

April 2019

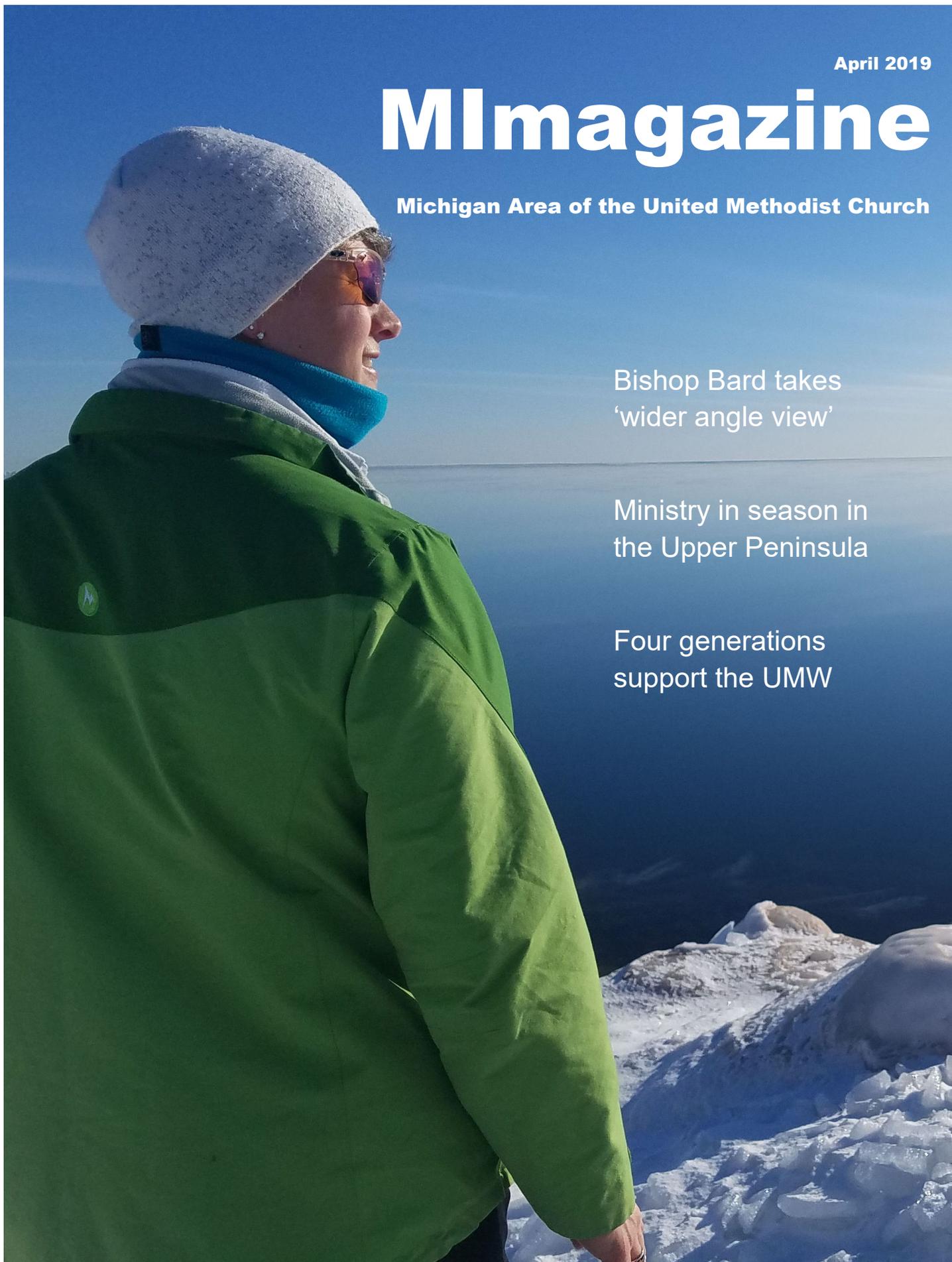
MImagazine

Michigan Area of the United Methodist Church

Bishop Bard takes
'wider angle view'

Ministry in season in
the Upper Peninsula

Four generations
support the UMW





April 2019

MImagazine 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 850 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

The structure of The United Methodist Church may remind you of the way the government of The United States is divided into three branches. It is really no coincidence as the Methodist Episcopal Church emerged within the United States as this country was being formed. As the government of The United States has legislative, executive and judicial branches, so The United Methodist Church has a legislative body (General Conference), an executive body (The Council of Bishops), and a judicial body (The Judicial Council). One crucial role of The Judicial Council is to determine the constitutionality of legislation passed by General Conference, the Constitution of The United Methodist Church being ¶1-61 of The Book of Discipline.

Following General Conference 2019, the petitions associated with the Traditional Plan which were approved by that body, along with a petition regarding local church disaffiliation from an Annual Conference which was also approved, were sent to the Judicial Council for review. At their meeting last week, the Judicial Council ruled that some of the Traditional Plan petitions passed by the General Conference were constitutional and some were not.

Petitions found constitutional and taking effect January 1, 2020, included:

An expansion of the definition of a "self-avowed practicing homosexual" to include persons in same-sex marriages or civil unions.

Prohibition of bishops from consecrating bishops or commissioning or ordaining "self-avowed practicing homosexuals."

Minimum penalties for being convicted at a church trial for officiating at a same-sex wedding: a one-year suspension without pay for the first conviction and loss of clergy credentials for a second conviction.

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Bishops raise their hands for the "Prayer of the People: These Hands" during Feb. 24 opening worship for the 2019 United Methodist General Conference in St. Louis. (From left) Bishops David Bard, John R. Schol, Sally Dyck, and Cynthia Moore-Koikoi. ~ UMNS photo/Kathleen Barry

Ministry in season in the Northern Skies District

REV. SCOTT HARMON
Superintendent, Northern Skies

Warm greetings Michigan, from the snows of the Northern Skies District!

Spring in the northern-most parts of our Conference always comes with great anticipation. The promise of receding snow and light-filled days offers a vantage from which I draw meaning looking into the coming season.

