

'The Holy Spirit has been working for this day for generations...'

— Bishop E. Roy Riley

EAST BRUNSWICK — Hundreds of clergy and laity from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference and the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) gathered here Oct. 9 to celebrate a common faith and the historic Full Communion agreement that has been 30 years in the making.

"The Holy Spirit has been working for this day for generations and now it is here," proclaimed Lutheran Bishop E. Roy Riley.

The celebration began with a full clergy processional that had hundreds of clergy witnessing to their faith as they walked down Ryders Lane from Aldersgate Church to Calvary Korean Church, led by youth who proudly waved red streamers in celebration of the historic service. The service was joy-filled, with praises being sung out by a Festival Ecumenical Choir directed by Mark Miller, instructor in church music and Composer in Residence at Drew University Theological School.

During his sermon, Bishop Riley commented on the symbolism that the clergy had been called to gather between Aldersgate, where John Wesley had his heart-warming experience, and Calvary, where Jesus was crucified on the cross.

Bishop Riley's sermon was based on Luke 17:11-19, in which Jesus heals 10 lepers. He told the story of the 9 lepers who disappeared after their healing and the one who stayed, thanking Jesus.

"Where are the other nine?" Bishop Riley asked. "It's a question for the crowd (who had gathered) and for us. We could be any one of those nine — healed, yes, but leaving the rest of the gift behind."

After being reminded by the Lutheran Bishop of the gift of grace we are each offered, Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar presided over the Service of Holy Communion, the sacrament of grace.

Bishop Devadhar said he was excited to celebrate a new milestone in our ecumenical journey as two ecclesiastical bodies.



"At the celebration of the full communion agreement we witnessed passionate worship, powerful preaching of the word, and a joyful and spirit-filled Holy Communion service," commented Bishop Devadhar following the service. "The grand processional of ELCA and UMC clergy, lay leaders, youth and Bishops, and the presentations of what the Full Communion means and how it is lived by two outstanding theologians is symbolic witness of ecumenism at its best."

"While continuing to keep our own identities, the ELCA and the UMC can now recognize the catholicity and apostolicity of each other," he said. "As both churches have joyfully and enthusiastically celebrated today, the Full Communion agreement now allows the communicants of each Church to partake freely and openly at one another's altar. Also, it allows the ordained clergy of each denomination to celebrate the Holy Communion at one another's church."

(Continued on page 9)

A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM. Led by children and youth, a clergy procession moves from Aldersgate Church to Calvary Korean Church in East Brunswick, Oct. 9, initiating the joyous Full Communion Celebration. Below are service leaders Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, Dean Paul Rajashekar of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Lutheran Bishop E. Roy Riley, and the Rev. Tanya Linn Bennett, director of the chapel and religious life at Drew University.



FULFILLMENT OF HOPE. Clergy and laity from across the Greater New Jersey Area join their Lutheran counterparts at Calvary Korean UMC, East Brunswick, for the joyous celebration of an agreement ratified last year providing for mutual sharing of sacramental ministry.



PREPARING THE SACRAMENT. Bishops Devadhar and Riley consecrate the sacred elements for the shared Eucharist as worship leaders from Drew and Lutheran Seminary assist.

EDITORIAL

I Don't Write Poetry Anymore

Someone, a Relay reader, a short time ago, confronted me with an accusation that drew an immediate "Guilty" plea.

"You don't write poetry anymore," my confronter said. There was a mix of challenge and regret in the speaker's voice. In my chest, I echoed my own silent regret.

"You're right," I said. And my chin dropped to my chest for a moment before I forced it up, reflexively, defensively. "I don't. Or hardly ever." I thought of the good old glory days when my byline would appear in one publication or another. Then in a futile attempt at self justification I stammered out a recital of one or two fairly recent attempts at verse, only to hear myself trail off into nothingness.

"No, I guess you're right. I don't write poetry anymore." The encounter drove me into a bout of introspection and depressed silence. Why? What happened to my muse? What had become of the marshaled metric parade of simile and metaphor, the rhythmic flow of word and thought?

Was it a matter of age? An easy excuse. Too easy. For many a poet has continued creatively into their dotage.

Was it a question of time? Well, that was part of it, I guess. And then I remembered a wise saying: We have time for what really matters to us. What is the reason then?

If truth were told, I guess I'd have to admit that the glow of life has dimmed somewhat. The highs and lows that give life its excitement and awaken exuberance, had flattened into a dull plateau of sameness. And when that happens, all the pressing concerns of life and culture and crisis gnaw away at the soul.

Maybe we all have those seasons when the muse has fled. What remedy can we find in such a circumstance?

We don't have to look far. The poem that is the unfolding rhythm of the calendar give us a hint. God writes the poetry in stanzas of the seasons.

When summer heat and humidity bring exhaustion, God writes Autumn and paints the world in variegated hues.

When fall gales have stripped the trees of foliage, and all is stark about us, God offers blessing and awakens in our hearts an anthem of Thanksgiving.

And as the old year dies, God leads us on an Advent trail from Nazareth to Bethlehem, stirring our soul, quickening our step, and evoking from lip and heart the joyous carols of the season.

When winter's icy breath seems to have had the last word, God touches earth again, and crocus and daffodil spring forth.

No, I don't write much poetry anymore, but there is someone who does. Some One. And we can thank God-the-Poet for reawakening us all to beauty and wonder — and life.

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A Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:
Greetings in the precious name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



In his editorial in the October 5, 2010 issue of *The Christian Century*, John M. Buchanan writes, "In a lecture on the communion of saints, the Baptist preacher Carlyle Marney said that each of us is like a house. In the house is a living room where we entertain and a dark basement where we store the trash. And, Marney said, each house has a balcony with all the people who have influenced and inspired us. They are our saints. The way to celebrate All Saints Day, he said, is to step out onto the front lawn and salute the people on your balcony." (John M. Buchanan, "City Prayers," in *Christian Century*, October 5, 2010, p. 3.)

As we celebrate All Saint's Day, one of the saints on the balcony we need to salute is Bishop James K. Mathews, who died on September 8. Bishop Mathews who served in the United States Army, served also as a missionary and as a bishop of the church. Besides being a powerful and prophetic bishop, he also taught us how to be a witness for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world. On September 25, when his life was celebrated at the Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church, Washington, DC, it was celebrated not only by United Methodists, but also by people of other Christian denominations and by people of other faiths.

"...Each house has a balcony with all the people who have influenced and inspired us. They are our saints." By his leadership qualities of influencing, modeling, and inspiring U.S. Presidents, Supreme Court justices, and thousands of others during his ministry, Bishop Mathews is on our balcony.

As I was reflecting on his life during my drive back from Washington, I was reminded that he influenced and inspired us even at the service of his life's celebration as we heard great testimonies about him by colleagues, family members, and friends. His spirit and writings continue even now to influence and inspire us.

From his countless writings, one of his powerful comments to 21st century Christians was made by Bishop Mathews at the 70th anniversary of the Sat Tal Christian Ashram founded by his beloved father-in-law, the great evangelist Dr. E. Stanley Jones. This comment has great relevance and especially to us United Methodists who claim the motto, "Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors." He said, "Open Heart is a state where one gives up all ego and prejudices and empties oneself so that the spirit of Jesus Christ may enter. It is not a mere state of nothingness but a positive state filled with the bliss of the ever present Spirit of Jesus." [Bishop] Mathews continued: "An individual does not live Christian life merely for oneself but as a part of the larger society" "(Dr. J.S. Murthy, "Sat Tal Christian Ashram celebrates 70th anniversary," at <http://gbgm-umc.org/news/2001/jan/indiachbm.stm>).

As we internalize the words of this saint of the Church, may we ask ourselves:

- Does our Christian witness as baptized individuals and as a Church have an effect on the larger society of which we are a part or a member?

- If it does, what message do we send as a Church to persons who are subject to hate crimes, as a result of human prejudice?

- Do we join others in criticizing persons of other faiths without understanding what they truly believe — or as a Christian, do we make a sincere attempt to understand them as our neighbors?

- Are our ministries and missions nestled in our personal egos and agendas instead of located in the Spirit of Jesus?

- In what do we find our bliss? Is it in the cars we drive, the things we consume. Or, is it the ever-present spirit of Jesus Christ as we commit ourselves to making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?

Dag Hammarskjold wrote, "Do not seek death. Death will find you. But seek the road which makes death a fulfillment" (http://thinkexist.com/quotes/dag_hammarskjold/)

Indeed, this was the road on which Bishop Mathews chose to travel for the glory of God and as a disciple of Jesus Christ, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit!

May we recommit ourselves to traveling on that same road as a salute to the persons on our own balconies who have influenced and inspired us.

"God loves you all and so do I!"

In Christ's love,

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar



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Bishop Names 7 to Study Links to Subordinate Organizations

OCEAN – Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar has announced the appointment of a committee created by action of the Annual Conference last June to study the relationship between the conference and subordinate, affiliated organizations.

Heading the committee will be Harriett Olson, Esq. deputy general secretary of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries and formerly a Morristown attorney and a United Methodist Publishing House vice-president.

Rounding out the committee of seven will be three additional lay members and three clergy.

Lay members named by the bishop are Jay Brown, Niurca Lewis, and Staci Scheetz, Esq; clergy members are Dan Gepford, Hyekyung Kang and Beth

Whalley Mitchell.

Under the terms of the resolution creating the committee, the study will include such entities as United Methodist Homes of NJ, GNJ United Methodist Camping Ministries, Inc., Christian Outreach Project, Inc., the Educational Society, the New Jersey United Methodist Foundation, Inc., Pennington School, Centenary Fund, Preacher's Aid Society.

Other conference-related organizations will also come under the purview of the committee which will report on its findings and make recommendations at the next session of the annual conference next June.

In pursuing its study, the committee is limited in its spending for consultants and other expense to a maximum of \$2,500.

Resources Abound for Advent

With Advent and the Christmas season only a snowball's throw away, churches of the conference are gearing up for the observance. To keep the seasonal celebrations fresh and relevant, local churches are scanning catalogs and combing resources.

A good place to start is within our own denomination. This Advent, United Methodist Communications will offer "A Life-Giving Christmas," a lectionary-based sermon series with accompanying resources for the four Sundays of Advent. Each component echoes the focus of the denomination's Rethink Church advertising and welcoming campaign.

Included in the sermon series are ideas for engaging congregants via a church's social media channels. Related to the free sermon series is an optional media bundle available from UCom at \$25. It features five videos for use in worship or study, print and slide graphics, and templates for invitation cards, door hangers and direct mail.

