

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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IGNITE Youth Take Faith Public as World Changers

By Josh Kinney
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WILDWOOD – The idea of “going public” with your faith could easily sum up the experience of the 2018 IGNITE Youth Conference in Wildwood. The speakers, the music, the themes all challenged students to step outside their comfort zones and take their faith public to change the world.

Faith in action dominated the conference and anointed youth with a calling they could grab hold of -- to enter their churches, schools and communities ablaze to make change.

This year’s headline speaker, Rachel Billups, pierced through to the hearts of students when she shared her personal testimony of being called out for a former life of private faith.

“When my friend had to ask if I was a Christian, it cut me deep,” she said.

Billups, who serves as Ginghamburg UMC Tipp City Campus Pastor in Ohio and as Executive Pastor for the church’s Next Generation Ministries, challenged the youth at IGNITE to go public with their faith to be world changers for Jesus.

“It’s okay to struggle with fear and doubt and depression,” she said from the stage. “Jesus is where we can find our hope and our identity.”

She encouraged the students to band together so they don’t have to deal with their struggles alone.

“No matter what your story, people want to and need to hear it,” she said,



IGNITE 2018 World Changers commit to taking their faith public during this year’s life-changing conference in Wildwood.

Photo by Edison Lee

suggesting that the youth stick with God’s story in 2 Timothy 4:5 which calls believers to endure hardships and go forth in ministry.

“This following Jesus stuff is about your entire life, using it to spread the light and love of God to the entire world, and that’s not easy stuff,” she exclaimed with sincerity in her voice to a stadium of students who were quietly transfixed on her heartfelt honesty.

“If I don’t share the good news of the

gospel I won’t become the person God has called me to be,” she said.

Scott Hunter, a youth leader at Simpson UMC in Old Bridge said his youth got the most from Billups’ messages.

“She really had them riveted each time she spoke and made a huge impact on them,” he said.

Worship was led by Bread of Stone, a Christian pop rock band from Iowa, and headlined by Christian hip hop and R&B artist, Mr. TalkBox. DJ Vow and Preston

Centuolo returned to motivate the crowd and keep the momentum rolling into the next act. The lively performances energized youth and brought excitement to all.

“This was a great, life changing experience for me,” said Ashley Caldwell of The UMC at New Brunswick. “It was truly amazing. We were dancing like crazy and going up to the stage every time a song came on. We all bonded and that was

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Laity Learn New Ways to Partner with Clergy for Ministry

By Kamelia Ani
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NEPTUNE – The message to people attending the Laity Leadership Academy on Saturday, October 6 at the Mission and Resource Center was clear, at least according to Betty Quackenboss from Aldersgate UMC and a workshop leader at the event. “Laity need to work as partners in ministry with our pastors if the church is to flourish. Disciples need to think more about ‘feeding’ others than sitting in the pews waiting to be ‘fed.’”

The Academy provided workshops geared toward providing tools and skills to minister across racial and cultural boundaries. The workshops were divided into five different tracks so participants could choose an area which they felt their congregation would best benefit. After an inspiring worship led by Bishop Schol, participants divided up into their individual tracks where they spent the rest of the day.

Kirk Huber, of the First UMC of Westfield, attended the Finance/Stewardship session which was led by Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, Executive Director of The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation, and Brian Mickle of First UMC in Glassboro. Huber said he learned some very useful things.

“The use of e-giving was particularly interesting to me. I know our church has it available, but it is under-utilized. I hope to encourage more in our congregation to



GNJ laity gathered at the Mission and Resource Center in Neptune on October 6 to learn tools and skills for ministry and discipleship. Photo by Kamelia Ani

use it by promoting the benefits to the individual and the church; perhaps through the newsletter, information sessions and a practical demonstration after church some Sunday,” said Huber.

According to Purkis-Brash, the key message of the workshop was to impart that generosity helps promote spirituality, and is not just about numbers. Huber agreed, “I will also be ‘talking up’ the emphasis on generosity in our finance and stewardship communications, and making sure we do this throughout the year. I like the recommended idea of periodic messages from a diverse group of congregants on their joy when experiencing generosity.”

Another track was “Vital Ministries with Older Adults,” facilitated by Helen Hunter of Wesley UMC in South Plain-

field and Arthur Harrell of Cokesbury UMC in Lebanon. Harrell has been involved in nursing home ministries and said the workshop was positioned to help individuals looking to develop ministries specifically targeting older populations. He said that at the end of the workshop he felt confident that every participant walked away with a clear plan to achieve their goals.

“In fact, the workshop was so inspirational that by the end of the day, the nine participants had already decided to reconvene in six months to give feedback on how far along they would be in their projects,” said Harrell. “They also agreed on a mutual goal to apply for one of the grants disbursed by the Academy.”

The workshop “A Closer Walk” en-

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Pastor Starts Water Color Ministry for Children

By Denise Herschel
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BRIDGETON - Rev. Dr. James Kim Crutchfield has served the Broad Street United Methodist Church in Bridgeton for the past seven years with a talent many of his congregants did not know. He is a talented watercolor artist and recently, he decided to share his artistic abilities with his church’s youngest members.

“Art is a passion of mine and I love it!” stated Crutchfield. “I started the class originally because five children were already coming to the church while their parents practiced in the worship team which meets on Monday nights. Because they already had to be at church, my wife Stephanie, who is the worship team leader, suggested we do something to occupy the children’s time more beneficially. Parents and children were excited and several of them already wanted to learn watercolors. So I decided to have a Bible discussion and then offer sessions on watercolor painting for beginners.”

The Bible study and Water color class began in September and meets every Monday evening for an hour for young

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A Message from the Bishop



The Bible Scripture, Story, Revelation

I have a good friend, a clergy woman who I have deep respect for, who on a couple of occasions shared with me revelations she received from God while in deep prayer about my ministry. These revelations did occur during my ministry. My wife Beverly, on a couple of occasions, has had what she calls premonitions about my ministry. In each of these cases what was revealed

came to pass. I cannot explain how or why, but I believe that people whose hearts are at one with God and with others are open to receive God's revelations. I believe the writers of the Bible were such people.

