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**DO NOT DELAY. DATED MATERIAL**

## Continue Martin Luther King Jr.'s—and God's—agenda, urges Rev. Danita R. Anderson

by Rev. Victoria Rebeck,  
NIC Director of Communications

Over the past 57 years since Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, Northern Illinois United Methodists annually honor his sacrificial leadership and recommit to eradicating racism and the profound gap between rich and poor, influential and invisible.

At the conference's 2025 observation at First United Methodist Church of Downers Grove on Jan. 19, keynote speaker Rev. Danita Anderson spoke of "God's agenda" that we should love all whom we encounter. "Martin Luther King must have heard this agenda," she said.

Rev. Anderson is the first black woman to serve as an assistant to the bishop in the North Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church. She is respected for her leadership in church and community. "This is a bad sister," commended Rev. Marcus Tabb when he introduced her.

King "showed us how to live together in a world that was not interested in living together," Rev. Anderson observed.



**Rev. Danita R. Anderson reminds worshipers that they were created by God to work together to bring about the Beloved Community.**

"He was following God's agenda to show the world that no matter your background, we are to build community together. We were created by God to work together."

This agenda is not finished, she said.

"We must put away the nonsense and stupidity in the world," she said frankly of the divisions that block the establishment of the Beloved Community. In the Beloved

Community, we are responsible for one another.

"Beloved Community" was coined by Josiah Royce of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. King developed the idea into a global vision in which all people share in the wealth of the earth, poverty is eradicated, and racism and all forms of discrimination are replaced by the conviction that all are equally loved members of God's family.

Thus, eradicating racial injustice is necessary for the Beloved Community to become reality.

Referring to the United Methodist membership vows, she urged the worshipers to "resist racial injustice in all the forms it presents itself."

She related two personal stories of racist, threatening behavior she endured from police officers—on Sundays when, as a district superintendent, she was dressed for church and drove with meticulous attention to traffic laws. Even after she identified herself as a clergywoman to the officers who pulled her over, they still spoke contemptuously to her and warned her to leave town.

These events occurred fairly recently—some 160 years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Make sure there is a place at God's table for all, Rev. Anderson said.

This entails helping others when they cannot help themselves. It means caring for others, especially the last and the left out.

"As you think about all the places you go, ask yourself, 'Is there a place at the table for everyone?'" she said.

"If not, get up and give them your place."



**The Swahili Choir of Victory New Faith Community of Rockford buoyed spirits with their joyful songs.**

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports events like the NIC MLK, Jr. Celebration.





From Your Bishop:

# The conspiracy of silence

by Bishop Dan Schwerin

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.” — Romans 12:9

“There is a conspiracy of silence about hatred, its function and its meaning.”

—Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*

We are a love-your-neighbor religion. Scripture calls us 35 times to welcome the stranger. United Methodists ground their lives in grace, which is offered expansively for all—to save and to heal and to grease our growth in love. And yet there is a culture of silence about the othering being done by powerful monied interests at work in the federal government.

In his book *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Howard Thurman has written an entire chapter on hate. Many who have counseled me to be silent for the benefit of the unity of the church do not seem to be troubled by the ways in which silence supports a clear weaponization of the other.

For example, seeds have been planted in the national discourse to displace millions of Palestinians. While some believe that only felons and bad actors are being rounded up in immigration raids, that is not true. Raids have been indiscriminate. I have read in more than one credible source that indigenous persons have been rounded up in the raids. Some in the government have even called for removal of their citizenship.

We all know there is a battle in the courts over birthright citizenship guaranteed by the 14th amendment. Persons who identify as LGBT, especially trans persons, are also losing rights and access to medical treatment. The war on diversity, equity, and inclusion means that women and persons with disabling conditions also face losing their rights. Are these actions unrelated? Episodic?

Are we ready to call this evil and abhor what is evil? If these actions constitute hatred, we must ask how such hatred is functioning—to return to Thurman’s premise. What else is going on while the nation is being divided in this way? How does the silence of Christians help the harm continue? And what does this mean for the church? What would it look like to let love be genuine?

I will encourage us to break the conspiracy of silence about hatred by:

- creating circles for conversation about hard topics in your community of faith
- creating a forum to discuss the Sunday sermon following worship services
- engaging in small talk with anyone as a step toward bridging life together

- being in mission to express your witness to the love of Jesus
- contribute in ways that strengthen the church’s voice
- making relationships with persons who are different from you. Learn.

In *The 2020/2024 Book of Discipline*, among the disciplines by which bishops are encouraged to lead the church is “a prophetic commitment for the transformation of the world” (§ 403.1d). The subparagraph continues, “the role of the Bishop is to be a prophetic voice for justice. . . . and alleviation of human suffering.” Yes, we are to lead the whole flock of Christ, with all its gifts and differences. My hope is to offer a prophetic reminder that God’s relentless love is among us to reduce human suffering.



While these considerations are tearing at the hearts of all spiritual leaders, I would call us to our practices. I have been praying more. I have engaged in Bible study with laity and clergy. I would call us all to the assembly of the faithful for worship and service.

I would also call us to our neighbors. Meet them. Learn from them. Expand your definition of neighbor.

Know that I am praying for you.

Your giving to General Church apportionments support the Episcopal Office.



## In the Wesleys’ footsteps: Reflecting on justice, faith



by Rev. Dr. Tercio Junker,  
Poplar Grove UMC

From Nov. 30 to Dec. 10, 2024, a group of Hispanic/Latino people representing different segments of The United Methodist Church in the U.S. participated in the

Juan and Carlos Wesley Pilgrimage in the United Kingdom.

Sponsored by El Plan for Hispanic/Latine Ministry, Discipleship Ministries, and the Commission on Religion and Race, this English-Spanish pilgrimage took us through the historical and spiritual landscapes of the Wesleyan movement.

As we walked in the footsteps of John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, we were transformed by the enduring relevance of their theology and practice, particularly their commitment to the marginalized,

their work for justice, their gestures of compassion, and their emphasis on holiness of heart and life.

My contribution focused on writing the daily devotional and helping to plan the daily Eucharistic services. For John Wesley, the Eucharist was a memorial and a means of grace, where God’s love is tangibly experienced and shared.

Our pilgrimage began in Bristol, a vital center in the Wesleyan story. At the New Room—the oldest Methodist building in the world—John Wesley established a center for preaching, teaching, and caring for people experiencing poverty. The New Room’s simplicity stands in contrast to the grandeur of many ecclesiastical structures, showing us that the gospel thrives not in opulence but in humble service.

In Bristol, the Wesley brothers ministered to coal miners, prisoners, and the disenfranchised. They preached the radical message of God’s

love for all, challenging the rigid class structures of 18th-century England. Their ministry was marked by action: establishing schools for poor children, advocating for fair wages, and providing medical care. The Wesleys were also vocal opponents of the transatlantic slave trade, which thrived in cities like Bristol.

We also visited Oxford, where the Wesley brothers studied and formed the Holy Club. This group of students committed themselves to prayer, fasting, Bible study, and works of mercy. Despite being mocked by their peers for their methodical approach to faith, they accepted the name “methodists” as a mark of respect.

The Wesleys’ commitment to rigorous study and disciplined practice reminds us that faith is not anti-intellectual but thrives in thoughtful engagement with Scripture and the world. *This article was condensed from a longer piece published by United Methodist News Service.*

Your giving to General Church apportionments support El Plan for Hispanic/Latine Ministry, Discipleship Ministries and GCORR.



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### Stay Connected

Sign up for the weekly NIC eNews, Appointment Announcements and Sympathy notices. Visit umcnic.org and scroll down and click on “Sign up for our Newsletter” to enter your name and email.

### Submissions

Deadlines for submissions Feb. 5, April 5, June 5, Aug. 5, Oct. 5, and Dec. 5. 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 the Communications staff.

### Job Openings

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

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports this publication.



