

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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Traditional and Contemporary Unison at Night of Worship

By Josh Kinney

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OCEAN GROVE – The Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association's 148th Methodist week, a cherished and anticipated annual summer tradition, closed out with an inspiring blend of traditional and contemporary worship followed by a soul-tending sermon by Bishop John Schol.

The evening of August 6 brought together GNJ clergy, laity, church members, United Methodists, Ocean Grove residents and vacationers, and bystanders from off the beach into the historic Great Auditorium for an uplifting night of praise and worship.

"We were in the choir," said Rev. Paul Fenn of Buddtown UMC. "What a spiritual experience we had. Singing praises to our Lord and Savior couldn't be more rewarding. Thank you for the opportunity to worship in such a beautiful church setting."

A choir made up of over 150 GNJ clergy and laity, as well as members of the Camp Meeting Association, came together representing various ages, genders, and races to sing a unique balance of worship songs. GNJ Worship Director Eric Drew brought a praise band of young adult worship leaders and musicians from congregations throughout GNJ to lead the service.

"I loved being one of the oldest people in the band," said Drew, noting that several of the band members had never been to the Great Auditorium before. "It is exciting to think about bringing new generations of worship leaders to such an iconic setting in the history of the United Methodist Church."

For Drew, the event was one of the highlights of his summer.

"I love large platforms and congregations. It's always fun to get big groups of people together to sing and worship," he said, expressing his excitement in being a part of a significant milestone for the relationship between GNJ and the Camp Meeting Association. "For us, it is a truly special venue to come together and worship; it takes us closer to our roots and is



Blending traditional with contemporary worship music, a choir made up of GNJ members and the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association kicked off the Night of Worship featuring Bishop Schol at the Great Auditorium on Aug. 6. Photo by Josh Kinney

sacred ground for many."

Drew, who wrote and recorded a worship album entitled 'Center of It All' to be a resource for new, Wesleyan worship music, found joy in playing some of the songs.

"I know that churches are downloading and singing the songs in worship services on Sunday mornings, and it was also incredible to hear so many people engaging and worshiping with them in Ocean Grove," he said. "As a songwriter, Ocean Grove is hallowed ground where Fanny Crosby and others wrote hymns and songs which became centerpieces of the Christian Church in the states. It's exciting to think that myself and many other new generations of worship songwriters can carry the tradition of 'singing to the Lord a new song' which expresses the timeless message of the gospel in

sounds and expressions of worship for new generations of followers of Jesus Christ."

The event showcased a cohesive compromise that provided a space for the traditional and contemporary to exist in unison and within the context of a matchless historical venue.

"How many times do we talk about this through sermons, articles, and resourcing, but don't model it?" asked Rev. Catherine Jordan-Latham of Monmouth Grace UMC and member of the evening's worship band. "That night we showed that this can exist together. It wasn't an easy pro-

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Pictured above: Eric Drew, Director of Worship and Rev. Catherine Jordan-Latham of Monmouth Grace UMC in Eatontown worship at Ocean Grove's Great Auditorium. Photo by Josh Kinney

Reclaiming Baptism Through Remembrance

By Josh Kinney

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BLOOMSBURY / MIDDLETOWN - "I knew I was ready," said Allison Ferdinand, a member of Simply Grace UMC in Bloomsbury. "I just had a feeling, and I knew I had found home in my church community."

Ferdinand trusted her feeling and publicly declared her newfound faith through the sacrament of baptism. She wanted a tangible experience to look back on and carry with her, so she decided to make it official on Nov. 20, 2016.

The church's senior pastor, Rev. Gina Yeske, performed the baptism and was moved by the memorable occasion.

"It's a community thing," said Yeske, describing what baptism has meant for her and her church. "It's relational, and everyone's included."

Over the years, Yeske had come across teens and young adults who longed for a baptism experience they could connect in a moment with a tangible memory.

"As a pastor, I thought perhaps this

needs to be a little more hands on," she said. "I've met people who lament not remembering, especially if they've been away from the church and have then come back."

Yeske pairs joining new church members with water baptisms at Simply Grace to signify joining God's family. There are not multiple baptisms in one day; rather each family gets their own special day to look back on.

"Many times, moms or dads who were never baptized themselves now want to baptize their kids who have come of age to accept Christ," said Yeske. "And many of these parents also want to be baptized with their children."

At Simply Grace, the idea is to make a public commitment of faith not only as an individual but as a community that's together choosing to include and journey with the baptized. Families bring everyday household pitchers or containers to use for their baptism, whether that's sprinkling or pouring.

"It brings the ordinary every-day into the story," exclaimed Yeske. "And it

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SENT Conference to Pursue Great Commission

By Josh Kinney

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EAST BRUNSWICK – On November 11 at Aldersgate UMC in East Brunswick, leaders throughout GNJ will be invited to learn more about what it means to be "sent into the world" for Christ.

'Honing in on Jesus' "Great Commission" the 2017 SENT Conference will feature storytellers, change makers, organizers, theologians, and pastors.

Workshops leaders include Danielle Fanfair and Marlon Hall of Folklore Films, Mark DeVries of Ministry Architects, the consulting firm on boarded by GNJ to develop the Next Generation ministries initiative passed at the 2017 Annual Conference session, and Christian Coon of Chicago's Urban Village Church. Additionally, Eric Barreto of Princeton Theological Seminary and Michelle Matthews of Kingstowne Communion in Alexandria, VA will also lead workshops on theology and reclaiming Wesley's model of relational discipleship and community building.

"How are we sent into this world?"

asked Director of Mission, Nicole Caldwell-Gross. "How do we connect with new people? How do we connect with new communities that aren't even interested in church? What does this mean for me, my ministry, and my call? This conference will send you and your team into the world to create meaningful ministry with new people."

Michelle Matthews, an inner-city high school English teacher turned pastor, expressed zeal at her opportunity to speak at the SENT conference.

"What a fan-freaking-tastic idea for a conference," she exclaimed. "Let's start learning from the full host of creatives."

Having helped plant four United Methodist new faith communities in Virginia Beach and Durham, NC, Matthews' heart is "set on fire" by expressions of church that major on community, mission, justice, and inclusivity. Her workshop will focus on how disciples are formed and teaching how to enmesh with community in courageous, creative, and collaborative ways that elicit slow and steady growth through spiritual depth, intimacy,

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A Message from the Bishop



Honor, Disrupt, Align - The actions of a transformational leader

Have you ever watched a college band play at half-time during a football game? To play in the band, you have to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. In a band you have to play a musical instrument and march in synchronized order. It looks natural, and the best bands make it look easy, but it takes vision, coordination, practice and a willingness to work together. Think about it, the

band member is playing their instrument in harmony with a lot of other instruments. The instruments are in tune with each other. The band members march in different directions to create a visual picture or spell out a word. It takes alignment.

This is the third and final part of a three-part series on how effective transformational leaders honor, disrupt and align goals, ministry and people.

Previously I talked about honoring and disruption. Honoring is essential during change, otherwise people experience the change as being critical and even condemning of past ministry or even more damaging to the people who led the ministry in the past. Honoring people and past traditions is critical to future progress.

Churches and organizations do not make important progress without some disruption. Disruption is caused when leaders make changes to move the mission forward. Generally, people must change or even stop doing something that may be a long-standing tradition because it is not making new disciples of Jesus Christ and engaging disciples in mission.

