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Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Local Church News & Events

You Can Still Register for Leadership Training Events!

Workshops for SPRC's, Trustee Boards, Finance Committees and Nominations/Leadership Development Committees are tonight and tomorrow night. **Please call Liz to register 616.459.4503.**

- Tonight, January 25 at Muskegon Central UMC from 6:45-9pm
- Tomorrow, January 26 at Rockford UMC from 6:45-9pm

Ubuntu Gathering Center Campaign Update

Thank you, thank you, thank you to the Albion District for their generosity! The AU Task Force was thrilled to receive a \$10,000 check at the Albion District Conference this past Saturday, January 21. Albion District Superintendent Tamara Williams challenged the churches of the district to match that \$10,000 so that their district could name a room in the Ubuntu Center. Thank you Albion District for your faithful offering to the vision of making disciples for the transformation of the world in Africa! The *Ubuntu Gathering Center* campaign has raised more than **\$380,000** in cash and pledges toward the \$500,000 goal. You too, can be part of the Ubuntu dream! The campaign ends on December 31, 2012.

There are 2 ways to remit campaign donations:

- **When sending a check to the WMC Treasurer for the Ubuntu Gathering Center campaign, please make sure you list the amount of the check in line 5910 (lane 6) of the remittance form and indicate it's for the Ubuntu Campaign.**
- **You may also send a check directly to the UM Foundation (use Conference Center address) referencing account UMF00497 and indicate Ubuntu Gathering Center campaign donation.**

Click [here](#) for the Michigan Methodist Reporter article about the *Ubuntu Gathering Center*. Click [here](#) to view the Ubuntu Gathering Center video on YouTube. Check out the GR District *Ubuntu Gathering Center* fundraising website at www.AfricaUniversity.org to learn more. **Would you like an AU Task Force member to speak at your church?** Please call Liz in the GR District Office to make arrangements at 616.459.4503 or by email at grdistrict@wmcumc.org.

Support Group Meetings at Cornerstone UMC

- **DivorceCare for Kids** helps children 5-12 years old who are suffering the effects of divorce. Meets Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 PM, at Cornerstone UMC on the corner of 84th St and Kalamazoo Avenue. Registration and further information at www.cornerstonemi.org.
- **DivorceCare for Adults** who are separated or divorced. There is life after divorce. Meets Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 PM, at Cornerstone UMC. Registration and further information at www.cornerstonemi.org.
- **GriefShare** can help turn your mourning into joy. Meets at Cornerstone UMC beginning Thursday, January 26, 7:00 PM. Registration and further information at www.cornerstonemi.org.

JUSTICE Fourth Friday Films at the Y to Show Out In America

White Pines UMC in Belmont is proud to be able to show the amazing brand new documentary "Out In America" on Friday, January 27 at 7pm in the community room at the Wolverine Worldwide Family YMCA on Jupiter Ave. NE. *Out in America* is an uplifting collection of unique, transformative stories and inspiring personal narratives told through the lens of the country's most prominent LGBT figures and pioneers, as well as many average, yet extraordinary, citizens from gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities. This documentary will kick-off our yearlong monthly series of movies that help us consider and invite conversation around one of the most pressing social justice and human rights issues of our time. This will also begin our year long conversation at White Pines UMC as we consider how we might become a more welcoming and inclusive church within our community. These movies are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Click [here](#) for the promotional poster:

Blood Drive

Monday, January 30 from 3-7pm GR First UMC will be holding its 1st Blood Drive of the year in Wesley Hall. New donors as well as regulars are most welcome and appreciated! Please call the office at 616.451.2879 to sign-up or walk-in's welcome. GR First UMC, 227 East Fulton Street.

GR District Care Ministry Meeting

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 31 (snow date is February 7) from 9:30 to 11:30am at Rockford UMC (159 Maple, downtown Rockford). This group was formed to foster and support Care Ministry programs across our District, providing ideas and best practices that your church can implement immediately. The focus for our January meeting will include:

- Review September 2011 meeting - Get ideas, share knowledge and participate in a fellowship of care givers.
- Spiritual Gifts Inventory- Natural Talents are the abilities we receive by birth and the natural person is dependent on himself to discover, develop and use his talent.

- Pray for area Care Ministry providers - Meet other leaders and volunteers in the Care Ministry field. Care Ministry providers from GR First UMC, Cornerstone UMC, Newaygo UMC, Wesley Park UMC, Trinity UMC and Rockford UMC have already expressed a desire to attend. Childcare will be provided in our nursery. Prayerfully consider joining us at this important collaborative meeting. Please contact Susan Witte, RUMC Care Ministry Director, at care@rockfordumc.org to RSVP or if you have any questions concerning this event.

