

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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Churches Join Forces to Serve Community

By Denise Herschel
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Ocean Township resident Donna Hulse has been a member of Hamilton UMC in Neptune for the past 16 years. During this time, she along with other church members, assisted with countless outreach programs in the local community including bringing meals to The Center in Asbury Park, donating supplies to the Chant Food Pantry of Neptune, and knitting/crocheting caps and blankets for those with cancer and babies in the neonatal intensive care unit at Jersey Shore University Medical Center. Now another outreach effort is underway by not only Hamilton UMC but members of Ballard UMC in Asbury Park, First UMC in Oakhurst, and Wall UMC in Wall Township.

Dubbed the 'Community Mission,' Hulse said that "we would like the entire community to participate."

"We are partnering with these other churches. At the moment they are all United Methodist churches, but we have invited all denominations to join with us. I believe they are assisting because there is a great need for folks to be taken care of until they can get on their feet," she said. "The mission statement of the 'Community Mission' sets forth our goal - to find, feed, and aid homeless individuals. An empty stomach is a problem. As a church, it is our responsibility to help correct the problem by providing life's basic necessities."

As this is the time of year in which giving to others is at the forefront of many people's minds, Hulse said it should be emphasized that the 'Community

Mission' will be ongoing and not limited to the holiday season.

"We began on Tuesday, November 1st and we will be serving on the first and fourth Tuesdays of the month. It is open to anyone who has a need," she said.

Hulse added that the idea for initiating a local mission came to her after a trip to Virginia last spring.

"I was visiting my son and daughter-in-law. They participated in a program called 'Mercy Drop' with their church. They go into Portsmouth, Virginia on Monday nights and distribute supplies and food to the homeless. I believed we could do something similar here. And my church agreed with me," Hulse continued.

Christopher Stanley, supply pastor at Ballard UMC and part of the Northern Shore Mosaic Team, said his church became involved with the mission project because of a request from the neighboring Hamilton UMC.

"They approached us about using



Volunteers from Wall UMC pictured at Ballard UMC preparing soup and sandwiches for the community mission. Photo provided

our church building space as a site from which their church, in partnership with other churches in the area, could do ministry that blesses the least of these, in the name of Christ. It's important because it has everything to do with being faithful to who Jesus has called us to be as the church. The mission is a great reminder for all of us that our identity as disciples calls us to be people who express their faith by actively choosing to love and serve others."

Hulse said, "We will be taking soup and sandwiches to Ballard UMC on Tuesday evenings. In addition, we will be bringing supplies such as socks, toiletries, hats and gloves for distribution to those in need. Each church or group will be collecting supplies and signing up volunteers. Each church or group will designate a week per month that they will be responsible for. Hamilton UMC will be the supply depot, and Ballard UMC will

Continued on page 6



Clergy gather out front of the New Jersey State House in Trenton for a prayer vigil and justice rally in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. Photo provided

Clergy Hold Justice Prayer Vigil at State Capital

By Josh Kinney
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Advocating for justice, GNJ clergy publicly affirmed their solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement through a rally and a prayer vigil on November 14. The day started at Turning Point UMC in Trenton with about 30 clergy members marching through the heart of the city to the New Jersey State House.

"Far too often we find ourselves crying out with the psalmist, "How Long, O Lord?" as we hear of more black men dying on the other end of a police officer's weapon," said Varlyna Wright, Capital

District Superintendent who went on to say that those cries too often remain in darkened sanctuaries and behind closed doors. "It's time for us to move from 'How Long?' to 'Act Now.'"

At the state capital stairs, Wright spoke from her perspective as an African American woman and leader in the church.

Rev. Gina Hendrickson, Northern Shore District Superintendent and former probation officer, felt a calling to make a statement, particularly as a Caucasian woman, to understand her own lens and biases while acknowledging others.

Continued on page 7

Conaway to serve as Superintendent for Delaware Bay

By Josh Kinney
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Rev. Glenn J. Conaway knows what it's like to grow disciples. Having served GNJ for 30 years in Fairton, Moorestown and at Trinity Church in Mullica Hill, Conaway exemplified connectional and transformational leadership through each of his appointments, helping to grow congregational vitality.

Now Conaway is stepping out in faith to take on a new leadership role as the District Superintendent for Delaware Bay. In selecting Conaway as superintendent, Bishop John Schol worked closely with the cabinet in evaluating each person who was suggested. As someone who depicts many of the characteristics GNJ leadership seeks in clergy, Conaway's appointment was solidified.

Schol stated that Conaway is "a spirit-led pioneer who initiates a vision of what could be, develops strategies and inspires people to work together to achieve life and world changing mission."

Conaway grew up in Glassboro attending Glassboro UMC. He went to Asbury College in Wilmore, KY, where he studied education. He felt that Asbury gave him a solid understanding of how to live out his faith in community, and particularly enjoyed the mission and ministry opportunities available through the college. Conaway graduated in 1984, going on to earn his M.Div at Eastern



Rev. Glenn Conaway has been appointed to lead as Delaware Bay's new District Superintendent. Photo provided

Theological Seminary in Wayne, Pa, and worked with youth at Trinity UMC in Pennsville.

With an open heart and mind to the doors God has opened in his life, the new appointment to Delaware Bay District Superintendent has inspired Conaway.

"I'm approaching it as a learning experience," said Conaway, who expressed his gratitude for the warm support from his GNJ colleagues.

While at Trinity Church in Mullica Hill, Conaway worked side by side with clergy and laity to transform a congregation worshipping under 100 people each week to one of GNJ's largest congregations of 500 worshippers attending three different services in a newly built facility on a 16 acre site. Conaway has worked in the midst of major socio-economic shifts and feels he has something unique to bring to his new appointment.

"Some areas in our district have taken a tough economic hit," said Conaway. "We want the church to be able to re-

Continued on page 6

A Message from the Bishop



We have a future

I see a 20 to 50-year view of GNJ, and I am encouraged.

Really? Can anyone look out over 20-50 years and anticipate the future; a bright future? Think about living in the 1970s or 80s and as a business leader anticipating and responding to some of these changes: digital music, cordless tools, cell phones, online banking and bill paying, the iPhone,

Google Maps and the internet. Or think about these changes: people living longer, people not trusting institutions, the de-churching culture, and the rise of terrorism. How do they change the way we think about money, the church and life?

Individuals and leaders did not always see these changes coming and the impact they would have on people and society. Can anyone see 20 to 50 years into the future to know what will occur and how it will change and shape the church? Maybe it is not seeing the future that makes the difference but how we shape GNJ today to live into our future. How will we create a regenerative GNJ today?

Regenerative organizations continually remake themselves regardless of what occurs in the future. These organizations renew or revitalize their own resources and energy for a successful future.

In nature, forests regenerate by producing new trees as old trees die. A starfish can lose a point of the star and grow a new one. Why? Because they are designed that way. They are a part of a system that regenerates. They produce new generations.

Can organizations or GNJ or congregations regenerate, particularly when we cannot foresee the future? Yes! The March of Dimes was started to eliminate polio, and when the U.S. became polio free in 1979 because of vaccines, The March of Dimes refocused its mission and is now the leading nonprofit organization for preventing birth defects and premature births.

Today, the 3M Company which originally was known as the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company is a \$30 billion business with 88,000 employees and produces 55,000 products including post-it notes, duct tape, and surgical tape. It moved from mining and minerals to a company of new innovations.

The March of Dimes and the 3M are regenerative organizations. At first glance to the outsider they are generating new business models or products, but a closer look reveals they are really regenerating their mission and values. The March of Dimes is regenerating a commitment to the health and welfare of children, and the 3M Company is regenerating a commitment to employee innovation and offering products that make life easier or better for people.

In The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Women (UMW) has continued to remake itself. They have focused on resettlement for refugees and immigrants to women's rights, to addressing poverty among women, children and care for the environment. The UMW was once known as the Women's Aid Society, the Ladies Aid Society and The Women's Society of Christian Service. Today, it's the UMW. With each new name the organization was adapting their mission to the new environment and needs in which women found themselves. Today, the UMW is one of the strongest organizations in The United Methodist Church.

