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Wednesday, January 4, 2012

Local Church News & Events

Ubuntu Gathering Center Campaign Update

Almost unnoticed, the quiet mist of Christianity is sliding across Africa, gathering strength across regions, attracting ever increasing numbers of converts, promising a bright and satisfying future for all. Those who are monitoring the change project that in the next quarter of a century, "most of the world's Christians will live in Africa." Think about the implications of that fact alone! <<[Read More](#)>>

The *Ubuntu Gathering Center* campaign has raised more than **\$352,226** in cash and pledges toward the \$500,000 goal! **The campaign ends on December 31, 2012.** 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.

January Leadership Training Events

These identical trainings are for the GR District local church SPRC's, Trustee Boards, Finance Committees and Nominations/Leadership Development Committees from both GR and Muskegon area churches.

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

These trainings are free! **Click [here](#) to register online and to read more about this training event.**

Questions? Please call or email Liz in the GR District office at grdistrict@wmcumc.org or 616.459.4503.

Taizé Sung Prayer Service Tonight at 7pm

Taizé worship consists of simple choruses, which are repeated many times and are often accompanied by instruments and vocal solos. Interspersed between the music are prayers, scripture and periods of silence. Communion, prayers for healing, and the lighting of candles are also offered at each service. The meditative Taizé worship services are open to all people and are a wonderful way to connect with God in the midst of a busy week. Taize worship services are the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm at GR First UMC – 227 East Fulton Street. Questions? Please call the church office at 616.451.2879.

God In America

Sundays, January 8 – February 12 at 9:30am. Join GR FUMC for this community-wide project: "2012 Year of Interfaith Understanding" series. Our first event will be the offering of the PBS program "God In America" in classroom format. "God In America" is "for those who know that in America religion matters, and for those who wish it didn't matter so much. The series explores its themes through a series of emblematic stories of the country's religious history, and the political and spiritual journeys of important historical figures. First UMC – 227 East Fulton St, Grand Rapids. Questions? Please call the church office at 616.451.2879.

Sparks Service

Wednesday, January 11 at 7pm a casual worship service for college students and young professionals that sparks faith, conversation, and friendship will take place. Sparks meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7pm in The Vine. Service begins with dinner at 6pm followed by worship at 7pm. For more information contact Sami Marasigan at samim@grandrapidsfumc.org. All are invited to attend our next meeting located in The Vine at GR First UMC – 207 East Fulton Street. Questions? Please call the church office at 616.451.2879.

Financial Peace University January 15 at Georgetown UMC

Georgetown UMC will be offering [Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University](#) starting January 15 through April 22 from 6-8pm and running on consecutive Sunday's (observing Spring break) for those 13 weeks. The cost is \$93.00 and the price covers the kit with all the materials you will need for class and at home. Questions or want to sign up? Please call the church office with questions or to RSVP 616.669.0730.

Interfaith Dialogue Night at Georgetown UMC

Georgetown UMC will again be hosting an Interfaith Dialogue Night. The first event will be held on Sunday, January 15 from 6:30 to 8pm. The first speaker will begin at 7pm. The speakers are Dr. Garth Ammodt from The Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) and Rev. Bob Stewart of the 7th Day Adventists.

Jazz Vespers – Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra

Bring your friends on Saturday, January 21 at 6pm for Jazz Vespers featuring jazz ensembles from around West Michigan in a liturgical setting. Free of charge. Located at GR First UMC – 227 East Fulton Street. Questions? Please call the church office at 616.451.2879.

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.

Grand Rapids District Care Ministry Meeting

The next district-wide Care Ministry meeting will be on Tuesday, January 31 (snow date: February 7) from 9:30 until 11:30am at Rockford UMC (159 Maple, downtown Rockford). Questions? Please email Susan Witte, Rockford UMC Care Ministry Director, with questions or to RSVP at care@rockfordumc.org.

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

The observance of Marne UMC's 150 year anniversary began on January 1 and continues throughout 2012. Many special events are planned in observance of this milestone anniversary a few are listed below. Additional details will be made available soon.

