

# THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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## Annual Conference Offers New Ways To Fish

By Jeff Wolfe  
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WILDWOOD – If you didn't know what the theme of the 2015 Annual Conference was before walking in the doors of the Wildwoods Convention Center, there was no mistaking it at first glance. There was also no mistaking it in the messages given by several at the different services that took place from May 28-30.

The unmistakable theme was "Fish," based on the Bible verse of John 21:6, where Jesus tells some of the disciples to throw the net on the other side of the boat. The enthusiasm for that theme was apparent from the opening worship children's parade, where they had voluntarily constructed fish out of paper, or drawn pictures of fish to put on display, to the end of the conference when more than \$12,000 more was spontaneously donated to the mission fund.

Bishop John Schol not only greeted and appreciated the kind and creative gestures by the children and donations from the adults, but also made a point to let everyone of the record 1,700 who attended know that he valued their efforts to fish for spiritual growth.

"You have set sail into the deep and stormy waters and you are proving that the most dedicated are always fishing for new ways to be faithful and generous," he said. "Fisherman have patience and persistence. Fisherman are people who throw the line in the water lots of times."



Some brought fish drawings to support the theme of the 2015 Annual Conference in Wildwood on May 28-30. A record 1,700 people attended the conference.

The GNJ's Director of Mission and Multi-Cultural Ministries Nicole Caldwell-Gross threw her line into the water as the speaker at the opening worship service on the Thursday morning of Annual

Conference.

"Like John, I will exclaim with hope in a weary throat: It is The Lord! It is The Lord who sends fish to empty nets! It is The Lord who sends faith to empty spir-

its!" she said. "It is The Lord who brings abundance to absence, possibility to impossibility and expectation to emptiness!"

Caldwell-Gross also brought home the

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### More on Annual Conference

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The Annual Conference in pictures.

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## Music Camp Tradition Moves to Pinelands

By Jessica Stenstrom  
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With summer camp set to start July 12, Jестie Higgins, Director of GNJ Camping Ministries, is gearing up for another fun-filled season at Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery.

If you haven't registered yet, there's still time and many camp experiences to choose from, said Higgins. Campers can choose a variety of options including A Taste of Camp, a shorter session perfect for first time campers, Camp-A-Palooza, a sampler of all things camp and Ninos Para Cristo y Jovenes Para Cristo, an inclusive camp program that invites all to celebrate Latin culture. Higgins said that no matter which experience campers choose, they will enjoy a wide range of activities: archery, hiking, canoeing, gaga ball, lake swimming, mud hiking, campfires, nature studies and fishing, are just a few.

In addition, Music Camp will be relocating to Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery this summer. Pastors Kaleigh Corbett and Heather Valosin will lead the camp replacing long-time directors Mark Miller and Tanya Linn Bennett.



Corbett



Valosin

"As a student at Drew Theological School, I got a little spoiled worshipping so regularly with leaders as gifted as Mark and Tanya," Higgins said. "So you could imagine how elated I was when I found out I got to work with them as camp directors, like we had rock stars leading camp."

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### What's Inside...

A Future With Hope has house lifting. Page 8

Respond Inc. graduates finding jobs. Page 9

Children's book sales to help CUMAC. Page 9

## Manna Monday At Orange UMC



Joy Thomas hands out food during the Manna Monday program at Orange UMC. Manna Monday began last July and thanks to some help from Table to Table is providing food, both physical and spiritual, for about 200 people. Story and Photos on Page 3.

# A Message from the Bishop Annual Conference

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



## Next

This is the third of a three part series on key words for our future as leaders, congregations and conference. Sometimes a single word such as "mind, yet, or next" can speak volumes.

For anyone standing in line, the one word you want to hear is "next". Good books and movies have you wondering about what is coming next. Creating a sense of anticipation is a blessing. We have an entire season in the church dedicated to anticipation called Advent.

I was recently talking to a CEO of an organization in her mid-50's who was leading quite well and helped the orga-

nization achieve great results. She said to me, I feel like I have another opportunity in me, one more job.

Declining organizations and churches have lost the sense of next. They think more in terms of how we will make it through the next year or next cycle. They have lost the sense of possibility, wonder, and a new challenge. This loss of next generally happened because years before things began to get stale and the leader(s) did not cast a new vision.

The prophet Ezekiel described the Israelites as a valley of dry bones. They were a beaten and discouraged people. In the 37th chapter, Ezekiel casts a new vision of bones coming together and life being reformed.

There is a great reformation occurring in GNJ in many of our congregations. In the midst of challenging times, there are clergy leaders saying I have another opportunity to lead toward vitality and health. They are casting a vision and inspiring people to pursue the vision.

We have lay leadership that are asking what's next for us and recreating youth ministries, children's programs, and mission opportunities that are capturing the imagination of their fellow disciples.

Next congregations are doing at least three things:

1. They are open to the Holy Spirit and God's vision for their future. They pray for God to reveal what is next for their congregation. Interestingly the healthiest churches pray these prayers before they are declining.
2. They love challenges. Next churches are always looking for God-sized challenges and finding how to pursue them. Thomas Edison once said, most people miss opportunities because they are dressed in overalls and look like work. A congregation's calling from God will be work. The scriptures are filled with stories of hope and achievement through leaders and people who worked hard to fulfill God's calling. A church does not have a future unless it is ready to work at the new ministry God is unfolding for it.
3. They never dismiss a new idea. Next congregations allow new and even crazy ideas to be explored. Moses had a crazy idea to cross the Red Sea without a boat. David had a crazy idea to take on a giant. John Wesley had a crazy idea to spread the Methodist way in America. Next congregations are willing to experiment and allow people to try something new.

At the GNJ Annual Conference session at the end of May, there were some crazy ideas that people are still talking about – leading opening worship with an impromptu children's parade carrying fish that the children made; giving out fishing hooks as a symbol and call to go and reach new people, taking pictures of people on a surf board, hanging eight foot fish from the convention hall ceiling, and not debating controversial legislation but singing, praying and talking with one another because we recognized relationships are more important than being right. What does any of this have to do with God? Well I believe it is a prelude to a powerful story that is unfolding before us. I invite you to come along on what God has for us next.

Next,

John Schol, Bishop  
The United Methodist Church  
Greater New Jersey

point of how important it is for people to be willing to listen to others, listen to God and to change their way of thinking and action.

