

**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
EMPIRE UNIT**

MARCH 8, 2021 Meeting 11:00 am
Program - Carole Merillat Business Meeting

Bring a sack lunch!  Fellowship!

Empire United Methodist Church - Vision Statement:
A community who goes out, serving in love, sharing Christ.
“Go, Serve. Share Christ.”



**BIBLE STUDY
THURSDAYS**

2:30 pm



(via iPad, Cell Phone, Laptop, desktop & computer)
We are studying of the Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations. Contact Tom Petersen if you would like to participate in the weekly ZOOM Bible Study Class.



MARCH 2021

The Glen Lake Community Schools Student Assistance Fund is used for all manner of needs for students. As an example, a teen who wanted to run cross country track but whose family could not afford running shoes fund money provided the shoes. The fund also pays the lunch bills for kids whose families fall behind.

When forwarding your donation, please note: *Glen Lake Community Schools Student*

Assistance Fund on the memo line.
Make your donation by check payable to: Empire United Methodist Church
Attn: Treasurer
PO Box 261 Empire 49630

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 many projects each year.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES - FEB. 15, 2021 – 6:30 PM



Present: Pastor Melody & Denny Olin, Sandy Mallory, Roger & Beth Noonan, Meredith Goodrick, Tom & Jean Peterson, Aggie Wilson, Roger & Carol Merillat, Barb Foged, Sue Palmer, Roy Pentilla, Jan Lyon, Jim & Kay Coombs, Kay Wilcox, Jim & Gerri Sorbie.

Pastor Melody opened the meeting with a prayer at 6:35 PM.

Team Reports:

Pastor: Pastor Melody said she did not have a lot to report but stated she is continuing with online services. She made a recommendation to the Ad Board that we purchase a laptop computer for the Church office so Christine can continue to work from home. Christine is currently using her personal laptop which is not in good condition. The cost for a new one is estimated to be between \$400-\$600. **Motion** made by Roy Pentilla to purchase a new laptop for the church office for the secretary's use at home; **Second** by Jan Lyon. **Passed.** Denny will purchase the laptop.

Lay Leader: Jan Lyon -nothing to report.

Pastor Parish: Roger Noonan stated that we need to get back to church. **Discussion followed:**

- All but 3 people present have had the vaccine 1st shot and others are waiting for 2nd shot to be administered by the end of March. **To re-open**, the church building would need cleaning; masks and social distancing must be observed (sanctuary 25 people; fellowship hall overflow – 30); use of hand sanitizer; no singing during services.
- Sue Palmer suggested that people sign-up before Sunday so there would be a head count before services.
- The Bishop has recommended that we should follow what the governor advises.
- Pastor Melody has been unable to get her vaccine as pastors are not considered to be essential workers. She does not want to be in church until she is able to get it. Denny talked to the Benzie-Leelanau Health Department. They said they will add her name on their list but do not know when it will be scheduled.
- Kay Coombs said a timeline should be discussed as to when we might be able to get together for in-person church services.
- Sue Palmer asked about ZOOM meetings and Jan Lyon said we should consider it. We have a ZOOM account that is paid up through April. Tom Peterson said he could set it up. Denny said the service would still be videotaped. The service could also be done on Facebook Live, but Pastor Melody does not want to do it live.
- Roy suggested we appoint a team to investigate and plan for the re-opening of the church.
- Roger suggested that we set a tentative date of April 4 for in-person worship services to begin. Sandy asked for volunteers to coordinate this. The team includes Roger Noonan, Jean Peterson, Kay Wilcox, Carol Merillat and Sandy Mallory.

Motion to approve re-opening for church services with tentative date of April 4, 2021 made by Roger Noonan, **Second** by Sue Palmer. **Passed.** A planning meeting is set for Tuesday, March 16 at 6:00.