Even in an unknown and changing environment, organizations can regenerate their mission and values and adapt their ministry/services to a changing world. These groups not only survive but thrive.

These organizations have a core mission that is purposeful and meaningful to society, and they have organizational systems much like a forest and starfish have biological systems that continually regenerate the organization.

As a whole, we are not experiencing this in The United Methodist Church and particularly among most of our congregations. In GNJ as many as 66% of our congregations are declining in worship attendance each year. It is not only the congregations and GNJ that are not sustainable, but it is our very mission that's unsustainable.

But we have a future, not of demise but of hope. I see a 20-50 year GNJ that is thriving because this is the work of God and our leadership is focused on leadership, congregations, disciples and mission.

Much of my leadership over the next several years will be working with GNJ leaders to create a regenerative GNJ that not only is surviving but thriving and growing for the next 20 to 50 years. When much of The UMC is declining in the U.S., I see a GNJ that is growing its mission and regenerating its ministry.

We are already seeing disciple's increased engagement in mission, small group ministry and mission giving in GNJ and I believe we will also see growth in making new disciples and disciples in worship as we continue our present path and mission – to make disciples and grow

vital congregations to transform the world. While over the last 45 years we have declined, I see a future of growth based on deepening spirituality, focusing on our mission, and resourcing congregational leaders to achieve the mission.

In the next four editions of The Relay, I will share more about the areas we need to develop regenerative systems:

1. spirituality/faith,
2. leadership
3. congregations
4. money

This is not something that one person can create but requires us to work together to build a regenerative system that is transforming lives and communities through a strong, robust GNJ for the purposes of God 20-50 years from now.

Keep the faith!

John



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GREAT LEADERS ARE:

SPIRITUAL: Spiritual leadership connects the soul and yearnings of people with the mission of the organization. Empathy, insight, positivity and communication are key characteristics of spiritual leaders. Effective leaders tell stories of new disciples, vital actions of the congregation and how it's affecting community change. The outcome: inspired and enthusiastic people.

PRESIDENTIAL: Presidential leadership understands, serves and unifies the different constituencies within any organization. A pastor has worshippers, members, elected leadership, youth, senior adults, and community residents as "constituents" to connect with and to connect with the greater mission. The outcome: constituent groups feel connected to one another and the greater mission.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: A CEO leadership is highly missional, focused and engaged in leading the organization through planning, mobilizing resources, getting people into the right positions (paid staff and volunteers) and making high level decisions. CEO leadership leads other leaders to accomplish the mission. The outcome: organized church/organization/team with a plan and accomplishing its mission and goals.

These are not different roles but aspects of every religious organization or leader. Which aspect do you do best? Which do you need to strengthen?

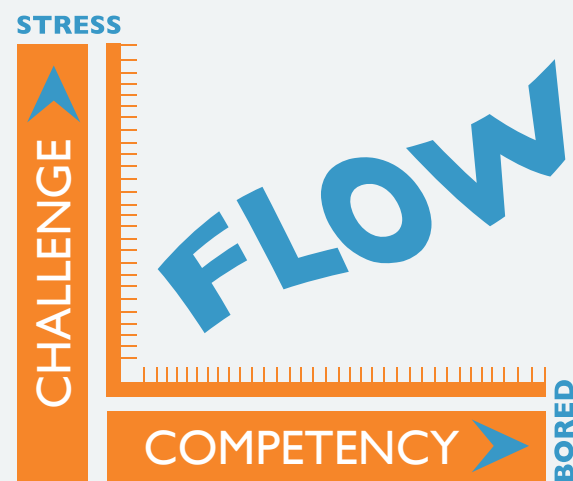
Leaders receive gifts from the organizations they serve: money, talents and time come from the people they lead. A leaders' first responsibility is to steward these gifts to focus and accomplish the mission. Secondly, they are to thank those they serve for entrusting them with these resources. - Bishop John Schol

4 WAYS TO BECOME A BETTER EMPATHETIC LEADER

- 1 Listen more and ask better questions.
- 2 Spend one on one time with core leadership.
- 3 Reserve judgment.
- 4 Lend a hand to others as they do their work.

GREAT LEADERS LOVE PROBLEMS

The best leaders rise to complex and difficult problems. The chart below shows how the best leaders lead.



WITHIN ANY LEADER AND SITUATION THERE ARE TWO THINGS AT WORK:

- competency and
- challenge

If a leader on the scale has more competency than sufficient challenge they become bored. If a leader has more challenge than competency they become overwhelmed. The key is to embrace problems and have just a little more challenge than competency because the best leaders grow by skilling up to tackle a difficult problem.

If a leader on the scale has more competency than sufficient challenge they become bored. If a leader has more challenge than competency they become overwhelmed. This is what creates leadership flow: the right mix of challenge and abilities. The best leaders grow by skilling up to tackle a difficult problem.

Do you have more competency than challenge right now? *You're missing leadership flow and probably bored. How can you volunteer or look for greater challenge?*

Do you have challenges greater than your experience and skill? *You're missing leadership flow and probably stressed. How can you skill up and get the experience you need?*

3 WAYS TO BE A SERVANT LEADER

- 1 Invest in the people you work with.
- 2 Put the success of others above your own.
- 3 Generously help others.

Leadership is not an entitlement, it's a gift, and the best leaders exemplify gratitude. - Bishop John Schol

Capital District Superintendent Varlyna Wright to Retire

By Josh Kinney
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As a catalyst for growth in congregations, Superintendent Varlyna Wright has served 65 churches in the diverse Capital District for the past six years. On June 30, 2017, she will retire and relocate to Georgia.

"As I reflect back over my life, it is apparent that God has a plan for my life and has called me on several occasions to step into this plan," Wright wrote in a statement to GNJ. "What I have learned is that every time I follow God's calling into something new, my life has been enhanced and blessed. Even when I'm not sure about what this new calling will bring me, I still walk through the door God has open to me – knowing that God is with me and goes before me."

Over the last year and a half, Wright has heard God's call. In response, she has felt called to pursue renewed relationships with her family and new opportunities in Georgia.

"It has been a pleasure to be the District Superintendent of the Capital District for the past six years, and together we



Capital District Superintendent Varlyna Wright will retire in June, 2017. Photo provided

have made great progress toward congregational vitality and making disciples

of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," said Wright. She added, "I thank God for the opportunity to serve as district superintendent and work with such faithful pastors and laity. The spirit and faithfulness of the district and my joy in serving has made it difficult for me not to continue as superintendent, even as Bishop Schol invited me to continue beyond my six year term."

Wright graduated with an M. Div from Palmer Theological Seminary in Wyncott, Pa, and then went on to earn her Doctorate of Ministry at Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C. Ordained an elder in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, Wright transferred to Greater New Jersey and served as a delegate to the 2012 General and Jurisdictional Conferences and 2016 delegate to General Conference.

"I enjoyed the variety of ministry I've participated in while working in GNJ," said Wright. "I feel blessed to be a part of this conference and I look forward to what God has in store for me as I retire and relocate."

Rev. Gina Hendrickson, Northern Shore District Superintendent, has spent

several years working with Wright on the Executive Cabinet. Hendrickson described Wright as "a gift" and "an anchor."

"Varlyna has an incredible lens by which she helped me understand the importance of superintending," Hendrickson said. "She's just so well regarded and respected. All the time she brings the totality of who she is as a woman of God into everything she does."

Bishop John Schol said, "Varlyna has been a gifted leader in GNJ leading us as a superintendent and Connectional Ministries director." He added, "She has championed coaching, urban ministry and congregational development. Varlyna has developed congregations and leaders in GNJ in urban, rural and suburban areas. Her leadership will be missed."

Wright solicits prayers from GNJ for her mother and herself as they prepare to pack up and say goodbye to great friends and colleagues and embark on a new life chapter. She also asks GNJ to pray for Bishop Schol and the cabinet as they prepare to identify the next district superintendent for the Capital District.

