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Wednesday, February 22, 2012

Local Church News & Events

Ubuntu Gathering Center Campaign Update

Africa University has vital programs in the Health Sciences. Included in their curriculum are degrees in nursing, health administration, clinical laboratory science as well as advanced degrees in nursing, and health administration. Many of the health care leaders and workers left the country during the civil unrest in 2008. The need for health professionals is desperate in Zimbabwe, as in all of Africa. Africa University is providing education to bring health and well-being to those who need it most. A new one-year clinical laboratory science certificate program was established in 2009. Last June, Jeanne Stoddard, Director of Clinical Laboratory Science at GVSU traveled to Africa University to help the faculty set up a two year curriculum in hopes that they will eventually have a full four year program. The *Ubuntu Gathering Center* campaign has raised more than **\$425,000** to date 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.

Church Treasurer's please note 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.

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 open!
- **Prefer to register offline?** Click [here](#) for a printable registration form to mail w/ payment.
- Click [here](#) to view a schedule of the day
- Click [here](#) to view the complete workshop and presenter list
- Click [here](#) for a ½ page bulletin insert
- **The GR District Conference will take place during the lunch break from 11:35am-1pm**

Our morning plenary speaker, Shannon Trilli, Director of UMCOR's Global Health Initiative, is now scheduled to be in the South Sudan on March 10 because of her new responsibilities. **Elisabeth Clymer, a high school senior from Burke, Virginia, will be our new morning plenary speaker.** Elisabeth is the young woman who championed *Nothing But Nets* for The United Methodist Church.

Elisabeth writes, "I originally learned about NBN/malaria in sub-Saharan Africa while researching for an eighth grade civics assignment to "find a problem in the world to fix." In short, after learning that one child died every 30 seconds from malaria, I felt compelled to join the fight and consequently developed a church-wide, youth led campaign at my church called "The SWAT Team." I also have developed tool kits to facilitate swim-a-thons for swim teams, and have gotten local pools involved in the effort. I still continue those efforts and also serve on the Imagine NO Malaria Executive Team sub-committee for youth and young adults."

Please alert middle and high school youth to Elisabeth's presence on Bishop's day! They (and you!) won't want to miss Elisabeth's presentation. Remember, youth can come to Bishops Day for free!

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.

POTTER: Andrew Jacoby will be at the potter's wheel throughout the day.

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

Ash Wednesday Service at GR First UMC

Ash Wednesday Service tonight, at 7pm. This service includes the imposition of ashes.

Soup Supper & Ash Wednesday Service at Wesley Park UMC

There will be a soup supper beginning at 5:30pm in Fellowship Hall followed by a followed by an Ash

Wednesday service, which includes the imposition of ashes, meditation and renewal, at 6:30pm on February 22 at Wesley Park UMC, 1150-32nd St. SW in Wyoming. Questions? Please call the church office at 616.534.4411.

Ash Wednesday Service at Muskegon Central UMC

There will be an Ash Wednesday service at Muskegon Central UMC, 1011 Second St., at 7:30pm with a time of fellowship afterwards for all in attendance. Rev. Andrew Jackson is preaching and singing this year and it promises to be a wonderful beginning to Lent. Questions? Please call the church office at 231.722.6545.

Wyoming Park UMC Special Lenten Events

The following special events will be offered on Sunday evenings during Lent at Wyoming Park UMC, 2244 Porter St. SW. Dinner begins at 5:30pm followed by the evening's program at 6:15pm.

March 4 - The Covenant Players

March 11 - Joyce Lynn Davis, Soloist

March 18 - Hymns We Love to Sing

March 25 - A Passover Seder

Love offerings will help defray expenses. Questions? Please call the church office at 616.532.7624.

Marne UMC 150 Year Anniversary Celebration

The first event in Marne UMC's Sesquicentennial celebration will be a concert on Saturday evening, March 10 at 7pm, featuring the 25-voice *Hark Up!* Gospel Singers and band, to coincide with the release of the church's whimsical new history, *Soil, Soul, and Simplicity*. The book includes 70 photos and illustrations from the colorful life story of this historic congregation, founded in 1859. Admission is free (freewill offering). The cost of the book is \$5. Click [here](#) to read about additional events planned for this year-long celebration.

Rockford UMC Camper Fundraiser

Rockford UMC is having a camp spaghetti luncheon and silent auction on March 11. Please join us for lunch that day and bid on the many items and services available. There is a minimum donation of \$5 for adults and \$4 for children with a maximum of \$20 per family. Lunch will begin at noon and the silent auction will close at 1PM. All proceeds from this event will go towards underwriting the cost of camp for students. If you would like to donate an item or service for the auction or would like to help with the Luncheon or donate a dessert for the luncheon, please contact Chad Inman by Sunday, March 4 cinman@rockfordumc.org or 616.866.9515 x 12.

