

The REPORTER

Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church www.umcnic.org



From the Bishop: A time to declutter?

Few people do “spring cleaning” anymore. In case you’ve never heard of it, it was the practice of thoroughly cleaning a house in the springtime. Its history is debated but in most cultures, spring was a time of new beginnings which called for the cleaning out of the old.

The origins of spring cleaning are thought to go back to the Iranian Norouz, the Persian New Year, which falls on the first day of spring. Iranians practice “khooneh tekouni” which literally means “shaking the house” before the New Year begins. Scotland and Japan also have “New Year’s cleaning” on December 31.

In northern climates, whether in caves, huts, teepees, sod houses, wooden or brick structures, spring cleaning meant that you had to have enough light and warmth to take draperies and rugs and even mattresses outside in order to clean them. You had to open the windows and the doors to let a fresh breeze blow out the stuffiness and let in more light which is always good for cleaning!

Traditionally the Church had a thorough cleaning of the altar and everything associated with it on Maundy Thursday.

Which brings me to my point. Have you looked around your church building lately? Do you have a lot of clutter? Do you have rooms that you don’t use much any more and they have become clutter magnets, collecting every old thing brought into or made in the church? Take a look at the backside of the pulpit. Could you do an archeological dig of every children’s sermon in the last year (or more)?

Just like Jesus “cleaning the temple,” I can tell you stories about cleaning out storage areas in a church only to be met with harsh criticism. “You threw away what?” Whatever it was, we hadn’t used it in years. One particular thing that really upset an elderly

woman in the church was so faded you could hardly recognize what it was. My husband threw away a raggedy cardboard donkey (who hadn’t gotten the lead in a Christmas play or Palm Sunday parade for years) and he got a real dressing down! People don’t always like you to mess with their clutter!

But it is all worth it! You see, when we have a lot of clutter around our churches, especially in public spaces for all to see (not just new people or visitors), it says that we live in the past, not in the future. We’re hanging onto stuff that we don’t need and in fact keeps us from being free, nimble, and even new. Our old stuff is more important than dreaming and creating fresh expressions of being church, telling the story, and living unencumbered by all the old.

De-cluttering our buildings from literal papers, props and stuff may actually help us de-clutter some other things like old hurts, “we’ve always done it that way” excuses, and too much looking back and inward instead of looking forward and outward. We could all really use some spring cleaning in our hearts, minds, and relationships!

There’s a meme on Facebook that says: “Instead of giving up sweets for Lent, give up clutter! Each day fill a bag (any size) with things that you no longer need/use and donate to charity.” It might be a little late to do the full Lenten practice but even if you just do it for a few weeks or Holy Week—at church and in your own life—you might find the de-cluttering of your house, church, heart and soul.

God is always seeking to do a new thing in us and through us. Give God some space to work, open the windows and doors of your life for fresh breezes and more light, beginning in your building and moving into your heart and mind.

Enough for now, I’ve got some de-cluttering to do. What about you?

Outpouring of support for Ottawa



Several EF3 tornadoes left a trail of destruction through north-central Illinois on Feb. 28. Photo courtesy Timothy Hortsman

When an EF3 tornado barreled through the small communities of Ottawa and Naplate in north-central Illinois on Feb. 28, there was an immediate response to help from United Methodists.

The Rev. Cheri Stewart of Ottawa’s First United Methodist Church says it’s never more evident that the church really is a compassionately caring Christian community than when there’s a tragedy.

“Ever since the tornadoes struck, I’ve seen that caring compassion expressed in four simple words, ‘how can I help?’,” said Stewart.

She said the night of the tornado youth from Ottawa FUMC sent her texts asking ‘how they could help’. The next morning



Youth and adult volunteers from First UMC in Ottawa grab rakes and garbage bags to clean up yards of downed trees and debris.

Dwayne Jackson, NIC Director of Risk Management, called the church asking ‘how he could help’. Soon after the Rev. Laura Wilson Underwood from neighboring Morris UMC called asking the very same question: ‘how can I help?’

NIC disaster coordinator, the Rev. Christina Vosteen emailed the churches asking ‘how she could help’ and by the end of that first day after the tornado many NIC clergy, active and retired, had reached out to Stewart each asking: ‘How can I help?’”

“All these offers to help and I had no idea what to say to them,” said Stewart whose church was also in the midst of organizing two funerals (not related to the tornadoes). “All I knew was no one was getting in or out of affected areas without identification

(continued on page 3, see Ottawa)

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Look Inside . . .

Light Shines Through...

178th Northern Illinois Annual Conference
Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL
June 4-6, 2017

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Tornado damages Iowa church, pipe organ

By Arthur McClanahan

March 6 was an active weather night across Iowa. A round of heavy thunderstorms and lightning rolled west to east across the state along with gusts of damaging wind. Funnel clouds were observed well off the interstate. Hail struck homes and cars.

Shortly after 10 p.m. things changed drastically in Muscatine. A tornado touched down, demolishing businesses, taking the roof off an apartment house, and lifting and dropping the heating/cooling unit atop the Family Life Center of Wesley United Methodist Church. That led to serious water damage. By far the most serious impact of the storm took place across the street when part of the roof of the more than century-old sanctuary of Wesley UMC flew off and the ensuing high-speed wind collapsed the 5200 pipe Casavant organ. Some of the pipes were as big as 32 feet long.

“We think this all happened about 10:10 p.m.,” said Katie Roquet, Wesley’s director of media ministries. “My husband and I first got a text message from church members who live across the alleyway from the church. I remember being on the phone with the head of our trustees wondering, ‘what is the damage like...how bad is it...what do you see?’ and he said, ‘I don’t even know how to tell you.’”

Debris was scattered on the road outside the church. Roquet reports that she and her husband, Eric, who is

Wesley’s celebration worship leader, “were glad we brought our truck to get down there.” They and others found it difficult to get into the building, and once they did get in they were shocked. “We came down here not knowing what it was going to be like and wanting to salvage as much as we could. When we walked in here everyone was quiet...it was just still...eerily so...there were no lights.”

Roquet described the damage they saw. “We think that there was a chimney back there...the wind took that down, blew off that section of the roof, and the organ just collapsed and shattered everywhere.” Yet, amazingly, “we didn’t see a lot of damage in other places and the stained-glass windows seem to be OK.”

Even with the catastrophic damage to the Casavant organ, grand piano, and contemporary band instruments buried on the altar platform under the roughly scattered pipes, the focus of the Wesley UMC community is outside the sanctuary walls.

“Right now, we’re trying to become a communication hub between all the volunteers contacting us wanting to help and the individual home owners who need the help,” Roquet said.

