

GNJ Annual Conference Shines in Wildwood

By Alex Davis

The recent Annual Conference in Wildwood was Clarissa DeFederico's first, and she said she enjoyed the music, Episcopal address, and yes, even the legislative sessions.

"I felt this was mini-government," said the 18-year-old, who is a member of the Dingmans Ferry United Methodist Church in Pennsylvania.

More than 1,500 people registered and attended the conference May 28-31 in Wildwood, a record breaker for Greater New Jersey. Voting members passed an agreement to explore and expand mission partnerships to Thailand and Nepal; resolutions to take a stand against poverty in Greater New Jersey; and the creation of a strategic disciple making fund to start new congregations and faith communities.



More than 1500 clergy and lay delegates packed the Wildwood Convention Center for the 2014 Session of Annual Conference.



Layne Evan Reilly is baptized by Bishop Schol as conference staff person Brittane Riley and her husband Glenn look on.

A Future with Hope Mission Fund Campaign Partners with United Methodist Communications

Funded by a generous media grant from United Methodist Communications, Greater New Jersey is rolling out a media campaign to promote the mission work of the people of the United Methodist Church in our Conference.

Starting with a full page ad in the Star Ledger and continuing through October to coincide with the second anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, the campaign focuses on A Future with Hope ministry and the "faces of hope" of our volunteers who are rebuilding hope for those still struggling to recover more than 18 months after the storm.

The campaign features photos of actual volunteers taken by professional photographer Paul Guba. Guba met some A Future with Hope volunteers in Highlands NJ last summer and was so inspired by their work, he volunteered to take portrait shots of those staying at the Highlands Host Site.

Staff members of Greater New Jersey worked with UMCOM staff and a committee comprised of public relations specialists from each district to form the strategy and design of the campaign. With a goal of attracting the widest audience and working within a limited budget, the campaign is designed to focus on shore communities and attract the attention of beach-goers this summer. It includes:

- 4 full page ads in the Star Ledger on 5/24, 7/5, 8/16, 9/27
- 2 full page ads in the Asbury Park Press 7/27 and 10/12
- 9 billboards starting June 16th
- Route 37 E into Seaside
- Route 36 S into Highlands

Routes 40 & 30 E into Atlantic City
Route 9 S into Forked River
Route 138 E into Belmar
Route 33 E into Asbury Park
Route 36 E into Long Branch
Route 72 E into LBI

Radio and Television Public Education Program Ads as part of the NJ Broadcast Association - beginning June 16th

Internet displays, Pandora radio ads, and Facebook promotions - begin July 28th

Since New Jersey is one of the most diverse conferences in the denomination, one of the television spots is Spanish language. In recognition that the immigrant population has not been fully served by recovery groups, the Spanish language version focuses both on volunteers as well as those who still need help.

With an eye to link local churches to the statewide campaign, GNJ designed banners, posters, yard signs and bulletin inserts for congregations to use.

"This campaign will help to support Greater New Jersey in three ways," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "We hope to create awareness for A Future with Hope ministries, recruit volunteers through reminders that service is 'church,' and provide an invitation to be a part of local United Methodist churches."

Posters, and bulletin inserts can be downloaded for free from the website. Banners (\$85) and yard signs (\$10) can be purchased by contacting Rebecca Nichols at rebeccanichols@gnjumc.org.

There was also some time for fun at the event, including dunking Bishop John Schol at a picnic themed lunch. DeFederico was one of the lucky ones to actually dunk the bishop as he sat eating popcorn. "It felt cool. I did it all out of fun," she said. Bishop Schol and Treasurer John Cardillo helped raise more than \$3,800 for A Future with Hope by getting in the dunk tank, where people took shots at them for \$10. "He's [Bishop Schol] a very cool guy," DeFederico said. She said that Schol jokes around with people.

Bruce Buzalski, a lay person for the Millbrook United Methodist Church in Randolph, also enjoyed the conference and the tone set by Bishop Schol's Episcopal Address. "I liked his enthusiasm," he said. Buzalski wants to see more kids involved in the Annual Conference. There were some young people, he said, "but they [young people] don't have visibility as a group."

Conference Leadership

Conference leaders shared results from the GNJAC's work in 2013 including:

- the number of vital congregations has increased from 14% to 31%,
- more than 40% of churches are growing in worship attendance,
- 14,500 Greater New Jersey United Methodists participated in mission,
- 10% more young adults are participating in small groups,
- the conference budget and shared ministry will not increase in 2015,
- the Connectional Table was formed to serve to align committees and agencies,
- the focus of our efforts is on the local church and District Superintendents have been challenged to become missional strategists for our local churches and work in teams with the new Connectional Ministries staff

Other highlights included:

- More than \$126,000 was collected in a special offering for the mission fund campaign.
- Northern Illinois Annual Conference Bishop Sally Dyck led Opening Worship which included a baptism and a Native American celebration.
- Bishop Moses Young Hun Kim of the Seoul Annual Conference preached the sermon during the Memorial Service.
- The Rev. Olu Brown from Impact Church in Atlanta led/teaching times;

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Building Playhouses is Serious Mission Work at Annual Conference



United Methodists made more than 40,000 meals for Stop Hunger Now at 2014 Annual Conference.

Ellen Korpar, Project and Volunteer Coordinator with A Future with Hope helps build playhouses at 2014 Annual Conference.

By Alex Davis

For some, hammering and doing other construction work comes naturally. "For me, it's a challenge," said Deborah Westbrook, a volunteer who helped assemble playhouses during the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in Wildwood. "I'm not used to using a saw or hammer."

The project had a wider scope for Westbrook. She said she wanted to do this mission work and get her hands dirty to help others. She said she wanted to see the fruits of her labor.

"This has been a fun experience," said Westbrook who is a Wesley Seminary alumna and lives in Princeton.

A Future with Hope and Wesley Seminary teamed up to construct playhouses to be given to the children of families who were displaced because of Superstorm Sandy. "Children are the ones you never hear about during recovery," said Liz McDevitt of Whiting, who is Disaster Case Manager Supervisor for A Future with Hope.

Paul Codella of Woodstown, who is a Construction Foreperson with A Future with Hope, said he enjoys working with the volunteers. He said the playhouses were "a good tool in getting people trained in assembling a house but on a much smaller scale. When it comes down to it, there's nothing more rewarding than lending someone else a hand."

Inside the Wildwood Convention Cen-

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Epicopal Address ~ May 29, 2014



Isaiah said, "Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." (Isaiah 61:1).

Today I give thanks to God for you and how God's light is shining through you. You have shined in, out and on through your ministry. God's light is growing the vitality of our congregations and shining brightly through our spiritual leaders.

Across the conference, congregations are growing in worship. In the Northern Shore District, Monmouth Grace Church has risen to shine through its ministry, and particularly in worship. The congregation has been adapting its ministry to connect with people in the community. They have started a new English-speaking ministry and have traditional and spirited worship that is connecting with younger generations. In the last two years, they have grown by 30 worshippers.

They are not the only church growing in Greater New Jersey. In fact 208 of our congregations grew in 2013, a six percent increase in the last year. We are moving toward our strategic ministry plan goal of 51% of our congregations growing in worship.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

To see God's light first hand, we need to look no further than The United Methodist Church of Union City. This congregation, like many of our congregations, is engaging in the community. They have been a community leader by meeting with the mayor about homelessness and they are providing emergency assistance to people. They also just completed renovating their building as a worship space and community center.

Mission is rising throughout the conference. Not only has Emmanuel Church been engaging more people in mission but over the last year the number of people in mission increased by more than 12%. Now 14,500 worshippers in Greater New Jersey are doing hands-on ministry in a community or global mission project. We are well on our way toward our strategic ministry plan goal of 40% percent of our worshippers engaged in mission.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

We have made strong progress on our strategic plan. One reason is because conference and congregational leaders have been striving to grow the vitality of congregations for several years.

Together we recognize that the world needs passionate, Christ-like disciples who stir up faith, hope and justice in the world. Passionate disciples are more often being made in vital congregations that are engaging their people in worship, faith sharing, small groups, community mission and generous giving to mission.

