

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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No. 11

Five Years Later, Hope is on the Move

By Josh Kinney
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TOMS RIVER - Five years to the day after Superstorm Sandy struck New Jersey, survivors took refuge from a heavy rainstorm inside St. Andrew UMC in Toms River. Removing coats and shaking out umbrellas, they gathered to remember a different, much more powerful storm, and recognize those who helped them build a future with hope.

GNJ commemorated the anniversary with a conference-wide Day of Prayer on Oct. 29. At St. Andrew, Bishop John Schol, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and his cabinet, and 14 mayors from around the state took part in a worship service to reflect, pray for those still recovering, and call leaders to finish the work that's begun.

The service credited the success of recovery efforts to partnerships between nonprofit and faith organizations, donors, local and statewide government, and thousands of volunteers from throughout the country.

In October 2012, Sandy left more than 70 casualties and caused more than \$50 billion in damage. But it was the partnerships celebrated at the service that helped restore power to 2.7 million homes, helped 82,000 homeowners with home damage, and assisted the 161,000 people displaced by the storm.

"We are a state that joins together and works together," Schol said during the sermon. "When disaster strikes, we are all a part of God's family."

Within weeks of the storm, GNJ

staff started hiring coordinators, case managers, and a construction manager so that by January the newly formed A Future With Hope organization was on its way to providing long-term recovery relief to Sandy-affected homeowners. Today, A Future With Hope is one of the last remaining nonprofit organizations on the ground assisting with long-term recovery efforts. In the past five years, it has helped 461 families, provided case management support, completed construction on 260 homes, and coordinated some 12,173 volunteers, including United Methodists as well as Lutherans, Episcopalians, Mennonites and many others from 46 states in the U.S. and from Canada. Presently, 15 homes are still underway.

A Future With Hope has received support from the Robin Hood Foundation, the American Red Cross, The Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) among others.

"When Hurricane Sandy hit our state, and you sit as the governor and hear of loss and the damage and the rebuilding that's yet to come, you can easily become overwhelmed," Christie said to the congregation. "What brings you out of that sense of being overwhelmed... is hope. And hope comes from each other."

Bobbie Ridgely, Executive Director of A Future With Hope said people are surprised to learn recovery is still underway five years after the storm.

"There's a tendency to think that it'll be all taken care of in six months, but it's a much longer process to get fully recov-



Bishop John Schol prays with N.J. Gov. Chris Christie during a Day of Prayer church service for the fifth year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy on Oct. 29 at St. Andrew UMC in Toms River. Photo by Edison Lee

ered," Ridgely said. "We've been getting homeowners back to safe, sanitary and secure homes, and we feel good about the progress we've made. But there are still an estimated 2,000 families in New Jersey that have not yet finished recovery."

With help from A Future With Hope, Frank and MaryEllen Azack of Toms River, who were featured in a video presented at the church service, received their Certificate of Occupancy on Sept. 21, 2017. For nearly five years, Frank lived in a nearby apartment while devot-

ing full-time to recovery. MaryEllen, who has multiple sclerosis, stayed with her mother in Kearny, about an hour away, because she was unable to navigate the stairs in the apartment.

"It's been a long battle, but we're finally home," Frank said.

The video featured the couple seated in their bright living room, sharing their recovery story. Without help from energetic volunteer crews and case managers from A Future With Hope, the Azacks said they'd likely be homeless.

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Stories Emerge, Esperanza for Puerto Rico Launched in Wake of Disasters

By Josh Kinney
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When people hurt, United Methodists help. To date, GNJ has collected over \$260,000 for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) disaster relief for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. And for some, like Chereese Evans, you never know who you might be helping.

On her way to Mantua UMC to deliver and help pack flood bucket supplies, Evans stopped at a Dollar Tree store for last minute items.

"67 items to be exact," said Evans. "The cashier seemed a little annoyed at my big order, and I was annoyed at the long lines."

It was then that she met Lynn, a woman who was shopping with her mom.

She happened to live in Puerto Rico and had fled Hurricane Maria. Unable to return, she was living with her daughter and shared with Evans the damaged state of her home, business, and neighborhood.

"She wanted to say thank you for making the flood buckets no matter which disaster they ended up helping because everyone needs help," said Evans.

In Ocean City, the Mission Committee of St. Peter's UMC plans to use funds from an annual M&M fundraiser and pancake breakfast to bolster support UMCOR's relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

"Our prayers and thoughts go along with our material contributions to help those affected by the three major hurricanes that have disrupted many lives," said one congregant. "We pray that our contributions will help UMCOR do its

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GNJ Hosts AUMCPBO Annual Meeting



GNJ hosted the annual Association of United Methodist Conference Pension and Benefits Officers (AUMCPBO) annual meeting on Oct. 25 at Ocean Place in Long Branch, bringing together Conference Benefits Officers, Treasurers, Chairs of Boards of Pension and Health Benefits, and Conference staff to share information regarding conferences benefits plans and how they're funded. Bishop Schol addressed the meeting. For info on GNJ's pensions and health benefits visit gnjumc.org. Photo by Josh Kinney

Central Region Charge Conference



1000+ United Methodists from 168 churches throughout GNJ's Central Region gathered on Saturday, Oct. 28 for a life-changing time of worship and church business at Calvary Korean UMC in East Brunswick. Photo by James Lee

ESPERANZA
FOR PUERTO RICO
UNITED METHODISTS OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

GNJ Food, Supplies and Toys Drive
November 17, 18 & 19, 2017

FOR MORE INFO AND LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP, VISIT:
www.gnjumc.org/disasterresponse/esperanzaforpr

A Message from the Bishop



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Sunday, October 29 was the 5th Anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, and I thank you, our pastors and laity, for your leadership in assisting the recovery ministry. We held a worship service at St. Andrew UMC in Toms River in which the Governor and his cabinet attended along with 14 mayors from across NJ.

