

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

Volume LXI

FEBRUARY 2017

No. 2

Soul Tending Convocation Inspires Clergy

By Josh Kinney
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LONG BRANCH – A powerful Nor' Easter wreaked havoc along the beach just beyond the doors of the Ocean Place Resort where Bishop Schol sat studying his sermon notes one last time. The frothy waves rolled violently in a mist of gray as a howling wind rattled the windows. Across the hall, more than 250 clergy and their families took their seats, gathering for the 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation; a three-day retreat of learning, growth, and for this year in particular, soul-tending.



"The weather outside is a lot like our world today," Schol said, addressing the crowd. "It's also much like the church; turbulent with waves, foaming at the mouth at times," he said through a smile, rousing laughs.

Rev. Susan Beaumont, an adviser, author, coach and spiritual director who has consulted with over a hundred congregations and denominational bodies across the U.S. and Canada, was the plenary speaker with the theme of "Soul-Tending." She believes the soul is the authentic and truest self of the institution and the source of its divine calling and character; the protector of institutional integrity.

"Everything we do in church seems like a pursuit and management of knowledge," said Beaumont. "But church ought to be a place where we're cultivating wisdom, requiring understanding and moving beyond it into something we can become to transform and enlighten us."

Beaumont spoke about the church living in a season of liminality, where an old era and way of doing things has ended, and something new has not yet begun. She discussed the need for a different



Clergy witness the full picture of The Music Paradigm orchestra at the 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation at the Ocean Place Resort & Spa in Long Branch on Jan. 23-25. Photo by Josh Kinney

kind of leadership presence in a liminal season that connects the soul of leaders with the soul of the institution.

"During liminal seasons, we occupy space on both sides of a boundary or threshold," Beaumont said. "We have one foot rooted in something that is not yet over, while the other foot is planted in a thing not yet defined, something not yet ready to begin." She went on to talk about functioning with structures, identities and relationships formed by past experiences while knowing that those structures and processes will not serve adequately in the future.

"Liminality is more than people in new roles, or organizations going through transition," she said, describing it as the state of developing.

Convocation included small group sessions to help unpack the idea of institutional soul tending. Through small

groups, clergy entered a three-way conversation engaging God, the soul of the leader and the soul of the organization. Clergy learned about inviting innovation and fostering the creativity that springs from the soul of the institution to deepen capacity for discernment.

"The language of the soul is longing," Beaumont said. "The soul of an organization often expresses itself through the collective yearning of its membership body. Soul-tending work requires sharpening group discernment skills and requires deeper listening as collective yearning finds expression."

Beaumont believes tending the soul of the institution requires risk-taking, adaptation, innovation and creativity.

"It requires that we shape bold experiments from which we can learn," she said, "it requires an openness to failure

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Rev. Frank Davis will serve as the new Capital District Superintendent. Photo by Josh Kinney

Jersey City Church Makes Bold Move for Future of Mission

By Josh Kinney
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Following Jesus' death, the first acts of the apostles were simple. The diverse group of Israelites lacking positions of power, seminary training or connections to the Roman Empire gathered together in an ordinary upper room, following their directive from Jesus to go to Jerusalem and wait. There, the modest, nondescript group worshiped, fellowshiped and prayed. Ornate buildings and religious traditions paled in comparison to their newfound outbound mission.

Some two thousand years later, a similarly varied group of Christ followers gathered in a lower room; the basement of Christ UMC in Jersey City. On January 4, faithful church members took seats around a table and were joined by their pastor, Rev. Ivan Alberts, Gateway North District Superintendent Manuel Sardinias and Bishop John Schol. Collectively, the group decided it was time to get back to the roots of their faith and emphasize the making of disciples for the transformation of the community.

Some of the congregants had been

members for two years, others four, others 20, and for one, 45 years. They agreed that their elaborate church building which stood as a striking but obsolescent edifice in the heart of the city was struggling in a state of physical and fiscal disrepair, had served the body of Christ well through the years and had lived out its life.

With the church's decreasing numbers, mounting debt, and financial struggles, the small group of forward-thinking hopeful disciples held strongly to the idea that they had been called for "such a time as this" to be the ones chosen to change their city for Christ.

For some, it was thrilling, for others, uncertain, for all, an uncomfortable dance with anxiety. But in the midst of tense conversation, a vibrant boldness to step outside the familiar for the purpose of a greater mission shown through.

"The time has come for us to trust God and take bold steps of faith," said Alberts. The congregation had come to a decision to tear down their church building, work with a developer to construct a new facility on the property and create a new, modern, multipurpose space for

the congregation which would include a place of worship, daycare and programing space for mission.

Bishop Schol expressed gratitude for Alberts, the church members and pastors within GNJ willing to take risks.

"Church today is very different," said Schol, "but your courage and vision to try something new is inspiring." Remarkably, that 'something new' harkened back to something old; the original mission of the first apostles.

"The first temples ever built were within marketplaces, and they had many sections," said Schol. "They were built in the midst of their communities to engage in conversation through experiential and ecumenical cooperation and collaboration." Alberts nodded in agreement and proclaimed to the group that the vision for the future of their church was that of their faith's past and that buildings constructed long ago don't necessarily meet the present community's ministry needs.

With Christ UMC beyond the capacity to take care of, Alberts and Schol explained that they were standing on a treasure.

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Davis to Serve as Capital District Superintendent

By Josh Kinney
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Rev. Frank Davis' personal motto of "only what you do for Christ will last" is a constant motivator that stands at the forefront of his life. Currently the pastor of The United Methodist Church at New Brunswick, Davis has been appointed to serve as the Capital District Superintendent following the June 2017 retirement of Rev. Varlyna Wright.

With educational and ministerial experience in the U.K., Jamaica, Trinidad, Georgia, North Carolina and New Jersey, Davis graduated with a Bachelor of Science from The University of The West Indies and went on to earn a Master of Divinity with honors from Drew Theological Seminary.

"Frank is a passion-filled leader for the Church of Jesus Christ," said Rev. Gina Hendrickson, Northern Shore District Superintendent and Dean of the Cabinet. "He brings that passion to everything he

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A Message from the Bishop



We have a future - Part 3

I see a 20 to 50-year view of GNJ, and I am encouraged.

I grew up in a working-class Philadelphia community in which four people, all the same age, went on to significant leadership. Jimmy Bagian became an astronaut and logged 337 hours of space travel. Jerry McGinn became a head referee for college football and refereed

10 bowl games including the Rose and Orange Bowls and the National Championship. Dennis Ourlan became a captain and commanding officer in the U.S. Navy, leading strategic commands for the military. And I became a bishop of The United Methodist Church, the only slacker in the bunch. It is pretty remarkable that the four of us grew up at the same time, in the same neighborhood and all rose to significant leadership positions.

There have been sports teams who have generated championship teams year after year and organizations and companies that have been leaders in their field for decades.

Why does this happen?

This is the second in a five-part series on building and growing a regenerative church conference that is constantly generating:

- Passionate faith
- Transformative Leaders
- Vital missional congregations
- Money, and lots of it, for mission

Organizations can achieve important results and lead their fields for decades because they focus on developing a culture, mechanisms or processes that help them thrive and do a number of things well. In the church, this includes developing regenerative systems in the areas of faith, leadership, congregations and money. All four are critical to a sustainable mission.

