BISHOP JUNG
Returns to Wisconsin for Another Four Years!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
- Bishop Shares Vision for the Future
- Annual Conference Celebrates Bountiful Harvest
- NCJ Conference Elects Bishops; Conducts Business
- General Conference 2016 Determines Direction for Denomination
My sisters and brothers, I am back! Our North Central Jurisdiction reassigned me for four more years to the beautiful people of beautiful Wisconsin. I am coming back to continue to Imagine Wisconsin Anew, and to humbly lead where God calls us. I am so thankful to be returning “home.” My first four years flew by. I promise to work with all of you to make this next four years as productive, strong and vital as it can possibly be.

I wish to share with you my thoughts and vision at this milestone in my Episcopal service here. We have made some serious progress to Imagine Wisconsin Anew, but we still have a long way to go.

Think with me, what it means, mercy and justice for all. These are not nice concepts that we feel good about. We are living together in a world of violence, hatred, and division. There is gun violence in the news every week. Young black men live in a world where they feel their lives don’t matter. Blood feuds going back generations coexist with talk of schism and division in our own Church. When faced with the challenge of living in God’s abundant grace, compassion, kindness and mercy, we choose instead judgement, condemnation and criticism, if not blatant aggression. Mercy and justice for all must become a cornerstone upon which we build God’s house of unity and peace. We must create. We must lead. For the people called United Methodist, this is in our DNA. Our commitment to mercy and justice is part of Christian perfection – how we are perfected in God’s love.

People are starving in multiple ways. We live in a country where millions of children go to bed hungry, while millions of children go to bed morbidly obese. We are not only malnourished in our bodies, but in our hearts, minds and spirits, as well. There is a deep hunger and emptiness in our society, and the only thing that can fill it is Soul Food – the bread of life and living water manifest in the body of Christ. We must feed the hungers of our culture. We must nourish body, mind, heart and spirit. Wisconsin United Methodist churches don’t provide Soul Food; we must become Soul Food. We must begin to see all that we do as feeding ministry. Feed the stomach, feed the heart, feed the mind, feed the spirit – heal the soul.

Our communities and neighborhoods are very different than they were in the last century. We are racially, ethnically, economically, educationally, generationally, traditionally, and sexually diverse. Yet, we are all created in God’s image. We are God’s people, whether we know it or not. We are not one thing; we do not think one way; we do not hold one set of values; and we do not subscribe to one narrow set of beliefs. And this is GOOD. This is GREAT. This is God’s will and God’s plan. The challenge set before us is how culturally competent and proficient we can become. The better we
open our hearts, minds, and doors to the cultural diversity in the Wisconsin Conference, the more closely we resemble God’s own heaven.

In the 2010 census, 81% of Wisconsinites self-selected “Christian” as their faith tradition. Yet, only 44% reported a church affiliation. There are tens of thousands of Christians without a church home! And there are tens of thousands of people who have never connected with any faith. The fields are ripe for harvest! There are untold opportunities for new faith connections, with new people, in new and different places. Every church in our Conference has potential to “turnaround” and move in the direction of growth, vitality, and effectiveness at sharing the gospel. I challenge all existing congregations to join our ever-growing number of new congregations in seriously exploring what it means to be a “disciple-making system” designed to equip men and women to take their place in the body of Christ, “for the transformation of the world.” A disciple-making system is grounded in God’s sanctifying and perfecting grace. As we grow in our discipleship, we become more merciful and just, we attend to the spiritual and physical hungers of others, and we build bridges across our many cultural divides.

In the coming months, I will be sharing more and more of my vision, as I meet with circuits and church leaders throughout the Conference. We have just begun, brothers and sisters, to truly Imagine Wisconsin Anew.
The Wisconsin Conference celebrated the theme of “Bountiful Harvest” as a culmination of a quadrennial vision, “Live the Fruit of the Spirit” at our Annual Conference, which took place at the Madison Marriott on June 10-13, 2016.

