

# THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

MAY 2022  
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## How Breakthrough Series Brought Several Denominations Together

### A S O N E F A M I L Y

By Shirley Carvatt

LEBANON, NJ

*The following article is a testament to GNJ's Breakthrough Series, a 5-part series resource guide to worship for all congregations, submitted by Shirley Carvatt from Cokesbury UMC.*

**T**he Fountain of Grace was flowing abundantly at Cokesbury United Methodist Church in Lebanon, NJ, during Lent. Worship materials provided by Rev. Emily Wilton, Breakthrough Coordina-

tor, formed the basis for the Sunday services led by Pastor, Rev. Lynn Mears. Each week of Lent, a simple everyday cup was elevated to holy status, beginning with brokenness, and culminating on Easter Sunday with a cup overflowing with God's grace. Shards from the cups broken on the first week were used to form a beautiful mosaic cross by member Dot Klitsch. It was prominently displayed at the altar on Easter Sunday. In the intervening

weeks, members chose cups of discipleship and compassion to reach out to the community with gifts of food, gift cards, notes of encouragement, and prayers. A group of churches came together in a testament to the excellence of the Breakthrough worship materials. Several denominations used Fountain of Grace each Wednesday for the soup and bread evening Lenten studies. Each church took a turn as host during the evening gatherings and provided the soup dinner. Pastors of the participating churches also took a turn to lead the discussions. Members from

"SHARDS FROM THE CUPS BROKEN ON THE FIRST WEEK WERE USED TO FORM A BEAUTIFUL MOSAIC CROSS BY MEMBER DOT KLITSCH."

several congregations shared in the discussions, coming together as one Christian family.

The Breakthrough materials were very helpful in leading participants to understand that Lent is a journey from the brokenness of sin to the sacrifice Jesus gave for our redemption, to hope in the Resurrection and its gift of joy. The Breakthrough authors deserve our thanks and appreciation for their beautiful effort. 🙏

However, in those moments, something shifted. Here's the hard truth and great opportunity that is before us... wait for it... Sunday is no longer

Continued on page 5



Mosaic Cross Painting by Dot Klitsch

Rev. Jevon Caldwell Gross



## IT'S NOT JUST SUNDAYS: Hybrid Church Growth in a New Normal

By Rev. Jevon Caldwell Gross

**C**ovid changed us all. For over a year, many congregations had to close their doors and reimagine how to be the church. We had to look for God in places we have never looked before. We learned that Jesus was present in Zoom meetings, walks in the park, waiting in line for take-out, and even in the homemade creative expressions of the sacraments. We discovered that Facebook was no longer a platform just for aging millennials (yes I'm guilty), but a place where people stayed connected to their faith and their community. We also affirmed our belief that wherever two or more were gathered, both in-person or virtually, God was in our midst.

However, in those moments, something shifted. Here's the hard truth and great opportunity that is before us... wait for it... Sunday is no longer

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

## Goals — A Key Ingredient for Successful Leadership

Bishop John Schol



Successful leaders lead toward something. Churches, ministries, and organizations without direction flounder and, eventually, fail. There are three things that are essential to successful leadership — *vision, mission, and goals*. In the past two months, I shared with you about vision and mission. Today, I will talk with you about goals.

While vision provides direction and inspiration, and mission provides focus and alignment, goals inform activity and progress.

### What Are Goals

A goal is a measurable action that helps a church, ministry, or organization achieve its mission and become more like its vision. Goals give direction to the activities of ministry and provide a means of measuring progress.

In the church, we tend to shy away from goals. People think goals are too corporate, too numbers oriented, and that they squelch the Spirit. The Gospel writers believed numbers were important — 5,000 fed (Matthew 14), 10 healed (Luke 17), 3,000 were added to their number that day (Acts 2), sent out 70 (Luke 10), etc. Numbers were a testimony to the power of God at work through Jesus and his disciples. While numbers do not tell the entire story, they do illustrate that God is at work through your congregation.

Good goals measure the engagement of people and activities over a period of time. GNJ has four core goals:

- **Grow the number of vital congregations from 14% to 41% to 51% by December of 2023.** In fact, we reached 50% in 2019, and even while Covid affected ministry, because we continued to work on our goals, in 2020, we achieved 46%, which is a wonder of God at work through the clergy and lay leadership of GNJ. We abbreviate the name of this goal to “14% to 41% to 51% by 2023” so that everyone can remember it.
- **150 congregational A Journey of Hope Plans by December of 2023.** We are concluding training 150 facilitators to work with congregations across GNJ. We abbreviate this goal to be known as “150 Hope Plans by 2023.”
- **100 congregations to the next worship band size by December 2023.** We abbreviate this goal to be known as “Worship 100 by 2023.”
- **Grow shared ministry giving from 88% to 93% and billings giving from 92% to 98% by December 2023.** GNJ congregations in 2021 gave 92% and 97% respectively.

Another wonder to behold. We abbreviate this goal to be known as “93% and 98% by 2023.”

*Why do you think GNJ is doing so well on these goals?* Because they are measurable, they have a target date, they are core to our mission and values, and because GNJ has focused its staff, resources, and time to achieve these goals. Also, these goals and our progress toward them are discussed regularly in staff and agency meetings, and progress is reported at each annual conference session. But there is one more activity staff engage in—they develop and carry out lead measures.

