid. Camps had been scheduled to begin the week of July 12 and run through Aug. 8.

"I grieve the challenges we are facing and that we are not able to have a camping ministry this summer," Bishop John Schol said. "This has been an important and valuable ministry to disciples within GNJ. A new Camping Board begins this summer and has the qualities to discern the future of summer camping ministry. We will be looking to people throughout the conference for their suggestion and engagement."

"United Methodists in Greater New Jersey should pray for the Holy Spirit to inspire them in their work. We should also pray for the families and children who were planning on and looking forward to their camping experience at Pinelands this year."

In May, the Annual Conference nominated a new board for the Greater New Jersey Camping Ministries to help lead the camping programs into the future. The new board will meet for the first time later this summer.

If you have questions about camps, please contact Jестie Higgins at [jhiggins@gnjumc.org](mailto:jhiggins@gnjumc.org).

## Paddling For A Purpose



Margo Pellegrino, who is active at Medford United Methodist Church, is on her latest mission to bring attention to the need for clean water. She is paddling in her canoe from Newark, N.J., to Chicago, and is expected to arrive there on about July 18. See story on Page 7.

## FAQs About GNJ's Vote On Sexuality

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey passed six pieces of legislation during its Annual Conference in May in Wildwood concerning human sexuality and its treatment in the Book of Discipline and within Greater New Jersey. You can read the legislation that was passed on [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org). The vote on the six resolutions was very close with as few as 23 votes separating those who supported and those who did not. While the legislation passed, the people of Greater New Jersey are not of one mind about human sexuality.

The United Methodists of Greater New Jersey have a variety of beliefs that range from:

The legislation passed is not in accordance with the Bible and the teachings of the United Methodist Church.

I do not agree that gays and lesbians should marry but I do not want for this to be the concern that shapes our church.

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### What's Inside...

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Communities of Hope initiative to begin. **Page 3**

Eric Drew joins GNJ as Director of Worship. **Page 4**

GNJ's Erika Yun gets big chance in D.C. **Page 9**

# A Message from the Bishop

*This is the second of three-part series called "Mind, Yet, Next."*



## Summer Theology – Recreation

The July and August articles will be about two words often associated with the summer, *recreation* and *renewal*.

### Recreation

Summer is often associated with recreation, a time of amusement and refreshment. Think about the things you do during recreation – have a catch with a ball, swim, play with a child, read a good book, go out to eat with good friends.

Some define recreation as a diversion from the everyday, from the mundane of life. The scriptures speak of this in the

creation story found in Genesis as Sabbath. Sabbath is the understanding that God has invited, maybe even commanded, us to stop and play, to relax and enjoy. Sabbath is a time to set aside the toil and routine of the daily and to do something different.

As a child I thought of Sabbath as church, which as a child felt more like obligation. Once in a conversation with a rabbi, he told me that Sabbath was not about stopping something but about embracing something different. He talked about reading a good book, spending time with friends, enjoying a good meal, play, and in particular, enjoying the fruits of life.

Summer often lends itself to a slower pace, more time with friends and family, vacation and even ice cream. Today I spent time playing with my granddaughter, Elise. She will turn 1 later this month. Now that is Sabbath -- returning to childhood play.

I wonder if we take life too seriously sometimes. Jesus by his contemporaries was thought of as not very religious because he encouraged his disciples to pick grain, drink the fruit of the vine and romp through the fields on the Sabbath. In fact, I believe they were practicing Godly discipline, taking time for Sabbath.

Christians have reduced Sabbath to a day when it was meant to be a way of life. Recreation is re-creation, enjoying God's gift of creation. Tomorrow Elise and I will go to the beach, walk on the boardwalk and play peek-a-boo and I will be re-created for the important mission ahead. I invite you to create space for play and family and fun. It is a gift from God.

Keep the faith!  
John Schol, Bishop  
The United Methodist Church  
Greater New Jersey

# Palisades Sponsoring Food Drive for CUMAC

This summer the Palisades District is sponsoring a six-week summer food drive to help restock the dangerously empty shelves at CUMAC in anticipation of the heightened need for food this summer. The food drive will start on July 15 and run through Sept 1. The Palisades District Poverty Task Force is asking each church in its district to actively participate by collecting food every week and bringing it to one of four collection sites across the district.

The drop off sites and times are Ridgewood United Methodist Church from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. each day, Totowa United Methodist Church on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Calvary UMC in Dumont (any time for small donations, email [calvary185@verizon.net](mailto:calvary185@verizon.net) to arrange for large donations), and New City UMC with drop off times of Wednesdays 5 to 8 p.m., Thursdays 10 a.m. to noon, Saturdays 9

a.m. to 2 p.m. and Sundays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

CUMAC's client numbers have increased over 30 percent since 2009, leaving it struggling to find enough food to feed all of those who come to its doors in need. Last year CUMAC's pantry served 40,273 people and this year it is feeding 3,400 clients every month.

To keep up with the growing need, CUMAC started two new feeding programs this year, a mobile pantry and a satellite pantry. CUMAC also continues to run a depot for a network of 55 smaller feeding programs, providing trucking, storage and support to ensure each of them can do their critical work. Overall, CUMAC distributed 1.9 million pounds of food in 2014 and is on track to distribute even more in 2015.

For more information contact the Palisades District office at (201) 670-1400 or at [palisades@gnjumc.org](mailto:palisades@gnjumc.org).

## One Matters Award

*Continued from page 1*

before his appointment began on Boy Scout Sunday and was asked to join the scouts up front. Then, remembering his own Boy Scout heritage, Hall did something he hadn't done he says for about three decades.

"The Holy Spirit put in my remembrance things I hadn't said in years," Hall said, of being able to say the Scout Oath. "I said where did that come from? They were surprised I knew the Scout Oath."

Hall said Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts meetings bring about 60 families per week into the church.

"Scouting is a major part of our ministry," Hall said.

"They are prime candidates to be part of a young adult ministry and youth ministry."

Scouting is just one of many things

happening at Groveville. Other groups and activities include the restarting of a United Methodist Women's ministry that was chartered in 2014 and beginning a men's fellowship group that meets once a month and is also reaching out to other men in the community.

"The women had not been very active, but now by God's grace they are working as a functioning unit," Hall said. "The men meet on Saturday mornings, and while some of them don't come to worship on Sunday morning, they are regular attendees for that Saturday morning fellowship hour."

Hall believes there is still more potential for growth, too.

"Our congregation is within walking distance for 3,000 people," he said, "and we are the only church in town."

## Relay To Be Published Year-Round

The Relay, which has traditionally not been published in the months of August and January, will now be published all 12 months of the year. That will begin with the upcoming August issue. The news and advertising deadline will continue to be the 15th of each month.

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The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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### FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION and PLACEMENT

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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.

Greater New Jersey will debut its new website on Aug. 1. The new site is designed to be more user friendly and to improve efficiency.

## New Website To Improve Organization, Resources

Church leaders looking for resources to support their congregations will find a new resource at their fingertips – a new conference website designed to support the conference strategic plan of making disciples, vital congregations and turnaround spiritual leaders.

On Aug. 1, [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org) will have a fresh new look and organizational tools to make resources easier to find. The site is being restructured to focus on three distinct audiences: visitors looking for information on our churches, congregational leaders looking for resources for vitality and clergy who need more specific information about benefits, pensions, and administration.

“As we were preparing for supporting our new initiatives like Team Vital, Coaching and PaCE groups, we realized that our website wasn’t meeting our needs,” said Director of Communications Carolyn Conover. “The style, functionality and its organization wasn’t supporting where our conference needs to go to become vital.”

This realization coincided with a

scheduled maintenance update to the website, so instead of updating the current site, Conover and her team decided to spend their time and resources creating something new and better.

The new website will have much of the same content, but that content has been organized to flow more intuitively. The pages have been cleaned and shaped so that users will find it easier to navigate.

Key elements of the new site include better use of video and photos, more detailed district pages with maps and directories for churches, focused sections for the five markers of vitality and resourcing initiatives, a connectional ministries blog and more dynamic calendar and events pages.

“Making resources easy to use and find is one of the more important things we can do to help our congregations and clergy,” said Conover of the new website. “The new site will be managed in house making it more flexible to update and saving money for the conference.”

The communication team has been

working on the new site since October. Brittney Reilly, Online and Digital Communications Manager for the conference was the team leader and is responsible for the new look. Although she knows the new site is a big improvement, she also expects a few glitches after the rollout on Aug. 1.

