Home from Haiti, Trinity Mission Team Vows to Return

HACKETTSTOWN — It was a joyous reunion, tempered by the enormity of the destruction and the sadness of unspeakable tragedy they had left behind, when the Mission Team of Trinity United Methodist Church arrived home from Haiti to be greeted by a candlelight welcome at 3:30 a.m. January 15.

For the 15 missioners, led by their pastor, the Rev. Frank Fowler, the homecoming was an Easter morning after a painful climb along the Via Della Rosa and their own stark vision of Calvary. For the crowd of parishioners who had kept vigil through the night, it was mingled gratitude and relief after days of fearful waiting and prayer.

The mission team had left for the impoverished island republic less than a week before, laden with 30 suitcases containing medical supplies, and some money for Haitian partners – a hospital, a clinic, an orphanage.

Their first mission partner was Grace Children’s Hospital where they presented a portion of their goods as well as generous helpings of love in the form of a hug for the young patients. Then, on Tuesday January 12, on to the Orphanage outside Port au Prince where they were to stay for a time.

While half of the missioners played with children inside the building, and the other half joined an impromptu soccer game in the courtyard of the orphanage, they felt the earth move beneath them. Before the shaking had ceased, the city and the nation were devastated, and every member of the Trinity team, though safe, had been profoundly touched.

A Surreal Experience

For Ginny Thorp, on her first mission trip, the "earthquake was a surreal experience." "The realization of the scope of the earthquake I think first hit me," she said, "when we heard the sounds of crying and screaming coming from the town and we realized that those were human voices crying out. That is a haunting sound."

And the haunting sound continued. It would be 19 hours before Dr. Fowler was able to reach the church with a borrowed satellite phone from CNN with the words, "We’re OK."

"His voice was very shaky," parishioner Bill Anzel, answering phones at CNN with the words, "We’re OK." Fowler was able to reach the church with the team awaiting their turn on an outgoing flight, Dr. Fowler was able to make his call home.

From there, a short flight to the Bahamas, an overnight stay, and the flight to JFK in New York, where they were met by family members in a shuttle bus to whisk them back to Hackettstown for

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES... Only 24 little hours separate the events depicted in these scenes from Haiti. Above, Dan Chamberlin, a member of the Trinity (Hackettstown) mission team, comforts a child at the Grace Children’s Hospital in Port au Prince. Dan was one of 15 members of the team that visited the impoverished island to bring the love of Christ in the form of medical supplies, Christian witness, and lots of TLC. Barely a day later, Dan removes the scattered possessions of team members from the guest house where they were staying, following the 7.0 earthquake that leveled much of the Haitian capital and cut a broad swath of death and destruction. Now home, the mission team vows they will return.

A UMNS Report

UMCOR Joins On-the-ground Relief for Haiti

by Linda Bloom

The United Methodist Committee on Relief and a host of other faith-based groups are on the ground in Haiti as they determine how to assist earthquake survivors.

With more than $2 million in donations received by January 20, and receipts from January 21 services not yet counted, UMCOR already has provided emergency grants to the Methodist Church of Haiti and GlobalMedic, a Canadian relief agency, to address immediate needs.

An assessment team led by UMCOR’s Melissa Crutchfield was gathering in the Dominican Republic January 20 and preparing to enter Haiti. She is accompanied by five others with the relief agency, the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Communications.

Other United Methodist-supported organizations, including Church World Service, Action By Churches Together International and Stop Hunger Now, also are responding with aid.

Paul Jeffrey, a United Methodist photojournalist and missionary on assignment with ACT, watched a Mexican rescue team free Anna Zai from the home of the parish priest at Port-au-Prince’s Roman Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption.

(Continued on page 5)
Dear Martin:

What a difference a year makes! Last year, I wrote with great exuberance about the election of the first African American to the presidency of the United States. Today, I am no less excited, because it demonstrated a significant step forward in our nation’s history.

However, some pundits have wrongly hailed the election as ushering in a post-racial era! Events of the past year have dispelled that premature prediction.

Martin, we have been sadly reminded of the depth of prejudice in the hearts and minds of many as the new president has taken office.

Let me quickly acknowledge that not all criticism of the President or any person of color is automatically based on race. I well remember the day I realized some people did not like me, not because I was black, but because I was! But we have seen the awful face of racism so long that no matter how it camouflages itself, is it when we see it! We have seen it these past few months, and it is no less ugly.

Yet Martin, it is the face of a passing America. However loudly the voices shout and however strong they may appear, it is a last gasp! Most Americans are prepared to live in and work for a nation about the kind of racial division that characterized our country so long.

At the same time, it is clear that the battle to end racial division in our nation is not yet over. We still have much work to do to replace walls of separation and prejudice with communities of love and justice.

Too many people still are racially divisive. They exploit division, foster it and profit from it, some for political gain, others for personal and financial reward — and they come in all colors!

And sadly, the seeds of racial prejudice have been planted so deeply in some that though it may seem dormant, it latches little to stir these people to act in hateful ways. So we must continue with efforts to heal our brokenness, to bring clarity to misunderstandings and to address our fears.

Good people can never remain silent in the face of evil. History has taught us too well what happens when they do.

It would be misleading on this, the anniversary of your birth, to give the impression that progress in the area of race has stalled. It has not. Every day, new doors open, old barriers fall, and hands and hearts reach across the racial divide. But it is not enough.

