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Episcopal Address

The Why of GNJ

North Korea is testing missiles for nuclear war heads to eventually reach the United States. Leaders are using poisonous chemical weapons on their own people. There are rumors of war, talks of border walls, efforts to cut health care, churches are closing, our sons and daughters and grandchildren are addicted to heroin, and racism, xenophobia, classism and sexism are in our communities and congregations. The world needs the grace and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Gospel's message is as urgent today as at any other time in our history.

While some talk of the end times, which we have heard in every generation, others believe these are the times God has called you for, to be God's healing and redemptive love.

I rejoice that God's grace is at work through disciples of Jesus Christ who are stirring up faith, hope and justice in communities and in the church. Through the Holy Spirit, these disciples are transforming lives and making disciples. More often than not, we are finding these disciples in our most vital congregations. That's why we call and equip spiritual leaders to grow vital congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

We have amazing disciples who are stirring up faith, hope and justice in the community. Suzanne and Keith Dice of the Red Bank UMC started *The Backpack Crew* whose motto is, "it's hard to be awesome when you are hungry". Each Friday, The Backpack Crew delivers to schools 175 back packs filled with food for students who are on the breakfast and lunch program at school and who often do not have enough food on the weekend. They are working with church and community volunteers and they are inviting people to church through the ministry.

Abena Abusa, in addition to chairing the staff pastor relations committee at the New Brunswick Church, collaborates with 15 community organizations to host seminars and programs on immigration, homelessness and healthcare for the poor.

Kristen Skrobanek stirred up hope and justice through Trinity Church in Mullica Hill by starting *Your Place at the Table* to feed people. She has collaborated with a bank to offer budgeting classes, local farmers to provide fresh food and the Rotary Club to increase food contributions.

What do children walking home with backpacks or the homeless in New Brunswick or people who need a meal in Mullica Hill do when they see our disciples stirring up faith, hope and justice? I think in their own way, they say, REJOICE!

Rejoice! God is not done with us. God has a future with hope for us!

Rejoice

To rejoice is to recognize that God is in the mix, God is the author and creator of the church and every good work we do together. God has, is and will continue to guide our ministry and progress.

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice. We choose joy because happiness isn't enough. Happiness is dependent on an outside stimulus to generate good feelings within. Joy is rooted in a redeeming faith and eschatological hope, a future conviction that no matter how bad things seem, everything works for good for those who love God. —*Romans 8:28*

Happiness is breaking an attendance barrier on Easter Sunday morning. We feel a sense of accomplishment. Joy is the one family who comes back following Easter Sunday because the Holy Spirit stirred in their heart. They continue to come and go through a complete transformation of their faith, how they parent and how they engage in the world. The family decides to be baptized together. That's joy.

Joy is sustained by a hope that lives at the edges of faith that is rooted in the conviction that God's grace prevails, that love wins, that Jesus Christ makes all things new, that we will see the new city, the new Camden, the new Newark, the new Atlantic City, the new Jersey City, the new Trenton and every city, town and community in GNJ renewed, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared for you and for me. Rejoice! —*Revelation 21:21*

Rejoice in Our Progress through the Strategic Plan

God is doing a new thing through GNJ and we rejoice in the progress we are making. In 2014 we embarked on a bold strategic plan that said we are going to turn things around. We built on our past and moved to the edges of faith where today we are finding hope and joy. Since starting on the strategic ministry plan, just three short years ago, together:

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- We developed five new resources to accomplish the plan – Team Vital, Coaching, PaCE groups, the Laity Academy and Communities of Hope.
- We aligned our budget, staffing, ministries and superintending to focus on congregations and moved more energy and resources into the mission field.
- We increased the number of disciples in small groups from 43% to 79% in our congregations.
- We increased the number of disciples engaged in hands-on mission from 8% to 50%.
- We increased mission giving from \$349 per worshiper to \$356, that's a quarter more million dollars going to mission. Our churches raised \$5,452,346 million to combat malaria, rebuild homes and lives following Superstorm Sandy, and engage in mission through our congregations.
- We started 26 new faith communities.
- We grew vitality from 16% of our congregations being highly vital to 34%. Listen to this, we have also made significant progress in a new area of measurement that tests how well our congregations are doing on moving forward the five markers of vitality. Forty-four percent (44%) of our congregations are moving the markers forward. We have the third highest percentage in the United States. The turnaround is taking shape.

Rejoice for all God is doing in and through us. These numbers represent people, lives changed, disciples engaged and people served. We are about people and God's healing and redemptive grace for their lives.

Rejoice in our Commitment to Excellence

God's love is at work in and through us and others are noticing. Our Vital Mission Partner, A Future With Hope received the Innovative Program of the Year award from NJ VOAD. A Future with Hope has now repaired 256 homes, with 11,810 volunteers from 46 states and 3 countries and raised more than \$17 million dollars.

Our new MRC, The Mission and Resource Center won the New Good Neighbor Award from NJ Business and Industry Association and NJ Magazine. This award is for development projects that contribute to NJ's economic growth and are aesthetically beautiful. The MRC is becoming a resource being used by churches, Vital Mission Partners, regional ecumenical gatherings, community organizations, Drew School of Theology and the Northeastern Jurisdiction. More ministry, more service to the community and the MRC is saving us money and it is paid for. Now that's worth celebrating!

We do not go looking for awards, but we seek to serve God with excellence. Recently the denomination recognized serving God with excellence in our communications team who earned six awards. Our sister Vital Mission Partner, United Methodist Communities, formally United Methodist Homes, won four communications awards. That's 10 communications awards in GNJ. The most within the denomination.

It hasn't been easy, but we are experiencing joy in what God is doing through us. One of the places that has been hard is making new disciples or professions of faith. I am happy to report that two of our congregations are receiving The One Award from the General Board of Discipleship because they grew in the numbers of professions of faith.

The first is Emmaus Church led by Don McMahon. The congregation went from zero professions of faith to eight in 2016. The second is Panther Valley Church led by Ninabeth Metcalf. The congregation went from zero professions of faith to six in 2016.

These two churches are connecting more with the community, creating inspiring worship, developing youth and small group ministry, developing a culture of hope and inviting people to receive God's grace through Jesus Christ.

Please join me in congratulating and thanking Rev. Metcalf, Rev. McMahon and the laity for their leadership and commitment to making new disciples for the transformation of the world.

Rejoice! God is at work through GNJ.

Our Challenges

While we rejoice, we are not without our challenges. James said:

"When you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing." –James 2:1-2

While we have much to be joyful about, our congregations, world and denomination are experiencing challenges.

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Denominational Fear and GNJ Conviction

As a denomination, we are not of one mind about homosexuality. Some are saying we cannot stay united. We hear that we will divide. I disagree. The church has never fully agreed on anything. In the past we were divided over slavery, ordination of women, and segregation. United Methodists found a way to come back together.

What if this time we said, “We will not let our differences divide us but allow our common mission to guide us. Let’s model what it means to be diverse culturally, ethnically, geographically and theologically and guided by common mission.”

Let it begin with us. Let GNJ lead the way.

To do this we will need to move to the edges of our faith where hope and joy live.

I will be a bishop of the whole church. I will work to ensure people, ministries and congregations are not hurt as we move forward. While some talk of division, I intend to keep GNJ together as one conference. A place where orthodox, progressive and middle viewpoints can thrive and grow. Where liberals and conservatives can draw upon their rich understandings to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This will be a significant challenge. Let joy be our aim, not happiness, joy in diversity not happiness in uniformity.

If the denomination maintains its present policies, I want all our clergy to be pastoral as they serve their communities and unique contexts. I want all our congregations to live out their calling. Our unity will not be in a theology or polity but in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church – *to reach new generations of disciples and engage in transforming lives, communities and the world.*

If our denomination changes its polity, I will not make appointments to intentionally disrupt the practices and theologies of a congregation. I will not draw attention to our differences creating division in our congregations or GNJ, but call attention to how Jesus loves us even more because of our differences. Jesus gathered people who were different from one another and united them toward a Gospel vision of God’s reign. We can be diverse and thrive! We can be unique and work together toward a common mission! We can understand the scriptures differently and remain united in Christ Jesus. I rejoice in our diversity.

As I serve as bishop of the whole church, I ask you to serve with me as leaders and disciples for the whole church no matter our theological or political views. After all, when we worked on Sandy homes, no one asked us our view on LGBTQ people. No one asked us when we sent kids home with backpacks full of food our theological view point. Instead they pointed to the love we had for them and one another and thought, this is what companions of Jesus looks like.

Let unity in diversity begin with us. Let GNJ United Methodists lead the way.

World Challenges

I am deeply concerned about the geopolitical shifts in our nation and world and call all of us to a faithful and biblical response by the church. The scriptures have been clear from the beginning, we are called to welcome the stranger, the refugee and the immigrant. In a world where leaders engage in rhetoric that heightens conflict, we are called to stand firm in our values and engage in conversation that glorifies God and witnesses to the life of Jesus. In a world, whose aim is happiness through wealth, pleasure and consumption, we are called to move to the edges of our faith to choose joy, service and sharing.

The congregations that are bold in offering a more Christ-like way, will capture younger generations, deepen the faith of their disciples, and model for the world the first century church.

Let it begin with us. Let GNJ United Methodists lead the way.

Congregational Challenges

While we are witnessing renewed growth and vitality in many congregations, we also saw 301 churches decline in worship attendance and five churches discontinued or merged in 2016. Today we are 18 congregations fewer than five years ago. In 2013 we commissioned a study that said we would be 123 congregations fewer by 2030. Our challenge is the culture has changed and we are not adapting fast enough. We are not connecting with new and younger potential disciples of Jesus Christ.

It does not have to be this way. We do not have to follow the pack, we can change. We can connect with the people in the community. We can continue to create new worship and ministry experiences.

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The Greenhouse Church that we launched last year to connect with millennials is now worshipping 90 disciples in two sites. We can connect with new and younger generations to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Let it begin with us. Let GNJ United Methodists lead the way.

We rejoice with Paul in our challenges, knowing that challenges produce endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us. —*Romans 5:3-5*

Path Forward

The challenges seem daunting, but the path forward is clear, critical and doable. The path is not hard and it is not elaborate, it focuses on four pillars to support a growing GNJ mission: passionate faith, transformational leaders, vital mission congregations, and money.

Path Forward, Passionate Faith

Deep, passionate faith is the first of the four pillars to grow our mission. Passionate faith is a source of joy and it attracts new generations of believers. Passionate faith is contagious.

Sometimes things get in the way of our deep passionate faith. Emotion, for example can be dependent on outside stimulators – a fiery sermon, an upbeat song, or inspiring reading – then we are manufacturing faith that requires one inspirational moment after another. Think of Jesus' life or Paul's life, both exemplified deep faith but we read of only a few emotional experiences in their lives. Instead, their faith welled up from within.

Passionate faith welcomes wisdom and thinking. It harnesses both inspiration and knowledge. It is not reactive but deliberative — based in prayer, study and experience.

Passionate faith is enthusiastically living your faith every day — *enthusiastic, faithful, everyday!*

Passionate faith is nurtured, shaped and deepened through three key ministries of the church – worship, small groups and hands-on mission in the community. In fact, these three vitality markers increase disciples' participation in the other two vitality markers, generous giving and making new disciples. Focus on worship, small groups and hands-on mission and the rest will follow.

That's why we will continue to equip church leaders to lead worship, small groups and mission. Team Vital, Communities of Hope training and lay leadership development will all focus on developing passionate faith through these three markers of vitality.

Passion is also grown through young people. Their enthusiasm and youthfulness inspire faith in others. A group of GNJ leaders developed a comprehensive student ministry plan so that by 2027, GNJ will produce:

- A vibrant youth ministry in 60% of our congregations attracting 12 or more teenagers per church,
- An innovative campus ministry on 10 college campuses reaching more than 1,000 students a year,
- A 21st century premiere camping experience for students and
- An IGNITE experience that attracts 5,000 students annually.

I invite you to come along with us and create a *Next Generation Ministry* that will attract and make passionate student disciples of Jesus Christ.

Path Forward, Transformational Leadership

Leadership is the second pillar for our path forward. Leaders, both lay and clergy, set the pace, tone and direction for disciples and the congregation. GNJ's pacesetter leaders exhibit one or more of three types of leadership: *fruitful, transformational, and apostolic*.

We believe every leader can be **fruitful**, growing the health and vitality of the congregation. Fruitful lay and clergy leaders increase vitality by growing worship, small groups, hands-on mission, giving to mission and making new disciples.

Sheila Brown of Milton UMC is a fruitful leader. She first led the children's ministry, where the Sunday School and VBS have experienced growth and is one of the most vibrant children's ministries in the Skylands District. Sheila is now leading the

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evangelism ministry. She approaches ministry with a passion for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, and is a great equipper of others in leadership in her own congregation and throughout the district.

Luana Cook Scott through passion, strategic outreach and engaging laity has led Milford UMC to be highly vital in four years. They grew worship, small groups and community outreach and the congregation moved from 0% Shared Ministry giving to 100% in four years. There is movement from uncertainty to faithful response and engagement.