This is the third in a three-part series about the Bible. Previously, I shared that our scriptures came to be after years of conversation, prayer and discernment. In fact, the Bible was not finalized until more than 350 years after Jesus' death. The Gospels were written 25 to 70 years after Jesus' death and the book of Genesis thousands of years after the stories occurred. The Bible was never written to record history or science but to give us deeper insight and understanding of God, the community of faith and ourselves. About 75% of the Bible is story and poetry. More than history, the Bible is sacred story about the meaning of God, humanity and life. Today I want to talk about revelation, what is revealed through the Bible.

There are several ways to read the Bible.

- Academic – to learn about the text, and when it was written, who wrote it and why it was written.
- Devotion – to be inspired and moved to act on God's Word.
- Revelation – to discover what God is calling us to be and do.

No one way of reading the Bible is the "right" way. Each has a purpose and as disciples of Jesus, I encourage you to read the Bible through these three different lenses.

Just as there are several ways to read the Bible, there are several ways to interpret the Bible.

- Sacred story – the Bible is a collection of stories to be studied to be understood. This form of study is called exegesis and hermeneutics. Exegesis uses commentaries and Bible dictionaries or attends Bible studies in which the teacher has used these tools to understand the setting, the original meaning of words and phrases, and how others have interpreted the verses in the past. Reading the Bible as only sacred story can lead to picking and choosing the passages that reinforce our story.
- Inspirationally – God breathed stories and teachings to move us to live a holy life. Here the Bible is read devotionally - how will I live this verse or verses today? While knowing the context and meaning of phrases will be helpful, to receive God's inspiration does not require thorough study. For instance, the 23rd Psalm, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and 1 Corinthians 13 about love speak deeply into us without knowing everything about these passages. Meditating on these passages is appropriate for daily devotions. Reading the Bible only devotionally leads to a shallow faith.
- Literal Word of God – the words on the page are to be lived as printed. As I shared in the previous article, I have never encountered a United Methodist that reads the entire Bible literally or, maybe I should say, follows the entire Bible literally. There are scriptures about food, clothing, keeping the Sabbath holy (Saturday is the Sabbath day, but we do not even keep Sunday as prescribed in the Bible. There is an entire list of what you can and can't do on the Sabbath), as well as many others that we do not follow literally. But there are scriptures we should follow literally – the Ten Commandments, the

Great Commandment, 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, forgiving other's sins, etc. Reading the Bible only literally sets people to judging one another.

Here is a paradigm for three ways to read the Bible. Read each row from left to right to see how each differs from one another and enhances each other.

Sacred Story (study)	Inspiration (meditate)	Literal (read)
Understand	Wonder	Know
Believe	Trust	Conviction
Knowable	Mystery	Truth
Clarity	Excite	Concrete
Interpret	Meditate	Take at Face Value
Different Interpretation	My Interpretation	One Interpretation
Story of Creation	Story of Pentecost	Story of the Crucifixion

Notice in each method of interpretation, each column has value for understanding and living the Bible. When we lean only on one column, we become dogmatic, narrow, and miss the full revelation of God. It is in the combination that we capture the full breath of God's unfolding story. Only reading the Bible through one of these lenses misses the wider revelation and understanding God has for us.

Revelation engages all three and is a journey rather than an event. Revelation is about the next step forward, the unfolding mystery of our next step and the future's path for our life. The Bible is filled with mystery, in other words, it is not fully known and faith is required for revelation.

God is most often revealed in the scriptures when we are most vulnerable because that's when we are most open to God's revelation, just as these Biblical and religious stories illustrate:

- Abraham sees a ram in the bush and knows it is a gift from God.
- Moses is awed by a burning bush that is not consumed and understands God has a mission for him.
- Mary understands God is doing a new thing through her when the baby in Elizabeth leaps.
- During his baptism, the heavens open and the divine mission of Jesus is made known.
- Paul, on a sunny day on the road to Damascus, realizes he is to make disciples of Christ, not persecute them.
- John Wesley, on a ship that looked like it was about to sink, finds faith in Christ.

Each highlights God's revelation when the individuals were most vulnerable. When we are the most vulnerable we have the most to learn, understand and experience.

Ultimately, revelation is about finding ourselves in the passage. Too often, we are trying to find a message for others while the passage is searching for us. When you think the passage is speaking about someone else, spend time reading, studying and meditating on what God is saying to you. If the Word returns empty, become more vulnerable. God wants to reveal something for us every day.

Keep the faith!

John Schol
Bishop
United Methodists of Greater New Jersey

The December 2018 issue deadline is November 16, 2018

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Greater New Jersey Commission on Archives and History seeks church histories for the annual Local Church History Contest.

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The Steelman Methodist History Award (For best local church history)

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All histories must conform to the guidelines and be received by January 18, 2019.

Submission guidelines may be found at:

www.gnjumc.org/our-history-and-values

For more information, contact:

Don DeGroat, Vice-chair | dfdegroat4@aol.com or 570-646-9298

'TIS THE SEASON OF INVITATION

About a third of Americans attend church regularly.

More than two thirds of Americans attend church around Christmas time.

Of those who don't attend during Christmas time, more than 50% say they are willing to attend if invited by a friend.

This is pretty simple math. A whole lot of your neighborhood is about to become a possible guest in your church.

What are you doing to invite them?

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- **Promote your January sermon series** and give them something to come back for.
- **Promote your January dinner gathering** and give them someONE to come back for.
- *"Nothing beats a personal invitation"* **Consider equipping your congregants with event cards** and a few tips on how to invite someone to church.
- **Call-a-thon** | While that *"visitors welcome"* sign out front looks nice, churches have had a lot of luck with calling congregants they haven't seen in a few months.
- **Door hangers** | Rather than a knock on the door during dinner time, a lot of neighbors might be moved by a simple door-hanger invitation to the month's services.
- **Step out of your comfort zone** and invite that person whose been on your heart to join you for church and out for a meal afterward.



