

A Future with Hope Mission Fund Campaign Launches in GNJ

A Future with Hope Mission Fund Campaign has been launched with encouraging early results. This campaign, which is to raise \$12 million to stop people from dying of malaria, assist survivors of Superstorm Sandy and support mission programs in our local churches, has already topped the \$2 million in pledges and gifts received. Leading the effort is the commitment of our clergy – close to 75% of Greater New Jersey clergy have made a commitment totaling nearly \$1 million.

The congregational phase of the campaign is designed to run simultaneously with the stewardship program churches generally conduct in the fall. District Superintendents have been coordinating webinars and meetings with GNJ staff to review manuals, walk through resources and answer questions.

The tools needed to conduct the campaign are on the GNJ website (www.gnjumc.org); however, churches around the conference have applied their creative and unique approaches to the program to make them fit each unique congregation.

The following are some examples of how GNJ churches are implementing the campaign:

- Making string “mosquitoes” in Sunday School and sharing them with the congregation.
- Hosting a car show in coordination with the city in order to raise money for the Mission Fund and awareness in the community of the needs of the community, region, and world.
- Creating a graffiti wall so worshippers can answer the questions: “Who am I?” “Who is God?” and “Who are we together?”
- Placing prayer leaves by the front door with each leaf having the name of a Greater New Jersey Church, a country in Africa struggling with malaria, or a town in New Jersey hit hard by the storm. Throughout the day staff and visitors take a leaf and pray for the church, country or town then place it on the tree.
- Creating a special event for immediately after worship that includes bands, food and games going through the afternoon.
- Taking a special offering the last week in October to recognize the one year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and in March designated to Malaria.
- Creating special Mission Fund



Denise Tiedemann, of the Jackson Church, takes a moment to pray over the name on a leaf and participate in a prayer tree as part of the Future with Hope Mission Fund Campaign.

gift envelopes to be included and interspersed monthly in the regular stewardship envelopes.

- Holding a church-wide dinner at a local banquet hall, including a silent auction where all the proceeds from the dinner will go towards the Mission Fund Campaign.

The Conference has dedicated three staff members to help congregations implement the campaign and guide them through the materials they need to successfully bring it to the congregation. Rebecca Nichols, Field Coordinator for Imagine No Malaria says, “My job is to make sure that our congregations have the resources they need. Yes, this campaign is about rais-

When people hurt, United Methodists help.

7 Families Back Home

31 Homes in Construction

28 Homes Scheduled to start

GNJ, through A Future with Hope ministry, is using volunteers to repair homes of low income, elderly and disabled people. Your gift and commitment to the Mission Fund Campaign will help us repair 300-500 homes. Our progress towards this goal includes:

ing money, but equally important, it is to share information about urgent needs in our world. Everyone should get the opportunity to learn about these valuable programs and how they can help those who are hurting.”

Bishop John Schol has clearly emphasized that this campaign is about second mile giving. Stewardship should come first. He also emphasizes that the needs are God-sized. “When people hurt, United Methodists help.”

100% of the monies raised in this campaign go to the mission. Since Imagine No Malaria and A Future with Hope Inc. have been funded for their administrative overhead, all monies collected will go directly to help save lives in Africa and build homes in New Jersey.

ATTENTION...

Affordable Care Act (ACA) – Local Churches Must Take Action!

The Affordable Care Act requires that every employer, including local churches and agencies of the Greater New Jersey Conference, notify their employees of the new Health Insurance Marketplaces (formerly called “Exchanges”) and how an employee can contact the Marketplace to purchase coverage.

The Notice must be given to **ALL** employees on the church payroll, regardless of hours worked, status, or whether or not they are eligible for health insurance through the church or conference. This includes clergy who receive a salary through the church. The requirement applies even to churches who offer NO health insurance coverage. The notice must be given to employees by the local church by October 1, 2013; there are penalties for non-compliance!

The attorneys and staff at the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of the UMC have studied the new Affordable Care Act for the last year and have put together a packet of information about requirements as they relate to our local churches, along with letter templates to use as tools for notification to employees.

In addition, for employees hired between October 1, 2013 and December 31, 2013, the Notice must be provided on the employee's start date. For employees hired on or after January 1, 2014, the Notice must be provided within 14 days of hire.

Packets were mailed to the pastor and one to the Staff Parish Relations Committee Chairperson in September. If you did not receive a packet, please call Patti Megill, 732-359-1025 or pmegill@gnjumc.org.

Special Session of Annual Conference to be Held at the Great Auditorium, Ocean Grove

The Greater New Jersey Conference will convene a Special Session of Annual Conference for all clergy and lay members held on Saturday, November 2, 2013 at the Great Auditorium in Ocean Grove, NJ. The agenda will include a modification of the 2014 budget to account for the strategic plan and an adjustment to the organization plan to align with the Book of Discipline, among other pieces of business.

A Service of Remembrance and Hope will commence the session promptly at 9:00 am. This special service, led by Bishop John Schol will include testimony from survivors of Superstorm Sandy and the volunteers who have helped them rebuild. The Service of Remembrance and Hope is open to all and will be followed by opportunities to work with A Future with Hope, Inc to help rebuild homes.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive between 8:15-8:30am to accommodate for parking and gathering in the Great Auditorium. Free street parking is available throughout Ocean Grove and carpooling is encouraged.

Resolutions:

Resolutions to be voted upon at the Special Session will be posted on the GNJ website, www.gnjumc.org, by mid-October and can be printed or downloaded and brought to the Special Session.

Voting Credentials:

All clergy members, elected (2013) lay members and elected (2013) at-large members will receive their voting credentials via email in mid-October. To simplify the registration process, members should print voting credentials and bring them to the Special Session on Nov. 2. Lay members who are not able to attend the Special Session should give their credential to the alternate/reserve lay member in their church; the alternate/reserve member will need to check in at the Registration Desk outside the Great Auditorium to receive proper ID.

Additional details will be provided on www.gnjumc.org/specialsession and through the GNJ Digest as they become available.

A Message from the Bishop



*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King,
the Lord!*

-Psalm 98:4-6

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

After a year of ministry with you, this is a Psalm that is very much in my heart. I praise God for the people of GNJ and the mission and ministry I have experience in the past year. I witnessed great ministry that is a part of your rich tradition and I have seen how you have stepped forward to pursue God's hope for the Conference, to engage in the relief and recovery from Superstorm Sandy, and to meet the opportunity to make and engage new disciples. The Holy Spirit has been on the loose throughout GNJ.

We have stepped forward to meet our challenges and create opportunities for the Spirit to be unleashed through our disciples, spiritual leaders and congregations. Recently, I visited a congregation facing many challenges. Rather than looking inward, they turned outward. *They turned their congregation inside out.* They began developing a relationship with nearby university students, engaged their people in Sandy relief, and identified other ways to connect with people in their community.

Another congregation focused on growing their disciples' faith through small groups. They began to train small group leaders, organize small groups and grow their disciples by "getting smaller" and more in touch with their people.

I am watching congregations and spiritual leaders respond to God's calling in creative and dynamic ways.