We believe that lay and clergy leadership can excel to be **transformational** leaders. Through the Holy Spirit, transformational leaders change lives and change the culture and attitude of the congregation. They lead the congregation to be more welcoming of all people, make new disciples and engage the congregation in ministry and mission with the people in the community.

Three years ago, Roebing UMC was on the verge of closing. That changed with the arrival of McWilliam Colon. Under his leadership, the average worship attendance went from 20 to 35 people, Shared Ministry and billings were paid in full in 2015 and 2016. The congregation began to reflect the diversity of the community. New programs were added that connected the church to the community, such as a food program, a music school, a blood drive and lots more. He is a transformational leader because he has changed how the church thinks about itself, mission and the community.

Haddon Heights UMC led by Ayn Masker, has grown from an average of 38 to 60 worshipers each week. They have explored new worship styles and services, and are connecting with the families of their preschool through the pastor's music lessons to the children in the school. The church has started a new worship service at a McDonald's. Ayn is a transformational leader because she is changing how people think about worship.

We believe there is potential for many of our leaders to be **apostolic**. These are mission driven leaders who find and make a way when others do not see a way forward. They multiply people, gifts and resources.

Peter, Paul, John Wesley, Francis Asbury, Harriett Tubman, Mary McCloud Bethune, Anna Howard Shaw, Henry Appenzeller, Pat Bruger and Wilbert Mitchell are apostolic leaders. When others did not see a way, they found a way. They created movements, organizations, ministries and systems to sustain and grow the mission.

GNJ leadership is committed to come alongside all willing and ready lay and clergy leaders to develop their gifts and potential to be a difference maker in the life of the church and community.

To strengthen lay leadership, we are in the process of creating a laity leadership development initiative that will bring all laity training under one umbrella and create a seamless program for laity development.

For clergy, we are creating a leadership development plan to assist clergy to be fruitful and to increase the number of transformational and apostolic leaders.

We are also committed to further develop local pastors. We are working with Drew School of Theology to develop local pastors training to strengthen and grow present and future local pastors so they do not have to travel 200 or more miles to attend classes.

GNJ leaders will be inter-culturally competent and a 10-year plan for developing intercultural competence among our lay and clergy leadership has been developed to guide us. Fruitful, transformational and apostolic leaders all desire to be better at understanding and connecting with different cultures.

Today I give thanks and rejoice for the leaders of GNJ. I find we have leaders who are highly committed, want to learn, build relationships and seek results. You collaborate and take more risks for the mission. GNJ leaders bring me joy and I am honored to serve with you. I thank God for you.

Path Forward, Vital Missional Congregations and Hope Centers

Vital congregations and mission centers are the third pillar. Vitality, growing the passion and fruitfulness of a congregation or mission center is life giving. Every time one congregation becomes healthier, all congregations become more vital. Let me illustrate:

Six years ago, Calvary Korean UMC was going through a very challenging time. They lost more than 60% of their membership. Today, they are one of the five fastest growing United Methodist Churches within the United States. It was not an easy

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turnaround. They had conflict. They had significant financial challenges. A newly appointed apostolic leader, Rev. Sang Won Doh got the congregation working together again. They built their small group ministry, refocused their mission in the community and around the world and connected with community. They started a new worship service for young adults and then built upon that and started a second site worshipping community. They have been a significant supporter of the Mission Fund and increased their Shared Ministry commitments, fulfilling 100% or \$114,593 in 2017. Calvary Korean UMC is a highly vital congregation that all of us can be proud of.

Vital congregations are the third pillar of our path forward. Through Calvary UMC and many other congregations, the witness and mission of GNJ is being strengthened. As you do your part in and through your congregation, collectively God's love heals lives and transforms the world through The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey.

Rejoice!

We are seeing more and more congregations develop their vitality by:

1. Making new passionate disciples.
2. Creating inspirational worship,
3. Forming faith through small groups,
4. Engaging the community in mission and
5. Giving generously to mission.

In addition to vital congregations we are developing Hope Centers. Hope Centers have robust outreach ministries for children and youth, and provide services to the community. By the end of this year we will have five Hope Centers and 12 by the end of 2018. We are also working with seven congregations to repurpose their property to be a worship center and community center to address the needs of the community. Our urban centers are leading the way in this effort. Jersey City and Atlantic City churches have started conversations about how to transform their property into hope. These preliminary plans create church space, day care, affordable housing, senior housing and retail and offices. For some this may be hard to grasp but for the congregations and community, it is hope for their future.

To grow more vital congregations and Hope Centers, we will continue to offer Team Vital and Communities of Hope training and assist congregations in learning from each other through Bright Spots ministry. Bright Spots are learning from congregations who are excelling in growing the five markers of vitality. Peer to peer or congregation to congregation learning is one of the most effective ways to grow vitality.

I thank God for all our congregations and rejoice in the congregations that are growing their vitality.

Path Forward, Money

Money is critical to our mission. While the church is consolidating, the mission need is growing. This consolidation has affected congregations' income. This is why the Council of Finance and Administration created a 2018 budget DECREASING the amount we apportion churches by \$894,542.

The Council on Finance and Administration changed the budget formula to a fixed percentage instead of a fluctuating amount that we apportion churches. The amount is 16.3% and CFA has also set a goal to decrease the percentage to 15.6% which is below the 2003 apportioned percentage.

I rejoice in the wisdom and leadership of CFA. I also call all of us to be more resilient. As the culture shifts, the church needs to identify how it will change to connect to make new generations of believers and regenerate itself.

While we are reducing the amount we apportion churches, we are developing other streams of income for the mission of GNJ. The increase of the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey from \$4 million to \$40 million and an anticipated \$42 million by the end of June is because more churches are investing through the Foundation. Thank you. This has allowed us to create a staff team that will work with congregations on fundraising and raise funds through foundations and individuals. We have set a goal for the Foundation to be more than \$100 million by 2022.

Two of our other nonprofit corporations, A Future With Hope and *Next Generation* Student Ministries, formally the GNJ Camping and Retreat Board, will raise money for the ministries they oversee. These two organizations and the Foundation will support GNJ administration, building and communications ministry through the use of shared resources and services. While we reduce the amount we apportion to churches for Shared Ministries, we are increasing other giving avenues so that we will not just sustain our mission; we will grow it. I rejoice in the visionary and innovate leadership who are creating the opportunity for a regenerative GNJ.

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Rejoice, God will See Us Through

We have great days ahead and we are engaged in a high-risk path that seeks to create a passionate church that is missionally engaged and reaches new generations of believers. It seeks new avenues to sustain the mission financially and to declare God is not finished with us yet!

It will take courage, collaboration and a focused determination to grow leadership, passionate disciples, vital congregations and money. We will choose risk over accepting the status quo, and learn through failure. We cannot tolerate trying to just maintain who we are, but accept that God is doing a new, big thing right here in Greater New Jersey.

Let United Methodists of GNJ lead the way.

I rejoice that God has entrusted us with the future of Christ's Church, that God has given us the minds, leadership, congregations, resources and rich cultural diversity for the journey. I rejoice that we have made strong progress on what we said we would do four years ago. I rejoice for this is God's time, this is GNJ's time, this is the church's time to be the difference.

Presented on May 22, 2017

John Schol, Bishop

A Future With Hope

A Future With Hope (AFWH) is a GNJ Vital Mission Partner working to extend our conference mission and ministry. Organized in 2012 to provide relief and recovery following Superstorm Sandy, AFWH has accomplished the following in support of this ministry.

- Disaster case management services provided to 452 families
- Repaired or built 254 homes
- Housed and utilized the skills of more than 11,000 volunteers from 36 states and Canada
- Raised more than \$16 million dollars toward Sandy recovery efforts

Currently there are an estimated 3,000 families who have not yet completed their Sandy recovery and AFWH is one of the last remaining ministries still available to support these families. Working collaboratively with three other community partners we recently received access to funds in excess of \$1.8 million dollars to bolster our generous UMCOR grant and donations received through the A Future With Hope Mission Campaign. We are blessed by the continued support of many GNJ churches who serve as volunteer host sites, organize and send volunteer teams, provide volunteer meals and offer generous financial support.

When organizing, AFWH also recognized the need, and set aside funds for, rebuilding communities through community development ministry. While disaster recovery continues, AFWH is also expanding into this new area of ministry focusing in three areas.

- Engaging congregations and communities in Communities of Hope training. Communities of Hope trains congregations and communities in strategic planning, community organizing, systemic change, and working inter culturally. At the end of the training, each Community of Hope team has a community strategic plan to guide its work.
- Developing, overseeing and resourcing Hope Centers. Hope Centers are congregations and community centers affiliated with GNJ that identify and provide needed services within a community.
- Leading community economic development projects that include housing development and repurposing church buildings.

To date eleven GNJ United Methodist churches have completed Communities of Hope Training and have been commissioned to carry out their strategic plan. In the area of Hope Center development, CAMP YDP continues a successful turnaround with outstanding growth from 30 to 110 students enrolled in just 11 months. Additional Hope Center exploration continues in eight communities including Paterson, Jersey City, North Hudson, Camden, Roebing, East Brunswick, Bridgeton and Atlantic City. Our near term goals for this area of ministry include Communities of Hope Training for an additional 15-20 congregations and the development of 5 to 10 Hope Centers.

A Future With Hope is exceedingly grateful to Bishop Schol for his vision to create a God-sized ministry to support not only Sandy Survivors but all those in need throughout New Jersey.

Submitted by:
Bobbie Ridgely
Executive Director

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Africa University

Africa University ended 2016 poised to celebrate its Silver Jubilee and eager to embrace new opportunities for transformative ministry over the next 25 years.

It is a great joy to recognize and thank the Greater New Jersey Conference for a 100 percent investment to the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment in 2016. All ten conferences in the Northeastern Jurisdiction led by example, giving to the AUF at 100 percent or higher for the second consecutive year. In 2016, the tremendous commitment to connectional giving and participation of local churches enabled 34 of the 56 United Methodist annual conferences in the United States — up from 32 in 2015 — to invest 100 percent or more of their asking to the AUF.

The university community acknowledges, with heartfelt appreciation, the many ways in which the Greater New Jersey Conference has been active, faithful, and generous in helping Africa University to realize its mission.

Through Africa University, the Greater New Jersey Conference helps young people to discover and sharpen their gifts for leadership. The dream of the global United Methodist Church is alive in the contributions of the university's 7,000+ graduates. More than 90 percent of these graduates are still in Africa, serving communities in 32 countries. Currently, more than two dozen Africa University graduates are missionaries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe, under the auspices of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. People who would otherwise be on the margins are actively bringing God's grace, peace and abundance to the lives of others.

Over the past year, your Africa University has continued to evolve and serve by:

- Restructuring its academic units in order to remain relevant and provide a broader-based education to meet new demands in the African workforce.
- Providing leadership formation experiences and learning for more than 1,400 students from 26 African countries. (*Contrary to the norm for African higher education institutions, women represented more than half of the student body.*)
- Generating new knowledge and capacity to support peacebuilding and to improve food security, human rights, and leadership for the African continent.

The ongoing support of the Greater New Jersey Conference is of vital importance to Africa University. As part of its observance of AU's 25th anniversary, we invite the individual members as well congregations and districts of the conference to celebrate Africa University. Engage in a season of daily prayer for Africa University. Join Africa University's honorary alumni association. Consider hosting a special "AU@25" event or Africa University Sunday in your local church or area. Use your event to increase awareness of Africa University's ministry and invite attendees to each give at least \$25 each in honor of the 25th anniversary.

Thank you for your unwavering response to the call to faith, hope, action and renewal in the world. We pray that blessings continue to abound for all who lead and serve in disciple-making ministry in the Greater New Jersey Conference.

Submitted by:

James H. Salley

Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement

Africa University Development Office, P O Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007

Tel: (615) 340-7438, jsalley@gbhem.org, www.support-africauniversity.org

Archives and History, Commission on

2016 was a fruitful year for the Commission on Archives and History (CAH) as we engaged in the ministry of memory. We equip clergy and lay leaders to strengthen our Wesleyan identity, as we fulfill our Disciplinary mission to identify, preserve and make available the historic record of ministry within GNJ. Highlights include:

Ancestry.com: Our GNJCAH page on Ancestry.com received a total of 481,790 hits between its inception in February 2016 and December 31, 2016. Our closed church vital statistics (births, baptisms, deaths, marriages, etc.) have been digitized, are now being searched on a daily basis and are available far beyond GNJ!

History Awards: We award the 2017 Robert B. Steelman Methodist History Award to the Friendship UMC in Monroeville, NJ, for submitting the best overall church history within GNJC this year. The Steelman Award is given annually to the local church that submits a history which best exemplifies an inclusive narrative on the life and ministry of the congregation from its beginnings to the present day. We congratulate Friendship UMC and especially commend Rick Krassow, Church Historian, for undertaking and completing an excellent church history. We award the 2017 Multi-Media Local Church History Award to Midvale United Methodist Church of Wanaque, NJ, which is recognized for submitting the best overall multi-media church history within GNJC. This is a special recognition, as this is the first-ever presentation of the Multi-Media Local Church History Award. We are excited to give that honor to Midvale UMC and commend Marie Mahler, Church Historian, for developing and

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submitting this unique local church history. We extend special thanks to each church and church historian who submitted publications for consideration this year. We are grateful for the high caliber of the histories we received.

