

THE RELAY

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Trinity UMC's Alan Chorun (second from left) and Young Vision Africa believe in creating a self-sufficient community in Bo, Sierra Leone.

Sharing God's Love in Bo

By Heather Mistretta
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In an isolated village of the Sierra Leonean city of Bo sits a blue school, ramshackle buildings, huts with thatched roofs and remnants of a decade-long war. Plagued by the historical trauma and layers of poor healthcare, it is estimated that 185 out of every 1,000 children will not live to see their fifth birthday. The Human Development Index lists Sierra Leone, a nation on the coast of West Africa, as one of the poorest countries in

the world. It is estimated that there is one doctor for every 25,000 people.

But in that small village where most are cut off from most communication, there is also a rich culture of storytelling, Mende dancing and a "football" game or two.

There are also many students eager to learn and grow and a group of faithful employees dedicated to help make that happen. Down the road is a new solar-powered medical center where prenatal care is emphasized. In the city, there is a burgeoning restaurant, slated to open in

December, where some of these graduating students may work one day.

In Highland Park, NJ, Trinity UMC member, Alan Chorun and his team have been spending the past decade sharing God's love in Bo through medical care, education and a focus on creating a self-sufficient community through Young Vision Africa (YVA).

A professor at Rutgers and Union County College, Chorun has also led mission/service work in homeless communities in Manhattan, the Cheyenne

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Neighbors Welcoming Neighbors

"Jesus reached for a little child, placed him among the Twelve, and embraced him. Then he said, 'Whoever welcomes one of these children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me isn't actually welcoming me but rather the one who sent me.'"

—MARK 9:36-37

By Heather Mistretta
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LAKEHURST, NJ

In late August, the first group of Afghan refugees forced to leave their homeland arrived at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey. Veiled women, barefoot and hungry children and others carrying nothing but a tattered jacket, a small bag and many unknowns were stationed there as part of a massive resettlement effort.

Called Liberty Village, the community that began as a tent city grew almost overnight to about three thousand and then continued to climb to near 10,000, as Afghans desperately fled Kabul in search of safety from the Taliban's stranglehold and threats of terror. The New Jersey base is one of eight in the United States where tens of thousands of Afghans are being housed.



Rev. Hyun-Bo Shim, who has been a chaplain in GNJ for the past five years, supports the ongoing efforts to help with Afghan resettlement.

"There is a great need there at the base. I didn't know what exactly to expect the first time I went," said Rev. Hyun-Bo Shim, a chaplain for GNJ and husband of Rev. Sunny Shim of Wall UMC.

But what Shim found was a well-run base where refugees and military personnel, in spite of a language barrier at times, coexisted peacefully. While there, he connected with Master Sergeant Megan Munoz, who oversees one of three camps at the base. She shared with him what was needed (see on page 4).

"Children are happy. I saw smiling faces. People are talking to one another and engaging with military personnel," said Shim who added that men, women and children are being housed in barracks normally meant for military during active duty.

Although needs regularly change, Shim said in early November that men's and women's underwear were needed as was powdered laundry detergent, coats and shampoo. He offered to deliver the supplies to the base, if needed.

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In everything, acknowledge God, who makes straight our paths.

—PROVERBS 3:6

GNJ Moves Forward on its Mission and Ministry Path

By Heather Mistretta
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The path over the past year and a half has been a circuitous one, but glimmers of hope along the way have reminded us that God has been right by our sides the entire time. On the morning of October 14, the people of GNJ gathered for the 2021 Adjourned Annual Conference Session—Forward. The powerful scripture from Proverbs continued to shape the conference session as they gathered in fellowship and trusted God to help the Conference move forward to transform the world!

District Superintendent and Dean of Cabinet Rev. Sang Won Doh welcomed everyone in prayer as he thanked God for lighting the way in the midst of challenge.

"WE'RE HERE TO ALLOW THE SPIRIT TO FLOW AND MOVE THROUGH US."

—Bishop John Schol

In a video greeting from abroad, Tanzania Conference Bishop Mande Muyombo of the North Katanga Episcopal Area shared in the greeting, saying, "This team gives hope to not only the Greater New Jersey Conference, but also the Tanzania Conference, Africa and the entire world" as he implored everyone not to "quench the spirit" and not give up on mission.

Bishop Schol echoed this sentiment when he recognized the strong ministry and mission that still continue among the GNJ congregations and how that growth along with the music heard have enriched our souls. "We are bound together as friends in Christ all around the world," he said.

"We're here to allow the spirit to flow and move through us."

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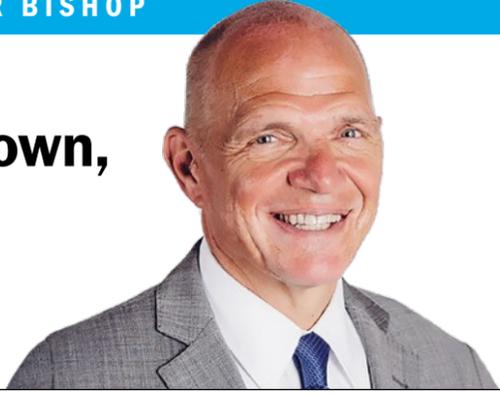
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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

From a Small Town, Large Dreams Take Flight

Bishop John Schol



People wondered if Jesus would make a difference. One reason they wondered was because he was from a small town called Nazareth. People wondered if anything significant or good could come from Nazareth.

—JOHN 1:45-46

Rom a small town, large dreams take flight. Recently, I celebrated a wedding for some friends in Vermont. At the reception Beverly and I were seated with a group of family and friends of the bride and groom. As we talked about Vermont fall colors, family, friends and life during the pandemic, I noticed a woman with white hair, long retired sat taking it all in, but silent.

I asked her to tell me about herself. She told me she had been a high school gym teacher in a Vermont town and coached field hockey. She shared that when she arrived at the school in the early 1960s, there were only a few women's sports teams, and so she decided to start a field hockey team. She had little support from the school or the district. Starting a women's sports team before Title 9, which requires parity between men and women's sports in schools, was a difficult task.

She noticed the football field was not being used because the season was over, so she gathered interested girls and began to practice on the football field. "Well, you might have thought a mortal sin had been committed," the woman told me.

The football coach said she could not use the field, and it went to the school principal and then to the superintendent of schools. Each indicated that she should not proceed, but she persisted. Eventually the intramural team became part of the league and eventually went on to win the state championship.

Title 9 changed a lot for women's sports. I have to wonder if it was not because of courageous women in small towns across the country that dared to dream and persevere. We often don't hear of the small town stories, or the solitary gym teacher and their impact on change and progress. Usually important and significant change and accomplishment begins with a person.

This is the Gospel story. Jesus came from a town that everyone did not think would produce anything. He gathered a group of tax collectors, fishermen and others that no one thought much of, and they persevered, which produced character, and character produced hope, and hope has not disappointed (Romans 5:4-5).

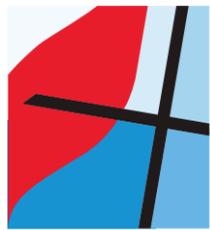
God blesses the small individual steps toward healing, wholeness, health, justice and righteousness regardless of where they start. Each of us can and are a difference maker in the unfolding story of God in the world.

God is and will continue to bless you and your efforts for the Gospel sake.

It is the story of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32). One day a seed is planted and years later people are blessed by that simple act with beauty and fruitfulness. Never think that you won't be a difference maker by the small act of grace, kindness, witness, prayerful act of obedience or act of justice you do today. You are God's gift to the future. 🇺🇸

"GOD BLESSES THE SMALL INDIVIDUAL STEPS TOWARD HEALING, WHOLENESS, HEALTH, JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY START. EACH OF US CAN AND ARE A DIFFERENCE MAKER IN THE UNFOLDING STORY OF GOD IN THE WORLD."

—Bishop John Schol



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Thank you to the more than 18 million veterans in the
United States for your courage, dedication and compassion.

On the Journey for Justice with Courage

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—MARGARET MEAD

By Heather Mistretta
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In Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist*, he writes, “One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of ‘not racist.’ The claim of ‘not racist’ neutrality is a mask for racism.”

