

The Northern Illinois Conference OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Reporter

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Torn out of the ground by a tornado, a tree sliced through a house in Rolling Fork, Miss.



The manor house at Camp Reynoldswood, Dixon, suffered roof damage from an April 4 tornado.



Randy Miller helps repair the outer shell of a damaged home in Rolling Fork, Miss.

NIC Churches and Members Step Up with Storm Recovery Help

By Victoria Rebeck, Director of Communications

Images of trees torn out by their roots and roofs pierced by tree limbs and reports of tornadoes dominated the news in late March and early April. Northern Illinois United Methodists immediately offered help and support those whose lives were disrupted.

Part of a wide swath of storms that traversed the country on March 31, a tornado destroyed a theatre in Belvidere. A few days later, on April 4, strong winds knocked a tree onto the manse at Camp Reynoldswood in Dixon. Ashton United Methodist Church immediately mobilized to help with repairs, demonstrating the strength of the connectional system.

First United Methodist in Morris sent its Early Response Team to Rolling Fork, Mississippi, which was almost completely obliterated by a tornado on March 24.

This storm was particularly devastating because it hit the Mississippi Delta, one of the poorest areas of the country. Twenty-five people in the region died from storm-related injuries; 13 of them in Rolling Fork.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the tornado was rated an EF-4, with winds of up to 170 mph that traveled almost 60 miles and lasted more than an hour.

Rolling Fork United Methodist Church was of the few

structures that withstood the storm. The following Sunday, the church held a brief service on the church steps, where friends and neighbors greeted each other with tears and hugs.

"We hadn't really seen each other since the tornado happened on Friday," Laura Hollis, the chair of the church's Nurture, Outreach and Witness Committee, told United Methodist News Service. "It did our hearts good, I think, to just sit in front of that church that meant so much to us and feel the presence of God while we sat there."

Among the projects that the Morris ERT tackled in Rolling Fork was the repair of a house that sustained significant damage from a fallen tree. "Our ERT crew worked for several days to clear out the damaged section of the house and salvage the belongings," the team reported on the NIC Disaster Response Facebook page. They also rebuilt the house's outer shell and provided the homeowner with funds for inside repairs.

The homeowner extended her thanks to "everyone back in Illinois who has been praying for the tornado victims and those who make donations that allow the ERT crew to do these trips," the team said.

Midwest Mission has also responded quickly with assistance. On April 2, Brad Walton, the center's

operations manager, drove a box truck filled with bottled water, hygiene kits, and storage totes to Robinson, IL, which had been hit by an EF-3 tornado. First United Methodist in Robinson is serving as a distribution center. The organization also intends to help Southern states with their recovery. It invites churches to donate funds toward the purchase of tornado kit contents, shovels, rakes, and tools.

Bishop Dan Schwerin encourages churches and individuals to continue to pray for those affected by the storms. His prayer appears at umcnic.org/news/bishop-calls-for-prayer-for-storm-victims.

How to help . . .

NIC United Methodists can participate in these much-appreciated acts through Apportionment and Mission Links giving:

Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund
(NIC Advance #50000148)

Midwest Mission
(NIC Advance #50000150)



 From Your Bishop:

Encourage Each Other

Scripture implores us to encourage each other and Hebrews 10:25 gives us a context: “Don’t stop meeting

together with other believers, which some people have gotten into the habit of doing. Instead, encourage each other, especially as you see the day drawing near” (CEB).

This takes me to the topic of gathering, and how healthy it is to do so. Recently I attended a gathering of local pastors, district superintendents, and certified lay ministers in Earlville and an event sponsored by the Center for Asian/Asian American Ministry and the Reuben P. Job Institute for Spiritual Formation at Garrett-Evangelical Seminary. One could say that these events were healing for all involved. I saw encouragement, honesty, challenge, and appreciation. I heard laughter. These things are healing.

It reminded me of Psalm 40: “I’ve told the good news of your righteousness in the great assembly. I didn’t hold

anything back—as you well know, Lord! I didn’t keep your righteousness only to myself. I declared your faithfulness and your salvation. I didn’t hide your loyal love and trustworthiness from the great assembly” (verses 9-10, CEB). When someone experiences healing of faith or body, that healing is not complete until it is shared in community. This surfacing bears witness and offers hope to others. Our faith calls Christians to come together in groups for worship, mission, prayer, witness—and healing. What groups do you contribute to? What groups are sustaining for you?

During the recent funeral for Gary Curl, one of our retired clergy, pastors spoke of his commitment to mentoring other clergy out of his own concern, not because he was assigned to do so. He took interest in new clergy. He reached out to Korean pastors and built relationships that helped them feel less isolated and sharpened their ministry.

It seems to me that the presence of clergy at our

colleagues’ funerals is sign of our connection. Yes, it can be difficult for clergy to attend funerals or memorial services on Saturdays. That said, I have often wondered what the absence of clergy communicates.

One of my seminary professors, Dick Murray, told us on the first day class to “find yourself a crazy friend and a sane friend. Your crazy friend will say, ‘Let’s get away for a ball game or go see a concert.’ Your sane friend will say, ‘Be accountable. Buckle down. Focus.’”

While I don’t think I would use the word crazy to describe those who seek a spontaneous break, I would emphasize how sustaining it is to make friends of difference and diversity; friends who can laugh with you and challenge you. I stand on the shoulders of my good friends.

Encourage each other.



Repair the Harm Campaign Launched

By Lisa Smith, NIC Communications Specialist

The Boy Scouts of America recently settled a lawsuit related to accusations of sexual abuse of children. The United Methodist Church—one of the parties in the suit—is committed to caring for the children who were harmed and to preventing abuse in the future.

“Our Christian faith calls us to have an obligation to children—past, present, and future—to do no harm to them and to repair the breach when harm is done,” says Rev. Tammy Scott, president of the Northern Illinois Conference Council on Finance and Administration, in a letter to NIC congregations.

As part of the settlement, the United Methodist Church has agreed to raise and give \$30 million over a three-year period to a fund to compensate survivors. The church also agreed to work for the healing of survivors and recommit to work toward ending sexual abuse of young people.

The NIC will care for the survivors financially by contributing \$754,348, its fair share, to the fund. The Northern Illinois Conference Trustees and Council on Finance and Administration, in collaboration with Bishop Dan Schwerin and the conference staff, created the Repair the Harm to Children Campaign to respond to the victims’ needs.

The campaign will address the needs of the survivors in three ways: listening and providing healing to the survivors, contributing our fair share to the survivor fund

established by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, and working to create safeguards against harm in the future.

