

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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Grant Boosts Next Generation Initiative

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

NEPTUNE – For GNJ, another reason to rejoice has arrived on the heels of May's Annual Conference session. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) awarded GNJ with a \$197,620 grant to cultivate young people for ministry. The Young Clergy Initiative administered through the agency seeks to increase the number of young clergy in the United Methodist Church by helping youth and young adults discern what vocation God may be calling them into.

The spring, Drew Dyson, Raritan Valley District Superintendent, and Trey Wince, GNJ Director of New Disciples, submitted a grant application to the initiative through the GBHEM. Funds will provide high school summer internships, college and year-long seminary residencies, as well as program funding for training initiatives.

"We are extremely excited about this award and look forward to working together to help high school, college and seminary students continue moving towards ordained ministry in GNJ," exclaimed Dyson. He added, "This is a huge award for GNJ and should be celebrated!"

The GBHEM Staff Team and Board of Director's Selection Team reviewed the application and thought it was a good match for funding support. The Young Clergy Initiative is another first for GNJ and opens a new door of opportunity to boost Next Generation enterprises that were passed at Annual Conference.

The grant enables GNJ to strategically link high school students with summer internships, college students with part-time youth leader positions, seminary students with multiyear co-pastoring positions through the Mosaic Ministries

program, and seminary graduates with full-time associate pastoral apprenticeships at some of GNJ's leading, most vital churches.

"In the past few years, we have invested in a few key churches near our seminaries using initiatives like Mosaic, Training Hub, church internships, and The Feed Truck to recruit and train young pastors," said Wince. "By leveraging these relationships with these few churches during the past four years, we have seen over 40 talented young adults help lead United Methodist Church ministries."

The grant supports a strategic and

specific initiative committed to encourage, recruit and train Christian leaders from ages 16-30. Rather than allow students to fall through the cracks as they transition from youth to college GNJ is building a system that strategically encourages students to discern their vocational future throughout their teens and twenties. The goal is to provide ample opportunity for young people to "try on" these vocational hopes in significant leadership roles at a much younger age than what's typically available.

"We have already established the necessary systems," said Dyson. "Now we'll be able to scale these endeavors to

the level of high impact that we feel called to make as a conference."

With a commitment to intercultural competency, leaders recruit diverse young leaders that reflect the region. The process of identifying key, healthy churches that would benefit from and invest in the leadership of young people in various stages of development has already begun.

"We look forward to working with Drew and Trey on the grant and how it can further the GNJ mission and benefit all of GNJ," said Bishop John Schol, who expressed gratitude for their innovative and entrepreneurial spirits.



GBHEM awarded GNJ with a \$197,620 grant to cultivate young people for ministry, boosting the Next Generation initiative passed at this year's Annual Conference. Pictured above: Kids at IGNITE 2016 pose together inside the Wildwoods Convention Center. Photo by Shari DeAngelo



Abdul Alargha and his wife Rana share their story of fleeing war-torn Syria for refuge and a second chance at life in the U.S. at a Syrian Supper Club meal hosted by members of Morrow Memorial UMC in Maplewood. Photo by James Lee

Syrian Refugee Receives Visit From Jesus

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

MAPLEWOOD, N.J. – Guests packed the intimate dining room inside the Farfan's home in Maplewood, N.J., Morrow Memorial United Methodist Church members were hosting their first Syrian Supper Club with their friend Abdul Alargha who sat at the head of the table beaming, welcoming each guest, shaking hands,

and introducing himself. With a quiet sigh, the once successful Damascus businessman turned refugee, and now asylum recipient, leaned back in his chair, gently clasping his wife's shoulder. No longer destitute on the streets of Manhattan, Alargha was secure and settled in the welcoming embrace of New Jersey United Methodists who defied societal predispositions, fearful skepticism and

Continued on page 8

IGNITE Through Lens of Mission, Outreach

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

For some ministry leaders in GNJ, the mission of IGNITE isn't just to reach young people but rather the exact opposite. A nuanced perspective that's beginning to grow in GNJ is the idea of seeing IGNITE through the lens of mission and outreach in an effort to embolden an older generation to become active in seeking to further the ministry of the next.



Rev. Gina Yeske, GNJ's new Director of Small Groups and former Senior Pastor at Simply Grace UMC in Bloomsbury, is one of them. In 2014 and 2016, Yeske brought groups of students to IGNITE that included members of the church's youth group as well as students from the surrounding community. For Yeske, IGNITE was more about reaching the community and growing her youth group by using IGNITE as an outreach vehicle.

Creative, out-of-the-box thinking has engulfed IGNITE, which over the last two years has transformed from an annual youth weekend in Ocean City to an experience and movement in Wildwood. Rev. Shelley Smith, Senior Pastor of

Ferry Ave UMC in Camden recalls the exciting opportunities youth events and outreaches provided her growing up and the value she placed upon those unique life-altering experiences. When the first IGNITE conference debuted, Ferry Ave's youth group was just getting started as a part of the Camden Urban Ministry Initiative (CUMI) which is made up of six United Methodist Churches.

"The initiative joins us together to allow our youth to take part in IGNITE," said Smith. "The students who came out experienced something new and different and caught a glimpse of the bigger picture of what being a part of a youth group in GNJ looks like." Smith explained that the students at Ferry Ave returned from IGNITE inspired and wrote essays about their experience.

"We hope the initiative and IGNITE continue to grow in ministry together," she said, "and that we can work to be more collaborative."

Smith believes young people are the best suited to connect with other youth, so she encourages adults to empower them to invite their friends, establish scholarships and create street teams centered around IGNITE.

"The key is working with friends, family, colleagues and our church families

Continued on page 7

A Message from the Bishop



Honor, Disrupt, Align - The actions of a transformational leader

Today, change is no longer an option for the church, it is required to make new generations of disciples and to be engaged in meaningful mission in the community. The change that is needed is not surface or cosmetic change, but deep change, disruptive change. With deep change comes resistance.

Resistance is the measure of how passionate the leader is about ideas, new ministry, growth and change. The more a leader leans into new ideas and change, the more the leader encounters resistance.

Resistance is also the measure of a congregation's commitment to the values, traditions and ministry of the congregation. Resistance is encountered when a leader steps out in faith with a bold idea or vision. Resistance can be clarifying and an opportunity for growth and development.

When leaders encounter resistance, they should thank God because there is passion, commitment, new possibility and an opportunity for everyone to grow and be further shaped by God.

This is the first of a three-part series about what effective transformational leaders do as they encounter resistance as they lead toward health and vitality – *they honor, disrupt and align.*

In the first century, the city of Athens had altars to every god. Everywhere in Athens there was a different altar. The Athenians wanted to be so sure that they did not offend any god that they even had an altar to an unknown god. When the Apostle Paul visited Athens, he didn't come into town brandishing the Gospel with hell, fire and brimstone against their pantheistic ways but began by saying to them, *I can see that you are a very religious people, having so many altars to the different gods including one that you do not even know about.* Acts 17:15-34

Paul began by honoring the religiousness which opened the opportunity to preach about the resurrection of Christ Jesus. He did not agree with their pantheism, but he recognized their spirituality and honored them for it. Once the Athenians experienced Paul's honoring their religiousness they were more willing to listen. While some sneered at his preaching, others came to believe.

Sometimes leaders begin right away with what is wrong, with what needs to be fixed. In essence, they communicate intentionally or unintentionally that what people have been doing in the past is wrong and must be changed, and that the leader can fix it. They do not honor people's hard work, dedication, commitment, values and history.

Every leader should begin by honoring something within the life of the congregation. Lovett Weems, the Director of the Lewis Center at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. said, *every new pastor should find something to honor their predecessor.* He encourages pastors who are starting new appointments to honor their predecessor even if he or she was not very good, and find something to be positive about.

