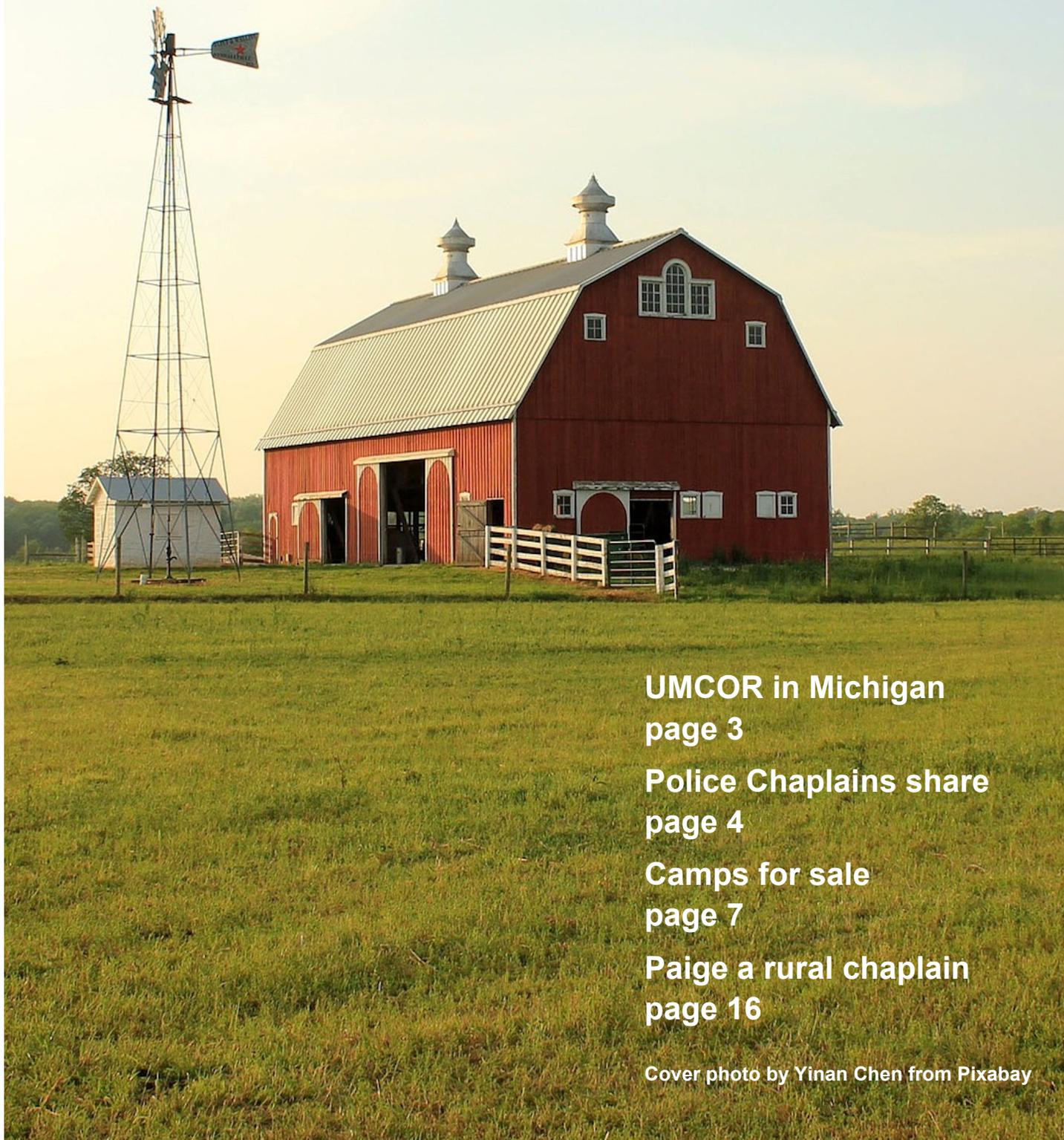


August 2019

# MImagazine

Michigan Area of the United Methodist Church



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### August 2019

*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 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 wedding service had ended. Pictures had been taken, including a few along the shores of Lake Superior on a beautiful day. Our daughter Sarah was married, and we were going to continue to celebrate with dinner and dancing. Sarah asked both her older brother and older sister to say a few words as part of the evening's toasts. Those moments will be etched in my memory forever, filled with feelings of deep pride and love. There were our three children, now grown adults, all married, and the love and care they have for each other swelled Julie's heart and mine.

Isn't that what we want and hope for our children, that they will develop into caring adults, that they will be healthy, and know happiness, that they will support and care about each other? Isn't that what all parents want for their children, unless trauma or addiction has so damaged them that they have lost the capacity to parent well?

In thinking about those moments at Sarah's wedding, I cannot help but also think about other children, children whose parents want for them health and happiness and opportunity, children whose parents want them to grow up with a modicum of safety and security. We have many such children coming to our borders. Are we seeing them as children? Are we seeing them as children whose parents want them to be well and have opportunities to do well?

Being able to see these children as children with such parents will not answer all the complex questions about immigration policy and border security that continue to occupy political debate. Yet to see in this way is necessary. In The United Methodist resolution on migration, we call for comprehensive reform of the United State immigration system, and then include this statement: "Any legislation to reform the US immigration system must affirm the worth, dignity, and inherent value and rights of migrants." This is an invitation to us to see differently.

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**The Rev. Joel Hortiales (right), a United Methodist missionary with the Board of Global Ministries, visits with Lizbeth and her three children Bridgette, 3, Caleb, 4 and Alvaro Jose, 10, at the Hosanna Refugio Para Mujeres, in Mexicali, Mexico. The family is part of the migrant caravan that started their long journey on foot from Central American a few months ago. ~ umnews/Mike DuBose**

## UMCOR case managers care during the storms of life

### KAY DEMOSS

Senior Content Editor

Michigan ... the name means, "Large Water." And the state's tagline since the mid-1950s is, "Water Wonderland."

In recent times, however, "large water" in Michigan has not been so wonderful.

In August of 2014 torrential rains resulted in massive flooding in northwest Detroit. The downpour across mid-Michigan in June of 2017 brought devastation to several counties. Residents in the Keweenaw Peninsula woke up in crisis after the Father's Day Flood of 2018. Another deluge hit Detroit/Dearborn in May of 2019.