Upcoming Events at GR First UMC

- **Taizé Sung Prayer Service** on Wednesday, February 1 at 7pm.
- **Young Adult Sparks Service** on Wednesday, February 8 at 7pm. Service begins with dinner at 6pm followed by worship at 7pm. All are invited to attend the next meeting located in The Vine at First United Methodist Church – 207 East Fulton St, Grand Rapids. For more information contact Sami Marasigan at samim@grandrapidsfumc.org.

Give Your Taste Buds a Treat!

The United Methodist Women of South Wyoming UMC (2730 56th Street just west of Byron Center Avenue) invite you, your family and friends to their annual spaghetti dinner on Friday, February 17 at 6:15pm. Dinner includes spaghetti, bread, salad, and dessert. A free-will offering will be accepted. Please put this on your calendar and call the church at 615.532.0131 by February 13 to let us know how many guests to expect.

Spring Break Mission Trip for College Students

Do you have any college students at your church who'd like to go on a spring break mission trip? GR First UMC and the GVSU Wesley Fellowship are partnering for an inner-city mission trip to Philadelphia, March 2-8. For additional info please email SamiM@grandrapidsfumc.org or click [here](#) for the informational flyer.

Marne UMC 150 Year Anniversary Events

Click [here](#) to read about the events planned for this year-long celebration.

Confident Parenting Seminar

On February 8, from 6:30-9pm, Cornerstone Church has invited world-renowned author and speaker Dr. Jim Burns to present his Confident Parenting seminar, which will equip and encourage anyone who interacts with kids and teens, whether as a parent, grandparent, or mentor. Topics to be covered during the 2.5 hour seminar include: finding replenishment for overcrowded lives, overcoming negative family patterns, creating a grace-filled home, communicating with affection, warmth and encouragement, and addressing issues of media influence and purity. Tickets are \$6 (\$10 for two), which will include a seminar manual and light refreshments, and can be purchased at the church office or at www.cornerstonemi.org/parenting.

Southern Gospel Singing at Courtland-Oakfield UMC

You're invited on Saturday, February 11 at 7pm for a night of southern Gospel singing by the *RoyalHeirs*, a Gospel Music Quartet, at Courtland-Oakfield UMC, 10295 Myers Lake Avenue NE, about 1½ miles south of M-57. A free will offering will be taken. Questions? Please call the church at 616.866.4298.

Bring Your UMCOR Donations to Genesis UMC

Genesis is a local storage and shipping facility for the UMCOR Midwest Mission Distribution Center in Illinois. We receive and store all UMCOR kits and components until we have a car/van/truckload to take to MMDC. This saves you postage and allows you to collect and donate postage prohibitive items like flood buckets. All you need to do is package everything securely and contact us at outreach@genesisumc.org to schedule a drop off. Do you know of people who would like to volunteer to drive a load to MMDC? If so, let us know. Can't volunteer? Consider a small donation to help cover volunteer gas costs.

White Pines UMC Brings 4 Feed America Food Trucks to Rockford Area

White Pines United Methodist Church in Belmont set a goal in December to spend less money on unnecessary gifts, and instead put that money toward things that matter. During worship on January 8th it was announced that those special gifts totaled over \$2000! This was enough for White Pines to buy four 5000-pound food trucks through Feeding America West Michigan to feed hungry people in the Rockford Area during the coldest months of winter. Click [here](#) to read the full story with photo.

Young Adult Mission Discovery Trip to Africa University, Zimbabwe

Greg Lawton of the Wesley Fellowship at GVSU is leading a team of young adults (ages 18-30) to Africa University from May 10-21. There is room for one or two more persons to join us. The trip will cost around \$3,000 per person and have its primary focus on training young people to lead mission trips by interacting with the students at AU, serving on projects at the University and community, and exploring the wonder of Zimbabwe. If you are interested in this opportunity or would like more information, please contact Greg at gregorylawton@gmail.com or 269.317.7183.

Wanted: Part-time Worship Leader

CrossWind Church in Dorr is known for being a relevant and modern church reaching out to people without a church in Northern Allegan County. Our mission statement is, "to love people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ." We currently have about 200 regular church attenders between our 2 services and we are growing! Our style is somewhat heavy rock. We use music from David Crowder and Tenth Avenue North and

others with a similar style. Our band is made up of quality musicians. This could be set up as a paid internship or just simply as a paid worship leader. Check out our website at www.crosswindcc.org. Questions? Please contact Pastor Scott Otis 616.681.0302, 616.307.9765 or scott.otis@crosswindcc.org.

