

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

Volume LXII

APRIL 2018

No. 4

Cross-Cultural, Racial Training an 'Eye-Opening' Experience

By Josh Kinney
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NEPTUNE – Rev. Sooah Na didn't know what to expect at GNJ's first Cross-Cultural, Cross-Racial training. Newly appointed to Community Church in Hoboken, Na and one of her church leaders attended the training to learn what they could.

"It was an eye-opening experience for me," said Na.

At the 2017 Annual Conference session, GNJ approved a ten year intercultural competency plan that will develop laity and clergy to continue strengthening and growing diversity, inclusion, and collaboration in local churches and communities. As part of this commitment, GNJ started offering a Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural Training in 2017 for pastors and churches who receive a cross-racial and or cross-cultural appointment.

GNJ has partnered with The United Methodist Church's General Commission on Race and Religion for this resourcing and learning experience with the intent of providing pastors and laity with the awareness, barriers, challenges and blessings of cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, as well as building new skill sets and learning to welcome and embrace new pastors. On July 21 2018, GNJ will host another Cross-Cultural, Cross-Racial Workshop

for churches who received a new appointment in 2018 that is cross-cultural and cross-racial. The pastor and a small group of laity will be invited to the workshop by their District Superintendent.

"Through the training, we had a wonderful opportunity to identify who we are and what challenges, joys and opportunities we might have," said Na. "It was a wonderful, healing and encouraging time when we listened to other churches share their experiences. We laughed, shared concerns and understood together by listening to our churches stories."

Na was amazed at how many cross-cultural and cross-racial ministries existed in GNJ as well as the more than 40 new cross-cultural, cross-racial appointments last year alone. Within GNJ, 114 of 511 congregations are multi-cultural, which is defined as those with at least 30% of their membership being of a different race. Nine languages are spoken on any given Sunday during worship in local GNJ churches and there are 146 cross-racial, cross-cultural appointments.

Having grown up in a pastor's family in South Korea, Na served Korean Methodist Churches and in the U.S. served as a children's pastor, music director, and student pastor. Now she is living into her calling as Hoboken's Community Church lead pastor. She was inspired at one of the trainings when the group took a new approach to read Acts 8:26-40 regarding



Grace Pak, Director of Cross Cultural Leadership at the Commission on Race and Religion is pictured leading a Cross-Cultural, Cross-Racial Training session at the Mission and Resource Center. Photo by Josh Kinney

Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

"One thing that came to mind was that the Angel of the Lord said to Philip to go south to the road, and it was 'wilderness,'" she said. "Philip met the Ethiopian and made a disciple by teaching about Jesus Christ and baptizing him by water and the spirit."

For Na, she believes the cross-racial, cross-cultural ministry is the 'wilderness.'

"I believe that this is a worthy journey for us, first of all, because God told us to go. Second, because unexpected joys will be waiting for us at the end of the journey's road of this ministry, such as making more disciples of Jesus, becoming active and welcoming churches toward local community and having teaching mo-

ments for each other and being churches at the hub of world mission."

Rev. Myounghun Stephen Yun, Pastor of Succasunna UMC in western Morris County felt the trainings provided him with useful conceptual frameworks and tools for self-reflection as a pastor serving in a cross-cultural and cross-racial appointment. Born and raised in South Korea, Yun came to the U.S. at 27.

"As a cultural bearer, I know that I will always carry my cultural and ethnic identity into my ministry in one way or another whether I intend it or not," said Yun. "I also know that there are times when I submit to or fully immerse myself in a culture where I am serving."

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GNJ Co-Hosts Communicators Conference, Podcast Recognized as Denominational Leader

By Josh Kinney
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PHILADELPHIA – In March, A United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC) Conference was held in Philadelphia with Greater New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania Conferences serving as hosts to over 140 communicators from around the U.S. and the world. The annual conference focuses on issues affecting all conferences, agencies and churches within the denomination and shares best practices and models for communicating the Good News.

Bishop Schol sat on a panel to discuss communicating the messages of The Way Forward, and Rev. Hector Burgos, Director of Connectional Ministries, participated on a panel focused on advocacy communication, sharing his learnings from MARCHA.

Chris Heckert from Haddonfield UMC was asked to lead a workshop on communications audits and Paul Barnett, a Princeton Theological student and GNJ intern was asked to share his work on podcasting for the local church school scheduled for Haddonfield. Unfortunately, that event was cancelled due to a snow storm.

In addition to GNJ leaders, UMAC conference attendees attended sessions with Adam Weber, Pastor of Embrace Church in Sioux Falls, SD, Len Wilson, United Methodist storyteller and strategist, and Dan Krause, the General Secretary of United Methodist Communications. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Chair of the Connectional Table and Maidstone Mulenga, Director of Communications for the United Methodist Council of Bishops, lent insight and perspective on communicating the church's Way Forward, especially as the 2019 special session



Rev. Hector Burgos, Director of Connectional Ministries, addresses the UMAC Conference in Philadelphia at Arch Street UMC. Photo by Matt Brodie

of General Conference takes place in less than a year.

Attendees spent time at the historical Tindley Temple on Broad Street, learning about the church's history and hearing from a panel discussing the denomination's history and how to lead in changing times. The panel featured Rev. Robert L. Johnson, pastor at Tindley, Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, Fred Day, General Secretary of Archives and History, and Bishop John Schol.

Outside of United Methodist communications, attendees learned best practices and insights from other local organizations. Ed Cambron, Executive Vice President of the Kimmel Center for Performing Arts shared Kimmel's work toward building an audience, realizing they had four different segments to reach: workhorses, old school connoisseurs, adventurous intellectuals and casual followers. It was this last

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Using Our Biggest Asset: Transforming Communities by Repurposing Buildings

By Josh Kinney
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NEPTUNE - A church is many things. Churches are places of worship. They are community centers and gathering places. They represent Christian faith and our congregations. They can be beautiful, historic and beloved by generations of United Methodists who have called their sanctuaries home.

These same churches can be old, in disrepair and underutilized. Their maintenance and repair can financially burden the congregations who use them for worship. They can become imposing monuments that are less than warm and welcoming to the community and their outdated facilities less desirable for the community and sometimes even impossible for the disabled and elderly.

GNJ's Board of Trustees knew that they needed to find solutions for churches who have struggled with the burden of their buildings. Taking a page out of the asset-based planning advocated by A Future With Hope, the Board of Trustees has organized Nehemiah Properties to help turn GNJ's church buildings into financial and mission assets for our congregations.

GNJ has more than 1,100 properties including churches, parsonages, fel-

lowship halls and cemeteries. Some of these properties housed closed churches and currently sit vacant. Others are historic facilities that are in disrepair. Still others are underused and yet sit in the midst of communities in desperate need for the love of Christ.

GNJ's Property Management Team, under the direction of the Board of Trustees is in the process of establishing Nehemiah Properties to create mission opportunities, sustainable use and regenerative income from these valuable resources owned by GNJ congregations. Nehemiah Properties, a separate 501c3 nonprofit, will exist to help GNJ congregations repurpose their most valuable financial resources to expand mission and make disciples to transform the world.

"We believe in building new ministries through asset-based planning," said Alex Mayer, GNJ Property Manager. "We need to ask ourselves if our buildings are an asset that can help grow our ministries to reach further and deeper into our communities."

The process involves coordination with GNJ's vital mission partners A Future With Hope and The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey. Once a church identifies a vision to repurpose their property, they can call

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A Message from the Bishop



Last month I talked with you about the challenges of today's pastor, who has many different demands on her/his time and many more challenges in the life of the church and community than pastors had even 10-20 years ago. Because of the number of requests and the variety of challenges, pastors are required to focus their time on fewer things, particularly if a congregation is having a hard time reaching new people, growing worship and other ministries, and facing financial challenges. I invited all pastors to focus their time on three areas:

1. Focus on developing congregational leadership and the things that help a congregation's health and vitality flourish – 40% of a pastor's time
2. Lead and engage in the ministries of the congregation – 40% of a pastor's time and include things like visiting, teaching, worship preparation, preaching, attending functions of the congregation and in the community that further the mission of the church.
3. Congregational administration – 20% of a pastor's time. These are the ministries that undergird the operations of the congregation.

