

EMMANUEL

Emmanuel

Emmanuel



Emmanuel



Emmanuel



Emmanuel

Emmanuel

God with us



Emmanuel

EDITORIAL

Technology and Isolation

Elsewhere in this issue of the Relay readers will find a story about the start-up of a newly designed conference website with what are expected to be quite helpful, user-friendly features. This is the latest step in the ongoing effort to keep pace with available technology as the Church continues to tell the timeless story in ways that are relevant and accessible to today's world. The use of the internet, social media, (Facebook, Tweeting, etc.) cell phones, I-books, and the like should be encouraged if the Church is to maintain a high level of visibility and connection to the world. There are, however, some cautions to be observed.

One of the primary causes for concern is the level of isolation that is brought about by the use of technology. Some years ago, e-mail began to supplant the telephone call as a primary means of communicating. Recently, texting has taken over as the preferred mode, especially between adolescents and young adults. It has gotten to the point where person-to-person, face-to-face dialogue has been relegated to the background, if not forsaken altogether. It is not unusual for people in the same room to be texting each other rather than taking the opportunity to converse.

The pervasive nature of the technology and its seemingly addictive qualities is engendering an isolationist society in which people have or are on their way to losing the ability to be fully present with each other. At a recent Northern Shore District Resource Day, Dr. Craig Gilliam, quoted the writings of Martin Buber. "All actual life is encounter," the philosopher said. We cannot be the people God created us to be apart from one another; we are relational beings, fashioned in the image of God. Buber put it in terms of an "I-Thou" encounter. We define who we are with respect to how we relate to others.

Isaiah 6 is instructive at this point. The prophet was present in the temple, doing his usual work when the space was filled with the glory of God. Overwhelmed by the Holy Presence, the prophet acknowledged his own shortcomings and sinfulness. In that instance of I-Thou communion with God, Isaiah was able to understand who *he* was compared to God.

That kind of self awareness requires us to be in communion with God and with one another. It cannot be done at a distance. Over-reliance on communication technology creates and stretches the inter-personal distance between us and lessens our ability to have I-Thou encounters.

The Church has always struggled to build an understanding among its members that it is crucial to the life of faith to be personally present in the body of Christ. Pastors and lay leadership wring their hands and fret over those who should be in the Church but who are not. We have a sense that things are wrong when people are missing. There is a disconnect between the church and those members who are absent. A similar disconnect occurs when we allow technology to take the place of personal interaction.

While we should continue to do everything we can to make disciples and transform the world through the use of developing communications technology, we must also be careful lest the medium becomes the message. As we move into and beyond the Christmas season, the incarnation stands as a powerful example of face to face communication. When God wanted to bring salvation to the world, it wasn't by telephone, e-mail, texting, or tweeting. It was in a person. Emmanuel. God *with* us.

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.

A Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

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

Rev. Adam Hamilton, pastor of the Church of the Resurrection, talks about the journey of Joseph and Mary based on Luke 2:1-7 in one of his Advent sermons from 2010. In his powerful sermon, he talks about the challenges Mary might have faced on her journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem as a pregnant woman in the last days of her pregnancy. In driving his point home, he shares a video in which he interviews one of his colleagues, a woman in the ninth month of her pregnancy, who talks about her feelings as an expectant mother. As Rev. Hamilton connects Mary's challenges to those of a twenty-first century pregnant woman, one can really sense the divine and human convergence of Christmas. May I suggest you view this video by going to the Church of the Resurrection website and watching his sermon of December 19, 2010 posted in the sermon archives <http://www.cor.org/worship-sermons/sermon-archives/show/sermons/From-Nazareth-to-Bethlehem/>



As I was reflecting on this, a scriptural verse that came to my mind was, "And the word became flesh and lived among us..." (John 1:14). Christmas is not a story of the past; it is the power of the present and the promise of the future. It is not a one-day event, but an everyday reality. Through the birth of Jesus, God became "flesh and dwelt among us."

God among us... May we ponder that for a moment?

- What does it look like when we realize the presence of God with us in the midst of our challenges, frustrations, anxieties, joys, hopes and dreams?
- What does it mean to us to make the presence of God known to others when they go through their challenges?
- What does it mean when a homeless, chemically-addicted, challenged person feels the true love of Christ in us as we walk with him or her?

The joy and the power of Christmas cannot just be contained in human gifts or wrapped in any kind of gift paper. It should be lived out through those of us who celebrate the birth of Christ in our own lives. Perhaps the best Christmas gift we can give to our communities, nation, and world is to show that Christ still lives among us through our service and witness. I heard Mother Teresa once say that the poor are the people not necessarily with problems; they can be the ones who offer us a different way of loving God by the way we help them. This sentiment is also echoed by Dag Hammarskjöld who said, "In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action." <http://quotationsbook.com/quote/579/>

May our Christmas celebration go beyond the trimmings of the holiday by making known the grace of God the Creator, the love of Christ our liberator, and the power of the Holy Spirit our guide through our words and actions as we minister to the modern day Marys and Josephs in our communities as we travel with them and they with us.

Prema joins me in wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

"God loves you all and so do I!"

In Christ's love,

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Are you coming off your Church's complementary subscription list?
Is there a United Methodist on your Christmas list that has you stumped?
Is your paid subscription coming up to renewal?

The United Methodist RELAY

at \$9.50 per year continues to be one of the best bargains around.

Send in your subscription order now.

UNITED METHODIST RELAY, 1001 Wickapeckia Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733



Serving the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

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

New Subscriptions, renewals, address changes, and corrections should be addressed to the subscription manager, Beverly Karlovich, BKarlovich@gnjumc.org or by mail to Beverly Karlovich, Subscription manager, United Methodist Relay, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION and PLACEMENT

Glenn C. Ferguson
924 Middletown-Lincroft Road
Middletown, N.J. 07748 • Phone (732) 671-0707 e-mail: mumc.pastor@comcast.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.

Views and opinions expressed are those of the writers, and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Methodist Church, the Greater New Jersey Conference or any official or organization thereof.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Glenn C. Ferguson
Editor

924 Middletown-Lincroft Road
Middletown, NJ 07748-3104
Phone: (732) 671-0707

e-mail: mumc.pastor@comcast.net

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Capital & Cape Atlantic Districts

Hector Burgos-Nunez
205 Northfield Ave., Northfield, NJ 08225-1949
Phone: (609) 484-1141
e-mail: HectorABurgos@aol.com

Delaware Bay & Gateway South Districts

Rob Tomer
506 West Broad Street, Gibbstown, NJ 08027-1071
Phone: (856) 423-1196
e-mail: rwtomer@verizon.net

Gateway North and Raritan Valley Districts

Glenn Ferguson
924 Middletown-Lincroft Rd., Middletown, NJ 07748
Phone: 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

Skylands & Palisades Districts

Jessica Stenstrom
PO Box 115, Denville, NJ 07834-0115
Phone: (973) 627-1041
e-mail: jstenstrom@drew.edu

Web Address: www.UMRelay.org - Send all NEWS and PHOTOS to the staff member serving YOUR district or agency.

The UNITED METHODIST RELAY is published monthly except January and August by the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Office of Publication: Office of the Bishop, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733. Second Class postage paid at Brick, N.J. 08732. Mailed free to selected Charge Conference members and clergy of each church. Others may subscribe at the rate of \$9.50 per year. Back issues may be obtained as available at \$1.50 for first copy and 50 cents for each additional copy sent in the same wrapper. POSTMASTER: Send Address changes to UNITED METHODIST RELAY, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733.

A Season of Change: The Installation of Five New District Superintendents

The installation of a district superintendent is a very joyous experience. Each district gathers together to celebrate the change of leadership, pray for the future, and be thankful for the history that has brought them this far. The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference was blessed to welcome five new district superintendents during the months of September and October 2011. Most were new to the world of superintendency, while one moved from a northern district to a southern district.