When we started focusing on vital congregations, 81 of our congregations met the criteria. Today, more than 180 meet the criteria for vitality and that number is growing. In our strategic ministry plan, we set a goal of having 41% of our congregations be vital by 2018. As of today, we have increased the percent of vital congregations from 14% to 31%.

In the words of Paul, we have shined like the stars, not drawing attention to ourselves but to the power, grace and love of God found through Jesus Christ. -Philippians 2:15

While we are growing vital congregations, it is not without a commitment to, and engagement in, the needs of the world. Our Sandy relief ministry through A Future with Hope is an example of our rising up so that the light of Christ shines for some of the most vulnerable in our region. By working together, our Sandy ministry has the capacity to:

- House 358 volunteers a week with 14 host sites
- Repair 100 homes a year – this summer alone, we are scheduled to work on 79 homes
- Provide case management for 500 families.

We have put together the most comprehensive and efficient long term recovery operation in the region. We have become a beacon to the poor, the elderly and the disabled in our devastated communities. We are the face of Jesus Christ through A Future with Hope Ministry.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

All of this would not be possible without your generous financial and volunteer support. We have had more than 6,100 volunteers donating more than 125,000 hours of their time to provide relief and recovery.

Arise, shine, for Christ's light from Minnesota has brightened our ministry in Greater New Jersey and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Our Mission Fund Campaign has raised more than \$4 million dollars in its first year toward our \$12 million goal. Your generosity is helping people recover from Sandy, eliminating deaths by malaria, and engaging congregations in local mission within

our communities. Based on reports from congregations and other contributions, we believe we will be half-way toward our goal by the end of the year. Together we will reach our \$12 million goal. A new media campaign made possible by a grant from United Methodist Communications is rolling out this summer to promote the efforts of A Future with Hope, to encourage volunteerism, and to show everyone in the region that mission IS church.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

We are saving souls through our ministry. Sometimes the soul has lost hope because Sandy has displaced them, sometimes it is because a disease like malaria has devastated a family, and sometimes it is because people are struggling to find their way in life.

Reverend James Keeton came to Greater New Jersey two years ago from Georgia to Camden to serve with us at Parkside UMC. Within the first few months of ministry in Camden, a murder took place in front of his church and his home. It probably made him think about wanting to move back to Georgia, but he stayed. He committed to the teaching of Jesus who said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God in heaven".

In the short time he has been in Camden, there has been renewal in the church, in the community and in people's lives.

Camden is a pretty rough place. There are daily acts of violence, poverty and prostitution. But despite all this, the undeniable power and presence of God is present at Parkside United Methodist Church. The food ministry continues to be a major ambassador for the church in the city. God has tripled the number of members dedicated to evangelism. These are people who go out on the streets of the city, day after day, to preach the gospel to those on the margins and "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

James recently shared with me about a life that has turned to Christ. I'll call him Jimmy. Jimmy sold drugs. He used drugs. He used women for financial gain. He served prison sentences for his crimes. Jimmy came to Parkside and the Lord touched his life. Today, he is an active member of our congregation. He serves as a Certified Lay Speaker. He is the Church School Superintendent and he plays an active role in many other ministries of the church. Lives, like Jimmy's, that have been transformed, remind us that truly the Lord is in our midst.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

There is outstanding ministry occurring all over Greater New Jersey, and I thank God and James for the new disciples we are making.

Today I also want us to face into three of our most pressing challenges: leadership, spiritual adaptation and unity.

Leadership

First let's take a look at leadership. The Greater New Jersey Conference has talented and educated lay and clergy leadership. Within our congregations are the glowing embers of the Holy Spirit's fire. But if we are to fan the embers into Holy Spirit fire, we need to grow more leaders, particularly lay leaders, so that we grow deeper, wider and farther.

The primary role of the Greater New Jersey Conference is to call, equip and support spiritual leaders. Leaders who will inspire others to arise and shine. Leaders who will grow more disciples, grow more vital congregations and lead innovative mission that transforms communities.

Let us hear from some of our new staff about the resources they are developing to support lay and clergy leadership.

Beth Caulfield, Director of Small Groups and Spiritual Visioning:

"I'm pleased to be a part of offering congregations the opportunity to resource expertise that can help them combine their own close-up view and a broader view of their gifts, challenges, calls and contexts. Helping one another find the forest through the trees and our own true God-sized visions, is something of which I'm proud to be a part. I think that's what God calls us all to do and what gives us spiritual direction that produces fruit, if we're just willing to participate."

Hector Burgos, Director of Worship and Urban Ministries:

"As part of our strategic plan, we will create cohort groups with pastors that share commonalities. We will meet regularly to promote, among other things, a deeper spirituality with peers, a sense of community and a support in ministry. These groups will be facilitated to help participants create actionable plans that lead to fruitful results."

Nicole Gross Caldwell, Director of Mission and Multi-Cultural Ministries:

"We are committed to equipping and encouraging spiritual leaders by providing meaningful learning opportunities in interpersonal skill building, God-inspired ministry and pastoral engagement without burnout. Through a variety of dynamic and diverse thought-leaders, we will continue to empower pastors to lead congregations as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Matthew Na, Director of Professions of Faith and Youth/Young Adults:

"One of the key areas that we are focusing on is coaching. Working closely with our churches, our pastors and our leaders, we want to create a safe and honest space where there is a sense of shared investment and not hierarchy. One where there is

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John R. Schol, Resident Bishop
The Greater New Jersey Conference ~ 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712-4733

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VIEWPOINT

Time is Now to End the Torture of Long-Term Solitary Confinement in our Backyards

By the Rev. Jack Johnson

Recently, PBS Frontline aired "Solitary Nation," a gripping, graphic portrayal of solitary confinement, a practice used in prisons, jails and detention centers throughout the United States.

We saw in nightmarish detail the mental and physical deterioration experienced by prisoners in isolation, even those that initially seemed resilient and compliant, like the young father who was desperate to earn his GED and find employment. We witnessed the use of solitary as a default method of punishment and control in response to institutional disruption. Above all, the Frontline episode left no shred of doubt in my mind that the use of long-term solitary confinement rises to the level of cruel and unusual punishment, treatment not fit for any living being.

According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, solitary confinement beyond 15 days should be subject to an absolute prohibition due to its devastating psychological toll. The Supreme Court ruled in 1890 that solitary confinement constituted torture. And yet today, the practice of locking prisoners in a cell, alone or with one other person, for 23 hours a day, for months, years, even decades, persists in every state. Perhaps even more chilling than witnessing on our television screens the pools of blood spilled as a result of cycles of self-harm flash is the knowledge that this is happening every day in our very own towns and cities.

As a United Methodist pastor who has spent the past two years campaigning for alternatives to isolated confinement in New Jersey with the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, permit me to provide a brief snapshot of our own backyard.

Our state was one of the first states in the country to test solitary confinement as a primary tool of correctional control in the modern era. Bonnie Kerness, coordinator of the AFSC Prison Watch Project, recounts the adoption in 1975 of "Management Control Units" (MCUs) in New Jersey State Prison, then Trenton State Prison, as a response to politically dissident groups in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement. Using sensory deprivation, long-term isolation, seizure of property and denial of outside human contact, New Jersey law enforcement worked with state administrators to dismantle groups deemed "radical" by incapacitating their leaders. Since the 1970s, decades of 'tough on crime' rhetoric have led to an unsustainable ballooning of our prison and jail populations, and a shift toward a punitive model that focuses on control and disposability of human persons.

The Frontline report failed to address the draconian, disproportionate impact of our correctional policies on communities of color, evidenced in New Jersey and throughout the United States. New Jersey's reliance on incarceration and isolation has a direct, detrimental impact on our poor communities of color. As of 2007, New Jersey boasted the third highest black-to-white incarceration rate disparity in the United States. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the cities and counties from which most state prisoners hail are also those with the highest poverty rates, school closings, policing and public health issues.

No one knows the exact number of isolation units in our nation's correctional facilities. A 2006 study by the Vera Institute of Justice reported that over 80,000 prisoners are in isolation at any given time, but this number did not include jails or detention centers. These figures reflect the now common practice of funneling public monies (and private contracts) into the construction of "supermax" facilities—prisons comprised exclusively of solitary confinement units. Once a rarity on the U.S. correctional landscape, these super-maximum prisons are in at least 44 states.