So, Michiganders know that water both sustains life and water threatens life. Over the past five years excellent volunteer leadership and UMCOR-funded case managers carried the day in those communities affected by storms across the state.

Today, thanks to a major grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the Michigan Conference has a full-time Coordinator of Disaster Recovery. Nancy Money has now been on the job for five months.

She reports on two flood recovery projects; one is wrapping up and the other is just beginning.

### Copper Country clean-up

In October of 2018 Marci Vivian and Dennis Leopold began work as UMCOR case managers, based in Hancock, Michigan. The work of that office concluded on July 15, 2019.

From June of last year to their arrival on the scene, the Portage Health Foundation worked on mucking-out and rebuilding of 90 homes in the region. Dennis and Marci then called several thousand more householders to determine need, many of whom had cared for damage to property themselves, with assistance from friends and family.

The Copper Country Flood Recovery effort involved 52 cases. Most were rebuilds – furnace replacement to total redo of a main level and everything in between. While a \$100,000 grant from



**A Volunteer in Mission team from Clarkston UMC volunteered at Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC) in Chatham, IL. On May 6, 2019 the team helped bless 2,088 cleaning buckets, worth \$156,600, before shipping to Dearborn for clean-up efforts. ~photo courtesy Brenda DuPree**

UMCOR paid the salaries of the case managers, individual assistance funds to facilitate the rebuilds were all local dollars from churches and community agencies. The Michigan Conference Disaster Recovery Fund supported utility subsidies and such but no rebuilding.

"This effort was life-changing for folks," Nancy Money says. "People in the U.P. have a very proud heritage. They really want to help themselves, and that's awesome." She adds, "For those who really needed it, the work provided through UMCOR and the Michigan Conference got their lives back to a new normal." She calls the Copper Country Flood Recovery, "a great project with good community partners."

### Another deluge in Detroit

Two-and-a-half years after the Northwest Detroit Flood Recovery Project closed, another torrent struck the city. A ten-day rain, May 1-10, affected over 3,000 households, mostly in the Dearborn Heights area. While many were able to clean-up on their own, the Michigan Emergency Management/Homeland Security and the Red Cross

determined that around 340 households required assistance. Those cases will be handled by Cheryl Tipton, who served as one of two case managers in the Northwest Detroit Recovery Project.

Cheryl Tipton and Linda Staley worked from January 2015 through December of 2016. "Cheryl can hit the ground running using UMCOR best practices," Money observes. "She already knows the job and doesn't need to be trained. Cheryl also is aware of community resources because of her prior experience."

In fact, some of the same people, who suffered when the rains came in August of 2015, were hit again by the 2019 flooding. Money reports that last May, "Cheryl began getting calls from previous clients."

When the flooding occurred in May of 2019, Samaritan's Purse, a Christian humanitarian organization based in North Carolina, worked for a month in Metro Detroit. Dan O'Malley, Disaster Response Coordinator for The Michigan Conference, referred volunteer early responders to work alongside Samaritan's Purse.

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## These chaplains take church outside the building

### DIANE BROWN

Michigan Conference Communications

Making a difference in someone's life is what United Methodists strive to do.

Police chaplains do so in ways that may never appear inside a church.

The Rev. Andrew Jackson should know. He's been a chaplain with the Michigan State Police (MSP) for 17 years. "Being a chaplain is where you can serve beyond the four walls and make a difference in people's lives," Jackson said. "The officers will appreciate you in a way you'd never expect or receive anywhere else."

Chaplain duties vary by agency or department. Some agencies look to their chaplain to help build bridges between the officers and the community. Others, like MSP, identify chaplains to provide pastoral services to members of the department and their families, participate in department ceremonies, counsel officers, visit sick or injured members, and officiate at department funerals.

"If you want to be a servant called by God and be an example for people, this is a good place for you," Jackson said. "The

(officers) have a need for someone to care for them. Even though they walk around in a uniform and with guns, they see some of the most unbelievable things that happen in our world. They appreciate you being there for them, sometimes when their lives fall apart."

A retired elder from the former West Michigan Conference, Jackson began his chaplain ministry when a fellow UMC pastor, the Rev. Bill Sanders, invited him to serve. Sanders, also a retired elder, recently was honored by the MSP as Chaplain of the Year for 2018.

"We are chaplains for the troopers and their families, not for the community," Jackson explained. "I do whatever I can do to assist the officers. I do ride-alongs and death notifications. But I'm there for the officers. That's the most important thing. I've never ridden with anyone who didn't have a faith-based question of me. I want to be a chaplain not a trooper. I'm not a wanna-be (cop). I don't have to be anything other than a chaplain. I'm just there to assist."

The Rev. June Marshall-Smith, senior pastor at Novi UMC, has served as a

chaplain for the Novi police and fire departments for 12 years. "Humbling grace would best describe the work I do," she said. "A call from the dispatch means I will change into my uniform and head to a home or business and forgo what I was doing."

Chaplains receive additional training with the police agencies and often are provided with uniforms and personal protective equipment. Jackson and Marshall-Smith said their hours vary, but average two to four calls or visits a month.

"One day I was asked to meet our officers at Providence Park Hospital," Marshall-Smith recalled. "After asking, I was assured that it was not one of our officers. I was informed that it was a baby. This is highly unusual since the hospital has its own chaplain ministry. They explained that they needed me for the family and our officers.

"God was present with me when I took the parents to their two-week-old baby. I prayed for God's grace in those moments as I held that beautiful still child of God in my arms and baptized her in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The water of baptism still on my hand as the blood from the tube in her head trickled to join the water of baptism. That moment we felt God's presence as mother, father, officer, nurse and chaplain formed the community of believers to dedicate her to God."

Some of the most difficult times for police chaplains are following deaths of officers. Jackson experienced that in his first year in the role.

"We had a trooper killed in line of duty," Jackson recalled. "I was instrumental in assisting with his funeral, but it was very difficult. It was my first time as chaplain. I learned a lot. But I carried with me my experiences, including 30-plus years in public education and as a pastor."