“We’ve felt a huge outpouring of love and support from the community from all the people who reached out and wanted to help the church,”

Roquet added, and “that’s amazing to me!”

Even in the midst of their sadness, Roquet said, “we’re hopeful because we’re seeing so many people come and want to help in any way they can. And that’s amazing because that’s what the church is for.”

In short, despite the significant damage from the March 6 tornado that tore through part of Muscatine, Iowa, the people of Wesley United Methodist Church are committed to “getting out of the walls and making a difference.”



From the Cover: Ottawa

of their residence. All we knew was truck and truck after truck...utility after utility truck, garbage trucks, insurance company trucks and city trucks and the police were everywhere to help and secure access to the affected areas. It was chaos, really.”

Fortunately, none of the churches or parsonages of the three UMC churches, First, Epworth and Evangelical, sustained substantial damage even though the twister narrowly missed their properties. Epworth UMC’s Rev. Carolyn Lukasick says they were very fortunate to suffer nothing more than hail damage to their roof, however, they had to cancel Ash Wednesday’s service and supper since the church lost power.

When the sun rose the day after the storm, help began to pour in. Church members young and old stepped up to assist their neighbors with meals, caring cards from children, youth-led cleanup and a spiritual support table at the Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC).

Stewart says the FUMC’s youth group raked and helped clean up several yards of fallen trees and debris on the Sunday after the tornado.

“The youngest member of the group that day was Reily who at supper that night showed me two rocks he’d found while helping that afternoon,” said Stewart. “Reily told me that he picked up the rocks to help him remember how they had helped!”

Even though First UMC had back to back funeral dinners at the church following the tornado, Stewart says there were no questions asked to help support the United Church of Christ in Ottawa, which was preparing 200 meals a day for the victims. “Our kitchen crew said ‘absolutely we can help’ and we provided and delivered the meal Monday night giving our UCC neighbors a break from their responsibilities.”

Epworth members collected supplies for the local resource center and assisted an older couple in the church who lost a sunroom addition and garage.

“They came to church the following Sunday expressing how fortunate they were,” said Lukasick. “Our Lenten focus this year will be less reflection and more about how we can BE the church for our community at this time.”

Bishop Sally Dyck and DeKalb District Superintendent

Young-Mee Park visited all three Ottawa churches during the following Sunday morning services to offer a message of hope, prayers and support.

“Warm thanks to all who were willing to help out on such a short notice,” said Park. “It was possible only thanks to our connection and willingness of our pastors to help out.”

Park said 15 pastors (14 from DeKalb District, one from Aurora) volunteered their time to fill all the shifts covering 15 hours over two days at the MARC. At that event, at least 40 people stopped by the table and they prayed with at least 10 different people.

“No other churches could do it, but us, the UMC, thanks to our strong connection,” said Park. “I think our presence in the MARC with the mission of providing ‘Spiritual Support’ was a witness and ministry in itself.”

Stewart says one of the last clients they saw at the MARC was a mom and a daughter.

“When the mom came through she asked us to pray for her daughter whose home in Naplate had a lot of damage,” said Stewart. “The ERT crew from Morris UMC, which had come to volunteer and at first was turned away, was an answer to our prayer.”

Stewart says minutes after the connection was made the ERT crew was able to help with debris removal at the daughter’s home as soon as they are able to get a dumpster.

“We witnessed so many UMC connections, so much help and so much caring compassion being shown to the people of Ottawa and Naplate,” said Stewart. “We’re grateful to be a part of the UMC connection.”

Volunteers

The North Central Illinois Council of Governments (NCICG) says volunteers are no longer needed. Assistance in long-term recovery efforts may be possible in the future.

Donations:

The Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services is accepting relief donations on behalf of the Ottawa/Naplate Recovery Assistance Effort. Anyone wanting to donate items following the tornado must call 815-433-0798 and receive an authorization number. Please also call before purchasing any items so that they may coordinate on what

items are still needed.

For those who would like to make a monetary donation, you may contribute to the NIC Advance for Disaster Response. Checks can be made out to Northern Illinois Conference, memo: **Advance #50000148**

Mail to: Northern Illinois Conference
PO Box 5646, Carol Stream, IL 60197-5646

For the latest updates and information on how you can help, visit the NIC Disaster Response Facebook page.



Rev. Paul Judd of First UMC DeKalb and Rev. Sandy Smith of Earlville UMC joined more than a dozen other pastors to volunteer at the Multi-Agency Resource Center in Ottawa.



Bishop Sally Dyck visited all three United Methodist Churches in Ottawa on the Sunday after the tornadoes to offer a message of hope and healing.

Light Shines Through...178th Annual Conference June 4-6, 2017

Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL

Registration Opens

Registration for the 2017 Annual Conference session of the Northern Illinois Conference opens April 6, visit www.umcnic.org/AC2017. The early bird cost is \$80 through April 28. The cost increases to \$95 from April 29-May 19. The onsite cost is \$130. Rooms at Pheasant Run Resort must be reserved by May 10 to receive the conference rate at \$119 plus tax.

Childcare

Certified childcare will be available for those attending the Annual Conference at no cost. May 19 will be the last day to register and June 1 is the last day to cancel. No shows will be billed for the actual cost of the service for the day (approximately \$20 an hour)

Display Table Information

Display tables which celebrate our connectional ministries will be set up in the St. Charles Ballroom in conjunction with the Cokesbury Bookstore in the same space on Monday, June 5 and Tuesday, June 6.

Deadline to apply for space is May 19. The cost is \$25 per table and \$45 for a table with electrical hook-up.

For online applications visit www.umcnic.org/AC2017 select Display Table tab.

Accessibility Coordinator

Our onsite Accessibility Coordinator will be present to help coordinate with any needs (vision, movement, hearing, etc.) we may have. Please be sure to indicate when registering how we can extend welcome and hospitality to you during Annual Conference.

Volunteers Needed

If you are interested in ushering, greeting or volunteering during plenaries and worship services, email Alka Lyall at pastoralkalyall@gmail.com.

Journal and Directory

Sales will be separate from Annual Conference registration. A link will be available to purchase online when both are complete and published in the fall. Both will be available to download for free on the conference website.

Meals at Annual Conference

All meal reservations must be completed by 5/19, as they are not available onsite. Buffet meals will be served at every meal time on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. "Invitation" meals are listed for planning purposes and not be included in registration.

*Prices and more information on meals will be available through registration on the web.

Blueprint for Wellness Screenings

Blueprint for Wellness Screenings will be held at Annual Conference on Monday and Tuesday (June 5 & 6) from 7 a.m. - 10 a.m. in the Ruby Room (Tower 2nd floor). For more info and pre-registration visit www.wespath.org and log in to your "HealthFlex/WebMd" account.