The history and trajectory of the use of solitary confinement in the United States is important because it parallels the unprecedented growth in the prison population at large. Our country is an outlier, incarcerating more people and at higher rates than any other on the planet.

The film did not acknowledge that grassroots movements are making gains in many states to reduce the social and psychological trauma of imprisonment and isolation on communities. While Frontline highlights the new perspective on solitary confinement in Maine that followed a statewide campaign of community and religious leaders, legislative efforts are also underway in California, New Mexico, Colorado, New York and Massachusetts. Texas passed a study bill last year, backed by the largest correctional officer's union in the state of Texas, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3807, and an audit of the use of isolation is being conducted in the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

As national scrutiny increases thanks to prisoner hunger strikes, public hearings and communities of faith speaking out about the immorality of this practice, New Jersey legislators must act to end the torture of long-term solitary confinement here in our backyards. As Frontline made clear, our safety and humanity depend on it.

The Rev. Jack Johnson is a United Methodist pastor who lives in Columbus, N.J.

Mission Work at Annual Conference

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ter several yards away off the boardwalk, dozens more people put together more than 40,000 meals to send to people who need food in the developing world. Wearing clear gloves and clear hair nets, the volunteers stood around tables putting soy protein, dried vegetables and rice into bags, which were sealed and boxed for distribution.

"This is a good way of giving back. It's what I want to do during Annual Conference," said Carol Petersen a member of the Park Avenue St. John's United Methodist Church.

Stop Hunger Now has a vision of ending hunger worldwide. For Peterson, it was a highlight of the Annual Conference who says, she hopes more people participate next year and that the mission projects catch on. She said that Stop Hunger Now raises awareness to the problem of hunger.

Barbara Hoffman, who is the pastor of the New City United Methodist Church of New York, agrees with her, "It feels great. It feels like we are really helping." Her husband, Dan Hoffman, was working as well. He said the mission work didn't take much of an effort and the result helps many people.

People are making a difference, and with the music blaring at the event, Pastor Chris Miller of the United Methodist Church of Delran said he could keep packing food bags all day if needed. "I feel like I am doing something," he said.

Act of Repentance Highlights Native American Celebration



Chief Gould presents a handmade cross to Greater New Jersey Annual Conference as part of the Act of Repentance.

By Alex Davis

Small red cloths wrapped with sage and tobacco were passed along the rows of pastors, laypeople and others at the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church on Thursday, May 28. The contents of the cloths represented things that God made.

These cloths also symbolized unity between Natives Americans and the United Methodist Church.

During the first official day of Annual Conference, Greater New Jersey United Methodists and the Lenape Native Americans held an Act of Repentance, a way to mend relationships between the two groups.

"John Wesley had a strong desire to preach amongst native peoples," said Mark C. Shenise, who works for the General Commission on Archives and History. "Upon his arrival to minister to the Savannah, Georgia colony, Wesley's great hope was to preach the gospel to the Yamacraws and convert them to Christianity. Unfortunately, he never had a serious chance to minister to the tribe before leaving for England. His desire to work amongst native peoples never waned despite distance and time which separated him from the New World."

Pastor Roy Bundy of the St. John's United Methodist Church of Fordville said that Wesley "set the mark."

"So who ministered to and accepted our Native-American sisters and brothers in Christ?" asked Shenise, as he read from prepared remarks. "The answer seems to lie in the local church though lack of documentation is legion. There are a few historic tidbits which give clues. In the north, the Thiells Methodist Episcopal Church worked among the Minneceongo until the early 1800's. In the south, churches such as Indian Mills in Burlington County presumably absorbed tribal members into their established flock as did other local congregations without fanfare. As a result many current United Methodist native peoples may not be aware of their heritage or continue to keep it quiet because of reactions from non understanding church members. But



Cyndi Kent, of the United Methodist Native American International Caucus participating in the smudging ceremony.

that is changing in recent years, such as the recognition of St. John's UMC in Fordville as a Native-American congregation by both United Methodists and The State of New Jersey."

During the ceremony on May 29, Cyndi Kent of the United Methodist Native American International Caucus led the litany for the Act of Repentance, in which people recited facing east, south, west and north.

Bishop John R. Schol said he is unsure of how the Methodists in New Jersey treated Native Americans, but he knows that their actions don't speak for the Word of God. The bishop challenged those at the Annual Conference to reach out to people, particularly Native Americans.

"In conclusion, we as Greater New Jersey United Methodists have too long ignored the heritage and spiritual traditions of our native members," Shenise said. "History points us to this moment of need for an Act of Repentance in order to come to terms with our dark veil of indifference and bring forth into the light of day the value, dignity and grace by which our native members can freely express themselves both as Native American Christians and United Methodists."

Also on the night of May 29, a smudging ceremony took place, which represented an act of purification. The ceremony is used to release negative energy when sage, or sage along with other dried herbs, are burned to create a smoke bath.

GNJ Annual Conference

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- sharing how to move from a membership church to a relationship church.
- Eight clergy were ordained, 10 clergy were commissioned as provisional members, and one was recognized as an Elder.
- Approximately 200 people participated in mission projects with Stop Hunger Now and A Future with Hope. More than 40,400 packets of food were packed to ship to the developing world and two playhouses were built for families with young children who lost their homes during Superstorm Sandy.
- More than 100 people attended eight workshops covering topics including engaging young people, creating inspiring worship and growing mission.
- The recognition of service for 30 pastors who retired this year.
- The Act of Repentance for Native Americans in our Conference
- Inspirational music by Mark Miller and the Festival Choir
- A carnival picnic with the dunk tank set up to raise money for the Mission Fund. More than \$3,800 was raised by clergy and laity who paid for a chance to dunk Bishop John Schol and Treasurer John Cardillo while a plane circled over Wildwood carrying the banner "United Methodists stir up faith, hope and justice."!

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Epicopal Address Continued from page 2

active engagement from both sides that will work on real issues and alternatives, while encouraging and building from unique strengths and gifts. We are hungry for change. We talk a lot about it and I'd like to share one exciting lived-out example of this desire. October 3rd through 5th, we will be hosting the Ignite Conference here in this very Convention Center! We are gathering young people from across the North East - from our Conference to neighboring Conferences; from our denomination to other denominations; from life-long Christians to those who have never dared consider such a thing. We have a national speaker, Preston Centuolo, cutting edge bands and performers. And ultimately, we have the backing of this great Conference and an even greater God! We have more information about the event at the Youth & Young Adult Booth in the lobby. So stop by and find out more today!"

We have a great team of staff leaders and they look forward to serving you.

We are all here because we serve in roles that call for leadership. We are pastors, lay leaders, chairs of boards and committees, district superintendents and bishops. A title and role does not make us a leader. The word "leader" is a description of how we carry out our responsibilities. I am a bishop but that does not make me a leader. You may be the lay leader but that does not mean you lead.

Turn-around spiritual leaders bring three things to leadership:

1. Zest - Holy Spirit inspiration and passion,
2. Grit - a thick skin and perseverance, and
3. Heart - a deep faith and caring spirit for people, the church and the world.

Bringing leadership zest, grit and heart is necessary because we are faced with challenges that we have not experienced before. Today's leaders tell a new story of a God-sized vision for what we are called to become. Today's leaders tell stories that challenge and inspire people rather than stories that satisfy and maintain the status quo. Let's talk to Gina Hendrickson and Manolo Sardinias who have been leading churches to greater vitality for a combined 38 years. They have been fruitful, and they also have had failures along the way, but they have always strived to increase leadership excellence. Let's hear their principles for leadership.

Gina Hendrickson, Senior Pastor, St. Andrew's UMC, Cherry Hill:

"I've found that one key to leadership excellence is always looking for the next right answer — for myself and for the church. With each church I've served, each leadership position I've held — I have always worked at equipping myself to become the leader who was needed at that time and in that context — be it as a licensed local pastor in a 2-point charge, to an associate pastor, to co-senior pastor, to lead pastor to district superintendent.

Vital, Spirit-filled leadership is about growing and becoming that who God needs to make disciples for the transformation of the world. So I've always looked for leaders who are willing to change, adapt and become that which God needs — because the church is always growing.