I am also hearing that some are overwhelmed by the challenges of serving, leading, and growing congregations today. I am hearing that people are having financial difficulties. I am hearing that people are asking what do the changes in the culture, congregations, the conference and the denomination mean for them.

It was not unusual for the disciples to say to Jesus, we are concerned about how people are feeling and thinking (Luke 9:18-20), we don't understand (John 13:7, 19), what is my place in the movement (Luke 9:46), and we are afraid where we are going and it may lead to our demise (John 11:7-16). Challenging times invigorate and unsettle, stimulate imagination and desire for security.

The question before us is, *how do we embrace our hopes and our challenges, how do we take risks and support disciples and spiritual leaders.* There is no doubt in my mind from what I have experienced that we have the spiritual depth and faith to ask the good questions and move forward. Over the next several editions of the Relay, I will share more about our direction through the new strategic ministry plan and how we will together take the next steps.

Each congregation, each disciple and each spiritual leader is important to our life together and our progress.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises;
God is with us.

Keep the faith!
John Schol

District Days of Service Offer Hope for Sandy Victims

Each month a District of the Greater New Jersey United Methodist Church will invite worshippers to join together for a day of service for A Future with Hope. The District will select one Saturday for volunteers to work from 8:30am to 4:30pm, helping rebuild homes destroyed by Superstorm Sandy and renew hope for families who have been devastated by the storm. Contact your District Office to find out when your District is scheduled and for instructions on how to sign up. Your District contact information can be found on www.gnjumc.org.

A Future with Hope Now Offering One Day Volunteer Opportunities

Starting in November, local volunteer teams can sign up to work for individual days, Tuesdays through Fridays. You must register in advance for the day work on A Future with Hope's website, www.afuturewithhope.org. On the volunteer registration form, please write "Day Work" in the comment section and indicate the date (Tuesdays through Fridays only) you would like to volunteer.

Kenya Mall Victims Mourned, Attack Condemned

By Sam Hedges - UMNS

United Methodist and Methodist leaders in East Africa are condemning the recent deadly terrorist attack at a shopping mall in Kenya and are asking United Methodist churches in the East Africa Episcopal Area to set aside time for prayer Sunday for survivors and others directly affected.

At least 67 people were killed, and others remain unaccounted for as authorities continue to search rubble from the collapse of part of Westgate Mall in Nairobi.

"We wish those who were injured quick recovery and may the Almighty God rest the souls of the departed in eternal peace and may God the creator enable us pull out of this very difficult situation of great loss," said Bishop Daniel Wandabula, who leads the East Africa Episcopal Area, which includes Kenya.

Wandabula was in Nairobi, not far from the shopping mall, meeting with church leaders when the attacks began on Sept. 21. Leaders of the Nairobi District of the United Methodist Church were meeting in the Kayole area of the city.

The Rev. Carol Alois Ososo, Nairobi District superintendent, joined Wandabula in asking for prayers for survivors and for the families of the deceased.

Thomas Kemper, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, wrote in a letter to Wandabula: "The mission community of the United Methodist Church stands in solidarity with the United Methodists of Kenya in this time of pain and grief."

In a Sept. 24 email to the Board of Global Ministries, Bishop Joseph Ntombura, presiding bishop of the Methodist Church

in Kenya, wrote: "We are touched and greatly moved by your concern for our country. It has been tough but God is faithful. Many Kenyans lost loved ones and others are still recovering in hospital."

Bishop Ntombura went on to say that "Kenyans came together and supported one another through prayers, blood donations, financial support and all ways possible to show solidarity. The Methodist Church in Kenya donated Kshs. 100,000.00 (about \$1,150 U.S.) to the Red Cross Society who are involved in the rescue and treatment process."

Kenyan United Methodists have been contributing financially and through blood donations to an emergency relief effort for victims, Wandabula said.

According to news accounts, an unknown number of attackers, wearing bulletproof vests and firing assault weapons, stormed into the upscale mall about 1:30 p.m. on Sept. 21. Kenyan security forces did not take full control of the mall until three days later.

The armed Somali Islamist group al-Shabaab took credit for the attack, claiming it was a response to Kenya's 2011 military intervention against the group in Somalia.

"Nothing justifies the cruel contempt for human life shown by the attackers at Westgate," said Daniel Bekele, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "The victims of this sickening attack and their relatives deserve justice. Those responsible for this horror should be swiftly caught and prosecuted."

Hedges, a United Methodist News Service writer, lives in Dallas; contact him at (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

The November Issue Deadline is October 15, 2013



Serving the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

John R. Schol, Resident Bishop
The Greater New Jersey Conference ~ 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

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Atlantic City Church Offers Youth Career Exploration

It's a rigorous syllabus at the Future With Hope Learning Academy which offers programs in Biology, Engineering, Journalism, Political Science and more. But while the curriculum might read like a lot like a college course book, the age bracket is very different.

Over the course of two weeks, more than 30 Atlantic City youth, ages 6-12, got the chance to jump into almost any career they could imagine. A grant from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference helped establish the academy at Asbury Church in Atlantic City, and provided the church with the resources to buy supplies and equipment to expose the youth to these careers.

Rev. William Williams, pastor of Asbury Church, explained the plan:



Rev. William Williams helps a student at the Future with Hope Learning Academy.

"Give kids the authority and let them lead us."

In addition to typical programs like music, crafts and games, the kids learned about career fields like law enforcement, aviation and nursing.

"I think the goals are to expose children to skills they may not encounter on a daily basis," said Sonia Massie, Youth Director since August 1st. "One of our biggest focuses was S.T.E.M. Science, technology, engineering and math. I think they've been thrilled to have that exposure."

It was a trial by fire for Massey, who was given the task of building this two-week program, which ran simultaneously with the church's Vacation Bible School. A busy couple of weeks, but Massey said she enjoyed every minute of it.

The program placed a significant amount of emphasis on journalism too. The kids got to meet print and TV reporters, and even went on a tour at NBC 40 News.

"It's more than just writing," said

Aaliyah Ingram. "It's getting to know people, take pictures, interview them and with all that stuff, make a story."

Aaliyah's project at the camp was a video presentation where she introduced and explained pictures of the friends she'd made at the Academy. She took the photos on an iPad, reported in front of a green screen, shot video on a camera and edited it herself with industry-standard software. Not bad for a 12-year-old.

Williams explained how they worked to give the kids an understanding of storytelling, especially since many of these kids were displaced by Superstorm Sandy or come from neighborhoods where they have a front row seat to watch news as it happens.

St. Paul's Centenary Reaches out to the Surrounding Community



Members and volunteers of St. Paul's Centenary Church pose for a picture during their community-wide fair in Newark, NJ.

Walking into the parking lot of St. Paul's Centenary Church in Newark, NJ on Sunday, August 11th, one was met with the sounds of laughter and music. There were people dancing, hamburgers cooking, and children playing all around the walls of the church.

In an effort to reach out to the surrounding community of Newark, the church was able to put together a day full of delicious food, good music, and wonderful people at their inaugural Hispanic Church Fair. The biggest part of the day was the ability for the church to reach out to the surrounding community and show them what they are all about. "We put this together to let the community know we are here; to do something with hope and outreach, to tie it into A Future with Hope," said Rev. Rolando Santiago-Fuentes. "It sounds like a small step, but if you can have fun with your family then that is a building block for a community."