Congratulations and welcome to the new District Superintendents of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference: The Reverend Varlyna Wright (Capital District), The Reverend Dr. Jisun Kwak (Gateway North District), The Reverend Dr. Robert Costello (Gateway South), The Reverend

Wayne Plumstead (Palisades), and The Reverend Dr. Steven Bechtold (Skylands). Mr. Costello's message focused on the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11-32) and how that story might have been different if one of the sons had changed his attitude towards the situation. Those in attendance were encouraged to have positive attitudes in their ministries and see what a difference that could make.

Palisades welcomed Mr. Plumstead at Arcola with a host of talented performers including interpretive dance by a team from Christ Church- Paterson, a youth praise team, KCCNJ Musicians, Arcola KUMC Men's Chorus, and many others. It was an impressive celebration with many people contributing to the great evening. The new



New Skylands District Superintendent Steve Bechtold listens while Gateway North Superintendent Jisun Kwak makes a presentation.

Many Methodists, especially those involved in local church leadership positions, have heard about the district superintendents, also known as the D.S.'s or the Bishop's Cabinet, but how much is really known about their ministry? District Superintendents are a part of a long-standing heritage of an organized structure in the United Methodist Church.

Each district has a superintendent appointed to oversee the ministries of the churches in those communities under their jurisdiction. According to the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, district

service in the world." (par. 419) The *Book of Discipline* goes on to explain in depth about the duties and responsibilities of district superintendents. Even at a quick glance, it is clear what is expected of a D.S. through a few of the key descriptive words used: "spiritual leadership", "support", "encouraging", and "modeling." There aren't any other or better words to describe the five district superintendents who are now several months into their new ministries. The people of the GNAC are encouraged to keep all of the superintendents in your prayers as they con-



Gateway South Superintendent Bob Costello in his element with children of his new district.

superintendent's message urged churches to continue pushing through the tough times that every church faces because they are "living out the Gospel message that God really loves us."

Even though there were five installation services this year, an atypical amount from the usual one or two, each service had its own unique personality.

The Capital District celebrated at St. Mark Church in Hamilton, New Jersey with an energetic and inspiring choir who warmed up the crowd for Ms. Wright's empowering message of change for her new district. The sanctuary was on fire with energy, hope, and excitement for what God has in store for the district in the future.

Gateway North had a spectacular showcase of the many cultural heritages of the district at Chatham Church, including a performance of traditional Korean drums, a combined choir, and a moving message from the Ms. Kwak. She asked her district to let her be their "momma bear," walking beside them supporting them in their journey but there when they needed protection or a lending hand.

Gateway South had a strong empha-

superintendent's message urged churches to continue pushing through the tough times that every church faces because they are "living out the Gospel message that God really loves us."

Skylands was the last installation service of the year but they did not disappoint. It was the first district to incorporate a hand and foot washing moment for all those in attendance. Prior to the washing service, Mr. Bechtold's message brought perspective to the act of serving one another. He spoke about how serving those God has shown in the communities around our local churches isn't always the easy thing to do and sometimes it takes a person out of their comfort zone but God has called God's people to reach beyond the boundaries, both physically and mentally, created by human fear. Following the message, in preparation of the hand and food washing service, Rev. Ellen Bechtold led the congregation in a responsive reading taken from John 13: 13-15. People of all ages and heritages took turns washing one another's feet or hands in a great moment of unity for the Skylands District.



Jisun Kwak in a moment of prayer, surrounded by Bishop Devadhar and members of the GNJAC cabinet.



Palisades District Superintendent Wayne Plumstead is installed by Bishop Devadhar while other members of the cabinet (Fran Noll, Steve Bechtold, and Bob Costello), as well as Conference Lay Leader Rosa Williams, look on.

superintendents are appointed by the bishop of each annual conference to serve typically 6 year terms. "The district superintendent shall oversee the total ministry of the clergy and of the churches in the communities of the district in their missions of witness and

continue to support their local churches, lay leaders, communities and annual conference. To all of the new district superintendents, on behalf of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, welcome!



Capital District Superintendent Varlyna Wright listen while Dean of the Cabinet, Barbara Rambach, shares in the



Global Relay

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

Bishops vow to uphold same-sex union ban

(UMNS) While acknowledging the denomination's "deep disagreements" over homosexuality, the United Methodist Council of Bishops promised to uphold church law banning same-sex unions in a letter released Nov. 11.

"As bishops chosen, consecrated and assigned by the Church, we declare once again our commitment to be faithful to this covenant we have made," the letter said. "As the Council of Bishops we will uphold the Book of Discipline as established by General Conference."

The bishops' statement marked the first time the council as a body has addressed the pledges to bless same-sex unions signed this year by more than 1,000 United Methodist clergy across the United States. In the New York Annual (regional) Conference, 732 lay people also have signed "a covenant of conscience" in support of such unions.

United Methodists see Occupy protest ties

(UMNS) They may have begun as a protest against corporations and greed, but for a growing number of United Methodists taking part in the Occupy Wall Street movement, the protests are a statement about the spiritual bankruptcy of materialism as well as a call to transform the world.

"This movement articulates [our call] for a more just society," said the Rev. Sandy Gess, pastor at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Vacaville, Calif., and a long-time resident of Oakland. "The numbers of people who are homeless, unemployed, living on the streets are finding a community [in encampments] where they get assistance, a spiritual home, and have a voice — those of us in the clergy, who really speak on behalf of our spiritual leader, Jesus the Christ, who always advocated for the poor."

NCC top executive plans to leave post

CHICAGO (UMNS) — The Rev. Michael Kinnamon, 63, will be leaving his post as the top executive of the National Council of Churches after a four-year tenure because of health concerns, the NCC Governing Board reported Nov. 9. NCC President Peg Chamberlin and President-elect Kathryn Lohre will develop a proposal for transitional leadership for the executive committee to consider in December. Lohre was installed the same day as the council's 26th president.

United Methodists Join Tar Sands Action for Environmental Justice

(UMNS) United Methodist Women's Green Team members, along with United Methodists from Maryland, converged on the White House on Sunday, November 6, 2011, with over 10,000 others to press President Obama to block construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. The project, contracted by the company TransCanada, would transport crude oil 1,700 miles from the Tar Sands of Alberta, Canada, to refineries in the Gulf of Mexico. Those against it argue it would deface the natural landscapes of the Tar Sands and the Nebraska Sandhills, destroy indigenous Canadians' communities, and raise carbon dioxide levels to dangerous realms. If the pipeline leaks or is not secured properly, it could contaminate vast freshwater aquifers like the Ollagala in Nebraska, making it undrinkable.

Participants rallied in Lafayette Square Park in Washington, D.C., before standing shoulder to shoulder around the White House, with enough people to encircle it five times.

Religious leaders: Don't cut poverty funding

(UMNS) Legislation affecting how the U.S. addresses global poverty will be under scrutiny as the U.S. Senate considers the 2012 appropriations bill. The bill, expected on the Senate floor the week of Nov. 14, will affect many programs and places where United Methodists are attempting to improve — and even save — people's lives, says Mark Harrison, United Methodist Board of Church and Society. "If you're concerned about malaria funding, if you're concerned about HIV funding, this is the bill you need to be spending time with," he noted.

Japan relief efforts pay off

(UMNS) When northern Japan was devastated by last March's earthquake/tsunami, the Rev. Michiko Nishinosono knew she had to do something to help.

The members of the Japanese-language group she leads at Wesley United Methodist Church in San Jose, Calif., — known as Wesley Nichigo-bu (Japanese-speaking) — felt the same way.

While Japanese Americans live throughout the Santa Clara Valley, San Jose's Japantown, where Wesley is located, remains the cultural, emotional and spiritual heart of that community. After being approached to collaborate on a fundraiser for Japan relief, "our nichigo-bu decided to be a sponsor for this event, and we worked together," she said.

Obesity rising among faithful

(UMNS) The nation's churches and synagogues have a weight problem. The multiple health benefits of an active faith life tend to stop at four-course Shabbat meals and church supper tables groaning with fried meat, biscuits and gravy, new research shows. In one study of some 5,500 women and men ages 45 to 84, participants were more likely to be obese the more religiously active they were. Each step of the way, from those never attending worship to those attending weekly, greater religious activity was associated with significantly higher rates of obesity.

