



The Beacon

Volume 9 No. 6

JUN 2020

Bishop Announces Virtual Annual Conference

LANSING MI... In consultation with Michigan Conference leaders and public health experts, Bishop David Bard announced that Annual Conference will be held online **Sunday, July 26, through July 29, 2020**. Bishop Bard has asked that the Commission on the Annual Conference Session design the event in a manner that assures those with varying access to technology be able to participate as fully as possible, given these extraordinary circumstances.



"I grieve that we will not be together this year in-person," said Bishop Bard, "The COVID-19 crisis has brought great uncertainty, and the health and well-being of our members must be our focus. Moving our Annual Conference online will allow us to fulfill the Disciplinary, legal, and necessary actions needed to keep the Michigan Conference and our members healthy and moving forward. We join in many other annual conferences in moving our session online."

Sowing Seeds: Rooting, Tending, Reaping, will use online platforms and telephone conference calls to allow all members to participate. Annual Conference 2020 will begin with a virtual opening worship service on Sunday, July 26, 7:00 PM EDT – 8:30 PM EDT, which will also include a time of memorial. On Monday, July 27, there will be two virtual plenary sessions to consider essential business, 9:30 AM EDT to 12:30 PM EDT, and again from 1:30 PM EDT to 4:30 PM EDT. On Tuesday, July 28, Clergy Session will be held virtually from 9:30 AM EDT to 12:30 PM EDT. The virtual Annual Conference will conclude on Wednesday, July 29, with a live stream of the Service of Recognition, Commissioning and Ordination from 7:00 PM EDT to 8:30 PM EDT. Planning and safety protocols are still being developed. Those being Commissioned and Ordained will be able to be present in-person with Bishop David Bard for the laying of hands. While there will be a time to honor those retiring in 2020, we will find another time to hold an online celebration later this year.

Registrations made for the original in-person dates of the Annual Conference will be fully refunded. No action is required. If you paid by credit card, you will receive a full refund within seven days. Checks were held and not cashed. Unless you need your check returned, it will be voided and destroyed. If you are an equalization member or retiree, no action is required. A new registration form for the virtual Annual Conference will be available once plans are complete for the virtual Annual Conference 2020.

To ensure that most members are reached, a legislative guide and a paper ballot will be mailed four weeks before the virtual Annual Conference. The legislative process will be held online and by a conference call for plenary discussion, and then members to the Annual Conference will return their completed ballots with a postage-paid return envelope. The votes will be tallied by the Conference Secretary and announced by Bishop Bard before Labor Day.

According to Nichea Ver Veer Guy, Chairperson of the Commission on the Annual Conference Session, the shortened virtual Annual Conference session will focus on essential actions, while other presentations will be available throughout the remainder of the year. "We recognize how important it is for us to remain nimble during this pandemic." said Guy, "Circumstances have changed in the local church, and we will be responsive to providing what is needed to remain vital."

Future announcements about the virtual Annual Conference will be emailed and posted to the conference website 2020.MichiganUMC.org. Please direct questions regarding the virtual Annual Conference to district offices or Conference Events Planner Nancy Arnold at narnold@michiganumc.org.



May 31 was Pentecost. Celebrating Pentecost was different this year.

The following are excerpts from an article that appeared on MinistryMatters.com authored by Melissa Slocum.

“While some were disappointed at not being able to celebrate [Pentecost] in person at church, this is an opportunity to experience the work of the Holy Spirit in new ways. Pentecost in the Jewish tradition was known as the Festival of Weeks. The Festival of Weeks occurred 50 days after the Passover celebration. When the disciples met for the Festival of Weeks and the Holy Spirit entered like a rush of wind giving them the ability to speak different languages, the church was born — and Pentecost took on new meaning.



The Gospel of John reports that before Jesus died, he assured the disciples that they would never be alone: “The Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you” (John 14:26). Even though Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection and spent time with them, it was not the same as it had been.

We too have experienced distance from our church family. Meeting online is not the same as being together in the flesh! Yet, the Holy Spirit breathed new life and purpose into the room where the disciples gathered, and it quickly spread far beyond their dreams. On this Pentecost, we too can experience the Holy Spirit breathing new life and purpose into us as we

figure out how to navigate what lies ahead.

Even though we have the Holy Spirit as our Helper, we may feel like we do not know where or how to start. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit has given us creative gifts. We are called to listen, follow, and faithfully pursue new ways to reach new people during this time. Having our physical buildings closed forces us to work outside of those buildings, to learn new ways of worshipping and sharing God with the world, and to receive and use the gifts of the Spirit in ways we never before attempted nor imagined!”

Question of the day: How do you describe the Holy Spirit?