"Jesus' instruction to cast their net on the other side defies all known logic, all agreed upon tradition all they know about fish and being fishermen," she said. "For casting their nets on the other side was not simply a shift in position but a shift in perspective. It's a shift a little known preacher made in Montgomery, Alabama when the most effective weapon against racism and segregation were not guns but songs of glory.

"It's a shift a Palestinian girl made when she chose books in the face of bullets and ignited a revolution for girls' education in the Middle East. It's a shift John Wesley made when coal miners, widows and orphans became people to do ministry with and not to. It's a shift Jesus is calling each of us to make in our congregations, in our communities - within our very selves!"

At the conclusion of her speech, Caldwell-Gross' words were met with a standing ovation.

Bishop Schol also directly addressed the fishing theme in his Episcopal and Ordination addresses, noting that Schol, in Dutch, means fish. He also noted from experience that catching fish can sometimes be a challenge.

"Fish are slippery," he said, pointing out the natural covering that makes them difficult to hold. "There are lots of people who are slippery, too. They don't want to be part of a system that doesn't care about people. Fish will be slippery until we change our habits."

The Bishop also told a story of how his father and uncle loved to fish and bought a motor, but no boat. On their first fishing trip with the motor and a rented boat, they were out in a bay when the motor wouldn't start. After opening the top of the motor, the Bishop's father and uncle decided to pour some gasoline into the carburetor to try and get it to start. The result was the engine caught on fire, and when the Bishop's father and uncle tried



A break in final legislation turned into a time of giving for the mission fund as more than \$12,000 was given in 15 minutes.

to put out the fire by holding the engine in the water, they dropped the engine and it sank into the bay.

"I wonder," the Bishop said, "if there are some things we need to let go of so God can use us."

A time that God appeared to use to help GNJ's mission fund came during a break in the final legislation session. After the Bishop announced that the mission offering was at \$96,000, several people speaking for different groups and congregations spontaneously stepped up to the microphone pledging to donate more. Those added donations brought the final mission offering to support Imagine No Malaria and A Future With Hope and local missions to \$115,065.

Teaching speaker Andrew Forrest, from Munger Place church in Dallas, also reminded during his two sessions that reaching the unchurched remains a primary mission.

"Is the love for your neighborhood," he asked, "public knowledge?"

## THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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# Orange UMC's Manna Monday Satisfies Many

By Jeff Wolfe  
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Audrey Audain got her answer to prayer. It just wasn't exactly what she thought it would be.

Now Audain and the United Methodist Church in Orange is helping answer the prayers of the hungry by providing physical and spiritual food for 150 to 200 people each Monday at the church. They call it Manna Monday and it has been made possible due to a partnership with Table to Table, a nonprofit organization that delivers food for free.

"I had been praying that we would have a place to just get some good food," said Audain. "Then the Lord said call Table to Table and they came out right away."

Table to Table came and inspected the church to make sure it met its requirements. About a week later, the first truck load of food was delivered to the church. The first delivery was in July and Manna Monday has been going strong ever since.

"A woman from their organization came here to check us out and look at everything," Audain said. "She said we were good to go. She asked me how soon would I like some food delivered here. I said, 'how about on Monday?' She said the truck would be here the next Monday and it was."

But once the answered prayer of food arrived, Audain realized she wasn't finished praying. The church put a sign up to tell the neighborhood that free food was available. However, there wasn't an organized way to distribute it.

"The first time was a little bit chaotic," Audain said. "People would just come and the next day we still had food left to give out. So I just prayed and asked God to give me a way to hand it out. Now we put people in chairs in three rows of three and then let them come up and get the food."

The people needing the food don't simply sit in the church's fellowship hall and wait their turn. Before the food arrives, they participate in a worship service that includes music, prayer and testimony from those in attendance.

"I think it is uplifting to them to have a worship service before they get their food," said Tieasha Lewis, a volunteer helper for Manna Monday. "They can come in here and get their spirits lifted up."

Orange UMC Senior Pastor Prescott Butler serves communion at the service on the first Monday of each month. Those who attend say getting some spiritual nutrition is just as important as the food they receive as they leave.

"I like coming here because I can receive spiritual food," said Edward Banks, who has started attending Sunday service at the church after coming for Manna Monday. "That kind of food keeps you full. That is food for the soul and food from the Lord. And this food helps, too."

Banks spoke that last sentence as he got in line to pick up his variety of food for the day. There are assorted meats, vegetables, fruits, breads, desserts (sometimes even cakes) that are usually available. Audain says there are no questions asked and there is no ID needed to pick up the food. She said the idea is to try and give out as much as possible each Monday.

While the Table to Table truck usually comes late in the morning, Audain and her volunteer staff stay at the church throughout the day as some people cannot come to pick up the food until late in the afternoon or early in the evening. It's the kind of dedication that makes Butler proud of his church.

"It's no accident that this church will celebrate its 185th anniversary this year,"



Photos by Jeff Wolfe

**Above, Algernon Arthur (right) and Joy Thomas help hand out food during Manna Monday at Orange UMC. At right, Orange UMC's Audrey Aubain greets a woman who has come to receive food. At bottom left, Frank Aubain finishes carrying in food delivered by the Table to Table truck. At bottom right, Joy Thomas hands out food after the Monday worship service at Orange UMC.**

Butler said. "Our members understand that they are here for a reason. They love to come out and help in the feeding of the community."

Butler also pointed out that people who attend other churches show up to help with Manna Monday, making it a true community effort.

Manna Monday wouldn't likely be possible, or at least nearly as successful, without the efforts of Table to Table. The organization was started in 1999 as the first food rescue program in North Jersey. Its mission is to take unused food and deliver it to those in need in quick order. According to a 2012 USDA report, 40 percent of food in the U.S. is not eaten, but one out of every six people in America do not have enough to eat.

The uneaten food comes from more than 60 grocery stores, restaurants, country clubs, hospitals and other organizations. The food is delivered for free in a refrigerated truck on the day it is donated. The quick turnaround for the food is important as it is delivered within a day or two of expiration dates. The quick distribution of the food is one key element of a successful program.

"The food we get is going to expire the day we pick it up, or the next day," said Table to Table Director of Recipient Relations and Community Affairs Julie Sciaino. "We keep a record of the temperatures for when we pick up the food and that's something we really try to watch."

Table to Table also makes occasional unannounced visits to all of its recipients to make sure the food is being handled the right way.

"We do pop in and check to see how they are doing," Sciaino said. "Ninety percent of the food is gone within the first hour."