The son of two Methodist ministers goes on to say, “Like fighting an addiction, being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism and regular self-examination.”

Fighting racism and promoting justice can be messy, dirty, an arduous journey. It can take you on paths that you weren't expecting, take you down dark roads that may be scary or uncomfortable. It's work. It's deliberate. It's intentional. It also takes teamwork, recognition of privilege and a faith that together you can make a difference.

GNJ's A Journey of Hope team is committed to confronting racial inequities and journeying together toward ending the sin of racism. But they also recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach is not going to work for all churches, nor can the team do it on its own. Different voices need to be heard; different thoughts need to be shared; and different cultures need to be embraced.

As mentioned in the October issue of *The Relay*, Fearless Dialogues is the consulting firm who is shepherding GNJ's journey. On Nov. 13, the group will host its first training session for GNJ. Three of those people who take part in this training share their motivations and thoughts for joining in this article.

For nearly all of her 72 years, one person who has had the passion and the grit to pursue this journey is Ingres Simpson.

“We're on the right track. We need to get the training and get the message out to our churches,” said Simpson, who is lay leader at First UMC in Glassboro and part of the original Journey of Hope team. “Fighting racism is something we need to do as a church. We should be at the forefront. How can we call ourselves Christians if we're not willing to help?”

Simpson knows all too well what the face of racism looks like having grown up in the South in the 1960s. She recalled going to a segregated school in Columbia, North Carolina where she graduated in 1967. Raised by her grandparents along with her two brothers, Simpson embraced every opportunity, shrugged off fear and moved forward with conviction and love.

She attained a B.A. in Music from Virginia State University, and then went on to the University of Cincinnati on a full scholarship. Simpson married and raised two children, moving to New Jersey in the late-1970s. She dedicated her career as a music teacher



Rev. Frank Davis of Leonia UMC has spent his life promoting and fighting for social justice; JOH team member, Ingres Simpson of First UMC Bloomfield seizes every opportunity to help others; Rev. Yeika Huertas-Roman of First UMC Vineland dressed as an Easter Bunny proclaiming the Resurrection of Jesus for a children's activity.



express themselves freely,” said Simpson, who is one of only two black people in her congregation.

“Why am I still here, I always wonder. God didn't bless me to do nothing,” said Simpson. “If I'm going to be here, God has a plan for me.”

God clearly also has a plan for Rev. Yeika Huertas-Roman. Having been appointed as a cross-racial cross-cultural pastor at First UMC Vineland two years ago shortly before the onset of the pandemic, Huertas-Roman is also planning to join the Fearless Dialogues training on Nov. 13.

“It was through the invitation of Megan McKay in our district when I heard about the Fearless Dialogues training. I would like to know and learn more about our Journey of Hope (JOH) and be part of this journey of justice with my voice and actions,” she said.

“As a brown woman, I truly believe that JOH and the Fearless Dialogues training are opportunities for me to know others and be known. I want to be part of the journey that is announcing and making real that ‘God's kingdom has come.’”

Huertas-Roman, who is in her second year of a cross-racial cross-cultural appointment, said, “Why am I willing to, you ask? Matthew 4:17 says, ‘From that time Jesus began to tell people his message: ‘Change your hearts and lives, because God's kingdom is now very near.’ The expression used in Greek is ‘God's kingdom has come.’ Jesus didn't proclaim a future state of utopia. Jesus announced the reality of God's kingdom. And after announcing it, Jesus made it happen. Then, the realm of God is possible. It's real. It's now.”

She went on to say, “But how could the kingdom of God be a reality in a world corrupted by sin, both personal and collective?

By the action of ordinary people that joined Jesus to make it happen. People who are convinced that “the Spirit of the Lord is on US.”

Huertas-Roman embraces discipleship.

“I'm called not as a pastor, not as clergy, not as any title or leadership, but as a Disciple, to empower the prophetic role of denouncing the sin, and announcing the possibility of transformation. I'm answering the calling to act, to pull down, to deconstruct the structures of oppression and the mindset that justifies those structures.

From my perspective, the reality of God's kingdom is through knowledge. I've heard that knowledge is power, and I agree. But I'm not talking about the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. I'm talking about the awareness or understanding of others. Then, we need to learn and teach to know each other as a sacred creation of God. We need to create spaces to “know” the other. Spaces to learn to be aware of that person that looks different, speaks different, lives different. Powerful



opportunities to know the other and be known by the other. The chance to confront the fears of the unknown and stereotypes, and open the windows of empathy, justice and equality.”

For Frank Davis of Leonia UMC, he is always learning and offering a helping hand. Living his life committed to social justice in every step he takes, Davis said he also intends to take the Fearless Dialogue training.

“Any insight I might offer is only from a personal desire for social justice,” said Davis. “Having been raised a Quaker and later on deciding to become Methodist, one of my driving forces is justice for the least and the lost. I believe that we cannot honestly make true disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world if we are not authentically taking care of each of God's creations.”

Effective Christians make vital churches, and vital churches make relational communities, and relational communities care about ALL of its members. But this takes work and time. Honestly, we have failed to be an obedient church, and we have to do better.”

But Davis echoed what others have said, seeing the JOH plan as a great way to facilitate social justice.

“The Journey of Hope is another chance for us to get it right. Another chance to Do Justice, Love Mercy, and walk Humbly with God. JOH gives us the opportunity to see GOD in everyone...and so we have work to do.”

The November 13 training provided by Fearless Dialogues will engage our Journey of Hope work. It will develop those gathered as GNJ Journey of Hope ambassadors who have a foundational understanding of the skills needed to engage anti-racism work in the diverse ministry landscape of our conference.

Another training will be hosted on January 6 for those gathered to build a working knowledge of bias, privilege and systemic and structural racism. Like the first, this workshop training will also be virtual.

It will be necessary, for those serving as Journey of Hope facilitators, i.e. current circuit leaders, supporting and guiding local congregations in engaging anti-racism work in their ministry contexts to attend one of these sessions. The first cohort of in-depth facilitator training will begin March 18 and conclude April 14, 2022.

Proverbs 31:8 says, “Speak up for the people who have no voice.” The Journey of Hope team is committed to give voice to those who have been silenced. For team member Ingres Simpson, whose favorite hymn is “Blessed Assurance,” she like many others will be sharing her story and voice to help others. “This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.” 🇺🇸

**FEARLESS
DIALOGUES**
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in an elementary school and then as an instructional supervisor before retiring. In 1999, she was elected as the first female in her town council. She later served on her church's finance committee and was named Annual Conference delegate from 2018-2020.

Through it all, Simpson said, “I learned to feel comfortable in different groups, to work with leadership.” Today, she is still following the guidance of God, helping people grow and thrive along the way. She is president of the Samaritan Center food bank in Glassboro, and for the past eight years has supervised student teachers at Rowan University. Last fall she was invited to be on the Board of Ordained Ministry, and when she's not singing in her own church choir, on the first Sunday of the month she is a fill-in for the choir at Mt. Zion-Wesley UMC in Wenonah.

Her church's pastor, Rev. John Inverso recently started a book club to discuss Kendi's masterpiece and delve into what could be uncomfortable conversations.

“I'm not going because I want people to be able to



Rev. Shim believes in helping both refugees and military members during this challenging time.

Refugees

Continued from page 1

“The military personnel from the Air Force side are in charge of watching over the refugees, and they have also asked for some snacks like chocolate and beef jerky,” said Shim. MSgt Munoz echoed this need, saying that the enlisted are working around the clock to sort items and care for the refugees. Snacks, bags of ground coffee and energy drinks would be appreciated, she said. She also added that gift cards to Dunkin, Wawa or Costco can be used to supply the military personnel with those items as she does the purchasing herself.

“This journey has been such a great blessing to me. During such a time as this, I can utilize my experience to help,” said Shim who is pastor at Harvey Memorial UMC in addition to being a chaplain.

Shim described his transition into the dual role five years ago as sort of a “mid-life crisis.” Chaplaincy was only at 50 percent, so he knew more help was needed.

