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SNAPSHOT



A MONTHLY RECAP OF LOCAL CHURCH NEWS & VIEWS

Bishop Announces Projected June Appointments

Announcement Sunday Reflection

I am in constant prayer this morning of "Announcement Sunday" as congregations throughout our annual conference receive word of pastoral changes. I know how difficult change is, and am all too aware of the beautiful yet wrenching reality that the more attached we are to our clergy families the harder it is to say goodbye.

The Cabinet and I have taken our appointive work very seriously. We have prayed, studied, agonized, and prayed some more. Every final decision was made in my prayer closet with a deep sense that it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to me.

Some will be frustrated that I relied so much on the Cabinet's collective wisdom and prayer. That means letters, emails, phone calls, etc. had limited bearing. Neither did any sense of entitlement by clergy or congregations. I have seen sexism, racism, ageism, careerism, and selfishness try to thwart this process and it grieves me. We have much work to do as a Church.

That said, the Cabinet and I are confident that the Annual Conference will be stronger, and the churches more vibrant, after these moves. God is mightily at work in so many parts of this Annual Conference, and many gifted pastors and committed laity are pouring out their lives in service to Jesus Christ. We have much to celebrate as a Church.

My prayers continue for clergy families whose lives will be uprooted. My family has survived our moves by focusing on these three truths:

- 1) home is not a particular place but where we are sharing life and love together;
- 2) each place will have something unique and wonderful about it; and
- 3) God will be with us and God's people will be waiting to welcome us. Then we name all the wonderful folks in each place we have lived that we would never have met but for the itineracy.

I pray also that the Holy Spirit will be at work in the churches comforting the grieving, reassuring the disconcerted, and giving a new sense of excitement as the church moves into a new chapter of its ongoing mission to do Christ's work in the world. I close with one of my favorite quotes, from Holocaust survivor Corrie ten Boom: "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." Grace and peace to you all.

— Bishop Sue



Welcoming a New Pastor



United Methodist Communications shares ideas to help churches put out the welcome mat in meaningful and constructive ways:

1. Don't just take the family a meal the first week and then forget about them.
2. Coordinate a team of volunteers to help with unpacking boxes, providing transportation, running errands, providing meals and stocking the house with groceries and cleaning supplies.
3. Be attentive to their personal needs. Give them a list with the name and phone numbers of grocery stores, plumbers, drycleaners, wallpaper hangers, painters, repair people and babysitters.
4. Give a pastor and family gift certificates for home improvement stores, restaurants, bookstores, magazine subscriptions, movie theaters and entertainment venues.
5. Perform random acts of kindness like washing their car(s), offering to babysit, giving them rides (they may not know their way around) and running errands.
6. Invite them to participate in fun activities like church parties, informal dinners and events in which they might not normally expect to be included.
7. Give them a call, send them an email, drop them a note — without an agenda. Don't write criticism, but affirm them. Be an encourager.
8. Give them permission to take time to rest and get settled in.
9. If possible, provide a place for a little R&R — perhaps someone in the congregation can offer a weekend home or a guesthouse for a brief retreat.

Justmoved.org also offers Christ-centered books and materials related to moving, as well as a weekly Words of Encouragement email, a newsletter to encourage women in transition, a prayer support team, resources, devotionals, tips and encouragement for the mover.

Read the original post on UMC's website: <http://www.umcom.org/learn/tips-to-help-pastors-and-families-on-the-move>

Tips for Moving Pastors



Susan Miller knows how it feels to live a gypsy's life. The wife of a corporate hotel executive, Miller moved 14 times in 25 years. The experience had a profound effect and led her to start Just Moved Ministry. The spiritually based non-profit reaches out to people who are frequently uprooted and equips them with tools to help them let go of the past and embrace new lives. She now leads relocation classes in churches, military installations and corporations, as well as trains motivators to guide families who are dealing with the stress of moving. Miller offers these suggestions.