You can read this March article at www.gnjumc.org/news under 'Bishop's Relay Column' which also has a helpful chart listing ministries and activities related to the three focus areas.

Today I want to talk with you about the role of two groups that support and further develop both the congregation's and pastor's ministry. They are the church council and the staff parish relations committee.

These two groups are key to keeping the congregation focused on vitality. They tend to focus most of their time on ministries of the congregation, and congregational administration. In fact, I believe that most of our church councils and SPRCs do not even touch on developing congregational leaders and congregational vitality. The church council and SPRC should focus 75% of its time on developing leaders and vitality, 20% on administration and 5% on ministries. Why? Because leadership development and congregational vitality are directly related to the mission of the church: *to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform lives, the congregation, the community and the world.*

Here is what a transformational church council agenda might look like.

120 minute meeting 4-6 times a year

- 45-60 minutes - discuss an article or video about church vitality, health, or growth. You can Google for a variety of articles that can be great conversation starters. Questions to consider as you discuss them are – What in this article are we already doing? Where are we seeing progress based on the article? How can we do more of this? What is one thing we can improve? What will each of us as church leaders go out and do based on this article – each person says one thing she/he will do. Key to this conversation is that all participate and no one dominates. The pastor's key role in this conversation is to ask questions that help the group go deeper on the above questions and not to provide answers or solutions. The pastor or no other individual should speak more than eight minutes during the entire conversation.
- 20 minutes - Five quick updates on worship, new disciples, small groups, mission engagement in the community and giving. Each update tells what's been accomplished since the last time you met, where you see growth and progress and one to two things that will be done between now and the next meeting that will further the mission and accomplish goals.
- 15 minutes - Three quick updates on personnel/leadership, trustees and finance. These reports should each be five to seven minute updates on what has been accomplished, what's next and challenges and how they are being addressed. Printed reports are best and should be sent to members one week before the meeting with the expectation that they have been read.
- 5-8 minutes - Pastor tells one or two stories that amplify progress or challenges. A story about a particular person's progress is especially inspiring. The pastor does not talk about activities or what she or he will do, but about how the congregation is connecting with the community or making a difference in someone's life.
- 20 minutes - After the 5 and 3 updates and pastor's update, the chair asks, *what did you hear tonight that makes you feel good about our progress, what question do you have and do you have any feedback?* Hold these questions to this point in the agenda so people have all of the information before discussion. This way you focus on major aspects of the ministry rather than getting into the weeds. Structuring it in this way helps people put the attention on mission and connecting with the

community, not the details. Trust the people to the details.

The above agenda is a leadership conversation and focuses the meeting on the areas that actually can make a difference in the vitality of the congregation.

The SPRC is often challenged by what is the right agenda for the meeting and how often to meet. Generally, SPRC's meet too often or not enough. A healthy rhythm is four times a year. A helpful role of the SPRC is to be a thinking partner with the pastor. There are SPRC's that spend too much time micro-managing a pastor's time and never have healthy conversations that leads to better ministry and results. Here is a good agenda for SPRC's:

30-45 minutes - The committee engages the pastor in the following:

- Tell us three things that went well for you in the last quarter and why did each go well?
- What progress have you made on your goals during the past quarter and what have you learned about yourself and the congregation? Based on these learnings, what will you do in the next quarter?
- What are appropriate expectations of the congregation you are meeting?
- Which appropriate expectations do you feel you are not meeting and what plans do you have to meet them? What are spoken or unspoken expectations and what clarity and support do you need from us about these expectations?
- What is one or two new relationships you have developed in the last quarter that is strengthening your leadership and/or the congregation?
- How are your personal leadership plans coming along?
- What support do you need from us?

10 minutes – the entire committee discusses one thing they heard from the pastor to deepen clarity about the pastor's progress and challenges.

10 minutes – the pastor shares any support she/he needs and the committee makes a commitment or indicates why they cannot make a commitment for the pastor's request.

5 minutes – 3-4 committee members each share one thing they appreciated about the pastor's leadership in the last quarter.

This too is a leadership conversation that creates clarity, focuses on the important areas of ministry, and provides direction and feedback that helps the pastor and congregation.

How pastors and church leaders focus their time can make significant impact with the congregation. Each of these agendas/conversations assumes the congregation is focused on the mission and congregational vitality, both the congregation and pastor have goals, the congregation is focused outward, and everyone is working toward serving Christ. If this isn't where the congregation is presently, it will move the congregation in that direction.

Thank you for being a leader in the church. You and your ministry are important to the Gospel's witness in the world.

Keep the faith!

John Schol
Bishop
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

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THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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For more info: Contact Soomin Lee at slee@gnjumc.org



GROWING A CULTURE OF GIVING AND GENEROSITY

Most churches have spent significant time developing a mission statement to express who they are, what they believe, and what their purpose is.

Has your church devoted time to creating a stewardship statement?

STEP 1.

ENGAGE LEADERS IN DISCUSSING THESE THREE QUESTIONS:

What do *I believe* about stewardship?

What do *we believe* together about stewardship?

How will *we practice* and talk about stewardship as a church community?



“By engaging in an intentional, thoughtful, and honest conversation about stewardship, you will discover God’s call to be good stewards in your context.”

Adapted from Horizons Stewardship: horizons.net

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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UNITED METHODIST
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STEP 2.

CREATE A STEWARDSHIP STATEMENT:

What does the church believe about stewardship (biblically, practically, individually, and corporately)?

How might the church define good stewardship to a person who is new in faith?

Does the church understand stewardship as a shared calling, a nice habit, a private duty, a conversion experience, or something else?

Why give? Who or what am I giving to? What is the purpose of giving?

Is giving characterized by honoring, loving, cheerfulness, generosity, tithing, sacrifice, habit, ownership, discipline, gratefulness, duty, dedication, grace, joy, blessing, or something else?

Does the church intentionally and consistently create opportunities to preach and teach about stewardship?

Could church members describe what the church believes about stewardship? Is there a common understanding of what it means to be God’s steward?

Are church leaders expected to practice what the church believes about stewardship?

How does the church intentionally teach new members about its stewardship beliefs and expectations?

Does your church, as an organization, practice and exemplify good stewardship?

IGNITE 2018 Unveils 'World Changers' Theme

By Josh Kinney
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WILDWOOD – It's no surprise that IGNITE has embraced the theme 'World Changers' for the 2018 conference which will be held September 28-30 at the Wildwoods Convention Center.

Over the past five years, IGNITE has changed the world. Over 2,000 churches have sent groups to the annual youth conference in Wildwood, over 4,000 participants have attended, and there have been over 2,000 commitments or re-commitments to Christ. In 2017 alone, 80,000 meals were packed and sent to Zambia in Southern Africa, over 40 young adults were provided community and connection through the 'IGNITE Squad' while GNJ launched 'Next Generation

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Ministries' to re-energize ministry with youth in New Jersey.

"A world changer recognized the Divine Spark which has been placed within them," said Eric Drew, Director of Worship and IGNITE Leader. Based on Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world" the theme seeks to remind students that the light Jesus refers to is them.

"They don't hide who God has called them to be; they claim their identity and God's purpose for their lives," said Drew. "A world changer has an impact on the

world around them. Following Jesus changes the world for us and others."

At IGNITE 2018, students from grades 6-12 from around the region will gather in Wildwood to claim their 'Divine Spark' within and be released to go change the world.

"I want students to know that they have that divine spark within them," said Drew. "They're created by God, in God's image and can build their foundation on Christ, not what others say, think or do. When they do, they'll find that God made them with a purpose, not to hide but to shine God's light and love for all to see."

In 2018, the IGNITE team dreams of 150 churches coming together for one weekend of worship, spiritual growth and fun. They're seeking 50 churches who have never been to IGNITE to send

groups and anticipate 1,000 students committing or re-committing their lives to Christ. They also seek to double the number of young adults serving on the 'IGNITE Squad.'

