



Bishop Sally Dyck and Bishop John Hopkins co-officiated the Ordination and Commissioning Service for the 2020 class at Barrington United Methodist Church on April 24, 2021. Because of COVID-19 safety precautions, attendance was limited, everyone wore masks and practiced social distancing. The service was livestreamed via the conference Facebook page and YouTube channel.

## A jubilant ordination and commissioning service after pandemic postponements

By Anne Marie Gerhardt, Dir. of Communications

A feeling of exuberance and loud “Amen’s” filled Barrington United Methodist Church’s sanctuary on April 24 during a long-awaited, in-person service to ordain and commission the 2020 class. The ordinands and commissioning candidates had patiently waited nearly a year for their time after the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled the service two times in 2020.

“How pleased I am we finally got to do this in person!” said Retired Bishop Sally Dyck during the service, which was livestreamed from the church. “This is not the celebration you had in mind, but we are here together and I celebrate you are still going forth in ministry every day.”

After the June 2020 Northern Illinois Annual Conference was cancelled and moved to a virtual event in the fall, plans were made to have a small in-person service in November under health and safety guidelines. However, a couple of weeks before the date, COVID-19 cases started to surge in Illinois. Bishop Dyck made the difficult decision to cancel again.

Bishop Dyck, who retired in December to California, was grateful to return to co-officiate with Interim Bishop John Hopkins in the April service and be included in her final work in the Northern Illinois Conference. “I was thankful for the opportunity to make this important time of celebration with all of them,” she said. “I know this isn’t the service they dreamed of, but it was pretty powerful and emotional!”

The Rev. Tammy Scott, who was ordained an elder and serves at Sugar Grove UMC, said she was filled with emotions and tears during the service. “I was ordained a deacon 15 years

ago, so now be ordained an elder I’ve come full circle. To walk this journey with some amazing colleagues, it was very meaningful,” said Rev. Scott. “I was so thankful we had an opportunity to be physically together and to have Bishop Dyck here, but the difficult part was not having friends, family and churches I’ve served be present with us.”

Those being ordained and commissioned could only bring one guest in order to stay within the church’s capacity limits. Most brought a parent, spouse, friend or mentor. Everyone was required to wear masks and participants were socially distanced 6 feet apart. The Bishops sanitized between the laying of the hands.

The Rev. Beverly Dukes, who was commissioned for the work of an elder and accompanied by her mother, a retired United Methodist pastor, said she was so thankful to have her by her side and was uplifted by the service. “I really needed this and felt spiritually rejuvenated,” said Rev. Dukes, who serves St. Andrew UMC in Homewood. “I was called to the ministry and feel recharged to continue my journey of serving others.”

For many, it was difficult picking just one guest, but they understood and were thankful for the precautions being made.

“I feel joy and gratitude that we found a safe way to honor this moment and a little bit of sadness as well that so many who have companioned us on this journey were not able to be there,” said Andi Voinovich, who was ordained an elder and serves as Associate Pastor at First UMC in Downers Grove. “In so many ways, ordination feels like a celebration, a community affirmation of the call God has placed on my heart, and that the

Holy Spirit has been nudging me towards for so many years.”

The Rev. James Fu, who was commissioned for the work of an elder and serves Calvary UMC in Village Park, said the delays were only a slight inconvenience and he was so grateful to come together in thanksgiving to God with all those who have supported him through his journey so far.

“The Spirit of God present alongside me during this time has been far more important and comforting to me,” Rev. Fu said. “I think that my commissioning is confirmation of the call that God has placed on my life and verifies the gifts that God has blessed me to work for the Kingdom of God, and I am so thankful for all that God is and has done in my life.”

Unfortunately, a traditional reception after the service could not take place, but many found ways to celebrate including dinner with family and outdoor receptions at their church.

Ordained Deacon Rev. Kathy Wellman said she was grateful for the meaningful ways people found to recognize her “giant milestone” in her faith journey. “After the service, I arrived home where my parents and daughters had flowers, balloons, cards, and a slideshow filled with congratulations waiting for me,” she said.

Bishop Dyck acknowledged how tough a year it’s been for ministry through the pandemic as she quipped in her sermon title, “A Walk in the Park... Jurassic Park.” While we are not running from killer rogue dinosaurs like in the 1993 movie, the pandemic has brought on some frightening, anxiety-producing challenges for clergy, lay

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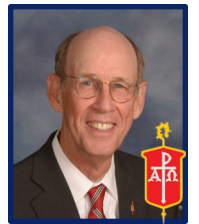
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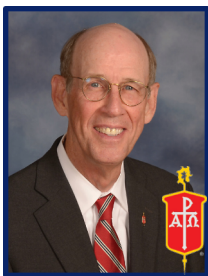
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## FROM THE BISHOP:

# Questions about the future of The United Methodist Church

Through this column over several months, I want to discuss some crucial, bedrock issues that will determine the future of our church at every level. I will present key questions that each of us must understand to help us move forward together in ministry. Each question has more history than I can tell and more nuances than I can explore. I simply want to engage you in understanding the importance of these questions and let you make your own decisions as a follower of Jesus Christ. In the April Reporter I asked Question 1: “Is the Church a Movement or an Institution?”

### Question 2: “Is the Church a Covenant Community or A Voluntary Association?”

*I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. Genesis 9:11 (God makes a covenant with Noah)*

*Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Mark 14:23-24 (Jesus is the New Covenant)*

The scriptures talk about God’s covenant with us from Noah to Jesus. God wants a relationship with us despite our many faults and failures. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we know God’s love is unconditional. God loves us and invites us to respond to that love with an eternal commitment. The church is the guardian of this Good News and the community in which we live out our promise to God.

In the Apostles’ Creed, we say “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (universal) church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting” (UMH 882). When the church baptizes someone, they are incorporated into a universal covenant community called the Body of Christ—the Church with a capital “C.” We do not baptize ourselves; the church claims us as a child of God. We are not baptized United Methodist, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian; we are baptized as Christian.

