



Local Pastors' Registrar Sharon Engret presents Bishop Dyck with a gift of a book after the group took up a special offering for the Bishop's Appeal.



Local pastors, associate members, district supply pastors, and certified lay ministers gathered for "Brunch with the Bishop" Sept. 21 for fellowship and to share their ministry stories.

Local pastors called to serve churches, communities

By Anne Marie Gerhardt

On the last Sunday of each month, children at Leon United Methodist Church eat lunch after worship and then get busy with markers, glue, paper, and stickers to make greeting cards. The "Kid's Card Corner" is just one outreach ministry local pastor Jan Shaulis likes to talk about.

"Adult volunteers help make and serve the lunch and then help the children make the cards," said Shaulis. "Each month has a different theme, such as thanking veterans or cheering up residents in a nursing home. The kids really seem to be enjoying it and look forward to it."

Shaulis is one of 65 full-time and part-time local pastors in the NIC. She serves two UMC churches, Leon and Fenton in the DeKalb District. "This is my 5th year and I love being out in the country," said Shaulis, who previously served at Grace UMC in Joliet as an associate pastor. "I love getting outside the church with people in the community, especially our farmers. When they're out in the fields planting, I'm on the combines with them."

On Sept. 21, NIC local pastors, associate members, district supply pastors, and certified lay ministers gathered for "Brunch with the Bishop" at Wheatland Salem UMC in Naperville to share more about their outreach ministries, such as "Kid's Card Corner," in their local settings.

Joe Munro also serves two churches: pastor at Grace UMC in Maple Park and Youth Ministries Director for Sycamore UMC. He says his mantra is "keep it simple." He shared with the Bishop that Sycamore youth ministry numbers are down, but he's okay with the statistics.

"Sometimes we get caught up in the numbers too much," said Munro. "As a congregation or pastor we talk about how important it is that we need to build the number of people in our churches, but I believe we really need to build disciples."

For the last 16 years, Munro has led adults and youth

on mission trips through the Life Missions program at Sycamore. The youth group travels somewhere in the United States to serve on different projects each summer, traveling near and far, including Montana, Florida, and Texas. The program, which is open to all youth in the community, grew to include as many as 165 youth, plus adult leaders. Munro proposed a change to require youth to attend eight worship services during the year leading up to the summer trip. That was an addition to youth group once a month, service projects, and fundraising. He knew they would lose some participants, but he's noticed a positive change.

"I told the board that we've done a great job of planting seeds, but not making disciples," said Munro. "We really are not asking all that much of the kids, but it starts to teach them to make church and God a priority. We've seen them coming to worship in numbers."

Munro adds that the youth who participate in the mission trips are there because they want to be, not because their parents told them to be. "After their mission trip experience, the youth learn how blessed they really are," said Munro. "It puts a whole different perspective in their lives and what we've noticed is a lot of our kids go into service-related careers after college, such as nursing or teaching."

The NIC local pastors are members of the United Methodist Fellowship of Associate Members and Licensed Local Church Pastors under the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM). They have recently welcomed associate members, district supply pastors, and certified lay ministers into the group.

NIC Local Pastors' Registrar Sharon Engert says these leaders pastor their church congregations with all of the duties of an elder, including worship, Holy Communion,

baptisms, church and community leadership, confirmation, home, hospital and nursing home visits, Bible study, and everything else a pastor typically does.

"Our fellowship is all about collegiality and support for one another," she said, adding that local pastors serve many different communities. "We serve rural, suburban, and urban churches. We serve large, medium, and small member congregations. We serve English, Hispanic, and Korean churches, and we serve cross-cultural appointments."

Shaulis says she's "very busy" taking care of her congregation and the needs of the community. "We have a 'bare necessities' pantry that serves about 30 people; we host an Upper Room study in a local restaurant; we hold a 'Christmas Eve in the Barn' service; and we offer a tractor blessing," Shaulis said, naming several of her church's other outreach ministries. "It's important to get outside the church walls. Being in the community is where you begin to find the needs of the community."

Munro says after three years at Grace UMC, he's starting to see new energy. "Grace was close to being closed down, but in the last three years we've remodeled the building and we are doing great," said Munro. "I teach the congregation that they are the church. We recently had about a dozen members go on an adult mission trip to Nicaragua. Mission gives you a passion and gives you that fire."

Bishop Sally Dyck came away from the brunch inspired after hearing the local pastors' stories of ministry. "Some of these ministries may be simple, like the 'Kid's Card Corner,' but it shows even the littlest churches can do something big," Dyck said. "They're bringing vitality and growth."

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FROM BISHOP DYCK: MILITARY CHAPLAINS NEED OUR SUPPORT

During the Gulf War (January 17 - February 24, 1991), the church I was serving was engulfed in its own conflict. One large extended family in the congregation had several members deployed. A large contingent of church members also participated in the peace protests every week in downtown Cleveland.

In this particular church, it was impossible to sit in your pew and pretend that everyone agreed with your perspective on the war. Requests for prayer were always lengthy anyway, with testimonies and personal concerns and celebrations, but they were longer and more intense than ever as various members shared their views—based on part politics and part faith—on the war. We were all exhausted a few weeks into the war as we stayed up late to watch the “shock and awe” on television. Mercifully, it only lasted 42 days. Oh, if our present military conflicts were only so short-lived!

When the deployed members came back, they told me that I should become a military chaplain. Say what? Did I mention that this extended family wasn't exactly my biggest supporter—and now they were suggesting I become a military chaplain?

I have had the opportunity to learn more about the United Methodist recruitment, screening, training, and credentialing of military chaplains. United Methodist military chaplains are highly regarded in their ministry in all the branches of the U.S. military.

Making a personal connection

I was reminded of this recently when I was a guest with Elgin District Superintendent Rev. Darneather Murph-Heath, and the Rev. James Preston and Clayton Edwards from Kingswood UMC in Buffalo Grove at the Great Lakes Naval Station north of Chicago. Two military chaplains there, Lt. Cmdr. Jennifer Anderson (who I ordained in Minnesota) and Lt. Eric Brown, had invited us to the graduation ceremony for 975 recruits. It was quite impressive overall, but most impressive was how these two military chaplains (and others with them) provide ministry during a very grueling experience for them. The chaplains are well-trained in all kinds of preventive mental health care for people suffering from the effects of abuse, suicide ideation, and other upsetting conditions as part of the general recruit population.

