

# THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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## Puerto Rican and Tanzanian Bishops to Address Annual Conference

By Josh Kinney  
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WILDWOOD – Missional partnerships will be a major highlight of Greater New Jersey's 2018 Annual Conference session in Wildwood on May 20-22. Bishop Hector Ortiz from the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico and Bishop Mande Muyombo of Tanzania's North Katanga area will join the conference to share with attendees and celebrate GNJ's commitment to their regions.

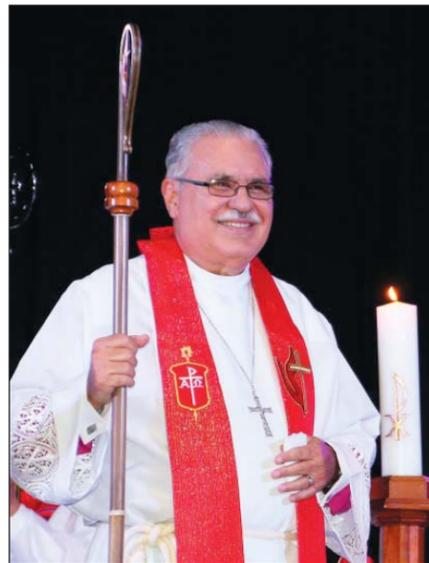
### Missional Partnership with Puerto Rico

The need in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria is personal for many in GNJ as congregations and surrounding communities have significant numbers of people with strong family ties to the island. From these concerns, GNJ United Methodists created Esperanza (Hope) for Puerto Rico, a grassroots effort to bring relief and resources to those struggling through the storm's devastating aftermath.

Working directly with Bishop Hector Ortiz of the Methodist Church in Puerto Rico and coordinating with UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), churches raised funds and gathered supplies. Shortly following the hurricane, GNJ delivered a \$50,000 check to the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico to provide immediate relief and supplies. Additionally, a funds and supplies drive through First UMC of Hightstown raised an additional \$50,000 and resulted in 27

pallets of food and six pallets of Christmas toys.

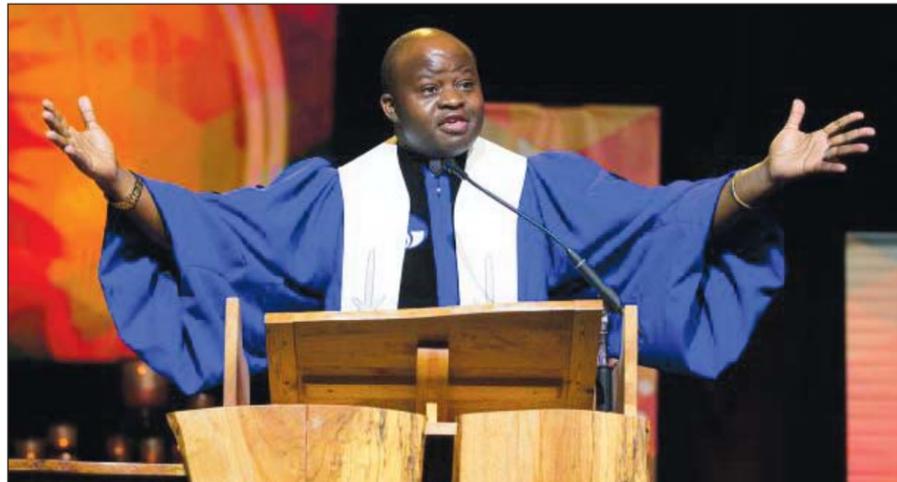
In December 2017, a team from GNJ embarked on a trip to Puerto Rico to assist with the organizing of recovery efforts after the recent hurricanes. Ortiz invited Bishop John Schol and a small team to meet with his staff and leaders about the



**Bishop Hector Ortiz of The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico.** Photo provided

long-term recovery of the island based on A Future With Hope's Sandy recovery ministry and talent.

"GNJ is a generous conference offering others our people, funds and experience," said Schol. "Bishop Ortiz reached out to me because everyone



**Bishop Mande Muyombo of Tanzania's North Katanga region.** Photo provided

who he talked to said GNJ did a great job responding to Superstorm Sandy."

Bishop Schol invited Bishop Ortiz to the GNJ 2018 Annual Conference Session to recognize the depth of the connection between the two conferences and to help kick off the Miracles Everywhere Campaign, which is under consideration in the legislative session of the conference.

Through its Miracles Everywhere Mission Campaign, GNJ will raise funds over the next three years to support the recovery, rebuilding and renewing of communities impacted by the hurricanes in coordination with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and the MCPR.

In addition, the missional partnership

with Puerto Rico includes cross cultural immersion experiences to foster youth, young adults, laity and clergy leadership exchanges to develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for one another's uniqueness, culture, history, spirituality and ministry in making disciples and transforming communities. It will also include joint educational experiences for laity and clergy to leverage best practices for growing and strengthening passionate disciples and vital congregations in a multicultural ministry field.

GNJ will work with the MCPR to provide appointment opportunities to Puerto Rican pastors without congregations because of Hurricanes Irma and Maria so that they can lead in GNJ congregations

*Continued on page 8*

## New Hispanic Faith Community Launches in Palisades Park

By Josh Kinney  
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PALISADES PARK – First United Methodist Church of Ridgefield Park was eager to grow. The congregation had a strong desire to see the church expand, earnestly seeking to reflect their extremely diverse, urban community. They faced two challenges: finance and leadership.

Palisades Park is an area largely populated by Hispanic immigrant families and day-laborers. The congregation in neighboring Ridgefield Park knew that if they wanted to grow they needed to meet the needs of this population which represented over six different nationalities. The church, with the help of a GNJ grant, took its first step in 2015 by launching a weekly Saturday Hispanic worship service and small group. By January 2018, the two challenges of finance and leadership had been solved, and the church planted a second site in Palisades Park, offering two services on Sunday and Tuesday.

"Our church leaders met and prayed about how to start from scratch," said FUMC Pastor Michelle Ryoo. "We received a grant from a GNJ vital congregation project but were told that there was not a pastor available in GNJ who spoke fluent Spanish and English."

Ryoo and the church leaders turned to the community and started asking around, looking for a pastor who would fit into their ministry. It was then that they came across Daniel Lee who had been ministering to Hispanic day laborers for years in Palisades Park, was fluent in Spanish and spent his young adult life in Argentina. He was an ordained pastor from the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA).

"We met and shared our vision to-

gether," said Ryoo. "His love and compassion for people was inspiring and we decided to partner in ministry." Since his initial involvement in 2015, Lee decided to serve the United Methodist Church and was certified and recommended as a licensed local pastor.

According to Lee, 30% of Palisades Park residents are Hispanic, coming from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Puerto Rico, The Dominican Republic, Columbia, Ecuador and Nicaragua.

"Many families here are socio-economically marginalized and live in households deeply impacted by joblessness, alcohol, drug addiction, culture shock, language barriers, sexual immorality and homelessness," said Lee. "To make matters worse, many are in debt, struggle with finances and need to work to support their families."

Lee shared that many of the area's Hispanic teenagers left their countries to try finding a better life in the U.S. Poverty, criminal gangs, political instability and recurring financial crises often conspire to make Latin American life more challenging than the U.S.

"Hundreds of Hispanic day laborers come to our town every morning looking for a job, so we are sharing the Gospel and the love of God every Tuesday through the service and the lunch fellowship, providing workers with a warm place to gather and a good meal," said Lee.

A local community organization assists individuals who have a variety of needs, ranging from how to completing applications and forms for services and employment, finding medical services, connecting with people who have similar struggles and helping migrants adapt to life in a different culture. The local pastors and volunteers come from different



**Congregants worship at First UMC of Ridgefield Park's new Hispanic church plant in Palisades Park.** Photo by Rev. Heeyoung Lim of Lyndhurst UMC

nationalities and denominational backgrounds but work as a team.

"Working together, I learned a lot and became more humble in the Lord," said Lee. He attributes the daily growth of the church to God's grace and guidance. He celebrates the congregation who have come to know Jesus and experience changed lives. Some have

become leaders and are "very faithful sincere followers of Christ, serving God and God's people, boldly sharing the Gospel message with other Hispanics in the streets," said Lee.

