

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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No. 8

Northeastern Jurisdiction Vows to Fight Racism

By Carolyn Conover
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The Northeastern Jurisdiction elected two new bishops to serve in the jurisdiction: Rev. Cynthia Moore-Koikoi from Baltimore-Washington and Rev. LaTrelle Easterling from New England at the Jurisdictional Conference held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania the week of July 10.



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Rev. Dr. Jisun Kwak withdrew her name from consideration on July 14 after saying, "I praise God for my amazing journey. I stand in awe of God's love. I want to thank Greater New Jersey Conference for endorsing me. I felt their prayers. Continue to pray for me as I have to face the challenges ahead." Rev. Kwak was endorsed by GNJ in May at the Annual Conference in Wildwood.

The election of Bishops Moore-Koikoi and Easterling marked a historic moment in the jurisdiction. Both Moore-Koikoi and Easterling are African American women, and their election comes on the heels of a powerful statement from the College of Bishops of the Northeastern Jurisdiction that committed "to acknowledge our participation in the sin of institutional racism and to have ongoing conversations with the College about racism, privilege and oppression."

Bishop Schol, who was presiding during the final election said in celebration of the historic legislation, "The College of



2016 Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference Bishops' Consecration Service. Photo by Western Pennsylvania Conference

Bishop's may never be the same again."

The Black United Methodist Pastors, Black Methodists for Church Renewal and Black Leadership Forums of the Northeastern Jurisdiction presented legislation that would turn the College of Bishop's commitment into action. The resolution included requiring district superintendents, conference staff and lay leadership to confront racism, require training and address the impact of structural and institutional racism that result in

the closing of Black churches and start new faith communities.

Rev. Varlyna Wright who helped draft the legislation and is the District Superintendent of the Capital District in Greater New Jersey said, "Greater New Jersey has already committed to a ten year plan to address cultural competency. This resolution takes the commitment one step further. We are a part of one of the most diverse conferences in the denomination and our congregations

are ready to move forward to eradicate racism in our communities. We need to get this done!"

The delegates at the conference had an extended conversation in support of the resolution. One youth delegate, stated that the use of the term "Black" churches continues to build walls rather than break them down. Bishop Schol responded, "Sometimes there is more than one right answer. We need to ac-

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Palisades District Superintendent Celebrates Every Day

By Josh Kinney
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For Palisades District Superintendent Rev. Gina Kim, every day is her favorite day. From the tagline at the end of her emails that read: "Today is my favorite day" to the jovial, overflowing elation radiating from her presence, Kim is a living expression of gratitude and calling.

"I love what I do," Kim said. "Being a part of God's plan for the United Methodist Church is an absolute joy!"

Having started her appointment as Palisades District Superintendent in July, Kim now works with more than 60 churches in the district. With 24 years of full-time ministry, Kim transferred to GNJ from East Ohio in 2006 and has grown ministries in each place she served. Bishop John Schol has described Kim as a "Spirit-led pioneer" who "initiates a vision of what could be" developing strategies and inspiring people to work together to achieve world-changing mission.

But ministry wasn't always a part of Kim's life. Before she became known for celebrating every day, Kim arrived in the U.S. from Korea as a realist, disregarding and writing off all matters of faith. While studying at the University of Idaho, a professor of computer engineering demonstrated the love of Christ to Kim by sharing his faith, patiently and subtly.

"He went out of his way to help me and pray for me," Kim said. "I saw what Christ-likeness truly meant."

For years Kim was rooted in the Ko-



Rev. Gina Kim, Palisades District Superintendent speaks before Annual Conference 2015 in Wildwood. Photo by Shari DeAngelo

rean Community Church in Englewood where she served as a youth pastor before moving to Ohio with her husband, Chong. There, working as a computer engineering project leader, Kim felt compelled to share her faith with coworkers. Lunch hour became a prayer and study group session.

"It was my passion," she exclaimed! "I wanted to share the gospel with everyone." Kim felt led to leave her job and enter a period of prayer and solitude to seek direction. She expected to hear from God clearly.

"And I did," she said. "I heard God tell me one night to feed His sheep." But Kim was concerned. "I remember saying to God, 'who am I? I'm just a computer engineer.'" Kim didn't know how she would teach or lead, but she was confident that God would train her. She accepted her calling and immediately doors started opening.

While earning her Masters of Divinity at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio, United Methodist recruiters from the East Ohio Conference arrived on campus and interviewed Kim.

"At the time, I didn't really know anything about the United Methodist Church, but the recruiters were impressed with me and connected me with the district committee," Kim said. After passing the interviews, she was sent to the Board of Ordained Ministry and served her first appointment at Twin Falls UMC in Munroe Falls, Ohio. From there she went on to serve two cross-cultural church appointments in East Ohio.

In 2006, Kim and her husband returned to New Jersey and to their beloved Korean Community Church. For five years Kim served as the church's Associate Pastor, working alongside people she considered family and had counseled and mentored under before moving to Ohio.

"I loved every minute of working there because I had such a special affection for that church," she said.

Always willing to step outside her comfort zone, Kim followed her calling to Wesley UMC in South Plainfield and became the full-time senior pastor, serving a vital, multicultural congregation and facilitating its spiritual growth.

"When I first became a full-time pastor, I couldn't believe it," she said. "I thought, 'they're paying me to do what I love?'"

Under Kim's leadership, Wesley UMC grew significantly with increases in worship attendance, professions of faith, disciples in small groups, and mission engagement while the congregation faithfully paid 100 percent of its shared

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A Message from the Bishop



Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. -Proverbs 22:6

This year I have or will have run a half marathon with Kristin at Zion National Park, deep sea fished with Mark and hiked and meditated in Peru with Rebecca. This year I turned 60 and asked each of my children what they would like to do with me. Let's see, a vigorous long run, fishing in the middle of the ocean and hiking up the side of a mountain in some distant country - hmmm, I think my kids

are trying to get their inheritance sooner than I would like.

Last month I shared with you about marriage as Beverly and I celebrated our wedding anniversary. Today I want to share with you about children. I really believe Proverbs has it right, how you start your children off will carry into adulthood.

I was not always a good parent. I was young, learning and exploring how to be a good father to my children. I made mistakes, like spending too much time at work when I should have been with family, trying to control my kids to be more like me rather than guiding and releasing them, and being angry which had more to do with what I was experiencing and not who they were being.