Conference Historic Sites: We are presenting three nominations for Conference Historic Site status to be approved by vote of the 2017 Session of GNJAC. These three recommended sites are the St. John UMC in Fordville, NJ; Frankford Plains UMC in Frankford Plains, NJ and The Old Stone Church / St. Paul's United Methodist Church, in Nyack, NY (please see the individual recommendations for specific information about each church).

Archivist: Our volunteer archivist, Walt Jones answered 53 information requests ranging from membership, baptism, marriage, death, and local church information. He also worked with Ancestry.com to finish the digitization of closed local church records and make them available on the Ancestry website.

Speakers: We also supported local churches by providing speakers and attending celebrations. Our chairperson preached at Flanders UMC's 227th Anniversary Service and attended the 150th Anniversary celebration for Linden UMC. Another member spoke at both Flanders and Mendham UMCs. Our members remain available to support other congregations reflect on their Wesleyan identity and historic role within Methodist mission in GNJC.

NEJCAH: We continue to have a representative, Donald DeGroat, serving on the Northeast Jurisdiction Commission on Archives and History (NEJCAH) Executive Board, which gives GNJCAH a presence and leadership role on the jurisdictional commission. Additionally, four other commission members attended the 2016 NEJCAH Annual Meeting in Dover, Delaware in April of 2016, where our conference delegation actively participated in and supported the ministry of the Jurisdictional Commission.

Best Practices: Our recent publication, Celebrating the Ministry of the Delaware Conference, has been shared with other groups by Rev. Fred Day, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH), as a model for promoting their mission. Further, GNJCAH is still being utilized periodically as an example in the GCAH social media outlets. We are thus becoming known in our connectional circles as a leader in the field.

Digital Library: We began moving our digital library to Internet Archive (IA) website. IA is a free service that will allow us to post an unlimited amount of historical material on the internet. To date, all of our Historical Trail and Circuit Rider publications (SNJ & NNJ historical journals) have been uploaded to the IA website through the dedicated efforts of Mark Shenise. Moving our digital library to the IA website will significantly increase the volume of historical resources we are able to make available online without raising GNJC data rates.

Heroes of Faith: During the coming year, we plan to develop a series of short resources that tell the stories of our "Heroes of Faith." Our goal is to highlight inspirational faith stories, especially those of laity. As the project develops, we hope to highlight stories about vital ministry in our present and reinforce that preserving our history is simply about telling our story faith.

Hispanic/Latino Working Group: Our chair attended a GCAH conference led by the Committee on the Study of the History of Hispanic/Latino United Methodism held in October at Drew University in Madison, NJ. The agenda was to identify ongoing efforts to collect, preserve and publish the story of Hispanic/Latino ministries within NEJ and to develop strategies for strengthening those efforts. As a result, GNJCAH plans to partner with the GNJ Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministries to create a working group to craft strategies that will work within our conference.

Archival Depository: We provide for the safekeeping of the historical records of all closed churches within the bounds of our annual conference and its antecedents and for the retention of corporate records of conference boards, agencies and committees. Our collection is housed in a fire-safe and climate controlled archival depository located in the GCAH vault at Drew University in Madison, NJ. Our archives space is secured through a unique and cost effective rental agreement with GCAH, which insures the preservation of our historical records and models good stewardship by limiting the impact of archival costs on our shared ministry budget.

Resourcing: In addition to the items noted above, CAH continued to fulfill its Disciplinary mandate by posting resources on our CAH webpage on the GNJ website and by hoisting a display table at annual conference.

Collaboration: We co-sponsored a program entitled "Celebrating the Ministry of the Delaware Conference" on November 12th in collaboration with the Mt. Zion UMC in Lawnside, NJ and the GNJC Historical Society. Bishop Ernest S. Lyght spoke about the history and unique spiritual experience within the former segregated conference of African American churches within the boundaries of the present GNJC. He identified what African American Methodists both gained and lost when the Delaware Conference was integrated into the Caucasian SNJ & NNJ (predecessors to GNJ) Conferences. The local history tour focused on the historical significance of Lawnside and Mt. Zion UMC in the resistance to racial prejudice and the struggle for African American self-determination. The day was a success, with many laity expressing appreciation for us honoring an important part of their spiritual heritage. We were privileged to support Mt. Zion's ongoing effort to lift up the historical significance of their

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congregation's witness and mission, which includes leadership in the formation of the Underground Railroad, providing a safe haven for freed blacks and escaped slaves prior to and during the Civil War, and being a place of security and support for African Americans to this day. Many participants expressed that they found the day very moving. Several African American participants expressed appreciation that the program honored the uniqueness and vitality of the spiritual heritage in which they were raised, but had become distanced from due to the integration of their churches into the Caucasian church's structural culture. Others expressed gratitude for Bishop Lyght identifying how African Americans provided leadership and important social justice witness within the greater church, through resistance to racial prejudice and by modeling the role of women in lay leadership. One attendee even stated that the program helped her see that her community was not helpless but, in fact, spoke truth to power through their efforts to resist racism and embrace self-determination. Likewise, many Caucasian participants expressed a new level of awareness about how difficult the African American experience has been and gained greater sensitivity to how contemporary issues are experienced within the that community. All throughout the program was woven the power of faith to undergird and transform lives and the ongoing witness of the Methodist church, all be it imperfect, to embrace a vision of racial inclusion and social justice, and provide consistent opportunities to move in that direction.

Submitted by:

Rev. John D. Callanan, Chairperson

jcallanan@umcommunities.org

(908) 596-0412 (c)

Boston University School of Theology

Greetings in the Spirit of Jesus Christ! The Boston University School of Theology (BUSTH) travels with you in the vital journey of seeking God, building knowledge, and equipping leaders for the church and society. We celebrate our students, alums, and church partners, who join hands in serving God and building toward transformed communities.

BREAKING NEWS:

- **Congregations:** We welcomed Jonathan Calvillo as a new faculty member in sociology of religion, leading us toward better understanding of congregations and faith identity. See also our website of congregational resources: <http://www.bu.edu/cpt/current-projects-2/congregational-research-and-development/>.
- **Doctor of Ministry:** The DMin program in Transformational Leadership is soaring with deeply committed student cohorts who are widely ecumenical, culturally diverse, and increasingly global. The blended model includes intensives, online courses, and close work with faculty mentors.
- **Scholarships:** We multiplied funding for student scholarships and housing, including the Vincent Machozi Scholarship for African students who seek to cultivate ministries of compassion, justice, & peace in their homelands.
- **Religion and Arts Initiative:** The Initiative sponsored a hymn-writing contest this year, complementing the photography contest last year and STH's rotating art exhibits. The current exhibit focuses on ecological healing: "Sense of Place" by women print-makers from Ecuador and Maine.

PARTNERING FOR MINISTRY AND TRANSFORMATION: Preparing students for ministry means meaningful partnerships with the local spiritual community.

- **Congregational courses:** Courses in congregations with church leaders and students learning together.
- **Religion and Conflict Transformation Clinic:** Internships, workshops, and projects that foster justice and reconciliation.
- **Travel seminars:** Courses engaging local communities on Arizona-Mexican border and in Cuba, Germany, and Indonesia.
- **Ecumenical partnerships:** Continuing close work with UMC, AME and other Wesleyan denominations, while building strong programs with the Episcopal Church and United Church of Christ.
- **Partnership with Hebrew College:** Joint courses and public events, plus co-sponsoring *The Journal of Interreligious Studies*. The focus is on enriching theological education and developing religious leaders who are faithful and wise.

TAKING ACTION GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY:

- **Campus action:** Work with Boston University to improve accessibility and sustainability: to provide full access for all persons (a work in progress) and to live sustainably with the planet.
- **Internships in global service and peacemaking:** Student-initiated internships for service with communities across the world, and for just peacemaking projects with international organizations.

RENEWED COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE: Celebrating differences while joining together for action.

- **Standing with Standing Rock:** Several BUSTH students and alums joined indigenous peoples at the Oceti Sakowin Camp in North Dakota to protest the pipeline on sacred Sioux land.
- **Deep conversations:** Faculty, students and administrators have led deep conversations on issues that divide, but with respectful listening that builds community life and communal action.

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OTHER NOTABLE HEADLINES:

- Our own Associate Dean Pamela Lightsey was featured in Boston University's 2016 Annual Report for her pursuit of justice, empowerment, and change.
- Our graduating senior, Rev. Mariama White-Hammond (AME) led the Boston Women's March, and some 75 STH faculty and students marched, calling for social and ecological justice as we build new futures in the United States.
- Students of all theological and social orientations are asking and then acting: "What can I do to make this world better?" "How can I witness to my Christian faith?"

As BUSTH looks back on 2016, it celebrates transformational leaders who have loved God and cared mightily for God's world. Their living legacy gives us hope and courage for the future.

Submitted by:



Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean

Cabinet

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey equips spiritual leaders to make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world. Within that broader mission, the cabinet is charged with the specific responsibilities of being missional strategists for the Conference and specifically in each of the districts and regions where we serve. We celebrate that we are moving forward in Greater New Jersey's turn-around goal of reaching 41% highly vital congregations by 2018, knowing that there is still work ahead for us. Over 30% of our congregations are growing in worship attendance. New worship experiences, new opportunities for hands-on mission, emerging communities of hope, growing our small group ministries and increasing our mission giving through shared ministries and beyond are other signs of renewed life, commitment and a hope-filled future in Greater New Jersey.

This year, we celebrate some beginnings and endings. The Rev. Dr. Varlyna D. Wright will end her six-year term as District Superintendent of the Capital District in June. Varlyna will relocate to Georgia to continue to live out God's calling on her life. We will miss her voice and insights at cabinet's meetings. We also celebrate the beginning appointments of two new district superintendents: The Rev. Glenn Conaway and The Rev. Frank Davis who will be serving the Delaware Bay and Capital Districts respectively. Both pastors have had fruitful and growing ministries and will bring great gifts and experiences to the cabinet. We give thanks to God in the midst of these transitions.

The impact of the Cabinet's ministry is strongly felt by those churches and pastors that engage in the resourcing we offer. Cabinet members are currently engaged in coaching clergy, facilitating churches in Team Vital, and leading PaCE groups. The annual church conferences have been refocused to provide opportunities to engage in learning and meaningful conversation among the laity to help to move the church forward.

Our regional teams are creating workshops to help churches learn and grow into what it means to be in ministry in today's reality. The Central Region offered a day of dynamic worship resourcing with *Doxology*. The Southern Region has partnered with Horizon Stewardship Foundation to offer a retreat for clergy; as well as a training program for local churches called *Revolutionary Stewardship*. The Northern Region sponsored *Outbound*, a day of resourcing focused on making disciples and evangelism. All of these resources are helping local churches and clergy grow as vital congregations.

The Cabinet is given specific responsibility to work with the bishop in making appointments. In doing so, we work closely with the Staff Parish Relations Committees of our local churches to identify needs and clarify the future missional opportunities in the church and community. In the appointment process, the Cabinet reviews a pastor's willingness, passion, ability, and track record to engage a congregation in being faithful and fruitful, with the goal being to maximize disciple making throughout the Conference. Pastors are also invited to request consideration for open churches during the appointment season, providing additional information in the discernment process. We have found this new practice to be very helpful.

The 2012 Discipline added the term "Chief Missional Strategist" to the job description of the District Superintendent. We live into that through our maintenance to mission goals. Maintenance work is important. However, if all your time is spent on work that will need to be done over and over you will simply stay in the same place. It is the focus on mission work that resources congregations and helps us move into the new mission field. The goal of the cabinet is to spend 20% of our time in maintenance work, 60% of our time resourcing congregations through Team Vital, Coaching, PaCE groups and other resources; and 20% of our time in the new mission field.

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In order to evaluate our progress towards this goal, time surveys have been done. Initial reports indicate we are making progress in certain areas. We have transferred the administration of our resources to the Connectional Ministries Team. Our Administrative Staff is now making sure needed reports are in on time. There is still work to be done in other areas. We are working on transitioning conflict matters to the Episcopal Office. We also need to do more work in evaluating the load of our Conference agency responsibilities. The area that we need to focus on most is the 20% of time that is to be spent in the new mission field and creating new faith communities.

In the midst of the progress and challenges we are heartened to know that this division of our time has resonated with our churches. We continue to hear stories from congregations who are looking at how their church spends their time, specifically working towards spending more time in new mission work and resourcing the congregation to make this possible.

