

THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

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A Journey of Hope: GNJ's Plan To End the Sin of Racism

By Heather Mistretta
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"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly[a] with your God.

—MICAH 6:8

A Journey of Hope Plan offers the possibility of addressing and ending the sin of racism in GNJ.

Just three ago the death of George Floyd sent shockwaves around the world and opened up a deep wound, revealing racism that continues to pervade our society and awakened the minds of many to recognize that not participating in racist activity was not enough, that we are called to actively work to end racism.

It was time to be anti-racist and embrace the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr who once said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

Led by a team of GNJ laity and clergy leaders who have long vowed to fight for social and racial justice, A Journey of Hope is a plan to establish a just, inclusive and equitable church that works together to end the sin of racism while honoring the humanity, racial identity, uniqueness and sacred worth of everyone.



A Journey of Hope is a plan to establish a just, inclusive and equitable church that works together to end the sin of racism.

It was developed in consultation with leaders and experts from across the country. Nine different GNJ groups, including ethnic caucuses, GNJ leadership and GNJ staff including the cabinet reviewed and provided input into the report and its goals and measures. More than 100 people assisted in the development of the report.

"We move with a sense of purpose and urgency because people are being harmed, discriminated against and even killed because of their skin color," said Bishop John Schol.

A Journey of Hope uses the acronym, ACT: Aspiring to something different, Comprehending and understanding that we are called to live and act differently, and Transforming our beliefs, values, policies, actions to be a more racially just, inclusive and equitable church.

"At its core it's about reclaiming our humanity," said Rev. Enger Muteteke, who is among the 10 leaders of this plan and leads Good Shepherd and Lifegate UMCs.

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The Celebration of Gateway North District Superintendent

By Heather Mistretta
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The Bishop and Cabinet invite all United Methodists in Greater New Jersey to join in the celebration of Rev. William M. Williams III as the Gateway North District Superintendent on Saturday, September 12 at 4:00 p.m. The service will be live streamed to the GNJ YouTube channel and available on Facebook so all can join with respecting social distance.

"He is committed to congregational vitality, evangelism and community transformation. He has served faithfully on leadership teams within GNJ and within the Northeastern Jurisdiction," said Bishop John Schol.

At First UMC in Westfield, Williams led the congregation in developing vibrant children's and youth programs like Junior Youth Fellowship and Serving As Light Together as well as other ministries like Little Free Libraries, FUMC Gardens and its Soul Food Dinner Church.

But whether he's on the ballfield acting as a YMCA tee-ball coach, leading a neighborhood watch or speaking at the March for Love and Against Hate or Black Lives Matter events, Williams devotes all his energy to doing his very best.



Rev. William Williams

While at Asbury UMC in Atlantic City, he embarked on innovative ways to enact social reform within Atlantic City. Under his leadership, the church became a Cisco Networking Academy, a work-study site for Stockton University, a partner site for the University's Office of Community Engagement and a site where the hungry and homeless are fed weekly through partnerships with several organizations in the region, including other United Methodist congregations. In recognition of his service at Asbury UMC, Williams received the Atlantic City NAACP person of the year.

Williams has been instrumental in instituting transformation. When he and his congregation recognized a need to address domestic and sexual violence, they hosted a panel with Atlantic City's chief of police. This resulted in the City Council passing Resolution 217, which designated April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Atlantic City and made noteworthy steps to ensure educational, religious, and government institutions were equipped to help stop this type of violence in the community.

Williams earned a BA in Economics from Swarthmore College, a Post-Baccalaureate

Continued on page 4

The Colorful Right to Vote

How some GNJ churches are working to narrow the gap and make all voices heard

By Heather Mistretta
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"Life is a hard battle anyway. If we laugh and sing a little as we fight the good fight of freedom, it makes it all go easier. I will not allow my life's light to be determined by the darkness around me."

—SOJOURNER TRUTH, A HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVIST AND METHODIST PREACHER
IN THE 19TH CENTURY

John Wesley believed in the power of voting. On October 6, 1774, he wrote, "I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election and advised them to vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy; to speak no evil of the person they voted against, and to take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side."

Nearly 200 years later the United Methodist Social Principles were first adopted by the 1972 General Conference. Paragraph 164.B states,



Following in the footsteps of John Wesley, GNJ churches are doing their part to make sure all voices are heard at the ballot box.

"The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting poli-

cies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust."

2020 is not only a presidential election; it is also the 100th anniversary of the

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

Finding the Good News

Bishop John Schol



In our nation, wildfires burn in California, a powerful hurricane swept through the Caribbean and came ashore on the Gulf Coast of Louisiana and Texas, racial issues continue as a police officer shot another African American, Jacob Blake, which gave rise to new demonstrations and even riots and a white teenager killing protesters, a presidential campaign is driving wedges in communities, homes and even the church, and more than 180,000 people have died from COVID-19.

Our pain deepens, our anger burns and our fear increases.

“THE GOOD NEWS IS HOPE THAT FUELS JUSTICE, FACES INTO THE STIFF WINDS, SEES PEOPLE AS PEOPLE AND NOT AS THEIR POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS, UNDERTAKES THE HARD WORK TO END THE SIN OF RACISM, AND FINDS A WAY FORWARD WHEN OTHERS CANNOT FIND A WAY.”

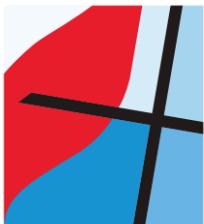
—Bishop John Schol

Some describe these times through the end times in the book of Revelation, others call forth texts from the prophets to let justice roll down like water and others like Jesus, weep over the city of Jerusalem.

Where is the Good News of Jesus Christ? Where is the God news?

UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) was planning and mobilizing for hurricane relief even before the hurricane rolled ashore.

United Methodist churches in the Western Jurisdiction are sheltering and caring for those affected by the fires.



THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY**John R. Schol, Bishop**

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A GNJ team working with more than 100 leaders has created a plan, A Journey of Hope to integrate our mission and the work of ending the sin of racism in GNJ and working to create greater inclusion in all of our churches.

GNJ churches are distributing 20,000 meals a month to people who have been affected by the economic crisis caused by COVID-19.

GNJ has said that in the midst of our differences, we will find a way forward together and that we may not think alike, yet we will love alike.

The Good News doesn't quiet the bad news, but it helps us find a way through the bad news. The Good News is 2 Timothy 4:7, I have fought the good fight...I have kept the faith. The Good News is hope that fuels justice, faces into the stiff winds, sees people as people and not as their political affiliations, undertakes the hard work to end the sin of racism, and finds a way forward when others cannot find a way.

Friends in Christ, we live for another day, but in this day we mourn with those who have lost, we walk with those who experience injustice, we help those who are hurt, we love those who feel unloved.

I call each of you to be bearers of the Good News and to pray for the healing of our land. I call upon you in these most difficult economic times to give generously when the storms of life rage, to work to understand one another, to learn about inclusion and equity, to stand up against racism and to stand with those who are victims of hate, storms, fires and pandemics. Let us all pray for our nation and the people around the world. 🙏

SOME GOOD NEWS...



The Maker's Place of Trenton has distributed 60,000 diapers to families since the COVID-19 crisis began. Their "virtual volunteers" help over 150 families a month, scheduling appointments to pick diapers at grab-and-go locations across the city. Want to get involved? Contact michaelreed@makersplace.org.



Galilee UMC in Englewood is hosting a virtual four-week Wellness Program from August 19-September 9 in partnership with Englewood Health called "Health 'E' Wellness. About 30 members of the church and the broader community are working together each week via Zoom for 90 minutes to address underlying issues like diabetes as well as overall health. Each participant is also receiving a bag filled with goodies like a grocery store gift card and a FitBit. "We used to do dinner church, but with social distancing we can't do that now," said Rev. Elouise Hill-Challenger. "We want to get people eating better, especially those with diabetes." Starting September 24 at 6:00 p.m. they are also starting a new weekly community dinner at Galilee UMC in conjunction with Cornerstone UMC who will be preparing meals biweekly to assist them. More information about Galilee UMC can be found at www.galileumcnj.org. A COVID-19 Health Disparity Toolkit for pastors to use with their congregations and community partners as they work collaboratively in communities that are suffering and hampered by inequities is available on the GNJ website.

ACTING ON YOUR STEWARDSHIP

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. - Act 2:45-47

GREATER
Than

You Are Not Alone

The Breakthrough bonus series, *Greater Than*, can help you with your stewardship. Resources for worship and for the annual campaign will strengthen the impact you make.

Join us for this series as we consider all that God has shared with us and what it means to live a life that is Greater Than.

Find out more about Breakthrough's *Greater Than* at: www.gnjumc.org/greater-than



FOR MORE STEWARSHIP INFORMATION:



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UNITED METHODIST
STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Find out more at: www.gnjumc.org/umsf

Courage Will Prevail at the 2020 Annual Conference

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

“Be strong and of good courage, and act. Do not be afraid or dismayed; for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished.”

—1 CHRONICLES 28:20

In January, when planning for 2020 Annual Conference originally scheduled for May, GNJ leaders settled on the theme “Courage” to best represent the challenges facing the denomination. Now months later when the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the Conference to

October 5 and 6 to be held in a virtual setting, the theme of courage resonates even more loudly throughout GNJ.

When Annual Conference members come together remotely in October, they will be considering significant legislation, including a racial justice plan to end the sin of racism called A Journey of Hope, a 2021 budget and plans for the future of Aldersgate Camp.

Six legislative sessions have been scheduled in advance for members to hear details about the legislation and to have their questions addressed. Questions can also be submitted on the Annual Conference web pages at www.gnjumc.org.

The virtual Annual Conference will have both traditional elements and a new

format to accommodate the realities of COVID-19 and the requirement to social distance. The event will be taped live and shared over Zoom for voting members and livestreamed to YouTube for visitors and guests. Worship services will include Ordination and Commissioning, the Service of Remembrance and the Service of Passage.

Legislation, which will be handled over Zoom, will allow for participants to speak for and against legislation and make amendments. In order to facilitate the new format, all members are being asked to ask questions in advance.

“While the annual conference will be a remote setting this year, we have the opportunity to connect and include people

in our annual conference session that have not had the opportunity in the past because of distance. We plan to work with you so that you can fully participate and be a part of shaping the future of GNJ,” said Bishop Schol.

He added, “I believe God will use this conference to draw us closer together to work together on the important matters before the church, making disciples, grow sustainable vital congregations and transforming the world, particularly as we learn and grow together to end the sin of racism, feed people and help people through the pandemic.”

“I BELIEVE GOD WILL USE THIS CONFERENCE TO DRAW US CLOSER TOGETHER TO WORK TOGETHER ON THE IMPORTANT MATTERS BEFORE THE CHURCH, MAKING DISCIPLES... PARTICULARLY AS WE LEARN AND GROW TOGETHER TO END THE SIN OF RACISM, FEED PEOPLE AND HELP PEOPLE THROUGH THE PANDEMIC.”

—Bishop John Schol

Registration information has been sent directly to all voting members and only those who are credentialed will be able to attend the meeting on Zoom. A pre-conference workbook, which includes legislation, has been posted online and a hard copy is in the mail to all voting members.

Much like David told his son in Chronicles that it is time to act with courage knowing that God is by your side, the Greater New Jersey Conference is hoping to come together in October and get the work finished so that together local churches can work on the transformation of the world.

For additional details, visit www.gnjumc.org/2020annualconference/.

