

# The REPORTER

Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church

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Bishop Sally Dyck

## From the Bishop: More than an annual conference session

Years ago Ken and I took our two Ohio nephews, who were 11 and 15 at the time, on a cross-country road trip, starting in Cleveland. We went to Yellowstone National Park where we met up with four other nephews from Utah. All year there was excitement between the six nephews in their back-and-forth planning, conversation, anticipation, and preparation for this rendezvous in Yellowstone.

When we all got to Yellowstone, with six boys under 15, we did everything. We didn't just see Old Faithful; we explored everything around it. We didn't just stop at Tower Falls; we hiked all around it. We didn't just look at Mammoth Hot Springs from afar; we traipsed all over it. We looked at every buffalo and discovered wildlife. We fully explored Yellowstone!

On the last day we didn't get back to our campsite in time to make dinner and clean up before dark. We were all a little tired, so Ken and I decided to stop at one of the cafeterias and eat there. We got them all fed. The youngest one—who was five at the time—finished first. He began to wander around so I put him on my lap. While we were talking, he yawned and I said, "We seem to have worn you out in Yellowstone."

He looked up at me in total confusion, his face scrunched up as if he were trying to decipher some strange language. Then he asked, "Are we in Yellowstone?" Evidently no one said to him, "You are now entering Yellowstone!" When we went to Old Faithful, Mammoth Hot Springs, Tower Falls and the rest, he didn't associate those under the overall concept of "Yellowstone." He saw them as separate places, perhaps leading up to the anticipated Yellowstone!

As we prepare for annual conference, I have the same feeling: we define annual conference as an event—the sessions that delegates go to each year. Some conferences call what we do from June 4-6 as "annual conference session" to distinguish between other definitions or functions of the annual conference. All the churches in Northern Illinois are the annual conference. You are the annual conference! There is no us and them. Whether it's 77 W. Washington or your local address, we are all the annual conference.

Even at the sessions of annual conference, we may view and value various aspects of it as separate events. Worship, fellowship dinners, caucus gatherings, legislation, commissioning and ordination, education, and celebration of ministry are all separate parts of the sessions. Together they are our annual conference session!

Some clergy and lay delegates like some of these separate components within our annual conference sessions more than others. Some remember when legislation was the major focus of annual conference sessions. Increasingly in our annual conference and across the church, there is less legislation and more worship, Bible study, and/or education. These are the components that help to shape us and help us remember our identity as "the people called United Methodist." It is the annual conference that enhances and extends the United Methodist witness beyond our geographical bounds and connects local churches to the world beyond. In these times of uncertainty within our denomination, strengthening our identity as United Methodists and connecting with the wider world is important.

Some of us remember when annual conference sessions would last almost a week! I've worked at getting annual conference sessions to a shorter period of time. A shorter time frame saves on cost and hopefully allows people to attend for a few days who otherwise wouldn't be able come for a full week. But by so doing, it means we have long days and a full schedule. However, we try to have a flow of the various components to make it easier to attend all the sessions! For instance, we will have legislative work as well an educational opportunity with our worship leader, Dr. Marcia McFee, on Monday evening.

If you're clergy or a lay delegate to annual conference sessions, I look forward to seeing you throughout our time together and hope that we will keep the whole in mind throughout our various components of work, worship and fellowship. If you're not clergy or a lay delegate, listen carefully to reports from the conference communications and your clergy and lay delegate(s). Far more happens that ultimately affects local churches than just "hot button" items!

We are making changes in how we function as an annual conference so as to better equip local churches to make disciples, to reach new people, and to engage in our communities. Legislation for a new organizational structure will be before us. There are petitions that address what is happening in the world around us. Worship will be wonderful with Dr. Marcia McFee.

But remember, as annual conference sessions occur, the "annual conference" is more than just three days of meetings. Whether you're clergy or a lay delegate, you're still the annual conference!

My 5-year-old nephew is now in his late 20's. He grew up and he knows that Yellowstone is all those experiences and more! As United Methodists, sometimes we need to "grow up" and learn more about the church we're a part of locally, regionally (Northern Illinois Annual Conference) and also globally.

~Bishop Sally Dyck

## Churches gather to learn more on immigration

By Anne Marie Gerhardt



Emma Lozano (upper right) along with John Gutterrez (center) and his father talk with participants from NIC churches about her congregation's struggle with immigration policies.

A young "dreamer", a father of a U.S. veteran facing deportation, and an immigration activist from Mexico taking sanctuary in a United Methodist church shared their personal stories at an immigration learning event sponsored by the Northern Illinois Conference (NIC) Hispanic/Latinx Ministry Team and the National Hispanic/Latino Plan.

"This is an opportunity to review what's going on nationally and in our own area around immigration," said Bishop Sally Dyck to the nearly 120 gathered at Our Saviour's United Methodist Church in Schaumburg on April 22. "Not everyone agrees on what to do around immigration issues, but when we come together like this we hear from each other, make connections and think about what it is we as United Methodists are called upon to do."

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# Bishop Dyck responds to Judicial Council rulings

The much-anticipated rulings by the Judicial Council were released on April 28. Bishop Karen Oliveto remains a bishop in good standing. We are most thankful for that and support all that she is doing. However, the Judicial Council ruled that her consecration violates church law and as a part of its ruling, the Judicial Council directed the use of the existing administrative or judicial processes (known as the complaint process).

Therefore, the next steps in addressing the bishop's status will be handled in the Western Jurisdiction, in accordance with additional requirements for actions and reporting detailed in the Judicial Council's ruling. Please keep Bishop Oliveto and the Mountain Sky Area in your prayers during this time of challenge.

In a separate Judicial Council ruling affecting the Northern Illinois Annual Conference, the Board of Ordained Ministry was directed to make full examination of all candidates in light of the disciplinary questions in "scope and breadth" that would "deal with issues of race, gender, sexuality, integrity, indebtedness, etc." ¶¶ 304.2, 305, 306, 310. Candidates for licensed or ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church should be treated fairly and denial of entry must be based upon the evidence received from the results of the full examination."

In the months ahead, I will be in discussion with the Board of Ordained Ministry to address these specific findings and requirements. I expect and have confidence that the Northern Illinois Board of Ordained Ministry has and will continue to respectfully examine candidates fully for effectiveness as well as these other questions of living up to the highest Christian standards. I will continue to work collaboratively with them according to our respective roles. Thank you, Board of Ordained Ministry, for your dedicated service.

The divide in our views about how the church deals with matters concerning human sexuality are profound and will require continuing prayerful and careful attention. But I am deeply concerned that elements within The United Methodist Church continue to obsess on human sexuality while our communities and world around us are in such great need. I am convinced that a persistent focus on our differences regarding how we view LGBTQ persons does not communicate the "highest ideals of Christian living" to a skeptical and fractured world nor bear evidence of our abiding love for and embrace of all people both within and beyond the church.