### Lead Measures

Each of the goals listed are lag goals. Lag goals are goals in which you do not know if you have achieved them until the end date. It is hard to work on a lag goal because you are not seeing and experiencing regular progress. A lead measure is what will an individual can do this week that will work toward achieving a lag goal. For instance, if a congregation set a goal to increase worship attendance by 3% this year, the following are examples of weekly lead measures for a pastor:

Week 1 — Talk with 10 people, at least three from the community, and ask, *What is something you would like to learn more about God? More about life?* More about how to live a fulfilled life? From these conversations, identify five themes based on what you learned in your conversation. These become worship/preaching themes over the next year.

Week 2 — Research these themes and identify four to six sub-themes for each of these topics in order to create five worship/sermon series for the year.

Week 3 — Identify two or more teams of people to work with you to develop a worship series and small-group series to couple with each theme. You may select people from the congregation and community, clergy colleagues, or former classmates. It will take two to three weeks to develop each individual series, so stagger the start of each team.

Week 4 — Identify someone to develop promotional materials for the next worship series who will connect with people in the community and inspire present worshipers to invite others.

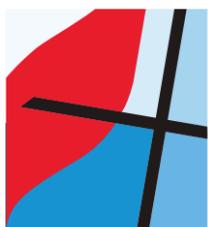
Week 5 — Ask five trusted people to critique your message and the worship experience for five weeks in a row prior to the first worship/sermon series. The following are questions you can share with those who will evaluate your sermon and the worship: *What went well? What connected with you? What else could I have done to better to connect with people from the community? Was there anything that inspired you to want to invite a friend, neighbor, or co-worker next week? If not, what might have been more inspirational? What suggestions do you have for me to improve?*

A lead measure can be developed for each week of the year.

As you can see, each week the pastor and members of the congregation identify something they will do to plan worship, grow interest in worship, improve the quality of worship, invite people to worship, and engage more people in planning worship. Lead measures are the key to accomplishing lag goals.

Does your congregation have a clear vision, mission statement, and goals? Are they shaping and focusing your congregation’s time, talent, and treasure? GNJ has people ready to assist your congregation and ministry shape a mission statement. Contact the Director of Connectional Ministries, Eric Drew at [EDrew@gnjumc.org](mailto:EDrew@gnjumc.org).

Be purposeful and fruitful, lead toward a vision, mission, and goals. 🇺🇸



## THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

### John R. Schol, Bishop

United Methodists of Greater New Jersey  
205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune, NJ 07753

**Eric Drew**, Director of Connectional Ministries  
732.359.1044 | [edrew@gnjumc.org](mailto:edrew@gnjumc.org)

**Megan Sizemore**, Communications Manager  
732.616.7812 | [msizemore@gnjumc.org](mailto:msizemore@gnjumc.org)

**Laura Canzonier**, Communications and Marketing Specialist  
732.359.1063 | [lcansonier@gnjumc.org](mailto:lcansonier@gnjumc.org)

**Christopher G. Coleman**, The Relay Designer  
[chris@cgc Coleman.com](mailto:chris@cgc Coleman.com)

**Corbin Payne**, Graphic Designer  
[corbinpaynephotography@gmail.com](mailto:corbinpaynephotography@gmail.com)

New Subscriptions, renewals, address changes, and corrections should be addressed to Laura Canzonier at [lcansonier@gnjumc.org](mailto:lcansonier@gnjumc.org) or by mail to: United Methodist Relay | 205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune NJ 07753

### FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION & PLACEMENT

Contact: [msizemore@gnjumc.org](mailto:msizemore@gnjumc.org)

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## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 23 & 24, 2022

# DELIVER

Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.

He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*  
- Luke 4:16-19 (NRSV)

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

 UNITED METHODISTS  
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT ON

A CALL  
TO DISCERNMENT

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

ROMANS 12:2

By Meg Sizemore

Jesus was sent to deliver people from death to life and resurrection, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Today, as the body of Christ, we are called to continue to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ.

As GNJ approaches its Annual Conference this month, we see many glimpses of deliverance and the faithfulness of God. In later article from this Relay issue, you'll read about the celebration of Turning Point UMC and its 250 Anniversary. Since last year's Annual Conference session, the Journey of Hope recalculated shared ministry and billables payments more equitably, which has led to congregations moving impactful ministries throughout communities. Despite the challenges and pain points we face, God is faithful and delivers us still today!

You have most likely also felt challenges in other ways. The pandemic continues to change church attendance patterns, both in person and virtual, and stretches us to adapt new ways to fulfill our mission. The Boy Scouts of America bankruptcy case cited over 4,000 claims against United Methodist Churches in the United States, and we await the approval of their reorganization plan and financial settlement. The United Methodist Church has postponed the General Conference due to various challenges as well.

In each challenge, there have been glimpses of God's deliverance. We know that God isn't finished with us yet! While the world will continue to evolve quickly, congregations and leaders in GNJ have moved with God. GNJ leaders will continue through prayer, discernment, and action to further the mission to equip transformational

leaders. It is those who serve, who make new disciples and grow vital congregations, and work to end the sin of racism for the transformation of the world. We pray,

**"GOD IS FAITHFUL AND ALREADY MOVING IN POWERFUL WAYS THROUGH THE LEADERSHIP OF DISCIPLES IN GNJ AND I KNOW THIS IMPORTANT, MEANINGFUL WORK WILL HELP ALL OF US DISCERN GOD'S FUTURE WHICH IS STILL FULL OF HOPE, PURPOSE, AND MISSIONAL IMPACT."**

—Eric Drew, Director of Connectional Ministries, United Methodists of Greater New Jersey

God, deliver us. We pray, God help us to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. And we pray, God, continue to reveal to us what is next.

