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Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Local Church News & Events

Ubuntu Gathering Center Campaign Update

After twenty years of operation, Africa University has approximately 1,500 students from 29 countries around Africa – and has 4,000 alumni, nearly all of whom have remained in Africa to work with the people. The University also established the Institute for Peace, Leadership and Governance to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts on the continent. All AU students, regardless of their majors, are required to complete a course in ethical and moral leadership. The Institute is well known in Africa and has been successful in bringing conflicting parties to the university for conciliatory resolution of their differences. In the recent past, the President of the Republic of Congo and war lords contesting his leadership came to the Institute and achieved a mutually satisfactory resolution of their issues. The *Ubuntu Gathering Center* campaign has raised more than **\$412,500** 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.

Upcoming Events at GR First UMC

- **Celebration of the Arts** begins on Friday, February 11 and ends on Wednesday, February 22. The exhibit hours are 10am – 6pm from Saturday, February 11 through Tuesday, February 21 and Wednesday, February 22 from 10am – 4pm. The exhibit is held at First United Methodist Church, 227 East Fulton Street, Downtown Grand Rapids. Admission is free and open to the community. Groups welcome! Call 616.451.2879 or visit www.theCelebrationoftheArts.com for additional information.
- **Dodworth Saxhorn Band** on Saturday, February 11 at 7pm. The Dodworth Saxhorn Band is a re-creation of one of America's first all-brass bands. Using antique valved horns and drums, the Band will bring America's past to life through music, song, audience participation, drama, poetry, dance and theatre. Audiences of all ages will enjoy this musical trip back in history! This activity is funded in part by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the Michigan Humanities Council. Free of charge.
- **Gallery Walk through Celebration of the Arts** on Sunday, February 12 at 9:30am in Wesley Hall. All adults are invited to experience this year's show through the special insight of Nancy Clouse, artist and faculty member from GRCC.
- **"The Art of The Organ"** – Organ Concert featuring Eric Strand on Sunday, February 12 at 3pm. Eric Strand, new Director of Music and Arts, will present a concert on First Church's four manual, 68 rank Möller/Buck pipe organ. The organ recital, "The Art of The Organ" will feature music that is inspired by visual art, as well as other masterworks for the organ by Bach, Duruflé and Howells. Free of charge.
- **Infertility Support Group** meets on Tuesday, February 14 at 7pm. A confidential support group for those experiencing the struggles and challenges of infertility meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7pm in The Vine. Meetings include speakers, doctors, videos, support and fellowship. Husbands are specifically invited to 1 or 2 meetings a year. Open to anyone experiencing miscarriages, neonatal death, the inability to get pregnant or secondary infertility. Led by Marj Timmerman, Parish Nurse. All are invited to attend our next meeting located in The Vine at First United Methodist Church – 207 East Fulton St, Grand Rapids.
- **Gallery Walk through Celebration of the Arts** on Wednesday, February 15 at 12 Noon in Wesley Hall. All adults are invited to experience this year's show through the special insight of Nancy Clouse, artist and faculty member from GRCC.

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 *Royal Heirs*, 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.

Broadway Theme for Fundraiser Variety Show at Wyoming Park

Wyoming Park's 2012 *The Park's Got Talent* theme is *Broadway*! This year's event will take place on February 11 at 5:30 pm at Wyoming Park UMC, 2244 Porter St. SW, Wyoming, 49519. You can enjoy a

lasagna dinner, silent auction, and variety show, all for \$5.00! Children 12 and under are free. We'll feature songs from "Grease", "Rent" and "Annie", plus magic from "Andrew the Magnificent". Come see what else is in store! Call to reserve your tickets at 616-532-7624 or wpumc@comcast.net.

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.

Magic Bob and Suzie's Magic and Chalk Art Program

Bring the family on Saturday, February 18 to Church of the Dunes, 717 Sheldon Road in Grand Haven to see Magic Bob and Suzie present their Christian program of magic and chalk art. A spaghetti dinner will be offered at 5pm, followed by the magic program at 6:30pm. The general public is welcome and encouraged to attend. The cost is \$10 per person and \$25 per family. Nursery care will be available for parents with small children. Proceeds from the event support the United Methodist Men's (UMM) group mission projects as well as church youth group events. Questions? Please contact Dick Tanis, UMM president at rtanis@mac.com or by cell phone 616.502.1672.