Part of the good news is that Table to Table and its five trucks are on the road five days a week delivering food. Sciaino



said they are still taking applications from groups that want to give out the food, but with 80 such places to deliver to now, they have a waiting list. And she says, Orange UMC has become a model partner. "They have taken the program and ran with it," Sciaino said. "It is so much fun to hear everything they have accomplished. I love to hear when a church becomes

a community." And Audain loves the kind of feedback she hears from the people who regularly come to each Manna Monday. "There is a woman who comes here and she said before she started coming, she knew who God was," Audain said. "But now she says she knows God. That's why we are here."

# Conversations Key Part of Human Sexuality Vote

By Jeff Wolfe  
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WILDWOOD – Six pieces of legislation concerning human sexuality were brought before the Annual Conference last month in Wildwood. Four of the pieces of legislation called for proposed changes to the Book of Discipline. Two of the pieces called for action within the Greater New Jersey Conference. All six pieces passed.

In advance of the legislation being presented, Bishop John Schol invited the annual conference to revise the normal process using Roberts Rules of Order for a process of Holy Conferencing. The annual conference voted to use a process to break into small groups of two or three people to share how these issues have affected each person individually. Seven questions were presented to start the sharing so that each person had a chance to speak and ask questions.

Bishop Schol hoped the conversations would keep relationships at the center of the work particularly when discussing controversial legislation.

"We don't want to be a conference known for agreeing or disagreeing with each other," Bishop Schol said, "but known for how we love each other."

The sharing sessions were concluded with singing and prayer.

"There are no winners or losers here," Schol told the audience. "We are all seekers."

At least some of the conversations took

place between people with opposite views

"It was important that we listen to each other," said Wen-Ling Lai, the senior pastor at Blairstown UMC. "We can learn a lot more about each other when we take time to listen and hear what they have to say."

The questions on the big screen were written in a way so that each person would have a turn to talk and share beliefs and views.

"To hear out each other and to hear ourselves, that is how unity will come," Lai said. "I think we have to continue to listen and to be sensitive to others."

At least in one case, since the conversations took place before the voting, some people weren't sure where the other stood on the issue even after talking.

"It was a good thing," said Fred Harz, a lay member of Elmer UMC. "I had a good talk with one woman and then when it came time to vote, I was surprised she voted yes on all of them. But I think this issue is important."

It was important enough that about an hour of time was put into the schedule just for the speeches and conversations.

"It is the first time that everyone has had that kind of time to talk about this issue," said Jennifer Cho, the senior pastor at First UMC in Newton. "It allowed the conversations to be in depth and honest, yet we were able to have a very sensitive attitude."

"I felt the presence of God during the conversations and that we are together as the body of Christ. We need to find a

## Human Sexuality Voting Results

The first four pieces of legislation will be sent to General Conference in 2016 for consideration. The following details the vote count for each piece of legislation:

Strike from the Book of Discipline the phrase: We do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider the practice incompatible with Christian teaching.  
**Yes 410. No 339.**

Strike from the Book of Discipline the phrase: Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.  
**Yes 396. No 353.**

Strike from the Book of Discipline that homosexuality and performing homosexual unions or weddings is a chargeable offense.  
**Yes 414. No 336.**

Strike from the Book of Discipline that United Methodist funds cannot support the acceptance of homosexuality or supporting homosexual ministries.  
**Yes 405. No 344.**

The Greater New Jersey Conference work for the full inclusion of all people including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons and that we oppose the continued restrictions of church law that restricts the full inclusion of LGBT people.  
**Yes 389. No 352.**

The Greater New Jersey Conference make a public statement supporting and upholding marriage equality in civil law and that we spiritually, emotionally and prayerfully support clergy who are brought up on charges for performing homosexual unions or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies.  
**Yes 381. No 358.**

way to keep serving God together."

As a result of the legislation, Greater New Jersey will bring the resolution to the General Conference for consideration next year.

Regardless of how they felt about the outcome of the vote, most people felt the overall attitude of the conference and the

voting process was a step forward.

"I think what happened here helped promote unity and understanding of one another," said one young clergy person. "We have to be able to have conversations about these things. It was good dialogue and it helped to promote understanding."

## Bright Spots Range From Laundromats to Egg Hunts

During the Episcopal address, Bishop Schol asked churches to tweet, text and email in their bright spots. Here's a sampling of the responses.

"This year our church changed the time of Sunday School so that children are invited to remain in the sanctuary and worship with the congregation every Sunday. The powerful experience of intergenerational learning, worshipping, and growing in faith together has been awesome! Thanks UMC of Summit NJ for valuing children's presence in our worshipping community!"

"The Wantage UMC Youth LOVED Ignite '14 and can't wait for October!"

"We celebrate the impact "Oasis Women's Lounge" is making on the immigrant women in Davis Memorial UMC in Harrison NJ. We empower immigrant women and domestic violence victims with information from volunteer professionals - medical doctors, social workers, counselors, lawyers, hairdresser, manicurists, massages, exercise instructors, nutritionists, and English and computer teachers. Thanks be to God."

"Rosenhayn UMC personally influenced over 200 lives of children in Columbia this past year."

"St Andrew in Toms River hosted our first ever community Easter egg hunt. We filled and hid 13,000 eggs and served a free breakfast to almost 700 children and their families in our community. Our goal was to share Christ love and it was beautiful!"

"First United Methodist Church of Moorestown had a dinner and brainstorming session a few months ago, which we called "super sunday". 200 people attended! A new visioning committee was formed to start working on the many ideas that were suggested by the 5 subgroups. Our members are excited and ready to put these ideas into action! We already have a monthly dinner and time of fellowship for widowers that is well attended!"

"For the past 15 years, Calvary Dumont and UMC at Demarest have offered dinner and fellowship to 80 to 100 people with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses. Last night was such a dinner. What a blessing to watch radical hospitality in action. Several of our guests were sharing their love of God. It was SO EXCITING!"