Winter's cold winds and the annual blanketing of snow over frozen lakes and trees tends to draw us, regardless of where we are in Michigan, indoors. Our neighbors become those we wave a friendly greeting to while pulling into the garage or shuffling bundled against the wind to the mailbox. But beyond the chance encounter of synchronized snow-blowing, the winter months lend themselves to the habit of seclusion within the four walls of our insulated boxes.

For the adventurous, though, these months represent a chance to explore God's creation in ways that only the context of the winter season provides. The Copper Dog and UP200 sled dog races through the Keweenaw and Marquette, ice climbing in the Pictured Rocks, pond hockey tournaments in St. Ignace, and ski jumping in Ishpeming, Iron Mountain, and Ironwood. Not to mention the snow-shoeing, Alpine and Nordic skiing, outdoor hockey and curling that goes on across the region. Personally, the winter months and I are friends. I enjoy the winds coming off the lakes and the blankets of white that cover the woods. Long ago I learned to keep my "winter kit" in the car (blanket, boots, water, and energy bars), letting nature's rhythm, and a little good sense, set my pace.

In the midst of this conflicted love/hate relationship we have with the season, it comes as little surprise that the promise of Spring is something all seem to celebrate! Neighbors, with smiles, pause to greet one another from the sidewalk, walkers and runners feel the beckoning impulse to explore their worlds.... and every dog barks it's springtime greeting with pent-up enthusiasm.

And as much as the change in seasons may be anticipated, there's another

reality... change is messy. Winter, in its resplendent sterility, is a known quantity. The warmth of Summer, so desired, is but an aspiration not yet real. Spring, through warm days and cold, freezes and thaws, is a birth; and births, as we know, are not as much "planned" as they are "responded to" with kits packed and ready. Spring is God's invitation, and something of a Biblical metaphor for northern people.

As creation awakens around us, melting snows will doubtlessly swell the rivers. Pathways will be muddy, shorelines

redrawn, rocks from longstanding faces will tumble to the ground.... I wonder if this is not simply a reflection of the way God works. Inviting us into a new life-giving day despite the fact that change, like life, is messy.

I don't know what God has planned, what flowers will sprout among the receding snow piles, or soils wash away down the hillsides, but I want to be ready to offer a good word of grace in Jesus Christ to a messy world whatever the melting snows reveal.



Rev. Scott Harmon visits Hancock First UMC for worship on February 4. "A wonderfully friendly and outgoing congregation bringing Christ's Kingdom to life." ~ Facebook photo/Northern Skies District

The little bank that keeps on giving to support UMW

KAY DEMOSS
Senior Content Editor

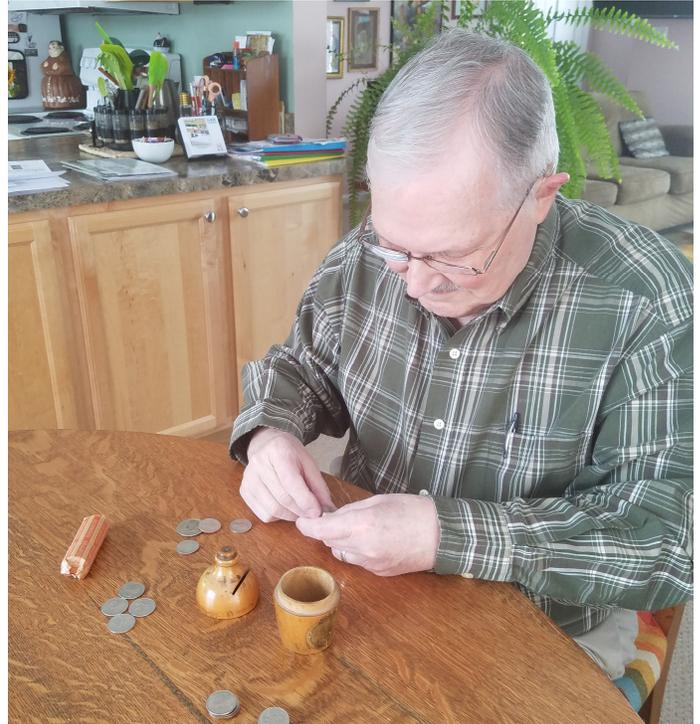
This year The United Methodist Women celebrate their 150th birthday. Today the UMW is the largest women's faith-based organization in the world, with 800,000 members worldwide.

They have come a long way since 1869 when eight women gathered at Tremont Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston, MA to organize the Women's Foreign Missionary Society. The first act of the WFMS was to raise money to send Clara Swain, a doctor, and Isabella Thoburn, a teacher, to India.

By 1890 the organization was recognized by the General

Conference under the name Women's Home Missionary Society (WHMS). The organization continued to grow and would eventually become the service and advocacy powerhouse called United Methodist bringing life-changing opportunities to women, children, and youth in 100 countries.

In 2014 the United Methodist Women launched a Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign aimed at building upon the foundation set forth by their founders. Five years ago, they said, "Imagine what is achievable if United Methodist Women had the resources to deepen and expand its mission to transform lives and ignite change in places near and far."



Lynn DeMoss counts the latest bank-full of quarters for the Legacy Fund. ~ photo courtesy Lynn DeMoss

The goal set for the Legacy Fund is \$60,000,000. To date \$26,046,570 has been raised. Will the goal be reached? Yes, it will. Because decades of faithful giving nurtures a current and future pattern of faithful giving.

Witness the four generations of giving in one Methodist family as reported by the Rev. Lynn DeMoss, retired pastor of The Michigan Conference.

"My maternal great grandmother, Mary Langsdon Veneman (1852-1947), had a mission coin bank which passed through women of my family and finally came to me. On the bank's face is a worn label: *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.*

That bank and the women who filled it many times over, are part of the legacy of mission of the United Methodist Women.