# Annual Conference is Coming

## Monday, June 9, to Wednesday, June 11



# Grace is Sufficient

### Special Observances & Events

- Clergy session: May 13, 9 a.m. to noon, Woori UMC, Naperville
- Laity session: June 9, morning
- Celebration of ministry: June 9, evening
- Bible study: June 10 & 11, mornings
- Lunch-and-learn sessions: June 10, noon to 1:30 p.m.
- Memorial service: June 10, late afternoon
- Retirement celebration: June 11, midmorning

### Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center

1551 N. Thoreau Dr., Schaumburg, Ill.

### Registration

#### Fees:

- April 1-30: \$155
- May 1-23: \$170

There will be NO on-site registration

*\*New for 2025: registration includes a box lunch on Tuesday, June 10*

### Things to note:

- **Box Lunches:** New for the 2025 Annual Conference: on Tuesday, June 10, all registered participants will receive a box lunch. From noon to 1:30 p.m., bring your lunch to a group of interest for a time of learning, presentation, and fellowship.
- **Childcare:** The Annual Conference Committee has worked hard to organize a childcare option for the conference members. Childcare will be provided during session times by Our Saviour's UMC, in conjunction with Our Redeemer's UMC, in Schaumburg. Sign up and pay when registering for Annual Conference. More information to come.
- **Display Tables:** Display tables this year will be in the ballroom foyer and hallway. Find guidelines and registration here: [umcnic.org/2025-annual-conference/registration-reservations-2025](http://umcnic.org/2025-annual-conference/registration-reservations-2025).
- **Legislation:** Submit proposed legislation and historical documents now at [umcnic.org/AC2025Docs](http://umcnic.org/AC2025Docs). The deadline is April 1. Documents will be posted by May 9.
- **Mass Choir:** This year we are again inviting churches to send four or five members from their churches to sing as a mass choir

during the Celebration of Ministry Service on Monday, June 9, at 7 p.m. Those interested should click the link in the sidebar on this page: [umcnic.org/ac2025](http://umcnic.org/ac2025).

- **Memorial Service:** The deadline for submission of names and photos of annual conference lay members to be included in the Memorial Service is May 9. This includes anyone who has passed since May 2024. Please send the information to [ACMedia@umcnic.org](mailto:ACMedia@umcnic.org).
- **Meals:** Conference-related organizations and groups are encouraged to hold their group meals at the hotel. Plated meals, buffet, and reception-style food station options are available. For more information, please contact Ariel Alonso ([aalonso@umcnic.org](mailto:aalonso@umcnic.org)), conference events planner.
- **Mobility Scooters:** Scooters will be available to those who had requested them when they registered in advance for the conference. Be prepared to indicate your scooter request when registering. Please do not wait until you

arrive at the conference to make a request; there will not be one available to you.

- **Presentations:** Requests for presentation time, including media and videos to be projected on the screens, must be submitted for approval in advance. Most spoken presentations will be prerecorded on video. The deadline for requests is April 15. Find the link to the request form in the sidebar here: [umcnic.org/ac2025](http://umcnic.org/ac2025).
- **Reserve Ad Space:** Advertise your United Methodist-related organization or activity in the Program Booklet. Find the link for more information in the sidebar here: [umcnic.org/ac2025](http://umcnic.org/ac2025).
- **Volunteers:** We need registration helpers, ushers/plenary pages, greeters, information desk volunteers, and more to help Annual Conference run smoothly and efficiently. Volunteers need to be at least 16 and cannot be voting members. Find the link in the sidebar here: [umcnic.org/ac2025](http://umcnic.org/ac2025). Complete the form by May 5.

Be sure to watch the weekly NIC eNews for up-to-date information as well as the registration link. Sign up here to receive the eNews: [umcnic.org/newslettersignup](http://umcnic.org/newslettersignup).

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports the Annual Conference Session and special events



## Conferences will vote on constitutional amendments

by Heather Hahn, assistant news editor,  
United Methodist News Service

General Conference delegates passed amendments to the United Methodist constitution last year. The next step: voters in the annual conference determine whether to ratify them.

In the coming months, lay and clergy voters at each of these conferences will consider changes that carry out the restructuring plan called "regionalization," stand against racism and colonialism, expand inclusiveness in church membership, and clarify who can vote for clergy delegates.

The amendments approved at General Conference last year next must win at least two-thirds of the aggregate vote at annual conferences. That is, the threshold for passage is not a two-thirds vote at each annual conference, but two-thirds of all annual conference votes. That means the

results won't be known until after all 127 United Methodist annual conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines and the U.S. have held a vote. Northern Illinois will take these votes in June.

Annual conference voters may debate each ballot but may not alter any of the language.

The most discussed and far-reaching of the measures coming before annual conference voters is worldwide regionalization, a package of legislation that gives the UMC's different geographic regions equal decision-making authority.

Under regionalization, the U.S. and each central conference (church regions in Africa,

Europe and the Philippines) would become regional conferences with the same authority to adapt parts of the Book of Discipline, the denomination's policy book, for more mission effectiveness. Just as is now the case in the U.S. and each central

conference, each regional conference would consist of multiple annual conferences.

At present, only central conferences have authority under the denomination's constitution to adapt the Discipline as missional needs and different legal contexts require. The constitutional amendments not only extend that same authority to the U.S. but also spell out what can be adapted.

Among other things, each regional conference would be able to publish its own hymnal, book of worship and regional Book of Discipline; set requirements for ordination and licensed ministry of clergy; develop practices around marriage ceremonies, funerals, and other rites; and more.

Regionalization would require changes to more than 20 paragraphs in the denomination's constitution. Annual conferences will vote on all of these amendments on a single ballot.

The regionalization plan came about through cooperation among United Methodists around the world who saw regionalization as the best path toward denominational unity. *This article was condensed from a longer piece published by United Methodist News Service.*



# Apply now for small town/rural church grants

by Rev. Libby Rutherford,

chair of the Keagy/Town and Rural Committee.

Are you in a small-town or rural church? Have you been dreaming of a creative ministry opportunity in your community, but need a little financial help? The Northern Illinois Conference awards two grants for rural ministry each year—the PACK (Planned Act of Christian Kindness) Grant and the Keagy Grant—to empower small-town and rural churches in their community outreach.

PACK grants can range from \$100 to \$500. They are meant to help churches bless the community outside of the church to show them Jesus Christ's love.

The Keagy Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000. They are funded by a bequest from Martin Keagy, who had a big heart for small-town and rural churches. These grants are for larger ministry projects that benefit the community and strengthen the church's evangelism, discipleship, justice, and compassion.

Find the grant applications at [umcnic.org/grants](http://umcnic.org/grants). Winners are usually notified within two

months after the March 31 deadline. Recipients will present their ministries at the Town and Rural Festival held in the fall. If you have any questions about the grants or the grant process, please contact Rev. Libby Rutherford at [rutherford.libby@gmail.com](mailto:rutherford.libby@gmail.com).

Be sure to apply by March 31!

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports the Keagy/Town and Rural grant program.



## Laity Convocation renews hope and grace

by Rev. Victoria Rebeck, NIC Director of Communications

Laypeople reclaimed their callings and God's grace in their lives at the Northern Illinois Laity Convocation, Feb. 8 at New Lenox United Methodist Church.

About 100 people attended and found inspiration in the Board of Laity's theme for the event, which they drew from the Star Wars franchise: "A Renewed Hope: May God's Grace Be with You."

God's grace, and how it comforts and challenges, infused the speaker's encouraging words.

Rev. Eugene Williams, NIC co-lay leader, found quotes from the Star Wars movies — particularly those of the Yoda character — that can inform Christian discipleship.

One was "Do or do not; there is no try." Discipleship requires our complete commitment. Half-hearted tries at following God will not get us far and will not enable us to use our gifts to build the world God intends.

Yoda also taught his protégé, Luke Skywalker, not to trust his eyes or ears, but to follow the force. "It's easy to think that something can't be done," Mr. Williams said, noting the many obstacles that discour-

age us. But following our force — God — makes all things possible.

Reflecting on grace and hope, Bishop Dan Schwerin recalled the wisdom of theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who had been conscripted into the German army during World War II. Eventually, he was captured and sent to a prisoner of war camp in Scotland.

Moltmann and the other prisoners experienced God's grace from the camp chaplain, who invited them to his home every Sunday for a homemade dinner.

"Don't go into despair. The resurrection brings hope. Christ walks beside us unseen," he urged, reminding listeners of the story of the two travelers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).