The ministry focuses on building relationships and venturing out into the community to do so such as at restaur-

*Continued on page 9*

## Who are GNJ's Vital Mission Partners?

By Josh Kinney  
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NEPTUNE –What are Vital Mission Partners, what do they do, and how do they relate to GNJ? This article breaks down these separate but related non-profit organizations which help GNJ fulfill and expand its mission. These self-

funded partners take the management and financial responsibility of their efforts outside GNJ's shared ministry formula, existing to benefit and bolster the work and ministry of GNJ's local churches. Let's explore each of these partners and how they relate to the bigger picture mission of Greater New Jersey.

*Continued on page 10*

# A Message from the Bishop



Leaders are the engine that drive the train, architects that shape the path, catalysts that spark enthusiasm. The future of the church and its mission is dependent on leaders with a deep and abiding faith in Jesus Christ and a Holy Spirit passion to lead and serve God in every situation.

In April, I led a two day retreat with our clergy who will be recognized, ordained and commissioned. I was inspired by their intellect, passion to serve and lead and commitment to Christ and the church. It made me remember just how important leadership is for the church. For the next two months I want to examine not only who leaders are and what they do, but *why* they do it.

This month, I want to elaborate on five expectations of all leaders and next month, the three types of leadership to seek and cultivate.

We have five expectations of clergy and lay leadership. These expectations are based on our understanding that leaders will move the mission forward to make disciples of Jesus Christ and grow vital congregations to transform the world. The following are our five expectations and the *why* behind them.

1. Connect and relate well with church leadership, the congregation and community residents.

Relationships are the currency that moves the mission forward. People are at the heart of the mission and relating well is essential. The relationships leaders create are not based in friendship, although leaders should be friendly. The relationships leaders create are based in connection and respect. Sometimes in the church, leaders try to make their people happy. They do this because the church sometimes values happiness over discipleship. They are not mutually exclusive. Jesus said discipleship is putting yourself last, giving away what you have, carrying someone's backpack the second mile, turning the other cheek, and sacrifice. These are not the things that make for happiness but make for discipleship. Connecting leadership taps into the spiritual and discipleship yearnings of people to create a path to walk together. Connecting leadership can be counted on because the leader consistently does the right thing (character) and is competent and effective in their leading (ability to lead toward positive results). Congregations that are happy but are not making progress are not being led well. Congregations that are challenged and are making progress are often being led well.

2. Develop leaders within the congregation and community.

Leadership is not a solo enterprise. Leadership is the key to the future and the more competent leaders we have, the stronger the mission becomes. The best leaders make and develop the leaders around them. They are mentoring, supporting and teaching others to grow into leadership and improve their leadership. Our strongest congregations have many talented leaders and the core leaders of the church are constantly sharing leadership with others and developing new leaders. I once heard a lay person say, 'I am using what I learn about leadership from my church in my business.' That is making principled leaders.

3. Lead the congregation to deeper faith and service in the world.

Some congregations are a mile wide and an inch deep. Jesus described these congregations in the parable of the sower. The seeds never take root because there is no depth of soil. Congregations grow deeper to grow wider and further. Depth of faith and depth of service in the world becomes contagious, inspiring and lasting.

4. Increase vitality through inspiring worship and messages, attracting and making new disciples, and engaging disciples in small groups, community hands-on mission and generous giving.

The vitality of a church is developed and maintained by engaging disciples in five ministries: passionate worship, small groups, hands-on mission, generous giving and making new disciples. Increasing a congregation's vitality expands and deepens the mission. Leaders grow the vitality of a congregation by developing leaders to lead these ministries and leading the church to organize around these ministries. To do one, two or even three well is not enough. It takes all five to grow the health and vitality of the mission.

5. Raise sufficient funds for community and world mission, ongoing congregational ministry, shared ministries, salary and benefits.

The writer of Proverbs said, 'where there is no vision, the people perish.' The same is true for money, where there are insufficient resources, the mission dies. Leaders are called upon to raise the funds to not just sustain the mission but to help the mission flourish. Increasing the number of people who give and the amount they give is essential for the mission of the church. Giving is directly related to doing the four expectations above well.

GNJ is blessed with outstanding leaders. I call upon our leaders to grow deeper in their faith and leadership skills so that the church of Jesus Christ furthers God's mission in the world. Dedicate yourself to God and these five expectation and God will bless the people you serve.

Keep the faith!

Bishop John Schol  
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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## SEEKING FREELANCE GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

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**Professional skills that we are looking for:**

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- Understanding Color
- Knowledge About Layout

If you're interested, please email your portfolio to Brittney Reilly at [breilly@gnjumc.org](mailto:breilly@gnjumc.org).

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# CREATIVITY

Wherever Jesus went, children flocked to Him,  
and kids are fun magnets – they are attracted to FUN!

Where did Jesus perform His first miracle? At a party, of course!  
This summer add some fun events to your church calendar. Laugh. Play. Be Silly. Have FUN!

## BOWLING PARTY

Say “thank you” to your volunteers by arranging a pizza and bowling party!



## LEMONADE AND LAWN CHAIRS

Host a summertime book club in the backyard and make new meaningful connections.



## SING A NEW SONG

Invite the youngest musicians to share their gift during summertime special music.



## ROAD TRIP

Go hiking, camping or down the shore for the day. Enjoy God’s good creation together!



## MOVIE UNDER THE STARS

Show a movie outside with free ice cream and popcorn. It’s a great opportunity to meet your neighbors.



## PUPPET MINISTRY

Involve the youth in a puppet ministry and invite them to perform on the kick-off of Church School.



## SUNDAE SUNDAY

Invite everyone to bring in a topping and host a Sundae Sunday after worship. It will be sweet!



## PET BLESSING

Bring your family and furry friends for music, prayer, stories and fellowship with a special outdoor blessing of all the animals.



## JESUS PROMISES ABUNDANT LIFE

We should have a joy that is uncommon!  
Have an idea to share? Send it to Gina Yeske at: [gyeske@gnjumc.org](mailto:gyeske@gnjumc.org)

## Repollet needs to take lead in addressing school segregation: Bishop John Schol

By Bishop John Schol  
bishopjohnschol@gnjumc.org

*School segregation is an issue that affects all children. This editorial by Bishop Schol published in The Asbury Park Press is urging lawmakers in Trenton to take the lead on this issue.*

NEPTUNE - We are not preparing our children well for the future.

Although New Jersey boasts some of the best schools in the country academically, we rank in the top five most segregated school systems. Segregation disadvantages children of all races.

When children of color and children from low-income families learn in an integrated setting, they have higher test scores, attend college at higher rates and attain higher-paying jobs.

When white children and children from middle – and high-income families learn in an integrated setting, they enhance social and emotional skills while expanding their world views.

The benefits of an integrated setting extend beyond test scores and classrooms. A diverse setting also helps students, who learn best when they have the opportunity to interact with children from different backgrounds. In my own public education, I experienced this first hand.

Even as our state grows more diverse, our education system is becoming increasingly segregated. From 2010-2016

an additional 20,000 children of color started attending schools that are more than 99 percent black or Latino. These trends harm everyone.

Too many children are denied an equal opportunity because of our education system. The system hurts all children, and particularly children of color, who are too often segregated by both race and poverty. More than 80 percent of black and Latino students attending racially segregated schools come from low-income families. Their circumstances should not be barriers to receiving a high-quality education. It is time for this inequality to end.

We need to end racial segregation within our schools and provide an integrated learning environment for all students.

Poverty and segregation are serious issues confronting our school-aged children and their families. I know this first hand. I was fortunate to attend an integrated high school and experience the importance of racial reconciliation in my career. Working in Philadelphia, I helped build affordable housing and organize communities battling poverty and racism. We found we worked well together, and in the midst of our differences, we found a path forward and embraced integration.

With the change in administration, New Jersey is poised to take the lead and create a model for an integrated school model that reflects the rich culture and

diversity throughout our state to benefit all our children.