Guest speakers included Jim Winkler, president and general secretary of the National Council of Churches; Bishop Sharon Rader; the Rev. Chebon Kernell, executive secretary for Native American and Indigenous Ministries for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries; Richmond (Virginia) Area Bishop Young Jin Cho; Ashley Gish, Imagine No Malaria assistant campaign director; and Patrick Friday, director of the Global Ministries’ In Mission Together program.

At a historic Licensing, Commissioning, and Ordination service, an all-women class of nine ordinands was ordained to be elders and a deacon. Among them was the Rev. Mao Vang Her, the first Hmong woman ever to be ordained as an elder in The United Methodist Church. In addition to the nine ordinands, 14 people were licensed as local pastors, four were commissioned for the work of an elder, one was commissioned for the work of a deacon, and two ordained elders were received by transfer from other Methodist denominations.

An Oneida drum circle called Sky Ridge shared songs and sanctified the plenary and worship space to begin our Annual Conference session. Sunday’s Walking the Trail of Repentance Worship Service featured a sermon from Chebon Kernell, special music from a group of Oneida singers, and liturgy adapted from Anita Phillips’ book “On the Spirit Walk.”

At a special dinner on Saturday, Jean Nicholas, director of development, announced that the Conference exceeded its goal of raising $1 million for Imagine No Malaria, thanks to gifts from all 460 United Methodist churches.
in Wisconsin, ranging from $5 to $60,000. We actually raised more than $1,023,000, Nicholas announced.

Saturday evening’s dinner was also dedicated to celebrating Bishop Jung’s visionary episcopal leadership. Dan Schwerin, chair-elect of the Conference Episcopacy Committee, said that what strikes him the most about Bishop Jung is how generous he is. “He goes to churches and talks about abundance and it’s not a program — it’s just who he is.” The Rev. Amanda Stein, current chair of the Conference Episcopacy Committee, thanked Bishop Jung for visiting all churches in Wisconsin. Mary Anne Cotter, on behalf of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, presented the Perry Saito award to Bishop Jung.

During his State of the Church Address, Bishop Jung said we are entering the next phase of our efforts to Imagine Wisconsin Anew. This vision includes helping create new faith for new people in new places, revitalizing and reenergizing local church ministries, creating multicultural competency and engagement, serving the needs of people through mercy and justice ministries, and nourishing body, mind, soul and spirit through Soul Food.

In her Cabinet Address, District Superintendent and Dean of the Cabinet, the Rev. Deborah Thompson, added, “We are seeing an increase of time that District Superintendents are spending with our churches,” she said. Conference Lay Leader Deanna Shimko gave updates on laity initiatives in the Conference during her Address, including the Third Annual Bishop’s Convocation with Laity Leadership held in March.

During plenary sessions, all action items presented were approved, including some that were amended. The 32 approved action items included a 2017 Budget of $7,032,028, a Call for Repentance Actions, a Native American Partnership Agreement, a Feasibility Study for a Major Financial Campaign, a Call to Observe United Methodist Children’s Services Sunday, and more.

**Annual Conference members gave generously to special offerings and Ingathering:**

- Opening Worship (offering for New Faith Communities Planting): $1,839.70
- Walking the Trail of Repentance Service (offering for Native American Emerging Ministries): $3,509.69
- Ordination and Commissioning Service (offering for the Clergy in Transition Fund): $1,582.94
- Ingathering for Midwest Distribution Center: $4,892.02 and 8,369 pounds of donated items.
Delegates from around the North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) gathered July 13-16 in Peoria, Illinois for the NCJ Conference. This quadrennial gathering focused on the mission work within our jurisdiction, adopting budgets, and electing and assigning bishops. Out of 17 candidates, four new bishops were elected: Tracy Smith Malone from Northern Illinois, Frank Beard from Indiana, David Bard from Minnesota and Laurie Haller from West Michigan. Following their consecration service at First UMC in Peoria, 2016-2020 episcopal assignments for all NCJ bishops were announced. A highlight for Wisconsin is that it was announced that Bishop Jung will be returning to serve another four years in our Conference.

