

## Bishops Songfest Draws Singing Methodists to Ocean Grove

Ocean Grove - The 2011 Bishop's Songfest drew an enthusiastic audience to the great auditorium of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association on a day when the clouds scudded across the skies outside and dropping temperatures marked the unofficial end of the summer season. Inside it was warm and bright with the light of the Spirit as music filled the air. A varied



program under the leadership of Rev. Tony Godlefski began with performances by the praise team and choir from the Union Church. After words of welcome from Bishop Devadhar, the Songfest Choir sang, followed by a time of congregational hymn singing. A performance by the children's choir from the Englewood Community Korean Church was highlighted by a rendition of "Jerusalem." The Christ Church of Piscataway Gospel Choir shared two rousing songs after which



the crowd was given the opportunity to share in the ministry "Imagine No Malaria." The offertory was played by organist Joanne Teubner-Prussak and her brother, trumpeter William Tuebner. The Songfest Choir performed another piece and more hymns were sung. Mr. Godlefski then invited members of the audience to join the Songfest Choir on stage if they wished and everyone sang the Hallelujah Chorus from *The Messiah* by G. F. Handel.

## Pilgrims Find Healing at Taizé

As dishes splash in cool, soapy water, Bishop Devadhar laughs with fellow members of his small group as they joyfully do their daily task, washing dishes after breakfast. In Taizé everyone takes part in some way to share the work that it takes to support up to 5,000 pilgrims each week. The bishop has returned to Taizé for his sixth pilgrimage since coming to the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.



After the dishes are washed, and breakfast is cleaned up, each pilgrim joins one of several large groups, organized by age, to look at a passage from the Gospel of Matthew. One of the brothers from the community takes time to read and talk through the passage, as translators in Spanish, German, French, Serbian, Romanian, and other languages ensure that all who are gathered understand the teacher in their own language.

After the time of Bible teaching is over, the pilgrims break into smaller groups to share their thoughts on the passage, and ask questions given in a work sheet. Often the small groups, which may have pilgrims from 5 or 6 different countries in them, end their time by playing games and singing songs.

At 12:15, bells ring, calling the entire community back into the large church for the second of three prayer services of the day before sharing a

simple, but adequate lunch together. Although Taizé is perhaps best known in the United States for its worship style — in particular, its body of original music, sung repetitiously — the services are referred to as prayer times. In fact, everything is about teaching young people a rhythm of prayer. They are exposed to prayer through song, through silence, through community study, and through spoken prayers. Everything in Taizé is prayer. The work has a rhythm to it, and the day is built around the different times of prayer.

This year, our group consisted of 25 pilgrims and chaperones, including 7 people from the Lydia Patterson school, a United Methodist supported institution in El Paso, Texas. Although we were two separate groups when we met in the Newark Airport on July 29th, there was no distinction among the pilgrims, now friends, when we returned on August 1st. The partnership be-

tween GNJAC and Lydia Patterson school was formed after Erica Munoz, GNJ's Children, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator, met pilgrims from the school during last year's pilgrimage.

### Why Taizé?

What so many have discovered at Taizé is that in the heart of the deepest wound, we can find the source of great healing.

The community of Taizé sits in the heart of many deep wounds from Europe's history. It is nestled above an old village, which by the time of World War II, was all but abandoned. A young Roger Schutz, along with other men, began to offer refuge and hospitality to people fleeing the oppressions of war. After

the war had ended, the same group of men, now living as the first protestant monastic order in the world, offered radical hospitality to German soldiers, who were being held as prisoners in France.

Many years later, in 1960, the German government offered the brothers

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## GNJAC Laity Delegates to General Conference Share Their Vision



Lynn Caterson  
Head of the Delegation

When asked to share her understanding of the key issues facing the Church and what challenges lie ahead for the general Conference, Lynn Caterson, head of the delegation replied:

I believe the biggest challenge before United Methodist s and the 2012 General Conference is the global nature of our church in this day. The largest churches and fastest growing churches are not English speaking nor are the located in the United States.

This leads to questions concerning whether *The Discipline* needs to be modified to make it workable throughout the world. Should we have variations of *The Discipline* to more conform with other countries and other cultures? How do we conduct quadrennial conferences so that there is appropriate representation of the world-wide nature

of United Methodism? I do not have answers to these questions — but I believe they MUST be addressed.

Two other huge issues facing General Conference are the "Call to Action" report with Connectional Table proposals and the "Ministry Study". Both these studies/reports drastically challenge the way we are currently organized and the way our entire itinerancy system now functions.

I have attended many General Conferences in two capacities. I was elected to the Judicial Council in 1992 and served in that capacity through the 2000 General Conference. I was then elected as a delegate to both the 2004 and 2008 General

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## VITAL CONGREGATIONS

### Focus on "Older Adult Ministry"

By Douglas Ruffle

Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC



This past year we trained nine laity as "Lay Missionary Planters." The idea is that these trained persons take initiative to plant new ministries wherever they are located. We have several of them starting new ministries in the churches where they attend. From time to time, I want to highlight these ministries in this column.

One of the planters, Pauline Wallace, has a heart for older adult ministry. A member of the Whiting United Methodist Church, Pauline lives and works in the Northern Shore District. Pauline writes,

Are we neglecting our older adults? Are we including them in the life of our churches? Are we offering

intergenerational opportunities to unite the ages? The residents of Wesleyan Arms in Red Bank and the Seniors I encounter through *Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey* have led me to plan a program teaching others to plan and implement ministries to, with and for older adults. Through the leadership of Rev. Doug Ruffle, the lay Missionary Planting Network has given me a platform to promote this ministry. Contact me if your church is interested in learning about aging sensitivity or in building a viable older adult ministry within your congregation and community. Old age is a gift so let's enable our older adults to enjoy life to the fullest! Let's learn from each other! Pauline Wallace. Email: [Pwallace072003@yahoo.com](mailto:Pwallace072003@yahoo.com)

Pauline raises an important question for our time: How can we be intentional about our ministry with older adults? The so-called "Baby Boomers" are reaching retirement age and there are 77 million of them! It would behoove all of our churches to have plans of action to minister to older adults. I hope you take up Pauline's challenge. Contact her with your questions. Indeed, there is much we can learn from each other.

## Multi Cultural Celebration Is Just Around the Corner

The Multi Ethnic Coordinating Committee of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will be holding the annual multi cultural celebration on October 22, 2011 Saturday (from 4PM to 7PM) at St. John's church, 2000 Florence Avenue, Hazlet, New Jersey. The purpose of this annual celebration is to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage and gather together for worship, fellowship and cultural festivity. Why an annual multi cultural celebration?

For the past two years, the multi cultural celebration has been well attended by persons from local groups and congregations, representing many nations, many languages and displaying an array of talents. Last year, the celebration brought hundreds from over 35 different nations together for worship and talent show festivity (*Relay, December, 2010*). The annual celebration is also well participated in by both laity and clergy, each with their varying gifts to offer.

This year's celebration will be meaningful for everyone as it will bring people together once again to experience the blessings of diversity. Worship with inclusive participation is being developed where representations from different age groups, cultural ethnicities and from all races are sought. The planning team is looking for verse readers from different lan-

guages and a sign language interpreter. The festivities would not be complete without native food from different continents, nations, and cultures from all races. Anyone can bring a dish of any of these kinds: meat, chicken or fish, vegetable, or side dish (rice or pasta) that can feed at least 50 people. Dessert and drinks will be provided.

The cultural presentations will follow from the different nations/continents and from all races. Presentations must be culturally oriented and not more than five minutes long. For further information, access the multi cultural celebration brochure from the conference web site and send in your church's registration to the conference office as identified in the brochure. To add color to the festivity, we also encourage that everyone wear their native dress and/or national costume.

It is a goal to have inclusive participation from all local churches in the conference. The hope and prayer is that the gathering will enhance awareness of the rich diversity of the conference, not only of the many countries and nations represented, but also of the many gifts and graces present in the fellowship of United Methodists in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

— Judy Colorado, Team Leader, *The Multi Ethnic Coordinating Committee*

## A Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

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

Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams said, "Faith is not just ideas in your head, faith is not just feelings in your heart—faith is the whole of a new life, making a difference to your lives, to your neighbors, to your community, by the grace and the Spirit of God"

(taken from <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2085>)

What a succinct definition of Christian faith! Christian faith is the demonstration of the grace of God, the love of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, in our lives and through our lives. As we demonstrate it through our own actions, it can enable us to transform not only our lives but also the lives of others in our neighborhoods, communities, nation, and world. As I was reflecting on this I was reminded of a couple of things that have happened in the last few weeks that have clearly demonstrated our faith in action:

- outpouring of genuine prayers, love, and support from volunteers, leaders, and others who have participated and continue to participate in helping the victims affected by the recent hurricanes and storms in our areas and other places.
- the enthusiastic participation of our youth in various mission activities during the Ocean City youth weekend
- a couple not known to me, standing in a parking lot praying to God before they got on their motorcycle. They were not bashful about it and they were communicating with their Creator through their prayer as they started their day. As I watched them pray, I thought to myself— if a non-religious person were watching them, he or she would be wondering why they were doing this and perhaps this person might have been touched by their witness!