**The February Issue Deadline
is January 5, 2012**

Delegation News

At a recent meeting of the 2012 Delegation, it was unanimously decided to work with all our District Superintendents to see if there could be a General Conference Delegation presence at all the District Days of Learning. Delegation Members see this as not only an opportunity for sharing about the upcoming General Conference, but also to listen to what Annual Conference members have to say. Watch for news of the particulars in each District announcement.

Also, the Delegation has decided to interview potential episcopal nominees with an eye toward possibly making an endorsement as a Delegation. Following is the Questionnaire to be completed with instructions and deadlines. The Delegation wants to encourage everyone — laity and clergy — to prayerfully consider possible nominees and initiate conversation with a clergy person whom you think has the gifts and graces to be an Episcopal leader urging them to complete the questionnaire.

Any questions about the foregoing, call Lynn Caterson at 609-272-1469.

REQUEST FOR DELEGATION SUPPORT FOR EPISCOPAL NOMINATION

Greater New Jersey Conference

Date Due: December 31, 2011

Send by mail, FAX or e-mail to:

Lynn Caterson
PO Box 1492, Absecon, NJ 08201
FAX: 609-272-8008
e-mail: jecaterson@verizon.net

The Greater New Jersey Conference Delegation invites those who have sensed the call to Episcopal leadership to request the support of the Delegation for their nomination to the 2012 Jurisdictional Conference. The nomination will be presented to the Conference at our annual session in May/June 2012 and will be voted on by the whole Conference at that time. Requests, to be considered, must be received by December 31, 2011. Nominees may be invited to meet with the delegation on a Sunday afternoon in January to further discuss their candidacy. Requests which are not received by the deadline will not be considered but will be eligible for nomination from the floor of the 2012 Annual Conference.

Please submit a one-page, one sided curriculum vitae. Contact information, including a cell phone number is important. Be sure to note your experience in administration and financial leadership.

QUESTIONS: Please answer the following questions as they pertain to your interest in Episcopal leadership.

Page limit — 5 one-sided pages (no smaller than size 12 font, single spaced, with 1" margins) for all information and answers to questions to be apportioned as you see fit. Please clearly note which answer applies to which question.

1. Describe your call to the episcopacy and what gifts and graces others have identified in you that have affirmed this calling.

2. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the United Methodist Church in this time and how your leadership would react to them.

3. Based on the big issues facing the 2012 General Conference, describe your vision of the United Methodist Church ten years from now; twenty years from now.

4. What else would you like the Delegation to know about you as we consider our support of you for Episcopal Nomination?

ENDORSEMENTS:

Please list the names (no signatures required) and contact information of 5 lay persons (must be voting Lay Members of the GNJ Annual Conference) and 10 clergy persons (must be members in full connection) who support your potential candidacy for the episcopacy. Please advise your endorsers that Delegation members may be contacting them for further information, including a request for a written letter of recommendation.

Delegation members, so as not to give the appearance of impropriety, may **NOT** be your personal endorsers.

REMEMBER — ONLY a 1-page Curriculum Vitae and 5 additional pages TOTAL to be sent!

A Newly Transformed Website for the GNJAC

The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference launched a new version of its website on Friday, November 18, 2011. The goal of the new website is to be more inviting and informative. The homepage is driven by news, events, and "Faith in Action" stories of the conference.

Users will find a brighter, easier-to-use homepage with all of the information needed from the old site and many new features. Right away users will notice a scrolling feature story section with news from around the GNJAC and the world. The "Faith in Action" section is the local churches' chance to let others know what's happening in their ministries. Local churches are highly encouraged to submit stories and photos from special events and weekly ministries to share with the world! Churches can do this by clicking on the "Tell Your Story" link.

Another great feature is every district now has a website built into the new GNJAC website. Events and news can be viewed by district to make it easier to find those events close by.

Also new is the online searchable database for the GNJAC Media Center. Did you know that you can borrow books, DVDs, bible studies, vbs starter kits, and more to use and preview before purchasing your own copies? Simply, search for the resource you're looking for and then add it to your online cart. The Media Specialist will confirm your request and either mail it to you or put it aside for pick-up.

With the abundance of new resources, local churches can now submit events, job opportunities, classifieds and news online! The Local Church Event/News/Job listing in the emailed GNJ DIGEST will now all be on the new website for easier searching and viewing. A link to the events calendar will continue to be provided to the appropriate web page in the GNJ DIGEST.

Don't have access to a computer or want more information? Contact Heather Fullerton, GNJAC Media Specialist! She can be reached through email at communications@gnjumc.org or 732-359-1020. A toll-free number is also available: 1-877-677-2594, ext. 1020

VIEWPOINT

Child Sexual Abuse & Safe Sanctuary Policies

In recent days the news of the scandal at Penn State has raised concern about guaranteeing safety for children, especially in light of the fact that there is almost no limit to the possibility of sexual abuse against them. Recent events point out that it can happen when and where it is least expected.

Television news, radio commentaries, talk shows, internet chat, newspaper stories, countless editorials, and law journal articles are full of allegations, discussion, speculation, and pontification. People are speculating as to what took place. There are legal questions flying around in countless directions. Rallies and demonstrations have developed, both to express outrage and to express concern for victims. Penn State is the hot topic. People are talking about it everywhere.

Now before you think I am sending a message about how to limit your potential liability, please note that my concern is protecting the vulnerable. My goal is not to limit damage awards that arise in litigation. Truly my hope is to prevent harm from coming to those who we are charged to protect.

We have no right to pontificate about morals, ethics and legal retribution, unless we are willing to go beyond what "should have been" to what "must be" on behalf of the kids. We must get beyond our curiosity about what "really happened" at Penn State. We have to move beyond our anger at the perpetrators.

We have no choice but to move forward to emphasize actions that demonstrate our concern for past, present and future victims of sexual abuse. Developing and utilizing a good Safe Sanctuary Policy can help curtail potential legal problems, but protecting children is the real issue - not limiting bad press, legal costs and damage awards.

If your church does not currently have a Safe Sanctuaries Policy, now is the time to begin working on one. Having a policy in place helps protect not only the children, youth and vulnerable adults in your ministry, but also the adult paid and volunteer staff.

Safe Sanctuaries Policies helps to prevent both abuse and also unfounded allegations of misconduct. It is our responsibility as disciples of Jesus Christ to care for all of God's children. It is a simple fact that adopting and then following a Safe Sanctuaries Policy are important parts of keeping children and vulnerable adults safe.

Here are some suggested steps to become a compliant Safe Sanctuary Church:

1. Purchase Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Adults by Joy Melton 2008. (available through Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com))
2. Develop a Safe Sanctuaries Policy and have it approved by your local Church Council.
3. Have your policy certified by the Greater NJ Conference by sending policy to 1001 Wickapecko Dr. Ocean NJ 07712 or to Emunoz@gnjumc.org.
4. Implement all aspects of the Safe Sanctuary policy, including demanding that ALL adults (laity and clergy) working with children, youth and vulnerable adults participate in a Safe Sanctuaries training (available online after December 1).
5. Demand that ALL employees and volunteers complete a background check through Trak-1 Technologies (www.gnjumc.org)
6. Celebrate with your congregation that your church is a Safe Sanctuary. Widely publish the policy.
7. Follow legal and Safe Sanctuary Policy guidelines in responding to any suspected abuse against children, youth and vulnerable adults.
8. Review policy annually.

If you have any questions or concerns about creating a Safe Sanctuaries policy for your church or if you need more information, please contact Rev. Erica Munoz - Greater NJ Annual Conference Children, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator at Emunoz@gnjumc.org.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of God's children!

Rev. Dr. Robert E. Costello
District Superintendent Gateway South District

Richard and Julia Wilke Institute for Discipleship (IFD) and the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) Announce 2012 Advanced Lay Speaking Ministry Online Courses

Multimedia Technology in Worship for the Church Volunteer 101 –

January 2-13, 2012 – John Zimmerman, Instructor

Direct link: <http://beadisciple.com/layspeakingministries.html#Multimedia>

Students will be introduced to the hardware and software in worship technology and discover their ability to plan, create and implement technology in a worship setting. The workshop will also help the student learn about worship itself and the role of technology in design, appropriateness and excellence.