William Williams

Continued from page 1

Certification in Pre-Medicine from the Drexel College of Medicine and a Master of Divinity from Drew University. He is a former commissioner of the Casino Redevelopment Authority’s Tourism Advisory Commission in Atlantic City and the chair of the Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee, a board member of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey and a participant in the Christian religious fellowship group, Fellowship of Churches and the ecumenical religious group Bridges of Faith.

He is a recipient of the Harry A. Seese Memorial Scholarship and is one of 12 United Methodists in the U.S. named a fellow in the Lewis Community Leaders Fellows Program of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership.

Williams’ wife, Joyce is lawyer, a former adjunct professor at Rowan University and also served on the team to create GNJ’s A Journey of Hope plan. They are the parents of Julia and twins William, IV and James. 🇺🇸



From food ministries to working on the frontlines, the people of GNJ have exemplified courage over the past few months.

We invite you to bring that courage to the virtual 2020 Annual Conference on October 5-6.

For details on how to submit your questions in advance, upcoming legislation, listening sessions that will prepare you for voting, the pre-conference workbook and more, go to:

www.gnjumc.org/2020annualconference



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Breaking Through the “Wilderness” with 2021 Worship Series

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

—ISAIAH 43:19

Making “a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” can be difficult, but add in the support of others and the burden doesn’t seem so heavy. The Breakthrough Worship Series is the support system for both clergy and laity to develop engaging worship and move their congregation forward on the path to vitality.

Designed to provide easy-to-use best practices and worship tools, the 2021 Breakthrough Worship Series will allow congregations to refine their worship, stay visually creative and save time for other ministries.

“There is so much to be gained by bouncing ideas off of others, sparking your own creativity,” said Rev. Ronell Howard of Christ Church in Piscataway who has both contributed to the writing of the Breakthrough series and regularly depends on it for her own sermons. She is one of about 50 GNJ leaders and pastors who have contributed to the Breakthrough Series.

Within each of the eight four- to six-week series, there are liturgies, creative graphics and videos, song and hymn suggestions, sermon starter materials, prayers, discussion questions and more—each consistently carrying the same theme throughout. Also included are mission and engagement ideas to help engage with the community, serve people and be more outward.

“This is an excellent resource. It has given me the opportunity to think outside the box and do something different,” said Rev. Elouise Hill-Challenger of Galilee UMC, who enjoys customizing each series so that it addresses her own context that appeals to her congregation.

“I like to make my sermons fun. I jump rope. I play tug of war. There are so many different ways to live life. It’s not about holding the Gospel hostage,” said Hill-Challenger who likes the flexibility that the Breakthrough series provides.

“THIS IS AN EXCELLENT RESOURCE. IT HAS GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX AND DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.”

—Rev. Elouise Hill-Challenger
of Galilee UMC

The goal is to save pastors 10 hours each week to prepare the sermon and lead the congregation. The goal is for leaders in churches to continue to learn, grow and serve well. As pastors and church leaders partner together to do God’s work, the breakthrough to a brighter day will come.

Another benefit is that the sermons in the Breakthrough series connect directly with a companion small group discus-

sion resource. The small group can meet after church or later in the week.

“It’s extraordinarily helpful while we’re all managing so many things. It helps to relieve the burden and anxiety,” said Howard, who mentioned that as her church works toward developing small groups, this series has been valuable to clergy and laity alike. She said it allows her to hand off the responsibility to laity with confidence, empowering them to lead on their own.

1960s version! 1 John 4:8 says, “Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” But what does that mean? Through this series, we will look at four different ways we can love God and the people around us by following the example and teaching of Jesus. Embrace your inner Hippie! Designed for Summer 2021.

Living Faith: John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, insisted that Christian faith was more than just a set of beliefs or a feeling. Faith changes

and to keep doing things the same old way. But there comes a time when we must decide... are we going to play it safe or go all in? John 3:16 tells us that God loved us so much that he gave his only Son for us, “so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” God’s love for us is “all in!” In turn, when we put all our trust in God, our lives can be freed for unimaginable wonder. This series will explore what it means to be “all in” for God with

“THERE IS SO MUCH TO BE GAINED BY BOUNCING IDEAS OFF OF OTHERS, SPARKING YOUR OWN CREATIVITY.”

—Rev. Ronell Howard of Christ Church in Piscataway

From Deck the Halls and Courageous to Summer of Love and God With Us, the new Breakthrough Worship Series will carry clergy and laity from Advent 2020 to Advent 2021. The first in the series is scheduled to be released on the website by October 1.

See details below, and stay tuned for upcoming workshops related to these programs:

Deck the Halls: Decorating Your Life with What Matters: As we get out the Christmas lights, ornaments and tinsel to decorate our homes this year, it might be hard for some of us to feel the holiday cheer. We have truly been through a lot this year! In this season, as we prepare to celebrate the arrival of Jesus, we can prepare by decorating our lives with what matters: the hope, peace, joy and love of God. Designed for Advent 2020.

Courageous: Our world often tells us that being courageous is about strength, bravery and heroic acts. This series explores what courage looks like in the New Testament and expands our understanding of courage. Together, we will learn how courage can help us raise up other people, transform our communities and face new and challenging situations. Designed for January 2021.

PurpleTheory: This Lenten series explores a different spiritual discipline each week, starting with self-examination on Ash Wednesday, then prayer, meditating on scriptures, fasting, confession, worship, silence and gratitude. Analogous to the popular OrangeTheory fitness program that focuses on a healthy balance of intense workout and restorative recovery, PurpleTheory will help you get spiritually fit with a good blend of challenge by stepping outside your comfort zone and recovery practices that allow you to heal. Designed for Lent 2021.

I See You: God creates, knows, loves and sees all of us in our full humanity. But as people, we can fall into the habit of assuming everyone is the same or everyone is like us. While we share a common humanity, these assumptions can be harmful and prevent us from truly seeing other people and listening to their perspectives. By looking at Biblical stories, this series will help us learn how to listen to, respect, affirm and act for and with others. In doing so, we can also come to know God even more fully. Designed for April-May 2021.