Marshall-Smith agrees that officer deaths can be incredibly difficult occasions for a police chaplain, but also crucially important for the well-being of the agency.



**The Michigan State Police made Christmas merrier for these students in their Shop with a Cop program. Children were treated to lunch and then went Christmas shopping with the police officers from the Wayland post, including Chaplain Andrew Jackson (right).** ~ photo used with permission of Wayland Union Schools

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## CHAPLAINS .....from page 4

“Tim, a well-loved officer who could have retired, was living a life of huge responsibility. He died by suicide after a full day’s work on the job,” Marshall-Smith said. “The entire department was devastated, and we quickly set up a schedule for our officers to spend time with the chaplains. After clearing a busy calendar, I spent two weeks, alternating shifts to talk with and pray with our officers. I did the hardest, gut-wrenching and fulfilling ministry with those officers in the weeks after (his) death. It was in those moments that I truly served those officers like I expected to serve.

“Over the years, I have gotten to know all the officers by riding in their cars, baptized their children, volunteered at police golf outings and even buried parents of a records clerk. I serve them without judgment as I listen to their stories of heartbreak, watching families neglect their children, and as I hear of heartbreak in their own lives,” Marshall-Smith adds.

Chaplains assist when making notifications to families of people who just died or were critically injured which often makes a difference with the grieving families and the officers, one of Jackson’s MSP post commanders explained.

“One of most difficult things in law enforcement is to deliver a death notification,” said First Lieutenant Chris McIntire, commander at the MSP Rockford post. “Our chaplain corps come out no matter what time of day or night to give the horrible news. With their training, they help deliver that news in a compassionate way. No matter what religion.”

But occasionally the presence of a police chaplain initially can be misunderstood. Marshall-Smith recalled making a “well-being” check with her officer for an elderly woman who hadn’t responded to her son’s daily phone call. “She stood in the doorway of her condo shaking like a leaf,” Marshall-Smith said. “It was obvious to me that she was shaken to the core to have the police standing at her door. I asked her a second time if she was okay because things did not seem right the way she was quaking. She looked me square in the eye and said, ‘Seeing you on



**The Rev. June Marshall-Smith, senior pastor at Novi UMC, has served as a chaplain for the Novi police and fire departments for 12 years. June says, “Humbling grace would best describe the work I do.” ~ photo courtesy City of Novi**

my doorstep has been the biggest fear of my life!’ I told her I did not understand, thinking the cop standing next to me invoked a lot more fear than a middle-aged, chubby woman.

“She explained that she was the ex-wife of a Detroit police officer and her greatest fear was to see a chaplain who always delivered the bad news of their loved one. As I held her in my arms and she cried tears of relief, I realized the magnitude of the work we do for the departments we serve.”

Mental well-being is a challenge in law enforcement. McIntire and Jackson explained that a vital role of the chaplain corps is to listen to officers and provide counseling, when asked.

“We see some pretty horrible things,” McIntire said. “The chaplain corps helps us cope with that. The law enforcement rate of suicide (and divorce) is incredibly high, often because we don’t know how to deal with the horrors.

“The goal of the chaplains is to be there, but not too much. Jackson took it upon himself to ride with officers after they had faced difficult situations. He never

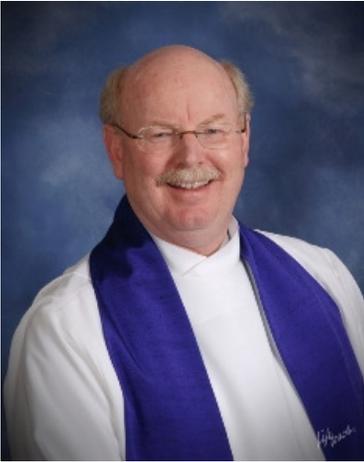
proactively inserted himself into a situation, but he was there to help.”

Jackson doesn’t limit his relationship-building to just on-duty time. He’s conducted five weddings of officers or family members. “I also spend fun time away from the post. We play cards, have dinner, meet with them in other places. I see them out of their uniform – and that makes a difference too. Officers are people too. We need to see them that way.”

Getting involved in chaplaincy may require a waiting period for an opening and not all police agencies have police chaplain assignments. But Jackson encourages any clergy person to ask an MSP post commander or local police agency chief about the opportunity. “We don’t get paid,” Jackson said. “But if you want to make a difference in someone’s life. There are people who could use your skills, your knowledge, your nurturing.

“Church has to get beyond the four walls. Be a haven for a person, be a shoulder and a leader even if they never walk through the door,” he concluded.

## Drinking the Cup ... giving up potatoes



**REV. JOHN W. BOLEY**  
Clergy Assistant to the Bishop

So, over the years, often when groups I've been in do some get-acquainted exercises, the question is asked, "What is your favorite food?" This question has been used a couple of times recently for staff and leadership gatherings on the formation of the new Michigan Conference.

My answer is almost always, "Boiled Potatoes." It happens to be true and it fits my genetics with my Scottish and Irish blood. But it usually is greeted with laughter, and some fun, good-natured ridicule.

I was diagnosed with Type II Diabetes a few years ago – me and the rest of America. It has been relatively stable, but it is now time to be a little more vigilant in managing diet and exercise. Ugh.

And so I have finally decided that I am willing to mostly give up complex carbs and starches as part of my diet – white rice, bread, potatoes, pasta, and corn. I've toyed with this in the past, but not seriously. Now it's time to be a bit more serious. It's hard to change a lifetime of eating a certain

way. Boiled potatoes are about as basic as food gets, it's a good thing that I have liked them so much.

I don't want to give up boiled potatoes, let alone those other starches and carb-heavy foods that I love. But I guess I have to. Giving up boiled potatoes is cruel and unusual punishment that I think is outlawed in Leviticus and should be outlawed in the Book of Discipline and the United States Constitution.

We are in a time in the United Methodist Church when we are being asked to give up some of our boiled potatoes. Here are some of the basic, beloved boiled potatoes that I must give up in our beloved United Methodist Church.