"Great grandmother's mission coin bank challenges me every day. I regularly drop in quarters and contribute them to a cause in honor of all the mission-minded women of my family, who helped shape my own faith and birthed mission involvement in me. I am now grateful for the opportunity to support the Legacy Fund honoring my foremothers."

The theme of the Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign is, "Together, we are building our legacy." One coin and dollar at a time, these funds will carry on the UMW's mission of faith, hope, and love in action.

"Mary Veneman's mission bank, like the widow's jug mentioned in 1 Kings 17, never runs dry." says Lynn DeMoss. "It is the little jug that keeps on giving, as will the Legacy Fund."



Four generations of giving to Methodist women's organizations. Mary Langsdon Veneman, seated, is the original owner of the WHMS coin bank. Surrounding her, left to right, are others who have filled the bank over the years: Lynn DeMoss, Helen McCarty DeMoss, and Myrta Veneman McCarty holding Rachel DeMoss Edwards. ~ photo courtesy Lynn DeMoss

Greening and growing at Greensky Hill Indian UMC

KAY DEMOSS

Senior Content Editor

Greensky Hill Indian United Methodist Church has historic roots that go as deep as those of the Council Trees in its side yard. “We had one of the fallen trees dated and its age is estimated at 204 years old,” said Pastor Jonathan David Mays. That means those maples were already 40 years old when Peter Greensky and other Native Americans constructed a church there out of hewn-logs in the mid-19th century.

That pine log church still stands today and is in good repair thanks to a renovation project that began in 2016 with the help of a grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places. The congregation that is housed in that building is as vital as ever and is working on initiatives that will celebrate their past as well as innovate for their future.

Greensky, located in the northwest part of the lower peninsula near Charlevoix, is a multi-racial congregation; about 50% Native American and 50% non-Native. Pastor Mays has been serving in their midst since July of 2013. He says that, “From my very first meeting with Greensky, I have been embraced and welcomed by the congregation.”

Mays came to Greensky with a passion to learn about Native American culture and to minister to the trauma experienced by that community. “I made a point before arriving to gain information about the Grand Traverse and Little Traverse Bands of the Anishinaabe.”

At present there are three new ministry initiatives underway at Greensky. The first involves food. Last January the church changed their Sunday morning worship time to 10am. This made it possible to start a Breakfast Ministry at 9am. “We serve a full, hot breakfast to the community every Sunday morning,” Mays explains, “and we make it clear that guests do not have to stay for church in order to be welcome at the meal.” Through a partnership with Manna Food Project: Feeding the Hungry through the North, Greensky has access to food resources.

There’s also a potluck after the 5pm worship each Sunday and food is sent home with those who need it.

The second project is the Greening of Greensky. “We want to get our 180+ year old church completely off the grid through use of alternative solar, geo-thermal, and wind energy,” the pastor says. They even hope to put energy back into the system. Michigan Interfaith Power and Light is part of this conversation. Water protection is another issue of concern and advocacy.

Archeological exploration of the site is underway. The third initiative being undertaken by the congregation moves this beyond historic artifacts. “We want Greensky to be not just a living United Methodist Church but a cultural center,” Mays reflects. “Many people come to Greensky to experience liminal space, which in part goes back to the grove of crooked trees.” Members hope to offer displays and information about the history of the site to enhance the spiritual experience. The goal is to have an educational center that will tell the story of the Anishinaabe here.

The annual youth camp includes young people of Native American ancestry who may not meet the criteria for tribal membership. “Our camp gives these kids

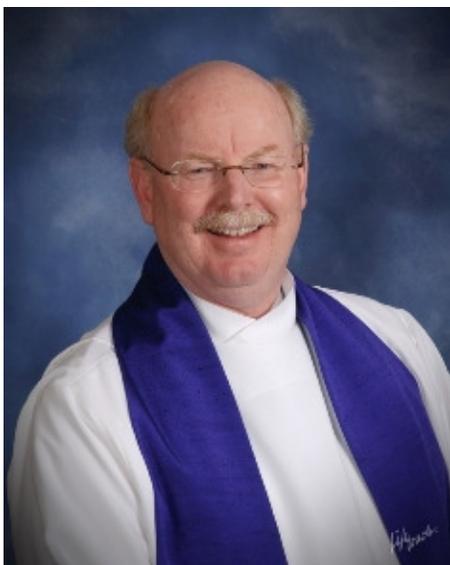
opportunity to experience the integration between Christ and their own culture,” Mays says. A special series is also being planned for fall 2019 that includes Greensky youth and teens from other United Methodist churches in the region. “Walking in these White Man Shoes” is a UMW study by Ray Buckley that will be the basis of these four sessions.

Worship at Greensky Hill Indian UMC keeps Native American culture alive through use of Anishinaabemowin, the Ojibway language. The Lord’s Prayer, Doxology and a hymn are voiced during each gathering in Anishinaabemowin. “There is nothing inconsistent between traditional spirituality and the teachings of Christ,” Mays remarks. “We acknowledge that whenever we worship.” A Native American Communion is observed on the first Sunday of each month. Pastor Jonathan Mays hopes that the white church and culture will listen to Native peoples and build relationships from a non-defensive point of view. “We must recognize how privilege has affected our relationships, how we understand scripture, and how we teach about the ways of Christ,” he continues. He believes “When we open ourselves to learn from our native brothers and sisters, we are more fully like Christ.”



Pastor Jonathan Mays (left) is excited about the many young families active at Greensky Hill Indian UMC. ~ photo courtesy Jonathan Mays

Drinking the Cup ... a greater justice



REV. JOHN W. BOLEY
Clergy Assistant to the Bishop

I was going to write about General Conference 2019. But I ripped it up (electronically). It's time to give that a breather. The current state of the United Methodist Church has been consuming, but not for this blog on this day.

One of the books I've read recently is Preet Bharara's book called *"Doing Justice: A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment and the Rule of Law."* Bharara is the former U.S. District Attorney for the Southern District of New York. He is a bit of a superstar in Federal legal circles. In this book, Bharara reflects on the US judicial system, how it works, and some of the nuances of process that are meant to ensure that "justice" is accomplished. He especially talks about "due process" and the "rule of law."

