

THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 2022
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We Are Still Here

By Krista B. Jeffries

BRIDGETON, NJ

November is Native American Heritage Month, and now more than ever we want to recognize our American Indian Tribes all around New Jersey, especially in their time of need. This year, there has been a major vaccine initiative in the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribe, the largest American Indian Tribe in New Jersey. The Covid pandemic was particularly hard on this community, and a lack of access to good health care, including vaccines, has been a detrimental issue that needed to change.

Leading the charge is Gail Gould, wife of the Tribal Chairperson, the new Chair of Committee on Native American Ministries (CoNAM), and the New Jersey State American Indian Covid Coordinator under the New Jersey Commission on American Indian Affairs. To say she wears many hats is an understatement.

The New Jersey Commission on American Indian Affairs received a grant of \$580,000 through the Department of Health to provide Covid-19 services to New Jersey's three State-recognized tribes and inter-tribal communities. This is to ensure they have vaccines, clinics,



Participants share a moment as they wait in line for their Covid vaccine. Photo by Corbin Payne.

and PPE in the area, especially for vulnerable populations. This is a three-year grant that started in 2021, but Covid was so prevalent that officials weren't in the office every day, so it took a while to establish the clinics, but now there are approximately 150 clinics throughout New Jersey.

The United Methodist Church is a major partner, having provided a safe and supportive environment for Native

Americans for decades. St. John's United Methodist Church has partnered with South Jersey Family Medical Centers to spearhead a rural health initiative, which actually began in the U.S. almost 50 years ago. Their mission is to provide high-quality, culturally-sensitive care to all people of any race, culture, creed, or economic status. SJFMC started in 1977 with just seven employees and today have grown to about 250 employees.

The need for good health care has grown exponentially with the Covid-19 pandemic. Stunning news has recently been published from the CDC that the life expectancy for Native Americans has dropped by over seven years. Health problems are related to historical poverty and lack of health care, but the pandemic exacerbated the issue and is essentially to blame for an astounding number of

Continued on page 8

NEJ Elects Burgos as First Hispanic/Latino Bishop

Other UMC Jurisdictions Make History Also

By John W. Coleman

History was made on Wednesday, Nov. 2, when the Rev. Héctor Burgos, a superintendent in the Greater New Jersey Conference, was elected as a bishop in The United Methodist Church's Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference (NEJ). He becomes the first Hispanic/Latino bishop elected in the jurisdiction and was

Continued on page 5

"REV. BURGOS BECOMES THE FIRST HISPANIC/LATINO BISHOP ELECTED IN THE JURISDICTION AND WAS ENDORSED BY MARCHA, THE UMC'S NATIONAL HISPANIC/LATINO CAUCUS."



With his election on the third ballot, the Rev. Héctor A. Burgos-Núñez became the first Hispanic/Latino bishop elected in the jurisdiction.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

Return Policy



Bishop John Schol

Every smart shopper today is aware of the return policy, particularly online shoppers. If what I purchased doesn't fit or isn't quite what I thought it would be or isn't really like the picture online, can I return it.

Amazon has a money back 30-day return policy. If you do not like what you purchased within 30 days, you can return it. In my neighborhood, I can walk down the street to the 7-11 store, and outside the store there are a series of different sized boxes for amazon returns. I select a code, a box opens, I put what I want to return in the box and close it, and it is returned. A few days later, my money is redeposited into my bank account. Magic.

God has a return policy too. God is always ready to redeem, forgive, accept us back. It is the story of Abraham and Sarah, Moses, the prophets and taught and exemplified through the life of Jesus. If we humble ourselves and return to God, God will forgive us and welcome us home (the story of the Prodigal Son, Luke 5:11-32).

The United Methodist Church also has a return policy. Clergy are often returned to their congregational appointment every year and bishops may be returned to their assignment every four years. At the most recent Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference held in early November, I was returned to serve Greater New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania. I am humbled and grateful for this opportunity. I have been blessed by the people of Greater New Jersey who have given me the opportunity to lead over the past 10 years. Together, God has done wonderful ministry in GNJ. The following are some of the accomplishments God has done through us.

- Rebuilt or built new 270 homes after Superstorm Sandy raising \$18 million and deploying more than 13,000 volunteers. Today we are repairing 75 homes following hurricane Ida.
- Built the Mission and Resource Center.
- Successfully navigated the pandemic, providing financial relief to congregations and grants for community ministry.
- Approved and are accomplishing A Journey of Hope, a comprehensive initiative to end the sin of racism.

- Started 25 Hope Centers.
- Started more than 50 new faith communities.
- Developed a partnership with Tanzania.
- Started Next Gen and the Ignite Conference.
- Reestablished our foundation that has grown from \$4 million to \$50 million in investments.
- Established Mosaic Ministry and other recruiting ministries that provides a continuous flow of new and outstanding clergy.
- Increased congregational vitality from 14% vital congregations to more than 50% vital congregations.

Thanks be to God for each of our clergy and congregations who have worked together to move God's mission forward.

We have also navigated important challenges—the pandemic, disaffiliation and financial issues. Here again, people worked together to assess the issues and charted a path that continued faithfulness to God and addressed the problems.

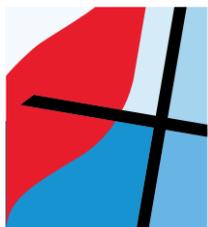
But God is not done with us. God has more for us to accomplish. Between now and the end of the year, I will meet with leadership to ask three questions.

- *What has gone well in the last several years and how can I lead to build on what has gone well?*
- *What can I do in my role as bishop to help improve the mission and vitality of congregations and develop clergy and lay leadership?*
- *If together we were to accomplish one thing during this quadrennium, what would it be?*

If you have thoughts about these three questions, please feel free to email me. I am humbled by the opportunity to continue to serve GNJ. You have been a gift to me, and I look forward to our continued ministry together. Keep the faith! 🇺🇸

“IF WE HUMBLE OURSELVES AND RETURN TO GOD, GOD WILL FORGIVE US AND WELCOME US HOME.”