The emphasis on the day as a family day was very pivotal to the church. Volunteer Adela Ortiz commented, "We've had a lot of children out today and that has filled us with joy. Together with the church and our families we've been able to get this going."

According to Santiago-Fuentes, the day included "...an artist from Puerto Rico, worship and praise music, a safe atmosphere, fun for kids and families." These activities drew in people from not only Saint Paul's, but from other churches as well. "I'm Methodist and I'm not a member of this church, but I'm friends with this church. I want to make it here every year," Esther Morales commented.

The organization of this event went beyond asking volunteers to set up tables and cook burgers. "Initially I just thought this would be a great outreach for the community, but as we worked

together we saw a sense of joy in our people." Santiago-Fuentes continued, "When the church unites around one goal and is open to more outside the four walls of the church, great things can happen and I know they experienced that."

The idea of making a difference is something that really hit home for many of the volunteers of the day. Volunteer Soni Cancel said, "It's a way for us to go out and do some mission work without going out of the country and to integrate the community with the church."

Leslie Torres, a volunteer who helped put the day's events together, believes the day is important for very similar reasons. "We want to evangelize and take the word of God out to the community. We want the community to know that we're here to help and serve them."

Although it was only the first year of this fair, the church hopes to continue and expand each year. "I hope we can continue. I don't know what the results will be, but we hope to do it each year if the Lord provides," Santiago-Fuentes stated.

The future of the church fair will hopefully mirror an event that inspired Santiago-Fuentes to hold this fair in the first place. He said, "A church in Puerto Rico provides rides, food, and vendors; people come for a week and the community comes to support it. I'm hoping in the next three years we can expand this into a weekend and the community can all join together and come." Rev. Santiago-Fuentes says St. Paul's Centenary Church will continue to use these efforts to show the citizens of Newark that they are more than a church; they are a community. "This is the stepping stone to other events in the future, letting the community know we're here with open doors, which is the most important part of today."

St. John's Church Joins the Fifty Year Anniversary of the March on Washington



Members of St. John's Church in West Berlin participate in the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.

At 6:00 am, a chartered Coach Bus pulled up at St. John's Church in West Berlin, guided by the "Black History Scholarship" Committee, destined to introduce and relive the history of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement to 45 persons including 20 youth, their parents and adult chaperones.

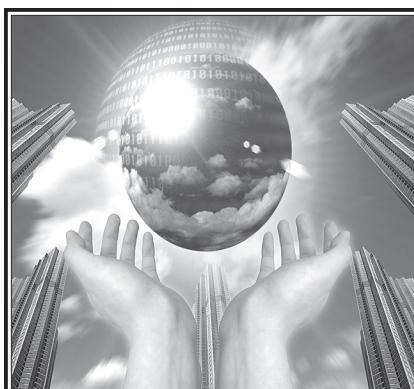
The intent was to remind the children to keep "hope" alive and never stop "dreaming" because "dreams do come true when God is leading us," said Rev. Stafford Miller.

Miller said there was an electric feeling in the air, the lunches were packed, the beverages chilled and the Bus was waiting. As the youth of St. John's gravitated to the rear of the bus, Miller invited a member, Nikki Robertson, to pray a prayer of thanksgiving as well as for safe traveling mercies, which was reminiscent of a prayer that covered the marchers nearly 50 years ago.

The group arrived, passing the Washington Memorial, and visiting the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial as they made their way to the Lincoln Memorial. The group was not alone, with many others gathering, standing shoulder to shoulder through intermittent rain. Miller said, as a whole group, they laughed and shared stories as they inched forward - happy just to be a part of this moment in time.

Miller explained that folks shared their water with the thirsty, portable stools and chairs with the weary, and their umbrellas during the times of the happy showers. They heard the speakers and were thrilled to be there for the occasion and to hear Presidents Jimmy Carter & Bill Clinton, children of Dr. King, Martin Luther King, III and Bernice King, and Representative John Lewis, who was also present at the march fifty years ago, along with Rev. Al Sharpton, Oprah Winfrey and President Barack Obama who was the keynote speaker of the day.

Miller said the group had an opportunity to not only witness history; but to be an integral part of it. Miller continued that upon returning home, they celebrated with gratefulness to be a part of this history making event as they gave God the honor for the story they would be blessed to tell for years to come.



Global Relay

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

Missionaries receive World Methodist Peace Award

LONDON (UMNS) — United Methodist missionaries Marion and Anita Way, known for their work in Angola and Brazil, received the 2013 World Methodist Peace Award in London.

Religion and Race to award \$98,000 in grants

WASHINGTON (UMNS) — The United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race will award nearly \$98,000 in grants to seven church projects that will support or replicate culturally diverse, relevant and vital congregations, develop culturally competent leadership and ministries or promote institutional equity.

Alabama-West Florida volunteers to be locked up

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (UMNS) — Alabama-West Florida Annual (regional) Conference pastors and ministry leaders and the Alabama Rural Ministry are getting ready to be locked up in the 6th Annual No More Shacks Campaign. Lisa Pierce, director of the rural ministry, will live in a makeshift shack for up to eight days. Other ministry leaders will commit to 24 hours in two other adjoining shacks. The goal is to raise awareness about poverty housing, provide volunteer efforts and raise money for repair.

Global Mission leader prays for Syria peace

NEW YORK (UMNS) — “Our social principles say that ‘we believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy,’” writes Thomas Kemper, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, of the situation in Syria. “As followers of Christ, we are anointed as peacemakers — we know that adding violence to violence is not the answer.”

New president of United Methodist Scouters

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Phil Craig has been elected as the new president of the National Association of United Methodist Scouting. Affiliated with United Methodist Men, the scouting association provides resources for scouting and civic, youth-serving ministries like Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Camp Fire USA, 4-H and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Craig has served NAUMS as vice president for a year and is the scouting coordinator for the Memphis Annual (regional) Conference.

Gaza kids get a break from conflict

JERUSALEM (UMNS) — In the narrow and desperately overcrowded 140-square miles of Gaza, everyday life goes on in a kind of perpetual emergency, whatever the discussions of the territory’s status in international corridors of power. The United Methodist Committee on Relief is supporting a program that will help the children of that perilous territory to enjoy fuller and more stable lives.

Council lists steps for resolving East Africa issues

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — The directors of The United Methodist Church’s finance agency have adopted a list of steps for resolving the audit issues in the church’s East Africa area, including a call for Bishop Daniel Wandabula to resign.

UMCOR responds to flood-soaked Philippines

NEW YORK (UMNS) — After Tropical Storm Trami and a southwest monsoon joined forces to pummel the capital of the Philippines and neighboring towns, the United Methodist Committee on Relief mobilized to bring aid to affected neighborhoods and witnessed the fruits of earlier community disaster-awareness training.

Publishing House signs contract for sale of property

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — The United Methodist Publishing House has announced that it has entered into a purchase and sale agreement with TVG Holdings LLC for the sale of the Publishing House’s downtown property. The church agency is exploring options for a new location in the Nashville area.

Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS)

Fall “Family” Reunions

October 8, 2013

Green Village UMC, Green Village, NJ

10:00 a.m.

