

# The Northern Illinois Conference OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Reporter

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## Chicago church receives large grant to start a Freedom School

By Anne Marie Gerhardt, NIC Dir. of Communications

Children and youth in Chicago's Chatham neighborhood on the city's South Side will soon get additional educational support to give them a head start thanks to a new Freedom School opening at St. Mark United Methodist Church. On Sunday, August 14, St. Mark UMC announced the church received a \$350,000 renewable yearly grant for three years from the Illinois State Board of Education to start a Freedom School as a continued effort to provide social and economic equity through unique learning opportunities.

"We are honored to receive this grant, but we are more excited about the impact it's going to have on the children and our community," said Rev. P. Devon Brown, senior pastor at St. Mark. "The Freedom School teaches the students reading, writing and arithmetic in the context of their culture and history, which will build self-esteem and help raise competent young people to grow into adults who contribute to the community."

In April 2022, the state of Illinois announced a \$17 million grant to build the first state-funded network of Freedom Schools in the country. The schools date back to the 1960s when volunteers traveled to Mississippi to teach Black students how to read and write, along with lessons on constitutional rights and African American history.

Chicago 6th Ward Alderman Roderick T. Sawyer said he's pleased the state chose St. Mark for the grant and believes the Freedom School will be vital to the community.

"Any educational institution like this will uplift the citizens in this community and I think it will be enlightening to the youth, their parents and community members who get involved," said Sawyer. "We have to make sure people know they matter and that they have the rights and privileges of every other student, and I think this Freedom School will make that happen."

In 1995, Marian Wright Edelman, civil rights activist and founder of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), took the name and founded the Freedom School Program. CDF's mission is to "ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life, and a successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities."

Rev. Pamela Pirtle, who is serving on staff at St. Mark, first introduced the idea of starting a Freedom School with

the church's Youth and Family Center and brought together a team to work on applying for the grant.

"We are excited to receive this Phillip Jackson Freedom School grant that is part of the state's Education and Workforce Equity Act enacted last March," said Pirtle. "We had a dedicated team working the last few months to make this happen, and we can't wait to begin welcoming scholars, as they're called under the program."

According to the CDF Freedom Schools website, the program provides summer and after-school enrichment through a research-based and multicultural program model that supports K-12 scholars and their families through five essential components, including character-building enrichment, parent and family involvement, civic engagement, and nutrition, health and mental health.

Since 1995, CDF says the program has educated more than 150,000 children (K-12) and trained more than 17,000 young adults and child advocates on the Freedom Schools model.

About five Freedom Schools exist in Chicago and more

than 200 across the country, according to Jon Hale, Associate Professor of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and author of the 2016 book "The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement" (New York: Columbia University Press).

"Illinois will have the largest Freedom School network in the county with this grant program," said Hale, who added this kind of funding is rare as many states are cutting education funding. "Hopefully, this inspires more state support since this type of education is critically important. The after-school program supports what's being taught in schools and the six-week summer program fills that summer learning gap."

Hale, who consulted with St. Mark, says Freedom Schools provide tremendous support for young students by providing high-quality education, excellent teaching, and connections to mentors. He says this education is needed now more than ever.

(continued on page 3, see from the cover)



St. Mark UMC leaders and guests celebrate a \$350,000 yearly grant for three years to open a Freedom School to support students in the Chatham neighborhood in Chicago.



## From Your Bishop: Boy Scouts and Evangelism

*“A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.”*

That is the Scout Law I learned when I was 12 years old entering the seventh grade. I could recite it from memory along with the Scout Oath, “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.”

As I was becoming a teenager at the end of 1958, it was good to learn some values to keep me focused. Someone figured out that young people need mentors and friends to prepare us to make ethical and moral choices over our lifetime. I benefited from having someone say it was honorable to choose the good over the many distractions and temptations that would come my way.

It was early summer when my friend Peter Yost told me the Boys Scouts met at Wayne Street Methodist Church, blocks from my house in Ft. Wayne. I was new in town and needed to make friends. Troop 12 was the oldest in the city and met in a room set aside for scouting. Near the gym were open spaces for pledging allegiance to the flag,

knot-tying, relay races, working on merit badges, and basketball.

During that summer, we went on a campout with tents and sleeping bags, cooking and cleaning, games, and stargazing. We hiked a ten-mile trail through the woods in the fall and attended a jamboree with other troops. All these activities made me feel part of something bigger than myself and gave me a sense of purpose.

Bill Christensen, Mickey Beaver, Ricky Hawthorne, and a few other scouts were active in the church where we met. One of them invited me to the Youth Group they called “MYF,” which met on Sunday night in the same gym we used in scouting. That is how my journey in Christian formation began. When the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) met, there was a larger group of Junior High School students from several schools, and there were girls!

After a meeting, someone said, “We missed you in Sunday School this morning.” The next thing I knew, my family was going to church, and I was with my friends in Sunday School. That seventh and eighth-grade Sunday School Class became the Confirmation Class, where I learned about God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, John Wesley, salvation by grace, and the Methodist Church. I was baptized and joined the Wayne Street Methodist Church on May 15, 1960, just before I entered high school.

I do not know how many people have come to learn

about Christ and his Church through the Boy Scouts and similar organizations for youth, but the number is significant. The merit badges in scouting and Sunday School classes helped build character within me. They related me to God, helped me discover teamwork, unleashed my potential, and gave me the courage to make good choices. I never advanced to a high rank because football became my passion. However, the Boy Scouts pointed me to a life-long desire to love and serve God and others.

Methodists were busy forming Scout Troops around the world before the Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910. We have partnered with the Boy Scouts for over a century to build character. In 2020 we had over 10,000 units related to United Methodist churches in the U.S., but by the end of May the number dropped to about 6,600 Scouting units, partially due to the pandemic. Approximately 140 troops are currently active in churches across the Northern Illinois Conference.

We have always teamed with other organizations to teach people how to make good choices and develop their God-given potential while respecting others. Like me, many people have entered the church doors through a friend’s invitation. In my case, it was through the Boy Scouts of America.