Tips for pastors and their families making a move to a new church and community:

1. Before you move, be sure you have closure with people and places. Take pictures to recall important memories. You might want to make a scrapbook or album with keepsakes representing your time in that church and community.
2. Once you have moved, be aware of what your overload factors are. Watch for physical, emotional and spiritual strain.
3. Try not to compare your last church and community with your new situation.
4. Be careful of having unrealistic expectations. They can be the ruin of any new appointment.
5. Remember, moving is a loss—a tangible loss. You will grieve on some level. Expect to go through the stages of grief because you have lost close touch with friends, a church, a home or a neighborhood you love. It can be even more traumatic when you move to a new place where you may not have a support system in place. Understand that what you are experiencing is normal.
6. Be sensitive to your spouse's identity crisis. The loss of personal identity in a move can be huge. So many times people introduce the spouse as a pastor's wife or husband rather than "this is Judy" or "this is Joe." Loneliness in ministry is a bigger issue than many people realize.
7. Let people help you. It could be the beginning of a friendship and it lets the congregation be a part of your family. Don't isolate yourselves.
8. Borrow an egg! One way to begin a friendship is to borrow an egg. It's a way to start a conversation. It's a first step.
9. Build your nest. Circumstances may force you to hit the ground running, but as much as possible, find time to settle in. It is important to get unpacked, put things in place, begin to make a home and start putting down roots.
10. Communicate. Share your anxiety. Don't let your emotions fester. Talk to someone. Pray.
11. Remember, the greatest adventure is building the kingdom of God. You are doing God's work. God has you right where you are to be.

Read the original post on UCom's website: <http://www.umcom.org/learn/tips-to-help-pastors-and-families-on-the-move>

Show Your Work: Bishop Names 2017 Annual Conference Special Offering

SHOW YOUR WORK



WORSHIP THAT INSPIRES ACTION

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson has named the Ministerial Education Fund as the 2017 Annual Conference Special Offering.

The Ministerial Education Fund has helped thousands of men and women become pastoral leaders in The United Methodist Church. Chances are seminary students from your congregation or the pastor of your church was a recipient of MEF. It is nurtured and funded by United Methodists to provide scholarships to seminary and undergraduate students, course-of-study for local pastors, and license to preach school.

Aligning with the theme of the 2017 Annual Conference, "Show Your Work: Worship That Inspires Action," this fund is one way United Methodists can show our support to those called to serve as clergy. Together we can help minimize debt of North Georgia United Methodists beginning in ministry.

"Receiving MEF in seminary meant that my conference cared about me and my development and training as a future clergy woman," said Rev. Joya Abrams, associate pastor at Impact UMC. "When your conference helps to fund your education, it means that a body of people believe in you. It helped to remind me of the depth of the connection."

MEF is a general church apportioned fund of which 25 percent is retained by our conference. But 100 percent of the giving to the Annual Conference Special Offering will go to United Methodist seminary and course of study students in the North Georgia Conference.

Churches are invited to collect the offering any time before Annual Conference 2017, but many choose the first Sunday in June, June 4, 2017. One person from each local church will present a check from their church during the Service of Remembrance on Wednesday, June 14, at 2 p.m.

Please give generously to the Annual Conference Special Offering.

God At Work: Resources for Confirmation



One of the things that I enjoy most about the very first confirmation class every year is the encounter with the young person who clearly does not want to be there. He or she normally sits in the back of the room with his or her eyes fixed upon whatever is going on outside of the nearest door or window and reluctantly provides answers that are generally short, or perhaps even inaudible.

As off-putting as this student's actions can be, he or she is one of my favorite "types" of student to encounter because I know that the initial resistance, while hard fought, will wane as he or she begins to open up over the course of the confirmation experience. Perhaps you have encountered this type of student too. Such an experience with a reluctant student should remind us of the limitations of our role as teachers in relationship to the limitless ability of God's mysterious work through the Holy Spirit. This type of experience should also underscore the importance of creating a confirmation experience where God can work.

— **Rev. Dr. Tonya Lawrence,**
"Confirm: Director Guide"

We asked Rev. Dr. Tonya Lawrence, author of the Director's Guide for Cokesbury's new series, Confirm, to share resources she recommends to confirmation leaders. First-time and long-time leaders will benefit from these tools.

She suggests the following books and videos:

- *Models of Confirmation and Baptismal Affirmation* by Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed. Published by Religious Education Press. Birmingham, 1995.
- *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism* by Dom Gregory Dix. Published by Oxford: Dacre Press. Westminster, 1953.
- Confirm Student Bible
- Confirm curriculum, including the parent guide, at www.cokesbury.com/confirm
- [Overview of Confirm](#) (Video)
- [Church Knows Confirmation Part 1](#)
- [Chuck Knows Confirmation Part 2](#)

For Such a Time as This: United Methodist Women Give, Serve Across Our Conference

Tryphenia Speed, president of the United Methodist Women of the North Georgia Conference, shared the following letter in the recent UMW newsletter. She highlights just a few of the good works happening in our Conference through the UMW.