The Repair the Harm to Children committee seeks pledges from churches and individuals to fund restorative healing for the survivors.

“When we baptize, we commit to do ‘all in our power’ to nurture the baptized. Let’s do all in our power to create safe spaces for children and vulnerable adults,” Bishop Schwerin commented.

The committee intends that every church will contribute and repair past harm as quickly as possible. They recommend that churches’ administrative councils discuss their pledge decision with input from their finance committee and/or the church’s Scouting liaisons. All pledges are welcome and meaningful to the healing of victims of sexual abuse.

“Let’s do all in our power to offer healing love and justice for those whose lives are changed by abuse,” Bishop Schwerin asks. “Thank you for being the generous people of God.”

The committee urges churches and individuals to consider prayerfully their commitment during April and May. The first goal is to receive initial pledges by the start of Annual Conference this June. Payments towards pledges may start this fall. Churches or individuals can make a pledge or payment online at umcnic.org/repairtheharm.

All children in the care of the United Methodist churches should be safe from any kind of harm, committee leaders say.

“Unless repairs are made to children who have been hurt, we are not being honest with the present and future children God brings us,” says Rev. Scott. “We are speaking to every United Methodist in the NIC when we ask for your participation in repairing the damage done to the children of formerly chartered BSA troops and creating safe spaces for the future.”

The committee also plans to offer care to the survivors by listening to their stories. “If anyone wants to report their pain to a bishop, I am ready to do what is helpful for healing,” offered Bishop Schwerin. “We have much to make up for.” If you or someone you know wants to share their story, please contact the committee at repairtheharm@umcnic.org. All stories will be held with respect, safety, and confidentiality.

To safeguard against any future harm, all NIC churches have committed to having Safe Sanctuary policies administered by their church leaders and appointed clergy. Safe Sanctuaries is an overt expression in making congregations safe places for all within the community of faith. More information on Safe Sanctuaries can be found at umcnic.org/safesanctuaries.

More information, an FAQ, pledge links and donation links are available at umcnic.org/repairtheharm.



Spring Symbols Remind Us of Resurrection

By the Rev. Mark Price, minister of spiritual formation and facilities manager at Christ United Methodist Church, Franklin, Tennessee

◀ Photo by isabella fischer/unsplash

When the weather turns warmer and the grass grows greener, it’s easier to understand the promise of new life and renewed hope that Christians proclaim as “Easter people.” The reminders are all around us so be sure to keep an eye out on your next spring stroll.

Birds

The robin, a very common bird in the U.S., has a red breast and a legend to explain it. Seems that once a gray robin flew to Christ’s crown of thorns to draw out a thorn, and when it did, a drop of Christ’s blood fell on its breast, leaving a stain forevermore.

Bees

It takes lots of buzzing bees to spread the pollen and make flowers grow. The honey these creatures create is a

biblical symbol of God’s favor. The Torah agrees, for it describes God’s promised land again and again as “flowing with milk and honey.”

Flowers

Long considered a symbol of hope and new life, the daffodil is one of the blooms most often connected to the Resurrection. Tradition says that giving a gift of daffodils will ensure happiness for the receiver—but always give a bunch: a single bloom signals doom.

It is said the dogwood tree used to grow straight and tall, but after it was used as a crucifix for Christ, God made it short and twisted with a thin trunk so it could never be used as a cross again. The dogwood bloom has four parts, each with a rusty red color on the end and a small hole, a reminder of where the nails were driven into the cross. The center stamens look like the crown of thorns.

Faith

The traditions that developed around these spring symbols helped explain the concept that God in the flesh took on death and came back to tell us there is life on the other side. What fantastic news! This spring, be a witness to the good news that Christ is risen:

- Learn about the symbols and notice them when you are outdoors this season. Even better: plant some dogwoods and flowers in your yard and on the grounds of your church.
- Fashion a cross from cuttings of spring flowers. Invite others to help. Set it out in front of your church, or even your house, for all to see.
- Make (don’t buy) a gift for someone who needs to be reminded of the love of God made known in the Risen Christ.
- Play. Physically play. Move. Dance.



Tuesday, June 6, through Thursday, June 8

Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center, 1551 N. Thoreau Dr., Schaumburg, Ill.

Registration: April 29 to May 28: \$125/person
NO on-site registration

Services:

- Ordination:** Tuesday, June 6, at 7 pm
- Retirement:** Wednesday, June 7, at 10:30 am
- Memorial:** Thursday, June 8, at 10:30 am

The conference will be broadcast via livestream on the NIC YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/c/AnnualConferenceofNorthernIllinoisUMC.

Important Dates:

- May 2** Deadline to submit names and photos of Annual Conference lay members who have died since July 2022. Send to communications@umcnic.org.
- May 5** Legislation and documents posted online.
- May 8** Video and media presentations due. Find full instructions at umcnic.org/AC2023.
- May 23** Clergy Session
- May 30** 7:00 pm, Pre-conference Briefing, online.
- May 31** 10:00 am, Pre-conference Briefing, online.

See Annual Conference Up Close as a Volunteer

Annual Conference relies on volunteer ushers, pages, legislative section leaders, greeters, secretarial pool members, and more in order to run smoothly and efficiently. Please contact Bri Wadlington, events administrator, at events@umcnic.org if you are interested in serving as a volunteer for a day or even part of a day or if you have questions. No previous experience is necessary.

More details at umcnic.org/AC2023



Fill the Truck Mission Challenge Collection Drive

Midwest Mission sends tangible resources to those in need to make a difference in their lives. The NIC Board of Global Ministries and Midwest Mission are organizing its Annual Conference collection drive for its most needed items.

Donations will be accepted on Tuesday, June 6, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Wednesday, June 7, from 7 a.m. to noon. Bring your donations to the Midwest Mission truck, which will be located in the east parking lot outside the Schaumburg Convention Center.

Most urgent needs:

- Liquid laundry detergent (105 oz.), 100 bottles
- Liquid household cleaner (80 oz.), 54 bottles (no spray bottles)
- Liquid dish soap (64 oz.), 42 bottles
- Shampoo (19 oz.), 12 bottles
- Hand towels or other Personal Dignity Kit items (no kitchen towels)

- Rulers (12" long with metric) or other School Kit items
- 24 heavy-duty trash bags (33-45 gal.) or other Tornado Kit items
- Receiving blankets (between 28" x 28" and 32" x 32") or other Birthing Kit items

Also wanted:

- Bleacher wood to make into student desks
- Fire-fighting equipment
- Sewing machines
- Hand tools
- Blankets
- Medical supplies
- Bicycles
- Other items in Midwest Mission Kits (midwestmission.org/kits)

More information available at umcnic.org/2023MissionChallenge



Financial Donations

- Give to Midwest Mission #50000150 through the online apportionment process.
- Write a check to the Northern Illinois Conference with Midwest Mission #50000150 in the memo section
 - Send it to the conference treasurer's office
 - Bring the check to Annual Conference.