They preach to about 1,100 young adults every week. “What do you preach about?” I asked them. They told me whatever it is, it's always about grace: how much God loves you no matter who you are or what you have done. And not only grace, but when they feel alone and afraid, they can know that God is with them. Pretty “basic” preaching to go along with their basic training.

After an amazing tour of the facilities and the graduation (at which I was the guest of honor), we went to lunch, where I learned more about the chaplains' ministry. At the end of lunch, one of the chaplains said, “Bishop, the reason I wanted you to come here was because in all that is going on in our denomination, please don't overlook the importance and the contribution of our church in providing quality military chaplains all over the world and in all branches of the government.”

The impact of apportionments

As groups discuss the future of the church (and have written legislation for their ideas), UMC boards and agencies are often on the chopping block. Some may question, who needs them? Or for that matter, as members of our annual conference, people have chosen to withhold apportionments to the general church due to the Traditional Plan, which prevailed at General Conference in February.

Most United Methodists don't know or appreciate some of the ways that the rest of the world counts on us to be in ministry. Military chaplains who care for the souls of the men and women who serve their country are among the unsung heroes of our church. And it takes resources

to prepare chaplains for their work and care for them.

Through the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, funds for recruiting, training, and credentialing are provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry through the World Service (first priority in paying apportionments) and the Ministerial Education Funds. Today, more than 1,700 endorsed United Methodist clergy are taking their ministry beyond church doors and answering God's call as chaplains and pastoral counselors.

While active chaplains are paid for by the military, the federal government looks to religious bodies to provide a credential known as an “endorsement” for anyone who wants to serve as a military chaplain. Clergy must be qualified and authorized to provide the full range of ministry to all kinds of military personnel and must work cooperatively in pluralistic settings to support all needs. Endorsements are not equal in their sensitivity to the needs of all people; United Methodists stand out and above others.

United Methodist clergy matter in the military

We have about 350 military chaplains and chaplain candidates in the UMC at this time. From our conference, there's the Rev. Jason Turner, who will attend training in January 2020 with the Air Force and National Guard; the Rev. DooSoo Lee in the Army; and the Rev. Jeffrey Moore, who spent years in the Navy and Coast Guard but has transitioned to prison ministry in the last few years.

Veterans Day is coming up. I hope that all churches in our conference will consider the impact that their dollars (given or withheld as the case may be) have on lives and ministries. This is just one small, usually invisible, incredibly important ministry that no local church could provide by itself but could be jeopardized by our actions.

Let me repeat: this is ONE ministry that we are known for even if we don't know about it! Please support World Service in the General Apportionments. There are tons of other stories of ministry about other line items in our general apportionment budget.

Support UMC military chaplains

No, I didn't go into the military and as most people know—including the extended family who told me I should become a military chaplain—I rarely support war or military efforts to solve our international disputes. But I fully support the ministry of our church in providing quality military chaplains and I hope you will too. As you pray for those who serve our country this Veteran's Day, offer a prayer for our military chaplains.

To learn more, visit www.gbhem.org/clergy/chaplains-pastoral-counselors.

~Bishop Sally Dyck



Rev. Darneather Murph-Heath, Lt. Cmdr. Jennifer Anderson, Bishop Sally Dyck, Commanding Officer Recruit Training Command (RTC) Capt. Erik Thors, Lt. Eric Brown, Rev. James Preston and Clayton Edwards visit the Great Lakes Naval Station to attend a recent recruit graduation.

Say more! They told me that some (non-United Methodist) chaplains preached hellfire and brimstone and led Bible studies on the book of Revelation out in the desert apocalypse. They told me how scary that approach was for them and others when what they needed was assurance and strength. They would have preferred my style of teaching and preaching. To say that I was surprised would be an understatement!

Over the years as a district superintendent and bishop,



Bishop's Appeal raises money for farmers

At the Nov. 16 Annual Conference Special Session, a Bishop's Appeal offering will be taken to help our local farmers who are facing hardships due to a rainy, cold spring that delayed planting and a subsequent drought that further hampered the growing season.

A downloadable video and bulletin insert along with more information are available at www.umcnic.org/bishopsappeal.

Micro-Grant Applications for Farmers

The Keagy Town and Rural Committee is accepting Farm Family Aid micro-grant applications to help our area farmers. The application is to be filled out by a clergy member on behalf of FSA-recognized farmers who need extra assistance. The recipients of the ministry do not have to be affiliated with the congregation. Grants will be awarded according to funding available from the Bishop's Appeal offering.

To find the form, visit www.umcnic.org/grants/keagy-town-and-rural-micro-grant.

CCFA proposes lowering budget, changes to apportionment formula

By Stephanie Uhl, CCFA Chair

As our conference prepares for a Special Session, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration (CCFA) wants to provide an update on our financial condition and information regarding some of the changes in our budget.

Through September 2019, our conference has received \$3,073,671 from local churches towards our 2019 Annual Conference budget, which is approximately 66% of our budgeted apportionment income for the year. Additionally, we have received \$119,845 from local churches towards our General Church Apportionments, which is approximately 6% of what we have been billed, and \$265,440 in second-mile giving (gifts to specific ministries beyond apportioned dollars). While we greatly appreciate the effort local churches have made to ensure that the NIC Annual Conference remains strong, we encourage our local churches to keep our UMC connection strong as well through the support of General Church Apportionments.

In recognition of our continued difficult financial position, the 2020 Annual Conference budget of \$4,574,255 shows a reduction of \$288,221 from the 2019 Annual Conference budget. The reductions in the budget are primarily from the following:

- A change from an in-house IT professional to outsourced IT support, resulting in a reduction in expenses of approximately \$60,000. This change occurred in late 2018, and we have realized these savings in 2019.

