

Northern Illinois Conference
of The United Methodist Church
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Bishop Sally Dyck leads Bible study at the 2020 Laity Convocation invoking an introspective discussion on how racism is incompatible with Christian teaching. Photo by Aquilino Javier

Laity Convocation opens conversation on racism

By Mark Manzi, Conference Co-Lay Leader

Laity Convocation 2020 brought more than 185 lay and clergy from across the Northern Illinois Conference to Sycamore United Methodist Church on Feb. 8 to work toward “Unpacking Racism.” This year’s theme was based on the Conference’s strategic goal: “To live out the conviction that racism is incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Bishop Sally Dyck led Bible study using the conversion of Peter (Matthew 16: 13-16, John 21: 15-17, Acts 10: 34-35 and 11: 15-18) to examine how Peter changed how he viewed who Jesus was, what his mission was really about, and how he viewed himself and others. She reminded us about the United Methodist Social Principles with regard to racism and then challenged us to look at racism from not only an individual position but of racism that is embedded in our institutions and our systems.

Bishop finally challenged us, especially those of us who are white, to consider our privilege. “Racism hinders our relationship with Christ,” said Dyck. “What’s your implicit bias? Looking at our own racism takes a lot of self-reflection. To grow in a relationship with Christ we have to face it.”

A panel discussion on racism followed with Rev. Dr. Chris Pierson, senior pastor of Gary UMC in Wheaton; Mrs. Judy Siaba, member of Euclid Ave. UMC in Oak Park; Dr. Richard Guzman, member of Friendship UMC in Bolingbrook and a North Central College professor; and Mrs. Rebecca Fraley, member of Steward UMC in Steward;

with Rev. Alka Lyall, senior pastor of Broadway UMC in Chicago, as the moderator. Each shared stories of their experiences with racism, which gave personal meaning and context to the problems that still exist in our society and churches.

The panelists answered a series of questions to help us dig more deeply into our understanding of racism and the effect it has in our country. Participants came away with motivation, inspiration, and resources for beginning discussions and study on racism with members of their local churches.

Dr. Guzman, who was born in the Philippines but grew up in the U.S., shared how his father’s attempt to assimilate to the American way was hurtful. “I remember it still very vividly my father coming home one day when I was young and telling my mother, ‘You will never speak to the children in our dialect again,’ and that caused a deep, isolating pain of losing my native language for me,” said Guzman. “Since I’ve been attending Friendship, one of the most diverse congregations in the Conference, I’ve been back with more Filipino friends than I have in decades. They love me and I them, but not being able to speak my own language, or the Tagalog most of them speak, is deeply painful for me.”

During worship, an offering totaling \$1,668 was taken for UMCOR disaster relief to help Puerto Rico following damaging earthquakes. The closing worship ended with prayer, hymns, and communion.

Those who were unable to attend Laity Convocation 2020 may visit the Board of Laity’s page on the NIC website at umcnic.org/laity to see a list of resources that can be used in local churches to take the first step on the journey to unpack racism by continuing this important conversation and empowering each other to become antiracist advocates – work we must do together.



Dr. Richard Guzman, a professor emeritus at North Central College who teaches courses on race and ethnicity, shares how racism impacted his life growing up in America as a Filipino. Photo by Anne Marie Gerhardt

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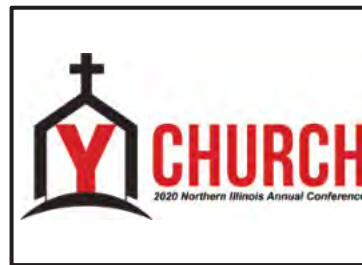
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From the Bishop: Environmental racism exists in our own backyard

A friend of mine from the World Council of Churches recently went on a Pilgrimage for Peace and Justice to Fiji. Usually these pilgrimages are to places where there is great conflict and extreme distress so I initially wondered what need would there be for such a pilgrimage to paradise.

But the people of Fiji, especially the indigenous people of Fiji, are suffering due to the rising waters that climate change has wrought on this island paradise. They wonder what life will be like for them in a few decades. Will they become climate migrants? As I listened to my friend, I was reminded that environmental racism impacts many poor, vulnerable, and/or indigenous communities around the world.

One of Northern Illinois Annual Conference's strategic goals is to eliminate racism and to live into the reality that racism is incompatible with Christian teaching. One area of racism that exists in our world, nation, and communities is that of environmental racism. With Earth Day coming up, I would encourage churches to think about the ways racism impacts the environment.

First let's look at the definition of environmental racism. Our *Book of Resolutions* (2016, pp. 55-61) says in part:

In the United States, the extraction, production, storage, treatment, and disposal processes of hazardous materials and wastes are too often zoned within close proximity to where people of color live... (and who) are usually the least able—politically and economically—to affect the political institutions that make the decisions that allow this to happen. People of color also disproportionately suffer from the lack of public health protections in the current economy... (p. 55, BOR)

Environmental racism is in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the ground that contains toxins upon which some communities built schools and public housing.

But it may not be in your neighborhood! There is an unequal distribution of climate change's impact across

the world and in communities that experience the effects from disposal of hazardous wastes. The U.N. has called it a "climate apartheid." In essence, wealthier nations, communities or corporations contribute the most waste and provide the least support for its disposal, often not even "seeing" or knowing about such problems. Where is environmental racism affecting your community or near you?

One example in the Northern Illinois Conference area where environmental racism has made an impact is the rural community of Wedron in LaSalle County. Underground petroleum storage tanks from a gas station that closed after a fire leaked fuel into and contaminated the water table of this small community. Residents rely on private wells for drinking water since there is no municipal water service.