"When students claim their divine spark and place their identity in Christ, the world changes for us," said Drew. "We will live differently, and that will change the world. Sharing God's light and love around us means that we spark peace, hope, and justice for our communities. We want IGNITE students to live into God's call on their lives to change the world."

To find out more about the 2018 IGNITE 'World Changers' Conference, view schedule, artist lineup, workshops, resources, and to register visit www.ignitenj.org

Ashes Lead to Communion as Church Goes Outside

By Rev. Elaine Wing
elainedwing@gmail.com

BERGEN CO. - Positive encounters with more than 150 commuters and residents passing through Palisade District towns in Bergen County on Ash Wednesday motivated two GNJ pastors to offer the Sacrament of Holy Communion and prayer outside their churches on Wednesdays, March 7, and April 4 from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m.

Rev. JongIn Lee of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Bergenfield, and Rev. Elaine Wing of Calvary United Methodist in Dumont, were optimistic that people would want to receive Communion and personalized prayer on their way to work or taking their children to school. The two months served as test runs to expand the "outside ministry" for the future.

"We both experienced people thanking us for making the ashes available to them at the start of Lent, so why not the

Lord's Supper once a month," said Pastors Wing and Lee. "We want to serve the people in our communities and to share God's love by praying confidentially with people about the needs they identify."

Wing and Lee each spoke of significant prayer requests raised by people who came to them on Ash Wednesday at commuter bus stops and in their parking lot.

"We feel that not only will Communion be meaningful, but that a mid-week prayer or blessing will give everyone a spiritual boost!" they added.

While some believe the Sacrament of Communion should be given only within the sanctuary, Wing cites how John Wesley said "the world is your parish." She tells a favorite story about Communion during a food and clothing run to Lower Manhattan years ago.

"I put a Communion table a short distance from the food truck, so no one felt pressured," she said. "Many people came over to me and were so grateful. One boy about six- seven years old asked what I was doing. His mother explained the Lord's Supper in beautiful and simple words before we prayed and he dipped the bread in the cup of juice. Minutes after



Rev. Elaine Wing of Calvary United Methodist in Dumont took God to the streets for Ash Wednesday. Photo provided by Rev. Elaine Wing

they stepped away, the little boy came back asking for more. With eyes as big as saucers, he said, 'That bread is so good!' My response was that God's love is good and that we can always return for more."

The ministry will not be offered if the weather is extremely inclement. People can remain in their cars or get out. Bread or gluten free wafers are dipped into the chalice of grape juice for sanitary reasons.

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IGNITECONFERENCE

Churches Join Forces, Form Youth Collective

By Denise Herschel
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EDISON - Their first meeting was only held four months ago but since that time they have already become a vibrant cohort youth ministry of about 25 students from six small United Methodist churches in central New Jersey. The Youth Collective of the Raritan River was formed on December 1, 2017 at the Wesley UMC in Edison for students in grades six through twelve to have a space to grow in faith in their local communities.

As the brainchild of Conklin UMC Senior Pastor James Lee, also GNJ Manager of Visual Arts, the Youth Collective launched as he began "dreaming of a joint youth ministry with small churches in the geographical area" around Conklin UMC in South River.

"I started calling churches around Conklin and when contacting Pastor Namjo Jin of Wesley UMC in Edison," said Lee. "He told me that he had been talking with Pastor Federico Quezada of Matawan UMC/Grace UMC in Union Beach about doing something together. We then got together and dreamed up the Youth Collective."

Each of these small churches found difficulty in having a quality youth ministry

without a critical mass.

"Conklin did not have any youth ministry prior to this collective," said Lee. He added that all of the pastors were struggling with the same dilemma, which was a call to start a youth ministry but only having two or three students in their churches.

"Once all of our paths collided, the rest has been history," said Lee. "Our group meets the first and third Fridays of every month and a different church hosts the gathering each month."

According to Lee, the Youth Collective includes Conklin UMC in South River, Wesley UMC in Edison, Trinity UMC in South Amboy, Matawan UMC in Matawan, Grace UMC in Union Beach and Simpson UMC in Old Bridge. Pastors Jin, Quezada, Lee, Matawan UMC lay leader Lisa McArthur-Riccardi and Youth Director Steven Wegrzyn all help run the group.

Each meeting, only open to students in grades six through 12, begins with dinner, typically pizza and tacos. Games are then led by McArthur-Riccardi with Lee leading music and Jin leading a Bible Study.

Lee added that it is important for youth to have a space to grow in faith in community with fellow youth. He said



Six United Methodist Churches in Central New Jersey have banded together to create a vibrant youth ministry known as The Youth Collective of the Raritan River. Photo provided

that for many students, they have never experienced faith in community.

"They are building friendships with people of similar age and faith. I hope this collective is allowing them to experience community," he continued.

The significant success of the Youth Collective of the Raritan River is evident as there are more than 20 students who attend each meeting. Current students invite their non-Christian friends to attend as well and Simpson UMC in Old Bridge

has recently joined the group's meetings.

The Youth Collective of the Raritan River meets the first and third Friday of every month with each church rotating per month. For additional information contact Pastor Namjo at 201-667-9777 or Youth Director Steven Wegrzyn at stevenw1993@msn.com. Interested in starting a Next Generation ministry or collaborating to start one in your church? Contact Next Gen Coordinator Ryan Clements at rclements@gnjumc.org



In CUMAC'S Walls

A 2018 Series on the power of miracles in GNJ



Pictured above: CUMAC's pantry team in Paterson. Photo provided by Adrian Diaz

PATERSON – Adrian Diaz pays witness to the miracles she sees on a daily basis working at CUMAC in Paterson. "A girl walked into our pantry with her family on a bitter winter day," shared Diaz, the organization's Communications Coordinator. "They rushed inside for shelter and a CUMAC's team members greeted the family to make them feel welcome. The CUMAC worker noticed that the girl has a single sock over her fingers to help keep her hands warm. However, the sock is soaking wet from the snow and the girl's hands are ice cold."

"Without hesitation, our CUMAC team takes a warm pair of gloves, winter hat and stuffed animal from the Community Closet. The girls' face lit up in joy and in that moment she no longer was worried about staying warm or what's for dinner. Offering hospitality warmth and a good meal to this young girl and dozens like her is made possible through the kindness and generosity of the CUMAC community. This kind of generosity creates miracles and around here, they happen all the time."

Bags of goods prepared for families are carefully packed by volunteers each day to keep shelves stocked throughout the month. From the fruits and vegeta-

bles to the meat and dairy products, the food is donated regularly by individuals, groups, and churches who look beyond their own kitchen tables and understand how important a meal can be to someone who is hungry.

"CUMAC staff goes the extra mile to ensure that every client gets the support and care they need most, day in and day out," said Diaz. "So many moving parts and so much kindness all come together here to help make a difference. Every day small miracles happen in these walls and we're so thankful to all who help make our mission to feed people and change lives possible."

CUMAC is currently seeking individuals and groups to help sort, pack, and distribute food for clients on weekdays as well as volunteers to assist drivers with daily pickups. The organization's Community Closet is in need of blankets, pillow cases, bedding, baby items, girls and boys clothing, spring and plus size clothing, suits, and shoes. Consider donating new or gently used items to help someone in need. If you're interested in getting involved or want to learn more, please call (973)-742-5518 or email volunteer@cumacecho.org

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THE GNJ DIGEST
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Fishers of Men, Fixers of PC's Church-Sponsored Course Trains Residents for IT Jobs

By Claire Lowe
claire.lowe@pressofac.com

ATLANTIC CITY — Inside a back room of Asbury United Methodist Church on Thursday, five people gathered for the second time this week. Instead of biblical lessons, the group was getting a primer on the basics of a computer.

The students, of varying ages and backgrounds, were all there for the same reason: opportunity.

"This came right at the right time," said Henry Porvaznik, 55, of Atlantic City. "I need to know this stuff for my job, and I wouldn't have been able to afford it otherwise."

This week, Asbury United Methodist Church began a pilot program to offer Cisco-certified training to area residents as a way to provide career training outside of a typical education setting.