In spite of some bad parenting and blessed by good mothering, my kids turned out alright. Here are some things I worked on as a parent and still try to carry into our relationships today.

You are Beautifully and Wonderfully Made

The more I saw my children as beautifully and wonderfully made, the more they became true to who God had created and called them to be. Children, not just my kids, are remarkable. They are resilient, hopeful, playful and friendly. The more I appreciated these, even when I was not hopeful or ready to be playful, the more they grew into a child of God.

Love No Matter What

Sometimes it is hard to love unconditionally, even your own children. They mess up from time to time and we have such high hopes for them. Over the years I found it was hardest to love my kids when they were not becoming the young people I wanted them to be, or quite frankly, not becoming me - adopting my interests, my way of doing things or my hopes for their future. The more I loved them just the way they were and the more I stood with them even when they were wrong, the more they respected life, people and even me. Love is the most powerful influence we have.

Inspire Courage Not Perfection

The children who do well as adults have enough courage to fail. The other day one of my kids was concerned about making a decision. I asked why, and "I might fail" was the response. I said "Good. I hope you do fail. The sooner you fail the sooner you become better." Maybe I was too direct or too hard, but my child chose the option of trying even if it meant failure. That makes me proud. The more we offer our children challenges and support them, even though they may fail, the more they grow and mature.

Parenting is tough. I spent a lot of time talking and praying my way through it. Even after my children left the house (oh and they will be back), I use to stop at their bedroom doors each night before I want to bed and pray for them. I prayed God would keep them safe and that more than all else they would have meaning and purpose that fulfilled them and offered something to the world. Pray for your children's safety and that they will have a life of meaning and purpose.

A Word to Kids and a Lot of Adults

I spent a good part of my life trying not to be like my father. Don't misunderstand, I had a great dad. He loved me, cared about me and wanted the best for me. But you know, those nagging habits our parents have just seem to exhaust us and then we find we are doing the same thing. Ugh! I spent time and energy trying not to acquire my dad's habits and it was exhausting. One day I decided I would stop trying not to be like my father and embrace all that was good about him. My life took off. WARNING TO KIDS - no matter how hard you try, you are going to acquire habits from your parents that you do not like. Get over it, it's part of your destiny. You have been practicing these habits since the second you were born. Embrace their goodness, it may be the best Godliness you will learn.

You know you don't have to have kids to influence the life of young people. In fact there are kids watching you all of the time. I encourage you to see every child as beautiful and wonderfully made, to love children no matter what and to inspire and support children to be courageous.

Keep the faith!

John,

John Schol, just another proud dad
The United Methodist Church
Greater New Jersey

Northeastern Jurisdiction Vows to Fight Racism

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knowledge that the wall dividing us by race is real before we can take it down."

After the resolution had passed, the delegations from each conference stood to affirm that they would commit to action on the steps outlined in the resolutions set forth by their conference leadership.

Rev. Eunice Vega-Perez of Vernon UMC offered prayer after a group of Latino clergy delegates shared their vision for the church. Additionally, Asian-American delegates issued a statement to the jurisdiction celebrating the church's "increasing" diversity and inclusiveness.

"We are excited to be a part of the momentous occasion of electing two

African-American women bishops. How exciting it is also to be a part of a new movement where we made bold and prophetic resolution and call to action to dismantle racism," the statement read, acknowledging that there is still work in progress. The statement went on to say, "It gives us much hope that we can face the ongoing challenges of racism, immigration issues, social and economic injustice. It takes everyone to work together to fulfill God's vision for the church and the world. We are standing here with you to affirm our commitment and to offer our gifts and graces to continue the work of bringing God's kingdom in our midst."

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“Finding the 20% that matters”

80% of our actual productivity comes from 20% of our tasks...
(and unfortunately, this also means that the other 80% of our tasks only account for 20% of our productivity)

HOW CAN WE FOCUS ON THE 20% ...THE STUFF THAT MATTERS?



VISION

- What is our church's ultimate vision and ongoing mission? *(and will my to-do list get us there?)*
- What is one thing I can do for my church that will actually matter a year from now?
- What will we do this week that normal churches don't do?

ROLES

What is our #1 task for my role as a:

- Disciple
- Spouse
- Parent
- Pastor
- Health Expert
- Financial Manger
- Learner



DATA BASE

- Are people's information up-to-date?
- When is the last time they attended?
- How do they like to be contacted?
- Are we actively inviting people to move from visitor to attender to leader?



**Revisiting vision documents + recognizing our key roles
+ tending to our databases = 20% that really matters**

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Trey Wince, Director of New Disciples | twince@gnjumc.org | 732.359.1044

Calvary Dumont Leads Service to Condemn Violence, Promote Peace

By Elaine Wing
elainedwing@gmail.com

They might have come looking for comfort in the face of violence and discord, but that's not what the 73 attendees from diverse communities in North Jersey and Rockland County, New York, received at the "Stop Violence and Promote Peace" event held June 29 at Calvary UMC in Dumont.

"If I had to sum up what was said and sung with far greater eloquence, the one word to shout would be "Enough!,"" said Rev. Elaine Wing, Calvary's pastor. Six religious representatives joined Wing at the pulpit and more in the pews representing Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Hindu faith traditions.

The collective impatience reverberating in the room was fueled by data from many respected sites including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Justice which indicated that in 2010 alone, more than 30,000 people were killed by guns in the United States. Half of these victims were between 18 and 35 years, and one-third was under the age of 20.

Statistics from the CDC and The Los Angeles Times related to mass shootings were part of a powerful video created by Chuck Wing. Pictures of children who were all killed in the month of December 2015 - many as a result of domestic violence or drive-by shootings -- were incorporated into the video leaving viewers shocked at the frequency of death due to firearms.

The focus of the evening was on firearm-related violence in the United States, yet those gathered in the church were of one mind as they joined Ercan Tozan, Executive Director of Peace Islands Institute-New Jersey, in condemning the heinous act of violence committed against innocent lives in Istanbul, Turkey.

Peace Islands Institute is an organization of Turkish-American Muslims dedicated to fostering tolerance, understanding, and peace among people across the world.

