

## Annual Conference – 2010



### Building the Church by Our Presence

KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa. – Over 1300 people gathered at the Valley Forge Convention Center here under the leadership of Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar for the 11th session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. The conference met from June 3 - 5 under the theme of "Making Disciples for the Transformation of the World: Building the Church by Our Presence."

During his Episcopal Address Bishop Devadhar called the churches of the GNJ Conference to action. "John Wesley gives us seven manifestations of how we live out the ministry of presence," said Bishop Devadhar. He explained these areas: concern the poor, slavery, prisons, liquor, politics, war, and education.

Presenting his address in the context of the four foci of the United Methodist Church, he encouraged clergy and laity to continue to ask,  
*(Continued on Page 3)*

**CONFERENCE MOSAIC.** Picking up some of the flavor of the Annual Conference is this montage of images reflecting the spirit of celebration and the thoughtful deliberation of that event. The photos (with two exceptions) are the work of John C. Goodwin who is the copyright owner.

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## EDITORIAL



**NO TITLE.** This editorial has no title. The image stands on its own. No grinning, smiling face looking out at a camera. Here is a man at work, undistracted, attending to his task of communication at the annual conference.

In a day when communication plays a central role in all relationships, and the marriage of word and graphic image exerts a power beyond reckoning, we note with real sorrow an unfortunate loss to our conference.

With this issue of the *Relay* we say goodbye to Jack Shaw as communications coordinator of the Greater New Jersey Conference. He will be missed. He already is.

Jack came to his post as communications coordinator from a lifetime of committed service. He began as a teacher, and as his expertise grew in the use of media, he branched out — in directions both secular and sacred.

His background was rich and varied. In 1982 he joined the production staff of WCAU-TV, Philadelphia, then an affiliate of CBS. At the same time he became a producer and consultant for the Haddonfield Church where he created the long-running weekly show, *On the King's Highway*.

The years that followed saw him with his own production company, *Televents*. He has taught, directed, produced, and managed in several venues, and for six years oversaw public relations for the Battleship New Jersey Museum and Memorial, rising to the level of vice president.

But through it all the Church remained his overarching passion, from local to conference level. When the GNJ post opened he filed his application, and stated his philosophy:

*"The key for those of us trying to make disciples is to 'tell the story' in as many ways and means as we can," he wrote. "As a communicator, it becomes my responsibility to equip as many people as possible with as many tools as possible."*

This he did with admirable energy and skill, and the conference has profited from his service. His training events at district days of learning have awakened a new vision of communication in many churches. His Power Point presentations and promotional creations have informed and stimulated. He has transformed the thrice-weekly e-mail *Digest* to an effective instrument for all; it will continue now as part of the portfolio of the stewardship coordinator.

Others will assume some of his duties, but none will replace his skills.

Though steeped in the electronic media, he has a real appreciation for the print media as well, and as coordinator he was skillful in melding and molding the two.

We understand the process and logic that led to his departure, but we wonder if history will show it to have been a false economy. If these words seem inappropriate, perhaps even insubordinate, let it be known that they are written in love — love for the United Methodist Church, love of the Greater New Jersey Conference, and in love of the Lord of the Church who has sent us on this mission to tell the Story by telling the story.

So Jack, we will miss you. Your contributions to, and support of the *Relay* will always be appreciated.

God bless you, Jack. Our prayers are with you as you continue to tell the Story in whatever way God opens to you, in whatever time and place.

— RVC

## VIEWPOINT

### A Slogan Only Goes So Far

By Jessica Stenstrom

**"Our hearts, our minds and our doors are open."  
But to whom are they open?"**

The Rethink Church campaign emphasizes that each church has 10,000 different doors they can open to invite someone into the life of the church. But do we really want people who think, look, dress, act and believe differently than us in our presence? Or do we only want people with whom we are comfortable walking through our doors?

There seems to be an unspoken tension between youth and young adults and older members of congregations. When a young person, especially a new one, shows up for church there seems to be an excitement and celebration about the hope of a stronger youth program and new members in worship Sunday morning. But what happens after the initial excitement wears off?

While in conversation about the cultural differences between the generations, one woman said that when a new young person shows up she is genuinely excited that they are there. But her second thought is that she wished they had worn a different shirt. This example speaks loudly of the vastly diverse viewpoints between the generations. For the older adult, dressing in jeans and T-shirt is a sign of disrespect during Sunday morning worship. Someone younger isn't likely to think they are being disrespectful by dressing casually; that what they are wearing doesn't affect their ability to worship God.

It seems the old saying "Children should be seen and not heard" is still in the forefront. For example, at Annual Conference, there were many young people who were celebrated for their artistic talents, but when it came time to hand out the appointment list Thursday evening, the Conference Youth & Young Adult Ministries team was skipped by the usher. The usher informed them that they would receive copies if there were enough extras. WE ARE FULL VOTING MEMBERS just like any other adult lay representative. Actions speak louder than words.

There is a common misconception that young people are only looking for fun at church, but if you talk to youth in our conference, many are looking for a safe space they can actively explore their faith and grow closer to God. Don't believe me? I challenge you to visit any conference youth event, such as the lay speaking weekend, the Extreme Makeover retreat or Youth Weekend 2010 — all places where youth are not only having fun, but also growing in their relationships with God.

Before you dismiss what has been said, I would offer that the church can make a world of difference in the life of a young person. I know because I was an unchurched young adult when I wandered into church at the age of 24. The church opened their doors and their hearts to me and gave me a safe space to actively explore my faith. They also gave me a place to serve in the ministries of the church. As I finish my first year of seminary, I am now a full-time staff member of a church. I can't imagine how different my life would be today if the church members had been more concerned with what I was wearing than with me as a child of God.

*(Jessica Stenstrom is a second year student at Drew Theological School, a member of the staff of Denville Community Church, and a frequent contributor to the United Methodist Relay.)*

**We urge your patience and your cooperation as we adjust to the new communications arrangement in the conference. Please continue to send your news to the editor serving your district. For news of conference agencies, please send to the appropriate program staff person in the conference office. In districts not covered by an associate editor, send your copy directly to the editor-in-chief until further notice. Watch for additional instructions in future issues or on the GNJ Digest.**



Sudarshana Devadhar, Resident Bishop  
The Greater New Jersey Conference ~ 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

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# GNJAC Makes its 'Presence' Felt in 3-Day Meeting at Valley Forge

(Continued from Page 1)

"Are we a sacramental presence of Christ in everything we do?" He urged prayerful consideration of whether God is calling us to be risk takers, caretakers, or undertakers.

The Conference Preacher/Teacher was the Rev. Stephanie Hand, a provisional deacon from Western North Carolina Annual Conference who has been recognized in the area of Christian Education and Youth Ministry. She roused and inspired the attendees in her three preaching sessions. The Rev. John Holbert, the Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics at Perkins School of Theology, led two morning Bible studies where hundreds of participants were challenged with thoughtful ruminations on Biblical examples of the conference theme. Dr. Holbert dealt with Moses and Ruth as exemplars of presence.

The Rev. Esther Chung Kim, Assistant Professor of History of Christianity at Claremont School of Theology, and the Rev. Kadi Billman, Professor of Pastoral Theology at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, preached powerful sermons at the Tribute Service and Commissioning Service respectively. Both are clergy members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

The Dean of the Appointment Cabinet, the Rev. Sung Ahn, presented the District Superintendents' report in which the leadership of GNJ was encouraged first through song and then through suggestions for disciple making for the transformation of the world. The superintendents urged the churches toward Christian perfection with a goal of 100 percent of Shared Ministries paid in the coming year, celebrating the fact that the Conference has paid 100 percent to the general church for three years in a row. They also emphasized the importance of discerning and equipping leadership and taking risks in ministry, while deepening spiritual experiences, citing

a pilgrimage to the Holy Land as an example.

In her report, Conference Lay Leader Ressie Fuller encouraged the lay leadership of the Conference. "The laity in this Conference are not just hearers of the Word, they are doers," said Ms. Fuller. She discussed the certified lay minister program with a graduating class of 29 along with other laity-led ministries in the Conference. She encouraged the leadership to be aggressive and strong. The lay leader shared her presentation with Melodie Jilson, co-president of the Conference Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team and a member of the Tuckerton Church.

"Where's the beef?" was the question posed by Bishop Devadhar during the Ordination Service. Quoting George Barna's thoughts of "*ecclesia exitus*," "the Latin term for church drop out... people are dropping out of church for several reasons. Some see gaps between what is practiced and preached, some have had previous bad experiences, and others are not finding the experience of God they are seeking."

Bishop Devadhar reminded listeners that it is neither the size of buildings or endowments that make the difference in ministry. "It is the ability of the people of God to ask the right questions at the right time that makes a difference," he said. "The unchurched are asking us, our youth are asking us, and the world is asking us that same question: *Where's the beef? Or the fish? Or the kimchi? Or the tofu? Or the carne?*" The point being that people yearn for substance in our mission and ministry.

In the course of the Annual Conference one person was commissioned in the Order of Deacons and seven persons were commissioned in the Order of Elders. One woman was ordained as Deacon and six men and five women were ordained as Elders. The average age of the ordained elders is 42. The Rev. E. Roy Riley, Jr., Bishop, New Jersey Synod, Evangelical Lutheran



**"WONDERFUL ACHIEVEMENT."** Bishop Devadhar proudly displays the 100 percent Shared Ministries plaque awarded to the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference from the General Church. The Bishop thanked profusely all the laity and clergy of the conference for this achievement. This is the third consecutive year that the GNJAC has paid 100 percent of its General Church apportionment.

(Photo by John C. Goodwin)

Church in America, was the ecumenical guest at the ordination service. Bishop Felton Edwin May and Rev. Dr. David Graybeal also participated in the ordination service along with others.

A number of reports and resolutions were dealt with in the course of the Conference's business. Of note was the "Study on Effectively Fulfilling Our Missional Responsibilities" report wherein the Rev. Doug Ruffle reminded the assembly of the ripe mission field available in our area. The report offered various recommendations, including one new church plant a year, forming "revitalizing clusters" in each of the nine districts, equipping clergy and laity for cluster and healthy church development, and a Pilot Program for Growth for churches not receiving new members through professions of faith.

A Structure Task Force reported on recommendations for changes in staffing and committee structures within the Conference and a resolution supporting the national MARCHA resolution on immigration was approved.

A generous \$100,000 donation was made to create an endowment that will support the spiritual formation of youth and young adults of the Conference. The endowment, donated by Paul

Smith Jr. and Patria Agustin-Smith, will primarily support scholarships for the annual Taize pilgrimage, spiritual and missional pilgrimages for the youth and young adults. The Conference also honored Rev. Dr. Maxine Beach on her retirement for her "outstanding ministry" as Dean of the Drew Theological School.

Membership in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference stands at 94,201 down just .06 percent from the previous year. "This is remarkable considering the net loss of membership at an average percentage of two percent and above in the last few years," noted one observer. The Conference also celebrated a seven percent increase in Confessions of Faith in 2009 from the previous year. Worship attendance stands at 49,988, down 2.3 percent, but representing a 53 percent attendance-to-membership ratio. Sunday school attendance stands at 16,308, down 7 percent. However, the Conference reports 33,665 participants in Faith Formation groups, an increase of 6% in United Methodist Men and an increase of 8% in United Methodist Women memberships.

— Jessica Stenstrom and Jack Shaw

## Conference Journal CD Free to Members; Printed Copy Available Upon Request

OCEAN – Complying with the action of the Annual Conference, each clergy member, active or retired, and each lay member will receive a copy of the 2010 Journal on a CD-ROM free of charge. A CD-ROM Journal will also be sent to every local church office.

Bound, printed copies of the Journal may be purchased for \$10.00 plus \$3.00 shipping each if ordered prior to the August 15 deadline. An order form is available on line at the "Post-Conference" page of the Conference

website, [gnjumc.org](http://gnjumc.org).

