

THE RELAY

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

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JOSHUA'S HOUSE: An Open Door to Hope and Comfort

"The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a man. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!"

—JOSHUA 10:13-14

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

This Relay's theme is about getting healthier, and that encompasses getting healthier in mind, body and spirit. Part of that journey includes making connections—making connections to God, each other, within our congregations and stretching out to the wider community and the world. It seems to be that it's this connection that many of us are feeling is tenuous as we face challenges and do our best to keep ministry and mission vital and transforming.



A FUTURE WITH HOPE
UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

As our churches continue to do ministry that changes lives, we are thankful for the connections we can make that together make us stronger and more equipped to be fruitful dis-



Joshua's House welcomes teenage girls to participate in Girlocity, a mentoring program designed to empower girls and help them achieve their goals.

ciples. Starting in 2012 when superstorm Sandy ravaged the Northeast, A Future With Hope (AFWH) embraced its mission to provide solutions, care... and hope to the neediest. Eight years later as the pandemic bared down on our communities, our hope centers stepped in to be that glimmer of hope that was so sorely needed, particularly in those places that were already vulnerable.

Now in 2021, AFWH is continuing to grow with the addition of two new

members, First UMC Vineland and Joshua's House.

"Hope emerges where residents, businesses, organizations, government and institutions work together to heal communities" is the vision statement for AFWH. Much like it was seen when groups banded together to form AFWH, that hope emerged again in 2020 when the pandemic put a stranglehold on communities.

For Rev. Dr. Dawrell Rich, pastor at Clair Memorial UMC in Jersey City and

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The Dayton, OH, native wants to bring an intergenerational experience to IGNITE.

AQUEELAH LIGONDE: Bringing Her Intergenerational Spirit to Wildwood

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

Growing up in Dayton, OH, Aqueelah Ligonde was surrounded by family and friends of all ages. Each Sunday she attended the Baptist church that her family belonged to, soaking up nuggets of wisdom and guidance from the longtime members. Now at 44, she is sharing those gifts with others.

"Growing up, my whole life was intergenerational. It was never a term back then, but older people walked alongside all of us," said Ligonde, who discovered her love for youth ministry at only 13 and in 2018 shared her thoughts in the book, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry*.

"I have three brothers and one sister, and my mom loves kids," said Ligonde when asked what inspired her to pursue youth ministry. "The work of my pastor also led me to youth ministry. He saw things in me that I didn't see in myself." She added that Pastor Daryl Ward is still her mentor and "spiritual person."

Rev. Dr. Ligonde, an ordained Presbyterian clergywoman who recently attained a D.Min. from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, has dedicated her life to youth through coaching, speaking, workshops and

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Linking Strangers to Friends

New Website Nourishes the Migrant Community

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."

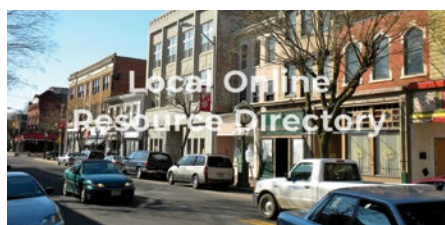
(ATTRIBUTED TO CHIEF SEATTLE OF THE SUQUAMISH AND DUWAMISH TRIBES)

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

BRIDGETON, NJ

Cities are not always places with skyscrapers and busy streets. Some cities are much quieter with tree-lined streets, a smattering of barns and chock full of rich history and stories—qualities that may work to disguise the underlying inequities and struggles that many of their citizens may be facing.

Bridgeton, NJ, is one of those places. Founded hundreds of years ago by indigenous people, most notably the Lenni-Lenape Native Americans, the city of more than 25,000 on the Cohansey River



New website will be a go-to resource for the migrant community in Bridgeton.

in Cumberland County has undergone many changes over the years.

But interspersed amid the Victorian architecture, farmland and lush parks is a poverty rate for more than 30 percent of the city's population, most of whom are minority, including a large Latino population. The pandemic further amplified this over the past year for those who were most vulnerable, including refugees and migrant workers.

St. John's Fordville, which is GNJ's only Native American church and is one of the city's historic sites having been designated one in 2017, serves the large population of Native Americans that still live in the city after seeking refuge in the 1800s and 1900s when children were being

separated from their families and sent to boarding schools.

For more than a year, the church has been a beacon for feeding the hungry, feeding more than 400 families each week and giving away much needed supplies like clothes and household goods. They also facilitated the census and helped people register to vote.

But when the opportunity arose to apply for a Mustard Seed Migration Grant from UMCOR, St. John's Cynthia Mosley, who has been leading the food ministry effort along with the other ministries, knew that her church needed to apply in order to help her community. UMCOR was awarding Mustard Seed Migration Grants of up to \$2,000 to 50 United Methodist churches in the United States to engage in new, one-time community-based service projects focused on refugees and migration.

As Mosley considered her proposal, she also knew that she needed help, so she solicited the help once again from Donny Reyes, an 18-year-old Mexican American resident of Bridgeton and member of St. John's UMC who has been

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

Will I be a good gymnast?

Bishop John Schol



During July, our granddaughters, Elise and Nora stayed with Beverly and me during the week, and we were joined by mom and dad on the weekends. It was pure joy...and work and fun and a few tears. After dinner one night, we had ice cream cones, mint chocolate chip. Mmmmm.

Elise, who had her seventh birthday in July, asked, "Where are the sprinkles, Pop?" I pointed to an upper cabinet and said in there. Elise pulled herself up onto the countertop, opened the cabinet and found the sprinkles. As she was getting ready to jump down off the countertop, I put my hand out to help and she jumped to the floor without any help. I said, "Pretty good." Elise asked, "Do you think I will make a good gymnast, Pop?" I said, "Elise, you will be good at anything you work to be good at."

I am not sure she will ever be great enough to be in the Olympics, but she can be good with the right mindset and practice at any number of things.

Right now, these pandemic times just aren't as good as other times. Right now, we are not being as good at doing some things. The pandemic has forced all of us to stop doing some things and get good at other things—social distancing, Zoom calls, masking, learning about vaccines, turning homes into workspaces and ministry online. But the things we enjoy being good at have not come as easily.

"MAYBE WE HAVE TO ASSESS AND ACCEPT THAT SOME THINGS WILL JUST HAVE TO BE 'GOOD ENOUGH' AND SOME THINGS WE JUST CAN'T DO AS WHAT WE ONCE DID."

—Bishop John Schol

Maybe we have to assess and accept that some things will just have to be "good enough" and some things we just can't do as what we once did. Many of our churches have had a much harder time attracting people to worship online or back to in-person worship or participating in small groups and hands-on mission. It has been frustrating and even demoralizing. Yet, right now, we may need to adjust expectations and focus on what we can do, particularly as new COVID-19 variants are making their way through the population.

One of the books I read this summer is *Southernmost* by Silas House. It is about a Church of God preacher who some would say fell from grace while others might say found grace. At one point at a very low ebb, his son asks, "What does God expect from us?" "Galatians 6:9," his preacher father replied. This preacher/bishop had to look it up. "Don't become weary of doing good." Or as one of Wesley's three simple rules says, "do all the good you can." It is not about what we ought to do, or what we should do, but what we can do.

My advice to a weary church, a weary people, a weary pastor and church leader in a weary time, do what good you can do. Focus on what you can do and not what you used to do. There is a marvelous blessing in the new good.