## UMC portion of Boy Scouts’ bankruptcy ruling approved

By Sam Hodges, UMNS\*

United Methodist leaders greeted with cautious optimism a judge’s partial approval of the Boy Scouts of America’s bankruptcy reorganization plan. The BSA filed for bankruptcy in February 2020 amid mounting claims of Scouting-related sex abuse going back decades, with many allegations involving chartering or sponsoring organizations of Scout troops, including local United Methodist churches.

After months of negotiations and hearings involving multiple parties, as well as a trial earlier this year, U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Laurie Selber Silverstein issued a lengthy ruling on July 29, approving initial settlements of about \$2.3 billion to abuse survivors. That includes a \$30 million United Methodist contribution to the survivors’ fund.

Silverstein rejected some parts of the bankruptcy plan, saying the BSA still has “decisions to make” as it continues a fight for survival, but expressed her willingness to work with the organization.

United Methodist Bishop John Schol is among a group of United Methodist leaders who has negotiated on behalf of the denomination.

“I am grateful Judge Silverstein ruled that most of the BSA reorganization plan met with criteria of bankruptcy law and was constitutional, including approving the United Methodist settlement,” Schol said in an email to UM News. “However, there are several more matters the BSA must address in order for the plan’s full approval.”

Steven Scheid, director of the Center for Scouting Ministries at United Methodist Men, said that though hurdles remain, he sees “God actively preparing a future” for the BSA.

In its own statement, the BSA said: “This ruling represents a significant milestone in the financial restructuring of the Boy Scouts of America. ... We are committed to working with all constituents to make the necessary changes required by the ruling to drive this process forward and we remain optimistic about securing approval of a final plan as soon as possible.”

The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations have had a relationship with the BSA for more than 100 years, mainly by providing headquarters for Scouting groups at local churches.

Some 6,600 Scouting units were chartered by United Methodist churches in the U.S. as of May, making the

denomination the largest partner of BSA programs.

But local United Methodist churches — which in many cases recruited and screened adult leaders of Scouting groups — have faced considerable liability in that partnership. That became even clearer as Scouting-related abuse allegations mounted and prompted the bankruptcy filing.

United Methodist leaders formed a committee to represent the denomination in the bankruptcy negotiations — something other large partner groups did as well.

The committee ultimately negotiated a settlement for United Methodist conferences in the U.S. to contribute \$30 million to a fund for abuse survivors. United Methodist local churches would in turn get protection from future lawsuits over Scouting-related abuse allegations. The Northern Illinois Annual Conference’s calculated contribution is \$754,348 toward the Survivor Trust Fund, which will be funded through church pledges and other resources over three years..

The settlement also committed the denomination to a review of all Safe Sanctuary policies in conferences and local churches; to meeting with survivors of abuse that occurred in United Methodist-sponsored troops; and to sharing resources across the denomination about the reality of sexual abuse and ways to keep young people safe.

In her ruling, Silverstein noted that there had been no objection to The United Methodist Church settlement, and that she found “substantial” its monetary contribution and willingness to work with survivors. She also said the denomination’s commitment to continue working with BSA “helps to ensure ... the future of Scouting.”

Along with approving the \$30 million United Methodist contribution to the survivors’ fund, Silverstein approved \$78 million from the BSA, \$515 million from local Scouting councils and nearly \$1.7 billion from settling insurers.

The Associated Press has covered the bankruptcy proceedings closely and noted that the BSA, upon filing for bankruptcy, faced about 275 lawsuits and knew of another 1,400 potential cases. There are now more than 82,000 claims.

The Coalition of Abused Scouts for Justice — which includes law firms representing more than 70,000 of the survivor claimants — noted the scope and complexity of the litigation. The coalition offered a positive assessment of Silverstein’s ruling.

“The confirmation of this plan makes closure possible and some measure of justice tangible for people whose voices have been silenced for far too long,” the group said in a statement.

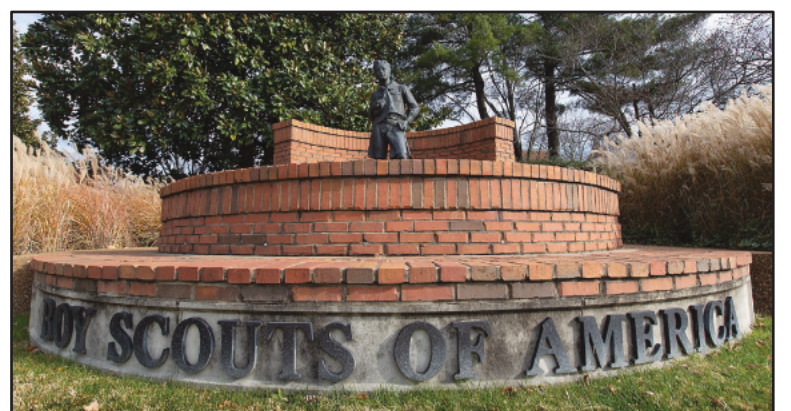
Schol, in a press release, joined in looking forward to a final agreement.

“I am confident that everyone working together with the BSA will be able to address the remaining issues so that survivors will be fairly compensated and 1 million young people will continue to participate in Scouting.”

### Scouting ministry continues

In June, United Methodist leaders and the BSA announced they would continue as partners but in a new relationship that would include a standard affiliation agreement for local churches wanting to host a Scouting group. Churches will be supportive of Scouting in various ways, but supervisory responsibility will shift to local Boy Scout Councils. NIC treasurer Lonnie Chafin says churches are required to use the new chartering agreement and is the only approved one. To find the agreement, visit [methodistscouter.org/a-new-agreement](http://methodistscouter.org/a-new-agreement).

\*Hodges is a Dallas-based writer for United Methodist News.



A judge has given partial approval to the Boy Scouts of America’s sex abuse-related bankruptcy reorganization, including a \$30 million United Methodist contribution to a fund for abuse survivors. United Methodist congregations have long been partners of the BSA. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.



## NCJ Committee on Episcopacy recommends episcopal election

The North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) will convene in Fort Wayne, Ind., November 2-5, 2022 with the theme “We Press On.” This Jurisdictional Conference will gather delegates (lay and clergy) from across Illinois (Northern Illinois, Illinois Great Rivers), Indiana, Iowa, Ohio (East Ohio and West Ohio), Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin for a momentous time filled with worship and collective discernment regarding the election of episcopal leadership and receiving episcopal assignments.