One resolution before the Annual Conference Session is the Call to Discernment and Renewal, a collaboration between the Cabinet, Connectional Table, and Board of Trustees. This recommits to GNJ's mission and strategic

plan, highlights the many resources for congregations to thrive in 2022 and beyond, and lays out the steps that the Annual Conference will take if a congregation is discerning to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. Leaders from all three groups have expressed the importance that GNJ's mission stay central to their work and the importance of supporting local churches to discern what is next to thrive in their local ministry.

GNJ's Annual Conference Session also includes legislation about local church contributions to the Boy Scouts of America Survivor Trust Fund, a budget to move forward the mission and ministry in 2023, increasing support to transfer land back to Native Americans as a part of their Journey of Hope plan, and more.

Director of Connectional Ministries, Eric Drew, stated that, "while this isn't an easy time to be the church, I'm so proud of the meaningful work that GNJ is doing to address challenges and seek God's will and power to move forward. God is faithful and already moving in powerful ways through the leadership of disciples in GNJ and I know this important, meaningful work will help all of us discern God's future which is still full of hope, purpose,

and missional impact." 🇺🇸

*The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Session will be held May 23-24 virtually. For information about the Call to Discernment and Renewal, which includes Bishop Schol's letters, materials about disaffiliation and more, please visit [www.gnjumc.org/disaffiliation-discernment](http://www.gnjumc.org/disaffiliation-discernment).*

# REFLECTING ON *Turning Point's* *250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* *Celebration*

By David Loerke

A gala celebration was held at Turning Point UMC in Trenton, NJ on Sunday, May 1 with the singing of hymns written by early Methodists, Charles Wesley and Samuel Sebastian Wesley. They included "The Church's One Foundation" as processional, "And Are We Yet Alive" and "Rejoice the Lord is King".

It marked the 250th Anniversary of the beginning of First Methodist Church of Trenton. That church is the ancestor of Turning Point UMC, a story featured in the April edition of *The Relay*.

Pastor of Turning Point, Rupert A. Hall, Jr., lead the worship service and welcomed all to this historic event. District Superintendent of the Central District, Hector A. Burgos lead with the opening prayer, followed by an inspiring message by Bishop John Schol, emphasizing the joy of having the church celebrate 250 years in Trenton.

Former pastors were in attendance, among them, Rev. Jack Johnson and Rev. Annie Allen. Also present were spouses of former pastors, now deceased, including Ms. Beverley Williams, widow of Rev. Compton A.L. Williams and Mr. Drew Burrus, husband of the late Rev. Myrna Bethke, a former District Superintendent.

The featured soloist, Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin, sang very moving renditions of Malotte's "Lord's Prayer" and Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday". Dr. Robinson is a teacher of Gospel singing at Princeton University. A stirring Praise Dance was offered by Ms. Barbara Teh.

Additionally, the Mayor of Trenton, W. Reed Gusciara was in attendance and offered words of congratulations.

Pastor Hall recognized the Johnson family, a family of long standing at the church, beginning in the 1950's. This past month the oldest member, Mrs. Eva Johnson, 94 years of age, went to be with the Lord.

Following the service, a reception was held in the fellowship hall, including a special anniversary cake which all in attendance enjoyed! 🍰



Taking in the powerful message and impact of 250 years



Pastor Rupert A. Hall, Jr. speaking at the 250th Anniversary celebration



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Pastor Rupert A. Hall, Jr., Bishop John Schol, Ms. Beth Stroud, Central District Superintendent Hector Burgos, Mr. Drew Burrus



Public attendees celebrating Turning Point's 250 years



Singing Hymns written by Charles Wesley and Samuel Sebastian Wesley



Zoom has become a critical tool for church members to connect.

“THE QUESTION WE MUST ASK OURSELVES IS,  
“HOW DO WE GROW THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE?”  
WHAT IF I TOLD YOU THAT A PODCAST COULD REACH  
MORE PEOPLE THAN YOUR SERMONS?”

—Rev. Jevon Caldwell Gross

## Hybrid Church

*Continued from page 1*

the only day we have to create these transformative experiences that reach our community. While Sunday is “a” day, it’s no longer “the” day. While most congregations spend hours planning what happens on Sunday morning between 8AM and 12PM, we have no clear strategy for the other 164 hours of the week... until now.

As we move closer to more in-person gatherings, our concerns cannot be limited to returning to “back to normal”. We need to accept that those days are over. The question we must ask ourselves is, “How do we grow the church of the future?” What if I told you that a podcast could reach more people than your sermons? Imagine if an interview with a well-known person in your community could reach people more effectively than your church choir. Imagine if we strategically planned for 365 days and not just 52 weeks.

On June 2, Rev. Jevon Caldwell Gross will be presenting a virtual workshop on “IT’S NOT JUST SUNDAYS”. This is a journey to help you build a hybrid strategy that reaches your community. The workshop will begin by rediscovering what it means to be a church and the key behaviors that will define the future church. This will form the lens we use to consider the practical strategies that are available in hybrid forms of ministry... because the future church is both in-person and online.