A retirement service honored bishops Michael J. Coyner (Indiana); Bishop John L. Hopkins (East Ohio); Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton (Illinois Great Rivers); and Bishop Deborah Lieder Kiesey (Michigan) for their combined 72 years of episcopal ministry. Bishop Sharon Rader reminded the four, “No one ever retires from ministry. Continue to be true to your baptismal calling.” She thanked them for their servant leadership and added, “Never think lightly of the great good God has brought through you.”

Bishop Jung led opening worship on Thursday, delivering a sermon entitled “Living Together Amidst Diversity.” Though he joked that as a Korean-American, he is “half kimchi and half Wisconsin cheese,” he drew upon personal, historical, and biblical examples and delivered a serious call: to love one another despite, or perhaps because of, our differences. “Living in the midst of diversity is our God-given reality,” he said. “The yin and the yang are not divisions between you and me, but aspects of each of our lives.” Bishop Keaton led opening worship on Wednesday and Bishop Hopkins led opening worship on Friday.

Other highlights from NCJ Conference included a musical episcopal address from Bishop Kiesey, and delegates spending Friday morning in discussion with one another following an address to the body from Bishop Trimble. The next NCJ Conference will be held in 2020 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Visit www.WisconsinUMC.org for more information about NCJ Conference and links to photos, videos, and more.
From May 10-20, 2016, 864 delegates from around the world— including our eight from Wisconsin— gathered in Portland, Oregon to determine the denomination’s future direction, consider revisions to Church law, and approve plans and budgets for Church-wide programs. General Conference is a quadrennial gathering that also featured inspiring daily worship and a chance to witness the global nature of our Church. Here are some major outcomes from the year’s gathering:

Human Sexuality Discussions Delayed: During the first three days of General Conference, delegates wavered back and forth on using Rule 44, a proposed group-discernment process to deal with particularly complicated and contentious legislation, such as sexuality. Ultimately, they voted against it.

Delegates also voted to delay debating all petitions regarding human sexuality after accepting a recommendation from the Council of Bishops entitled “A Way Forward.” As a result, a commission to study Church regulations will be named by the Council of Bishops, and will “include persons from every region of our UMC, and that will include representation from differing perspectives on the debate.” In addition, a special General Conference session in 2018 or 2019 may be called to discuss the tabled petitions.

New Hymnal Approved: The United Methodist Church is on track to get its first new hymnal since 1989, and this one will be Internet-cloud based and print-on-demand.

Special Sunday Changes: One Great Hour of Sharing will now be known as UMCOR Sunday. Two other special Sundays, Women’s Ministry Sunday and Volunteer in Mission Awareness Sunday — both without offering — were approved as well.

Central Conference Issues: Africa will get five more United Methodist bishops; and provisional central conferences in Southeast Asia/Mongolia and Rwanda will be created.

Voting to Oppose Mascots that Demean Native Americans: Delegates overwhelmingly approved a resolution calling on United Methodist agencies to raise awareness about the harm caused by sports teams that use mascots or symbols that disrespect Native Americans.

Judicial Council Decisions: Plan UMC Revised – which would have given new authority to the Connectional Table – and the “just resolution” process for a clergyperson admitting to committing a chargeable offense were both declared unconstitutional.

Celebrating Milestones: General Conference 2016 celebrated notable milestones, including the 60th anniversary of the Methodist Church granting full clergy rights to women, the 200th anniversary of Francis Asbury’s death, the upcoming 25th anniversary of Africa University, and a day dedicated to United Methodist Women, which will soon turn 150.

