NEW MINISTRIES GROWING IN WI

ICD and New Church Plants Take Off!
Looking Forward to General and Jurisdictional Conferences
Imagining Circuit Ministry Anew
LIVING Wisconsin Anew:
Leadership Development and New Church Plants Are Taking Off!

The level of excitement and joy around our Conference this fall couldn’t be better! We have so many new great ministries, initiatives and strategies that are happening as we Imagine Wisconsin Anew, and more importantly, as we LIVE Wisconsin Anew.

One of the strongholds of our movement is leadership development. In July 2015, we launched the first class of the Institute of Congregational Development (ICD), created by Wisconsin Methodist leaders. The purpose of the ICD is to develop a new generation of leaders who are well prepared and trained in church development and redevelopment.
We have established a methodology for new church starts and revitalization processes based on the Seven Seasons for Planting a Church PATH1 Strategy. Each ICD session is focused on one of the seven seasons for planting a church. In addition to the workshop sessions, two field trips have been planned—one to the Leadership Institute in the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, and the second one, to Embrace Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Both trips are cutting edge experiences related to church development. Each of the 26 participants in the ICD will complete the sessions in one year. We are not only developing a new generation of church developers, but we are also making a strong statement to begin to permeate the Wisconsin Conference with a culture of permanent growth. Times are changing, citing the words in Nehemiah 2:18, “Let us start building!” So they committed themselves to the common good.

Imagining Wisconsin Anew is also the "name of the game" for New Church Starts. In the fall of 2014, two church planters, Pastor Myung-hoon Han and Pastor Juan Garay, started formal efforts to establish new communities of faith.

Pastor Han’s Madison Korean UMC, which worships at Trinity UMC, has become a strong ministry focusing its efforts in outreach to students and families of the students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A weekly worship experience has been growing, with a core group of 30-40 people attending every Sunday.

In the Milwaukee area, Urban Poiema UMC (aka UP Church), led by Pastor Garay, is generating excitement and involvement by millennials in the area. Through passionate outreach efforts and strong leadership, UP Church now has two campuses, one at Walker’s Point and the second one in Waukesha. Seventy people are getting together every Sunday at both campuses, and life groups (discipleship system) have recently launched. With an average membership age of 28 years old, UP Church utilizes social networks (Facebook, Instagram and Tweet) extensively as a means of connectivity. Garay said that you have to reach out to people over social media, add bilingual elements to worship and a younger edge to ministry, and be more down to earth in preaching.

Bishop Jung said, “I’ve been engaged in church planting as a pastor, superintendent, Bishop, and your colleague. It’s an amazing call that excited me in my leadership journey. It’s not easy, building a new community and engaging that dream. But once you’ve been touched by the spirit, you have no hesitance to tell your story to others. God touched me when I was in a tough spot. God was two steps ahead of me, engaging in my life. That’s the call for being a church planter.”

Many more new church plants are beginning to thrive and multiply in Wisconsin. Join our LIVING Wisconsin Anew movement! Ask your Pastor, District Superintendent or leaders in the Conference, how to become involved.

BY ENRIQUE GONZALEZ, DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
During the 2014 Annual Conference, ten laity and ten clergy were elected to serve as Wisconsin’s delegation for the 2016 General Conference and North Central Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church. The General and Jurisdictional Conferences are convened once every four years (quadrennium). Lay delegates representing Wisconsin on May 10 – 20, 2016, at General Conference (GC) in Portland, Oregon are Lisa King, Barbara Dick and Gail Burgess. Clergy delegates are Dan Dick, Sam Royappa and Steve Zekoff (delegation chair.) Lay reserve Katie Estrem-Fuller Crise and clergy reserve Amanda Stein will also attend.

On July 13 – 16, 2016, the North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) Conference will convene in Peoria, Illinois. All delegates to GC are the same as NCJ delegates. Additional jurisdictional delegates are laity Tom Popp and Judy Vasby, and clergy Jorge Mayorga Solis and Dan Schwerin. The remaining eight delegation members serve as NCJ reserves. They will be moved up to voting delegate status if another delegate cannot serve. The lay reserves are Jennifer Southworth, John Lawson, Diane Odeen and Julie Schubring. Clergy reserves are Dawn Helton Anishinaabeqwa, Jeremy Deaner, George Kafer and Jenny Ameson.

