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EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

Have you ever looked into a kaleidoscope in a dimly lit room? Not very fascinating or inspiring. But then you hold it up to the light and the colors and shapes came alive. Imagination is having enough light to see God's unfolding story for the church in all of its hues and shapes. That light is the light of Jesus Christ, illuminating our way to a future with hope.

In 2013, together through our strategic ministry plan, we imagined a God-sized future for The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey and God has not disappointed us. This vision and strategic ministry plan are rooted and growing in our congregations. All across the conference, congregations are going deeper and further to develop worship, small groups, mission engagement, making new disciples and generous giving.

Morristown UMC is an example of who we are becoming in GNJ and how vital congregations are pursuing God's call. Morristown has a rich tradition that is exploring what God has next for them. This primarily Anglo congregation has a Korean pastor and is starting a Hispanic ministry. Together they have engaged in Team Vital, assessed their congregation and community, grown their small group ministry to 17 groups and launched a new Hispanic ministry on Pentecost Sunday.

Morristown UMC along with many other congregations are the reason Greater New Jersey moved from the middle of the pack in vitality to number four, and why we had the second highest increase in vitality among conferences in the United States. Come, imagine with me what more God wants to do through your congregation.

We imagined a God-sized goal of starting 90 new faith communities by 2018. Now that's imagination.

In the last 10 months we chartered a new Ghanaian congregation with more than 200 singing and dancing worshipers, and we engaged a new Egyptian faith community that now has more than 60 worshipers. It is our second GNJ Egyptian congregation.

Conference leaders also recently met with a group of young people that are preparing to launch Greenhouse, a new faith community that will be a second site of Calvary Korean Church. I imagine Greenhouse will be worshiping with more than 200 new disciples in the near future.

Since 2013, we have started 24 faith communities. Come, let us together imagine starting another 40-60 faith communities.

We imagined a God-sized ministry after Superstorm Sandy that would renew, repair and rebuild houses, communities and lives. We are renewing Frank and Mary Ellen Azack lives. Both have health concerns and found that after the storm their home could not be repaired and had to be torn down. They did not know where to turn.

When we learned of their plight, our A Future With Hope Ministry turned their frustration and pain into joy. When God is involved, weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5), weeping may tarry during the storm, but joy comes when A Future With Hope shows up.

This week, we are setting a new home on their property. Joy showed up this morning for the Azack's.

Through our A Future With Hope Ministry, GNJ has now worked with 441 families, teamed up with 11,004 volunteers, and repaired or built 234 homes. Through A Future With Hope, we created one of the most robust and resilient organizations that is one of the last organizations on the ground working with families recovering from Sandy.

In 2013, I shared with you that United Methodists were one of the first on the scene after Superstorm Sandy, and we would be one of the last still working to repair, rebuild and renew homes, families, and communities.

As United Methodists, we cannot imagine people who need help going without help, people who need hope going without hope. When people hurt, GNJ United Methodists helps. Come, together let us imagine what God has next for us.

Today, I announce what's next for our A Future With Hope Ministry. We are preparing to resource and support you through Hope Centers. We anticipate that our Sandy relief and recovery ministry will come to an end in 2017. This has been a remarkable ministry, and we developed capacity and resources that are recognized in the region and across the nation.

Instead of disbanding this ministry and organization, we will retool and use our current capacity to create Hope Centers to provide training, strategic community planning, and develop affordable housing.

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While A Future With Hope began through a tragedy, it has become a force for hope and renewal. While it began in Sandy-damaged communities, it will be an organization that will now work with churches that want to extend and deepen their mission in any community in GNJ.

I am excited about Hope Centers that will provide community development and human services in the name of Jesus Christ. It will work through our congregations and church sponsored community centers.

We are presently developing a joint venture with C.A.M.P. YDP, a community center started by a United Methodist pastor 60 years ago and is supported by GNJ and a number of our congregations. A new partnership will emerge in which GNJ, A Future With Hope, and Hope Centers will work together, so more mission and ministry is happening in the community. This is imagination, and I am grateful for the leaders of A Future With Hope and GNJ for shedding light on what God has next for us.

I can imagine at least five Hope Centers in every county which will create more than 100 Hope Centers throughout GNJ.

We have been imagining the congregation as the primary source of mission. We have focused GNJ resources on making disciples and growing vital congregations to transform the world. We said we will do everything we can to keep more dollars in the congregation. For three years in a row, we kept the Shared Ministry budget flat or decreased it.

The Council on Finance and Administration has proposed a 2017 budget that again decreases the Shared Ministries budget. By not increasing or even decreasing the shared ministry budget for four years, we saved the churches \$1,407,000. Imagine that!

We developed and are implementing new resources for our leaders through coaching, PaCE groups, Team Vital, Communities of Hope, and The Laity Academy.

We implemented all of these resources and lowered the Shared Ministry budget while paying 100% General Church Apportionment for the ninth year in a row. Now that's imagination.

This type of imagination is saving our churches \$1,407,000. Come, imagine with me how God will continue powerful and life changing ministry, keeping more of the financial resources in the congregation.

While we are speaking of money, which God uses to make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world, let's not forget what we are doing through our Mission Fund.

We have raised \$5.5 million and with it, we have repaired 234 homes, cut deaths from malaria in half and supported community mission through our congregations. It is most astounding that The United Methodist Church, one of the first three partners in the fight against malaria, which now has more than 100 partners, has cut deaths by malaria in half.

Our efforts are saving nearly one million people a year, sometimes just through a bed net. Let's continue to work together and imagine cutting deaths from malaria in half again and again and again until people are no longer suffering and dying from malaria. With God's help and your gifts, we can do this.

We also imagine how to do things better to support our laity, clergy, and congregations. I already mentioned how coaching, PaCE groups, Team Vital, Communities of Hope and the Laity Academy are serving the mission.

We have strengthened our Foundation and assets under management will grow to more than \$20 million this year.

We are also making our larger events like the Annual Conference session, IGNITE and Bishop's Clergy Convocation, a better experience. This year more than 90% of you had your Pre-Conference Journal one month before Annual Conference. IGNITE registrations started at the end of last year, and we expect to have more than 1,000 students attend IGNITE this year.

We are offering outstanding learning experiences like The Coach Approach to Ministry, Leading Through Conflict, and the clergy transition workshop. We have also seen our communications ministry create new resources and improve our existing resources. We are not the only ones to notice. The United Methodist Association of Communicators gave five awards to GNJ. These awards were for the advertisements we placed on NJ Transit buses during Lent last year that directed people to our local churches, and for the design of nametags for Annual Conference, which saved us money in production costs and is now being duplicated by other conferences across the country.

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We are not imagining how to do things better for awards, but to do things with excellence for God. We want to further our mission to make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world. We believe excellence attracts excellence and we strive for excellence, because we serve a great God.

Six years ago we imagined a new conference center that would be a resource for GNJ mission and ministry. While the church is consolidating, while many conferences are cutting resources, while many within the church are saying we need to conserve, we heeded the words of Isaiah, who prophesied in a very difficult time. "Stretch out your tent," he told the people, "drive the stakes deeper, and lengthen the tent cords."

Our new Mission and Resource Center is a testimony that God is not done with us yet. God's imagination far exceeds what we see, and God is willing to light the way. The building came in slightly under budget, and the \$5 million project is paid for. The 5 million dollar project is paid for!

The vision for this new facility is already creating mission and ministry opportunities. We have started a new partnership with Drew University, and this fall a seminary course will be taught at the Mission and Resource Center. Imagine with me the possibilities that we will open as we become a satellite campus for one of the premier theological schools.

I see hope rising across GNJ, and I imagine a God-sized vision and ministry in which hope springs eternal out of our congregations and into our communities. God is doing a new thing, an important thing among us. Come imagine what God has for us next.

While imagining what God has for us next, we cannot deny we have present and future challenges. We experience here at home and have witnessed at General Conference that there are deep differences among us.

It is painful, and it is unsettling. It creates fear and talk of division and even separation. It moves some to the edges and others to the center. I do not want to mislead you. This is serious. At the core, we have different understandings of how to interpret the Bible. Can we serve God together knowing there are sharp differences among us?

Yes!

The movement of God has never depended on our agreement with one another but our willingness to unite to serve God.

Do you think the family that sleeps under a United Methodist malaria bed net wonders what side of an issue we are on?

Do you think the Azack's, who we are building a new home for, care whether we are to the left of the right on an issue?

Do you think the children at C.A.M.P. YDP, who have a place to go to because we stepped into the breach, care about our vote on a particular issue?

I dare say no in each of these cases. When they saw and experienced the love of Jesus in us, all differences melted away.

Look at all God has done through us. Growing congregational vitality, repairing 234 homes, creating new faith communities, cutting deaths from malaria in half, building a new Mission and Resource Center, and reducing the shared ministry budget. This happens because God is at work through us in the midst of our differences.

It happened because the disciples of GNJ agreed to be hope for the hopeless, love for the loveless, relief for those in the midst of disaster and faith for those who doubt.

Did we first ask the hopeless, the loveless and those in the midst of disaster if they agreed with us? No! Our engagement with others only depended on our love for God and our love for one another.

History tells us we are stronger together than we are on our own. Imagination tells us we are better, more excellent for God when we imagine together.

In no way does this negate that on a few things we have sharp disagreements, but it is a witness that we are willing to allow God to work through us in the midst of differences. Our unity will not be uniformity but faithful commitment to God and scripture, allowing for difference.

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I pledge to be a bishop of the whole church and for all the people. Our mission is too important to pick and choose who we serve. You are too valuable to God and to me to only select you because we share the same beliefs. Every time the church has split, the witness has weakened and the mission has suffered. Every time a congregation leaves the denomination, we all hurt and we all grieve.

In the last four years, three congregations contemplated or left the denomination. It is one of the most troubling experiences for me as a bishop. These are hard conversations and they are spiritual conversations bathed in prayer and discernment.

In all things, I seek to glorify God and seek reconciliation and oneness in Christ. These are prayerful and spiritual journeys.

In the midst of differences, our clergy also have a very difficult challenge in leading the church today. I want us all to pray for and support our pastors as they seek to serve God, the church and the community.

I also call our pastors to refrain from harsh judgment, leave that for God. Refrain from being certain, leave room for mystery and faith. Love your people even when they do not show love for you. There is nothing more Christ-like than to love when you are misunderstood.

I can imagine us becoming a church in which the world admires us not because we agree but because we love each other in the midst of our disagreements. Then we will have truly become like the variety of disciples Jesus gathered, like the peaceable kingdom Isaiah describes, like the Shalom community Jeremiah depicts, and like the kingdom of God that Jesus inspires us to become.

As we live the words of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Jesus, we have a greater possibility to tackle some of the deep challenges we are facing. The following are challenges that we will need to pray, imagine and work together to address.

While our vitality is increasing, we are decreasing in worship attendance. This may mean that we are going deeper, and it will be some time before we start to grow wider again.

We imagine a greater and larger mission than we have capacity, people, systems and dollars to do.

There are injustices that we must address. Last annual conference session we committed to learn about incarceration and how laws and attitudes have used privilege to disadvantage African Americans and Latinos particularly. We have held a joint criminal justice reform forum with Senator Cory Booker. The cabinet and others have studied the book, "The New Jim Crow" to broaden our understanding of these issues. I have sought to learn by traveling throughout the conference, meeting with prison personnel, inmates, judges, lawyers and police officers. We have offered PaCE groups about incarceration. There is still more for us to learn and do. This afternoon together we will reflect on these issues and white privilege.

The final challenge I would like to lift up is that we are discontinuing churches. At this Annual Conference session, we will close five churches. Last session we discontinued five churches. The study we commissioned to develop our strategic plan indicated that we will discontinue 20-30% of our congregations within the next 20 years.

In the midst of these challenges, let's talk about how we will imagine something different. Something different than closing churches. Something other than allowing injustice that rises out of privilege. Something more than declining worship. Let's talk about how to build our capacity to catch up to the big vision and mission we continue to imagine. Let's talk about how we build a church and community for all people.

We have already begun to imagine, pray and work together, and we see the results. In 2013 we imagined a new future through our strategic ministry plan and today while we have significant challenges, we are making progress on our plan and addressing our challenges. Let's review how we are doing to achieve our strategic plan goals. We said by the end of 2018 we wanted to accomplish nine goals:

1. Increase the percentage of churches growing in worship attendance from 32% to 51%. Today 30% of our churches are growing. This is a concern for the health and vitality of GNJ. We have important work to do together.
2. Start 90 new faith communities. We have started 24. This is a good start and with God's help, we can achieve this goal.
3. Decrease the number of worshipers it takes to make a new profession of faith from 17 to 15. We have slipped on this one and are at 18 worshipers to make one profession of faith.
4. Increase the percentage of worshipers in small groups from 43% to 75%. We have already exceeded this goal.
5. Increase the number of young adults in small groups from 2,800 to 3,200. Today we stand at almost 2,900. There is work for us to do.
6. Increase our racial ethnic members from 20% to 25%. We now stand at 21%. There is more work for us to do.

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7. Increase the percentage of worshipers engaged in mission from 8% to 40%. We have already exceeded this goal.
8. Increase local church dollars spent on mission 15% to 17% of their budget. We exceeded this goal and are in the top 10 conferences in our denomination.
9. Raise \$12 million through a mission campaign. We have raised \$5.5 million which is a tremendous start and has exceeded many expectations.

On five of our nine goals, we have exceeded or made strong progress. With God's help and every congregation working to grow vitality, we will see growth in the other four by 2018.

We are also making progress on a strategy and action steps to develop greater cultural competence throughout GNJ, addressing injustices and recruiting more transformational leaders to grow vital congregations.

I imagine in the future, every time we discontinue a church somewhere, we will start a new Hope Center and also start a new faith community. Beginning two new ministries for every church we discontinue. While we may not be able to turn every congregation around, we will imagine new possibilities through Hope Centers and new faith communities.

We have imagined and made strong progress. We are experiencing renewal in our congregations and the lives of people. We have made progress on our goals, built a new Mission and Resource Center, repaired more than 230 Sandy-damaged homes, reduced deaths from malaria, reduced the shared ministry budget, welcomed a new Ghanaian Congregation and an Egyptian faith community, and became one of the most vital United Methodist Conferences.

GNJ in the midst of very challenging times is making progress because this is a movement of the Holy Spirit that has been bathed in prayer each step of the way. We are seeing and experiencing transformational leaders throughout GNJ, we have a clear plan and focus, there is greater trust throughout GNJ, and we are using our resources in alignment with our mission and strategic plan. Our future course is to continue the good work we are doing and strengthen our other areas of ministry.