- Saturday, March 10th - A concert and introduction of "Soil, Soul, and Simplicity," our new history of the church and the village.
- Monday, May 28th - Annual Memorial Day Pig Roast and major display of historical photographs, documents, and artifacts.
- Weekend of August 25th - 2-day old fashioned Methodist tent meeting.
- Weekend of October 20th - 2-day homecoming event, including original play and re-consecration of church campus.

Questions? Please contact Buck Matthews, Chairman of the Marne UMC Sesquicentennial Taskforce at buckmatthews@charter.net.

Needed: A Place to Live until June 1, 2012

Isaac Aduda, a member of Aldersgate UMC, is looking for a temporary residence for the next 5 months. He works on the south side of Grand Rapids, so he would like to find something in that vicinity. Isaac has a house rented beginning the first of June, and we hope that his family from Kenya will be arriving shortly thereafter to join him. If you know of an available room or apartment, please contact the Rev. Greg Martin at 616.363.3446.

Secretary/Receptionist Job Opening

Sparta United Methodist Church is seeking a part-time hourly Secretary/Receptionist (15-18 hours/week). Key responsibilities will include providing routine secretarial tasks, answering telephones, reception of visitors, bulletin preparation, power point preparation, mail, and creating the monthly newsletter. Candidates must support the vision and mission of Sparta UMC. Please direct all questions and resumes via email to csnow814@yahoo.com.

Music Leader/Accompanist Needed

A person with piano/keyboard skills is needed for a joint position as Music Leader of our contemporary service and Accompanist of our Adult Choir at our traditional service. Hours are 8:15 a.m.-12:45 p.m. on Sunday mornings as well as occasional Monday evening meetings with the worship design team. Interested candidates should contact Lake Harbor UMC at 231.798.2181 or lakeharbor@aol.com.

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.

- Free: Approximately 250 clear glass communion cups. If you need more information, call Emil Jensen at 616.451.2879 or emilj@grandrapidsfumc.org.
- FUMC Holland has a Ricoh Aficio 2035 black and white copier that we are no longer using. It is free to a good home – if your church or business can use it you are welcome to it. The unit will need to be picked up at our church in Holland. Contact Tracy Garrett at tgarrett@fumcholland.org.

Grand Rapids District News & Events

Best In GR

Clark Retirement Community was just voted best in GR by GR Magazine! Click [here](#) to view the article.

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. Please update the dashboard following your church conference so our records are accurate! If you need your password/username or a refresher course, please call Liz at 616.459.4503 or email grdistrict@wmcumc.org.

2011 Ministry Shares Deadline is Noon on January 18

All 2011 Ministry Shares are to be received in the Conference Treasurer's Office by noon on January 18, 2012. Please write "Final 2011" across the remittance form. Your support makes a difference in our shared mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world. Contact John Kosten at johnk@wmcumc.org or 616.459.4503 if you have any questions or concerns.

Tables I, II, III Data Deadline is February 6

Be sure to submit your data by February 6, 2012 via the Internet. The new web address is www.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.

Mandatory Sexual Ethics Training Sessions

For All Clergy in the Michigan Area. Grand Rapids District training session information is below.

- March 21, 2012 at Cornerstone Church, Caledonia 49316

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 will be \$8. Our 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.

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. The group will leave for Iquitos Peru on February 24, 2012 to spend six days providing healthcare for women and children then return to Lima to work with children in orphanages. Jody will be accepting donations of gently used or new bras, toothbrushes (not toothpaste), and monetary donations for medicine purchases. The village children and children in the Lima orphanages would appreciate small, used action figures and matchbook sized cars. They do not need to be new and small items are easier to pack and carry considering airline weight limits and boat travel. She welcomes calls, emails, or visits before and after her return. In conjunction with the Wisconsin Conference, Pratt and Bruun will be investigating a similar trip in the winter of 2013 that will recruit from the Michigan area and will include some church renovation work. Please contact Jody Pratt at 269.792.0481 or email prattgji@hughes.net if you have any of the above items to donate for this mission trip.