New Jersey has long led the way in providing resources to poor urban districts – like Asbury Park, which invests almost twice the state average per pupil. Under the leadership of Lamont Repollet, who served as superintendent from 2014-2017, this investment in students made a difference in their lives. The graduation rate grew from 49 percent to 73 percent over the course of his tenure. Repollet had a vision to advance the district and improve performance – work he is now taking on statewide as Gov. Murphy's acting education commissioner.

Because of his work in one of the state's most segregated districts, I urge Repollet to take the lead on addressing the root causes of school segregation. By leading the state to break down educational segregation, he can help New Jersey celebrate our diversity by helping our students from all racial and economic backgrounds achieve success.

Strong, sustained leadership from elected leadership in Trenton will help bring an end to segregation. Our leaders already have the framework to implement change. The New Jersey Constitution, one of the strongest in the country, prohibits segregation of public schools, as do several decisions by the New Jersey Supreme Court. New Jersey enables segregation by requiring students in segregated communities to go to the

school where they live and by drawing boundaries that further segregates as a result of demographic shifts.

The Murphy administration, together with the legislature, already has powers to foster integration, including altering school attendance boundaries. Patterns of institutionalized segregation can be broken by the use of magnet schools, the introduction of inter-district attendance programs and the revitalization of the defunct office within the Department of Education which provided assistance to districts to work on integration. Seemingly small administrative changes, such as making technical assistance available to school districts interested in integrating, helps us move toward an education system that embraces our diversity.

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, spoke often about the crucial importance of education. The United Methodist Church recognizes that "education is a right of all children and is affirmed by Scripture which calls us to 'train children in the way they should go.'" All people, regardless of color, religion or economic status, deserve access to a high-quality education.

The governor, working with Repollet and legislative leaders, has the power to live this vision of education equality for our students and their future. It is at the heart of achieving social justice in New Jersey to provide opportunities for all children – no matter their race – to succeed.

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## NJ Prayer Shawls Blanket FL Tragedy



The Lower Berkshire Valley UMC prayer shawl team spent time hand-crafting shawls for those affected by the recent shooting at a Parkland, FL high school.

Photo provided

By Rev. Tricia Piazza  
[Tpiazza9@gmail.com](mailto:Tpiazza9@gmail.com)

WHARTON - The Lower Berkshire Valley United Methodist Church (LBV) responded to the tragic shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School with prayers for all of those affected. And then, the Spirit moved. A whisper, a nudge, a thought and the parishioners felt a call to do more.

The church has an active Prayer Shawl Ministry. Many in the congregation either knit or crochet prayer shawls which are blessed during worship and then shared with those in the local community and beyond who are going through difficulties in their lives. Ray Suttles, the group leader, said, "We trust that God provides comfort through this expression of God's love for people."

Through our United Methodist connection, Lower Berkshire Valley UMC reached out to First Church in Coral Springs, Florida which is located a few miles from the high school and asked if they would be able to distribute the shawls. With the encouragement and thanks of First Church, LBV followed through with their gift.

The prayer shawls were blessed dur-

ing a Sunday morning worship. Everyone attending came to the front of the sanctuary as each shawl was held and prayed over.

Suttles reported that the shawls were packaged and shipped to Florida.

"The UPS store in Succasunna donated the box, packaged the shawls and labeled the package for us without charge," he said. "We only paid the shipping cost."

It was then that a friend of the church heard what they were doing and paid the shipping cost.

Each shawl had a beautiful card designed by church member Charlie Nielsen, and Pastor Tricia Piazza wrote a letter to accompany the package to Rev. Vance Rains of First Church. LBV felt blessed themselves to be able to share God's love this way through fellow Christians who were in the area of the tragedy.

"God knows how we all want to help in times of tragedy, and the small congregation of Lower Berkshire Valley UMC was blessed to be moved by the Spirit with an action plan to serve beyond the local community," said Piazza. "May God continue to move in each congregation, no matter the size, so that we may bless others as God has blessed us!"

# From Running for Soccer to Running for Jesus Christ

By Rev. Brandon Cho  
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MORRISTOWN - When you walk into the indoor gym on the third floor of the Morristown UMC building, you will find many young people playing their favorite sport – soccer; and they're getting good at it. They are known as the "Nueva Esperanza Soccer Kids."

Two years ago, Rev. Charles Perez was appointed to Morristown UMC to launch a new bilingual Latino/Hispanic Ministry called Nueva Esperanza (New Hope). As the first step in developing an asset-based community development strategy in Morristown, Perez and Morristown UMC Pastor Brandon Cho decided to utilize Perez's experience in sports ministry to begin a soccer ministry for young people in the church gym.

Perez began with just a few who showed up out of curiosity and then continued to build on those relationships. Soon, more young people joined in. Today, the church has a growing soccer ministry with 15 to 20 youth actively participating in three weekly gatherings and Sunday worship.

Perez used part of the soccer practice and games to engage these youth in conversations about their life experiences, hopes and dreams. He tells them about God's love for them in Jesus Christ, and even sings some Christian hip-hop songs which he wrote.

The two pastors began a new youth confirmation journey early this year. Perez shared his joy of personally shepherding the youth to grow as enthusiastic young disciples of Jesus Christ.

"To see a bunch of young people who know each other, play with each other and pray with each other is a powerful outcome for our church," said Perez. "The trust through soccer and their personal friendship brings an extra dynamic when it comes to growing in Christ as individuals and as a body. There is a natural connection between the soccer ministry and the making disciples' effort among them. These young people used to run just for soccer and now they are learning to run for Jesus Christ, too!"

Perez recounted a story of one youth stopping a time of devotions to say, "Pastor, I get it. God loves us so much that God gave us a place in God's house to play what we love for the sake of us getting to know God." The others reacted with nodded heads. When it was time for dinner, another youth volunteered to pray and said, "Today I want to offer God my own 'thank you prayer.' I thank you, God, for our pastors who got these delicious pizzas for us, for being patient with us, for a good time we are having in



The Nueva Esperanza Soccer Kids of Morristown UMC's bilingual Latino/Hispanic ministry is growing and changing the lives of the community's youth. Photo provided

playing soccer, for my friends here, for our church family, and for our study time. In Jesus' name. Amen."

District Superintendent Steve Bechtold noted, "Congregations often imagine a new future that more closely reflects the community they serve. The Morristown United Methodist Church not only imagined this but through their initial dreaming through the Team Vital process brought their dreams to reality. Under the leadership of the Rev. Brandon Cho and a team of highly creative and motivated laity, the congregation launched Nueva Esperanza as a new expression of what it means to be the church."



On Sunday, May 27, the entire Morristown church family will come together to celebrate confirmation of youth from both English and Bilingual Latino/Hispanic Ministries and welcome them as full members of the church. According to Cho, "It will be a time to celebrate that we are one in the Spirit and one in the Lord, and that this church is the spiritual home for all God's people."

Perez and Cho have plans to grow this ministry beyond soccer. The future includes getting these young people involved in camping as part of the Next Gen Ministries initiative and the IGNITE conference, reaching out to parents, continuing to build trust in the community and creating a friendly soccer league within GNJ.



Pictured with their minister Rev. Charles Perez (right) the Nueva Esperanza Soccer group consists of 15 to 20 youth actively participating in three weekly gatherings as well as Sunday worship. Photo provided



Cho shared, "This vital Next Gen Ministry was possible because of the generous support of the early champions like District Superintendent Bechtold, our GNJ leadership, and our mission-minded congregation." He added, "We are sharing this story to bear witness to what good things can happen when we let God unleash new possibilities through us. It only takes a little spark to get a fire going, grow and multiply God's redemp-

tive work in the world."

"Nueva Esperanza, New Hope, is truly an amazing gift to the church as it provides a new model of how to bring the good news to our church communities," Bechtold noted. "I celebrate that something that was simply a hope and dream several years ago has not only come to fruition, but is creating a vital new opportunity for bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the community of Morristown and beyond. My hope is that this kind of achievement will become contagious and we will see new possibilities emerging in the months and years ahead."