When we do all of this, God sightings emerge from unsuspecting sources and in unsuspecting places. Doug Card is a councilperson in Highlands New Jersey; a town hit hard by Superstorm Sandy. He met a man in town this year who had no way to rebuild his home. The man needed a total rebuild and didn't have the resources. He had multiple sclerosis and struggled with health concerns. Doug told him about our A Future With Hope.

Today the man has a new modular home built by United Methodists.

Councilman Card told this story to Nicole Caldwell-Gross, Director of Mission for Greater New Jersey because she is leading the Community of Hope training with the Highlands church and community.

Highlands, under the leadership of Pastor Jill Hubbard Smith and seven laity, is one of our first Communities of Hope. They have been trained and have a plan for revitalizing their community. Their imagination and clear plan have attracted members of the town council, the president of the chamber of commerce, the chairs of the Garden Club, the recreation committee, the art society, and 100 other community leaders and residents to work with the congregation.

Councilman Card, who is not a United Methodist but we are working on him, said: "A Future With Hope and the Highland's Community of Hope, has no agenda but to help people. This group gets things done and is making a difference."

As United Methodists, God is giving us all the light we need to see hope, to see an engaged disciple, a vital congregation, and a transformed world.

Like looking through a kaleidoscope, the disciples, the congregations, and transformation will look different in different places. But this I am convinced of: in these places there will be faithful GNJ laity and clergy leading the way.

You are a courageous, imaginative people who are faithful and fruitful. Come, let's imagine together what God will do next. Thank you and God bless you and your ministry.

Presented on May 23, 2016
John Schol, Bishop

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CONFERENCE LAY LEADER'S REPORT

I would like to share with you some of the things and events that have happened since our last time here together. We know that God's Plan for the LAITY IS TO CARRY OUT HIS PLAN FOR HIS CHURCH THAT IS TO GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD. All of us are gifted by the Holy Spirit for Ministry-each one of us has a place in the body to use this gift in concert with others; as we become more equipped as life time learners we are empowered to do God's work more efficiently! We need the entire body, not just the clergy as we seek to become a more vital in our congregation and in this conference. The work of ministry is more than just preaching, teaching, giving, and helping, these things are extremely important, but we also need build relationships with our clergy and our community. I urge you to be more intentional about sharing your faith stories with other people, building relationships by sharing with other the good news of Christ, is bringing hope sometime in a very dark world.

Last September we started our year with the Laity Leadership Academy. The purpose of the Academy is to create a supportive culture in which laity throughout the conference will be engaged, equipped and empowered to be effective partners with our clergy to lead the church as Disciples of Christ. We offered four learning opportunities with the theme of Laity growing in faith and knowledge and called to serve. The Educational tracks were:

- Creating Small Groups
- Creating Inspiring Worship
- Creating Evangelism Ministry and
- Creating Social Media Ministry

We had about 170 persons who took advantage of these workshops and gave out 7 scholarships of \$500 as a result of action plans developed to implement new ministries at their local church.

1. Bethany Brown Memorial UMC
2. Beverly UMC
3. Capital UMC
4. Dunellen UMC
5. Magnolia UMC
6. Seaville UMC
7. UMC of East Pennsauken

The opportunities for Lay Ministries are innumerable; start with the assessment of the needs of your church and your community and find out what ministries are in need. Take advantage of the Lay Servant ministry Training in your District. We have the advance course in the fall and the Basic course in the spring. Those Lay Servants who attended Lay servant classes for the first time this year, will be celebrating their achievement at the graduation on June 4, 2016 at the Mission and Resource Center.

The Laity Board also celebrates and appreciates all committed disciples who are called to become Certified Lay Ministers. We are aware of obstacles created by additional cost surrounding the Psychological Evaluation that may hamper a disciple journey. Those persons who would like to be more engaged in ministry in their district we will assist you. The Laity Board has obtained Funds for Five Scholarships to offset this cost. You may go online to seek out the application if you are a CLM who has completed the requirements and has going before DCOM in your journey and is ready to take the Psychological assessment.

In April 2016 about 150 people gathered in or new Mission and Resource Center for the Recognition of Lay Ministries. Twenty different awards were given to group or individuals. These awards were to recognize the different ministries that are being done by laity in the local church. Ministries such as; The Workers in Mission at the Broadway UMC in Salem, Angel Tree Ministry and Prison Ministry Programs done by several churches, Meals of Love at Beverly UMC as well as many pantry ministries to feed the hungry in our midst; And Casa De Esperanza at FUMC Tuckerton. And there were so many more and of course those special persons who are dedicated to ministry at your churches. This was a very special and proud moment for me and I do hope that those who were recognized will hang their banner proudly somewhere in their church. The Laity Board believes that the church that leaves the building in faith and action, serving their community is the church of Jesus Christ and that is what we are called to do! I would like you to imagine the unlimited and surprising ways God can use our congregations composed of people

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equipped and unleashed to do ministry anywhere and anytime. Imagine all of our churches with a clear robust mission, reinforced through preaching, teaching, mentoring, leadership training and witnessing, small groups and ministry teams. We have seen Laity and Clergy working together with fresh new energy with focus on mission and vital congregation, many of you are involved in team vital, engaged in discussion and planning ways to grow your church. We must continue to move forward our strategic plan to create healthier congregations that are effectively engaged in the mission field, so we must keep focused on the work ahead by equipping our local church leaders for mission and to serve in a way that develops new relationships that bring the Gospel to those in their own communities.

We will continue our Mission Project this year as we have done for the last four years-Stop Hunger Now- plan to pack 30,000 meals tomorrow afternoon at 3:30PM. May 22, 2016- Please plan in joining us as we do this meaningful work!

Last year we elected delegates to go to General Conference and many of us returned yesterday from Portland where the energy level was very high. Delegates were engaged in discussion that was sometimes difficult and very hard. The Laity Address at General conference urges the Laity to share Jesus with the World, reminding us that we have a responsibility of making Disciples of Jesus Christ in the world. Scott Johnson from the Upper New York Conference and other lay leaders said that the challenges facing the church are in part the result of the failure to live the discipleship we claim! That too many members are willing to sit on the sideline of ministry, due in large part because of the discomfort many people have in sharing their faith in Jesus. Sometime we serve in way that are convenient to us, stating that Discipleship is not just about helping out when we have time or energy, but it is about offering Christ and we must be willing to step out of our comfort zone. The laity in the local church must offer opportunities for congregations to commit to serving Christ. We are called to be the church that helps persons finds a sense of purpose in life as a disciple by learning what it means to live out our beliefs through acts of piety and mercy, sharing our Faith and engaging in service. This address encouraged Laity to love, love is what brings about transformation of the world and laity is encouraged to be a part of the church that hears the cries of God's people and brings God's presence into the world and play a role in bringing the love and mercy of Christ to everyone!

We are told that we must go and welcome the stranger into our church. We must go and welcome and the poor in our midst. We must go and feed the hungry. We must go and offer healing to the sick and those who suffer. We must go and seek out those who are lonely. The needs are great!

There is no doubt that each of us are being called by God, today, right this moment, to participate as we can, in what God is blessing us within our mission field. So Brothers and Sisters, with that sense of urgency I ask that you listen to what God is calling you to do! Imagine what we can do! Don't wait get started and let's go!

Rosa Williams
Conference Lay Leader

COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

"If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday"

-Pearl S. Buck, Noble Prize Winner and Daughter of American Missionaries in China

"For history does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid... A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."

-President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Inauguration Speech, January 20, 1953

The highlight of our work this year was hosting a workshop on how to research, manage, write and publish a local church history, which we sponsored last September in Madison and Glendora. Marie Amerson led two identical workshops at The United Methodist Archives and History Center in Madison and at the Chews United Methodist Church in Glendora. There were twenty-nine registrants for the Madison workshop and eleven registrants for the Glendora workshop. The group was comprised primarily of United Methodists with a few Lutheran and Unitarian representatives attending as well. Besides drawing from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, there were also United Methodist representatives from the Eastern Pennsylvania. Each workshop contained four sessions, which lasted for almost five hours of instruction time. All of the participants expressed great satisfaction with the workshop. Amerson agreed to privately coach any of the participants as they work on their future histories. Prior to the workshop CAH published an article in the Relay on how writing a church history benefits and unites a

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congregation for future outreach. Archives and History is currently preparing another five articles for the Relay on the present themes for vital congregations.

It is important to honor those churches and institutions which shaped our present through the vital work of their past deeds of ministry. In 2015, there were three such places recognized as historic sites because events and witness that shaped the direction our annual conference in different ways. They are Flanders United Methodist Church, Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church and The Neighborhood Center in Camden. Upon recognition as such by the General Commission on Archives and History, each place received an historic site plaque which the chair and vice chair presented at separate celebrations.

Another way of honoring local churches is through Robert B. Steelman Methodist History Award for best local church history submission on a yearly basis. The Commission on Archives and History honors the hard work of local churches who reach back to document their past ministries as a way understanding who they are as a contemporary congregation that looks forward to future successful ministry. The submitted history immediately becomes an outreach tool to their community as way of reintroducing the church to potential visitors and members. This year's winner, United Methodist Church of Pearl River, Pearl River, New York, did exactly that with their storied gift to the larger understanding of what it means to be United Methodist. The submission gives the reader a useful overview of Pearl River's 250 years of active ministry within the community. The church's 68 page history also illustrates their faithfulness to live and preach the Good News while lifting up their godly heritage both as a Methodist congregation and those individuals who stepped forward to lead during their respective lifetimes. The reminiscences towards the end are a nice addition as Pearl River continues to live their story for many years to come.

Walt Jones, our archivist, reports that he has have spent hundreds of hours researching 16 baptisms, 4 marriages, 11 genealogies and 31 other information requests. Ancestry.com is still processing the 38 boxes of closed church digital records we sent them in October, 2014. The final project produced 721,231 records in the form of 99,264 images. Walt also promoted the idea of placing a Christian flag on the graves of ministers as an important project for those churches that have attached cemeteries or in other cemeteries. Closed church records archives this year include Gladstone, Barnegat, Gloucester, Highland Park, Bridgeton churches Central and West Portal. This year's acquisitions are the pastoral record book for Rev. Lawrence Atkinson; six boxes of charge conference reports from the Northern Shore District; several boxes of old relays from Whiting UMC; twelve four inch binders of the Bradley Beach history and old records from the Blairstown UMC.

Resourcing the history of our annual conference and beyond came in the form 1 of digitizing previous historical publications of the former Northern New Jersey Historical Society that are now available on our GNJ web pages. Titles include: The Civil War Diaries of James B. Faulks and The Personal Diaries of John Summerfield Coit; The Diaries of Stephen S. Day, 1895-1934; The Journals of the Reverend Thomas Morrell, Methodist Patriot and Preacher, 1747-1813; The Maverick Strain: Dissent and Reform in the United Methodist Tradition, On the Trail of Francis Asbury, Untrod Paths, A Forgotten Chaplain of the Civil War: Commander John L. Lenhart; One Hundred Twenty-Five Years of Methodism; Skeletons in Our Closets: Unique, Amusing, and Human Incidents from the Life of Our Churches; The Story of Our Ethnic Churches; Visiting the Past, Present and Future: A Tour of Methodism in Northern New Jersey.

We remained active in our jurisdiction CAH connection through attending the annual meeting in Connecticut and by having Don DeGroat serve as a member on NEJCAH's Executive Committee. The same is true with our close connection with the General Commission on Archives and History, who rents us shelving to properly store the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference archives. We also offer professional assistance in all phases of archival practices. Our archivist served as one of the test contributors to GCAH's revamped on-line catalog of United Methodist annual conferences' holdings for public searching.

Other items of note include a survey of annual conference commission on archives and history budgets in order to see where we fit in to the larger annual conference funding picture. A result of the survey revealed a mean average budget of \$27,034. There were three conference budgets over \$100,000 and nine conference budgets below \$10,000 in the mean average calculations. Some of our members speak at local churches on the value of archives and history in a vital congregation. We help churches date and interpret their history. Another important aspect of CAH's work is supplying and subsequently advising proper records management through retention scheduling. There were times when our members helped churches with preservation of their treasures whether at our repository or how-to discussions with the local church historian.

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! The Boston University School of Theology (STH) walks with you on the journey of discipleship, seeking to love God and to love our neighbors with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Thank you for your prayers that inspire and support the STH mission to love God, build knowledge, and equip leaders for the church and society.

News

New faculty: This year, Boston University welcomed new faculty in ethics, psychology, theologies of spirituality, comparative theology, church renewal, Black church leadership, and mission studies. We welcomed: Nimi Wariboko (Walter G. Muelder Professor of Social Ethics); David Decosimo (Theology); Theodore Hickman- Maynard (Evangelism and Church Renewal); Andrea Hollingsworth (Theology); Barbod Salimi (Psychology and Peace Studies); and Daryl Ireland (Associate Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission).

Spiritual life: STH continued to expand and deepen its spiritual life program, led by Charlene Zuill, Spiritual Life Coordinator and United Methodist elder. Bishop Susan Hassinger, Claire Wolfteich, and many others also offer a rich selection of courses in spirituality and leadership.

Chaplaincy track: STH added a chaplaincy track to the MDiv degree, preparing students for hospitals, prisons, and military settings.

Engaging in Dialogue: STH spent much energy this year in hard conversations on violence, racism, and injustice, seeking to be honest and vigorously open to change, while honoring the dignity of all persons.

Power, Privilege and Prophetic Witness is the STH theme for 2015-2017: We engaged the theme in classes, lectures, retreats, and workshops, seeking to stretch our capacities to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Examining the intersection of theology and race: The opportunities this year included: a brilliant new documentary on North Korea; a dialogical viewing of Selma; dialogues on racism with Thandeka and Andrew Sung Park; a retreat on building race relations; circle worship; a student-led event Missing Voices, Daunting Choices: The Erasure of Black Women in Black American Movements; and events on interfaith understanding.

Caring for the Church through Leadership and Service

Serving the United Methodist Church: Students served local churches and church bodies as interns, staff, and volunteers. Faculty served with such bodies as: United Methodist Women, World Methodist Council, Ministry Study Commission, Women of Color Scholars and Mentors program, Pan Methodist Commission on Children in Poverty, and boards and agencies of the general church and annual conferences.