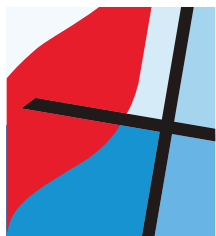
With sprinkles in hand, Elise's two feet landed on the floor, not a perfect dismount, but good enough to sit on the porch on a warm summer night and have some ice cream. And it was a good night. 🍦

"MY ADVICE TO A WEARY CHURCH, A WEARY PEOPLE, A WEARY PASTOR AND CHURCH LEADER IN A WEARY TIME, DO WHAT GOOD YOU CAN DO. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO AND NOT WHAT YOU USED TO DO. THERE IS A MARVELOUS BLESSING IN THE NEW GOOD."

—Bishop John Schol

Correction:

In the story about Rev. Dr. Tiffany Murphy in the July 2021 issue, her first churches—Mt. Zion and Barnsboro UMCS—were in Barnsboro, not Clarksboro. We regret the error.



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John R. Schol, Bishop

United Methodists of Greater New Jersey
205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune, NJ 07753

Heather Mistretta, Editorial Manager

732.359.1047 | hmistretta@gnjumc.org

Laura Canzonier, Communications Administrative Assistant

732.359.1063 | lcanzonier@gnjumc.org

Brittney Reilly, Online and Digital Communications Manager

732.359.1040 | breilly@gnjumc.org

Christopher G. Coleman, The Relay Designer

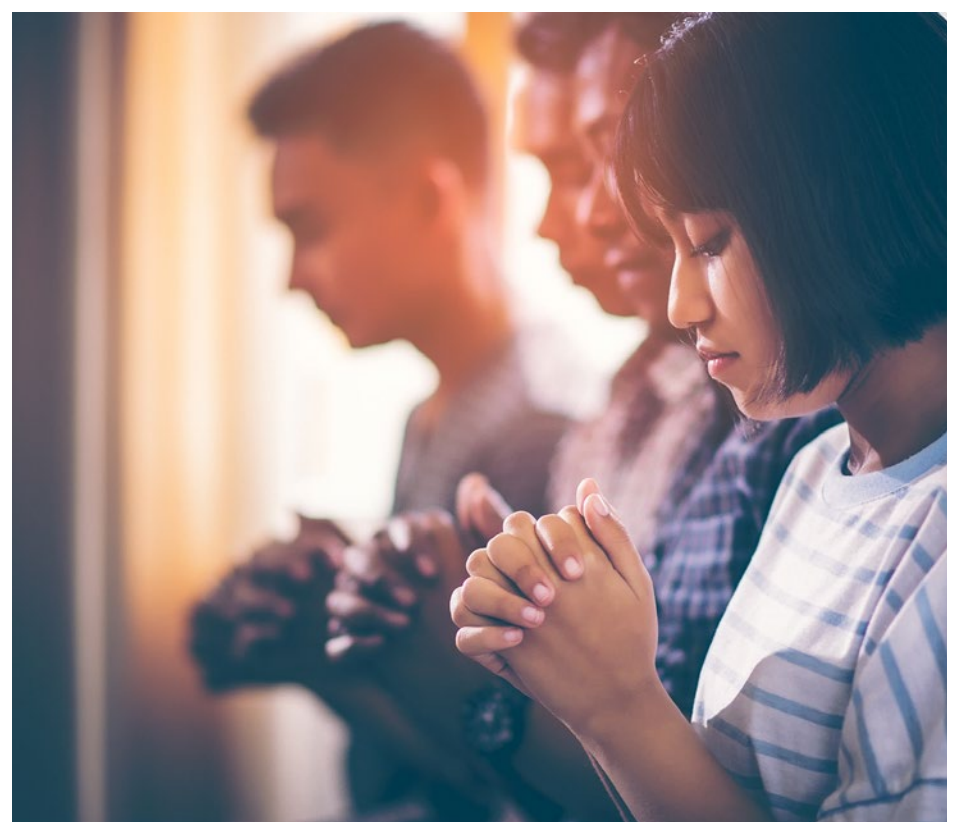
chris@cgcoleman.com

New Subscriptions, renewals, address changes, and corrections should be addressed to Heather Mistretta, hmistretta@gnjumc.org or by mail to: United Methodist Relay | 205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune NJ 07753

FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION & PLACEMENT

Contact: communications@gnjumc.org

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UNITED METHODISTS
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Red Bird Mission Soars to its 100th Anniversary

*“Hope is the thing with feathers
that perches in the soul—and
sings the tunes without the words
—and never stops at all.”*

—EMILY DICKINSON

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

The red cardinal, the state bird of seven states including Kentucky, holds a special spiritual meaning for Christians as it symbolizes everlasting vitality (the faith in the blood of Christ as the birds are red in color), Christmas (the birth of Christ) and are also considered a creative force (the red color equals vitality and creativity).

In the remote Clay County of eastern Kentucky, where also Chief Red Bird of the Cherokees once lived, sits a place of dichotomy—where shuttered coal mines, shells of cars, decayed houses and generations of poverty are entrenched in the Cumberland Mountains but where lives are also transformed sometimes with just a hammer and a prayer much like Jesus did.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Red Bird Mission, a faith-based nonprofit that has directly responded to the growing needs of a community where more than 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

According to the history, a young teacher named Zelpia Roberts prayed that a Christian school be started in the area when she noticed how many children were not receiving any education. In 1919 the Illinois Branch Women’s Missionary Society was the first of three branches to request that a church begin work here. After much prayer and study, the Women’s Board established the Faith Fund to help pay for its growth.

Zelpia’s prayers were answered on July 1, 1921, when the first workers, Myra Bowman and Emeline Welsh, arrived to teach elementary grades. Rev. J. J. DeWalt was the first pastor appointed to the Mission and served as superintendent from 1921 until his death in 1928.



LEFT: Rev. Dave Delaney (right), who has been going to Red Bird for over a decade, embraces a collaborative spirit with his team from St. Paul’s Deptford UMC.; BELOW: Rev. Gabrielle Martone along with her team from Pearl River UMC is committed to meeting people exactly where they are.



Soon after teachers came, nurses and doctors arrived. Red Bird medical work began in 1922 with Lydia Rice, RN as the first medical worker. Dr. Harlan Heim joined the staff in 1926. The first hospital was built in 1928, but for many years, calls to mountain homes were made by medical staff on horseback.

Under the leadership of Rev. DeWalt, a pattern was set that continues today. He and his wife, Nettie demonstrated the purpose of Red Bird – to bring Jesus Christ into every heart and to bring life abundant to all.

Since that day in 1921, the organization offers a strong foundation of education, community outreach services like a food pantry, healthcare, home repair and personal development. Educational services through a PK-12th grade school are provided at the Red Bird Christian School where 100 percent of its students graduate, as well as a Head Start program and an adult vocational training program (Red Bird STEAM).

“It’s part of my soul, part of my journey, part of my ministry,” said Rev. Gabrielle Martone of Pearl River UMC who led a team of 42 people this summer on her 15th trip to Red Bird to fix a bathroom, build a ramp to a trailer, built a stoop and paint a porch. “Our goal is to enrich peo-

ple’s lives in the place where they are and not only helping people whose identity matches my own. It’s about being open to changing where they’re at based on what their needs are.”

Despite the widespread hardship and inordinate need she sees, Martone remarked how resilient and resourceful the people of Clay County are.

“They are amazing people, super generous. I’ve learned more down there than many other places,” said Martone who added that their strong survival skills enable them to keep going.