LUKE 5:11-32



THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

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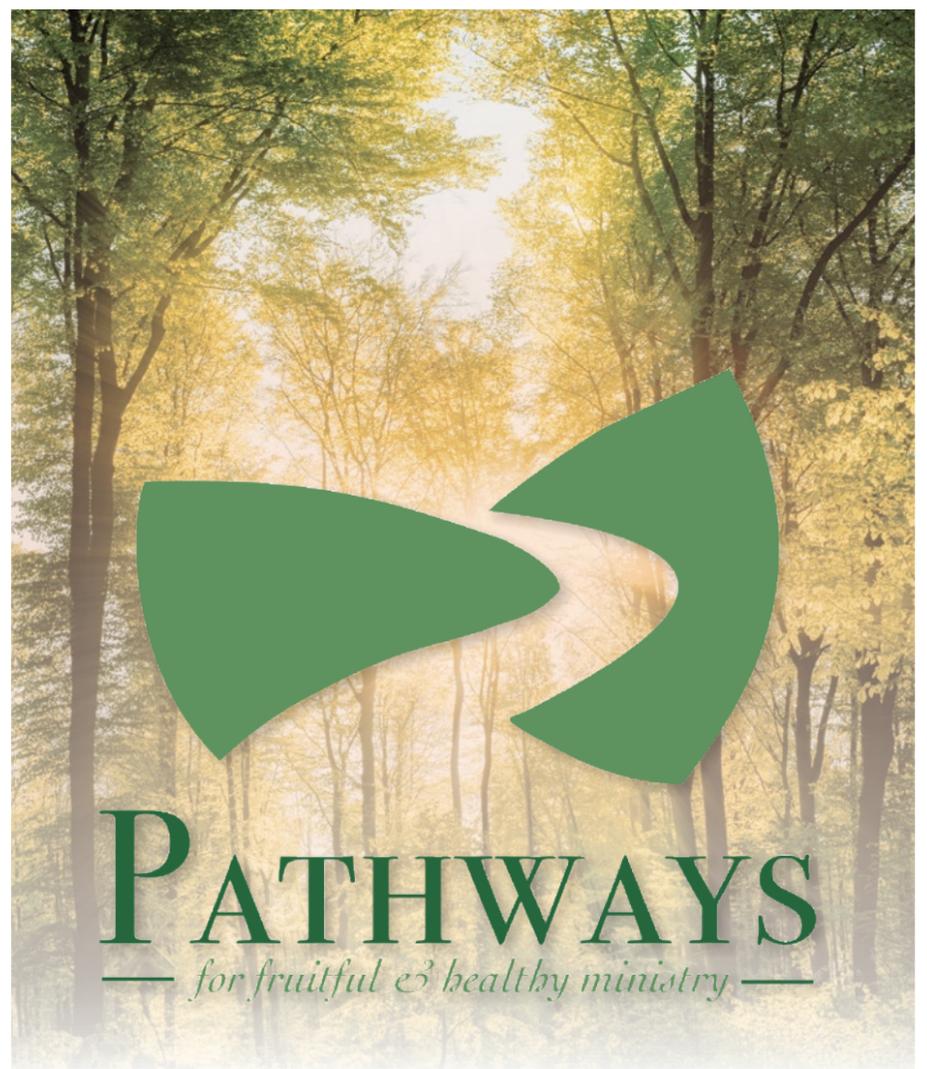
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UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



Rev. Frank Davis

Are You Considering a Call to Ministry?

By Gina Yeske

God has gifted us each in unique ways to serve as members of the body of Christ. All Christians are ministers. Some are called to serve in mission and ministry as a lay person, and others to serve as an ordained deacon or elder, or as licensed local pastor. We encourage you to explore the many ways that you can say yes to the call of God on your life.

In January 2023, the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) is offering a virtual “Orientation to Ministry” workshop. This is an opportunity for anyone wishing to understand the diversity of ways they can serve in the United Methodist Church.

This month, Rev. Frank Davis, an elder serving at Leonia UMC, and Rev. Dr. Deb De Vos, a deacon serving at Hackettstown UMC, are sharing their call stories.

My Call—Rev. Frank Davis

Honestly, I never wanted to become a pastor. I was a PK (Preacher’s Kid) and I saw what ministry was like from the inside out. My dad was like superman. Everyone sought his counsel and prayers, from the man

on the street to government officials. He was indeed well loved, but he was also hardly home. I hated that part of what he did. I complained but all they said was one day I would understand. I didn’t know how true that would be. It appears that everyone, except me, knew that I was going to be in ministry. “From you were born” my mother said!

How could that be? I was not perfect and the things I did already excluded me from being chosen...and so I ran. I ran so hard from God that I ran right into God.

Years had passed and my call to the ministry was neither dramatic nor spectacular. It came neither by some miraculous vision nor by some blinding light experience on the road of life. Moreover, it did not come as a sudden realization. Rather, it was a response to an inner urge or knot in my gut that gradually came upon me. This urge... this knot would not let me go...it expressed itself in a desire to serve God and humanity, and the feeling that my talent and my commitment could best be expressed through the ministry.



Rev. Frank Davis

At first, I planned to be a pilot; then I turned my attention in the direction of finance. It came easy to me as my mom was a CPA. But as I progressed through my chosen profession, I still felt that undying urge to serve God and humanity through the ministry. I was working on Wall St. when the urge (the knot) in my gut was overwhelming, and I finally decided to accept the challenge to enter the very ministry I vowed never to enter. I came to see that God had placed a responsibility upon my shoulders and the more I tried to escape it, the more frustrated I would become. A few months after preaching my first sermon I entered theological seminary. It was then that the “knot” in my gut subsided. This, in brief, is an account of my call and pilgrimage to the ministry. I would enjoy sharing more with you around a call to serve as an elder in the United Methodist Church at the Orientation to Ministry workshop.

Why Am I a Deacon? Rev. Dr. Deb De Vos

All my life I wanted to be a teacher. All my life I also loved Jesus and scripture. I went into college an Elementary Ed major and came out an accountant. Things happen. I taught catechism in the Catholic church and over the years I taught all grades from K-8. That didn’t fulfill my teaching bug. I taught skincare as a Mary Kay Beauty consultant and that didn’t fulfill the bug either. At one point, I decided to look for an evening Bible study. My church only offered them during the day. I did an internet search; this was pre-Google, so it was probably on Magellan! This search turned up Trinity United Methodist Church in Hackettstown. I had a co-worker who was a Methodist. Other than that, I knew nothing other than they were Protestants. I was concerned that in studying the Bible with them (who didn’t even have the whole Bible) that they would teach “wrong” things, but I went and did *Disciple 1* with these Protestants and then *Disciple 2*. As I studied with them, eventually worshipped with them, and learned about John Wesley, I realized I was a United Methodist in my heart all along. I loved education and I cared about social justice, and these were two things that mattered to Wesley.