For Such a Time as This

As I reflect on the past couple of months, I realized that North Georgia United Methodist Women have been very busy. I have read many email messages, received phone calls, read district newsletters and even had conversations that bear out we have been busy for such a time as this.

- Members are collecting and preparing layette kits to bring to Annual Conference in June.
- Members are promoting the upcoming Spiritual Growth and Social Action Event.
- Members participated with the Interfaith Children's Movement Day at the Capitol
- Members participated in "Let's Box'Em Up" Human Trafficking Campaign.
- Members have supported the National Mission Institutions through monetary gifts and volunteer services.
- Districts and local churches have conducted mission studies.
- Newly elected conference officers have attended Leadership Development Days.

So, what is to come? Let's just look at the month of March! March is National Women's History Month with a theme "Our History is our Strength" Districts are observing Day Apart and Lenten Day Services throughout the month of March in recognition of the ultimate sacrifice that was made for all. March 23 is the Annual Day of Giving for The Legacy Fund United Methodist Women as our Conference UMW continues the work that was begun almost 150 years ago, for such a time as this. The needs have increased and we are to do even greater work as we move forward.

Let us remember our United Methodist Women History and Legacy as we move into the rest of this year and the next 150 years.

Blessings for all you do!

Tryphenia Speed

REGISTRATION OPENS MAY 15

September 23, 2017 at Glisson

The purpose of this day is to offer children and their clergy parents the opportunity to spend time together with others who face the same unique challenges. This is time to forge relationships and friendships that can be cultivated and counted on throughout the years, through school moves, and new appointments, through thick and thin!

Commission on a Way Forward Gathers in Atlanta for Second Meeting



The Rev. Jasmine Smothers (center) with the Rev. Jorge Acevedo (left), Alice Williams, the Rev. Tom Lambrecht and Mazvita Machinga talk together during the first meeting of the Commission on a Way Forward in Atlanta, Jan. 23-26.

Commission on a Way Forward Convenes for Second Meeting

March 1, 2017

Atlanta: The second meeting of the Commission on a Way Forward got underway in Atlanta February 27, as commission members spent time in reflection, discussion and work team meetings.

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball led the Commission in discussions of accountability and their covenant, the complexity of the work ahead, and building relationships of trust by going deeper in conversation and understanding. These three values—accountability, complexity, trust—are considered essential to taking the steps toward decision-making.

On Tuesday, the Rev. Jorge Acevedo led a Bible study on Galatians 1, a letter that stirred the fires of the Protestant Reformation and was important to both John and Charles Wesley. "Paul gets to the heart of the matter. He's concerned; very concerned for the church," said Acevedo.

Learning from history

Does a divided era of the church's past provide some clues for how to move forward towards the future? Commission members heard from Bishop Woodie White as he reflected on the period that spanned the 1940s, 50s and most of the 60s when African-American churches were segregated and placed into the Central Jurisdiction. That lasted until the formation of The United Methodist Church in 1968.

"Fifty years ago, the church was -- as everyone knows -- structurally segregated. Annual conferences were segregated, most of our colleges were segregated, our institutions were segregated, and the church said that that had to come to an end," said Bishop White.

Bishop White likened the church to a family. "I believe we are brothers and sisters in Christ, and because I believe that, I won't let you write me out of the family and I won't write you out of the family. That gives me hope, that we are children of God," said Bishop White.

"Because I believe that everybody in this room is a brother or sister, it impacts how I treat everybody in this room. I believe everybody in this room is of infinite worth. I believe everybody in this room is entitled to be loved and accepted. I believe everybody in this room is more than their opinion or their ideas or their philosophy or their theology. I think everyone's essence transcends all of that, so I have to find a way to always evidence how important I think you are even when I think you're 1000 percent wrong or even when I know you are working against my best interest."

Bishop Ken Carter said that the moderators invited Bishop White to reflect on his experience as a leader having lived through the divisions of the church and the Central Jurisdiction and how that might help the church in the future.

"I think Bishop White is a leader and a sage, wise voice across our denomination," said Bishop Carter. "He both lived in a time of segregation and exclusion and also in a time of reunion -- as imperfect as that was. I feel like he has a unique perspective and a historical perspective; and if we didn't listen to that kind of voice, we'd have a gap in our knowledge of where we are at a time when the church is also struggling for unity."