Each lay person in all our churches, has the potential to be God's next right answer — for a Sunday school teacher, chair of trustees, missionary or Jr. High youth leader. Recognizing and developing this transformative gift of grace in myself and others has led to some awesome ministry in the name of Jesus Christ."

Manny Sardinias, Senior Pastor, The UMC in Union City:

"I have 3 things that guide me in my own leadership development:

The first is that prayer and action need to be joined together.

The second is that you must lead by action. You must be willing to put words into action. You must lead by example.

Third and finally, you need to dream "big dreams". Your job is to convince others that greatness is achievable. This means that you have to be a daring leader. You have to take risks. It is only by taking risks, and sometimes failing in those risks, that you will get great rewards. And when you take great risks, you support and challenge the people around you to take risks as well."

Through the years, my leadership experience has been like that of Joshua in Ezra 3. When he led the people to rebuild the temple and the foundation was laid, half the people were joyous and half mourned the loss of the old temple. Both saw the same thing and had different reactions. Aren't these the times we are living in? Haven't you had the same experience? Half appreciate where you are leading and half are frightened or are feeling a sense of loss. It can make challenging ministry even more challenging. And so we walk and lead together, encouraging and supporting each other as we lead with zest, grit and heart. I fully anticipate that as you put forth God-sized visions some will leap for joy and some will mourn. So let's go together and encourage and support one another.

Spiritual Adaptation

Our second challenge is adapting to a new climate of spirituality. Faith questions have changed. People know less about the church, Jesus and God. They reject institutionalism and the church is perceived to be an institution. We need to adapt how we communicate, worship and witness in the world. Change begins within ourselves before we see change within others. We need to adapt the church and our leadership to a new spiritual climate so that we connect with the people in our communities. Our number one adaptive challenge is growing our congregations so that the people in the pews look like the people in our communities.

Here are some additional spiritual adaptive challenges we are facing into:

1. Now that people, particularly young people, have changed what they do with their leisure time, what does a new camping ministry look like?
2. We have spent millions of dollars to keep churches open that are losing worshipers. Our grants in most cases have not resulted in the turnaround of our congregations. What does the parable of the talents look like for us as we use limited resources to make grants?
3. As resources are exiting our urban areas and small towns, what does it look like for us to invest in our cities and towns? What does it mean for us in the words of Jeremiah, seek the shalom of the city? (Jeremiah 29:7)
4. We were short eleven clergy this appointment season, and in 15 years it is predicted that the US Conferences will be short 5000 clergy. What does the new paradigm for pastoral ministry look like in The United Methodist Church?

We can view these challenges as crises, or we can view them as Holy Spirit opportunities to reshape the church. We can become highly anxious or ask, God what do you have for us next?

Throughout the Conference, there are congregations who do not rest on good ministry, but ask what does God have for us next? We are seeing important progress through our small church initiative called Mosaic Ministry. In 10 months, the three pilot congregations have refurbished two sanctuaries, started three new outreach ministries and grown in combined worship attendance from 46 to 93. Worship attendance more than doubled in 10 months.

Our hope is not in who we are but in who God is calling us to be. We will work with willing congregations to assess their present ministry and identify the gap between where you are and the church God is calling you to become. We will support you to engage passionate Christ-like disciples who are stirring up faith, hope and justice in the community.

Together, let us rise, shine, for our light has come and the glory of the Lord is rising among us.

Unity

The third challenge I want to talk with you about is unity. I am concerned about the things that divide us, and in particular, I am concerned today with our inability to find a Christ-like path forward on homosexuality. We have set church against church, leader against leader and disciple against disciple. Our division diminishes our witness of Christ. In this matter, we have not risen to shine the light of Christ in the world.

I count as my sisters and brothers in Christ both those who vigorously work to maintain our Disciplinary stance and those who work vigorously to change it. I call each of you to see one another as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

Here are some things I am realizing after four decades of debate about human sexuality:

- We have not and cannot legislate our way through this challenge. Theological, biblical and spiritual concerns will not find resolution through legislation.
- Unity in the church does not require uniformity.
- Faithful Christians sometimes interpret the Scriptures in different ways.
- The entire church has not agreed, and is not likely to agree to a common understanding.

Therefore a third way needs to be explored that allows congregations and conferences to adapt to the spiritual challenges in their context.

In light of this challenge and the other spiritual challenges, I will lead to:

- Build bridges among our differences and build bridges to our future,
- Discover the gift of unity that is deeper than our differences,
- Claim grace as our enduring value and let it guide us in our most challenging conversations and decisions, and
- Lead so that theological differences will not impede the mission of the church. Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world must be core because the world needs passionate Christ-like disciples who stir up faith, hope and justice.

I do not challenge you to change your convictions but to honor the Jesus that is in all of us. I do not ask you to endorse someone else's biblical understanding, but to seek grace space so that the world says of United Methodists in Greater New Jersey, in the midst of differences, see how they love one another. That is the kind of love that will attract new people to Jesus.

We have and will continue to have challenges. Leadership, spiritual adaptation and unity are three before us now but I see how you are rising above the challenges. I see how the light of Christ is shining through you. You are a lamp on a stand, a city on a hill, and a shining example of God's grace and hope.

God has blessed us through your outstanding ministry over the last year.

- We grew from 14% to 31% highly vital congregations.
- We are leading the Sandy volunteer and repair efforts in the region.
- Our small church initiative, Mosaic Ministry, doubled worshipers in 10 months.
- We increased the number of young adults in small groups by almost 1,000.
- We paid our general church apportionments at 100% for the seventh year in a row. Thank you for giving generously through our shared ministries giving. You are making a difference in the world.
- We are hearing stories throughout the Conference of Christ's transformation through changed lives, changing congregations and mission testimonies.

You have been rising and shining, for the glory of the Lord.

Let us continue to serve together because the world needs passionate Christ-like disciples who are stirring up faith, hope and justice in the world.

Let us grow more vital congregations because passionate Christ-like disciples are stirred up in vital congregations.

Let us call, equip, send and support more lay and clergy turnaround spiritual leaders because these leaders are growing vital congregations.

Let us build a Holy Spirit fire that transforms lives and communities because Christ came to make a difference in people's lives and in the world.

Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

**The July/August Issue Deadline
is June 12, 2014**

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CREDO Confirmation Retreat



Confirmands from across GNJ explore history of Methodism in Philadelphia.

Confirmation is not the beginning or the end of the faith journey. Confirmation is about making disciples. It is that simple and that challenging. For the fifth year the Greater NJ Conference has hosted the CREDO Confirmation Retreat: Know Your Story, Confirm Your Faith, Live Your Commitment. This curriculum, developed by Cokesbury, brings worship, Sunday school, Bible study, service, and church ministries into confirmation. It is a confirmation program so straightforward and so flexible, it can be used in virtually any confirmation format or setting.

The weekend, incorporating both prayer and our historical roots as United Methodists, began as 118 confirmands gathered together from seven of the nine districts across the GNJ Conference for an overnight retreat. The retreat began at the Pinelands center at Mt. Misery with an evening of music, silence, ACTS prayer (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication), breath prayers and the Lord's Prayer were used to strengthen our ability and willingness to pray. Each youth was encouraged to write and offer their own prayers during this retreat in addition to being challenged to offer prayers in their home worship services.

On Saturday the group traveled together to the city of Philadelphia to explore two churches that have so deeply enriched our history of Methodism: St. George's United Methodist Church and Mother Bethel AME Church both of which

represent the beginning of the Methodist Church in America. The founder of Mother Bethel AME, Bishop Richard Allen, began his life enslaved by a Quaker family, and his journey to freedom and the Methodist Church is one of true determination and faith. Beginning his faith journey as an ordained deacon, Allen was at one time invited by Bishop Asbury to preach the gospel throughout the southern part of the States. Allen felt his calling was closer to home and at the invitation of the pastor St. George's UMC began a Sunday evening worship service. St. George's was already established as a place where blacks and whites were worshipping together. However, the number of those worshipping with Allen grew so rapidly that soon their own facility was needed. (For additional details on this story visit www.motherbethel.org/church-history) Understanding the challenges that our church fathers encountered and how their faith informed their decisions and their ability to move forward, gives us insight into how we, today, respond and meet the challenges of the church.

