

November 2019

# MImagazine

Michigan Area of the United Methodist Church



**A first for UMW  
page 3**

**Advent Offering  
page 7**

**Wiltse honored  
page 15**

**Church reborn  
page 16**

David Kim and Bob Miller distribute UMCOR Cleaning Buckets during Midland flooding in 2017. The 2019 Advent Offering supports Disaster Recovery.



## November 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

**I**t is not much of a secret that I enjoy music. I remember when I was in my early teens tuning in on my transistor radio on New Year's day to listen to the top 100 songs for the previous year. I recall buying my first Bob Dylan albums, Greatest Hits Volumes I and II, curious because a community Christian youth group used some of his songs when we sang together. I later found out that Dylan was born in Duluth and graduated from high school in Hibbing, Minnesota. My enjoyment of music casts a wide net – rock, jazz, soul, pop, classical.

It will not surprise you, then, that I have been enjoying Ken Burns' new public television film on the history of country music. To be sure, when I was in high school listening to country music would have been considered very uncool. Yet exploring the roots of rock and roll in my college years, there was country and western music, Hank Williams, Johnny Cash, and others.



One of the persons interviewed during Burns' County Music series is singer/songwriter Tom T. Hall. One of Hall's well-known songs is simple and delightful. I remember hearing it as a teen, and liking it even if it was "country." It's entitled "I Love" ... "I love little baby ducks, old pickup trucks/Slow-movin' trains and rain/I love little country streams, sleep without dreams/Sunday school in May and hay/And I love you, too." The final verse: "I love honest, open smiles, kisses from a child/Tomatoes on the vine and onions/I love winners when they cry, losers when they try/Music when it's good and life/And I love you, too."

What's on your "I love..." list? What are you grateful for as we come into this month where we set aside time for giving thanks? What would you sing about in an "I Love" song? What simple pleasures bring you joy? When has beauty last touched your heart and blown it open? Whose smiles find their way deep inside? What memories warm your soul? What songs lighten your load? In what wonderfully amazing ways does God's grace find its way to you?

In her book *Almost Everything*, Anne Lamott writes, "Maybe more than ever before in my lifetime, my friends and I are aware of our brokenness and the deep crazy, the desperation for light, hope, food, and medicine for the poor. What helps is that we are all not crazy and hopeless on the same day. One of us remembers and reminds the rest of us that when it is really dark, you can see the stars. We believe grace is stronger than evil and sin. We believe love is stronger than hate, that the divine is bigger than all huge egos simmered together in a bloviation stew, and this makes us laugh. And laughter is hope. We believe, and we hope that we will get through these terrifying times." (page 138)

There is a wonderful image of the church, for which I am also grateful in Lamott's words, a place where perhaps we are not all crazy and hopeless on the same day. It may not be theologically eloquent — like the UMC Faith and Order ecclesiology paper *Sent In Love* that will be presented to General Conference — but it is delightful practical ecclesiology.

There is much in the world that weighs heavy – the persistence of racism, our penchant

## Michigan United Methodist Women mark historic first

**KATHY FREELAND**  
Michigan Conference UMW

October 26, 2019 marked a historic moment in the history of The United Methodist Women in the state. The FIRST Annual Michigan Conference United Methodist Women Celebration was held at the Howell United Methodist Church on that Saturday.

The theme was appropriate to the occasion, “Celebrating 150 Years, Together Toward Tomorrow.”

District officers from all nine of the new districts attended their respective officer counterpart training Friday afternoon.

Participants then celebrated 150 years of United Methodist Women that evening. Songs were sung. Accounts of several well-known women in our history were read, including Fanny Crosby (American mission worker, poet and composer), Belle Harris Bennett (founder of Scarritt College for Christian workers and Susan Bennett College), and Francis Willard (president of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, one of the forerunners of United Methodist Women).

Updates about what is happening today were shared. Cheers of joy were expressed for future possibilities. United Methodist Women are BOLD and diligent and relentless.

Emphasis was placed on the reality that United Methodist Women is “in it for the long haul!” Women have been organized for mission around the world for the past 150 years, putting their faith, hope, and love into action for women, youth and children. And women intend to continue doing this for at least the next 150 years.

Approximately 250 women and a few good men shared in an exciting day Saturday. Honored guests included: Bishop David and Julie Bard; District Superintendents the Rev. Dr. Jerry DeVine, the Rev. Scott Harmon with wife Bron, and the Rev. Dr. Charles Boayue, Jr.; United Methodist Men President, Don Archambeau; eight Past Conference Presidents; Genie Bank, past



***This birthday pic celebrates the diversity of United Methodist Women present at the 2019 Annual Celebration. Top (left to right) Piccola Hill, Northern Waters Officer; Linda Darrow, Conference Officer; Ruby Anderson, National Officer. In front are two young women, Piccola’s daughters, Arianna and Kaliah Lightfoot.***  
Photo courtesy Kathy Freeland

National UMW President; the Rev. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai from the Connectional Table of The United Methodist Church; Randy Hildebrandt from God’s Country Cooperative Parish in the upper peninsula; and United Methodist Community House representatives, Eric Williams and Carla Moore.