For more information about inviting people to church, reaching your community and making new disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world, contact:

Trey Wince, *Director of New Disciples*
twince@gnjumc.org | 732.359.1046



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

GNJ Collectively Commits to Prayer

By Josh Kinney
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WILDWOOD – For 40 days prior to Greater New Jersey's 2018 Annual Conference session in Wildwood last May, GNJ was committed to intentional praying for the gathering. Each day, a specific area of GNJ ministry was lifted up through a daily e-mail that included scripture, a short devotion and a prayer. Over 1,300 signed up to be a partner in prayer.

Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups, took the lead on initiating the 40 Days of Prayer and was moved by the people who came to the prayer room during Annual Conference.

"What people might not know is that there were folks in the prayer room during the entire conference praying for the needs of the people of GNJ," said Yeske. "We received comments that people could feel the presence of God in a powerful way."

After annual conference, Yeske considered what the next steps were for GNJ's prayer ministry. She asked the 18 prayer ministry volunteers if they would all commit to two days a month of prayer for GNJ, assuring that prayers are being lifted daily. At the same time, United Methodists across the world began on June 3 to pray regularly for the special session of the General Conference in 2019. The initiative led by the Council of Bishops calls for daily prayer and weekly fasting as the denomination seeks a way forward regarding homosexuality.

"The Bible instructs us to pray in times of need, but for what and how do we pray?" asked Yeske. She continued, "In times of crisis, loss, fear or uncertainty, we grasp for what we know for sure, returning to familiar routines until our mind and heart can catch up with our new reality. Until we find ourselves ready to hope again."

When Kathleen Altobello read in The GNJ Digest weekly e-newsletter earlier this year that Yeske was looking for fellow United Methodists to share in a new prayer experience by leading a team of prayer warriors leading up to Annual Conference, she knew she had to sign up.

"Each day for 40 days we received an e-mail from a GNJ staff person. These people would give a description of what their positions or committees entailed and then we would all pray for that group," said Altobello. "It was educational and not time consuming, and it was easy to do. I enjoyed it a great deal."

At Annual Conference, a prayer station was set up where the prayer team would pray for the ongoing sessions, speakers and any concerns. It was a quiet room lit with candles and with small 'cube holes' set up for people to place their written prayers likened to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

"While we sat there, conference attendees would enter and we would hold hands and pray with them," said Altobello.

A few days after the conference, Altobello received an email asking if she wanted to continue praying throughout the year on her own.

"We would agree to pray for GNJ, its churches, clergy, members and any other specific concerns we as an individual may have," she said. "I pray on my own for GNJ once a week. It's so easy. No deadlines, no meetings and it's such a blessing to be able to do it."

Yeske said that she has experienced divine intervention, answers to prayer, as well as miracles that she never expected.

"At the same time I have known the deep disappointment of prayers not answered. Amidst the seemingly unpredictable nature of miracles, I have learned that I would rather place my trust in God whose ways I did not always understand, rather than live in hopelessness. I will keep praying for miracles."

When asked how to do that, Yeske responded that she first allows her concerns, problems and needs to be an opportunity for prayer.

"Prayer can replace the anxiousness in my heart and calms my fears," she said. "In prayer I pour out my desires to God. When I am unsure what to pray, I turn to the scriptures and pray these words to God. I use the scripture, often the Psalms, to offer words of lament, praise, thanksgiving and request. There



Pictured above: Prayer Warriors at GNJ's 2018 Annual Conference last June in Wildwood. Photo by Shari DeAngelo

are times when I have recorded my prayers in a journal as a way of expressing myself. This has given me a way to go back and reflect on the work of God."

For Yeske, prayer is not always a personal, private practice.

"At times I share my prayer requests with others so they can pray alongside me," she said. "I have had prayer partners who I met with regularly; they have helped me to wait, kept me hopeful and interceded when I no longer could. I have also seen God work through the intercessory prayers of churches, in small groups and gatherings of friends and family. We pray in anticipation of a miracle."

"God is creating signs and wonders in GNJ and there is even more God wants to do," exclaimed Bishop John Schol at Greater New Jersey's 2018 Annual Con-

ference session in Wildwood. "God wants to continue working through the United Methodists of Greater New Jersey so that miracles of healing and transformation occur across GNJ and around the world."

Yeske encourages all of GNJ to "be a part of the movement" anticipating miracles everywhere. "Psalm 77:14 says, 'you are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.' Begin by joining us in prayer for GNJ, The United Methodist Church, and our world."

Leading up to the 2019 General Conference of The United Methodist Church next February in St. Louis, United Methodists in Greater New Jersey will be invited into another opportunity to be a part of a 40 days of prayer. Stay tuned for sign up information in The GNJ Digest e-newsletter.

Laity Learn New Ways to Partner with Clergy for Ministry



From finance and stewardship, ministry with older adults, technology, and cultural competence, laity across GNJ engaged in a day of workshops to learn skills for their congregations and ministries. Photo by Kamelia Ani

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couraged participants to improve the spiritual tone in their churches by helping to create an environment more conducive to going deeper in faith. "Building up the Beloved Community of God" explored how to create a loving, God-centered community while seeking ways to minister across racial and cultural boundaries and "Digital Strategy for Salvation"

provided guidance on how to determine a powerful church brand through sharing a "unique church story."

Quackenboss, one of leaders of "A Closer Walk", said she was excited and blessed by the feedback she received, especially from those who said they were inspired to start new groups within their own congregations.

"Our point was to show how a team

of lay people, working with our pastor, could step up and take responsibility for our own spiritual growth and to help others to go deeper in their faith," she said.

