Easter Day began with some grieving women carrying ointment for burial rites. They came prepared for an embalming; They left celebrating a resurrection. They came looking for a body; They found only an empty tomb. They came expecting a corpse; They found angelic witnesses. They came with tear-filled eyes; They left in joyous amazement. They came forgetting all his promises; They left remembering all he had told them. They came to the tomb grief stricken; They left in buoyant, exuberant joy. They came to pay tribute to the dead; They left proclaiming the living Lord. Turning Point! And when they told the others what they had found Their words seemed like idle tales And the disciples did not believe them. But Peter, always impulsive, and hyperactive, Got up and ran to the tomb With the same set of expectations as the women. Expecting a sealed tomb. Expecting a dead body. Expecting the eclipse of hope. And all he found was Some slightly worn linen burial clothes. And he went home scratching his head, Amazed at what had happened, Wondering. Then 50 days later, came Pentecost, and Peter preached a sermon. And the world hasn’t been the same since.

May the message of the women and of Peter be yours as well: The Lord is Risen! ...Risen indeed!
Greetings in the precious name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“You are being digested!”

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.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“Take your candle; go light your world,
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world
Take your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world
Take your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world...”

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

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, “Christ is Risen,” and we preach the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

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.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“Take your candle; go light your world,
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world
Take your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world
Take your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world...”

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

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, “Christ is Risen,” and we preach the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

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.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“Take your candle; go light your world,
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world
Take your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world
Take your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world...”

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

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, “Christ is Risen,” and we preach the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

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.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“Take your candle; go light your world,
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world
Take your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world
Take your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world...”

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

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, “Christ is Risen,” and we preach the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

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.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“Take your candle; go light your world,
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world
Take your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world
Take your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world...”

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

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, “Christ is Risen,” and we preach the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

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.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“Take your candle; go light your world,
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world
Take your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world
Take your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world...”

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

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, “Christ is Risen,” and we preach the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

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.

An Easter Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

An Easter Message from the Bishop

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

“Take your candle; go light your world,
Seek out the helpless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world
Take your candle, run through the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
Hold out your candle, for all to see it;
Take your candle and go light your world
Take your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, confused and torn
Hold out your candle for all to see it;
Take your candle, go light your world...”

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

On Easter Sunday we sing with joy, “Christ is Risen,” and we preach the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So this year, give someone a candle and invite them into the celebration of all celebrations: the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Be a bearer of hope in a world too often characterized by darkness.

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

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

JISUN KWAK

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

Currently Mr. Kwak is pastor at Centenary Church, Metuchen, where she has served for just one year. Prior to that position, the Rev. Kwak served the McPherson (1995-2007) and was pastor of the Thetils (N.Y.) Church (2007-2010). She was also one of several GNJ clergy members who served the Palisades district in 1998 and served as a deacon from 1995 to 1998.

Bishop Devadhar described Ms. Kwak as a great pastor who has demonstrated empowerment of the laity. “I care about life, because life is the most wonderful, amazing gift from God. That is the reason I became a pastor,” said Ms. Kwak. “I would like to help people to live their life with the feeling of greatness and excitement.”

Born in Korea, Dr. Kwak came to the United States in her twenties. “English is my second language,” she said. “I know exactly how it feels to live in a foreign land where the mother tongue is different, and where you are far away from family and friends.” She feels that this background will fit her well for her new assignment.

“I am truly excited to be serving a district in which I am not a resident,” she said. “I am looking forward to being able to work in a multicultural environment and multi-cultural. My hope is that our community remains open and accepting, so that we celebrate our differences and our rich cultural heritages, and accept with open arms everyone, regardless of age or walk of life.”

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

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

Bishop Devadhar said Dr. Kwak is a servant leader who always places heart and mind together in her decisions. “She will bless us with her compassion and deep Christian faith as a district superintendent,” said Bishop Devadhar.

Wayne Plumstead

and mind together in their decisions.

“Will bless us with her compassion and deep Christian faith as a district superintendent,” said Bishop Devadhar.

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

WAYNE J. PLUMSTEAD

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

Currently Mr. Plumstead is the senior pastor at Park United Methodist Church in Bloomfield, where he has served since 1991. He says he has served within what is now the Gateway North District, since his ordination as elder in 1975.

