

# THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

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gnjumc.org

## Lacey UMC Heals and Comforts a Community in Recovery

By Chris Carter  
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LACEY TOWNSHIP, NJ

**E**arly in 2018, Lacey Township's Police Chief Michael DiBella started a conversation with community leaders, including Rev. Linda Applegate of Lacey UMC and Heather Scanlon, the Lacey Municipal Alliance Chair, to create solutions for the area's growing drug addiction problems.

In the last few years, Ocean County has ranked in the top five counties for drug-related overdose deaths, and Lacey Township has been a hard-hit municipality. This year alone, the county has had 75 deaths from opioid overdoses.

Out of these conversations, and nearly a year of planning, Xodus Recovery Community Center (XRCC) at Lacey United Methodist Church (UMC) opened its doors December 1, 2018.

Donna Catlow, director of the Center, knows first hand how important recovery is to the community. "Helping people in recovery is my passion," Catlow said. "I am a



**Bill Applegate cuts the ribbon at the Xodus Recovery Center's grand opening at Lacey UMC on December 1, 2018.**

mother of sons in recovery and know how important it is to have a safe, sober environment for those in recovery to gather."

The Center's funding comes from a congregational development grant from

Greater New Jersey's Connectional Ministries and in 2019, XRCC became a Hope Center with A Future With Hope. Hope Centers are a network of organizations

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## SHARING THE MINISTRY; BLESSING THE DIFFERENCE:

## Diverse Views United on GNJ Way Forward Team

NEPTUNE, NJ

**G**NJ pastors Rev. David Wehrle and Rev. Amanda Hemenetz represent diverse views regarding how United Methodists should be in ministry with the LGBTQIA+ community. However, together, they see a path forward sharing the ministry that unites United Methodists while blessing the differences that come between them. They shared their witness at the GNJ Annual Conference in May. The following is their witness (edited for print). The full video of their testimony can be found in the Holy Conferencing video of GNJ's webpages: [www.gnjumc.org/2019-annual-conference/annual-conference-videos](http://www.gnjumc.org/2019-annual-conference/annual-conference-videos)

### Rev. David Wehrle

Vice Chair of Wesleyan Covenant Association

Christ is Risen. This is the faith that unites us. This is the truth that we are rooted in. Jesus Christ died and resurrected to offer us new life. That is good news.

My experience on this GNJ Way Forward Team is an echo of the Gospel. Despite our team's incredible diversity and despite our obvious serious differences, just as Jesus chose a sinner like me, the GNJ Way Forward Team has accepted me and invited me in and I love them.

Each member of the GNJ Way Forward Team is working hard. We're working hard on learning to be outward. We're moving forward with one another. We're learning to move beyond trying to change one another and toward listening and understanding one another.

When Jesus chose me, He showed me grace and acceptance. The Holy Spirit entered my life to begin a long way forward to holiness. People of faith, Christian brothers and sisters, we are a people of the Way Forward. Our Christian faith and life are a constant discerning of what the next way forward will be.

The GNJ Way Forward Team knows the "why." We don't have a plan with all the "hows" yet. I know it's hard to wait. We all want to move forward, and we will.

Our spiritual director, Rev. Shawn Calender Hogan has reminded us that just as the Israelites followed a pillar of fire, we wait on the Holy Spirit, and we move forward in faith at the leading of our Lord.

I believe, sincerely, that the Holy Spirit desires to lead the GNJ Way Forward Team. I believe the team will choose to follow when the Holy Spirit moves and wait when the Holy Spirit says wait. I believe that as the GNJ Way Forward Team follows the Holy Spirit, the team can lead this Annual Conference into scriptural holiness and a winsome witness.

We need your help. We need your input, and we especially need your prayer that we will discern the way forward that Jesus has for us.

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## Mwanza Missionaries, Beyond the Walls of the Pastor School in Tanzania

By Carolyn Conover  
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MWANZA, TANZANIA

**O**n their third day in Tanzania, the GNJ clergy who were leading the Tanzania Pastor School were dropped off on a dusty city street in front of a partially completed building in Mwanza, the country's second largest city. This was the front door to Wesley College, a United Methodist-affiliated school that hosted the pastor school and occupied the fourth floor of the seemingly abandoned building.

The GNJ team climbed the four stories of the empty building on wet, dirty

crumbling stairs to see a modest school that housed a library, faculty offices and classrooms. The largest room held the GNJ Pastor School with 161 participants eagerly awaiting the team.

The infrastructure may have felt incomplete, but the school itself was alive with 30 students who are completing their secondary education, pursuing a theology degree or taking classes in community development and business administration.

Eric Soard, a United Methodist missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), started dreaming about opening a college six years ago because he saw a need to provide practical resources for Tanzanians wanting to grow and

transform their communities. The dream became a reality in 2017, when the doors of Wesley College opened with course information and communications technology, theology and adult education.

Elizabeth Soard, Eric's wife is also a missionary with GBGM and hosted the GNJ team during their stay, helping take care of logistics including travel and

**"OUR MASTER PLAN IS BIG, BUT GOD IS BIGGER."**

—Mutwale Ntambo, GBGM missionary and pastor of Changombe UMC, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

accommodation. She works side by side with her husband coordinating partnerships and mission groups who support their work together.

"I really feel called to connect the churches worldwide with the culture here in Mwanza," said Elizabeth. "How or what do you see of yourself in the other culture? What do you need to change? There's always an area of growth."

The Soard's commitment to the people of Tanzania runs deep and is a powerful testament to discipleship. They came to Tarime, a village about a four-hour drive from Mwanza, 10 years ago as volunteers for an orphanage called Angel House and

*Continued on page 9*



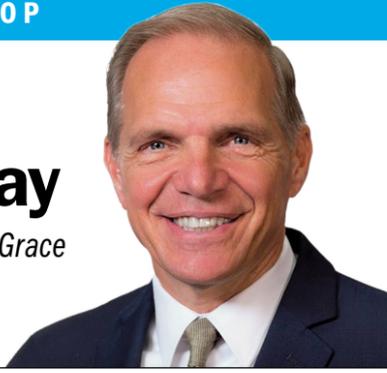
**District Superintendent Gina Hendrickson with Mutwale Ntambo, a GBGM missionary who pastors Changombe UMC in Dar Es Salaam and serves as the representative for Bishop Mande Muyombo for the region.**

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

# The Wesleyan Way

Calling, Character, Values, & The Means of Grace

Bishop John Schol



**W**ill The United Methodist Church survive? There are a lot of people asking, does The United Methodist Church have a future? This question goes to more than our current controversy about human sexuality. At the heart of this question are the following issues.

- Can an aging institution remake itself so that it can connect again with new generations of believers, capturing their hearts and imaginations? Today, particularly where the United Methodist movement has been around for several hundred years, the church is not connecting as it once did with the people in our communities.
- Can a global denomination that is hierarchical and applies non-adaptable methods for being the church, work in a flat world? Today, more and more organizations are shifting from a pyramid organization to dispersing decision making to where the work is being done. As a global denomination, we have a worldwide body that determines how church is organized and carries out ministry in many different countries, contexts and cultures.
- Can an institution with long and deep traditions innovate? Every congregation and church organization wrestles with two things--tradition and innovation. Tradition is confidence that the past has provided a future and a common way of doing things. But without innovation, organizations become routine, stuck on one way of doing things and dependent on a few to keep the tradition alive. Traditional core values can be innovative as long as we think there is more than one way to carry out the core values.