Particularly striking throughout the evening was that the voices calling for peace and non-violence had been doing so for decades. Rabbi Paul Jacobson of Temple Avodat Shalom in River Edge shared these words penned in 1930 by Rabbi Mitchel Salem Fisher:

"Disturb us, (God), ruffle us from our complacency; Make us dissatisfied. Dissatisfied with the peace of ignorance, the quietude which arises from a shunning of the horror, the defeat, the bitterness and the poverty, physical and spiritual, of humans..."

The Rev. Susan Kerr, Pastor of Old North Reformed Church in Dumont, read excerpts from Senator Robert F. Kennedy's speech to the Cleveland City Club in 1968:

"This mindless menace of violence in America (again) stains our land and every one of our lives. The victims of the violence are black and white, rich and poor, young and old, famous and unknown. They are, most important of all, human beings loved and needed. We tolerate a rising level of violence that ignores our common humanity and our claims to civilization alike. We glorify killing on movie and television screens and call it entertainment. We make it easy for men of all shades of sanity to acquire weapons and ammunition they desire."

While there were moments of silence and deeply felt prayer calling for peace, tolerance, divine wisdom and healing, the thrust of the evening was a call to action. The voices calling for change came from religious and secular songwriters as well as the speakers. One of the songs, "Change" was written by contemporary artist Christina Aguilera as a tribute to



(left to right) Rabbi Paul Jacobson, Rev. Peggy Niederer, and Alka Chandra dialoging about future interfaith events following the service at Calvary UMC in the Palisades District on June 29. Photo by Ness Bantog Photography

the victims of the Orlando shooting massacre in June.

The General Board of Church and Society for the denomination has resources on how congregations can take action. One way is to participate in "The Concert Across America To End Gun Violence" as part of the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims on September 25, 2016. This is a national event that will use the power of music to fuel efforts to end violence due to firearms.

Music is one approach to facilitating change, but many social scientists studying non-violence say a multi-disciplinary approach is required to change individual and collective behavior like gun violence. Boston researcher David Hemenway says "We should regard gun violence as a public health threat and tackle it like we tackled the hazards of motor vehicles, cigarettes, and poisons. All three products continue to circulate in society, but we have found ways to make them safer."

As the June 29 service concluded,

Wing invited the participants to engage in dialogue over refreshments and sign cards of encouragement to be sent to persons not always considered by the public but who are impacted by such tragedies such as funeral directors, first responders, and hospital staff.

An integral part of the event was the distribution of information to those in attendance. "The resource materials are not exhaustive, but we believe they provide a solid starting place to learn about this complex and often divisive issue. Let us honor those who've died and their families with our actions. We are called as people of God to stop violence and promote peace. Let us not refuse to answer that call," Wing exclaimed.

To receive a copy of the handouts, or to be notified of future interfaith events regarding the reduction of violence due to firearms, please email the church at Calvary185@verizon.net or call 201 384 3630.



Flyer from the Stop Violence & Promote Peace interfaith event at Calvary Dumont

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If possible, team members and a translator will accompany representatives of the families to their homes and ensure the filters are properly positioned and verify that proper maintenance procedures are followed.

JOIN THE TEAM!



Contact Kathy Ahmad, Conference UMVIM
Coordinator at kahmad@comcast.com

GNJ 2016 Scholarship Award Recipients Announced

The Conference Board of Higher Education and Ministry has announced the 2016 scholarship recipients

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Frances Nelson Scholarship
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Quinton-Haven UMC, Quinton



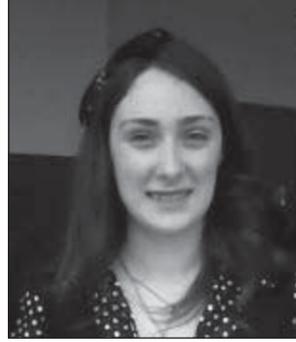
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Southeastern University
Dobbins Memorial UMC, Delanco

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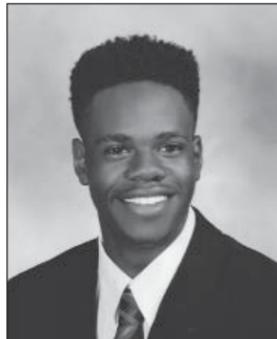
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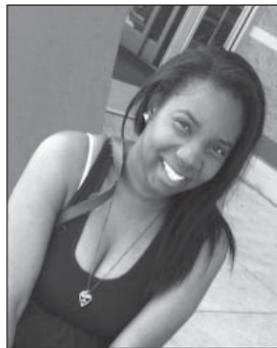
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St. Mark's UMC, Montclair

Steven P. Mazzochi –

Conference Trust Scholarship
Purdue University
Trinity UMC, Bridgeton

Kaylan S. Shambry –

Emily S. Garrison Scholarship
Camden County College
St. John's UMC, Berlin

The New Palisades District Superintendent Celebrates Every Day

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ministries.

"Rev. Kim is a Christ-centered, Spirit-filled believer who exemplifies many of the characteristics we look for in clergy," said Bishop Schol after introducing Kim to the GNJ Bishop's Clergy Convocation in January.

For the congregations in the Palisades District, Kim hopes for spiritual growth and fruit-bearing ministry. She encourages leaders to pray and study the Bible to "go deeper and wider" to become a significant influence on society. Her hopes include seeing the emergence of new faith communities, developing more mission work, and unity among the district churches in cooperation to work together to impact their community for Christ.

"We're one in Christ," Kim said, "and that's the beauty of being a Christian."

The diversity of GNJ has left a profound impact on Kim, who describes the conference as "a slice of heaven on earth."

"We need to work together to serve God," she said. "Different people in different cultures should live and serve together. I'm a part of that fulfillment here in Greater New Jersey."

Kim's relational qualities stood out to Bishop Schol, who saw her as "genuine in her relationship with God and others" who "seeks a team experience and connects with others through their interests and ideas." A people person by nature, Kim enjoys gathering with friends over good food. She says her favorite part of serving as district superintendent so far has been meeting people and visiting churches to explore the variety of worship styles.

"We have to remember that Jesus is not interested in fans, he is interested in followers," Kim said, mentioning how her favorite verse, Psalm 133:1 speaks of living together in unity. "Let's pay attention to what and who we believe and live out that faith every day. That," she said, "is worth celebrating."



