

MI CONNECT

Michigan Area of the United Methodist
Church News & Information

Print Edition

MIconnect Monthly Magazine

April 2018 Review

New districts with new names begin new life on July 1, 2018



District 2 came together in Gaylord, under the leadership of Superintendent, Anita Hahn on April 22, 2018. They celebrated a new vision and a new name — Northern Waters. ~ Facebook photo/Anita Hahn

KAY DEMOSS
Senior Editor, Michigan

It's no longer "by the number" for all but one of the nine districts of the new Michigan Conference!

For many months the nine new districts have been known by numeric designations.

These districts will be fully functioning by July 1, 2018.

In the meantime, organizational meetings have taken place around the state to vision, elect officers, set budgets, and affirm names.

Eight district names have now been revealed. Maps and

church listings may be found at design.michiganumc.org.

Northern Skies District (District 1)— Superintendent Scott Harmon

Northern Waters District (District 2) — Superintendent Anita Hahn

Central Bay District (3)— Superintendent David Kim

Midwest District (4) — Superintendent Margie Crawford

Mid-Michigan District (5)— Superintendent Jerome DeVine

East Winds District (6) — Superintendent John Hice

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April 2018

MIConnect provides the official news of The Michigan Area of The United Methodist Church. This printable edition is a summary of the month's top news published online every Wednesday in MIConnect Weekly. Find the "rest of the story" at MichiganUMC.org.

Bishop David A. Bard
Publisher Mark Doyal
Editor Kay DeMoss

We are 800 churches making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Connected in the Spirit with our neighbors, we are making a difference across the state of Michigan.

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Bishop David Bard

The Joyful Journey

When I was the pastor of First United Methodist Church in Duluth, Minnesota, my congregation was gracious in giving me the opportunity to engage in some teaching at the College of St. Scholastica. A number of congregation members were faculty at the college, and the academic dean was a member when I arrived as pastor (she later moved away). She was the one who told me of the need at the school for someone to teach a course in health care ethics, and wondered if I would be interested. My doctoral degree happens to be in religious ethics, and though that was not my area of specialization, I was interested. The school, my congregation and my district superintendent all said "yes."

For ten years I taught a course on religious perspectives in health care ethics. We read about and discussed fascinating and controversial topics such as abortion, physician-assisted suicide, end-of-life care and the distribution of health care resources. It was not uncommon for a student, in the midst of a discussion, to say, "well, everyone is entitled to their own opinion."

Everyone is entitled to her or his own opinion. This is true enough, and to the extent that the statement represents a willingness to listen to others respectfully, it is helpful. The statement also has limits. Sometimes it is simply used as a way to end conversation, and there are times when conversation needs to end, or at least, take a break. Sometimes people realize that at that moment nothing further is to be gained by continuing to talk. For the statement, "everyone is entitled to their own opinion" to be the final word in a conversation is not helpful. It fails to recognize that some opinions, some points of view, are more well-supported, more well-considered, more well-argued, than others.

An important goal in teaching is to help students understand what a well-considered, well-supported, well-argued opinion looks like. Given the level of discussion in our wider society, it might do us some good to think again about what a well-considered, well-supported and well-argued opinion looks like.

At the same time, while most of us like to think of the opinions we hold as well-supported, well-considered and well-argued, we would also do well to acknowledge that in many of the most important things we think about, there is always room for growth



Michigan remembers 1968 Uniting Conference

KAY DEMOSS

Sr Editor-Writer, Michigan Conference

“About 420 Evangelical United Brethren and 850 Methodist delegates are meeting at the Dallas Memorial Auditorium in Dallas.” That’s how John S. Jury began the *Michigan Christian Advocate’s* reporting of the 1968 Uniting Conference. Before said meeting was over two bishops – Methodist leader Lloyd C. Wicke and Evangelical United Brethren leader Reuben H. Mueller— clasped hands over a table laden with hymnals, Bibles, the Book of Discipline, the Book of Worship and a 307-page Plan of Union. The delegates and 10,000 guests recited a covenant along with the bishops, “Lord of the Church, we are united in Thee, in Thy Church and now in The United Methodist Church. Amen.”

Amen ... let it be so ... and it has been so for 50 years come April 23, 2018. Many of the Michigan Methodists and Brethren who were among the delegates reciting those binding words are now in glory, some are yet alive. We remember all of those delegates with respect and affection ...

Detroit Conference delegates: Carl Ammerman, Prentiss Brown, Jr., Mrs. William Cansfield, James Crippen, Jesse DeWitt, Harold Karls, Dwight Large, John Marvin, Orville McKay, Mrs. Earl W. Price, Hoover Rupert, Lionel Thompson, Frederick Vosburg, Woodie White

Michigan Conference: Mrs. Russell Finch, Donald Holbrook, Robert Jongeward, Carlos Page, Bernard Shashaguay, John Tennant, Katherine Wilcox, James Wright

Michigan EUB: Ray Allen, P. Edison Chamberlain, Gerald Fisher, Stanley Forkner, Willard Haist, Robert Horton, John Iwaniuk, Garfield Kellermann, Jr., John Kennaugh, Ralph Klump, Newell Liesemer, Prentice Peck, Arden Peterson, Mrs. Frieda Spafford, Lawrence Taylor

Michigan persons lifted up for distinction in *Advocate* coverage included James Crippen, attorney from First Church Ann Arbor, who “had a prominent

place in the presentation of the World Service and Finance Commission’s report.” It was further noted that Mr. Crippen’s “grasp of the material and answering of questions in the spirited debate were valuable contributions to the whole church.” Dr. Hoover Rupert, pastor First Methodist Church Ann Arbor, was elected to the Judicial Council for a four-year-term. The oldest bishop present was Raymond Wade, who returned from service in Europe in 1940 and served churches in the Detroit area before his retirement in 1948.

Bishop Dwight Loder, who would return to Michigan as the episcopal leader of The United Methodist Church, preached a compelling sermon against racism at First United Methodist Church in Dallas. The sermon titled, “God has no favorites,” was an allegory celebrating the end to the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church. Loder called for the elimination of “second class citizenship.”

