

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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GNJ Stands Tall At Justice Reform Forum

By Jeff Wolfe
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EAST ORANGE, N.J. – The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey was well represented in numbers at the Criminal Justice Reform Forum on Aug. 11 that featured New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker and other religious leaders from around the state. And at least some of the about 75 GNJ members, including 30 clergy, who attended the event were well represented among the voices calling for change in the current justice system.

One of those voices was GNJ Bishop John Schol, who gave some of the opening remarks to the audience of about 300 at Christ Episcopal Church.

“The criminal justice system more often emphasizes punishment over rehabilitation and applies the law unevenly while our faith traditions and moral sensibilities call for restorative justice and applying laws equally and fairly,” Schol said. “This is an issue that is important for all of us and it affects our communities in countless ways.”

Participation in the forum, which focused on race, religion and criminal justice, reinforces the commitment Greater New Jersey United Methodists made to equal justice under the law, racial justice, institutional racism and white privilege in resolutions passed at the 2015 Annual Conference.

The speakers in the forum shared statistics on the criminal justice system in the United States to demonstrate the need for action:

The United States leads the world in the number of people incarcerated.

The U.S. has had a 500 percent increase in incarcerations in the last 35 years which includes an increase in the number of people incarcerated for drug



Photo by Andrew Ryoo

Sen. Cory Booker, left, and Bishop John Schol share a moment together before the Criminal Justice Forum on Aug. 11 in East Orange. The forum was attended by about 300 people and also televised by NJTV.

offenses from 41,000 to 500,000.

More than 60 percent of the people in prison today are people of color.

African American men are six times more likely to be incarcerated than Caucasian men.

One in every 10 African American men in their 30s are in prison or jail on any given day.

“People have to see that we have a system that is a big reason for our problems,” said Vanessa Wilson, the Greater New Jersey Chairperson for the Commis-

sion on Religion and Race, who attended the event. “I’m glad we are staying on this issue because the first thing you have to do is get educated.”

Booker gave the keynote address and helped educate the captive audience on why criminal justice reform is such an important issue.

“We have five percent of the population in the world, but we have one quarter of the world’s prison population,” Booker said. “We are the incarceration nation. We are spending \$4 trillion per year deal-

ing with this problem.”

Booker pointed out that when examining the problem within the African American community, the numbers are even more stunning.

“The system is profoundly against poor people and people of color,” Booker said. “A person of color is 3.7 times more likely to be arrested than a person who is white.”

After Booker’s address he joined a five person forum that answered questions

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IGNITE
CONFERENCE 2015



Photo provided

Gian-Paul Gonzalez will bring his ‘All In’ message to youths at the IGNITE Youth Conference on Oct. 2-4 at the Wildwoods Convention Center. Gonzalez has spoken in chapels for professional sports teams, including an inspirational talk that spurred the New York Giants to a Super Bowl victory in 2012. Page 4

Task Force Proposal Given A Green Light

Greater New Jersey leadership gave the Maintenance to Mission Task Force the green light to take the next steps in organizing conference staff.

Its proposal, presented at a meeting on Sept. 1, seeks to deepen conference resources, particularly to allow superintendents and connectional ministry staff to work together to assist congregations to make disciples, grow vital congregations, transform communities and start new faith communities. The proposal builds on the Strategic Ministry Plan of GNJ and deepens the commitment to congregations as mission outposts.

The Task Force proposal was enthusiastically endorsed as it was approved by 90 percent of those in attendance including members of the Connectional Table, Council on Finance and Administration, Episcopacy Committee, Commission on Communication and Chairpersons of the Superintendency Committees.

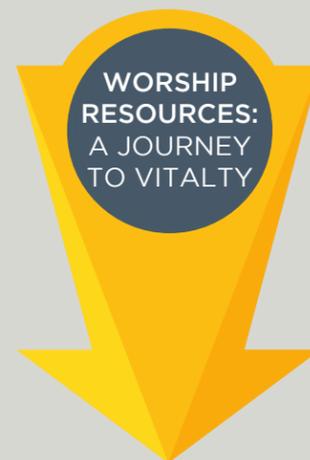
The Task Force’s goal was to refocus conference staff to the new mission field. They worked over the last several months to research other conference structures, evaluate how staff use time, interview current staff members, survey conference leaders and consider ideas to develop the plan. The new plan will allow district superintendents to move away from administrative duties and spend more time on disciple making, church plants and new faith communities.

The proposal was sent to all conference leaders in an email in August and includes: continuing nine districts, grouping superintendents into three regions, deploying connectional ministries staff into the regions, using circuit elders and providing shared services for all conference administration.

“Most of the superintendents’ time is focused on administration and maintaining the conference and congregations as they are,” Bishop John Schol said. “This limits our potential for fulfilling our mission and growth. It continues patterns of decline which ultimately limits our mission. The new plan for staffing seeks to grow our mission and congregation.”

David Argos, a consultant with the Texas Methodist Foundation who worked with the Task Force, agreed with that observation.

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This month we debut a series of pages highlighting stories and information about one of our Connectional Ministries Team areas.

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Bridgeton churches provide summer place for youths. **Page 9**

A Future With Hope has house blessing in Atlantic City. **Page 10**

A Message from the Bishop A Special Letter



I am blessed as your bishop to witness and hear about great faithfulness and ministry throughout GNJ. Quite often I receive letters of faith. Instead of an article this month I wanted to share a letter I received on Aug. 5, 2015. It blessed me and I hope it will be a blessing to you.

Dear Bishop Schol

I am writing you today to notify you of the passing of the Reverend George C. Schlesinger, my grandfather and his wife Maxine Schlesinger on Aug. 4, 2015. My grandfather devoted his life to serving God and the United Methodist Church. He was born and raised in Central Pennsylvania which was something he was

very proud of. He answered the call as many proud Americans did and joined the United States Marine Corps during World War II. After faithfully serving in the South Pacific, he left the Marines to return to Central Pennsylvania. There he worked on the assembly line at Piper Aircraft until as he so often put it, "God called me off the assembly line."

From that moment on he devoted his life to serving God as an ordained Minister with the United Methodist Church. My grandfather was appointed to churches small and large from Pennsylvania to New Jersey eventually settling in Toms River, N.J., after retiring.

My earliest memory is when my grandfather was appointed to Springfield Emanuel United Methodist Church in Springfield, N.J. I remember seeing him preach from the pulpit with an energy and passion that I have never seen before or since. Every time he took the pulpit it was like seeing major league baseball superstar step up to the plate. This is what he was born to do and he did it with extreme passion. My brother Nick and I would see him working in his office every week to prepare his sermon like a football player studies film during the week of the Super Bowl.

But to my grandfather every Sunday was his Super Bowl. It was his time to reach out to the congregation and not only make them hear the word of God, but to truly understand and embrace it.

My grandfather and grandmother were married 68 years and are the greatest love story that I will ever know. On June 4, my grandfather was diagnosed with cancer and given a death sentence of three months to live. To most people this would be the most depressing news, but not to my grandfather. His faith was unshakeable, stronger than any cancer.

He took comfort in knowing that in three months he would be sitting next to his God. My grandmother although diagnosed years ago with dementia was nowhere near the end of her life. Actually most doctors predicted she had years left on her life.