Rev. Caldwell-Gross serves as the Teaching and Online Pastor at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church. As a pastor, author, and professor, his mission is and has always been to equip churches and congregational leaders for relevant and effective ministry in a rapidly changing society.

Pastors and laity are invited to take part in this important learning for our time. You can register for this Leadership Academy class at <https://www.gnjumc.org/leadership-academy>. For more information contact, Gina Yeske, Metro Highlands Resource Director via email: [gyeske@gnjumc.org](mailto:gyeske@gnjumc.org).

*Honor the humanity, racial identity,  
uniqueness and sacred worth of everyone  
as we live out our baptismal vow.*

# JOURNEY of Hope

LEARN MORE ABOUT JOURNEY OF HOPE.

[www.gnjumc.org/journeyofhope](http://www.gnjumc.org/journeyofhope)

# Motherhood and It's Intricate Journey

By Meg Sizemore

**T**he most delicate time of my life, but also the most empowering time, was the day that I became a mother. After 44 hours of labor, under new Covid-19 hospital restrictions, and a few worship playlists later, my daughter Sadie was born. 2020 was a terrifying year to become a mother. Bringing life into an unknown state of the world with heightened anxiety, roaring societal issues, and family and friends that found difficulty in keeping a newborn safe during a transition to the "new normal", all made the postpartum stage of motherhood that much more challenging for me.

Motherhood isn't always beautiful. Motherhood isn't a simple concept that any woman can take to with ease. I know, I know... this is the one time of year we celebrate moms! We're supposed to talk about the joy of being a mother, how wonderful mothers are... and we'll get there, I promise. But for there to be joy, to really know joy, you have had to face hardships. For there to be light, to really know light, you have had to face darkness. As a mother, I am greatly aware of just how beautiful this journey is, but I advocate to acknowledge the difficulties as well. If you're a mom and you face challenging days, you're not alone, and you're still a GREAT mom.

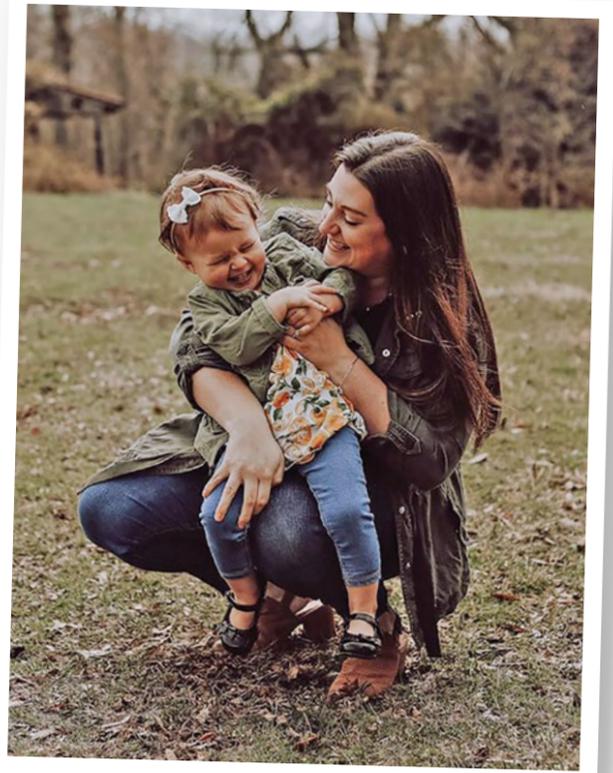
When thinking about the history of Mother's Day, I did some digging into impactful women who advocated for this nationally recognized holiday. Ann Reeves Jarvis was

a trailblazing mother and an activist before, during, and after Civil War times. Ann established clubs for women and mothers, taught general health and safety care of children to mothers, and served various needs of war through recruiting nurses, even as she called for peace.

Ann and her daughter Anna recognized their faith as an important priority. Together, they attended and became members of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church (now UMC) in Philadelphia, Pa.

At 84 years old, Ann Jarvis went to be with the Lord on the second Sunday in May of 1905, before Mother's Day was recognized and signed into a holiday. Each year, we celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday of May, recognizing the powerful work of Ann, shadowed by her daughter. In 1908, Ann's daughter Anna Jarvis distributed white carnations on the first formal commemoration for Mother's Day in Gafton, WV with a larger celebration in Philadelphia. A founding symbol, white carnations were chosen for their tight petals, similar to a mother's love. By 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed Mother's Day into an official national holiday.

Thinking back to my relationship with my daughter, and my son on the way, I am thankful for all the mothers that come before me to serve as examples. I find it remarkable that God chose mothers to give life on this earth. We are called to show love and gratitude, not just in the month of May but throughout the entire year, to the ones who raised next generations and birthed life into the world. 🇺🇸



**Megan Sizemore, GNJ Communications Manager and adoring Mother, with her daughter Sadie**

## A PRAYER FOR MOTHERS

For our mothers, who have given us life and love,  
that we may show them reverence and love,  
we pray to the Lord...

For mothers who have lost a child through death,  
that their faith may give them hope,  
and their family and friends support and console them,  
we pray to the Lord...

For women, though without children of their own,  
who like mothers have nurtured and cared for us,  
we pray to the Lord...

For mothers, who have been unable to be a source of strength,  
who have not responded to their children  
and have not sustained their families,  
we pray to the Lord...

