

THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

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gnjumc.org

Not Your Typical Christmas Performance

By Joshua Kraft Gribbin
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PARSIPPANY, NJ

For 11 consecutive years Rev. Jeff Edwards has led an original Christmas theater performance alongside members in the community at Parsippany United Methodist Church.

The production process is a testament to Edwards' profound spirituality and love for all people.

"By the summer I get an image or scene in my head. The image or scene becomes a seed thought for the play. From there I put out a call for people to be in the play," said Edwards.

Most people who respond to the call, to be a part of the Christmas performance cast, are from the church, but some are from the surrounding community. Throughout the years some people have entered the church through being casted in the plays.

"I will take whoever is willing," Edwards says. "Everyone is welcome to be a part of the cast. I begin to create characters based on the people who volunteer."

Edwards asks for volunteers first because he creates the Christmas play around who responds to the call. For the past decade the cast has averaged 30 people with a large portion being children.

"Throughout the entire process I keep asking, 'What can we create together?' And I have faith we will create



For 11 years Rev. Jeff Edwards has written the script for each Christmas performance.

something beautiful as a holy offering to God."

Once the idea presents itself and the people respond to the casting call, Edwards embarks on his annual trip to a friend's house where he writes his next original Christmas performance.

"For a week I go away to the home a friend provides me, and the primary work is done on the script. Along the way there is great uncertainty. Can we do this again?"

Edwards continues to write all throughout late summer and into early fall, but the script is finalized by mid-October because rehearsals begin the first week of November.

The 30-member cast rehearses three times a week leading up to the show's debut.

"The rehearsals can be rough and frustrating for everyone. There is a level of chaos to the practice of the production.

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All the information
you need for the
Rise Against Hunger
March 21 event

SEE PAGE 8

Youth Ministry Summit Piques Young Minds' Curiosities

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ

From a beautiful rendition of "Reckless Love" by worship leader

Caitlyn Deviney to an energetic session on mental health by Licensed Clinical Social Worker LaVante' Dorsey, this year's Youth Ministry Summit on February 8 was a hit among teens and adults alike. About 50 participants from local churches joined at Aldersgate UMC for a day of learning, inspiration and community through workshops and learning tracks for Youth Ministry, Children's Ministry, Young Adult Ministry and Camping and Retreat Ministry.

To act as an ice breaker for the event, the team led a cup game known as "up-cups." One team's objective was to turn all the cups face up. The other team's goal was to turn the cups downward facing.



Youth Program Coordinator Kerwin Webb, M.Div. spoke about the merits of a youth group. Photo: Corbin Payne

Youth leaders and volunteers were then treated to engaging workshop presentations and a dynamic plenary speaker, Mike Park. The theme, "Growing Young" helped leaders and churches of all sizes engage the next generation of disciples and "grow young."

"Youth leaders were challenged to reimagine their tasks when it comes to youth ministry," said Youth Program Coordinator Kerwin Webb, who also led the workshop, "Start a Youth Group."

It's not a matter of new programs or a rock star youth pastor, but really it's about the culture of the church. We

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A Tiny Door to Opportunity

By Heather Mistretta
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TUCKAHOE, NJ

When church leaders at Tuckahoe United Methodist Church in southern New Jersey searched for a ministry to serve the needy using the limited resources available to them, they discovered an idea right near their doorstep. Now their free pantry serves a steady flow of people each day.

"We don't have the resources to staff a regular pantry," said Blanche Adams, who has been a member of the small, multi-generational church in Cape May County for over 25 years and now serves as the church's board president.

She added, "We also didn't want people to have to fill out forms. We just wanted to feed them. It was a little way we could make a difference, with a jar of peanut butter." The stigma of having to ask for help or pulling out food stamps is removed because people can come and go anonymously when they need to.

The white box has a sloped roof and a clear plastic front. A window latch holds the door closed. A metal sign on the post identifies the church and says, "Neighbors helping neighbors. Take what you need, leave what you can."

This take-something, leave-something philosophy has been noticed by others in the community, and Adams said she hopes it will be replicated elsewhere. The free pantry is regularly stocked with things like canned goods, rice, muffin mixes, pasta and toiletries.

"People look at us a little differently. We're here to help in any way. Pastor Will is the hands and feet of God," said Adams

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Tuckahoe UMC's Free Pantry has a take-something, leave-something philosophy.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

Remaining Centered During Denominational Changes

Bishop John Schol



As The United Methodist Church discerns a way forward concerning the ordination and marriage of LGBTQ persons, GNJ has affirmed that there is and will be differences among us and that we will support congregations to develop covenants about its ministry with and by LGBTQ persons. The denomination at its next general conference will consider the following possible next steps:

1. Divide the denomination into two to three separate denominations.
2. Allow United Methodists to go and start new denominations that congregations may join.
3. Create the United States United Methodists to be a regional church that allows it to establish new laws or change existing laws for the church.
4. No change to the current *Book of Discipline*.

Solutions may include any combination of the listed four or something else that may emerge. As it stands at this moment, there is no plan to remove the restrictive language concerning ministry with and by LGBTQ persons. The one path where this potential occurs is the one that would form regional churches with one being in the United States in which the U.S. regional church could remove the restrictive language. This could not occur for at least two to four years.

While our beloved denomination seeks a general solution to its impasse, GNJ has affirmed in listening sessions and voted in a special session of annual conference to find solutions that we remain united and allow for local and contextual application of God's grace and ministry with and by LGBTQ persons. And while we will closely monitor denominational solutions, we will continue to live with difference based in common hope, commitment and action.

GNJ Hope

God will be glorified, hearts will be reborn and communities will be transformed as we live and serve like Jesus Christ.