He recalled how in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy he “saw the other side and what they could do,” referring to the help and support that the National Guard provided during that time.

“I was amazed at what they could do, but I also wondered who is serving them,” so began his transition into what is now a dual role as local pastor and chaplain. Five years later, Shim said he is still honored to serve these people.



Stanhope UMC collected blankets for refugees in preparation for the winter.

As Shim and others help refugees on the local level, UMCOR is working with more than 30 partners worldwide to fulfill the biblical mandate to “love thy neighbor” and “welcome the stranger.” In collaboration with long-standing partners, UMCOR is providing humanitarian relief and is assisting with refugee resettlement in part its partnership with Church World Service.

But our local churches are also doing their part.

The Church of the Master UMC in Howell has collected baby items to donate as part of its partnership with the Sponsor Circle Program, a community-led resettlement initiative that allows everyday Americans to take on the responsibility of welcoming an Afghan newcomer to their communities. The Sponsor Circle Program pairs Afghan newcomers with community groups eager to provide support. By applying to serve as a certified sponsor circle, the group commits to providing critical welcome and support to an Afghan newcomer family for a minimum of 90 days. More information can be found at www.sponsorcircles.org.

At Park UMC in Bloomfield, the congregation has always been dedicated to



St. Mark's collected donations of feminine hygiene products and diapers at its homecoming event.



Manasquan UMC collected essential items like soap sacks for refugees.

ministry and mission that is inclusive and compassionate to all neighbors in need. Five years ago, the church leadership organized a mission to work with refugees and their resettlement. Although some of their efforts were thwarted by the pandemic, Park UMC has resumed its focus as Afghan refugees arrive in New Jersey in need of housing, household supplies, meals and educational services.

Stanhope UMC has been and continues to be a Project Linus drop-off site. Project Linus collects new, handmade blankets and distributes them to children in crisis. They learned that Project Linus is sending over 600 blankets to the base for the Afghan refugee children there.

St. Andrew UMC, who has always been committed to helping veterans is now giving even more at Fort Dix by collecting items to be donated there. Manasquan UMC also is collecting for the Afghan

refugees living in New Jersey. They have donated things like soap sacks.

As part of its homecoming celebration, St. Mark's UMC hosted a fundraiser on Oct. 17 in partnership with United Methodist Women to support refugee families. They collected donations of feminine hygiene products and diapers.

What Do They Need?

Sgt Munoz is responsible for about a thousand women at the camp. They are in need of the following donations:

1. Yoga Mats and Volleyballs — The women are not allowed to exercise outdoors in the presence of men, so they are organizing activities that can take place indoors and separate from the men.
2. Personal Care Items — The Afghan women were asked what they needed or would like. Their responses were Nair Hair Removal, Make-up (Foundation in Tan+ tones) and body spray.
3. Toys — There is a huge need for toys for the children.
4. Munoz said that we could share the amazon gift link so that gift cards or items can be purchased (link shared in prior email) AND solicit the above donations through our churches.

She recommended two ways to get the items to the base:

1. If there are only a few items, she lives in Robbinsville, NJ, and they can be dropped off at her house.
2. If we have vehicles to bring the items to the base, she can assist in the pickup and escort the vehicle (s) onto the base. 🇺🇸

OTHER RESOURCES:

- **Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON)** — Delaware Valley stands ready to serve asylum-seekers in our area.
- **Church World Service** — Working around the world, CWS has seen migrants and refugees finding home even after every door has been closed.
- **NJ Coalition for Afghan Refugees** — Hosting a school supply drive. As a coalition of NJ-based non-profits, faith-based organizations, community organizations, and elected officials, they represent a diverse group who advocate for and with Afghan refugees. More info at www.afghanrefugeesn.com.
- **Welcome Home Jersey City** has made great strides helping the refugees in its community by providing educational, employment and material support for refugees, asylees and asylum-seekers in the Jersey City area. More information can be found at <https://welcomehomerefugees.org>.
- **Episcopal Migration Ministries** — refugee resettlement and migration ministry of The Episcopal Church, is currently working in partnership with the U.S. government to assist Afghan allies with resettlement and direct services through a network of 12 affiliates across the U.S.
- **Ethiopian Community Development Council** — Refugees and immigrants face daily challenges as they reestablish new lives. ECDC's programs assist newcomers by giving them hope for their future, and helping them become self-sufficient, productive members of their communities.
- **HIAS** — Works around the world to protect refugees who have been forced to flee their homelands because of who they are, including ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. For more than 130 years, HIAS has been helping refugees rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.
- **International Rescue Committee** —The IRC has worked in Afghanistan through three decades of crisis providing millions of people with shelter, education, clean water, health support.
- **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services** — working to meet the relocation needs of Afghan immigrants and refugees.
- **U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants** — Their goal is to help create a world of possibilities for displaced people—where displacement may have defined their past, but their future is reimagined with unlimited possibilities.
- **World Relief** — World Relief partners with local churches and community-based organizations across the United States to provide support for thousands of immigrants and refugees who are seeking a place to call home.

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Trinity UMC

Continued from page 1

River reservation, Appalachia and New Jersey. But after reading *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah who at 13 became a soldier in the government army, he knew he needed to get to Sierra Leone. His solo trip to the country in 2009 sparked his passion further.

"The work Alan does is the epitome of sacrificial love. It's astounding when you think of all of the time, effort and resources he pours into YVA," said Rev. Alicia Grey, a former missionary who was appointed to the church this past July and who has since immersed herself into the church's culture and mission. "He has given up a lot over the years because he is so driven by this deep love of God and people. He is truly an inspiration for all of us."

Chorun began his service in this war-torn country burdened under colonial rule for many years by volunteering at an orphanage where some of the children had survived in the bush for a long time amid a civil war in the country from 1991-2002 before being brought to the orphanage.

While illicit diamond traders gained wealth from Sierra Leone's mines, most



But the people of Sierra Leone still had hope and an unwavering courage to recover and improve their lives. The United Methodist Church had founded the orphanage to protect some of the children during the war.

"I ended up there unplanned, and while there I met orphan youth who had vision and hope waiting to be actualized," said Chorun.

"Seeking to empower one of the orphan youths with an ambitious dream, some friends and I funded and organized the construction of homes for widows in his remote village," said Chorun, who

The result has been magical.

A high school student is teaching little "street" children to read. A young middle-schooler suffering from a serious condition conducts classes on his porch for children in the village—after he walks four miles home from his school. The students are courageous, intelligent and insightful. Their stories are inspiring and heartwarming.

Since its founding in 2009, Ebola was eradicated in the country in 2012 through vigilant grassroots efforts to educate; the original makeshift school has grown to now educate an average of 80 children at a time with some of its alumni returning to be leaders; housing for teachers and other families has been built; wells have been fixed and there is a healthcare center.

"But through it all, we have come to focus on empowering youth through education and God's hope and compassion," said Chorun.

He added that the original scholarship program with the five children has developed into a comprehensive leadership and character development mission using the village church community and weekly American mentor sessions.

Hoping to spread and share their work, Chorun and his team brought groups of six Americans in 2016 and another seven in 2017, holding medical clinics and school programs for the arts and English literacy.

"At the request of the Muslim villagers, we started a church and in an amazingly courageous commitment, our board member Rev. Enid Benjamin spent five months in the village to encourage the church and the school," said Chorun.

"Always though, we've been led and inspired by youth...their judgment, their vision, their ideas. Many of the orphans I met years ago have worked for us. What YVA's Tato Primary School lacks in facilities, it makes up for by the talent and commitment of the staff

our head teachers assembled."

Twelve years since its founding, YVA is still working toward improving education, now with a focus on women and girls amid a patriarchal culture that doesn't always put value on the contributions of women.

Chorun added that Princess, a local who was once a preschool teacher, is now a YVA director. "She has quite a story," said Chorun, recalling how a young woman once married to a man with five wives is now working toward getting her certification as a teacher.

Starting as an outside school with only a roof, YVA's school now educates about 80 children. BELOW: In addition to academic studies, the curriculum includes child abuse prevention and empowering girls.