These decisions cause me to recommit to be the Bishop of all the people and congregations of this Annual Conference.

We are very diverse and I celebrate the gift of diversity as a missional opportunity to provide entry to all people into a life of Christian community. I appeal to the people of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference to keep focused on the mission of Jesus Christ. We can and will work through our differences and find ways to honor one another and live with integrity, tolerance and grace.

Let's all pray for and await the report of the Commission on the Way Forward to the Council of Bishops, and participate in the discernment and work of organizing our life together that will follow. Let's stand in faith and anticipation to see what God can do with our church's brokenness as a sign of hope to others who are also broken in their own lives and communities. Let us encourage each other with hope, joy (yes, even joy), kindness and mutual respect. Let us give witness to the faith that is within us and show compassion and patience toward each other and our neighbors.

Let us pray for one another and the church that "the God of hope fill (us) with all joy and peace in believing, so that (we) may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

~Bishop Sally Dyck

To read the President of the Council of Bishops statement on the Judicial Council rulings visit: [www.umc.org/who-we-are/council-of-bishops-news-statements](http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/council-of-bishops-news-statements).

## From the Cover: Immigration

Seventeen-year-old Rosalinda, a member of El Mesias UMC in Elgin, came to the U.S. from Guatemala at the age of four and never thought being an immigrant was a "big deal." It wasn't until recently she discovered the impact it would have on her life.

"My sophomore year (in high school) I wanted to drive, but I couldn't get a permit because I wasn't a resident or citizen," said Rosalinda. "I wanted to get a job, but I couldn't. I can't even apply for scholarships, even if I have the grades."

Miguel Perez, Sr., shared how his son, a Mexican-born legal permanent resident and a U.S. Army veteran who served two tours in Afghanistan, is facing deportation after a drug conviction.

"He defended the flag of this country in Afghanistan," said Perez. "If he leaves, I don't know what to do without him. We are advocating for clemency for my son and others who fought for this country and have a right to live in this country."

Elvira Arellano, an immigrant rights activist from Mexico who helped bring the sanctuary movement into the spotlight ten years ago after taking a 12-month refuge at Humboldt Park's Adalberto Memorial UMC, shared how she returned to the U.S. three years ago with her sons to seek asylum fearing for her life. She is back in sanctuary at Adalberto and advocating for fair and just immigration reform.

"I'm here because God has a purpose for me and my church," said Arellano.

### Making a connection

Stacy Williams, a member of Salem UMC in Barrington, came to the event to learn how she can make a difference and advocate for immigrants.

"I want to help and I'm so thankful to be part of a congregation that wants to do something and put faith into action," said Williams. "I think first we need to listen to their stories and share them...that's where it all starts."

Pastor Emma Lozano of Lincoln UMC in Chicago, a predominantly Spanish-speaking, mixed-status immigrant congregation, says the event was so important to help connect with one another and dispel misconceptions about immigrants.

"I talked with members of other churches who may not know what my congregation is going through," said Lozano. Even though we don't speak the same language, we speak the same language of love. We can stand up as United Methodists opposed to laws that separate families and come together."

The United Methodist General Board of Church and Society's Jeania Ree Moore and Kristin Kumpf provided background on current national immigration policies and outlined how local churches can take action through advocacy, direct action, and sanctuary.

"This journey of immigration is about people who we know and we love," said Kumpf. "I have stood at the border and watched someone taken away that I loved by border patrol. That's the kind of moment in our lives that makes our faith become action."

Organizers say some ideas to help put faith into action include: support the Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors (NIJFON); which provides free legal service for immigrants; call your legislators; hold a Bible study on immigration; invite immigrants or immigration rights groups to speak at your church; and/or attend an immigration rights rally/march.

Sixteen-year-old John Gutierrez, a member of Lincoln UMC, is looking forward to attending college to study computer science, but for the last 10 years, he's lived with fear and anxiety that his father will be deported to Mexico.

"I'm always afraid my dad will leave us," said Gutierrez who was feeling less anxious after coming to the NIC immigration event. "I'm really happy I'm not alone. We can help each other out and go through this together."

Manuel Padilla, strategic leader of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry, said the learning event was the fruit of many partners coming together to accompany prayers with actions and an opportunity for all people, church included, to raise the level of

awareness of our own ethnocentric orientation.

"It is when we do not only embrace but defend the rights and uniqueness in each one of God's creation that we can make possible a process to transform our world and our beloved United Methodist Church," said Padilla.

### NIJFON donation

At the end of the event, Our Saviour's UMC presented the Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors a check for \$1,200.

"Local church support like this, that congregants make happen through special offerings and through the Advance, are essential to NIJFON's ability to continue to provide free, high-quality legal services across the conference. The fact that these practical services are provided at United Methodist churches reveals the NIC's commitment to transform the world," said NIJFON board member Brent Holman-Gomez.

For more info on NIJFON visit: [www.nijfon.org](http://www.nijfon.org) and for a list of other resources provided at the event, including what The United Methodist Church says about immigration, facts and figures and tool-kits for churches, go to: [www.umcnic.org/immigrationresources](http://www.umcnic.org/immigrationresources).



Nearly 120 people from across the Northern Illinois Conference attended a day-long event to share stories and connect around immigration issues.

## United Voices for Children Announces award recipients

United Voices for Children (UVC) announced the recipients of its 2017 annual awards for outstanding advocacy and service for children and youth in Northern Illinois. The Bishop Jesse R. Dewitt Award will be given to two recipients.



Lorena Cory

Lorena Cory of First UMC of Arlington Heights is being honored for founding and facilitating Pinwheels, a support group for families with transgender children. Lorena started Pinwheels in March 2011 out of her own family's needs. Since then, this unique support group has steadily grown to more than 100 members meeting monthly in two locations. Parents who have experience with gender creative children and their families gather with parents who are new to this journey to build relationships, share resources and offer support to one another. UVC says Cory's advocacy work goes beyond the church walls. Pinwheels is the only known faith-based program of its kind—though people of all or no faiths are welcome.



Rev. William Lenters

The Rev. Dr. William Lenters, retired Northern Illinois clergyman, is recognized for his 19 years of service as chaplain at Rosecrance. Each week Bill leads spirituality, grief and loss groups for teens and young adults seeking treatment for substance use disorders. He also meets one-on-one with young clients who have questions and concerns about faith, or who are struggling with various challenges during treatment. Bill has counseled people who are vulnerable and broken down by guilt and shame. He disarms adolescents and young adults who are angry, distrusting, and questioning faith and God by listening to their fears and concerns and countering them with acceptance. UVC says Bill does all of that with a laid-back demeanor and a sense of humor that can be both silly and hilarious. In his own words: "Recovery is spiritually grounded in acknowledgement of powerlessness, a need for a greater power."