Two speakers encouraged laypeople to find and live out their callings.

"Do you hear the cries of those who are not in the church?" asked Michael Pope, president of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders and the California-Nevada Conference lay leader.

"We have spiritual gifts so we can live into our purpose, to know our reason for being," she said.

Conference Treasurer Elaine Moy talked about her call in terms of empire vs. Christianity. Sometimes we conflate the two, she said.

"I want to be made uncomfortable when I am at church," she said, countering the temptation to assume all is well with the world. "It's our job to be uncomfortable."

We can tolerate discomfort by embracing hope. "Bring hope wherever you go," said Ms. Pope, the AACLL president. "Have courage and do not be afraid."



The Board of Laity got into the spirit of the Star Wars-inspired theme.

Only a suffering God can help those who are suffering, Moltmann taught.

"If we don't embrace the suffering God, our faith is superficial," Bishop Schwerin said.

## Leading the Laity Stay Focused



by Eugene Williams,  
Conference Co-Lay Leader

On behalf of the laity of the Northern Illinois Conference, I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the

Christ! Let us continue to embrace 2025 as a Year of Grace. We need to have a precision, laser-like focus on what we are called to do as followers of Christ. We cannot be distracted by what has taken place or will take place by anyone who tries to take away our joy in the Lord. Our joy can only be taken from us if we allow it to happen. So let us build upon this Year of Grace, this Renewed Hope 2025, knowing that Grace is Sufficient.

May the Force (grace, faith, and hope) that binds us all together be with each of

us. God is still in control, so stay on target! Ignore the smoke and mirrors and the noise and clutter that come from anyone proclaiming to be the great Wizard of Oz! Rest assured that no executive orders or divisive acts will ever undo the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and so many others. And it absolutely will not undo the great commandments that Christ has written upon each of our hearts (Matt. 22:37, 39): "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." Which is followed by the second commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Stay focused! If we stay in love with God and our neighbors, we will be able to withstand and overcome anything un-Christlike that comes our way. Christ is always moving closer to us,

even when we are not moving closer to Him. Seek Him while He can still be found. He is hiding right there in plain sight. His prevenient grace will never leave us and His word will never return void.

The Northern Illinois Conference Board of Laity would like to extend a special thank you to the community of faith at New Lenox United Methodist Church for their radical hospitality in hosting our Laity Convocation in February. We renewed our hope and strengthened our desire to make disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. Thanks to all who participated, attended, and assisted in this wonderful event.

With and through the works of the Holy Spirit: May the force be with you as we look to Lent and beyond! Go with Christ, go with hope, go with grace, and be well. Amen!

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports the work of the Board of Laity and Laity Convocation.



# 2024 Our connectional generosity is rising

by Elaine Moy, NIC Treasurer

The 2024 apportionment contributions have been totaled! Our churches have contributed \$4,110,820 for the Northern Illinois Conference apportionment and \$814,994 for the General Church apportionment.

## What do those numbers mean?

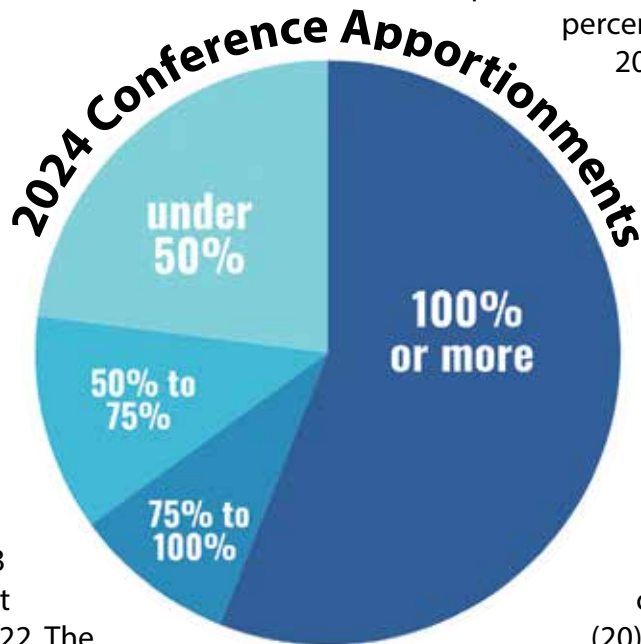
We collected 79 percent of the total apportionment for conference ministries. We are moving in the right direction, since we surpassed the 77 percent in 2023 and the 75 percent we collected in 2022. The last time we reached 79 percent was in 2021.

For the General Church we collected 46 percent of the total apportionment. We are moving in the right direction in this category too, since we collected 34 percent in 2021 and 38 percent in 2022 and 2023. The last time we paid 100 percent was in 2012. We can proudly say that we contributed 100 percent for 9 of the 13 years between 2000 and 2012.

Another sign of your faithfulness to our connectional church is that more churches increased their contribution to the conference apportionment in 2024:

- 56 percent of churches (176) paid 100 percent or more—2 percent more than in 2023 (171 churches).
- 9 percent of churches (27) paid 75 to 100 percent—holding steady from 2023 (27 churches).

- 12 percent of churches (37) paid 50 to 75 percent—2 percent more than in 2023 (27 churches).
- 23 percent of churches (72) paid less than 50 percent—5 percent fewer than in 2023 (87 churches).

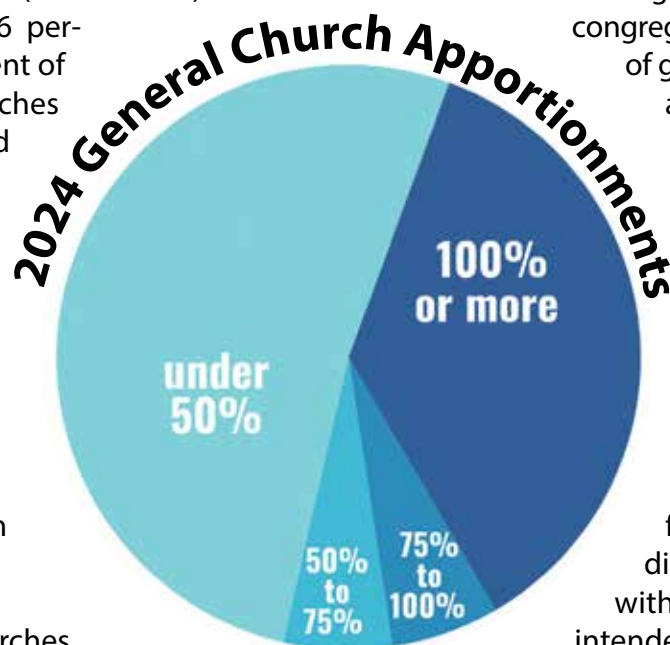


More churches also increased their contributions to the General Church apportionment in 2024.

- 36 percent of churches (111) paid 100 percent or more—7 percent more than in 2023 (91 churches).
- 6 percent of churches (20) paid 75 to 100 percent—2 percent more than in 2023 (13 churches).

- 6 percent of churches (19) paid 50 to 75 percent—2 percent more than in 2023 (12 churches).
- 52 percent of churches (162) paid below 50 percent—a decrease of 11 percent from 2023 (196 churches).

Even though we are contributing more than in the previous few years, we need to continue to increase our giving to both annual conference and general church apportionments.



The 2020/2024 *Book of Discipline*, which is one of our points of connection as United Methodists, tells us:

“Payment in full of these apportionments by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the Church.” (§ 247.14).

“It is strongly recommended that the committee on finance, in collaboration with the church council, find creative ways to turn their congregation into tithing congregation with an attitude of generosity. All financial asking to be included in the annual budget of the local church shall be submitted to the committee on finance.” (§ 258.4)

If your church has challenges to paying apportionments and for other services for which it is billed directly, please speak with your district superintendent about options for your church.

Learn more about apportionments at [umcnic.org/apportionments](http://umcnic.org/apportionments). See pp. 6-7 for the list of church apportionment payments.

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Look for this symbol throughout *The Reporter* to see what your apportionments help support.



Look for this symbol throughout *The Reporter* to see what your apportionments help support.