"She said we changed her life, but she is now changing the lives of many," said Chorun.

He also noted that the education is not just about academics. It is also about child abuse prevention and empowering girls. One way they do that is through fables from which they teach simple character development. Also emphasized is the importance for students to give back to their community in ways like tutoring younger children.

"We have been putting more attention on kids that will hopefully become leaders in their country...We're also hoping to bring people there this summer, people who are brave, sensitive and altruistic."

Rev. Anna Thomas, who was the church's pastor when YVA was founded and now at Metuchen UMC, was an integral part of bringing the mission to fruition. She called Chorun "a deeply committed Christian."

She added that his project is also supported by Centenary UMC, Aldersgate UMC and Beverly UMC, who have all participated in raising funds for this project.

"He strongly believes to encourage the people there to trust themselves and explore resources that are readily available to them in Africa and build on them—and not be continuously dependent on the western influence. He has created a team of people here to guide the educational process in Sierra Leone."

Chorun's connection to Trinity UMC began in the early-1990s and has since taken on many different roles like SPRC chair and music director.

As he looks ahead at the future of YVA, Chorun said his goal is to be flexible and focus on meeting needs of some of the poorest people in the world.

"Now we just have to do the hard work of looking outward instead of the church acting for itself. It's about reaching out in many ways," said Chorun.

In a country that has been plagued by abject poverty, corruption and abuse for decades, Chorun and the YVA team he leads are ready to take on any challenge they meet with grace, courage and a bold determination to transform the small pocket of the world by not only providing them with resources but equipping them with the tools, resources and confidence to build on the foundation and strive to be independent.

For a country whose name means "lion mountains," whose capital and largest city is called Freetown and with natives like Zainab Hawa Bangura who is now Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi and committed to erasing the rape culture that has existed for years, the future looks bright and full of promise. 🇸🇪

"NOW WE JUST HAVE TO DO THE HARD WORK OF LOOKING OUTWARD INSTEAD OF THE CHURCH ACTING FOR ITSELF. IT'S ABOUT REACHING OUT IN MANY WAYS."

—Alan Chorun, Trinity UMC member, Highland Park, NJ

citizens remained in dire poverty with no infrastructure or healthcare. Even before the war in the mid-1980s, around 80 percent of the population lived below \$1 (USD) per day. During the war, an estimated two million Sierra Leoneans—almost half the population at the time—were displaced and an estimated half million were killed. Rape, torture and abductions were rampant. The crippling conflict fueled diseases and illnesses like pneumonia, typhoid and malaria, destroyed the economy, dwindled food supplies and demolished national infrastructures. Some civilians' hands were amputated to discourage them from voting in upcoming elections.

added that they started to run a Vacation Bible School for the illiterate children of the village.

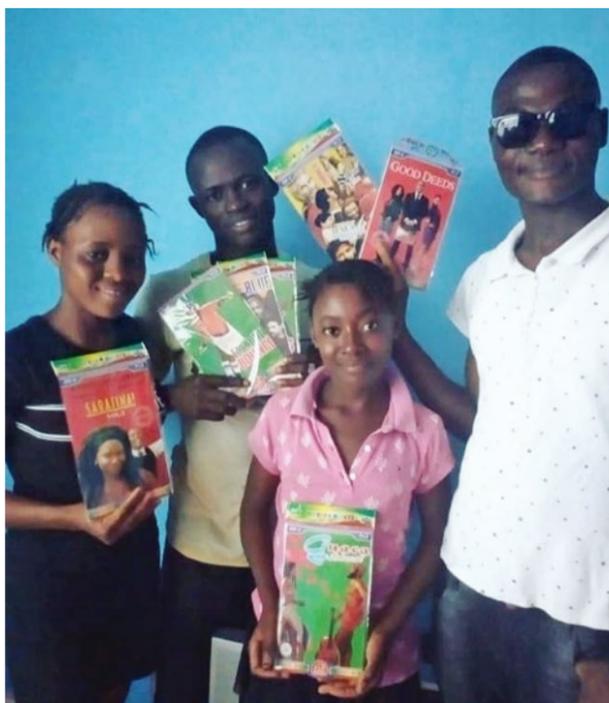
"We all saw that these kids were missing an opportunity, a good education. So YVA was born by starting with the education of five village children."

The new group built houses over a two-year period. They started tutoring children in a makeshift school with only a roof, no walls and a chalkboard in each corner.

Since then, YVA has continued to be all about the vision of young Africans. In a country where colonialism strangled their freedoms for many years and stifled growth, YVA's mission remains to help these youth help themselves.

Princess, now a YVA director, is completing a teacher certification program.

The YVA program began only as a scholarship program for five children.



Celebrating Jesus this December and into the New Year

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

The Leadership Academy delivered another collaborative event of clergy and laity on Oct. 21 with its new Advent Workshop, a virtual session that encouraged the participants from New Jersey to Seattle to carry the celebration of Jesus' arrival into the new year.

"We had a lot of great conversation, particularly about how to handle Sunday, December 26 and creating engagement during services and preaching," said Breakthrough Coordinator Emily Wilton who also co-pastors Titusville UMC and is a coordinating pastor at Centenary UMC in Lambertville.

Rev. Linda Ross of First UMC of Mays Landing, who also had her laity with her during the Zoom call, digested what Wilton shared and is now planning to do a fireside chat the morning after Christmas next to her own fireplace at home. She thought giving her congregation a break from the usual routine would be a good idea.

Wilton added that she encouraged participants to use the last week of the new Breakthrough sermon series, *God With Us* for January 2 to give visitors on Christmas Eve a reason to come back. It was also suggested that planning another event at the beginning of the year could be another good thing to share in Advent services.

Week 4, "God With the World" embraces the idea that help is here, that even in those times when we feel alone, God is always there.

It rounds out a series that puts us in the place of the first people who awaited and celebrated Jesus' birth. By unraveling these stories, people can learn what it meant for God to be with them, and what it means to open our eyes to experience God with us, too.

Wilton also encouraged participants to get creative and collaborative, noting that one south Jersey church is worshipping together with local churches of different denominations. Others use this time for pulpit exchanges or a Christmas-themed scavenger hunt. One pastor recommended creating a digital Christmas message involving the congregation to be shared during a service.

The collaborative spirit of the group that night was alive and contagious as each pastor shared with others what tools they use from a gratitude journal to a Rubik's cube.

Follow Through: A Reason to Return

- Last session of small group
- Invitation to new small group
- End of the sermon series
- Teaser video for new series
- Fun New Year Event
- Personal invitation to fellowship



Pastors and laity joined a virtual session with Pastor Emily Wilton to prepare for Advent and into the new year.

One participant recommended taking along a clergy member from another church who might recognize something you may have missed, and then reciprocating.

"A set of fresh eyes can illuminate something important," he noted.

Ross echoed that idea, saying, "Especially now that we're doing things online for people who aren't as familiar with our surroundings, it's a good time for a walkthrough." Ross added that she also

gleaned the idea of training a lay person to lead a small group, and she plans to implement that into her church's schedule in the near future.

Wilton encouraged pastors to step outside their church doors and into the community, embracing what makes your community unique during this time and getting involved in it.

"How can you be part of your community?" said Wilton. 🇺🇸

The Worship Experience: Music & Preaching

- Invite Advent wreath lighters/readers
- Plan special music – get started early!
- Feature musically gifted children and youth
- Use God With Us music suggestions to make your life easier
- Get creative and collaborative (e.g. Fieldsboro UMC)
- Plan pulpit exchanges to keep things fresh
- Get theatrical – Dramatic Readings
- Use "me"/"we" to develop a question for fellowship, online, or in person service

"Seminars like this build up your energy and passion for ministry," said Ross. "It was so well organized. Hope they do it again another time."

Wilton shared the importance of having everything prepared ahead of time like candles, music selections or performers and programs and doing a walkthrough prior to the Advent services. Also stressed that evening was the need to revisit what measures need to be taken during this time of COVID-19.



GOD WITH US
Advent 2021

Celebrate the birth of Jesus with Breakthrough's newest worship series.

Learn more at www.gnjumc.org/breakthrough/2021-worship-series/

CLERGY FAMILY SERIES

FINDING GOD

Wherever the Journey Takes You

By Denise Herschel
nj6pack@yahoo.com



“I LOVE BEING A COMMUNICATION PARTNER, HELPING CHURCHES DISCERN THE MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CREATION OF A STRATEGIC PLAN AND PRAYING FOR PEOPLE.”

—William M. Williams III



As the son of a United Methodist elder and educator, Williams is grateful for all the experiences that led him to find his call to ministry.

Every day, William M. Williams III, Gateway North & Palisades District Superintendent, rises and thanks God for another day. Grateful to wake up next to the love of his life, his wife Joyce, the couple have three children together, daughter, Julia and twin sons, James and William IV, who love and support him, continuing to energize him to go and do the work of God. They support his “early days and long nights,” and he believes that they understand the importance of sharing God’s love in a variety of ways, whether it be through evangelism, mission, service, activism or administration.

“I believe that they are supportive because they know I love giving them all of me,” he said. “I accepted my call into ministry 12 years ago. In fact, my mother nor my father ever influenced my decision.”

According to Williams, he grew up in many places as his father is a United Methodist Elder.

“I was born in the great state of Texas while my father attended Perkins School of Theology in Texas. My mother is from Kansas. We lived the first nine years of my life in various cities in Texas. Soon after, he was appointed to a small 1,300-person town in Arkansas. We lived in this farming town for a couple of years. Much of my adolescent years were spent in Omaha, NE,” he said.

Williams preached his first sermon on Youth Sunday at Clair Memorial UMC of Omaha while he was in sixth grade. Yet, as an eighth grader his dream was to be a cardiothoracic surgeon, major league basketball player and a pastor.

“I lovingly blame my father for getting me involved in the church but always glad he did,” he continued. “I like to

say he volun-“told” me to join the choirs, MYF, the youth annual conferences and the junior usher board. However, it is because of these that I ultimately developed a passion for the health and well-being of the local church. My fondest memories are working alongside the trustees helping close the church. They gave me my own set of keys as a teenager, doing other nominal but important tasks.”

Williams’ mother, who is a college professor, certified public accountant and an entrepreneur, was his biggest inspiration and because of her guidance, instilled in him a love for business. So, when he was accepted into Swarthmore College, he decided not to pursue a liberal arts education but instead a Bachelor of Arts in Economics.

Williams received a M.Div. from Drew University in 2012.

Williams is now in his second year as Gateway North & Palisades District Superintendent as well as the Northern Region Team Leader. He previously served as a senior pastor at First UMC of Westfield and Asbury UMC of Atlantic City.



Williams never misses an opportunity for adventure and a laugh with his wife and their three children.

“Because Swarthmore and University of Pennsylvania are a part of the Quaker Consortium, I was able to take much of my business course load in the Wharton School of Business. Several years after graduating college and working in corporate America, I decided to take night classes and pursue my eighth-grade passion—medical school. I received a post-Baccalaureate degree in Pre-Medicine from Drexel College of Medicine.”

But in 2009, Williams accepted his call into ministry. His ministry began in Omaha, NE, where he served as a youth pastor at Tri Community UMC. Soon after serving this position, he began seminary at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, MO. While in seminary, he served as a student intern for Gregg Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church and community director for the Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council. He re-

Williams added that one of the greatest joys in his life is seeing “individuals accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.”

“For me, serving God and serving in this ministry means using my energy and gifts to work alongside our local churches; to help them accomplish their God-inspired vision. I love being a communication partner, helping churches discern the movement of the Holy Spirit in the creation of a strategic plan and praying for people,” he said.

He continued that his serving God and serving in this ministry is all because of the love and support he received in the various local churches he grew up with in his early years.

“My life was changed because of these churches,” he added. “Regardless of any joys or challenges in life, I always give thanks to God and continue to serve him.”



GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

The Relay encourages clergy and laity alike to share their experiences in their own words of adapting ministries and how that adaptability shines the light on others in the new section, "Go Tell it on the Mountain." Do you have Good News to tell? Contact Heather Mistretta at hmistretta@gnjumc.org.

The Church as Community

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

—JOHN 15: 11-13

by Mary Louise Lavery, Haddonfield UMC

HADDONFIELD, NJ

The church, at its best is a community, which reaches out to serve a larger community. This was certainly true in the rural area of Kentucky where I grew up. My grandmother told me stories about her grandmother who lived in a remote area where only dirt roads existed. That made travel in buggies and wagons almost impossible when it was rainy. The only time she could get out and be with other women was at church.

My grandmother said that her desire for fellowship was so strong that she would move the hand on the pendulum clock forward on Sunday morning so that they could arrive early, allowing her time to talk to more people. The women often



Haddonfield UMC's Lay Leader Mary Louise Lavery calls on us to love our neighbors as Jesus did.

exchanged dress patterns and cuttings from their gardens. It was there that they heard the news from the neighbors who were sick and needed nursing, who needed help with farm chores, who had given birth to a new baby, or whose cattle had gotten out in a neighbor's field. Then as a community they were ready to spring

into action. They knew that love is an active verb.

So, the question for us today is how can the church become what Jesus intended. When we attend church, we know that it is a dual institution formed by humans for a spiritual experience. For us to reach out in love to all who enter is an enormous

task. First of all, we tend to minimize and rationalize our own shortcomings while sometimes seeing supposedly greater sins in others. It is our job to receive others with the same grace that God gives us. We must remember that Jesus did not suggest that we love our neighbors, he commanded it.

During the time of the pandemic, we have seen church closings on a large scale. Although we are sad for those people, this can be an amazing time of outreach for us. People who were once members of other churches are now looking for a new church home. They are visiting us and evaluating us as a possible place to join. We must be attentive to new faces who are attending our services. These people may not look like us, dress like us, or talk like us and Jesus loves them just as much as he loves us. Our hospitality will determine whether they stay or go. Be the church both in and out of the building! Love all!

Just for today: Be alert to those who are visiting and to those who have newly returned to worship. Reach out by phone to members you have not seen. We must work together to build a Christian community. Great things happen when we all work together. 🇺🇸

Annual Conference

Continued from page 1

Amid a strong connection with each other, smiles and warm welcomes from the people present at the MRC, the finance staff worked to translate what the new legislation would mean for GNJ, answering questions and doing its best to explain the details of what next year's budget would look like.

In between, Director of Leadership Development Rev. Juel Nelson led a learning moment session in a 15-minute video, "Six Practices to Lead Through Adaptive Challenge," as part of the Leadership Academy. She encouraged both clergy and laity to work together and step outside comfort zones to achieve vitality and fruitfulness in our congregations and communities.

The video and a new Leaders Guide were also shared on the GNJ website by searching "Leadership Academy."

In the end, the legislation passed as follows:

- A 2022 consolidated budget that includes all billings to congregations, GNJ ministry and mission and general church apportionments passed in a vote

of 337-94. This includes a 15.2% shared ministry apportionment - 12.3% for GNJ shared ministry apportionment and 2.9% for general church apportionment; a \$1.732 million from property sales to support congregations with their billings; and a salary and support for six district superintendents. It was also mentioned that it includes a five percent draw from GNJ Designated Funds to support the mission of GNJ and retiree healthcare.

- A formal reduction from nine to six districts in a vote of 364-80, which will help GNJ better align superintending, resources and other support with the number of congregations we currently have. During this time, Bishop Schol applauded congregations on the rise in vitality and is hopeful that GNJ will one day soon reach 60% vital congregations. He



Live music enhanced this annual conference session with Pastor Chris Heckert, Pastor Sooh Na, Lan Wilson and Pastor Catherine Jordan-Latham.

also stressed the importance of including more women among the cabinet following the death of Rev. Myrna Bethke and appointment of Rev. Dr. Gina Hendrickson and retirement of Rev. Dr. Gina Kim. Rev. Juel Nelson, director of leadership development and Rev. Enger Muteteke, director of resourcing, have joined appointive cabinet meetings so that a good diversity of voices, including women's voices, are included.