I remember when I was baptized, confirmed and joined the church at age 13. My mother grew up Methodist and my father Baptist. I was not baptized as an infant. I am not sure if that was because my father was Baptist or because we moved several times and had no regular church. I do know in the seventh grade I joined a Boy Scout troop that met in Wayne Street Methodist Church in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The scouts from that church

invited me to come to the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) on Sunday evenings. Later, some members of MYF invited me to their Sunday School Class, which became the Confirmation Class. When I heard again how much God loved me in Jesus Christ, I promised to follow him and was baptized.

“The Baptismal Covenant is God’s word to us, proclaiming our adoption by grace, and our word to God, promising our response of faith and love. Those within the covenant constitute the community we call the Church...” (UMH p.32)

The church is where God’s Word is given to you in Jesus Christ, and you respond with faith and love. You are “adopted by grace” into a Covenant Community. Or in words of baptism, you “die to self and are raised in Christ.” In essence, once you are baptized and confirmed in your faith, God has a claim on your life through the church.

A Covenant Community is different from a Voluntary Association. For one thing, you can walk in and out of a Voluntary Association, but a Covenant Community is like a marriage. You cannot just walk out. There is a claim on you. You have a responsibility to uphold that relationship because it is a relationship with God and the church.

Did you know that you cannot just walk out of a United Methodist Church? You must withdraw, have your membership transferred, or be removed by a vote of the Charge Conference after the church attempts to reach out to you. Clergy retain their membership in the Annual Conference after retirement and are held accountable to one another for life.

A covenant relationship is also different from a legal relationship. A legal relationship requires an outside party to resolve disagreements. In a covenant relationship, only the parties involved are responsible. No one is forced to be in a covenant relationship or to remain in a covenant without their consent. God’s love is not coercive; it is always invitational and persistent.

A covenant is initiated by another’s love for us. In response, we affirm our love to them and promise to fulfill the covenant with the help of God. We can never keep the covenant by ourselves alone. Our faults and failures hurt or disappoint the very one who loves us. Elaine and I have been married almost 57 years not because we don’t have any irreconcilable differences, but because she has loved me when I was not lovable. Jesus, as the incarnation of the new covenant, demonstrated that God’s love never gives up on us or anyone else.

On this side of heaven, our churches will not be perfect any more than we are perfect. Our scripture (Genesis 1:27) tells us every person, despite their imperfections, is created in the image of God. Likewise, the Church was established by Jesus (Matthew 16:18) knowing it would not be perfect. Isn’t that just like God to use the imperfect to point to the perfect?

What do you think? Is the Church a Covenant Community or a Voluntary Association?

In one of my churches, I married a couple who came to see me many months later with issues straining their relationship. The wife arranged the meeting and coerced her husband into coming with her. About a half hour into our session after identifying their concerns, she turned to me and said, “When we were married, he said his vows to me and I said my vows to him. Can’t you get him to live up to his promises to me?”

There was no way I could intervene like a judge and call him to account. They had to find some way to renew the covenant that had loved them together. Eventually they had an agreement as to how to move forward and as far as I know their marriage survived.

As they left my office, my prayer for them was that they would wake up every morning and voluntarily commit to the covenant they had made. My prayer for you is that every day you will voluntarily recognize God’s love for you and live as a baptized child of God in a community of faith.

## Annual Conference registration opens in June

The 182nd Northern Illinois Annual Conference will be held virtually July 16-17 through a Zoom video webinar. The theme is “Jesus Makes a Way.” The scripture focus is Matthew 14:13-21 (feeding of the five thousand). The Annual Conference Committee is working on finalizing the times and agenda for the two-day event.

Online registration opens **June 1** and will close **June 30 at noon**. Registrations will not be taken after that date. The registration fee is \$30 and covers video production, voting technology, worship planning and other administrative expenses, as well as the fall session.

### More Updates:

- Legislation and historical documents will be posted on the NIC website by June 16 (30 days prior to the conference).
- The **Clergy Session** will be held **June 28** via a Zoom meeting. Registration will open **May 24**.
- The **Bible study leader** will be Bishop Julius C. Trimble from the Indiana Conference. The session times are still being determined.
- The Memorial Service preacher will be Bishop Hee-Soo Jung of the Wisconsin Conference. The days and times of the Memorial and Retirement services are still under consideration.
- A Laity Session will be held **Thursday, July 15** via Zoom. The time is still being determined.
- An **Ordination Service for the 2021** class is scheduled for **Oct. 1**, likely with limited in-person participation and will be livestreamed. Bishop Tracy S. Malone from the East Ohio Conference will be the preacher.
- A **fall session** to consider the budget and other agenda items will be held **Oct. 2** and will be held virtually as well.

Stay up to date on news, registrations and announcements at [umcnic.org/AC2021](http://umcnic.org/AC2021).



# Chauvin verdict brings relief and resolve for anti-racism work

United Methodists across the connection joined the national response of relief and resolve to end racism after a jury handed down guilty verdicts April 20 on all three counts of murder and manslaughter in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin for the killing of George Floyd.

NIC Interim Bishop John Hopkins said the verdict is a crucial step towards rebuilding trust in our democratic system of justice but is met with profound sadness.

“Although justice has been served, my heart goes out to George Floyd’s family, as they will never have him back,” said Hopkins. “We hope the knowledge that his death sparked an anti-racism movement with a demand for police reform may give them some solace.”

Across the country, the decision was met with both relief and acknowledgement of the significant anti-racism work that remains. Even as the Chauvin trial was taking place, we heard news of a Minnesota police officer fatally shooting 20-year-old Daunte Wright during a traffic stop and a Chicago police officer shooting and killing 13-year-old Adam Toledo in an alley near one of our United Methodist churches in the Little Village neighborhood.

“Yes, there is much more to do. Dignity and respect for all people will take more than one verdict,” said Hopkins. “Resentment takes time to heal. Lack of trust takes time to restore. Fear can only be replaced with love. As people of faith, we persist in hope even when the road is long and the journey is hard. The journey is easier when we invite others to join us along the way.”

The Rev. Dana Neuhauser, who serves New City Church, a United Methodist church plant in South Minneapolis, was at the site of Floyd’s memorial when the verdict was announced. Most of the people she was with were bracing for an acquittal, she said.

“My initial reaction was shock, then relief,” Neuhauser said. “A Black colleague with whom I was standing said, ‘We matter, we matter, we matter.’”