Surviving Suicide Workshop

Suicide claims approximately 1 million lives worldwide each year. Their family and friends are left behind with not only their grief but often with questions and worse, their guilt. If you are a survivor of a suicide loss, please join us for a Support Group gathering at Shelby UMC, 68 E 3rd Street, (Shelby MI 49455) on Tuesday, March 20 at 7:00pm. This will be a time of healing, support and empowerment. If you are a Suicide Survivor, come and be among those who understand your pain and are willing to listen.

Benefit Concert for Young Adult Africa University Trip

In May, a team of 8 young adults and 3 clergypersons from West Michigan will travel to Africa University in Zimbabwe to learn how to conduct mission trips, interact with the students at AU, and provide service to those in need. They appreciate your financial and prayer support. There will be a benefit concert in support of the young adults travelling in May to AU on Friday, March 23 at 7:30 p.m. at South Wyoming UMC. Refreshments will be served and free will offering will be accepted to assist with the expenses involved with the mission trip. If you are interested in this opportunity or would like more information, please contact Greg at gregorywlawton@gmail.com or 269.317.7183.

New Hymnal Supplement *Worship and Song* Event

Dean McIntyre from the General Board of Discipleship will lead participants in singing from the new hymnal supplement, *Worship and Song* on Saturday, April 21 from 9am - 3pm at Grandville UMC. McIntyre is an expert in hymn-singing and hymn-playing. Registration begins at 8:30am; closing worship will be at 2:30pm. Three sessions and lunch will be included for the price of \$25. Fellowship of United Methodists in Music, Worship, and the Arts members pay just \$20. For a flyer or more information, email BCaryn@aol.com, or call 517.485.9477, ext. 35.

Suicide Warning Signs Workshop

Suicides don't happen "out of the blue" there are clues and warning signs that a person you love is at risk of suicide. If you are interested in learning about the clues and warning signs of suicide, there will be an instructional gathering at Shelby UMC, 68 E 3rd Street, (Shelby MI 49455) on Tuesday, April 17 at 6:30pm. This instructional gathering is intended for pastors, teachers, youth leaders, and concerned people who want to know the right thing to do when confronted with a person contemplating suicide. Please join us. It's time to take steps to stop this epidemic of sorrow.

Retirement Celebration

A retirement celebration for Pastor Michael Conklin will be held at the Middleville UMC, hosted by Snow and Middleville UMCs on Saturday, May 19. Reception hours are 2-4pm with a program of sharing beginning at 2:30pm.

Farewell Service & Reception for Laurie Haller

A special worship service and reception for outgoing Grand Rapids District Superintendent, Laurie Haller is planned for Sunday, May 20 at GR Trinity UMC. The service will begin at 3pm with a reception to follow. Click [here](#) to view and print your invitation.

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.

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.

- **Needed: 225 metal folding chairs for a May 19, 2012 wedding reception at Wesley Park UMC in Wyoming. Would like to pick up on Wednesday the 16th or Thursday the 17th and will return on Monday the 21st. If you have chairs available please contact Paula Hartley @ 616.532.0852 or pshartley@hotmail.com and include "chairs" in the subject line.**
- **Musicians Wanted! Praise Night is held the last Sunday night of each month at Coopersville United Methodist Church at 105 68th Ave. N. Coopersville. We are looking to add more musicians to the open mic portion of the evening. Please contact the church office at (616) 997-9225 if you are interested in participating.**

Church Office Manager

16 hours per week. Responsible for communication, office management and ministry support. Please send resume to: Wayland UMC, c/o Sandi Ragan - SPRC Chair, 200 Church Street, Wayland, MI 49348.

Custodian Job Opening

Sparta United Methodist Church is seeking a part-time Custodian to work 20 hours per week. Candidates must support the vision and mission of Sparta UMC. Please direct all questions and resumes via email to csnow814@yahoo.com.

Church Secretary Position Available

Responsibilities related to producing worship bulletins, newsletter, email communications, social media, and other computer applications. The position is part-time, up to 12 hours per week. Work days and hours flexible. Send letter of inquiry and resume, with references to: Rev. Bill Johnson, wcj47@comcast.net.

Grand Rapids District News & Events

GR District UMW e-Newsletter *The Anchor*

Click [here](#) to view and print the February, March and April edition of *The Anchor* e-newsletter.