The reality is that walls that come down can be rebuilt. Old hatreds can be rekindled. That’s the problem with celebrating achievements too long and too quickly. Progress is never permanent. We need to continually nurture the good and challenge those elements committed to fostering ill will and division.

One of the most meaningful signs this year, Martin, was the nomination and confirmation of Judge Sonia Sotomayor of New York as the first Hispanic justice to the Supreme Court. The daughter of Puerto Rican parents, Judge Sotomayor has a distinguished career and will bring broad legal experience.

Permit me a bit of personal pride, Martin — we both graduated from Princeton! Permit me a bit of personal pride, Martin — we both graduated from Princeton!

And I dare not forget U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is now the first African American to hold that office. Such “firsts” are becoming so routine, Martin, that they now gain little or no public recognition!

Martin, nothing has brought me more personal joy, than the honor that came to our buddy, Joe Lowery, who continues to be an influential voice for social justice and human rights. He was chosen to give the benediction at the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States. And it was a stirring one! Then on Aug. 12, he received the prestigious Presidential Medal of Freedom Award, the highest recognition the nation can bestow upon a civilian!

At the heart of the dream, you shared that August day back in 1963 in Washington, D.C., was a society in which people would be “judged on the content of their character and not the color of their skin.”

You told us, “It was rooted in the American dream.” And so it is “One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

We shall overcome!

(Woodie (Retired Bishop Woodie White is Bishop-in-Residence, Candler School of Theology, Atlanta.)
The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits is sponsoring three information sessions for the new HealthFlex insurance plan that becomes effective on March 1 for all Conference Health Insurance Plan participants.

Each will have a session for active clergy from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, a session for retired clergy from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

HealthFlex is administered by the UM General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits in Evanston, IL and will be providing a representative at each session. The Conference BOPHB and staff in attendance will have copies of the revised Conference Health Benefits Book for members and will be available to answer questions January 1, 2010 available as well.

Please call Barbara Gruzieke, Insurance Coordinator for the GNJ Conference, with any questions regarding the new HealthFlex program. Her phone number is 1-877-677-2594, ext. 1037 or bgruzke@gnjumc.org.

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Bishop Extends Terms for DS Ahn and Rodeffer

OCEAN — In a late December letter to clergy and lay members of the conference, Bishop Sudarshan Devadhar announced the extension of the appointments of two district superintendents whose six-year term would be coming to an end in June.

“After much prayer and discernment, and following the consultation process required by The 2008 Book of Disciplines, I am extending the appointment as District Superintendent of the Rev. Sung Hoon Ahn and the Rev. Vivian L. Rodeffer. Though the Discipline sets the term for district superintendent at six years, it provides for an extension of up to eight years at the discretion of the bishop and cabinet.

Ms. Rodeffer is superintendent of the Gateway South District, Mr. Ahn presides over the Palisades District. Both came to their present positions from distinguished service as pastors of local churches.

“For the past six years, both of them have been ministering faithfully and joyfully...”. Bishop Devadhar wrote in his letter to the conference. “They are valued members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Cabinet. They are deeply committed to making disciples for Jesus Christ and to the strengthening of the connection in the United Methodist Church.”

The Bishop appealed to his readers to keep the “cabinet, extended cabinet, staff, support staff, bishop, and us in your prayers as we try our best to demonstrate the servant ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with you.”

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Rethink Church Offers a Lenten ‘Journey of Hope’

“Journey of Hope,” a series of Lenten sermon starters, will be available to local churches and pastors through Rethink Church, the United Methodist media and messaging campaign aimed at seekers.

A Journey of Hope begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17, with an invitation to travel with Jesus to the cross. As participants encounter real life issues along the way, they will see how God’s love is sometimes found in the darkness and that hope can be found even in the most unlikely places.

Social media suggestions are provided to engage each congregation prior to the message, affording opportunity for reflection afterward. Props, especially helpful to visual learners, will add another dimension to the series. Free-downloadable UMTV video stories illustrate how United Methodists are finding and sharing hope around the world, and hope will be extended beyond the walls through experiences shared through Facebook, Twitter, blogs, short videos and personal testimonies.

“This Lenten season, take a journey to hope and share that hope with the world,” invites the Rethink Church campaign.

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Financial Seminars for Clergy Nearing Retirement

A Financial Security Seminar, March 4, at the same location, is designed to assist clergy more than five years from retirement and will focus on financial planning for future needs. Registration forms and directions may be downloaded from the GNJ website under Finance & Admin/Pension/Retirement/Clergy Retirement Seminars.

Retirement plans for clergy in thefall of 2010. A seminar to help members plan for retirement in the next five years and will include a speaker from the Social Security Administration addressing the issues of Social Security and Medicare.

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Tex Sample to lead Discipleship Workshop in Ewing April 16-17

Ewing — United Methodist theologian, ethicist, sociologist of religion and master storyteller Tex Sample will lead a two-day workshop on the theme “The Craft of Discipleship” at the College of New Jersey, April 16-17.

Students at the College of New Jersey and Rider College may participate in the event free of charge. Dr. Sample, a native of Brookhaven, Miss., received his B.A. degree from United Methodist-related Millsaps College with a major in psychology. He received his M.Div. from the Boston School of Theology and his Ph.D. from the Boston University Graduate School. While a graduate student, he was a Fellow in the Boston University Human Relations Center.

In 1999 he was named Distinguished Alumnus of Boston University School of Theology. He received the D.D. degree from Coe College in 2003. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, he is a member of the Missouri Conference. He served as a delegate to the General Conference on four occasions and to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference five times.