Bulk Purchases

Make a bulk purchase to take advantage of competitive prices. Purchases from these sites will be shipped directly to Midwest Mission. Midwest Mission has bulk supply wish lists at Dollar Days, Walmart, and Amazon. Find the lists at umcnic.org/2023MissionChallenge



Bishop's Appeal for Migrant Needs

As followers of Jesus, we take seriously the commandment to welcome the strangers in our midst. Whether they journeyed from Venezuela on foot, crossed the

Southern border of the U.S. seeking asylum and ended up on busses to Chicago, or flew across the ocean from Ukraine to escape the Russian invasion, we want to offer compassion, love, and care to our neighbors.

Why are people leaving their homes?

Their government is harassing, arresting, and even killing people because of their political views or religious affiliation.

A neighboring country has invaded their nation and their city is under attack.

Local gang leaders have threatened their family.

Storm damage has decimated the local economy and they have no way to feed their families.

These are just a few reasons why people leave their homes—sometimes at a moment's notice and often with only a few items that they can carry with them—and flee to other places for safety, security, and hope for a better future. Can you imagine how desperate one would be to leave everything that is familiar and make a hazardous journey to an unknown destination in order to protect yourself and your family?

The funds that we raise together through the Bishop's Appeal will benefit organizations that provide for immediate needs, such as hygiene kits, temporary shelter, and food, and longer-term needs, like employment, housing, medical care, and legal assistance. We will partner with groups such as Justice for Our Neighbors, World Relief, Refugee One, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), and NIC congregations.

We can't fix all the world situations that cause migration, but we can be a source of hope and life for our



neighbors who are on our doorstep. Start planning for and collecting your church's contribution to the Bishop's Appeal for Migrant Needs.

Learn more at umcnic.org/bishopsappeal2023

HAPPY BABIES DRIVE

April 3 - May 15

Often, it is the simple things that make life easier. Families that have adequate basic

The organization, which offers programs including early childhood education; safe, supportive housing; and transformative counseling services in four northern Illinois counties, is welcoming donations of supplies for the children and families it serves. Consider organizing a collection at your church or with a church group.

Items they can use:

- Baby and toddler bathtubs
- Baby bathmats
- Baby bottles, cleaning brushes, and sterilizer bags
- Nursing pillows

- Breastmilk storage bags
- Corner guards and bumpers for furniture, drawers, etc.
- Childproof stove knob covers
- Childproof cabinet locks
- Swaddling blankets
- Forehead thermometers
- Baby washcloths and grooming kits
- Backpack-style diaper bags
- Diapers and disposable training pants

Bring the supplies to Kids Above All's Better Life Distribution Center, 1801 E. Oakton St., Des Plaines, IL 60018.

If you'd prefer, consider sending gift cards. These enable the organization to fill gaps with specific needs. Also, visit their website to find the link to their Amazon Wishlist. Items you purchase from this list will be delivered to Kids Above All.

More information can be found at kidsaboveall.org/happy-babies/



Local Church News

This monthly column highlights local church outreach ministries that are making a difference and transforming lives. We hope sharing these success stories ("it worked for us") will inspire and become learning tools for other churches. If you have a Ministry Makers story, email communications@umcnc.org.

How We Became a Reconciling Congregation

By Rev. Jin-Hee Kang, pastor of Galena United Methodist Church

I was appointed to Galena United Methodist Church on July 1, 2022. Galena is a small but historic town. The church itself is 194 years old and its membership is predominantly Caucasian.

As the church's new pastor, I needed to build a relationship with and learn more about this congregation and their neighbors. During that learning process, I found out that the congregation was not officially a Reconciling Congregation, even though they thought they were. They had already been openly in support of LGBTQ+ people for a long time, so I helped them start the process to become a Reconciling Congregation. It was difficult, but we prayed and communicated with each other.

On Nov. 6, Galena UMC voted 90 percent in favor of becoming a Reconciling Congregation. The members adopted a statement of affirmation and agreed at their church conference to affiliate with the Reconciling Ministries Network.

We celebrated this decision on Jan. 22. Elisa Gatz, a Northern Illinois Conference delegate to the 2019 United Methodist General Conference, was our guest speaker. We publicized our joy through emails, letters, Facebook, our website, and the local paper.

In an interview with The Galena Gazette, I shared my faith journey and passion for inclusive ministry, social justice, and reconciling ministry and advocated for the love and grace of God.

Galena UMC is an aging congregation, but age has not diminished our passion to be a Reconciling Congregation. In every Sunday worship service, we

proudly and joyfully proclaim our welcoming statement. Our hope is that more LGBTQ+ people will feel welcome and those who are already a part of this congregation will continue to feel safe and welcome. We hope that Galena UMC becomes an oasis or a lighthouse for LGBTQ+ people and their families or neighbors near and far.

We're Growing

Since we became a Reconciling Congregation, our Sunday worship attendance has been growing! Over 50 visitors have worshiped with us and in January, we welcomed two new members. And in February, we celebrated an infant baptism.

We are blessed to have a wonderful new choir coordinator and choir director, and we are grateful that they found us through The Galena Gazette. This enabled us to restart our choir. Our services have become more vibrant and joyful. Our choir even participated in the Night of the Luminaria and Living Windows in downtown Galena. They sang Christmas carols in front of the church in December.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, Galena UMC members have been engaging in tearing down the barriers of injustice, gender oppression, and the walls of hostility that hurt and dehumanize the children of God. I believe that the amazing grace of God has been manifested through this process of becoming a Reconciling Congregation, and I feel humbled by everything that has been done by this church and its beautiful people.



Hispanic/Latino Ministry Leaders Learn About the "Nones"

Pastors and laypeople who are seeking to start new ministries alongside Hispanic and Latino communities in Northern Illinois gathered April 15-16 in Northbrook for session eight of The Academy (Hispanic/Latino) for Faith Community Development. The Academy is a two-year training program that provides support, ministry skills development, and leadership training to prepare a pool of leaders to reach out to religious "nones" in Northern Illinois. Rev. Martin Lee, Director of Congregational Development and Redevelopment, oversees the Academy.