GNJ Commitment

We will connect with all our congregations and offer congregations assistance to thrive in their context recognizing different convictions. Congregations thrive as they

are led by the Holy Spirit to make and grow disciples and focus outward to serve the community where they are located. We will provide trained facilitators when requested by the pastor and lay leadership to guide congregations with important conversations and assist congregations to develop covenants for their ministry. This may also include assisting gracefully congregations choose to The United Methodist Church and join a newly formed Methodist Church.

We want to assure all our congregations that there is a place for you as United Methodists of Greater New Jersey and our commitment is to help all our congregation to thrive.

GNJ Action

1. *Pray* — In your praying, do not see people who are different than you or hold different convictions than you as your obstacle to your beliefs and convictions or what you want for the church. Pray for others as though they matter just like you matter. Pray more for yourself, and who you will be and how the love and grace of Christ will shine through you. May the objective of your prayers not be an outcome you desire but a renewed commitment for who you will be and how you will serve God. Do not see a vote by general conference or the annual conference as a confirmation of your prayer; throughout the ages, the church has taken votes that have wounded the witness and unity of the church only later to be changed by people of a later generation. Here are four biblical and Wesleyan guides to pray at this time:

- a. Lord have mercy on me for I am a sinner (Luke 18:13)
- b. Bless me God so that I may be a blessing to others (Proverbs 11:25-31)
- c. Jesus, let me do no harm (one of the rules from John Wesley's 3 simple rules)
- d. Not my will God but your will (Luke 22:42)

I want to assure you that praying these four prayers several times throughout the day will ground and center you in God, open you to opportunities to serve God in new ways.

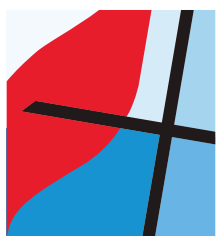
2. *See God in others* — don't we tend to see the faults in others before searching for the God in others? It is what it means to live in a fallen world. We see fallenness before we see God.

3. *Ask for help*. Many congregations want to avoid important conversations right now. They feel conversation about God, human sexuality, the Bible, *The Book of Discipline* will lead to hurt and division. As in families, avoiding talking about issues can lead to more pain, hurt and division. These are hard conversations, but we have been working with congregations and leading conversations where people feel heard and understood; agreements emerge, and differences become opportunities to learn and grow.

4. *Accept that the future will be different*. Not better, not worse but different.

5. *Stay focused on what you can do individually and together as a congregation to serve God and the people in your community*. Loving God and loving others is the true measure of our faith. (Matthew 22:36-40)

God will see us through this challenging time by working together, remaining focused on our mission, reaching out for help when your congregation needs assistance and most importantly, keeping God first during this time. 🇺🇸



THE RELAY
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Seeking a Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

The Greater New Jersey United Methodist Annual Conference is seeking a Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer to steward the financial, property and administrative areas of the 530 churches in our region. This position will help lead our conference forward and grow our financial resources so that our ministry together will thrive.

We are looking for a team member who values:

- innovation and risk taking
- excellence in its ministry and service
- compassionate and just service
- diversity
- collaboration

The person with the right experience will have served as a CFO for a nonprofit with a budget of \$10 million or more and have experience leading and supervising staff in a cross functional business model.



Are you called to serve? Do you know of another who would be interested in this position?

Find out more and apply at: www.gnjumc.org/jobopportunities



WAYS TO SAY THANKS...

1. SAY THANK YOU, AND THEN SAY IT AGAIN

Whether your church receives a \$100,000 gift or a \$100 donation, it is important to say thank you. Here are some suggestions for how to say thank you to individuals, small groups of people, or the whole congregation.

2. HANDWRITTEN THANK YOU

Cultivate donors with a process of ask-thank-share. Send a handwritten thank you following a gift from a donor or annual pledge.

3. END OF YEAR PHONE CALL

Call each donor in December to say thank you for their commitment to the ministry and mission of your congregation. Fundraiser Penelope Burk says that a thank you call to a newly acquired donor yields 40% more revenue in year two.

4. DONOR NEWSLETTER

Create a donor newsletter to give updates on pledges received, money in hand and progress on ministry being funded. A newsletter can contain photos of ministry in action or video links.

5. SNAIL MAIL LETTER

Send two letters - one in January and one in September to thank donors. This is another opportunity to thank donors and update them on ministry through participant stories and photos.

6. DONOR EVENT

Consider a donor event either for top level donors or all donors. Use the time to interact with donors to hear about their interests and share stories of ministry.

7. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Offer donors opportunities to volunteer where they have a passion and are already making a financial contribution.

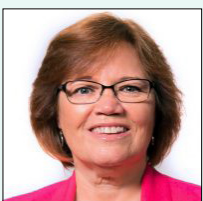
8. TOURS

Offer tours of ministry taking place in your facility, perhaps clothes closet or food pantry, or afterschool program. Conclude each tour with refreshments and Q&A.

Find out more | www.gnjumc.org/umfsf



UNITED METHODIST
STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



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Safe Sanctuaries, Outside Groups and Local Church Liability

Churches in Greater New Jersey are required to protect children and other vulnerable persons from abuse. Two primary ways we ensure this protection is by requiring all congregations to enact the Safe Sanctuaries program and create written usage agreements with all outside groups, including those that are chartered or sponsored by the congregation.

Information about Safe Sanctuaries and the steps to become compliant can be found in the resource area of both the GNJ website (www.gnjumc.org) and the NextGen website (www.gjnnextgen.org).

ALL CONGREGATIONS WHO CHARTER, SPONSOR OR HOST OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REVIEW THE SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY AND USAGE AGREEMENTS.

Outside groups who use the church building or are chartered or sponsored by the congregation must also have applicable policies in place. Tiffany Lupo, GNJ's Account Manager at Sovereign Insurance Group advises, "Each church must have written usage agreements including indemnification, hold harmless, waiver of subrogation, minimum limits of insurance, primary and non-contributing wording, certificate naming the church as an additional insured and policy en-

dorsements that show the church is an additional insured."