Both of Cory and Lenters will be honored at the United Voices for Children (UVC) Breakfast on Tuesday morning, June 6 at 6:45 a.m. during the Northern Illinois Annual Conference session at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles.

United Voices for Children is a coalition of congregations and individuals in Northern Illinois dedicated to speak and act on behalf of needy children, youth and their families as well as to support ministries in the Conference serving these children and youth.

For more information on UVC visit: [unitedvoicesforchildren.org](http://unitedvoicesforchildren.org)

## Hilltop ministry center building sold

By Lisa Kruse-Safford, Rockford District Superintendent

Bill and Joyce Russ, long-time faithful members of Centennial UMC in Rockford, Ill., and life-long farmers on the north side of the city, made a gift of land in 2004 to the Northern Illinois Conference (NIC) with the dream that the land, which brought forth a harvest of grain, would bring forth a harvest of souls for the glory of God. After much dreaming and demographic work, the NIC built the community-center style building called Hilltop Ministry Center in Machesney Park. The plan was to have a center for ministry partners to provide childcare, counseling, a coffee shop, a gymnasium, and a community of faith. All this came to pass in 2008.

Over the course of the next several years the building served the needs of the community. What became the UM new faith community, New Life, worshipped and gathered weekly. Other groups, ranging from ball teams to line dancers and a community theater, used the building for gatherings and practices. And the 13,000 square feet of childcare space housed Hand-in-Hand childcare. Financially, the shared-space partners helped the NIC meet the mortgage payments on the building.

That financial reality changed dramatically in the fall of 2014 when the childcare program moved out. The full-mortgage responsibility weighed heavily on our NIC budget. A task force worked over the course of many months to find new ministry partners to fill the space – all to no avail. We turned to the help of a commercial realtor.

After many unrealized possibilities, a new opportunity came: Easterseals was highly interested in the space – actually the whole building! Their Rockford school for children and adolescents with autism and other special needs had outgrown two other buildings in Rockford (they serve students from several area school districts). When they walked into the Hilltop building, they knew they didn't want to look any further. After months of working out the details, the Hilltop Ministry center building was sold in March of this year to Easterseals. This sale covered the balance of the NIC outstanding mortgage, leaving us debt-free and thus relieving our NIC budget.

"Our students will continue to benefit from Easterseals Academy's individualized curriculum and activities," said Principal Jacque Ruch. "We are

delighted with the additional opportunities available to our students with the purchase of our very own campus with plenty of places for them to live, learn, work and play."

Does this end Bill and Joyce's dream? No! First of all, the New Life UM congregation remains dedicated to ministry in the community and will remain worshipping in the building. Easterseals has extended an initial two-year lease to the New Life congregation free of charge. In addition, Bill and Joyce rejoiced when they heard about Easterseals coming to their former farmland. The Russes had been involved in a special-needs school at Centennial UMC years ago. They saw this as a way for that interest to continue! So in two ways, Bill and Joyce's dreams live on!

Bill Russ died this past January at the farmstead he had lived on for so long. Out the west window of that house, you can see the Hilltop building across the field. This year, Joyce will continue to worship with her New Life family on Saturday nights and her Centennial family on Sunday mornings. And this spring she will watch the building go through renovations and expansions, as Easterseals makes ready to move in.

On that land where crops were once harvested, people's lives will continue to be touched and changed and made new through the ongoing ministry of New Life and through the loving work of Easterseals. And that original farm homestead includes 10 acres that the NIC has for future ministry needs. Thanks be to God for new possibilities!



The New Life UM congregation remains dedicated to ministry in the community and will still worship in the former Hilltop Ministry Center which was purchased by Easterseals.

## Vital church immersion experience in South Korea

By Rev. Christian Coon

Many of you know that my wife and I just returned from a trip to South Korea. The trip was organized by the Northern Illinois Conference and the Institute for Congregational Development in conjunction with Bupyeong Methodist Church in Incheon City, South Korea. Bupyeong hosts 12-15 groups a year and it's difficult to describe just how remarkable this trip was, especially considering the commitment Bupyeong has made to this ministry.

I'd heard from others who have taken this trip that I would be astounded by the church's hospitality and that was indeed the case. From the moment we were each given roses as we walked out of the airport onto Bupyeong's charter bus to the ovation we received from staff when we arrived at the church, it was one act of kindness after another.

Those acts of kindness got to be overwhelming. On Sunday, we received a tour of the church, went to one of the services, were treated to a very nice lunch and then were told that there would be a "mini-concert" just for us. I was floored by how good the concert was and then there was another worship that night with a phenomenal choir from Seoul ("Brought here just for you," said the Bupyeong pastor) and then after the service

we were kindly ushered into another room for cake. That's when I started feeling uncomfortable. As we walked out of the sanctuary and down the hallway, there was a group of about five people all smiling and showing us into the room for the post-worship refreshments. As I walked by the group, I said to myself, "It's all too much!"

But the warmth and hospitality weren't acts. None of this was done for show or just to make a good impression. It truly felt authentic.

There have been too few times in my life where I have felt overwhelmed by God's love. I've rarely doubted God's love for me, but it's always felt like it was just enough. But that's more my issue than God's. The kindness after kindness shown by us by the members of Bupyeong reminded me that God's love is never just enough. As First Timothy reminds me, God's grace overflows. It spills over. It, frankly, can make a mess, which can make me feel uncomfortable. I confess to wanting that love meted out just so. But the hospitality of Bupyeong reminded me that it's OK to receive the overflow and grab a cup to receive even more so that, as Paul notes in Philippians 1:9, my love for God and neighbor might overflow more and more.



14 people traveled to South Korea April 19-27 as part of the 2017 Vital Church Immersion Experience organized by the Northern Illinois Conference's Institute for Congregational Development. The group rose every morning at 5 a.m. for prayer services and visited the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to pray for peace.

# Celebrating Retirement

This June we celebrate our 17 retiring pastors with a combined 529 years of service.

## Rev. Barry William Britton

### 42 1/3 years of service

The Rev. Barry William Britton retires as the CPE Supervisor at Rockford Health System. During his nearly 43 years of ministry he served; North Boone Parish (4 point charge), East Jordan UMC, Rockford Health Systems, Board of Ordained Ministry (10 years), Board of Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) (20 years), National ACPE (2 years). "I have really enjoyed being the CPE supervisor at Rockford Health Systems. It has been exciting to work with students of all ages, backgrounds and religions," said Britton who added he will miss the direct involvement with students and patients the most. Britton plans to do some consulting, serve with BOOM and ACPE, travel, enjoy some fishing and the outdoors in his retirement.