A dinner was held at the Adolphus Hotel during the course of the Conference to honor bishops Dwight Loder (Michigan), Reuben H. Mueller (Indianapolis), and

Charles Wesley Brashares (former pastor of 1st Methodist Church Ann Arbor). The program led by the Revs Lawrence Taylor, Jesse DeWitt, and John Tennant focused on helping the 102 persons present from three conferences – Detroit, Michigan and Michigan EUB — become better acquainted.

A young face present at that dinner table was Donna Lindberg. Donna was a student at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas at the time. She had the honor of participating in the Opening Ceremony of the Uniting Conference as a flag bearer and also served as a page. Today Donna is a retired clergy member of the Detroit Conference living in the Upper Peninsula.

Donna recalls, “1968 was an exciting time to be a seminary student at Perkins School of Theology. We were afforded the opportunity to participate in the Uniting Conference. I still had class and work schedules, but was able to participate as a flag bearer for the opening processional and sit with other flag-bearers across the front of the sanctuary,

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Lay leaders come together during the Uniting ceremony in Dallas: Emma Tousant (Evangelical United Brethren) and J. P. Zepeda (Methodist). ~ photo courtesy Archives and History

Unbounded praise ... Michigan pastor on Hymnal team

REV. KARIN ORR
Michigan Communications

A few years ago at Annual Conference, opening worship included one of the old standard hymns. The assembled voices gave it a monumental, if ponderous, gravitas. But by the end of the third stanza, the music team moved into the chorus with a modern praise song, while the music leader and the congregation continued with the old stand-by. The contrapuntal effect was stunning, soul stirring. It showed what a little imagination can do to enliven worship.

“It showed me there were new ways of making melodies to God. It expanded my comfort zone.”

Blending old and new while enlivening worship is exactly what the Hymnal Revision Committee of the United Methodist Church wants to do. The 15-member committee held its initial meeting from March 19 to 21 in Nashville, Tennessee, at the United Methodist Publishing House. The Reverend Anna Moon from Troy, Michigan, was there. Reverend Moon, who is in charge of the Troy-Hope (English) Ministry at Troy Korean United Methodist Church, feels “blessed to be a part” of the committee, which has been continuing its work online and via the web.

“We all have different backgrounds and different talents,” reports Reverend Moon. “There are teachers, professors, composers—all from

different states.” The diverse committee began its work by experiencing various ways of praising God, and Reverend Moon was impressed with the members’ ability to plan together with respect as they explored the “richness of worship.”

She notes especially one setting, where the method used to ring hand bells produced a hum rather than the expected clang. Another technique involved chanting, whereby participants were “given a tone” to create a certain musical ambience.

“It was cool to see and hear different languages, new ways of making harmony, different meters and instruments,” says Moon. “It showed me there were new ways of making melodies to God. It expanded my comfort zone.”

Beyond innovative musical styles and techniques, there is also much new technology, and the committee is reviewing that, too. The members are identifying songs and worship rituals that can be used with multiple media, including digital downloads and streaming. “There was a lot of conversation about the possibilities,” Reverend Moon remembers, “even beyond what we are thinking now. We’re looking at the future!”

Finally, the committee is giving serious thought to the theology behind the songs and rituals. The primary goal is to create a resource that can be used for worship that is transformative, life-changing, and that expresses our unity in great diversity. To this end Reverend Moon and the other members of the committee are encouraging submissions.

Those who would like to take part in this mighty mission can submit their songs, lyrics, arrangements, prayers, and rituals. To do so, go to the website of the United Methodist Publishing House.

The committee is expected to present their report to General Conference 2020.

Wouldn’t it be fun to be a part of music history?



Rev. Anna Moon is the pastor of TroyHope Ministry. She is a member of the Hymnal Revision Committee.

Kalamazoo Wesley names director

The Board of Directors of the Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo is pleased to announce the name of the new Campus Pastor and Director, Jess Davenport. She will begin ministry on July 9th, 2018.

Jess is excited to return to the Midwest to work in campus ministry, her passion. The past few years she has been in Washington, D.C. and received her MDiv from Wesley Theological Seminary.

During her time in D.C., she worked at Capitol Hill United Methodist Church as the Connections Minister. Prior to that, she worked as the Associate Director of the Wesley Foundation at Illinois State University.

Jess is married to Torey, whose hometown is Kalamazoo, and they have a one-year-



-old, Tommy. Jess loves working with students, has a passion for justice, and can-

not wait to begin in ministry with the Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo at WMU.

Davenport succeeds the Rev. Lisa Batten who begins ministry on July 1, 2018 as The Michigan Conference Coordinator of Young Adult Initiatives.

Drinking the Cup ... at the 4th quarter



REV. JOHN BOLEY
Clergy Assistant to the Bishop

Over the years we have all heard football and basketball coaches say something to the effect of – “it is my job to get the team well into the fourth quarter, and then it is up to them if they want to win.”

There is something in this that reminds me of the work that the Design Team has done over the last three years. The Design Team has worked methodically and well to put together the Michigan Conference and get The United Methodist Church in Michigan to a place where it is more cohesive, more missional, and in a better position to help the local and connectional church make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Now it is up to United Methodists in all of the congregations and connections of our great state of Michigan to take it from here – to continue great ministry already being done and to become even more effective and missional.

I understand that there are limitations to this analogy. The Design Team isn't getting us to the end of the game – it is getting us to the beginning of the new reality. But still, the Design Team is wrapping up its work and is disbanding as of this Annual Conference. And it has placed Michigan United Methodists in a better position than they were before – in accordance with the overwhelming desire of both annual conferences when they voted separately to come together into one Conference.