An urban example is Altgeld Gardens, long described as the "toxic doughnut" on Chicago's Southside. Public housing was built on a landfill in the 1940s for African American veterans returning from the war. More than half of the residents live below the poverty level. The community is surrounded by landfills, factories, and sewage treatment plants. For more than 40 years it has suffered from the pollution of air, water and ground, due to such contaminants as mercury, ammonia gas, lead, DDT, PCBs, heavy metals and xylene.

The residents of Altgeld Gardens suffer disproportionately from major health problems, especially asthma, brain tumors and lead poisoning in children, leading to a cascade of other problems like absenteeism and behavior problems. The community has some of the city's highest rates for cancer, including lung, prostate, and bladder cancers.

Massive federal budget cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency over the last few years and its deregulation of about 100 policies have failed to protect or restore communities like Wedron and Altgeld Gardens.

I have a poster in my office that says: "What if ecology was part of theology?" I believe that ecology is part of theology, and I wrote a book with my niece about it

titled "A Hopeful Earth." Throughout the scriptures we read that when we are faithful to God, the earth responds with abundance and fruitfulness, but when we aren't faithful, the earth suffers (Psalm 107, for instance). When we fail to protect and restore communities that have been the target of environmental racism, we are not being faithful to God.

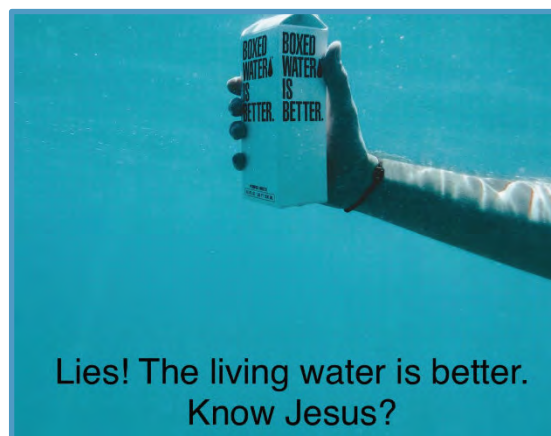
What does faithfulness look like in terms of caring for the earth? It means to do the things that we as individuals can do (recycling, less consumption, eating less meat, etc.) but ultimately we must impact national policies. Frankly, as we approach elections—local and national—people suffering from environmental racism need us to vote for those candidates who will make a difference in the most vulnerable communities.

You know it's bad when paradise is groaning (cf. Romans 8:22). Even if environmental racism isn't impacting you or your neighborhood, love your neighbor and do right by them! Bring back paradise!



April 22, 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day. Earth Day Sunday can be celebrated April 19, 26, or another day convenient for your church. Creation Justice

Ministries offers Christian education materials to equip faith communities to protect, restore, and more rightly share God's creation. Their 2020 theme focuses on "The Fierce Urgency of Now." Resources and accompanying web-based materials are available to download free at www.creationjustice.org/urgency.



Youth created these Memes shown above at the 2019 Christmas Institute workshop in Rockford, IL in conjunction with Rev. Eric Reniva of Beth Eden UMC. Rev. Kyungsu Park facilitated the workshop.

Contest: What does Jesus MEME to me?

Create your own meme with a Jesus theme and you could win up to \$100!

The Northern Illinois Conference Discipleship Task Force invites youth and young adults across the conference to participate in our first meme-making contest called, "What Does Jesus Meme to Me?"

The contest runs March 15 through April 15. Cash prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place entries in the following age brackets: 8th grade and under; 9th through 12th grade; and young adults up to and including 21 year

olds. Prizes in each category are \$100 for 1st place, \$75 for 2nd place, and \$50 for 3rd place based on number of likes across the Northern Illinois Conference's social media and final judging. Use the hashtag **#whatJesusmemestome** and help spread the good news of Jesus Christ!

Submissions must be original and not contain any copyrighted or protected materials. To find the complete contest rules, a registration form, prizes, and a gallery of all the memes, visit umcnic.org/memecontest.

Contestants in the 8th grade and under category are expected to choose the visual and do a significant portion of the work; however, an adult may offer technical assistance. Contest winners will be announced at the 2020 Annual Conference in June.

Our goal is to go viral with Jesus memes. Let's support our youth and young adults by letting them know we love Jesus and want to know what Jesus "memes" to them! Keep your eyes open for more information and start asking yourself, "What does Jesus meme to me?"



Annual Conference 2020: Registration opens April 6

Clergy and lay members to the 2020 Annual Conference will be able to register online starting April 6 for the June 7-9 gathering at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center. This year's theme is "Y Church" while reflecting on the scripture 1 Peter 3:15b that calls us to always be ready to make an account of the hope that is within you. Bishop Sally Dyck asks us to reflect on why church matters to you and why church still plays an important role in our communities.

Here are some important reminders:

Clergy Day Apart and Session

Clergy are invited to gather for worship, fellowship and business on Tuesday, May 26 at Sycamore United Methodist Church, 160 Johnson Ave., Sycamore, IL. More details coming soon.

Presenting at Annual Conference

All potential presenters must provide essential information to the Annual Conference Committee, including contact information, reason for requesting an opportunity to present, a short description of the proposed presentation, estimated time for the presentation, and whether the presentation includes slides or video. To do so, please fill out the "2020 NIC Annual Conference Presentation Request Form" available at umcnic.org/AC2020. Priority will be given to requests received before March 31. Final decisions regarding scheduling are made by the Daily Proceedings Coordinator in conjunction with the Annual Conference Committee.

Legislation/Historical Documents

ALL historical documents and proposed legislation for the conference must be submitted by April 1, 2020 to Rev.

Katie Voigt at ACdocuments@umcnic.org (no exceptions). If you have any questions about how to format your documents, please feel free to contact Rev. Voigt at this same email address during your writing process, well in advance of the deadline. All legislative documents must be in the Action/ Rationale format with a maximum of 500 words for the rationale, be submitted as a WORD document and editable. At-conference documents must be submitted to her BEFORE the start of the annual conference. The author must submit both a printed version and on a flash drive or similar USB storage device (the device may or may not be returned), and the author must bring 1000 copies to the annual conference session for distribution.

