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NEW Spirit!

UNITED METHODISTS OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
& GREATER NEW JERSEY

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Over 60 members of the Eastern PA and Greater New Jersey conferences attended the 2020/2024 General Conference in Charlotte, NC, from April 23 to May 3. Some served as conference delegates, marshals, pages and hospitality workers. But also present, and pictured here, were EPA&GNJ staff and visitors, including Mosaic Ministry student pastors, and two bishops: John Schol and Alfred Johnson (retired).

Corbin Payne photo

EPA, GNJ Delegates Reflect on Historic General Conference

By James Lee

CHARLOTTE, NC

The United Methodist Church's postponed 2020 General Conference—now officially the 2020/2024 General Conference—held in Charlotte, NC from April 23 to May 3, was an intense experience for all delegates, including those from Eastern PA and Greater New Jersey. They sometimes worked 12-hour days, deliberating and voting on critical legislation that will influence the direction of our denomination for the next four years.

Overall, many delegates voiced amazement at how unified and spirit-filled this General Conference was. In the evenings, EPA and GNJ delegates took time to

share video reflections watched by fellow United Methodists back home.

Regionalization

In historic votes for the church, delegates broadly approved a constitutional amendment and related petitions to put the denomination's geographic regions—the U.S., Africa, Europe and the Philippines—on equal footing. The amendment now goes to annual conferences for potential ratification.

"What better gift could there be than to be a part of this historic moment in the life of our beloved church" said EPA delegate Rev. Lydia Esther Munoz, celebrating her birthday that day. "We can move in a direction that the spirit is taking us, where context matters,... and still remain one church."

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Annual Conferences to Meet Back-to-Back, but Looking Forward

By John W. Coleman

WILDWOOD, NJ

Following his ascension, Jesus Christ's followers gathered in a room to meet, pray and await the Holy Spirit's power, until it came upon them with wind and flame on what became the Day of Pentecost. The United Methodists of Greater New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania will do likewise, as they gather at the Wildwood (NJ) Convention Center, one after another, from May 19, Pentecost Sunday, until May 23, the day before Aldersgate Day.



Fittingly, one day celebrates the birth of Christ's church and its mission; the other celebrates John Wesley's spiritual conversion that gave birth to Methodism.

United Methodists of Greater New Jersey (GNJ) will hold their Annual Conference at the Wildwood center May 19-21, followed by the Eastern PA Annual Conference (EPA) May 21-23. Both assemblies will meet, pray and seek the Holy Spirit's power as they:

- Worship and praise God in song, sermon and ceremony.
- Hear reports and resolutions, and then legislate through Christian conferencing.
- Honor the sunsets and sunrises of professional ministry careers.
- Remember recently deceased clergy and clergy spouses.
- Celebrate ministry progress and accomplishments through awards.

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GNJ Stewardship & Generosity Summit Informs, Inspires

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FROM LEFT:
Scott McKenzie of Horizons Stewardship and the Rev. Brian Roberts, who heads GNJ's United Methodist Stewardship Foundation, co-lead the foundation's well-attended Stewardship & Generosity Summit April 18.

John Coleman photo



EPA Presents 4 Evangelism Awards

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FROM LEFT:
Lincoln Park UMC leaders Jack Villecco, Barbara Leas, Richard Auman, and the Rev. Quentin Wallace, pastor, receive the One Matters Award from the Rev. Evelyn Kent Clark, South District Superintendent.

John Coleman photo

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

Embracing the Joy of Our Unity

Bishop John Schol



“...so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” —ROMANS 12:5

I tasted grits for the first time at the age of 16 at an Atlanta diner. As a teenager from Philadelphia in 1972, this experience was quite novel to me, though I must confess, I never took a liking to grits.

I was in Georgia with my pastor attending the General Conference as a youth observer. Wow! As a 16-year-old, I was amazed, surprised and overwhelmed by the workings of The United Methodist Church. The newly formed denomination had formed from the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church in 1968.

As its own structure of racial segregation was ending, The United Methodist Church was already engaged in the social issues of its time: the war in Vietnam, poverty, racism, equal rights and “homosexuality.” I realized I lived a pretty sheltered life, particularly about the engagement and workings of the church.

Through the nine General Conferences I've attended, and my study of our church's history and policies, I've seen that The United Methodist Church embodies grit, passion and perseverance. It has taken more than five decades to resolve our issues over slavery, integration, ordination of women, merger, and LGBTQ inclusion. However, I use the term “resolve” loosely, as some votes by General Conference mark points of discernment rather than full resolution.

At the recent General Conference that concluded May 3, I witnessed a remarkable demonstration of grit, transcending any single matter. This event was characterized by three themes:

Unity and Celebration

Of the nine General Conferences I attended I never witnessed such unity. I thought there would be at least six “fights” over regionalization, human sexuality, the budget, the number of bishops, and a new pension program for clergy and lay employees of the church. It just didn’t happen.

There were differences of opinion and belief, but everyone worked together toward a stronger mission of the church through challenging times. All but a few votes passed by 80-90%. The unity led to celebration. Worship spontaneously broke out with singing and dancing in praise of God, inspiring preaching and joy. For the first time in a long time, we all belonged to the same team, the same church – all working toward a common mission.

Contextualization and Local Decision Making

The General Conference enacted big changes. It reduced its budget by 43% because it believes the local church is the outpost of our mission. It removed all language that previously restricted LGBTQ persons from fully participating in the life of the church and gave greater precedence to regional, annual conference and local church decision-making.

Widening, Including and Deepening

This was the first General Conference I witnessed where our African delegates were active and engaged in leading committees, speaking on the floor and offering legislation and compromise that assisted the church to move forward. The grit toward the goal of a more global church was beginning to come to fruition.

General Conference said we welcome all people. We celebrated UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and its worldwide mission, and we deepened its commitment to help our neighbors around the world. The General Conference on behalf of The United Methodist Church took responsibility for sexual abuse and sexual misconduct and apologized to all survivors of abuse. We are deepening our commitment to be a better church.

Path Forward

Grits and grit both require an acquired taste—a blend of time, ability and steadfast determination. The United Methodist Church embodies this kind of grit. We are navigating diversity with grace and advocating for contextual decision-making while championing unity, not uniformity.

We are not only going wide but also going deep in our mission. And we are embracing the joy that breaks forth, not because our circumstances are perfect, but because in the midst of it all, God is with us.

We are *United* Methodists—belonging to God and to one another. Thanks be to God. 🌍

Sean Lee to Become New GNJ Associate Superintendent

The Rev. Sean Seunghyun Lee, pastor of Cross Keys United Methodist Church in Williamstown, NJ, will serve the Greater New Jersey Conference’s Coastal Plains Region as an Associate Superintendent beginning July 1. He has led three GNJ churches and has degrees from Methodist Theological University in Seoul, Korea and Drew Theological School in New Jersey. He is “passionate about developing next generation ministry, leading inspiring worship and preaching the gospel.”

“We are excited about Sean Lee joining us as the new associate superintendent,” said the Rev. Glenn Conaway, Coastal Plains Region team leader and superintendent of the Delaware Bay District. “Sean has been an effective pastor and leader who brings knowledge, skills and passion that will help equip pastors and churches. He already has worked with Cross Racial Cross Cultural leadership development, been trained in coaching, and has a desire to raise up the next



Rev. Sean Lee

generation of transformational leaders that we need in the church. We look forward to having him share his gifts and creativity both in the region and across the annual conference.”

Bishop John Schol described Lee’s new role as “critical to the development of transformational leaders and vital congregations. Sean brings a deep faith, a keen mind and a servant’s heart as we continue to serve God, the church and the world.” 🌍



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John Coleman, Editorial Manager, Retires

The Rev. John W. Coleman, Editorial Manager for EPA&GNJ since December 2022, will retire June 30, 2024, after 10½ years of employment on the EPA Conference staff. He is the managing editor of NEWSpirit newspaper and both Eastern PA’s and Greater New Jersey’s websites and weekly Digest newsletters. He also provides other editorial services through the collaborative EPA&GNJ Communications Team.

“John has contributed significantly to our collaborative communications efforts and will leave an indelible mark on the communications ministry of both our conferences,” said EPA&GNJ Director of Communications Rev. James Lee.

“I am grateful for my colleagues among the dedicated EPA&GNJ staff,” said Coleman, who was EPA’s Communications Director from 2013 to 2022. “And I appreciate our many blessed opportunities to do communications work that helps our conferences, churches and members tell



Rev. John W. Coleman

their compelling stories of faith and witness in Christ.”

He will pursue freelance writing, editing and communications opportunities or future employment, “to continue using my gifts in pursuit of Christ’s mission.” Meanwhile, Coleman has been appointed to serve two GNJ churches as a part-time Licensed Local Pastor on loan to GNJ, starting July 1.

“John’s ability to tell powerful stories has been recognized across the United Methodist connection, as his articles are frequently promoted and published by UM News,” said Lee. “I am personally grateful for the wisdom and insights gained from working alongside him. We bless his continued journey, confident that his next steps in ministry and life will be as impactful as his tenure with us.”

Bishop Schol praised John's long-standing service, noting, “John Coleman is an exceptional writer and for more than 30 years has served The United Methodist Church telling the Good News. He has won awards for his writing and has had numerous articles printed in denomination-wide publications. His writing is thoughtful, engaging and insightful. We are grateful for his service to the church for these many years.” 🌍

Annual Conferences

Continued from page 1

- Feast and fellowship with one another.
- Learn new knowledge in interactive workshops.
- Share in collective stewardship as they vote on 2025 budgets, give to special offerings, and approve funding to Advance Special projects and other ministries.