## Church Coffee House Establishes New Faith Community

By Teresita Matos-Post  
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TOTOWA – Since the re-launch of Totowa United Methodist Church's 'Spirit Coffee House' in 2017, the ministry has partnered with local artists, poets, musicians, storytellers, painters, designers, and volunteers to provide a space of creativity, conversations, and connections.

"We've been intentional in creating win-win situations to make this project come alive," said Matos-Post. "For example, we had a student from Berkley design our logo and we provided a leadership academy in which high school students earned volunteer/ leadership hours by designing the space."

Rev. Chuck Coblenz, former pastor at Totowa UMC, conceived the coffee house initiative and first launched it in 2015 with the help of a GNJ grant. The task force under his leadership set the ground work for the implementation of the ministry by acquiring equipment, supplies, and envisioning the coffee house as a place where neighbors of all ages would gather.

The coffee house recently kicked off



Totowa UMC's Spirit Coffee House is establishing a new faith community of its own, drawing students from Passaic Valley High School with an opportunity to display their art. Photo provided

"Season 3 of Creation" in which opening night featured an art show with the work of students in the Portfolio class at Passaic Valley High School.

"This partnership with the art students in our regional high school has provided an opportunity for us to build relationships with our neighbors by sharing in the things we are passionate about," said Pastor Teresita Matos-Post.

But not all nights at The Spirit Coffee House are a knock-out.

"There are nights when it is just me, and a few church friends," said Matos-Post. "We try not to focus on the numbers. We see the coffee house as a ministry laboratory where we are trying to gauge the culture of the community and our place in it. I am grateful that our congregation is one who is not afraid to

try things out and are not bogged down when things do not go as expected."

Those nights when it is just her and a few church friends, Matos-Post has seen congregants getting to know each other on a deeper level.

"I get this question a lot: 'How do you get people to come Sunday morning?' My response is that we do not have an ulterior motive to get people to come to Sunday morning," said Matos-Post. "That has been very clear to us all along. The Spirit Coffee House is ministry in of itself. It is a place in which people who are un-churched or de-churched can explore themes of faith and spirituality in a non-threatening way. We have all engaged in meaningful conversations with guest of all ages, not unlike Jesus did in the market places. I even got to share my experience of pastoral calling with a young man who was exploring his own call to ministry in the Catholic Church. We see God in it and our vision is that a new community of faith will emerge from this project in God's time."

The Spirit Coffee House opens in "seasons" of six to eight weeks. Their schedule can be found at [www.totowaumc.org](http://www.totowaumc.org).

# GNJ Stories of Race at the 50th Anniversary of King Assassination

On April 4, 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated for his faithful work toward radical justice and reconciliation. In a letter to GNJ leaders, Bishop John called on GNJ to recommit to ending racism and to see everyone as equal and to work for justice for all of God's people.

"We all have a story of how we, or someone we know has been hurt, harmed or disadvantaged by a person of another race," he said. "What would it look like for each of us to have 100 stories about a positive relationship with a person of another race and begin to tell these stories every day? Let it begin with me and you." Schol said

He extended an invitation to the people of GNJ to share stories of having witnessed racial equality or a person of another race helping someone out. Below are a few of those stories:

## The Stories

"In sixth grade I had a teacher from India, Hanshi Deshbandhu. I often think learning from her has kept me from racism in my life. In addition, having a God who is "colorblind" when seeing the human race has been a lifelong philosophy. Deshbandhu was a wonderful teacher. We had a small but diverse class at the Friends School in Mullica Hill and she went on to become the school administrator. I have co-workers who are Christians and also Indian. We share God with each other as sisters in Christ. During the Lenten season I shared devotionals with them, and one, a Sunday school teacher, was excited to share it with her class" –

- Kay Hutchinson, Trinity UMC- Mullica Hill

"I see Martin Luther King as a 20th century Moses who was fighting for justice and equality. It rings to mind a song sung by Sandy Patti, 'in heaven's eyes there are no losers, in heaven's eyes no hopeless cause, only people like you with feelings like me amazed by the grace emerges can find, in heaven's eyes'" –

- Valerie Robinson

"I have a friend and colleague who I used to work with closely. She is a lawyer like me. She grew up in Philadelphia, in a Christian middle class family. I grew up in a mostly white, mostly upper class area. Both of our fathers happen to be pastors. At the time I met her, any time there were discussions of race, I would always say – 'But I don't see race when I look at a person. I just see that person.' I don't think I'm the only white person to ever say that.

She taught me that to look at people of other races like that or to see people of other races without seeing their race was almost as bad as only seeing their race. She taught me that who she is cannot be separated from her race; her experiences and personality have all been developed because she is black and because she is a woman. What she taught me is that as a white woman, I will never really be able to get it, what it is like to be her, or be black, but I can accept it and seek to recognize what that means. All I need to do is keep having respectful conversations and keep seeking understanding.

So this year when we had a very publicized racial incident in our high school, the district had a public meeting and I tried to explain to all the people in the room, the majority of which were white, how they couldn't possibly get it, but that was okay. Because what they needed to do was acknowledge they don't and keep the conversation going. I can only hope that what I said, because of what my friend taught me, had an impact on another person in that room just as my friend has had a lasting impact on me" -

- Megan E. Watson, First UMC, Glassboro

"In 1985 while a Middler at the former Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, I was asked by a District Superintendent in Delaware to supply a three point charge in Port Deposit, MD while they waited for the appointee to return from the mission field in Ecuador. The charge consisted of two white and one African-American congregations. At the time, the Conference had to reach into the mission field to find a pastor, as no white pastor would shepherd the African American church and neither would the white congregations accept an African American pastor.

The charge was located in Appalachia, across the Susquehanna River in a poor, rural community with few job opportunities. Upon arrival I discovered the first white church was polite but had little vitality. The other church was more of a family chapel, and they wanted to keep it that way. The African American congregation was a breath of the Spirit. The church had recently rebuilt after a devastating fire. The original building was constructed by former slaves. Immediately following the Emancipation Proclamation, the farm owner asked his former slaves if they would stay on and he would pay wages and give them the land and materials to build the church. And so they agreed. These former slaves were such skilled artisans, the foundation that still remains was cut by hand so precisely no mortar was used to hold the stones together.

At the afternoon service, I didn't have to preach. This was around the time "Roots", the TV series had aired. The congregation asked representatives from their original families to speak on their families' roots. There were some amazing stories shared from the pulpit each Sunday afternoon and it was standing room only, unlike the morning service where approximately 20 attended. I was the only white person in the house, but my skin color didn't matter because I was there to serve the church on behalf of Christ. It was the most amazing two weeks of my ministry. And the dinners that followed, OMG! The best food I ever ate. Men and women had cooked for hours setting up tables in the basement. I knew I had been blessed. My only hope is that I left them with some blessings as well."

- Rich Leaver



The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. addresses the crowd from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech during the Aug. 28, 1963, march on Washington, D.C. Photo by the U.S. Marine Corps

"As a Native American, I hear comments like, "If you want to come to America, learn to speak our language," and I cringe. The first languages in our country were those of indigenous peoples. The insensitivity both to those who have long been in America and those who wish to be American is disheartening.

Recently I was approached by a woman in the grocery store. She asked if I was of Native American descent. I shared with her that I was Cherokee and was raised as part the PowWow district. She sighed and looked me in the eyes. With tears she told me that her family came to America on the Mayflower. Weeping, she apologized.

Though the differences of our families occurred long ago, in that moment we felt it profoundly. It was a beautiful moment of understanding and reconciliation."

- Rev. Anna Gillette, Marlton UMC, Marlton

"When I was a young girl in grade school there was an African American woman who had me over to her home numerous times a week telling me stories and teaching me how to be kind and loving to others, not to mention the hospitality of honey cornbread for a snack. My 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Hayes, was a big part of who I am today. She taught me a lot about how to deal with diversity with other people. She was very patient when I struggled to understand something. She has since gone home to be with the Lord, but often I think of the impact she's had on me"

- Tracy Dormida, Simply Grace UMC, Bloomsbury.

"When I was in 7th grade I walked to my bus stop every day and there was an African American girl that would wait for me and walk to and from school. The conversations and company meant a lot to me."