Today I want to talk about leadership. Leadership is key to the health and growth of the church. Not only leadership at the top but leadership throughout the church. In a conference like GNJ, we need to consistently raise up, call, equip and support transformational leaders for a healthy GNJ that is making new disciples and growing vital congregations for the transformation of the world.

In my hometown in the Olney section of Philadelphia, these four leaders were made. In this community very few of our parents went to college, and yet cultivating young people who pursued challenging goals was woven into the fabric of the community. Parents encouraged their children to participate in extracurricular activities and supported them. There were high expectations of children. You worked hard, were encouraged to achieve and parents supported you. One or both of my parents came to every football game I played from the time I was seven-years-old through college. My neighborhood had a culture of developing the skills of leadership during the time I was growing up.

This same culture was infused in the United Methodist Church my family went to in our neighborhood. Over a 20-year period, 15 clergy were produced. One is the General Secretary of Archives and History, and also grew up three blocks from where I lived. Another is the head of the Salvation Army in Indiana. Another heads a church organization, and others went on to be missionaries and pastors.

Organizations, including the church, can cultivate leadership year after year. When they stop, the organization begins to decline.

Recently, I have been talking with clergy about being apostolic leaders who have a clear mission, wisdom and determination just as the leaders of the first-century church had.

Attributes of today's apostles can be understood through three characteristics – the spirit, skills and attitude of apostles.

- Spirit of Apostles - Risk taker, Innovator, Courageous, Collaborator, and Creative problem solver. Apostles have a unique spirit.
- Skills of Apostles – Builder, Developer, Explorer, and Organizer. Apostles create something that grows the mission and people.
- Attitude of Apostles – Encourager, Investor, Leader of leaders and Coach. Apostles see everyone as a potential leader and pour themselves into the development of people.

Apostles inspire people, create a bigger mission, develop people and organize the church to accomplish the mission.

Cultivating and sustaining this type of leadership today is not too unlike the community I grew up in. Setting high expectations, believing in and supporting your emerging leaders give them lots of opportunities and allow them to fail. Support them when they fail, encourage them to excel beyond their accomplishments, and give them increasing challenges.

Jesus was an apostolic leader. So were Peter and Paul. Each of them had their detractors, and each sought to develop the people around them. They never gave up, and they always lifted up the people around them. They developed new apostles by calling, equipping, challenging and supporting them.

I call upon each of our churches to spot potential leaders and prayerfully call, equip, challenge and support them. I challenge each of our congregations to give permission for your pastor to be more apostolic and to continue to support and challenge them to develop their leadership

to lead the congregation to engage in and grow more fully the mission.

In GNJ we are developing new leadership resources that create a culture of leadership, spot and call new leaders and grow our leaders to be like Christ in their attitude, skills and spirit. It is still taking shape and will include:

- Developing leaders holistically through a lay leadership development process. .
- Working with young people prior to seminary and while in seminary – our Mosaic Ministries.
- Targeting three different groups of clergy with a comprehensive leadership development program :
 - Supporting, challenging and using our most apostolic leaders to work in developing other clergy.
 - Working with clergy who are serving well and want to become apostolic leaders.
 - Working with our clergy who have not been performing well through intense skill development, growing knowledge of what to do and focus on and laser coaching that increases awareness and challenges clergy to excel.

If GNJ is to have a strong mission in 20-50 years, it will be through effective apostolic lay and clergy leadership. It will take all of us working together to develop a leadership culture that cultivates attitude, skill and spirit. I hope you will keep GNJ in your prayers as we develop our leaders.

Keep the faith!

John

If you want to read more about apostolic leadership see my article at: www.gnjumc.org/resources/bishops-remarks

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The United Methodist Relay (USPS 343-360) is published monthly by the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Office of Publication: Office of the Bishop, 205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune NJ 07753. Periodical Postage Paid at Red Bank, NJ and additional entry offices. Mailed free to selected lay leaders and clergy of each church. Others may subscribe at the rate of \$9.50 per year. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to UNITED METHODIST RELAY, 205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune NJ 07753.



EASTER IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!

Are You Ready For New Faces?

Here are **five ways to cast a wide net** and give an ever-so-gentle nudge to potential churchgoers this Easter season **to come be a part of your congregation.**

1.

MAIL OUTS

They're not as expensive as you might think. Talk to your local post office about ways to send a flyer to everyone on your mail route for less than 20 cents each. Somewhere around 5% of those people are going to stick it on their refrigerator and show up at your church on April 16.

2.

WEBSITE

Polish it up! Your web traffic is going to increase some 30% when April rolls around. Why not update your front page with a high-definition picture of happy people at church? (*Psst, while you're at it, make sure your worship times and events are up to date*)

3.

SOCIAL MEDIA

While you're polishing up that website, amp-up your social media presence. Create an "Event" for your Easter service on Facebook and start inviting people. Create a countdown to Easter and post engaging content to draw people to your accounts and pages.

4.

INVITE CARDS

Arm everyone in your congregation with 5-10 Easter invite cards and encourage them to invite their friends, family, neighbor, milkman, etc. Responses to direct invites are higher than any other medium. And in the process, everybody gets an easy course in Evangelism 101.

5.

STRENGTHS AND PASSIONS

Gearing up for Easter is a great time to play off people's passions and strengths by connecting with people based on what you know or are willing to learn about them, their interests and needs. When reaching out to people who are not part of a church, make an effort to know their situations well enough to share how being part of a faith community can enhance their lives.

BOTTOM LINE: Easter is the biggest holiday of the Christian year, so get the word out and **let your neighborhood know you've been expecting them.**

Churches Express Concern Over Immigration

By Josh Kinney
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Park UMC in Bloomfield is one of a number of churches in Greater New Jersey that is concerned about President Trump's recent executive orders on the subject of immigration and refugees.

The executive order, which bars refugees from seven majority-Muslim countries for 90 days until sophisticated vetting measures can be implemented, has been met with opposition from local, regional and national faith leaders including leaders from the United Methodist Church.

Rev. Joel Hubbard, pastor of Park UMC and an organizer of the Interfaith Partners Network, which includes Temple Ner Tamid in Bloomfield and Glen Ridge Congregational Church, expressed his disappointment.

"For my part, both Park United Methodist Church and Interfaith Partners are disappointed in the president's recent expectation of an executive order on immigration," said Hubbard.

Over the last several months, The Interfaith Partners Network, in partnership with regional and national organizations, has helped refugee families, including those from Syria, resettle in the northern New Jersey region.

Hubbard said that the network remains committed to providing care, refuge and sanctuary to the refugees in America and has reached out to Djanna Hill-Tall, chair of the Bloomfield Civil Rights Commission, about collaboration.

"What we try to do is not be knee-jerk, but to be thoughtful in our responses," Hubbard said.

Hubbard expects that the Interfaith Partners Network would likely gather to discuss the subject within the coming weeks.

In addition to the reaction from local churches, there has been a growing number of denominational leaders expressing their concern about the executive order.

The Northeastern Jurisdiction of the College of Bishops has also released a statement saying in part, "Today there is a disconnect between the position of the country and the mission of the church."

Harriett J. Olson, top executive of United Methodist Women (UMW) also made a statement of concern, "United Methodist Women takes to heart Jesus' commandment to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Throughout our 150-year history, we have carried this out by extending God's love to women, men, youth and children around the world, including immigrants and refugees."

