

Northern Illinois Conference
of The United Methodist Church
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Amid tumult of 1968, a church came together By Heather Hahn, UMNS

The year 1968 convulsed with assassinations, riots, war in Vietnam and student protests against that war. The Troubles revved up in Northern Ireland, and Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia.

At a time when it seemed much of the world was violently splitting apart, a group of Wesleyan Christians peacefully and joyfully were coming together.

On April 23, 1968, two bishops followed by two children, two youths, two adults, six ordained ministers, two church officers and finally all 10,000 people present joined hands and repeated in unison:

“Lord of the church, we are united in thee, in thy church, and now in The United Methodist Church. Amen.”

With those words in a Dallas auditorium, the 750,000-member Evangelical United Brethren Church and the 10.3 million-member Methodist Church became one church. The merger also brought people together in another way: marking the official dissolution of the Methodist Church’s racially segregated Central Jurisdiction.

Amid a tumultuous year — just weeks after the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. — a new United Methodist Church was born. “It felt like the restoration of the Methodist movement,” said the Rev. Joseph Evers, a Methodist delegate to the 1968 Uniting Conference. He is now 91 and lives in Quincy, Illinois.

Reaching unity required years of effort and a commitment to address racism that remains a work in progress. The Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell, newly named as a district superintendent at the time, was among the demonstrators at the doorway to the Uniting Conference promoting integration. They held signs silently reminding delegates the church still had work to do. Caldwell’s sign quoted the title of King’s

final book: “Where Do We Go from Here... Chaos or Community?”

“We knew even though we eliminated the Central Jurisdiction, issues of race and racism were still there,” he said.

As The United Methodist Church celebrates its 50th birthday, church historians see lessons for a denomination facing questions of unity anew.

Blessed be the ties

The early leaders of what would become The United Methodist Church had close ties. They just took more than a century to bind.

Philip Otterbein, the German-born co-founder of the United Brethren in Christ, was friends with Francis Asbury, Methodism’s pioneering bishop. In fact, Otterbein participated in Asbury’s ordination at the 1784 Christmas Conference, the event that marked the founding of the Methodist church in America.

Jacob Albright, founder of what became known as the Evangelical Association, came to Methodism through a class meeting and began preaching and forming classes of his own among fellow German-speaking Americans. However, a lack of cooperation from English-speaking Methodists led both Otterbein’s and Albright’s followers to organize their own denominations.

Language differences weren’t the only source of division. U.S. Methodism during its first century saw a structural split about once every decade, wrote noted church historian, the Rev. Russell E. Richey. Most dramatically, northern and southern Methodists ruptured over slavery in 1844. By the early 20th century, John Wesley’s spiritual descendants had gone from breaking up to making up — but at great cost.

In 1939, three Methodist denominations reunited to form what was then the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S. But to make that union possible, Methodist Protestant clergywomen had to surrender their clergy rights.

Most notoriously, the Methodist Episcopal Church South required the creation of the Central Jurisdiction, which enshrined the segregation (and attendant second-class treatment) of African-Americans in the new denomination’s constitution.

Let’s get together

Nonetheless, members of both denominations continued to push for a church more in keeping with Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21 that believers “will be one.” Efforts to end the Central Jurisdiction date from its inception. Methodists and Evangelical United Brethren also began making movements toward union just months after the EUB formed.

“The mid-20th century marked a broad movement toward church unity,” said the Rev. Thomas E. Frank, a historian of Methodism at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The path to The United Methodist Church wasn’t without roadblocks. Bishops from both denominations in 1957 identified possible impediments to union, said the Rev. Ted Campbell, church history professor at Southern Methodist University’s Perkins School of Theology in Dallas.

One issue was that the Methodist Church gave bishops life tenure while the Evangelical United Brethren had term limits. The list also included the size difference between the two churches, the manner of selecting district superintendents, overlapping church agencies, and finding a name that would honor the heritage of both denominations.

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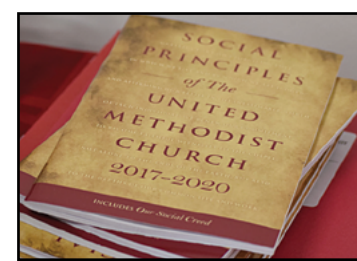
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From Bishop Sally Dyck: **Shepherding on the edge**

When I was a district superintendent in Ohio, I had a series of churches which were all built about the mid-1800s. Their architecture was similar but more strikingly, they all had the same two stained-glass windows.

One window was Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. The colors were darks: grays and

deep purples. He was kneeling before a big rock in anguished prayer. I could imagine generations of people praying and finding comfort in front of the windows of Jesus in anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The other window was Jesus as the Good Shepherd. This Jesus the Good Shepherd had a lamb in his arms and he was walking with the other sheep who were obediently following him through a lush, sunny green valley. A look of peace, even a look of joy, was on Jesus' face as he triumphantly returned with his lost lamb and flock intact. If you looked real close, it almost looked as if the sheep were smiling! All peaceful, calm and serene, this Jesus the Good Shepherd!

But this peaceful, calm and serene Jesus the Good Shepherd didn't seem to connect to the experience of life or church that most of these folks were having at that time. The economy was killing the small town where the church was. One man in the congregation was furious with others in the church because they took their hardware business to the Walmart in a larger town nearby. He accused them of putting him out of business.

The older congregants' lambs were lost; many of their

own children and grandchildren had nothing to do with the church. If they did, they went to the larger town nearby... and usually to a non-denominational church. The flock was fighting and in conflict. Instead of smiling, these sheep were butting heads.

I was reminded of a different picture of the Good Shepherd that I knew from my youth. It's one that's over 100 years old, painted by Alfred Soord. This is no peaceful, calm or serene setting for the Good Shepherd. The shepherd has left the lush, level ground for the mountainous cliff in search of a lost lamb. He is holding precariously onto his staff. There's an eagle circling overhead, trying to snatch the lamb away before the shepherd gets to it in order to have a tasty kabob for dinner.

Consider the role of the shepherd in Soord's painting. He had to listen; listen to the lambs crying from afar and then go find them, doing whatever it took. Risking his own life as he clung to the side of the cliff was part of his work in tending the flock. There's no shepherding from the safety of level, lush ground, wishing the lambs would come to him!

The viewer of the Soord painting is left in suspense: what will happen? Will the shepherd fall or fail to get to the lamb in time before it falls or is snatched away? Will the shepherd and lamb return safely to the fold?

Shepherding isn't for the faint-hearted. It requires physical, mental and even spiritual strength to climb mountains, hang off cliffs, be acutely aware of predators and rescue the lost lambs. Likewise, when we talk about the ministry of the church or those of us who are in ministry as shepherds—laity and clergy, this is the image of the shepherd that should come to mind!

Last year at annual conference we approved an Annual Conference Shepherding Team (ACST) with corresponding District Shepherding Teams to help connect, coordinate and communicate ministry and mission throughout our annual conference as well as to vision and strategize for the future.