When the GC gathers, equal numbers of lay and clergy delegates come from across the 144 worldwide Annual Conferences. Each delegation’s size is calculated based on its Annual Conference’s membership. The 864 delegates are distributed as follows: 504 U.S.; 260 Africa; 50 Philippines; and 40 Europe. There are an additional ten delegates from other Methodist denominations. The largest Annual Conference delegation is 48 from North Katanga in Congo. The largest U.S. delegations are from North Georgia and Virginia, each with 22. Wisconsin has six (three clergy and three lay.) The smallest Annual Conferences have one clergy and one lay delegate.

The General Conference speaks on behalf of the entire denomination. Its three legislative responsibilities include adopting revisions to The Book of Discipline (Church law), acting on proposed resolutions for The Book of Resolutions (UMC teachings), and adopting a GC budget for the quadrennium beginning the following January 1. It also elects the members of the Judicial Council, the University Senate and other positions.

During the first week, delegates work within committees considering submitted legislation. The petitions passed by the 2015 Wisconsin Annual Conference addressing worldwide denominational restructure, health and welfare ministries, a missional Book of Discipline and persecuted Christians will be considered by legislative committees. The second week of GC is when all voting delegates act on recommendations from the legislative committees.

Each July, following GC, the five U.S. Jurisdictional Conferences meet. These gatherings focus on the mission work within their jurisdiction, adopting their own budgets and electing bishops. The NCJ includes North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

The NCJ currently has nine active bishops. It is anticipated that there will be three NCJ bishops retiring in 2016. The NCJ has been alerted that it may lose one episcopal area beginning September 1, 2016, as determined by formula in The Book of Discipline. In that case, there will be one less new bishop elected than those retiring.
What a marvelous and powerful time we spent together at Annual Conference this year! Truly a celebration and vision for our future were central. It was so amazing to see what God can do. From the wonderful news that we have achieved over $700,000 in our million-dollar commitment to Imagine No Malaria (now up to over $850,000), to the new possibilities given us by our new five-district structure, God is doing great things in the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

It was so good to hear Dr. Elaine Heath encourage us to “fail-forward,” to step out in faith unafraid and to try the new things that will make us more faithful and effective. Inspiring messages from Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe and Bishop Han Ku Kim from our sister Conference in South Korea supported our vision for “Cultivating and Nurturing” a new, brighter, better Wisconsin Conference. Our service of Ordination and Commissioning deeply touched the hearts and souls of many, reminding us of the sacred and serious work that we do as beloved community.

And the music was phenomenal! Mark Miller and his band, Subject to Change, set a tone and energy for our entire Annual Conference.

We are, together, living the fruit of the Spirit in so many ways. We are stretching and reaching to do more than we think that we are able. Imagine No Malaria has been a confirmation that we can go the second mile, digging deep to do good work around the globe. As we look to the future, and prepare for a capital campaign, we set our sights on our missional priorities of new church growth, “turnaround church” vitality for existing churches, and strong, vital mercy and justice ministries throughout the Conference.

Many thanks to all who made Annual Conference such a meaningful event, and thanks to all who attended!

Grace and Peace,

Hee-Soo Jung, PhD Bishop
The concept of Circuit Ministry is deeply embedded in the history of United Methodists. In 1746, our Founder John Wesley organized local churches as “societies,” which were formally called “circuits” under the care of one or more pastors or ministers. Those circuits were the origin for today’s familiar word “connection” within our denomination. The early circuits were primarily based on a geographic area where churches were located. Later on, the Wesley brothers developed Bands and Class Meetings that functioned as accountability groups.

In the Wisconsin Annual Conference, Circuit Ministry is the method used for developing church ministry differently and creatively. With the recent restructuring of the Conference to five districts, the circuits have been adjusted for size and affinity, and now number 77. Strategic leadership for Circuit Ministry is provided by Don Greer, the Coordinator of Circuit Ministry, and Sam Royappa, the Director of Congregational Development, in collaboration with the District Superintendents.