Memorial Service

If you have names of lay members to Annual Conference who have passed away in the last year, please email them to communications@umcnic.org. Please attach a high resolution photo in a .jpg format. The deadline is May 1, 2020, so we may include them in our Memorial Service slideshow and program.

Hotel Reservations

Room reservations at the Renaissance Hotel are open. The rate is \$152 + tax, per night. Deadline to cancel a reservation is 72 hours to arrival date at no penalty. To book your room online by May 22, a link is available on the NIC website at umcnic.org/AC2020 or you may call the hotel directly at 847-303-4100.

Booklet Advertising

New this year, we will be selling advertising space in the AC booklet. Limited space is available. Full-page, half-page

or quarter-page ads must be submitted as 300-dpi JPG, PNG, or PDF files: no WORD files will be accepted. Ads will be included on a first-come, first-served basis. The Annual Conference Committee will make the final decisions on inclusion. Special pricing for display tables will be available for groups reserving ad space. Costs and details can be found on the AC webpage at umcnic.org/AC2020. The deadline for ad submittals is April 1, 2020.

Worship Schedule

Sunday, June 7 - Ordination - Bishop Dyck preaching
Monday, June 8 - Retirement Service
Tuesday, June 9 - Memorial Service

Also:

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. Sign-up is available through the AC online registration.

Volunteers needed. If you are interested in ushering, greeting or volunteering during plenaries and worship services, fill out the volunteer form on the AC webpage or email Laura Lopez at llopez@umcnic.org.

Our Accessibility Coordinator will be present on site to help with any needs (vision, movement, hearing, etc.), within our ability. Please be sure to indicate in your registration form how we can extend welcome and hospitality to you during Annual Conference.

Check for updates in the NIC eNews, website and the Reporter.



Construction underway for Tanzania school

Bishop Sally Dyck has designated the Global Mission Secondary School for children ages 13-18 with the United Methodist Church in Tanzania as the recipient of the Bishop's Appeal offering at the 2020 Annual Conference.

Global Ministries Missionary and NIC Elder Rev. Young Seon (Christina) Kim is serving as the managing director of the project. She provided this construction work update:

The first stage of construction is well underway to build an administration block, four classrooms, three science labs (Physics, Biology, and Chemistry), and a 600-meter fence. Site clearance began in early September 2019 and it has been progressing steadily despite delays caused by the Christmas holiday break and heavy rain.

On rainy days, because water is everywhere, I usually park my old car at Mvuti (a village center) and use a Pikipiki (motorcycle) transportation to get to the school construction site. However, once I get to the school construction site, I always get excited and inspired by it, because I see God's grace, creating something out of nothing. All foundation work took a lot of time, money, and materials. Progress seemed unnoticeable. However, when walling began after the 2020 New Year's celebration, everything changed. Progress has been remarkable every week.

Starting in mid-February, roofing of classrooms began.

At the same time, the foundation groundwork for the second stage started because we want to finish it before the heavy rainy season comes (late March to mid-May). I can't wait to see it. The second stage includes building a prayer tower, a library, a cafeteria, a boys' dormitory, a girls' dormitory, and a small public washing area. I know the heavy rainy season can bring unexpected challenges and problems to the school construction, such as materials not being delivered in a timely manner. However, what I know is that God will be there and help us to move forward.

I started funding for Stage 2 in Oct. 2019. God placed on my heart Matthew 7:7, "asking, searching, and knocking." God's mission requires God's money, so I don't worry about the \$432,000 cost of Stage 2. I know my God is richer than Bill Gates. I pray to God every day.

One day I received an email from Bishop Sally Dyck that the school project in Tanzania will be a recipient of 2020 Bishop's Appeal. Wow!!! I was so grateful to Bishop Sally and the Northern Illinois Conference. I was so thrilled by the way God answered my prayers. I never thought of it only dreamt of it. Now I see the great possibility to open the school in January 2021 with 40 students.

So I have been praying that the nearly 370 churches in the Northern Illinois Conference will respond to the Bishop's Appeal. If each church gives \$555 to the school project, the goal of \$200,000 will be fulfilled. Holy Spirit, help each church to go extra miles for your mission!!! Thank you.

For more information and to follow the construction progress, visit umcnic.org/bishopsappeal.



Rev. Young Son (Christina) Kim stands between columns that will frame the science labs at the Global Mission Secondary School in Tanzania currently in its 2nd phase of construction.

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

2020

Revised Social Principles reflect worldwide church



One of the many consultations on the Social Principles was held at Africa University in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe. Photo courtesy of United Methodist Board of Church and Society.

By Kathy Gilbert*

The United Methodist Church has a long history of tackling complicated, controversial and contemporary topics such as polygamy, child marriage, abortion, violence and treatment of migrants. While much attention currently is focused on the church's stance on LGBTQ people, it is not the only human struggle the church prays about and addresses.

For the past eight years, a diverse group of writers and editors has been revising the denomination's Social Principles, which since its founding has been an expression of the Wesleyan commitment to social holiness for The United Methodist Church.

The revised Social Principles crisscrossed continents, was read and studied by thousands and will land in Minneapolis in May for final review and approval at the 2020 United Methodist General Conference.

The 2012 General Conference commissioned the United Methodist Board of Church and Society to revise the Social Principles to enhance its theological foundations, global relevance and meaning, along with its focus and succinctness, said the Rev. Mary Elizabeth Moore, chair of the revision team and dean of Boston University School of Theology.

The revised document was broken down into four sections: creation, economic, social and political communities. Scriptural passages and excerpts from John Wesley's writings introduce each section. Moore said the toughest sections to revise were on violence and sexuality.