The next General Conference will be held in 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Visit www.WisconsinUMC.org for more information on General Conference and links to pictures, videos, and more.
We continue the Bible Study on the Book of Jonah, focusing on chapter three. Verse 1 begins with these words: “Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time.” This is the genius of God’s word that all of us have a second chance. The reason is the amazing grace of God that always welcomes a repentant heart, offers the gift of salvation, and provides the gift of new opportunities. Once the prophet Jonah was running away, and now he is given a second chance. Let me ask a question for personal reflection. How many of us would be where we are today if God had not given us a second or third or fourth chance? It’s purely God’s mercy, not our merit that keeps enabling us to do His service. I invite you to say a simple and humble prayer. “I am sorry God for my mistake and I want to be restored to God-of-the-second-chance.”

Verse 3 reads: “Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.” Once Jonah said, “no” and now he says, “yes.” This means obedience. Jonah is heading for Nineveh now. No argument, no grudging, no reluctance... Obedience to God ought to be with delight and enthusiasm, and, of course, with humility. Further, such obedience creates an authentic relationship between us and God. God always asks of us the best for me and the best for God. When Jonah resisted God, that means he stopped knowing Him, loving Him, cooperating with Him, and eventually obeying Him. Whoever prays like little Samuel, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening,” they would be “all ears” at the sound of God’s voice, which would lead them to know God more, love Him more, and obey Him unconditionally.
servant is listening,” they would be “all ears” at the sound of God’s voice, which would lead them to know God more, love Him more, and obey Him unconditionally.

**Verse 4-5** may be summarized as the shortest sermon. Upon arrival, Jonah began to tour the city of Nineveh, probably stopping at street corners and preaching a tough, but short sermon. The city of Nineveh was going to be destroyed in forty days, again forty days of grace to repent. Jonah began a great grace-propelled awakening in Nineveh that actually brought a great response. Bible scholars tell us that forty is a significant number in the biblical sense that it refers to a period of testing and examination. It also has hope at its core. Jonah communicated a message that old, bad Nineveh was to go, but a new, good Nineveh was to be born. It is possible when God’s people know how to combine grace and hope, then a better and brighter future could be born. People of Nineveh believed God, because they saw the picture of a future with God. This is exactly what we sing, we have no fear of what the future holds because we know who holds the future (which may seem bleak and hopeless). God of Abraham became God of Jonah, and now God of people of Nineveh. **Thanks be to God!**

**Verses 6-10** teaches us that God’s word and people’s repentance become contagious. The people of Nineveh were converted, as well as the king. He listened to Jonah’s message, submitted to the kingship of God, and acknowledged the power of God. The Spirit of God began working in the heart of Jonah, then the hearts of people (of Nineveh), and now the heart of the king. Let the Spirit of God come upon our denomination, as we are facing difficult times in the midst of an uncertain future. Let the Spirit of God come upon our nation, as we are facing the election year. I believe that we will see a tremendous moving of the Spirit of God across our Church and nation. It’s possible for God to listen and act, when we pray, fast, and obey. **Verse 10** says: “When God saw... He had compassion...” This means that people were forgiven, and were filled with joy. This is the work and outcome of the good news. God’s compassion leads us towards repentance, and to rejoice in the Lord. May the God of Jonah and the God of Nineveh continue to have compassion with grace and hope upon each one of us, our churches, our denomination, our nation and our world!

---

**FOR REFLECTION:**

*When was the last time, you prayed (and fasted) for God to bless our Church and our nation?*

*What are the signs of hope that you continue to witness for a better and brighter future?*

*Have you recently experienced and expressed grace and hope together?*
 Archives Retreat to Feature Camp Meeting Re-Enactment

JOIN US for the unique opportunity to participate in a re-enactment of a mid-19th century camp meeting on the shores of Pine Lake. This year’s Archives Retreat will be held from September 9-10 at Pine Lake Camp and will conclude on Saturday, September 10 with the re-enactment event from 1-3 p.m. The re-enactment will be led by the Rev. Dan Dick and song-leader Barbara Dick. Inspired by the firsthand account of an actual camp meeting held in the Sun Prairie area in 1848, the re-enactment will portray the experiences of those planning and attending the camp meeting. Then we will experience a worship service as it would have been held at the time, with a sermon based on one that was actually preached, and hymns typically sung at camp meetings. Audience participation is encouraged. We will conclude with an ice cream social.