“Whenever you put out something

new, there is always a bug or two,” Reilly said. “We have worked hard to represent all of our constituents and their needs. But we are also prepared to make adjustments to the site and the content based on the feedback of our users. I hope everyone shares their feedback on the new site so we can continue to make it better.”

### Conference Journal Orders Available

Each active or retired clergy member, elected lay member and local church office of the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey will receive one 2015 Journal on a CD-ROM free of charge. Bound, printed copies of the Journal may be purchased for \$18 each (\$15 plus \$3 shipping). If you wish to purchase a hard copy of the conference journal go to the Annual Conference page at [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org). No printed journals will be sent unless they are pre-paid and no requests will be honored after the journal has gone to the printer. The deadline to order is Aug. 15.

## Communities Of Hope Ready To Launch This Summer

By Carolyn Conover  
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When leaders of the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey created A Future With Hope, they had the foresight to look beyond the immediate necessities of individual families that needed recovery and dedicate part of their mission to help whole communities.

It is with that vision the board of trustees laid out community building as one of the four pillars of recovery. Its initial case statement states:

“Bringing a sense of normalcy involves more than hammers and nails. It is community building. We will work with three communities to provide asset-based community building strategies to develop local leadership and strengthen community organizations.”

This spring the board unanimously agreed to launch Communities of Hope under the umbrella of A Future With Hope. Communities of Hope is an initiative founded on the principles of Communities of Shalom, which was started in the 1990’s as a response to the riots in south Los Angeles. The Communities of Shalom asset-based model organizes resi-

dents and community leaders to rebuild their communities’ fabric and institutions including leadership development, community development, employment, business development and human services development.

The United Methodist Church has been a leader in establishing this initiative in 300 communities within the United States, Haiti, Ghana, Ireland and Zimbabwe. One of the most visible Shalom Communities in New Jersey is Respond Inc., in Camden.

Nicole Caldwell-Gross, Director of Mission and Multi-Cultural Ministries, is working with board member Dr. Patricia Morton to lead the Communities of Hope efforts. The first training meeting is scheduled for July 11.

“I am excited by the growing enthusiasm for Shalom and am looking forward



Caldwell-Gross

to learning with and from each of communities we are impacting,” Caldwell-Gross said.

Initially, Communities of Hope will focus on Sandy impacted areas, but the goal is to broaden the scope to include all areas of Greater New Jersey. To initiate the project, several dozen area churches were invited to an information session to learn more. Four congregations/communities were selected for the initial phase: Atlantic City (Asbury UMC, Venice Park UMC and Hamilton Memorial UMC), Highlands (Atlantic Highlands UMC and Navesink UMC), Long Branch (St. Luke’s UMC) and Plainfield (Covenant UMC).

Atlantic City is a community that had whole neighborhoods destroyed by Sandy. A Future With Hope has already rebuilt 39 homes and is working on another 11 this summer. Adding community development to the program will enhance work that has already begun.

It’s a similar case in Highlands which lost its municipal building, police headquarters, community center and most of its businesses during the storm. The congregations in Navesink and Atlantic Highlands were some of the first responders after the storm and more than

a third of the congregations are made up of residents of the Highlands community.

In Plainfield, the Covenant congregation sees a community with many people in crisis because of unemployment, HIV, housing and healthcare needs, violence and inadequate education. Its goal is to create a partnership with area nonprofits and the city to deliver service to these at-risk populations.

St. Luke’s in Long Branch sees poverty, hunger and undocumented residents as a priority for its community. St. Luke’s has been proactive in responding to these issues by creating a food pantry, providing free hot meals, starting an English as a Second Language program and growing a community vegetable garden. Becoming a Community of Hope will escalate that impact.

The congregation of St. Luke’s already has a sense of the power of Communities of Hope.

In the application, Janet Massaro, a leader at St. Luke’s UMC stated, “The most effective and important aspects of these outreach ministries have been collaborative team work with the faithful and diligent people in the community.”

# Drew Brings Passion For Worship To GNJ

By Jeff Wolfe  
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Eric Drew has known music as long as he can remember and he has played music almost as long. However, it took Drew, a life-long United Methodist, going to a place where he knew no one, to learn how to play an instrument he had never played and to rediscover a passion that was always within him.

Drew is now sharing that passion with the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey as he joined the Connectional Ministries Team (CMT) as the Director of Worship on July 1.

"I grew up playing the trumpet in church," he said. "Then I went to college and received classical music training. After I started working as a professional musician, I got burned out and needed something else. I went to do missions work in Honduras. That is where worship came alive to me."

Drew described his time in Honduras as a time of peace and growth where he realized he had and needed little.

"I was teaching English in different Christian schools there," he said. "I started playing guitar at an orphanage of kids who had been taken out of the capital city. That is where I found the Kingdom of God, which is always all around us."

Drew spent five years as a professional musician and then almost three more years in Honduras. He came back to New Jersey in 2011 and served as assistant pastor at Bloomsbury UMC and then worship pastor at CrossPoint Church, a multi-site United Methodist congregation in Harrisburg, Pa., for more than three years.

"At CrossPoint, I did a lot of work around something that I call contextual worship," he said. "It's all about creating worship experiences relevant to our con-

text. We have to reflect the community that we are in so that people can express their worship to God in their own language. We don't choose a worship style because we like something, but because it's in a language that is familiar to us."

Drew points out that worship is best when different people can combine talents.

"As we engage with those around us, what's exciting is that it can include many people with many different gifts," he said. "This also can happen in large or small churches. I believe excellence honors God and that also God honors excellence. Excellent worship will be exciting and is always inviting to other people. It becomes irresistible."

Drew understands that different styles of music can be irresistible as well.

"If you have someone who can play guitar and some percussion, you can do something engaging and low key that is accessible and maybe easier for smaller churches," he said. "But then you can be in a sacred setting where a great organ can be really moving, too. I value all of it."

Drew lists some of his contemporary music influences as Chris McClarney, Matt Redman, David Crowder, Hillsong, Jesus Culture and Mark Miller, a popular music figure among Greater New Jersey Methodists for years.

"Mark Miller was a huge mentor for me since I was in middle school," Drew said. "He has had a tremendous influence on what I consider worship and good worship music."

Music isn't the only area of specialty for Drew. He is trained in coaching, and is the founder of [www.BasileiaMovement.com](http://www.BasileiaMovement.com), a resource for pastors and worship leaders.

"I hope to encourage, equip and coach pastors who are doing worship now and also those who are the next generation,"



Eric Drew joined Greater New Jersey as its Director of Worship on July 1. Drew has extensive experience as a musician and a worship leader in several settings.

he said. "I think we can continue to create vibrant and vital congregations no matter what size they are."

"I'm really excited about the vision that Bishop (John) Schol has for the Connectional Ministries Team. Greater

New Jersey is doing things very differently than some other places and I see tremendous possibilities going forward."

Eric Drew can be reached at [edrew@gnjumc.org](mailto:edrew@gnjumc.org)

## First Team Vital Churches Finish; Next Round Near

This summer four congregations from the Skylands District, completed the Team Vital program and submitted action plans for vitality as a part of the first Team Vital, which was launched with a splash and a surfboard at Annual Conference in Wildwood. As a part of the strategic plan for Greater New Jersey, the goal is to have more than 300 churches complete the program in the next three years.

To become a part of Team Vital, congregations must complete and submit an application by Aug. 10.

As a part of Team Vital, congregations come along side one another as they assess their own communities and ministry assets, become equipped for effective ministry, plan future ministry, receive technical support for putting their plans into action and as a result grow in their vitality.

Team Vital helps leaders create a strategic ministry plan using the five markers of vitality: worship, making new disciples, small groups, mission and giving.

Each church receives individual technical support, monthly consulting and other resourcing opportunities from the conference. Churches regroup periodically to assess their progress and share lessons learned.

Churches also learn from each other, collaborate, support and hold each other accountable to pursue their min-



Algernon Arthur takes a ride on the Team Vital wave at Annual Conference in May.

istry plans.

For more information go to [www.gnjumc.org/teamvital](http://www.gnjumc.org/teamvital), contact your district superintendent or contact Beth Caulfield, Director of Small Groups and Spiritual Visioning who is leading the Team Vital initiative at [bcaulfield@gnjumc.org](mailto:bcaulfield@gnjumc.org).