CREDO Confirmation Retreat provides an opportunity for participants in confirmation classes across the conference to bond with one another as these young people are the next generation of leaders for Greater New Jersey.

And of course, no trip to Philadelphia is complete without experiencing a local favorite....the Philly Cheesesteak.

Boonton Church Makes Music and Raises Funds for Sandy Relief



The Boonton Fusion Choir was one of a variety of groups and individuals that helped raise money for Sandy relief.

Recently the Boonton Church hosted the first of a series of musical events called The Music Mission. The kick-off event was a variety show featuring the local talent. The Music Mission project is the church's response to the GNJ Conference challenge to raise money for the *A Future with Hope* Fund. Boonton UMC has always had a strong music program and with their music director's expertise they felt it would provide the area with a different approach to fundraising. "We could have done dinners and pledge drives, but being such a small congregation, we needed to draw from the larger community," said Administrative Council President, Karen Korinda. "The Music Mission team is planning to host a minimum of four events per year and each with a different style of music."

Those in attendance enjoyed the gospel sounds of Susan Lovell Brigati and the BUMC Fusion Choir, the tap dancing skills of Morgan and McCall Carlson, Singer/Songwriter Sydney Kayne, the rock band, Captains of Leisure, and the Cajun violin of Jackie Hecht. The featured artist of the evening was Eddie Brigati singing his famous, "Groovin" and "People Gotta Be Free", as well as his new creation, "Angels".

Over 100 people attended the concert and helped the church raise over \$1,800.00 for Sandy Relief events. Attendees were asked what types of music would bring them back for more and the top results were Classic Rock, Bluegrass, and Jazz.

The next event will be a Cajun Festival on August 2 with music by Jessie Lege and the Bayou Brew. The evening will include Cajun food, dance lessons and more. Details and ticket sales can be found on the website: TheMusicMission.org

Lee Weaver brings "The Box" to New Jersey

Pax Amicus Castle Theater
23 Lake Shore Rd., Budd Lake, New Jersey

and
LEE WEAVER PRESENT



JULY 25 & JULY 26

Friday & Saturday - 8:00 p.m.

Reservations: (973) 691-2100; Admission: \$20

Questions? LeeFWeaver@gmail.com

Lee Weaver, retired UMC clergy, Greater New Jersey Conference, is enjoying a second career as playwright and actor. He has been performing all over the country, receiving considerable acclaim for his last three dramas, which he wrote and presents as One Person Shows. He received, in 2013, recognition as North Florida's Outstanding One-Person Show Presenter.

Weaver has been selected to present his *The Secret - The Spanish Inquisition in Old St. Augustine* at the 2014 NYC International Fringe Festival this August. This is an extraordinary honor bestowed on a very few select artists.

In his latest, *The Box*, which he will be presenting this summer at Pax Amicus Castle Theater in Budd Lake, NJ, "Jack" lives in the woods of St. Augustine, FL, and calls his box, "Home Sweet Home." He is coaxed out of his box to give an interview to WGAC's Sandy Shores (Lee's wife, Nanette, heard but not seen). During the interview he relates his tales of life on the road. He is a philosopher, a theologian, a humorist, a lover and a fighter and all of his stories come through his PTSD ravaged mind.

The Box has been filmed by Eclipse Recording Studios, using five cameras and is now in post-production. A late summer release is anticipated.

Bob Feldheim, North Florida's premier reviewer wrote the following:

"Weaver commands the stage for two intense, brilliant, soul-and society-searing hours, in two acts, recounting his story. It's an unforgettable emotional powerhouse, a mind-bending experience, a theatrical work of towering genius.

Weaver wisely interjects periodic humor for relief. Jack has come to terms with life. He spends a good deal of his time in the library. He's conjured clever, effective panhandling signs. He explains his personal religious philosophies. Jack pulls no punches; he survives."

The Box brings the very timely issues of homelessness and PTSD to the stage in a uniquely sensitive and informative way. *The Box* will make you laugh and cry, think, question and perhaps commit in new and profound ways. Persons of all faiths, it has been suggested, need to see this extraordinary theatrical event.

(Paid Advertisement)

A disabled veteran whose son had to drop out of college to help the family recover.

A young first generation family who had a broken drainage pipe leaking under their children's playroom.

A school teacher in Atlantic City who had rain penetrating her damaged roof for more than a year after Sandy.

There are thousands more who need help.

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A Future with Hope Mission Fund Campaign Partners with United Methodist Communications

Funded by a generous media grant from United Methodist Communications, Greater New Jersey is rolling out a media campaign to promote the mission work of the people of the United Methodist Church in our Conference.

Starting with a full page ad in the Star Ledger and continuing through October to coincide with the second anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, the campaign focuses on A Future with Hope ministry and the “faces of hope” of our volunteers who are rebuilding hope for those still struggling to recover more than 18 months after the storm.

The campaign features photos of actual volunteers taken by professional photographer Paul Guba. Guba met some A Future with Hope volunteers in Highlands NJ last summer and was so inspired by their work, he volunteered to take portrait shots of those staying at the Highlands Host Site.

Staff members of Greater New Jersey worked with UMCOM staff and a committee comprised of public relations specialists from each district to form the strategy and design of the campaign. With a goal of attracting the widest audience and working within a limited budget, the campaign is designed to focus on shore communities and attract the attention of beach-goers this summer. It includes:

4 Full Page Ads in the Star Ledger

5/24, 7/5, 8/16, 9/27

2 Full Page Ads in the Asbury Park Press

7/27 and 10/12

9 Billboards begin June 16th

Route 37 E into Seaside • Route 36 S into Highlands
Routes 40 & 30 E into Atlantic City • Route 9 S into Forked River
Route 138 E into Belmar • Route 33 E into Asbury Park
Route 36 E into Long Branch • Route 72 E into LBI

Radio and Television begin June 16th

Internet, Pandora, and Facebook promotions begin July 28th

Since New Jersey is one of the most diverse conferences in the denomination, one of the television spots is Spanish language. In recognition that the immigrant population has not been fully served by recovery groups, the Spanish language version focuses both on volunteers as well as those who still need help.

With an eye to link local churches to the statewide campaign, GNJ designed banners, posters, yard signs and bulletin inserts for congregations to use.

“This campaign will help to support Greater New Jersey in three ways,” said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. “We hope to create awareness for A Future with Hope ministries, recruit volunteers through reminders that service is ‘church,’ and provide an invitation to be a part of local United Methodist churches.”

Posters, and bulletin inserts can be downloaded for free from the website. Banners (\$85) and yard signs (\$10) can be purchased by contacting Rebecca Nichols at rebeccanichols@gnjumc.org.

The Team from St. Philip's Church Commemorates Their 50th Mission Trip



By Alex Davis

On their 50th mission trip, crew members from St. Philip's Disaster Relief of Minnesota spent more time than ever before setting aside their hammers to talk with homeowners and their relatives in South Jersey.

"I've found after my first trip how important it was to get your hands dirty and put your arms around somebody to let them know somebody really cares about them after a disaster," Robert Saunders of North Dakota said while on a break from repairing a home in Ocean City in early May. He was among 33 members from St. Philip's Disaster Relief repaired homes in Ocean City, Pleasantville and Atlantic City the week of May 4. The efforts were in collaboration with the United Methodist Church's nonprofit organization, A Future With Hope, which focuses on relief, repair, rebuild and renew following Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

This was Saunders' seventh trip with the St. Philip's Disaster Relief team of the St. Philip's Lutheran Church of Fridley, Minn. "It's important to write a check but doing a helping-hands project is really, really great," Saunders said.

Jesus instructed his disciples to help and love their neighbors, and that's what Saunders said that's what the crew was doing for about a week in South Jersey. "They're just fun," Saunders said of the crew members.

The mission trip was the St. Philip's Disaster Relief team's 50th since 2006 and their first time in New Jersey. The team attempts two long-distance trips a year. Over the years the relief team has been to Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, among other states. In South Jersey, they painted, did electrical work, ripped apart flooring and other tasks. That week Saunders, 69, set beams and planned to help lay down plywood subfloor in the one room of the house on Simpson Avenue in Ocean City.