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,  
so you watch over your Church.

Bless these women, that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers.  
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.

Grant that we, their sons and daughters,  
may honor them always with a spirit of profound respect.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

—The United Methodist Book of Blessings,  
U.S.A., 20th Cent., Alt.

# A Growing Church and New Ways TO WORSHIP



Members of Wesley UMC in Edison, NJ

By Denise Herschel

## EDISON, NJ

Wesley United Methodist Church in Edison, NJ has long been known, both within their church and local communities, for immense hospitality. Embracing the principle of “Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors,” Wesley UMC members consider themselves to be a strong, welcoming team and according to their Senior Pastor Sunghyuk Kim, “a church which has always been one that has worked towards welcoming, putting our best foot forward in friendliness, hospitality, and connection.” In fact, when members are asked why they decided to settle at the small church, their response remains the same — “The people were just so friendly here. We felt right at home.”

“Our church members are mostly from Edison, Fords, and Woodbridge. Many people choose to become part of the church because the church offers gracious hospitality and openness to all people,” Pastor Sunghyuk said. “Wesley has a great hospitality group who are responsible for arranging the meals, snacks and refreshments that are served at our special events and any Sunday after service. Embracing the love that Jesus teaches us to give towards our fellow man is only accentuated by a nice, hot cup of coffee and a tasty snack. The hospitality group has been a staple at Wesley for many years.”

Pastor Sunghyuk was appointed as Wesley UMC’s senior pastor in July of 2021. He said that he previously served Arcola Korean UMC in Paramus, NJ for more than six years. During that time, he oversaw children and youth ministries, director of Christian education and AWANA ministry.

“Wesley is a healthy and strong church where multi-ethnicities gather to worship God. Like many other churches, COVID-19 caused a decrease in (in-person) worship participation and in finance. When I first came

to the church in July 2021, the worship attendance was around 20 to 25. Throughout the eight months, 31 new and transferred members have joined our church. Our current Sunday attendance average is now 50 to 60 people in-person and 10 to 15 people viewing the service live online,” he said.

Wesley UMC began as a Danish Methodist Church in 1874 in Perth Amboy. As the community changed,

**“WESLEY UMC IS A CHURCH WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE THAT HAS WORKED TOWARDS WELCOMING, PUTTING OUR BEST FOOT FORWARD IN FRIENDLINESS, HOSPITALITY, AND CONNECTION.”**

—Rev. Sunghyuk Kim,  
Senior Pastor at Wesley UMC

the church welcomed all who came through its doors. A devastating fire later caused serious damage to the church, which was eventually rebuilt when the congregation decided to move to their current location in Edison. The building was consecrated in April of 1960.

“Over the years, our church has reflected and reached out to the community and us. Our congregation now includes people from a variety of backgrounds and faith histories, and is always ready to welcome new people,” he added.

Pastor Sunghyuk continued that his greatest joy as a pastor is preaching the Word, seeing people come to know Jesus, experiencing church change, and watching members grow up literally and spiritually.

“We are committed to being a vibrant church community by joyously serving and worshipping God. We are strengthening and increasing our program offerings to all people from the youngest to the oldest. We are growing in faith and membership, and encouraging all to actively participate in the life of the Church,” he added.

One of the church’s most recent ministries is “Praise Night”, hosted every second Wednesday of the month, when they come together to worship and praise God through song.

“Since we have traditional worship songs on Sundays, I wanted to bring contemporary music into the church. Therefore, we mostly sing five to seven Contemporary Christian songs and traditional songs with arrangements. Afterwards, we conclude the night with a prayer and just allow ourselves to be enveloped by God’s presence. We started this ministry in November of 2021, and it gave us a huge impact to bring live music and souls back to church. We have an average attendance of 35 to 40 people, and they are not just church members but also neighbors in the local community. We are aiming for all generations to be invited to this special ministry and to build up leaders from our youth and young adults,” he said.

As Wesley UMC looks forward to a continually vibrant year, Kim said that his church is full of vital worship, strong music, fellowship, and mission impacting growth.

“Wesley UMC is moving forward with the vision statement for 2022 - Recover, Reboot and Rebuild. May God continue to bless and lead us at Wesley,” said Pastor Sunghyuk.

Wesley United Methodist Church is located at 5053 Woodbridge Avenue in Edison, NJ. Their phone number is 732-738-0232. 🇺🇸

## EVIDENCE

### Together—We will Lift Your Stories of Praise!

**E**VIDENCE is a new section of *The Relay* where we invite you to share stories of praise... tell everyone what God is doing in your life, in your ministry, and more. We also invite you to share prayer requests, so that we may embrace our mission of joining in prayer and lift up our requests to God.

#### STORIES OF PRAISE:

- **Turning Point UMC of Trenton, NJ Celebrated its 250th Anniversary!** For two and a half centuries, this church has served in ministry through one of NJ's urban areas and community.
- **GNJ's 2022 Annual Conference is quickly approaching.** We can see God moving in the many areas of our ministry!

#### PRAYER REQUESTS:

- **Healing for those going through a time of sickness and health concerns.** For God to work through their bodies and bring peace and rest.
- **For the upcoming Breakthrough Series to be an impactful resource to all pastors and congregations.**
- **For opportunities of ministry as churches move into the spring and summer seasons.**
- **God, provide answers and for the Spirit to bring confidence as ministries move forward.**



In the upcoming issues of *The Relay*, we will share your prayer requests and praises together.