1. As a compatibilist and large tent Christian, I will need to give up the compelling desire for a large, diverse denomination with a wide variety of demographics and geography; and with different theological truths holding each other in tension. A split is inevitable over human sexuality, and perhaps it's the best thing, but a big part of me believes that we are still better off together – avoiding the great Protestant heresy of always splitting up.
2. As a baby-boomer who grew up in the 1950's style church, I will need to give up that particular model of church, including its civil religion, its worship styles, and its community orientations. Phyllis Tickle's work has been beneficial to me to understand that we are entering into a new era. My 1950's style church is a thing of the past – time to let it go.
3. I will need to transform my understanding of connectionalism to include a much higher dose of congregational polity. Greater autonomy and independence of individual congregations seems to be the current desire – to the detriment of connectional understandings. It is probable that the new expressions of Methodism will not be as highly structured or "disciplined," leaving much more room for congregational diversity and polity.
4. I will need to give up a polity with itineracy at its center. I still believe that itineracy is the best way to deploy pastors. Of course, it has been under constant stress, and new generations are much less inclined. It is probable that the new expressions of Methodism will be much less tied to the Methodist itineracy of the past and present.
5. I must give up current understandings of the professional clergy (but not the professionalism of clergy). My entire career has been spent pursuing and supporting a professional clergy. New expressions of Methodism probably will continue the trend of part-time and bi-vocational clergy, with a much more diminished line between ordained clergy and lay leadership.
6. I must give up generational arrogance. Every generation believes that it has its act together and that the succeeding generation cannot do things nearly as well. But it's time for the millennials to take over. They are dedicated, extremely capable, and unflappable. They will take the Methodist movement and the Christian church into this next era – all to the glory and service of Christ. Thanks be to God for that.

## Camp Board puts two Michigan campgrounds up for sale

As announced in February, the Michigan Area United Methodist Camping Board of Directors made the difficult decision to shutter four camps for the 2019 camping season. This decision was made after much prayer, reflection, a thorough examination of aging facilities, the downward trend in usage, and the estimated large amount of capital investment needed for infrastructure improvements at all its sites.

The current camping and retreat season is off to a promising start, however, usage and participation remains a challenge. Significant facility improve-

ments still need to be addressed. Upon review of the facility needs at the open sites and the resources available to fund these improvements, the Board has acted to offer two of the shuttered properties for sale.

The two sites being offered for sale are Crystal Springs Camp & Retreat Center (Dowagiac) and Myers Lake Campground (Byron).

“These camps have a long, storied history and have served the camping ministry well over time, but unfortunately, can no longer fit in the Board’s long-range plans and needs,” said Stuart Smith, Board President. The Board anticipates buyers at or

above the appraised value of the sites. “As good stewards of our camping ministry, the Board wants to offer outstanding programs at beautiful, well-maintained camps,” Smith added.

“The injection of capital from the sale of these two sites will be a big step forward in that plan.”

Summer camp programs for kindergarten through adults continue to be offered at four facilities: Judson Collins Camp & Retreat Center (Onsted), Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat (Pentwater), Lake Huron Retreat Center (Burtchville), and Wesley Woods Camp & Retreat Center (Dowling).

Two campgrounds provide opportunities for RV/tent and cabin camping: Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat and Lakeview Family Campground (Lakeview).

Churches, nonprofits, families and groups are encouraged to use these facilities throughout the year and participate in summer programming. Increased utilization will help the Board maintain and grow the camping ministry at these sites.

Explore the camping website at [umcamping.org](http://umcamping.org) to learn more about all the sites, their year-round retreat facilities, and how camp changes lives.



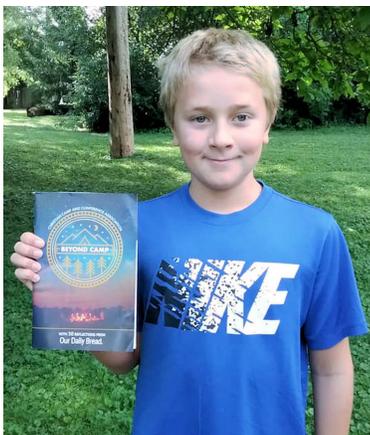
~Facebook/Myers Lake Campground



**GREATER SOUTHWEST ...** Senior Pastor Steve Charnley (right) picks up his violin to play in the First Strings Ensemble at Kalamazoo First UMC.



**MIDWEST DISTRICT ...** Participants at Arts Alive Camp, hosted by Grand Rapids 1st UMC, spent time "Choosing Kindness."



**MICHIGAN UM CAMPING...** Drake is the first one to finish the 30 Day Devotion Challenge at Judson Collins Camp. A prize from the camp store is on the way. This opportunity is a way to grow in faith "Beyond Camp."

Snapshots  
of Vitality



**MICHIGAN MINISTRIES...** EngageMI missionary Dr. Pierre Manya (2nd from right) with wife, Pauline, and friends, Duane and Diana Miller.



**GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT ...** The lovely women of Flint: Bethel UMC arrive in style for the UMW Hat & Brooch Luncheon.



**CENTRAL BAY DISTRICT ... Rev. Rob Nystrom was not the Faster Pastor in the race, but his efforts still earned almost \$8,500 for Auburn UMC for the event held at Tri-City Motor Speedway. To be used for summer camperships.**



**MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT ... This little light of mine. Acolyte practice at Mulliken United Methodist Church.**



**NORTHERN WATERS DISTRICT ... Back to nature, making a bird feeder at Youth Heritage Camp hosted at Greensky Hill Indian UMC.**



**HERITAGE DISTRICT ... Rev. Mike Desotell dressed as a Circuit Rider for the 185th Anniversary of Cherry Hill UMC in Canton.**



**NORTHERN SKIES DISTRICT ... Campers from Gwinn UMC plant five apple trees at Camp Michigamme. Future generations can have an "Applesauce and Cider Camp"!**

## She heard the call of God on Iowa State campus

The Rev. Deborah Johnson, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Alumna (G-ETS 1981), heard her call while working in campus ministry at Iowa State University.

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is one of the 13 United Methodist seminaries supported by the Ministerial Education Fund apportionment of the United Methodist Church.

She had grown up in Northern Michigan near Cadillac and went to college at Central Michigan University, where she majored in education. She had planned to become an elementary school teacher, she said, but later changed her mind after becoming involved with the Wesley Foundation on campus. Instead of being a teacher after she graduated in 1974, she accepted a two year position in campus ministry at Iowa State.