I was a little surprised when the Organizational Task Force decided to call them "shepherding" teams. Shepherds aren't a part of everyone's experience. (Although in full disclosure: my brother and I had a little sheep-raising business when we were young so I do know a little about shepherding!) In fact, some church consultants think that we should abandon all use of the word shepherd or even pastor (which means shepherd) because it's too passive and, dare I say, serene for the tasks of ministry. Yet, shepherding or ministry today is really about go-

ing to the edge, willing to venture out of the safe, level ground into the present and treacherous religious landscape.

The Annual Conference Shepherding Team has to be ready to go to the edge of where people are in our conference, local churches, and communities so as to help equip us all to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We have many forces around us—like those circling eagles overhead—that make it difficult to be the church in the world today. Unlike our memories of previous years, the landscape isn't level or safe or easy; it's rugged and sometimes being the church is a real "cliffhanger" in terms of what will happen (think: the special General Conference in 2019 or maybe any one of our local churches).

The Shepherding Teams are charged to do this "adaptive" work to help set mission, vision, priorities, and strategies as an annual conference for the near future. As is always stated in adaptive work, what we have done in the past isn't going to get us through our challenges today! Shepherding requires attentiveness, listening, risking, and caring deeply for people around us, and not just "our own."

Like the Good Shepherd, we're called to go to the edge, to go over the edge and to reach out from there! That means we experiment and risk new ways of being the annual conference, the district, the local church and yes, even disciples/members. That's scary for many of us. That's going over the edge!

But even as we seek to do new things, risking like the shepherd in Soord's picture, it's really how we do things that will ultimately matter. If we want deeper trust in our conference or church, then we have to reach out from there and be trustworthy. If we feel isolated and alone as clergy, laity or local churches, we have to reach out from there and meet others where they are. If we want younger, newer and more diverse leadership in our churches or the district and annual conference, we need to reach out from there, inviting them in and empowering them. If we want safe places so that we can think, imagine, dream, and risk sharing an idea that might not be quite "baked" yet, then we have to reach out from there and create that space.

Shepherding is really about leading; leading by example, listening, caring, risking in the midst of the precarious places we find ourselves, and reaching out from whatever place we find ourselves, so as to make it better, more Christ-like, more loving, and holy!

~Bishop Sally Dyck

From the Cover

To make the union happen, the two denominations made compromises. United Methodists in the U.S. adopted the Methodist practice of life tenure for bishops. The Evangelical United Brethren's Council on Ministries structure was adopted, and is still used to coordinate ministries at the local church and other levels of the denomination. The word United also became part of the new church's name.

Forming a more perfect union

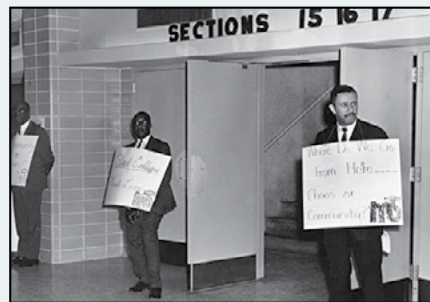
The Central Jurisdiction was not on the initial list of trouble spots, Campbell pointed out, but that came later.

The Evangelical United Brethren – following actions called for when the Rock River Conference met at First Methodist Church of Oak Park, Ill., in 1963 – ultimately made abolishing the segregated institution a condition for union, said the Rev. J. Steven O'Malley. He was an ordained EUB pastor at the time of the merger and now a professor at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. "This move reflects longstanding EUB opposition to segregation and, before that, slavery," he said.

Four years before the union, Methodist

conferences within the Central Jurisdiction began transferring to geographical jurisdictions. "By 1964, there were just so many of us who thought segregation was wrong and that the Central Jurisdiction was an anomaly in the Methodist Church because our theology didn't support segregation," said Evers, the Methodist delegate. "But it lasted too long."

In a reversal of what happened in prior mergers, the 1968 union also assured women the right to be ordained and have full clergy rights. However, the church sometimes struggled to live up to its



"Where do we go from here... Chaos or Community?" appears on the sign held by the Rev. Gilbert H. Caldwell by the entrance to the plenary for the 1968 Uniting Conference in Dallas. Photo courtesy of Archives and History.

teachings. Retired Bishop Susan W. Hassinger, who came out of the EUB tradition, was ordained in 1968. She waited two years for her first appointment, which was only part-time.

Lessons from union

Hassinger and other church leaders say the denomination can learn from its union. Those lessons seem especially relevant as the church prepares for a special General Conference in 2019 where delegates will face questions of whether attitudes toward homosexuality should be church-dividing.

"People had to listen to each other across differences and learn how to value the other," said Hassinger, now bishop-in-residence at United Methodist Boston University School of Theology.

O'Malley thinks the church can benefit from its Evangelical United Brethren heritage by taking a more "irenic" approach to conferencing, church order and social principles — that is, an approach aimed at reconciliation and peace.

Find resources for celebrating at UMC.org/umc50.

*Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.

Heritage Sunday - May 20

"JUBILEE": The 50th Anniversary of The UM Church Heritage Sunday, which is celebrated on Aldersgate Day (May 24), or the Sunday preceding that date, is set aside for remembering our legacy as United Methodists.

This year's approach to Heritage Sunday is a celebration, a JUBILEE, in fact in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of The United Methodist Church.

The General Commission on Archives and History's (GCAH) History and Interpretation Committee urges your annual conference, district and congregation to discover and then celebrate all that our denomination has accomplished in the last five decades.

Use this Special Sunday and resources provided at www.gcah.org/resources/heritage-sunday-2018 to serve as a vehicle for launching any number of history-related projects in the Annual Conference: oral history interviews with retired church workers in the conference; a new conference history; the preservation of a Historic Site or Heritage Landmark; or a children's poster contest.



Rev. Martin Deppe (left) with Rev. Dr. Calvin S. Morris (right) sing a hymn at the Northern Illinois Conference Martin Luther King Jr. celebration on Jan. 14, 2018.

Remembering the 50th anniversary of the birth of The United Methodist Church, April 23, 1968

The Rev. Martin Deppe, who was serving as senior pastor at Gresham Methodist Church in Chicago in 1968, attended the Uniting Conference and shares his reflection on this historic church union:

We slept for a few hours on the church's gym floor after spending the night writing and mimeographing the Methodists for Church Renewal daily newsletter. We were young turks (elders)

from Chicago, part of the national MCR caucus leadership: Jerry, Jim, Chuck, Ross, Bruce... Then it was up and to the Dallas, Texas convention center to distribute these 8 & 1/2 by 14-page papers to the 1,300 arriving delegates of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church and hundreds of more visitors. It was a renewal moment but more.

The vote for the union, which included an end to the segregated Central Jurisdiction, signified a racially inclusive church, a justice and reconciling moment. Then, with Bishops Reuben Mueller and Lloyd Wicke joining hands and declaring "Lord of the Church, we are united in Thee, in Thy Church and now in The United Methodist Church," the new denomination was born.

The uniting moment became a sacramental moment as

the delegates and guests, including the unshaven Chicago bunch, broke bread and drank juice. These precious moments were followed by a somber moment standing on a grassy knoll where JFK was assassinated just five years earlier. (Incredibly, this historic church union occurred less than three weeks after the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. whose funeral several of us had attended in Atlanta just days earlier.)