Moving forward, however, there are challenges that the Cabinet faces. While we celebrate moving closer to our conference goal of 41% highly vital congregations, sustainability is an issue. Over the past ten years 25% of our full-time appointments moved to part-time and the total amount for clergy salaries dropped by more than a million dollars, creating appointment and ministry challenges. Congregations living off endowments for many years have used up these funds and the current level of mission and ministry is no longer possible. Second, the richness of our diversity within Greater New Jersey is a blessing and a gift to be celebrated, but creates recruitment challenges to meet leadership needs of such a diverse church. Third, the changing culture requires that there be new approaches to ministry to which most laity and pastors have not been trained. Leadership styles that worked a generation ago no longer bear the fruit that they once bore. We need to learn new methods, but also grow deeper in our understandings of ministry in this new chapter in the church's life. Together we are working to develop new ways of ministry and mission as the next right answers.

Our next steps as a Cabinet include actively addressing these challenges in partnership with the Connectional Ministries Team and other teams within the Conference. The Cabinet is committed to engaging further in developing new church starts, second sites, and new worship experiences for new people, working with willing and ready congregations and leaders gifted in church planting. The blessing of our diversity requires that every pastor and church grow in cultural competency so that our congregations will more accurately reflect the communities and context for our ministries. In our work with pastors and congregations, we look forward to living out our conference's plan to combat racism and grow in our understanding of one another as children of God.

As we begin to look at new ways to serve Jesus Christ in the world, a major step will be engaging laity and clergy in rethinking and reimagining what it means to be a church sent into the world, and how we begin to live into apostolic leadership. This will require reflection, resourcing and an openness to rethink ministry so that together we will continue on the journey towards vitality and transformation that is Christ's call on all of our lives. The Cabinet is confident that the laity and clergy of Greater New Jersey together will meet the challenges ahead because we see the Spirit alive throughout our churches and communities. For God is with us – and in God is our hope.

Submitted by:
Myrna Bethke
District Superintendent, Gateway South

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 more than \$6.25 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 2016 contributed more than \$5.5 million toward the funding of retiree healthcare. The Fund Balance as of the end of November 2016 was \$10,962,380; and the Distribution Base (amount that can be distributed without invading the principal) was \$4,688,270 before deducting the Fund's 2016 contribution of \$547,072 toward retiree healthcare.

To continue support for retired clergy and their families at the current level of over a half million dollars per year, 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. Donations to the Fund in 2016 were \$49,223.

The Fund's Finance Committee Chair is Keith Helsby. Other members of the Fund Board are Charles Bender Jr., Jennifer Lovallo, Grace Pak, Steve Poloff, Dennis Poane, Jack Scharf, David Wiley, and John Cardillo (ex officio). In July, 2016, the

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Board moved its Funds to be invested by the Stewardship Foundation, adding more than \$10 million to the Foundation. Currently our investments via the Foundation are in Wespath's Multiple Asset Fund which has a long term allocation of 65% equity, 35% fixed income and employs an investment approach guided by the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.

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 the substantial contributions needed in the future to fund retiree healthcare and to provide aid to retired clergy and their dependents.

Thank you so much for your support to date.

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

Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns

The Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns is happy put forward the report for the year 2016.

The Committee met twice in person in the fall, once in February and once over a conference call in April. We are committed to the purpose and goal of our agency and took the challenges of the current society in our meetings.

A committee member has attended the Episcopalian Diocese Annual meeting as the representative of the Annual Conference.

Four people (two clergy and two lay) have attended the National Workshop on Christian Unity in Minnesota to be trained to serve our Conference and their congregations.

We have actively been involved and participated in the New Jersey Council of Churches participating in their theology discussion groups, issues and Actions Day.

We have presented two Bishop's Awards for Christian Unity at the 2015 Session of the Annual Conference, one to the Church that involved in ecumenical activities and the other to an individual who has contributed to Christian Unity in society.

We are actively involved in World Methodist Conference, World Council of Churches, and Religions for Peace, USA and the denominations office of Christian Unity.

The Committee would like to propose the following programs for the coming years:

Creating an Interfaith Bus Tour, participating in the District Days of Learning with ecumenical unity topics, continuing our work with New Jersey Council of Churches, World Methodist Conference, World Council of Churches and the National Workshop on Christian Unity, and also continuing to seek and promote ecumenical work by presenting Bishop's Awards for Christian Unity.

The chairperson is actively involved in Ministerium of Scotch Plains and Fanwood, New Jersey. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Ministerium is comprised of clergy from various faith communities, along with leaders of non-profit organizations, the school district, and civic leaders from our two municipalities. He was given a chance to share the word of God on the occasion of Community Thanksgiving. He is also involving in the activities of "Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council" that facilitate regular interfaith meetings in order to make way for the building of bonds within the interfaith community. This Council respects and encourages the inclusion and welcoming of others regardless of faith, race or disability and strives to be proactive on social issues.

We as a committee request the members of the conference prayerfully consider to promote unity among ecumenical bodies in their local level and we do submit this plea for your prayerful consideration.

Submitted by:
Rev. Dr. Vijaya Kumar Chairperson
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Church and Society, Board of

All the glory and honor to our God who is the King of Peace and the Master of Justice!

For last quadrennial, Church and Society has diligently worked on the three areas of social justice, which are Immigration Justice, Criminal Justice, and Anti-Poverty Movement. At the first meeting of this quadrennial, Church and Society decided to continue to work on the same three areas from last quadrennial.

Recently, the right of immigrants and refugees has been one of the most heated issues in the US. Our Social Principle is crystal clear on the rights of immigrants “to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination”(Book of Discipline ¶162. H.) As United Methodists, we are urged to advocate the right of immigrants as basic human rights. In a response to the current issues of immigration and refugees, Church and Society is discussing a possible educational event on immigrants’ rights as well as the sanctuary church movement.

As for criminal justice, Church and Society has recently supported the New Jersey State Senate’s Legislation of Isolated Confinement Restriction Act(S/51, A/547) and Independent Prosecutors for Police Killings(S/2469). Both pieces of legislation were vetoed by the Governor. Then, the Church and Society co-sponsored the rally of faith leaders in New Jersey to end isolated confinement in the Trenton area on January 11, 2017. This rally was organized by New Jersey Campaign Against Isolated Confinement.

As for anti-poverty, I would like to praise the active works of our District Anti-Poverty Taskforce Teams, especially, the active works of Palisades, Cape Atlantic, and Gateway South District Anti-Poverty Taskforce Teams. Also, we continued to support the Poverty Summit which was organized and hosted by Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey.

Besides our work on these three areas of concentration, two exciting changes wait for us. First, we have recently decided to create a Peace with Justice program for youth and young adults in our Conference. Many exciting ideas have been discussed to make an innovative program for our youth and young adults. Secondly, we are planning to create a promotion video to encourage our church leaders to be more engaged with the ministry for justice while respecting the ministry of mercy. Whenever the Board of Church and Society meet, we spend an extended time to passionately discuss how we lead the church leaders in our Conference to be more engaged with ministry for justice. We believe creation of the promotion video will be a great starter.

We continued to support a young clergyperson in our Conference to attend Young Clergy’s Forum at General Board of Church and Society. Also, we continued to make a strong coalition with the Coalition of Peace Action by supporting their Annual Conference in Princeton. Finally, we couldn’t be more excited to have Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, who is a General Secretary of GBCS, as a guest speaker for our focus dinner during the Annual Conference.

As a new chair for this important body, I could not thank enough each and every member of Church and Society. Since I am still in a stage of learning the works of the Church and Society, I am so grateful for the commitment and devotion for social justice of each and every member of the Board. I hope we can do more prophetic works for justice and peace as we grow stronger in such a time like this.

Submitted by: Myung Sun Han

Coalition of Religious Leaders

Important to ecumenical and interfaith relationships for the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference is the Coalition of Religious Leaders in New Jersey. Its history began in 1967; then Governor Richard Hughes called upon religious leaders in the state to address the issues of civil unrest following the Newark riot, one of the most devastating riots in U.S. history. The Coalition today includes some fifty members representing, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant faith communities as well as Jewish and Muslim leaders in the state.

The Coalition meets semi-annually, addressing issues of mutual concerns around issues of mercy and justice in New Jersey. The Coalition affords opportunities for faith leaders to develop partnerships that sustain ecumenical and interfaith relations.

The Coalition meets annually with the New Jersey State Governor and the two United States Senators, as well as others in political and civic leadership.

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In August 2015, in partnership with US Senator Cory Booker, the Coalition hosted a forum on Criminal Justice Reform. Bishop John Schol played a leading role in the program design and welcoming over four hundred persons in attendance. Over seventy-five attendees were members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, including some thirty clergy from our conference.

Over the past year, Coalition members have met with legislative leadership in the New Jersey Assembly and Senate. Members shared their concerns around affordable housing, criminal justice reform, and the prevention of gun violence.

In the fall of 2016, the Coalition provided a forum for its leadership, centered around a conversation with Mark Morial, Present and CEO of the National Urban League, and Ryan Haygood, President and CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. The design of the program addressed the question of how religious leaders may work cooperatively in addressing racism and how they, too, may lead their faith communities in addressing issues of racism.

The Coalition, in 2017, welcomed to its membership, His Eminence Joseph William Cardinal Tobin as Bishop of the Newark Archdiocese. Bishop Schol and Coalition president, Bishop Mark Beckwith, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, participated in the service of installation, welcoming the Archbishop on behalf of Christian communions. Bishop Schol will host the Spring 2017 meeting of the Coalition at our Conference Mission and Resource Center.

Over the past fifty years, the Coalition has served as a forum for religious leaders to gather in affirming the importance of Ecumenical and Interfaith relations.

Submitted by:
Rev. Jack Johnson

CUMAC (the Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community)

Throughout 2016, the staff and Board of Trustees at CUMAC (the Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community) embarked on an ambitious and exciting strategic planning process and finalized the working document in October. The plan outlines CUMAC's purposes and will guide the organization's operation and development over the next four years. Continuing our 30 year mission to feed people and change lives, we remain committed to following God's call to serve the poor while working to alleviate hunger and its root causes for those in need in Paterson, Passaic County and northern New Jersey.

At our core, we serve low income individuals in need of some of life's basic necessities, such as food, water and clothing, with compassion, kindness and love. The feeding people part of the mission is straight forward. We have uniquely positioned ourselves to provide immediate and direct help to individuals with present and perhaps emergent needs. The "changing lives" comes into play in our ongoing efforts to provide job training, encourage independence and to advocate for the disenfranchised. At every level of engagement, CUMAC staff and board seek to promote individual dignity and to serve with loving hearts.

The objectives and strategic direction set forth in the plan are based on the environment that CUMAC operates in and an assessment of the strengths we have and the challenges we face. At the end of a detailed and spirit led evaluation process, we formulated four important objectives; with the most critical being the successful management of CUMAC leadership throughout 2017, as our beloved Executive Director, Reverend Patricia Bruger, retires after 27 years at the helm. Additional objectives include achieving financial stability, developing and begin implementation of a new facilities plan and strengthening our programs to move clients toward self-sufficiency.

Throughout our history and especially in recent years, CUMAC has witnessed unprecedented growth in the number of people coming to us in need of our feeding programs, disaster relief services, affordable housing, job training and other offerings. Meeting this increase in need has often required a leap of faith, growing our feeding efforts exponentially in the face of increased and pervasive hunger and pursuing new opportunities to care for those who need us most with trust that the resources necessary to run our programs—the space, staff, equipment, funding and support that make our work possible—would follow. Our strategic plan has provided an opportunity to step back and determine how we can best provide for our clients and community going forward. With its direction, CUMAC board and staff will take tactical and deliberate steps toward a future of strength, where we will have the staff, facilitates and equipment, programs and financial resources necessary to effect real and lasting change in our community over the years and decades to come.

Over the past 3 decades, the unwavering compassion and unrivaled generosity of our United Methodist partners has allowed us act as a beacon of hope for so many people with nowhere else to turn. As CUMAC takes exciting steps to guarantee our present and future success in ministry to the poor and disenfranchised, the support of our friends within the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will mean more than ever. Going forward, your food and clothing collections will allow us to continue providing direct support. Financial gifts made as donations, taken as special offerings, and shared as event proceeds

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will be a critical part of our growth story and our ability to expand our work. Volunteers will continue to play a vital role in our everyday feeding efforts, but will also be needed as industry experts, as board members, and as committee people. You, your generosity of spirit, and your commitment to live the words of Christ will make all the difference to mission and to those we serve. We are ever grateful of and humbled by all who come together to help feed people and change lives and we look forward to continued collaboration to ensure none among us suffer the pain and indignity of poverty or hunger.

Submitted by:


Reverend Patricia Brugger
Executive Director


Laura Purdy
Assistant Executive Director


Stephanie Ames
Development Director

Ph: 973-742-5518

Fax: 973-742-5118

info@cumacecho.org

Drew Theological School

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of our founding this year, we find ourselves in the unique position of reflecting deeply on our past and, at the same time, looking with confidence and enthusiasm toward the future. Drew Theological School has, throughout its long and distinguished history, fostered a vibrant spirit of learning and community that allows for a rich diversity of both expression and experience. These qualities of inclusion and a steadfast commitment to social justice are what make the Theo School what it is today – and have, in fact, defined it from the beginning of its existence.