Alignment is bringing all the pieces together so that they work in harmony. A band whose members do "their own thing" is not a band you want to listen to. If the tuba players play a different song than the rest of the band or the trumpeters turn left when the rest of the band turns right, you have a band nobody wants to see perform. In the church, we fail to see how important it is for worship, small groups, spending, staff time, and organizations to support one common mission and work toward accomplishing the same four or five goals. Groups say, "we are different" or "we have different priorities" or "our mandate is to...". Churches with groups who think and act this way are like trumpeters marching in the wrong direction, and tuba players playing 'How Great Thou Art' when everyone else is playing 'Amazing Grace.' It is confusing for the church members and even more confusing for visitors. Alignment recognizes different expressions of achieving the same mission and goals.

Alignment is helpful to the congregation, particularly visitors. When leaders and congregational organizations are all using similar language about the direction, mission, priorities, ministries and goals of the congregation, the worshipers and visitors have an easier time understanding what is important to the congregation, its direction and how to engage in its ministries.

Alignment isn't easy and requires resonance. In other words, people do not align because someone told them to, but because most of the congregation resonates with the mission, ministries and goals. It is easy to align a machine so that all the parts work together, but people are not machines. Resonance is brought about by building relationships and developing shared vision and goals. We do not achieve resonance by telling people what to do but by inviting them into a process to create the mission and goals and encouraging them to develop ministries and activities that achieve the mission and goals. It is one thing for everyone to talk in similar ways about the mission, but to inspire people to carry out the mission and ministries enthusiastically requires

alignment to mission and goals that resonate with most the people.

To achieve this type of alignment requires clarity of purpose and identity that connects with the congregation and community. People will not get on board because it is a good idea, but because the purpose and identity connects with them. They believe and feel this is God's calling for the church and for them.

Here are ways to align people, the mission, and goals of the church.

1. Have a clear, concise mission phrase. Here are a couple of examples:
 - a. Knowing Jesus and making Jesus known
 - b. Connecting with Jesus by connecting with people in need
 - c. To be known by our love for God and our love for others
 - d. To make a difference in people's lives and the community by sharing God's grace

2. Have a scripture passage that identifies who you want people to be
 - a. We are a Good Samaritan church
 - b. We are a Matthew 25 church and serve Christ by serving others
 - c. We are a Philippians 2 church; we imitate Christ

The key here is to choose a passage of action that is embedded in your belief rather than a passage that is only about a belief. The passage is to organize people around the mission and action of the church.

3. Set a few clear goals. Here are some examples of clear, crisp goals:
 - a. We will become a hospitality church by creating...
 - b. We will increase the number of visitors by...
 - c. We will train ___ new small group leaders to lead ___ people in small groups

The key is clear action oriented goals that are measurable.

Once you achieve this type of clarity, communicate and invite people to participate in helping to achieve the mission, purpose and goals of the church. For instance, a sermon may lift up a person who is living the mission by telling a story about her or him. In your morning worship, pray for one of your goals and ask God to help the congregation achieve the goal. Write a newsletter article about why you have the mission you do and in meetings or when groups gather, spend time in conversation about how the congregation is achieving its goals and mission. There are many other creative ideas about how to continue to lift up your mission and goals and invite people to participate in them. This is what Jesus did. He came with a mission of helping the Kingdom of God become real and known in people's lives. He taught about it, demonstrated the Kingdom of God in his actions and even did miracles to demonstrate God was present and active.

Today every congregation needs lay and clergy leaders who honor, disrupt and align. The churches that are vital, making new disciples and serving the community with life-changing mission are honoring, disrupting and aligning. I encourage each of you to honor more deeply, disrupt even more, and align by developing clarity about your purpose, mission and goals and communicate them all the time.

I am grateful for each of you who lead a church, a particular ministry or an administrative team. You are important to the movement of God through your congregation.

Keep the faith!

John Schol, Bishop

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey



Check Out Our Featured Episode:
**HOW TO GROW VOLUNTEERS
IN YOUR CHURCH**

Feel like you're doing ministry all by yourself? Director of Leadership Development Juel Nelson comes on the podcast to share ideas and resources for fostering a spirit of lay leadership and service in your church, so the pastor doesn't have to be doing ministry alone.



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When the righteous cry out, the Lord listens; he delivers them from all their troubles. - Psalm 34:17

The United Methodist Church has many resources already being deployed to the Houston area.

FIND OUT HOW YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION CAN HELP.
www.gnjumc.org/disasterresponse



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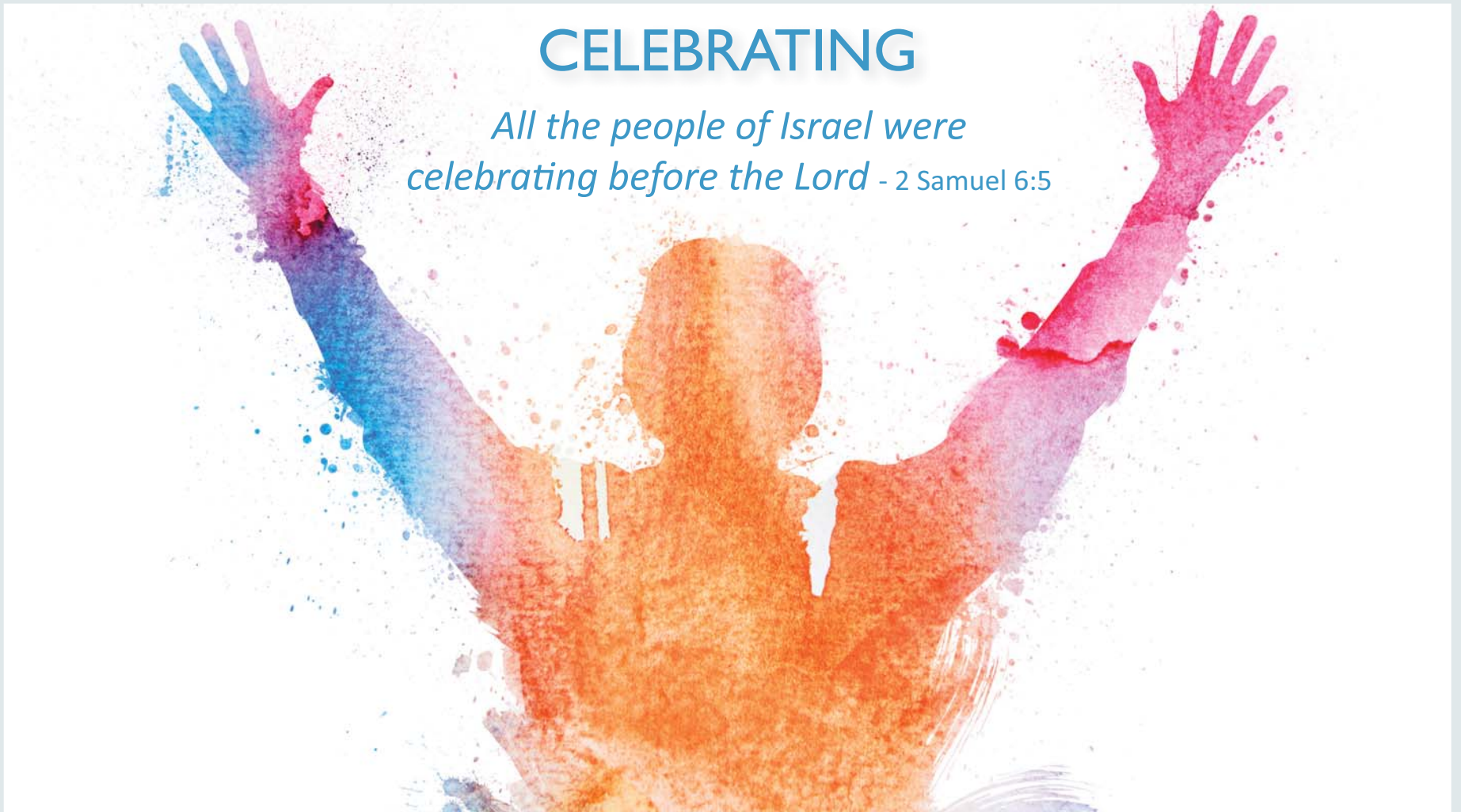
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CELEBRATING