"People raised multiple concerns about violence, revealing our very diverse United Methodist contexts and perspectives," she explained. "For example, people living under the constant threat of violence often see the use of military force differently from those in which the military itself is a major threat to peace or those who are committed to nonviolent resistance."

Many of the participants who worked on the document said listening to diverse voices was eye-opening and

rewarding. The Rev. Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh, rector of The United Methodist Seminary in Oslo, Norway, said the current and past revisions of the Social Principles often represented an American or Western context.

"I find it important to emphasize that America has not lost anything in making the Social Principles more global; it is better for them as well," she said.

Movafagh said she was especially proud of the outcome of two issues the writing team tackled: reproductive health and human sexuality. "Reproductive health is a lot more than abortion," she said. "Women worldwide need good reproductive health care both throughout and after a pregnancy. The deaths of women giving birth are still too high worldwide."

In the Social Community section, under the heading of Human Sexuality, the document lifts up the issue of consent and the right to decide about your own bodies, Movafagh added.

"We emphasize sexual relationships in love, care and respect without specifying what that looks like. We have therefore pointed to the values in good sexual relationships rather than entering the current debate," she said.

The process began with listening sessions. Drafts of the revisions were sent to various church settings. Also included were individual consultations with church leaders and scholars and an online survey.

"We heard from 1,700 United Methodists from across the connection," Moore said. "Keeping our commitment to listen to the church, we analyzed all of the responses and identified the themes, critiques and suggestions."

The task force wrote three drafts before handing off the final version to the board. The final draft was released in seven languages in early October. The Rev. Kalaba Chali, mercy and justice coordinator for the Great Plains Conference, said working with a group from various backgrounds was "energy-giving and enlightening."

"We certainly did not always agree on all of the issues

that needed critical rethinking and review, but we did our best not to remain disagreeable," said the Rev. George D. Wilson Jr., Liberia Conference.

Randall Miller, chair of the task force on Social Principles for Church and Society's board of directors, said the team is aware that the 2020 General Conference will be dealing with "profound" questions about whether the denomination can stay united.

"We also know that the church continues to wrestle with issues related to human sexuality, reproductive health, gender and racial/ethnic exclusion and other important issues," he said.

The purpose of the Social Principles revision was not to solve those problems, he added.

"I am perfectly settled with the final document," said the Rev. Israel Painit, Philippines. "I hope it will get the approval of the delegates." He also expressed gratitude for the hard work from all the team members.

The Rev. Esther D. Jadhav, a Church and Society board member and an assistant vice president at Asbury University, said she served in several capacities as a member of the writing and editorial teams.

"I was most impressed with the level of research that was conducted, every perspective and every experience was captured. Such a high level of global sociological study centered around the life of the church is rare if not unheard of," she said.

Moore pointed out that the process was designed to be reflective and participatory.

"The task force and editorial team listened to the chorus of voices and passions and the people of The United Methodist Church have their handprints all over the Revised Social Principles," she said.

Review Revised Social Principles

To read the revised Social Principles in one of seven languages, visit www.umcjustice.org/sp2020.

*Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service.



Submit Nominations for United Voices for Children Awards

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 recognize who is doing this good work in your church or community, then nominate a deserving individual or a group.

A detailed description of these awards plus a downloadable nominations form and information on past award winners is available at unitedvoicesforchildren.org/programs/awards. The deadline for receiving nominations is April 6, 2020. The chosen awardees will be honored at the UVC breakfast during the Northern Illinois Annual Conference in June.

Direct any questions by emailing unitedvoicesforchildren@gmail.com.



The Vacation Bible School at Zion UMC continues to grow with more than 100 children participating in 2019.



Zion UMC members gather to pray for one of their own as he leaves for school.

Church's prayers and concern for discipleship of children, increase adult discipleship By Jeff Campbell*

When Rev. Hogun Kim arrived at Zion United Methodist Church in Mendota, Ill., in July 2015, one of the first things he noticed was the members. There weren't many. "And the ones who were there were of retirement age; the youngest was 61," said Kim.

But he also noticed that these remaining members were willing to make changes. With that in mind, Rev. Kim encouraged the congregation to spend time with God.

"I believe the first step to becoming a true disciple is to be with Jesus, to be connected with him," Rev. Kim said, adding that he believes spending time alone with Jesus is the best way to develop an intimate relationship with him.

He started a Tuesday evening intercessory prayer meeting so people could learn to pray. The group started with just a couple of people and has grown to about 10. They have seen God answer prayers.

"At our prayer meetings, we began to pray for little children to come, just as Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me,'" Rev. Kim said. "We decided to do a Vacation Bible School (VBS) to attract children, something the church hadn't done one for more than 20 years."

It was a huge step of faith for Zion. Some members were

worried about how many would come. (Note: Isn't it interesting that they were concerned about how many would come, not how many wouldn't come. Doesn't that show great faith?)

"We prayed God would intervene and he sent 70 children that first year," Rev. Kim said. "The next year 80, next year 90, and this year we had more than 100 children!"

Each year following VBS, seven or eight families decided to stay in the church. The church not only has a children's ministry now, but a youth group and a young adult group. The new families have begun to work as teachers, in hospitality, and other areas.

"They work hard for the church," Rev. Kim said. "I see God working in their hearts."

While the adults have certainly made an impact on the work of the church, Rev. Kim said he knows the truth is the children have brought their parents to the church, not the other way around. The children felt loved at VBS, and then their parents felt loved when they came to the church.

"The children loved VBS so much," he said. "They insisted that their parents bring them back to church after VBS was over. I have even had parents tell me they had to

come back from vacation a day early because their children didn't want to miss Sunday school."

The church has been meeting continually since it began in 1887. Even with a 130-year history, Rev. Kim believes the best days are ahead.

"Our prayer group believes in miracles," he said. "We have seen them. We prayed for Him to bring us children, and He did. We had tried so many other things to bring people in, spent a lot of money, but nothing works like prayer."