## Thomas Kingery

### 36 years of service

The Rev. Thomas Kingery retires from Wilmington UMC and began his ministry career in 1981 at Brookville-Elkhorn. He was ordained a Deacon in 1982 and an Elder in 1984. He also served Plano, Galena, Pecatonica, and Rockton. Kingery says some of the highlights over the last 36 years, include hiring Stanley Campbell who became the President of Rockford Urban Ministries, working on drug prevention activities through Plano High School, leading Disciple Bible study, working on gambling prevention in Plano/Kendall County, working with Scouts and leading the youth fellowship in several parishes. Kingery and his wife, Carol, have a daughter and son. "The highest highlight of my ministry has been being immersed in God's Word, teaching it, and preaching it...and being a servant of God's grace to the people I have loved," said Kingery. In retirement he plans to become the full-time caregiver for his wife, who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1988 and if possible, become a part-time pastor.

## Clarence W. "Bill" Landis

### 41 years of service

The Rev. Clarence W. "Bill" Landis retires from Antioch UMC. During his 41 years of ministry, he also served Kingswood in Buffalo Grove, Grace UMC in Prairie View, Sheridan, Norway, First UMC of Savanna and Sycamore. Landis said it has been both fulfilling and humbling to know that God called and used him as a United Methodist minister to be part of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. "I still get all excited when I see people find Christ in their lives

and get excited about their faith," said Landis. "I love watching them grow in discipleship while deepening their faith and understanding of the scriptures." Landis says he will miss the great sense of fulfillment when someone responds to something he said in a sermon, Bible Study, conversation, etc. and follows through with it. He will also miss hearing or seeing one of his flock teaching, preaching, serving in the name of Christ and seeing people respond to their ministry. During retirement, he looks forward to spending more time with his wife, Jo, family and friends. They plan to travel as well as make their retirement house a home. "I have great plans for my model railroad and old cars," added Landis.

## Mary Gay McKinney

### 40 years of service

The Rev. Mary Gay McKinney retires from Open Prairie United Church of Christ in Princeton, Ill. During seminary at Garrett-Evangelical Theological, she served with the NIC's Ministry of Criminal Justice, visiting regularly two different correctional facilities and she interned at Whitefish Bay UMC in Wisconsin. During her 40 years of ministry she also served as the youth pastor at North Northfield. Her first appointment was to Earlville and later served Clearing, Ivanhoe, Plainfield First and DeKalb First. She began ministry in the United Church of Christ at the Mayfield Congregational UCC, where she served 9 1/2 years. One of the highlights of her ministry she said was becoming acquainted with mimetic theory as taught by the late Rene Girard. She said she will miss the many dear people she's been privileged to be in ministry with along the way. "Not a day goes by that I don't think of what someone has taught me or shared with me via their words and actions," said McKinney. In retirement, McKinney says she plans to take some time to rest and visit churches to find a faith community to call home. "I also plan to visit my children and grandchildren, and enjoy the life-giving relationship Goldy Mortensen is gracious enough to share with me!" added McKinney.

## Rev. Richard Mosley, Jr.

### 26 years of service

The Rev. Richard Mosley, Jr. retires from Hemenway UMC in Evanston, Ill. During his 26 years of ministry, he served Waukegan First, Evanston First, St. James in Chicago and Morgan Park in Chicago. Mosley highlighted the many ministries at Hemenway and its commitment to being in ministry with the community through medical equipment assistance, a clothes closet, food pantry, and a weekly hot meal program. "Hemenway United

Methodist Church is a faith community of compassion and conscience," said Mosley. "Hemenway has sought to be in ministry within our church, and in service to our community and the world." One of the highlights Mosley said is the installation of cost-saving solar panels on the roof the church. Mosley said he will miss the food, fellowship and fun the most. He is unsure his plans in retirement.

## Rev. Dr. William A. Mueller

### 41 years of service

The Rev. Dr. William A. Mueller retires from the Winnetka Congregational Church after 41 years of ministry. He was ordained a Deacon in 1976 and ordained an Elder in 1981. He served at Emmaus UMC in Chicago, Mayfair UMC in Chicago, Christ UMC in Alsip, Chicago Heights First and Covenant UMC in Evanston. He completed a residency at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Harbor Light Hospice in Glen Ellyn, Bethany Hospital in Chicago, Samaritan Counseling Center: Winnetka and Evanston and as an Adjunct Professor at Loyola University Chicago. He received a Master of Social Work, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and earned both a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) in Pastoral Counseling and a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.). "Highlights of my ministry are pastoral counseling and education in the parish and various venues and populations in the Chicago area, as well as teaching graduate students at a major university," said Mueller. He said he will miss the counseling, teaching and preaching the most. During retirement, he has settled in Asheville, North Carolina with his wife, Judi. They're currently building a home in the Blue Ridge Mountains. They both enjoy reading, hiking, traveling and welcoming a German Shorthaired pup, Zoe, to the family.

## Rev. Timothy B. Rathod

### 29 1/4 years of service

The Rev. Timothy B. Rathod retires from Emmanuel UMC in Evanston after more than 29 years of service. As an Evangelist he served at Every Home Crusade: Mhow, (Madhya Pradesh, India) and Borivali Gujarati Methodist Church Mumbai (Maharashtra, India). As a Pastor, he served at Vile Pale Gujarati Methodist Church Mumbai (Maharashtra, India). During his theological studies, Rathod was involved in ministry with Operation Mobilize (OM) in Gujarat, India where international workers came alongside Indian national Christians in partnership to present the Good News. He was ordained a Deacon in 1975 in the Methodist Church in Southern Asia, Mumbai Conference, and then ordained an Elder in 1976. In 1984 he came to the U.S. to join his wife, who was already here after receiving her Visa based on her pro-

fession of nursing. He received a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from North Park Theological Seminary. "I will miss the people of the congregation and preaching the word of God," said Rathod. "I have been doing this a long time. I have church members who I have Baptized, confirmed, and then officiated at their weddings." Rathod looks forward to spending quality time with his family, gardening, reading and volunteering in the community. "I'll continue what I'm doing now, proclaiming the Good news," he said.