## Mission Links change the world



by Lisa Smith, NIC Communications Specialist  
The Northern Illinois Conference and the Conference Global Board of Ministries thank those churches that went the second mile as 100 percent Mission Links churches. In addition to general church and annual conference apportionment gifts, the NIC received over \$440,000 in second-mile giving and over \$70,000 in Special Sunday offerings.

To become a Mission Links 100 percent supporter, a church must pay its apportionments (conference and general church) in full and make a gift to at least one project in each of the giving areas. “Mission Links giving is an amazing chance for churches to step up and support the projects that unite the Methodist faithful in supporting those who need us,” noted David W. Quinn, the Northern Illinois Conference apportionments administrator.

Through Mission Links, NIC churches support The Advance for Christ and His Church (The Advance). As the official giving channel, The Advance enables churches, individuals, and organizations directly to support missionaries and projects that empower people around the world to enhance their quality of life and grow as spiritual leaders. These designated funds support missionaries and mission projects such as church development, disaster relief, health services, contextual agriculture, small-business entrepreneurial skills, education, and much more.

Find a detailed listing of the missionaries currently supported through our Mission Links program at [umcnic.org/missionlinks](http://umcnic.org/missionlinks). The booklet is currently being revised for the 2024-2028 quadrennium; watch for updates.

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### Mission Links Churches

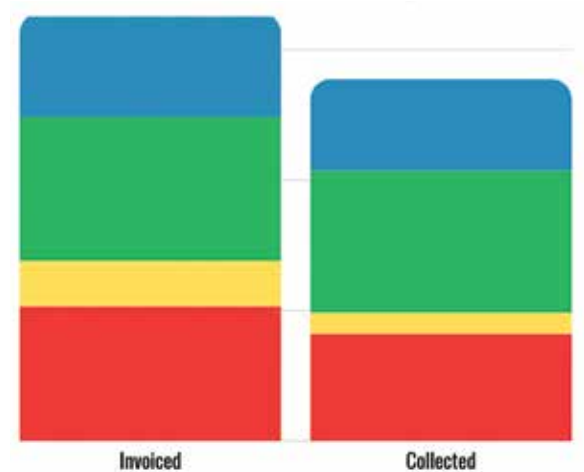
Buffalo Grove: Kingswood  
Chana  
Chicago: Morgan Park  
Earlville  
Hanover  
Harmon  
Lanark

Lemont  
Marengo  
Oswego: Good Shepherd  
Ottawa: First  
Serena  
Sheridan



Look for this symbol throughout *The Reporter* to see what Mission Links help support.

## Connectional Giving Update



### Our collection rates for 2024:

- NIC Apportionments 79%
- General Church Apportionments 46%
- Health & Pensions 98%
- Property Insurance 86%

\* For invoices and payments through Dec. 31, 2024



# Northern Illinois churches:

Church	Conf.	Gen.
Addison: Good Samaritan	0%	0%
Albany	100%	0%
<b>Alden</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Algonquin: Christ	100%	8%
<b>Alsip: Christ</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Antioch</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Apple River	95%	39%
<b>Argo Fay</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Arlington Heights: First	100%	30%
Arlington Heights: Incarnation	92%	27%
Ashton	95%	87%
Aurora: Bethany of Fox Valley	51%	0%
<b>Aurora: Nueva Vida</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Aurora: Wesley	41%	0%
Barrington: Barrington	43%	8%
Barrington: Salem	100%	0%
Batavia	92%	89%
Belvidere: First	100%	89%
Belvidere: Iglesia Esperanze y Vida	94%	83%
<b>Bensenville: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Blaine</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Blue Island: Grace (Closed)	0%	0%
Blue Island: La Gracia de Dios NFC	0%	0%
Bolingbrook: Crossroads of Faith	100%	0%
<b>Bolingbrook: Friendship</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Brookfield Compassion	100%	0%
<b>Brookville</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Buffalo Grove: Kingswood</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Burritt	0%	0%
Capron	79%	50%
<b>Carol Stream: St. Andrew</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Cary</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Cedarville	100%	0%
Chadwick: Hope	100%	0%
<b>Chana</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Channahon	7%	0%
<b>Cherry Valley</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: Adalberto Memorial	100%	0%
Chicago: African Community	52%	46%
Chicago: Amor de Dios	0%	0%
Chicago: Berry Memorial (Clsd)	58%	6%
Chicago: Bethany/Jesus, El Buen Pastor	11%	0%
Chicago: Big Shoulders (Clsd)	42%	0%
<b>Chicago: Broadway</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Chicago: Chicago Lawn</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: Church of 3 Crosses	29%	0%
<b>Chicago: Clair Christian</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: East Side	48%	0%
Chicago: Edison Park	100%	0%
Chicago: El Redentor/ Redeemer of Calvary	100%	6%
Chicago: Emanuel	0%	0%
Chicago: Faith (Closed)	50%	50%
<b>Chicago: First (Temple)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: First Vietnamese	29%	0%
Chicago: Freedom (Closed)	14%	0%

Church	Conf.	Gen.
Chicago: Gorham	100%	0%
Chicago: Grace of Logan Square	60%	27%
Chicago: Granville Avenue	0%	0%
Chicago: Greenstone	39%	0%
<b>Chicago: Hartzell Memorial</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Chicago: House of Praise</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Chicago: Humboldt Park</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Chicago: Hyde Park Korean</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: Indo Pak	100%	0%
<b>Chicago: Ingleside Whitfield</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: Kelly/Woodlawn (Clsd)	50%	0%
Chicago: Lincoln	100%	0%
Chicago: Mandell (Closed)	27%	27%
Chicago: Maple Park	100%	58%
<b>Chicago: Morgan Park</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: New Gresham (Clsd)	0%	0%
Chicago: Olivet	27%	0%
Chicago: Parish of the Holy Covenant	58%	0%
Chicago: Ravenswood Fellowship	50%	0%
Chicago: Renewed Hope	42%	4%
<b>Chicago: Resurrection</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: South Shore	100%	88%
Chicago: Southlawn	100%	0%
Chicago: St. Mark	54%	54%
Chicago: St. Matthew	100%	0%
Chicago: Trinity	58%	58%
<b>Chicago: Union Avenue</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Chicago: United Church of Hyde Park	0%	0%
Chicago: United Church of Rogers Park	69%	0%
Chicago: Wesley	100%	3%
Chicago: West Ridge	100%	0%
<b>Coleta</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Creston	62%	45%
Crete	22%	0%
Crystal Lake: First	100%	8%
<b>Dakota Rock Grove</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Davis Junction	20%	20%
<b>Davis: Calvary</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
DeKalb: First	100%	0%
Des Plaines: First	100%	0%
Des Plaines: Neuvo Amanecer	100%	86%
Dixon: First	6%	0%
Dixon: Grace	42%	33%
Dolton: Faith	100%	8%
Downers Grove: Faith	24%	29%
Downers Grove: First	83%	82%
Durand	51%	36%
<b>Earlville</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
East Jordan	100%	0%
Elgin: Cornerstone	0%	0%
Elgin: First	55%	14%
<b>Elgin: Journey of Hope</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Elizabeth	100%	67%
Elk Grove: Prince of Peace	100%	0%
<b>Elmhurst: Christ</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Elmhurst: First	100%	34%
Erie	9%	0%
<b>Esmond</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Evanston: Emmanuel</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Evanston: First	92%	100%
Evanston: Hemenway	100%	30%