### Team Vital Deadline

The application deadline is Aug. 10 for churches interested in the September Team Vital training. More information @ [www.gnjumc.org/teamvital](http://www.gnjumc.org/teamvital)

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[www.GNJUMC.org/TEAMVITAL](http://www.GNJUMC.org/TEAMVITAL)

# Conference Passes Equal Justice Resolution

By Jessica Stenstrom

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

With racial tensions across the country reaching high levels, church leadership passed a resolution brought forth by the Greater New Jersey Caucus of Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) which emphasizes the need for equal justice under the law, racial justice and human dignity for all God's people.

The resolution, passed at the 2015 GNJ Annual Conference in May, expresses solidarity with the thousands of protesters across the nation who are angry about the recent deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Oscar Grant, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray and other unnamed African American per-



sons by police or policing organizations.

"We experience here within the Greater New Jersey Area the toxic impact of the intersection of racism and poverty in too many of the lives of citizens of urban rural and suburban settings," the resolution states. "While we recognize that there has been some progress within police departments here in New Jersey and across the nation to engage in constructive dialogue and good faith efforts

to improve relations among officers and communities of color and young people, problems still exist and improvements are needed in order to protect lives."

The resolution additionally calls on Greater New Jersey to create a task force to identify resources to help congregations engage in initiatives that address that needs of the community, the perpetrators, and the victims that bring God's restoration and helps congregations promote positive relationships between the community and the police. It also asks that the conference designate BMCR and the Conference's Board of Church and Society and the Commission of Religion and Race to work in consultation with the bishop to set the membership of this task force. This task force will report

its findings and recommendations at the GNJ Annual Conference in May of 2016.

The resolution also requests that the bishop, extended cabinet and the connectional table, read and discuss the book, "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander.

## Camping Resolution

Another resolution which requested permission to sell an unattached part of Camp Aldersgate, which has not been used for ministry, was tabled. Outgoing Chair Rev. Jennifer Livallo said with so many new leaders coming on the Conference Camping Board, the current leadership decided it was important for the new leadership team to do its own evaluations and make decisions about the property.

## Vote On Sexuality

*Continued from page 1*

I am not sure how to understand what the Bible says but when I read the Bible, I do not see us treating gay and lesbian people as Jesus treated all people.

The Bible is the word of God but not the literal word of God. The Bible is written in a period of time with particular understandings and God's truth is unfolding in each generation like the ordination of women in The United Methodist Church.

### How does the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling affect our decisions in the church?

The denomination has recently posted an article outlining the issues. To read the article go to [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org).

### Why did the Bishop and the conference pass these resolutions?

None of the legislation regarding human sexuality were proposed by the Bishop or Conference leadership, boards or committees. Four of the pieces of legislation were submitted by a congregation and the other two were submitted by an individual and her congregation. The conference did not endorse the legislation.

Immediately after the vote and before the results were tallied, Bishop John Schol stated that he is the bishop of all people and it is not his intention to change people's minds but to create space for people to hold differing views of a very difficult and potentially divisive concern within the church. Along with the conference's leadership, Bishop Schol will ensure that congregations may continue to read the Bible, pray and listen for God's call for their congregation. Bishop Schol will continue to honor Wesleyan theology which is "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

### What changes in our churches as a result of this legislation?

The votes at annual conference did not change the policy of the church. The four pieces of legislation that recommended changes to the Book of Discipline will be referred to General Conference for consideration in 2016. No changes to United Methodist doctrines or governance will occur unless a decision is made at General Conference in 2016.

The other two pieces of legislation concern how Greater New Jersey will respond to issues of human sexuality and marriage. Specifically they state that GNJ will commit to being an inclusive church, will make a public statement supporting marriage equality and will support clergy with prayer who may be brought up on charges for marrying two people of the same gender.

### Why was there no debate about the legislation on the floor of annual conference?

The annual conference members voted not to have a floor debate. It was a 90 percent plus vote. When given a choice, they voted to engage in a process of holy conferring and small groups conversations. Also, there was a motion to table the legislation indefinitely so that it would neither be discussed nor voted on during annual conference. This amendment was defeated by more than 95 percent of the conference members. At the end, the annual conference members chose to vote

on the legislation and voted for how the legislation would be handled.

### What if my congregation does not agree with the resolutions?

No one is seeking to change your congregation. The Bishop and cabinet of Greater New Jersey are committed to leading all United Methodists in the conference regardless of their position on human sexuality. Individuals and congregations may continue to hold their views on this issue. Churches that struggle about human sexuality have the opportunity to continue discerning God's calling for their congregation. As United Methodists we remain committed to our common mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### What is the conference leadership doing to support congregations' discernment and conversation about human sexuality?

A team is being organized on human sexuality that will identify the needs of Greater New Jersey related to ongoing human sexuality conversations and the most recent annual conference vote. The task force will provide resources to assist understanding and conversation within congregations about the present United Methodist Church human sexuality conversation that helps all of our congregations to feel valued and honored and helps recognize that good people of faith can disagree and continue in faithful relationship with God and one another.

### Where can I find more information about how the denomination and General Conference will handle this issue?

Leading into General Conference in 2016, there is widespread commentary and discussion. The following outlines several sources you can review to find out more information.

The denomination's web site has many articles concerning the debate over human sexuality. You can find an index of these articles by going to [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org).

The web site Religion and Politics has recently posted an overview of the issues facing the United Methodist Church. That story can be found at [www.religionandpolitics.org](http://www.religionandpolitics.org).

Adam Hamilton, a senior pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas, a renowned author and leader within our denomination, is proposing a way to move the denomination forward while supporting congregations that hold differing views. That article can be found at [www.awayforward.net](http://www.awayforward.net).

For general information about General Conference 2016 go to [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org).

### Still have questions?

The leaders of the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey are deeply concerned about our congregations and the struggles they may face as they prayerfully consider these issues. These questions and resources are dedicated to helping facilitate questions and concerns that you may have.

To submit a question or concern, email [info@gnjumc.org](mailto:info@gnjumc.org) and we will add your question and the response to our list or answer your concern individually.

## 2015 GNJ Clergy Retirees



Retirees and others participate in the retirement ceremony during the 2015 Annual Conference in Wildwood in May.

Below is a list of the 2015 GNG clergy retirees that were honored at the Annual Conference in Wildwood in May. In all, the service records of the retirees adds up to more than 700 years.

Kathryn Avery  
Frances Ballinger  
Frederick Boyle  
Grant M. Buttermore Jr.  
Don Chan Chang  
Robert E. Costello  
Richard De Rick  
Raymond DuBois  
Mark Earl  
Thomas J. Gilchrist,  
Betty A. Horne  
Clint L. Hudnall Jr.  
Marilyn Pote Hutton  
Alfred Jaeger  
Sherrie Dobbs Johnson  
Walter C. Kellen Jr.

Don Knott  
Richard E. Knox  
Hee Moon Lee  
Rozellia Matthews  
William Moore  
Carlos Nolasco  
Shelley K. Potter-Abrahamsen  
Barbara Rambach  
Jerry D. Ruff  
William Spangler  
Cynthia M. Taylor  
Rina L. Terry  
Annemarie Yeo  
Nancy Lee Vonderhorst  
Gregory B. Young.



The United Methodist Church  
of Greater New Jersey

## MAY 22-24

### SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Beginning in 2016, 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.

# Special Spirit Fills Ordination Service

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

In a spirit-filled ordination service at Annual Conference, Bishop John Schol, along with others, commissioned 11 provisional members, ordained five as full elders and recognized one as an Associate member. There were also two blessed and commissioned as missionaries.

"So often the movement of the Spirit is silent and hidden, but on this night we get to see it clearly, and join in the celebration," said Rev. Shawn Callandar Hogan, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Those being commissioned and ordained represented a diverse group. Some of that diversity was evident in the statements each candidate prepared prior to the clergy vote session describing where they saw God in the world.

Rev. William Williams, who was ordained as an elder, said, "God is the healing and hopeful presence in the midst of the prolonged difficulties and hurts that have resulted because of the crises of Super Storm Sandy and the economic disaster. Over the past three years, people have come together to make a sustainable difference in the lives of our sisters and brothers, and these acts were and continue to be the work of God."

Rev. SandraLee Stenstrom, who was commissioned as an elder, said, "I see God at work in the world whenever and wherever we follow Jesus into the mission field: Breaking down the walls that divide us; extending a hand up to those who are oppressed; offering physical and spiritual food to the famished; shining light into dark places and sharing words of hope and the message of salvation to those who can no longer envision it."