I enrolled in Drew Theological School for a Master’s in Ministry with a concentration in Scripture for fun. At the same time, I was leading a small group called *Companions in Christ* and doing a 25-week mentoring program with one of our associate pastors. It was after that year and being immersed in all that work, that I realized God had been calling me all along to ministry, specifically to ordained ministry as a deacon. I felt the strong tug of the call to Word, Service, Compassion and



Rev. Dr. Deb De Vos

Justice. I knew I was called to educate people on their call to biblical justice and what that looked like in the world. I knew then I was called to be a prophetic voice when the voices of some were silenced or ignored, especially in the Church. It’s not easy and it’s not popular especially in today’s climate, but nonetheless Jesus does call us to justice.

Micah 6:8 is the signature passage when I think of the life of a deacon. We are the connection between the world and the church so that together we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. If you would like to know more about the ministry of the deacon, I invite you to come to the Orientation to Ministry workshop that will be offered in January 2023. 📖

To explore more on serving as a elder, a deacon, a licensed local pastor or a certified lay minister in the United Methodist Church please register for Orientation to Ministry workshop on January 23, 2023, from 7-8:30 p.m. Learn more <https://www.gnjumc.org/ordained-ministry/orientation-for-ministry/>.

Christmas Covenant Strangely-Warms Hearts at Aldersgate

By James Lee
jlee@gnjumc.org

EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ

Following the Special General Conference of 2019, proposals to dissolve or dismember the United Methodist denomination proliferated, most of them emanating from the United States. The African College of Bishops issued a statement on maintaining unity and integrity of the United Methodist connection. The Philippines' College of Bishops also released a pastoral letter that spoke against the dissolution of the UMC.

Rooted in a lamentation of how colonialism has shown itself in efforts to divide the church without hearing from the silenced margins of United Methodists outside of the U.S., African and Filipino United Methodists saw this as a “kairos” moment—an opportune time to offer a gift of hope from those in the grassroots for the future of our global connection. Thus, from the Cavite Annual Conference of the Philippines, the “Christmas Covenant” legislation was born.

So, what is the Christmas Covenant?

On September 27, 2022, the Raritan Shore District hosted and the GNJ Korean Caucus sponsored a hybrid

“THE CHRISTMAS COVENANT IS ROOTED IN THE FOLLOWING VALUES: CONNECTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ROOTED IN MISSION, RESPECT FOR CONTEXTUAL MINISTRY SETTINGS, AND LEGISLATIVE EQUALITY FOR REGIONAL BODIES OF THE CHURCH.”

—Rev. Dr. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuann,
President of Claremont School of Theology

special event titled “Christmas Covenant and the Future of the United Methodist Church” at Aldersgate UMC in East Brunswick. Rev. Dr. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, former dean of Drew Theological School and current president of Claremont School of Theology, was the presenter. Princeton Senior Resource Center CEO Rev. Dr. Drew Dyson and Raritan Shore District Superintendent Rev. Sang Won Doh participated as panelists.

“The Christmas Covenant is a set of legislation and constitutional amendments submitted to the United



A diverse crowd and many more on Zoom participated in the informative forum. Photo provided.

Methodist Church’s General Conference with the goal of establishing regional equity in the structures of the church for missional effectiveness while sustaining connectional unity,” presented Kuan, “It is rooted in the following values: Connectional relationships rooted in mission, respect for contextual ministry settings, and legislative equality for regional bodies of the church.”

At its core, the Christmas Covenant comprises of eight petitions that will revise language throughout the Book of Discipline from central conference/s to regional conference/s that, as the Philippines’ College of Bishops wrote in a statement on August 31, 2019, quote: “have the authority to decide their witness, mission, and ministry, thus, preserving locality and connectionality.” The petitions will allow the United States to be its own regional conference with regional equity and structure (as proposed by The Connectional Table) and authorizes contextual adaptations of the Book of Discipline for missional effectiveness.

Kuan gave a powerful argument in support of the Christmas Covenant. “While diversity is a challenge, we do not believe dissolution is the right way to heal the wounds that cause us pain as Christ’s Body. A truly global church committed to be in mission together embraces its differences and allows for self-determination. It is able to find common ground in affirming how we do effective

ministry in places we serve. Acknowledging that our different contexts need different solutions is a better way forward and fosters mutuality.”

Rev. Dr. Drew Dyson also endorsed the Christmas Covenant as the way forward. “You may be surprised to know, The United Methodist Church is the only one among the 25 largest denominations in the world that is democratically-elected and representative in its polity and governance [rather than regionalized], and also global at the same time.” Dyson continued, “The context of the space that we occupy matters in the theological and biblical interpretation and in our understanding of who we are in relationship to God. And so, for me, the Christmas Covenant moves us a step towards full inclusion. But that must be accompanied with -- in my opinion as Drew Dyson -- the legislation that removes the restrictive language in the Book of Discipline.”

Rev. Sang Won Doh approached the Christmas Covenant from a centrist perspective, naming his faith in a “big-tent theology” church and how in the past as a theological conservative being impacted by his progressive colleagues, especially regarding the sin of racism. “There is a one major challenge with the Christmas Covenant,” explained Doh. “It is a constitutional amendment, meaning, it requires two-third aggregate votes of all annual conferences. We have seen in the past various attempts to acquire constitutional amendments fail because of this requirement.”

But there is hope. The Christmas Covenant is now endorsed by the UMC Connectional Table, the North Central Jurisdiction, various annual conferences including the Florida Annual Conference delegation and the Mountain Sky Annual Conference, MARCHA (Hispanic/Latino caucus within the United Methodist Church), United Women in Faith, Love Your Neighbor Coalition (LYNC), Western Methodist Justice Movement (WMJM), and many more. During a time of increasing denominational divide and disaffiliations, this legislation is revealing that unity amidst differences is possible. Online participants of the presentation were thankful for the presenter and panelists, and many shared their renewed hope in the future of the United Methodist Church.

As Methodists, the intersection of a “Christmas” Covenant presentation occurring at a church named “Aldersgate” is particularly notable. Aldersgate is the name of the street where John Wesley’s heart was “strangely warmed” in 1738. Christmas is an auspicious time for Methodists as it reminds us of the Christmas Conference of 1784 that gave birth to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. As the Aldersgate Street conversion and the Christmas Conference were moments in time when a Methodist revival was birthed, so the proponents and endorsers are praying that the Christmas Covenant will also be the birth a new revival of a contextual, global, and mission-focused United Methodist Church. 🇺🇸



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Panelists Drew Dyson, Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, and Sang Won Doh. Photo provided.