Given the church's growth and their commitment to bringing people into their fellowship, the Northern Illinois Annual Conference awarded the church a 2019 One Matters Award and a \$1,000 to help continue their ministry.

"We were honored and grateful to receive the award," Rev. Kim said, "but we are most grateful for the children and families we have reached."

*Jeff Campbell joined Discipleship Ministries in 2013 and now serves as the Associate General Secretary of Strategic Programming. In this role, he connects with conference leadership to strengthen intentional discipleship-making across the connection.

Register now for "Fresh Expressions" with Bishop Kenneth Carter



"A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It will come into being through principles of listening, service, contextual mission and making disciples. It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the Gospel

and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context." From *The Bishop's Blog*, September 1, 2015, by Bishop Ken Carter, Florida Annual Conference. (flumc.org/blogdetail/2005605)

On Thursday, March 12, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Bishop Kenneth Carter will introduce the Northern Illinois Conference to Fresh Expressions, an international

movement of missionary disciples cultivating new Methodist churches.

Attendees will learn how established churches and new faith communities are reaching unchurched and dechurched people through fresh expressions of faith. Bishop Carter will cover such topics as redefining connection and evangelism, fresh expressions of our Methodist faith, and missional relationships in our current cultural landscape.

For more than three years, fresh expressions of faith have been creating new disciples and passing on the traditions of the Wesleyan faith in new and creative ways. Fresh expressions are anchored to existing churches, connecting churches with people who would never enter the church building on a Sunday morning. They do not exist to get people to come to the church, but rather to form new faith communities in places where people are already gathering.

Bishop Carter's blog notes the Fresh Expressions movement began in England in 2004, through a report of

the Church of England about the state of the church in that nation, and the need for a new direction. The word "fresh expression" is taken from the Book of Common Prayer: "The Church of England...professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation."

During the March 12 workshop, attendees will reflect on how they see the culture changing in their own church and community, and what responses seem to connect with persons who are clearly outside the church.

Cost is \$40 and includes lunch. Register at umcnic.org/calendar/fresh-expressions. Registration closes March 10 at noon.

Rev. Kenneth Carter is resident bishop of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, president of the Council of Bishops, and author of "Fresh Expressions: A New Kind of Methodist Church" (Abingdon Press, 2017).

Follow-Up Discipleship Systems Training features practical solutions

In March 2020 the Northern Illinois Conference will welcome two guest speakers from the United Methodist Discipleship Ministries to build on the Discipleship Systems Training presented in fall 2019 at six sessions throughout the conference.



Rev. Dr. M. Scott Hughes



Rev. Dr. Ken Sloane

Rev. Dr. Scott Hughes, Executive Director of Congregational Vitality and Intentional Discipleship, and Rev. Dr. Ken Sloan, Director of Stewardship and Connectional Ministries will build on the foundation provided by the #Seeallthepeople training facilitated by Rev. Jeff Campbell, Discipleship Ministries Associate General Secretary for Strategic Programming.

Leaders will learn practical ways to expand on their church's intentional discipleship system with a revitalized perspective on stewardship and discipleship formation. Attendance at the fall sessions is not a prerequisite for this training:

everyone, clergy and laity, is invited to attend. These sessions are perfect as both an introduction to intentional discipleship systems and an exploration of new ways to reframe discipleship in your congregations.

Two workshops will be presented during each training session. Rev. Dr. Hughes will lead the workshop "Exploring the 'How' in the Formation of Mature Disciples," which explores the foundation of discipleship in baptism, where we experience both our acceptance as a child of God and call to lifelong discipleship. Questions for discussion include What role does the church have in forming disciples? How does worship contribute to disciple making? How can small groups contribute to forming of disciples? and How might engaging your community impact our church's activities and growth as disciples? Attendees will discover answers

to these and other questions designed to help churches take next steps in discipleship formation.

In "Exploring the 'How' of Growing Generous Disciples," led by Rev. Sloan, attendees will be challenged to make generosity a part of disciple-making focus. Donors today are not content to simply give but want to see impact and transformation of lives. However, in many churches the focus of stewardship often centers on "how do we pay the bills?" Funding your church's mission and ministry is vitally important, so how do we do that while still keeping our attention on raising up generous disciples? This workshop will encourage churches to recognize the need for their members to experience the joy of generosity.

TRAINING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Training events are offered in each district from March 24-26. You do not have to attend the event in your district; feel free to register for the event that works best with your schedule.

Tuesday, March 24

9 a.m. to 12 noon Chicago Northwestern District
Northbrook UMC, 1190 Western Avenue
2 to 5 p.m. - Chicago Southern District
Oak Lawn: First UMC, 10000 Central Ave
(100th Street & Central Avenue)

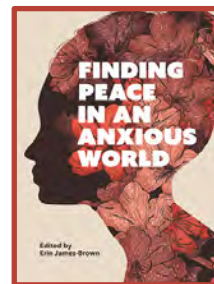
Wednesday, March 25

9 a.m. to 12 noon DeKalb District
Ashton: Reynolds UMC, 2496 Reynolds Road
2 to 5 p.m. Rockford District
Harmony UMC (formerly Freeport: Trinity UMC)
2600 W Pearl City Road, Freeport

Thursday, March 26

9 a.m. to 12 noon - Elgin District
Schaumburg: Our Saviour's, 701 E. Schaumburg Road
2 to 5 p.m. - Aurora District
Naperville: Grace UMC, 300 E. Gartner Road

Register today at www.umcnic.org/calendar/follow-up-discipleship-systems-training.



