

1 All of this activity and more are for us signs of the Holy Spirit at work, answering Jesus' prayer. As many of us
2 complete our commission-terms, we look forward to seeing what wonders of grace lie ahead on the road to Jesus'
3 all-inclusive unity. For, the words of Jesus' prayer go on with repetitive force, now as then: "The glory that you
4 have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may
5 become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you
6 have loved me." (John 17:22-23)

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8 Submitted by the Rev. John Wesley Morrison, with the Rev. Jessica Campbell, Chair, on behalf of the
9 Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns

10 **Report**
11 **CUMAC/ECHO**

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13 **CUMAC Continues Mission to Feed People and Change Lives**

14 The Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community, known to most simply as CUMAC, is deeply grateful to
15 the churches of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference for the consistent support that allows our ministry to
16 grow in service. This year CUMAC proudly became the administering body of the Community Food Coalition
17 (CFC). The CFC is a collaborative effort amongst 28 member food pantries committed to serving those in need in
18 Passaic County and surrounding areas. It addresses hunger-related issues and manages shared food resources
19 for Passaic County, while connecting New Jersey residents with feeding programs that best fit their needs.

20 The CFC was created with the understanding that hunger is a deep and pervasion issue in our community and
21 beyond. To truly make a difference, synergistic collaboration is key. Many hands make light work, but many
22 minds, voices and advocates make lasting change.

23 The addition of our newest program advances CUMAC's longstanding tradition of forward thinking and growth.
24 That same ethos has led us on a 40 year journey from a small pantry in a borrowed United Methodist Church
25 closet to the multi-programmatic response to hunger and poverty that CUMAC operates today. In 2015, our
26 programs were able to reach many people needing to feel God's love through the action of his disciples.

- 27 • **CUMAC's food pantry helped around 38,000 people** put food on the table where otherwise they may
28 have gone hungry. Around 2 million pounds of food were distributed.
- 29 • **Two mobile pantries ensured that same help and love was extended** to people living in underserved
30 communities where barriers to food access are uniquely complex.
- 31 • **Our food depot was utilized by a network of feeding programs.** It provided the storage space,
32 refrigeration, trucking and resources necessary to bolster smaller agencies and allow them to address
33 hunger in their own communities.
- 34 • **Pathways to Work offered job training and experience to dozens of people** on the path to gainful
35 employment.
- 36 • **The Community Closet gave disaster relief to lessen the burden of recovery for over 120 individuals**
37 who had experienced fires, flooding and even a roof caving in, as well as quieter disasters like owning
38 only flip flops in the middle of winter. Our thrift shop sold high quality goods at extremely affordable
39 prices to low-income households as a means to boost self-sufficiency.
- 40 • **Place of Promise provided permanent, supportive housing** to around a dozen residents, assisting each
41 individual with setting and meeting personal goals and helping them connect to critical resources on the
42 path to meeting self-sufficiency.
- 43 • **Seasonal collections provided over 3,000 children** with Christmas gifts, Easter baskets and school
44 supplies.

1 **Through these programs, CUMAC worked ceaselessly to lift up a community truly in need of a helping hand.**

2 Among our clients are seniors and the disabled, unable to work and struggling to keep up with rising costs of
3 living. We are visited by the unemployed and underemployed, those who work two or three jobs but still
4 struggle to pay rent and put food on the table. Many are looking to rebuild after long stints of homelessness.
5 Still others turn to us to learn valuable job skills that will help lift them and their families out of poverty. Our
6 clients include children growing up with empty bellies and struggling to thrive, often without stable housing,
7 adequate clothing, proper school supplies or a network to help raise them up. Combined, our programs provide
8 the material support so many need to get by. Of equal importance they provide hope and lift people's faith in

9 the fact that they live in a world that cares about them and won't let them suffer. As God claims all people as
10 his beloved children, we strive always to lift up the least among us.

11 With CUMAC's growth story comes an exciting announcement made this year. **After 27 years of service, our**
12 **executive director, Reverend Patricia Bruger, has announced her upcoming plans to retire in the summer of**
13 **2017.** This news is being shared 18 months in advance to allow sufficient time to plan for the future of the
14 organization. Over the next year and a half a diverse team will be reviewing CUMAC's unique strengths and
15 needs, putting together a profile for the next executive director, undertaking an in-depth strategic plan meant to
16 point our agency in the right direction in the upcoming years, and beginning the search for an executive director
17 who will lead from a place of strength and growth in the years to come.

18 This 18 month timeframe also gives us time to celebrate the incredible accomplishments Pat has made during
19 her tenure at CUMAC's helm. CUMAC has seen substantial growth under Pat's leadership and we look toward a
20 future of continued accomplishment feeding people and changing lives.

21 To ensure our doors stay open to all who needs us, our circle of compassionate disciples in Christ is ever
22 expanding. The Greater New Jersey United Methodist Church time and again lives that inspiring adage "Do all
23 the good you can, in all the ways you can" in their support of CUMAC. **In 2015, 78 United Methodist Churches**
24 **lived faith in action by sharing their gifts.** This came by way of financial support, events held on our behalf and
25 special collections of food, coats, hygiene items, book bags and other critical goods. **38 United Methodist**
26 **Churches made over 110 service trips to ensure our vital work is continued.** They came as bible studies, UMW
27 and UMM groups, youth groups, summer camps, and ecumenical partnership. They brought friends and family
28 and were instrumental to growing disciples for Christ through service. With your help, we have accomplished
29 much work to make this world a kinder, more just place for all God's children.

30 We ask that you join us in celebration of all that can be accomplished when we come together to live the word
31 of Christ. CUMAC gratefully accepts volunteers to assist with a myriad of projects that make our mission
32 possible. We encourage groups and individuals to learn more about our work by coming for a tour or inviting a
33 speaker to their home church. We have many informative and engaging topics prepared and a host of activities
34 to help people of all ages grow a deeper understanding of hunger and service. Donations in all form remain
35 critical to our mission. Please consider holding a special offering for CUMAC, designating a portion of a
36 fundraiser to our work, or hosting a collection to help meet the need for food, clothing and other goods.
37 CUMAC staff and volunteers are always happy to provide support, share information and help communities
38 unite in mission to provide for the least among us.

39 CUMAC can be reached through our newly redesigned website www.cumac.org or on social media at
40 [facebook/cumacfeedspeople](https://www.facebook.com/cumacfeedspeople) and [twitter/cumacfeeds](https://twitter.com/cumacfeeds). We are available by email at info@cumacecho.org and
41 by phone at 973-742-5518. We are always happy to answer questions about our work and explore ways to
42 partner in ministry.

43 Stephanie Ames, Community Engagement Coordinator

Reverend Patricia Bruger, Executive Director