During the Special Called NCJ Conference in 2021, the delegates affirmed the recommendation from the Committee on Episcopacy to reduce the number of active bishops in the North Central Jurisdiction from nine to eight. The NCJ Committee on Episcopacy (COE) with the NCJ College of Bishops had determined the prudence of anticipating a General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA)-announced reduction ahead of the 2020 General Conference (GC). The recommendation was made prayerfully and proactively, using the data and information we had at that time.

However, as the NCJ has attempted to live out the experiment of reduced episcopal leadership, with Bishop Laurie Haller and Bishop David Bard assuming oversight

of additional annual conferences for what has become a 24-month “interim,” multiple medical leaves among our bishops, the uncertainty triggered by the pre-GC launch of the Global Methodist Church, etc., committee members find such a reduction impractical at the present moment. They acknowledge that such a reduction will likely be both necessary and inevitable following the transitions facing the UMC in 2024. But for the present moment of transition and uncertainty, they believe this approved reduction will not now help our jurisdiction “press on” into the future.

The recent Judicial Council ruling and GCFA affirmation offers flexibility: “Absent General Conference action, the formula and number of bishops for each jurisdiction approved by the 2016 General Conference remain legally binding and effective until replaced by a new formula.”

Therefore, the NCJ Committee on the Episcopacy, after consultation with the NCJ College of Bishops, proposes the following:

1. The North Central Jurisdiction will reverse the decision of NCJ 2021, thereby returning the total number to nine active bishops, beginning January 1, 2023, until the next General Conference declares otherwise.

2. Additionally, the NCJ will be asked to reaffirm the Dakotas and Minnesota returning to a single episcopal area, being served by one (1) bishop.

These proposals are presented for the short-term, in order to help us navigate the uncertainty of the present time. The COE anticipates that the Jurisdictional Conference Session of 2024 may bring new developments and circumstances, including several mandatory episcopal retirements. They anticipate a return to nine active bishops for the interim will provide greater “breathing room” to help prepare for those decisions at that time.

The Northern Illinois Conference General and Jurisdictional delegation has endorsed Rev. Luis Felipe Reyes, pastor at Sycamore UMC as an episcopal candidate. Rev. Jacques Conway, Lake South Superintendent has also submitted his candidacy among the field of nine candidates. To learn more about the candidates, visit [ncjumc.org](http://ncjumc.org) and click on the WePressOn graphic for more details.

All United Methodists across the North Central Jurisdiction are encouraged to begin praying for the conference, the delegates, and the important decisions that will be made in November.



## Author of United Methodist Swedish history receives award



Linda Schramm from the General Commission on Archives and History presents Rev. Carol M. Norén the Saddlebag Award for her book on the Swedish Methodist history.

The Rev. Dr. Carol M. Norén, retired elder in the Northern Illinois Conference and professor of preaching emerita at North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, recently received the 2022 Saddlebag Award for her book “On to Perfection: Nels O. Westergreen and the Swedish Methodist Church,” published by Wipf and Stock.

The Historical Society of The United Methodist Church awards this honor to the author who published the most significant book on United Methodist history, biography, theology or polity during the preceding year. The award was presented by Linda Schramm, chair of the Saddlebag Selection committee, on July 28 at the Historical Society’s annual meeting at Epworth by the Sea, St. Simon’s Island, Georgia.

Norén said, “I’m honored to receive this

award, not only as a validation of my research and writing, but also because my grandparents, like Westergreen, were Scandinavian immigrants who became Methodists after coming to America. In some ways, I see my family’s story reflected in his.”

On to Perfection presents the history and evolution of Swedish Methodism: the largest foreign language group in the American Methodist connection, told through the life of one of its leading ministers. Nels O. Westergreen (1834-1919) served a number of churches in the Northern Illinois and Great Rivers Annual Conferences. Westergreen was a chaplain during the Civil War, helped organize the Swedish Conferences, founded the Swedish Methodist Theological Seminary in 1870 and taught there in later years, edited *Sändebudet*, the Swedish Methodist

newspaper, and served as a district superintendent. He also helped organize the Emigrant Aid Society, contributed to the authorized Swedish Methodist Hymnal, and was active in the temperance movement. Westergreen’s collected writings are housed in the NIC archives, where Norén serves as a volunteer archivist along with Marilyn Steenwyk of United Church in Sandwich, Ill. On to Perfection also explores what is distinctive about ministry in an immigrant community, and how that has changed or remained the same over the last 150 years, as well as what happens to individual and communal religious identity of immigrants in the process of assimilation into the dominant denominational and social culture.

For more information on the award, visit [umchistory.org](http://umchistory.org).

## From the Cover: Freedom School Grant



Children at many Freedom Schools start the day with a Harambee ritual. Harambee in Swahili means “Let’s Pull together.” Screenshot photo from Philadelphia Freedom Schools Literacy Academy video.

“They (Freedom Schools) have become so much more important because COVID-19 has devastated public education in terms of funding, displacing students and teachers, and increasing privatization,” Hale told the Illinois News Bureau.

CDF says many sponsors have returned to safe operation this year, offering in-person, virtual, and hybrid programs. In 2021, CDF Freedom Schools partnered with 94 organizations to serve over 7,200 children at 152 program sites.

Rev. Arlene Christopherson, NIC Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries, praised St. Mark for receiving this grant and said the church is up to the challenge.

“I know from my time working with you that this church invests in youth and children from your martial arts program, youth choir, youth groups, Sunday school; it’s in your DNA,” Christopherson told the congregation. “In this era in our society, our youth need more support, guidance, and opportunities than ever before. We need the moral grounding that you can give through this school.”

St. Mark will open its after-school program in October 2022 and offer the summer program starting June 2023. For more information and to get involved, visit [stmarkumcchicago.org](http://stmarkumcchicago.org).

## DeKalb church breaks ground on building after generous pledges come in

Penny Rosenow, First UMC DeKalb member



Bishop John L. Hopkins greets members of DeKalb First UMC at the site of the church's new building on 15 acres of land off Annie Glidden Road.