As United Methodists, we need to understand the core and then recognize everything else can change. Core to United Methodism is not how or even what we do, but the principles of *Calling, Character, Values, and The Means of Grace*. These four principles, the Wesleyan Way, are core to United Methodism. They are distinctive ways of being the church.

## Calling

Every United Methodist, lay and clergy person, is called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. As a disciple, United Methodists are called to be life-long learners and followers of Jesus Christ who passionately serve God in the church and in the world. Disciples live their baptismal vows, and these vows are the standard for evaluating the calling and engagement of any United Methodist. As United Methodists, we vow to renounce sin, confess Jesus Christ and end evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.

## Character

Every United Methodist, laity and clergy, is to live by the highest standards of faith, including but not limited to, ethical decision making and living, care for creation, faithfulness in relationships, ending injustice, evil and oppression and welcoming and including everyone in its ministries and worship. The character of a United Methodist is encompassed in Wesleyanism's three simple rules — *Do all the good you can, do no harm and stay in love with God*. Why "simple rules?" Because they become profound in our daily application. The ethic of a United Methodist is embodied in faithfulness to the scriptures, doctrine, teachings and Wesleyan Way of The United Methodist Church. For an overview of The United Methodist Church and our beliefs and doctrine go to [www.umc.org/what-we-believe](http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe) or review the front section of our *Book of Discipline*. The United Methodist Church page on Wikipedia also has detailed information.

## Values

As United Methodist we have seven core values.

- *Grace* — God's grace is sufficient for salvation and is offered to all through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- *Extending God's Grace* — Grace is extended through the sacraments of communion and baptism to adults, youth and children, and by being graceful as witnessed in the life of Jesus.
- *The Bible* — The Bible is the primary authority and revelation for salvation and living and is interpreted through scripture, tradition, reason and experience.
- *Personal and Social Holiness* — United Methodists grow spiritually and are accountable for faithful living and service in the world.
- *Connectionalism* — United Methodists are connected through a web of congregations and organizations that share a common mission, doctrine, apportioned mission support, itineracy and holy conferencing.
- *Diversity and Inclusion* — United Methodists welcome and include all people in the life of the church.
- *Open itineracy* — While recognizing differences among congregations — theology, language spoken, leadership needs and contexts — bishops and superintendents teach, support and practice open itineracy in making appointments.

## The Means of Grace

United Methodists practice the means of grace. John Wesley taught that God's grace is unearned but that we are not to be idle waiting to experience grace; rather, we engage in the means of grace. God's mystery works in the hearts and thinking of disciples through the means of grace, hastening, strengthening and confirming faith so that God's grace pervades in and through disciples. The means of grace are categorized into works of piety and mercy.

### WORKS OF PIETY

*Individual Practices* — reading, meditating on and studying the scriptures, prayer, fasting, regularly attending worship, healthy living and sharing our faith with others.

*Communal Practices* — regularly share in the sacraments, Christian conferencing (accountability to one another in small groups) and Bible study.

### WORKS OF MERCY

*Individual Practices* — doing good works, visiting the sick, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry and giving generously to the needs of others.

*Communal Practices* — advocating for and seeking justice, ending oppression, injustice and discrimination (for instance Wesley challenged Methodists to end slavery) and addressing the needs of others, particularly the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed, the children and the elderly.

Active participation in the mission and Wesleyan Way of The United Methodist Church keeps United Methodist disciples on the path to loving and serving God which is traditional and core to our values.

If we stay true to these core values, we can and should innovate so that we do not become stuck and dependent. If we do not innovate, we will not survive.

Yes, The United Methodist Church, can and in a number of places is already, remaking itself. It can be global in mission, traditional in core principles and local in practice. It can innovate for a flat world while building on the traditional Wesleyan Way.

Here in GNJ, we are committed to and have been building on the Wesleyan Way as we make our way forward. We have built on tradition to innovate and expand the mission. We continue to find new ways to connect with the people in our communities and make progress. During this time of innovation, there has been disruption, differences and even pain, but you have continued to make progress, and we continue to strengthen the mission and prepare the church for what God has next for us. Thank you for being United Methodist, and I invite you into a deeper discipleship path by living the Wesleyan Way. 🇺🇸



**THE RELAY**  
UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

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Special Session of Greater New Jersey's Annual Conference

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Saturday, October 26, 2019**

Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, NJ



Registration is scheduled to open in mid September.

Look for a call letter with agenda and more information through email and in the GNJ Digest.



# HOPING TO MAXIMIZE YEAR-END GIVING?

Check out the suggestions below that will help you tell the story of ministry.

## PREACH ON GIVING AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

God calls us to be generous givers. This is the time of year when people are worshipping more regularly and are already thinking about giving. It is a wonderful opportunity to give in response to God's love in Jesus Christ.



## HIGHLIGHT THIS YEAR'S MINISTRY ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

People are more willing to give when they can connect their giving to a positive change in peoples' lives and in the world. In the last quarter of the year, communicate the ministry your congregation has done. Share new ministries initiated, mission trips, service projects, outreach ministries, growth over the year.

Help people understand the connection between their giving and the wonderful things the church is able to do.

## SET AMBITIOUS GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR.

The congregation will respond to goals, no matter how ambitious. People want to see exciting things happening. They want to be part of something big.

Set a clear goal for next year's budget, and tie it to the things you want to accomplish. When the new year starts, make plans to meet those goals and do a regular follow-up with your congregation.

## SEND AN END-OF-YEAR GIVING LETTER.

At the end of November or beginning of December send a letter encouraging church members and friends to give a gift to the church that resonates with the gift giving season. Gifts received can help balance budgetary shortfalls or fund exciting new projects.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:



UNITED METHODIST  
STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



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## Lacey UMC

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that create partnerships between congregations and community leaders to address social needs.

The Xodus Recovery Community Center has a mission to provide a safe, sober environment for those seeking long-term substance abuse disorder recovery services. State-certified Peer Recovery Coaches help people in recovery set goals for themselves and provide guidance, education and support. The XRCC has also held workshops in practical life skills including nutrition, dressing for success, interview tips and resume writing. A member of Lacey UMC leads the devotions on Thursdays.

DiBella and Scanlon serve on the XRCC's board of directors. "They've been very supportive," says Applegate, "helping the center get started, as well as sharing physical and emotional support, venturing forward on the journey of faith together."

The XRCC holds Narcan training sessions once a month, and attendees learn how to administer the life-saving drug and are also provided with nasal injectant drug. Many of the attendees are the family members of those with substance abuse issues, reports Catlow. "These trainings are saving the lives of loved ones who attend." This year Lacey Township has had 31 Narcan saves and zero deaths from opioid overdose.



**A FUTURE WITH HOPE**  
UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Applegate says there are 20-25 families a week who are serviced by the XRCC and the number is growing. "There is no typical story," she told us, "just ordinary people, looking for community, a place to belong, and not be judged while they figure out the next step."