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.

Speaker is Tim Wise. Tim is among the most prominent anti-racist writers and educators in the United States. Recently named one of "25 Visionaries Who are Changing Your World," by Utne Reader, Wise has spoken in 49 states, on over 600 college campuses, and to community groups across the nation. He has also lectured internationally in Canada and Bermuda on issues of comparative racism, race and education, racism and religion, and racism in the labor market. Questions?

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, 2012. Class must have 10 registrants to be held.

- **Basic Class**-Instructor TBD

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, 2012. 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 is set for June 6-9

The Programming Committee is pleased to announce the dates of Annual Conference 2012. Our conference will gather on Wednesday, June 6th through Saturday, June 9th at Calvin College in Grand Rapids. The theme is "A Healthy World: Mind • Body • Spirit" and this year's speakers will be announced soon. You may view the proposed schedule for Annual Conference: <http://bit.ly/2012AnConfCalendar>. Please be aware this is a working document and subject to change.

2011 AC Journal Online

The 2011 Journal is available in easy to use sections! Click [here](#) to view from the West Michigan Conference website.

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.

Apply for Peace with Justice Grants

January 6 is the deadline to apply for a Peace with Justice grant from the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS). Funding for this program is generated through the Peace with Justice Special Sunday offering of The United Methodist Church. One of six Special Sundays in the denomination, Peace with Justice "witnesses to God's demands for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world." Peace with Justice Sunday is June 3 in 2012. Grant applicants must be either a United Methodist or other affiliated organization, or an ecumenical group working with and through at least one United Methodist agency or organization. Applicants may seek assistance in filling out the form, which is available on the GBCS website at Peace with Justice Grant Application. Read more: <http://westmichiganconference.org/news/detail/2403>. Did you know that there are also several other grants offered by other United Methodist agencies? You can now find them all listed in one convenient location: <http://westmichiganconference.org/news/detail/2406>.

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. More information and a flyer will be coming soon! Hope to see you all there! Questions? Contact Marcia Lienesch, GR District Youth Council Adult Coordinator, lieneschm@yahoo.com.

GR District Mission Team set to help Baudin Agricultural School in Haiti

The GR District Mission team gearing up for their trip to Haiti Feb. 3, 2012. The work to be completed at the Baudin Agricultural School includes installing stairway hand rails, making roofing repairs and replacing a pump. Part of the group will be offering a Vacation Bible School at the elementary school. The participants are Mike Ramsey, Steve and Kate Robbins, Bill Dutton, Kelinda Scott, Jeff Ramsyer, Dave Selleck. There is room for one additional person if you're interested or have questions, please contact David Selleck at 269.254.7172 by email at dselleck2000@gmail.com. The group is asking for your prayers as they prepare to make this important trip.

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

- The [online registration](#) page is now open!
- Click [here](#) to view a schedule of the day
- Click [here](#) to view the complete workshop and presenter list

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. Her primary program areas have included the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund, the Malaria Control Program, and most recently, developing and directing UMCOR's strategy as part of the denomination's \$75 million "Imagine No Malaria" campaign. The INM campaign includes partners such as the United Nations Foundation and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

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. Questions? Please call or email the GR District office at 616.459.4503 or grdistrict@wmcumc.org.