Then to our cars and the drive back to our parishes in Chicago. Moments of renewal, justice, reconciliation, unity, and sacrament all packed into 10 memorable days. We need those same spiritual moments in our church today. Come, Holy Spirit, come.

~Rev. Martin Deppe

Merging the Streams

The North Central Jurisdiction of the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church will be hosting an event from July 9-12 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the E.U.B.-Methodist merger in 1968 in the West Ohio Conference. The event, called "Merging the Streams," will take place at the E.U.B. Heritage Center, 4501 Denlinger Rd., Dayton, Ohio. The registration cost is \$155. For more information and to register visit www.umchistory.org/merging-streams.

United to end racism By Megan Casey, NIC Communications Specialist



Clergy and laity from the Northern Illinois Conference gather on the National Mall in D.C. participating in the Unite to End Racism rally.

From April 3-5, 2018, a group of Northern Illinois Conference United Methodists and other faith leaders traveled by bus from La Grange to Washington D.C. to mark the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and to unite to end racism.

Our NIC group met on April 3 at 5 p.m. in La Grange in a Catholic church parking lot, where they boarded a bus entitled "Ideal Charter" and over the course of 14 hours, drove across the country to D.C. The trip was long and tiring, but well worth it.

"It was great to meet so many people dedicated to change and to defeating racism. I look forward to joining hands and hearts in the future," said Nayna Byers from Lyonsville Congregational United Church of Christ, Indian Head Park.

Once they arrived in D.C. around 7 a.m. on April 4, the silent prayer walk had already begun from the National Mall to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, so our NIC members jumped right in. Joining them were people of all different faiths.

The Rev. Jenna Couch, an ELCA pastor serving in Galena, Ill., who traveled with the group said, "I appreciated the ecumenical/interfaith service and hearing from so many different traditions who center the sanctity of humanity, and the importance of working together in this world so that people are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their beliefs."

The following hours consisted of incredible speakers from all walks of faith, including but not excluded to Sikhs, Rabbis, Catholic Priests, and Pastors.

Midway through the day, the rally temporarily shut down because of strong winds and rain. However, an hour later the rally started up again with the second part of the day.

Some of the influential speakers at the rally included Yolanda Adams, Danny Glover, Louis Gossett, Jr., Rev. Dr. Jennifer Harvey, Rev. Dr. Frederick Douglass Haynes, III, Bishop Vashti McKenzie, DeRay Mckesson, Bishop W. Darin Moore, Dr. Mary I. O'Connor, Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Bishop Marvin Sapp, and Jim Wallis.

The Rev. Vickie Hadaway from Cherry Valley UMC said of the speakers, "I was moved by so much of what happened that day but what has stuck with me the most are the last two speakers, Bishop McKenzie "take a stand" and A.M.E. Bishop Darin Moore as he made the pledge to his grandson [to end racism]."

The rally sponsored by the National Council of Churches, entitled "A.C.T." stands for AWAKEN ourselves to the truth, CONFRONT racism and injustice, and TRANSFORM the hearts, minds, and behaviors of people and society.

"It was an incredible experience to be among groups of faith that acknowledge the need to A.C.T. 2 end racism. While there's still work to be done 50 years after Dr. King's assassination, I remain hopeful and pray for our strength to continue to recognize and acknowledge the struggles and work together to bring justice, equality, and peace within all aspects of our society," said Alison Jenkins from South Shore UMC in Chicago.

The NIC bus left D.C. at 3 p.m. after the rally that day, but the event continued onto the next day for a National Day of Advocacy and Action with some of our NIC members present, along with many other United Methodists. The three-day event is only the beginning. The #rally2endracism is the launch of a comprehensive, multi-year program to address racism in our nation. For more information visit www.rally2endracism.org.



Pictured are Citizenship class teachers Shalley Wakeman (left) and Marta Dunne (right) reviewing the Naturalization application with student Karina Nelson.

Keagy Fund + JFON = Citizenship

Funding from the Martin Keagy Grant for rural ministries allowed the United Church of Sandwich to offer Citizenship classes for local residents this spring. Teachers Marta Dunne and Shalley Wakeman received training on the Citizenship Process through the New Americans Initiative fund through Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors (NIJFON).

The class prepared their students for the interview process, reviewed the questions on the application, studied the 100 civics questions and practiced answering questions they might be asked. The class studied U.S. History, Government, and Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship.

At the end of the 10-week class, each student was able to meet with NIJFON attorney, Jenny Ansay, to review their 20-page application to become a naturalized citizen. Living in an area where immigration services are a distance, the lawyer workshop held at the church in Sandwich was well received by the dozen or so who attended.

Both teachers expressed their appreciation to the Martin Keagy Fund, Northern IL JFON and the United Church of Sandwich for their support in making this possible.



Navigating Uncharted Waters 179th Annual Conference Reminders

Online Registration has increased to \$95 and closes May 20. Onsite registration cost is \$130.

Legislation and other documents may be found at www.umcnic.org/AC2018 starting May 4. We recommend downloading them to your personal devices or printing before arriving to Pheasant Run.

Childcare will be available for those attending the Annual Conference for children 12-years-old and under at Geneva UMC at 211 Hamilton St., Geneva, IL. May 19 is the last day to register. June 1 is the last day to cancel childcare, no-shows will be billed \$20 an hour.

Blueprint for Wellness Screenings will be held at Annual Conference on Monday and Tuesday (June 4 and 5) from 7 a.m. - 10 a.m. in the Ruby Room (Tower 2nd floor). For more info and pre-registration visit www.wespath.org and log in to your "HealthFlex/ WebMD" account. Deadline to register is May 22.

Cokesbury Bookstore and Display tables will again share the space (selected rooms of the St. Charles Ballroom). Registration for Display Tables is open and the link can be found at www.umcnic.org/AC2018. The cost is \$30 per 8ft table and \$50 if electricity is needed. The deadline to register is May 10.

Our onsite Accessibility Coordinators, Kathy Wellman and Violet Ricker and assistant Susan Harkness will be present to help with any needs (vision, movement, hearing, etc.), within our ability. Please be sure to indicate in your registration how we can extend welcome and hospitality to you during Annual Conference.

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

Visit and bookmark www.umcnic.org/AC2018 for updates.