“Having served churches in the current Gateway North District for my entire ministry, I am looking forward to serving the conference in new ministries and friendships in the Palisades District,” said Mr. Plumstead.

Bishop Devadhar said that Mr. Plumstead has been a great pastor who has modeled what it means to have a heart for global ministries. “I am deeply touched by his leadership, faithfulness and organizational skills that he has exhibited through the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and his leadership in the district,” said Bishop Devadhar.

Mr. Plumstead said that just as Jesus Christ lived out the life of God in all of its human dimensions, the church is called to be the living presence of Christ in the world and to do the same in every aspect of its ministry. “This is true for district superintendents no less than for every pastor and lay follower of Christ,” he said. “I am truly humbled by the opportunity that has been afforded me to serve the people and pastors of the Palisades District and I see myself as challenging, encouraging and walking with them as they seek at such a time as this to make committed disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

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

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

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

(Continued from Page One)

UMVIM Offers ‘Hope to Haiti’

GNJAC — “Bring Hope to Haiti”

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

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

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

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

The Team is now a functioning unit of VOAD, New Jersey Volunteer Orga- nizations Active in Disaster, a coalition of groups that includes the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Fema and several other of the best things a local church can do is to help assembled the buckets, supply funds, or donate funds to purchase supplies. Completed buckets, their contents can be found at the UMCOR web page at http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/flood-bucket/

Local churches may assemble buckets, collect supplies, or donate funds to purchase supplies. Completed buckets and multi-cultural. My hope is that our community remains open and accepting,

Jisun Kwak

Wayne Plumstead

and multi-cultural. My hope is that our community remains open and accepting, so that we celebrate our differences and our rich cultural heritages, and accept with open arms everyone, regardless of age or walk of life.”

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

“This experience will enhance my ministry to pastors and churches in this, the most multi-cultural district of the Greater New Jersey Conference,” she believes. Bishop Devadhar said Dr. Kwak is a servant leader who always places heart

and multi-cultural. My hope is that our community remains open and accepting, so that we celebrate our differences and our rich cultural heritages, and accept with open arms everyone, regardless of age or walk of life.”

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

“This experience will enhance my ministry to pastors and churches in this, the most multi-cultural district of the Greater New Jersey Conference,” she believes. Bishop Devadhar said Dr. Kwak is a servant leader who always places heart

The Team is now a functioning unit of VOAD, New Jersey Volunteer Orga- nizations Active in Disaster, a coalition of groups that includes the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Fema and several other organizations, an effective service to people affected by disaster.”

UMVIM Offers ‘Hope to Haiti’

GNJAC — “Bring Hope to Haiti”

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

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

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

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

The Team is now a functioning unit of VOAD, New Jersey Volunteer Orga- nizations Active in Disaster, a coalition of groups that includes the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Fema and several other organizations, an effective service to people affected by disaster.”

UMVIM Offers ‘Hope to Haiti’

GNJAC — “Bring Hope to Haiti”

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

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

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

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

The Team is now a functioning unit of VOAD, New Jersey Volunteer Orga- nizations Active in Disaster, a coalition of groups that includes the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Fema and several other organizations, an effective service to people affected by disaster.”

UMVIM Offers ‘Hope to Haiti’

GNJAC — “Bring Hope to Haiti”

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

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

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

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

The Team is now a functioning unit of VOAD, New Jersey Volunteer Orga- nizations Active in Disaster, a coalition of groups that includes the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Fema and several other organizations, an effective service to people affected by disaster.”

UMVIM Offers ‘Hope to Haiti’

GNJAC — “Bring Hope to Haiti”

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

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

After considering a number of priority projects for earthquake recovery, a coalition of church agencies has proposed and approved a “Haiti Response Plan” to enlist volunteers for service.
Faith leaders look at budget’s ‘moral’ impact

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

Mission leader decries Pakistan assassination

NEW YORK — The United Methodist Church’s chief mission leader has expressed solidarity with the Christian community in Pakistan in the wake of the March 2 assassination of Bishop Azfar Aziz, a United Methodist bishop in Pakistan. “He served his country with loyalty even as he opposed strict interpretation of a blasphemy law that would make the face of being Christian punishable by death.”