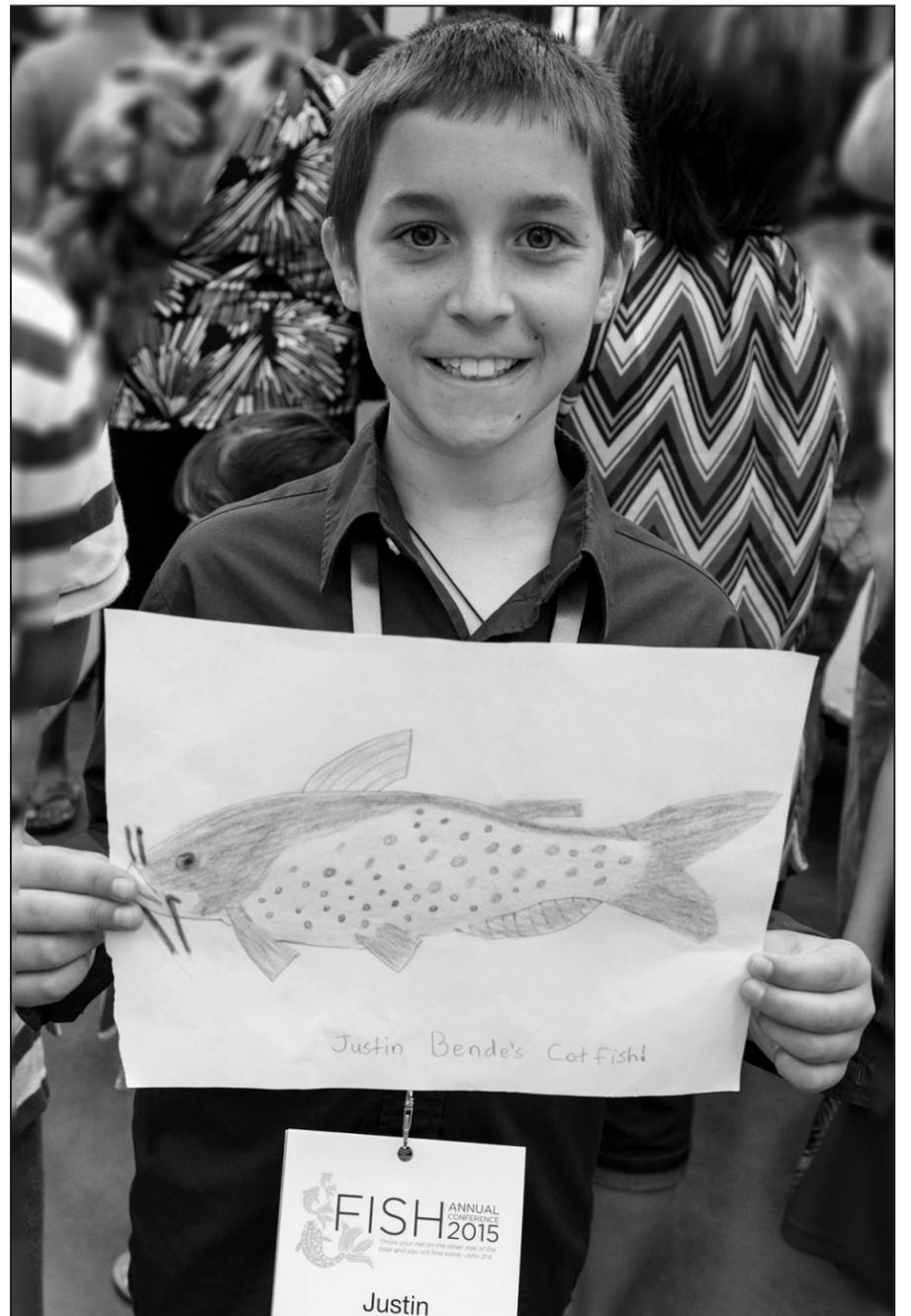
"We are teaching our children at Drew UMC Port Jervis NY to serve at home, church, community and the world. They are currently supporting a missionary in Cambodia."

"Pemberton UMC has an outreach ministry called Loads of Love where our members go to a local laundromat to help marginalized people with their laundry, to listen to them, & pray with them. It's awesome."

"Vincent UMC had Radiant Concert Ministry providing a safe place for positive concert experiences. 2014 saw 43 concerts and over 4000 young people seeing church in a new way and feeling the love of God."

"Bethany St John's congregation of 20 has gathered 4961 lbs of food for the food bank."

"Newton FUMC has launched a new contemporary service last November. Since then, 30 new people have been attending this worship service. A lead singer for our newly formed praise team is a 16 year old high school junior. We hope to offer this service weekly by next year. Newton FUMC has also joined a pilot project, "team vital" ministry this month and 10 people will be involved to find ways to create new ministries for young adults and families this fall. We also had a successful "Walkathon" to benefit "A Future With Hope" mission with cub scouts friends of Pack 85 Newton on Sunday, May 17. We raised over \$1,600. We are planning to have this kind of collaborative mission outreach with other organizations in our community. Small Group Ministry is blossoming now and we



Justin Bende was one of several youths who either drew fish or made fish figures for the opening parade of the 2015 Annual Conference.

have created 8 new small groups since last October. God is good, all the time!"

"A new wind of hope and excitement is blowing at Morristown United Methodist Church. Our YTD giving is up by 19% compared to last year. 14 youth will be confirmed this coming Sunday on May 15th. We are gearing up to launch a new Hispanic Mission and Bilingual Wor-

ship Services to reach out our Hispanic friends who make up 35% of the Morristown population. We are one of the first class of churches participating in "Team Vital" and with it we are exploring innovative ways to vitalize our church in order to reach out more new people, young people and diverse people. A new wind of the Spirit is blowing in our church."

# Delegates Set For Gen. Conference, NE Jurisdiction

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey elected eight delegates to represent GNJ at General Conference next year. Additionally eight delegates were elected to represent GNJ at next year's jurisdictional conference.

General Conference is the top policy-making body of the United Methodist Church which meets once every four years. The conference can revise church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs. Next year all delegates will meet at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, the largest convention center in the Pacific Northwest, May 10-20, 2016.

## Clergy Delegation to General Conference



Lank

Rev. Thomas Lank, a deacon in full connection, is currently appointed at Haddonfield UMC as an Associate Pastor. "I hope that General Conference 2016 will be a time when all voices within the church get a fair hearing and when we can celebrate the global nature of the church," Lank said. "There are difficulties in being a 'United' Methodist Church, but I believe we have a responsibility to maintain unity despite our differences of opinion and culture." Lank will be the first deacon delegate to represent GNJ.



Vega-Perez

Rev. Eunice Vega-Perez, an elder in full connection, is currently appointed at Vernon UMC. "Given the disappointments of the last General Conference, I hope that we will purposefully deal with complex issues and do so with a spirit of honest hearing and courageous speaking that leads to decisive action," Vega-Perez said. "I hope we can learn to be unified in diversity of thought and practice. May we establish general principles that will be applied locally and variously and move away from minute legislation that stalls and distract us in our embrace of mission."