Leading Worship 101 for Lay Leaders –

January 9 – February 13, 2012 – Dan Benedict, Instructor

Direct link: <http://beadisciple.com/layspeakingministries.html#Worship>

Leading Worship 101 will focus on basic worship leadership skills for lay persons ("liturgists" or "lay readers") who assist the pastor in leading Christian worship. If you currently help lead worship in your congregation or would like to prepare for such leadership, this course is for you.

Biblical Storytelling I –

January 16-30, 2012 – Beth Galbreath, Instructor

Direct link: <http://beadisciple.com/layspeakingministries.html#StorytellingI>

This is a two-week introduction to the ancient-future art and spiritual discipline of *telling the sacred stories* of Scripture. Participants will learn to prepare, learn, and tell a Biblical text by heart (not "memory").

Growing Spiritually through Daily Discipline –

January 17 – March 2, 2012 – Debra Dickerson, Instructor

Direct link:

<http://beadisciple.com/layspeakingministries.html#DailyDiscipline>

Participants will be guided in discerning God's direction for their lives, practicing daily disciplines, and reaching out in love.

Biblical Storytelling II –

April 15 – May 7, 2012 – Beth Galbreath, Instructor

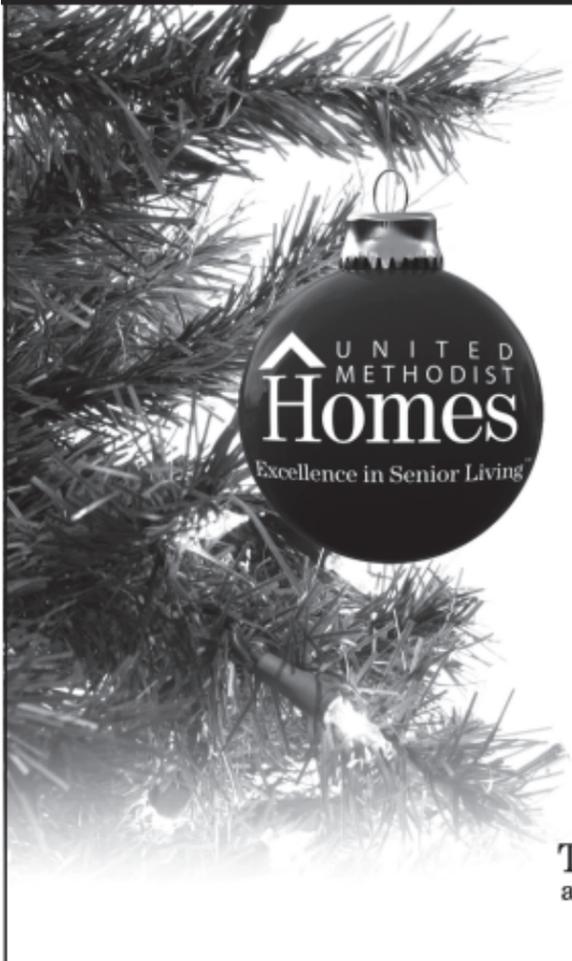
Direct link:

<http://beadisciple.com/layspeakingministries.html#StorytellingII>

This workshop expands on the methods taught in Biblical Storytelling I. It explores a number of storytelling genres as well as telling the Biblical text, including midrash, chancel drama, first-person storytelling, puppetry, and more.

The Richard and Julia Wilke Institute for Discipleship is dedicated to providing educational opportunities that nurture and enrich Christian leaders, lay and clergy, for effective living and ministry. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for all IFD workshops. To read more about these and other upcoming workshops, visit our website at www.BeADisciple.com. Register there to receive monthly email updates or to enroll for an online course.

The Fellowship Fund Makes the Difference



Christmas Blessings

Bristol Glen
Newton, NJ
973.300.5788

Collingswood Manor
Collingswood, NJ
856.854.4331

Pitman Manor
Pitman, NJ
856.589.7800

Francis Asbury Manor
Ocean Grove, NJ
732.774.1316

The Shores at Wesley Manor
Ocean City, NJ
609.399.8505

The Fellowship Fund ensures that no resident will ever be asked to leave because of an inability to cover the cost of care.

To make a secure online contribution visit
www.umhfoundation.org/donate
or mail your donation to United Methodist Homes,
3311 State Route 33, Neptune, NJ 07753

Log on to:

www.UMRelay.org for Current Relay Online,
Relay Archives & Relay Reflections.

Bishop Devadhar Lends A Hand With Breaking Ground In Union City

Bishop Sudasharna Devadhar led the Blessing of the Place for a groundbreaking celebration conducted at The Union City Church. Union City is a growing Hispanic/Latino church in a heavily populated inner city area in New Jersey, one mile from New York City. Also present for the ceremony was Tilo Rivas, Hudson County Freeholder and Adriana Birnes, from the Union City Board of Education.

The Rev. Manuel Sardinias has been the pastor at Union City since 2002 and under his leadership the church has become self-sufficient. The church stopped receiving supplemental salary

in 2005 and has been faithfully paying its Shared Ministry obligations for the last five years.

Membership and attendance have grown 133%, to the point that the church needed an expansion and decided to build a new educational annex to the church building.

The Union City church has a strong children's ministry, giving food and education to 75 children Monday through Friday all year round. The church also has a praise band and a liturgical dance group, in which children play a major part.



America's Sunday Supper Promotes Service to Honor M.L. King, Jr.

United Methodist Communications and the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society are urging communities to Rethink Church in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with *America's Sunday Supper* on January 15, 2012. *America's Sunday Supper* will be a nationwide night of simultaneous dinners and discussions shared in churches, homes, community centers and kitchens to promote positive change in the world.

As an activation partner with Points of Light, United Methodist Communications has created several free resources to make it easy to host an *America's Sunday Supper*. These resources include downloadable films for focused discussion and a toolkit to help plan and execute a meaningful event.

Events are designed to meet specific community needs. Project resources include ideas to support education, environment, military care, Imagine No Malaria and others.

"America's Sunday Supper provides a great way for churches and groups to welcome others and make a difference in the world while celebrating Dr. King's legacy of service and social justice," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "In the spirit of his 'I Have a Dream' speech, this event allows us to share our own dreams and build awareness."

For free planning resources and to register to participate visit www.sundaysupperumc.org.

There will be a free online discussion about how to host an *America's Sunday Supper* event on Thursday, November 17 at 2 p.m. EST. To attend the webinar, please click on umc.adobeconnect.com/rethinkchurch and sign in as a guest.

About Rethink Church

Rethink Church, the next evolution of The United Methodist Church's "Open hearts" welcoming and advertising campaign, highlights the many opportunities available within United Methodist churches to engage with the world — from literacy programs to feeding the poor. At www.rethinkchurch.org, visitors may interact, learn more about the church, and search for involvement opportunities.

Peace on Earth



- The United Methodist Foundation provides free planning, consultation, education and training services to GNJAC churches.
- Equally valuable in the current volatile climate, we continue to offer investors a balanced fund of stocks, bonds and cash assets.
- Our adherence to the church's Social Principles yields further peace of mind.



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.

Northern Shore Youth Go for the Gold in Pumpkin Olympics



Over 200 Northern Shore District youth enjoyed a day of fun, games, worship and the Word at the recent "Pumpkin Olympics." The fall classic held in Middletown included pumpkin smashing, launching pumpkins across an open field and writing prayers to God on pumpkins. (Photos by Brian Neville)



GNJAC Pastor receives recognition at COR Leadership Institute 2011



Rev. Hector Burgos (left) and Rev. Adam Hamilton.

As they do each year, The Church of the Resurrection in Leawood KS, and their senior pastor The Rev. Adam Hamilton, hosted the COR Leadership Institute on September 28-30, 2011. Over 2,000 clergy and laity from 44 different states and 20+ countries, including a delegation from the GNJAC of over 50 people, attended the event.