Sandy reported that she has been asked to be a lay equalization delegate from the Northern Waters District for the

Michigan Annual Conference which will be a virtual meeting June 3-8. As part of the conference, June 5 has been designated as *local church mission service day*. Sandy asked if we would like to participate; would need ideas for a project we might do to reach out to our community. Roy Pentilla is the lay delegate from EUMC. There will a second part to the MI Annual Conference in October where legislation will be discussed. A tentative **United Methodist Church General Conference** meeting is scheduled for August 29-September 7. More information will be available in March.

Finance: Roy presented the treasurer's report. (Copy posted on south wall bulletin board) He said that to get money from the government we would have to show that receipts are down and stated it did not look like that would happen.

Trustees: Jean Peterson said that there are 3 things that needed repair: a crack in the line to the dishwasher which is under warranty; the furnace thermostat needed replacement; and a huge crack in the window by the front door. Jan Lyon asked if we could budget for a patio at the parsonage. Jean Peterson said it would be discussed. Sue Palmer said that the Village of Empire is going to repair Union Street in 2021 and said we might want to think about repaving the parking lot at this time.

Worship: Pastor Melody said she will be doing a short (virtual) Ash Wednesday service and will do a short sermon on Wednesdays during Lent.

Memorials: Aggie said that there is \$1100 in the memorial fund.

Missions: Jim Sorbie said that the February mission on the month fund will go to the Benzie Central Schools unpaid student lunch fund.

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Administrative Council [continued]

Hospitality: Jan read in *Michigan Connect* ways to reach out to the children in our church. She suggested preparing Lent/Easter bags for the Sunday school children. This was done at Christmas time by Candi Hasslebeck and Pat Smith.

New Business: Denny said there will be no grants from the Michigan Conference in 2021. We were planning to apply for a grant to purchase a video camera to use with the sound system in the sanctuary. There is \$236 remaining in the sound system fund and \$793 in the men's club fund that could be used for this. Roger Merillat asked if there is money available for a sound system in the hall. We do have sound from the sanctuary through the video equipment in fellowship hall, but no picture at the present time. A video camera in the sanctuary is needed to transmit picture/graphics to the screen in Fellowship Hall.

Motion to adjourn by Roger Noonan, **Second** by Aggie Wilson. **Passed.** Meeting adjourned at 7:30

Next Meeting date - TBD

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Noonan, secretary



WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT *SERMONS POSTED ON FACEBOOK*

MARCH 03	"Giving Up Expectations"
MARCH 10	"Giving Up Superiority"
MARCH 17	"Giving Up Enemies"
MARCH 24	"Giving Up Our Lives"

PALM SUNDAY - GOOD FRIDAY

MARCH 28 - APRIL 2



Holy Week



Please continue to support the church by mailing your offerings to:

Empire United Methodist Church

Attn: Treasurer PO Box 261 Empire 49630

or contact Roy Pentilla [erpentilla@aol.com]

for on-line giving

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

If you wish to contribute to the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund** or **Mission of the Month Offering – Glen Lake Community Schools Student Assistant Fund**, please make the notation on your check.

BISHOP BARD ADDRESSES



GENERAL CONFERENCE DELAY

~ mic photo

Bishop David Bard comments on two important decisions made this week. The General Conference has been postponed until August 2022. In the meantime, an online session in May 2021 will deal with several important matters.

Dear Friends in Christ in The Michigan Conference,

The Commission on the General Conference for The United Methodist Church has released a statement announcing its decision to further postpone the 2020 General Conference given that the trajectory of the coronavirus pandemic does not seem to allow for the planning and holding of a large, in-person international gathering in late August and early September of this year.

Furthermore, the Commission, after hearing a report from its Technology Task Force, did not think a full General Conference could be held virtually given challenges of internet access and time differences involved. It is important to know that there is a 16-hour time difference between the Philippines and the United States West Coast time zones. The Commission sought to do justice and avoid harm. General Conference is now scheduled for August 29-September 6, 2022, in Minneapolis.