Agenda *subject to change

Sunday, June 4

- 1 - 3 p.m. Registration
- 1:00 p.m. Coat Room Open for Clergy Robes
- 2 - 3 p.m. New Member Orientation
- 2:00 p.m. Ordination Rehearsal - Mega Center
- 2 - 7 p.m. Youth Session
- 3:00 p.m. Deadline for Submitting Removal from Consent Calendar Petitions
- 3:00 p.m. Clergy Line-Up for Ordination - St. Charles II,V,VI
- 4:00 p.m. Ordination - Mega Center Reception to Follow - St. Charles II,V,VI
- 7:00 p.m. Celebration Dinner Buffet - New Orleans Ballroom Hispanic Latino Dinner

Monday, June 5

- 6:30 - 8 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:30 a.m. Opening Plenary - Mega Center
- 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. UMM Prayer Line - Topaz Room
- 9:00 a.m. Bible Study - Mega Center
- 10:00 a.m. Episcopal Address - Mega Center Organizational Task Force Presentation
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch Retired Clergy Association Rainbow Covenant/Global Ministries Order of Deacons GETS
- 1:30 p.m. Retirement Service - Mega Center
- 3:45 p.m. Plenary 2 - Mega Center
- 5:15 p.m. Dinner RMN/MFSA
- 7 - 9:00 p.m. Plenary 3 - Mega Center

Tuesday, June 6

- 6:30 - 8 a.m. Breakfast United Voices for Children North Central College
- 8:00 a.m. Plenary 4 - Mega Center
- 9:00 a.m. Bible Study- Mega Center
- 10:00 a.m. Memorial Service - Mega Center
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch UM Foundation Extension Ministry Local Pastors Older Adult Ministries
- 1:30 p.m. Plenary 5 - Mega Center
- 3:45 p.m. Plenary 6 - Mega Center
- 5:00 p.m. Adjournment

NIC Clergy Day Apart/ Clergy Annual Conference Session



Mike McHargue

A day planned by the Board of Ordained Ministry for fellowship, renewal, education and business.

Tuesday, May 23

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location: Barrington UMC, 98 Algonquin Rd., Barrington, IL

The morning will include worship and a keynote address by Science Mike McHargue, author of the book *Finding God in the Waves* and host of the podcast Science Mike and The Liturgists. You can learn more about Mike at: www.mikemchargue.com.

The afternoon will include the annual clergy session (held apart from the June meeting). Watch for more information regarding the Clergy Session registration coming soon.

Mission Challenge



This year's mission challenge at Annual Conference will be to collect bulk items for Dignity Kits for the Midwest Mission Distribution Center, our United Methodist disaster relief supply center just south of Springfield, Ill. See below the assigned donations by district.

- Aurora: Hand Towels/1,500 • Washcloths/1,500
- Chicago Northwestern: Nail Clipper Sets/1,500 • Razors (individually wrapped)/750
- Chicago Southern: Combs/1,500 • Shampoo/Conditioner (4 oz.)/750
- DeKalb: Deodorant (2 oz.)/1,500 • Shampoo/Conditioner (4 oz.)/750
- Elgin: Toothbrush/ 1,500 • Toothpaste 2.5 oz or larger/1,500
- Rockford: Bar Soap (3-4 oz.)/1,500 • Razors (individually wrapped)/750

All items are available through Dollar Tree online except the washcloths (currently only available in the store). The trailer from the distribution center will be outside the MegaCenter on Sunday afternoon and through the day on Monday.



Dr. Marcia McFee

AC Worship Leader - Marcia McFee

The 2017 Annual Conference worship committee is pleased to announce Dr. Marcia McFee as this year's worship leader.

Dr. McFee is an author, worship designer and leader, professor, preacher and artist.

Her engaging and interactive style has been called "refreshing," "inspiring," and "unforgettable." Marcia combines her background and experience in professional companies of music, theater and dance with a variety

of worship and preaching styles in order to bring a fresh experience of the Gospel to each worship setting. Marcia has provided worship design and leadership at numerous international and regional gatherings.

Marcia's passion for helping the church to worship God fully is especially directed toward the education of local congregations. She travels extensively in order to teach regional workshops that are accessible to congregational leaders and worship teams. These one-day workshops are usually hosted by a church, underwritten by district or

conference bodies or by registration fees, and open to all churches in a particular area. Participants have commented that these workshops are inspirational as well as practical, no matter the "style" of worship practiced or denomination of the participants. Additionally, Marcia has begun a program of continuing education events in her home town of Lake Tahoe and an online subscription service to Worship Design Studio that offers inspirational and educational help for worship teams featuring a ground-breaking worship design application.

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The Northern Illinois Conference HIV/AIDS Task Force is deeply grateful that Bishop Sally Dyck chose the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund (UMGAF) as the recipient of the Bishop's Appeal for 2017. Each congregation is asked to take a special offering or to do some type of special fundraising to help support the appeal.

In years past, the Bishop's Appeal has raised \$45,000 and greater for the causes selected. Bishop Dyck offers the Northern Illinois Conference an opportunity to make a significant difference in our world including the NIC by selecting the UMGAF. Twenty-five percent of the funds donated may be retained in the annual conference for local projects.

The World Health Organization, WHO, reports that 36.7 million people are infected with HIV. Nearly half of those who are infected are women. The UMGAF assists 287

projects in 44 countries. The goals of the UMGAF are: the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; the prevention of HIV in young people and high-risk populations; increased access to HIV counseling, testing, and treatment services; stigma reduction and psychosocial support to people living with HIV.

At the 1995 Annual Conference, the Rev. Todd Singley preached a powerful sermon. Rev. Singley, himself a person with AIDS, said, "As the church is feebly struggling to respond to the AIDS crisis, we have to acknowledge the complex issues, the misunderstandings, the apprehensions and fear that are realities surrounding the crisis we face together. I have hope for a cure for this disease, and I hold on to a hope for the healing of our church. AIDS presents to the church a crisis of faith; as great as it is, a crisis of health. I have hope that God is at work within the body of Christ, even now, that as we are touched with tenderness and Christ-like compassion for the sick and for the dying, may be transformed by love for the living."

Twenty-two years later we continue to hold on to a hope for healing for our church and cure for those with HIV/AIDS.

UMGAF is seeking a total of \$50,000 in support for 2017. Can we, the Northern Illinois Conference, step up to make sure the UMGAF is fully supported and funded through

the Bishop's Appeal? The NIC HIV/AIDS Task Force believes this is more than achievable when we all work together. Bishop Dyck gives us an opportunity to respond to this continuing global crisis. There are many ways to support the Bishop's Appeal. There are many educational resources available on the NIC website, GBGM website, and many others.