Late last month my grandfather was placed in the care of hospice as his condition was getting worse. As this was happening out of nowhere my grandmother, who was predicted to have years left on her life, began a rapid decline of health. At this point her dementia had progressed to the point where she was "healthy", but could not remember anything.

It was as if she sensed my grandfather was not doing well and was not going to stay in this world without the love of her life. They were transferred to a facility in Toms River and placed in the same room, but had beds next to each other so they could hold hands. They would never wake up again. On August 4th at 1:40 a.m. my grandmother took her last breath and ascended into heaven to wait for her love. Exactly nine hours to the minute, at 10:40 a.m. my grandfather took his last breath and ascended to heaven. He took my grandmother's hand, gave her a kiss, and they both walked through the gates of heaven to be with their God and be with each other in eternity.

My grandparents were not going to be on this planet without each other.

They made a promise in front of their friends and God on June 30, 1947 to have and hold until death do us part. What little did anyone know that day was that death would not even keep them apart. My grandparents had a long life filled with lots of family and friends. We will miss them every day that they are not here, but we will take comfort in knowing that they are together and at peace. They are sitting with their family and friends who have passed and most of all, they are sitting with their God that they have served with honor while on this planet. This is truly a story of the power of love and the comfort of faith.

Sincerely,
Jason Lytle

Publication Features AFWH

A Future With Hope and its work in Atlantic City is featured in this summer's issue of the Lott Carey Herald. Lott Carey is a global missional community that helps churches extend witness across the world, and its publications highlight all kinds of missions related to natural disasters and more.

Below is the Interview that took place at Venice Park United Methodist Church recently with Lott Carey Herald's Mike Tucker asking the questions to A Future With Hope's Rev. Lou Strugala, Construction Director and Spiritual Advisor; Jim Watson, Construction Foreman, and Carolyn Conover, Director of Communication and Development.

Mike: Being in a resort town means it can be easy to forget about life beyond the Boardwalk.

Jim: That's important to remember because it's real. It's where the people live.

Mike: What is the difference between rebuilding and getting people home?

Jim: When you build a house, you hammer a nail into a wall. That's the easy part. To get somebody home is to know what it is that they're afraid of losing. That's what I tell my kids every day. I go to work. I help people. I don't work construction. I help people. That makes it easy to come to work.

Lou: We're rebuilding lives of family and neighborhood structures. Many homes, especially in the Venice Park area and in the inner city, have been in families for multiple generations. The people need to come home. They need to feel that sense of community.

Mike: It's been years. What's taking so long?

Carolyn: Recovery takes time and the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey recognized that recovery would take three to five years or even longer to get people home. There's a process. There is funding in place but it is a challenge to work with insurance, to work with FEMA, to work with other government programs, to pull the resources together, to identify what the needs are and then address people's needs.

A FUTURE WITH
HOPE

The People of the United Methodist Church

Lou: There are homeowners who have been back in their homes for two years. They could self-recover because of savings, they were over insured in some cases; so they were able to hire a builder and get the job done. A Future With Hope is out to help the low income, the elderly, and the handicapped. The program has morphed. It also helps the vulnerable, the people who have been victims of contractor fraud, and the people who cannot recover because they don't understand construction technique or process. We have to take into consideration all the different dynamics. We have mortgage companies involved. We have insurance companies involved. We have the government involved. We have people's personal savings and assets involved. Our case managers put together the whole package so we're able to figure out what's the best recovery process. If someone's home is marginal, do we tear it down and build a new one because that's a better recovery plan? Or do we fix what they have? The process just takes time.

Mike: Each of you sounds so earnest. Does working with A Future With Hope have a spiritual component?

Jim: It's a different work environment. I remember not too long ago opening the front door and this family of three generations of single women walks in; there were tears in their eyes because they were home. The oldest said, "I never thought I'd get back here." I helped in that. It makes it easy to get up in the morning at 5:00 when I want to go back to bed. It makes it easy to say, "Okay. Get your lazy butt out of bed and go help somebody."

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Back issues of the Relay are available at
www.gnjumc.org/news/issue

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**The October Issue Deadline
is September 15, 2015**

Worship Resources: A Journey to Vitality

Vital Worship Comes From Within

By Eric Drew, Director of Worship
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The Rutherford worship team. Top (left to right): Dave Romberger, Trevor Romberger, Jason Wolf, Brian Sanders, Tyler Yohn Bottom: Elizabeth Givler, Keely Romberger

As the Director of Worship at CrossPoint Church in Pennsylvania, one of my responsibilities was to supervise the worship leader at the Rutherford campus. After I had been there about one year, the original worship leader left for the mission field and I hired his replacement. Within six months the replacement left too. The only person left on our worship team was a harmonica player named Brian. While not a large congregation, we had traditionally had a great blended music service and active worship team. I felt like everything was falling apart. Worship was a mess and I didn't know what to do.

woman named Keely who had ties to our community and had played with us a few times, but had very little experience. But we decided to offer her an internship anyway. When I spoke with Keely her jaw dropped. God had told her that she would find a worship internship.

God told me to bring on an intern to lead our music. The church leadership didn't agree. Especially because my choice was a young

After her internship, we hired Keely for a part-time position and within a year, we had a full worship team. Now, after two years, the team continues to grow spiritually and musically. Brian is still there with his harmonica. Keely got married and her husband plays guitar in the band. Her father-in-law, who had been worshipping in the congregation for years, is playing bass with them. The new drummer is the son of the food pantry coordinator. He just graduated high school and has serious questions about his faith, but never misses a rehearsal or a Sunday morning. A guitar player was found through Craig's List and later this month I will participate in his wedding.

During this crisis, I didn't initially see that God had already provided an amazing worship team. All that was needed was to step out in faith to empower and mentor the next leaders. They may not play every song perfectly each week, but they are an amazing blend of generations, gifts and souled-out believers who come together to lead a community in worship. They have grafted into an important part of the congregation's worship journey and haven't proven weekly that vital worship comes from within.

When you look at folks in your ministry setting, who are the hidden treasures that need to be empowered and mentored to become the next worship leaders in your congregation?

Phil Wickham who holds the number 2 spot on top 10 list will be the worship leader at IGNITE youth conference in October? Join the movement of IGNITE at www.ignitenj.org.

IGNITE CONFERENCE 2015

CCLI Top 10

Two times each year Christian Copyright Licenses (CCLI) International creates a list of the top worship songs being used in churches throughout North America. Here are the top 10 of the most recent list!

1. **10,000 REASONS**
by: Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman
2. **THIS IS AMAZING GRACE**
by: Jeremy Riddle, Josh Farro, Phil Wickham
3. **OCEANS (WHERE FEET MAY FAIL)**
by: Joel Houston, Matt Crocker, Salmon Lighthelm
4. **HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD**
by: Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
5. **OUR GOD**
by: Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman
6. **CORNERSTONE**
by: Edward Mote, Eric Lijero, Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, William Batchelder Bradbury
7. **ONE THING REMAINS**
by: Brian Johnson, Christa Black Gifford, Jeremy Riddle
8. **LORD I NEED YOU**
by: Christy Nockels, Daniel Carson, Jesse Reeves, Kristian Stanfill, Matt Maher
9. **MIGHTY TO SAVE**
by: Ben Fielding, Reuben Morgan
10. **FOREVER REIGN**
by: Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan

Recommended Resources

BOOKS:

The Worship Architect, Constance Cherry

WEBSITES:

Carey Nieuwhof: www.careynieuwhof.com
David Santistevan: www.DavidSantistevan.com

NEW WORSHIP ALBUMS:

Matt Redman, "Unbroken Praise"
NCC Worship, "You Alone."