Thomas Kemper, top executive of

the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries stated, "I pray that the Trump administration will be guided in its immigration policy by international standards of human rights and respect for migrant workers as stipulated by United Nation's Conventions."

"I am deeply troubled by the abruptness and speed of the changes that do not allow for fuller understanding and conversation especially regarding immigration," said Bishop John Schol. "While the decision may be based in law, we as disciples of Jesus Christ have a responsibility to ask moral questions as well. I call all United Methodist to pray for our nation, our president and how we engage with one another and the world."

Bishop Bruce R. Ough, President of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church released a statement in which he said, "I call upon the people of The United Methodist Church to see the face of Christ in the refugee. Say "no" to the walling off of our country and our

hearts and say "yes" to their hope – our hope – for new life. Let us unite and work together to bring the soul of this country to a living birth!" The full statement can be read at UMC.org.

The United Methodist Church's official stance regarding immigration comes from the Book of Discipline and reads:

"We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all. We oppose immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families."



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Apostles in our Midst: Rev. Sang-Won Doh and Calvary Korean UMC

A 2017 Relay series on Apostolic Leadership in GNJ

Mission: Through an apostolic vision of new discipleship, new generations, and missional outreach, Rev. Sang-Won Doh has helped lead Calvary Korean UMC to be the 5th fastest growing large United Methodist Church in the U.S. The church has grown by 126% in the past 5 years.

When Rev. Doh began his appointment in 2010, the church was in the midst of turmoil, division and a financial burden with low attendance. He led afflicted church members to healing and forgiveness, warming hearts to reconciliation through worship services and outreach. He helped tackle grave financial challenges by providing full transparency and creating "The Nehemiah Project" which sought giving and prayer commitments from volunteers in addition to usual tith-

ing with a goal of \$300,000 in three years. The church became unified and after three years and funds from the project exceeded the goal. Giving continues to this day helping to improve the church facilities and invest in their Christian education program. Under Rev. Doh's apostolic leadership, Calvary Korean experienced a compelling spiritual revival.

Living into an apostolic vision, Calvary Korean has come to run many outreach



Rev. Doh

programs. In 2011, The Calvary Outreach Center was established which features a cultural center which teaches languages, art, music and quilting, a school, community outreach education, a summer school, and a program for the elderly. The programs are open to the entire community, not just church members. Additionally, the church has conducted significant mission work in Mexico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, India and Native American Reservations. In 2014, the church held a Korean Festival to support Sandy recovery work, raising \$40,000. The Korean Festival has become a well-known and anticipated event for the community.

Through Rev. Doh's apostolic leadership, Calvary Korean has become a revitalized strong example of the

true reconciliation that comes through Christ. Their outbound missional focus has helped create new disciples for the transformation of their community.

Apostle: Rev. Sang-Won Doh pastors Calvary Korean UMC in East Brunswick. He earned a Bachelor of Theology from the Methodist Theological Seminary in Korea and an M. Div. from Drew Theological Seminary. His past appointments include Church of the Covenant in Jersey City, Monmouth Grace UMC, Knowlton UMC and Epworth UMC. Sang-Won Doh earned the Denman Evangelism Award, was part of the Board of Ordained Ministry, served as GNJ Order of Elder Co-Chair and the GNJ Connectional Table Chair. This turnaround spiritual leader has led the charge in bolstering churches through conflict resolution and growing attendance.

Celebrating a Legacy: Pat Bruger and CUMAC

By Adrian Diaz
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Rev. Patricia Bruger, Executive Director of CUMAC — the Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community — has been on the front lines of the fight against hunger for over two decades, working tirelessly to raise hunger awareness and serve those in need in New Jersey.

Bruger began her journey as an advocate and leader for the hungry in 1991, when she became only the second paid Executive Director in CUMAC's history.



She didn't know what to expect from her then part-time position, but she had a vision for CUMAC and the desire to make a difference. With Bruger at the helm, CUMAC has grown over the years from a small food pantry run out of a borrowed



Rev. Pat Bruger, Executive Director of CUMAC, soon to be retired after 26 years of faithful service. Photo provided

church closet in Paterson into a multi-service agency serving over 40,000 people in need annually, providing everything from food assistance and disaster relief to job training and supportive housing. Through Bruger's forward-thinking efforts and transformational leadership, millions of meals have been served and countless lives have been changed.

After 26 years of dedicated service, Bruger will be retiring from her position as CUMAC's Executive Director this summer, and entering retirement as an Ordained Elder of GNJ. While Bruger will certainly be missed, the impact of her career will be felt for many years to come. She has set a strong foundation for CUMAC's future, helping establish a board, staff and network that are ready to carry on the organization's mission through Bruger's transition and beyond.

"While I do not know what the next

chapter at CUMAC will be, I am certain that those who have been on the journey, and those who will join the CUMAC family, will help shape a stronger, more vibrant CUMAC that will continue to serve as long as there are persons in need" says Bruger.

CUMAC will be holding a special retirement dinner for Rev. Bruger on Thursday, April 27 at The Fiesta in Wood-Ridge, New Jersey. The retirement celebration is open to all and will feature a hospitality hour, music, dancing, dinner and some special surprises. It promises to be a festive and moving celebration. Tickets for Rev. Bruger's dinner can be purchased at www.cumac.org/events. Several sponsorship levels are also available. For those who would like to share their gratitude, there will be an opportunity to send Bruger messages of support. See CUMAC's website for more details.

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Soul Tending Convocation Inspires Clergy

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as such a rich learning environment for soul work.”

In an adjacent ballroom, Maestro Roger Nierenberg met with a group of musicians he had hired for Convocation. It was his first meeting with this group and they ran through a 30 minute practice.

Nierenberg, a former Music Director of the Stamford Symphony in Connecticut and the Jacksonville Symphony in Florida, leads a unique experience called The Music Paradigm. Since 1995, hundreds of corporations and organizations in 23 countries have engaged The Music Paradigm to mount sessions for their employees where audience members are also participants, seated within a live professional orchestra where they observe highly trained musicians perform. Each session is unscripted and authentic, uniquely customized to create a lasting impact and unforgettable memory.

“We’re doing this because it’s going to be an important experience for each one of us to continue to think about our leadership and how we lead,” said Schol as GNJ clergy filled the seats around the orchestra pit. “And we’re doing this because the leadership of Greater New Jersey thinks you are special, you are

important and that this kind of experience you are more than worthy of.”

Clergy listened as Nierenberg conducted, stopping to explain how the musicians were spontaneously available to realign for the purpose of the music which he called “the greater story.”

He praised the orchestra’s ability to trust and value each piece, acknowledging that every member played an important and vital role regardless of where they were positioned. From his perspective as the conductor, Nierenberg could grasp the full picture.

“The ability to believe in what’s possible is what makes the orchestra,” he said.

Nierenberg invited clergy to stand anywhere in the room to see the musicians from any perspective they felt most comfortable. Many joined him on stage and saw how each piece was vital to the whole performance and how they were vital to the story.

“The quality and investment made in the entire experience made me feel deeply cared for and appreciated by our bishop, staff and entire annual conference,” said Rev. Joe Monahan of Medford UMC.