When we are deeply rooted in God through Christ, when our Christian faith is vibrant in action, we will make a difference in the lives of others. It is not only our pastor, District Superintendent, Bishop, or religious leaders who are responsible to make a difference in the lives of others through our Christian faith. It is the acts of every baptized Christian! Each act of ours in faith - big or small - can make a difference in the lives of others.

May we as individual Christians and as members of a faith community continue to ask the question - What is the difference I have made today, either in my life or in the lives of others, because of my Christian faith through my silent, as well as spoken, words and deeds?

"God loves you all and so do I!"

Your brother-in-Christ,

*Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar*



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Sudarshana Devadhar, Resident Bishop  
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## Bishop's Convocation Will Feature Rendle, Smothers, and Jung

The annual gathering of clergy and spouses for the mid-winter convocation will once again take place at the Willow Valley Double Tree Resort in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, from January 23rd to the 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The theme for the event is "Disciples Transforming the World Through our Service and Witness." Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar will once again lead the participants through a time of renewal, reflection, fellowship, and worship. The keynote speakers for the convocation will be Gil Rendle and Jasmine Rose Smothers.

Mr. Rendle serves as Senior Consultant with The Institute for Clergy and Congregational Excellence of The Texas Methodist Foundation in Austin Texas and as an independent consultant working with issues of change and leadership in denominations. Prior to this position he served the Alban Institute as an author, seminar leader and senior consultant for twelve years. An ordained United Methodist minister, Mr. Rendle served as senior pastor of two urban congregations in Pennsylvania for sixteen years and as a denominational consultant for The United Methodist Church for nine years.

Mr. Rendle has an extensive background in organizational development, group and systems theory, and leadership development. He has consulted with congregations on planning, staff and leadership development, and issues of change. He is well known for his work with middle judicatory and national denominational offices and staff as they wrestle with denominational and congregational change.

In training workshops and conferences, Mr. Rendle has led numerous large and small groups in practical learning that directly impacts participants' decisions and practice in their leadership roles. He is the author of six books, a contributor to four books, and the author of numerous articles and monographs. His most recent books include *Journey in the Wilderness: New Life for Mainline Churches* (2010) and *Back to Zero: The Search to Redis-*



**Gil Rendle**



**Jamine Rose Smothers**



**Im Jung**

*cover the Methodist Movement* (2011) published by Abingdon Press. He is a resident of Pennsylvania where he lives with his wife, Lynne.

Ms. Smothers is an Associate Director of Connectional Ministries of the North Georgia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. She is the primary resource for existing Black Church Development, Natural Church Development, Multi-Ethnic/Cultural congregations, support and training for Cross-Cultural/Racial appointments, developing Young Clergy leadership. Ms. Smothers is a church consultant for Small Membership Churches and is the staff liaison for the Annual Conference ministry teams.

Previously, she served as the Senior Associate Pastor of Atlanta First United Methodist Church, as the Assistant and Youth of Powder Springs First United Methodist Church, and as the Youth Pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church, Marietta, GA.

Ms. Smothers serves the Church and her community as a workshop facilitator, writer, consultant, advocate and preacher. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Spelman College a Master of Divinity degree from Emory University's Candler School of Theology. She is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church.

Above all, she loves God, loves the Church, and is committed to "equipping

the saints for the work of ministry" so that the world may know and be transformed through Christ!

In addition, there will be the usual program designed especially for clergy spouses, under the leadership of the Rev. Im Jung. She is a Korean-American Christian, Ordained Elder from Wisconsin Annual Conference UMC, a certified spiritual director, a retreat and workshop leader and a practitioner of Lectio Divina, Centering Prayer, Reiki, Tai Chi, Yoga, and Body, Mind, and Spirit Exercise and meditation. She is a leader of Stephen Ministers and a member of the Walk to Emmaus community. In Wisconsin, she served two Caucasian churches and a Native American church for 12 years. She is also a soul-seeker and interested in both Western and Eastern mystics and spiritualities. Recently, she completed 110-days of personal spiritual journey into early Christianity (Constantine's heritage), Muslim, Sufism, and Eastern Orthodox religions in Turkey. In Spain, she walked a 30-day wilderness pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and another 30 days to follow the footsteps of the three great saints of Christianity in Spain. She also journeyed into Buddhism, Shamanism, and followed the footsteps of early missionary work and today's Christianity in Korea. Lastly, during a final, 10-day stop in Snowmass, Colorado, she was

able to reflect on the honorable and humbling experiences of centering, offering, and celebrating. The fruit of the 110 days of her spiritual pilgrimage brought forth gratitude and humility! She truly experienced indescribable riches in God, people, culture, religion, nature, and geography.

Im Jung received her M.Div from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL, and received the certification of both traditional Jesuit spiritual direction as spiritual director from Norbertin Center for Spirituality DePere, Wisconsin, and ecumenical spiritual direction certification from Hesychia School of Spiritual Direction, in Redemptorist Renewal Center in Picture Rock, Arizona, completed the two-year Academy for Spiritual Formation #28 in Iowa and serves as a Companion Guide to the Companion in Ministry II program offered by the Upper Room Ministries – GBOD. She is a member of the Fellowship of United Methodist Spiritual Directors and Retreat Leaders, a member of Spiritual Directors International, and a council member of the World Methodist Church.

Im Jung shares the early stage of her faith journey in the book, *The Holy Seed of Calling: Korean-American Clergywomen's Journeys toward Ordination*, published in 2010.

Im Jung lives in Naperville, Illinois, with her husband Bishop Hee-Soo Jung and their two sons.

The convocation will also include time for the clergy and spouses to rest and renew friendships, inspiring worship, and an opportunity for dialogue with the bishop. Brochures will be available shortly and information will be posted on the conference website. Continuing Education credits are available and partial scholarships are available for clergy who register by the announced deadline. Local church Pastor-Parish Relations Committees are strongly urged to help their pastors attend.

## Bishop Devadhar to Preach at Kingwood in Footsteps of Francis Asbury

KINGWOOD — Carpeted by fallen leaves and crested by a cross, Pulpit Rock, at the end of a wooded pathway from the Kingwood Church, sits as it has for the past 224 years when Bishop Francis Asbury, first "general superintendent" of the Methodist Episcopal Church, stood on the site and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, after being bypassed by history for two and a quarter centuries, Pulpit Rock will be visited by another bishop, Sudarshana Devadhar, at the annual Old Home Day celebration here October 9.

Old Home Day is a Kingwood tradition reaching back 88 years, but this year's observance offers something special, celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the erection of the current Kingwood building.

The day will begin with a 10 a.m. worship service presided over by Pastor Mercia Solomon with Bishop Devadhar in the pulpit. Also participating will be the Rev. Robert Olyn Bryant, pastor of Kingwood and Seargeantsville from 1960 to 1963 and now retired.

Following the service, the congregation, led by Pastor Solomon and Bishop Devadhar, will take an autumnal stroll through the leaf-strewn path that leads to Pulpit Rock where Bishop Asbury had preached in 1787. And as Asbury had done, so Bishop Devadhar will do, challenging the congregation with a message and prayer.

Following the procession to Pulpit Rock, the congregation will return to the church building for a fellowship luncheon.

The Kingwood Church on the Raritan Valley District claims the title of "Mother of Methodism" for the West Jersey region stretching north and south from Frenchtown to Stockton and west to east from the Delaware River to Flemington.

While ministry began in the area in 1768 under the auspices of a Rev. William Frazer, a Church of England missionary, the first Methodist meeting was held in Kingwood in 1774. Two years later, Bishop Asbury visited the town and made frequent stops there through 1788, visiting in the home of Thomas West

In 1816 a Methodist Episcopal organization was formed. Land was acquired from the Thomas West farm, and the first of three church buildings was erected.

The present edifice was built in 1860. In the same year, William Charles



Lehman, then owner of the land where the Pulpit Rock formation was situated donated the rock and surrounding land to the church.

A highlight in the life of the congregation came in 1960 with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, when Pulpit Rock and a new Memorial Chapel was dedicated under the ministry of Pastor Robert Bryant. In 1964, with the Rev. David Pierson as pastor, the church broke ground for an addition that included a new kitchen.

In addition to the Old Home Day service, Pulpit Rock is also the site of an annual Easter sunrise service.

### Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS)

**October 11, 2011 - Lunch/Meeting**

10:00 a.m. Green Village United Methodist Church  
Speaker: Rev. Charles "Chuck" Miller, Ph.D., E. A.

