

Easter Day began with some grieving women carrying ointment for burial rites.

They came prepared for an embalming;
They left celebrating a resurrection.

They came looking for a body;
They found only an empty tomb.

They came expecting a corpse;
They found angelic witnesses.

They came with tear-filled eyes;
They left in joyous amazement.



They came forgetting all his promises;
They left remembering all he had told them.

They came to the tomb grief stricken;
They left in buoyant, exuberant joy.

They came to pay tribute to the dead;
They left proclaiming the living Lord.

Turning Point!

And when they told the others what they had found
Their words seemed like idle tales
And the disciples did not believe them.
But Peter, always impulsive, and hyperactive,
Got up and ran to the tomb
With the same set of expectations as the women.
Expecting a sealed tomb.
Expecting a dead body.
Expecting the eclipse of hope.
And all he found was
Some slightly worn linen burial clothes.
And he went home scratching his head,
Amazed at what had happened,
Wondering.
Then 50 days later, came Pentecost,
and Peter preached a sermon.
And the world hasn't been the same since.

May the message
of the women and of Peter
be yours as well:
The Lord is Risen!
...Risen indeed!

rvc

Reprinted from *Relay Online* April 4, 2010



United Methodists Respond to Disasters in Japan and New Jersey

From cleanup kits for flood-ravaged homeowners in the Passaic Valley, to donations to alleviate the suffering of earthquake and tsunami victims in Japan, Greater New Jersey United Methodists are showing that they care, and generously demonstrating their caring in Christ's name.

Motivated by the recent spate of floods in Northern New Jersey, the Conference Disaster Response Committee has been energized, backed by the full support and encouragement of Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar and his cabinet. On the global scale, the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, followed by the nuclear threat posed by flood-ravaged power plants has mobilized United Methodists in every corner of the GNJ Conference to

reach out to the stricken islands through UMCOR and other relief agencies.

Headed by the Rev. Derrick Doherty, Waretown pastor, the GNJ DRC is currently coordinating efforts to provide cleanup kits to those affected by the March floods in the Passaic River Valley and the Bound Brook area of Northern New Jersey.

Meanwhile, half a world away, United Methodist Committee on Relief workers have joined with missionaries already in Japan to aid those suffering from the devastating 8.9 earthquake March 11. Within hours of the seismic eruption and tsunami, UMCOR had assigned an account number to identify the Advance Special designated for donations to alleviate the suffering, and

immediately gifts began to pour in. The number is #3021317, Pacific Emergency.

In a letter to pastors and conference leaders the same day as the earthquake, Bishop Devadhar requested prayers "in the light of the devastation which is happening in Japan, the islands in the Pacific and even the West Coast of the United States." He urged readers to pray "for those affected by the earthquake, subsequent tsunami waves, and the threat of radiation from damaged nuclear generating plants."

"In addition to your prayers," the Bishop continued, "please consider taking a special offering for the Pacific Emergency" through UMCOR.

In the same letter, the Bishop made a plea for the GNJ disaster response

to the North Jersey floods.

"At this time, the Disaster Relief Committee of the Annual Conference is assessing the needs in various parts of the New Jersey which have been affected by flooding," he wrote. "As the needs become clear the opportunity for your assistance will be made known...I earnestly covet your prayers across the conference for both those in need and those who volunteer to be of assistance."

The newly energized Conference Disaster Response Committee will be hosting a training event for everyone interested in becoming part of the Early Response Teams (ERT) within the conference. The training will be April 30, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the conference

(Continued on Page 3)

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

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

Today, on Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, I was the preacher at the 200th anniversary of a Church in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, where the choir sang beautifully, "Go Light Your World," with words and music by Chris Rice, arranged by Allen Pote. Moved by it, as soon as I returned home, I googled it, so I could read all the words of this powerful song. I found it to be very challenging and inspirational.



It reads as follows (... indicates that I have left out certain words):

"There Is a Candle in Every Soul.

...
Carry your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn,
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle; go light your world.
Take your candle; go light your world

...
Carry your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world,
Take your candle; go light your world.

...
Carry your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world

...
Carry your candle, run to the darkness,
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle; go light your world
Take your candle; go light your world ."

As I was reflecting on these words I realized what a powerful message they offer, particularly as we journey through the Lenten season, observe Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter.

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, "Christ is Risen," and we preach with power, "The Tomb is Empty!" But we also live in a world where there are many who merely *observe* Easter. (My emphasis here is on the word "observe." They celebrate Easter only through Easter egg hunts and Easter bunnies.) As celebrators of the true Easter faith, our commitment to Christian service and witness tells us to present Christ to the world through our ministry of presence, service, and witness. As Chris Rice composed, "There is a candle in every soul..." We as Christians are to run to the world carrying the candle to "seek out the helpless, de-

ceived and the poor; to seek out the hopeless, confused and torn."

My invitation to all of you, then, as celebrators of the true Easter faith, is to share the light of Christ with someone in your circle of influence. You may know of persons who only attend a Christian worship service on Christmas or Easter. Why not give them a candle, a Christ candle, and invite them to celebrate the true meaning of Easter. You may even want to offer to take them to church with you. How many lives could we touch if we were to give out candles to our friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers this year with the simple words, "Please receive this gift as a token of my/our friendship/love as we look forward to celebrating Easter on April 24th."

We are not to be limited to Christmas and Easter but we are to hold the light for Christ each and every moment of our lives to a world where there are people who are helpless, deceived by the powers of the world, poor, hungry, homeless, confused, and torn. Christ, through the empty tomb, offers us a challenge to be a Church that ministers not to those inside, but to those outside, those who need hope, like the disciples who were encountered by the risen Christ on the first Easter morning.

Our Easter celebration should be a day of recommitment and rededication to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

May we be challenged by God, constrained by Christ, and nudged by the Holy Spirit, so that as we sing "Christ is Risen" we may also seek out the places where we need to take the Christ candle.

Is it to prisoners of injustice and victims of violence in our communities?

Is it through prayer against violence in the Middle East and other places in the world, including some of our own communities in the United States?

Is it by fighting for just systems on every level of our society?

Is it by giving to the poor instead of spending on Easter gifts, cards and dinners for our loved ones?

May the words, "There is a candle in every soul... Take your candle; go light your world," stir us, agitate us, and push us till we find the peace the risen Christ offers to all of us. Let us ask each other the next time we meet, "To whom have you taken the Christ candle recently?"

Prema joins me in wishing you and your loved ones a Happy Easter.

In Christ's love,

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

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Yes, You Are Being Digested!

By now, you have probably discovered the thrice-weekly GNJ Digest, your conference's electronic newsletter full of Announcements, Events, Celebrations, National News and Conference Calendar Updates. There are also special letters from the Bishop and notifications of deaths among members of the Annual Conference.

If you are not currently on our e-mail list and would like to be, please send your request to become a part of our "digested community" to communications@gnjumc.org.



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

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FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION and PLACEMENT

George A. Imhoff, Advertising Manager,
P.O. Box 115, 190 Diamond Spring Road
Denville, N.J. 07834 • Phone (973) 627-0260 e-mail: gai42adv@optonline.net

ALL NEWS ARTICLES, photos, letters and viewpoints should be sent to the Editorial Staff member serving your district or agency, at the listed address.

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Robin E. Van Cleef
Editor
1 Mayflower Court
Whiting, NJ 08759
Phone: (732) 350-6444
e-mail: revrev@verizon.net

Erica Munoz
edGe Editor
1001 Wickapecko Drive
Ocean, NJ 07712
Phone: (732) 359-1049
e-mail: EMunoz@gnjumc.org

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Skylands & Palisades Districts
George A. Imhoff
190 Diamond Spring Road
P.O. Box 115, Denville, NJ 07834
H: (973) 627-0260 Fax: (973) 627-2214
e-mail: gai42adv@optonline.net

Capital & Cape Atlantic Districts
Daniel Casselberry
223 Burd Street, Pennington, NJ 08534
H: (609) 434-0061 e-mail: dbcassel@comcast.net

Delaware Bay & Gateway South Districts
Glenn C. Ferguson
141 Marcshire Dr., Middletown, NJ 07748
(732) 671-0707 e-mail: mumc.pastor@comcast.net

Northern Shore District
Robin E. Van Cleef
1 Mayflower Court, Whiting, NJ 08759
(732) 350-6444
e-mail: revrev@verizon.net

Gateway North and Raritan Valley Districts
Position Vacant
1001 Wickapecko Drive, Ocean, NJ 07712
Phone: (732) 359-1048

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Newly Named D.S.s Prepare to Assume Post July 1st

As the conference year winds toward its conclusion, two GNJ clergy are preparing for their new appointments following Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar's announcement late last month of the last two district superintendents rounding out his cabinet for the coming year. Assuming the superintendency are the Rev. Jisun Kwak and the Rev. Wayne Plumstead.