- A consolidation of district offices and staff resulting in a reduction of approximately \$80,000 in expenses. Our technological improvements have enhanced the work of our cabinet and enabled much of the work of our district superintendents and administrators to be done via the web. As a result, this has reduced the necessity for regional offices and we will be closing them in 2020. Additionally, we will be consolidating and realigning the duties of regional administrators and reducing them from 3 to 2 administrators. The savings from these changes are projected to be approximately \$80,000 in 2020, with additional potential savings in 2021 once we have paid any outstanding lease obligations.
- A reduction in Cabinet Ministries of \$50,000. Due to the reduction in the number of clergy moves per year, we estimate a savings of \$20,000 in moving expenses, and the remaining reduction will be allocated by the Cabinet. A full list of the ministries and mission supported by the Cabinet can be found in the budget explanatory materials.
- A reduction in Program Ministries of approximately \$60,000. The majority of this reduction will come from a reduction in Conference programming. A full list of the Program Ministries and Missions supported by the conference can be found in the budget explanatory materials.

CCFA also recommends a change in our apportionment formula for 2020. Earlier this year, we reorganized our apportionment bills to show the Annual Conference and General Church apportionments separately. The proposed budget for 2020 shows the Annual Conference revenues and expenses separate from the General Church receipts and apportionments. The proposed apportionment formula uses the same methodology as previously used to calculate the Annual Conference apportionment, with the exception that the apportionments will be calculated using 12% instead of the current rate of 14%. The General Church apportionments for each local church will be calculated based on their pro-rata share of the Annual Conference apportionments.

FAQ sheets and a recorded webinar will be available soon at www.umcnic.org/financeadministration. For links to the proposed budget, explanatory materials and apportionment formula, visit www.umcnic.org/specialsession.



November Special Session information

Northern Illinois Annual Conference lay members and clergy may register online for the Nov. 16 Special Session. It will be held at Kishwaukee College, 21193 Malta Road, Malta, IL from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (check-in opens at 8:30 a.m.).

Registration cost is \$10. Off-site childcare at Malta UMC will be available for pre-registrants. Pre-order a box lunch to go for \$8.

Legislation available to download

The proposed budget, apportionment formula and explanatory materials are available online to download. You will find them under the "Legislation" title

at www.umcnic.org/specialsession along with a list of commonly asked questions. We recommend downloading and/or printing these materials to review prior to attending the special session. If you need assistance, check with your local church office.

Mission Collection for Hurricane Relief

The Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC) will park its truck outside Kishwaukee College from **8am - 9am on Nov. 16** to collect donations for Hurricane Dorian relief for the Bahamas. More than a month after the Hurricane devastated the islands, recovery has been slow. The island of Abaco remains without electricity and running water.

For a list of items needed and to bring to the Special Session, visit www.umcnic.org/specialsession. Please bring items in boxes. Thank you in advance for your support!

From the Cover



Children make cards for veterans and nursing home residents at Leon UMC as part of a multi-generational ministry.



annual Clergy Age Trends report, the number of active elders continues to decline, while the number of local pastors has increased dramatically in the U.S. since at least the 1980s. There are 514 fewer elders and 25 more local pastors in 2019 than in 2018. In the NIC, the total number of local pastors increased to 65 in 2019 from 59 in 2018.

Engert says the local pastors, associate members, district supply pastors and certified lay ministers in the NIC are doing good work and they believe in connecting the church to the community. "Many times, these persons are juggling bi-vocational employment, their churches, their personal lives, and school all at the same time," said Engert. "And through it all, they are faithful to God, to their congregations, to their communities and to the Conference. And we need to thank them."

At the brunch, the group gave an offering of \$340 to a mission of the Bishop's choice.

Bishop Dyck put it towards the November Bishop's Appeal to help local farmers. "The offering was a great opportunity to talk about the farming crisis and how it impacts their congregations and communities," said Dyck.

The group also gave Bishop Dyck a copy of "Called for Life: Finding Meaning in Retirement" by Paul Clayton as a gift to show their appreciation for her leadership.

When asked if they ever considered becoming ordained elders, both Munro, a former businessman, and Shaulis, a former grief counselor, say they're content as local pastors and say this is what they're called to do.

"I love where I am," said Shaulis. "My prayer is I stay here until I retire."

For more information on the role of the local pastor, licensing and course of study, visit www.gbhem.org/clergy/local-pastors.



Amania Drane is named ACST part-time project manager

Shepherding Team moves forward on goals

The goals are set and the Annual Conference Shepherding Team (ACST) is ramping up their work to help congregations grow in discipleship, vitality and address racism. The three high-priority goals approved at the 2019 June Annual Conference are:

- To grow and reach new Disciples of Jesus Christ;
- To live out the conviction that racism is incompatible with Christian teaching; and
- To increase the number of highly vital congregations.

The ACST met Sept. 28 at First UMC in Lombard to review the progress so far and move on to the next phase of implementing plans in 2020.

ACST consultant Helen Chang helped the group review the process so far and focus on moving forward. "This team collectively agreed, (which the Annual Conference approved), that these goals are the three things we've said are central to helping define who we are as a church," said Chang. "Now it's time to build the details and drill them down into actionable steps."

The group also welcomed Amania Drane, who joins the ACST as an independent contractor, serving the

role of part-time Project Manager. She will support the Conference's focus on strategic goals. Working closely with Strategic Team co-chairs, Drane will ensure that projects are moving forward in accordance with plans and timetables, review and disseminate relevant information, and provide support and resources for effective communication.

Drane has a Master of Science in Management and Organizational Behavior from Benedictine University (Lisle, Ill.) and spent 25 years with State Farm Insurance Companies. Much of her career at State Farm included working with leadership on Talent Management, Change Management, and Employee Engagement. She is a member of Friendship UMC in Bolingbrook, served as lay member to the Annual Conference for a number of years, and served on the Conference Committee on Personnel. She has also served as the NIC Plumblines Tour Coordinator for the last two years.

Drane said she's grateful for the opportunity to be involved in this missional work to shape the future of the NIC. "How we think, react, and adapt to God's mission will have an infinite impact on what our church becomes in the NIC," said Drane. "Let us be courageous, creative, and committed; confident that the Spirit will guide us to new and sometimes unexpected ways to share the love of God as

revealed through Jesus Christ." Drane may be reached via email at adrane@umcnic.org.