- Madelon Smith, age 90, Simply Grace UMC, Bloomsbury.

**The June 2018 Issue Deadline is May 16, 2018**

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## Superintendent Frank Davis to Return to Pastoral Ministry



Pictured above: Rev. Frank Davis at his installation service in September, 2017. Photo by Brittney Reilly

By Josh Kinney  
jkinney@gnjumc.org

WILMINGTON, DE – Rev. Frank Davis, Superintendent of the Capital District will be the new pastor of the historic Ezion-Mount Carmel United Methodist Church in downtown Wilmington, DE starting July 1, 2018.

Davis came to the decision while caring for his mother in Jamaica who is on hospice care. Bishop John Schol went to visit Davis' mom and while there, he shared that during prayer and reflection he realized he was a pastor at heart.

"While he enjoyed being a Superintendent, he loves working with laity each and every day," said Schol. "I, the Capital District and all of GNJ will miss his leader-

ship. He has been a gift to each place he has served, always leaving behind new disciples, a vital congregation and a more just and merciful ministry."

Davis also realized he wanted to be closer to family and therefore wanted to explore and appointment in a conference south of New Jersey.

"I am delighted that things worked out and I am delighted for Ezion-Mount Carmel UMC," said Schol. "They are receiving a transformational leader and a gifted pastor."

Schol thanked Davis for his ministry and leadership in GNJ and asked for prayers for the cabinet, Capital District and himself as they transition and discern the next right leader for the district.



Dr. Cain Hope Felder preaches from the pulpit of Parkside UMC in Camden, celebrating Black History. Photo provided by Parkside UMC

## Dr. Cain Hope Felder Celebrates Black History Month at Camden Church

By Josh Kinney  
jkinney@gnjumc.org

CAMDEN – Parkside UMC in Camden celebrated Black History Month with guest preacher Dr. Cain Hope Felder, biblical scholar and Professor Emeritus of Howard University School of Divinity.

On Sunday, February 25, Felder took the pulpit and followed up with a question and answer session and book signing.

A professor of New Testament language and literature and editor of The Journal of Religious Thought at Howard University School of Divinity, Felder serves as chair of the Ph.D. program and immediate past chair of the Doctor of Ministry program.

Prior to coming to Howard, where he has been on faculty since 1981, Felder taught within the Department of Biblical Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary and worked as the first executive director of Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), the Black Caucus for

The United Methodist Church.

"It was an honor and a tremendous blessing to have such a noted biblical scholar, theologian, preacher and author as Dr. Cain Hope Felder in our midst at Parkside United Methodist Church," said Senior Pastor Keith Dickens. "Dr. Felder's lecture and message on the African presence in the Bible was most appropriate and timely for the church and for the celebration of Black history."

Originally ordained as an elder in The United Methodist Church, Felder served as pastor of Grace UMC in New York City in the late 1970s. Currently he serves as an elder in the Second Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, where he has been appointed by Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson as the resident Biblical scholar for the district.

Felder's publications include *True to Our Native Land*, *Troubling Biblical Waters: race, Crisis, and Family*, and *The Original African Heritage Study Bible*.

## Mission U Offers Educational Opportunity For All

Mission U, formerly known as Cooperative School of Christian Mission, is an annual educational opportunity offering studies for effective mission ministry in local churches and the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey. Women, men, youth and children, pastors and friends are invited to attend. This can be a family retreat for learning, inspiring worship and fellowship where participants can choose a three day or a one day school. Studies this year include four courses for adults taught in English, Spanish and Korean and there are also studies for youth and children

This year's theme is "Where is Your Treasure?" based on Matthew 6:20-21 which says, "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (NRSV)

### 2018 MISSION CLASS DATES

Sunday, July 13-15  
Georgian Court University, Lakewood, NJ

Saturday, July 14,  
Georgian Court University, Lakewood, NJ  
Online registration only

Saturday, July 21  
Calvary Korean UMC, East Brunswick, NJ  
Online registration only

### COURSES

Spiritual Study--Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective for Covenantal Living

Geographic Study -Missionary Conferences in the United States

Issue Study - What About our Money? A Faith Response

Conference Study: When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor & Yourself

Children's Study- What About Our Money? (Lakewood Only)

Youth Study -Is it Just Money? (Lakewood Only)

Informational brochures and registration forms can be found at [gnjumc.org/mission-u-2018](http://gnjumc.org/mission-u-2018). To learn more contact Millie Grey, Mission U Dean at [millieg178@aol.com](mailto:millieg178@aol.com) or Grace Rapp, Mission U Secretary at [grace\\_rapp@comcast.net](mailto:grace_rapp@comcast.net)

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**RACHEL BILLUPS TAKES THE STAGE  
AT IGNITE 2018**

**IGNITE 2018**  
WORLD CHANGERS  
*You are the light of the world - Matthew 5:14*

A Campus Pastor at Ginghamburg UMC, Rachel Billups is a rising voice in inspiring young people for Christ. She will be taking the stage at the 2018 IGNITE World Changers conference in Wildwood and is one of the top 50 young United Methodist pastors in the U.S. to participate in the Young Pastor's Network.

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# Laity Take the Lead in Day of Learning

By Josh Kinney  
jkinney@gnjumc.org

WAYNE – “A day well spent” that’s how Rev. Scott Bostwick of Grace UMC in Wyckoff described the Northern Region Day of Learning event, ‘Take the Lead.’ Held on March 3 at Bethany Wayne UMC. The daylong session invited laity to bring their pastors to learn about resourcing laity to lead churches and communities.

The event featured keynote speaker Rev. Mike Mather, pastor of Broadway UMC in Indianapolis, IN.

“People already have power,” said Mathers. “It’s our job to act like that and show that; point out where God is present. When we focus on the giftedness around us and invite others to talk about their gifts, the conversation shifts to what we’re missing to who we are.”

Additionally, Mather led a workshop on connecting with community titled “Name, Bless and Connect.”

Rev. Brian Neville of Hillsdale UMC left the church inspired.

“The regional events provided by GNJ have been top notch,” said Neville. “I was inspired by Mather, who said that church work is hard no matter what, so we might as well do hard work that we believe in.”

Instead of doing things the same old way with the same poor results, Mather encouraged his audience to reconsider how they do ministry so that it will have a greater impact on their communities.

“I took this to heart,” said Neville. “I’ve already started looking at ministries in my church in a different way.”

Others described the event as well-planned, well-attended, well-hosted and well-executed.

Rev. Jess Winderweede and her team from Kingston UMC shared about leading ministry with millennials, designed for churches looking to connect with millennials but uncertain about where to begin. Attendees heard from the team that launched the Feed Truck, a fully-outfitted, mobile food truck with a team serving locally sourced breakfast and late night eats while also providing radical hospitality and a taste of hope to folks in Central New Jersey.

Rev. Gina Yeske, GNJ Director of Small Groups, presented “Big Ideas for Every Small Group Leader” begging the question of what’s next for small groups and uncovering new ways to bring vitality to a group’s ministry.

“In debriefing, my team and I found the selection of topics and breakout sessions to be very informative and helpful,” said Bostwick. “Mather’s winsome way of sharing his experiences, and how they relate to and inform our ministry settings were both helpful and inspiring.”

Along with her colleagues Rosario Quinones and Alma Matos, Rev. Lyssette Perez of the UMC of The Rockaways directed a contemporary bilingual multicultural worship workshop aimed at providing tools and ideas to develop this

kind of worship as a means of outreach to all people.

“Our communities are a mosaic of cultures, languages, abilities and orientations,” said Perez. “For many years and generations, churches have been the one place that has been pretty homogeneous. It has been said that eleven o’clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week. However, if we walk through any city or town, we will see all sorts of people and shops, hear voices in different languages and smell a variety of foods from different restaurants. We celebrate the cultural diversity in our congregations.”

A big takeaway from the event was Mather’s notion that “God’s spirit flows down on all people” that everyone has a gift and it’d be a sin to waste it.

“But the challenge in the church is that we operate from scarcity, and not plenty,” said Mathers. “That mindset is even in the way we communicate opportunities to serve in our local congregations, which makes us look desperate.” Bostwick agreed.