Church	Conf.	Gen.
Evanston: Sherman	100%	0%
<b>Evergreen Park: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Fairhaven (Merged)	58%	58%
Flossmoor: South Suburban Korean	58%	58%
<b>Forreston</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Fox River Grove: Community	0%	0%
Franklin Grove (Closed)	24%	14%
Franklin Park: First	48%	0%
Freeport: Faith	100%	54%
Freeport: First	49%	0%
<b>Freeport: Harmony</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Freeport: Red Oak	100%	0%
<b>Galena</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Geneva	100%	52%
Genoa: Faith	71%	0%
German Valley	0%	0%
Glen Ellyn: First	23%	23%
Glencoe: North Shore	100%	0%
Glenview	65%	0%
Grayslake: United Protestant	6%	0%
<b>Green Garden</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Hampshire: First	19%	0%
<b>Hampshire: Zion</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Hanover</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Harmon</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Harvard: First	56%	31%
Harvey: Transformation Community	100%	9%
Hazel Crest: Community	29%	29%
<b>Hebron</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Herbert: Davis	6%	6%
<b>Hickory Grove</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Hinckley: First	93%	85%
Hinsdale	100%	0%
Homewood: St. Andrew (Clsd)	0%	0%
<b>Hunter</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Ingleside	100%	83%
Itasca: The Center	0%	0%
Joliet: Cristo Es El Camino NFC	0%	0%
<b>Joliet: Grace</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Joliet: Hope</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Joliet: Ingalls Park	71%	0%
Joliet: Trinity	0%	0%
Kaneville	58%	58%
Kingston	100%	87%
Kirkland: First	92%	0%
<b>La Moille: Community</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
La Salle: Grace	9%	0%
LaGrange: First	65%	1%
Lake Bluff: Grace	82%	73%
Lake Villa	51%	0%
<b>Lanark</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Lansing: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Leaf River</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Leland	100%	0%
<b>Lemont</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Lena	100%	71%
Leon	100%	0%
Libertyville	100%	95%
Lighthouse	100%	50%
Lockport: First	100%	0%
Lombard: Faith	71%	0%
Lombard: First	100%	45%

# Connected through giving



Church	Conf.	Gen.
<b>Machesney Park: Evans</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Machesney Park: Harlem</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Machesney Park: New Life UMC (Merged)	50%	0%
Malta	75%	0%
Manhattan	67%	0%
<b>Maple Park: Grace</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Marengo</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Marseilles	49%	0%
<b>Maywood: Neighborhood</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
McHenry: First	33%	0%
McHenry: Mount Hope	100%	0%
Melrose Park: Cosmopolitan	100%	0%
<b>Mendota: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mendota: Zion</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Millbrook</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Milledgeville</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Millington	10%	0%
Minooka	51%	0%
Morris: First	19%	27%
<b>Morrison</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mount Carroll</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mount Morris: Disciples</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mount Prospect: Sam Mool Korean</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Mount Prospect: Trinity	100%	40%
Mundelein: Vision Church	0%	0%
<b>Naperville: Community</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Naperville: Grace	100%	0%
Naperville: Hope Indian	0%	0%
Naperville: Wesley	89%	13%
Naperville: Wheatland Salem	0%	0%
<b>New Lenox</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
New Milford	20%	2%
Northbrook: North Northfield	38%	0%
Northbrook: Northbrook	100%	77%
<b>Norway</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Oak Lawn: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Oak Park: Euclid Avenue</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Oak Park: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Oak Park: St. John's</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Olympia Fields	32%	3%
<b>Orangeville</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Oregon	100%	19%
Orland Park: Faith	100%	0%
<b>Orland Park: First Korean</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Oswego: Good Shepherd</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Oswego: Wellspring</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Ottawa: Epworth	54%	1%
Ottawa: Evangelical	84%	48%
<b>Ottawa: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Palatine: First	60%	0%
<b>Palos</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Park Forest: Grace United Protestant	83%	33%
Park Ridge: First	100%	11%
Paw Paw	92%	92%
<b>Pearl City: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Pecatonica</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Peotone	95%	2%
Plainfield: First	36%	20%
Plattville	93%	0%
Polo: Faith	100%	0%
<b>Poplar Grove</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Princeton: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Church	Conf.	Gen.
Prophetstown	8%	0%
Prospect Heights: Central Korean	30%	0%
Prospect Heights: Galilee	67%	67%
Red Oak DeKalb	69%	0%
<b>Reynolds</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>River Forest</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Riverside: Woodside</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Rochelle</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Rock Falls	43%	12%
Rockford: Aldersgate	100%	0%
Rockford: Beth Eden	100%	67%
Rockford: Brooke Road	100%	0%
Rockford: Centennial Multicultural	100%	0%
<b>Rockford: Christ</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Rockford: Christ the Carpenter	18%	0%
Rockford: Court Street	41%	6%
Rockford: Emerge NFC (Clsd)	0%	0%
<b>Rockford: Grace</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Rockford: Victory NFC	0%	0%
Rockton	93%	83%
Roscoe	92%	83%
<b>Roselle</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Sandwich: United</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Savanna: First	100%	0%
Scales Mound	29%	0%
Schaumburg: Our Redeemer's	100%	15%
Schaumburg: Our Saviour's	100%	92%
Schaumburg: Salem Korean	21%	0%
<b>Seneca: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Serena</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Shannon: Bethel</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Sheridan</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Shirland</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Skokie: Central</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Skokie: Jesus Loves Korean</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>South Elgin: Community</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
St. Charles: Baker	63%	17%
<b>Sterling: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Church	Conf.	Gen.
<b>Sterling: Wesley</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Steward</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Stockton: Wesley</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Sugar Grove	100%	0%
Sycamore	81%	100%
<b>Tampico</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Thomson</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Thornton (Closed)	0%	0%
<b>Tinley Park</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Triumph</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Urban Village	100%	0%
Villa Park: Calvary (Merged)	67%	67%
Walnut	0%	0%
Warren	13%	26%
<b>Waterman</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Wauconda: Federated Church	84%	81%
<b>Waukegan: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Waukegan: New Hope	40%	0%
West Chicago: First	58%	0%
<b>West Dundee: First</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Western Springs (Closed)	0%	0%
Wheaton: Gary	100%	25%
Wheeling: First Korean	50%	50%
<b>Wilmette: Trinity</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Wilmington	41%	7%
Wilton Center Federated Church	100%	0%
Winfield: South Asian	0%	0%
Winnebago	0%	0%
<b>Winthrop Harbor: North Prairie</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Woodridge	100%	0%
Woodstock: First	54%	0%
Wyanet	100%	67%
<b>Yorkville: Trinity</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Zion: Memorial	18%	0%

Churches in blue paid 100% in General Church and NIC Apportionments  
For more information visit: [umcnic.org/apportionments](http://umcnic.org/apportionments).



## Update

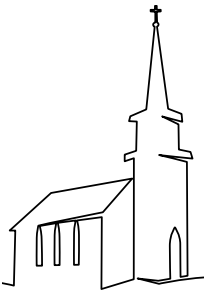
As we continue our journey of repair and restoration for people who were abused as children while in Boy Scout troops, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the churches and individuals who have faithfully contributed to the fund. We have collected \$547,223.78, This is about 70 percent of our total, leaving us with \$195,205.22 left to raise.

While we celebrate the progress we've made, there is still work to be done. We encourage those who have not yet contributed to join us in fulfilling our collective responsibility. Every contribution—large or small—helps us complete our financial commitment as we continue our work of listening, healing, and protecting.



\*updated 1/31/25

For more information visit: [umcnic.org/repairtheharm](http://umcnic.org/repairtheharm).



# Local Church News

## Our Saviour's feeds the hungry

by Tim Alexander, Our Saviour's UMC, Director of Discipleship

About a year and a half ago, the United Methodist Men at Our Saviour's in Schaumburg launched a program to distribute \$25 Wal-Mart gift cards to people in the area in need. The pilot program was able to distribute \$500 in cards, covered by funds the UMM raised from their annual golf tournament.

In December 2024, the UMM invited the entire congregation to join them. In addition to the UMM's gift of \$1,000 from their 2024 golf event fundraiser and the United Women of Faith's \$1,000 gift, the church raised \$7,730 for a total of \$9,730 for the project.

The UMM purchased \$25 and \$50 gift cards (most were \$50). The few cards left will be distributed as needs arise. We learned that many card recipients were so happily surprised that tears of joy filled their eyes.

### Wide distribution

The cards were distributed in a wide variety of towns. Some took cards with them to distribute in downtown Chicago; others took them as far west as Huntley and Pingree Grove. We also

gave cards to food distribution programs to supplement the baskets given to families, the Elgin Community Crisis Center, and for supplemental food items served at a soup kitchen in Elgin that members of OSUMC work at monthly.

We plan to continue this project on an annual basis. The UMM are thankful for the congregation for their donations and also for helping to find people and distribute the cards to folks in need. We also want to thank Pastor David Lagos-Fonseca for championing the project with related sermons, stories, Bible verses, and encouragement.