Rev. Royappa was part of the original transformation team when Circuit Ministry was launched in 2004. Since 2012, Circuit Ministry is being reframed in light of the Imagining Wisconsin Anew vision. Changes are also based on extensive research conducted by Rev. Greer on the existing practices and challenges of circuits. Circuit Ministry continues to be about relationships, connections and cooperation for ministry in communities. Successful Circuit Ministry will result in making disciples of Jesus Christ, revitalization of congregations and the development of new faith communities.

Alignment is the key for moving forward with the Circuit Ministry within the framework of Imagining Wisconsin Anew, and it continues to challenge ministry in isolation. As Circuit Ministry is being redeveloped, laity circuit teams are being formed to partner with Clergy Circuit Teams for the purpose of identifying potential new ministries. Clergy Circuit Teams continue as support and accountability groups, as well as learning forums for community engagement practices and transformational ministry for local church vitality. Laity Circuit Teams will focus on community study and idea development for new ministry possibilities. In other words, they are looking for how new missions can reshape the church.

Circuit teams, both lay and clergy, can be resourced by the Discipleship Leadership Team and other boards (such as the Board of Laity and Board of Ordained Ministry), creating synergy and alignment within our Conference. Alignment comes when diversity shares a common purpose and focus. Churches are filled with a variety of generations, nationalities, preferences and backgrounds. As Thom S. Ranier and Eric Geiger put it, “Unity is best expressed in the midst of diversity. That is when it is clear that God is the one united people.”
WISCONSIN CHURCHES
Reach Out Beyond Their Doors

We are so proud and thankful for the churches across the state that are Imagining Wisconsin Anew through outreach and fundraising efforts. Here are a few of the heartfelt and inspiring ways Wisconsin is Rethinking Church.

Appleton: First UMC’s Carnival Raises Money for INM
This July, in Appleton, First UMC’s Vacation Bible School (VBS) served more than 80 children. “This really was an amazing week of experiments, fun, and life changing lessons about what God’s plan is for our lives,” Christine Ladewig, Director of Children’s Ministries, said. They raised $270 for Imagine No Malaria by selling notecards and sponsoring a dunk tank.

At Lake Street Church in Eau Claire, Inclusion is the Goal
It all started with a mother’s ongoing concern that her three children with developmental disabilities had never been through confirmation. Pastor Graham West created a special class using a variety of media, even including the church’s stained glass windows, to make that happen for her kids and for others in the congregation with similar issues. The church wants to be known as a safe haven for all those with special needs.

Racine: First UMC Holds F.U.N. Fest
F. U. N. (First United Neighborhood) Fest, open to anyone, was held in August and included food, games, music, a bouncy house, dunk tank and more. The opportunity to share the love of God and the fellowship with their neighbors filled the hearts of all who attended.

Cargill Gardeners Donate Fresh Produce to Food Pantries
Cargill’s Harmony Garden started last year as a way to grow produce to be donated to food pantries. Members of the congregation volunteer at the garden in their spare time. They wanted to provide healthier options, rather than the often sodium-laden food pantry donations.

Pastor Rides Motorcycle for INM
Pastor Pete Peterson of Gethsemane in Pewaukee has a love for motorcycles and long-distance riding. In an effort to raise funds for INM, Pete embarked upon a Saddle Sore 1,000 sanctioned by the Iron Butt Association. The congregation was asked to pledge as to whether he would complete the journey. In 18-1/2 hours, he completed 1,094 miles, raising over $5,300.

Cedarburg: Community UMC Raises More than $1,350 for INM
This past summer, the Cedarburg Community UMC (CUMC) Outreach Committee organized a large group of volunteers to host a car wash/bakesale to raise funds for Imagine No Malaria. More than $1,350 was raised in three hours by washing cars, grilling brats and hot dogs, and selling baked goods.

Circuit 7 Served Community During Mission Work Day
At the 9th annual Circuit 7 Mission Work Day, 69 volunteers from 11 United Methodist Churches worked on projects at 11 different work sites within an area served by the Anson, Holcombe and Jim Falls United Methodist Churches. The work included bridge and trail maintenance, repairing decks, painting and yard work, and boxing shoes for the Soles for Souls project.
The Book of Jonah is an all-time favorite book because of Jonah's encounter with a great fish. The gospel says that Jonah eventually did what God has asked of him, though he didn't in the beginning. Therefore, I believe, the Book of Jonah is about God's consistent, unfailing and pursuing grace that reaches out to both individuals and communities. Jonah demonstrates the importance of developing healthy enjoyable relationships with all people. The book is not just about a fish, a ship or a man named Jonah. It's about a God who is filled with amazing and abundant grace that continues to flow in and flow out and reaches out to all people who can return to a loving and living God. Jonah is a prodigal son of the Old Testament who ran away from God and whose grace brought him back.