Photo by Anuja Tilj/Unsplash

The hymn reminds us that we celebrate renewal every day.

Out of oppression

In 1940, when Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia became part of the Soviet Union, there were 46 Methodist congregations in the region. When Estonia gained independence in 1991, only 17 remained. God, however, was working toward revival.

"I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart in 1991," says the Rev. Sergei Sutskov. "It was a time of great spiritual awakening in Estonia. At this time, Estonia seceded from the Soviet Union."

Three years later, Sutskov moved to nearby Kohtla-Järve to start Galvay United Methodist Church.

Sutskov, a member of the first graduating class of the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary, founded by The United Methodist Church, continues to pastor this growing congregation reaching the people of Kohtla-Järve.

In the early days of Galvay United Methodist Church, their biggest challenge was "the lack of its own building for the community," Sutskov says. In 2007, the congregation moved into a place with sufficient space for worship, Sunday school, and other activities.

Reflecting on his faith journey and the church he serves,



Every Day to Us is Easter: Experience Resurrection All Year Long

By Joe Iovino, United Methodist Communications

During the Easter season, many United Methodists sing, "Every day to us is Easter, with its resurrection song." These words open the last verse of "Easter People Raise Your Voices" (*United Methodist Hymnal*, #304), penned by United Methodist pastor Rev.

William M. James. The

Sutskov says, "God responded to the spiritual hunger of people." Every day can be Easter.

Out of ashes

Living Waters United Methodist Church in Centerton, Arkansas, was just getting started when fire destroyed their building in 2011.

"The fire and loss of the building just seemed like a long line of setbacks and obstacles we had to overcome," says the Rev. Blake Lasater, who then pastored the congregation. "It happened at a time when I seemed to be losing everything close to me."

Lasater's wife was suffering from pancreatic cancer and would pass away just four months after the fire.

"We are called to place our absolute trust in God even when we cannot see a way forward," Lasater explains. "That's what I ultimately did. It wasn't easy."

After two years of struggle, the new building opened in 2013 with a sense of renewal. "The fire made people into a community of faith," Lasater says.

"I learned that loss can be absolutely overwhelming and leave you feeling that there is no hope, and it is in those moments we are called to trust God the most," Lasater reflects. "When we cannot see beyond the next horizon, when we can't imagine the sun ever rising again, God is still there working," in Louisiana, Estonia, and Arkansas. The sun will come up again. Every day can be Easter.

Out of floodwaters

In late August 2005, Hurricane Katrina and the resultant flooding displaced hundreds of thousands of people in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Rev. Darryl Tate was one of them.

"I had lost our church by floodwaters, and our home," Tate says. At the height of the flooding, St. Luke's United Methodist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, had ten to 12 feet of water in it.

"I lost my stuff, but the storm was not going to define Darryl Tate," he recalls, "I was going to overcome."

Bishop William W. Hutchinson soon asked Tate to organize The United Methodist Church's disaster relief ministry in Louisiana. Tate served as director of the Louisiana Conference Storm Recovery Center until 2012.

He remembers a unique request from a man whose home the Storm Recovery Center was ready to rebuild. "I want a house of only 1,000 square feet," he said.

The case manager assured him that though guidelines would not allow them to build more than he had before, they could rebuild the 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom home the storm destroyed.

"No," the man replied. "I only want a house that is 1,000 square feet. I live alone. I don't need a home that big anymore. Give it to somebody else."

An elderly couple from a horse farm in Pecan Island were forced to live in a horse trailer when floodwaters came to their home. During the home blessing service held for the family by the Storm Recovery Center after rebuilding their home, the woman excitedly showed Tate her new refrigerator.

"I can put my glass in the door and I'll get water and ice. Isn't it amazing?" she said. "I am so blessed."

A new home, a new refrigerator, a new blessing that comes after a storm. Every day can be Easter.

As Easter people, we know that even in the tragedies of life, God is at work bringing renewal. Some of those renewals we get to experience: national revival, new church buildings, and rebuilt homes. Others, like the death of a loved one, we wait to celebrate in the kingdom of God to come.

As Christians, we experience resurrection every day and are called to share it in our worship and work. Every day can be Easter, all year long.

This article originally appeared on umc.org.



Pipelines, Partnerships, and Promises

By Cindy Gregorson, director of ministries and clergy assistant to the bishop for the Minnesota Conference

An episode of the television show *The West Wing* has stuck with me all these years. A billionaire tells C.J. Cregg, the president's chief of staff, that he wants to start a foundation to attack single problem, like AIDS, malaria, or clean air—something that could have an impact.

“A single problem?” C.J. asks. “Highways is what you’re looking for,” she tells him. “It’s not sexy, no one will ever raise money for it, but nine out of 10 African AIDS projects fail because the medicine or the personnel can’t get to the people in need. Blanket the continent with highways, then maybe get started on the plumbing.” The donor thinks about what she’s saying and repeats the problem aloud: Infrastructure. “Well, if you think that’s what needs fixing, I’ll give you \$10 billion to fix it,” he says.

Infrastructure. We take it for granted . . . until it doesn’t work.

I tell you this story because I believe the biggest value of our apportionment system is that it creates a pipeline, an infrastructure, that allows us to get ministry and resources where they are needed. It is not sexy, but it matters.

This hit home for me when I was listening to a podcast from Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill. The church had raised over \$1 million from its congregation for Hurricane Katrina relief. But church leaders had a problem: They didn’t have a pipeline to get resources to the people who needed help. They had to find a church in the area, develop a relationship, and create a process to give the resources and ensure they were going where intended. As I listened, I realized we United Methodists already had the pipeline built. We had resources going to hurricane survivors, and not just from one of our churches but from churches all over the world. We sent millions of dollars, along with work and recovery teams—all because of our infrastructure.

Disaster relief is one of our more visible pipelines, but there are others that touch our churches every day. Clergy credentialing and deployment is our biggest and most foundational pipeline. It was what made the Methodist movement different in the beginning. John Wesley had a

process for raising up leaders, and those who became itinerant preachers were sent to the mission field—where the people were—to form communities, provide sacraments, and train lay leaders. The movement effectively spread across the continent because of this clergy credentialing and deployment pipeline. That method and process has changed over the years, but one of the distinctives of the United Methodist system is our appointment process. We send clergy to churches instead of churches’ needing to find their own pastors. In some other churches, a congregation may have to spend months seeking a pastor; geography and financial resources can hamper that. However, United Methodist annual conferences can match and send someone to pastor our churches.