Rev. Gina Kim began her appointment in July serving as the new District Superintendent for the Palisades District. Photo by Shari DeAngelo

Centuolo Unifies Youth at IGNITE 2016

By Josh Kinney
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For IGNITE emcee and New Jersey native Preston Centuolo, this year's conference is just as much for leaders as it is youth.

"We want the youth to feel unified and the leaders to feel reinvigorated," Centuolo said, emphasizing the IGNITE breakout sessions that will be held for leaders to develop strategic planning and vision for their groups.

"It's easy to get caught up in the drift unless you're intentional about keeping your eyes on where you want to be and where you're going," he said.

The Wildwoods Convention Center will be the scene for the IGNITE 2016 Conference, September 30 through October 2, bringing together over 1,000 students grades 6-12 throughout the Greater New Jersey region. For Centuolo, the excitement of being in a beach town he loves, coupled with the powerful experience of the conference has 'ignited' thrill and anticipation.

Since his days as a college intern, Centuolo has continuously immersed himself in youth programming and development. After graduating from Valley Forge University with a BA in theology, he became a successful youth minister, serving in East Brunswick and Vineland.

Wishing to raise his level of impact on children, families and the community, Centuolo founded The Youth Alliance in 2000, a faith-based nonprofit specializing in cutting edge, customized school and community-based programs. The Youth Alliance now spans the country and the globe.

Centuolo has become a reputable international communicator, motivating crowds of young people and youth group leaders with his contagious energy. Traveling extensively as a speaker, school assembly motivational communicator and event host, Centuolo considers it a privilege to have shared at events and organizations such as Creation Festival, Youth for Christ, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and professional NBA and NFL chapels.

Growing up in the tiny South Jersey town of Barnsboro near Sewell, Centuolo attended Vacation Bible School at Barnsboro UMC as a child and maintains a love for his home state. He seeks to reignite hope for a bright future in the lives of



Preston Centuolo motivates a packed audience to grow deeper in their walk with God. Photo provided

young people at IGNITE.

"I want every person to recognize they have immeasurable, irrevocable purpose and value no matter what their past or present circumstances," said Centuolo. "Their special gifts and even their struggles can be transformed into platforms of success." He hopes to diffuse societal messages that misconstrue success and to challenge young people to chase after meaningful, authentic dreams.

With a keen ear to absorb and process, Centuolo's gift as an emcee allows him to draw connections, fill in gaps and tighten the overall message while at the same time rallying, motivating and inspiring both youth and leaders through masterful storytelling.

"I want students and pastors to leave with tools and to feel empowered on how to disciple," he said. "IGNITE is a time for leaders to plan strategically and grow their vision."

For Centuolo, strategic planning means getting rid of distractions and a willingness to have tough conversations.

"A lot of youth group leaders tend to think implementing their ideas are the an-



Preston Centuolo will take the stage at IGNITE 2016 as the event's official emcee, challenging and inspiring both youth and leaders. Photo provided

swers and keys to success," he said, "but that's not always true. It's their character."

Centuolo believes successful youth groups are team-led. He urges leaders not to get distracted by their circumstances but to focus on where they're headed. "That can go for most things in life, not just youth ministry," he added.

"Preston's ability to share hope and love for young people is phenomenal," said one school social worker. "So many kids had a spark in their eye reignited because they saw so much of themselves in him." One student said that he felt like he could "actually be somebody" after Centuolo's motivational talk.

Centuolo addresses common issues facing students in an effort to demystify confusing messages in today's technological era. His words have resonated with youth struggling to find balance in a chaotic, high-pressure age of information overload.

"IGNITE is not just going to be an event," he said, "It will be an experience."



For more information about Preston Centuolo and The Youth Alliance, visit prestoncentuolo.com and theyouthalliance.com. Photo provided

IGNITE
CONFERENCE 2016

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www.ignitenj.org/donate

From the NFL to IGNITE, William Green Has A Message for Youth

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

William Green had it all: fortune, fame, and four seasons playing football in the NFL. A 6-foot 215-pound running back for the Cleveland Browns, Green's career was a success, yet he still felt unfulfilled, like something big was missing.

"I thought there had to be something more," he said. "I achieved fame and fortune, so now what?"

Green had come a long way from an insolvent childhood plagued with pain and hardship. Born and raised in Atlantic City, both of his parents fell victim to AIDS. That left the young man of 13 in the early 1990s questioning his faith in God, begging for answers and healing. Unable to bear watching his mother suffer from the disease, Green prayed to trade places with her.

"I was raised in a church. My grandfather built one with his own two hands in Atlantic City," Green said. "As a kid, I remember saying the prayer of salvation, except I didn't believe it or mean it in my heart."



William Green, former running back for the Cleveland Browns will share his journey of faith at IGNITE 2016. Photo provided



Atlantic City native and NFL star William Green speaks about finding fulfillment and purpose in Christ. Photo provided

Growing up, football became Green's god, and his teenage years at Holy Spirit High School in Absecon were spent drifting away from the faith of his childhood. He played for his school's football team and received multiple high school All-American honors before receiving an athletic scholarship to attend Boston College. There he played for the school's Eagles football team from 1998 to 2001. In two years as a starting running back, he compiled over 2,700 yards rushing and 32 touchdowns. In 2000 and 2001, Green was a first-team All-Big East Conference selection and was honored as the Big East Offensive Player of Year. In the 2002 NFL Draft, Green was a top-rated player selected by Cleveland.

"The NFL didn't take away the pain in my life. Neither did the money or the fame," Green said. "So I turned to drugs and alcohol. Everything the world said would make me happy didn't work."

The patience and will power displayed by Green's wife, Asia, left a profound impact on the NFL star's life. The couple had been together since high school; Asia having lived through her husband's struggle to find peace, purpose, and fulfillment. After his second year in the NFL, she began sharing her faith.

"Her love and patience moved me," Green said. "I decided I needed to give this God thing a chance." After years of drifting from "fleeting satisfaction" and "temporary void-fillers" Green finally found fulfillment and wholeness in Christ, returning to the faith of his childhood.

"I saw how all things work together for our good and God's glory," Green said.

"Everything was turned around for me."

Green became a motivational speaker at corporate, church, and school events and was ordained a minister in 2012. He will take the stage this fall at IGNITE in Wildwood, sharing his story of "true

conversion" and what it means to have a real relationship with Christ.