- *Designated Fund Legislation* (postponed from May; details on pp. 28-30 of the Pre-Conference Workbook) — passed in a vote of 288-87. Adoption of this legislation will help fund present vital ministry and ensure a sustainable future mission and ministry.
- *Itemized Shared Ministries Statements and Remittance Forms* (pg. 31) — passed in a vote of 333-46. As a result, church treasurers only have to focus on two funds when remitting payments rather than detailing eight areas.
- *Trustees Enabling Resolution Amendment* — Adding Conflict of

Interest Statements (pp. 33-34) — The recommendation not to include the amendment passed in a vote of 288-87. Conflict of Interest policies for CFA, the Board of Trustees, agencies of the Connectional Table, and Vital Mission Partners were shared. The Conflict of Interest Policy for the Annual Conference will be affirmed by all registrants beginning with the next Annual Conference Session. These will be sent to the Council of Bishops.

- *Retiree Health Plan Amendment* (pp. 35-40) — was not adopted in a vote of 281-104. The revised plan, created by the CFA and the Board of Pensions and was passed in the May 2021 Annual Conference Session, will impact as few people as possible while lowering the liability and creating savings now.
- *Rules Amendment: Nominations for General and Jurisdictional Delegates* (pg. 41) — was referred to the Rules Committee by a vote of 347-12.

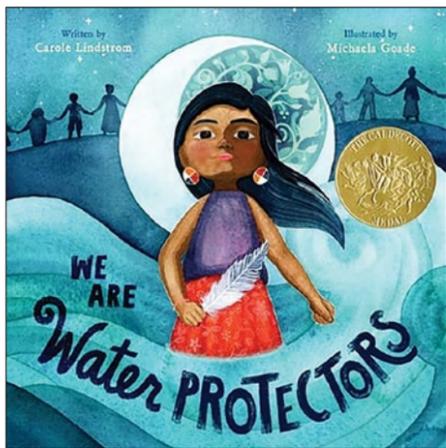
Additional details related to all legislation can be found on the home page of the GNJ website. 🇺🇸



Rev. Dr. Juel Nelson shared a learning moment, encouraging viewers to think about some of the hopes and aspirations they have for themselves, congregation or the community.

NOVEMBER BOOKSHELF

This month we are moving together to transform the world! November is also National Native American Heritage Month. It's a time to recognize the many sacrifices, contributions and achievements of Native American people, as well as celebrate their rich and vibrant culture. Discover the varied selection of books below, including one illustrated by the first woman of color to win the prestigious Caldecott Medal. We invite you to read these on your own or consider using one for a book club small group.



We Are Water Protectors

(2021, Roaring Brook Press)
By Carol Lindstrom; illustrated by Michaela Goade

Illustrated by the first woman of color to win the prestigious Caldecott Medal, *We Are Water Protectors* is a children's book that brings life to a culture that respects and protects the environment through powerful words and vibrant pictures. Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, this book issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption.

Carol Lindstrom is Anishinabe/Métis and is a proud member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe Indians. She was born and raised in Nebraska and currently makes her home in Maryland. She is also the author of *Girls Dance, Boys Fiddle*. Michaela Goade is an illustrator and graphic designer living and working in Juneau, Alaska, where she was also raised. Forever inspired by the coastal wilds of Southeast Alaska, she works to capture its magic and honor its vibrant cultures. She is from the Raven moiety and Kiks.ádi Clan from Sitka, Alaska. Goade is also the illustrator of *I Sang You Down from the Moon*, *Encounter*, and *Raven & the Tide Lady*.

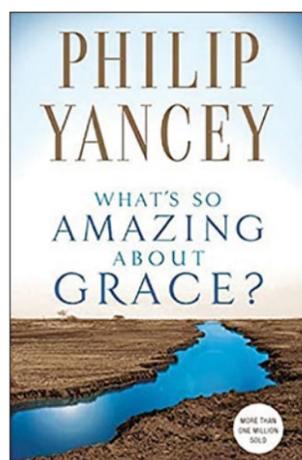
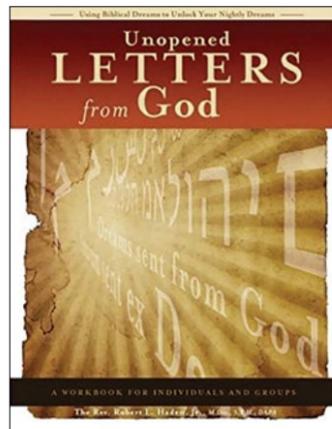
Unopened Letters From God: Using Biblical Dreams To Unlock Nightly Dreams

(2010, Haden Institute.com)

By Rev. Robert L. Haden Jr.

Unopened Letters from God is a transformative workbook for dream groups and individuals. It is for the beginner, but also for those who already know and experience this reality—yet need the support, encouragement and wisdom of the dream community. Each of the 14 chapters explores a Biblical dream in its own context, suggests a method to work that dream, and shares similar contemporary dreams with exercises leading you to your own dream “ahas.”

Rev. Bob Haden, M.Div., S.T.M., D.A.P.A. is an Episcopal priest, founder and director of The Haden Institute. A former rector, he is a practicing pastoral counselor and spiritual director with a Jungian orientation. He is a diplomate of The American Psychotherapy Association with more than 30 years of experience in teaching the Dream. He received a BA from The University of The South, Sewanee, TN, a M.Div. from The Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA, and has a Master's degree in The Use of Dreams in Spiritual Direction from The General Theological Seminary, New York, NY, and did graduate studies at the C.G. Jung Institute in Switzerland. He is co-author of *Soul's Labyrinth*.



What's So Amazing About Grace?

(2021, HarperChristian Resources) By Philip Yancey

What's So Amazing About Grace explores the concept of grace—the one thing the world cannot duplicate and the one thing it craves above all else—and explores what it looks like in action. Through compelling and true portraits of grace's life-changing power, the book also examines how Christians, as the sole dispensers, are doing at lavishing the grace on a world that knows far more of cruelty and unforgiveness than it does of mercy.

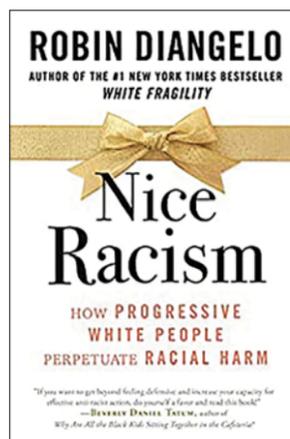
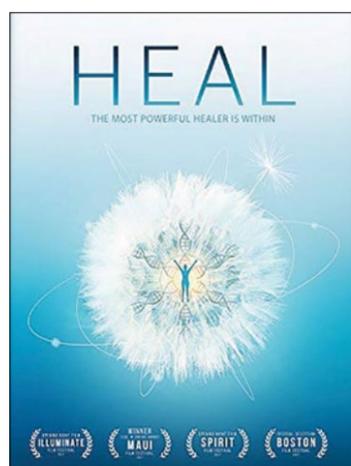
Philip Yancey has written 12e Gold Medallion Award-winning books and won two ECPA Book of the Year awards for this book and *The Jesus I Never Knew*. Four of his books have sold over one million copies. He lives with his wife in Colorado. Learn more at philipyancey.com.

Heal: Discover Your Unlimited Potential and Awaken the Powerful Healer Within

(2019, Atria Books) By Kelly Noonan Gores

Heal, which is based on the groundbreaking documentary of the same name, follows two people on their healing journeys, while combining science-backed research and real-world testimonials from experts like Marianne Williamson, Bruce Lipton, Deepak Chopra, Bernie Siegel, Anita Moorgani, Kelly Brogan, and many others, to offer hope and alternative treatments for the many people suffering from a variety of chronic illnesses.

Kelly Noonan Gores has been working in entertainment for twenty years. In 2012 she transitioned to writing, directing and producing and started Elevative Entertainment with the intention to create conscious media that informs, inspires and empowers. She considers *Heal* her greatest passion and life's work. Learn more at HealDocumentary.com.