Let's share together of the EVIDENCE of God in our lives. 🙏

*All prayer requests and stories of praise should be submitted directly to Meg Sizemore, Communications Manager, at [msizemore@gnjumc.org](mailto:msizemore@gnjumc.org)*

**"I THANK MY GOD EVERY TIME I REMEMBER YOU, CONSTANTLY PRAYING WITH JOY IN EVERY ONE OF MY PRAYERS FOR ALL OF YOU."**

— Philippians 1: 3-4



# LIMITLESS

IGNITECONFERENCE

REGISTRATION OPENS: MAY 16TH

**EARLY BIRD**

MAY 16TH - JUNE 19TH

1-9: \$65  
10-29: \$60  
30+ : \$55

**REGULAR**

JUNE 20TH - SEPT 4TH

1-9: \$70  
10-29: \$65  
30+ : \$60

**LATE**

SEPT 5TH - SEPT 29TH

1-9: \$75  
10-29: \$70  
30+ : \$65

## MAY BOOKSHELF



### For the Common Good

Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts  
Christine Harman

*For the Common Good* reminds us that the Holy Spirit gives each Christian one or more spiritual gifts to be used for the common good. It guides readers to discover their own particular gifts and learn to use their gifts to serve others.

Examining key passages in Paul's writings, author Christine Harman leads readers through a personal spiritual gift assessment. She names 25 distinct spiritual gifts — including discernment, hospitality, compassion, evangelism, and music — and helps people explore scripture references on each one. After identifying their particular gifts, clergy and

laypeople will learn how to apply them for the good of their church, community, and the world. This book is ideal for both group study and self-discovery. It also includes suggestions for how to build a ministry team or assign people to committees based on the gifts of each individual.

This book is the text for a Lay Servant Ministries advanced course on spiritual gifts. It also can be used for a small-group study.

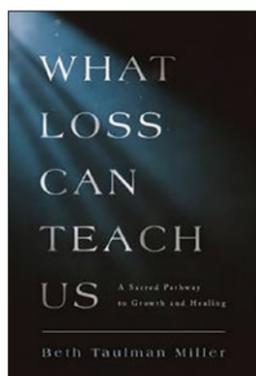
### Brave Church

Tackling Tough Topics Together  
Elizabeth Hagan

In today's deeply divided world where discussions can quickly become heated and uncivil, churches need to learn how to talk about sensitive issues. Our society needs brave churches where people can talk about the real struggles, they are experiencing without fear of being dismissed, shamed, or judged.

*Brave Church* helps congregations talk about controversial topics with sensitivity to those who see the world and have experienced life differently from themselves. It guides readers to think through how they can foster conversations about such challenging topics as infertility/miscarriage, mental health, domestic violence, racism, and sexuality.

In this 6-week small-group study, pastor Elizabeth Hagan weaves personal and theological reflections with scripture, discussion questions, and real-world examples to move readers from exploration to action. *Brave Church* includes a Leader's Guide and suggests resources for further reading and action.



### What Loss Can Teach Us

A Sacred Pathway to Growth and Healing  
Beth Taulman Miller

After a significant loss, many people rush to get back a sense of normalcy without allowing themselves time to heal and learn from that loss. Our loving and compassionate God longs to walk with individuals on a transformational journey through loss toward becoming more emotionally and spiritually whole. This book shows readers that God offers an "on ramp" to the process of tending to their pain.

*What Loss Can Teach Us* provides readers with stepping-stones for getting through loss and pain while discovering the lessons they can learn through that process. Including

her own story of loss, the author guides us in spiritual practices that helped her heal.

While nothing changes its reality, loss can lead to an important juncture where readers will decide if they can trust God to take them through the hard process of growth and healing by allowing themselves to be shaped by the lessons they learn through their recovery. *What Loss Can Teach Us* can serve as a road map for that transformational journey.

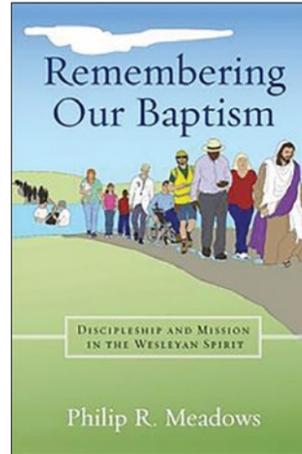
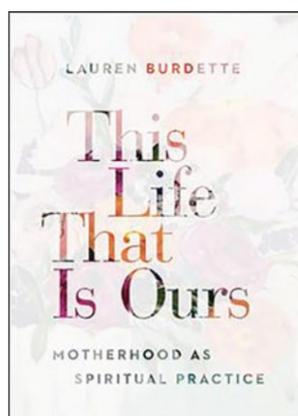
### This Life That Is Ours

Motherhood as Spiritual Practice  
Lauren Burdette

*This Life That Is Ours* offers 40 gentle meditations with guidance for reflection on the spiritual journey of motherhood. These practical, soul-affirming meditations nurture a mother's heart and spiritual life in a season fraught with overwhelm, exhaustion, and loss of identity. Through the lens of Burdette's real-life stories, the reader is invited to ponder her experience and to contemplate where God might be present.