WORSHIP MUSIC COLLECTION:

Passion: The Essential Collection



Call to Action in Preaching

4 out of 5 people will forget everything in your sermon by Tuesday at noon. How can you give something people can hold onto? Provide a call to action of a "so-what". Recently Lifeway Research did a study on types of action steps that preachers are using. The following are what pastors ask worshipers to do as a result of the sermon:



For additional information and support on worship resources:



www.gnjumc.org/worship

Contact Eric Drew,
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Gonzalez All In As IGNITE Speaker

By Jeff Wolfe
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Gian-Paul Gonzalez is known for speaking to and motivating professional sports teams with his "All In" message. He's led chapels in the NBA and NFL, most notably speaking to the New York Giants who credited him for inspiring them on a playoff run that ended with a Super Bowl victory in February of 2012.

But as a New Jersey high school teacher, Gonzalez says the youths he sees on a day-to-day basis aren't much different than those professional athletes. Gonzalez will be the keynote speaker at the IGNITE Youth Conference on Oct. 2-4 in Wildwood and he says those who attend will be hearing some of the same things he's told the pros.

"The interesting thing about all the different groups I have had a chance to work with is that we all go back to our human condition," Gonzalez said. "People ask me how do you speak to those sports team, but I've felt all along that I treat them the same way I do a 16-year-old. Those athletes just have more zeroes on the end of their bank account."

While athletes, whether high school, college or professional, are mostly measured by what the scoreboard says, Gonzalez says the victories off the field are much more important to him than the results of athletic competition.

"When I talk to a team, I tell them I'm not here because I think you are going to win, but that my main concern is about your heart and mind," Gonzalez said. "The greatest thing I hear when I see them later is when they say they have decided to have a greater commitment to their wife, or decided to take their family to church every Sunday. "Championships come and go and MVPs come and go, but it's loving your brother or sister or mother and father, that's something that we can all do right now."

Something that Gonzalez had a chance to do, but decided not to, was pursue a career in the NBA. As a 6-foot-6 forward, he scored more than 1,400 points at Montclair State University. He was playing in an NBA summer league after his college career was over and had contract offers from several NBA teams to come to training camp in the fall. And even if he had not made it in the NBA, he likely could have signed a lucrative deal to play professional basketball in Europe.

But he felt quite strongly that was not



Gian-Paul Gonzalez likes to bring his "All In" message to professional sports teams and will be bringing it to the IGNITE Youth Conference in October.

the path that God wanted him to take.

"My first love was football, but it fell through," he said. "If I had to make that decision for football, I probably would have pursued it with all my heart. Basketball just kind of fell in my lap. I was in Los Angeles on Venice Beach and was prompted by God to step away from basketball."

"It wasn't easy, but I was able to do it and start a jail ministry and a basketball ministry to do outreach."

Just as Gonzalez made a tough decision to not pursue a professional basketball career, he says parts of his IGNITE messages will challenge youths.

"I know even after growing up, we sometimes become disillusioned with faith," he said. "Sometimes we believe it is going to be easy. Sometimes we can say, well, I believe in God, or I know who Jesus is or that I go to church. "I want to pose a challenge that being all in and totally committed as a young man or a young woman, and to do the things that God has put in your life now as well as going forward, that's going to be hard. It's going to take commitment to a degree where we can't be concerned about outside opinion."

Gonzalez understands while it may

IGNITE
CONFERENCE 2015

OCTOBER 2-4
REGISTER @ www.IGNITENJ.org

FRIDAY
5:00 pm Registration Opens
7:00 pm Bonfire
8:00 pm Session 1: "Fan Into Flame" with Gian-Paul Gonzalez

SATURDAY
9:00 am Session 2: "Power" with Preston Centuolo
11:00 am Workshops
12:30 pm Free Time
5:00 pm Acoustic Coffee House
7:00 pm Entertainment by F.U.D.G.E. Da Comedian
8:00 pm Session 3: "Love" with Gian-Paul Gonzalez
9:30 pm Concert by KB

SUNDAY
8:00 - 10:00 am Continental Breakfast
10:00 am Session 4 "Self-Discipline" with Gian-Paul Gonzalez
11:30 am Communion
12:00 pm Wrap Up with Preston Centuolo
12:30 pm Conference Ends

be easy to make a commitment amidst friends and hundreds of others at a spiritually based weekend program, that things can change quickly for youths when they return to home or school environments that are not as spiritually encouraging. Gonzalez plans to give the youths some tools to help them in those times, too.

"The theme I'm going to hit on is what it means to be committed in your

Task Force

Continued from page 1

"We have gifted and talented district superintendents who have had to work on things that do not move us forward in making new disciples and transforming lives," he said.

Rev. Jeanette Block of Cape May UMC was chair of the Maintenance to Mission Task Force and felt strongly about moving forward with the new plan.

"We must do this," she said. "People need the transformative power of a relationship with Jesus Christ. It transforms lives."

The presentation generated a question and answer period where people were encouraged to voice concerns or share support. The questions concerned the speed of the change, how small churches will be affected, the need for more communication, how ethnic concerns will be addressed and assessment and benchmarks to measure success.

Argos believes the proposal will put the conference on a better long-term track. "This is a plan," he said, "that can help do what every congregation wants to do, and that is to grow."

The new plan will take effect July 1, 2016. It is budget neutral and will cause a shift in staffing in the districts and changes in the responsibilities of the district superintendents.

The changes for superintendents will include no longer engaging in conflict resolution, contacting congregations and pastors about apportionment and billable payments, following up on statistical reports, managing supervisory concerns with clergy, answering church administration questions, and handling property issues. These tasks will be moved to shared services in the conference office.

"The superintendents will be more engaged with congregations particularly if the congregation or pastor participates in Team Vital, Communities of Hope, Coaching and PaCE groups," Schol said. "This will allow superintendents and conference staff to provide leadership through these new resources."

Block said the task force was encouraged by similar plans adopted by conferences elsewhere.

"Our extensive research and conversations with other conferences who have undergone similar transitions, let me know that this kind of plan works," Block said. "We know there are new ways to do things."

The other shift in staff will involve the district administrative assistants. These positions and job functions will be moved to the conference office to take advantage of shared services. The current district administrative assistants will be given the opportunity to relocate to new positions in the conference office. The Committee on Finance and Administration will meet to create fair severance packages for employees who choose not to transition.

"Our district administrative staff have been faithful and loyal for many years," Schol said. "They have been a gift to us. We regret losing any of our staff but when this occurs and we will be generous and graceful in helping people to transition."

The next step in the process will be creating position descriptions for shared services staff and creating a transition plan. Shared services staff in the conference office will be hired in 2016 and all district administrative functions will continue until the transition is complete in July.

ATTENTION PASTORS

Do you have students going to Rutgers this fall?
Would they benefit from a friendly face during
their time at college?

LET US HELP!