Summer of Love: We invite you to be part of a summer of love—no, not the

our lives and results in faithful action in the world. The New Testament letter of James gives the same message. This series will look at Wesley’s General Rules in connection with readings from James to show how our faith can come to life in all that we say and do. (Note: This series follows the epistolary readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for Sept. 5- Sept. 26, 2021 [Year B]). Designed for September 2021.

All In: When we face important decisions and opportunities in our lives, we often weigh the pros and cons. We often find reasons to avoid making changes

all of our being and all that we have. Designed for October/November 2021.

God With Us: In the season of Advent, we prepare to welcome Jesus, the Messiah in God Is With Us. This year, as we await our Lord, we will put ourselves in the place of the first people who awaited and celebrated Jesus’ birth. Through their stories, we will learn what it meant for God to be with them, and we will open our eyes to experience God with us, too. Designed for Advent 2021.

For details, visit www.gnjumc.org/breakthrough/2021-worship-series/.



Come to the Table where ALL are welcome with the Breakthrough Team this September.

Revelation @ the Table kicks off the worship series in week one.

DOWNLOAD SERMON SERIES AND RESOURCES:

www.gnjumc.org/breakthrough

BREAKTHROUGH
A GNU guide to best practices for worship

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Cho: Clergy Recipient of a 2020 Harry Denman Evangelism Award

By Rev. Debra A. De Vos, Associate Pastor, Chair of the GNJ Board of Discipleship

The prestigious Harry Denman Evangelism Award recognizes people whose life and ministry exemplify the teaching of Christ and the Great Commission. Rev. Dr. Jennifer Cho has been selected to receive the 2020 Denman award for clergy.

When Rev. Cho was appointed to Bridgewater UMC in July 2017, she be-

came the first ethnic minority senior pastor in its history. She has always believed in the power of “sharing God’s story of love” with people, especially those who are unchurched and de-churched (including the “nones” in her community). During Rev. Cho’s tenure, the attendance in worship grew from 169 to 225, and welcomed new disciples of Jesus Christ as active members of the church.

Rev. Cho’s ministry is based on loving God by loving people of all back-

grounds and walks of life. During this current pandemic, she has sought to provide a non-anxious presence and non-judgmental response to everyone. She understands that the work of loving kindness means developing a compassionate heart for people. She knows that ministry is all about developing relationships.

With her lay partners in ministry, she is developing highly effective and contagious “relational evangelism.” One concrete form of her relational evange-

THE ALL NEW LEADERSHIP ACADEMY*

Partnering laity and clergy to engage in
new ministries for a changing church.

Four course offerings include three 90 minute online sessions!

Navigating Worship in the New Day

Oct. 10, 20 & 27 | Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

with Lan Wilson, Director of Worship

As new dynamics in worship arise for our churches in this new day, this course will address hybrid worship, live worship, hospitality, worship presentation software, licensing and resources for products.

Making Worship Work Behind the Scenes

Nov. 4, 11 & 18 | Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

with Chuck DelCamp, of Haddonfield UMC and Chair of GNJ’s Commission on Communications

This course focuses on best practices in worship technology and developing a team. Learn best practices in worship technology as part of an overall experience.

These Small Groups Make a Difference

Jan. 7, 14 & 21 | Thursdays, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

with Rev. Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups and Daniel Jimenez and Vivian Naa-Awa Nelson-Appiah, Small Group Developers

Moving small groups from activity to lifestyle. In this workshop leaders will focus on three unique styles of gathering that have moved small groups from an activity to a lifestyle. Supper Groups, Covenant Groups and Children’s Small Groups. *This session is also available using a non-Wifi compatible phone.*

Missional Engagement that Opens Hearts, Minds and Doors

Feb. 3, 10 & 24 | Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

with Ashley Wilson, Director of Mission, Rev. Luana Cook Scott of Morristown UMC and Andrea Wren-Hardin, Hope Center Developer

In this workshop series, you will learn best practices for engaging in mission that is relational, transformative, and utilizes the gifts and assets of your church and community. You will leave with a mission plan to share with your mission committee and church leadership, as well as resources for encouraging and engaging in mission.

LOOK FOR REGISTRATION AND DETAILS
www.gnjumc.org/2020-leadership-academy

*formerly the Laity Leadership Academy



Rev. Dr. Jennifer Cho

lism is a generous feeding ministry. At Bridgewater UMC, nobody goes home hungry. Everyone is well fed spiritually, relationally and literally!

“REV. CHO’S MINISTRY IS BASED ON LOVING GOD BY LOVING PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS AND WALKS OF LIFE. DURING THIS CURRENT PANDEMIC, SHE HAS SOUGHT TO PROVIDE A NON-ANXIOUS PRESENCE AND NON-JUDGMENTAL RESPONSE TO EVERYONE... SHE KNOWS THAT MINISTRY IS ALL ABOUT DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS.”

—Rev. Debra A. De Vos,
Associate Pastor, Chair of the
GNJ Board of Discipleship

Rev. Cho’s real joy in ministry is to help people grow in faith and discipleship. Lives are changed by Rev. Cho’s passionate sermons, coaching and living example of a mature and committed disciple.

She is a gifted teacher with remarkably effective organizational and coaching skills. She applies these skills in ministry — particularly in the areas of servant-leadership development, mentoring programs between seasoned mature leaders and new believers and missions for children, youth, young families and young-at-hearts. Serving others in the name of Jesus is the motto of her ministry. 🇺🇸

MISSION CORNER

Is your church welcoming a new pastor into a cross-racial and cross-cultural (CR/CC) ministry?