October 22, 2013

St. Peters UMC, Ocean City, NJ

11:00 a.m.

Following a Memorial Service for those clergy and spouses that have died this past year, the Rev. John D. Callanan, Director of

Chaplains for the United Methodist Homes, will share a presentation on “The Spiritual Life of Retired Clergy.”

Lunch is \$10.

Call Garey Hope (609) 291-5003 to make a reservation.

GNJAC Haiti UMVIM Trip Changes Lives



Students and staff of Rutgers University participated in the 2013 UMVIM trip to Haiti, helping the people of the Haitian Methodist Church.

The fourth GNJAC UMVIM Trip to Haiti was a blessing both to the team members and the Haitian hosts. Nearly all of the team members were affiliated with Rutgers University this trip. When asked about how they had felt about the trip, as with previous teams, many said it had been a life-changing experience. The near unanimous opinion of the various team members is that the experience enriched their lives more than they could have imagined. It is the philosophy of UMVIM that the most important part of the mission is to build relationships with the members of the community where the work is being done. The people of the Haitian Methodist Church (EMH) and community thanked the team over and over for showing that they cared about them and that they had not been forgotten.

The team went to Mellier which is near the epicenter of the 2010 earthquake. Over 80 percent of the homes in the area were seriously affected by the earthquake. The first Haitian UMVIM trip was to Mellier and the team spent a week clearing away rubble from the Methodist church and school. The team found great progress had been made at the site since the first trip. Many of the workers had been at the site since the work started. Since there is nearly a 50% unemployment rate in Haiti (down from approximately 80% after the earthquake) one of the main

features of the UMVIM plan is to provide employment on site to at least two Haitian workers for each volunteer. In fact, UMVIM has been able to have three Haitian workers employed for each volunteer in many cases.

During the school recess, the UMVIM team would all go to the empty field next to the complex and play soccer, jump rope and fly kites with the children. The children were delighted and would cling to the players hating to go back to school. The water pump where the whole community would get their water was on the complex. All day until late in the evening women and little children would come to the pump to fill jugs and buckets with water. When the team took a break from work, the football players would take turns pumping the water for the women and children. These women and children were overjoyed that the players were willing to help them in this way, embodying God’s love.

If anyone would like to become a member of one of the GNJAC UMVIM trips to Haiti, the next trip is January 11-18 2014. To obtain more information about joining a team or to obtain an application, you may contact the GNJAC UMVIM coordinator Kathy Ahmad via email kahmad@comcast.net or by cell 732-865-3730. There will be an information meeting on Sunday, October 13, 2013 at 2:00p.m., St. John’s Church in Hazlet, NJ.

Upper New York Conference Logo Design Competition

The Upper New York Conference of The United Methodist Church has an opportunity to help build brand awareness for their Conference and to win an iPad.

The Upper New York Conference is inviting designers – professional and amateur – to submit designs for a Conference logo. There is no entry fee and the winner will receive an iPad. The deadline is Nov. 1, 2013.

The Upper New York Annual Conference comprises more than 900 churches in 49 counties in upstate New York. It was formed in 2010 and the Conference is led by Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb.

Full details about the contest can be found on their website: <http://www.unyumc.org/news/detail/1751>.

Upper New York looks forward to seeing the creative fruit from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

Log on to:

***www.UMRelay.org for Current Relay Online,
Relay Archives & Relay Reflections.***

Stewardship Stories

By Rich Hendrickson
Coordinator of Stewardship Education
and Development, GNJAC



How the story ends is up to us!

As the first light of dawn begins to streak across the African sky, a mother is awoken by the sound of her baby crying. It's not unusual that her baby is crying at this hour for it is time to awaken and face the promise and fears of a new day. This morning however, her baby's cry sounds different and the mother is afraid. It's the same cry she heard from her first-born child; a child who died shortly after contracting malaria.

As mom bends over and picks up her baby her worst fears are confirmed. She can feel the fever radiating through her baby's blanket. She gathers her things and with her baby in her arms she begins the four hour walk to the nearest health clinic. As she walks she sings quietly to comfort her baby and herself. And she prays. She prays that this time things will be different; this time the clinic will have medicine; this time her baby won't die. She comes to the end of her journey and as she arrives at the clinic she is met by a health worker...

The story pauses here because how it ends is very much up to us. Whether or not she is met by a health worker along with malaria medicine and treatment for her child or met by a worker who sadly informs her that there is nothing they can do for her or her daughter is very much up to us. Together we can put an end to suffering and death from malaria on the continent of Africa.

In the same way, how, if, and when people who have been displaced by Superstorm Sandy can return to their homes very much depends on us. The ability of congregations to reach out to their local communities and make a difference in the name of Jesus Christ very much depends on us.

God has invited you and I and all of us together to be part of something very special: to be God's physical presence in the world to save lives, welcome people home, and transform communities. By participating in the Future with Hope Mission Fund Campaign you will be blessed and you will be a blessing to others.

Concert at Grace Church in Wyckoff to Benefit CUMAC

On Sunday, October 20th at 4pm, Grace Church at 555 Russell Ave, Wyckoff, NJ will present its fourth annual "Music Feeds the Soul" Concert. Proceeds from the concert will benefit the CUMAC Food Pantry in Paterson, NJ. There is a suggested donation of \$8 and one non-perishable food item. The concert will feature music from a variety of genres! Performers include vocalists Lori Vanderaa, Steve Gant, and "The Silvertones," as well as instrumentalists Kevin Cummines, Melissa Kay, and more. For more information, please contact the church office at (201) 891-4595 or e-mail KVanderaa@hotmail.com. For information about CUMAC and a list of recommended food items, visit their website at www.cumacecho.org.

ARISE Camp Blesses Children from Vineland

Children from Vineland participate in ARISE Camp at First Church in Vineland

Thirty-nine children from the Vineland Center City area attended a free camp called ARISE that has been provided by First Church in Vineland for the past seven years. Using the theme "Everywhere Fun Fair," the children (ages 8 – 12) participated in academics, art, music, and Bible study. The all-volunteer leaders took them bowling, to Wheaton Village Arts and Cultural Center, Sahara Sam's and the Philadelphia Zoo. They also experienced a band, drums with Tony Mascara and martial arts lessons. They also visited a local park and the Vineland police station. Fun was had by all.



A Day in the Park with Changewater Church



Children enjoyed a host of activities from face painting to making rubber band bracelets at A Day in the Park with Changewater Church.

In an effort to be more visible in the community, members of the Changewater Church participated in the "A Day in the Park" family day in Lebanon Township, NJ, on September 14th. A booth was set up displaying a banner with the church's name and website address. Despite the day being cool and windy, attendance was very good. The public was greeted by coordinator, Peg Miskowitz, Pastor Andrew Paek and many church members. Various items were offered for free, such as stress balls and water bottles with the church's information printed on them.

For the children, the church offered

free snacks, a toy, and face-painting by church member and artist, Sandy Watts. A Sunday School table and chairs were set up where children could make rubber band bracelets and other simple crafts geared toward different age levels. A poster board display and slide show presentation of various church activities was set up to pique the interest of the public. Brochures giving an overview of the church, its activities, missions, youth programs, and contact information were given out as well. It was a wonderful opportunity to reach out to the community and offer them an invitation to join Changewater Church.