Kwak

Rev. Jisun Kwak, an elder in full connection, is currently appointed as Superintendent for Delaware Bay District. "It is my hope for the UMC to go back to basics by rebuilding our relationship with God," Kwak said. "More than being an organization with its structure, we must endeavor to reach out to communities with missional mind and embrace all without regard to any differences. Strengthening clergy and laity leadership with cultural competency will lead us to be truly inclusive in the changing world."



Wright

Rev. Varlyna Wright, an elder in full connection, is currently appointed as the Superintendent of Capital District. She was also a delegate to General Conference in 2012. "I dream of a United Methodist Church where its members practice personal and social holiness, a church that continues to proclaim the message of salvation that inspires the unchurched to receive Jesus Christ," Wright said. "I envision a church that speaks truth to power and is willing to stand with the marginalized members of our society seeking justice."

## Lay Delegation to General Conference



Catterson

Evelynn Catterson, a lay member of Abscon UMC, was also a delegate to the 2012, 2008 and 2004 General Conferences. "I pray for a world-wide United Methodist Church which works to make disciples for Jesus Christ," Catterson said. "I pray that differences in race, culture, language, gender and social-economic groups be the focus of learning and understanding rather than a barrier to communication. In a world that is so full of hate and anger, I want the United Methodist Church to be the voice and presence of love and caring."



Amey

Bethany Amey, a lay member of Trinity UMC (Clayton) was also a lay delegate at the 2012 General Conference. "My hopes for the next General Conference is that this denomination finds a way to work through our differences in theology and finds a way to move forward together, united. This is a critical time of change and growth," Amey said. "There's an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth. General Conference has to evaluate where we are as a denomination."



Colorado

Judy Colorado, a lay member of the Springfield Emanuel United Methodist Church, was a delegate to jurisdictional conference in 2012. "The mission of the United Methodist Church is, 'to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world'. I believe that the UMC is God's representation to the world to share His redemptive love to all people," Colorado said. "I am hopeful that the UMC continues to engage in new ways of reaching out to all people. I am hopeful that the UMC continues its efforts to be inclusive."



Williams

Rosa Williams has served as Lay Leader for GNJ the last five years and is a member of Galilee UMC. She was an alternate delegate to the 2012 General Conference. "My hope for the United Methodist Church is to develop a strategic plan and implement it in an intentional way to grow our declining church and reverse the decades of decreasing growth," Williams said. "My hope for the future of the United Methodist Church is to be supportive of Christ centered ministries of the local church."

The eight delegates to General Conference will also attend the Northeast Jurisdictional Conference next July. They will be joined there by eight more elected delegates, four clergy and four laity.

## Clergy Delegates to Jurisdictional Conference

Rev. Drew Dyson is currently appointed as Superintendent of the Raritan Valley District. He was a delegate to General Conference in 2012. As the first elected clergy delegate to jurisdictional conference, he will also be an alternate delegate to General Conference. "My

greatest hope for the UMC is a recovery of our missional identity and the proclamation of a compelling, synthetic Wesleyan faith that weaves a deep desire for personal spiritual formation and a strong passion for societal transformation towards the embodiment of God's kingdom," Dyson said.

Rev. Grace Pak is appointed to Embury UMC. "My hope and prayers for the United Methodist Church is that we will recover the 'first love' (Rev 2:4) we had at the beginning as the movement that brought about the change in the course of the history," Pak said. "The time is now for us to be 'Enthusiasts' and be filled with God, to be passionate about patterning our lives after the teachings and examples of Christ individually and collectively, and experience the transformation of heart and life."

Rev. Tanya Linn Bennett is currently appointed to Drew University and Conklin UMC. She was a delegate to General Conference in 2012. "I was honored to serve on the clergy delegation for General Conference 2012, and experienced breadth of theological and ecclesiastical perspectives represented within the global UMC," Bennett said. "I pray that our church acts in solidarity as a more inclusive, more productive, more inspired body, making disciples for the true transformation of a hurting world, bringing hope and reconciliation."

Rev. Gina Hendrickson is currently appointed as the Superintendent of the Northern Shore District. "The UMC is filled with laity and clergy who have a heart and mind to grow deeper and become more in and through Christ's grace by the transformative power of the Holy Spirit," Hendrickson said. "Our church is more than one congregation, one conference or one country. Together we can make a difference to bring peace, justice and hope to all who need God's gift of re-creation, Jesus' saving grace and the Spirit's synergetic power."

Alternates: Rev. Chris Heckert, Rev. Steve Bechtold and Rev. John DiGiamberardino.

## Lay Delegates to Jurisdictional Conference

Stephen Quigg is a lay member of Elmer UMC. "Everyone hopes that the

UMC will become a holy, thriving, Christ-centered, Body of Believers again. But how do we get there?," Quigg said. "I would use Global Ministries (GBGM) as an example of a church institution heading in that direction. It has streamlined its structure while focusing ever more energy and resources on supporting missionaries and their ministries. It works with and represents the whole theological spectrum of our diverse church, yet does so by finding common ground upon which to work."

June McCullough is a lay member of First UMC in Vineland. She was a delegate to General Conference from 1980 to 2008 and was a second reserve to General Conference in 2012. "Our most important task is to spread the Gospel and win people for Jesus," McCullough said. "In that process we look to the Scripture and the charge(s) Jesus gave to all who inquired as He moved among those who came to learn from Him and that Paul gave in his epistles to the early Christians."

Jee Hei Park is a lay member of First UMC, Montclair. "As a young adult, I have a hope for the United Methodist Church to embrace and lead innovation. I hope that we carry out faithfully our slogan, 'Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors'," Park said. "As the body of Christ, our church must expand the definition of diversity and inclusiveness by welcoming all regardless of race, culture, age, and gender/sexuality. Also, I have a hope that the United Methodist Church would work on transforming the world by more actively addressing social justice issues."

Creed Pogue is a lay member of West Side UMC in Millville. He was an alternate to General Conference in 2008 and a delegate to jurisdictional conference in 2008 and 2012. "Our current path is unsustainable with continuing membership losses and increased budgets. Instead, we should be a denomination that constantly lives out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment," Pogue said. "Anything that doesn't further the Kingdom should not be supported with apportionment dollars. These decisions aren't easy ones and need to be made based on facts not entrenched interests."