Growing Together on the District

This is a feature of the *Connection* where GR District churches can coordinate ministries, develop partnerships and promote the sharing of resources. This information exchange directly relates to the GR District vision statement "*Growing Together and Reaching Out*". If you have something to share, are looking to borrow items, or need feedback on information related to resources, please email your info to Liz in the GR District office at grdistrict@wmcumc.org or call the office at 616.459.4503.

Grand Rapids District News & Events

Reshape Your World: A Bishop's Day Event on March 10, 2012 @ Cornerstone UMC

- Click [here](#) to view and print the brochure
- The [online registration](#) page is now open! **Prefer to register offline?** Call Liz 616.459.4503
- Click [here](#) to view a schedule of the day
- Click [here](#) to view the complete workshop and presenter list
- **The GR District Conference will take place during the lunch break from 11:35am-1pm**

The keynote Speaker will be [Shannon Trilli](#) from UMCOR. Shannon is a young adult who joined the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) in January 2008 as an executive for Project Implementation and Evaluation for the Health Unit. On January 10, 2012, Shannon was named UMCOR's new director of Global Health programs. Click [here](#) to read the story.

2 WORKSHOP SESSIONS: Workshops are focused on domestic and international mission, local church outreach, health and welfare ministries, hospitality ministries, children, youth, young adult ministries and many other topics of interest to local churches.

LUNCH: The **GR District Conference** will take place during the lunch break.

Also during the lunch break there will be a Panel Discussion with young adults who are active in domestic and/or international outreach and mission.

CLOSING WORSHIP: DS Laurie Haller will lead our closing worship celebration which will include an opportunity for individuals and churches to respond to God's call to ministry and mission. **Cost is \$17 per person and includes food. Youth (grades 6-12) are free and should make morning and afternoon workshop selections.** Questions or you'd prefer to register offline? Please call or email the GR District office at 616.459.4503 or grdistrict@wmcumc.org.

Grand Rapids District Conference

The GR District Conference will take place from 11:35am-1pm during [Bishop's Day](#) on Saturday, March 10 at Cornerstone UMC. There is no cost to attend the District Conference during the lunch break at Bishop's Day.

UMCOR Haiti Gathering and Opportunity

UMCOR staff person in Haiti, Lauren James, will be available to discuss Haiti and future projects and partnerships. She will answer questions and share what is happening in Haiti today. Anyone who has a heart for Haiti is invited to this gathering, which follows our Grand Rapids Bishop's Day Event on Sat., March 10 at Cornerstone UMC from 4pm to 5:30pm. Questions? Please call Dave Selleck at 269.254.7172 or email Dave at dselleck2000@gmail.com.

Mandatory Sexual Ethics Training Sessions

For all clergy in the Michigan Area. There are 3 training sessions offered, please choose a session that works best for your schedule.

- March 19, 2012 at Birmingham First UMC
- March 20, 2012 Gaylord First UMC
- March 21, 2012 at Cornerstone UMC

Check-in and refreshments at 8am. Program starts promptly at 8:45am and wraps up at 4:30pm. Pre-registration is required; click [here](#) to register online. If you'd prefer to register by phone, please call Liz in the District office at 616.459.4503. **Individual cost is \$8 and includes lunch. Please make checks payable to Michigan Area United Methodist Church and mail to Vicki Gibbs, Michigan Area Episcopal Office, 2164 University Park, Suite 250, Okemos, MI 48864.** The Sexual Ethics Trainer will be Rev. Michelle Foster, Clergy Ethics Coordinator for Western North Carolina Conference. Conversations will focus on healthy boundary setting and boundary keeping within our interpersonal relationships and in our engagement with technology. Handouts will be provided. You are encouraged to bring a pen or pencil if you would like to take notes throughout the day. Click [here](#) to read the FAQ flyer.

Protect Your Volunteers, Committee Members, and Others

[Andrew J. Vorbrich](#), WMC Conference Chancellor, is here to provide advice to the local church. In the event someone is injured by the church and they gain the right to recover damages (money) from the church, they might also be able to make the individual people who damaged them liable along with the church. To protect your church and volunteers, please read the entire linked article. <<[Read More](#)>>

Hildegard of Bingen and the Living Light GR Performance

On Monday, January 30 at 7pm, Linn Maxwell Keller will perform her one-woman show *Hildegard of Bingen and the Living Light* at Spectrum Theatre, 160 Fountain St. NE. Hildegard's timeless universal message of spiritual truth, holistic healing and caring for the earth is more urgent today than ever before. Pope Benedict XVI will canonize Hildegard in 2012 and name her a Doctor of the Church. Tickets are \$10/\$5 for seniors, students are free with valid student ID. Please call the box office at 616.234.3946.