The Music Paradigm provided an unforgettable experience for GNJ clergy as they witnessed and participated in the unique learning session at the 2017 Bishop’s Clergy Convocation in Long Branch. Photo by Josh Kinney

Others described the experience as “beautiful, emotional and profound” and “feeling a oneness of being part of something bigger.”

“The musicians were very moved by what you received from them,” Nierenberg told the clergy after the orchestra departed. “That says a lot about you, the capacity to feel that gratitude and love for what they did... they’re going to remember that.”

In his closing Communion Liturgy, Schol thanked God for drawing clergy back to the source of the music, acknowledging God as a trustworthy maestro.

“So go, because somewhere there’s an orchestra that’s looking for a conductor,” he said. “Go, because there are people out there who are in this in-between time, and they need a leader to just be with them. And go, because there are souls out there needing to be tended.”

Rev. Katelyn Hillis of Hopewell UMC said her favorite parts of Convocation were The Music Paradigm and the emphasis on discernment, rather than decision-making in Beaumont’s sessions. “The emphasis on pastoral leadership as enacting the task of deep listening, contemplation, self-care, slowing down



Convocation’s keynote speaker, Rev. Susan Beaumont took clergy on a journey into tending the soul of the institution. Photo by Josh Kinney

and the Spirit’s guidance was incredibly refreshing,” she said. “I also enjoyed quality time with friends in a comfortable environment.”

Rev. Judy Anne White of Trinity UMC in Newark exclaimed, “What an amazing time this has been.”

As Convocation came to a close, the raging storm dissipated, the waves quieted to a smooth green lapping, and sunlight emerged leaving a bright calm and tended souls.

Sock Rock Warms Soles and Souls in Cape Atlantic

By Denise Herschel
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As Pastor Keith Roller of the Leesburg and Delmont United Methodist Churches in Southwest Cumberland County looked at his and his wife Bonnie’s living room and dining room recently, he was witness to an unusual but heartwarming sight - two rooms overflowing with socks of all shapes, sizes and colors. To any bystander, what might appear to be just a large collection of socks is actually a mission of love for this united couple who began their quest three years ago to help the less fortunate receive this least donated but most needed item.

“When people think about donating clothing, they generally go through their closet and pick out items which they no longer wear, are out of style or doesn’t fit. It often doesn’t cost them anything to do that. They generally wear their socks until they wear out or lose one of the pair.

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GNJ Director of Worship, Eric Drew, led worship at the clergy convocation, blending upbeat with tradition to the enjoyment of all. Photo by Josh Kinney



Over 250 clergy gathered at the 2017 Bishop’s Clergy Convocation to grow, learn, and soul-tend. Photo by Josh Kinney



Rev. Ivan Alberts of Christ UMC in Jersey City is pictured praying over his colleague and brother in Christ at the 2017 clergy convocation in. Photo by Josh Kinney



GNJ Director of Connectional Ministries, Rev. Hector Burgos, lifts praises to God during worship on day two of the clergy convocation. Photo by Josh Kinney

Sock Rock Warms Soles and Souls in Cape Atlantic

Continued from page 6

If they did donate them it would be akin to donating used underwear so need I say more? We have encouraged folks to physically go out and buy new socks for those in need. It really makes a difference to the people that receive them," said Roller, who is also a practicing attorney and sole practitioner at Keith C. Roller, Esquire, P.C.

Dubbed "Sock Rock," the annual event begins November 1 and runs well into the New Year. During this time, new socks are collected at various locations in three southern counties - Cumberland, Atlantic and Cape May. This year, sock "bins" were located in 22 different churches and businesses in the tri-county area. Roller and his wife designed and then provided "Sock Rock" posters and flyers to all the locations that had bins. They also placed posters and flyers listing the business and church locations in various locations in the three counties.

Roller added that "Sock Rock" is a faith-based organization dedicated to providing new socks, the most needed and least donated item, to the homeless and the less fortunate.

"The first socks were received this year from the Central Cluster of United Methodist Churches where I delivered the message at their annual Thanksgiving Eve service on November 23, 2016. We received nearly 1,000 pairs of socks from 11 churches that night," he said. "We received approximately 300 more from the churches before Christmas.

Just before Christmas I contacted and collected the socks from the businesses that participated in the event. The business bins collected almost 1,200 pairs. My wife and I then distribute the socks in the New Year to different locations that care for those experiencing homelessness and living in the margins of society in those same three counties," he said.

Roller continued, "This year we will deliver socks to Cumberland County Family Shelter and Trinity UMC in Cumberland County, The Atlantic City Rescue Mission, Covenant House in Atlantic County and 'The Branches' and 'Family Promise' in Cape May County. We are always open to suggestions to other delivery sites in the tri-county area."

Cape Atlantic District Superintendent, Rev. Brian Roberts, said that he is excited about the difference this ministry makes; providing for people's soles and souls.

"It conveys to those receiving the socks that people care and are caring for their souls. It is a simple idea that is making a mountain, literally of socks. Almost everyone can participate. Congregations and organizations quickly capture the vision and are energized as they see the mountain of socks to give away grow," said Roberts. "It is a creative idea, much like the idea of filling a shoe box with gifts for children at Christmas."

Roller said he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to do this for the first time in 2014 and he and his wife have done it each successive year in 2015 and 2016.

"This year was our third annual event.



The Sock Rock ministry is dedicated to providing new socks, the most needed and least donated item, to the homeless and less fortunate. Photo provided

We collected 500 pairs the first year, 1,500 pairs the second year and 2,500 this year. I give God all the glory for inspiring me to start this 'make a difference' kind of event," Roller exclaimed. He added, "My wife has helped me to make it all possible ever since. The sight of all those socks piled high in boxes and bags at the Thanksgiving Eve service brought tears of joy to the eyes of both us. We sincerely hope and pray that they will continue to be a part of 'Sock Rock' for many years to come."

When asked what his hopes are for the 2017 "Sock Rock" event, Roller replied, "It's too hard to think about that at this point in time. We are still so overwhelmed with this year's response. All we can hope for is continued growth in the future as the Spirit leads us. Our goal is to one day hear that socks are no longer the most needed and least donated item. We truly believe that the body of Christ led by the power of the Holy Spirit can make that happen one day. Our God is an awesome God!"

Jersey City Church Makes Bold Move for Future of Mission

Continued from page 1

"How are United Methodists going to uncover it?" asked Schol.

GNJ Property Manager Alex Mayer addressed the group.

"The churches here in Jersey City are unique with challenges and possibilities. They each can have a future if they're willing and ready," Mayer said. "Christ UMC can be a gift to the community in terms of both housing and ministry."

Church members gathered around the table each wrote down what was most important to them regarding Christ UMC and their witness in Jersey City. In the midst of varied thoughts, ideas and opinions, the group collectively settled on missional outreach, financial stability, and continuous growth as top priorities.

"We need to take into consideration the population change here in the city and offer a worship space for new generations," one churchgoer said. Another suggested investing in music, drama and multimedia for the new facility to create a bright, vibrant and exciting worship experience.

"That's what new generations of believers will be looking for," Schol said. "And if they don't find it here they will find it elsewhere."

The group decided they wanted to live out their faith by providing opportunities and a network of services for their community so their church would be an outward presence as opposed to just an inward sanctuary. Through a writing exercise, they realized they didn't have to lose their identity as a church because at their root as Christ-followers they all sought a "welcoming, hospitable, diverse, relational, vibrant, missional, multi-cultural and Christ-centered place."