Keith Harris, 60, of Atlantic City, received a degree in computer science in the 1980s. He said he wanted to support his church and refresh his computer knowledge.

"I wanted to bring my skills up to par," Harris said.

The IT Essentials course, which meets twice a week at the church, is open to anyone 18 or older. The students learn the basics of information technology and can receive certification so they can apply for entry-level IT jobs.

The church received grants from the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey and the Stroser Foundation to implement the academy. The Rev.

William Williams said the course is the same one offered at community colleges but, at \$250, it is affordable for many more people.

Williams said the idea for the program started five years ago when the church decided it wanted to help out the schools in an innovative way.

Atlantic City and the surrounding region have been struggling with high unemployment since the latest recession. Recognizing that, and noting the biggest employer outside of the casinos is the William J. Hughes Technical Center in Egg Harbor Township, Williams said, the church wanted to offer programs that prepare the community for careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

"We understand in the African-American community that a lot of our students suffered in proficiency in math and science," Williams said. "I think we can do a lot better in how we prepare our students."

Williams said his previous work in Nebraska introduced him to the Cisco Networking Academy and he was able to make a connection with the local Cisco support center, the Camden Dream Center.

"We onboard new academies, which are in traditional and nontraditional educational centers," said Dream Center Director Keith Davis.

Davis said they are now seeing more requests for training at nontraditional academies, like the one at Asbury UMC, because of the lack of educational funding.



Course instructor AL Maddox, center, of Pleasantville, shows Atlantic City residents Chez Crisden, 41, Keion Marshall, 23, Keith Harris, 60, and Henry Porvaznik, 55, how to work on a computer at Asbury UMC. The church is hosting a pilot program to train residents in information technology systems so they can apply for entry-level IT jobs. Photo by Craig Matthews, Press of Atlantic City Staff Photographer

"Tax bases have shifted and resources have diminished, resulting in community organizations stepping up to the plate to address workforce needs and training," Davis said. "That's what's happening across the country now."

Davis said the Cisco Networking Academy is the world's largest classroom for IT training. The academy is offered through the technology conglomerate's social responsibility arm.

He said students who go through the academy have the opportunity to get jobs that could net them six-figure salaries.

"This is serious stuff," Davis said. The community supports Williams and the church's initiative.

"Pastor William Williams has been an integral part of this community since he's

been at Asbury," said Atlantic City Council President Mary Small, 2nd Ward representative. "This program will be a great asset to residents, as a whole, trying to get training outside a typical school and education setting."

Williams said churches can always do more to play a bigger role in educating the community, including supporting existing after-school programs and members volunteering in local schools.

"We need to do a better job of supporting our schools," he said. "Education is a form of justice."

Williams said they are currently training volunteers to teach additional courses at Asbury UMC.

This article originally appeared in The Press of Atlantic City

GNJ Communicators and Podcast Honored at UMAC

Continued from page 1

audience, Cambron said, where growth can occur. Matt Smith, Social Media Specialist for Visit Philly, spoke about radical hospitality he calls "surprise and delight". Specifically, Visit Philly's social media campaign leading up to the Super Bowl asked Philadelphia ex-patriots what they missed most about their city. They received many, many replies—so they sent out care packages to homesick Philadelphians with items including Wawa iced tea, Tasty Kakes, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and cheese steaks.

Other speakers included Bishop Peggy Johnson, Rev. Robin M. Hynicka, Rev. Dr. Mark Tyler of Mother Bethel AME. Carolyn Conover, Director of Communications, co-hosted the awards with John Coleman, Director of Communications for Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Conover, who was awarded last year's Communicator of the Year, took the stage with Coleman after a short, comical GNJ-produced video was streamed featuring GNJ staff pretending to "try out" for the role of awards host.

The communications team at GNJ brought home six awards for excellence, including a Best in Class Award for the Uncovered Dish Christian Leadership Podcast.

"If you haven't been listening to this podcast, you should catch up now," said Bishop John Schol. "The people of Greater New Jersey continue to shine as they put their best work forward for God."

This award recognizes The Uncovered Dish as leading the denomination with the quality of its production and the messages it shares. Communicators and leaders from across the denomination are listening in regularly.

"The podcast was always a side passion project for us, and we're blessed that it's being recognized at the denominational level," said James Lee, Manager of Visual Arts and podcast founder. He added, "Several conferences and organizations have since contacted us about helping them start their own podcasts, and we've been happy to share our experiences with them and coach them through the process. We keep asking ourselves how we can improve our podcast even more."



James Lee, Visual Arts Manager, sits with his daughter Amy at the 2018 UMAC Awards banquet in Philadelphia where he was presented with the First Place award for Best in Class podcast. Photo provided by Julie Lee

Other Communications awards included The Relay's 'Apostles in our Midst' series and Page 3 resourcing, the 2017 IGNITE "Fired Up" Highlights video, Stop Doing Ministry Alone Laity Academy Video, and the Water & Roots campaign. Also our vital mission partner, United Methodist Communities received awards for their postcard invitations and blog.

The 2019 UMAC gathering will take place in St. Louis, Missouri, Feb. 21-22, right before the special session of General Conference as well as after, on Feb. 27, for a half day postmortem as those communicating the church's story navigate the changes to come.

In July, 2018, James Lee will take over as Pastor of Wesley UMC in South Plainfield. GNJ is seeking to fill the position of Media Production Manager who will produce video content and manage the media production studio for GNJ and its vital mission partners. This position elevates the communication of GNJ by creating high quality, innovative and dynamic media that grows understanding and inspires engagement to recruit and equip transformational leaders to make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world. For a full job description and to apply, visit gnjumc.org/job-opportunities

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Featuring Susan Beaumont and Catherine Jordan-Latham

As a pastor, you're the staff manager of the church. But with a staff comes the inevitability of having to fire someone. In a church, that is a really difficult situation. There is an emotional investment in churches that is absent in other sphere and ties into our spiritualities and theologies. So many churches ending up holding onto ineffective employees or are really, really bad at hiring and firing.

Consultant, author, and coach Rev. Susan Beaumont comes on the Uncovered Dish Podcast to talk about better church staff management and everything in between. Rev. Catherine Jordan-Latham of Monmouth Grace UMC in Eatontown NJ guest-co-hosts.



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In Camden, 'Pop Up Library' answers a need to read

By Kevin Riordan
kriordan@phillynews.com

CAMDEN - The browsing began as soon as Tom Martin opened his one-hour Camden County Pop Up Library near the RiverLine's Broadway stop.

"I'm one of his regulars," said David Stanley, describing himself as mostly a reader of history, but glad to find a copy of 'All the Light We Cannot See.'

Anthony Doerr's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel was just one of the fresh titles Martin had arranged on a folding table in downtown Camden on a recent Sunday afternoon.

The 61-year-old Oaklyn resident has been giving away new and gently used books on the streets of the city for about a year, and finds no shortage of folks who haven't lost their love of reading even if they have lost a job or a home.

"You can go down to the waterfront, kick back with a book, and spend the day enjoying yourself," explained Eligio Rivera, of Camden, who was pleased to find a couple of recent thrillers by superstar novelist James Patterson.

Genre fiction, literary fiction, and non-fiction, along with children's books and coffee-table volumes — all of them donated — are available for free, in hardcover or paperback, at the Pop Up Library.

"It's fascinating," said Martin, an avid reader and former stockbroker who grew up in Cherry Hill and works as a headhunter.

He started regularly distributing free books at the RiverLine stop, Cathedral Kitchen, which feeds the homeless and trains them in the culinary arts; New Visions, a day shelter for the homeless; Volunteers of America Delaware Valley

facilities; the city's Salvation Army Kroc Center; elementary schools; and other sites in January 2017.

"I knew right away this thing was going to work," Martin said as folks walked up to take a look at the library's latest offerings. "People took to it immediately. There's a thirst for books."

Perhaps 100 men, women and children regularly gather in the gravel parking area between the CVS store and the RiverLine on Sunday to wait for the regular mid-day meal provided by volunteers from the United Methodist Church of Turnersville.