Another resource is the Advent devotional booklet published by the Society of St. Andrew, the Virginia-based hunger-relief agency that gleanes agricultural products from field surpluses and annually feeds multitudes.

Last year, donations made through the Society of St. Andrew's Advent devotional program provided more than 1.2 million servings of food to the hungry.

The society, an official partner of The United Methodist Church, is hoping church members will use this year's booklet, "Preparing the Way," to "prayerfully reflect on the Scriptures and join in the ministry of feeding America's hungry" during the Advent season.

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For conference churches another resource is the Marcia McFee Worship Design Studio, available free of charge thanks to a GNJAC subscription. Churches wishing to utilize this service must call the Conference Office (1-877-677-2594) for a coupon code, then follow online instructions.

Simple Living Guide Challenges Consumerism

DILLON, Colo. (UMNS) — For those looking for an escape from Christmas consumerism, the 2010 edition of "Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway? Ideas for a Christ-Centered Holiday" is now available.

The guide contains reflections, activities and how-to ideas for a more sacred Advent and Christmas observance. It is published by the ecumenical Alternatives for Simple Living, a partner of the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

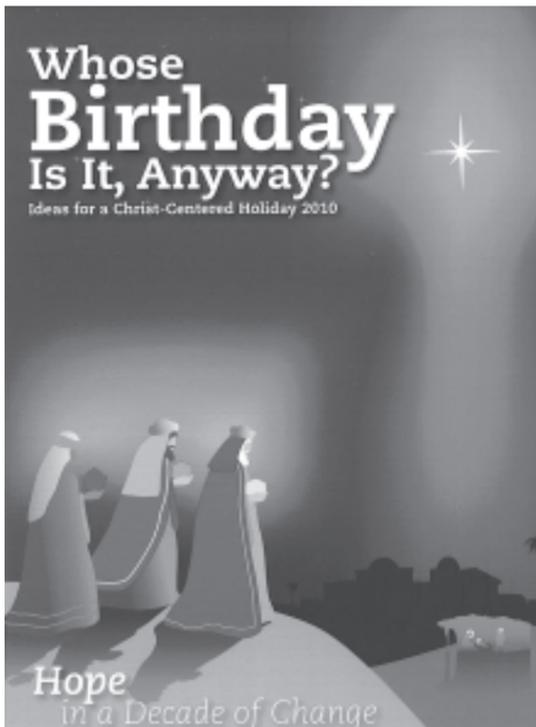
The group aims to equip people of faith to challenge consumerism, live justly and create meaningful celebrations.

Generating excitement this year is a new resource, **Whose Planet Is It, Anyway?** In the age of decision about climate change, authors from Christianity and other world religions, weigh in on what their traditions teach about the urgent need to care for Creation.

Whose Planet Is it, Anyway? is a question that brings earth's diverse faith traditions together in a united stance to address climate change, aid

those most affected by climate change, and ground the faithful more deeply in their own traditions.

Additional information is available by logging on to the Simple Living website, www.simpleliving.org.



BISHOP'S DAY ON THE DISTRICT



It's seven down and two to go as Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar meets with Palisades District laity at the Demarest Church October 21 in the annual round of Bishop's Days on the District. Earlier in the day he met with clergy, as he had done at six other districts this fall. In the sessions the bishop shared his vision for the Conference and listened carefully to the thoughts and suggestions of both clergy and laity. The schedule for the two remaining Bishop' Days are: **November 15, Cape Atlantic District at the Absecon Church, Clergy, 8:30 a.m to 3 p.m.; Laity 7-9 p.m.** **November 22, Raritan Valley District, at the Bridgewater Church, 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.**

(Photo by John C. Goodwin ©)

Drew Offers Webinar on Gen M

MADISON – Drew Theological School's popular webinar series will focus during November on the Millennial Generation with online sessions on the theme **Youth Ministry and Gen M: Reaching Out to a New Generation of Christian People. Leading the series will be the Rev. Tanya Linn Bennett, Director of the Chapel and Religious Life, & Associate Chaplain, Drew University** and the Rev. Babydoll Kennedy, *Director of Encouragement Ministry at St. James A.M.E. Church, Newark.* The four session themes will be

November 1: Gen M—A New Generation: A New Way of Being Church?
November 8: Face-to-Face vs. Facebook: Communicating with Gen M
November 15: Seeing God: Worship Built for Gen M
November 22: Shepherding Gen M: Cultivating Adult Leadership for this Generation

OBITUARIES

JOHN DREW GODSEY, Retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died on October 12, 2010. He taught for many years at Wesley Theological Seminary as well as Drew University Theological School. His funeral was held in Bristol, Tenn., October 22 with a memorial service a week later at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington.

Dr. Godsey's entire ministry was spent in the academic field as a teacher of systematic theology. Entering the Northern New Jersey Conference in 1952, he became an instructor at Drew in 1956, and rose to the level of professor of systematic theology. In 1968 he moved to Wesley where he was appointed dean as well as theology professor. He continued on in the latter post until his retirement in 1988.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Benevolent Care Fund of the Asbury Foundation, 201 Russell Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 or to The Library at Wesley Theological Seminary, 4500 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016.

Messages of condolence may be sent to his daughter, Emalee Murphy, 5211 White Flint Drive, Kensington, MD 20895.

NORMAN W. SCHANCK, retired elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died October 8, 2010 in Swedesboro, NJ. A Memorial Service was held at Bethesda United Methodist Church, Swedesboro.

Mr. Schanck began his pastoral ministry in 1957, serving the Friendship and Porchtown churches. The following year he was appointed to the Newfield Church and Fourth Church, Vineland.

Admitted to the New Jersey Conference in 1959, he continued in full time appointment to Newfield, until he was appointed in 1961 to the Thorofare Church. Subsequent appointments included Swedesboro (1963); Christ Church, Lakewood (1977); Pennsville (1983), and Middletown (1985), from which he retired in 1998. Post-retirement appointments were St. John's Church, Harrisonville, and Ferrell Church, Monroeville.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to his widow, Winnifred Schanck at 146 Applewood Drive, Swedesboro, NJ 08085.

DARBI J. HESS, wife of the Rev. William R. Hess, a retired local pastor residing in Port Richey, NJ, died September 21, 2010. Funeral services were held at the Dorchester United Methodist Church Sept. 25.

Mrs. Hess is survived by her husband and two sons, Wade Hess, of Oceanview and Eric Hess, of Woodbine.

Memorial gifts may be sent to either the Heisler Memorial United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 227, Heislerville, NJ 08324 or the Dorchester United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 555, Dorchester, NJ 08316. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to the Rev. William Hess, P.O. Box 227, Heislerville, NJ 08324

Jesus said ..., 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25



Global Relay

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

Bishops break new ground at Africa University

OLD MUTARE, Zimbabwe — Breaking ground on a \$60,000 duplex for staff members is a concrete signal of The United Methodist Church's commitment to Africa University, said the school's founding chancellor. The groundbreaking marks the beginning of the first structure funded by The United Methodist Church's African bishops at the 18-year-old campus.

First impressions matter to church visitors

MANSFIELD, Texas — The Rev. Shelia Fiorella, founding pastor of New Day United Methodist Church, says the people coming through the doors of a church have expectations as consumers. "Competition for experiences that affirm the customer's value is so intense in today's culture that consumers often base the quality of any business — or church — on the first few seconds of their experience," she writes.

United Methodist ecumenical leader dies

GREENPORT, N.Y. — The church leader who helped shape the ecumenical vision of The United Methodist Church has died at the age of 90. The Rev. Robert W. Huston is remembered as a devout Christian with a fierce passion for the unity of the church and a humble man who championed the gifts of women and young adults.

Civil rights leader Bishop James Thomas dies

ATLANTA — James Samuel Thomas, the United Methodist bishop who broke racial barriers when he was assigned to an all-white annual conference in 1964, died Oct. 10. His funeral was Oct. 15 at Cascade United Methodist Church in Atlanta. Thomas was 91.

Mission initiative launches with focus on Haiti

NEW YORK — Each day, visitors to the website *10-Fold.org* will get to see United Methodist mission programs around the world. The website uses current technology, including Skype, streaming videos, online chats and downloadable podcasts. In addition, people can help just by clicking on the link of a particular project as viewers donate one dollar to the selected project. The first focus is in Haiti.

Women's division offers response to domestic violence

STAMFORD, Conn. — Survivors of domestic violence should not have to choose between their faith and being safe. Such a dilemma can occur, says the Rev. Aleese Moore-Orbih, if their churches tell them to stay "in a situation where it is possible for them to lose their lives." During the Oct. 8-11 meeting of the Women's Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, she counseled directors on how local congregations can assist abuse survivors. United Methodist Women is among the sponsors of "I Believe You: Faiths' Response to Intimate Partner Violence," which will air on ABC-TV in January.

Students told 'Africa needs you'

OLD MUTARE, Zimbabwe — "Stay home. Serve God. Use your education to save your countries and help the continent develop." That was the message of Vice Chancellor Fanuel Tagwira addressing first-year students at Africa University here.

New congregation growth reaches half-way mark

STAMFORD, Conn. — From Vietnam to Malawi, the number of new United Methodist congregations outside the United States has grown by more than 200. The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries mission initiatives program has started 210 churches, expanding the denomination's reach particularly in Asia and Africa.

Chilean miner: 'God has never left us'

COPIAPO, Chile — Their Christian faith helped many of the 33 miners trapped for more than two months in a copper-gold mine. "There are actually 34 of us," wrote Jimmy Sanchez, 19, the youngest of the miners, in a letter sent up from the mine, "because God has never left us down here." A CNN story noted that on Aug. 31, miner Mario Sepulveda had reported: "We 33 miners are walking hand in hand with God." In a Christianity Today blog, Trevor Persaud notes that miners have also made decisions about their family lives and at least two have made professions of faith.

Pension Board schedules public forum

Glenview, Ill. — The United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits has scheduled a public forum on Nov. 12. The forum will be held at the Westin Tampa Bay Hotel, 7627 W. Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa, Fla. It is tentatively scheduled for 11:45 a.m., Eastern time. The forum is intended to allow the board of directors to hear concerns of constituents from across the church during their regularly scheduled board meeting. To place a topic on the agenda, call Colette Nies by Oct. 29 at (800) 269-2244, extension 4296, or e-mail cnies@gbophb.org.