Conceding that traditional ways of church funding are in decline, the group began a discussion about engaging efforts to become entrepreneurial for sustainability; acknowledging their valuable real estate and the bold, God-sized vision before them.

"Feeding the homeless here in Jersey City seems like just a band-aid," said Alberts. "But what if we did something more, something bigger." He added, rousing inspiration, "Homeless housing is difficult, but affordable housing is possible. Low-income people are being pushed out of this area. Here we have an opportunity."

The mixed-use structure that will stand in the footprint of Christ UMC will feature affordable senior housing, office space, potential residential and or commercial space, and church space for the existing congregation to further their mission and ministry to reach their city for Christ.

"Our job is to negotiate the best deal for the church and make a place that's attractive to the community, that's useful and purposeful," said Schol, emphasizing that the church will have final approval of the space.

Many GNJ Churches Face Regenerative Challenges

Jersey City exemplifies the changes many GNJ churches are facing. Decreasing budgets and declining worship pose tough challenges and yet regenerative opportunities for churches throughout the conference.

Ready to embrace change, Christ UMC invited Jersey City's five other United Methodist churches to their basement gathering with hopes of working together in a collective effort to stay afloat by grappling with their stark realities. 70 clergy and laity from Christ UMC, Bethany Browne Memorial, Clair Memorial, Church of the Covenant, First Filipino-American and Trinity UMC's assembled to examine possibilities.

"The past has served us well, but we need to step out in faith to find new ways to cooperate and work together in consensus around a common mission," said Alberts.

Using information collected by the churches, Mayer presented a PowerPoint recognizing the serious challenges facing the congregations that jeopardize the mission and witness in Jersey City; projecting fewer than 200 United Methodist worshipers and more than \$1 million of debt in the next five years, indicating unsustainability.

"This is no one's fault but a condition of the forces outside the church and the challenge for congregations to make quicker decisions to address current realities," stated Schol.

With significantly deferred maintenance in several of the buildings, the forecast for the future of these churches as a whole is challenging. But, following the lead of Christ UMC, there is also opportunity for those willing to loosen



A parishoner from Christ UMC in Jersey City voices her thoughts at the Jan. 4 meeting. Photo by Josh Kinney

their grip on nostalgic tradition and take leaps of faith.

"There is a future for the church in Jersey City," said Schol. "We're not here to combine and create one single church, but we have to ask the question of how United Methodists can begin to work collaboratively and cooperatively to increase the witness of Christ." He continued, "We can do more together than we can by ourselves."

Church members voiced their thoughts, concerns, fears and opinions, asking questions and floating ideas of strengthening basic cooperative ministries and the potential of coming together to share certain aspects of church such as a conjoined confirmation class to provide a better experience for youth.

"What are ministries we're already doing that can be strengthened in this way?" asked Alberts.

Worship, young adults, evangelism, after-school tutoring programs, firming up the administrative work of the congregations and community service work through joint Hope Centers were ideas mentioned as ways the churches could partner to lower costs and provide better quality services and ministries.

Bearing witness to the benefits of collaboration, Emanuel UMC in Union City avoided closure by joining forces with Lafayette UMC in Jersey City. The result was a bolstered feeding ministry and a strengthened congregation and community witness. In Monmouth County, Ballard UMC, Hamilton UMC, Wall UMC, and First UMC in Oakhurst joined forces to serve their community by creating an

outreach to find, feed, and aid homeless individuals, boosting their witness as United Methodists in the community.

"Staff and clergy can work together to provide collaborative approaches to ministry in their community by using each other's gifts and talents in specific areas, lending their skills and working together to share in ministry experiences to strengthen all of the churches," Schol stated. He indicated that church members will find disagreements but, like the first apostles should agree on the central mission of Christ.

With Christ UMC already committed to moving forward, Bethany Browne and Covenant UMC's began conversations about the potential of repurposing property that could better serve the community and provide sustainable ministry and worship space for the long-term future.

"It is a privilege and pleasure to work with the conference and people of our church in dreaming a renewed mission and ministry in Jersey City," Alberts said, mentioning that in the past, Jersey City churches tried partnering in small ways. He added, "Perhaps now we need to move forward and take bold and intentional steps."

Despite demonstrating varying degrees of vulnerability, the Jersey City churches remain important to GNJ as the city is on a path to become the largest in the state.

"As leaders, our task is to inspire people to make the right decisions for the good of the mission," said Schol, expressing gratitude for those willing and ready to step out in faith and remorse for churches that have closed in GNJ by turning down regenerative solutions. "God will see us through a renewal of the congregations and communities of Jersey City as we humble ourselves, pray and lead toward the change God and we want to see. The Holy Spirit is in our midst as we face these challenges," he said. "What can we do to secure our future?"

Raquel Rebadavia, a lay leader at Trinity UMC, praised the long-term, outbound and missional-minded vision for Jersey City and GNJ as a whole; embracing the idea of returning to the apostolic roots of Christian faith.

"We need to pray for the work and ministry," she said, "and remember not to go it alone."

Churches Combine to Bolster Ministry

By Rev. Pedro Cesar Miyares and Josh Kinney
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In 2015, Emanuel UMC in Union City faced the possibility of closure due to declining membership and financial struggles and had to scale back on their feeding ministry for three months.

Since the early 1990s, the church has faithfully served the downtrodden in their community through a consistent feeding ministry. Through the years, the endeavor has faced challenges, but the possibility of closing the church would also close the feeding ministry.

"In every difficulty faced we have seen the hand of God providing for people," said Emanuel UMC Pastor, Rev. Pedro Cesar Miyares, "God is always working for God's people." Miyares and his congregation knew they needed to take bold steps of faith to create a future for their mission.

Emanuel UMC merged with Lafayette UMC, combining their ministries and keeping their doors open to those in need for Christ. In addition, the church's breakfast ministry program received support from The North Hudson PAC (Parish Action Community) which included volunteers and supplies.

"That is an example of how our connectional Wesleyan heritage allows us to be relevant and transforming agents of change within the church and for the community in a real, tangible, visible and practical way that makes a difference in changing the community," said Miyares, who believes the practical meaning of God's grace is an invitation to share with

others the abundance of the Kingdom of God.

"This is the miracle that we have been seeing every Sunday in our community at Emanuel UMC in Union City," Miyares added. "That the abundance of the Kingdom of God among us provides enough for sharing even for all the deep scarcities inherent to human beings."

Church leaders discussed and searched out different ways to maintain their homeless ministry with a clear Wesleyan understanding of social concerns and personal holiness. The ministry leaders decided to flesh out their mission by asking themselves three questions: What are we doing? What do we have to share? What new actions should we plan?

Every Sunday the ministry feeds approximately 50 people and attendance is rising. The ministry has etched a reputation as a weekly oasis for the disadvantaged.

"For us, grace's meaning is linked to the church ministry and to the Kingdom of God because we have a deep and practical vitality that can be implemented in terms of sharing hope, collaboration, compassion, service, and love and salvation for everyone who is in need, despite their material or human conditions," said Miyares.