## Rev. Anne H Rial

### 21 years of service

The Rev. Anne H. Rail retires after 21 years of service. She served Timber Ridge in St. Charles, Mokena, Lockport First, Lemont and as chaplain at the Inn at Willow Falls in Joliet. Rial said she has always felt honored when given the opportunity to be helpful and considers moments of insight, healing and connection the highlights of her ministry. "I enjoy pastoral counseling and teaching about God's unconditional love for everyone," she said. "I love showing people how God connects with us all in intimate and consistent ways." She will miss those quiet moments praying alone in the church sanctuary in the early mornings. "During retirement, she plans to continue volunteering and looks forward to not being "on-call" 24/7. "My husband and I are very active in our present church and will be traveling more to see the country while visiting family and friends," she said.

## Rev. Brian Roots

### 30 years of service

The Rev. Brian Roots retires from Christ Deerfield after 30 years of service. He began his ministry career in Chicago working as a student under the leadership of the Rev. Marti Scott. After ordination, he served at Wesley Cicero, First Harvard and then in the Missouri conference at North Cross before launching a new church, North Star. Roots said his most challenging and rewarding time in ministry was as a church planter. "It was overwhelmingly hard and then overwhelmingly joyful when over three hundred people came to our first service," said Roots. He said he will miss planning special and creative worship services with a group of musicians or other leaders and then watching the congregations be spiritually moved by the service. In retirement, Roots plans to continue to be in ministry by providing spiritual direction and companionship, especially to clergy who seek a spiritual conversation. "My wife and I will spend time with parents and grandchildren, travel and look for opportunities to help as volunteers," said Roots.

### Judith (Judy) Sherk

#### 28 years of service

The Rev. Judith (Judy) Sherk retires from Orangeville and Afolkey: Bethel after 28 years of service. She was ordained a deacon in 1989 and an elder in 1992. She also served at Grace in Elgin, Waukegan First, Mundelein; Steward-Creston; Libertyville and Wilton Center Federated. She will serve Orangeville-Afolkey: Bethel one more year in retired status. "It's been "a good run" overall," said Sherk. "I'm grateful to God for my call to pastoral ministry, and hope the people I've been served feel the same way." Some of her ministry highlights include spending time with youth early in her ministry and engaging with church members during the significant events of their lives—baptisms, confirmations, graduations, marriages, and funerals. She will miss most the one-to-one interactions with church members as well as planning and leading worship. A year from now, Sherk plans to move to Silver Spring, Maryland to live near her son Dan and his wife Kim (who was in her youth group at Waukegan: First when they met). She also plans to travel to Switzerland and Florida to visit her other sons and their families. "I want to see more of this country—I'd especially like to see the Grand Canyon, and the glaciers in Alaska before they diminish any more," said Sherk.

### Patricia Allen-Stewart

#### 36 years of service

The Rev. Patricia Allen-Stewart will retire from Galena UMC after 36 years of service. Allen-Stewart also served, Grace in Joliet, North Austin in Chicago, Pullman in Chicago and Lake Villa. She said one of the most fulfilling highlights of her ministry is the young people she's mentored over the years. "They have become wonderful, caring, spiritual adults who are using the varieties of their gifts to carry on God's work of love and justice in many places," she said. Allen-Stewart says she will miss most "the proximity to the people and colleagues in so many churches and communities who have enlarged and nurtured my spirit and have become friends for life." She plans to retire with her husband, Ben, in Galena and tutor ELL students, substitute teach, become a Master Gardener, continue practicing yoga, and continue to work for God's love and justice in the world.

### Rev. Dr. Jamie Hanna Williams

#### 34 years of service

The Rev. Dr. Jamie Hanna Williams will retire from Libertyville. During her 34 years of service, she served Aldersgate in Wheaton, Christ in Deerfield, and Friendship in Bolingbrook. She took a Sabbatical at the Chicago Theological Seminary and Institute for Spiritual Leadership and has served on the Board of Ordained Ministry. Williams says some of the highlights of her ministry include working with Aldersgate in Wheaton on many redevelopment efforts, celebrating the intercultural congregation at Friendship and working on a dream and visioning process as lead co-pastors with her husband Steve at Libertyville. She said she will miss most "being able to make a difference by bringing together and working with a collaborative community of people, through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, to create something beautiful for God." In retirement, she will spend the coming year in a travel adventure with Steve visiting Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Spain, France, Italy, Costa Rica and Mexico. They'll return to their home in Glen Ellyn to see what other adventures God has in store for them.

### Rev. Stephen C Williams

#### 38 years of service

The Rev. Stephen C. Williams will retire from Libertyville UMC after 38 years of service. His first appointment in 1979 was at a rural parish in the Central Pennsylvania Conference. He followed his wife Jamie Hanna Williams to Northern Illinois in 1983 and was a stay at home father for three years, which he said was an honor and great privilege. He also served Faith in Downers Grove, Wesley in Naperville, Franklin Park and Lombard. One of the highlights of his ministries was the overseeing of a \$2.5 million renovation of the sanctuary at Libertyville, which was completed in 2016. "The most glorious aspect of this space is the Resurrection window," said Williams. "To see it in the morning with light streaming through is analogous to witnessing the birth of a star or the miracle of creation." Williams said he will miss most the job of leading worship. "I will miss preaching the Word of God with the sense, every now and then, I got it right and people were blessed," said Williams. As for his plans for retirement, see Jamie's answer.



Barry William Britton



William A. Mueller



Patricia Allen-Stewart



Thomas Kingery



Timothy B. Rathod



Jamie Hanna Williams



Bill Landis



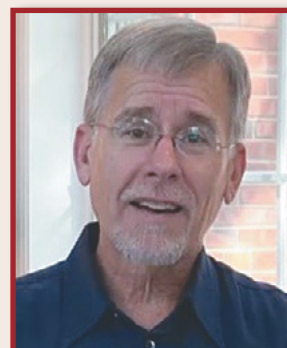
Anne H. Rial



Stephen C. Williams



Mary Gay McKinney



Brian Roots



Richard Mosley, Jr.



Judith Sherk

### Other Retirees:

**Pastor Roland C. Harkleroad**  
13 years of service

**Pastor Karen E. Hundrieser**  
16 1/2 years of service

**Rev. William Soon Chang Jang**  
29 1/2 years of service

**Rev. Dr. Mary M. Wise**  
29 years of service

# Thank you for your service

# Fighting to bring faith to those behind bars

By Jessica Lema / *The Courier*

Pastor Linda Walker knows what it takes to bring the power of faith into some of society's darkest and most hopeless places.

For the last 15 years, Walker's congregation has primarily consisted of inmates living inside Illinois Department of Corrections prisons and various county jails, many of whom have been disowned by their families and have little to no connection to organized religion of any denomination.

On countless occasions, Walker, 72, has made her way through the metal detectors and paperwork involved in entering the Logan County Jail and the Logan Correctional Center with one goal in mind - delivering the good word to people in bad situations.