One Step in the Journey Towards

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY

By James Lee
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“Today is not the only time we will be having a cultural competency training. This is only the beginning.”

Jay Kim, GNJ’s Director of Human Resources and Superintending Support Team, opened with these words to the more-than-forty eager GNJ staff-persons attending a full-day of cultural competency training on Monday, October 24. “Cultural competency is being aware of your own cultural beliefs and values and how these may be different from other cultures—including being able to learn about and honor the different cultures of those you interact with,” Kim continued.

In 2017, the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference passed a resolution calling for the implementation of a 10-year intercultural competence plan where there is to be a systemic shift in GNJ from diversity to intercultural competency. The Journey of Hope plan to end the sin of racism in the Greater New Jersey area was passed during the 2020 October special session to build on the intercultural competency plan. Among the core competencies in every GNJ staff job description, one of them is to be “committed to grow in intercultural competence.” This training day was one step forward in the journey towards fulfilling this commitment.

General Secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race Rev. Dr. Giovanni Arroyo led the transformational sessions. The anticipation was high, and the participation dynamic. Participants began the morning with self-awareness exercises reflecting on the origin of their names. In the afternoon, teams held discussions on how cultural competency will impact GNJ’s five staff core values of innovation and risk taking, excellence in its ministry and service, compassionate and just service, diversity, and collaboration.

Capital District Superintendent Héctor A. Burgos was inspired by the stories shared during small group conversations and for having the opportunities of getting to know his colleagues at a deeper level. “It was both encouraging and challenging reflecting on how power dynamics impact our ability to fully see others and that sometimes for achieving inclusion, rather than adding chairs to the table, there needs to be a willingness on those already at the table to step down to make room for others,” Burgos shared.

Rev. Dr. Juel Nelson serves as the Director of Leadership Development and worked with Kim to design and implement this day of training. “Our vision to grow in intercultural competency doesn’t only mean congregations, laity, and pastors, but also includes the staff of the annual conference,” said Nelson. “It is critical for GNJ staff to consider how the Journey of Hope Plan—an annual conference legislation—impacts how we work and live day-to-day.”

Nelson and Kim plan to continue to work with General Commission on Religion and Race in providing professional development in the area of intercultural competency for GNJ staff so that the team might grow and better-work alongside diverse congregations and church leaders in ending the sin of racism in Greater New Jersey together.

Burgos is excited for what is next. He concluded, “I look forward to our staff team continuing to go deeper and growing in cultural competence so that we can leverage our God-given diversity in GNJ.” 🇺🇸



Rev. Dr. Giovanni Arroyo leading the sessions on intercultural competency. Photo by Corbin Payne.



Rev. Dr. Juel Nelson co-designed and implemented this day of training. Photo by Corbin Payne.



DS Hector Burgos and Jay Kim giving a group presentation during one of the exercises.

Photo by Corbin Payne.



Staffpersons James Mulligan and Krystina Michalopoulos sharing their experiences.

Photo by Corbin Payne.



Children celebrating a Day of Hope and fun!

St. Paul’s Day of Hope – As Long as There Is Hope

By Rev. Rolando Santiago

NEWARK, NJ

On September 17, 2022, St. Paul’s Centenary Church in Newark, NJ held its first Day of Hope celebration in three years. The Day of Hope began in 2012 as an outreach to the community to provide health screenings, activities for children and young adults, opportunities for the community to participate in a blood drive and see the work of the St. Paul’s UMC with programs such as “Imagine No More Malaria”, “A Future with

Hope,” and more. GNJ staff and clergy have participated in worship and provided orientation to ministry over the years.

This year, St Paul’s UMC connected with the local community for a day of hope and fun. A car show, bouncy house, and domino tournament attracted many attendees. Face painting, free food, and worship music were also provided throughout the day. Many were invited to attend church services the following day, and some did attend. As long as there is hope, there is a future, and as in

“WE MUST HOLD ON TO THE HOPE WE HAVE, NEVER HESITATING TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT IT. WE CAN TRUST GOD TO DO WHAT HE PROMISED.”

HEBREWS 10:23

the letter to Hebrews: “We must hold on to the hope we have, never hesitating to

tell people about it. We can trust God to do what he promised.”

Burgos as Bishop

Continued from page 1

endorsed by MARCHA, the UMC’s national Hispanic/Latino caucus.

History was also made twice on Wednesday at the South Central

Jurisdictional (SCJ) Conference, meeting in Houston, Texas. The Rev. David Wilson, of the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary conferences, was elected as the denomination’s first Native American bishop. And the Rev. Delores “Dee” Williamston, of the Great

Plains Conference, was elected as the first Black female bishop in the SCJ.

The Rev. Kenneth Bigham-Tsai, who heads the denomination’s programmatic oversight body, the Connectional Table, also made history on Wednesday when the North Central Jurisdictional

Conference, meeting in Fort Wayne, Indiana, made her the first bishop to be elected during this historic day of episcopal elections across the five U.S. jurisdictions. She was also the first bishop to be elected on the first round of voting within the jurisdiction’s history.



The Rev. David Wilson, assistant to the bishop of the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, was elected Nov. 2 on the first ballot, becoming the first Native American bishop in The United Methodist Church.



Hector Burgos (center) celebrates with attendees in his historic election as a bishop.

We Are Still Here

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deaths in the Native American community over the past three years. Underlying health conditions, such as obesity and diabetes, put citizens at greater risk of dying from Covid, but the lack of access to health care has also made a huge impact. Not only must they travel a long way to access health care, but they are also met with hurdles like discrimination from doctors and sometimes a language barrier that make it tougher to get the care they need. This is one of the fundamental reasons for this initiative. If they couldn't get to the vaccines, the commission wanted to bring vaccines to them.

Now that the majority of people in the Native American community have been vaccinated, they are opening it up to the rest of the communities, putting the rest of the grant money to good use. As Gail Gould suggested, "What is the point of having our community vaccinated if the people we interact with are not?" They have opened the vaccinations sites to everyone and have

even been holding them in parking lots downtown to reach some of the homeless and immigrant population.