Christ United Methodist Church in Piscataway seeks
to show Christ's love to Rutgers students.



We would love contact information for students willing
to share their walk with a vibrant faith community
during their time away from home.

CONTACT US AT:

jessrigel@gmail.com or call 609.947.2246



Photo by Andrew Ryoo

GNJ Lay Leader Rosa Williams and Bishop John Schol talk about the topics that were discussed during the Criminal Justice Reform Forum on Aug. 11 in East Orange.

Justice Reform

Continued from page 1

submitted by the audience. Others on the panel were Paul Fishman, U.S. Attorney for the State of New Jersey; Jiles Ship, a New Jersey native who is president of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement; Rev. Charles Boyer, pastor of Bethel African American Methodist Episcopal Church in Woodbury, N.J.; and Rev. Craig Hirshberg, of the Unitarian Universalist Ministry of N.J.

The panel was in agreement that the problem encompasses the entire process, from who we choose to arrest and prosecute to how we treat people in prison to the societal issues that occur once a prisoner is released.

They referenced the book, "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander, which points out disparities in the justice system and how it affects people of color. GNJ leadership, including the extended cabinet, is currently reading and discussing the book.

"We, as a church, need to address these problems and educate the people in our churches," said Greater New Jersey Lay Leader Rosa Williams, who was also in attendance. "It's the whole church's problem, too."

While Booker says it can be challenging to change laws in Washington, he says continually pushing for change in criminal justice reform will remain a major priority for him.

He also joined other panelists in offering suggestions for people to act. Those suggestions included reading "The New Jim Crow" to get educated on the issues, using social media to share concerns and get others involved, volunteering with mentor programs for at-risk youth, creating support programs for people leaving the prison system and supporting community policing.

"I am a prisoner of hope," said Booker, the former mayor of Newark. "I believe that we will see change, and to me, it's just a matter of how far that change will go."

Religion and Race Receives Healing Communities Training

By Vanessa Wilson
vwilsonlaw@gmail.com

The Greater New Jersey Commission on Religion and Race (GNJ CORR) committed to a social justice initiative for this quadrennial to engage in criminal justice reform and provide tools and resources for congregations. Specifically, GNJ CORR is addressing issues of racial disparity in the criminal justice system and looking at models of restorative justice.

The latest step in the initiative is to train more clergy as Healing Communities trainers. This most recent "train the trainer" program from Healing Communities included Rev. Lourdes Magalhães of Davis Memorial UMC in Harrison, Rev. Vanessa M. Wilson of Magnolia Road UMC in Pemberton Township, who is the Chair of the Commission on Religion and Race, and Rev. Denise M. Wooten-Troutman, Senior Pastor and Founder of Workmen Devoted to Edifying the Body of Christ Evangelistic Church in Camden.

Healing Communities is designed to equip faith leaders and laity with tools to build relationships of healing, redemption and reconciliation.

GNJ CORR has joined with the Gen-

eral Commission on Church and Society (GBCS) in the fight against mass incarceration. This was the second training program for clergy in the area. In 2014, GBCS sponsored Healing Communities training to members of Greater New Jersey and faith leaders from other denominations.

The trainers for this most recent session were Rev. Dr. Sonia L. King and Rev. Dr. Brian W. Jackson from the Baltimore-Washington Conference. Designed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Harold Dean Trulear and Rev. Dr. Wilson Goode, the training provides resources for congregations to become Stations of Hope for the restoration of people affected by crime, incarceration and reintegration.

Sponsors of the most recent training included the GBCS, National Campaign Against Religious Torture and Rutgers School of Law – Newark, which graciously donated space for the two day training.

The primary purpose of GNJ CORR is to build the capacity of United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey, be relevant and to reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people.

Bishop Schol's Statement Opens The Justice Forum

Below is the text of GNJ Bishop John Schol's opening statement at the Criminal Justice Forum on Aug. 11.

Good evening and welcome you to the criminal justice forum. Thank you for coming to what we hope will be conversations that lead to action and change.

I, John Schol, United Methodist Bishop for the New Jersey Area and my colleague Matthew D. Gewirtz, Senior Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, in Short Hills, N.J., welcome you on behalf of Senator Cory Booker and the Interfaith Partners who sponsor the forum. Interfaith Partners is a group of religious leaders from various faiths who model and work together to address concerns of mercy and justice within our communities and state.

We are also grateful for NJTV's participation and thank them for broadcasting the forum across the state in the coming weeks.

We gather today to begin a conversation for some and deepen the conversation for others because we have witnessed changes in the criminal justice system over the last 35 years.

We are grateful to the many men and women who serve the nation, and in particular New Jersey through public service. We are especially thankful for the way so many of our public officials administer their role faithfully and justly.

We also recognize that there has been a vast increase in incarceration over the last 35 years, and the increase has been unproportional, incarcerating higher numbers of people of color.

The United States is the world's leader in incarceration because of a 500 percent increase of those incarcerated over the last 35 years.

Policies from the War on Drugs era have resulted in a dramatic growth in drug incarcerations – skyrocketing from 41,000 to almost a half million. Laws have become harsher, incarcerating people for a longer period of time and most are not high-level actors in the drug trade.

More than 60 percent of the people in prison today are people of color. African American men are six times more likely to be incarcerated than Caucasian men. For African American men in their 30s, one in every 10 is in prison or jail on any given day.

As religious leaders we are also deeply concerned for the communities and families where increased and longer incarcerations put more children in foster care and create more community disruption.

We gather today to begin and deepen the conversation because the mass incarceration of people of color, particularly African Americans, is not just.

Michelle Alexander in her book, "The New Jim Crow," through facts and testimony, paints a picture of a criminal justice system rooted in prejudice, racism and systematic injustice. It does not arrest and prosecute evenly. Ms. Alexander characterizes the criminal justice system as the new Jim Crow.

The criminal justice system more often emphasizes punishment over rehabilitation and applies the law unevenly while our faith traditions and moral sensibilities call for restorative justice and applying laws equally and fairly.

Today is the first of what we hope will be several conversations that will lead to action and change. You will hear from leaders, secular and religious, who are committed to understanding and changing our systems to reflect a new and better way. You will also hear testimony from community people who have experienced firsthand the challenges we have described.

Welcome, thank you for coming, and let the conversation and action begin with us.



Photo provided

GNJ CORR Chairperson Vanessa Wilson (center) participated in N.J. Sen. Raymond Lesniak's round-table discussion on solitary confinement. She was also there as a partner with the National Campaign Against Religious Torture.

VBS 2015



Clockwise from top left, youths at Pitman UMC celebrate during worship time. Below, attendees at Beach Haven UMC take in a class during its G-Force week. At top right, a group at Haven UMC in Quinton reaches higher with its human pyramid during its Mega Sports Week. At middle left, the UMC of the Rocakways had a big turnout. At middle right, kids at Manahawkin UMC enjoy some end of the day snacks and at bottom left a group at Bergen Highlands UMC enjoys some craft time during its G-Force week. The Relay staff thanks all of the churches that sent in photos. Due to the high volume received, not all photos were able to be used.