JISUN KWAK

In a February 20 letter, Bishop Devadhar announced the appointment of the Rev. Jisun Kwak as the district superintendent of the Gateway North District, effective July 1.

Currently Ms. Kwak is pastor at Centenary Church, Metuchen, where she has served for just one year. Prior to that, she served the Mendham Church (1995-2007) and was pastor of the Thiells (N.Y.) Church (2007-2010). She was ordained as an elder in full connection in 1998 and served as a deacon from 1995 to 1998.

Bishop Devadhar described Ms. Kwak as a great pastor who has demonstrated empowerment of the laity.

"I care about life because life is the most wonderful, amazing gift from God. That is the reason I became a pastor," said Ms. Kwak. "I would like to help people to live their life with the feeling of greatness and excitement."

Born in Korea, Dr. Kwak came to the United States in her twenties.

"English is my second language," she explains. "I know exactly how it feels to live in a foreign land where the mother tongue is different, and where you are far away from family and friends." She feels that this background



Jisun Kwak

will fit her well for her new assignment.

"I am truly excited to be serving a district that is so wonderfully diverse and multi-cultural. My hope is that our community remains open and accepting, so that we celebrate our differences and our rich cultural heritages, and accept with open arms everyone, regardless of age or walk of life."

After earning a doctorate focusing on culture and identity, she has taught courses on cross-cultural pastoral care and ministry and group dynamics at seminaries and in graduate courses. She has supervised numerous students in pastoral counseling.

"This experience will enhance my ministry to pastors and churches in this, the most multi-cultural district of the Greater New Jersey Conference," she believes.

Bishop Devadhar said Dr. Kwak is a servant leader who always places heart



Wayne Plumstead

and mind together in her decisions.

"She will bless us with her compassionate and deep Christian faith as a district superintendent," said Bishop Devadhar.

Bishop Devadhar asks that all members of the Greater New Jersey Conference remember the Ms. Kwak, her family, and all parties involved in the transition, in their prayers.

WAYNE J. PLUMSTEAD

In the same February 20 notice, Bishop Devadhar announced the appointment of the Rev. Wayne Jack Plumstead as district superintendent of the Palisades District, effective July 1.

Currently Mr. Plumstead is the senior pastor at Park United Methodist Church in Bloomfield, where he has served since 1991. He says he has served within what is now the Gateway

North District, since his ordination as elder in 1975.

"Having served churches in the current Gateway North District for my entire ministry, I am looking forward to building new relationships and friendships in the Palisades District," said Mr. Plumstead.

Bishop Devadhar said that Mr. Plumstead has been a great pastor who has modeled what it means to have a heart for global ministries.

"I am deeply touched by his leadership, faithfulness and organizational skills that he has exhibited through the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and his leadership in the district," said Bishop Devadhar.

Mr. Plumstead said that just as Jesus Christ lived out the life of God in all of its human dimensions, the church is called to be the living presence of Christ in the world and to do the same in every aspect of its ministry.

"This is true for district superintendents no less than for every pastor and lay follower of Christ," he said. "I am truly humbled by the opportunity that has been afforded me to serve the people and pastors of the Palisades District and I see myself as challenging, encouraging and walking with them as they seek at such a time as this, to make committed disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Mr. Plumstead has been married to educator, Rosemary Amello-Plumstead since 1983. Bishop Devadhar asks that all members of the Greater New Jersey Conference remember the Plumsteads and all parties involved in the transition, in their prayers.

Local Churches May Aid in Supplying Kits for Flood-Ravaged Areas

(Continued from Page One)

office, 1001 Wickapecko Drive, Ocean. Meals will be provided.

"The ministry of the ERTs is one where the rubber meets the road with our faith," explains Mr. Doherty. "ERTs go and work with people who are trying to recover from a disaster." Interested persons should notify the committee of their intention by e-mail to DisasterResponse@gnjumc.org no later than April 19.

"How excited I am that we are having united responses at every level of the conference from the episcopal office to the local churches," Pastor Doherty declared. He also expressed appreciation to other conferences of the Northeastern Jurisdiction who offered help in bringing the DRT up to

speed. "It's just a wonderful example of our connectionalism," he told United Methodist News Service. Among the conferences volunteering their services are Baltimore-Washington, Upper New York and Eastern Pennsylvania.

The Team is now a functioning unit of VOAD, New Jersey Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster, a coalition of groups that includes the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Fema and several score of denominational and civic organizations. VOAD describes its mission as "bringing together New Jersey organizations active in disaster relief, and to foster, through cooperation in mitigation and response, a more effective service to people affected by disaster."

IMPORTANT POINTERS

> **The Good Shepherd Church** in Northfield has been designated as a Hub for receipt and handling of UMCOR kits and disaster supplies. Clean-up kits and buckets received at the Good Shepherd Hub will be made available for local needs or shipped to Mission Central in Mechanicsburg Pa.

> **Local Churches.** The best thing a local church can do is to help restock **Clean Up Buckets** that are used for the recent flooding. The contents of the buckets can be found at the UMCOR web page at <http://new.gbmg-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/flood-bucket/>. Local churches may assemble buckets, collect supplies, or donate funds to purchase supplies. Completed buckets, supplies or funds can be brought to the Good Shepherd HUB which will keep a number of the buckets in stock for use in the Greater NJ Conference and pass along any excess to Mission Central to replenish the stock there.

> **Volunteers** are invited to help assemble buckets and other kits at the Good Shepherd HUB. For additional information call 609-272-9984 or log on to this e-mail address: goodshepherdhub@comcast.net.

Donations may be sent to Good Shepherd HUB, PO Box 762, Northfield NJ 08225.

> **For Flood victims.** The NJ Division of Consumer Affairs has issued the following urgent message: All home improvement contractors are required by law to obtain registration numbers that begin "13VH" in order to provide emergency repair services from flood damage.

Before you hire a contractor call the Division's License Verification Line: 973-273-8090

UMVIM Offers 'Hope to Haiti'

GNJAC — "Bring Hope to Haiti." That's the slogan and the hope of Kathy Ahmad, coordinator of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission for the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, as she plans for a June 11 meeting at St. John's Church, Hazlet, designed to inform and awaken United Methodists to the possibility and promise of reconstruction on the Caribbean island.

Just 18 months after the disastrous earthquake that brought widespread death and destruction to Haiti, the June meeting will explore several avenues to renewal for the devastated land.

After considering a number of priority projects for earthquake recovery, a coalition of church agencies has proposed and approved a "Haiti Response Plan" to enlist volunteers for service.

Ms. Ahmad's vision involves two GNJ VIM teams scheduled for November 5-11, 2011 and March 10-17, 2012. And for those who choose not to join one of the two teams, there is the possibility of local churches scheduling a team of their own.

The June 11 meeting will explore the options and the challenges.

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission has been active in Haiti for over 30 years, addressing needs in education, health and housing. The Haiti Response Plan is UMVIM's answer to the crisis, in collaboration with the Methodist Church of Haiti.

The June 11 meeting at St. John's will begin at 3 p.m. Additional information and registration is available by e-mail at kahmad@comcast.net.

The Birthday Committee
Requests the honor of your presence at the

60th Birthday Worship Celebration
for
Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

Wednesday, April 6, 2011 7:30PM

St. John's United Methodist Church
2000 Florence Avenue
Hazlet, NJ 07730

Bishop Violet Fisher, Preacher

In lieu of gifts feel free to make a donation to the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, designating either "Wings of the Morning" plane project for North Katanga or The United Theological College, Bangalore, India



Global Relay

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

Faith leaders look at budget's 'moral' impact

WASHINGTON — The poor have no one staging mass protests on their behalf, but religious leaders are speaking out about how proposed changes to the U.S. budget for 2011 and 2012 could affect them. In a March 1 letter to Congress, 16 religious leaders - including United Methodist Bishop Larry Goodpaster, president of the Council of Bishops, and the Rev. John McCullough, the United Methodist executive director of Church World Service - expressed their full commitment to ministry with the poor.

NBC special to focus on efforts against malaria

NASHVILLE — On both sides of the ocean, people are working to end a disease that takes the life of a child every 45 seconds. An NBC special TV program, "A Killer in the Dark: An Extraordinary Effort to Combat Malaria," discusses efforts being undertaken by United Methodists and others to achieve this goal. Presented by the National Council of Churches and produced by United Methodist Communications, the program will be available to local NBC affiliates starting May 1. Church members can contact their local stations and ask them to schedule "A Killer in the Dark."