"These inmates are people and these people must have access to clergy," Walker said. "I'm there for them, from a theological standpoint, because you have to love your brothers and sisters, so I'll be there for them because that's what I do."

With the Bible as her guide, she's helped inmates reflect on the nature of personal accountability, on what it means to be a human being in the face of life's challenges and, in many cases, she's inspired those in her congregation to seek a life of purpose and meaning behind bars and beyond.

Walker's organization, the Crossroads of Life Prison Faith Community, works in conjunction with the First United Methodist Church in Lincoln and consists of 15 clergy members serving dozens of inmates at local correctional centers.

Walker and her team don't just pay spiritually-focused visits to area inmates, but also attend their court dates and provide support to their family members throughout the judicial process.

## Finding her calling

Walker is quick to explain that she didn't choose the path of prison clergy work; she was compelled by a higher power in a way that made turning her back on the job absolutely out of the question.

After graduating from Northwestern University with a double major in classical languages and English, Walker taught at the high school level for a few years. Once she felt the call to clergy work, around 2002, Walker got involved with Kairos Prison Ministry International, a Christian organization dedicated to the spiritual needs of incarcerated people around the world. Soon she began serving at Dwight Correctional Center, in Livingston County, Ill., where she worked until it closed in 2013.

When several of the women she saw at Dwight were transferred to IDOC's Logan Correctional Center, Walker moved to Lincoln too. "Where my girls go, there go I," she said quite matter-of-factly.

## The Pastor with "street cred"

The cases are challenging, she admits, but not entirely unrelatable. That's due, in part, to the fact that when she was in her late 20s, Walker herself did a stint behind bars in a federal correctional center in Kentucky, where she was sentenced to 18 months on mail fraud charges stemming from an embezzlement scheme.

"Basically, because I was raised a poor little rich kid, I could have anything I wanted and if I couldn't get it any other way, I'd just put my hand in a deep pocket and get it," she said, acknowledging that she makes "no bones about it."

Her nickname, "Pastor Nine," is a reference to the first

digit of the number that was assigned to her in prison.

"I've been there. I've done that. I've rebuilt my life. I was accepted into divinity school and did that and I went through the whole pastoral process with The United Methodist Church. So, the fact that I do know what it's like gives me street cred in there; it makes them more likely to listen. I'm walking proof that you can change your life."

## Turning things around

Walker points to the dissolution of prison Bible study programs and expanded limitations placed on clergy visitation hours as proof that not everyone agrees about the importance of open access to faith-based services for those in behind bars.

"They're hungry for faith, they're hungry for this," she said. "If they weren't lost, they wouldn't be in there. They need access to clergy and under jail standards, they are entitled to that."



Rev. Linda Walker, of the Crossroads of Life Prison Faith Community, points to a painted message on the power of prayer. Walker spends her days sharing religious faith and guidance with inmates housed at local jails and prisons. Photo by *The Courier*

While she has encountered some visitation challenges at the county jail, Walker speaks very highly of the changes that came to the Logan Correctional Center with the arrival of Warden Maggie Burke.

Among the positive changes that Walker mentioned was the Out In A Week Boutique, a "free store" full of donated items, where inmates can select an outfit for release and one to wear to job interviews just before discharge, as a step in the right direction.

Walker helps coordinate donations to that program and several others benefitting the inmates at Logan Correctional, including the recent donation of 300 Bibles. She hopes to see more prison model improvements in the future and plans to personally back them as much as possible.

"The amount of money it costs to incarcerate a person for a year could pay their college tuition at some universities and colleges. What would you rather do with your money? You're paying for this and so am I," she said.

## On life taken for granted

"Through these efforts, these inmates are realizing that they do have some value and people do care and that they are not alone and [they think] 'maybe I am worth something. Now, what am I going to do with my life?'" Walker said.

That realization was certainly the case for Maria Ricca,

formerly of Lincoln, whose life was at an all time low when she met the pastor last year.

Ricca was 36 years old, addicted to heroin, and had just gone through the agony of withdrawal inside of a cold, damp cell at the Logan County Jail. She landed there in January of 2016 after being arrested for possession of the controlled substance that was quickly ruining her life.

Like many of the people Walker has encountered in similar circumstances, Ricca had gone astray from her Catholic roots during her adolescence in Peoria for a number of reasons, namely that she felt rejected by the faith community of her youth due to her sexuality. In turn, any kind of regular emphasis on adhering to Christian values slowly disappeared from Ricca's life and, as her young adulthood progressed into her 30s, things got much darker than she ever imagined possible.

After one month in jail and with some deep-seated reservations, Ricca met with Walker for the first time.

"I remember, like it was yesterday, she said to me 'God never left you; God's always been there, you're the one who turned your back' and I was like 'wow, you know what? She's right,'" Ricca said.

She explained that the women in her pod (a unit of jail cells) were all recovering from something and that most of them met with Walker as often as they were allowed - clergy visitation is one hour a week.

"You meet her and she welcomes you with open arms and she doesn't judge and it's nice for somebody who is a little broken to feel that - to feel accepted maybe for once in their life and she opens that door to give you a better understanding of the world around you."

Ricca got out of jail the following April and entered intensive treatment for her addiction as part of her sentence. Today, the 37-year-old is still on probation and will be for several years, but she's proud to share that she's been drug-free since the day of her arrest (one year and three months ago).

Ricca attends services at the First United Methodist Church in Lincoln and is still on the road to cultivating her best life possible. She credits Walker for bringing that aspiration to light. She maintains regular contact with the pastor and said that Walker is now like a part of her family.

"She doesn't just go in for your visit and when she closes that door and walks out, that's it; it's more than that, she's more than that. She's a good person and she understands the struggle. She's doing what she's called to do and a lot of people need her and benefit from her," she said.

"I wish there were more people like her that were doing what she does."

## How to help

The donation of freshly laundered women's clothes and shoes, as well baby clothes up to size 2T, for the Out In A Week Boutique at Logan Correctional and for use at the Decatur minimum security women's facility (where babies can stay with their mothers) can be dropped off at the First United Methodist Church, 302 Broadway St., Lincoln. The donation of 100 percent plastic clothing hangers (no metal or wood allowed) is also appreciated. To make donation arrangements or to learn more information, contact Rev. Linda Walker at (630) 328-6787 or at [walker.linda@comcast.net](mailto:walker.linda@comcast.net).

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# Signature Cleaners help former inmates dress for success

Men's suits abandoned, forgotten and left behind at some Illinois dry cleaners are getting put to good use thanks in part to a United Methodist who responded to a need.