Rapper wins $40K for UM children’s home

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

Census helps church with evangelism

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

Feeding others…pastor keeps going and going

NEW YORK — The Rev. C. Ray Davis home with a bottle of pain pills and the gloomy news that he had two weeks to live. Now, some 55-years later, and as a pastor at the “Enchanted Bunny,” Davis preaches for five weekly worship services and coordinates 19 outreach ministries at his small, but spirited, 200-member church.

Giving to UMCOR goes 100 percent to designated cause

NORTH CANTON, Ohio — At the United Methodist Committee on Relief, every contribution designated for Japan or other disaster areas goes toward people who need help. This is possible because of the One Great Hour of Sharing, a special giving program that allows United Methodists and others to achieve this goal. Presented by the National Council of Churches and produced by United Methodist Communications, the program will be available to local NBC affiliates starting May 1. Church members can contact their local stations and ask them to schedule “A Killer in the Dark.”

Call to Action Interim Operations Team named

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

Online Bible study explores contemporary issues

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

CAMDEN — Every Wednesday evening Parkside Church here opens its doors to neighborhood youth ages 8-18 years, where they can engage in a number of activities. There is homework assistance, life lessons from the Bible, games, and a nutritious snack to share with their friends. It’s a safe place to meet and have fellowship in a city described as the second most dangerous city in the nation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“They know they can get something back to their community the youth can still dream dreams for a better future,” one observer noted.

Dan Furgal, executive director of the United Methodist Homes and Bristol Glen, reported the following ways: phone, 732-657-7580; email, bwehrle@umh-nj.org; or mailing address, 49 Mansfield Avenue, Manchester, NJ 08759.

‘Our Connection is our Strength’, UM Homes Holds

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

United Methodist Homes and Bristol Glen joyfully invite you to a 10th Anniversary Celebration

On-site parking
Refreshments and tours
For more information please call 973.300.5788 or visit our website www.BristolGlen.org
HAZLET — At the invitation of Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, the clergy and laity of the annual conference gathered here to mark the beginning of the Lenten season of penitence and preparation. In the morning session, the clergy were inspired by the preaching of the Rev. Stephanie Hand, who previously was the conference preacher for the 2010 sessions of the GNJAC.

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

The worship service included liturgical dance by Keila Vega-Perez and a rousing act of praise that featured drums and dance by Korean Clergywomen Dancers. Bishop Devadhar and retired Bishop Felton E. May presided over a communion service.

During the break after our dance in the pre-Lenten gathering this year, many colleagues commented that they could feel the Spirit moving in us. Yes, the Spirit is truly filling us and moving us. Like our performance, our lives, our ministry, and our work matter if they say, “We don’t want you for our senior pastor because you are a woman.” It doesn’t matter if they say “you cannot be an effective leader because you are an ethnic minority woman who doesn’t speak English fluently.” Jesus says “Follow me” and that’s all that matters to me and to all Korean clergywomen!

We were gathered once again to perform at the opening worship service of the National Association of Korean-American Clergywomen of UMC 25th Anniversary event in 2010. The tradition of gathering together, trying to move our stiff bodies together, eating together, laughing together and crying together started again and still continues to this day.

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

‘Following Our Leader Jesus Christ’: Journey of Korean Drum Dancers

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

Our journey began at the 2006 Annual Conference where she serves as the president of the Korean-American Clergywomen of UMC 25th Anniversary event in 2010. The tradition of gathering together, trying to move our stiff bodies together, eating together, laughing together and crying together started again and still continues to this day.

Since 2008, our fund has had an annualized return of 5.44% compared to a 3.53% blended benchmark consisting of the S&P 500 and a Barclays fixed income index.
How to Have an Argument over a Dryer

By Krista Hendrickson

"The Pirate Code? It's really more of a guideline!"

-Captain Barbosa, Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl

Laundry Day is a college student's worst nightmare. No matter how long I try to delay the inevitable, it must come, and we have to carry our heavy bags of clothing to the closest laundry place on campus, hoping that we have enough quarters in our pockets to afford the dollar a load. Last weekend was like all the other laundry days. Events carried on in their usual way, loading the washer, starting the wash, waiting for the wash to be done, unloading the wash, waiting a half hour for a dryer to finally open up...and that's where the dryer over and over again. The situation isn't just the most unusual thing occurred: I got into an argument over a dryer.