Music Paradigm to Bring Unique Experience to Clergy Convocation

By Josh Kinney
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Conductor Roger Nierenberg will take his Music Paradigm, an elaborate show-and-tell executive learning class based heavily on role playing, to the 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch on January 23-25.

The Music Paradigm has been deemed an "unforgettable learning experience" for any type of organization where audience members are also participants seated within a live professional orchestra where they can observe highly trained musicians as they perform. The participants' attention is drawn to fascinating and unexpected organizational dynamics within the orchestra's riveting demonstration.

According to Nierenberg, an orchestra is "a great place to model organizational dysfunction."

The Music Paradigm is an outgrowth of Nierenberg's outreach efforts as music director of the Stamford Symphony in Connecticut from 1980 to 2004 and of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra in Florida from 1984 to 1998. In Jacksonville, the orchestra's board members were invited to sit among the players during rehearsals in an attempt to inspire and energize them and in Stamford, children were encouraged to do the same with the hope of awakening their passion for music.

Since 1995, hundreds of corporations and organizations in 23 countries have



The Music Paradigm will offer a unique and memorable experience for clergy at the 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation next month at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch. Photo provided

engaged the Music Paradigm to mount sessions for their employees. This winter, clergy from GNJ will be among the participants engaging in this unique and

inspiring experience.

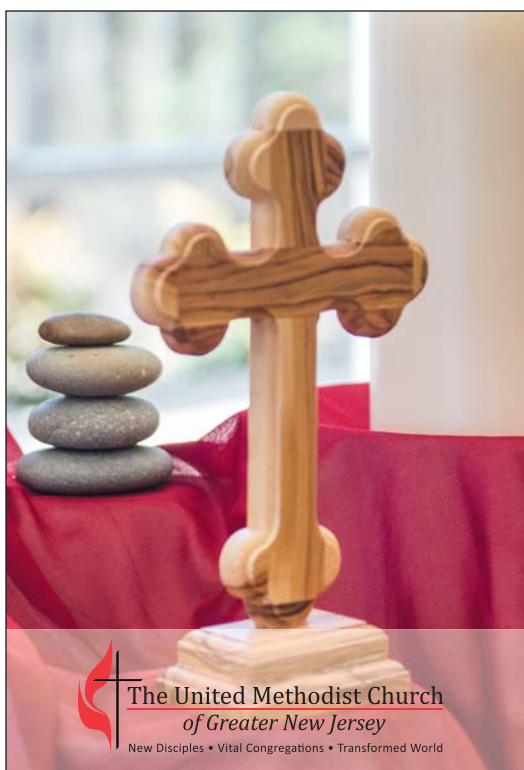
Each Music Paradigm session is unscripted and authentic, uniquely customized to create a lasting impact

and unforgettable memory. Prior to the event, Nierenberg seeks to understand what the business or organization wants to achieve with its meeting, retreat or conference; examining its goals, opportunities and challenges. Based on his conversations, he devises a series of interactive exercises for the orchestra that will bring the company or organization's most important issues to life with "startling clarity." The two-hour program is designed to invigorate participants with confidence and a renewed sense of purpose.

Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr., Chairman of The New York Times Company said in a review of the Music Paradigm that he had gone through many such exercises over the years "but never one as enjoyable and effective."

Stuart Fletcher, President of Diageo International, commented on the "enormous impact" the experience had on his company's attendees.

The 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation invites clergy to a special time of renewal, learning and fellowship. The cost includes registration fee, workbook, two-night stay, and five meals. For more information and to register, visit: gnjumc.org/2017bishopsconvocation



GRACEFUL CONTROVERSIES

Saturday, March 4, 2017 | 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

In our diverse and global existence, what is the shared mission/purpose of the Church?

All laity and clergy from GNJ are invited into a deeper conversation to develop our hopes and aspirations for the future of The United Methodist Church and send them to the Commission on the Way Forward. We have the opportunity to model graceful controversy. We will hold a gathering for GNJ members to identify how best we would like to see the church move forward and all church members and clergy are welcome to participate.

RSVP by February 10, 2017

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Clergy Convocation Features Susan Beaumont

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

Susan Beaumont believes the soul is the authentic and truest self of the institution; the source of its divine calling, and character; the protector of institutional integrity.

"Tending institutional soul requires nurturing organizational effectiveness and spiritual wholeness as one," Beaumont wrote in a blog post entitled: "Tending The Soul of the Institution."

Beaumont will be a guest speaker at the 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa in Long Branch on January 23-25. She has demonstrated expertise in the leadership dynamics of large congregations, offering consulting, coaching and educational support to help congregations more effectively engage their mission in the world.

An advisor, author, coach, and spiritual director, Beaumont has consulted with over a hundred congregations and denominational bodies across the U.S. and Canada. She is especially known for her ground-breaking work in the leadership dynamics of large congregations. Having worked as a Senior Consultant with the Alban Institute, Beaumont served on the faculty of two business schools, teaching graduate level courses in leadership, management and organizational behavior. She has consulted with nonprofit and corporate clients in leadership development and change management.

The core values that guide Beaumont's consulting relationships are focusing mission, strengthening covenant, balancing health, aligning resources, sharing leadership, building on the positive, and inviting discernment.

In a blog post, Beaumont writes about a vibrant and impactful church with declining membership facing a life-changing decision about the future of its building.

"Leaders of the congregation began



The 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation will feature guest speaker, author, coach, and consultant Susan Beaumont. Photo provided

by deepening their knowledge and skill base," wrote Beaumont. "They sought out best practices, attended workshops and researched the ins and outs of real estate, finance and property management."

She describes how organizational capacity was enhanced by bringing in wisdom of architects, property managers and investment managers which gave leaders a sound understanding of issues and options.

"But they were stuck in finding a solution that would align the congregation with its history, its mission and the voice of membership," she writes. "Finally, leaders paused to consider the institutional soul."

Through a process of journaling and guided prayer, the church leaders emptied themselves of the biases and assumptions that had accumulated during their study. They hosted listening circles to discern the congregation's orientation to its space, pausing and praying. The leaders asked themselves

questions about the sacredness of place and dwelled on what it meant to befriend the soul of the community through each of their options.

"In the midst of this soul-tending work, a way forward began to coalesce," said Beaumont. "Leaders sold a small parcel of property at the edge of campus and used the proceeds to reduce their mortgage so that debt became manageable for the present membership base."

An exciting and vibrant chapter for the church followed. Beaumont used the illustration to highlight four critical dimensions of organizational soul-tending work: cultivating collective wisdom, clarifying vocation, unbinding memory and deepening discernment.

"Tending the soul of the institution is more than a simple call to prayer," writes Beaumont. "It requires more than

slapping a scripture verse on top of good business practice. It is more than understanding the culture, strategy and spirituality of a congregation."

According to Beaumont, soul-tending requires basic leadership orientations that "may seem at odds with traditional practices of leadership."

"Nurturing the soul-tending capacity of our leaders takes intentionality, time and attention," Beaumont writes. "The payoff is greater authenticity in decision making and the genuine transformation of our congregations."

The 2017 Bishop's Clergy Convocation invites clergy to a special time of renewal, learning and fellowship. The cost includes registration fee, workbook, two-night stay, and five meals. For more information and to register, visit: gnjumc.org/2017bishopsconvocation

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Churches Join Forces to Serve Community

Continued from page 1

be the distribution center. Ballard was chosen for this purpose for two reasons - they are centrally located in Asbury Park, and they already have a program in place serving those in need. Every Saturday morning they serve a hot breakfast to approximately 30 to 60 people, and they do it very well. People already know to go to them for assistance. The 'Community Mission' is an extension of that assistance to others."

Supplies are dropped off at Hamilton UMC. Toiletries such as shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and soap are collected along with socks, hats, scarves, underwear, blankets, water, wet naps, and rain ponchos. All supplies should be new and travel-size.