All the people of Israel were celebrating before the Lord - 2 Samuel 6:5



PEOPLE WILL REPEAT WHAT YOU CELEBRATE - Worship is celebration! We respond and rejoice for all God has done and continues to do. As we begin a new school year of ministry and programming, let us keep our eyes open for where God is moving and celebrate it regularly.

WHY CELEBRATE

Adapted from brilliantliving.com

- 1 TO LEARN**
As life-giving ministry is happening, ask “how did we do this?”
- 2 TO DEVELOP A SUCCESS MINDSET**
Counter “that will never work” by constantly pointing to where God is moving.
- 3 INCREASE MOTIVATION**
When lives are changed and communities are transformed, people will be inspired to join you.
- 4 HAPPY CHEMICALS**
Your brain actually releases dopamine when you achieve success, everyone will feel better!
- 4 SHARE SUCCESS**
Honor and bless others by pointing to how their ministries make a difference to the community.

WAYS TO CELEBRATE

- Share a testimony in worship.
- Make an iPhone video and share it on your church’s social media.
- Share how the offering collected is changing lives through ministry.
- Host a concert, open mic night, coffee house, story slam or art gallery for the community.
- Take 5 minutes to begin a meeting and highlight where you have seen God at work.

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Peace Vigil Brings Out Hope in Hopewell

By Josh Kinney
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HOPEWELL – In the wake of violence in Charlottesville, Hopewell UMC lived up to its name and became a well of hope for their community. Churchgoers, neighbors, friends, and community and religious leaders gathered on the evening of August 15 for a solidarity peace vigil in the midst of national division, strife, hatred, and conflict.

Candles were lit and singing filled the church lawn as gatherers remembered lives lost and envisioned a hope for peace and acceptance.

Pastor Kate Hillis said, “As a community of faith, we grieve together. All of us, black and white, are called to see one another as image bearers of the Divine in this world.”

Other local religious leaders spoke about the importance of focusing on love and standing against injustices.

Hillis went on to quote scripture. “There is no division between Jew or non-Jew, slave and freed, male and female,” she said. “Among us, you are all equal.”

Hillis moved many to tears as she lit her candle from one burning on a makeshift altar situated on the church steps. The flame was then passed among the gatherers.

“It grieves my heart to say that this

violence against our fellow human beings is not an isolated incident,” said Hillis. “It is also not an incident that we can afford to look away from because it didn’t happen in our community – this time. Many egregious and violent acts of hate have often been done in the name of God, and as a pastor in this town, I need you to know that I’m not okay with it. And I will not be silent on issues of injustice.”

Hopewell Borough Mayor Paul Anzano expressed gratitude for designating the borough as a Sanctuary City. Some stepped up to the microphone and shared their stories, including Deacon John Buck of the Second Calvary Baptist Church who proudly described Hopewell as a “small town with a big heart.” Both Buck and Anzano expressed gratitude to the community for attending the vigil. The crowd walked around the block singing songs of peace before concluding the event.

“From a ‘son’ of Hopewell now living and resisting in Charlottesville, I’m proud of and grateful for your response to the weekend’s horrors here,” commented E. Anderson, addressing the town on the community blog MercerMe.com. “Thank you, Hopewell, for the rock-solid foundation you fostered in me as a young person 30 years ago, and for somehow supporting me still even today.”



Church and community members gathered at Hopewell UMC for a peace vigil following the violence in Charlottesville, VA. Photo by Michael Mancuso for NJ.com



Hopewell UMC Pastor Kate Hillis encouraged the crowd gathered for the vigil, quoting scriptures of equality. Photo by Michael Mancuso for NJ.com



Families, friends, and neighbors brought signs of solidarity as they lit candles and prayed at the Hopewell church’s peace vigil. Photo by Michael Mancuso for NJ.com

**Do not be overcome by evil,
but overcome evil with good.**

– Romans 12:21

EMBRACE LOVE.

Go to UMC.org/EmbraceLove to learn more about how you can be a force for good.



Traditional and Contemporary Unison at Night of Worship

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Bishop John Schol challenged and inspired the audience at Ocean Grove’s Great Auditorium to tend to the soul and to make one’s faith personal. Photo by Josh Kinney

cess, but that’s the whole point because worship is messy,” she said. “But look what can happen if we adjust and stretch and make sacrifices! Was it perfect? Of course not, but for me, it modeled the possibilities of what could happen.”

Jordan-Latham found the experience of being on the worship stage looking out at different ages, races, and genders freely worshipping, fulfilling. A group of young people who came from the beach joined the crowd, lifted their hands in worship, and immersed themselves in the event.

“Seeing that reminded me of how present God is and how much God is working in situations that I have no idea about,” said Jordan-Latham, who advocated for making the event an annual tradition. “It also reminded me how God can touch the most unlikely of people. It’s still sitting with me weeks later.”

Bonnie Graham, a longtime member of the Ocean Grove Auditorium choir, felt blessed to participate and said that the evening was “proof positive that traditional and praise music can be presented at the same service, and they can complement each other beautifully.”

The worship experience was made whole by efficient ushers, and communion servers, which Jordan-Latham noted was equally important as making sure scriptures match worship songs.

“The beautiful array of genders and ages, clergy and laity, serving communion was moving,” she said. For some, the sacrament was a sacred tradition and for others, a sincere moment of raw brokenness.

“I had never been inside the Great Auditorium, but as a Methodist in the Northeast, I knew all about it,” stated Jordan-Latham. “There were some who were comfortable in that space and others who were a little uncertain, and those who were able to become comfortable during the actual event. But that’s the beauty of worship, because we have that on Sunday morning’s, too.”

Jordan-Latham recognized pastor friends and colleagues in the crowd whose facial expressions showed they were being ministered to.

“Seeing these people who give so much of themselves being fulfilled by this experience really says something, and it’s a reminder that we need to make spaces for moments and refueling and refilling,” she said.

Bishop Schol’s inspiring sermon expanded upon that very point; the tending of the soul.

“Night of Worship was a way to expand our congregations beyond the walls of our local churches,” said Jordan-Latham. “It was a way to have a shared experience that doesn’t have to be in *our* church but in *the* church.”

Walking with God ‘Most Exhilarating Adventure’ says Meredith Andrews

By Kamelia Ani
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WILDWOOD - Contemporary Christian music artist, songwriter, and worship leader, Meredith Andrews is a North Carolina native who has won two Dove Awards and has had her music featured in the top 20 songs of 2013. She is best known for her piano tunes and is associated with the Vertical Church Band at Harvest Bible Chapel in Chicago. Andrews is ecstatic to be performing at the 2017 IGNITE Youth Conference in Wildwood, NJ.