**October 25, 2011 - Lunch/Meeting**

11:00 a.m. St. Peter's United Methodist Church, Ocean City  
Speaker: Peter Guilfoyle, CPA

Topic at both meetings: Retired Clergy and Taxes

Lunch: \$10 - call Garey Hope to reserve - 609-291-5003



# Global Relay

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

## When cross and crescent meet

WOODRIDGE, Ill. (UMNS) — When Irshad Learning Center, a Muslim congregation in Illinois, asked to use Woodridge United Methodist Church facilities for fellowship and worship, it didn't take long for the church to say yes. Ten years after terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, the interfaith friendship between Woodridge and Irshad offers hope in the unpredictable seas of Christian-Muslim relations, Interpreter magazine reports.

## Faith leaders push to end bigotry

WASHINGTON (UMNS) — Jim Winkler, top executive, *United Methodist Board of Church and Society*, was among the national interfaith leaders who reiterated a call for faith communities to promote acceptance and end religious bigotry. The event for the "Shoulder to Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding America's Values" campaign was Sept. 8 at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

## Together through storm and flood

WINDHAM, N.Y. (UMNS) — As rains from Tropical Storm Lee brought new threats of flooding to a waterlogged Catskills region, United Methodists already had begun outreach efforts to assist those affected earlier by Irene. Elfrieda Benjamin, a member of Windham-Hensonville United Methodist Church, who helped coordinate the effort of local townspeople, said, "I don't even know where the food comes from; I turn around and it appears." Bishop Jeremiah Park led a delegation from the denomination's New York Annual (regional) Conference and United Methodist Committee on Relief as it toured five small mountain towns affected by Tropical Storm Irene: Windham, Prattsville, Roxbury, Margaretville and Fleischmanns.

## Ethnic caucuses oppose church restructure

NASHVILLE (UMNS) — Leaders of five groups that represent the denomination's ethnic constituencies caution that proposals to restructure The United Methodist Church are "too drastic." The leaders are responding to proposed legislation that the *General Conference*, the denomination's top lawmaking body, will take up next year. Among other proposed changes, the legislation would consolidate nine of the denomination's 13 general agencies into a new United Methodist Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry. The center would have a 15-member board of directors, which would be accountable to a 45-member advisory board called the General Council for Strategy and Oversight. The council replaces the Connectional Table, which was created by the 2004 General Conference and coordinates the denomination's mission, ministries and resources.

## Susquehanna flooding affects churches

NEW YORK (UMNS) — The flooding of the Susquehanna River has had major consequences for the United Methodist conference of the same name. Since the river spans the Susquehanna Annual (regional) Conference from north to south, floodwaters affected eight of its 11 districts, said the Rev. Larry Siikanen, conference disaster coordinator. Across the northeastern United States, United Methodists were continuing to respond Sept. 12 to the one-two punch of flooding caused consecutively by Tropical Storms Irene and Lee.

## Harassment of Fiji Methodists deplored

TORONTO (UMNS) — The World Association for Christian Communication has called for an end to government harassment of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, part of the Methodist Church of Britain. Recently, the government of Fiji canceled the annual meeting of the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma and prohibited all church meetings except Sunday worship. Methodists constitute the largest religious group in Fiji. The Christian communication association calls for meaningful dialogue and strongly encourages government, church and community leaders in Fiji to move toward greater honesty and trust in church-state relations.

## Advent sermon series now available

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Rethink Church has released an Advent sermon series titled "Outside the Box." The series invites Christians to unwrap anew the story of Jesus' birth. It includes sermon starters, an Advent wreath-lighting liturgy, youth/young adult small-group resources as well as children and family activities. The series also offers adaptive tips for including those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. These are available for free download. The multimedia bundle includes promotional materials, video and graphics for \$25.

## Exploration 2011 registration open

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — Registration is open for (<https://www.cvent.com/events/exploration-2011/registration-fd74fff43f434b6fa6c750caa93be6cc.aspx>) EXPLORATION 2011, an event for young adults who feel God's call to ordained ministry as a deacon or elder in The United Methodist Church. The event will be Nov. 11-13 in St. Louis, Mo. Sponsored by the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Exploration 2011 is open to young adults age 18 to 26. The registration fee will cover a two-night stay at the Millennium Hotel, meals, and program fees. Updates and registration information will be posted on the event website.

**The November Issue Deadline is  
October 5, 2011**

## 101<sup>st</sup> Birthday Celebration



St Marks, Montclair recently celebrated the 101<sup>st</sup> birthday of Mrs. Evia Duton. Mrs. Duton attends worship almost every Sunday and is an active member of the UMW. She graduated from college with a major in music, in Meridian, Mississippi where she grew up.

She has served as an organist in various churches, and has taught music as well.

She also worked with the public schools in Montclair and Newark in the music department.

Mrs. Duton pursued graduate studies at the Juilliard School of Music in NYC and was affiliated with the Griffith Music Foundation in Newark.

## New Retreat Encourages Young People to Respond to God's Call



While many young people were busy preparing for the impending school year, getting in those last few precious moments in the pool or hanging out with friends, eight young people took time to reflect on how God is calling them into ministry at the "Exploring A Call To Ministry" retreat. Held at the Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery August 15th - 17th, the retreat was the first of its kind designed to allow young people to explore their individual calls to ministry and to educate those interested in the processes involved in becoming ordained.

As the sun shone through the windows of the building, Reverend Chris Heckert, Senior Pastor at Morrow Church, talked passionately to the group about "owning the call from God" and the process leading to pastoral ministry. He shared experiences of his own journeys through certification and ordination and gave tips on navigating the sometimes stressful processes. Most of all, he gave hope and encouragement that although it's not an easy journey, it's a fulfilling one.

### Confirming God's Call

The youth and young adults in attendance felt this event provided a degree of confirmation about where they each feel God is calling them into ministry. Some, like Cassie Hinnen and Danny Jimenez, left the event with a clear picture of the steps to take going forward. Cassie felt the event, "Shed light on where I feel I need to be. It linked former experiences together in a cohesive vision." Danny said this event confirmed something he had been feeling for some time, "I don't believe in coincidences, I believe in 'God-incidences.' This has confirmed things that I've been hearing for a long time." Samantha Smith thought the event gave her something tangible to look back on when thinking about her call, "It's given me a better perspective and something to look back at."

The potential of this retreat is enormous as it encourages and supports those felt called to ministry at an early age. Reverend Heckert believes in the effects this program will have on the individuals who participate and is looking forward to expanding it in the future, "It's a great pilot program. It helps them stay connected and grounded as they explore their call."

Perhaps you know a young person who feels called to ministry. Start to pray for and with them about God's call. It's important for local churches to support them. Details about the next "Exploring A Call To Ministry" retreat have not yet been announced, however, look for that information in future editions of The Relay and GNJ Digest.

## UM Homes Selects New President and CEO

NEPTUNE, N.J. — Rev. Dr. Virginia Samuel Cetuk, chair of the United Methodist Homes board of directors announced the selection of Lawrence D. Carlson as president and CEO, effective September 6, 2011. A distinguished search committee, chaired by Dr. Cetuk, cooperatively chose Mr. Carlson from the many highly accomplished candidates over a one-year period.

Most recently, he was senior vice president of operations for the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago Service Corporation, a not-for-profit senior care organization with over 3,400 residents among 12 campuses. Mr. Carlson has exhibited achievement in developing human capital, outstanding team leadership, strong fiscal management and effective resident and staff relations.

Dr. Cetuk commented, "Mr. Carlson has more than 35 years experience in upper level management of faith-based

senior communities. Given this skill set, we are confident he will lead the United Methodist Homes into a bright future."

His former professional responsibilities include executive leadership positions with retirement communities in Massachusetts, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Texas. Mr. Carlson brings expertise in operations, strategic planning, board development, new project design and development and fiscal management in a variety of environments including adult day health, assisted living, skilled nursing, post-acute rehabilitation and congregate housing. His career accomplishments include the 2007 Legacy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Financial Performance.

Mr. Carlson's academic degrees include a Master of Business Administration from Babson College (Wellesley, Massachusetts) and a Bachelor of Business Administration

from Roanoke College (Salem, Virginia). He holds licensure as a Nursing Home Administrator in three states. He and his wife, Melanie, have three adult daughters.

Mr. Kirk Stiffney of MHS Alliance assisted the Homes in its executive search. The search committee, led by Dr. Cetuk, also included selected members of the board, United Methodist Homes Foundation trustees and board members emeriti.

The former president, The Reverend Dr. James C. Batten, retires following 20 years of distinguished service to the United Methodist Homes. The organization is governed by a volunteer board of directors affiliated in ministry with the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The mission of the United Methodist Homes is to provide quality and caring services to senior men and women in a Christian community. With over 100



**Lawrence D. Carlson**

years of continuous operation, the organization operates ten communities offering independent, residential, assisted-living, skilled nursing, short-term rehabilitation, memory support, respite, and hospice to 1,400 persons of all faith backgrounds.