At top, Vincent UMC has some fun during its Super Heroes of the Bible week. At middle left, Red Bank UMC students are all smiles. At center, students at DeBows UMC learn during Camp Discovery week. At middle right, youths at First UMC in Mt. Holly take in some Weird Animals. Below at middle right, Vincentown UMC gets some outside time during its G-Force week. And at bottom, students at Glassboro UMC take a fun break during their Expedition Everest week.



United Methodist New Service file photo

Kathy Ahmad, the GNJ UMVIM Director, has been on several mission trips to Haiti and here shares a light moment with an orphan at the Methodist Children's Home in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, in 2011. Ahmad will be one of the presenters at the GNJ Mission Fair.

Mission Fair Offers A Chance To Share

By Jessica Stenstrom

Jessica_stenstrom@yahoo.com

The Greater New Jersey Board of the Global Ministries is hosting a Mission Fair on Sept. 19 at Christ UMC in Piscataway in hopes of helping conference pastors and church leaders resource themselves while networking with others in their geographic area.

"The idea behind the mission fair is to come and meet one another and to see what mission is being done in the conference," said Barbara McFarquhar, chair of the conference board. She said churches often believe they are too small to be able to do something and she wants leaders to realize they are not alone.

"There are people you can work with," she said.

Participants will attend three workshops during the mission fair. Each district superintendent from the central region, encompassing the Raritan Valley, Northern Shore, and Capital districts, will celebrate a missional bright spot from their district. All churches are invited.

During worship, the keynote speaker will be a representative from the General Board of Global Ministries. Each participant can choose two of the three workshops they wish to attend. Everyone will attend a workshop on New Jersey Missions where they will get a chance to talk one-on-one with those involved in New Jersey Missions and hear from GNJ Advance Specials as to what works, what makes them rejoice and what makes them pray. In this hands-on time, participants can wish a missionary a happy birthday, write a personal note, write a prayer, make a gizmo and have some fun.

The workshop choices are:

UMVIM (United Methodist Volunteers In Mission): Kathy Ahmad, Conference Coordinator of UMVIM, will facilitate this workshop. She has led several UMVIM groups to Haiti, including one in response to the 2010 disastrous

earthquake. Dr. Ahmad has experience and knowledge in organizing mission teams of volunteers and she will share the requirements for leading and participating on these teams.

Mission and Culture: Rev. Fred Price, who with his wife, Rev. Lanie Price, served as UM missionaries to Africa for many years, will bring a sense of the real atmosphere of the mission field within the context of cross cultural experiences, and how culture affects the way evangelization is presented and perceived.

A Future with Hope presents "Am I my brother's/sister's keeper?": Rev. Lou Strugala, Director of Construction for A Future with Hope, will give an update on the ongoing Hurricane Sandy mission work that is happening within Greater New Jersey. Information covered will include fundraising for recovery, recruiting volunteers for rebuilding and ministering to those who are impacted by Superstorm Sandy.

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and Disaster Response: Rev. Chris Miller, the GNJ Coordinator of Disaster Response, will help with advance preparations and resources in for the next disaster.

The Tale of Two Missionaries: Two missionaries in David Guikpa, a regional missionary in Africa and Rosangelica Acevado-Delgado, who serves in Puerto Rico, will share their perspectives as they minister in two different continents and environments.

McFarquhar said the board hopes to have a mission fair annually and visit the different regions in Greater New Jersey. All are welcome to attend no matter what district they are from, but pre-registration is required by Sept. 14. Child care will be available if the child is pre-registered. She said pre-registration is especially important to plan for the continental breakfast that will be served and for child-care. Online registration and workshop selection is available at www.gnjumc.org.

With First Season a Success, Coaching Signups Underway

By Jeff Wolfe

jwolfe@gnjumc.org

If you missed the first coaching session for clergy, you might have missed something special.

At least that's the feedback that Coaching Project Manager Rev. Myrna Bethke is hearing as the first season of coaching, which began last winter, is nearing its close.

Signups are now open at www.gnjumc.org for the second season of coaching.

"From what I am hearing from churches, congregations are noticing that their clergy are leading differently," said Bethke, who is the Gateway South District Superintendent. "I am hearing too that it has helped sharpen leadership skills and empowered them to become more effective leaders."

A coaching season lasts about eight months with clergy talking with coaches, whether by phone or in person, for a total of eight hours during those months. The sessions can be an hour long once a month or can be 30 minutes long with 16 sessions over the same period.

Bethke said more than 130 clergy were involved in coaching at some level during the first season, which began in January after the Bishop's Convocation where Chris Holmes, who teaches the Coach Approach Skill Training, led training sessions on that method.

"Coaching is one of the purest forms of empowerment and Chris Holmes is changing the church and its leaders through his Coach Approach Skill Training," said Bishop John Schol. "Leaders are changing how they lead and how they work with others because of the Holmes Coaching Group. Leaders who have received coaching or training from Chris and his team all come away invigorated,

with a new set of tools for leadership and more confidence in their leadership."

There are different levels of training that allow clergy to be coaches. Clergy who have completed the Cast 1 and Cast 2 training can do individual coaching. Clergy who have done Cast 3 training can do group and team coaching. Bethke said that all members of the GNJ connectional ministries team and the nine district superintendents have been trained at the Cast 3 level. Each training session takes between 2 and 2 and a half days for the first three levels.

Bethke said each coach can carry between eight and 15 people. And that there is no firm deadline for signups in this season. She said it's possible for those who signup to have a short waiting period as coaches finish schedules from their first seasons.

"Some coaches are on a bit of a different schedule, so we may not be able to accommodate everyone immediately," she said. "It's an ongoing thing."

Coaching not only gives the individual person being coached new ideas, but the clergy person can then go and influence people in their congregations from what they've learned.

"I think another thing I've been seeing is that it changes the way clergy have been leading," Bethke said. "I think it is helping clergy be more directive and proactive in helping move congregations from hopes and dreams into action plans."

Bethke also knows from being a coach that it can have a positive effect on the coaches themselves.

"It is exciting to see people get enthused and energetic," she said. "I love to hear people say 'that's a good question' because you know you have hit on something for them."



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LAY SERVANT CLASS SCHEDULES

Below are the schedules for the Lay Servant classes in the districts where they have been announced. For registration go to www.gnjumc.org.

Cape Atlantic: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26 and Saturday, Oct. 3 at First UMC in Mays Landing. Instructor: Ed Davis.

Capitol District: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31 and Saturday Nov. 14 at Crosswicks UMC. Instructors: Rev. Sammy and Joy Arroyo.

Gateway South: 7 to 9 p.m. on the Wednesdays of Oct. 21, Oct. 28, Nov. 4, Nov. 11, Nov. 18 at Sicklerville UMC. Instructor: Rev. Steve Schuster.

Northern Shore: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 3 and Saturday Nov. 7 at St. Paul's UMC in Ocean Grove. Instructor: Rev. John DiGiamberadino.

Palisades: 7 to 9 p.m. on the Thursdays of Sept. 24, Oct. 8, Oct. 15, Oct. 22, Oct. 29, Nov. 12, Nov. 19 at Galilee UMC in Englewood. Instructor: Rev. Beth Whalley Mitchell.

Skylands: 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on the Saturdays of Sept. 26, Oct. 10, Oct. 24, Oct. 24, Nov. 7. Instructor: Pastor Carla Costantino.