The news of the recent bankruptcy filing of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has many congregations asking questions.

BSA has their own policies in place to protect youth. BSA does background checks on volunteers every two years at minimum and requires each participant to be certified every two years as trained with testing in their constantly updated Youth Protection Program.

In addition, Lupo reports that the usage agreement provides coverage for the church under the BSA insurance policy.

All congregations who charter, sponsor or host outside organization are encouraged to review the Safe Sanctuary Policy and usage agreements.

If you have additional questions about a specific situation in the church with re-

gard to outside groups and insurance agreements, please contact Sovereign Insurance Senior Account Manager Tiffany Lupo at 610-535-6800 x3389 or tiffanyl@sovinsurance.com.

For details on Safe Sanctuaries, go to the Resources section of the NextGen website at www.gjnnextgen.org

Christmas Performance

Continued from page 1

The reality is that there are always complications and conflicts with people's schedules. But people are faithful to process and their commitment."

The Christmas performance is held in the church's fellowship room. The room is larger than a basketball court. On one side of the fellowship room is a permanent stage that is extended for performances.

"There is a great degree of technical work," Edwards describes. The performances have taped, edited, musical transitions, which help create the moods for scenes. On stage is a sprawling screen with rear projection to display the backdrop of scenes or prerecorded videos apart of the play. Every year is very different.

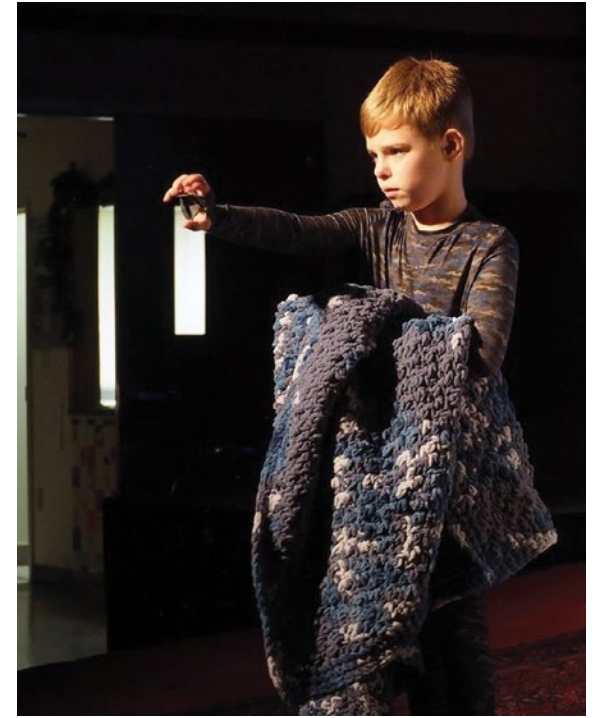
"It is an incredibly mysterious experience. From the origin of the seed thought, to the writing of the script, to rehearsals; eventually the chaos forms. It usually does not take shape until the nearing of opening night. But there is an end point filled with mystery."

The Christmas performance occurs for three nights. Information of the play is passed around via social media, word of mouth and flyers. Every year the fellowship hall is filled all three nights.

The production process is a testament to Edward's profound spirituality and love for all people. The scripts and performances witness to the true meaning of the Christmas story.

"The Christmas story is very realistic about the brokenness and darkness of the world. The Christmas story is not a hallmark card. We are very conscious of the pain and suffering of the world. It is important to talk about the hardships in the Christmas story and then recognize the incredible message of grace. Our plays are not about sweetness and Christmas lights but focus on the need of God's grace as we are guided to care for the world."

This year the play focused on children having nightmares. The performance, *The Lambs Are Frightened; They Need to Know* emphasized the daily bombardment by messages of fear and its effects on relationships with others. The play presented the interconnectedness of human interactions and how, as fears are resolved, relationships with others grow stronger.



This year's play focused on children having nightmares and the messages of fear that clutter their minds.

"We are willing to invite people into our lives with more authenticity when we reconcile our fears," says Edwards.

In the play, each child has a series of dreams confronting a fear. In the midst of each dream an angel appears asking the character questions, helping them face their fears. As the child progresses closer toward the fear, the conversation increases between the children and the angels.

"Incredible humanity is on display. We see ourselves in the child, in their fears and in their dreams. Then grace enters our life and calls for our response, and we can choose to accept or ignore it."

As the characters reconcile with their fears and their relationships with others, the gospel message and the Christmas story come into focus.

"Hope is found in our relationship with Christ in the mess of our lives, to give voice to our different experiences of Christmas and to take seriously that life is not easy; this becomes our message of the play. God is among us to love us, to help us and to teach us to share ourselves with each other."

"And then it's over. All the performances, all the setup, all the rehearsals, all the work that began with a seed thought; it is suddenly over. It is a dynamic series of events wrapped in mystery. God has seen us through. It's not your typical Christmas play, yet we never had a participant complain. Everyone finds their meaning in it."



Each child actor had a series of dreams in which they confronted a fear.

MOVEMOUNTAINS

Put away the Easter baskets...and get ready to move mountains!

The GNJ worship team invites you to its next Breakthrough worship session where we'll tackle our obstacles together!

No mountain is insurmountable with Jesus as our guide.