Rev. Rolando Santiago Fuentes, who was ordained as an elder, said, "We are called to be the feet, hands and eyes of Jesus to a world with much need so that they may experience now the kingdom of God. God is working through the efforts of mission and outreach in our communities, cities and worldwide."

Rev. Karline Dubuisson, commissioned as an elder, said, "In a world full of tragedy and pain, I see God at work in the loving acts of those who stand by us. I find the face of God in the tears, the hugs

and the words of comfort others bring in times of great sorrow and pain. It's at these moments we experience God's pure and unconditional love that brings a world of joy and fulfillment."

## Ordinands

**Rev. Jean Arlea-Erickson**, ordained as an elder, graduated with her Master of Divinity from Drew Theological School in May 2009. She is appointed as full-time associate pastor to the United Methodist Church of Bound Brook.

**Rev. Evan Rohrs Dodge**, ordained as an elder, graduated with his Master of Divinity from Drew Theological School in May 2012. He is currently serving Mc Crea Memorial UMC in Port Murray.

**Rev. James Jisung Lee**, was recognized as an elder in the United Methodist Church. He graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary with his Master in Theology in December 1994. He is currently serving at Bethany UMC in Wayne.

**Rev. Rolando Santiago Fuentes**, ordained as an elder, graduated from Drew Theological School in May 2010. He is currently serving St. Pauls Centenary.

**Rev. William Williams**, ordained as an elder, graduated from Drew Theological School in May 2012. He is currently serving Asbury UMC in Atlantic City.

## Associate Member

**Rev. Regina 'Gina' Yeske** was recognized as an associate member of the Annual Conference. She graduated from Moravian Theological Seminary with a Masters in Theological Arts in May. She is serving at Simply Grace United Methodist Faith Community in Bloomsbury.

## Commissionees

**Rev. Debra De Vos**, commissioned as a deacon, graduated from Drew Theological School with a Master of Arts in Ministry in May 2014.

**Rev. Karline 'Kay' Dubuisson**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Palmer Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity in May 2012. She is serving the United Methodist Church of Spring Valley.

**Rev. John Inverso**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Palmer Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity in May 2009. He is serving New Sharon



Rev. Karline 'Kay' Dubuisson, left, commissioned as an elder in the Annual Conference ordination service, takes part in the retirement service here.

in Deptford, Wenonah, Barnsboro, and Mt. Zion in Sewell.

**Rev. Yeol 'Earl' Kim**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Boston University with a Master of Divinity in May 2011. He is serving at First UMC of Montclair and Verona UMC.

**Rev. Frederick Marz**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Palmer Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity in May 2012. He is serving at Dennisville United Methodist Church and Trinity United Methodist Church in South Dennis.

**Rev. Ninabeth Metcalf**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Drew Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity in May 2013. She is serving the Panther Valley Ecumenical Church and Knowlton UMC.

**Rev. Teo Youl 'Leo' Park**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from United Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity in May. He is serving as associate pastor at Bethany Wayne

United Methodist Church.

**Rev. SandraLee Stenstrom**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Drew Theological School in May 2014. She is serving at Emmanuel UMC in Oaklyn and Embury UMC in Collingswood.

**Rev. June Tamburro**, commissioned as a deacon, graduated from Drew Theological School with a Master of Theology in May 2010. She is serving as an associate pastor at Bridgewater UMC. She also serves East Millstone UMC, which is part of the Somerset Hills regional ministry.

**Rev. Heather Valosin**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Drew Theological School with a Master of Divinity in May 2011. She is serving Montville United Methodist Church in Towaco and Mt. Fern United Methodist Church in Randolph.

**Rev. Catherine Williams**, commissioned as an elder, graduated from Palmer Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity in May 2010. She is serving at Princeton UMC and Chambers UMC.

## Conference Center Mortgage Likely To Be Paid Off in 2015

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

The mortgage for the new conference center is scheduled to be paid off in 2015 which will save the conference \$1.7 million over the next 25 years.

John Bishop, Chair of the Council of Finance and Administration announced at the 2015 GNJ Annual Conference in May that thanks to the generosity of churches faithfully paying their shared ministries giving and adjustments to the clergy retirement health benefits there was a surplus of 1.7 million which could be applied directly to the mortgage. GNJ leadership voted to approve the motion to do that.

Immediately following, it was announced that the GNJ Board of Pension was giving a gift of \$800,000 toward the mortgage. With what has already been paid by the conference trustees, just \$500,000 more needs to be paid toward the mortgage.

Pastor Lou Strugala, chairman of the building team, said the construction is progressing according to timetable and the goal is to be in the building by November.

The work is being done by Jack Green Construction and overseen by Norman Cetuk.

"It's been really wonderful to have them involved," Strugala said.

He said updates on the building progress are posted weekly on Facebook. If you'd like to follow the progress of construction, you can search for the group The United Methodist Church of Greater



Photo by Norman B. Cetuk  
Construction has continued to go as scheduled on the new conference center with hopes of it being completed and open by late 2015.

New Jersey Conference Center.

"The goal of the new building is to provide the conference with appropriate meeting and worship space for our clergy and lay leaders," Strugala said. "As designed, it also allows us to further the mission work of our conference."

While Strugala's term as President of the Conference Board of Trustees has ended, it was announced at Annual Conference that he will remain the chair of the Building Team until the end of construction.

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Margo Pellegrino, who attends Medford United Methodist Church, uses a sit on top outrigger canoe to take journeys sometimes as far as 2,000 miles to bring attention to the need for clean water.

## Medford UMC's Pellegrino Paddles For A Cause

By Jeff Wolfe

[jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

When Margo Pellegrino is on one of her paddling excursions to bring attention to the need to take care of our waterways, she's often alone, yet, not lonely.

That's because Pellegrino, who attends Medford United Methodist Church, understands there's a bigger and more powerful presence involved in her clean water mission.

"These journeys all have a spiritual aspect," Pellegrino said. "You talk about faith . . . there have been so many times where I feel like I am racing thunderstorms and there have been times I have been on the water when it has been really ugly.

"I'm out there all alone sometimes and there's a lot of praying involved. To me, it's just a reaffirmation that things will work out. You might not see it at the time, but it really does impact my faith."

Pellegrino is making her impact on the world by bringing attention to the need to take better care of our water sources. She is in the midst of paddling from New York City to Chicago on her most recent journey, about 2,000 miles, with a scheduled arrival of July 18 in Chicago. This journey actually began in Newark, N.J.,

and has taken her into the Erie Canal and eventually onto the Great Lakes of Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.

"They are the largest supply of fresh-water we have," said Pellegrino, who uses a sit on top outrigger canoe. "This is the fresh water ocean. They can be every bit as dangerous as the ocean and even more dangerous if you don't respect them."

Pellegrino believes all people should respect the need for clean water. That's why she's trying to influence the nation and world to take better care of it. That desire to make a difference is rooted in a Methodist foundation that was passed down from her Methodist pastor grandfather, on to her father, and then her.

"It was my father who got the ball rolling," said Pellegrino while paddling toward Lake Huron last month. "He did so much for other people. We never lacked for anything, but we did have financial limitations. He was always helping others so much and we couldn't always do what we wanted, but we were always happy. But we realized he had it right. He never said no to helping someone."

Pellegrino always knew she wanted to help people too and decided to take on more of a big picture project that could potentially aid thousands, or maybe even

millions.

"I knew I wanted to do something and I've done things to benefit various charities," she said. "But I thought what can give the most bang for your buck is to focus on the water and the ocean. Globally speaking, water is always an issue."

Pellegrino admits the first priority in her mission has been to focus on the oceans needing to have clean water.

"I'm really passionate about the ocean and taking care of it," she said. "It pretty much takes care of us. Even some of the drugs we use, like AZT for AIDS, comes from the ocean. It is a chemical component of a sponge. There are so many cures for diseases that we haven't really resourced yet.

"Scientists say some of the stuff is dying before we find out the benefit it can have for us. It's a lot of responsibility because all of the water goes to the ocean. You can eliminate so many problems if you just keep things clean. We are not keeping our oceans and freshwater systems clean."

Some of Pellegrino's saltwater missions include paddling from Miami to Maine, Miami to New Orleans and Seattle to San Diego. More locally she did a paddle from Trenton to Newark.