GBCS seeks aid for persecuted Chinese Christians

WASHINGTON — The United Methodist Board of Church and Society calls for all church members to pray and speak out for Christians in China who are being prevented from leaving the country and/or practicing their faith. Chinese Christian leaders are being forbidden to travel to an evangelical gathering in Cape Town, South Africa. The government claims the event and the activities of these Christians are a threat to state security. The actions of the Chinese government highlight the continuing persecution of Christians and other faith traditions around the world, according to the Board of Church and Society. The board calls upon members of The United Methodist Church to pray, build awareness and contact the U.S. State Department at (202) 647-5291 and urge pressure on the Chinese government to lift restrictions on people to practice their faith.

Two schools lose United Methodist status

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Two Pennsylvania seminaries have been removed from a list of schools approved to train United Methodist clergy, following a June ruling by a denominational sanctioning body. Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown and Palmer Theological School in Wynnewood received letters from the University Senate informing them of the decision. Both plan to appeal.

Laura Bush to speak at Methodist Healthcare luncheon

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Laura W. Bush, a longtime United Methodist and former first lady, will reflect on her life and speak about her best-selling memoir, "Spoken From the Heart," at the ninth Methodist Healthcare Foundation Cancer Center luncheon Nov. 12. Proceeds from this year's luncheon will benefit the Methodist Cancer Center.

Reclaiming History Through Act of Repentance



DENVER — A stone marker at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in Colorado commemorates the date, November 29-30, 1864, when troops led by Colonel John Chivington, an ordained Methodist minister, brutally slaughtered a temporary camp of Native Americans, Cheyenne Indians largely composed of women, children and the elderly. Members of the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns visited the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site September 24 as part of a process to lead The United Methodist Church to an "act of repentance" for past injustices toward indigenous peoples around the world. Authorized by the 2008 General Conference, a resolution called for "Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons" charges the commission "with the necessary study and preparation of resources for the process of listening, repentance and reconciliation to occur." It is one of 18 resolutions supporting Native Americans in the 2008 Book of Resolutions. (A UMNS photo by Ginny Underwood)

Independence leader heralded in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone — A Harvard-educated physician and activist who helped his country become independent, the Rev. John Albert Musselman Karefa-Smart did not follow the typical career path of a United Methodist pastor. Called a visionary by his admirers and controversial by his critics, he remained politically engaged throughout his life, running for president at the age of 81. After he passed away Aug. 26 at age 95, Karefa-Smart received not one but two state funerals.

Church partners with Global Fund

NASHVILLE — The United Methodist Church has entered into a partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. The United Methodist Church is in the middle of an effort to raise \$75 million through Imagine No Malaria, a portion of which will go to The Global Fund, a recognized global leader in the fight against diseases of poverty. This is the first time the Global Fund will work together with a faith-based organization.

Camp supports young clergy families

BOYNE FALLS, Mich. — What began as a summer camp in the Detroit Conference has become a peer-support system for young clergy and their families, worthy of emulation in other conferences. The Family Camp for Young Clergy and Ministry Professionals in Boyne Falls is a weeklong getaway that allows young clergy and their families to relax while also being able to build relationships with others who share their experiences. "It's a week where you can be present to your kids and to your spouse and to your family in a way that doesn't seem like many other weeks do," said the Rev. Jeff Nelson, pastor of Aldersgate Church, Redford, Mich. "All you have to do is show up and be ministered to in the context of community."

And the lame shall walk in Uganda

ANZU, Uganda — As refugees from the country's long civil war begin to return to their villages in northern Uganda, The United Methodist Church is among the organizations heeding the government's call to assist in the peace recovery process. The East Africa Annual Conference collaborated with a 15-member mission team from four Kentucky churches to offer medical care to people in the Arua region. In seven days at the end of August, the team treated about 1,500 patients in the villages of Anzu, Kulu and Lebanon.

United Methodist agency pulls rally endorsement

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Concerned about recent "overtly political and partisan statements" made by event organizers, a United Methodist church agency withdrew its endorsement of an Oct. 2 rally in Washington just hours before the event. Jim Winkler, top executive of the Board of Church and Society, made public the decision, explaining that the "One Nation Working Together" rally, initially endorsed because its aims to "build a more united country with good jobs, equal justice and quality public education for all" were deemed consistent with Scripture and the denomination's Social Principles. The reversal came when the rally became increasingly political, adding some endorsers who "detracted greatly" from the aims of the event and adding to the polarizing effect of Fox entertainer Glenn Beck's August 28 rally, Winkler explained in the board's statement.

Foundry UMC allows same-sex marriages

WASHINGTON — Members of Foundry United Methodist Church voted 367 to 8 on Sept. 26 to allow same-gender marriages to be performed in its building. Foundry is among many congregations in Washington that have been discussing same-sex marriages since the city passed the Marriage Equality Act last March. The *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's rulebook, says it is a chargeable offense for a clergy person to conduct a holy union or marriage for gays and lesbians. Following Foundry's vote, Washington Area Bishop John R. Schol in a statement to clergy and lay leaders in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference promised to "do all I can to be fair and compassionate," while at the same time upholding church law. "(I) will process and follow through with any complaint or charge against a United Methodist clergy person of the Baltimore-Washington Conference who performs a same gender wedding or holy union."

Faith is Crucial to Young Gays Facing Guilt and Rejection

A UMNS Report
By Kathy L. Gilbert

At age 23, the pain of believing that God didn't love him because he was gay was too much for "George." He decided to commit suicide.

But at the darkest time of his life, he felt overwhelmed by a loving divine presence and he clearly heard in his head the words, "Don't do it."

Listening to that voice saved his life. "If I were to ever speak face-to-face with a kid who was really struggling with acceptance and bullying, that is one of things I would tell them," he said. "How grateful I am that I stopped and didn't go through with suicide because I have the most amazing life ever."

George's name is fictitious, but his story is real.

News media have reported several recent episodes of young people who killed themselves after bullying from classmates about their sexuality. Many adults, including celebrities, faith leaders and laity, are reaching out to young people with the message, "It does get better."

In response, George posted this message on his Facebook page: "I was that kid: that was called a sissy in 2nd grade, punched in the belly in the 3rd, who wrote a story about men marrying men in the 4th grade, who was called queer in junior high, who did everything possible to blend in in high school. I was that kid that decided life wasn't worth living at 23. If you are that kid, too, you're not alone. Let's talk."

George said he is blessed today to be in a United Methodist church that loves and welcomes him. But that wasn't always the case. He grew up in another denomination, attending church twice every Sunday and on Wednesday nights. His father was a deacon.

"Faith in God was very important to me as a kid and to my family."

But he heard loud and clear from the religious world that God "frowned" upon people like him. "I heard I was an abomination and God hated me."

Life is difficult and confusing enough when you are a teenager, and when you feel like God can't accept you, that is a heavy burden, he said.

Conflicted opinions

The Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance lists the policies of 47 Christian faith groups on homosexuality.

According to its website, more liberal denominations and Christians tend to view homosexuality as a civil-rights matter. They generally believe it is a fixed, unchosen, normal, natural and morally neutral sexual orientation for a minority of adults.

More conservative denominations and Christians tend to view homosexuality as a profound evil. They generally believe it is changeable, chosen, abnormal, unnatural and immoral behavior, regardless of the nature of the relationship.

United Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians have actively debated the issue within their denominations.

The United Methodist Church's General Conference has consistently affirmed homosexuals as individuals of sacred worth. It also has consistently held that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, that gays cannot be ordained as United Methodist clergy and that pastors cannot perform same-sex marriages in a United Methodist church.

As recently as the 2008 General Conference, delegates proposed adding a statement to the Book of Discipline that would acknowledge not everyone in the church agrees on the issue. The motion was rejected by a vote of 763-38.

"I have been frustrated by our seeming incapacity to acknowledge that we believe different things, especially as Wesleyans, for whom right belief doesn't come first but it comes after

community, it comes after an experience of grace," said the Rev. Trey Hall, a United Methodist pastor serving at Urban Village Church in Chicago.

Urban Village recently hosted a "coming out" celebration to announce the opening of its second location. The event was held Oct. 11 — national "Coming Out Day" for homosexuals.

At the same time, news media were reporting on Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers University freshman who committed suicide after his roommate broadcast on the Internet a video of Clementi's sexual encounter with another man.

More than 100 people attended the Chicago event, many of whom had never been to the church before, Hall said. Speakers included politicians and community leaders as well as Hall and his co-pastor, the Rev. Christian Coon.

"You know all the stereotypes about church ... because I'm gay or because my brother is gay I won't be welcome in church," Hall said. "Not only are you welcomed here, you are invited to be transformed. Christ is longing to make you a more mature disciple. You are not here just to receive the crumbs. You are here to grow and be a brother and sister in Christ."

The Urban Village website proclaims, "Whoever you are — seeker or skeptic, Democrat or Republican, straight or gay, young or old, woman or man — you are welcome here."

"I am still overwhelmed by the number of e-mails, Facebook postings, phone calls we get asking us if this is legitimate. 'Are you all really a place of radical love?'" Hall said. "Obviously for so many people, church equals all the bad words, exclusion. So we thought it would be good to have an event and say this is what we believe and we want you to come out and hear it from our own lips."

That message of welcoming was amplified at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church in Houston following the suicide of Asher Brown, a 13-year-old from the local suburbs. Asher had shot himself after coming out.

Gary Brewton, a member of Bering, said for the last three years the church has served at-risk street kids ages 18 to 25 who have been kicked out of their homes because they are gay.

Some weeks the church serves as many as 70 kids in a program called Open Gate. Youth are offered a hot, family-style meal prepared by members of the congregation and have a safe place for conversation and support.

"Those who say that homosexuality and Christianity are incompatible cannot escape the consequences of that statement: homophobia kills kids," Brewton said. "Theology is indeed a matter of life and death."

"With God's help and our volunteers' faithful work, some of these kids will get off the streets, get apartments, find jobs, and learn a measure of self-respect. In this way the Spirit builds up the body of Christ one soul at a time," he said.

Leading cause of death

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 24, with gay teens up to four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.