She started singing at the age of six, and hasn't stopped since. We asked her to tell us about her music and how she got started.

Meredith: I grew up in a small Assemblies of God church in Wilson, NC, and sang my first solo as a six year old. I wanted to follow in my mom's footsteps as she was one of the praise team leaders at our church. When I was 12, I wrote my first song which had six verses and no chorus. I guess I thought I was a modern day hymn writer. I made my first album when I was 16 and began traveling to churches in Eastern NC to share my original songs with whoever would listen. I was super involved with my youth group, and we had a worship service every Saturday night called Potter's House. That's where I began playing keys and leading worship on a regular basis. When I was 17, I went to a Rebecca St. James concert and as I fully



Nationally acclaimed Christian singer-songwriter Meredith Andrews will take the stage at IGNITE 2017 in Wildwood, NJ. Photo provided

surrendered my desire to use my giftings, the Lord spoke to my heart and clearly said, "Be faithful where I have you." That has been my mantra my whole life. After leading worship at Liberty University, I moved to Chicago to join the staff of Harvest Bible Chapel where I served for over ten years, and signed a record deal with Word around the same time.

Relay: Could you give us a glimpse into your faith journey and how it began?

Meredith: I was basically raised under

a pew, but more than going to church a few times a week, I had a deep longing to know God even as a kid. When I was five, I responded to an invitation my pastor had given, and I proceeded to do the same the following weeks. After the third time I went forward for an altar call, my mom explained that I didn't have to ask Jesus into my heart every week, but that He had come to stay the first time I asked. When I was 12 I began really seeking the Lord for myself. I would turn on my worship CDs and sing, pray, and get into God's Word, and He met me in the sweetest, most tangible ways every time.

Relay: What message will you try to spread at IGNITE?

Meredith: I hope to bring a message that encourages students and leaders alike that knowing and walking with God is the most exhilarating adventure we could ever have. And I want to bring a message of hope and faith, that no matter what someone is battling or struggling with, no matter what their circumstances, Jesus is who He says He is and He is longing to bring each of us deeper into His Word and His presence and closer to His heart. We find everything we need in Him.

Relay: What do you hope kids and youth leaders come away with from the experience as a whole, as well as from your personal performance?

Meredith: I want them to encounter the Living God. Many people can sing, many people can teach, but it is the Holy Spirit that changes lives. I am praying

that the Lord will reveal Himself in fresh ways to each of His children that week-end, for when we see and understand the very nature of God, it draws us in and transforms us on the inside.

Relay: Why do you think youth events like IGNITE are important?

Meredith: My junior high and high school years were some of the most significant for me spiritually, especially the conferences and camps I attended when I was a student. There's nothing quite like getting away from the craziness and distractions of daily life and spending intentional, focused time seeking Jesus together. I believe that IGNITE will be an event that marks many of us for the rest of our lives. It will be an experience where many put a stake in the ground and say, I am living to know, love, and honor Jesus, no matter the cost.

Relay: What would you tell pastors, youth leaders, and church members as to why they should participate in IGNITE, whether that's through funding scholarships or encouraging their youth to go to the event and bring their friends?

Meredith: We must pour into the next generation. The chance to reach young people with the power of the Gospel is right in front of us, and this will be an event that has the potential to impact thousands of students for eternity.

To see Meredith Andrews and other amazing performers at IGNITE 2017, visit www.ignitenj.org for more information and registration.

Church's Prayer Garden Welcomes Community

By Denise Herschel
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OAKHURST - Ocean Township resident Gayle Fitzmaier has been a member of First UMC in Oakhurst for the past 30 years, however recently, she found another calling. "The Prayer Garden," uses what was once an underused and dormant space to become a place of serenity and prayer, surrounded by nature, for all in the community to utilize freely.

"The purpose of this garden is to have a peaceful area to pray and an area outside of the Sanctuary to worship," Fitzmaier said. "Additionally, it is an area to honor and memorialize our loved ones. Welcoming the community to use the garden is also part of its purpose. Our church members have responded favorably as they like the idea of worshiping in a natural environment and out in the open."

According to Fitzmaier, who is the Prayer Garden Committee chairperson, the idea of the garden came about in early 2015 when she initiated the concept due to the area rarely being utilized. Before the location was "re-purposed" as the Prayer Garden, it was called "the Labyrinth."

Located on the north side of the church, it is accessible from the sidewalk by a paved pathway. Many of the bricks along the pathway have been purchased in honor or memory of a loved one with the area being approximately a half acre.

"I truly believe that I was inspired by God to re-purpose the area," exclaimed

Fitzmaier. "I brought it up to the governing body of the church and with their support, led a campaign to remove and re-purpose the area. A vote was taken and the name became 'The Prayer Garden.'"

Several additional donor brick campaigns followed as well as a massive cleanup and a dedication ceremony on November 1, 2015.

"One of our missions for the garden was to open it to the community. There is a new sign near the entrance that says, 'The Prayer Garden.' U R Welcome," Fitzmaier said.

The garden contains a 32 foot by 32 foot square seven circuit design paved labyrinth, a large wooden cross built and donated by a church member, three standard benches, a square bench, a prayer card mailbox and 113 donor bricks along the pathway. There are several trees, memorial plaques and four benches bought and dedicated to the memory of church members' loved ones. Planting and weeding is done throughout the year and deer resistant flowers have been a primary focus. Church members have been encouraged to plant as the spirit moves them.

Small services were held in the garden with the church's Praise Team. A prayer card mailbox was added in September of 2016 with signage inviting community members to complete a prayer card that will be prayed over by the church's weekly Women's Covenant Group. The garden has been used as a place of worship for a sunrise service on Easter morning, two summer worship services,



The Prayer Garden at First UMC in Oakhurst has become a place for the surrounding community to enjoy. Photo provided

and a Communion celebration.

"We have only just begun," Fitzmaier said. "I truly hope members of both the community and the church will spend some time in prayer and contemplation in the garden," said Barbara Gruezke, Prayer Garden Committee Member and GNJ Insurance Administrator.

Rev. Mark Ale, who has been actively involved with the garden, added that he is pleased to be able to offer this place to everyone.

"It's a place of peace and prayer surrounded by the beauty of nature where anyone from our community can spend

time in thought, prayer or meditation," he said. "It is now a worship and prayer area enjoyed by the church members as well as the community. There is new enthusiasm for the outside worship space. We hope that people will experience God's love in the garden. We want people to know that they are not alone. If there is a need to share a prayer we will help. We hope it continues to grow as an outreach to the community."

For more information about The Prayer Garden, contact First UMC at (732) 531-1150. The church is located at 103 Monmouth Road in Oakhurst.



GNJ is looking for the right person to join the Connectional Ministries team to serve as project manager, coordinate events and manage support staff. The Connectional Ministries team provides programs and resources in the five markers of vitality.

FOR MORE INFO:
Go to www.gnjumc.org for job description and information on applying for this key position with in the conference.

The October Issue Deadline is September 23, 2017

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SUMMER FUN! GNJ VBS 2017



Newfield UMC



Union UMC



Mantua UMC



Christian Rapper Tedashii to Headline IGNITE '17

By Josh Kinney
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WILDWOOD – With a goal to create songs that are thoughtful and thought-provoking, nationally renowned Christian rapper Tedashii will be taking the events that shaped his life as an artist and a believer in Christ to the IGNITE 2017 stage.