Two church members enjoy the annual Ok-Sober-fest at Lacey UMC.

One regular at the Center reports that she is learning the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, building self-confidence and self-esteem, learning communications skills and growing positively in recovery. Another said, "I've never felt comfortable opening up and talking about things; now I'm feeling better about myself and getting stronger."

At one of the Thursday All Recovery Meetings, attendees reported that the difference between the XRCC and twelve-step programs was the 'trust factor.' Attendees feel comfortable with their peer recovery coaches and each other.

"This place is great," one attendee said. "There was nowhere my boys could get this kind of help growing up," another observed.

"We support all pathways of recovery as all recover differently," said Applegate who pointed out that people with mental health issues or those on medical assisted treatment are not always welcome in some recovery circles. At the XRCC, there is no judgment. "Our God is an awesome God whose power is to bring healing and wholeness to anyone," Applegate said.

On August 31 the XRCC held the 5th Overdose Awareness Day event in remembrance of those lost to substance abuse disorder. It was an evening of sharing stories about substance abuse, recovery and the stigma and grief that comes with drug-related deaths. A candlelight prayer vigil remembered those who have died and offers prayers for their families and those struggling with addiction now.

Future events include the first "Laughs for Recovery" comedy night at the Lanoka Harbor fire department on September 20. Tickets are available through email at [xrccenter@gmail.com](mailto:xrccenter@gmail.com) and the second annual "Ok-Sober-fest" scheduled for mid-October. 🇺🇸

## Lauren's Story

"I was using on and off for seven years. I tried twelve-step programs and didn't feel like they were working for me. I tried rehabs, but I kept going back, until I contracted a bacterial infection in my heart valve and had open heart surgery. I had fluid in my lungs, and I wanted to die. I remember my mother coming to the hospital, begging me to choose life. I was in a coma two weeks and the hospital two months. In February I reluctantly came to the Sober Valentine's Day party that Xodus sponsored, and I've been coming ever since. I started working with a recovery coach and attending the All Recovery Meetings regularly. Coming to the Xodus Center has kept me strong (she tears up) and has helped me get through a lot of my past. I feel safe here. I have grown here. Xodus has helped me deal with and go through court cases. I was on the run, but now I'm being accountable and doing well in my recovery. My long-term goals are to get my son back with me and to take care of my mom, who had a bad car accident and suffers a brain injury. I watched my ex-boyfriend overdose and die; the doctor says I have PTSD from that. Before coming to Xodus Center I would have gone off the deep end and spiraled downward, but I have the strength not to go use again. I got that from coming here."

Looking for a way to infuse some

# VITALITY

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## PLUG IN TO BREAKTHROUGH

As the fall approaches, this is the perfect season for launching into ministry. Breakthrough's Plugged In series is a great way to cultivate the culture of getting everyone involved in our congregations. Visit the Plugged In series page to access extensive resources that will have you geared up and ready to preach.

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**BREAKTHROUGH**  
A GNJ guide to best practices for worship



**UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY**

## The Way Forward

Continued from page 1

### Rev. Amanda Hemenetz

Chair of the Reconciling Ministries Network

Since coming onto the GNJ Way Forward team in that first meeting, my scripture has been the scripture that says, “Verily I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bears much fruit” and that’s from the Gospel of John. (John 12:24)

We are in a time of death in the UMC. In my opinion, we’ve been on hospice care for quite a while. Sometimes death is a good thing. In Easter season, death is a time for new life. In our GNJ Way Forward Team, that is what I see. I see new life. I see a new church. I see a new beginning, and I see it being much better than it is right now.

The GNJ Way Forward Team is in conversations larger than the issue of sexuality. We are talking about the Book of Discipline, polity, theology, how we see each other



David and Amanda speaking at Annual Conference.

and how we see the church. We are talking about how we work together or how we don’t. We are talking about mission and what we should be talking about as a

church of Jesus Christ. We look forward to reclaiming things that have been lost and to creating things new. That’s what we’re working on, on the Way Forward.

We talk about blessing each other to go out and do ministry; to go out and be the church. I truly believe that when we are done with our work as a Way Forward Team, we will be able to be the church much better than we have in many years.

I see my church accepting people who are gay and lesbian, as disciples, in leadership and in marriage. And I see other churches celebrating disciples and covenants differently. We’d all be reaching people for Christ. That’s what we’re all called to do and the work of the GNJ Way Forward Team is enabling us to get there.

Please keep us in prayer, know that we are hopeful. Know that we are joyful. Know that you have a future. Thank you.

The GNJ Way Forward Team is meeting in September and will present a framework for launching pilots for new expression of Methodism on October 26 at a specially called Annual Conference to be held at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft. 🇺🇸

## A Tapestry of Unity: Looking Ahead to October 6

**W**orld Communion Day is a day of unity, a day when congregations throughout GNJ and abroad will embrace a diverse togetherness throughout the world. This year on October 6, the first Sunday of every October, followers of Jesus Christ will gather in churches of all sizes, on lanes, streets and major highways, in modern buildings and makeshift sanctuaries, in rural and urban environments, all to receive the bread and cup of Holy Communion. Despite the differences in our denominations and traditions, we celebrate our unity in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior on this Special Sunday.

From a practical perspective, World Communion Sunday is one of the six Sundays of the year that the United Methodist Church has designated as denomination-wide Special Sundays, where special offerings are collected to serve specific ministry purposes in the church.

### What does World Communion Sunday mean to you?

It is vital to recognize the global perspective this day brings, but this Special Sunday also touches people on a personal level. Hear what some of our pastors at United Methodists of Greater New Jersey have to say:

*“I grew up in the diverse multicultural congregation of New Dover United Methodist Church in Edison, NJ. I remember as a child on World Communion Sunday being amazed at the familiar tune, “Jesus Loves Me” sung by members of the congregation in various languages. Looking back, it*

*was such a simple lesson that taught me about the diversity of the church and how we can celebrate the love Jesus has for each of us as the Body of Christ together.”*

—Rev. Juel Nelson, Director of Leadership Development

*“We never celebrated World Communion Sunday growing up, but since becoming a Methodist, I quickly learned to love and appreciate this day. We celebrated it as a day in solidarity with the rest of the world. A day to remember to pray for people everywhere. A day to pray that all will come to know and experience God’s grace. And a day to thank God for and pray for our Christian brothers and sisters everywhere remembering that in Christ, we are many members of one body.”*

— Landen Wilson, Director of Worship

*“World Communion Sunday took on new meaning for me as a pastor. As I broke the bread and shared the cup in my New Jersey congregation, I was inspired by the fact that on this day, this one Sunday each year, Christians around the world gathered at the table and celebrate communion. That despite our many differences, here at the table we are one in Christ Jesus. World Communion Sunday is a reminder that what we do here is not for us alone, not just for family and friends, but it’s for all the world.”*

—Rev. Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups

*“During my time serving as Senior Pastor at Princeton UMC, World Communion Sunday was a great celebration.*

*The congregation is ethnically diverse so we would celebrate that diversity as a gift from God by having congregation members read scripture in different languages, using breads from around the world for communion and processing in native dress on the Main St. in town led by a bagpiper. It was always a joyous Sunday.”*

— Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, Executive Director of the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey

*“IGNITE usually falls on World Communion Sunday. I think it is fantastic that students and churches from throughout the*

*region, who represent different cultures, languages, ethnicities and demographics, come together in Wildwood to receive Communion. It is a beautiful, impactful way to wrap up. This year all of us will come together around the altar to remember that God Moves Mountains across and beyond any lines of division or difference. I encourage pastors to send groups with youth leaders and adult volunteers, or for pastors to make accommodations so that their group can be at IGNITE on Sunday morning to celebrate together.”*

— Eric Drew, Executive Director of Next Generation Ministries 🇺🇸

*“It was an inspiration. I can’t say enough about the class.”*

— Judy DiCecco, Hightstown UMC

September 28, 2019

## LAITY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

A one-day event for laity to engage and deepen ministry.