UVC helps create UMC spiritual growth study book

"Finding Peace in an Anxious World", the 2020 United Methodist Women's Spiritual Growth Study by staff of the Urban Village Church in Chicago, uses the book of Proverbs and "The Serenity Prayer" as a guide to help Christians find their way through anxiety, worry, and fear and move towards God's peace that surpasses all understanding. Using "The Serenity Prayer" as a scaffold, "Finding Peace in an Anxious World" explores ways to discover peace through scriptural and spiritual disciplines so that we can be rooted in God and energized to live fully as disciples of Christ.

"The Serenity Prayer" shaped a 2015 four-part sermon series at the Urban Village Church in Chicago. It was through that series that the church was able to address the tumultuous events of that summer and present a framework for how to approach a God who desires peace for the hearts of God's people in times of anxiety. These sermons are the basis for this book.

The four chapters, each written by a different Urban Village Church leader, focus on different aspects of the prayer—serenity, acceptance, courage, and wisdom—and each concludes with a spiritual practice to help further develop the featured characteristic in your life.

UVC Pastor Emily McGinley said five years ago, staff and pastors gathered to reflect on what their congregants were struggling with and where they need guidance. "As we listened and shared, one issue repeatedly came up: our people were anxious," said McGinley. "Whether it was family relationships, identity, finances, life transitions – you name it – across the board, folks were struggling to manage their inner turmoil in ways that were not only effective, but faithful. Thus our Serenity sermon series was born."

Over four weeks, the sermon series explored how to faithfully find a way through anxiety, worry, and fear to experience God's "peace which surpasses understanding."

"It wasn't long before this became our most listened-to sermon series," said McGinley. "A few months later, the United Methodist Women approached us: Would UVC be willing to share the gift of this sermon series with the broader church?"

UVC is using the book study during Lent and will be distributed across the denomination and all over the world. Purchase for \$10 by visiting unitedmethodistwomen.org/finding-peace-in-an-anxious-world.

Martin Luther King celebration inspires attendees

By Diane Strzelecki, NIC Communications Specialist

Approximately 150 people attended the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. 2020 Celebration at Hinsdale UMC on Sunday, January 19, sponsored by the NIC Committee on Religion and Race. Attendees experienced a powerful message by the evening's guest speaker Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith and heard inspired prayers from Aurora District Superintendent Rev. Jeffery Bross, Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) Administrator Sylvia Jo Oglesby, and Rev. Christian Coon (Urban Village Church/River Forest UMC).

Members of the St. Mark UMC choir led by Rev. Pamela Pirtle provided music and song, along with a special performance of "Freedom Melody" by Caleb Bunton. Sixteen-year-old Kennedy Shanks (Chicago: Gorham UMC) contributed to the spoken word portion of the celebration with her inspiring and thought-provoking poetry.

In her message "Slavery's Enduring Legacy of Disempowerment," Walker-Smith, who is the Senior Associate for Pan-African and Orthodox Church Engagement at Bread for the World, highlighted Martin Luther King's refocus on the systemic issues of racism and his desire to go deeper intellectually and critically with those issues—a refocus that may have led to a less favorable image among his followers and critics alike.

Noting that King's role as a civil rights leader, activists, and social reformer was informed by his

ethnic as a Christian and a Baptist pastor, Walker-Smith said churches should lead the way in calling out and providing solutions regarding racial injustice—starting with themselves. She called on Christians and churches to have difficult conversations around race – the difficult conversations MLK was promoting.

"We've got to find a way to soldier together around reworking these systems," Walker-Smith noted. "Christians need to lead the way."

A question-and-answer period followed Walker-Smith's presentation, where she encouraged attendees to reach out to their younger relatives and neighbors. "Find yourself in their company, where they are, and listen," she said. "If I don't do that, I am missing my future."

A light supper followed the celebration where a diverse group from churches around the NIC enjoyed conversation and fellowship.

"Hinsdale UMC was privileged to host this vital, uplifting event, filled with rousing music and eloquent prayers," says Lennox Iton, Co-Chair of the NIC Commission on Religion and Race and member at Hinsdale UMC. "Dr. Walker-Smith finely wove Dr. King's significant themes into the tapestry of the context and legacy of slavery. The presentation was resonant with our Annual Conference goal of living out the conviction that racism is incompatible with Christian teaching."



Rev. Angelique Walker-Smith, Senior Associate for Pan-African and Orthodox Church Engagement at Bread for the World, shares her presentation on "Slavery's Enduring Legacy of Disempowerment." Photos by Aquilino Javier



Hinsdale UMC hosts the NIC annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration.



Scouts celebrate 100 years refocusing on the future

On Feb. 18, 2020, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) filed for bankruptcy. BSA officials say this Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing opens the door to meet the goals of the BSA: care and compensate all those who have been harmed by past abuse while in Boy Scout programs and to grow the mission for youth in the future.

Steven Scheid, Center for Scouting Ministries Director with the General Commission of United Methodist Men, said this re-organization will occur at the national level and does not impact the local meetings or programs for youth. Councils are independent financial organizations. The change will not impact council or district events.

"Our support for the Boy Scouts of America has not changed," said Scheid. "We need youth who can make moral and ethical decisions over their lifetimes. We need a place for youth to learn citizenship, group and personal skills. Careers and hobbies that help fulfill the lives of youth are taught here."

If one child is harmed, that is too many, Scheid added. "And from the local group to the highest level, the safety of children continues to be paramount. Youth Protection training has been a focus since the late 1980's for BSA." Visit BSArestructuring.org for more information.

A century of scouting

Scouting was officially recognized by the Methodist Episcopal Church in February 1920. In truth, Methodist churches were supporting Scout troops prior to 1920 when James V. Thompson, superintendent of Young People's Sunday School, wrote to James E. West, the Chief Scout of BSA. But that letter marks the first formal relationship between the Methodist Episcopal Church and Boy Scouts of America.

First local church

Grace Methodist Church in Delaware, Ohio, may be the first local church to sponsor a troop. In 1908 The Rev. L.