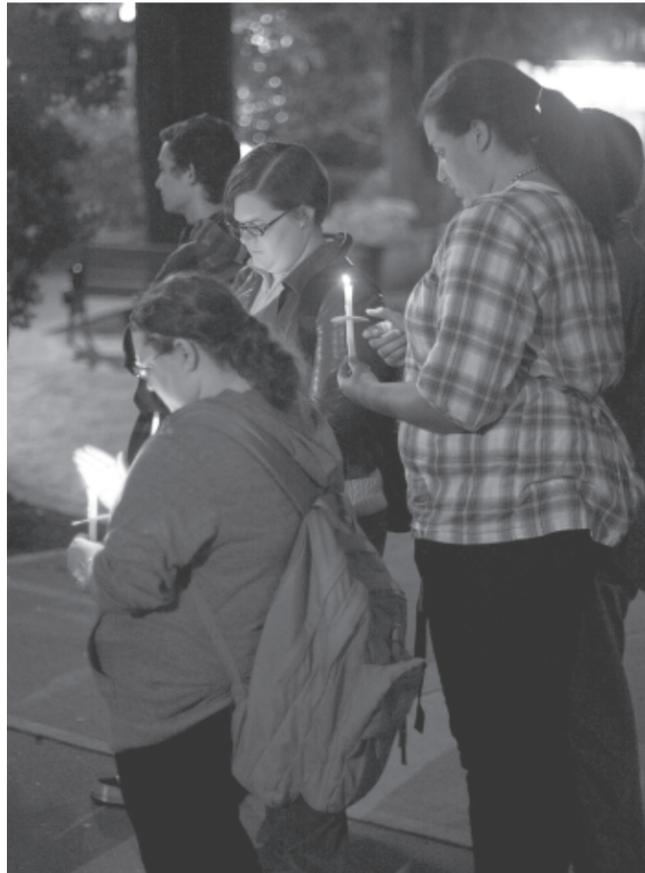
The risks increase on college campuses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies suicide as the second leading cause of death there.

At the University of California-Davis, United Methodist pastor Kristin Stoneking is part of a team of faith leaders working with about 40 students living together in a multifaith residence hall.

Together the students, Christian and non-Christian, are "encouraged to bring everything they believe to the table," she said.

Stoneking is working with other faculty and staff at the university to host a "teach-in" to talk about the recent rise in suicides.

Students who live in the CA House



On September 22, Rutgers University student Tyler Clementi committed suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge. On October 5, Hofstra University students (left) held a vigil to mourn Clementi's death. In this UMNS report, Kathy Gilbert tells how an affirming faith is helping to save the lives of gay youths.

(UMNS photo)

Multifaith Living Community sign a covenant pledging to be open, compassionate and willing to grow. They also pledge to share their faith with the community but refrain from trying to convert others to their way of believing.

Stop the pain

"Church in general, including The United Methodist Church, as well as our state and national government, help perpetuate the pain," George said.

But many United Methodist churches are open and welcoming, he added.

"While I don't love many things about the current policies of the church, I do love that even among those policies there is room for difference. I love that there can be those differences and we can still be United Methodist, and that is one of the reasons I stay."

(Kathy Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville.)

Something to feel good about!



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97% of employees feel their work is important.

98% of residents say the staff are friendly and caring.

98% of residents are proud of their community.

FAMILY COMMENT

"The staff loves my mother, knows her by name, gives her hugs when they walk past her. We, her children, know she is safe and taken care of."

STAFF COMMENT

"It feels good to say you would tell your friends to work here and it's comforting to say that you would recommend that your family live here."

An independent survey of the staff and residents of United Methodist Homes has again confirmed why our communities are among the best places to live and work in New Jersey.

Whiting at 25 Witnesses to Value of New Church Starts



A NEW CHURCH START born in a local funeral home, the Whiting Church has grown into a fellowship that reaches out to the community and the world through this attractive space for worship and witness.

If you want an investment that will pay off, start a new church. That's the lesson the GNJ Conference can learn from the Whiting Church which is currently celebrating its 25th anniversary. Begun as a new church start in 1985, the congregation is rounding out its first quarter century with a proud record of accomplishment and mission.

The Whiting story has something of a phoenix quality about it. Well, not exactly a rising out of the ashes, but a new creation. Set in the Pine Barrens, in western Ocean County, was a Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1866 "for the woodsmen who live in dense forests." By the early 1960's, apparently the woodsmen had disappeared, the little chapel had fallen into disuse, and the then-New Jersey Conference

voted its discontinuation and sold the property.

Just a few years later, however, a real estate developer bought up a huge tract of land and proceeded to build a series of retirement villages — Crestwood Villages. Their grey-haired residents, steeped in a lifetime of churchmanship, became a ready market for whatever denomination had the vision. The Southern New Jersey Conference saw the possibilities, had the faith, and voted to create a new church in the area, providing seed money to hire and house a pastor and get the project moving.

On June 16, 1985 the Whiting United Methodist Church came into being, three days after its creation by vote of the annual conference, meet-

ing initially in a funeral home. Under the skillful organization of founding Pastor George Reid, with intentional planning, intensive visitation, and lots of prayer from its newly recruited congregation, the church grew from 40 worshipers at its first meeting to 85 at the time of its formal chartering six months later presided over by Bishop Neil Irons. At the end of its first five years the Whiting Church membership had risen to 195.

Today, notwithstanding the dynamic outflow of its aging membership, the number stands at 227, with an attendance average of 152, a remarkable percentage considering the fact that the church also boasts a large home-bound population.

In June, 1998, under the pastorate of the Rev. Charles Hankins, the church sent a \$5,000 check, a "thank you gift" to the SNJ Church Extension Fund in appreciation for the conference's aid in launching the new congregation. Four months later, on Oct. 4, 1998, with the Rev. Jim Davis as pastor, the mortgage on the newly constructed church building was burned and a new project launched — a "Christian Life Center." Now complete and in use, the center is expected to be the site of another mortgage burning by year's end, completely erasing

the church's indebtedness.

Today, celebrating its silver anniversary, the Whiting Church shines like a beacon proclaiming the value of new church starts. A scattering of charter members will be on hand for the anniversary dinner November 14, but they will be joined by a younger generation of disciples ready to take their place in the "endless line of splendor." Also on hand will be Bishop Devadhar who will bring greetings of the conference. An anniversary service will climax the year's celebration on December 12.

Throughout its history the Whiting congregation has proudly witnessed to God's grace by upholding its share in the continuing mission of the Church. Every year since its founding, the church has paid its apportionments in full, including last year's Shared Ministry asking of \$31,309. In addition to the apportioned askings, the church participates in a number of missions and Advance Specials — Camden Neighborhood Center, Heifer Project, Hope School, Bread for the World, several local missions and others.

"And don't think that we have a lot of money," notes one member. "We're no gated community here. These are ordinary folks. They just love the Lord and do their part," he concluded. "That's all it takes."

In its 25th Decade, Broad Street, Burlington, Celebrates

BURLINGTON — It was a circuitous route that led to the establishment of Broad Street Church here 240 years ago, involving a red-coated captain in the British army, sporting a green patch over one eye, lost in the French and Indian War. It was Captain Thomas Webb, a convert to the Methodist faith and a friend of John Wesley, who traded his sword for a Bible.

John Wesley had licensed Captain Webb as a local preacher in England, and in 1768 the colorful captain made his first visit to Burlington. On one of his frequent visits, he took advantage of a public hanging, delivering a sermon to the townspeople, and calling the spectators to repentance.

in need. A theatrical group uses the all-purpose room for their performances. The church sponsors food and clothing drives in conjunction with the Wayside Ministries. They also have a school supply and backpack giveaway in August for neighborhood children. The church has sponsored a county nutrition program, Rutgers reading program and blood drives.

According to the planning committee for the anniversary celebration, 240 years requires more than one event! In October the anniversary celebrations began with a worship service with the Rev. Thomas Venables, coordinator of religious affairs at Rutgers University, Camden, as guest speaker.



Two years later, in 1770, Captain Webb organized a Methodist class, making Burlington City the first place in New Jersey where Methodism was permanently established. The congregation's first building was constructed in 1788 on land donated by Governor Joseph Bloomfield. The current church was built in 1847 and the education wing was opened in 1950.

Now, planning its 240th anniversary, the congregation sees itself as "folks who enjoy their quiet traditions, who tend toward conservatism, who hold high their family values, and enjoy worshipping and serving the Lord together."

The church serves its members and the community. The Sisterhood and Wayside Ministries, housed at the church, offers food to area residents

Upcoming events include an afternoon worship service followed by dinner. November 20, at which the Interim Pastor David Finch will speak, and a December 12 Service featuring the Rev. Robert Williams, Executive secretary of the Commission on Archives and History.

"We cordially invite you to share this celebration with us as we continue into our 25th decade," urges Pastor Finch, "the journey that was begun in colonial times before the birth of our nation."

Additional information is available by consulting the church website, www.broadstumc.org or calling the church at 609 386-0155. Although there is no charge for the November 20th dinner, reservations are needed so the proper planning can be made.



ACOLYTES Alex Fischer and Don White symbolize a new generation of discipleship as the Whiting Church begins its second quarter century of ministry. Alex's parents are active leaders in the church; Don's mother sings in the choir. Sarah, Alex's sister, is also an acolyte.

WILD SWINGS MAKE EVERYTHING... GLOOMY



The Balanced Fund is a conservative approach to protect United Methodist Foundation investors from wild swings in the market. We survived the market turmoil of 2007. Versus the S&P 500, the total fund tracked favorably.

Our Balanced Fund approach continues to serve not only us well, but also the 51 churches which have invested over \$4.6 million.

Our core services of planning, consultation, education and training are provided free of charge to GNJAC churches.



For additional information contact
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Taize 2011

Information now available!!!
For more information or for
an application please visit
www.gnjumc.org

NEW INFO!

YOUTH 2011

July 13-17, 2011

**You Think YOU are
Ordinary...Think Again!!**

The Greater NJ Conference will be arranging bus transportation to Purdue University in West Lafayette Indiana for Youth 2011. (You must register your youth group to attend the event at www.youth2011.org....this is only for transportation) Information available at www.faithgarden.com and www.gnjumc.org

Cost is \$100 a person for Round trip transportation.

Space is limited so sign up your youth group soon!!

NOVEMBER YOUTH WORKER TRAINING

November 18th 7-9pm

Recruiting Volunteers - get the right people excited about helping with young people.

Northern Shore - West Grove UMC - Neptune

Please RSVP to Ginny Kaiser at 732-359-1043 - 1 week prior to the training.

Re-Think Community

This past month Conference Youth Coordinators from around the Nation gathered together to re-think ministry with Young People in the denomination. Charles W. Harrison, the new director of the youth worker movement share in a recent publication to the Youth Worker Movements 4,500+ members the highlights about this group of Conference Youth workers and their conversations. Here is what Mr. Harrison shared:

“The primary people I consistently heard everybody talk about, think about, worry about, pray for, and plan for were people like YOU! Youthworkers on the front lines, most of whom never get paid to help shape the spiritual lives of Young People. Some Youthworkers get a part time salary and even fewer get a full time salary. But the needs of ALL Youthworkers were discussed.