## Taizé (Continued from Page 1)

of Taizé money to build a sign of reconciliation and peace. They used the grant to build the Church of Reconciliation, which, after several expansions, holds up to 5,000 pilgrims three times each day.

It is in the new expanded Church of Reconciliation that each year pilgrims from GNJAC join people from all parts of the world and all Christian denominations in singing, praying, and receiving communion, communing with God and one another.

Along with holding signs and memories of the pains of war, the community offers space for reconciliation in the heart of a land that was torn apart by the Protestant Reformation. Many towns, families and provinces in Europe are still divided by Protestant and Roman Catholic identity. In the Church of Reconciliation young people sit on the floor with no distinction of country of origin, religious traditions, or language.

Reconciliation is a real need for young people today in GNJ with its great diversity and disparity of wealth, poverty, comfort and violence. Living in shared community for a week in a place like Taizé, France, where so many wounds have been felt, young people get a broader view of the world - a wider view of some of its needs and neighbors. It gives a view of what true transformation could look like - a vision for Christian community.

Pilgrims coming from different United Methodist churches see that Christian community at Taizé, as they interact with Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics, various Protestants and even people who don't claim to have any particular faith, but come anyway.

They come in search of community, in search of something greater than what they have experienced in their own countries.

### Vision for revitalized leadership

In 2005, GNJ took its first group of pilgrims with Bishop Devadhar's vision of taking hundreds of young people over the next 5 years and beyond. "If we can expose our young people to an experience of radical Christian community, I believe we can spark a revitalized passion among future and present leaders in our church," said the Bishop of the importance of taking young people to Taizé.

Here is what a few of this year's pilgrims said:

**Sophia Joseph, 17, of Christ UMC in Piscataway, NJ**

"I didn't expect to meet such a range of people with such a range of beliefs. I think the impact of the music over time made a difference. It seemed odd at first, but it had a therapeutic and meditative affect on me and helped my prayer."

**Daisy Guerra, 16, of El Paso, TX**

"I was surprised by the humility and simplicity at Taizé. People don't judge you for what you wear, or where you live. Everyone's the same there. We're all equal."

**Victoria Guyaden, 17 of Dingmans Ferry, PA**

"It's the only place where you will get that level of diversity in cultures and way of life."

In the past 7 years, over 250 pilgrims from GNJ have returned with a renewed sense of God's presence in their lives. Many pilgrims have discerned a call to ministry after participating in a pilgrimage to Taizé.

When asked what the draw is for so many young people, Bishop Devadhar added, "for me it is the genuine church of the Pentecost where people of all backgrounds culturally and ecclesiastically come together in community. The youth flock here because this is a church with no pretense."

## 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](mailto:communications@gnjumc.org).

## A Look Back: Holy Communion, Summer of 2011



"Pastor, the grape juice is fermented and the bread cubes have turned to croutons."

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## Delaware Valley Church Marks Its Centennial

SANDYSTON — On October 15, 1911, the members and friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Hainesville, NJ came together to celebrate the opening of their new church building. One hundred years later, members and friends will again come together in celebration of the re-dedication of a building that remains virtually unchanged over the last century.

Now known as the Delaware Valley United Methodist Church (DVUMC), its congregation plans a weekend of festivities on Oct. 15 & 16 built around the theme "From the past will come the future." DVUMC Pastor Karen Popjes will welcome Bishop Sudasharna Devadhar to the pulpit to deliver the message for Sunday morning worship, and to dedicate a new flag pole commemorating the Centennial. He will be joined by Skylands District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Steven Bechtold. The weekend will culminate with a re-dedication of the building on Sunday afternoon conducted by Rev. Bechtold. Former pastors and district superintendents are invited to join in the celebration by sharing reminiscences of their times with the DVUMC congregation.

The Centennial celebration kicks off Saturday with a concert featuring Clinton Ingram, a well known tenor soloist from New York City. He will perform a variety of spiritual offerings, Broadway favorites, popular tunes and classical selections.

Mr. Ingram will be joined in concert by Melissa Macy, a violinist and music instructor.

The Centennial celebration was kicked off on May 1, 2011 with a ground breaking ceremony for the new flag pole. The following Sunday, a weekly publication known as the Centennial Capsule was inaugurated. Each issue since then, the Capsule has depicted some aspect of the Church's 100 years of history.

According to Centennial co-chairs, Carol Ayers and Karen Bevans-Cassidy, the weekend is planned to recapture some of the events that marked the life of the Church over the past 100 years. An historical exhibit will be on display during the two days that includes pictures, documents, memorabilia, and oral histories. The exhibit will feature marriage and baptism pictures over the years solicited from the Church family. A section of the exhibit will be devoted to the numerous gifts to the Church, and the families that presented them.

The original church building did not have indoor plumbing, and modern conveniences were not installed until the early 1950's. Other than minor cosmetic changes through the years, the Church in Sandyston appears today much as it did in 1911. Over the years, forty-one pastors have helped guide the congregation through a century of the joys and struggles of a small rural church. Today, the Delaware Valley United Methodist Church remains, what Pastor Popjes calls, a beacon of light — a light that continues to bind the greater Sandyston community to the family of God.



## Fair Haven Cell Tower Pays Christ Church Bills while Serving Community



**TELLING THE STORY.** Two towers, one the Christ Church steeple, the other a cell phone pylon, symbolize the spiritual and technological sides of spreading the news to the Fair Haven community. In addition to providing a service to the community, the cell tower helps to pay the bills of the Northern Shore District church.

(Photo by Robin Van Cleef)

What can a church do to be a peacemaker when a community is rent asunder by a decade-long controversy?

What can a church do when faced with financial problems in a time of economic downturn?

What can a church do to facilitate better communication in the community and beyond?

For Christ Church, Fair Haven, the answer to these three questions came in the form of a cell tower rising from the trees and kudzu in a 5-acre wooded tract owned by the church and adjacent to the church building.

The new cell tower became a reality in 2008 after a decade of spirited debate in this Northern Shore town, and 2 ½ years of serious discussion and negotiation.

Need for the facility was evident whenever Fair Haven cell phone users employed their instrument, only to receive sub-par reception or no reception at all. But where? It was the old story of "not in my back yard" for any location near homes of residents. Fears of electromagnetic frequency radiation were rife.

An effort to install a tower between another local church and a residential neighborhood looked promising when the church entered direct negotiations with the cell companies, but a local ordinance requiring involvement of the town council forestalled the move.

While the controversy waged, someone suggested that the wooded area owned by Christ Church was sufficiently removed from private homes, but strong opposition within the church at the time prevented any action.

When the heightened controversy coincided with a pastoral change in 2006, the scene was set for action.

"It was an answer to prayer," said the new pastor, the Rev. Eusun Kim. There was a felt need in the community for improved cell service, and in the church there was an acute need for additional cash to augment the lagging finances. Representing the church in negotiations with the town and the cell phone companies, was Dr. Paul Liou, an electronics research engineer and executive and a long time member of Christ Church, who successfully guided the discussions, aided by a professional negotiator chosen by the town.

(Continued on Page 7)



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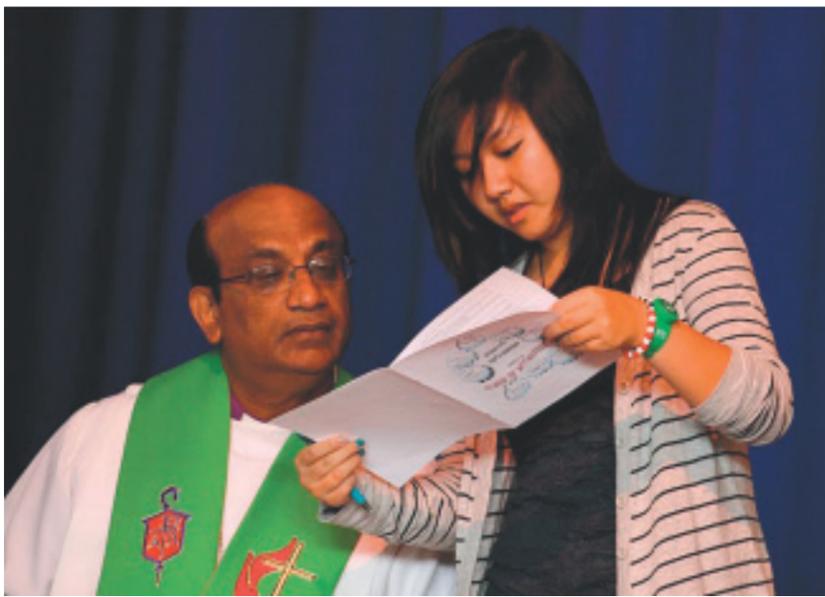
Our core ministries of planning, consultation, education and training services are provided free of charge to GNJAC churches.