Sometimes people ask, What do we get for our apportionments? Why don’t we just keep the money here and invest in our own ministry?

I get it. Money is tight. There is a lot of need and opportunity in each congregation and community. Nonetheless, the pipeline and partnerships matter. Without apportionments, these go away. There would be

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North Central College Welcomes Anita Thomas as Its New President

By Kelly Murphy, Director of Communication for North Central College



North Central College has a new president: Dr. Anita Thomas. She is the first woman and the first person of color to lead the 162-year-old institution.

She will assume her official role at the college on July 1.

A mission-driven leader, researcher, educator, and psychologist, Thomas, 55, is a champion of liberal arts and sciences education, particularly as a foundation for inspiring curiosity and civic engagement among students. Over a career spanning more than 25 years in higher education, she has deep experience in shaping strategic vision and supporting the development of student intellectual life.

“Dr. Thomas is an inspiring and proven leader whose values are aligned with North Central College’s mission to prepare students to become curious and engaged citizens

and leaders in their communities,” said Holly Humphrey, chairperson of the board. “She has a keen sense of the higher education landscape and is poised to draw upon her vast experience in academia, and as a national thought leader, to move this institution forward.”

Since 2019, Thomas has served as the executive vice president and provost at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minn., one of the largest private women’s universities in the country. In her role as chief academic officer, she provided strategic leadership for the university’s academic programs. Among her achievements, she spearheaded implementation of the institution’s academic master plan, including the planned launch of the Office of Intercultural Engagement and Social Justice to increase cultural fluency and global awareness. In addition to academic affairs, Thomas has been responsible for student affairs and career development.

As a higher education leader, Thomas is guided by a deep

commitment to student growth and development.

“Education has the ability to empower individuals to gain skills, enhance talents, and develop meaningful careers,” she said. “It also has the capacity to develop critical consciousness and global awareness, along with the understanding of systems of inequity and the need to create change.”

She holds a doctorate degree in counseling psychology from Loyola University Chicago, specializing in family therapy and multicultural counseling. She earned a master’s degree in community counseling from Loyola. Her bachelor’s degree in education and social policy is from Northwestern University.

Thomas is known nationally for her scholarship and leadership on socialization in African American families, stereotypical roles of African American women and girls, and the development of critical consciousness and resilience in children, adolescents and families.



Helping kids heal from trauma of gun violence

By Heather Hahn, assistant news editor for UM News

“I feel scared.” “I feel hurt.” “I feel numb.” “Is this the new normal?”

Across the United States, children and teens are grappling with such feelings in the aftermath of yet another school shooting—this time in Nashville, Tenn.

The best way adults can comfort the young people in their lives after such violence is to be there for them, said Patti van Eys, a licensed clinical psychologist and lifelong United Methodist.

“Our ability to be fully present with our children is the best tool in our toolbox,” she said. “They take their cues from us, and they will feel safe if they feel like we are safe.”

She was speaking to a group of parents and teachers during an online question-and-answer session hosted by Calvary United Methodist Church in Nashville on March 30. The church stands down the street from Covenant School, the Christian elementary school where on March 27 a shooter killed three adults and three nine-year-olds before being taken down by police.

The attack was the 19th shooting so far this year at a U.S. school or university in which at least one person was wounded, according to CNN. It also was the deadliest school shooting since last year’s massacre in Uvalde, Texas.

Many of Calvary’s members have friends and family directly affected by the tragedy, and they are still in shock, said the Rev. Eric Mayle, the congregation’s minister of

connection and engagement. The church also is home to Calvary Young Children’s School, a preschool where instructors moved quickly to bring the children indoors when they heard the sirens of the shooting’s first responders.

“We’re processing all of these emotions,” Mayle said. “And for those of us who are parents and teachers and grandparents, adding a layer to that is that we’re wanting to help our children to talk about and to process these events and their emotions about these events in healthy ways.”

With that in mind, he and van Eys quickly organized the session to provide people in the wider community with some guidance. With help from van Eys, the church also is now providing resources from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to help support children after the tragedy.

Van Eys, a member of Calvary and wife of its minister of congregational care, specializes in childhood trauma. She has spent much of her career helping children and adolescents heal. Her advice includes:

Be present.

She explained what she meant by being “fully present” with kids coping with tragedy. At the minimum, she said, it means that the adult is not distracted by the phone or using some other device with a screen.

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The best way adults can comfort the young people in their lives after such violence is to be there for them.

~Patti van Eys, licensed clinical psychologist



Participants on the docent-led tour of "The Negro Motorist Green Book" exhibit.



Lunch and discussion was enjoyed with desserts provided by YoFresh Café.

The Anti-Racism Task Force kicked off its 2023 Film Series at the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie on March 25. This first event aimed to help participants better understand the media's role in portraying people of color in ways that sometimes contribute to negative stereotypes and perpetuate a "white savior" narrative.

Participants first took a docent-led tour of The Negro Motorist Green Book exhibit, held at the Holocaust Museum, and was followed by lunch, a presentation, and a panel discussion. Online participants joined the presentation and panel discussion.

The exhibit is based on the guidebook of the same name, prepared for African American travelers. Many black Americans took to driving, in part to avoid segregation on public transportation. Victor Hugo Green, an African American New York City mail carrier, published the book from 1936 to 1966. African Americans could not assume that every town would offer them service at restaurants or hotels or that police would not arrest them just because of the color of their skin.

Developed by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) in collaboration with Candacy Taylor, The Negro Motorist Green Book exhibit offers an immersive look at the historic reality of travel for Black Americans and how the guide served as an indispensable resource for the rise of the Black leisure class in the United States. The exhibition included artifacts, from business signs and postcards to historic footage, images, and firsthand accounts that illustrate not just the apprehension felt by Black travelers, but also the resilience, innovation, and elegance of people choosing to live a full American existence.

After the tour and lunch, Dr. Richard Guzman, professor emeritus at North Central College and consultant for the

Anti-Racism Task Force, spoke about the representation of Blacks in film as well as the contrast between The Negro Motorist Green Book exhibit and the 2019 movie *Green Book*. "The *Green Book* is another film where black life and history are seen through white eyes," Guzman noted. "There is almost no relationship between the film and the history that the exhibit showed us." Guzman also discussed clips from different movies, including *The Birth of a Nation*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *The Littlest Rebel*, and excerpts from the Turner Classic Movies series "Race and Hollywood: Black Images on Film" and PBS's "American Experience."