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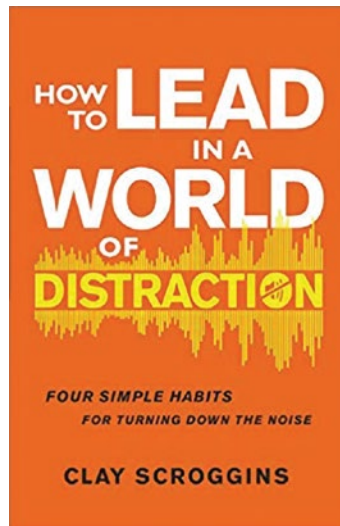
ON THE BOOKSHELF FOR MARCH

How to Lead in a World of Distraction Study Guide: Maximizing Your Influence by Turning Down the Noise

(Zondervan, 2019) by Clay Scroggins

This book is a guide that shows how to live in a world filled with distractions. They take a toll on our work, our parenting, our marriages and our souls. In this six-session video Bible study, pastor Clay Scroggins shows how to take the next step in personal growth by limiting the distractions. This study guide contains a session overview, a video teaching summary, group discussion questions and personal study tools.

Clay Scroggins is the lead pastor of North Point Community Church, providing visionary and directional leadership for all the local church staff and congregation. Starting out as a facilities intern, Scroggins has worked his way through many organizational levels of North Point Ministries and knows all too well the challenge of authority deprivation. He holds a degree in Industrial Engineering from Georgia Tech as well as a master's degree and doctorate with an emphasis in Online Church from Dallas Theological Seminary. He lives in Forsyth County, GA, with his wife, Jenny, and their four children.

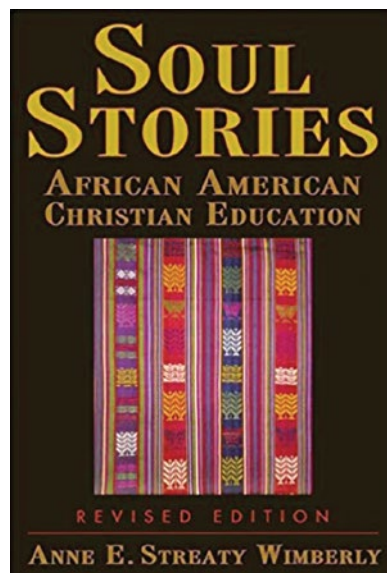


Soul Stories: African American Christian Education

(Abingdon Press, 2005) by Anne E. Streaty Wimberly

Soul Stories links persons' everyday life with the Christian Scriptures. The soul stories in this revised volume take on a cross-generational orientation with emphasis on linking stories of family identities, events, relationships and story plot with Bible stories and exemplary Christian faith stories found in the African Diaspora.

Anne E. Streaty Wimberly is Professor of Christian Education at the Interdenominational and Theological Center in Atlanta, GA. With four decades of teaching experience, Wimberly has been involved in music instruction in all age levels from preschool through graduate level.

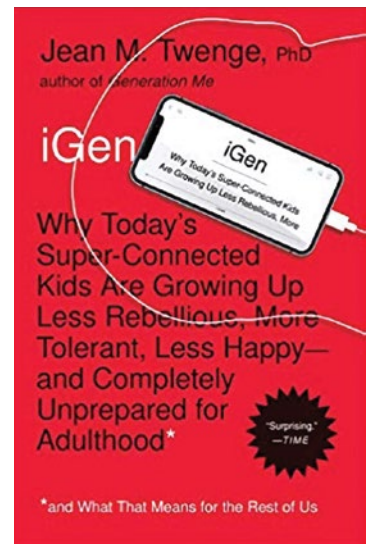


iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy — and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood — and What That Means for the Rest of Us

(Atria Books, 2008) by Jean Twenge

iGen addresses a generation born in the mid-1990s up to the mid-2000s who are the first to spend their entire adolescence in the age of the smartphone and who are distinct in how they spend their time, how they behave and in their attitudes toward religion, sexuality and politics. More than previous generations, they are obsessed with safety, focused on tolerance and have no patience for inequality. *iGen* explores all these topics and how the sometimes disconnected generation suffers from anxiety, depression, and loneliness.

Jean M. Twenge, Ph.D. is a widely published professor of psychology at San Diego State University. Her research has appeared in *Time*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and she has been featured on *Today*, *Good Morning America*, and *CBS This Morning*. She holds degrees from the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan. Dr. Twenge lives with her husband and three daughters in San Diego, CA.

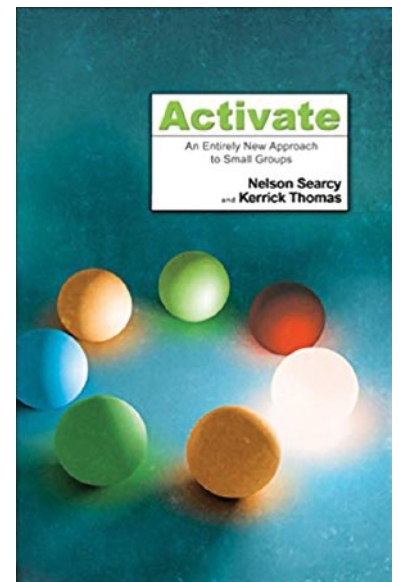


Activate: An Entirely New Approach to Small Groups

(Baker Books, 2008) by Nelson Searcy, Kerrick Thomas

Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas show how church leaders can implement a life-changing small group ministry that gets the maximum number of people involved and solves many of the important problems facing churches of all sizes.

Nelson Searcy, the founding and lead pastor of The Journey Church in New York City, is the recipient of the prestigious 2013 Donald A. McGavran Award for Outstanding Leadership in Great Commission Research. He is the author of more than 75 church growth resources and 12 books, including *The Generosity Ladder*, *Maximize*, *Connect* and *Ignite*. Kerrick Thomas is a teaching pastor at The Journey Church and regularly co-leads training events with Searcy. Prior to his move to New York to plant The Journey, he received a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.



1 CHRONICLES 28:20

COURAGE

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020

Be strong and courageous and act. Don't be afraid or discouraged. God is with you and will not let you down.

MAY 31 - JUNE 2, 2020

WILDWOODS CONVENTION CENTER | WILDWOOD, NJ

SIGN UP FOR WORKSHOPS WHEN YOU REGISTER.