At a house a few blocks away on Haven Avenue in Ocean City, crew members were doing even more extensive repairs. The home was hit badly by Hurricane and sustained more than 42 inches of water. When the crew entered the home, they saw the floor buckled and junk strewn about. They had their work cut out for them.

"I can't imagine somebody living like this," said team member Gary Johnson, 59, of St. Paul, Minn.

On May 8 the townhouse was gutted

and the crew was working on putting in new flooring.

Anderson, 66, has seen some severely damaged homes. He's been on 41 of the mission trips, he said.

The team from St. Philip's Disaster Relief got its start in 2006 following Hurricane Katrina. They fixed homes in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. About 140 people have made one or more mission trips throughout the eight years, said Anderson, as he sat on a yellow ladder in what used to be the kitchen.

Crew leader John Katerberg, 65, of Grand Rapids, Mich., was also working on the Haven Avenue townhome. He said he enjoys being able to meet new people and lending a helping hand. The labor is intensive, and can be daunting emotionally and physically. Johnson said he may complain but has noticed the older members of the crew do not. They hang in there and maintain a positive attitude, he said. The New Jersey trip was his seventh with the team.

"It's an awesome group to work with," Johnson said.

Besides the Ocean City houses, the team replaced windows at a home in Pleasantville and crews were working on painting, washing and doing electrical work at homes in Atlantic City.

Saunders' wife, Lindy, is part of the disaster relief team, and on May 8 she was painting a home in Atlantic City. The duo is doing mission work together, paying it forward. In June 2011 their home in the western United States sustained 6 feet of water, Robert Saunders said.

It was evident the crew had been busy working away at the homes in Ocean City. An orange-yellow dumpster outside the Haven Avenue site was filled with rotten, broken and termite-infested boards, mostly from that location, Anderson said, "God works our hands."

Katie Quigley, who is construction site foreman with a A Future With Hope, praised the disaster relief team's efforts. "They have been fantastic. They came prepared to work," she said.

Time wasn't just spent working on homes. After the shift was over for the day, the team members gathered together for a devotional, according to Saunders. While in South Jersey, the team stayed in three rooms and the fellowship hall at the Somers Point United Methodist Church in Atlantic County.

And the group's efforts have inspired other disaster relief teams to form. Thou-

sands of pictures have been taken of the work, some of which have been put into Powerpoint presentations and used a tool for others to organize their own teams or joined St. Philip's, according to Anderson.

Marie Teeter, 35, of Ramsey, Minn., said the trip to South Jersey was her first long-distance journey with the team. She called the team one little, big happy family and that she felt welcomed. Teeter said the mission effort is God's work. "I feel like I'm growing more spiritually,"

she said.

These trips have a major impact on the St. Philip's Disaster Relief team. "They'll be talking about this trip for months," Anderson said. Katerberg recommends people give mission work a try. "They'll like it," he said.

For more information on St. Philip's Disaster Relief team, see www.splcmn.org. Additional information about A Future With Hope is available at www.afuturewithhope.org.

MUMC Supports Lordi Family, Takes Service Outside for 5K



Pastor Luana Cook Scott is seen here with the Lordi family at the conclusion of the 5K run/walk.

The Milford Church took its second service outside to Camp Speers-Eljabar in support of Josie Lordi and her family. Josie has Type 1 diabetes, and the outdoor service coincided with the second annual 5K run/walk "Taking Our Shot at Inspiring Hope."

The 5K event is a fundraiser to benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and Service Dogs by Warren Retrievers. Josie, 5 years old, is slated to get a service dog, a black lab, at the end of May that will alert family members to fluctuations in her blood sugar level.

At least 220 runners and walkers took part in the 5K, an increase of more than 27 percent from last year's first such race. Chris Lordi, Josie's dad, said the community turnout, including many church members from MUMC who ran or walked, was outstanding. The Lordis worship regularly at MUMC. At least two MUMC members were among top place finishers in their categories.

After the 9 a.m. race concluded at one of the main fields of Camp Speers-Eljabar in Dingmans Ferry, Rev. Luana Cook Scott kicked off the outdoor service at the camp's chapel, along the shore of the 42-acre, spring-fed Lake Nichecronk. The pastor also noted Earth Day, giving

children small lettuce plants, for later replanting, during the children's sermon. In her main message, she highlighted being caretakers, "that we are to be good stewards of all God has given us." She said that includes not only caring for our natural resources, but caring for other people as well, such as the Lordi family.

After the service, Chris, his wife Leslie, Josie and her brother, 3-year-old Anthony, greeted worshippers. Chris Lordi called it "overwhelming;" how their church family moved its service to the Camp to coincide with the 5K and support Josie, as well as the many MUMC members who ran or walked.

MUMC is at 206 East Ann Street in Milford. The church has two services weekly, at 8:15 am Sunday and 10:30 am Sunday. Visitors are welcome at either service. The church is online at <http://milfordunitedmethodistchurch.wordpress.com/>. The church is home to a number of community groups as well, including daily AA meeting.

More about the "Taking Our Shot at Inspiring Hope" race can be found on Facebook, at <https://www.facebook.com/takingourshot5K>, or on the web at <https://lordic.wix.com/takingourshot>.

YES, YOU ARE BEING DIGESTED!

By now, you have probably discovered the 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 gnjdigest@gnjumc.org.

Local Church's Music Program Strikes Chord With Community



Children of the Wanaque community display their certificates, having participated in the Midvale church's music program with pastor Ayn Maker looking on.

Reverend Ayn Masker, of Midvale church in Wanque, NJ, has always had a strong desire to communicate through music. She said she began to think and pray. "Everyday, hundreds of kids pass our church on the way to the public school which sits right behind us, but on Sunday, we ask, where have all the children gone?" said Masker "I knew there was a treasure hidden somewhere in this formula and needed to connect the dots."

Masker had become aware that the Board of Education at the two elementary schools had cut the instrumental music programs due to budget constraints years before she was appointed to the church in July 2012. For some families, it is easily remedied by sending their children for private music lessons. However for many families, due to the cost, private lessons are simply not an option. Masker had what she loves to call a "scathingly brilliant idea" quoted from her favorite film, *The Trouble with Angels*. "What if the church could be that bridge so that all children can learn music...no money involved?" She said the idea was inspired by Bishop John Schol when he asked all churches to honestly ask leaders to reflect on whether it would make a difference if the church doors closed tomorrow.

Word spread fast in the small community of Wanaque, and before long 15 students signed up - ages 3 to 14. The church has held two music recitals as part of its regular Sunday worship service. "The recitals are wonderfully ecumenical," says Masker. "As an unexpected blessing, families who had previously been unchurched or who had been seeking a church family have joined Midvale to become part of our growing congregation."

As Midvale Church prepares for its second program year, interest in the free music program continues to grow. Masker was invited by the public school superintendent to join the Strategic Task Force, which is challenged with finding ways to offer high school students creative outlets for learning outside of school. Based on that joint conversation, this September the local high school will be offering a new course to band students who are interested in teaching a musical instrument to the younger children but may not necessarily know how to teach.

Teaching at the Midvale music program will count toward the high school students' required community service hours. "Next year we may be able to offer guitar, violin, and trumpet: the vision has endless possibilities," said the pastor. "It is overwhelming affirmation that this is not only a good thing but a God thing," she added.

Save the date

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Classes of 1964 and 1989 Anniversary Reception
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October 15

For more information, including forum topics, speakers and preachers please visit drew.edu/tipple

Questions? Contact Nancy VanderVeen, Director of Theological Alumni Relations and Lifelong Learning at nvanderveen@drew.edu or 973-903-6482.

(Paid Advertisement)

Stewardship Stories

By Rich Hendrickson
Coordinator of Stewardship Education
and Development, GNJAC



Together We Can: Our Shred Ministries at Work

The World Service Fund

"The World Service Fund" is the heart of our United Methodist presence in the world, enabling Christian mission and ministry to flourish around the globe. When you support the WSF you:

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- * Plant New Congregations
- * Nurture Leaders

The World Service Fund also provides for ministries in our own conference:

- Valuable programs and resources available to the local church
- Conference and District programs and ministries
- Conference Resource Staff

Africa University

- Men and women from 22 countries in Africa receive post-secondary education and post-graduate degrees from Africa University. When we support the Africa University Fund, we nurture students in Christian values and develop visionary leaders.