Over the course of his life Dr. Sample has worked as a cab driver, a laborer, and a roustabout in the oil fields. In addition, he pastored churches for eight years and served three years as the director of Social Relations of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. In this last capacity he was lobbyist for the Council and worked actively in the civil rights and peace movements.

At Saint Paul School of Theology he served as Acting Academic Director during 1987-88. He is the recipient of many awards for his work in promoting justice issues.

Academically, Dr. Sample works and teaches in the areas of U.S. lifestyle and culture, social theory and social change, power, social class and theological ethics. He is a specialist in the study of blue collar and poor people. Sample has authored nine books and co-edited another. He is a member of the Society of Christian Ethics and a fellow of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

In Phoenix, Arizona, where the
**The Bishop’s Message**

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As we start our Lenten journey this month, may I place before you a quotation by Thomas Porter: “The last Supper is a meal in the midst of conflict with Jesus naming the conflicts in the room, and then gives bread, the gift of forgiveness, not a stone, or retribution, or punishment. In remembering this living reality, we are called to re-member or re-frame our world and our own actions so that we do likewise” (Thomas W. Porter, The Last Supper: Naming the Conflicts and Giving Bread and Wine, in Conflict and Communio: Reconciliation and Restorative Justice at Christ Church’s Table, Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2006, p.18).

May I suggest that you reflect upon this statement as a part of your Lenten journey? Many a time in our Christian journey, whenever there is a conflict, we tend to postpone talking about it, thus causing more conflict. May we take time to approach the person or persons with whom we may have conflict and attempt to resolve that conflict by seeking genuine forgiveness and reconciliation? Also, may we seek God’s power and grace to grant us the courage to name all kinds of conflict that may surround us.

Imagine if every Christian in our world did this exercise faithfully. Imagine if in every church we did this faithfully on a regular basis. Imagine if we took time to model the servant leadership demonstrated by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What if we all attempted to take a basin of water and a towel and were to wash the feet of a lot of others? What if, “Jesus, Jesus, fill us with your love, show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you...” became a prayer, a song, an action, and a deed of each and every one of us? (The United Methodist Hymnal, Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989).

During Lent on a regular basis, may we say the prayer found in the lyrics of “For Courage to Do Justice” by Alan Paton, in our hymnal:

> “O Lord, 
> Open my eyes that I may see the needs of others; 
> Open my ears that I may hear their cries; 
> Open my heart so that they need not be without succor; 
> Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich. 
> Show me where love and hope and faith are needed, 
> And use me to bring them to those places. 
> And so open my eyes and my ears 
> That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.”

May we all hope and pray for a powerful and spiritually blessed Lenten journey.

In Christ’s love,

**Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar**

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**Former head of mission board dies at 92**

NEW YORK — The Rev. Tracey K. Jones Jr., 92, former top executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries from 1968-1980, died Dec. 16. Jones, son of YMCA missionaries, grew up in Canton, China. He served as vice president of the World Council of Churches and led delegations of church leaders to Vietnam in 1968 and to the Middle East in 1980. He was a missionary in China and Singapore. After his retirement, he served as professor at Drew Theological Seminary and was active in Habitat for Humanity, Hospice, Resurrection House and his church in Sarasota, Fla.

**Drew offers Museum of Mysticism**

MADISON — A treasure trove of United Methodist history can be found on the campus of Drew University. On display are one-of-a-kind artifacts like a death mask of John Wesley and the original Enoch Wood bust commissioned during Wesley’s lifetime. Audio and video clips and rare documents also make up “the largest collection of United Methodist history in the world.” The “Museum of Mysticism” is available to view at http://www.umtv.org/archives/museum_of_mysticism.htm.

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**The March Issue Deadline is February 8, 2010**

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**Global Report**

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

**Time critical for peace in Middle East, UM Bishop declares**

NASHVILLE — Time may be running out to reach a peaceful settlement between Israel and Palestine, Methodist leaders said, warning that a world without a delegation of Christians, Jews and Muslims visiting the Middle East “People of faith must stand up for what is right and they must become more than observers and more than bystanders. They must be leaders and promote peace for the sake of the people of the Middle East.”

**Hanke named top executive of United Methodist Men**

NASHVILLE — The United Methodist Church needs men, and men need a spiritual home. The challenge is bringing the two together, said Gilbert C. Hanke, new top executive for the Commission on United Methodist Men. Hanke, 59, becomes top staff executive of the agency Feb. 1. “Men are searching for someone to trust and to share their pain and to share their challenges,” he said. “The United Methodist Church is uniquely equipped to help men because of that wonderful balance between personal and spiritual piety, as John Wesley calls it. We are always growing and understanding our relationship to Jesus Christ.”

**Widows rebuilding lives at Mozambique home**

MASSINGA, Mozambique — Some of the widows were run out of town as their neighbors three stories above. Others, considered too great a financial burden, were left on the side of the road to die. Still other widows were branded as “witches,” and deserted by their children. These are the stories of 26 women who are rebuilding their lives “amidst great care and suffering.” The lives of the widows in Massinga have become a haven for widows abandoned by their families and threatened by neighbors as being “bad luck,” or costing too much to support. Says the Rev. Vicente Mendes, executive director of women’s work in the Mozambique South Annual Conference:

*United Methodist initiatives boost clergy health*

NASHVILLE — God had to break his heart before Bishop James Swanson started running. “Serious health concerns” resulted in Swanson losing 30 pounds, turning him into a man who walks three times a week, eats more leafy vegetables, drinks more water and consumes three servings of dairy products a day. Swanson is one of many spiritual leaders leading healthier lives because of new United Methodist clergy health initiatives ranging from in-depth studies to a reward program for physical activity.