The conference office staff warns that "no printed Journals will be sent unless pre-paid," and "no requests will be honored after the Journal has gone to the printer (to reduce waste, we order only the amount requested)."

For retired clergy members, a bound, printed copy of the Journal will be sent free upon request. The Journal will not automatically be sent to the retiree. Requests must be sent in prior to the August 15 deadline.

## Concert to Benefit Neighborhood Center

CHERRY HILL – Billed as "a voice you will remember," singer Chris Westfall will perform a "family friendly" concert at St. Andrew's Church here September 25, for the benefit of the Neighborhood Center, Camden.

In this time of economic recession, the role of the Neighborhood Center is even greater in reaching out to meet the needs of the Camden community, notes one observer. The agency provides Christian-centered programs that reach out to people of all ages—infant/toddler childcare, after school care, school break and summer enrichment, teen groups, a 50 plus club, emergency food services, and a soup kitchen.

"Help them continue this wonderful



mission work by attending Chris Westfall's benefit concert," proclaims the invitation. "Chris' style combines a balance of 'acoustic folk' on both piano and guitar. His clear tenor voice moves gently from familiar tunes to original interpretations of artists such as James Taylor and John Denver, and then to his own heartfelt compositions. Join this passionate troubadour as he takes you on a journey that is deep and enduring... transforming simple tunes into a celebration."

Tickets for the 7:30 p.m. concert may be purchased in advance for \$10.00 or at the door for \$12.00. St. Andrew's is located at 327 Marlton Pike West, Cherry Hill. For additional information readers may call the church at (856) 429-4469.

## Church Health and Growth Event

A Conference wide event on the Principles of Church Health and Growth is set for Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Moorestown, NJ.

Joining us for the day will be Dave Wetzler, publisher of the Natural Church Development resources. Christian Schwarz will give greetings via video from Germany. The event, to be held at the First United Methodist Church in Moorestown, will begin with fellowship at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 2:30 p.m.

Registrations can be made online at

<https://webview.shelbyinc.com/app/07316/default.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=7>.

Obtain the brochure at <http://yourchurchcangrow.org/409/>.

For more information, contact the office of Congregational Development at (732) 359-1047 by phone or email:

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

- Register before August 15: \$20 per person
- Register between August 16-October 15: \$25 per person
- Registrations at the door: \$30 per person

Make plans to be there. 1.5 Continuing Education Units will be awarded to attendees.

## Digest Continues

The *GNJ Digest*, thrice-weekly e-mail newsletter will continue in the same format as in the past, pending analysis of a recent electronic survey. Fears that the publication would be jeopardized by the termination of the post of communications coordinator were laid aside in a recent announcement from the conference office. Editing the e-newsletter will be Stewardship Coordinator Rich Hendrickson.

Items for the *Digest* should be sent to [communications@gnjumc.org](mailto:communications@gnjumc.org), either in e-mail text or MS Word.



# Global Relay

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

## Religious parents influence young adults

NASHVILLE — New research shows parents are one of the most powerful factors influencing the religious lives of young adults. In the study, religious young adults had consistently more positive outcomes than the least religious emerging adults in nearly every area, from physical and mental health to giving and moral compassion. Yet in a culture where mothers and fathers hover over their children in school, on athletic fields and even on social media sites such as Facebook, many parents take a hands-off approach to religion and spirituality, setting youth adrift in crucial areas of moral reasoning and finding meaning in life.

## Growth in Africa outpaces decline in U.S.

NEW YORK — The 2010 State of the Church Report tells United Methodists something they are already painfully aware of — U.S. membership is continuing its long decline even as the denomination expands internationally. In the decade between 1998 and 2008, overall membership grew by 14 percent for those who come into membership by profession of faith and 27 percent for baptized members. At the end of 2008, the church had approximately 11 million professing members and an additional 2.5 million baptized members in Africa, Europe, the United States and the Philippines. But U.S. membership has declined every year since The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 and dropped by nearly 590,000 between 1998 and 2008.

## Theme, logo chosen for General Conference

NASHVILLE — “Make Disciples of Jesus Christ to Transform the World” will be the theme for The United Methodist Church’s 2012 General Conference, scheduled for April 24 - May 4 in Tampa, Fla. The logo, which complements the theme, depicts a graphic image of the cross, representing the presence of Jesus Christ at the center of the church’s mission. Circles extending from the cross express energy and movement into ministry in the world. A bright sun and blue water represent Tampa.

## Aug. 10 is deadline to apply for ethnic grant

WASHINGTON — Aug. 10 is the deadline to apply for an Ethnic Local Church Grant from the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. Grant recipients must be programs initiated by or developed in partnership with one or more United Methodist ethnic minority local churches to address chronic social problems or concerns. Two funding periods are available for consideration: Aug. 10 is the deadline for the October cycle and Jan. 10 is the deadline for the March cycle. More information is available at [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org).

## United Methodists need to face abuse crisis

CHICAGO — Let’s consider the planks in our own eyes when it comes to sexual misconduct, M. Garlinda Burton, top executive of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women of The United Methodist Church, wrote in a recent UMNS commentary. Too often, she says, “The corporate United Methodist Church neglects our primary call to be caring and pastoral to wounded disciples of Jesus Christ in the name of protecting the institutional church, discrediting those who complain and engaging in stonewalling and legal maneuvering instead of justice making.”

## Chaplain sets sights on winning Afghanistan

SOMEWHERE IN AFGHANISTAN — The Rev. Nicolas Camacho, a United Methodist chaplain with the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade of the U.S. Army, is also serving the Afghan community. The Operation Winning Afghanistan charitable effort he oversees extends to 10 local missions, including five orphanages, two day-care centers, the Afghan National Army Hospital, a school for girls and boys with more than 3,200 students and a children’s hospital. “To serve beyond your own described and identified duties is something that God calls you to do,” he said.

## Pension initiative hits \$20 million goal

EVANSTON, Ill. — After 40 years of ministry in Zimbabwe, the Rev. Lovemore Nyanungo must rely on help from his children to make ends meet. The United Methodist Church’s Central Conference Pension Initiative has reached its initial fundraising goal of \$20 million to help provide for retired pastors like Nyanungo and their surviving spouses. The United Methodist Board of Pensions and Health Benefits will invest the money. The earnings will pay pensions for about 1,200 retired clergy and 1,300 surviving spouses in 62 annual conferences in Africa, Asia and Europe.

## U.S. reports ‘serious problem’ with trafficking

NEW YORK — Over the past decade, the U.S. government has stepped up its efforts to combat global networks that foster modern-day slavery through forced labor or commercial sex. But this year’s recognition that the United States itself has “a serious problem with human trafficking” is important, say United Methodists. This is information that social action coordinators with United Methodist Women can use, said Susie Johnson, staff executive for public policy with the Women’s Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

## Basketball star donates to Nothing But Nets

TULSA, Okla. — Ruth Riley, named June 14 as the female 2010 recipient of the Henry P. Iba Citizen Athlete Award given by the Rotary Club of Tulsa, is donating half her \$10,000 prize to Nothing But Nets, a grassroots campaign to prevent malaria in Africa. Riley, who plays basketball for the San Antonio Silver Stars, has traveled to Angola and Mali to witness the impact of the disease and has raised awareness in the United States. Partners in Nothing But Nets include the United Nations Foundation, The People of the United Methodist Church, NBA Cares and Sports Illustrated.

## Gathering to promote disciple-making churches

NASHVILLE — The School of Congregational Development will bring together speakers and workshop leaders to help United Methodist leaders develop disciple-making churches. The 2010 gathering, sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship, Path 1 and the General Board of Global Ministries, will be held July 29 to Aug. 2 at the Renaissance Hotel, Nashville Convention Center and area churches.

## Red Bird school seeks funds to reopen

BEVERLY, Ky. — After 89 years of educating and shaping the faith of youngsters in rural Appalachia, Red Bird Mission School is at risk of shutting its doors. In May, the Red Bird Mission Board voted to suspend classes during the 2010-2011 academic year. The kindergarten through 12th grade school, with operating expenses of about \$1.8 million last year, needs to build up its cash reserves after years of dwindling donations. Still, the mission’s new executive director, Taylor Collins, has hopes the school can reopen this fall. He has set a goal of raising \$1 million by Aug. 1.

## Meharry ranks second in nation in social mission

NASHVILLE — Meharry Medical College, a historically black United Methodist-related institution, was ranked as one of the nation’s top producers of primary care physicians and social mission in a study by the Annals of Internal Medicine. Dr. Wayne J. Riley, president of Meharry, said the study validates that primary care and serving underserved communities is important. “The practice of medicine is indeed a social pursuit and, as I often tell our students, when you put the initials M.D. behind your name it comes with a strong obligation to serve.”

## Book offers help for mentors

NASHVILLE — “Mentoring Into Vocation: Touchstones for the Journey,” updated to reflect changes made by the 2008 General Conference and with a new introduction, offers a comprehensive framework for guiding people into ordained or lay vocations. The book is written from the perspective of United Methodist polity and theology. The revised edition, available in August from the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, can be pre-ordered now from Cokesbury.

## Evangelism group honors Michigan church

SWARTZ CREEK, Mich. — The Foundation for Evangelism has recognized Swartz Creek United Methodist Church as the first-ever recipient of the Culture of the Call Church Award. This inaugural award honors a congregation of The United Methodist Church with a history of helping young people 35 or younger experience God’s call to full-time Christian service. More than 25 people from the church have gone through lay-speaking training and seven people have become clergy.

## Obama discusses immigration at American University

WASHINGTON — The United States must reform its immigration system to reflect “our values” as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants, President Obama said July 1 at United Methodist-related American University. Obama chose to make the case for reform before an audience of about 250 religious, business, labor and community leaders at the university’s School of International Service. Washington Area Bishop John R. Schol delivered the morning’s invocation.

## Upper Room part of World Cup evangelism

JOHANNESBURG — When South Africa tied Mexico in a 1-1 draw during the opening World Cup game, some young spectators watched at big-screen viewings sponsored by churches and faith-based organizations. The events were part of an effort led by an informal network called TUG — The Ultimate Goal — to “score” with soccer-mad youth. United Methodists used the network to distribute daily devotional guides and other resources from The Upper Room during the month-long event, that took place in Africa for the first time.

## Zimbabwe’s crisis tested Class of 2010

MUTARE, Zimbabwe — Africa University’s class of 2010 has been tested by fire. Graduation on June 12 meant an end to years of uncertainty and financial struggle for students who have faced food shortages, record levels of inflation, an extremely tight money supply and the eventual demise of the Zimbabwe dollar. More than 300 received degrees at the United Methodist-related Africa University’s 16th graduation ceremony. With 21 African countries represented, it is the most diverse graduating class in the institution’s history.

## Summit explores responsible investing

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — St. Paul School of Theology will hold a “Socially Responsible Investing Summit” on Oct. 18-19. The gathering will enable an exchange of ideas about The United Methodist Church’s evolving understanding of socially responsible investing policy and practices. The summit also will evaluate implications from the more than 400 responses to the Socially Responsible Investment Task Force’s recent survey. Registration for the summit is limited to 100. The deadline to register is July 31.

## UMCOR aids storm recovery in Central America

NEW YORK — Recovery from Tropical Storm Agatha, which left a trail of destruction May 29 in Central America from Guatemala to Nicaragua, is expected to take at least a year. Guatemala was hardest hit, with 174 dead, 113 missing, 147 injured and more than 160,000 survivors evacuated and displaced from their homes. The United Methodist Committee on Relief is working with the ACT Alliance through a Central American partner, the Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala, to provide immediate relief and long-term recovery.