"I'm going to be talking about ambition and drive. Whether it's a career, sports, or something else, it isn't a bad thing, but if we're looking for that to be our ultimate

fulfillment, it won't be," he said. "Money, fame, I had it all, but it wasn't enough. Everything got old. None of it gave me abundant life. But Jesus did. Christ is true joy."

Green wants students to leave IGNITE assured of God's spirit. Despite being introverted, he believes God has called him to step out and share his story. He plans to share his testimony and encourages both youth and leaders to do the same, making the weekend conference a comfortable place to "show off scars" and "reveal the healer" leaving with a greater reliance upon God.

"No matter what background, race, social or economic status, we're all struggling," said Green. "Pain might look different for each person, but we all have problems. But if we share openly and honestly, our hearts are softened and more open and vulnerable to hear the gospel."

"I want youth pastors to leave rejuvenated, keeping inspired, and remembering why they do what they do," said Green. "This is a chance for them to reconnect and remember why they got into ministry in the first place, and to be encouraged to let the spirit lead."

Recently, Green and his wife moved from their home in Berlin, New Jersey to Montrose, Colorado where Green works for the Christian Action Camp's USA Youth Outreach. He welcomes youth and leaders to reach out to him at willgreen1433@yahoo.com

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Children's Books Inspire Hope

By Rev. Jessica Stenstrom
Jessica_stenstrom@yahoo.com

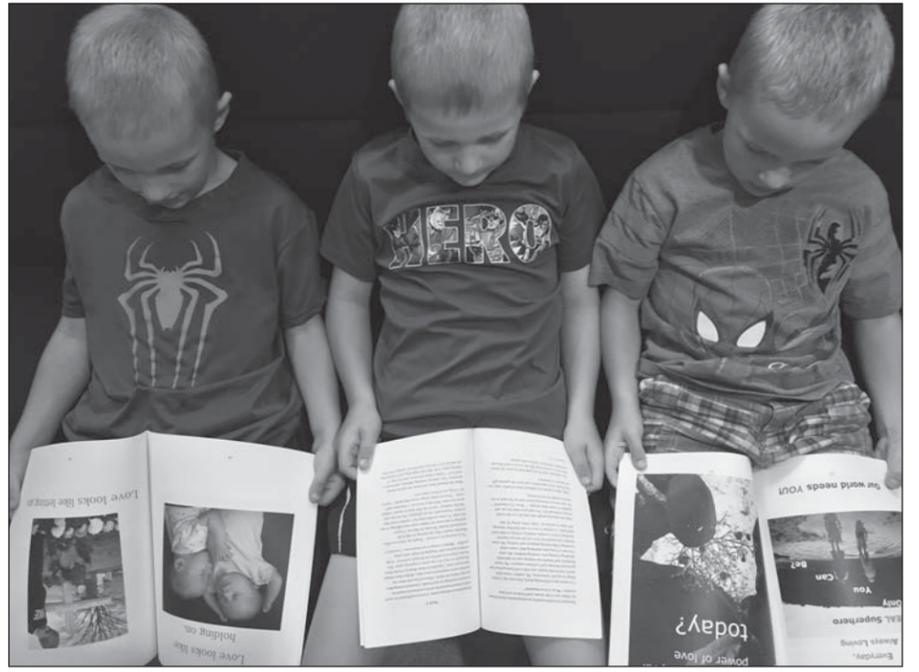
With so much hate and violence in our world, two books published by a local Christian education director offer hope and love to children and their families making them a great teaching tool for Sunday School or home.

Sherri Shumate says both of her children's books – "Love Looks Like This" and "REAL Superheroes to the Rescue: Children Can Change the World" are written to help empower kids to know they make a difference, a lesson that Shumate lives out in her day to day life as a mother of three boys, Joseph who is seven, and Riley and Bradley, who are six. "All of us, children as well as adults are responsible for working together to make our world a better place in the choices we make every day about how we live our lives," she continued.

With a Masters in Education from UVA and an M.Div from Drew Theological School, Shumate has taught several workshops at Drew and currently serves as the Director of Christian Education for the UMC of Summit. Self-described as a preacher's kid and the oldest of five children, she has been working with and teaching children in her home and church literally all her life as a big sister, Sunday school teacher, and Vacation Bible School leader.

Shumate said her newest children's book, "Love Looks Like This" celebrates the common humanity and hope that unites us all. "There seem to be many polarizing forces competing in our world, setting people against other people because of differences in what we believe and how we all choose to live our lives," she continued. "Our world isn't perfect; everyone makes mistakes sometime. Still, there is so much good in our world and in all of us. There are no good and bad people, and love isn't one size fits all." She said "Love Looks Like This" celebrates real people from all over the world, of all different types and varieties, showing love and living their life together. "It celebrates the possibility of peace, kindness, love and life lived together whether we're single or married, young or old, male or female," said Shumate. "As it says in the book, 'Love like you and me. Love looks like living life together'."

Shumate's first children's book "REAL Superheroes to the Rescue" began when she was eating at a restaurant and her children started asking questions while a news story about a recent terrorist attack was shown on the restaurant televisions. "We don't have cable in our home, and we don't intentionally expose our children to the violence happening in our world," said Shumate. "Still, I believe it's important to be honest and truthful with children and not shield them from



Author Sherri Shumate's three boys, Joseph, Riley, and Bradley pictured reading their mother's books. Photo provided

reality either. We started talking openly and honestly about their questions and about how we all have the choice to use our power for good."