The EPA & GNJ conference sessions will share the same uniting theme, *“Belong,”* drawn from Romans 12:5: *“... So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”* That theme was inspired by the 2023 IGNITE Youth Conference last fall, whose young participants from GNJ, EPA and other conferences used it in their gathering at Wildwoods.

Two Conferences to Share Similar Agendas

The two conferences will also share similar agendas. Preceded by Laity and Clergy sessions and worship services to commission and ordain clergy, they will open by conducting business and legislation, followed by moving memorial services for deceased clergy and spouses.

Both conferences will offer workshops on various, interesting topics. They are:

- Fresh Expressions of Church, led by the Rev. Michael Beck, Director of Re-Missioning for Fresh Expressions U.S. and Cultivator of Fresh Expressions for the Florida Conference
- Build, Paint and Name a Birdhouse for Camp & Retreat Ministry, led by Apryl Miller and the Camp and Retreat Ministry Team
- Embodied Serenity: Mindful Movement & Breathwork, led by Alyssa Ruch and Jessica “Jess” Curtis
- Foundations for Healthy Teams, led by the Revs. Shelley Smith and Lisa Depaz
- Generative Ai and the Future of Church Ministry, led by the Rev. James Lee

Members will discuss and vote on a groundbreaking Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to continue the EPA&GNJ Collaborative Partnership that elected committees, leaders and staff of the two conferences have been working to develop for a year and a half. The historic proposal, presented by both conferences’ Connectional Table chairpersons, will further engage them

in collaborative decision-making, staffing, budgeting and ministry.

“This MOU was developed and prepared by a joint task force of EPA&GNJ involving 15 elected and staff leaders from each conference and was reviewed and approved by CFA and the Connectional Table of both conferences,” reads the resolution. “It involved a survey of both conferences, Zoom and in-person feedback sessions, and the affected agencies of both conferences working together.”

‘Together We Belong to God and to One Another’

Bishop John Schol will speak to both conferences in his final episcopal address before he retires in August. He will likely review their progress and challenges and offer a deservedly hopeful outlook for their future—one that relies on living out the unifying and outreaching spirit of their common theme, *Belong*.



Wildwoods Convention Center, Wildwood, NJ.

“Together we belong to God and to one another,” he writes in his introductory, Pre-Conference Workbook letter. “As United Methodists...we are interconnected throughout our conference and with congregations around the world. Our connectionalism as the body of Christ guides our work together....We have much to celebrate about our ministry locally and around the world.”

Clergy retirees will be honored, as they pass their wisdom and mantles of leadership onto the already emerging next generation of clergy leaders in the annual Service of Passage with Anointing. In addition, district superintendents will announce new church closures and new clergy appointments to churches. 🌈

GNJ Conference to Vote on EPA&GNJ Partnership and More

By John W. Coleman

The Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, May 19-21, will consider a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to continue and extend the 18-month collaborative partnership between the GNJ and Eastern PA conferences (EPA&GNJ). Another resolution brings back the 2023 Strategic Direction proposal after further, collaborative development.

Among two dozen Annual Conference resolutions, the conference will also consider new policies to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct and abuse. And two resolutions submitted by the February deadline offer pending responses to decisions that General Conference made regarding United Methodist restrictions against participation of LGBTQ persons in ordained ministry and church marriages.

Also, the Conference is expected to approve customary resolutions for 2025, including a proposed budget, clergy pensions and health insurance benefits, the Minimum Equitable Salary, Conference Advance Specials, and enabling and approving actions taken by the Conference Board of Trustees.

Collaborative Partnership, Strategic Direction

The MOU resolution—which also will be considered by the EPA Annual Conference, May 21-23—formalizes the groundbreaking partnership that elected committees, leaders and staff of the two conferences have been working to develop for a year and a half. The historic proposal, presented by both conferences’ Connectional Table chairpersons, will further efforts at collaborative decision-making, staffing, budgeting and ministry.

The Strategic Direction resolution cites progress in meeting GNJ goals for increasing the growth and vitality of congregations, reflected in the development of their worship life, small groups, mission outreach engagement, financial stewardship and disciple-making efforts. It also affirms progress in meeting GNJ’s strategic ministry initiatives in leadership development and diversity, and



EPA&GNJ staff participate in a joint training in June 2023. Together they learned about Positive Intelligence, a collaborative process to strengthen job performance, relationships and mental health. John Coleman photo

progress made in “ending the sin of racism,” while strengthening racial-ethnic congregations.

That progress, the resolution reports, comes from collaboration among the conference’s Extended Cabinet and Connectional Table, along with a Strategic Direction Team and working with “our sister conference, Eastern Pennsylvania.” Thus, it calls for adoption of the resubmitted 2023 Strategic Direction proposal, with annual reports on its “implementation, progress, challenges and necessary modifications.”

Sexual Misconduct Policy Update, Response

GNJ “has not updated its sexual ethics policy since 2009,” reads a resolution proposed to do just that. It cites increased research and greater public awareness about sexual misconduct since then as reasons conference policies should be updated.

“While most ministry leaders remain faithful to their vows and their covenant with God and the church, there are ministry leaders who sometimes violate the trust given them,” reads the resolution. Relating that violation to the abuse of power, it admits that both clergy and laypersons “can engage in acts of sexual misconduct, abuse and/or harassment.”

The resolution includes definitions, a theological foundation, examples of ministerial relationships and of sexualized behavior, harassment, abuse and domestic violence. It also defines standards of conduct for clergy and laity, confidentiality and “perceptions of reality.”

A second resolution would create a Sexual Misconduct Response Team (SMRT) to assist individuals and churches when sexual misconduct is discovered. “Research has shown that responding well to sexual misconduct reduces levels of harm to individuals and churches and lessens liability,” the proposal claims. It calls for recruitment, screening, training and deployment of diverse team members, plus trauma-informed care for victims. But the response team would not be involved in any judicial or disciplinary processes.

‘A Safer GNJ’

Two 2024 resolutions relate to “A Safer GNJ,” a resolution adopted by the 2023 Annual Conference.

One asks to change an amendment to the approved policy. That amendment reads, “GNJ shall offer trauma-informed care to survivors of previous complaints, including, but not limited to reimbursement for post-traumatic stress treatment as recommended by

COSROW” (Commission on the Status & Role of Women).

The change seeks to clarify that amendment by recommending the UMC’s General COSROW “Do No Harm—A Complaint Process Guide” as a guide for trauma-informed care. And it seeks to clarify that for validated abuse complaints, therapeutic care by a licensed professional, “to address issues specific to the assault,” should be paid by the conference if not by insurance.

The second resolution related to “A Safer GNJ” calls on GNJ’s Connectional Table and COSROW to co-create an online assistance portal for “victims and survivors of sexual abuse perpetrated by GNJ laity leaders and clergy members to come forward so they may get the help they need, and perpetrators may be called to account.”

It calls on the Connectional Table and Council on Finance and Administration to annually report the number of individuals who come forward and what is spent on treatment and healing. “We should take the opportunity as a Conference to take positive steps in a public fashion to create a sense of trust and safety for other potential victims and survivors to come forward with their experiences of abuse,” reads the resolution.

Safe Sanctuaries, A Future with Hope

GNJ’s Safe Sanctuaries Team is mandated to present updated/amended legislation to the Annual Conference yearly. Its 2024 update endorses the proposed Sexual Misconduct Response Team. It also proposes that churches observe Safe Sanctuaries Sunday on the last Sunday in September, with conference-supplied worship resources, and that they review/update Safe Sanctuaries policies yearly.

In addition, the team asks that all active clergy complete the Professional Ethics Development Program this year and then once a quadrennium.

Conference members also are asked to approve changes to the bylaws of “A Future with Hope, Inc.” (AFWH), which were updated in July 2023. Organized

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EPA to Vote on Conference Partnership, Camp’s Land Easement

By John W. Coleman

The 2024 Eastern PA Annual Conference, May 21-23, will consider 11 resolutions, including a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to continue and extend the 18-month collaborative partnership between the EPA and Greater New Jersey conferences (EPA&GNJ).

The MOU resolution—which also will be considered by the GNJ Annual Conference, May 19-21—formalizes the groundbreaking partnership that elected committees, leaders and staff of the two conferences have been working to develop for a year and a half. The historic proposal, presented by both conferences’ Connectional Table chairpersons, will further efforts at collaborative decision-making, staffing, budgeting and ministry.

Also, EPA members are expected to approve a full slate of leaders and members of conference boards, committees and agencies for 2024-2028, with many new leaders nominated for a new quadrennium by the Committee on Nominations & Leadership.

Innabah Conservation Easement for Payment

In addition, EPA’s Camp & Retreat Ministries (CRM) Board proposes a restricted conservation easement of 126 acres of land at Innabah Camp & Retreat Center in Spring City. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement that permanently limits uses of land to protect its conservation values.

Innabah would retain ownership of the land and be paid from \$1,392,000 to \$1,834,000 for the loss of its usage value by a conservation trust for limiting use of it for conservation purposes.

The payment would enable the CRM board to pay all of Innabah’s past payroll liability and provide future

CRM funding for camp development, improvements and scholarships. The funds would be invested and monitored according to EPA’s new fund policy. Innabah can use the remaining 46 acres of its property without restrictions.

Conference Advance Specials

Eight projects are being proposed for Conference Advance Special support as of July 1. Advance Specials are local projects given exclusive rights by the Annual Conference to solicit funding from churches conference-wide. Churches that first fulfill their shared (connectional) giving and remittance commitments can support Advance Special projects through “second-mile giving.”