Church leaders and members participate in the official groundbreaking ceremony held July 24.

It was a glorious day for First United Methodist Church of DeKalb on Sunday, July 24, 2022! It was a perfect day for the official groundbreaking for a new church building on 15 acres of land on North Annie Glidden Road – a day that had been in the congregation's hopes, dreams, and prayers for nearly 20 years. The early morning rain left behind a day of blue skies and bright sunshine.

But more than the blessing of good weather was the blessing of the apparent joy of all present. Honored guests included Northern Illinois Conference Bishop John L. Hopkins, Prairie South District Superintendent Rev. Brian Gilbert, and Director of Congregational Development Rev. J. Martin Lee. Other dignitaries included past and present DeKalb city officials, former land owner and neighbor Kate Storey, Dan Saavedra from Saavedra Group Architects, and Project Managers from Irving Construction. Dozens of the many church members who have been actively involved in The Help Build the Future committees were present.

As DeKalb First plans to leave their large, beautiful, but aging downtown church building, (originally built in 1908), for a new, smaller, less majestic one, Pastor Jonathan Crail put some of the congregant's feelings into words.

"We feel as though we are breaking new ground in opportunities for mission and ministry for our congregation," said Crail. "This is not just putting together a new facility for the church, but it is really a new opportunity to engage with the community, to be in a neighborhood that is in the process of revitalization. So it is not just about our congregation having a place to worship and do our activities; it is really about how we can be a blessing to DeKalb and the larger world."

Sherry Uhrich, co-chair for the Building Coordinating Team, added, "Moving to this area is going to help us to build on our mission programs, expanding our outreach within our new neighborhood, including the new high school area and the Eden's Garden community next to our land."

The building fundraising and planning began in earnest with an April 2017 Charge Conference at which the congregation overwhelmingly voted to purchase land and build a new facility. The church hired Greg McGarvey of Horizons Stewardship, who recommended two campaigns, as the congregation was adamant there be no mortgage. With massive involvement of individuals and committees praying, "Lord, what do You want to do through me," the first campaign was a success.

The second campaign commenced this year, and "Help Build the Future" campaign co-chairs Jim Horn and Tom Weber noted, "On June 12, we celebrated total commitments to our second planned campaign, just short of reaching the Celebration Level." Still, they reported, "When we received the initial construction bids, we were still well short of the money needed to construct our church building."

This news was obviously disappointing to many who had worked and prayed for years. But less than a month later, on July 3, Jim and Tom reported, "As our journey has been grounded in gratitude, revealed in prayer and lived in faith, we have prayed and kept the faith. Through generous commitments, we have surpassed the Miracle Level."

The Building Coordinating Team then worked with Saavedra Group Architects and the building contractors, Irving Construction, on the estimated costs for the

building. This group was able to determine a new estimated construction cost of \$4.8 million. This meant that DeKalb First was on pace to pay for the building without a mortgage. This news was celebrated with the official groundbreaking on July 24. Construction will take 9-12 months with plans to be in the new building by mid-summer 2023.

First United UMC of DeKalb has affirmed that it is truly amazing what God can do through us, through a community on a journey grounded in gratitude, revealed in prayer, and lived in faith. And that miracles do happen.



The congregation has been worshipping in their building on the corner of Fourth and Oak Streets in downtown DeKalb since the early 1900's.



# Local pastors complete Spanish Licensing School at Garrett

One of the first steps to becoming a License Local Pastor is to attend a United Methodist Licensing School, which requires having a minimum of 80 hours of instruction with students. They receive training and mentorship in areas such as Administration and Leadership, Pastoral Care, and United Methodist Theology.

To bring this opportunity to Hispanic/Latinx pastors, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (GETS) offered the Spanish Licensing School this year from May to August for 20 students from several conferences, including twelve from the Northern Illinois Conference.

"This is a great accomplishment for our students who have been waiting to fulfill this step for years, and it's a great celebration for our Northern Illinois Conference to know that twelve Hispanic/Latinx servants will be licensed as Local Pastors and are eager to be trained to be better servants of Jesus Christ," said Rev. Fabiola Grandon-Mayer, Prairie North District Superintendent, who has walked hand in hand with this group of pastors. "This also shows us that great things can happen with goodwill, dedication, and commitment."

After the students receive the official documentation of completion from GETS, once appointed by the bishop, students can receive a license for pastoral ministry. This allows them to preach and teach, lead worship, receive new members, perform the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion in their appointment setting, and carry out other pastoral duties. Many of the NIC students also recently graduated as lay missionaries from the Conference Academy for Faith Community Development.

Garrett has held the Spanish Licensing School every other year for more than a decade, but leaders say this year was unique.

"What was different about this year was our weekly online format that made learning more accessible, especially for those students who work part-time or full-time alongside their ministry practice," said Rev. Lisl Heymans Paul, GETS' Director of Course of Study.

Paul also said the faculty diversity, including clergy from Northern Illinois, Illinois Great Rivers, Indiana, Wisconsin Conferences, and a Ph.D. student from Garrett and

President Javier Viera, also made this year's program special.

"These excellent faculty provided a wealth of experience and commitment to collaborate on behalf of and with the Spanish Licensing students," said Paul. "President Viera shared with me his delight in teaching these students and Garrett's commitment to continuing to support their ministry formation."

Paul added that the seminary looks forward to these students continuing in the Course of Study and Master's degree programs.

"Personally, it was inspiring for me to witness the dedication and perseverance of the students," said Paul. "All of our Licensing School faculty remarked how connected the group was and what a joy it was to teach and learn along with the students."

One of the students, Xiomara Castro, who is serving at Iglesia Metodista Nuevo Amanecer in Des Plaines, said the experience was a blessing and a dream come true.

"The preparation and teachings of the teachers increased our knowledge and prepared us for the performance and guidance in our Methodist Congregations," said Castor. "They trained us to deepen in Methodist Theology, in the administration that is a vital part of the Church, and for the life of our congregation. We can clearly see now that our humble plans, God turns them into great projects, and

this project is one of them."

Garrett and Course of Study coordinators say they're committed to the student's successful completion in the program.