Small Grants Available

Family Life Ministries, from the Board of Discipleship, has small grants (\$50-\$100) available to local congregations and groups to support ministries that strengthen the quality of life. Such activities could include: Parenting, Care Giving, Spiritual Formation, Marital Growth, Church School Materials, Family Camping Experiences, Special Church Family Activities, Back to School Materials, Short-term projects, etc. If you could use such a grant to launch or support a quality of life activity or project, contact Mary Lou Fassett by email at mlfassett2@yahoo.com.

Reminder: Please Update your Church Dashboard with Leadership Changes

This is a reminder that your [church dashboard](#) needs to be updated to reflect new leadership for 2012. If you need your password/username or a refresher course, please call Liz at 616.459.4503 or email grdistrict@wmcumc.org.

Tables I, II, III Data Deadline is February 6

Be sure to submit your data by February 6 via the Internet. The new web address is <http://ezra.gcfa.org/>. The home page appearance has changed, but the procedures for entering data are the same as before. Please check your church and pastor information for accuracy. If you need assistance, email John Kosten or Ann Buck in the conference treasurer's office at johnk@wmcumc.org or abuck@wmcumc.org.

Bishop Schol's "A Call To Action" Presentation DVD is Available

Bishop Schol's presentation from November 10 at Cornerstone UMC is now available on DVD. The DVD's may be picked up at the GR District Office. Bishop Schol's powerpoint presentation is also available click [here](#) for ppt and [here](#) for pdf. If you'd like to reserve a copy for pick up, please email Liz in the GR District office at grdistrict@wmcumc.org or call 616.459.4503. GR District Office hours are M-Th, 8:30am-4:30pm.

Health Mission Trip

Jody Pratt from Middleville UMC will be working with Judy Bruun from the Wisconsin Conference along with DB Peru /Lima to provide healthcare for village women living along the Amazon river. Jody leaves for Iquitos Peru on February 24. <<[Read More](#)>>

Partners for a Racism-Free Community Annual Community Forum

- Date: Friday, February 24
- Location: Kroc Center, 2500 South Division Avenue SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Registration/Breakfast: Begins at 7:30 a.m. Program Cost \$55.00 (Includes Box Lunch): 8:00a.m.-2:00 p.m. For online registration please follow this link www.prfc-gr.org. Participants will have the opportunity to learn, connect, and become part of the goal of making the greater Grand Rapids area racism free.

Spring 2012 Lay Speaking Classes now Forming

- **Advanced Class:** *Leading Small Groups*-Instructors Helen Reid and Jody Pratt

Saturday, March 17, from 9am until 3pm at Twin Lake UMC. One Saturday only with lunch and materials provided. Fee is \$25 and payable at the door on March 17. Make-up date is Saturday, April 14. Class must have 10 registrants to be held.

- **Basic Class**-Instructor Don Williams

Saturday, March 17 AND Saturday, April 14, from 9am until 3pm at Twin Lake UMC. Participants must attend both sessions to receive Basic Class certificate of completion. The fee is \$25 and covers registration, two lunches and all materials. Payment can be made at first class; please make checks payable to WMC Treasurer. Must have 10 registrations for class to be held. Please register via email to Jody Pratt at prattgji@hughes.net or call 269.792.0481 and leave a message. Please request a return call or email to confirm your registration. Registration deadline is February 10. Classes will take place at Twin Lake UMC, 5940 S. Main St, Twin Lake, 49457. Twin Lake UMC is located just off M-120 in Twin Lake. Click [here](#) for the flyer to post in your church.

2012 Annual Conference Theme Announced

The theme of the 2012 Annual Conference has been announced. "A Healthy World: Mind • Body • Spirit" will be held Wednesday, June 6 through Saturday June 9, 2012 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids. This is the 44th Session of the West Michigan Conference and the final year themed on the four areas of focus of The United Methodist Church. "Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally" will explore three sub-themes; mind, body and spirit. Preachers for the event include the dynamic author, pastor and sociologist Dr. Anthony Campolo, Resident Bishop of the Ohio West Area Bishop Bruce Ough and our own Bishop Jonathan Keaton. The three keynote speakers for the final day of Annual Conference, sometimes referred to as "Miracle Saturday," have been selected and will be announced soon. Click [here](#) for additional details.

It's not too late to sign up for a 2012 MARC Membership!!!!