Eugen Rush wanted to keep Methodist boys off the streets, and he founded the Eastside Roughnecks. The name was eventually changed to the East Side Gang and they became involved in activities like Scout troops engage in today.

Rush later contacted Sir Robert Baden-Powell, a British military hero who founded the Boy Scouts in England. Baden Powell sent Rush a charter, making East Side Gang a troop in the British Scouting movement.

When the Boy Scouts came to America in 1910, Rush's troop became Troop No. 1 in Delaware, Ohio. Now there is a Number One BSA Troop in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Dozens of Methodist Churches between 1908-1909 established Boy Scout Troops. They joined the BSA after its creation in 1910. The pastor was often the first Scoutmaster. The connection of values, character, and the church was natural.

UM Men take the lead

The Center for Scouting Ministries of the General Commission on UM Men takes the lead in nurturing scouting ministries in the denomination. Today 3,111 UM congregations charter 9,611 Scout units serving 309,739 young people. UM churches provide home base for more Scouts than any other denomination in America.

The UMC designates the second Sunday in February for Boy Scouts of America and the second Sunday in March for Girl Scouts of the USA. Many congregations use a Sunday of their choice to celebrate all ministries offered in collaboration with the Center for Scouting Ministries.

Scouting ministry specialists

There are 171 active scouting ministry volunteers serving conference, district and local church Scout units across the U.S. These specialists encourage local churches to sponsor Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY) classes for four age groups. Some pastors use God and Church courses in confirmation classes. In addition, these scouting ministry specialists provide churches with information

about awards to honor Scouts and express appreciation to leaders. If your church is interested in starting a troop, visit gcomm.org/scouting.



First UMC in Woodstock celebrates scouts and leaders on Feb. 9, 2020 during their Scout Sunday worship service. Active since 1916, the church's Troop 159 is the oldest continuously chartered Boy Scout Troop in North America. Photo courtesy Woodstock First UMC's Facebook.



March/April Calendar News

One Board Leadership Model Training

Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Location: Plano UMC, 219 N Hale St, Plano, IL. If you or your church is considering a change in a leadership model, this will be an excellent opportunity to explore the pros and cons of moving to a One Board style of leadership. To register call 630-552-3700 or email office@umcplano.org.

NIC General/Jurisdictional Delegation meetings

Sunday, March 22

Location: Belvidere: First, 610 Bonus Ave, Belvidere, IL 3 - 8 p.m. (open to anyone for observation after 5:45 p.m.)

Sunday, April 19

Location: Dixon: First, 202 Peoria Ave, Dixon, IL
Send off service for the Delegation. Save the date and look for details soon. Follow the Delegation on their Facebook page at facebook.com/NICDelegation.

Mission Leader Training

Saturday, March 28, 8:30 a.m. - 12noon
Kingswood UMC, 401 W. Dundee Rd., Buffalo Grove, IL

Don't start from scratch or reinvent the wheel, join us for training. Lunch will be provided. Register with Kris Aves at 815-751-8743 or aveskris0@gmail.com by March 22. Please purchase the book "A Mission Journey, A Handbook for Volunteers" by Global Mission of the UMC.

UMCOR Sunday

March 22

For resources, visit UMCgiving.org/giveUMCOR.

Native American Ministries Sunday

April 26

In 2019, generous donors gave **\$541,784** towards the ministries funded by the **Native American Ministries Sunday** offering. This offering funds scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians, strengthens and develops Native American ministries and communities, both urban and rural, and supports Native American outreach at the annual conference level. Remember you can celebrate this Sunday and any Special Sunday on a day of your congregation's choosing. For resources, visit umcsgiving.org/givenams.

Early Registration:

Academy for Spiritual Formation

Register today for the Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation: *Come to the Waters* from September 12-17, 2020. The setting is on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan in Racine, Wis., at the Siena Retreat Center. For five days a rhythm of prayer, worship, learning and reflection will center you. Early bird registration is \$625 through March 20, 2020. After the cost increases to \$700. Register online at umcnic.org/calendar/five-day-academy.

Appointments - February Announcements

Bishop Sally Dyck announces the following clergy appointments for the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church effective July 1, 2020 (unless otherwise noted):

Felicia Howell LaBoy (Elder) to Elgin: First (Elgin District) from Melrose Park: Cosmopolitan and Oak Park: St. John's Chicago Northwestern District). Felicia follows Rick Carlson who is retiring.

Jesus Molina Jr. (Local Pastor) to Franklin Park (3/4 time) (Chicago: Northwestern District) from Chicago: Emanuel, Franklin Park, and Melrose Park: Stone Park Mission (Chicago Northwestern District).

Audrine Molina (Local Pastor) to Chicago: Emmanuel (3/4 time) (Chicago Northwestern District) from Chicago: Emanuel and Melrose Park: Stone Park Mission.

Esther Lee (Elder) to Deerfield: Christ (Chicago Northwestern District) from Geneva (Associate) (Aurora District). Esther follows Norval Brown who is appointed to Cary.

Ji Eun (Mori) O (Local Pastor) to Chicago: Ravenswood (Chicago Northwestern District) from Red Oak/Waynet (DeKalb District). Mori will follow Erin James Brown who has been serving as interim following Linda Misewicz-Perconte who retired in December.

Matthew Krings (Elder) to Chicago: Berry (Chicago Northwestern District) from New Lenox (Associate) (Aurora District). Matthew follows Krista Paradiso and Gregory Gross who have been serving as interim following the move of April Gutierrez to Michigan.

Shirley Pulgar-Hughes (Local Pastor) to Schaumburg: Our Redeemer (Elgin District) from Chicago: El Redentor del Calvario (Chicago Northwestern District). Shirley follows Romir Esguerra who is appointed to Joliet: Grace (Aurora District).



DYK???