Meanwhile, the Rev. Laqaan Malachi, who serves North United Methodist Church in North Minneapolis, said he feels like he’s in a limbo of sorts.

“We are celebrating the mediocrity of our justice system,” he explained. “This verdict does not exonerate the system but instead highlights how difficult it makes justice when there are no cameras watching. This verdict was a baby step and we have a long way to go.”

The Rev. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, senior pastor of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., was in Minneapolis and present with the Floyd family as they awaited the verdict. She described it as “a heavy consequential moment for us as people of faith.”

“This is potentially a real pivot moment to recommit to



George Floyd mural in Minneapolis. Photo courtesy: Chad Davis, Wikimedia Commons

address how to dismantle these things instead of pretending they’re not real,” she said in a Facebook Live post on Foundry’s page. “I believe God is ... always with the oppressed and the suffering.”

Church leaders expressed the sense that the verdict was just while urging the religious community to be involved in ending widespread racism and systemic injustice against people of color. M. Garlinda Burton, interim top executive of the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race, noted that the Hebrew word for justice, *mishpat*, occurs more than 200 times in the Old Testament.

“God has set an anti-racism agenda for us and God expects us to live that out in our relations with Christ and one another,” she said. “It must start with hard conversations and penitent prayer and action, and truth about what the U.S. Christian church community has failed to do and be.”

Floyd’s May 2020 death was a catalyst that led to the creation of the denomination’s “Dismantling Racism” initiative, launched weeks later. While relief and even brief exuberance are understandable in the wake of the conviction, United Methodist bishops also urged the church to continue the hard work of racial reconciliation.

“We need the Holy Spirit, the breath of Jesus for the continuing work of dismantling racial inequity ... the work of building Beloved Community, the work of love,” Minnesota Conference Bishop David Bard wrote.

The verdict shows the community was able to hold law enforcement officers accountable, but abuses still go unpunished, said Bishop Laurie Haller of the Iowa and Dakotas conferences.

“The list of Black lives who have been needlessly killed grows each day,” she said. “The pervasive culture of racism and white supremacy, increasingly incited by political rhetoric, grows each day. The fear among parents of Black children grows each day. The flaunting of our laws against

racial profiling and discrimination grows each day.”

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference suggested that, “we shed some silent tears along with our many brothers and sisters who have been traumatized by racism, unjust systems and brutality.”

“Many people have not received justice in the past, and racial inequity and violence against people of color has been a painful reality,” she said.

Chauvin and his family also are suffering, several bishops acknowledged, and are worthy of the prayers of United Methodists along with Floyd’s family.

There are “no winners in the George Floyd murder case,” said Bishop Frank J. Beard of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. “We are all hurt and weakened by all forms of injustice and pain. I pray for Derek Chauvin and for his family. I continue to pray for the family of George Floyd. I pray for our police officers and those sworn to protect and to serve.”

Other United Methodist organizations and partners also commented on the verdict. The Rev. Michael L. Bowie Jr., national executive director for Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century, described it as being “like Jesus breathed on our nation,” but he noted that hours later, a Black teenage girl was shot by police in Columbus, Ohio.

“Until police reform and the systemic racism in this country is dismantled, we unfortunately will continue to live with the fear of not being able to breathe,” Bowie said.

United Methodist Women General Secretary Harriett Jane Olson said, “As people of faith, we celebrate even as we continue our advocacy work. May justice roll down like waters, today and in days to come.”

*This story was compiled and reported by UM News reporters Joey Butler, Heather Hahn, Sam Hodges and Jim Patterson. Minnesota Conference Director of Communications Christa Meland also contributed to this report.*



## ARTF NIC Anti-Racism Task Force Statement

**ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE**  
of the Northern Illinois Conference

With the conviction of former police officer Derek Chauvin in the murder of George Floyd, some are saying that justice has been served. Indeed it is right that a guilty verdict was rendered where there was indisputable evidence of a crime. But as Christians who know that the word justice means more than punishment, our hearts are heavy because no conviction would have been able to bring back beloved Black child of God, George Floyd.

The most common word pairing in the Hebrew Bible is “justice and righteousness,” reminding us that justice does

not stand alone; God calls us to create a world where all people are treated with dignity, respect, equality, and love. There is still much work to be done to build love for neighbor into our systems and we lift up the modern-day prophets who have long been calling us to live out justice and righteousness in concrete ways.

Yet, this is still a moment of sorrow and grief because we remember the life of George Floyd who was murdered before he had an opportunity to do all God was calling him to do in this life, just as too many people of color have been.

We grieve because this kind of accountability of racist violence of a former police officer is still so rare. We grieve because we have too often witnessed our systems fail and give in to the demons of white supremacy.

May our grief give way to meaningful action, that we would create a world in which the words of the prophet Amos would be fulfilled: “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”



Rev. Martin Lee (left) and Pastor Ramiro Rodriguez (right) pray with church members at a memorial for teenager Adam Toledo who died after a police shooting in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood.



Grace UMC in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood opens its doors to protestors needing bathrooms or a charging station. In addition, they make available water, masks, sanitizer, snacks and first aid products. Photo by Lilette Ramos.

## Sorrow and outreach for Little Village neighborhood after fatal shooting of a 13-year-old boy

By Jacqueline Serrato\*

It was a Sunday night, technically Monday, when it happened. While Pastor Ramiro Rodriguez slept that night, a tragedy unfolded in the alley behind the parsonage where Chicago Police engaged in a foot chase that within seconds took the life of a 13-year-old boy.

Hours earlier, his church, Amor de Dios UMC in the Little Village neighborhood, had had its regular Sunday service. The members had discussed the plans for its food pantry program on Thursday, while some children played on the concrete basketball court and in the garden next to the church.

Pastor Rodriguez said he didn't hear or witness the incident involving seventh-grader Adam Toledo, and he didn't know the youth because he lived on another block. But slowly, he learned more details as news reporters and camera crews trickled into the church later that week.

"Amor de Dios UMC became a little light in Little Village as a hospitable place for a dozen reporters and TV trucks and staff stationed there all day since it happened," said Rev. Martin Lee, Northern Illinois Conference Director of Congregational

Development and Redevelopment, after visiting the church and praying with members of the congregation on the site of a growing memorial.