Church leaders denounce Islam hearings

NEW YORK — The head of the National Council of Churches was among the speakers at a March 6 rally in Times Square opposing congressional hearings on Islam being held by U.S. Rep. Peter King, R-NY. Although King has denied that his inquiries into Islam are "anti-Muslim," others believe that American Muslims are the targets of bigotry in the name of national security. "Today, millions of Muslim Americans are subjected to thoughtless generalizations, open discrimination and outright hostility because of a tiny minority whose acts of violence deny the teachings of the Quran and are denounced by other Muslims," Michael Kinnamon, NCC head, declared.

Mission leader decries Pakistan assassination

NEW YORK — The United Methodist Church's chief mission leader has expressed solidarity with the Christian community in Pakistan in the wake of the March 2 assassination of the most prominent Christian in that country's government. "Shahbaz Bhatti... was by all accounts a man of great integrity and dignity," wrote Thomas Kemper, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, in a March 3 letter to Bishop Samuel Azariah, presiding bishop of the Church of Pakistan, a board mission partner. "He served his country with loyalty even as he opposed strict interpretation of a blasphemy law that would make the face of being Christian punishable by death."

Immigration task force meets in Washington

WASHINGTON — Members of the United Methodist Interagency Task Force on Immigration met March 4 in Washington, led by Phoenix Area Bishop Minerva Carcaño and Iowa Area Bishop Julius Trimble. Some of the group attended a White House meeting and visited Senate and House offices to discuss needed changes in detention and deportation policies.

Alert: Bishop warns of fraudulent Facebook page

NEW YORK (UMNS) — New York Area Bishop Jeremiah Park warns that the Facebook page that bears his name is a fake. Several pastors have received an e-mail from what appears to be "Bishop Jeremiah Park's Facebook page" that states the bishop is willing to lead a revival service and asks money for the travel expenses. Someone else set up the page using the bishop's name and pictures. An investigation is in progress. Anyone receiving such an e-mail should not send money.

Imagine No Malaria gifts top \$15 million

WASHINGTON — Gifts to Imagine No Malaria, the denominational initiative aimed at wiping out the disease that takes many lives, especially in Africa, recently surpassed \$15 million, thanks to caring United Methodists who donated to special offerings and participated in fundraisers to wipe out the mosquito-borne disease.

Imagine No Malaria revamps website

NASHVILLE — Just back from a virtual facelift, the Imagine No Malaria homepage is now live online. With a new, user-friendly interface, the ministry website at ImagineNoMalaria.org is loaded with more malaria information and downloadable resources. The site also offers a daily Lenten devotional.

Homosexuality debate heats up

NASHVILLE — A call from 36 retired bishops for The United Methodist Church to eliminate its ban on gay and lesbian clergy has outraged some members and encouraged others. In the past month, United Methodist-related groups on both sides of the ordination dispute have issued strong responses while for many United Methodists, homosexuality is not an abstract issue but something that affects their daily life.

UMCOR, donors work to rebuild Sudan

NEW YORK — Independence for South Sudan will mean rebuilding a country where both people and structures have been worn down by several decades of war. The United Methodist Committee on Relief — through its nongovernmental organization, a variety of donor partners and church members from Sudan and around the world — has already embarked on the rebuilding effort by constructing schools and providing for water and sanitation needs.

Call to Action Interim Operations Team named

NASHVILLE — The United Methodist Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table have named a seven-member Call to Action Interim Operations Team to work with church leaders in developing a denominational plan in preparation for the 2012 General Conference and beyond. The team includes a bishop, a general agency top executive, a church pastor and four laypeople with extensive experience with the church and the business world. The team's assignment is to be a catalyst for implementing significant change in denominational structures, policies, practices and leadership in ways that are aligned with God's call, the church's mission and the needs of the world in the 21st century.

Online Bible study explores contemporary issues

NASHVILLE — The United Methodist Church is debuting an online Bible study this spring. Participants will have an opportunity to explore and discuss contemporary topics and how they relate to the Christian faith in response to the call to Rethink Church. Participants who sign on for the Encounter Faith Bible study, available free of charge at RethinkChurch.org/encounterfaith, will look at timely issues, such as the demonstrations in North Africa and the Middle East, through the lens of faith.



In the Japanese coastal city of Ofunato, a house lies upended among debris following the 9.0-magnitude earthquake, March 11, which triggered a devastating tsunami and took more than 10,000 lives. Teams from the United States, United Kingdom and China were on the scene within hours to assist in searching for missing residents. UMCOR and other relief agencies continue to offer aid as the weeks pass and the suffering lingers. Donations can be made to Pacific Emergency, UMCOR Advance #3021317. Other stories on page 1, 3 and 10. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Matthew M. Bradley, courtesy U.S. Navy.)

Rapper wins \$40K for UM children's home

ATLANTA — The big "Celebrity Apprentice" winner Sunday March 27, wasn't just Lil Jon it was also children and youth at a North Georgia United Methodist Children's Home. The rapper and "Celebrity Apprentice" contestant won \$40,000 for his first time as a project manager on the hit NBC show. His designated charity is the North Georgia Annual Conference's United Methodist Children's Home located in Decatur. The money will go to the facility's family-housing program to provide shelter for homeless families.

Census helps church with evangelism

WASHINGTON — In the early days of Methodism, circuit riders traveled by horseback to reach potential converts. Some 200 years later, today's United Methodists can explore their mission field without ever leaving their computers — thanks to the U.S. Census. The once-a-decade enumeration of the U.S. population gives churchgoers a better sense of the people in their neighborhoods — their ages, ethnicity, educational backgrounds, household size, income levels and even their average travel time to work.

Feeding others...pastor keeps going and going

MARION, N.C. — Ten years ago, a heart surgeon sent the Rev. C. Ray Davis home with a bottle of pain pills and the gloomy news that he had two weeks to live. Now, some liken the 55-year-old United Methodist pastor to the "Energizer Bunny." Davis preaches for five weekly worship services and coordinates 19 outreach ministries at his small, but spirited, 200-member church.

Giving to UMCOR goes 100 percent to designated cause

NORTH CANTON, Ohio — At the United Methodist Committee on Relief, every contribution designated for Japan or other disaster areas goes toward people there who need help. This is possible because of the One Great Hour of Sharing, an annual offering across The United Methodist Church that covers the overhead expenses of UMCOR, points out Brian executive director of the East Ohio United Methodist Foundation.

New rule for schools: more clergy, more money

NASHVILLE — United Methodist schools of theology that educate more students for ordained ministry in the denomination will get more church funding in 2012 under a new formula for distributing money from the Ministerial Education Fund. The Directors of The United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry had approved the changes last fall, but tweaked the formula at the spring 2011 meeting to include money for full-time United Methodist faculty and senior administrators at the seminaries.

TV special focuses on help for job seekers

NEW YORK — A CBS religion special, "Unemployment: How Faith Communities Help Job Seekers," will be broadcast April 10 on the CBS Television Network. Check with local stations for the exact broadcast times. The special is produced in cooperation with the National Council of Churches, Consortium of Roman Catholic organizations, the Islamic Society of North America, the Union of Reform Judaism and the New York Board of Rabbis.

NCC 'deplores' Jerusalem bombing

NEW YORK — The National Council of Churches deplored the March 23 bombing of a crowded bus in Jerusalem that killed a woman and injured at least 24 persons. "In the 61 years of its existence, the National Council of Churches has consistently condemned violence as a tactic for advancing political ideology," said the Rev. Michael Kinnamon, NCC top executive. "The bomb that tore through this bus served no earthly cause but was a murderous assault on all that Christians, Muslims and Jews deem holy."

Faith groups protest gun amendment to budget

WASHINGTON — Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, a coalition of 26 denominations and national organizations, sent a letter March 1 to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., protesting the Boren amendment to the federal budget that would undermine the ability to monitor bulk sales of assault rifles. "As members of the faith community, we are keenly aware of the consequences of gun violence in our communities and within our families," wrote Jim Winkler, chief executive of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society and chair of Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence. "All too often the weapons used to commit these deadly acts of violence are obtained through illegal means. Therefore, it is imperative that law enforcement has the ability to detect and interdict illegal gun trafficking patterns."

**The May Issue Deadline is
April 5, 2011**

Heisman Trophy Winner Mike Rozier visits Parkside

CAMDEN — Every Wednesday evening Parkside Church here opens its doors to neighborhood youth ages 8-18 years, where they can engage in a number of activities. There is home work assistance, life lessons from the Bible, games, and a nutritious snack to share with their friends.

It's a safe place to meet and have fellowship in a city described as the second most dangerous city in the nation.