## Anti-hunger leaders share 2010 World Food Prize

WASHINGTON — Two leaders of anti-hunger programs that receive support from United Methodists will share the 2010 World Food Prize. The prize recognizes the Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, and Jo Luck, president of Heifer International, for leading “two of the world’s foremost grassroots organizations leading the charge to end hunger and poverty for millions of people around the globe.” Bread for the World works with churches to write letters to Congress and other decision makers on issues related to hunger in the United States and abroad. Heifer International provides food and income-producing animals as well as animal husbandry training around the globe. Beckmann is an ordained Lutheran minister and Luck is United Methodist.

## Busy attorney and mother fosters adoptions after Africa VIM trip

WASHINGTON — What started as a UMVIM mission trip to the DRC, turned into a life-changing event for Jilma Meneses. The Washington State attorney visited a Congo orphanage and was struck by how many children needed homes. The director challenged Meneses to adopt one of the kids herself. She not only did that but started an agency to help U.S. families navigate the complicated process for international adoptions. She has a full-time job, two children at home, yet this tireless advocate gives freely of her time and legal expertise because she wants to help some of the five million children orphaned by war and disease. Working with United Methodist-supported orphanages, Meneses has found homes for over a hundred children so far. You can view UMTV’s “Our Family Adoptions” by typing “UMTV, adoptions” in the keyword search.

# Practice Servant Leadership, DS's Tell Conference



**THE GNJAC CABINET** rounds out its night following the ordination service by posing for this group photo with Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar and visiting Bishop Felton May. The district superintendents are (l. to r.) Robert Scott, Richard Nichols, Fran Noll, Robert Smith, Bishop Devadhar, Renee McCleary, Sung Hoon Ahn, Paul Maliel, Robert Costello, Vivian Rodeffer and Bishop May.

(Photos by John C. Goodwin)

**KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa.** — The District Superintendents' report to the 2010 Session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, meeting at the Valley Forge Convention Center, June 3-5, was presented by the Rev. Sung H. Ahn, dean of the cabinet and Palisades District superintendent.

Beginning with an expression of gratitude – to Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar for his six years of episcopal leadership, and to a wide array of other persons who help in the life and business of the conference — he quoted Ecclesiastes 3:1: "There is a time for everything and a season/purpose for every activity under heaven."

District superintendents live and serve basically in two major seasons, Mr. Ahn observed, an appointment-making season and a church conference season.

"During this 2010 appointment-making season the bishop and cabinet made 80 new appointments," he noted. "We spend days and nights to fulfill...God's appointment-making ministry through and in spite of us...We pray several times before and after the bishop's final decision on each and every appointment."

Prayerfully focusing on the gifts and talents of each pastor in relationship to the mission and ministry needs of the local churches – the cabinet carefully utilizes written profiles from pastors and churches. The superintendents also lead "transitional workshops" for all churches facing appointment changes and follow-up on those transitions in the fall and winter. Church conferences have become "Thanksgiving" services "where we bring the fruits of our ministry for the year as a congregational sacred offering," Mr. Ahn said.

"We still have many challenges to overcome in our ministry," Mr. Ahn continued. "We still need to move on to the perfection of our Shared Ministry Giving so that we don't have to sacrifice any part of our planned ministry each year." At the same time, "we truly celebrate the fact that we were able to pay 100 percent to the general church...for the third straight year."

Mr. Ahn affirmed that it is a *time to celebrate* various unique ministries that can be seen throughout the churches. Naming each district, he lifted up one or more notable ministries within that district that give cause for celebration.

Also worthy of celebration are the efforts made to strengthen clergy and lay leadership throughout the annual conference, including the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership Training; training pastors for New Church Starts; Natural Church Development; training coaches for clusters; Certified Lay Ministry Training; Lay Ministry Planting Network Training, etc.

This is also a *time to build*, the cabinet dean declared, echoing the Ecclesiastes text. It is time to build our ministry together, he said. Referring to the book, *"I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church,"* by the Rev. Paul Nixon, he noted that "some of our churches don't even realize that they are dying slow deaths."

Countering this, Mr. Ahn cited Dick Wills, who, in his book, *"Walking to God's Dream,"* offers eight touch points to determine if you or your church is dying a slow death.

- You or the church values conservative decisions (not spending money, not taking risks, etc.);
- You avoid deep spiritual change;
- You explain away or ignore external criticism;
- There are only short-term, day-to-day operating procedures (no clear and compelling vision of what can be and will be with faith in God);
- The pastor and leaders focus on management, not leadership;
- People have a sense of hopelessness;
- There are needed changes that no one is willing to make.
- Failure to make needed changes is "undiscussable."

"Are you, or is your church, dying a slow death," he asked. "Even one church is one too many if we allow any church of Jesus Christ to die a slow death because of our leaders' unwillingness to provide visions and to make the visions come true," said Mr. Ahn. "We need to take risks to make deep spiritual changes to be more committed and effective leaders to serve the people of God in this 21<sup>st</sup> century."

He then offered suggestions for working together "to make more disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." They include:

- Use prayerful discernment when preparing nominations. "We need to place the right leaders who can bear good fruits in various areas of our local churches' ministries."
- Be willing to make "paradigm shifts" to provide spiritual nurturing to children, youth, and young adults. For example, instead of complaining about the prevalence of community sports games on Sunday mornings, offer programs of spiritual nurture at other times of the week. Learn to embrace the clothing styles of youth instead of being critical.
- Throw away...spiritual arrogance and practice the servant leadership of Jesus Christ. "We still have serious problems with leaders who do not promote our annual conference and district-sponsored equipping and empowering programs to the leaders in the local congregations. It is obvious that only growing leaders can grow the churches."



**Cabinet Dean Sung Hoon Ahn**

• "Let us recommit ourselves to make spiritual changes. Again quoting Wills he declared that 'Personal change precedes organizational change. You cannot share what you do not have.'

"Let us be like those early disciples who recommitted themselves to be more effective and faithful laborers in the vineyard of Jesus Christ," the Palisades superintendent affirmed.

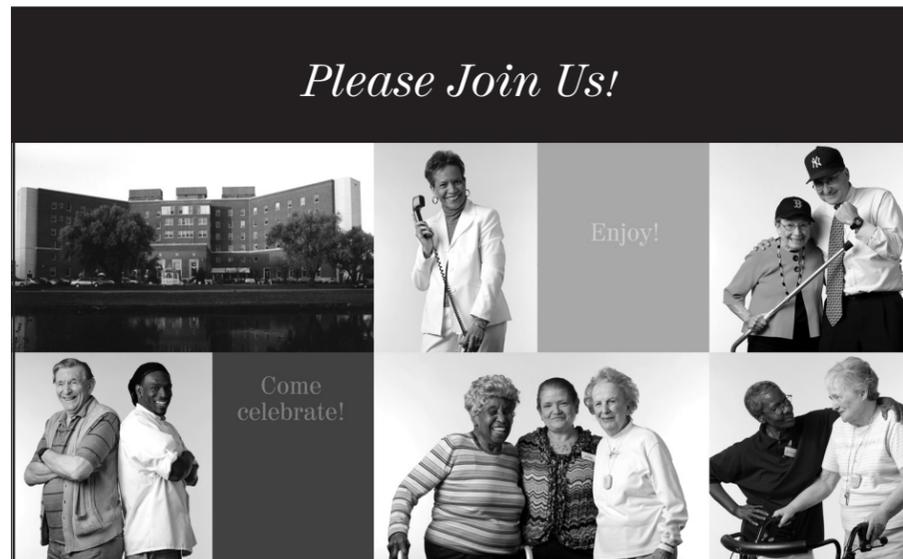
Mr. Ahn then celebrated the good working relationship between the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

He cited the meaningful experience of participation in the 2010 Holy Land Pilgrimage, along with Bishop Devadhar, the the Rev. Varlyna Wright, dean of the extended cabinet, Board of Ministry Chair Steve Bechtold, and persons ordained by the bishop.

He then focused on the importance of clergy and laity training for new church starts, quoting the church growth author, Bill Easum: "If we do not start new churches that are 10 percent of the total of the United Methodist Churches in this country each year, we will be an extinct species sooner or later."

Due to circumstances, there are some churches "that cannot or would not make disciples of Jesus Christ," Mr. Ahn acknowledged. "There are some churches where their missions and ministries are all about keeping the church doors open. This may be a time to reexamine this journey of maintaining the building and to turn all the passion, energy, and resources toward new church starts before it's too late. It may be painful, but we need to make the right choices."

In closing, he applauded the team spirit among cabinet members, and noted the departure of the Rev. Robert Scott and the arrival of the Rev. Barbara Rambach to the cabinet table. "We will continue to talk, sing, pray, and walk this journey toward God's dream. Would you join us to help make God's dream come true: 'Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We cannot transform the world unless we are willing to be transformed first.'"



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## Bishop Cites 5 Key Accomplishments in Episcopal Address

**KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa.** — It was with a note of gratitude that Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar presented his sixth Episcopal Address before the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference meeting at the Valley Forge Convention Center here, June 3-5.

Five key accomplishments were immediately noted as causes for thanksgiving to God, namely:

- + A seven percent increase in professions of faith in 2009 over 2008;
- + A healthy worship attendance-to-membership ratio of 53 percent;
- + The launching of the Lay Missionary Planting Network and a Certified Lay Minister program;
- + Increases in membership for both United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men's groups throughout the conference;
- + The payment of one hundred percent of shared ministries to the General Church for the third consecutive year.

Noting that this year's focus is on the ministry of "presence," Bishop Devadhar posed the question: "What does it mean to be a sacramental presence of God as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world filled with the power of the Holy Spirit?" Then, citing the life and teachings of John Wesley, he offered seven manifestations of how we live out that ministry of presence in relationship to the poor, slavery, prisons, liquor, politics, war, and education.

**The Poor.** Wesley spent much time with the poor and gave away most of his money to help others. "Wesley believed that poverty results from a misuse of community resources. He believed that God is the owner of all we have and that we are the stewards of these resources."

**Slavery.** "John Wesley adamantly opposed slavery in any form," noted Bishop Devadhar, and quoted Wesley's oft-quoted letter to William Wilberforce encouraging him to maintain his fight against slavery throughout the British Empire and ultimately against American slavery.

**Prisons.** In Wesley's day people were imprisoned not only for assorted crimes but also for simply being a debtor. Wesley visited prisoners several times a week, advocating on their behalf in the face of injustices in the penal system.

**Liquor.** Bishop Devadhar pointed out that "John Wesley also focused much attention on the sale and consumption of liquor." The abundant consumption of liquor led to poor health, a reduction of available grain to feed the poor, and diminished funds needed elsewhere.

**Politics.** While always insisting that he was a religious, not a political, leader, Wesley had an impact on society by his sermons and his printed materials. People who were of no account in the social order of that day were ennobled by the Gospel message and the opportunity to lead and serve.

**War.** "Wesley believed very deeply that Christians should be advocates of peace," said Bishop Devadhar. "While there were, for Wesley, legitimate reasons why the government could engage in war, Christians should be active peacemakers."

**Education.** "The core value of education for people called Methodists is rooted in organized educational institutions," said Bishop Devadhar. "The Methodist Revival was born in a university." Wesley was educated at his mother's side from the time he was very young, the bishop noted.

Continuing, the Bishop reflected on what it means for the Church to be a



(Photo by John C. Goodwin)

"sacramental presence of God." "We need to keep in mind the four foci of our denomination" enunciated by the General Conference, "and to find answers by asking the larger questions." Through our sacramental presence, "What can we do

- to develop principled Christian leaders for the Church and the world?"
- to create new places for new persons and renew existing congregations?"
- to engage in ministry with the poor?"
- to stamp out the killer diseases of poverty by improving health globally?"

Bishop Devadhar stated that developing principled Christian leaders for both the Church and the world is the primary task of the ministry of both laity and clergy. Leadership development is an ongoing process, and "the core value of education for people called Methodists is rooted in organized educational institutions." It is vital that we fund our theological schools so that we have educated clergy who are not excessively burdened by debt incurred by student loans.