Following the Commission's announcement on the General Conference, the United Methodist Council of Bishops announced it would call a special session of the General Conference to be held virtually on May 8, 2021. The agenda for this special called session will be strictly limited to the consideration of a few changes to The Book of Discipline that will help The United Methodist Church move forward on issues related to jurisdictional conferences, the retirement of bishops, certain annual conference elections, and procedures, and budgetary matters. Since the General Conference's initial postponement, the bishops have found that the language of our current Book of Discipline offers little flexibility in situations such as a pandemic. Voting on these few petitions will be done by paper ballot.

If you have ever been to or closely followed a General Conference, you will understand why a full-agenda General Conference is essentially impossible as a virtual meeting. It is difficult to conceive ten long days, with committee meetings and multiple amendments being compressed into a virtual format.

"While the postponement of General Conference delays important decisions for The United Methodist Church and puts us in a waiting mode in some ways, it does not mean we have simply hit pause in our life and ministry together."

In the coming weeks and months, we will be engaged in the on-going work of creating a post-pandemic church. When the Michigan Conference came together, we agreed upon a shared vision to form a conference that equips and connects to foster Christ-centered mission and ministry, to form bold and effective leaders, and to create vibrant congregations.

A broad, aspirational statement of direction was approved at the 2019 Annual Conference that identified important values and directions for the Conference. The conference, in its life together pursuing our vision, will hold space for persons of diverse viewpoints by creating "time and space for reflection, forgiveness, and reconciliation" among those who differ, while also creating new space for LGBTQIA people and joining together in the work of sharing the Gospel and creating a more just, equitable conference and world. This space can be a wide and broad space, a space for grace, and we remain committed to living toward this vision, embodying these values, and welcoming all willing to be part of this adventure. The extensive anti-bias/anti-racism work we are undertaking in our conference is evidence that we are not at a standstill. Further evidence is found in every one of our local churches engaged in faithful ministry for Jesus Christ in the sharing of good news that frees and heals, in feeding, in caring, in doing justice, in fostering reconciliation and doing the works of love.

At the same time, I understand there is disappointment with this decision. We are being asked to wait yet again to make important decisions about the future of The United Methodist Church, and waiting is not always our strongest asset, particularly now when we have been asked to wait so often and about so many things. There is understandable disappointment among many United Methodists that the [Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation](#) will not be among the items included in a special called session of General Conference in May. Many believe that the petitions related to the Protocol are one of the best ways forward for The United Methodist Church, acknowledging our significant divisions and providing for a gracious and amicable separation. I am not ignorant of the fact that a number of Michigan United Methodists do not see themselves aligned with the direction the conference has claimed and desire to be part of something else. If some kind of structural change, division, or separation is inevitable, waiting can feel onerous. The Protocol was carefully negotiated, and a simple up or down vote may not seem complicated.

"It is important to know that no congregation needs to be voting on its future direction right now."

Yet is any separation of our United Methodist Church simple? Should such a significant proposal be voted upon without robust conversation, debate, and opportunities to consider accompanying proposals? The Council of Bishops does not think so. Also, since the release of the Protocol, other ideas for moving The United Methodist Church into the future have been proposed, not necessarily as substitutes to the Protocol, but some as important addendums to it. Some propose regional forms of governance for The United Methodist Church, no matter if there is division. Among these additional proposals, I would call your attention to [The Christmas Covenant](#) initiated in the Philippines; [Africa Voice of Unity; Out of Chaos... Creation](#); and [A Protocol for Graceful Unity](#). My inclusion of these proposals and ideas here does not represent an endorsement of them. I am merely pointing out reasons why the Protocol petitions are more complicated than some might imagine.

Here we are – more waiting and more uncertainty. In response to these announcements, I don't know if those working with the [Wesleyan Covenant Association](#) or the [Liberation Methodist Connexion](#) to create a new Wesleyan denominations/structures/organizations will choose to separate before the postponed General Conference. These groups, and perhaps others, are actively dispensing information about their organizations. I hope you will receive information graciously and ask good questions about what you receive and how issues may be framed. I am committed to doing my best to communicate with you clearly and transparently. I will work with others, even those who may be intending to be part of a new denomination, as cooperatively as possible in this uncertain time. It is important to know that no congregation needs to be voting on its future direction right now.