While the media had immediately reported that an "armed confrontation" led to the fatal shooting, it took 48 hours for Adam's age to be revealed and for his family to be notified, prompting a range of reactions from the community and the public at large.

A makeshift altar was built in Mexican tradition near the mouth of the alley on west 24th St. by members of the community, and the asphalt ground where Adam fell on his back as he gave his last breaths was marked with rows of lit veladoras candles.

The pastor reviewed the grainy footage from two video cameras installed on the exterior of the church and made it available to police, lawyers and investigators. The angle of the camera facing the alley did not capture the incident, only the flashes of what is presumed to be the officer's gun and the presence of police on the scene from 2:30 a.m. until about 9 a.m.

The front-facing camera, as well as the camera from Farragut high school next door, shows two young

males standing on the front corner of the church, gunshots ringing, and them running away. Available footage did not show a target and there were no reported injuries from those fired shots.

The police were instantly deployed, and the encounter in the alley led to the arrest of a 21-year-old man, who is said to have fired the gun, and the shooting of the 13-year-old, who police say had the gun in his possession while he was running from the officer.

These last details caused newspaper columnists and zero-tolerance proponents to strip Adam of his boyhood innocence, undermining his age and clean record, and suggesting that perhaps he was to blame for his fate. And if not him, his parents.

More empathetic neighbors and youth advocates responded by pointing to the lack of investment in impoverished and racialized neighborhoods like Little Village that leave children and teens without many options to grow emotionally, educationally or economically.

The video of the officer's body camera was released by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA), the agency that investigates

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### From the Cover: Ordination

leaders and church staff, she said.

"We've had to do things we never thought we'd sign up for and demanded new skills like producing online worship services," said Dyck. "And we had to think through things quickly and safely ... like how to do ashes when you have to stay 6 feet apart or serve communion?"

But she told the ordinands and those being commissioned, while we need to make room for people to express their pain and loss this past year, we also need to celebrate with them, even if it's the little things.

"We need to celebrate because there's incredible ministry happening despite all the challenges," said Dyck. "As we begin to emerge back to in-person worship, I encourage you to figure out individuals and groups of people to celebrate each week, such as our medical and first responders. Celebrate graduations, births, baptisms, marriages and anniversaries. Celebrate accomplishments and anything else that you can think of for the next year! Find ways to meaningfully acknowledge that it wasn't—and still isn't—the way they had hoped, but you see them, you care and you rejoice with them!"

After each clergy was ordained, a lantern was lit as a reminder of their loved ones and supportive community who couldn't be present. Bishop Dyck said not all days in ministry will be a "walk in the park," but reminded clergy to remember they're not alone on the walk.

"Some days you're going to come home and say that was a walk in the park... Jurassic Park, but then you can give thanks that you are not in the park by yourself because God is with you along with a whole covenant community and church of Jesus Christ whose spirit is surrounding you like a cloud of witnesses. You're not alone in the park, whatever kind of park it is."

To view a recording of the service, visit [vimeo.com/umcnic](https://vimeo.com/umcnic).



Each ordinand received a lantern as a gift from Bishop Sally Dyck. She said the light represented all the family, friends and church community who couldn't be present at the service.



The Rev. Scort Christy was one of 11 elders ordained along with two deacons. Seven candidates were commissioned for the work of an elder and one for the work of a deacon. The orders of Rev. Melwyn Solomon Alagodi were also recognized as an elder.

# This I Celebrate! Welcoming new members in new ways

By Rev. Martin Lee, Dir. of Congregational Development and Redevelopment

On Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021, Pastor Gary Rich and his congregation welcomed 10 new members to Cedarville UMC, a small rural church located north of Freeport, Illinois.

Pastor Gary Rich told me that eight people were scheduled to join the church on Easter Sunday 2020, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic they could not celebrate their new membership in person with the congregation. So, the celebration was deferred to this past Easter.

Because of the pandemic, many congregations have explored doing ministry in creative ways. When the state issued a stay-at-home order in March 2020, overnight pastors became video producers and learned to utilize online platforms to deliver sermons and Sunday worship. Churches were able to reach people they never reached before!

Don and Colleen Snyder, who lived about 10 miles from the church, also joined Cedarville UMC on Easter Sunday 2021. They had been invited to participate in the church's livestream worship service. If they had been invited to come to the church in person, they might have been reluctant to do so, but the online worship service was a convenient way for them to connect with Pastor Rich and the church.

Pastor Rich had always felt a call to serve God's people. For years he was a member of Lena UMC and worked as a high school math teacher. When he got a new job at a local manufacturing company, he would drive by Cedarville's little church building almost every day and would wonder what it would be like to be a pastor there. After he decided to answer God's call to ministry as a licensed local pastor, God surprised him when he was appointed to Cedarville UMC in 2017!

Often God demonstrates a sense of whimsy and humor, and surprises us in magnificent ways, opening doors for us where we could not have even imagined. I encourage you to explore your passion and dream for serving God. Find a trusted mentor to discuss some leaning that you have, an inkling of some piece you can do, large or small, for the good of the God's kingdom.



New members welcomed at Cedarville UMC left to right: Sandy Janicke, Norene Dailey, Sherri Heckman, Bill Guinther, Debbie Guinther, Gary Hawkinson, Don and Colleen Snyder Not pictured: Brenda Ufken, Steve Vehmeier.

In our conversation, Pastor Gary Rich reminded me that many years ago he participated in a Natural Church Development workshop that I led for laity and clergy in Stockton, Illinois. It is a small world and we are all connected! Whether lay or clergy, we are all on the same journey to love God and our neighbors and welcome new disciples for Jesus Christ even in the midst of a pandemic.

**This I celebrate!**



## High school youth Justice Camp registration open

Registration is open for this summer's Justice Camp, a unique experience for United Methodist high school students (incoming freshmen through graduating high school students). Campers will take a mostly virtual journey toward racial justice at various sites around the country.

Justice Camp dates are June 13 (in-person and Zoom), June 27 (Zoom), July 11 (Zoom), and August 8 (Zoom). Registration fee: \$25. Space is limited. For more info and to apply, visit [umcnic.org/justicecamp](http://umcnic.org/justicecamp).