According to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, over 43,000 people in Illinois are living with HIV/AIDS. The majority of those persons live within the boundaries of the Northern Illinois Conference. HIV/AIDS is both global and local. Your giving to the Bishop's Appeal for the 2017 annual conference session helps both those who are far away and those who are close to home.

Please make sure to indicate UMGAF's Advance Special number #982345 on your contributions whether made at the annual conference session or at another time.

Please act courageously, give generously, and love boldly that we can help put an end to a disease which continues to devastate families, communities, and countries. For more information and resources visit:

www.umcnic.org/bishopsappeal.

With hope for a cure,
NIC HIV/AIDS Task Force

Task force hears feedback on conference restructuring

The Organizational Task Force thanks the clergy and laity who provided helpful input at the three listening sessions held across the conference in March to discuss restructuring plans for the Northern Illinois Conference.

Following legislation passed at the 2016 Annual Conference, the Organizational Task Force began meeting last September to look at ways to align resources and mission, streamline the work of conference committees and create an intersection between administrative, program and superintending functions while responding with flexibility and efficiency.

Bishop Sally Dyck says it was several years ago that the Conference Council on Finance and Administration came to her with help on determining how to proceed when faced with a reduction in funds.

"There was no central body to have that conversation," said Bishop Dyck. "This annual conference has a lot of circles in our organizational chart that did not intersect, so this task force has worked on strategic designs that look at streamlining while keeping in mind our priorities to help our Annual Conference be better aligned to equip churches for ministry."

The diverse 27 member task force divided into four teams meeting five times spending more than 20 hours as a full team and countless more hours in smaller groups evaluating different designs, options and strategies.

After meeting in February and incorporating ideas from each team, the task force proposes the formation of a central coordinating body with co-chairs and representatives from areas of the conference. They chose the name "Annual Conference Shepherding Team" and its purpose is: discerning, stewarding, and empowering NIC vision and priorities that faithfully lead toward more vital congregations and vital Christians in alignment with the NIC mission statement.

The task force reviewed the restructuring work of other annual conferences and made recommendations that comply with requirements of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*. The call for an annual conference restructuring developed out of the Landscape process, Landscape survey, purpose summit and clergy/laity sessions held in 2015-16.

"This design we are presenting is the 4th iteration and truly the work of the entire member task force," said Task Force Chair Liz Gracie. "It's still a work in progress and we want to remind everyone this is an adaptive process. What

we are able to come up with all together is just going to be the starting point. It's going to evolve as the annual conference works with it."

The Task Force met again in March and incorporated the input from the three listening sessions to help craft its final proposed legislation, which will be available to download and review online at www.umcnic.org/AC2017 by May 1. It will be voted on at Annual Conference in June.



Clergy and laity attended listening sessions in March to provide input to the Organizational Task Force's restructuring plans.

Green Fairs impact congregations

By Richard Alton, Co-chair NIC Sustainability/ EcoJustice Task Force

On February 25, Grace Church of Logan Squire hosted a Green Fair for the Chicago Northwestern and Southern Districts. Twenty-four congregations participated involving 64 people.

People particularly enjoyed the resource tables: Faith in Place, Garrett- Evangelical Theological Seminary, ComEd, People's Gas, WindFree (solar), GreenFaith, 350.org, Openland, Wild Ones, One Earth Film Fest and Earth-keepers. To show a hint of the impact of the tables, five congregations signed up for a free solar estimate and six congregations signed up to be part of the One Earth Film Fest.

In the evaluation, people talked about the empowering nature of talking and hearing what other congregations are doing. There is a big interesting in how we might keep these congregations connected. People spoke of Green Fairs being an annual event (even on the District level). We need in the future to give more time for congregations

to think through next steps as well as focusing on working together action.

One of the participants wrote the following note to the group:

Dear Green Fair Friends, Thank you for your interest and support of the Green Fair. This was the first of the Green Fairs trying to enable church people to think progressively and creatively about sustaining the earth. In this time, when the government is withdrawing oversight regulation to protect the environment, the church must speak up so that the executives of private corporations and industries will be encouraged to become pro-active in protecting the environment. The church has direct access to many consumers, and they will need to become sensitized to purchasing in ways to support God's natural creation.

As Bishop Dyck said in her letter to the Fair, "we can choose more ecological, economic, and more sustainability methods to heat, light, use our property inside and



Congregations participated in two Green Fairs held in the Northern Illinois Conference in February and March to learn ways to sustain the Earth.

out, etc... I hope that you and your team go home with new inspiration and ideas to take one more step toward "a hopeful earth". Done!

A second Green Fair was held March 11 at First United Methodist Church in West Chicago with about 90 people in attendance. For more info or to reach out to the task force contact: Richard Alton at richard.alton@gmail.com.

LOCAL Church News

Downers Grove First United Methodist Church partners with World Relief

This January Downers Grove First United Methodist Church (DGFUMC) began a partnership with World Relief to address the needs of refugees resettled in our community. World Relief is an organization that partners with local churches to transform communities economically, socially and spiritually, so that the lives of the vulnerable can thrive and grow.

As part of their Refugee Resettlement program, World Relief works in partnership with the U.S. Department of State and local church partners to welcome and resettle thousands of refugees referred by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to the United States each year.

This year World Relief will resettle hundreds of refugees to our area. Refugees often flee their homes at a moment's notice. They arrive at a U.S. airport with few belongings, a difficult past and high hopes for the future.

An important first step in making refugees feel welcome is to provide each family with the supplies they will need to make their house a home. This January DGFUMC took our first step in partnering with World Relief with a commitment to donate supplies for a Welcome Kit. These kits include kitchen supplies, bedding, hygiene and other household items. The items for the Welcome Kit were filled the very Sunday the program was introduced as generous congregants signed-up all the needed items, leading to a collection for a second kit.

In February members of DGFUMC delivered a van full of pillows, towels, dishes and everything else needed for two families to start fresh in a new apartment in a new country. DGFUMC looks forward to continuing and growing this partnership with World Relief.



Don Dunham and Maggie Roth of Downers Grove First UMC deliver household items to World Relief to help welcome refugees.

Artists take residence at Chicago church



Billy McGuinness (left) is the current artist-in-residence at Grace UMC Logan Square whose art focuses on current social justice issues.

Grace United Methodist Church in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood has extended the artist-in-residence concept to the local church. Its Studio 3325 challenges artists to explore new forms of creation while engaging with the neighborhood and church community.