In my first appointment after seminary, the church and community were undergoing change. Many older, more established middle income families had moved away and poorer people were moving in. There was an older couple in the congregation, Billie and Rooker who were from the previous middle class generation of the community. Steeped in tradition, and a more formal engagement with people, it was a bit of a surprise to find them living in the community that had been through significant change. With a tight grip they held onto the past and stayed rooted, but resisted most of the change in the church and were not happy. I feared that it would become personal, that their resistance and even anger would take on a form of personal criticism of the leaders. I made it my priority to visit them a couple of times a month in their home. We would have tea and cookies and talk about the old neighborhood and about their parents. I would thank them for staying in the neighborhood when most of their friends and neighbors had left, for being longtime, faithful and generous giving members of the church. They never agreed with the changes but after I started visiting, it never became personal. They voiced their concerns in meetings and voted against things but they continued to participate and give generously. I visited them a couple of times a month for a year and then began to visit less and less until it was a couple of times a year.

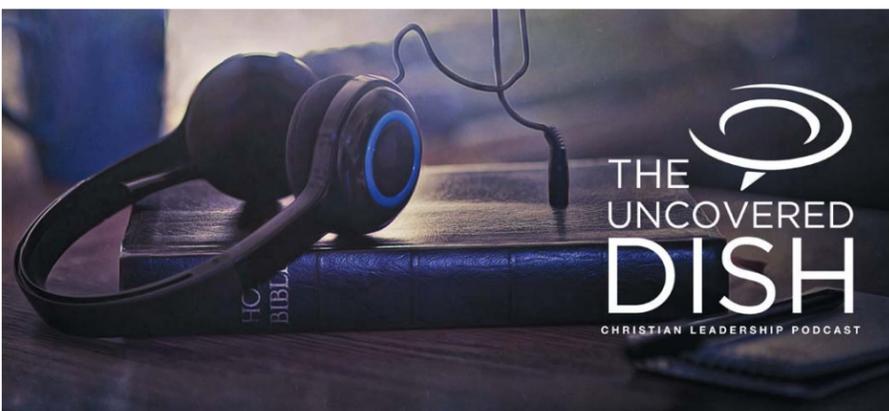
When we honor past leaders, present disciples and past ministry, it lets people know that they are appreciated and respected. Some leaders seek to isolate people who have a different opinion or see them as resisters rather than recognizing that they too have some piece of truth and an experience that is important to understand and honor.

Healthy honoring goes deep, not surface comments. It recognizes the holy in others, the sincere efforts of others, and the best of others. When somebody disagrees with us, even tries to thwart a leader's good ideas, how a leader responds either invites a person or congregation into a deeper conversation or creates deeper resistance. This requires deep listening, building on the best of others and finding common ground. It doesn't mean that a leader never disagrees, or doesn't tackle the harder issues. It means we begin first by honoring. The honoring never stops. It is constant throughout the leader's ministry, not only when they first arrive.

Paul entered Athens and said, *I see you are a very religious people.*

John Schol, Bishop
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

**The August 2017 Issue
Deadline is July 23, 2017**



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THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

John R. Schol, Bishop

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey
205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune, NJ 07753

Rev. Christopher Heckert, Chair, Commission on Communication
856.429.0403, ext. 209 | checkert@haddonfieldumc.org

RELAY STAFF

Josh Kinney, Editorial Manager
732.359.1047 | jkinney@gnjumc.org

Carolyn Conover, Director of Communication and Development
732.359.1016 | cconover@gnjumc.org

Brittney Reilly, Online and Digital Communication Manager
732.359.1040 | breilly@gnjumc.org

Denise Herschel, Contributing Writer
nj6pack@yahoo.com

Rev. Melissa Hinnen, Contributing Writer
melissa.hinnen@nyac-umc.com

New Subscriptions, renewals, address changes, and corrections should
be addressed to Beverly Karlovich, bkarlovich@gnjumc.org or by mail to:

United Methodist Relay | 205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune NJ 07753

FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION and PLACEMENT
Josh Kinney, jkinney@gnjumc.org

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SERVOLUTION

noun | serv·o·lu·tion | \,ser-və-'lü-shən\

Definition of SERVOLUTION: a radical commitment to disrupting mission as usual and connecting with community

The month of July is one in which we recall the independence and revolutionary spirit of our country. We grill steaks to perfection, lay out the lawn chairs and set off the fireworks. However, July may also be an opportunity to start a servolution or a radical commitment to disrupting mission as usual and connecting with community over more than just a hotdog.

5 STRATEGIES TO START A SERVOLUTION!

1 BE BRAVE: Jesus' call to make disciples of all nations is a call to a life of adventure! To serve God and meet Jesus on the mission field we must be brave or unafraid of new people, new places and new ways of experiencing God.

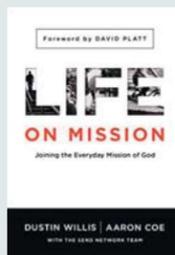
2 HUDDLE UP: When is the last time your mission team's leadership intentionally studied or read a new resource together? Huddle up this summer and inform your servolution by reading one of these resources:



Servolution: Starting a Church Revolution through Serving
by Dino Rizzo



Life on Mission: Joining the Everyday Mission of God
by Dustin Willis & Aaron Coe



Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life
by Jeff Vanderstelt



3 GOAL BIG: This summer, commit to a mission that is bigger, larger and grander than anything that your congregation has done before. Big goals reflect a Big God- who is able to supply all of our needs on the mission field.

4 SET UP A SCOREBOARD: When you've identified where your servolution will have impact, make sure it's front and center for your congregation. Have a Service Scoreboard (number of people served, money raised, meals served, cans collected, trainings completed) on your social media page, church website and bulletin boards to keep people moving towards the goal!

5 CELEBRATE THE WIN(S): Plan at the outset regular moments of evaluation and celebration of what God is doing through your congregation's service. Congregations replicate what we reward- and celebrating your servolution will encourage leaders and honor God.

When your SERVOLUTION has ended please share what you're doing so that others might bring the same transformation to their communities!

Methodist Connection Partners Relay with Printer

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

WILLIAMSTOWN – From October to May, on the first Saturday of the month, Cross Keys UMC in Williamstown hosts a Variety Breakfast to connect the church and the community. John Dreisbach is one of three omelet makers who consistently work the event and takes pride in his role cooking quality foods.

As a church member for the last 15 years, Dreisbach served as Chairperson of the Pastor Parish Relations (PPR), and a member of the Finance Committee and Administrative Council. He's currently a member-at-large on Council and serves as a member of the Trustees and Men's Group. His two adult sons, Luke and Mike, have participated in the church's Red Bird Mission in Kentucky and his

family has been involved with Sandy relief efforts through A Future With Hope. He's also Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Evergreen Printing Company in Bellmawr and a faithful reader of The Relay.

"It occurred to me that it would be a good idea to offer and make available our services at Evergreen," said Dreisbach.

Relay readers may have noticed a sturdier, crisper, brighter and more colorful newspaper since operations were moved to Evergreen earlier this spring. The upgrade has boosted quality, color and efficiency while also saving significant costs; upwards of \$8,000 annually.

Just outside Philadelphia in suburban South Jersey, Evergreen prints daily, weekly, and monthly publications for regional, national, and international publishers including clients like POLITICO,



Through a United Methodist connection at Cross Keys UMC, The Relay has partnered with Evergreen Printing in Bellmawr for printing, boosting quality, color, and efficiency while saving costs. *Photo provided*

The Columbia University Review and The Financial Times of London.

Recently, Evergreen was selected as a winner in the 2017 Neographics Power of Print Awards by the Printing Industries of America and Graphic Arts Association. The company was recognized with four "best of category" awards for heatset and cold web publication print quality.