"We are very excited to continue providing student support services to our Spanish Licensing School students, especially in their native language, español," said Honorio Morales, Coordinator of Course of Study from GETS. As we concluded its 12 weeks of the SLS program, we celebrated students' accomplishments with a virtual closing ceremony where participants received a certificate of completion and shared their learning experiences and potential impact on their congregations."

Morales reported that one student remarked, "this program makes us feel important by constantly encouraging us to continue while receiving the guidance of Latinx faculty." Another student stated, "Culminar este programa ha sido el mejor regalo recibido este verano para mí y mi comunidad" (Completing this program has been the best gift that my community and I have received this summer)."

All participants expressed tremendous gratitude for this opportunity and are eager to continue with the Course of Study in español next year.

*~Information compiled by Rev. Fabiola Grandon-Mayer*



A large group of Hispanic/Latinx local pastors take the next steps to become licensed through a program at Garrett taught in Spanish.

## Welcome New Inclusive Collective Campus Minister



Rev. Larry J. Morris III

The Inclusive Collective (IC), a vibrant, growing, and diverse Northern Illinois Conference and Presbytery of Chicago campus ministry in Chicagoland, is welcoming a new Pastor and Executive Director. After a national search, the IC Board of Directors named Rev. Larry J. Morris III to lead the campus ministry, succeeding Rev. Rich Havard.

Larry is a self-described personality junkie, Apple loyalist, and plant parent. Larry is from Indianapolis, Ind., but has spent the last ten years on the west coast in California and Nevada. He is the co-founder of Communion Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Henderson, Nev., and owner of Larry J. Morris III, LLC, which helps people and organizations "realize their extraordinary purpose."

Larry is a Ph.D. student in the African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric program at Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis, IN). Their research interests focuses on the intersections of Blackness, queerness, and sacred rhetoric. Larry comes to the Inclusive Collective with a variety of unique experiences, including community organizing, diversity, equity and inclusion consulting, and program development and management.

In its seventh year, the IC is a relaunch of a ministry known as Agape House. In 2015, Agape House was on the verge of dying: it had zero student involvement, a declining reputation, and was hemorrhaging partners and funds. Believing that God wanted to do a new thing among university students in Chicago, the ministry intentionally restarted in August 2015 as the Inclusive Collective with Rev. Havard as Pastor and Executive Director.

Over the past seven years, the ministry has experienced a renaissance. Here are some glimpses of what God has done since 2015:

- The IC has gone from 0 people in 2015 to over 115 young adults involved in spiritual formation in 2021 through small groups, worship gatherings, and retreats.



Rev. Rich Havard

- Over 40% of IC members are new to faith or returning to faith, meaning almost half had no connection to a faith community before the IC.
- IC members are diverse: 40% BIPOC, 50% LGBTQ, and 80% Gen Z.
- Hosted annual Justice Retreats with over 100 young adults to learn how following Jesus invites us to seek justice.
- Launched South Loop Community Table, a weekly dinner party with young adults and people experiencing homelessness.
- Increased the budget by 140% while diversifying revenue streams and decreasing dependence on denominational giving. Denomination funding was 72% of the budget in 2015 and 33% of the 2021 total budget.

Havard left the IC in December 2021 to become the Program Officer at the Wayfarer Foundation, a grant-making organization that funds and supports spiritually-rooted and justice-oriented non-profits.

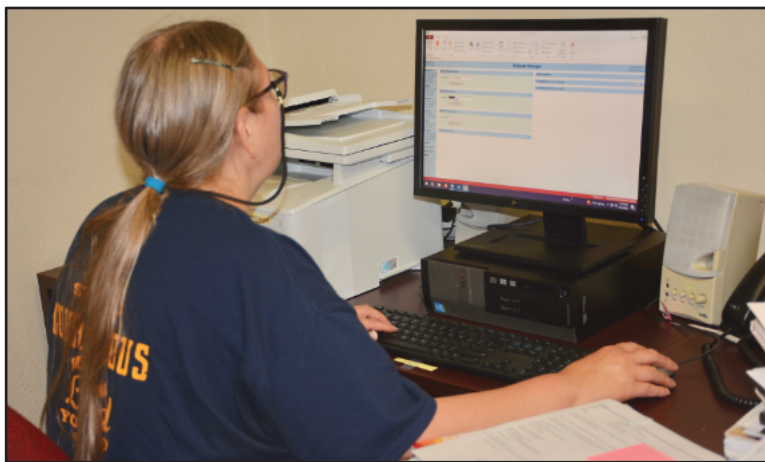
During his ministry, Havard helped grow the Inclusive Collection and expand its mission "to fuel young adults through Jesus-rooted soul work."

"In other words, we strive to create experiences where our people encounter God in such powerful ways that they become deeply aware of who they are, feeling inspired and energized for courageous, faithful living," said Havard. "Experiences that stir them up to follow Jesus, disrupt the status quo and co-create God's Beloved Community."

Rev. Morris has hit the ground running to get ready for a new school year. Under their leadership, the IC is looking forward to the future, believing that university campuses are prime places to engage emerging leaders who can pave the way toward a bold, faithful, and hopeful future across the country and the world.

Visit [LetsGetInclusiveChi.org](https://LetsGetInclusiveChi.org) or Instagram (@LetsGetInclusiveChi) for more information.





Jill Stone, retired United Media Resource Center director and now one of several volunteers, enters information in the United Media Resource Center system to send out orders for resources.



More than 24 shelving units line the UMRC's collection at Kumler Outreach Ministries in Springfield.

## United Media Resource Center settles into new home

By Jill Stone, Retired UMRC Director

Over the summer, many volunteers, some from the Northern Illinois Conference, unpacked more than 200 boxes and organized hundreds of United Media Resource Center (UMRC) resources that are back on shelves again in a new home. Some resources have been sent, and more will continue to be sent as volunteers get caught up on the backlog of orders.

### What's different

The UMRC relocated to Kumler Outreach Ministries, a Kumler United Methodist Church ministry in Springfield, Ill.