Emanuel UMC's homeless ministry in conjunction with Lafayette UMC invites people to participate, give, and engage in their efforts. Many who receive from the ministry have asked to collaborate, volunteer, and have even brought humble offerings to help provide for the needs of other homeless people. Some ask for prayers and others remain for



In Union City, Emmanuel UMC's food ministry was kept alive and growing by joining forces with Lafayette UMC. Photo provided

the church's worship service. Several express gratitude not only for meals but for the ministry's openness to meeting physical and spiritual needs. Presently the ministry provides breakfast, prayer, thanksgiving, Bible study, and a time for exchanging insights and opinions regarding their circumstances. Through open doors, minds and hearts, the ministry provides a place for a few hours where people can feel welcome.

"So even when we're improving the materially deprived conditions for the ministry of vulnerable people, we are receiving feedback for learning how to be more open to the changes God is encouraging us to implement in our lives," said Miyares. "We as a Christian church are learning how to manage deprivation and scarcity to create hope and unity in a broken situation because we learned the lesson from our Master Jesus Christ

and from all the Christian people that preceded us."

Miyares expressed that Emanuel UMC is stronger because of their merge with Lafayette UMC. The ministry is alive for the service of God's Kingdom in a broken world.

With a vision to reach and engage people for Christ through the ministry service of the church, Miyares and his congregation seek to use human and physical resources from their community to create spaces of material, emotional and spiritual relief for the benefit of the disadvantaged in Union City.

"We believe that the miracle of multiplication of food performed by Jesus is a sign of the abundance of God's grace in the middle of a world with all kinds of scarcities," Miyares said, "but with an eagerness to receive love, justice and hope."



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**The March 2017 Issue Deadline
is February 23, 2017**

Church Time Capsule Hints at Vital Past

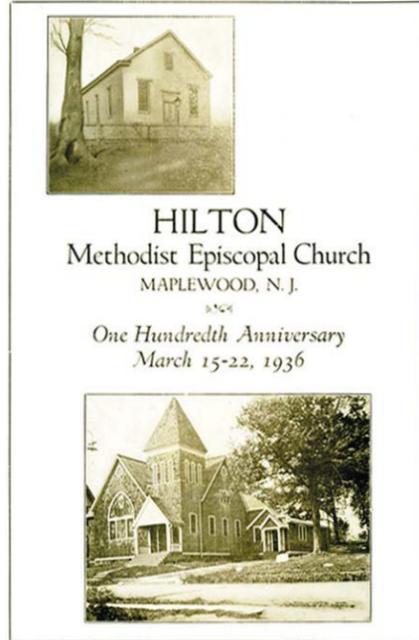
By Paula Jensen
Pj531@hotmail.com

Buildings often fall to the wayside as progress and zoning needs evolve. When this happens with a church building, it is more poignant because it represents a different sort of transition. Physical walls may crumble because of neglect and justify replacement; yet the spirit of an abandoned congregation can never be replaced - or forgotten.

After the closed Hilton UMC in Maplewood was recently sold to a developer, a time capsule was unearthed in the foundation during demolition. It was housed in a cornerstone of the building and purposely made obvious enough as to not be ignored. However, not unlike a tombstone, the cornerstone had a range of a date range 1836-1898 rather than simply the year of construction.

Not unlike a graveyard, Maplewood had its share of history that had long disappeared. Originally purchased from Lenape Native Americans in 1667, Maplewood grew as a bedroom community to Newark Township, one of the three original municipalities that made up Essex County when it was established in 1683. Now, Maplewood is a suburban town that refers to its center as a village, perhaps to recall as quaint a neighborhood feel as can be expected within four densely populated square miles. It is a far cry from the rolling farms that once made up the Hilton section, formerly called Middleville, which bordered the villages of Jefferson and South Orange.

The dates on the cornerstone have significance. The year 1836 refers to the date a vacant Universalist Church chapel, which was once a cider mill, was rented for regular Sabbath services. Purchased in 1838, it was officially named the Middleville Methodist Church. From 1836-1956, 72 pastors served this congregation. Among them is Henry Buttz, who became President of Drew Theological Seminary, which was also the source for other student pastors for

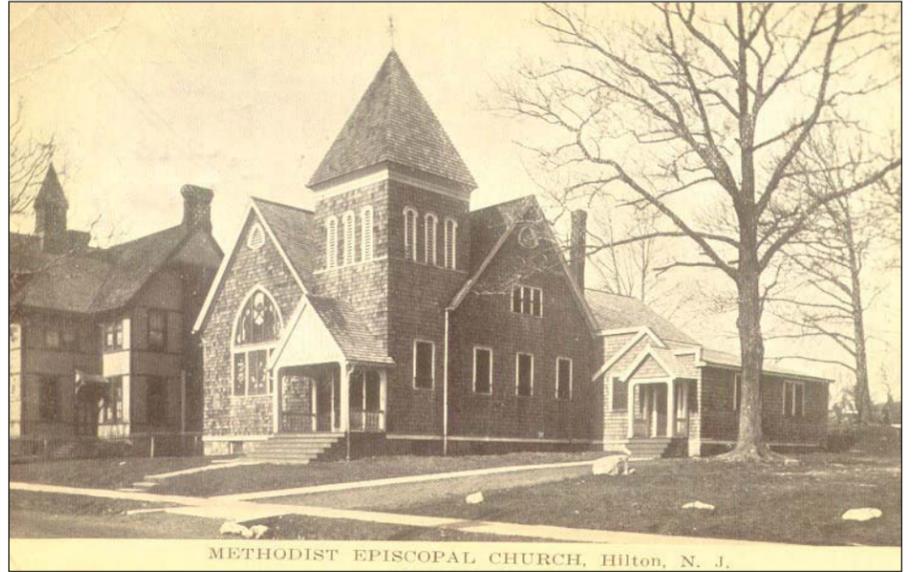


Hilton. In 1898, Rev. Jay Goodrich supervised the erection of a newer church building; hence the range of dates on the cornerstone.

At its height in the 1930s, its congregation numbered well over 300; there would be up to five services on a Sunday. A longtime member described the Hilton UMC in 1936, "the little house of God was the heart and center of a picturesque village." The congregation was proactive in the community and ran a nutrition program for seniors and housebound residents. The church celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1986. But, a decline in membership and condition of the building took its toll and it was closed in 2012.

What did the parishioners choose to leave as testimony in the time capsule? About 700 people crowded into the Hilton Branch of the Maplewood Library this January 7, to find out.

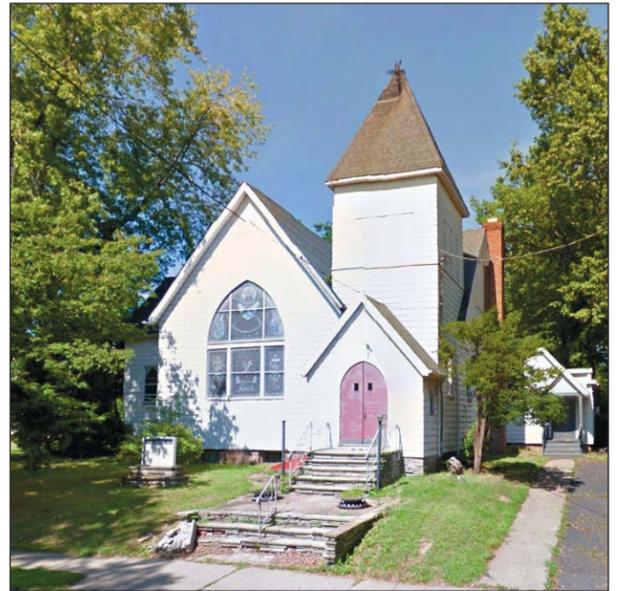
Among the items selected to put in the time capsule were a copy of The Newark Evening News of July 8, 1898. The front page ran headlines about the U.S. Navy's siege of Santiago de Cuba dur-



ing the Spanish-American War and survivors of the La Bourgoigne arriving in New York. Inside was an article on the Hilton Church dedication and an ad for Bamberger's on Market Street in Newark.