"There are many, many hands and hearts involved in the Community Mission. Matthew 25 is so clear that we are called to feed the hungry," said Rev. Jessica Campbell of Hamilton UMC. "There are hungry people right here in our community, and so we are compelled by our faith to go and feed them. We are also blessed to be providing the homeless basic supplies as well. We are all working together to make this life-giving, life-changing ministry happen."

"It is such a great program because the youngest child to the most elderly senior citizen can serve in some way and make a difference," Hulse said.

Campbell added that there is no time-



Ballard UMC in Asbury Park serves as the home base and distribution center for the community mission project. Photo provided

line for the Community Mission project. "We would love to work ourselves out

of the ministry, and we pray that there will be a day when there will no longer

be hungry people. Until then, we have work to do."

Conaway to serve as Superintendent

Continued from page 1

spond in these areas and play a greater role."

With a contagious love for God and people, Conaway's passion for mission and moving people and ideas to action has inspired many.

"He's grounded and yet embraces new ideas and learnings," said Schol, who describes Conaway as "a grace filled leader that is open to and embraces people who think, look, act and live differently."

Genuine in his relationship with God and others, Conaway seeks a team experience and connects with others through their interests and ideas. With a dedication to learn and apply new ideas, Conaway's creativity doesn't let adaptive challenges stop the mission but keeps him curious and inquisitive in risk-taking and applying innovative ideas even when there is limited resources to overcome challenges.

Currently serving a third term on the Board of Ordained Ministry, Conaway has served two terms on the District Committee of Ordained Ministry for the Delaware Bay District, has been a clergy mentor, served on the Board of The United Methodist Homes of New Jersey, and was a Trustee for the former Southern New Jersey Annual Conference. In 2005, he received the Denman Evangelism Award.

Conaway's wife, Holly (Thielking) Conaway is a public school teacher and they have two grown married children: Timothy and his wife Emily and Bethany Vega and her husband Fred.

Conaway will officially begin his new appointment as District Superintendent on July 1, 2017, but will begin working with the cabinet to assist in making appointments and working with Superintendents Bethke and Roberts on matters pertaining to the Delaware Bay District.

"There's a lot of potential," said Conaway, who is excited for the opportunities that may open due to the expansion of Rowan University and the future of the district.

"The challenge we face here are the small churches that are struggling," he said. "We want to get them vibrant and strong; feeling positive about their ministry."

Conaway praised the teamwork of clergy and laity at Trinity Church in Mullica Hill.

"We pulled together to say, 'let's make this happen, let's really make disciples of Christ and make Jesus known,'" he said. That mission remains Conaway's driving force as he steps into his new role.

Bishop Schol invites GNJ to pray for Conaway as he prepares for this new ministry.



IGNITE

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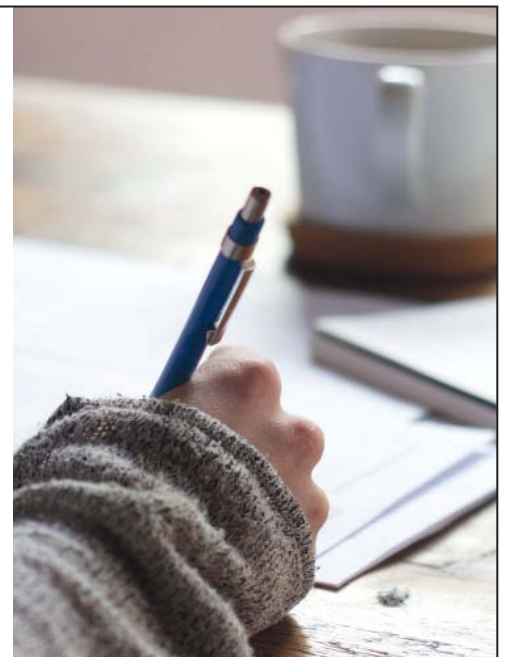
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Your byline is waiting.

Are you interested in writing for The Relay? We're seeking freelance contributors to be a part of the newspaper in 2017. This is a unique opportunity for young adults, college students, or just writers who want to explore what's happening in GNJ.

Please email a resume and writing sample to jkiny@gnjumc.org



GNJ Youth Visit North Dakota Reservation

By Cyndy Mosley
CMosley19@hotmail.com

A group of 20 Native American United Methodist youth including four from Greater New Jersey travelled to North Dakota in September to learn more about their heritage and experienced a deepened faith.

They met as a part of the Peg Leg Flamingos Youth Group, a group named as a symbol for overcoming challenges. Flamingos often stand on one leg and then fly above it all. A flamingo with a peg leg lives in a world out of balance.

"We are like the flamingos. We are strong, balanced, and connected with the Creator," said Jaden Shepard of Trinity UMC in Bridgeton who attended the youth meeting. Flamingos, who are a threatened species, survive because they live in community.

The Peg Leg Flamingos met at Spirit Lake Ministry Center on the Spirit Lake Reservation, a year-round United Methodist Mission for community-building, spiritual growth, and meeting needs of nutrition, clothing and shelter for elders, persons with disabilities, youth and children in rural North Dakota.

Shepard knew that he was Native American but really never knew what that meant. "All I knew was my ancestors were born here," said Shepard. "For me, this trip has served as a learning experience for what it means to be a Native American. Having Native American blood also brings with it the tears of ancestors who were slaughtered, enslaved and abused."

Trasyena Campbell, also of Trinity, enjoyed the opportunity to bond with young people from different Native American communities and felt a warm welcome.

Allie Mosley from St. John's UMC in Bridgeton also attended the gathering which was sponsored by the Native American International Caucus and sup-

ported by GNJ's Committee on Native American Ministries

The youth learned about the Dakota peoples and tribal history while visiting Fort Totten, originally a military fort which became a Native American boarding school. Mosley shared that while at the Fort, she felt the tears and the prayers of youth just like herself.

The youth collectively agreed that the Native Americans had to survive just like the peg leg flamingos by living in community and sharing in the raising of their families while fighting to keep their heritage alive. The students explored modern issues of overlooked Native American Tribal people. They visited the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota where thousands of Native Americans and supporters have gathered to protest the laying of Energy Transfer's \$3.78-billion, 1,172-mile-long crude oil Dakota Access Pipeline to carry oil through sacred ceremonial grounds in addition to threatening the reservation's water supply.

Each student returned with renewed hearts and minds, knowing more about their heritage and experiencing a deepened faith. Shepard, Campbell and Mosley prepared oral and electronic presentations to share with their home churches. Each participant shared their anticipation for next year's gathering and commitment to continue the conversations with the youth and leaders they met in North Dakota.

If you're interested in supporting additional youth to attend Peg Leg Flamingos gatherings or to hear the story from the heart of the youth directly, please contact Cynthia Mosley, St. John UMC at cmosley19@hotmail.com. Portions of this article were contributed by Jaden Shepard and Trasyena Campbell from Trinity UMC in Bridgeton, and Allie and Cynthia Mosley from St. John's UMC in Bridgeton.



20 United Methodist youth including four from GNJ stand together on a visit to the Spirit Lake Ministry Center on the Spirit Lake Reservation in North Dakota. Photo provided

Justice Prayer Vigil at State Capital

Continued from page 1

"I have witnessed systematic and institutional racism," Hendrickson said. "And although we believe all lives matter, we have to recognize the importance and focus of Black Lives Matter because of the statistics of African American young males being killed."

At the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference (NEJC) last July in Lancaster, Pa, delegates affirmed a historic statement which, in part, committed United Methodists to "confront racism and affirm that, while all lives matter in God's eyes, in the current cultural and social context of this country, Black lives and all lives of color really do matter."

The United Methodist presence outside the statehouse was met with a warm welcome of solidarity and thanks.

"I'm with you guys," cheered a statesman as he walked past the gathering and into the capital building.

A time of remembrance and prayer was led by Raritan Valley District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Drew Dyson. Names were read of all African Americans who perished at the hands of law enforcement in recent years. Dyson spoke from his perspective as a white man with two African American sons and specifically prayed for police officers, government and civic leaders, and families and friends who lost loved ones.