The new mailing address is:

Kumler Outreach Ministries  
Attn: United Media Resource Center  
303 E North Grand Ave.  
Springfield, IL 62702-3822

The new phone number is 217-523-2269, the number for Kumler Outreach Ministries. When the receptionist answers, ask for the United Media Resource Center. The UMRC hours of operation are in flux, so you will likely need to leave a voice message. Please include your name and church name in your message.

Items are not mailed out every day. Items are generally sent by Library Rate or Media Mail, which is cheaper but adds delivery time. Order items as soon as possible before the beginning use date for best results.

Jill Stone's email, [jstone@igrc.org](mailto:jstone@igrc.org), will be discontinued. Please use [umrc@igrc.org](mailto:umrc@igrc.org).

Volunteers now operate the UMRC; training will be ongoing as we continue to transition to new ways of doing things. Please be patient with us!

The building hours are 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 3 p.m., Monday-Friday. If you are in Springfield,

please drop in to look around and borrow items to take home. The UMRC is located on the second floor (an elevator is available). Parking is located behind the building.

### What stays the same

The UMRC has a wonderful collection of DVD studies, books, and more on a variety of topics! Don't buy what you can borrow! Items can be ordered anytime online from the UMRC online catalog.

Items can be mailed to your church or home address, whichever is most convenient for you. The UMRC email address is [umrc@igrc.org](mailto:umrc@igrc.org). Items can be requested through the online catalog or by email. The UMRC website is [igrc.org/UMRC](http://igrc.org/UMRC).

The world around us continues to change, and although there are changes at the United Media Resource Center, Kumler UMC is pleased to keep the UMRC open so it can continue to serve its member churches. We encourage you to use this convenient service to access resources for Christian education, leadership development, ministry support, and personal spiritual development.

Keep us in mind when you see resources of interest from Cokesbury or other distributors. Check the UMRC online catalog to see if titles are already in the collection or email us to see if new or upcoming titles will be ordered. We welcome your resource suggestions!

Yes, if your church is a member of the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church, you already are a member of the UMRC thanks to your apportionment dollars.

The world around us changes, and the UMRC encourages you to try new things! Be creative and bold! And practice good stewardship with the United Media Resource Center!



Rev. Hyo Sun Oh, pastor at Roselle UMC.

## Pastor leads by example with Apportionment challenge

By Rev. Hyo Sun Oh, Pastor at Roselle United Methodist Church

I attended the 183rd Northern Illinois Annual Conference right after hearing the news from the Finance Committee that our church has been experiencing a \$4,000 monthly deficit since January 2022. It was shocked since we had a successful stewardship drive that allowed us to reinstate the musicians' salary (which was cut in half during the pandemic in 2020-2021) and to pay our apportionment 1/12th every month until June 2022.

The reality depressed me, and I doubted my effectiveness in ministry. I prayed and focused on how to resolve the issues during the Annual Conference sessions. Then, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA) presented how Apportionments are distributed to fund the ministry and mission of the Northern Illinois Conference and the General Church. They used pie charts to show how the seven funds are allocated. The presentation sounded like God talking to me, showing the answer to my prayers.

I knew about apportionments and taught every congregation I served about them. Yet, CCFA's presentation made more sense to me, clearer than ever before. I shared the divine intervention with my lay leader and planned to present it to the congregation just as it was presented at Annual Conference.

As I put more thought into it before Sunday, it did not make sense to me to teach about apportionments without modeling it. So, I calculated the total amount of the apportionments and divided it by the giving units of the congregation. It came down to \$300 per person or per

giving unit, so I wrote a \$300 check for my portion.

After the apportionments presentation using the pie charts by one of the Annual Conference lay members during Sunday service, I shared my story that I've been giving more to the church than ever before due to the great needs of the ministry and mission of the church. I said the Pastor does not only ask the congregation to give but also leads by example. Then, I showed my check and challenged the congregation to give a one-time portion of \$300, \$50.00 monthly, or \$12.00 weekly until the end of the year 2022 to strengthen the connectional system of The UMC. Without hearing the reactions or feedback from the people that Sunday, I returned home, pulled my hair, and regretted my action, thinking, "Are you crazy?" Why did you do that? No one seemed to be interested."

On the following Tuesday at the Trustee's meeting, one of the members told me that he had already given \$300 to the church. Really? The next day, one senior member approached me, saying, "what is the name of the \$300 donation?" "Apportionment!," I said. "I will bring my portion this Sunday," he replied. Wow!

As time passed, I talked about the Apportionment challenge to the

leaders at the committee meetings and urged them to participate. I wrote an article and put the NIC 2022 Apportionment insert into the bulletins. The Stewardship Committee embraced the challenge, and the chairperson also wrote an article on apportionments in the church newsletter and spoke about it during the Mission Moment in worship.

At the end of June, we collected \$2,655. Wow! In July, the congregation gave \$4,135 more to connectional giving. The Finance Committee has committed to talking about Apportionments monthly during worship, telling the congregation how apportionments transform lives and strengthen The UMC connectional system locally, regionally, and globally, using videos on the seven World Church funds.

(continued on page 7, see Apportionment Challenge)



Roselle UMC leaders accept the apportionment challenge from Pastor Oh with grateful hearts.

# Leading the Laity

Words of encouragement, insight & inspiration from lay leaders

## Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh upon us

By Eugene Williams, NIC Co-Lay Leader



Eugene Williams, NIC Co-Lay Leader

Close your eyes and let the Spirit of God come into this space. Growing up, I learned to be patient and wait on God to let the Holy Spirit embrace me. So Holy Spirit, I invite you to read this laity message/prayer. Come, O God and let Your Spirit fall afresh upon all who read or hear of these words. Come, O God and be present with us.

Our ancestors reminded us that You are the God who knows all about us. The God who shaped

and formed us in the wombs of our mothers. The God whose anointing was upon us even as we were waiting to be birthed into this world. And you knew our names; maybe not the names our earthly parents gave us, but the names that identified us as the beloved sons and daughters of the Almighty God. You were pleased with calling us your beloved. So God, as we focus on these words, help us to claim our identity as Your children. We are the beloved of the Most High God! And every day, O God, you allow us to have life; let your anointing fall afresh upon us so that we might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

O God, the work that you have called us to do is challenging, and some mornings we don't want to fight the battle anymore; but God, you have anointed us and called us and have set us apart for such a time as this!