Cynthia Mosley is the "boots on the ground" person who is setting up the vaccine clinics and recruiting the participants. Gould shared, "Cindy and I have a passion for helping not only Native Americans but all people." Gail's name is quite fitting, as it means "gentle leaves." She says, "the limbs of the trees protect all," and that is exactly what she intends to do. Not only do they provide vaccines, but they also provide much through the church food bank, including meals, produce, baked goods, clothing, household goods, diapers (for babies and adults), baby formula, wipes, hygiene products, and other essentials to families in need. During Covid, they serviced 450 families, and now they are at 400, including Ukrainian refugee families. They recently purchased 60 winter coats, 60 queen-sized blankets, hats and gloves, snow suits for children, and boots, distributing them to families at the end of October. They are also working with the Cook Native American



St. John's United Methodist Church providing medical services to local Native American communities. Photo by Corbin Payne.

Ministries Foundation for the Winter Gear and Tool Closet Program. They have a tool shed for snow shovels, windshield scrapers, and other seasonal equipment to help people get through winter storms.

They also provide lunches for elders, as well as lunches and dinners for children during the Summer Feeding Program. They offer approximately 90 meals a day in the summer and give out elder boxes so seniors don't have to trek all the way to the supermarket which can be miles away.

Overall, they are doing so much good for the community in every way possible. As Cynthia shared with us, they are more than just a church; they provide social services to the community. She says, "Scripture tells us to do that, and that's what we do."

The most important message she shared is "We are still here." Our Native American brothers and sisters do not want to be forgotten. GNJUMC has had a supportive hand in making sure Native Americans in New Jersey are still seen and taken care of, especially in rural areas where they are most in need. This month, as we celebrate Native American Heritage, may we all remember that taking care of each other is always the right thing to do. 🇺🇸



The majority of folks of the Native American community in the greater Bridgeton area have been vaccinated. Photo by Corbin Payne.

BELONG

IGNITE 2023 CONFERENCE

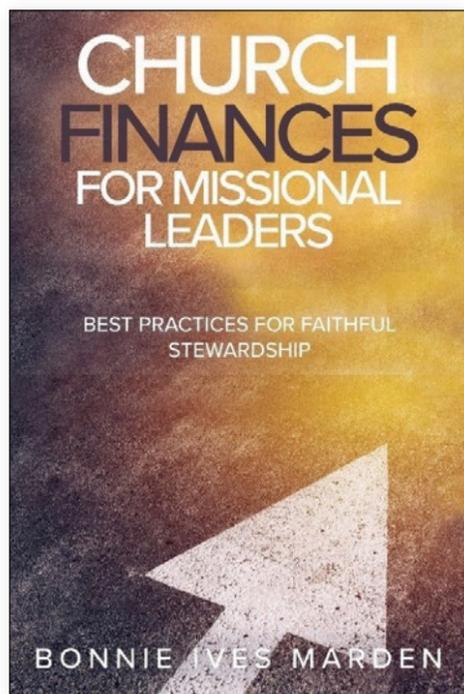
KEEP THE FIRE GOING

SEE YOU AT IGNITE 2023

9/29 // 10/1

WILDWOOD CONVENTION CENTER

NOVEMBER BOOKSHELF



Church Finances for Missional Leaders

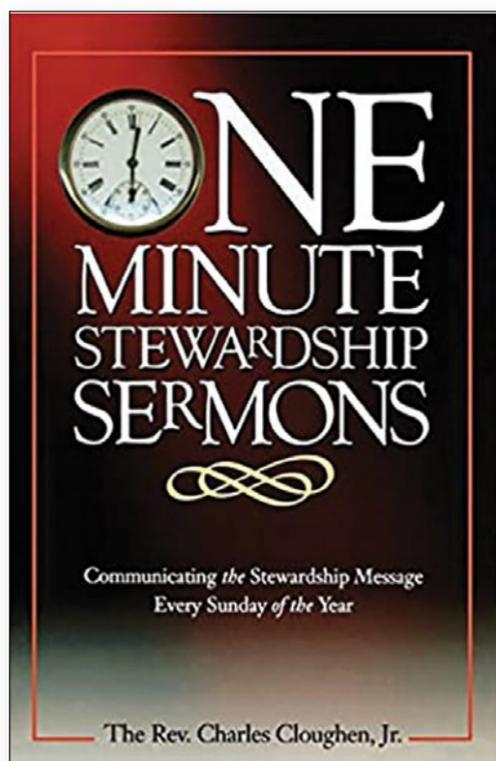
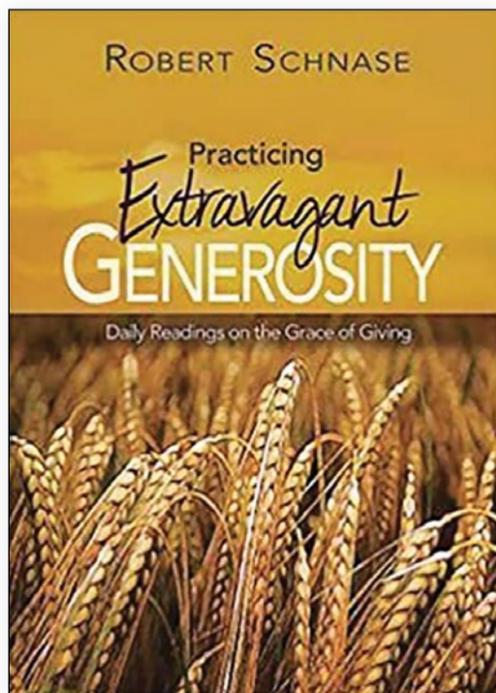
Best Practices for Faithful Stewardship
Bonnie Ives Marden

Packed with guidelines, tools, worksheets, and biblically sound strategies for pastors, treasurers, trustees, finance and stewardship chairs and committees. This book introduces basic financial vocabulary and offers concrete help for creating a church budget; understanding financial sustainability, the role of reserves, the importance of personal and congregational stewardship; communicating financial needs; generating money for mission, income planning, and projection; and developing strategies for appeals and campaigns, risk, and liability issues, and much more. Includes reproducible pages with worksheets and sample policies.