But despite the glimmers of hope she sees while on her mission trips, Martone said her eyes have been opened to the poverty in America and the realization that in ministry a one-size-fits-all approach does not work.

Similarly for Rev. Dave Delaney of St. Paul’s UMC Deptford, who has also made several trips to Red Bird, he is grateful for the collaborative spirit he sees there.

“There’s a blessing you get that’s hard to explain,” said Delaney who added that he and his team worked on a house owned by a man named Terry Montgomery. “We have made a stranger a friend again, and we have made his house so much better than it was when we arrived in Kentucky.”

Delaney also recalled how in 2019 he and his team met a woman whose husband had died in the coal mines, leaving her to take care of their children, including a disabled son.

“Miss Tanya is a friend for life,” said Delaney who added that during the pandemic Tanya worshipped with St. Paul’s online.

“What we do know is there’s a lot of work to be done and this work is not in the name of any one particular church because it’s the work of God in Jesus Christ,” said the former social security employee.

“Our team was thrilled to see that four churches from Pennsylvania plus one young person from a church in New Jersey formed a work team together because they knew it wasn’t about the one church’s name, but it was about representing God in Jesus Christ,” said Delaney who is looking forward to planning a more collaborative effort for 2022.

“I’m asking every grandparent to consider coming with their grandchildren as the woman from Pennsylvania did last week. I’m asking teenagers to consider how this one week in Kentucky can make a difference in the rest of your life while helping make a difference in the life of others,” said Delaney who despite being more comfortable holding a spatula than a hammer relishes the next opportunity he will have in Kentucky. “I am encouraging those of you who have no carpentry skills nor plumbing skills nor basic labor skills to come to Red Bird because I have none

of those skills either and yet I’ve been blessed by going to Red Bird.”

Over the past century, the Red Bird Mission has exponentially grown in its outreach as it remains nimble so that it can respond to the ever-changing needs of its community.

A dental clinic that was once run by a dentist is now staffed by students as part of a new partnership with the University of Louisville. The DeWalt Senior Citizens Center started operations in 1991, and the Red Bird Elderly Housing apartments were opened in 1996. Emphasis on encouraging family food production led to the establishment of a farmers’ market in 2010 and a commercial food kitchen in 2017. A permanent pavilion for the farmers market was constructed in 2015 as part of a project to provide a potable water-dispensing kiosk for area residents without a clean drinking water source. Red Bird now teaches people how to farm, offering them a place every Saturday morning to peddle their crops.

To meet the needs of neglected or abused children in the community, Red Bird instituted a dormitory program that gives these children a safe place to live. The program also welcomes international students from places like Nigeria and China who pay full room and board, which helps to finance the program and gives local youth more opportunities to learn about other cultures.

Much like the people of Clay County never give up, nothing stops the people of the Red Bird Mission. Fires, economic downturns and funding issues over the past 100 years may have temporarily hampered efforts, but the leaders of the Red Bird Mission continue to create innovative ministries and embrace the mission of its forefathers.

When asked what she envisions for the next 100 years at Red Bird, Martone said, “It will continue to morph and change as the community shifts. There will always be a need for Red Bird.” She added that the ministry will likely be bolstered by the addition of vocational training, one of which involves the company, Caterpillar, and more services for the elderly. 🇺🇸

To learn more about the 2022 Northeast Brigade to Red Bird, contact Rev. Martone at pastorgabriellemartone@gmail.com. If you live further south, contact Rev. Delaney at pdattstpauls@gmail.com to join his group in 2022.

If you’d like to share your own Red Bird story, contact Heather Mistretta. Also, if you’d like to learn more about this organization’s wonderful history, visit them at <http://rbmission.org/>.



ABOVE: Butler UMC’s Rev. Mike McKay once again led a large team in July to help rebuild in Kentucky.; BELOW: Red Bird Mission began in 1921 with a Christian school, followed shortly thereafter with dormitories and a medical facility.



2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROFILE:

Following Her Journey of Connection

FROM COMPUTERS TO CHURCH

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.”

—BRENEE BROWN, *DARING GREATLY: HOW THE COURAGE TO BE VULNERABLE TRANSFORMS THE WAY WE LIVE, LOVE, PARENT, AND LEAD*

Rev. Yang was ordained an elder by Bishop Schol in May. Credit: Shari DeAngelo

By Heather Mistretta
hmistretta@gnjumc.org

In 2011 JiSun Yang emigrated to the United States with her husband, Sung Woo Lee, who wanted to study theology seven thousand miles away at Drew University. She left behind family and a job as a computer programmer, a nine-year stint that included launching an online shopping mall, but she was hopeful for the future.

“I am a fourth-generation Christian,” Yang said proudly. “I envied spending all day long at church,” said Yang, recalling how her husband was appointed as pastor at Evangelical UMC in Clarksboro.

“I WANT TO SPEND MORE TIME IN SMALL GROUP MINISTRY. I WANT TO DEVELOP A CULTURE OF SMALL GROUPS AND THE CONNECTION WITH EACH OTHER.”

—Rev. JiSun Yang

As she navigated her new life 10 years ago, Yang listened and embraced her faith. But she also recalled part of her earlier journey when she felt God was not close.

“I heard many stories about God from my pastors and my parents, but they were not mine. I felt I was missing,” said Yang. “The questions that arose in me were why I should live, why I should find a job, or why I should study. I was searching for answers to life but felt lost. It was a painful and confusing moment, but it

was a blessing because my questions and confusion guided me back to God.”

When I prayed for my calling, I received John 21:15-17 as God’s answer. When Jesus asked Peter, ‘Do you truly love me?’ I answered with Peter, Yes, Lord. You know that I love you. ‘Feed my lamb,’ Jesus said to Peter. I prayed to let me know whether it was God’s call to ministry or not, but God was silent at that time.”

But as Yang immersed herself in her new life, taking English classes and opening up her heart and mind to God, she started to feel transformed by God. In a recent post she wrote in Haddonfield UMC’s Daily Reflections:

“In my junior year in college, I started to reengage into the church. In that season of my life, I felt lost and tried hard to find the meaning and the purpose of my life. I was eager to attend worship services and prayer meetings because I was desperate to find some answer of life. About two years later, when I was elected as the president of the college group of the church, I had complex feelings. I felt good and proud of myself as I was acknowledged by friends and honored to be a group leader. On the other hand, I felt odd to be a church leader as the questions arose about myself: Am I qualified? Am I the right person? Am I good enough?”

There’s no doubt Yang is so much more than “good enough,” and her three appointments prior to her current one have solidified her willingness to help and to bring new vital ideas to congregations.

“I continue to follow my faith journey,” she said, adding that in 2015 she attained a M.Div. from Drew.



Rev. Yang with her parents and husband, from left to right: Kyehyuck Yang, Myunghee Jung, Rev. Sungwoo "Aiden" Lee, Rev. JiSun Yang.

Now 42, JiSun has been imparting her wisdom, experience and talent in her role as the Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation at Haddonfield UMC for the past three years.

In May, she was ordained as an elder in GNJ. When asked what this means to her, Yang said, “I’m grateful and honored to be ordained. I feel more responsible now because it’s a lifetime commitment.”

Commitment has always been one of her strengths. In her role in Haddonfield, Yang loves to share God’s stories of love and listen to the stories of people. As she looks at the year ahead, once again she is hopeful and eager to grow relationships.

“I want to spend more time in small group ministry. I want to develop a culture of small groups and the connection with each other,” said Yang, who added that she would also like to bolster digital ministry as churches enter into a whole new future.