- The 2024-25 Advance Special ministries are:
- The Center-Philadelphia and Grace Café at Arch Street UMC.
 - Code Blue winter homeless shelter ministry at Haws Avenue UMC, Norristown.
 - The Summer Reading and Lunch Program at Cokesbury UMC, Marcus Hook.
 - The Liberia Education Project at Somerton UMC, Philadelphia.
 - Light of Marnie, which supports a Christian Academy in Liberia, West Africa.
 - LUMINA, a family and community services ministry in Lancaster.
 - Spiritual Renewal Ministries, Inc., providing spiritual direction, retreats and seminars.
 - Wesley Foundation of the City of Philadelphia, a United Methodist-related campus ministry (Open Door Christian Community) at Drexel University

Supporting Freedom to Vote

EPA’s Committee on Native American Ministry (CoNAM) offers a social advocacy resolution titled “Continuing the Journey toward Healing and Wholeness with Indigenous People.” They call upon EPA to join with the UMC’s Council of Bishops who took a “bold stand against voter suppression in 2020 and again in 2022 in their belief that ‘...the right of every citizen to vote in the United States is under attack...’” The bishops urge United Methodists to “use their influence in their states, legislative districts, and local precincts to enable voter registration and to encourage elected officials to provide the resources necessary to support the fullest participation in elections.” (A Call for Equal Voting Rights, January 2022)

CoNAM calls on EPA members to support the Congressional Freedom to Vote Act (S.2747) and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (S.4) by contacting their senators directly or through the website at <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-you-can-do/advocacy/take-action/>. Their rationale states that the voting rights legislation impacts the lives and rights of Native peoples across the nation.

Both acts would require that voters are given ample time and means to exercise their right to vote, while encouraging civic participation, protection of poll workers and transparency in the electoral process, says CoNAM.

GMC Ties Disqualify EPA Delegation Membership?

“United Methodists may not hold membership in two denominations simultaneously, and upon joining another denomination, membership in The United Methodist Church is terminated.” That is a rule cited by a resolution that would prohibit EPA members who belong to the new Global Methodist Church (GMC) or serve on its Transitional Leadership Council from also serving on the conference’s delegation to the Northeastern Jurisdiction, which meets in July.

Any such members would be required to “cease their involvement in the preparations and proceedings of Annual Conference, Jurisdictional Conference and subsequent General Conferences.”

Clergy Benefits, Church Closures

- Four clergy financial benefits resolutions relate to:
- Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)
 - Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons
 - Equitable Compensation for clergy in churches facing economic difficulties
 - A Clergy Salary Arrearage Policy
- And the conference will vote on discontinuing seven closed churches, while expressing “thanksgiving for all the blessings made possible by the clergy and laity who have contributed to the ministry and mission of the following congregations”:
- Fremont: Union UMC
 - Pottstown: Salem UMC
 - Hamburg: Bethany UMC
 - Port Carbon: First UMC
 - Donaldson UMC
 - Philadelphia: Servants of Christ UMC
 - Philadelphia: Trinity UMC. 🇺🇸



Innabah Camp & Retreat Center

General Conference

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Removal of Harmful Language

At another pivotal moment the conference, without debate, removed the denomination’s longstanding ban on ordained clergy who identify as “self-avowed practicing homosexuals,” a rule established in 1984. Another popular decision prevents clergy and churches from being penalized for engaging in or refraining from conducting same-sex weddings.

Joyous applause, embraces and celebratory hymn singing erupted during a recess. “Our ordinations are now legal!” shouted a tearful Rev. Kaleigh Corbett Rasmussen, GNJ delegate. Barriers imposed by exclusionary language seemed to dissolve, signaling a new era of inclusivity.

“Full inclusion requires baby steps to achieve completely,” said the Rev. David Gaitan of Trinity UMC in Ewing, NJ, who was there to observe. “We have taken one today.”

Social Principles Revision

The Conference revised the harmful language in the Social Principles by removing the phrase “the practice of homosexuality... is incompatible with Christian teaching,” ending the church’s 52-year anti-LGBTQ stance.

“I remember 1972,” said Judy Ehninger, EPA’s lead lay delegate. “I want you to know I’ve been praying for this day for 52 years.”

The Rev. William Williams III of GNJ discussed the broader implications of this change, “If we don’t try to live into who we say we are, it harms our witness to the world... I’m glad to have been a part of passing the revised Social Principles. Now we need to live into them.”

GNJ’s young adult delegate Moselle Jules shared how the inclusion of queer persons has rekindled her hope in The United Methodist Church. “I think the church has an amazing opportunity to create disciples and to foster young people,” she stated. “It is nice to see that we can work together to create something for the future.”

A Spirit of Joy, Excitement

This General Conference passed other groundbreaking legislation, including giving deacons full sacramental authority.

The Rev. Edward Cameron, an EPA delegate and deacon, was excited about that change. “It gives me numerous opportunities to practice the sacraments in my church and beyond,” he said. “It’s been a long time coming, and we are thankful that the church recognizes our role as deacons in extending the church to the world as a place where the sacraments can be both presented and received.”

First-time attendee and EPA reserve lay delegate Kristine Adams shared her initial apprehensions amid the positive turn of events, saying, “This is my first General Conference, and I had some apprehension before coming. It has been nothing



EPA delegate Rev. Lydia Esther Munoz and others celebrate the vote to fully regionalize The United Methodist Church, a constitutional amendment that now requires approval by two-thirds of annual conferences. Corbin Payne photo

but peace and love, and I really felt the Spirit. Everyone here is trying to work together—listening to each other.”

Bethany Amey-Sutton, lay leader of GNJ’s delegation, observed a transformative atmosphere. “There was a different spirit—a joy and excitement about the way we are building a church that is truly open for all people. There was a commitment to working together.”

While ending the temporary allowance for churches to disaffiliate and take their property, the Conference agreed to “reaffiliation,” a grace-filled measure

of reconciliation. It allows disaffiliated churches or defrocked clergy to have a potential pathway back into The United Methodist Church.

“At this General Conference, we’re leaving that light on for people who maybe felt that light was not on for them,” said the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm, EPA delegation co-leader. Reflecting on her childhood, when her parents would leave the light on for her to return home, she shared. “We want to say to them: ‘Welcome home. It’s a safe place. This is a sanctuary for you. And the light is on.’” 🇺🇸

GNJ Stewardship & Generosity Summit Informs and Inspires

By John W. Coleman

At the Stewardship and Generosity Summit, sponsored April 18 by the UM Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey Conference, Scott McKenzie’s keen wisdom poured from the stage and screen, with serious and humorous instruction as captivating as his informative PowerPoint slides.

That wisdom filled appetites like the sumptuous lunch that host church Haddonfield UMC served to more than 80 attendees from 36 congregations and ministries. Each of them came to learn how to increase giving in their churches.

What many learned is that generosity grows from gratitude, and resources grow from relationships, and that most churches “don’t have a giving problem. They have an asking problem.”

The Rev. Brian Roberts, foundation executive director, set the stage for McKenzie by reviewing giving trends that showed mostly increases in charitable giving, even to religious groups and even during the pandemic. “We’re here today because people continue to be generous in their giving,” he said. “They’re just not giving to us.”

Of course, there is greater competition for that generosity among nonprofits. Religious groups received about 27 percent of all donations to charities in 2022; but that is a shrinking share of all giving to nonprofits.

That’s why Roberts wants to resource churches to help them attract more of the dollars that people want to give. And he wants to do it connectionally, by holding annual summits and helping to “create a movement of learning, growing, and developing new models rooted in God’s grace and our Wesleyan DNA.”

Scott McKenzie, a partner and senior executive at Horizons Stewardship, has helped congregations across the country, including some in Greater New Jersey, make stewardship part of their DNA through capital campaigns, planned giving and other tools and strategies to inspire generosity.

An ordained United Methodist Elder with a Ph.D. in spiritual formation and about 30 years of fundraising experience, he is also a certified coach with C.F.R.E. (Certified Fundraising Executive) status and is currently coaching several GNJ pastors. And he is an author and co-author of four books on stewardship and generosity as keystones of discipleship.

‘Keep it Spiritual!’

It’s McKenzie’s focus on spiritual formation that may be most remarkable, especially when he uses it to ground and elevate his teaching about stewardship. “He walks the walk!” said Roberts.

“Keep it spiritual” was the first of five “Principles for Growing Generosity” that McKenzie’s offered. “People learn about giving and generosity through the



ABOVE: The Rev. Gina Hendrickson, pastor of First Methodist Church of Moorestown, names stewardship ideas she will use with her church to encourage generosity.
John Coleman photos

preaching and teaching they experience at the church,” he explained. “It is essential to lay a spiritual foundation using biblical generosity principles, so people can understand the connection between their generosity and their relationship with God.”

In fact, he said, the most important scripture to inspire generous giving is not the usual 2 Corinthians 9:7—“God loves a cheerful giver,” but John 3:16—“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

“Tell Your Ministry Story” was rule #2. “One of the primary reasons people give to any organization is a belief in the mission. People want to give to organizations that are focused on a mission and accomplishing it. Finding ways to tell how your church is accomplishing its mission is key to increasing levels of support.”

The other three principles are:

- *Make the Ask*—The most common way that churches make the ask is through the annual appeal. But we also should make the ask through websites, planned giving initiatives, capital campaigns and special offerings.



Pastor Tim Merrill describes “Impact Maker” Imani Community Fellowship in Camden (the former Bethel UMC and now a Hope Center), where he forges relationships and creative initiatives with community partners and local residents, including formerly incarcerated men.