"We're proud of our quality and each employee's contribution in producing quality work," said Evergreen President, Carmen Pinto.

Dreisbach is also proud to take on The Relay's print job with great care, as

he sees the paper as an extension of his greater church family.

"As a church family – we are fortunate to have many members that have been a part of Cross Keys for a lifetime," said Dreisbach. "And with new faces, the personality of our church is inviting, providing a desire to be a part of the spiritual feeling and mission that the Lord provides as we serve God through each other."

For Dreisbach and the GNJ Communications Team, keeping The Relay in the connection helps further that service.

Evaluations Assess and Grow Leadership

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

NEPTUNE - With a goal of making the work of Greater New Jersey leadership transparent and relevant, GNJ leadership rolled out a series of evaluations to assess ministry and effectiveness. The first of these assessments focused on GNJ staff and administration. The second, which will rolled out in the spring is for clergy. The third and final evaluation is focused on congregations and has been included as part of the church conference forms.

"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 of 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."

The clergy evaluation provides pastors with feedback about their leadership and progress. It is done outside clergy appointments and salary reviews because it is to be focused on providing the pastor with what they are doing well, clarify expectations and set development plans for growth. It is not meant to identify a pastor's next appointment or salary rather its goal is to provide healthy feedback.

The GNJ Leadership evaluation for staff and administration is being conducted twice a year and all clergy and lay are encouraged to participate. Links to the survey are sent in the fall and spring and included in the GNJ Digest to encourage participation. The goal of the assessment is what resources are done with excellence and what needs improvement.

The evaluation was open for two weeks in September and then again in March with 855 laity and clergy participating so far. 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 improve resources and communication. 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 congregation evaluations are being added to the church conference paperwork that is completed each summer. The evaluation is to be completed by Church Council and gives the leaders of the congregation and opportunity to assess their strengths and weaknesses, flagging areas they would like to discuss with their district superintendents.

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.

"Our congregations, lay leadership, and clergy have been working with us so we excel in our ministry to equip spiritual leaders to make disciples and grow vital congregations for the transformation of the world," said Schol. "We have made a number of changes over the last several years, and together we're beginning to see growth and fruit from our ministry."



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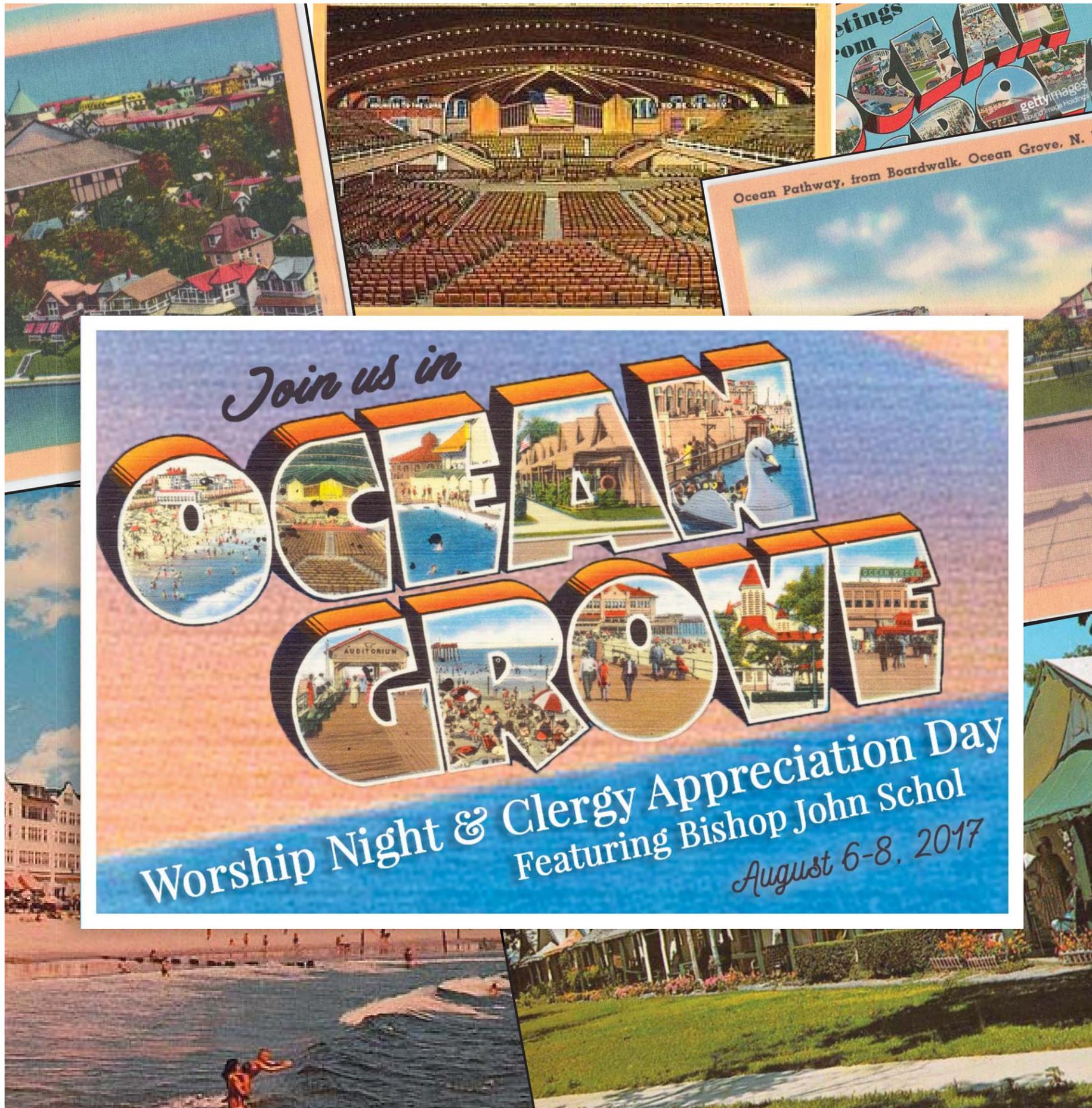
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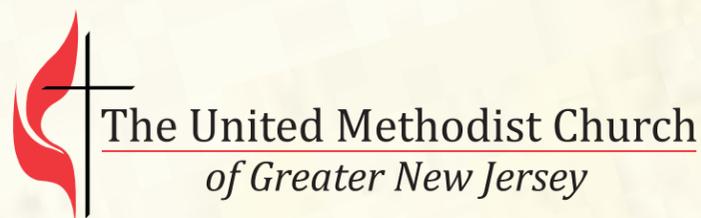


Registration now open!

Bishop John Schol will be featured at a Night of Worship in Ocean Grove this summer on Aug. 6. in collaboration with the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association.

All are invited to join in worship. On Monday, Aug. 7, GNJ will honor clergy and their families in a special Clergy Appreciation Day.

Register today at:
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Juel Nelson's Leadership Legacy Comes Full Circle

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

NEPTUNE – At the time, the laity at New Dover UMC in Edison didn't know what God had in store, but they knew it was their calling to pour into the life of one of their youngest members. It was 1987, and seven-year-old Juel Nelson had become a priority to the laity of the diverse, multicultural congregation.

Nelson started attending the church with her parents soon after an accident left her father unable to drive for some time. "Believing God had a hand in saving his life," Nelson said, "we walked to the closest church."

That church happened to be New Dover UMC. The laity welcomed and drew near to Nelson. By 13 she was invited to preach her first sermon, preaching every year after. It was during these formative years while attending the Christian Outreach Project at Aldersgate where Nelson said she really "claimed Jesus as her own."

"I walked away from that experience changed," she said. "I knew God had a bigger purpose for me, but I wasn't quite sure what it was yet."