To give you the footsteps of what took place in the ten minute span: I was unable to find a dryer, which I could not use a dryer anymore because one girl had a friend who wanted to use them. Attitudes were flying left and right and I cannot deny the fact I was getting really angry and the sight was not pretty. All the events included an argument over a laundry dryer...I couldn't believe it! I had just wasted all of my energy on playing into the attitude of another.

I tried being a good person, a good Christian, you know, turn the other cheek and all that good stuff but...another dryer but each time I had a realization it was also a spoken word. I had no idea how to respond. What was I supposed to do when turning the other cheek just meant being around another...and then again and again I had always believed that eventually the slap would end. After all, I thought that was the point of the whole metaphor?

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

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

United Methodist Camps of Greater New Jersey

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

- We are a United Methodist Church
- We are committed to helping campers grow in awe way, including physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Our trained, fantastic counselors and directors serve as positive role models for our confirmands' lives. All of this is housed in the Skylands of New Jersey. Aldersgate Center is located on 300 acres of beautiful woodland in the Skylands of Northwestern New Jersey. In addition to the main camp campus there is a twenty acre recreation, boating, and camping facility located on Swartswood Lake. It is a uniquely beautiful and peaceful place in the midst of our busy lives in New York metropolitan area. Aldersgate Center’s Summer Camping Program offers a wide andservice variety of on-site camping programs and off-site challenge programs. On-site programs will have campers sleeping in Cabins, eating inlocated dining hall, and experiencing all the activities available at Aldersgate. Off-site programs allow campers the opportunity to camp in the woods, explore new areas, and develop new friendships with each other as they face the elements as a team. You can be confident that campers are sleeping on the lake, hiking the trek, or just relaxing around the pool, they will be building close relationships with God and each other.

- Some of the activities you might enjoy at Aldersgate Center include:
  - Waterfront, Sailing, Canoeing, Kayaking
  - Low Ropes Challenge Course
  - Archery
  - Cook Outs
  - Marshmallows
  - S'MORES!!

- Campers will experience worship and Bible Study in a way that is relevant and meaningful to them.
- Campers will be accepted, included, listened to, challenged, encouraged, and have truely wild fun.
- All campers end with a closing ceremony that provides an opportunity for family and friends to see their camp's experience.

Pinedale Center at Mt. Winyah is located in the preserved area of the Piney Woods. This camp provides campers with even more camp activities in a truly incredible and unique environment. Pinedale Center Camp programs are housed in the main area of camp, where campers sleep in cabins (compute with electricity and bathrooms), eat meals in the dining hall, and learn many of their activities right in camp. Whether we are a ride bike or singing around the campfire, campers will spend the week growing closer to God and each other.

Some of the activities you might enjoy at Pinedale Center includes:
- Canoeing, Kayaking, Bowhunts
- Low Ropes Challenge Course
- Archery
- Crafts
- Swimming
- Cook Outs
- Sleeping under the stars
- "MISSION PROJECT AND LASTING FRIENDSHIP"

- VBS: Local communities will be invited to perform at OCYW 2011.
- Campfires
- Hikes
- Field Games
- Campfires
- S'MORES!!

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

New Resources For Young People

The Way Of The Pilgrimage: An Adventure In Spiritual Formation for the Next Generation

- 24 Hours That Changed the World.
- For Youth
- For Parents
- Topic for Today's Teen's: Green Church and Bullying & Mean Girl
- "Four Practices of Fruitful Youth Ministry"
- Resources can be ordered from Cokesbury.com

Bishop's Confirmation Celebration May 14, 2011

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

Bridgewater UMC
Country Club Rd. Bridgewater, NJ - 5:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Do you want to be B1 who changes the world?

On May 14-15, United Methodists will work globally to Change the World, going where needed, and doing whatever they can to make a real difference. There is power in numbers, will you? B1? Think about using this week's dedication to a lasting friendship. We provide a way to be a part of the Church's mission to Change the World and post on Facebook what's going on with your team. Invite your team members to do the same. You'll be able to talk with people from around the world just like you who are going where needed and doing what they can. Just like you!