REGISTRATION BEGINS MARCH 18!

www.gnjumc.org/2020annualconference



2020 ANNUAL CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Hero Makers: Raising Leaders | Facilitators: Chris Heckert & Lan Wilson

Everyone wants to grow by addition, but most of our systems keep producing the same outcomes. This workshop will help us start looking beyond the surface and seeing what people are capable of, identifying, recruiting and then how to pour into these individuals.

Faith Mapping: Sharing Your Faith Story | Facilitators: Emily Wilton & Gina Yeske

A great story will move people's minds and hearts. Participants will learn to map out their faith journey, identify and then capture their hope-filled stories of faith and ministry. Come learn how to simply share your story with others.

Missions in Puerto Rico | Facilitators: Eunice Vega-Perez, Sam Perez, Norm Cetuk

During this workshop, we will share about the current conditions in Puerto Rico after two natural disasters, hear testimonies about our mission efforts to date and learn about opportunities on how to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the future.

A Dinner Church Experience | Facilitators: Brendan Galvin, Kay Dubuisson, Daeil Min

Dinner churches are continuing to serve as welcome spaces for people who don't normally find themselves in a worship setting. We'll even offer a "starter pack" list to help you try dinner church in your own community. Dessert and coffee will be provided during this class!

Leading Change | Facilitators: Trey Wince and Juel Nelson

People really don't hate change. They fear the potential loss that comes with change. Learn how to identify your congregation's underlying concerns and build a process that actually makes healthy change predictable.

Sharing the Gospel with Youth | Facilitators: Next Generation Ministries Team

Research shows that younger generations feel alone and anxious. They see a bleak world around them. The message of Jesus is still the hope of the world, but churches are struggling to translate it for young people. How do we share good news with an anxious and lonely generation? We'll discover together through studies, stories, scripture and more.



IGNITE 2020 SUMMER CAMPS

Register now for...

THE BEST SUMMER EVER!

For more information about summer camping at Pinelands Center, go to www.gnjnextgen.org

2020 SUMMER CAMPS:

July 20 – 25, 2020

CAMP INSPIRE | GRADES 6 - 12

For all kinds of artists! Come for singing, acting, photography, painting, poetry and more.

July 27 – Aug. 1, 2020

CAMP TRANSFORM | GRADES 6 - 12

Calling all world changers! Have fun and learn to put faith into action to change your community and the world.

Aug. 3 – 8, 2020

CAMP SPROUT | GRADES 1-5

Adventure, fun and faith for elementary students.

Aug. 10 – 15, 2020

NIÑOS Y JOVENES | GRADES 1 - 12

A week of celebrating faith and Hispanic heritage! Grow closer to God in a place where Hispanic heritage is celebrated.

Youth Ministry

Continued from page 1



The team led a game of "Up-Cups" to act as an ice-breaker. Photo: Corbin Payne



LaVante' N. Dorsey, with over 10 years of experience in social work, led a workshop on mental health. Photo: Corbin Payne

must recognize the importance of the work and create spaces for youth and young people to learn, grow and develop in their knowledge of God and their own faith."

He added, "Practical, specific workshops followed, allowing participants to focus their learnings around what is best for their church and community."

From "Planning Sunday School for Less than 15 Kids" and "Wrestling with Rest" to "Get Great Children's Ministry Volunteers" and "Children's Spirituality Through Wonder," guests were treated to some valuable advice from professionals who are committed to helping youth connect to God.

Prior to joining Hope West Side, a new church plant on the Upper West Side in New York City, Park led student ministries for 12 years in California and New York in various cultural, ethnic and socio-economic contexts. He is also a coach and speaker for the Fuller Youth Institute and a student ministry advisor with Slingshot Group.

For more information on all the programs Next Generation Ministries offers, visit gnjnextgen.org.



Caitlyn Deviney, owner of the indie-folk duo Homestead Collective, led worship and entertained the group. Photo: Corbin Payne



The Youth Ministry Summit is a day of learning, inspiration and community. Photo: Corbin Payne

“ People can grow from the internships. I would encourage as many students to take part in the internship as possible. - Cultivate participant ”

CULTIVATE

Summer of Exploration

June 22-August 9
About 20-25 hours per week.

DISCOVER A DIFFERENT SIDE OF MINISTRY

From leading worship and conflict resolution to pastoral visits and church administration, clergy and teens work together.

High school students even earn a \$2,000 stipend!

with Next Gen's Cultivate Summer of Exploration H.S. Internships

The application deadline is March 15.
For details, visit: gnjnextgen.org/cultivate



GOOD FRIDAY Family Retreat

APRIL 9-10 @ PINELANDS RETREAT CENTER

Rediscover the story of Jesus this Maundy Thursday and Good Friday with your friends at Next Gen at Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery - a special place, a perfect place to connect with God on this solemn day. Nestled in the middle of the historic National Pinelands Reserve, the nearly 150 acres are surrounded on most sides by cranberry bogs and preserved forestland, including miles of trails in Brendan T. Byrne State Park.

Age: Grades 6-12
Price: \$70
Registration Deadline: April 6
Check-in: Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
End Time: Friday, 3:30 p.m.

FOR DETAILS, VISIT
gnjnextgen.org/igniteretreat-holyweek



YES, WE CAN!

Pack meals with your friends and be part of a vital effort to feed over 2,000 people for a year!

More than 100 congregations have signed up!
The 2-hour time slots are filling up fast, so please REGISTER TODAY!

HOPE TO SEE YOU ON SATURDAY, MARCH 21

For GNJ's "Rise Against Hunger, Yes, We Can!" event.

Can't attend? Consider a sponsorship. Details of the many sponsorship opportunities are on our website.