Alternates: Carolyn Pendleton, Cynthia Kent and Sherri Shumate.

## 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.

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# A Photographic Look At The 2015 Annual Conference

Photos by  
Linda Hesthag Ellwein

At right, worshippers gather to make a circle during the opening worship at Annual Conference in Wildwood. Below, Vanessa Wilson answers questions during her time on the stage with Bishop Schol during the Episcopal Address. Below right, Annual Conference Teaching Speaker Andrew Forrest takes a minute with his son Jack. The bottom worshippers of different ages enjoy some music played by Mark Miller and his band.

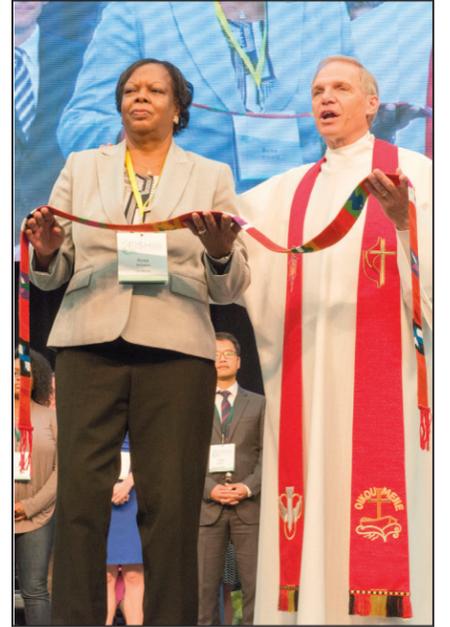


# More Pictures From GNJ's Three Days in Wildwood



Photos by  
Linda Hesthag Ellwein

At left, Bishop Schol and others commission John Inverso during a special moment on Saturday morning of Annual Conference. Inverso fell ill and could not attend the commissioning service on Friday night. Below, Bishop Schol and GNJ Lay Leader Rosa Williams hold the mantle passed on from the retirees to the clergy and signify that clergy and lay servants are in mission together. At bottom left, many hold hands to make a circle during opening worship. At bottom right, anointing was one of the key moments of the retirement service.



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# House Lifting Offers Security From Flooding

By Chris Carter  
ccarter@afuturewithhope.org

Joanne had seen plenty of storms in her Keansburg home, but on October 29, 2012 she saw something new. Small puddles appearing on the floor, as if water was leaking through the roof, but there were no drips or spots on the ceiling. Joanne realized the water wasn't coming from above, but below.

She knew then that it was time to find higher ground, and prepared to leave for her brother's. Soon there was shallow water all throughout the first floor, rising above the electrical outlets as Joanne left.

"It was almost like a flash flood," she recalls.

From her brother's home, Joanne watched the water rise even higher. Neighbors' fences disappeared under the surge, then street signs. She watched boats being flushed down the street by the storm, including her brother's canoe. Even more was being washed away beneath the water's surface, unseen. All Joanne could do then was wait for the water to recede.

Now Joanne and her home are rising above the storm, quite literally in the house's case. A Future With Hope has been working with the Monmouth County Long Term Recovery Group to repair and raise Joanne's home to protect her from future storms.

Subcontractors in partnership with A

Future With Hope began the multi-phase project of lifting a house at the end of April and are fast approaching a move-in date. A structure built around lathe steel beams supports the mass of the home during the lift, which was just above eight feet over the course of several hours. Wooden pilings are put in place during the incremental lift and allow the building to settle. The final stage is a new concrete foundation for the revised elevation of the home, for which work is underway.

"I'm just so excited," Joanne said when we asked how she felt watching the house go up inch by inch.

Thousands of people are still out of their homes due to Sandy and much work remains to be done. Many homes that are still in need of rebuilding this far from the storm have additional complexities, like the need for a lift, that require collaboration amongst recovery agencies to be completed.

A Future With Hope staff worked closely alongside the Monmouth County LTRG to manage the case. Generous grantors like the American Red Cross, Robin Hood Foundation, and Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund are making this project, and others like it, possible. Even though the water has gone down, it takes everyone working together to lift each other up and recover as a closer community.



A house lifting can be a major undertaking and the lifting of this home in Keansburg was made possible with cooperation between A Future With Hope, the Monmouth County Long Term Recovery Group and several generous grantors.

**The July/August Issue  
Deadline is June 22, 2015**



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# Respond Inc. Grads Use Skills For Work

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

In just one year more than 50 individuals from Camden have received in-demand job training through Hope Happens Here, an outreach ministry of Respond Inc. made possible through a United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey Congregational Development grant.

"[Hope Happens Here] gives them a second chance," said Dr. Wilbert Mitchell, executive director of Respond Inc. He said it is priceless to see the expression on the faces of graduates and that many either secure jobs or continue on to other educational programs through Camden County College.

"It's an eye opener for a lot of people," Mitchell said. "It makes people living in the city feel like they have value."

Respond Inc. started as an outreach ministry of Haddonfield UMC to the city of Camden in 1966 answering a need of childcare so that people could work. The services have expanded over the years and Respond is now a collaboration with six United Methodist churches in Camden: Trinity, Asbury, Bethel, Fairview, Parkside, and New Beginnings, along with the Neighborhood Center and Fellowship House. Mitchell described Respond as a social services agency. Currently there are eight day cares operating in the city with over 700 children enrolled, programs to assist with housing and other services for the homeless population in addition to the newest job training initiative.

The job training center offers a 22 week automotive technology program and a 16 week culinary arts program. To date 30 have graduated from the auto program and 40 have graduated from the culinary program.

"Most have found jobs," Mitchell said. "They are productive – giving back to the community, involved in their churches and providing for themselves."

The job training program is important in the city of Camden. Mitchell said there is a 60 percent high school dropout rate and the unemployment rate is 22 percent, much higher than the 6.5 percent rate in New Jersey and the national rate of 5.4 percent because of a lack of jobs in the city. Students receive training for in-demand occupations.

"There is a need for these type of skills," Mitchell said. "Teaching students a trade helps them earn an honest living and helps keep them off the street and out of trouble."

Candidates of the program are selected by the six churches that are part of the collaboration. Each church nominates four or five people at a time for job training. A condition of the program requires that candidates give back to the churches that recommended them through either service or attending worship on a weekly basis which adds another dimension to the job training.