The program accepts two artists per year in the spring and fall. Each artist has unlimited access to a studio space within the church for six months. At the start of their residency, a small exhibition of the artist's previous work is installed at the church and continues to be on view for the duration of the residency.

Grace Logan's Rev. Mark Schol says over the last five years the church has searched for ways to engage the culture of the Logan Square neighborhood and to be a community hub. "The neighborhood is dramatically changing," said Schol. "Houses of Worship are closing or moving. So we are constantly examining how we can continue to be a relevant place in the community."

The current artist-in-residence is Billy McGuinness who uses his art to explore the pressing issues of hunger, mass incarceration and homelessness.

"My approach to art making is that it's a learning process," said McGuinness who brings art to the homeless and detainees at the Cook County Jail. "I'm asking a set of questions, not a set of statements."

One of McGuinness' art pieces displayed in Grace's Fellowship Hall showed extremely stark photographs of himself before and after his hunger project, which for 365 days he lived on \$4 a day - the equivalent of living off food stamps for an entire day.

"Artists in our neighborhood need affordable places to create, so what better way to give back to the neighborhood by opening our doors up to artists," said Schol. "The artwork, like that from Billy, has really opened up our congregation to the exploration into art."

The church recently received a grant from the Northern Illinois Conference United Methodist Foundation to help keep the program going and applications are now being accepted for a fall resident.

The church is also hold a special community event on April 26 to meet Billy McGuinness. For more info visit: www.gracelogansquare.org.

Make A Soup: An Evening of Community Healing

April 26, 7-9 p.m.

Grace Church of Logan Square, 3325 W. Wrightwood Ave, Parlor (enter through door on Kimball near alley)

Studio 3325 at Grace Church of Logan Square invites you to an evening of food and conversation with the current artist-in-residence, Billy McGuinness. Guests are requested to bring one ingredient--an onion, a carrot, whatever you have lying in the bottom of your refrigerator--nothing is too small, to be made into a large soup. Guests will participate in the chopping, cooking, making, and eating, while learning about McGuinness' practice as an artist and activist. Considering the current social and political climate, this night is dedicated to warming hearts and encouraging community building in the most simple way of sharing a meal together. Beverages will be provided.

Annual dinner invites discussion with our Muslim neighbors

The 12th annual CIOGC/NIC interfaith dinner will be held Wednesday, April 19 at the MECCA mosque (Muslim Educational and Cultural Center of America) 16W560 91st St., Willowbrook, IL.

The dinner begins at 6 p.m. and is sponsored by the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago.

This year we gather in the new MECCA building in Willowbrook for which Northern Illinois Conference helped advocate with zoning officials. After welcomes by Bishop Sally Dyck and CIOGC chairperson Dr. Bassam Osman, the theme of Immigrants and Refugees: Our Nation's Story will be modeled for table discussion by the guest speakers sharing of their own stories and journey of their own families to this land.

The planners from the CIOGC along with the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships feel that such discussion will be a bridge of understanding because all of us have had the same journey and challenges, which are so evident in today's headlines.

Our hope is, that with bridges built, we will be better able to work together for the goals that were set forth 12 years ago in the Declaration of Relationship between NIC and CIOGC. Look for more details in the NIC eNews and CCUIR Facebook page.

Who is My Neighbor: A Gathering on Immigration

The NIC Hispanic/Latinx Ministry Team is hosting a gathering on immigration for lay and clergy on Saturday, April 22 at Our Saviour's UMC in Schaumburg from 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.

The day will include an overview of immigration in the United States and an in-depth look at what the United Methodist Social Principles say about immigration. Time will be given for hearing the stories of immigrants and learning how we can respond to the needs.

Partners from the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, as well as state and regional representatives working with our immigrant communities and on immigration reform will share their work.

Participants will learn ways that churches and individuals can be involved in the sanctuary movement,

political reform, legal services and direct services to our immigrant communities.

Register online at www.umcnic.org/immigrationevent. Cost of the event is \$5, including lunch.

Clergy mentor training

April 26

The NIC Board of Ordained Ministry invites current and future licensed local pastor/candidacy/clergy mentors to the NIC's 2017 Mentor Training Workshop. This is a highly recommended training for all current and future licensed local pastor/candidacy/clergy mentors. After completing this training, you will be trained to serve as a mentor for the next quadrennium.

When: Wednesday, April 26 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Where: First UMC: DeKalb, 321 Oak St, DeKalb, IL

Phone: (815) 756-6301

Continental breakfast provided.

Lunch: Panera boxed lunches. You can specify lunch preferences on the RSVP page. Lunch is provided at no charge to attendees courtesy of the NIC Board of Ordained Ministry. Visit www.umcnic.org/mentor to register.

(more on page 7)

Bishop May a Chicago church planter and pastor dies at 81

By Sam Hodges

UMNS - Bishop Felton May often spoke of the need for “holy boldness” — and his admirers said he lived the phrase. He was a forceful preacher and a force away from the pulpit.

“You did not have to ask him to enter the fray,” said James H. Salley, associate vice chancellor for Institutional Advancement for Africa University, a United Methodist School. “If he saw it and felt it was wrong, he opposed it. If he felt it was right and something he needed to support, he did it.”

May died Feb. 27 at age 81, at his home in Ellicott City, Maryland. He had been under hospice care for pancreatic cancer. Survivors include Phyllis Henry May, his wife of 53 years.

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling of the Baltimore-Washington Conference announced May’s passing and called him “a giant of The United Methodist Church.”

“I urge us all to actively keep his family and all those who loved him in our prayers,” she said.

During five decades of ministry, May led United Methodist churches, conferences and agencies. He was the first African-American bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. He helped start both Africa University and the denomination’s Communities of Shalom movement.

May made church-related visits to the White House, but also accepted a first-ever “set-aside” episcopal assignment to the streets of Washington, during a spike in drug-related violence. Through his ministry, he acted on a deep concern for those on the margins.

“What I saw was a person who showed bold leadership, a person who was visionary and a person who didn’t mind taking risks on behalf of those who tended to be left outside,” said Bishop Marcus Matthews, who was a district superintendent under May. Matthews retired as bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference in 2016.

May was born in Chicago in 1935. He grew up in an apartment on the South Side and regularly attended a Baptist church with his mother and siblings. While a student at Judson College, May worked part-time at a reform synagogue. Rabbi Louis Leopold Mann recommended that he become a part of St. James Methodist Church, which had a commitment to integration.

“I think God has called you to be a minister,” May, speaking in 2009 at Wesley Theological Seminary, recalled the rabbi saying.

May also remembered being incredulous at the rabbi’s assertion, but was soon involved in leading Sunday school and youth programs at St. James.