Michigan’s current National UMW representatives — Ruby Anderson, Tayloric Bailey, and Suzanne Hewitt — were also in attendance.

The day was led by Conference Vice President, Pat Bostic. As always, it was a pleasure to have Bishop David Bard bring us greetings. He thanked the UMW for the opportunity to teach at several 2019 Mission u events. By request, Bishop Bard led the gathering through the body prayer that he had introduced at Mission u.

Keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. Jill Zundel, Senior Pastor at Central United Methodist Church in Detroit shared an inspirational message, “For such a time as this.”

The offering raised \$3,353.65 for the

UMW Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign. The ingathering was generous as well, benefitting the Connection Youth Services of Livingston Family Center.

Conference President Linda Darrow led the Business Session. Members voted for the slate of officers for 2020, revised the Standing Rules, and approved the 2020 budget and Pledge to Mission. Other items on the agenda include district reports on 2020 pledges, honoring those who passed this past year and recognizing those who concluded their term of office.

We were honored to have Genie Bank, past National UMW President, lead the Installation of 2020 officers. The afternoon concluded with communion, the host pastor, the Rev. George Lewis, presiding.

Michigan Conference United Methodist Women look forward to next year’s Annual Celebration to be held at Kalamazoo First United Methodist Church on Oct. 23-24, 2020.

## Michigan Foundation supports ‘Dollars for scholars’

### KAY DEMOSS

Senior Content Editor

There are 117 United Methodist-related schools, colleges, and universities across the United States. Those institutions stand as evidence that education is a core value of The United Methodist Church.

But buildings are not what’s at the heart of the denomination’s passion for teaching and learning. It’s students. The website of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry traces the concern for nurturing the minds and spirits of boys and girls, women and men, back to John Wesley. “John Wesley believed that education was the key to a fuller, richer life. He championed greater educational accessibility as a way to ensure that leaders would act ethically and responsibly.”

Sharing in our founder’s belief, congregations and individual donors support students in their efforts to achieve their goals. The United Methodist Foundation of Michigan is a strong partner in school funding. Over the years they have been blessed with charitable gifts that have been endowed by the Foundation to provide scholarships, grants, and awards for United Methodists throughout Michigan. In 2018 the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan gave a total of \$88,000 in scholarships.

“Dollars for Scholars” or “Quadruple your Dollars” is just one of their scholarship programs. It is a partnership with the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation (UMHEF).

Basically, the United Methodist Dollars for Scholars program involves a four-way matching of support from 1) a student’s church, 2) UMHEF, 3) participating UM-related schools, and 4) the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan.

The qualifying student must be a member of a United Methodist congregation and attend a United Methodist-related college or university. Dollars for Scholars begins with a local church providing a \$1,000 scholarship. UMHEF will match that \$1,000 and then the school will also match the congregation’s \$1,000. Finally, the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan will match the \$1,000; thus, creating a potential scholarship total up to \$4,000.



The United Methodist Foundation of Michigan has given \$24,000 in Dollars for Scholars Awards since 2016.

Brian Lightner is a Dollars for Scholars recipient. Brian, a member of Hartford United Methodist Church, is attending Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in pursuit of a Master of Divinity degree. “Dollars for Scholars is an amazing program,” Brian says. “It literally made the difference for me to be able to come to seminary.” Brian thanks God for this program. “It brought together my church family, my conference, my seminary, and denomination in support of my studies to become an elder in The Michigan Conference.”

At the close of this academic year, Paul Reissmann will graduate from Garrett. Paul looks back and says, “As someone who was anxious about the potential costs of seminary after attending Western Michigan University, I was happy to encounter the Dollars for Scholars scholarship through GBHEM.” He speaks to the fear of financial burden. “Despite coming out of my time at college with a relatively low amount of student debt, the amount overall was still incredibly overwhelming to consider when thinking about additional debt for my time at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.” Paul,

coming from Bangor: Simpson United Methodist Church, is grateful to all who make Dollars for Scholars possible. “I can say with certainty, that the safety of my family and the ability to live out my call from God have been assured thanks to the Dollars for Scholars program reducing the costs of travel, tuition, and other expenses associated with a United Methodist theological education,” Paul concludes.

David S. Bell, President and Executive Director of the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan, points out, “This matching scholarship program is a fine example of being a connectional church.” Now delighted to be a partner in Dollars for Scholars, Bell was once a scholar in need of dollars. “I was a recipient of this scholarship during my formative years,” he remarks, “so I know firsthand the benefits of being supported by a local congregation and other ministry partners.”

Bell adds, “We are grateful to Bob Fletcher, President/CEO of the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation, for connecting us with this important ministry.”

How do you connect with this program? Go to [umfmichigan.org](http://umfmichigan.org) to access application information for Dollars for Scholars and other financial aid.