“As my wife likes to say, ‘it’s not what you say, but how you say it,’” said Bostwick. “That being said, ‘discovering abundance in unexpected places’ was certainly an apt title for the plenary – no bait-and-switch here! From a practical standpoint, I appreciate and will implement the two questions Mathers suggested for our guests and members alike: ‘What three things do you do well enough

to teach others and what three things do you want to learn to do well?’”

GNJ Lay Leader Rosa Williams weighed in on the event by reiterating Mathers’ message of enrolling people into God’s kingdom.

“Most of our outreach ministries such as feedings, pantries and thrift shops often tell recipients what we can offer them in meeting basic needs,” said Williams. “We forget about the whole person and what they can offer! Mathers encouraged us to simply ask people what gifts they have and how they can share that gift. This simple act of conversation and listening jumpstarts relationships, builds up a person’s self-esteem and self-worth and engages them to use their God-given talents in meaningful ways.”

Additional sessions were led by Rev. Dr. Steve Bechtold, Skylands District Superintendent, on seeing conflict as a transformative experience through leadership and an afternoon plenary from Trey Wince, GNJ Director of New Disciples, on how to take next steps and implement the day’s learnings. Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, Executive Director and Brian Mickle, Director of Development, from the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey also provided resourcing information and answered questions.

To hear from Rev. Mike Mather on GNJ’s Uncovered Dish Christian Leadership podcast, visit [gnjumc.org/podcast](http://gnjumc.org/podcast)

## Puerto Rican and Tanzanian Bishops to Address Annual Conference in Wildwood



The GNJ Tanzania team (from left to right) Ashley Wilson, Executive Assistant to the Director of Connectional Ministries, Lakesha Groover of Covenant UMC in Plainfield, Skylands District Superintendent Steve Bechtold, Bishop John Schol, Sung Hoon Ahn of Ridgewood UMC, Connectional Ministries Director Hector Burgos, Shelley Smith of Ferry Ave UMC in Camden. Photo by James Lee

Continued from page 1

with their gifts and experiences. There will be opportunities for local churches to establish relationships with local churches in the partnership conference, including mission experiences in Puerto Rico and GNJ.

### Missional Partnership with Tanzania

The North Katanga Episcopal area of the United Methodist Church is comprised of three Annual Conferences: North Katanga, Tanganyika and Tanzania Conferences. The United Methodist mission in Tanzania began 25 years ago with the deployment of six United Methodist missionaries. Today there are 68 emerging United Methodist congregations in Tanzania that are growing, both in numbers and impact, in the community.

GNJ and the North Katanga UMC (NKUMC) have unique histories and common ministries. Over the past ten years, congregations throughout Greater New Jersey have raised funds for the Wings of the Morning, an airplane that transports the sick from rural areas to health facilities in urban ones in North Katanga. The Wings of the Morning plane and pilot celebrated with GNJ in 2013 by joining us in Wildwood for Annual Conference.

The leaders of GNJ know that missional impact of GNJ and NKUMC goes beyond distance, language, culture. Through the Miracles Everywhere Campaign, GNJ congregations will raise funds for a joint pastors’ school in Tanzania to grow the skills of pastors, support up to ten pastors’ salaries, and start a new congregation or build a new church building. The partnership will also support a Mission/Hope Center in the country’s capital of Dar es Salaam that will start a health clinic to provide life-saving and preventative care to the community, a primary and secondary school for orphans, and host mission teams from across the world.

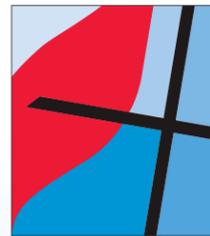
Bishop Muyombo, who will assume a leadership role on the Council of Bishops this summer, will address GNJ about the new partnership and welcome a team of 10 GNJ leaders to Tanzania in June.

Bishop’s Ortiz and Muyombo will address Annual Conference on Monday, May 21 at 3:15 p.m. in the West Hall prior to legislation regarding missional partnerships and GNJ’s Miracles Everywhere Mission Fund Campaign.

For more information and to see the full Annual Conference schedule, visit [www.gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference](http://www.gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference)

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# Faith and Art Combine in Jackson UMC's Arts Ministry

By Kamelia Ani  
kameliaaniphoto@gmail.com

JACKSON - Art and faith come together in sweet harmony at Jackson UMC's newly expanded arts ministry, called JAM. The church is no stranger to the incorporation of arts into their worship. Many in the congregation have a variety of creative gifts in the arts and about two years ago the ministry decided to put those gifts to good use by forming JAM.

The idea was the brainchild of Senior Pastor Joe Tiedemann. The goal was to offer a variety of classes to the congregation as well as to the local community who might not otherwise attend church.

"The overall concept for everything we do is designed to introduce people to Jesus Christ," said Tiedemann. A committee was formed and the idea was put into action. Members of the congregation offered their time as teachers and a two-semester program of classes was created. The fall semester runs for 10-12 weeks and the spring semester for 15. Classes in art, cooking, yoga, photography, performing arts, and a variety of dance are offered for students of all ages, from preschoolers to adults. Most of the classes have a modest tuition fee ranging from \$15 to \$50 to cover supplies. There is also a suggested donation which is not mandatory but helps keep JAM running.

Megan Gallagher, who taught dance at Messiah College in Pennsylvania, teaches all the dance classes at JAM

and is also on the committee. She says the program has had a positive response.

"The first semester we had a good turnout from the congregation. By the second, a lot of families who don't attend our church regularly heard about our classes through word of mouth and the preschool program. The response was tremendous," said Gallagher. "It's a super neat that we were able to reach the community this way. People love the environment and the classes are really affordable."

Attendance has now reached over 100 students. Gallagher stresses that all the programs incorporate Christ.

"These are art classes but they are all faith embedded," she said. "We pray before each class. The dance and performance art classes use Christian music. This way people who don't attend Sunday service weekly can still have a spiritual experience and get introduced to our church."

JAM is more than just an arts program, it is an outreach program. Last year's show "Bedtime Stories as Told by Dad," was a big hit. This year's performance will be a variety show which will allow JAM students to showcase their various talents. Students will choose songs and choreograph dance solos. Some plan to put on short skits or do stand-up comedy routines. The show is always the highlight of the year that all involved look forward to.

Registration is now open for next



Jackson UMC's Arts Ministry (JAM) is expanding with now over 100 students in attendance. Photo provided by Jackson UMC

semester's classes. These classes are offered one or two nights during the week as well as Sunday afternoons. Anyone interested in more information

or to sign up is encouraged to visit [www.JacksonAM.org](http://www.JacksonAM.org).

To learn more about Jackson UMC, visit [www.jacksonumc.org](http://www.jacksonumc.org).

## New Hispanic Faith Community Launches in Palisades Park, NJ



First UMC of Ridgefield Park's second site in Palisades Park is rapidly growing, reaching the Hispanic migrant and day laborer community. Photo by Rev. Heeyoung Lim of Lyndhurst UMC

Continued from page 1

rants and public spaces. The church offers space for birthday parties, hosts community events with community leaders, actively seeks influential leaders and offers classes including English as a Second Language classes (ESL), sports, and music.

The new faith community has gradually grown from 25 to 85 since its January launch.

"Everything is through God's grace and by God's grace," said Ryoo. "We worked so hard all together. God is awesome."

Rev. Hector Burgos, Director of Connectional Ministries, has supported the ministry by preaching messages on site. Pastors Heeyoung Lim and Minhwee Kang also support the ministry with their musical talents.

"Whenever we see other people's lives change, the Holy Spirit is touching

them and working through them," said Lee.

"It's my hope that this experience will give others some insight and ideas to start a new faith community or church within their church," said Ryoo.

FUMC of Ridgefield Park invites others to come experience and build the mission together by serving dinner on Sundays at their second campus.

"We are called to serve the Hispanic immigrant families of Palisades Park and its neighboring communities," said Ryoo. "As more Hispanic families and children come to our communities, we see a significant and urgent need to spread the Gospel and share the love of God through worship and a meal."