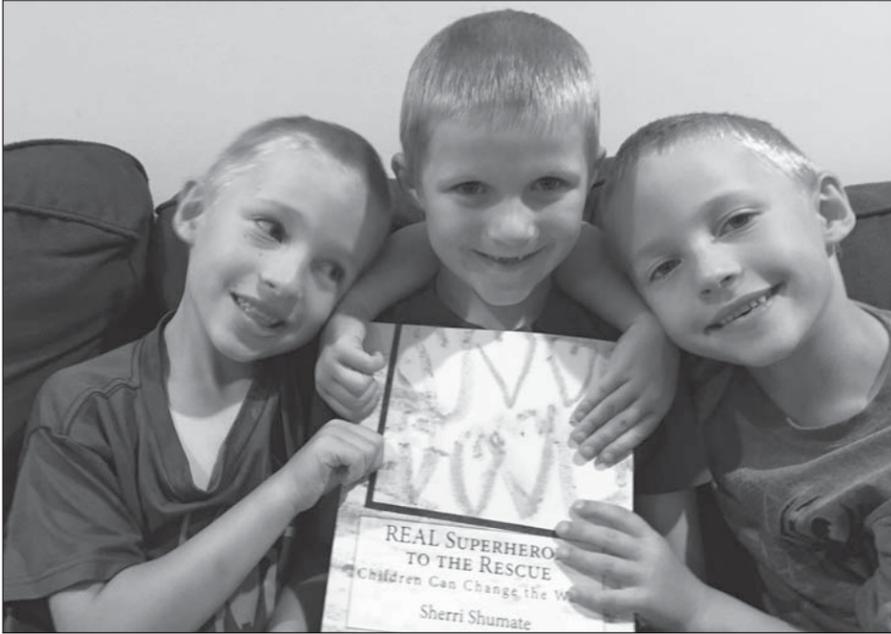
The conversation led Shumate to realize she had much to learn from her children. Together, Shumate and her three sons wrote a simple e-book about the power of love and how to use that power for good in this world. "Just a few hours after sharing it on Facebook, a dear friend Janet Stafford asked to publish a print version of our book," said Shumate.

Both books are written to be accessible for an elementary age reading level, but Shumate says the messages and images speak to a hope that we all need right now. "People of all ages tell me these books speak to them and have touched them."

Shumate said the books were not written to make a profit and that everything that's been earned from their sale has been given away to good causes. "I wrote these books, as I try in everything I do, to

share a message of hope," she continued. "My heart breaks at the continued violence happening in our country and world, and at the fear, pain, and anger so many people carry in response. I strive to be a message of the hope I believe is possible for our world. I choose love, peace and hope, and this is the message I try to share with our children and our world."

Both Shumate's children's books are available on Amazon. There's also a sequel to the first book, "REAL Superheroes Forgive" that is coming soon. She said it focuses on imagining a world that loves enough to forgive everyone, always. She is also working on a book about strength that challenges the idea that power is found by dominating others and celebrates power that builds people up. Shumate has also published an adult devotional called, "Smelling Roses" and a book of Advent and Lent reflections called, "Whistling in the Dark."



Smiling faces, Shumate's three boys show off their mother's newest children's book: "REAL Superheroes To The Rescue." Photo provided



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Hispanic Emmaus Becomes Second in the Nation



Bishop Schol prays over those gathered for worship, fellowship, and celebration at the GNJ Mission and Resource Center during the "4th Day" event.

Photo by Rev. Hector Burgos

By Rev. Rolando Santiago Fuentes

After 12 years of journeying, hard work, and commitment, the Comunidad Emaus Latina Emanuel (CELE) became the second Hispanic Emmaus Community in the nation.

The signing of the covenant and celebration was part of a training event held at the GNJ Mission and Resource Center. The event, called "The 4th Day" is a day where pilgrims who have completed the Walk to Emmaus gather for training and fellowship. About 180 pilgrims, clergy, and laity from Greater New Jersey, New York and Eastern Pennsylvania Conferences, joined in a time of worship, fellowship and celebration.

The service recognized the invaluable help and support that the Emmaus Communities from Garden State, Skylands, and Puerto Rico had given throughout the years.

The strong economic support that the National Hispanic Plan from GNJ was recognized for facilitating the walks. Many GNJ clergy were instrumental in the first development stages, especially Rev. Manolo Sardinias, Gateway North District Superintendent. In 2004, Sardinias came up with the dream to empower the Hispanic laity through the Walk to Emmaus ministry.

Elizabeth Gonzalez, who attended

"The 4th Day" commented, "As Lay Director this was an important day, the culmination of our dreams, not mine, but of the many brothers and sisters who sacrificed time, and family, to get to this place. Given that the walk to Emmaus is a ministry of the laity, it gives us an opportunity to prepare leaders to make our churches vital that we may be integrated and have hope."

The Rev. Victor Perez, Emmaus National Leader for Emmaus Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, said "My soul was uplifted as we worshiped together, celebrating a major accomplishment for the Hispanic/Latino local churches in the Greater New Jersey area. After twelve years of intentional planning, prayer, and hard work, we now have a Spanish language Emmaus community in Greater New Jersey."

Over sixteen Hispanic/Latino local churches are represented on the new Comunidad Emaus Latina Emanuel.

Through the ministry of Walk to Emmaus, local church leaders are reminded how God's grace can empower them to be the hands and feet of Christ in their homes, their communities, and all over the world. Walk to Emmaus is 72 hours of spiritual formation for people to become faithful disciples sharing God's unconditional love through the ministries of their vital congregations.

New Ministry Energizes The Arts at Jackson UMC

By Rev. Melissa Hinnen

Melissa.hinnen@nyac-umc.com

"God created humanity in God's own image, in the divine image God created them." Genesis 1:27 CEB

The creation story is a guiding Scripture for the new Jackson Arts Ministry (JAM), an outreach program of Jackson UMC. Children of all ages are invited to explore their creative gifts by engaging in fine arts, crafting and performing. JAM is committed to "seeing the arts in Jackson flourish and grow unlike ever before."

Jackson UMC was started more than 26 years ago by a group of smaller churches coming together for family focused worship and ministry. The congregation has a number of people with creative gifts in the arts. The church's senior pastor Rev. Joseph Tiedemann stresses, "The overall concept for everything we do is designed to introduce people to Jesus Christ."

In that context, JAM is a natural new ministry to further engage the community in creativity and fun.

Piloting the program in April with three lead instructors, JAM is one way that the church lives out its belief "that faith should be more than just a Sunday service; it should be a journey that helps

to build your relationship with Christ."

Tiedemann explains, "The idea of JAM evolved out of a number of classes we had offered individually throughout the years and we decided to package them together." He continued, "The design of the arts program meets a need to help adults and children grow in the arts while bringing them into a Christian setting and introducing them to Jesus Christ. It gives us a platform to engage creative adults as teachers while inviting them into the church."

One teen offered a testimony on the JAM website about her experience with the performance arts that combine faith, dramatization and music while connecting her with friends from the community. She said, "The church plays helped bring me some new found confidence I wouldn't have gotten otherwise."