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Ocean City Youth Weekend 2013 Brings Together Youth from Around GNJ

What a phenomenal weekend! From September 6-8, 475 youth and youth leaders from around the Greater NJ Conference gathered in Ocean City, NJ for the last Ocean City Youth Weekend. Young people from every corner of the state gathered together to worship, engage in mission, and have a blast on the boardwalk and beach of Ocean City. This year, the GNJ Ministries with Young People team invited Celia Whitler and her band to lead worship and praise throughout the weekend. Whitler brought stories of hope and encouragement as she shared her journey and her desire to live as the person God created her to be. As she led music that had the youth dancing and singing along, she shared a valuable lesson of love.

Highlights of the weekend included a powerful message from two-time NFL Superbowl Champion Lee Rouson and a hilarious night of laughter with comedian Bob Smiley. The youth gathered Saturday morning to do mission expe-



The youth and leaders of OCYW'13 packed over 20,000 meals for Stop Hunger Now, an organization that fights global hunger.



Worship leader Celia Whitler had the youth on their feet at every opportunity. Here, a youth helps demonstrate dance moves to one of the songs for the weekend.



NFL Superbowl Champion Lee Rouson engaged and encouraged the youth of the Greater New Jersey Conference during his powerful message of hope and determination for the future.

Bishop John Schol delivers a message of hope for the future during the closing worship service at OCYW'13 in the Ocean City Music Pier.

riences with their youth groups. Together, they assembled over 20,000 meals for Stop Hunger Now, put together flood buckets and Health Kits through the UMCOR HUB and made 350 PB&J sandwiches for Sister Jeans Kitchen in Atlantic City. Youth also painted, hung drywall and helped churches and homes affected by Superstorm Sandy through A Future with Hope.

The weekend came to a close with worship at the Ocean City Music Pier, featuring music by the band Currency Red and a great message of hope for the future from Bishop John Schol.

In looking towards the future and the

new Ignite Youth Weekend, Rev. Erica Munoz expressed her appreciation for the past weekends and excited for the future, "As we say goodbye to a longstanding tradition in the GNJ Conference, we celebrate the great work that has been done and look forward to igniting an even greater passion for young people in this conference through the new discipleship journey we will be embarking on in 2014."

Ignite '14 will be held on October 3-5, 2014 in Wildwood, NJ and will be open to Junior High, Senior High and Young Adult groups. More information will be available in the coming months on www.gnjmvp.org.

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Beginning Lent of 2014 and culminating at
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Ignite '14:
A discipleship journey for
Jr. & Sr. High Youth
and
Young Adults



If you want to be a part of the Design Team
or would like more information contact:

Rev. Erica Munoz
GNJ Children, Youth & Young Adult Coordinator
EMunoz@gnjumc.org

Hightstown's Methodist Madness Instills Hope

HIGHTSTOWN — When two Hightstown laymen caught a vision of turning the First Church parking lot into a basketball court two decades ago, they had no idea that their dream would not only come true, but that it would grow annually for the rest of the century and continue 13 years into the next.

But that's exactly what Methodist Madness, the name they gave to their project, has done. In the intervening years, it has expanded to a community-wide endeavor that includes scholarship awards, vision screening and other activities as well as basketball hoops. Most of all, it has instilled hope in a generation of Hightstown's youngsters.

Methodist Madness had its origin 19 years ago when two Hightstown United Methodists, lawyer Jim Chamberlain and Paul Follansbee, a guidance counselor, looked at the church parking lot, and across to the "Projects", a block away, a public housing complex administered by Hightstown Housing Authority.

Chamberlain took the idea to the pastor at that time, Rev. James Davis, who gave his endorsement. Four pastors later, the program continues to thrive and grow.

"It's been a great blessing to the church and the community," said Rev. Heidi Bak, the present pastor. "It is a great program that is continuing to grow."

Adult volunteers from the church work with youth, ages 8 through 18, providing friendship and mentoring, as well as activity supervision. What began as a small idea for outreach has evolved into a major ministry to Hightstown youth, with a strong foundation of support from the church and from other community organizations.

The latest addition to the program is vision screening. Joining the Methodist Madness Summer Basketball Outreach in sponsoring the screening program are Princeton Healthcare System and the New Jersey Commission for the Blind - Project Prevention Unit. Through this expansion, some 80 people were vision-tested this summer under Methodist Madness auspices and 56 were fitted for glasses. The sight program was made possible through a generous grant from TD Bank.

Another vital aspect is the scholarship program that has opened doors of opportunity to a number of youth across the years, including one young



Scholarship Recipient, Chris de LaHoz is flanked by Methodist Madness founder Jim Chamberlain, (l.) and scholarship committee head Kyle Tattle, (r.) LaHoz attended Mercer Community College and completed his degree at Rider University in Trenton with aid from the Methodist Madness program. The scholarship program began in 2005 with an anonymous gift of \$10,000 and is ongoing this year.

lady currently attending William Patterson College. The scholarship program was initiated by the church several years ago thanks to anonymous donations and continues to be an important element.

But basketball remains at the heart of the program. Chamberlain reports a record number of participants this year concluding August 7 with an awards ceremony and barbecue picnic. During the Methodist Madness season a total of 241 youths attended at least one night's activities. An average of 130 attended each week, up from 115 in 2011 and 125 in 2012. Additionally, there were 35 adult volunteers from the church and community.

The program offers young people a month of friendly basketball games, trophy competitions, and theme nights. Each night there are healthy snack bags and drinks for all, in addition to trophies for nightly competitions. Regulars receive the Methodist Madness T-shirt. For children too young for the basketball program there are opportunities to take part in craft nights and similar activities.

At the conclusion of the program, there is a distribution of gifts to all who participate regularly. Sneakers, T-

shirts and backpacks are among the prizes. This year 138 T-Shirts, 141 backpacks laden with school supplies and 139 pairs of sneakers were given out.

Bak contributes to the program by providing times of story-telling and crafts that apply Bible lessons to life. "It's a kind of family night out," she says. "It's become a large community

partnership," opening the door to an evangelistic outreach.

"Our Church has become known as 'the church that cares', a conduit of Christian concern," said Bak. "Cases in need have been uncovered, and the church has been able to provide meals and money for clothing and electric bills."

She continued saying that the church has been strong in its support of the program and the "trustees have been incredible". Bak pointed out that it has been no drain on the church treasury.

"The program is self-sustaining," Chamberlain explained, "with no impact on the church budget." Some 80 percent of the cost of the program is met by an annual flea market, while other expenses are underwritten by donations.

The Methodist Madness founder spoke appreciatively of the five pastors who have each in their own way contributed to the program from their own stock of gifts and graces. He pointed to a letter from a grandparent to the Rev. J. Neill Tolboom, who served the church from 2001 to 2007, expressing appreciation to church and pastor and summing up the impact of Methodist Madness.

"May God ever bless you, your church and congregation, and especially those responsible for putting together such a worthwhile program," the letter concludes. "The hours spent on setting up each week and volunteering... to ensure that the program ran smoothly is noted and very much appreciated. You are all touching the lives of many. You have surely touched mine."