Panelists then offered their thoughts on Black representation in film and the exhibit. "When you see a film, it reflects society's values, images, and perspectives," Dr. Larry Murphy, professor emeritus at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, reflected. "How can we revise those images and expectations that you hold of me if they are not in sync with the reality of who I am?"

Typical characteristics of "white savior" films were shared by Dann Gire, founding director of the Chicago Film Critics Association. Rev. Tennille Power, pastor of Hazel Crest Community United Methodist Church, reflected on how Black actors are honored for the films in which they play typical Black roles, not when they play characters in powerful positions.

YoFresh Café provided participants with a sampling of desserts historically associated with African American culture. The café, located in Evanston, was created by panelist Dr. Larry Murphy and his wife, Dr. Jean Murphy, as a place where they hoped to contribute to the community by providing an inviting communal space that offered delicious, healthy food options.

The goal of the film series is to help

participants "go deeper" in their understanding and actions related to the harm done by racism. The series will continue with one event per quarter, using films to focus on various aspects of race and ethnicity in America. At host centers around the conference, small groups will discuss what they viewed in the film and what they heard from the presenter and panelists. They'll also sample the food and culture of the people featured that quarter.

The second quarter event, on the rich history and culture of the multitude of Asian communities, will take place on May 25. Several churches and North Central College will host the meal and discussion, and project the presentation (over Zoom) by the primary speaker and the panelists. Dr. Wonhee Anne Joh, a professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, will be the presenter. The panelists include Rev. Rose Marie Calderon-Khan, Rev. Scott Christy, and Rev. Heewon Kim. Before the gathering, participants should watch the documentary *Being Asian in America*, by Pew Research Center. The documentary draws on 66 focus groups conducted in the fall of 2021, in which Asian Americans described navigating their own identity in a nation where the label "Asian" brings expectations about their origins, behavior, and physical self. Find out more information about the event, including the participating locations, at umcnic.org/calendar/23-film-series-asian-history-and-culture.

A recording of the first quarter presentation and discussion are available at umcnic.org/calendar/23-film-series-the-green-book. More information about the film series can be found at umcnic.org/2023filmseries. The organizers also welcome inquiries from churches that are interested in serving as host sites. Contact Tim Alexander at tim@osumc.org if you have questions.

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"Think of yourself as a mirror," she said. "And as your child—no matter their age—comes to you, you can mirror what you are observing."

She said adults should not force children to talk but they still have ways to check in with their kids.

For example, with a withdrawn child, she suggested a parent might say, "I notice you're quiet today. Anything you want to talk about? I've been kind of feeling wonky today, too."

She added that parents sharing a bit of their vulnerability with their child can help build trust.

Conversation with children also can give parents an opportunity to correct misinformation, she said.

But more important than words, she stressed, is the tone a parent uses. "If you're talking to a friend on the phone, or you're chatting in the other room, your children will be picking up your tone—even if they're not picking up your words," she said. "And if your tone is fearful, they're going to pick that up."

Help young people take control.

So much about a mass shooting is beyond a child and even a parent's control. They don't set gun policy or security measures. But, van Eys said, parents can help children take control of their emotions.

"Whatever the feeling is, name it to tame it. Lean in. Because if we resist it, it's going to persist," she said.

And if a child wants to shift that feeling, she said, that child has the ability to do so. One way, she suggested, is bilateral movement — exercise such as walking, dancing, and swimming, which involves both sides of the body. That action, combined with listening to a favorite song, has the power to change the brain.

"If we feel like we have some control," she said, "some of this sense of helplessness and confusion will go away."

Feel free to say, "I don't know."

One question both parents and pastors face is, "Why did God let this happen?"

Van Eys said that how parents answer will depend largely on their values. The way she addresses the question is to note that God gave humanity free will.

"We are made in God's image, and we have the ability to be creators and co-creators with God," she said.

It also means humans can do wrong. "I always tell kids that God cries when these things happen," she said.

Mayle, the pastor, added that parents should not be afraid to acknowledge they don't know why this happened.

"I do know that God is good and God is love," Mayle said. "And God did not allow this to happen. But beyond

that, I don't know. We join our voices to a long tradition of our faith that has said either 'I don't know' or 'Here are all these possible answers,' and they all come up short."

When struggling with the existence of evil, van Eys said, it's good to tell children that it's a very good question and ask their thoughts.

"Some of the thoughts may be way off the wall," she said, "and that may be exactly where we need to be going."

Reach out to teachers.

Young people are not the only ones struggling with the evil of school shootings; so are their teachers.

Van Eys suggested parents reach out to teachers to see what stress relief they need. Some schools have opportunities for parents to volunteer. But even in cases where parents can't assist in the classroom, they can help by sending a letter of support or extending an act of kindness.

Just a cup of coffee or a card can go a long way, she said.

"There is something really important about just even the little gestures of appreciation," she said. "Humans were created for connection, and so when we connect to each other in kindness, it changes the brain chemicals in our brain in that very moment."

Leading the Laity

Words of encouragement, insight & inspiration from lay leaders



By Mark Manzi, NIC Co-Lay Leader

Laity Convocation 2023 took place two and a half months ago. Together we focused on thinking outside of the church to do community ministry.

I hope that you are planning, starting, or restarting a community ministry. I hope that you have made a connection and built a

relationship with another United Methodist congregation near yours to partner with in community ministry and to keep each other accountable for it. If you need resources to help guide you, make sure to check out the NIC laity web page (umcnic.org/laity). You can also find many resources on the Discipleship Ministries (umcdiscipleship.org) website.

The 184th Northern Illinois Annual Conference, "Come to the Table," will meet June 6 to 8. If you are a lay member of Annual Conference, please make sure you register! You can find a link at umcnic.org; click the "2023 Annual Conference" tab. Registration ends May 28 and there will be no on-site registration. When you register, make sure you sign up for laity session, scheduled for June 6 from 9 to 10:15 a.m.

Annual conferences should have an equal number of clergy and lay members. Our conference needs more lay members. If you would like to serve this way but are not a member from your church or by virtue of your office, contact your district superintendent to volunteer.