Locations:	Regions:	Districts:
St Mark UMC, Hamilton	Central	Capital
Trinity UMC, Mullica Hill	Southern	Delaware Bay
Korean Community, Englewood	Northern	Palisades
Sparta UMC	Northern	Skylands
New Dover UMC	Central	Raritan Valley
Asbury UMC will be hosting at: Sculville Volunteer Fire Company Hall 1708 Somers Point Road, Egg Harbor Township	Southern	Cape Atlantic

For more information on registration as well as valuable resources like a press release, flyers, videos and social media posts, visit:

www.gnjumc.org/events/yeswecan



Introducing

MISSION CORNER

“Little children, let us love not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”
 —1 JOHN 3:18

The Tie That Binds

Mission Corner is a place to share mission experiences. From Red Bird, KY, to Zimbabwe, groups of volunteers are traveling from their church pews to help those in need through education, ministry, health, home building/repair and disaster response. One partner who facilitates those trips is the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) whose motto is “Christian Love in Action.” UMVIM trains, equips, connects and mobilizes United Methodists for short-term mission locally, nationally and internationally. The agency is often associated with short-term missions only, but it provides

so much more, allowing United Methodists to express their faith through transformative action. By developing and nurturing relationships with domestic and international leaders and providing comprehensive training, UMVIM is able to help volunteers assimilate into a new community and meet its needs while being culturally competent and respectful of different customs, rituals and priorities. UMVIM has been engaged in God’s mission since 1976, with projects in more than 90 countries around the world, working in more than 30 states. The UMVIM network offers guidance, organization and training for more than 125,000 volunteers each year. Rev. Tom Lank, a Deacon in Full Connection with Greater New Jersey, is the Northeastern Jurisdiction coordinator which includes the 10 annual conferences of the New England, New York, Upper New York, Western Pennsylvania, Susquehanna, Eastern Pennsylvania, Greater New Jersey, West Virginia, Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences. For more information or to share your mission experience please contact Director of Mission Ashley Wilson at 732-359-1043 or awilson@gnjumc.org. For more information on UMVIM Northeast Jurisdiction, visit umvimnej.org.



Pastor Colon McWilliam from Bound Brook UMC works together with volunteers in Puerto Rico.



Shelley Smith, pastor at Camden Ferry Ave UMC, in Tanzania in 2018 to facilitate the first Tanzania Pastors' Leadership Development School, dedicate a new congregation and its building, break ground for a new elementary school, cut the ribbon on a new guest house and view new and emerging Hope Centers.

“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing.”

—MATTHEW 25

Special Sunday Helps the Neediest

UMCOR Sunday, celebrated on the fourth Sunday in Lent, is March 22. Formerly known as One Great Hour of Sharing, it is a day when people share what they have with those who are hurting most. Donations received that day provide major support for immediate assistance in the wake of natural and human-caused disasters and help support ongoing ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), local churches can make a difference in the lives of communities and individuals whose lives have been rocked by storms, wars, climate change and displacement. Looking for ideas to engage your congregation that day, check out a pastor and leader kit at www.umcsgiving.org/resource-articles/umcor-sunday-pastor-and-leaders-kit.



Special Sunday collections help the neediest like those in Puerto Rico following the onslaught of Hurricane Maria and then Tropical Storm Dorian.

Cardillo to Retire, Search Begins for New CFO/Treasurer

John Cardillo, GNJ's treasurer and director of administrative services, has announced his retirement. Effective June 30, he will be leaving his post after 14 years.

"John has served faithfully, helping GNJ accomplish a healthy financial position, undertaking relief and recovery projects following Superstorm Sandy, assisting to establish our nonprofit mission partners and leading with experience and wisdom our finance, benefits and administration team," said Bishop John Schol.

For more than a decade, Cardillo has stewarded the financial life of the Annual Conference caring for shared ministry, pensions, insurance, healthcare and federal and state regulations been dedicated to meeting the needs of clergy and local churches. During his tenure, his financial management has been critical to the establishment of vital new ministries including NextGen, the Stewardship Foundation, The Centenary Fund, Nehemiah Properties and A Future With Hope. His wise financial advice helped pave the way for the construction of the Mission and Resource Center and launch two mission campaigns, which will raise nearly \$18 million once complete.

"John has been an absolute rock in handling all the challenges that the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference could throw at the accounting function with ability and calmness," said A Future With Hope Trustee John Bishop, "Under his leadership, the accounting department has absorbed the responsibility for the financial functions of all the conference agencies and subsidiaries and done so with grace and expertise. It has been a pleasure to work with John all these years."

He has been responsible for the financial and administrative areas of the GNJ Annual Conference, carrying out the policies of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA).

CF&A Chair Robert Dietz said, "John has been a valuable asset to GNJ over his tenure, helping to further our financial prudence and discipline at GNJ, while also working closely with local churches to educate them on best practices. CF&A and I will miss him greatly, and we wish him much joy, happiness and longevity in his retirement."



John Cardillo, treasurer and director of administrative services at GNJ.

"It has been quite a ride. I'm lucky to have had a great team to support me," said Cardillo who added that he is looking forward to spending more time with his family.

A search to fill the position has already begun.

Bishop Schol said, "I am convinced that the best place to look for our new Treasurer is in our congregations." In addition to GNJ's usual recruitment efforts, a bulletin insert and ad for newsletters have been posted to the website for download. All congregational leaders are encouraged to share information about the open position among their congregation and community.

Details can be found on our website, gnjumc.org under "Job Opportunities." 📄

Free Pantry

Continued from page 1

who previously served as the SPRC (staff parish relations committee) chair. Rev. William Walters has been a pastor at the church for a little over two years.

The offering is not meant to replace formal food assistance programs. It may just be enough to let someone go to bed with a full stomach.