Empowering young Latino/a leaders: Young leaders gathered with seasoned mentors to enhance their gifts and service as Christian leaders: Hispanic Youth Leadership Initiative (HYLA) and Raices Latinas Leadership Institute.

Facilitating dialogues on church renewal: We launched a new initiative on Evangelism and Church Renewal.

Reflecting on worship: We contributed to a special issue of Worship Arts Magazine, edited and written by STH faculty, alumni/ae, and students, and published by the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.

Caring for the World

Offering opportunities for engaged learning: Opportunities included the Doctor of Ministry program in Transformational Leadership; an urban ministry course; travel seminars to India, the Arizona-Mexico border, Israel-Palestine, Mexico, and Turkey (Ephesus); work with leaders in Ferguson, MO; and a travel seminar for UMC clergywomen to Cuba, co-sponsored by GBHEM and STH.

Collaborating with the global church: Collaborations included sponsorship of the Dictionary of African Christian Biography; events and art exhibits on local and global ecology; and dialogues with global church leaders.

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As we at STH seek to be faithful and to partner with you in ministry, we give thanks for your witness. Thank you too for your continuing inspiration and contributions to our shared journey.

Blessings and gratitude,
Mary Elizabeth Moore
Dean of Boston University School of Theology

COMMISSION ON CAMPS, CONFERENCES AND RETREATS, INC.

GOAL: GNJ Camping will become a year-round center of Christian community that, through effective use of our resources and connectionism, better serves all contingents in our shared mission of developing disciples and leaders for the future.

The Greater NJ Camping Ministries has been struggling financially for many years. In order to preserve the financial integrity of the ministry plan for the future effectively, the decision was made in 2015 and 2016 to rest the summer camps at both the Aldersgate Center and the Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery. The Pinelands Center has remained open for retreats and youth events year-round.

A new Camping Board began this past summer and has the qualities needed to discern the future of summer camping ministry and it will bring forward a report for the 2017 Annual Conference session.

Report submitted by:
Commission on Camps, Conferences and Retreats

CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

For more than 100 years, Candler School of Theology at Emory University has prepared real people to make a real difference in the real world. Since our founding in 1914, over 10,000 students have graduated from Candler, where they have been shaped as Christian leaders who put faith and love into action, transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

One of 13 official seminaries of The United Methodist Church, Candler is also one of seven graduate professional schools of Emory University, a top-tier research institution offering extensive resources and a rich context for study. Our location in Atlanta provides a learning environment that reflects the highly diverse communities of the 21st century. Simply put, there is no better place for ministry preparation that addresses our major denominational priorities: developing leaders, starting and growing churches, ministry with the poor, and improving global health.

In order to keep pace with the needs of the church and the world, Candler now offers 17 degrees: seven single degrees and ten dual degrees pairing theology with bioethics, business, development practice, law, public health or social work. One of our newest degrees is a retooled Doctor of Ministry that is 90 percent online, so students can remain in their places of ministry as they study—and apply what they learn in real time. We've also partnered with the University of Georgia's School of Social Work to create an MDiv/MSW where students learn to maximize their effectiveness by combining pastoral skills such as spiritual counseling with social work practices such as family therapy and community assessment.

Our student body continues to reflect the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful. 466 students are enrolled, with 48 percent women, 34 percent people of color (U.S.), and a median age of 29. Students represent 44 denominations, with 51 percent coming from the Methodist family. 82 percent of students are seeking a degree to prepare them as ministry professionals.

Candler has a deep commitment to alleviating student debt and employs a multi-pronged approach to tackle this issue. In 2015-2016, we awarded nearly \$5.5 million in Candler scholarships, with 92 percent of MDiv students and 84 percent of all students receiving support. And our comprehensive financial literacy program teaches money management skills that serve our students now and will continue to serve them—and the churches they serve— well into the future.

At the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, Candler says goodbye and Godspeed to a handful of noted faculty as they retire: Barbara Day Miller, Luke Timothy Johnson, Steve Tipton, and Bishop Woodie White. Yet even as these legends take their leave after distinguished careers of scholarship and service, we look forward to welcoming a new crop of scholar-leaders who will join us in the coming months and grow with us in the coming years. We are especially pleased to welcome Bishop Larry Goodpaster, who will join the faculty as bishop-in-residence in the fall

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12 of 2016.

Candler draws considerable strength and inspiration from its relationship with The United Methodist Church. Our ability to fulfill our mission of educating faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries in the world depends upon your support, gifts, and prayers. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this vital ministry in the life of our denomination. Visit us in person in Atlanta or online at candler.emory.edu to see firsthand how Candler prepares real people to make a real difference in the real world.

Jan Love
Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics
Candler School of Theology

THE CENTENARY FUND AND PREACHERS' AID SOCIETY REPORT

The Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society was established by charter granted in 1857. In 2000 the charter was amended to rename the corporation The Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The purpose of the Fund is to provide maximum income, consistent with the preservation of principal, for the support of retired clergy and surviving spouses and dependent children of deceased clergy who have served in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

Since inception the Fund has received in excess of \$6 million in donations, and from the earnings on these donations has provided grants to pastors and their families who have requested aid, loans to assist retired pastors obtain housing in Methodist Homes, and during the period 2004 through 2015 contributed more than \$5 million toward the funding of retiree healthcare. The Fund Balance as of the end of November 2015 was \$11,055,302 and the Distribution Base (amount that can be distributed without invading the principal) was \$4,822,708, before deducting the 2015 contribution of \$539,271 toward retiree healthcare.

To continue support for retired clergy and their families at the current level of a half million dollars per year for retiree healthcare, donations are needed from pastors and churches. Reverend Douglas Miller is the Centenary Fund's Outreach Director and is working to increase our Donation Base. The Fund's Finance Committee Chair is Keith Helsby. Other members of the Fund Board are Charles Bender Jr, Valerie Garron, Grace Pak, Steve Poloff, Jack Scharf, and David Wiley. We hope you will help us build up the Centenary Fund with your tax-free donations so that The Centenary Fund and Preachers Aid Society will be able to continue to make the substantial contributions needed in the future to fund retiree healthcare and to provide aid to retired clergy and their dependents. Thank you for your support to date.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eleanor Hartley, Chair
The Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society

CONFERENCE BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The Board continues to look at three major issues: Immigration, Prison Reform and Poverty Reduction. In the next phase of our work, we will see beyond mercy ministries and work toward including justice ministries. We also look at issues related to Affordable Housing, Peace and the Environment as well as other issues that are presented to us.

As we look to the future, we will continue to support sending two young clergy to the Young Clergy Forum sponsored by GBCS each year.

At the 2015 Annual Conference, we had a Dessert Time. This was co-sponsored by Religion and Race, Christian Unity and Interfaith Relationships and Church and Society. This is a way to share how conference agencies work together on issues. This type of collaboration will continue with these and other entities.

Immigration: Began to look at ways to work with Justice for your Neighbors (JFoN) to get our churches to work with immigrants that need legal assistance.

Prison Reform: As we move toward justice ministries, we look at supporting legislation such as the Redeem Act.

Poverty: The Board became members of the New Jersey Anti-Poverty Network. Through this entity, we are able to inform our churches about resources and training opportunities.

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With the approval of the Poverty Reduction Resolution, the Board is beginning to organize District Reduction Poverty Committees.

Peace with Justice: We were able to give one grant to Tansboro Trinity UMC to work with children.

Affordable Housing: One of the new issues we are going to work on is affordable housing. This would relate to working with the homeless to those that are of need of affordable housing.

Cynthia Ann Kent, Chair
Conference Board of Church and Society

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS

In John 17:20-21, Jesus prays, not only for his disciples, but also for those, who are (literally) “trusting into me, through their word”. His petition is inclusive of both, “so that they all may be one” and also reveals that this desired unity of faith is based on and reflective of Jesus and God’s own oneness: “You are in me and I am in you; I pray that they may also be one in us.” Moreover, this unity is said to validate Jesus and his mission before the world, “so that the world may trust that You sent me.”

At least, since the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910, Jesus’ prayer for unity has been central to that great “Movement” of the Holy Spirit, called “Ecumenical” (meaning “world-wide”). It has opened the eyes of Christians everywhere, to see Christ present and at work in each other, in the various churches, and in the many peoples and persons with whom they minister. As most of our commission completes their second quadrennium of service, we rejoice to bear witness to the ongoing power of this prayer, which speaks of a unity that for us as United Methodists “is not an option”, but “a gift to be received and expressed” (Discipline, 2012, #105, p. 88).

Of course, this movement toward Jesus’ vision of unity has struggled with the same challenges 1 that all of the churches are facing in these times of transition. Yet those of us engaged in this work of unity are not dismayed; rather, we would celebrate with you just a few of the signs of God’s Spirit at work ecumenically, which we have been privileged to see:

- “The Episcopal/Methodist Theology Day”, sponsored with the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, was held at Drew Seminary on September 17, 2015 (having been delayed earlier by snow). In Holy Communion and through mutual dialogue, we joyfully explored with clergy and students the “Interim Agreement on Full Communion” approved by both denominations.
- “The National Workshop on Christian Unity” – begun by Roman Catholics after Vatican 2 – has for over 50 years been a forum for ecumenical dialogue and leadership development. Several of our commissioners have shared in its discussions of emerging ecumenical issues like mission in ethically and religiously diverse cultures, interaction with newer “evangelical” churches, ongoing interreligious dialogue, and intergenerational engagement. The next workshop meets on April 18-21 in Louisville, Kentucky, with the hopeful theme, “Christian Unity: It May Be Closer than You Think”. United Methodist leadership has long played a significant role in the NWCU and, in the past decade, a workshop-affiliate known as UMEIT (United Methodist Ecumenical & Interfaith Training) has emerged under the aegis of the United Methodist Episcopacy’s Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships.
- United Methodists are also serving the New Jersey Council of Churches, both on its Board of Directors and in its working groups. The “Public Policy” group engages in legislative advocacy for impoverished children, prison reform, and other justice concerns. Such topics are often addressed at the NJCC’s annual “Issues and Actions” event. Its “Theology” group has in recent years held discussions at Hightstown U.M.C. on Dr. Miroslav Volf’s *Allah: A Christian Response* and Dr. Karen Armstrong’s *Twelve Steps to A Compassionate Life*. It has also sponsored seminars on “Environment Theology” led by Dr. Laurel Kerns of Drew Theological School, both at Drew University and in our Pinelands Center. On June 11, 2015, the next environmentally focused seminar will examine Pope Francis’ recent encyclical *Laudato Si’ – On Our Common Home* at St. George’s Roman Catholic Church, Titusville, New Jersey, under the leadership of Father Vincent Gartland.
- One of our members has also served on the “Intergenerational Think Tank” of the National Council of Churches and, through Cynthia Kent, has been involved with the World Council of Churches, to which we also have sent delegates.
- The commission has also sought at the behest of the U. M. Council of Bishops to lift up ecumenical interaction and service with other Methodist denominations, like the African Methodist Episcopal, Christian Methodist Episcopal, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches. We have also sent delegates to the World Methodist Council.
- Likewise, we have sought to highlight the potential of our “Full Communion Agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”, which is as yet unfulfilled.

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- Also, over the years, we have raised up the importance of interfaith dialogue as an intrinsic part of Jesus' unity agenda. We have done so through demonstration-dialogues at our "District Days of Learning" and at "Abraham's Table" luncheons, sponsored by the Islamic based "Interfaith Dialogue Center" (now known as "Peace Islands").
- Finally, every year, we have honored at least two worthy recipients of the Bishop's "Award for Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations", often with many other candidates having to be passed over. This testifies to the extensive grassroots involvement of our congregations and pastors in local ecumenical work throughout the Greater NJ Conference.

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

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

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

In May 2015, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference affirmed the creation of a Criminal Justice Task Force to identify resources to help congregations engage in restorative justice initiatives that repairs the harm caused by criminal behavior to victims, perpetrators and communities. This task force worked on identifying resources on the following: promoting dialogue and positive relationships between communities of color and law enforcement; helping congregations understand how racism, mental illness and poverty impacts the criminal justice system and exploring ways to advocate for prison reform and ending mass incarceration.

The Criminal Justice Task Force submits the following recommendations:

1. Have the Board of Church and Society establish a Committee on Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministry as outlined in ¶ 657 of the 2012 Book of Discipline. This committee will relate to the Board and Church and Society.
2. Identify and promote resources that would aid in the understanding of the criminal justice system. For example, the study guide for Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow* could be made available in the GNJ website.
3. Display exhibits at annual conference and regional events to help people understand the issues, for example, a replicated solidarity confinement cell.
4. Encourage churches to participate in Healing Communities.

Respectfully Submitted
Rev. Dr. Varlyna D. Wright

CUMAC/ECHO

CUMAC Continues Mission to Feed People and Change Lives

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

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

The addition of our newest program advances CUMAC's longstanding tradition of forward thinking and growth. That same ethos has led us on a 40 year journey from a small pantry in a borrowed United Methodist Church closet to the multi-

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programmatic response to hunger and poverty that CUMAC operates today. In 2015, our programs were able to reach many people needing to feel God's love through the action of his disciples.

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

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

Among our clients are seniors and the disabled, unable to work and struggling to keep up with rising costs of living. We are visited by the unemployed and underemployed, those who work two or three jobs but still struggle to pay rent and put food on the table. Many are looking to rebuild after long stints of homelessness. Still others turn to us to learn valuable job skills that will help lift them and their families out of poverty. Our clients include children growing up with empty bellies and struggling to thrive, often without stable housing, adequate clothing, proper school supplies or a network to help raise them up. Combined, our programs provide the material support so many need to get by. Of equal importance they provide hope and lift people's faith in the fact that they live in a world that cares about them and won't let them suffer. As God claims all people as his beloved children, we strive always to lift up the least among us.

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

This 18 month timeframe also gives us time to celebrate the incredible accomplishments Pat has made during her tenure at CUMAC's helm. CUMAC has seen substantial growth under Pat's leadership and we look toward a future of continued accomplishment feeding people and changing lives. To ensure our doors stay open to all who needs us, our circle of compassionate disciples in Christ is ever expanding. The Greater New Jersey United Methodist Church time and again lives that inspiring adage "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can" in their support of CUMAC. **In 2015, 78 United Methodist Churches lived faith in action by sharing their gifts.** This came by way of financial support, events held on our behalf and special collections of food, coats, hygiene items, book bags and other critical goods. **38 United Methodist Churches made over 110 service trips to ensure our vital work is continued.** They came as bible studies, UMW and UMM groups, youth groups, summer camps, and ecumenical partnership. They brought friends and family and were instrumental to growing disciples for Christ through service. With your help, we have accomplished much work to make this world a kinder, more just place for all God's children.