GR Metro Ministry Lunch

Please join Grand Rapids metro clergy and laity for lunch on March 6, from 12-1:30 pm at Trinity UMC, 1100 Lake Drive SE. You'll hear about the progress on our partnership with Dwelling Place to redevelop 100 Burton Street, Hope Center (former Olivet UMC) happenings, including short- and long-term ministry projects for youth and adults along with a Communities of Shalom update. Laurie Haller will also speak about urban ministry and our future. Cost (payable at door) is \$10 and includes sandwich, pop, cookie. Please RSVP by March 1, to Rev. Julie Liske, Executive Director, United Methodist Metro Ministry at 616.456.7133 or jliske@grmetroministry.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.

Spring 2012 Advanced Lay Speaking Class at Twin Lake UMC

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

This class will take place on Saturday, March 17, from 9am until 3pm at Twin Lake UMC. This is one Saturday only and includes lunch and materials for \$25, payable at the door on March 17. The weather cancellation date (if necessary) is Saturday, April 14. This class will proceed as scheduled and is open to a few more new registrations on a first come first served basis. 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. The Advanced class 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.

- **Basic Class-has been cancelled due to lack of participants**

A Fall class is being planned for the GR area that will include Basic and Advanced classes, details to come.

GR District UMW Spring Fling is Saturday, March 24 at Georgetown UMC

Click [here](#) to view the details and print the flyer/registration form.

Mandatory Sexual Ethics Training Sessions

For **all** active 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. To protect your church and volunteers, please read the entire linked article. <<[Read More](#)>>

February Dementia Series Lecture: "Early Onset Dementia"

Clark Retirement Community hosts a monthly Dementia Education Series with lectures given by community experts in the area of dementia. The February program titled "Early Onset Dementia" will be presented by Mary Mathieu from the Alzheimer's Association. More people are being impacted by dementia at an early age. If you're in your 40's, 50's or 60's, you should attend! This program is free and open to the public. Come join us on February 28 at 10:30am at the Clark on Keller Lake, 2499 Forest Hill Ave, 616.954.6628 or on February 29 at 2:00pm in the Clark Chapel, 1551 Franklin St SE, 616.452.1568.

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 include email addresses whenever possible.** If you need your password/username or a refresher course, please call Liz at 616.459.4503 or email grdistrict@wmcumc.org. Click [here](#) to view a help video about using the dashboard.

GR District Pre-Conference Briefing May 10 at Marne UMC

The GR District pre-conference briefing will be on Thursday, May 10 at Marne UMC. Dinner will be from 6-6:45pm followed by the briefing from 6:45-8pm. GR District pastors, local church lay members, district lay members and alternates to Annual Conference are invited and encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to Liz in the GR District Office at 616.459.4503 or by email grdistrict@wmcumc.org.

New Lenten Studies- available through MARC!

Looking for that perfect small group study to take you through Lent? Click [here](#) for your February 2012 edition of MARC News, and find out what's fresh in your **Michigan Area Resource Center**.

It's also time to renew your subscription. New to MARC, or haven't had a membership in 5 years? Join for ½ price for 2012! Click [here](#) for your 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 online at www.marc-web.org.

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.

<p><u>Grand Rapids District February Calendar</u></p> <p>February 24 Racism Free Event 8-noon Kroc Center</p> <p>February 28-29 Cabinet Mtg.</p> <p><u>Grand Rapids District March Calendar</u></p> <p>March 6 Worship Arts Conf. Call 1:30-3:30pm</p> <p>March 6 Metro Ministry Lunch 12-1:30pm at Trinity UMC</p> <p>March 10 Bishop's Day 8:30-3pm Cornerstone UMC</p>	<p>March 12 Cabinet Meeting</p> <p>March 21 Sexual Ethics Training 8:45am – 4:30pm Cornerstone UMC</p> <p>March 22 AU Task Force Mtg. 10am – noon, Conf. Center Rm. 101</p> <p>March 24 Gen. Conf. Delegation Mtg. 9:30am – noon Conf. Center Rm. 101</p> <p>March 27-28 Cabinet Mtg.</p>
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West Michigan Conference News & Events

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, 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.

SMALL MEMBERSHIP CHURCH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

This seminar is designed to equip laity and pastors with the knowledge and skills for leading their small attendance church into the future. Open the doors of your church and discover the mission field that surrounds you. The seminar takes place on March 11-15 at [Mt. Sequoyah Conference Center](#) in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Click [here](#) to view and print the brochure. Click [here](#) for the registration form.

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. Please submit all entries to johnellen5@comcast.net. A subcommittee will read the sermons and present their submission for the award to the full board. The deadline for entries is April 1.

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@fonwestmichigan.org or phone 616.481.8145.

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

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 for Clergy April 11-13

All Clergy & Spouses are invited to a Marriage Encounter Weekend to be held at a Chicago area site on April 11-13. 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.

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.