Pressing on in her faith, Nelson attended St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia because of the school's high level of hands-on mission projects. Having come from a congregation that rooted her in a genuine love of diversity, her education provided "wonderful, rich, and amazing experiences" where she



Rev. Juel Nelson, GNJ's Director of Leadership, is a passionate disciple who believes that recruitment and leadership development of clergy and laity is essential for the growth of vital congregations. Photo by Josh Kinney

"saw God in all things." From a Peace and Reconciliation Center in Northern Ireland to a Navaho Reservation in New Mexico, to Philadelphia soup kitchens, Nelson immersed herself in mission. She worked for a Welfare Rights Union while she studied English education and did student teaching.

During a powerful communion service on Market Street in Philadelphia, Nelson heard a clear call. "I knew then I was called to celebrate communion with the people within and beyond the walls of the church," she said. "And yet, during all of this time I was nervous to surrender to

the call to be a pastor."

While teaching at a Middle School in Hillside, NJ, Nelson applied to seminary despite not knowing how she would come up with the funds.

"I trusted God and thought if it were meant to be, the money would come," she said. And it did. With the help of scholarships, particularly the Education Society of GNJ, Nelson graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary debt free. While at Princeton, she worked as an assistant chaplain at Rider University and interned for First UMC and St. Paul UMC in Trenton when the churches were discerning their future; eventually merging to become Turning Point UMC. For Nelson, this too was a turning point in her journey of faith.

"I saw these churches not just living in the present but envisioning their future, hoping to grow and see what God had in store for them," she said. "Truly, it was a powerful experience."

With several years of urban ministry under her belt, the then 25-year-old Nelson was surprised to hear her first appointment after seminary was to Dingmans Ferry UMC in northeastern Pennsylvania; a midsize rural church and a far cry from her comfort zone.

This developmental experience proved to be one of Nelson's most challenging and rewarding. She felt honored to be trusted and dove full-throttle into the work, as both her and the congregation's faith grew exponentially. There she truly saw how lay leadership is instrumental in the vital ministries of congregations.

Nelson went on to serve at Franklin Lakes UMC and Succasunna UMC. At Franklin Lakes the church had a deep passion for service and the community. The church and community rallied around the creation of a garden, whose produce served the clients of CUMAC in Paterson. At Succasunna, she emphasized leadership development with approximately ten lay servants now serving in a variety of

ways beyond preaching.

As Nelson served these congregations she actively sought out leadership development opportunities be it through the 50 Young Pastor's Program hosted by Adam Hamilton and Michael Slaughter, the Lewis Fellows with Lovett Weems, GNJ's 21st Century Leader's Program and others. Nelson said, "The laity I served alongside and the leadership opportunities I was granted helped me become a better pastor, but more importantly a better Christian."

After a decade of ministry, Nelson once again followed her call and saw the opportunity for GNJ Director of Leadership Development as a way she could see another part of the church and how it impacts the life of the congregation and its leadership. "I wanted to see from a different vantage point," she said.

In her new role, Nelson is focused on equipping pastors and lay leaders; investing in those who first invested in her as a child. She's working on a laity development plan which has been a vision of The Board of Laity. She will be working with The Board of Ordained Ministry on recruitment and leadership development. Nelson will also be involved with the conferences' Clergy Leadership Development Initiative.

"Overall, I want us to celebrate what's being done, explore new possibilities and help equip and empower pastors and laity to be apostolic transformational leaders," said Nelson, praising GNJ's willingness to step out and make leadership development a top priority.

"How do we live into the future in the present that we're in?" she asked. Nelson retrospectively recalled her roots with the laity at New Dover UMC. "If someone didn't invest in me I don't know if I'd be where I am today," she said. "Church can be instrumental in identifying and raising leaders and then equipping them for the next generation."

Mother and Daughter Team Head Out to Haiti

By Rev. Sunny Shim
revsunnyslim@aol.com

WALL TWP - Ebenezer (Ebbie) Shim, a senior at Communications High School in Wall Township, and her mom, Rev. Sunny Shim, Senior Pastor of Wall UMC, traveled to Leogane, Haiti on a volunteer mission last month along with 19 youth and adults from different parts of the U.S., organized by Group Mission Trips.

In the past, the mother and daughter team travelled to Virginia with their church's youth on week-long mission trips. This year however, they embarked on a journey outside the U.S. to offer their services in a place with limited resources.

While there, they learned more about Haitian culture and the many challenges the people of Haiti experience; everything from lack of clean water and good sanitation to obstacles surrounding education and economic challenges. They also served at an orphanage doing repair and maintenance projects while spending time serving local children through VBS

and sport camps.

"This gave us a chance to connect personally with Haitian kids and share God's love through our actions," said Rev. Shim, who had visited Haiti twice prior. The group brought toiletry items collected by students of Spring Lake Heights Elementary School after Hurricane Matthew.

Ebbie was able to fund this mission trip with savings from her job at the Arbors Home for Senior Living, through generous sponsors she received from a letter campaign to her church families at Wall UMC and Harvey Memorial UMC and through the support and generosity of friends and families.

Lay and clergy interested in joining a mission trip to Haiti next year are invited to be a part of the GNJ United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Water Filtration team on January 6-13, 2018. For application and further information, email Brittany Rusk at brusk08@gmail.com or call (609)790-0480.



Rev. Sunny Shim of Wall UMC in Spring Lake Heights and her daughter Ebenezer. Photo provided



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JANUARY 6-13, 2018

Application with a \$200 deposit is required.
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Three team meetings will occur in:
September, October and November.

For more details and an application, contact:
Brittany Rusk at brusk08@gmail.com
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UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION
Christian Love in Action!

Apostles in our Midst: Rev. Erica Munoz and Aldersgate UMC, East Brunswick

A 2017 Series on Apostolic Leadership in GNJ

Mission: Dreaming God-sized dreams has become a staple of Aldersgate UMC in East Brunswick. With an active young adults ministry and youth group that continues to grow, the church has set its sights and focus on the next generation.

The first Sunday of every month, the church hosts 'Family First Worship Service' where children and parents are encouraged to attend together. The worship includes opportunities for children to sing and dance, pray with and for their parents, participate in communion and give their offerings to God.

"It has become a time that we all look forward to each month, and we are excited to see what happens next," said Rev. Erica Munoz, Aldersgate UMC senior pastor.

Each month has a new theme and families are asked to engage in a mission project. Recent projects include making Valentines for children who attend other houses of worship in the community and crafting Christmas cards for the children of the Crisis Room, a church-sponsored outreach that feeds and serves over 2,000 people a month.

"A great joy in the midst of this important ministry is that the volunteers from our congregation have the unique opportunity to be in ministry with all the



Rev. Erica Munoz of Aldersgate UMC, East Brunswick. Photo provided

faith communities of East Brunswick and many other organizations that volunteer to impact the people of Middlesex County," said Munoz. The church connects with the local community through the Middlesex County Fair and church fundraisers such as the Pumpkin Patch, an annual Butterfly Release, and a Tree Lighting Jubilee and Advent Celebration.

New and exciting small groups have formed including volleyball, moms groups, crafters, and brunch groups. These groups challenge themselves to give more faithfully of their financial gifts and their time. Many of these groups have explored ways to be in ministry to

the world through the church's mission connections in Sierra Leone and the Sri Lankan Annual Conference.

Apostle: Rev. Erica Munoz knew she wanted to become a music teacher, but didn't know what God had in store for her life.

"I admitted very clearly that I knew for a fact, that I would never want to be a minister in the church," said Munoz, describing her teenage years as an active youth at First UMC of Newton where she was baptized and confirmed.

Munoz chose West Virginia Wesleyan College to pursue music education and became involved at First Church in Buckhannon, W.V. where she was hired as part-time Director of Children's Ministries during her junior year.