But Bharara begins his book on a note other than focusing on the complex laws and procedures that define achieving justice in the well-established judicial system. He begins with a truth that we Christians understand. He quotes the great lawyer Clarence Darrow in a case from 1926 called *"People v. Henry Sweet."* In this case, an African American was accused of murder, and was being defended by Darrow. In his summation of the case in court, Darrow said of the African American defendant; "The law has made him equal, but man has not. And after all, the last analysis is, what has man done? And what has man not done?" Darrow continued by saying,

After all, every human being's life in this world is inevitably mixed with every other life and, no matter what laws we pass, no matter what precautions we take, unless the people we meet are kindly and decent and human and liberty-loving, then there is no liberty. Freedom comes from human beings, rather than from laws and institutions.

This understanding as proffered by Clarence Darrow, apparently became the primary guiding principle for Bharara in his stellar service as a U.S. Attorney.

During this Holy Week, we are reminded of how Christ taught exactly this and paved the way for true justice. The Jewish ruling classes of Pharisees and Sadducees had set up elaborate rules and procedures to determine righteousness and atonement. Then Jesus transformed them all with the Great Commandments, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, body and spirit; and your neighbor as yourself." All forms of justice come from these commandments regardless of institutions and laws and procedures.

So as we continue to do Christ's work in the world, seeking compassion and justice, and as we reflect on GC 2019 and its aftermath, the words of Jesus, Clarence Darrow and Preet Bharara come together in a very clear directive – even while we work for institutional justice and making disciples, it is only our love, kindness and decency in all contexts that can transform the world.

Summer is coming soon ... Reflections of a family camper

TERRI REYNOLDS
Michigan Area UM Camping

We are back from another week in the sand and dirt and woods of western Michigan. Our ankles are covered in mosquito bites, our shoulders are slightly pink still from too much sun, and we are, for a brief time, sated with s'mores and hobo pies.

And our tanks are full again—we've spent a week in worship and study and play with our extended church family so we are buoyed and hopeful.

It was a very good week. We camp near friends that have blurred the line into family. We reveled in late night card games, chats around the communal fire, and big "family dinners" that everyone

contributed to. Our rhythms changed—the dinners were slower, more boisterous. We were not labored with tending to just our own needs—fire, food, shelter—and so had more time to just Be.

It is good to head into the new school year with the confidence of who we are and to whom we belong. It's the best thing about family camp—all the generations tumbling upon each other so that there are always extra hands to hold the little people and extra advice for those in the pre-teen trenches. And so much love. Love for even the middle-agers who are tired and worn down from work and routine.

There is balm in the sunsets. There is rest in pulling our chairs out into the shallow waters and letting the lake lap

over us while we read and talk and soak up the sun. There is joy in the singing at fire bowl. Convivial warmth in the shared meals and trivia games and walks along the trails. There are old friends and new friends and reconnections.

And there is dirt, and grime, and uncleaned bathrooms, mice in the walk-in coolers, chipmunks in the tents, and worn out children in need of a nap. There is patience required in the long walk to the ice-cooler or the wiping down of sandy tables and the shaking out of sleeping bags. What a gift it all is.

If you are a camper—all that lovely green around you is a wonderful thing. To hear birds and the skittering of tiny feet is music. To be surrounded by

people who reflect back 1 John 4:7-8 in their laughter and kindness and offer to toast a marshmallow for you. What a holy thing it is to be out of cell phone range—to see that "No Service" pop up on your iPhone and know that you are not for this world. Ah—that is a sacred offering in itself.

We store it up as best we can—we pack it up as surely as we pack up the tarps and bungee cords and camp dishes.

Throughout the long year ahead we'll find remnants, even in this thicker place,—a piece of a song or the whiff of wood smoke. And those remnants will stir the memory of who we are, what we are called to be, and how much we are loved.

Or at least that's the hope.





GREATER SOUTHWEST DISTRICT ... *On the grow at Sunnyside United Methodist Church in Kalamazoo. April 22rd was Mulch Day in the community garden.*



MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT ... *Pastor Pete Crawford, Juddville UMC, "likes to dress the part" for his children's sermons. Right out of the horse's mouth on April Fool's Day*



MIDWEST DISTRICT... *The Spirit comes down on a new disciple at Wolf Lake UMC. Pastor Mona Dye celebrates Easter Sunday baptisms at Wolf Lake United Methodist Church.*

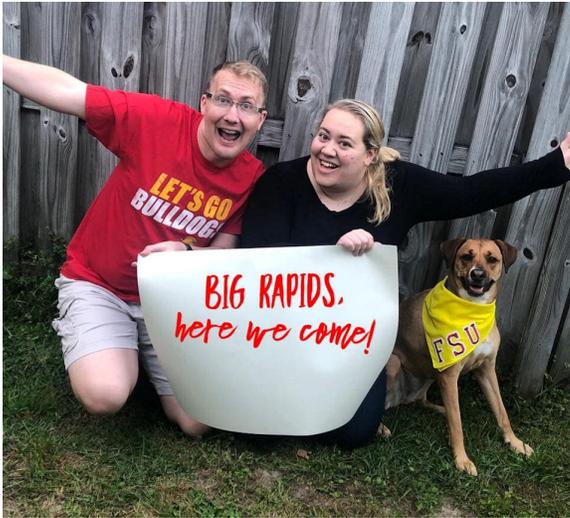
Snapshots
of Vitality



HERITAGE DISTRICT ... *Chelsea First UMC's 3rd-5th graders had a sleepover at church. Friday night they made a meal for 100 people and Saturday morning a smaller group went to the Jackson Interfaith Shelter to serve the lunch.*



CENTRAL BAY DISTRICT ... *Tip-toeing through the tulips in Saginaw. New Heart UMC's Easter Egg Hunt was fun for all ages.*



MICHIGAN MINISTRIES ... Wesley House at Ferris State University welcomes new director Kim Bos. Moving to Big Rapids with Wil and Maybelle, Kim starts ministry as campus pastor on July 1.