In this two part blog, I want to highlight some of the major things the Design Team has accomplished to get Michigan United Methodism to the point where it can be more missional. These may seem like nothing more than structural shifts, yet they are critical shifts that are getting us to a better place:

1. **One Michigan UMC and one Conference.** The two conferences knew what they were doing when they separately approved each by about a 90% vote to form one Michigan Conference. We know intuitively that we are better off together than separate. We can speak with one voice, break down more barriers, and combine our strengths in a variety of justice and mercy ministries. The Conference Plan of Organization has streamlined the conference to be more efficient.
2. **Mission Alignment.** The Michigan Conference has a new Vision Statement: Christ Centered Mission and Ministry; Bold and Effective Leaders, and Vibrant Congregations. This Vision Statement is designed to state loudly and clearly that we need very vital congregations and very effective leaders, both clergy and laity. Business as usual is no longer possible. Comfortable complacency is no longer possible. The “holy rotary club” model is a thing of the past. The civil religion model is giving way to a new emerging church. It is the intent that Conference and District Leadership align in mission. With concerted and consistent efforts of leadership at every level, we can be in a better position to make disciples of Jesus Christ for transformation of the world in the new emerging church.
3. **Directors' Table.** The Design Team developed the concept of the Directors' Table – meaning that all of the Directors of the Michigan Conference (Directors of 1- Connectional Ministry, 2- Clergy Excellence, 3- Congregational Vibrancy, 4- Communications, 5- Treasury and 6- Benefits) would meet monthly with the Bishop and the Clergy Assistant and work together on conference, district and local church mission and ministry. That does not sound like a big deal, but it is. Too often in the past there has been too much silo-ing in both programmatic and administrative ministries, and much of it disconnected from the Bishop's leadership. The Directors' Table will go a long way toward consistency and efficiency in our collective ministry. This will be substantially aided by having all of the Directors in close proximity to each other and the Bishop in Lansing.

There is plenty of belief that re-organizing structure is never a solution to big problems. Certainly this is mostly correct (“moving around chairs on the Titanic”). But the Church of Jesus Christ is not the Titanic. And re-organization can instead be a constant effort at efficiency and adaptation. But it ultimately comes down to the passion for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Organization and structure cannot do that. But the Design Team has gotten us well into the 4th quarter – now it's up to each one of us as disciples of Christ to see if we want to move ahead with more passion and compassion.

Next month more on these different structural shifts – The Appointive Cabinet; Nine Districts; Staffing Models, and Communications.

Michigan Conference profiles in leadership

JOHN E. HARNISH Michigan Communications

“I think it was the community—the fact that old people knew my name and would ask me how I was doing.” That was the first thing my son David said when I asked him what he remembered about being a PK, a preacher’s kid. He said he thought most PKs grow up to be good with people and community-minded, regardless of their career because of their life as a child of the parsonage and the encouragement of the congregation. David said, “The negative thing was we always had to be the last family to leave the church, but overall, the church community helped me become the person I am today.” Though not a pastor, David’s sentiments reflect the experience of those who followed in their parents’ or grandparents’ footsteps into ordained ministry—PKs who became preachers.

In the Michigan Conference we have a significant number of PKs who did just that, including a set of twins, the Revs. Glenn and Carl Litchfield, and the Rev. Jj Mannschreck, pastor in Ishpeming, who is actually 4th generation clergy. Jj’s father, Dr. Jack Mannschreck is the pastor at Waterford Central UMC and his maternal grandfather, the Rev. O. William Cooper, served 25 years in the Detroit Conference before transitioning to mission work to establish a seminary in Haiti. His uncle was at one time in ordained ministry and his great-grandparents were missionaries from Germany to China prior to World War II. Jj says, “What’s interesting is we have the pattern of clergy

daughters marrying clergypersons,” a unique way of passing on the mantle of ministry.

Like so many PKs, Jj says his first response to “The Call” was resistance. “I fought like crazy,” he said, “because doing what your parents did

Methodist at the time of merger. Her great-grandfather was a member of the Evangelical Association which predated the EUB Church. When her father was growing up his aunts would line up the three nephews and say, “One of you

Okemos Presbyterian Church, represents that specific moment in United Methodist history. Born in 1972, she calls herself a “merger baby” because her mother was a Methodist missionary and her father was an Evangelical



Revs Margery and Gordon Schleicher celebrate their son Andrew’s ordination as a deacon, the third generation of clergy in the family. Margie’s father, the Rev. Marcius Taber was a clergyman in the West Michigan Conference. ~photo courtesy Marjorie Schleicher

just seemed so lame”. He was in seminary preparing for a career in teaching religion when he felt called to pastoral ministry, not because of his father, grandfather or great-grandparents, but simply because he sensed God had a place for him in service for the sake of Christ and the church.

The experience of the Rev. Jodie Flessner, pastor at Caledonia, represents the history of United Methodist clergy and the denomination. Her father, the Rev. Ray Flessner, started out his ministry in the Evangelical United Brethren Church and became a United

will follow in your grandfather’s footsteps.” After which, his grandmother would call the boys aside and say, ‘Your aunts are good people, but they aren’t God. Only God can call you.’ As it turned out, all three served in the church and two of them became ordained clergy. In 1994 Jodie received her first appointment, exactly 100 years after her great-grandfather’s first appointment in 1894, so a century later she followed in her great-grandfather’s footsteps, something her great-aunts never imagined.

The Rev. Alice Fleming Townley, currently serving the

United Brethren pastor. Her great-grandfather once held the conference cane as the oldest pastor in the conference. Years later when Alice went to seminary, her mother decided to take the Local Pastor Course of Study and lived in Alice’s apartment at Duke Divinity School while Alice did a field work assignment. Her father and mother now serve as co-pastor in Charlotte, North Carolina and her sister is in full-time ministry as the Communications Director at Middle Collegiate Church in Manhattan.

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Though there are no statistics available for exactly how many clergy grew up as children of the parsonage, it is interesting to see how experiencing the church as a PK shaped the lives and ministries of these persons. Some speak with warmth about the nurture and encouragement of the local church, others remember difficult times when they felt their family and clergy parents were treated poorly. They share in common the experience of seeing the church “from the inside” with all of its strengths and weaknesses. Julie Tuttle, a PK who did not enter ordained ministry but serves in the church as a volunteer writes, “The church has the potential of being the greatest place of healing or the greatest place of hate.” Having seen both sides of church life, PKs have a realistic view of what it means to live and serve in ordained ministry.