Superstorm Sandy affected:

- 2.7 million people who lost power
- 253,000 households that sustained damage
- 82,000 homes that sustained major damage
- 161,000 people who were displaced

As United Methodists of Greater New Jersey, together we:

- Rebuilt or built new 260 homes
- Hosted 12,173 volunteers from 46 states representing a labor value of \$8,095,413
- Raised more than \$17 million from United Methodist congregations, UMCOR, the American Red Cross, Hurricane Sandy NJ Relief Fund, Robin Hood Foundation and thousands of individual donors
- Provided case management for 461 families

Your prayers, your support, and your leadership made the difference. I am also grateful for our bishops from across The United Methodist Church who championed our cause which led to donations and volunteers. Several bishops also came to volunteer in rebuilding homes. In addition to bishops there were volunteers from many different denominations who worked with us as well as people from other faiths.

In 2018 as planned, we will wind down our Sandy Recovery work. Being a people who have come through the storm, I pray and encourage each of you to support the efforts in the most recent disasters that impacted many lives in 2017. Already we have collected more than \$250,000. Your leadership makes a difference. Here in GNJ, I am committed to raising at least \$500,000 to support recovery from these recent disasters.

I also want you to know, our Future With Hope ministry and the nonprofit corporation GNJ started will continue as we transition from Sandy recovery to what is next for us missionally. The Future With Hope ministry will develop 100 Hope Centers around the state and re-purpose church buildings for community ministry, housing and church space that works for ministry in the 21st century. One project we are working on in Jersey City will re-purpose a church building to provide new worship and community space as well as more than 120 units of affordable and market-rate housing as we serve the community and create revenue streams for mission and ministry. Your leadership and encouragement in the midst of the disaster has led to A Future With Hope's next steps in making disciples and transforming the world. Thank you.

The following are some of our learnings after coming through a tragedy:

- We can do more together than working separately.
- We have greater capacity than we imagined, especially in our smallest congregations (some of our smallest congregations gave the largest gifts and giving per worshiper to the recovery efforts).
- God is ready to do more than we can imagine. During our recovery period we raised \$7 million from our churches through the mission campaign and Shared Ministry giving went from 78% to an anticipated 88% this year.
- Hope is stronger than tragedy.

You give me hope for what God is ready to do next through GNJ. Thank you for your continued service to God, the church, and the community.

Keep the faith!

John

Bishop John Schol

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

John R. Schol, Bishop

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BENEFIT FROM INVALUABLE COLLABORATION



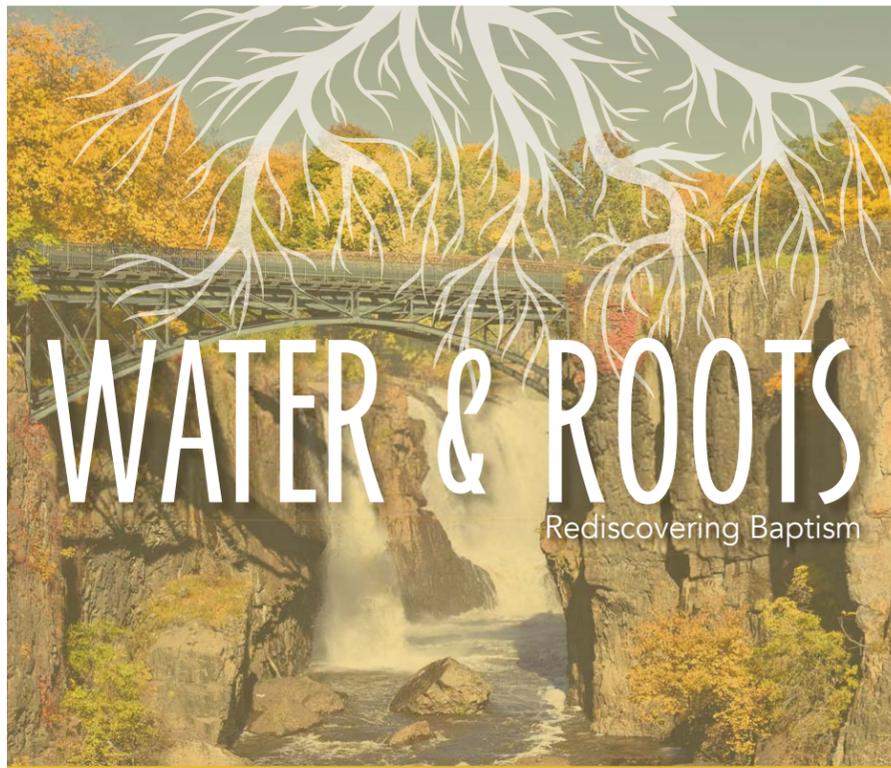
Do you want to save up to 9 months of work in your church's ministry? Collaborate with other congregations through Team Vital in 2018.



NOW'S THE TIME!

Plan for future ministry and register by Dec. 1.

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www.gnjumc.org/team-vital



Join this Spirit-driven movement as GNJ congregations rediscover the power of the redemptive grace of God in Jesus Christ through baptism. Resources include small groups discussion guide, sermon series, baptism renewal, liturgy, videos, graphics and much more.



Register today for available resources starting in November.
www.waterandroots.org



Your annual lagniappe of unsolicited holiday visitors are just about to be on your doorstep, and we have one question....

ARE YOU READY?

Given the possibility that you've got *juuuuust* a few other things on your mind, we're makin' a list (and checkin' it twice) of ways to welcome your seasonal attendance bump into the fold:

1. **INVITES:** Mail postcards and send emails. Sometimes we're just an invitation away from being back in the game.
2. **CHURCH PREP:** Update bathroom signage, redesign your visitor card, save your best seats for guests, and station your friendliest greeters near your high-traffic doors.
3. **INVOLVE THE KIDS:** Let the community know that kids will be participating in your Christmas Eve service and make sure the nurseries are staffed with welcoming faces.
4. **CHRISTMAS SONGS:** There's nothing wrong with singing a Christmas song that our once-a-year visitor knew from childhood to make them feel at home.
5. **CHOOSE SERVICES CAREFULLY:** Be considerate and ask around to see what works best for the people in your community.
6. **COMPELLING ADVENT OFFERING:** Many guests want to be generous, but they also want to feel compelled by what they're giving to.
7. **PROMOTE "THE NEXT THING":** Have an easy ministry event planned for January so there's a clear next step for your guests.
8. **WATER & ROOTS:** Christmas is a great opportunity to invite families to take part in the reaffirmation of baptism on Sunday, Jan. 28. Learn more at waterandroots.org.
9. **LAST BUT NOT LEAST...** Invite your visitors to follow Christ.