Scott McKenzie



FROM LEFT: The Rev. Gerri Ridings, pastor of Green Creek-Bethel United Methodist Church, one of three “Impact Makers” churches at the summit, describes the church’s “Our Part” community ministry that supplies food to neighborhood children on weekends when school lunch programs are not available. With her are program coordinator Mary Ann Schellinger and Kent Schellinger.

Looking at Horizon’s Integrated Church Funding Model, we need to be sure we are promoting different ways in which people can partner with the church—not just pledging.

- *Measure Effectiveness*—We want to be sure that the strategies we are deploying are having the desired effect. Using analytics or even basic metrics will help you determine whether or not what you are doing is actually increasing generosity.
- *Build Donor Relationships*—“Never talk about people’s money apart from their discipleship,” McKenzie said, quoting church leadership sage Lovett Weems. “Never talk about the church’s money apart from its mission!” He taught other principles of nurturing donor relationships also, starting with the importance of expressing gratitude for donors’ gifts.

Create a Discipleship Path

McKenzie taught numerous other, practical principles, while also fielding questions. Included in his suggestions:

- Have prayer and devotions before financial commitments are made.
- Create a “Discipleship Path” that embraces stewardship, giving and generosity (SGG).
- Offer a generosity preaching and teaching series, along with small groups studies.
- Establish a Generosity Team.
- Share life-transformation stories, “the heart of our faith” to help people resonate with the value of generosity.
- Ask committed givers to share their stories that inspire their own generosity.

In addition, “You should know what people give,” he strongly advised, concurring with most stewardship experts

that such knowledge can help pastors identify committed and uncommitted leaders and also care for their members. “It will be one of your greatest joys,” he said, “but also one of your deepest sorrows.”

‘New Perspectives Helped Spark Creative Ideas’

“This stewardship summit caught the attention of our treasurer, Lori Rapp, who organized a team from our finance committee to attend,” said the Rev. Heather Valosin, pastor of Denville Community (UM) Church. “Getting outside our bubble and hearing new perspectives helped spark creative ideas and reignite our understanding of generosity as a joyful form of discipleship. We look forward to sharing these ideas with the finance committee and implementing some of them. We also hope to get help through Horizons for long-term planning for the vitality of our congregation.”

Roberts used some of the afternoon session to introduce leaders from three GNJ churches, whom he called Impact Makers, and several more attendees, including from Denville Church. All shared uplifting stories of resourceful, impactful ministries their churches were undertaking to serve their communities.

The summit began with worship and ended with Communion and a benediction, all sweetened by praise music from Haddonfield UMC’s ministerial staff. In-between, there was McKenzie’s teaching, attendees’ testimonies and Roberts’ exhortation, encouraging the “congregation” of mostly pastors to believe in the possibilities of faithful, fruit-bearing stewardship.

Perhaps the most fitting thing to add to this worshipful stewardship summit would have been an offering. 🙏



FROM LEFT: Linda Henderson, Robert Haerberle and the Rev. Sam Park, from First UMC in Delran, participate in a table-talk about stewardship challenges and possible solutions.

Urban Ministry Awards Go to 4 Community-Engaged Churches

By John W. Coleman

In describing the urban ministry challenge today, the Rev. Evelyn Kent Clark, Eastern PA Conference Dean of the Cabinet, may have turned iconic author Charles Dickens' most famous opening line into a call for mission evangelism.

"We think these are difficult times with high inflation, wars and rumors of war," she told a sanctuary crowd during the presentation of awards to four United Methodist churches for their dedicated ministry efforts. "But we represent Christ in the midst of everything that's going on. So, this is the best time for evangelism that we've ever seen!"

Could our churches be living in the "best of times" amid "the worst of times," to borrow from Dickens' classic *A Tale of Two Cities*? Well, perhaps.

"People are looking for something," asserted Clark, Superintendent of the South District. "And we've got what they're looking for."

The annual Herbert E. Palmer Award for Urban Ministry celebrates urban churches that try with faithful, creative determination to offer people what they're looking for and what they need most in the worst of times to help sustain them in both body and soul.

Four EPA churches in four districts received the 2024 Palmer Awards at Christ UMC in Fairless Hills April 6. They are: Mother African Zoar in Philadelphia (East District); Aurand Memorial in Ringtown



Your Sister's Closet, a free clothing store sponsored by Aurand Memorial UMC in Ringtown.

(North District); St. Daniel's in Chester (South District); and Hebron in Lebanon (West District).

Over 50 pastors and lay members came for the entire 90-minute ceremony, which also included presentation of the conference's annual Denman Evangelism and



FROM LEFT: The Rev. Eric Carr, St. Daniel's UMC's pastor, received a Palmer Award from South District Superintendent Evelyn Kent Clark, as the Rev. David Eckert, Urban Commission co-chair, looks on. John Coleman photo

One Matters awards. Each drove for hours to and from the church. But they clearly felt it was worth the journey, as they all voiced earnest gratitude for the special recognition received from the conference.

Remarkable, Life-Enhancing Ministries

The Rev. David Eckert, co-chair of EPA's Urban Commission, read glowing descriptions of each church's remarkable, life-enhancing ministries of community outreach and engagement. And then each representative, clergy and laity team received their award from their district superintendent.

Mother African Zoar UMC's pastor, the Rev. William Brawner, led a group of 16 members from their pews to tread the red carpet toward the pulpit. As they filled that sacred space, Eckert remembered the Rev. Herbert Palmer as a revered urban ministry mentor and model of leadership over many years.

Eckert then described Zoar's purchase and use of an RV to distribute food, clothes and other needs in its North Philadelphia neighborhood, but also to offer Holy Communion wherever and to whoever wants it. The Urban Commission at first rejected Zoar's grant application, Eckert recalled, because the

idea seemed too "radical." But Brawner and his members proceeded with their mobile ministry anyway, prompting the commission to say yes to their second funding request. "We had to get on board with you," Eckert admitted with a chuckle.

Also lauded were Zoar's other outreach to its underserved neighbors. That includes sharing employment, housing and health resources information, twice-monthly free food distribution, breakfast with worship in its fellowship hall on Sundays at 9 a.m., partnering with community organizations and schools to deliver needed supplies and services, and providing youth with Work-Ready temporary employment at \$15/hour to help them prepare for future employment.

'Teamwork makes the dream work'

"Teamwork makes the dream work," said Brawner who accepted the award from the Rev. Andrew Foster III, East District Superintendent. He then commended his members for working together as partners to actualize dream-worthy ministries with and for their community.

Aurand Memorial UMC in Ringtown opened Your Sister's Closet in 2022 to empower vulnerable women striving to rebuild their lives while recovering from addiction, abusive relationships and the impacts of poverty. Donna Holmes Burchess started the free clothing store for women seeking employment, with

help from Aurand's pastor, the Rev. Julian Milewski.

Its compassionate services also include job-hunting assistance to encourage those entering or returning to the workforce. They have seen the store quickly evolve into "a beacon of hope for women facing challenging life circumstances."

"We are privileged and grateful to able to be the Lord's hands and feet in the world," said Holmes after receiving the Palmer Award from the Rev. Hun Ju Lee, North District Superintendent. "Your Sister's Closet is making a real difference in women's lives and a life-changing impact on its community," said Lee. "It's offering more than just clothing, but also a fresh start and confidence for them to pursue new opportunities."

'Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities'

The mission of St. Daniel's UMC, serving its community in Chester for nearly 153 years, is "Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities," reported Eckert. Their outreach efforts include serving 5,000 meals



Donna Holmes Burchess receives a Palmer Award for Aurand Memorial UMC in Ringtown, which sponsors Your Sister's Closet, a free clothing store for women striving to rebuild their lives.

John Coleman photo

a year, giving Christmas shoebox gifts, and offering clothes and other support to families in need.

The church's nearby satellite campus, HOPE Point Ministries, in the city's center, offers weekly drive-through prayer, feeding programs, diaper and clothing drives, youth and young adult activities, and popular classes in dance, music,

Continued on next page

Two Church Leaders Receive GNJ Denman, Davisson Awards

The 2024 Greater New Jersey Annual Conference honors two lay members who are providing a lifetime of leadership to their local churches and beyond.

Harry Denman Evangelism Award

Jack Scharf, a Certified Lay Minister and Lay Member to Annual Conference, has served alongside seven pastors as a member of Morristown United Methodist church for 45 years. A member of the GNJ Council on Finance and Administration, he is also president of the Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society.

Scharf is a faculty member of both the Lay Leadership Academy and the Lay Servant Certification Program. He is Lay Leader of the Skylands District serves on its Committee on Ministry and has served as a conference coach for about 20 churches, while performing



Jack Scharf

annual financial audits for 10 churches. He has a Masters in Theological Studies (MTS) degree from Drew Theological School and has served as vice president of its alumni association.

But the Denman Award recognizes the dedication of evangelists, and that also describes Jack Scharf. "He freely shares his faith journey with his local church, his community, his denomination and even the world," reads his award nomination. "In sharing his own story of how Jesus transformed his life, he brings others to know and claim that story for themselves."

"It is his kindness and caring heart that are his strongest evangelism tool.

Through those qualities he builds relationships where people want to know more about his faith and how he has overcome so many challenges and is able to be the person he is today. God uses Jack Scharf to share the radical message of Jesus Christ that people matter."

Helenor Alter Davisson Award

Mary Bland, a Certified Lay Servant and Lay Member to Annual Conference at Christ Church United Methodist in Paterson, has served and helped lead numerous church committees and ministries. A communion steward and worship leader, she is also the president of Christ



Mary Bland

Church's United Women in Faith and a member of the Board of Trustees, choir, scholarship committee and GriefShare ministry.