“It was in the practice of doing my ministry, I realized my call,” she said. With the encouragement of Gary Putnam (G-ETS 1965), the campus minister and a Garrett-Evangelical graduate, Johnson explored going to seminary and ultimately chose Garrett-Evangelical.

She enrolled in the fall of 1977 and enjoyed her experience tremendously. “It was so fun,” she recalled. “I had never had a woman pastor growing up, and there were women pastors all over the place at Garrett-Evangelical.” Her first advisor was Dr. Rosemary Radford Ruether, which she said, “was like sitting at the feet of a saint.”

At the time, she said, Garrett-Evangelical was paying attention to the fact that women in seminary needed to meet with other women and learn things differently. “We had a class in pastoral care for women and a class on church administration for women, where we learned about boilers and tuck pointing and other

things we might not have known about,” she said. “It was great community building with other women students, but also very practical.”

After graduating in 1981, Johnson became the pastor of the Manton United Methodist Church, about 20 minutes from where her parents were living. “It was like coming home,” she said.



Four years later, she moved to the Marne United Methodist Church in Marne, Michigan, near Grand Rapids, where she was the pastor for five years. After that, she helped start a church in Hudsonville, Michigan, and served there for seven years. In 1997, she moved to Lansing Asbury United Methodist Church and served there for 11 years until she moved to the Sturgis United Methodist Church in Sturgis, Michigan. She retired from that church in 2014.

She said she was known for creating programs and her mission work. “I had a real emphasis on mission in all of the churches I served,” she said.

Although Johnson is technically

retired, she still guest preaches at area churches. She is also serving as board chair of the Wesley Foundation at Ferris State University and working with the campus ministry there, coming full circle from where she began.

One of seven apportioned giving opportunities of The United Methodist Church, the Ministerial Education Fund is at the heart of preparing

people for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The 13 United Methodist seminaries help students to discover their calling through the challenging curriculum. The fund enables the church to increase financial support for recruiting and educating ordained and diaconal ministers and to equip annual conferences to meet increased demands.

Please encourage your leaders and congregations to support the Ministerial Education Fund apportionment at 100 percent.

Story reported by *We Give* at [umcsgiving.org](http://umcsgiving.org).

## HomeWords Bound ... Right tool, right task



### REV. BENTON HEISLER

Director of Connectional Ministries, West Michigan

The workbench in my garage was my great grandfather's. The barn was constructed in 1865, likely the workbench was made about the same time. It is cracked, oil stained, and the height is too short to be comfortable for me to work on it. The 22" wide board across the front is perforated with multiple size drill bit holes. (The story my grandfather told me, left some children unnamed, but reported they had "tested" their father's auger bits one day when he had gone to town and had left them home to their own devices.) I never met Great Grandpa Shively, but I knew his daughter, her husband and their son, my dad. Lessons I learned while visiting that farm, fixing stuff on that bench and hearing stories of faith, family and friends formed my early spiritual life and an appreciation for "leaving the world better than you found it."

I still have my Great Grandpa's hand crank drill, auger bits and their wooden storage case along with other items from that early agricultural era. The 6' long two-person crosscut saw we sharpened on that bench now hangs on the garage wall. (Memories of using that saw one fall that day in the woods with

my father and grandfather are treasured recollections.) My tools of choice now are Dewalt, Craftsman and Stihl. Same tasks; building, repairing, creating firewood, but new skills are necessary and new knowledge of all the component parts is essential.

Each time I use one of those old tools, memories return, and I am reminded of my small place in a much longer legacy of adventure, hope, faith and family. I now have two grandsons (ages 4 and 5 months) and a third one is scheduled to arrive in November. The oldest one and "Papa" (me) love to spend time in my workshop. "What's this Papa?" "What does this do Papa?" Gradually he is learning that not every problem can be solved with a bigger hammer and that some skills and tools take time to practice and learn the most productive technique.

I have been visiting garage and estate sales the past couple of summers. My goal is to create a "starter set" of tools for each grandchild (male and female alike, if that turns out to be the case.) and show them how to use them safely. I did the same for our daughters and then provided that "starter set as they headed off to college. It brings a smile to me face to see them still using items from their "starter set."

You may have your own basic "go to" tools. My most frequently used items include: a hammer, side cutters, channel lock pliers, vise grips, 4-6 various screwdrivers, a utility knife, a crescent wrench, a small hand saw, a set of sockets and some end wrenches. Most any project can be handled in an emergency with these, thus a small bag with those items is in each of my cars.

I always emphasized to my daughters and now my oldest grandson, "right tool, right task." They are amazed when something they were struggling with, suddenly becomes easier, when the right tool and technique are in place. People are a lot different than products, but there are still the right tools.

The fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) are the "tools of choice" for dealing with others. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, these are the relationship "tools" you want to always have ready. I struggle with why in one of the most advanced countries of the world we seem to think that everyone needs to have the "tools of war" in their personal possession. Just because it might be "recreational fun," I am not allowed to own a rocket launcher, or a fully weaponized tank. If I take to the woods or fields to hunt, I am limited in the amount of ammunition in my weapon's magazine. If you can't hit what you are aiming at with five shots, you need to get closer, practice more or get out of the woods!

The military and police departments have the unfortunate task of sometimes needing to choose between the life of a few for the sake of the life of many. They train for it, they agonize over it and they use that choice with a remarkable amount of composure and restraint. The general public, in my mind has no need for tactical level weapons intended for the military and police. The fact that our congress and state legislators cannot manage to arrive at this same level of understanding simply baffles me.

My father-in-law served in the Navy and then served over 25 years in the Michigan State Police. He supported the NRA, and I am inclined to think he mostly voted Republican. But I heard him say time and time again that, "Military grade weapons have no compelling to be available to the general public." I believe he was right.

The prophet Isaiah is recorded as saying "...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war, anymore (2:4)."

I will need to teach my grandchildren the importance of the safe use of the tools in their tool bags and help them understand what is the "right tool, for the right task." But I can tell you, there will be no AR-15 with a 100-round magazine as a tool for them to choose.