As a frontline Youthworker I always wondered what happened when the leaders who led me gathered together in the connexion. Well they spend their time supporting each other in their roles as Conference leaders. They pray for each other. They worship together. They study the Bible together. And then they share best practices and plan exactly how they can better support Youthworkers like you and me.

These good people are over-worked, over-tasked, over-loaded and under-resourced. In a tight economy, budgets are cut multiple times, job descriptions are expanded, staff positions are eliminated. Stress and Pain and Grief become unwanted spiritual disciplines. But still, smiles and laughter, the Joy that comes from the God of Jesus Christ fills any space these good people occupy! I am not sure I have EVER met a group of people more deeply committed to their craft and to the people they serve.

There is a great and brilliant future for Youth work in the United Methodist Church! My suspicion is that Youthworkers will lead the way in showing what it means for grass-roots Youth work to shape the agenda rather than a top-down approach. I can assure you these leaders get it. They have been where you are now and they think about your needs as they plan.

An exciting component is the work of the Division of Ministries with Young People (GBOD) in helping to plant a resource leader in each Jurisdiction to help connect and support and sustain the work being done as we strengthen the Connexion. As staffing moves closer to the grass roots I think we will all find new ways to build sustainable ministry with Youth. And having met our new Jurisdictional folks I can assure you we will be blessed a hundred times over through their unique gifts and graces!

Finally, our national leaders are modeling for us what we need to be doing in our own geographies and contexts. Connect! Do you meet with a group of Youthworkers Yearly? Monthly? Weekly? Do you pray together? Worship together? Read the Bible together? Do you share Joy? Share pain and frustrations? Do you share best practices? Do you hold each other accountable? How are you raising the bar through your own education and training? What have you read that others should read? What program has worked well for you to help shape the spiritual lives of Youth? Who can you share it with? What can others share with you?”

The founding principle of The Youthworker Movement is that our very best resource is each other. It is not something we can legislate in a meeting. It is not something we can buy off the internet. It is simply each other. Bound together by the Holy Spirit. Growing. Leading. Following. Together.

You can learn more about the Youthworker movement by visiting www.youthworkermovement.org. If you are interested in plugging into the GNJ Conference community of youth workers please contact Rev. Erica Munoz @732.359.1042

Apple Picking Time for Clinton Youth

CLINTON — Twenty-one junior and senior high school members of the Clinton Church, along with five of their advisors, spent a recent Sunday afternoon at Valley Crest Farm in Lebanon, picking apples.

At the invitation of Robert LeCompte, owner of Valley Crest, the youth picked about 1,400 pounds of the luscious fruit, 1,000 pounds of which were donated to NORWESCAP, a food bank serving Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren Counties.

In addition, the other 400 pounds of apples are being used as a fundraiser in which members of the youth group will make fresh apple pies and sell them. Money raised will go toward funding the youth group's summer mission trips to serve others in the area and throughout the Northeast.

A Clinton supermarket donated flour, butter, shortening, cinnamon, sugar, pie pans and pie boxes to the church for the fundraiser. The group anticipates that it will raise \$1,000 from the project.

The youth were voluble in their appreciation to Mr. LeCompte for allowing them to come in to “spend an incredible afternoon at his orchard,” and also expressed their thanks to the Shoprite store in Clinton.



MacINTOSH MISSION. This Clinton youth group had a Gala time without going to Rome or any other Empire to pick 1,400 pounds of apples that were all very Delicious, whatever the variety. When the youth were finished, they made a sizable contribution to a local food bank and had enough left over to bake some apple pies to finance a mission. Granny Smith stayed home.

New Professions of Faith Totaled 2904 for 2009

We celebrate this month all the churches of the conference which recorded new members by profession of faith last year. This chart is the record of new members received on profession of faith into the churches of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference during 2009 as reported to the 2010 Annual Conference in June.

We rejoice to recognize that 2904 new disciples of Jesus Christ were welcomed into our membership during the year past, an increase of 207 or 7.1 per-

cent over last year's total professions of faith.

Special commendation goes to the Palisades District, which topped the list with 467 persons added to our GNJ church family, and to the Korean Community Church, Englewood, which received 127 persons on profession of faith.

Any church not listed did not record new members by Profession of Faith in 2009.