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

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

Stephanie Ames, Community Engagement Coordinator



Reverend Patricia Bruger, Executive Director



DREW UNIVERSITY THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

A Cohering Vision: Curriculum, Community, Co-Curricular Initiatives

After much collaborative discussion, discernment, and evaluation of the current state of theological education, those of us who lead, teach, and support Drew Theological School have launched on an ambitious course. Nearly 150 years after our founding, we envision a future as bright as the best eras in our past. I am pleased to share with you here the concrete steps we have taken— and are taking— to bring this future to light.

First, our efforts have been attentive to the history of Drew, in particular its Methodist roots, its long commitment to the Church and its ministries, and draw from this wellspring for inspiration and direction. Also, we have honored our progress to achieve denominational, ethnic, gender, and racial diversity in our faculty and student body. This rich diversity has become both a hallmark of Drew and an expansion of our wellspring. Forces beyond our campus—notably, that the reasons for pursuing a theological education and expected outcomes are shifting dramatically—further press the need for us to align our vision and its supporting systems with our communal reality.

Given this imperative, we are focused on the three “C’s” of our cohering vision: redesigning our curriculum, strengthening our community of learning, and deepening training through revived co-curricular initiatives. These three aspect of a Drew Theological School education will work together to enable us to empower creative thought and courageous action to advance justice, peace, and love of God, neighbor, and the earth—as well as uniquely position us to lead evolving expressions of Christianity.

Designing distinct pathways from curriculum to vocation

To remain meaningful and offer the greatest value to our students, each of the six degree paths that we offer must be as distinct as the ministry to which it leads. For example, our Master of Arts in Ministry program, which forms students for the broadest spectrum of theologically-informed advocacy and ministry, or our DMin program, which has become the “new” terminal vocational degree, must be custom rebuilt for current and emerging student needs and outcomes. This also holds true for our Master of Arts, Master of Sacred Theology, PhD, and, most critically, our Master of Divinity programs.

We have achieved our roadmap for curricular change through a period of intentional discernment, which included discussion with consultants, and with colleagues at peer institutions, who led a curricular formation retreats with our faculty; through the discernment and guidance of our faculty, and with the generous financial support of the Jesse Ball duPont Fund. Our next steps include a comprehensive analysis of pedagogical and technological trends in theological education, enrollment, and outcomes. Our redesigned curricular paths will be announced in the fall of 2017, concurrent with the 150th anniversary of the founding of Drew Theological School and the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

Student experiences rooted in community

Despite the increase in students pursuing their education through evening classes and online enrollment, we remain committed to the on-campus experience of community. This begins with a student-centered educational experience that better attends to the scheduling needs of our students, offers broader course content and availability, and more intentionally integrates vocational or career aspirations with coursework.

The success of these efforts are inextricably linked to scholarship support. Only by removing the financial barriers for students pursuing vocations can we hope to attract and retain the most promising students and free them to learn and grow in community. Related to tuition support is the need for more affordable and modernized housing for those students who choose to live on campus. Together, scholarship 1 support and housing relief will also unburden our students from unsustainable debt.

Fostering innovation in ministry and the work of spirit-filled justice

To round out changes in our curriculum and on-campus learning experiences, we are also reviving co-curricular initiatives. The existing Center for Lifelong Learning will be recast as the new Center for Innovation and Leadership in Ministry and serve

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students, alumni, and others seeking to find creative and courageous approaches to revitalizing ministry. Here, programming will train pastoral leaders, in particular, for service in rapidly changing church environments, as well as position them to lead fearlessly and prophetically.

Our second co-curricular center will be an expansion of the current Communities of Shalom. This initiative will focus on action, advocacy, and social justice work in both pastoral and lay environments. Projects will range from student interns supporting the work of A Future with Hope in our home state of New Jersey, advancing social justice in non-profit settings across the country and around the world, initiatives which seek to transform and end systemic poverty, expansion of our Partnership for Religion and Education in Prisons (PREP) program, and teaching residencies at Drew for prophetic leaders.

Success so far through our One and All Campaign

As the 14th dean of Drew Theological School, I am deeply committed to continuing our long and distinguished legacy. To this end, our vision is innovative, forward-looking, and grounded in the practical needs of our students—we hope, too, that it is an inspiration to the various constituencies we serve. I fully subscribe to the inimitable words of Antonio Machado, that “we make the road by walking.” The road to this bright future we envision will be made by the dedication, determination, and generosity of those who love Drew and believe in its future.

Our vision is coming to light, in part, because of the generosity of our many alumni-donors and friends. Our One and All fundraising campaign has raised more than \$12 million to date for the Theological School and has seed-funded many of our burgeoning efforts.

Also, I encourage our alumni to embrace your power of influence to help grow philanthropic support for Drew Theological School. Many of our largest gifts have come from the influence of alumni, particularly pastors who serve in our church communities.

Yes, the needs ahead are many, yet our hope is high for a bright future for Drew Theological School. The road is made by walking. Let’s walk it together.

The Reverend Dr. Javier A. Viera
Dean of the Theological School
Professor of Pastoral Theology

EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

The Educational Society has been assisting men and women of New Jersey, called by God to full time Christian service, in their pursuit of a theological education. By providing scholarships and loans for more than one hundred and fifty years to persons preparing to serve in Christian ministry, our Annual Conference has invested in the future of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Scholarships are awarded to candidates for ordained ministry who are matriculated in an accredited theological seminary or graduate school approved by the United Methodist Church University Senate (UMCUS) and who are members of a United Methodist Church within the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference (GNJAC), or who are clergy of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference engaged in continuing education at an accredited graduate or theological school approved by UMCUS who are not eligible for Ministerial Education Funds.

Interest free loans are available to men and women preparing for full time Christian service, matriculated full or half time in an accredited college, seminary, or graduate school, including Course of Study, approved by UMCUS. Applicants must be a member of a United Methodist Church within the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. The distribution of scholarships and loans is determined annually by the Board of Directors of the Educational Society. \$3,500.00 in loans were granted in 2014. In this same year, three scholarships totaling \$16,500.00 were awarded to Cynthia Lydon, Josh Mularski, and William B. Wilson Jr. The Educational Society is supported by the repayment of loans, interest earned on early endowments, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, and contributions from local churches and individuals. Contributions may be made through the Conference Advance # 622. It is an opportunity for the local church to affirm the ministry of pastors who have benefited from Educational Society assistance by “paying it forward” through contributions to Conference Advance #622.

Respectfully submitted,
Jo D. Malessa, President

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THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

The Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, as the name of the agency indicates, has two crucial ministerial functions: 1) Higher Education – supporting the United Methodist Students of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference to achieve their higher educations, especially through granting them scholarships; and 2) Campus Ministry – partnering with the campus ministers and local churches that are passionate about their campus ministries, as they tend the religious/spiritual needs/life of the students and faculty in college/university settings.

First of all, every year, the Board has a tough task of selecting/granting scholarship recipients. Due to the limited scholarship funding availability, the Board carefully and prayerfully selects the scholarship beneficiaries. In year 2015 (as was the case in the previous year), the Board was able to grant nineteen overtly qualified students from various backgrounds, locations, and studies their scholarships. The Board is working toward a way to grant more scholarships, without compromising the quantity and quality of the conference scholarships that we offer to our students, by contacting the UMM and UMW of our local churches and by creative fundraising event(The reason once again is that the Board is in agreement, refusing to turn down our U.M. students in their academic and spiritual journey in their colleges and universities settings.

Secondly, the Board has two responsibilities under the heading of Campus Ministry: 1) Partnering with and accountable for the existing campus ministries, and 2) Connecting with and assist to the starting-up campus ministries of the GNJAC.

With this regard, there are four existing campus ministries that the conference has been supporting in consistent and persistent basis. They are:

1. Centenary College
2. Rockland County Community College
3. Wesley Foundation at Princeton
4. The FeedTruck Ministry (covering Mercer County colleges).

And in 2015, the Board was able to publicize and implement seven grants to our local churches and their endeavors to doing campus ministries. They are:

1. First UMS Glassboro (Rowan University area): Tavern Theology
2. Grace Korean UMC (William Patterson University area): College Outreach
3. Monmouth Grace UMC (Monmouth University area): Race Matters
4. First UMC of Mt. Holly (Bergen County Community College area): Art with a Heart
5. Christ UMC Piscataway (Rutgers University area): Methodist Muffin Ministry
6. Princeton UMC (Princeton University area): Café Ministry
7. Christ UMC Lakewood (Georgian Court University area): Beyond the Great Divide – Bridging Opportunity

This is a strategic plan, aligned with the GNJAC mission and the 2018 objectives. The objective #2 indicates, “Start 90 new faith communities,” and objectives #5 asserts, “Increase the number of young adults in small groups from 2,820 to 3,200.”

The members of the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry promise to continue our support to the U.M. colleges students and campus ministries of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference by doing ministry more innovatively, and most of all, more prayerfully. So, the Board asks you to please join in this great ministry with your care, love, and prayers!

Respectfully submitted by
Hyun-Bo Shim, on behalf of the Board of HE and CM members

EPISCOPACY COMMITTEE

The Episcopacy Committee has met regularly with our Bishop during the past year for the purpose of support, encouragement, communication of conference priorities, and to provide feedback where solicited. We have participated in an evaluation of the Bishop, discussed matters related to the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, and assured that the Episcopal residence is in excellent condition. At each meeting the Bishop has issued, and we have discussed, a detailed report of his work in the conference. He has been thoroughly transparent and collegial in all of our discussions and we well know that he greatly values the shared ministry of all laity and clergy in the conference.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Fowler, Chairperson, Episcopacy Committee

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COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The economy of New Jersey continued improving in 2015 and the Shared Ministry collection rate was up 2%. 394 of our local churches paid 100% of their shared ministry allocation, up from 391 last year. 481 paid 100% of their billables, down from 485 last year. We are grateful to the churches of the conference for their stewardship.

As in prior years, committees, boards and agencies were prudent in their spending and the income from conference investments continued to perform well, in line with the general financial markets. Therefore overall financial results were in line with budget projections for 2015.

As a result of contributions from the Board of Trustees, the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits and the Council on Finance and Administration, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference has moved into our new building mortgage free.

For the ninth year in a row, our conference paid 100% of its general church apportionments. GNJAC was one of the 26 out of 56 conferences that paid 100%. We thank the Bishop, Cabinet and Program Staff for their leadership and we thank our local churches for their faithful stewardship and hard work, all of which make these results possible.

Other items of note from our activities this year:

1. In accord with conference legislation, and with the leadership of the Bishop and Cabinet, all of the churches receiving equitable or supplemental compensation grants paid 100% of their Disciplinary Obligations.
2. Financial training has again been provided at the District Days of Learning. Emphasis was on the various matters of interest to local churches. We are looking into ways to develop services that CFA might be able to provide to local churches, such as auditing or financial planning and budgeting.
3. Conference investments again performed well in 2015, matching the benchmarks. Our portfolio is well diversified and as a result of our investment gain trends over the last several years, the CFA continues to authorize a payout rate of 5%.
4. On line collection of the data for statistical reports continues to go well. Errors have been much reduced with the new system and local churches have been much better able to meeting reporting timetables. As an added benefit, the information needed for conference management is available nearly 6 months earlier that it had been under the old system.

The Conference Council on Finance and Administration wants to thank Bishop Schol, the Cabinet and the Program Staff for their continuing support and encouragement. We also want to thank John Cardillo, Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, and his staff for their hard work and support.

John Bishop, President
Conference Council on Finance and Administration

GENERAL COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Financial Services Committee reviewed all General Church board and agency spending plans for 2015 and approved same. The primary elements of the review are to determine that the spending plans conform to the budget approved by the 2012 General Conference, are within the forecasted receipts and that unreasonable reserves are not being accumulated. Budgets are subject to year to year adjustments required due to economic conditions. If such adjustments are required, they are prorata among all recipients.

The full GCFA Board is working with the Connectional Table to establish the proposed budget for the 2016-2020 quadrennium. Initial numbers indicate an increase of about 1% in the budgets of the general church agencies.

The Audit Committee received and extensively discussed with the external auditor the report of the audits of all general church boards and agencies. The reports on UMC General Boards and agencies audits did not disclose any unusual problems or major weaknesses in internal control. The Audit Committee also recommended asking for RFPs from firms desiring to do the audits of the General Church Agencies and recommended a change based upon lower costs.

The Committee on Legal Responsibilities has the disciplinary responsibility to protect the UMC and its mark, the Cross and Flame. It also has a fund to be used in related proceedings regarding annual conferences or local churches. This support is to be limited to matters of denominational significance.

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During the year we reviewed several requests and did provide some funding for issues involving the defense of the trust clause and also of the rights of local churches to conduct religious services in non-traditional settings. We also denied several requests for funding.

The Committee on Legal Responsibilities participated in a number of legal briefs supporting the trust clause or its equivalent in other denominations. Many denominations are having issues with breakaway congregations that want to take their building and endowments with them as they leave the mother denomination. We have the obvious interest in that an adverse decision could affect future legal actions within the Methodist denomination.

Members of the GNJAC may be aware that GCFA and GBGM had halted all payments to the East Africa Annual Conference over which Bishop Wandabula presides. Salary and office expenses were also reduced. This is a result of long term inability to get Bishop Wandabula to provide documentation to show that his uses of the funds were appropriate. This matter was submitted to the Judicial Council which ruled that the Bishop's salary cannot be reduced from that authorized by the General Conference in 2012. The Judicial Council did not reverse any of the other actions related to program expenses and office expenses which are not being paid.

GCFA has continued adjusting to a new and smaller Board (21 vs. 41 previously). It is going well and most Board members prefer the new arrangement. I have been personally involved with an effort to have administrative services provided on a shared basis among the general boards. Quite a number of services have been integrated into a shared service among the general agencies.

John Bishop, Member
General Commission on Finance and Administration

BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

The Conference Board of Global Ministries works with missionaries, our Advance Specials, Agencies, Conference staff and aligns with the strategic goals of the Conference.