Read: Acts 2:1-12, 38-41; Acts 9:1-20; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11



“ZOOM” COFFEE CONNECTION – FRI 1:00 PM

(via iPad, Cell Phone, Laptop, desktop computer)

Contact Tom Petersen if you would like to be “connected” to keep in touch with fellow parishioners ... what’s happening and sharing with others.

“ZOOM” BIBLE STUDY - THU 2:30 pm

(via iPad, Cell Phone, Laptop, desktop computer)

Contact Tom Petersen to participate in the weekly Bible Study Class. Currently, we are studying *The Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL NOTES - ZOOM Meeting – May 13, 2020 – 7:00 PM



PRESENT: Roger & Beth Noonan, Tom & Jean Petersen, Pastor Melody & Denny Olin, Kay Wilcox, Kay Coombs, Jan Lyon, Roy Pentilla and Sandy Mallory

FINANCIAL: Roy stated that, as of April 30, 2020 we have a **-\$10,751 deficit**. The congregation is sending in some contributions, expenses are down (utilities, custodial expenses). Our application for a Small Business grant is pending; hopefully, we will receive \$4,000. (*per financial statement*)

RE-OPENING: As of 5/13, The Bishop has not named a date to re-open churches.

The Michigan Conference UMC will follow CDC guidelines for meeting in groups (number of people, masks, social distancing, etc.) and UMC guidelines. As soon as we hear from the Bishop, we will send an email to all in the EUMC family.

CHURCH BUILDING SAFETY: Before re-opening, the building needs to be cleaned and sanitized (rest rooms, kitchen, fellowship hall, sanctuary, offices, classrooms, and nursery) per CDC and Michigan Conference UMC guidelines.

SAFETY TEAM FORMATION: *Consensus reached to form a EUMC Safety Team* to set up procedures for implementing safety guidelines. Sandy will send out an email to church family *asking for 3 – 5 volunteers*.

- The Safety Team will establish procedures for re-opening the church and be prepared for what is to become the 'New Normal' at church (when we eventually get back into the building and/or outdoor services if we hold them).
- The Safety Team will follow the Michigan Conference UMC/Bishop's recommendations and Federal CDC recommendations; investigate what other churches may be doing, mold it into EUMC needs as an older congregation, but looking to protect all ages, including children.

MAKING MASKS: Jean, Jan and Kay C. are willing to make masks to have on hand at the church when it re-opens.

MISSIONS TEAM: Vacancy on the Missions Team; need a volunteer to fill it.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Until the church re-opens, Pastor Melody would like to increase "face time" on Facebook with *volunteers to read scriptures, devotions, etc.*
- A safety consideration for Communion – participants could bring their own elements (bread, grape juice) to be blessed before partaking at service.

June Administrative Council ZOOM meeting – To Be Determined



The Music Minister

Kevin B. Chamberlain - Minister of Music and Organist, Avenue United Methodist Church, Milford, DE

Acts 17:22-31

"The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ... For 'In him we live and move and have our being.'"

Over the past few months, the worshipping life of many congregations throughout the world has been altered significantly. Many churches have embraced technology to proclaim Christ to their members and anyone who wishes to view their live-streamed worship services. While live streaming worship is not new, it is a form of communication that many churches still had not embraced before this year.

The lectionary reading for the week of May 17, 2020] reminds us that, "... the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands." The buildings in which we worship do not, nor will they ever contain Christ; Christ dwells within each of us. No matter where we are or how we worship, Christ is there with us. These words remind me that God's love has not been removed from me; God has not been taken from me as our worship has changed over the past few months. God is always present. Christ is always with us no matter where we worship.



For JUNE: Society of St Andrew #801600

The Society of St. Andrew is a grassroots, faith-based, hunger relief nonprofit working with all denominations to bridge the hunger gap between 96 billion pounds of food wasted every year in the United States and the nearly 40 million Americans who live in poverty. **SoSA** relies on support from donors, volunteers, and farmers as they glean nutritious excess produce from farmers' fields and orchards after harvest and deliver it to people in need across the United States. **SoSA** provides nutritious, healthy produce through programs such as the Potato Project, the Gleaning Network, Harvest of Hope, and the Seed Potato Project. If donation is by check, please make payable to Empire United Methodist

Church with Memo: Society of St Andrew #801600.

The United Methodist Church's special giving structure ensures your generosity blesses as many people as possible in sustainable, strategic ways. Through your support, and our church, we fund hundreds of projects each year.

Our Vision Statement:
 A community who goes out, serving in love, sharing Christ.
 "Go, Serve. Share Christ."