She said she will also continue to help out when needed in the sanctuary by playing the piano or cello, talents she picked up in elementary school in Seoul.

“Ministry is challenging, but I pray for my congregation and myself to grow together and ignite a small fire of revival of the church and the community.”

When Yang is not enriching lives in her church or outside in her community, she loves to play a competitive game of bowling or table tennis, and she loves to watch movies. The Avengers is one of her favorites.

It has been a decade since Yang left her home country for a new life in the United States and a new relationship with God, but she continues to look forward, embrace God’s love and guidance and generously share her open heart with others.

Clearly thankful for her journey, Yang said, “Even though I miss my family in South Korea, I still feel like I’m home once our plane gets back to JFK [Airport].” 🇺🇸



Aqueelah Ligonde

Continued from page 1



Aqueelah relishes the opportunity to change her hairstyle and discover a new part of herself.

delving into their lives in whatever way she thinks will make a difference. She has worked with organizations like Princeton Seminary Institute For Youth Ministry and Youth Specialties, Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, Urban Youth Workers Institute and Racial Ethnic Young Women PCUSA Mission Agency, and she has also served on the Executive Board of GenOn Ministries, an organization dedicated to intergenerational relationship and trained with the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative.

But to each unique experience, she brings passion, creativity and optimism.

When she arrives at IGNITE this October, Ligonde said she plans to bring a balance between fun and “something that will stick.”

“I don’t take myself too seriously. I hope I can help people relax so that they can hear the message better. I hope the kids will come with an open-

ness to roll with me. For me, there always has to be interaction. That might come from my Baptist roots,” said Ligonde who jokingly told me that even she’s not sure what hairstyle she will have at the event in two months.

“I love to change my look,” she said.

For Ligonde, she said she’s looking forward to “hearing a variety of voices, paying attention to what the Holy Spirit has.” “I’m sure everything will line up beautifully,” she said.

Ligonde’s journey after graduating from McCormick Theological Seminary in 2002 led her first to Alexandria, VA, in her search for a place to do youth ministry. Then when a church in Jamaica, Queens, was looking for a youth minister, Ligonde seized the opportunity, staying there for 12 years.

“We did great work there, but I was looking for something other than working for a church,” said Ligonde who recalled how she found Ministry Architects at the top of an internet search. Six years later, she is still a staff consultant for the organization who works with churches using the philosophy that both creativity and structure can work in tandem in ministry.

She works concurrently for Ministry Incubators, an organization that helps creative individuals, organizations and faith communities transform innovative



Since her early days growing up in a Baptist church in Ohio, Aqueelah has immersed herself in youth ministry.

Aqueelah with Ministry Incubators’ co-founder, Mark DeVries.



ideas for ministry into sustainable social impact enterprises and is the transitional pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Far Rockaway, NY.

A few years ago, Ligonde wrote a blog called “The Three R’s of Engaging Teens,” in which she wrote, “It is not easy engaging teens. Sometimes we feel like we have to have some kind of formal to be attractive and appealing. In my many years of working with teens, I have found that there are three realities that ring true when trying to engage teens. I like to call them the 3 R’s—relationship, real and relevancy.”

Ligonde’s commitment to youth is relatable, relevant and real. Her chameleon-like hair, penchant to laugh easily and ability to move forward with her ears and eyes wide open make the connection to youth an easy and cohesive one.

When she’s not helping people bolster their ministries or grow in their faith,

Ligonde is working toward improving the spiritual, physical, mental and social health of youth, with a focus on young girls, women and ultimately the family. She applies this focus as a volunteer retreat leader for junior and senior high school students for Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center or teaching a free fitness class for Shape Up NYC.

No stranger to IGNITE, Ligonde was the keynote speaker at Next Gen Ministries’ IGNITE Youth Leaders Day in 2018 when she spoke of taking care of the soul while serving as volunteers or staff in ministry.

Some say that the meaning of the name, Aqueelah is “wise,” while others say, “bright and pleasant gift from God.” For Aqueelah Ligonde, both meanings apply. 🇺🇸

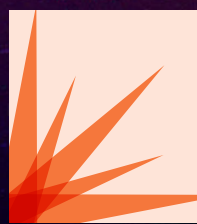
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NEXT GENERATION
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Joshua's House

Continued from page 1

founder and president of Joshua's House, being a new hope center of AFWH is an opportunity to connect with the wider community and to expand the work they have been doing since 2009 when the group first started to roll up their sleeves to bring solace and solutions to its community.

Back then the group's first mission was to provide backpacks to low-income families. From there, it grew into a mentoring program and so much more.

"As I had more conversations, I realized that it was a community development operation," said Rich as he recalled the early days of Joshua's House. One of the projects he is most proud of are the health and hygiene kits they provide to women and children in emergency shelters and the LGBTQ homeless.

This initiative continues today, in part due to the success it has imparted on the Greater Bridgeport Area Prevention Program (GBAPP), a collaborative agency that serves the greater Bridgeport region for adolescent sexuality-related issues, which includes prevention of adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS. They do this through education, intervention and collaboration.

Rich recalled how GBAPP recently reached out to him to let him know what an impact those kits had on their vulnerable population. A letter dated Feb. 10, said "Your gift that most people take for granted will help many adults who will use these essential kits. Your donation will provide our clients with a feeling of dignity by feeling comfortable and confident in the learning or working environment."

As Joshua's House continues to grow and stretch its outreach to a broader area, Rich is recognizing what an inordinate need there is.



Rev. Rich (second from right) leads a monthly distribution to HomeFirst, an organization in Plainfield committed to helping the homeless.

"Jersey City is rife with homelessness. We're wrestling with how to provide services to them," said Rich. "We're trying to use what's in my wheelhouse and in the wheelhouse of my board."

He added that his board brings experience in mental health and public health among other fields. Rich brings experience in urban planning and development, having studied architecture and environmental leadership earlier in his career before attaining a M.Div. from Drew in 2012. It was at Drew where he earned the 2019 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Social Justice Award. Rich anticipates completing his doctoral program in 2022 with a Ph.D. in Religion and Society at Drew University. He currently does not possess a D.Min. from that institution or any other.

Through partnerships with local colleges and universities, Joshua's House is nurturing the next generation of social change leaders. Currently, they have a student

chapter at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ. Also in its effort to sustain communities, the hope center provides community indicator reports and asset-based revitalization strategies to support health and resiliency through comprehensive research and analysis.

Looking ahead to the future with a keen insight and a tireless energy to be that catalyst of change for his community, Rich said he hopes to expand Joshua's House so that they can make a bigger impact on the homeless community by providing job training and housing development.

One way he sees that happening is by tapping into the youth that he teaches. While teaching a course to teens at the W.E.B. Du Bois Scholars Institute of Princeton University, he realized an opportunity. He assigned them the task of creating a nonprofit.

"There were some amazing ideas that came out of this assignment," said Rich.

New Website

Continued from page 1

helping distribute food to the town's Mexican community for the past year.

"This young man told us one of the first items immigrants purchase is a cell phone, which they use for almost everything from grocery lists to legal documents. He said his search for food would have been so much easier if resources were on one website," said Mosley.



The large Latino community in Bridgeton, often limited because of its language barrier, will now have a one-stop place for resources.

The duo came up with "Empower Cumberland," a local online resource directory designed specifically for the community of Bridgeton. The website was launched in late July.