**Mission volunteer ‘blessed to be a disciple’**

SAN DIEGO — What inspired that simple talk we have come to call the “Great Commission,” missionary kid Carol Conger-Cross got the message. For the past 16 years, she has trekked to Guatemala twice a year to be the hands and feet of Jesus in that country. Whether by building a home, teaching English, or building or remodeling churches, clinics and schools or installing energy-efficient stoves, they discover serving in mission is “a powerful, often transforming experience (that) has a major impact on people’s perceptions of themselves and the world.”

**UMCOR assists victims of typhoon in Vietnam**

NEW YORK — The United Methodist Committee on Relief is assisting victims of Typhoon Ketsana, currently in the Philippines as Typhoon Parma approaches. The typhoon, which swept through the Philippines Oct. 15, caused severe damage and left more than 300,000 homes in Vietnam in late September. More than 356,000 people have been evacuated from their homes. UMCOR is working with Bring Hope to Vietnam’s Typhoon- and Flood Victims, a program of the Vietnam Mission Initiative, to provide food, relief and material goods to 1,000 people who have lost homes, crops and sources of income. Donations to the Vietnam relief work may be made through UMCOR’s international response.

**Blanks, health kits being distributed along border**

NEW YORK (UMNS) — The United Methodist Committee on Relief is providing 10,000 warm winter blankets and health kits to immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexican border at six different relief points through the Methodist Border Mission Network. The network is a cooperative ministry of the denomination’s U.S. annual (regional) conferences in the border area and the Methodist Church of Mexico. Donation information is available online at http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations/umcor/donate.cfm?code=901670&dt=3018992.

**Carcano keynote speaker at national immigration event**

WASHINGTON — Bishop Minerva Carcano will be among the keynote speakers at the 2010 San Antonion Conference Day on March 19-22. Theme of the event is “A Place to Call Home: Immigrants, Refugees, and Displaced Peoples.” Carcano, chair of the United Methodist Taskforce on Immigration, is the episcopal leader of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference, which covers portions of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and small portions of California and Utah. Other keynote speakers will be the Rev. Sharon Watkins, general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Sister Helen Prejean, Roman Catholic nun and anti-death penalty activist. For more information, visit www.umtv.org/archives/ecumenical_aday_2010.cfm.

**Climate inaction a danger, United Methodist say**

NEW YORK — Someday soon, Tupou Keleimeni fears, her ancestral home could be underwater. “Our island communities are already experiencing the threat of climate change.”

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**Porter: “The last Supper is a meal in the midst of conflict with Jesus naming the conflicts in the room, and then gives bread, the gift of forgiveness, not a stone, or retribution, or punishment. In remembering this living reality, we are called to re-member or re-frame our world and our own actions so that we do likewise”**
IN HAPPIER MOMENTS before the 7.0 earthquake devastated Haiti, January 12, Erika Patty, one of two participants in the Trinity mission team, cuddles a smiling child at the Grace Children’s Hospital.

- to help travelers grow in their spiritual journey:

- we never knew what special tasks God may place before us. I have known for some time that I am a voice for the group in her own very personal way. Their journey was cut short, the Trinity team is undaunted in their commitment to their mission. A Continuing Witness Ginny Thomas expressed with the mingled feelings of fulfillment beyond the frustration she and other team members had experienced.

The main feeling in the aftermath of the earthquake was one of gratitude that we were all ok and that we were able to be there to hold and comfort the orphans as well,” she said. “There would have been far less hands able to hold them if we hadn’t been there.”

Pastor Fowler said it another way. “After 30 years of traveling to Haiti I am well aware of the suffering of God’s people there. This further devastation demands that the world offer a sustained and committed hand to the wonderful people of Haiti, that they find a way to rebuild their homes and their lives.”

But it was Suzanne Buchanan, a second-time traveler to Haiti who spoke for the group in her own very personal witness to the experience. “I never knew what special tasks God may place before us. I have known for some time that I am a voice for the people of Haiti. More, now than ever, I must make sure that their voices are heard. I stood in a field on the day that the earthquake struck, I can still see the house that I was in and now my work begins. I am one small voice but I can be heard by thousands and for that I am very thankful.”
There was Camel-Lot, at First Church, Vineland, which began the year singing, dancing and acting in a musical comedy about a used camel salesman who sold the beasts of burden at the time of Jesus’ birth. The dramatic context of the story of “Camel-Lot” was actually a little girl’s dream. The play invited the audience to laugh and be entertained while remembering that Christmas is about the birth of our Savior, Jesus, the Son of God. Patricia Cummines, the church’s music director and her husband, Richard Cummines, produced the show with lots of support from the cast and crew, members of the children’s choir and the Cathedral Choir. Pastor Jeanette Block gave the benediction, with its implied warning, “Don’t let it be forgot” that “there’s simply not a more congenial spot for happily-ever-aftering” than Camel-Lot.