"Concentrating on scripture exposure and the gift of prayer, we presented laity designed opportunities to approach these means of grace in newer, often less restrictive ways. And, we learned that as lay people we are capable of

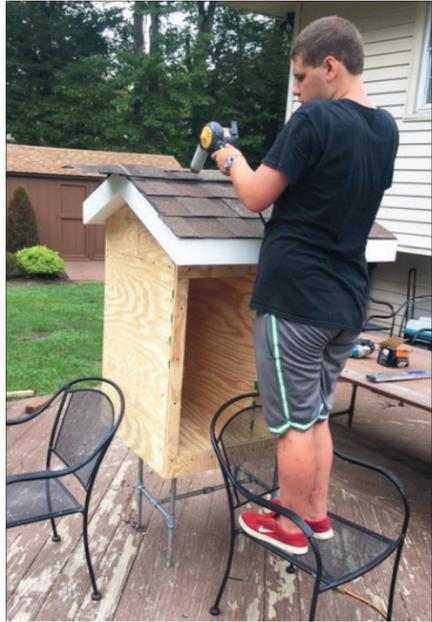
so much more than we think if we keep Jesus Christ and his spirit at the center of our work."

The response from the attendees was very positive. All left the Academy feeling inspired, with plenty of food for thought, as well as practical tools to help guide their congregations.

Red Bank UMC Opens NJ's First 'Little Free Pantry'

By Rev. Melissa Hinnen
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RED BANK - The first New Jersey based Little Free Pantry was recently constructed and registered at the United Methodist Church in Red Bank. Perhaps you have heard of the Little Free Library movement, enclosed bookshelves in public places where people can give or get a book for free. The "Little Free Pantry" adapts that concept to help meet the needs of those experiencing food insecurity in local communities.



Raphael Kon constructed the pantry for his Eagle Scout badge project and out of a passion to serve others. Photo provided

Suzanne Dice, a member of the UMC in Red Bank, dreamed of this pantry for a number of years. While there are numerous local food programs available, they are not always open.

"Hunger has no schedule," Dice noted. So when Raphael (Raef) Kon asked if there was a project he could work on for his Eagle Scout badge, Dice enthusiastically suggested the Little Free Pantry.

Kon was introduced to the church's hunger related ministries when his Troop 246 led two food drives for the UMC of Red Bank's Backpack Crew. A 15-year-old sophomore at Middletown South High School and faithful parishioner of Saint Mary, Mother of God Roman Catholic Church, he has been in Scouts since first grade. Because only 2% of Boy Scouts attain the rank of Eagle Scout and most do not attain it until they are 18, Kon's family is proud that he is earning this honor at such a young age.

His mother, Theresa, says that Raef was significantly affected by the loss experienced in nearby towns after Hurricane Sandy damaged the area in 2012. He baked brownies and delivered food, blankets, hats, and gloves to Union Beach and Keansburg several times following the storm.

Last year when he was considering his Eagle Project, he wanted to help children who had been affected by Hurricane Sandy. Knowing that the UMC of Red Bank Backpack Crew ministry was started to help children in the aftermath of the storm, Kon and his family sat down with Dice and made a plan to begin construction of the Little Food Pantry.

According to his mother, "Raphael

worked extremely hard all summer long on the Pantry. It was a hot summer. But, he was determined and he built it from scratch." She continued, "He does not want anyone to ever go hungry, especially kids. He loves the motto, 'you can't be awesome when you are hungry' and he recites it every time that he does a food drive for The Backpack Crew."

The Pantry, a house shaped enclosed shelving unit with a door covered in Plexiglas, was completed and stocked in August. After being placed in the church parking lot, people in the community immediately began using the resource. Dice reports that as word gets out she sees items rotating with people taking what they need and others replenishing with new items.

The Little Free Pantry is open to anyone and the anonymous nature of the service helps maintain the dignity of those who need it. Because the church is used by multiple organizations including pre-schools and addiction recovery groups, Dice hopes that the word will



The Little Free Pantry at Red Bank UMC has debuted as the state's first. Photo provided



The "Little Free Pantry" at Red Bank UMC adapts the concept of the Little Free Library Movement but rather than books it provides food needs for those experiencing food insecurity in the local community. Photo provided

begin to get out into the town.

In addition to non-perishable food items, the shelves are stocked with school supplies and toiletries. As the weather gets colder, Dice is considering other items like socks, hats, and gloves.

Kon and his troop recently completed a third food drive for the UMC of Red Bank. He is glad that the Little Free Pantry is being used and does what he can to make sure it is stocked with food, toothpaste, and soap.

While she doesn't know where the construction of the Little Food Pantry might lead, she plans to begin conversations in the community to establish them throughout Red Bank.

Churches interested in bringing this ministry to their community can contact Suzanne backpackcrewnj@gmail.com. More information about the Little Free Pantry can be found online: www.little-freepantry.org

Delaware Bay Community Day



John Wesley UMC in Bridgeton invited their community to a day-long festival of fun, service and fellowship. Photo provided

BRIDGETON – Pastor Hillary Johnson-Crute had a dream for John Wesley United Methodist Church. Something unique that would reach the residents of the Southeast Gateway in Bridgeton and beyond, to let them know that the church is present, open and can lead people to the power and love of Jesus in a different way. Johnson-Crute wanted an event that was open and free to the public, with activities and vendors on every corner of the parking lot.

On the afternoon of Saturday, September 22, Johnson-Crute's dream came true as the church hosted its first annual Community Day where the church body united on one accord to serve the residents of their community and to exemplify Jesus.

"It was a success beyond my wildest dreams," said Johnson-Crute. "Members of our congregation selflessly came together to plan and host this event. It was all God's doing!"