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.

# Youth Engage in Mission Experiences at Ocean City Youth Weekend

By Heather Fullerton



**Bishop Devadhar and a member of the GNJMYP Team preparing for Sunday morning worship.**

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar joined the group at The HUB at Good Shepherd UMC to prepare clean-up buckets. HUB Coordinator, Howard Minnichbach, said the youth were "a God-send. It would have taken me a week to do what the youth have accomplished in a few hours." Curtis Campbell, Youth Advisor at Mt. Zion UMC in Lawnside, said the experiences allowed the youth "to understand what's going on in the world and appreciate what God has given them. This is touching to me. It may not look like a lot but for people who don't have anything, it's everything." Campbell also said he hopes to bring his full youth group back to the HUB in the future.

After the mission experiences, the youth and youth workers had a much deserved break to enjoy Ocean City. The Cape Atlantic District Youth Team coordinated optional "Beach Fun," which included beach volleyball, relay races on the boardwalk, and a scavenger hunt. The weekend picked back up Saturday night with performances by the Audubon UMC Teen Worship Team, more Youth Service Fund Auctions, and a presentation by Illusionist Jared Hall. Agape closed out the evening with another stellar performance and testimony.

The weekend concluded with the traditional Sunday morning worship with Bishop Devadhar led by the Northern Shore District Youth Team at the Ocean City Music Pier. The youth and youth workers sang songs, shared communion, and enjoyed special music by the OCYW Choir led by Jack and Ef Deal. The youth also included special moments in remembrance of 9/11 with special songs, prayers, and a video. Special thanks to all those who made the weekend possible!

Ocean City, NJ once again played host to the annual GNJAC Ocean City Youth Weekend (OCYW) on September 9-11, 2011. Close to 500 senior high youth and youth workers attended the retreat, which focused on being a "Cloud of Witnesses," based on Hebrews 12: 1-3.

The weekend kicked off with a performance by *Troubled Nation*, a youth band from Trinity UMC in Hackettstown, NJ, and the first of several auctions to benefit the Youth Service Fund. The evening continued with a unique presentation by hip-hop artist and inspirational speaker, Agape. Agape's ministry, [www.hiphopoutreach.com](http://www.hiphopoutreach.com), combines hip-hop, dance, testimonials, and interactive worship for all ages to enjoy. His energy and passion was the perfect start to what would be a great youth weekend!

Saturday morning started bright and early for the teens and workers, with devotions led by all of the GNJAC District Superintendents and music by Billy Zane of Audubon UMC. It also marked the beginning of a potential change in tradition of OCYW. Typically, Saturday morning would have consisted of a series of workshops for the teens and youth workers to attend. This year, the decision was made to get the youth and youth workers out into the community, actively engaging them in mission experiences. The attendees were randomly split into thirty groups to lend a helping hand to Ocean City and its neighbors. Some of the experiences included: preparing clean-up buckets at The HUB at Good Shepherd UMC in Northfield to help those affected by the recent floods, painting at Oasis UMC in Pleasantville, singing at The Shores at Wesley Manor, preparing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for Sister Jean's Kitchen in Atlantic City, creating care packages for our troops, random acts of kindness on the boardwalk, and many more!



**Two youth decorating care packages to send to our troops during the Saturday morning mission experiences.**



**Several youth and their leader supporting the ministries of the weekend.**

## Cell Tower (Continued from Page 6)

Many meetings were held with church members to discuss the plan and air any objections. When visiting engineers assured them of the safety of the project, there "was very little opposition," Pastor Kim said.

"It (the improved service) was going to come any way," said Pastor Kim. "The only question was when."

"When" turned out to be 2008, when the contract was signed and the tower erected. Under the terms of the agreement, the church leases the woodland to the town who in turn awards a lease contract with four wireless carriers that according to the Asbury Park Press will bring in \$131,887 a year. The deal will earn \$81,000 annually for the borough and \$51,000 for the United Methodist Church.

The Fair Haven experiment is believed to be the first of its kind in the Greater New Jersey Conference. Haddonfield and Middletown churches had at one time researched the possibility of erecting a cell tower, but for one reason or another rejected it.

The primary contract to build and maintain the tower was awarded to T-Mobile-Omnipoint, whose high bid earned them the pinnacle position on the tower. Others in order of their installation were Verizon, Sprint and AT&T.

The biggest benefit to the church, says Pastor Kim, is that the income from the tower is devoted to paying longstanding bills, and permits the congregation to focus on mission and ministry funded by week-to-week income from tithes and offerings of the people. For the community, a long and sometimes bitter dispute has been resolved, and a needed service made available.

The Christ Church pastor acknowledges that not everything is perfect in the arrangement. One member of the church who opposed the installation has left the congregation he noted, and admits that offerings have fallen off somewhat, due in part to the soft economy.

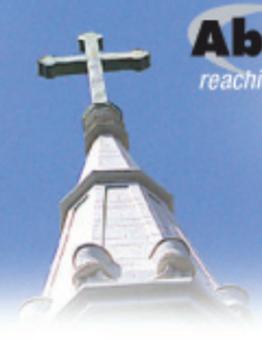
The Rev. Eusun Kim reflects a blend of spiritual vitality and practical common sense. A product of Rutgers University and Drew School of Theology, he is one of nine clergy in his immediate family circle including uncles, and cousins.

"One is a defector to the Presbyterian Church," he explains with a rueful smile, then changing the subject, he sums up his judgment regarding the cell tower.

"I truly believe that we were being a positive witness to the community of Fair Haven, as well as, parts of the neighboring communities of Rumson, Little Silver, and Red Bank," he declares. "We are being Christ, offering a technological salvation of sorts, in both remedying a very divisive community issue while also providing the transmitting ability to communicate."



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## General Conference Delegates

(Continued from Page 1)



**Bethany Amey**

*When asked to share her understanding of the key issues facing the Church and what challenges lie ahead for the general Conference, Ms. Amey replied:*

Reflecting on my feelings about being elected to General Conference, there are a few things I can say for sure - first is that I have a profound sense of responsibility to represent our conference well. In addition I feel that as a young person, it will be crucial to voice comments and concerns about what the future of our Church will look

like and how we will operate. I am extremely humbled and blessed to serve in this role.

I am a graduate of Eastern University with a degree in Political Science and have been active on various levels of the United Methodist Church.

Over the past four years, being a part of the Connectional Table and the Division on Ministries with Young People, I have gained a greater understanding and appreciation of what it means to be a young person within the life of the Church. I think it's important for the Church to realize that young people are present within the life of the Church and are willing to be active participants when space is given. I believe that with the Call to Action and the new Interim Operations Team we will see proposed changes in what has been the status quo of how we go about the business of the Church. The issues of congregational vitality, a set aside bishop and episcopal accountability, and general agency realignment are sure to bring passionate debate. I have great hope for the United Methodist Church during this time of rediscovery. I believe that we as a denomination can grow significantly if we are able to celebrate our Wesleyan heritage and make the bold changes needed to move forward.

*When asked to share his understanding of the key issues facing the Church and what challenges lie ahead for the general Conference, Mr. Miller replied:*

I am honored to be a lay delegate from Greater New Jersey. Having participated in the last three General Conferences, (in '00 and '04 as a delegate and '08 as Music Director) I have a good grasp on the way conference works and look forward to fully engaging in the legislative process.

I am concerned that we don't get bogged down by issues that seem to have little to do with spreading the love of God to a hurting world. At GC we have a tendency to get preoccupied looking in at ourselves; "How can we restructure this bureaucracy?" Or we try and figure out another strategy or commercial to stop our membership decline. We argue about who can be a church member or who is allowed to be ordained.

It is my hope that at the GC in Tampa we will re-orient, turn around (to use the Biblical word) repent, turn back towards what we know to be true- all of us are in constant need of God's grace and not one of us is any less precious than another in the sight of God. We delegates need to remember we come from local churches trying to embody the love of Jesus in the world. If we can re-imagine the best ways to em-



**Mark Miller**

power those communities of faith, it will be a good conference.

*Mr. Miller is an Assistant Professor of Church Music at Drew Theological School, Drew University, Madison, NJ. He is also a Lecturer in the Practice of Sacred Music, Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University, New Haven, CT. and Minister of Music at Christ Church in Summit, NJ.*

## John Bishop

*When asked to share his understanding of the key issues facing the Church and what challenges lie ahead for the general Conference, Mr. Bishop replied:*

The most important issue to be addressed at this General Conference will be major legislation that would completely reorganize the General Church into a business model, with a small Board of Directors, a set-aside Bishop to act as CEO (my interpretation from the description provided of his/her duties), and 5 "departments" to report to the Board of Directors.