In addition, Bland serves beyond her local church on the GNJ Committee on the Status & Role of Women (COSROW) and the Skylands District Superintendency Committee.

Moreover, Bland joyfully serves the community through her church's affiliated New Direction CDC (Community Development Corporation), the Paterson Alliance, Public School #13, Servant's Heart and Star of Hope Ministries. She also helps distribute fresh produce to residents and participates in church and citywide prayer groups. 🇺🇸



FROM LEFT: Ryan Perini and the Rev. Bob Howard receive a Palmer Urban Ministry Award for Hebron UMC in Lebanon from the Rev. Jennifer Freymoyer, West District Superintendent.
John Coleman photo

Urban Ministry Awards

Continued from previous page

sewing and design. They also partner with community agencies to connect residents with counseling, family health and wellness services, financial support services, and more.

“God has called us for such a time as this,” said the Rev. Eric Carr, St. Daniel’s pastor, echoing the prophetic notions of South District Superintendent Clark, after receiving the award from her. “God has called us to be the church that does ministry differently in the community. God has called us to love people, and that’s where it starts for us. We believe that through our servant work people will see God, and then they will see hope.”

Finally, Eckert introduced the awards gathering to Hebron UMC, an historic church trying valiantly to revitalize its aged building, as well as its membership and mission to serve the changing city of Lebanon. A five-year plan is part of that effort, bolstered by participation in the

conference’s Pathways congregational vitality initiative.

The plan includes hosting four large “parking lot” events a year to draw increasing numbers of interested residents. They are a Summerfest block party, a Fall Festival, a Halloween Trunk or Treat event, and a Spring Fling.

But after receiving the Palmer Award, Hebron’s enthusiastic pastor, the Rev. Bob Howard, was eager to tell listeners about two other ministries led by the church’s new children’s ministry coordinators Ryan and Sienna Perini. They created a popular, mobile mini-skate park where dozens of children come to enjoy skating and learn about Jesus.

And the church’s annual Easter egg hunt was moved to a local park in March, after participation grew from 80 to 140 children the past two years. “We planned for 250 kids this time,” Howard said. But instead, thanks partly to advertising on Facebook, over a thousand energetic children showed up ready for the egg hunt March 24.



The Rev. William Brawner and members of Mother African Zoar UMC receive a Palmer Award from East District Superintendent the Rev. Andrew Foster III as the Rev. David Eckert, Urban Commission co-chair, looks on... *John Coleman photo*



Hebron UMC created a popular mobile mini-skate park where children come to enjoy skating and learn about Jesus.
Rev. Bob Howard photo

‘We’re Going to Matter Here’

The Rev. Jennifer Freymoyer, West District Superintendent, praised Howard’s persistence and church leaders’ determination to stand in the gap and serve their community, declaring even in the face of decline, “We’re going to matter here.”

“We’re an old, blue-collar, Pennsylvania Dutch congregation, and change is slow,” said Howard, adding with a laugh, “I think out-of-the-box so much, sometimes it scares my congregation. But we’re right in the middle of ethnic diversity changes happening in Lebanon. And we have to change to meet the needs there,

especially to attract young kids.”

Indeed, what these four congregations and others are discovering is that smart change is essential for effective urban ministry, especially now, in what many do consider “the worst of times.” As Clark said, people are “looking for something,” and urban churches have to be able to create that “something,” whether it’s new ministries or “new places for new people,” to cite a decade-old United Methodist missional strategy.

And those churches that do create and commit to doing something new might discover that this actually is the “best time for evangelism that we’ve ever seen.” 🌍

Read about the Rev. Herbert E. Palmer and churches that received Herbert E. Palmer Urban Ministry Awards on EPA’s Urban & Metro Ministries web page. Also, a video about the awards presentations is being produced for the Eastern PA Annual Conference session.

EPA Recognizes Four Who ‘Go and Make Disciples’
One Matters Award, 3 Denman Evangelism Awards

By John W. Coleman

The Eastern PA Conference celebrates evangelism each year with two major awards that recognize churches and individuals making strides in living out Jesus’ Great Commission to “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). The goal of that important recognition—which comes from both the conference and two national, church-related agencies—is really to remind and inspire all of us to go and do likewise.

At a pre-Annual Conference awards ceremony April 6, EPA presented the One Matters Award, on behalf of UM Discipleship Ministries, to Lincoln Park Community United Methodist Church, located in Reading, PA. The church, which draws about 100 worshipers on Sundays, describes itself as “a friendly, open-minded, non-judgmental community of faith who are simply trying to be faithful to Jesus’ greatest command to “love God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength; and, to love our neighbor as ourselves.” (Luke 10:27).

“The ministry of Lincoln Park Community UMC is having a tremendous impact on the Lincoln Park community,” said the Rev. Lloyd Speer, co-chair of EPA’s Congregational Development Team, in announcing the award. “The pastor, Rev. Quentin Wallace, is a pastoral presence in the church and the community. He is a powerful leader whose unique talents and strengths have



LEFT: The Rev. Quentin Wallace, pastor of Lincoln Park Community UMC.; CENTER: The Rev. Scott Kunle, Denman Clergy Awardee, expresses the urgency and challenge of reaching society’s Millennials (people born from 1981 to 1996), many of whom describe themselves as Christian but don’t attend church.; RIGHT: Alvin Doeleh, Denman Laity Awardee. *John Coleman photos*

resulted in a new sense of purpose, passion, and growth in the church, which is affecting the community.”

In fact, since Wallace’s appointment in July 2023, two youth and one adult were baptized, and 23 persons have joined the church. Thanks to new ministries and creative worship, community outreach and worship attendance have increased.

Speer also announced three Harry Denman Awards for Evangelism, which are administered by the Foundation for Evangelism, a grant-making organization in Lake Junaluska, NC, started in 1949 by Dr. Harry Denman, then General Secretary of the Methodist Church’s Board of Evangelism.

The Rev. Scott Kuhnle, pastor of Black Creek United Methodist Church in

Sugarloaf, near Hazleton, received the Denman Award for Clergy. He led members to serve a quarterly homecooked “mission breakfast” fundraiser to support neighbors in need. The 2023 Vacation Bible School also reached new people. VBS kids sang during Sunday worship to end the weeklong program, followed by a family carnival where Kuhnle led members in showing “radical hospitality” by offering “free food, ice cream, popcorn, carnival games, prizes and a huge bounce house obstacle course.”

The outgoing pastor “believes evangelism is an essential part of his mission and works hard to create opportunities to engage his members in outreach throughout the year,” said the Rev. Hun Ju Lee, North District Superintendent. One of their most successful outreach

events is a free community concert series, where “local bands perform at their outdoor venue, and people come to enjoy a free evening of music, dinner, and ice cream.”

Alvin Doeleh, a member of New Life UMC since his teenage years, received the Laity Denman Award from DS Clark. As both evangelism and youth ministry chair, he has helped double the number of active youth, along with adults. “He ensures that every youth who wants to attend church worship and events can do so, even if he has to drive them there himself,” said Speer and Clark during the award presentation.

Doeleh helps young people to grow in faith and leadership abilities by training them to serve in the Youth Fellowship.

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Church Adopts Fresh Expressions to ‘Bear Fruit that will Last’

By John W. Coleman

“I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last...” from John 15:16

M I D D L E T O W N , N J

Fresh Expressions describes itself as a “Wesleyan, Spirit-led movement to cultivate communities of love and grace for people neglected by the church.” Indeed, at Middletown (NJ) United Methodist Church (MUMC) it is a new, emerging outreach mission that is bearing fruit where it belongs: outside the church and in the community.

For Gail Maples, a lifelong United Methodist and Middletown UMC member for five years, that new outward expression of her faith is an exciting departure from conventional notions of church outreach where the goal is to eventually add to worship attendance and membership. But it’s made possible by the encouragement of her pastor and a close-knit cadre of accountability partners her church calls “pioneers.”



Gail Maples prepares to serve tea and pastries to her Fresh Expression group.

“I am so passionate about my Holy Spirit-led journey with our Fresh Expressions team,” she said. “This surprised me. I have always embraced both traditional and contemporary worship on a Sunday morning, most often in a church building.

“But through prayer, discussion, training, and the support of my church family, I have been made aware of the beauty of this outreach, to potentially connect with those outside who would not otherwise be open to hearing the Good News of



Jesus Christ, especially in the context of a church building.”

Indeed, that is the ingenious purpose of Fresh Expressions groups across the U.S. and beyond that gather in non-church venues like brew pubs, coffee shops, campgrounds and online.

EPA and GNJ members who attend the hourlong “Fresh Expressions of Church” workshop at each of their Annual Conferences in May will learn some basics about this new movement from Michael Beck, who leads Fresh Expressions initiatives for United Methodist Discipleship Ministries and the Florida Conference. He also teaches it at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

Reaching ‘Those Who are Not Yet Part of Any Church’

“Inherited congregations, with long histories, are experimenting with cultivating ‘fresh expressions’ of church...for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of those who are not yet part of any church,” reads the workshop description. Visit www.epaumc.org/ac2024/workshops and www.gnjumc.org/ac2024/2024-focus-groups-2 for more information.

Maples reached out to several single women in her 50-plus residential community to meet regularly for tea, pastries and conversation on her patio. She knew they didn’t seem to get out much or have many visitors. None of the neighbors were regular churches attenders, but they found other interests to share while becoming friends.

After several meetups, she told the group about a women’s retreat she had attended at her church and how attendees prayed for people in their lives. She

cautiously asked her new friends if they had anything they wanted her to pray for. Several mentioned other people they were praying for, and Maples said she would do likewise. She then spoke about the women’s prayer group and informal Sunday worship at her church but did not press them to attend.