"What's nice is we don't qualify people," Walters said who added that there is no income requirement, and the box is open 24 hours a day.

Adams said one of the catalysts for the ministry was Little Free Pantry, a pilot project that started in 2016 to loosely model the Little Free Libraries that have been propagating all over the country. The Little Free Pantry uses a familiar, compelling concept to pique local interest in and action against local food insecurity. It offers a place around which neighbors might coalesce to meet neighborhood needs, whether for food or for fun.

"Many people cannot afford paper goods, cleaning products or personal care products. I once had a good friend who wasn't able to buy these items. Once I found out the situation, I helped her," said another church member. "That's just one family. This is a wonderful idea. If you know someone struggling, help if you can."

A family at Tuckahoe UMC was instrumental in getting the project off the ground. Shona Rutter spearheaded the project, and her son, John and husband, Charles built the 2x3-foot structure on a pole, working off plans they found at the Little Free Pantry website, where they also found other valuable and helpful resources.

Another church member Liz Bready lives across the street from the small structure, so she checks on it every day.

"I just check things around, see what needs to be organized," Bready said.

For more information about Tuckahoe UMC, visit tuckahoeumc.org. For more information about the Little Free Pantry, visit www.littlefreepantry.org. 📄

UNITED METHODIST HIGHER EDUCATION | GREATER NEW JERSEY SCHOLARSHIPS



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

Are you a student striving for a brighter future?

Check out all the scholarships available to you from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Deadline to apply is March 31, so APPLY TODAY at:
www.gbhem.org/loans-scholarships/scholarships

YOUR FUTURE AWAITS YOU!

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS



Souper Bowl food drive brings in over 2,000 pounds of food. Credit: Andrea Mateo, liaison to CUMAC

Midland Park UMC Collects a Ton of Food

Midland Park United Methodist Church held a “Souper Bowl” food drive that gleaned 2,304 pounds of food for CUMAC in Paterson. Midland Park is the oldest congregation in the township, having worshiped on the same site since 1802. They began by meeting in each other’s homes and then in a log cabin.

Focus Group Registration Open for Annual Conference

If your group or committee would like to schedule a special gathering at GNJ’s Annual Conference May 31 through June 2. Please visit www.gnjumc.org/2020annualconference/ to request a space.

Blueprint for Wellness (BFW) & HealthQuotient in 2020

BFW screening and HealthQuotient (HQ) for HealthFlex participants are through July 31. Participants can earn points and rewards are offered for participating. For details, visit www.gnjumc.org/benefits-overview/.



IGNITE Summer Camp Looking for New Volunteers and Staff

Opportunities abound this summer at Pinelands at Mt. Misery to get involved in helping at IGNITE 2020 Summer Camps in July and August.



NEXT GENERATION
UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

From photographer to counselor, both staff and volunteer opportunities are available. For details visit gnjnextgen.org.

It’s not only a chance to deepen a relationship with God and make wonderful friends and memories that will last a lifetime. It’s also a great thing to include on a resume!

Seize the Day: Scholarship Applications

GNJ Scholarships – Deadline March 31

From scholarships for aspiring nurses to ones that foster Christian education, the GNJ Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries offers opportunities for GNJ students. For more information and to apply go to: www.gnjumc.org/higher-education. You can also see a list of 2019 award recipients who are achieving their dreams for higher education.

Honoring Lay Ministry on March 28

The Laity Board will recognize innovative ministry from across GNJ on Saturday, March 28 at 2 p.m. at the Mission and Resource Center. People whose leadership in ministry and service has been exemplary in our midst will be celebrated that day.

For details and to register, visit <https://www.gnjumc.org/lay-ministry-recognition/>.

OBITUARIES

Edna May Robinson, surviving spouse of Rev. Sherman Robinson, died February 19. A private service with family and friends was held February 24 at Ely Funeral Home in Neptune. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to a United Methodist Church of your choice in memory of Edna May Robinson. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to: Donna Privette (daughter) at 5 Warner Way, Toms River, NJ 08755.

Elizabeth “Betty” Hughes, spouse of Rev. H. Raymond Hughes, died February 2. A viewing was held February 8 at First UMC, Cape May Court House. A memorial service followed. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to First UMC, Cape May Court House, 1 Church Street, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. H. Raymond Hughes at UMC Pitman, 535 North Oak Avenue, Pitman, NJ 08071.

Julia Garrett, surviving spouse of Rev. Curtis Garrett, died January 31. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Habitat for Humanity in memory of Julia Garrett. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Ben Garrett (son) at 11672 Mt. Whitney Ct., Altaloma, CA 91737.

Dorothy Parr, surviving spouse of Rev. James Archie Parr, died January 31. A viewing was held February 4 at Tuttle Funeral Home in Randolph, NJ. A memorial service was also held there on February 5. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent to Samaritan’s Purse in memory of Dorothy Parr. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to James Parr (son) at 701 Chapel Hill Road, Leonardo, NJ 07737.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BENEFIT FOR ACTIVE HEALTH PARTICIPANTS

As of January 1, 2020, Behavioral Health is included in the BCBS medical plan. 2020 claims should be submitted to Blue Cross Blue Shield. Optum now only handles the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

To select a behavioral health professional
Use the *Provider Finder* by visiting bcbsil.com
(available via Single-Sign On from the WebMD portal) and select *Find a Doctor*.

Or call the number on the back of the member ID card.