"We prayed for laws and policy changes that will move us toward justice for all of our neighbors," said Wright. "We prayed for the families who have lost loved ones – whose names are far too numerous to list but who we hold closely in our hearts. And we prayed for and with police officers, affirming the great majority who serve and protect, who faithfully carry out their duties with dignity and with respect for those they serve."

The group also prayed for the church, among other societal entities, to have the courage to seek justice and confront racism.

A Biblical directive was presented by Drew Theological Seminary Assistant Professor of Christian Theology, Rev. Dr. Chris Boesel who reminded the crowd that the church proclaims Black Lives Matter every day because "we follow a Palestinian Jew that had to have dark skin." Boesel asserted Jesus' call to stand in solidarity with the marginalized and the oppressed.

"For me, this was a powerful experience because as someone who works for the conference I wrestle with how I can share my voice," said Director of Worship Eric Drew, who closed out the gathering by leading the group in singing "We Shall Overcome." "How do we minister to everyone, not just the people who are on our side?" he added.

Many left with a sense of responsibility to figure out how to share their voices and take a stand while also grappling with the ideas of privilege and discrimination in a constructive way.

"It was really a powerful and meaningful morning," said Drew.

After the rally, the group marched back to Turning Point UMC for lunch and a conversation about the next steps churches in GNJ can take to combat racism. Among some of the resources mentioned were "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehisi Coates, "White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son" by Tim Wise, and "The New Jim Crow; Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" by Michelle Alexander.

"For me personally, this was powerful," said Hendrickson. "But you know what?" she added, "We need to step up and really be the church."



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Worship Conference Benefits Range of Churches

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

Throughout GNJ, pastors aren't the only ones leading worship on Sunday mornings. From musicians to lay leaders to multimedia assistants, the Doxology Worship Conference on Nov. 12 was geared toward all people involved in their churches worship.

GNJ Director of Worship Eric Drew spearheaded the event that was held at Calvary Korean UMC in East Brunswick and brought in approximately 400 attendees. Featuring 12 workshops with eight different presenters and four learning tracks, the conference brought together both urban and rural churchgoers from all different ages.

The idea behind the Doxology Worship Conference was to get the right resources to the right people, namely worship leaders.

"We really learned a lot from it," said Drew. "We left encouraged and inspired that so many in GNJ are hungry for excellence."

The word "doxology" which comes from the Greek "doxa" (glory) and "logia" (word or saying) is defined by Google as "a liturgical formula of praise to God." With workshops for contemporary worship teams, traditional worship planners, preachers, multimedia teams, volunteers, small churches, and all kinds of musicians, participants left with practical learning in a continued expression of God's glory.

Kurtis Parks, Worship Director at National Community Church in Washington,



The Doxology Worship Conference brought together approximately 400 from all across GNJ. Photo by James Lee

D.C. was one of the conference's lead speakers. National Community Church is a multi-site church led by pastor and New York Times best-selling author Mark Batterson and has a music team made up of nearly 150 singers and musicians who travel to churches and conferences alike, sharing their vision to see "global revival through personal worship." Parks speaks to worship teams, and at various conferences about his desire to see passionate worship emerge in the church.

"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always be what you've always been," said Parks, who equated worship to "The exclamation point to last week, and the start of the next week."

Parks challenged attendees to "create worship" by "using what God has given you."

Sonja Oftedal of St. Paul's UMC in Bay Head was impressed by Parks' message.

"The scriptures supporting the means for praising our Lord Jesus Christ was a great reminder to our musicians that their efforts are essential and play an integral part in creating the worship experience," said Oftedal.

Rev. Catherine Williams, Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care at Princeton UMC led a workshop called "Finding Your Unique Preaching Voice" which attracted a dynamic, cross-cultural, multi-generational group of clergy and laity who were fully vested in the learning experience.

"There was much lively dialogue in the small groups that discussed the qualities of different preaching voices, both biblical and contemporary," said Williams. "The take-away was that our uniqueness is important to God, who needs the message of the gospel to be embodied in particular people, in particular places for particular times."

Williams thought the event was well planned and executed and left encouraged by contagious energy.

"It was just so wonderful to connect with clergy and laity across several districts," she said.

The practical and specific workshops were designed to offer something meaningful to all. Rev. Gina Yeske, Pastor of Simply Grace United Methodist Faith Community in Bloomsbury presented a workshop on small membership church worship.

"I am passionate about the work of this facet of ministry," Yeske said. "It is my belief that small membership churches can offer a setting for ministry and mission that are transformational for both personal faith and deep connections to the community."

Yeske's workshop highlighted the need for church leadership to take a close look at their local setting, their style and their values to determine if they were bringing their best to God in worship.

"Small churches are relational," stated Yeske. "They can nurture the gifts of the laity, and they can adapt to the local culture. They can focus their ministry and mission on a few things that they will do with excellence."

The workshop concluded with a discussion of what a strong small church is.

"Doxology was a well needed opportunity to recharge and refresh our passion for worship," said Chuck DelCamp, producer of the contemporary worship service at Haddonfield UMC who coordinates with pastors and worship leaders to ensure a positive flow and worship experience. Additionally, he serves as the stage producer of the IGNITE youth conference.

"Eric Drew's class and discussion



Kurtis Parks, Worship Director at National Community Church in Washington, D.C. spoke at the Doxology Conference event on Nov. 12. Photo by James Lee

challenged me to look at how we engage volunteers. I realized our approach to the team should always start with the big picture, 'why are we here?'"

DelCamp was inspired by Drew's challenge to never work alone.

"In the class I was able to see that we are not lone workers, but part of a bigger team," he said. "We spent a lot of time talking about ways to make our efforts more effective by involving others. I was reminded to find ways and opportunities to celebrate success in our group."

James Lee, GNJ Director of Visual Arts, led a workshop on furthering the worship narrative through media. He was encouraged to see what he described as churches having "a great hunger to engage with people they hadn't engaged with before and an eagerness to do so; specifically to engage with younger people."

"As a worship committee chairman, I appreciated the workshop on media in worship," Oftedal said. "I especially appreciated the verbal exchanges between the participants in the workshop and the time spent learning together new ways to use media as an integral form of communication during a worship service."

Both Lee and Drew agreed that one of the most powerful and moving moments of the conference was witnessing the gathering of diverse worshipers of different ages from across GNJ singing and receiving communion. Attendees left with practical next steps to take back to their churches.

"It was a day to offer great resources to all in GNJ and highlight and learn from GNJ pastors as well as nationally renowned people," said Drew. "It was moving to come together and celebrate unity moving forward."



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The United Methodist Church
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The Church has Left the Building

By Kate Hillis
revkatehillis@gmail.com



In a time when most people are aware that mainline denominations have seen a steady decline in membership, it is easy for smaller churches to become discouraged. But in the little town of Hopewell Borough, the local United Methodist Church and its sister churches are getting creative in how they unite as the body of Christ to expand their reach to the surrounding community.

Hopewell Borough only has 1900 residents, many of whom are younger families who have recently moved to the area and do not know much about the five historical mainline churches that reside within a three block radius of each other.

"It has been difficult in previous years to keep attendance up for all the churches in Hopewell," said Council of Churches representative Cathy Peterson. "I think it's time we find new ways of working together to remind the changing community that we are here and want to offer our support."

With this in mind, Peterson and newly appointed Rev. Kate Hillis of Hopewell UMC spent the summer devising a plan to bring all of the churches in Hopewell together in one common mission. Rev.

Hillis expressed her enthusiasm at joining the Council of Churches in this endeavor. "It is so exciting to partner with churches who genuinely want to share the love of Jesus with the world around them."

On Sunday, November 6, five churches in Hopewell left their buildings to participate in an ecumenical day of service and worship called "The Church has Left the Building", a movement that began at Woodside Church, in Yardley, Pa. Among them were 70 participants from Hopewell UMC, Hopewell Presbyterian Church, Grace United Church of Christ, Calvary Baptist Church and Second Calvary Baptist Church.