In the spirit of our founders, we continue to educate students from all over the United States and throughout the world. We continue to pursue a mission of empowering students to “creative thought and courageous action to advance justice, peace and love of God, neighbor and the earth.” In the classroom and beyond, we continue to focus on educating and forming rooted, innovative, and bold leaders for the church, the academy, and the world.

These are the principles that attract students to our programs, and they guide us in all we do to support them during their time with us.

We have seen the effects of this in our rising enrollment numbers. In the last three semesters, the Theological School has seen a steady growth in both applications and enrollments, and early indications strongly suggest we will continue that trend this year. Our students hail from across the country, represent 21 different denominations, as well as a sturdy non-denominational presence, making Drew a truly ecumenical community. Yet we could not have arrived here on our own: over 30 percent of our applicants come to us through recommendations from our alumni and friends.

We also have a history of great success when we open our doors to prospective students and invite them to explore our programs first-hand. Of the students who attended our *Open Doors at Drew* event last March, more than 50 percent enrolled.

These gatherings are so successful because they offer prospective students an opportunity to see Drew in person – to see Drew *in action*. We allow them to immerse themselves for the day in dynamic classroom conversations, worship services, and panel discussions with both current students and alumni. These events highlight our efforts to create a truly collaborative, comprehensive, and transformative experience that involves the entire Drew community.

A recent report by the Pew Research Center, “America’s Changing Religious Landscape,” made clear that seminaries and theological schools must reimagine their programs and how they reach students who are seeking out new expressions of Christian theology, ethics, liturgy, and gathered community.

In order to accommodate these prospective students and offer them the kind of dynamic and relevant theological training they seek, we embarked on an ambitious transformation of our curriculum, thanks in part to a generous grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund.

This project has been guided by our efforts to address the changing needs of our students, those who may not choose to pursue a traditional ministerial path, and those who require a more flexible structure to their education. While our commitment to the Church and to the training of pastoral leaders is unwavering, we have also focused on ensuring that our current curriculum, teaching, and student assessment are aligned with more diverse demographics, changes in vocational choices, and the need to prepare religious leaders to serve effectively in multi-faith, secular, and even non-religious settings. We aim to serve the students whose vocational goals may include chaplaincy in healthcare settings, the military, or corporate

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venues, those who may seek to work as life coaches, or who may pursue careers in advocacy, social activism, and the non-profit world more generally. The focus is on preparing students for transformational leadership, wherever their vocation is lived out.

Our curriculum transformation project also includes a focus on various modes of delivery – online classes and a flexible course schedule for students who are unable to attend class during the day or those who live too far from campus to attend in person regularly. These changes will expand our sphere of influence and the contexts in which our students serve, inspiring us to think more broadly about what is required for leadership-in-context. It will also hopefully bring us an even more diverse student body, something that Drew values highly.

The curriculum that we hope to implement will more clearly and intentionally help students root themselves in the cumulative wisdom of their tradition (more Bible and theology) but also prepare them to be adaptive leaders who confidently innovate ancient wisdom and tradition in order to address contemporary needs and challenges. They will do more and sit less.

Their mentors in learning and experimenting will extend beyond our residential faculty and draw from the rich resources of partner organizations and networks which can provide the real-world settings for these “experiments in courage,” where the pursuit of wisdom and godly living can be more vigorously pursued.

The majority of our students come to us with experience in ministry, and many are currently exercising some form of public religious leadership. Additionally, an increasing number of students come to us with a wide range of experience in the foundational understanding of basic biblical texts and theological concepts. Furthermore, an emphasis on public theology and the role of the public theologian and leader is an essential aspect of the work of Christian ministry today, and more attention will be paid to helping our students develop this aspect of their ministry.

All of these efforts will make it possible to offer our bold vision to a wider audience of students. While these changes will be significant, they will in no way alter the spirit that has distinguished a Drew Theological School education for 150 years. Indeed, these changes have their source and their end in that very spirit, and they will, we are confident, contribute to its continued vitality.

We are thrilled by how our vision for the future of the Theo School is unfolding and taking shape. We look forward to our continued work with the entire Drew community – both past and present, on and off-campus – as we transform this center of learning, pastoral formation, and service to respond in relevant and powerful ways to the changing needs of our churches, our communities, and the world.

The Educational Society

The Educational Society is an agency of the Greater NJ Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church whose goal is to assist with the education of clergy for the edification of the church. We are composed of clergy and laity from across the Conference and have been assisting men and women of New Jersey called by God to full-time Christian service by providing scholarships and loans for more than one hundred and fifty years. We are supported by the repayment of loans, interest earned from long-standing endowments, grants from the Annual Conference, and by local churches and individuals through the Conference Advance #622. The Conference Advance #622 is an opportunity for local churches to subsidize and affirm the ministry and education of Greater New Jersey United Methodist pastors who have reaped the benefits of the Society’s ministry by supporting the Educational Society in its historic mission.

In 2016 the Educational Society was delighted to award \$20,000 in scholarships to 4 recipients (Donald Kirschner, Joshua Mularski, Rachel Callender, Nova Villa Vitug) in order to further their seminary education. Applications for GNJ Educational Society scholarships and loans can be downloaded from the conference website at www.gnjumc.org/resource/2016-educational-society-application/

If you would like more information about the Educational Society and its ongoing ministry of underwriting seminary education, please stop by our display at Annual Conference or email Rev. Donald Stevens (revdon64@hotmail.com) or Mrs. Jo D. Malessa (ma_malessa@comcast.net).

Submitted by:

Rev. Donald M. Stevens, President
(732) 892-3233 | revdon64@hotmail.com

Episcopacy Committee

The Episcopacy Committee has met quarterly with Bishop Schol during the past year for the purpose of support, encouragement, communication of Conference priorities, and feedback when solicited. We have participated in an evaluation

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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 provided a detailed report of his work and goals for the Conference. The Committee has had lively discussions of the reports, and the Bishop has responded candidly to our questions. We have shared in his excitement in the move to the new Resource Center in Neptune and we appreciate his warmth in expressing his gratitude for the shared ministry of all laity and clergy in the Conference.

Submitted by:
Eleanor Hartley, Chairperson
973-714-4535
Eleanor.hartley@gmail.com

Finance and Administration, Council on

Greetings in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ.

As we close 2016 and look forward to 2017 and beyond, we do so knowing together we have accomplished much with the resources God has blessed us. Under the leadership of our Bishop and Cabinet, the Council on Finance and Administration has been able to support the ongoing effort of the many programs within the Conference, particularly the focus on "Maintenance to Mission".

Our congregations have led the support for these efforts by again raising the Shared Ministry collection rate to 86.7%, an increase of 1.6% over the prior year. We were blessed that 407 of our local churches paid 100% of their shared ministry allocation, while 452 paid 100% of their billables. We are grateful to the churches of the Conference for their stewardship and support, together we are accomplishing many things.

During 2016 we were able to maintain our commitments to funding many programs, while also completing the reorganization of our District Superintendent support, allowing for improvements and refocus of our talent and gifts. In doing so, expenses were well controlled throughout the Conference, allowing our Conference to finish the year in a position to pay 100% of our General Church apportionments, for the 10th consecutive year.

The year also was marked by continued prudent investment returns, managed in partnership with Wespath Inc., as well as an enviable audit report of 2015, reflecting only minor areas of opportunity for improvement. All of the Council's sub committees were efficient and timely in their respective areas, insuring effective management of our precious resources.

As we look forward to 2017, we are excited about the possibilities to where Christ is leading us. We are working to develop support in the form of shared services for new efforts based on Hope Centers, where individual charities would be established to address key areas in our communities. Additionally, we recognize the need to address our current Shared Ministry formula and are committed to introducing a new methodology for the 2019 budget. Other areas of focus are for shared procurement and long term management of cemeteries within the conference.

I would be remiss if we did not recognize the efforts of our Treasurer and his staff for their continued excellence in performing their roles. Likewise, the leadership of the Council transitioned from John Bishop and we are grateful for his many years of dedication and service to the Council and Conference. We are blessed to have them and are grateful and thankful for the blessings of them in our conference and lives!

In closing, on behalf of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, we offer our thanks to Bishop John Schol and the Cabinet for their leadership and support, as together we continue to spread the good news of Our Savior Jesus Christ.

Submitted by:
Bob Dietz, President
Conference Council on Finance and Administration

Global Ministries, Board of

The Conference Board of Global Ministries works with missionaries, our Advance Specials, agencies, and Conference staff, aligning with the strategic goals of GNJC.

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Advance Specials: Each Advance Special is assigned to a CBGM member who acts as the liaison with the Board to assure that their ministries continue. Visits with the agency have been planned for Spring 2017. Advance Specials are required to submit a reapplication each year and provide supporting documentation. The list of Advance Specials may be found in the Resolution section of the pre-conference journal. Although the Conference does not fund Advance Specials directly, they are encouraged to apply to churches and the churches are encouraged to support them by sending funds to them through the Conference treasurer.

Global missions, Conference Secretary (CSGM): In the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference the position of CSGM is held by the Chair of the Board of Global Ministries as well. The CSGM works with the General Board of Global Ministries in accommodating missionaries who will be itinerating in our Conference. In 2016 Marilia Alves Schuler itinerated in Greater New Jersey.

Isabel Quezada attended the Northeastern Jurisdiction CSGM 2016 fall retreat from October 17-20, 2016 in Haverford, PA. This was a three day event of worship, workshops and the opportunity to meet with current CSGM's of the Northeast Jurisdiction. Highlights from this gathering include: Rev. John Calhoun, Mission Advocate, Northeastern Jurisdiction had been reappointed to Ukraine, effective December 2016.

The Conference Board of Global Ministries has met several times during this period to discuss activities for 2017. There is a unanimous interest from committee members to be more involved in communicating mission opportunities to youths and young adults in our Conference.

Submitted by:
Isabel R. Quezada, Chair
Board of Global Ministries

Laity, Board of

“To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12–13).

Working to do ministry and mission is always a challenge for many local churches because of the many hats laity may need to wear as well as limited resources to do the work that need to be done. The Laity Board has continued its work in equipping laity to this valuable work of ministry and to carry out God's mission through hands on training. We know that ministry is to be carried out by the entire church, by both laity and those ordained. Laity should be the primary agents for this work and there is one reason God has given us the church is to enable the community to work together to build up the Kingdom.

The Laity Board continue to focus on equipping laity to do ministry with specialized education such as the Laity Leadership Academy and providing small seed grants for those who attend the academy and wish to start new ministries. The Lay Servant and CLM program continue to train laity along with other leadership development programs in our districts. Lay Ministry Recognition provides opportunities to share ministry with other churches and to tell stories of ministries.

Why Do We Need To Equip Laity?

- We know that a pastor cannot do ministry alone.
- God intends for all Christians to be involved in mission and ministry.
- Equipped Laity is able to work as partners with the pastor.
- Pastor can concentrate on shepherding and leading church mission and vision.
- Disciple-making begins in our immediate environment-in our own community.
- If revival, renewal and awakening are to occur, it will be done by trained disciples.
- Excited and equipped laity will help us meet our goals and strategic plans for principle leadership, profession of faith, small groups, reaching new people in GNJAC.

I would like you to imagine a well mobilized equipped and excited laity in our Conference of CLM's, LSM Teams, elected officers fully trained in their role, ministry teams who are equipped for ministry. What would it look like to have a church council who plans ministry, stewardship ministry constantly renewing the church's finances? I see a small church of a 2-3 point charge with a CLM in each one of the churches to work in partnership with the pastor. I see a LSM person leading small groups, Bible study, Sunday school and a worship team that knows how to develop creative worship experiences and outreach ministries that

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include community representatives. When laity intentionally become equipped to model the life of Christ, the church will soar to new heights in making disciples and building the Kingdom of God.

Submitted by:
Rosa Williams
Conference Lay Leader

National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry Committee

“Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” Acts 2:46-47

Reviewing of our vision, mission and strategic plan

The National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry Committee within GNJ began the quadrennium with new leadership, welcoming five new members and making a reviewing of our vision, mission, strategic plan and structure in partnership with the leadership of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry.

As part of this process, we met with clergy, laity (youth and adults) of our current Hispanic/Latino congregations in order to know what were their principal values and vision for the committee. We completed the process of aligning our vision, mission and strategic plan with the Conference and National Plan Hispanic/Latino. We did an evaluation of the work and the role of the committee. We also created a new structure for the committee that include the executive team and an extended committee that will focus its work on three areas: Current Leadership Development, Youth Leadership and Community Outreach.

Leadership Development

Our committee has continued offering training for our lay leaders. We offered Modules 1 and 2 of National Plan Hispanic/Latino. The students of SELAH, our Laity Biblical Academy, concluded their program of study successfully. On March 18, 2017, 17 students from SELAH and 15 from Modules 1 and 2 graduated at Drew Theological School. Dean Javier Viera was the speaker of the day.