*"If you make my Word your home, you will indeed be my disciples. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (John 8:13 New Jerusalem Bible.) Each article I write for this column is based in the guidance of a Scripture passage. I pray that these reflections, stories and information will assist you in your own witness and service as a Disciple of Jesus Christ.*

## Global Mission Fellows serve Michigan well

**KAY DEMOSS**  
Senior Content Editor

Creating opportunities for young adults has been a priority of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church for the past ten years.

Global Mission Fellows are young people who are committed to work in social justice ministries for two years. They serve outside of their home communities, either in the United States (US-2 Track) or overseas (International Track).

This fellowship allows participants to address the root causes of oppression and alleviate human suffering alongside community organizations in a variety of issues including public health (including HIV/AIDS), migration/immigration, education and poverty. These young adults play a critical role as agents of change in

The United Methodist Church.

The Michigan Area has served as a placement site for Global Mission Fellows since 2010:

**NOAH Project Detroit:** Brandon Powell (2012-2014); Chelsea Spyres (2014-2016); Chelsea Williams (2015-2017); Isaac Dunn (2016-2018); Grace Okerson (2017-2019); Jinnia Siironen (2018-2020)\*

**Northwest Detroit Flood Recovery:** Kayla Flannery (2015-2016)

**Motown Mission:** Kayla Flannery (2016-2017); Lynda Sylvain (2017-2019)

**Kalamazoo Wesley:** Asti White (2018-2020)

**Kalamazoo: Sunnyside UMC:** Emily Burns (2018-2020)



**These four new US-2s were commissioned on August 23 and are on their way to serve in Michigan. L-r: Nathan Whitford, Samantha Whitford, Rev. Jack Amick (UMCOR staff), Yeo Jin Yun, and Kathryn Sappington. ~ photo courtesy Lisa Batten**

As the summer of 2019 draws to a close it is time to say goodbye to Grace Okerson and Lynda Sylvain, whose two-year terms are ending. Grace now begins her studies in Public Ministry with a focus on Racial Justice at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary this fall.

Thirteen new US-2s were trained and commissioned in August. Michigan will welcome four of them for ministry around the state. Arriving here on August 25:

**Kathryn Sappington**, from Mississippi, who will serve at Kalamazoo: First UMC;

**Nathan Whitford**, from Ohio, who joins the team at NOAH Project Detroit;

**Samantha Whitford**, from Ohio, who takes up ministry at Motown Mission, Motor City Wesley, and Redford Brightmoor Initiative;

**Yeo Jin Yun**, from New Jersey/South Korea, will serve at the Methodist Federation For Social Action (MFSA) headquartered at Detroit: Central UMC.

The General Board of Global Ministries invites church leaders to encourage 20-30 year-olds in their congregations and families to consider service as a Global Mission Fellow. Go to [umcmmission.org](http://umcmmission.org) and search on Global Mission Fellows to learn more about the program and how to apply.

Applications open on September 15, 2019 for the 2020-2022 cohort of Global Mission Fellows.

Questions? Contact Lisa Batten, Young Adult Initiatives Coordinator for The Michigan Conference; [lbatten@michiganumc.org](mailto:lbatten@michiganumc.org).



**Michigan says goodbye to these US-2s after their two-year term of service ended in August. Lynda Sylvain (left) served Motown Mission. Grace Okerson was in ministry at NOAH Project Detroit. Says Rev. Lisa Batten, Michigan Conference Young Adult Initiatives Coordinator: "These two! Amazing, inspiring ladies! Not saying good bye, saying 'see you later' as we wish Lynda and Grace blessings for the next step in their journey!" ~ Facebook/Lisa Batten**

## Bishop ..... from p. 2

Seeing differently. This is a deeply spiritual issue. “Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him he asked him, “Can you see anything?” And the man looked up and said, “I can see people, but they look like trees, walking.” Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.” (Mark 8:23-25)

Part of the restoration of sight, spiritually is that we see people as people, children as children. In writing to Galatian followers of Jesus, Paul writes, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (3:28). Paul is asserting that when we see more truly in Jesus Christ, the categories through which we often look at the world fade away. We see everyone as a person loved by God and created in God’s image.

Our failure to see migrant children as children whose parents want a better life for them is a kind of spiritual blindness. Racism and sexism, which seem to have gained new footholds in our society are spiritually pernicious and are rooted in spiritual blindness, a failure to see others who may be different in some ways as deeply similar to us, as human persons created in the image of God, loved by God, with hopes, dreams, disappointments, joys and struggles. We trust that in Jesus Christ, though, our blindness can be healed. In being converted to Jesus

Christ, we join the journey to new sight, to seeing more deeply and truthfully. One part of the mission of the Michigan Conference is to help nurture and grow vibrant congregations. An important element in vibrant congregations is that they develop an increasing capacity to have challenging conversations – deep and profound conversations about life, about what it means to follow Jesus in this day and time, and even about tough issues facing our world and the moral climate in which we live.

There are no simple solutions to the crisis at our border, or to the new ascendancy of racism and sexism. Yet, we must begin with having our sight healed. We must begin by seeing those caught up in the border crisis as human beings, we must see children as children. We need to assert that human beings deserve humane treatment and children deserve care. As we allow God’s Spirit in the touch of Jesus to continue to heal our sight, we will see that we can do better. We will understand that we need not be trapped in old ways of seeing. We need not allow racism to shape our seeing or acting, though its roots are as long as the slavery that marred our national life for so many years. We need not allow sexism to form our sight and behavior, though it has only been 100 years since women were given the right to vote, and only a little over 60 years since the Methodist Church allowed the ordination of women.

God grant us grace to see with new eyes. God grant us courage to speak what we see. God grant us love to live in the world differently.



**Haiti Covenant Partners recommend giving to other Advance Special Projects in Haiti, such as Haitian Assets for Peace International (HAPI).** ~ Facebook/HAPI

## Please, no more Hot Lunch giving

The Conference Board of Global Ministries and Haiti Covenant Partners announced in February 2019 that the Haiti Hot Lunch Program (Advance # 418790) is no longer an Advance project of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

This was difficult news for Michigan United Methodists, after many years of faithful and generous giving by the Detroit and West Michigan conferences to the Haiti Hot Lunch Program. However, the Michigan Conference’s EngageMI program will no longer receive funds for the Haiti Hot Lunch Program.