Co-chairs for the three goals have also been identified and are organizing their committees:

- Discipleship goal co-chairs are Karen Bonnell and Caleb Hong
- Anti-racism goal co-chairs are Jarrod Severing and Nadia Kanhai.
- Vital congregations co-chairs are Brittany Isaac and Dennis Langdon.

The co-chairs are meeting with their committees to begin the work of plan implementation, including specific actions, accountability and key indicators of progress/success.

At the close of the September meeting, Chang challenged ACST members to consider what one outcome they would like to see realized one year from now and one action or set of actions they will personally take to help reach that outcome.

The ASCT will be present at the Nov. 16 Special Session and will meet again on Jan. 11, 2020. For updates and news about their progress, visit:

www.umcnic.org/shepherdingteam.



Road to General Conference 2020

While General Conference May 5-15, 2020 may seem far down the road, it will be here before we know it. The Conference is planning trainings and conversations starting in November and leading up to the May gathering in Minneapolis. Registration and final details are still in the works for some of the events, but now's the time to put them on your calendar.

The Conference is also gathering resources and studies

to help congregations engage and learn more about the issues facing our denomination.

Events

Restorative Leadership

Sat. Nov. 23, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Orland Park First

Leading more effective transformative conversations in churches. Register at www.umcnic.org/calendar/restorative-leadership-workshop

Rockford/DeKalb District Clergy Retreat

Jan. 12-13
Northern Illinois University
Speaker: Rev. Rob Fuquay

Register at www.umcnic.org/calendar/rockford-dekalb-district-clergy-retreat

Conversations

Co-hosted by the NIC Exploration Team and NIC GC Delegates with DCM/Cabinet.

Sunday, Feb. 2 at 3-5 p.m.
River Forest UMC

Thursday, Feb. 13 at 3-5 p.m.
Woodridge UMC

Thursday Feb. 13 at 7-9 p.m.
Schaumburg: Our Saviour's

Sunday, Feb. 16 at 3-5 p.m.
Rockford: Christ

Other Gatherings

John Wesley Institute

Feb. 23-24

Speaker: Dr Ashley Dreff, author of *Entangled: a History of American Methodism, Politics, and Sexuality*
Elmhurst: First

Post-GC Gathering

Saturday, May 30
Location TBD

Resources for the Journey

Courageous Conversations: a toolbox that local churches can use to inspire and encourage the church and individuals to stay at the table when anxiety and emotional turmoil is painful. www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/courageous-conversations-about-human-sexuality.

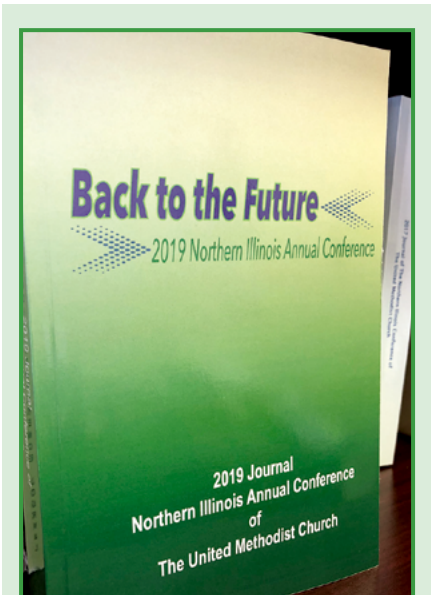
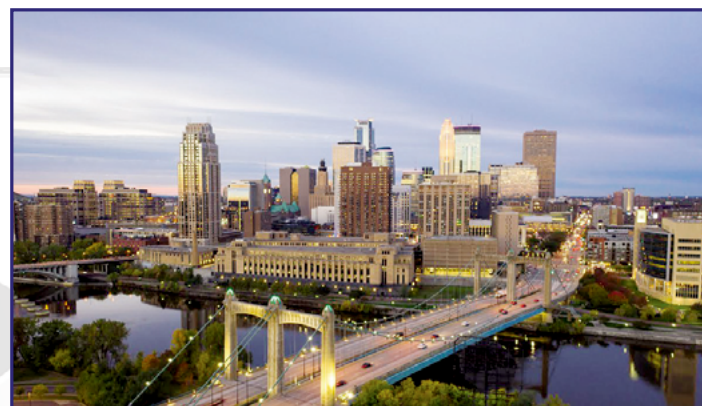
Discipleship Bible Study:

The Bible and Human Sexuality, based on the book "The Bible, Sexuality, and the United Methodist Church" by Rob Fuquay. www.institutefordiscipleship.org/dvd.

UM Scholars for an Inclusive Church:

A series of short videos from a variety of perspectives recorded by UM Scholars in the summer of 2019. Study guides are under development. Visit lumc.org/umscholars.

Visit www.umcnic.org/GC2020 to find updated GC2020 news and information.



Order 2019 Journal/Directory

The 2019 Journal of the June 2-4 Northern Illinois Annual Conference is now available to purchase online through Amazon, search Northern Illinois Conference Journal. The cost of the paperback is \$12. A free downloadable pdf is available on the Conference website. Visit www.umcnic.org/journal.

The 2019-20 NIC Directory of clergy, laity and related agencies is also available to download for free or order online through Amazon for \$8, search Northern Illinois Conference Directory. For a free downloadable pdf version, visit www.umcnic.org/directory.

Delving deeper into topic of race

For the last three years, under the aegis of the theme "Skin in The Game," United Voices for Children (UVC) has succeeded in creating courageous space and facilitating critical conversations on how race—on both a systemic and individual basis—affects the ways that children and families are served. This year's workshop held on September 14 and entitled "Delving Deeper; Race and Well-Being," convened a diverse group of more than 50 people including, faith leaders, educators and social workers who serve children and their families.

The workshop was facilitated by a team from Evanston Township High School (ETS) led by Dr. Marcus Campbell (Assistant Superintendent and Principal) along with Aracely Canchola (Department Chair for Student Services) and Taya Kinzie LCSW (Principal for Student Services). They shared how racial bias has historically tracked black and brown students out of honors/advanced placement classes. With a refreshing candor the team shared that Evanston Township School District had a long way to go, but they have begun the journey toward equity in educational opportunities. UVC President Robert Biekman noted that "one of the elements of the workshop I found particularly illuminating was the way the presenters 'carefronted' participants by asking them to check in and share their feelings after a challenging subject was addressed."