For a small annual subscription fee (for most churches, less than the cost of buying just one DVD!) your church leadership has unlimited access to thousands of the most popular faith resources. Browse the Michigan Area Resource Center [website](#) and find a wealth of material ready for loan - small group study resources, stewardship helps, children and youth programs, UMW and UMM program material, etc. There is no need to log in when visiting MARC. Just click on the advanced search bar, key in your needs, and then submit your order! New to MARC, or haven't had a membership in 5 years? Join for ½ price for 2012. Click [here](#) for the 2012 membership form. MARC looks forward to equipping you in your ministries! Questions? Contact Betsy Weems, Director, at 888.217.1905, marc@wmcumc.org, or visit us on-line at www.marc-web.org.

Three Mile Project lock-in event

The Grand Rapids District Youth Council is planning their annual winter lock-in event to be held at the *Three Mile Project* in Walker on Friday, February 24, 2012. This facility is a faith-based, nonprofit organization that was designed to give youth somewhere to go and keep them off of the streets. Take a look at their website at: www.3mileproject.com. Some of the activities available are: basketball, volleyball, gaga ball, re-ball, indoor skate park, coffee bar and snack shop, free video games, pool and foosball tables and three movie theaters. The facility is new and designed with teens in mind. There is plenty of just hanging out space. Click [here](#) for the flyer to print and post in your church. Hope to see you all there! Questions? Contact Marcia Lienesch, GR District Youth Council Adult Coordinator, lieneschm@yahoo.com.

<u>Grand Rapids District January Calendar</u>	<u>Grand Rapids District February Calendar</u>
January 25 Leadership Training Event 6:45-9pm Central UMC in Muskegon	February 1-2 Cabinet Mtg.
January 26 Leadership Training Event 6:45-9pm Rockford UMC	February 7 Nominations Comm. Mtg. Noon-1pm District Office (lunch provided)
January 28 Joint WMC-DAC Delegation Mtg.	February 9 dCOM Mtg. 9am-3pm Conference Center
January 30 WMC Cabinet Meeting 9am-noon Smart Room	February 9 Bd. of Pension Mtg. 1-3:30pm Conf. Center Rm. 101
January 30 GR District Leadership Council 4:15-5:45pm Conf. Center Rm. 101	February 16 AU Task Force Mtg. 9-11am Conf. Center Rm. 101
January 31 Worship Arts Conf. Call 1:30-3:30pm.	February 18 GC Delegation Mtg. 9am-2pm Millwood UMC
	February 28-29 Cabinet Mtg.

West Michigan Conference News & Events

Director of New Church Development Announced

Bishop Jonathan Keaton announced the appointment of Rev. Gary Step to the position of Director of New Church Development and Congregational Transformation for the West Michigan Conference effective July 1, 2012. Gary has been serving as the pastor of Indian River UMC since July of 2000. <<[Read More](#)>>

Laity and Clergy Invited to Address General Conference Delegation

The General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation of the West Michigan Conference has set aside several hours during two upcoming meetings in order to dialogue with conference clergy and laity. If you would like to ask questions or present your viewpoint on any of the issues that will be addressed at General Conference, you are invited to contact Rev. Laurie Haller, chair of the West Michigan delegation, at grsupt@wmcumc.org or in writing at the West Michigan Conference Center, P.O. Box 6247, 11 Fuller SE, Grand Rapids MI 49516. The available times are:

- Saturday, February 18, between 10 a.m. and noon: Millwood UMC, Kalamazoo
- Saturday, March 24, between 10 a.m. and noon: West Michigan Conference Center, Grand Rapids

Guests will be allowed 10 minutes to address the delegation and will be able to use our conference Smart Room technology if they do not live near the meeting site. More information about General Conference can be found on the General Conference website click [here](#). In addition, the West Michigan Conference Weekly News will contain a brief article each week leading up to General Conference.

Time to Submit Entries: Peace Sermon & Peacemaker of the Year Award

The WMC Board of Church and Society each year awards the person who has submitted the best Peace Sermon for that year, and the person or group that has given the best effort at peacemaking. Our Board is passionate about ministries of peace and justice and seeks to acknowledge those who give time and service to a world of peace as desired by God in Christ for all God's people and creation. The awards are presented at the Church and Society meal at annual conference. All submissions, both peace sermons and nominations for peacemaker, should be sent to johnellen5@comcast.net. A subcommittee will read the sermons and present their submission for the award to the full board.

ReThink Lent: Open Hope's Door

Rethink Church invites you to take your church on a 7-week Journey to Hope. We'll travel with Jesus to the cross and discover the Hope that can be found in the midst of life's most difficult circumstances. This series was previously released in 2010 and has been updated to include small group, children and youth/young adult supplements. Click [here](#) to read the full story.