The General Commission on Religion and Race has provided additional resources for Cross-Racial and Cross-Cultural ministry to “help foster a welcoming and meaningful transition for your pastor and the congregation” including:

- 3 Ways to Honor Your CR/CC pastor
www.gcorr.org/3-ways-to-honor-your-cr-cc-pastor/
- Communion Liturgy: Great Thanksgiving
www.gcorr.org/great-thanksgiving-gift-of-a-new-pastor/
- This is our Story, This is our Song: A small group study for congregations containing reflections and stories from CR/CC clergy
www.gcorr.org/this-is-our-story-this-is-our-song/

Additional resources for CR/CC ministry can be found at gcorr.org.



Sounds of Christ Ring Out at Calvary Korean United Methodist Church

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ

When asked what people miss most about not being able to have in-person worship, many often say the music. For the past year Calvary Korean United Methodist Church’s Musical Director Edward Cho has been working with the choir at his church in East Brunswick to create Christian music that can be heard anywhere.

“Music is a big part of our church. This allows us to stay connected,” said Cho who added that he spends about one to three hours on each clip before uploading it to YouTube. “This allows us to praise the Lord as a virtual choir.”

For Cho, it is his passion. Each week he works with about 30-35 members ranging in age from 22 to 75 to create a musical masterpiece. He then gets started on the extensive editing after finishing a day of work at his full-time job as a sales manager.

To listen to the collection, visit www.calvarykumc.org or check out their YouTube channel.

Cho said he and the choir are now gearing up for the 2020 Praise the Lord Online Music Festival for the Korean Churches of America that begins at the end of September. There are approximately 5,000 Korean churches in the United States. Winners will be announced December 10.

When asked which song has been his favorite, Cho said, “Since Christ My Soul From Sin Set Free,” whose lyrics begin with, “This life has been a joy to me; And ‘mid earth’s sorrows and its woe, ‘Tis joy my Jesus here to know.”



Calvary Korean choir members aged 22 to 75 provide comfort through music during social distancing.

“MUSIC IS A BIG PART OF OUR CHURCH.
THIS ALLOWS US TO STAY CONNECTED.
THIS ALLOWS US TO PRAISE THE LORD
AS A VIRTUAL CHOIR.”

—Edward Cho, Musical Director of
Calvary Korean United Methodist Church

SEEKING MUSIC
VIDEO SUBMISSIONS
FOR PRE-CONFERENCE
WORSHIP

Featuring our local churches for the
virtual Annual Conference session.

FIND OUT MORE!

www.gnjumc.org/2020annualconference

A Journey of Hope

Continued from page 1

the numbers or the size of the plan. It took us 400 years to get here. This is a journey, a journey that will not end in our lifetimes, but everyone has to be committed to working on it."

That work will be done over the next five years. The plan calls for a \$5.1 million investment to end the sin of racism in five areas: 1) Increasing and growing Leadership of Color, 2) starting new and developing Congregations of Color, 3) developing resources to lead all leaders and congregations to integrate ending the sin of racism with the mission of Greater New Jersey, 4) reviewing all policies and procedures of GNJ for bias and to ensure equity and inclusion, and 5) investing financially in repairing harm and engaging in the long term work of racial justice, inclusion and equity.

"The hope is to set the paradigm for the United Methodist Church in terms of addressing its own racial history and moving toward equity together," said Rev. Kermit Moss who leads Christ Church in Paterson and is interim director of the Center for Black Church Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary where as a Ph.D. student he is also writing about hip hop and the language of protest.

Moss also knows first-hand what it's like to be scared, having been both witness and victim of racist acts growing up in Virginia in the 1990s with sights of the Confederate flag waving. "I've been on the ground as a teen with police officers pointing guns at me. Fortunately, I was okay."

Although precipitated by the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, the plan addresses all People of Color, including Native Americans who were removed from their land, including in the GNJ area and forced onto a reservation in the Pine Barrens. "Indigenous people continue to face different forms of racism, including

health care disparities, which have become amplified by COVID-19," said Rev. Vanessa Wilson, lead pastor at The Church of the Good Shepherd in Willingboro and chair of the Commission on Religion and Race at GNJ.

St. John UMC is GNJ's only Native American church. It sits in a city that has been plagued by poverty and violence. COVID-19 has indeed brought these challenges to the forefront. Cumberland County has the dubious distinction of being last in NJ county ratings in many of the quality of life indicators. Fairfield Township, the home of Lenape ancestors, has the lowest per capita income in the county. Health disparity is evident when you study these statistics.

Church and community members, which includes 21 from the Tribe, continue to feed and clothe people in their community, both on its property and to shut-ins, as demand continues to grow.

"As Christians, we must follow the example of Jesus Christ and his disciples, who challenged both the political and religious structures of their times in order to bring justice for those marginalized and show mercy for those who are suffering the sin of injustice in our society," said Rev. Sammy Arroyo, who serves First UMC of Hightstown. "When Jesus talked with the woman at the well, he not only transformed her life, but he also broke the social and ethnic boundaries that separated the Jews and Samaritans."

Muteteke added, "It's more than just denouncing racism. It's also about repenting to the ways we have been complicit for many years and expanding the language so everyone can understand. I have to remain committed to this plight. My daughters need to see me engaging in this work to create a better world and a more just society."

Outlined in the plan is language that is used to identify people, races, nationalities and cultures, recognizing first that it will

evolve and change and secondly that understanding language is one of the first steps.

For Grant Karsner, a retired chemical engineer who is on the board on directors for the United Methodist Communities, president of the South Seaville Camp Meeting and lay leader at St. Peters UMC, his job as a team member was to bring his many years of global experience working with different cultures to the group to help them synthesize the content and identify priorities.

"Everyone has the right to be valued and respected. It will be a challenge to figure out how we marshal resources during a pandemic and determine how we give this the right priority," said Karsner.

This deliberate approach is evident across the team.

Another lay member of the group, Joyce Williams, who is a lawyer, former adjunct at Rowan University and mother to three Black children, said, "This is not business as usual. This is an opportunity to be at the forefront to make a big change."