In the first plenary session, Mr. Hamilton announced that throughout the institute he would be lifting up seven stories of transformation in congregations across the country. To the surprise and great joy of the New Jersey delegation the first story shared was about GNJAC's own, Rev. Hector A. Burgos and the Oasis Church in Pleasantville NJ. In his presentation, Mr. Hamilton highlighted the renewal and growth, deeper and wider, that Oasis has experienced during the past two years under Mr. Burgos' able leadership.

When asked by Mr. Hamilton to name the most important things that lead to this renewal and growth, Mr. Burgos said "Oasis' growth and sense of hope about the future is based on a renewed understanding of their mission and vision for ministry, along with new leadership recruitment, training and mentoring. Also, the congregation is growing in the practices of radical hospitality, passionate and relevant worship, intentional faith development, risky evangelism and community outreach; and in their understanding of stewardship and extravagant generosity".

Oasis church is a multi-generational, bi-lingual Hispanic/Latino church located in the city of Pleasantville NJ. The ministry of Oasis started 22 years ago as a mission. The congregation became a charge conference in the year 2000. During the past two years, Oasis has been going through an intense time of renewal and re-visioning towards the future. Currently, worship attendance average is up from 52 to 98 people on Sundays. Their renewed vision for ministry has taken members out to the streets to do mission work in the name of Jesus Christ. "We started a Food Pantry that is already serving an average of 80 families a month. Also, once a month, our women and youth work together and bring a warm meal to the homeless in the Atlantic City area. We started a Kidz Club that runs every

other month and reaches out to an average of 45 children in the community. During the summer, we had many events for the children and youth: VBS, Fun Nights, Water Splash afternoons, and a community-wide Back to School Celebration with more than 600 hundred in attendance this year", Mr. Burgos explained. "We still have a long way to go in terms of our finances. This is a challenge to Oasis given that our congregation mainly serves a predominantly low income community and the economy in our area is very bad. But, we are diligently working to grow in this area in the years to come. I know it will happen – God will continue to provide", he concluded.

The Rev. Brian Roberts, senior pastor of St. Peter's church in Ocean City, who was in attendance at the institute with a team from his church, received the affirmation of the ministry of Oasis with great excitement. "I had tears of joy. Our conference and many of our churches have supported and cared for the ministry of Oasis and the results of these seeds are now starting to bear fruit. I thank God for Hector's exceptional gifts, his big, God sized vision, and heart to touch people for Jesus Christ".

Among those also present from the GNJAC, was the group of Provisional Members who participated in the event as part of the Residents in Ministry program sponsored by the conference's Board of Ordained Ministry. The Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, from Princeton church, commented on her experience at COR; "It was a joy to again travel to Church of the Resurrection for the Leadership Institute 2011 with the GNJAC Provisional Members. For me it is so helpful to attend an event like this with colleagues who are working in the same Annual Conference, as we are able to process keynote addresses and workshop experiences in a way that helps me harvest possible ideas for my setting in a way that I might not do on my own." Mr. Roberts was also delighted with the participation of the RIM group from the conference. "It was great to see BOOM sending those being ordained. I am sure this investment will show a great return", he said.

Brian Neville, associate pastor at First Church in Toms River, who attended the Institute with the BOOM-RIM group, is grateful for the experience. "COR helped me distill the most important aspects of church leadership. I feel much more confident in leading a congregation through the process of discernment for vision and mission in my local church. The leadership institute also helped me crystallize a preaching format that is broadly appealing, even to those outside of the church - a format that begins with the human condition", he commented. To find information about next year's Leadership Institute, visit on the website: www.cor.org.

Gateway South District Schedules Retreat

The pastors and laity of Gateway South are joining together for a Winter Retreat, January 6-8, 2012. It will be a time of inspiration, education and fellowship to be enjoyed in a relaxed, vacation-like atmosphere in the beautiful Pennsylvania Amish countryside. The Rev. Jim Ozier, Coordinator of Congregational Transformation from the North Texas Conference will be present as the guest speaker. If you would like to be a part of the Winter Retreat, please contact the District Office at 856-424-5790 or by E-Mail GatewaySouth@gnjumc.org.

VITAL CONGREGATIONS

“Street Angels”

By Douglas Ruffle

Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC



Scripture: Matthew 25:40 — “And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

As I anticipate celebrating Christmas this year, I am reminded of the story of Steve Chung and how he brought a whole new meaning of the Christmas season to me.

When Steve Chung hired some day-laborers to unload electronic equipment several years ago, he never dreamed what God had in mind.

Steve worked for an electronics distributor in Palisades Park, New Jersey and was an active lay member of the Korean Community Church in Englewood, New Jersey. On a street near his office Latino day-laborers gathered to find work. Some would stay all day hoping that someone would come by to give some work in landscaping, construction or moving.

Steve needed help loading and unloading televisions that day and so he hired several of the laborers. He began a relationship with the men hired for the day and afterwards came by the street corner to see them. He managed to communicate despite language barriers. Steve himself knew what it was like to immigrate to the United States for he had come from Korea.

Steve went back to his small group in his church and shared about the day to day struggles of the day laborers. They felt called by God to reach out in some way. The small group provided the initial manpower as well as funding to offers programs to the day laborers. They began an academy that taught them skills in electricity, construction, plumbing and computers. They also taught English as a Second Language classes. The project became known as “Street Angels.” What started as an outreach of one layman grew to include the entire Korean Community Church.

It all started out because one member of the church’s heart was touched. Isn’t that what the Christmas spirit is all about? And the beautiful thing is that it can happen any time of year.

Here’s my prayer for this Christmas: That God might open our eyes and heart, to those in and around our communities, to those who need and desire a helping hand so that they can help themselves. May the Spirit of the Christ Child inspire us to action in His name. Amen.

Wings of the Morning



Chadd Pierce of Chews Church on the Gateway South District presents a check for \$3000 to District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Robert Costello for Wings of the Morning. Mr. Pierce is a 16 year old special needs member of Chews that attends worship weekly and enthusiastically expresses his love for the Lord. He has combined his passion for airplanes, his unique gift of being a “people person,” and his love for God to collect

coins for this aviation ministry in North Kantanga. When Pastor Bill Wilson returned from Annual Conference with information about Wings of the Morning, Mr. Pierce decided that he needed a ministry to further develop his faith in a way that was meaningful to him. He began a four month campaign that raised \$3000.00 with the help of the Groveville congregation which gave \$611 in honor of him.



Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association Selects New President



Dr. Dale C. Whilden

Photo by Tracey James

The trustees of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association (OCGMA) have selected Dr. Dale C. Whilden, a long-time trustee and prominent Ocean Grove dentist, as their new president. Dr. Whilden succeeds Scott Rasmussen, who ended his six-year term in mid-October.

Dr. Whilden has served as an OCGMA Trustee since 1983, during which time he has chaired both the Development and Program Committees along with having other fiduciary responsibilities. Having spent summers in Ocean Grove all his life, he became a year-round resident 30 years ago when he opened his practice of dentistry in the community. Dr. Whilden graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University, Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine and the General Dental Residency Program at Jersey Shore University Medical Center. He serves as President of the Board of the New York City Rescue Mission and on the boards of the United Methodist Homes of NJ and Christian Dental Missions, a non-profit organization he founded in 1987 which provides volunteer dental service in under-served areas overseas. Under the auspices of CDM, Dr. Whilden has led a dental team annually for 30 years.

Dr. Whilden is an active member of St. Paul’s Church in Ocean Grove. He is a past Conference Lay Leader of the former Southern New Jersey Annual Conference and has been a three-time delegate to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church.

“Dale has a true servant’s heart and a deep commitment to the Camp Meeting’s mission of providing opportunities for spiritual birth, growth, and renewal,” said past president Scott

Rasmussen. “His lifelong passion for serving others will serve him well as the new President of the Camp Meeting.”

In his capacity as president, Dr. Whilden will oversee the selection of the Camp Meeting’s new Chief Administrative Officer following the resignation of Scott and Nancy Hoffmann, who served as CAO’s since 2007. The Hoffmans have accepted positions with the Billy Graham Training Center in North Carolina.