Other contents included a copy of the New Testament, handwritten lists of the officers and members of the church, a picture of the church, and a letter dated July 7, 1898. There were business cards for the pastor, the mason and other contractors who built the church, an invitation for the laying of the cornerstone on July 9, 1898 at 4:00 p.m. and an advertisement for services and a revival meeting. Lastly,

there was 19 cents: 4 pennies dated 1898, one dime and one nickel. The items in this time capsule preserve the faith of those who worshipped there. It is almost as if Rev. Goodrich anticipated the demolition of the Hilton



A 119-year-old time capsule was unearthed at the former Hilton UMC in Maplewood. Photos are provided.

Church long before its time. The loss of the building does not change the humanity served by those pews. The time capsule is a reminder that faith continues beyond the building.



The KO-AM Cross-Cultural Ministry Pastors' PaCE Group

By Rev. Jennifer Cho
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Powerful cross cultural ministry is growing out of peer learning with Northern region pastors. Six Korean-American pastors serving in cross-cultural appointments created the KO-AM PaCE Group to find a place of mutual support and growth?

PaCE, which stands for Pursuing Clergy Excellence, is a resourcing opportunity facilitated by Greater New Jersey. Clergy have the opportunity to from peer learning groups to grow their ministry within peers and support each other to become better pastors.

In the northeastern part of GNJ Conference in Morris, Sussex, and Warren counties, Korean-American pastors are serving churches faithfully, but, because of significant physical distances from

each other, they have felt isolated and disconnected. When GNJ leadership introduced the idea of forming PaCE Groups, these pastors met and agreed to organize their own group called the "KO-AM PaCE Group." It is a unique group where the cultures and ideologies of the East and West intersect.

They began as a monthly group for fun, food, and fellowship. They share stories as a powerful tool for community building. The group meets at a different church each month and learn about each other's joys, struggles, hopes and dreams in ministry. They pray together for the host pastor and his or her church. One pastor said, "What we are experiencing when we get together is a genuine sharing of love and support for each other. We experience God's healing and new hope."

The KO-AM group also provides op-



Pictured above: a collage of the KO-AM Cross-Cultural Ministry Pastors' PaCE Group. Photos provided.

portunities for its clergy spouses to come for a time of good conversation and connection. Oftentimes, clergy spouses feel isolated as well and the fellowship of the spousal group is equally important.

The KO-AM PaCE group spends its time and energy on mutual learning and growing for pastoral excellence, vital pastoral spirituality, and fruitful ministry. The group uses GNJ resources and other

materials to help its group discussion on various topics in ministry. Soon after Christmas, they met for a day of group retreat. Each pastor facilitated discussions on Healthy Spirituality, Self-Care, Pastoral Care, Visioning for Ministry, Cultural Competency, and PaCE Group Experience. They will continue to meet each month and are planning to have another retreat during the season of Lent.

GNJ Moves to Church Mutual for Property Insurance

By Josh Kinney
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To better serve churches in the Greater New Jersey Conference, GNJ has moved its property insurance from United Fire Group (Mercer) to Church Mutual.

Church Mutual is the leading insurer of worship centers and related organizations in the U.S. and will cover the conference with lower premiums and provide greater coverages.

The move was instigated as a result of rising costs. Over the last two years, several expensive property claims were paid on behalf of a number of Greater New Jersey churches resulting in rising premiums over the years and a significant increase in premiums for churches under our former provider and policy with Mercer.

"Insurance claims need to be made carefully because they affect all of our churches," said Alexa Taylor, GNJ's Benefits Services Manager. "When someone has a claim that's expensive, it affects everyone under that policy. We encourage churches to make good choices so that increases in premium are kept to a minimum."

"Church Mutual's motto is to take a proactive approach as opposed to a reactive approach on risk management," said GNJ Property Manager, Alex Mayer. "They're a fantastic choice, and they have a lot of useful tools and resources GNJ churches can take advantage of and utilize."

With churches at risk for water damage from burst pipes, Church Mutual is taking preventative measures by providing churches with free wall mounted devices to monitor temperatures and sense moisture that can send alerts to church leaders via a cell phone app.

"What I am so pleased about is that

we've been talking about educating congregations and church leadership on how to make the most out of property insurance management," said Barbara Gruezke, GNJ's Insurance Administrator. She encourages church leaders to read the weekly GNJ Digest e-newsletter for updates, and FAQ's regarding property insurance, workplace accidents and liability claims.

"We have a unified policy for all of our churches because we want every church to have the same coverage," stated Gruezke.

Church Mutual provides self-inspection safety checklist booklets for worship centers and related facilities. The booklets are designed to help prevent or reduce property, liability, theft, workers' compensation and vehicle losses. They encourage churches and organizations to screen job applicants, current employees and volunteers, especially those who interact with children, the elderly or other



GNJ Property Manager Alex Mayer meets with Church Mutual representatives at the Mission and Resource Center. Photo by Josh Kinney



GNJ Insurance Administrator, Barbara Gruezke and GNJ Benefits Services Manager, Alexa Taylor discuss the benefits of Church Mutual during a meeting at the Mission and Resource Center. Photo by Josh Kinney

vulnerable populations to promote safer, more secure environments while avoiding high direct and indirect costs arising from criminal or harmful behavior.

Additionally, Church Mutual's Risk Control Consulting and Research Center carefully researches individual questions and offers solutions to meet the unique needs of churches and organizations. Their website offers safety resources to help churches protect their properties by taking precautionary measures to avoid financial and emotional distress. Resources include brochures, posters, checklists, videos, articles and webinars covering a wide range of topic areas, each carefully selected to meet the unique needs of churches.

Visit www.churchmutual.com for more information.

Evaluations Seek to Assess and Grow Leadership

By Carolyn Conover
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With a goal of making the work of Greater New Jersey leadership transparent and relevant, in 2016, leadership in GNJ rolled out a series of evaluations to assess GNJ ministry and effectiveness. The first of these evaluations focused on conference staff and leadership.

"Evaluations can make us defensive. We internalize what people say or what they didn't say. We feel vulnerable and uneasy," said Bishop John Schol about the evaluation process. "It's difficult work, but like all things difficult, they can make us stronger leaders and help move our mission forward by growing our ministry."

This first evaluation on GNJ and its leadership, mission and resourcing was made available by email and through the GNJ Digest to all clergy and lay leaders within the conference. The goal of the assessment was to evaluate the services clergy and congregations receive and provide feedback on if the resources we are offering are done with excellence and conviction. The evaluation will be done twice a year.