During high-school, Tedashii was a football-playing, poetry-reading, trombone-wielding member of the band who often felt like a “misfit” and an “outsider.” From his mix of Samoan and African-American heritage to his love of theater, sports, and cooking, Tedashii couldn't be categorized. In his family, there were several preferred career paths, and musician certainly wasn't one of them. With relatives in the military, teaching, and professional athletics, young Tedashii was a light-hearted storyteller trying to express himself. His mother pushed him toward the arts and a high school English teacher and college friend stepped in to alter his future by helping him find his voice and then his Savior. During college, Tedashii became a Christian and “never looked back.”

A few years after his 2009 album release of *Blacklight*, tragedy shook up his life. His one-year-old son passed away suddenly, and “the world stopped” for Tedashii. He ceased recording and touring to spend months with his family, seeking counseling, and trying to find a new normal. It was his love for interacting with people both on and off the stage that helped him ease back into performing. This he found to be therapeutic; aiding his healing.

Tedashii returned to work on his fourth album, which turned out to be drastically different than originally planned. Recorded in Dallas and Atlanta, *Below Paradise* became a personal take on the sometimes harsh realities of the world; both the joy and the sorrow.

“The songs read like a journal, some entries so honest and transparent that



Nationally renowned Christian rapper Tedashii plans on taking the events that shaped his life and faith as an artist and believer to the IGNITE 2017 stage. Photo provided

the pain is palpable,” explains Tedashii's official website bio, “but the album is not a somber, solemn experience. There is triumph and hope to be found here, too.”

The album tracks Tedashii's personal growth and progress as an artist. From his 2006 debut, *Kingdom People* to the present, the rapper's style continues to thrive and develop. From his robust stature and attention-grabbing delivery on the mic, his heavy bass vocals and dramatic beats captivate listeners. Tedashii's music seeks to speak reality into life, asking “Where are in our lives with God?”

“The takeaway is that we all need to be looking at ways we can speak truth to ourselves and others,” he said. “Life is short, and there's no time like right now to get real.”

Outside his music career, Tedashii is a busy family man with strong ties to his home in Denton, Texas, where he's part of The Village Church. He sometimes uses his rich, deep voice to provide background during worship.

“Paradise for me is a must now, not just a hope,” he said. “Heaven has become more real, and there's a new urgency to get there. It's an important

message I feel compelled to share.” However, this newfound purpose for Tedashii doesn't make the pain worth it or lessen the ache of loss, but it's a calling he's embraced. As he moves forward in his music career, family, and to the IGNITE stage, he's more determined than ever to prove himself a faithful follower of Christ

and to influence his audiences for the glory of God.

The IGNITE youth conference kicks off September 29 through October 1 at the Wildwoods Convention Center in Wildwood. The third price break ends September 28. Visit www.ignitenj.org for more information and to register.

Reclaiming Baptism Through Remembrance

Continued from page 1

engages an opportunity for people to remember their baptism, the commitment, their church family, and to retell that story.”

Over the last two years, Yeske's church has done over 30 baptisms including infants, children, teens, and adults. The sacrament has become an important part of the church's worship; stressing a kinship aspect and a coming alongside as a church community to raise children and or walk with someone in their faith. The congregation is heavily invested in baptism. Members hand craft blankets, not for display but to be used, serving as a constant reminder of one's baptism, the public declaration of one's faith, and the church family. One parishioner donates new Bibles to the newly baptized and another crafts Christmas ornaments.

Ferdinand's baptism was especially significant for her mother, Phyllis, who watched her daughter's public declaration of faith before passing away shortly after. Ferdinand hopes that like her mother, she'll be able to see her son, Wyatt, 2, grow up to decide his baptism.

“We can guide our children in the right direction, but ultimately, I want this to be up to him,” said Ferdinand.

Baptism is celebrated in a variety of ways throughout Greater New Jersey. From sprinkling, pouring, dabbing and immersion, United Methodists uniquely honor all methods and traditions. Over the last two summers, several adults at Middletown UMC were baptized in the Atlantic Ocean. Additionally, a group

from the church chose to be baptized in the Jordan River while on a trip to Israel.

“Recently, we have had young adults that have decided to follow Jesus and wanted to become baptized as a sign of that,” said Rev. Derrick Doherty of Middletown UMC. “Baptism is like a spiritual tattoo that can't be washed off. It shows that we're marked by God and set aside for God and through it we're asking for God's grace to be poured out on us.”

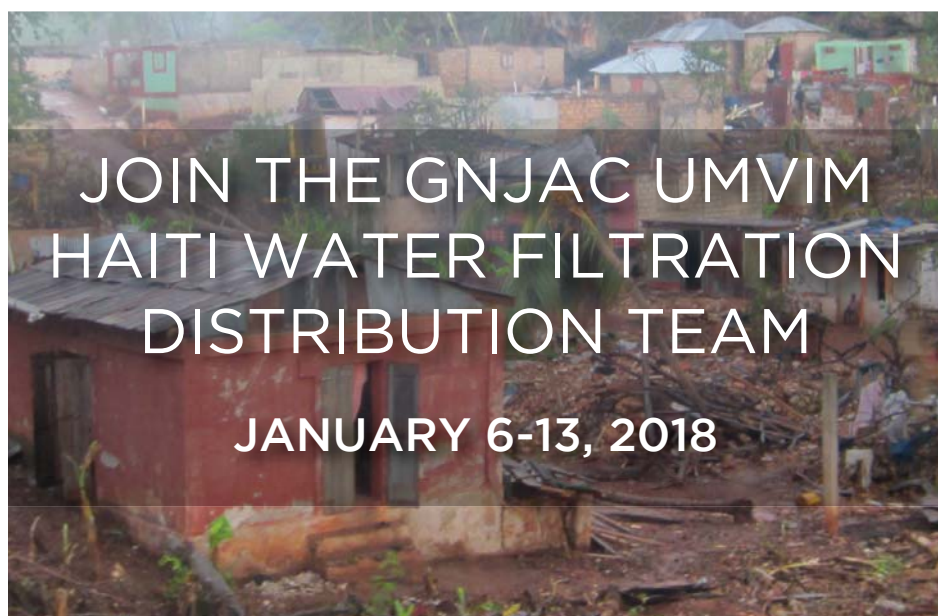
When infants are baptized at Middletown UMC, Doherty gives the parents a letter from himself to give to the child on their 14th birthday.

“The letter is between me and the child but I write that now that you've turned 14, I hope that you've chosen for yourself to follow God,” said Doherty. The letter invites the child to share with the pastor and reclaim and live into their baptism. Doherty looks forward to future responses.

As adult baptisms in GNJ continue to grow, so does a renewed passion that's sparking interest and conversation among faith communities.

“I usually equate baptism with the beginning of Jesus' ministry,” said Yeske. “The adults I know are getting baptized into the family of God and the ministry of the church.”

Reclaim the power of the Holy Spirit by rediscovering baptism. Resources available in November including liturgy, videos, graphics, a worship sermon series and much more. Look for updates in The GNJ Digest for more information and how to join the movement. Visit www.waterandroots.org



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JANUARY 6-13, 2018

Application with a \$200 deposit is required.
Total trip cost is \$1800, including the deposit.

Three team meetings will occur in:
September, October and November.

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Brittany Rusk at brusk08@gmail.com
or call 609.790.0480.