This book is divided into three sections. Reflections in the first section, "Becoming a Mother," explore the dynamics of being a new mother and the whirlwind experience of those early months and years. The second section, "Becoming Yourself," considers what it means to return home to yourself — to begin to find your identity again, both within the realm of motherhood and outside of it. The third section, "Becoming Holy," names the holy paradoxes of motherhood — the ways it can be both extraordinary and mundane, both gift and sacrifice — ultimately deepening one's experience of the holiness of motherhood.

*This Life That Is Ours* includes an introduction, a preparatory guide for the reflective journey, a closing spiritual practice, and a conclusion. This book can be used in communities of mom groups, intergenerational groups of women, or spouse groups and would make a great gift for new mothers and mothers-to-be.



### Remembering Our Baptism

Discipleship and Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit  
Philip R. Meadows

Drawing on the roots of early Methodists, Philip Meadows urges readers to use the act of "remembering their baptism" to connect themselves to their own discipleship and mission. This will result in the daily shaping of their Christian lives by personal and corporate spiritual discipline, which is itself decidedly baptismal in character. When church communities of every size remember their baptism, they hold one another accountable for the life of disciplined discipleship and everyday witness. A great resource for small group study and clergy.

### Living Compassion

Loving Like Jesus  
Andrew Dreitcer

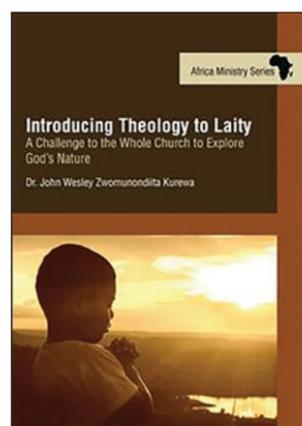
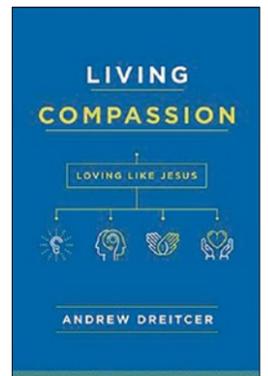
In the face of hurtful public dialogue and worldwide conflict, many Christians want to practice and experience genuine compassion. After all, centuries of Christian teachings have insisted that compassion is at the heart of the Christian life.

"Love your enemies," Jesus said in Luke 6:35-36. "Do good to them. Be compassionate, just as God is compassionate."

*How do we become more compassionate toward others, especially our enemies? And since Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, how do we practice being compassionate toward ourselves?*

Join Andrew Dreitcer, codirector of the Center for Engaged Compassion, in exploring how certain Christian spiritual practices are compassion practices. Discover how ancient as well as contemporary practices can shape your life, helping you become more compassionate in today's world.

Dreitcer introduces you to the Compassion Practice, a compassion formation process that has been developed in the last decade. Each chapter includes a "Review and Practice" section to help you apply what you learned. Uncover and learn how to express your innate compassion within you and find out how to turn your desire for compassion into a life centered in genuine, lasting compassion.



### Introducing Theology to Laity

A Challenge to the Whole Church to Explore God's Nature  
John Wesley Zwononondiita Kurewa

As John Kurewa and his brother talked about a tragic bus crash that had occurred nearby, his brother said, "Well, that shows when your time to die has come, there is nothing you can do about it."

*Was it really God's will for all those people to die or be injured in that wreck?* By together delving into the meaning of the event, and into God's nature, the author and his brother came to a more profound understanding of God's purpose regarding the events of our lives.

Challenged by their discussion and reminded that theology is for the whole church not just clergy, the author wrote *Introducing Theology to Laity* to encourage all Christians to engage in the study of God.

Although written for lay people, the book doesn't water down its view of Christian theology. Instead, it explores clearly and thoroughly the doctrines of God, creation, humanity, sin, the problem of evil and God's providence, and the Holy Spirit, among others.

*Introducing Theology to Laity* is an invitation to all believers to dig deeper into knowing God — through study and experience. As the author says, "God is not a thing to be scientifically investigated; rather, theology investigates faith — that living relationship in God."

### Plant Like Jesus

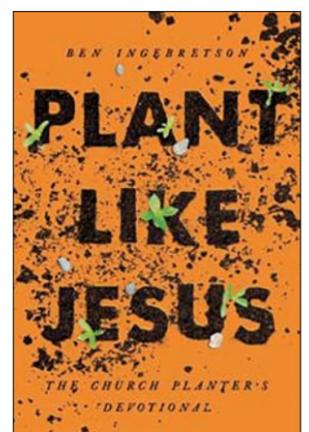
The Church Planter's Devotional  
Ben Ingebretson

*Plant Like Jesus* provides spiritual nourishment for planting leaders, innovating pastors, seminary students, and anyone seeking to root their mission work in the practices of Jesus.

Author Ben Ingebretson's extensive experience in church planting brings hands-on credibility to this topic. He uses accessible language and real-life examples to encourage and equip those who are called to reach new people for Christ. With each of the 60 devotional readings, Ingebretson proclaims that by looking to the past, leaders can better tend the future.

Sourced from the best practices of Jesus and the early Christian movement, *Plant Like Jesus* addresses missional engagement, ministry development, and effective leadership. Entries include scripture, theological reflection, meditation, and prayer. Questions for reflection invite readers to dig deeper.

"Jesus and the way the early church followed his example gives us a pathway to follow," writes Ingebretson. "He is not only the Lord of the church; he is also the Lord of church planting."