General Conference has been postponed, except for the limited-agenda special session called by the Council of Bishops. The large decision about restructuring, division, or separation will not be made this year by a General Conference. Restructuring, division, or separation in one form or another remains highly likely at some point. Regardless of when and how that may occur, I am committed to working with graciousness and kindness toward mutual blessing with all persons and churches. The overall witness of the church is only weakened by acrimony and failure to treat others as we would like to be treated.

In Acts 15, an argument between Paul and Barnabas “became so intense that they went their separate way” (v. 39). Yet Barnabas is not trashed following the separation. The only negative thing said about him by Paul is in Galatians, where he notes that Barnabas got a little carried away with some other Jewish Christians.

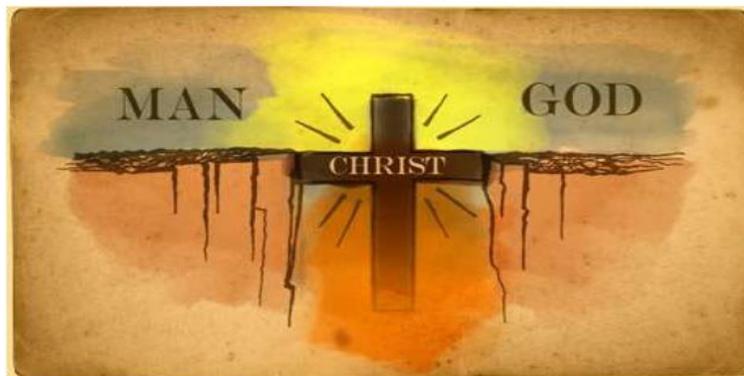
When I think about a potential separation, the image from Genesis 25 is in my heart and mind. “Abraham took his last breath and died after a good long life, a content old man, and he was placed with his ancestors. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave in Machpelah” (v. 8-9). Two brothers, almost strangers to each other, come together to bury their father. I picture them standing together outside this burial cave, each with their own memories of their father, each with their own memories of the years they were together. There is shared grief and lamentation and a desire for mutual blessing.

“While we are together, I am committed to working with you as your bishop with graciousness, kindness, and toward mutual blessing.”

Some form of separation is likely to come but has not yet arrived. While we are together, I am committed to working with you as your bishop with graciousness, kindness, and toward mutual blessing. As long as we are together, and I continue to believe there is genuine strength in our togetherness, we share in the ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Our conference has indicated a direction in which it wishes to travel in this transformational ministry, and we will work to embody that vision. And even when there is disagreement about elements of our vision or dimensions of our values, there remains much we share. We all want to see people come to know God's saving grace in Jesus. We all want people to grow in the love of God and neighbor. We all want the hungry to be fed and the homeless housed. We all want to overcome the racial divides that have plagued our country and hampered our witness and ministry. We all want to be a force for justice, reconciliation, and healing in our world. We want our congregations to be communities of transformation. Let this be our focus. Let this be the work to which we devote our primary energy. Let our prayers be devoted to transformed lives, vibrant congregations, and vital ministries to heal a broken world.

Some have also asked about the related proposals from the Council of Bishops regarding Jurisdictional Conferences. The proposal is for virtual sessions of Jurisdictional Conferences to be held this coming July to place bishops into retirement, determine the number of new bishops to be elected at in-person Jurisdictional Conferences following the 2022 session of General Conference, and announce a plan for episcopal oversight until that time. The North Central Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy and the College of Bishops will work cooperatively to ensure that every conference has solid episcopal leadership for this interim time. I don't know if I might be asked to continue to be bishop for a conference beyond Michigan. What I do know is that the Michigan Conference is blessed with solid, faithful, courageous, and creative leaders, and we will make whatever arrangements are needed for the church work for this conference. It continues to be my joy and privilege to work with these people and with you all as your bishop.