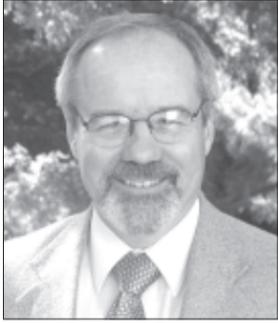
GATEWAY SOUTH		DEMAREST	9	MIDDLETOWN	19	MILLTOWN	7
AUDUBON	11	DUMONT: DISCIPLE	107	MORGANVILLE	6	NESHANIC STATION: NESHANIC	2
BERLIN: CENTENARY	4	ENGLEWOOD: FIRST	1	NEPTUNE: HAMILTON	12	NEW BRUNSWICK	15
BLACKWOOD	1	ENGLEWOOD: GALILEE	2	NEPTUNE: WEST GROVE	4	OLD BRIDGE: SIMPSON	8
BROOKLAWN	7	ENGLEWOOD: KOREAN COMMUNITY	127	OAKHURST: FIRST	5	OXFORD: COLONIAL	3
CAMDEN: ASBURY	5	FRANKLIN LAKES	7	OCEANPORT	3	PATTENBURG	4
CAMDEN: FAIRVIEW VILLAGE	1	GARNERVILLE	5	PT PLEASANT: CENTRAL	4	PHILLIPSBURG: WESLEY	5
CAMDEN: FERRY AVENUE	3	HASBROUCK HEIGHTS:FIRST	1	PT PLEASANT: HARVEY MEMORIAL	4	PISCATAWAY: CHRIST	3
CAMDEN: PARKSIDE	15	HILLSDALE UMC	7	RED BANK	9	PLAINFIELD:COVENANT	13
CHERRY HILL: FIRST KOREAN	6	MIDLAND PARK	1	SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS: WALL	3	SCOTCH PLAINS: FIRST	6
CHERRY HILL: OLD ORCHARDS	2	NEW CITY	4	SPRING LAKE: ST ANDREW'S	12	SERGEANTSVILLE	4
CHERRY HILL: ST ANDREW'S	26	PARAMUS: ARCOLA KOREAN	21	TOMS RIVER: CEDAR GROVE	1	SOMERVILLE: FIRST	2
CLARKSBORO: EVANGELICAL	6	PATERSON: CHRIST	2	TOMS RIVER: FIRST	21	SOUTH AMBOY: TRINITY	8
COLLINGSWOOD: EMBURY	11	PATERSON: PATERSON AVENUE	1	TOMS RIVER: ST ANDREW'S	24	SOUTH PLAINFIELD: WESLEY	13
DELAIR: ST MATTHEW'S	10	RIDGEFIELD PARK: FIRST	18	TOMS RIVER: ST MATTHEW'S	2	SPOTSWOOD: TRINITY	1
DEPTFORD: ALMONESSON	5	RUTHERFORD	7	UNION BEACH: GRACE	4	WARREN TWP: MOUNT HOREB	1
DEPTFORD: MT ZION-WESLEY	1	SPRING VALLEY	1	WARETOWN	10	WARREN TWP: UNION VILLAGE	2
DEPTFORD:NEW SHARON	1	STONY POINT: FIRST	4	WEST BELMAR	1	WASHINGTON	19
GIBBSBORO	4	STONY POINT: TRINITY	4	WEST LONG BRANCH: OLD FIRST	5	WEST PORTAL	2
GIBBSTOWN: CLONMELL	3	SUFFERN	3	WHITING	7	WESTFIELD: FIRST	10
GLENDORA: CHEWS	13	TENAFLY	15	Northern Shore District Total	297	WHITEHOUSE	11
GLOUCESTER: TRINITY	4	THIELLS	1			Raritan Valley District Total	343
HADDON HEIGHTS: FIRST	6	TOTOWA	3	CAPITAL DISTRICT			
HADDONFIELD	6	W. PATERSON: APPENZELLER NAIRI	5	ALLENTOWN	5	CAPE ATLANTIC	
LAWNSIDE: MT ZION	11	WALDWICK	3	ATCO	8	ABSECON	22
MAGNOLIA	3	WAYNE	5	BEVERLY	1	ATLANTIC CITY: ASBURY	19
MANTUA	10	WAYNE: BETHANY	36	BORDENTOWN: TRINITY	9	ATLANTIC CITY: HAMILTON MEMRL	8
MANTUA: BARNSBORO	3	WESTWOOD	16	BROWNS MILLS	5	ATLANTIC CITY: VENICE PARK	4
MERCHANTVILLE: TRINITY	5	WESTWOOD: GRACE KOREAN	14	BUDDTOWN	6	AVALON: FIRST	3
MONROE TWP: NEW BROOKLYN	3	WYCKOFF: GRACE	20	BURLINGTON: BROAD ST	4	BELLEPLAIN	2
MT EPHRAIM: FIRST	3	Palisades District Total	467	CINNAMINSON: ASBURY	7	BLUE ANCHOR: GRACE UNION	3
NATIONAL PARK: FIRST	7			COLUMBUS: WESLEY	2	CAPE MAY	11
PAULSBORO: ST PAUL'S	3	GATEWAY NORTH		COOKSTOWN	3	CAPE MAY CT HOUSE: FIRST	14
PENNSAUKEN: EAST PENNSAUKEN	3	BAYONNE: WESLEY	5	CRANBURY	4	DELMONT	1
PINE HILL: MEMORIAL	7	BELLEVILLE: WESLEY	1	CROSSWICKS	9	GREEN CREEK: BETHEL	2
SICKLERVILLE	3	BLOOMFIELD: PARK	19	DELRAN: FIRST	8	HALEYVILLE	1
STRATFORD	2	CALDWELL	13	EMLEY'S HILL	6	HAMMONTON: PINELANDS	6
TURNERSVILLE: ST JOHN'S	24	CHATHAM	12	FLORENCE	4	LEESBURG	2
VERGA WELFARE	4	E. ORANGE: PARK AVE -ST JOHN'S	24	HAMILTON SQ: ST MARK	36	LINWOOD: CENTRAL	27
VOORHEES: HOPE	9	GREEN VILLAGE	4	HAMILTON TWP: CHAMBERS	1	MARMORA: TRINITY	1
WEST BERLIN: ST JOHN'S	4	HARRISON:DAVIS MEMORIAL	2	HAMILTON TWP: GROVEVILLE	4	MAURICETOWN	1
WEST DEPTFORD: ST PAUL'S	12	HOBOKEN: COMMUNITY	2	HAMILTON TWP: NEW COVENANT	4	MAYS LANDING: FIRST	2
WESTMONT	1	IRVINGTON	2	HAMILTON TWP: PEARSON MEMORIAL	3	OCEAN CITY: MACEDONIA	8
WILLIAMSTOWN	5	IRVINGTON: HAITIAN	5	HEDDING	4	OCEAN CITY: ST PETER'S	23
WILLIAMSTOWN: CROSS KEYS	7	JERSEY CITY: CHRIST	8	HIGHTSTOWN: FIRST	1	PLEASANTVILLE:	
WOODBURY: COLONIAL MANOR	2	JERSEY CITY: CHURCH OF COVENANT	2	HOPEWELL	1	KOREAN OF SO. JERSEY	2
WOODBURY: KEMBLE MEMORIAL	6	JERSEY CITY: CLAIR MEMORIAL	1	INDIAN MILLS	12	PLEASANTVILLE: MT PLEASANT	8
WOODLYNNE: ASBURY	4	JERSEY CITY: FIRST FILIPINO AMERICAN	5	JACKSON: DEBOWS	4	PLEASANTVILLE: OASIS	3
Gateway South District Total	292	JERSEY CITY: LAFAYETTE	5	JULIUSTOWN	2	PLEASANTVILLE: SALEM	6
		JERSEY CITY: TRINITY	5	KINGSTON	7	PORT ELIZABETH	6
SKYLANDS		KEARNY: GRACE	1	LAMBERTVILLE: CENTENARY	6	PORT NORRIS: FIRST	1
BARRYVILLE	6	KEARNY: NEW CAANAN	16	LUMBERTON	2	PORT NORRIS: JOHN WESLEY	4
BELVIDERE	19	KENILWORTH	8	MAGNOLIA ROAD	2	PORT REPUBLIC: ST PAUL'S	4
BLAIRSTOWN: FIRST	12	LINDEN	11	MARLTON	25	SEA ISLE CITY	7
BLAIRSTOWN:WALNUT VALLEY	5	LINDEN: EL REDENTOR	9	MEDFORD	20	SEAVILLE	7
BOONTON TWP: ROCKAWAY VALLEY	7	LITTLE FALLS	8	MOORESTOWN: FIRST	46	SOMERS POINT	1
BRANCHVILLE	6	MADISON	9	MT HOLLY: FIRST	1	SOUTH SEAVILLE	14
BUTLER	5	MAPLEWOOD: MORROW MEMORIAL	14	MT HOLLY: ST. PAUL UMC	1	SWAINTON: ASBURY	1
BUTTZVILLE	2	MONTCLAIR: FIRST UMC	2	NEW EGYPT	4	TABERNACLE UMC	1
DENVILLE COMMUNITY	14	MONTCLAIR: ST. MARK'S UMC	18	PALMYRA: EPWORTH	15	TUCKERTON	13
DINGMANS FERRY	10	NEWARK: FRANKLIN-ST. JOHN'S	31	PEMBERTON	12	WILDWOOD CREST: FIRST	1
DOVER: GRACE	3	NEWARK: ST PAUL'S CENTENARY	5	PENNINGTON: FIRST	2	Cape Atlantic District Total	239
ELDRED	4	NEWARK: ST. MATTHEW'S	6	PRINCETON	21		
FLANDERS	3	NEWARK: TRINITY	12	RINGOES: LINVALE	5	DELAWARE BAY	
HACKETTSTOWN: DRAKESTOWN	6	NUTLEY: VINCENT	1	SMITHVILLE	9	ALDINE	1
HACKETTSTOWN: TRINITY	43	ORANGE	14	TABERNACLE	3	BRIDGETON: FIRST	1
HOPATCONG: WESTSIDE	2	PERTH AMBOY: SIMPSON	5	TANSBORO: TRINITY	3	BRIDGETON: FORDVILLE ST JOHN	1
HOPE: ST. JOHN'S	2	RAHWAY: TRINITY	2	TITUSVILLE	2	BRIDGETON: FRIENDSHIP-FINLEY	6
KNOWLTON	13	ROSELAND	1	TRENTON: AFRICAN	11	BRIDGETON: JOHN WESLEY	6
LAKE HOPATCONG	8	ROSELLE	1	TRENTON: CADWALADER-ASBURY	4	BRIDGETON: TRINITY	2
LANDING: PORT MORRIS	13	SOUTH ORANGE VAILSBURG	2	TRENTON: WESLEY	2	BRIDGETON: WEST PARK	24
LIBERTY TWP: FREE UNION	2	SPRINGFIELD: EMANUEL	4	VINCENTOWN	1	CANTON	1
MILFORD	6	SUMMIT	7	WILLINGBORO: GOOD SHEPHERD	21	DEERFIELD	8
MORRISTOWN	6	UNION	1	WILLINGBORO: ST PAUL	16	ELMER	7
MORRISTOWN KOREAN	4	WEST NY:		Capital District Total	394	FRANKLINVILLE	3
MOUNT TABOR	6	FIRST UNIT. PRESBY. -METHODISTA	4			FRANKLINVILLE: PLAINVILLE	1
NETCONG: STANHOPE	9	WOODBIDGE	3	RARITAN VALLEY		GLASSBORO: FIRST	9
NEWTON:FIRST	11	Gateway North District Total	310	ANNANDALE: ALLERTON	1	HANCOCK'S BRIDGE	2
OAK RIDGE:MILTON	5			ASBURY: ASBURY	1	HARRISONVILLE: ST JOHN'S	3
PANTER VALLEY ECUMENICAL	1	NORTHERN SHORE		BASKING RIDGE: BISHOP JANES	11	MALAGA	1
PARSIPPANY	17	ABERDEEN: MATAWAN	6	BELLE MEAD: MONTGOMERY	15	MILLVILLE: FIRST	22
PORT JERVIS: DREW	4	ASBURY PARK: FIRST	5	BELVIDERE: SUMMERFIELD	2	MILLVILLE: FOURTH	6
RANDOLPH: MILLBROOK	3	ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS	1	BERKELEY HGTS: BOUNTIFUL KOREAN	8	MILLVILLE: TRINITY	1
ROCKAWAY	7	BAY HEAD: ST PAUL'S	10	BERNARDSVILLE	4	MINOTOLA	5
SANDYSTON: DELAWARE VALLEY	1	BAYVILLE: FAITH COMMUNITY	3	BLOOMSBURY	10	MONROEVILLE: FERRELL	1
SPARROWBUSH	5	BEACH HAVEN TERRACE: FIRST	1	BOUND BROOK	11	MONROEVILLE: FRIENDSHIP	6
SPARTA	14	BEACH HAVEN: KYNETT	1	BRIDGEWATER	23	MULLICA HILL: TRINITY	34
STANHOPE:WATERLOO PARISH	7	BELFORD	4	CALIFON	6	NEWFIELD: FIRST	3
STILLWATER: HARMONY HILL	1	BRICK: ST PAUL'S	15	CALIFON: FAIRMOUNT	2	NEWPORT	2
STOCKHOLM	1	FARMINGDALE: FIRST	13	CHANGewater	1	PEDRICKTOWN: HUDSON	4
SUCCASUNNA	6	FORKED RIVER: LACEY	9	CLINTON	32	PENNS GROVE: EMMANUEL	1
SUSSEX	7	FREEHOLD: FIRST	5	CRANFORD	7	PENNS GROVE: ST PAUL'S	2
TOWACO:MONTVILLE	6	HAZLET: ST JOHN'S	18	DUNELLEN	3	PIESGROVE: SHARPTOWN	15
TRANQUILITY	2	HOWELL: CHURCH OF THE MASTER	2	EAST BRUNSWICK: ALDERSGATE	24	PITMAN	4
VERNON	8	ISLAND HEIGHTS: FIRST	3	EAST BRUNSWICK: CALVARY	2	PITTSBURG: OLIVET	5
VIENNA	3	JACKSON	5	EAST MILLSTONE	1	PORCHTOWN ZION	8
WHARTON: UNITED COMM. ST JOHN'S	2	KEANSBURG: FIRST	2	EDISON: WESLEY	8	QUINTON	1
WHARTON:LWR BERKSHIRE VALLEY	1	KEYPORT: CALVARY	1	EDISON: NEW DOVER UMC	11	RICHWOOD	17
Skylands District Total	328	KEYPORT: EL MESIAS	1	FLEMINGTON	1	SALEM: BROADWAY	5
		LAKEHURST	2	FRENCHTOWN	2	SEWELL: HURFFVILLE BETHEL	2
PALISADES		LITTLE SILVER: EMBURY	6	HAMPTON:NORTH HUNTERDON	3	SWEDESBORO: BETHESDA	7
ALLENDALE: ARCHER	10	LONG BRANCH: ST LUKE'S	5	LEBANON: ROUND VALLEY UMC	10	VINELAND: FIRST	7
ALPINE:ALPINE COMMUNITY	1	MANAHAWKIN	3	LEBANON:COKEBURY	1	Delaware Bay District Total	234
BLOOMINGDALE	6	MANASQUAN	20	MANSFIELD TWP: ANDERSON	4		

VITAL CONGREGATIONS

A New Kind of Rally Day

By Douglas Ruffle

Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC



Rally Day never looked like this before. At the Cranford United Methodist Church, on September 12th, congregants gathered in front of the church—outside—for a short worship service and then went out into the community to **do** the mission of God.

Over the previous summer, church folk read Mike Slaughter's book (recommended by Bishop Devadhar to all of our congregations), *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010). As a result of the reading, church leadership decided to do something different for

Rally Day—the day traditionally dedicated to re-start Sunday School and regular worship activities after the summer season. They decided to take the people out of the church and into the community. They were blessed with a gloriously beautiful day.

Normally, two worship services are held on Sundays. For this rally day, they decided on a different format. All would meet for a short service at 9 a.m. and then go off for 'hands-on' activities either inside the church building or out into the community. Chairs were set out in front of their sanctuary at the corner of Walnut and Lincoln Avenue. A short service of songs, Scripture and message was held. Pastor Ed Hann exhorted the people to go out into the community that day to participate in a number of planned activities. After his message, there was a service of anointing.

