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BISHOP'S COLUMN: Special Session brings disappointment and hurt

Bishop Sally Dyck along with fellow bishops and delegates gather together to pray at the front of the stage before a key vote on the Traditional Plan on Feb. 26 during the Special Session of the General Conference in St. Louis. Photo by Paul Jeffrey, UMNS.



"438 votes can't take away God's love for you! You are beloved children of God and of sacred worth."

The long-awaited Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in St. Louis, Mo., has finished its work. The three days were very painful for people who attended or watched at home via livestream. The pain inflicted upon our LGBTQI members, friends and families was intense. But there was also pain in seeing the deep divide among the delegates. Likewise, many of us feel this doesn't reflect the United Methodist Church's doctrine on grace.

The One Church Plan, which was recommended by the Council of Bishops, and which would have given space for clergy, all churches (no matter what their stand on human sexuality), and annual conferences to be in ministry within their contexts was defeated by a very close margin: 438-384, 54 votes.

Instead, the Traditional Plan was approved. It not only affirms what is presently in the Book of Discipline about homosexuality but places far more restrictions and penalties on clergy performing weddings for LGBTQI members. It also tightens the existing restrictions on ordination based on sexual orientation.

The Traditional Plan was referred to the Judicial Council, the denomination's top court, for a declaratory decision on its constitutionality (a number of the items have previously been declared unconstitutional). We will know more about what portions of the legislation will become church law after the Judicial Council meets April 23-26 in Evanston, Ill.

Because I supported the overwhelming recommendation of the Council of Bishops for the One Church Plan, I will unabashedly say that I am deeply disappointed that the One Church Plan did not prevail and the Traditional Plan did.

The hurt has been tremendous across the global church and certainly within our annual conference, beginning with our delegates and all the observers who attended. I'm deeply disappointed because it is so hurtful to the LGBTQI community, family and friends. I'm deeply disappointed because I believe we have just lost another generation who will not want to be a part of a church that seems so judgmental. I'm deeply disappointed because I think we will lose members and have difficulty reaching new people (not just LGBTQI people) due to the message this action sends.

To our LGBTQI members, friends, families, and welcoming congregations:

438 votes can't take away God's love for you! You are beloved children of God and of sacred worth. I love you, and so many in our churches love you and will continue to care for you.

I know that not everyone is grieved by the actions of the General Conference. We are more diverse as an annual conference than many realize. I will be the bishop of the whole annual conference, including those of you who are relieved that the Traditional Plan has prevailed.

Northern Illinois Conference has in effect lived in the One Church Plan for some time. The reality is that most of our churches, especially the larger the congregation, are very diverse within the same wide spectrum of traditional and progressive that was found at General Conference. Somehow, we've learned to be church together and love one another in spite of our differences on human sexuality and many other things. Also, remember that these restrictions do not exclude laity from membership or leadership in the

local church or beyond.

What happens next? There are so many unknowns. I would encourage us all to pause and take a breath. We need clarity of mind and spirit. We need to talk with each other about how we live into this new reality as an annual conference. We have opportunities to learn more and to talk with each other.

Please attend one of the following debriefing sessions:

- **Saturday, March 30 at 9:30 a.m.** - Orland Park: Faith UMC, 15101 S 80th Ave., Orland Park.
- **Saturday, March 30 at 2 p.m.** - Barrington UMC, 98 Algonquin Rd., Barrington.
- **Sunday, March 31 at 3 p.m.** - Oregon UMC, 200 S. 4th St., Oregon.

As I've said all along, the day after the Special Session of General Conference we will continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Yes, we will continue to grow in our love for our neighbor and God. We will feed the hungry and provide relief for those who have experienced a natural disaster. We will visit the sick and care for the dying. We will work to eliminate gun violence and to care for the immigrant with mercy and justice. We will love and care for our LGBTQI members, friends and families. We will be the church!

Thank you for your faithfulness in serving Christ and your community!

Holding you all in my prayers,

~Bishop Sally Dyck

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Students attending the Northern Illinois University Wesley Foundation's Saturday evening community dinner light candles and offer prayers for one of their fellow Huskies killed in the Feb. 15 workplace shooting.



The congregation at Bethany of Fox Valley UMC holds a special Sunday morning worship service Feb. 17 to remember victims of gun violence.

Praying for Aurora By Anne Marie Gerhardt

After the tragic Feb. 15 workplace shooting at the Henry Pratt manufacturing facility in Aurora, Ill., local Northern Illinois Conference churches and ministries offered prayers and vigils. Five people were killed and five police officers along with one worker were injured when an employee opened fire inside the facility after he was reportedly terminated.

At the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Wesley Foundation's weekly Hungry Huskies community dinner on Saturday evening, students lit candles, wrote notes, and prayed for one of their fellow students who was killed in the rampage. Trevor Wehner, 21, was a human resources intern who was on his first day on the job when he was shot by the gunman. He planned to graduate NIU in May.

The Rev. Rosa Lee, NIU Wesley Foundation Campus Minister, said they held the vigil because they wanted to support Trevor's family as well as acknowledge the loss of one of their own Huskies. "As a community, we came to support each other while grieving together," said Lee.

The news of Trevor's death came one day after the 11th anniversary of the horrific Valentine's Day NIU campus shooting where five students were killed in a lecture hall. "This year was the first year there was no official anniversary ceremony except a siren at 3:06 to remember those who lost their lives," said Rev. Lee. "We will remember Trevor as one of the Huskies' Angels who made their way home to heaven too early."

Despite the bad weather that night, about 80 students came out to the vigil which included a short moment of prayer led by students reading interfaith prayers representing the group's diverse backgrounds.

"We prayed for God's comfort and peace, God's healing for our soul in this difficult season, courage to let our anger and fear go away from this massive gun violence," said Rev. Lee. "We prayed for God to grant us comfort as we grieve a loss of Trevor Wehner. We prayed for God to grant comfort to his family who is having the most challenging time and for God's peace to cover his friends as we think of good and joyful memories of him."

On Sunday, Feb. 17, Bethany of Fox Valley UMC in Aurora invited all community members to come together for a morning prayer service to end mass shootings and heal those who have been harmed by violence.

The prayer service opened by naming the victims, said the Rev. Sam Park, Bethany's senior pastor. "During the entire service, tears, prayers, reflection, and new hope flowed through the gathering at Bethany of Fox Valley UMC," said Park. "It was a service of sorrow as well as a service of respect for those who are lost and harmed by this tragedy. It was a service of outrage over broken humanity and systems as well as a service of claiming an action out of love."

After Holy Communion, most congregants stopped by a table that was set at the corner of the sanctuary to light candles, remember those lost by gun violence, and pray for peace and change. "Indeed, the people of Bethany of Fox Valley UMC are courageous to claim justice and peace and to lift love and comfort as the peacemakers," said Rev. Park.

The Rev. John Bell, senior pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church in Aurora, participated in a community vigil on Monday, Feb. 18, where about 100 people gathered in downtown Aurora to remember the victims, pray for their families and honor first responders. "We lift up prayers today in the midst of chaos to bring meaning back into our lives. We lift our prayers to God to hold us as we grieve, shelter us as we fear, love us as we doubt, comfort us as we rage, and strengthen as we pray," Rev. Bell prayed before those gathered.

The Aurora shooting has many people across the country wondering, yet again, what can be done to end gun violence and mass shootings. "Prayers for all those involved in the shooting in Aurora: the victims' families, co-workers, responders, kids in school, and the neighborhood. When will we do what needs to be done to stop the violence?" Bishop Sally Dyck wrote on Facebook following news of the tragedy.

Rev. Lee shares her prayers for an end to gun violence. "We ask God to help all of us to let our anger and fear go away from the massive gun violence in this country and do something to make this country and the world safe. God heal our soul as we struggle during this difficult time."

Calling youth for the 2019 Plumbline Tour



The NIC Plumbline Tour enters its 17th year since its founding in 2002. Although there have been a few years when the tour was not held, it has provided a generation of youth and now adults an opportunity to learn and mature in their faith understanding as it relates to world events.

It all came about as a result of Conference Treasurer Lonnie Chafin's vision to expose conference youth to new experiences of expanding and deepening their faith with other teens. As a teenager, Lonnie had the opportunity to go to NYC to the United Methodist Women's Building with other teenagers and remembers the life-changing experience it had on him.

The tour provides an opportunity to not only connect students' Christian faith and social justice, but to meet other teens from rural, urban, and suburban communities within the conference. Over the past 17 years, hundreds of youth have gone to New York City to seminars at the United Methodist Women's Building and experienced many sites in NYC.

This year, the group will head to Washington, D.C. The seminars will be held in the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill which is the only non-governmental building on Capitol Hill. In addition to the daily seminars, the group will have an opportunity to visit other D.C. sites including monuments, museums, a Congressional visit, and more.

The tour cost of \$699 per student includes air, hotel, meals, and excursions. Limited scholarships are available based on financial need. Please see the flyer below for additional details. Space is limited. For an application and more info visit www.umcnic.org/calendar/2019-plumbline-tour.

Please contact Plumbline Tour Coordinator, Amania Drane, at niaenterprises1@comcast.net for questions.

NIC welcomes new administrative assistant/communications specialist



Diane Strzelecki ("z" is silent) started as the Northern Illinois Conference's new Administrative Assistant/

Communications Specialist on Feb. 15. She will work closely with the Rev. Arlene Christopherson, Dir. of Connectional Ministries and Anne Marie Gerhardt, Director of Communications.

Diane will be responsible for special publications, brochures, Annual Conference media support, web content, social media and other communication projects.

Diane comes to the NIC with more than 20 years of experience in communications, most recently as marketing/public relations coordinator for a public library district. She has a bachelor's degree in communications from

Northwestern and a master's degree in writing/rhetoric from DePaul.

Diane has been a member of Toastmasters for about four years and is on track to achieve Distinguished Toastmaster in 2020. In her spare time, she enjoys horseback riding and competing in Western Pleasure horse shows. Diane lives in Cary with her husband Dave and daughters Aimee (20) and Heather (16).

"We are pleased to have Diane join our team," said the Rev. Arlene Christopherson. "She brings a strong background in communication and gifts in social media that will enhance the work we do to support our churches and the work of the annual conference."

To reach Diane contact her by email at dstrzelecki@umcnic.org or call 312-346-9766 ext. 764

Back to the Future

2019 Northern Illinois Annual Conference

Online registration will open for the 2019 Northern Illinois Annual Conference April 2 via the conference website at www.umcnic.org/AC2019. The 180th session, "Back to the Future", will be held June 2-4 at a new location, the Schaumburg Convention Center, 1551 Thoreau Dr. N, Schaumburg, IL.

Details and reminders:

Registration: \$80 until April 28 (early registration fee) \$95 From April 29 - May 19
\$130 available After May 19 and onsite ONLY

- **Hotel reservations:** Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel reservations will remain open until May 17 at 5pm. The rate is \$149 + tax. The reservation link is available on the conference AC webpage.
- **Theme:** We will go "Back to the Future" to remember our history and reclaim it for a hopeful future.
- **Documents:** All historical documents and proposed legislation for the conference must be submitted by April 1, 2019 to Rev. Katie Voigt, by email at ACdocuments@umcnic.org.
- **Delegate Elections:** This year we will be voting on Clergy and Lay Delegates for the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. We will elect three lay and three clergy General Conference delegates and three lay and clergy Jurisdictional Conference delegates, as well as two clergy and lay alternates. Starting this year, the lay delegate nomination form will only be available online. Also this year, potential delegates will be asked to include a picture to make it easier to recognize candidates at Annual Conference. All active clergy are eligible candidates and do not need to fill out a form. To find the lay delegate election information form visit the AC webpage.
- **Celebrations:** We will also celebrate Global Ministries bicentennial in 2019 and the United Methodist Women's 150th anniversary.
- **Bible Study Leader:** United Methodist Women's Harriett Olson will lead this year's Bible Study.

Registration opens April 2

Olson has served as chief executive officer of the UM Women's national administrative and policymaking arm since 2007. The Rev. Russell Pierce, Executive Director Mission Engagement and Director of the Advance for Global Ministries, will speak about the past 200 years and the future of mission both in our local communities and around the world.

- **Worship Leader:** Gary Rand and The Many Band will lead us in worship for a second year.
- **Schedule:** The Conference will open on Sunday afternoon with the Ordination service. Watch for more information about clergy processional and all other related instructions. The Retirement Service will be held Monday and the Memorial Service will be held Tuesday (please remember to submit the names and photos of the Lay Members to Annual Conference who have may have died since June 2018 to communications@umcnic.org).
- **Clergy session:** May 21, 2019 at Faith UMC, 15101 S 80th Ave, Orland Park, IL.
- **New Member Orientation:** Scheduled for Sunday, June 2 at the Convention Center.
- **Documents:** All historical documents and proposed legislation for the conference must be submitted by April 1, 2019 to Rev. Katie Voigt, by email at ACdocuments@umcnic.org.
- **On-site childcare** for children 12 years old and under of parents/guardians of those attending AC. Childcare is free thanks to the cost being incorporated into the registration fee.
- **Display Tables:** The registration form will be made available by March 15.
- **Accessibility Coordinator:** Please indicate any special requests if you need assistance on your registration form. A coordinator will be onsite to help assist with any needs.
- **Volunteers:** If you are interested in ushering, greeting or volunteering during plenaries and worship services, please email Alka Lyall at pastoralkalyall@gmail.com.



BISHOP'S APPEAL

Bishop's Appeal Night Out with the Chicago Bulls

Wednesday March 27, 7 p.m.

Location: United Center

Benefits the Bishop's Appeal for the NIC Youth Camps

We are all invited to experience great NBA action, non-stop entertainment and the energy of a sellout crowd while supporting NIC Youth Camps and bearing witness to God's loving presence everywhere and in everything!

Enjoy the excitement of the Chicago Bulls as they play the Portland Trail Blazers at the United Center on March 27 at 7 pm. On this special night, all Northern Illinois Conference United Methodists have the opportunity to purchase Chicago Bulls tickets at a discount to see the Chicago Bulls vs Portland Trail Blazers. Built into this discounted pricing is a \$5 donation to the 2019 Bishop's Appeal for NIC Youth Camps, as well as the 12% city/county tax amusement tax and fees.

Choose your own seats and level: \$28- \$90. (Tickets sent to you via Chicago Bulls)

Final purchase deadline Mar 27 @ 5:00 p.m.

- Bring a group from your church
- Invite your neighbors and friends
- Support NIC Youth Camps
- Also watch Portland Trail Blazer Evan Turner, a native of Chicagoland and Maywood's Neighborhood UMC family!

To help support this year's Bishop's appeal, look for more information and resources at www.umcnic.org/bishopsappeal.

A Sheepish Lenten Guide

While Lent is already underway, you can still join the flock and spend some time in a weekly devotional all about sheep and shepherds written by Bishop Sally Dyck and Rev. Myron McCoy, along with editor Jane Rubietta.



The six-week devotional titled *A "Sheepish" Lenten Guide to Sheep, Shepherding and Staying on the Path* hopes to spark conversations about ministry and leadership - laity and clergy - in our local churches.

Why sheep and shepherds? In 2017, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference approved an Annual Conference Shepherding Team (ACST) with corresponding District Shepherding Teams. "I hope the theme will help make you more aware of the Annual Conference and District Shepherding Teams, but mostly we want to re-cast a vision of what it means to be shepherds/leaders today!" said Bishop Dyck.

Various tools are available at the end of each week's reading for discussion, prayer, and reflection both in a group as well as individually. In addition, the applications make it very simple for anyone to facilitate a small group. Churches are free to download and share this resource! Visit www.umcnic.org/lentendevotional to read more and to download the 45-page devotional.



UVC seeks nominations

United Voices for Children (UVC) is inviting nominations for its three annual awards. These UVC Awards honor extraordinary volunteer service or advocacy efforts on behalf of children, youth and/or families throughout the Northern Illinois Conference.

All United Methodists are encouraged to look around at who is doing this good work in your church or community. Then nominate an individual or a group who deserves this recognition.

A detailed description of these awards and a nomination form are available by visiting unitedvoicesforchildren.org. The deadline for receiving nominations is April 5, 2019. The chosen awardees will be honored during the Northern Illinois Annual Conference in June. Direct any questions to unitedvoicesforchildren@gmail.com.



Mission Challenge for 2019 Annual Conference

This year's mission challenge at Annual Conference will be to collect bulk items for Personal Dignity Kits for the Midwest Mission Distribution Center, our United Methodist disaster relief supply center just south of Springfield, Ill.

Assigned donations by district. 2,000 of each item:

Aurora:	Chicago Southern:	Elgin:
Toothpaste 2.5 oz/larger	Combs	Deodorant (2 to 3 oz.)
Adult Toothbrushes	Nail/Toenail Clippers	Razors (with guard)
Chicago Northwestern:	DeKalb:	Rockford:
1 Gallon Sealable Plastic Bags	Bath Hand Towels	1 Gallon Sealable Plastic Bags
Shampoo (3-4 oz.)	Bath Washcloths	Bar Soap (3 to 4 oz.)

Please visit www.umcnic.org/missionchallenge for more information. The trailer from the distribution center will be outside the Convention Center from noon on Sunday through 3 p.m. on Monday.

Questions? Text Larry Dunlap-Berg 615-945-6411 or email ldnlbrg@gmail.com.



Delegates, observers dismayed over General Conference decisions By Anne Marie Gerhardt



More than a dozen youth and youth leaders from First UMC in Evanston travel to St. Louis to see firsthand the Special Session proceedings.

After four days of prayers, debates, and voting in St. Louis, delegates at the February Special Session to General Conference, the global United Methodist Church's top lawmaking assembly, approved an amended Traditional Plan by 53 percent. The Traditional Plan maintains the denomination's prohibitions on same-sex marriages and ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals with additional accountability for enforcing those policies.

The Council of Bishops had recommended the One Church Plan, which would have left questions of marriage up to individual churches and clergy, and ordination up to conferences. It failed in Legislative Committee by a vote of 436 to 386.

This special General Conference — the first such off-year gathering in the denomination since 1970 — came about after long tensions boiled over at the 2016 General Conference in Portland, Ore. That General Conference authorized the bishops to form the 32-member Commission on a Way Forward to find ways to help the church stay together — and to call a special General Conference to take up the commission's proposals.

"It was our aspiration that we would find a way forward beyond our impasse. That was to try to really listen to people and listen to their values and understand them as people, rather than issues," Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, president of the Council of Bishops, said in a press conference after General Conference adjourned. "I will simply say we have work to do. We did not accomplish that."

When the Traditional Plan vote was announced and flashed on the screen, some in the room erupted singing "Blessed Assurance." A group of delegates gathered in a circle and joined in with the singing. LGBTQI supporters in the bleachers went into a call and response, some chanting, "no, no, no," in protest of the vote.

A handful of observers unhappy with the day's legislative results tried to gain entrance to the plenary floor, but security officers blocked them and eventually moved them through turnstiles farther away from the doors. The protesters continued to chant their demand to be admitted.

"I'm going back and forth between being heartbroken and crying to total disbelief," said NIC General Conference Delegation Chair Elisa Gatz reacting to the vote. "This isn't what we were called here to do and it isn't how you treat people."

NIC Clergy delegate the Rev. Gregory Gross, who is an openly gay deacon, expressed pain and grief over the General Conference's decision. "What's going through my mind is that people made it very clear they don't want me in their church," said Gross who added it may be time to talk about a new expression of Methodism.

Observers came to witness UM history

Aurora District Superintendent the Rev. Jeffrey Bross and his 81-year-old father the Rev. Billy Bross, a retired United Methodist clergy from the Wisconsin Conference, were among the 3,000 observers at this historic Special Session.



Bishop Sally Dyck talks to delegates, clergy and observers during a lunch break offering prayers and words of assurance.

The father-son pair offered prayers to all those who may be hurting from the decisions made. "To the LGBTQI community, know that your sacred worth is not affected by the votes of people, hear that strongly," said Bross. "God's love is bigger than this General Conference."

The Rev. Billy Bross, who first preached from the pulpit at age 18, expressed his disappointment in the decisions of this General Conference. "It feels like we are going backward rather than forward and I always want the church to go forward," said the elder Bross who nonetheless remains hopeful. "We will always be people of God and we will find a way to make it work."

The Rev. Chiondzi Wellington, a Zimbabwean student at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and student pastor at the Urban Village Wicker Park location, is worried what the vote means for relationships across the international church. Voting is by secret ballot, but it was clear from floor-vote speeches that tallies reflected regional differences.

"The decisions will have a big impact on the future of the church," Wellington said. "I am not sure relationships across the church are going to be the same after this. I am very anxious."

Jill Wood-Naatz and Peggy Dire, lay members of Our Redeemer's UMC in Schaumburg, traveled together to St. Louis to be an eyewitness. Wood-Naatz, who's a longtime United Methodist of more than 70 years, said she felt called to be present. "I had to be here. I told people I wanted to feel it and I didn't want to just hear about it," she said. After the votes, Wood-Naatz said she was feeling frustration, sadness, and anger. "The United Methodist Church is part of who I am and it's hard to imagine not being part of it, but it's also hard to imagine being part of it, now."

The Rev. Danita R. Anderson, lead pastor at Woodridge UMC, has been volunteering at General Conferences since 1984 in a variety of roles. She's been a marshal, page, delegate, observer and in the secretarial pool. In St. Louis, Anderson helped the reserve delegates switch their credentials before stepping in for a delegate. She said the tension in the room felt more intense this year.

"I think there's been a lot of tension for a long time, but this time it felt heavier," she said. "The question remains is when are we going to get to the real conversations? We've not finished the conversation around the issue of racism and how racism and human sexuality are just smokescreens to what the real problem is," said Anderson. Even so, Anderson said she's remaining hopeful. "My hope is that everybody who says they're going to leave will stay and fight to make the church what it should be," she said.

The Rev. Jane Cheema, a deacon at First UMC in Evanston, brought more than a dozen youth and youth leaders to St. Louis over the weekend for the opportunity to witness the church at work in the world and to hear the potential changes the denomination is facing. "I understand that God calls us all to the church together, and so I want these youth to experience this and understand what the fullness of what the church can be," she said.



Several Rockford clergy stand on a busy intersection showing signs of solidarity to the LGBTQI community the day after the Special Session adjourned.

Jack Kalil, a youth member at First UMC Evanston, was worried what would happen if the Traditional Plan passed. "Personally, I hope we accept everybody. I love my church community," he said. "If one of the plans passes that doesn't go with our beliefs, I think it could divide our church."

High school junior and member of Community UMC in Naperville Natalie Overstreet joined the Evanston group in St. Louis. She was hopeful one of the inclusive plans would pass. "I find it hard enough to get my friends through the door of my church without telling them the greater denomination isn't accepting," she said, adding that an exclusive plan could push out youth. "At this point, our generation's view is why wouldn't we include LGBTQI persons? I think a concern for the worldwide church is how are you going to keep youth if we aren't inclusive?"

The Rev. Scott Field, lead pastor at First UMC in Crystal Lake, preferred the Traditional Plan from the available options. He believes the General Conference decisions indicate the church is clearly divided, possibly beyond repair. "People on all sides of the General Conference are people of deeply held convictions who cannot and will not violate their conscience," he said.

Standing in Solidarity

Many churches across the Northern Illinois Conference displayed signs of welcome to the LGBTQI community. Bethany of Fox Valley UMC in Aurora changed its signage to read, "We are not changed at all! No matter who you are, you are all masterpieces of God."

In Rockford, several clergy stood outside near a busy intersection the day after the Special Session with signs that read, "God loves LGBTQ people and so do we." The Rev. Juyeon Jeon, pastor of Faith United Methodist Church in Genoa, joined the other clergy and told The Rockford Register Star she is sad and frustrated by the General Conference decisions.

"I believe all children of God are beloved. I've never participated in a demonstration like this, but I think it is critical to say that not all Methodist churches believe what they decided. I want to be part of the message that we are all beloved and LGBTQI cannot be excluded," Jeon said.

What is the next step for the UMC?

It's unclear how much of the legislation will take effect until the Judicial Council reviews the constitutionality of the Traditional Plan at their April meeting. The legislation ruled constitutional would not become official church law until January 1, 2020. In the meantime, the Council of Bishops is calling on all United Methodists to stay focused on the mission that glorifies God and reaches new people with the gospel. The next General Conference will take place May 5-15, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minn. For more information and latest news from the Special Session, visit www.umnews.org.

**United Methodist News Service contributed to this report.*

Local Church News

Ministry Makers

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

Pancakes deliver up an extra helping

By Mark Harrington, Batavia UMC Member

If God gives you the skill of cooking or working together with others, then this church project is for you and your church. If God gives you a kitchen in your church, there's another sign from above.

When our church, Batavia United Methodist, was wading through tough times after losing our favorite pastor of 17 years and membership began slipping, I came up with this idea out of angst to keep us together, maybe build the numbers, or feed the community or poor.

One thing about Methodists, they are the best cooks and everyone loves a good feast. If you can reach a man through his stomach as the saying goes, why not a Methodist or the unchurched?

Blueberry, chocolate chip, or regular...

And why let that church kitchen sit idle, saved for an occasional funeral and a Wednesday night meal. God gave us a kitchen. Is your church kitchen being used to its fullest?

What I have read in my internet quest on how to ask the unchurched to your church is one way: invite them to a simple church event.

Hey, like a pancake breakfast. Did I say free?

Now entering its fifth year, the list of church members, who volunteer 90 minutes, has gradually expanded and lessened the frequency which teams need to serve. Those teams include a father and son, married couples, and an antique store team named Amazing Grace.

But it also is what happens at the serving window that is equally impressive. Smiles are exchanged and brief conversations create a warm welcome.

The cost runs about \$30 a week for just pancake mixes and sausage after initial costs for syrup, butter, gloves, sterno, and napkins. Oh, did we mention blueberries or chocolate chips?

During the hour while church is in service, the aroma wafts upward into the sanctuary or into the parking lot. Parishioners claim their lips start drooling from the sweet buttermilk smell drifting about halfway during the pastor's sermon.

For me, it was also a way to keep my "sleep-in" high school son participating in the life of the church, and also

with me. From there, he met Lino, an adult who mentored him, and the next week he was wearing Hawaiian shirts just like him.

I've seen this happen several times. Those blurry-eyed high school kids can be wrestled from bed to help their parents.

But the one defining moment came when a couple had started fluffy huge round pancakes, "for our neighbor," they explained. Never done that outreach before.

Actually that neighbor turned out to be the homeless lady, who lived in a blanket shroud surrounded by her worldly possession of bags, in the bus shelter across the street from our historic 130-year-old church.

For Betty, she gets special treatment. Nearing 100, she often leaves with a breakfast container. Oh, and a gracious smile on her face.

Two young brothers, a first grader and a third grader are also helping us serve. Their cheery greetings at that kitchen window quickly bring smiles to others – just another unconscious way to solidify our people from both sides of the counter.

Then there is the teen youth group that comes together every fifth Sunday. Fearful of teenagers creating havoc, they have admirably proven themselves those Sunday. One has been endured as "The Pancake King."

One Sunday an elderly member helped us; the next time he brought his wife, thus a new cooking team was born. Another man's wife now attends church regularly: could it be the pancakes?

People also have helped carry plates to tables for seniors. They have sat next to those for conversations that probably chase away the loneliness of many meals alone.

We miss Velma, always good for a good morning hello or a hearty hug despite failed eyesight. Every Sunday she arrived to help start coffee and warm the maple syrup. She passed away at 94 last year.

Round tables promoted better conversations than rectangular ones and different meal prayers are placed in lucite holders on the tables. Our hope is for group prayer,



Brothers, Hendro and Arno, serve up pancakes at Batavia United Methodist Church always with a smile.

individual silent prayer, or showing an easy prayer for future use.

Besides the teams, the crew leaders have noticed the fellowship. People are staying longer and talking in larger groups at the tables. They are laughing, other times they may be listening while consoling and sympathetic.

There has been a mother and her estranged adult child, newcomers sitting with members, and people sitting by people alone. Seniors, singles, and those widowed often are left to eat by themselves at home during the week, but that changes every Sunday at this church meal. I have watched four youth in trouble find their way back to the church at different times; pancakes were just a way of complimenting their choice.

One long-time member has tried to get me to ask for a free-will donation. My standard, humorous reply has been from the Bible: "did Jesus charge for the loaves of fish and multitude of fish?" Her quick chiding reply, "it doesn't say he didn't!"

It's all about the serving others and the fellowship...God intended and desired, no shoreline required.

Batavia United Methodist Church is located 8 N Batavia Ave, Batavia, IL 60510. For more info on worship times and happenings visit www.bataviaumc.com.

Laity Convocation explores the power of prayer

By Mark Manzi, NIC Co-Lay Leader



The Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey introduces her Breakthrough Prayer Initiative at the 2019 Laity Convocation on Feb. 9 at New Lenox UMC.

More than 100 laity and clergy arrived at New Lenox UMC on Saturday, February 9 interested in learning about the power of Breakthrough Prayer. The Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, Director of the Missional Church Consultation Initiative for the West Ohio Conference, asked those gathered "do you really believe in prayer and that it makes a difference?"

In her keynote presentation and breakout session, she shared that Breakthrough Prayer goes beyond our usual prayers of asking for comfort, healing and wisdom and adds a request for God to break through with new ideas, hopes and possibilities.

"Many churches snack on prayer instead of feasting on prayer," said Rev. Nilson Kibbey. "I encourage you to include requests for God to break through with something anew." She gave examples of ways to incorporate prayers into our personal and congregational life, including individualized prayer cards.

These examples were coupled with stories that showed how local churches across the Midwest are once again finding the power of prayer.

For more information on the Breakthrough Prayer initiative, Nilson Kibbey has written a book, *Flood Gates: Holy Momentum for a Fearless Church*, and a corresponding study guide, *Ultimate Reliance: Breakthrough Prayer Practices for Leaders*.

The day ended with worship and communion, which included an offering that raised over \$900 for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

The Board of Laity would like to give a special thank you to the people of the New Lenox United Methodist Church for their radical hospitality and help with a variety of pieces that made Laity Convocation 2019 a success. This annual event is an opportunity for the laity of our conference to have a time of learning, fellowship, and to build relationships. The Board of Laity thanks everyone who attended and looks forward to seeing you next February for Laity Convocation 2020.

Local Church News Continued



The Rev. Stevan Saunders (far left) helps cut the ribbon for the Plano Family Resource Center located inside the Plano United Methodist Church on Jan 16 along with school and community leaders.

New family resource center in Plano

By Kathrina J.E. Milton*

PLANO – For years, the Sunday school nursery room at the United Methodist Church of Plano, 219 N. Hale St., sat vacant. In 2016, the Rev. Steve Saunders, pastor at the church, thought about recreating the space for the community to use.

“We had this underutilized space, and we wanted to do something with it to help benefit the community,” Saunders said. “We are here to be a blessing to others and care about the next generation.”

At the same time, Laurel Mateyka, principal of Plano’s P.H. Miller Elementary School and director of the P.H. Miller Preschool, was thinking of adding a family resource center to the preschool program, but there was not enough space at the school.

“I called Pastor Saunders and everything seemed to come together at exactly the right time,” Mateyka said. “We had the need for the center and he had the space.”

For about two years, officials from the church and school worked together to plan the family resource center. This past year, the room was painted, new carpeting was installed, furniture was added and the room was decorated. The resource center was funded in part by the Preschool for All Expansion Grant as part of P.H. Miller Preschool’s Family Support Program.

The center’s grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting was held Jan. 16. The center will open Wednesday, Feb. 6, and will be open Wednesdays for three sessions: 10 to 11 a.m., 6 to 7 p.m. and 1 to 2 p.m. for bilingual programs.

To define exactly what the resource center will do, Mateyka stressed that it is not a preschool or a drop-off program.

“It is a resource for the community where parents and their children, age birth to age 5, can come for support, structured programs, playgroups and workshops all for free in a relaxed environment,” Mateyka said.

“At the resource center, you can talk to other parents about what works and what doesn’t work when it comes to topics like teething and potty training and routines at home,” she said. “The resource center is a gathering place where parents and children can interact with each other and socialize.”

The Plano Family Resource Center will provide a variety of resources and services to families in the community including weekly playgroups, parent and family education, a toy and book lending library, books and materials for parents and information about community programs, organizations and resources.

Sherrri Rachford, family support worker at P.H. Miller Elementary School, said the potential of the resource center in the future “is unlimited.”

“Depending on the community’s interest, we can customize the center’s dates, times and programs,” Rachford said. “Maybe we’ll have infant playgroups or informational sessions for grandparents, single parents or expecting mothers. The programs will evolve as we get to know the community’s wants, needs and interests.”

Mateyka, who at one time was a stay-at-home mom with four young children, wishes there had been a local family resource center for her back then.

“As far as I know, there’s nothing like this in the community,” Mateyka said. “Our hope, our goal, is to give parents and families the resources they need to strengthen the parent-child bond and help their children succeed. Parents are their children’s first teacher, and we want to help them become the best lifelong teachers and their children the best lifelong learners they can be.”

To register or for more information about the Plano Family Resource Center, call 630-552-8504, ext. 7107.

**This article, which first appeared in the Jan. 26, 2019 issue The Valley Life newspaper, has been reprinted with permission of Shaw Media.*

Sweet sounds from saved organ fill new sanctuary home

By Anne Marie Gerhardt



From left to right - Kingswood Senior Pastor Rev. James Preston, Kingswood Youth Minister Clayton Edwards, and First UMC Glen Ellyn Senior Pastor Rev. Daniel Diss bless the new organ gifted from Saint Thomas UMC in Glen Ellyn which closed its doors in 2018.

Beautiful, booming new sounds are piping through the sanctuary at Kingswood United Methodist Church in Buffalo Grove, Ill., thanks to a special organ that needed a home. In April 2018, Saint Thomas United Methodist Church in Glen Ellyn closed its doors after more than 50 years in ministry. Through connections, their Rogers organ, which brought so much joy to the Saint Thomas congregation over the years, was donated to Kingswood. It was dedicated and blessed on January 27 at a service and concert filled with classical and worshipful music.

“It was tremendous to have this organ (at Saint Thomas) and we were very lucky to have a succession of organists who could do it some justice,” said Rick Calhoon, former Saint Thomas Finance Chair and who attended the dedication service. “Many parts of Saint Thomas are now being used in churches from Chicago to Bloomington, Ill., and we were happy to find a home for this organ at Kingswood.”

The organ originally was owned and used at Carnegie Hall in New York City. One of Saint Thomas’ first organists, Helen Lawler, helped make purchasing and installing it possible through fundraising efforts.

It was perfect timing for Kingswood since the church’s old Allen organ had run its course and was an analog (non-digital instrument). “Repair parts were hard to find. In fact, they had to take some from an organ in an organ museum at one time. It was failing,” said the Rev. James Preston, Kingswood’s Senior Pastor.

Kingswood raised just under \$11,000 to remove, transport, renew, and install the instrument. Faithful donors helped make it happen said Preston, who added a new organ would have been very expensive.

“We are grateful beyond measure for a gift that strengthens our worship of God and brings such beauty and joy to our life together,” said Preston. “We will be able to be empowered for living as disciples of Jesus in our worship because of this amazing gift from the people of Saint Thomas.”

Saint Thomas UMC began as a new church start out of First UMC in Glen Ellyn in February 1966. The Rev. Bob McWilliams was the pastor when the first service was held at Arbor View Elementary School. More than 100 people joined that month in this church that would serve people in the south Glen Ellyn area. The church later purchased five acres of land near Route 53 & Butterfield Road and by May 1969 a building that included a sanctuary/multipurpose room was

finished. In 2009 an addition was built to afford more space.

“Mission outreach was a constant goal for the congregation. Some of the mission trips included traveling to Honduras, Ohio, New Orleans, South Dakota and Midwest Mission Distribution Center,” said Sally Grenzow, former leadership team chair at Saint Thomas.

“Nurturing children and youth was also important through Sunday school, children’s church, and Vacation Bible School.”

Grenzow says over the years students from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary served as youth directors and assistants and many of those young pastors in training are now pastors in the Northern Illinois Conference.

Due to declining attendance with people moving out of the area and elderly members in retirement homes, plus a large mortgage debt for the last addition, Saint Thomas UMC was encouraged to return to First UMC of Glen Ellyn that originally sent them out. The merger is going well said the Rev. Daniel Diss, the senior pastor at First UMC in Glen Ellyn. “Both congregations are working very hard with each other to integrate histories and traditions,” said Diss.

Besides the organ to Kingswood, many other contents of the building were shared with several other churches. Altar furniture was given to a Chicago UMC in Englewood, hymnals and Bibles were sent to the Philippines and First UMC in Glen Ellyn received chairs, tables and choir music.

Diss says the gift of the organ to Kingswood honors Saint Thomas’ history, past organists and shows the strength in our United Methodist connection. “What served the Saint Thomas congregation for all those years can now serve this congregation and continue those legacies in ways that are faithful.”

Rev. Preston says the Holy Spirit was at work in making connections so this organ did not end up in a landfill but in a new sacred space. “Kingswood is beyond honored to have Saint Thomas be a part of their journey of loving God, serving others, and building sacred community as followers of Jesus,” said Preston. “The concert was an unbelievable blessing to all who gathered as we experienced the amazing joy of worshiping God together!”

To hear the organ in person, Kingswood UMC’s classic worship with the organ is Sundays at 10:30 a.m. A contemporary worship is held at 9 a.m.

The church is located at 401 W. Dundee Rd., Buffalo Grove, IL. For more info about Kingswood visit www.kingswoodumc.com.

MARCH/APRIL CALENDAR NEWS

John Wesley Theological Institute

March 17-18

Where: Sycamore UMC, 160 Johnson Avenue, Sycamore, IL
Cost: \$150.00 (\$100 for students), includes Sunday evening dinner and Monday lunch.

Wesleyan theology, which once enlivened and deepened the language of charity with a spark of divine love, must breathe new life into the public language of social responsibility, lest we end up in a world where we are talking only to ourselves.

Dr. Robin W. Lovin will give four presentations on "Communities of Faith in a Divided Society" for the 2019 John Wesley Theological Institute. Lovin is Professor of Ethics emeritus, Southern Methodist University. Two respondents, Dr. Cynthia G. Lindner and Dr. Darryl W. Stephens, will follow up with further conversation with participants.

Participants are responsible for arranging their own accommodations. One CEU credit is available for continuing education.

Event Contact: Rev. Fernando Siaba, Registrar 630-414-2429 or fsiaba48@yahoo.com.

Local Pastors Meeting

March 30, 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Where: LaMoille Community UMC, 71 N Main St, La Moille, IL

Who: Local Pastors, Associate Members, and District Supply Pastors Spring Meeting

Join us for two discussions including "Ministry in Our Churches after February 28th" and "The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion". There will be lunch, communion and fellowship. To register and for more information contact Rev. Sharon Engert, 630-553-7568 safe331@comcast.net.

2019 UMCOR Sunday

March 31

This offering is taken on the fourth Sunday in Lent and provides major support for immediate assistance in the wake of natural and human-caused disasters. Donations help support ongoing ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. UMCOR Sunday giving allows 100 percent of designated gifts to be used for the specified disaster response or other ministry.

For a Pastor's Kit and resources visit umcsgiving.org/umcor. If you would like to order offering envelopes, leadership products and other materials, visit the new online store at UMCGiving.Outreach.com.

NIC Order of Elders Gathering

April 10, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Where: Barrington UMC, 98 Algonquin Road, Barrington, IL

Clergy Thriving in Changing Social/Cultural Times
"... and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

Presenter: Dr. Michael Emerson, Provost North Park University

RSVP boxed lunch choice to NICorderofelders@gmail.com.

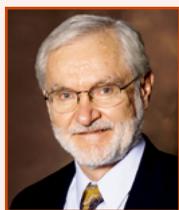
Lunch options are as follows:

- Turkey
- Smoked Turkey
- Ham & Swiss
- Mediterranean Veggie
- Tuna Salad
- Greek Salad
- Cesar Salad
- Seasonal Greens

Empowering Mental Wellness

in Your Congregation

April 27, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



A presentation from the NIC Committee on Accessibility Ministries

Who should attend? All Clergy and all laity, especially SPRC Committee members and those involved in pastoral care ministry in their church and/or their community.

Robert Skrocki

Cost: \$10

Keynote speaker: Robert Skrocki will introduce us to the concept of empowering us to focus on mental wellness for ourselves and others.

Robert Skrocki has a special interest in how faith communities can help build mental health resiliency and support the recovery of persons with mental illnesses. He is a certified trainer in Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and Soul Shop. He has a Master's In Social Work and clinical pastoral education training.

Two workshops, running sequentially, will be hosted by Rev. Dr. Cheri Margini on "Circle of Care" and Rev. Rev. Violet Johnicker on "What more can we do".

For registration and complete workshop details visit: www.umcnic.org/calendar/mental-health-wellness-workshop.

Youth Night of Music



Resurgence Worship Night 2019

Saturday, March 16, 5:00 p.m.

Youth Pastors - Are your youth struggling to connect with God? Are your youth longing for an outing together sometime soon? Are your youth ready for something bigger that God has called them?

The NIC Youth Ministry Council is hosting a special concert featuring the Christian contemporary worship band Iron Bell Music.

Location: North Central College, Pfeiffer Hall, 310 East Benton, Naperville, IL

Doors open at 4 p.m. for a youth meet and greet with the band.

General Admission tickets are available for \$10 at www.umcnic.org/calendar/youth-ministry-concert.

Tickets are \$15 at the door.



2019 Confirmation Retreats

Confirmation Retreats are excellent team-building experiences for participating Confirmands. Through Bible studies, group activities, team building and worship, we explore who we are as individuals, as a community of faith, and as Christians in an ever-changing world.

We work with local pastors to ensure that the weekend experience complements and enhances your home curriculum.

Cost: \$75 per person includes Friday night snack and lodging, Saturday breakfast and lunch, and materials.

Spring Dates:

Wesley Woods, May 3-4
Reynoldswood, May 17-18

Fall Dates:

Wesley Woods, November 1-2
Reynoldswood, November 15-16

Visit www.niccamp.org for more information and a registration form.

Appointments and Retirements: February Announcements

Bishop Sally Dyck announces the following clergy appointments for the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church, effective July 1, 2019 (unless otherwise noted).

Lisa Kruse-Safford (Elder) to Crystal Lake, Lead Pastor (Elgin District) from Rockford District Superintendent. Lisa follows Scott Field who is retiring.

Beth Galbreath (Deacon) to retirement from Appointment Beyond the Local Church. Beth was commissioned in 2006 and became a full member Deacon in 2009. During her ministry, Beth has served Pinckney: First and beyond the local church at Galbreath Digital Culture Ministry.

Michael Hickok (Elder) to Bolingbrook: Crossroads of Faith (Aurora District) from Cary (Elgin District). Mike follows Tom Bourke who is appointed to Sandwich: United (Aurora District).

Jon McCoy (Elder) to Northbrook: North Northfield (Chicago Northwestern District) from Hinsdale (Aurora District). Jon follows Soon In Moon who is retiring.
Young-Mee Park (Elder) to Hinsdale (Aurora District) from DeKalb District Superintendent. Young-Mee follows Jon

McCoy who is appointed to Northbrook: North Northfield (Chicago: Northwestern District).

Eric Reniva (Local Pastor) to Rockford: Beth Eden (Rockford District) from Glenview and Melrose Park: Cosmopolitan (Chicago Northwestern District). Eric follows Mario Mayer who is retiring.

Gary Waters (Elder) to Cary (Elgin District) from Leave of Absence. Gary follows Michael Hickok who is appointed to

Bolingbrook: Crossroads of Faith (Aurora District).

Wendy Witt (Elder) to Dundee: First (Elgin District) from Chicago: First (Associate) (Chicago Southern District). Wendy follows Joane Patton-Seaton who is serving as interim.

Did You Know? Sea of Change

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



Rev. Arlene Christopherson, (3rd from right), returns to St. Louis and joins fellow NIC clergy and observers at the 2019 Special Session of General Conference.

Thirty-one years ago, I went to St. Louis. I was a young United Methodist and a newly ordained clergy. I was proud of the denomination I had chosen for my faith home and lifelong commitment. I assumed all clergy go to the general conference. I read the conference materials and watched eagerly as the event unfolded.

I remember a sea of “very similar looking delegates” in dark suits and skinny ties (predominately male, predominately white) working efficiently, somberly, respectfully to “order the church.” It was a bustling event with great singing and a process I did not understand. I would need to pull the 1988 Book of Discipline off the shelf to know what was important that year. Regardless of agenda, I was enthralled by the love of God revealed through the mission and ministry of the UMC and the work of the General Conference.

Fast forward 31 years. I was an observer at the 2019 Special Session of General Conference back in St. Louis. I could not help but think of the energy and excitement I experienced in my first general conference. This conference was different in many ways. Thirty-one years later, I wondered and prayed for who we would be after the session ended.

Much has changed for our denomination. This session was a more diverse body of Bishops and delegates: it was a sea of color, men and women, young and old, gay and straight, ethnic and international. At a glance, this is encouraging. The legislative body reflects our global denomination.

You could not see it just by looking, but it was also a deeply divided gathering. The divisions were heart breaking. The prayer for unity, for a way forward, was lost in the deep divide. Like the United States, the United Methodist Church is polarized. In the heat of those few days, we failed to find a middle way. We failed to respect our differences. We worked with Roberts Rules of Order but missed the mark in “holy conferencing.” We failed in Wesley’s rules of do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God.

There were a few moments early in the week when the spirit was high. The music was lively and everyone was on their feet, smiling, singing and swaying. It did not take long, however, on the first day of legislative sessions, for the mood in the room to change. The speeches were polarizing, many times hurtful. The hope of a change was dashed in early, close voting. Throughout the session votes remained close, reinforcing the message of a divided church.

A lot is yet to be clarified. Our judicial council (the UMC equivalent of the Supreme Court) will review much of the legislation passed. A number of petitions have already been ruled unconstitutional. What will that mean? What is the future? These questions will be addressed in the weeks and months and even years ahead.

There were no dry eyes in the stands as we sat and watched, as we stood in support, as we joined in an antiphonal chant and sang to witness to our faith in the face of a moment that was not faithful. We cried, hugged, prayed, and cried some more.

Harm has been done. We have further alienated a part of our body, our LGBTQI members and families, those who stand with our LGBTQI friends and now all those who will never be willing to set foot in a United Methodist Church because, as an institution, we will be known as closed, hurtful, and homophobic.

What is next? We regroup, pick up the pieces, await ruling on the work that was passed and pray some more.

God in your mercy, grant us wisdom, grant us courage.

2018 100% Apportionments Paid

As we close the books for 2018, we want to take a moment to thank the 183 churches who paid 100% of their apportionments. We even had an amazing 27 churches pay over 100%. See list below.

Of the 183 churches, 77 went on to become Rainbow Covenant churches. These churches help complete the Methodist tradition of “a portion meant for others.”

Aurora District

Aurora: Wesley*
 Carol Stream: St. Andrew
 Downers Grove: First
 Geneva
 Glen Ellyn: First
 Glen Ellyn: St. Thomas
 Green Garden
 Hinsdale
 Joliet: Hope*
 Kaneville
 Lemont
 Lisle: Faith
 Manhattan*
 Millington
 Millbrook
 Morris: First
 Naperville: Community
 New Lenox
 Orland Park: Faith
 Oswego: Good Shepherd
 Plainfield: First
 Plainfield: Sharon
 Plano
 Plattville
 St. Charles: Baker
 Wheaton: Gary
 Winfield: Community
 Woodridge
 Yorkville: Trinity
 Winfield: South Asian*
 Bolingbrook: Crossroads of Faith
 Flowing Grace

Chicago Northwestern District

Chicago: Church of 3 Crosses
 Chicago: Edison Park
 Chicago: El Redentor/ Redeemer of Calvary
 Wheeling: First Korean
 Chicago: Resurrection
 Chicago: Grace of Logan Square
 Chicago: Humboldt Park
 Chicago: New Hope
 Deerfield: Christ*
 Evanston: Emmanuel
 Evanston: Hemenway
 Evanston: Sherman
 Glencoe: North Shore
 Maywood:

Neighborhood

Northbrook: Northbrook
 Northbrook: North
 Northfield
 Oak Park: First
 Oak Park: St. John's
 River Forest*
 Chicago: Adalberto Memorial
 Chicago: Indo Pak
 Skokie: Jesus Loves
 Korean (NFC)
 Melrose Park: Stone Park Mission*

Chicago

Southern District

Alsip: Christ
 Brookfield Compassion
 Chicago: Chicago Lawn*
 Chicago: Clair Christian
 Chicago: First (Temple)
 Chicago: Gorham
 Chicago: Ingleside
 Whitfield
 Chicago: Morgan Park
 Chicago: St. Mark
 Chicago: South Shore
 Chicago: Union Avenue
 Chicago: United Church of Hyde Park*
 Chicago: Wesley
 Evergreen Park: First*
 Flossmoor: South Suburban Korean
 Harvey: Transformation Community*
 Urban Village Church

DeKalb District

Albany
 Brookville
 Chana
 Coleta
 DeKalb: First
 Dixon: First
 Earlville
 East Jordan
 Erie*
 Esmond
 Fenton
 Franklin Grove
 Harding*
 Harmon
 Hinckley: First

Kingston

La Moille: Community
 Leland
 Leon
 Lighthouse
 Malta
 Malta: Northwest
 Maple Park: Grace
 Marseilles
 Mendota: First
 Mendota: Zion
 Morrison
 Mount Morris: Disciples
 Norway*
 Oregon*
 Ottawa: First
 Paw Paw
 Princeton: First
 Prophetstown
 Red Oak (Bureau)
 Reynolds
 Rochelle
 Seneca: First
 Serena*
 Sheridan
 Sterling: First
 Sterling: Wesley
 Sycamore*
 Tampico
 Triumph
 Waterman
 Wyanet
 Elgin District
 Addison: Good Samaritan*
 Alden
 Antioch
 Arlington Heights: First
 Barrington: Barrington
 Barrington: Salem
 Buffalo Grove:
 Kingswood
 Burlington
 Des Plaines: First*
 Elgin: First*
 Elmhurst: Christ*
 Elmhurst: Faith
 Evangelical
 Fox River Grove: Community
 Hampshire: Zion
 Harvard: First
 Hebron
 Ingleside*

Lake Bluff: Grace

Libertyville
 Marengo
 Mount Hope
 Wauconda: Federated Church
 Waukegan: First
 Wood Dale: Community Church
 Mount Prospect: Sam Mool Korean

Rockford District

Apple River
 Argo Fay
 Belvidere: First
 Capron
 Cedarville
 Dakota Rock Grove
 Davis: Calvary
 Davis Junction
 Fair Haven*
 Florence
 Freeport: Faith
 Galena
 German Valley
 Hanover
 Hunter
 Kent
 Lanark
 Leaf River
 McConnell
 Milledgeville
 Poplar Grove*
 Red Oak
 Rock City
 Rockford: Aldersgate
 Rockford: Christ the Carpenter
 Rockford: Evans
 Rockford: Grace
 Rockford: Harlem*
 Rockton*
 Roscoe
 Savanna: First
 Scales Mound
 Shannon: Bethel
 Shirland
 Stockton: Wesley*
 Thomson
 Warren
 Winnebago
 Chemung

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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