"Something happened to me during that time, and God's voice was becoming stronger and louder in my life," she said. "So I started asking questions and researching the possibility of going to seminary."

Discerning that ministry was the direction God was leading her toward, Munoz committed to following. It was then that she realized her experiences during high school played a formative role in her spiritual development.

"Some of the happiest and most fulfilling times of my life had been learning

about or doing God's work," said Munoz. "Whether it was through the Christian Outreach Project or the Appalachia Service Project or my youth group or attending church camp at Aldersgate, it took me a few years to actually hear God's call, but there I was. The church had allowed me to grow and understand God's purpose for my life."

Munoz graduated in 2008 with a Masters of Divinity and Certification in Youth and Young Adult Ministry from Boston University School of Theology. That same year she was hired and later appointed as GNJ's Children, Youth, and Young Adult Coordinator and commissioned as a Provisional Elder in 2009. In 2012 she was ordained an Elder in Full Connection and 2014, began her first local church appointment as an interim of Aldersgate UMC where she was appointed full time in 2015. An advocate for Coaching and PaCE groups, Munoz serves as the Raritan Valley District Committee on Ordained Ministry Chair and the GNJ Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator.

"I have been serving this congregation and loving every minute of what God is doing in my life and in this community of faith," she exclaimed.

Munoz lives in East Brunswick with her husband Matt and two children, Madelyn and Braelon.

IGNITE Through Lens of Mission, Outreach

Continued from page 1

to motivate the youth to be witnesses to their friends," Smith said. "Young people who are excited about things like IGNITE will have no doubt talked about and shared those experiences with friends."

In 2016, a GNJ produced video clip shared testimonies from youth who had been deeply moved by their time at IGNITE. Smith sees this video as a recruiting tool and an opportunity to share in church worship contexts to inspire mission. The video can be found at www.YouTube.com/gnjumc

"Even if a church doesn't have a youth group but has a few young people that can be the start!" Smith exclaimed. "Send two or three young people to IGNITE, or connect them with a church that has a youth group. This can be the spark of inspiration for a youth ministry to take shape after the event."

"Over the past three years, the excitement and energy of IGNITE has recalled for me the kind of excitement and energy I experienced as a young person in our camping program at Aldersgate," said Skylands District Superintendent Steven Bechtold. "It was something that was encouraged by a Christian educator in my home church who encouraged and supported my participating in those experiences." Bechtold explained how those programs allowed him to connect with youth from other congregations, develop a new sense of what it meant to be in community with others and become friends with people whose experiences and backgrounds were different from his own.

"I found affirmation from peers and leaders who helped me to hear and clarify God's call on my life for ordained

ministry," he said. "While my local church experience was important, these weeks were strongly influential in understanding from an experiential level how the Christian faith could be lived out in community. God spoke to me in unique ways in these 'mountain top' experiences that helped to inspire and encourage me in serving Jesus Christ daily. This today, is IGNITE."

Other congregations, including some without youth groups, are catching on to the idea of seeing IGNITE as a mission project by providing scholarships for GNJ youth and or street teams to reach out to the local community. Some churches like Oasis UMC in Pleasantville brought a blend of students from the church's youth group and the neighborhood to IGNITE. The church's Senior Pastor, Rev. Amarilys Gonzalez-Lopez, was inspired by the high spirited ministry centered

around IGNITE.

Palisades District Superintendent Gina Kim was "delighted" to take part in last year's IGNITE conference. She links the success of IGNITE with GNJ's Next Generation initiative that was passed at this year's Annual Conference.

"I am so proud of GNJ to have the vision for the next generations," she said. "Without the next generation in the church, there is no future. Without a comprehensive plan, our efforts will be wasted. That's why I'm excited to launch the new Next Generation's ministry initiative. It takes the concentrated and directed efforts of the whole conference to reach out to the next generation."

Smith encourages GNJ youth pastors to do exactly that by setting goals for their youth, encouraging them to invite their friends and sharing stories with the congregation through social media, church newsletters and announcements.

"It's not ministry for, but ministry with," stated Smith. "We want to include youth and adults alike in the process and planning."

For more information about IGNITE including scholarship opportunities, please visit www.ignitenj.org

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Nationally Renowned Youth Speaker Reggie Dabbs Fired Up for IGNITE

By Tim Divine
Timmed88@gmail.com

WILDWOOD – Reggie Dabbs has been one of the most sought-after public school and event speakers in the U.S. for more than two decades. Dabbs relentlessly chases his personal passion by sharing a powerful story of tragedy, redemption and hope with millions each year. This fall, Dabbs will be joining IGNITE 2017, and he couldn't be more thrilled. Dabbs sat down for an interview to share his upbringing and ministry, as well as what he plans to share with IGNITE.

When he was eight-years-old, Dabbs went to his first parent-teacher conference at his elementary school and noticed that all of his friends' parents were much younger than his. On the car ride home, he yelled from the back seat, "Why y'all so old?" He learned that his parents had fostered him, and that his birth mother had other children, but he was considered a "mistake."

"That was the first time I felt like I didn't belong," said Dabbs. Growing up Dabbs struggled with severe depression.

"But hope did come," he said. "I found out my mom did love me because she gave me away to her favorite teacher at school, Lelia Dabbs. My mom's tenth grade teacher loved Jesus and taught me everything I know."

A defining moment changed Dabbs' life when he was 12-years-old. One



Nationally renowned youth speaker Reggie Dabbs will debut at this year's IGNITE conference in Wildwood with a message to speak to the hearts of young people. Photo provided

evening when he struggled with suicidal thoughts, his foster-care father, Bill Dabbs, walked into his room and said, "I can't give you my blood. You're not my son. But if you let me, I will give you my heart until the day I die." According to Dabbs, that's exactly what he did.

"He was a humble man," he said. "He was a school janitor. And he was my hero."

That night sparked Dabbs' faith in Christ. He saw how his foster-care parents loved Jesus and watching their lives spurred him on to a relationship with God.

Relay: Why did you begin your youth ministry?

Dabbs: I don't want anyone to grow up like me and I want everyone to run into a janitor like I did. If I could just be

that janitor, I'll be alright. Hope changes everything, and if it can happen for me, it can happen for anyone.

I grew up in the church, going to conferences, listening to speakers, and I thought, "I could do that" when I was about 14-years-old. I decided to follow my dream and the one thing that kept coming back to me was, 'no one would have to grow up the way I did and I could help somebody not have to hurt the way I did.' That was my whole purpose, and it still is, even today.

Relay: What message will you be bringing to IGNITE?

Dabbs: No matter where you're from, no matter what you've done, Jesus can get you through. The title of my message will be, "He did it for me!"

We are going to go on a journey, part of which happened on December 7, 1988, when a kid was in an earthquake and his dad dug 39 hours to find him, and I'm going to tie that into God's love for us.

Relay: What do you hope kids and youth leaders will come away with from the experience?

Dabbs: In one word, "hope." No matter how close they are to Jesus, there is always hope, no matter what they're going through. If they can leave with hope, I've done my job, with Jesus' help.

Relay: Why is IGNITE important?

Dabbs: Any time you can get a group of kids together under the banner of Jesus, to look around and see different colors and ages worshipping God, it's

encouraging to them. It's important for the body of Christ to come together in a place like that because then when it gets hard, kids still know that God will help. Kids will go back to that when times get tough.

Relay: What would you tell pastors, youth leaders, and church members as to why they should participate in IGNITE in any way possible?

Dabbs: We have got to build the next generation of leaders or else we die. If there is no one opening a door saying, "This is what Christianity is" and "This is what loving Jesus is like," kids will find somewhere else to go. For the adults looking at kids, we have to give them an opportunity – a platform to see Jesus and see God's work in people's lives.