When we resume services, please sign up to serve!

| DATE | COUNTER | HOSTS | USHERS | READERS |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Contact: Gerri Sorbie | Contact: Jan Lyon | Contact: Pete Mallory | Contact: Christine |
| | JSorbie@centurytel.net | billjanlyon@gmail.com | Sandy.mallory2@gmail.com | Empireumc@gmail.com |



**Please continue to support the church by mailing your offerings to:
 Empire United Methodist Church, PO Box 261, Empire 49630
 or by contacting Roy Pentilla [erpentilla@aol.com]
 for on-line giving**

(we still need to pay for the utilities, staff, and other bills to keep the church going).

If you wish to contribute to the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**, or **this month's Mission: Society of St. Andrew**, please make the notation on your check.



RE-OPENING THE CHURCH BUILDING

There are many things to consider before meeting again in the church building. It's not as simple as just staying six feet away. Corporate worship contains physical contact, from passing the peace to passing the collection plate, from the coffee maker to communion. Finding alternatives to certain acts and adhering to thorough cleaning and disinfecting measures will be a challenge

In this time of uncertainty, there seem to be more questions than there are answers. More problems than solutions. Thus, the Church Safety Team was formed, comprised of Pastor Melody, Sharon Humphreys, Jean Petersen, Kay Wilcox, and Sandy Mallory, to determine what needs to be done

before the first Sunday of in-person worship.

The time to prepare is now. EUMC needs to examine its own unique set of circumstances carefully. The safety of our congregation is paramount because it is considered "High Risk" with an average age of 78.

The Safety Team will suggest procedures for re-opening the church and preparations for what is to become the 'New Normal' at church.

The Safety Team will follow the Michigan Conference UMC/Bishop's recommendations and Federal CDC recommendations, state and local authorities; investigate what other churches may be doing, mold it into EUMC needs as an older congregation, but looking to protect all ages, including children.

The Safety Team will consider the following and determine procedures/protocols to present to the Administrative Council:

- How will people be greeted safely?
- Will masks be available for those arriving without them?
- Where will hand sanitizer stations be placed?
- Will taking your temperature before coming to church be required; if you have a temperature and/or do not feel well will you be required to stay home?
- Will we advise congregation not to hug, shake hands, or use social distancing.
- How will we signal social distance seating in the sanctuary?
- What special signage needs to be created around safely worshipping together?
- Will we remove high touch items like hymnals, pew pads, pencils, and offering plates? Door handles?
- Will we avoid using bulletins by using the sanctuary technology?
- How can we distance worship leaders and musicians?
- Will singing be allowed?
- When will it be safe to bring the choir back?
- Will our first service back be outside? Where?
- Will there be a coffee hour following worship?
- Will events be held (weddings, funerals, baptism, communion)?
- Will there be Sunday school, bible studies? Nursery?
- Will outside groups be able to use our facilities (AA,NA, Lions Club, community organizations, etc.)

As we work toward in-person worship and ministry, we call on John Wesley's "3 General Rules" to reinforce our direction: **Do No Harm. Do Good. Stay in Love with God.**

Our mission has not changed (Matthew 28:16-20). We are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This is still happening as we continue to find new ways to worship, connect, grow, serve, and give in the age of COVID-19.

You are invited to lean into a direction that is not simply about returning to our previous "way of doing things," but embracing a new and hopeful vision for what we are becoming.

The Safety Team



**Serving as the Hands & Feet of Christ
136 Years in Empire
1884 – 2020**

The Beacon is published monthly by The EMPIRE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. Our mailing address is: PO Box 261 – 10050 Michigan Street, Empire, MI 49630. We can be reached at 231.326.5510 or www.empireumc@centurytel.net. Information and items for publication must be received at the church office by the 3rd Wednesday of the month.



EUMC Mission Statement

"To live out a faith in Jesus Christ through our efforts to hear others, share in God's truths, join in worship, and celebrate in the Joy of God's grace."

SUNDAYS

10:00 AM **Worship Service**
8:00 PM AA Group

MONDAYS

9:00-1:00 **Church Office open**
10:00 AM Worship Team

WEDNESDAYS

9:00-1:00 **Church Office open**
8:00 PM NA Group

THURSDAYS

9:00-1:00 **Church Office open**
10:00 AM Worship Team

**THE CHURCH BUILDING IS CLOSED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE
CHECK YOUR EMAILS
FOR CURRENT INFORMATION**



**EMPIRE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
PO Box 261 - 10500 Michigan Street
Empire MI 49630**

TO:

**Rev. Melody Olin, Pastor
(231) 326-5510
Cell: (989) 560-1667
empireumc@gmail.com
Facebook.Com/Empire United Methodist Church
Website: www.empireumc.org**