## We shall come rejoicing ... prayers for rural Michigan

**KAY DEMOSS**  
Senior Content Editor

Last summer Lynn and I took the “back road” to his high school reunion. As we drove through the countryside south of Big Rapids, we found ourselves in Amish country. Suddenly I spied something I had never seen before. “Look, Lynn!! Sheaves!!” I was thrilled.

Perhaps I am too easily excited. But I have loved that old hymn, “Bringing in the Sheaves,” since I was kid, listening to the voice of Tennessee Ernie Ford from our family record player. I was delighted to meet a “sheaf” in person.

“By and by the harvest, and the time of reaping, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.”

Yes, we are at that time of year in Michigan spoken of in the verses of the hymn. These classic evangelistic lyrics, of course, are talking about souls, not corn or soybeans, potatoes or sugar beets.

Still, in the fall my memories return to my rural roots on a “necktie farm” east of Vicksburg. “Necktie” because my grandfather labored in town by day and worked the fields during his time-off.

With that as my growing-up, my thoughts and prayers are often with the state’s farmers. On a back road near Boyne Falls, two weeks ago, another exclamation from our front seat. “Lynn, look how short that corn is!” This time I was not thrilled. Corn is meant to be knee-high by the 4th of July not the 4th of October.

I despair for our neighbors, county by county, who seek to make a living off the land.

The year 2019 is not a time of rejoicing for farmers across Michigan and the U.S.A. Here are two ag-related articles from *Bridge Magazine* that speak to a few of the issues: *Michigan farm country testifies to widespread crisis as crops go unplanted* and *The gray-ing of Michigan farmers and what they will leave behind*. I invite you to fine these accounts online.

So, with another time of harvest upon us, I turn to Peggy Paige, retired Michigan pastor and recently certified Rural Chaplain, to share her top ten prayers for rural Michigan ...

*Thank You, Lord, for the sun and the rain and for the fruits of the fields.*

*We thank You, for valley and hills, for sunlight and wind.*

*Thank You for the sky’s rich color and for the good black earth which nourishes the seeds.*

*Thank you, God, for farmers who labor through sunshine, rain, and frost.*

*Almighty God calm the storms that threaten our crops and our livelihood.*

*Bless the farmers who work with the animals which provide our food and clothing.*

*We pray for those who work the land that they may receive a fair price for their labor.*

*Bless those who live close to the land who know the struggles, fears, joys, and rewards of life in a rural area.*

*Almighty God give us wisdom to use the resources of nature, that no one may suffer from our abuse of them and that they may be available for generations yet to come.*

Peggy’s Number 10 comes

from *The United Methodist Book of Worship* p. 430.

Perhaps you could ask your pastor to share it with the congregation sometime, in gratitude and celebration for those in our midst who raise livestock, prune the vines, and till the soil.

*O Lord, you have given us the gift of land. May we ever protect and preserve it. O Lord, you have given us the gift of water. May we keep it pure and safe. O Lord, you have given us the gift of air. May we keep it pure and fresh. O Lord, you have given us the gift of plants and trees. May we ever use and protect them justly. O Lord, you*

*have given us the gift of birds and animals. May we preserve and enjoy them. O Lord, you have given us care of the earth. O Lord, we accept the care of these gifts as our sacred stewardship. Amen.*

We will talk more with Chaplain Peggy in the days ahead about ministry with Michigan’s rural communities.

“When our weeping’s over, He will bid us welcome, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.”

Together, *sowing for the Master*, we will find joy.



**In August 2019 Anne Marshall (left) and Peggy Paige were certified as Rural Chaplains of The United Methodist Church. Paige, a retired pastor, lives in Ingalls, Michigan. ~ photo courtesy Rural Chaplains Association**

## Drinking the Cup ... time to reclaim 'spiritual intimacy'



**REV. JOHN W. BOLEY**

Clergy Assistant to the Bishop

I recently read an article about Rachel Held Evans in *The Christian Century*. Evans was a millennial theologian who has been very influential without following the traditional theologian career path of doctor's degrees and seminary professorships. Rather, she was more attuned to the digital world and published from the vantage point of a young person trying to make church and scripture relevant and empowering – "taking theology off the high shelf and making it accessible."

Evans grew up in Dayton, Tennessee, famous for the Scopes "monkey" trial of 1925 in which evolution was pitted against fundamentalism. Evans grew up a fundamentalist in a household filled with grace, and gradually migrated away from fundamentalism to become a "progressive evangelical." Her first book was entitled "Evolving in Monkey Town." Another work of hers is "A Year of Biblical Womanhood." Another work is "Searching for Sunday." These titles are indicative of the power of her thought and writing. Unfortunately, Evans died a few months ago tragically at the age of 37.

Evans believed that Americans continuously attempt to find a "theology of rightness in a world where rich white men are in charge and everybody else is exploited and quiet about it." The antidote to this poison, she proclaimed, is not distance from scripture, but greater proximity to it – even intimacy with it. Particularly with the role of women in scripture, Evans believed in looking into the Bible's dark corners so as to light a candle there.