Members signed up ahead of time for a number of service opportunities. For instance, some went inside the building to put together care packages for soldiers serving overseas. Others wrote letters to soldiers while children drew pictures for them. Another group made sandwiches in the kitchen that would be later given to Shelters in nearby Newark. Still another group made packages of fresh produce that would be given to the community food bank.

Other service opportunities included a church clean up crew with specific chores drawn up by the Board of Trustees. A group of women made prayer shawls to give to people who recently lost loved ones. Others went out into the community itself to local parks where they welcomed people giving out bottles of water. One team went into public parks and cleaned up debris. Another went on visits to shut-ins. Another team visited the Cranford Manor Nursing Home to share songs, offer prayers and provide companionship.

Several women went to a park that had a basketball court. They brought orange slices and bottled water and gave them to the young people who were playing. They engaged in some conversation and simply offered the water and oranges to them, not expecting anything in response. One of the women of the church inadvertently left her pocketbook at the playground and she went on to another park. Realizing later that she had left her pocketbook she retraced her steps back to the basketball court. As she and another woman from the church approached the court, they could hear the players say, "Here come those nice church ladies." The youth themselves pointed out where she had left her purse.

All the people engaged in these activities returned to church at 11 o'clock where they had a time of sharing and a conclusion to their worship for the day. People talked about what it felt like to be out into the community actually doing God's service on behalf of others. There was an effusive spirit of joy at being able to make a difference in people's lives.

Such was the experience of going out into the world on this Rally Day. Cranford United Methodist Church is already planning similar events for the winter and springtime where they can get out of the four walls of the church and engage the community in ways that make a difference in peoples lives. Mike Slaughter talks about all of this in his book, *Change The World* where he says, "Quit worrying about getting people into your church, and start finding opportunities to move the people who are already there out into God's service. Religion that honors God is religion with feet" (p. 24).

Cranford United Methodist experienced a "Rally Day" unlike any they had ever experienced. How will your church change the world? How will you get out of the church building and into the community to make a difference?

Communion Agreement

(Continued from page 1)

Bishop Devadhar said that whenever an ELCA clergy or laity sings, "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," or a UMC clergy or laity sings, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," it will have new meaning and dimension now.

"As both denominations' clergy and laity continue to show the marks of our participation in the Lord's Table through our daily lives as disciples of Jesus Christ, for the glory of God, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, we can make a powerful impact on our society, addressing the issues that break the fabric of humanity such as poverty, violence, and injustice," said Bishop Devadhar. "This is a great

opportunity to demonstrate our Christian witness and unity in such a time as ours."

Following the service of celebration, clergy and laity enjoyed a traditional Korean lunch prepared by the congregants of Calvary Korean United Methodist Church. There were also workshops that further explained the agreement, which were led by Rev. Timothy J. Wengert, professor of Reformation history, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia and the Rev. Kathleen D. Billman, a clergy member of the GNJAC and professor of pastoral theology at the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago.

Stewardship Stories

By Rich Hendrickson
Coordinator of Stewardship Education
and Development, GNJAC



Christmas for Others

So much money is spent on gifts each Christmas, yet how many gifts are really appreciated and, more importantly, how many are really needed? If you're tired of giving and receiving the same old gifts for Christmas then we invite you this year to do something completely different.

First, we invite you to rethink your wish list. Instead of asking for new clothes to replace the ones that are perfectly fine, ask your spouse, parents, siblings, children, friends to buy clothes for someone in need. Instead of asking for the "latest and greatest" new fad that will be outdated by June, ask that a gift be made in your name to a local food bank or overseas mission.

We also encourage you to give generously. Give a gift in someone's name that will truly make a difference in the lives of others. Check with your local church missions or outreach committees to explore the possibilities. The Advance Specials catalogue is a great place to pick out your "Christmas for Others" gifts. Begin family traditions that emphasize sacrifice over consumption and giving over getting. Instead of it all being about you, make it about someone else.

If giving to others instead of your family and friends does not appeal to you then we encourage you to match the amount of money you spend on Christmas gifts this year and make a donation of that same amount to the ministries of your local church.

VIEWPOINT

'Is Jesus Really Necessary?' Yes, but...

by Jack Scharf

I am responding to Gary Kochman's Viewpoint entitled "Is Jesus Really Necessary," which appeared in the October, 2010, issue of the *United Methodist Relay*.

There is much that I can agree with in Gary Kochman's recent article in the Relay which raised concerns about the modern tendency to view all religions as leading to God. This tendency can lead to a failure on the part of some to witness to the gospel of salvation of Jesus Christ. Certainly, as faithful Methodists, we must not slide unwittingly into the heresies of relativism and syncretism. We Methodists do believe that there is absolute truth in Jesus Christ and we do believe that all religions are not *equally* true. Nevertheless, I am concerned that Mr. Kochman's polemic may go too far in rejecting the "truth" of other religions.

Methodists have historically accepted that other religions do contain both truth and goodness in their doctrines and practices. John Wesley lived in a world of religious pluralism in England and was concerned that Christianity not promote conflict between denominations and religions. He held to the truth of Christianity while being both respectful and tolerant of those of other beliefs. Wesley wrote these words in his treatise on "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists":

"The thing I am greatly afraid of...and which I greatly resolved to use every possible method of preventing, was, a narrowness of spirit, a party zeal, a being straitened in our own bowels; that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among themselves. I thought it might be a help against this frequently to read, to all who are willing to hear, the accounts I have received...of the work which God is carrying on in the earth,...not among us alone, but among those of various opinions and denominations."

Wesley would often quote Matthew 12:50, "Whoever does the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" in explaining his tolerance towards those of other faiths.

Today we live in an increasingly pluralistic society. There are almost as many Muslims living in America today as Methodists. While holding to the truth given to us in the gospel, we must nevertheless, always be open and tolerant to those of other faiths. In the end it is God, in God's infinite mercy, and *not us* who will judge who will be saved and who will not be saved. Yes, let us be emboldened in our faith in Jesus Christ, fearless in our witness to his message and mission, and always loving to those who do not believe as we do.

(Jack Scharf is a member of the Morristown United Methodist Church.)

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VIEWPOINT

Thoughts on Professional Ethics in Retirement

by Daniel B. Casselberry

This year I received a letter indicating that I have enough service years completed to be eligible for retirement. The letter was a bit of a shock, since retirement was not on my mind and I hope I have a few good years of active ministry left in me.

The letter did give me pause to consider what I would be doing in retirement. One of those thoughts centered on where I would formally worship. I began to ponder stories of colleagues who had retired pastors in their congregations. Many of those stories told of retired clergy who were supportive assets to them and the churches they served. Some of those stories spoke of clergy who were unsupportive and subversive.

My own experience with retired clergy has run the gamut from those who were extremely helpful to those who were angry and bitter and unprofessional. My heart is warmed when I recall having the late Paul Friedrich in one of the churches I served. Paul and Deborah were as good as they come. Paul was a former district superintendent in the Southern New Jersey Conference, and became a mentor figure for me in his retirement while I was a young pastor in Maplewood. Wise, supportive, and encouraging would describe his participation in the church. He was very conscious of professional boundaries, and never crossed them.

Those on the other end of the spectrum need not worry...they will not be named. I do wonder if they ever stop to consider how much damage they do to pastors and churches when they violate the boundaries of professional conduct. I'm talking about those who openly criticize the appointed pastor to church members and others. I sometimes wonder if they even care. It seems to me they operate as if in retirement they are somehow exempt from consequences for their inappropriate behavior, but they would be wrong.

The Book of Discipline prescribes a remedy for this violation, under the category of chargeable offenses: undermining the ministry of another pastor. Conviction by church trial on such a charge would have serious consequences, as it should.

I like to believe I would follow the example of the supportive retired pastors whose support has endeared them to me and the churches they attended. At the same time, while I am a life-long loyal United Methodist, the thought of attending a theologically compatible church of another denomination increasingly seems like a viable option.

The very fact that the behavior of some makes me even consider such an option troubles me. It shouldn't be necessary to explore this, but it is.

So I pose this question to retired pastors, and soon enough I'll be one of you. Are you an asset or a liability to the church you are attending? It's truly a question worth pondering.

RELAY REVIEWS

Documentary

Homeless: The Motel Kids of Orange County

HBO Documentary Films

Alexandra Pelosi, Producer and Director

Released July, 2010

Filmmaker Alexandra Pelosi (daughter of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi) has given the public a new glimpse into what homelessness looks like in the current economic context, as opposed to what it looked like twenty years ago.

Her latest documentary work chronicles the lives of modern homeless children and their families living in Orange County, one of the most affluent areas of California.

Much of the film's location is a low rent motel across the street from the entrance to Disneyland, a place few if any of these children have ever visited themselves. For these children, the benefit of Disneyland for them is the nightly fireworks display or the possibility of employment for a parent at Disneyland's parking lot (which pays a little more than nine dollars an hour), barely enough to pay the \$850 monthly rent at the motel.

These children are today's "invisible homeless": if you encountered them at a supermarket or on the street, by appearance alone, they would be undistinguishable from most other children. In most instances, their parents are not unemployed, but underemployed. The high cost of living and the scarcity of jobs is at the heart of their families' plights, and in the instances of those families featured in the film, there is an honest desire on the part of the parents to provide the best life possible for their children. Circumstances being what they are, that is not an easy task.

On the surface, many of the children seem to be reasonably happy, while some express utter despair and hopelessness. Most of the children residing at this particular motel attend The Hope School, a one room school serving grades 2-4, a special year-round school for homeless children. At the Hope School, the children receive breakfast and lunch provided by the County, but the teacher there commented that "the food offered was not particularly nutritious and that she wouldn't eat it." At times when they are not at school, the children frequently eat at soup kitchens provided by area churches.

Life at the motel is fraught with problems. Bed bugs and lice are commonplace. Play areas for the children are virtually non-existent, and if they make too much noise outside of their rooms, the family becomes subject to eviction, and evictions are frequent.

For those evicted families who have no means to remove their belongings, those items are frequently discarded in dumpsters, which become treasure troves for the kids remaining at the motel. They eagerly explore the contents of the dumpsters, looking for toys, iPods, and anything else that might meet some need in their constricted lives.

When queried by journalists as to how Pelosi thought her latest film would stand up in the ratings against television programs like "The Real Housewives of Orange County", Pelosi indicated she didn't really worry about it. "I make movies about the people and things I care about. That's what's important to me."