In addition to the gift card program, Our Saviour's has

been collecting monthly donations from the congregation for over 35 years for the Schaumburg Township Food Pantry. The Fourth Sunday Food Drive has collected and spent over \$18,000 this year alone for the program.

Members of the congregation work with the food pantry to purchase supplies and deliver them monthly. In November and December,

the Social Justice Committee held a separate collection for holiday food items such as gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and dessert items. Our Saviour's and Our Redeemer's UMCs in Schaumburg also supply volunteers each month to pack food bags at Feed Our Starving Children for worldwide distribution.



Members of Our Saviour's and Our Redeemer's packing food bags at Feed Our Starving Children.

## UMC of Geneva goes native—and geothermal

by Kimberley Larsen, UMCG Communications

UMCG has a long history of being friendly to the environment and doing what it can to care for the planet, but this year they completed their greatest "Creation Care" project yet – they finished transforming their old, traditional HVAC system into a geothermal one and upgraded their surrounding landscaping to be more environmentally friendly. As Rolland Lang, an active member of UMCG's Creation Care team and current Treasurer, explains it, "It all came down to a matter of timing and the church's willingness to think outside the box." Faced with \$2500 a month in electricity bills and aging HVAC equipment that could no longer sustain the church, a group of UMCG members were inspired after attending their Conference's "Green Fair," where they learned of Euclid Avenue UMC's installation of a ground-based geothermal HVAC system and rooftop solar system. The group learned that the geothermal system and solar panels had reduced Euclid Avenue's gas and electricity costs by about sixty-six percent and were very inspired.

"We were pleased to discover that geothermal would be feasible at UMCG: giving us more flexibility in heating and cooling, significant operational cost savings, improving our impact on the environment, and would cost the same as replacing our old system," explained Lang.

UMCG's building has some unique challenges. First, the church comprises a series of additions spanning 150 years. The conventional system, including a converted oil-burning forced air system they called "The Beast," was not at all efficient. Second, the systems were not zoned

appropriately, and the estimates from conventional HVAC contractors were remarkably high. "Trying to make a new system work together using conventional units to replace 'The Beast' would be impossible. That's where geothermal came in," explained Tony Zefron, the church's project manager.

Geothermal technology uses a series of well loops outside the building to bring coolant into heat pumps located throughout the church. For summer air conditioning, the coolant, at a steady 56 degrees, allows the heat pumps to use just the fan inside of it to cool the air as it blows across the coils. The coolant warms up in this process but is then pumped back into the loop and deep into the wells to cool back down to 56 degrees. In the winter, the loops produce heat by recirculating the coolant within the indoor system. Each time the coolant recirculates, it becomes hotter, and the fan blows across the hot coils to warm the room.

UMCG's situation is even more unique because it does not own much land around the church. This forced them to dig 12 wells, over five hundred feet deep, which is much deeper than normal, and supply chain issues and labor shortages made the drilling take twice as long as planned. The project was finally complete after

two months of calibration and adjustments. "We are pleased with the way the system has been working and the savings in utility costs. Our gas provider thought our gas meter was broken because we were using no gas," added Trustees Chair Ron Donovan.

The church was prepared for major landscaping restructuring and Creation Care suggested a more "native" approach. The team was essential in helping the church decide how to rebuild the landscaping after months of trenching, adding irrigation for sustainability and Dark Sky outdoor lighting, which is designed to direct light to the ground instead of the sky to reduce light pollution. "We saw this as an excellent opportunity to replant with drought-resistant natives. Our Church grounds will be an oasis for birds and pollinators such as bumble bees and butterflies. It will also highlight the beauty of native plants and demonstrate how well they work in

an urban setting," said Fran Manos, a member of the Creation Care Team.

"Geothermal technology works and is a perfect alternative to conventional HVAC systems. If your church has an antiquated, inefficient system or your building is a montage of additions to the original structure like ours, it is well worth the effort to look into geothermal when updating or replacing the HVAC," said Zefron.







by Rev. Fabiola Grandon-Mayer,  
NIC Director of Connectional Ministries  
I'm an immigrant Hispanic/  
Latinx woman born and  
raised in Chile. I came to the  
United States when I was  
30 years old and received

my first appointment at the Northern Illinois Conference in 2012 to serve Elgin: First UMC as associate pastor. This conference has embraced me, shaped me, and given me the opportunity to learn, grow, and share my gifts and talents. Something that I appreciated the most in our conference when I joined was the diversity. I celebrated then and celebrate today the richness of our diversity and appreciation of the different cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and theological views, recognizing that each of us brings unique gifts to our shared journey.

We are living in challenging times as a country. Divisiveness, hate, polarization, and persecution of immigrant communities seem to permeate every aspect of our society, creating barriers between communities, families, and even within the church. It is in these moments that our call to unity becomes even more urgent. As followers of Christ, we are called to be peacemakers, bridge-builders, and examples of love in a world that so desperately needs

healing. The early church exemplified this unity in diversity. Acts 2:42-47 paints a powerful picture of believers coming together, sharing everything, and supporting one another in love.

This is a critical time when we must be united in proclaiming to our world, society, and country the need for love, faith, hope, justice, and unity. We are called to live together in unity, even though we know it is not always an easy task in today's world.

Diversity enriches us, unity strengthens us! Our differences are not obstacles but gifts that bring depth, creativity, and a fuller reflection of God's image. When we embrace diversity, we gain new insights, deepen our compassion, and create a more vibrant and inclusive community. Yet, diversity alone is not enough; we must also strive for unity. Unity calls us to move beyond mere coexistence and into true fellowship, where we uplift and support one another in love. It is through



unity that we find strength, resilience, and the power to create lasting change.

As we move forward as the Northern Illinois Conference, let us continue to support and celebrate our diversity by embracing all cultures and backgrounds. Let us stand with and support our immigrant siblings, recognizing their invaluable contributions and ensuring they feel welcomed and valued. Let us listen, learn, and uplift each other in faith. We are not alone in this journey.

We are stronger together!

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports Connectional Ministries.



## Planting seeds of change: Empowering communities through gardens and sustainability

by Diana Davis, HEAL Well Leadership Team member

The Northern Illinois Conference's HEAL Well initiative is an innovative project addressing food insecurity and environmental sustainability through faith and action. HEAL Well's mission is to unite faith communities and local stakeholders to create a more sustainable future by planting trees and volunteering in community gardens in urban neighborhoods. Its vision is rooted in trust and care for God's creation, fostering relationships that sustain the earth and its people.

On Aug. 27, members of Northern Illinois Conference's Black Healing Collective visited community gardens in Chicago's Austin neighborhood to learn about food insecurity and opportunities to make a difference. They identified a critical need for volunteers to maintain the gardens and shared their findings with the Conference Committee on Religion and Race. In response, HEAL Well (Helping Everyone Access Life Well) was born.

HEAL Well opens opportunities to identify concrete deserts and food deserts and to increase tree cover and support healthy eating options to a variety of communities in northern Illinois. It's a participatory initiative wherein volunteers learn about gardening, sustainable living, and community engagement.



In the growing season, HEAL Well hopes to engage with and develop a core group of at least 25 high-school students (paid with a stipend) who will be the primary planters and maintainers of trees in their communities. In addition, HEAL Well hopes to engage at least 25 United Methodist volunteers who will work at community gardens at least one day per month for a minimum of two hours each time.

During the off-season, HEAL Well will focus on knowledge and relationship-building with nonprofit organizations and the communities the group hopes to serve. They are holding monthly online learning sessions to illuminate the contexts of the neighborhoods where they will work.

HEAL Well is a part of CCORR's Advocacy Partners subgroup, working with the conference's Net Zero Team and Board of Church and Society. Their six-person leadership team has been meeting since October. In summer 2025, they will partner



with Faith in Place to help learn how to plant trees, the Austin Garden Collective to learn and work in their more than 25 community gardens, and Olivet United Methodist Church in Chicago's Austin neighborhood to plant trees on their property. Other partner organizations include Rising Sun Missionary Baptist Church, My Block My Hood My City (which introduces underprivileged youth to diverse cultures, cuisines, careers, and communities), and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. It receives support from the Midwest Methodist Foundation and other grant partners. The team is delighted to have church partner volunteers and individual volunteers.