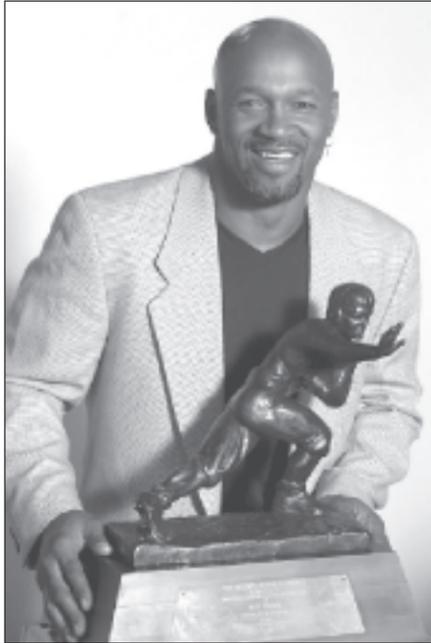
To celebrate Black History Month, the Parkside youth fellowship decided to invite local "heroes" to come and speak to the youth.

On February 23, Mike Rozier, 1983 Heisman Trophy winner and former NFL running back joined in the effort. Rozier, a Camden native was well received by his audience as he spoke about his days at the University of Nebraska and displayed the iconic trophy while a highlight video was played.

Some of the boys were in awe of the skills he demonstrated as a running back at Nebraska as they viewed the highlights. They asked, "Did you really do that?" He replied "Yes and you can too if you stay focused."

A number of volunteers under the direction of Gerry Baker, youth coordinator, and Mr. & Mrs. Pratt constitute the staff of this program.

In addition to hearing Rozier's story and getting a real close-up look at the Heisman Trophy, the young people had a chance to pose for pictures with Rozier who also granted one-on-one time to each young person who wanted it.



HEISMAN WINNER Mike Rozier, a Camden native, displays for Parkside Church youth the coveted trophy he won as a member of the University of Nebraska football team in 1983.

Pastor Calvin Woods joined the young adult leaders as they enjoyed the event as well and got the chance to get an autographed picture of the former football star.

"Thanks to people like Mike Rozier and those youth leaders who continue to give back to their community the youth can still dream dreams for a better future," one observer noted.



PHOTO OPS. Posing for pictures with the Parkside boys and girls, and granting them one-on-one time made the former star athlete a very special guest for the youth at their weekly gathering.

Galilee Church Offers Answer to Question 'Money! Money! When is it Enough?'

"Money! Money! Money! When is it enough?" That's the question raised at Galilee Church here. And the church's stewardship committee has come up with an answer, inviting the community to reflect on "Discovering Joy through Simplicity and Generosity."

Based on a book by Adam Hamilton, this 5-part study series encourages the participants to recognize "Enough" when they see it.

"Enough" is an invitation to rediscover the Bible's wisdom on prudent financial practices. Participants will be led to find the keys to experiencing contentment, overcoming fear, and discovering joy by changing their relationship with money.

The study sessions begin at 8 p.m. on five consecutive Mondays.

Session 1: Monday, March 14 will be led by Wayne Hamer and Valerie Hamer.

Session 2: Monday, March 21 will be led by Rev. David Briddell.

Session 3: Monday, March 28 will be led by Karlene Hyman.

Session 4: Monday, April 4 will be led by Lenord Kelly

Session 5: Monday, April 11 will be led by Jane Briddell.

A light supper will be served before each session at 7:00 PM. Patrick Henry is the Stewardship Chairperson. The Rev. Sherrie Dobbs Johnson is Pastor of Galilee Church, 325 Genesee Avenue, Englewood, NJ. For more information call 201-567-0009.

'Our Connection is our Strength', UMHomes Holds

The Morris L. Smith "Church Connection" program, an initiative to strengthen and enhance the longstanding bonds between the churches of the Greater New Jersey Conference and the United Methodist Homes, has completed its first year and a half. This program is the vision of Mr. Smith, immediate past-chair of the UMH Board of Directors.

The central focus of Church Connection is to establish an "ambassador" in each conference church. Any layperson can be an ambassador, serving as a communication link between the Homes and the congregation. There are now 102 ambassadors involved, representing 92 churches. Each ambassador receives direct communication about events and activities, needs and concerns from the Homes corporate office in Neptune and from one of the residential communities. The ambassador then helps the pastor promote and publicize the benefits of the Homes' programs and outreach.

"Church Connection yields financial and programmatic advantages to participating congregations," explains the Rev. Barry W. Wehrle, retired GNJAC clergy member and coordinator for Church Connection. To date, a number of congregations and individuals have benefited from this program, he reports.

Among tangible benefits, several prospective residents have had their application fees waived. In one instance, a person in need of respite care received a week free of charge for room and board at Francis Asbury Manor in Ocean Grove. Other benefits have included programs on aging as well as pulpit supply.

For further information, Mr. Wehrle may be contacted in any of the following ways: phone, 732-657-7580; email, bwehrle@umh-nj.org; or mailing address, 49 Mansfield Avenue, Manchester, NJ 08759.

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GNJAC Clergy and Laity Celebrate the Beginning of Lent

HAZLET — At the invitation of Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, the clergy and laity of the annual conference gathered here to mark the beginning of the Lenten season of penitence and preparation. In the morning session, the clergy were inspired by the preaching of the Rev. Stephanie Hand, who previously was the conference preacher for the 2010 sessions of the GNJAC.

Ms. Hand is from the Western North Carolina Conference where she serves as the volunteer manager of Workforce Initiative for Supportive Housing (W.I.S.H.) as well as associate minister at St. Mark's Church in Charlotte. Her sermon was drawn from the biblical story found in John 4:7-13 of Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. Ms. Hand encouraged the clergy to regularly "go to the well." She said that clergy too often neglect to care for themselves and that they need to acknowledge their own need for "living water."

The worship service included liturgical dance by Keila Vega-Perez and a rousing act of praise that featured drums and dance by Korean Clergywomen Dancers. Bishop Devadhar and



SACRAMENTAL MOMENT. Bishop Devadhar is joined by Bishop Felton May in consecrating the Communion elements at the pre-Lenten clergy gathering at St. John's Church in Hazlet. (Photos by Leo Park)

retired Bishop Felton E. May presided over a communion service. The morn-

ing concluded with a time of reflection and sharing around the questions:

"Where are your watering holes?" and "What keeps me from availing myself of the living water?"

The afternoon session included a service of healing and anointing followed by a brief meeting of the Order of Elders. On the agenda was a discussion of the purpose and function of the Order of Elder and how the order might best support its members.

During the evening session for laity, the congregation at St. John's hosted a light meal, with drinks and refreshments. The worship service again featured Ms. Hand's preaching with Bishop Devadhar celebrating communion. This service also included a prayer call and about fifty people responded and were anointed. GNJAC Lay Leader Rosa Williams and the conference laity council worked together to conduct the program during which an offering was taken for the initiative, "No Barriers To Entry" which Williams indicated was to create a fund to provide handicap access to our churches, through such things as elevators and ramps.

Thus prepared, the laity and clergy of the conference returned to their local settings re-energized for ministry in the Lenten season.

'Following Our Leader Jesus Christ': Journey of Korean Drum Dancers

"Praise God who created each and every one of us all different so that life in this world can be a lot more colorful!" So says the Rev. Pauline (Hyekyung) Kang, pastor of the Mt. Horeb and Springdale churches and member of the Korean Clergywomen Drum Dancers.

In this year's Pre-Lenten clergy gathering, the group was asked to perform an act of praise during the morning service. Ms. Kang reflected on the experience for the Relay.

As I was standing in the aisle wearing my all-purple dance costume waiting for the music to start, memories of the last five years of our journey together flashed through my mind.

Our journey began at the 2006 Annual Conference with the 50th Anniversary Celebration of full clergy rights for women in the United Methodist Church. Earlier that year, Korean clergywomen of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference were asked to prepare something special to mark this momentous event. At the time I was serving as vice president of the Korean-American Clergywomen's Association of the GNJAC. When the officers of that association sat down together squeezing our brains for ideas, the first thing that came to my mind was doing something that involved Korean traditional rhythm and dancing.

Although God has not blessed me with outstanding musical talent, I have always loved music and dance. All the more, I wished I knew how to perform traditional Korean dance or drum whenever my non-Korean friends gave me that look of "Hey, can't you do anything

Korean for us?" When I suggested to our group we celebrate the anniversary by performing Korean traditional dance set to original Korean praise music the Korean Clergywomen Drum Dancers was born.

Our first step was raising funds for costumes and lessons. Since it is a universal rule that whoever opens her big mouth gets the job, I was unanimously appointed for the responsibility. Thankfully, through the help of my father, a Methodist minister in Korea, many Korean Methodist churches in Korea willingly supported us as we explained the importance of the event. The following several months were a time of great fun and blessings. We laughed as we tried to move our bodies that were so stiff from the natural aging process and lack of exercise. Although we were all leaders at our churches, we were such terrible followers — always busy talking and eating snacks while our dance teacher tried so hard to get our attention. It was a time of reconnecting to our cultural heritage, bonding with one another as sisters, and experiencing healing from whatever wounds we had from our ministry and life situations.