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Bridgeton Bridges Allows Children To Shine

By Rev. Melissa Hinnen
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When children started attending the Bridgeton Bridges of Growth for Children summer education program, they were initially shy and uncertain. By the end of the summer however, relationships with program leaders blossomed and new friendships with other children had been forged.

The summer school program is a part of a new larger ministry project between all of the United Methodist churches in the greater Bridgeton area. Delaware Bay District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Jisun Kwak says it is important to "help churches collaborate efforts for mission in their surrounding communities."

The school was developed as an opportunity for families who do not have financial resources to send their children to a summer program. This was the first summer that some of the children had a place to go every day and receive breakfast and lunch in a fun, safe, faith-based, learning environment.

The summer program grew out of the new mission partnership. The four host churches, Trinity, First, John Wesley, and Fordville St. John, spent months developing an eight week curriculum that included math, reading, and Bible study for 90 children from kindergarten through 6th grade. Each church hosted half day sessions of the school for two weeks.

The summer school strengthened the educational opportunities for children in the community, provided nutritious meals and served as an invitation to faith. More than 50 of the 120 children who participated did not belong to a church.



Photo by George Lagos

The Bridgeton Bridges of Growth ministry had more than 120 students attend. The ministry was part of a collaborative effort of Methodist churches in Bridgeton during the summer.

Rev. John Randall of First United Methodist Church was delighted that 20 children came to worship on the Sunday that the church hosted the school.

Kwak celebrated the program, too, saying it "had the immediate fruit of bringing the church and these families closer to God."

The program created an opportunity for friendships to grow between children from different ethnic backgrounds who traditionally do not interact in Bridgeton. The program leaders developed a cultural component at each church. Every two weeks, the focus shifted and the students engaged in new understandings about Mexican, Thai, and Native American culture. A fourth module highlighted change agents like Nelson Mandela,

Abraham Lincoln, and Sojourner Truth.

Spending time together on field trips at a water park, zoo, and a Native American reservation allowed friendships to develop in a less structured environment.

"Children who historically have not gotten along in Bridgeton are returning to their public schools with a shared summer experience," said George Lagos who was the director. "This program helped them cross some boundaries and they now have tools to serve as ambassadors in the community."

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey gave Bridgeton Bridges of Growth for Children a \$30,000 grant for the summer program. The funds were used to pay four teachers and the director as well as cover some of over-

head costs to the each of the churches. The teachers were church members who are certified in the public school system.

The Food Bank of Southern New Jersey provided breakfast and lunch everyday. This was an important part of the program because children who receive free or reduced meals at school often are hungry when the public schools are not in session.

Kwak emphasized the importance of churches working together to meet the needs in the community, sharing information and resources of time and money.

"This is just the beginning," she said. "The Holy Spirit is at work in Bridgeton churches and continuing to move us to serve God's children in our communities."

A Church History Can Help Soul And Growth

By Mark Shenise
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What does it mean to be a United Methodist congregation or member in this rapidly changing society?

That question and others like it have been asked in one form or another in every generation since the 1796 Christmas Conference.

The questions are legitimate, but to answer them with bona fide meanings or solutions needs contextual identity. The Commission on Archives and History has a solution that when discovered can bring unity, vision and empowerment to local congregations.

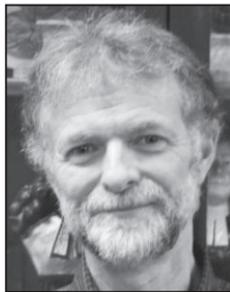
A local church history can answer many of these questions. Past successes and failures are all part of developing a strong identity in the 21st century. Former courageous tales of past ministries and events informs a congregation's DNA which is the keystone for building future success. Documenting your church's history inspires present day members knowing that their predecessors fought the good fight to give your contemporary congregation the opportunity to strive forward once more in the name of Jesus.

A church that understands its past identity can better navigate today's spiritual and social dilemmas while at the same time involve members for solving future problems. These capsular histories are a source for long-term deep, dynamic faith wells that can be drawn from in times of doubt and stagnation.

Did you know: Methodists were instrumental in the successful American Camp Meeting movement? Methodist Circuit Riders also acted as traveling physicians until the mid-1800s? Early American orphanages were started by our United Brethren? The social creed spearheaded the end of child labor and workers' rights to organize? Methodists created foreign language conferences and women's homes to help immigrants through the "Golden Door" of America? How the church compromised itself on the slavery question until the 1844 split?

These are just a few examples of how United Methodism took the lead on many important spiritual and social

issues around the world. But do you know if your congregation participated in shaping these events? Just think how these facts can entice visitors to join the congregation knowing they were becoming part of something that had real meaning in the name of faith.



SHENISE

If done right, a solid, well-written history will not be a stifling trip down memory lanes of faded tales and dusty trails. Rather it will call out for new chapters to be written in order to inspire future United Methodists on all levels of the connection. It builds teamwork with a clear achievable goal in mind through planning, researching, writing, publishing, and promoting a history no matter the age of the congregation. Hence, it becomes a perfect avenue for bringing a congregation together. The crucial part, however, is pastoral support. Why would any pastor throw away a growth opportunity that an up-to-date history can bring to the vital church table?

On Sept. 18-19, two workshops with the same content will be offered by the Greater New Jersey Commission on Archives and History. Marie Amerson, an experienced local church history author, college professor and visually impaired instructor, will lead a six hour seminar with real archival documents on step-by-step instructions on how a presentation to produce a solid church history that can transform your church.

The United Methodist Center on the campus of Drew University will host Friday's workshop and Chews UMC in Glendora will do the same on Saturday. The cost is \$25. Participating clergy will receive 0.5 continuing education credits. To register contact Rev. Don DeGroat at P.O. Box 25, Long Pond, PA 18334 or at dfdegroat4@aol.com.

Mark Shenise is the Associate Archivist on the Greater New Jersey Commission on Archives and History.

New Support System In Place For Safe Sanctuaries Questions

A Safe Sanctuaries Policy is a requirement for every congregation in the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey. If your church has any questions about its Safe Sanctuaries policy, or needs to fully adopt one, go to www.gnjumc.org/safe-sanctuaries.

While Rev. Erica Munoz, who is the pastor at Aldersgate UMC in East Brunswick, is still the coordinator for Safe Sanctuaries, the primary way to have questions answered about that topic will now be to call your district office.

"Right now we hope that a local church would call their district office if they have any questions about Safe Sanctuaries," Munoz said. "Everything about our policy is remaining the same, it's just that if a policy needs to be certified, or if there are any other questions, churches can just call their district office."

Each of the districts will also have a Safe Sanctuaries regional coordinator. The regional coordinators and their contact information are Andrea Osborne (aosborneesq@aol.com) for Skylands, Palisades and Gateway North; Rev. Kathleen Stolz (stolz.kathleen@gmail.com) for Raritan Valley, Capital and Northern Shore and Pastor Debbie Barnett (dbarnett1322@comcast.net) for Gateway South, Delaware Bay and Cape Atlantic.

Munoz emphasized that if a church already has a Safe Sanctuaries policy that has been approved, that it is not required to do anything. However, if a church does not have Safe Sanctuaries policy, it needs to adopt one as soon as possible.

"If they do have a policy, they should let people know about it and celebrate it," Munoz said. "If they do not have a policy they need to contact their district office for support."