MICHIGAN UM CAMPING ... And I will make you fishers of ... pike. Care takers of the Pike Pond at Lakeview Campground measuring the fish for the Department of Natural Resources.



NORTHERN SKIES ... First Easter! A little disciple learns about new life in Christ at Marquette Hope UMC.



NORTHERN WATERS DISTRICT ... Kingsley UMC celebrates the grand opening of Crossroads Farm for 6th-8th graders on Sunday night. Games, awesome worship, and a great message, "Who is Jesus- a lunatic, a liar or our LORD? Jesus is our Lord!"



GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT ... A-Rum-Pa-Pa-Pum! Parent-Toddler Music Time at Royal Oak First United Methodist Church.

AC 2019 ingathering offering benefits Haiti and Liberia

The Ingathering at the 2019 Michigan Annual Conference will once again benefit the Area's covenant partners. The Rev. Jon Reynolds chairs the Libera Covenant Partners. The Rev. Karl Zeigler is the leader of the Haiti Covenant Partners. They talk about the importance of the offering.

Construction of the Bishop Judith Craig Children's Village took place during the 1990s and doors opened in honor of Bishop Judith Craig in 2000. Today, almost two decades later, 69 orphans live in nine cottages on the site. Other buildings in the complex house a clinic, classrooms and administrative offices.

The Liberia Covenant Partners receive 45% of the financial ingathering received at opening worship during Annual Conference. They have designated the 2019 funds to support cabin maintenance at the Judith Craig Children's Village. The existing cabins have faithfully done exactly what they were constructed to do; provide shelter to children who were orphaned because of the civil war and the Ebola

crisis in Liberia. The buildings are beginning to show signs of the wear and tear any building would show after housing children for 20 years.

Reynolds asks, "Can you imagine life after a war without your parents, or a familiar place to sleep?" The staff at the Judith Craig Children's Village in Liberia are incredible examples of Christ's love.

"When I was at the orphanage two years ago," Reynolds remembers. "Some of the staff there were caring for the children despite not having been paid for several months. When I asked the staff how they were surviving the director, the Rev. Robert Sieh, said, 'It's a calling right?' Sieh was not being paid himself at the time."

The children in the orphanage now are there because their parents were lost in the Ebola crisis. The staff are now regularly receiving their wages and in general things are going well for the orphanage. Some of the cottages however, have fallen into stages of disrepair because of deferred maintenance during lean financial times. This year the Liberia



Rev. Robert Sieh, Director of the Bishop Judith Craig Children's Village, stands with some of the 70 residents of the facility in Liberia. ~ photo courtesy Robert Sieh

Partnership Team encourages generous of the ingathering that will enable the Judith Craig Children's Orphanage reopen some of the cottages that have closed over the years due to the deferred maintenance. More cabins make it possible to assist more children.

Karl Zeigler has announced that Grace Children's Hospital in Port Au Prince, Haiti has been chosen to receive the 2019 Annual Conference Offering.

Michigan United Methodists have had a long relationship with this medical ministry that began over 50 years ago. A small clinic started by a benevolent and loving couple has grown into a major treatment center.

Today, Grace Children's Hospital, founded in 1967, is recognized as Haiti's leading medical facility dedicated to the treatment of children with tuberculosis (TB). Each year, the hospital receives thousands of children who are suffering from TB, HIV, and other chronic diseases. Grace Children's Hospital is an Advance Special of the

General Board of Global Ministries.

While inpatient services are available, most children receive treatment through the many out-patient treatment centers around the country. Some of the services provided are prenatal care, vaccinations, vision testing/eye care, reproductive health services and nutrition awareness. Grace Children's Hospital determines fees for outpatient services on a sliding scale based on the patient's income. No one is ever turned away because they are unable to pay. The contributions from The Michigan Conference will help provide charitable care services. The Haiti Covenant Partners invite you to transform the world of the families in Haiti.

The 2019 Ingathering during the Opening Worship Service at The Michigan Conference will be divided among Grace Children's Hospital (Haiti-45%), the Bishop Judith Craig Children's Village (Liberia-45%), and the Disaster Recovery Fund (Michigan Conference 10%).



Over 50 years ago James and Virginia Snavley opened a small clinic to care for children in Haiti. Today Grace Children's Hospital continues to offer hope for countless families.. ~ Facebook/International Child Care

Home Words Bound ... remember the essentials



REV. BENTON HEISLER

Director of Connectional Ministries, West Michigan

I had an opportunity to finally get out in the yard this Spring. There are those essentials that need to be done after the long winter. Each home has its distinct needs for cleaning up yard debris, adding fertilizer to the grass, mulch around bushes and shrubs, and setting out the spring and summer lawn furniture.

Early Spring television has the rhythm of the NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments and Opening Day of Baseball. Equally, there is nothing more encouraging that warm temperatures will soon reach us than seeing the magnolia blossoms and hearing cardinals whistle and chirp in the background as a quiet voice narrates the Masters PGA Golf Championship from Augusta, Georgia. Reflecting on these seasonal rhythms, triggered a pattern of other essential rhythms in my mind.

"A great defense is the best offense." (Just ask the Spartans.)

"Keep the ball in the strike zone."

"Buy low, sell high."

"Prepare the equipment in the winter, so its ready to plant the fields in the spring."

"Maintain Balance in your life: Spiritual life, family, exercise, diet, work, play, rest, education..."

Robert Fulghum once summarized a list in his popular book, *Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Today far too many children have not learned all they needed to know. A parent may be missing from the equation at home or is far too distracted by their own dysfunctions and inadequacies to properly nurture the child. The groan of hunger in the child's stomach distracts their mind and steals their energy. Teachers are inadequately paid to cover the significant college student loan burden and thus some of our finest teaching candidates and employees may choose to exit the education system, leading to a further decline in the quality of our education system. Math, Science, Reading, English, Social Studies and Creative Arts, are no longer able to be the essentials to the rhythm of the curriculum. Instead teachers must maintain order in the face of defiance, abandon creativity for the institutional machine of core testing components, and hold parent/teacher conferences while they stare across their desk at an empty seat intended for the parent.