The Rev. Hector Burgos and Rev. Cesar Miyares have been instrumental in a project to turn SELAH in a Hispanic/Latino Theological and Leadership Development Training Center. The mission of SELAH will be to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and its purpose is recruit and develop transformational leaders for the church of the 21st century by providing theological and practical ministry, and leadership development education in the Wesleyan tradition. We have been working on SELAH new curriculum, choosing the teachers who will be part of the faculty and the administration team. Our committee has been working with Javier Viera, Dean of Drew Theological School, on getting certification for the program of SELAH.

Support to Children and Youth Ministry

As every year we supported the Hispanic/Latino Children and Youth Retreat called “Niños y Jovenes para Cristo” that usually take place at Pinelands Center. This year we offered scholarships to 48 campers and 4 youth counselors. In addition to offering scholarships, the chair of our committee visited Pinelands Center during the retreat to support the staff and chat with the campers. We celebrate the leadership of Milagros Soto, Rev. Charles Perez and Rev. Rolando Santiago in keeping this program going, and offering spiritual direction for our children and youth. We also offered 34 scholarships to support the youth going to IGNITE 2016. Charles Perez has been instrumental in keeping alive the IGNITE Movement among the Hispanic/Latino churches. Our youth continue doing their rallies during the year. During the rallies they praise God together, and get inspired to live life to the full and share the good news of salvation.

Support to Methodist Men and Walk to Emmaus

On September 24, 2016 in Matawan UMC, we held the first gathering of Hispanic /Latino Methodist Men. The event was attended by 47 men, including 3 women who helped with hospitality. The men worshipped God together, and they engaged in conversation about their discipleship and leadership in the local church, community, and daily life. Our committee supported this historic event with funds and we participated in its organization. We acknowledge the leadership of Rev. Hector Burgos and Samuel Perez in the organization of this event.

After 12 years, the Comunidad Emaus Latina Emanuel (CELE) became the second Hispanic Emmaus Community in the nation. Our committee has provided consistent and strong economic support for facilitating the walks. The ministry of Walk to Emmaus is a highly effective resource to develop lay leadership and spiritual growth. Walk to Emmaus provides spiritual formation for

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people to become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We acknowledge the leadership of Elizabeth Gonzalez as the Director of the Community and Rolando Santiago as their Spiritual Director.

Events to strengthen unity among our clergy and laity

We organized our Epiphany Service once again this year. This event has great relevance for our community, because it strengthens the unity and traditions of the Hispanic/Latino people, and it is attended by all our congregations within GNJ. Bishop Schol was our guest speaker, and he was assisted by members of the Cabinet in serving communion and pray for the people. We also organized two clergy gatherings during the year, a picnic during the summer and a party in the winter. These gatherings provide opportunity for building strong relationships between our clergy and their families.

Our goals looking ahead

Some of our goals of our committee looking ahead:

- Encouraging all our congregations to get involved in Team Vital.
- Provide support for lay missionaries starting new Hispanic/Latino communities of faith
- Provide resources for community outreach projects, Evangelism and Small Groups Ministries.
- Organize workshops about cultural competence, and support our pastors serving in cross-cultural appointments.
- Support the development of youth leadership and youth ministries.
- Continue working with the Commission on Archives and History on identifying the Hispanic/Latino Methodist history within GNJ and encourage the preservation of significant documents, artifacts and transformational personal faith stories.

Acknowledgements

- God, our Sustainer and Divine Partner, without God's help will be impossible to reach our goals as a committee.
- Jazelis Adorno-Burgos, our former chair who prepared the way for us and provided support and guidance during the transition.
- The members of our committee, Rev. Waleska Trinidad, Rev. Teresita Matos, Rev. Cesar Miyares, Rosemary Rentas, Gladys Zubko and Justino Cabrera. They have worked hard on organizing events, and creating new strategies to support and grow the Hispanic/Latino ministry.
- Bishop John Schol, for his encouraging presence and support. Bishop School has spent time in meeting with our clergy and laity to better understand the Hispanic/Latino culture; and he has invited us to explore new possibilities for the continued growth of the Hispanic/Latino ministry.
- Our DCM Rev. Hector Burgos and DS Rev. Manuel Sardiñas for walking and meeting with our committee, providing guidance and creative ideas.
- Manuel Padilla from National Plan Hispanic/Latino for helping the committee in the process of organizing better, and to adopt strategies that best serve the needs of the Hispanic / Latino people.
- Ginny Kaiser, for providing amazing support to the work of our committee.

Submitted by:

Rev. Onay Lopez-Diaz

National Plan for Hispanic/
Latino Ministry Committee Chair

Waleska Trinidad

National Plan for Hispanic/
Latino Ministry Committee Secretary

Native American Ministries, Committee on (CoNAM)

As the committee continues to keep the Act of Repentance alive in the Conference, we had Ms. Christie Pierce, a UM and a member of the Lenni Lenape Tribal Council give the Welcome at the Annual Conference. We were happy to hear that St. John UMC was a part of a VBS program within the Delaware Bay District which included the Native American culture and history. To remember the history and heritage of the Lenni Lenape people, St. John UMC has worked with Archives and History to record the stories from the elders. We are looking at putting a marker on the Pineland Retreat Center property where the "Brotherton Reservation" was once situated.

As we start to work with other Native communities in the conference, three people attended an event sponsored by the Native American Comprehensive Plan (NACP) related to starting new ministries. Those communities are the Powhatan and Ramapough communities.

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One of our goals is to include Native American youth and young adults into the life of the Church. We sent three youth to the IGNITE event. We send three youth to the Peg Leg Flamingo event in North Dakota and they were able to visit with people at Standing Rock, South Dakota. We are also working with Pineland Center about holding a Native American youth camp in the future. We support Ms. Allie Mosley, a member of the CoNAM in starting a Native American Club at the Bridgeton High School.

It is important for CoNAM to be involved with other Native American organizations in the Church. We had four CoNAM members attend the Northeastern Native American Ministries Committee (NEJNAMC) Annual Meeting in Wheeling, WVA in October, 2016. The CoNAM was also the host to the Native American International Caucus (NAIC) Annual Meeting which was held in Vineland and Bridgeton, NJ in October 2016.

Submitted by:
Cynthia Kent, Chair

Pension and Health Benefits, Board of

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 as other church workers and lay employees of the United Methodist Church.

Working with the Wespeth Benefits and Investments, the Board endeavors to implement and interpret national and conference policy.

PENSION

Pre-1982 Pension Plan

The 2017 Past Service Annuity Rate for pre-1982 annuitant payment is \$658 per year of pre-1982 service. The 2018 Past Service Annuity Rate for pre-1982 annuitant payment will be \$672. 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 2017 churches pay CRSP at 12.5% of clergy plan compensation and for the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) at 3% of clergy's plan compensation, and UMLife Options at 2% of plan compensation for ½ time clergy.

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 94.36% and 99.60% respectively. Thirteen percent of churches were unable to pay these bills on time. Below is a summary of 2016 remittances:

Type	Remittances Rate	2016 Shortfall	# of Churches Paying < 100%	% of Churches Paying < 100%
CRSP	94.36%	\$143,608	62	13.62

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CPP	99.60%	\$2,318	
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To maintain clergypersons' participation in CRSP/UMPIP and CPP/UMLife Options, the Greater New Jersey Conference fully pays delinquent church accounts using funds from the Reserve Account at Wespath Benefits and Investments. We are concerned that some churches are not fully meeting their obligations with the resulting decrease in the Reserve Account.

By 2016 year-end the cumulative delinquent amount for years prior to 2016 was \$1,916,000 for CRSP/MPP and \$412,000 for CPP - a total of \$2,328,000, an increase of \$138,000.

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 \$113,000 of the 2002-2015 shortfalls was collected in 2016.

Pre-Retirement Seminars

As in years past, the Board sponsored a retirement education session held at the Mission and Resource Center of Greater NJ on March 2, 2017. The pre-retirement seminar focuses on those anticipating retirement within five years. Fifty persons were scheduled to attend. Presentations by Peter Hang of the Wespath Benefits and Investments and a Social Security representative provided valuable guidance to assist retirement planning. Special thanks go to Jennifer Cho for organizing this event. Thanks also to Alexa Taylor, Benefits Services Manager, for assisting and providing support.

HEALTH INSURANCE

For 2017, the Board continued Active health insurance under HealthFlex, the health insurance plan sponsored by the Wespath Benefits and Investments. The medical provider network is Blue Cross/Blue Shield PPO; the pharmacy benefits are provided through OptumRx. Beginning in 2015, Wespath 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 2017 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 2017. 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 2017	
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 2016. Overall, churches paid 97% of the total \$3,872,800 health insurance billings, a decrease from the 2015 remittance rate of 99%. The 2016 shortfall was approximately \$141,000. By 2016 year end, the amount owed from years prior to 2016 had been reduced by \$123,247 and the cumulative unpaid health insurance bills had increased to \$3,056,309 owed for years prior to 2016.

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 Administrator 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 2017 Conference Reports and Recommendations have been updated.

Annuitant Health Care Liability

As of the end of 2015, the Financial Accounting Standards Board FAS 158 liability for annuitant healthcare costs in the amount of \$49.5 million was posted to the Conference balance sheet. This liability is the estimated present value of the future costs of

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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 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, 2016, the Annuitant Health Insurance Contingency Fund held a balance of \$8,748,335 after transferring \$565,260 to the Annuitant Health Insurance Account to avoid a negative balance in that account at year-end. In 2016 approximately \$3,406,000 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. Dr. William Wilson, Sr., Chair; Rev. Dr. Jennifer Cho, Vice Chair; Rev. William Williams III, Secretary

Submitted by:

Rev. Dr. William B. Wilson, Sr., Chair

Property and Liability Insurance Program of the Board of Trustees

2017 Insurance Renewal:

At the 2017 insurance renewal coverage has been moved to Church Mutual Insurance Company. The 2017 insurance renewal process resulted in a \$158,500 premium increase or 4% versus the 2016 costs. This includes the final increase in property values as a result of property inspections that were completed in 2013 to 2015. The Conference had been insured with Mercer Insurance Company for most of its coverage since 2004. But due to the poor loss history, Mercer this year had proposed over a 30% increase in premiums. The Board of Trustees believes that the long relationship with Mercer was mutually beneficial for many years, but in light of the significant premium increase, coverage limitations, and at the recommendation of our broker Sovereign Insurance have decided to move the insurance coverage to Church Mutual. As a result of Sovereign's negotiations the Conference was able to avoid a steep premium increase and a large reduction in coverages by moving to Church Mutual. Church Mutual Insurance is the largest insurer of churches in America and has already met with GNJAC staff and Bishop Schol. Additional loss control information and services will become available to local churches and we look forward to the new partnership with Church Mutual.

Workers' Compensation:

The Workers' Compensation coverage is with Church Mutual Insurance Company effective January 1, 2017. Workers' Compensation premiums were increased from \$629,426 to \$660,038 due to adverse claims development which resulted in 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 2017 premium cost is overall 18% lower than in 2016. 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 to 2016 policy years due to several large loss events. The Board of Trustees believes Church Mutual understands well the nature of the GNJAC loss exposures and look

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forward to engaging in active loss control measures to achieve more favorable results. If losses continue in an undesirable fashion they will negatively impact the overall cost of insurance; our current five year loss ratio is 105%.

Large Losses:

The loss experience for the past five years has been driven by several events and a few specific claims. 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 \$2.1 million from damages to 142 churches. In 2013 \$4.7 million in losses from two workers' compensation claims were sustained. In 2016 there was a total fire loss with damages totaling over \$1.9 million and a roof collapse claim totaling over \$600,000.

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, 2016 and again for 2017, the Board of Trustees has funded parity relief from Board of Trustee's fund balances. The 2017 billing is the final year of the ten year Parity Plan.

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 five years. The Board anticipates \$100,000 addition to the surplus position in 2017.

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.

Submitted by:
Rev. Clifford Still
President

Religion and Race, Commission on

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

Thank you to the members of the Greater New Jersey Commission of Religion and Race (GNJ CORR) and the collaborating ministries for their work and valuable contributions. 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 2016, GNJ CORR continued with the goals of 1. Providing resources, training and 2. Supporting and providing programs of cultural competency, racial justice and reconciliation. Specifically, the 2016 activities were as follow:

Resources and training

- GNJ CORR worked with The Board of Church and Society and the Commission on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relationships to sponsor a dinner at the 2016 Annual Conference, The keynote speaker was Dr. Kenzoe Brian Selassie who provided tools on *"How to Communicate Effectively in a Polarized World"*. We were provided with valuable tools to engage in fruitful conversations.

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- Rev. Vanessa Wilson provided relevant information to GNJ CORR from the General Conference. GCORR will produced new material regarding cross-cultural, cross-racial sites for use by Annual Conferences in 2017. When the final edition is printed, we hope to use it in Greater New Jersey.
- GNJ CORR hosted at *Just-in-Time Conversation about Race*, at Drew University Theological School, in an effort to address postelection tension. “*Leading with Love and not Fear*” was an opportunity to gather, worship, learn and support each other and was co-sponsored by the Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns and the Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM) The guest speakers and conversation leaders included Dr. Leah Gunning Francis, Rev. Charles D. Mitchell, Rev. Dr. Ralph Bunche Terrell, Ms. Tammy Bormann and Rev. Vanessa M. Wilson, J.D.