Six months after the announcement, the Conference Treasurer’s Office reports that they still are receiving gifts for Haiti Hot Lunch. These churches are sent a form with their statement asking for the funds to be redirected.

If your congregation has supported the Haiti Hot Lunch Program, please consider supporting one of these EngageMI Advance Projects of GBGM that also benefit the children of Haiti:

—*Grace Children’s Hospital /International Child Care* (# 418520)

—*Haiti Assets for Peace International/HAPI* (Advance # 3020490)

—*Haiti Children Project* (Advance# 3020507)

—*Haiti Undesignated* (Advance #00483A)

Each of these projects is engaged in meaningful mission and ministry with the people of Haiti.

Why was the Haiti Hot Lunch Program discontinued? The General Board of Global Ministries responsible for ensuring accountability for the appropriate use of funds given through The Advance. GBGM did not receive an annual report from the Haiti Hot Lunch Program for multiple years. Donors expressed concerns about lack of communication and financial accountability. Because of these concerns of the Cabinet of GBGM closed the project. If you have questions, please contact Karl Zeigler, chair of Haiti Covenant Partners, [zeigler.karl@yahoo.com](mailto:zeigler.karl@yahoo.com).

## Two councils respond to the GC 2019 voting probe

**HEATHER HAHN**  
UM News

Both The United Methodist Church's bishops and finance agency are taking action in response to the investigation that found fraudulent voting at General Conference 2019.

The Commission on General Conference — the group that organizes the denomination's multinational legislative assembly — announced Aug. 10 that four ineligible people cast votes using credentials of absent delegates.

The investigation into voting irregularities unearthed other concerns that the commission referred to the denomination's Council of Bishops and General Council on Finance and Administration.

With the next scheduled General Conference fast approaching, the bishops said they take the concerns seriously.

“The best work of the delegates in the upcoming 2020

General Conference depends on the integrity of the voting process and the transparent oversight of our conferencing,” the bishops said in a statement released late Aug. 15. Bishops do not have a vote at General Conference but act as presiders during plenary sessions.

The commission determined that enough improper voting took place to invalidate a key vote that substantially revised legislation to allow congregations to leave with property.

The commission wants the denomination's top court, the Judicial Council, to decide what the invalid votes mean for the legality of the subsequently adopted full legislation. To ask the church court to weigh in, the commission determined the Council of Bishops should be the group that made the request.

The bishops agreed to ask the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision “on the

implications of the illegal votes on the disaffiliation petition.”

The Judicial Council already has announced its docket for its next meeting on Oct. 29-Nov. 1 in Evanston, Illinois. It is up to the church court to decide whether or when to schedule the bishops' request.

The Council of Bishops responded to two other commission requests: To do further investigation of allegations related to delegate selection. To collaborate with the General Council on Finance and Administration in discussing the membership statistics used in calculating how many delegates each annual conference can send to General Conference.

The bishops said they are naming two small working groups to fulfill this request.

The General Council on Finance and Administration board reported during a teleconference meeting Aug. 15 that the agency also would work with the bishops and the commission on the request related to membership.

In the meantime, the agency also plans to post on its website how membership data is collected, the purpose it serves, the years and sources used for calculations and what the Book of Discipline, the denomination's policy book, says about data collection. The agency also will list the training it has already conducted around the globe on data collection.

Sharon Dean, chief communications officer, said the finance agency hopes to

have that information up by the end of the week.

Membership data has faced increased scrutiny since the high-stakes 2019 special General Conference that dealt with the denomination's long-time debate over the status of LGBTQ individuals. By a 438-384 margin, the denomination's top lawmaking body adopted the Traditional Plan that adds enforcement measures to bans on same-sex weddings and “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy.

A formula that uses each annual conference's number of professing members and clergy helps determine its number of General Conference delegates. Membership data is also used in determining how many bishops a region has. But for various reasons, including infrastructure challenges, the membership data available can be out of date and unreliable.

Ken Ow, a finance agency board member, said during the teleconference that one concern has been a lack of uniformity in the collection of professing membership data across the denomination.

Rick King, the agency's chief financial officer, said the agency has been training statisticians and other conference staff in membership collections. But he added that trying to validate all the data “could become very costly.”

The Rev. Gary Graves, the secretary of General Conference, already has calculated the size of the 2020 General Conference delegations using annual conference journals. Most of the 862 delegates are already elected.



**Bishops Thomas J. Bickerton (center) and Gregory V. Palmer (right) confer with colleagues on legislative procedures during the 2019 United Methodist General Conference. Bickerton is the Council of Bishops representative on the Commission on General Conference. The Commission on General Conference found evidence of four ineligible people casting votes using the credentials of delegates who were not present. ~ UM News/Mike DuBose**

## News in Brief

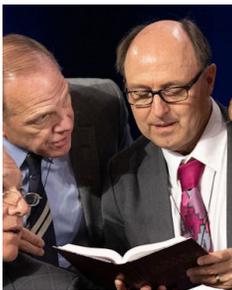
### MICHIGAN POET FEATURED ON CT WEBSITE



The Connectional Table has launched a new website called, “Emerging.” The focus is a digital collection of essays, articles and other content discussing what may be taking shape in the life of the United Methodist connection as a result of the outcome of the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference. The purpose of the website, [www.emergingmethodism.com](http://www.emergingmethodism.com), is to be a venue of conversation

including voices from a multiplicity of viewpoints. Rev. Dillon Burns, slam poet and pastor of Manchester: First UM is featured on the website. His poem, “Why Now?,” was first shared at the 2019 Michigan Annual Conference during a time Celebrating the Journey of Ministry.

### DISAFFILIATION VOTE NOW IN QUESTION



The Commission on the General Conference has announced the result of an investigation into voting at the 2019 General Conference. Because four votes have been declared invalid, it is likely that the new paragraph 2553 in The Discipline — specifying a process for local churches to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church for reasons related to human sexuality —

will be found null and void by Judicial Council. Bishop Bard says that the process for disaffiliation developed by the Michigan Conference Trustees remains valid. Read the full story on [news.michiganumc.org](http://news.michiganumc.org). (Also see related story page 14.)