This legislation virtually eliminates Jurisdictional Conference, Annual Conference and local church involvement in managing the affairs of the General

Church, although the promoters of the new organization have adopted various patchwork approaches to try to address this concern. The legislation certainly will mean that the General Church will be almost completely staff driven.

This legislation is very far reaching and needs to be carefully thought out. The details being proposed have changed virtually every month recently and I am concerned about the quality of discernment that has gone into the proposals.

This is my second time as a delegate to General Conference and I am happy to be a part of our strong delegation and to be on the legislative committee that will be considering the reorganization legislation. I hope to be able to make a contribution to the legislative committee's deliberations.

## Lynn Catterson (Continued from Page 1)

Conference, and I am extremely honored to head our GNJAC 2012 delegation. By these experiences, I have come to clearly understand how the process works and how I need to deal with legislation. First, I recognize that I will not fully understand any of the issues until I read the actual legislation, which I will not receive until early in 2012. Second, if I am to serve our Conference effectively, I need to hear thoughts from my fellow delegates and the people of our Conference. Then, when I get to General Conference I

must listen to the folks in my Legislative Committee and the entire Conference as we vote on things. I am aware that the wording of a Petition as it is submitted can be completely re-worded at General Conference to actually say the opposite of how it initially was intended. I also know that one word - added or subtracted - can make a huge difference as well.

My commitment to everyone is to study hard, listen to everyone and vote to the best of my ability to do God's will.

## Northeast Jurisdiction Hosts First-Ever Launchpad for Church Planters



The first-ever Northeast Jurisdiction Launchpad was held August 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> at Memorial United Methodist Church in Neptune City, NJ. Launchpad was designed by the Path1 and hosted by the GNJAC Congregational Development Team to address the need for an area-specific church planting training event in the Northeast.

Over fifty church planters attended the training event that spanned topics from the foundations and theology of church planting to networking to time and money management. Participants took time to worship, fellowship, reflect and discuss the trials and tribulations of the church planting process. On Sunday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, participants had the opportunity to visit one of three new faith communities: Broken Builders Ministry in New York, NY, Sharptown North in Woolwich Township, NJ, and New Day UMC in Bronx, NY. This gave the participants the opportunity to ex-

perience worship with communities which have only been worshipping together for a short time.

### What is Path1?

Path1 is an international movement of The United Methodist Church seeking to develop leaders who can go out and help start at least one church per day, every day of the year. Path1 seeks to build the kingdom of God by providing training on how to meet the needs of the community and offer diverse worship opportunities that will appeal to a wider demographic. They recognize it is not a one-size-fits-all solution for every area. What might work in one community, may not work in the next one. This is why Path1 encourages all United Methodist's who feel God calling them to be a part of the church building ministry to take part in a training event that will give them the tools and support to be successfully.

## Multi Cultural Celebration Is Just Around the Corner

The Multi Ethnic Coordinating Committee of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will be holding the annual multi cultural celebration on October 22, 2011 Saturday (from 4PM to 7PM) at St. John's church, 2000 Florence Avenue, Hazlet, New Jersey. The purpose of this annual celebration is to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage and gather together for worship, fellowship and cultural festivity. Why an annual multi cultural celebration?

For the past two years, the multi cultural celebration has been well attended by persons from local groups and congregations, representing many nations, many languages and displaying an array of talents. Last year, the celebration brought hundreds from over 35 different nations together for worship and talent show festivity (*Relay, December, 2010*). The annual celebration is also well participated in by both laity and clergy, each with their varying gifts to offer.

This year's celebration will be meaningful for everyone as it will bring people together once again to experience the blessings of diversity. Worship with inclusive participation is being developed where representations from different age groups, cultural ethnicities and from all races are sought. The planning team is looking for verse readers from different lan-

guages and a sign language interpreter. The festivities would not be complete without native food from different continents, nations, and cultures from all races. Anyone can bring a dish of any of these kinds: meat, chicken or fish, vegetable, or side dish (rice or pasta) that can feed at least 50 people. Dessert and drinks will be provided.

The cultural presentations will follow from the different nations/continents and from all races. Presentations must be culturally oriented and not more than five minutes long. For further information, access the multi cultural celebration brochure from the conference web site and send in your church's registration to the conference office as identified in the brochure. To add color to the festivity, we also encourage that everyone wear their native dress and/or national costume.

It is a goal to have inclusive participation from all local churches in the conference. The hope and prayer is that the gathering will enhance awareness of the rich diversity of the conference, not only of the many countries and nations represented, but also of the many gifts and graces present in the fellowship of United Methodists in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

- Judy Colorado, Team Leader, *The Multi Ethnic Coordinating Committee*

**The November Issue Deadline is  
October 5, 2011**

## GNJAC Pastor Seeks Peace Despite 9/11 Hurt

A UMNS Report By Linda Bloom

When the death of Osama bin Laden was announced in May, the Rev. Myrna Bethke was awakened by a late-night call from a New Zealand media outlet seeking her reaction.

That itself was not a surprise. Bethke, pastor of Red Bank United Methodist Church in New Jersey, has a drawer full of videotaped interviews — in Korean, Japanese, Italian, Norwegian, German and Chinese — that she's received from TV stations around the world.

As the sister of one of the 2,977 victims of the Sept. 11 attacks and an advocate for reconciliation who traveled on a peace mission to Afghanistan the next year, her perspective often has been sought by the media.

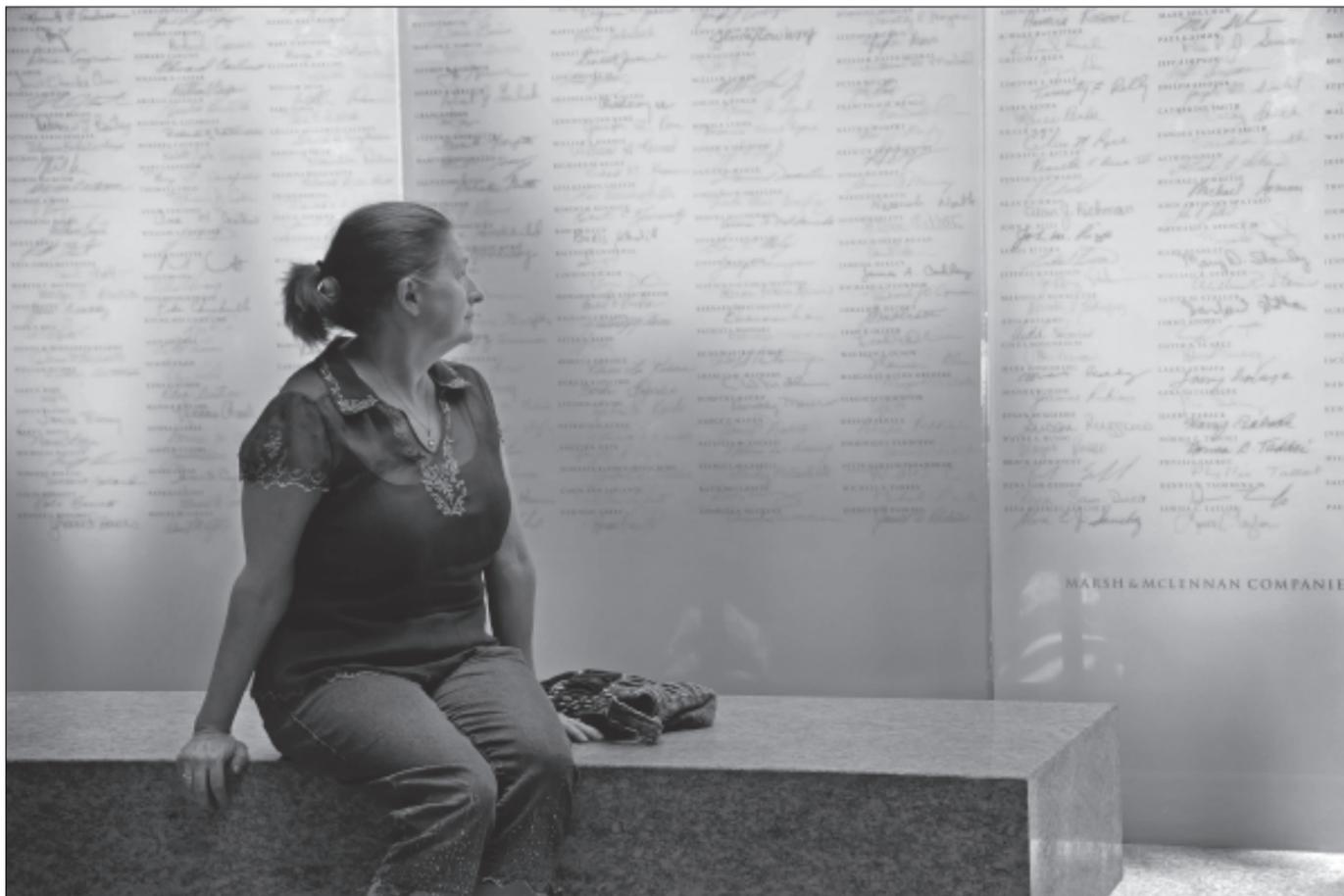
Any reporter thinking Bethke would allow herself the satisfaction of revenge would be disappointed. Her family's loss because of 9/11 has not changed a lifelong commitment to peace.