GNJ approved its Safe Sanctuaries policy in June of 2005 with the purpose of reducing the risk of abuse in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

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Timing Perfect For AFWH, Atlantic City Family

By Jeff Wolfe

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A Future With Hope came along at just the right time in Damita Daniel's life.

The Atlantic City resident had been trying to find a way to get her house repaired after it was severely damaged in Superstorm Sandy in October of 2012. Then she was told she was losing her 30-year job as a casino worker.

A Future With Hope did indeed give Daniel and her family a hopeful future.

"Life is about timing and I'm a firm believer that things are going to happen to you, it's just a matter of where you are at in life," Daniel said. "I was at Bally's for 30 years and one day I was getting all this joyous news about my home, and then the next day they said we have to let you go."

"But this (the news about getting the house rebuilt) was able to carry me from that. That's the timing I'm talking about. I believe if you keep it going and you keep it moving and do the things you are supposed to do, God up above will take you through."

The home rebuilding journey for Daniel and her family was officially completed on Aug. 26 with a house blessing. Others who partnered with AFWH to help complete the more than year-long project were World Renew Inc., Venice Park UMC in Atlantic City and The Salvation Army. The Daniel home was the 160th out of 178 homes rebuilt by AFWH by the end of August.

"When any project is complete, there is of course a sense of relief and gratitude and usually a sense of satisfaction," said AFWH construction foreman Jim Watson. "With this house in particular, it was a lengthy project and the family was so gracious and kind for being out of their home as long as they were. It's

"My mom has worked all of her life and never asked anybody for anything. But the one time she needed it, you came."

a testament to who they are as people. It's especially gratifying this time because they were so grateful and understanding every step of the way."

That understanding was helped partly because of the trust that the Daniels' had in A Future With Hope's case manager Shawn Dickerson. It turns out, Damita Daniel and Dickerson grew up in the same neighborhood.

"I remember when she first came up to the house, but I couldn't see her very good and I was just looking at her," Daniel said. "Then I saw it was Shawnie. I grew up with her. I said God is sitting right here."

The faith of Daniel and her family was evident throughout the process, said AFWH case manager Jay Tunnicliffe, who also worked with the family.

"The biggest thing I learned in this specific case is that we are not necessarily the ones who give hope," he said. "Sometimes the homeowners give us hope."

"Every time I called with news of some type of difficult hiccup, they maintained their patience and faith. It does prove that everything, in time, does work together for God's glory."

Daniel says, too, that working with AFWH certainly strengthened her faith. "I lost a 30 year job, but I feel more at peace now than when I went to work



Photo by Andrew Ryoo

Damisha (left) and Damita Daniel take communion during their A Future With Hope house blessing in Atlantic City on Aug. 26.

because I know I can make it now," she said.

Daniel's daughter, Damisha, pointed out that her mom has always found a way to make ends meet without outside assistance, but that was not possible when dealing with such significant dam-

age from Superstorm Sandy.

"I want to thank you for everything you've done," Damisha Daniel said at the house blessing.

"My mom has worked all of her life and never asked anybody for anything. But the one time she needed it, you came."

CCONAM Sponsors Carlisle Trip

By Cynthia Mosley

Cmosley19@hotmail.com

The Greater New Jersey Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CCONAM) sponsored a trip to Carlisle, Pa., for Lenni Lenape Tribal members and others in June. In all, 45 people who wanted to understand more about forced boarding school, a disrespectful and unhappy part of American history from 1879-1918, went on the trip.

According to history shared by the tour's guide, European settlers and the United States government were distrustful of the indigenous tribes and followed a philosophy of "assimilation or extermination."

Native American children were removed from their culture and families and housed in forced boarding schools until the so called assimilation was thought to be complete. The Carlisle School is one such location and the closest one to New Jersey. This school is now the United States Army War College where upper level military personnel from all over the world are educated in the tactics of war.

Remnants from the old boarding school remain. A museum inside the building includes information about the boarding school days. Native American children are photographed in gray flannel uniforms with their braids and dark hair shorn. The museum also highlights the school's most famous graduate Jim Thorpe, a Sac and Fox member from Prague, Okla. The fitness center was named for this former Olympian, famous for his prowess in football, track and field, and baseball.



Photo Provided

CCONAM's trip to the site of the Carlisle Indian School ended with a tour of the cemetery where Native American children who died while at the school were buried.

At the tour's close, a guide directed the tour members to a cemetery where children who did not survive the boarding school experience were buried. Most of the children were less than 10 years old and died without their families' prayers and support.

Can that kind of loss ever be remembered without tears?

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey held a Native American Witness and Acts of Repentance Service at its 2014 Annual Conference because of those type of acts that occurred.

All of the travelers thanked CCONAM for the opportunity to learn more about this sad time in the history of the United States. Members of CCONAM and others continue to pray that never again will man and a culture face extinction at the hand of his brother.

Anyone interested in visiting the Carlisle Indian School or the Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Cultural Center should contact Cynthia Kent at njcyndi@live.com or Cynthia Mosley cmosley19@hotmail.com.

A FUTURE WITH
HOPE
The People of the United Methodist Church

Magazine Features AFWH

Continued from page 2

Mike: What sorts of problems do you typically see in damaged homes?

Lou: Sandy blew roofs off. It blew windows in. Water damage is a primary problem and that water damage can cause cast iron pipes for the sewer to crack. It can cause shifting of the foundations. It can cause electrical issues. It can cause shifting of the support columns and beams within the crawl spaces and basements. We have a multitude of problems so our approach has been more holistic.

Carolyn: A Future With Hope is the most robust recovery organization in the state of New Jersey. As the years have gone by and we're nearing the three-year mark, Sandy, the effects of Sandy and Sandy Recovery are out of the news cycle. So people around the country, people around the state are not familiar with the need that still exists. We have an estimated 10,000 families in New Jersey alone that are still not in their homes after the storm. Our job is to stay on the ground until recovery is complete.

Mike: If they're not in their homes, where are they?

Carolyn: On relatives' couches, on the second floor of their homes. People live in damaged homes, apartments and motels. They are struggling. Some are paying rent and a mortgage. They are in a downward spiral of debt because their recovery needs are so great.

Lou: We recently welcomed our 10,000th volunteer. They all feel they get blessed more than they give, and be the hands and feet of Christ.

Carolyn: That's how I feel—I used to have a job and a career and now I have a mission.

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS



Photo By Susan Rapp

During the First UMC of Moorestown's 200th History Night, Bertha Bendel, who has been a member at Moorestown since 1935, discusses early pastors and parishoners she has known.

Bishop Schol to speak at First UMC Moorestown's 200th anniversary

First United Methodist Church of Moorestown has spent the better part of 2015 celebrating its 200th anniversary. Founded Aug., 21, 1815, the church has grown from a few members at an early brick meeting house to 979 members, who worship today at the church's fourth location. The celebration will include a Sept. 13 service with Bishop John Schol preaching. The church's celebration theme has been "200 years of faith, hope, love and charity." According to membership records, Frances Duffner, who lives in Moorestown, joined the church in 1928 and is the longest tenured church member. In 1815, the church was incorporated as the Moorestown Methodist Meeting House and was later built on land secured from one of the trustees. In the early years, the church had about 50 members, according to an article in the Moorestown paper about the church's 135th anniversary. The next church building, also located in downtown Moorestown, was dedicated in 1860 and remodeled and expanded in 1901. In the 1950s, the church relocated to the western end of Moorestown, where members worshipped in what today is its Fellowship Hall, until the current sanctuary was completed in 1967. A music building and educational wing were completed in late 2003. For more about the history, visit: www.meetwithgod.com/news-events/200-year-anniversary-celebration.