JFON-Immigrant Welcoming Congregations Retreat Feb. 25

The IWC Program is based on a successful model developed and successfully completed with a group of downtown Chicago congregations last year. The IWC Program offers us a creative, concrete way to collaborate with a general agency and assist local churches in engaging in meaningful ministry in their local context. How will this work? << [Read More](#)>> To learn more about this project, JFON West Michigan is hosting a retreat on **Saturday, February 25**. Please contact Laura Rampersad if you have questions or would like to reserve a spot at the retreat by email L.Rampersad@jfonwestmichigan.org or phone 616.481.8145.

WMC UMW Winter 2012 Highlights e-newsletter is available by clicking [here](#).

Resources for Keeping Children and Youth Safe

One way that we express God's love is by creating and maintaining policies, procedures, and covenants dedicated to providing a safe space for young people to be faithfully formed and nurtured. In our commitment to equipping leaders in ministry with children and youth, GBOD prepared and posted resources in response to the unfolding story at Penn State. The information found [here](#) will assist congregations in keeping children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe in our congregations and communities.

MissionInsite Demographic Information

The West Michigan Conference has subscribed to Missioninsite.com, a comprehensive demographic provider. With this MI tool, every church and Agency in the Conference now has access to up-to-date demographic information. Gone are the days of submitting the fill in the blank form and waiting 30 days, or more, for the report to return. With MI you can sit at your computer and generate a report in a manner of minutes. In most cases the time to print the report is far greater than the time to generate it. So how can you get started? Simply follow the [How to Register](#) instructions then go to Missioninsite.com the rest is easy! Questions? Call the GR District Office at 616.459.4503.

UM Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend

February 24-26 at Best Western Gateway Hotel in Romulus. Direct questions or make a reservation by contacting Dalice and Church Yost at 248.773.7475 or cyst429@comcast.net. www.encounter.org.

UM Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend for Clergy April 12-14

All Clergy & Spouses are invited to a Marriage Encounter Weekend to be held in or near Chicago on April 12-14. A Marriage Encounter "Angel" is donating the cost of the weekend for United Methodist Clergy in Michigan (excluding a \$50 registration fee). Click [here](#) for more information. Click [here](#) to register.

North Central Jurisdiction Disaster Response Academy

An UMCOR Disaster Preparedness Academy for the North Central Jurisdiction will take place March 14-17, at the Koinonia Retreat Center (Minnesota Conference). Anyone with an interest in this ministry is invited to come, learn and participate in the future disaster response of your conference. All Conference Disaster Response Coordinators, Directors of Connectional Ministries, and UMVIM Coordinators or their designated substitute should attend. Registration is online www.umvimncj.org go to the *Disaster Response* page. This page also includes a schedule of events and course options. Early bird registrations are due by February 8 and final registration is February 29. Questions? Contact Lorna Jost by email at umvim-ncj@brookings.net or call 605.692.3390.

One-Eighty Turnaround Church Conference

The next 180 Turnaround Church Conference is set for Thursday, March 22 from 8:30am-4pm at Redeemer Church in DeWitt. Click [here](#) for more information or call the church at 517.669.3430. General Sessions presented by Ron Kalajainen and Brad Kalajainen will focus on: Beginning the Turnaround Process, Living Out a Spiritual Mentality of Abundance, and Preaching for a Change. New Workshops added for 2012 include: Conflict Resolution, Using Social Media, Growing Volunteers, The Value of Coaching and First Steps in a Turnaround. For clergy and laity alike. The cost is \$49 per person before March 2 and group rates are available!

Popular Christian Activist Shane Claiborne Speaking March 31, 2012

Shane Claiborne will speak on March 31 at University UMC in East Lansing from 9:30am to 3:30pm. Shane Claiborne is sponsored by the MSU Wesley Foundation, the United Methodist Women and the Boards of Church and Society of the West Michigan and Detroit Annual Conferences. To register follow this link <http://msuwesley.org/claiborne> or call 517-332-0861. Questions? Please email Rev. Rich Peacock rjpeacock@wowway.com.

Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity Seminar at MTSO

This seminar is a unique opportunity for church leaders to learn and implement the best faith-based fundraising practices available today. In partnership with the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, MTSO is hosting a three-part seminar, titled *Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity*, on April 27, June 6 and Sept. 19. For more info please contact Lisa Withrow at 704.362.3343 or lwithrow@mtso.edu.