REDISCOVERING BAPTISM

WATER & ROOTS

Reclaim the power of the Holy Spirit by rediscovering Baptism. Resources available in November including liturgy, videos, graphics a worship sermon series and much more. Look for updates in the Digest for more information and how to join the movement.

www.waterandroots.org

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Angels in Motion Through Church's Bag Blessing Ministry

By Denise Herschel
Nj6pack@yahoo.com



PLEASANTVILLE - Handwritten notes of encouragement, resource information, snacks, drinks and toiletries filled into clean Ziploc bags, can change lives forever, as those who assembled these "blessing bags" at Bethany St. John's UMC recently learned. Such a simple gesture can mean a world of difference, particularly to those who are struggling with homelessness and addiction. Mike McGaffney, who helped organize the recent bag event at the Pleasantville church with Pastor Carol Hutchinson, knows this story all too well, as he has walked in those shoes.

"I have had several overdoses, been on life support, and in a coma for 31 days. I have been to several rehabs, intensive outpatient programs, jails and state prison. I was addicted to heroin and cocaine. But I got clean on December 12, 2012," he said.

McGaffney, along with his friend Susan Howell, who also became clean on January 14, 2014, were friends and

roommates in the worst of their addiction and together battled homelessness, living on the streets. After getting clean, "we talked about giving back and Susan helped bring 'Angels in Motion' to Atlantic City in early 2016 and I joined her," said McGaffney. "We go to the streets every day giving out blessing bags, clothing, water, love and encouragement."

To date, the Angels in Motion (AIM) blessing bags program has according to McGaffney, "gotten over 1,000 people off the streets and into treatment."

"We filled 425 bags, meaning 425 people's lives will be touched with the blessing bags event at Bethany St. John's UMC," he said. The event was attended by the congregation and AIM volunteers from South Jersey. McGaffney



Bethany St. John's UMC in Pleasantville hosted an 'Angels in Motion' bag blessing ministry on Aug. 17, helping to provide for the homeless in their community.

Photo provided

gathered donations and the bags were filled by attendees. Notes of encouragement were written by children and their parents, along with resource lists that contain all New Jersey phone numbers for substance abuse, mental health and homeless alliance housing. Included also were Medicare/Medicaid, county and state funding and programs that scholarship those needing assistance.

McGaffney, who is the New Jersey Chapter consultant for AIM, added that he has been involved with the organization since January 2016.

"AIM is an organization that is changing the way the homeless and addicted are treated. We help them get ID's, get them into detox/treatment, support them in their recovery, go to court dates with them and encourage them throughout the process," he said.

Angels in Motion started with one woman's efforts to rescue her child from the disease of addiction. While searching the streets of Kensington, a neighborhood in North Philadelphia, for her son, Carol Rostucher saw that many other children and loved ones were suffering and lost as well. She opened her heart and spread the love on the streets by providing "blessing bags" which contain

food, snacks, clothing, hygiene products and resource information to obtain help when they are ready. AIM was formed in mid-February of 2015.

"I would love to see other churches get involved by hosting blessing bag parties," said McGaffney. "Susan and I were both homeless on the streets for years and no one helped us. We are trying to end the stigma. The first thing we do when we meet them is give them a hug! Hugs mean so much when you are in darkness and feel alone. We listen to them. We tell them we are here for them. Our hearts soar when they call, we pick them up and immediately begin the process of getting them help. The initial reactions we get is of suspicion or disbelief. Over time we build trust and love and they talk to us, some eventually reaching out to receive help from us." He continued, "In the current opiate epidemic, we have lost more than we can count, but we are also getting some wins. There is no better feeling than reuniting mothers with children, parents with their sons and daughters, and helping families through the healing process."

For more information about Angels in Motion visit their website at www.aimangelsinmotion.org



The group filled 425 bags with handwritten notes of encouragement, prayers, resource information, snacks, drinks and toiletries to share the love and provision of Christ to the hurting in their community. Photo provided

SENT Conference

Continued from page 1
and public presence.

Eric Barreto, a Baptist minister who pursues scholarship for the sake of the church, will lead a theology workshop titled "Acts of/and Imagination."

"The Acts of the Apostles is not a blueprint for a perfect church," he says. "Instead, Acts contains stories meant to provoke and inspire our imaginations about how God might be present among us in vibrant and unexpected ways."

His workshop will walk through six imaginations for following Jesus into a changing world. Barreto regularly writes for and teaches in faith communities around the U.S. He has also been a leader in the Hispanic Theological Initiative Consortium, a national, ecumenical, and inter-constitutional consortium comprised of some of the country's top seminaries, theological schools, and religion departments.

As pastor of a fast growing young adults-centric congregation that is one of 30 new "planting churches" started by the United Methodist Church in 2009 designed to attract people who have been turned off by religious institutions, Christian Coon believes that even the best-laid ministry plans will go awry.

"But, rather than seeing the effort as a failure, it might be the start of a new way that God is wanting to reach people in your context," said Coon.

Author of "Failing Boldly: How Falling Down in Ministry Can Be the Start of Rising Up" Coon talks about the benefits of community organizing for one's ministry and how failure may sometimes be the best thing that can happen.

For Ministry Architects consultant Mark DeVries, leaders in the church often fall into one of two styles: Disruptive innovators stirring up change to create quick momentum, and systems leaders designing long-term structures to create stability and sustainability.

"The problem is that disruptive inno-

vators often don't know how to sustain their own change initiatives, and system leaders can find it immensely difficult to avoid creating a culture that grows stale over time," said DeVries. His seminar seeks to provide strategies for leaders who want to combine the passion and energy of disruptive change and anchor it in systems that can ensure the long-term impact of those changes.

Having trained youth workers across the U.S., Canada, Russia, Uganda, South Africa, Ecuador, Trinidad, Nicaragua, and Northern Ireland, working with a variety of denominations, DeVries has helped facilitate GNJ's Next Generation ministries initiatives. He's taught courses and guest lectured at several colleges and seminaries including Princeton Theological School Vanderbilt Divinity School, and David Lipscomb University. DeVries has authored several books including "Sustainable Youth Ministry" and "Family-Based Youth Ministry." In 2011 he co-authored "Before You Hire a Youth Pastor" and "The Indispensable Youth Pastor" with YMCA Vice-President, Jeff Dunn-Rankin.

Storytellers like Danielle Fanfair and Marlon Hall seek to empower people to become storytellers in their communities. Their workshop invites SENT attendees to excavate the "good news" through the power of the human story.

Fanfair serves as a strategist and producer for Folklore Films, a Houston-based film series dedicated to illuminating beauty from brokenness and folklore within us all. She explores the stories of people who are using change, trauma, and pain to fuel passion through life-giving work, telling "visual poems" through film.

Hall describes himself as "a curator of human potential." Academically trained as an Anthropologist, accomplished film-maker, and published author, Hall is a lecturing Fellow for Duke University and helps Fanfair curate Folklore Films.

For more information and to register for SENT, visit www.gnjumc.org/events/sent

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FIND OUT MORE AT: WWW.GNJUMC.ORG

Apostles in our Midst: Rev. William M. Williams, III and Asbury UMC, Atlantic City

A 2017 Series on Apostolic Leadership in GNJ

Mission: Asbury UMC in Atlantic City has embarked on innovative ways to enact social reform within the city by the sea. The church has become a Cisco Networking Academy, a work-study site for Stockton University, a partner site for the University's Office of Community Engagement, and a site where the hungry and homeless are fed weekly through partnerships with several organizations in the region, including other United Methodist congregations.