About the gospel, Evans states:

*The gospel doesn't need a coalition devoted to keeping the wrong people out. It needs a family of sinners, saved by grace, committed to tearing down walls, throwing open the doors, and shouting, 'Welcome! There are bread and wine. Come eat with us and talk.' This isn't a kingdom for the worthy; it's a kingdom for the hungry.*

I would wholeheartedly agree with Evans. I am deeply saddened by the way the Bible is used as a weapon, from all sides, when the wielders of the weapon seemingly don't know much about it.

I'm recalling the many times I was part of a Disciple Bible Study class over the years, both as participant and facilitator. They don't seem to be happening as much now, probably because of the busy demands of people, and because the materials are now a bit dated.

However, the need for Biblical intimacy is more important now than ever before, both within the United Methodist Church and in the Christian world as a whole. All of us can continue to learn and grow through this intimacy.

I will pray that it be so and work toward that goal.

# Bishop's 2019 Advent Offering heals disaster pain

## KAY DEMOSS

Senior Content Editor

Over the past 12 months, lives were broken by disaster in places like the Bahamas, Philippines, California, Iowa, Florida, and Zimbabwe. “Advent is about the breaking in of hope, of light, of life, of God’s love breaking into the world in Jesus Christ, years ago and always,” says Bishop David Bard.

Michigan’s disasters don’t have names like *Dorian, Harvey, Michael, or Maria*, but people have been hurt and property damaged, nonetheless, by torrential rains in places like Detroit.

In those and many other cases unnamed, the United Methodist Committee on Relief has partnered with annual conferences and local agencies to bring healing and help.

For decades Michigan United Methodists have supported UMCOR giving millions

of dollars of contributions to disaster relief, national and international. Further, congregations have packed countless tubes of toothpaste, bottles of bleach, pencils, and work gloves into relief supply kits distributed by Midwest Mission Distribution Center or Sager Brown UMCOR Depot.

In the past four years, such support for UMCOR has continued and the partnership has expanded in scope to touch the lives of those within the state at the mercy of rain and wind. Since 2014 UMCOR-funded disaster caseworkers have ministered in Detroit, Flint, Midland, and Copper Country. Michigan has hired a full-time Coordinator of Disaster Recovery Ministries, Nancy Money, thanks to a grant from UMCOR.

Michigan loves UMCOR, and UMCOR loves Michigan and the whole world beyond our borders. Disasters keep happening. And because of the strong

ministry ties between The Michigan Conference and the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Bishop David Bard has once again designated Disaster Relief as the 2019 Advent Offering.

The 2019 Advent Offering will again be shared between UMCOR Domestic Disaster Relief, UMCOR international Disaster Relief, and the Michigan Conference Disaster Relief Fund.

Advent is about arrival and hope,” says Bishop Bard. “As I think about places in our country and God’s world devastated by recent natural disasters, nothing speaks of the arrival of hope more than UMCOR. Beyond the headlines, UMCOR brings hope to people and helps them put their lives back together in the long-run.”

~ Cover photo: Bob Miller (left) and the Rev. David Kim unload UMCOR Cleaning Buckets during 2017 flooding near Midland.





**NORTHERN WATERS ...** Disciples at Traverse City Central UMC received 20/20 Vision glasses during stewardship month in October.



**EAST WINDS DISTRICT ...** When he is not serving as the Coordinator of Flint Water Recovery, Pastor Greg Timmons is in ministry at Calvary UMC in Flint. The Fifth Annual Halloween Rest Stop Night was a huge success.



**HERITGE DISTRICT ...** Rachel Labram, Director of Discipleship Ministries at Marshall UMC, was among those taking selfies with Bishop David Bard during his visit for the District Conference.



**MICHIGAN CAMPING ...** The glory of autumn in Michigan as seen from the Fire Bowl at Wesley Woods Camp near Dowling.



**GREATER SOUTHWEST ...** Global Mission Fellow, Kathryn Sappington, expresses holiday happiness at Family Fun Night at Kalamazoo First United Methodist Church.

Snapshots of Vitality



**CENTRAL BAY DISTRICT ...** Acting out the devotional booklet - "My Heart, Christ's Home" at Millington UMC's United Methodist Women Harvest Brunch.



**MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT ...** Two shoppers Mixing and Matching at Green Street UMC in Hastings. These Rummage Sale fashionistas are ready for just about every season.



**NORTHERN SKIES ...** Irene White, pastor of Norway Grace and Faithorn UMCs, received the 2019 Outstanding Community Leadership award in Norway. "Congratulations Irene! Thank you for being a visible child of God in your community."



**MICHIGAN MISSIONARIES ...** Mbwizu Ndjungu and her husband, the Rev. Nkemba Ndjungu, are EngageMI missionaries serving in Belize, a country in Central America. Mbwizu celebrates the work of the sewing class.



**GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT...** Children in worship leadership at Livonia: Newburg United Methodist Church. Angelic!