“We are sorry to see them go,” said Whilden. “Scott and Nancy’s expertise in program expansion, fiscal management, resource development and basic day-to-day operations, coupled with their genuine concern and compassion for others, significantly enhanced the Camp Meeting’s success over their tenure with us. We are now working with the staff and trustees to ensure a smooth transition when they leave at the end of this year.”

Founded in 1869, the mission of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, rooted in its Methodist heritage, is to provide opportunities for spiritual birth, growth and renewal through worship, education, cultural and recreational programs for persons of all ages in a Christian seaside setting.

CUMAC Challenge Raises the Roof

Who doesn’t like a good challenge?

A local non-Methodist church has pledged \$10,000 towards the replacement of CUMAC’s roof by the end of this year through it’s Thanksgiving offering. The total cost of the roof will be \$20,000.

CUMAC has issued a challenge for the churches of the GNJAC and its friends to match this generous donation. What are some ways your church can help support this vital ministry? CUMAC relies on your support to get them through the cold winter months.

In this challenge CUMAC is asking churches to do anything they can above and beyond their normal generous contributions so no services are affected because of their need to fix the roof.

It’s a tall order, but together the churches of GNJ can do it!

For more information about the challenge call CUMAC at (973) 742-5518 or email them at info@cumacecho.org.

POSITION OPEN CONGREGATIONAL CARE PASTOR TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HACKETTSTOWN, NJ

Applications are now being received for the clergy staff position of Congregational Care Pastor.

This is a 30-hour per week position; encompassing all aspects of pastoral care in a large, multi-faceted congregation.

This position is not appointed by the Bishop.

START DATE:

July 1, 2012

APPLICATION

DEADLINE:

February 15, 2012

CONTACT:

Dr. Frank Fowler

213 Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

908-852-3020

ffowler@catchthespirit.org

12 Ways You Can Fight Hunger

A UMNS Feature By Barbara Dunlap-Berg

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society says that every minute 11 children who are 5 or younger die of hunger-related causes, and about 800 million people suffer from chronic or acute hunger. Think this is a problem too big for you to make a difference? Not so. To help you get started, here are a dozen ways you can make a difference today.



Children join volunteer efforts to pack sweet potatoes for the hungry during the Virginia Annual (regional) Conference sessions in Norfolk, Va.

A UMNS photo courtesy of the Society of St. Andrew.

1. Go the second mile through The Advance. The Advance, an accountable, designated-giving arm of The United Methodist Church, ensures 100 percent of each gift reaches its intended mission or ministry. Working in 100 countries around the globe, Advance projects not only alleviate suffering and respond to disasters but also address the root causes of poverty and injustice, and make long-lasting improvements to the quality of life through development and education.

2. Buy a water buffalo... or a goat ... or a flock of chicks through Heifer International. A charitable gift through Heifer International, a United Methodist partner, provides animals and training to help families around the world build a better future for themselves and their communities. Traditionally, recipient families give the first offspring of the animal they receive to another family in need, and the gift, quite literally, keeps on giving.

3. Make a group, housing or agriculture loan to an entrepreneur across the globe for as little as \$25. Kiva is a nonprofit organization with a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. Leveraging the Internet and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions, Kiva lets individuals lend big or small amounts to help create opportunity around the world.

A Ghanaian farmer checks his crops as part of the United Methodist Committee on Relief's integrated-crop and pest-management training. A UMNS photo by June Kim.

4. Participate in Stop Hunger Now, a United Methodist partner and international hunger-relief organization that coordinates food distribution and other life-saving aid. More than 100,000 volunteers have packaged meals through Stop Hunger Now's meal-packaging program. These meal packages are shipped around



A Ghanaian farmer checks his crops as part of the United Methodist Committee on Relief's integrated-crop and pest-management training.

A UMNS photo by June Kim.

the world to support school feeding programs and crisis relief. The food stores easily, transports quickly and has a shelf life of five years.

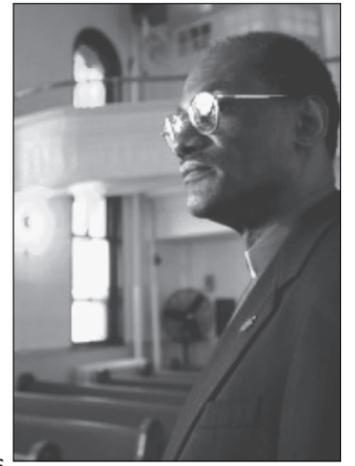
5. Urge Congress to end hunger through the Bread for the World letters campaign. The interfaith organization, another United Methodist partner, is a collective Christian voice encouraging U.S. decision-makers to end hunger globally. Bread for the World members write personal letters and emails and meet with members of the U.S. Congress. Working through churches, campuses and other agencies, Bread for the World involves more people in advocacy.

6. Walk to help others. CROP Hunger Walks sponsored by the United Methodist-supported Church World Service are popular hunger-fighting venues for people of all ages. Walkers of all ages collect pledges for each mile they walk. Today more than 2,000 communities across the United States join in more than 1,600 CROP Hunger Walks each year. More than 5 million people have participated in more than 36,000 CROP Hunger Walks in the last two decades alone.

7. Become a "backpack buddy." Children who depend on free school breakfasts and lunches may go hungry at suppertime and on weekends. "Backpack

Bishop Lyght Retires

(editor's note: The following is a copy of a letter sent by Bishop Jeremiah Park to the people of the New York Annual Conference. We print it here as both Bishop Lyght and Bishop Park have deep roots in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.)



Dear United Methodists of the New York Annual Conference:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer, the Prince of shalom, Healer of our brokenness, and Hope of the world!

I am writing to inform you of the retirement at the end of December of a dear friend of the New York Annual Conference, Bishop Ernest S. Lyght, who is presently serving the West Virginia Annual Conference. Bishop Lyght has battled ongoing health issues since February and has concluded that even though he was scheduled to retire this coming summer he would retire earlier. Retired Bishop William Boyd Grove, who served the West Virginia Conference from 1980-1992, will serve again in the interim until a new episcopal leader is assigned by the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in September.

Although all who know Bishop Lyght will have their own favorite recollections of their association with him during his time as the Resident Bishop of the New York Conference from 1996-2004, one of the lasting legacies of his is the Conference Center on Soundview Avenue which was purchased and renovated during Bishop Lyght's tenure. All of us who work at the Center, as well as those who visit and use it, know how precious and beneficial this place is to the ministry of the New York Annual Conference. Thanks be to God for this awesome gift from God's people in and through the leadership and ministry of Bishop Lyght.

Indeed, we give God thanks for all the rich blessings that came to the individuals and congregations, boards and agencies, and organizations and institutions throughout the New York Annual Conference and the United Methodist connections during Bishop Lyght's tenure as an active bishop. Our respect, appreciation, and best wishes for him go deep.

Our dear thoughts and prayers are with Bishop Lyght for a most fulfilling and rewarding future in health, joy and peace. Let us keep Bishop Lyght and Eleanor in our prayers as they transition to their home in New Jersey.

In Christ,
Jeremiah Park, Resident Bishop
New York Annual Conference

buddies" programs provide children from food-insecure homes with weekend meals during the school year. Local churches and other groups collect and pack bags with child-friendly nonperishable food. In a typical backpack ministry, children receive a backpack containing six balanced meals and two healthy snacks every Friday.

8. Compete with other congregations. United Methodist churches and other congregations in the Salt Lake City Valley, for example, sponsor the "Golden Celery" Award challenge every summer to benefit a community food pantry. The church with the most pounds of food per attendance at church donated for the month of July wins.

9. Contribute to — or start — a food pantry at your church. Don't know much about it? Get involved in community or state food banks to learn. Feeding America is a good resource. Its mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage people in the fight to end hunger.

10. Deliver Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels is the oldest and largest American organization made up of and representing community-based Senior Nutrition Programs in all 50 U.S. states and well as the U.S. territories.