David Bard, Bishop
Michigan Conference UMC



To the Point

Doing Community Ministry in the Small Church

Sometimes I interact with small congregations that assume that any significant community ministry effort is beyond their reach. They often keenly feel their limitations as they work to keep internal church programs going with limited staff and volunteers. So how could they ever engage the community in any significant way?



With the right approach, it is possible for a small group of people to make a big impact. It will take focus and clarity about what you are trying to accomplish, but the small church can make a big impact in the world through partnerships, creative use of resources, and a focus on relational ministry. Small congregations have unique strengths that can result in strong and effective community ministry.

Focus. A small congregation must be more disciplined about not “biting off more than it can chew.” Identifying just one thing to focus on (tutor kids at the local public school, collect diapers, sponsor a community garden) may well help you be more successful, as you will have clear outcomes in front of you. I think sometimes there is a temptation for larger churches to make ministry efforts bigger and more complex than they need to be. Internal ministry programs may have many bells and whistles, so we think we need to do that with work in our community as well — right? Wrong! Sometimes simpler is just what the community needs.

Relationships. Another advantage of being small is that your church may be better at relational ministry than larger churches, and it is the relationships that you can build with people in your community that will make the greatest impact. People who are drawn to attend smaller churches are often there because of the “family” feel; in your small congregation, you can really get to know each other, go deep in your relationships, and bear one another’s burdens. A pastor of a rural congregation in West Virginia told me that his small church is “a place of gathering, celebration, and common community. We still celebrate each person’s birthday here!” Carrying that affinity for relationship into the community may well help you make a greater impact than if you brought hundreds of volunteers or thousands of dollars. Everything you’ve learned within your own congregation about really listening to one another and devoting time to relationships will bless your community in myriad ways.

Partnerships. Small churches often have no choice but to partner with others to carry out ministry. Partnerships, if done well, can result in exponentially greater impact. You aren’t limited to the gifts within your own church. You can seek others, particularly when working on complex community issues where expertise, connections, and resources are needed. I once worked with several smaller churches that were developing partnerships with public schools. We started with a goal of recruiting just 10 volunteers from each church, and they met that goal. Next people from the church started going into the school every week, learning about the needs of students, interacting with teachers and other staff, and making an impact by being faithful. A small group of people who are willing can make a big difference!

Ownership. In a small church, members may also feel a greater sense of ownership for the ministry. Without many paid staff, it is up to church members to develop the vision and the plan, find partners, and enlist other members to get involved. You can’t just look around and say, “Pastor So and-So is going to do that.” In a small church, when you look around, you might only see yourself and a few of your friends. If you don’t do it, no one else will! This strong ownership by lay leaders can help ministry be sustainable over the long term.



Accountability. Finally, those in small churches may be better able to hold each other accountable for following through on ministry goals and commitments because you are small. If just a few of you are working on a project and two of you don’t show up, it’s pretty obvious who isn’t holding up their end of the work! It is harder to be anonymous and go back on what you’ve agreed to. It is harder to give up when your friends are on your case!

Small churches are all too aware of the challenges facing their ministries — limited funds, members, and facilities. But even in the face of such challenges, your small church can start some very powerful community ministries. Take stock of what you do have rather than what you don’t have and build on those assets. Be creative about finding partners, raising money, and securing in-kind donations. And most importantly, keep going. Some of the most successful community ministries are small and focused and don’t require lots of money and people.

Ω Joy F. Skjogstad is a consultant who works helping churches develop programs to meet community needs. She is the author of *7 Creative Models for Community Ministry* (Judson Press, 2013) and *Starting a Nonprofit at Your Church* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

**Serving as the Hands & Feet of Christ
137 Years in Empire
1884 - 2021**

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 - FACEBOOK - WEBSITE
FOR CURRENT INFORMATION**



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