A Journey of Hope Plan's cornerstones include the following actions:

- Creating equity in apportioning and using resources.
- Acknowledging, repenting and addressing past harm.
- Returning Native American land and preserving a Native American heritage site and burial ground.
- Forbearing African American congregation's debt as well as any congregation in a low-income community.
- Starting 25 new congregations and doubling the number of African American and Hispanic/Latino clergy elders.
- Building on GNJ's 10-year intercultural competency plan to deepen understanding of racism and how to work to end the sin of racism.
- Strongly encouraging and supporting every congregation to develop A Journey of Hope ACT plan integrating the mission of GNJ with ending the sin of racism.

- Implementing five keystone measures that are central to ending the sin of racism by addressing the actions and measures detailed in the report.

"Self-examination and honesty are critical. If we can start the journey together in an honest way, there's hope," said Rev. Wilson. "This is not a political cause. This is about the role of the Christian in racial justice. I'm hopeful."

Throughout the years Black Methodists have followed the teachings of Wesley and made their marks on history, spreading hope along the way—from Harry Hosier, the African American preacher who traveled with Francis Asbury in the late 18th century and Brown v. the Board of Education lawyer, Charles S. Scott, who was a Methodist layman in 1954 and the first African American bishop elected in 1968 to the strides made by Civil Rights Leader Joseph Lowry who worked alongside Martin Luther King Jr and the first African American woman elected bishop in 1984, Leontine T. C. Kelly. Self-educated preacher, Charles Tindley is widely believed to be the writer of the hymn "We Shall Overcome," which became the mantra of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, for which lifelong Methodist pastors, Gil Caldwell and James M. Lawson made a difference by providing nonviolent training programs, rallying peacefully and supporting voter drives.

It is this spirit and courage that have been infused into this plan to give it sustainability, strength and hope so that the transformative goals like 25 new ethnic congregations (at least 10 Black) by December 2025 (10 by 2023) among many others, can be met by the United Methodist leaders of today and then handed down for generations to come.

To read the plan in its entirety, visit www.gnjumc.org/2020annualconference. Legislation for the plan will be considered at the 2020 Annual Conference on October 5. 🇺🇸

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A LETTER CONFRONTING RACISM

“For He is our peace; in His flesh He has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” —EPH. 2:4

“And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” —MICAH 5:8

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We write to you as white clergy who are members of the Greater New Jersey Conference, serving ministry in pastoral appointments, extension ministries, and retirement. We write this letter to acknowledge, confront and work to change the sin of racism. As James Baldwin wrote: “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can change until it is faced.”

We write this letter recognizing that as people living in segregated communities, in predominantly white churches, we live inside bubbles of white privilege, inside a nation we love, but whose history has been shaped by white power and been deformed by racism. We recognize that even in our best moments, we cannot help but to have internalized aspects of racism and privilege, which distort our relationships with persons of color, and left unchallenged, lead us to silent complicity and sometimes active expressions of racism, even when we are unconscious of doing so.

Recent events, the violent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Elijah McClain in confrontations with police, images of blatant acts of racism by white persons in parks, restaurants, department stores, the disparity in the impacts of the corona virus, the on-going protests, and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, has made the ugly reality of racism, very visible and very public. If we remain silent and unresponsive to this reality, we remain complicit within it.

We, the undersigned white clergy, inspired by a group of white colleagues, offer an invitation to the white clergy of our conference to join us in a process to discover how we perpetuate racism. How we lead, what we preach and what we teach if absent of intentionality on matters of race will continue the status quo rather than advance social and racial justice. We write to identify ways to allow God to transform our lives, that we may affirm our Baptismal Covenant, “To accept the freedom and power God gives to you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression.”

We are committed to prayerfully and thoughtfully discerning how we might address our white privilege and the sin of racism in our ministry setting.

We are committed to stand in solidarity to support “A Journey of Hope” plan and advocate for its passage at our October 2020 Annual Conference.

We are committed to engage members in ministry settings by hosting conversations on race and racism in small group settings.

We are committed to reaching out to Black, Indigenous and People of Color who are our colleagues to explore how we might collaboratively engage in acts of reconciliation in our own congregations.

We are committed to support “A Resolution in Support of Black Lives Matter” from the GNJC Board of Church and Society, Commission on Religion and Race, and the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and advocate for its passage at our October 2020 Annual Conference.

The Reverend William Cook

The Reverend Jack Johnson

The Reverend George Morris

The Reverend Ernie Williams

Bishop Ernest Lyght, Resource Person

You can also sign this letter by visiting the following link: <http://bit.ly/GNJClergyRacismLetter>

Clergy Breaks Through with PaCE

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

PaCE (Pursuing Clergy Excellence) is an initiative that began in 2015 to facilitate peer learning groups where together leaders can engage in deep conversation and share ideas. From the transformational experience, clergy have supported each other to expand food pantries, refine missions, broaden ministries and change lives.

“PaCE groups offer far more than just learning together. They are an oppor-



In 2018 a PaCE Group led clergywomen to create “Salsa Sisters,” a year-long devotional.

tunity to care for one another’s souls,” said the program’s coordinator, Rev. Gina Yeske, who is GNJ’s Director of Small Groups and a newly-appointed lead pastor at Bloomsbury UMC.

Rev. Yeske knows all too well how when clergy support one another and ask how is your soul, great things can happen. Back in 2018 Yeske along with Gabrielle Martone, Frances Noll, Vicki Brendler, Francie Preston, Diane Dyson, June Tamburro, Lynn Mears, Jean Arlea Eriksen and Jana Purkis-Brash joined together to become the “Salsa Sisters” who later published *Salsa Sisters’ One Year Devotional: Sisters Alive in Leadership, Spirituality, and the Arts*.