And similar to John Wesley during the

circuit rider years in the 1700s, Pellegrino randomly meets people on her journeys and it's not unusual for her and her traveling companion (she has a different one for each trip), who drives ahead of her on land, to be asked to have lunch or dinner and even at times be offered free lodging.

"People have just been opening up their homes to me," she said. "People ask me what I am doing and they basically pick me up right out of the water. That has been just incredible."

Pellegrino also gets financial support for each trip. The main contributor for the New York City to Chicago trip is Earth Justice. Pellegrino's next scheduled journey in 2016 is to paddle from Chicago to New Orleans.

Like the water she travels, Pellegrino's hopes her journeys allow her to continue to connect her clean water message to new places in the country.

"There is a call for stewardship," she said. "We need to take care of this resource and not ruin it so others can use it."

To read more about Pellegrino's journey go to [paddle4blue.wordpress.com](http://paddle4blue.wordpress.com) or follow her on Twitter at @slowpaddler and on Instagram at @1slowpaddler

## 12 Year Old's Faith Helps The Homeless

By Jeff Wolfe

[jwolfe@gnjumc.org](mailto:jwolfe@gnjumc.org)

Savanna Schaeckel didn't mind sharing her soccer ball with a homeless child. What she did mind was seeing that the child had no other toys to play with.

That homeless child and others were among the families staying at Mantua United Methodist Church, the Schaeckel family's home church, as part of the Family Promise Network. When Schaeckel was at choir practice one evening, one of the children staying at the church wanted to play with a soccer ball that was attached to Schaeckel's ankle with a string.

When Schaeckel removed the string and ball from her ankle, it was the beginning of her becoming attached to the homeless children who had nothing else to play with.

"It was a practice soccer ball where you can hook it around your ankle, kick it and it comes back to you," Schaeckel said. "There was a little 2-year-old who wanted to take it and I let her have it. But when I had to leave and take my ball with me, she was upset."

That event made Schaeckel, who recently completed sixth grade at J. Mason Tomlin School, realize children in the Family Promise Network should have toys and things to play with like most

other children do. She and her family had two bake sales and took private donations to raise money to buy toys for those children. There are usually between five and 10 children with their families that stay at churches in each county on a rotating basis.

"We originally wanted to buy one toy for each kid," said Tracie Schaeckel, Savanna's mother. "But we ended up having three per kid and some left over for the next time they came in."

The Schaeckels said the best part was seeing the reaction of children when they received the toys.

"They were excited and even the parents were saying they remembered some of those toys from when they were kids," Tracie Schaeckel said. "We probably had 40 or 45 different things and there are some toys that can stay at our facility, like a miniature bowling set that would be hard for them to carry back and forth."

One concern the Schaeckels had about giving out toys was just how the children would carry them from place to place. They took care of that potential issue, too.

"We got them drawstring bags and Savanna put their toys in the bags," Tracie Schaeckel said. "We were only going to give them one toy because they don't have a lot of room, so that's why we got



Savanna Schaeckel, who with her family attends Mantua United Methodist Church, held bake sales and took donations to buy toys for homeless children.

the bags for them."

Mantua UMC pastor Rev. Doug Baitinger is glad to have people in his church who are not only thoughtful, but also faithful.

"It's a great feeling to know that I have a congregation that really uses the church like the body of Christ," Baitinger said. "Savanna is one of the many who

reach out and share God's love. For a 12-year-old, she knows what service is and to see her live that is wonderful."

Baitinger pointed out that it's one of the best examples of how faith can work.

"Faith has to be an action and visibly lived," he said, "and that is certainly what Savanna is doing. She is a good young lady."

# Rapper KB Latest Addition to IGNITE

Rapper KB is the latest addition to the second annual IGNITE Youth Conference scheduled for Oct. 2-4 in Wildwood.

Who is KB? That's not a bad question as it was also the title of his first album, a mixtape released in 2011. KB, whose actual name is Kevin Burgess, uses the theme of Romans 1:16 in his music: "I'm not ashamed of the gospel: it is God's own power for salvation to all who have faith in God". Being unashamed of the gospel is a common thread in his songs.

This theme can be heard in KB's latest album, *Tomorrow We Live*, that was released in April. The album was recently featured on iTunes as one of its hot summer selections. The day of the release the words "*Tomorrow We Live*" were written in the sky above New York City which probably helped it debut on the Billboard charts at No. 1 on Top Christian Albums, No. 4 on Top Rap Albums, and in the top 20 on the iconic Billboard 200.

Some of the featured lines on *Tomorrow We Live* include, "Aint gotta make sense, homie you gotta make faith, Faith, the only thing that make sense" from the song *Ima Just Do It*, which also features a verse from PGA golfer Bubba Watson.

KB's other album releases have included *Weight & Glory* in 2012, and the EP *100* in 2014, which won a Dove Award

## Five KB Listens

Here is a quick glance at five KB songs worth listening, too, and the albums those songs are on.

**Sideways** - *Tomorrow We Live*  
**Ima Just Do It** - *Tomorrow We Live*  
**100** - *100 EP*  
**Angels** - *Weight & Glory*  
**Zone Out** - *Weight & Glory*

for Rap/Hip Hop Song of the Year, 100.

KB, who is from Tampa, Fla., and is turning 27 this month, dove into hip-hop after receiving a theology degree. He has toured with Reach Records co-founder Lecrae, along with Tenth Avenue North and more recently Social Club to promote *Tomorrow We Live*.

KB joins worship artist Phil Wickham as the two primary musical performers for this year's IGNITE. Also confirmed for IGNITE are speaker Preston Centuolo, who was last year's featured speaker, and the Ground Zero Master's Commission, which will perform music and skits throughout the weekend. More speakers and performers will be announced in the coming weeks.

Registration is open for IGNITE at [IGNITENJ.org](http://IGNITENJ.org).

**The August Issue Deadline  
is July 15, 2015**



Rapper KB will be one of the headliners for the Second Annual IGNITE Youth Conference in Wildwood the weekend of Oct. 2-4.

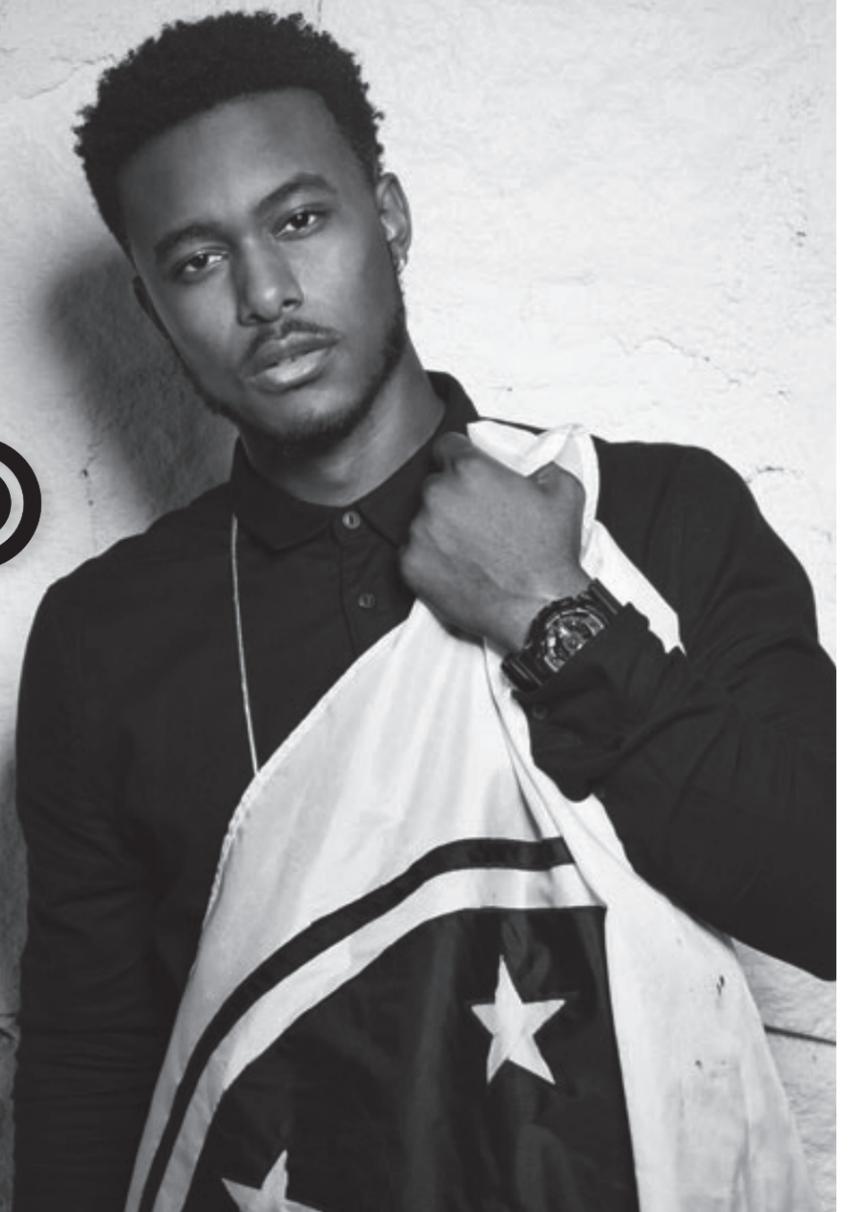
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# Grace Korean's Yun Uses Peace Skills as D.C. Intern

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

Erika Yun doesn't know exactly what the rest of her post-collegiate life will hold. She does know she has a chance of a lifetime this summer.