## God gave Lydia and Leslee the gift of a second career

**JOHN E. HARNISH**  
MI Conference Communications

We don't really know much about Lydia. Her story is told in two brief verses in Acts 16. We do know she was a business-woman, a seller of purple cloth, who became Paul's first convert in Europe and opened a house church in her home in Thyatira. Though she is officially named as a saint already, I'd like to name her as the "Patron Saint of the Second Career" because she represents clergy who come to ordained ministry as a second career rather than as young adults straight out of college and seminary. Lydia also represents the ranks of clergywomen who have served across the centuries and who today comprise a large part of our active United Methodist pastors. The Rev. Leslee Fritz would understand.

Like many second-career pastors, Leslee first felt God's call when she was in high school. She says, "I knew I was called to serve, but I did not know where that service would occur." After high school, she attended United Methodist-related Albion College thinking she would either go to seminary or to law school. As a participant in the Gerald Ford Institute for Public Service, Leslee was introduced to opportunities in the public arena and discovered a "...meaningful way to combine my interest in public policy with my call to service."

Looking back, she has no regrets about the 20 years she spent in that field, believing that public service can be a noble calling that truly impacts the world, touching the lives of those who were

hurting, lost or broken. However, she says she was left with "a certain hollowness" which she tried to fill through volunteer work including lay ministry and teaching in her local congregation, Okemos Community Church.

Eventually, that hollowness grew to the point she could no longer ignore it. Her first intention was to serve as a part-time local pastor while still maintaining her career in public service, but she quickly realized God was calling her to ordained ministry. Leslee went to Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, graduated in June and was commissioned as a Provisional Elder at the Michigan Annual Conference this summer. She is now serving as the pastor at First United Methodist Church in Albion.

Fritz makes this move from a career in public service to ordained ministry at a time when the United Methodist Church is in turmoil and the future is uncertain. When asked about her hopes for the church she says, "My hope comes from God, not from human institutions, so as easy as it is to get caught up in the current tensions in our denomination and to let those tensions dominate my thoughts and sap my energy, I know that this church is not the only way God works in the world. If we as flawed humans cannot find a way to use this denominational structure to aide in building God's kingdom, then God will find a way around our failings."

She takes the long-view. "As important as this issue (the church's stance on LGBTQ inclusivity) is, if we cannot find consensus it will not stop God from doing God's work in the world. All I know is I have been called to this ministry and my hope is that every day God will use whatever gifts I have to serve others so that they might see a glimpse of God."

We don't know what became of Lydia and her house church and at this point, there is no way to know how God will use Leslee and the other second career pastors who, like her, bring their experience and gifts to ordained ministry. All we know is Lydia was willing to follow God's calling, willing to be used in the work of Christ in the world, willing to serve God's people. In the spirit of St. Lydia, the Patron Saint of the Second Career, Leslee Fritz and others like her are willing to do the same.



## Home Words Bound ... the blessings of life



**REV. BENTON HEISLER**  
Director of Connectional Ministry

**I** had the joy this past Saturday of sharing the day with my four-year-old grandson, Weston. We are blessed to be able to seem him and his brother frequently, but rarely is it just the two of us for a length of time.

The day was full of possibilities, a fishing pole was in the back of the truck, snacks and drinks were ready to travel, an itinerary of orchard/cider mill/donuts, lumberyard, zoo, playgrounds, and Tractor Supply store were all mapped out.

The lumber yard in Charlotte was full of sites, sounds, tools, machines and fragrances of wood that he had never encountered. Snacks in the parking lot were enjoyed.

The orchard was equally exciting as children, parents, pumpkins, playgrounds, horses, apples, donuts and cider filled the day with sights, sounds and smells.

I remember hearing those four words, spoken ever so quietly. I honestly can't

remember exactly where but It seems like it was while we were walking hand in hand among the large band saw, planer and drum sander.

**"I love you, Papa."** Had I not been attentive, it could have easily been missed. "I love you, too, Weston." The day ended all too soon, and with both of us asleep for a late afternoon nap as the family all returned. But I will forever treasure the moments we had alone and hearing those unsolicited words.

Sunday worship was a blessing, as it always is. "Helping People Know Jesus and Making Him Known." The words are prominently placed and well lit on the sanctuary wall. As I experienced that worship service, my mind moved back and forth between the inspiration of the moment and the memories of the day before. I spent time alone with Weston, exposing him to sights and sounds and experiences some of which he had never had before. The beauty of our day centered on enjoying the relationship we have with each other.

**The blessing of life comes as each of us has a similar relationship of trust and love with God,** spend time alone with God, and because of our faith in our Savior Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I talk regularly to Weston about God and Jesus and living as a disciple of Jesus. When the moment is right, I am equally willing to share with others the impact God has in my life and how they too can hear God's voice speaking to them, "I love you\_\_\_\_\_."

A great deal is often written about justice, social holiness and addressing systems of oppression and injustice. I contend that John Wesley had a unique gift and vision for calling people to the **equally balanced life of personal holiness and social holiness.** They are dependent upon one another. Maybe it's just me, but I feel as though I hear and read far more about social holiness and less about encouraging persons to a life of personal holiness (evangelism), faith in Jesus Christ for their salvation and the resulting fruit of one's desire to transform the world.