Advance Specials: Each Advance Special (Advanced) is assigned to a CBGM member who is its liaison with the Board to make sure that their ministry continues, and visits with the agency where possible. Advance Specials are required to submit a reapplication each year and provide supporting documents. Two Advance Specials have been dropped from last year and one new one has been added. The list can be found in the Board's resolution. Although Conference does not fund Advance Specials directly, they are encouraged to apply directly to churches and the churches are encouraged to support them by sending funds to them through the Conference treasurer. One of the future measures of an Advance's viability will be the support it receives.

Partnerships: International Partnerships continues to be a gray areas with CBGM.

Mission Fairs: CBGM held its one Mission Fair on September 19, 2015. No future fairs are planned.

UMVIM: Kathy Ahmad led a VIM team to Haiti in January and installed over a hundred water filters.

Global Missions, Conference Secretary of (CSGM): In Greater New Jersey, the position of CSGM is also held by the Chair of the Board of Global Ministries. The CSGM works with the General Board of Global Ministries in accommodating missionaries who will be itinerating in our Conference. During 2015 Brenda and Alex Awad, Jerusalem; Rosangelica Acevedo (Robinson School in Puerto Rico); and Devorah Umipig and Ronald Julian (Japan) itinerated in Greater New Jersey. In the spring of 2016 Sun Lae Kim (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia) and Katherine Parker (Kathmandu, Nepal) are also visiting.

Grace Rapp attended the National CSGM meeting in New York City Nov. 11 – 13 in place of Barbara who was unable to attend. This was a three-day event of worship, workshops, and the opportunity to meet with current CSGM's of the Northeast Jurisdiction. Some highlights: Thomas Kemper, Secretary General, spoke of the move to the new GBGM facility in Atlanta, Georgia with transfer of some staff to be complete by Fall 2016; the 75th Anniversary of UMCOR celebrated with slide show and a birthday cake; reports from Transformation Generation and UMCOR staff; the development of four regional offices which reinforces the slogan of GBGM "From Everywhere to Everywhere."

Submitted by Barbara McFarquhar
Conference Board of Global Ministries

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NATIONAL PLAN FOR HISPANIC/LATINO MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Vision

A diverse and inclusive church that is transforming the community and expanding God's Kingdom.

Mission

To empower Hispanic/Latino leaders to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry has been supporting and strengthening Hispanic Leaders in GNJ. It has also trained leaders and created contextualized training resources. We continue developing a strong laity and clergy with resources in their own language and cultural context as part of our mission and vision of creating Vital Congregations in alignment with the Strategic Plan of the Conference. Our areas of focus are Leadership Development, Spiritual Growth, Social Concerns, Developing New Churches and Small Groups and Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Our Strategic Plan starts by identifying active leaders within our churches and communities of faith, that are committed to learn, work in team with their pastors, other leaders, and with a genuine desire to growth in the Wesleyan theology tradition.

Programs that we have developed:

- The HNP Module I and II trainings were offered in 2015. As a result of this training we have 14 New Lay Missioners of the National Hispanic/Latino Plan in GNJ.
- We continue supporting The Walk to Emmaus in Spanish which is proving to be a highly effective resource to develop lay leadership and spiritual growth. Pastors are reporting an increased level of participation and commitment to the local church in those that have experienced Emmaus. We're also seeing an increased understanding of the concept of servant-leadership, among Hispanic/Latino laity. This year we had over 40 new pilgrims participate in the Walk to Emmaus Retreat.
- We supported IGNITE 2015. More than 75 Hispanic youth participated. As a result they are doing Rallies among our churches and engaging and worshipping God in their own way with their gifts and talents. As the result of this effort we are developing a strategy to develop and organize our Youth and Young Adults with more intentionality understanding that they are part of the present and future of the church. They meet and start organizing their Annual Retreat Niños y Jovenes para Cristo for the summer 2016 with the support and guidance of Rev. Charles Perez, Rev. Rolando Santiago, Rev. Hector A Burgos, Milagros Soto- Pillot and Jazelis Adorno-Burgos.
- Our Laity Biblical Academy - (SELAH) provides enhanced/contextualized theological education for lay leaders from a Wesleyan perspective in Spanish. The 2 year program covers topics such as Church History, Systematic Theology, UMC doctrine and polity, Worship/Preaching, Evangelism, and more. This program is making theological education available to lay leaders that otherwise would not be able to have it, do to affordability, immigration status, and/or family/job responsibilities. The academy started in September 2014, with 19 laity students, and its being facilitated by experienced clergy with a strong theological and ministry background in our denomination. We are in the second year program with a total of 22 students.
- We offer connection among our clergy families. Two annual gatherings to enjoy one another and to play dominoes, games, good food and relax. (summer and winter)
- We celebrate after the Annual conference the new appointments and ordinations from our Hispanic Clergies. Very proud of our new leaders that have decide to answer their call.
- We have three New Hispanics Ministries hosted by English/Korean speaking churches. We celebrate their vision and desire to be in ministry with the Hispanic/Latino community.

God is working in new and different ways. The Hispanic population keeps rapidly growing and we need a space to worship God and to feel his love in a lot of places in New Jersey. They are so many challenges in the Latino community. We are looking forward for more Hispanic Vital Congregations, for more Pastors willing to serve in different ways, for new churches opening the doors to serve the Hispanics/Latino Communities. God is up to something! We invite all to join us as we seek to expand the reign of God and transform the world in the love of Jesus Christ.

Jazelis Adorno-Burgos, Chair

National Plan Hispanic/Latino Committee, on behalf of the committee

COMMITTEE ON NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES (CoNAM)

This Committee worked with the Conference on setting up an Act of Repentance Service at the 2014 Annual Conference. The Indigenous Welcome was given by Mr. Mark Gould, the Chief of the Lenni Lenape Tribe which is part of the Nanticoke Lenni

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Lenape Confederation. The 2015 Indigenous Welcome was given by Rev. Roy Bundy, the pastor of St. John's UMC in Fordville. This church is designated as a Native American Methodist Church and has been in existence 175 years. We hope to see this welcome continue as a part of our Annual Conferences.

We continue to work with the Lenni Lenape Tribe by:

- Supporting their Youth Camp and assisting youth with Peg Leg Flamingo participation.
- At one of CoNAM meetings, we shared with people about a trip to the historical site of the Carlisle Indian School some of the members attending. Some of the Lenape people were interested in attending as well. On June 4, 2015, forty five (45) people went on the trip. We plan to do a trip for Conference members.
- Rev. Doug Mackey from the Upper NY Conference came to St. John's UMC as a part of his seminary course. He shared how a Native American Ministries Sunday (NAMS) training could be as he shared resources from their Act of Repentance Service. With this type of training, the CoNAM will do a training for the Conference during Regional Day of Learning conferences in 2017.
- The history of the relationship between the Tribe and St. John's UMC needs to be recorded and the Archive Center at Drew University is working with the Tribe and the church to record this history.
- St. John's UMC is a part of the eight week Bridgeton Summer Program. It was held for two weeks at each church from June 29-August 21, 2015. A total of 120 children were in attendance, with 38 attending at St. John's UMC. St. John's used an in-house Native American immersion curriculum and explored how the culture and Christianity partner together to glorify the Creator. From that program, more Tribal youth are attending church and a youth program is being established by the church.

We want to develop a working relationship with the other two Tribes in the conference, they are the Powhatan Tribe in Burlington County in Central New Jersey and the Ramapough Lunaape Tribe in the Northwest corner of New Jersey in the Hunterdon County area. We will be working the District Superintendents in those areas to look at ways to open up a dialogue.

We are aware that many Native people from the state and from other places are attending colleges in New Jersey. While they are in the state, the Committee would like to be supportive of them. We are working with the Reform Church of America on a Welcome Center at the Rutgers University in New Brunswick. As we develop a plan to work with Rutgers, we will see how this activity can be presented at other schools. The Committee continue to see how native people and issues can be included into the life and work of the Conference.

Cynthia Kent, Chair
Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM)

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Vitality. Transformational Leadership. Effectiveness.

These are some of the words to which we are drawn in today's Church. They speak to both the beauty and the urgency of ministry. And they speak with power to the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry. For ours is a work of deep discernment for the sake of the God Who Calls.

When a member of my church asks me about the work of the Board, I am always eager to tell of my awe for the diverse ways in which God calls and the diverse stories of human response. I remain enthralled with the innumerable avenues through which God beckons God's children into ministry.

Through varied people with varying gifts, God continues to share grace with the world.

In seeking to serve this God Who Calls, the Board engages in tasks that may at times look like just "processes," but are, in truth, paths that lead to deep discernment and lasting empowerment. The journey of questions and mentorship and assessments and interviews and site visits (and so much more) is a rich and powerful pilgrimage of deep listening, for the individual and for the community.

In this deep listening, it is our privilege and our responsibility to equip those who are called, in order that each may fully claim the gifts God has given, and may use them with joy.

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In attending to the unique spiritual timbre God has given for ministry, the door is then opened for the very things we seek: vitality, effectiveness, and even transformation. We find that these words, when we hold them with care, tap into the great mystery of how God is at work in our midst.

This quadrennium has held many important changes for the Board, as reflected in previous reports. This year, in addition to our standing responsibilities, we have been tending to the need for greater staff support, to include staffing for recruitment; we have been exploring assessment tools in languages other than English, to care for our community; and we have made the transition from the Online Candidacy Application System (OCAS) to UMCARES.

We have joined with Conference leadership in envisioning the future of vibrant ministry, continued to evolve the written requirements of candidates to reflect current insights, and nurtured the individual journeys of persons under our care.

As this season comes to an end, I would offer a word of deep thanks to all the persons who serve on the Board, for their countless hours attending to matters of call and community, their willingness to wrestle with complex issues, their commitment to care for the persons responding to God's call, and above all their openness to the movement of the Spirit.

We also thank Beverly Karlovich for her indispensable administrative wisdom and care; her grace and diligence have been integral to our work. It has been a privilege and joy to serve among such faithful servant leaders. Collectively, we understand that we are responding to a sacred calling to engage in discernment, be attentive to the movement of the Spirit, and celebrate what God is doing in our midst. It is our privilege to serve the God Who Calls.

Shawn Callender Hogan
Chair, Board of Ordained Ministry

PARISH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The members of the Parish and Community Development Committee met on September 17, 2015, and participated in the Conference's Board, Agencies and Committees Strategic Session on January 9, 2016. We have reviewed our goals and affirm our recommendation to have them be examined by the Connectional Ministries Team.

1. Find out how many of our churches would be considered local-community-churches verses mostly commuter-churches. This statistic would encourage conversations that would help us to define the very terms parish and community as they present themselves within our conference, and would be beneficial in the planning of effective clergy and laity peer group conversations and inter-congregational relationships.
2. Connectional Database for our Conference. We propose the creation of a database that would have relevant reference information for ministry and outreach by offering a central place of parish-community resources for our GNJUMC family. Our vision is that it would serve as a comprehensive connectional tool that would help us to see the richness of gifts and experience that we already have in our churches and that would encourage collaboration among our congregations. The purpose of the database would not be to simply show success stories to be duplicated. We understand that every community and church is unique, but we also know that we can learn from one another and that our ministries can be enriched by the sharing of our experiences. Therefore, we propose the following:
 - a) Creation of a Connectional Database to include data to be sent by laity and clergy and to include categories such as personal experiences, gifts and graces, areas of expertise, work experience, success stories, and failures.
 - b) That the information inputted into the database would show anonymously and would be reviewed prior to posting ideally by a lay person within our conference who has experience with statistics.
 - c) Care would be given to designing a system that allows contact with persons for additional sharing without making their personal information public.

May the work of our Conference always be led by the Spirit of God with us.

Maylis de la Fe, chairperson

BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS

The Greater New Jersey Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (the Board) is authorized by *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* to contribute to the support, relief, assistance and pensioning of clergy and their families, as well

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as other church workers and lay employees of the United Methodist Church. Working with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the Board endeavors to implement and interpret national and conference policy.

PENSION

Pre-1982 Pension Plan

The 2016 Past Service Annuity Rate for pre-1982 annuitant payment is \$646 per year of pre-1982 service. The 2017 Past Service Annuity Rate for pre-1982 annuitant payment will be \$658. The pre-1982 pension program continues to be fully funded and in a strong position.

CRSP/MPP and CPP

The General Conference's pension plan, Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) is a hybrid of defined benefit and defined contribution approaches which took effect in 2007. For 2016 churches pay CRSP at 12.5% of clergy plan compensation and for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) at 3% of full time clergy's plan compensation, totaling 15.5% of plan compensation. For less than full time clergy, the CPP rate is 3.4% of Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) for 3/4 time and 1/2 time, and 4.4% of DAC for optional coverage (1/4 time and leave status).

The 2012 General Conference enacted changes to the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Effective 1/1/2014 for all contributions going forward, the CRSP Defined Benefit component was reduced from 1.25% of DAC to 1.0% of DAC. Under the CRSP Defined Contribution component, contributions were reduced from 3% to 2% of clergy plan compensation and, in addition, match up to 1% of compensation if clergy contributes 1% to UMPIP. Contributions previously made will not be affected by this change and benefits paid upon retirement will be based on the previous formula for all benefits accrued prior to 1/1/2014. Any benefits accrued from that date forward is based on the new formula.

Additionally, the General Conference changed the participation requirements from all clergy under appointment to only clergy under full time appointment. Clergy appointed to less-than-full-time (3/4 and 1/2-time) are eligible based on the decision of the Annual Conference after approval of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The Board has voted to include those clergy appointed to less-than-full-time (3/4 and 1/2 time) appointments in CRSP. For clergy appointed to 1/4 time appointments, a vote of the Board has made UMPIP available as a pension option for those clergy. Please contact Alexa Taylor, Benefits Services Manager, for more information on this option. These changes require Annual Conference approval.

The rates of remittance for the Clergy Retirement Security Program/Ministerial Pension Plan (CRSP/MPP) and Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) increased from last year's rates to 95.93% and 95.58% respectively. Twenty percent of churches were unable to pay these bills on time. Below is a summary of 2015 remittances:

Type	Remittances Rate	2014 Shortfall	# of Churches Paying <100%	% of Churches Paying <100 %
CRSP	95.93%	\$105,461	63	13.67
CPP	95.58%	\$25,906		

To maintain clergypersons' participation in CRSP and CPP, the Greater New Jersey Conference fully pays delinquent church accounts using funds from the Reserve Account at the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. We are concerned that some churches are not fully meeting their obligations with the resulting decrease in the Reserve Account.