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Jill Gordley, a 17 year old Ambassador Girl Scout, recently earned her Girl Scout Gold Award by partnering with Flemington Church, where she is a member, in order to replace a broken fence in their backyard and plant a flower garden that the Sunday School will continue to care for. She worked with the church's trustees and volunteers from the congregation to install the new fence. The project took almost two years and \$3,000 to complete. By hosting a series of fundraisers, including movie nights and bake sales, Gordley was able to achieve her goal. She said, "This project has been a great learning experience and the congregation's support has been absolutely incredible."

BHEM Directors Approve Dream Team Plan for Young Clergy Initiative



Plans drafted by Young Clergy Initiative Dream Team were approved by GBHEM's Board of Directors on Monday. Shown, from left, front: Trip Lowery, Beth Ludlum, Sam Kim, Shonda Jones, Brad Farrington. From left, back row: Beth Downs, Sophia Agtarap, Melissa Wiginton, Quincy Brown, Casey Langley, and Robin Minthorn. Not shown, Kenda Dean and Drew Dyson. Photo by Vicki Brown.

by Vicki Brown

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Board of Directors unanimously approved a plan to disburse funds from the \$7 million Young Clergy Initiative to innovative projects of all sizes that could attract young people to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church.

On Monday, Board members made suggestions for improving language in the grant application, particularly to state clearly that applicants are encouraged to form partnerships for projects and also to seek matching funds from other sources. The special called meeting was held through a telephone conference call.

"We want to leave as wide a door as we can for applicants because we want a lot of creativity. This needs to be seed money that is used with matching funds in creative approaches," said Bishop James Dorff, episcopal leader of the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande Annual Conferences and president of GBHEM.

The Dream Team replaced categories and criteria for grants with purpose and priority statements that team members believed would be more accessible, especially to applicants who do not regularly apply for grants. This was done after Board members expressed concern in August that categories were too complex and inaccessible.

The Dream Team, a group of 12 young clergy, campus ministers, pastors, youth ministers, annual conference staff, and seminary staff with expertise in various areas relating to discernment and young clergy issues, met in Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 5-6. They mapped out a timeline, priorities for grants, and funding category recommendations. It was those plans that GBHEM's directors reviewed and approved on Monday.

The goal of the Young Clergy Initiative, approved by General Conference 2012, is to increase the number of young clergy in the UMC.

Board member Ted Brown, president of Martin Methodist College in Pulaski, Tenn., suggested that the application should place a greater emphasis on partnership projects. Other board members agreed.

Amy Gearhart, senior pastor of Missouri United Methodist Church in Co-

lumbia, Mo., also suggested asking applicants how they will tell the church about their project.

"They are the folks that are passionate, and they need to tell the story," Gearhart said.

Board members discussed again the expectation of some in the UMC that the money would be spent for scholarships, but agreed with the Dream Team's assessment that giving out scholarships to individuals would not result in the systemic change that is needed to create a culture of call that will encourage young people to go into ordained ministry in the UMC.

The timeline calls for online grant applications to be available in late October through GBHEM's website, with a Feb. 1 deadline for submitting a project proposal. A second round of grant applications will be accepted by June 1, 2014. GBHEM will monitor and evaluate funded projects through completion.

Grants will be invited that:

- prepare young people to hear God's call to ordained ministry
- assist young people to respond to God's call to ordained ministry
- develop young people in spiritual and theological formation
- nurture young clergy for lifelong transformational ministry.

Applicants should consider these priorities:

- engaging and empowering young people
- engendering imagination, creativity, and risk/innovation
- including diversity, especially ethnic and gender diversity
- encouraging cultural and systemic change
- facilitating experiences connecting faith commitments and the needs of the world
- including matching funds and/or creative partnerships.

Grants will be considered competitively in three categories: \$5,000 to \$20,000; \$20,000 to \$50,000; and \$50,000 to \$100,000.

To learn more about the Young Clergy Initiative, visit www.explorecalling.org/yci.

*Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Newton Church Dedicates Symbolic Clock Lost For Half A Century

NEWTON — First Church marked its 50th anniversary at the sanctuary on Ryerson Avenue by dedicating a symbolic link to its past.

The church unveiled a tower clock, which had been in place at the church's former location on Park Place for more than a century, on the church facade atop the education wing entrance.

Senior Pastor Jennifer Yu Cho described the lengthy process and fortuitous find leading up to the clock's recovery and installation.

ted the cast iron objects at an estate sale, which he purchased for about \$25.

He notified Dick Roy, a collector of local memorabilia, who deduced that the parts — including the four clock faces, each composed of six sections — had once belonged to the church.

He made arrangements for its return and eventual installation.

A plaque inside the church notes the history and cites Iliff and fellow



Revs. Richard Carlson, E.T. Holland, Erica Munoz, Jennifer Yu Cho, H.Alden Welch and Steven Bechtold stand under a clock that once was the centerpiece of Newton United Methodist Church's former sanctuary.

"It was lost. We didn't know where it was," Cho said.

As described by John L. Iliff in the church's 50th anniversary booklet, the tower clock was removed following the demolition of the Park Place sanctuary and, following an unsuccessful sale effort, somehow ended up covered in a tarp inside a chicken coop in Beemerville for a half-century. Several years ago, a Branchville resident spot-

congregant Charles Tice, as well as Roy, for their efforts.

First Church, founded in 1931, today is home to about 500 congregants, Cho said.

The anniversary service included recognition of 50-year members Dante Fortini, James Frasier and Laura Frasier. Also participating in the service was E.T. Holland, the first pastor at the Ryerson Avenue church.

Mission Service Opportunities through Generation Transformation

NEW YORK - The United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries is launching Generation Transformation, a new movement that provides mission service opportunities for young adults ages 18-30.

"Global Ministries is committed to offering mission service opportunities for young people all around the globe," says Judy Y. Chung, associate general secretary of missionary services. "As young people are mobilized to serve in mission, integrating faith and justice, the movement will inspire and transform the world."

Three different programs offer a variety of options for young adults who are interested in missionary service:

1. Global Mission Fellows sends young adults ages 20-30 out of their home context for two years of mission service. This is a faith- and justice-centered opportunity that grew out of the historic US-2 and Mission Intern programs. The Global Mission Fellows aim to engage with local communities, connect the church in mission and grow in personal and social holiness. "The program's revised structure will better reflect Global Ministries' motto of 'connecting the church in mission,'" writes Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee, the program's executive secretary. "Local United Methodist leaders — be they lay leaders, pastors, missionaries and/or campus ministers — will provide mentorship and support, helping Fellows navigate opportunities and chal-

lenges that arise when pursuing a life of mission."

2. Global Justice Volunteers is a short-term service opportunity for young adults ages 18-30. Small teams of volunteers spend 10 weeks during June, July and August exploring the links between faith and social justice. They work with grassroots organizations around the world.

3. Individual Volunteers offers individuals and couples the flexibility to volunteer for a period of two months to two years. Volunteers serve at placement sites all over the world, including the United States. Every effort is made to accommodate placement preferences.