We were also bonded and inspired by the lyrics of "Our Leader, Jesus Christ," the song that accompanied our performance at the 2006 Annual Conference and at this year's pre-Lenten gathering. The lyrics, which begin with the refrain, "Our leader Jesus Christ goes before us; our leader Jesus Christ commands us to follow," mirrored our journey as Korean clergywomen. We are in ministry because Jesus has commanded us to follow Him. It doesn't

matter if they say, "We don't want you for our senior pastor because you are a woman." It doesn't matter if they say "you cannot be an effective leader because you are an ethnic minority woman who doesn't speak English fluently." Jesus says "Follow me" and that's all that matters to me and to all Korean clergywomen!

We were gathered once again to perform at the opening worship service of the National Association of Korean-American Clergywomen of UMC 25th Anniversary event in 2010. The tradi-

tion of gathering together, trying to move our stiff bodies together, eating together, laughing together and crying together started again and still continues to this day.

During the break after our dance in the pre-Lenten gathering this year, many colleagues commented that they could feel the Spirit moving in us. Yes, the Spirit is truly filling us and moving us. Like our performance, our lives, committed to our calling, will flow in endless song to the drumbeat of Jesus' command: "Follow Me!"



PRAISING GOD IN SOUND AND MOTION are these Korean clergywoman drum dancers at pre-Lenten gathering.

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We currently manage over \$4.45 million for member churches and other investors.

Since 2008, our fund has had an annualized return of 5.44% compared to a 3.53% blended benchmark consisting of the S&P 500 and a Barclay's fixed income index

The United Methodist Foundation and the Conference's planning, consultation, education and training services are provided free of charge to GNJAC churches.



For additional information contact
K. Edward Jacobi, President
at 732-747-4891 or
ejacobi07739@yahoo.com
or Jay Kim at the
GNJAC Office 732-359-1032



Taize 2011

July 22-August 1, 2011

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Young people ages 16 and 29 are invited to join Bishop Devadhar on a week-long spiritual pilgrimage. This is a journey of a lifetime. Let us know if you are coming...call 732-359-1043 today!! **Deadline is fast approaching.**

YOUTH 2011

July 13-17, 2011

The UMC Youth Event

It happens every 4 years... **don't miss it!!**

Greater NJ Conference MYP is going to Youth 2011 at Purdue University. Wanna come with us?? All groups attending Youth 2011 must make their own hotel and registration arrangements. Visit www.youth2011.org for more information. The MYP will supply bus transportation from NJ to Purdue. All you need to do is let us know your youth group is coming with us!! Cost: \$100.00 (R/T) per person. Deadline is April 10, 2011. Seats are Limited!!! Visit www.gnjumc.org/607/ for more info.

Looking for new ideas for your Youth Ministry?

Be sure to join the Youthworker Movement. Find intentional support groups, creative ideas, online trainings and so much more. Plus...it's Free. Go to youthworkermovement.org You think you are Ordinary?... Think Again!

How to Have an Argument over a Dryer

By Krista Hendrickson

"The Pirate Code? It's really more of a guideline!"
-Captain Barbosa, Pirates of the Caribbean:Curse of the Black Pearl

Laundry Day is a college student's worst nightmare. No matter how long we try to delay the inevitable, it must come, and we have to carry our heavy bags of clothing to the closest laundry place on campus, hoping that we have enough quarters in our pockets to afford the dollar a load. Last weekend was like all the other laundry days. Events carried on in their usual way, loading the wash, starting the wash, waiting for the wash to be done, unloading the wash, waiting a half an hour for a dryer to finally open up...and that's when the most unusual thing occurred: I got into an argument over a dryer.

To give you the footnotes of what took place in the ten minute span; I was told three times that I could not use a dryer because one girl had a friend who wanted to use them. Attitudes were flying left and right and I cannot deny the fact I was getting really angry and the sight was not pretty. All of this anger and frustration over a laundry dryer...I couldn't believe it! I had just wasted all of my energy on playing into the attitude of another.

I tried being a good person, a good Christian, you know, turn the other cheek and all that, but it was really hard. I tried ignoring the girl and using another dryer but each time I was told that it also was spoken for. I had no idea how to respond. What was I supposed to do when turning the other cheek just meant being slapped again...and then again and again? I had always believed that eventually the slapping would end. After all, I thought



that was the point of the whole metaphor?

When I told my story to a Christian friend she responded, "Well, what would Jesus do?" Personally I have no idea what Jesus would do if he was denied a dryer over and over again. The situation isn't in the Bible as far as I know. That's why I decided to just "go with my gut." Trust that everything I had been taught in Sunday school and church will help me make the right decisions in this situation and any others I might come across.

I used to think of the Bible as a rigid set of rules. But where in the Ten Commandments does it say thou shall not fight over a laundry dryer? What I've realized is that the teachings in the Bible are fluid, designed to give us guidance and advice around different scenarios that we face every day. Whether we're deciding to sneak out of the house past curfew or fighting over a dryer, we can trust that what we have learned throughout our time with Jesus will help us make good decisions. We just have to actually listen to that little voice in the back of our head telling us what to do. So instead of asking ourselves WWJD, we should simply trust that what Jesus would do is smile - then make the right decisions.

United Methodist Camps of Greater New Jersey

With so many options available these days, you might be wondering why you should send your child to Aldersgate Center or Pinelands Center. Well, consider this:

- We are accredited by the American Camping Association
- We are committed to keeping campers safe in every way, including physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Our trained, fantastic counselors and directors serve as positive Christian role models as they build community within the groups of campers.
- Campers will experience worship and Bible Study in a way that is relevant and meaningful to them.
- Campers will be accepted, included, listened to, challenged, encouraged, and have truly wild FUN!
- All camps end with a closing ceremony that provides an opportunity for family and friends to share in the camper's experience.

Aldersgate Center is located on 300 acres of beautiful woodlands in the Skylands of Northwestern New Jersey. In addition to the main campsite there is a twenty acre recreation, boating, and camping facility located on Swartswood Lake. It is a uniquely beautiful and peaceful place in the midst of our busy lives in the New York metropolitan area. Aldersgate Center's Summer Camping Program offers a wide and exciting variety of on-site camping programs and off-site challenge programs. On-site programs will have campers sleeping in Cabins, eating in Epworth Dining hall, and experiencing all the activities available at Aldersgate. Off-site programs allow campers the opportunity to camp out in the woods, explore new areas, and develop tighter bonds with each other as they face the elements as a team. You can be confident that whether campers are sailing on the lake, hiking the trails, or just relaxing around the pool, they will be building close relationships with God and each other.

Some of the activities you might enjoy at Aldersgate Center include:

- Waterfront, Sailing, Canoeing, Kayaking
- Low Ropes Challenge Course
- Archery
- Crafts
- Swimming
- Stream Hikes
- Cook Outs
- Field Games
- Camp Fires
- Sleeping under the stars
- S'MORES!!

Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery is located in the preservation area of the Pinelands. This camp provides campers with awesome camp activities in a truly incredible and unique environment. Pinelands Center Camp programs are housed in the main area of camp, where campers sleep in cabins (complete with electricity and bathrooms), eat meals in the dining hall, and have many of their activities right in camp. Whether on a mud hike or singing around the campfire, campers will spend the week growing closer to God and each other.

Some of the activities you might enjoy at Pinelands Center include:

- Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowboats
- Low Ropes Challenge Course
- Archery
- Crafts
- Swimming
- Creek Walk
- Mud Hikes
- Hayride
- Field Games
- Camp Fires
- S'MORES!!

2011 Camp Brochures are available. If your church or you need extra copies, contact the office at 732-359-1000 and we will mail them right out. You can also visit the camps at www.gnjumc.org

Bishop's Confirmation Celebration May 15, 2011

Come Celebrate with hundreds of Confirmands from around the Greater NJ Annual Conference. Bishop Devadhar will share the message as we embark on this new journey in our confirmands' lives. All 2010 and 2011 Confirmands, leaders, parents, and mentors are invited to attend. Special music, Communion and an anointing by Bishop Devadhar will just be part of the celebration of confirmation. This event is a great culmination of the Confirmation season. We hope to see you there.

Bridgewater UMC
Country Club Rd. Bridgewater, NJ • 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Do you want to B1 who changes the world?