Stories Emerge, Esperanza for Puerto Rico Launched in Wake of Disasters

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excellent work to help families begin to get their lives back in order.”

In 2012, when Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc on Ocean City and flooded St. Peter's first floor, people from around the country helped support the church in prayer, funds, and volunteering. The church joined with the city of Ocean City and other faith groups to form a nonprofit called 'Ocean City NJ Cares.'

Despite a flooded first floor, the church set up a community shelter on the second floor and provided over 5,000 meals and services to the island in the days that followed.

“The generous financial support we received from strangers and the thankful response from those helped by Ocean City NJ Cares prompted our congregation to pay forward some of the kindness we received in 2012,” said congregant Ralph Bingham.

A special appeal for UMCOR received \$7,500 after Hurricane Harvey hit Texas. A matching amount from St. Peter's reserves was approved for UMCOR relief work in Florida following Hurricane Irma. Additional contributions increased the church's total for UMCOR Hurricane Support to \$18,000. St. Peter's United

Methodist Women circles packed 25 UMCOR cleaning kits and 20 school kits while a missions group prepared 250 UMCOR health kits and delivered to the GNJ Mission Center at Good Shepherd UMC in Northfield.

Across GNJ, stories of prayer and action have brought communities together and raised significant funds toward relief efforts.

Esperanza (Hope) for Puerto Rico

Many United Methodists in Greater New Jersey have close ties to friends and family in Puerto Rico. Last month, Bishop Hector Ortiz of Puerto Rico met Sam Perez of Bishop Jane UMC at the airport in the island's capital of San Juan to receive a \$50,000 check from GNJ for disaster relief.

Working with the Methodist Church in Puerto Rico, GNJ is developing special resourcing and support for those in need after Hurricane Maria. A day of thanksgiving will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Nov. 19 at First UMC of Hightstown to engage congregations in contributing needed supplies.

A list of goods and materials that are in need for donation can be found at www.gnjumc.org/disasterresponse/

esperanzaforpr and dropped off at the church at designated times. All are welcomed and encouraged to attend the service on the 19th.

Additionally, GNJ churches can register to be included on the Esperanza Team to receive updates regularly on needs as

they arrive.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/disasterresponse to find out how you, your church or organization can support relief efforts, make flood buckets and hygiene kits, donate, volunteer, download resources, and register to join the Esperanza Team.



ESPERANZA FOR PUERTO RICO

UNITED METHODISTS OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

United Methodist of GNJ are working with the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico developing special resources and support for those in need after Hurricane Maria.

FOOD & SUPPLIES DRIVE

DROP OFF DATES & TIMES:
Nov. 17, 2017 | 12 to 7pm
Nov. 18, 2017 | 10 am to 7 pm
Nov. 19, 2017 | 12 to 5 pm

DROP OFF LOCATION: First UMC of Hightstown
187 Stockton St. | Hightstown, NJ 08520

THANKSGIVING & BLESSING OF SUPPLIES SERVICE

Nov. 19, 2017 | 6 pm
Join us for a day of Thanksgiving engage your congregation in contributing much needed supplies.

First UMC of Hightstown
187 Stockton St. | Hightstown, NJ 08520

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATES, GO TO:
www.gnjumc.org/disasterresponse/esperanzaforpr



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Featuring Mark DeVries, Ministry Architects

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Like, subscribe, download and share your thoughts!

WATCH & LISTEN TODAY AT:
gnjumc.org/podcast

Hamilton UMC Offers Service for Solitude

By Denise Herschel
nj6pack@yahoo.com

NEPTUNE - In a society filled with continual stimulation it is often difficult to disconnect and find a quiet place to be present in the moment. Hamilton UMC in Neptune Township is hoping to provide that place of solitude for many who may be seeking such reprieve with its Saturday Service of Sacred Space.

Offered on the first and third Saturday of each month at 6:30 p.m., it is open to all who wish to attend, according to Pastor Jessica Campbell.

“We live in such a fast-paced and stress-filled culture,” she said. “People long for a space to disconnect from technology and to just slow down from the busy pace of life. This service was started to provide a sacred space for people to be renewed and re-energized by being still and quiet. Through prayer, healing, candlelight, meditation, sacred music, and silence, people are given a comfortable way to center and reset.”

The concept for the service was initiated after a day-long visioning retreat in June 2016. At the retreat “it was lifted up time and again that people were hungry for meaningful spiritual growth and also an alternative time to Sunday morning worship,” said Hamilton UMC Music Director Maria Sottile. “Our desire is to establish this Saturday Service as both an alternative option for those who can't regularly attend church on a Sunday morning as well as an alternative experience to our worship styles offered during Sunday morning services.”

Campbell added that attendance at the reflective service has ranged from six people up to 40 people. The 45-minute experience allows one to pause, slow one's pace and sit in a quiet, peaceful atmosphere in the divine presence of God.

“When there is a specific issue, hardship, sadness or concern within local

communities or perhaps a story in the news that captures our collective consciousness, we may focus our Saturday service on that theme. For example, we may focus a given service for those suffering the devastation of recent storms or at Christmas, this service is designed for those who are experiencing a solemn time during the otherwise festive holiday season. We would love to have people come and find a place that is welcoming, relaxed, and offers release and rejuvenation,” Campbell continued.

Sottile said that she has received much positive feedback from those who have attended the service.

“People have said that they feel 're-freshed' and 'more relaxed' after attending. As the music director I offer music that speaks to one's heart and creates a serene background to the entire experience,” she said. “Most often our Saturday Service of Sacred Space is exactly that...an intentionally, non-cluttered 45 minutes of quiet time with God. As music plays, each one can come and go from the space freely, light a candle after a silent prayer and upon occasion, enter into a group experience such as guided meditation.”