Nice Racism: How Progressive White People Perpetuate Racial Harm

(2021, Beacon Press) By Dr. Robin DiAngelo

Nice Racism, a followup to the New York Times best-seller, *White Fragility*, explores how a culture of niceness inadvertently promotes racism. As GNJ delves into having uncomfortable conversations as part of A Journey of Hope, this book explains *White Fragility* in greater depth. Drawing on her background as a sociologist and over 25 years working as an anti-racist educator, the author picks up where *White Fragility* left off and moves the conversation forward.

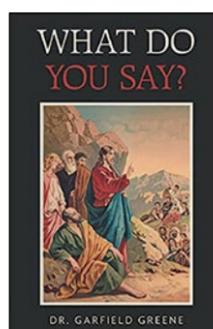
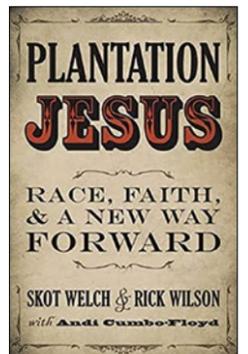
Dr. Robin DiAngelo is an affiliate associate professor of education at the University of Washington. She has been a consultant, educator and facilitator on issues of racial and social justice for more than 25 years. She is the author or coauthor of several books. Her work has been praised by Ibram X. Kendi, Michael Eric Dyson, Claudia Rankine and Jonathan Capehart, among others. More information can be found at robindiangelo.com.

Plantation Jesus: Race, Faith, and a New Way Forward

(2021, Herald Press) By Skot Welch, Rick Wilson and Andi Cumbo-Floyd

Plantation Jesus looks at history, church and pop culture in detailing the manifold ways that racism damages the church's witness. With the addition of common responses by white Christians to racial injustice, such as I never owned a slave, I don't see color; only people, and We just need to get over it and move on, this book calls out the church's denials and dodges and evasions of race, and it invites readers to encounter the Christ of the disenfranchised. Using practical resources and Spirit-filled stories, *Plantation Jesus* nudges readers to learn the history, acknowledge the injury, and face the truth.

Skot Welch is the principal/founder of Global Bridgebuilders, a firm focusing on cultural transformation and inclusion that serves a wide range of clients in the U.S. and in more than seven countries. He has worked in international business and diversity and inclusion management for 20 years. Rick Wilson was an Emmy-winning producer and writer in print and broadcast media. He was cohost, with Skot Welch, of the popular radio program, “Radio in Black and White,” which covered topics related to race, ethnicity, and cultural competence. Wilson died in 2014. Andi Cumbo-Floyd is a writer, editor and writing coach whose books include *The Slaves Have Names*, a book of creative nonfiction that tells the story of the people who were enslaved on the plantation that she calls home. She and her husband, Philip run a small farm in central Virginia.



What Do You Say?

(2021, Xlibris US) By Dr. Garfield Greene

What Do You Say is about Jesus Christ as the center of the Christian faith. Jesus has a conversation with his disciples about his identity. He asks them a question concerning his christology. This happens a short time before his crucifixion. They have been living with him for nearly three years now, and they are still not sure about his true identity. He questions them, and they give him different answers.

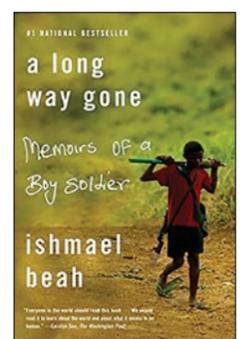
Dr. Garfield Greene was honorably discharged in 1961 after serving as an American Airman in the U.S. Air Force. He earned a BA in French from Morgan State College, an MSW from the University of Maryland at Baltimore, a M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and a D.Min. from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. He has been employed as a chaplain at the Trenton State Prison, a Clinical Social Worker for the Dept. of the Army and for the Veterans Administration and has served as a United Methodist pastor in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He also published *Ordinary People*.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier

(2008, Sarah Crichton Books) By Ishmael Beah

A Long Way Gone, which has been published in 30 different languages and nominated for a Quill Award in 2007, tells a riveting story of a boy in Sierra Leone during the decade-long civil war, who at the age of 12 fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By 13, he had been picked up by the government army, and although at heart a gentle boy, found himself capable of truly terrible acts.

Ishmael Beah, born in 1980 in Sierra Leone, is a UNICEF Ambassador and Advocate for Children Affected by War; a member of the Human Rights Watch Children's Rights Advisory Committee; an advisory board member at the Center for the Study of Youth and Political Violence at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; visiting scholar at the Center for International Conflict Resolution at Columbia University; visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Genocide, Conflict Resolution, and Human Rights at Rutgers University; cofounder of the Network of Young People Affected by War (NYPAW); and president of the Ishmael Beah Foundation. He has spoken before the United Nations, the Council on Foreign Relations, and many panels on the effects of war on children. He is a graduate of Oberlin College with a B.A. in Political Science and resides in Brooklyn, NY. 🇺🇸



NEW JOB POSTINGS AT GNJ

Musician – Browns Mills UMC

A musician who is able to play traditional religious hymns from the United Methodist Hymnal and occasional contemporary religious music on the piano. Must be available for two and a half hours on Sundays and an additional two hours one night during the week for rehearsal when the choir returns (the Choir has been inactive since the pandemic). May also be required for special occasions such as weddings and funerals. Good vocal skills are preferred but not required.

Point of contact is Harry Bishop 609-206-5363.

Transformational Experience Specialist – UMW

Responsible for guiding the holistic design and implementation of United Methodist Women virtual, hybrid and in-person gatherings, training, and events that inspire spiritual growth and social change.

To apply, send Resume/Cover (with salary requirement) to employment@unitedmethodistwomen.org with 'TRANSFORMATION POSITION' in the subject line.

Full job description is available on the GNJ website.

Family Ministries Pastor (P/T) – St. Andrew UMC Cherry Hill

Purpose: To help the growth of the family ministries of St. Andrew's UMC. This position strives to help growth in the areas of: Youth Ministry, Christian Education, spirituality, and events for families.

Help develop the Sunday school program of the church. This can be done through obtaining volunteers, ordering Sunday school materials, placing in substitutes when needed, and other responsibilities of leading a Sunday school program.

For additional details, <https://saumcnj.org>.

Minister of Music – Covenant UMC

Covenant UMC is seeking a dynamic and energetic spiritually gifted music leader.

Basic Responsibilities Include:

- Lead and coordinate traditional and contemporary music for worship
- Lead, oversee and help create other special worship services and activities throughout the year (Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Church Conference and Vacation Bible School)
- Develop and coordinate adult and youth choir

Send resume to: Gerard Simmons, SPRC Chair at covenantumcplfd@gmail.com or mail to 631 E. Front Street Plainfield, NJ 07060

For more information, call (908) 756-2684.

Director of Music – Vincent UMC in Nutley

Vincent UMC seeks a part-time Director of Music who is a devoted Christian, is passionate about the ministry of the Church, and seeks to draw people deeper into their faith through engaging and spirit filled traditional and contemporary Christian music. The ideal candidate will plan and implement the musical components of the worship services with the pastor and music committee. The position requires the music director to play both piano and pipe organ for worship. The director will also lead the Chancel Choir and Wesley Bell choir utilizing a variety of musical styles.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to the church via email to vincentumc@verizon.net.

Director for Economic, Health, and Gender Justice – The General Board of Church and Society (GBCS)

GBCS seeks a highly skilled professional in Washington, DC to lead the programmatic team to advance economic justice, guarantee access to affordable equitable health care, and to advance the rights of women and children. This includes implementing programming to support agency priorities such as poverty, worker rights, domestic violence, human trafficking, education, addictions, and health care including racial disparities in access and outcomes, mental health, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and other emerging global health concerns.

If you know of someone who might be interested, please have them go to the link below to apply. If you have any questions regarding this position, please contact Tarji Beatty at 615-369-2313.

Resumes must be submitted by Nov. 29, 2021.