“And then I began to read Methodist literature and its social witness, and it made sense to me. I felt I was called by God to do that,” he told the Baltimore Sun for a 2001 profile.

May was active as a young adult in civil rights work, including Operation Breadbasket. He was ordained as a deacon in the Northern Illinois Conference in 1962 and served two pastoral appointments in Chicago, one of them a church start. To get Maple Park Methodist going, May and his wife knocked on doors, started a children’s ministry and held worship services. The church was chartered with fifteen families and grew to 300 in weekly attendance during May’s time. It also was active in civil rights and other social justice advocacy.

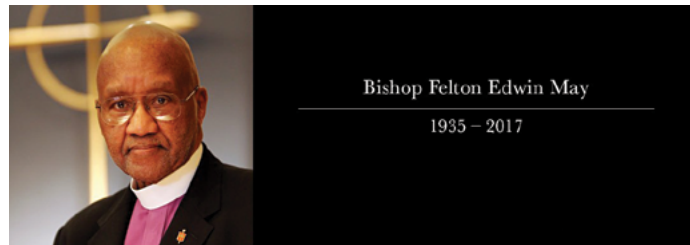
In 1968, May transferred to the Peninsula Conference and became associate executive director of the Methodist Action Program in Wilmington, Delaware. After earning his master of divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminary, he was ordained a United Methodist elder in 1970.

May would again serve as a church pastor, then as a district superintendent and as director of the Conference Council of Ministries. In 1984, he was elected bishop and assigned to the Harrisburg Episcopal Area.

May made a vivid impression on many of those he led in the Harrisburg Area, including Iris Green. She recalled that May asked people to put a candle in one of their windows as a symbol of peace.

“I’ve had a candle in my kitchen window ever since,” Green shared by email Feb. 27.

May, as a bishop and as president of the General Council on Ministries, was one of those successfully pushing for the 1988 General Conference to establish Africa University. He would later serve as vice president of its board of directors.



Bishop Felton E. May, flanked by a number of fellow bishops, speaks out about the U.S. government’s denial of visas for some United Methodists from Africa and the Philippines during a press conference in front of Pittsburgh’s federal building at the 2004 General Conference. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose

“He was there from the beginning, and there are a number of students who have graduated because of his personal intervention in providing funding,” Salley said.

May also had a key role in forming Communities of Shalom, which the 1992 General Conference started in response to race riots in Los Angeles. Later he successfully pushed for expanding the program into Africa.

“He was the organizing bishop and brought it out internationally,” said the Rev. Michael Christensen, director of the Shalom Initiative for Prophetic Leadership and Community Development at Drew University.

Perhaps May’s highest-profile role came in 1990-91, when he served on special assignment, leading the United Methodist Bishops’ Initiative on Drug and Alcohol Abuse and Violence in Washington. No other bishop has been asked by the Council of Bishops to leave an episcopal area for a special assignment on its behalf, and then return to active service.

In Washington, May and his wife took an apartment in The United Methodist Building, but he spent much of his time working with pastors in the toughest neighborhoods.

“He would be on the street, meeting people where they were,” said Stephen Drachler, who worked with May on the Washington assignment.

Drachler recalled that May heard another pastor refer to churches as “saving stations,” and seized on that term. May

and clergy colleagues borrowed tents and erected them on the street, where they held revival-style worship services but also invited drug counselors in to help people battling addictions.

“We must mount a holy war against drugs and reclaim our streets,” May told *The New York Times*.

May would reprise the strategy in Baltimore during his final episcopal assignment, leading the Baltimore-Washington Conference. The saving stations idea would be adopted elsewhere and would help lead to the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries’ Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence.

All along as bishop, May showed a deep interest in combatting poverty and other social ills in the United States and worldwide. In 1994, he visited Rwandan refugee camps as part of a United Methodist fact-finding team. He returned two years later to help dedicate a tent village for orphans provided by United Methodists, a change he called a “miracle” compared to lethal conditions he’d seen earlier.

May also served on a White House Presidential Commission on AIDS, traveling across southern Africa in 1999. The trip helped increase U.S. spending on AIDS worldwide by \$100 million.

In 2004, May retired from the episcopacy, but his work pace hardly let up. He served as dean of the Harry R. Kendall Science and Health Mission Center at United Methodist-affiliated Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas.

From 2007-2008, May served as interim top executive of the Board of Global Ministries. During his tenure at the agency, May and three other general secretaries presented four new areas of focus to the denomination at the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. The Four Areas of Focus were celebrated by the delegates and have guided much of the church’s work since then.

Late in life, May became a church pastor again, serving both Turning Point United Methodist in Trenton, New Jersey, and Theresa Hoover Memorial United Methodist in Little Rock.

May’s indefatigable efforts in social outreach were guided by an unapologetic evangelical fervor.

“Programs have had their day,” he said in his 2009 address at Wesley Theological Seminary. “The power of Christ must rest upon us and our institutions.”

May is survived by his wife; two children, Daphne May Brown and Felton May II, and 10 grandchildren. A memorial service was held on April 1st at Asbury United Methodist Church in Washington D.C.

**Hodges, a United Methodist News Service writer, lives in Dallas. Contact him at (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.*

Condolences and Memorials

Condolences can be sent to the May family at 3315 Oak West Drive, Apt. 123, Ellicott City, MD 21043. Emails can be directed to Daphne May Brown at ddaja512345@gmail.com.

The family asks that memorial donations be made to either Project H.O.P.E. or the Africa University Development Fund. Donations to Project H.O.P.E., Feeding Hungry Children, can be sent to Theresa Hoover United Methodist Women, C/O Dr. Etta Carter, 6403 Shirley Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas 72204. Donations to the Africa University Development Fund can be made online at www.support-africauniversity.org or mailed to the Africa University Development Fund, Post Office Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203.

Native American Ministries Sunday is April 30

By Pastor Kirby Verret

Since 1984, the Clanton Chapel Christian Preschool in Dulac, La., has helped countless local children who might otherwise not have the opportunity to learn about Jesus and receive basic education to start public school. This program serves students from various ethnic groups in the community, both members and non-members of Clanton Chapel United Methodist Church.

In the past, public preschool space was limited, and often, the neediest families were the last to hear of the programs. By the time they applied, no vacancies remained.

In 1984, Zoeanna Billiot Verret, a member of the Houma Indian Nation, took a leap of faith to address the needs of the young students. She herself was excluded from public education, and her first teachers were United Methodists.

Verret's inspiration was Wilhemina Hooper, who came to Dulac in the 1930s and found her calling. She stayed until the early 1970s. Verret was in some of her last classes in the 1960s. Hooper strongly believed that the local church should create ministries to help people in the community and develop United Methodist leaders.