Tiedemann explains that JAM is an opportunity to invite children and adults from outside of the church, into a faith-based artistic environment and build up their leadership. It offers youth, particularly middle and high school students, a creative outlet in a community that is threatened by drug abuse. Through JAM, church and un-churched children, youth and adults discover their God-giv-

Continued on page 10

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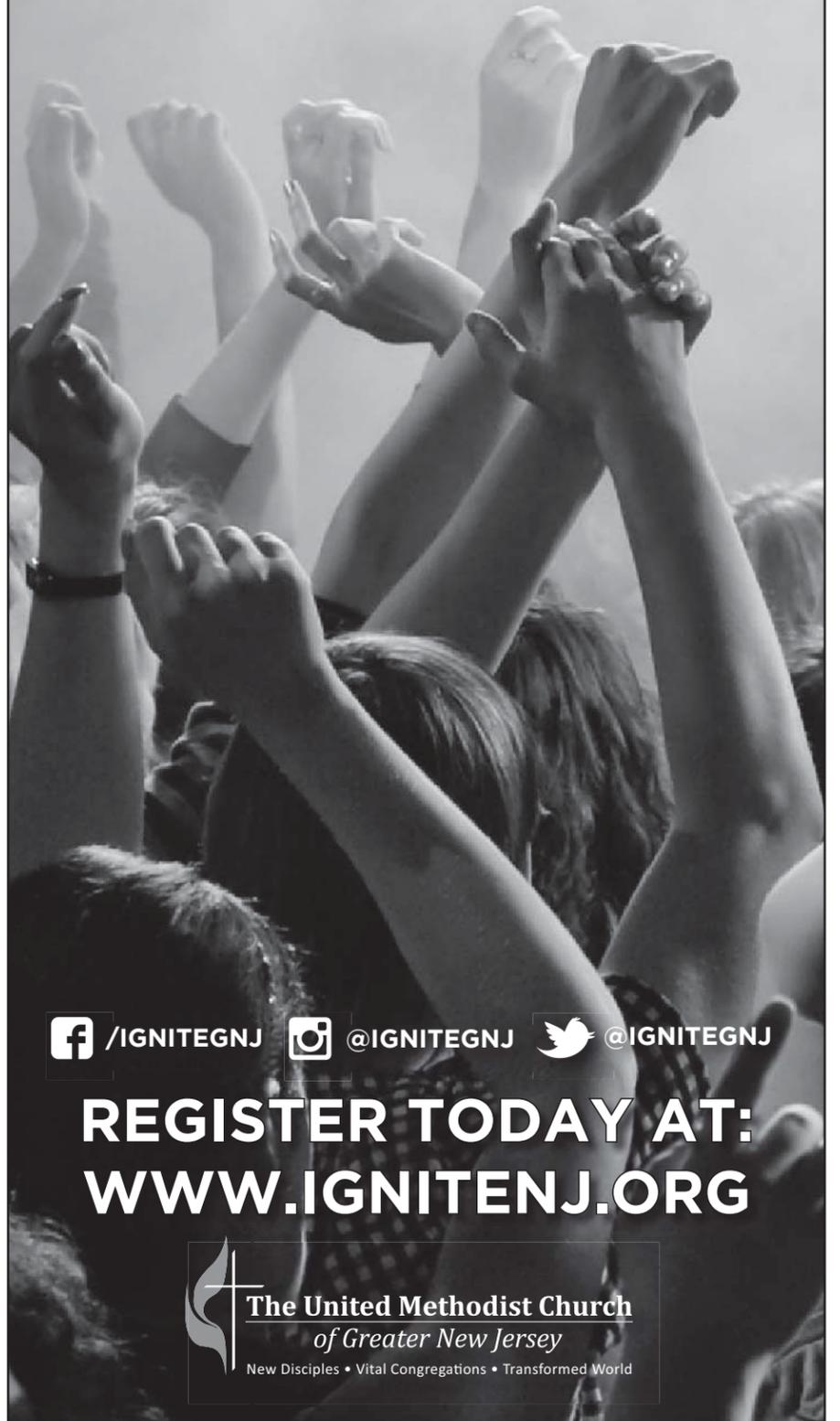
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"Our church had an amazing time! The music and message really hit home. It helped us grow closer as a church family. We created wonderful memories together and opened our hearts to hear what God had to say to us as a group."

"I didn't know what to expect as it was my first time coming with a new congregation. What I found were speakers who were radically honest about themselves, their walk with Jesus and top notch musicians praising God."

"Ignite tremendously encouraged me as a youth leader and inspired our youth. The speakers brought such a depth of experience to the event; they were absolutely terrific. Keep up the great work, as we witness God move through our youth!"



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New Arts Ministry at Jackson UMC Inspires Youth

Continued from page 9

en talents and are nurtured to “develop excellence for an expressive life.”

Nearly 20 children and youth participated in the ministry’s first seven-week class “Musical Theatre, Stand-up Comedy and Improv” this spring. Led by professional performer and singer, Denise Tiedemann, students “developed their comedic timing, their ability to think creatively on their toes and explored stand-up comedy routines.” They presented two showcases of songs, skits and comedy with younger children on June 26 and middle and high school students on July 5.

A Resource for the Whole Community

A hallmark of the arts ministry is that anyone in the community can participate. While the actual cost of each class per student ranges from \$20-\$80, the tuition is voluntary. Tiedemann says people pay “what they can, when they can” and others make donations to cover the costs. People who otherwise would not be able

to access a high quality arts program now have the opportunity to tap into their creative spirits.

JAM programs invite all students regardless of religious affiliation. The ministry leaders are trained to offer a prayer and devotional at the beginning of each class and are encouraged to design classes through a Biblical lens. They commit to intentionally praying daily for God’s blessing on each student and family. JAM participants and supporters are also invited and welcomed into the Jackson UMC church family.

When the full ministry program is rolled out this fall, there will be creative opportunities on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday nights to fit every age and interest. From adults sketching colorful mandala prayer wheels, to singers joining voices in a community choir, to young children crafting culinary delights or sewing projects, to youth and young adults making a joyful noise through comedy or musical theater, the Jackson community will be “empowered to discover gifts and talents that change lives.”