Interestingly, few of those surveyed spoke negatively about the itinerant system. Some felt their parents had been unfairly treated by superintendents or bishops, but for the most part they were not critical of the moves they made in their childhood and youth. Rev. Margery Schleicher, retired clergy in the Detroit Conference, is the daughter of the Rev. Marcius Taber who served in the West Michigan conference. Her husband, Gordon, is also an ordained elder and their son, Andrew, is an ordained deacon. Marge regretted an appointment change during her college years because she wanted to come home and see her old friends, but instead came

home to a strange town and strange church. She served in a variety of roles before entering pastoral ministry as a second career because as she says, “In my youth, there were no ordained clergy-women so I never considered it as a possibility.” Today women comprise a major portion of the ranks of clergy in the Michigan area and many of our large and small churches have been served by women who, in turn, encourage young women to consider God’s call.

Overall, the PKs who shared their experience felt their parents did their best to create an environment where they would be free to discover their own career path without undo pressure to “follow in your father’s footsteps”. That gave them the freedom to respond to God’s guidance in ways which were appropriate for them. For some it meant the freedom not to enter the ministry without feeling guilty.

Some moved toward ministry in spite of their family history and their own resistance to the idea. For others growing up in the parsonage encouraged them in that direction, but all of them say that ultimately it was not about following in their father’s or mother’s footsteps, it was about responding to God for their own lives.

Given the urgent need for younger clergy in the church today, the relationship of PKs and their preacher-parents reflects the larger question of how we nurture children and youth for ministry within our churches. Every ordained minister can point to at least one parental type mentor—a pastor, youth director, campus minister,

choir director, Sunday School teacher or camp counselor – who was instrumental in their journey. In every situation, the community plays a crucial role in creating the environment where youth can hear and respond to God’s call.

Whether parent, pastor, teacher or friend, this pipeline to ministry is crucial to the future of the church and clergy leadership for the next

generation.

In response to the question of what he would say to clergy parents, Jj Mannschreck gives these words of advice: “Be authentic in your own faith journey, lean into the weirdness of life in the parsonage and push your kids toward Jesus, not the ministry.” Then God will have the opening to call and youth will have the freedom to respond.



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- Heritage District (8) — Superintendent Elizabeth Hill
- Greater Detroit District (9) — Superintendent Charles Boayue
- District 7 will hold its gathering on May 12.
- Above, the Rev. Anita Hahn prays during Communion at the District 2 organizing meeting on April 22 in Gaylor.



GLOBAL TIES... Michigan deacon Greg Lawson, takes time off from ministry at the LCC Inter-national University in Klaipeda, Lithuania to see the sights.



MARQUETTE DISTRICT ... Celebrating new life head on! In their Easter Bonnets at Marquette Hope United Methodist Church.



GRAND TRAVERSE ... Superintendent Anita Hahn travels to Gaylord to help organize District 2 on April 22nd. Does your unicorn have snow tires??

Snapshots of Vitality



ANN ARBOR ... The Soup & Chili Cook Off at Howell First UMC supports the youth and their summer mission trip. This year's Champion, Mary Lou Hilton, made many people happy with her delicious Cheese Burger Soup.



KALAMAZOO DISTRICT ... Who says committees can't be fun?!? Pastor Joe Shaler brings some humor to the Mission meeting at Otsego UMC.



GRAND RAPIDS DISTRICT ... Blessing quilts at Muskegon: Central UMC. The quilts went from sanctuary to coffee hour where loving hands tied knots with prayer.



DETROIT RENAISSANCE ... Youth of Grosse Point UMC spent the night baking bread to raise money for a bakery in Jeremie, Haiti. "Jesus loaves me, this I know."



ANN ARBOR ... Pastor Merlin Pratt, Lincoln Community UMC, gives witness to 1 Corinthians 4:10.



CROSSROADS DISTRICT ... On Easter Sunday Flint: Court Street UMC opened "Ken's Place," a special room for special people. It's a safe place for those with sensory processing issues to be while their families attend worship.



GRAND RAPIDS ... Deaconess Anne Hillman leads a Good Friday labyrinth experience at Grand Rapids: Trinity United Methodist Church.

REMEMBER

from p. 3

looking out at the assemblage of delegates, visitors, church leaders from around the world, share in the inspiring music, preaching and liturgy – it was awesome!” Donna remembers a “wardrobe moment.” “Serving as page I became dubbed the ‘yellow page.’ Working as a page gave me the opportunity to meet, engage in conversation and learn from, a number of our bishops and delegates from different cultures, different theologies, different church histories – words can’t adequately describe all that that meant to a young, relatively naïve student from a small town in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.” While she had excellent teachers at Perkins from whom she learned much — Albert Outler, Schubert Ogden, John Deschner and Carleton Young — Donna notes, “nothing was more compelling than the experiencing of the Church at work in this momentous occasion.”

Another Perkins seminarian, Margery Taber, came to the dinner at the Adolphus. Now Margery Schleicher, she is a retired clergy member of Detroit Conference living



Rev. Margery Schleicher

East Lansing. Margie recalls, “Although I was a student at Perkins, at that point in my life I had no plans of going into pastoral ministry. I was in school because of my interest in theology and biblical studies but I planned to return to Michigan to teach social studies.” She had special interest, however, in the Uniting Conference because of her father, the Rev. Marcius Taber, who experienced the joy of Methodist and EUB fellowship 12 years prior to the official merger.

Margie explains. “Dad was appointed to Pentwater Centenary and Ludington Summit Methodist churches in 1956. The Summit Church was unique in that a Methodist and a EUB congregation worshipped together in one church following a fire that had destroyed one of the buildings. One Sunday morning, Dad, would preach and that Sunday, Rev. Myron Williams would preach the evening service following youth fellowship. The next week, the reverse would happen with Myron in the morning and Dad in the evening.” She reports hearing one member say, “It took two pastors to keep us straight!”

With that background, Margie encouraged her father to attend the Uniting Conference as an observer. Her brother, the Rev. Harold Taber, was in Dallas as a member of the press from the Michigan Methodist Conference. And her mother came along and made a wedding dress for Margie’s roommate. A true family experience.