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 the family of Rev. John Francis (ret. pastor) who passed away on Monday, February 20. John's memorial service will be Wednesday, February 29 at 11am at First UMC, 227 Fulton St. SE. A reception will follow. Condolences may be sent to

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

Donna Francis at 1151 Franklin S.E. #4001, GR MI 49506, and Dean Francis at dean@faithatfirst.com.

- Please pray for Deborah Miller, local pastor not currently under appointment and spouse of Rev. Tim Miller, who is on incapacity leave. Deb is in the Intensive Care Unit at Metro Hospital in Grand Rapids and is being treated for a staff infection.
- Please pray for Rev. Kathy Groff, pastor at Newaygo UMC, recovering from surgery.
- Please pray for Gayle Berntsen, pastor at Whitehall-Claybanks UMCs. Gayle's husband Bob suffers from Alzheimer's and has been placed in Heartland Healthcare Center in Whitehall.
- Please pray for retired pastor, Chuck Garrod who is recovering from a broken ankle.
- 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!

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.

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

Appointment News

- Cori Cypret has been appointed to Coopersville UMC effective July 1, 2012. Cori will graduate this spring from Asbury Theological Seminary.
- Tony Shumaker has been appointed to Middleville-Snow UMCs effective July 1, 2012. Tony currently serves Trowbridge UMC.

United Methodist News

Upper Room 50 Days of Prayer

Join with United Methodists around the world by using the daily prayer book, [50 Days of Prayer](#). You can also subscribe and have it delivered each day by email. Also available [for a small cost] are print-on-demand copies of this prayer book which was written by various church leaders and designed by the Prayer Team for General Conference.

MTSO and the Lake Institute Share Best Practices in Church Giving

Is "money" a four-letter word in your congregation? It doesn't need to be. Methodist Theological School in Ohio and the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving are pleased to offer a unique opportunity for church leaders to learn and implement the best faith-based fundraising practices available today. In partnership with the Lake Institute, MTSO is hosting a three-part seminar, titled [Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity](#), on April 27, June 6 and Sept. 19. The nonprofit Lake Institute, a program of the nationally renowned Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, specializes in congregational fundraising. This seminar is designed to help pastors and their leadership teams rethink their role in congregational finances, become better stewards of their donors' gifts, and awaken an ongoing spirit of generosity within their communities. An overview of all session topics, along with detailed seminar information and online registration, appears at www.mtso.edu/lake. Questions? Please contact Danny Russell at drussell@mtso.edu or 740.362.3322.

Culture of the Call Church Award

The Foundation for Evangelism is now accepting nominations for the 2012 Culture of the Call Church Award.

This award, given annually, recognizes one local United Methodist Congregation with a culture that encourages young people to respond to God's call to full-time Christian service as a result of their being active in the life of that church. The Foundation for Evangelism, as part of its vision to raise up generations of leaders with a passion for evangelism, awards this honor to highlight throughout the denomination the outstanding work being done in the local church. Click [here](#) to find additional information including the nomination form.

Safe Sanctuaries and Safety Webinars

February 29, March 8

- **Feb. 29, 2012** 4pm eastern time. RECORD KEEPING BASIC PROCEDURES FOR JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS.
- **March 8, 2012** 4 pm eastern time. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING: THE CHURCH AND THE MEDIA.

For links and call-in information, click [here](#).

Green Church Online Course March 12-23

Based on the book by the same name, and facilitated by its author, [Rebekah Simon-Peter](#), this two-week course is designed to introduce participants to biblical concepts of stewardship of the earth. And how to integrate them into the life of the believer. Through this online community, participants will receive support, share insights, and generate creativity to move their communities of faith into becoming Green Churches. An autographed copy of the book is included in the cost of the course (\$60). It will be mailed out shortly after enrollment. Click [here](#) for more info or to enroll.

FAIR TRADE: Eco-Palms Project

The Eco-Palms Project is a cooperative of farmers, who legally and responsibly harvest palm from the forests of Mexico and Guatemala, which helps to sustain forestry, protect local jobs and helps preserve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers by ensuring fair wages. Order your Eco-Palms today! Click [here](#) for more info. You can also support small-scale farmers by giving to Sustainable Agriculture and Development, [UMCOR Advance #982188](#). Click [here](#) for the bulletin insert.

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.

Cokesbury Announces New Children's Curriculum Releasing Fall 2012!

Cokesbury is proud to announce their new children's curriculum, [Grow, Proclaim, Serve!](#) Visit the website to [watch videos](#), [preview sample lessons](#) and learn more. Sign up for the Grow, Proclaim, Serve! [email newsletter](#) to stay on top of all the latest news.

Asbury Launches New Website

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&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.