Black College Fund

- Through the Black College Fund, the United Methodist Church helps the 11 historically Black United Methodist-related colleges and universities to maintain solid, challenging academic programs, strong faculties, and well-equipped facilities.

Clergy Support and Administration

- * District Superintendent salary
- * Board of Ordained Ministry
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- * Administration and Support Staff
- * Retiree Healthcare
- * Annual Conference Sessions
- * Equitable Compensation
- * General Administration Fund
- * Interdenominational Fund

Ministerial Education Fund

- This fund is essential for the United Methodist Church to continue its commitment to recruit and educate quality pastoral leadership. This fund both helps defray the cost of a seminary education and provides clergy with funds for continuing education. This fund also provides money for local pastor training, and district resource days.

Personalized Pathways to Healing...



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WE LOVE FRAN PARTY – Northern Shore District Applauds Superintendent

On Friday, May 16, the Northern Shore District showed appreciation for the Rev. Fran Lawrie Noll's six years of sharing the love of God, at St. Paul's Church in Brick.

The celebration began with a praise sing along with Pastor Eusun Park, playing the guitar, and a warm welcome with surprise instructions from Pastor Reggie Albert.

The superintendent and her beloved husband, retired pastor Bill, were then welcomed by 160 Fran fans (see picture). A booming, "Thank you, Fran!" was clearly heard by all.

After Pastor Alan Darby offered grace, Federici's South, from Howell, served a buffet dinner that included chicken franchise, eggplant parmesan, ziti with broccoli and oil, chicken fingers, spaghetti, salad, rolls and butter. The dessert cakes were decorated with "WE LOVE FRAN" and a picture of the Barnaget Lighthouse, a symbol of her lighting up the Northern Shore District!

Following dinner, Marcus Phillips, a soloist from St. Luke's in Long Branch, entertained the Nolls with "Under the Boardwalk."



One of 160 hand held "Fran fans" shared at the appreciation party for Fran Noll.



Five women from Little Falls UMC were awarded UMW Adult Life Membership Pins at the Women's Service on Mothers' Day, May 11. From left to right they are Emily Van Biert, Catherine Gritman, Cheryle Mitchell, Kathy Flannagan and Marion Start.

"Doug Swims for Path 1" Raising Funds to Support New Churches

NASHVILLE, Tenn. May 8, 2014 / GBOB/ – A ministry supporting church planters in the United States and a new church in Argentina will benefit from a special three-mile swim by New Church Starts (Path 1) associate executive director Doug Ruffle to celebrate his 63rd birthday.

Ruffle is asking friends and supporters to make donations to **Doug Swims for Path 1** to help the Large Impact Church Residency Program, cosponsored by the General Board of Discipleship's Path 1 division, and the New House of Prayer for All People, a church in Buenos Aires.

"I'm doing 'Doug Swims for Path 1' for fun and to help raise some funds for these two important projects and to hopefully get some attention for both of them," Ruffle said. "The projects are important to me because we're all about trying to help plant new churches in the United States and we're part of the movement that helps plant Methodist Churches around the world."

Ruffle's son Ben, a dining services supervisor at Rutgers University, who will be 36 this summer, will join his father for part of the swim, which will take place on Ruffle's birthday, June 11, at a Nashville area YMCA.

"Donors may want to contribute \$36 since my son is turning 36 or \$63 because I'm turning 63, or \$99 for the two of us," Ruffle said. "Or any amount would be welcomed for these two great causes."

To make a contribution, go to www.Swim4Path1.org. Anyone who gives \$36 or more will receive a free "Doug Swims for Path 1" t-shirt. To view a video of Ruffle in training for his birthday swim, go to <http://bit.ly/1kC4oPR>.

The Large Impact Church Planting Residency Program, which Path 1 co-sponsors with annual conferences, is a unique way to prepare the next generation of church planters by placing young people for a year in United Methodist churches that are having an impact on their communities. There the residents have day-to-day contact with effective pastoral and lay leadership as they learn how to help organize a church for ministry

and mission.

The first four 2013-2014 residents are completing the year-long program, which was organized by Path 1 in response to the needs of annual conferences to plant new congregations that are relevant and contextual. Support was only available for four residents the first year, but program organizers hope as many as a dozen residences will be available during the coming year, which begins this summer.

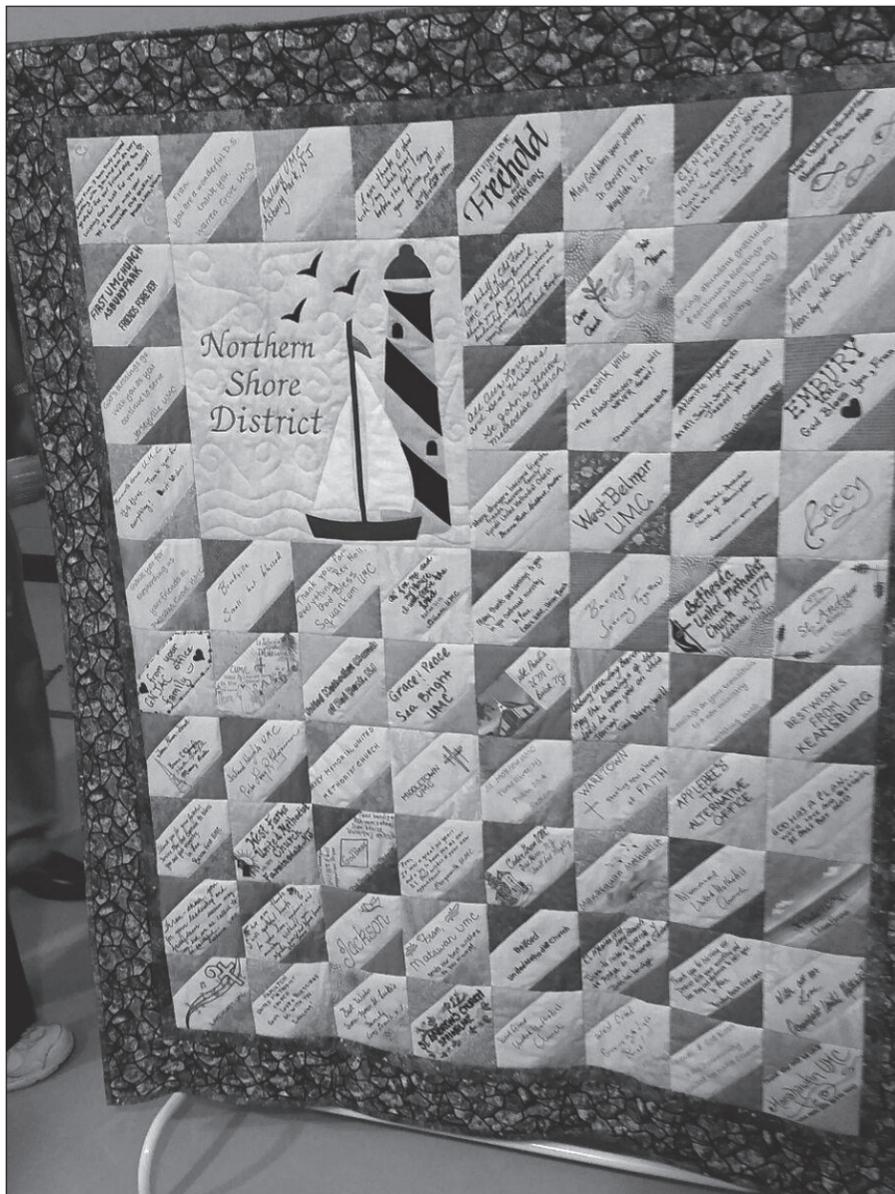
Cost of the residency program is shared by Path 1, annual conferences and the local churches. GBOB's funding for grants made to annual conferences during the first year came from trust funds, but future support for the residency program will depend on outside donations, like those made to "Doug Swims for Path 1."

For more information about the residency program, go to <http://bit.ly/1mlgbbG>.