White says it's a mistake to think that we will ever have a church where we're never struggling with issues. "Somebody's always struggling and I think it's unfortunate when we believe that because it causes people to become discouraged."

Centralized vs. decentralized organizations

Gil Rendle led commissioners in a learning session on centralized and decentralized organizations that provided basic organizational information as a foundation for later conversations on denominational structure.

"A way forward cannot be an extension of the same path that got the church to this point," said Rendle. "Albert Einstein said, 'We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking that created them.'"

Organizational theory notes that all organizations go through a swing in behaving in centralized and decentralized ways. Each type of structure has both advantages and disadvantages, but when the disadvantages become too pronounced, centralized organizations move toward decentralization and decentralized organizations begin to move back toward centralization.

"The United Methodist Church in some contexts experiences itself as a highly centralized organization that often wishes it could be more decentralized," said Rendle.

Rendle said that organizations become deeply embedded in a particular way of thinking because it works; but if practiced to excess, such thinking can easily become a weakness. As leaders who are schooled in the structure and polity of the denomination, Rendle says the Commission may have to set aside some of their current assumptions.

Rendle talked about organizational theory and polarity management, that is, managing two equally important truths that cannot be held together at the same time. For example, an organization should be well ordered and efficient, aligned in purpose and resources; and it should also be quick and agile, responsive to immediate needs and inventive enough to meet those needs. But how can it be both? How do we get out of our own constraints?

"I think there is an assumption by others that the work you are doing is to fix the centralized system we already have or how to improve it. But that's a question that comes within the framework of assumptions about the goodness of being centralized. If you stay within that box, you will not be able to address the questions about how to move forward."

The Commission on a Way Forward continues their meeting through March 2. Additional information on the meeting will be forthcoming.

Read more on the Atlanta meeting at ngumc.org/news

[More information on the Commission is available on their website at UMC.org/wayforward](http://UMC.org/wayforward)

Due West UMC Welcomes Young Families



This is third in a series of stories from growing congregations around the North Georgia Conference.

By Ansley Brackin

Due West UMC in Marietta is one of the fastest growing churches in the Atlanta-Marietta District. The congregation has spent the last few years converting their services to sound "a little less metal and a little more Mumford" in order to attract the young families who have been steadily moving into the area. With them has come an increase in professions of faith for all ages, and greater community participation.

When the economy began to struggle more than a decade ago, Due West UMC slowly watched its local demographic change as fewer and fewer young people found themselves able to afford living in the area; however, the church has greeted the recent housing market improvements with open arms as these young families begin to return to Marietta.

The church is regularly hosting cookouts, festivals, and

kids' camps through their Young Families Ministry. These events happen both on site as well as at local restaurants. Due West provides these opportunities as a sign of support for the local residents.

"Loneliness is very much one of the things that people are trying to overcome," Rev. Tom Davis explains. "They want community when they come to church."

Children are highly valued at Due West UMC. They are welcome to attend Sunday services. They are also the highest age group in the congregation who announce professions of faith and wish to be baptized. Often, the parents and even the grandparents follow suit.

Davis says outreach is important to the church and that something the church acknowledges is that "not everyone who is broken is broke." The church gives aid the homeless and hungry, and they also strive to provide support groups for those whose needs may be less obvious. Support groups are available for those struggling with depression and suicide. The church is also a host for weekly AA meetings.

Davis hopes to expand the variety of small groups in the future. He wants to make them more welcoming to newcomer, as a way to sort of "try out church" before committing every Sunday morning.

Due West UMC members credit the growth to acknowledging the needs and population of the community. Not every church is located in a neighborhood of young families, but every church has the ability to respond to the specific needs of those surrounding them.

Due West UMC's Young Families Ministry will be hosting a Spring Fling on Saturday, April 15, from 11am-1pm. Everyone is welcome!

Wood Attends GCFA Winter Board Meeting in Cambodia



The Board of Directors of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) held its winter board meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, March 4-8. Cambodia is a mission initiative nation selected by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

Among those attending was GCFA member and North Georgia Conference clergy, Rev. Steve Wood who serves Mount Pisgah UMC in Johns Creek.