Other churches and organizations, such as Friends of Fairview, distribute clothing or provide assistance to needy people every Sunday at the parking area. Many groups or individuals have done similar work, with little recognition and less fanfare, for years.

"There's so much good stuff going on under the radar in Camden," Martin noted, in between schmoozing with repeat visitors. "It's very cool. And it's so much fun talking to people about books."

Martin's Pop Up Library effort obtains books from local booksellers and distributors, as well as from private donors. It's a spin-off of a program organized by the Rev. Cherese Evans, pastor of the Magnolia United Methodist and the Pine Hill Memorial United Methodist churches, as part of her denomination's regional anti-poverty project.

"We bring books to where libraries don't go — to 20 different places and spaces, mostly in Camden County, where we pair up with food pantries and [other] programs," Evans said. "We've distributed about 2,000 books so far."

Scott Hartman's online book business, Hartman-Books.com, of Collingswood



Tom Martin (left) hands out books as they wait in line for food in a parking area near MLK Blvd. The Camden County Pop Up Library distributes free books to homeless and other folks in need downtown and at other sites in Camden. Photo by Michael Bryant, Philadelphia Inquirer staff photographer

has provided Martin with about 5,000 volumes to give away. "You're not just giving someone a few ounces of paper and glue," he said. "You're giving them the ability to change their life."

Said Julie Beddingfield, a Pop Up Library supporter and the owner of Inkwood Books in Haddonfield: "Imagine what life would be like if you never had" a book.

I try to imagine such a thing and can't. The tactile, intellectual and even spiritual pleasures of settling down with and being transported by a good book are incomparable, and there really are no words describe what it would be like to never share in that joy.

"People want to read, regardless of their circumstances," said Beddingfield. Last fall, she connected Martin with a publishing event that provided him with advance copies to distribute through the library.

Skeptics might see minimal value in such charity when so many people in the heart of Camden regularly line up for free meals. And what if folks accept a book and then sell it to get money for something less...edifying?

"I've given that a bunch of thought. I used to get nervous if someone was taking lots of books, but now, I just offer them a bag," says Martin.

"What if they do want to read them all? What if they're trying to build a little home library? I don't think [re-sales] happen that much."

Angela Boatright, a retired clergywoman who lives downtown and regularly pitches in at the Pop Up Library, sees books as tools with which people can improve their lives.

"Reading uses your imagination and exercises your brain," she said. "It keeps you sharp."

Turns out that providing people with books also can be a learning experience, said Martin.

"Some people who seem like they wouldn't be readers walk over and the next minute they're swapping ideas about books with someone else," he said. "Other people who stop by tell me they learned to read while they were incarcerated."

Jobless, homeless, addicted, mentally ill, hungry — or just hungry for something to read — people he meets on the street prove that "you can't judge whether people read or not by their appearance," Martin said. "You can't judge a book by its cover."

This story originally appeared in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* / *Philly Daily News* and *Philly.com*. Kevin Riordan is an *Inquirer* staff columnist.

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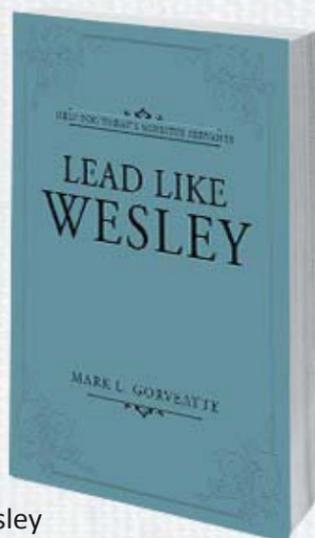
Cost: \$10. Lunch will be provided

For questions:

Please contact Southern Region Administrator, Jennifer Creran at jcreran@gnjumc.org.

Register at:

www.gnjumc.org/events/lead-like-wesley



MARK GORVEATTE



Mark Gorveatte has served as executive director for regional judicatories in three states. In these roles he has coached and served more than 200 pastors and church planters.



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2018 AWARDS RECIPIENTS

THE ROBERT B. STEELMAN METHODIST HISTORY AWARD

Robert Carlson, Centenary United Methodist Church

Sponsored by the Commission on Archives to recognize the best overall church history from United Methodists of Greater New Jersey.

The Commission on Archives and History is proud to present The 2018 Robert B. Steelman Methodist History Award to Centenary United Methodist Church of Metuchen, New Jersey. We congratulate Centenary UMC's Church Historian, Robert Carlson, for submitting a detailed history of the Christian witness by the disciples of the Metuchen congregation from its inception in 1866 to its 150th anniversary, which the church celebrated in 2016.

Mr. Carlson's thorough research of church documents and local history impressed the judges of the contest. The addition of many pictures and historical anecdotes made this a comprehensive a history as strong as any we have judged in recent years. A local church history is a narrative of the faith of a congregation. In future years, this history will supply the foundation for telling Centenary's ongoing story of engaging in vital, transformative ministry.

Bob Carlson is a 52 year member of Centenary UMC, where he has served on a variety of committees, chairing many. Recently he chaired the 150th Anniversary Committee, as well as writing the history. He taught the Adult Sunday Class for twenty-five years and is an active participant in Centenary's Summer Vacation Bible School. Prior to his retirement, he was Manager of Employee Communications and Community Relations for Novartis. He has two adult children and four grandchildren.

Church history entries were judged by commission members Morgan Glossbrenner, Nikolay Petrov and Donald DeGroat. Submissions for the 2019 Church History Contest are due by mid- January of next year.

THE HELENOR ALTER DAVISSON AWARD

Rosa Williams, Conference Lay Leader

Sponsored by the General Commission on Status and Role of Women as the outstanding woman for leadership and influence in the Greater New Jersey Conference of the United Methodist Church.



Galilee UMC.

Rosa Williams is a die hard, sold-out saint for Christ. She serves faithfully at the Galilee UMC and as a lay leader for the Greater New Jersey Conference. Whenever asked, Rosa has answered to the call and to go beyond her duties as a servant in the church. Her determination to see others connected to God and be in right relationship is phenomenal. She exemplifies a Woman of God and has served as a past president of the United Methodist Women at

A member in the United Methodist Women hall of fame, Rosa continues to support the cause of women locally and globally especially in the area of missions. She not only supports women but also any young people. Rosa is always willing and ready with resources that she has acquired to share with whomever is in need of them. Because of her consistencies in her demonstrating love and determination in her service at Galilee, many parishioners are growing spiritually.

She is the epitome of dedicated service, diligence and leadership and always well prepared to go the extra mile. A talented visionary, Rosa supports and promotes the various ministries inside and outside of the church.

For many years she has been the president of National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club in - Teaneck Englewood. They promote the interest of business and professional women, provide programs and award scholarships to recognize youth and uplifts the community. Rosa is a dynamic woman who genuinely gives her all to transforming lives.



THE FRANCIS ASBURY AWARD

Rev. Frances Preston, Christ UMC in Piscataway

Sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) board members of Greater New Jersey.



Rev. Frances Preston is the senior pastor at Christ Church in Piscataway. Several years ago, under her leadership, Christ UMC, began to work with seminary students to develop a campus ministry at Rutgers where they were able to make a connection with the International Students Community. The church works with the Rutgers International Friendship Program to host events and make connections. They have connected students with host families in the church for holiday meals at Thanksgiving, hosted

an international food party and sponsored other events for the international student community. Most recently, they have been working with the Rutgers Student Food Pantry. Christ UMC's own food pantry (Shepherds Shelves) has been helping to support the student food pantry at Rutgers with tangible donations and gift cards. Many of the international students use this resource.

Rev. Preston currently serves as registrar for the Raritan Valley DCOM. She has mentored numerous seminary students and graduates seeking ordination or certification in ministry in the UMC. And, she currently serves on the Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry."

THE HARRY DENMAN EVANGELISM AWARD

Timothy Myunghoon Ahn, Arcola Korean UMC

Sponsored by The Foundation for Evangelism to recognize a clergy member, lay person or a youth pastor who has an outstanding personal evangelism ministry.