Campbell believes that our society has sacrificed by obtaining technology that keeps us “connected” and “plugged in” on a twenty-four hour cycle.

“We need to re-claim our quiet time and create un-plugged moments for ourselves. Once you carve out a moment of time and devote that time to silencing all the sounds in your busy mind and pressing the 'pause' button on your hectic life to just be still...even for a moment...you realize how much you need this quiet time to regain your inner balance,” she said.

For more information go to www.hamiltonumc1.org. Hamilton UMC is located at 858 Old Corlies Ave. in Neptune Township, N.J.

The December Issue Deadline is
November 23, 2017



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#GivingTuesday to Transform Lives This Advent

#GivingTuesday is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

This November 28th, join the movement and give - whether it's some of your time, a donation, gift or the power of your voice in your local community. It's a simple idea. Whether you come together with your family, your community, your church or your organization, find a way to give back and then share your idea.

This #GivingTuesday, you're invited to come together and join thousands of United Methodists to extend the spirit of giving thanks into the Advent season through gifts.

Connect your passion with God's mission as you give to a world in need through your prayers, presence, gifts, and service.

United Methodists in GNJ have many close ties to our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico. Working with the Methodist Church in Puerto Rico we are developing special resourcing and support for those in need after Hurricane Maria. On Giving Tuesday, remember the disaster recovery relief fund and help us reach the goal of \$500,000

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Imagine No Malaria: Helping to prevent malaria throughout Africa, cutting deaths in half since 2015.

Cast a wider net this Advent and host an Imagine No Malaria worship service or giving drive.

www.imagenomalaria.org

ESPERANZA FOR PUERTO RICO
UNITED METHODISTS OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 28, 2017

#GIVING TUESDAY

United Methodist of GNJ are working with the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico developing special resources and support for those in need after Hurricane Maria.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATES, GO TO:
www.gnjumc.org/disasterresponse/esperanzaforpr




Feeding People • Changing Lives

CUMAC: Serving thousands of people facing hunger and struggling with basic needs in the Paterson region.

Fight against hunger and sponsor a food drive or collection in your congregation this Advent.

www.cumac.org

In addition, if your heart is moved to lend support to one of the following groups, organizations, or ministries working to transform lives and communities in New Jersey, please make:

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AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT, PRESCHOOL & SUMMER PROGRAMS
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Camp YDP: Caring for over 100 children in preschool, after-school and summer programs in the city of Paterson

www.campydp.org

A FUTURE WITH
HOPE

A Future With Hope: Committed to bringing every last family home following Superstorm Sandy and developing 100 Hope Centers throughout N.J.

Help bring the remaining families home and spread hope to hurting people throughout NJ by contributing to Hope Center initiatives.

www.afuturewithhope.org


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The Neighborhood Center: Serving children and families in the Camden community for over 100 years through urban farming, community kitchen, childcare, senior care, and education.

Take a seat in the "community's living room" with a team of volunteers, mentors or donations this Advent.

www.ncicamden.org


Respond Inc.
Founded 1967

Respond Inc: Serving the city of Camden through homeless programs, housing, youth services, and employment and economic development.

Help people help themselves for the next 50 years this Advent by supporting Respond, Inc.

www.respondinc.com

Mary Pat Christie Meets with A Future With Hope, Recovery Groups

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

WALL TWP – New Jersey's First Lady, Mary Pat Christie convened a roundtable discussion with nonprofit organizations that received funding through the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund (HSNJRF) and continued to actively support long term Sandy-related recovery projects. Among those present was Bobbie Ridgely, Executive Director of the mission arm of GNJ, A Future With Hope.

The roundtable was held on Oct. 25 at Camp Evans, a former military installation in Wall Township that with the help of a \$125,000 Relief Fund, has been transformed into a volunteer host center in case of future natural disasters.

"Camp Evans has been a tremendous launching point for Sandy recovery efforts in Monmouth County," said Mrs. Christie. "I'm proud to see first-hand Sandy Relief Fund grants in action with the culmination of this volunteer host center. It's unbelievable that five years after Sandy, volunteers from around the country continue to come to New Jersey to bolster our recovery. What began as a means to help New Jersey rebuild after the storm has evolved into a committed partnership of individuals and organizations working together to make a difference in the lives of all those impacted by Sandy."

In creating the HSNJRF, Mrs. Christie's objective was to form a nonprofit

that would have a sustainable, long-term impact, focusing on programs to address unmet needs of communities affected by Sandy.

"A Future With Hope and United Methodists are grateful to the tens of thousands of donors who contributed to New Jersey in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy," said Ridgely. "Because of their generosity, along with the fiscal stewardship of Mrs. Christie and her staff, A Future With Hope and our partners continue to help homeowners on the long road to recovery."

Kevin McGee, Director of New Jersey Recovery at SBP, Inc., praised the relief fund's help in empowering the rebuilding of homes for the most vulnerable members of communities in Monmouth and Ocean counties.

"Simply stated, the Relief Fund's willingness to partner with local nonprofits on the ground has resulted in returning safety and security to hundreds of families who otherwise would not have been able to return home."

A total of \$41 million was raised by the HSNJRF from over 35,000 donors worldwide. Contributors included corporations, foundations, foreign countries, community organizations, and individuals. Ninety-five percent of funds, totaling \$37.8 million were efficiently distributed in support of 109 nonprofit organizations throughout New Jersey

HSNJRF funding and accomplishments include:



Bobbie Ridgely and Lou Strugala from A Future With Hope joined partners in long term disaster recovery from Ocean County LTRG, New Jersey Community Capital, SBP, Camp Evans, the Affordable Housing Alliance, Housing Recovery and Resources Center and Mary Pat Christie representing the Hurricane Sandy NJ Relief Fund to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the storm and the recovery work funded by the HSNJRF. Photo provided

- 250,000 total New Jersey residents helped through the grants provided by the Relief Fund
- 2,265 home repairs and reconstruction completed
- \$6.2 million given to 11 Long Term Recovery Groups
- 2.5 million meals were delivered to those affected in the aftermath
- 1,127 small businesses obtained loans to re-open their doors
- 31,274 residents received financial

counseling

- 3,060 households were provided with mental health and emotional support service

The NJHSRF responsibly distributed all funding entrusted to it and closed in March of 2016. It was the largest philanthropic funder of New Jersey's recovery.