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.

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.

Marne UMC 150 Year Anniversary Events

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

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@genesismc.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.**

Grand Rapids District News & Events

Save The Date

A special worship service and reception for outgoing Grand Rapids District Superintendent, Laurie Haller is being planned for Sunday, May 20 at 3pm at GR Trinity UMC. More details to come!

Spring 2012 Lay Speaking Classes Registration Deadline is 2-10-12

- **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 prattj@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.

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
- Click [here](#) for a ½ page bulletin insert
- **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** 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](#)>>

Clark Retirement Community Collaborates to Provide Hospice Services

Clark Retirement Community will collaborate with Porter Hills Retirement Community and St. Ann's Home to offer hospice services to residents and constituents of these three faith based organizations. Offering hospice services is an opportunity for Clark to complete the continuum of care that is provided. The name of this new

hospice service will be *Emmanuel Hospice*. Clark looks forward to sharing more information about this exciting opportunity in the coming months as *Emmanuel Hospice* develops.

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 Fasset by email at mlfasset2@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. **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.

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.

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 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.

Grand Rapids District February Calendar

February 9 dCOM Mtg.
9am-3pm Conference Center

February 9 Bd. of Pension Mtg.
1-3:30pm Conf. Center Rm. 101

February 14 Urban Ministry Task Force
10:30-11:30am District Office

February 16 AU Task Force Mtg.
9-11am Conf. Center Rm. 101

February 16 Leadership Development Mtg.
2-3:30pm at Cornerstone UMC

Grand Rapids District March Calendar

March 10 [Bishop's Day](#)
8:30-3pm Cornerstone UMC

March 12 Cabinet Meeting

March 21 Sexual Ethics Training
8:45am – 4:30pm Cornerstone UMC

March 24 Gen. Conf. Delegation Mtg.
9:30am – noon TBD

March 27-28 Cabinet Mtg.

February 21 Nominations Comm. Mtg.
Noon-1pm District Office (lunch provided)

February 18 GC Delegation Mtg.
9am-2pm Millwood UMC

February 24 Racism Free Event
8-noon Kroc Center

February 28-29 Cabinet Mtg.

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, 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.

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@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 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.

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 our Haiti Mission Team, led by Dave Selleck as they work this week at the Baudin

Grand Rapids District Mission Statement

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

Agricultural School.

- Please pray for Rev. Kathy Groff, pastor at Newaygo UMC, recovering from surgery.
- Gayle Berntsen, pastor at Whitehall-Claybanks UMCs who is taking a 2 month family health leave.
- Retired pastor, Chuck Garrod is recovering from a broken ankle.
- Please pray for Rev. John Francis (ret. pastor) receiving Hospice care.
- Rev. Carolin Spragg (Fremont UMC) who is on renewal leave.
- Rev. Randy Hansen (Montague UMC) who is on renewal leave.
- 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!

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.

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

Appointment News

- Congratulations to Rev. Rob Cook who has been appointed to Lansing, Mt. Hope UMC effective July 1, 2012. Rob currently serves Temple UMC in Muskegon Heights.

GR District Retiring Pastors

- Rev. Mike Conklin pastor at Middleville-Snow UMCs will retire July 1, 2012.
- Rev. Bill Johnson pastor at Wyoming Park UMC will retire July 1, 2012.
- Rev. John Morse pastor at Coopersville UMC will retire July 1, 2012.

United Methodist News

Safe Sanctuaries and Safety Webinars

February 9, 29, March 8

- **Feb. 9, 2012** 4 pm eastern time. SAFE SANCTUARIES: TIPS, TRENDS, AND ISSUES IN BACKGROUND SCREENING.
- **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](#).

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](#).

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! Grow, Proclaim, Serve! incorporates Bible stories, activities, crafts, media, and games into a full faith experience for children. Grow, Proclaim, Serve! will nourish and enrich children, from birth through tweens, in their faith. [Parents can get involved too!](#) As a parent, finding a church home that reinforces and encourages the spiritual development of your child's faith is very important. Sign up for the Grow, Proclaim, Serve! [email newsletter](#) to stay on top of all the latest news.

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&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.