Bill Denwood, a board member of Disciples Bible Outreach Ministry (DBOM) and member of Community UMC in Naperville, has been working to bring the DBOM study to Stateville Prison in Illinois. DBOM has worked with more than 10,000 inmates in 80 state and federal correctional facilities around the country. While that's still a work in progress, Denwood says last November, Stateville sent out an email request for suits, sport coats and dress shirts for their parolees to use on job interviews.

"The idea is to place these men on an equal footing in the interview process and to help them get employed, especially when they can be up against a high unemployment rate," said Denwood.

Denwood began collecting clothes from area churches and took nearly 400 suits and shirts to Stateville. On the way back from his last visit to the prison, Denwood stopped by his local dry cleaner, Signature Cleaners in Naperville, and asked the owner Steve Hirmer if he had anything to donate. Steve gave him a half rack of unclaimed shirts and suits.

"People drop off things and then leave them, and by the time I call, the phone number is no longer valid," Hirmer told the Chicago Tribune. "So [when] Bill asked, I said yes, and I have a better idea: Why don't we ask all the dry cleaners?"

Together they thought of the idea of going statewide. In the ensuing two months, they called and met with the Executive Director of the Illinois Professional Dry Cleaners and Launderers Association Sue Kratz, who quickly came on board and "Suits for Success" was born. More than 20 dry cleaners are now participating in this new ministry.

"The donated business clothes will help restore their pride, get these men out of the environment that caused them to be in prison, help to get them employed and become tax paying citizens. From this new position they will join the work force and rejoin the community," said Denwood.

Denwood says the benefits are real: the state will benefit by reducing the crowded state of the prison population (a one percent reduction of recidivism will save the state \$35,000 per prisoner x 450 - \$15,750,000.00) and reduce the 50% overcrowding of prisons in the state of Illinois.

So far, they have delivered just under a thousand suits, shirts and dress pants to Stateville prison and

other charitable organizations. The group has received a couple hundred women's clothes as well, which are being dry cleaned by dry cleaners in Joliet and Naperville. Those garments will be delivered to the women's state prisons in Logan, Lincoln and Decatur.

Suits for Success will also collect gently used clothes from the community. Participating dry cleaners are serving as a drop off for the garments and will clean and press them at no cost. Volunteers will deliver them to the state prisons.

For more info and drop-off locations visit: [suitsforsuccess.net](http://suitsforsuccess.net).



Signature Cleaners owner Steven Hirmer (left) and retiree Bill Denwood started the Suits for Success program. Photo courtesy Bill Denwood.

## Youth Group Opportunities

Are you looking for ways to connect with youth leaders and for your youth to connect with other youth? A group of NIC youth leaders have collaborated to provide the following gatherings open to all youth groups in the conference. We hope you can join us for one or all of these!

**June 7, 2017:** Meet at Evanston FUMC, 6:30 - 8:30, for a meal and then games at the beach. For more info and to rsvp for food contact Jane Cheema at [jane@faithatfirst.com](mailto:jane@faithatfirst.com).

**September 24, 2017:** Meet at Northbrook UMC, 5:00 - 7:00, for a meal and Capture the Flag. For more info and to rsvp for food contact Christine Hides at [Christine@northbrookumc.org](mailto:Christine@northbrookumc.org).

**February 25, 2018:** Meet at Glenview UMC, 5:30 - 7:30, for a meal, Gaga Ball and games. For more info and to rsvp for food contact Linda Duback at [lduback@glenviewumc.org](mailto:lduback@glenviewumc.org).

**Spring of 2018** - Youth Ministry in a Changing Church Workshop: For youth leaders (clergy, staff, and volunteer). Planning is underway. If you would like to be put on the workshop email list or join our monthly youth leader gathering for resources, prayer, and support, please contact Christine Hides at [Christine@Northbrookumc.org](mailto:Christine@Northbrookumc.org).

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS: UMW Summer Mission U

**July 13-16, Mission U**  
Weekend Event (Camp Reynoldswood, Dixon)

**July 22, Mission U**  
One Day Event (First UMC, Downers Grove)  
For more info and registration visit the Northern Illinois Conference UMW's new website: [www.umwnic.org](http://www.umwnic.org).



Rev. Molly Phinney Baskette

## SAVE THE DATE! 2017 UMF Stewardship Summit Saturday, August 26

### Stewardship for Real People: Flaws and All

**Time:** 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Location:** Barrington UMC, 98 Algonquin Rd., Barrington, IL  
Keynote: Rev. Molly Phinney Baskette. Check out her recent book *Real Good Church: How our church came back from the dead, and yours can, too*.

Are you seeking ...

Inspiration?  
Practical experience?  
Meaningful change?

Join this summit to begin building a specific and practical plan for your church.

Individual: \$40  
Church Group (3+): \$120  
(increased cost at the door)

Sponsored by Northern Illinois Conference  
United Methodist Foundation.

For more information visit: [umfnic.org/summit](http://umfnic.org/summit).



## EQUIP your church for transformation

Two sessions remain for TeamWorks training taking place in the Northern Illinois Conference through the Office of Congregational Development and Redevelopment with Dr. Craig Kennet Miller from Discipleship Ministries. Registration for Session 3 will open soon.

During these seminars participants are introduced to the TeamWorks material written by Dr. Miller which offers an opportunity to deepen your leadership by creating a healthy, dynamic team of leaders in your congregation. In the month following the one-day experience, the pastor and one key congregational leader will present the same material to a team of seven to fifteen people in their church who will be committed to working together throughout the year.

Registration is ongoing for the remaining three sessions. Each will be held at the Belvidere: First United Methodist Church, 610 Bonus Ave., Belvidere, IL.

The final two sessions will be:

**3rd Session:**  
Saturday, September 23, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
TeamWorks: "Creating a Discipleship System"

**4th Session:**  
Saturday, November 11, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
TeamWorks: "Futurecasting"

If you would like to register, register by contacting Laura Lopez at (312) 346-9766 x724 or [llopez@umcnic.org](mailto:llopez@umcnic.org). You can also register online beginning one month prior to each event by going to [www.umcnic.org](http://www.umcnic.org) and click on the conference calendar.



DYK???

## Did You Know: “Equip” is Our Watch Word”

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

In 2015 the Northern Illinois Conference went through a major organizational review including the use of a judicatory tool called “Landscape”. The Landscape assessment told us that a key desire of pastors and laity is to be (1) equipped to reach new members using new strategies, (2) equipped to help members grow as disciples and to (3) equipped for more effective community outreach. This focus has become part of our conference priorities.

In the course of 12 listening sessions across the conference to help test the findings of the Landscape Assessment, laity and clergy continued to champion the need for tools to be more effective as disciples. Fast-forward to the fall of 2016 when a Staffing Task Force composed of a cross section of leadership realized we needed more than our assumptions to think about equipping the local church into the future.