Annual Conference Agenda

*subject to change

Sunday, June 3

1 - 3 p.m. Registration
2 - 3 p.m. New Member Orientation - Skybox 3/4 (Mega Center)
2 p.m. Ordination Rehearsal
3 p.m. Deadline: Submit removal from consent calendar petitions
4 p.m. Ordination
6 - 8 p.m. Display/Cokesbury area open
6:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner
7 p.m. Hispanic/Latinx Dinner

Monday, June 4

6:30 a.m. Holy Communion
7 a.m. Display/Cokesbury area open
8:30 a.m. Opening Plenary
9 a.m. Episcopal Address
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. UMM Prayer Line
10:15 a.m. Plenary 2
11 a.m. Biblical reflection on refugees - Rev. John McCullough

12 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. Retirement Service
3:45 p.m. Plenary 3
5:15 p.m. Dinner
7:15 - 9 p.m. Plenary 4 - Teaching session from Gary Rand and The Many band

Tuesday, June 5

6:30 a.m. Holy Communion
7 a.m. Display/Cokesbury area open
8:30 a.m. Plenary 5
9 a.m. Biblical reflection on the merger - Rev. Fred Day
10 a.m. Plenary 6
10:30 a.m. Memorial Service
12 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. Plenary 7
3:45 p.m. Plenary 8
5 p.m. Adjournment

Annual Conference Speakers and Guests



Worship Leader: Gary Rand

Gary Rand has been leading worship and the arts at LaSalle Street Church in Chicago for the last ten years. He also directs worship, mentors and teaches at McCormick Seminary, while composing music in a wide range of styles, from folk/pop songs to contemporary classical music.

"One of the key things I have tried to teach and model is that worship is something we do...not something we view," said Rand. "Giving people ways to actively participate, whether that's through singing, speaking words out loud, moving their bodies, writing on sticky notes, making art for the worship space...has always been a goal of mine, and something I've tried to bring to whatever worship experience I have helped create."

Rand started making music at a young age, literally as a baby, as a member of my family's country-western group. After high school, he helped form and toured in one of the seminal Christian rock bands of the 70s, The Crimson Bridge, earned a BMus degree in composition from Wheaton College, then began a solo singer/songwriter career, writing and performing songs and making records that reflected his growing concerns about peace and justice issues.

Rand has also earned a Masters in Theological Studies, focused on worship and the arts, from Chicago's Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and a Doctorate in Music Composition from Northwestern University.

Currently, Rand and his wife Lenora are working on The Plural Guild, an online gathering for worship artists. For more information visit www.pluralguild.com.



Band: The Many

Drawing on indie pop and gospel influences, The Many makes music to help give voice to faith and doubt, questions and fears, laments and longings, music that speaks to a non-

violent God, a Jesus who is with us and for us, and to a Spirit that can't be easily defined or controlled.

It's music for a movement of resistance to hatred and division, for reconciliation and restoration, and music that always reminds us "we are on this earth to love."

The lead singers in The Many - Darren Calhoun, Kerry Anne Pritchard, Leslie Michelle and Hannah Rand - came together around their shared love of music and commitment to honest expressions of faith, peace-making, economic and racial justice and LGBTQ+ inclusion.

The Many are equally at home at a house concert, festival, conference or a faith-and-justice-grounded gathering of any kind. They do more than simply concerts...they create experiences in which they weave together music, words, images and liturgy into an engaging, participatory, transformational event.



Memorial Service: Rev. Tim Casey

The Rev. Tim Casey was raised in a rural community in south-central Wisconsin. He was ordained in the Church of the Nazarene in 1990. In 1992, he and his family and moved to Evanston, Ill., so he could attend Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. He received his Master of Divinity degree in

1994 and moved to Nebraska to serve a two-point charge in The United Methodist church.

It was his hope to become a full member of the conference in 1998, however, an automobile accident in 1997 meant that he had to postpone his pursuit of full membership until 2001. He became the senior pastor at Good Shepherd UMC in Bartlett, Ill., in 2006 and his current appointment at Channahon UMC in 2017.

He's developed dynamic ministries in youth, caring ministries (Stephen Ministries) and Bible and book studies.

"I love being a disciple of Jesus Christ and helping others become disciples," said Casey. "I thank God for the blessings of everyday life and I look forward to what comes next."



Biblical Reflection:

Rev. John McCullough

The Rev. John L. McCullough is President and CEO of Church World Service (CWS), the global humanitarian agency with programs in development and humanitarian affairs, refugee assistance, and advocacy for social justice. Under his leadership, CWS is known as an innovative and adaptive leader in its programmatic fields, engaged in transformative relationships.

McCullough has been at the forefront of agency efforts to press for the needs of the hungry and the displaced, human rights and the empowerment of civil society. "Whether the challenge is chronic or in crisis, we dedicate ourselves to working with affected people to hear their needs, access the resources necessary to address those needs, and build a foundation for their future," said McCullough. McCullough has remained outspoken in support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform, DREAMers, and the rights of the displaced.

A graduate of the Boston University School of Theology, McCullough was honored with its Distinguished Alumni award. An ordained minister in The United Methodist Church, he has served pastorates in the United States and Kenya and has held leadership positions at the denomination's global mission agency before joining CWS in 2000. McCullough is grateful to be the recipient of numerous awards and honors including "Outstanding Ecumenist" by The United Methodist Council of Bishops in 2012.



Biblical Reflection: Rev. Fred Day

The Rev. Alfred T. Day, beginning in 2014, is the General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History. He is a clergy member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference. He also serves as editor of Methodist History.

Prior to his present appointment, Day served local churches in the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference including a term as District Superintendent and most recently as Pastor of Historic St. George's Church, a United Methodist Heritage Landmark.

He received his graduate studies from Drew University and Temple University, an M. Div. from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and a B.S. from Houghton College.



Ecumenical Guest: Bishop Jeffrey D. Lee

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee is the twelfth bishop of the Diocese of Chicago. He was elected in 2007 and consecrated on February 2, 2008.

Bishop Lee leads 35,000 Episcopalians in 125 congregations across northern Illinois.

A charismatic preacher, liturgist and spiritual leader, he is committed to helping the congregations of the diocese grow the church, form the faithful, and change the world.

He is the author of *Opening the Prayer Book* in the New Church's Teaching Series and the recently published *Gathered for God: Church's Teachings for a Changing World*; a member of the Board of Directors of Episcopal Relief and Development; and an associate of the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

Bishop Lee is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Nashotah House Seminary and served as a curate, canon to the ordinary and church developer in the Diocese of Northern Indiana and as rector of churches in Wisconsin and Washington before being elected bishop.

He and his wife, Lisa Rogers Lee, have two children, Katherine and Jonathan.

FROM YOUR CO-LAY LEADERS United Methodist Beliefs: What is a Disciple?



The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The Northern Illinois Conference expands on the UMC mission adding “by equipping our local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all for the glory of God.”

This is good stuff, but when one thinks about it we need time to sort out exactly what our mission is asking of us. One thing we have asked of ourselves and had others tell us needs to be “sorted out” is - What is a Disciple? At our most recent Laity Convocation, we heard people ask this question especially after the Rev. Junius Dotson, our keynote speaker, spoke about the “why” and “how” of discipleship.

We gave the question some thought and decided to look for some answers. The United Methodist website has the following as a definition of discipleship. “The active living of the individual Christian in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ, that is, being as effective a disciple of Christ as possible. Discipleship involves a ministry of outreaching love and witness to others concerning Christ and God’s grace. Discipleship also calls the Christian to ministries of servanthood and service to the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment.” So, a Disciple lives according to the teachings of Jesus and involves him or herself in reaching out in love, witnessing to others about Jesus, and is in service in the church, neighborhood, and world.