Today, United Methodist women help young students in the community. "Every year," said the Rev. Kirby Verret, "our (Committee on) Native American Ministries provides at least \$3,000, but the needs are much greater. We have three Native American United Methodists women teachers with approximately 20-25 students per day. This is not a baby-sitting service but a strong teaching program that also invites parents to be involved in their children's education as the first teachers." Verret chairs the Louisiana Annual Conference Committee on Native American Ministries.

Sharing Jesus is vital

One man comes back every year to attend the preschool's commencement program. He told Verret, "The preschool program is where I learned how learning can be fun and God made us to learn." The man is a college graduate, who worked on his Master of Business Administration degree, and in his drive to learn, he went into the medical field.

The preschool recently celebrated 30 years of ministry. "We do not have any public funds. We are

totally dependent on donations from churches and The United Methodist Church to do the Lord's work and make disciples for Jesus Christ," Verret said. "We pray that, as we are on the frontline for ministering in the name of Jesus Christ, that bigger churches will help the smaller churches as partners in mission. We can do a lot to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, teach part of the church, how can we expect the church to survive or grow?"

In Ephesians 2:19b-22, CEB, we read, "You are fellow citizens with God's people, and you belong to God's household. ... Christ is building you into a place where God lives through the Spirit."

We share God's love and make disciples of Jesus Christ through our gifts to the Native American Ministries Sunday offering.

One of six church-wide Special Sundays with offerings of The United Methodist Church, Native American Ministries Sunday serves to remind United Methodists of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society. The special offering supports Native American outreach within annual conferences and across the United States and provides seminary scholarships for Native Americans.

When you give generously on Native American Ministries Sunday on April 30, you equip seminary students who will honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries. You empower congregations to find fresh, new ways to minister to their communities with Christ's love. For resources and how to give visit: www.umcgiving.org/nams.

**Pastor Kirby Verret, Chairman of the Louisiana Annual Conference Native American Ministries*



Zoeanna Billiot, a Houma Indian, teaches a preschool class at Clanton Chapel UMC. She was part of the Indian school classes in the 1960s taught by Wilhemina Hooper.

Calendar News (continued from page 5)

NCJ Volunteer Academy

April 27 - 30, 2017

"Learn & Prepare to Witness & Serve"

Where: Camp Warren, 4225 South Camp Warren Lane, Decatur, IL

Cost: \$85.00 - \$175.00 depending on the lodging and days you choose.

Clergy CEU: 2 Hours

This Academy is open to those who desire to further their knowledge in UMMVIM-UMCOR Disaster Response. We welcome volunteers who desire to work with survivors of natural disasters in the most vulnerable populations of the country. Come and meet those who work in Disaster Response and those who would like to serve!

Cathy Earl from UMCOR will be teaching along with others on emotional and spiritual care. Come and earn some CEU credits! For more info: umvimncj.org and click on "trainings".



NIC local PAUMCS chapter to host national conference

Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries 2017 National Conference

Feel the Spirit in the Windy City

May 4 - 6, 2017, Thursday, 11 a.m. - Saturday, 4 p.m.

Location: The Westin O'Hare Hotel (6100 N. River Road, Rosemont, IL)

For registration visit: paumcs.org.

McFee (continued from page 3)

As well as her experience with local church worship, Marcia specializes in designing and leading conference worship. Over the last 18 years, she has coordinated worship for countless regional and agency conferences. Most recently, she designed and led 29 worship services over a 10 day period for the international quadrennial General Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Dr. McFee received a Master's of Theological Studies degree at Saint Paul School of Theology with a concentration in Preaching and Worship, where she recently received the Outstanding Graduate Award from the Alumni Association. She earned a Ph.D. in Liturgical Studies at the Graduate Theological Union with an allied field of Ethics. She has been a guest lecturer and adjunct faculty at twelve seminaries. Marcia is an avid skier and the co-author of *Spiritual Adventures in the Snow: Skiing and Snowboarding as Renewal for Your Soul*.



Holy Week Worship Experience with Dr. Marcia McFee Tuesday, April 11, 7:30 p.m. Barrington UMC

For many clergy and church leaders, the most significant holy days of the year get consumed by the tasks of ministry instead of being able to authentically worship.

This Holy Week, the Northern Illinois Conference is partnering with Dr. Marcia McFee to provide an opportunity for clergy, their families, and church leaders to come and participate in a profoundly moving worship experience. No reading or other preparation is required. You are simply invited to come and have your soul fed.

Dr. McFee will lead a worship experience through the lens of Egeria, a 4th-century pilgrim who left a journal describing Holy week events in Jerusalem. Together, we will engage in our own pilgrimage through Holy Week, from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday, experiencing prayers, soulful singing, candlelight and space for personal reflection.

"Dr. Marcia McFee is unparalleled in creative, transformative worship design, and it is our hope that the extraordinary clergy of this conference will be blessed by this Holy Week offering, not as another meeting or event to attend, but rather an opportunity to join with sisters and brothers journeying to the cross," said Bishop Sally Dyck.

Childcare and parking are available. This event is entirely free, meant to be a gift for those who are so generously giving of themselves through their calls to ministry.

We do, however, request registration in order to facilitate adequate setup and materials. To register visit www.umcnic.org/Egeria.

For more information, contact the Barrington United Methodist Church office at (847) 836-5540.





DYK???

Did You Know: "Say Something"

By Rev. Arlene Christopherson,
Assistant to the Bishop/Dir. Connectional Ministries

Every morning as I ride into the office on Metra and approach Union Station an automatic announcement plays reminding us of safety tips and procedures so the hundreds of thousands of people traveling these rail lines can travel well informed. "If you see something, say something" is a tagline embedded in my brain.

"Say Something" this should also be a mantra for us in the church. Sometimes we are the best-kept secret around!

A few years ago my husband and I agreed to take one of our family members to visit a relative in western Illinois for Christmas Eve. I was up for the trip with one condition, that we time our travels so we could worship in a United Methodist church along the way. I was confident that with churches dotting the countryside we would find one that lined up with our plans.

A few days before our trip I pulled up google maps to plot out the churches we could worship with. I began calling up their websites to coordinate a time. What I learned was that worship times are one of the best-kept secrets in the world. Facebook searches and website scouring yielded no clues for where we might find a church to join for Christmas Eve. Finally I began phoning church offices. It was already the weekend but I hoped for a voicemail that would recite worship options. No luck.

When we arrived at the town where the relative lived I thought maybe the local paper would have a section where worship times were listed and we could invite the whole family to join us at church. The town we were in happened to have multiple United Methodist Churches so hope sprang eternal. . . only to be dashed. The worship page of the local paper contained Christmas greetings and worship times for the United Church of Christ, Lutheran Church, local Roman Catholic Church, but not one of our United Methodist Church's had participated in the ads.