Hundreds of people visited Community Day throughout the afternoon, enjoying music, pony rides, Zumba, yoga, haircuts and facials while members of the church served hundreds of hamburgers, hot dogs, barbeque chicken, baked beans and fresh corn on the cob. Vendors included Inspira Hospital Systems, the Office on Aging, mortgage information, and a flea market. The city of Bridgeton Fire Department was on hand to give children a tour of their fire truck and mobile command station. Bridgeton Mayor



The Delaware Bay Community Day provided music, pony rides, face painting, Zumba, yoga, haircuts, information booths, a flea market, fire truck tour, special guests and plenty of food. Photo provided

Albert Kelly was among many from the area that stopped by to show support, as well as Delaware Bay District Superintendent Glenn Conaway. Members of John Wesley UMC's sister congregation, Haven UMC, and other local churches showed their support by participating in the event festivities.

At the end of the day, Johnson-Crute declared, "This will not be the last event... just wait until next year."

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IGNITE Youth Take Faith Public as World Changers



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awesome. I hope to go next year and the year after and the year after and maybe even have more teens from my church go. I'm so thankful for this experience."

On a scale from one to 10, Kayla Eberly of Vincetown UMC rated this year's IGNITE 10,000 and "would recommend it to anyone looking to find Jesus in their life." For Eberly, IGNITE "outdoes itself every year."

"This year was definitely unforgettable for me," she stated. "Bread of Stone was amazing. Rachel Billups was amazing. Mr. TalkBox was amazing. IGNITE is amazing. This was my 4th year and let me tell ya, it was the best year ever. Lots of tears and lots of memories were made and I can't wait to change the world and



show them what God really does for us. We are world changers.”

Sara Snialkowski, an IGNITE Squad young adult volunteer leader said this years’ experience will stay with her forever. “By far, this year was the best,” she said.

“IGNITE was transforming, life changing, and modeled so much of who we are and our values and goals as a conference,” said Bishop John Schol.

Billups ended her last session with an assurance that the Holy Spirit would enable the youth to live out their calls.

“God hasn’t given you a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind,” she said. “God has a claim on you. Live your best life for Jesus.”

She emphasized the importance of youth conferences and how they impact lives including many of her friends who found their call to ministry during similar events.

“I was so thankful for the opportunity to speak into the lives of young people,” said Billups. “My prayers are with the students who committed to next steps with Jesus and the leaders who will disciple them.”



One student shared that their call to ministry at IGNITE was because “this world needs to understand that God is always the answer and that we should trust God. We should never forget how important we are and that Jesus made us to be us, not anyone else. For me, the time has come. I’m going public.”

GNJ’s Next Generation Ministries is cultivating and mobilizing new generations of enthusiastic disciples of Jesus Christ that connect, engage and lead in their congregations and communities to change the world. For more information about IGNITE, visit www.ignitenj.org



Pianist, Violist Seek out 'Novel Voices'

By Linda Bloom

NEW YORK - A musical duo's desire to demonstrate how music can give both solace and a voice to refugees worldwide is getting an extra boost through United Methodist connections.

Anna Petrova, a pianist, and Molly Carr, a violist, began playing together as a duo while at the Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music. They conceived their "Novel Voices" project to raise awareness about the refugee situation within their musical circles and show how to use art to make social change.

An Oct. 3 concert in New York, celebrating human rights and non-governmental organizations working with the United Nations, was one part of the project, organized with the Rev. Liberato "Levi" Bautista, who heads the U.N. office of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society.

Petrova told United Methodist News Service that she and Carr realized many friends their age didn't know much about the current refugee crisis or the people who are doing refugee resettlement work.

"That's what inspired us even more to do this project," added Petrova, who teaches at the University of Louisville.

Novel Voices would become an extension of Project: Music Heals Us, a program that Carr created after working in a hospice while briefly considering a career in nursing. Carr, who is currently on the viola faculties of the Juilliard School pre-college division, has organized concerts at nursing homes, hospitals, prisons and other locations.

But the two young women needed help reaching the refugee community. Petrova reached out to the Rev. Elaine Wing, pastor of Calvary United Methodist Church in Dumont, New Jersey, where Petrova worked as the church music director for eight years, starting as an undergraduate at the Manhattan School of Music.

Petrova, a native of Bulgaria, said she has received "all kinds of support" from the Calvary congregation. "They've become my family," she explained. "We just clicked really well."

Wing contacted the Rev. Hector A. Burgos, director of Connectional Ministries for the Greater New Jersey Conference, who suggested getting in touch with the Rev. Jeania Ree V. Moore at the Board of Church of Society. Moore connected them with Bautista. "He just exactly knew what we were trying to do," Petrova said.



Pianist Anna Petrova (second from left) and Molly Carr (right), performing during a concert in New York to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and highlight their "Novel Voices" project. Photo by Ramon Leonardo Cabrera/GFDD

Through the fall of 2019, the Novel Voices team — Petrova, Carr, composer Fernando Arroyo Lascurain and filmmaker and photographer Victoria Stevens — is holding periodic workshops with and performing concerts for refugees in five locations.

In August, Novel Voices visited a school run by the Danish Red Cross at the Jelling Refugee Center in Denmark and worked with children there aged 10 to 18. Some of the teachers were refugees themselves. The head teacher, for example, had come to Denmark from Bosnia during that country's war in the 1990s.

The participants were shy at first, but "like our best friends" at the end of the two-day workshop, Petrova said. The duo talked about musical devices and sounds that can be used to express emotions and offered short piano and viola classes. Lascurain, who plays multiple instruments, taught guitar and basic piano chords.

"We left feeling so fulfilled and excited and encouraged," Carr said in a Youtube video posted by Novel Voices. "At the same time, rather heartbroken and a bit overwhelmed but very inspired to continue our project."

In early October, the team was to spend two days collaborating with the International Rescue Committee, Church World Service and other organizations in New York and New Jersey, working with

refugees from Africa.