Dotson, General Secretary of Discipleship Ministries, says this about what a disciple is. “For me, to be a disciple in its simplest form, it means to be a follower of Christ. I will never forget when I became a disciple of Jesus Christ when I publicly accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. But there are some things I learned along the way that have been very helpful for me and I think are very characteristic of the life of a disciple, of a person who has committed their life to Christ. One of those things is spiritual disciplines. Practicing spiritual disciplines, I think, is a very important part of growing in our faith. Praying on a daily basis, reading Scripture, giving on a regular basis, being in worship, making worship a priority as we seek to be in the presence

of God. I think we all have been given at least one spiritual gift. And to be able to share those gifts in the building of the Kingdom, to be able to share those gifts in helping others who don’t know Jesus to come to know Jesus, sharing those gifts to be transforming agents, to be difference makers, to be leaders in and through our community.”

Dotson goes on to say, “I think for me, another significant part of being a disciple is being able to share your faith. Every single day, I pray for divine opportunities. Those are simply moments where somebody will come across my path, where I can engage them in conversation and you never know who’s gonna come across your path who needs to hear an encouraging word or who may need to be offered the life-saving grace of Jesus Christ. So, I think those are the most important aspects of what it means to be a disciple.”

Our Bishop Sally Dyck provides this idea about what a disciple is in a comparison between being a member of a church and being a disciple. “I think maybe the most important, single message you could give is the difference between being a member and being a disciple. There are in fact overlapping conditions—prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness—but how it is that we too often rest in our membership (I often describe it like having status with frequent flyer miles) and its “privileges” rather than the service which discipleship calls from us (the analogy would be like giving our frequent flyer miles away instead of using them!). Anyway, I think that is a major “confusion” for people: membership (and the longer the better because it gives more privilege and status within the church) vs. Discipleship.”

As your Co-Conference Lay Leaders, we offer these ideas to use in coming to your own understanding of what a disciple is.

~Jessie Cunningham, Elisa Gatz, Mark Manzi

For more information and resources visit:
www.umc.org/what-we-believe/glossary-discipleship
www.discipleshipministries.org



Navigating Uncharted Waters 179th Annual Conference Reminders

Reminder: Bring your Bishop’s Appeal offering to Annual Conference



There are 65 million people displaced in the world today. That’s more than at any other time since World War II. In response to his global migration crisis, the Bishop is encouraging churches to bring an offering \$\$ to the 2018 Annual Conference (June 3-5) to help affected families around the globe

and locally. Seventy-five percent will go to the Global Migration Advance for international assistance to refugees and migrants. Twenty-five percent will stay in Northern Illinois to support organizations like Refugee One and World Relief that work with local immigrant and refugee families.

Resource Links:

www.umcmigration.org (Global Migration Sunday)
www.unhcr.org (Updates on the worldwide crisis)
www.umcor.org (UMC work around the world)
www.umcnic.org/bishopsappeal (NIC Info)

For more information, contact Rev. Jonathan Crail by email at jcrail@firstumc.net or 630-956-2368.



Reminder: Bring your cleaning kits to Annual Conference

Following a very active, destructive hurricane season in 2017, the Northern Illinois Conference Board of Global Ministries has chosen cleaning kit buckets as this year’s Annual Conference Mission Challenge.

Each District is being challenged to collect designated cleaning kit items to be distributed through the Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC).

When you arrive in St. Charles for Annual Conference on June 3, please bring your donated items, copies of receipts for any direct donations to MMDC or UMCOR and a completed donation form to the collection site outside the Mega Center. We will be available to assist you until 4 p.m. on Sunday and until 1 p.m. on Monday.

For all forms, itemized District lists and more information, visit www.umcnic.org/missionchallenge.

Board of Laity wants to hear from you

Three months have passed since Laity Convocation 2018 where we reviewed our WHY and found out about our HOW. The Rev. Junius Dotson inspired us with ideas about WHY and HOW to make disciples and create an intentional discipleship making system in our local church. Breakout sessions focused on the HOW of Sharing Our Faith, Meeting Our Neighbor, Using Data, Talking About The Way Forward, and Seeing All The People. Our question is how have you used what you heard and saw at Laity Convocation?

The Board of Laity’s WHY is to provide support and direction for the ministry of the Laity on the local, district, and conference level. Our HOW is through building relation-

ships and connections with local church leaders and clergy for equipping and empowering them for ministry.”

Your Board of Laity wants to hear from you! What is your WHY in your local church and HOW are you working to accomplish that? What have you used from Laity Convocation 2018 to help you in your journey? How has what you heard and saw at Laity Convocation 2018 equipped and empowered you to meet your churches WHY and HOW?

Tell us your story by sending us an email at confayleader@umcnic.org. Or, talk to us at Annual Conference - June 3-5. We want to hear from you!

Revised Social Principles open for comments

By Kathy L. Gilbert*, UMNS

The process for the writing of the first United Methodist Social Principles in 1968 was done in a room by 12 men who were mostly scholars and all from the United States.

The revised Social Principles, released in draft form April 12, comes after years of listening sessions with more than 200 United Methodists from around the world and is only about 50 percent finished, said Randall Miller, vice president of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and chair of the Social Principles Task Force.

"From the beginning, we decided because the church has changed so much that we would change the process to be more open and diverse," Miller said. "We had a lot of good conversations and now we need to open it up and allow lots of other people to comment on what is a work in progress."

The draft and subsequent materials are available in English, French, Portuguese and Swahili, said Tricia Bruckbauer, director of communications for the board. People can weigh in on the draft until the end of August by visiting www.umcjustice.org/sp2020. At that point, an editorial team will compile the feedback and edit the document for presentation to the Board of Church and Society.

The board ultimately hopes to bring the proposed revised Social Principles for a vote in 2020 at General Conference, the denomination's top policymaking body.

Six writing teams, assigned to the six sections of the Social Principles, worked on the draft, Miller said. The writing teams themselves also had global representation.

After consultations around the globe, Miller said it became apparent that the document contained many Americanisms that don't make sense in other contexts.

For example, he said, the word "race" doesn't have the same meaning in other places that it has in the U.S.

The board's goals were to make the Social Principles more succinct, more theologically grounded and more globally relevant.

"It is not yet succinct and concise but we have tried to combine sections and make it less an encyclopedic list of every issue," Miller said.

Readers of the draft will notice that two sections are not drafted: "Human Sexuality" and "Rights of Persons of All Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities."

The board decided to wait until after the special session of the 2019 United Methodist General Conference, which will deal with issues of human sexuality.

"This has been a years-long process, and we are excited about this next step," said the Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. "I am grateful for the hundreds of United Methodists who have devoted time to this endeavor in service to the Church, and urge everyone to read the draft and submit feedback."

Staff will be traveling to almost every episcopal area in the central conferences — church regions in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines — to hold in-person dialogues about the draft. In the U.S., Church and Society chairs in the conferences will hold dialogues.

"Midway through the summer, we will be releasing a report highlighting themes that we are seeing in the comments," Bruckbauer said.

Miller said he taught the Social Principles for many years and at the beginning of this process felt they were in good shape and just needed some "tweaking."