Yun

Yun, who attends Grace Korean UMC in Westwood, N.J., was one of 10 people, ages 18 to 23, selected to work in the Ethnic Minority Young Adult (EYA) Summer Internship program of the United Methodist

ist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). The interns are working in nonprofit and nongovernmental social justice organizations in the U.S. capital for two months.

A recent graduate of Messiah College in Pennsylvania, Yun majored in peace and conflict with a concentration in Asian studies.

"Having graduated in May, and having those types of passions and interests, when I was looking at specific types of internships, this seemed like a perfect fit for me," Yun said.

The interns are selected annually and primarily drawn from the five ethnic caucuses of The United Methodist Church, and increasingly from Central Conferences (outside the United States) to reflect the global nature of the denomination.

"I really love our group and our community," she said. "We come from such different backgrounds. Also, we know we have this connection of being around the same age group, coming from a college culture and being an ethnic person in the U.S."

Yun's internship is with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a civil rights organization for ethnic minorities in the United States. To qualify for the program, applicants must be passionate about social justice and active in the denomination, according to the Rev. Neal Christie, the GBCS assistant general secretary for



Erika Yun is one of 10 interns from around the world working with the United Methodist Church this summer in Washington, D.C., who are also making visits to Baltimore and New York City.

Education & Leadership Formation who directs the program.

That's another reason why Yun thought she would be a good candidate for this particular internship.

"It's not a very peaceful time around the world or in this nation," she said. "That's why my study and major are important. There is this gaping wound in our society. We need to be more educated in practical skills and just personal peace and conflict skills and learn how to use this word instead of that one."

Some of the interns schedule has included traveling to Baltimore in June where they had an opportunity to learn about Methodist heritage. They also met with a United Methodist pastor who

discussed the faith community's role in Baltimore in recent weeks to promote reconciliation and justice following the civil unrest after the death of Freddie Gray.

The interns also attend worship together each Sunday at a different area church and meet for weekly evening devotions and Bible studies. They are scheduled to go to New York City in mid-July to visit GBCS's United Nations & International Affairs office, the General Board of Global Ministries and the United Nations.

"It's been a lot of different experiences," Yun said. "Being in the Methodist building and having workshops, we talk about a lot of real issues."

Yun acknowledges that some of those issues exist within her own ethnicity.

"Seeing the injustice and destruction and hurt all around the world, it's just hard," she said. "I consider myself a Korean American and looking at all the unrest in the Korean peninsula, and looking at all of the family conflicts, I saw this major as something I could use."

While the summer internship does provide her a place to stay along with daily meals and transportation, Yun hopes her peace and conflict skills will be put to use for a paying job very soon.

"Looking at how institutions function in this world, you can go into any field," she said. "You're going to need this skill set wherever you go."

## Three Bishops and Cabinets Help A Future With Hope

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

A Future With Hope has facilitated and inspired more than 9,000 volunteers coming from more than 38 states to help with Sandy Recovery.

Some of those volunteers are leaders from other conferences in the country. Western Pennsylvania Conference Bishop Thomas Bickerton became the third bishop, along with their cabinets, to volunteer, last month. Every volunteer team is important as the three year an-

A FUTURE WITH  
**HOPE**

The People of the United Methodist Church

niversary of the storm nears and more than 10,000 people are in need of recovery help.

Many people around the country and even the region have forgotten about Su-

perstorm Sandy or believe that recovery is long complete. A Future With Hope needs United Methodists throughout the conference and the region to spread the news that much work needs to be done so that A Future With Hope can stay on the ground in recovery until the job is finished.

Conference leaders in Greater New Jersey and Western Pennsylvania led by example by spending a week in June rebuilding houses and bringing attention to the need that is very real to the thousands of people who are living in unsafe conditions or who have not been able to return home since the storm in October of 2012.

Bishop Bickerton and his cabinet spent a week working in the home of an elderly Chinese-speaking couple in Roselle Park. The language barrier the couple encountered was another confounding element of their path to recovery, but breaching that barrier made their connections with the cabinet volunteers all the more meaningful.

One homeowner they worked with got choked up when the team finished and cleaned up his kitchen. It was the first time in 2½ years it could finally be used again as a proper kitchen.

Another homeowner said the Western Pennsylvania cabinet team helped "joy and laughter return to the home."

The visiting WPA cabinet team worked on other Union County homes in Linden and Union Township, as well as a raised home in Keansburg in Monmouth County.

Dozens of United Methodist churches in Western Pennsylvania have already sent mission teams to help in recovery. Hopefully, dozens more will follow WPA's leadership and volunteer for 2016.

Also in June, GNJ Bishop John Schol and Greater New Jersey's cabinet and connectional ministries team put up wall board and painted a home in Little Egg Harbor. The team bunked at the Lacey United Methodist Church host site.

Rich Hendrickson, Director of Stewardship and Visioning is a veteran of mission work and was inspired by the work.

"It can be surprising how much need there still is," he said, "but it's also rewarding to know that Methodists are still on the ground, helping. If we want to help our neighbors we must take action, share their stories, lend a hand, and get those hands dirty."

In the summer of 2013, the West Virginia cabinet and Bishop Sandra Steiner-Ball were the first conference leadership team to volunteer in Sandy recovery with A Future With Hope. As recovery gets more complicated in the coming months and years, A Future With Hope staff hopes that other Bishops and conference leaders follow their lead.

"The more attention that we can bring to the needs of the people of New Jersey who are struggling with recovery, means more volunteers will come to work with A Future With Hope to help complete the recovery process," Bishop Schol said. "When people hurt, United Methodists help."



William Meekins was among the Western Pennsylvania Conference members who did volunteer work for A Future With Hope in June.

# Titusville UMC Hosts Full-Day VBS For Seven Weeks

Titusville United Methodist Church decided to try something a little, or maybe even a lot, different when it came to hosting vacation Bible school this summer. Instead of a traditional one-week event, Titusville decided to offer its VBS for five days of the week for seven consecutive weeks.

The idea came about to give working parents another choice on where to send their children during the day during the summer. The first week began Monday, July 6, and the VBS will run each week with the final session ending Friday, Aug. 21.

"Vacation Bible school is a time-honored values education offered by the United Methodist Church," said Emmalee Morrison, co-coordinator of TUMC's planned VBS program. "We recognize the needs of families for an extended summer program. The Titusville United Methodist Church is rising to meet these needs within our greater community."

The summer ministry coordinators at Titusville hope to serve families throughout the Mercer County, N.J., and Bucks County, Pa., areas. Ideal for working parents in those areas, this VBS program is designed for children from ages 4 through 12 years old and is scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. The program includes the 4- and 5-year-olds meeting separately in their own class. The schedule also allows parents to pick and choose the weeks that best suit the needs of their children's summer schedules.

The featured daily curriculum is the United Methodist Church's "G-Force: God's Love in Action." It focuses on what it means to be a Christian and serve God in everyday life. Each session's action word will spark an idea about a way to show God's unstoppable love. Those words are: move, act, follow, share and then to go out and serve. The G-Force curriculum's main Bible verse is Acts



Titusville United Methodist Church in Mercer County, N.J., is hosting a full day, five days a week VBS for seven weeks. The first VBS began July 6 and the final week will end Aug. 21.

17:28: "In God, we live, move and exist."