Soon she plans to offer brief devotional moments before their meetings begin—maybe using the Upper Room devotional guide—for those who want to come early. But their meetings will remain unreligious for now. She calls these “baby steps” toward inviting her group to share a fledgling faith journey together. “I won’t say it’s scary but just a different approach for me.”

Will her Fresh Expression journey “be simple or go fast? No, but will it be worthwhile,” she said. “Is it something God has planned for me, for the people in our group and who knows how many others? Absolutely.”

Another new ministry just began that uses recreational frisbee golf to reach young adults. And the Rev. Derrick Doherty, Middletown’s pastor, is helping two young adult members discern if God is calling them to start a Fresh Expression focused on online gamers.

“We have set a God-size goal of launching and sustaining at least three fresh expressions by 2026,” Doherty said. He meets monthly with the five pioneers to provide “consulting, coaching and cheer-leading” as they plan, pray and proactively encourage one another.

‘Go Into the Community, Engage with People and Stay with Them There’

Mitch Marcello, a Fresh Expressions trainer, met with about 30 church members in October and November 2023 to explain the initiative and help them envision and begin to plan their efforts.

“We learned that the majority of our ministries and missions eventually invite people to come and engage with MUMC at the church building,” Doherty said. “But studies show that only about 40 percent of the community will engage with anything that a local church is currently doing. That means when a local church continues with the status quo, 60 percent of the community will not engage with them. For Middletown that was just unacceptable.

“We knew we had to do something else. We knew we had to go out into the community, engage with people there and stay with them there.”

Indeed, “to stay there” is the challenge Fresh Expressions

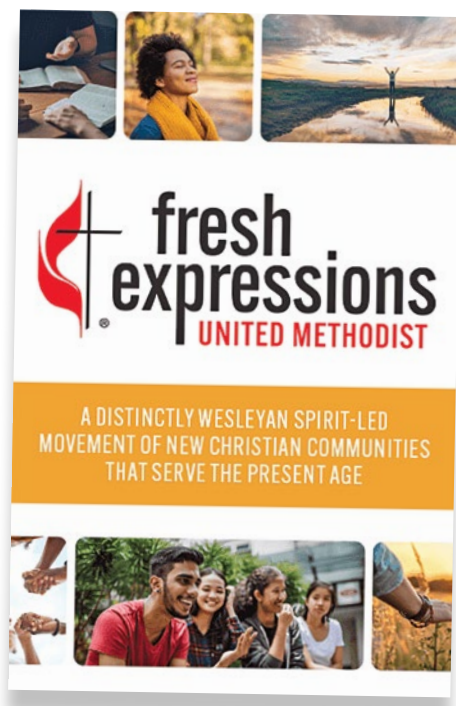
offers as a variable to conventional church outreach. “We’re seeking new ways to reach new people for Christ, right where the people are,” Doherty explained. “It is not about filling pews, statistical reports or offering counts. It is about making disciples of Jesus Christ.”

Middletown recognized a need to prayerfully release some key leaders from their primary responsibilities to become pioneers, a radical commitment that relied on confirmation by the Holy Spirit, Doherty said.

Dianne Thompson, the church’s lay leader, became a pioneer, seeing the effort as “a different way for us to think about reaching outside the building to bring Jesus to people and people to Jesus.” She launched a second Fresh Expression ministry in late March at a senior complex, offering Bible study and fellowship to inactive residents who lack frequent visitors.

Getting management’s approval for any type of religious activity was a challenge, but a friend who lives at one senior facility told her that residents there were asking for a Bible study. After many attempts, Thompson was able to get the management’s approval.

Twenty people attended the first informal, now-weekly gathering, which overflowed from the small library into the outer hallway. “When was the last time anyone held a Bible study in a church building and the room wasn’t large enough?” Doherty asked incredulously. “Fresh Expressions is becoming for us a new, refreshing manifestation of doing church.”



Such promising progress would probably please Methodism’s outgoing founder John Wesley, whose own courageous evangelism beyond the church is the inspiration for this movement. And it is no doubt encouraging to the Fresh Expressions pioneers and the church that not only stands behind them but also sends them forth to bear new fruit.

The book *Fresh Expressions United Methodist: A Distinctly Wesleyan Spirit-Led Movement of New Christian Communities that Serve the Present Age (\$15)* is available from *UM Discipleship Ministries*. To learn more read the *UM News* story “Fresh Expressions movement offers hope.” Also, “Recap of Futuring Forward: The Reawakening of the People Called Methodist,” and visit <https://freshexpressions.com/>.

To learn more about Middletown UMC’s Fresh Expressions ministry contact the Rev. Derrick Doherty at derrick@middletownumcnj.org.



FROM LEFT: Middletown UMC Fresh Expressions pioneers: Joe Spinelli, Gail Maples, Dianne Thompson, Barbara Meyer, Rev. Derrick Doherty.

Pathways Guides Steps Toward Ministry Growth, Progress



By Gina Yeske*

On a Sunday morning after worship 25 church leaders are gathering around tables to set goals and action steps that will lead to a successful pastoral transition. At a weekday church council meeting leaders are meeting to move beyond the regular business of the council to a time of open dialogue on how best to be an open and welcoming congregation.

On a Saturday morning a circuit of churches are gathered on Zoom to name their church’s purpose and mission in the next season of ministry and to plan some action steps.

Three different churches in different contexts, all working through the same process. This is Pathways to Congregational Fruitfulness & Health. The right path and the right process can lead to productive outcomes.

Pathways offers congregations an intentional process to create a plan that provides clarity and focus that can help them take their next faithful steps in ministry and mobilize leaders and disciples to foster world-changing discipleship and ministry.

Pathways is a congregational process offered to you by Eastern PA and Greater NJ, where your team will recall your congregation’s history, reflect on the status of the church and community, and then set SMART** goals to emerge into your vision for the future.

Overall, over 120 churches across both conferences are engaged in Pathways.

Pathways Builds on Your Congregation’s Work

The leaders of EPA and GNJ know that over the years you and your congregation have done a lot of good work and have engaged in some really good resources to attain your goals. Pathways builds on the work your congregation has already done and encourages you to take on the next steps in being connected and engaged in mission and ministry.



West Willow UMC mission group activity.

“At its primary level, Pathways provides vital human connection in an era of increasing isolation. On a deeper level, it offers a path to missional clarity and collective enthusiasm.

Since its launch in EPA, Pathways has touched more than 70 churches with a guided resource that is voluntary and free, according to the Rev. Steven Morton, former EPA Leadership Development Manager. Conversations among church leaders, led by trained facilitators and inspired by the Holy Spirit, yield new direction and purpose for Christian disciples in today’s environment.



Clinton UMC indoor family Easter egg hunt.

“Turning words into action sets us on the path to success,” says the Rev. Innica Humphery, pastor of First UM Church of Englewood, NJ. She emphasizes the profound impact of aligning actions with beliefs, while finding strength in Christ, as we draw inspiration from Philippians 4:13. Through their Pathways engagement, her church has fostered deeper, more purposeful relationships with their neighbors, such as collaborating with the police department to establish a youth basketball league.

As lay leader of Succasunna UM Church, Linda Diffley emphasizes the holistic nature of the Pathways approach, urging her congregation to expand their perspective beyond the confines of tradi-

tional church practices. A Pathways team leader, Linda Diffley saw the opportunity to reimagine the church’s role in people’s lives beyond just Sundays. It’s about fostering a culture of support and empowerment that extends beyond the church walls and into the broader community, driven by a commitment to growth and positive change.

The Need to Adapt to a Post-Pandemic World

Succasunna’s pastor, the Rev. Stephen Yun, echoes this sentiment as he reflects on his church’s journey through

the Pathways process. Recognizing the need to adapt to a post-pandemic world, his congregation embarked on a collective exploration of what it means to embody the principles of their faith in tangible ways.

Through intentional goal setting and action planning, they sought to engage with their community and nurture the next generation of leaders. “The Discipleship Path Team identified 15-20 promising new leaders aged 25-45,” he said. “The team continues to work on establishing a clear, intentional roadmap to equip them as transformative leaders and creating opportunities for their leadership development and spiritual formation through mentoring, discipleship classes and life groups (small groups).”

Pathways offered Clinton UMC a framework to guide their discussions particularly around cultural competency. That work helped to “highlight some of the places where greater transparency was needed about the scope of our ministry,” said the Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty, pastor. While committee leaders or admin council members knew about yearlong stewardship emphases or overall goals around small group ministry, she shared, those elements were not “seen” by the church folk who weren’t involved in the planning process.”

Willow Valley UMC, guided by the Rev. Helen Adams, a Pathways facilitator, went through the program and saw a boost in volunteerism and group engagement with new ministry initiatives. “As soon as the new ideas were implemented,” said Pastor Bob Garvey, who endorsed the program, “we saw a significant increase in church volunteers and small groups. I highly recommend the Pathways Program to any church which is looking to grow.”

Enhancing Vitality, Engagement, Sustainability

Many churches view Pathways primarily as a tool for enhancing congregational vitality. Yet its scope extends far beyond that singular focus. In July, the Rev. Lorelei Toombs, Associate Superintendent of EPA’s North-West Region, will begin working on Pathways Community Engagement

to support churches interested in being more engaged in their community. That interest may lead churches and partner organizations to become Wholeness and Hope Centers.