For more information, contact Pastor Michelle Ryoo at (201)213-6827 or Pastor Daniel Lee (201)290-3677.



## MISSION OPPORTUNITY

at First UMC of Ridgefield Park

Join us every Sunday from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

We serve between 50 and 60 people.

The second site of FUMC of Ridgefield Park is looking for volunteers to serve hot meals to our homeless and low-income Hispanic neighbors on Sundays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

We are called to serve the Hispanic immigrant families of Palisades Park and its neighboring communities. There are thousands of Hispanic day-laborers and immigrants representing over six different nations in Palisades Park.

As more Hispanic families and children come to our communities we see a significant and urgent need to spread the gospel and share the love of God with them through worship and a meal.

Sunday Worship service begins at 5:00 p.m.

First UMC of Ridgefield Park

50 West Palisades Blvd. | Palisades Park, NJ 07650

For more information, please contact:

Pastor Michelle Ryoo 201.213.6827 or

Pastor Daniel Lee 201.290.3677



# Who are GNJ's Vital Mission Partners?

Continued from page 1



## A Future With Hope

What began as a response to the destruction caused by Hurricane Sandy, A Future With Hope will complete its 269th home in June, 2018 with the help of 12,230 volunteers. The Board of Trustees envisioned a mission based on four pillars of relief, repair, rebuild and renew. From the beginning they have dedicated a part of the budget and strategy to community development. The transition from rebuilding after Superstorm Sandy to spreading hope further and wider in Greater New Jersey is unfolding through the development of Hope Centers in partnership with congregations and like-minded nonprofit organizations.

A Future With Hope has already proven its funding capabilities through partnering with funders and faith-based nonprofits. These alliances have allowed AFWH to raise \$17.7million to date and include the American Red Cross, the Robin Hood Foundation, the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund, UMCOR and others. It has also led to new relationships with ecumenical partners including the Episcopal Relief and Development, the Salvation Army, Lutheran Social Ministries, World Renew, Christian Public Service and others.

A Future With Hope has partnered with six nonprofit organizations to join their Hope Center movement including CAMP Y.D.P., Christian Outreach Project, CUMAC, Pathways to Prosperity (Noresecap), the Neighborhood Center and Camden Urban Ministry Initiative.

"Hope Centers are places of community transformation that offer youth development, education, food security, job development and social support within communities," said Hope Center Developer Andrea Wren-Hardin. Going forward, A Future With Hope will now serve as GNJ's mission arm.



## Next Generation Ministries

Investing in young people and the future of GNJ was a top priority at the 2017 Annual Conference where GNJ approved a Next Generations Student Ministry plan challenging GNJ leadership to set bold goals. This God-sized vision of a Next Generation ministry seeks to integrate camping ministries, IGNITE and campus ministries. The plan was developed by GNJ leadership in partnership with the consulting firm Ministry Architects after meeting with 112 stakeholders including youth, young adults, parents, youth workers, campus ministry workers, camp staff, pastors, and staff with an additional 110 people completing surveys related to camping, collegiate and student ministries.

The approved plan commissioned church leaders to work with congregations to have 12 or more active youth engaged in faith formation and discipleship in their community. It also sought to develop ten college campus faith communities with 75 or more students, reinvigorate a 21st-century camping experience, grow IGNITE to 5,000 participants and develop 1,000 leaders to lead student ministries throughout GNJ.

"The goal is to create a vital and sustainable students ministry," said Rev. Hector Burgos, Director of Connectional Ministries. "Strategic priorities include raising new generations of enthusiastic disciples of Christ who are connecting, engaging in and leading ministry in congregations and participating as healthy young people within a global society."

By reframing and rebranding the current Camps and Retreats Board, an affiliated 501c3 organization, as the GNJ Next Generation Ministries Board,

the plan establishes strong leadership for all GNJ initiatives related to youth, serving to coordinate and collaborate the work of the Councils on Youth and Youth Adults, the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries, a Camps and Retreats Committee, and a staff action team for operations.



## The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey

The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey (UMSF) serves the financial stewardship and investment needs of GNJ, its local churches and its agencies. It partners with local churches and agencies in GNJ to invest, grow, manage and utilize funds so that they can multiply their ministry to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The Foundation works with churches to develop endowments, manage reserve funds and encourage planned giving. Their investment policy follows the socially responsible investing practices of the United Methodist Church. The investments are handled by Wespeth Investment Management in accordance with United Methodist principals. Currently, The UMSF of GNJ has over \$45 million in assets under management. Services include stewardship education and planned giving counsel.

"The foundation doesn't just offer the investment management side of things, we want to work with member churches on stewardship education, managing existing resources well, and being good stewards of what we already have," said Jana Purkis-Brash, Executive Director. She added, "We want to work with churches on financial management education as well as financial literacy education for their community members."

The Foundation currently serves more than 75 churches with their long-term investments. Those investments offer good returns and are managed so that the money is invested in full compliance with the socially responsible requirements of GNJ.

The Foundation provides churches with the opportunity to invest with lower fees and low margins through Wespeth. They seek to provide a safe place for churches to invest that's true to Methodist principles.



## The Centenary Fund and Preacher's Aid Society

The Centenary Fund and Preachers Aid Society was established in 1857. The purpose of the fund is to provide maximum assistance in times of need for the support of retired clergy, surviving spouses and dependent children of deceased clergy who have served in GNJ. Earnings from donations have provided assistance to pastors and their families who have demonstrated need and have contributed more than \$5.5 million toward the funding of retiree healthcare.

To continue support for retired clergy and their families, donations are needed from pastors and churches. The Centenary Fund hopes the people of GNJ will help to build up the fund with tax-free donations. With those donations they will be able to continue to make the substantial contributions needed in the future and fund retiree healthcare to provide aid to retired clergy and their dependents.



## Nehemiah Properties

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. 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 those mentioned above.

The organization would exist to help turn GNJ's church buildings into financial and mission assets. Through the repurposing, redevelopment, and or sale of properties, Nehemiah creates mission opportunities, sustainable use and regenerative income from these valuable resources owned by GNJ congregations.

GNJ has more than 1,100 properties including churches, parsonages, fellowship 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. Nehemiah Properties would seek to help GNJ congregations repurpose their most valuable financial

resources to expand mission and make disciples to transform the world.

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 on these highly skilled professionals to help guide the process to see their vision bear fruit.

## Resurrection Gardens Association

While still in the development phase, the Resurrection Gardens Association will handle the future management of cemeteries owned by GNJ as a result of approved legislation from the 2017 Annual Conference session. Over the past several years, GNJ has received six cemeteries which were once part of former United Methodist congregations. Approximately 20% of GNJ churches own and manage cemeteries. Because GNJ is a connectional system, it has a responsibility to ensure churches are good stewards of the property and resources entrusted to them and to prepare for potential increases of cemeteries under GNJ's management.

With as significant ethical and legal responsibility associated with these cemeteries, the formation of this separate cemetery association provides some additional protection for GNJ as a whole. Other religious organizations, such as the Roman Catholic Church, which owns and operates many cemeteries uses this management model of a separate incorporated cemetery association.

These separate but related, self-funded nonprofit organizations continue to help build and shape GNJ to fulfill and expand its mission into the future.

## Local Church PURCHASING OPPORTUNITIES

GNJ's Council of Finance and Administration has vetted a number of national and local products and services that it recommends to local churches for their possible contracting/purchasing.

These vendors were chosen based on feedback received from surveys. Substantial savings are possible for your church by using these providers.

### TECHSOUP

TechSoup has been a donation program for 30 years accessing 501c3 nonprofits to software and hardware at a discount. At TechSoup religious organizations around the world find the information they need to make smart decisions about technology for their church. | [www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)

### KOKUA TECHNOLOGIES

Kokua assists in supporting your day to day by providing 24/7 help desk services, cloud-based technology solutions, backup and disaster recovery plans, antivirus protection, printing, email assistance and any strategic planning needed to ensure your church has all the benefits of premium support at the local level. | [www.itskokua.com](http://www.itskokua.com)

### TITAN ENERGY

Titan Energy is a premier energy service provider to nonprofit, commercial and industrial customers. Since 2001, Titan has expanded its energy procurement services greatly, covering areas of energy efficiency, utility bill auditing, demand-side management and co-generation. | Contact Bill Olderman at [wolderman@titanenergy.com](mailto:wolderman@titanenergy.com) or call 973-568-0470.