Every local church should have small groups of people who are committed to deepening one's Christian discipleship — prayer groups, study groups, etc., he said. Over the past five years, he continued, the conference has offered excellent district resource days and district training events, along with suggestions of books for profitable study. He offered thanks to pastors and churches that have been faithfully availing themselves of these opportunities — with notable

(Continued on Page 7)

## NEW PASTORAL APPOINTMENTS

Cape Atlantic	Dennisville & S. Dennisville, Trinity Eldora Elm & Winslow Erma Green Creek Mays Landing Northfield, Good Shepherd Port Republic, St. Paul's Tuckahoe Ventnor, Trinity	Don McMahon Tom Novack Deborah Barnett Michael Smith Gerri Ridings Linda Ross Thomas Stark James Elliott James Rixon Louis Strugala, Jr.
Capital	Crosswicks & Ellisdale Ewing, Trinity Freehold Hightstown Palmyra, Epworth Pennington Roebing, Trinity Titusville	Horace Frantz, Clinton Cain Brad Motta Sylvia Massi Heidi Bak Charles Soper, Jr. Daniel Casselberry Elizabeth Vaneekhoven John Morrison
Delaware Bay	Elmer Ewan Fairton Millville, Trinity Pennsgrove, Emmanuel Pilesgrove, Sharptown Porchtown, Zion Quniton, Haven	David Repenning Charles Burton, Sr. Ayn Masker Charles D. Mitchell Sherry Zappola Jerry D. Ruff, assoc. Peter J. Broomall, Sr. Lorraine Priestley-Smith
Gateway North	Irvington, Haitian Maplewood, Morrow Memorial Montclair, First Montclair, St Mark's	Zacharie Cazeau Christopher Heckert Wayne Plumstead, Alexis Currie Edmund Martin
Gateway South	Camden, Asbury Cherry Hill, Old Orchards Collingswood, Embury Haddonfield Haddonfield, Rhoads Temple Lindenwold, Lucaston Merchantville, Trinity National Park Sicklerville	Lysette Perez Tae Youl Park Marilus Rodriguez Jessica Brendler, assoc. Alice Cook Patricia Davis Walter Mander Jungrea Chung Alan Darby

The following first-year pastoral appointments were announced by Bishop Devadhar and his appointment cabinet during the Bishop's Night at the Annual Conference, June 3.

	West Berlin, Wesley Woodbury, Kemble Memorial	June Stitzinger-Clark Michael Melbourn Harriott
Northern Shore	Barnegat Bayville, Faith Community Belford Brookville & West Creek Eatontown, Monmouth Grace Jackson Neptune City, Memorial Sea Bright Union Beach	Erik C. Hall Douglas Rea Sunghee Park Eileen Murphy Il Young Kim Joe Tiedemann Larry Oksten Jill Hubbard Smith, Misty Howick Sarah Johnette Lawton
Palisades	Dumont, Calvary Englewood, Galilee Englewood, Korean Community Haledon, Cedar Cliff Hawthorne Park Ridge Stony Point (N.Y.), Trinity & First Suffern (N.Y.) Thiells (N.Y.) West Paterson, Appenzeller	Bonnie Strain, assoc. Sherrie Dobbs Johnson Sungnam Choi Rene Y. Pak Grace Chung Sudhama Andana Jonathan Campbell Gerard J. Koob Jessica Campbell Sang Kyoo Lee
Raritan Valley	Clinton Dunellen East Brunswick, Calvary East Millstone Changewater High Bridge Lebanon, Round Valley Monroe & Spotswood South Amboy, Trinity	Amanda Hemenetz, assoc. Vijaya Kumar Sang Won Doh Joseph Gillespie Andrew Paek Andrew Paek Andrew Paek TBA Wayne Jones
Skylands	Blairstown Booton Twp: Rockaway Valley Buttville Hopatcong, Westside Lake Hopatcong & Hurdtown Landing, Port Morris Milford (Pa.) Stanhope, Waterloo Parish	Brandon Cho Carter Smith Marcia Krause Bilyk Emily Hall Paul C. Zorn Nickalay Petrov Linda L. Hale Timothy Nicinski

## 'Sacramental Presence' Involves Taking Risks, He Tells GNJAC



**FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES.** Bishop Devadhar confers with retired Bishop Felton May who attended the June meeting and has been a helpful consultant in the Newark Ministry project.

(Photo by John C. Goodwin)

(Continued from Page 6)

results — and called upon those who were not doing this to correct their course of inaction.

With regard to the itinerant system, Bishop Devadhar pointedly said: "Salary and seniority are not a basis for an appointment; it is always about mission and disciple making. We primarily use the profiles that pastors and churches have submitted or updated each year to consider where a pastor is appointed." While noting our past heritage, living fully in the present moment, and moving toward the future, "let us become the powerful circuit riders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Being a "sacramental presence of Christ" in the world involves the willingness to take risks, the bishop declared, not maintaining the status quo, but creatively applying energies and resources in new directions in order to offer Christ in ways that will reach the present generation. It is time, he said, to stop thinking in terms of "institution" (with room for a few) and embrace the "Christian movement" (with a place for everyone).

Bishop Devadhar noted that "principled Christian leaders, both clergy and laity,...refuse to be merely pew-warming Christians. They are deeply committed to engaging in a ministry with the poor, not *to* the poor or *for* the poor, but *with* the poor...They are moved, shaken, and agitated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"They, like Wesley, are in ministry with the poor, fighting the causes that perpetuate poverty directly or indirectly through things such as modern-day slavery in various forms."

He went on to share his concern that, the "ministry of presence" in terms of those who are in prison is being neglected by many local churches. This was a ministry that was very important to John Wesley, and is "needed not only to make visits and offer comfort and hope, but to advocate for justice for the incarcerated population."

"As we continue our ministry with the poor in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century," said Bishop Devadhar, "we, like Wesley, must fight against the elements of our society that perpetuate poverty and degrade the humanity of the people of God in various forms." Referring to the misuse of alcohol, so-called "recreational drugs," prescription medicines, and underage drinking, he encouraged all to heed John Wesley's example of not using grain liquor and other drugs.

"Doing ministry with the poor calls us to be Christian spokespersons for the voiceless and marginalized people in society when war or faulty immigration

### The Bishop's Benediction

Bishop Devadhar concluded his episcopal address with a unique blessing, a version of a Franciscan Benediction quoted on the website of emergent church advocate, Brian McClaren.

***"And may God bless us with just enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in the world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done: to bring justice and kindness to all our children and all our neighbors who are poor. Amen."***

policies degrade humanity by making the poor poorer," he declared. "We as Christians cannot keep quiet when our international laws and corporations go to poor countries and exploit them without giving any respect to environmental issues or when the international headquarters of those companies don't follow certain rules and regulations."

Bishop Devadhar quoted a number of disturbing statistics that pointed to the shocking disparity between worldwide expenditures on militarism as opposed to the care and feeding of children and the relief of poverty. Powerful nations have the ability to produce cruise missiles but offer no budgets to educate their children, he said. Yet, the cost of making one cruise missile would be enough to feed a school full of hungry children a lunch meal every day for 5 years. Similar examples of injustice abound on every hand and ought to prod Christians to speak up and take action, he noted.

Another area of deep concern is that of the impact of the killer diseases of poverty, HIV AIDS, and malaria. Bishop Devadhar commended the conference for its faithful participation in raising money for "Nothing But Nets" and for its support for the Central Conference Pension Initiative. He encouraged his hearers "to keep giving to the best of our ability."

Referring to a recent report to the Council of Bishops from the Connectional Table, Bishop Devadhar said, "the measures of fruits of 'planting seeds — celebrating the harvest,' are seen in five areas: worship attendance, disciples engaged in mission, professions of faith, mission giving, and spiritual discipleship formation groups. "We celebrate the fact that we are all doing it, he noted, and the statistics have proven our journey in this area. May we lead the way more powerfully and aggressively..."

Bishop Devadhar then challenged conference members to undertake the following in their respective ministry settings:

- "Read faithfully the book by Mike Slaughter, *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010).
- Constantly nurture and develop faithful, principled Christian leaders at every level of the church, district and conference. Claim the study on 'Effectively Fulfilling our Missional Responsibilities' approved by the annual conference in 2008 and apply it to every level of the Conference and let us celebrate it!
- Engage in ministry with the poor by visiting prisons and food pantries, and by boldly asking our youth groups to embrace the B1 Campaign — 'one being, being one'...
- In doing everything we can in partnering to stamp out the killer diseases of poverty and by improving health globally; by boldly partaking in the 'Imagine No Malaria' campaign of our denomination."

With regard to the latter, he encouraged participation, encouraging people to text the word "malaria" to 27722 — allowing them to give a \$10.00 donation to the malaria initiative. He thanked conference members for having donated more than \$200,000 toward the goal of raising at least \$500,000 for the "Nothing But Nets" campaign.

Bishop Devadhar asked his listeners to begin saving all of their daily "pocket change" and bring it to next year's Annual Conference Session as an offering towards buying a plane for the North Katanga Annual Conference to enable them to carry on their ministry of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in areas that are impossible to reach by road. The goal for this offering is at least \$100,000.

The bishop concluded his address by saying: "Brothers and sisters in Christ, I love you and appreciate you for who you are and thank God for the grace which is allowing me to journey with you at such an exciting moment as this."

## Drew Theological School Names Jeffrey Kuan, OT Scholar, As New Dean

MADISON — Drew University President Robert Weisbuch has announced the selection of Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan as the new dean of Drew's Theological School, succeeding Dr. Maxine Beech who recently retired.

"Jeffrey brings with him a wealth of experience and high ambition for Drew," said Dr. Weisbuch. "His commitment to theological education that addresses the challenges of the wider world will broaden our students' experience and better prepare them for leadership."

Dr. Kuan, an active member of The United Methodist Church, has served on the board of directors of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry since 2004, and looks forward to being able to serve the church as dean of one of its leading theological schools. He will be the first Asian American to serve in this capacity.

"There is a perfect match between my values and the institution's values

— a deep commitment to the church, to diversity and justice, and to academic excellence," said the new dean. "Drew is now poised to be a pioneer in reimagining and transforming theological education, and in the preparation of religious leaders and scholars for ethnically diverse and global societies."

Kuan comes to Drew from the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) and the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), both in Berkeley, California, where he has served as a professor of Old Testament since 1991.

From 2003 through 2009, Kuan served as an associate editor of "The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible." He was also an editorial board member of the "Journal of Biblical Literature" from 2000 to 2005.

Dr. Kuan began his career serving a church as an associate pastor in Malaysia. In 2002, he was ordained an elder in the California-Nevada Annual



Jeffrey Kuan

Conference. Since 2008, he has served as the vice president of the board of directors of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Kuan is co-editor of "Ways of Being, Ways of Reading: Asian American Biblical Interpretation" and the author of numerous articles, the most recent of which include "Biblical Interpretation and the Rhetoric of War and Violence," which was published in The Asia Journal of Theology, and

"Reading Race Reading Rahab: A 'Broad' Asian American Reading of a 'Broad' Other," which appeared in Postcolonial Interventions.

In addition to winning several grants and fellowships, Kuan has received numerous awards and honors throughout his career. In 2004, the Reconciling Ministries of the California-Nevada Annual Conference named him the winner of the Turtle Award for "sticking his neck out" for the LGBTQ community. He was listed in Who's Who in Biblical Studies and Archaeology in 1993 and in Who's Who Among Asian Americans in 1994.

He holds a PhD in Old Testament from Emory University, a master of theological studies degree from Southern Methodist University and a bachelor of theology degree from Trinity Theological College in Singapore.

The newly appointed dean is expected to begin in his new position in January 2011.