On May 14-15, United Methodists will work globally to Change the World, going where needed, and doing what they can to make a real difference. There is power in numbers, will you B1? Think about using this weekend for a fasting event. Work with your team, and register details at www.umcom.org/changetheworld. You'll show up on a map where others can find you and maybe join in! As you organize, you'll have Change the World advertising helping call attention to what you're doing. Use the weekend to make connections! Go to the United Methodist Church Change the World event page on Facebook to post what's going on with your team. Invite your team members to do the same. You'll be able to talk with people from around the world just like you who are going where needed and doing what they can. Rethink Church. Change the world.

SAVE THE DATE: Youth Weekend 2011

September 9-11, 2011, Ocean City, NJ

New workshops for youth and youth leaders this year!!! Guest Performers include: Illusionist Jared Hall, Hip Hop Artist Agape and you!!! Music will be provided by youth groups from around the GNJ. Stay tuned for our first ever... "So U think U can Praise???" competition. Youth groups/individuals will be invited to submit their Praise video to the MYP team. The selected groups/individuals will be invited to perform at OCYW 2011. Details coming Soon!!!

Cooperative School of Christian Mission Youth/Young Adult Retreat R U Looking 2 Fit N

Well come hang out with Tesha Goodson, Dawn Jackson and Jeffrey Clark, Sr. At Georgian Court University in Lakewood, New Jersey Friday, July 8 - Sunday, July 10, 2011 Theme: Grace, Forgiveness and Reconciliation Cost \$125: All Inclusive Weekend (2) \$50 Scholarships available per church Requirements: An Open Mind and a Willingness to have Fun 2 Age Groups: 7-12 grade graduates and Young Adults in their 20s We provide A Strong Team, A Safe Ministry, A Hands on Mission Project and a Lasting Friendship Follow me on facebook: Tesha Goodson or contact me @ 609-638-7514

Stewardship Stories

By Rich Hendrickson
Coordinator of Stewardship Education
and Development, GNJAC



Top Ten List for Funding Ministry

1. Emphasize trust, not techniques.

Trust in God is the foundation for any stewardship strategy.

2. Connect giving with mission and ministry.

Make the case that even your fixed costs like utilities, property insurance, etc. provide a means for mission and ministry to take place.

3. Focus on building relationships with donors, not soliciting donations.

Spend time praying for your people, checking in with them, and offering your pastoral support.

4. Create special giving opportunities.

Make a wish list, find out which ministries people are passionate about, give opportunities for people to give specifically to those ministries.

5. Look beyond your current needs.

Develop strategies and relationships that will encourage your folks to see the blessing in making a planned gift to the future ministries of the church.

6. Say Thank-you!

Ask your leadership to help you thank donors — as many and as often as possible.

7. Leverage the momentum from other campaigns.

Maximize the “spill-over” effect of other campaigns (i.e., capital or endowment) by using the opportunity to highlight your ongoing programs.

8. Communicate differently with various groups within the church.

Thank those who are faithful, encourage greater participation for those on the margins, make a concerted, intentional effort to encourage inactive people to get involved.

9. Communicate more often.

Use every avenue available: bulletins, newsletters, websites, mission moments, interviews, DVDs, etc. to get the word out about how the church is changing lives.

10. Be fiscally responsible.

Take a look at your expenses and make sure your using your resources in accordance with your ministry needs.

OBITUARIES

E. EMANUEL BURKMAN, 99, retired elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died on February 19, 2011. A Memorial Service was held at The Shores at Wesley Manor, Ocean City, March 5.

Mr. Burkman's ministry extended over 62 years under appointment, active and in retirement. He began his pastoral ministry in 1933, serving as student pastor of Wesley Church, Camden. Two years later he was admitted to membership in the New Jersey Conference.

Subsequent appointments were Heislerville; Rancocas; Wesley Church, Pleasantville; Second Church, Millville; Elmer; Simpson Church, Long Branch; Francis Childs, Collingswood; Wildwood; and Bayville and Ocean Gate. He retired in 1978.

Following his retirement he remained active in ministry, pastoring Newport, Green Creek, and Swainton churches.

He is survived by two sons, Edward Jr. (Nancy) of San Diego, Calif., and Thomas of Buffalo; four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Memorial donations may be sent to Delanco Camp Meeting, PO Box 597, Sicklerville, NJ 08081.

Messages of condolence may be sent to Tom Burkman, 800 Kirkwood Drive, Grand Island, NY 14072.

BETTY VOELKER, wife of the late Rev. Howard Voelker, died on February 25, 2011. A service in celebration of her life was held on February 27, 2011, at St. John's Church in Hope, NJ.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. John's United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 291, Hope, NJ 07844; or to The Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice Center, 99 Sparta Ave., Newton, NJ 07860.

VITAL CONGREGATIONS

Who do you say we are?

By Douglas Ruffle

Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC



The gospel of Luke follows the life and ministry of Jesus from his home in Nazareth and then on to Capernaum and the Galilee region. The disciples followed: listening, observing, and sent out by Jesus to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Then he asks the disciples two important questions: “Who do the crowds say that I am?” and “Who do you say that I am?” (see Luke 9:18-20).

Did Jesus want to find out if his disciples understood him and his message? Did he seek feedback—an evaluation of sorts—for his ministry?

Have you ever asked the people of your community, “Who do you think we are?” What would they say? What is the perception of the community towards your church?

Recently I had the privilege to visit an inner city United Methodist Church in Portland, Oregon called “The Bridge” that carries on effective ministry among the homeless. We were taken on a walking tour of the city by one of the workers in this church who had been homeless herself prior to her encounter with Christ. Her tour was quite revealing. She walked us by many of the agencies, both secular and sacred, that help the homeless. She gave us a perspective on these ministries from one who had been a recipient of the service. It wasn't all good.

“There's the church that makes us sit through a 45 minute service before giving us food,” she said as she pointed down the street. “They yell at us telling us we are sinners. Most of my friends don't like to go there—but if they are hungry enough, they'll go.”

She told of an agency that provided showers for women, but did not offer any kind of privacy. “We have to be really desperate for a shower to go there,” she said.

“Over there is the ‘peanut butter and jelly’ church. We like them. They always engage us with a smile and seem to really care who we are.”

It became clear after a while that there were two kinds of servants: those who focused on the ones being served and those who protected their own needs while serving. Those who loved and those who merely provided a service. The homeless community could tell the difference right away. More than anything, they just wanted to be treated as human beings, as persons of worth. Clearly, the United Methodist Church known as “The Bridge” was a serving community of faith that had gained a reputation as a caring, loving church.

What would we learn about ourselves if we were to ask persons who are recipients of our service, our ministry? Would we be seen as a church that cares for the people being served or would we come across as something less. As we continue through the season of Lent and move towards Easter, we are invited to reflect on the motivation for our mission in the name of the One who gave his all, even his Life, for us.



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THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

by Jerry C. Crossley

This is a new book that can bless the local church by serving as a springboard into Bible Studies, Retreats, and Personal Devotions. **THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN: Our Problems, His Presence**, is based on 2 Corinthians 4:18—“So we fix our eyes not on what is **seen**, but on what is **unseen**. For what is **seen** is temporary, but what is **unseen** is eternal.” (NIV)

Many times you and I are besieged by problems that threaten to undo us: fear, failure, rejection, sickness, despair, etc. All we can focus upon is the problem itself. What we fail to observe is the **unseen**: the power, presence, and promises of a loving God.

The author, Jerry C. Crossley, is an ordained elder who served several churches in Eastern Pennsylvania Conference for 40 years. After retirement in 2000, he was appointed as a part-time local pastor to Green Creek Bethel UMC in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference where he served for 10 years. In July of 2010, he began serving as Chaplain at The Shores at Wesley Manor, a U.M. Retirement Community in Ocean City, NJ.

The book, **The Seen and the Unseen**, retails for \$16.00, which includes sales tax. Order by calling WinePress Publishing at 1 877 421-7323 or go online to the website at www.WinePressBooks.com. You can also call Jerry at 609-465-8055 or email him at juliejerry@verizon.net.

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First Church, Toms River, Uses Resources to Feed Poor



TOMS RIVER — What is a church to do when poverty grows at a rate greater than population growth?

That's the question First Church here asked itself several years ago. The answers were not too promising, and with the passage of time the situation has not improved.

According to U.S. Census figures quoted in the Asbury Park Press, an estimated 8 to 10 percent of the Ocean County population of 560,000 live in

poverty, and 42,000 residents are on food stamps.

So what is a church to do? First Church, a Northern Shore District congregation located in the county seat of Ocean County, decided to act.

Impelled by a Toms River United Methodist, Paula Brown, the church launched a soup kitchen. After several years the venture has proven its worth, and offers an open door to the community twice a month. Ms. Brown has

long since moved away, but the soup kitchen continues to honor her, and bears her name.