"But I really heard in two consultations in Mozambique and the Philippines that while basically fine, they are wrapped in a lot of explanations that come out of the U.S. context and don't apply. Our task will be to hear what still needs to be revised."

**Gilbert is a multimedia reporter for United Methodist News Service.*

Camps & Outdoor Retreat Ministries News



Confirmation Retreats 2018

Spring: May 11-12 **Wesley Woods**

Fall: Nov. 2-3 **Wesley Woods**
Nov. 16-17 **Reynoldswood**

NIC Confirmation Retreats offer incredible opportunities to

- grow relationally and spiritually,
- experience Jesus in a new and reviving way with nature,
- validate first-hand that they are not the only Illinois youth who worship God.

The dynamic of open space and natural environment encourages listening, learning, and interaction with one another and the Holy Spirit. For many confirmation students, this retreat is their first opportunity to experience community outside their immediate family and home congregation.

Confirmation students explore the Bible, the Methodist faith and the foundations of intentional Christian

community. Participants will be challenged to answer the question of how they experience God's Grace, Comfort and Will in their daily lives.

Cost: \$75/person - includes Friday night Snack and odging, Saturday breakfast and lunch and all supplies for activities.

Registration Form

Please access the Group Registration form via www.niccamp.org/retreats.

Repeating Annual Schedule

Please note that—based on your feedback these past three years—we have adopted a repeating, annual schedule starting this fall to facilitate local church planning and scheduling:

Always 7 p.m. Fri. to 3 p.m. Sat.

Fall: Wesley Woods, 1st Fri. of Nov.
Reynoldswood, 3rd Fri. of Nov.

Spring: Wesley Woods, 1st Fri. of May
Reynoldswood, 3rd Fri. of May

We hope the four separate opportunities make it easier for you to juggle church, family and extracurricular calendars to gather your Confirmands for an exciting weekend of spiritual growth, fellowship and fun!

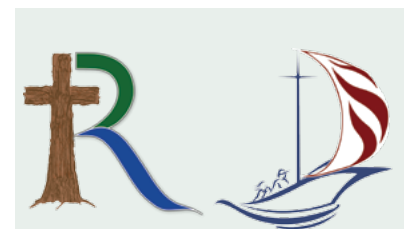
Summer Jobs @ Camp!

Camp Reynoldswood and Wesley Woods Retreat Center need Summer Associates to fill the following paid positions: Female Counselors, Kitchen Sous Chef, Kitchen Helpers, House-keeper and Lifeguards.

We need committed youth to encourage guests, one-another, and to build friendships. These are Summer JOBS, not vacations – candidates will be expected to work all summer long, including holidays—June 1 through August 12.

APPLY ONLINE:

www.niccamp.org/employment.



Summer Camp

Registration remains open for summer camps at both Wesley Woods and Camp Reynoldswood. Visit www.niccamp.org/summercamps for registration and details.

Student orchestra plays weekly at historic Lockport church

At 10:30 a.m. on most Sunday mornings, worship attendees at the First UMC of Lockport get to hear a tuba, a clarinet, African drums, French horn, oboe, cello or any of a number of other musical instruments. The instruments are played by young musicians who are students or friends of Bonnie Johansen-Werner, the skilled First Organist/Diaconal Minister of Music and a music teacher and professor.

The Orchestra, as the musicians call themselves, was organized a year ago as Johansen-Werner sought to provide a venue for musicians, particularly students, to be attracted to attend church. The situation is a win-win for the students and the church: the students get musical exposure and spiritual fulfillment, as well as fulfilling the community service requirement expected in most schools and the congregation has their worship experience enhanced by the variety of music and instruments, as well as enjoy the visible presence of a group of positive young people.

Orchestra members currently include Antonio Gonzalez (tuba), Freda Hogan (clarinet), Cortney Mims (oboe), Evelyn Moan (French Horn) Conor Mullins (alto sax), Vicky Nyder (viola), Tehya Venegas (alto sax), and Nik White (English Horn).

High school junior Antonio Gonzalez says, "the most interesting thing about the ensemble is the variety of backgrounds and skill levels that the musicians bring. I appreciate the opportunity to be part of a diverse group of people who are just as passionate about music as I am."

Senior Freda Hogan concurs, adding, "we have an instrumentation that you never see anywhere else, so our sound is truly unique. It's not required and it's not for a grade, which shows the commitment to music on the part of everyone there."

Conor Mullins also enjoys the "motley crew of instruments" and adds "what I absolutely love about the church is



Student musicians enhance worship at First UMC in Lockport. Pictured Front, L to R: Evelyn Moan, Antonio Gonzalez, Freda Hogan, Cortney Mims. Back, L to R: Vicky Nyder, Nik White, Conor Mullins.

how welcoming it is, to be honest, that was one of my biggest worries about playing at church. I didn't know its views on LGBT+ people and was worried that I wouldn't feel welcome there. But those worries were very quickly dismissed."

The Orchestra director Bonnie Johansen-Werner has been the organist at First UMC since 2014. Educated at Concordia University, Chicago, she is a published musician and has been an adjunct faculty member at Joliet Junior College and the University of St. Francis. "Music is custom arranged for the musicians. This way we can comfortably involve both accomplished performers and younger musicians," says Johansen-Werner. "Young players get accessible scores and advanced musicians let me know what kind of difficult passages they like to play."

Pastor Philip Sheets adds, "We are pleased and proud to have these musicians playing for our worship service. And we would like to enlarge the pool to include more youth from Lockport! We believe strongly that a church needs to be a place where people can engage in ministry and service to each other and to the world. Helping young people offer their gifts, fulfill community service expectations and augment our worship is an upbeat experience for everyone involved."

For more information contact the church at 815-838-1017 or check out the website at www.1umclockport.org.

**submitted by Rev. Phil Sheets, First UMC Lockport*



Eric Doolittle and North Central College student Manilyn Gumapas pose at a recent event. Photo courtesy Manilyn Gumapas

North Central College Chaplain Rev. Eric Doolittle is 'home' to many on campus

By Allison Hartman*

"Where do you call home?" is the first question the Rev. Eric Doolittle asks when he meets someone new.

As Doolittle rounds out his fourth year at North Central College in Naperville, Ill., he is hitting his stride. As a social activist, father, Reverend, and colleague, he has connected with the North Central community with a belief in uniqueness and inclusivity.

Before he found his way to the Midwest, where he pursued his undergraduate degree in sacred music at Illinois Wesleyan University, he grew up in East Tennessee. Following, he made his way to Virginia where he received his master of divinity degree at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Aside from being North Central's college Chaplain, Doolittle also serves in extension ministry in the Northern Illinois Conference.

Doolittle's job is more than its simple description, "college Chaplain." He is finding ways to reach beyond this definition and make his mark with every student. "He's been very affirming to me. He's a really good sounding board to talk about issues with whether it's issues going on in the real world or the bigger world or issues at home and personal issues and he's very receptive and very good at listening, so what I take away from him is that feeling of affirmation in my own self," said Manilyn Gumapas, '18.