This story was adapted from a press release issued by the office of Governor Chris Christie on Oct. 25, 2017.

Five Years Later, Hope is on the Move

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"Now we feel like our future does have hope, because we hooked up with this wonderful group of people," MaryEllen Azack said. "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Ridgely expressed how recovery projects are a testament to the power of United Methodist connectionalism not only in getting work done but in serving others as a witness. Now Schol wants to keep up the momentum and focus A Future With Hope, which has grown into the mission arm of GNJ, into new community-building endeavors.

"We will keep working with Sandy-affected homeowners, but we've been

preparing for what's next," Schol said. "We're committed to further our ministry to engage in community building and building affordable housing through Hope Centers around the state."

Hope Centers will provide vital community resources, some of which will include childcare, after-school programs or tutoring for students as the Future With Hope ministry assists in economic development within low-income communities by helping to provide housing, job readiness classes, and other social services that strengthen neighborhoods.

Additionally, United Methodist churches throughout GNJ are looking to repur-

pose older structures that no longer serve the community into places that do exactly that. One project is Christ UMC in Jersey City which will re-purpose its building to provide new worship and community space as well as more than 120 units of affordable and market-rate housing to serve the community and create revenue streams for mission and ministry.

However, A Future With Hope remains committed until to the last family displaced by Sandy is finally home.

"In any disaster, there are going to be challenges. There are going to be issues," said Schol. "But New Jersey can be proud of what the people of the communities did, of what local nonprofit organizations and churches and business

leaders and elected officials, all working together, all did - an amazing job."

At the conclusion of the service, Christie, too, thanked the thousands of people and organizations who worked to restore storm ravaged communities.

"It has been, and will always be, the greatest honor as my eight years as governor to have had the opportunity to lead the great people of this state through such a difficult trial," he said. "You don't run for governor to do this, and there is no manual... but the way you lead is to draw inspiration from the people you lead, and that is what I did. And that is what I hope any leader, when confronted with this in the future, will do."

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www.gnjumc.org/umsf

Language Ministry Links Church to Community

By Denise Herschel
nj6pack@yahoo.com

MONTCLAIR - When Pastor Earl Kim was first appointed to the First United Methodist Church of Montclair in 2012, he immediately noticed the growing number of immigrants and the lack of service programs available for them in the surrounding area. After a discussion with his wife Jee Hei Park, who had completed an internship for a non-profit organization which offered various programs for immigrants, including ESL, the couple agreed to initiate free English as a Second Language (ESL) and Spanish speaking classes at the church "as a great outreach program connecting the church to the community."

Since its launch in the fall of 2013, the program has assisted more than 200 immigrants and has been a recipient of the Harvest Mission Fund of the GNJ and the RJB Mission Grant.

"This was the first time the church had offered this program which is open to all," said Kim. "Everything is offered free-of-charge; no registration fee and no tuition. We even provide all the materials needed in class."

In preparation of opening the program, in 2012 church members discussed the 'free-of-charge' policy for the program and, "we, in one mind, wanted this to be completely open and accessible to anyone who wants to know English," said Kim. "We don't want their economic or civil status to be an obstacle to learning a new language and culture. We cherish and are more than willing to continue this policy."

The program, called LINK Language Learning, started as a mission initiative of the church. According to Kim, the foremost goal is to appreciate and promote diversity and inclusiveness by exchanging language and cultures.

Reflecting the population surrounding Montclair, the majority of the students are from Latin America - Columbia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and Puerto Rico.

Students from Middle Eastern nations such as Syria, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Algeria, and Morocco are also in attendance as well as Asian students from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea.

"We have a few students who are from the Muslim tradition and some of them, but not all, felt a bit strange about coming to a church building," said Kim. "But soon they opened their minds and mingled with us as well. We have a good number of students working as au pairs in the area with most of them from Latin America and Europe. This program is more than just learning and teaching English. This program has been a place where all participating build up a community of friendship and care."

The church offers ESL classes on Wednesday evenings with classes meeting weekly for 12 to 13 weeks in both the fall and spring semester in addition to a four week summer session. There are two levels of classes - beginner-low intermediate and intermediate-advanced. Last fall, Spanish classes were also debuted.

"It was a successful start as we drew some local residents who wanted to learn Spanish. We are now in the process of reorganizing with the plan to reboot next spring," said Kim. "This is a mission and ministry solely to the community."

The church is collaborating with the Montclair Board of Education and the Montclair Public Library. In partnership with the library, they are developing new classes and curriculum which are more purpose-oriented.

"All of the volunteers who teach serve from their goodwill," said Kim. "All are greatly passionate about this mission, putting their time and energy into developing curriculum and helping the students even outside the classroom. Our program is now well-established and well-known for our professional teaching and hospitable environment."

Each semester the church's program has 25 to 30 students and almost half are returning students.

"We see that everyone in the program -students, teachers and child caregivers- builds a great community and becomes a family," Kim said. "Some of them are interested in our church, come to Sunday worship and become part of our congregation too," he added.

Kim believes the program is a ministry that aims to be a bridge connecting the church and the local community of Montclair and nearby towns.

"Monclair FUMC offers this program not to simply teach English but to do God's mission more tangibly and ac-

tively," he said. "By supporting those who need help with English, we have become a city center where God's inclusive love is strongly demonstrated and practiced. This program is an essential way that our church can contribute to the community and ultimately, an important way the church invites people from the community."

First UMC of Montclair is located at 24 North Fullerton Avenue in Montclair, NJ. For more information visit www.linklanguagelearning.org or www.first-montclair.org.