Attending Laity Convocation, Laity Session and/or Lay Academy, being a member of Annual Conference, partnering with neighboring churches, and being an active member at your local church are all examples of how we are stronger when we work together. I am convinced that the more relationships we build and the stronger those relationships become, the better our churches, districts, conference, and denomination will be. Jesus didn't travel and do ministry by himself. He built a relationship with his disciples and with the people in the communities he visited. The late Junius Dotson, the former general secretary of the UMC's Discipleship Ministries, reminded us that "engagement involves initiating and building relationships." To serve our neighbors, we must love all the people. That requires a relationship.

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no district superintendent to help churches with an issue they don't know how to address. There would be no automatic assignment of a new pastor when your current one retires. And, oh yeah, there would be no health or pension plans or money to move a new pastor when the church finds one. There would be no Safe Gatherings resource for training and checking backgrounds of volunteers. No camping programs with a Wesleyan focus, no group workers' compensation program to provide better rates, no communications director to help in a crisis, no finance ministry office you can call when you have questions about payroll taxes or how to fill out a W-2 for your pastor . . . I could go on.

Not sexy, right? But the pipeline allows resources to flow in multiple ways. You can receive help and resources. And you can share help and resources.

I recognize that as churches emerge from the pandemic, giving has been slow to recover. I understand how much giving now is sacrificial. So I offer great thanks to churches who have extended themselves in order to help us as a connection of churches to keep our promises and get the resources where they are needed.

This piece originally appeared on the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church website. Reprinted by permission.



May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, a time when we honor the history and contributions of members of this fastest-growing population in the United States. This is a diverse group of people with origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands.

As we celebrate the gifts of being in community with these brothers and sisters, we also must acknowledge some difficult moments in our history, including Japanese internment camps during World War II, the difficult working conditions for Chinese laborers instrumental in completing the Transcontinental

Railroad, and the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy.

Even though our history was not always kind to Asian and Pacific Islanders, these setbacks did not stop them from contributing to the arts, technology, and education. In The United Methodist Church, we have an opportunity for a richer experience of worship and life as the people of God when we celebrate the voices of our Asian American and Pacific Islander brothers and sisters among us.

** information shared from resourceumc.org. Resources available at www.resourceumc.org.*



THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR FAITH
HERITAGE SUNDAY 2023

Heritage Sunday 2023 Theme Celebrates Local Church Histories

The United Methodist Church celebrates Heritage Sunday annually near Aldersgate Day (May 24). This year Heritage Sunday is May 21. The observance provides an opportunity for reflection on heritage, celebration of where the Church has been, how it understands itself as it shapes us today, and the meaning of Christian conferencing.

Heritage Sunday calls the Church to remember the past by committing itself to the continuing call of God.

Dr. Ashley Boggan D., general secretary of the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History, has announced the theme for Heritage Sunday 2023: "Local Church Histories: The Cornerstone of Our Faith."

"Each congregation has a story, one rich with history and details of ministry to its community and one another," Boggan explains. "We want to recognize that our shared stories undergird our denomination and serve as the foundation of our connectionalism."

Aldersgate Day commemorates the day in 1738 when John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, attended a prayer and scripture study meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. Here he received an experience of assurance of his salvation, which he describes as feeling his heart "strangely warmed." This was a momentous day for Wesley and shaped the development of the Methodist movement.

Worship Resources are available at www.resourceumc.org.

Church food pantry helps Alaskans 'on the edge'

By Joey Butler for United Methodist News Service

Jimmie Hutson said that his wood stove burns the whole winter and must be fed every few hours. Living on a fixed income, he said it's a blessing to be able to rely on free firewood courtesy of the Willow Community Food Pantry, a ministry of Willow United Methodist Church.

"They take care of me. The truckload I picked up today should get me through the winter," he said.

Hutson is not just a recipient of the ministry; he also volunteers there, stocking pantry shelves and delivering firewood to others.

The food pantry began in 2005 out of a space the church had been using to store donated clothing. Pantry director Ola Williams, then chair of the church outreach team, said they realized there was more need in the area for food than clothes.

"The first year, we supported 35 families a month. Now we're up to 170-200 families a month and we've helped a total of 745 individuals already this year," she said.

In addition, every Friday the pantry distributes bags to 60 students with two breakfasts, two lunches and snacks to get them through the weekend. The pantry also provides small vouchers for gas as well as firewood.

"The population of Willow is only 2,000, so you can see what a percentage they serve," said the Rev. Christina DowlingSoka, co-pastor of Willow United Methodist

Church and superintendent of the Alaska Conference.

DowlingSoka said that the ministry serves a community "on the edge." Willow has higher unemployment than the national average, the cost of living is 13 percent above the national average, and the cost of food is 31 percent above the national average.

"Some people we serve are living in buses or little trailers off grid, with no heat or running water. So, when winter goes long, it's a matter of survival," she said.

Williams said it's taken a long time to build relationships, as many of those living off the grid tend to be mistrustful of others.

Fortunately, she said, "everybody knows the UMC is there to help."

Judy Hannaman became a volunteer after initially coming to the pantry for help.

"I was almost out of food. They rescued me and put me on my feet and I've been here ever since," she said.

She also is a member at Willow United Methodist and brings her grandsons with her. She said the camaraderie among volunteers is her favorite part of the ministry.

Though the church only has about 54 members, the growth of the pantry program led them to construct an addition to the building. That addition was vital when COVID-19 began to spread.

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DYK DID YOU KNOW?

Behind the Scenes

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

The upcoming Annual Conference registration deadline (May 28) is approaching quickly, and we are working hard to have everything ready for the June 6 opening session. This year's theme is "Connected in Christ: Come to the Table." While we talk, pray, and learn with one another about our mission as the United Methodist Church in a world filled with uncertainties, there is one thing that is certain: we will be prepared for the gathering, thanks to the many, many hours of volunteer and staff time that goes into making our annual conference a hospitable, comfortable, well-run event.

Who comes up with the annual conference theme, coordinates the venue, runs the registration, creates the worship services, orchestrates the agenda, keeps us on track, decides the music, schedules the presentations, designs the slides, edits the videos and more?

Much of the work of designing and executing this large meeting with multiple moving parts is done by multiple committees and many staff members.

It is Bishop Dan Schwerin who keeps us on track, presides at the annual conference, guides and approves the work of committees, and shepherds our leadership.

Behind the scenes it takes a community of dedicated, creative volunteers and attentive staff to host this important annual meeting.