Knights of Columbus
Cooperative School of Christian Mission Education Youth/Young Adult Retreat

R U Looking 2 Fit N

Well come hang out with Teresa Goodson, Dawn Jackson and Jeffrey Clark, Sr.
At Georgia Court University in Lakewood, New Jersey
Friday, July 8 - Saturday, July 10, 2011
Theme: Grace, Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Cost $185 All Inclusive Weekend
(250 Scholarships by church perchurch)
Requirements: Open Mind and a Willingness to have Fun 2 Apps Groups: 7-12 grade graduates and Young Adults in college (West Virginia)
We provide A Strong Team, A Safe Ministry, A Hands on Mission Project and a Lasting Friendship Follow me on Facebook: Teresa Goodson or contact me @ 609-836-7514

Summer Date:
Youth Weekend 2011

September 9-11, 2011, Ocean City, NJ
New workshops for youth and youth leaders this year!!!
Guest Performers include: Illusionist Jared Hall, Hip Hop Artist Agape and you!!
Music will be provided by youth groups from around the Greater NJU. Stay tuned for our First Annual Idea Competition! "So U Think U Can Praise??" competition. Youth groups/individuals will be invited to submit their Praise video to the MYP team. The selected groups/individuals will be invited to perform at OCYW 2011. Details coming Soon!!!

Looking for new ideas for your Youth Ministry?

Be sure to join the Youthworker Movement.

Find intentional support groups, creative ideas, online trainings and so much more. Plus...It's Free. Go to youthworkermovement.org

You think you are Ordinary?.. Think Again!
By Rich Hendrickson
Coordinator of Stewardship Education and Development, GNJAC

Stewardship Stories

Top Ten List for Funding Ministry

1. Emphasize trust, not techniques. Trust in God is the foundation for any stewardship strategy.

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

3. Focus on building relationships with donors, not soliciting donations. Spend time praying for your people, checking in with them, and offering your pastoral support.

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

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

6. Say Thank-you! Ask your leadership to help you thank donors — as many and as often as possible.

7. Leverage the momentum from other campaigns. Maximize the "spillover" effect of other campaigns (i.e., capital or endowment) by using the opportunity to highlight your ongoing programs.

8. Communicate differently with various groups within the church. Thank those who are faithful, encourage greater participation for those on the margins, make a concerted, intentional effort to encourage inactive people to get involved.

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

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

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

by Jerry C. Crossley

This is a new book that can bless the local church by serving as a springboard into Bible Studies, Retreats, and Personal Devotions. 

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN: Our Problems, His Presence, is based on 2 Corinthians 4:18—"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (NIV)

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

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


OBTITUARIES

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

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

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

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

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

Memorial donations may be sent to Tom Burkman, 800 Kirkwood Drive, Grand island, NY 14072.

BETTY VOELKER, wife of the late Rev. Howard Voelker, died on February 25, 2011. A service in celebration of her life was held on February 27, 2011, at St. John’s Church in Hope, NJ. Memorial contributions may be made to St. John’s United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 291, Hope, NJ 07844, or to The Karen Ann Quintan Hospice Center, 99 Sparta Ave., Newton, NJ 07860.

VITAL CONGREGATIONS

Who do you say we are?

By Douglas Ruffle
Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC

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

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

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

Recently I had the privilege to visit an inner city United Methodist Church in Portland, Oregon called “The Bridge” that carries on effective ministry among the homeless. We were taken on a walking tour of the city by one of the workers in this church who had been homeless herself prior to her encounter with Christ. Her tour was quite revealing. She walked us by many of the agencies, both secular and sacred, that help the homeless. She gave us a perspective on these ministries from one who had been a recipient of the service. It wasn’t all good. “There’s the church that makes us sit through a 45 minute service before giving us food,” she said as she pointed down the street. “They yell at us telling us we are sinners. Most of my friends don’t like to go there—but if they are hungry enough, they’ll go.”

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

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

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

What would we learn about ourselves if we were to ask persons who are recipients of our service, our ministry? Who do you say we are?
**First Church, Toms River, Uses Resources to Feed Poor**

TOMS RIVER — What is a church to do when poverty grows at a rate greater than population growth? That’s the question First Church here asked itself several years ago. The answers were not too promising, and with the passage of time the situation has not improved.

According to U.S. Census figures quoted in the Asbury Park Press, an estimated 8 to 10 percent of the Ocean County population of 560,000 live in poverty, and 42,000 residents are on food stamps.

So what is a church to do? First Church, a Northern Shore District congregation located in the county seat of Ocean County, decided to act. Impelled by a Toms River United Methodist, Paula Brown, the church launched a soup kitchen. After several years the venture has proven its worth, and offers an open door to the community twice a month. Ms. Brown has long since moved away, but the soup kitchen continues to honor her, and bears her name.