Timothy Myunghoon Ahn has been in full-time ministry for over thirty years. During that time, he has pastored churches in Boston and New Jersey. Both churches grew from about thirty to one hundred fifty people. He is currently senior pastor of the Arcola Korean United Methodist Church (KUMC), where he has been leading for twenty years. He led a smooth transition as the second senior pastor of the church and led the \$4.5 million construction of the education wing of the church building.

Rev. Ahn is passionate about mission and outreach. He leads and participates in various local initiatives to further the gospel. Arcola KUMC is involved in an annual lunch outreach to homeless people in New York. During one of these lunches, Rev. Ahn spoke briefly on Psalm 121 which was of great encouragement to the homeless gathered.

Arcola also raises support and gives annual donations for the Center for United Methodist Aid to the Community (CUMAC) in Paterson, NJ.

Arcola KUMC is also heavily involved in global missions. The church supports Rev. Ahn as he leads training for local pastors two to three times annually in nations such as; Mexico, Bolivia, Laos, Bangkok, Cambodia and Mongolia. This past year, more than thirty people were baptized at Arcola's mission center in Bolivia during a revival conference led by Rev. Ahn.

At home, Rev. Ahn's ministry reaches people young and old. His paradigm for preaching is "why Jesus". He visits church members' homes frequently in ministry of presence, sharing Scriptures and prayers with the people. He conducts several funerals a year in which he always emphasizes the heavenly hope that is found in Christ Jesus. Arcola confirms around ten middle school students yearly and Rev. Ahn does Q&A sessions with the confirmation students to encourage them as they make the gospel faith their own. Arcola runs a two-semester per year discipleship program called Wesley Discipleship School, during which he and other pastors teach various faith building classes.

The church sees the impact of Rev. Ahn's ministry in the stability and steady growth of the church and his continuing evangelism and outreach inspires others to do the same for Jesus Christ.

St. Paul's in Brick Helps Transform Haitian Community

By Doug Buechler
douglassbuechler@comcast.net

BRICK - In January, a team of 15 from St. Paul's UMC in Brick returned from Lac'Ajue, Haiti, where they sought to build relationships and connect with the community. For the past four years St. Paul's has partnered with Aslan Ministries of Red Bank and Step of Faith Ministry of Brick in ministry to Haiti and in return, received changed hearts and lives themselves.

"Haiti means 'mountainous land' and a Haitian proverb says, 'After a mountain, another mountain,'" said Doug Buechler, Missions Chair at St. Paul's and a trip participant. "Each day a person wakes up realizing that he will climb with all his might all day and into the night to reach the top of the mountain in front of him. And tomorrow, the next day and every day of his life he will awake to another mountain that is equally tall and equally hard to climb."

This year the team from Brick ran a four day Bible Club which included 86 girls and 75 boys ranging in ages 4-13. The camp included singing, a Bible story and skit, craft, snack, relay game, parachute play and soccer during the four days of camp.

The mission trip was bigger than just

those who attended the trip, rather they represented a whole church of supporters.

- The UMW Circles provided 25 hygiene packs.
- The knitting and crocheting group made prayer squares and pocket crosses.
- The congregation provided 50 pairs of sneakers.
- The Sunday School children raised money from their mission walk to provide a meal of rice, beans and fish to the Haitian children and made each camper salvation bracelets.
- The congregation provided a crutch to a stroke victim that will assist his walking.
- One parishioner provided a personal collection of Beanie Babies for the children

"We couldn't wait to be with these kids," said a participant from St. Paul's. "And many of them arrived hours before, waiting patiently for the program to begin."

English as a second language was also taught to 35 of older teens in an effort to provide additional opportunities.

The team repaired the community faucets that provide clean water and installed an additional 500 gallon cistern to keep water flowing for the village. The



Haitian children celebrate their new pairs of shoes provided by the congregants of St. Paul's UMC in Brick. Photo provided

team was also able to repair leaks in the roof of a clinic and paint the inside trim. A centrifuge blood machine was provided to the clinic to make blood analysis more accurate.

Rice and beans were distributed to 66 families through the Grains of Grace program run by Step of Faith. This year, a 'pay it forward' goat program was instituted and nine families received a goat. With the goats, families can establish

a business and income; a challenge to most families due to the lack of business infrastructure in Haiti.

"This trip is not only fulfilling but life changing," said Buechler. "In Proverbs 14:31 it says 'Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.' The people of Lac'Ajue certainly touched the hearts of the team members who will keep them in prayer."

Using Our Biggest Asset: Changing Communities by Repurposing Buildings

Continued from page 1

on these highly skilled professionals to help guide the process to see their vision bear fruit. A Future With Hope staff helps the congregation connect with the community to engage in mission needs and process, The Stewardship Foundation helps the congregation with financing and supporting the program through grants and fundraising and Nehemiah Properties will lead the redevelopment of the property working with architects, builders and permits.

"We'll work with your congregation, leaders, community, and local govern-

ment to help you discern your property's potential and the Foundation will help plan the funds," said Rev. Clifford Still, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

As part of legislation in the 2018 Annual Conference Session, the Board of Trustees submitted a relationship statement with Nehemiah Properties. If passed, Nehemiah Properties will become a vital mission partner, similar in scope to A Future With Hope and the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey. These separate but related nonprofit organizations help GNJ fulfill and expand its mission

while at the same time are self-funded, taking the management and financial responsibility of these efforts outside the shared ministry formula.

"Nehemiah Properties will help our congregations use the assets they have to build community inroads, new mission opportunities and creative worship spaces so that they grow alongside their communities in innovative and responsible ways," said Tara Maffei a Hope Center Developer with A Future With Hope who works on the project team for Nehemiah Properties. "It can be an exciting time for congregations ready to

make real change in their communities."

Vacancies due to building damages in excess of the current structures' value, unoccupied buildings resulting from mergers, change in demographics or movement in communities, and buildings that would better serve mission in a community through a different, more cost effective and sustainable use are all potential reasons for considering repurposing a church.

"If a church is interested, they should reach out," said Mayer. "We will guide the congregation and community each step of the way, from start to finish."

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—JANET WENHOLZ
GRANT WRITER,
OPERATION FREEDOM PAWS

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—Rev. Charles A. Sayre, Ph.D., pastor (retired),
Haddonfield United Methodist Church

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Unity Between Two Faiths Celebrated in Cape May County

By Rev. Glenn A. Scheyhing
gscheyhing@gmail.com

CAPE MAY COUNTY - In the midst of a world filled with turmoil, war, and division, two faith communities in the Cape Atlantic District are aiming for the higher goal of "Peace & Unity." That is the title of the recent series of gatherings between Tabernacle United Methodist Church in Erma, Lower Township, and Congregation Beth Judah in downtown Wildwood.

In November 2017, the EPIC Youth Group (Everything's Possible In Christ) from Tabernacle visited the Beth Judah Temple for a meal and a tour and a time of great fellowship and deep learning about Methodism's Jewish roots. The Torah scrolls of the five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) were displayed. Each youth was encouraged to touch the scroll with the Yad ("hand" in Hebrew), a metal pointer used as a guide for reading to avoid physically touching the holy parchment.

One month later, EPIC joined students from Wildwood Catholic High School for a Friday evening Shabbat (Sabbath) service at Beth Judah. Rabbi Ronald Isaacs, the leader of the congregation, took time during each portion of the service to explain its significance to the Jewish people. Even though this event happened on the same night as the Wildwood Christmas Parade, "Rabbi Ron" as he is known, did not miss a beat. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed refresh-

ments in the adjacent fellowship hall. Part of the celebration included kugel, a pudding/casserole dish made of egg noodles and/or potatoes traditionally served on Shabbat.

In early February 2018, the members of Beth Judah and Tabernacle joined together in the Tabernacle sanctuary for further Peace & Unity. It was an hour of scripture and story from Isaacs, his wife Leora, and Tabernacle's Associate Pastor, Rev. Jennifer Bolton. After this encouraging and uplifting time, all joined in the narthex for refreshments, further conversation, and of course, more kugel.

