



The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

New Disciples • Vital Congregations • Transformed World

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1 John 5:4

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

Romans 12:21

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Good people of faith are overcome with grief.

We are overcome as we hear the cries of the people in Las Vegas where a shooter has killed dozens of people and wounded hundreds more. We are overcome by news of the more than 3 million people in Puerto Rico who are struggling for food and water after Hurricane Maria. We are overcome by the need to help rebuild homes in Florida and Texas that were flooded in September. We are overcome by the helplessness we feel in the aftermath of the earthquakes that hit Mexico, war in Bangladesh and Syria and mudslides in Sierra Leone.

I call upon all of us to pray for the victims and their families and the people of Las Vegas. They need our prayers and our support. It will take years to heal. I call upon you to continue to pray for those affected by the hurricanes, fires, earthquakes, war and other disasters. Their recovery will take years as well.

We overcome tragedy and evil with good.

On Tuesday, Samuel Perez, a member of Bishop Janes UMC, and a board member of Next Gen Ministries is headed to Puerto Rico. The Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Puerto Rico, Bishop Hector Ortiz, will meet him at the airport to receive a check for \$50,000 from Greater New Jersey, part of the initial response we have received for hurricane relief in Puerto Rico. More than 15 GNJ pastors are from Puerto Rico and have family that are struggling on the island. Hundreds of our laity have family there.

UMCOR organizes United Methodists on the ground to provide relief in the immediate aftermath of tragedy and to stay on the ground helping for as long as the need is present. When people hurt, United Methodists help. Volunteer teams from our churches are preparing to deploy to Florida and Texas to help rebuild. UMCOR is on the ground in Mexico, Sierra Leone and Bangladesh organizing relief efforts. United Methodists in western U.S. conferences are responding to the devastating forest fires.

To date, the people of Greater New Jersey have raised more than \$200,000 for UMCOR's hurricane relief efforts.

I encourage you to claim the victory of the Risen Lord and your faith to overcome all that overwhelms us. I encourage you to use the power of prayer to help heal those who are hurting and experiencing unimaginable loss. I encourage you to nurture the faith of our youth as a sign of our faith in the future.

We are born of God.

This past weekend, 1,350 young people and their youth pastors joined together to celebrate their faith and journey on their path to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior at the IGNITE 2017 conference. Worshipping with these young people and witnessing their faith in action is to fully realize that we can overcome this world; that there is victory in Christ.

In the face of tragedy and sometimes evil, we overcome with good being born of God. Let us all continue to pray and also do good works that the world, in the midst of tragedy, will see the goodness of Christ in and through us.

I also encourage you to care for yourself by doing all the good you can and staying in love with God.

Keep the faith!

John Schol

John Schol, Bishop
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey