



Give Wholeheartedly
- 2010 -

Highlights of the 41st Session
Wisconsin Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church
June 13-16, 2010
La Crosse Convention Center, La Crosse, WI
Bishop Linda Lee, Presiding
Theme: Give Wholeheartedly

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be” – Matthew 6:21

The **Wisconsin Annual Conference** took place June 13th-16th, 2010 in La Crosse, WI. Bishop Linda Lee, Episcopal leader of the Wisconsin area, presided over the Conference. The featured theme, *Give Wholeheartedly*, was woven throughout the four days of activities.

The **Clergy Session** was called to order at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 13th, with the presentation of the Report of the Board of Ordained Ministry. The clergy in attendance approved the candidates for ordination, commissioning and retirement.

The **Laitry Session** also began at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday with music from *Acoustic Grace*, a praise band from Zion United Methodist Church in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Susan Eaton Mendenhall gave an interpretative dance presentation set to the songs *Open* and *Come to the Edge*. Representatives from *Faith Alive!*, the Hmong House of Good News in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the newly developed *Catalyst* team shared their stories. Sherian Foster, the Capital/Coulee District Lay Servant Minister, talked about the opportunities for learning and getting equipped that Lay Servant Ministry continues to offer to those who are seeking to learn, explore, and grow in their ministry.

Worship Services

The Ordination Service was held at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday evening, June 13th. Bishop Jong Kuk Won from the Dongbu Conference in South Korea gave a sermon entitled *Devotional Life* in which he talked about the dedication required of the new elders. Five persons were ordained elders, including William Busch, Jeremy Deaner, George Kafer, Arveda Kirk, and Joshua Pegram. Carrie Kreps Wegenast was recognized as a full member of the Wisconsin Conference. Music was performed by *Trinity Brass*, *Grupa Alabanza Unida*, and the *Onalaska United Methodist Church Choir*.

During the Youth Service on Monday, June 14th, Bishop Linda Lee delivered a lively sermon about the “ridiculously lavish” love that God has for us and declared, “God is in the neighborhood!” She used the example of family reunions to illustrate how love can unite different people – even those who disagree. Music was provided by Christian rock band *Atlas*, which is comprised of youth members.

On Tuesday, June 15th, at 2:00 p.m., the Conference gathered for the Service of Remembrance and Celebration. Kevin Rice Myers, Conference Secretary, read the names of those clergy members, clergy spouses and children, and lay members who have died since the last session of the Annual Conference. Family members were invited to come forward and light a candle in memory of their loved one. At the end of the service, *Amazing Grace* was performed on bagpipes by Douglas Weidenbach.

The Order for Commissioning Provisional Members for Service took place Tuesday, June 15th, at 7:30 p.m. with the Reverend Jeremy Deaner, a recently ordained elder in the Wisconsin Annual Conference and pastor at Trinity UMC in Waldo, Wisconsin, preaching on the theological, emotional, and physical oneness of the human race. Nine provisional elders were commissioned, including Maribel Celiz, Paul Gregersen, Steven Hanusa, Dawn Helton-Anishinaabegwa, David Leistra, Stephen Scott, Jane Sommers, Loretta Waughtal, and Barbara Wells. Three provisional deacons were commissioned, including Amy Jo Anderson, Susan Haller, and Becky Schmidt. Two clergy who transferred from another denomination were recognized as elders while serving the provisional membership period, including Nhia Wahn Her (Southern Baptist) and Martha Williams (Evangelical Covenant Church). Ten newly licensed local pastors were recognized, including Eduardo De La Cruz, Afi Dobbins, Jennifer Emert, G. Wiley Gladney, Greta Hietpas, Kathleen Huneywell, Juan Mayorga, Laura Nordstrom, Jeffrey Radley, and Mary Beth Scow. Music was provided by *Revelation*, a praise band from the Fall River United Methodist Church, and the *Women’s Chorus of Trinity United Methodist Church* in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. M. Parker Hunter, a newly elected provisional elder, was commissioned by the North Carolina Annual Conference as a courtesy to the Wisconsin Conference UMC.

The Annual Conference session ended with a brief closing worship and benediction.

Greetings and Recognitions

Throughout the four days, the Annual Conference was filled with heartfelt greetings and well-deserved recognitions. Bishop Lee introduced her husband, Lamarr Gibson, thanked him for his support, and noted that June 15th was their 19th wedding anniversary. The Conference expressed its appreciation for their ministry among us with a round of applause.

Bishop Lee welcomed the delegates from the Dongbu Conference of the Korean Methodist Church. The delegation was led by Bishop Jong Kuk Won, who is the 17th bishop of the Dongbu Conference, with which the Wisconsin Conference has a sister-conference relationship. Bishop Jong shared stories about the Dongbu Conference and exchanged gifts of appreciation with Bishop Lee.

Mark Geisthardt, Chairperson of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, presented Bishop Lee with a special recognition certificate from the General Council on Finance and Administration for Wisconsin's 100 percent apportionment payment for 2009. This is the 21st year in a row that the Wisconsin Conference has received this recognition.

Dan Dick, Director of Connectional Ministries, introduced those clergy persons who were being recognized by the Conference Commission on Archives and History for 25, 50, 60, and 70 or more years of service to The United Methodist Church. The pastors who are retiring this year were also recognized. A special Celebration of Retirees Service and luncheon were held in honor of Stuart Allen, Irving Case, Roger Clapp, Forrest Clark, Terry Dorenbusch, Richard Fite, Paul Foulke, Carol Hackbardt, William Helwig, Terry Hettenbach, Don Iliff, Larry McCann, Jim McKay, Lee Meissner, Evelyn Mingle, Lynette Peterson, Ron Retherford, Gary Swanson, Jim Verkest, and Raymond Wreford.

Dan Dick recognized the recipients of this year's awards. The Perry Saito Award was given to Steve Schooler, Executive Director of the *Porchlight* ministry and member of Madison First UMC. The Thelma W. Gregg Award was given to Patty Henrichs, who has revolutionized the missions program at her church, Central UMC of Milwaukee, and participated in many VIM projects. The Harry Denman Evangelism Award was given to Annette Lewis (laity), and Creighton Kaye and Stan Pegram (both clergy). Wesley White noted that the Perry Saito Award also included the members of the Disaster Relief Team. Dan Dick asked all of those who are part of the Disaster Relief Team to stand and be recognized.

David Green, Chairperson of the Health and Welfare Ministries Committee, was recognized for receiving the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries 2010 Conference-Related Unit Leader of the Year award.

Bishop Lee announced that Sam Royappa, Superintendent of the Capital and Coulee Districts, will be the new Dean of Cabinet in 2010-2011. She also recognized Bill White for his 18 years of service as Chancellor of the Wisconsin Conference UMC. She then nominated his colleague, Nathan Moenck, to serve as Associate Conference Chancellor. He was elected by affirmation. Additionally, Dorothy Radley, Conference Lay Leader, introduced Deana Shimko as the new Associate Conference Lay Leader.

Inspiring Presentations

Throughout the plenary sessions, the Conference highlighted individuals and groups who continually give above and beyond what is expected, including our 13 Health and Welfare Ministries; the International Volunteers In Mission; the various Campus Ministries throughout the state; the East Angola Task Force; the 2008 Flood Recovery Program; numerous multi-cultural ministries that have emerged and are thriving; and all of the important ministries created by our Wisconsin congregations, like the Still Waters new church start in Jackson and the Kingdom Come Food Pantry in Oconto Falls.

The session included a presentation, skits, singing, and dancing from the new Catalyst Team, which is exploring new possibilities for clergy/laity collaborative leadership and change management, a vision for the new Discipleship Leadership Team structure, and The Community in Conversation - a period of open dialogue in which members of the conference discussed homosexuality and living into God's future.

The Conference also included learning opportunities to find out how our boards and agencies serve in ministry and put apportionment dollars to work on behalf of all of the congregations in Wisconsin. The breakout sessions included Health and Welfare Ministries, Ethnic Local Church Concerns/Hispanic Ministries, Board of Higher Education and Student Ministries, Board of Congregation and Circuit Development, Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries, and Board of Church and Society.

Action Items

Several Conference Action Items were voted on. The approved items include the formation of a new Discipleship Leadership Team, a call to action on Immigration Reform, a new Covenant of Affiliation with Hillcrest Family Services, the 2011 budget and the closing of the Bay City UMC, which was formed in 1889.

Action Item 1	Local Church Camping Coordinator	Approved*
Action Item 2	Camp and Retreat Emphasis Sunday	Approved*
Action Item 3	New Camp Participants	Approved*
Action Item 4	United Methodist Women's Sunday	Approved*
Action Item 5	United Methodist Youth Sunday	Approved*
Action Item 6	Resolution on Lay Speaking Ministries	Approved*
Action Item 7	Designation of Earnings from New Ministries Fund	Approved*
Action Item 8	A Resolution on Health Care in our Social Community	Approved as Amended
Action Item 9	A Resolution on our Economic Community	Approved as Amended
Action Item 10	Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the WI Conference	Approved*
Action Item 11	Resolution on Past Service Annuity Rate	Approved
Action Item 12	Resolution on Minimum Compensation	Approved
Action Item 13	Resolution on 2010 Formal Funding Plan for Pre-1982 Pension Liability	Approved*
Action Item 14	Resolution on 2010 Formal Funding Plan for Retiree Medical Benefits	Approved*
Revised Action Item 15	Proposed Rewrite of Conference Policy 10.10.5: Apportionment Adjustment for New Faith Communities	Approved
Action Item 16	Proposed Addition to Conference Policy 60.4.0: Minimum Parsonage Equipment & Conference Policy 130.1.0: Minimum Standards for Local Churches	Approved

Action Item 17	Proposed Amendment to Conference Rule 3.3.2: Membership of Conference Program Boards	Referred to DLT
Action Item 18	Closing of Bay City United Methodist Church	Approved
Action Item 19	Resolution Regarding Anti-Gay Legislation	Out of Order
Action Item 20	Covenant of Affiliation between Hillcrest Family Services & the Wisconsin Conference of The United Methodist Church	Approved
Revised Action Item 21	Resolutions Related to the Wesley Foundation of Wisconsin, Inc. – Madison	Approved
Action Item 22	Proposed 2011 Conference Budget	Approved
Action Item 23	Proposed Discipleship Leadership Team	Approved
Action Item 24	Conference Budget Reduction Percentage Resolution	Referred to DLT
Action Item 25	Resolution Regarding Our Current Crisis	Points 1 & 2 Approved, Point 3 Ruled Out of Order
Action Item 26	2010 Call to Action on Immigration Reform	Approved as Amended
<i>*Indicates the item was approved on the Consent Agenda.</i>		

Generous Giving at Annual Conference

The Conference attendees demonstrated their willingness to give enthusiastically during several special offerings: \$4,378 for the Central Conference Pension Initiative, \$1,855 for Ministries for Children and Youth in Wisconsin, and \$1,937 for the Dong-Bu Annual Conference of the Korean Methodist Church Scholarship Fund and the Clergy in Transition Fund. The Conference also donated \$5,244 for school books for orphanages in East Angola.

In addition, many participants donated mission items and money, with an estimated total value of more than \$80,000 to help impoverished and disaster-stricken areas both nationally and internationally. Donations included:

- ❖ 2,660 Health Kits
- ❖ 1,388 School Kits
- ❖ 121 School Bags
- ❖ 399 Harbor House Kits
- ❖ 779 Premie Caps
- ❖ 159 Sweaters
- ❖ 149 Layettees
- ❖ 50 Cleaning Buckets
- ❖ 8 Boxes of Tools
- ❖ 2 Prayer Shawls
- ❖ 103 Blankets
- ❖ 8 Seafarers
- ❖ 10 Birth Kits

- ❖ \$ 6,240.73 for Shipping
- ❖ \$ 5,232.25 for Pennies for Angola

The Conference also celebrated the generous giving from UM congregations throughout the state for disaster relief in Haiti (more than \$439,000) and Chile (more than \$14,000).

Conference Statistics Report

Preliminary membership stands at 81,612, down 3% from the previous year. Preliminary worship attendance stands at 37,882 down 2.3% from 2008. Preliminary church school attendance stands at 11,318, down 4.7%.

Next Year

The 2011 Annual Conference session will be at the Chula Vista Resort in the Wisconsin Dells on June 12th-15th.