"Bridgeton has one of the three largest Mexican and Central American immigrant populations in the Delaware Valley," said Mosley who is also the chair of the staff parish relationship committee, an Annual Conference delegate and is leading the jurisdictional Committee on Native American Ministries.

"Vast farms continue to need laborers to harvest the acres and acres of produce. Workers and their families arrive needing survival resources."

The project creates a user-friendly resource that takes advantage of Google

Translate, a built-in translator, so that it is accessible to all. Information in the directory is grouped by type, such as housing, food, employment, immigration matters, legal aid, health care, etc. Details for each resource include hours of operation, services provided, cost, location and other pertinent information.

During its first two months, the Empower Cumberland tool will be marketed first to a group of 25 mixed age immigrants with a request for feedback. Feedback will be addressed, and the tool will be marketed widely with a \$10 incentive gift card from Walmart or ShopRite for the first 150 users.

Additional incentives like discounted services, sample products and coupons will be requested from those resources that are featured in the online directory.

Although the grant calls for the program to last six months, Empower Cumberland will continue after that period with volunteers who have agreed to maintain the website.

"Immigrants and refugees will have an instant all-in-one resource directory easily accessible from a cell phone upon enrollment. Services will be at their fingertips. It will be step toward independent living in their new home community," said Mosley, who added that the addition will also benefit the St. John's congregation.

"Church members will become more familiar with the large and growing Central American and Mexican population and their needs. We went to the community and asked what they needed. This act itself was a step in appreciating the needs of the new families."

Many of those who will be helped by this new website will be those who have also benefitted from the church's Food

Giveaway. Growth in both areas will likely grow in tandem.

The church also has partnerships with the Bridgeton Public School District, the Fairfield Township School District, the Cumberland County Health Department, Gateway Head Start, and the First UMC in the center city part of the community.

Mosley added that they plan to develop a partnership with Complete Care, the most frequently used healthcare source used by the immigrant community.

One obstacle that has hampered the sharing of resources is the spotty internet service in the community.

"Technology is a big step for our church. Our rural church is in an internet desert, but we expect that to change soon with the improvement and expansion of an internet provider in the church neighborhood," said Mosley.

"We anticipate new technology skills to develop. With this growth, the knowledge of the immigrant community will grow. The immigrant families seem to relate well with our indigenous families and vice versa, so we can see our cultures blending in social activities like our pow wow and their festivals."

St. John's congregants, some of whom are bilingual or work in settings where they have direct contact with families or the social workers who work with the targeted families, will recruit participants during the food and clothing giveaways.

Those unable to work directly will be dedicated prayer warriors.

"Though we are small in number, we have managed to establish a food and clothing giveaway, which serves more than 400 families four to six times a month. There is an understanding spirit among our Tribal people for the immigrants. We understand what it means to be disenfranchised. We understand what

"Now I'm working on shepherding my students into making an organization a reality. There has to be an incubator for these ideas, and Joshua's House could be that incubator."

Rich said he also plans to include his own congregation in the growth of Joshua's House. Once the pandemic hit, Rich said he and his congregation jumped into action to provide an effective hybrid worship. The newly created website and bolstered social media presence also helped to increase engagement.

"I asked myself how do we keep all the sheep together? I taught myself video editing, and we offered six different ways they could connect."

The result was a sharp uptick in viewers, from about 40 people in person to about 450 online viewers last May and even a peak of about 700 one week in 2020. A survey sent a couple months later revealed that three platforms were primarily being used, so they pared down their options to three.

Now as they look toward reopening their doors of their sanctuary this September, Rich said he is preparing his congregation to be mentally ready for the next transition and to be more hospitable.

"We see in the Bible that their bodies left oppression and trauma in Egypt, but for some their minds didn't. I want to make sure this isn't the case here," said Rich.

With an unwavering spirit for his community both inside the sanctuary and outside in the places where people are hurting, Rich is committed to being that leader who will continue to provide hope and comfort.

For more details, visit Joshuashouse-nj.org.

Learn more about the new hope center at First UMC of Vineland and Rev. Yeika Huertas in the September issue of The Relay.

it means to leave your homeland. Poverty is not unknown to us," said Mosley.

Donny especially knows how poverty and leaving your homeland can impact families, having immigrated from a rural community outside of Mexico City.

"Donny has become a presence in our church family," said Mosley, who added that in addition to food distribution, he is also assisting the youth leadership at the Conference level, most recently participating in a video describing Next Gen youth activities.

Mosley recalled when she first met Donny in his neighborhood while delivering food.

"He found us on the computer when his uncle was hungry and disabled. We met him in his neighborhood and from then on, we have become partners."

Donny, a quiet, bright and ambitious young man, was part of an experimental education cohort where 50 youth attended college and high school at the same time. This past spring, he graduated with a high school diploma and an associate degree, all while taking care of his younger brother so his mother could go to work.

The teenager who dreams of working in finance and possibly running for office one day is heading to Rowan University in August to finish up his remaining two years of college. With a bachelor's degree in finance in hand, Donny wants to be an investment banker so he can start a nonprofit and impart what he learns about financial literacy on his community.

Donny along with Cynthia and Byron Francis of St. John's formally introduced their new website to the community at the church on July 31. Those who decided to sign up on the website that day not only received gift cards, but they also opened the door to new opportunities for a brighter future ahead.

<https://empowercumberland.weebly.com>

Clergy Couple Always on Their Toes to Help Others and Share Joy

By Denise Herschel

For Rev. Dr. Rich Hendrickson, senior pastor of St. Paul's UMC in Ocean Grove, NJ, the greatest joy of being a pastor is "without a doubt" watching people encounter, accept, grow and serve Christ. He has found throughout his years of ministry that there is "nothing better" than seeing people find their way, discover their gifts and put those gifts to work for Christ.

"I BELIEVE WHEN PEOPLE LIVE FULLY INTO THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST, THE BODY OF CHRIST WILL BE ALIVE AND WELL AND FLOURISHING IN THE WORLD."

—Rev. Dr. Rich Hendrickson

"Serving God means helping people encounter, accept, grow and serve Him. I am much more interested in discipleship than church membership," he said. "I believe when people live fully into their relationship with Christ, the body of Christ will be alive and well and flourishing in the world."

Hendrickson's own roots are deeply embedded within the Methodist faith as he was born and raised in Ocean Grove where he grew up as an active member of St. Paul's.

"I grew up in the church. I attended Sunday School, sang in the choir, and at-



In spite of the adversity, Gina and Rich always seem to find that silver lining and are often seen smiling or cheering on someone.

and Howland UMC in Maine; and director of youth ministries of St. Paul's. In addition, he was director of the Stewardship Foundation of GNJ.

Hendrickson has been happily married for the past 37 years to his wife, Rev. Dr. Gina Hendrickson, and they are parents of adult twin daughters--Krista who is married to Joe and Rebecca married to Ben who have a daughter, Abby.

"I met her at a covered dish supper at St. Paul's UMC, and I guess you could say that you can't get more Methodist than that!" he laughed.

The clergy couple, who often find ways to laugh and share that joy with others, have only served together when they both co-pastored the Summit UMC from



Gina and Rich have experienced many adventures throughout their 37 years of marriage, including a trip to Switzerland.

staff of the Moorestown church," he said. "She will be making the long commute from the back of the parsonage through the church parking lot to her office! I'll have about an hour commute from Moorestown to Ocean Grove."

Hendrickson said that this past year and a half has proved difficult at times for both he and Gina as pastors who were leading congregations through a global pandemic.