Now it is our turn to pick up the mantle. And though we may grow weary in well-doing, God, Your Holy Spirit is always present with us. So we stretch out our hands to you, just as our ancestors did. Teach us how to listen to the movement of the Spirit. Teach us how to be discerning; teach us that no matter how heavy the burden may be, to put our faith, our trust and our hope in You. Remind us that You always go before us to prepare the way. You never send us on a journey or a mission that You have not equipped us for. But you are asking, do we have that hope, trust and faith to allow You to lead us and to lead this world into a path of righteousness?

For Your name's sake, I pray that the Holy Spirit will touch each person reading this prayer so that their response will be a resounding YES! Fill us with Your Holy Spirit, abide with each of us; speak hope and encouragement to us and let us know that Thou art with us. O God, speak into our very being; love, contentment and joy; healing and deliverance. Thank you for the privilege to be on the battlefield for You. Let Your Spirit speak to each of us, O God, that in due season, the anointing will resolve any problems that might arise. So that all of your people will join in giving You praise and thanksgiving; to say THANK YOU JESUS, THANK YOU GOD for the visitation of this reading. Be blessed, sisters and brothers, as we go forward to do His work and remain: IN HIS SERVICE. Amen, and Amen!

## Fall 2022 Events

### September

#### Fresh Expressions Teachings

##### Sunday Worship Event: September 18 - 21

Explore the wave of new Christian churches emerging to reach unchurched and dechurched people living in a culture that is increasingly non-religious and multi-religious.

**Presenter:** Rev. Dr. Michael Beck is a pastor, professor, author and Director of Re-Missioning for Fresh Expressions US.

##### 6 Teaching Offerings

Sunday, Sept. 18 - 2 - 5 p.m. - Prairie Central - Schaumburg: Our Saviour's  
Monday, Sept. 19 - 9 a.m. to Noon - Prairie North - Freeport: Harmony  
Monday, Sept. 19 - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Prairie South - Dixon: First  
Tuesday, Sept. 20 - 9 a.m. to Noon - Lake South - Oak Lawn: First  
Tuesday, September 20 - 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. - Prairie Central - Naperville: Grace  
Wednesday, September 21 - 9 a.m. to Noon - Lake North - Park Ridge: First

Visit [umcnic.org/calendar/fresh-expressions-2022](http://umcnic.org/calendar/fresh-expressions-2022) to register and find out more. Questions? Contact Rev. Martin Lee [mlee@umcnic.org](mailto:mlee@umcnic.org).

### October

#### Speaker Series: Undenied: No Longer Willing to be Unheard

##### September 22, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

(In person and via Zoom)

**Location:** Our Redeemer's UMC, 600 W. Schaumburg Rd., Schaumburg, Ill.

**Speaker:** Rev. Chebon Kernell, Executive Director of the UMC Native American Comprehensive Plan, shares insights and learning related to indigenous communities' history, present work being done, and how we can be in solidarity as we prepare for the future.

**Moderator:** Rev. Pamela Pirtle.

For registration and more information, visit [umcnic.org/2022speakerseries](http://umcnic.org/2022speakerseries).

#### Apportionment Challenge (continued from page 6)

I heard from the Finance Secretary, "Don't pull your hair anymore. It works." And from the Finance Chairperson, "It is my conviction that the people will give, especially, when it comes from the Pastor with examples."

I initiated this challenge without much confidence about whether it was going to work or not. Yet, over the last year, I have learned there is power in asking for money.

In my first year at Roselle UMC, I visited those who had not given to the church for a few years and found out they were in a health crisis. I prayed for them. By surprise, they gave their annual giving of \$6,000. Upon hearing a rumor that someone wanted to donate a significant amount of money in memory of his wife toward the online ministry equipment, the Memorial Committee chairperson and I met and talked with him about his will for the project. A few

months later, he gave \$30,000 to cover the cost of live-streaming cameras, a computer, and a digital soundboard. When we asked the congregation to help the Ukrainians, we collected almost \$5,000 for the cause.

Surely, there is power in talking about money and asking. Pastoral leadership, pastoral care, and pastoral modeling in giving and cooperation of the lay leadership inspire people to give generously to various causes, including the apportionment drive.

Still, our church, an aging congregation, is struggling with finance after the post-pandemic. Yet, I am sure God is not giving up on us, the church. When we do our parts, God does work among us to continue to share God's love and grace in and through our generosity locally, regionally, and globally.

Find resources at [umcnic.org/apportionments](http://umcnic.org/apportionments).

#### Join the Rockford Area CROP Hunger Walk

##### October 16

The Annual Rockford Area CROP Hunger Walk is the third Sunday in October and the goal is to have 200 walkers raising an average of \$200 each for a grand total of \$40,000.

The CROP Hunger Walk raises money for local food pantries and worldwide hunger relief through Church World Service. People are welcome to designate other overseas relief organizations as well.

For more information, or to volunteer please call David Jones, 815-540-3703, or email [davidj6226@aol.com](mailto:davidj6226@aol.com).

To find a Walk near you, visit [events.crophungerwalk.org/2022](http://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022).

### November

#### Facing the Future Virtual Conference

##### November 16, 12:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Be Still as a Spiritual Practice: Online Event for Pastors Serving Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural, and Multicultural Contexts

After a brief hiatus during the pandemic, "Facing the Future" is returning. Facing the Future is the premier conference sponsored by the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) for anyone engaged with or discerning cross-racial/cross-cultural/multicultural ministry. You will learn skills to support the CRCC ministry context, personal self-care, and professional development. You will experience meaningful worship and workshops from sought-after leaders and professionals. We are looking forward to seeing you there.

##### Standard Registration:

Sept. 1 - Oct. 15: \$50

##### Late Registration:

Oct. 16-31: \$60

Find more information and registration at [gcorr.org/facingthefuture2022](http://gcorr.org/facingthefuture2022).

RISE  
AND UP!  
REVIVE GOD'S GIFT.