Mitchell said Respond is grateful for the financial support of the grant and believes Hope Happens Here is a model that can be used any place. The program is preparing to expand again with ground breaking for a 3,200 square-foot auto repair shop made possible by grants from Wells Fargo, the U.S. Economic Development Administration and New Jersey Community Capital.

"We are grateful for the support of Wells Fargo and other partners as we strive to provide our students with opportunities to succeed in the auto repair industry," Mitchell said. "This shop will create at least a dozen jobs and will provide a much needed service to the broader community."



Hope Happens Here graduates celebrate their graduation recently. The Respond Inc. program has graduated more than 50 people in the last year, most of which have found jobs.



# Children's Book Brings CUMAC's Mission To Life

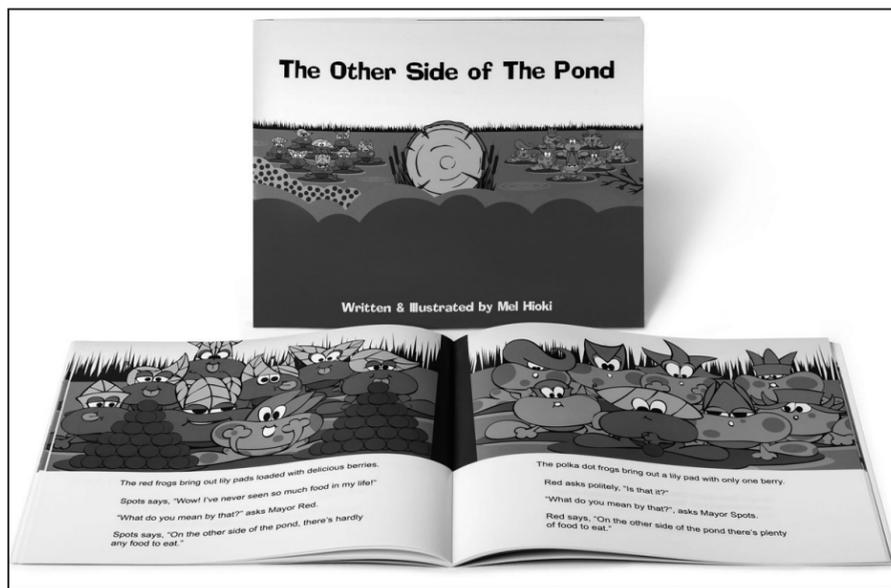
By Jessica Stenstrom  
[Jessica\\_stenstrom@yahoo.com](mailto:Jessica_stenstrom@yahoo.com)

A book inspired by an outreach experience in a soup kitchen will help raise funds to address hunger through CUMAC.

"The Other Side of the Pond" written and illustrated by Mel Hioki is a children's story based on an experience he had at Cornerstone in Englewood, N.J.

"We prepared and served a meal for a soup kitchen that was on one side of the highway," Hioki said. "On the other side of the highway was a nice shopping mall. The big question for the people at the soup kitchen was where they were going to get their next meal? The big question for the people at the shopping mall was what they should buy or where they should eat?"

Hioki said he couldn't get over the fact that the two locations were so close to each other, with people like himself, only divided by a highway. This became the basis for his book. The highway is the log, the soup kitchen is one community and the shopping mall is the other community. The two communities of frogs are alike except that one community has plenty of berries to eat and the other doesn't. With the log in the way they are separated from one another, until finally one master leap frogger from each community is able to transcend the log and they learn about one another. The end result is a beaver



'The Other Side of the Pond' is a children's book that shows how overcoming boundaries can help those in need.

crew removing the logs and a big party where all the food is shared among the frogs.

Hioki, who has been a volunteer at CUMAC for nine years and is currently on the CUMAC board, sees his book being used as a teaching tool for children.

"I envision the book to be used as a hook to create hunger awareness for children," he said, "to make them aware there could be hungry people in need of

help, right next door."

There will be a book release party from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 20th at Hackensack United Methodist Church. There will be a reading of the book, refreshments and Hioki will also be signing copies of the book.

"The Other Side of the Pond" can be purchased at <http://www.cumacecho.org/book.html>. The book costs \$20 with \$10 covering production costs and \$9 will

benefitting CUMAC. The final \$1 will be donated to Hackensack UMC where Rev. Eugene Kim is currently serving.

"If it weren't for Rev. Eugene Kim who introduced me to Outreach, this book would have never been created," Hioki said.

Hioki said his experience serving at CUMAC also motivated him to publish the book.

"After my sister Joyce passed away in car accident, I found out from my Mom it was an organization like CUMAC that helped her in her time of need," he said. "I was shocked to find out and had no idea she was having difficult times.

"Joyce was a very kind and caring person. So I made a promise to God that I would dedicate my work for CUMAC to Joyce, so her love and kindness towards people would live on. She was the other side of my pond."

Hioki said there are so many talented, passionate, hardworking and caring people at CUMAC from Executive Director Pat Bruger, to the board, to the staff, to the workers and volunteers.

"There are so many people who work behind the scenes to make CUMAC run," he said. I would ask myself, "What's the best way I can help using my God given talents?" So, this book is my contribution."

As far as what's next, be on the lookout for a sequel involving the little yellow duck on the last page of the book.

**July/August Deadline is June 22, 2015** News, letters, photos, or other material must be in the hands of your associate editor by that time to assure consideration for publication. Viewpoint articles may be e-mailed to the editor at [editor@umrelay.org](mailto:editor@umrelay.org).

## Ride The Team Vital Wave



The Team Vital surfing photo was a popular stop during the 2015 Annual Conference in Wildwood from May 28-30.

The launch of Team Vital, a new resource for building vital congregations, made a big splash during 2015 Annual Conference in Wildwood. Team Vital is an intensive training and workshop series focused on the five markers of vitality – worship, small groups, mission, making new disciples and giving. It creates a synergy among congregations that fosters learning from one another, collaboration, mutual accountability and support. Team Vital follows the scriptural wisdom that two are better than one.

To help build excitement around Team Vital, their booth featured a surfboard so attendees could ride the wave of vitality.

For more information about Team Vital go to [www.gnjumc.org/teamvital](http://www.gnjumc.org/teamvital) or contact Rev. Beth Caulfield at [bcaulfield@gnjumc.org](mailto:bcaulfield@gnjumc.org).

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The United Methodist Church  
of Greater New Jersey

## Music Camp

Continued from page 1

Higgins said she has always been extremely impressed with Music Camp, a program that had been running continuously since the opening of Camp Aldersgate in 1965. Aldersgate Music Camp at Pinelands will take place July 19-25.