As part of the program, Titusville pastor, the Rev. John Wesley Morrison, leads the children and their teachers and aides in regularly scheduled chapel time. Along with the VBS curriculum, children will enjoy crafts, nature walks, water play, scooters, skate boards and bikes.

One highlighted outreach activity will be a weekly Muffin Ministry, whereby VBS children will make cards and deliver homemade muffins to local community residents or church members within walking distance of the church.

Children are asked to bring their own

lunches each weekday. Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided. Children are encouraged to bring their own bikes, scooters, other appropriate fun stuff, helmets and good walking shoes for daily play time and nature walks in the park.

The cost is \$135 per child each week (with a minimum required attendance of six children for VBS each week). A one-time, non-refundable \$25 registration fee will serve as a reservation for as many weeks as desired.

Titusville UMC is located alongside

Washington Crossing State Park and the Delaware River at 7 Church Road in Titusville at the corner of River Road (Route 29) and Church Road. The VBS will be held in the church's large separate education building and chapel time will be held in the church's stained-glass, window-filled sanctuary. There is ample parking available and look for the blue ox on the front lawn.

For more information and further details, please contact Emmalee Morrison at 609-221-8634 or emmaleemorrison@yahoo.com.

## Laity Academy Offering Leaders Chance To Learn

The Laity Leadership Academy will offer churches and their non-clergy leaders a chance to learn a variety of innovative ways to continue to develop their congregations. The Academy will take place the weekend of Sept. 11-12 at Haddonfield United Methodist Church, with a registration deadline of Aug. 15.

The Academy will feature instruction tracks on creating vital small groups, creating an evangelism church, creating inspiring worship and creating a social media ministry.

The small group track will include receiving a resource tool kit and learning techniques for creating, sustaining and growing your church's small groups, learning how to use your website and social media effectively and developing an action plan to partner with clergy.

The inspiring worship track will include sessions on understanding the total worship experience, reviewing the latest research on traditional and alternative worship services and learning how to use technology to inspire.

The creating an evangelism track includes learning successful principles used by a discipling church, learning techniques to deepen young people's spirituality and connection to the church, receiving a resource tool kit for effective evangelism and learning how to use your website and social media effectively.

Each of the first three tracks also include developing an action plan to partner with clergy.

The social media track will include receiving a resource tool kit for an effective social media ministry, discussing ministry in the digital age and strategies to be effective, learning how to use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other platforms as outreach ministry, learning to build relationships, visibility and engage



Those who attended last year's Laity Leadership Academy worship during the opening service at Haddonfield United Methodist Church.

members through the church website.

Churches are encouraged to send a team of lay leaders who work together to the Academy so they can develop an action plan to take back to their church for implementation. Certified Lay Servants who successfully complete the Laity Leadership Academy and implement the action plan will receive recertification recognition for being a Certified Lay Servant.

The Academy also requires some pre-reading leading up to the Sept. 11-12 weekend.

The registration fee is \$50. The Academy will begin with registration at 3 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 11 with a dinner at 5:30 p.m. and worship and communion with Bishop John Schol beginning at 7 p.m. The Academy will conclude at about 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12.

For more information about the Academy, contact GNJ Lay Leader Rosa Williams at [rosamw@optonline.net](mailto:rosamw@optonline.net)



JOIN US FOR THE

21<sup>st</sup> Annual WALK for ALL AGES

September 13, 2015

Registration 12 noon, walk 1:00 p.m.

Food • Fun • Games • Door Prizes • Entertainment • Tours & More

Francis Asbury Manor • 70 Stockton Ave., Ocean Grove

Advance registration \$15. Event day registration \$20.

Registration is required!

Supporting the United Methodist Homes of New Jersey undergirds our mission and values. On an everyday basis, it translates to vibrant communities where residents live abundant, fulfilling, meaningful and self-directed lives.

Here's how you can participate:

- Form or join a Walk Team – [www.umhjnwalk.org](http://www.umhjnwalk.org)
- Give a gift to support a Walker or Team – [www.umhjnwalk.org](http://www.umhjnwalk.org)
- Spread the word on social media – <https://www.facebook.com/UMHNFoundation>
- Learn more about United Methodist Homes of NJ – [www.umh-nj.org](http://www.umh-nj.org)

Can't make it to Ocean Grove on September 13th: Create a virtual walk team online.

For more information please call Rebecca Roe at 732-922-9802 ext. 2128.

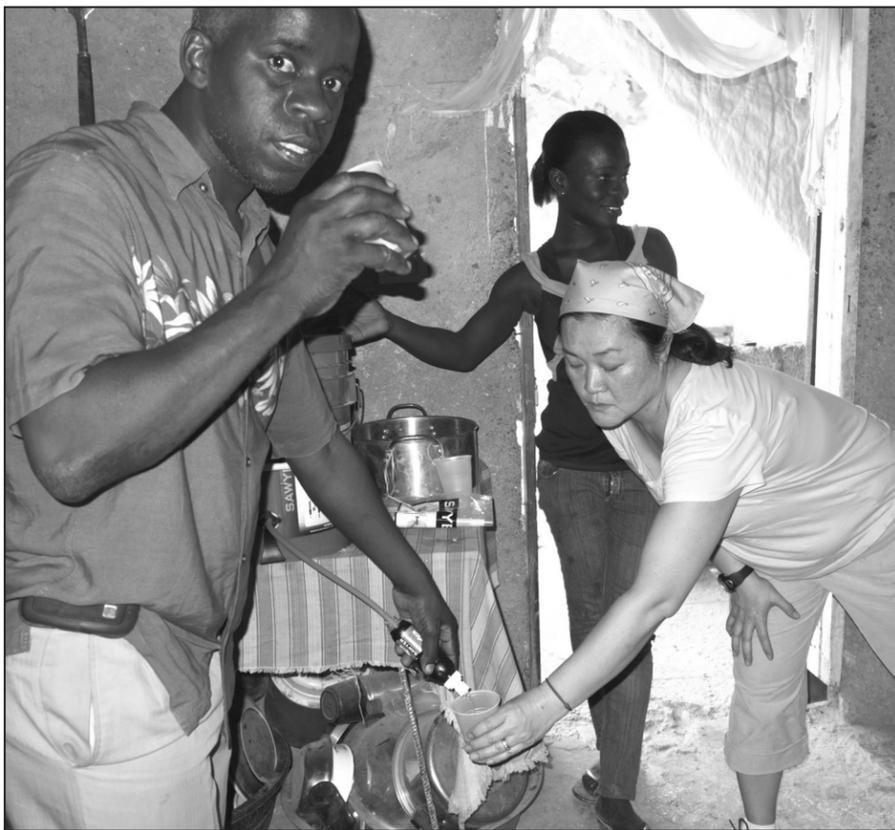
To learn how your business or organization can be involved visit:

[www.umhjnwalk.org/sponsor](http://www.umhjnwalk.org/sponsor)

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GNJ mission team member Gray Whetstone and Rev. Sunny Shim take a drink of water after it has gone through a filtration system installed at a home in Haiti.

## GNJ's Team Delivers Water Filters to Haiti

The lack of potable water for basic human needs is one of the most critical problems in Haiti, which has the lowest rate of access to improved water and sanitation infrastructure in the Western Hemisphere. An estimated 3 million of the 10 million people in Haiti do not have access to clean water.

Greater New Jersey's United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Haiti team collaborated with a team from Plano, Texas, to work on a water filtration project this past March. First there was a strong educational component that included general water sanitation training for the Haitian families.

Each family received training on assembling the water filters and performing the maintenance on the filters. A team member with a translator accompanied each person to his or her home and verified that the filter was properly set up and that the recipient of the filter could perform the proper maintenance in the home.

On the last day, the UMVIM team had a Vacation Bible School type of experience for over 100 children where team members read a Bible story, did a craft with the children, sang songs and gave out snacks, coloring books and crayons.

The team also spent one day visiting sites in Haiti where previous UMVIM

teams had taken mission trips. Those places included Grace Children's Hospital and Pediatric Clinic in Port au Prince, Hope for Life Children's Home, and Mellier Church. This team delivered dresses, school supplies and snacks to Grace Hospital and Hope for Life Children's Home. Previous teams worked at Mellier removing rubble after the earthquake and constructing the new church.

"It was rewarding to see the finished church, which has become the center of community activity for the region," said GNJ UMVIM Coordinator Kathy Ahmad, who was on the trip.

Other GNJ members on the team were Marian and Gray Whetstone from Kynett UMC and Rev. Sunny Shim, pastor of Wall UMC.