In Vs. 1-3, Jonah receives a prophetic call to go to Nineveh, but he chose to go in the opposite direction. In Church language, he chose his own pulpit. God gave him a job to perform, but he did not want it. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, he would not have fully understood the what and why of God’s command and direction. Many of us grapple with this kind of situation when we try to understand everything around God’s call. I wonder about whether we should understand or simply stand with God’s call by faith. For the path of discipleship, the beginning is clear, but not the journey. The good news is that the God and thought he was leaving God behind on the shores. He did not realize that God is everywhere. Apparently, he did not know Psalm 91: 1-13. What a great lesson for us to know that He is an ever-present help in times of trouble.

In Vs. 4-10, Jonah finds himself in a well-intended storm, caused by the
One who had called him and now wanted to get his attention. It’s interesting to notice that all sailors, except Jonah (Jonah prayed later in the belly of the fish, but not on the deck), were found on their knees, praying to their gods for help from the storm. Further, they also started throwing the cargo into the sea to make the ship lighter. Prayer goes hand in hand with some kind of action. I heard a preacher say, “The taking hold of God must lead to undertaking for God.” We get down on our knees to pray, but we don’t stay there forever because we want to get up to put our prayers into action. Jonah was found neither in prayer nor in action, but in deep sleep. Jonah thought that he escaped from God, but he did not, as the captain of the ship appeared to rebuke Jonah (on behalf of God). We might try to avoid God and His awesome presence and His divine call, but He continues to appear before us in the form of a shaking-storm, a captain’s rebuke and sailors’ prayers. All of these are wonderful channels of transformation, renewal and invigoration. Yes, indeed, we need these signs to know God more clearly, to love Him more dearly and to follow Him more nearly. In this section, we learn that God uses a system called “casting lot” to get Jonah’s attention. The lot fell on Jonah, which meant it was a shock to him. But the forgiving, cleansing, restoring and renewing God was with him. Jonah began his journey of confession.

In Vs. 11-17, Jonah is confronted with a difficult question, “what should we do to you?” The journey of confession turned into an act of penance, sort of…but also it was a sign of repentance, not totally. This simply means that Jonah was still dodging the real issue. He was ready to be thrown into the sea, and not ready to throw himself into the ocean of God’s grace. We tend to try everything except for the place where we can immerse ourselves, and that’s called grace-greased arms of a loving and merciful God. Jonah again misunderstood the experience of repentance. He thought by moving his body from the ship to the sea or from life to death, his failures could be atoned. Repentance is about the movement of the soul. It is not on our terms, but purely by the grace of God. We must be eternally thankful for God’s loving concern for all people. R.E. White, the former principal of a Scottish Bible College, once asked a question to his students, “Why is it so hard for the godly to believe that God also loves the ungodly?” The Book of Jonah challenges us to pray to God for deliverance from all pride, all exclusiveness and all prejudice, and help us obey the great commission to move toward communities and beyond four walls. Eventually, the sailors prayed and threw Jonah overboard. The Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, which is similar to the method the Lord used when He provided a ram (to be sacrificed) to Abraham on the land of Moriah in place of Isaac (Genesis 22:13-14). Once again, God proved Himself to be Yahweh-Jireh, the One who provides. Jonah kept fleeing from God who kept providing – first a ship, then a storm, now a fish, and, above all, the sufficient grace for life’s issues. All of these are the visible signs of His graciousness. Jonah 4:2 reads: “I knew that You were a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love.” Yes, He was a gracious and compassionate God to Prophet Jonah, people of Nineveh, sailors of the deck, captain of the ship and today to all of us. Thanks be to God for His persistent grace!

The Bible Study on the Book of Jonah will continue with chapter 2 in the next issue.