Defining Doolittle's job at North Central can also help one illustrate Doolittle as a whole. A recurring word, "warm," follows Doolittle across campus. "His job really is to support the spiritual welfare of the North Central community and not just for students, but also for faculty and staff. I think what he has

also made his job is in also training and equipping students to cultivate their own faith in such a way that leads them to act," said Whitney Roberts, director of civic engagement and social innovation.

On one end, Brian Rainville, director of ministry and service at North Central defines Doolittle as his "partner in crime." The two team up to make North Central a more spiritually connected place. Among other things, Rainville and Doolittle have teamed up to bring the Lux Veritas speaker series to life at North Central. This series capitalizes on the North Central motto "light and truth."

Outside of his spiritual association with the campus, students find themselves relating to him in a number of uncommon ways. Doolittle's colleagues define him as a "big gamer," he has also found a home with the Nerd Culture Club on campus. "We've shared an affinity over tea. But then again to bring the nerdy aspect of it, he has a tea steeper shaped like the Tardis from Dr. Who," said Gumapas.

If you want a small look at Doolittle's personality, you can find him on Twitter, providing commentary on everything from what's going on in the world to what is going on at North Central.

To Doolittle, "home" is more than what city or country you are from. "When you interact with him what stands out to you most about him is his ability to dive deep really quickly and get at what's going on or just to ask about you in a way that is authentic and not surface level," said Roberts.

Home is more than what is surface level to Gumapas. "Instead of asking students where they're from no matter what they look like or who they are and stuff, he words it as where do you call home. Which is not only a very nice, inclusive way of wording it but also it appeals to the emotional side of things, too," she said.

*Allison Hartman is the Managing Editor for the Chronicle/NCClinked.

April Announcements: Appointments and Retirements

Bishop Sally Dyck announces the following clergy appointments for the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church, effective July 1, 2018 (unless otherwise noted):

Patricia Bonilla (Deacon) to Deerfield: Christ (Chicago Northwestern District) as Director of Family Ministries ½ time from Leave of Absence, effective 3/16.

Mark Gilmore (Local Pastor) to Pecatonica (Rockford District) from Chicago: Riverside (Chicago: Southern District). Mark follows Katie Voigt who is appointed to Erie.

Tammy Scott (Transitional Deacon, pending Local Pastors License) to Sugar Grove (Aurora District) from Naperville: Grace (Aurora District). Tammy follows Cheoni Oh who has accepted an extension ministry position with UMCOM.

Anna Voinovich (Provisional Elder pending approval) to Downers Grove: First (Aurora District) as Associate Pastor from Barrington (Elgin District) as part-time Local Pastor. Anna follows Jim McDonald (Co-Pastor) as Jim retires.

Jeffrey Bross (Elder) to Aurora District Superintendent from Aurora: Flowing Grace (Aurora District). Jeffrey follows Richard Wisdom who is appointed to Plainfield: First (Aurora District).

Kurt Gamlin (Elder) to McHenry: First (Elgin District) from Woodstock: First (Elgin District). Kurt follows Scott McClellan who is retiring.

Richard Wagner (Elder) to Olympia Fields (Chicago Southern District) from Lake Villa (Elgin District). Rich follows Claude King who is appointed to Downers Grove: First (Lead Pastor).

Britt Cox (Elder) to Chicago: Church of the Three Crosses (Chicago Northwestern District) from appointment to another denomination. Britt follows John Hobbs who retired. Effective May 1, 2018.

Violet Johnicker (pending Local Pastors License) to Rockford: Brooke Road (Rockford District). Violet follows Nancy Vidad who is moving out of the area.

Timothy Biel Jr. (Elder) to Skokie: Central (Chicago Northwestern District) from Homewood: St. Andrew (Chicago Southern District). Timothy follows David Haley who is retiring.

Sharon Engert (Part-Time Local Pastor) to Millbrook (Aurora) from Bolingbrook: Crossroads of Faith (Aurora District). Sharon follows Stevan Saunders who is appointed full-time at Plano (Aurora District).

Vickie Hadaway (Elder) to Sault Ste. Marie Central and Algonquin churches in the Detroit Conference as a 346.1 from Cherry Valley (Rockford District).

Sin-Gyo Jung (Provisional Elder) to Lake Villa (Elgin District). Sin-Gyo follows Richard Wagner who is appointed to Olympia Fields (Chicago Southern District).

Thomas Kim (Elder) to Extension Ministry as Director of Korean/Asian News at UMC, from Oregon (DeKalb District). Effective May 21.

David Poust (Elder) to Walnut (DeKalb District) from Leaf River and Forreton: First (Rockford District). David follows Mark Harkness who is appointed to Cherry Valley (Rockford District).

Derek Rogers (Elder) to Aurora: Flowing Grace (Aurora District) from Naperville: Wheatland Salem (Aurora District). Derek follows Jeffrey Bross who is appointed as Aurora District Superintendent.

Steve Saunders (Full-Time Local Pastor) to Plano (Aurora District) from a two-point charge with Plano and Millbrook (Aurora District).

Glen Stewart (Retired Elder) and **Joel McClellan** (DSS) to Paw Paw and Compton (DeKalb District). They follow David Holden who is retiring.

To find the complete listing online which is updating each Monday visit www.umcnic.org/2018appointments.

Clergy Day Apart/Clergy Session

May 15

Location: Christ UMC, 4509 Highcrest Rd, Rockford, IL

Cost: \$15

Speaker: Victor Saad/ Experience Institute

Bio: victorsaad.com

Time: Check-in - 8:30 a.m.

Program - 9 a.m.

Clergy Session - 1:30 p.m.

Shift Training Series

with Phil Maynard

May 30 and June 13

Location: The Augsburg Room at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American (ELCA) Churchwide Ministries Center, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Registration Fee: \$20 per workshop (includes lunch and workbook)

Topics: Membership to Discipleship - May 30

Impactful Service and Extravagant Generosity - June 13

Are you doing things the same old way and getting the same old results? The Shifts for Leadership training by Phil Maynard offers a better way. Discover the tools and methods to move your congregation into healthy church systems that create a new way of doing life together.

For more information visit

www.umcnic.org/calendar/shift-training.

Questions contact: Laura Lopez 312-346-9766 ext. 724

email: llopez@umcnic.org

Sponsored by the NIC Office of Congregational Development and Redevelopment.

Peace with Justice Sunday

May 27

As one of the six churchwide Special Sunday offerings of The United Methodist Church, Peace with Justice Sunday helps support advocacy work through the General Board of Church and Society and right here in the Northern Illinois Conference.

Half of the offering receipts remain within the conference for the local Board of Church and Society and its work to address issues of injustice.

For resources and more information visit

www.umcsgiving.org/givePWJS.

Freedom's Journey:

The Art of Organizing for Democratic Change and the Mission of Liberation

Date: June 18-22

Location: St. James Commons, 65 E Huron Street, Chicago, IL

Registration Fee: \$450

Sponsored by Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, and the NIC and led by Gerald Taylor.

This workshop will provide power-based, effective, and relational community organizing training grounded in helping you learn mission-based organizing and leadership skills.