Isaacs said the theme of peace and unity is very relevant "because we have so many divisions within our own country as well as the world-at-large." He added that when it comes to people of different faiths there also is much miscommunication and that it's important for those in each faith to learn from the other, "what it has in common and work together for the common good." Isaacs highlighted Psalm 34:4 emphasizing that "working to bring more peace into the world is considered an important Jewish virtue, and it must be pursued at all times." He added that Beth Judah is the only Jewish presence in all of Cape May County. Isaac's relationship with Bolton, who has been involved with Beth Judah for a couple of years prior to Isaac's arrival, made Tabernacle a natural partner for such a gathering and he hopes to have more partnership opportunities going forward.



The EPIC Youth Group of Tabernacle UMC in Erma, Lower Township visited the Beth Judah Temple in Wildwood for a meal and time of fellowship and learning about Methodism's Jewish roots. Photo provided

Bolton said the Peace & Unity event is important because "we live in a world full of fear and misconception." Bolton added that she was surprised at some of the curious and perceived confused comments received upon telling others of her involvement at a Jewish synagogue.

"It is always the unknown that scares us the most," she said, sharing her joy of meeting new friends, learning new things, and having awesome experiences.

"Once the people see [the unknown] for themselves, they realize it's not that bad," she said. "Peace and unity come from knowing one another, sharing memories, and creating experiences."

Bolton stresses, however, that talking about peace is not enough – "acting out peace is how it is truly achieved." She hopes that this relationship with Beth Judah will continue and flourish, "moving us forward to one day sharing perfect peace."

Rabi Isaacs is encouraged that the GNJ Annual Conference meeting is in Wildwood [May 20-22, at the Convention Center] and encourages GNJ attendees to stop by. Those interested can visit bethjudah temple.org for more information. Erma Tabernacle can be reached at ErmaTabernacle.org

Cross-Cultural, Racial Training an 'Eye-Opening' Experience

Continued from page 1

Yun believes the key to cross-racial, cross-cultural ministry is to cultivate self-awareness and grow in intercultural competency as emphasized in the trainings.

"The trainings reminded me that learning how to cross into someone else's cultural world first requires a growing understanding of my own cultural self," Yun said.

One of the exercises conducted in the training showed the group that multiple parts make up a cultural identity, such as organizational belonging, work, faith tradition, income, race, ethnicity, age, gender and sexual orientation, and that every relationship is cross-cultural in one way or another.

"This training wasn't just about the relationship between myself as a Korean pastor and my congregation that is predominately white," said Yun. "For us it was more about how we could build a better cultural understanding in our church and the surrounding community and how we, as a community of disciples could continue to welcome and reach out to strangers, especially those who haven't been reached out to, are neglected, or are marginalized."

As a way of implementing some of the training's insights, Succasunna UMC organized a hospitality ministry team and prepared to build evangelism ministry. They also recently held an event called "International Dinner Night" where the congregation was to invite family and friends in the community. While sharing 36 different cultural dishes with over 110 people, the church celebrated cultural diversity within and among themselves, affirming it as 'God's gift.'

"The affirmation was that my difference from you is my gift to you. Your difference from me is your gift to me," said Yun. He added, "It's a saying I learned from my candidacy mentor, Rev. Brandon Cho."

Yun acknowledges that problems can arise due to lack of self and other-awareness as well as the fear of the

unknown or the new.

"There is virtually nowhere we can go without having to deal with people who are culturally different from us in our everyday lives and ministries today," said Yun.

Amid GNJ's commitment to diversity, there is significant room to grow, with racial ethnic diversity representing 22% of weekly worshipers, yet almost 50% of the state's population. Rev. Juel Nelson, Director of Leadership praised GNJ for its ever-growing diversity.

"We want to encourage these cross-cultural, cross-racial opportunities because they bring more richness to our churches," she said.

Rev. Sung Chun Ahn of Centenary UMC in Berlin attended two of the trainings and described the experience as "tremendous."

"We were able to have a chance to think about basic questions like 'what is culture?' 'what are cultural differences?' and 'how can we understand each other?'" said Ahn. "Fundamentally, the main focus of the questions was to open ourselves up for new challenges. Transition is not always an easy process for both clergy and congregations. A cross racial cross cultural pastor brings a whole different culture and it can be a cause of conflict between an old and new atmosphere and anxiety that relates to the new experience. But I believe cross racial cross cultural ministry is a blessing from God, because God calls us to the particular church setting we're serving for God's Kingdom. The more I open myself, the more my congregation opens themselves as well. The best practice is to do what Jesus taught us: love one another as we love ourselves."

For more information on Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural appointments, review GCORR's resource titled 'Learning from Strangers' available at www.gcorr.org where valuable articles, video clips, and lectures about Cross-Cultural, Cross-Racial ministry can also be found.

LOCAL CHURCH GRANTS

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

COMMUNICATIONS
United Methodist Communications
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2017 NEW CHURCH START GRANTS:

Grace-Bethel Korean UMC | Leonia NJ
Hope @ Mt. Laurel | Mt. Laurel NJ

2017 WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS:

Clonmell UMC	Indian Mills UMC
Conklin UMC	Montana UMC
Covenant UMC	Mt. Zion Wesley UMC
Crosswicks UMC	Plainville UMC
Emmanuel UMC	St. Andrews UMC
First UMC Dover	St. Paul's UMC Thorafare
First UMC of Hammonton	Totowa UMC
First UMC Westfield	Tuckahoe UMC
Frankford Plains UMC	UMC in Branchville
Grace-Bethel Korean UMC	Venice Park UMC
Groveville UMC	Wesley UMC
Hamilton Memorial UMC	Wesley Petersburg UMC
Iglesia Metodista Unida Wesley	Woodbridge UMC
Iglesia Nuevo Nacimiento UMC	

2018 GRANTS FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

UMCOM is in the process of reconstructing grants for 2018 to better fit local church needs. Applications for New Church Start grants and Website Development will open soon. For more info, go to: www.umcom.org

 **COMMUNICATIONS**
United Methodist Communications

The May 2018 Issue Deadline is April 16, 2018

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

Reserve Space for Your Focus Group at Annual Conference

If your group or committee would like to schedule a special gathering at the Wildwoods Convention Center, visit gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference to complete the form. The deadline to reserve a meeting space is April 27.

ERT Training Session April 28

An Early Response Team (ERT) training session will be held on April 28 at Middletown UMC. Visit gnjumc.org/disasterresponsefor for event details and to register.

UMVIM Leadership Training May 19

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) will be hosting a leadership training session on May 19 at First UMC, Glassboro. Lunch will be provided. Visit gnjumc.org/events to register.

Plan a Fall Stewardship Campaign

The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey encourages churches wanting Fall campaign resourcing to make requests in April and May. For the best possible results, an early start with planning is best. Visit gnjumc.org/umsf to contact. So far, 87 churches and organizations across GNJ have invested approximately 46 million with The Foundation.

Register for Mission U 2018

Mission U is hosting two one day events, July 14 at Georgian Court University in Lakewood and July 21 at Calvary Korean UMC in East Brunswick, and a 3 day event option, July 13-15 at Georgian Court University. Classes include: embracing wholeness, what about our money, missionary conferences UMC, Korean class, and conference study. Visit gnjumc.org/mission-u-2018 for details and to register.

GNJ Peace with Justice Grant Application for 2018 Now Available

The GNJ Board of Church & Society believes that vital congregations are deeply rooted in mercy and justice ministries. Applications for the Peace with Justice Grant program may be submitted by any group related to GNJ - a local church; GNJ agency, district, or by two or more such groups in cooperation. Applications are due May 1. Visit gnjumc.org/church-and-society for details.

Does a Pastor Need Personal Insurance?

YES. Church insurance only protects the parsonage and its church-owned contents. A pastor residing in a church owned parsonage must purchase renters insurance to cover their personal liability and property/contents. Visit gnjumc.org/insurance to learn more.

Moving Expenses for Clergy Become Taxable Income beginning 2018

The IRS have made recent changes to federal tax laws pertaining moving expenses for clergy. Those clergy who are moving in 2018 will have church-paid moving costs reported as income on their W-2 form for 2018 taxes. Visit gnjumc.org/taxes for the statement provided by the legal team at the General Council on Finance & Administration.