The Task Force decided that a survey was in order and partnered with The Alford Group, an organizational coaching organization, to design and analyze a survey. You will be hearing more about the findings at annual conference and into the future, but for this brief article I want to highlight a few items.

The survey was sent to representative lay and clergy across the conference. Of 1,200 invited participants, 519 responded, a 47% participation rate. Thank you to all those who took the time to share in this work. There was strong participation from every district in the conference and churches of every size.

On the topic of Equipping, we learned that:

- You prefer live, on-site and regional training resources.
- You prefer events on your district and/or within approximately a one-hour travel time.
- You prefer tailored training, improved communications and on-demand resources.

Focused on outreach, we learned that:

- 83% of respondents would like to learn ways to share their faith.
- You wish to focus on community outreach, mission and leadership development.
- You want to learn how to invite others to church.
- You wish to identify and meet needs of the community while relating to neighbors.

Strengthening connection, we learned that:

- The conference e-news and website are the highest rated tools for communication in terms of important methods of connection.
- You value the use of social media and direct contact.
- Face to face discussion with other churches would be helpful.
- You would like to partner with other churches on outreach.
- Networks, clusters and partnerships are among the top types of beneficial connections.

So what’s next? Pending approval of a new organizational model (another outgrowth of the Landscape Assessment), these findings will create a foundation for carrying forward the priorities of the conference in the coming years.

Meanwhile, feedback on communication, access to online training, topics and modes of training will guide the work of our connectional ministry staff and our work areas, as we plan our equipping efforts in the year ahead.

## Stay Connected

Sign up for the weekly NIC eNews & Appointment Announcements. Visit [www.umcnic.org](http://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](http://www.umcnic.org/jobs)

## How to Contact Us:

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[agerhardt@umcnic.org](mailto:agerhardt@umcnic.org) 312-346-9766 ext. 766  
77 W. Washington St. Suite 1820, Chicago, IL 60062

## 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.

## 2017 APPOINTMENT: MAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Jenny Weber** (Elder) to Kirkland (DeKalb District) from Oak Park: First (Chicago Northwestern District). Jenny follows Kyeong-Ah Woo who is appointed to GBGM as a missionary.

**Katherine Paisley** (Elder) to Oak Park: First (Chicago Northwestern District) from Chicago: Irving Park (Chicago Northwestern District). Katherine follows Jenny Weber who is appointed to Kirkland (DeKalb District).

**Marcus Tabb** (346.1) to Maywood: Neighborhood (Chicago Northwestern District) full time from part time.

**Hope Chernich** (DSS) to United Church of Rogers Park (1/2 time) and Chicago: Irving Park (1/2 time) (Chicago Northwestern District) as associate.

**Melissa Earley** (Elder) to Arlington Heights: First (Elgin District) from Northbrook (Chicago Northwestern District). Melissa follows Ouk-Yean Kim Jueng who is appointed to Campbell in the Cal-Nevada Conference as a 346.1.

**Soon Chang Jang** (Elder) to retirement from Mundelein: Vision Church. Soon Chang transferred from the Korean Methodist Church in 1998 and has served Mundelein: Vision Church during his ministry.

**Lindsey Long Joyce** (Provisional Elder) to United Church of Rogers Park (1/2 time)(Chicago Northwestern District) and Chicago: Irving Park (1/2 time)(Chicago Northwestern District) from Oak Park: St. Johns (Chicago Northern District). Lindsey follows Catiana McKay who is appointed to Galena (Rockford District) and Katherine Paisley who is appointed to Oak Park: First (Chicago: Northwestern District).

**Thoreau May** (DSS) to Chicago: Mandell, ¾ time (Chicago Northwestern District). Thoreau follows Amos Olidipo who is appointed to Thornton and Park Forest.

**Nancy Vidad** (LP) to Rockford: Brooke Road (Rockford District) from Dakota (Rockford District). Nancy follows Chung Nam Kwak who is appointed to Tinley Park (Chicago: Southern District).

**Brenda Morris** (LP) to Dakota: Rock Grove (Rockford District) from Stockton: Wesley (Rockford District). Brenda follows Nancy Vidad who is appointed to Rockford: Brooke Road (Rockford District).

**Keri Rainsberger** (Pending LP License) to Lena (Rockford District). Keri follows Brian LeBaron who is appointed to Polo: Faith (DeKalb District).

**Thomas Yang** (Elder) to Pacific Northwest Conference (346.1), Seattle District, Bellevue mission field as a new church start planter from Hampshire: First (Elgin District).

**Paul Judd** (Elder) to Brock UMC in the North District of the Central Texas Conference (346.1) from DeKalb: First (DeKalb District).

**Kristen Larsen** (Elder) to Crete (Chicago Southern District) from Glen Ellyn: First (Aurora District). Kristen follows Fritz Bartels who is appointed to Joliet: Grace (Aurora District).

**Ayla Samson** (Pending Commissioning to Provisional Elder) to Lombard: Faith (Aurora District) ¾ time while continuing to serve at Chicago: G2G (NFC) (Chicago Southern District) ¼ time. Ayla follows Amos Oladipo who is appointed to Thornton and Park Forest: Grace United Protestant (Chicago Southern District).

**Jeremiah Thompson** (346.1 from Illinois Great Rivers Conference) to Sterling: Wesley (DeKalb District). Jeremiah follows Wesley Dickson who is appointed to New Lenox (Aurora District).

**Megan Thompson** (346.1 from Illinois Great Rivers Conference) to Steward/Creston (DeKalb District). Megan follows Jin Yang Kim who is appointed as a GBGM missionary.

## Outdoor & Retreat Ministries Happenings

### Summer Camp Registration

Still thinking about camp?  
Find the listings and descriptions at:  
[www.umcnic.org/camps](http://www.umcnic.org/camps).



## Chicago Southern District offers mini-summer camp

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

Early Bird: \$229 by 6/1

Full price: \$249

\$50 non-refundable deposit

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!

## Volunteers get camps ready

More than 30 United Methodists from Chana, Crossroads (Bolingbrook), First (West Chicago), Morrison, Princeton and Sycamore gathered at Camp Reynoldswood for the Annual Spring Cleaning Work Party on May 6 and volunteers pitched in at Wesley Woods on May 20. Participants enjoyed beautiful spring weather and sunshine to get the camps in tip-top shape by hanging new doors, building new archery racks, installing bunkbed safety rails, cleaning windows and clearing the prayer trail. Participants broke bread together for breakfast and lunch, and each earned a \$20 credit toward camp fees for the church or camper of their choice. Thank you for getting our camps ready for the summer and all our campers.