The next GNJ UMVIM mission trip to Haiti will be Jan 9 - 16, 2016, which will be another water filtration mission. The dates for future trips have yet to be scheduled. No date has been set for an UMVIM team leader training workshop, but you may contact Kathy Ahmad for information about upcoming sessions.

*To obtain more information about joining the team or to obtain an application, Ahmad can be contacted at [kahmad@comcast.net](mailto:kahmad@comcast.net) or by cell 732-865-3730.*

## OBITUARIES

**DORIS L. WILLIAMS**, retired Elder, died June 15. A viewing and service was held June 20. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Hospice of the Bluegrass, 2312 Alexandria Drive, Lexington, KY 40504.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Landrea Miriti (daughter), 771 Longwood Road, Lexington, KY 40503 or on the Facebook page: In Memory of Doris L. Williams.

**EDYTHE FRANCES STAFFORD GREEN**, widow of retired Elder Roy C. Green, died June 16. A memorial service will be held in August. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Christiana UMC, 21 W. Main Street, Christiana, DE 19702.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to David R. Green (son), 9 Loveland Street, Madison, NJ 07940.

**MEZZIE ANN THIELKING**, widow of Retired Elder William Thielking, died June 12. A viewing took place June 16. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Help and Hope Food Closet, P.O. Box 116, Millville, NJ 08332.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Holly Conaway (daughter), 35 Woodduck Drive, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062.

**EDITH S. PROPERT**, widow of the retired Elder George Propert, died June 6. A viewing took place June 12. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Fellowship Fund - United Methodist Homes of NJ, 535 North Oak Ave., Pitman NJ 08071.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Bill Propert (son), 554 North Lake Shore Dr., Brick, NJ 08723.

**ELI SAMUEL RIVERA**, retired Elder, died June 11. A viewing and service was held June 15. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to UMCOR or the New Jersey Retired Clergy fund.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Marie Rivera (wife), at 1766, Brookview Drive South, Jacksonville, FL, 32246.

## STEWARDSHIP STORIES

by Rich Hendrickson, Director of Stewardship & Visioning

### Time to go fishing!



The shadows grow longer as the sun makes its way deeper into the western sky. The breeze is light and the temperature just right. The lines are baited and in the water. The poles are secure in their holders, anchored deep in the sand. The beach chairs strategically placed to see any action from the tip of the fishing poles. The cooler is opened and while enjoying their favorite beverages one of the fishermen sums up the thoughts

of the group, "Boy, I sure hope the fish don't bother us!"

The light is bright across the eastern sky as the sun breaks the dawn on what promises to be a beautiful day. The church doors are open, the candles lit, and the last-minute details are worked out in preparation for this morning's worship service. The greeters are in place as well as the ushers. The choir is robed, in line, and waiting to process. A collective thought travels quickly through the congregation, "I sure hope the fish don't bother us!"

"Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It was their regular work. Jesus said to them, "Come with me. I'll make a different kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass." They didn't ask any questions, but simply dropped their nets and followed." (Matthew 4:18-20 The Message)

Friends, Jesus didn't call recreational fishermen. He didn't call the casual fisherman who could easily afford to come home from a day of fishing empty handed. Jesus called those whose very livelihood depended on the catch. Like those first disciples we are also called by Jesus to fish for men and women. May we do so with passion, commitment, urgency, and love.

## CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

**Musicfest of Praise Food Donations Top 2,000 Pounds** - Christ United Methodist Church in Piscataway had more than 2,000 pounds of food donated by fans who attended the church's third annual Musicfest of Praise in June. For admission to the outdoor concert, the church asked attendees to donate non-perishable food items and more than 400 people responded. Church volunteers have sorted the food and much of it is going to Fish Inc. for distribution in Middlesex County. The balance of the donations will go to Piscataway area families participating in the church's Shepherd's Angels ministry. The immediate objective of this ministry is to help these families bridge the food gap they may experience during the summer months when children are eating more meals at home.

**Summer Stars Series Underway at Ocean Grove** - The Thursday night Summer Stars series is underway at the Great Auditorium in Ocean Grove. The remaining concerts in July feature Maksim Shtrykov and Misuzu Tanaka on July 16, the Solisti String Ensemble on July 23, and the Grand Orchestra and the Great Organ on July 30, with organist Gordon Turk and Jason Tramm conducting the Summer Stars Festival Orchestra. For more information and tickets, go to [www.oceangrove.org/box-office](http://www.oceangrove.org/box-office).

**Anti-Poverty Network To View The House We Live In** - The Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey will view and then discuss the movie *The House We Live In* the third installment of the documentary series *Race: The Power of an Illusion* from 3 to 6 p.m. on July 22 at Georgian Court University in Lakewood. *The House We Live In* analyzes how racial differences were used to establish a social hierarchy that is deeply ingrained within society. The film also explores the implications of this hierarchy for power, wealth, and prosperity. For more information call (908) 458-3940 or go to [www.antipovertynetwork.org](http://www.antipovertynetwork.org).

**Capital District UMW Raises More than \$2,000 For Neighborhood Center** - The United Methodist Women Capital District Tea for the Neighborhood Center in Camden raised more than \$2,000 for the Neighborhood Center and attracted nearly 100 people to Magnolia Road UMC in Pemberton Township. Participants also donated paper products, baby items, snacks and cleaning products for the Neighborhood Center. There was such an overwhelming response that the Center van had to come back the next day to get it all. The evening program was presented by Christa Galvin, Volunteer and Community Outreach Director for the Neighborhood Center. The next Capital District UMW event will be Oct. 3 at the Allentown United Methodist Church, for

the Annual Communion Breakfast and meeting.

**Centenary UMC to Host Starlite Chorale** - The Starlite Chorale will present a concert of popular music hosted by Centenary United Methodist Church in Metuchen, N.J., at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 18. All proceeds will benefit the A Future With Hope mission fund. The Starlite Chorale is an 18 voice singing ensemble that will present a show called, "Sing, Sing, Sing!", featuring popular hits of the 40's 50's and 60's. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors. Students and children are free. For more information, contact Pastor Tony Godlefski at either [pastortony@montgomeryUMC.org](mailto:pastortony@montgomeryUMC.org) or 908-295-2252 or Pastor Anna Thomas at 732-619-6290.

**Local Church History Workshops** - The Greater New Jersey Commission on Archives and History is hosting a six hour self-contained workshop on how to start, manage and complete a local church history. Marie Amerson, college professor and author, has devised a manual for local churches to manage the process from start to finish. She will give two identical workshops on Sept. 18 and 19 based on her book "Dusty Books and Faded Records." Friday's session will be held in The United Methodist Church Archives and History Center in Madison, N.J. Saturday's workshop will be held at Chews United Methodist Church in Glendora, N.J. Each workshop will start at 10 a.m. The deadline for registering is Sept. 12. A registration fee of \$25 will cover both the workbook and lunch. For more information contact Rev. Don DeGroat at [dfdegroat4@aol.com](mailto:dfdegroat4@aol.com) or 570-646-9298.

### HOUSE FOR RENT

Peaceful sunset and bay views. Recently renovated vintage Sears Kit-house. Two bedroom-sleeps 5, first floor waterfront home in Stone Harbor NJ. Relax, swim and use kayak.



### AVAILABLE WEEKS

July 11-25, August 8-15 and 22-29

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL:  
CALL 609.425.1586

# 1 PERSON + 1 IDEA = CHANGED LIVES

In February, Rev. Jean McMullan had the idea to create a “gift shop” at Annual Conference to raise money for A Future With Hope. She reached out to the talented crafters within the United Methodist community and dozens of people responded by providing beautifully made quilts, dolls, scarves, afghans and more. **In one weekend, she helped raise more than \$2,500.**



**\$2,500 WILL HELP INSTALL NEW KITCHEN CABINETS SO THAT A FAMILY CAN MOVE HOME ALMOST 3 YEARS AFTER THE STORM.**

**\$2,500 WILL SAVE THE LIVES OF 250 CHILDREN IN AFRICA BY PREVENTING AND TREATING MALARIA.**

## YOU CAN CHANGE LIVES TOO.

**SUPPORT THE MISSION FUND CAMPAIGN.**

[www.gnjumc.org/missionfund](http://www.gnjumc.org/missionfund)

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MISSION FUND CAMPAIGN

A FUTURE WITH  
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**IMAGINE NO**   
Our Faith In Action.  
**MALARIA**