A pig and a chicken were walking by a church where a charity event was taking place. Getting caught up in the atmosphere, the pig suggested to the chicken that they make an offering. “Great idea,” said the chicken. “Let’s offer them ham and eggs!” “Not so fast,” said the pig. “For you, that’s a donation. For me it’s a sacrifice!” I think it would be fair to say that most of the offerings our churches receive during the worship service are, for some, merely a donation, and for others, a heartfelt sacrifice. For still others, it’s somewhere in between.

Annual stewardship campaigns have taken on many forms and many names over the years. I’ve been involved in a pledge drive, an every member canvas, Loyalty Sunday, Consecration Sunday, and much too often the annual “begging” campaign.

Whatever you currently call your annual campaign I want to challenge you and encourage you to begin to think in terms of holding an annual COMMITMENT Campaign.

Dr. Wayne Barrett, Executive Director of the UM Foundation of Western Michigan and the Detroit Annual Conferences, says that “the point of any annual stewardship campaign is to encourage financial commitments.” He goes on to say that “if you describe the campaign as a means to finance the budget, you will ruin it.”

Herb Miller, in his Consecration Sunday Program, says that as followers of Jesus Christ our need to give in response to God’s gift of Jesus Christ far outweighs the church’s need to receive.

As church leaders, both clergy and laity, I would encourage you to preach, teach, and model financial commitment in your local church. I would also encourage you to create the kind of atmosphere and message in your local church where all God’s people are invited to give generously to God through the church.

Please contact my office if I can be of assistance.
Delran Church Opens Doors to HS Homecoming Float-makers

10,000 Doors — Only 9,992 to go
Door Opener No. 8

Homecoming is a big deal at the high school in Delran every year. Each high school class develops a float for the homecoming parade, much as it's been done in American towns for decades. It's a very positive experience. However, the actual process of assembling the floats in various locales around the community had frequently ended up in not so positive experiences. So when the request came from the Freshman Class to use the First United Methodist Church as the location to assemble its float, it was met with a less than enthusiastic response. The truth is, the class had been to every other organization with a large enough area and had been turned down by them all.

Delran Pastor Chris Miller took the request to George Weissgerber, Jr., the Board of Trustees president and they began to investigate. "We had a member of our church who is on staff at the high school call us," Pastor Miller relates, "and warn us because of past history with homecoming float preparation. We had members of the Board of Trustees who had children in high school who said we would be crazy if we did it. They reminded us that the Police in town actually step up patrols during this preparation week because of the chaos that often arises at the locations where the floats are being assembled. I even had a police officer who has been attending our church sporadically, give me his cell phone number "just in case."

Mr. Weissgerber, however, performed what Pastor Miller described as "an underhanded act." "He used my words against me. Every Sunday during my benediction, I close by challenging the congregation to "go and do something risky for God." He said to me, "Isn't this the kind of thing you are talking about?" At that point it was clear that the Freshmen were coming. The trustees approved the use of the fellowship hall (SonShine Hall) for the week and a half before homecoming and the church hosted more than 100 kids along with some parents and school staff working on what turned out to be a beautiful homecoming float.

"Our Youth Director, Phil Gorog, even came up with the idea of buying pizza for the kids one night," reported Pastor Miller, "and then a case of cookies and drinks for another night which he selflessly took out of his limited Youth Group Budget." Gorog explains the act by saying, "the parents were thrilled and somewhat flabbergasted noting the church had already done its part by making the space available." That gave Gorog the chance to say to them, "That we are grateful for what God has done for us so we are happy to do something for you."

The church's open door policy did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Pastor Miller and the church staff received a number of letters of appreciation from students and parents.

"We have difficulty getting into the closed circumstance that is the high school," observes the youth leader, "this was a great chance to get them to come to us." When you open up one of those 10 thousand doors we've been talking about, you never know what may float in or out.

What about Health Care Reform?
Leonia Church Asks its Congressman

LEONIA — "How can we help our congregation understand Health Care Reform?" That's the question the Leonia congregation asked itself recently. A speaker? A panel discussion? A group study? The issue is very complex.

Instead of the varied options, they decided on a novel approach. They would ask members to submit questions they had about health care reform. In turn, these questions would be forwarded to their representatives in Washington, asking them for their answers.

Some questions were specific: "How much money does the taxpayer currently spend on medicine for the uninsured?" Other questions were general, such as "What are the reasons we in the United States don't have a better health care plan?"

"Imagine our delight when Congressman Steve Rothman responded with a five and a half page letter, answering each question in detail," writes Leonia's Ellie Spiegel. "It was extremely enlightening and helpful."

Rothman (D) represents the Ninth Congressional District, covering the southern tier of Bergen County and including the borough of Leonia.

The letter was circulated to the congregation and is now the basis for conversations about health care Reform. In response to the final question about our Christian responsibility for others, whether legal or illegal, Congressman Rothman answered:

"As a member of the Jewish faith, I strongly believe that ensuring access to affordable quality health care is consistent with Judeo-Christian values... We have a moral obligation to address the issue... This moment presents an historic opportunity for America to reaffirm the greatness of our national character."

Ms. Spiegel believes that this model for church involvement in current issues is one that other churches might follow.

"We thought readers of the Relay would be interested in action members of the Leonia Church took regarding the issue of health care reform. Our members were confused about the various proposals. We were interested in helping people understand the various issues raised, and not in presenting one position and so we developed the strategy. We thought other congregations would be interested in this approach."