### ENGAGE MI TRAINING COMING THIS FALL



The Michigan Conference Connectional Ministry staff are hosting two EngageMI regional trainings in Fall 2019 to resource congregations to engage in ministry with their local communities.

**Sunday, September 15, 2019** hosted at Michelson Memorial UMC, 400 Michigan Ave, Grayling, MI 49738), 2-5pm.

**Sunday, November 10, 2019** hosted at Asbury UMC, 2200 Lake Lansing Rd, Lansing, MI 48912, 2-5pm.

Participants will have the opportunity to attend two workshops, led by a Conference staff person and local practitioner, at each training event. Local Church and District mission leaders are especially encouraged to attend. The event is free, light refreshments will be provided, childcare available upon request. To register go to the Calendar of Events at [michiganumc.org](http://michiganumc.org).



**Cheryl Tipton (l) and Linda Staley (r) served as UMCOR case managers for two years after torrential rains struck Detroit in August 2014. Cheryl will again assist residents suffering after spring floods in 2019.** ~ Facebook photo/ Northwest Detroit Flood Recovery

## UMCOR ..... from p. 3

Tipton’s work will be supported by residual Conference funds designated for the Northwest Flood Recovery that were not utilized. Because the flooding this year was not as extensive, her work is scheduled to conclude in four months.

*It’s not a matter of if disaster will happen but when. It’s good to know that when something does happen, there are groups there to help.*

~ Nancy Money

Some of the households need mucking-out, others have already been mucked out, and some will require some re-build.

Do you know of someone who may need assistance with damage from the May 1-10, 2019 flooding in Detroit?

Contact Cheryl Tipton at 248-260-8332 or email Cheryl at [ctipton@michiganumc.org](mailto:ctipton@michiganumc.org).

Do you want to help with clean-up or rebuild efforts? Contact Cheryl or email Dan O’Malley at [dano.malley@gmail.com](mailto:dano.malley@gmail.com); or 616-915-6301.

“I have appreciated working with all the groups in the Michigan Conference and the community,” Nancy Money states. And she continues, “It’s not a matter of *if* disaster will happen but *when*. It’s good to know that when something does happen, there are groups there to help.”

Preparedness is always important. Undesignated gifts to the Michigan Conference Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund help with readiness for the next storm or crisis.

Send a check payable to the Conference Treasurer to Conference Center North, 1161 E. Clark Road, Suite 212, Dewitt, MI 48820.

If you have questions, please contact Nancy Money at, [nmoney@michiganumc.org](mailto:nmoney@michiganumc.org).

## Rev. Peggy Paige now certified as a UMC Rural Chaplain

On August 7-9, 2019, the Rev. Peggy Paige from the Northern Skies District of The Michigan Conference was one of 48 persons gathered in Pueblo, Colorado to consider the challenges and need for hope in rural communities. The Rural Chaplains Association (RCA) partnered with the Executive Committees of United Methodist Appalachian Ministries Network (UMAMN), Rural Church Network (RCN), and the United Methodist Rural Advocates (UMRA) to host the 2019 Focus Event.

Participants witnessed the certification of two persons as Rural Chaplains: Anne Marshall of Oklahoma and

the Rev. Peggy Paige of Michigan. Peggy has long been active in issues of town and country. She has held offices in the Detroit Conference she calls home, and she has served as an officer in the National United Methodist Rural Advocates.

She says, "As a Rural Chaplain in Michigan one of my goals is to share information and resources with persons living in rural communities." She lifts up the Rural Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) as a key resource. "They have partnered with NACo (National Association of Counties) and RCAP (Rural Community Assistance

Partnership) to develop a mobile app designed to identify areas with low or no connectivity to help ensure adequate funding for broadband infrastructure being provided across the country," she explains.

The Focus Event in Pueblo was a time for building awareness, identifying needs, and exploring resources. The opening session on Wednesday used table conversations centered on the overarching question of, "What does it take to create healthy, safe, rural communities?" Thursday began with a visit to an irrigated farm to learn about the challenges of farmers and ranchers not having sufficient water.

On site at Ordway UMC, the group heard a panel discussion on the impact of marijuana on rural communities. Local commissioners explained the economic benefits of legalized marijuana. A caseworker from the Department of Human Services offered thoughts on the challenges and needed education for parents and others. Nurse Practitioner Karen Tomky spoke about the desperate need for health care providers in rural areas and the difficulty of attracting them to serve in rural areas.

At Fowler United Methodist Church the conversation centered around the impact of opioids on rural communities. The use of opioids is not only an addiction problem. It also causes a reduction in the workforce, increases crime related to domestic violence and property, while overtaxing emergency systems.

A local restaurant owner and farmer of Milberger Farms noted the aging population of farmers. The farmers work

long days, sometimes 18 hours or more, and even if they do everything right, a year of bad weather can be devastating financially. Even a good year can have minimal returns in our present economy.

Friday began with an inspiring and challenging presentation by Sister Nancy Crafton of El Centro de Los Pobres, presently serving over 900 immigrant and low income families. She spoke of immigrants living in a state of perpetual fear – fear of being arrested, fear of being separated from their families, fear of their children being "imprisoned." In the past, being apprehended without appropriate documentation was a misdemeanor, but new laws now make it a felony, causing the separation of children from parents.

During a final reflection session, one participant summed up the feelings of many with the comment: "We heard both sides of the coin – we heard the pros of the marijuana on Thursday and the cons on Friday. We heard the pros and cons of young people getting an education and moving out of the area versus the need to have them return to their local area."

Roger Grace, chair of RCA, noted that both sides need to be heard. "It is not about changing the mind of the other side. It is about hearing the other side. We have more in common than differences separating us, no matter where we call home. It is about respect."

Learn more about Rural Chaplains, an Advance Project of The UMC at [www.rcahome.org](http://www.rcahome.org).



**Anne Marshall (left) and Peggy Paige were recently certified as Rural Chaplains. Paige, a retired pastor, lives in Ingalls, Michigan. ~ photo courtesy Rural Chaplains Assoc.**