# Hail and Farewell Mark Traditional Ministries Celebration

In the traditional hail-and-farewell that marks the Ministries Celebration at each annual conference, retiring clergy were honored, emerging church leaders welcomed and ministerial candidates commissioned for service. One highlight of the service is the Passing of the Mantle, based on the act of the prophet Elijah, conveying authority on the younger Elisha in II Kings 2.

In the service a representative retiree says, "I transfer this mantle from our generation to the next, indicating that our responsibilities will be caught up and carried on by you..."

The candidate soon to be ordained replies, "We who come after you take up the mantle which falls to us. May we inherit a double portion of your spirit."

Then, the bishop adds an apostolic blessing, urging his hearers to "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called..."



Earlier in the service, the Rev. Kadi Billman, a GNJAC clergy member, addressed the assembly. Dr. Billman is on the staff of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Chicago.



**LOYAL TO THE END**, these 11 retiring GNJ clergy remained for the photographic ritual following the Celebration of Ministries at Annual Conference, Friday morning, June 4. The representative group of retirees was exactly half of the 22 who received the retired relationship at this session. They are (Left to Right) Robert Scott, John Painter, Lucy Martinez, Joyce Radcliffe Mayer, Hazel Shue, John Howard, Marilyn Sainsbury, Duk Kyun Lee, Robert Ralph, Franck Aguilh and Koo Yong Na. No less loyal, but not available for picture taking were Harry L. Anderson, Henry C. Anderson, Marie Burger, Willard Cotton, Eugene Errickson, Margaret Kaleh, Mona Maglone, James Sainsbury, Thomas Venebles, Carole Wagg and Clarence Wilson.



**GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.** Bishop Devadhar offers the thanks of the entire conference upon the retirement of the Rev. Pat Bruger, executive director of CUMAC/ECHO, UM outreach ministry in Paterson, for her years of dedicated service. Due to the hard work and collaboration between the Conference Board of Pensions and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, Ms. Bruger, will receive healthcare benefits in her retirement.

(Photos by John C. Goodwin)

## Smith Donation Opens Door to Spiritual Renewal



**GENEROUS GIFT.** Mr. Paul D. Smith, Jr. and Mrs. Patria Agustin-Smith present Bishop Devadhar and the Rev. Mark Earl, Conference Board of Trustee Chair with a gift of \$100,000 establishing the Agustin-Smith Endowment Fund. The Fund will provide scholarships for youth and young adults attending the spiritual pilgrimage to Taize' and other spiritual journeys. Looking on is CFA chair John Bishop.

(Photo by John C. Goodwin)

## AWARD ROUNDUP

Watch for the September issue with a roundup of conference awards presented at the June session of the Annual Conference.

## Wish List

1. Create a prayer garden
2. Fund a new mission
3. Establish a food pantry
4. Send kids to summer camp
5. Purchase the lot next door
6. Pay a church organist for one year
7. Replaced stained glass windows
8. Renovate the parsonage kitchen
9. Install ceiling fans in the nursery
10. Generate additional operating support



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# Ordination Rites Follow Wesley in Historic Tradition

Apostolic Succession, the doctrine that divine authority is conveyed by an historic, tactile link to the 12 apostles, and is the basis for episcopal ordination in liturgical churches, stands at the root of a controversy that has influenced Methodism since its inception.

When John Wesley, a lifelong Anglican, found himself increasingly shut out of the churches of his communion, he revisited the ancient doctrine and found in the course of his study that apostolic authority may be conveyed by a presbyter (elder), and is not limited to the bishops of the church.

Armed though he was with this new insight, it nevertheless took him a generation to put it into effect. Then in 1784 responding to the call from Methodists in the New World, he made the historic and decisive break, consecrating Thomas Coke as "general superintendent". (He could not bring himself to refer to him as "bishop," though granting to Coke the authority, if not the title.)

Coke subsequently first ordained and then consecrated as superintendent, Francis Asbury, who promptly took to himself the title "bishop."

This spring, as United Methodists met in annual conferences across the "connexion", bishops of the church, spiritual sons and daughters of Wesley and Asbury, carried on the ancient practice of laying on of hands, ordaining men and women to carry on the ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Among them was Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar of the Greater New Jersey Conference meeting in King-of-Prussia, Pa., joined by retired Bishop Felton May and an array of elders, affirming anew this apostolic linkage across time and space.

The Friday night service saw the ordination of 11 candidates to the Order of Elder and one to the Order of Deacon.

## The Relay and its Readers Congratulate our Ordinands

(Photos by John C. Goodwin)



The video camera, with a technology unknown to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, captures the image of the ordination of Jessica Campbell by Bishops Sudarshana Devadhar and Felton May at the GNJAC session in June. The ordination and consecration of Bishop Asbury by Thomas Coke, depicted in this 1882 engraving, had no digital recording device.

### Ordained to the Order of Elder



Thomas F. Austin



Scott H. Bostwick



Jessica M. Campbell



Husuk Chung



Eric Helms



Donnie W. Mitchell



Matthew Na



Juel Frances Nelson



Michelle Ryoo



Janice L. Sutton



Alice F. Walsh

### Ordained to the Order of Deacon



Brenda Wheeler Ehlers

### ORDINATION PRAYER

*...Give to these your servants the grace and power they need to serve you in this ministry.  
Make them faithful pastors, patient teachers, and wise counselors.  
Enable them to serve without reproach, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation,  
to administer the sacraments of the new covenant,  
and to offer with all your people spiritual sacrifices acceptable to you,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever...*

### Commissioned Clergy

### Provisional Elders

### Deacon



Jessica Brendler



Hector Burgos



Johnathan Campbell



Colleen Fitch



Amanda Hemenetz



Robyne Mayer



Loraine Priestly-Smith



Bonnie Strain

## Laity Share in Ministry of Presence, Report Holds

KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa. — Citing Bishop Devadhar's reminder that "as members of The United Methodist Church, we took vows to support our churches with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness," Conference Lay Leader Ressie Fuller, in her final laity report to the Greater New Jersey Conference, meeting here at the Valley Forge Convention Center in June, addressed the conference theme of "Disciples Transforming the World Through Presence."

Ms. Fuller quoted Bishop Joe E. Pennel, Jr., who in his book, *The Gift of Presence*, wrote that: 'The gift of presence is rooted in the belief that the living Christ is present with those who suffer. Those who desire to give help, need simply to bear witness to the Christ who is already present.' Bishop Pennel uses the example of the Good Samaritan to show how we, as followers of Christ, should respond to those who suffer."

Ms. Fuller cited James 1:27 as instruction for a ministry of presence: "Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep one's self from being polluted by the world." The emphasis of James' letter is to stress the importance of good deeds undergirded by a sustaining faith, she said.

Continuing, she assured her listeners that the laity of the Conference were not only hearers of God's word, but doers of that word as well. They have been a "sacramental presence" to the glory of God in several ways, she said.

One such way is in *developing principled leaders*. Thanks largely to the efforts of former Conference Lay Leader Jay Brown, the conference has launched a certified lay ministers program and is about "to graduate 29 of the smartest, most dedicated, well trained principled leaders" who went through ten weeks of rigorous training, study and examination — taught by a number of lay and clergy persons, including Bishop Devadhar who taught a class on the Discipline.

Other examples include the Lay Missioners Program with the Rev. Douglas Ruffle, Congregational Development Team Coordinator for the conference; a Bible Breakfast Ministry with children and youth at Wesley Church; a Bible Café at Park Avenue — St. John Church; a "Freedom School" summer program for children at Hamilton Memorial Church, Atlantic City; the "Rock of Ages Youth Ensemble" at Park Church, Bloomfield; and Spanish Lay Speaking classes at Simpson Church.

Another way of being a "sacramental presence" is by *engaging in ministry with the poor*, Ms. Fuller said. Examples include: a church in Orange is feeding hundreds of people in the park; El Redentor church in Linden, starting an English class as a ministry to the undocumented; the Sharptown Church conducting a Prison Ministry; the Chatham Church and the South Orange-Vailsburg Churches, hosting homeless persons through the Interfaith Hospitality Network; a Community Garden at Hilton Church, Maplewood; food pantries and soup kitchens in a number of local churches; a Bus-Stop ministry at Park Avenue-St. John's, East Orange, as well as "Menistry" — a men's ministry that teaches young men the art of construction and restoring homes.

Such examples of laity, along with clergy partners, are "helping to transform the world," she said. "Care for the suffering in this world is not left as an option for us as followers of Christ. Every Christian is bound to be God's presence to those who suffer."

"But James reminds us that charity without purity would be of no use," she said. "We as Christians must also walk in the way of holiness, 'without which no man or woman shall see the Lord.' We must be in the world but not of it. We must, as we are God's Presence, do everything to the Glory of God."

She noted that she had not yet said anything about what the conference young people are doing.

"They are perfectly capable and anxious to speak for themselves," she said, as she allotted five minutes of her time for the conference to Melodie Jillson, a member of the Tuckerton Church, who serves as co-president (with Albert Ramirez, a member of the Manasquan Church), of the conference Council of Youth and Young Adults. Ms. Jillson then gave her report.



**THE VOICE OF LAITY** is sounded by outgoing Conference Lay Leader Ressie Fuller who cited the New Testament book of James to underscore her message. Accompanying her is Melodie Jillson, co-president of conference youth and young adults.



**SURROUNDED** by conference leaders, Ms. Fuller receives a plaque in appreciation of her service, and with it, the prayers of Bishop Devadhar as she completes her term of service in the Lay Leader's post.

(Photos by John C. Goodwin)

## Collingswood Manor's Gene DeLeo Wins Award for Selfless Service

COLLINGSWOOD — Gene DeLeo, bus driver and activity assistant at Collingswood Manor, was named Staff Person of the Year by the New Jersey Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (NJAHSA). The Cherry Hill resident received the award at the statewide organization's annual meeting and exposition in Atlantic City June 4.

The annual award is presented to an individual who enhances the lives of people living or working within their communities, demonstrates acts of kindness, giving or selflessness to benefit others; performs his/her job in an extraordinary manner; and goes beyond the call of professional duty.

The audience responded with a standing ovation to the heartfelt acceptance speech Mr. DeLeo delivered with tearfilled eyes. NJAHSA which serves over 135 member communities affirms the enduring value of senior men and women to society, to family and to the community; promotes quality, stewardship and choice in aging services; advances mission driven values, compassionate services and public trust. DeLeo's persona exemplifies these objectives—his devotion both on and off the job is legendary.

DeLeo's acts of kindness far ex-

ceed his job title and duties, residents say, naming him "a true hero." DeLeo started making a variety of homemade soups for a couple of residents. Word rapidly traveled and the list grew as "Souper-Man" delivered heartwarming packages accompanied by a big smile. Throughout the year he prepares numerous luncheons and dinners from spaghetti and meatballs to fillet mignon and crab cakes.

On bus trips he sings and entertains, making life enjoyable for Collingswood Manor residents.

"We are very lucky and blessed to have someone like Gene working for our organization, says Lynda Hamrick, activity director, who has been his supervisor for seven years. "There is only one Gene and he is truly irreplaceable," summarized

Collingswood Manor is one of the network of United Methodist Homes scattered around the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. With over 100 years of continuous operation, the organization has grown to ten communities offering independent, residential, assisted-living, skilled nursing, short-term rehabilitation, memory support, respite, and hospice to persons of all faith backgrounds.



**MAN OF THE YEAR.** Collingswood Manor activity assistant and bus driver Gene DeLeo displays NJAGHSA plaque as Staff Person of the Year. Flanking him are (l. to r.) Collingswood activity director Lynda Hamrick, his wife Maggie, Arlene Tousaint, executive director; and Ellie Kinsey, vice president of operations of United Methodist Homes of New Jersey.

**The September Issue Deadline is August 5, 2010**

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## Middletown Team Encounters Stark Pain at Haiti Medical Clinic

Thanks to the prayers and generous support from the Middletown Church's Women's Fellowship and other church members, a team of seven traveled to Ouanaminthe, Haiti with Aslan, a Red Bank-based interdenominational youth ministry, earlier this year.