Gothic Revival Camp Meeting Cottage for sale in Historic Landisville Camp Meeting

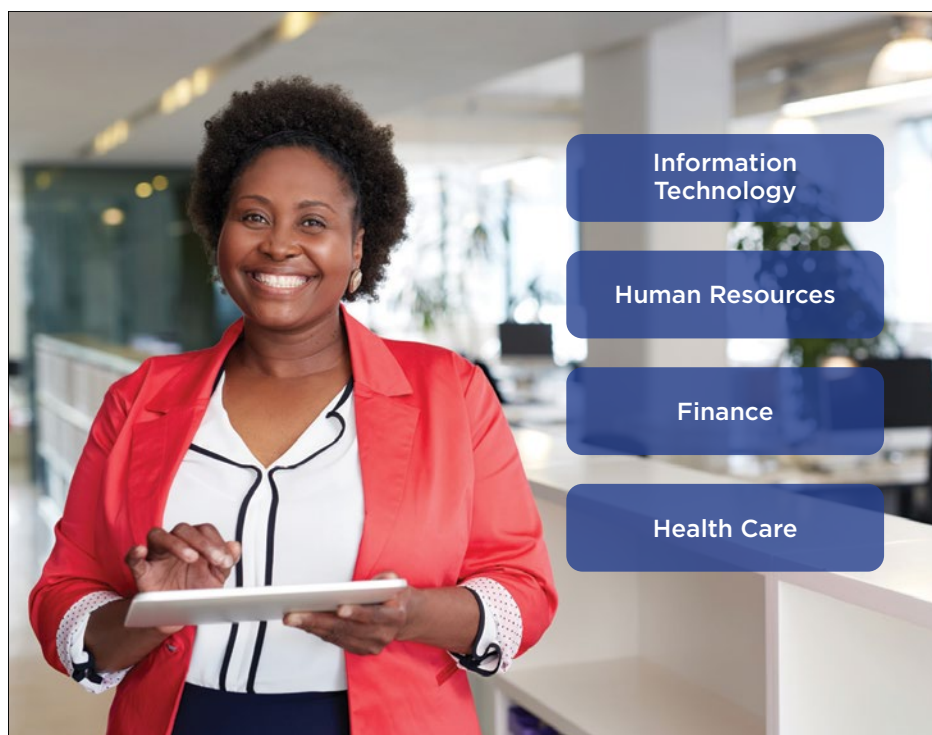
The oldest camp meeting in Lancaster County PA.

Established in 1870, the cottage dates to about 1873. Landisville Camp Meeting was originally a Methodist Holiness Camp Meeting and the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness met here in 1873.

Today it is a camp meeting of varied denominational backgrounds.

Located 7 miles from Lancaster City and convenient to Sight and Sound and other key locations in Lancaster County. **Price: \$15,500.**

Contact at 609.315.8446 or email: fmarz@eastern.edu



You’ve worked hard to develop your level of expertise. Now it’s time to apply that knowledge in a way that benefits others.

The challenges of IT, human resources, finance and health care, present many opportunities for organizations.

If you are interested in serving as a member of the United Methodist Communities Board of Directors, email board@umcommunities.org.

Corporate Board of Directors Opening

United Methodist Communities
Abundant Life for Seniors

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

Miracles Everywhere

***We celebrate and thank all of our
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\$350 per worshipper

Miracle Circle Churches

Christ UMC (Piscataway)
Elm UMC
First UMC (Bradley Beach)
First UMC (Freehold)
Kingwood UMC (Stockton)

\$250 per worshipper

Wonder Circle Churches

Bridgewater UMC
Community UMC (Roselle Park)
Princeton UMC
UMC at New Brunswick
Wesley UMC (South Plainfield)

\$150 per worshipper

Blessing Circle Churches

New Dover UMC (Edison)
UMC in Washington

\$75 per worshipper

Gratitude Circle Churches

Allentown UMC
Asbury UMC (Egg Harbor Township)
Belford UMC
Christ First UMC (Hasbrouck Heights)
Denville Community UMC
Embury UMC (Collingswood)
Epworth UMC (Palmyra)
Fellowship UMC (Haddon Heights)
Grace UMC (Wyckoff)
Harmony Hill UMC (Stillwater)
Harvey Memorial UMC (Point Pleasant Beach)
Hopewell UMC
Kemble Memorial UMC
Milton UMC (Oak Ridge)
Ridgewood UMC
Salem UMC (Pleasantville)
Smithville UMC (Eastampton)
Sparta UMC
St. Mark UMC (Hamilton Square)
Trinity UMC (Ewing)
Trinity UMC (Highland Park)
UMC in Union

Participating Churches

Arcola Korean UMC (Paramus)
Asbury UMC (Cinnaminson)
Asbury UMC (Woodstown)
Audubon UMC
Bishop Janes UMC (Basking Ridge)
Bound Brook UMC
Chews UMC (Glendora)
Clonmell UMC (Gibbstown)
Covenant UMC (Plainfield)
Ferry Ave UMC (Camden)
First UMC (Beach Haven Terrace)
First UMC (Delran)
First UMC (Glassboro)
First UMC (Mays Landing)
First UMC (Moorestown)
Friendship-Finley UMC (Bridgeton)
Lacey UMC (Forked River)
Marlton UMC
Masonville-Rancocas UMC
Middletown UMC
Midvale UMC (Wanaque)
Montgomery UMC (Belle Mead)
Morristown UMC
Haddonfield UMC
Hillsdale UMC
Juliustown UMC
Korean Community of NJ (Englewood)
Kynett UMC (Beach Haven)
North Wildwood UMC
Pearson Memorial UMC (Hamilton)
Pennington UMC
Rise Church (East Orange)
Roselle UMC
Round Valley UMC (Lebanon)
St. Andrew UMC (Toms River)
St. Marks UMC (Montclair)
Succasunna UMC
Trinity UMC (Hackettstown)
UMC in Branchville
UMC of Mantua
UMC at Milltown
UMC of Red Bank
UMC of Summit
UMC in Union City
Vincent UMC (Nutley)
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**TO JOIN THE MIRACLES
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CONTACT:**



Michaela Murray-Nolan | Director of Development

O: 732.359.1045 | E: mmurraynolan@gnjumc.org

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