It begins with committees. Like any good United Methodist organization, our annual conference is supported by a variety of committees. There is an Annual Conference Committee charged with oversight of the work. There is a Worship Committee that is made up of smaller groups that design the three major worship services, plan and create the visuals, and oversee the music. There is a Credentials Committee that monitors the roll to be sure we have the right balance of lay and clergy members and that those voting are qualified to do so under denominational rules. There is a Legislative Sections Committee that recruits and trains those leading these sections. There is an usher coordinator, conference secretary, conference secretarial pool, daily procedures coordinator, parliamentarian, Accessibility Committee, display-table team, and site volunteers.

These committees are supported by the work of conference staff. Our events coordinator, Bri Wadlington, communications specialist, Lisa Smith, and

director of communications, Victoria Rebeck, work to provide an efficient, user-friendly registration system, web interface with all the information you need to participate, multiple points of communication, and Annual Conference materials. In addition, the Administrative Office staff provide the financial unpinning for registration and technical services. The bishop's administrative assistant, Marva Andrews, and the district administrative assistants work with our database and provide up-to-date information concerning conference membership. As director of connectional ministries, I work with many groups and organizations on this massive effort of coordination.

So, when you walk into the conference center on June 6 and pick up your name badge and event booklet for the 184th Annual Conference, remember all those who work hard behind the scenes. While we are Connected in Christ and Come to the Table, gathering to commune with one another, our gathering is in good hands.

Thank you to all those who make it so.

Clergy Appointments and Retirements

Bishop Dan Schwerin announces the following clergy appointments and retirements for the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church, effective July 1, 2023 (unless otherwise noted):

Jane Easley (Full Elder) to Methodist Liaison Advocacy Coordinator with the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem, Israel (General Board of Global Ministries) from Rockford: Christ (Prairie North District).

Keri Rainsberger (Full Elder) to Davenport-Edwall (Pacific Northwest Conference) from Lena (Prairie North District).

Joshua Brown (Licensed Local Pastor) to Polo: Faith (1/2 time) (Prairie South District) while remaining at Chana (1/2 time) (Prairie South District). Joshua follows Brian LeBaron who is retiring.

Chan Ik Choi (Provisional Elder) to Carol Stream: St. Andrews (Prairie Central District) from Chicago: Urban Village Church (Lake North District). Chan follows Jungmi (Deborah) Kang who will be appointed to attend school.

Sung-Eun Kim (Provisional Elder) to Transitional Leave from Forreton/Leaf River (Prairie North District).

Joe Munroe (Licensed Local Pastor) to Sugar Grove (Prairie South District) from Maple Park and Sycamore (Prairie South District). Joe follows Tammy Scott who is appointed to Aurora: Wesley (Prairie Central District).

Mary Rawlinson (Full Deacon) to Family Leave from Appointment Beyond the Local Church (Hampton Center in New York). Effective March 10th.

Fernando Siaba (Retired Elder) to interim Senior Pastor at Franklin Park: First (Lake North District). Fernando follows Jesus Molina whose ministry is ended. Effective April 1.

Matthew Smith (Provisional Elder) to Freeport: Red Oak (1/4) (Prairie North District), while remaining at Warren (Prairie North District). Matthew follows Gary Rich (Retired Licensed Local Pastor) as the charge is unyoked and he remains at Cedarville (Prairie North District).

Claire Marich (Full Deacon) to retirement. Claire was commissioned as a Deacon in 2008 and ordained in 2010. During her ministry she served at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital (CRP Program), Innovative Hospice, Heartland Hospice (Hillside, IL, Spiritual Care Coordinator), and Ecumenical Shared Ministries on staff at Asbury Memorial Church in Savannah. Effective January 1, 2023

Susan Flinn-Portee (Full Elder) to retirement. Susan transferred from Illinois Great Rivers Conference to Northern Illinois Conference in 1998. During her ministry she served at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and Harris Methodist Hospital. Effective March 29th, 2023

Chung Nam Kwak (Retired Elder) to Flossmoor: South Suburban as interim. Chung Nam follows Ho Gun Kim, who has withdrawn his orders. April 9, 2023

Jenny Weber (Full Elder) to Extension Ministry (New Morning Retreat Center) from Hampshire: First and Hampshire: Zion (North Prairie District).

Kimberley Neace (Full Deacon) to Naperville: Grace (Prairie Central District) from St. Charles: Baker Memorial (Prairie Central District). June 1, 2023.

Alex Lee (Licensed Local Pastor) to Harvard: Hispanic NFC (Prairie North District) from Alden (Prairie North District) while remaining at Harvard: First (Prairie North District).

Mark Harkness (Full Elder) to New Milford (Prairie North District) (1/4 time) while continuing at Cherry Valley (Prairie North District) (3/4 time). Mark follows Kazimierz Fiut who is ending his ministry.

Aaron McLeod (Provisional Elder) to Evanston: Sherman (Lake North District) from Chicago: Gorham (Lake South District). Aaron follows Dennis Oglesby who is appointed in the Minnesota Conference.

Caleb Hong (Full Elder) to Rockford: Christ (Prairie North District) from Orland Park: Faith (Lake South District). Caleb follows Jane Easley who is appointed as a missionary in Jerusalem, Israel (General Board of Global Ministries).

Sarah Hong (Full Elder) to Rockford: Beth Eden/Aldersgate (Prairie North District) from Minooka (Prairie South District). Sarah follows Brett Todd who is retiring.

Marcia Peddicord (Certified Lay Minister/District Superintendent Supply) to Mount Morris: Disciples (Prairie South District) (3/4 time) from Malden (Prairie South District). Marcia follows Julie Bunt who is retiring.

David Rogula (Retired Elder) to Lighthouse (Prairie South District) (1/4 time) while remaining at Esmond (Prairie South District) (1/2 time). David follows Joshua who is appointed to Polo: Faith and Chana.

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Volunteer Lisa Darnell (left) hugs fellow volunteer Judy Hannaman at the Willow Community Food Pantry.



Jimmie Hutson loads firewood that he received from the Willow Community Food Pantry. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.

Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth, who oversees the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area, said ministries like Willow's food pantry that serve remote areas become the lifeblood of those communities. "The viability of the ministry can't rest on the number of people who show up for worship. It really has to rest on the impact that the congregation is having within its context."

Northern Illinois Conference supports food pantries and similar ministries through Mission Links. Consider supporting these: Ridgewood United Community Food Pantry (#60000203), United Church of Rogers Park Community Feast (#60000178), and The Seeds Center Community Development Corporation (#60000225).

Job Openings

For the latest job openings in the Northern Illinois Conference and across the connection, visit umcnic.org/jobs.

Stay Connected

Sign up for the weekly NIC eNews, Appointment Announcements and Sympathy notices. Visit 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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