

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.



Michele Neiberlien, St. Andrew's UMC

Michele Neiberlien is a lifelong member, and a "saint" of St. Andrew's UMC in Spring Lake. She was baptized, nurtured in Sunday School, confirmed as a youth, and when old enough, volunteered in the church's nursery, and taught Sunday School. She managed the school for 10 years. Michele was always an active church goer, but after participating in the Skyland's Walk to Emmaus retreat, her heart was transformed, and she rededicated her life to serving Christ.

She quickly stepped into prominent leadership roles as UMW president (faithfully led by Betty Rushton for some 30+ years), and then trained as a Lay Servant Minister. Michele quickly brought vitality and enthusiasm to the UMW, the mission arm and backbone of St. Andrew's outreach ministry. When COVID-19 took hold of the world, it did not thwart Michele's discipleship! She quickly organized a canned food collection to support her local food pantry with innovative methods- using plastic bins for quick and easy drop-off around the church's semi-circle; this yielded many boxes filled with food to deliver! Throughout the pandemic she found a way for the annual rummage sale to still take place safely, coordinating this bi-annual fund raiser from start to finish. The sale serves those who are less fortunate by providing a very affordable means of getting gently used items, while raising small funding for the UMW as well. After the rummage sale, Michele coordinated the remaining clothing items to be bagged and donated to the Jersey Shore Rescue Mission.

Pre-pandemic, she coordinated a winter coat collection for this same Rescue Mission bringing a sizable rack full of coats to their doorstep! Michele's latest innovation was to provide plastic containers for members to freeze home-made soups, labeled and transferred to the church's freezer to be given out to those recovering after hospitalization, shut-ins, and anyone who may have needs, further empowering the church's Member Care Ministry.

God's loving Spirit is clear in her enthusiasm and vitality; all can see that something wonderful is going on with Michele, and should anyone stop to ask her what, she would not be shy to give credit to God in Christ Jesus! Michele always goes the extra mile for others. There are so many un-named people with various needs that have been blessed because of Michele's leadership. Michele is truly a gifted and spiritually in-tune, well deserving of the Denman recognition.

Michele's dedication and service to the ministry of Jesus Christ at St. Andrew's makes a big difference in the lives of her community. She is a role model in how to serve Jesus. The time she gives to the church and her ability to step up and lead when needed is truly exemplary.