All are welcome to attend this very special camp meeting service, even if you cannot attend the entire retreat. But please call and register with the Conference Archives first so that we can accurately plan for this part of our program.

Please consider attending the entire Archives Retreat, which will feature a time of learning and singing music from the time of the 1800’s to the present, as we conclude our series on the musical heritage of The United Methodist Church. This year, we will again be led by the Rev. Jeremy Deaner as we focus on “Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue.” We will sing camp meeting choruses and African-American spirituals, gospel hymns of the more professionalized urban revivals, and social gospel hymns. We will sample hymns from around the world along the way, and enjoy our present variety of praise, world, contemplative, and other kinds of worship music. This is a time when music is borrowed and rearranged; and a time when spirituals, the blues, jazz, and rock have their turns influencing what we sing in church. Join us for a great finale!

The Retreat will also look at some of the other early camp meetings in our Conference, from those at Camp Witwen to Lomira to Forest Junction. You are encouraged to join in a time of sharing memories from these events.

A local church historian workshop will also be part of the retreat, and will feature time for sharing some of your own church’s special history and successful strategies for your archives. Also, there will be a question and answer time with Lynn Lubkeman, our Conference Archivist. And we will have a presentation from the Rev. Jim Droste on the historic Simpson Chapel, located near Dodgeville, WI. Built in 1861, it is said to be the “smallest Protestant Church in the United States.”

If you would like more information about the Archives Retreat, or the Archives, please contact the Conference Archives at Archives@WisconsinUMC.org or 608-837-7328.
REFLECTIONS from the Little Church in the Woods
Scene Ten: 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders at Rustic Treehouse Camp

MONDAY: The counselors give a few instructions on how to build shelters out of sticks, pine needles, and other natural elements. The kids work together to build several forts. The activity concludes by testing the strength of the buildings by launching water balloons at them.

TUESDAY: The campers ask if there is any unscheduled time so that they can continue to build onto their forts. The counselors made time, and the campers added new shelters. Guesthouses, garages, and full homesteads begin to appear in the woods.

WEDNESDAY: Construction continues, and now the campers are building roads to connect their shelters and also begin constructing other community services, including a city hall, a court house, and a church. The campers elect one of their own, Lisa, as both Pastor and Mayor.

THURSDAY EVENING: Mayor/Pastor Lisa leads a worship service at the church fort. First thing that happens: an offering is collected. Campers give building materials to add benches to the church. Second thing that happens: Pastor Lisa says “The Lord be with you.” Church service ends and the campers go to work building the new benches for the church.

Counselor Gavin summed up the experience with three simple words:

Best. CHURCH. Ever.
2016

Conference Events

AUGUST 31 – SEPTEMBER 3
One World Methodist Conference
Houston, TX

SEPTEMBER 9-10
Archives Retreat
Pine Lake Camp

SEPTEMBER 15-16
School for Ministry
Green Lake Conference Center

SEPTEMBER 16-17
UMM Spiritual Congress
Williams Bay, WI

SEPTEMBER 18
UMW Special Sunday

OCTOBER 2
World Communion Sunday

OCTOBER 7-9
Children’s Sabbath

OCTOBER 16
Laity Sunday

OCTOBER 21-22
United Methodist Women
Annual Gathering
Eau Claire; Lake Street UMC

OCTOBER 21-23
Inquiring Candidates Retreat
Pine Lake Camp

NOVEMBER 1
All Saint’s Day
Election Day

NOVEMBER 24
Thanksgiving

NOVEMBER 27
First Sunday of Advent
UM Student Day

For a more comprehensive list of events and training opportunities, visit our website www.WisconsinUMC.org