"Gina had the challenge of helping churches in her district navigate all the facets of dealing with a pandemic like moving from live to virtual worship, keeping ministry going while not being able to meet in the church building, and financial stress and struggles," he said.

"I have had some of the same struggles at St. Paul's. On the flip side, we have grown and flourished even in the midst of the pandemic. Our staff and lay leadership have stepped up and helped us increase our online presence, restart in-person worship with safe protocols in place and maintain our presence in the community."

Together, they always seem to find that silver lining and are often seen

smiling or cheering on someone. At the Annual Conference session in May, Gina said, "We haven't been able to grieve together, to hug each other," said Hendrickson who cited many "dark valleys" she encountered over the past year. But, "The 23rd Psalm has been balm for my soul," she said as she encouraged everyone to let it become their voice as it has for her and to "fear not!"

Another time when she was citing an excerpt from John Eldridge, Gina said, "It's exhausting, and my soul just needs to lie on its back and put its paws in the air for a few minutes."

In spite of these past 16 months of uncertainty, it has taught this clergy couple the true meaning of the word, "nimble."

"The word we have committed to over this last year plus is 'nimble.' Gina and I personally, and in our pastoral work, have tried to remain nimble, responding to the changing needs with grace and calm," he said.

And then there's always their rambunctious Chesapeake Bay Retriever, Ruhe, who gives them another opportunity to laugh and tend to their souls. 🐾

"GINA HAD THE CHALLENGE OF HELPING CHURCHES IN HER DISTRICT NAVIGATE ALL THE FACETS OF DEALING WITH A PANDEMIC LIKE MOVING FROM LIVE TO VIRTUAL WORSHIP, KEEPING MINISTRY GOING WHILE NOT BEING ABLE TO MEET IN THE CHURCH BUILDING, AND FINANCIAL STRESS AND STRUGGLES."

—Rev. Dr. Rich Hendrickson

tended youth group. I served as youth pastor at St. Paul's from 1987-1992 before going to seminary," he added.

Hendrickson, who has a B.A. from Thomas Edison State College, a M.Div. from Bangor Theological Seminary and a D.Min. from Drew Theological Seminary, has been senior pastor at St. Paul's for the past five years. His previous appointments include co-senior pastor of UMC of Summit; associate pastor of Central UMC

2001-2006. The two have recently been busy with a move to Moorestown, NJ, where Rev. Dr. Gina Hendrickson began her new position on July 1 as the senior pastor at First UMC of Moorestown. She was previously the district superintendent from 2014-2021 for the Northern Shore District.

"Gina is very excited to be moving back into ministry in the local church and can't wait to be in ministry with the laity and



GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

The Relay encourages clergy and laity alike to share their experiences in their own words of adapting ministries and how that adaptability shines the light on others in the new section, "Go Tell it on the Mountain." Do you have Good News to tell? Contact Heather Mistretta at hmistretta@gnjumc.org.

Keep On Keeping On!

By Alyssa Ruch, co-director of The Maker's Place

After a very busy summer of distributing about 22,000 diapers in the month of June alone, I wanted to formally and officially introduce myself now that I have joined the Maker's Place team! Most of you don't know me, and that's okay. I am new to the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and I am new to the lovely state of New Jersey. However, there are a few important things that you should know about me:

- I am a certified deacon candidate in The United Methodist Church, which means I feel strongly about social justice matters, acting from a space of compassion, and building bridges based on equitable relationships with people of diverse backgrounds.
- I am a certified movement chaplain. I have a heart for empathic listening and feel passionately about journeying alongside and with others as a way of offering emotional and spiritual accompaniment and support to people struggling in different areas of life and those working for social change.
- Most importantly, I am committed to the mission and work of The Maker's Place, "to seek out where God is already at work, and then help catalyze an abundant community for all God's children, especially those living in economic poverty."



LEFT: Alyssa and Lori, board member and volunteer, at the Maker's Place distribution location at Unity Square (formerly Columbus Park) with their partners at the Capital YMCA talking with a family.; ABOVE: Alyssa and Hava, community volunteer, at the Maker's Place distribution location at Wesley UMC talking with a mom.

It's important for you to know that myself along with Callie Crowder (our other co-director) have been working hard to continue the good works of The Maker's Place while introducing some new ideas of our own. We are excited to continue to manage this growing organization, as we continue to add new programs, connect with new community members, and

move into new spaces for ministry and social services.

God is already at work in our midst, and new beginnings await! Keep an eye out for our National Diaper Need Awareness Week (9.29.21 – 10.3.21) and our table at the IGNITE Conference!

While I get my bearings in this new position, I invite you to reach out to me

and introduce yourself, tell me why The Maker's Place is important to you, or how The Maker's Place has impacted your life. Also, if you are interested in getting involved through a diaper drive, a fundraiser, bundling event, or something new, please let us know!

Send me an email at alysraruch@makersplace.org. I want to hear from you as we continue on this journey toward abundant community together! Read more about our new leadership on our website, www.makersplace.org!

ASBURY UMC: LIFTING HEARTS AND HOPE

By Kirk Jones, Lay Leader

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, located on the east side of Camden, NJ, has been committed to serving the community through various community engaging and outreach programs.

Upon the arrival of Pastor Edwin Lavalley in July 2020, the church quickly continued the mission of "Lifting Hearts and Hope" by embarking on an evangelism campaign in the community working with other local churches, neighbors and business partners to expand the gospel of Christ.

The church remained committed to serving the community through food outreach of the "Peoples Table" by taking the message and meals of love to the people of Camden in the heart of the downtown, the transportation district.

With the leadership of Sister Betty Lavalley, Mary Weekes and Dorothy Mfon, Asbury UMC has been able to serve more than a thousand meals to the people of Camden from August 2020 to this date.

In June to celebrate Father's Day, the men of Asbury, led by Pastor Lavalley, Ezekiel Mfon and Edmund Vincent, organized a cookout to serve the community and spread the word of a risen savior Jesus Christ.

A new Asbury member, Sister Trina Munford has indelibly made an positive impression on everyone as an evangelism coordinator and outreach specialist. The Father's Day cookout served more than 200 members of the community.

Asbury UMC will continue to be a beacon of light and nourishment through community outreach and sharing the good news of Christ, shining at the east side of the city while it actively responds to God's call to holy living in the world. 🇺🇸



Everyone in Camden is welcome to the table at Asbury UMC.

AUGUST BOOKSHELF

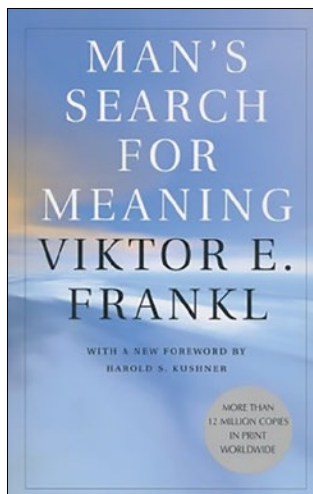
This month we are stressing the importance of getting healthy in mind, body and spirit! It's up to you what makes you healthy! Discover the varied selection of books below that touch on life's meaning, overcoming grief, the power of liturgies, learning from history and more.