Spring Splash Grades 6-12

An exciting event at Avalanche Bay Water Park & Lake Louise UMC Camp. Youth coming together to enjoy each other in God's awesome, amazing grace. Hosted by the West Michigan Conference Council on Youth Ministries, this event will happen on April 21-22, 2012. Click [here](#) to view and print the registration form or click [here](#) for the promotional flyer. Please send completed registration forms and checks to Lake Louise UMC Camp, 11037 Thumb Lake Road, Boyne Falls, MI 49713. Questions? Please contact Judy Zimpfer at judy.momzee@gmail.com, 231.584.3572 or John Holland at westmichiganyouth@yahoo.com, 989.506.0439.

Bold Faith Seminar in DC

May 14-18, Sponsored by West Michigan Conference Board of Church and Society. Questions? Please contact Clarice McKenzie at cjmckum@gmail.com. Click [here](#) for flyer.

2012 New Clergy Conference

2012 New Clergy Conference applications are now being accepted. The dates are Saturday, July 7 - Saturday, July 14 and Saturday, August 11 - Saturday, August 18. The application deadline is February 17. All applications will be acknowledged; a select number of fellowships will be offered by March 31. Applications may be downloaded from our [website](#) or may be requested through Chautauqua Institution's Department of Religion at 716.357.6274. For further information contact Nancy L. Roberts, Administrative Assistant, Department of Religion, Chautauqua Institution, P.O. Box 74, Chautauqua, NY 14722-0074 or e-mail nroberts@ciweb.org.

Current & Continuing Prayer Needs

- Please pray for Rev. Kathy Groff, pastor at Newaygo UMC, who will be having a double mastectomy this Friday, January 27, at Central Michigan Community Hospital in Mt. Pleasant.
- Gayle Berntsen, pastor at Whitehall-Claybanks UMCs, requests prayer for her husband Bob, who suffers from Alzheimer's and is declining rapidly.
- Rev. Rob Cook, pastor at Muskegon Heights Temple UMC, would appreciate prayers for healing for his mother, Beth Cook, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. She had surgery on Monday.
- Sue Norton, lay member on the District Nominations Committee, is having hip replacement surgery today at Blodgett Hospital.
- Please pray for Liz Black, attorney for Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON), West Michigan, whose father, Ralph Balck, died unexpectedly last week. A funeral service was held on Monday. Liz can be reached at l.balck@jfonwestmichigan.org

Grand Rapids District Mission Statement

Our Mission is to connect and support vital ministries of Jesus Christ.

Our mission calls us to:

- Train, equip, encourage and coach clergy and lay leaders for transformational ministry.
- Provide effective multi-layered communication.
- Promote networking and clustering among clergy and churches.
- Engage together in acts of mercy, justice and spiritual growth.
- Be proactive risk-takers and change agents.

Grand Rapids District Vision Statement

Growing together, **R**eaching out...
The churches of the Grand Rapids District of the United Methodist Church are healthy, vital, outer-directed and are united in actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As clergy and laity, we live out our connection through cooperative initiatives, local and worldwide mission, mentoring, sharing of resources, and mutual love and support.

- Retired pastor, Chuck Garrod is in Spectrum Butterworth recovering from a broken ankle
- Please pray for Rev. John Francis (ret. clergy) recently diagnosed with stomach cancer, treatment to be determined.

Visit the Grand Rapids District Website at:
<http://www.grdistrictumc.org>

[Visit *Leading from the Heart* Blog](#)

The **Connection** is published weekly and distributed electronically every Wednesday. We request your news and contributions each week via e-mail to the GR District office at grdistrict@wmcumc.org no later than Monday!

(Adopted by the GR District Conference 2-15-09)

Prayer Concerns (con't)

- Prayers for Sally Passenger, wife of retired pastor Ed Passenger, recovering from surgery.
- Vance Dimmick (pastor at Parmelee UMC) recovering from total hip replacement.
- Pastor Carolin Spragg (Fremont UMC) who is on renewal leave until the end of March.
- Please pray for Bea Horton, wife of Rev. Bob Horton. Bea is receiving treatment for cancer of the bone marrow.

United Methodist News

GBGM US-2 and Mission Intern Programs Deadline is Feb. 5

For 60 years, Global Ministries has been sending young people into service. Through the US-2 and mission intern programs, we have enriched the lives of thousands of young men and women, and through their witness touched uncountable youth, adults, and communities. The US-2 and mission intern programs develop church leaders, as young people work in communities that face issues such as poverty, racism, or environmental justice. The deadline for the 2012 class of mission interns and US-2s is February 5. Please share the application with those in your networks and communities between the ages of 20 and 30 throughout our global connection, who are committed to addressing the root causes of injustice. The application is available here: <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/connections/youth/applications/>.