UVC board member Catherine Inserra spoke to the importance of the workshop: "Every day I hear stories in the news about racism and hatred which is so discouraging and scary. Spending this time together with Marcus, Taya, Aracely and a room filled with people who truly care about others and were vulnerable to delve deeper was so encouraging. The presenters know what they are talking about because they live it every day in the context of a high school environment!"

The ideas and strategies presented by the leaders were further amplified by a panel of youth presenters: Dan Barton from Trinity UMC Mt. Prospect; Emily

Laureano, Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism; and Natalie Overstreet, Community UMC Naperville. The youth spoke frankly and honestly about the challenges they face navigating racially-diverse settings in their schools and community. The youth panel was moderated by UVC board member Pamela Pirtle who reflected that: "Our panel of young persons was excellent, diverse and insightful. All of the adults who attended learned something from their well-thought responses."

UVC board member Joy Hayag noted the significance of the workshop for her as someone who has stepped into U.S. society and culture. "Moving here and learning how to embrace the American culture and still not losing the identity and my roots has been a challenge. Being a Filipina and sometimes being the only Filipina Asian in a group is sometimes difficult, especially experiencing always being the minority. I have learned to love and accept and be proud of my culture and color and accent. There is always that fear of being rejected for being different in color, in actions, in dress, and in communications."

UVC board member Jacki Bogolia summarized the affirmative reaction of many participants: "I feel both grateful and hopeful after attending this workshop—grateful for the presenters and youth panel who shared their insight, wisdom and real-life experience of race as it impacts learning, success, and human relationships; and hopeful after gathering with so many folks who were willing to become aware (perhaps for the first time) of how race continues to be used as an intangible, sometimes invisible, tool to categorize, divide, privilege and condemn human beings."

UVC board member Timothy Biel echoed these observations: "Great presentation by the ETHS team on racial bias. Their message is hopeful and engaging. I was encouraged by the elimination of the advanced placement testing for high school

classes and how that impacts access to A.P. classes for all students. I liked how they challenged us to view our assumptions about race and ethnicity, giving us time in small groups to discuss what our thoughts were. The youth panel kept it real, engaged the participants with honesty and urgency."

It has been many decades since the 1963 March on Washington where Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech was delivered. Yet none of us can say we have fully lived up to Dr. King's vision of a land where each person would be judged by the content of their character, rather than the color of their skin. Through events like Skin in the Game, United Voices for Children continues to address the ill-effects of racism by being a conduit for information and a catalyst for support to advocate for children and their families.

United Voices for Children expresses great appreciation to the Northern Illinois Annual Conference for co-sponsoring the Delving Deeper workshop and to Downers Grove United Methodist Church for its gracious hospitality in hosting.

For more info, visit www.unitedvoicesforchildren.org.



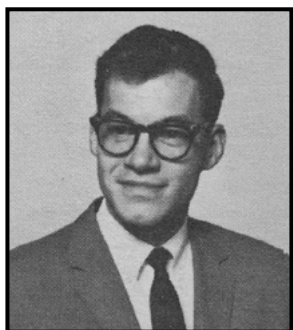
United Voices for Children recently held a workshop with school leaders from Evanston Township High School to talk about how issues of race affect the well-being of children and families.

TAKING THE CHURCH TO THE STREET: Remembering modern day martyrs

By Jacqueline Serrato*



Eugenia Johnson



Rev. Bruce Johnson

The history of the Latino/Hispanic ministry in the United Methodist Church in Chicago is a tumultuous one, one that initially claimed the lives of North Side pastor Rev. Bruce Johnson and wife Eugenia 50 years ago when they opened their church doors to the Puerto Rican community. On the 50th anniversary, Sept. 28, UMC elders, Latino politicians and activists from the '60s held a memorial service at Holy Covenant United Methodist Church to remember their lives and that difficult chapter.

The upscale neighborhood of Lincoln Park, where Armitage Avenue UMC once stood, used to be composed of about 80,000 working-class Puerto

Ricans in 1969 when the Johnsons were murdered. That community had not yet established any Spanish-language religious services and families had to commute south to attend Catholic mass.

A group of reformed gang youth who called themselves the Young Lords Organization, and who had begun to organize against gentrification and displacement, requested meetings with the church council to ask for space for social programs modeled after their friends in the Black Panther Party. The church council had been renting the basement to the Department of Human Services, which had recently moved out, and the Young Lords wanted to introduce what they referred to as "survival programs": breakfast for children, a free clinic, and free daycare.

When the predominantly Anglo congregation refused, the Young Lords walked in and occupied the building, according to news reports. They had previously taken over McCormick Theological Seminary, now owned by DePaul University, for an entire week, and won their demands for the construction of affordable housing and money for legal representation, another clinic, and a cultural center.

Chicago police surrounded Armitage Avenue church during its takeover, but what could have been a bloody confrontation became a truce between the United Methodist Church and the Latino community. Rev. Bruce Johnson intervened and told police that the Puerto Rican youth had his permission to be in the church. And in the following days, the church was unofficially renamed People's Church, the survival programs implemented, and revolutionary-themed murals erected.

As Bishop Sally Dyck said at this year's Northern Illinois Annual Conference in June, "The Johnsons and the church, along with the Young Lords Organization, were dedicated to serving all people in their community, middle-class, poor, Latino, Black, and Anglo. Taking the church to the street was central to the Johnson's ministry."

But their missionary work did not come without opposition. According to archived documents at DePaul, the congregation sent angry letters to Bishop Thomas Pryor, visited his office, and rallied suburban churches to withhold their donations to the People's Church. A week before their deaths, the bishop responded in a letter, "The Church has an unavoidable responsibility to the youth of Chicago on which it dare not turn its back."

City inspectors fined Rev. Johnson \$200 a day for running the daycare center without a license, and the local alderman passed a resolution in City Council to denounce the Young Lords.