By 2015 year-end the cumulative delinquent amount for years prior to 2015 was \$1,805,000 for CRSP/MPP and \$385,000 for CPP - a total of \$2,190,000, an increase of \$43,000.

We thank those churches that maintained faithful stewardship, paying 100% of their obligation. We also appreciate the continuing efforts of our district superintendents, Alexa Taylor, Benefits Services Manager, to collect the past due balances. More than \$185,000 of the 2002-2014 shortfalls was collected in 2015.

Pre-Retirement Seminars

As in years past, the Board sponsored a retirement education session held at St. Mark United Methodist Church in Hamilton on March 3, 2016. The pre-retirement seminar focuses on those anticipating retirement within five years. Fifty-five persons were

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scheduled to attend. Presentations by Peter Hang of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, a Social Security representative, and Barbara Gruezke, Insurance Coordinator, provided valuable guidance to assist retirement planning. Special thanks go to Donna Hough for organizing these events and to St. Mark UMC for their gracious hospitality. Thanks also to Alexa Taylor, Benefits Services Manager, and Barbara Gruezke, Insurance Coordinator for their support.

HEALTH INSURANCE

For 2016, the Board continued Active health insurance under HealthFlex, the health insurance plan sponsored by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The medical and prescription benefits changed from 2015, but still is the richest plan HealthFlex provides. The medical provider network is Blue Cross/Blue Shield PPO; the pharmacy benefits are provided through Catamaran. Beginning in 2015, the General Board no longer offers retiree health insurance. The Board implemented United HealthCare's National Medicare Advantage PPO Plan which combines the participants' Medicare A & B, supplemental coverage and Part D prescription plan.

The Board has again provided a contribution to participants' Health Reimbursement Accounts for 2016 of \$1,250 for single and \$2,500 for all other plan types which can be used for qualifying medical expenses (such as co-pays and deductibles). These funds do not expire and are accessed through a MasterCard branded debit card, or via a reimbursement form.

Premiums and Remittances

The following chart shows church premium rates in effect for 2016. These rates reflect a Cabinet- requested blended rate for all categories, which the Board has been moving toward for several years, so that health insurance premiums are not a factor in determining clergy appointments.

Health Insurance Premiums for 2016	
Employee	\$14,000
Employee & Child(ren)	\$14,000
Employee & Spouse	\$14,000
Employee & Family	\$14,000

The Board thanks all churches that fully paid their health insurance premiums in 2015. Overall, churches paid 99% of the total \$4,276,240 health insurance billings, an increase from the 2014 remittance rate of 98%. The 2015 shortfall was approximately \$40,000. By 2015 year end, the amount owed from years prior to 2015 had been reduced by \$224,824 and the cumulative unpaid health insurance bills had increased to \$2,830,113 owed for years prior to 2015.

Churches failing to fully pay their premiums burden all churches and result in higher health insurance premiums for all. Thanks go to the Conference/BOPHB Treasurer John Cardillo, Insurance Coordinator Barbara Gruezke, and the Cabinet for their continued efforts to collect health insurance arrearages.

The Board and the Conference staff have continued their efforts to ease the continued transitions in healthcare. The Health Insurance Guidelines included in these 2016 Conference Reports and Recommendations have been updated.

Annuitant Health Care Liability

As of the end of 2014, the Financial Accounting Standards Board FAS 158 liability for annuitant healthcare costs in the amount of \$51.6 million was posted to the Conference balance sheet. This liability is the estimated present value of the future costs of annuitant healthcare. The Annuitant Health Insurance Contingency Fund described below has been set up to address this large liability over time.

Annuitant Health Insurance Contingency Fund

In 2002-2003 the Board, recognizing the growing magnitude of annuitant healthcare costs, together with the Centenary Fund, representatives of CFA, the Cabinet and the Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS), developed a plan for a long term Annuitant Health Insurance Contingency Fund that begins to offset the liability and ensure that retirees continue to enjoy conference-paid health insurance. The Fund was initiated by the 2003 GNJ Annual Conference and earmarked exclusively for healthcare costs for annuitants to cover higher premium costs expected in future years. The plan for the Fund involves a multi-year period during which excess pre-1982 retirement funds would be used to pay CRSP defined-benefit requirements, and

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comparable funds from churches would be used to create a permanent retiree health fund. This is a critical initiative since it is clear that the Conference cannot continue to fund retiree health insurance on a cash basis out of the Conference Budget.

As of December 31, 2015, the Annuitant Health Insurance Contingency Fund held a balance of \$8,985,134 after transferring \$467,618 to the Annuitant Health Insurance Account to avoid a negative balance in that account at year-end. In 2015 approximately \$3,055,204 came into the Contingency Fund (representing the 2% clergy and staff salary contributions toward the cost of health insurance) plus the Centenary Fund's annual contribution (in excess of \$300,000, separate from their \$100,000 contribution directly to the Annuitant Health Insurance Account).

The Board Itself

The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits endeavors to serve the Conference and the needs of those in ministry. There continues to be much to accomplish, especially in the challenging field of health insurance. Christ strengthens us to meet these challenges and we pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire our actions.

Current leadership is Rev. Paul Zorn, Chair; Donna Hough, Secretary.

Submitted by Paul Zorn, Chair

PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2016 Insurance Renewal:

The 2016 insurance renewal process resulted in a \$129,721 premium increase or 3% versus the 2015 costs. This includes a re-inspection of all conference properties which were completed by 12/31/15. In 2011, Hurricane Irene damages, and a total fire loss, contributed to a 189% loss ratio for the property insurance. There were also adverse claim developments for the workers' compensation coverage resulting in a 110% loss ratio for that line of business. In 2012, Super Storm Sandy damages resulted in a Conference loss ratio of 129%. In addition, there were several significant workers' compensation claims for the 2012 - 2013 policy term. The Conference has been with Mercer Insurance Company for most of its coverage since 2004, and has an overall loss ratio of 80%. The Board of Trustees believes the long term relationship with Mercer, and Sovereign's negotiations on our behalf, allowed the Conference to avoid a steep premium increase or an outright non-renewal of insurance. In 2013, the wind damage deductible was increased from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for 98 churches that fall into the insurers wind hazard zone. Most carriers are now imposing percentage deductibles for wind zones, such as 3% of insured values, so the deductible increase is the better option for the Conference. In the event of a wind loss, the Board of Trustees intends to cover the increased wind damage deductible for affected churches from its surplus funds. The insurer continues to cover up to 25% more than the declared property value of any church, providing a level of protection from unexpectedly high damage reconstruction costs. Mercer has re-inspected and re-appraised all Conference owned properties.

Workers' Compensation:

The Workers' Compensation coverage is with Church Mutual Insurance Company effective December 1, 2013. Workers' Compensation premiums were increased from \$418,052 to \$629,426 due to a statewide rate increase in New Jersey, adverse claims development, and an experience modification factor increase.

Automobile Insurance:

The Board of Trustees continues to make available a voluntary automobile insurance program for church-owned vehicles. The 2016 premium cost is just under 1% than in 2015. Each church has access to this insurance program and pays the premium cost for any vehicle insured.

Claims Experience:

As previously noted, the Conference loss ratio was very unfavorable for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 policy years due to several large loss events. The Board of Trustees believes Mercer Insurance understands well the nature of the GNJAC loss exposures and reacted in good faith with the 2016 renewal after those three consecutive unprofitable years. However, if losses continue in this fashion they could negatively impact the overall cost of insurance; our current three year loss ratio with Mercer is 82%.

Large Losses:

The unfavorable loss experience of those three years were driven by large losses each year. In 2011 the Conference sustained nearly \$900,000 in Hurricane Irene claims from 66 churches and a fire loss totaling over \$2 million. Super storm Sandy losses in 2012 totaled \$1.8 million from damages to 134 churches. In 2013 \$4.2 million in losses from two workers' compensation claims were sustained.

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Parity Implementation:

The Parity Implementation Plan approved at the 2007 Annual Conference session continues to be implemented according to the original plan. In 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and again for 2016, the Board of Trustees has funded parity relief from Board of Trustee's fund balances.

Surplus:

The Board of Trustees endeavors to complete each policy year with a positive fund balance. The accumulated surplus is used to cover uncollectible premiums, fund cash flow in order to pay insurers timely, pay deductible differentials, and fund parity relief. Surplus is also potentially needed to offset future rate increases and uninsured/underinsured defense costs and losses as prescribed by the Cabinet.

The Board of Trustees believes that it is crucial to maintain the surplus position given the adverse claim experience of the past three years. The Board anticipates no addition to the surplus position in 2016.

Summary:

The Board of Trustees encourages each church to take advantage of the assistance available through Sovereign Insurance (800-222-4478), the Conference insurance program's broker. The Conference insurance program does not include flood insurance. We remind churches, particularly those located in a flood zone, of the need to purchase flood insurance; Sovereign Insurance is prepared to help with that process.

Rev. Clifford Still, President

COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

"To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice." Proverbs 21:3

At outset, I would like to thank the members of the Greater New Jersey Commission of Religion and Race (GNJCORR) and the members of the GNJ CORR Monitoring /Advisory Team for their work and valuable contributions to this ministry. GNJ CORR is called to engage in activities consistent with role of the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR). "GCORR is the core agency within the United Methodist Church tasked with empowering the Church to pursue racial equity and cultural competency to build a stronger, more vibrant UMC." Similarly, GNJ CORR is charged with this same task in the Greater New Jersey Conference (GNJ). By promoting full and equal participation of the racial and ethnic constituency in the total life and mission of the church, GNJ CORR seeks to empower clergy and laity to develop transformational leaders and vital congregations.

In 2015, GNJ CORR continued with the goals of 1. Providing resources and training; and 2. Supporting and providing programs of cultural competency, racial justice and reconciliation. Specifically, the 2015 activities were as follow:

Resources and training

- GNJ CORR is working to develop collaborative solutions for presenting "The Conversation About Race" for clergy and laity. We entered a conversation with Drew Theological School to have "The Conversation About Race" hosted at Drew thereby allowing seminarians and other members of the Drew Community to benefit from "The Conversation About Race".
- GNJ CORR is supportive of Bishop Schol's development of the 10-year Cultural Competency Plan, as well as the Bishop's plan for repentance and reconciliation for the African Americans who remained in the United Methodist Church. We encourage building a foundation of information and education about the historical, legal, financial, religious and socio-political context of race, racism and racialized systems of oppression and exclusion. Acknowledging that we do not live in a post-racial or colorblind America, repentance and reconciliation is necessary to build a community of faith that works diligently towards the dismantling of racism in GNJ, the United Methodist Church and in this country, thereby allowing all of God's children access and equity.
- GNJ CORR worked with The Board of Church and Society and the Commission on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relationships to sponsor a dessert event in which Katey Zeh, Project Director, Healthy Families, Healthy Planet of the General Board of Church and Society was the keynote speaker. She addressed the topic of "Building Multicultural, Ecumenical Partnerships for Global Health"

Supporting and providing programs of cultural competency, racial justice and reconciliation

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- GNJ CORR works collaboratively with the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) in the area of Fighting Mass Incarceration. In addition to advocacy, GNJ provides Healing Communities Restorative Justice training for individuals and congregations interested in working with people who are leaving prison. As a follow-up to the 2015 Healing Communities training, GNJ CORR trained an additional twenty-four people including three people who were trained as Healing Communities' trainers: The Reverends Lourdes Magalhaes, Denise M. Wooten-Troutman and Vanessa M. Wilson. The Reverend Drs. Sonia King and Brian Jackson from the Baltimore Washington Conference conducted the training. The training equipped members of congregations with to work with "returning citizens", those people who are returning from incarceration. The training was sponsored by GNJ CORR, GBCS, The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) and Rutgers University School of Law that provided the training site. GNJ CORR continues to engage in legislative advocacy along with other agencies and organizations in this area.
- Rev. Wilson represented GNJ CORR at Senator Lesniak's Roundtable discussion concerning solitary confinement.

GNJ CORR looks forward to continuing to serve GNJ through training, consultation, research and advocacy to empower clergy and laity to be able to be an effective witness for Christ in a diverse world.

Respectfully submitted,

The Reverend Vanessa M. Wilson, J.D.

Chair, Greater New Jersey Commission on Religion and Race, on behalf of the commission

COMMISSION FOR THE SMALL MEMBERSHIP CHURCH

This Commission was approved by the GNJ Annual Conference and organized in 2015. Responsibility of the Commission is to be in harmony with the Conference mission and Strategic Plan. The Commission will focus on helping the small membership church to realize its full potential through providing resources, support and encouragement to become vital congregations. The goal of the Commission is to focus on equipping, developing and strengthening clergy and laity to become effective leaders. In order to meet this goal, the following objectives have been established:

- a) To define and determine the demographics what is a small membership church with regard to size, and location urban, suburban, rural; Is the congregation older? Declining? Stable?
- b) To advocate and support small membership churches throughout the Conference by providing resources and people that will assist churches to grow as vital congregations
- c) To help small churches determine mission objectives that will help them to connect and serve their communities.
- d) To center on worship as one of the markers of a vital congregation.
- e) To provide opportunities for training, coaching and educating the leadership of the church.
- f) To find funding that can be used to help meet the goals and objectives.

Small Membership Commission is an important ministry of the Annual Conference. As all churches' mission is to make disciples. A small membership congregation is more than numbers, although size does count. The Commission will assist small churches to pursue their mission, vision and any challenges they may have in becoming vital congregations.