If you're interested in becoming a Justice Camp Counselor, find an application at [umcnic.org/news/justice-camp-counselors-wanted](http://umcnic.org/news/justice-camp-counselors-wanted).

Justice Camp is organized in partnership with the Northern Illinois Conference Anti-Racism Task Force Justice Generation, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM), UMC Native American Comprehensive Plan, UM Communications and UM Discipleship Ministries.

## Conway awarded Illinois "Police Chaplain of the Year"

By Diane Strzelecki, NIC Communications Specialist

In April, Chicago Southern District Superintendent Rev. Jacques A. Conway was presented with the Illinois "Chaplain of the Year" award from the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC). The award was presented at two separate ceremonies, one at the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police's (FOP) monthly meeting in Springfield, Ill., and one at the Oak Park Police Department – both where Conway began his chaplaincy in 1995.

The ICPC Chaplain of the Year award is given by regions and by state said Rick Worshill, the ICPC Illinois area representative. "Nominations for the award can come from anyone including Police Chiefs and citizens," said Worshill.

Conway received several nominations, including from fellow ICPC members and the Illinois FOP, and Worshill said the vote was unanimous for him to be this year's recipient.

The Rev. Richard Wisdom, Senior Pastor for Plainfield UMC and Plainfield Police Department Chaplain, said this distinguished title is befitting for his friend and colleague.

"It is a big deal in our world," said Wisdom. "Jacques has selflessly served with distinction and honor for decades and the ICPC is recognizing him for this. And I will tell you it is well deserved!"

Conway was on vacation when he heard about the award from Wisdom, who texted Conway while attending the regional ICPC meeting in March. "He said 'hey man where you at? You should be at this meeting, you won Chaplain of the Year,'" Conway said. "I was thinking he was pulling my leg, but it was true."

An ecumenical, interfaith and interdenominational organization, ICPC was launched in 1973 to organize a network of chaplains with their contact information and

"promote the bond of brotherhood so chaplains from far-reaching communities... would be joined together in fellowship." ICPC currently has 2,200 members in 12 regions across 20 nations worldwide.

Receiving the award is both an honor and a humbling experience, Conway said. "It brought me back to how I became a police chaplain," he said. "I was put in the position to be honored for what someone else did for me to save my career and perhaps save my life."

Conway had been a police officer with the Oak Park Police Department for about four years when he was involved in a fatal shooting. "Back then we didn't have a chaplain, we didn't have anything in place," he remembered. "They just took my service revolver, interviewed me and just sent me home without any chance to debrief."

He describes the days following the shooting as a blur of worry, fear, guilt and more worry. Concerned for his wellbeing, Conway's mother called on a connection with the Chicago Police Department, who connected Conway with one of their chaplains, a Catholic priest named Thomas Nagel.

"He stayed with me for counseling and support for more than two years," Conway said. The priest walked with Conway as he worked through depression and anxiety, and through the process of a civil lawsuit filed by the person's family. And when Conway decided to go into seminary, he knew that he was going to give back and volunteer his time



Chicago Southern District Superintendent Rev. Jacques A. Conway (center) received the Illinois Chaplain of the Year award from the International Conference of Police Chaplains. The Illinois Fraternal Order of Police celebrated with Conway at their monthly meeting in Springfield on April 21.

as a police chaplain as well. Today, Conway continues to serve the Illinois FOP, the U.S. Marshall's Service and the Chicago office of the U.S. Secret Service.

Worshill says Conway exemplifies the important role police chaplains are called to do. "We provide emotional and spiritual support in crisis situations and Jacques has done a tremendous job doing that for a long time," said Worshill. "What stands out about Jacques is he's always ready to help someone, to mentor another chaplain and to serve."

Western Springs Police and Fire Department Chaplain Rev. Christina Vosteen was pleased but not surprised Conway received this award. "He has the mix of gifts and experiences that specifically equip him to minister to the spiritual needs of law enforcement, and his time as an officer gives deep integrity to his care and counseling," Vosteen said. "In this award, Jacques is being acknowledged for saying 'yes' to God's call to serve those who risk their lives to serve us."

# Agencies set greenhouse gas emissions goal

By Jim Patterson\*

Eleven general agencies of The United Methodist Church are pledging to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 across ministries, facilities, operations and investments. The initiative was announced on Earth Day.

"I think it's important for us as stewards of God's resources," said Roland Fernandes, general secretary of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, one of several agencies leading the denomination's environmental efforts.

"It's exciting that we're having all these sister agencies join us because ... there's so much more momentum and even excitement that we can get into this really important need for our time."

Net-zero emissions means the amount of human-produced greenhouse gas emissions does not exceed the amount taken out of the atmosphere, according to the World Resources Institute. Greenhouse gas removal is achieved by tactics such as restoring forests or direct air capture and storage.

The agencies committed to the goal are the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, Board of Global Ministries, Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Commission on Archives and History, Commission on the Status and Role of Women, Communications, Council on Finance and Administration, Discipleship Ministries, United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and Wespeth Benefits and Investments.

"Within our distinct areas of ministry and throughout our global connection, we are embarking on a new course of action to match the urgency of this moment," reads a joint statement from the leaders of the 11 agencies.

"We will work both to reduce the principal cause of climate disruption — greenhouse gas emissions — and to support a just and equitable transition that dismantles structural barriers to racial and gender equity and builds resilient, flourishing communities."

Caring for creation "is a Biblical directive, God's very first charge to humans in Genesis," said Harriett Jane Olson, United Methodist Women General Secretary. "When we fail to care for creation, women and children on the margins are most at risk in terms of their health and

livelihoods."

Although the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race and Publishing House have yet to sign on, neither has rejected the proposal, said the Rev. Jenny Phillips, senior technical advisor for environmental sustainability at Global Ministries.

"No one has said no," Phillips said. "Those who haven't committed have said, 'We're trying to better understand what this would mean for our agency,' which I totally affirm."

The goal is being set before a plan exists to get there, Phillips said.

"We made this commitment as a first step in saying we are committed to making a plan and living into it," she said. "The next thing ... are the plans for the next five years ... and then keep going along like that."