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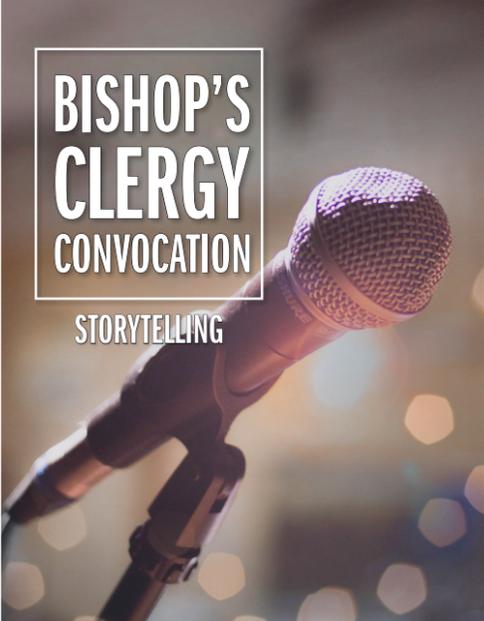
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Find out more at: [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org)





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CLERGY  
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STORYTELLING

SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 13-15, 2020

Ocean Place Resort & Spa  
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More information coming soon in the GNJ Digest this fall.



**OCT. 4-6, 2019 | REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!**

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**NEXT GENERATION**  
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# IGNITE Helps CUMI Inspire Youth in Camden

By Heather Mistretta  
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

C A M D E N , N J

**T**wenty years ago, when the United Methodist Churches in Camden formed Camden Urban Ministry Initiative (CUMI) to reach neighborhood youth and young adults, no one would imagine that spending a weekend in Wildwood would ignite their ministry and change the lives of the youth in Camden. Now the leaders can't imagine not including IGNITE in their ministry to show young people the transforming power of Christ's love.

CUMI brings together a group of small churches who are dedicated to helping the youth of their city and know that they can do more through their connection. CUMI works to actively influence youth to choose a better path, resulting in caring, successful adults that stay involved and better the community of Camden.

Each year, this formidable force of five churches — Asbury UMC, Bethel UMC, Ferry Avenue UMC, Parkside UMC and New Beginnings UMC — bring dozens of young people to IGNITE, giving those

students the chance to connect with God and their peers in new and different ways.

"We're all about the youth," said co-founder Shirley Stewart who is also the assistant to Rev. Keith Dickens at Parkside UMC, an historian and a member of the Superintendency Committee of Gateway South.

She recalled how wonderful last year's IGNITE event was when IGNITE's mission project included collecting school supplies to be donated to CUMI. "It was amazing and so needed," said Stewart.

Stewart considers IGNITE just one part of her ministry with the youth of Camden. Along with Waverly Singleton, who is the council chairperson at Parkside, Stewart organizes Camp CUMI for both the students and their parents. Camp CUMI provides back-to-school resources like uniforms, meals and gifts during the holidays as well as field trips to the Camden Aquarium, Camden's Children Garden, Playdrome for bowling, African drum performance at King Church and Mann Music Center.

"We've watched them grow up and graduate high school. It's quite an experience," said Stewart who has been a Camden resident for 65 years after mov-



In 2018, students at IGNITE brought school supplies, which were boxed and donated to Camden Urban Ministry Initiative (CUMI).

ing from Philadelphia when she was 10.

She added that fellowship and recruitment are also part of the program, adding that some students are reaching the homeless with "evangelism on the street."

CUMI also offers a Skills-N-Drills Program that not only teaches children the fundamentals of basketball and the im-

portance of being physically fit but also focuses on teaching children teamwork, leadership, responsibility and trust.

"There's so little some of these kids get to experience. They miss out on a lot. Through CUMI, we get to bring some of that to them, and it's an honor," Stewart said. 🇺🇸

## CONNECT. GROW. LEAD: IGNITING FAITH THIS OCTOBER

**I**GNITE 2019 will inspire students with passion, a strong faith...and a few of their friends. This year invited guests from all over the world are going to give students the confidence and strength to move mountains and deepen their connection to God.

Here's a sampling of what the teens will see, hear and experience at IGNITE:

### ARISE: Lifting the Hearts and Minds of Church Leaders

ARISE is a group who shares in the vision of providing guidance in worship that inspires disciples to lead with compassion and helps churches of all ethnicities and cultures thrive and deepen their commitment to God.

In addition to a session on Saturday, the group of passionate individuals will be stoking up the enthusiasm among the crowd at a bonfire on the last evening.

"It will be a free space for people to continue to worship God and reflect," said Yoon Kim, the 26-year-old leader who added, "I'm excited about all that the Lord has to bring to IGNITE, to pour into the next generation and the impact we can leave on them so they can carry forth what's in their hearts and what the Lord has them calling to do."

Kim added that his group is planning on being at IGNITE for the entire weekend as he's looking forward to "the body of Christ coming together in unity."

"We don't want to miss a thing!" said Kim.

### VERSES: Sharing Lyrics that Inspire

All the way from Newcastle, Australia's seventh largest city, the trio known as VERSES will be on stage spreading the spirit of God through pop music that rivals any secular group in talent and enthusiasm. With songs like "Neighbor" and "All Things," the band who is connected by family ties said they are coming to worship with the teens through music.

"We love to see how kids just let go," said Luke O'Dea, the band's writer, producer and brother to vocalist, Joel. "We want them to know that God loves them just the way they are now."

"There are no rules and regulations in the presence of God," said Jess Clayton O'Dea who sings with Joel O'Dea and has been married to Luke for eight years since they met at the age of 14 at Luke's first musical gig. "God loves them now."

For more information, visit [www.versesmusic.com/](http://www.versesmusic.com/)

### Britt Nicole Inspires Teens Through Music

Long before Britt Nicole was nominated for Female Vocalist of the Year in 2011 with a GMA Dove Award, signed with Capitol Records the following year and then landed a Grammy Award nomination in 2013, the North Carolina native was singing gospel hymns at the age of three in her grandfather's church in Char-

lotte with her older brother and now pastor, Bryn, and cousin, Candace.

But her enthusiasm for music, as did her commitment to her faith, only strengthened as she entered her teenage years, dancing ballet, jazz, hip hop and lyrical style and picking up the piano and guitar.