This workshop is ecumenical and interfaith, open to both clergy and laity. There are no degree requirements to attend. All participants will receive a certificate of completion and 4 continuing education units (CEUs). To see learn more about the instructor, see the course objectives, and to register, visit the Freedom's Journey webpage at garrett.edu/freedomsjourney.

DYK???

Did You Know?

"What goes on behind the scenes?"



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

Check-in for the 2018 Annual Conference begins on Sunday, June 3 as we prepare to launch the 179th session of the Northern Illinois Conference with a Service of Ordination. The theme for this year is "Navigating Uncharted Waters" and while we talk, pray, and learn with one another about all the uncertainties in our world and for our denomination, there is one thing that is certain – we will be prepared for the session, 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, plans the registration, creates the worship services, orchestrates the agenda, keeps us on track, decides the music, schedules the presentations, and more?

Some of this is obvious to conference attendees but much of the work of designing and executing a large meeting with multiple moving parts is done by multiple committees, staff, and professionals.

It is Bishop Sally Dyck who keeps us on track, presides at the annual conference, guides and approves the work of committees and leadership. But 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. The Annual Conference Committee is charged with oversight of the work. The Worship Committee is made up of many subcommittees that recommends the theme, designs the three major worship services, the visuals of the session, and oversees the music. The Credentials Committee monitors the attendees to be sure we have the right balance of laity and clergy and that those voting are qualified to cast a ballot. We have a Bishops Appeal Task Force related to the year's specific appeal. There is a general usher coordinator, worship usher coordinator, Conference Secretary, conference secretarial pool, a Consent Calendar Committee, Childcare Committee, Daily Procedures Coordinator, Parliamentarian, and site volunteers.

These committees are supported by the professional work of conference staff. Our Events Coordinator – Laura Lopez, Media Specialist – Megan Casey and Director of Communications – Anne Marie Gerhardt work to provide an efficient, user-friendly registration system, web interface with all the information, multiple points of communication and Annual Conference materials. The Bishop's Administrative Assistant, Marva Andrews, and the Director of Connectional Ministries, myself, work with many groups and organizations on this massive coordination effort. In addition, the Administrative Offices provide the financial underpinning's for registration and technical services.

Undergirding all these moving parts is the contracted support of an events planner, media company, worship/music director, and musicians as well as the vast array of the hotel staff.

So, when you walk up to the table to pick up your name tag and event booklet for the 179th Annual Conference, remember all those who are behind the scenes. While we "Navigate the Uncharted Waters" of our future, our gathering is in good hands.

Bishop appoints two new District Superintendents



Rev. Jeffrey Bross

Bishop Sally Dyck is pleased to announce the appointment of the new Aurora District Superintendent, the Rev. Jeffrey Bross and the new Chicago Northwestern District Superintendent, the Rev. Brittany Isaac, both effective July 1, 2018.

Rev. Bross has served as the Associate Pastor at Batavia UMC and then founding pastor of Flowing Grace UMC which chartered four years ago. He has served on the Aurora District Committee on Ordained Ministry as well as the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rev. Bross follows Rev. Dick Wisdom who has been appointed to Plainfield: First UMC, also effective July 1, 2018.

On behalf of the annual conference, Bishop Dyck thanks Rev. Wisdom for his years of service on the Northern Illinois Cabinet. He served the DeKalb District from 2011-2013 and then the Aurora District from 2013-present. As part of his superintendent responsibilities, he has been active on the Red Door project and the liaison on the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rev. Wisdom says serving as the Aurora District Superintendent has been a great gift. "It is a challenging and dynamic district. There have been, for sure, times of rugged ministry that I've experienced," said Wisdom. "Though my memories will be of the gifted and talented clergy linked with empowered and faithful laity navigating the largest cultural shift of our lifetime.

Rev. Bross says he is thrilled with the appointment and the opportunity to help bring the annual conference and the local church into a closer relationship. This first year as District Superintendent, Bross says he intends to spend as much time listening, learning and growing as possible. The District Superintendency calls for a new learning curve for him but he is confident that the Cabinet, Aurora churches and Dick Wisdom, will help him transition quickly.

"I do not want to come in and change the wonderful momentum that Rev. Wisdom has started for us. Rather, I would like to build upon the relationships, trust, and work that he has so diligently worked on over his tenure as our District Superintendent," said Bross. "Although, I do have some fresh ideas and resources if they fit into the vision of the Bishop and our district, that I'm excited to share with the very dedicated and talented clergy we have in Aurora."

Bishop Dyck says Bross has a passion around the "Day of Call" which is an emphasis for our annual conference to help people articulate and respond to a call to ministry. "He has a 'can do' attitude and he will continue to be accessible to clergy and churches for support and to connect with others to learn and grow in ministry," said Dyck. "As someone who has successfully started a new church, he will help both the cabinet and local churches rethink new ways of being church."

Bross refers to himself as a "T.O. (Theological Offspring)" and responded to his call as an ordained elder while serving as a full-time youth director in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin. He is married to Catherine and they have three children.



Rev. Brittany Isaac

Rev. Brittany Isaac follows the Rev. Zaki L. Zaki whose next appointment will be announced later. Bishop Dyck thanks Rev. Zaki on behalf of the annual conference for his years of service on the Northern Illinois cabinet. He served the Chicago Northwestern District from 2012-present. In addition to his responsibilities as a district superintendent, he has reached out to immigrants and refugees, including Arabic-speaking communities.

Since 2012, I have worked intentionally to support each congregation in the District encouraging them to engage missionally and effectively, locally and in the world," said Rev. Zaki. "I have repeatedly witnessed the faithfulness and exemplary dedication of our laity and clergy alike; for this, I truly give thanks to the Lord."

Rev. Isaac came into ministry after being a Starbucks store manager in Chicago for eight years. Following a call to ministry and seminary, Brittany built a congregation from 0 to over 200 at one of the Urban Village Church sites in Chicago. Isaac has participated in strategic work in the annual conference being a major contributor to the design of the new structure.

Bishop Dyck says like with her new colleague, Rev. Bross, Isaac brings a perspective of doing church differently to the cabinet table, local churches, clergy and the annual conference.

"Brittany brings a strategic outlook to ministry, often being the person in the room who asks the questions that open up a new vision and solution," said Bishop Dyck. "She balances both progressive and evangelical understandings of our Christian faith and ministry."

Isaac says her time at Urban Village Church has been foundational for the way she does ministry while offering her the opportunity to continually learn and grow as a person and pastor.

"I am excited to work with the laity and clergy of the Chicago Northwestern District to understand our present circumstance and find creative ways to engage in the mission of the church," said Isaac. "This district has many assets and I look forward to leveraging them so we can make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Isaac grew up in Central Illinois and has a daughter, Ruby.

Opportunities for saying "thank you" to Rev. Zaki and Rev. Wisdom as well as "welcome" to Rev. Isaac and Rev. Bross will be publicized when the details are finalized.

Read more on both Rev. Bross and Rev. Isaac at umcnic.org/news.

Stay Connected

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

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Job Openings

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