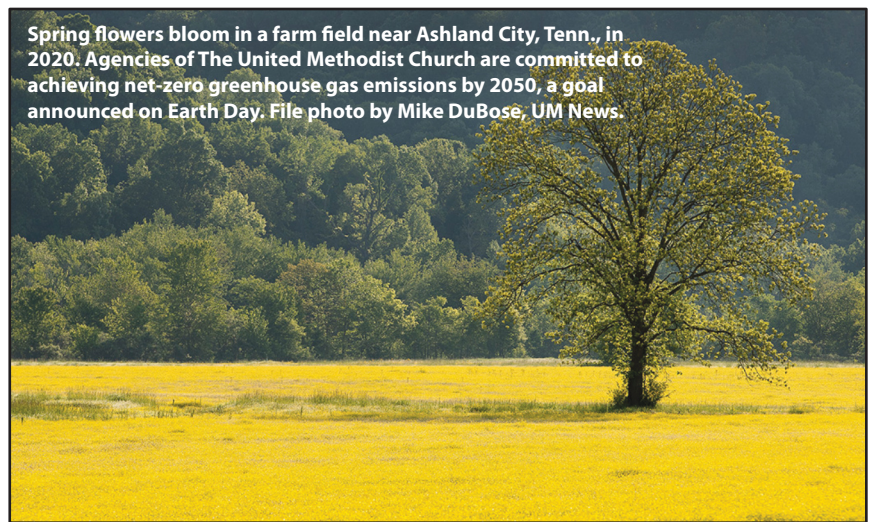
One thing that can be done immediately is better energy efficiency at many United Methodist properties, Phillips said. It turns out that even the headquarters of Global Ministries in Atlanta can be improved. That building is already certified the highest level of "platinum" by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a green building certification program developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

"We had an energy audit, and our auditor identified a huge number of opportunities for efficiency that's going to save us 17% of our annual energy budget when we implement the changes," Phillips said.

Common building fixes include coordinating thermostat settings and replacing old boilers and other equipment.

"It is a natural choice for United Methodist Men to join Net-Zero 2050," said General Secretary Gil Hanke. "We have already taken steps in this direction, such as installing solar-powered entrance gates and cameras to secure our building. We take recycling seriously and encourage sustainable practices with employees."

In West Africa, a pilot energy study is planned at 13 United Methodist clinics to help develop an energy plan,



including how to finance it, Phillips said.

"There are strategies when we're looking at doing solar across multiple sites and different ways we can finance it than when we are doing one-off projects," she said.

In the "Natural World" section of the United Methodist Book of Discipline, denomination leaders "acknowledge the global impact of humanity's disregard for God's creation ... We therefore ... call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries and communities to reduce their emissions."

At Discipleship Ministries, a task force will "evaluate where we are and where we need to go in order to fulfill this pledge," said Jeff Campbell, acting general secretary.

"We also commit to continue creating resources to help disciples understand that our involvement in creation care is an essential part of discipleship."

When considering how to pay for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, it should be noted that a high price is already being paid for climate change, Phillips said.

"When we look at our work on disaster response, the extreme nature, the extreme frequency of storms, the intensity, the wildfires — all of that has a cost as well. ... We're so focused on alleviating suffering. I think we also have to be investing in addressing the root causes of that suffering."

*\*Patterson is a UM News reporter in Nashville, Tennessee.*

## 10 Tips to Help Your Church Go Green

By Ken Sloan, Discipleship Ministries

The best way for your church to lead your members in a growing consciousness of being good stewards of earth resources is to lead by example. The bonus is that, in the long run, going green will often free up money that can be used to grow mission, engaging with your community to make disciples.

Trustees and members of the finance committee can bring expertise and energy (pardon the pun) to this work as they lead the way in reducing our carbon footprint and becoming better stewards of limited resources.

Many of these steps may require some up-front expense to realize long-term gains, but we encourage you to inform your congregation of your creation care efforts. You may find special donations that will help you move through these ideas quickly.

### 1. Keep many of your meetings virtual.

It will be great when we all feel safe to come together for worship in person, but we've learned from the pandemic that many meetings work well when they are conducted virtually. We've all heard reports of some of the positive environmental impacts of more than a year of people staying home more and driving their cars less. Just in the U.S., imagine the impact of 33,000 United Methodist churches continuing to meet virtually — with no one having

to start and drive a car and no heating or cooling or lights having to be turned on in churches, coffee pots started, or cookies purchased. Will virtual meetings be better for every gathering? Of course not, but where it works just as well, it will make an impact for the care of the planet and for conserving the resources of churches for more important purposes.

### 2. Organize car-pools and ride sharing to build relationships and lower CO2 emissions.

Our mission as a church is to make disciples, and making disciples happens through relationships. Helping to organize and encourage church attenders to be carpoolers and ride sharers can make members feel more comfortable about building relationships with neighbors in the community who don't attend church. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, motor vehicles are responsible for 28.2 percent of the CO2 (carbon dioxide) released into our air, the largest single contributor to greenhouse gases blamed for global climate change. Fewer cars in the church parking lot could be a sign of a healthy congregation and a slightly healthier atmosphere.

### 3. Do an efficiency study on church appliances.

Many church refrigerators run all the time, even when people are not in the building. Some run for the sole

purpose of keeping coffee creamer preserved for the next Sunday or meeting night. Unplugging a full-sized refrigerator (until an event requires it) and running a smaller unit is more cost-effective and better for the environment, and it can lower the church's energy bills.

### 4. Have heating and cooling units serviced regularly for top efficiency.

Often, your local HVAC providers offer reasonable service plans to do annual checks of your heating and air conditioning equipment. By keeping your unit cleaned and serviced, you maintain efficiency, waste less fuel, detect environmentally damaging leaks and exhaust issues, and often extend the life of your units.

### 5. Make the move to LED light bulbs.

The average LED bulb with equivalent light output of a 60-watt incandescent bulb uses eighty percent less electricity. These bulbs also produce less heat, which will help offset summer cooling costs. Fluorescent fixture tube bulbs can also be replaced with LED equivalents, which will improve energy efficiency even more.

### 6. Be an off-peak energy consumer.

Most churches have their peak energy use at times that are non-peak for utility companies — on weekends,

# KIDS ABOVE ALL

## Mom and Me Drive



Each and every year, and especially during the pandemic, Kids Above All (formerly ChildServ) families have identified diapers and wipes as a major area of need. Therefore, in time for Mother's Day, the agency is launching their first annual Mom and Me Drive through May 17.

They are collecting donated diapers (of all sizes) and wipes so their parents, caregivers, babies, and toddlers have the essentials they need for a happy and healthy start to their lives together.

Drop off location: 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Suite 450 Chicago, IL 60631, Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit [kidsaboveall.org](http://kidsaboveall.org). To schedule a drop off time for your donations, contact Manager of Faith and Community Relations, Catherine Inserra, at 847- 224-2870, or at [cinserra@kidsaboveall.org](mailto:cinserra@kidsaboveall.org).

## Sorrow (continued from page 4)

police-involved shootings, several days later. It shows Adam facing the officer with his arms raised and hands empty a moment before the officer fired his gun.

Pastor Rodriguez told a Sun-Times reporter he thought of his children when he saw the video of Adam with his hands up. "They grew up here, and it's thanks to God they didn't have any problems," Rodriguez said in Spanish. "But now I have grandchildren who are growing up and they come to visit me happily, and I don't want anyone to do that to them. It would break my heart."

A massive rally in the North Side demanded police accountability for Adam and other youth recently shot and killed by police. It's said to be the largest protest in Logan Square in recent memory, with estimates of more than 5,000 people marching in the streets.

Another march took place in Little Village the next Sunday.

Co-Pastor Lindsey Long Joyce was in communication with the organizers of the Logan

Square action. The crowd had planned to march to the corner of Wrightwood and Kimball outside of Grace United Methodist Church—one block from Mayor Lightfoot's home—but they were blocked by police.

Last summer, the church began to open up its building to provide protest support. "We work with St. Luke's Lutheran Church (with whom we share a building) to do this," said Grace UMC Pastor Hope Chernich. "If we become aware of an action or protest taking place we make sure several people [from the church] can be present. We offer our bathrooms and provide a charging station. In addition, we have water, masks, sanitizer, snacks and first aid products available."

Meanwhile, members of Amor De Dios Church, most of them immigrants, continue serving the community quietly, still attempting to understand the loss of a child so close to home.

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



## Outdoor and Retreat Ministries News



### Summer Camps are back!

Outdoor and Retreat Ministries is making preparations to welcome campers back this summer. The safety of campers, volunteers and staff is of utmost importance. Both camps will comply with all health department regulations and COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Youth Camps will be at Camp Reynoldswood in Dixon, Ill. Family Camp remains at Wesley Woods on Geneva Lake. For prices and more information, visit [niccamp.org/summercamps](http://niccamp.org/summercamps). Family Camp remains at Wesley Woods on Geneva Lake.

### June 20-26, 2021 J.O.Y. Camp (Grades 7-13)

J.O.Y. Camp is designed to challenge and encourage youth in their faith journey. J.O.Y. is an acronym that stands for **J**esus, **O**thers, and **Y**ou. *This year we are focusing on the "O" for Others.*

### July 7-9, 2021 Total Camp (Grades Entering: 2-6)

Total Camp offers a camp experience at Reynoldswood for the younger crowd. Fun-filled days include archery, campfires, Bible studies, crafts and a Talent Show! Of course, Gaga Ball, Volleyball, 9-Square-In-The-Air, hiking trails, and slip-n-slide are available to all.

### July 25-30, 2021 Woodland (Grades Entering: 7-13)

Woodland offers something for everyone: from sleeping in tree houses in the forests of Reynoldswood to canoeing, games and archery. Evenings include campfires, fun activities and a Talent Show. Daily crafts and Bible Studies help us experience Jesus in a Christian community.

### Total and Woodland Camps will explore Creation Speaks!

In the beginning, God created. God is still creating now. What do God and creation have to teach us about how to live today? **Creation Speaks** invites us to look to God's creation, including each other, as we listen for God's voice in the world today. By looking anew at the creation story, campers will imagine what each part might teach us about God and our place in the world. Light, water, earth, seasons, animals, humans and even a day of rest will invite campers to listen for God, who is still speaking to them today. Through our new understanding of the interdependence of all creatures and responding to our call as caretakers of creation, we are moved to awe and wonder at the gift of creation and the Creator. If the people of God stop and listen to creation, what might we hear? Shhhh, listen. Creation speaks!

## Go Green (continued from page 6)

especially Sunday. This is helpful to the environment in that high-demand times mean more fuel consumed and more carbon released into the air. There might be a savings to being recognized as an off-peak energy consumer, and an inquiry to your electricity provider might result in a lower rate per kilowatt charged. It's worth investigating.

### 7. Purchase programmable, smart thermostats.

If your church is still working with the thermostats that were installed 10 or 20 more years ago when your building's heating and cooling units were installed, newer smarter programmable units are almost a guaranteed savings. While these thermostats are not hard to install, check with your HVAC service provider before you purchase these on your own. Your HVAC service professional can often provide commercial units that are more reliable and efficient than what homeowners purchase at a home improvement store or online.

### 8. Consider replacing a traditional water heater with tankless, on-demand units.

A 40- or 50-gallon water heater was not very economical running in your church during the pandemic, and odds are, it is still inefficient as you move toward reopening your facility. A new generation of tankless, on-demand water

heating units can be mounted in-line under sinks and will heat water only when needed. These units can cost as little as \$200, use a fraction of the energy of larger units, and probably can recoup their cost in as little as a year.

### 9. Give careful thought to adding solar panels to your church energy plan.

Solar radiation is a wonderful source of clean energy that, depending on the location of your church and its orientation to the sun, might be a great resource for you. Before you invest in a solar energy installation, do your due diligence. Check with the conference treasurer or trustees to find out the experience of other churches in your area and their appraisal of the vendors they used. Research what federal, state, or local incentives there are for making the investment. No doubt you will find some churches that made an amazing impact on their energy costs, while making a positive impact in reducing their carbon footprint.