Before our two daughters were even pre-school age, I remember asking a school superintendent what he suggested as some of the best steps toward school readiness. His answer was simple. "Be sure they are in Sunday School and Worship. They will learn the many basic Judeo-Christian values that guide our society and they will have the necessary social interactions that will help prepare them for sharing a classroom, and eventually the world, with others."

Deuteronomy 5 lists "The 10 Commandments", Matthew 22 records "The Great Commandment" and Matthew 28, declares "The Great Commission." These have become some of the essentials of our Christian faith.

No other gods ... No idols ... No misuse of God's name ... Observe the Sabbath ... Honor your parents ... No murder ...
No adultery ... No stealing ... No lying ... No wishing you had somebody else's family or stuff.

Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 5:17 "I did not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them." Later in Matthew 22 he taught, "I give you a **new commandment**. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind; **AND, love your neighbor as yourself.**" As he communicated the last time with his disciples, after his resurrection, he gave them the Great Commission "**Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**" (Matthew 28:20)."

These essentials guide the rhythm of our faith along with countless other promises and biblical examples of Gods' providential and grace filled actions in our lives.

These are the other essentials in our faith rhythm: Brokenness, Preventive Grace, Repentance, Justification, Sanctification:

Consequences – "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Preparation – God's grace reaches out to us even before we realize we need it.

Redirection – "We are born again." (John 3:7)

Correction – "God shows his love for us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Improvement – The continual process of discipleship as we spend time in prayer, study, worship, fasting and service.

There seems to be a fair amount of conversation about what divides us in the UMC and the steps we need to take to accomplish that division. My prayer is that we never fail to remember and focus upon the essentials that unite us to God, through Jesus Christ, and to which we are called to witness to the world. These essentials are far more important than the fertilizer on our lawn, our "busted NCAA bracket" or Sunday golf at the Masters.

The next generation is counting on us not losing track of the essentials of our faith and to teach them!

Bishop from p. 2

Prohibiting District Committees on Ordained Ministry and Boards of Ordained Ministry from recommending persons who do not meet all disciplinary requirements.

Making every effort to have a complainant agree to the terms of a just resolution of a complaint, and specifying that a just resolution must contain a statement of harms and how they are addressed in the resolution.

Church trial verdicts can be appealed on the basis of egregious errors of church law.

Petitions found unconstitutional:

Petitions which would have moved the accountability of bishops away from their jurisdictional college or central conference.

Petitions which would have required specific certification for persons nominated for the Board of Ordained Ministry.

A petition which would have asked Boards of Ordained Ministry to examine candidates in part, through a search of social media, to determine if they meet qualifications for commissioning or ordination.

Finally, the Judicial Council ruled that a

petition specifying a process for local church disaffiliation from an Annual Conference was constitutional. The process includes a two-thirds majority vote by the church conference, an agreement between the church and the conference trustees, and a ratification vote by the Annual Conference. It takes effect immediately.

These rulings reinforce The United Methodist Church's current stance on human sexuality and the limitations for LGBTQ persons to be married by our pastors or in our churches or to be eligible for licensing, ordination and appointment. Many LGBTQ persons, their families, and friends find this stance hurtful and harmful. In addition, the legislation passed and now found constitutional adds specifications to the complaint process that some view as deeply punitive. Some among us, then, had the feelings of disappointment, hurt and discouragement felt immediately following General Conference reawakened.

Others among us believe that the church in these decisions is being faithful to the long-standing witness of the Bible and the church. Such diverse responses reveal starkly the depth of our divisions.

Expectations for this work of the Judicial Council were high, in some cases unreasonably so given that the Judicial Council was not going to change the basic stance of our denomination. Anxiety about this meeting was high and remains so following the decision. What might the future look like?

It may be helpful for each of us to step back for a moment and seek a wider-angle view.

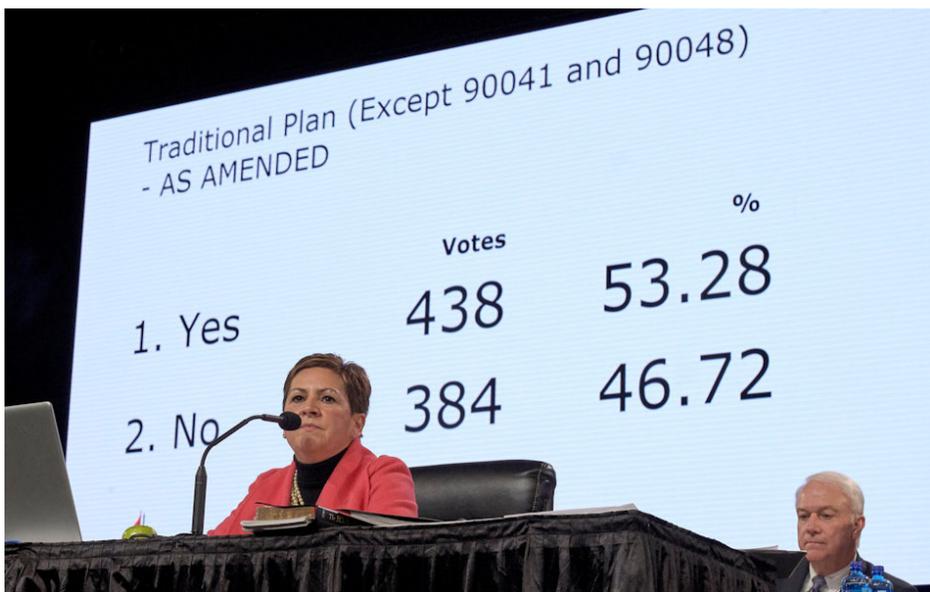
The Judicial Council decision has not markedly changed the trajectory of differing groups within The United Methodist Church. Traditionalists who are in accord with the Wesleyan Covenant Association and other groups have pledged to continue to work to strengthen the Traditional Plan as they prepare for the 2020 General Conference in Minneapolis. They will seek to revise petitions from the Traditional Plan found unconstitutional to make them constitutional.