Rev. William M. Williams III, Asbury's Senior Pastor, serves as a core team leader within the state chapter of Black Lives Matter – New Jersey: Atlantic City. As a result of this leadership, and in partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore, and various professors at Stockton University, the church hosted a 12-month educational teach-in series where principles of the Black Lives Matter movement were discussed. Topics varied from the sociology of racism in partnership with Sociology and Anthropology of Stockton University to fair housing and gentrification in partnership with the Fair Share Housing Center and the Department of Housing Preservation and Community

Development of South Jersey Legal Services.

The church hosted a domestic and sexual violence panel with Atlantic City's Chief of Police, Councilman of the Third Ward of Atlantic City, Vineland Public High School Assistant Principal, community activists, and the Women's Center of Atlantic County. As a result of this series, the City Council passed Resolution 217, which designated the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the city of Atlantic City and made noteworthy steps to ensure educational, religious, and government institutions were equipped to help stop this type of violence in the community.

The year-long educational teach-in series inspired social change in part-



Rev. William M. Williams, III of Asbury UMC in Atlantic City.

nerships with the South Jersey Poets Society and community visual artists and poets. The church hosted a Civil Disobedience Workshop in partnership with the National Action Network and the Atlantic City Police Department. The Atlantic County's Advisory Commission on Women, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies of Stockton University and the University's School of Social and Behavioral Sciences also partnered with the church to contribute to the education teach-in sessions. From partnering with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore to discuss the notion of dismantling white privilege, to teaching about African Americans and the Media in partnership with the Communications Department of Stockton University and community visual artists, Asbury UMC continues to leave its mark on Atlantic City as a powerhouse of influence, change and hope.

Apostle: Rev. William M. Williams III is proud to be the husband of Joyce and father to five-year-old Julia, three-year-old William IV, and three-year-old James. He serves as Circuit Elder in the Cape Atlantic District, is a Communities of

Hope trainer, serves as Recording Secretary of the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the North Eastern Jurisdictional Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc. Williams is a recent recipient of the Harry A. Seese Memorial Scholarship and is one of 12 United Methodists in the U.S. named a fellow in the Lewis Community Leaders Fellows Program of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership.

Williams earned a BA in Economics from Swarthmore College, a Post-Baccalaureate Certification in Pre-Medicine from the Drexel College of Medicine, and a Masters of Divinity from Drew University. He is a former commissioner of the Casino Redevelopment Authority's Tourism Advisory Commission in Atlantic City and the Chair of the Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee, a current board member of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey, and a participant in the Christian religious fellowship group, Fellowship of Churches and the ecumenical religious group Bridges of Faith. Through his community leadership, Williams has sought to inspire the hearts of those in the Atlantic City region.

Rivers of Life Transforming Lives Among Arabic-Speaking Community Pt. 1

By Douglas Ruffle

druffle@umcdiscipleship.org

BAYONNE - A woman called the pastor of Wesley United Methodist Church in Bayonne, New Jersey, because she was in dire straits. A widow, her two sons grown up and moved away, she now had lost her job. Her rent was overdue and she was down to her last few dollars without enough to buy food or even a bottle of water. Walking down the street, she read the sign in Arabic at the front of Wesley United Methodist Church. She read, "Rivers of Life" and wondered whether she had found a way to quench her thirst.

The call went to voice mail but shortly thereafter, Pastor Emad Gerges, who serves both the English and Arabic speaking congregations at Wesley UMC, called her back.

"What is your name?" he asked.

She gave only her first name. She and the pastor knew that if she gave her last name it would give away her religious affiliation.

"Can you see me?" She asked.

"Come to church on Sunday afternoon at 2 pm when we hold our services. I will speak to you after worship." The Pastor said this to anyone who inquired about the church, regardless of their background. Moreover, he spends hours talking with people who attend. The service ends before 4pm, but he often stays until 11pm on Sunday nights in conversation with worshipers and newcomers, almost all of whom are immigrants or refugees, from Arabic-speaking countries. Some people drive more than three hours to attend worship. There just aren't that

many Arabic language churches.

The following Sunday after the phone call, as was his custom, Pastor Gerges recorded a message that he transmits via YouTube prior to the start of worship. There is a large glass window from the makeshift recording studio to the sanctuary and the Pastor suspected that the newcomer entering was the one who had called.

He greeted her and once again invited her to remain after worship so that he could speak with her.

"How do you know me?" She asked after worship.

He said he did not know her. He had never met her before except for their phone conversation.

"But everything you said in the service spoke exactly to what my circumstances are and what I needed to hear."

"It's not me," he replied. "It's a God thing."

She began to weep. "You gave examples in your message of the exact things that I am going through in my life!"

"This is God," he said.

"I am Muslim," she said.

He suspected that she was. He assured her. "We have others in the congregation who come from the Muslim faith tradition. Please know that God loves you and it matters not where you have come from."

She poured her heart out. She told him of her dire circumstances and that her funds had run out and told him the story of passing by the church and seeing the "Rivers of Life" sign in Arabic.

Before she left, Pastor Gerges conferred with some lay leaders of the

church. Though they themselves were always trying to make ends meet to pay church bills, they managed to obtain a package of food for her and one lay person donated \$200 to help her pay bills.

She came back the following Sunday to worship. "I came hoping to get monetary help," she confessed. "But I received so much more. I met a loving and accepting God here through the kindness and hospitality of these people."

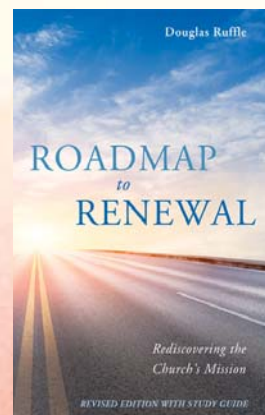
The "Rivers of Life" congregation, which is part of Wesley United Methodist Church, is, to Pastor Gerges' knowledge, the only full-fledged Arabic-speaking

church in the United Methodist connection. "There are mission congregations," he said. "But ours is the only one constituted as a church."

The Muslim woman who found thirst-quenching help continues to be in contact with Pastor Gerges and she has found a job. She found something more through the encounter. She found a lifeline to Jesus and a community of faith willing to hear her story.

Stayed tuned for Pt. II of this story in the October Relay and learn more about Pastor Emad, his family, their origins and the unique ministry of Rivers of Life.

AVAILABLE NOW ON AMAZON



Doug Ruffle's

ROADMAP to RENEWAL

is available in a newly revised edition that includes a study guide. Take a journey together with others from your local church - a road trip that will help you rediscover your true mission.

This newly revised and updated edition of Roadmap to Renewal will serve as a vital resource enabling you to reconnect to your mission area. Use the step-by-step process in a small group to come up with a Ministry Action Plan for your community of faith. Know your community. Know your mission. Know your strengths and challenges. Know where you are going. Reach people with the good news of Jesus Christ!

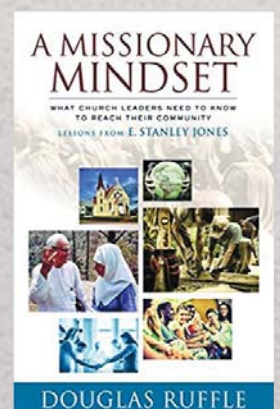
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Doug Ruffle's

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Using the timeless principles of E. Stanley Jones, A Missionary Mindset transfers them for use today. Teaching us to approach the mission field as if we were from a different country and learning a new culture, a new way of communicating, and a new way to connect people to the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Marcia's Melodies

You will find more of Marcia's Melodies at the Hub this summer than ever before! Several new devotional songs and choruses have been added to the collection. Also, service music and 20 simple hymns, which can be utilized as EZ Anthems or new music for small groups are in stock. *For larger numbers of copies, please special order.*

Three notebooks filled with actual music have been prepared and include choral anthems, choruses & devotional songs. As well as, solos, duets, ladies trios, and men's quartets.