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

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

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

**APPLICATIONS SOUGHT FOR SEESE SCHOLARSHIP**

Greater New Jersey pastors are invited to apply for the Harry A. Seese Memorial Scholarship for continuing education. Last year an award of $860 was offered to pastors whose plans for continuing education have led to strengthening their ministry in the local church.

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

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

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

**HOPE FOR HAITI**

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

**New Sweet Song of Evangelism**

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

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

**Gene Hamilton**

Evangelist-pulpit supply

Available for one week or more, in series

Now scheduling for 2011 - 2012

Scripture-based, spirit-led, with children’s sermons, call to worship, hymns, prayers included

Dial A Prayer- 610-681-PRAY-(7729)

Serving the entire GNJAC

References available

Katrina Volunteer New Orleans

A member of the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists

EWH16@PTD.NET — 610-681-4866

(Paid Advertisement)
Mission Work Continues in Japan Despite Quake, Radiation Fears

March 17, 2011

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Agricultural training center

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

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

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

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

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

Lack of food and fuel

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

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

Residents of Tokyo continue to endure rolling electrical blackouts and after-shocks from the earthquake.

Japanese Council Offers Thanks for Prayers, Gifts

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

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

One church family was “looking for bread,” “which was not to be found in any of our neighborhood stores,” she said. But a neighbor from Ghana — whom Genung-Yamamoto had provided with a flashlight during the blackout the night before — had extra food and bread and was “grateful” that she could help someone else. “We all pool our resources in times of need,” she said.

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

Some “newcomers” evacuating

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

Five churches affiliated with the Korean United Methodist Church had been badly damaged by the earth-quake, and the Korean Consulate is helping evacuate Koreans from the Sendai area close to the epicenter.

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

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

“How could the Council of Bishops, as in instances in the past when massive hu- manitarian action is needed in concert, once again lead our church to make an effort to undertake relief and reconstruction in a manner commensurate with our ability as a connection, and beyond what UMCOR is normally able to do?” the letter asked.

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

Peter M. Guilfoyle
Certified Public Accountant
Serving the United Methodist Community Since 1980

• Personal Courteous Service at Reasonable Rates
• Specializing in Taxation of the Clergy
• Income Tax Returns Expertly Prepared
• Electronic Filing Available

By Appointment
(732) 938-2665
( Toll free)
Opportunity File
A roundup of coming events in the Greater New Jersey Conference and beyond. Send items of conference-wide interest to the Opportunity File at Editor@umrelay.org or UMRelay, 1 Mayflower Ct., Whiting, NJ 08759.

April 2 — Regional Disabilities Conference
WILMINGTON, Del. — Ginny Thornburn, internationally known expert on inclusion of persons with disabilities will keynote this conference jointly sponsored by the GNJAC and Penn-Del Conference, at Aldersgate Church here. FFI: Contact pastor/Pastor, Rehoboth UMC, Verona.

April 6 — Bishop’s Birthday Worship Celebration
HAZLET — The 60th birthday holds special significance in Indian culture, and so the GNJ Conference is honoring its episcopal leader, Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, with a special worship celebration on the occasion of this anniversary of his natal day. Bishop Violet Fisher will be the preacher at this service to be held as St. John’s Church here at 7:30 p.m.

April 8 - 10 — DREAM Big Retreat
POCONO PLATEAU, Pa. — Northeastern Jurisdiction youth — 16-25 — invited to this three day retreat considering the issue of immigration.

April 16 — UMW Legislative Training Event
GNJAC — United Methodist Women teaming with Church Women United will offer this training event focusing on human trafficking, a growing problem in the state and elsewhere. Participants will address the problem, biblical implications and responses, and what can be done to combat it. Speakers will include ISA Whitaker of the Atlantic County Anti-trafficking Task Force, Place and time TBA.

April 16 — Historical Tour
PHILADELPHIA — The historical Black Connection comes alive in visits to a number of churches that contributed to the spiritual development of the City of Brotherly Love. Visits to Old St. George, Mother Bethel, Tindley Temple and others. Registration deadline, March 26.

April 30 — Disaster Response Training
OCEAN — The Conference Office will be the site for this training event for Early Response Teams equipping churches in cases of disaster. (See story page 1).