At the same time, a number of more Centrist and Progressive persons and groups have pledged to resist the Traditional Plan in different ways and to work to change it as they prepare for the 2020 General Conference. It would seem there are forces within The United Methodist Church destined to collide again, and soon.

Complicating the picture is that there are significant numbers of people who would describe themselves as traditional or progressive who would also be considered *compatibilists* or *incompatibilists*. *Compatibilists*, who may hold either more traditional or more progressive views, also have a desire for people of differing views to stay together in a United Methodist Church and would be willing to allow for different practices of ministry in different contexts. *Incompatibilists*, who may hold either more traditional or more progressive views, prefer a United Methodist Church that fully represents their viewpoint. Again, there are forces here that seem destined to collide at the next General Conference.

What has become clear to many, including me, is that more space is needed between

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Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey presided on Day 4 of the 2019 General Conference when delegates approved the Traditional Plan by 54 votes. ~ umns photo

persons within The United Methodist Church. We cannot simply keep moving into the future as we are now. It will only generate intense cycles of reactivity. There are a number of ways we might describe what “more space” looks like: amicable separation, a new connectionalism, new Methodisms, a new form of unity, and mutual blessing.

If we would like to see General Conference 2020 look different from General Conference 2019 when it comes to considering the inclusion of LGBTQ persons, then we would do well to seek some kind of negotiated plan to create more space prior to that General Conference which could then be ratified by that body. There are a number of significant conversations taking place that could contribute to such a negotiated plan, including the conversation taking place at Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, May 20-22 which includes clergy and laypersons from across the United States. I will be there as well. **I have also been in conversation with other bishops in less formal settings discussing the future of the church.**

This is where we are, and the Judicial Council decision is part of this long story. The question before us is how we will live together in this uncertain and in-between time. We can make choices about ministry shares. I would encourage continuing participation in connectional giving so as to keep the church strong as we move into a new future. Weakening the church now only weakens what may emerge. We can choose to turn up the temperature by sharing our viewpoints in words that wound and in actions that generate more anger and anxiety. We can choose to see caricatures of each other rather than see each other. On the other hand, we can choose to be more thoughtful and less reactive. We can choose to live into the future by seeing how we can bless each other now, while we are together, even as we anticipate some parting of the ways, some greater space between us.

Regardless of my own viewpoint on LGBTQ inclusion, which has been clear in my support of more space for LGBTQ persons in the life and ministry of the church as represented by the defeated One Church Plan, I remain and am committed to being the bishop for all



The Rev. Adam Hamilton, Church of the Resurrection, is one of the organizers of a conversation taking place May 20-22 to seek a negotiated plan of options for the future of The UMC prior to the 2020 General Conference. Bishop Bard will participate in that conversation along with others from Michigan.

United Methodists in Michigan. We need not agree about everything for me to support the good work you do in ministry as clergy and lay people, to celebrate with you your joys, professional and personal, or to mourn your sorrows.

When the time comes that we might have to extend the hand of Christian fellowship to each other in a wave goodbye, we will cross that bridge then. In the meantime, I will offer my best to you and to Jesus Christ as bishop of the Michigan Area.

We have to figure out the future, thoughtfully, prayerfully, open to God’s Spirit. While we do that, we also know we cannot neglect the pain and anguish in the world which God loves. The ministry to which we are called in our churches, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world continues. Hungry people need food, those mired in poverty need help, addicted people need freedom, frayed relationships need mending, broken lives need healing, lost lives need saving, injustices need to be righted. This work of God in Jesus Christ still calls to each of us and to our churches, even in the midst of our tensions, even in the midst of our anxieties, even in the midst of our confusion, even in the midst of broken

hearts and disappointments. Ministry needs to be done and, thanks be to God, is being done.

We are in a challenging and difficult time as The United Methodist Church. We are in an uncertain and in-between time. Two moments from the first book in our Scripture tug at my soul. “Abraham took his last breath and died after a good long life, a content old man, and he was placed with his ancestors. His sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him.” (Genesis 25:8-9a, CEV) “Isaac took his last breath and died. He was buried with his ancestors after a long, satisfying life. His sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.” (Genesis 35:29, CEV) It is not the images of death which speak to me, rather the images of brothers, often-estranged, standing together in shared memory and shared grief. In this moment we are together with a deeply shared history. Soon we may go other ways. Might we work to bless each other even as we work out this new thing that needs to happen?

My prayer for us remains that God would enlarge our hearts, enliven our minds, expand our imaginations, make gentle and generous our spirits, and renew our commitment to the mission of the church.

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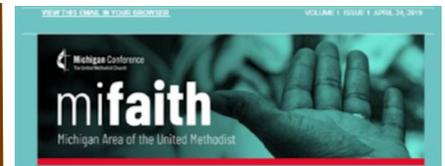


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Art in the heart of Grand Rapids



— photo courtesy Laura Glisak

"I Light" Art Therapy studio is an exciting setting where spirituality and meaning can be explored using a different medium and method.

What was it about the recent burning of Notre Dame Cathedral that touched the soul of millions around the world? Many would answer it was the loss of the work of artists and artisans, crisscrossed and many names: the destruction

News in Brief

DETROIT FLOOD RELIEF IS UNDERWAY



On May 1, 2019 the Dearborn Heights area near Detroit experienced flooding due to heavy rainfall in the region. Approximately 100 homes are currently known to be affected in that area. A report has been received that the Centro Familiar Cristiano UMC parsonage is among those

homes now flooded. Currently the disaster, identified as the Detroit 2019 Flood, is in the Relief Stage. Contributions are welcomed and should be designated to the Michigan Area Disaster Response account 4407.