A lot of churches are small, and might only have a handful of young people. For them to walk into a room as big as IGNITE would blow their minds and help them dream and see a bigger picture than the one they're in. For the adults, we have got to set the platform so kids can be great. Look at me, if a teacher and a janitor didn't open their home and hearts to me, I know I would not be alive today. We don't need to see the end result, we just need to love kids where they're at.

Don't miss the second price break for IGNITE 2017! Register now at www.ignitenj.org and reserve spots for your youth. Save time, avoid hassle, and print off permission slip letter drafts and templates for youth and parents.

MusicFest of Praise Helps Meet Community Needs

By Kamelia Ani
Kameliaanipphoto@gmail.com

PISCATAWAY - The weather was gorgeous, the air filled with lively music, and kids were laughing and playing all afternoon at the fifth annual MusicFest of Praise on June 10. Hosted by the Christ UMC of Piscataway, the event is meant to raise awareness as well as gather donations for local food pantries. This year's donations were directed to the Rutgers Student Food Pantry, as well as the Angel Tree Program. Admission to the event was free, but attendees were asked to bring donations of non-perishable food items. Many local businesses chipped in with sponsorships and donations, and organizers said this year's event was "a huge success."

Christ UMC firmly believes that they are called to heed the command of Jesus in John 21:17 to "feed my sheep." With this in mind, they are very active in supporting various food pantries such as Fish, CUMAC and the Rutgers Student Food Pantry. They have also launched their own food ministry called Sheppard's Shelves which distributes food to the community. They have partnered with the Angel Tree program which provides physical and emotional support to families with a member in prison. At the end of

the school year, they collected donations of pantry staples so that these families could continue to feed their children once they were out of school. About four times a year they host a communal dinner at the Church of Epiphany in Orange for people in need.

Five years ago, members of the food ministry wanted to raise awareness for the hungry within their community, and so MusicFest of Praise was born. Throughout the years, they have tried different concepts and activities to garner attention to their cause. This year, they decided to stick with four local but diverse praise bands for the entertainment. The lineup included the church's band, Messiah's Quest; a Filipino band called Rhyme and Praise; Break Ministry, a youth-oriented band; and the Piscataway Praise Singers, a local Indian band. The adults in attendance thoroughly enjoyed the show while the children played in an inflatable game area.

Big name sponsors this year included Bob's Discount Furniture and the Home Depot, who set up and organized a craft project for the kids. Many local small businesses were sponsors as well and even donated gift cards to the food pantry. Steve Latus, a member of the organizing committee, said that their support is what made this year's MusicFest one



Christ UMC of Piscataway hosted its fifth annual MusicFest of Praise on June 10, connecting the church with the community while raising funds and awareness for local food pantries. Photo provided

of the most successful they've ever had.

"For an event like this, you want to put a good plan in place, well in advance. And you want a good buy-in from the congregation," said Latus. "We had 50 volunteers from the community helping us out with organizing as well as on the day of the event. We reached out to our local businesses, and the response and desire to help were overwhelming. We couldn't have done it without them."

This year's event drew a few hun-

dred people, and organizers are hoping next year's crowd will be even bigger. MusicFest of Praise continues to bring people together for a day of fun and positivity while raising awareness for the struggle of others. Unfortunately, hunger is a serious issue in the community, and Christ UMC of Piscataway is forging forward to fight it. To get involved with their food ministry or find out where you can donate, please visit their website at www.christumcpiscataway.com.

Syrian Refugee Receives Visit From 'Jesus Himself'

Continued from page 1

political authorities to radically live the love of Jesus.

"We used to call this kind of relation in Arabic, is like brother but not from my mother," said a smiling Alargha, describing his close friendships with the church members.

The Supper Club brings Syrians and their friends in the community together twice a month for a delicious meal cooked by Syrian women who earn money from tickets sold. After the meal, Alargha shared his story of escape from Syria and his separation from his family. In 2012, his various companies were closed by the Assad regime after they were deemed "threats." Among them was a charitable organization in support of widows from the government's brutal crackdown on widespread dissent. After security forces forcefully entered his workplaces and home, Alargha flew to

New York on a business visa with \$400 and a laptop.

"I remember waking up in-flight thinking, 'what am I doing on this plane? Where am I going to go?'" he exclaimed. Hours prior, he was a prosperous entrepreneur with a beautiful house and hundreds of employees. Meanwhile, his wife Rana and three children spent a year and a half on the run, stealthily hiding from the regime's authorities. When missiles rained down from the sky, Rana would shelter her children by saying they were fireworks and special effects for the filming of a movie.

In 2015, Alargha was granted political asylum in the U.S. with the help of several attorneys. The next day he began the process to retrieve his family.

Morrow Church was at the ready to help him with this process. The church worked with First Friends of New York and New Jersey, a refugee support agen-

cy, to facilitate the family's settlement and adjustment process. The people of Morrow Church helped the Alargha's find an apartment in Montclair, N.J., where they could embrace the future.

"I knelt on the ground and took my wife's hand and held my kids' legs when they arrived at JFK airport," he said. "Sometimes I wake up at night and ask myself, 'are they really here or is this some kind of imagination?'"

Alargha says the United Methodists are his main supporters who have been "like a solid wall" against his back.

"Everything we have is because of their support and we're so grateful."

After the Morrow Church had come to his assistance, Alargha returned the embrace by addressing the congregation during a worship service about his experiences as a refugee and joined youth from the church on a weekend trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with state

legislators about immigration policies.

Employment remains the prime challenge for Syrian refugees including Alargha, who has taken on part-time work while he searches for a more stable job.

For Alargha, it's enough for him that there are people who have a will to help. "Even if they don't help, just because they have this will, this is more than enough," he stated. "As Jesus said, 'break bread.' I believe these United Methodists I have met represent Jesus Himself. We found open arms here. I can tell you, frankly and honestly, what I have received from this church for me is like I have received it from Jesus Himself."

This story was published in the July/August 2017 issue of The Interpreter, the magazine of The United Methodist Church. You can find out more, subscribe, or view the story at www.interpretermagazine.org

Camp YDP Makes Strides Through Missional Service

By Kamelia Ani
Kameliaaniphot@gmail.com

PATERSON - The playground at Camp YDP in Paterson is swarming with a group of adorable 4-year-olds who are fascinated by a camera one of their caretakers is carrying. They all line up for a turn and get to look through the viewfinder and press the shutter. They are overeager but remember to shout thank you when their turn is up. Their eyes light up when they're shown the photos they have produced.

This type of interaction is typical and highly encouraged at Camp YDP, according to director, Bria Pierre. In fact, one of their primary goals is to expose the children to experiences they might not normally participate in.

"Most of these kids live in the projects right down the block from camp. They believe that everything in life is encompassed within this five-block radius," she said. "We want to show them a whole world of possibilities and opportunities that exist outside these five blocks."

The camp, which serves children from age two and a half to 13-years-old, has various programs to achieve this goal. They run a full day preschool program, after-school program, and summer camp. In a city that is vastly underserved, Camp YDP strives to provide resources and a broad sense of relief to the community. While much has changed over the past 60 years that the camp has been open, this objective has remained their modus operandi.

Paterson is a unique city filled with a rich history. Unfortunately, many of its residents live below the poverty line and struggle daily. Camp YDP is not free but it goes by a shared services model. They try to keep costs to a minimum so that everybody in the community can participate. A significant portion of their resources come from donations of money as well as time. They will be holding a fundraiser luncheon on August 5 to raise funds and awareness. As much as they need funding to operate, Pierre says they need volunteers more. They want to expand their reach within the community, having locals give help and in turn receive support back. She hopes that sharing the camp's vision with those who attend will inspire more people to get involved.