“Although we’ll be online this time, the same connectedness and encouragement will be there,” said Yeske. “Amid all the amazing things clergy have been doing over the past few months, I can’t wait to see what transformations come out of PaCE this time!”

Three PaCE programs will be offered via Zoom, starting in November. Details are as follows:

Breakthrough Preaching PaCE Group

Facilitator: Multiple Facilitators

Dan Gepford: TBA

Gabrielle Corbett: Monday, 10:00 a.m.

(once a month)

Josh Shuster: Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. (every other week)

Will Wilson: TBA

Using GNJ Breakthrough materials as the primary resource for sermons, this group will work together as peer learners to become better communicators of God’s word. The group will work on studying the scripture, developing a message and delivering effective sermons.

When it IS all about ME

Meeting Time: First Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m. until noon

Facilitator: Iraidia Ruiz de Porras

Explore the benefits of living in a space where stress is released and creativity is unleashed (transformation) that will build on the patterns of liminality (transition) in the constantly changing world, setting and ministries which create anxiety and stress. As exercise programs and diets are not made “one size

fits all,” explore spiritual exercises and find the right one for self. From meditation, contemplation, examine, journaling, movement exercises, mantras, mandalas, photography, music and art, the goal is to become aware, mindful and compassionate with self and by using these tools to learn how to experience joy daily and enhance your gifts and graces in ministry and family life.

Spiritual Formation for Clergy

Meeting Time: First meeting is Tuesday Oct. 20, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Group will decide the best date and time after that meeting.

Facilitator: Peter Jamieson

Exploring spiritual formation practices that will help you be more contemplative in your daily lives. This group will help you enrich your current spiritual practices as well as discover new ways to enrich in your relationship with God.

To learn more about PaCE and the upcoming programs that will be offered, please visit www.gnjumc.org/pace. Registration opens September 20 and closes October 20. 🇺🇸

Right to Vote

Continued from page 1

19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which on paper granted all American women the right to vote. It ended the fight for thousands of white women, but for Black women and other women of color the outcome was less clear.

August 18, 1920 was a momentous day, a day when women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton dressed in long dresses and festive hats marched the streets waving the American flags to celebrate their victory. It was supposed to solidify the 15th Amendment in 1870, which prohibited the government from denying anyone the right to vote based on their “race, color, or previous condition of servitude” but was often not enforced.

But shrouded in their celebration were the many women of color who had been shoulder to shoulder with their white counterparts to fight for these rights or had instituted their own groups of Black suffragists.

Instead of relishing the victory and embracing the new freedom, many women of color would still face obstacles to voting booths and deprived them of a voice in local and federal elections for at least another 45 years.

Following the passage of the 19th Amendment, a New York Times editorial wrote, “millions of other women—particularly African-Americans in the Jim Crow South—remained shut out of the polls for decades,” including many Native American and Asian American women who were not granted citizenship.

Amy Jones, an ordained deacon since 2010, an adjunct faculty member at Wesley Theological Seminary and manager of volunteer engagement for Family Promise, said, “While white women could vote, people of color were still not considered human.”

Obstacles like poll taxes, required literacy tests, violence and other measures of subjugation prevented many from exercising their right. Poll taxes were not eliminated until 1964 when the 24th Amendment was ratified, and Methodist suffragists like Dorothy Height embraced the “love your neighbor” teachings by raising money to pay poll taxes, offering special classes for the literacy tests and

helping to organize voter registration in the South, voter education in the North and scholarship programs for student civil rights workers.

The following year the seminal Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed. This Act driven by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson outlawed literacy tests and other barriers to voting. In 1971 the 26th Amendment was ratified, guaranteeing the right to vote to adult citizens 18 years of age or older.

In 1975 the federal government passed voting rights amendments that prohibited discrimination against “language minority” citizens, which included Native Americans.

Jones added that part of the problem was the segregated school system, which disenfranchised people in how they were able to vote.

“Education is the solution,” said Jones. “We have so much to learn about racism and working for justice, but part of the solution is getting out of the way and being aware of all the privilege we have. We can’t change the past, but we can start to change the future.”

GNJ Churches are Doing Their Part

As Election Day nears, some GNJ churches are doing their part to ensure more voting privileges by assisting in voter registrations.

Donny Reyes, a 17-year-old Bridgeton resident and member of St. John UMC who helps distribute food to the town’s Mexican community, said, “With the COVID-19 pandemic changing all aspects of our lives, voting is no exception. In order to stay safe while performing one’s civic duty registering to vote is more important than ever before. While helping at the food distribution, I realized that there was an untapped opportunity in front of us. Helping register members of our community to vote will leave a lasting impact based on their hopes, values and faith. Registering members of the community to vote during food distribution is a great way to ensure that our democratic system succeeds.”

The voice of this youth was heard. Donny is part of an experimental education cohort where 50 youth are attending college and high school at the same time. He will graduate at 17 with a high school diploma and an associate degree. He dreams of attend-

ing an Ivy League school. Concurrently, he takes care of his 12-year-old brother while his mother works.

“When our youth asked about doing voter registration at the Food Giveaway, it was an easy ask,” said Cynthia Mosely, the coordinator of the Food Giveaway as well as the chair of the staff parish relationship committee and an Annual Conference delegate. She is also active on the Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) and serves on the jurisdictional CONAM, which reaches the other four Native American United Methodist Churches in the Northeast.

“Donny found St. John UMC on the computer when his uncle was hungry and disabled. We met him in his neighborhood and



In 1920 many women of color would still face obstacles to voting booths and deprived of a voice in local and federal elections for at least another 45 years.

Credit: Aaron Blanco

from then on, we have become partners,” said Mosely. “We obtained the postage paid self-mailer form last month, made a bunch of copies and we ask everyone if they are registered,” said Mosely who added that she and others at St. John also take registrations to the post office.