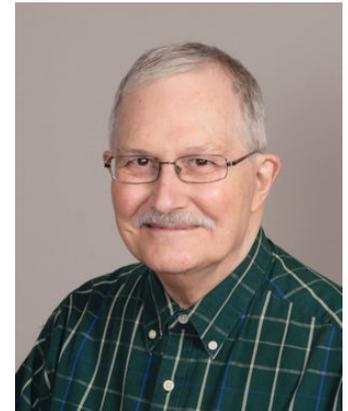
A rotation was established for student pages that accomo-

dated seminary class schedules. “I was thrilled to be part of it,” Margie says, “and it is my understanding that the Uniting Conference was the first time women were permitted to be pages.” She notes that there were very few women delegates; only five of the 37 Michigan combined delegation were women (and listed officially by the names of their husbands). Margie shares a fun aside, “My brother with his press badge took a picture of me on the floor of the conference and a delegate noticed that as a woman I was getting press attention. My response was, ‘Oh, that’s just my brother!’”

Along with other seminary students, Margie had special interest in civil rights and social issues. “The segregated Central Jurisdiction was to be dissolved at the Uniting Conference,” she said. “I was especially pleased to hear African-American advocate strongly for that action.”

The Rev. Lynn DeMoss was a young Methodist pastor from the Michigan Conference. He and clergy friends went together to Atlanta in 1966 to the Methodist General Conference and were present for the vote to merge. Lynn remembers, “I was greatly impacted by this, my first in-depth exposure to the merger issue. I was excited and feeling part of a great moment in the life of the church.”

Later he would learn during a visit to friends in Indiana that others were impacted in a less positive way. “We excitedly reported our experience in Atlanta and mentioned that the merger was approved,” he remarks. Unknown to Lynn the family was EUB. “The



Rev. Lynn DeMoss

daughter, who was my age and a close friend, immediately burst into uncontrollable sobbing and her mother was visibly distressed.”

Lynn went on the road again in 1968 accompanied by his friends, the Rev. John Francis and the Rev. Carlos Page. Page was a Michigan Conference delegate to the Uniting Conference. “Our party came home with the feeling that the Spirit was moving and we were part of that movement.”

Lynn remembers “There was a pervasive feeling of respect for the strengths each group brought to the union and a feeling that the merger would enable a more faithful witness to the unity of the Body of Christ. This was a merger not a takeover.” Lynn is now retired, living at Clark Community in Grand Rapids.

Another Clark resident, the Rev. Charles Fullmer, was serving Reed City Methodist Church when he was persuaded to attend the Uniting Conference as a marshal. He calls himself “a nobody at the time but I liked to learn what was going on.” His most vivid

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recollection of his service as a marshal was having to be somewhat assertive in the role. "I remember everyone wanted to get in close to see who was voting for what. The officials in charge of us told us no strangers must get on the floor. We had to push people back, mightily."

Like Margie Taber Schleicher, Charles had a foretaste of the merger prior to the Uniting Conference. In 1966 Charles was appointed to Reed City Methodist Church. "I was good friends with the pastor serving the EUB Church in Reed City," Charles reports. "The congregations had done things together." Then the EUB pastor was moved unexpectedly. Charles shares, "The EUB Superintendent, Larry Taylor, came to our personnel committee. Then he came and knocked on my door and said, 'You aren't going to believe this but the EUB Church wants you to serve them.'" Charles laughs that he then had the privilege of serving two bishops ... EUB and Methodist! For a year he preached in two separate churches and then the congregations voted to

build on a site selected by the EUBs. This experience caused Charles to conclude, "I felt a part of that merger history in real life. It was a good mix in Reed City."

Where were you on April 23, 1968? A personal aside, this editor was a sophomore in high school, frankly more interested in the Detroit Tigers' pennant-chase and World Series victory than I was the restructuring of my church. I was to learn about the dynamics of merger quickly, however. Three years before merger, I was confirmed in the Vicksburg Methodist Church. As the Methodist and EUB churches stood on the same village block in my hometown, they were to be among the congregations that did actually come together as one. In 1968 many churches experienced the uniting of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren denominations by changing the name on the sign out front or by eventually putting a Cross & Flame on the side of the building. We Vicksburgers experienced the uniting in real time ... sometimes joyful, sometimes painful, always faithful.



The opening procession was a highlight of the Uniting Conference. Donna Lindberg, a young woman from the U.P. was among the flagbearers. At the time Donna was a student at Perkins School of Theology. ~ Archives & History



Social Principles re-write in progress

JOHN E. HARNISH
Michigan Communication

"Theologically grounded, globally relevant and succinct". According to Rev. Chris Momany, those were the three guiding themes in the work of rewriting the "Social Principles of the United Methodist Church". Rev. Momany (photo above) is the chaplain and member of the religion faculty at Adrian College. He is the only Michigander and the only college chaplain or campus minister on the writing team which has been working since 2012.

The first "Social Creed" was adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1908. Within the next decade a similar document was adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Protestant Churches. In 1946 when the Evangelical Association and the United Brethren merged to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church they also prepared a statement of social principles. In 1968 when these various antecedents came together to create the United Methodist Church, one of the first tasks was to write a shared "Social Creed" which was adopted in

1972 and has been the foundation of our stance on social issues ever since.

Momany says that the Social Creed is "...held in high regard and with a sort of reverence" as the writing teams work on the broader "Social Principles" document.

In 2012 Momany took part in a series of "listening sessions" hosted by the General Board of Church and Society. Prior to the 2016 General Conference several trial statements were written to illicit feedback from the church. Chris was involved in the one on the "Economic Community".

With the affirmation of the 2016 General Conference, 50 persons were divided into seven teams of writers to begin work on the document. Chris was assigned to the writing team on "the Economic Community". It is comprised of seven members including United Methodists from New Jersey to Montana and Native American and Filipino representatives. "Throughout the writing", says Rev. Momany, "there was great concern that this not be an entirely American-centric document, but that it reflect a global perspective." A good

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Profiles in leadership: meet Don Emmert & John Boley

KAY DEMOSS

Senior Editor-Writer

On December 15, 2017 Bishop David Bard announced the names of persons who will serve as the core leadership team for the new Michigan Conference. While many are familiar faces, each will be serving in the context of a new Director Model that takes people out of ministry silos and into a collaborative team effort.

The following are excerpts from full ministry profiles for the Rev. Don Emmert, Director of Benefits and Human Resources, and the Rev. John Boley, Clergy Assistant to the Bishop. For much more, go to the website www.news.michiganumc.org and search on "Profile."

DON EMMERT ...

Share a little personal background.