At the memorial service in Holy Covenant last month, the leader of the Young Lords, Jose Cha-Cha Jimenez, said of Rev. Johnson, "He talked about Christ being a revolutionary, but... you're probably saying, 'What's this former gang member doing talking about Christ's work?' But that's one of the things that he said, he said we're all sinners... he treated us like we're all human beings, the youth. He treated us like a bona fide movement, not just a gang."

continued on page 7, see Modern Day Martyrs



UM Foundation President Chris Walters presents Bishop Dyck with new running shoes to give thanks for her ongoing support.



Past and present UM Foundation presidents gather to celebrate the Foundation's 70th Anniversary. From left to right: Rev. John Peterson, Rev. Chris Walters, Rev. Harry Nicol, and Rev. Richard Heiss.



Carolyn Cook receives a surprise certificate for her 40 years of faithful service as the Foundation's executive assistant. Photos courtesy Tom Nicol

Foundation "caps off" 70 years with celebration, recognition

The United Methodist Foundation (UMF) of the Northern Illinois Conference celebrated 70 years of "encouraging lifelong generosity with God's abundance" on Sunday, October 13 at the DoubleTree Conference Center in Downers Grove. Approximately 200 UMF supporters gathered to connect with each other, honor former Foundation presidents and board members, hear the testimony of a UMF covenant group, and enjoy the stories of UMF's special 70th Anniversary grantees.

As supporters registered for the event, many reflected on their involvement with UMF. "I've served as a board member and enjoyed working closely with Harry [Nicol], Chris [Walters], Carolyn [Cook] and each of the board members," noted Jon McCoy (Northbrook: North Northfield). "I've witnessed the tremendous impact of the Foundation's grants upon the ministries of churches and agencies throughout the conference, providing the seeds for ministries that have blessed far more lives than can be easily calculated."

Steven Brundridge (Orland Park: Faith) agreed. "The advice and support of UMF have been instrumental to our purpose and mission," he added.

"Through the generosity of the UMF, countless ministries have been planted throughout the Northern Illinois Conference. Lives have been touched, minds have been

opened and hearts have been filled with the love of Christ. To God be the Glory!" added Jeanine Wang (Rockford: Christ).

During the event, the Foundation presented a special gift of a pair of purple Hoka running shoes to Bishop Sally Dyck for her service to the Foundation board. Former Foundation presidents John Peterson (2014-2016), Harry Nicol (2003-2014), and Richard Heiss (1976-2003) spoke, reflecting on their experience serving the Foundation board and encouraging attendees to continue living lives of service and generosity. That kind of life was illustrated during the compelling testimony of Phyllis Tholin, whose covenant group Sisbro has pledged 2% of their collective annual income to causes the group selects each year.

After dinner, the Foundation recognized the 70th Anniversary grant recipients. More than 100 organizations beyond the local church applied for the grants; seven were selected for their unique ministries to people with disabilities, underserved children and youth, healthcare workers, people experiencing homelessness, and seniors in rural areas.

Representatives from the grant recipients, MOMENTA, I Am Abel Foundation, Inspired Youth Inc., Mobile Care Chicago, Almost Home Chicago Inc., Mendota Area Senior Services Inc. and National Organizations of Black Law

Enforcement Executives, rose to present their inspiring stories and thanked UMF for their prayerful and financial support of their work.

"We are honored that we were chosen among so many deserving agencies to receive this award," said Rayanne Sester of Mendota Area Senior Services, Inc. "The ministry of the Foundation will carry on through our services to assist many needy and deserving seniors and disabled clients throughout our rural communities."

"Your kindness and generosity will be long remembered," noted LaMenta Conway of I Am Abel Foundation. "Thank you for your powerful advocacy for so many and for believing in our mission to raise up our next generation of healthcare heroes."

To cap off the evening, UMF Board Chair George Gill and President Chris Walters recognized Carolyn Cook for her 40 years of service to the Foundation as Executive Assistant. Attendees left with logo beanie hats to warm heads during the upcoming winter and warm their thoughts for another 70 years of Christian faith expressed through generosity.

Visit umfnic.org to learn more about the grant recipients and UM Foundation resources.

Peace is a journey; not a destination: Let's walk together

By Rev. Robert E. Biekman, NIC Urban Ministry Coordinator

On a balmy and breezy Saturday in early September the fragrance of peace filled the air. The scent of patchouli and music of meditation greeted more than 200 residents as they entered Cooper Park located in the historic Maple Park neighborhood on Chicago's far south side. They journeyed to this urban ashram for a "Passport 2 Peace" summit.

Through a series of strategic, community engagement conversations Maple Park residents acknowledged that community safety was their number one quality of life concern. Out of these conversations a local design team composed of residents, the Maple Park Neighborhood Association, Chicago Police 5th District CAPs, the Chicago Park District and area communities of faith was created and "Passport 2 Peace" was born. Significant collaborative input from the Goldin Institute, Chicago Peace Fellows and the Chicago Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) Collaborative's Neighborhood Interns helped shaped the event.

The Maple Park "Passport 2 Peace" Neighborhood Summit is one of three such events across the southside. The concept behind "Passport 2 Peace" is that peace is an "inside job" and begins within each of us. "Passport 2 Peace" is an inward journey to promote the place of peace

that resides in every person and an outward journey to build community.

Massage therapy, meditation, yoga, and tai chi demonstrations and reflexology stations staffed by certified experts provided the tickets on the journey to inner peace. One participant remarked, "it was amazing to see children doing tai chi."

As participants moved from station to station, Peace Ambassadors clad in sky blue t-shirts applied stickers to individual's passports and served as hosts for the event. The children played on the playground and received face painting while the adults explored their inner peace.

After sharing a community meal, to promote community peace and facilitate relationship building, more than 50 people participated in three Inter-generational Peace Circles led by Nehemiah Trinity Rising, a grassroots consultancy specializing in restorative practices leadership training.

On the Sunday prior to "Passport 2 Peace," a Peace Makers' Sabbath Celebration was held at Maple Park United Methodist Church. The event organizers were invited to come and pray for peace. The Peace Makers' Sabbath encourages participants to pray, preach, and act for peace. "Passport 2 Peace" was the action step.