In His Grip,

Millie Grey, Chair

Commission for the Small Membership Church

COMMISSION FOR THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN (COSROW)

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people (1Timothy 4:9-10a)

COSROW, is the Annual Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women, that is made up of women and men, laity and clergy who are dedicated to advocate the full and equal participation and equipping of women as transformational leaders in the total life of the church to make a difference in the vitality of our conference and its local churches. The mission of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women is to challenge The United Methodist Church at all levels to work for full and equal participation of women in the total life of the denomination, including ordination of women, equal access to policy-making and recognition that Jesus Christ calls men and women alike to salvation, liberation, discipleship and service in church and society. It is with great joy that I have been able to serve continually with dedicated team members throughout this past year. COSROW in the Greater New Jersey Conference carried out its purpose through the following projects: (1) **Helena Alter Davission Award:** We developed a new award and awarded Rev. Dr. Jusun Kwak as its first recipient at the 2015 Annual Conference. We are honored to award Rev. Patricia L. L. Bruger in 2016 to affirm her courageous and transformational

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leadership. (2) **Leadership Development:** Four clergy members attended Do No Harm Leadership Training “Best Practices for Health, Accountability and Wholeness.” (3) **Sexual Ethics Training/Workshop** on Thursday, April 14: Its goals are to raise awareness of sexual ethics and issues, prevent sexual abuse, promote healthy boundaries, and bring about justice and healing. (4) **Response Team training:** Seven clergy members received training to support others in moving forward in healing and to provide education to help others understand the nature of sexual misconduct by a faith leader. (5) **Display Table at the Annual Conference** to promote our ministry and provide resources for our mission goals. Lastly, I would like to give thanks to our members for their faithful service: Sonia Cancel, Maxine Harris, Gilbert Morris, Diane Pacione, Iraida Ruiz De Porras, Marcia Roebuck, Yoomi Yi, Evan Rohrs-Dodge, and Beth Caulfield, who is a Conference liaison.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Ryoo, Chair

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Officers of the Board are: Chairperson – Rev. Clifford Still; Vice-Chairperson – Rev. James Ryoo; Secretary – MaryBeth Scherer. The following Trustees serve as liaisons to the properties for which the Board is responsible: Ed Bowen, Vicci Hahn, Rev. Hosuk Chung, Judy Hopkins, Jack Green, Rev. Peter Broomall, Rev. David Lehmkuhl, Rev. Rupert Hall, Tracy Estes.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance/care of the following properties: the Episcopal residence, nine District parsonages, the previous Palisades District parsonage situated in Harrington Park, NJ, the building in Paterson, NJ, as well as the Conference Office building. Additionally, they oversee the actions needed to be taken in reference to churches and parsonages that have been closed, representative of formal action taken at prior Annual Conferences. Seven cemeteries are also under the care of Trustees.

Some items of note as a result of Trustee action taken during the 2016 Conference Year:

- In response to action taken at the 2013 Annual Conference, the Trustees have begun construction of the new Conference office building on the two acre lot in Neptune, NJ. Expected date of occupancy is early 2016. The present Conference office is listed for sale and is under contract with a tentative closing date of 3/31/16.

The Trustees are privileged to work with, and receive the cooperation of, many individuals and groups throughout the Conference. The counsel which is offered to the Board from Conference Chancellors Lynn Catterson, Esq. and Sanford Brown, Esq. is invaluable. John Cardillo, Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, serves as Treasurer of the Board and Alexa Taylor, Benefits Services Manager, serves as staff liaison to the Board. As a result of their guidance and expertise in reference to overall financial resources of the GNJAC and specifically the funds which the Board oversees, the Trustees are better equipped to prioritize and responsibly address the needs of the various properties. Likewise, the work of the Board has been enhanced this year with the presence of The Rev. Wayne Plumstead as Cabinet liaison. His dedication, leadership and interest in the matters of the Trustees, particularly as they interface with the Conference in general, is very much appreciated. The Conference Trustees are also grateful for the opportunity to work more closely with Bishop Schol and the Cabinet during the course of this Conference year.

Rev. Cliff Still, President

UNITED METHODIST STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Vision: We see congregations and conference mission organizations experiencing the joy of generosity and the excitement of increased financial resources to make new disciples, provide inspiring worship, grow faith groups and engage disciples in community mission.

Mission: The Foundation increases disciple making, congregational vitality and community mission engagement by assisting congregations and mission organizations to grow financial assets through stewardship education and investment management.

Officers of the Board: President – Edward N. Bowen, Jr. (laity), Vice President – Sue Goodman (laity), Secretary – William Markert (laity), Treasurer – John Cardillo (conference staff)

Board Members: Rev. Robert Costello, Rev. Richard Hendrickson, Rev. David Mertz, Rev. Bruce Quigley, Jay Gerken (laity), Vasanth Victor (laity)

Brief History:

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- Created in 1992 by action of the 135th Session of the Northern Annual Conference
- First Investment was made by the Conference
- In 2000 became the UMF of Greater NJ after the merger of the Southern & Northern Conferences
- Currently Invested: \$6.7 million

Developments in 2015:

- The United Methodist Foundation changed its name to The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey to more accurately reflect its new direction. Rev. Richard Hendrickson was named the Executive Director of the Foundation. Rich fills the long waited and much needed position to provide daily management of the Foundation's stewardship education and investment management activities.
- Jay Gerken and Vasanth Victor, both laity, joined the foundation to add needed strengths in the areas of financial investment and marketing skills.

Plans & Goals for 2016:

The Foundation is developing marketing and communication plans to educate the churches of the conference as to the resources and capabilities of the Foundation. The Foundation should be considered the "go to source" for all stewardship education and investment management needs of the churches of the conference. The Foundation seeks to grow the investment to over \$15 million in the short term. This will be accomplished by initiating accounts with several local churches that are already in the planning stages.

Plans for further growth will be developed and implemented as the Foundation continues to mature. Now that a solid board and daily management structure are in place the Foundation will strengthen a communication plan and will be rolling out program assistance to all churches.

Respectfully submitted:
Edward N. Bowen, Jr.

UNITED METHODIST HOMES OF NEW JERSEY

Since the United Methodist Homes of New Jersey (UMHNJ) board of directors approved the Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017, we have done much and published this progress in the last two annual reports. The theme for our fiscal year 2015 annual report, Share the Magic of UMH, continues to chart that journey.

With Alliance Rehab, Bristol Glen and The Shores at Wesley Manor implemented SeniorFITness, a venture which supports a longstanding priority — improving resident function, quality-of-life and independence. Led by professional exercise physiologists, the multidisciplinary program, designed to be both fun and functional for older adults, improves strength, balance, mobility and mental well-being through a wide assortment of activities. As residents age, improving balance is one of the keys to preventing falls.

A significant step toward the Strategic Plan's expansion of Home and Community Based Services occurred in June 2015 with the launching of The Arms Café at Wesleyan Arms. They have partnered with Home Helpers of Monmouth County and the Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey to promote living and learning for the area's older adults. PineRidge of Montclair's resource hub and meeting place, Senior Space, successfully continues to offer weekly social interaction, physical exercise and lifelong learning at the Montclair Public Library.

As both hubs engage into and with their local communities, the varied calendars include: chair yoga or Zumba®, art, technology, reading and book club discussions, meeting new friends, walking groups, finding information, enjoying the company of others, and more. Resource coordinators offer information about elder care to individuals and their families. This allows access to important resources to successfully age in place at home: meals, home care, tele-health, and chore, social and transportation connections.

Our full-service communities continue to transition from a medical model in healthcare to household models, creating environments where residents can live fulfilling, meaningful and self-directed lives. The Shores at Wesley Manor has developed three neighborhoods of approximately 20 residents each. These establish a person-centered model of caring for residents, giving them greater control over their daily routines. We invested almost two years bringing key stakeholders together to learn about and create the model. Conceptual plans of similar scope are in the works for Collingswood, followed by Bristol Glen and then Pitman.

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As planned and in harmony with Service Expansion, The Shores at Wesley Manor opened six hospice-dedicated apartments in April 2015. Located in a private assisted living neighborhood, each one-bedroom apartment has been custom designed for individuals facing terminal illness that no longer responds to curative treatment. The expertise of the multi-disciplinary hospice team includes advanced, traditional and alternative therapies; 24-hour nursing oversight; medication management; certified caregivers; emotional and spiritual support; personal services; and palliative care for symptom management and pain control. Welcoming gathering spaces for families and friends complement a nurturing atmosphere.

We refreshed our mission, vision and values statements and celebrated Commissioning Services for our executive directors and housing administrators. This focus on our Wesleyan Christian values segued into Missioning Services for all associates at each community. They honored associates and their call by God to a ministry of caregiving and affirmed the important impact associates make using their unique gifts and embracing our core values of compassion, respect, stewardship and service. Additionally, Spiritual Care Teams and local Mission Teams have been formed to develop creative ideas for celebrating the Homes' mission and values in the future.

United Methodist Homes concluded fiscal year 2015 with an overall increase in net 1 assets. We completed a refinancing of debt in October which reduced the amount of interest expense that UMHNJ must pay on our outstanding debt and this resulted in a large decrease in interest expense in 2015. Therefore, through this positive stewardship, we are realizing savings and able to retain more of our cash for other ministry purposes. This promotes goals under the Strategic Plan's mandate to Strengthen the Financial Position of the Ministry.

Through the analysis of hospital discharge documentation, all of the full-service communities have created a specialty clinical niche within their respective healthcare centers. Bristol Glen offers a pulmonary specialty while The Shores focuses on cardiac rehabilitation. This initiative has effectively aligned us with several hospitals for stronger referrals and consistency of clinical care as people move from hospital to home.

As accountable care organizations and bundled payments have surfaced as key strategies of the federal government to control the cost and quality of healthcare, our ability to reduce hospital readmission rates and track key clinical performance metrics have proved invaluable. This is critically important for our future and will distinguish UMHNJ in the marketplace. We continue conversations with several accountable care organizations and major insurance companies.

To advance the Strategic Plan's mandate to strengthen the Organizational Human Capital, considerable time has been devoted to developing foundational human resources policies and best associate relations practices, including the Fair Treatment Process. Consistent with those outcomes, we issued an Associate Resource Guide. The recruitment, hiring and on-boarding of new talent now aligns with the organizational values. Also, within human resources and aligned with Integrating the UMHNJ Mission into the Fabric of the Ministry, we are assimilating our values into the organizational job descriptions and reinventing the performance evaluation process. In order to make decisions consistent with our organizational values, we are creating a Wesleyan decision-making model.

Share the Magic of UMH, a daylong event filled with magic, music, information and inspiration, occurred in May 2015. The day held some very serious purposes: bringing together associates who work in eleven unique locations; affirming and acknowledging organization-wide, local site, and individual accomplishments; giving a status report on the Homes; viewing videos featuring the compassionate relationships between associates and residents; and inspiring and motivating staff. Four associates received awards as determined by nominations through an interdisciplinary Awards Committee.

United Methodist Homes of New Jersey is united by our commitment to a noble mission and common purpose. Collectively, we have moved our mission and agenda forward with your help. We do this work for the love of people and for the ways in which our efforts improve the human condition. We do it for our love of Newton, East Orange, Montclair, Neptune, Plainfield, Red Bank, Ocean Grove, Ocean City, Collingswood, and Pitman. And we do it for the love of residents who have entrusted their housing and care needs to us for over 108 years.

While much work remains toward the Strategic Plan's initiatives, we will continue to embrace omnipresent change and grow. We thank you for your many demonstrations of love, energy, passion, support, and faithfulness, especially to the Fellowship Fund, the cornerstone of our charitable mission. God bless you and the role you play facilitating United Methodist Homes' abundant life.

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United Methodist Homes United Methodist Homes Foundation United Methodist Homes

Virginia Samuel Cetuk
Chair, Board of Directors Chair
United Methodist Homes

Frank Kardashian
Chair, Board of Trustees
United Methodist Homes
Foundation

Lawrence D. Carlson
President & CEO
United Methodist Homes

UNITED METHODIST MEN

Men – according to the General Commission of Methodist Men in Nashville we are struggling. Fewer churches are renewing their charters or becoming chartered for the first time. Thank you for those churches that have been and continue to be chartered.

Reasons given for not chartering from our own churches are:

- \$80.00 annual fee is too high
- What are we getting for being chartered
- Our men's group has folded
- Pastor does not support the men
- Only have age 60 and above attending our men's group

Ok, enough about reasons why are churches are not participating with the General Commission of Methodist Men.

- \$80.00 is not a lot of money – look how much you spend on sporting events, eating out, movies, coffee, etc. - what do we get - personal enjoyment or full from eating
- Please look at the UMM General Commission web site www.gcumm.org to see what your \$80.00 supports.

If your men's group has folded why not consider meeting quarterly with another church or two. There are many churches like yours that have a desire to have men get together, but are small in numbers. Try it. In Matthew 18:20 we read "For where 2 or more are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them".

Pastors' not supporting the men of your church is only an excuse. Pray about it and talk to the Pastor why he or she does not support United Methodist Men. Be strong and gather together in the name of Jesus Christ for fellowship, devotion, prayer, sharing and missions.

Younger men not coming to church men's events is certainly an issue. Our young men today are so stretched with work, their families, sports, etc. These men do not want to sit through a meeting. How can we get them involved in men's ministry? This is your challenge. This is our challenge. Please forward to me walkerrn@comcast.net if your church is reaching out to this age group.

Getting together for a conference men's gathering has been difficult. Men do not want to travel far from home for a men's event. Our conference has now grouped our 9 districts into 3 regions. In 2016 & 2017 there will be regional gatherings for the United Methodist Men, Having 3 gatherings travel time will be less and participation should be greater.

Men let us continue to witness for Christ and to tell others what God has done for us. We do not need a formal setting or a soap box to do this. Opportunities to do this can arise any time if we are alert to them.

In Luke we read "Good people do good things because of the good in their hearts". Please send me what good things are occurring with the men in your church so they can be shared with other churches.

Thank you for what you are doing in your local church, community, family, district and conference.

Submitted by Rick Walker, President
GNJ United Methodist Men

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women continue to fight for the rights of women, children and youth. We practice Faith, Hope and Love in action. This includes our support for social actions causes. We continue to help women who are victims of domestic violence,

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and those forced into human trafficking. We fight for the rights of women and children being held in our immigration detention centers and the need for legal representation to keep families together.

We continue to acknowledge racial justice issues. Many of us traveled to Blackstone, VA , where nine conferences attended a Charter for Racial Justice seminar. We discussed issues concerning the United Methodist Women. Our delegates for General Conference and our Bishop received information expressing our concerns for racial justice. A committee was created to become involved with our state legislators to work with the United Methodist Women and its social action issues.

The United Methodist Women have concerns about those affected by mass incarceration and provide support for those victims who are returning back into society. We also are fighting for providing equal pay for women and supporting the working poor. This includes petitioning major food chains and restaurants to practice fair labor laws for migrant workers and their families.

A campaign was launched with The League of Women's Voters to register our youth, and seniors in assisted living facilities. It is important to document addresses changes for absentee ballots and provide the opportunity to vote during the upcoming presidential elections.

Environmental justices are another form of support to save our environment with its climate changes. This is one of the studies being presented this year at Mission "U." Our 2015 UMW spring meetings addressed some of these issues. We had a program on "Going Green" and " Living after Super Storm Sandy." We learned how to prepare our own natural cleaning products such as all-purpose cleaner, furniture polish and laundry soap. Then we discussed how NJ disposed of the trash accumulated from the homes destroyed by Sandy. This included cleaning up the debris from beaches and the back bays from the flooding. Our other environmental event included "Saving the Bees." Our bees are being destroyed by the use of GMO's. This is the use of genetically altered seeds which affect the bees and destroy their hives. Bees are an important part of our food chain in pollinating our crops and fruit trees.