<u>Grand Rapids District January Calendar</u>	<u>Grand Rapids District February Calendar</u>
January 2 District Office Closed	February 9 dCOM Mtg. 9am-3pm Conference Center
January 5 Cabinet Mtg. 10am-2pm Okemos	February 9 Bd. of Pension Mtg. 1-3:30pm Conf. Center Rm. 101
January 10 Urban Ministry Task Force Mtg. 10-11am DS Office	February 16 AU Task Force Mtg. 9-11am Conf. Center Rm. 101
January 10 Nominations Comm. Mtg. Noon-1pm District Office (lunch provided)	
January 12 AC Program Committee Mtg. 9:30am Trinity UMC	
January 12 AU Task Force Mtg. 10:30am-12:30pm DS Office	
January 16 Conference & District office closed MLK Day	
January 15-18 WMC Cabinet Retreat	
January 18-21 Pre-Conference Briefing Tampa	
January 25 Leadership Training Event 6:45-9pm Central UMC in Muskegon	
January 26 Leadership Training Event 6:45-9pm Rockford UMC	
January 28 Joint WMC-DAC Delegation Mtg.	
January 30 WMC Cabinet Meeting 9am-noon Smart Room	
January 30 GR District Leadership Council 4:15-5:45pm Conf. Center Rm. 101	
January 31 Worship Arts Conf. Call 1:30-3:30pm.	

West Michigan Conference News & Events

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 your district 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.

Being Who God Created You to Be - Nothing More, Nothing Less!

A Winter Leadership Retreat for High School Youth. Senior high youth are invited to join us at Lake Michigan Camp for the first annual winter leadership retreat sponsored by the West Michigan CCYM, January 20-22. Rev. Lisa Batten and members of the Kalamazoo Wesley Foundation will lead us as we explore why we are all so different and who God made us to be. All senior high youth are invited to attend and the cost is only \$25, but space is limited so act quickly - registration will be on a first come, first serve basis! Please contact Naomi Garcia, naomi@wmcumc.org, or Joy Mills, officemanager@gulllakeumc.org, for more details or click [here](#) for a printable flyer.

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 cyost429@comcast.net. www.encounter.org.

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, sought-after speaker and bestselling author, will speak on March 31, 2012, at University United Methodist Church in East Lansing. This 10th Annual Keep Making Peace Day is March 31, 2012 from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at University UMC in East Lansing. 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. Ticket information will be published in January. For additional information, please email Rev. Rich Peacock, rjpeacock@wowway.com.

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.

Registration Time: 10:30-11 am, April 21st

Departure Time: 10:30 am, April 22th

Includes:

- Lodging
- Meals
- Water Park Ticket
- Speaker: Grant Norsworthy (of the band SONIC FLOOD)
- Band: HARLAND (harlandband.com)

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 UM Camp, 11037 Thumb Lake Road, Boyne Falls, MI 49713. Questions? Judy Zimpfer at judy.momzee@gmail.com or (231) 584-3572. John Holland at westmichiganyouth@yahoo.com or (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.

Current & Continuing Prayer Needs

- Please pray for Joe Huston, retired pastor serving Dimondale and Grovenburg UMCs, who is recovering from surgery.
- Prayers for Sally Passenger, wife of retired pastor Ed Passenger, who will be having surgery on Friday, January 13 at Hackley Hospital in Muskegon to remove a stent and several kidney stones.
- Leslie Lynch, wife of Bob Lynch (pastor at Community UMC in N. Muskegon) recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- Vance Dimmick (pastor at Parmelee UMC) recovering from total hip replacement.
- Warren Black, father of Carl Black (pastor at Ravenna UMC), in Hospice care.
- Please pray for Bea Horton, wife of Rev. Bob Horton. Bea is receiving treatment for cancer of the bone marrow.

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!

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, Reaching 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.

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

United Methodist News

Human Relations Day is Sunday, January 15, 2012

Almost everyone seeks to be a part of a good community, one that nurtures and supports. The Human Relations Day offering (received each year on the Sunday before the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday) helps support improving the fabric of communities and the quality of life for those who live in them. Call (888) 346-3862 today to order envelopes and other resources so your congregation can participate in this church wide offering. They will be sent at no cost to your church! Find inspirational stories of the difference your gifts make and more at www.umcgiving.org/hrd.

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](http://10-Fold.org) in your church. The 10-Fold Toolkit contains all the information you need to know about [10-Fold](http://10-Fold.org) 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:

- [America's Sunday Supper](#) – January 15, 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&aid=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.