Laity Sunday 2022 - October 16

2 Tim 1:8-12

### Laity Sunday

This year's Laity Sunday falls on Oct. 16. The theme is RISE UP! - and Reveal God's grace (2 Tim 1:8-12). Under the call to Rise Up, laity in the current quadrennium will continue to echo the invitation of this passage: to Rise Up and revive God's gift of faith (that first lived in those who loved us); to Rise Up and reveal the grace in Christ that destroys death and brings life; to Rise Up and remain committed to sound teaching with faith and love; to Rise Up and retain this reliable gift of good and beautiful things placed in our trust by the Holy Spirit. For resources, visit [umcdiscipleship.org](http://umcdiscipleship.org).



# DYK DID YOU KNOW?

## Providing safe spaces

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

You are phenomenal! This year we challenged all church leaders to ramp up their Safe Sanctuaries training and increase the number of volunteers who have gone through this valuable course.

We started the year with a report of 1,362 trained volunteers, and as I write this article, eight months into the year, we have gained 800 more trained volunteers raising the number to 2,162 leaders working with children, youth and vulnerable adults. These leaders are Sunday school teachers, choir directors, youth leaders, mission trip chaperones, camp staff, clergy, and even church office staff and ushers. Our statistics from NIC churches indicate 5,818 children and youth (ages 0-18) active in our churches in 2021. With 2,162 trained adults, we have a ratio of 1 trained adult to every 2.7 children. You are phenomenal!

Why is this so important? Training in Safe Sanctuaries is not a sign that our church volunteers are not to be trusted; instead, it is a witness to our commitment to provide safe spaces for ministries and programs with those who have little voice and are easily exploited. It is a witness that the church is providing trusted adults who

can prevent abuse and sometimes identify those who have suffered abuse at the hands of another.

Training equips our leaders in identifying predatory behavior. Training provides tools for recognizing signs and symptoms in those who have been harmed. When we have leaders well trained in prevention, we deter bad behaviors. When we model good practices, we help others learn as well.

Statistically, in the United States, the most vulnerable population for abuse are children between the ages of 7 and 13. The median age for reported abuse is nine years old nationally. There are so many challenges in today's world for our children and youth to navigate – being exploited by adults shouldn't be one of them.

As we read about the Boy Scout settlement in a lawsuit that spans decades of harm, our hearts are heavy with the "what ifs." What if we had better training in those years? What if we knew more about the characteristics and patterns of abuse? What if we had watched and listened more carefully to our children? Our prayers are with the scouting survivors who have waited decades to be acknowledged, but no settlement can erase the

damage that has been done. What we can do is work to see that such stories are not the norm today and in the future.

Our work is clear; we are called to take responsibility, set the tone, learn from the painful lessons of the past, and ensure a better experience for future generations. If you have not yet been trained in Safe Sanctuaries practices and you work with children whether in the church, in your community, in a music or sports program, or any setting, I would urge you to take action today. Visit our website at [umcnic.org/safesantuaries](http://umcnic.org/safesantuaries) and click on the link for Safe Gatherings to find a self-guided online course you can take at any time to equip yourself to be an even better guardian of our future.



Safe Gatherings provides an online training and background check to help complete Safe Sanctuaries Trainings



## Conference youth leaders give back By Sharon Rice\*

On Saturday, August 6, the Discipleship and Anti-Racism Task Forces collaborated to sponsor a gathering for youth leaders in the conference. We met at Kids Above All (formally known as ChildServ), a United Methodist affiliated non-profit, to learn about the work and ministry they do, grow with one another, continue building connections as youth leaders, and gain ideas for future mission work with youth and congregations.

At Kids Above All, Deaconess Catherine Inserra shared the many ways they are ministering to children in northern Illinois, from early childhood education, to working with foster programs, group homes, and providing counseling for children, youth, and families, just to name a few. In the late summer, they receive school supplies which are stuffed into backpacks and distributed to children. Those of us who gathered on August 6 had the opportunity to help with the organizing and stuffing of these backpacks.

In response, Catherine said, we "give to 1,000 school-aged kids in Kane, Cook, Lake and DuPage counties, in our care to ensure they have what they need to succeed this new school year. Your work, along with the NIC mission partners, local churches, United Women in Faith, United Methodist Men, and individuals continue to model incredible generosity in so many ways to help our kids reach their potential for over 128 years."

We had a wonderful time together and ideas for future ministry opportunities for youth and churches were shared! We are hoping to make these gatherings of youth leaders quarterly, and are looking to have our next in November, most likely in the Prairie North district.

To learn more about the backpack drive, visit [kidsaboveall.org](http://kidsaboveall.org).

\*Sharon Rice is an ordained Deacon, member of the Discipleship Task Force and Director of Discipleship at First UMC Belvidere.



Members of the NIC Discipleship and Anti-Racism Task Forces visit the Kids Above All offices to help stuff backpacks with donated school supplies for children across northern Illinois.

## Churches Rally Against Racism



Members at Cary UMC participated in the church's DIY Rally Against Racism event by showing their support at an information table during the Cary Cruise Night event on July 20.

► Find resources at [umcnic.org/antiracism](http://umcnic.org/antiracism).



Approximately 1,400 cars passed by Friendship UMC in Bolingbrook on Aug. 14 as members participated in the 2nd Annual DIY Rally Against Racism event sponsored by the NIC Anti-Racism Task Force. This year, the church's Faith Formation ministry team incorporated this activity into their Intentional Discipleship System's community engagement efforts.



Church and community members gathered on the First United Methodist Church lawn in Elmhurst to celebrate Juneteenth with music, education, and guest speakers from the DuPage County NAACP. The event ended with a lively rally on York Road where people rang cowbells and raised their anti-racist signs telling those who passed the church that United Methodists Stand Against racism.

### Job Openings

For the latest job openings in the Northern Illinois Conference and across the connection, visit [www.umcnic.org/jobs](http://www.umcnic.org/jobs).

### Stay Connected

Sign up for the weekly NIC eNews, Appointment Announcements and Sympathy notices. Visit [www.umcnic.org](http://www.umcnic.org) and scroll down and click on "Sign up for our Newsletter" to enter your name and email.

### Submissions

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. Submissions will be edited at the discretion of the Communications staff.

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