"Passport 2 Peace" was funded by a grant from the Chicago Community Trust, Fund for Safer & Peaceful Communities and supported by 23 organizations serving the Greater Roseland Community of Chicago. The Chicago ATI Collaborative is funded in part by a General Board of Church & Society, Ethnic Local Church Concerns Grant.



NIC Urban Ministry Coordinator Rev. Robert Biekman (left) and community leaders take part in promoting peace in Chicago's neighborhoods.



Members of a knitting ministry from two United Methodist churches in Freeport, Ill., deliver nearly 100 handmade hats to 4th grade students at a nearby elementary school as wearable reminders to stand up to bullying.

Knit Wits make wearable symbols of love for students

A knitting ministry group from two United Methodist churches in Freeport, Ill., hope their knitted blue hats will help some area elementary students stand up to bullying.

The group known as the Knit Wits is a combined Plarn (plastic yarn) Ministry of Faith UMC and First UMC in Freeport. It began as a prayer shawl ministry about 10 years ago with members knitting and crocheting shawls, tote bags, pocket prayers, and other items to donate to local nonprofits. They gather the first Saturday of each month at Faith UMC to bring, organize, and bless their creations.

The Knit Wits recently visited Durand Elementary School (Durand, Ill.) to distribute approximately 100 handmade hats to 4th graders and participate in an anti-bullying program.

Member Sharon Lang brought the idea of Lion Brand Yarn's "Hat Not Hate" anti-bullying campaign to the Knit Wits in June 2019. Lion Brand launched the campaign in 2018, encouraging people to make, wear and post handmade blue hats on social media. According to their website, "blue hats are our symbol in the 'craftivist' movement to eradicate bullying."

The Knit Wits decided it was a worthwhile project both on principle and due to their close ties to the school. "Two of our members, myself included, have daughters who are teachers," said Knit Wit Mary Meier. "My daughter Dawn Hart teaches 4th grade at Durand and was thrilled about it."

And so the Knit Wits got their fingers to work. The only criteria was that the hats be constructed using a shade of blue yarn. Knit Wits used their budget to purchase an official wooden "Hat Not Hate" tag from the Lion Brand website. They attached the tags to the hats and arranged to deliver them to the school.

"We had a special moment at a Sunday service where we explained the project to the congregation and the hats were blessed," Meier said.

On October 7, several Knit Wits brought the hats to the school, where two classes had been engaged in lessons on kindness throughout the week. That day, the children watched and discussed the film version of "Each Kindness" by Jacqueline Woodson.

continued on page 8, see Knit Wits

Annual NIJFON dinner inspires attendees and friends to persevere

By Diane Strzelecki, NIC Communications Specialist

On Sunday, September 29, more than 150 supporters gathered at Two Brothers Roundhouse in Aurora for the Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors' (NIJFON) annual fundraiser. Fifteen NIC churches were represented at the event, which raised more than \$20,000 for NIJFON and featured a variety of speakers such as the Rev. Christian Coon (River Forest UMC/Urban Village), Congressman Bill Foster (11th District), former JFON client Mazen Ataya, and the 2019 Champions for Justice Award Winners.

"It is a crucial time for our organization and our immigrant community as a whole," said Executive Director Claudia Marchan as she welcomed attendees.

NIJFON presented their 2019 Annual Champions of Justice award to the Rev. Paula Cripps-Vallejo (Humboldt Park UMC) and State Representative Delia Ramirez (4th District). Award recipients are determined by their contributions to their professional field as well as NIJFON's mission and vision.

"Our 2019 Champions of Justice not only represent the work of JFON throughout the years but embody the true meaning of Justice in the work that they do every single day," said Marchan. "They inspire all of us to continue to do the same."

The atmosphere was a mix of celebration and determination. Just three days earlier, the Trump administration started implementing further restrictions

on asylum seekers who flee to the U.S. in an effort to escape from violence and harm in their home country.

"For me, as a white American U.S.-born citizen--it breaks my heart to see what is happening time and time again," she said. "I accept this award with deep honor and privilege because I know that I've been able to do this work for immigrants' rights because I've been surrounded by so many other champions for justice."

In accepting her award, Ramirez paid tribute to her mother ("my heart, my hero") and to Cripps-Vallejo. "One of the reasons I am able to stand before you today is because of that woman--she is my pastor!" Ramirez said, recalling growing up in Humboldt Park and asking questions about homelessness and poverty and other social issues.

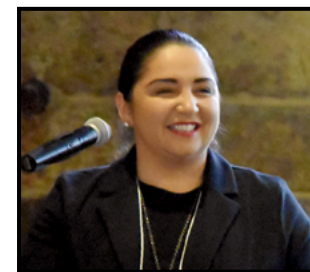
"As people of faith sometimes we have to 'get inside' to change the rules," Ramirez said. "Sometimes we have to be closest to the center of power to change it. Our representation matters!"

The event also served to kick off JFON's Justice Campaign to grow their capacity. An initial \$3,100 was raised toward the \$50,000, which will help bring on two more legal staff at the end of the year, another full-time attorney and a paralegal assistant.

"Our goal is to keep growing because there is more demand right now than we are ever going to be able to

meet," said board member Brian Straw. "Every additional dollar we raise is going to have a massive impact in somebody's life. Tonight we heard from Mazen Ataya, whose life was saved by NIJFON. Last year we heard from an asylee from Africa whose life was at risk and NIJFON worked and got his asylum case granted and now he's a legal permanent U.S. resident. That's incredibly exciting."

Harry Nicol, NIJFON Board Chair, said the organization was very pleased with the fundraiser's outcome. "It is clear that the financial and prayerful support of individuals and churches throughout the Northern Illinois Conference will be critical for us to continue to provide quality, free legal services."



State Sen. Delia Ramirez (4th District) receives one of two Champion for Justice awards during the NIJFON annual dinner and fundraiser on Sept. 29.



Rev. Paula Cripps-Vallejo, Pastor, Humboldt Park UMC is the second honoree as a Champion for Justice.