Each church left their building and regular Sunday morning worship schedules to complete eight service projects in the community. These projects included making six blankets for soldiers overseas, collecting a truckload of non-perishables that people donated by leaving on their doorsteps, visiting a local nursing home, bagging 95 lunches for the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK), as-

sembling 70 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes, making 64 pairs of shoes for Sole Hope in Africa, filling 45 soup mix jars for Fisherman's Mark Food Pantry in Lambertville, and renovating the local home of a low-income family in the Borough. Each church partnered with local community organizations and non-profits to collect donations and receive assistance for the various projects.

At 5 p.m., all churches gathered at Hopewell UMC for a shared meal, followed by an evening of worship led by Rev. Hillis and the local pastors, as well as musicians from three of the participating churches. "It was amazing to see all of the churches come together and worship. This is what it means to be the church. We need to do this more often!" said one worshiper Sunday evening.

Worshippers were also given the opportunity to see a slideshow of pictures that were taken throughout the day at the various service project locations, and offer a testimony about their own experiences. One local community member, whose home was renovated during the day said, "I have no words to express how much what you all did today means to me. If any of you need anything, just call me."

Diane Baratta, a member of Hopewell

UMC, said, "I am so thankful my family was given the opportunity to serve alongside each other today. We were able to talk with our kids about how eye-opening it was for them to pack shoeboxes with soap and a washcloth and know that some kid will open that on Christmas morning."

Worshippers took communion together and lit candles in celebration of All Saints Sunday, a day when United Methodists remember the saints of the Church, whose commitment to Christ's love and works of service helped to transform the world and the lives of future generations.

In just one afternoon, nearly 400 people in Hopewell were reached by the love of Jesus Christ all because five small churches were brave enough to unite together, get creative, and embrace the mission that God gives to all of Christ's followers -- to defend the foreigner, care for the orphans and widows, rescue the poor, and stand for the oppressed.

Whether big or small, the churches in Hopewell believe that by sharing the love of Jesus Christ with the world around them, God will transform lives. As one local resident with tears in her eyes put it that night, "There is a new energy in Hopewell tonight. The Spirit is moving and it is awesome."

Bishop Fred Corson Remembered Through Scholarship

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org



Dr. William S. Hawkey, Headmaster of The Pennington School, a college preparatory institution located in the heart of the Capital District and affiliated with the United Methodist Church, announced a new scholarship will be established honoring the Corson family and Bishop Fred Pierce Corson.

With the new scholarship, the Pennington School is recognizing Corson for his great leadership during his tenure as bishop from 1944 to 1968 where he participated in the life of the school through securing funds for the school's continued investment in rigorous and competitive academic and spiritual growth.

"Our students develop a sense of responsibility for themselves, for others, and for the world in which they live," said Hawkey. "Our community is one of inclusion, open to diversity of opinions and people, united in our purpose, and dedicated to the values of honor, virtue, and humility."

Bishop Fred P. Corson is an individual whose faith-based leadership influenced millions around the world. His example inspires Pennington's mission to find future leaders to carry on the school's

legacy. A Millville native born in 1896, Corson was pastor of local churches, president of Dickinson College, bishop of the Philadelphia Area, president of the World Methodist Council, and trustee of The Pennington School. Corson was a leader whose influence quite literally spanned the world. His wisdom and direction guided tens of millions of followers, secular and religious alike, toward fulfilled and socially responsible lives based upon Methodist values.

"While inspiring examples of leaders with character and strong values are plentiful at Pennington, there is one individual who stands out: Bishop Fred P. Corson, whose faith-based leadership influenced millions around the world," said Hawkey. "It is his example that inspires our mission to find future leaders to carry on the Pennington legacy."

Bishop Corson and his family had a lasting impact on the school and the churches throughout Greater New Jersey. It's estimated that during his time as bishop, Corson raised \$50 million for church purposes. Members of the Corson family served as pastors throughout GNJ

including Hopewell UMC, Pemberton UMC and Epworth UMC. Through the Bishop Fred P. Corson Scholarship, his legacy endures.

Capital District Superintendent Varylna Wright says, "This scholarship is a great way to honor Bishop Corson who was really instrumental in calling so many young people to ministry." She added, "The scholarship provides kids with an outstanding education, and it's one way we can remember Corson's contribution to the school and GNJ."

The scholarship established in Corson's name was made possible with the help of Pennington trustee the Honorable John Kuhlthau and the support of Bishop John Schol.

"I want all of our students to believe that their Pennington education prepares them to give back to the world rather than giving them a leg up to get ahead in the world," said Hawkey. "The rising generation will require more than good grades to meet the humanitarian and social challenges that await them. Above all, they will require commitment grounded in values."

Founded in 1838, The Pennington School in Pennington has educated and mentored students by encouraging them to become their best selves and lead

lives of service and integrity. The school's community is built on mutual responsibility and trust, where personal ethics and moral behavior are emphasized. This college preparatory institution is affiliated with the United Methodist Church and provides students with an education that reflects the principles espoused by John Wesley and core values of honor, virtue and humility. The student experience is designed to result in a principled, comprehensive understanding and awareness of personal discipline, social responsibility and global citizenship.

Pennington seeks funding for the Corson scholarship which will help attract students who look to be leaders accomplished in academics, athletics, and the arts. The school seeks to enroll students at Pennington so that they can gain the quiet confidence that comes from deeply held convictions and the values exemplified by Corson.

"I invite you to join with us in supporting a Pennington education for talented and motivated students who will make a positive difference in the world," said Hawkey.

For more information about The Pennington School or to donate to the Bishop Fred P. Corson Scholarship, please visit www.pennington.org or call (609)737-1838

CAMP CARES DAY



Camp Cares Day was a huge success on Nov. 11 at Camp YDP in Paterson. Children worked to fill bags with toiletries for the homeless of their city and distributed the Camp Cares Packages to those in need. The children were provided with an opportunity to learn about the importance of community and how giving back helps others. It was the perfect way to begin the Thanksgivings season. Camp YDP is a Hope Center in partnership with The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey. Photos provided by Camp YDP Operations Manager, Susan Phillips

Scholarships Awarded to 36 Students in GNJ

The Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry is committed to providing quality educational opportunities for higher learning. They offer scholarship opportunities through GNJ and oversee campus ministries. The purpose of grants for the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry is to expand the United Methodist presence within colleges and universities in GNJ. Funding opportunities provided are for creative and innovative approaches to ministries for college and university students. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry recently released its list of 2016 scholarship winners. Below is a list of the 36 from GNJ who were awarded, with the churches and colleges they attend and the type of scholarship received.

Emma Lucadema, First UMC of Scotch Plains, University of Florida, Rev. Dr. Karen Layman GIFT OF HOPE Scholarship

Larisse Kanson, New Canaan UMC in Kearny, Drew University, UM Allocation Award

Ju Hee Jun, True Light Korean UMC in Bayonne, Rutgers University – Newark, Ethnic Minority Scholarship

Kia Hill, Browns Mills UMC, Drew University, UM Allocation Award, Ethnic Minority Scholarship

Lawrence Hills, Kingston UMC, Drew University Theological School, United Methodist General Scholarship

Carly McCarthy, Waterloo UMC in Stanhope, Dickinson College, UM Allocation Award

Megan Zierold, Bridgewater UMC, Gettysburg College, Rev. Dr. Karen Layman GIFT OF HOPE Scholarship

Paul Barnett, Medford UMC, Princeton Theological Seminary, United Methodist General Scholarship

Keunsik Lee, UMC in Madison, Drew University Theological School, Clinical Pastoral Education-Ethnic in Service Training Stipend Scholarship

Claudia Santa Cruz, New Canaan UMC in Kearny, Drew University Theological School, HANA Scholarship

Samuel Arroyo, Kingston UMC, Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Metro, HANA Scholarship

Hyang Ahn, Simpson UMC in Old Bridge, Drew University, United Methodist General Scholarship

Nova Villa Vitug, Good Shepherd UMC in Bergenfield, Drew University Theological School, E. Craig Brandenburg Scholarship