Anyone is welcome at Paula Brown's Soup Kitchen. Frequent guests are the patrons of Your Grandmother's Cupboard, a nonprofit organization to help homeless and working poor in the state by collecting and distributing food and clothing to agencies delivering services to those in need. Patrons come to select clothing from the cupboard and sit

down to enjoy a nourishing hot meal.

The cooperative spirit between First Church and Your Grandmother's Cupboard is so strong that a Press reporter covering the soup kitchen was unable to distinguish between the two.

With the economy sagging, and many church facilities under-utilized, other congregations might take a cue from First Church, Toms River, and other faith communities who have used their resources to feed and care for the poor.



APPLICANTS SOUGHT FOR SEESE SCHOLARSHIP

Greater New Jersey pastors are invited to apply for the Harry A. Seese Memorial Scholarship for continuing education. Last year an award of \$650 was offered to pastors whose plans for continuing education have led to strengthening their ministry in the local church.

Guided by Rose Seese of Gibbsboro, his widow, and supported by ongoing gifts, the scholarship honors her late husband, the Rev. Harry Seese who died while serving the Medford Church.

"The Seeses continue to support clergy in continuing education to improve ministry skills," said Interim Director of Connectional Ministries, Rev. Varlyna D. Wright, "We are thankful for their generosity."

Application procedures and eligibility requirements can be obtained by contacting the Rev. Varlyna D. Wright in the Conference's Ministries Team Office, (732) 359-1041, or (877) 677-2594, ext. 1041.

New Sweet Song of Evangelism

MADISON — Dr. Leonard Sweet, professor of evangelism at Drew Theological School will present a new look at evangelism April 15, based on his new book "Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God who is Already There."

"Evangelism in Today's World" will be the theme of the presentation that will explore an "organic, semiotic way of thinking about evangelism that refuses to separate evangelism from discipleship."

Dr. Sweet's "whole new way of looking at evangelism" is based on joining Jesus in what he is already doing, rather than "taking Jesus to people."

The seminar will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12 Noon, either in Craig Chapel or Room 104 at the University Center on the Drew campus.

The Taize Way

The Taize Way, an escape from the familiar rat-race, into a soothing environment of renewal, is available to United Methodists across the Greater New Jersey Conference in a number of different settings and locales.

This alternate route through the noisy confusion of everyday life includes meditative chanting, live music, readings from the Hebrews scriptures and the Gospels, intercessory prayer, and the glue that ties it all together — silence.

- Every Wednesday at 6:45 pm at the Old First Church in West Long Branch
- The third Saturday of each month from 5 - 6 pm at the Caldwell Church
- Every Thursday at 7:00 pm at the Tenaflly Church
- Second Saturday of each month at 7 pm at Milford (Pa.) Church
- Montgomery UMC - First Saturday of the month (October through June), 5:00 pm. Holy Communion.
- The second and fourth Wednesdays at 7:30 pm, at New City Church, New City, N.Y." (September through June)

I + I = Youth 2011 Gatherings

NASHVILLE (UMNS) — United Methodist youth, ages 12-18, on both sides of the country will gather in July for a nationwide event sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Discipleship. For the first time, Youth 2011 will meet twice in two locations: July 13-16 at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., and July 27-30 at the Convention Center in Sacramento, Calif. "We just wanted everybody in the church nationwide to feel like they could attend without as much trouble as they may have had in the past," said Blake Thornell, Youth 2011 event coordinator.

To learn more and register for Youth 2011, visit www.youth2011.org.

HOPE FOR HAITI



REBUILDING a broken Island, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission will show their Christian compassion in a series of Mission trips to the Caribbean. See the story on page 3 for details.

Haiti leads increase in mission giving in 2010

NEW YORK (UMNS) — Total United Methodist-designated mission giving soared in 2010 because of response to the earthquake in Haiti, according to figures released by The Advance, the church's designated mission-giving channel. Designated gifts for missionary support held steady from 2009 to 2010.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief received \$62,338,768 through The Advance last year, including \$43.9 million for response to the Haiti earthquake and \$721,988 for relief in flood-ravaged areas of Pakistan. Total mission giving through The Advance in 2010 was \$79.2 million, with \$10.7 designated for worldwide mission projects other than UMCOR or missionary support.

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Mission Work Continues in Japan Despite Quake, Radiation Fears

A UMNS report by Linda Bloom

March 17, 2011

It's planting time at the Asian Rural Institute in northern Japan, and the staff is in the fields when they aren't cleaning up damage caused by the powerful March 11 earthquake that shook the region.

But they keep an eye to the coast, where efforts are ongoing to contain radiation leakage from the damaged reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

"We continue to be worried about the power plant, which has now become the major obstacle to recovery," Jonathan McCurley, a United Methodist missionary assigned there, wrote on his March 16 blog.

McCurley said that he, his wife, Satomi, and others at the school were taking precautions to avoid contamination from radiation, even though he noted that the radiation levels there, while above normal, were "nowhere near the levels to harm one's health."

Later that same day, the head of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission warned Americans to stay 50 miles away from the Daiichi plant, which is about 170 miles north of Tokyo. The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed on March 17 that the Japanese military "carried out four helicopter water droppings" over Reactor 3 at the plant.

The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries has given all personnel permission to evacuate from Japan if they wish to do so. A few have left. ...

In the past few days, the London Telegraph reported, people have been leaving the district around Koriyama, the major town closest to the stricken plant, and traveling 25 miles away to the railway station at Nasushiobara, in the Tochigi Prefecture, so they could travel farther south. Nasushiobara is 145 kilometers (90 miles) from Tokyo and 162 kilometers (100 miles) from Sendai.

Agricultural training center

At the Asian Rural Institute, also located in Nasushiobara, the staff has set up shop at the Nasu Seminar House, a retreat center for the Student Christian Fellowship in Japan.

The ecumenical institute – founded in 1973 by the Rev. Toshihiro Takami – conducts a nine-month Rural Leaders Training Program each year from April to December, focusing on sustainable agriculture, community development and leadership. The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries has had Asian and African participants in the program.

"As Japan still has the occasional aftershocks, we continue to clean up in and out of the buildings," McCurley wrote in his blog. "That's a difficult task. Although we have been told the buildings are safe to enter, any shaking makes us all run for cover; the shock from the first quake still isn't gone."

In an e-mail to United Methodist News Service, McCurley said most of the staff that left the institute after the earthquake has now returned. "The hardest thing in Japan right now is trying to get the correct information," he added, "but when we look at the people in the community, although worried, they are carrying on as normal."

The institute has accepted three people who have come seeking shelter from the evacuated areas near the nuclear plant. "We continue to meet, pray and see what we can do to help those who are in the middle of the really affected areas," McCurley said.

Lack of food and fuel

A former missionary, the Rev. Michael Southall-Vess, now pastor of Arlington (Va.) Forest United Methodist Church, said he is hearing from friends a concern over a lack of food and fuel, even miles from the main disaster area. One friend in Kitakata, about 60 miles from the coast, "said the grocery store shelves are empty and they have no gasoline."

Without gasoline and with train travel disrupted in the northeast, he added, it is difficult to move supplies. "There's not panicking or rioting, but they're starting to hoard food," he observed.

Residents of Tokyo continue to endure rolling electrical blackouts and aftershocks from the earthquake.



Damage at the Asian Rural Institute in Nasushiobara, Japan, after the March 11 earthquake. The building housing the dining hall, kitchen, chapel, meeting room and computer room sustained significant structural damage. A UMNS photos courtesy of Jonathan and Satomi McCurley.

Japanese Council Offers Thanks for Prayers, Gifts

TOKYO (UMNS) – The National Council of Churches in Japan is expressing thanks to "friends and ecumenical partners in Christ" from around the world for their "generous gifts and prayerful support" following the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. In a March 25 letter, the council reported that it has held consultations with national church partners and member organizations and will coordinate the distribution of relief materials and locating temporary housing for those displaced by the disaster.

On March 17, the blackout started at 3:30 p.m. and lasted about three hours. The Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto, a United Methodist missionary, spent the day handling e-mail queries from overseas for the National Christian Council in Japan, to which she is assigned, and tending to the needs of members of West Tokyo Union Church, where she serves as a part-time pastor.

One church family was looking for bread, "which was not to be found in any of our neighborhood stores,"

she said. But a neighbor from Ghana – whom Genung-Yamamoto had provided with a flashlight during the blackout the night before – had extra food and bread and was "grateful" that she could help someone else. "We all pool our resources in times of need," she said.

Genung-Yamamoto had dinner later at the home of Kumsoon Lee, a member of her congregation, and her husband, the Rev. Songwan Hong, the top executive of the Korean Christian Council in Japan, a partner organization of The United Methodist Church. Two aftershocks occurred as they spoke together about the effects of the earthquake.