Bethke has visited a stadium in Afghanistan where the Taliban carried out its executions and she recognized the evil in bin Laden. But, as she told the New Zealand reporter that night, "I'm not going to celebrate anyone's dying."

From the beginning, she has chosen reconciliation over retribution.

### The tribute at ground zero

On Sunday, Bethke, 54, and her husband, Drew Burrus, a church organist, will attend the 9/11 family obser-



The Rev. Myrna Bethke visits a memorial to New York City employees of Marsh & McLennan, which lost 295 people, including Bethke's brother, William Bethke, in the Sept. 11 attacks. A UMNS photo by John C. Goodwin.

transferred earlier that year from his company's Princeton, N.J., office to lower Manhattan.

Then the realization came: "Billy works there now." No one in her family could reach him. His body was never identified.

That evening, she opened the doors of First United Methodist Church in Freehold, N.J., where she then served as pastor, to the grieving congregation and community. They sang hymns and read psalms of anger and lament, like Psalm 137, written centuries ago by the oppressed Israelites living in exile in Babylon.

It felt right, Bethke recalled, to "let that rage happen" in a liturgical context, "knowing that God is big enough to handle all of our anger and all of our feelings." The next night, during a more formal worship service, they talked instead about beginning the healing process.

### Finding ways to heal

Her family, which includes a sister and two other brothers, found different ways to deal with the tragedy, but they eventually lost touch with Bill's widow, Valerie. "I think her way of coping was just to disappear," Bethke said.

Her mother, Marie, started leading workshops to help people learn to use the healing power of laughter and still does. Until his death from cancer two years ago, her father, Brud, tagged along with his wife.

For Bethke, the aftermath of 9/11 meant learning to express her concerns and convictions in a much more public fashion than she was used to, even as a pastor. "I'm actually a very shy and quiet person, so having to be that public about the death of my brother has been an interesting journey for me," she admitted.

She knew she had to live out this truth: "The more we know about one another and the more we know our names and our stories, the harder it is when something happens to generalize or stereotype another group of people."

able to identify her brother's remains. Then, in Afghanistan, she listened as an 8-year-old girl spoke the names of family members who had died in a bombing, offering a sort of verbal DNA, and the connection was clear.

"Those two things came together for



### The young remember 9/11

In 2001, Joseph Kurt Alexander, was 12 and living in Greeley, Colo. "When 9/11 happened," he recalled, "it suddenly brought the possibility of death into American life — something present everywhere else in the world but not so much recognized here." Almost overnight, the seventh-grader realized he was part of something greater than he was.

The desire to keep making connections with other peoples and cultures also has touched her two children, Krista, 22, and Daniel, 20. "Both of them grew up in a kind of peace tradition," she explained. "The jump to our response to 9/11 made sense to them."

Bethke had a powerful reminder of the urgent need to work for peace and justice when she and United Method-

me," she said. "This is why we do what we do."

### Promoting interfaith relationships

Since 9/11, Bethke has been active in September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, an organization that promotes dialogue on alternatives to war; has committed herself to seek-



The Rev. Myrna Bethke holds baby Elizabeth Anne Binder on the day of her baptism. A UMNS photo by Gwen Kisker.

vance at ground zero as she has every year except the first anniversary. The guest preacher to take her place in the pulpit at Red Bank was lined up several months ago.

This year, through a lottery system, she is one of the family members chosen to read aloud the names of those who died in the attacks. She will be permitted to mention the name of her youngest brother, William Bethke, who was among the dead, at the end of her list.

If the sun is reflecting brightly off the Hudson River, it will be hard to forget how blue the sky was that morning. Her brother, nearing his 37th birthday in October, was at work in the offices of the consulting firm Marsh & McLennan, on the 95th floor of the World Trade Center's north tower.

After American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the north tower, between the 93rd and 99th floors, at 8:46 a.m., Myrna Bethke followed the breaking news on her computer. But, she momentarily forgot that her brother had



The Rev. Myrna Bethke (left) sits with Amira, an Afghan girl who lost most of her family during a U.S. bombing near Kabul, for a memorial service in 2002. UMNS photo courtesy of Myrna Bethke.

ist Bishop C. Joseph Sprague were part of an interfaith delegation to Afghanistan in 2002, sponsored by Global Exchange, an international human rights organization.

She had carried with her a memory that symbolized the tragedy of 9/11 for her: watching her father give a DNA sample in case authorities were ever

ing out relationships with Muslims and other faith groups in communities where she has lived; and has worked with other New Jersey clergy to address a growing backlash against immigrants.

Two years ago, the Red Bank congregation was part of the Three Faiths

(Continued on Page 10)

## Atlanta Church's Ribbons Remember War Dead



**U.S. Army Capt. Brooks Askew looks through gold ribbons at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church in Atlanta.** *UMNS photos by Courtney Ficken.*

*By Courtney Ficken\**

ATLANTA (UMNS) — U.S. Army Capt. Brooks Askew takes a moment to study the thousands of gold, blue and green ribbons across his church's front lawn. Askew is a member of Peachtree Road United Methodist Church, Atlanta, where the Prayers for Peace Memorial is displayed.

The memorial honors the 6,400 members of the U.S. military who have died in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Askew is all too familiar with one of the names on the memorial.

"I had a job as a casualty notification officer/casualty assistant officer to inform a family that their son had been killed in Iraq," Askew said. "I can't imagine having to get that news because it's probably the worst day of your life."

The idea for the memorial came after Peachtree Road's director of evangelism and programs, Susan Marshall, happened to visit a similar display in New York.

Marshall returned to Atlanta with the inspiration to involve her church in developing a plan to replicate the New York memorial that honors the fallen and represents prayers for peace throughout the world.

### 'Dreaming big'

"Through working on this project, I've realized that it's not a pipedream to think about peace for all of us," Marshall said. "This project has touched the congregation in one of the deepest ways I have ever seen. We have been reminded that we never want to stop dreaming and praying and working for peace. We are excited about what's possible and we are dreaming big."

More than 750 volunteers, both in the church and throughout the community, participated in creating the display, which features three significant colors of ribbon.

Volunteer and church member David Metzner explained the differences in the ribbons starting with the gold, which represent members of the military who lost their lives.

"Attached to each is a dog tag," he said. "The dog tag displays their rank in the respective armed forces, their name and their age. The blue ribbons represent praying for peace for the people of Afghanistan and Iraq that don't have their freedom. ... The green ribbon represents prayers for peace."

Volunteers worked tirelessly for months to create the display. Amy Peil and other church members helped.

"I have a 19-year-old, and this idea just tugged at my heart," Peil said. "I think of all the fallen soldiers, and many of them were so young. I felt like as an American and as a Christian, it was the least I could do."

### 'Dedicated to peace'

"Prayer is a part of my daily life, and I know with the Lord, anything is possible.



**Susan Marshall is coordinator of the Prayers for Peace memorial.**

All these wars and all these young lives. What a wonderful thing if we really could have peace."

The congregation continues each week to honor the fallen by reading the names, ranks, ages and hometowns of the men and women of the armed services as they die in the wars. Church members like Arch Kennedy are grateful for the way the church honors the sacrifice of these men and women as it takes a stand for peace.

"Our church is a very giving church and this project means a lot to me," Kennedy said. "We want peace in the world, and this shows that we are dedicated to peace."

The next step for the church is to begin contacting family members of fallen troops to tell them about the memorial.

The Prayers for Peace memorial was dedicated Sept. 11, 2011. More than 1,700 people, representing six churches and other members of the community, attended the event. The display will remain on the church grounds indefinitely.

*\*Ficken is a freelance journalist based in Watkinsville, Ga.*

## Stewardship Stories

**By Rich Hendrickson**  
*Coordinator of Stewardship Education  
and Development, GNJAC*



### Building Better Stories

It was around 9:00 am when the phone rang at the parsonage. On the other end of the line was the third grade teacher from the local elementary school. She had just overheard one of her students telling a classmate that her family had run out of money and were beginning to break up some of the furniture so they could burn the pieces in the wood stove in order to stay warm. The family lived in a hunting camp just outside of town. She was calling our church because she had heard others in town telling stories of how we were "always doing something to help people" whether they were members or not. Being a caring church that looked out for the people of Howland, Maine was our "corporate image" and we could not have been more proud.