11. Glean through the Society of St. Andrew. The ecumenical organization founded by United Methodists has three hunger-relief programs. The Gleaning Network and the Potato and Produce Project deliver donated leftover and unmarketable agricultural produce to people in need. The third — Harvest of Hope — informs people about the hunger problem and invites them to be part of the solution.

12. Show you care through the Souper Bowl of Caring. Mobilizing young people to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities, Souper Bowl of Caring is a youth-led effort that encourages people to contribute one dollar each at worship services on Super Bowl Sunday. In 2011 across the United States, 15,238 groups generated \$9,583,338 in cash and food items for local charities.

Facts about hunger in the world

If you want to learn more about hunger around the world, here are some places to start:

- **Ministry with the Poor:** This United Methodist campaign "provides resources for learning, mobilizing, connecting and engaging with ministries and people to eradicate poverty."

- **Board of Church and Society's Global Poverty and Hunger report:** This United Methodist agency report explains the biblical and theological context for fighting hunger and tracks the reports of global initiatives in the fight against hunger.

- **Bread for the World:** This United Methodist partner describes itself as a "collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision-makers to end hunger at home and abroad." It has just issued its 2012 Hunger Report.

- **Feeding America** defines its mission as "to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger." Its website is rich with information that helps explain the scope of hunger in understandable ways such as its interactive Map the Meal Gap.

- **Church World Service:** This 60-year-old United Methodist-supported organization "is people reaching out to neighbors in need near and far — not with a hand out, but a hand up." Its website provides opportunities for involvement and news about projects around the world.

Barbara Dunlap-Berg is the internal content editor at United Methodist Communications. News media contact, Barbara Dunlap-Berg, Nashville, Tenn. (615)-742-5470

Bishop Fisher Challenges UMW at Annual Meeting

HAZLET – More than 125 United Methodists attended the Annual Fall Meeting of the GNJ United Methodist Women at St. John's Church here October 22. Clergy as well as laity, men as well as women gathered to hear the guest speaker, Bishop Violet Fisher challenge her hearers to respond to the silent urges to do God's work.

Those in attendance included Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, cabinet members and conference program staff.

Earlier in the day, the program opened with devotions led by Nancy Cook, GNJUMW Mission Coordinator for Spiritual Growth, who reminded her audience that "things don't always work out the way we planned, but God has a plan."

Following the meditation, conference UMW President Millie Grey, and Vice President Carole Nelson greeted the large crowd, inviting them to join in a unison recitation of the United Methodist Women Purpose.

Two conference ministries were highlighted in presentations by Sharon Vogel of the Neighborhood Center, Camden, appearing in person and the Rev Pat Bruger of CUMAC/ECHO, Paterson, through a video message. Ms. Vogel thanked the UMW for its generous support and asked for continued partnership, while Ms. Bruger also thanked the UMW for its strong backing in the days, weeks, and months following Hurricane Irene.

Sofia Joseph, recipient of a UMW scholarship to the ecumenical retreat center at Taize, France, addressed the group, expressing her gratitude for an "almost indescribable experience" last

summer. Taize retreats have played a key role in the spiritual formation of GNJ youth ever since the arrival of Bishop Devadhar in 2004.

The day continued with a business meeting, an offering for CUMAC/ECHO and the traditional "ingathering" which this year included health kits and flood buckets to be delivered to Mission Central for distribution in areas stricken by the unprecedented floods this year.

After the business portion of the meeting, Bishop Devadhar introduced the guest speaker of the day, Bishop Violet Fisher, who before her retirement served as bishop of the Western and North Central New York Annual Conference from 2000 to 2008, describing her as "a prayer warrior and a person who has a heart for the marginalized and the poor in our cities and the world."

In her message, Bishop Fisher spoke on the theme, "Tell Me What Do You Have?" based on 2 Kings 4: 1-7.

Recasting the biblical story of the prophet Elisha and a poor widow threatened by cruel creditors, she related it to the present day, with the economy sagging, and many people losing their homes and their livelihoods.

"God is faithful in our time of need and in our time of stress," in spite hard times economically and personally, the retired bishop declared.

Everyone has something to offer, she continued, no matter how big or how small. If we trust in the Lord, great things can happen.

"Little becomes much when you place it in the Master's hands... We are God's resources to transform the world."

OBITUARIES

GENEVIEVE "JEAN" HILL, wife of the retired Rev. Harry Hill, died on Nov. 9. Visitation was held at St. Paul's Church in New Gretna on Saturday, November 19, followed by a memorial service at 11 a.m.

Mrs. Hill graduated from Gloucester City High School class of 1955 and subsequently went to work for Curtis Publishing Company. She married her high school sweetheart and the pair has been married for 55 years. They are the parents of three children, Jean (and Ron) Voorhis, Harry Jr. and Doris Hill, and Cindy Myers (and the late Bill). Mrs. Hill is also survived by 14 grandchildren, two great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

She enjoyed camping, boating, sewing, gardening, baking, reading, decorating her home and helping others. She has done a lot of volunteer service for the Church over the years, involved with many church activities including 20 years as a church secretary.

Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers) can be sent to St. Paul's UMC Building Fund, 5630 Route 9, New Gretna, NJ 08224.

PAUL VAN DER LOO, Retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died on Thursday, November 24, 2011. Mr. Van Der Loo served the former New Jersey, Southern New Jersey, and the Greater New Jersey conferences since taking his first charge in 1953 at Sharptown and Haines Neck. He also served Oaklyn, Brooklawn, Mercerville, Woodstown, Gibbsboro, Westmont, Stratford and Erma; retiring in 1987.

A time of visitation will take place at 10 a.m. on Friday, December 16, 2011 at St. Peter's Church, 501 E. 8th Street, Ocean City, NJ 08226. A memorial service will follow at 11am.

In lieu of flowers, please make memorial donations to the Brooklawn United Methodist Church Missions Program, 213 Maude Avenue, Brooklawn, NJ 08030.

Messages of condolence may be sent to Rev. van der Loo's widow, Audrey, 105 Aberdeen Circle, Egg Harbor Twp., NJ 08234-7563.

WILLIAM THIELKING, Retired Elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died on Saturday, November 26, 2011 in Millville, New Jersey. Mr. Thielking began his ministry in the New Jersey Conference in 1951 in Atalntic City at Central and Christ Churches. He also served Margate, Millville: West Side, Camden: Asbury, Somers Point: Bethany and Central, Glassboro, and Haddon Heights. He retired in 1995. Known as an accomplished magician and for his sense of humor, Mr. Thielking was in demand as a dinner speaker and featured guest in many churches around the annual conference.

A memorial service will took place on Saturday, December 3, 2011 at Trinity Church, Mullica Hill, NJ. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the Help and Hope Food Pantry, P.O. Box 116, Millville, NJ 08332.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Thielking's widow, Mezzie, 11 Pike Avenue, Millville, NJ 08332.

Stewardship Stories

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



Just the other day one of my daughters called me and asked if I would pray for her since she had a very important mid-term exam the following morning. Of course, I couldn't just answer with a simple "yes." "What would you like me to pray for; that you'll retain and be able to recall all of the information stored in your brain as a result of all your hard work, hours of reading, and extensive study habits? Or should I pray for a miracle?" That question to my daughter brought to mind a similar question when it comes to stewardship in our churches: "When we ask the folks in our local congregation to support the ministry of the church with their time, talent, and treasure will their response be a result of all our hard work and extensive stewardship habits or are we hoping for a miracle?"

As we enjoy the Advent season, celebrate the joy of Christmas, and prepare to say goodbye to 2011 I hope and pray that we all will commit to practicing extensive, healthy stewardship habits in the coming year in our own personal lives and in the life of our local church, district, conference, and denomination. My commitment to you for the coming year is to:

- (1) practice good stewardship habits in my own life including tithing, resisting a consumer driven lifestyle, and using my time and talents to make a difference in the world;
- (2) provide stewardship resources and materials through District Resource Days, District Days of Learning, the Relay, Digest, and the newly launched Conference website, including an interactive stewardship blog; and
- (3) continue to be a resource for you in your local ministry setting.

Let's work together to practice good stewardship habits in the coming year. God bless you and have a blessed Advent and Christmas!