Free catalogs give you needed information about each song. Choose catalogs which interest you. Happy browsing!

The Hub is now open for the summer season. Be sure to stop in and check out Lynda Kusick's unusual and attractive inventory.

To receive catalogs or to order music:

Call: 732.988.3191 | Email: marciasmelodies15@gmail.com

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS



GNJ at MARCHA in Dallas

The 46th assembly of MARCHA, the Hispanic/Latino caucus of The United Methodist Church, offered lots of prophetic speaking on a range of topics, including protecting immigrants and reforming the denomination. The meeting also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. GNJ was represented by MARCHA's President, Lysette Pérez, Hector Burgos, Onay Lopez, Elisabet Perez-Vega, Eunice Vega-Perez, Jazelis Adorno, Obed Perez, Esther Morales, Noemi Perez, Manuel Sardiñas, Elizabeth Gonzalez, Douglas and Tammi Ruffe, and Bishop John Schol.

Seeking Engagement Specialist and Ministry Coordinator

GNJ is seeking a Next Generation Ministries (NextGen) the youth and young adult ministry plan approved at the 2017 Annual Conference, is ready to engage. They are seeking two key part-time positions to help launch the next steps:

Engagement Specialist to develop innovative initiatives for expanding the number of students, parents, youth leaders and volunteers and other key stakeholders participating in Next Generation Ministries in GNJ.

Ministry Coordinator to serve as the single point of contact and clearinghouse for all matters related to NextGen. Visit www.gnjumc.org/news to apply.

Register for Lay Servant Classes

A local church Lay Servant shall serve the local church in which membership is held through ministries of leading, caring and communicating. Registration is open now for Fall 2017 Basic and Advanced Lay Servant classes. Visit www.gnjumc.org/what-is-lay-servant-ministries to learn more and register.

Has The Mission Fund Changed Your Community?

From marathons to concert events and fundraisers, The Mission Fund has made a tremendous impact on GNJ communities. The Fund has helped bring people back home following Superstorm Sandy, saved hundreds of lives through the Imagine No Malaria campaign, and changed our communities with local mission work. We would love to hear your stories of how you used The Mission Fund Campaign in your own community. Email Brian Mickle, Director of Development, bmickels@gnjumc.org with your story.

Does Your Church Need Help with a Stewardship Campaign?

If your church is seeking assistance with a Stewardship Campaign, the team at The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey is ready to help. Please email Executive Director Jana M. Purkis-Brash at JPurkisBrash@gnjumc.org for assistance, more information, or questions.

Beware of Email Scams

Phishing is fraudulent email that looks like it's from a reputable source, but seeks to gain personal info, credit card numbers or payment. If you receive an email from GNJ or a GNJ account that you think is suspicious, send an email or forward the email to the person to confirm the request. Do not reply to the email or open an attachment if deemed suspicious. Visit www.gnjumc.org/email-fraud for more info.

Communicate Effectively

Be sure to provide your most accurate email in order to receive timely, informative, and vital communications from GNJ. Regularly check your junk or spam folders for communications that may have gotten lost. Email is the most cost effective way to communicate, and we want to ensure excellence in doing so.

Reserve Space at the Mission and Resource Center

Let the Mission and Resource Center serve you. Request a meeting room or reserve space for your congregation, agency, or committee. Visit www.gnjumc.org for more info.

Interpretation Equipment Available

GNJ has interpretation equipment available for agencies, committees and other groups so your next event or service can be interpreted in up to four languages. Visit www.gnjumc.org/translation-equipment-request-form to request use of this equipment.

Reserve Studio Space at Mission and Resource Center

The Mission and Resource Center has a 18' x 22' acoustic-treated media production studio equipped to handle video recording and music productions of various kinds. It's available to use for free up to 4 hours a day and for other organizations at an hourly rate. Visit www.gnjumc.org/studio to find out more and reserve space.

Help People Find Your Church

The Find A Church function on the umc.org website is one of the easiest ways for people to find you on the web. GNJ's website also links to this page. Please make sure your church's information is up-to-date on the United Methodist Church's 'Find a Church' web page. Visit www.umc.org/find-a-church to search your church.

Take HealthQuotient to Avoid Higher Deductible in 2018

Participants and spouses in HealthFlex, take the HealthQuotient online health assessment between Aug. 1 - Sept. 30 at www.webmdhealth.com/gbophb/. Log in to get started and avoid paying extra on next year's Healthflex deductible.

Health Insurance Premium Rates for Local Churches

The GNJ Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB) has set the health insurance premium rates for local churches, effective Jan. 1, 2018. You can view the rates at www.gnjumc.org

OBITUARIES

David Bort, Retired Elder, died on Aug. 21. A Celebration of Life took place on Sept. 1 at Sandgate UMC in Sandgate, VT.

Memorial Donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Sandgate UMC or Second Congregational Church, c/o Hanson Walbridge & Shea Funeral Home, or P.O. Box 528, Arlington, VT, 05250

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Susan Bort (daughter) and David Bort (son), c/o Susan Bort, 4114 35th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98126

TAPESTRIES

INSPIRED DEMENTIA LIVING

United Methodist Communities understands the need for older adults with Alzheimer's or related dementias to live in supportive surroundings. Tapestries, offered in three locations, brings a structured household environment, programs, services, and experienced professionals specifically designed for your loved ones.



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UMCommunities.org/BristolGlen
Newton | 973-300-5788

Pitman
UMCommunities.org/Pitman
Pitman | 856-589-7800

The Shores
UMCommunities.org/TheShores
Ocean City | 609-399-8505


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www.UMCommunities.org

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A FUTURE WITH HOPE

The People of the United Methodist Church

A DAY OF PRAYER

The 5th Anniversary of
Superstorm Sandy

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2017

Join Greater New Jersey United Methodists in a Day of Prayer to remember those on the path to recovery and those whose lives were transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit during the recovery process.

Worship resources, videos and information will be posted at:

www.afuturewithhope.org
& www.gnjumc.org

5 YEARS AGO

In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, the people of Greater New Jersey had the courage to embark on a five year mission to provide relief, repair lives, rebuild homes and renew the spirit. We imagined A Future With Hope.

A Future With Hope is one of the last nonprofit builders on the ground helping Sandy effected homeowners. The rebuilding continues in Atlantic City, Manahawkin, Mystic Island and other Ocean and Atlantic County communities. Volunteers are needed through the fall and winter. Sign up today at www.afuturewithhope.org. More than 2,500 homeowners have not yet recovered from Sandy. These are families that have been torn apart and displaced from their homes.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart. - Jeremiah 29:11-13



Today, over 12,000 volunteers from 46 states have helped the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey rebuild 258 homes. More than 130 churches in Greater New Jersey have been among our volunteer teams and host sites including 2017 summer teams from the Capital District Mission Team with members from New Egypt UMC, Bishop Jane's UMC of Basking Ridge and First UMC of Glassboro UMC.

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