Q: What can we learn from failures through grace-lens?
Q: What one provision of God have you experienced in the recent past?
Don’t Forget the Basics

When pastors were asked if they “taught sacrificial giving” in the congregation, 81% said yes. When laity were asked if they were being “taught sacrificial giving” in the church, only 15% said yes. Here is a simple table of four key aspects of our Christian faith where there is a huge difference between what leaders think they are teaching, and what parishioners feel they are being taught:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Pastors and Laity Leaders “I/We teach ____ in the congregation”</th>
<th>Laity Members and Participants “Our church teaches ____ in the congregation”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Our Faith</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Study the Bible</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vast majority of laity admit that they are shy or awkward when it comes to talking to other people about their beliefs. Most, however, would like to be given some simple, clear directions to bringing up faith in casual conversation.

Regarding the giving of money, pastors say that people don’t like hearing money talked about in the church. Apparently, the problem is that a few vocal opponents criticize money talk, and pastors assume they speak for the majority. In fact, 75% of laity say that they wish there was more instruction about giving preached and taught at church.

Four out of five Christian adults say they are intimidated by the Bible. They enjoy reading favorite passages but as far as serious scholarship, they feel overwhelmed. Most curriculums are designed around themes and specific information, so the “study” is already done for them. Life-long Christians struggle to define a concordance, a commentary, a lexicon or an interlinear testament. Most have no idea how the canon was determined, and many are unaware that the scriptures reflect multiple eras and cultures. Of the laity surveyed, 41% believe that the Bible originally was written in English.

If we want to see our congregations revitalized and our ministries truly energized, perhaps we should stop looking for the next new thing and return to our roots. It may be time to get back to basics!
I am so thankful and excited to announce that as of September 30, 2015, we have raised over $825,000 in cash plus $40,000 in pledges toward our $1 million goal for Imagine No Malaria. Thank you for your continuing generosity and commitment to those who suffer from malaria around the world.

As you hopefully know, we launched an Imagine No Malaria initiative over a year ago to raise $1 million for this life-saving effort in order to eliminate malaria in Africa. It’s sad to know that one person dies of malaria every 60 seconds. But we can do something about it! Malaria is preventable, treatable and beatable. This is a fight that we can win through prayers and action!

As Paul prayed for the Philippians: “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.” (Philippians 1:3-5, NRSV)

I give thanks to those clergy, laity and churches who have already made financial commitments to this cause, especially the 91 churches that have already met or exceeded their goal. While we have almost reached our conference goal, we cannot stop now. I ask that each church and person get involved with Imagine No Malaria now – through your prayers, advocacy and financial gifts.

Please send any further gifts to Lisa King, Conference Treasurer at 750 Windsor Street, Sun Prairie, WI 53590. Make checks payable to: Wisconsin Annual Conference and mark them for Imagine No Malaria. For more information, contact me, Jean Ehnert Nicholas, Director of Development, at Jean.Nicholas@WisconsinUMC.org or 608-478-0368.

Keep Informed and Stay Connected!
In addition to Reflections, our print publication, we also publish a weekly Enews email newsletter, which contains timely information about important UMC events, tips and resources, and more. Visit our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/WisconsinUMC to view videos and our Flickr page at www.flickr.com/photos/WisconsinConferenceUMC to view photos from the Wisconsin Conference and The United Methodist Church. Be sure to read and post comments on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WisconsinUMC or our Twitter page at www.twitter.com/WisconsinUMC. Additionally, visit our website at www.WisconsinUMC.org for information, tools and links to all of our communications vehicles. You can sign up to receive Enews or share your story or event by emailing MVirnig@WisconsinUMC.org.

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Conference Events

NOVEMBER 13-14
Town and Country Ministry in the 21st Century
Burlington UMC

NOVEMBER 13-15
Grow—A Retreat for Parents and Tweens
Pine Lake Camp

NOVEMBER 13-15
Kairos Prison Ministry Outside
Lake Lucerne Camp

NOVEMBER 22-29
National Bible Week

NOVEMBER 26
Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 1
World Aids Day
Giving Tuesday

DECEMBER 25
Christmas

JANUARY 11
Human Trafficking Awareness Day

JANUARY 16
Learner-Leader Academy Launch

JANUARY 17
Human Relations Day

JANUARY 17
Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration
Milwaukee: Albright UMC

JANUARY 18-25
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

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