The writer of Proverbs wisely taught us, **"Train up a child in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)."** Life is about far more than orchards, lumber yards, football games and "games of politics and thrones" we see played out in Washington D.C. Jesus prophetically taught us, **"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)

I pray that these reflections will assist you in your own witness and service as a Disciple of Jesus Christ.

## EngageMI Challenge raises \$43,000 for mission

### KAY DEMOSS

Senior Content Editor

EngageMI Fundraising Challenge was a three-week event (October 14 – November 1, 2019) connecting donors with United Methodist-related non-profits and projects doing good across Michigan.

This virtual fundraising event, sponsored by the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church, offered the opportunity for these non-profits and projects to raise thousands of dollars to benefit their local communities.

At the close of the three weeks, \$30,119 had been raised from 309 donors. Cash Awards were also given to these projects on the strength of those donor gifts.

These organizations were among the top five with regard to online donations:

1. South Flint Soup Kitchen \$6,888 from 113 donors;
2. Samaritan Counseling Center \$4,605 from 18 donors;
3. Mobility Worldwide East Michigan \$4,161 from 21 donors;
4. Cass United Methodist Church & Center \$3,180 from 73 donors;
5. Camp Michigamme \$2,602 from 18 donors.

Participating ministries had access to an additional \$13,000 in Bonus Challenges throughout the campaign. Every week a new challenge opened.

**Kickoff Challenge** to top three organizations to raise the most dollars in the first 24 hours:

Cass Community UMC & Center \$800

South Flint Soup Kitchen \$300

Motown Mission \$150

**Week 1 Challenge** (Oct. 14-20) awarded to top three organizations to raise the most dollars in the first week:

South Flint Soup Kitchen \$1,000

Cass Community UMC & Center \$700

Samaritan Counseling Center \$300

**Week 2 Challenge** (Oct. 21-27) project with most unique donors in the second week:

Cass Community UMC & Center \$1,000

South Flint Soup Kitchen \$700

Motor City Wesley \$300

**Week 3 Challenge** (Oct. 28-Nov. 1) awarded to the top three organizations to raise the most dollars during the third week:

Samaritan Counseling Center \$1,000

South Flint Soup Kitchen \$700

Justice For Our Neighbors \$300

Go to ..... **ENGAGE** p. 13



**Pastor Maurice Horne welcomes neighbors to the South Flint Soup Kitchen six days a week. 30,000 meals were served last year.** ~ Facebook photo

# Whatever happened to ‘Amen’?

**REV. DR. MARGIE CRAWFORD**  
Superintendent, Midwest District

I think I have always been interested in language. I was only six years old when I attended the World’s Expo in Montreal, Quebec. Our family spent about four weeks in the Province, staying in Quebec City before traveling down to Montreal. That’s when I learned some French. It was also the first foreign language I took while I was in elementary school. I also took Spanish, learned a little Japanese, and Korean while I was in high school.

I minored in Spanish in college and enrolled in American Sign Language as I explored the possibility of becoming an interpreter for persons who are deaf.

When I began attending seminary, courses in ancient Hebrew and Greek were offered. I took three courses in Hebrew which has given me a new understanding of which English words have been selected for the translation of the Hebrew Testament.

I guess in some ways I am an amateur etymologist. Our language reflects our cultural heritage. Words in our language have Latin, Greek, German, French, Spanish, and even Sanskrit origins. Some words have been altered a lot since they were introduced into the language. Other words have remained the same.

*Amen* is one such word. It comes to us from the Hebrew language. It meant *right, just, true, or certain*.

The English definition is somewhat different. Amen is a solemn expression of belief or affirmation. Amen is used today to express agreement or assent. When the word is used at the end of a prayer or hymn, it means *so be it, or it is so*.

But have you noticed that modern songs of worship rarely include this wonderful word which is a declaration of our faith? I miss it.

Growing up, men and women in my parents’ church would shout this word out more than any other, as the Reverend shared a message, agreeing with him and affirming that his witness and testimony resonated with them. The



Amen concluded our time of singing our praises to God. For us, the word was a way of expressing our gratitude as we moved from a time of song to a time of prayer and preaching.

There is a rich heritage in this single word that connects us with our ancestors in faith. Amen is integral to how we express our relationship with God.

I don’t believe that it is a coincidence that Amen is also the last word in the Holy Bible. Because it is right, just, true and certain that the Lord has shared the Scriptures with us. The Holy Bible is only one expression of our Lord’s love for us, showing us all that the Lord is able and willing to do for our salvation.

May we continue to praise God. And Amen!

## ENGAGE ..... from p. 12

**The Final Day Challenge**, worth \$1,250, awards the organization with the most dollars received from midnight to 5 pm Nov. 1:

Samaritan Counseling Center \$800

South Flint Soup Kitchen \$300

Justice For Our Neighbors \$150

EngageMI is now concluding its first year as the mission engagement program of the Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church. EngageMI projects are focused on the wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable communities in Michigan: people experiencing hunger and homelessness, children and elderly living in poverty, and immigrants and refugees.