Applications are now open for Global Mission Fellows and Global Justice Volunteers. The rolling application deadlines are Nov. 15 and Jan. 15. Young people all around the world are encouraged to apply now! These programs develop strong young leaders who are committed to building just communities and a peaceful world.

Learn more about Generation Transformation at www.umcmission.org/GT or email gfmfellows@umcmission.org. Follow @umcmissionGT on Twitter for program updates. Please keep these young adults in prayer along with the communities they will serve. Financial support can be made through Advance #13105Z.

For more information, contact Melissa Hinnen, Director of Content & Public Information, mhinnen@umcmission.org.

The November Issue Deadline is October 15, 2013

Little Falls UMW Donates Filled Backpacks to Moore, Oklahoma



Members of the Little Falls UMW stand by a display of some of the supplies sent to a school in Oklahoma devastated by tornadoes.

Stepping up to the SNAP Challenge

By Barbara Dunlap-Berg

Skyler E. Nimmons, a member of First United Methodist Church, Charlotte, N.C., is "a self-proclaimed foodie" and an impulse/social eater. "I don't often plan my meals," he said, "and I'm often out with friends."

Nimmons, who estimates he spends \$25 a day for food, recently signed up to take the SNAP Challenge (<http://rethinkchurch.org/article/SNAP>) to live on the weekly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program allowance for an entire week. The purpose is to be in solidarity with those who rely on food stamps to feed their families. This amounts to about \$4.50 per person per day.

Nimmons, the 29-year-old communications specialist for the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, admits the SNAP Challenge will be tough. But he's read the statistics.

According to Feeding America, food insecurity a lack of dependable access to enough food to sustain a healthy life is a reality for one in six Americans. The United States Department of Agriculture states that limited resources prevent more than 50 million Americans from getting enough food, and more than 17 million children live in food-insecure households. Hunger is not limited to those who struggle with poverty, homelessness, unemployment or lack of education. Hungry people are everywhere, in urban and rural settings.

The Rethink Church initiative of United Methodist Communications and the Ministry with the Poor focus led by the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Church and Society are encouraging United Methodists to take the SNAP Challenge. Starting points might be anytime in September Hunger Action Month or Oct. 16 "World Food Day. If a month-long experience is not practical, consider the week or weekend challenge explained at www.rethinkchurch.org/article/weekend-snap.

First United Methodist Church, Boulder, Colo., has stepped up to the plate.

Leaders are inviting the congregation to take part in a hunger-awareness event, which will feature a screening of the award-winning documentary "A Place at the Table," said Michelle LaBorde, First Church communications director. The film outlines the status of hunger in America and includes interviews with people who have taken the SNAP Challenge.

"People we see every day"

"The statistics of hunger and poverty are not simply numbers," notes the Rev. Pat Bruns, senior pastor at First

Church. "They are people" living, breathing, struggling, suffering people. They are people we see every day ... in all our neighborhoods."

He hopes people in his congregation will "begin to look more closely at the faces of the hungry and work together with our community partners to make sure all of our neighbors have enough to eat."

How to participate in the weeklong SNAP Challenge

- Commit to seven straight days.
 - Spend no more than \$4.50 per day total.
 - Only buy and eat or drink items that SNAP allows people to purchase. Do not use food already on hand. Do not accept food from anyone.
 - Include fresh produce and a healthy protein each day.
 - Use coupons and store-discount programs.
 - Keep a log of what you buy and eat for each meal, as well as receipts.
 - Journal daily about your experiences.
 - With SNAP benefits, recipients may purchase produce and canned goods; meat and dairy products; dried goods, beans and rice; breads and cereals; baby food and infant formula; soda, chips and candy; coffee and tea; and seeds for eating or planting. Prohibited foods include hot food or any food you can eat in-store.
- Here are more ideas from Rethink Church and First Church, Boulder.
- Invite others to participate.
 - Share the experience in-person and via social media. Use the hashtag #UMCSNAP.
 - Learn about hunger and poverty.
 - Keep abreast of current legislation.
 - Share links to devotions and prayers around hunger and poverty from the General Board of Discipleship.
 - Try easy-to-prepare, low-cost recipes from the USDA website.
 - "When I heard about the SNAP challenge," Nimmons said, "I immediately thought that it is impossible to eat on \$4.50 a day. However, I thought of my neighbors who have no choice. I was intrigued about what it might mean for me to look at this differently."

"I'm not certain what changes I will experience, but I hope I will come out as a more enlightened and grateful individual with a greater focus on Micah 6:8 in my life."

Barbara Dunlap-Berg is internal content editor for United Methodist Communications, Nashville, Tenn.

Last Spring, the town of Moore, Oklahoma was hit with vicious tornadoes. Parts of the town just disappeared! When the Little Falls church pastor, Rev. Don Mitchell, spoke of the devastation during a Sunday worship service, UMW President Cheryle Mitchell felt moved to do something. She knew that when New Jersey was hit by Hurricane Sandy, people from all over the country reached out to help. She knew it was possible to send money through various channels, but felt she wanted to do something more personal. She took her idea to the UMW Executive Board Meeting in June, and said she would like to help the students whose school had been completely destroyed by the storm. She wanted to donate backpacks filled with school supplies for one class at the school. The UMW Executive Board liked Ms. Mitchell's idea. They had had a very successful luncheon and auction in May, and felt that some of the profits could be used to fund this new project. They asked Ms. Mitchell to get more information. She contacted Dr. Jason Perez of the Moore Public Schools Donation Center. He said: "As a fellow Methodist, it does my heart good to see a supportive (Methodist) group from New Jersey". He sent her a list of school supplies that were required for each grade level of the school. The UMW decided to supply a class of 20 pre-school/kindergarten students with filled backpacks. Several UMW members shopped for the supplies, backpacks were ordered, and by the end of July, all were packed and ready to go. Then came the problem of how to get them to Moore. Play-doh and moist wipes were some of the items requested, and they were heavy! Church Secretary Barbara Gray came to the rescue, looking for discounts on shipping. She called several companies, but found that there was a lot of paperwork and a wait of 4 – 6 weeks to be approved. The school wanted the supplies by early August. Then Ms. Gray called the Little Falls UPS store, and the store owner agreed to help. He would personally forego his store's profit to mail the backpacks! What a miracle! The total cost of the project came in just under \$700, and the backpacks made their way to Moore by the beginning of August.

BLESSING OF HANDIWORK AT REPAUPO CHURCH



"Hooked on Christ", a crocheting/knitting group, had their handmade items blessed by Pastor Marikay Green of the Repaupo Church in Logan Township on Sunday, September 22, during the morning worship service. The group, which was organized in April 2013, chose as their first project a "scripture afghan" pictured here. Each different patterned square has a corresponding scripture verse. The afghan will be presented to one of the church's shut-ins. Several chemo caps and additional afghans made by the members were also blessed and will be donated to a local cancer center and Inspira Health Network in Woodbury. The "Hooked on Christ" group meets in the church social hall at 770 Paulsboro Road, Repaupo, on the first and third Thursday of each month at 7 pm as one of the church's mission/outreach programs. New participants (novice or experienced) are invited to join the group. Members are (left to right, first row) Faith Hughes, Terri McGill, Dow Pobanz, Eleanor Zane, (left to right, second row) Marie Young, Diane McCormick, Martha Hudson, and Ruth Hurst.