In addition, a team of leaders is being trained to support congregations in Journey of Hope efforts, most specifically by writing JOH plans for Ending the Sin of Racism. Also, cohorts will be offered for churches who want to deepen their youth ministry efforts with the support of Next Gen Ministries. Meanwhile, other churches are using Pathways as a platform to do the challenging work of considering their sustainability or navigating church conflicts to peaceful, hopeful resolution.

Emmanuel UMC in Allentown witnessed firsthand the impact of Pathways Sustainability sessions led by Morton. The leadership was inspired to take action to elevate their sustainability level. “We formed a praise team, involved more congregants in scripture readings, and prioritized welcoming visitors,” said Lela Harcraft, a Certified Lay Minister. “Recognizing the importance of stewardship, we integrated moments into our services to honor offerings and talents, and we initiated small group meetings.”

While they have made significant strides, they are aware that the journey towards sustainability is ongoing. “In the coming weeks, we anticipate welcoming six new members, a testament to the vitality and growth of our community,” said Harcraft. “We still have a long way to go and will continue to strive to improve with God’s help.”

If you want to learn more about how Pathways might help your church experience growth and vitality, reach out to explore the possibilities with us. In EPA, check out <https://www.epaumc.org/pathways/>. In GNJ visit <https://www.gnjumc.org/pathways/>. We invite you to request a consultation. 🌈

*The Rev. Gina Yeske is a GNJ Associate Superintendent (Metro-Highlands Region), who helps manage the EPA&GNJ Pathways initiative.
**SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound

You are INVITED! Summer Camp 2024

By EPA Camp & Retreat Ministries

Hey there, adventurers! Summer's knocking on the door, and guess what? We've got the ultimate invitation for you! Calling all kids, teens, and grown-ups alike to dive into the thrill of our fantastic summer programs. It's not just a getaway; it's a journey packed with faith, leadership, and creativity, all wrapped up in the beauty of nature in beloved sacred camp communities. Our sites are truly God's Place Apart. Transforming Lives. Will you join us?

Picture This:

Imagine waking up to the soft whispers of leaves, with towering trees embracing you and the crisp morning air giving you a gentle nudge. Sounds like paradise, right? Well, that's an everyday experience at our overnight camp programs! Does day camp work better for you? Then experiencing the joyful embrace of camp staff each day when you arrive on site, may be just what your summer calls for. Each of our four sites hosts day camp programs. Whether you're a seasoned outdoor pro or dipping your toes into camp life for the first time, we have adventures tailor-made for you.

What's on the Agenda?

From inspiring hikes to refreshing dips in the water, from unleashing your inner Picasso in arts and crafts to hitting bullseyes in archery, and from conquering team challenges to simply soaking in the warmth of a campfire's glow—we've got it all! Our camps at Carson Simpson Farm, Gretna Glen, Innabah, and Pocono Plateau are your gateways to a summer filled with endless possibilities.

More than just fun:
But hey, it's not just about the activities; it's about the bonds we build and the stories we share. At our Eastern Pennsylvania United Methodist sites, we believe in the power of faith, fun, and friendship. Dive into Bible Discovery sessions, uplift your spirits in worship experiences, and dive deep into conversations that matter. Every chat under the stars and every game of capture the flag is a chance to connect, grow, and belong.

Ready for an Epic Adventure?

So, what are you waiting for? Pack your bags, grab your buddies, and get ready for the summer of a lifetime! Whether you're up for a week of day camp or an overnight escape, our programs are your haven for joy, connection, and creation. Let's make memories, let's share laughs, and let's embark on an adventure that will stay with us forever. Join our faith-filled camp communities this summer.
Would you be willing to share your time, talents & treasures at one of our sites? Contact us directly at our sites.



CARSON SIMPSON FARM
GRETNA GLEN
INNABAH
POCONO PLATEAU
CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRIES



CAMP & RETREAT CENTERS: SPECIAL SPACES FOR ALL SEASONS
Check out our websites for upcoming events, including summer camp. There's something for everyone!

Carson Simpson Farm
215-659-0232
csfarm.org

Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center
717-273-6525
gretnaglen.org

Innabah Camp & Retreat Center
610-469-6111
Innabah.org

Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center
570-676-3665
poconoplateau.org

GNJ Campaign and New Tanzanian Church Both Near Completion

Greater New Jersey's *For Tanzania* campaign is nearing its goal to fund construction of the Bamia United Methodist Church in Dar es Salaam, pictured here, and also pay a living wage for two years to 80 struggling United Methodist pastors. Their average annual pay is only \$63, while a living wage in Tanzania is \$1200.
Nearly \$85,000 has been given as of May 1. Of the 143 donations, 58 are from individuals and 85 are from congregations, including five from beyond Greater New Jersey.
We are only about \$15,000 short of our \$100,000 goal. Just like our campaign, the Bamia church sanctuary is also nearing its completion, as busy workers engage in their labors of love. Please help us reach our goal so they can reach theirs. We want to help United Methodists in Tanzania welcome new generations of believers.
Visit our For Tanzania campaign website at <https://www.gnjumc.org/fortanzania/>. Join one of our giving circles at <https://www.gnjumc.org/fortanzania/giving-circles/>.
A GNJ team of conference leaders and pastors will return to Tanzania May 23 to June 4, to attend its United Methodist Annual Conference and to once again teach in their school for pastors. Our visiting representatives will include Bishop John Schol, Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm, Eric Drew, Rev. Eunice Vega-Perez, Sam Perez, Rev. Leslie Houseworth and Rev. William D. Carter, III. They will teach on Wesleyan theology and understanding of the sacraments, evangelism, preaching and a study of Luke's Gospel.
The Greater New Jersey Conference continues to strengthen relationships with our United Methodist siblings in Tanzania through these yearly visits to share in their pastoral education and encourage development of their churches and leaders.



Bamia United Methodist Church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, under construction.

CUMAC, a Hope Center, is ‘Feeding People and Changing Lives’

By JaLia Moody*

CUMAC, a non-profit, anti-hunger agency in Paterson, New Jersey, is fighting against food injustice at its roots in Passaic County, while changing and saving lives. In other words, it provides food access with dignity to guests—no longer called “clients”—and it does so while using a trauma-informed approach.

With that approach, CUMAC understands that its guests struggle with food insecurity, but they might also be traumatized by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)—such as abuse or neglect, poverty, violence, family illness, homelessness—even past, toxic experiences that still harm them today.

“ACEs are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today,” according to Dr. Robert Block, former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics. CUMAC shares that knowledge with its staff and volunteers, but also with schools and other community service partners through its Community Conversations, knowing that it takes a village to serve a family.

CUMAC receives support from the Greater New Jersey Conference as one of its Hope Centers, and clergy members the Revs. David Edwards, of Califon UMC, and Iraida Ruiz De Porras of Butler UMC, serve on its board. “When people hurt, United Methodists help,” said GNJ Bishop John Schol.

In 2023, United Methodists helped CUMAC distribute about 2.8 million pounds of food, more than the food bank network that serves Sussex, Hunterdon and Warren counties combined. As a Regional Food Hub, it also supplies other food distribution partners.

The 53,726 guests who walked through CUMAC’s doors last year found many vital services ready and able to serve them, including:

- The Choice Marketplace, where guests have the power of choice to select the foods they want and need.
- The Benefits Enrollment Center that helps senior and disabled adults apply for aid.
- And Community Info Sessions to educate them about health-related topics like trauma, self-care and nutrition to promote well-being.



as the Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community/Ecumenically Concerned with Helping Others (CUMAC/ECHO)—are expansive in their embrace.

Food Insecurity a Public Health Issue

Food insecurity is defined as households having insufficient money or resources to acquire enough food for all members of a family—thus reducing food intake and/or disrupting normal eating patterns. Jessica Padilla Gonzalez, CUMAC’s CEO just since 2023, points out a lesson she learned early that many Americans need to hear: “Food insecurity exists in all sectors of society; it is indiscriminate in who it impacts and is—at its core—a symptom of injustice.”

In the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Household Food Security Report of 2022, food insecurity expanded across all demographics studied, including gender, race and ethnicity, age and household size. It rose from 10.2 percent of U.S. households

according to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. CUMAC’s Marketplace is a food service that gives choice in its access to fresh produce, lean meats and essential food staples, including eggs, milk, beans, and condiments like peanut butter and jelly. It even offers access to baby toiletries—diapers, baby wipes, etc.—and donated clothes.

CUMAC’s appointment system for guests to access the Marketplace helps to reduce the stigmas associated with the trauma that torments food-insecure households. Gonzalez explains the psychological benefits of having an appointment system instead of forcing people to wait in line. It removes the stigma of receiving a handout, eliminates the feeling of being judged, and lowers the stress of navigating a crowded market to access food.

Most importantly, the appointment system brings dignity to food access—granting unlimited access to food (no point system or supervised shopping), while all guests are provided five days of groceries based on their household size.

Dignified Access to Food Impacts Families

“Our way of treating people like people is through food,” said Jeni Mastrangelo, a Marketplace Associate for 10 years. To some in the community she is the heart and soul of CUMAC. Mastrangelo remembers when the food pantry was located in one room, and food was served in one bag. Now, the Choice Marketplace covers half of their facility’s first floor, and guests receive more than just one bag of food.

Unlimited food access supplements household income for all types of guests who can experience food insecurity at any point in time. “If it wasn’t for CUMAC, I wouldn’t have survived my chemo,” a cancer survivor told Gonzalez. There are guests from all walks of life who enter CUMAC desperate for help. Another guest relied on the Choice Marketplace after incurring credit card debt from grocery expenses over time.

“The people who work for CUMAC are very, very nice,” said Jenny Travezano, a five-year guest from Paterson’s Freedom Village senior apartments. “They help

us (with) everything we need. That’s why I like CUMAC...You have a question. They have any answer you need at the Community Conversations.”