May 15 — Bishop’s Confirmation Celebration
BRIDGEWATER — Come celebrate with hundreds of confirmands from the 2010-2011 classes, this milestone in their spiritual journey. Special music, a special speaker, and communion and anointing by Bishop Devadhar, 3-5 p.m. at the Bridgewater Church. Obtain registration forms at conference website, www.gnjumc.org.

June 1 - 4 — Annual Conference
KING of PRUSSIA, Pa. — “Disciples Transforming the World: Through our Gifts” will be the theme as clergy and laity meet together at the Valley Forge Convention Center. In transit with the Lord’s business, elect delegates to General Conference and find inspiration for the year ahead.

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

July 13 - 17 — Youth 2011
LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Youth 2011, the four day national youth gathering for the United Methodist Church at Purdue University will bring together top United Methodist leaders, the best ecumenical speakers, bands and talent and thousands of youth from all around the nation for what is sure to be a life-changing event. For information about the event and bus transportation from the GNJ conference office, log on to www.gnjumc.org.

July 28 — August 1 — Taize Pilgrimage
GNJAC — if you are between 16 and 29 years of age you are invited to join Bishop Devadhar and choraphers on a weeklong spiritual development experience. Additional adults may request to attend as space provides opportunity. For details, see conference website, www.gnjumc.org and click on Taize Pilgrimage link.

October 3 — India 2011 with the Bishop
GNJAC — Eleven days of discovery on the Asian sub-continent where the passion of Jesus Christ is moving and stirring the people. See conference website, www.gnjumc.org for details.

NEW 2011 PUBLICATION OF SCIENCE-FOCUSED BIBLE STUDY

AWESOME WONDERS
An Awesome Creation by an Awesome God
Published 2011 by Hope Publishing House, Pasadena, CA
By GERALD H. IHLE

9 Week Bible Study with SCIENCE focus about an awesome world and universe that provides evidence for believers of an awesome Creator — “God is great! God is good!”

Order from Amazon.com/Kindle; Hope Publishing House, 696 So. Madison Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106; Cokesbury; or from author, Rev. Gerald H. Ihle, 114 Elliot Rd, N. Cape May, NJ 08264 — ghilie@snip.net - $15 PLUS TAX

(REPRINTED)

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

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

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

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

The collection “contains a greater number of songs that are currently shaping the future of contemporary song, and it represents more contemporary styles and idioms than have previous publications,” said Dean McIntyre, director of music resources at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

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

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

Flemington United Methodist Church invites you to 5 nights of

REVIVAL!

May 16 – 20, 2011
7:00 PM
116 Main Street
Flemington, New Jersey

Please call (908) 752-1070 for additional information.

May 16 – 20, 2011
7:00 PM
116 Main Street
Flemington, New Jersey

Please call (908) 752-1070 for additional information.

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

The collection “contains a greater number of songs that are currently shaping the future of contemporary song, and it represents more contemporary styles and idioms than have previous publications,” said Dean McIntyre, director of music resources at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

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

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

(Repitied)

Covenant United Methodist Church
631 East Front Street, Plainfield, NJ

Health & Wellness Community Fair

Free Samples, Giveaways & Children’s Activities

Other Information:
- Local
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Insurance
- Social
- Home Care
- Assistance & Much More

Participants: United Healthcare, Hanned Parsonhood, Union County Board of Social Services, Visiting Physicians, Fernside Life New Jersey, Food Stamps Make America Stronger, Prudential, PNC & Chase Banks, Valdewans, State Farm, American Heart Association, Boyhood, and many more.

DATE & TIME: Sat., April 9, 2011 10am to 3pm
PLACE: Covenant United Methodist Church 631 E. Front Street, Plainfield NJ (908) 759-2684
CONTACT: Bridget Wilson (908) 591-7834 covisandtumc@hotmail.com

(REPRINTED)

April 2011
UNITED METHODIST RELAY 11
There is Power in Numbers. Will You Be Counted?

United Methodist Churches all over the world are uniting to Change the World on May 14-15, 2011

Visit www.rethinkchurch.org/change the world to find out how your church can be involved.

Ask your church treasurer about your congregation’s progress toward becoming a 100%, First Mile First Church.

More information, visit:
www.gnjumc.org
www.umcgiving.org