The focus of EngageMI is “ministry with” rather than “ministry to.” “Ministry with” seeks not only to meet immediate needs, but, also, to foster mutual relationships where all participants are met with dignity, engaged in shared leadership, and growing together in God’s love.

The goal of Engage MI is to encourage congregations to partner with these projects and to meet the challenge of being in “ministry with” people in the congregation and the local community.

For more information about EngageMI, contact the Rev. Paul Perez, the Associate Director of Mission and Ministry for The Michigan Conference.

To learn more go to <https://michiganumc.org/missions/engage-mi/>.



*The United Methodist Building is the only non-governmental building on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Its sign board out front reflects the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. ~ Facebook/GBCS*

## Revised United Methodist Social Principles released

**CHICAGO** — At its final meeting of the quadrennium, the board of directors of the General Board of Church and Society introduced the Revised Social Principles to entire church.

The document is now pending approval of the 2020 General Conference. “Today is the culmination of an eight-year journey that began when the 2012 General Conference first called the General Board of Church and Society to revise the Social Principles to become more globally relevant, theologically sound, and more succinct,” said Bishop Sally Dyck, resident Bishop of the Chicago Episcopal Area and President of the board of directors.

The document is available in seven languages for the whole church to read and discuss. The new document responds to General Conference by consolidating the six sections into four. The principles in the Nurturing Community are incorporated into the Social Community, while principles from the World Community section are integrated throughout. Each section is introduced by relevant

Scriptural passages and excerpts from John Wesley’s writings. “We didn’t always agree on every Social Principle,” said Randall Miller, the Vice President of the board of directors and chair of the board’s Social Principles Revision Task Force, “but we celebrated our agreements, and understood how the Social Principles represent how we want to be in relationship with each other and with the world as United Methodists.” First adopted by the United Methodist Church in 1972, this is the first time the entire Social Principles document was revised as a whole. During this revision, United Methodists from the Central Conferences participated actively throughout the process, offering specific recommendations on how the document could be a resource for ministry in congregations across Africa, the Philippines, and Europe.

“We are delighted to see that the UMC Social Principles have been revised in the context of the unification of the United Methodist Church at the global level,” said Bishop Daniel Lunge Onashuyaka,

resident Bishop of the Central Congo Episcopal Area and member of the board of directors. “All sensibilities have been included in this context to enable the unity of the church. This brings a lot of hope for the upcoming General Conference.”

The writing team included over 50 members from Central Conferences in the Philippines, the Congo, West Africa, Central and Southern Europe, and Northern and Eurasia, in addition to the five U.S. Jurisdictions. The Rev. Chris Momany, a Michigan Conference pastor, participated in the process.

“The revision process was spirit-filled, open and inclusive of many communities, cultures, and contexts from around the world,” said Susan Henry Crowe, General Secretary of Church and Society.

Prayerful dialogue and consensus guided the revision. This truly United Methodist process showed the church at its best.”

To read the Revised Social Principles in one of seven languages, please visit [www.umcjustice.org/sp2020](http://www.umcjustice.org/sp2020).

## News in Brief

### UMCOR'S NORMA KEHRBERG DIES



Norma J. Kehrberg, a long-time United Methodist missionary and the first woman to lead the United Methodist Committee on Relief, died on Oct. 6, 2019, following a long illness. She was 81 years old and lived in Hawaii in retirement. She spent almost 25 years as a missionary in Nepal, and from 1984 to 1991, was head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). She is thought to be the first woman to hold such a position among Protestant denominations.

### WILTSE RECEIVES COPES AWARD



For his long-time service as editor of *Worship Arts* magazine, Dave Wiltse was named the recipient of the 2019 V. Earl Copes Award during the biennial business meeting of The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts July 17. He oversaw the growth of *Worship Arts* magazine into a full-color print edition and a digital edition over 34 years. Wiltse served on the West Michigan Conference staff from 1977 to his retirement in 2009.

He was a three times delegate to General Conference and represented West Michigan at Jurisdictional Conference an additional two times. Well done good and faithful servant! Dave and his wife, Marj, reside in Rockford.

### DELEGATION ASKS FOR EPISCOPAL NOMINATIONS



The Michigan Delegation to the 2020 General and Jurisdictional Conferences met on October 11, 2019 and determined its process for solicitation, review, and endorsement of episcopal nominees (i.e. nominees for the role of bishop in The United Methodist Church). Endorsement by the delegation is independent of any future action taken to endorse nominees by the Michigan Annual Conference, when

they meet in June 2020. Anyone interested in nominating an ordained elder for consideration for episcopal endorsement by the delegate on may do so online at [ncj.michiganumc.org](http://ncj.michiganumc.org). All nominations must be received by November 18, 2019. Please direct your questions to Delegation co-chair Laura Witkowski [delegation@michiganumc.org](mailto:delegation@michiganumc.org).