She turned down a full scholarship to Belmont University in Nashville to pursue her passion for Christian music. The hard work paid off when in 2003 she released her album, "Follow the Call," which led to her first management deal with Vertical Entertainment, development deal with Word Records and record deal with Sparrow Records in 2006.

Her career and her influence on her listeners continued to rise, with her 2008 "The Lost Get Found" peaking at No. 1 on Christian radio and on the Billboard Christian Albums chart in 2009 (also No. 62 on Billboard 200), followed by her second EP Acoustic in 2010.

Nicole, who most recently released "Through Your Eyes," continues to make a difference both in and out of the studio. When she's not making music, she works on further exposing the human trafficking epidemic and continues to commit her resources to the rescue efforts of victims through partnerships with organizations on the front lines of the cause, like the A21 Campaign.

For more information on performers, go to [www.ignitenj.org](http://www.ignitenj.org).

## Workshops that Connect Kids to God

In addition to music and worship, IGNITE will offer students the opportunity to engage in workshops to expand their understanding and relationship with God:

- Kermit Moss will explore what hip-hop has to do with Jesus and how the church and the musical genre you know so well can intersect in creative ways to ignite the faith of a generation.
- Nicole and Jevon Caldwell-Gross is a powerhouse couple in the best way who knows the meaning of relationships and will help the teens move mountains with insightful perspectives and a unique ability to make all things possible.
- Darlene Thomas of the United Methodist (UM) Army, a unique

Christ-centered mission, has been serving people in need for 40 years and promotes spiritual growth and leadership development. In her workshop, "Here I Am, Lord: Answering God's Call to Serve Others," Thomas and the UM Army will provide Biblical background on why God calls us into the mission field. Through interactive discussion and activities, videos and a slide presentation, the group will explore the topic of mission work, both for themselves and their youth group.

- Michael Reed, pastor and project coordinator for The Maker's Place

in Trenton, will be leading a diaper drive. All participants are invited to bring a box of diapers on the Friday they arrive. On Saturday afternoon his nonprofit group will host a diaper packing party where participants open the boxes and prepare diapers to be distributed in Trenton.

- Daniel Cody and Anne Joseph, both music directors at New City Kids of Paterson and Jersey City will present "Songwriting and Rapping with The Word." This workshop will offer tips on learning and retaining scripture in a creative way. Through the elements of songwriting and rapping,

Daniel, Anne and their group will turn scripture into a melodic form to memorize more of The Word.

- Drama Members of the Christian Drama School of NJ will entertain the crowd with "Act, Dance, Believe," teaching them how to connect with Jesus through acting, dancing and believing.
- There will also be contemplative prayer session where students will be encouraged to relax and connect with God through prayer.

For more information, visit [www.ignitenj.org/](http://www.ignitenj.org/).

# Strengthening the Community with Music for All

By Denise Tong

LEONIA, NJ

To advance its mission to make live classical music available to everyone, Si-Yo's Classically Leonia™ concert series—launched during the 2018–19 season—is free to the public. Co-presented with Leonia United Methodist Church in Leonia, NJ, the series has become an integral part of the Foundation's programming.

Being free of charge, the series removes barriers that might prevent local residents from regularly appreciating live classical music or from beginning to build a relationship with it. Soyeon Park, Si-Yo's Artistic Director and the church's Music Director, conceptualized the series after she and other Si-Yo Artists™ had given well-received performances at the church.

"Leonia has an active arts scene," says Dr. Park. "We wanted Classically Leonia™ to help strengthen the community by providing opportunities for people to gather in a shared love of music."

Pastor David Wehrle was very receptive to the idea of his church collaborating with the Foundation, noting the enthusiastic response to previous Si-Yo events. "We wanted to support the arts; it's part of our mission to serve society," he explains. "We have a wonderful facility and resources and are always looking for ways to share them with others."

The series' concerts—performed by Si-Yo Artists™ and guest musicians—have featured a gathering of internationally-renowned local musicians, a rare six-cello ensemble, international folk songs, a tango chamber band, and a collaboration with New York Classical Players.

Boosted by word-of-mouth praise, the series has been warmly received and has steadily picked up repeat attendees.

"The feedback has been only positive and the attendance has been great," says Pastor Wehrle. "The quality of the performances has been terrific, and the attendees have really valued the diversity of the programs."



© 2019 Si-Yo Music Society Foundation, Inc.

Foundation members all play the cello as part of concert.

In addition to enjoying the music as an audience member, Pastor Wehrle has found the series fulfilling from his position as a local leader. "When we can attract people beyond our congregation and serve them in some way, it generates goodwill that can be felt everywhere," he says.

"Leonia is diverse and each concert has been a reminder of music's ability to unite people of all cultures, ages, and experiences," says Dr. Park. "We hope that Classically Leonia™ events will continue to encourage residents to feel connected to each other and be inspired to keep supporting the community."

For more information about the foundation, please visit [www.si-yomusicociety.org/](http://www.si-yomusicociety.org/).

To find out what other exciting and enriching things Leonia UMC is doing, please visit <https://leonia.church/>. From a monthly fellowship dinner, a student ministry

group called Lead Program and hosting families in July through Family Promise to a International Day of Peace celebration and a focus on mission every second Sunday, this small church in Bergen County is making a big difference in the lives of others. 🇺🇸

*This is a reprint of a July 2, 2019, blog ([www.si-yomusicociety.org/single-post/2019/07/02/Strengthening-the-Community-with-Music-for-All](http://www.si-yomusicociety.org/single-post/2019/07/02/Strengthening-the-Community-with-Music-for-All)) originally published by Denise Tong of Si-Yo Music Society Foundation in New York, NY.*

*David Wehrle, who has been the pastor at Leonia UMC for the past eight years, embraced the opportunity. "I like to mentor people and find out their calling and help them live into it," said Wehrle whose father was a pastor for 40 years.*

## Keeping PaCE with Our Clergy

By Heather Mistretta  
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

NEPTUNE, NJ

When PaCE began in the fall of 2015, many clergy hadn't realized what they had been missing. Now four years later, clergy are engaging more deeply and sparking creativity by participating in the peer learning groups that are designed to shape pastoral identity and develop leadership excellence.

"PaCE groups offer far more than just learning together. They are an opportunity to care for one another's souls," said Rev. Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups at GNJ who leads the program and will be hosting her own group, "Women in Ministry," in October.

"I have been blessed to have been engaged in a few groups; we studied, prayed and played together. We came alongside one another in ministry and offered encouragement, wisdom and even suggestions for improvement. Clergy don't just join a PaCE Group but instead covenant to journey alongside each other for a season."

Starting in early October, each group will meet for the first of 10 meetings. People representing different ages, cultures, backgrounds and theologies will share their knowledge with each other in hopes of growing as clergy members, feeling a sense of belongingness and unlocking creativity and the benefit that comes from blending different perspectives.

One new group this year will be "Inspired," led by Rev. Linda Ross, who has served First United Methodist Church of Mays Landing for the past 10 years.

"It was so refreshing and supportive," said Ross, who first took part in PaCE last year when she joined "Women in Ministry," led by Yeske. "We were from all walks of life; different ages and three women were expecting including my daughter-in-law. I thoroughly enjoyed it."