Director of Music – Park UMC Bloomfield (P/T)

To oversee the planning, organization, and execution of music ministry for the church. The Director will lead worship through a diverse range of musical expression, from traditional church hymns to contemporary music representing musical styles from around the globe. The right candidate will be able to seek out and recruit church members and other individuals with musical talents who are willing to share those talents. The Director of Music works directly with the pastors(s), staff, musicians, and volunteers, in a team approach, to provide a high-level worship experience.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to parkumc.park@verizon.net. If you have a particular interest or experience in working with children and youth ministries, please note this in your cover letter. Your resume should include a list of instrumental and vocal skills.



Vernon UMC is hiring a pianist.

Knowledge of UMC Hymns and Contemporary Christian Music a plus.

Pianist will work with the Pastor and other musicians to present an uplifting experience for our Sunday worship service. Sundays, 9am rehearsal and 10am service. If interested contact the church office.

churchoffice@vernonumc.org 973-764-3188

ONGOING JOB POSTINGS AT GNJ

- **Regional Administrative Assistant**
- **Director of Resourcing**
- **Next Generation Ministries of Greater New Jersey | Aldersgate Caretaker**
- **General Secretary, the General Commission on United Methodist Men**

All details can be found at www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities.

OBITUARIES

Leona P. Quigg, surviving spouse of Rev. Walter A. Quigg, died Oct. 23. Memorial donations can be sent to St. Paul's UMC, 80 Embury Avenue, Ocean Grove, NJ 07756 or Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association at www.oceangrove.org/give in her memory. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to Mary Pat Fuller (daughter), 7466 Epworth Drive, Brooksville, FL 34601.

Sandra F. Gifford, spouse of Retired Elder, Howard Gifford, died Oct. 20. Memorial donations can be made in Sandra's memory to the Wiley Mission, 99 East Main Street, Marlton NJ 08053. Expressions of sympathy: www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/sandra-gifford-obituary?id=31082143.

Rev. Richard W. Klein, retired full elder, died Oct. 5. Memorial donations can be sent to the charity of your choice in his honor. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to Louise Klein (spouse) at 54 Bayard Road, Somerset, NJ 08873-7204.

Suzanne H. Jenkins, lay member to Annual Conference, died Sept. 19. Memorial donations can be sent to South Dennis Trinity UMC, 834 Route 47, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210, or Animal Welfare Society, 40 Route 47 South, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210. Expressions of sympathy can be made here: www.radzieta.com.

Donna Palumbo, surviving spouse of Rev. Joseph Palumbo, died March 16, 2020. A memorial service was held at St. John's UMC in Turnersville, NJ.

ARE YOU STRUGGLING TO PAY YOUR UTILITY BILLS?

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs is now offering **EXPANDED UTILITY BILL ASSISTANCE**

The grace period for shutoffs is ending on December 31, 2021 and all customers who are behind on their utility bills are encouraged to apply prior to the deadline in order to create a payment plan and avoid a shutoff.

New!

Income eligibility has been temporarily expanded so that families who encountered a financial setback during the pandemic can qualify.

For example, a family of four (4) can make up to \$106,000 annually compared to \$48,000 previously.

To pre-check eligibility and to apply, visit:
www.nj.gov/dca/dcaid

For more information: 1-800-510-3102



UPCOMING EVENTS

Dates TBD Statistical Report Training: All pastors of local churches need to submit each year, a year-end statistical report by January 31, 2022. To help clergy complete these reports, GNJ's Finance and Administration Team will be holding training sessions on Jan. 4 and Jan. 6. More details forthcoming.

Nov. 3-18 HealthFlex open enrollment. Check the GNJ Website for details.

Nov. 27 Celebrating the history of Aldersgate from 2:00-4:00 p.m. All invited.

Nov. 20 ERT Re-Certification Training – 9:00 a.m.-noon on Zoom.

Dec. 6 Deadline to apply to FEMA for financial assistance. Homeowners and renters can apply.

June 18-25, 2022 Joshua Generation Civil Rights Pilgrimage

Accepting Nominations for the 2022 Lay Ministry Recognition Awards!

As laity, doing ministry and mission can sometimes be difficult, but add in a world-crippling pandemic, and it becomes almost impossible. But as we've seen over the past year and a half, our laity have made the impossible possible for those who needed it most. They have broadened their outreach to be primary agents of God's mission in today's world.

Lay Ministry Recognition Awards honor that creativity and innovation in transforming lives and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Lift up your laity today by nominating one for an award!

Applications must be submitted no later than Feb. 1, 2022. More details can be found on the GNJ website at www.gnjumc.org/lay-ministry-recognition/.



PHOTO OF THE MONTH



This month we feature Robert J. Williams who is responding to his induction into the Golden Circle. Also shown are his wife, Renee and W. Garey Hope, the Golden Awards presenter. At the ARMS (Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses) Fall Meeting at St. Peter's UMC in Ocean City, NJ, Williams was welcomed into the Golden Circle, which is composed of those who are recognized for having served for 50 years since they were ordained. Other new members of the Golden Circle are: Warren R. Brandt, Paul Kwancho Chyung, G. Dane Ewen, Karl R. Kraft, Norman P. Madsen, David Roberts, III, Hazel T. Shue, Richard W. Wittig and John P. Wood.

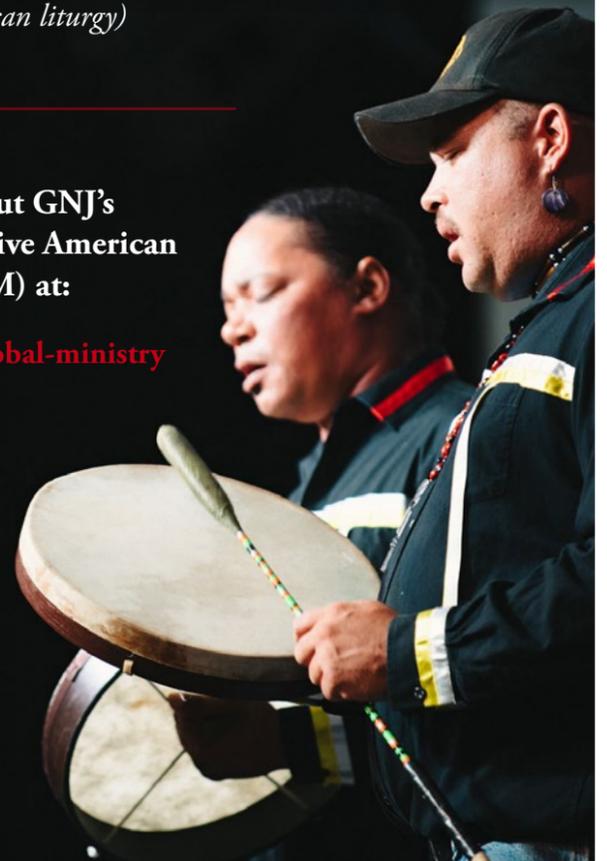
Each month we will highlight one photo sent in from our congregations that really exemplifies the wonderful ministries they are doing. If you would like to submit a photo, please email Heather Mistretta at hmistretta@gnjumc.org.

CELEBRATING NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

"For the unending baskets of food, coaxed from Mother Earth by the hands of her Native children"
(from a Native American liturgy)

Find out more about GNJ's Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM) at:

www.gnjumc.org/global-ministry



2022 OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY Best of the Holy Land

with Rev. HeyYoung Horton
June 6 - 18, 2022

Experience the most famous Passion Play in the world that only happens every 10 years, then travel to the Holy Land and walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Visit Munich, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Ettal, Wies, Oberammergau Passion Play, Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Megiddo, Caesarea, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Qumran, Dead Sea, Jericho, Jerusalem, and much more!

Starting at
\$4,998*
from New York

For more information, please contact Rev. HeyYoung Horton at: dreampeacetgether@gmail.com

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

The wrath of Ida resulted in more damage than previously thought. Some of our churches are struggling to not only recover as a church but are also supporting their communities.

To learn more about A Future With Hope's Ida Relief Fund, go to:

www.gnjumc.org/afwh/ida-relief-effort



A FUTURE WITH HOPE
UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY