

Northern Illinois Conference
of The United Methodist Church
77 W. Washington St. Suite 1820
Chicago, IL 60602

DO NOT DELAY. DATED MATERIAL.

Non Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #130
Homewood, IL



Community and neighborhood leaders along with police officers participate in a "Talking Circle" at Maple Park UMC Chicago's in the West Pullman Community.

Conversation circle creates space for openness

By Robert E. Biekman, Senior Pastor Maple Park UMC & NIC Urban Ministry Coordinator

On September 24 the Northern Illinois Conference, Chicago Urban Strategy and Community Renewal Society held an ecumenical worship experience outside the George N. Leighton Criminal Cook County Courthouse at 26th and California in Chicago. Those gathered were calling for justice for Laquan McDonald as the trial of Chicago Police Officer Jason Van Dyke took place inside the courthouse on the 5th floor. On Oct. 5 after nine days of witness testimony and four years after McDonald was shot 16 times and killed, a jury found Van Dyke guilty of second-degree murder.

At this confluence of social holiness and scriptural holiness, those in attendance were called to pray for Chicago, a city on edge, but also create safe spaces for processing pain and grief by affirming the loss of individuals, groups, and communities most affected by the verdict. Asking people not to respond to the verdict is like asking a grieving parent not to cry from the death of her only child.

In response to this call, a Restorative Justice (RJ) "talking circle" was held at Maple Park United Methodist Church on October 18. The 20 people who participated in the circle included community organizers, neighborhood block club leaders, Chicago Police Officers, the Imago Dei Youth Mentoring Program, Maple Park UMC members and volunteers with the Chicago Alternative to Incarceration Collaborative.

After an opening ritual and icebreaker, the question put to the group was, "What's the climate of the city aftermath of the Jason Van Dyke trial verdict?" Participants responded to the question in a variety of ways based upon the lived experience. The diversity and openness of the group allowed for a meaningful, healthy conversation and to plant a seed for mutual growth. Kathy Brock, co-lay leader at Maple Park UMC, believes, "The circle keeps us hopeful...police and community coming together."

The circle was intentionally designed to bring together people who are directly impacted but often perceive one another as being on the "opposite side" of the police reform issue for a moment of restoring of relationships. Chicago Police Officer Tim Crawford who served as co-circle keeper with myself, shared, "This was an awesome moment with people from all walks of life to share a moment with honesty and heartfelt communing. I am so proud to be a servant of this community."

Shannon Carrol a youth mentor with Imago Dei Ministry stated, "This is a much-needed platform for people to come together and voice their concerns and possible solutions."

According to Karen Swartz, Director of the Mood Disorders Adult Clinic at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, "... research points to an increase in the health-forgiveness connection...there is an enormous physical burden to being hurt and disappointed." As a precursor to healing James 5:16b states, "Confess your sins to each other and

pray for each other so that you may be healed." United Methodist Churches are encouraged to open their doors to promote this kind of community healing.

Church buildings are often considered "safe spaces." This makes them ideal places for people to gather. RJ circles help promote interconnectedness, healing, and reconciliation while restoring relationships. For helpful resources visit <https://justpeaceumc.org/tools/the-circle-process/>.



On Sept. 24 Bishop Sally Dyck along with Rev. Robert Biekman and many United Methodist clergy and laity gathered to worship and pray for justice outside the Cook County Criminal Courts Building where Chicago Police Officer Jason Van Dyke was on trial for the murder of Laquan McDonald.

INSIDE THE ISSUE



Bishop's Column:
A Lonely Season . . . 2



Ministry Makers:
Vacation Bible School . . . 3



2019 NIC Summer
Camps Insert . . . 5



Spreading the Word:
AIDS Awareness . . . 7



BISHOP'S COLUMN: LIFT UP THE LONELY THIS SEASON

On Christmas Eve most of us will see pageants and hear sermons that focus on the people in the story of Jesus' birth. The gospel writers used metaphors as well:

"The Word became flesh and made his home among us." John 1:14 (CEB)

His name shall be called Emmanuel (God with us). Matthew 1:23

Traditional hymns add: "Love was born at Christmas." UMH#242, Christina G. Rossetti (1885)

These words or metaphors bring joy to this season as they offer assurances of God's presence and love. But unfortunately many people don't experience God's presence and love in our society or even churches; people are lonely!

Recently I've been reading a variety of books and surveys (including the Cigna 2018 U.S. Loneliness Index, available online) that indicate that the number one threat to people's health these days is loneliness. Lonely, isolated people are 25% more likely to die prematurely. Loneliness can be as toxic to the body (mind and soul) as smoking a pack of cigarettes every day! As these studies indicate, loneliness kills!

Only about half of Americans have meaningful in-person social interactions, such as a friend that one can have an extended conversation with about things that matter or regular quality time with friends in-person. In the last 50 years, we entertain half as many people per year now as then. How often do you have people over to your house for a meal?

Therapists report that not all depression is depression (there is certainly bona fide depression for many) but some people self-diagnose as depressed when in fact the description of their feelings has more to do with loneliness and lack of social interaction than depression. And in fact, people feel more shame to say that they are lonely than to say that they are depressed.

In Brene Brown's, *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.*, she emphasizes the impact of loneliness particularly on leaders. She cites Colonel DeDe Halfhill, who was the commander of the 2nd Mission Support Group at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana and responsible for 1800 airmen and their daily operations. During her first year in her command, she gave a presentation to her airmen and then asked for questions. One young airman asked, "When is the ops tempo (the pace of current operations) going to slow down because we are really tired?"

Commander Halfhill acknowledged that they were being asked to do a lot as was everyone across the Air Force. Then Commander Halfhill remembered an article she had read which talked about organizations where employees report high levels of exhaustion. What was discovered was "that while these employees were in fact exhausted, it wasn't just because of the ops tempo. They were actually exhausted because people were lonely. Their workforces were lonely, and that loneliness was manifesting itself in a feeling of exhaustion." (B. Brown, p. 59) She then asked this large group of airmen to raise their hand if they were lonely. Much to her surprise, many of them indicated that they were indeed lonely...and exhausted.

In talking to fellow commanders, Halfhill discovered that they might use the word, disconnected, but not lonely. Disconnected, however, is "such a sterile word. It's a safe word. It's not a word that conveys the true depth of shared human experience like loneliness." (p. 63) How might we as Christians and members/leaders in our churches be masking the "true depth of shared human experience" with others words?

A wondering: when we talk about "clergy low morale," are we really talking about clergy who are lonely, even using a sterile or safe description for loneliness? Many clergy are without deep relationships over time (for a variety of reasons) that give a sense of love and acceptance, that lead to the building of trust with others, but then without them can erode trust with one another. Yes, we may have family but do we friends? Are we lonely?

Another wondering: Generation Z (ages 18-22) is identified in the Cigna 2018 U.S. Loneliness study as the loneliest group in our U.S. population. Hundreds or thousands of friends on Facebook, but maybe not even 2-3 close in-person friends. I might add that they are also the least likely to be a part of a faith community. Is there any correlation to that? Has disconnection from a faith community created more and more loneliness in our society?

Yet another wondering: could it be that some of our local churches, struggling to stay alive and vital, exhausted by the effort, and discouraged at times, are also lonely? Again, we use the word "connection" but are some local churches isolated and disconnected from the other churches in their community, or with other churches in the district or conference when connection might lend insight as well as support?

Still one more wondering: some elderly can also be very lonely. How often do the elderly in your community eat alone each day, often day after day? What could your church do about building relationships with them and sharing a meal, especially where there are few community resources for our elderly? What ministry or outreach is there for your local church when you focus on who is lonely in your community?

What wondering might you have this Christmas as you become more open to Christ being born through you and your church for "all the lonely people"?

~Bishop Sally Dyck



Bishop Sally Dyck opens one of six sessions held with the NIC General Conference Delegation in each district across the conference this fall.

Seeing a Way Forward: GC2019

By Elisa Gatz, Delegation Chair

The Northern Illinois Conference's General Conference delegation that will be attending the 2019 Special Session held six different days of conversation in each district around the conference in October and November. More than 600 people attended these sessions, sharing their questions, comments, and hopes.

The comment cards that were filled out were all compiled and shared with the delegation and Bishop Dyck, and the delegation will answer the most commonly asked questions in the near future on the conference webpage and the delegation Facebook page.

As the United Methodist Church is grappling with its future, the Northern Illinois Conference is also divided on the best path forward. It is clear from the attendance and from the questions that people are engaged in discussions and are looking for more information. There was at least some support for all four plans that were presented, (three from the Commission on a Way Forward's report and one from the UM Queer Clergy Causus), that were presented and a lot of concern for how any changes would be implemented, especially around finances, properties, and clergy appointments. Scriptural basis for support of each plan was given, and the theological diversity of the conference was evident.

The delegates will continue to read, discuss, discern, research, and pray in preparation for the February Special Session. Information is on the conference webpage at www.umcnic.org/wayforward and the delegation's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/NICDelegation, on how to attend the Special Session or watch online. There are also resources for use in local churches and a link to the Advance Daily Christian Advocate which has all of the legislation that was submitted for the General Conference.

Please keep our delegation in prayer and if you have comments, questions or input, send an email to Elisa Gatz at jegatz@comcast.net.

Choirs and worship ensemble groups needed for 2020 General Conference

United Methodist choirs and worship ensemble groups from around the world may now audition online for an invitation to perform at the 2020 General Conference, The United Methodist Church's top legislative assembly, which meets in Minneapolis, Minn. from May 5 -15, 2020.

To apply for an invitation to General Conference, groups are asked to submit a letter of application that includes the following: 1) name of group; 2) name of primary contact person along with email address and phone number; 3) brief history/bio of the group including number of members, general age range, group's location, and any unique characteristics; and 4) a link to a private YouTube video of the group performing.

The application should be emailed to gc2020worshipdirector@gmail.com by February 28, 2019.

"One of the many strengths of the United Methodist Church is the diversity of our denomination. General Conference affords us an opportunity to experience God in many ways in a central location," said Raymond Trapp, Worship and Music Director. "When choirs, dancers and artists come together, we witness the many ways through which the power and beauty of God is manifested and shared through the arts. We are grateful for all those who have agreed to make this journey to General Conference from all parts of the world in order to be a blessing."

Performance opportunities for invited choirs and ensembles include worship services and/or a lunchtime showcase venue. Groups are responsible for their own expenses.

Bishops urge trust in GC2019 delegates

By Heather Hahn*

Over the past two years, bishops have debated, reflected and fervently prayed about the future of The United Methodist Church.

Now, they know that the task of finding a way through the denomination's dispute over homosexuality is in the hands of General Conference delegates who will gather at the Dome in St. Louis, Feb. 23-26, 2019 for the called Special Session.

Bishops have no vote at General Conference. However, they still have a role to play as presiders during the plenary sessions of the denomination's top lawmaking assembly. During their Nov. 4-7 meeting at Epworth by the Sea, the bishops discussed that work.

They also committed themselves to "trust this General Conference, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discern God's best way for our future."

Bishops Cynthia Fierro Harvey of the Louisiana Conference and Sue Hauptert-Johnson of the North Georgia Conference presented the statement that the bishops unanimously affirmed.

In the statement, the bishops declared they can best serve the delegates by:

- Presiding fairly and creating a holy atmosphere in which they can do their best work
- Trusting that the General Conference will invoke the Holy Spirit
- Being a prayerful, hopeful, and pastoral presence
- Giving them confidence that we are acting transparently and not orchestrating or manipulating the process toward a desired end, and
- Acting as midwives as they birth something new.

The delegates will consider a report by the bishop-appointed Commission on a Way Forward, which includes three different plans for the denomination's future, as well as any other legislation deemed in harmony with the bishops' call.

Most of the same 864 delegates will be back for the 2019 special session, and they will start with the rules already approved.

"A major responsibility of the Council of Bishops is to make sure we create the kind of space for trust in order to enable the delegates to their work," said Bishop John K. Yambasu of the Sierra Leone Conference.

In August, 23 bishops volunteered to undergo training to be presiding officers at the special session. That means mastering the General Conference rules, parliamentary procedure and the electronic queuing system used by delegates who want to address the body.

During their November meeting, the bishops began training which are continuing at least once each month before the special session. They are working with a professional parliamentarian in their preparations.

The entire gathering will require only five or six different presiding officers, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton told his fellow bishops. Bickerton represents the bishops on the Commission on General Conference, the group that plans the big meeting.

Deciding which bishops actually end up presiding is the job of the General Conference Committee on Presiding Officers. The committee has 12 members, one each from the five U.S. jurisdictions and seven multinational central conferences. Half are clergy, and half are laity.

"We're trying to build a team among the 23 so that we can work together to build a common sense of purpose and a common way of presiding," Bickerton said. "How can we corporately deal with disruptions, for example? How can we corporately deal with rule on questions of what's in harmony? These are the conversations we're having."

General Conference delegates from around the globe will only have three days to complete their legislative work. The first day — when people arrive from around the globe and possibly deal with travel delays — delegates will spend largely in prayer.

The next day, Sunday, Feb. 24, delegates will seek to determine which of the multiple plans the majority wants to refine.

On Monday, Feb. 25, all delegates will meet in a single legislative committee to do that refining work and vote on all legislative petitions. This is to fulfill the denominational

policy that all petitions receive a vote in legislative committees.

The plan is for delegates to elect the chair of the committee from a pool of delegates who already have been trained and served as committee chairs in 2016.

The delegates will return to plenary on Tuesday, Feb. 26 for final voting. Again, bishops will preside.

"As a body, we bishops want the delegates to have the opportunity to do their best work," said Bishop L. Jonathan Holston of the South Carolina Conference.

**Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service. Contact her at (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org. To read more United Methodist news, subscribe to the free Daily or Weekly Digests at www.umc.org/resources/umns-subscription-form.*



The Council of Bishops November meeting was held at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island in Georgia.

Local Church News

Ministry Makers

This new monthly column called "Ministry Makers" 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.

Growing in faith through Vacation Bible School

By Pastor Hogun Kim, Zion United Methodist Church in Mendota

I still remember my first Sunday at Zion on July 5, 2015 when I shared my children's sermon with only my daughter, Soo-Ahn. Back then, among the forty-some Sunday worship attendees (mostly elderly) there were no Sunday School children except my daughter. Despite the desperate situation, however, our Zion church members wanted to keep trusting in Jesus who said "(Lk 18:16) Let the little children come to me... for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

In December 2015, a few ladies from our church began to gather every week to pray for children in Mendota. And as we were praying for the next generation in our town, God gave us the vision to do a Vacation Bible School (VBS).

Since our church had not done a VBS on our own for more than a decade and also our church had been going through financial difficulties, this dream of doing a VBS for our community seemed very difficult. However, God gave us a hope and confidence to continue to expect great things from God. The help of a Keagy Grant, especially, was a big sign that God was with us in this new ministry. God truly helped us muster the courage to go forward through this gift of a Keagy Grant.

Due to the grant, we were able to provide a high-quality VBS program to our community in 2016. In response, about seventy children came to our VBS. In 2017 and 2018, we were able to also provide a VBS. And especially this year, more than one hundred children attended!

As a result of these three Vacation Bible Schools, about forty children from twenty families (including four Hispanic families and one Filipino mother) have settled down in our church. Almost eighty people worship on Sundays now. Many young parents are involved in different ministries and committees and are changing the demographics of our church congregation from old to young.

We prayed and did our best to help the children and families who visited our church to feel loved and welcomed by Jesus through us during the VBS. We also did Vacation Sunday School during the summer so that those children and families who visited our church during the VBS could continue to come to our church afterwards. The summer program was basically a one-hour version of VBS. It had



praise, recreation, crafts, and a Bible story time. Those children and families who returned to our church after VBS became even more familiar with our church through this summer session.

Lastly, we want to thank and praise God for everything God has done through us, and also thanks to our conference, DeKalb District Superintendent Young-Mee Park, and Bishop Sally Dyck for their ongoing and heartfelt support for our children's ministry in many different ways.



Safe Gatherings Recognition

Congratulations to the 18 churches in the Northern Illinois Conference for meeting the criteria for Safe Gatherings' first recognition program, signifying their strong commitment to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults in 2018.

In order to receive this recognition, an organization must have a certain number or percentage of active Safe Gatherings approvals. Safe Gatherings is an online abuse prevention program that screens and educates staff and volunteers to help prevent abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in group settings.

Those recognized received special window clings, similar to the graphic above, to post on doors and windows where members and guests can see that a program is in place to help ensure that their loved ones are in a safe environment while involved in activities. Safe Gatherings says the window clings can be used as conversation starters with parents and caregivers about the church's protection policies. (See below for the list of churches).

Safe Gatherings will continue this program in 2019 and look to recognize more NIC Churches.

"We sincerely appreciate that you share our mission to protect the vulnerable populations in churches and other faith-based organizations by screening and educating staff and volunteers," said Sharon Holt, Safe Gatherings President. "We are always working to improve Safe Gatherings. Thank you for being part of this important mission, and please let us know how we can enhance our partnership with you."

The NIC Safe Sanctuaries Taskforce is launching a survey of our churches to learn more about how each congregation attends to the work of creating a safe space for children, youth and vulnerable adults. The survey will be sent electronically to clergy who are asked to fill out the information. Results will help the Taskforce better equip our congregations for their work. We appreciate your participation.

For more information on how your church can start the Safe Gatherings process visit www.umcnic.org/safesanctuaries.

2018 Safe Gatherings Recognitions:

Barrington	Olympia Fields
Deerfield: Christ	Schaumburg: Our Saviours
Naperville: Community Elston Avenue	River Forest
Evanston: First	Chicago: St Matthew
Evergreen Park: First	The United Church of Sandwich
Fox River Grove: Community	Chicago: Trinity
Bolingbrook: Friendship	Libertyville
Chicago: Kelly Woodlawn	Stockton: Wesley
Marseilles	

Bishops offer scholarships for 2019 UMEIT-USA and NWCU events

The Council of Bishops is offering partial scholarships for young adults (age 21-35) to attend the 2019 United Methodist Ecumenical and Interreligious Training (UMEIT:USA) and the National Workshop on Christian Unity (NWCU) next spring.

The COB is encouraging all ecumenical representatives in all U.S. annual conferences to participate, as it is an excellent time of ecumenical worship, networking and formation. This year the United Methodist network (UMEIT) will be joining the Episcopal network (EDEIO) for an ecumenical training on the Monday of the NWCU. As we work toward full communion between our two denominations, this will be an opportunity to get to know our Episcopalian colleagues and be formed ecumenically with them.

UMEIT is the annual training in the United States for United Methodists engaged in ecumenical and inter-

religious ministry through the church. The NWCU is an opportunity for Christians who care about ecumenical and inter-religious ministry to learn and network.

The NWCU and UMEIT occur parallel to each other once a year in a different area of the United States. The 2018 sessions will be from April 1-4, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Council of Bishops will offer up to six scholarships at \$300 each to assist seminary students and other young adults (aged 21-35) who will be attending UMEIT and NWCU for the first time.

To receive and submit a scholarship application, email Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst, Ecumenical Staff Officer, The Council of Bishops at jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org. The scholarship application is due to jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org no later than February 15, 2019.

UMC Giving

Thank you for partnering with UM Global Ministries on #GivingTuesday! Thanks to your generosity, \$624,868 was given, 100% of which will benefit designated projects and missionaries. 110 missionaries and 272 projects were supported with gifts from 11 countries.

The opportunity to give isn't over! Missionaries and projects need year-round support to continue their vital ministry work. Individuals, local churches and annual conferences can #GiveUMC any day of the year by increasing awareness of the Advance at , learning about the many ways that we are in ministry around the world, and donating to projects and missionaries who are selflessly dedicating themselves to improve the lives of those in need.

Thanks to your vital support and commitment to #GiveUMC, missionaries and projects can work with communities to transform the world through love, hope and healing.

Responding to wildfires in California

As tens of thousands of acres and structures burned in the wildfires in California causing unprecedented devastation, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is working with the disaster response coordinators of the California-Pacific and California-Nevada Conferences of The United Methodist Church.

UMCOR has approved a request from the California-Nevada Conference for a solidarity grant of \$10,000 which will be used to help facilitate the replacement of personal clothing items and food through various resources. Early Response Team (ERT) Coordinators have requested UMCOR buckets as well as hygiene and school kits. As the assessment of needs continues, UMCOR stands ready to provide additional support.

The recovery period for a disaster of such magnitude will be long, but thanks to your generous support, UMCOR



and its partners will be able to provide hope and tangible assistance to those in need for years to come. To give visit www.umcor.org/donate and click on U.S. Disaster Response Advance #901670.



Apportionment year-end giving

As we prepare to close out 2018, the churches of the Northern Illinois Conference are trailing slightly behind in apportionment figures when compared to 2017. As of November 1, the conference is average 53.7% of its apportionments being paid, compared to 55.5% during the same time last year.

When breaking down the figures by District, DeKalb is leading at 67%. Aurora comes in at 55%, Northwestern at 52%, and Rockford and Elgin are both at 51%. The Southern District is currently at 46%.

The Conference has 16 churches that have already reached 100% for the year, and 17 churches that are at zero percent. Over 100 churches are on track to be 100% by the end of the year.

Churches have until December 31 to pay their apportionments online this year, and until January 10 to mail a check. As in years past, we hope that the extension to pay until the 10th will allow churches to reach their goals. We are thankful for your connectal giving! For more information visit www.umcnic.org/apportionments.



Walk in The LIGHT

God is light and in him there is no darkness.

If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

~1 John 1:5, 7





J.O.Y. Camp - June 16-22, 2019
Grades 5-13 - \$419.00

This year we focus on the "Y" of JOY. J.O.Y. is for Jesus, Others, and You. We will have a combination of fun camp experiences as well as serious times to look at Jesus as Lord and Savior. J.O.Y. Camp is designed to be a challenge and encouragement for people in their faith journey. We use music, special worship, Scripture, and interaction as we work hard at providing and expecting a positive, accepting attitude of mutual respect.

Woodland Camp - July 7-12, 2019
Grades 4-13 - \$419.00

"Woodland offers something for everyone--from sleeping in Tree Houses in the forests of Reynoldswood to canoeing, horseback riding, and archery. Evenings include campfires, foil pouch cooking, and Talent Show. Of course, daily crafts and Bible Studies encourage us to Walk in the Light!"

Chicago Metro - August 4-9, 2019
Grades 8-13 - \$419.00

This camp, exclusively for the Chicago Southern and the Chicago Northwestern Districts of the NIC, gives urban and suburban campers an opportunity to experience wooded forests, wide-open grassy play spaces, river canoeing, horseback riding, swimming, archery, campfires, Bible studies and extensive opportunities to relax and bond with youth from different areas of Chicago Metro. Interested campers will be asked to help us put together a Summer 2020 Metro Camp for Elementary & Mid-High Campers.



Family Camp - July 28-August 2, 2019
Multigenerational - Price varies

Gather your family for a week on beautiful Geneva Lake, Wisconsin. In the mornings, youth and adults will split-up for Bible studies and activities with the Wesley Woods staff. Afternoons are full of family fun, with swimming, archery, scavenger hunts, and a family talent show at the end of the week.

Sailing Camp - July 28-August 2, 2019
Grades 8-13 - \$519.00

Wind, Water and Spirit. Discover God's presence on beautiful Geneva Lake while learning to use the elements of nature in an exciting new way. Beginners will learn terminology and rigging on Sunfish as they experience the wonder of sailing. Experienced campers will expand their experience through sloop-rigged boats with foresails, and enjoy an all day group sail. All "sailors" enjoy movies, discussion, Bible studies, campfire, and fellowship in diverse settings of learning and self-discovery. You must be able pass the swim test and tread water. Limit 12 campers.

Total Camp - August 4-9, 2019
Grades 2-13 - \$419.00

Total Camp offers Wesley Woods' most diverse camp experience. Total Camp combines the best of last year's CAPA and WaterSports camps so that all campers experience all of Wesley Woods' camp activities. Fun-filled days include archery, swimming, kayaking, campfires, foil pouch cooking, paddle boarding, 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.



Deposits, Discounts, Monthly Payments

\$50 Deposit

We require all registrants to pay the \$50 deposit fee at the time they register. It is a non-refundable deposit because we use it for up-front purchases, such as craft supplies, t-shirts, tie-dye ink and other activity supplies.

\$20 EARLY BIRD Discount

The Early Bird Discount is intended to reward families for registering early--it helps us to better plan purchases and staffing.

\$20 SIBLING Discount

We add the \$20 Sibling Discount to the \$20 Early Bird Discount for registered campers from the same family for a total discount of \$40 per camper.

\$20 Work Day Discount

Campers can earn an additional \$20 discount by participating in one of the pre-scheduled, multi-congregation Work Days listed below (limit one per camper):

Reynoldswood, Sat., May 4
Wesley Woods, Sat., May 18

\$40 GROUP Discount

The Group Discount is intended to help those churches who register multiple children, but cannot always make the Early Bird Deadline. To qualify a church representative must enter all of their youth registrations into our online group registration system.

Discount RESTRICTIONS

The \$40 GROUP Discount may NOT be combined with Early Bird, nor Sibling Discounts.

The maximum discount per camper is \$60.

Camperships (Camp Scholarships)

We stopped offering Camperships in 2014--we now connect families to local UMC Congregations; thus, building connections and growing relationships.

Fundraising Ideas

For simple fundraising ideas visit niccamp.org/fundraisers

Monthly Payments

Registering online enables you to select an automatic-monthly payment through our PayPal account--the earlier you register, the smaller the payment.
niccamp.org/summercamps



Camper Contact

E-MAIL

Campers may receive emails through each site's office. E-mail will be printed out by a staff member and handed to the camper. Attachments and pictures are NOT printed. Include Camper & Program Names in subject line.

Reynoldswood

RWcamper@niccamp.org

Wesley Woods

WWcamper@niccamp.org

PHONE CALLS

Campers do not call home unless prearranged by the Program/Event Director. In an emergency, call the after hours #s below:

Reynoldswood 815-494-9118 Wesley Woods 815-494-5970

LETTERS & CARDS

Campers will have opportunities to write letters home and to receive mail. If you wish to write to your camper, please send letters **three days before** you want them to arrive.

Camp Reynoldswood

Your Camper's Name
The Camp Program Name
621 Reynoldswood Rd
Dixon, IL 61021

Wesley Woods Retreat Center

Your Camper's Name
The Camp Program Name
250 Stam St
Williams Bay, WI 53191



Camp Essentials

- Bible
 - Flashlight
 - Insect Repellent
 - Laundry Bag
 - Pen & Notebook/ Notepad
 - Pillow (and pillow case)
 - Sleeping Bag, or twin sheets
 - Sun Block
 - Sunglasses
- TOILETRIES
- Soap, shampoo, etc.
 - Toothbrush & toothpaste
 - Towel
- CLOTHING
- Jacket
 - Pants & Shorts
 - Shoes (sturdy for hiking, old for wading, comfy for lounging)
- Socks
 - Swim Suit - (modest one-piece, NO bikinis, NO swim briefs [a.k.a. speedos])
 - T-shirts (we provide one themed T-shirt)
 - Underwear
 - Rain Gear (poncho or jacket)

CAMP STORE/MONEY/CASH

If you send cash with your camper, we record the total and lock it in our safe--we then keep a running tab which we deduct from their balance. Remaining balances on the last day that are less than \$1 will be recorded as donations, greater balances will be refunded.

2019 Camp Registration 1

Check ONE only per form, and mail to the respective camp.

Reynoldswood: J.O.Y. Camp Woodland Camp Chicago Metro Camp
621 Reynoldswood Rd, Dixon, IL 61021. Checks payable to Reynoldswood.
Questions: 815-284-6979 OR register@niccamp.org

Wesley Woods: Family Camp Sailing Camp Total Camp
250 Stam Street, Williams Bay, WI 53191. Checks payable to Wesley Woods.
Questions: 262-245-6631 OR register@niccamp.org

Camper Information

FIRST NAME _____ MIDDLE NAME _____ LAST NAME _____
NICKNAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ / _____ / _____ Male Female

Grade Entering in the Fall

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 Adult Vol

T- Shirt Size

Youth M Adult S Adult M Adult L
 Adult XL Adult 2XL Adult 3XL

Home Church _____ Church Town _____

Request up to 2 cabin-mates

CM1 _____ CM2 _____

Parent/Guardian Information

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP _____
PHONE 1 _____ PHONE 2 _____
TEXT # _____ EMAIL _____

MAIL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

Debit/Credit card payment information

NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD _____ EXPIRATION (MONTH/YEAR) _____ / _____
CARD NUMBER _____ SECURITY CODE _____

BILLING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

SIGNATURE _____

\$ _____ FOR CAMP STORE
\$ _____ + DEPOSIT OR CAMP FEE
\$ _____
= TOTAL AMOUNT TO CHARGE

By my signature above, I am instructing Outdoor & Retreat Ministries to charge the amount indicated on the "Total Amount To Charge" line, to my above-specified debit/credit card.

If I neglect to specify an amount, I understand that it will be charged the non-refundable \$50 deposit.

If paying by check, print your Camper's Last Name, First Name and camp name in the Memo Field.

Register Online at niccamp.org/summercamps

THANK YOU!

2019 Camp Registration 2

Check ONE only per form, and mail to the respective camp.

Reynoldswood: J.O.Y. Camp Woodland Camp Chicago Metro Camp
621 Reynoldswood Rd, Dixon, IL 61021. Checks payable to Reynoldswood.
Questions: 815-284-6979 OR register@niccamp.org

Wesley Woods: Family Camp Sailing Camp Total Camp
250 Stam Street, Williams Bay, WI 53191. Checks payable to Wesley Woods.
Questions: 262-245-6631 OR register@niccamp.org

Camper Information

FIRST NAME _____ MIDDLE NAME _____ LAST NAME _____
NICKNAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ / _____ / _____ Male Female

Grade Entering in the Fall

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 Adult Vol

T- Shirt Size

Youth M Adult S Adult M Adult L
 Adult XL Adult 2XL Adult 3XL

Home Church _____ Church Town _____

Request up to 2 cabin-mates

CM1 _____ CM2 _____

Parent/Guardian Information

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP _____
PHONE 1 _____ PHONE 2 _____
TEXT # _____ EMAIL _____

MAIL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

Debit/Credit card payment information

NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD _____ EXPIRATION (MONTH/YEAR) _____ / _____
CARD NUMBER _____ SECURITY CODE _____

BILLING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

SIGNATURE _____

\$ _____ FOR CAMP STORE
\$ _____ + DEPOSIT OR CAMP FEE
\$ _____
= TOTAL AMOUNT TO CHARGE

By my signature above, I am instructing Outdoor & Retreat Ministries to charge the amount indicated on the "Total Amount To Charge" line, to my above-specified debit/credit card.

If I neglect to specify an amount, I understand that it will be charged the non-refundable \$50 deposit.

If paying by check, print your Camper's Last Name, First Name and camp name in the Memo Field.

Register Online at niccamp.org/summercamps

THANK YOU!

Members of migrant caravan seeking better lives

By Kathy L. Gilbert*



This is a view of the border fence in El Faro Park in Tijuana, Mexico, after the arrival of the first members of the migrant caravan. Photo courtesy of Rubén Velarde de la Congregación Nuevo Pacto de Playas de Tijuana.



Bishop Minerva Carcaño prays for the caravan during the worship service at the budget meeting of the General Council on Finance and Administration. The meeting was held Nov. 16 at Providence United Methodist Church in Mount Juliet, Tenn. Photo by Kathleen Barry, UMNS.



The Rev. Gavin Rogers, an associate pastor of Travis Park United Methodist Church, San Antonio, recently traveled to Mexico City to join the migrant caravan as the group continued its journey. Photo courtesy of Gavin Rogers.

UMNS - While some have labeled Central American migrants headed to the U.S. as criminals or opportunists, many people of faith see them as children of God escaping desperate situations in their home countries.

One of those people is the Rev. Gavin Rogers, an associate pastor at Travis Park United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Texas. He joined the migrant caravan on Nov. 9 for a few days because he wanted to hear the migrants' stories and understand why they are risking so much to leave their home countries.

In an article in the San Antonio Express-News, Rogers noted that some people hear the asylum-seekers say they're seeking a better life and translate that into "They're going to steal our jobs." But for refugees, a better life just means life, he said.

"They're not out to steal anything," Rogers said.

The Rev. Samuel Murillo, a pastor with the Methodist Church of Mexico, said the first group of about 6,000 people was welcomed into Mexico City in early November.

"When they were in Mexico City, we came together as a collective of churches and faith groups and NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), trying to provide from our own backgrounds any kind of a pastoral, psychological support to them," Murillo, who is the youth and young adult president for the World Methodist Council, told United Methodist News Service.

Those in the U.S. who call the people in the caravan a threat are using fear as a way to justify closing the border, Murillo said. From a Christian and societal viewpoint, the issue is how to address the desperation of those seeking asylum in the U.S. They will risk as much as they can "not to go back to the violence they are running from," he pointed out.

Bishop Felipe Ruiz-Aguilar of the Methodist Church of Mexico said shelters are being prepared in Tijuana.

"Unfortunately some of the citizens (of Tijuana) have expressed a strong rejection to the caravans. I think it's the result of the negative publicity that they've been given,"

Ruiz-Aguilar said. "In general, the church's participation has gone fairly well, there's great organization, we know that the shelters are prepared and what kind of capacity each one offers."

The first group of migrants to reach Tijuana were a group of LGBTQ migrants, Ruiz said.

"Things are going better for them in comparison to the others. Upon arrival, someone rented a very large and nice house in an upper-middle class area," he said.

United Methodist Bishop Grant J. Hagiya, who leads the Los Angeles Area, said Methodists are extending "biblically rooted Methodist hospitality to those who come from afar." He issued a call for support and compassion with asylum seekers and refugees.

A number of organizations in the California-Pacific Conference work with migrants.

Safe Harbors Network, a coalition of congregations, charities and individuals based at Christ Ministry Center, San Diego, is preparing to form a "wall of welcome," said the Rev. Bill Jenkins, director.

Jenkins has been helping waves of immigrants since Christ United Methodist Church was closed as a church in 2011 and reborn as an immigration center. Over the years, the growing need to provide more beds led to the formation of Safe Harbors Network.

Nine churches in the San Diego area and one church in Portland, Oregon, are members of the network and will be taking in migrants. Jenkins is enlisting help from several other churches in San Diego, El Centro and Yuma, Arizona.

The Rev. John Fanestil, a U.S. United Methodist pastor, and Guillermo Navarrete, a lay leader in the Methodist Church of Mexico, hold church every Sunday on the beach that separates Mexico and the U.S. On Nov. 12, Guillermo and Fanestil blessed a pair of young Honduran newlyweds.

Guillermo and his ministry team are opening a day center near the San Ysidro Port of Entry into the U.S. to help shelter and assist migrants from the caravan as well as

people deported from the U.S. to Mexico, Fanestil said.

The California-Pacific Conference is working in coordination with the Conferencia Anual del Noroeste de Iglesia Metodista de Mexico supporting the efforts of the ministries related with migrants.

There is a growing network of Immigrant Welcoming Congregations, District Welcome Centers, Cal-Pac Neighborhood Immigration Clinic and "No Estan Solos" Camps and Retreats, Hagiya said.

Hagiya emphasized words from a statement recently released from the United Methodist Council of Bishops: "Above all, we call upon our congregations to be agents of God's mercy toward the migrant."

Bishop Minerva Carcaño, a member of the General Council on Finance and Administration board, prayed about the caravans at the board's November meeting in Nashville. She is co-chair of the United Methodist Immigration Task Force.

She said those in the migrant caravan are fleeing from violence and hunger and want to protect their children.

"It's not unlike what Mary and Joseph did for baby Jesus when Herod came against him and children of his age and of his gender. As the migrants come, we are reminded of Jesus. We are reminded of the fact that we are called to love God and make it real by loving our neighbor," she prayed.

"We pray this experience of the courageous boldness of those who travel may stir within our hearts your commandment that we love you and that we love our neighbor. We remember that you beckon us to even love our enemy.

"And so be with those who travel and be with us as we determine if we will love them. In the name of Jesus the Christ, we pray."

**Gilbert is a multimedia reporter for United Methodist News Service. Linda Bloom and Heather Hahn, also multimedia reporters for United Methodist News Service, contributed to this story. Contact them at 615-742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org. To read more United Methodist news, subscribe to the free daily or weekly digests at www.umc.org/resources/umns-subscription-form.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Give to the Global Migration Advance #3022144 at www.umcor.org/umcor/programs/disaster-response/international-disaster-response/europemigrants. Funds from this advance are being used to alleviate the suffering of migrants around the world.

Learn More

Read about The United Methodist Church's stand on migrants by visiting www.umc.org/topics/topic-immigration.

DECEMBER/JANUARY CALENDAR NEWS

Certified Lay Minister Informational Session

The "What" and the "How"

NIC Committee on Lay Servant Ministries invites you to attend an informational session to learn:

- What is a Certified Lay Minister (CLM)? What do they do?
- What is the process to become a Certified Lay Minister?
- How do I know if I'm being called?
- How do I begin?

Two dates to choose from:

- **Sat., January 5 at Roselle UMC, 206 Rush St. Roselle, IL**
- **Sat., January 12 at Oaklawn First UMC, 100th Street & Central Avenue, Oak Lawn, IL**

Registration begins 8:30 a.m. Session: 9:00 – 12:00 p.m.
Registration fee \$5.00

Save your seat and help us plan, register online or via mail visit www.umcnic.org/calendar/certified-lay-minister-informational-session-1

Day of Call

January 13 and February 17

On behalf of Bishop Sally Dyck and the NIC Board of Ordained Ministry, we'd like to invite you to celebrate our second annual "Day of Call."

The "Day of Call" is an opportunity to celebrate God's call in the Church – for clergy and laity. It's also part of our ongoing effort to nurture a culture of call in our Northern Illinois Conference.

The board is offering two more Sunday options for 2019: January 13 or February 17. Another possibility is to preach on God's calling on all of our lives and utilize one of the Call stories we've posted on our NIC website at www.umcnic.org/ordainedministry.

The purpose of this Day is to encourage each other to listen and respond to God's call on our lives. We hope you'll join us as we celebrate and cultivate God's call on our lives.

If you need resources for this day, you can reach out to us, as well. Please share your questions and testimonies (written or video) with Jim Bell at srpastor@fumcbelvidere.com or Eun Young Ko pdkoey@mail.com.

NIC UMW Mission u – Winter Event

January 18-20, 2019

Location: Camp Reynoldswood, 621 Reynoldswood Rd., Dixon, IL

Learning Together for the Transformation of the World Camp

Three mission study options including:
*Embracing Wholeness** – Rev. Danita Anderson
*Conferences of the U.S.** – Laura Dean Friedrich
What About Our Money? – Peggy Hansen.
(*Last time this study will be offered)

Cost: Weekend student: \$150 (lodging & meals included, linens not included)

Commuter student: \$100 (includes all meals) Add a \$25 late fee for registrations postmarked/emailed after Dec. 31, 2018. Final registration deadline is Jan. 7, 2019.

Lodging option: Quality Inn, Dixon (815-284-0500) – \$97.75+tax/per night – deadline for block price: Jan. 4 – two beds.

For more information and registration visit www.umcnic.org/calendar/umw-mission-u-1.

Winter Warming

January 19, 2019

Time: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Location: Faith UMC in Dolton, IL, 15015 Grant St.

Cost: \$25 Includes lunch and childcare

Register online at nicreconciling.org.

Winter Warming, "Resist, Reimagine, Rebuild" is sponsored by the Reconciling Ministries of NIC is on Saturday, January 19, 2019 (the Dr. King, Jr. Holiday weekend).

Walk-ins are welcome, but there will be no childcare and no guarantee for lunch without pre-registration. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. Event starts at 9:30 a.m. with the Rev. Dr. Jay Williams, lead pastor at Union UMC in Boston (former senior pastor at Glide Memorial in San Francisco) as Keynote. Bishop Yvette Flunder (UCC) will be the preacher at closing worship 3 – 4 p.m.

Special music by Andrae "A.J." Anthony, director of music and the arts at Broadway UMC in Indianapolis. Other panel presenters: Rev. Charles Straight, Rev. Pamela Lightsey and Jan Lawrence, Executive Director of RMN.

Martin Luther King Annual Celebration

Sunday, Jan. 20, 2019

Time: 4 p.m.

Location: Faith UMC, 15101 S 80th Ave, Orland Park, IL 60462

Event free and open to the public



"Emmett Till: The Chicago Connection Then and Now"

Special Speaker: Author Timothy B. Tyson

Tyson is author of *The Blood of Emmett Till* (2017), which Atlantic Monthly calls, "A critical book... [that] manages to turn the past into prophecy and demands that we do the one vital thing we aren't often enough asked to do with history: learn from it."

Human Relations Day

Date: **Jan. 20, 2019**

To continue the ministry of Jesus, UMC Giving has established Human Relations Day as a Special Sunday that calls all of our churches to participate in helping all God's children to realize their potential. Together, we extend a helping hand to those in crisis so they can overcome formidable obstacles. For resources and to give visit www.umcsgiving.org/ministry-articles/human-relations-day.

Laity Convocation 2019

Feb. 9, 2019

Location: New Lenox UMC, 339 New Lenox Rd, New Lenox, IL



"Knowing Our Way: Turning the Tide"

Come join laity and clergy from across our conference for Laity Convocation 2019. Our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, Director of the Missional Church Consultation Initiative for the West Ohio Conference. She will lead us in a discussion about her Breakthrough Prayer Initiative from her most recent book *Flood Gates: Holy Momentum for a Fearless Church*.

Our day will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 12:45 p.m. The early registration fee is \$10 or \$40 per church. After January 25, the fee will increase to \$15 per person or \$50 per church. Lunch will be available for a small extra charge. Registration information will be on the NIC website very soon!



OUTDOOR AND RETREAT MINISTRIES

Ski Camp Dates

February 1-3, 2019

Wesley Woods to Alpine Valley

February 15-17, 2019

Reynoldswood to Chestnut Mountain

Come to camp and let's hit the slopes! At Wesley Woods we will ski at Alpine Valley Resort, while at Reynoldswood we will travel to Chestnut Mountain Ski Resort. Once back at camp on Saturday night, we will have activities and a Bible study centered around a seasonal theme. Join other congregational groups as we enjoy a wintry weekend of fun and spiritual education.

The retreat begins at 7 p.m. on Friday evening, includes four meals and two snacks, and concludes Sunday at 10 a.m. For full retreat, which includes ski rental and lift ticket, cost is \$181.00 per person. For more information visit www.niccamp.org/retreats.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, March 16, 2019, 5:00 p.m.



Resurgence Worship Night 2019

The NIC Youth Ministry Council is hosting this special night of music featuring the Christian rock 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 visit: www.umcnic.org/calendar/youth-ministry-concert to purchase tickets.



The Rev. Kristine Marshall of Bethel United Methodist Church in Anderson, Ind., spent her time at the Breaking Barriers Global AIDS Conference creating three canvases to represent the process of breaking free from the stigma of living with HIV/AIDS and living your fullest life. Rev. Marshall's artwork may look familiar as she has created paintings for the Northern Illinois Annual Conference. Photo by Crystal Caviness, United Methodist Communications.



Lay member and Chair of the NIC HIV/AIDS Task Force Irma Clark received the AIDS Leadership Award at the Global AIDS Conference in Indianapolis.

Message at HIV/AIDS event: 'Say the words' By Crystal Caviness*

UMNS - Say the words "AIDS" and "HIV" out loud. Put the words — in all caps — in the church bulletin's prayer concerns section and don't shy away from the conversation.

These suggestions were among those offered — and repeated — during the recent Global AIDS Conference on how the church can help end the stigma for people living with HIV and AIDS.

"Breaking Barriers," held Oct. 25-27 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, gathered 140 people representing a spectrum of the population, including people of faith, health care professionals and advocates, community leaders, volunteers and people living with HIV, to discuss strategies for saving lives and increasing awareness.

Eighteen workshops, four panels and two keynote addresses tackled the topic of HIV/AIDS as it relates to a cross section of the population, including those dealing with aging, the opioid epidemic, tuberculosis, and the church.

There is a way to promote HIV/AIDS awareness within the church without condemning people, International AIDS activist Hydeia Broadbent told the group.

Broadbent, 34, was diagnosed as HIV-positive at the age of 3 and first spoke publicly about her status when she was 6 years old.

One suggestion, she said during her keynote address, is to include HIV/AIDS information during church-sponsored health fairs, alongside materials about other conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. Make sure HIV/AIDS is

a part of all health-related discussions, she added.

Jeanne White-Ginder — mother of the late Ryan White, the teenager who became an international voice for those living with HIV/AIDS in the 1980s — reminded the conference attendees of her son's greatest hope.

"Ryan always said, 'I want to make AIDS a disease, not a dirty word,'" said White-Ginder.

In hopes of reducing the stigma, White-Ginder has spent the 28 years since her son's death at age 18 telling his story. White was banned from school following his AIDS diagnosis and his mother reminds people of the prejudice and pain their family experienced.

For her efforts, the Global AIDS Committee presented White-Ginder with the AIDS Leadership Award during the conference. Other AIDS Leadership Award recipients were Brian Montgomery, chairman of the West Ohio Conference AIDS Task Force; Dr. Narasappa Mathew Samuel, professor and president of the AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific; and Dr. Irma Clark, chairwoman of the Northern Illinois Conference HIV/AIDS Task Force.

United Methodist Bishops Minerva Carcaño (California-Nevada Conference), Tracy Smith Malone (East Ohio Conference), Julius Trimble (Indiana Conference) and retired Bishop Fritz Mutti also attended the event. Trimble is chair of the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee.

"This event underscored the ongoing need for support for those living with HIV and AIDS — the need for love and acceptance, resources and treatment and the desperate need to eradicate stigma," said Linda Bales Todd, a committee

member and the conference organizer.

"The church can play a pivotal role in all this. Embracing all God's children as people of sacred worth is a message needed not only from the church but society."

The need for the church to be part of the global HIV/AIDS dialogue was a recurring theme from the podium throughout the conference, with faith leaders among those making written pledges to either start or keep the conversation going in an effort to break through the barrier that stigma creates.

"I know more and will now do more," Bishop Trimble said after the event. "We learned from those living with HIV that the church can do much more, beginning with education and collaboration. Stigma can be countered by breaking the silence and advocating for training and increasing access to treatment and education."

The goal was to change the narrative from what is not happening to what can be done better, the bishop noted. To fully be the church "will require us to address stigma," he said. "No racial or ethnic group is exempt and no excuses were accepted," Trimble said.

The Global AIDS Committee is planning a one-day conference scheduled for the day before the 2020 General Conference begins in Minneapolis in May 2020.

*Caviness is a senior public relations specialist at United Methodist Communications in Nashville, Tennessee. She can be reached at ccaviness@umcom.org.

HOW TO HELP

Donate to the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund through Advance #982345 at www.umcmmission.org.

DYK???

Did You Know? United Methodism 101



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

What is the difference between the College of Bishops and the Council of Bishops? How many conferences are in a jurisdiction? What is a jurisdiction? Who votes at a General Conference? How many countries have UM congregations? How are we structured?

Most of us rarely give the structure and governance of the United Methodist Church much thought. Beyond our local church council and the work of a District Superintendent, our denominational life is vague and far removed from our day to day existence.

As the United Methodist Church gears up for a historic special session of General Conference in February 2019 in debate of full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the life of the church, understanding more about who we are as a denomination gives us a framework for understanding how decisions are made concerning the denomination's future.

The UMC is the largest denomination within the wider Methodist movement of approximately 80 million people across the world. In the United States, the UMC ranks as the largest mainline Protestant denomination, the largest Protestant Church after the Southern Baptist Convention and the third largest Christian denomination. We are a twelve million member global denomination. There are United Methodist

Churches in the United States, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The United Methodist Church has a Connectional polity, a typical feature of a number of Methodist denominations. We are organized into conferences. The highest level is called the General Conference. As the primary legislative body, General Conference is the only entity with the authority to speak on behalf of the entire United Methodist Church.

The General Conference normally meets every four years to consider the business and mission of the church. The general conference is a legislative body of equal parts lay and clergy from around the globe. Northern Illinois has 3 lay and 3 clergy voting members elected in 2014 who will participate in the February special session. The clergy delegates are Rev. Alka Lyall, Rev. Gregory Gross, and Rev. Chris Pierson. The lay delegates are Lonnie Chafin, Irma Clark and Elisa Gatz (Chairperson). Reserves include: Jack Ryder, Rev. Carol Hill, Rita L. Smith, Rev. Luis Reyes, Nancy Pendergrass, and Rev. David Lagos-Fonseca.

Bishops preside at the general conference session but have no voice or vote in this body's work. A Judicial Council (global in membership and elected by General Conference) is tasked with determining the constitutionality of any decisions made by the legislative body. Our United Methodist constitution and polity are found in the

2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline.

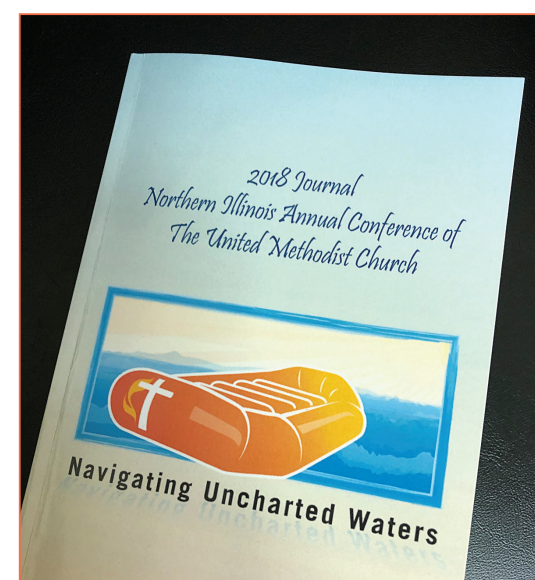
The general conference has authority in matters of church law but changes to the denomination's constitution must be ratified by each annual conference before they can be enacted.

In Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, there are seven geographical regions, called "central conferences." There are five geographic jurisdictions, or regions, in the United States, which are comprised of eight to 15 annual conferences each. Northern Illinois Conference is part of the North Central Jurisdiction made up of 10 conferences.

Many online resources are available to help us know about the structure and membership of the United Methodist Church as well as resources for understanding the issues to be addressed at the special session. Learn more about the UMC by taking the online course Methodism 101 at www.umctraining.org and stay informed in the coming months as our denomination works toward a way forward.

Resource links:

- www.umc.org
- www.umcdiscipleship.org
- www.umctraining.org
- www.umnews.org
- www.umcnic.org/wayforward



The 2018 Northern Illinois Annual Conference Journal is available to download for free online at www.umcnic.org/journal. If you would like a print edition, they're available for \$11 through amazon.com - search Northern Illinois Conference.

Stay Connected

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

Visit www.umcnic.org and scroll down to enter your email and name under "Sign up for our eNewsletter".

Job Openings

For the latest NIC job openings, visit www.umcnic.org/jobs

Submit News

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.

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