So, when time came to plan this year's PaCE group lineup, Ross knew she wanted to be involved. "I want to have a group of women clergy who feel inspired. I'm so

world was a gift to us all and her work will long survive her," her husband, Dan Evans wrote following her death on May 4.

By using Evans' best-selling book, *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*, as a foundation for the group, Ross is hoping to generate some healthy discussions and glean valuable advice from her peers.

She added that she's hoping the first meeting on October 2 will be an icebreaker into getting to know each other and will serve as a great launchpad to discuss a book that has inspired her. 🇺🇸

All clergy are encouraged to participate in a PaCE Group this fall. Groups are scheduled by region for convenience, but clergy can sign up for those available or form one on their own. Topics include:

- **Spirituality:** facilitator Rev. Jeff Markay
- **Women in Ministry facilitator:** Rev. Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups
- **Black Church Leadership:** facilitators Lan Wilson, Director of Worship, Rev. Leslie Houseworth-Fields and Rev. Ronell Howard
- **Anatomy of Peace:** facilitators Ashley Wilson, Director of Mission and Rev. Ben Lee
- **See all the People:** facilitator Rev. Glen Connaway

- **Inspired:** facilitator Rev. Linda Ross
- **Sermon Series Content Creation:** facilitator Rev. Myrna Bethke

To learn more about PaCE and the upcoming programs that will be offered, please visit [www.gnjumc.org/pace/pacgroups/](http://www.gnjumc.org/pace/pacgroups/). The deadline to register is September 15.



A recent baptism at First UMC at Mays Landing for a child who was adopted.

excited about getting to know each other and inspiring one another."

Ross will be setting out to accomplish this goal by honoring the passing of Rachel Held Evans, an American Christian columnist, blogger and author who courageously addressed uncomfortable topics and encouraged women in church leadership. "Rachel's presence in this

## Mwanza Missionaries

*Continued from page 1*

quickly felt at home, falling in love with the people and the culture.

“We ended up starting a church, which led us to establish Emmanuel Center for Women and Children. Today, the Center has 97 students in primary school and works with about 40 women to help them sustain financial independence by teaching skills like sewing, batik, poultry keeping and providing microfinance loans.

Their mission started when they met a young boy named Emmanuel who became sick and died while plowing a field to help his family. Emmanuel’s father, typical of many men in this patriarchal society, did not support his wife and children.

“Emmanuel’s mother found him dead in the field, and the other women in the village rose to support her,” said Soard. “They said this has to stop. We want a place that we feel safe, that we are empowered and that we understand our rights.”

That’s how the Emmanuel Center was formed. “Emmanuel means God is with us. The members wanted to remember Emmanuel, but they also wanted to tell the community that God is them,” said Soard.

Matsimbe is a church planter and shared that Tanzanians are ready for transformation. “The question is not to tell them about God. Everyone knows about God. The challenge is how to show them that God can change your life. We as United Methodists with a combination of spiritual holiness and personal holiness are perfectly suited to serve in Tanzania.”

His work in church planting mirrors GNJ’s work in asset-based ministry and is evidence that ministry is the same no matter the culture, community or country. “My approach is local asset based,” he said. “We build on what we have. People will come and bring what they have.”

Worshipping with the GNJ team on Sunday was Rev. Young Seon Kim, a GBGM missionary who serves as director of the Next Generation Ministries in Tanzania. Kim, who has been in Tanzania for seven years, was born in South Korea and is a clergy member of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference. She agrees that ministry, particularly young people’s ministry, faces the same joys and challenges no matter the culture or country. “Connecting with young people is key to growing the church, sustaining families and building strong communities,” said Kim.



**Elizabeth Soard, a missionary with GBGM, hosted the GNJ team during their stay, helping take care of logistics including travel and accommodation.**

Five years ago, Ntambo started a new congregation in Dar es Salaam in Mwanagati, an area that is underserved by United Methodists. Location is very important in Tanzania because it is difficult to travel far, so one of the worshippers from Changombe UMC donated land in a more remote area, and the community there is worshipping under tents. It started five years ago with five people and now they worship with 28 each Sunday.

Ntambo also oversees the building of a new Annual Conference Center and Hope Center in Dar Es Salaam. The master plan includes: a preschool, a health center and a guest house to host mission teams, an orphanage, a women’s school, a church and the offices for the Annual Conference. “Our Master Plan is big, but God is bigger,” said Ntambo.

Set on 50 acres, construction is underway, but the site still needs elec-

tricity and water to move forward. The government controls where and when electricity and water can be hooked up so the wait for these services could be long and costly. Ntambo reports that the government has asked for \$27,000 for the electrical hook up alone. But he is not frustrated by the delay. “That’s what we do, step by step.”

The Hope Center is a key part of Greater New Jersey’s Miracles Everywhere Campaign, which is raising \$6.1 million, some of which is dedicated to supporting the Hope Center at this site.

“The Hope Center is critical to our partnership with Greater New Jersey,” said Mutwale. “It is a fundamental part of our partnership.”

Congregations can find out more about how to support these efforts in Tanzania by going to [www.gnjumc.org/miracles everywhere](http://www.gnjumc.org/miracles_everywhere).

**“WE AS UNITED METHODISTS WITH A COMBINATION OF SPIRITUAL HOLINESS AND PERSONAL HOLINESS ARE PERFECTLY SUITED TO SERVE IN TANZANIA.”**

—Rev. Fernando Matsimbe, GBGM missionary in Tanzania

The Soard’s moved to Mwanza five years ago, but they remain connected to the mission in Tarime with one of them travelling there every other week. Anna xxxxx, who was one of the original women participating in the Emmanuel Center has since joined them in Mwanza where she attends Wesley College. Anna intends to return to Tarime to lead ministry with women and continue the work started by the Soard’s.

The next day was Sunday, and the GNJ team was invited to celebrate worship with the City Centre UMC in Mwanza, which worships on the open air third floor of the same building that houses Wesley College. They were welcomed by dancing and singing in the open air where approximately 150 worships gathered. People on neighboring balconies stopped to listen to the music, and a family gathered for breakfast on the balcony across the street. Soaring birds sailed by with wafts of smoke from cooking fires as the GNJ team joined in singing “How Great Thou Art” in Swahili. Rev. Fernando S. Matsimbe, a missionary charged with church planting, was the Sunday preacher.

Connecting with the community is something Kabaka Ndala Alphonsine, a GBGM missionary from Dar es Salaam, knows all about. She teaches women sewing, knitting, housekeeping, hygiene, and HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention and care.

Ndala, who serves as the United Methodist Women coordinator in Tanzania, said she found the Pastor School important for here. “Everyone sent to teach inspires us,” she said. “The teachers are helping us to discover something we can use as a preacher and a pastor.”

Ndale and her husband, Mutwale Ntambo are well known to many in Greater New Jersey (GNJ). As the first United Methodist missionaries sent to Tanzania, they have a long-standing relationship with GNJ congregations including Vincent UMC and Red Bank UMC who have both sent mission teams to serve with them. Today, Ntambo wears many hats. He pastors Changombe UMC in Dar Es Salaam, which has 98 worshippers. He also serves as a missionary, church planter, evangelist and is the representative for Bishop Mande Muyombo for the region.