Savannah Pearson, Church of the Master United Methodist in Howell, Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, Ethnic Minority Scholarship

Vanessa Wilson, Magnolia Road UMC in Pemberton, Drew University, Georgia Harkness Scholarship

Eric Small, Hope UMC in Voorhees, High Point University, UM Allocation Award

Catherine Jordan-Latham, Christ UMC in Piscataway, New York Theological Seminary, United Methodist General Scholarship

Adeoluwa Adesanya, Union UMC in Union, Seton Hall University, Ethnic Minority Scholarship

Brian Tipton, Summit UMC, Drew University Theological School, Greater New Jersey Annual Conference Merit Award, United Methodist General Scholarship

Catherine Williams, Princeton UMC, Princeton Theological Seminary, Woman of Color Scholars Scholarship

Pearl Lee, St. Luke's UMC in Long Branch, Drew University, UM Allocation Award, HANA Scholarship

Hyun Hui Kim, Monmouth Grace UMC in Eatontown, Drew University Theological School, Woman of Color Scholars Scholarship

Natalie Burr, Waretown UMC, Lebanon Valley College, Miriam Hoffman Scholarship, UM Allocation Award

Robert Magomero, Salem UMC in Pleasantville, Rutgers University – New Brunswick, Rev. Dr. Karen Layman GIFT OF HOPE Scholarship

Jisung Lee, Korean Community UMC in Englewood, Drew University Theological School, HANA Scholarship

Anuroop Alberts, Christ UMC in Jersey City, Lehigh University, Ethnic Minority Scholarship

Nicholas Wilford, Central UMC in Point Pleasant, St. John's University-New York, Rev. Dr. Karen Layman GIFT OF HOPE Scholarship

Jamel Flag, UMC of Moorestown, Princeton Theological Seminary, United Methodist General Scholarship

Eunice Chang, Grace Korean UMC in Westwood, Rutgers University-New Brunswick, HANA Scholarship

Yo Sep Nam, Monmouth Grace UMC in Eatontown, Drew University Theological School, HANA Scholarship

Brooke Boetticher, Hurdton UMC in Lake Hopatcong, Centenary College, UM Allocation Award, Rev. Dr. Karen Layman GIFT OF HOPE Scholarship

Pedro Souza Junker Silva, New Canaan UMC in Kearny, Rutgers University – Newark, Ethnic Minority Scholarship

Sarah Ashworth, Westfield First UMC, American University, AMU Block Grant

Jisun Nam, Calvary UMC in Dumont, Drew University Theological School, SEA Allocation Award

Rosemary Rentas, El Mesias UMC in Keyport, Drew University Theological School, SEA Allocation Award

Katherine Lee, St. Luke's UMC in Long Branch, Drew University, UM Allocation Award

NEJC Stands with Standing Rock

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

Members of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Committee (NEJC) on Native American Ministries of the United Methodist Church expressed their solidarity with Native American tribe in Standing Rock, North Dakota.

The tribe's reservation stands near a site occupied by hundreds of supporters who have joined the Native Americans in protesting Energy Transfer's \$3.78 billion, 1,172 mile-long crude oil Dakota Access Pipeline. The protest population has swelled to as many as 7,000 in recent weeks, spawning an unprecedented movement.

Set to run from North Dakota to Illinois, the pipeline comes within close range of the Standing Rock homes, raising concerns over the potential for a spill that could threaten land and water, including the nearby Missouri River. The pipeline would also trespass on what the regional Native Americans consider to be sacred tribal sites.

NEJC Committee members drafted and signed a letter to Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council Chairman David Archambault, to show their solidarity in opposition to the pipeline's construction. Among several others, the letter was signed by GNJ's Cyndi Kent, Chair of the Board of Church and Society and Chair of The NEJ Native American Ministries Committee.

"We Natives having faced threat of genocide, and silencing, who come from many Tribes and Nations, and we non-Natives as enthusiastic advocates, join together with you in seeking justice," the letter read. It went on to say, "We have faced conflicts with fossil fuel projects from coal mining to pipelines and fracking that have violated the mountains and streams, lakes and beaches we call

home. We united with the Lakota People at Standing Rock protecting the land from development of infrastructure that will violate treaty rights, trespass across sacred sites, and threaten the precious water so hard sought."

The letter closed with a prayer that God would encourage, uplift, and empower Archambault.

The pipeline was originally set to have gone north of Bismarck, but after the city's leaders complained, it was rerouted south to Standing Rock.

"The same concerns, when they were expressed by the Native American people, did not carry nearly the same power," said Rev. David Swinton, pastor of Grace UMC in Des Moines, IA, who recently traveled to the protest site.

Native Americans from across the continent along with thousands of other supporters, have flocked to a series of encampments along the Cannonball River. The protesters gather adjacent to the Standing Rock Reservation on lands now controlled by the Army Corps of Engineers. The land was awarded to the Dakota and Lakota peoples in an 1851 treaty, and then taken away.

The Standing Rock tribe has attempted to block the pipeline's construction in federal court but was denied by an appeals court in Washington on Oct. 9. Since then, construction resumed despite a request from the Obama administration for a voluntary halt.

In recent days, the encampment spaces have become dangerous, with protesters injured by rubber bullets and concussion grenades, and targeted with high-pressure water cannons in sub-freezing temperatures while praying.

The NEJC on Native American Ministries of the United Methodist Church remain committed to public support of Standing Rock and steadfast prayer.



“ I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. ”

— Charles Dickens

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**The January 2017 Issue Deadline
is December 23, 2016**

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

Revised Important Overtime Pay Ruling: As of Nov. 28

On Tuesday November 22, 2016, the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of Texas granted a temporary nationwide injunction that postpones the implementation of the changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) overtime exemption rules which were to go into effect on December 1, 2016.

This injunction means that the new rule that stated, any employee who has a salary under \$913 per week (\$47,476 per year) is entitled to overtime pay for hours worked exceeding 40 hours per week, will not go into effect. The rule will remain as it currently stands, that the minimum salary threshold for overtime exemption is \$455 per week (\$23,600 annually).

Even though there are currently no changes going into effect, this is a great time for the local church as an employer to ensure that employees are properly classified as exempt and non-exempt based on the current salary thresholds and duties test. Thank you for your attention to this matter and keep in mind that this is still an ongoing issue, and changes are likely to come in the near future.

The United Methodist Church of Greater NJ has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this information and it should be used for informational purposes only. Every local church should review their own unique situation. If you have any further questions, GCFA has provided additional resources on their website at www.gcfa.org.

2017 Church History Submission Sought by Jan. 6, 2017

GNJ Archives and History seeks local church history submissions for 2017. Awards are offered for three categories: The Robert B. Steelman Methodist History Award for best overall local church history, Ethnicity History Award for a non-English speaking, culturally diverse or native congregation, and a Digital Church History Award. All histories must be submitted by Jan. 6, 2017. Need resources from GNJ archival holdings? Contact Walt Jones at WaltRetired@optonline.net

All submissions should be sent (digital or mail) to Mark Shenise, GCAH, 36 Madison Ave., Madison, NJ 07940 or mshinse@gcah.org. For more information go to GNJUMC.org/archives-history

Archives and History Partners With Ancestry

The Commission on Archives and History announces a partnership with ancestry.com. This partnership places archived church vital records available 24/7 online. The GNJ internet portal is <http://collections.ancestry.com/search/us/umcgcah>

Thanks to the diligent work of Walter Jones, Archivist, and the assistance of Don DeGroat, records were removed, cataloged, boxed and shipped to Ancestry for scanning; the digital records uploaded on ancestry.com and then returned. Ancestry.com is a world renowned portal for ancestral records—births, deaths, marriages, among other details—with links to other portals such as findagrave.com. The membership records now available on-line are from churches that are closed, which according to The Discipline, such records are to be maintained by the Annual Conference for future reference. It is a part of the "Ministry of Memory" which the Commission on Archives and History strives to support.