All about the bishops

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

In The United Methodist Church, we are led by a Council of Bishops. The United Methodist Council of Bishops consists of 66 active and all retired bishops who meet biannually to shepherd the work of the denomination. The Council is further divided into geographic areas: there are five jurisdictions in the U.S. and 20 episcopal areas outside the U.S. The Northern Illinois Conference is in the North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ), which consists of nine bishops and ten conferences with one shared episcopal area: the Dakotas and Minnesota. Jurisdictional bishops as a group are referred to as the College of Bishops.

Bishops are ordained elders in the church who are elected for life by jurisdictional delegates. While every elder in the church is eligible to be elected as a bishop, it is common for each annual conference to endorse a candidate from among their elders for this calling. In 2020, jurisdictions across the connection will be electing bishops.

There is a formula, by membership, which determines

the number of bishops each jurisdiction will receive. When a bishop retires, the jurisdiction elects a replacement. In 2020, two NCJ bishops will retire, including Bishop Sally Dyck. It is likely, however, that only one bishop will be elected in our jurisdiction because we have fallen below the membership threshold to sustain nine episcopal areas. Read more at umcnic.org/news/ncj-recommends-electing-one-bishop.

Final decisions regarding conference boundaries and episcopal areas rest with the Jurisdictional Conference. A task force is developing a recommendation that will be presented at the July Conference.

When conferences share a bishop, the conferences do not merge but maintain their internal structure and identity even though they are one area served by one bishop. The bishop travels between the conferences offering leadership to each.

A final decision on the number of bishops will come at the Jurisdictional Conference in Fort Wayne, Ind. July 15-18. Meanwhile, each annual conference delegation sets in place a process for discernment and endorsement of

episcopal candidates. You can find more about the candidates endorsed in the NCJ at ncjumc.org/episcopal-nominations.

Once bishops are elected, a committee made up of one clergy delegate and one lay delegate from each annual conference in the jurisdiction meets during the jurisdictional conference session to determine episcopal assignments. This committee, called the Jurisdictional Episcopacy Committee, meets with the bishops regularly and reviews a conference profile provided by the annual conference's Episcopacy Committee to better understand the strengths and needs of each area. This group is tasked with matching conference needs and episcopal strengths.

Historically, the episcopal assignments are announced at the Consecration Service on the last day of the Jurisdictional Conference. This year's service is scheduled for Saturday, July 18, 2020 in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Episcopal assignments take effect September 1. While Northern Illinois Conference will know their assignment in July, we will officially greet a new bishop in September.

Outdoor & Retreat Ministries News

2020 Spring Confirmation Retreat

@Reynoldswood: May 15 - May 16

@Wesley Woods: May 1 - May 2

Summer Camp 2020 ~ Seasons of Jesus

From the cradle to the grave, we encounter Jesus through the seasons of the year, and through the seasons of His life. God encounters each one of us in different ways. This summer we focus on how we understand the life of Jesus through the seasons of the Church. Or to put it another way, we will seek to understand why and how the Church Year teaches us about the life of Jesus.

Come join us this summer at Wesley Woods in Williams Bay, WI or Camp Reynoldswood in Dixon, IL as we bring even more excitement to camp. Horses return this year, and communication and unity will be a major focus as we try to stump campers with brain teasers and unique problem solving situations.

J.O.Y. Camp - June 14-20, Grades 5-13 (\$489)

J.O.Y. Camp is designed to challenge and encourage youth in their faith journey. J.O.Y. is an acronym that stands for Jesus, Others, and You. This year we are focusing on the "J" for Jesus. Fun camp activities, Bible studies, and reflection explore ways to invite others to experience Jesus. We use music, multimedia, worship, Scripture, and personal interaction to create an exciting space for campers to share, participate, and experience positive attitudes of mutual respect.

Woodland - July 5-10,

Grades: 4-13 Cost: (\$449)

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 a talent show. Of course, daily crafts and Bible studies, help us experience Jesus in a Christian community.

Chicago Metro - August 2-7,

Grades 4-13 (\$449)

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, horseback riding, swimming, archery, campfires, Bible studies and extensive opportunities to relax and bond with youth from different areas of the Chicago metropolitan area.

Total Camp - June 28-July 3,

Grades 6-9 (\$449)

Total Camp offers Wesley Woods' most diverse camp experience. 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.

Registration and health forms are available online: www.niccamp.org/summercamps.



Summer Plumblin tour returns to Washington D.C.

Do you know a youth in the NIC who would like to head to Washington D.C. this summer to learn about their Christian faith and social justice? Registration is open for the 2020 Plumblin Tour, which will be heading back to the nation's capital from July 22-25. The NIC has taken students on the Plumblin Tour since 2002. Dozens of students have benefited from this opportunity to learn about social justice principles from a faith perspective.

This year the NIC's Anti-Racism Task Force, which was established in 2019 to plan a strategy around the conviction that racism is incompatible with Christian teaching, is partnering with Plumblin organizers to support youth toward working to end racism. They will coordinate with other conference boards and committees to support and empower United Methodist youth toward becoming champions against racism. Their youth theme is "Read something. See something. Do something."

The all-inclusive registration fee for the trip will be lowered from \$699 to \$499 due in part to a grant received from the General Commission on Religion & Race. The fee includes round trip airfare, in-city transportation, hotel accommodations, meals, outings, tours, and seminar speakers. All registration materials must be submitted by May 15 for consideration. For more information and to register, visit umcnic.org/calendar/plumblin-2020.

Job Openings

For the latest job openings in the Northern Illinois Conference, visit www.umcnic.org/jobs.

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Visit www.umcnic.org and scroll down and click on "Sign up for our Newsletter" to enter your name and email.

How to Contact Us

Please submit items at least two weeks prior to publication date. Include your name, address, email, phone number and name of local church. Space is limited. Electronic submissions are preferred with high-resolution attached jpegs. Submissions will be edited at the discretion of Communications staff.

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