The United Methodist Foundation of Greater New Jersey seeks to strengthen Church ministries, create new disciples for Jesus Christ, and supports the United Methodist connection by preserving and growing United Methodist ministries through the creation and administration of endowment funds.
UMCOR responds to Haiti emergency

UMCOR is encouraging church members to collect health kits for distribution in Haiti. The kits, valued at about $12 per kit, contain everything from towels and toilet paper to toothbrushes and toothpaste. The kits are being sent to UMCOR’s two relief supply warehouses in Salt Lake City and Baldwin, Louisiana.

Food Aid Flown In

A plane loaded with 80,000 pounds of water, medicine and medical supplies organized by Stop Hunger Now is being distributed in Haiti. The supplies are being sent to UMCOR’s two supply depots – Sager Brown in Baldwin, Louisiana, and UMCOR West in Salt Lake City – as well as other church-owned regional warehouses.

Roadmap to Renewal: Rediscovering the Church's Mission

by Douglas W. Ruffle
General Board of Global Ministries, Publishers
April, 2009 Paperback, $9.95

In the age of TMI (too much information), the task of finding useful, credible direction for congregational development can be a daunting task. Thankfully, that task became less daunting with the publication of Doug Ruffle’s latest book, Roadmap to Renewal.

With an economy of words, Ruffle delivers a succinct and systematic treatment of church renewal and development in a cogent, persuasive manner. I like the fact that he gets right to the point, sparing the reader from wading through page after page of theory and analysis. Instead, this book is true to its title: it is indeed a roadmap, and a good one at that.

The author knows his subject matter, and offers a helpful, hands-on approach. By design, this book is perfect for use by pastors, leadership teams, and church members in the small group study setting. Those who read it will gain a much clearer sense of where their church is, where it should be going, and the best way to get there.

The genius of this little book is that its author has captured the essence of what is essential for congregational development and presented it in a way that will be useful for churches of all sizes. For churches who want to get “right down to business”:

“Roadmap” is a great way to start.
Thinking About Summer Camp?

Can you believe it? It’s time to sign up for another great summer camp! This is an exciting time for everyone at the Greater New Jersey United Methodist Camps. We provide a fun and safe environment for children to learn and grow. The camps are located at Mount Misery, such as Mud Week, Water Week, Fishing, Music and Drama, Outward, and other traditional camp programs. For all participants, we have reopened the family camping options for Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends at both camps. Each includes a newly designed program with fun, fellowship, and worship (this will be limited to space available, so be sure to register early). Also new for 2010, we have opened the family camping weekends at the Aldegerse Center where you may design your own unique summer vacation package.

Youth Service Fund

The Youth Service Fund is a unique ministry because it is completely by, with, and for youth. Youth contribute the money, decide which projects receive the money, and the beneficiaries supported are youth-designed, youth-led, and benefit youth. The Youth Service Fund truly is youth in ministry. Currently, only US annual conferences fund the account. Money is raised at local youth events or by church youth groups, 70% of the money raised is kept in the local community while 30% is forwarded to the national portion of the Youth Service Fund. With that 30% Young Peoples Ministries funds youth-designed & youth-led projects around the world. We recently received money for the Youth Service Fund from the Philippines and we encourage contributions from others around the world.

Grants will be awarded (through an application process) for the 2010-2011 school year for NJU Youth Programs. Project categories are: Faith Sharing and Outreach, Leadership Development, Scholarship, Ministry with At-Risk Youth, and Agricultural/Vocational. More information will be shared in the next few months.

Souperbowl of Caring

Sunday, February 7, 2010
Want to find out how your youth group can participate this year? Go to www.souperbowl.org for more details.

“THE HIGHTSTOWN EVENT”

Workshops provided include information about the mission, generation, mission and fasting events for youth, Sunday school information and much more!

Hosted by the First Presbyterian Church 320 North Main St. Hightstown, New Jersey 08520

Saturday, March 6, 2010 8:30 am to 12:45 pm

Youth Lay Speaking

March 13-14, 2010 at Pinelands Center, Mt. Misery NJ

F.U.E.L

(Fear Unites Every Leader)

Youth and young adult training

March 20, 2010 at St. John’s Hazlet UMC, Hazlet, NJ

2011 Mission Of Peace to China

More information for these events can be found at www.gnjumc.org and www.fathgarden.org

New Background Screening System!! To obtain a new background check for anyone working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults go to www.gnjumc.org and click the Safe Sanctuaries link. The website will give you very clear directions on how to apply for a new background check using Track1 Technologies or to obtain an already processed check through Lexis Nexus. Please note that all Safe Sanctuaries Policy should correct their information regarding background checks. The Greater NJ Conference now uses Track1 Technologies. Thank you.

Youth and Children’s Pastor

Full Time Position

We are seeking an experienced, energetic person to lead our youth ministry and Christian education program, coordinate various church outreach projects, and share in other aspects of pastoral ministry.

The ideal candidate will possess a Spirit-filled enthusiasm for working with young people and seek to celebrate and nurture their faith. Innovative ideas for this ministry’s growth and development will be encouraged. Degrees in a related field preferred.