### Opportunities to Get Involved

HEAL Well aims to connect NIC churches that wish to work on climate sustainability with urban communities that want and need of this kind of work. They are seeking church partners, individual volunteers, and leaders for partnership development, youth engagement, and tree planting. To learn more visit [umcnic.org/healwell](http://umcnic.org/healwell).

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports the work of HEAL Well and CCORR.



# Well maintained buildings sustain ministry

by Sheryl Anderson, CPCU, ARM,

member of NICUM Insurance Board

NICUM, the Northern Illinois casualty and liability insurance program, is the most economic and secure insurance option for conference churches. It covers a host of concerns. The program will not drop churches from coverage.

NICUM does not pay claims for maintenance-related damages.

Under the terms of the policy, the insurance does not cover damages caused by cosmetic problems (e.g., building settling, cracking, shrinking, etc.) or the church's failure to maintain the premises (e.g., wear and tear, rust, corrosion, erosion, fungus, decay, deterioration, wet or dry rot, and mold).

It is the church's duty to maintain their property adequately so that the property's condition does not invite damage or destruction. The insurance company does promise to make payment to the insured in the event of a loss covered by the policy (i.e., fire; lightning; explosion; windstorm or hail; smoke; aircraft or vehicles; riot or civil commo-

tion; vandalism; leakage from fire extinguishing equipment; "sinkhole collapse;" "volcanic action;" falling objects; weight of snow, ice or sleet; or water damage).

It is a fact of life that a number of NIC church buildings are many decades old. Because of the age of these buildings, they have ongoing maintenance issues that must be addressed regularly. It is incumbent on a church and its board of trustees to continually assess the wellbeing of the church's physical structure and a wide variety of supporting systems as to their integrity and ability to function. It is the church's responsibility to address property deficiencies.

In order to have the greatest latitude in

addressing building conditions, the church and trustees will benefit from taking a forward-minded approach to exploring funding and alternative planning options.

For instance, churches may be able to more aggressively save for anticipated future maintenance needs. By establishing such a reserve, the church will be in a better position to care for needs as they arise.

Some churches may find they can't pay for necessary repairs through capital campaigns, general offerings, bequests, grants, or other fundraising activities. In this event congregations should work with their district superintendent to determine the best ways to continue to church's ministries. This may necessitate considering options for using or finding space or sharing ministry with other congregations.

The NICUM board remains strongly committed to providing the optimum property and casualty insurance program for our member churches. This will be more affordable when churches commit to in controlling risk as much as possible. When we work together to minimize risk, we will have more dollars available for ministry!

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports the NICUM Insurance Board.



## UVC training addressed youth mental health



On Feb. 10, United Voices for Children, in partnership with Children's Advocates for Change, welcomed over 73 people to their virtual Advocacy Training Addressing Youth Mental Health. The event helped equip community workers, mental health professionals, UMC laity and clergy, school administrators and teachers with the tools and knowledge to effectively advocate for children and youth facing mental health challenges. Learn more about UVC at [unitedvoicesforchildren.org](http://unitedvoicesforchildren.org)



Sarah Gray, Executive Director, NAMI



Laura Fine, State Senator



Anna Moeller, State Representative



Tasha Cruzat, President, Children's Advocates for Change

**Support the 5th Sunday Appeal for UVC on Sunday, March 30**

Learn more at: [umcnic.org/calendar/united-voices-for-children-5th-sunday-appeal](http://umcnic.org/calendar/united-voices-for-children-5th-sunday-appeal)



"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." - MATTHEW 25:35



**March 30, 2025**

[resourceumc.org/UMCOR](http://resourceumc.org/UMCOR)

APRIL 1 - MAY 15

## Healthy Babies Drive

Kids Above All's Healthy Babies Drive collects childcare supplies such as baby clothes, diapers, baby wipes, and more so that our parents, caregivers, babies, and toddlers have the essentials they need for a happy and healthy start to their lives together.

Contact Catherine Inserra at [cinserra@kidsaboveall.org](mailto:cinserra@kidsaboveall.org) for more info.





## Reimagining Church

by Rev. Christian Coon, NIC Director of Congregational Development

While I was the pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Deerfield in the 2000s, we joined Lake County United, which organized groups like churches, synagogues, and unions to work for change in our communities.

One of LCU's organizers was a man named Tom Lenz and I'll never forget the day in my office when he challenged me to do ten one-on-ones over one summer. I had been to a seminar about community organizing, but still wasn't 100 percent sure how to do a one-on-one and the thought of doing 10 was a little daunting. How does it work? What do I say? Will it be weird? What exactly is a one-on-one again?

I'm grateful that Tom didn't let me off the hook and gave me the courage to take on the challenge. It forever changed my ministry. I made a list of people who might have interesting insights about the community, including a school principal, the mayor, and a local restaurant owner. Not everyone wanted to meet with me (the manager of the Barnes & Noble was suspicious),

## Meet Your Librarian

but most of the people I reached out to gladly met with me and I learned a lot about the community.

My most interesting meeting was with the director of the local public library. As I was asking him some of the questions that I asked others ("What are you passionate about? What keeps you up at night?"), I also asked him, "Are there any particular books or subjects that people are asking about recently?" He responded, "Actually, we've been getting more inquiries about parenting children through a divorce."



That was a big aha moment for me and got me thinking about how our church might be a place to help parents and children who are going through divorce. I would never have known that if I hadn't had that meeting.

It might seem a little intimidating to reach out to a stranger in your community, but it's one of the most simple and powerful things you can do. And it's free (unless you buy the other person coffee)! Rev. Trey Hall is the director of evangelism and growth for The Methodist Church in Britain and has written a superb article about why and how one-on-one

meetings are crucial to congregational development. You can read it at <https://bit.ly/Church1on1>.

Just as Tom Lenz challenged me, I'd like to challenge you. I know Lent is a busy time, but how about you try to schedule four one-on-ones during Lent—4 for 40 Days? I'm happy to help give ideas about how you might get started.

I recommend that you start with a librarian.

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports Congregational Development.



## Walk to Emmaus: A journey for deeper understanding

by Stacy Nordengren, Northern Illinois Emmaus, Walk 171 Lay Director

*"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" Luke 24:32 (NIV)*

Have you been thinking of attending Walk to Emmaus? The weekend is a spiritual retreat, overseen by The Upper Room, designed to deepen a person's faith, strengthen their relationship with Christ, and build a supportive Christian community. This spiritual weekend offers teachings, discussions, and testimonies that can give new insights into your own spiritual journey.

An Emmaus weekend experience is deeply personal and can mean different things to each participant. Many who attend an Emmaus weekend describe it as a life-changing experience. For me, it represented a spiritual renewal, and a deeper understanding of God's grace and presence in my life. The Emmaus Walk weekend provided me with time to step away from the daily distractions and the busyness of life to help me focus on my faith journey and personal growth.

The Emmaus experience continues on after the weekend retreat as you become an active part of the community in both fellowship and service. Through my Emmaus experience, my passion was renewed for

service as a more active and engaged disciple in my church and community. It helped me to build strong relationships and created a sense of belonging and encouragement within a loving, compassionate Christian community.

The Northern Illinois Emmaus community invites you to consider attending a Walk to Emmaus Weekend, held in the spring and fall each year. The spring walks for 2025 are March 27-30 (Men's Walk) and April 3-6 (Women's Walk). Both walks are being held at Wesley Woods in Williams Bay, WI. The fall walks for 2025 will be held Sept. 25-28 (Men's Walk) and October 2-5 (Women's Walk) at Bishop Lane Retreat Center, Rockford, IL.

An applicant needs a sponsor from the Emmaus community. If you do not know anyone currently in the community, please contact Dave Stiver, sponsor chair ([davidstiver09@gmail.com](mailto:davidstiver09@gmail.com) or [224] 715-8756); Tom Wood, community lay director ([twood@nationalfibersupply.com](mailto:twood@nationalfibersupply.com) or [312] 406-7324); or Nancy Pitsch, assistant community lay director ([nancy@pitschfamily.com](mailto:nancy@pitschfamily.com) or [815]

499-3802). Applications are needed two weeks prior to the walk so arrangements can be made.