The House of Prayer for All People, an Argentine Evangelical Methodist Church located in Buenos Aires, is a growing and developing congregation that currently meets in a rented hall, but needs its own permanent place to worship. Donations for the House of Prayer given to "Doug Swims for Path 1" will go directly to the church via The Advance, the accountable, designated mission giving arm of The United Methodist Church. A part of UMC's General Board of Global Ministries, The Advance ensures that 100 percent of each gift is used for its intended mission or ministry.

For more information about the House of Prayer, see Global Ministries' Advance #3021287 at <http://bit.ly/1Sj5dP>.

"We're part of a whole worldwide movement to plant new churches, new places for new people. And House of Prayer in Buenos Aires is one of the first new church plants that the Methodist Church in that country has done in years," Ruffle said. "It's located in the largest city of Argentina, and they're reaching a lot of working-class people from Buenos Aires."



Members of the Manasquan church presented the superintendent with this quilt representing her ministry throughout the district.

A brief, thought provoking invocation was shared by Pastor Myrna Bethke, concluding with youth distributing Lego pieces, simulating building blocks of the future. Pastor Bill then came to the front to lead a discussion on "Salvation and Theology." To the audience's delight, he was assisted by LULU, the clown.

The District Lay Leader, Marilyn D. Kinelski, then began the roasting. Additional testimonials were offered by Reggie Albert, Jay Kim, Gateway South District Superintendent Bob Costello and Pastor Sandra Campanell. Then, after West Belmar UMC member, Joan Camp, read her special poem, all were delighted with Pastor Bernadette Cataline's vocal parody as well as Reggie and Gary Albert's personalized video production! Precious words were then shared by Fran's granddaughter, Sophie and everyone enjoyed Bishop John Schol's final comments.

The presentation of gifts was next. Pastor Bill began playing Fran's favorite hymn, Hymn of Promise, on the guitar. All sang the words Ms. Kinelski had written to honor the outgoing D.S. and her heartfelt service.

She was then presented with a quilt that was made by the quilt ministry of Manasquan UMC. These women stitched all the squares from each church, district office, the bishop, and Noll's "other office," Applebee's, together into a beautiful quilt.

Special thanks to the Superintendency Committee: Pastor Regina Albert (Co-Chair), Pastor Clark Callender, Pastor Sunghee Park, Pastor Sunny Shim, Avery Grant, Jay Kim, Marilyn D. Kinelski (Co-Chair), Dennis Poane and Anita Ritchie. And, KUDOS to the members of St. Paul's UMC, who helped with design, set up and clean-up!!

RELAY Reflections

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Absecon UMC's Diaper Donation Drive Hopes To Lead to 'No Baby Wet Behind'

By LUCIA C. DRAKE, Staff Writer, The Press of Atlantic City



Absecon United Methodist Women member Project Chair Lynn Caterson, right, of Absecon, made another diaper donation to Absecon United Methodist Women President Sue Reitmeyer, of Galloway Township, as Treasurer Linda Babcock, of Absecon, looked on.

Reprinted with permission from The Press of Atlantic City

There is one truth that is known by every family with a baby in the house: If the baby isn't happy, nobody is happy.

And when a baby's diaper doesn't get changed as often as it should because the family can't afford to have an adequate supply on hand, it can produce a lot of unneeded stress in a family that is perhaps already stretched to its limits.

In an effort to help, the United Methodist Women of the Absecon United Methodist Church declared May "diaper month" and chose Mother's Day weekend to kick off its participation in the "No Baby Wet Behind" program, spearheaded by the Family Service Association of South Jersey.

Donations of disposable diapers will go to the children of low income families in the community.

"Many parents are already struggling to pay for rent and food and simply cannot afford the high cost of an adequate supply of diapers for their children," said Sue Reitmeyer, president of the United Methodist Women.

And even for those families who use cloth diapers, the cost can be staggering, especially for those who don't have adequate laundry facilities and must use laundromats to wash and dry diapers, she said.

"Our area is hurting economically. This affects our youngest children, and also many seniors who have this personal need. This local drive is a perfect fit for our group," said Reitmeyer, who resides in Galloway Township.

The UMW's purpose is to support ministries locally and globally and offer fellowship, according to Reitmeyer. Particularly, the group's primary concern is to support women and children in need. As noted by Family Service, in some poor and low income homes, a baby can spend a day or longer in one diaper, leading to potential health and abuse risks.

An adequate supply of diapers can cost more than \$100 a month per child. And public assistance programs such as food stamps and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), do not cover the cost of diapers.

Nick White, director of development and external relations for the county-wide

Family Service Association, said the agency is averaging 140 new contacts per month, and about one-third of those families need diapers and other baby items.

Diaper drives such as the one by the UMW support an agency-wide initiative that fills a huge need in the community, he said.

"What it comes down to is that we recognize the fact that social safety net programs do not support an adequate supply of diapers that are realistically needed by families," he said. "So when groups help out with donations, it really is appreciated."

Absecon resident Linda Babcock, treasurer of the UMW, said the group is excited to partner with Family Services Association in the effort. They have bassinets set up in the church's atrium and Great Hall waiting to be filled with diapers and supplies, she said.

Besides disposable diapers, the group is calling for diaper rash cream and baby wipes, she said.

Lynn Caterson, a member of UMW who is affiliated with Family Service Association, said she knew the women's group was looking for a new project to get involved in when she presented the idea, which was immediately embraced by members.

"The cost of disposable diapers isn't something you think about until it's brought to your attention, and then you realize how expensive it can be for families," the Absecon resident explained.

The donation displays will be set up until the end of the month. You don't have to be a member of the church to make a donation.

Donations can be dropped off at the church, located at 100 Pitney Road, or to any UMW member. Caterson said members of the public can also drop off donations to her work site and she will deliver them to the church.

For more information and/or to donate, call Lynn Caterson at 609-272-1469.

The Family Service Association accepts diapers and baby supplies year-round. Anyone wishing to make a donation can visit any of FSA five locations in Galloway Township, Egg Harbor Township and Newtonville, or visit its website at fsasj.org.



The beauty of God's creation was experienced in the sunrise during an Easter service led by Pastor Lora Villinger on the mountain in Greenville, NY, for Greenville UMC and Matamoras UMC (Matamoras, Pa.).

OBITUARIES

DAISY DAVIS BERRY, widow of the Rev. Adolphus A. Berry, Elder of the Greater New Jersey Conference, died on Sunday, April 27. A funeral was held on May 2 at Haven UMC, Quinton NJ.

Messages of condolence may be sent to Mrs. Berry's daughter: Brenda Berry Long, 454 Coral Ave., Bridgeton, NJ 08302



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The July/August Issue Deadline is June 12, 2014

MISSION MATTERS

"We had been to the Jersey shore four times to help rebuild and spread some joy over the past year and a half. We've done our time. Right?"



When we heard about the Mission Fund, we thought we had already done our part. We had been to the Jersey shore four times over the last year and a half. What more could our small, struggling congregation of 60 worshipers do? It turns out a lot more. We placed a child's sand bucket in the back of the sanctuary to collect donations and the results have been truly amazing.

On April 5th, using the 25% of the donation that remains in our own church, Tabor's Treasures had its grand opening, a community thrift shop serving the needs of lower income families in our community.

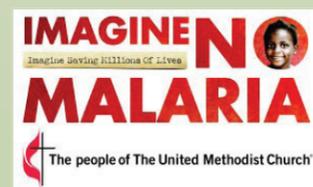
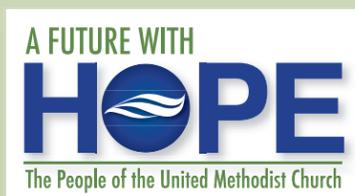


Tabor's Treasures wouldn't be possible without the Mission Fund.

The Sandy bucket, still at the back of the church, reminds us each week that we exist not to serve ourselves or just keep our doors open, but to change the world.

- Reverend Amanda Hemenetz, United Methodist Church at Mt. Tabor

HOW ARE YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION INVOLVED?



To find out how you can be involved
Contact Rebecca Nichols, Field Coordinator for the Mission Fund

rebeccanichols@gnjumc.org • 732.359.1047