This moving, heartbreaking documentary needs to be seen at a time when "Reality TV" is about anything but reality. At a time when "the lives of the rich and famous" seem to be the most common television fare, Pelosi's documentary offers a powerful and factual corrective to the shallow, vacuous, but popular "reality television".

See this film, and don't forget to keep the Kleenex handy.

Interfaith Concert in Sparta Benefits Pakistani Flood Victims



SPARTA — Nearly \$6,000 dedicated to relief for Pakistani flood victims was raised and put to use thanks to a fundraiser, Oct. 3, hosted by the Church and Society Committee of the Sparta Church.

The event was co-sponsored by The Multifaith Peace and Justice Alliance, the Sparta Ecumenical Council, the American Joint Multifaith Association, and the Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sussex County. Pictured above are some of the 80 attendees.

In addition to raising much needed funds for the Pakistan flood victims, the event was an opportunity for people of all faiths to meet each other and make

new friends. Light refreshments were served. Waleed Gabr of Islamic Relief USA and Moin Ansari of the American Joint Multifaith Association, both recently returned from Pakistan, showed pictures and described the needs of the people. A Pakistani band provided music.

The proceeds from the event were distributed to the Edhi Foundation, Islamic Relief and UNICEF to purchase food, medical supplies and support reconstruction.

"Let's continue to pray for our unfortunate brothers and sisters," urged Jim Milway, one of those attending the event, "no matter what religion throughout the world."

RELAY REVIEWS

Book Review by Dan Casselberry

Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle

By Chris Hedges

Nation Books, Publisher July 2009

Hardcover \$24.95

Former New York Times foreign correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winning author Chris Hedges' latest book, *Empire of Illusion* is both warning and lament. After reading the first couple of chapters, I felt nearly suicidal...a purely rational reaction to Hedges well-documented analysis of the current state of affairs in our nation.

He begins with the impact of television and the Internet as vehicles for dissemination of information and misinformation. With what has become private ownership of the airwaves and the move toward more corporate control over internet access and content, and with the demise of the Fairness Doctrine which sought to provide balance in terms of political content, Hedges asserts that the programming and information provided is more propagandistic than objective.

With corporate ownership of the various networks, viewpoints that are adverse to the goals of the owners are not likely to be presented, and if they are, they may not be presented fairly. He laments the demise of print media, the increasing number of Americans and Canadians who are functionally illiterate, and the rise of a "culture of celebrity" that promotes illusory notions of what is truly important in a civil society.

Gone is the notion of "the common good", replaced with an onslaught of "reality TV programming that runs the gamut of "The Real World" to "The Jerry Springer Show". It is a sad fact that more young people apply to be on "The Real World" than apply to attend college.

Shows like Jerry Springer and Maury Povich exploit the unfortunate and undereducated, inviting "guests" who air the sordid and private aspects of their lives for public entertainment and ridicule. It is not so very different from the days of the Roman Colosseum, where the crowds were entertained by people being fed to wild animals. The "guests" who achieve their fifteen minutes of fame do so at the cost of their own personhood. The "guests" become commodities for the entertainment of the viewing public, whose cruelty and voyeurism are satisfied at the expense of the "guests".

The culture of narcissism of which Christopher Lasch spoke of in his book by that title in 1979 has come to full fruition. Anyone on television or the Internet can become an "expert", even if they know very little about what they're talking or writing about. And when everyone can be an "expert", then no one is. The people who are truly experts in various subjects get lost in a sea of self-proclaimed, self-promoted "experts". How is it that someone like college dropout Sean Hannity, who considers himself an "expert" on just about everything, can host a television show and be paid millions of dollars for doing it? It is not about knowledge, or accuracy, or truth. It is about selling ideas and illusions that support the viewpoints of the viewers and make them feel "right". Feeling takes precedence over thinking, and ideology supplants fact.

Next, Hedges explores love, wisdom, and happiness. In the present age, love gets reduced to sex and pornography, wisdom to universities that churn out corporate managers rather than educated thinking human beings, and happiness to the acquisition of material wealth and fame.

Hedges sees little hope in the major political parties addressing the real problems we face, because he sees them as "owned" by the corporate interests. With the recent Supreme Court ruling that gives corporations the same rights as individual citizens, politicians are beholden to corporate interests if they seriously want to be reelected to office. Hedges says our democracy is almost dead, our government broken, and he sees little encouraging evidence that it can be fixed.

If you're looking for a boost in your spirits, this book is not the ticket. If you want to take stock of what's wrong with things as they currently are, *Empire of Illusion* will give you plenty of food for thought. Hedges doesn't shoot from the hip: his assertions are well-documented and easily verifiable.

My main criticism of the book is that while it accurately delineates the problems we face, it doesn't go far enough in proposing solutions. Perhaps his next book will take things up there.

UDDERLY CHARMING



HANDS ON activity was the order of the day for children of the Sparrow Bush (N.Y) Church during their "Son Harvest County Fair" Vacation Bible School last summer. Here one of the older children enjoys a Grade A harvest while learning about the Fruit of the Spirit.

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 or UMRelay, 1 Mayflower Ct., Whiting, NJ 08759.

November 2 — Election Day

EXERCISE your right as a citizen and your duty as a Christian citizen. Make your ballot count in ways that reflect the will of God to "do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God." Micah 5:8.

November 7 — Sunday Night Live Youth Event

SOMERVILLE — This interfaith Raritan Valley event — second of five this year — is jointly sponsored by Raritan Valley District and Bridgewater Church. Beginning with devotions, the evening continues with fellowship and recreation at the Somerville Y, 2 Green St., Somerville. Open to youth 6th through 12th grades. FFI: Call Cathi Reckenbeil at 908-526-1414 ext 5 or check the GNJ *Digest*.

November 13 — Multi-Cultural Celebration

HAZLET — St. John's Church will be the site of this three-hour celebration of cultural heritage reflected in the GNJ conference finding expression in worship, fellowship, food and festivity. Everyone is encouraged to come in native dress and bring a dish reflecting their culture to share. Runs from 4 p.m. through 7 p.m.

November 18 — Youth Worker Training

NEPTUNE — West Grove Church in the Northern Shore District will be the site of this session dealing with recruiting volunteers. FFI: Contact Ginny Kaiser at the Conference Office, 732 359-1043. See the edGe.

November 25 — Thanksgiving Day

O GIVE THANKS to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

February 27 - March 2, 2011 — NEJ Clergywomen's Consultation 2011

LANCASTER, Pa. — "Bold & Bodacious: Bubbling up, Bursting Out, Building Up, Breaking Through." That's how they describe this four-day Northeastern Jurisdiction event at the Holiday Inn Convention Center featuring Drew's Traci West, Claremont's Marjorie Suchocki and a bevy of women bishops. FFI: Contact Tanya Linn Bennett, tbennet@drew.edu

July 13-17, 2011 — Youth 2011

LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Youth 2011, the four-day national youth gathering for the United Methodist Church at Purdue University, will bring together top United Methodist leaders, the best ecumenical speakers, bands and talent and thousands of youth from all around the nation for what is sure to be a life-changing event. For information about the event and bus transportation from the GNJ conference office, log on to www.gnjumc.org.

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Fall District Resource Days

As the year winds down, laity and clergy on five of the districts of the Greater New Jersey Conference will have opportunities for growth as outstanding guest leaders share their expertise.

GATEWAY NORTH

Tues, Weds. November 2 & 3
Rev. Stephanie Hixon
JUSTPEACE Mediation & Conflict Resolution
Time: clergy 8:30 am - 1 pm; laity 7:30 -9:30pm;
Place: Vincent UMC, Nutley

The Rev. Stephanie Hixon is Co-Executive Director for JUSTPEACE, Center for Mediation and Conflict Resolution.

PALISADES

Thursday, November 4
Dr. James Fleming
Biblical Resources
Time: clergy 8:30am-3 pm; laity 6:30-9:00 pm
Place: Teaneck UMC

Dr. James Fleming, is a biblical archaeologist and founder of the Biblical Resources Study Center in Jerusalem.

NORTHERN SHORE

Thurs, Fri November 4 & 5
Stephanie Hixon
JUSTPEACE Mediation & Conflict Resolution
Time: clergy & laity 8:30.-3:00; laity 7-9 pm
Place: Hamilton UMC, Neptune

The Rev. Joe Daniels is the lead pastor of the Emory Fellowship, a rapidly growing United Methodist congregation in Washington, D.C.

GATEWAY SOUTH November 9

The Rev Dr. Joseph Daniels
"Being a Real Church for Real People"
Time: 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Place: Mt. Zion UMC, Lawnside

The Rev. Gil Rendle, has an extensive background in organizational development, group and systems theory, and leadership development. He has written four books and numerous articles.

DELAWARE BAY

Thursday, November 18
Rev. Gil Rendle: Leadership
Time: clergy 8:45am - 3 pm; laity 7-9 pm;
Place: Pitman UMC

Please note:

Cross-district registration is a possibility. Contact the district of your interest.

Glassboro Concert Nov. 21 with Musician Lenny Smith

GLASSBORO — First Church here will host an "Evening of Worshiping Our Maker" on Sunday, November 21, at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary.

The music program, presented by Clarksboro resident Lenny Smith, composer of the nationally known "Our God Reigns," will include some selections

with the church's Praise Hymn Praise Band.

Mr. Smith has written over 170 praise and worship songs and owns his own music publishing company, New Jerusalem Music. A free-will offering will be received to support his work.

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The *United Methodist Relay*, sent 10 times a year to the clergy and lay leadership of the Greater New Jersey Conference, is an effective medium for advertising goods and services related to local church ministry or personal interests and needs. The good news, the VERY GOOD NEWS, is that the advertising rates are remarkably low. To inquire about rates or to place your ad with our advertising manager, call:

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RELAY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the *United Methodist Relay* is to provide print communication to the leadership and membership, clergy and lay, of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. It shall be a vehicle to tell the church's story and a forum for the exchange of ideas regarding Christian Faith and Practice.

In fulfillment of this mission, its purpose is:

- to inform the readership of events and resources at local, district conference, area and denominational levels
- to promote the mission of the annual conference, the area, and the general church
- to invite discussion of and response to important and controversial key issues facing the church
- to encourage readers to grow in their commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in church and society
- to inspire readers to grow in their faith and commitment to Christ and the Church

In pursuit of this mission and purpose, we will endeavor to be: Accurate * Informative * Interesting * Stimulating * Motivating * And sometimes, Provocative.

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