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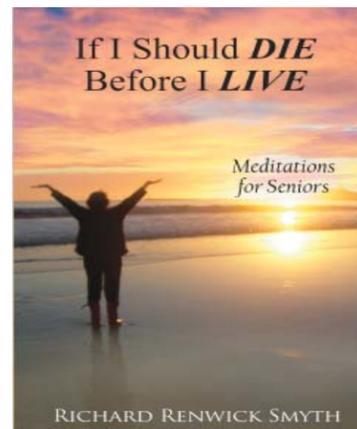
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Email your submissions to Mark Shenise, mshenise@gcah.org. Or send to Mark Shenise, 36 Madison Ave., P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940.



SUBMISSION DEADLINE

January 18, 2018. Entries received after the deadline will be entered in the following year's contest. Any questions or comments? Contact Don DeGroat at 570.646.9298 or dfdegroat4@aol.com.

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Pastor Hits the Streets for Homeless Youth

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

WESTVILLE – Pastor Dave Delaney of St. Paul's UMC in West Deptford joined Dee and Ish, the owners of the Piston Diner in Westville to sleep in cardboard boxes on the street on Oct. 26. They did so as part of a nationwide demonstration on behalf of Covenant House, a nonprofit working with homeless youth across the U.S. and Canada.

In an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless youth, Delaney took to the street and documented his experience on social media, reaching hundreds of friends and followers.

"These kids have mental health issues, some already have drug issues," said Delaney. "But some are just your average, everyday kid. For some of them, maybe their home life is not good."

Since 1972, Covenant House has been opening doors to homeless kids and now stands as a powerful human rights movement for vulnerable youth in 31 cities across six countries. For more than four decades, the organization has helped transform and save the lives of more than 1 million homeless, runaway and trafficked young people offering support services to those in need.

On the night of Oct. 26, Delaney raised over \$2,500 through an outpouring of small donations, many of \$10.

"Some also donated \$50 and \$100," said Delaney. "Plus, a dear classmate donated \$73 for our graduating class."

Joan Tapken Benedict posted pictures to her Facebook account of Delaney setting up his cardboard box outside the Piston Diner.

"Trying it on to make sure it fits," she wrote. "Stay warm Pastor Delaney. Luv your spirit and the way you're always out there for the less fortunate."

In the wake of the recent disasters brought forth by hurricanes, Delaney said its "easy to forget that each night teenagers are on city streets across America living in danger."

After many years working with teens, the cause has inspired Delaney who has no problem begging friends for support.



Pastor Dave Delaney of St. Paul's UMC in West Deptford prepares for his sleep out outside the Piston Diner in Westville on Oct. 26, helping to raise funds and awareness for Covenant House, a national group rescuing homeless kids. Photo provided

"As I've gotten older, I've come to realize the importance of using the time we have to help others," he said. "I try to do my best to be a voice for those who are hurting in the world, for the disadvantaged, the helpless, and the disabled. I have always tried to not just be a man of words but one of actions who won't hesitate to go out on the streets, into the dirty corners where the hurting sleep, and to continue to wrap my arms around those whose lives have been impacted by poverty, mental illness, and drug abuse."

Having seen, listened to, and held young men and women in their late teens and early twenties living out on the streets and officiating at their funerals, Delaney said he knows that each person reached by Covenant House has a chance to survive.

"Sadly, lost kids are still on the streets of the wealthiest nation in the world, waking up in their boxes, abandoned buildings, cars that no longer can be driven," said Delaney. "But Covenant House staff will be looking to find and rescue them and that's why I sleep out."

"Pastor Dave is taking care of the hard part – sleeping in the cold outdoors tonight," said churchgoer Gary Rutter.



For the past five years, Rev. Dave Delaney of St. Paul's UMC in West Deptford has slept out to raise awareness and funds for the cause he's most passionate about – rescuing homeless youth from the streets. Photo provided

He continued, "And I'll be doing the easy part – eating a nice hot meal in the warm Piston Diner in support of this vital mission project."

"You can always find Pastor Dave on the front line," said Johnny Ordille. "Putting himself out there to help those in need."

For the last five years, Delaney has slept out to raise awareness and funds for the cause he's passionate about. This

year, he expanded the sleep out because his friends decided to join him as a preview to Covenant House's national sleep out on Nov. 16-17, where Delaney will sleep out on the streets of Atlantic City.

"I tear up knowing kids are back on the streets tonight," he said. "They're desperately needing a loving face and voice encouraging them to come to Covenant House."

Find out more at www.covenanthouse.org

Native American UMC Designated Historic Site



St. John UMC in Bridgeton was officially designated as a Historic Native American Methodist Church on Oct. 29, making it the only church top receive such designation in the state. Photo provided

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

CUMBERLAND CO. – On Oct. 29, St. John UMC in Bridgeton invited the community to a ceremony officially designating the church as an Historic Native American Methodist Church, making it the only church to receive such designation in the state.

Home to many members of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, St. John UMC is the fifth oldest Native American Methodist Church in the U.S.

The recommendations to the 2017 Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey states, "the church building has been a place of meeting for tribal affairs when none were available or allowed and a place of ministry to help the spiritual and physical needs of those in need."

Disciples from St. John UMC currently serve on the Tribal Council of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation; one for over 40 years.

The historic acknowledgment is a significant contrast to the Tribal Nation's pursuit of reaffirmation, the struggle for sovereign recognition by the State of New Jersey.

Museum Visit Honors History, Leaders

On Oct. 18, 35 Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Tribal leaders and St. John UMC members paid homage to the new Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. Sponsored by the Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM), the trip served to remind attendees of the more than 250,000 Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River during the Revolutionary Era, forming more than 80 nations and speaking

dozens of languages. CONAM provides support and education to both Natives and non-Natives to assist in understanding the challenges of cultural retention as church and society change.

"The decades of political turmoil and warfare which divided Great Britain and its colonies and led to the creation of the United States profoundly affected Native people," said Kent.

Eight major exhibits within the museum explore the Native American story while other displays honored Native American leaders.