Afton Goriscak, Coordinator of Volunteers and Communications, stayed at CUMAC after completing her internship and undergraduate degree in human services. She felt she “needed to be and wanted to be here.”

Their trauma-informed, dignity-focused approach compelled her to stay.

In her three years, Goriscak observed an evolution in behavior in the Marketplace. Instead of just grabbing items off the shelf, educated guests started reading the nutrition labels—“paying attention to what they’re taking home and what they want to feed their family.” For social media, she has photographed babies sitting in carts and children with working moms and working dads shopping in the Choice Marketplace.

“We’re helping everyone,” Goriscak emphasizes, even observing CUMAC staff holding babies while guests shop. The environment that volunteers and staff help create is welcoming, family-oriented and holistic in its offerings. “This is a safe place...you feel seen,” said Mastrangelo, noting that guests often return to CUMAC to volunteer and pay it forward.

Help Us Water Our Roots

“We are a faith-based ministry,” said Gene Bilz, a long-serving CUMAC board member and part-time employee. CUMAC changes lives with the help of volunteers and members of their community. And those volunteers include United Methodists from area churches who want to serve the community and fight food injustice.

CUMAC is eager to have more volunteers, along with more donations. “Be a part of our big, crazy dreams,” reads their inviting, informative website, followed by a simple call to action, “Feeding People, Changing Lives.” Learn more and contact them to get involved today at www.cumac.org.

We welcome JaLia Moody as a new freelance reporter for EPA&GNJ Communications. CUMAC photographer: Tom Franklin



Meanwhile, persons who are homebound also benefit from CUMAC through their Home Delivery program.

No application or qualifications are required to become a guest of CUMAC. Serving all regardless of income or employment, CUMAC helps an estimated 5,000 guests per month, who come from all over Passaic County. The outreaching arms of CUMAC—incorporated in 1985

(13.5 million Americans) in 2021 to 12.8 percent (17 million Americans) in 2022.

Gonzalez learned how vital a food resource CUMAC is for individual and family households. She wants everyone to understand that food insecurity “is not a poor people’s problem. It is a public health issue that impacts all communities.”

Households in America spend an average of \$475.25 a month on groceries

Evangelism Awards

Continued from page 7



ABOVE: Alvin Doeleh speaks about his ministry at New Life UMC in Drexel Hill and the support he receives from his family, pastor and church members.; RIGHT: Alvin Doeleh (left) receives the Denman Laity Award from the Rev. Lloyd Speer, Congregational Development Team co-chair.

He also involves them in the church’s community outreach group called “Love Renegades.” They gather each summer at SEPTA’s 69th Street Transportation Terminal with people of all faith backgrounds, including members of Upper Darby’s large Muslim community, to focus on fostering relationships and collaboration.

“Alvin lives his Christian life for all to see,” said DS Clark in nominating Doeleh. “He has been God’s instrument in bringing many young people to Christ.”

Dooleh also brought a large group of church members from New Life, most of them family, to receive the award with him.

Finally, the Denman Award for Youth went to Delano Anderson, nominated

by Mike Nelson, youth minister at Norwood United Methodist Church, where he says that Anderson is a model and leader who has “an impact” on other youth. Anderson was unable to attend the awards ceremony.

“He makes sure new students who may not be familiar with the group or the gospel can understand,” said Nelson. “He will readily step in and make sure everyone feels comfortable. And he helps others understand the Bible, especially kids who are unbelievers.... I have had students come up to me and ask about Delano because he lives out his faith in such a way that other students want to know how he does it.”

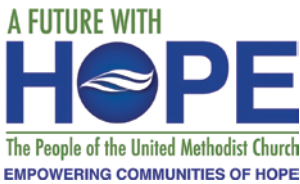
GNJ Conference to Vote

Continued from page 3



The Rev. Kaleigh Corbett Rasmussen, GNJ delegate, is joyful after General Conference votes to remove language denouncing and rejecting the full participation of LGBTQ members. That removal may impact several GNJ Annual Conference resolutions.

in 2012 to provide immediate relief and long-term recovery following Superstorm Sandy, AFWH is “completing its recovery ministry and expanding into community development ministry.”



That ministry engages congregations and communities in strategic planning, organizing for systemic change and community economic development. AFWH also provides Communities of Hope training for development and resourcing of GNJ-affiliated Hope Centers to address community needs.

Two Pending Responses to General Conference Actions*

A resolution titled “Affirm GNJ ‘A Way Forward’” calls on the Annual Conference to approve and communicate to conference and jurisdictional leaders its ongoing commitment to the “A Way Forward” resolution that GNJ adopted at a special session in 2019. That adoption came in response to actions taken at the 2019 General Conference special session.

The new resolution asks the body to affirm the adopted 2019 resolution’s call for support, full inclusion and participation of LGBTQ persons in all aspects of conference and congregational life. It also affirms commitments made in that resolution and commitments made by Bishop John Schol and other GNJ leaders to support the ministry of LGBTQ+ clergy and candidates for ministry, as well as churches in ministry with the LGBTQ+ community.

The “Providing a Path of Grace after General Conference” resolution asks the Annual Conference to permit congregations whose majority of members want to “separate for issues of conscience,” based on legislative decisions made at the General Conference, to vote on that matter after October 1. If at least 60 percent of members vote to disaffiliate from the denomination, the policy would allow them to do so if they fulfill mandated financial obligations and if the 2025 Annual Conference approves the separation.

Annual Conference resolutions had to be submitted by January, three months prior to the General Conference, which met April 23 to May 3. Thus, the resolution requests allowance, based on conference rules, for it to be altered or withdrawn pending General Conference decisions that may or may not lead to changes in the Book of Discipline.

Two other resolutions would modify conference rules related to the review

and reconsideration—before publication—of all submitted resolutions based on explicit or implicit bias, financial impact on the conference budget and any likelihood of being ruled out of order. Another asks for all Annual Conference members to receive a full list of pastoral appointments when it is available to help them “engage in ministry together.”

Other Resolutions

- In other resolutions GNJ members are expected to:
- Approve a full slate of leaders and members of conference and district boards, committees and agencies for 2024-2028, with many new leaders nominated for a new quadrennium by the Committee on Nominations & Leadership.
 - Discontinue four closed GNJ churches, with “thanksgiving for all the blessings made possible by the clergy and laity who have contributed to their ministry and mission. They are: Calvary UMC, Kearny; Long Branch UMC, Asbury; Magnolia UMC, Magnolia; and Zion UMC, Dividing Creek.
 - Set forth minimum standards and responsibilities for overseeing church-owned parsonages.
 - Approve 10 Conference Advance Specials for the 2024-2025 conference year. They are:
 - C.A.M.P. YDP (Community Association with a Ministry to People Youth Development Program)
 - Centenary Fund/Preachers Aid Fund
 - Christian Outreach Project
 - CUMAC/ECHO
 - First Friends of New Jersey and New York
 - Immigration Law & Justice of the Delaware Valley (ILJDV)
 - The Neighborhood Center (Camden)
 - Pennington School
 - Ranch Hope/Victory House
 - The Maker’s Place.

To learn about these projects, visit the Advance Specials & Affiliated Organizations page on GNJ’s website. (<https://www.gnjumc.org/advance-specials-affiliated-organizations/>).

*The 2020/2024 General Conference removed from the UMC’s Book of Discipline and Social Principles immediately language that describes homosexuality and that rejects LGBTQ persons from full participation in church ministry, including weddings and ordained ministry. The body also removed the expired paragraph #2553 that temporarily allowed churches to disaffiliate conditionally from the denomination while retaining property held in trust.

Connecting our Cultures in Christ

The Eastern PA Conference Economic Justice Council invites all to join and support EPA congregations in celebrating **JUNETEENTH 2024**, especially two of our historic Black churches.

Mother African Zoar UMC in Philadelphia

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 - 11 AM TO 3 PM

At 3259 N Broad St. at W. Westmoreland St., and in the parking lot across the street

Celebrating Juneteenth and Father’s Day. Honoring Black Fatherhood & Families. Enjoy a classic BBQ cookout with food, music and exhibits by community-partner organizations. To volunteer or get more information, email MOTHERZOARUMC@GMAIL.COM.

St. Daniel’s UMC in Chester

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 - 12 TO 6 PM

At Memorial Park, 2300 West 7th Street, Chester

The 13th annual Juneteenth Festival will celebrate freedom for African Americans and the entire nation. Featuring the legendary Blue Notes and other exciting musicians. Plus: food & craft vendors, a health fair, a basketball tournament, voter and NAACP registration, swimming, face painting and other children’s activities. To volunteer or get more information, email UNITED315@COMCAST.NET.

JUNE TEENTH FREEDOM DAY

19 JUNE

ALSO, JOIN TWO OTHER CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS THIS SUMMER:

New Life UMC of Drexel Hill

SATURDAY, JULY 13 - 10 AM TO 12:30 PM

At SEPTA’s 69th Street Terminal Transportation Center, 6901 Market St, Upper Darby, PA
Come support the Love Renegades’ 6th Annual Community Prayer & Praise Celebration. Join in praise & worship, collective prayer with neighbors, giveaways and more!

El Buen Samaritano in UMC West Chester

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11 - 4:30 PM

At Barker Park, 833 Falcon Lane, West Chester

Alcanzando la comunidad. Ven y apoya a El Buen Samaritano en su servicio de Adoración. Reaching out to the community. Come and support El Buen Samaritano in their Worship service. Enjoy faith, fun and fellowship, plus recreational activities!