We will be reviewing resumes immediately. Please e-mail resume to DanvilleCommunityChurch@verizon.net or mail to Danville Community United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 115, Danville, NJ 07834
2010 CALENDAR OF DISTRICT RESOURCE DAYS

The District Resource Days in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference bring some of the most prominent and inspirational thinkers and opinion-makers to where you can see them interact and deal with them in person. Here is the list of remarkable learning opportunities coming to the conference in 2010. Mark the Dates Now!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCE #1</th>
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<td><strong>CAPE</strong></td>
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<td>March 22</td>
<td>Rev. Dr. John Holtzclaw: Preaching &amp; Bible Study</td>
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<td>At: UMC at Absecon</td>
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<td>April 15</td>
<td>Rev. Reva Harwood: Evangelism – Reaching the Unchurched</td>
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<td>At: Trinity UMC, Marietta</td>
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<td>September 30</td>
<td>Rev. Norma Cook: Church Conflict: From Confrontation to Collaboration</td>
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<td><strong>CAPITAL</strong></td>
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<td>February 4</td>
<td>Dr. Joseph Lewis: Rethink Preaching &amp; Worship</td>
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<td>At: Adybury UMC, Somers Point, NJ</td>
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<td>April 16 &amp; 17</td>
<td>Rev. Dr. Ken Sloane: Rethink Church and Then Some</td>
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<td>Fri.: 9:00am-2:00pm</td>
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<td>At: PUMC, Delran</td>
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<td>October 13</td>
<td>Stephanie Moore Hand: Rethink Ministry with Youth &amp; Young Adults</td>
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<td><strong>DELAFIELD</strong></td>
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<td>March 25</td>
<td>Rev. Paul Nixon: “I refuse to lead a dying church”</td>
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<td>At: Zion UMC, Franklinville</td>
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<td>October 18</td>
<td>Diana Butler Bass: Christianity for the Rest of Us</td>
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<td><strong>GATEWAY</strong></td>
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<td>March 4</td>
<td>Fred Lehr: Time/TA/BA</td>
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<td>At: Trinity UMC, Vineland</td>
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<td>April 5</td>
<td>Bishop Michael Coyner: Connecting Newcomers to Christ in the New Century</td>
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<td>May 5</td>
<td>Rev. Dr. Ken Sloane: Archaeological Study of the Bible</td>
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<td><strong>GATEWAY SOUTH</strong></td>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td>Jason Santos: “Practice, Practice, Practice.” A day to be spiritually fueled to TAZ-based activities</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
<td>Cheryl Hemmerich: UNCOM Creative Use of Media in Worship</td>
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<td>October 23</td>
<td>Rev. Mary Hyuck: Redeveloping the Congregation</td>
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<td><strong>GANNETT VALLEY</strong></td>
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<td>January 9</td>
<td>Rev. Wayne Lavender: Peacemaking Amongst Violence and Pestilence</td>
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<td>March 20</td>
<td>Dan Smith: “To know the Biblical Study of community”</td>
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<td>September 18</td>
<td>Rev. Dr. Ken Sloane: “ReThink Church and Then Some”</td>
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<td><strong>HIGHLANDS</strong></td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>Rev. Rebecca Laird: “Spiritual Formation”</td>
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<td>April 8</td>
<td>Rev. Garlinda Burton: “Empowering Laity”</td>
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<td>At: Bobby UMC</td>
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**OBITUARIES**

JOHN F. GARRAHAN, 89, retired local pastor of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died December 20, 2009, with funeral services following December 26 at the Tuckahoe United Methodist Church.

Mr. Garrahan is survived by his wife, Caroline, a son, two daughters, 13 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Memorial donations may be sent to the Centenary United Methodist Church, 905 Herbert Street, Scranton, PA 18505, or the National Parkinson Foundation, Inc., Office of Development, 1501 W. 8th Ave., Bob Hope Rd., Miami FL 33136.


Memorial gifts may be made to the United Church of Christ in Keene, 23 Central Square, Keene, NH, 03431, or St. Paul’s Methodist Church, 605 Herbert Street, Scranton, PA 18505, or the National Parkinson Foundation, Inc., Office of Development, 1501 W. 8th Ave., Bob Hope Rd., Miami FL 33136.
February 6 — Statistical Report Training
GNJAC — Local church training offered by CFA in use of newly designed year end report. A must for all churches. 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Gateway North at Bloomfield; Gateway South at St. Andrew’s, Cherry Hill.

February 8, 10, 11 — Health Insurance Information Sessions
GNJAC — The new HealthFlex insurance program which becomes effective March 1 will be introduced and explained at three locations across the conference, with sessions for active clergy from 9 a.m. to noon and retired from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Glassboro, February 8; Hightstown, February 10; Parsippany, February 11. See story.

February 9 — African-American Heritage Center Open House
MADISON — The African-American Heritage Center on the campus of Drew University will hold an Open House from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. to maximize opportunity. For more information or to request an application please contact the program at www.gardenstateemmaus.org. 

February 23 — 25 — Children’s Ministry Forum ‘10
RALEIGH, N.C. — “Fill My Cup, Lord” is the theme of this event sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship primarily for large congregations (over 350 in worship) but welcoming all. A life-transforming event that will send you home with new skills and fresh understandings. FFI: Visit www.gbod.org/cmn or call Erica Munoz at (732) 359-1042.

February 28 — Curriculum Open House
OCEAN — The Curriculum Open House center will be the site of this 3-hour event, 3 to 6 p.m., showcasing newest curriculum resources including new VBS materials. See edcN page for details.

March 4 — Pre-Retirement Seminar
HAMILTON SQUARE — The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Beneﬁts will hold its bi-annual seminar for those planning to retire within the next ﬁve years, 9:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. See story.