NACP Gathers in Vineland

Native American leaders from each United Methodist Jurisdiction met in Vineland on Sept. 29-Oct. 1 for the Native American Comprehensive Plan (NACP) quadrennial CONAM training. Sponsored by GNJ's CONAM, 65 participants from Alaska to Florida joined local Lenni Lenape Tribal leaders and members of St. John UMC to learn strategies for continued development and implementation of Native American ministries in each conference.

Leaders including Director of Connectional Ministries Hector Burgos, Rev. Roy E. Bundy of St. John UMC, and Mark Gould of the Lenape Tribal Chair welcomed the group. Conference attendees visited St. John UMC for a traditional Native American meal followed by a Native American hymn sing. New ideas and resources were shared under the leadership of Anita Phillips, NACP Director, Cynthia Kent, Chair of GNJ's CONAM, and Chebon Kernell from the General Conference Office.

"Everyone looks forward to the outcomes of this expansive CONAM training," said Kent.

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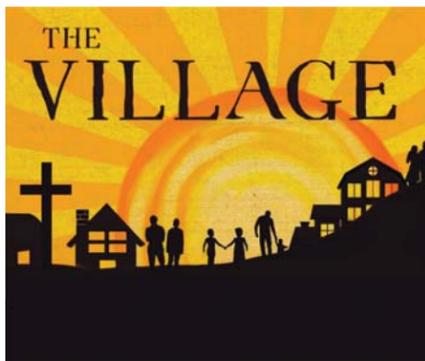
The Village Service Launches in Red Bank

By Ken Glossbrenner

RED BANK - What does it take to attract new people to church? The United Methodist Church of Red Bank (UMCRB) considered this question and has taken a bold step. After much research and planning, in September the church launched "The Village," an alternative worship service with a more contemporary, progressive feel.

With the support of a GNJ Congregational Development Grant, the Village has hired a worship leader to inspire and draw new community members with music and prayer. The Village occurs in a space with high tech lighting and audio and brand new A/V equipment for emphasizing words and imagery. The Village includes joy-filled good news songs energized with microphones, guitars, keyboards, and drums. Service attendees rise and clap their hands, unifying in excited praise, and opening themselves to understanding God's word.

Red Bank is going a step further with its concept of The Village. Traditional worship at United Methodist churches puts scripture and tradition in the forefront with a preacher interpreting the scripture from the pulpit. The Village also starts with scripture and tradition, but gives a stronger voice to the other



elements of Wesley's quadrilateral: experience and reason.

"God trusts us each to discover what God's message means to us," said the church's senior pastor Rev. Jessica Naulty. "So The Village takes some of the task of discernment out of the pulpit and crowd-sources it."

After an introduction to the day's scripture, those gathered are invited to share their own experiences and apply their own reason. Together in community, this "Village" creates a broader understanding of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and a collective mission.

"So perhaps this democratization of how we collectively come to understand God will open up a path for those who are uncertain about the value of church," Naulty stated. "Perhaps less formal, less



With a focus on reaching the community, "The Village" an alternative, contemporary worship service has launched at The UMC of Red Bank. Photo provided

structured worship will attract those who won't sit well through organ music and sermons."

"At UMCRB, we embrace the tough questions of faith and wrestle with what our theology really means as we live in out in our everyday lives," said Naulty. "We discovered though, that while we were really good at this in-depth reflection in our Christian education programs, we relied on the congregants to ask the questions and apply their theology on their own in worship. The conversational dimension of the sermon in our new Village service, where people dialogue together around topical questions, gives space for this progressive theological understanding – that everyone believes

a little differently, sees the world through different lenses, and we all have something to learn from one another." She added, "The Word of God is truly proclaimed through the people of our Village."

Naulty added, "These collective benefits might well bring new saints into church and into the blessings of God."

According to Naulty, the church has confidence that every new person will bring something new and valuable to The Village, leave inspired, and will gain something valuable, perhaps even transformational, in return.

The Village takes place 11:00AM every Sunday at The United Methodist Church of Red Bank, 247 Broad Street, Red Bank, NJ.

Apostles in our Midst: Charles Perez and Nueva Esperanza

A 2017 Series on Apostolic Leadership in GNJ

Mission: Nueva Esperanza is a new bilingual Hispanic ministry of Morristown UMC reaching out to the nearly 34% Hispanic and Latino population in the community. It seeks to bring together Hispanic people who have immigrated to America looking for a place to gather and experience God and a church family in the Morristown area. Pastor Charles Perez was appointed as an Associate Pastor to lead the ministry and he started with a creative sports ministry for young people, small group home ministries and inspiring worship services.



The ministry began reaching new people with baptisms, youth confirmations, reception of new young adult members and the blessing of a new young people's soccer team. The soccer ministry is made up of at least 20 youth who spend time together to develop their soccer skills as well as their personal relationships with Christ.

Three small groups have been established in the homes of Morristown residents for the purpose of evangelism and discipleship and in the course of a year, three children have been baptized into the faith through the ministry. Additionally, four youth completed the sacrament of confirmation and the church accepted three new members.

Since its inception a year ago, an average of 20 people worship at the ministry's Sunday Service and ministry leaders are currently working on Communities of Hope training to continue the momentum of connecting with the Hispanic and Latino communities. The team is seeking new, creative ways to build relationships with neighbors, developing innovative and life-changing community mission and nurturing mission partnerships with local organizations.

Another ministry of Morristown UMC and Nueva Esperanza is the Holy Hoops basketball ministry, attracting Generation Z and Millennials; two generations who often tend to be disconnected from church.

"The basketball ministry allows a space for young people to engage God in their own terms," said Perez. "It's a place where young people can take their passions and their culture to Christ in a way that feels authentic. It's also a place where leadership development

opportunities are given to our young people through mission, camping, and other resources."

The ministry averages about 25 young people on Thursdays and Sundays. Inspiration to start innovative ministries based on Holy Hoops has sparked among those in attendance. The group is working on an unorthodox Sunday service that allows their generation's culture to blossom in Christ.

"It will definitely be innovative and creative," said Perez.

Fifteen new members have been received this year due to the work of the ministry.