Some "newcomers" evacuating

Hong reported that most "newcomers" – Koreans who have not lived in Japan as long as those who are second- or third-generations there – have returned to Korea, as have many of the Korean students.

Five churches affiliated with the council were badly damaged by the earthquake, and the Korean Consulate is helping evacuate Koreans from the Sendai area close to the epicenter.

The Rev. Seo Eongill, a missionary of the Korean Methodist Church and council member, has remained in Sendai. Other Korean pastors are fine, but many church members in the area are not yet accounted for, Hong said.

The Center for Pacific and Asian American Ministries at United Methodist-related Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology has written to United Methodist Chicago Area Bishop Hee-Soo Jung about "what we, as a faith connection, could collectively do together" to respond to the disaster in Japan.

"Could the Council of Bishops, as in instances in the past where massive humanitarian action is needed in concert, once again lead our church to make an effort to undertake relief and reconstruction in a manner commensurate with our ability as a connection, and beyond what UMCOR is normally able to do?" the letter asked.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is working with the United Church of Christ in Japan and GlobalMedic to bring immediate relief to the affected communities in Japan.



This satellite image shows damage to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor in Japan resulting from the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

(Photo courtesy DigitalGlobe)

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OPPORTUNITY FILE

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

April 2 — Regional Disabilities Conference

WILMINGTON, Del. — Ginny Thornburgh, internationally known expert on inclusion of persons with disabilities will keynote this conference jointly sponsored by the GNJAC and Penn-Del Conference, at Aldersgate Church here. FFI: Contact pastorjackieburgess@verizon.net.

April 6 — Bishop's Birthday Worship Celebration

HAZLET — The 60th birthday holds special significance in Indian culture, and so the GNJ Conference is honoring its episcopal leader, Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, with a special worship celebration on the occasion of this anniversary of his natal day. Bishop Violet Fisher will be the preacher at this service to be held at St. John's Church here at 7:30 p.m.

April 8 - 10 — DREAM Big Retreat

POCONO PLATEAU, Pa. — Northeastern Jurisdiction youth — 16-25 — invited to this three day retreat considering the issue of immigration.

April 16 — UMW Legislative Training Event

GNJAC — United Methodist Women teaming with Church Women United will offer this training event focusing on human trafficking, a growing problem in the state and elsewhere. Participants will address the problem, biblical implications and responses, and what can be done to combat it. Speakers will include Isa Whitaker of the Atlantic County Anti-trafficking Task Force. Place and time TBA.

April 16 — Historical Tour

PHILADELPHIA — The historical Black Connection comes alive in visits to a number of churches that contributed to the spiritual development of the City of Brotherly Love. Visits to Old St. George, Mother Bethel, Tindley Temple and others. Registration deadline, March 26.

April 30 — Disaster Response Training

OCEAN — The Conference Office will be the site for this training event for Early Response Teams equipping churches in cases of disaster. (See story page 1).

May 15 — Bishop's Confirmation Celebration

BRIDGEWATER — Come celebrate with hundreds of confirmands from the 2010-2011 classes, this milestone in their spiritual journey. Special music, a special speaker, and communion and anointing by Bishop Devadhar, 3-5 p.m. at the Bridgewater Church. Obtain registration forms at conference website, www.gnjumc.org.

June 1 - 4 — Annual Conference

KING of PRUSSIA, Pa. — "Disciples Transforming the World: Through our Gifts" will be the theme as clergy and laity meet together at the Valley Forge Convention Center to transact the Lord's business, elect delegates to General Conference and find inspiration for the year ahead.

June 12 — Walk for All Ages

NEPTUNE — United Methodist Homes 17th annual *Walk for All Ages*. Registration at Great Auditorium Pavilion 12:30 p.m.; Walk begins from Ocean Pathway at 1:30 p.m. For more information visit www.umhfoundation.org or call 732-922-9800 x121.

July 13 - 17 — 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.

July 22 - August 1 — Taize Pilgrimage

GNJAC — if you are between 16 and 29 years of age you are invited to join Bishop Devadhar and chaperones on a weeklong spiritual development experience. Additional adults may request to attend as space provides opportunity. For details, see conference website, www.gnjumc.org and click on Taize Pilgrimage link.

October 3 — India 2011 with the Bishop

GNJAC — Eleven days of discovery on the Asian sub-continent where the passion of Jesus Christ is moving and stirring the people. See conference website, www.gnjumc.org for details.

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New Worship Resource

From the rousing "Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child" to the prayerful "Open the Eyes of My Heart," the newly released "Worship & Song" collection offers something for just about everyone.

"Worship & Song," jointly developed by the United Methodist Board of Discipleship and the United Methodist Publishing House, contains 190 hymns and worship songs, including old-time gospel favorites and popular contemporary praise songs. New worship-planning resources in the collection supplement The United Methodist Hymnal and other songbooks.

"There is always good, new congregational music being written," said Gary Alan Smith, senior music editor at Abingdon Press and project director for "Worship & Song."

"Worship & Song" is actually two publications in one — a songbook and a collection of prayers, litanies, liturgies and short items for worship planners, pastors, leaders and musicians.

The collection "contains a greater number of songs that are currently shaping the future of congregational song, and it represents more contemporary styles and idioms than have previous publications," said Dean McIntyre, director of



WORSHIP AND SONG are the order of the day at the Rethinking Worship and Song gathering in Nashville recently that introduced the new UM worship resource. (UMNS Photo)

music resources at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

One of the most popular Charles Wesley hymns is "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," which he wrote in 1738 to celebrate his conversion. That classic — with few exceptions — has been the opening hymn of almost every Methodist song collection worldwide.

It opens "Worship & Song" as well. But contemporary composer Mark Miller's rendition gives the song a contemporary, can't-get-the-tune-out-of-one's-head flavor while retaining the grandeur and beauty of the original hymn.

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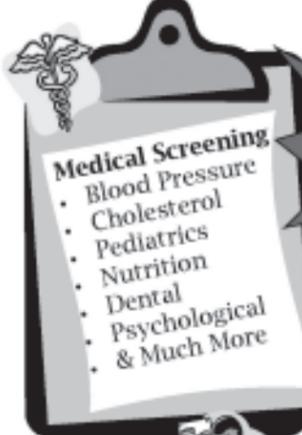
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Tuesday	Rev. Jerry Ruff, Pastor Sharptown North Church
Wednesday	Rev. Paul Jaw, Pastor Flemington United Methodist Church
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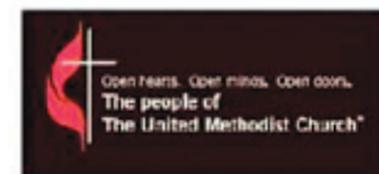
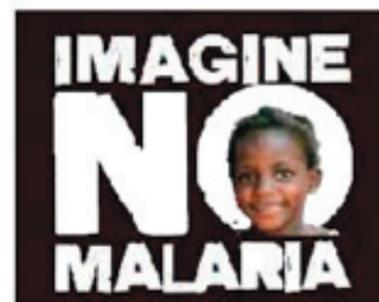
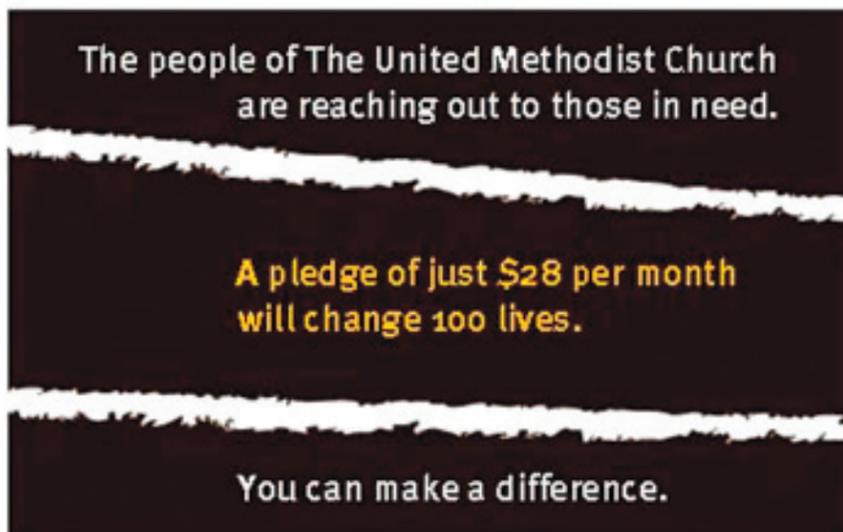
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DATE & TIME: Sat., April 9, 2011 10am to 3pm
PLACE: Covenant United Methodist Church
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