A priority for their time in Haiti was to hold an open air medical clinic for children and adults who wouldn't otherwise have access to medical care. The clinic was held at Bel Peyi (Beautiful Land) and was supplied by items purchased with funds raised by the Linwood Middle School.

Members of the team from Middletown included JoAnne Taylor, RN (pictured treating a child), Debbie Vincent, RN, Gary Kochman, Amy Peak, and Don Jengo. Others in the group from New Jersey were Carol Clark of Shrewsbury and Aliza Winer, visiting from San Diego. The nurses were able to see one hundred children and several adults, cleaning out multiple infections on feet, ankles, legs, knees and arms.

There was also a regular Sunday afternoon program, with over one hundred children in attendance. During the program, one girl stepped forward to ask for prayer for her mother. Several members of the team were invited into a small wooden hut with a tin roof



to the bedside of a 37-year-old mother (pictured below), with bedsores on her hip and leg and bleeding from her mouth and nose. The odor from her infected sores filled the room.

She had been sick for several months, and her mother had taken her to a hospital in January. However, she was turned away because she didn't have money to pay to see a doctor or to be admitted to the hospital. Ms. Vincent determined that the woman had severe edema (fluid retention and swelling of the feet and legs up to her knees) and was probably also in septic shock from an uncontrolled infection.

Vincent did what she could to clean

the woman's wounds. The next day and with much prayer, the team drove her to the hospital over twenty miles of rutted, muddy roads.

Once American doctors were located, several Haitian men grabbed the carpet beneath the woman and helped carry her into a triage tent set up by United Nations troops. The team had to return to the United

States not knowing how things turned out for this mother of young children. News came subsequently that she died

a short time later. The team members were comforted with the knowledge that they had given her the dignity of a hospital bed in which to die and doctors and nurses to care for her.

This is just one story among many. The mission team also carried 700 pounds of provisions with them that included the medical supplies, construction tools, shoes, clothing, toiletries, and toys and crafts for the children.

While the medical people were running the clinic, others were busy building a wall that represents the first step in the development of a hospital, an orphanage, and a school. The team also made time to interact with the area children.

## OBITUARIES

**GEORGE WATT, JR.**, retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Conference and former Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, died June 20, 2010. A memorial service is being planned for late September.

Mr. Watt served as an associate pastor of First Church, Plainfield (1948-1950); then as pastor of Hilton Church, Maplewood (1950-1956); Simpson Grace Church, Jersey City (1956-1962); and the Caldwell Church (1962-1966). He was appointed district superintendent for the Southern District of the former Northern New Jersey Conference from 1966 to 1971. He then served as pastor of the Ridgewood Church (1971-1984). In 1984 he was appointed Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, and retired in 1992.

Written messages of condolence may be sent to his daughter, Ms. Debra Anderson, 19 Wiltshire Dr., Boonton Township, NJ 07005.

Memorial donations may be sent to The United Methodist Homes of New Jersey, 3311 Route 33, Neptune, NJ 07753 and designated for the sound system at the Dorothy W. Watt and George Watt, Jr. Chapel at Bristol Glen.

**MARGARET W COUSINS**, a retired local pastor of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died July 3, 2010. A memorial service was held July 10 at the Haddonfield Church.

Ms. Cousins' entered formally into ministry in 1997 at East Pennsauken. She also served Colonial Manor Church, Woodbury, before her retirement in 2002. In recent years she served as chaplain of Pitman Manor. She was also a member of the American Guild of Organists.

She is survived by two children and eight grandchildren. Messages of condolence may be sent to Karen Bolger, 2120 Horseshoe Road, Warrington, PA 18976 or to Scott Cousins, 902 N. Market St. Apt. 827, Wilmington, DE 19801.

Memorial gifts may be directed to the Music Fund of the Haddonfield United Methodist Church, 29 Warwick Road, Haddonfield, NJ 08033.

**MARGARET "PEGGY" PARKER**, died on Wednesday, May 19, 2010. A memorial service was held at Hope United Methodist Church on June 7, 2010.

At the time of her death she was serving as pastor of the Glendale Church, a congregation associated with Hope Church. She was for many years employed in the pharmaceutical industry in Cherry Hill.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Hope United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 914, Voorhees.

**ROGER GEYER**, retired elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died May 28, 2010, at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. A private memorial service will be held at a later date.

Mr. Geyer served as pastor of the Anderson, Changewater, and Port Colden Churches (1955-1958); the Barryville and Eldred Churches (1958-1960); the Rockaway Church (1960-1983) and the Bergen Highlands Church (1983-1994). He retired in 1994.

Messages of condolence may be sent to Mr. Geyer's widow, Nancy Geyer, at 210 Cokesbury Circle, Lake Junaluska, NC 28745-8760. Memorial donations may be sent to the Building Fund, First United Methodist Church of Waynesville, 566 South Haywood St., Waynesville, NC 28786, or to the Junaluska Assembly, P.O. Box 67, Lake Junaluska, NC 28745.

**MARY ELIZABETH WHITFIELD POYNER**, a retired diaconal minister, died June 1, 2010 in Tinton Falls. A memorial service was held June 12, 2010 at the Red Bank Church where she served for many years.

A teacher by profession, Mrs. Poyner was head of the Children's Program at the Red Bank and Wayside churches.

She is survived by her husband, William Arthur Poyner; and three children, Marilyn, David and Scott, four grandchildren and three step grandchildren. Message of caring may be directed to her spouse, Art Poyner, 508 Heron Pt., Tinton Falls, NJ 07753-77680.

Memorial donations may be sent to the Scholastic Assistance Fund of the United Methodist Church of Red Bank, 247 Broad St., Red Bank, NJ 07701-2009.

**CHARLES E. (CHUCK) JONES**, lay member to the Greater NJ Annual Conference representing the First United Methodist Church of Haddon Heights, died June 27, 2010. A funeral service was held July 2 in Oaklyn.

A retired employee of PSE&G utility company, he was a member of the Haddon Heights Church, active in its life and leadership.

Mr. Jones is survived by his spouse, Joan Little Jones, a son, the Rev. Wayne Jones, two daughters, Cynthia Maksin and Pamela Alekseyev and 11 grandchildren.

Messages of condolence may be sent to his widow, Joan Jones, 27 N. Oak Avenue, Mt. Ephraim, NJ 08059.

Memorial donations may be made to the Heifer Project, c/o of First United Methodist Church of Haddon Heights, 704 Garden Ave., Haddon Heights, NJ 08035-1840

### Sparta-Newton Concert Yields \$2,000 for Haiti

Led by the combined choirs of the Sparta and Newton churches, music lovers in this Skylands District area enjoyed a journey, May 15 – a journey through the church year, and a journey to the beleaguered island of Haiti. The occasion was a concert to benefit the work in Haiti of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Approximately \$2,000 was raised, thanks to the offerings of the audience, enhanced by "special angels" giving \$25, \$50, or \$100 gifts.

Interlaced with songs of the liturgical year were reminders that the challenges in Haiti are going to be there for years to come. The concert concluded with the Epiphany hymn of outreach, "Lord You Give the Great Commission".

In traditional Methodist fashion, the evening ended with a pot-luck dinner.

CD's are available for \$10 each, including postage, from the Newton Church, but supply is limited. Most of those dollars also go to the Haiti donation.

Sparta Pastor Diane Koob and Newton Pastor Dorothy Dann offered prayers and scripture to introduce seasonal selections led by the two churches' music directors, Richard Kelley and Richard Harley. Matt Querns, "shared" youth director also participated, as did the Sparta Bell Choir.

Messages from recent visitors to Haiti included a letter from the Rev. Frank Aguilh, a Haitian pastor in Montclair, and a Haitian Roman Catholic Priest. They made the audience aware of the conditions in the Caribbean island.

"There were many wonderful results from this effort," noted Mr Harley. "Two congregations became closer and will remain so, and we did God's work at the same time. The greatest result would be to see these results becoming exponential. We had fun, you would too!"

A limited supply of CD's of the concert are available from the Newton Church.

## Church Relations Director United Methodist Homes of NJ

Under the direction of the Vice President Advancement, the Church Relations Director will implement giving strategies that will benefit United Methodist Homes, United Methodist Churches and identified ministries. The director will work as a member of the Advancement team to coordinate efforts to identify, cultivate and solicit prospects and serve as a resource for planning and execution of capital campaigns and major gifts programs.

Qualifications: B.A. from an accredited university or college.

Experience: 3-5 years of experience in fundraising analysis, materials and activities, stewardship experience preferably in a church setting. Experience with solicitation of pastors, ministers, church lay leaders and members. Membership and active participation in the life of the church both at the local church and judicatory level in a lay or clergy capacity for at least 5 years.

Job skills: Ability to identify, cultivate and solicit prospects. High quality of both written and verbal interpersonal and communication skills.

Job Knowledge: Knowledge of all fundraising vehicles and programs and fundraising software and data management systems.

Compensation: Competitive salary and benefits.

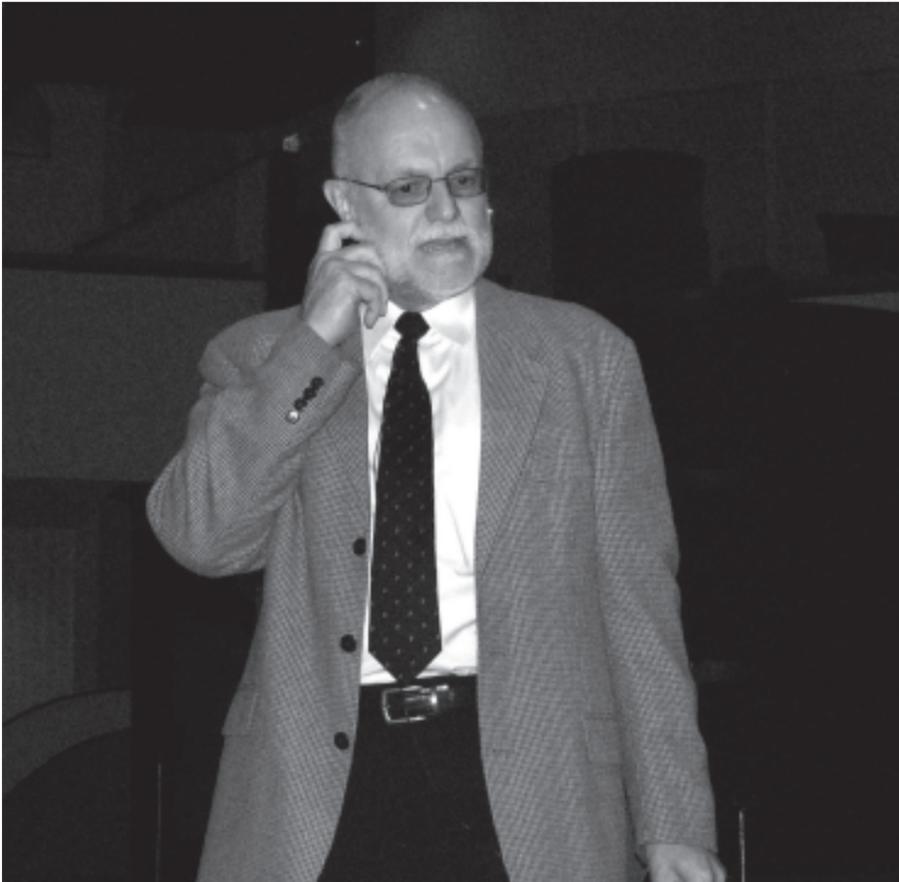
Contact: Luise Didato at 732-922-9800 ext. 131 or [ldidato@umh-nj.org](mailto:ldidato@umh-nj.org).