RELAY Reflections

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Evelyn Lowery, Civil Rights Leader, Dies at 88



Evelyn and Joseph Lowery are honored for their years of dedication to civil rights at Cascade United Methodist Church, Atlanta, in 2011. A UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert.

By Kathy L. Gilbert

Evelyn Gibson Lowery, 88, died Sept. 26 in her home in Atlanta after suffering a stroke on Sept. 18.

A public viewing will be held Sept. 30 at Cascade United Methodist Church, Atlanta, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The funeral will be held 9 a.m. Oct. 2 at Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College. The home-going celebration will begin at 11:30 a.m.

Mrs. Lowery was a civil rights leader and the wife of civil rights leader the Rev. Joseph E. Lowery. She founded the SCLC/W.O.M.E.N (Women's Organization for Equality Now) in 1979 and created the annual Drum Major of Justice Awards, which are on April 4, the date of the Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination.

The 2013 award went to Suzan Johnson Cook, U.S. Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom, U.S. State Department.

"Having been a part of the civil rights movement from the beginning, I am very proud to present Drum Major Awards to these accomplished leaders. Each of the honorees, in their own way and respective areas, are answering Dr. King's call to be a Drum Major for Justice," Mrs. Lowery said.

When the Rev. Lowery wrote his book, Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land, he credited his wife's role in the civil rights struggle.

"Evelyn, my wife of over 60 years, has been a good helpmate and lover; she's been a wheel in the middle of a wheel; a shelter, a rudder and an inspiration," he said. He noted that she marched beside him, went to jail with him and "almost lost her life when Klansmen shot at her car in Decatur, Ala."

In a statement from the family released after her death, Rev. Lowery said, "My beloved Evelyn was a special woman, whose life was committed to service, especially around the issues of empowering women. She was a wonderful mother and wife and I thank God that she didn't suffer any pain and that I was blessed having her as my partner, my confidant and my best friend for close to 70 years. I will miss her each and every day, but as a man of faith, I know that she is with her God."

In lieu of flowers the family has asked that donations may be payable to either:

SCLC/Women, Inc.
Evelyn G. Lowery Civil Rights Heritage Educational Tour
328 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303
or
Joseph E. Lowery Institute
P.O. Box 92801
Atlanta, GA 30314
Condolences may be sent to the Lowery family at: 3121 Cascade road SW, Atlanta, GA 3031

OBITUARIES

HERBERT F. LOWE, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died on August 15 in Bluefield, Virginia. In keeping with Rev. Lowe's wishes, there will be no public services or visitation.

Ordained in 1950, he served in both pastoral and denominational executive appointments in New York and New Jersey. Upon his retirement in 1991, following a ten-year pastorate at the First United Methodist Church of Asbury Park, NJ, he and his late wife, Carol June Shrader Lowe, relocated to Falls Mills, VA., where Lowe began a 13 year chaplaincy at the Glen Wood Park Retirement Village in Princeton. He retired from GlenWood Park on December 21, 2004.

Gifts of remembrance may be made to the Mercer County Animal Shelter, 961 Shelter Rd., Princeton, WV 24740. Messages of condolence may be sent to his daughter, Rebecca Ellis Lowe and son, Herbert F. Lowe, Jr. by visiting www.seaverfuneralservice.com.

ROBERT D. COOK, Full Elder of the Greater New Jersey Conference and pastor of the Aldersgate in East Brunswick, died on September 11 in Old Bridge, New Jersey. A Memorial Service was held at Aldersgate on September 14, preceded by a time of visitation at the church.

In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made in Rev. Cook's memory to the Crisis Room, c/o the Aldersgate UMC, address above. Messages of condolence may be sent to Mrs. Nancy Cook, 11 Gloucester Court, East Brunswick, NJ 08816-3319.

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Gaza Kids Get a Break from Conflict

by David Tereshchuk *

September 3, 2013—In the narrow and desperately overcrowded 140-square miles of Gaza, everyday life goes on in a kind of perpetual emergency, whatever the discussions of the territory's status in international corridors of power.

UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, is supporting a program that will help the children of that perilous territory to enjoy fuller and more stable lives.

Through an UMCOR grant to the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) of the Middle East Council of Churches (which, like UMCOR, is a member of ACT Alliance, an international coalition of churches and related organizations), three children's summer camps have been set up, and recreational trips have been organized for young people.

Both children and mothers have opportunities to take their minds off Gaza's ongoing crises, and the children can simply have fun as they participate in the camp activities and trips. In the end, some 600 children and 10,000 women will benefit from the program, whose broad purpose is to counteract in simple ways what the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has called the "protracted crisis of human dignity" that Gaza suffers.

The seriousness of Gaza's social deprivation has worsened since Israel's military operation there late last year. According to the World Health Organization, 163 Palestinians were killed during that conflict. An estimated 1,300 people were wounded, including 431 children. Many buildings were destroyed, and thousands of people were displaced from their homes—for many it was not the first time.

Much of that material damage re-

mains unrepaired—and social upheaval continues, not least in the form of perpetual electricity blackouts and the general impact of Israel's blockade against the territory. Since this worsening of conditions, much of DSPR's psychosocial work has consisted of debriefing and individual and group counseling activities.

This boost for mental and emotional well-being is being offered through the network of Health Centers that DSPR operates. UMCOR's funding is going to some clearly visible provisions (such as play-related items, from camp tents to toys and cheery T-shirts and hats). It also is being used to ensure skillful staff training for the essential counseling element of the mission.

With an eye to the future, slightly older Palestinian youth, above camp-attending age, are also being trained in helpful vocational skills.

At the heart of the work is a whole effort to influence lives for the better at as early a point as possible.

UMCOR Assistant General Secretary for International Disaster Response the Rev. Jack Amick says: "Where adults have been in conflict for a long time, working with future adults may be one of the best means of disaster prevention. Maintaining the open-mindedness of children is sometimes easier than opening the minds of some adults."

Your gift to **International Disaster Response, Advance #982450**, will help families in Gaza and elsewhere whose lives have been severely disrupted by human-caused or natural disasters.

David Tereshchuk is a journalist and media critic who contributes regularly to UMCOR.org

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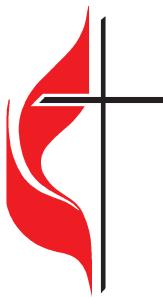

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As we mark the one year anniversary of the storm with
A Service of Remembrance and Hope.

Led by Bishop John Schol, as a part of the Special Session of the Annual Conference, the Service of Remembrance and Hope will have testimony from families who have survived the storm and from volunteers who have helped rebuild their homes.

All are welcome!

Saturday, November 2, 2013
9:00 am to 10:00 am
The Great Auditorium
Ocean Grove, NJ

Fellowship and registration begin at 8:15 am. Service to begin promptly at 9:00 am.

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Join us in service for special one day opportunities.

Visit www.afuturewithhope.org for registration and more information.

Southern Ocean & Atlantic Counties

- Monday, October 28
- Wednesday, October 30
- Friday, November 1

Northern Ocean & Monmouth Counties

- Tuesday, October 29
- Thursday, October 31
- Saturday, November 2