United Methodism 101

Whether you've been a United Methodist for five decades or five weeks, you may be surprised at all there is to discover about our denomination. [United Methodism 101](#) is designed for new church members and anyone else wanting to know more about the denomination and its history, teachings and structure.

In this course, you will learn more about United Methodist:

- History
- Structure
- Beliefs
- Ministries

The online course includes four modules, each with many interactive features. Each module takes about one hour to complete. Move through the modules at your own pace. [Course preview](#). No participants will be admitted once the course begins, so please pre-register before Wednesday, Feb. 1. [Pre-register](#)

Cost: \$9.99

Dates: Feb. 1 – March 14

Credit: Upon successful completion, learners are awarded 1 SACEM CEU

Instead of taking the online course, you may purchase the [United Methodism 101 CD \(KIT\)](#). The same interactive course blends audio, video and written materials into a fast-moving learning experience. This kit is ideal for groups or individuals wanting to increase their understanding of United Methodism. Each kit includes five identical CDs and one leader's guide. Additional CDs may be purchased separately.

Free Lenten Devotions Program

The Society of St. Andrew invites your congregation to participate in our 2012 Lenten devotion and giving program, "Living Proof." Each day during Lent, our gifted and talented writers, through scripture and prayer, share where they have seen Jesus at work in the world. The Society of St. Andrew salvages fresh produce that cannot be sold and delivers it to agencies that feed hungry people in the United States. Learn more at <http://www.endhunger.org/lent.htm>. For questions, or to order SoSA's free Lenten devotion materials and Good Friday Fast, you can also contact Rev. Jennifer Moore at church@endhunger.org or 800.333.4597.

Asbury Launches New Website

Asbury Theological Seminary has launched a new and innovative website. Seedbed is a digital publishing platform that serves the community by providing Wesleyan oriented bible studies, books, articles, sermons, and videos. The creator and visionary behind the site is Asbury Seminary's Vice President for Community

Formation, J.D. Walt. He says, "To share the gospel means to publish good news. This is Seedbed's sole aspiration. We want to gather up our richest theology, our clearest thinking, our best creativity and our sharpest technology and sow extravagantly for a great awakening." Check it out at asburyseedbed.com.

GBOD Training for Local Church Leadership

Training for new church leaders is available in one-hour recorded modules for the Church Council, Trustees, Nominating Committees, Finance leaders, and S/PPRC. Individuals can watch at home or church groups can view the modules when they meet. These modules are for pastors and laity in congregations to learn the requirements of their leadership positions. www.gbod.org/committee_resources.

Upper Room Living Prayer Center

The Upper Room Living Prayer Center is a 7-day-a-week intercessory prayer ministry staffed by Christian volunteers. You can submit a prayer request on their [website](#), and your request will be emailed to one of their Covenant Prayer Groups. There are also articles about prayer there as well as on the GBOD Prayer Initiatives [website](#).

Mission Never Stops: 10-Fold Continues

Don't forget, while visiting 10-Fold.org, with one simple click, it is easy to become an advocate and automatically raise \$1.00 to support this project. Mission never stops, so please be counted. Please help promote [10-Fold](#) in your church. The 10-Fold Toolkit contains all the information you need to know about [10-Fold](#) with suggestions for how you can spread the word to your church, family, and friends. **Click [here](#) to download the 10-Fold Toolkit.**

Rethink Church Opportunities in 2012

How well does your community know your congregation? What do people remember about your church? Are you the church with the food bank, the community garden or the pumpkin patch? Are you the one with the parish nurse or the global missions program? In many ways – great and small – God is made visible whenever Christians show love in tangible ways. Rethink Church can shine a light on God's work in your community. Here are a few opportunities for your congregation's involvement in 2012:

- [Change the World](#) – May 19-20, 2012
- [Impact Community](#) – Year-round!

For more information check out Rethink.org at the link below.

http://www.umcom.org/site/c.mrLZJ9PFKMG/b.7706447/k.9615/Rethink_Church.htm?tr=y&auid=9808065

2012 Special Sundays

Click [here](#) to view the UMC 2012 Special Sundays. Click [here](#) to view the WMC 2012 Special Sundays. To order free Special Sundays resources from UMCOM click [here](#).

To read UMCOR's complete *Hotline* E-Newsletter click [here](#).

2012 Advanced Lay Speaking Ministry Online Courses from General Board of Discipleship

Click [here](#) to read article from the GR District website.