In 1918, my grandfather migrated to Flint, Michigan to work in the auto industry only until he could save enough money to buy a farm in Indiana. The full expression of that dream never materialized, and thus, I was assembled in Flint where the non-farming members of my family still remain 100 years later. Growing up I was influenced by a

curious mixture of religious heritage; including Amish, Mennonite, EUB, Methodist, and Texan. From each tradition, I am grateful for being taught the importance in everyday living of embracing our Christian faith as well as offering oneself for service.

What about leadership lessons you've learned along the way.

The reason we refer to math adventures as "problems" is because they require solutions. Simple math problems may be straightforward and rote. But as equations become more complex, they require increased analysis, logic, and systematic strategies to find correct solutions. Especially as variables increase and functions become more abstract. Then there's music. While playing a solo does not require dependence on anyone else, the richest harmonies are only achieved through ensemble; for example, a well-rehearsed orchestra or mass choir. On the other hand, there are few sounds worse than a group of individuals trying to play different songs in different keys at the same time. I have found both the music and math illustrations analogous to life in the faith community. A few things may be achieved solo or by rote, but the most meaningful ministries generally require a dedicated direction and devotion from all.

By the way, I truly believe that music is the preferred language of the angels (with the possible exception of the accordion).

Where do you see God at work in Michigan and the worldwide connection right now?

I have witnessed how hard so many people have worked over the past few years to bring the new conference together. I wonder if God has not given us a temporary gift of how to concentrate on unity in the midst of so much speculation regarding separation throughout the denomination. I offer no statement to suggest what I think the future of our denomination should be, but I suspect God is pleased with at least much of the work of our Michigan hands. Back to the music metaphor. We must strive to produce the most pleasing harmony before God for others to hear. Whatever shape our connection takes in the future. Few people will spend the time or energy to attend a concert of discord, much less be inclined to accept an invitation to join a fragmented ensemble.

JOHN BOLEY ...

Please share a little personal history.

I grew up in United Methodist parsonages in the Detroit area. I'm a cradle to grave Methodist – firmly believing in the movement and theology of John Wesley. I have always had a call to ministry, but didn't take ownership of it until I was in my mid 30's. Growing up in the parsonage and the local church, I grew to value the itineracy and our called and sent theology. Even during those years when I wandered away from the church, I never doubted the truth of the church as a prophetic agent for justice and compassion in God's created world. John Wesley's focus on prevenient, justifying and sanctifying grace, and his focus on personal and social holiness held together are what I took away from my growing up in the United Methodist Church.

What about your professional background and leadership lessons you've learned along the way?

After college I did a tour as an Officer in



The Emmert family visits the Big House in Ann Arbor. Becky Emmert also works in the Treasurer's Office as Finance and Benefits Operations Manager.

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the U.S. Navy. I then went to law school and practiced corporate and commercial law in a large law firm in Grand Rapids for a number of years before going to seminary at Duke Divinity School. I'm grateful to have served and lived all across Michigan. I believe in the role of the itinerant professional clergy in the servant leadership of the local church laity.

What are the challenges you see as we move forward as a new Conference?

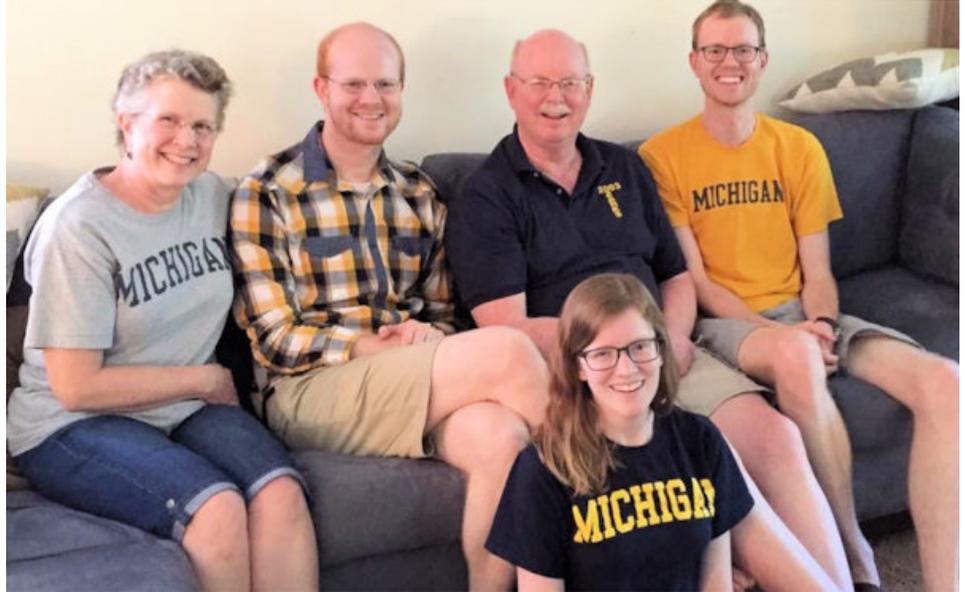
Our biggest challenge is renewing our passion for the evangelical and social witness of the Gospel. The new structure of United Methodism in Michigan is putting us in a place where making disciples will be enhanced. However, we still need the passion and the dedication to meet people with the relevant and life-saving message or the Gospel. Our desire for comfort often gets in the way. Our busy-ness often gets in the way.

Where do you see God at work in Michigan and the worldwide connection right now?

I believe that the life-giving message of Jesus Christ is as relevant and powerful now as at any time in history. As the world becomes more of a global village, the worldwide United Methodist Church must adapt to this reality and use its communications and leadership to spread the Gospel around the world. The Gospel of Christ is of critical importance in the world for peacemaking, human rights, and a just distribution of resources. The words of the hymn, "In the Midst of New Dimensions" (The Faith We Sing #2238) capture the spirit of this moment in our history as God's people.

What's your vision for the Michigan Conference and your personal and pastoral commitment to assisting in its birth?

I grew up in the Detroit Conference and served in the West Michigan Conference. I voted for merging the two conferences each time it was presented in the past. I'm delighted that we are now moving forward so well together. I sincerely believe that we are better off together than separate and look forward to devoting the remained of my appointed ministry to make it work.