That collaboration followed the Oct. 3 concert for the U.N. community at the Salvation Army auditorium in Manhattan. The event was a good way to combine both the artistic side and the human side of the Novel Voices project, Petrova said.

For Bautista, the concert also offered an opportunity to celebrate two 70th anniversaries — of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. Bautista is president of that group, which sponsored the event with support from other organizations, including the Board of Church and Society.

Copies of a resolution from its international board that recommit the group, known as CoNGO, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were distributed at the concert.

"I hope you join us in both our joy for such a document, but equally for our lament in how in many places and instances today these very rights are ignored and violated, including the very rights of human rights defenders themselves," Bautista told the concert audience.

Formulated after World War II, the declaration ushered in a body of international law and agreements that continue to help preserve world peace, the declaration points out. Now, more than ever, "such fundamental rights and freedoms must be reinforced," the resolution said.

The concert also marked a time when two major international agreements are due for approval: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

The musical pieces selected by Petrova and Carr for the concert reflected the desire to maintain human rights and freedoms. The final piece, for example — a movement from Quartet for the End of Time (1941) — was written by Olivier Messiaen, a devout Catholic, when he was in a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany.

"This piece is truly timeless," Carr told the audience. "Even behind bars, he (Messiaen) was looking to the future, he was looking to a time with no pain, a time of pure justice and peace."

A December workshop will take Novel Voices to Los Angeles, where they will work with participants in refugee resettlement classes. Next year, the team will visit refugee centers in Israel/Palestine and Bulgaria.

Lascurain — who wrote a piece for the Oct. 3 concert, "Call and Prayer," that was inspired by the workshop at the refugee center in Denmark — will use the conversations and encounters from all the visits as the basis for a final musical composition about their experiences. The result will be an album, film and benefit concert at Carnegie Hall in September 2019.

A Visiting Miracle ~ A Series on Miracles in our Midst

Rev. Rolando Santiago Fuentes witnessed a miracle one Sunday after his church service at St. Paul's Centenary UMC in Newark. An offering was taken for the church's food kitchen ministry that had been taking place for the last two years. Fuentes shared a story along with photos about the ministry and how just the day prior, members of the church had served over 60 hot meals to a men's shelter in Newark alongside community volunteers.

"I met a young man yesterday named Jonathan," said Fuentes. "We talked for some time. He is just 21 and serving life parole but with dreams to move on."

Fuentes went on to describe how although the shelter helped inmates on parole get acclimated back into their communities, the men, including Jonathan, needed to provide for meals themselves out of their own pockets. Cooking materials were made possible because of generous offerings from the church and community. Fuentes spoke to the congregation about his hopes of providing even more hot meals in the near future and opened the invitation to give.

After the service, Mrs. Zoraida Vega approached Fuentes with a heart that was moved. She committed to sending a monthly offering to support the church's



Volunteers from St. Paul's Centenary UMC in Newark serve hot meals to a men's shelter in the city. Photo provided

food kitchen ministry so men like Jonathan could be fed.

"Now the miracle is this," said Fuentes. "Mrs. Zoraida Vega used to be a member of our church but moved to

Pennsylvania about four years ago. She was just back in town visiting when she attended the service that day. She is a living miracle, and miracles are happening everywhere. Do you see them? Are

you one of them?"

If you have a miracle story you would like to share, email Josh Kinney, Editorial Manager at jkkinney@gnjumc.org

Youth Camping Experiences Last All Year

By Kamelia Ani
Kameliaanipphoto@gmail.com



MT. MISERY - "Camp truly changed my life" is a thought echoed by many who attend Next Generation Ministries' summer camp at the Pinelands Center in New Jersey. The newly rejuvenated camp kicked off this summer for middle and high school students, offering a variety of creative outdoor activities, with spiritual growth and leadership development at the heart of each program. Campers chose specialty activities from football to dance, swimming to art and made enduring friends in daily competitions like dodge ball, messy games, adventure relays and more. The Next Gen camp experience has allowed campers to dive deeper in relationship with God and others through worship, Bible study and discipleship under the guidance of mentoring counselors.

Paul Orellana, 15, of St. Paul Cenary UMC in Newark, said that camp is way of connecting with his peers and making lifelong friendships.

"What I liked about the camp was the way we all connected to each other, even though we were all strangers; we were best friends by the second day," he said. "I learned to be more outgoing. I usually am not the one to start talking to someone else but I learned that it's a good way to make friends. The camp changed my way of seeing my life personally. Going home was where it impacted the most, because I changed the way I acted a little more. I found that I was a little bit nicer to people and I was starting to make more

friends by talking to people I didn't know. It has made my life way better because I got to meet all the people I did at camp, and formed close bonds."

Liseth Rodriguez, 17, from FUMC Dover said camp is "like a family."

"I just loved camp and looked forward to it. I loved how everyone is a family when we're there," she said. "We always look forward to seeing each other and even when new people come they're always brought into our little family. It's great to know that there are kids that have the same faith as you and that's what builds the friendship in a unique way. It's nice that everyone gets so close to God because of the nature and beauty that we see in creation at camp."

Rodriguez said she noticed changes in others that have gone to camp for the first time and believes that it has taught her new things; motivating her to face the years ahead.

"I learned what my purpose in life was,



For GNJ's Next Generation youth, camp at Pinelands Center was a life changing experience that challenged and inspired. Photo by Edison Lee



This summer's Next Generation Pinelands Camping experiences connected GNJ youth in deep meaningful ways, changed perspectives and grew faith.

Photo by Edison Lee

not necessarily in ministry but how I can help others without having to do it under the title of ministry but to still know that

I'm doing God's will," she stated. "I feel like I'm called to be a helping hand and a voice for those that are voiceless or cannot be heard."