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. In 2017, we will focus our efforts on supporting those in cross-cultural cross-racial sites as well as proving resources and tools for effective cross-cultural conversation.

Submitted by:

The Reverend Vanessa M. Wilson, J.D.
Chair, Greater New Jersey Commission on Religion and Race
vanessa@vanessawilson.info
(609) 388-8852

GNJ CORR Members

Ms. Bonnie Smith Harley (L),
Reverend Amanda Hementez, (C)
Ms. Laura Lin (L)
Ms. Jee Hai Park (L),
Reverend Terisita Matos Post (C)
Reverend Danny Thomas (C),
Reverend Vanessa M. Wilson (C) Chair,

Small Church Membership, Commission on

The Commission on Small Church Membership was formed in 2016. The GNJAC website makes the following statements of goals for the Commission on Small Church Membership: “This committee helps create resources for smaller churches. It provides opportunities and creative solutions for greater collaboration, cutting edge resources, and spiritual growth. This strengthens and broadens the work smaller churches do in their communities – and supports the people sustaining these special, and often historical, sanctuaries in our region’s landscape.”

In 2017 the Commission on Small Church Membership is focused on the goal of growing worship attendance. We are addressing the question of how to best resource pastors and lay leadership to offer excellent worship in their settings. The focus is to increase the percentage of churches growing in worship attendance. Small church leaders have challenged the committee to assist them by offering an actionable plan and some resources to help clergy and laity take the steps necessary towards transformation.

We began our work at the Doxology Conference in November. I spoke on “Small Church Worship” and over 100 persons attended the workshop. Many of the pastors and laity asked for more resources on small church ministry. Building on the interest of these local church leaders we are working on gaining insight into the needs of small membership churches and ideas around how the conference can best resource them for growth.

The first objective of the committee was to define a small membership church. Discipleship Ministries defines small membership church in this way. “A small-membership congregation is more than numbers, but size counts. A small congregation is one that has fewer than 200 members or fewer than 150 in worship (<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/how-to-worship-in-small-membership-congregations>).” In GNJAC this definition includes many churches. To work effectively this committee needed to refine that definition. The committee agreed it would be best to focus on churches that on average worship less than 90 persons.

The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference is made up of 552 churches, in 2015 three hundred and seventy nine (379) of our churches had an average worship attendance of less than 90 worshipers. That represents 68% of all congregations. The good news is nearly 50% of our small membership churches brought in new members in 2015. The committee is exploring how to best build on this growth and determine if there are any common strategies that result in an increase in membership.

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Small membership churches share many of the same challenges such as older congregations and aging facilities. They also are very diverse in locality and community needs. We also recognize that 261 churches in GNJAC report less than 50 in average worship attendance. We are considering the different challenges these churches face in attracting new worshippers.

We are actively working on ways to connect small church pastors on a regular basis so they may share their challenges, as well as resources. Another goal is to offer a full day of learning for small membership church leaders both laity and clergy.

Submitted by:
Rev Gina Yeske

Committee: Janet Boetticher, David R Edwards, Millie Grey, Carol Hutchison, Faindan Blessings Magomero, Debi Selm-Orr

Status and Role of Women, Commission on (COSROW)

"The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women advocates for full participation of women in the total life of The United Methodist Church. We're helping the church recognizes every person – clergy and lay, women and men, adults and children - as full and equal parts of God's human family. We believe that a fully engaged and empowered membership is vital to The United Methodist Church's mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

COSROW in the Great New Jersey Conference has carried out that purpose through the following projects:

1. Helenor Alter Davison Award in order to recognize and affirm the courageous and outstanding women leaders in our Greater New Jersey. Rev. Patricia Bruger was awarded in 2016;
2. Review possibilities for mandatory Sexual Ethics Training for all clergies under appointment(s) in order to end sexual misconduct, abuse, and harassment by those entrusted with ministerial roles in The United Methodist Church;
3. Leadership Training: "Annual Conference Networking and Strategic Planning Meeting" Nashville, TN ;
4. Display table at the Annual Conference to promote our ministry and provide resources for our mission goals.

Two of GCSRW's key pieces of legislation passed by the General Conference in May of 2016 in Portland, OR.

1. "Ensuring inclusiveness of gender and age in the worldwide UMC" - Book of Discipline Paragraph 4. Article IV;
2. "**New Social Principle: Pornography**" - Add new Social Principle to ¶ 161 Book of Discipline. Please visit our website gcsr.org for more information.

All our meetings are open to the public, and you are welcome to contact any COSROW member about your attendance. Here are our members: Diane Pacione, Gilbert Morris, Yoomi Yi, Iraidia Ruiz de Porras, Evan Rohrs-Dodge, Sonia Cancel, and Beth Caulfield. I am so thankful for their faithful work for full and equal participation of women in the total life of the church and beyond.

We are honored to serve all of the Greater New Jersey Conference to have the benefit of the wisdom, life experiences, and perspectives of women for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. For by our baptism "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of [us] are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Submitted by:
Michelle Ryoo, Chair

Trustees, Board of

The Officers of the Board are: Chairperson – Rev. Clifford Still; Vice-Chairperson – Rev. James Ryoo; Secretary – Mary Beth Scherer. The following Trustees serve as liaisons to the properties for which the Board is responsible: Ed Bowen, Hosuk Chung, Judy Hopkins, Jack Green, Rev. Peter Broomall, Rev. David Lehmkuhl, Rev. Rupert Hall, Sang Chul Shin and 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 land 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

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that have been closed, representative of formal action taken at prior Annual Conferences. Six cemeteries are also under the care of Trustees.

Some items of note as a result of Trustee action taken during the 2017 Conference Year:

- Alex Mayer has been hired as Property Manager in accordance with the Maintenance to Mission Plan. Alex has since sold five of the closed churches in accordance with the Annual Conference action.

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, and Alex Mayer, Property Manager serve as staff liaisons 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. 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.

Submitted by:
Rev. Cliff Still, President

United Methodist Men

“I will make you fishers of men, if you follow me”.

WOW – If we follow him. Thank God for *the twelve* that followed him.

We, the men of the Greater NJ Annual Conference sometimes need to be reminded and nudged to follow our Lord. Men, we need to be still and listen and discern with what God is asking us to do. We need to have strong United Methodist Men groups in our churches. Are we willing to be the men God has called us to be?

What is our role as men in our churches?

We are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ to be Godly husbands, fathers, sons and brothers to step up in leadership in our churches and communities to be mentors to be disciple makers.

For the last several years, this report has noted that the Methodist Men in the local church has fallen off. Looking at the number of churches that are nationally chartered this is true, but talking to churches throughout our conference men are very active.

Today's men want to be more hands on and with less meetings. Thank you men and your churches for the following:

- Prayer ministry
- Feeding the homeless
- Clothing the needy.
- Serving on your local church committees
- Prison ministry
- Fellowship among each other
- Ushering
- Cooking & serving meals
- Assisting with worship services
- Leading small groups
- Mentoring young men in the church & community
- Scouting ministry
- Supporting the Upper Room Ministry
- Walk to Emmaus

Besides the above, there are many more ministries being done by the men of the Greater NJ Annual Conference.

Thank you for your service and devotion to our Lord and Savior.

Submitted by:
Rick Walker
GNJUMM President

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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 Ryan Goodman (laity), Secretary – William Markert (laity), Treasurer – John Cardillo (Conference staff)

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

Brief History:

- Created in 1992 by action of the 135th Session of the Northern Annual Conference, with the first investment made by the Conference.
- In 2000, became the UMF of Greater NJ after the merger of the Southern & Northern Conferences.
- Wespath Investment Management became the investment manager in August 2015. Assets totaled \$7 million at 12/31/15.

Developments in 2016:

- Rev. Richard Hendrickson, the Executive Director of the Foundation, was appointed to a local church. Sue Ryan Goodman assumed the role of Interim Executive Director while the Foundation searched for a full time Executive Director.
- Under Sue's direction the Foundation attracted the investments of the Centenary Fund, the GNJ Investment account of the Board of Trustees and three new local churches. The amount of investment in the foundation increased from \$7 to \$36 million.
- Marketing materials and account documentation were updated and a Planned Giving brochure was developed.
- In October, joint meetings with Wespath were held throughout the state with existing Foundation members and larger churches.

Plans and Goals for 2017:

The Foundation will be hiring a full time Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible for positioning the Foundation for future growth. The focus of the Foundation is three fold; fund raising, stewardship and investment management. The Foundation has become the "go to source" for stewardship education and investment management needs of Conference churches.

The Foundation seeks to increase investments to \$50 million by the end of 2017. This goal will be accomplished by reaching out to churches of all sizes across the conference that would benefit from our services.

It's an exciting time in the history of the Foundation. The organization is solid and becoming stronger. Our investment track record is healthy and confidence in the organization continues to build.

Submitted by:
Edward N. Bowen, Jr.
President

United Methodist Women

The GNJUMW had a busy and productive year!! In January a group five new GNJ Conference officers and President Marilyn Powell went to Lake Junaluska, NC for a three day weekend called Leadership Development Days, run by United Methodist Women National. The theme of the weekend was "Esther - Preparing for Leadership."

Our spring meeting on April 2, 2016 focused on Immigration. We were hosted by Rev. Heidi Bak's church, Beverly UMC. Our worship service was enhanced by the presence of Katherine Parker, our UMC missionary to Nepal. She thanked us for the

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emergency grant money that UMW sent to Nepal after the major earthquakes a couple of years ago. With this money they were able to buy food and water and transportation to reach those rural areas that had been cut off from aid. The program following the worship featured a presentation by First Friends, a non-profit group out of Kearny, NJ, that visits, advocates for, and befriends immigrants in detention centers, specifically the Elizabeth Detention Center. Tim Roebuck, a volunteer visitor, spoke to the importance of this work, as this visit represents not only the "First Friend," but, in most cases, the "only friend" that those interned have.

The program was closed by Pastor Esther Morales who shared her experiences writing poetry in a diner in the midst of an immigrant community.

We sent delegation of about 15 women from GNJUMW to the Northeast Jurisdiction meeting held June 16-18 in Syracuse, NY. The theme of the meeting was "A Fresh Wind is Blowing." Bishop Schol was present to participate in worship. Our very own Marisa Gonzales was elected as a UMW Northeast Jurisdiction Representative and Yvonne Bouknight became a member of the Program Advisory Group for National United Methodist Women from GNJUMW.

We co-sponsored Mission "U" with the GNJC, offering 4 courses, including a weekend session at Georgian Court University at Lakewood, NJ July 15-17, and a day session at the Arcola UMC, Paramus July 22. There was also an active youth contingent at Georgian Court. Dean Yvonne Bouknight ably coordinated the team that brought the school together, and Grace Pugh Hubbard led us in music and praise! The issue of Climate Justice was one of the workshop topics. "The Sea Is so Wide and my Boat is so Small," a book by Marian Wright Edelman, was a study at Arcola. This was led by Nicole Caldwell-Gross, the GNJC Director of Mission. This book focuses on underserved American children that are plagued by poverty.

Our fall October 15th meeting was devoted to Environmental Justice. We were welcomed into the GNJC Mission Resource Center by Bishop Schol. Our worship message was delivered by Rev. Pat Watkins our first UM missionary appointed to minister to the earth and to encourage environmental stewardship. Dr. Nina Chen of the Nature Conservancy clearly outlined many individual strategies to heal the earth in terms of water runoff, energy conservation and air quality. A representative of the Citizens' Climate Lobby described the destructive effects of increased levels of CO2 on the earth. Their solution to this is quite simple, a carbon tax that will encourage companies to cut their CO2 emissions.

The fall meeting closed with an election of officers. Rev. Jessica Campbell graciously officiated at the installation of the new Mission Team.

The last meeting of 2016 was the Mission Team Meeting and the Officer Training of District Officers November 18-19 at the GNJC Mission Resource Center. We were introduced to a simulation game on the effects of pollution on people, the earth, health, jobs and housing.

We wish to thank all the Conference staff, especially Joanne Sullivan who prayed us out of the Resource Center after our Team Meeting, and Kaitlyn Deal who helped us use the technology of the Center, while she also documented and photographed our meetings.

Further, we also wish to thank Grace Pugh Hubbard who we have affectionately named GNJUMW musician of the year for her faithful accompaniment of so many of our events.

Submitted by:
Kathleen Schulz,
President of GNJUMW

United Theological Seminary

Where Dreams Take Flight

United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, was founded in 1871 by Milton Wright, a Bishop in The Church of the United Brethren in Christ and father of aviation pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright. The Wright brothers had a passionate dream of developing the first successful "flying machine." They experienced great difficulties, hardships and setbacks in achieving their dream. Through their determination and commitment, however, their dream eventually was fulfilled, and they were the first human beings to achieve sustained flight.

God often plants a vision or dream in someone's heart to become a full-time servant of Jesus Christ. In St. Peter's sermon on Pentecost, Peter quotes the prophet Joel who said, "God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17). When God pours out the Spirit on someone and calls them into ministry, United seeks to partner with that person in helping them to grow spiritually and intellectually in achieving their God-given call and dream.