The Boley family (l-r): Diane, Ian, John, Rob and Hannah. Three generations in ordained ministry ... John's father, Rev. Robert Boley, served in the Detroit Conference. Son Ian is pastor of Walled Lake UMC.

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and new learning. Often well-considered, well-supported and well-argued opinions become so through shared conversation and dialogue. We should, then, be people who are open to new ideas, to new ways of looking at our lives and our faith, open to conversation and dialogue.

From the very earliest days of the community of those who follow Jesus until now, there have been debates and differences of opinion. In Romans 14, Paul identifies the controversial issues as what to eat and when to worship. He encourages openness, kindness, gentleness – in short, humility.

During Lent this year, I read Sister Joan Chittister's book Radical Spirit. I read it devotionally, that is, slowly, a little at a time, meditating and pondering along the way.

Radical Spirit is Joan's reflection on the seventh chapter of The Rule of St. Benedict, a chapter about humility. Benedict offers 12 steps of humility, here is the eleventh: "The eleventh step of humility is that we speak gently and without laughter, seriously and with becoming modesty, briefly and reasonably, but without raising our voices."

In her book, Joan writes about this step:

"The eleventh step of humility, then, was far ahead of its time, far more about being humane than about merely being proper. This was a function of humility meant to bring people together in mutual respect" (p. 186).

She goes on to reflect, "Speech in a Benedictine monastery, we're told here, is expected to be gentle, kind, serious, modest, brief, reasonable, calm, and emotionally controlled.... We are to be direct but kind. Always kind." (186-187)

Later this month we gather for Annual Conference. We will continue the long tradition of the church of debating and discussing issues that are important for our life together and for what it means to be in ministry with and for Jesus Christ in our day and time.

It is my hope and prayer that we will come together to present our best-considered and supported ideas. Even more, it is my hope that we will gather with a sense of humility, that sense that we can all learn and grow. If we come with humility, we will seek to speak gently, kindly, reasonably, and calmly. If we come with humility we will then also treat one another gently and kindly.

Council of Bishops recommends a Way Forward

CHICAGO – United Methodist bishops, meeting in Chicago, engaged in a prayerful process to discern a way forward. At the conclusion of the discernment process, the Council of Bishops strongly approved the following motion and rationale:

Having received and considered the extensive work of the Commission on a Way Forward, the Council of Bishops will submit a report to the Special Session of the General Conference in 2019 that includes:

1. All three plans (The Traditionalist Plan, The One Church Plan and the Connectional Conference Plan) for a way forward considered by the Commission and the Council.
2. The Council's recommendation of the One Church Plan.
3. An historical narrative of the Council's discernment process regarding all three plans.

Rationale: In order to invite the church to go deeper into the journey the Council and Commission has been on, the Council will make all the information considered by the Commission and the Council of Bishops available to the delegates of the General Conference and acknowledges there is support for each of the three plans within the Council. The values of our global church are reflected in all three plans. The majority of the Council recommends the One Church Plan as the best way forward.

Guided by the mission, vision and scope document, the bishops agreed to recommend the One Church Plan. This plan provides conferences, churches, and pastors the flexibility to uniquely reach their missional context while retaining the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church.

The One Church Plan allows for contextualization of language about human sexuality in support of the mission; and allows for central conferences, to retain their disciplinary authority to adapt the *Book of Discipline* and continue to include traditional language and values while fulfilling the vision of a global and multi-

cultural church. This plan also encourages a generous unity by giving United Methodists the ability to address different missional contexts in ways that reflect their theological convictions.

The One Church Plan removes the restrictive language of the *Discipline* and adds assurances to pastors and Conferences who due to their theological convictions cannot perform same-sex weddings or ordain self-avowed practicing homosexuals.

The Council's discernment process was guided by the over-arching desire to strategically help the General Conference do its work and to honor the General Conference's request for the Council to help the church find a way forward.

"With convicted humility, bishops want to be pastors and shepherds of the whole church in order to maximize the presence of a United Methodist witness in as many places in the world as possible and with as much contextual differentiation as possible," said newly installed Council of Bishops President Ken Carter.

The bishops expressed deep appreciation for the diligent work that the 32-member Commission on a Way Forward did in formulating the three plans; the Traditionalist Plan, the One Church Plan

and the Connectional Conference Plan. While the bishops recommended the One Church Plan they affirmed that the Connectional Conference Plan and the Traditionalist Plan held values that are important to the life and work of the church and will be included in the final report to the Special Session of General Conference that the bishops have called for Feb. 23-26 in St. Louis, Missouri.

Bishop David . Bard, Michigan Area, said of the decision ... "As these statements go out, I imagine a broad spectrum of reactions that might include joy, disappointment, anger, confusion, hope, or fear. I encourage us all to acknowledge what we are thinking and feeling and wondering, and to not let our reactions morph into runaway reactivity. I assure you there will be plenty of such reactivity available. ... Breathe. Pray. Listen well. Speak gently. Sunday worship is just around the corner, our weekly celebration that Jesus is risen, that Christ is alive. Worship continues. The work of Jesus in the world continues, the work of sharing good news, of inviting people to know God's love, of doing justice, of seeking peace and reconciliation, of breaking down dividing walls between people, of feeding the hungry and working with those in poverty."



(L-r) Bishops Bruce R. Ough, Kenneth H. Carter, and Cynthia Fierro Harvey were among episcopal leaders present in Chicago April 30-May 4, 2018 for prayer and discernment about the 2019 General Conference. ~cob photo/Maidstone Mulenga



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example is the paragraph on the gaming industry, a matter of great concern for the Native Americans and Filipinos alike.

Through it all, Momany said the writers were guided by their desire "... to be theologically grounded, as represented by the frequent use of Scripture, to be relevant to the broad global community of United Methodism and to make it as succinct as possible. On that point, when asked if he thought the 39-page document succeeded, Chris only chuckled because "...there was a desire to be concise and complete at the same time—a real challenge."

To his credit, Chris's impact can be seen as early as page 10 in the sentence, "Each person is formed in the image of God and endowed by God with *intrinsic worth*." The term "intrinsic worth" comes from the writings of Asa Mahan, an early Michigan Methodist preacher and abolitionist who founded Adrian College. Under Chris's leadership, the concern about human trafficking, present day slavery and the history of the abolitionist movement has become a hallmark of Adrian College and the term "intrinsic worth" has become a kind of a frequently heard refrain at the school. Chris's participation in the process also

represents the role of church-related colleges like Adrian in helping the church reflect on critical issues.