Man's Search for Meaning

(2006, Beacon Press) By Viktor Frankl

Man's Search for Meaning is the memoir of Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl who chronicles his life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Between 1942 and 1945 Frankl labored in four different camps, including Auschwitz, while his parents, brother and pregnant wife perished. Based on his own experience and the experiences of others he treated later in his practice, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it and move forward with renewed purpose. Frankl's theory—known as logotherapy, from the Greek word logos ("meaning")—holds that our primary drive in life is not pleasure, as Freud maintained, but the discovery and pursuit of what we personally find meaningful. A 1991 reader survey for the Library of Congress that asked readers to name a "book that made a difference in your life" found *Man's Search for Meaning* among the 10 most influential books in America.

Viktor E. Frankl was professor of neurology and psychiatry at the University of Vienna Medical School until his death in 1997. His 29 books have been translated into 21 languages. During World War II, he spent three years in Auschwitz, Dachau and other concentration camps.

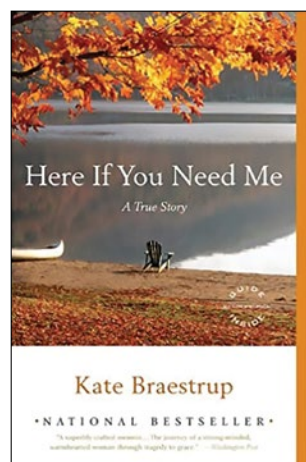
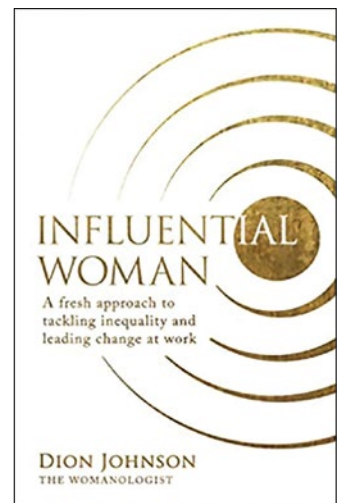


Influential Woman: A Fresh Approach to Tackling Inequality and Leading Change at Work

(2020, Hay House) By Dion Johnson

Influential Woman offers a development framework for senior leaders who want to initiate hard change without sabotaging their health or self-esteem. Dion Johnson has excelled in her field as a black woman in a white man's world; facially disfigured in a beauty-obsessed world; a devoted Christian in a secular world. She knows first-hand how unequal the system can be. In 2013, Dion, led by God, began challenging women leaders to respond to the call to show up, speak up and shake things up in their industry. Since then, she has served passionately as a strategic ally supporting women to evolve, rise above leadership challenges, and be more influential in their role.

Dion Johnson, known as the "Womanologist," creates exclusive opportunities for women in senior leadership to invest in their ongoing personal and professional development. She calls herself a woman in a man's world, a black woman in a white man's world and a Christian in a secular world. Johnson was also born with a pronounced facial disfigurement and spent a lot of time in hospital having corrective surgery. At the age of four she was gifted an artificial eye and dark glasses.



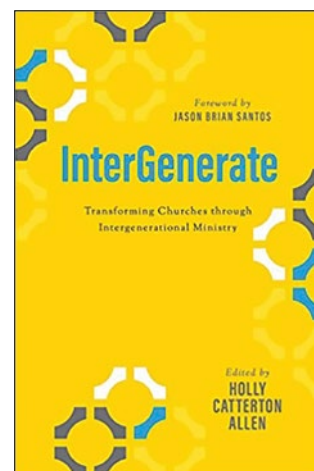
Here If You Need Me: A True Story

(2008, Back Bay Books) by Kate Braestrup

Here if You Need Me is the story of Kate Braestrup's remarkable journey from grief to faith to happiness. Ten years ago, Kate Braestrup and her husband Drew were enjoying the life they shared together. They had four young children, and Drew, a Maine state trooper, would soon begin training to become a minister as well. Then early one morning Drew left for work and an oncoming driver lost control, and Kate lost her husband. Stunned and grieving, Kate decided to continue her husband's dream and became a minister herself. And in that capacity, she found a most unusual mission: serving as the minister on search and rescue missions in the Maine woods,

giving comfort to people whose loved ones are missing, and to the wardens who sometimes have to deal with awful outcomes. Braestrup provides solace, understanding and spiritual guidance when it's needed most. It is an uplifting account about finding God through helping others, and the tale of the small miracles that occur every day when life and love are restored.

Kate Braestrup is a community minister, law enforcement chaplain, and the author of *Marriage and Other Acts of Charity* and *Beginner's Grace: Bringing Prayer to Life*.



InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry

(2018, Abilene Christian University Press)

by Holly Catterton Allen (Author), Jason Brian Santos (Foreword)

InterGenerate addresses important questions of why we should bring the generations back together, but even more significantly, how we can bring generations back together. In this edited collection, ministers, church leaders and Christian educators will find valuable, new generational theory perspectives, fresh biblical and theological insights and practical outcomes backed by current research.

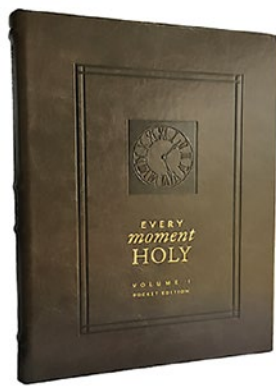
Holly Catterton Allen is professor of family science and Christian ministries at Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN, where she holds a joint appointment in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Bible and Ministry. She teaches undergraduate courses such as Nurturing Spiritual Development in Children and Family Ministry and has previously taught at John Brown University, Biola University and Abilene Christian University.

Every Moment Holy

(2020, Cokesbury) by Bustard Ned, McKelvey Douglas

Every Moment Holy, available in a pocket-size edition, includes all the liturgies from the Volume I hardcover edition plus a new liturgy from the forthcoming book featuring liturgies for seasons of dying and mourning. There are over 100 liturgies for daily life (including liturgies for meals).

Ned Bustard is the graphic designer, children's book illustrator, author and a printmaker. Some of the books he has written, illustrated, or edited include *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God*, *Squalls Before War: His Majesty's Schooner Sultana*, *History of Art: Creation to Contemporary*, *Bible History ABCs*, *Bigger on the Inside: Christianity and Doctor Who*, *A Book for Hearts & Minds: What You Should Read and Why*, *On Reading Well*, and *Revealed: A Storybook Bible for Grown-Ups*.

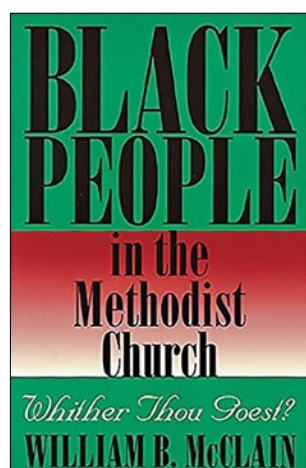
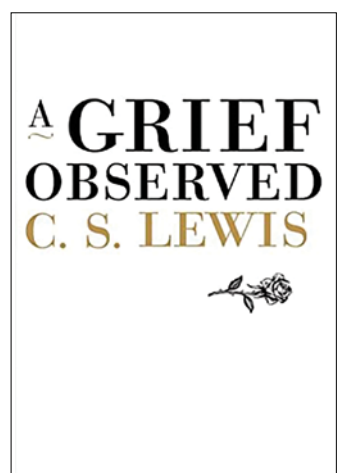


A Grief Observed

(2009, HarperOne) by C.S. Lewis

A Grief Observed is C.S. Lewis's honest reflection on the fundamental issues of life, death and faith in the midst of loss. Written after his wife's tragic death as a way of surviving the "mad midnight moments," this book observed a truthful account of how loss can lead even a stalwart believer to lose all sense of meaning in the universe, and the inspirational tale of how he can possibly regain his bearings.