### 10. Lead your congregation in the three R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

**I. Reduce** – Limit the amount of waste your congregation produces.

**II. Reuse** – Use certain items more than once before

discarding.

**III. Recycle** – Sort and discard items according to their properties (paper, glass, compost, etc.)

Be sure waste cans and recycling bins are properly labeled and place them in as many areas of your building as possible.

Learn more from the NIC Eco-Sustainability Task Force at [umcnic.org/greenteam](http://umcnic.org/greenteam).



DYK???

# Missions: Our Heart and Heritage

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



My early understanding of The United Methodist Church's passion for missions and the work of apportionments grew out of the Northern Illinois Conference's Rainbow Covenant, which provided resources to support second-mile giving in the local church. As a convert to the UMC before my ordination, I knew little beyond the local church. Participating in a Rainbow Covenant Bus Tour with other candidates for ministry introduced me to the work of missions within the bounds of our annual conference and throughout the world.

During that bus tour, we were taught the basics of apportionments and introduced to local and global missions. My heart was filled with pride as I spent three days on a bus hearing testimony as we traveled across our conference. Seeing firsthand the work that can be done when we pool our resources and energies was truly transformational. The work of our Conference Board on Global Ministries (CBGM) influenced my call to become a United Methodist.

Over the years, as churches have faithfully paid their apportionments for the work of the annual conference

and the witness of the general church, congregations have gone beyond their fair share of assigned apportionments and given even more to build up our witness through missions. A quick look through the Northern Illinois Conference journals indicates that over these 35 years, with special appeals and Rainbow Covenant gifts we have supported global missions beyond our apportionments with at least \$35 million dollars of faithful stewardship!

Fast forward 35 years and missions are still at the heart of our identity and Wesleyan tradition. We are a global church with an amazing reach into places where we can make a difference. 35 years is a long time to go without refreshing our brand. In 2019 CBGM made a commitment to update, refresh and modernize our communications so we can capture the next generation's heart for mission (and maybe the next generation of candidates for ministry).

Even with the barriers of the pandemic, a faithful group of lay and clergy members of CBGM labored to birth something new. This spring they unveiled: "Mission Links: Living the Beatitudes." This new online resource invites you to see our work in the world through the words of Jesus in the beatitudes. Mission Links explores

the history of apportionments and explains Special Sunday offerings. It gives you a snapshot of mission-giving opportunities globally, nationally, regionally and locally, as well as through our support of missionaries. Many of these listings include a link to a website where you can learn even more about a specific effort. The missions are also connected to one or more beatitudes so you can move through the statements of "blessing" and touch each aspect of Jesus proclamation.

This is a great resource for your missions committee, Sunday School class, Confirmation students, and prospective new members. We have all been through a long, hard year of uncertainty and isolation while trying to stem the tide of a pandemic. Even in this time of separation, we are still connecting around the world to those who need the healing hope of Christ! Blessed are those who answer the call to witness to Christ's love in our world!

To find the Mission Links booklet in a PDF format as well as digital magazine format, visit [umcnic.org/missionlinks](http://umcnic.org/missionlinks).

## April 2021 Appointments

Bishop John Hopkins announces the following clergy appointments for the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church, effective July 1, 2021 (unless otherwise noted):

**Rolland Hayag** (Local Pastor) to Pecatonica (1/2 time) (Rockford District) following Mark Gilmore who is appointed to Tinley Park (Chicago Southern District). In addition, Rolland continues to serve Shirland (1/4) time.

**Beverly Dukes** (Provisional Elder) to Maywood: Neighborhood (Chicago Northwestern District) from Homewood: St. Andrew (Chicago Southern District). Beverly follows Marcus Tabb who is appointed to Chicago: South Shore.

**Janice Shaulis** (Local Pastor) to Ashton/Franklin Grove (DeKalb District) (Part-Time) from Leon/Fenton (DeKalb District) while transitioning to retirement. Janice follows Satya Sudhakar who is appointed to Ottawa: Epworth (DeKalb District).

**Juyeon Jeon** (Elder) to Bensenville: First (Elgin District) from Genoa: Faith (DeKalb District). Juyeon follows So Young Kim who is appointed to Barrington: Salem (Elgin District).

**Addison Shields Jr.** (Retired Elder) to Harvey: Transformation Community (Chicago Southern District) (Part-Time). Addison follows Dwight Stewart who is retiring.

**Timothy Biel Sr.** (Local Pastor) will remain at Alsip: Christ part-time while transitioning to retirement.

**Deborah Kang** (Elder) to Morris: First (Associate) (Aurora District) from appointment to another annual conference. Deborah will follow Laura Wilson Underwood who has been appointed to an extension ministry.

**Hyo Sun Oh** (Elder) to Roselle (Elgin District) from Lemont: First (Aurora District). Hyo Sun follows Zaki L. Zaki who is appointed to Naperville: Wheatland Salem (Aurora District).

**Daniel Cochran** (Elder) to Wheaton: Aldersgate (Aurora District) from Naperville: Grace (Associate) (Aurora District). Daniel follows Joseph Kim who died in March.

**Eric Blachford** (Elder) to Naperville: Grace (Associate) (Aurora District) from Harvard: First and Alden (Elgin District). Eric follows Daniel Cochran who is appointed to Wheaton: Aldersgate (Aurora District).

**Megan Tobola** (Elder) to Naperville: Wesley (Aurora District) from Bartlett: Good Shepherd (Elgin District). Megan follows Tedd Steele who is appointed to Yorkville: Trinity (Aurora District).

**Tim Casey** (Elder) to Lemont (Aurora District) from Channahon (Aurora District). Tim follows Hyo Sun Oh who is appointed to Roselle (Elgin District).

For a digital copy visit [umcnic.org/missionlinks](http://umcnic.org/missionlinks)



## Living the Beatitudes

*A Call to Action and Connection*



*Mission Giving Opportunities  
2021-2024 Advance Projects and  
Connectional Giving*

### Job Openings

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

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

### Submissions

For editorial content, subscriptions and address changes:

Anne Marie Gerhardt  
Dir. of Communications  
312-312-346-9766 ext. 766  
77 W. Washington St.  
Chicago, IL 60602  
[agerhardt@umcnic.org](mailto:agerhardt@umcnic.org)