Youth participating in J.A.M. (Jackson Arts Ministry) show off their dance moves. Photo provided

Greeters from the congregation will present the face of the church and will welcome people from the community. A secondary benefit of JAM is that it offers the opportunity to evangelize through radical hospitality.

Tiedemann says that the JAM website platform is set up in a way that it can

grow through collaboration. “It would be great to work with other churches in the area and offer additional classes.” He continues, “We are happy to share what we have learned and provide training in a multi-church dynamic that would expand our reach to introduce people to Jesus Christ.”

Team Vital Brings Camden to Cape May

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

For people in Cape May, a perfect summer beach day is routine, but for children in Camden, a day trip to the beach is a summer highlight. Thanks to the congregation of Cape May UMC and the leadership of Rev. Jeanette Block, nearly 90 children and staff from the Camden Neighborhood Center got to have this summer highlight on July 13.

As a part of their action plan developed through Team Vital, the leaders of the church made the day at the beach a priority for their congregation. Team Vital is a resource offered by Greater New Jersey that helps leaders create a strategic ministry plan using five markers of vitality. The Cape May UMC Team Vital decided to focus on their greatest asset, the beach, and reached out to the Neighborhood Center with an invitation. Serving as a “community living room” the Camden Neighborhood Center attends and cares for struggling children and families with a mission to provide a space for academic achievement, athletic accomplishment and a flourishing arts program. The center’s mission and



Kids from the Camden Neighborhood Center join Cape May UMC for a day at the beach. Photo by Michael Duvall

“It takes real courage to take 88 kids to the beach,” Michael Duvall

Millville Westside UMC, Haddon Heights UMC, Mainland Manor, and the CAAA Insurance Company all made donations. Dozens of volunteers from Cape May UMC, both youth, and adults, participated to help make the day a success.

“Look! My beach towel matches my bathing suit!” exclaimed one of the children whose bathing suit pictured a character from the Disney film “Frozen.” “She was excited and very pleased,” said Cape May UMC volunteer Debra Chapman. Another child remarked in a surprising voice, “Do we really get to pick out one of those beach towels to keep?”

After towel and toy selections had been made, the children boarded their buses, traveling to the Philadelphia Avenue and Beach Drive beach where they found thousands of seashells previously sprinkled just for them by church member Norman Smith. The next three hours were spent in the sun and sand, playing and splashing in a warm, and abnormally clear ocean due to unexpectedly high levels of sea plankton along the South Jersey coast. For volunteers and children, the tropical waters made for a surprising treat.

“I was impressed with the gratefulness of the staff and children,” said event photographer Michael Duvall. “I was also blessed to see how much fun the kids had playing in the ocean.” According to Duvall, the volunteers went “above and beyond the call of duty” to make sure the day was a success.

“It takes real courage to take 88 kids to the beach,” he added. “It’s like trying to herd rabbits.”

Cape May Mayor Ed Mahaney waived beach tag fees and provided an extra

lifeguard for the afternoon. By day’s end, the kids returned to their buses, slurping iced bottles of water donated by local businesses and enjoying snacks in colorful fabric bags provided by the church’s United Methodist Women.

“We were impressed with the leadership provided by the Neighborhood Center,” said Rev. Block.

Through Team Vital training, Cape May UMC assessed their community and ministry assets, became equipped for effective ministry, received technical support for putting their plans into action, and as a result, has grown in their vitality.

Taking advantage of their unique seaside location the church is now planning future ministries in the wake of the successful beach day event.

“You can easily see that many people and communities helped make this day a huge success,” said Chapman. “Through God’s blessings so much can happen when trust is put in Him.”

Interested in participating in Team Vital training? Start planning now for 2017. The next sign up is December 1, 2016. Email Beth Caulfield, Director of Small Groups Ministry at bcaulfield@gnjumc.org



A happy young person buried in the sand says it all. Photo by Michael Duvall

goals were lived out through the beach day event and the hospitality of the Cape May congregation.

With the help of gift cards generously donated by local food stores, Cape May UMC provided a lunch of sandwiches, chips, pickles, cookies, and bottled water. Inside the church beach towels adorned every pew and the sanctuary’s main aisle was lined with beach toys donated by the church’s Sunday School children.



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CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

Delran 1st UMC Restores Cemetery

This summer, folks from 1st UMC in Delran took a Cemetery Restoration Class. The church cemetery dates back to 1859. Common sense and elbow grease along with special cleaning products transformed headstones, several of which were repaired and cleaned. The restoration group looks forward to cool fall weather and more graveyard projects. No ghostly sightings were reported.



Volunteers restore headstones at 1st UMC in Delran.

James P. Scalese Appointed Executive Director of UM Communities at Pitman

PITMAN, N.J. — United Methodist Communities (UMC) is pleased to announce the appointment of James P. Scalese, to the position of executive director of United Methodist Communities at Pitman, located on North Oak Avenue in Pitman. In this role, he will assume oversight and management of the senior living community.

Pitman's management team will report directly to Mr. Scalese, who brings over 25 years of experience in diverse settings within long term healthcare administration. In addition to certification as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator, two degrees add to his leadership skills: a Bachelor of Science in Human Services from the University of Scranton and a Master of Business Administration in Health Care Administration from Temple University.

"I am attracted to United Methodist Communities' clear commitment to quality resident care, its respect for the associates who are providing that care on a daily basis, and to its willingness to innovate in a rapidly changing healthcare environment," reflected Mr. Scalese, a resident of Haddonfield.

Mr. Scalese's broad administrative experience includes positions as a corporate compliance officer, emergency preparedness director and corporate liaison for state licensing agencies. He has demonstrated skill in specialty program development, negotiation of payer contracts, regulatory compliance and credentialing. Prior to joining UMC, Mr. Scalese was a development and operations consultant at Wilson Avenue, LLC, in Bristol, Pennsylvania.

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OBITUARIES

Ellen Little, retired full elder died on July 21. A Celebration of Life service will take place on August 13 at 1 p.m. at the United Methodist Church at New Brunswick, 323 George St.

Memorial donations, in lieu of flowers, may be sent to the UMC at New Brunswick, 323 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Kevin Little at 64 Quick Ave., Raritan, NJ 07481 and Christina (Little) McCarthy at 2431-B.S. Walter Reed Drive, Arlington, VA 22206.

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