**Rev. Young Seon Kim, a GBGM missionary who serves as director of the Next Generation Ministries in Tanzania, joined the GNJ team for worship at the Mwanza City Centre UMC.**

Check out all new

# REGIONAL PaCE GROUPS!

**NORTHERN REGION**

- 21st Century Leadership
- Spirituality

**CENTRAL REGION**

- Women in Ministry
- Black Church Leadership
- Anatomy of Peace

**SOUTHERN REGION**

- See all the People
- Inspired
- Sermon Series
- Content Creation

**REGISTER BY SEPTEMBER 15**

Organize a group or sign up for an open one at: [www.gnjumc.org/pace](http://www.gnjumc.org/pace)

**FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:**  
Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups  
[gyeske@gnjumc.org](mailto:gyeske@gnjumc.org) | 732.359.1042

**PURSuing CLERGY EXCELLENCE**  
UNITED METHODISTS OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

# Small Groups, the Front Doors to the Church

By Heather Mistretta  
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

NEPTUNE, NJ

A door signifies communication, conjunction and cohesion. Specifically, a red door symbolizes several things including welcome, sanctuary and status. In Feng Shui, the positive energy of the color red is drawn to the front door, which is considered the mouth of the home. Red also invites good luck and happiness during the Chinese New Year.

Whatever reason you choose as its meaning or what color you choose to paint it, the Small Groups in every church make sure you enter the door. The energy you can bring once you enter and the energy you will bring when you leave will be rewarding and sustainable.

Rev. Denise Tiedemann of Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church (UMC) in Jackson, who guides the Central Region's small groups, likes to think of small groups as "a team of people whose focus is connecting people and getting to know them by being welcoming and paying attention."

A licensed pastor for the past three years at her church, Tiedemann started a small group known as "Care Team", which focuses on prayers for others and making sure that worship is accessible to all even in their absence. The "Care Team" lives up to its name.

Tiedemann said the group caters to shut-ins in part ensuring that they receive the food they need and/or communion once a month.

A nice accompaniment to this small group is Pleasant Grove's "Arts Min-



A small group meeting at Trinity UMC of Hackettstown.

istry," a small group started about six years ago that gives children the opportunity to partake in enriching classes like art, cooking, photography, yoga, singing and dancing.

The program, Tiedemann said, not only exposes them to opportunities to get involved in musical theater like the production of "Peter Pan" coming up this spring, but also enables church leaders "to show kids how important

they are to God." For more information, visit [pleasantgroveumc.org/](http://pleasantgroveumc.org/).

In the Southern Region, Rev. Heather Mandala remembers small groups as a child. "Growing up with those small groups allowed me to dig deep and it's where my faith grew."

Now as the pastor at Hope Church in Voorhees, Mandala believes their purpose hasn't changed and embraces the idea that life-change happens through small groups: "I can't walk them down the path, but I can make sure there's a place where they can grow and flourish."

Mandala is no stranger to helping others...or to Hope Church. For 14 years, she has been giving hope to children at the church in Camden County that prides itself on being a safe place to get practical

help. She served as the church's ministry director and then started a preschool that she ran for 10 years.

Hope Church's small groups are known as "Next Steps," and offers a variety of programs from those purely about connecting with new people like Dinner for 10, Holy Smokes, Yoga and Book Studies to specific topics related to parenting, marriage and forgiveness to straight up Bible studies. In response to the congregation's needs, a small group was developed that supports parents with children of substance abuse.

that combines devotion, lunch, creativity and worship.

In any given week, the small groups at Trinity UMC caters to about 200 people of all ages, both in person and online. DeVos said to better serve the congregation she is working on refining training for the leaders of these groups.

For more information on these small groups as well as many others at Trinity, which begin accepting signups at Rally Weekend on the weekend following Labor Day in September, visit [www.catchthespirit.org/fall-small-groups-begin-in-september/](http://www.catchthespirit.org/fall-small-groups-begin-in-september/).

Small groups are one of the five markers of vitality and have their foundation in both the Bible and church history. Jesus and Paul did significant ministry in small groups. John Wesley developed a system of discipleship by gathering people together to share how they were doing in their walk with God. To find out more about small groups go to [www.gnjumc.org/congregationalvitality](http://www.gnjumc.org/congregationalvitality).



## Support and enliven your congregation's Small Groups.

*You might be part of a vital worshipping community BUT Sunday morning services cannot replace the encouragement, growth and support you will find in a small group.*

Register today and receive new resources to help you form Small Groups.

[www.gnjumc.org/congregationalvitality/smallgroups](http://www.gnjumc.org/congregationalvitality/smallgroups)

For more information on the development or formation of Small Groups this fall contact:



Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups  
gyeske@gnjumc.org | 732.359.1042



**"I CAN'T WALK THEM DOWN THE PATH, BUT I CAN MAKE SURE THERE'S A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN GROW AND FLOURISH."**

— Heather Mandala, small groups pastor at Hope Church in Voorhees, NJ

help. She served as the church's ministry director and then started a preschool that she ran for 10 years.

Hope Church's small groups are known as "Next Steps," and offers a variety of programs from those purely about connecting with new people like Dinner for 10, Holy Smokes, Yoga and Book Studies to specific topics related to parenting, marriage and forgiveness to straight up Bible studies. In response to the congregation's needs, a small group was developed that supports parents with children of substance abuse.

Mandala said the church also offers a small group called "Alpha" that is open to all, including non-believers or those who may be afraid to ask questions about their faith. The open forum provides people of all ages and backgrounds to explore Christianity in a non-threatening way. For more information, visit [www.meethope.org/smallgroups](http://www.meethope.org/smallgroups).

For Rev. Debra DeVos of Trinity UMC in Hackettstown in the Northern Re-

gion, small groups have become her passion. With an average worship size of 540, Trinity UMC works hard to keep its congregation enriched and supported through more than 50 small groups.

"We have 10 Bible studies for both men and women," said DeVos, an ordained minister since 2017.

"If you feel uncomfortable with the Bible or would like to know more about what's in the word of God, then a Bible study is the place to start," said DeVos who added that she "loves leading Bible studies."

There are also groups like "Foods in the Bible," "GriefShare," "Sew and Sews" that makes hats for cancer patients and "Contemplative Creators"

Small groups are one of the five markers of vitality and have their foundation in both the Bible and church history. Jesus and Paul did significant ministry in small groups. John Wesley developed a system of discipleship by gathering people together to share how they were doing in their walk with God. To find out more about small groups go to [www.gnjumc.org/congregationalvitality](http://www.gnjumc.org/congregationalvitality).

## CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS



### Mt. Zion Wesley UMC Supports Deptford Township Police

On August 6, Mt Zion Wesley UMC was happy to donate free Wawa gift certificates for Deptford Township's Annual National Night Out.

Pictured here receiving the gifts are Lt. John Storms, Jackie Love and Captain Ian A. McShane.

### Native American VBS

St. John UMC, the only tribal UMC in New Jersey, recently concluded its 2019 Native American immersion Vacation Bible School. Their average attendance was 40 children and 13 volunteers, five of whom were youth and two were young adults.