The introduction to the Social Principles reminds us that "... while not considered law, they are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world. They are a call to faithfulness and are intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. They are a call to all United Methodists to prayerful and spirited dialogue about faith and practice." (The Book of Resolutions, page 43)

The first working draft of the new Social Principles is now being circulated across the church and every United Methodist is invited to read them and offer their comments. The final proposal will go to the 2020 General Conference for their consideration and if approved will comprise the new official statement of the United Methodist Church on social issues of our day. Momany says, "Our work has been done in a spirit of prayer, collegiality and with a sense of humor." He hopes all United Methodists will receive their work in the same spirit.

News in Brief

UNITED METHODIST MISSIONARY SUPPORT



As of late 2017, the UMC employed 355 missionaries, including 183 in international places, 51 in the United States, and 121 young adult Global Mission Fellows around the world (including 21 in the U.S. and three in Michigan. US-2s Isaac Dunn, Grace Okerson at NOAH Project and Lynda Sylvain at Motown Mission. Global

Ministries also provides grants to help fund 309 "Nationals in Mission.

UMCOR APPROVES \$46 million in relief

A new round of grants from the United Methodist Committee on Relief — including \$16.8 million to the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico — will build upon the denomination's response to Hurricanes Maria, Irma and Harvey. Approved April 13 by UMCOR's board of directors, the more than \$46 million in grants also will further assist recovery efforts related to last year's Northern California fires and the historic 2016 flooding in Louisiana. UMCOR's head of Disaster Response, Catherine Earl, said of the goal to aid 900 households: "The plan design ensures the church reaches out to the most vulnerable of the island's population."



REMEMBERING THE REV. JAMES H. CONE

The Rev. James H. Cone, recognized as the "founder of black liberation theology," died April 28, 2018 at the age of 79. Cone joined the faculty of Union Theological seminary in New York City in 1969. Before that time, Cone taught at Adrian College. While living in Adrian he wrote his landmark book, "Black Theology and Black Power." Cone returned to Adrian in 2003



James Cone was the first black doctoral candidate at Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, IL.

United Methodists provide new aid for Flint

KAY DEMOSS
Senior Editor-Writer

“We do water! But we do so much more than water! We do gospel!” Greg Timmons may be a United Methodist layman but Greg acts as both preacher and prophet on behalf of the residents of Flint, Michigan.

Since August 2016 Timmons has served as Executive Director for Flint Restoration for The United Methodist Church. Working with the Crossroads (soon to be East Winds) District of The Michigan Conference, he has indeed managed hundreds of thousands of bottles of water.

In fact, he reports that he just received word that another denomination is poised to put “22 trucks of water” on the road to Flint.

Greg also knows Jesus. And that has compelled him to doggedly address issues of generational poverty. “Giving people hope is what the church does,” he says. “Hope and godly values will stabilize homes and create a self-healing and self-sustaining

society in Flint.”

Giving and doing and being in mission have become even more critical as the State of Michigan announced on April 6th that they were ending the distribution of free bottled water. That action is based on the State’s evaluation that the city’s tap water is now healthy to drink.

Prior to April 6, the State had been distributing water at three Help Centers in Flint hosted by Bethel and Asbury United Methodist churches and Greater Temple Church of God in Christ. Those Help Centers had been in operation since November 2016 thanks to a \$2.5 million grant from a collaboration of organizations, including PepsiCo, administered by the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. Water, lead-mitigating food, personal care items and health care were available at the Help Centers four days a week.

When the State distribution of bottled water ended, the PepsiCo and Food Bank support ended as well. The Help Centers closed at the end of March. However, since April

16th the Help Centers have re-opened thanks to Genesee Health Systems, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and remnant dollars from the original funding. With no paid labor force, volunteers are being recruited.

However, the Help Centers now are open only one day a week. Home delivery of water has continued thanks to dollars from the Bishop’s Fund of The Michigan Conference. Home delivery is handled out of Calvary and Asbury United Methodist churches five days a week.

When asked his thoughts about the current situation, Greg Timmons said, “I feel frustrated that the state has withdrawn from its commitments.” He quickly adds, “But I am excited about being responsible for our own future.”

The United Methodists continue to work as a member of the Community Resource Group. The network includes the Community Foundation, Mott College and Foundation, Genesee Health Systems, Catholic Charities, Social Security, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and churches.

He says of the network, “There is excitement that we are taking accountability for our own community’s success rather than looking to the State to drive our success.”

He describes what happened when the Community Resource Group got in a room to determine how to move forward. “There was a sense of chaos and helplessness. Now there is a sense of

focus and purpose,” Greg concluded.

The Michigan Conference has issued a new funding campaign for Flint Restoration. Timmons offers four ways for people to participate in “community stabilization” moving forward.

Money is needed for water, enhanced education, job training, counseling, and crime-reduction ministries. Financial gifts may be given by check payable to Crossroads District Board of Missions, attn Flint Recovery. Send checks to Crossroads District Board of Missions, 119 S. Leroy Street, Fenton, MI 48430, attn Linda Squires, Treasurer.

Volunteers are needed until paid staff can eventually be hired. Call Greg Timmons at 810-922-2257 to schedule some hours at a Help Center.

Provide a shipment of water for distribution at a Help Center or for Home Delivery. Call Greg at 810-922-2257.

Pray that God’s hands will move on the City of Flint and that the Holy Spirit will fill hearts so that lives will be transformed.

What’s ahead? Timmons says there are some bills going before the legislature that, if passed, may provide new state funding. Also on Greg Timmon’s radar is a proposal to provide reverse osmosis filtration systems for the three largest schools in Flint. The schools relied on bottled water provided by the State.

“Streams of mercy, never ceasing ... “The United Methodist Church of Michigan is committed to Flint, transforming a toxic crisis into a stable community.



Help Centers are hosted by three churches in the city including Flint: Asbury and Flint: Bethel United Methodist churches. ~mic photo/Mark Doyal