**In November 1985 Robert C. Smith stands with Norma Kehrberg and Indian leaders at the dedication of an earthen reservoir constructed with the aid of UMCOR. Bob Smith retired from the West Michigan Conference in 1983 then served the United Methodist Committee on Relief until 1992, working closely with Kehrberg.** ~photo courtesy Dorothy Smith

## BISHOP ..... from p. 2

for violence, the ways we get trapped in self-destructive behavior, climate change, denominational turmoil. We need not look any further than our own souls to find brokenness.

**“The church, at its best, is a place where we are not all crazy and hopeless on the same day.”**

The church, at its best, is a place where we are not all crazy and hopeless on the same day. It is a place where we remind each other that you see stars best on dark nights.

It is a place where we affirm the strength of God’s grace, the power of God’s love. It is a place where we can know hope and joy, and laughter. It is a place from which we can reach out and touch the world with kindness and

justice and love. Among the things in my “I Love” song is the church.

These are challenging times and difficult days. Yet there remains beauty and grace, the smiles of friends, held hands, justice done, goodness lived, kindness furthered.

There are simple joys and pleasures like songs and paintings and movies and meals. There are places where we are not all hopeless and crazy on the same day. There is God’s never-failing love and the persistent presence of the Spirit.

Remember some of those things this Thanksgiving month. Remembering them keeps us a little saner in this sometimes crazy world. Remembering gives us the energy to tackle the very real problems that are before us. Remembering them reminds us of the deep goodness of God, and helps us tap into the energy of God’s Spirit.

## Historic Rugged Cross church lives on in Pokagon

**DEBRA HAIGHT**  
For Herald-Palladium

POKAGON, Mich. — Molly Shaffer still gets a little teary-eyed every time she walks through The Old Rugged Cross Church in Pokagon. Not only does the beloved hymn hold special meaning for her from her childhood, the church represents decades of dedicated restoration efforts by her and other volunteers.

Shaffer has captured what the hymn and the church mean to her in a new book, “The Old Rugged Cross’ Lives On.” The 488-page book details the history of the hymn, the building and the efforts to restore the 157-year-old building over the last two decades. “When we would be giving tours of the church,” she said, “we’d tell stories about the building and our experiences, and people would say they hoped we were writing everything down.

“We’ve had cases where people tell a story back to us that we had forgotten, and other times when people were telling the wrong stories,” she added. “I thought it was time to get the story told as to what really happened. I wanted to document what happened,

and the people who helped make it happen.

“The more I got into it, the more rewarding it became,” Molly said. “I asked others how to proceed, and they said to just sit down and start writing, and to write it in a conversational manner. I tried to get the passion into the book. Hopefully, people will laugh and cry in places. There’s been a lot of tears and a lot of laughter.”

The restored church building at 61041 Vermont St., about halfway between Dowagiac and Niles, is where the Rev. George Bennard’s hymn was first publicly performed in 1913. Bennard, an Albion, Mich. minister, was visiting the area to take part in a series of revivals. While at the church, he finished writing the hymn for its public debut during the revival.

Shaffer can remember singing the song from the time she was a child. “It’s one of the first two songs I ever memorized as a child along with ‘In the Garden,’” she said. “I grew up in Lebanon, Indiana, and we would have big hymn sings. I’d stand up and sing it at the top of my lungs.”

Her involvement with The Old Rugged Cross church



building began in the late 1970s when she and her husband, Robert, joined the nearby Pokagon United Methodist Church. They began learning about the church across the street, which at that point was a dilapidated barn.

The building was constructed in 1862, to be a hops barn, and was converted into a church in 1876. It was sold in 1915, to a local farmer, two years after the famous hymn was sung there. The farmer converted it back to a barn — this time for livestock after the sanctuary floor was removed. It fell into disrepair in the following decades and ended up vacant. The Shaffers bought the barn in 1998, and formed The Old Rugged Cross Foundation to raise money to restore it.

That effort brought in more than \$1 million to completely restore the building, which is now on the state and federal registries of historic places. “We did any fundraiser we could think of, and we learned as we went,” Shaffer said. “Now we have just one big fundraiser each year with a spaghetti supper and silent auction each October at St. John’s United Church of Christ in Niles.”

Her book details everything from the history of the hymn and the church to the fundraisers, including a 2006 Sandi Patti concert at Andrews University and the building restoration work. She credits the transformation to the dedication of volunteers and the contractors they’ve worked with, including Dale Layman of Berrien Springs and Wardell Art Glass Studio of Aurora, Ill.

Those interesting in touring the church, or buying the book, can call 683-4540 or visit [the-oldruggedcross.org](http://the-oldruggedcross.org). The book is \$84.80.

The church hosts interdenominational hymn sings twice a month from May through early December, concerts twice a month, Good Friday services, and rentals for weddings and funerals.

“We close every hymn sing with ‘The Old Rugged Cross’ and the Lord’s Prayer,” Shaffer said. “It never gets old to hear it. It just means a lot.”

~ Reprinted with permission of the author. This story first appeared August 18, 2019 in the Herald-Palladium.