## Conference Speakers



**WITTY AND ERUDITE**, like SMU Old Testament Scholar John Holbert (below), or **Passionate and Powerful** like North Carolina's Stephanie Hand (above), the two guest speakers at the GNJAC session at the Valley Forge Convention Center held conference members in rapt attention. For Dr. Holbert, it was in depicting the power of presence, relating to the conference theme, in the lives of two Old Testament stalwarts, Moses and Ruth. For Ms. Hand it was some old fashioned sawdust trail rhetoric that ended in two altar calls filling the front of the hall with respondents. (photo below).

(Photos by John C. Goodwin and Robin E. Van Cleef)



Led by conference youth members, (l.), older adults surge forward in a response reminiscent of evangelistic altar calls of another era.

## VITAL CONGREGATIONS

### Planning Sermons in the Summertime

By Douglas Ruffle

Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC



Summertime affords an opportunity to do long-range planning for sermons. Preachers who take time during the summer would be wise to plan out as far as possible. Some preachers plan out a year or two in advance. Here is a simple methodology taken from a preaching professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, the Rev. Dr. Randall Nichols. Think of sermon planning as three gradations of focus, as in the power strength of a microscope. For summertime planning, we begin with the largest picture, planning to the power of 10. Later, as we get closer to a preaching date, the focus gets more intense as we fill in details (20 and 30 power

planning). Dr. Nichols offered the following worksheet:

- Date: Liturgical Date:  
 Sermon Series Title or Lectionary Date:  
 Texts:  
 Title:  
 Special Events (Baptism? Communion? New Members?)  
 Own "Life Story" Connection  
 (What of pivotal importance to me is being expressed?)  
 A. Purpose (What do I want to accomplish?) (objective)  
 B. Theme (What will it be a story about?)

A good suggestion by Dr. Nichols and others is to spend quality time in the summer to fill out the above worksheet for as far out as possible — even up to two years. Once this "10 power" planning is completed, you can begin to work on 20 and 30 power planning for sermons to be preached in the upcoming month.

Begin by reading the texts for the sermon. What jumps off the page the first time I read a passage? How is this scripture reading me? Then do research on the passage from the experts.

#### TWENTY-POWER PLANNING (The Preacher and the Passage)

- A. Context of Passage (historical, scriptural, editorial)  
 B. Theological Subject (i.e. vocation? salvation? knowledge of God? Problem of evil? grace? etc.)  
 C. Point of Contact (Where does the text touch our personal concern?)  
 D. Obstacles to Communication (What makes a text difficult to talk about, read or understand? What are the obstacles we will face as we try to make our way through it?)  
 E. Central Idea of Passage (What is its "central proposition," the inner thread of its meaning?)  
 F. Sermon Idea

#### THIRTY-POWER PLANNING (The Preacher, The Passage, and The People)

- A. Contract (The listener asks, "Why am I listening to this? What are we doing here?)  
 B. Relevance (If the Gospel is an answer, just what was the question? What life concerns of theirs and yours is this sermon touching? Why do I need this?)  
 C. Responsibility (What am I supposed to do? Does the sermon free people to cope with problems of their lives, care for their neighbors and responsibilities, respond in depth to God's promise of freedom, creativity and love?)  
 D. Role (What kind of company am I in? What kind of group would this have to be to believe, feel, act on this message and behave accordingly?)

Whether you preach from the lectionary or preach series, it makes sense to plan out sermons ahead of time and to set aside time each week to work the details of your plan. May this summer be fruitful in the plans you make to preach the Word of God.

### Relay Online Back in Service

The electronic version of the Relay has been somewhat interrupted this summer. With the coming of fall, however, we hope to have things back on schedule while we make adjustments in accordance with the Conference Communications reorganization.

Already the archived issues of the Relay are on line through the June issue. Soon after it's publication, this issue will also be uploaded.

The Gospel Lessons feature, offering informal comments on the lectionary Gospel lessons each week, suspended for much of the summer, will be resumed effective September 1.

We appreciate your patience and encourage you to continue to log on to [UMRelay.org](http://UMRelay.org).



### New "Selections" C.D. From Marcia's Melodies



Marcia and Chuck Hendron have produced a C.D. named "Selections". It is a culmination of 20 years of writing music to honor the Lord. Included are solos, several fine choir numbers, a quartet, The Canticle in C, featuring the Magnificat, Simeon's Song as well as two "Glorias". You will hear two of Marcia's hymns sung by the audience, and a Benediction. These "Selections", were taken from three of Marcia's concerts, and are graced with appropriate comments by Chuck. You will enjoy this one!

A new hymn, named "Mary" has been composed by Marcia J. Hendron. "Mary" is about the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, from his mother's point of view. She was an extraordinary woman. This hymn is a tribute to her faith in an Almighty God, her endurance, and her calm assurance that "With God all things are possible". "Mary" was planned as a song for use in women's ministries. However, Marcia has been encouraged to develop it into a simple hymn, and then, into an anthem. These will be composed later in the summer. The C.D. (at a cost of \$ 15.00) and indeed, all of Marcia's music, is available to you either at Hendron's home, or at the Auditorium Bookstore.

Chuck & Marcia Hendron  
 32 Pitman Ave.  
 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756  
 Phone: 732-988-3191 or at  
[marciasmelodies@verizon.net](mailto:marciasmelodies@verizon.net)



Auditorium Bookstore  
 (Opening May 15, 2010)  
 27 Pilgrim Pathway  
 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756  
 Phone: 732-774-9262

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STILL CHANGING THE WORLD

# Medford and Palmyra Youth 'Make Connections' in B-1 Event

"Making Connections" was the theme earlier this spring when 70 youth from the Medford and Epworth churches participated in a B1 Event held at the Medford Church. And making connections is what they did – connections between their gifts and the communities they support.

On Friday evening the youth participated in a series of workshops and activities focused on hunger, clean water, health and justice. In the clean water workshop the youth simulated the challenges faced by people who do not have the "luxury" of running water in their homes as they gathered and delivered a daily supply of water to their family.

Friday evening concluded with a time of devotion and the opportunity to connect and speak with Mozart Adevu, through Skype about his missionary work with UMCOR's Sustainable Agriculture and Development Program in Ghana, Africa. Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet.

Saturday provided a time for relaxation and service. The youth participated in service projects at food banks at Philabundance in Philadelphia and at Turning Point Church in Trenton. At Philabundance, two groups of youth packaged 1601 senior citizen food kits. This totaled 44,828 pounds of food for distribution in the region.

At the Turning Point Church food bank the group sorted and organized food, canned goods and clothing for distribution to the local community.

The event concluded with a worship



**LONG DISTANCE CONNECTION.** Using the services of Skype internet linkage, youth from Medford and Epworth Church, Palmyra, converse with Mozart Adevu about his missionary work with UMCOR. The trans-Atlantic exchange came as part of a B-1 weekend to sensitize youth to hunger.

service and communion led the the Medford church's praise band, "No Excuses", the clergy from the Medford and Epworth churches, Bishop Devadhar and Capital District Superintendent Robert Smith.

Following worship the youth enjoyed a "Breaking the Fast" breakfast buffet prepared by the Medford Church. \$4,331 was raised to support Advance Projects.

The B-1 program was developed in the Greater New Jersey Conference and has been adopted by the General Board of Global Ministries.

## Hurville Teams Fan Out Through Community to Change the World

HURVILLE – Bethel Church here celebrated Change the Word Weekend as 22 members gathered on Sunday, April 25, for a brief service of prayer and commissioning, before leaving to Worship Outside the Walls (W.O.W.!) with our hands and hearts.

"We divided into teams to go out into the surrounding community," writes the Rev. Carol Davies. "One group went to Atkinson Park, and helped clean up the trails. Three children on this team had the opportunity to tell the people they met about their church, and why they were there, after an impromptu lesson from the adults about caring for God's creation and serving their community."

Another team, composed of members of the choir, traveled to nearby Pitman Manor, one of the United Methodist Homes, to provide a choir for the worship service there. Afterward, they heard from residents about what it meant to them to have a choir in their service.

One Manor resident, Mrs. Gladys Batten, also a member of Bethel, joined in by providing the readings that accompanied one of the songs that were sung.

The third team assembled fruit baskets, which they then took out to local emergency services personnel, police officers, EMT's and ambulance squad members, and the staff in the Emergency Room at the local hospital. They were presented with the baskets, along with expressions of gratitude for their sacrifice and service to our community.

The following Sunday, all the teams were invited to share their experience with the whole congregation.

"All agree that even if this does not become an annual event for the general Church, it will be for us!", Ms. Davies concluded.



**WOW! WAS THE WORD** as this mission team, from Bethel Church, Hurville, "worships outside the walls" to do their bit to "Change the World". This group of 6, with a boost from a park ranger (l.), clears trails. They are (l. to r.) Nicholas Morrett, Rick Hess, Olivia Morrett, Pat Johnston, Arianna Middleton and John Davies.



**FILL-ABUNDANT** is the task of these Medford/Palmyra B-1ers, and they live up to their catchy assignment. Packaging citizen food kits for Philabundance, a Philadelphia food pantry, their day's work totaled 1601 kits or 44,828 pounds of food for distribution.

## Hispanic Church Offers Oasis to Families as Alternative to Hot Pleasantville Summer

PLEASANTVILLE – It may not seem like enough to change the world, but it just might be enough to create a little oasis for Pleasantville families after a hot June day. And so, Oasis United Methodist Church offered a free Movie Night for all families in the community.

The place: The church parking lot, where 92 persons – most of them children – gathered for the event. All in attendance received free sodas, juice, water, nachos with cheese and popcorn.

Luz T. Young, coordinator of the congregation's outreach team explained that this is part of Oasis' comprehensive community outreach vision which includes an Emergency Food Pantry, family oriented events, recreational and educational programs for children and youth, and support groups for women, men and marriage enrichment.

For more information on the Oasis program, contact the Rev. Hector A. Burgos, pastor, at (609) 484 1141.

Come to think of it, maybe it will change the world.





## Youth Weekend 2010 "The NOW!!!"

*Do not let anyone treat you as if you are unimportant because you are young. Instead, be an example to the believers with your words, your actions, your love, your faith, and your pure life.*  
- 1 Timothy 4:12

**NEW THIS YEAR!!!!**  
**Registration available**  
**ONLINE ONLY!!!**  
**Only \$35 a person.**  
**<http://www.gnjumc.or>**  
**Click on Youth Weekend Link!**

A weekend of music, workshops, guest speakers, fellowship and more. This three-day event is held every year for Senior High (9-12th grade only) Youth and their youth workers.



### Music by Group I Crew

Sunday morning we will all gather at the Music Pier in Ocean City for our closing worship with Bishop Devadhar. After worship we encourage your youth groups to hang out at the beach and enjoy the fellowship.



### Guest Speaker Tony Cruz

**Check the conference website for details**



## Thinking Aloud

### Jesus is my Homeboy

By Krista Hendrickson

Jesus Christ is my homeboy, although he hasn't always been. And in case you're unaware of the meaning behind "homeboy", I tend to define it as a good friend, a great friend, a fantastic friend.

Jesus and me? We're tight. We hang out on the weekends. We share the same classes. He helps me with my biology homework. But like I said we weren't always such good friends. Instead, Jesus was more of my back-up friend.

I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. You probably have one. It's the friend you go to when there's just nothing else to do; or if one of your "real" friends are either bothering or annoying you. For the longest time Jesus was that back-up friend for me. I'd hang out with him in church on Sundays because it was convenient.

For the most part, he was the only one around; he became a nice break from some of my annoying regular friends. But during the rest of the week I had better things to do. I had more important friends to hang out with.

But you know the worst part of this relationship I had with Jesus, is the fact that for the longest time I thought it was okay. I believed having Jesus as nothing more than a back-up friend was what the church wanted.

As I grew older and moved on to my junior and senior years of high school I began to realize that I required more than just a back-up friend in Jesus.