### PAYCHEX

Paychex is a leading national provider of payroll and human resource outsourcing solutions. The company's staff of highly trained professionals delivers solutions to our ministries to support growth. | Contact Nicole DiGuglielmo at [ndiguglielmo@paychex.com](mailto:ndiguglielmo@paychex.com) 908-770-5488.

### ECOMM NETWORKS

Ecomm Networks is a platinum provider of hosted VoIP services (Telecom) and the trusted phone vendor for United Methodists. Some of the services that they offer include upgrades to existing phone systems, easy to use telephones, ability to easily park calls, page and have anyone pick up the call from any phone in your facility. | Contact Jim Smith at [jsmith@ecommnetworksllc.com](mailto:jsmith@ecommnetworksllc.com) or call 610-560-1956.

### NEW JERSEY CITIZENS ACTION OIL GROUP

Created in 1983, the NJCA Oil Group covers the entire state of New Jersey and is a heating oil co-op that helps consumers pool their buying power and save money on home heating oil. As an agent for thousands of members including churches, the Oil Group negotiates with local oil companies for discounted prices. Members are guaranteed a fixed mark-up above wholesale. | [www.njcaoilgroup.com](http://www.njcaoilgroup.com)

### MY NATIONAL PURCHASE PROGRAM

NPP serves companies and individuals nationwide, saving them money through negotiated contract pricing. NPP provides discounts on leading products that transform the way people work and live. | [www.mynpp.com](http://www.mynpp.com).

*\*Although these companies have been vetted, local churches that purchase or contract with them will be solely responsible for any purchasing decisions. GNJ does not receive any commission or financial benefit from these companies.*



# CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS



## Pre-Conference Journal, Legislation & FAQ's

The pre-conference journal for the 2018 Session of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference has been mailed to all members (clergy and lay) of the Annual Conference. It can also be viewed and downloaded at [gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference](http://gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference) where you can also submit questions about legislation.

### Drew Theological School Breakfast Buffet

Drew Theological School will be hosting a buffet breakfast at Annual Conference on Monday, May 21 at 7:00 a.m. in Ballroom A. Please contact Craig Dunn at [adunn@drew.edu](mailto:adunn@drew.edu) for more info.

### Miracles Everywhere Sermon Series

Visit [gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference](http://gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference) to check out the GNJ 'Miracles Everywhere' sermon series. This 4 week series will encourage you and your congregation to open your eyes and fill your prayers with expectation.



### Church Sends Gifts to Children in Puerto Rico

Sparta UMC's Mothers and Daughters (MAD) About Missions group, part of the church's United Methodist Women (UMW) made gifts for children in Puerto Rico. Bunnies were crafted from washcloths and bars of soap and each child wrote a note in Spanish with the help of church member Lilly Santiago. The gifts were mailed to the Iglesia Metodista de Puerto Rico (The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico).

### NEJNAMC Send Reps to the U.N.

The Northeast Jurisdiction Native American Ministries Committee (NEJNAMC) sent representatives to the United Nations (U.N.) in New York on April 16 for a permanent forum on indigenous issues. GNJ was represented by Cynthia Kent, Chair of the Committee on Native American Ministries.



### [Re]Planting Mission Churches Conference in Princeton

The multiplication co-hort, a collective of clergy identified as potential church planters, attended the [Re]Planting Mission Churches Conference provided by Continuing Education at Princeton Theological Seminary on April 12. Impactful speakers and discussions are sparking missional imagination. Pictured above, GNJ was represented by James Lee, Michael Reed, Tom Stark, Jevon Caldwell-Gross, Waleska Trinidad, Brendan Galvin, Juel Nelson, Kate Hillis, William D. Carter III, Hoon Kim, and Trey Wince.



### Grant Bolsters Food Pantry in Wharton

Aided by a Communities of Hope grant from GNJ, the Wharton United Community Church at St. John's (WUCC) in Wharton is more than doubling the size of its food pantry. The expansion of this vital ministry adds a new hospitality center to serve as a brainstorming

space for community-led partnerships and projects. Partnering with the NJ Food Bank and ShopRite of Wharton, a loyal group of volunteers load in over 1000 lbs. of food weekly to the pantry; its organization and partnerships requiring over 80 volunteer hours each week. The pantry provides food for a steady 50 families weekly and more than 5,000 persons annually. The dedication of the new mission center, with town officials and business leaders, constituents, and members of WUCC, will be held on May 20.

### 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 [www.gnjumc.org/events](http://www.gnjumc.org/events) to register.

### 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](http://gnjumc.org/taxes) for the statement provided by the legal team at the General Council on Finance & Administration.

### 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](http://gnjumc.org/insurance) to learn more.



## HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE IN THREE LOCATIONS

Bridges' apartments in our private assisted living neighborhoods enhance comfort while skilled, compassionate multi-disciplinary teams deliver care. Contact the location of your choice and see why families choose Bridges to support the dignity and comfort of their loved ones.



### Collingswood

[UMCommunities.org/Collingswood](http://UMCommunities.org/Collingswood)  
Collingswood | 856-854-4331

### Pitman

[UMCommunities.org/Pitman](http://UMCommunities.org/Pitman)  
Pitman | 856-589-7800

### The Shores

[UMCommunities.org/TheShores](http://UMCommunities.org/TheShores)  
Ocean City | 609-399-8505



Residential Living | Assisted Living | Memory Support | Respite  
Rehabilitation | Long-Term Care | Hospice & Palliative Care

## Have Questions? The MRC is Here to Help

Let the Mission and Resource Center serve you. Have a question about ministry, registrations, forms or events? The first place to start is with your Regional Administrator.

For the Northern Region: Gateway North, Palisades, Skylands,  
email [NorthernRegion@gnjumc.org](mailto:NorthernRegion@gnjumc.org) or call 732-359-1075

For the Central Region: Capital, Northern Shore, Raritan Valley,  
email: [CentralRegion@gnjumc.org](mailto:CentralRegion@gnjumc.org) or call 732-359-1070

For the Southern Region: Gateway South, Delaware Bay, Cape Atlantic,  
email: [SouthernRegion@gnjumc.org](mailto:SouthernRegion@gnjumc.org) or call 732-359-1080

## OBITUARIES

**Rev. Dr. Clark Hunt**, Retired Full Elder, died on April 1. A Memorial Service took place on April 28 at Piner Hall at Arbor Acres Retirement Community in Winston Salem, NC. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to the GNJ Centenary Fund & Preacher's Aid Society, 205 Jumping Brook Rd., Neptune, NJ 07753 or Residents Assistance Fund of Arbor Acres, 1240 Arbor Rd., Winston Salem, NC 27104. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Judy MacMillian, 24540 NE 118 Place, Redmond, WA 98053

**Duncan P. McCallum**, Spouse of Retired Elder Carole McCallum, died on April 6. A Memorial Service was held on April 14 at Elm Park UMC in Scranton, PA. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent in Memory of Duncan P. McCallum to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania c/o Dr. Steven Kawut, Research in Pulmonary Hypertension, 3535 Market St., Suite 750, Philadelphia, PA 19104. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Carole McCallum, 123 Panther Hill Dr., Newfoundland, PA 18445

**The June 2018 Issue Deadline is May 16, 2018**



## NEXT GENERATION

UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Do you know a high school Christian leader in your church that may be ready to take the next step in their discipleship journey? We are looking for a select group of leaders to join the High School Leadership Boot Camp at Pinelands Center this summer.

### NOMINATE A YOUTH IN YOUR CONGREGATION

Send an email to Ryan Clements at [rclements@gnjumc.org](mailto:rclements@gnjumc.org). We'll follow up with an invitation to the camp and help facilitate the registration and logistics.

**FIND OUT MORE AT: [www.gnjnextgen.org](http://www.gnjnextgen.org)**