Church and Society Training: Racial Justice and White Privilege

Learn productive ways to discuss hot button issues with your church. GNJ's Board of Church and Society is hosting training focusing on helping church leaders facilitate discussions about difficult social justice topics. United Methodist Women Executive Secretaries Janis Rosheuvel and Mollie Vickery will lead a discussion on Racial Justice and White Privilege. The training will be held on Saturday, Sept. 26, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. John's UMC (2000 Florence Avenue, Hazlet, NJ 07730). The registration fee is \$10 per person. To register or learn more, contact Rev. Jonathan Campbell at pastorjcampbell@hotmail.com or 845-893-9157.

Christian College Fair Set for Aldersgate UMC in East Brunswick

Are you interested to learn about what Christian colleges have to offer? More than 30 Christian colleges will be on hand for the Christian College Fair hosted by Aldersgate UMC in East Brunswick from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15. For more information, go to <http://myblueprintstory.com/>.

Three Dates Announced For Early Response Team Training

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey has trained more than 300 people to become Early Response Team members. Current members must recertify every three years and more members are welcome. The training dates and places this year are Saturday, Sept. 26 at Richwood UMC, Saturday, Oct. 24 at Delran UMC and Saturday, Dec. 5 at Cokesbury UMC in Lebanon, N.J. The cost is \$25 per person for new ERTs and \$15 for refresher ERTs (please bring your training manual). Class for new ERTs is from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and refresher ERT training is from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Classes are taught by authorized UMCOR trainers, and team members are given ID badges as evidence of training, after background checks. Information regarding a background check is needed and a photo will be taken at the class for the ID card. For more information contact Disaster ERT Coordinator, UMCOR Authorized Instructor Carol Brozosky at carol@EHSprogress.com.

Boonton UMC Giving Away Robes

Boonton United Methodist Church has extra robes that it is giving away. The church has eight burgandy robes in teenage sizes, five blue robes in youth sizes and the stoles have the Methodist cross and flame embossed on them. For more information contact, 973-334-8275.

UMC at Newfoundland Sponsors Klothes For Kids Drive

The United Methodist Church at Newfoundland sponsored "Klothes for Kids" in June and provided hundreds of new items of clothing donated by Carter's and Gymboree to local families. One grateful recipient's thank you note stated: "Some of the clothes you donated are now helping a young, single mother with limited family support, as she struggles to raise two young girls under age 3 on her own. Your help is much appreciated."



Pictured are Klothes for Kids organizer Carlla Horton, Lay Leader at the UMC at Newfoundland, with volunteers Sean Pomeroy, Eleanor Keating, Maureen Quinones, Danielle Bonann, Alice Bresett, Laurna Townsend and Michelle Dale.

STEWARDSHIP STORIES

by Rich Hendrickson, Director of Stewardship & Visioning

What A Privilege It Is To Give!



Recently I had the opportunity to work at an *A Future With Hope* work site. It was hot, sweaty, dirty, dusty work and it was great! The feeling of helping a family get closer to moving home after being displaced for so long after Sandy far outweighed any discomfort that might have been mine during the actual work. I've also been able to help friends who have

been struggling financially. I've spent a great deal of my time off working with them, helping them look at their expenses, income, and develop a strategy to address their financial situation. I would not trade those hours for anything as I've been blessed to be a part of their moving from desperation to hope.

In the same way I've been reflecting on all the awesome, life-changing ministry I and my family have been a part of over the years simply because we've been invited to share our financial resources in ways and places that have deeply impacted the lives of others. We've helped build a church in North Katanga, Africa, end suffering and death from malaria on the continent of Africa, rebuild homes after Sandy, the earthquake in Haiti, the tsunami in the Far East, and made an impact in the churches and communities we've served simply by giving.

What a blessing, opportunity, and awesome feeling it is to give to God's work in the world; to give so that others might be blessed, and to give as an expression of love and gratitude to God.

What a privilege it is to give. I highly recommend it!

OBITUARIES

Naomi L. Costello, lay member of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference died on April 11. A viewing was held on April 18.

Memorial Donations may be sent to: Margate Trinity UMC at 8 S. Jefferson Ave. Margate City, NJ 08402.

Rev. Harold P. Johnson, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference died on August 15.

Expressions of Sympathy may be sent to: Mrs. Ethel Johnson at P.O. Box 1071, Penney Farms, FL 32079.

Reginald Crute, spouse of Full Elder Hillary Johnson Crute, died on Saturday, August 22. Viewings were held on Aug. 26 and Aug. 27. The funeral service was held on Aug. 27.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to: Rev. Hillary Johnson Crute at Trinity United Methodist Church, 70 Manalapan Road, Spotswood, NJ, 08884.

Rev. George C. Schlesinger and spouse Maxine Schlesinger, each died on Aug. 4. There was viewing held for each on Aug. 9 and a funeral service on Aug. 10.

Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers) may be sent to: Memorial Fund, First UMC, 129 Chestnut Street, Toms River, NJ 08753; Meals on Wheels of Ocean County, 225 Fourth Street, Lakewood, NJ 08701; Monmouth County SPCA, 260 Wall Street, Eatontown, NJ 07724.

Expressions of Sympathy may be sent to: Ivy Kim (daughter), address: 531 Longstreet Ave., Brielle, NJ 08730

Rev. Dr. Robert D. Simpson, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference died on Thursday, Aug. 6. A memorial service will be held at 7 p.m. on Oct. 16, 2015 at Chatham UMC, 460 Main Street, Chatham, NJ 07928.

Expressions of Sympathy may be sent to: The family at www.bradleyfuneralhomes.com.

Wesley UMC in South Plainfield is seeking a part-time Young Adult Coordinator and a part-time Bell Choir Director.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Email dewalter12@verizon.net or call 908.757.5290

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

MAY 22-24

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

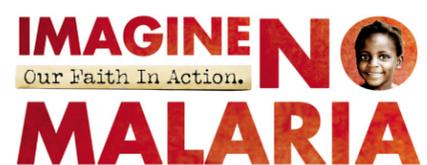
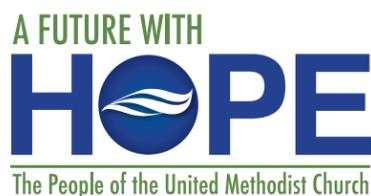
Beginning in 2016, annual conferences will begin on Sunday evenings and last through Tuesday. The dates are May 22-24, 2016; May 21-23, 2017; and May 20 - 22, 2018.



A MOSQUITO BITE CAN KILL

More than 450,000 children under the age of 5 die in Africa from malaria each year. These children do not have to suffer and die. Malaria is preventable. The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey has partnered with Imagine No Malaria to help prevent this terrible disease.

**HAVE YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION JOINED
OUR CAMPAIGN TO SAVE LIVES?**



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