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) was one of the intellectual giants of the 20th century and arguably one of the most influential writers of his day. He was a fellow and tutor in English Literature at Oxford University until 1954, when he was unanimously elected to the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University, a position he held until his retirement. He wrote more than 30 books, and his works continue to attract thousands of new readers every year. His most distinguished and popular accomplishments include *Out of the Silent Planet*, *The Great Divorce*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.



Black People in the Methodist Church

(1985, Abingdon Press) by William B. McClain

Black People in the Methodist Church is a fascinating and insightful account of one segment of Methodism's complex history. The early circuit riders, abolitionists, John Wesley himself, Harry Hoosier, John Stewart and Harry Evans are all featured. The book features a unique account of the struggles within United Methodism, the "uniting" conference of 1939, and the setbacks that forced a segregated faction to rise from its ashes.

William B. McClain, who died last November, was a Professor Emeritus of Wesley Seminary, in Washington, D.C., where he taught preaching and worship to thousands of students over 34 years. A celebrated, prophetic preacher himself, he also authored several books, advocated prominently for social justice and civil rights and served as lead pastor of several historic United Methodist churches, including Tindley Temple UMC in Philadelphia.



Health Journal for Women: Christian Health and Food Diary with Bible Verses, Christian Gifts for Women

(2020) Living His Story Designs

Health Journal For Women is a journal that will help to keep your spiritual, mental and physical areas of your life in balance, which is the key to longevity and health. As a bonus, in the back of the book you can find healing coloring pages—they will help you to relax and meditate on the Word of God concerning healing. This journal can also serve as a recovery tool, for you, or someone you know.

JOB POSTINGS AT GNJ CHURCHES

West Park UMC – Technology Director

- Must have previous training and experience in the use of audiovisual equipment and the latest technology
- Efficient with the use of PC and Mac based computers as well as audio visual programs
- Assist in the scheduling and production of Sunday services, streaming, podcasts, social media, interviews and other technology uses
- Coordinate technology needs, train new volunteers, maintain and coordinate equipment installs
- Be involved with the Pastors for "Digital Discipleship"
- 20-25 hours per week, can change with busy season

West Park UMC – Director of Children's Ministries

- Degree in Education, Biblical Studies or related field preferred but not required
- Direct all Vacation Bible School activities and follow-up program Lead "Children's Church" at most Sunday services
- Participate in community outreach events that will include families
- Recruit, train and develop leaders/volunteers to participate in Children's ministries
- Prepare a budget for Children's Ministries
- 18-20 hours per week, which can vary during busy seasons

Interested applicants for either job should send their resume to westparkumc40@gmail.com or fax to (856) 451 -9525.

Frankford Plains UMC – Organist

Qualified individuals should be available Sunday mornings, have a background in or experience playing religious hymns, and the ability to work cooperatively with the pastor on music selection as well as lead songs during worship. Preference given to individuals who are also willing to play the piano when necessary.

Frankford Plains UMC – Sunday School Superintendent

Qualified individuals should be available Sunday mornings, have a background in or experience working with children of various ages, and appropriate religious knowledge of the United Methodist faith and teachings. Requirements include coordination and implementation of curriculum, preparation and teaching of lessons, and direction of special events, all in accordance with Safe Sanctuary training and requirements.

Compensation to be discussed. Please send letter of interest to frankfordplainschurch@gmail.com or 99 Plains Road, Augusta NJ 07822.

Trinity UMC – Hackettstown

Position vacancies include the following:

- E-commerce and Thriftshop Assistant
- Director of High School Ministry
- Director of Middle School Ministry
- Director of Children's Ministry
- KidVenture – Assistant Director Position
- Worship Arts Coordinator

For more details, go to www.catchthespirit.org/job-opportunities/ or call 908-852-3020.

Park UMC – Director of Music

Park UMC seeks to hire a Director of Music to oversee the planning, organization, and execution of music ministry for the church. The Director will lead worship through a diverse range of musical expression, from traditional church hymns to contemporary music representing musical styles from around the globe. The right candidate will be able to seek out and recruit church members and other individuals with musical talents who are willing to share those talents at Park Church. The Director of Music works directly with the pastors(s), staff, musicians, and volunteers, in a team approach, to provide a high-level worship experience. This is a part-time salaried position with an average weekly expectation of 12-15 hours per week. Salary is \$15,000 – \$20,000 (annually); negotiable based on experience. Additional payment for weddings/funerals. Continuing education stipend of \$400.00 annually.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and list of three references. If you have a particular interest or experience in working with children and youth ministries, please note this in your cover letter. Your resume should include a list of instrumental and vocal skills. If possible, materials should be submitted via email to parkumc.park@verizon.net. Position is available immediately. Candidates will be considered on a rolling basis.

Atlantic Highlands Navesink UMC – Audio/Visual Coordinator

This position is under the general supervision of the clergy and is responsible for the oversight, direction, and function of all audio, video and streaming systems. Knowledge of PTZ cameras, video switchers, live streaming platforms, media presentation software, and audio/video production required. Approximately five hours a week on Sunday mornings. Please send letter of intent to AHNUMNOffice2@gmail.com

Atlantic Highlands Navesink UMC – Music and Creative Arts Director

Approximately 15 hours a week to prepare, play and sing for all worship services. Please email AHNUMNOffice2@gmail.com

If you would like to receive your Relay online only, please let us know!

ADJOURNED SESSION | 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FORWARD

In everything, acknowledge God, who makes straight our paths. - Proverbs 3:6

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 21-23	Southern Region (that ROCKS) Pastor's Retreat at Sandy Cove in Maryland. All clergy are welcome.
October 1-3	IGNITE Conference (Wildwoods Convention Center)
October 3	World Communion Sunday
October 14	Adjourned Session of the Annual Conference
October 16	GNJ UMW's Fall Meeting
October 17	Laity Sunday
November 28	United Methodist Student Day
June 18-25, 2022	Joshua Generation Civil Rights Pilgrimage

To order the 2021 Annual Conference Journal for retirees, visit www.gnjumc.org/2021-retiree-journal-form/. For all others, visit www.gnjumc.org/2021-annual-conference-journal-order-form/.

OBITUARIES

Rev. Robert Olyn Bryant, retired elder, died June 18. A memorial service will be held Sept. 25 at 2:00 p.m. at Whiting UMC, 55 Lacey Rd., Whiting, NJ 08759. Memorial donations can be sent to a charitable organization of your choice in memory of Rev. Robert Olyn Bryant. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to: James A. Bryant (son) at 17 Crane Avenue, W. Caldwell, NJ 07006.

Rev. Roy E. Bundy, retired local pastor formerly of St. John's UMC Fordville, died July 28. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to Cynthia Bundy (wife) at 7360 Pleasant Avenue, Pennsauken, NJ 08110.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Missions Coordinator, Chandi Ankrum, at Tabernacle Erma in Cape May decided to have an "Undie Sunday" during a July worship service. Her goal was to collect underwear for local help centers. A trunk load of about 627 items were distributed among a local woman's anti-abuse center; a warming center that serves homeless men and women, mostly veterans; and Cape May County Social Services.

Each month we will highlight one photo sent in from our congregations that really exemplifies the wonderful ministries they are doing. If you would like to submit a photo, please email Heather Mistretta at hmistretta@gnjumc.org.



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