March 5 — Financial Security Seminar
HAMILTON SQUARE — Under the auspices of the GNJ Board of Pensions and Health Beneﬁts, this seminar at St. Mark Church aims at assisting clergy who are more than half way through their career. From retirement to reinstallation, but who want a bit of help in planning their ﬁnancial future. 9:15 a.m. - 1 p.m. See story.

March 6 — Christian Education Event
HIGHTSTOWN — “The Hightstown Event”, an annual training opportunity for Christian educators and pastors, with a plethora of workshops and a wealth of information. See edcN page for details.

April 8 - 11 — Men’s Walk to Emmaus Weekend
GNJAC — GNJAC will hold a Men’s Walk to Emmaus Weekend. This three-day experience replicating the post-resurrection walk recorded in Luke 24. This Skylarks Walk to Emmaus for men is part of a world-wide movement sponsored by the Upper Room. FFI: Log on to www.gardenstateemmaus.org.

April 15 - 18 — Women’s Walk to Emmaus Weekend
GNJAC — GNJAC will hold a Women’s Walk to Emmaus Weekend. This three-day experience replicating the post-resurrection walk recorded in Luke 24. This Skylarks Walk to Emmaus for women is part of a world-wide movement sponsored by the Upper Room; at Sacred Heart Retreat Center. FFI: Contact Judy Mazzoni at judym@yahoo.com.

April 22 - 23 — Scouting Ministry Training
MORGANVILLE — A new program for training scouting ministry specialist will be held at Monmouth Boy Scout Council here, open to all scouting leaders in Mercer County focusing on pastors planning to retire. 9:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

May 13 - 16 — Women’s Walk to Emmaus Weekend
GNJAC — GNJAC will hold a Women’s Walk to Emmaus Weekend. This three-day experience replicating the post-resurrection walk recorded in Luke 24. This Garden State Walk to Emmaus for women at Keswick is part of a world-wide movement sponsored by the Upper Room. FFI: Log on to www.gardenstateemmaus.org.

July 9 - 19 — Taize Pilgrimage
GNJAC — Annual pilgrimage to the retreat center in France. Cost is reduced to maximize opportunity. For more information or to request an application please contact Erica Munoz at (732) 359-1042 or Emunoz@gnjumc.org. Application deadline is February 20.

CLAIMING THE BLESSING. If a “cup of cold water” given to the little ones was enough to earn Jesus’ commendation (Matthew 10:42), think of the blessings accruing to this quarter, it to UMHomes employees Robert Johnson, Tanya Swift-Preston, LaRonda Dingle and volunteer Keith Anderson as they assist in loading supplies on the way to Haiti, following collections at the GNJ-related senior communities.

UMHomes Join in Acts of Love, Hope, Charity for Haiti

MORRISVILLE, N.C. — "Fill My Cup, Lord" is the theme of this event sponsored by the Upper Room. FFI: Log on to www.gardenstateemmaus.org

On January 19, after days of tirelessly collecting, they began the trip from Collingswood Manor to Linden, driving two trucks and stopping en route to make additional pick-ups. Covenant Manor in Plainfield donated boxes of food, medical supplies, water and clothing; Francis Asbury Manor in Ocean Grove collected $1,100 in cash; Pine Ridge of Montclair donated clothing. Many of the Homes’ vendors gave food and water.

Bishop Taylor Manor in East Orange set up a Hope Center with coordination from the Red Cross, open to the general public and anyone wishing to confirm the safety of loved ones, posting a daily list of people presumed safe.

On February 11, Ms. Mertyl-Celestin plans to travel to Haiti to help victims of the earthquake. She’ll join her sister Viola Jolicoeur, also a registered nurse. Both will give their medical expertise during the absence of Jolicoeur’s husband, Ronald, a general surgeon, who heads a health clinic.

“Last year, the Homes took an important and necessary clinical precaution and stockpiled a 10 percent surplus of medical supplies in anticipation of the H1N1 outbreak,” explained James C. Batten, UMH president. "This year, the Homes are committing the excess for Haitian victims to the earthquake."

Pursuing an Education in Ministry? Scholarships & Loans
* Financial assistance for those agreeing to serve at least five years as a member of our conference.

THE EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY GREATEST NEW JERSEY ANNUAL CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Requests for applications are accepted from January 1 to March 1. Application deadline March 31.

Contact: Jo Malessa (856) 786-0293 or Rev. Emil F. Winkelspecht ENJWink@aol.com

Peter M. Guilfoyle Certified Public Accountant Serving the United Methodist Community Since 1980
• Personal Courteous Service at Reasonable Rates
• Specializing in Taxation of the Clergy
• Income Tax Returns Expertly Prepared
• Electronic Filing Available

By Appointment
(732) 938-2665
(Paid Advertisement)
Rev. Clint Rabb and Rev. Sam Dixon, executives at UMCOR, were already in Haiti seeking ways to help the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. They perished in the devastation of the earthquake. They were there supported by the solid rock you created through your Shared Ministries giving. When church agencies are allowed in again, UMCOR will be there.

UMCOR, the United Methodist Commission On Relief, is a division of the General Board of Global Ministries and may be the best-known agency of the United Methodist Church around the world. Rated an A+ by the American Institute of Philanthropy and as four stars by Charity Navigator, when you give to UMCOR you give with the knowledge that every penny given to a designated Advance goes directly to those who need it most.

On Christ the solid rock we stand... and give

You can continue to help the Haiti relief effort by giving to Advance #418325 or you can find other ways to help at www.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/