The children had a special topic every day with related scriptures and tribal art and culture, including drumming and storytelling, interwoven with the scriptures. They played traditional Native American games and sports and shared traditional foods.

The group journeyed to Tyler Arboretum, near Aston, PA, in the heart of the original Lenni Lenape land for a special lesson on the importance of the land to Lenape history. As a result, they have formed a new partnership with Tyler Arboretum.

These lessons and activities are included in a new curriculum to be published on or about September 1, 2019. For more information, contact Carol Mosely at cmosley19@hotmail.com or visit [www.stjohnneagle.com/](http://www.stjohnneagle.com/).

### Can't Join Us — Help Lift Up Another

For less than \$100, you can sponsor a student to attend IGNITE 2019 in October. For more information and to donate, please visit [www.gnjumc.org/2019-ignite-scholarship-fund-donation/](http://www.gnjumc.org/2019-ignite-scholarship-fund-donation/).

### Apply for Congregational Development Grants for 2020

The application forms for Congregational Development Grants, which provide valuable funding for an entire year, are now available for 2020. These grants are awarded to churches to increase vitality in the congregations and reach out to their communities.

Applications for next year funding can be submitted for new worship services, new small groups and mission ministries, congregational development, cooperative parishes, equitable clergy salary and planning.

Grants will be allocated based on demonstrated willingness and readiness to grow vital congregations.

In short, GNJ resources congregations for vital ministry that:

- Encourages innovative ministry that connects with people in the community.
- Develops lay and clergy leadership for making disciples and transforming the world.
- Maximizes vital congregations.

The application deadline is Oct 5. For more information and to submit an application, visit [www.gnjumc.org/2020-grants-for-ministry/faqs/](http://www.gnjumc.org/2020-grants-for-ministry/faqs/).

### Scam Alert is Widespread

Several congregations have received emails or text messages from persons pretending to be the pastor or other church leader. These persons have some simple knowledge of the congregations and use the pastor's name, etc. and are requesting donations in the form of gift cards from Walmart, Target and eBay, asking persons to buy them, scratch off on the back of the card and send the number or picture of the number.

Please be aware that your pastor or congregation will NEVER ask for funds in this way or through text or email. If you receive such a request, inform your pastor or lay leader and then block the phone number or email. More information about these scams can be found at [www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2019/07/worshippers-targeted-gift-card-scam](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2019/07/worshippers-targeted-gift-card-scam).

### GNJ is Looking for Bright New Leaders

The nominations committee is looking for new leaders to serve at the conference level. The committee works hard to recruit gifted people to be elected by the Annual Conference so that the ministries of our connectional church can be effectively carried out and disciples of Jesus Christ are made for the transformation of the world.

If you feel you or anyone else are ready for a larger role, you can get more information and submit a nomination at [www.gnjumc.org/nominations-committees/nominations-committee-application-and-survey-2/](http://www.gnjumc.org/nominations-committees/nominations-committee-application-and-survey-2/) or contact Rosa Williams at 201.833.0352.

### Church Conference Reports Are Due September 23

It's that important time of year when all churches are required to submit their conference reports. The deadline for all districts to submit is September 23.

The purpose of Church Conferences are to achieve the following goals:

- Review each congregation's previous year of ministry, complete essential church business, and affirm goals for the coming year
  - Foster collaboration and an outward-focus among all congregations by holding conferences in regional groups to push us beyond our own boundaries to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world
  - Inspire, energize, and motivate local congregations through high quality resourcing
- For more information, please visit [www.gnjumc.org/church-conferences-general/](http://www.gnjumc.org/church-conferences-general/).

### Small Churches Can Be Mighty

Small Church Strong, a learning opportunity offered specifically for small church pastors and laity, will host its next session, "Doing Missions in a Small Church," on September 17.

For more information on this session as well as another one scheduled for October 29, please visit [www.gnjumc.org/team-vital/small-church-strong/](http://www.gnjumc.org/team-vital/small-church-strong/).

### Calling All Clergy!

All active clergy are invited to Myrtle Beach, SC, from November 11-13 to learn about the many benefit issues that affect clergy life and ministry. Once there, clergy will have the opportunity to also earn continuing education units for attending.

The GNJ Board of Pension will reimburse the registration fee for clergy. Early-bird registration fee: \$149 by Oct 11. For more information, visit [www.wespath.org/events/cba-2019-myrtle-beach/](http://www.wespath.org/events/cba-2019-myrtle-beach/).

### Helping Young Clergy Grow Financially — RevItUp!

Because the GNJ Board of Pension and Health Benefits believes in this program and wants to help young clergy grow, they will be covering the \$150 registration fee for RevItUp!, an energizing educational event in Maryland October 28-30 for clergy under 40 to strengthen personal financial leadership skills for a productive and healthy lifetime in ministry.

In addition to this benefit, the UMC Clergy Financial Well-Being Initiative offers a limited number of scholarships for first-time attendees.

Once you've registered for the conference, email Michaela Murray-Nolan at [mmurraynolan@gnjumc.org](mailto:mmurraynolan@gnjumc.org) to RSVP for the GNJ Stewardship dinner on Tuesday night.

For more information about all this as well as the free childcare available, visit [www.wespath.org/events/revitup/](http://www.wespath.org/events/revitup/).



The future of IT presents many challenges and opportunities for corporations.

You've worked hard to develop your level of expertise. Now it's time to apply that knowledge in a way that benefits others.

If you are interested in serving as a member of the United Methodist Communities Board of Directors, email us today at [board@umcommunities.org](mailto:board@umcommunities.org).

 **United Methodist Communities**  
Abundant Life for Seniors

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UNITED METHODISTS OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

# CHURCH CONFERENCE REPORTS ARE DUE SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

Go to: [www.gnjumc.org/2019churchconference](http://www.gnjumc.org/2019churchconference)



## 5 Reasons to Run a *Miracles & More Campaign* This Fall

1

God is calling us to undertake big mission - to transform not just our own neighborhoods, but our entire conference, our nation, our world.

2

A three-year pledge helps members develop generosity as a spiritual discipline and prioritize bringing their first fruits to God. These habits continue long after a campaign ends, bringing new resources to your ministry for years to come.

3

Ask for God-sized commitments to solving God-sized needs. People get excited about accomplishing big projects together. Combine your community's need - for capital that will expand mission, start a new ministry or rejuvenate an old one - with the needs of God's people around GNJ and around the world.

4

You can build on this momentum to engage members in the missions and ministry they have pledged to support. They will see the impact of their generosity firsthand by volunteering in the food pantry, delivering Christmas toys to schools or attending a dinner church of interfaith partners.

5

Most of the work has been done for you! We have ready-to-go bulletin inserts, videos, commitment cards and even guest preachers to launch your campaign. Just sign up!

**We are seeking the next 75 miracle-making churches to join the campaign! Call or email today.**



Michaela Murray-Nolan | Director of Development  
O: 732.359.1045 | E: mmurraynolan@gnjumc.org

For information about Miracles Everywhere:  
[www.gnjumc.org/miracleseverywhere](http://www.gnjumc.org/miracleseverywhere)



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**Find out more about Miracles Everywhere at: [www.gnjumc.org/miracleseverywhere](http://www.gnjumc.org/miracleseverywhere)**