GNJ's Next Gen Ministries is cultivating and mobilizing new generations of enthusiastic disciples of Jesus Christ that connect, engage and lead in their congregations and communities to transform the world. Rodriguez and Orellana are just two examples that have come forward to share their testimonies. To learn more about Next Gen camping and how you can help change the lives of young people and build the next generation of leaders in GNJ, visit www.gnjnextgen.org

Pastor Starts Water Color Ministry

Continued from page 1

people ages nine to thirteen. Crutchfield refers to the children as young artists. There is no fee for the class and all necessary equipment and supplies are provided including brushes, paints, palettes, water containers, water color paper and backboards.

"In the sessions we begin with a Bible discussion," he continued. "We already discussed the two famous artists in the Bible - Bezalel and Oholiab from Exodus 31 and 35. We also looked at the brilliant artistic image recorded in Proverbs 25:11. After the Bible discussion we work on our paintings. I usually do a demonstration of a skill in watercolor painting. The children then watch and go to work on their own. Presently, the children have just completed their landscape scene of a dock on a river. They will matre their artwork and show it at the next coffee fellowship after service."

Crutchfield said he became interested in art as a young boy, describing himself then as "of a quieter more subdued manner."

"Mom took pity on me and every week, brought a pencil and paper so I could entertain myself... I sat next to her and drew furiously as everyone around me sang and danced and shouted. I became an artist in the Pentecostal Church," he said. "I painted in oil and acrylics as a teen but it wasn't until I served as the pastor of Hopewell UMC that I took a watercolor course in an adult program. Years went by as my family and I worked as missionaries. Upon returning I began enrolling in the Coastal Maine Art Workshops in Rockland and Belfast, Maine every summer. I appreciate what good teachers do to impart skill and encouragement."

Crutchfield considers his painting class to be a ministry. They look at scripture that have relevant lessons that speak to youth. The selected texts raise a few questions.

"I try to get into the world of this age group and form lessons that help them process their experiences in the light of the Gospel. Because God is the Creator



Rev. Dr. James Kim Crutchfield has taken his gift as a water color artist and turned it into a ministry for children at Broad Street UMC in Bridgeton. Photos provided

and has endowed human beings with creativity, I believe art is an avenue of expressing glory to God. Children should be immersed in the visual arts, painting and sculpture, music and poetry and the intuitive dimension of life," he said. "Developing the right brain helps bring wholeness

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to people. Children's brains are not just little receptacles to be crammed full of information for feedback and regurgitation. The church has a long tradition of addressing the whole person not just the rational, calculating and analyzing part of human intelligence. Watercolors tap into the right brain - the artistic, creative and intuitive dimension of our intelligence."

When asked what he hopes the

children are receiving in his ministry Crutchfield replied, "I hope that the kids will sense the fullness of life and the joy of existence Jesus brings to us. I want the children to be fully alive, full human, exercising their whole personalities."

For more information about the Broad Street UMC's painting class for children contact Crutchfield at 609-949-4308 or visit www.broadstumc.org

Wall UMC Uses Connection to Help Hurricane Survivors

By Olivia Cowdrick & Penny Hamilton

WALL – When Hurricane Florence devastated the Carolinas, Wall UMC quickly reached out to Rev. Nicole Hamilton, formerly of their congregation who now pastors two United Methodist churches near the coast in North Carolina.

Within a week, the congregation of Wall UMC collected enough supplies to make 30 flood buckets containing items needed to clean up after the disaster such as dust masks, cleaning supplies, and laundry detergent with each bucket costing an average of \$75. After the supplies were gathered, the youth group help

put the buckets together. In addition to the buckets, baby formula and diapers were also donated.

“The young people saw an immediate need for help and were willing to donate time and funds,” stated Olivia Cowdrick, a Wall UMC Youth Advisor.

With the help of friends and family, Wall UMC Youth Advisor Penny Hamilton delivered the buckets to North Carolina on Oct. 6. The congregation utilized their connection to make a difference and continues to pray for those affected by the storm and for an efficient recovery process.



Students at Wall UMC are pictured with flood buckets created for hurricane survivors in North Carolina. Photo provided

Looking for a Retreat?

The Search experience is a 3-day faith journey for Senior High youth. A great opportunity to build or broaden one's faith with like minded individuals.

What is Search?

The Search for Christian Maturity is a retreat for youth, by youth. Youth and young adults take the lead in guiding candidates through 11 talks that assist each retreat goer in experiencing a closer walk with Christ.

When is it?

The Search retreat will take place January 4-6, 2019

Where is it held?

Kiddie Keepwell Center
35 Roosevelt Drive, Edison NJ 08837

For more information
or to register
visit www.searchretreat.org



Conference Happenings



Kingswood and Frenchtown UMC's Donate \$10,000 to The Centenary Fund and Preachers Aid Society

The Kingswood and Frenchtown UMC's, having received an unexpected large bequest, have decided to make \$10,000 donations to four GNJ organizations: IGNITE, Mosaic Ministries, The Makers Place of Trenton, and The Centenary Fund and Preachers Aid Society. Pictured above is Pastor Peter Mantell presenting a check to Jack Scharf, Board member of the Centenary Fund.

Seese Scholarship Awarded

Rev. Miso Park of Bergen Highlands UMC in Saddle River and Rev. Pedro Pillot of Asbury UMC in Camden have both been awarded the 2018 Seese Scholarship for continuing education for clergy. Each year the award is given to pastors whose plans for continuing education will lead to strengthening ministry in the local church. Guided by Rose Seese of Gibbsboro, his widow, and supported by ongoing gifts, the scholarship honors her late husband, Rev. Harry A. Seese of Medford UMC.