Children at Chews UMC Raise Funds for Imagine No Malaria

Children from Chews UMC in Glendora raised \$300 by bringing in their quarters for Imagine No Malaria. A sleeping bag was placed on the floor with a malaria bed net hanging above. Each week children brought quarters to place inside the sleeping bag. "It was such a joy to see the children excited about giving and helping" said Naomi Walker.

GNJ Members Attend Faith and Guns Forum in D.C.

Seven laity and one pastor from GNJ attended the Faith and Guns Forum at the UMC Building in Washington D.C. Nov. 13 – 16. After the sessions, the group visited with their legislators to present their concerns. "We are grateful that this past summer our General Conference of The United Methodist Church overwhelmingly voted in favor of a Resolution (#3428), Our Call to End Gun Violence. "For more information, please contact the "Trees of Justice and the Flowers of Peace Team" at Treesofjustice7@yahoo.com



Wespath's Quadrennial Benefits Conference

Nine members of our Conference Board of Pensions attended a Quadrennial Benefits Conference (QBC) in Denver, CO on Sept. 28-Oct.1. QBC was sponsored by the Wespath Benefits and Investments (formerly the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits).

This event was designed to inform and train leaders and members of conference boards of pensions, benefits officers, cabinets, and other conference leaders in their work of supporting clergy and lay workers of the Church through the UMC's benefits programs.

The Conference Board of Pensions is meeting each month to maximize its work to support all the clergy and churches in relation to pensions and benefits in The UMC. All pastors of GNJ Conference are invited to the next Pre-Retirement Seminar on Thursday, March 2, 2017.

Insurance News

2016 Workers Compensation Payroll Audit Forms

Look for the customized 2016 Workers' Compensation Payroll Audit Forms which will be mailed to every church on December 1st by Church Mutual. The audit covers 2016 payroll for both church and church-controlled nursery school workers. Completed audits are due on January 15, 2017.

Completed audits are to be sent directly to Church Mutual, not to the Mission and Resource Center. Insurance certificates showing coverage for the entire audit period for workers covered by their own Workers Compensation insurance must be included with the audit submission (do not submit the Master Certificate of Insurance for your church for this purpose). The audit must be completed on the mailed form. Audit submission through Church Mutual's website is not allowed.

All questions regarding the audit should be directed to Church Mutual at: 800-554-2642 (press Option 4, Extension 4000) Or email: premiumaudit@churchmutual.com, referencing UMC of GNJ.



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OBITUARIES

Champion B. Goldy "Champ", Retired Full Elder, died on Nov. 7. A celebration of life took place on Nov. 19 at Haddonfield UMC in Haddonfield.

Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to The United Methodist Communities Fellowship Fund (in memory of Champ), 3311 State Route 33, Neptune, NJ 07753.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Evelyn Goldy, 412 Estaug Ave., Haddonfield, NJ 08033

James W. "Jim" Mooney, Spouse of Retired Local Pastor Joyce Mooney, died on Nov. 9. A celebration of life took place on Nov. 15 at the Smith Funeral Home in Mantua.

Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to the UMC of Mantua, 201 Mantua Blvd., Mantua, NJ 08051

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Joyce Mooney, 1007 Warren Court, Deptford, NJ 08096

Thomas Chalfant, Sr., Retired Local Pastor, died on Nov. 9. A celebration of life was held on Nov. 14 at Memorial UMC in Appomattox, Va.

Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Memorial UMC, Building Fund, P.O. Box 9, Appomattox, Va., 24522

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Steve Chalfant (son), 1007 Twin Oaks Dr., Toms River, NJ 08753

Rev. James A. Stermen, died on Nov. 10. A celebration of life took place on Nov. 19 at Stray Webster Funeral Home in Bridgeton.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Andrew Stermen (son), 26 Hillside Ave., Westville, NJ 08093

Linda H. Stratton, widow of Rev. Harry A. Stratton (Deceased), died on Nov. 13. A celebration of life was held on Nov. 17 at the Minetto UMC in Oswego, NY.

Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Arthritis Foundation, 1355 Peachtree St. NE, Suite 600, Atlanta, GA 30309

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Glen Suckling, 69 E. Utica St., Oswego, NY 13126

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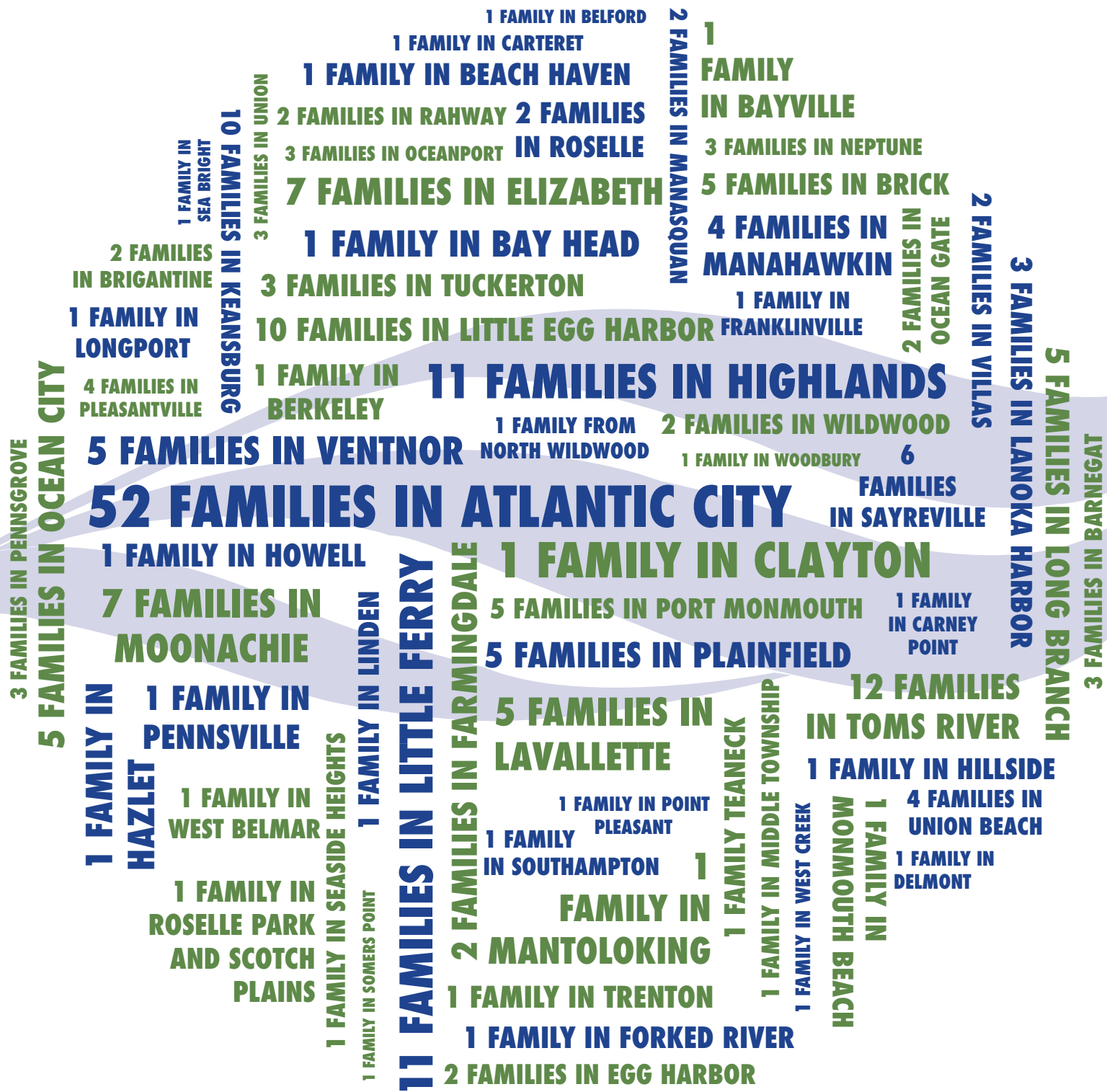




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