During the time in Cambodia, the board visited with the staff and missionaries working with the General Board of Global Ministries. Paul Kong, Asia Regional Representative, and Dr. Romeo del Rosario, Country Director for Cambodia, hosted the GCFA Board during its visit. While in Phnom Penh, the Board visited sites of projects of hope and care for the people of Cambodia. It also worshipped at Toul Kork and Preak Tual Methodist Churches and celebrated International

Women's Day with the congregations.

"The congregation I serve is committed to supporting the Advance projects represented by these impressive mission initiatives. The work we observed in Cambodia is evidence that our connectional giving is spreading the Gospel to first generation Christians in Cambodia. Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is happening in Cambodia in ways that inspire all of us," said Wood

- The Board visited five mission projects while in Cambodia:
- At the Toul Kork Methodist Church in Phnom Penh, the Board met with University Scholars and alumni.
- At the Cambodia Light Children Association (Advance #3020791) and the Women's Ministry Project (Advance #3020788), the board members interacted with the children and parents of the orphanage and the community.
- The Board visited the GBGM Cambodia Regional Office located in Phnom Penh. Many of the missionaries serving as teachers, directors and community developers were introduced to the Board during this meeting.
- The Board toured the Cambodian Methodist Bible School (Advance #14917A) and met with the cabinet of the school and the Mission Superintendent, Rev. Sok Sovandy.
- At the Community Health and Agricultural Development Center (CHAD) (Advance #14916A), the Board worked on a construction project and met with community children and their parents. They also engaged the students in training on personal hygiene and health care necessary for the children's growth and development.

Angle-Young Joins Staff of United Methodist Communications in Nashville

The Rev. Dr. Teresa Angle-Young, an elder in the North Georgia Conference, has joined the staff of United Methodist Communications in Nashville as Director of Seeker Communications and Advertising.

"In all of my appointments I have learned, grown, and seen fruit. I truly believe that God can and does employ us even to the ends of the earth, so for me, serving in a UMC agency is yet another exciting expression of the many ways God can use us to facilitate an encounter with the living Christ. ... I'm very excited to imagine what God is going to do as we move forward, and very thankful for this opportunity to serve," said Angle-Young.

Angle-Young will be guiding the denomination's communications with seekers – individuals who are not

committed to a church yet are searching for deeper meaning in life – by developing faith-based strategic communications plans, messaging and initiatives for advertising and social media campaigns.

The center of The United Methodist Church's advertising and seeker outreach is RethinkChurch.org, where visitors may interact, learn more about the church, and search for United Methodist churches in their area.

When asked about her move to Nashville, Dr. Angle-Young said, "I'm a homegrown Tennessee girl. ... I've always said I would love to go back to Nashville. It's a dynamic city with a lot to offer but it still feels like a 'community.' For my family, it's a great combination."

North Georgia Communicators Honored at UMAC Awards Gala



Approximately 160 storytellers, including North Georgia Conference communication staff, gathered in New Orleans March 23-25 to "Embrace the Story" at the annual United Methodist Association of Communicators meeting.

Among the highlights of the event was the Awards Celebration Gala where United Methodist communicators were recognized for outstanding work. A total of 250 entries representing 300-400 contributors, across 10 classes of communication, bore witness to the shining of Christ's Light at levels local to global.

The North Georgia Conference was honored with three awards in its division including first place in photography for Ansley Brackin's photo of Bishop Sharma Lewis standing before the SEJ Conference after her election as bishop. Sybil Davidson received a second place award in e-newsletters for "Weekly Conference Update." Both of the staff were

awarded second place for social media for the Conference Facebook page.

Mount Pisgah UMC in Johns Creek received two awards including first place for website content for staff members Marcy Heinz and Christian Janson. They won third place honor for social media for the church's Instagram page (pictured at right).

The Georgia United Methodist Foundation won third place in print publications for Faith and Money edited by Diana Durie.

"Learning about each other's work gives you ideas. It refreshes you and renews your spirit for telling the story," said Doreen Gosmire, member of the UMAC leadership team and associate director of communications for the Dakotas Conference, about the value of the competition.

"Those entries represent a massive amount of energy, time and resources," she said. "It's phenomenal the number of people out there telling the story of The United Methodist Church in so many different ways."

The 2017 Hall of Fame Award inductee is Cate Monaghan, who retired from her role as communications director of the California-Nevada Conference in 2012. Bishop John Schol of the Greater New Jersey Area was on hand to introduce his director of communications, Carolyn Conover, as the 2017 Communicator of the Year