DAVE PETTIGREW in Concert... "A Celebration of Christmas"

Time: Saturday, December 10th, 7:30pm (Doors Open at 7pm)

Place: Woodbridge United Methodist Church
69 Main Street, Woodbridge, NJ 07095

For tickets: Call 732-634-0559 or

Email: woodbridgeumc@verizon.net

Advanced: \$8/adult at door: \$10/adult

Children: \$3/age 12 and under 5 and under: Free

To Learn More About Dave Pettigrew visit his site at: www.davepettigrew.net



(Paid Advertisement)

Make your advertising dollars
go

FURTHER

Every month the United Methodist Relay
goes into the homes of United Methodist leaders,
clergy and laity across the Greater New Jersey Area.

*These are decision makers in the Church,
the Home, the Community*

In a day when more than ever, every dollar counts,
you want to be a good steward

That's why you need to consider the
UNITED METHODIST RELAY
as your prime advertising vehicle

For further information
call 732 359-1000 and ask for Beverly

DISCLAIMER

The *United Methodist Relay* accepts at face value the integrity of our advertisers, and attempts no heroic vetting. When an issue arises with any of our advertisers we investigate and act appropriately. Beyond this, we take no responsibility for the advertisers or their products.

**THE FEBRUARY ISSUE
DEADLINE
IS JANUARY 5, 2012**

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.

United Methodist Men Retreat - December 2- 4.

All men ages 17 and older are invited to enjoy a weekend of fun, fellowship, and spiritual growth at Black Rock Retreat Center in Quarryville, PA. Pastor Alec Park will be leading the retreat. **Cost:** Cabins: \$111. Motel Room: \$157 based on a 3 person occupancy. There are 12 motel rooms and 20 cabin beds reserved. Price includes all meals on Saturday and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Dinner Friday is at each individual's expense. The men usually meet at the restaurant in town between 6-7:30pm, however that is optional.

Gateway North District Day of Learning January 14, 2012 at Morrow Memorial UMC

Everyone is welcome at Morrow Memorial UMC, 600 Ridgewood Road, Maplewood, NJ 07040 for the annual District Day of Learning! Fellowship starts at 8:30, worship at 9:00, followed by workshops. There will be a 15 minute break between workshops 1 & 2 and the day will end at 1:00 p.m.

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 for further information and brochure.

Raritan Valley District Day of Learning - Saturday, February 26th, 8 AM to 1 PM

Bridgewater United Methodist Church, 651 Country Club Road, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 (908) 526-1414. A continental breakfast will be provided.

The 2012 Confirmation Retreat - Details have been announced!

Sponsored by: The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Christian Education Ministry and Ministries with Young People

Retreat 1: February 3-4, 2012

Retreat 2: April 20-21, 2012

Come to One or Come to Both!!! Registration Deadline: January 10, 2012. Forms are available at gnjumc.org.

Soul Tending: A Retreat for Youth Workers- February 10-11

A retreat designed to renew, restore and re-energize you as you continue to work with the young people in your local church. Youth Ministry is a tough job, and you need to know that you are supported and loved.

What you do matters!!! Come for a night away from it all without the youth!!! A time to relax, get pampered, share in fellowship and support with other youth workers from around the Annual Conference. Where: Grove Hall, Ocean Grove, NJ. When: February 10-11, 2012 Friday 7p.m. - Saturday 4p.m

Cost: \$75.00 per youth worker.

Deadline for Registration: January 1, 2011

**YOU... BELIEVE.
GIVE.
SAVE LIVES.**



OUR FAITH IN ACTION.

And the world has noticed.
Since launching in April 2010, your support has helped *Imagine No Malaria*

- deliver more than **588,000** bed nets,
- train **3,500** local health workers and
- create **15 in-country health boards** which empowers the people of Africa to fight malaria.

Today, we are pleased to announce the United Nations Foundation has granted \$3 million to support Imagine No Malaria campaign costs. This allows us to continue making sure your donation goes directly to fight this killer disease in Africa.

But, the urgency continues...

"Our children are still dying," Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa of Zimbabwe reminded us last week. In fact, a child dies of malaria every 45 seconds.

We need your help today!

The US Senate is considering a critical budget bill that would protect funding for global health, including malaria.

Please take a moment to contact your senator at **(202) 224-3121** or by email, asking for his or her support for global health funding.

Imagine No Malaria is the One Big Thing we can do together! Your support is a blessing to all of us.

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton - INM Campaign Chair
Bishop Sally Dyck - INM Fundraising Committee Chair

beat
Together, we will fight malaria.

Your support of World Service dollars makes possible the ministries of the general boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church.

BLACK METHODISTS

FOR

CHURCH RENEWAL

Greater New Jersey Annual Conference United Methodist Church

YOUTH CONFIRMATION CLASSES
(Ages 12-18 years old)

TOUR
HISTORICAL PHILADELPHIA

SPRING TOUR: April 21, 2012 FALL TOUR: September 22, 2012

MAKE THE HISTORICAL BLACK CONNECTION IN METHODISM
COME ALIVE BY VISITING:

- **St. George UM Church** – where racial inequalities began and affirms our beginning
- **Mother Bethel AME Church** – Richard Allen, Founder
- **Tindley Temple UM Church** – Charles Albert Tindley, Founder and meeting place of the Delaware Conference/Central Jurisdiction
- **Zoar UM Church** – Harry Hoosier, Founder who attended the Christmas Conference at Lovely Lane Church in 1784
- **St. Thomas African Episcopal Church** – Absalom Jones, Founder

RSVP DEADLINES:

SPRING TOUR: March 31, 2012 FALL TOUR: August 25, 2012

HISTORICAL TOUR BUS LEAVES @ 8:00 AM FROM ST. PAUL UM CHURCH
CHARLESTON ROAD & LEVITT PARKWAY, WILLINGBORO, NJ

CONTACT TOUR GUIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION:
REV. ALFRED MURRAY, ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CHURCH PHONE: 609-877-7034 CHURCH EMAIL: stpumc@verizon.net

YOUTH \$5.00	DONATIONS ADULT \$25.00	LUNCH PROVIDED
--------------	----------------------------	----------------

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: BMCR of GNJAC MAIL TO: PATRICIAL MILLS, TREASURER
LAWRENCE DRIVE - APT. E
P.O. BOX 448
BROWNS MILLS, NJ 08015

Please print or type and return to: Patricia Mills

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____
PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____
CHURCH _____ PASTOR _____

FRAZER

SLATE ROOFS
New & Repairs

John Frazer
(856) 451-9403 Phone
(856) 451-4580 Fax

34 Burt Street
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

(Paid Advertisement)

W. Michael Campbell, AIA

ARCHITECT

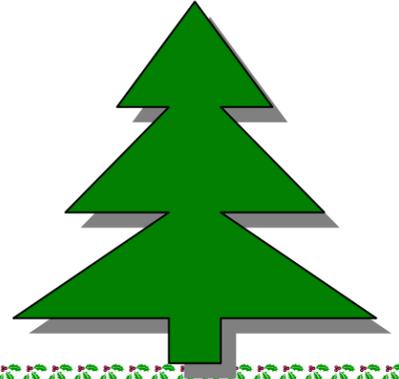
CHURCH DESIGN AND RESTORATION

369 West Farms Rd. Phone: 732-919-2750
P.O. Box 86 Fax: 732-919-2751
Farmingdale, NJ 07727 WMCarch@optonline.net

www.ReligiousArchitecture.com

(Paid Advertisement)

Making a List & Checking it Twice



Christmas Shopping List

- √ Sweater for Mom
- √ Tie for Dad
- √ Video Game for Daughter
- √ MP3 Player for Son
- √ Canned Goods for Food Bank
- √ New Toy for DYFS
- √ Chickens for Heifer Project
- √ Winter Coats and Gloves for Homeless Family

This Christmas give a gift that will truly make a difference in someone's life. Check with your local church Mission or Outreach Committees for all the ways your giving might do God's work in your local community or around the world. Or make a donation through your local church to:



*Have a Blessed Christmas
and a
Joy-Filled New Year*