After our afternoon visit and dinner with the family, as we drove east that night I continued phoning churches hoping that someone might answer and our timing would work out. It did. We worshiped, but I began to wonder why we are so reluctant to "Say Something".

I was a determined, loyal United Methodist. We were going to worship on Christmas Eve even if it was a midnight service when we arrived home. What about the fledgling Christian, the seeker, the "none" who is inspired to take a big step and find a place to worship? If we do not make it easy for them to know who we are and when we gather, we are missing a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel story.

The moral of the story as we move through Lent and approach Holy Week services is to "Say Something". Our worship services shouldn't be the best-kept secret. With more ways than ever to get the word out: Twitter, Facebook, Websites, voicemail, local print newspapers and more, we should be saturating the world with news that all are invited to come remember Jesus' journey to the cross and celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Update your website, Facebook page, UMC's Find-A-Church and voicemail today – tell the world when you gather and extend hospitality to the stranger.

2017 APPOINTMENT: MARCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Douglas Carroll (Elder) to Poplar Grove (Rockford District) from Manhattan (Aurora District). Doug follows Chris Druce Jones who is moving to voluntary transition.

Brian LeBaron (Associate Member) to Polo: Faith (DeKalb District) from Lena (Rockford District). Brian follows Karen Hundrieser who is retiring.

Grace Oh (Elder) to Chicago: Englewood/Rust (Chicago Southern District) from Ottawa: Evangelical (DeKalb District). Grace follows Harriette Cross who is appointed to Wilmington: First.

Jay Carr (Elder) to Libertyville (Elgin District) as Senior Pastor, from New Lenox (Aurora District). Jay follows Stephen Williams and Jamie Hannah Williams who are retiring.

Young Eun Choi (Elder) to Medical Leave from Plainfield: Sharon (Aurora District). Effective March 1.

Kihwan Choi (Pending Provisional Status) to full-time from part-time, continuing to serve Seneca: First and Marseilles (DeKalb District).

Jesus Molina (Local Pastor) to Chicago: Adalberto Memorial (1/4 time) (Chicago: Northwestern District). Jesus follows Emma Lozano who continues at Chicago: Lincoln (DSS) (Chicago: Southern District).

William Mueller (Elder) to retirement from Extension Ministry with Winnetka Congregational Church as Associate Pastor and Loyola University Chicago; Graduate School of Social Work. Bill became a probationary member in

1976 and Full Elder in 1981. During his ministry Bill served: Chicago: Emmaus, Chicago: Mayfair, Alsip: Christ, Chicago Heights, Evanston: Covenant and various extension ministry settings. Effective April 1.

Anne Rial (Elder) to retirement from Extension Ministry at The Inn at Willow Falls as Chaplain. Anne became a probationary member in 1997 and Full Elder in 2002. During her ministry Anne served: Timber Ridge, Mokena, Lockport: First and Lemont.

Mary Wise (Elder) to retirement from Medical Leave. Mary became a probationary member in 1989 and Full Elder in 1992. During her ministry she served Chicago: South Deering, Pullman, Elgin: First, South Elgin Community and Dolton: Faith.

Melwyn Alagodi (Provisional Elder) to Manhattan (Aurora District) from Tinley Park (Chicago: Southern District). Melwyn follows Doug Carroll who is appointed to Poplar Grove (Rockford District).

Julie Fluering-Moore (Local Pastor) to Villa Park: Calvary (Elgin District) from Chicago: Resurrection (Chicago: Northwestern District). Julie follows Char Hoffman who is appointed to Antioch (Elgin District).

Joy Starwalt (Elder) to full-time Chaplain with Lincolnland Hospice based out of Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital in Mattoon, Illinois from 346.1 in Illinois Great Rivers Conference. Effective April 17.

Chicago Southern District offers summer camp opportunity

By Rev. Jacques Conway, Chicago Southern District Supt.

During this previous charge conference season, I learned two very important things about our local children's ministries in the Chicago Southern District. The first is that too many of our local churches have very few or no children in their churches or part of their outreach ministries.

Second, our local church membership was not aware that our Conference owns two campsites that are fully operational and serve thousands of kids and adults throughout the year. During my years pastoring local churches in our Conference, the kids and adults from the churches I served have visited both of our campsites, Reynoldswood in Dixon, Illinois and Wesley Woods in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, enjoying the hundreds of acres the camps offer, including the land and water activities for all ages.

So working with the Northern Illinois Conference Outdoor Retreat and Ministries, we partnered to offer a mini-summer camp opportunity for our local churches in August. Our

local churches can use this camping opportunity to recruit kids from around their neighborhood as well as use this as a start of a vital children's ministry for their church.

Mini-Summer Camp

August 13 - August 16 (Grades 4 - 12+)

Early Bird: \$229 by 6/1

Full price: \$249

\$50 non-refundable deposit
Chicago Southern District Superintendent Jacques Conway's contagious enthusiasm for this new minicamp (Sunday through mid-morning Wednesday), has everyone excited to "Unmask Jesus" through archery, swimming, canoeing, Bible study, team building, campers, and so much more!

To register: www.niccamp.org

It is my hope that 100 kids from the Southern District will come August 13-16, 2017 to Reynoldswood in Dixon where they will be fed, housed, cared for and loved by

a trained staff. Kids from all races, areas, ages, and economic status are welcomed.

The Chicago Southern District Superintendent's Office will be offering full and partial scholarships to ensure every child who deserves to attend can attend. I am asking our local churches to both recruit and sponsor children from their parishes and communities. I am also requesting anyone else from our faith community, who desires to make a difference in the life of a child this summer and who knows how important it is for a child to feel safe, loved and cared for, if only for a few days, to sponsor a child or two, so that they can experience structural, Christian activities in a safe, loving environment.

Any questions or donations can be sent to the Chicago Southern District office, 77 W. Washington St., Chicago, IL 60602. Phone: (312) 346-9766 ext. 732. Checks may be payable to "Northern Illinois Conference" and put "Chicago Southern Camp" in the memo line.

Stay Connected

Sign up for the weekly NIC eNews & Appointment Announcements. Visit www.umcnic.org and scroll down to enter your email and name under "Newsletter".

Note: if you opt out of one email, you opt out of all conference emails.

Job Openings

For the latest NIC job openings, visit www.umcnic.org/jobs

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Submit News

Please submit items at least two weeks prior to publication date. Include your name, address, email, phone number and name of local church. Space is limited. Electronic submissions are preferred with high-resolution attached jpegs.