The image of any church in the community in which it resides is based on the perceptions and substantive experiences that people have with that church, its ministries, services, and people. Typically those perceptions and experiences are articulated in stories that people freely share with others. If you want to learn about your "corporate image" and whether or not it's a positive one, listen closely to the stories that are being told about your church. The stories will be good ones if your ministries, services, and interactions with the community build tangible value and impact people's lives.

So, how are you known in your community? What are you known for? What are the stories people are telling about you? Is it what you want to hear? Shape your "corporate image" in a way that reflects the image and presence of God out through your church doors and into the community. Build a better story by making a difference in the name of Christ and for the sake of all of God's people.

## Pastor Seeks Peace

*(Continued from Page 9)*

Walks initiated by U.S. Rep. Rush Holt, D-N.J., to promote understanding among Christians, Jews and Muslims. In 2010, church youth participated in the Three Faiths Quilt project, initiated by the Jewish Federation of Monmouth County in partnership with 14 houses of worship. Each square of the quilt, later displayed at the Statehouse in Trenton, depicted symbols of peace in those traditions.

These days, the personal significance of Sept. 11 has become more prevalent as the 10th anniversary draws near. On a bright summer afternoon, she visited, for the first time, Marsh & McLennan's memorial to the 295 employees it lost at ground zero.

In a small plaza adjacent to the company's offices at 1166 Avenue of the Americas, William Bethke's name is etched in the stone above a facsimile of his signature.

"The most meaningful part of that was to see my brother's signature," she

said later. "That was just really a very moving way to do that memorial."

But, when she thinks of Bill, she doesn't think of Manhattan at all.

She might remember the seasons of their childhood, when the siblings and four close Bethke cousins peppered the grades of the public school system in Hamilton, N.J., and vacationed together each August at the Jersey Shore.

Or she might recall Bill as an adult, the tech guru who "could reformat your whole computer over the phone;" the brother who would "always be the first to help somebody or make somebody laugh."

"A lot of times, it's just remembering who he was."

*Bloom is a United Methodist News Service multimedia reporter based in New York. Follow her at <http://twitter.com/umcscribe>. News media contact: Linda Bloom, New York, (646) 369-3759 or [newsdesk@umcom.org](mailto:newsdesk@umcom.org)*

## RELAY Reflections

Thoughts on the Spiritual Life  
Relayonline at [www.umrelay.org](http://www.umrelay.org)

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## OPPORTUNITY FILE

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

### October 3 — India 2011 with the Bishop

GNJAC - Eleven days of discover on the Asian sub-continent where the passion of Jesus Christ is moving and stirring the people. See conference website, [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org) for details.

### October 17 — Gateway North Resource Day at Epworth UMC, Elizabeth with Speaker Rev. Dr. John Holbert

Clergy are expected at 8:30 a.m. for Fellowship. Our program begins at 9:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to the evening session starting at 6:30 p.m. with Fellowship. The program begins at 7:00 p.m.

### October 22 — 2011 Multi Cultural Celebration

Hazlet - The purpose of this annual celebration is to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage and gather together for worship, fellowship and cultural festivity. Time: 4:00pm - 7:00pm. St. John's United Methodist Church, 2000 Florence Avenue, Hazlet, NJ 07730.

### Fall 2011 — (Dates and meeting Locations may be found at [gnjumc.org](http://gnjumc.org))

Lay Speakers Schools - Advanced Course, *Leading Bible Study Course* Text by William Barclay

The text for this study is "Introducing the Bible" by William Barclay. Barclay testifies to the Bible's unique value as an inspired book and gives clear advice on the best way to read it. He tells how the biblical writings came into being and finally gained acceptance as Scripture.

### November 13, 2010- Seminar: Muslims in the Kingdom of God

Presented by Gayle McCord from 9AM to 4PM at the Whitehouse United Methodist Church, 3 Old Highway, Whitehouse, New Jersey 08888. (908) 534-2064

### Holy Land Pilgrimage and Tour 2012 with Bishop:

10 Days of Biblical Discovery

Depart on February 2, 2012 from Newark for just \$2,547. See [gnjumc.org](http://gnjumc.org) for further information and brochure.

## OBITUARIES

**DORIS A. ATKINSON**, widow of the Rev. Lawrence G. Atkinson, pastor and district superintendent of the GNJAC, died August 24, 2011 in Staunton, VA.

Family will gather in a private celebration of her life at the Blue Ridge Mountains, Va., on October 15.

Mrs. Atkinson is survived by two sons, Jack Ballurio and his wife, Jane, of Staunton, and Keith B. Ballurio and his wife, Wendy, of Manassas, Va., a daughter, Amy Ballurio-Dulac and her husband, Frankie, of DeBary, Fla., four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Messages of Condolence may be sent to Mrs. Atkinson's son, Jack Ballurio, 40 Oak Lane, Staunton, VA 24401.

**JULIO DESANCTIS**, Husband of Rev. Joan DeSanctis (FE), died on September 9, 2011. A Celebration Service was held at Old Town United Methodist Church on September 14th, 2011.

Memorial donations may be made to: Cancer Cure of Maine, 33 Whiting Hill Road, Brewer, ME 04412 or the Joan and Julio DeSanctis Memorial Fund at Camp Mechuwana, PO Box 277, Winthrop 04364.

Messages of Condolence may be sent to: Rev. Joan DeSanctis, 744 Stillwater Avenue, Old Town, ME 04468

*"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth...that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"*

— Rev. 14:13



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## A UMNS Report

By Joey Butler\*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — There's long been talk of the "graying" of United Methodist congregations, but the same can now be said of its pastors.

The annual report on clergy age trends in The United Methodist Church reveals a widening age gap. The report was released this week by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Even though there are more young elders, deacons and local pastors than 10 years ago, their numbers are dwarfed by elders in the 55-72 age range - 951 compared with 8,790. Reflecting a trend that began in 1995, the number of elders in the 35-54 range continues to decrease.

From the 1970s to 2005, there was a continuous decline in the percentage of young adults as active elders. The past six years have seen gradual increase.

"After that long of a decline, for it to turn up in terms of numbers and percentage is fairly significant given the past trends," said the Rev. Lovett Weems, project director of the study. "But the numbers are very modest, and they're not enough to counterbalance the large numbers of middle-age clergy that are moving into the older group."

Among the 2011 study's findings:

- For the second year, the total percentage of elders ages 55-72 is the highest in history. In 2010, they represented half of all elders; this year it is 52 percent. As recently as 2000, this age group represented only 30 percent of active elders.
- The median age of elders remains 55 — the highest in history, first reached in 2010.
- The number of under-35 elders increased from 946 in 2010 to 951 in 2011, now 5.61 percent of the total number of elders. That's the highest number and percentage of elders under 35 in more than a decade.
- There are 455 young local pastors, more than any time in recent history. They comprise about 6.2 percent of all local pastors.
- There was a dramatic increase in the percentage of young clergy who are women. Ten years ago, men outnumbered women by a ratio of 2:1.

Today, women comprise almost 40 percent of elders under age 35.

Though the increase in the number of young elders hit a 10-year high, some might be discouraged because that rise reflects only five more pastors. However, the study shows that young people are pursuing a number of different ministry options.

## 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.

## 2012 Community Outreach Grants

The Parish & Community Development Team of the Conference Board of Global Ministries of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will be receiving and reviewing applications from churches for grants to fund **new programs** in the local church designed to reach out beyond our walls and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world with emphasis on the Four Areas of Focus: (1) Leadership Development; (2) Congregational Development; (3) Ministry with the Poor; and (4) Global Health.

Local churches must submit their application before the **October 14, 2011** deadline. Application forms will be mailed as requested by local churches (call Ginny Kaiser at 732-359-1043) or may be downloaded from the conference website [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org).

Criteria:

- Grants are intended to help start *new ministries* at local churches and not to sustain established programs.
- Grants are provided for one year at a time and not awarded for more than three (3) years to the same project.
- Preference is always given to new ministries at local churches that have not received funds previously.
- Only one project per church should be submitted.
- Project goals need to be according to the Four Focus Areas: (1) Leadership Development; (2) Congregational Development; (3) Ministry with the Poor; and (4) Global Health.
- Grants cannot be used to fund staff positions, equipment or capital improvement.
- Churches and ministries receiving grants *must* submit a copy of the Safe Sanctuaries Certification.
- Preference is given to local churches which have paid their fair share in the previous year.
- District Superintendent of the local church requesting funds needs to recommend the project.

Please follow the general instructions listed in the application as the Funding Committee will not consider *incomplete* applications.

**Completed applications must be returned to the Conference Office no later than 4:00 pm on Friday, October 14, 2011. All applications are to be sent to: Rev. Sung H. Ahn, Greater New Jersey Conference, 1001 Wickapecko Drive, Ocean, NJ 07712, or faxed to 732-359-1049. If you fax your application, you must also mail the original. No emails will be accepted.**

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