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In the fall of 2016, 418 students enrolled at United to answer God's call and vision for their lives.¹ Our prayer is that God will use United to prepare these students to become faithful, fruitful and effective pastors and church leaders who make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. According to a recent survey, 86% of our graduates are either currently serving in local congregations or are retired from serving in local congregations.² United alumni/ae are making an impact.

On January 1, 2017, United celebrated the beginning of a new partnership in ministry with Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO). United has become an extension site for the Course of Study School of Ohio located at MTSO, providing a convenient hybrid program for part-time pastors pursuing a local pastor's license. Through United's Course of Study, pastors experience a Friday-Saturday weekend on campus and finish coursework online over the weeks that follow. Courses are offered four times per year.

If you feel God calling you to serve in any form of Christian ministry, we encourage you to go online to united.edu to discover the option that fits your ministry and calling. May God bless you as you respond to God's dream for your life to serve in either the ordained, commissioned or lay ministry.

Submitted by:
 Dr. Kent Millard
 President, United Theological Seminary
 Dayton, Ohio
www.united.edu

¹Fall 2016 headcount of masters' and doctoral students enrolled in courses.

²According to the 2014 United alumni/ae survey.

Treasurer's Report

Property & Liability Insurance December 31, 2016

Balance Forward		713,006
Receipts:		
Interest Income	32,871	
Premiums from Churches	3,015,522	
Worker's Compensation	621,632	
Prior Year Receipts	186,025	
	3,856,050	
Disbursements:		
Insurance Premiums	3,237,912	
Auto Insurance	16,755	
Worker's Compensation	651,838	
Salary	43,664	
Other Expenses	3,163	
	3,953,332	

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Change in Operation	(97,282)
Ending Balance 12/31/16	615,724
Ending Balance as of 12/31/16 is for Reserves for Uncollectible Premiums.	

Health Insurance Accounts

Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

12/31/2015

12/31/2016

Variance

Assets			
Health Insurance Investments-BOA	4,139,810	7,376,176	3,236,366
A/R-GNJAC	1,503,867	1,418,724	(85,143)
Mortgage Receivable/Accrued AR-CBOPHB	3,340,000	0	(3,340,000)
Total Assets	8,983,677	8,794,900	(188,777)
Liabilities			
Post-Retirement Benefits	51,687,699	49,555,111	(2,132,588)
Total Liabilities	51,687,699	49,555,111	(2,132,588)
Actives Fund			
Balance Forward	16,521	5,464	(11,057)
(Receipts)			
Billing Non-Annuitants	4,743,577	3,917,623	(825,954)
Dist. Supt. & Staff Premiums	491,250	496,954	5,704
Staff Family Premiums	0	0	0
2% of Sal. Contrib.W/H fr Staff&DS's	38,705	42,319	3,614
Incapacity from 127	882,584	898,167	15,583
Transfer from 127 Subsidy	500,000	970,000	470,000
Total Receipts	6,656,116	6,325,063	(331,053)
(Disbursements)			
Non- Annuitants Premium	6,353,603	5,997,065	(356,538)
Consulting Fee	0	0	0
Other Expense	0	0	0
Transfer 2% Pastor Salary Contribution	276,026	284,306	8,280
Transfer 2% Staff Salary Contribution	37,544	42,737	5,193
Total Disbursements	6,667,173	6,324,108	(343,065)
Receipts less Disbursements	(11,057)	955	12,012
Balance	5,464	6,419	955
ANNUITANTS Fund			
Balance Forward	0	0	0
(Receipts)			
Shared Ministries for Annuitants	1,908,900	1,980,101	71,201
Billing for Annuitants over 65	44,522	52,163	7,641
Billing for Annuitants under 65	50,152	55,504	5,352
Medicare	0	6,283	6,283
2% Salary Funds Reserve Transfer	467,586	565,260	97,674
Transfer from 127 Subsidy	0	0	0
Total Receipts	2,471,160	2,659,311	188,151
(Disbursements)			
Blue Cross - Premium Expense	2,238,966	2,407,043	168,077
Administration Expense	18,735	18,977	242
Staff Expense	164,074	184,135	20,061

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CBO - Salary	26,205	28,856	2,651
Adoption Support/ Refunds	0	0	0
Consulting Agency Fee	23,180	20,300	(2,880)
Total Disbursements	2,471,160	2,659,311	188,151
Receipts less Disbursements	0	0	0
Balance	0	0	0

Reserve Fund for Retiree Health Ins.			
Balance Forward	8,929,812	8,958,134	28,322
(Receipts)			
Centenary Fund Additional Contribution	539,271	547,072	7,801
Transfer 2% Pastor Salary Contribution	276,026	284,306	8,280
Transfer 2% Staff Salary Contribution	37,544	42,737	5,193
Investment Income	15,337	333,573	318,236
Misc. Income	2,187,026	2,198,408	11,382
Total Receipts	3,055,204	3,406,096	350,892
(Disbursements)			
Transfer to Annuitants	467,586	565,260	97,674
Transfer to Non Annuitants	500,000	970,000	470,000
Dividend Expense	703,025	175,519	(527,506)
Strategic Transformation Grants	78,682	34,000	(44,682)
GNJAC Settlement Mortgage	195,005	872,949	677,944
Transfer to Annuitants Incapacity	882,584	898,167	15,583
Transfer to Reserve	200,000	100,000	(100,000)
Total Disbursements	3,026,882	3,615,895	589,013
Receipts - Disbursements	28,322	(209,799)	(238,121)
Balance	8,958,134	8,748,335	(209,799)
DENTAL Fund Balance Forward			
	20,784	20,079	(705)
Billing for Dental Insurance	72,861	93,887	21,026
Dental Insurance Premiums	73,566	73,820	254
Receipts - Disbursements	(705)	20,067	20,772
Balance	20,079	40,146	20,067
Post Retirement Fund Balance Forward			
	(59,970,551)	(51,687,699)	8,282,852
Current Year Transactions	8,282,852	2,132,588	(6,150,264)
Balance	(51,687,699)	(49,555,111)	2,132,588
Interest Reserve Fund Balance Forward			
	0	0	0
Current Year Transactions	0	0	0
Balance	0	0	0
0			
Total Fund Balance	(42,704,022)	(40,760,211)	1,943,811

Pension Accounts
Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

	12/31/15	12/31/16	Variance
ASSETS			
A/R-GNJAC	348,619	148,559	(200,060)
GBOP Deposit Account	1,521,338	1,584,615	63,277
Pension Investments-BOA	939,858	991,964	52,106
Accounts Receivable -GBOPHB	0	0	0

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Total Assets	2,809,815	2,725,138	(84,677)
LIABILITIES			
Pension	0	0	0
Due to Conference	0	0	0
Total Liabilities	0	0	0
General Fund			
Balance Forward	3,196,108	2,809,815	(386,293)
<i>Receipts</i>			
Investment Income	3,368	52,106	48,738
GBOP Invest. Gain/(Loss)	(44,249)	112,986	157,235
GBOP Invest. Refund/Adj	1,209	164	(1,045)
GBOP CPP Premium Holiday	0	0	0
UM Publishing Income			0
Annual Conference Offering			0
Chartered Fund Income	612	367	(245)
Pre-Retirement Seminar Income	515	825	310
Total Receipts	(38,545)	166,448	204,993
<i>Disbursements</i>			
Global Pension Trust			
Pensions - Moving Expense Reimb	45,634	41,402	(4,232)
Grants/Relief	1,496	1,496	0
GNJAC -Settlement / Mortgage Subsidy	113,752	0	(113,752)
Pre-Retirement Seminar Expense			0
Strategic Transformation Grants	0	0	0
Staff Expense	128,548	142,528	13,980
CBO Salary Expense	26,205	28,852	2,647
Pension Adjustment Expense	0	0	0
Refunds	0	0	0
Operating Expenses	32,113	36,847	4,734
Total Disbursements	347,748	251,125	(96,623)
General Fund Balance	2,809,815	2,725,138	(84,677)
Receipts - Disbursements	(386,293)	(84,677)	301,616
Current Service Fund			
Balance Forward	0	0	0
<i>Receipts</i>			
General Board of Pension Income	2,018,996	1,942,051	(76,945)
Staff Premiums			0
Conference CRSP/ MPP Income	2,643,893	2,496,318	(147,575)
Conference CPP Income	590,356	597,225	6,869
Total Receipts	5,253,245	5,035,594	(217,651)
<i>Disbursements</i>			
Refunds/Adjustments			
Transfer to Fund 127 Retiree Health	2,149,227	2,025,832	(123,395)
Expense entry	1,814,785	1,749,415	(65,370)
GBOP Billing	1,289,233	1,260,347	(28,886)

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Total Disbursements	5,253,245	5,035,594	(217,651)
Current Service Fund Balance	0	0	0
Receipts - Disbursements	0	0	0
Interest Reserve Fund	0	0	0
Interest Reserve Fund Balance	0	0	0
Total Fund Balance	2,809,815	2,725,138	(84,677)

2016 Receipts Comparison Greater New Jersey Annual Conference

Fd #	Funds	2014			2015			2016		
		Budget	Dec YTD	%Budget	Budget	Dec YTD	%Budget	Budget	Dec YTD	%Budget
Shared Ministry Funds	100 Clergy Support	5,890,456	4,989,578	84.71%	5,727,298	5,014,342	87.55%	5,319,436	4,625,288	86.95%
	200 Administration	3,077,536	2,806,347	91.19%	2,947,208	2,729,383	92.61%	2,853,078	2,639,495	92.51%
	300 WorldService/Conf.Ben.	3,498,839	2,909,309	83.15%	3,745,763	3,194,351	85.28%	3,765,928	3,411,579	90.59%
	410 Black College	216,512	179,375	82.85%	202,814	171,595	84.61%	197,700	171,411	86.70%
	420 Africa University	48,443	42,417	87.56%	45,383	39,369	86.75%	44,256	39,683	89.67%
	430 Ministerial Education	542,782	443,338	81.68%	508,422	424,310	83.46%	495,598	424,616	85.68%
	Subtotal	13,274,568	11,370,365	85.66%	13,176,888	11,573,350	87.83%	12,675,996	11,312,072	89.24%
Prior Yr. Shared Ministry		8,425			19,931			9,879		
Billing Funds	CRSP	2,621,770	2,420,756	92.33%	2,594,175	2,488,714	95.93%	2,548,698	2,405,010	94.36%
	2015/Prior Year CRSP	289,011	64,059		195,362	66,959		201,461	42,324	
	Prior Years CRSP	1,574,166	24,932		1,765,279	88,219		1,806,657	48,984	
	Total CRSP	4,484,946	2,509,748	55.96%	4,554,816	2,643,893	58.05%	4,556,816	2,496,318	54.78%
	Comp. Protection Plan	590,639	558,717	94.60%	585,452	559,546	95.58%	577,523	575,205	99.60%
	2015/Prior Year CPP	53,203	14,530		42,922	13,892		49,906	9,379	
	Prior Years CPP	339,013	4,310		372,875	16,919		384,986	12,642	
	Total CPP	982,855	577,556	58.76%	1,001,249	590,357	58.96%	1,012,415	597,225	58.99%
	Property/Liab. Insurance	2,825,531	2,728,927	96.58%	3,056,080	2,878,178	94.18%	3,269,240	3,015,522	92.24%
	2015/Prior Year P/L	246,307	54,670		245,787	73,140		285,459	69,918	
	Prior Years P/L Insurance	1,610,905	47,822		1,755,405	92,364		1,836,095	94,050	
	Total P/L Ins.	4,682,743	2,831,419	60.46%	5,057,272	3,043,683	60.18%	5,390,794	3,179,490	58.98%
	Health Insurance	4,658,072	4,598,335	98.72%	4,276,240	4,227,385	98.86%	3,872,800	3,731,749	96.36%
	2015/Prior Yr Health Ins	436,619	91,886		332,648	101,139		352,028	60,587	
	P/Ys Health Insurance	2,425,383	27,931		2,722,289	123,685		2,827,528	62,660	
	Total Health Ins.	7,520,075	4,718,151	62.74%	7,331,177	4,452,209	60.73%	7,052,356	3,854,997	54.66%
	Workers Comp Ins	518,808	507,381	97.80%	536,164	529,655	98.79%	622,560	621,632	99.85%
2015 Workers Comp	19,650	6,030		12,694	-1,605		32,162	18,677		
Prior Years Workers Comp	90,746	1,514		101,586	7,316		104,178	3,281		
Total Workers Comp Ins	629,204	514,924	81.84%	650,444	535,366	82.31%	758,900	643,590	84.81%	
Total Shared Min. & Billing	31,574,391	22,530,588	71.36%	31,771,846	22,858,789	71.95%	31,447,276	22,093,570	70.26%	
Special Giving	0	1,436,805		0	1,082,584		0	1,018,866		
GRAND TOTAL	31,574,391	23,967,393		31,771,846	23,941,373		31,447,276	23,112,436		