It was one of my friends from school that walked into class with a "Jesus is my homeboy" T-shirt on. I laughed the first time I saw it. I mean it was funny; a joke. But as I asked my friend why

she got this shirt, she began to seriously describe to me her relationship with Jesus Christ: how close they were, how tight they were, how intertwined they were. To be honest, I was jealous.

I wanted that relationship with Jesus. I wanted a best friend who wouldn't leave me to hang out with someone they thought was cooler or a friend who wouldn't put a crush on a boy or a girl over the friendship. I wanted a best friend who would have my back no matter what I did; who would love me for me no matter who I was, but who would also help me to become a better person as our friendship grew.

See, Jesus Christ is that perfect best friend. He's not only the way, the truth, and the life; he's the best friend you can call at all hours in the night. He's the guy you can tell anything to. He's the guy you can believe in, trust in, listen to, and most importantly he's that person you can look up to.

From the moment I saw that shirt I made it my goal to have Jesus Christ as my homeboy, my best friend. Giving Jesus that status helped me to not only accept and appreciate myself, but it helped me to be a strong, more confident person as I made that transition into college.

So as you take a look at the relationship you have with Jesus, ask yourself: Where do you stand?

Is he your back-up friend?  
Is he your sometimes friend?  
Best friend?

Are you ready to take the step and accept Jesus Christ as your homeboy? Or are you satisfied with just another back-up? The choice is yours.

## Latinos: Oppressed in the Land of Milk and Honey

*The current intense interest in the immigration issue evokes strong opinions and ardent feelings on all sides. Here is the first of a two-part article by a Latina pastor in the GNJ conference.*

By Eunice Vega-Perez

*Adapted from an article in the United Methodist Reporter and used by permission*

"Jesus Christ is the incarnated Verb; it is God's action for humanity. God sent Jesus Christ to live among us, to teach us how to love and live in community. Jesus' life and actions reveal a God of justice, love, hope, and liberation for all humanity. All of God's children are people with purpose and promise."

This is my conviction as a woman of faith rooted in the Wesleyan tradition; I reaffirm that there is no holiness without social holiness.

Today, there are a lot of things happening and many decisions being made addressing the issue of Immigration in the United States. As a result of this, new laws are emerging. These decisions will negatively impact the lives and families of the children of God, in this country without documentation, many of them Latinos. Weaving my own personal journey as a Latina Christian woman living in this country and with a profound faith and commitment, I write this article.

### My Own Personal Story

I have been living in this country for more than 20 years. My husband Sam and I came to the United States not out of desperation, poverty or unemployment but as young professionals looking for a great opportunity for growth in many areas of our lives. We came here to have a different work experience, to live another culture, to improve our English skills, and so on. Since Puerto Rico is a part of the United States, going back and forth between the States and the island to visit my family is not an issue. I have had full and easy access.

I was very young with an adventurous heart, embracing this change in my life with open arms and optimism. In my mind, this change was temporary: I was coming to the USA only for a while and then returning home. But God had other plans for my life!

One of the first things I did when I arrived in New Jersey was to find a place to worship God since worship has always been a priority in my life. However, it was imperative for me that worship be in my own mother tongue. That's how I found the United Methodist Church!

It was at First Church, Dover, that I had the blessing and opportunity to meet many Latinos from different countries. I heard their stories and experiences of coming to this country, which were perhaps a little different than mine. However, almost 90 percent of this small congregation happened to have some kind of legal documentation. Immigrants with legal documentation in this country have better opportunities to succeed in the areas of socio-economics. They have a better chance to adjust and be accepted by others. But legal documentation does not eradicate the many injustices immigrants face on a daily basis, though it helps to a certain degree to alleviate their pain and struggle.

After a few years of living in New Jersey, I thought it was time for me to go back to my country and family. In the midst of my plans of moving back, God called me into ministry. That meant making the conscious decision to raise my children away from any immediate family — grandparents, aunts and uncles — to support and strengthen the nuclear family. In order to respond faithfully to my call it meant going back to school as I balanced work and raising three children under the age of six years old. But through spiritual discernment and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, I have been able to understand and accept that God's call is not about convenience but about faithfulness. I have also been able to understand that we have to lose in order to gain, and in the midst of this paradox, God's will becomes a reality in our lives.

When it was time for my first appointment, I was sent to a church that changed my life and the DNA of my ministry forever. This church made the conscious decision to be an inclusive, multi-cultural church, to welcome the stranger, but more than that, to make the stranger a part of the family. As a witness for Jesus Christ, they understood God had entrusted them with the good news that they must share freely with others with a great sense of responsibility. It was in this church, located in a town which, like many others is experiencing significant change, that I met many children of God who are also undocumented immigrants.

When I began to share in community, breaking bread together, I understood that these persons were children of God with stories of hope and faith; stories of survival, of courage and pain. Their stories became the stories of the entire faith community and their pain became our pain.

These children of God, who are increasing in numbers in this nation, are oppressed, marginalized and persecuted because they are immigrants without the proper documentation. They have come to the United States because it is a country that is recognized world-wide for its resources and many opportunities. It is "a land flowing with milk and honey," seen by these persons in a way much like the Israelites in the Old Testament who saw the promised land as a place of prosperity and a land full of resources.

**To be continued.**

*(The Rev. Eunice Vega-Perez is a clergy member of the GNJAC and associate pastor of Trinity Church, Hackettstown. Beyond the local church she serves on the MARCHA Education for Advocacy Task Force.)*



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## OPPORTUNITY FILE

A roundup of coming events in the Greater New Jersey Conference and beyond. Send items of conference-wide interest to the Opportunity File at [Editor@umrelay.org](mailto:Editor@umrelay.org) or UMRelay, 1 Mayflower Ct., Whiting, NJ 08759.

### July 9-19 — Taize Pilgrimage

GNJAC — Annual pilgrimage to the retreat center in France. Pray for our pilgrims in their travels and in their inward journey.

### July 11 - 25 — South Seaville Camp Meeting

SOUTH SEAVILLE — Kentucky evangelist Larry Sears Nichols will top the list of leaders of this 21st Century adventure in renewal and revival. FFI: Contact the South Seaville Camp Meeting Association, 188 Dennisville Road, South Seaville, NJ or e-mail: [info@southseavillecampmeeting.org](mailto:info@southseavillecampmeeting.org)

### July 23 - 25 — School of Christian Mission

CALDWELL — "Faith, Hope, Love in Action" will be the theme of this annual Cooperative School of Christian Mission jointly sponsored by the GNJAC and UMW at Caldwell College here. Study themes will include a survey of the Letters of John, Sudan, Global Christianity and a discovery of the Joy of Simplicity under the heading of "Enough." Learning, fun and fellowship for everyone — laity and clergy, women and men. One day children's session as well. FFI: See May Relay ([umrelay.org](http://umrelay.org), p.3) or log on to the conference website, [gnjumc.org](http://gnjumc.org).

### July 29 - August 2 — School of Congregational Development

NASHVILLE — Jointly sponsored by the Board of Discipleship and the Board of Global Ministries, this annual school offers top speakers and workshop leaders focused this year on the theme "Creating Missional Disciple-growing Faith Communities of Jesus Christ" FFI: Log on to [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org) and click on listing under Upcoming Events.

### July 30 — Ocean Grove Camp Meeting

OCEAN GROVE — The Great Auditorium will reverberate with Gospel preaching and music in this 141st renewal of the annual event that dates back to 1869. FFI: Contact [www.oceangrove.org](http://www.oceangrove.org).

### September 13 — Clergy Mentor Training

MULLICA HILL — All new "mentees" (newly commissioned and local pastors in course of study), new mentors and existing mentors in need of refresher training (those who have not attended training in the last three years) are required to attend. Running from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., it begins with continental breakfast; lunch will be provided. Mentors and mentees who wish to meet on that day are welcome to remain following the 1 p.m. close. RSVP to Veronika Varga, [vvarga@gnjumc.org](mailto:vvarga@gnjumc.org). FFI: Direct questions to Tanya Linn Bennett, [tbennett@drew.edu](mailto:tbennett@drew.edu).

### September 10 - 12 — Youth Weekend

OCEAN CITY — NOW is the time. NOW is the theme of this annual September date with sun and surf for youth 9th through 12th grades. Fun, faith and fellowship in an awesome mix. Performances by Group 1 Crew, Tony Cruz and more. Register on line any time [gnjumc.org](http://gnjumc.org). FFI: Check next month's edGe page.

### September 27 - 28 — Order of St. Luke Retreat

OCEAN CITY — The order within United Methodism dedicated to liturgical renewal will meet at th Oceanaire beginning with a Monday potluck. FFI: mail Jeanette Block at [revblock@aol.com](mailto:revblock@aol.com).

### October 14 - 25 — Adult Taize Pilgrimage

GNJAC — This second adult journey to the Taize retreat center in France will offer 30-somethings and older a glimpse of the spiritual nurture conference youth have been experiencing for several years.

### October 16 — Church Development Event

MOORESTOWN — A Conference-wide event on the Principles of Church Health and Growth at the Moorestown Church will feature Dave Wetzler, publisher of Natural Church Development resources. See details in announcement on page 3.

## Virginia Conference endorses anti-tobacco resolution

UMNS — NORFOLK, Va. — Leaders of The United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ recently endorsed the Faith United Against Tobacco in Virginia Resolution. It calls for comprehensive policies in the state to reduce smoking, particularly among children, including increasing the state tobacco tax, funding tobacco prevention and cessation programs, and making all workplaces smoke-free. "By endorsing this resolution, we United Methodists have made a clear commitment to policies that will save lives...from tobacco-caused illness and death," said United Methodist Bishop Charlene Kammerer of the Virginia Annual (regional) Conference.

## Bristol Glen Offers Spiritual Life Scholarship

The senior residents of Bristol Glen Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), United Methodist Homes of New Jersey, are once again offering a \$500.00 scholarship to recognize the outstanding academic performance and leadership skills of a theological student.

Applicants must be New Jersey residents, be enrolled in a seminary accredited by The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and have a B academic average.

Interested applicants may download the Scholarship Information Sheet and the Scholarship Application at [www.umh-nj.org](http://www.umh-nj.org) by going to Our Communities/Bristol Glen/News/Bristol Glen Scholarship/Read More and may contact The Rev. John D. Callanan, Chaplain, Bristol Glen, 200 Bristol Glen Drive, Newton, New Jersey 07860, 973-300-5788 x2113, [jcallanan@bristolglen.org](mailto:jcallanan@bristolglen.org) to request additional information. The deadline for submitting a scholarship application is JULY 30.

## CONFERENCE MUSIC MAKERS



**MUSIC TEAM.** Led by Mark Miller (right), a skilled team of musicians provided the Annual Conference at Valley Forge Convention Center a seamless tapestry of music throughout the 3-day session.

(Photo by John C. Goodwin)

## Drew Offers Music Institute July 29 – 31

MADISON — GNJ's Mark Miller, music leader, director of music and Composer-in-Residence at UM-related Drew University, and the Rev. Tanya Linn Bennett, director of the chapel and associate chaplain at Drew, will lead a three-day institute for church musicians and worship leaders, July 29-31. The program is designed to develop new skills to feed the spiritual appetites of a new generation.

The institute will include:

- Plenary sessions and workshops led by renowned and experienced musicians, preachers and worship leaders
- A dual workshop track: music master classes and liturgy/worship workshops providing hands-

on practical and creative experiences

- Group sessions demonstrating team-based approaches to creating holistic worship
- Exciting evening events demonstrating the techniques emphasized in plenaries and workshops. Open to the public at a modest admission cost to non-SMI participants.)

Additional information and registration is available by logging on to the Drew website at [www.drew.edu/theo/cue/smi](http://www.drew.edu/theo/cue/smi), or by contacting Nancy VanderVeen, coordinator of continuing education, at [nvanderveen@drew.edu](mailto:nvanderveen@drew.edu) or (973) 408-3084.

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