*Pathways for Congregational Development has launched!  
Discover how your congregation can have a great future.*

[www.gnjumc.org/pathways](http://www.gnjumc.org/pathways)

**GNJ is Looking for  
Freelancers & Volunteers**

Calling all  
Graphic Designers,  
Copywriters,  
and Copyeditors:

GNJ is looking to expand  
freelancers and volunteers  
to support communication projects,  
writers for The Relay, and more.

For more information on collaborating  
with the communications team,  
please email our Communications Manager,  
Meg Sizemore: [msizemore@gnjumc.org](mailto:msizemore@gnjumc.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 9, 3:30 & 6:30	Info Session
May 12	Clergy Session
Registration opens May 16	IGNITE Conference – September 30 to October 2
May 23 & 24	Annual Conference

Additional details can be found on the GNJ website at [gnjumc.org](http://gnjumc.org).

## CURRENT JOB POSTINGS

### AFWH | Disaster Case Manager

The Disaster Case Manager serves as a survivor's primary point of contact, assisting individuals in coordinating necessary services and resources to address the individual's complex disaster recovery needs to reestablish normalcy. The Disaster Case Manager partners with a disaster affected individual to plan for and achieve realistic goals for recovery.

Visit [www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/](http://www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/)

### AFWH | Volunteer Coordinator (Part-time)

The Volunteer Coordinator will recruit and organize volunteers from local churches, colleges, and other organizations to support local volunteer opportunities for Ida Recovery. The Volunteer Coordinator will serve as the primary liaison with teams and non-profit builders that are leading the construction projects. The Volunteer Coordinator duties will also include tracking and reporting volunteer hours as part of the weekly and quarterly reports.

Visit [www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/](http://www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/)

### Staff Accountant

The Staff Accountant is responsible for the accounting functions and financial reporting of the Annual Conference and its vital mission partners. Visit [www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/](http://www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/)

### Director of Children and Youth Ministry

Denville Community Church

Seeking an individual who is passionate about bringing children and youth to a relationship with Christ for this full-time Director of Children and Youth Ministry position.

We seek a person who generates creative ideas and programs and who values a team concept of ministry; an energetic, dynamic leader who will attract youth of all ages from beyond our church community to their program. The individual for this position will be responsible for developing, implementing and growing the children and youth program from pre-school through high school ages. Interested parties should email their resume to Denville Community Church at [staffing@denvillecommunitychurch.org](mailto:staffing@denvillecommunitychurch.org).

### Bilingual Staff Attorney

Justice for Our Neighbors of the Delaware Valley (JFON-DV)

A "Justice for Our Neighbors" (JFON) staff attorney is responsible for the provision of immigration legal services at each immigration clinic and for the supervision and training of volunteers and support staff assisting with this provision of legal services. In addition, the staff attorney may work in coordination with each clinic to promote community education and interested parties should email their resume and a brief writing sample to [tom@jfondv.org](mailto:tom@jfondv.org)



JOB OPENINGS

Check out all the latest job postings at:  
[www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities](http://www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities)

## OBITUARIES

*Our thoughts and prayers are with these families and friends.*

**Grace Marie Cassaday**, Surviving Spouse of Rev. Howard Cassaday, passed away on March 16, 2022. No services are planned. Burial of her cremated remains will occur later in the Emanuel Lutheran Cemetery in Friesburg, N.J., with her husband, parents and grandson. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to: Aldine UMC, 780 Friesburg Aldine Rd., Elmer, NJ 08318. Please visit <http://www.htlayton.com/> to leave a note of condolence to her family.

**Harriett A. Reardon Bailey**, Former Lay Member to Annual Conference, passed away on December 14, 2021. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Titus Women Ministries who focus on meeting the spiritual and emotional needs of women worldwide, Titus Women Ministries, 1580 Lexington Road, Wilmore, KY 40390. For condolences to the family, visit [www.godfreyfuneralhome.com](http://www.godfreyfuneralhome.com).

**Shirley A. Mitchell**, Retired Local Pastor, passed away on April 20, 2022. A memorial service was held on Saturday, April 23. Interment followed at the Frenchtown Cemetery in Frenchtown, NJ.

**David F. Houston**, Retired Full Elder, passed away on April 13, 2022. A memorial service was held on April 20. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Alzheimer's Foundation of America or Plant a tree in memory of David F Houston Jr. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Cheryl Houston, daughter, 4611 Bloomingdale Dr., Hillsborough, NJ 08844-5563

**Rev. Raymond H. Gough**, Retired Full Elder, passed away on March 31, 2022. A memorial service will be held at a future date. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Alzheimer's Foundation of America [alzfdn.org](http://alzfdn.org). Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Christine Costello, 2772 Challenger Dr., Palm Harbor, Florida 34683.

**Rev. Dr. William F. Edsall**, Retired Full Elder, passed away on April 12, 2022. A memorial service will be held at a future date. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Calvary United Methodist Church, 971 Beech Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15233. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Kristen Bell, daughter, 132 Westminster Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15229.




## Dr. Donald Medley

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# Helping Our Neighbors Recover



One hundred percent of the proceeds for the A Future With Hope's Ida Road to Renewal Fund will go toward program goals and direct assistance to communities in need.



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

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

[www.gnjumc.org/afwh/ida-relief-effort](http://www.gnjumc.org/afwh/ida-relief-effort)