When GNJ partnered with Camp YDP in 2016, they dedicated themselves to helping the camp achieve this goal. Many of the children and even staff are second or third generation in the YDP family. In a community where everyone knows each other, the camp has always been a place they have called home. The kids come here to receive love, attention, and empowerment. The parents come to receive advice, validation and help. In fact, Pierre says she spends most of her day speaking to parents.

"This job is so much more than just organizing trips and running programs," she said. "It's about listening to the kids talk about their day. It's about giving parents advice on how to handle different situations that arise. I have two children



Children at Paterson's Camp YDP are all smiles for the camera. Photo by Josh Kinney

of my own at home as well. I don't really ever stop working. But seeing the smile on kid's face when they get to do something they wouldn't normally have the opportunity to do, that makes it all worth it."

One of the biggest struggles Pierre encounters is what she calls a "learned behavior of cant's." For example, one boy told her he could never go to college, simply because he was from Paterson. Pierre and her staff spend a lot of time explaining to the children that they are not their circumstances. Good is not an option for them. They have the ability to be great. Camp YDP gives them the experiences and opportunities to discover how.

Fortunately, in addition to partnering

with GNJ, Camp also gets a lot of help from volunteers and local organizations. Volunteers from Urban League come by and help with daily chores such as meals and building maintenance. High school students from nearby cities volunteer to help with homework at the after school program. Locals from the community come by and show the kids how to do various crafts as well as teach classes. They've also partnered with City Green to implement their City Sprouts program where the children grow and harvest their own garden of vegetables as well as learn about the environment and gardening. Currently, Camp YDP has a small garden in their playground. They hope to expand it soon so that it is large enough to provide fresh vegetable for the whole community.

The wall behind Pierre has Camp YDP's mission written in big sprawling letters, laying out what she and her team are vigorously working toward. It reads: "A Community Association with a Ministry to People (CAMP YDP) is an umbrella organization whose mission is to cultivate achievement and map out possibilities for the children and families of Paterson, New Jersey. We strive to work in partnership with parents, administrators, and community members to provide a haven for children and their families to grow, learn, and be empowered academically, socially and emotionally. Through our full day preschool program, after-school enrichment programs and summer camp program we encourage our children to become lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and productive members of society."

Kamelia Ani is a freelance writer and photographer studying journalism at Brookdale Community College.

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or contact Mrs. Patricia Francis, Board Chair @ 551.427.6328.

CUMAC Names New Executive Director

By Adrian Diaz
adiaz@cumacecho.org

PATERSON - CUMAC is pleased to announce Mark Dingalsan as the organization's new Executive Director. An accomplished and committed leader with more than 15 years of experience in both the corporate and not-for-profit sectors, Dingalsan brings an abundance of skills and knowledge to his new role.

CUMAC
Feeding People • Changing Lives

Before joining CUMAC, Dingalsan was the Executive Director of CASA of Cook County, Illinois. He has also led corporate development and fundraising at Just The Beginning - A Pipeline Organization, a foundation started by The Honorable Ann Claire Williams of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sev-

enth Circuit. He has led teams in the areas of youth development, program management, sales, and strategic planning and received an MBA from DePaul University's Kellstadt Graduate School of Business. In his spare time, Dingalsan is a marathon coach, youth mentor, and church volunteer and also hosts segments of GMA Network's lifestyle magazine talk show, FilAM Now.

Dingalsan started his career in the nonprofit sector as a lay mission worker, building homes in the slums of the Philippines and leading youth programs in the U.S. Upon deciding to move back to New Jersey in late 2016, he immediately began searching for an organization with whom he shared similar values and beliefs. This search led him to

Dingalsan will succeed Rev. Pat Bruger, who has led the organization since 1991. Bruger announced her retirement in January 2016 and will conclude her term this month after 26 years with the organization. With Bruger at the helm, CUMAC has grown over the years from a small food pantry run out of a borrowed

church closet to a multi-service agency serving thousands of neighbors in need every month.

"Our team will forever be grateful for Rev. Bruger's leadership, which leaves us ready and poised to take CUMAC onward," said Adrian Diaz, CUMAC Community Engagement Coordinator.

As CUMAC prepares for an exciting new chapter, Bruger is happy to see that the future is in great hands.

"In meeting with Mark I have been touched by his servant heart, experience and readiness for a new adventure," said Bruger. "I along with all of the board and staff at CUMAC look forward to seeing how his vision and leadership guide the strategic goals for feeding people and changing lives for years to come."

With Dingalsan's enthusiasm, skills and experience, CUMAC is confident that he will help the organization's mission reach new heights.

Presently, CUMAC is seeking plastic grocery bags to help pack food for neighbors in need as well as baby items such as baby food, formula and diapers



Pictured above: Former CUMAC Executive Director Rev. Pat Bruger and her successor, Mark Dingalsan. With more than 15 years of experience in both the corporate and not-for-profit sectors, Dingalsan brings an abundance of skills and knowledge to his new role in Paterson. Photo provided

to assist infants and families. Please consider helping to provide these essential resources by holding a collection or donating extra bags this month. Every donation can help feed a family in need. Email info@cumacecho.org or call (973)742-5518.

Vincetown UMC Grows Community Servanthood

By Denise Herschel
Nj6pack@yahoo.com

VINCETOWN - The mood of the evening was one of celebration and joy as approximately 30 members of Vincetown UMC gathered in the church parking lot on May 30 and then walked jubilantly down the street together to the Vincetown Fire Company. Joined by Senior Pastor, Rev. David Ledford, the group approached a short time later and were greeted by almost two dozen members of the firehouse, who eagerly awaited their arrival. As each firefighter was given a pocket-sized Bible, Ledford led more than 50 people with a prayer and devotion. And as the church members extended their hands forward and their colleagues laid hands on them, each firefighter was blessed by Ledford during the 30-minute service.

According to Ledford, this is the first time such an event was held and it was met with great enthusiasm by all who attended.

"Nobody really knew what to expect. The Fire Company expressed incredible surprise and excitement that so many members of our church came. Many of the firefighters knew people from our church, so it was nice to see

familiar faces. I think all were happy to be blessed," he said.

Ledford, who has been serving as the Pastor of Vincetown UMC for the past year, added that when he moves to a new church, he contacts local officials, schools, and first responders to see if there is any way in which he can assist them.

"I have experience in chaplaincy at two different hospitals and was a clergy member of a police department in a previous town, so this is a passion that I try to bring to every church I serve," he said. "It took a few months to develop, but the firehouse responded to my request and expressed their desire to name a new fire company chaplain. On the church side, the members thought it would be nice if we had some pocket-sized Bibles to give them during this event. Our church council approved the purchase of 200 Bibles to give out."

Although Ledford was the primary force behind the event, he credits the church laity and the fire company leaders with helping to make it work.

"During the service, I blessed approximately 20 firefighters. I spoke to those gathered about Saint Florian, then Patron Saint of Firefighters. I mostly spoke about what we can accomplish together

to fulfill our common goals as community servants. A major aspect of my message was about how we as a church are here for them when they are in spiritual or emotional need. I can say 'we are here for you' as much as I want but if no one is with me when I say that, it can be seen as an empty promise. But when I stood there and said, 'we are here for you' as there were 30 people from our church standing with me, then it really meant something," he said.

At the end of the service, the Vincetown Fire Department officially announced Ledford as their new chaplain.

"I hope to use my new role to assist the firefighters in dealing with trauma, spiritual and emotional challenges and prayer. This experience was so much more than I could ever have hoped for. What started out as me going to bless the badges turned into 30 church members coming with me and the firehouse members responding by installing me as their chaplain. The job of serving a community is a difficult one. But when the church and the first responders join efforts to do it together, we can do so much more than either of us ever could do on our own," he added.

Ledford said that he would like to continue this tradition every year at the



Rev. David Ledford of Vincetown UMC along with 30 congregants came together to bless the firefighters in their community. Photo provided

firehouse and other first responders' headquarters.

