

GNJ Awards

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

Clergy: Rev. Joshua Mularski, First UMC (Williamstown)



Rev. Joshua Mularski has been an out of the box innovative leader that has transformed First Church Williamstown. During his time there the church has become increasingly focused on God's mission for their future.

With the arrival of Pastor Josh in 2016, they were challenged to dream, vision and begin to make changes in outreach and through worship. The church now offers a contemporary worship service along with a traditional service so that all age groups and worship styles are interacting and working to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The average church worship attendance has grown each year in Josh's tenure.

Along with this growth has been the introduction of new small groups where the attendance in groups throughout the year has been almost that of the average worship. These small groups are much like the Wesley Small groups with discovering "how is it with your soul" in the sense that people are encouraged to live out the gospel message. The groups deal with topics, scripture understanding or even learning how to be better leaders in the life of the Church.

Josh has a niche for meeting people where they are in their encounter with Christ and then leading them into a deeper more meaningful relationship. During the pandemic, these groups have continued virtually, which has kept the church connected and offered invites to others to be introduced and brought into the church.

Before the pandemic, people involved in mission and ministry to the community was also almost that of the worshipping attendance. People have been involved in food distribution, clothes drives, and meals to neighbors .

One of the great ways of reaching out to the community has been in their winning a grant from the General Church for technology. Under Josh's leadership they are learning to not only have worship online, but how to connect with names, addresses and faces for those who have yet to be able to come through the doors of the church. Josh is getting the church out of the four walls and back into the community to where people are recognizing the name, ministry and encountering Christ.

Josh has a compassion and evangelist spirit that is seeking to help this church reengage with the "why" we are a United Methodist Church. He is helping the congregation to understand it is everyone's responsibility to know and share the gospel story of their life in true Wesleyan spirit that also entails the social aspect of where we are to live the gospel out in loving and serving all in the community.

Laity: Holly Robinson, Dennisville UMC



Holly's innovative evangelism ministry spans almost every realm of her church outreach; She is a liaison to the schools and coordinates with them in how to assist those identified in need within the school community. She also runs the church coat and mitten drive that goes to the school, and the food pantry.

She presents the mission moment each month with a passion that allows her enthusiasm for the mission to be contagious. Church giving to missions has increased since she began this monthly endeavor. She is a great advocate for, and involved in, the mission of Family Promise; she coordinates Thanksgiving dinner baskets with the school; is coordinator for the food pantry, and each month, she does all of the shopping with her sisters, (since the pandemic she has come over days early to pack each shopping bag for porch pick up); she carries the groceries into the social hall and organizes and accounts for every item which she carries to the second-floor storeroom where every item is organized. Holly runs and is present for every food pantry Sunday. When Holly heard of the loss of jobs to bus drivers and cafeteria workers, she contacted the school and arranged for food for families in need.

Additionally, Holly is the Treasurer of her church. Holly has coordinated and chaired the SPRC committee for five years and takes that responsibility seriously. Her major concern and direction has been toward pastoral care and a keen awareness to evangelism.

Holly understands how essential the presence of the Gospel, (lived-out), is to witness the message of Jesus. She lives out Matthew 25:34; and directs her church to do the same. Because of Holly and with the example and direction of other key leaders in the church, the church family is also keenly aware of, noticing, and responding to anyone hungry, thirsty, without a coat, sick or lonely.

Everyone who visits the food pantry is welcomed to participate in the uplifting devotional and prayer that is offered prior to the start of the distribution. A prayer basket is provided for prayer concerns and all know that the weekly Bible Study group prays for their concerns. All are offered prayer as they are helped with groceries to their vehicles.

Holly's ministry is changing lives; it impacts the community and region. Many in the community who do not attend church have been impacted by her actions of compassion, and although they do not attend, still view the church as their church home and reach out in times of spiritual need.

Holly models Jesus with her compassion and makes others truly feel loved in the how they are ministered to and cared for when they come to visit. She serves in a way that is welcoming and inviting, so that many who attend feel a part of the church.

Holly's drive and compassion challenges and motivates me as a pastor. She is relentless in her desire to care for those who are hurting. When the food pantry had to close last March and April, she looked to other ways to meet their needs and arranged for special pick-ups and food cards. Holly's efforts have so impacted the community that since the summer the church has had had over \$5000.00 in unsolicited funds (designated by the givers) for our food pantry. Lives have been impacted and the church is clearly a vital presence in the community, and Holly is an important part of that vitality. There are many other mission projects in which she is involved that are not listed, but she has made the mission of Jesus the center of her life.