Practicing Extravagant Generosity

Daily Readings on the Grace of Giving
Robert Schnase

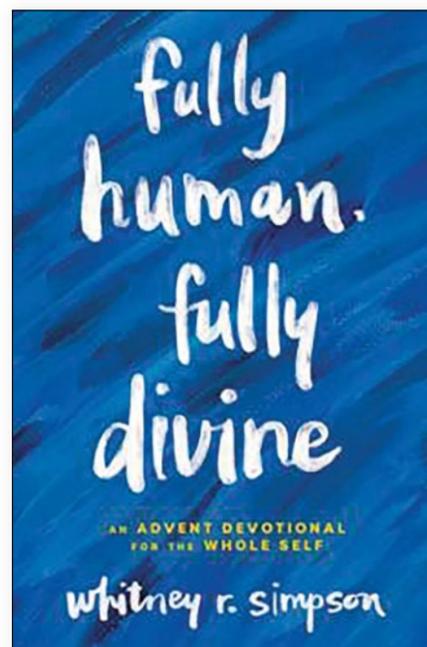
An indispensable part of the Extravagant Generosity stewardship program, this volume, by Bishop Schnase, opens the Scriptures to show the joy and grace of giving. Designed to provide daily Bible readings for the four weeks of the program, it leads the reader to explore such questions as “Why do we give,” “Who benefits most from our giving,” and “Where does true contentment come from?” By reading and following this guide to the spiritual discipline of stewardship, church members will experience afresh the joy of serving God with their time, talents, and gifts.



One Minute Stewardship Sermons

Communicating the Stewardship Message Every Sunday of the Year
Charles Cloughen Jr.

This collection of inspirational messages reflects on the many aspects of stewardship that congregations—both large and small—experience throughout the year. Designed for use at the offertory each Sunday, they may also be incorporated into the sermon or printed in the bulletin. This resource provides scores of different ways for clergy and leaders to connect the mission and vision of the local church with the stewardship of its members' time, abilities, and financial resources.



Fully Human, Fully Divine

An Advent Devotional for the Whole Self

Whitney R. Simpson

Fully Human, Fully Divine is an invitation to an embodied Advent. Over the course of four weeks, it encourages us to embrace the experience of the Advent season fully, with our whole selves and remember that Jesus showed us what it meant to be both fully human and fully divine. It challenges us to live right here, right now as we await the birth of the Christ Child, the embodiment of God's presence in our midst.

During a season that can often become stressful and overwhelming, we are rarely permitted time to be present in our own bodies. We forget that our bodies are blessed and con-

secrated. God did not create the body to bring us doubt or shame, instead, God created us as living, breathing human beings who have the ability to live wholly—body and spirit together.

In this book, the author, Whitney Simpson, suggests practices that will help us focus on the body God created and embrace what it means to be fully human. By letting go of external demands and giving ourselves permission to be present as we listen for God in our lives, we can learn what it looks like to notice and pay attention to our bodies.

Good News of Great Joy

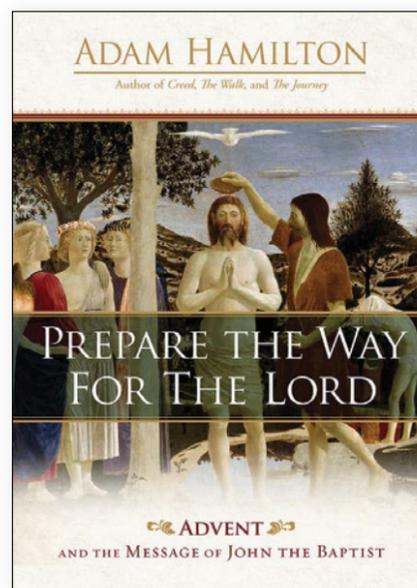
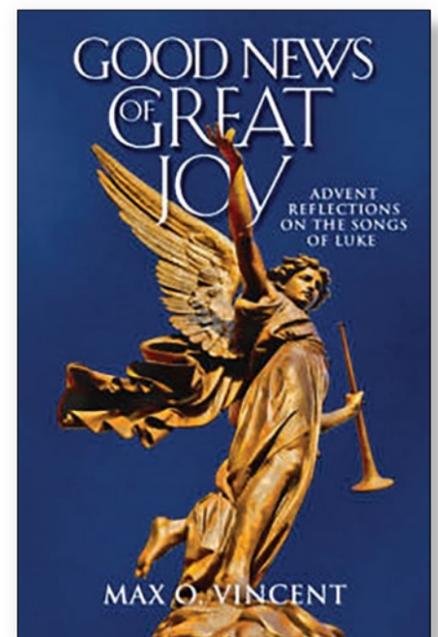
Advent Reflections on the Songs of Luke

Max O. Vincent

It's hard to imagine Advent or Christmas without music, and that goes beyond popular carols and handbells. Author Max Vincent invites readers to discover the music in the biblical story of Christmas. Four canticles (“little songs”) precede, announce, and celebrate the birth of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. These canticles invite readers to pause and consider the deeper meaning of the events surrounding his birth.

In Good News of Great Joy, 24 daily readings explore the context, content, and spirituality of these canticles. Each of the four canticles has six daily readings. The daily readings include practices and questions to encourage further reflection on these little songs. In addition, the book provides a Leader's Guide for group study.

Luke's canticles were some of the earliest songs of the church and are still prayed daily in some Christian traditions. Vincent encourages readers to pause and notice God's comforting presence as they reflect on these joyous songs of Advent.



Prepare the Way for the Lord

Advent and the Message of John the Baptist

Adam Hamilton

An unlikely character in the Christmas story, John the Baptist, his life and message, are explored in “Prepare the Way for the Lord: Advent and the Message of John the Baptist,” the latest book by the Rev. Adam Hamilton, author and senior pastor at Church of the Resurrection.

“Did you know,” Hamilton asks, “that all four gospels start not with the story of Jesus but with the story of John the Baptist?” Throughout the book and accompanying four-week Advent study, Hamilton reminds us that John the Baptist came “to prepare the way for the Lord, to help people be ready to receive the message of Christ and to receive him himself.”

Thrifty and Thankful

By Krista Jeffries

BOUND BROOK, NJ

Wesley Thrift Shop at the United Methodist Church of Bound Brook has served the Bound Brook community for almost 20 years, providing clothing and housewares at a reasonable price for anyone who is in need.

In 2021, the store took a major hit from Hurricane Ida, having been flooded with seven feet of water from the overflowing brook. Volunteers and staff had to bag up everything and haul it to the street; the only things remaining standing were muddy, empty racks that used to hold all the clothes. Blessed with assistance from the GNJ Ida Relief Fund, the store was renovated within eight months and reopened for the community on April 9, 2022. All monies were put to good use in restoring the space.

Pastor McWilliam Colon, lovingly referred to as Willy from Philly, and thrift shop coordinator Nancy Murphy, led a group of devoted volunteers as they cleared out all the water and mud, scrubbed down racks, replaced and rebuilt walls that had bowed and buckled, and repainted everything. The store may have been destroyed, but their spirit certainly had not.