"I believe that all in attendance are hopeful for the future work we can do together and are comforted in knowing that they will know where to go if they ever need spiritual or emotional support and guidance. This event created a new relationship between the firefighters and the church community that will continue long into the future," he said.

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

2017 NEJ LaunchPad Training, August 10-12

The 2017 NEJ LaunchPad is a three-day training event for leaders and teams planting new faith communities. The training is based on what we are learning from partnership with hundreds of church planting leaders across the U.S. The English track training leader will be author Paul Nixon, a United Methodist pastor who coaches church leaders in North America and Europe and is the regional strategist for Path 1 New Church Starts and CEO of Epicenter Group. The Spanish track training leader will be Sam Rodriguez, who has been serving in the United Methodist Church in full-time ministry as a layperson for 19 years and is the Director of Hispanic/Latino and Multiethnic New Church Starts, Path1 NCS Division, a ministry of Discipleship Ministries. Visit www.gnjumc.org and search NEJ Launch Pad for more info and to register.

Order 2017 Annual Conference Journals by August 15

2017 Annual Conference Journals will be available for download on the website in the Fall. All retired clergy may receive a hard copy of the 2017 Annual Conference Journal for free upon request. Hard copies are available for a fee of \$20. Go to www.gnjumc.org and search 2017 journal to buy before Aug. 15.

New Dates for Bishop's Clergy Convocation

Save the date! The 2018 Bishop's Clergy Convocation will be held Nov. 12-14, 2018 at the Ocean Place Resort & Spa in Long Branch. For 2019, the dates will be Nov. 11-13.

Bounce House (Moon Bounce) Insurance Required

Church Mutual, GNJ's insurance carrier, has information available for churches on how to plan and operate a safe carnival or fair. This is a reminder that our property insurance program does not insure use of bounce houses. Additional insurance can be obtained at nominal cost by emailing Tiffany Lupo at tiffanyl@sovinsurance.com or calling (800)222-4478.

Prevent Copper Claims

A discount program from Church Mutual, GNJ's Property Insurer, is being offered for exterior air conditioner cages which are an effective deterrent to copper theft. Interested churches should visit www.churchmutual.com and mention that you're a Church Mutual customer to receive a discount.

Continued from page 11

Pictured right: The members of Park Avenue St. John's UMC in East Orange joyously celebrated the 100th birthday of a cherished member, Ms. Inez Rosalie Alick Elliott. Ms Elliott who is known as "Rose" by family and friends shared her secret to living a long life. She relayed that she lives healthy through her faith in God, staying calm, and laughing as often as she can. It has been said that a part of her charm is her contagious laughter that makes you feel like joining in. Rose was recently recognized by Essex County Executive, Joseph N. DiVincenzo Jr. and the Essex County Division of Senior



Services. She was presented with the "Essex County Legends Award" for her contribution in helping to shape today's community. With 100 years of life, Park Avenue St. Johns UMC salutes Rose for setting an example of grace and service. She is a positive role model for younger generations and works tirelessly to assist fellow seniors, thus, improving the quality of many lives. Photo provided

Pictured right: GNJ Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) youth member Allie Mosley elected Princess at the 2017 Nanticoke Lenni Lenape pow wow. Mosley will represent the Tribe at the highest of ceremonies and will be an example, for youth. Annual conference attendees may recognize Mosley as the welcome speaker for the opening session. Photo provided



Marcia's Melodies

You will find more of Marcia's Melodies at the Hub this summer than ever before! Several new devotional songs and choruses have been added to the collection. Also, service music and 20 simple hymns, which can be utilized as EZ Anthems or new music for small groups are in stock. For larger numbers of copies, please special order.

Three notebooks filled with actual music have been prepared and include cover anthems, choruses & devotional songs. As well as, solos, duets, ladies trios, and man's quartets.

Free catalogs give you needed information about each song.
Choose catalogs which interest you. Happy browsing!

The Hub is now open for the summer season. Be sure to stop in and check out Lynda Kusick's unusual and attractive inventory.

To receive catalogs or to order music:
Call: 732.988.3191 | Email: marciasmelodies15@gmail.com

SUNSET SURF CELEBRATION

Join us at:

SEA BRIGHT PUBLIC BEACH

Tuesday Evenings @ 7:00 p.m.
7/11, 8/1, 8/22, 9/12

In partnership with:

Sea Bright UMC & Middletown UMC

www.seabrightumc.org | www.middletownumcnj.org

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

Religion and Race Offer Grants

The United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race, the denomination's racial justice agency, is seeking to fund innovative United Methodist initiatives that disrupt racism and xenophobia. The agency's CORR Action Fund is making available \$750,000 for U.S. grants for 2017 to 2020. Application deadline is August. Visit www.gcorr.org for more info or email sewing@gcorr.org or call (202)547-2271.

Global Leadership Summit Live Simulcast in Ocean Grove

The Global Leadership Summit, a two-day, world-class leadership event experienced by more than 170,000 leaders around the world, representing more than 14,000 churches, will be streamed at The Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association on Aug. 10-11 from 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. This event is crafted to infuse vision, skill development and inspiration. Visit www.oceangrove.org to learn more and register.

Immigration and Refugee Tool Kit Resource

For more information and resources on how your church can offer safe places of sanctuary and bear witness to God's grace and love to immigrants and refugees, visit www.gnjumc.org and search immigration resource.

Grants for Website Development

United Methodist Communications (UMCOM) is offering website development grants for churches. Iglesia Metodista Unida Wesley in Trenton received one to help develop their web presence. Find out more and apply at www.umcom.org/services-products/website-development-grants

Send Us Your Summer VBS Photos

We want to hear from you! Send us photos from your church's VBS this summer for publication in The Relay and GNJ social media accounts. Be sure to include church name, brief description and make sure to verify that all photos of children have signed parental consent. Email your photos to Josh Kinney at jkinney@gnjumc.org

Interpretation Equipment Available

GNJ has interpretation equipment available for agencies, committees and other groups so your next event or service can be interpreted in up to four languages. Visit www.gnjumc.org/translation-equipment-request-form to request use of this equipment.

Reserve Space at the Mission and Resource Center

Let the Mission and Resource Center serve you. Request a meeting room or reserve space for your congregation, agency, or committee. Visit www.gnjumc.org for more info.

OBITUARIES

Charles "Chuck" Wing, spouse of Rev. Elaine Wing, died on June 9. A Celebration of Life took place on June 24 at Calvary UMC in Dumont, NJ.

Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent in Memory of Chuck Wing to Calvary UMC, 185 West Madison Ave., Dumont, NJ 07628 or to The Centenary Fund, The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey, 205 Jumping Brook Rd., Neptune, NJ 07753.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Elaine Wing, 185 W. Madison Ave., Dumont, NJ 07628

CARING FOR AN OLDER ADULT AT HOME? WE'RE HERE TO HELP!



United Methodist Communities now brings personal care and case management services into homes.

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WHAT FOOTPRINTS DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE?



After a life of service, retirement should be simple, peaceful and fulfilling. For more than 25 years, Clergy Retirement Advisors has worked with ministers to create effective retirement plans. We will review all your retirement options which may include pensions, social security, property and other investments, and create a personalized plan designed to maximize your monthly payments to help provide a secure financial future for you and your family.

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MAKE THIS A SUMMER TO REMEMBER AND HELP BRING A FAMILY HOME.

A Future With Hope is seeking volunteers for Saturdays in the summer. Teams of 10-20 people are welcome to join ongoing projects in Southern Ocean and Atlantic Counties including Little Egg Harbor, Atlantic City and Brigantine.

Find out more.
Volunteer. Donate.
www.afuturewithhope.org
732.359.1012

A FUTURE WITH
HOPE
 The People of the United Methodist Church