BISHOP HOLDS LISTENING SESSIONS ON GC2019



Bishop David Bard said in a recent pastoral letter, “Regardless of my own viewpoint on LGBTQ inclusion, which has been clear in my support of more space for LGBTQ persons in the life and ministry of the church as represented by the defeated One Church Plan, I remain and am committed to being the bishop for all

United Methodists in Michigan. We need not agree about everything for me to support the good work you do in ministry as clergy and lay people, to celebrate with you your joys, professional and personal, or to mourn your sorrows.” Bishop Bard has two more Q & A sessions open to all: May 14, East Lansing: University UMC, 7-9 pm (to be livestreamed); June 1, 10 pm at Annual Conference.

AC 2019 TO ELECT MICHIGAN DELEGATES



Thirty-nine persons have been nominated as delegates to the 2020 General Conference to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 5-15 next year. The Michigan Conference will send eight delegates to that session, four clergy and four laity. Those persons will be elected at the 2019 session of the Michigan Annual

Conference held May 30-June 2 in Acme, MI. Their photos and bios can be found at 2019.michiganumc.org. It will be possible to nominate clergy and laity from the floor at the 2019 Annual Conference.



Deacon Cora Glass and Elder J. D. Landis are the first Michigan clergy to be interviewed for the new series, “Passing the Mantle.” Landis is retiring at the 2019 Annual Conference and Glass is being ordained.

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the summer of 1979, he was working as the youth director at Ocean Grove in New Jersey when Bill Quick came as the preacher. He remembers the night they sat on a bench looking out over the Atlantic Ocean, and Bill invited him to join the staff at Metropolitan. JD hesitated because at that time, Detroit was known as the “Murder Capital,” but he came and discovered a wonderful church and ministry in the heart of the city. Another important mentor was the Rev. Bob Horton, the Superintendent of the Port Huron District. Horton invited JD to serve three small churches even before he was . JD says, “Mentors like Bill and Bob and Jim Timmons have helped keep me alive in ministry along with the affirmation of the congregations I have served.”

Today Cora is looking forward to her ordination and to what will happen in the United Methodist Church. She is aware of the tensions and divisions in the denomination, but she also sees this moment as an opportunity for something new to emerge for

the Order of Deacon. She says, “For too long we have lived with a fear of dying so we focused on the local church. If we can embrace all the places where God is at work and the Spirit is moving outside the church building, we might discover new life. That’s the work of the Deacon, whatever comes next.”

“If we can embrace all the places where God is at work and the Spirit is moving outside the church building, we might discover new life.”

When asked, “What would you tell a new ordinand?” JD didn’t hesitate. He said, “Three things: find a mentor who will encourage you and challenge you, keep learning and studying, and finally, spend as much time as you possibly can on sermon preparation. That’s how you keep the call alive and stay fresh in ministry for the long haul.”

JD and Cora represent the tradition which goes all the way back to Elijah and Elisha, passing on the mantle of ministry from one generation to another for the sake of Jesus Christ and the future of the church.

When God calls ... passing the mantle of ministry

REV. JOHN HARNISH
Michigan Communications

The guild of prophets from Jericho saw the whole thing from where they were standing. They said, "The spirit of Elijah lives in Elisha!" They welcomed and honored him. 2 Kings 2:15
The Message

So, the aging prophet Elijah is carried away in a flaming chariot. But before he departs, his young protégé Elisha asks for one more blessing: "Give me a double portion of your spirit. Let your mantle fall on me."

As Elijah ascends into glory, his cloak falls on the shoulders of Elisha who will carry on his prophetic ministry. It's a grand exit which rivals the closing scene of a Broadway musical, and it is likely that very few of our retiring pastors will experience the majesty of departing the pulpit on their last Sunday in a chariot of fire.

But the tradition of "passing on the mantle" of ministry still holds powerful symbolism for the continuity of the church. In some annual conferences, and The Michigan Conference is one of them, there is a ceremony where a representative of the retiring pastors places a stole

on the shoulders of one of the incoming pastors as a sign of passing on of the office of ordained ministry in the church.

In this series of articles, we will be sharing the stories of retirees and ordinands (those newly authorized for ministry) as they reflect on

J.D. came to Michigan from Eastern Pennsylvania through the ministry of Dr. Bill Quick at Metropolitan United Methodist Church in Detroit. Cora experienced her call to ministry at First United Methodist Church in Birmingham. She currently serves on the staff at

"I'm going to seminary!" and a peace came over him which assured him he was moving in the right direction.

Cora's first sense of call came through a fairly ordinary experience—a CROP walk. When she was a high school student at Birmingham First UMC, she got involved with CROP, an extension of Church World Service that raises funds for the world's hungry. In that experience, she began to put together the needs of the world and her desire to do something about it. Under the ministry of the Rev. Jeff Nelson, then Associate Pastor for Student Ministries at Birmingham, she became involved in leading small groups and organizing mission trips and realized that "...there

was more than just meeting human needs. It also meant the transformation of the heart by

modeling the love of Christ." The growing sense that God was calling her to ministries of service led her to ordination as a Deacon, one who is called to lead the church in servant ministries such as Christian education, sacred music, and social work.

Like Cora, JD also points to mentors who have been significant in his journey. In



A passing of the mantle of ministry took place at the 2017 Michigan Annual Conference. Those retiring as Deacon and Elder put stoles on those to be ordained Deacon and Elder. L-r: Catherine Miles, Nancy Fancher, Gary Haller, and Andrew Lee. ~ mic photo/Hannah Hazen

their calling, their hopes and dreams for the church and their sense of shared ministry.

This first interview introduces the Rev. Dr. J.D. Landis, retiring from the pulpit of First United Methodist Church in Midland, MI and the Rev. Cora Glass, a provisional Deacon who will be ordained at the 2019 Michigan Annual Conference by Bishop David A. Bard.

Waterford Central UMC.

In discussing his call to ministry, JD looked back to his days as a biology student at Millersburg University in Eastern Pennsylvania. He was working with Intervarsity at the time and people kept telling him, "You have gifts. God is using you. You should go into the ministry." He felt a desire to do something but wasn't sure what. One night he literally woke up from sleep and said to himself,

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