Wespath Partners with NutriSavings

Wespath's Center for Health has partnered with NutriSavings to bring you a new program adding health-focused, cost-savings opportunities to your grocery shopping experience, recopies, and meal planning. Visit wespath.org/nutrisavings to learn more.

OBITUARIES

Marion McVeigh, spouse of Retired Elder Rev. Malcolm McVeigh, died on March 16. A Memorial Service will be held on Nov. 18 at Cedar Grove UMC in Toms River. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent in memory of Marion McVeigh to Mercy Ships www.mercyships.org or Cedar Grove UMC, 797 Bay Ave., Toms River, NJ 08753. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Malcolm McVeigh, 15 Michigan Ave., Whiting, NJ 08759

Rev. Herman Otto Bips, Retired Elder, died on March 20. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Herman Bips III, 209 West Frierson Ave., Tampa, FL 33603

Bertha Levant, spouse of Retired Local Pastor Johnny Levant, died on Feb. 13. A Memorial Service was held on Feb. 24 at Harper's Funeral Home in Claxton, GA. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) and expressions of sympathy may be sent to Pastor Johnny Levant, 2209 Gus Tippins Rd., Claxton, GA 30417

Rev. Robert Beyer, Retired Elder, died on Jan. 22. A Memorial Service was held on March 17 at Memorial UMC in Neptune City, NJ. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Pasadena Community Church – a United Methodist Congregation, 227 70th Street South, Saint Petersburg, FL 33707. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mrs. Dorothy Beyer, 285 107th Ave., Apt. 709, Treasure Island, FL 33706

Jim Galuhn, spouse of Rev. Dr. Kathleen Billman, died on March 5. A Memorial Service took place on March 17 at East Side UMC in Chicago, IL. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to East Side UMC, 11000 S. Ewing Ave., Chicago, IL 60617. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Dr. Kathleen Billman, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615

Donald Stitzinger-Clark, spouse of Retired Elder Rev. June Stitzinger-Clark, died on Feb. 12. A Memorial Service was held on Feb. 16 at First UMC in Franklin, PA. A second Memorial Service took place Feb. 24 at Centenary UMC in Berlin, NJ. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to First UMC, 1102 Liberty Street, Franklin, PA 16323. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. June Stitzinger-Clark, 30 Rockwood Ave., Oil City, PA 16301

Rev. Charles W. Miller, Jr., Retired Elder, died on Jan. 31. Rev. Miller is father of Rev. Vicki Miller Brendler, Mr. Mark Miller and grandfather of Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty. A Memorial Service was held Feb. 20 at Knowlton UMC in Columbia, NJ. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent in Memory of Rev. Charles W. Miller, Jr. to Drew Theological Scholarship Fund or Planned Parenthood. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Carol Miller, 10 Belvidere Corner Rd., Mount Bethel, PA 18343

The May 2018 Issue Deadline is April 16, 2018



Center for Health

Blueprint for Wellness® Is Coming
Earn \$100 PulseCash* and Up to 120 Wellness Points

Wellness Points on HealthFlex/WebMD Website
January 1 – December 31, 2018



Virgin Pulse® Program
All Year



Blueprint for Wellness® Screening
April 1 – July 31



HealthQuotient (HQ)
August 1 – September 30



Event: GNJ Annual Conference

Date: Mon., May 21 and Tues., May 22

Time: 6 am to 9 am-this is a fasting test!

Location: Wildwoods Convention Center
Meeting Rooms 7 & 8

Register by: 5/7 for 5/21; 5/8 for 5/22

Register!

Strongly recommended for on-site event; walk-ins are very limited.

Required for screening at Quest Diagnostics facility to avoid out-of-pocket costs.

Online: wespath.org > HealthFlex/WebMD
Select "Quest Blueprint for Wellness"

Phone: 1-855-623-9355

Employer group: HealthFlex or United Methodist Church

Reasonable alternatives or waivers will be made available for those who cannot achieve recommended or improved measures due to an underlying medical condition. Requests for a reasonable alternative may be made by:

- E-mail: incentiverequest@wespath.org
- U.S. mail: Wespath Benefits and Investments
Attention: Incentive Request
1901 Chestnut Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025

We will work with you (and your primary care provider, if you wish) to find a reasonable alternative in order for you to be able to achieve the same reward.

Blueprint for Wellness (BFW) provides an opportunity to learn about your health, and earn \$100 PulseCash* and up to 120 Wellness Points (depending on your screening results) on your path to 150 Points (and \$150 more in PulseCash). You'll also receive personalized data on 30 health factors.



Blueprint for Wellness Highlights

- Incentives**—\$100 PulseCash* and up to 120 Wellness Points. Participant and spouse in HealthFlex can each earn incentives.
- Convenient options**—take the screening at our on-site event or at a local Quest Diagnostics facility.
- No cost to you if taken** at an on-site event or registered at a local Quest Diagnostics facility.
- Wellness Points**—earn 20 Points for each of six health measures that meet the American Heart Association's recommended range (or for showing improvement vs. your 2017 Blueprint for Wellness results). Six health measures that meet the criteria = **120 Wellness Points total**. If you didn't do Blueprint for Wellness in 2017, don't miss out in 2018!
- Fast the night before** for the most accurate results. Ask your doctor or other primary care provider (PCP) if it is safe for you to fast.
- Confidential results mailed directly to you.** Share the results with your PCP.

Learn More!
wespath.org > "HealthFlex/WebMD"

The 2018 Incentives FAQ includes details about registration, health measures and how to receive the screening incentive if you can't get to an on-site event or Quest Diagnostics facility.

Participation in HealthFlex wellness programs is voluntary.
The IRS considers cash wellness incentives as taxable income. Please consult your tax adviser.

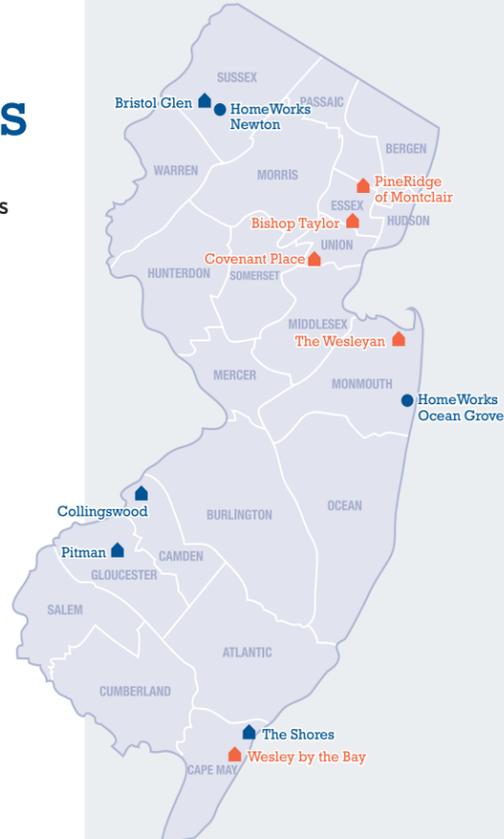


Abundant Choices For Seniors

United Methodist Communities brings compassionate care to New Jersey's seniors with our full suite of living and care options. This includes affordable senior housing; home care with HomeWorks; and assisted living, memory care, long-term care, rehabilitation, and hospice and palliative care in our full service communities. We offer independent living for active seniors in our continuing care retirement community.

Reach out to us for all of your senior living or care needs.

Call 732-922-9800 for additional information or visit our website, UMCommunities.org.



Home Office
3311 State Route 33 | Neptune, NJ 07753
732-922-9800 | www.UMCommunities.org



* Must be enrolled in HealthFlex and in Virgin Pulse to earn PulseCash.

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NEXT GENERATION

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

High school and middle school summer camps at
Pinelands Center are open for registration!

High School Leadership Boot Camp
Barefoot Republic Middle School Camp
Niños Para Cristo & Jovenes Para Cristo

Team sports, fine arts, music, outdoor adventures, discipleship and much more.

REGISTER YOUR YOUTH AT: www.gnjnextgen.org