Members of the Young Lords and supporters march to the location of the former Armitage United Methodist Church in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood following a service to remember the church's slain pastor and his wife Rev. Bruce and Eugenia Johnson. Photo by Anne Marie Gerhardt

Modern day martyrs *(continued from page 5)*

The Johnsons were both graduates of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Rev. Johnson was a member of the Renewal Caucus, a socially conscious group of young pastors, and he picketed the Cokesbury Bookstore at the Chicago Temple to open jobs for minorities. His wife "Jeannie", as she was known, rallied to fund Special Education.

On Sunday, September 28, 1969, around midnight, Rev. Bruce Johnson was stabbed at least 18 times on his reclining chair in the parsonage living room, and Eugenia was stabbed in their bedroom and her head crushed. They were found the next day after a mailman noticed their 4-year-old twins and 14-month-old toddler smeared with blood. Their cases remain unsolved.

Rev. Martin Deppe said in the recent service about his friends, "The Johnsons did not lock their doors. They were immersed in the world; they were open to the community;

they were engaged in the present, intent on participating in a renewed church, as well as a just society and a more peaceful world."

A march from Holy Covenant to the site of the People's Church, which was demolished, took place after the 50th anniversary memorial service, allowing church members and community members to reflect on their shared history and the ways they can work together towards social justice.

Today there are Latino/Hispanic churches across the city and suburbs and some of them function in the spirit of the People's Church, operating food pantries, providing sanctuary to immigrants, fundraising for social causes, and being true allies to the communities they serve.

**Jacqueline Serrato is a member of Amor De Dios UMC in Chicago and an independent reporter.*



DYK???

Do all the good you can

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

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.” John Wesley

I’ve done some crazy things for the sake of the gospel. Crazy things like becoming a pastor in a season when it was still a novelty to be a woman in ministry, joining in unpopular protests, and dragging my family across the state.

I’ve even kissed a pig for the sake of the gospel! Well, it was really a piglet, scrubbed and tethered for a day in church. And maybe my lips didn’t exactly touch the pig but I did graze his fur. How does kissing a pig and promoting the gospel connect? Read on.

John Wesley is at the heart of our Methodist heritage and tradition. Wesley was a flawed leader who made mistakes, struggled with his faith, didn’t always know the answers, opposed the actions of his denomination and without intending to, gave birth to a worldwide movement.

Our United Methodist roots in mission and witness come from our Wesleyan DNA. Wesley’s call to “do all the

good we can” resonates in our congregations. This is the foundation upon which we lead in mission, social witness and discipleship.

Apportionments are a key to the witness of the United Methodist Church. As a connectional structure, we have touched almost every corner of the world as we honor John Wesley’s words. The Methodist witness can be seen in the development of hospitals, schools, programs to combat poverty, promote peace, address immigration, addiction, disaster, discrimination and (fill in the blank with many other works of faith).

This has been a tough year for United Methodists. We are now in the fourth quarter of a year that has thrown us into uncertainty as a denomination and frustration as congregations. The stress and uncertainty have taken a toll on our church and conference’s witness. Our apportionments are suffering and our Connectional witness has struggled.

We can point to a lot of reasons for the drop in giving - denominational unrest and uncertainty, shifting culture, aging buildings, confusion in the billing process, misunderstanding in how you pay, and decreasing

financial commitments to congregations. According to recently released Pew Research statistics, Americans gave about 3% of their disposable income to churches in 1968, and less than 2.2% in 2016. This is a big hurdle to our witness.

John Wesley’s words echo down through the ages and push against our turmoil: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

This is why I kissed a pig. Devising a plan to pay apportionments one fall, as it became clear our congregation was struggling to pay our apportionments at 100%, the Church Council created a unique challenge. The outcome was paying 100% apportionments and my opportunity for a photo op smooching a pig.

Learn more about the dynamic work being done with our apportionments by visiting www.umc.org/how-we-serve/apportioned-funds. There is still time to be part of this dynamic work. Maybe you’re not excited about kissing a pig but I’d challenge you to find fun and engaging ways to be a 100% church in 2019.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR EVENTS

Accessibility Awareness Sunday

Sunday, Nov. 10

In the NIC each year, we set aside the second Sunday of November as Accessibility Awareness Sunday. The primary purpose is to remind each other that everyone is welcome in God’s house, including those with mental, emotional and/or physical challenges.

We invite you to go to umcdmc.org/worship and explore ways of increasing awareness in your congregation as you plan worship for this Sunday.

Restorative Leadership Workshop

Nov. 23, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Orland Park UMC: 15101 South 80th Ave, Orland Park, IL
Cost: \$15

Learn how to become more effective in leading transformative conversations. Learn valuable insights about: • Restorative leadership • Restorative practices and conversations • Conflict transformation concepts • Peace circle practices. Sponsored by NIC Urban Strategy.

Find out more and register at umcnic.org/calendar/restorative-leadership-workshop.

United Methodist Student Day

November 24, 2019

One of five UM Special Sundays, United Methodist Student Day Sunday is celebrated the last Sunday in November. It provides scholarship funds for United Methodist college, university and graduate students. It may be celebrated on any date convenient for your congregation.

For resources, visit www.umcsgiving.org.



Knit Wits (continued from page 7)

Knit Wits members said the students learned the importance of showing kindness and will hopefully be reminded to be kind each time they wear their new hats.

“The class discussed how we can all be more receiving of strangers,” Meier said, noting that a student asked why they were blue. “I explained that it was for peace, awareness, and kindness. One little boy said ‘I know why—it’s because the ocean is blue and it represents ripples.’ I thought yes, what we do has a ripple effect on many.”

Meier heard the children with hats tell other students what the hats mean and said parents expressed their gratitude as well. “We hope to continue making hats,” she said. “It seems when we give, we also receive. Just the smile on their faces was precious enough.”

Visit hatnothate.org to learn more about the Lion Brand anti-bullying campaign.

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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. For guidelines and to submit online, visit www.umcnic.org/communications/submit-news.

How to Contact Us

For editorial content, subscriptions & address changes:
Anne Marie Gerhardt, Dir. of Communications

agerhardt@umcnic.org

312-346-9766 ext. 766

77 W. Washington St. Suite 1820
Chicago, IL 60602