2015 brought awareness to our sisters of different cultures and race. Our Korean and Hispanic language coordinator and Conference presidents gathered in Nashville, TN for " VOICES," a seminar presented by UMW National. We discussed topics on how to be more inclusive with our Korean and Hispanic sisters. Also we discussed choosing your delegates for General Conference and to keep the decisions in prayer.

Mission "U" / Cooperative School of Christian Mission theme for 2015 was "In Christ a new creation!" 2 Corinthians 5:17b. This again included three- day weekend studies at Georgian Court University, Lakewood, NJ. Saturday included a one- day school experience. The study themes were Created for Happiness, Latin America: People and Faith, The Church and People with Disabilities. The Conference study session was The Church, Policing and The New Jim Crow. Classes were provided in Korean and Spanish for our Korean and Hispanic United Methodist Women. We also included programs for our children and youth. This year our worship services were held in Korean and Spanish with translation in English. This was a new experience and was well received. Our love offering supported The Amistad After School Program. Our ingathering included collecting can goods for the Food Bank of New Jersey.

Our fall meeting involved speakers Deaconess Molly Vickery and Rev. Vanessa Wilson who brought us information and biblical support in Maternal Child Health issues. Music was provided by Grace Pugh -Hubbard. Our ingathering collected 124 layette kits and extra supplies with funding for shipping and handling were sent to The Northfield Hub for UMCOR distribution.

The Greater New Jersey United Methodist Women sent representatives to United Nations Seminar supporting twenty years of addressing women's issues around the world. Our ladies spent time discussing racial justice issues. Also they addressed the abuse of women and promoting improving self -esteem and education for women with our global missionaries.

Several of our women also attended the United Methodist Women National Seminar in Chicago, IL. The theme was Interrupting Indifference: Jesus Justice and Joy. The National Seminar equipped and empowered its participants to engage leaders for social justice by practicing skills and tools to respond to current social issues.

Through the participation in the global ministries for the church the United Methodist Women continue to practice Faith, Hope and Love in Action.

Blessings,
Marilyn Powell
GNJUMC, President

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Property & Liability Insurance – 12/31/2015				
Balance Forward		1,083,384		
Receipts:				
Interest Income	1,799			
Premiums from Churches	2,878,178			
Worker's Compensation	529,655			
Prior Year Receipts	171,215			
	3,580,847			
Disbursements:				
Insurance Premiums	3,323,706			
Auto Insurance	17,157			
Claim Deductibles	51,020			
Strategic Transformation Grants	4,151			
Worker's Compensation	436,959			
Salary	40,719			
Other Expenses	77,513			
	3,951,225			
Change in Operation		(370,378)		
Ending Balance 12/31/15		713,006		
Ending Balance as of 12/31/15 is for Reserves for Uncollectible Premiums.				

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Health Insurance Accounts - Greater NJ Annual Conference

	12/31/2014	12/31/2015	Variance
<u>Assets</u>			
Health Insurance Investments-BOA	7,072,845	4,139,810	(2,933,035)
A/R-GNJAC	1,894,273	1,503,867	(390,406)
Mortgage Receivable-CBOPHB	0	3,340,000	3,340,000
Total Assets	8,967,118	8,983,677	16,559
<u>Liabilities</u>			
Post Retirement Benefits	59,970,551	51,687,699	(8,282,852)
Total Liabilities	59,970,551	51,687,699	(8,282,852)
Actives Fund			
Balance Forward	11,675	16,521	4,846
(Receipts)			
Billing Non-Annuitants	4,782,382	4,743,577	(38,805)
Dist. Supt. & Staff Premiums	543,542	491,250	(52,292)
Staff Family Premiums	0	0	0
2% of Sal. Contrib.W/H fr Staff&DS's	39,509	38,705	(804)
Incapacity from 127	902,649	882,584	(20,065)
Transfer from 127 Subsidy	483,000	500,000	17,000
Total Receipts	6,751,082	6,656,116	(94,966)
(Disbursements)			
Non- Annuitants Premium	6,429,138	6,353,603	(75,535)
Consulting Fee	0	0	0
Other Expense	0	0	0
Transfer 2% Pastor Salary Contribution	277,889	276,026	(1,863)
Transfer 2% Staff Salary Contribution	39,210	37,544	(1,666)
Total Disbursements	6,746,237	6,667,173	(79,064)
Receipts less Disbursements	4,845	(11,057)	(15,902)
Balance	16,520	5,464	(11,056)
ANNUITANTS Fund			
Balance Forward	0	0	0
(Receipts)			
Shared Ministries for Annuitants	2,365,025	1,908,900	(456,125)
Billing for Annuitants over 65	68,138	44,522	(23,616)
Billing for Annuitants under 65	56,380	50,152	(6,228)
Medicare	177,627	0	(177,627)
2% Salary Funds Reserve Transfer	273,128	467,586	194,458
Transfer from 127 Subsidy	252,000	0	(252,000)
Total Receipts	3,192,298	2,471,160	(721,138)
(Disbursements)			
Blue Cross - Premium Expense	2,969,137	2,238,966	(730,171)
Administration Expense	19,667	18,735	(932)
Staff Expense	104,054	164,074	60,020
CBO – Salary	25,220	26,205	985
Adoption Support/ Refunds	0	0	0
Consulting Agency Fee	74,220	23,180	(51,040)
Total Disbursements	3,192,298	2,471,160	(721,138)
Receipts less Disbursements	0	0	0
Balance	0	0	0

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Reserve Fund for Retiree Health Ins.			
Balance Forward	7,792,802	8,929,812	1,137,010
(Receipts)			
Centenary Fund Additional Contribution	513,591	539,271	25,680
Transfer 2% Pastor Salary Contribution	277,889	276,026	(1,863)
Transfer 2% Staff Salary Contribution	39,210	37,544	(1,666)
Investment Income	90,366	15,337	(75,029)
Misc Income	2,867,876	2,187,026	(680,850)
Total Receipts	3,788,932	3,055,204	(733,728)
(Disbursements)			
Transfer to Annuitants	525,128	467,586	(57,542)
Transfer to Non Annuitants	483,000	500,000	17,000
Dividend Expense	0	703,025	703,025
Strategic Transformation Grants	116,280	78,682	(37,598)
GNJAC Settlement / Mortgage Subsidy	324,865	195,005	(129,860)
Transfer to Annuitants Incapacity	902,649	882,584	(20,065)
Transfer to Reserve	300,000	200,000	(100,000)
Total Disbursements	2,651,922	3,026,882	374,960
Receipts - Disbursements	1,137,010	28,322	(1,108,688)
Balance	8,929,812	8,958,134	28,322
DENTAL Fund Balance Forward			
	14,441	20,784	6,343
Billing for Dental Insurance	78,601	72,861	(5,740)
Dental Insurance Premiums	72,257	73,566	1,309
Receipts - Disbursements	6,344	(705)	(7,049)
Balance	20,785	20,079	(706)
Post Retirement Fund Balance Forward			
	(61,906,385)	(59,970,551)	1,935,834
Current Year Transactions	1,935,834	8,282,852	6,347,018
Balance	(59,970,551)	(51,687,699)	8,282,852
Interest Reserve Fund Balance Forward			
	0	0	0
Current Year Transactions	0	0	0
Balance	0	0	0
			0
Total Fund Balance	(51,003,434)	(42,704,022)	8,299,412

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Pension Accounts - Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

	12/31/14	12/31/15	Variance
<u>ASSETS</u>			
A/R-GNJAC	1,012,807	348,619	(664,188)
GBOP Deposit Account	1,246,811	1,521,338	274,527
Pension Investments-BOA	936,490	939,858	3,368
Accounts Receivable -GBOPHB	0	0	0
Total Assets	3,196,108	2,809,815	(386,293)

<u>LIABILITIES</u>			
Pension	0	0	0
Due to Conference	0	0	0
Total Liabilities	0	0	0

<u>General Fund</u>			
Balance Forward	3,629,895	3,196,108	(433,787)
<i>Receipts</i>			
Investment Income	37,710	3,368	(34,342)
GBOP Invest. Gain/(Loss)	12,200	(44,249)	(56,449)
GBOP Invest. Refund/Adj	0	1,209	1,209
GBOP CPP Premium Holiday	0	0	0
UM Publishing Income			0
Annual Conference Offering			0
Chartered Fund Income	1,322	612	(710)
Pre-Retirement Seminar Income	470	515	45
Total Receipts	51,702	(38,545)	(90,247)
<i>Disbursements</i>			
Global Pension Trust			
Pensions - Moving Expense Reimb	34,877	45,634	10,757
Grants/Relief	2,734	1,496	(1,238)
GNJAC -Settlement / Mortgage Subsidy	148,808	113,752	(35,056)
Pre-Retirement Seminar Expense			0
Strategic Transformation Grants	55,137	0	(55,137)
Staff Expense	173,092	128,548	(44,544)
CBO Salary Expense	25,220	26,205	985
Pension Adjustment Expense	0	0	0
Refunds	7,229	0	(7,229)
Operating Expenses	38,392	32,113	(6,279)
Total Disbursements	485,489	347,748	(137,741)
General Fund Balance	3,196,108	2,809,815	(386,293)
Receipts – Disbursements	(433,787)	(386,293)	47,494

<u>Current Service Fund</u>			
Balance Forward	0	0	0
<i>Receipts</i>			
General Board of Pension Income	1,967,861	2,018,996	51,135
Staff Premiums			0
Conference CRSP/ MPP Income	2,509,748	2,643,893	134,145
Conference CPP Income	577,556	590,356	12,800
Total Receipts	5,055,165	5,253,245	198,080
<i>Disbursements</i>			
Refunds/Adjustments			
Transfer to Fund 127 Retiree Health	1,989,332	2,149,227	159,895
Expense entry	1,784,928	1,814,785	29,857
GBOP Billing	1,280,905	1,289,233	8,328

REPORTS

Total Disbursements	5,055,165	5,253,245	198,080
Current Service Fund Balance	0	0	0
Receipts – Disbursements	0	0	0

Interest Reserve Fund		0	
Interest Reserve Fund Balance	0	0	0
0			
Total Fund Balance	3,196,108	2,809,815	(386,293)

2015 Receipts Comparison Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

	Fd #	Funds	2013			2014			2015		
			Budget	Dec YTD	%Budget	Budget	Dec YTD	%Budget	Budget	Dec YTD	%Budget
Shared Ministry Funds	100	DO, Clergy Sup., Admin	5,582,156	4,646,793	83.24%	5,890,456	4,989,578	84.71%	5,727,298	5,014,342	87.55%
	200	Admin. (Beginning 2005)	2,636,082	2,416,812	91.68%	3,077,536	2,806,347	91.19%	2,947,208	2,729,383	92.61%
	300	WorldService/Conf. Ben.	3,475,707	2,750,933	79.15%	3,498,839	2,909,309	83.15%	3,745,763	3,194,351	85.28%
	410	Black College	216,407	172,432	79.68%	216,512	179,375	82.85%	202,814	171,595	84.61%
	420	Africa University	48,420	40,858	84.38%	48,443	42,417	87.56%	45,383	39,369	86.75%
	430	Ministerial Education	542,572	423,998	78.15%	542,782	443,338	81.68%	508,422	424,310	83.46%
		Subtotal	12,501,344	10,451,826	83.61%	13,274,568	11,370,365	85.66%	13,176,888	11,573,351	87.83%
	Prior Yr. Shared Ministry		20,586			8,425			19,931		
Billing Funds		CRSP	3,198,781	2,953,946	92.35%	2,621,770	2,420,756	92.33%	2,594,175	2,488,714	95.93%
		2014/Prior Year CRSP	362,504	89,927		289,011	64,059		195,362	66,959	
		Prior Years CRSP	1,404,029	16,078		1,574,166	24,932		1,765,279	88,219	
		Total CRSP	4,965,315	3,059,951	61.63%	4,484,946	2,509,748	55.96%	4,554,816	2,643,893	58.05%
		Comp. Protection Plan	585,485	544,865	93.06%	590,639	558,717	94.60%	585,452	559,546	95.58%
		2014/Prior Year CPP	67,153	17,797		53,203	14,530		42,922	13,892	
		Prior Years CPP	317,390	6,844		339,013	4,310		372,875	16,919	
		Total CPP	970,027	569,506	58.71%	982,855	577,556	58.76%	1,001,249	590,357	58.96%
		Property/Liab. Insurance	2,834,348	2,590,636	91.40%	2,825,531	2,728,927	96.58%	3,056,080	2,878,178	94.18%
		2014/Prior Year P/L	268,856	59,632		246,307	54,670		245,787	73,140	
		Prior Years P/L Insurance	1,439,129	31,921		1,610,905	47,822		1,755,405	92,364	
		Total P/L Ins.	4,542,333	2,682,189	59.05%	4,682,743	2,831,419	60.46%	5,057,272	3,043,683	60.18%
		Health Insurance	4,861,555	4,559,691	93.79%	4,658,072	4,598,335	98.72%	4,276,240	4,227,385	98.86%
		2014/Prior Yr Health Ins	669,850	152,293		436,619	91,886		332,648	101,139	
		P/Ys Health Insurance	2,130,073	49,844		2,425,383	27,931		2,722,289	123,685	
		Total Health Ins.	7,661,479	4,761,827	62.15%	7,520,075	4,718,151	62.74%	7,331,177	4,452,209	60.73%
		Workers Comp Ins	475,275	455,400	95.82%	518,808	507,381	97.80%	536,164	529,655	98.79%
	2014 Workers Comp	20,707	5,891		19,650	6,030		8,799	-1,605		
	Prior Years Workers Comp	78,906	2,227		90,746	1,514		101,586	7,316		
	Total Workers Comp Ins	574,888	463,518	80.63%	629,204	514,924	81.84%	646,549	535,366	82.80%	
Total Shared Min. & Billing			31,215,386	22,009,403	70.51%	31,574,391	22,530,588	71.36%	31,767,951	22,858,789	71.96%
Special Giving			0	1,627,581		0	1,436,805		0	1,082,584	
GRAND TOTAL			31,215,386	23,636,983		31,574,391	23,967,393		31,767,951	23,941,373	