Today, the thrift shop is thriving, receiving so many generous donations, and servicing more community members than ever. The thrift shop pays it forward whenever possible. Often receiving an abundance of baby clothes, Wesley Thrift Shop donates the excess to the Pregnancy



Aid & Information Center in Raritan, NJ. Additionally, the thrift shop partners with the Bound Brook Presbyterian Church Food Pantry to provide vouchers for free

Various items for sale at Bound Brook UMC's Wesley Thrift Shop.

Photo provided.

items at the thrift shop for anyone lacking basic necessities.

This is a beautiful example of good people coming together to do good works—the monetary donations people made to the Ida Relief Fund, the donations of clothing and essentials to the thrift shop, GNJ blessing the shop with the funds necessary to recover from disaster, and all the volunteers who brought the shop back to life. As a result, the thrift shop is able to pass on so many blessings to others who need them the most. The community is thankful for Wesley Thrift Shop for not only offering clothing, bedding, cookware, and plates, but for instilling hope, love, gratitude, and resilience as well.

If you would like to donate to the thrift shop, or if you are in need of anything the thrift shop has to offer, all are welcome to visit the location at 138 W Union Ave, Bound Brook, NJ 08805. 🇺🇸

CURRENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Media Ministry Coordinator (PT)

Denville Community Church

Seeking an individual who is passionate about bringing people to a relationship with Christ for this part-time position as Media Ministry Coordinator.

- We seek a person who generates creative ideas and designs, and who values a team concept of ministry; an energetic, dynamic leader who will engage all age groups online.
- The individual for this position will be responsible for producing videos, managing media, creating worship slides, and designing posts for social media.
- This will include, but is not limited to, teaching and training volunteers.
- The ministry will be evangelistic and discipleship-oriented and implemented by reaching to church and community members online. Proficiency required in social media platforms, AV and live-streaming technology.
- College degree preferred in a related field.

Interested parties should email their resume to Denville Community Church at staffing@denvillecommunitychurch.org.

Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (PT)

Denville Community Church

Seeking an individual who is passionate about bringing youth to a relationship with Christ for this part-time coordinator 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 from beyond our church community to their program. The individual for this position will be responsible for developing, implementing, and growing the youth and young adult ministries.
- This will include, but is not limited to, overseeing a youth Sunday school, a weekly youth group program, Vacation Bible School, the Confirmation program, retreats and mission trips. The ministry will be evangelistic and discipleship-oriented and implemented by reaching to the church youth and the unchurched community.
- Prior experience must include at least 3-5 years developing and growing children and youth programs within the life of a church. College degree preferred in a related field.

Interested parties should email their resume to Denville Community Church at staffing@denvillecommunitychurch.org.

Grant Monitor and Evaluator

A Future With Hope

AFWH, seeks a Full Time, Limited Term Grant Monitor and Evaluator. The Grant Monitor and Evaluator is responsible for tracking data collection, program indicators and financial expenditures to ensure that so that they adhere to grant compliance requirements. They are responsible for completing all grant progress reports. They will work closely with the bookkeeper and GNJ's accounting department, ensuring grant compliance for a successful Greater New Jersey Ida Recovery. To be qualified for this position you must be competent and skilled in Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe Acrobat, experienced in financial software, and minimum of two years of grant monitoring and evaluation experience. You must have a bachelor's degree in finance, accounting or related field or similar job experience.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/.

Director of Music

Audubon United Methodist Church

The Audubon United Methodist Church is inviting a Director of Music to become part of our faith family and to use your creativity to grow and strengthen talents in a supportive setting. The candidate must strive to enhance the worship of the congregation through offering music as central in the worship, scheduling special music, and utilizing a range of forms and mediums of music. Attested musical skills and competence are a must—A Bachelor's degree in Music preferred.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/.

Director of Music Ministry

Centenary UMC

The ministry of music is one of the most essential elements of worship and nurture in the life of the United Methodist Church. The Director of Music Ministry appreciates the vital role of music in spiritual life and worship services. The successful candidate will have experience with a broad range of music styles, including traditional and contemporary genres. As a Christian, he/she will be able to lead others into deeper spirituality through the ministry of music. The Director of Music Ministry is responsible for planning and implementing a comprehensive program of music as a whole.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/.

Organist

Audubon UMC, Wyoming and Graisbury Avenues, Audubon, NJ

Audubon UMC is seeking an Organist to work 6-10 hours per week. The Organist must demonstrate competency in organ and piano performance both as a soloist and an accompanist. The Organist must also provide musical accompaniment for the congregation and choir(s) during Sunday morning worship services, special services, and rehearsals. Will also be required to play for special services such as Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Thanksgiving Eve, Christmas Eve and any other as required. The instruments are a 25 Rank Tellers Pipe Organ and Yamaha professional grand piano.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/.

Director of Admissions

New Brunswick Theological Seminary

New Brunswick Theological Seminary (<https://nbtns.edu/>) is seeking a collaborative and experienced admissions professional to bring their proven record of accomplishment to the Director of Admissions position at NBTS. The Director of Admissions is responsible for the recruitment and enrollment of new students to the institution.

The Director must demonstrate an ability to work independently as well as collaboratively with faculty, students, alumni, staff, and administrators. The Director must be mission-driven and committed to working at a seminary with diverse students. This person must have at least two years of experience in recruiting and one year in leadership of higher education admissions. Familiarity with Christian ministry is required.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/.

Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

Bridgewater UMC, Bridgewater, NJ

Bridgewater UMC seeks a part time (25 hours per week) Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. The Director of Youth and Young Adults Ministries seeks to strengthen the next generation ministries of the church by engaging the entire congregation to claim and grow an authentic faith. The Director is responsible for developing programs and ministries for our youth from 11-18 years old as well as our young adults, with the goal of empowering and equipping this population to join and contribute to the life of the church. A bachelor's degree is required; a theology background or a divinity degree is a plus. Compensation will be competitive, and the housing (parsonage) included.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/.

Director of Music Ministries

Bridgewater UMC, Bridgewater, NJ

Bridgewater UMC seeks a part time (20 hours per week) Director of Music Ministries. The successful candidate will be someone who enjoys overseeing music ministry at BUMC, including planning, rehearsing, recruiting and leading choral and bell choirs, a praise band, children's choirs, and dance group in both traditional and contemporary worship music style. The Director of Music Ministries will oversee the music life of BUMC. The successful candidate will work closely with the Senior Pastor to create professional and uplifting worship services, serving God and the congregation, bringing creativity and enthusiasm to worship with those who hold a position of responsibility within our church community. A bachelor's degree of music is required; a master's degree in choral conducting is preferred. Compensation will be competitive based on experience.