The evaluation was open for two weeks in late September and 524 laity and clergy participated. The results were posted on GNJ's website for all to review and given to teams of staff who reviewed the percentages and comments to identify how they can progress and build up

ministry within GNJ. Goals were set with the intention of measuring growth with each new survey conducted.

"There are important areas for us to improve," said Schol, who praised GNJ for a dedicated staff that excels in their work. "They have made substantial headway over the last several years and implemented changes that are expanding GNJ ministry. I am blessed to serve with this staff team."

The other two surveys which will roll out in 2017 are for congregations and pastors who serve congregations.

The congregational survey will be done once a year in August or early September. District Superintendents will use it as part of the charge conference

conversation every fall.

The clergy survey will be done once a year in April. April was intentionally scheduled so that it would be separated from appointment and salary conversations. This evaluation is meant to clarify expectations, set development plans and grow clergy leadership. It is not meant to identify a pastor's next appointment or salary. The goal is to provide healthy feedback to pastors.

To develop the evaluations, GNJ staff worked with more than 50 clergy and church leaders and received input from the Board of Ordained Ministry. They have been tested by clergy, SPRC chairpersons, lay leadership and congregations.

Davis to Serve as Capital District Superintendent

Continued from page 1

does. His leadership impacts not only the communities and churches he's served, but on the district and conference level."

Hendrickson praised Davis' gifts, vision and passion as a "gift to the Capital District and Central Region" in the collective work of making disciples of Christ.

Although Rev. Davis' secular experience is in finance, he has worked in various backgrounds and conditions and has done extensive work with 'at-risk' youth. He counsels many across the country and has served churches in a variety of communities in North Carolina, New York and New Jersey. He has led congregational growth and vitality in each appointment he's served and is known for being highly relational and deeply committed to ministry.

"I am constantly reminded that we are not human beings having a spiritual experience," said Davis, "Rather we are spiritual beings having a human experience."

Bishop John Schol describes Davis

as a "transformational leader who will connect well with the congregations and pastors." Schol praised Davis' deep love for Christ and the church, admiring his "relational heart" and "strategic mind."

Raritan Valley District Superintendent Drew Dyson said Davis is "an extraordinary pastor who leads with passion, grace and hope." He added, "Frank cares deeply for people and he's engaged in the community. He leads with integrity and I look forward to working with him on the cabinet. I trust that GNJ will be truly blessed by this gifted pastor."

With a love for traveling to exotic places and sampling a variety of cultural cuisines, Davis' passion for chocolate borders on obsessive. Depending on who is playing and on what day, his favorite football teams are the New York Giants and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Davis' focus and desire is to work with congregations and clergy to develop spiritual leaders and grow vital congregations for the transformation of the world.



Bishop John Schol welcomes Rev. Frank Davis as new Capital District Superintendent. Photo by Josh Kinney

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

Scholarship Opportunities

The GNJ Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry is now accepting applications for the 2017 scholarship opportunities. A letter was mailed to each church and information can be found on the GNJ website – www.gnjumc.org
 Deadline: March 31.

Collingswood VBS Raises Funds for A Future With Hope

A donation of \$718.50 was collected by VBS kids and parents of First UMC in Collingswood using video clips from the website. VBS kids and their parents were challenged to reach a goal that was set by using a submarine which went from one end of the stage to the other as the giving grew. The kids were very excited to see the submarine move every day and make it all the way across.
 A Future With Hope has now completed a total of 254 homes with the help of 11,741 volunteers. Of those volunteers, over 2,500 were under the age of 35. As a whole, these hard-working volunteers represent a labor value of \$7,864,725.30. Be a part of A Future With Hope's dedicated mission of helping the estimated 3,500 people still in the recovery process by volunteering or contributing at www.afuturewithhope.org

UM Judicial Council to Meet in Newark in April

The United Methodist Judicial Council will hold its spring meeting April 25-28 at the Hilton Newark Penn Station Hotel. Their semiannual meetings are scheduled on a rotating basis throughout the denomination. Council meetings are not open to the public except for scheduled oral hearings. Bishop John Schol has been invited to lead a service of Holy Communion prior to the oral hearing on Tuesday, April 25.

2017 Lay Ministry Recognition Nominations

The Board of Laity has developed a system to honor our laity and celebrate their ministry through "Lay Ministry Recognition Awards." To nominate a person or group in a GNJ church for Lay Ministry Recognition to honor their creativity and innovation in transforming lives and making disciples of Jesus Christ, complete the nomination form at www.gnjumc.org. The laity will be recognized on April 22, 2017 at the Mission and Resource Center. All are invited to come and celebrate us the work of those people whose faith journey has been exemplary in GNJ.

Cheesman and Wolfe Receive Excellence in Care Awards

Cited for Stellar Interactions and Compassion



NEPTUNE, N.J. — LeadingAge New Jersey, a statewide association of not-for-profit senior care organizations advancing quality aging services, recently presented eight Excellence in Care awards. Two honorees represented United Methodist Communities, Joanne Cheesman, a certified medication aide at The Shores (Ocean City) and Amanda Wolfe, a community life assistant at Francis Asbury (Ocean Grove).

"With a 14-year reputation for stellar interactions with The Shores' residents and their families, I have come to know Joanne Cheesman's work ethic and capability. She demonstrates the perfect combination of emotional and direct care support," exclaimed Pam Garofolo, director of memory support.

Cheesman set up tasks, personalized laundry services, made recommendations for meals, assistance with eating schedules and best methods for Bridges at The Shores. Additionally, she brainstormed with others to determine activities that matched each residents' abilities.

Amanda Wolfe, an associate of United Methodist Communities at Francis Asbury, The Shores' sister community, also garnered an award. Richard Johnston, executive director, tells of Wolfe's persistence, compassion and service, "When a very independent resident experienced a life-threatening fall, I believe Amanda

literally saved his life — he effectively had given up. With persistence, Amanda visited him every day. They developed a bond — the connection brought him, for the most part, back to his previous persona."

Wolfe involves residents in planning and implementing arts and crafts, weekly reminiscence discussions and the favorite proper Ladies English Tea events.

In 2011, United Methodist Communities committed to a 10-year term sponsoring the LeadingAge New Jersey Excellence in Care Awards. They recognize outstanding nominees from LeadingAge New Jersey member organizations in direct staff positions who have enhanced the lives of residents or staff through acts of kindness, giving and selfless care and support with exceptional quality and passion.

To view a video highlighting Cheesman, visit <https://youtu.be/UaX0hOe-ujg>. For additional information about United Methodist Communities at The Shores or Bridges at The Shores, visit UMCommunities.org/TheShores or call Patti Smith at 609-399-8505.

To view a video highlighting Wolfe, visit <https://youtu.be/ZTlxie7KQs0>. For additional information about United Methodist Communities at Francis Asbury or Patricia Darcey at 732-774-1316.

About United Methodist Communities



United Methodist Communities is a not-for-profit organization guided by a volunteer board of directors affiliated in ministry with the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey. The mission of the United Methodist Communities is compassionately serving in community so that all are free to choose abundant life. With over 109 years of continuous operation, the organization has grown to ten communities offering affordable senior housing, independent and assisted living, long term care, rehabilitation, memory support, respite, and hospice to persons of all faith backgrounds. In 2016, United Methodist Communities launched HomeWorks, which focuses on in-home care for seniors. For additional information call (insert name and telephone number of appropriate contact).



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 The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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