“Interestingly, most of our takers are young people. Older people say they are registered, but then we remind them their registration can lapse if they do not vote. We have a few more weeks to get them registered,” said Mosely who added that they are also registering 17-year-olds, as permitted, in case their birthdays fall before the election.

Another youth from Bridgeton named Michaela Thomas said, “Especially during a time where everything is entirely too hazy and unclear to define what it means to vote at all! However, it is still one of the only tools we have in a Democracy to be able to have a say about how our lives go in society. Voting has the power to change these realities when everyone is educated to choose and choose wisely about who is passing the laws and regulations around the causes that matter.”

A big push to register more voters is also taking place in Trenton where unemployment, health disparity and food insecurity have also been magnified by the pandemic.

Rev. Rupert Hall of Turning Point UMC said that the church’s food pantry volunteers are addressing the captive audience they have at their food pantry every Saturday morning by encouraging attendees to register to cast a ballot.

“Making our voices heard has never been more important,” said Hall. “Casting a ballot is one of the best ways to do that, so if we can make that opportunity possible for the people in our community, many of whom are among the marginalized and forgotten, we are going to do our best.”

The right to vote is a staple of the United States’ democracy and is the right that ensures every person has a voice in how the government acts. Although Sojourner Truth died before she was able to see women have the right to vote, her legacy still lives in the Methodist women and their descendants who followed in her footsteps. In 2020, women are showing up to vote in record numbers as the November election nears and more women, particularly women of color, register to vote.

The League of Women Voters provides information about the election process, new voting options, polling place locations and hours, candidates, absentee ballot and early voting options, registration deadlines and requirements. Resources for those local churches looking to get involved can be found on the website, <https://www.lwvny.org/> and on its webinar, “Voter Engagement in a Pandemic.”

In the words of the late Congressman John Lewis, “Your vote is precious, almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have to create a more perfect union.” 🇺🇸

CONFERENCE NEWS

Health Plan Offers New Options for 2021

The new HealthFlex Exchange, which starts January 1, will include six medical plans—three dental and three vision plans without sacrificing the quality of the service it offers.

HealthFlex contracts with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois to provide the PPO network and to pay claims only; with OptumRx for prescription benefits; and with United Behavioral Health for mental health benefits. Open enrollment for this plan will be October 28 through November 12.

Visit the website for additional information, including an informative YouTube video at www.gnjumc.org/healthflexexchange/.

Being Neighborly in Camden

The Neighborhood Center in Camden, one of A Future With Hope's Hope Centers that has been continuously operating in the city since 1913, now offers a Career Support Group to those who are employed or unemployed and could benefit from a creative, supportive group to discuss the challenges of today's work environments, careers, work-life balance, goal setting, training, career transitions and job search requirements.

Mike Landis, the nonprofit's executive director, is offering the program directly to anyone that can benefit—whether you are a donor, volunteer or just in need of a supportive environment you are welcome.

"It's our way of paying it forward to our donor base and the entire conference," said Landis. "I wanted to give back using the skills I have."

Prior to his current role, Landis provided this type of support, which included resume writing, job searching, interviewing and networking to people at Christ Church in Philadelphia. He was also a partner with a national retained search firm and a human resource executive in Fortune 500 companies. His clients included Bank of America, ConAgra, British Telecom, Dow Jones and Diageo to name a few. He was also previously in human resources at Diageo, Campbell Soup and Siemens.

The online group provides a confidential space for encouragement, listening and skill building in a faith-centered environment.

"Each session begins and ends with a prayer," said Landis who recalled how Rev. Charles Sayre first connected him to the Center.

The free sessions will be held each week via Zoom starting the first week of September. However, it is suggested that a tax-free donation be made to The Center's work with families in Camden if you are placed in a job only when you can afford to do so.

In addition to this, the Neighborhood Center continues to operate a free noon lunch for people who are hungry, feeding about 70 people a day and offering pantry giveaways.

For more information about the Center, visit www.neighborhoodrising.org/.



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REGISTRATION WILL BE OPEN | Sept. 20 - Oct 20

Find out more at: www.gnjumc.org/pace



FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups
gyeske@gnjumc.org | 732.359.1042



Spreading Compassion in Bridgewater and Beyond

Bridgewater UMC hosted "Compassion Camp" Vacation Bible School in August when they welcomed 116 kids registered from five different states. Kids learned what it means to be compassionate to others, the Earth and themselves.

Daily Zoom lessons offered kids the chance to interact with each other, hear a Bible story and sing a song.

A Google Classroom was set up with craft and "compassion in action" activity directions, stories read aloud by various community members and yoga videos.

A YouTube video of the event can be found at: <https://youtu.be/3AUtObzUHZg>.



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OBITUARIES



Rev. Dr. Charles A. Sayre: A Life Well Lived for 100 Years

Rev. Dr. Charles Sayre, called "one of the great saints of GNJ" by Bishop Schol, died August 10, prompting people across Greater New Jersey to reflect on the life of a man who has transformed so many lives through his strong faith, courageous actions and humility.

"He had a heart to reach people for Jesus Christ and to be Christ in the world feeding the hungry, working for justice and helping to establish mission work in the city," wrote Bishop Schol.

Rev. Dr. Charles A. Sayre, who celebrated his 100th birthday on April 19, served Haddonfield UMC for 25 years before retiring. The impression Rev. Sayre made on the lives of so many, particularly in southern New Jersey, has been shown in many ways over the years, including back in 2011 when the Respond, Inc. New Workers Job Development Center in North Camden was dedicated as the Sayre Training Complex. He had established the nonprofit, Respond, Inc. back in 1967 to better support the urban communities of Camden.

To read his obituary, visit www.inquirer.com/obituaries/charles-sayre-obituary-obit-pastor-haddonfield-united-methodist-church-20200812.html.



Making Miracles Everywhere

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Take an offering in your congregation to share at Annual Conference on October 5

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
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