Apostle: Rev. Charles Perez was born and raised in Newark by a Christian mother and an atheist father.

"I can see today that both influences have been a blessing to me," said Perez. His mother instilled the importance and value of education and having a consistent relationship with God while his father's influence allowed him to see people, different cultures, and the world that Perez would one day be ministering to.

Perez earned a Bachelors in Early Childhood Education from Bloomfield College where he met his wife. The couple went on to have four children and Perez went on to Drew Theological Seminary to earn a Masters of Divinity. Presently, Perez is a Provisional Elder in GNJ serving as Senior Pastor at First UMC in Dover, N.J., and the Associate Pastor at Morristown UMC for the Hispanic ministry Nueva Esperanza.

"I am really passionate about reaching the unchurched and de-churched in creative innovative ways that appeals to their cultures and allows for Christ to be in their lives."



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Immigration and Refugee Ministry Resources

GNJ is committed to equip and resource local congregations to engage in ministries of mercy and justice that support the immigrant community. Visit gnjumc.org/church-and-society for resources and tool-kits.

NJ Coalition for Diverse and Inclusive Schools

Bishop John Schol has been asked to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Coalition for Diverse and Inclusive Schools, Inc. The coalition is the work of the Honorable Gary Stein, the Associate New Jersey Supreme Court Justice who spoke at Annual Conference.



GNJ leaders Attend 'Catalyst One Day'

35+ GNJ leaders attending an awe-inspiring Catalyst One Day // Central PA on "Leading Change." Leaders learned from Craig Groeschel and Brian Houston, and left equipped to "lead change like never before."

Alloway UMC Engages Community Halloween Parade

Alloway UMC was the only church represented at the 2017 annual Halloween Parade in Alloway. The beloved community event featured vendors, antique tractors, string bands, school bands, and floats by the Boy Scouts, Little League, and local businesses. "Our simple message was 'Jesus is the light of the world,'" said Rev. Ellen Cusak, the church's senior pastor.



Kingston UMC Hosts Revival

Celebrating 139 years of continuous ministry, Kingston UMC in Princeton held its on revival on Oct. 1-3 featuring a tent, free food, music, and passionate, progressive speaking which included guest preacher, Dr. Tony Campolo.



Cherry Hill Food Pantry Celebrates 10 Years with Open House

On Oct. 14 the Cherry Hill Food Pantry in Cherry Hill held an Open House to celebrate its 10 year anniversary. St. Andrews UMC was one of the founding churches of the pantry and provides leadership. Many dignitaries and clergy were present.



West Belmar UMC Variety Show Benefits Children's Christmas Fund

The West Belmar UMC's annual variety show featured the theme "The Not So Grand-Ole-Opry" to benefit the church's Children's Christmas Fund. The fund helps local parents in need provide gifts for their children at Christmas and food donations. The night was filled with music, dance, and comedy.

Youth Present Worship Service at Oakhurst UMC

On Oct. 22, the youth group of Oakhurst UMC presented a worship service, taking part in a play that illustrated the role of forgiveness in the Christian life. Following the service, UMW honored the youth with a brunch.



Kemble UMC Offers Musical Community Showcase

Kemble UMC took advantage of its location on Broad Street, the parade route for the Woodbury Fall Festival, to offer a musical Community Showcase on Oct 7. Among other presentations, the newly formed J.A.M. choir (Jesus and Me) made its debut; Senior Choir joined them for the finale. Fellow Methodists from Mt. Zion-Wesley UMC in Wenonah, the Spiritual Five, also appeared. Spectators took advantage of the free hot dogs and tours of the church.

Choir Collaboration Brings Together Churches, Seminary, and Community

On Oct. 1, The UMC in Madison hosted a concert by choir members, Drew University and Christ Church Summit under the direction of Dr. Mark Miller and coordinated by Dr. Daniel Leguizamon. The collaboration brought together many from throughout the community.



Conversation About Race - Wisdom Circle

On Dec. 9 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Trinity UMC in Ewing, laity and clergy from cross-racial, cross-cultural sites will come together to engage in conversation regarding their blessings and challenges. The Wisdom Circle provides an opportunity for those in these sites to meet, fellowship and learn. For more info contact Rev. Vanessa M. Wilson. JD at vanessa@vanessawilson.info or call her at (609)388-8852.

Celebrate United Methodist Student Day

Think about the young people in your congregation as you prepare to celebrate United Methodist Student Day on Nov. 26. Download the United Methodist Student Day pastor's kit for tools to celebrate including social media images, e-books, videos, and more. Visit umcgiving.org

Are You an Organizational Superstar?

Are you a church administrator or leader looking for your next step? Do you have the relational ability to motivate, event plan, and manage tasks, schedules, and staff? The Connectional Ministries Team is seeking an Executive Assistant to do just that. Visit gnjumc.org/job-opportunities to learn more.

Let the Mission and Resource Center Serve You

Let the Mission and Resource Center in Neptune, NJ, serve you. Visit gnjumc.org/meeting to fill out the Conference Meeting Room request form and reserve space for your congregation, agency, organization, group or committee.

OBITUARIES

Gerry Woodlief, Spouse of Rev. Diane Gilbert, died on Sept. 27. A Celebration of Life took place on Sept. 30 at First UMC of Beach Haven Terrace. Memorial Donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to United Methodist Communities Foundation Fellowship Fund, 3311 State Route 33, Neptune, NJ 07753 or to the American Cancer Society, Inc. at donate3.cancer.org

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Diane Gilbert, 12502 Long Beach Blvd., Long Beach Twp., NJ 08008

Shelley Potter-Abrahamsen, Retired Elder, died on Oct. 31. A Celebration of Life took place on Nov. 11 at Whiting UMC in Whiting, NJ. Memorial Donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in Memory of Shelly Potter-Abrahamsen, Mission and Resource Center, 205 Jumping Brook Rd., Neptune, NJ 07753 or to Ocean's Harbor House Youth Shelter www.oceansharborhouse.org

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Art Abrahamsen, 55 Birchwood Dr., Whiting, NJ 08759



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