More information is available at [nil-emmaus.org](http://nil-emmaus.org).

Walk to Emmaus Ministries is overseen by The Upper Room, a division of United Methodist Discipleship Ministries.



# WALK TO EMMAUS

THE UPPER ROOM®

## Attend NIC Lobby Day in Springfield

by Lisa Rogers, chair of the Advocacy Partners of the NIC Commission on Religion and Race

All Northern Illinois United Methodists are welcome to attend the Legislative Lobby Day trip to Springfield on May 7. The Advocacy Partners of the Northern Illinois Conference Commission on Religion and Race is planning the event.

Participants will arrive in Springfield by mid-morning. They will first tour the capitol and then attend their pre-arranged meetings with their state legislators.

Participants will attend two preparatory meetings: a training session on March 3, 7 to 8:30 p.m., and an orientation session,

April 26, 9 to 10:30 a.m. Those who absolutely cannot attend in person can watch the video recordings once they are posted.

Transportation options include riding a small bus from one church, carpooling with others, and/or staying at a hotel the night before (at the participant's own cost).



The registration form will list the options.

Learn more at [umcnic.org/calendar/advocacy-partners-lobby-day-2025](http://umcnic.org/calendar/advocacy-partners-lobby-day-2025).

Your giving to NIC apportionments supports the Advocacy Partners of the Conference Commission on Religion and Race.



# This Life-Changing Journey **Grace and Hospitality**



by Rev. Danita R. Anderson,  
Assistant to the Bishop

This year has begun with us learning to live a life of grace, one of the tenets of our faith as Methodists. As I think about my journey of faith I am reminded of so many grace-filled moments that have shaped who I have become. From the time I was a child to this day I have seen and experienced God's love and forgiveness in many different forms. One of those forms of grace has been in the area of hospitality. Showing signs of welcome in a myriad of ways has made for some interesting hobbies as well as sermon series, but all of them ways to extend the hand of God to others.

As people called Methodists, we have so many opportunities to extend hospitality to others and be reminded of grace. From the reminder to gathered community of the openness of the Lord's Table to the ways in which we touch our communities. At The Table we receive reminders of who we are, whose we are, and how we should be in relationship with

one another. The elements of The Table are prepared in such a way that barriers are removed from finding one's place. At The Table, everybody matters, there is no judgment and no expectations. Grace abounds at The Table!

As we move through this year, our focus as an annual conference is grace and its sufficiency. We will have opportunities to sing, pray, preach, study and live around this focus. You will be hearing more and more about the ways to incorporate grace into our everyday life from various entities in our conference. But please don't let that stop you or hold you back. Share the new and exciting ideas and encounters that you experience. Grace has no limits!

One of the ways that you might experi-



ence that grace this year is to notice a member of the conference staff at your weekend worship experience. Our goal is to try to reach every worshipping community in our conference with a message of grace and hope. We are not there to judge, but to worship and share in an experience of grace. So as not to be disruptive, feel free to acknowledge and introduce the conference staff person at the end of the worship experience. We will have a brief word of greeting to share and if it's appropriate, can offer the benediction. This is our opportunity

to experience grace and to share grace.  
See you soon!

Your giving to NIC apportionments support the Assistant to the Bishop and the conference staff.



## Clergy Appointments and Retirements

Bishop Dan Schwerin announces the following clergy appointments and retirements for the Northern Illinois Conference of The United Methodist Church, effective July 1, 2025 (unless otherwise noted):

**Stephen Williams** (Retired Full Elder) to Tinley Park UMC (Lake South) as Interim Pastor (1/2 time) until June 30, 2025. He follows Mark Gilmore, who ends his ministry on Dec. 31, 2024. Effective Jan. 1, 2025.

**Calvin Haines** (Full Elder) to Retirement. Calvin was ordained a Probationary Elder in 2014 and became a Full Elder in 2017. During his ministry, Calvin served Lake Bluff: Grace, Morrison, and Freeport: First.

**Linn Hartzell** (Full Elder) to Voluntary Leave of Absence from Harvey: Transformation and Chicago: Resurrection. Effective Jan. 15, 2025.

**Marilyn Nolan** (Full Elder) to Retirement. She was ordained a Probationary Elder in 2008 and became a Full Elder in 2010. During her ministry, she served Lanark, Dixon: Grace, and Scales Mound.

**Colleen Norman** (Full Elder) to Retirement. She was ordained a Probationary Elder in 1999 and became a Full Elder in 2006. During her ministry, she served Chicago: South Lawn, Hazel Crest: Community, Oak Lawn: First, Mt. Prospect: Trinity, Chicago: Kelly and Woodlawn, Chicago: Temple (Associate), and Chicago: Olivet and Mandell.

**Amos Oladipo** (Full Elder) to Retirement. He was ordained in the Methodist Church in Nigeria and was transferred to the Northern Illinois Conference in 2005. During his ministry, he served Park Forest: Grace United Protestant, Oak Lawn: First, Blue Island: Grace, Thornton, Chicago: Mandell, Lombard: Faith, Chicago: African Community, Chicago: Epworth, and Brookfield: Community.

**KyungHae Anna Shin** (Full Elder) to Retirement. She was ordained a Probationary Elder in 1993 and became a Full Elder in 1995. During her ministry, she served Bolingbrook: Friendship, Oswego: Oswego Prairie, Hinsdale (Associate), Ewha Woman's University (Seoul, South Korea), and Capron.

**Chris Winkler** (Full Elder) to Disability Leave from Barrington (Senior). Effective Feb. 1, 2025.

**Luther Mason** (Licensed Local Pastor) to Harvey: Transformation Community (1/2 time) (Lake South), while continuing to serve Chicago: East Side and Chicago: Greenstone. He follows Linn Hartzell, who transitioned to Voluntary Leave of Absence. Effective Jan. 15, 2025.

**Addison Shields** (Retired Full Elder) to Christ: Resurrection (Interim, 1/2 time) (Lake South). He follows Linn Hartzell, who transitioned to Voluntary Leave of Absence. Effective Jan. 15, 2025.

**David Lagos-Fonseca** (Full Elder) to Barrington as Senior Pastor (Prairie Central District) from Schaumburg: Our Saviour's (Prairie Central). He follows Chris Winkler, who transitions to Disability Leave on Feb. 1, 2025.

**Jane Eesley** (Full Elder) to Chicago: First (Temple) as Senior Pastor (Lake South) from Methodist Liaison Advocacy Coordinator with the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem, Israel (General Board of Global Ministries). She follows Myron McCoy, who retired on Dec. 1, 2024, and Young-Mee Park, currently serving as Interim Pastor.

**Hyujae Lee** (Full Elder) to Los Gatos United Methodist Church (El Camino Real District of the California-Nevada Annual Conference) from Woodstock: First UMC (Prairie Central).

**Jacques Conway** (Full Elder) to Voluntary Leave of Absence from Orland Park: Faith (Lake South).

**Violet Johnicker** (Full Elder) to Rockford: New Faith Community (1/2 time) (Prairie North) from Rockford: Brooke Road (1/2 time) (Prairie North) while remaining at Rockford Urban Ministries as Executive Director (1/2 time).

**Heewon Kim** (Full Elder) to Schaumburg: Our Saviour's (Prairie Central) from Machesney Park: Evans (3/4 time) and Machesney Park: Harlem (1/4 time) (Prairie North).

Your giving to NIC apportionments support clergy appointments, moves and retirements.



## Get the Latest Conference Directory and Journal

The 2024-2025 NIC directory and 2024 Journal are now published!



The Journal includes the daily proceedings of the 186th annual conference session, resolutions, historical reports, 2023 statistics, and more.

View online or download a free PDF version at [umcnic.org/journal](http://umcnic.org/journal). You may also purchase a paperback version from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

The directory contains contact information for conference churches, clergy, laity, committees, and agencies.

View online or download a free PDF version at [umcnic.org/directory](http://umcnic.org/directory). You may also purchase a paperback version from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). Our online database is getting a refresh and will be back shortly with new and improved functions.



Your giving to NIC apportionments supports the creation of the directory and Journal.