How You Can Help With Disaster Relief

There are three primary ways GNJ churches can help families impacted by Hurricanes and other disasters:

- 1.) Assemble UMCOR kits. GNJ has three collection depots kits.
- 2.) Make a donation to UMCOR for Disaster Relief through the Miracles Everywhere Campaign. To make a donation online visit gnjumc.org or send your contributions to GNJ at the Mission and Resource Center, 205 Jumping Brook Rd., Neptune, NJ 07753. Use the UMCOR Advance #901670 Hurricane Michael. 100% of all UMCOR donations go to disaster recovery and relief.
- 3.) Organize a volunteer team to help in recovery. Email Brittany Rusk, GNJ's UVMIM Coordinator for more info at UMVIM@gnjumc.org

GNJ Endowed Scholarship at Africa University

Emmanuel Gasaba of Burundi is the recipient of the GNJ Endowed Scholarship at Africa University. Gasaba is a third-year student enrolled in the Department of Health Sciences. Join us in congratulating Gasaba. Visit www.africa.edu to learn more about Africa University.

2018 Laity Leadership Academy Seed Grant

The Laity Leadership Academy seed grant program is offered to teams of lay leaders who have attended the Laity Leadership Academy and completed an action plan to develop a project/initiative in their local church. Visit gnjumc.org to learn more.

Clergy Change in Membership Status

The Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) wants to clarify procedures for any who wish to make a change in their relationship with GNJ. Visit gnjumc.org to learn more.

GNJ Leadership Appraisal Results

GNJ conducts leadership appraisals twice a year to measure the progress we are making on mission and resourcing. The latest results of the survey can be viewed online. For more information about Leadership Appraisals, visit gnjumc.org/leadership-evaluations

GNJ Represented at UMC's 'Do No Harm' Summit

The United Methodist Church held 'Do No Harm' a sexual ethics summit in San Antonio with nearly 300 attendees. Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, Executive Director of The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of GNJ participated on a panel that she described as a "powerful experience."

Key Dates Calendar Available

The administrative team at GNJ has created a key dates calendar for church leaders to use for planning for 2019. The calendar is downloadable and displays the contact names for the people and departments who can help you in ministry. It's also printable and updated regularly. Visit gnjumc.org/events to access. For more detailed contact info, search the name with the corresponding event on GNJ's website.

GNJ Ministry Candidate Granted Bossey Scholarship

Rachel Callender, a 24-year-old student at Princeton Seminary and a member of St. John's UMC in Hazlet has been awarded a scholarship from the Council of Bishops to attend The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. Rachel is a candidate to become a deacon in Greater New Jersey. The \$10,000 award, one of three ecumenical scholarship programs offered by the Council of Bishops, will be applied to the program starting in September 2019.

What Did You do for World Communion Sunday?

How did your church honor World Communion Sunday? We want to hear from you. Share your unique experiences or ideas by emailing Juel Nelson, Director of Leadership Development at JNelson@gnjumc.org

Shared Ministry and Conference Billing Deadline

Shared ministry is at the foundation of United Methodism. All churches should submit their shared ministry and conference billing payments for 2018 by Jan. 16, 2019. Visit gnjumc.org/finance-administration for more info.

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 for more info.

Foundation Partnership Resources

Is your church seeking resources on stewardship campaigns, endowments, planned giving, teaching and training, preaching, workshops, capital campaign's, investment and financial planning or estate planning? Visit gnjumc.org/umsf to request your resources.

Conference Happenings

Winter Preparedness

As winter approaches, find out how you can protect your church or organization from the effects of weather. Visit churchmutual.com for resources and tips from Church Mutual.

Applications Open for Global Mission Fellows

The United Methodist Board of Global Ministries is taking applications from young Christian adults who are interested in becoming Global Mission Fellows. Applicants must be ages 20 to 30 and commit to two years of service. Global Mission Fellows work to address the roots of injustice. Early-access deadline is Dec. 3. Visit umcmis-sion.org to apply.

CUMAC Facing Food Shortage

Every day, families and individuals facing hunger and poverty come to CUMAC for the resources and support they need most. Unfortunately, their warehouse is running low on canned goods and, with dwindling supplies, will soon become difficult to serve others. Can you help? Please consider making a donation or holding a collection this month. Visit cumac.org to learn more.



Obituaries

Rev. Horace M. Frantz, Retired Elder, died on Oct. 13. A Memorial Service was held Oct. 19 at Allentown UMC in Allentown, NJ. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent in Memory of Rev. Horace M. Frantz Memorial Scholarship Fund of the Allentown UMC, 23 Church St., Allentown, NJ 08501 or a charity of the donor's choice. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to William Frantz, 4268 Dashley Circle, Catawba, SC 29704.

Elsie Levari-Scattergood, Retired Local Pastor, died on Oct. 17. A Memorial Service was held on Oct. 23 at Newfield UMC in Newfield, NJ. Memorial Donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Piney Hollow UMC, Building Fund, C/O Hazel Koehler, 893 W. Piney Hollow Road, Williamstown, NJ 08094. To e-mail condolences and or tributes, visit www.pancoastfuneralhome.com

Rev. James A. "Archie" Parr, Retired Full Elder, died on Oct. 29. A funeral service was held on Nov. 3 at Tuttle Funeral Home in Randolph, NJ. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent in memory of Rev. James A. "Archie" Parr to Wesley Theological Seminary, 4500 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20016. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to James Parr, 701 Chapel Hill Rd., Leonardo, NJ 07737.

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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.

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United Methodists in Greater New Jersey have embarked on an ambitious journey to fund miracles in the lives of young people, in the midst of our communities, in the wake of natural disasters and in new disciples in Tanzania.



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To help inspire and recognize our congregations, we've created the Miracles Everywhere Circles of Giving:

Miracle Circle | \$350 + *per worshiper*

Wonder Circle | \$250 - \$349 *per worshiper*

Blessing Circle | \$150 - \$249 *per worshiper*

Gratitude Circle | \$75 - \$149 *per worshiper*

The Miracles Everywhere campaign calls for all of our congregations to participate at the level most appropriate for their worshipping community.

All congregations who reach the milestones outlined in the Circles of Giving will receive recognition certificates at the end of the campaign.

To find out more and access easy to use resources, go to:

www.gnjumc.org/miracleseverywhere