"Not only has Music Camp stood the test of time, but under Mark and Tanya's leadership, and their predecessors before them, it has continued to be one of our most popular camps," Higgins said.

In addition to normal camp-song favorites, anthems of inclusivity and justice for all people are norms around the campfire during Music Camp, said Higgins.

"It is truly one of the most accepting and inspiring communities of young people I have ever had the privilege of working with," she said.

Higgins is now looking forward to Music Camp moving to Pinelands Center this summer.

"While it was sad news to hear that Tanya and Mark were retiring after over 20 years of leading the program — that's not including their years as campers, by the way — Greater New Jersey Camping Ministries is so blessed to have pastors Kaleigh Corbett and Heather Valosin taking the reins," she said. "Honestly we could not be any luckier than to have the leadership of two young clergy women who have grown up in our United Methodist camping family, who have felt the power of camp themselves and feel called to share that with the young people of GNJ."

Corbett said music camp is always one of the most fun weeks of the summer.

"I am honored to be one of the directors this year - and I'm grateful for the ministry of Tanya and Mark over the many years," Corbett said. "So many lives have been touched. My call to ministry is due to camping ministries and I truly believe lives are changed at camp, and children, youth and adults grow closer to God."

Valosin said the Music Camp equivalent where she grew up in western Pennsylvania was Drama Camp at Jumonville, where she was a drama camper for six years and then a counselor for another five while majoring in theatre at Drew University.

"Preparing a Christian musical in six days with a group of like-minded kids was inspirational and encouraging," Valosin said. "It was where I found friendships

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

#### JULY 12-15:

Taste of Camp: Grades 1-3

#### JULY 12-18:

Camp-A-Palooza: Grades 1-5

You Can't Do That at Camp!:

Grades 6-8

Soul Survival Outpost: Grades 6-8

Leaders-In-Training: Grades 9-12

#### JULY 19-25:

Aldersgate Music Camp at Pinelands: Grades 6-12

Ninos Para Cristo y Jovenes Para Cristo: Grades 1-12

#### JULY 26-29:

Taste of Camp: Grades 1-3

#### JULY 26-AUG. 1:

Camp-A-Palooza: Grades 1-5

Pioneer Adventure Outpost:

Grades - 3-5

You Can't Do That at Camp!:

Grades 6-8

Veg n' Venture: Grades 9-12

#### AUG. 2-8:

Delaware Canoe: Grades 6-12

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

that lasted decades and my faith grew as I realized that I wasn't the only kid curious about God."

Corbett said music camp has been a life changing experience for her.

"It is a place I could come summer after summer to a community where I could grow closer to God through music and fellowship," she said. "As a camper, I made life-long friends who have since returned summer after summer to volunteer."

She said it is her hope to give campers the same experience and to help them know they are beloved children of God. The music camp community is one of acceptance and love. People are welcomed as they are and can laugh, cry, dance, sing, craft and celebrate together.

"I hope that any kids who are interested in music, theatre and dancing will sign up so we can put together a great show that highlights their talents and God's great love for humanity," Valosin said.



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.



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# CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS



**Alexis P. Suter and the Ministers of Sound will be one of the performers at The Music Mission at Boonton UMC on June 28.**

**Gospel-Blues Benefit Concert** - The Music Mission at Boonton UMC will host a gospel-blues benefit concert at 7 p.m. Sunday, June 28, with all proceeds going to the A Future With Hope mission fund campaign. Performing will be Alexis P. Suter and the Ministers of Sound with Bruce Uchitel along with the Boonton UMC Fusion Choir. Tickets are \$25 each and may be purchased online at TheMusicMission.org, by calling The Music Mission at 973-334-8654, or by visiting Boonton UMC during office hours Tues.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. All proceeds will be divided among Hurricane Sandy Relief and Recovery, Imagine No Malaria, and Local Missions. Light refreshments will be served. For more information go to TheMusicMission.org.

**Galilee Retirement Luncheon for Rev. Dobbs Johnson** - Galilee United Methodist Church hosted a retirement celebration for Pastor Sherrie Dobbs Johnson on Saturday, June 6. Rev. Johnson was recommended for the ministry by Galilee United Methodist Church and 19 years later, she was appointed as its pastor. "It has just been wonderful to be reunited with people who were so much a part of my spiritual journey. I will carry them in my heart," said Rev. Johnson, a resident of Teaneck, N.J. Her final sermon at Galilee was scheduled for Sunday, June 14.

**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 or 570-646-9298.



**The Starlite Chorale will perform popular music during its concert at Centenary UMC on July 28.**

**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 or 908-295-2252 or Pastor Anna Thomas at 732-619-6290.

# OBITUARIES

**JAMES R. WEST**, lay member of First UMC in Delran, died May 6. A funeral service was held May 14.

Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers) may be sent to The First United Methodist Church Memorial Fund: 32 Conrow Road, Delran, NJ 08075.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Shirley West & family at 164 Oxford Road, Delran, NJ 08075.

A funeral service for **EVELYN J. MUSGROVE**, widow of local pastor R.C. Musgrove, was held May 14 at St. Paul's UMC, Willingboro.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to The Musgrove family at 14 Edge Court, Willingboro, NJ 08046.

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# STEWARDSHIP STORIES

*by Rich Hendrickson, Director of Stewardship & Visioning*



## To serve or be served... that is the question!

When we come to church we bring with us a laundry list of demands and expectations: We want an inspiring message, to sing our favorite hymns, listen to a great choir, have the pastor pray over us, have our children taught by someone else, and our faith encouraged. Then, once we are "well-served" we go home only to repeat the same story week after week.

Somewhere on our faith journey there comes a time when we need to transition from a "serve-us" to a "service" mentality. What would it look like for you if the church was not primarily a place where you go to be served but the place where you go to engage in service? What would have to change in the way you approached and lived out your faith? What difference would it make in your life and in the church's ministry if you were to offer God your life, not so God would meet your demands, but so, that God could use you to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to others?

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## THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK IN NEW JERSEY

In the closing minutes of Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, it was announced that the offering for the Mission Fund was shy of \$100,000. Spontaneously, people throughout the Wildwoods Convention Center reached into their pockets, consulted their treasurers and stood up to increase their pledging.

More than 75 people stood up to announce an additional gift or pledge to the Mission Fund resulting in more than **\$12,000 THAT WAS RAISED IN 15 MINUTES.**

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