Visit www.gnjumc.org/job-opportunities/.

CONFERENCE NEWS

New Central District Superintendent Appointed

Rev. Ronell Howard has been appointed as the new Central District Superintendent starting January 1, 2023. She will be replacing Bishop Hector Burgos who will be serving the Upper New York Conference starting the new year.

Rev. Howard is a Native of Fort Smith, Arkansas and was raised in New York City. She graduated from the State University of New York at Stony Brook with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature, and earned her Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary where she also received the Jagow Award for Excellence on Homiletics and Speech. While serving as a United Methodist pastor in Norwalk, CT, she facilitated the merger of two churches to form Cornerstone Community Church. She has served as the Lead Pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Piscataway, NJ and most recently as a Metro-Highlands Region Resourcing Director.



Rev. Ronell Howard

In her free time, Ronell loves to travel, garden, draw/paint, and follow all things Star Wars and Marvel Cinematic Universe. She loves spending time with family and friends and is the queen of spoiling her two dogs, Rocky and Robyn Fenty. Please join us in welcoming and praying for Superintendent Rev. Ronell Howard.

UPCOMING EVENTS

First UMC, Millville 'A Musical Christmas Celebration'

Dec. 4, 7:00 p.m.

The concert will help to raise funds for the mission of the Help & Hope Ministries. Refreshments will be provided.

Historic Head of the River Church Christmas Service

Dec. 4, 2:00 p.m. with speaker Rev. Dave Bailey of Ranch Hope

Please join in this joyful celebration of Christmas with special music, an uplifting message, and fellowship. 600 Rt. 49, Estell Manor, N.J.

Leadership Academy

Statistical Reports Training Dec. 6, 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Statistical Reports Refresher and FAQ Jan. 5, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

MRC Closures

Nov. 24 & 25 for Thanksgiving
Dec. 23 & 26 for Christmas

OBITUARIES

Elmo Pascale, Retired Local Pastor, passed away on September 21, 2022. A memorial service celebrating the lives of Elmo and Ella Pascale was held on November 11 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community. Memorial Donations (In lieu of flowers) may be sent to the Center for Justice and Peacemaking Eastern Mennonite University 1200 Park Road Harrisonburg, VA 22802, <https://emu.edu/cjp/>. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Martha (Marti) Weston, daughter at Marti.Weston@protonmail.com.

Elwood Davis, Lay member to Conference, passed away on October 9, 2022. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Thomas T. Trainor, Retired Full Elder, passed away on October 17, 2022. A memorial service was held on November 19 at First UMC (Tuckerton). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in honor of Rev. Trainor to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). <https://umcmmission.org>. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Lila Joyce Trainor, spouse, 330 Landing Ct. Little Egg Harbor Twp, NJ 08087-2859

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Rutherford United Methodist Church celebrated an adult baptism and confirmation of five newly received members at a joyful October 23 service. Wearing red stoles, the new members are shown here with RUMC's pastor Rev. Heeyoung Lim (center) and Associate Pastor Daniel Jimenez (right).

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 Laura at lcansonier@gnjumc.org.



DO YOU KNOW ALL THE BENEFITS OFFERED BY A DUAL SPECIAL NEEDS PLAN?

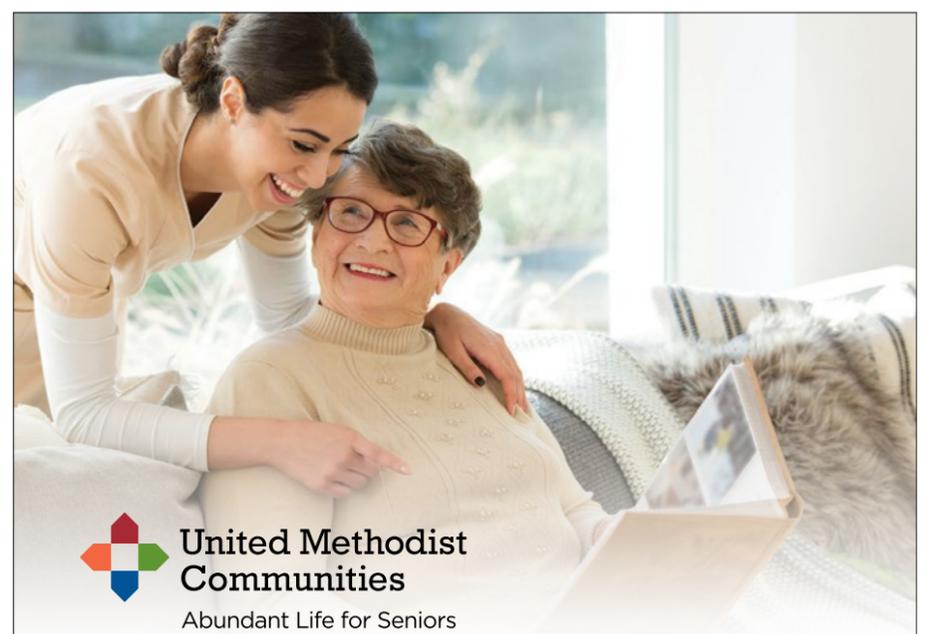
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 **United Methodist Communities**
Abundant Life for Seniors

Tapestries®: A Better Approach to Memory Care

United Methodist Communities' Tapestries Memory Care residents receive care on their own terms, replacing control with choice and decision-making. Tapestries, housed in our communities' Assisted Living neighborhoods, offers a safe, attentively supported and happy environment specially designed to care for your loved one.

To learn more about Tapestries at United Methodist Communities, visit UMCommunities.org.

Home Office
3311 State Route 33, Neptune, NJ 07753
UMCommunities.org



BRISTOL GLEN | COLLINGSWOOD | PITMAN | THE SHORES

WONDER

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS TOGETHER



Christmas Day is a Sunday? We actually got you covered.

The Eastern Pennsylvania and Greater New Jersey conferences are currently working together to produce a full video worship service including liturgy, music, and a sermon preached by Bishop Schol. The video will be a Christmastide service designed for churches to use either on Christmas Day Dec. 25, or Jan 1.

Be on the lookout the first week of December!