

The Thirty-Ninth Session
The Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
June 8-11, 2008
Madison Marriott West Conference Center
Bishop Linda Lee, Presiding
Theme: “Love – God, Neighbor, Self” (Luke 10:25-28)

THE WISCONSIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the United Methodist Church met June 8-11, 2008, in Madison, Wisconsin. Bishop Linda Lee, Episcopal leader of the Wisconsin Area, presided, as the gathered clergy and laity marked the 40th Anniversary of the union of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church, the 60th Anniversary of the Advance, the 100th Anniversary of the Social Creed and the 100th Anniversary of the United Methodist Men.

The Clergy Session was called to order at 3:00 PM on Sunday, June 10, with the report of the Board of Ordained Ministry being presented. In addition to approving candidates for ordination, commissioning and retirement, the Clergy Session voted to approve “Guidelines for Continuing Education” that define the minimum expectations for Clergy Continuing Education in the Conference

The Laity Session began at 4:00 PM. Karen McCaa, the guest speaker, was spirit filled, engaging, and inspiring. Her message focused on taking risks, encouraging us to follow our dreams, always loving others, and being true to ourselves. Karen's message moved us to laughter and tears. She further encouraged us to examine our hearts and minds to embrace and engage in Holy conferencing. The Faithful Men, from Crossroad United Methodist Church in Waunakee, filled our hearts with joy as they preformed wonderful, thought provoking music. The Spirit of God was very present as we closed the session, on our feet in praise. Our hearts, minds and souls were filled with God's Spirit.
(Laity Session report contributed by Dorthy Radley.)

WORSHIP SERVICES

The Ordination Service was held at 7:00 PM on Sunday evening, June 8. The Rev. Kelvin Sauls, Director for Congregational Transformation from the General Board of Discipleship, preached an inspiring sermon, “Living a Love Supreme,” based upon John 15:1-17. Six persons were ordained Elders: Kristina Marie Krause Androsky, Sharon Leah Stowe Cook, Cherie A. Forret, Kathleen Linda Cottrell Jury, Jean B. Schmidt, and Markus Wegenast.

Opening Worship with communion was held Monday, June 9, at 10:30 AM. Worship began with the blowing of the Shofar; Native American drumming accompanied the “Prayer to the Four Directions”; Luke 10:25-28 was read in many languages, celebrating the diversity of cultures in Wisconsin. Bishop Linda Lee preached on the topic of “Beyond All Expectation.” The new Social Litany, which had been approved at General Conference, was introduced during worship.

On Tuesday, June 10, at 10:30 AM, the conference gathered for the Memorial Service. Candles were lit and bells sounded in memory of clergy members, clergy spouses, clergy family members, laity of the conference, and family members of persons present who entered the Church Triumphant in the past year.

A Service for Celebration of Ministries, was held Tuesday, June 10 at 7:00 PM, with Bishop April Ullring Larson, Bishop of the LaCrosse Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, preaching. Five persons were commissioned as Probationary Members: Listowel Ayetnsu-Mensah, G. William Beaton, Claudia J. Deede, Eric Nelson, and Patrick W. Schultz. Ten newly licensed Local Pastors were recognized: Candace

Ascher, Kevin Dembinski, Jayneann Gagner, Steven R. Hanusa, Patricia Herdt, Brenda Jahns-Grams, Kenneth f. Markley, Jr. Lucas M. Hernandez Miranda, TyLacey Sims, and Annette Tricker. Nineteen retiring clergypersons were honored: Benito S. P. Agrarap, Davod A. Busker, Elliott J. Bush, Carl R. Doersch, Joan E. Goebel, Laurence R. Boebel, Sandra E. Hamilton, Robert A. Kenas, Jr., Suzanne M. Landis, Patricia E. Lyon, Gloria Esther Miranda, Nancy Lee Moffatt, Donald L. Nickolson, Patricia Ann Nolet, Mark H. Peacock, Penny L. Robbins, Theresa Scherf, Steve J. Ward, and Charles T. Wendt.

The Annual Conference session ended with a brief Closing Worship and Benediction.

FOCUS ON HOLY CONFERENCE

Bishop Susan Hassinger, Bishop of the Albany (New York/Vermont) Episcopal Area, shared three presentations on the art of Holy Conferencing, gave time for table conversations and invited people to share their thoughts, questions and responses to each topic at microphones on the floor of the conference. The three topics were:

“Listening to God; Listening to Each Other.”

“Discernment as Spiritual Practice.”

“Holy Conferencing as Practice.”

As part of the theme of annual conference (Love – God, Neighbor, Self – beyond all expectation) people were invited to stand at various times throughout the conference and tell “Holy Listening Stories” of how they were “neighbored to” or how they had “neighbored” others through various ministries of churches, circuits and other missional ministries of the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

CABINET, LAITY, and STRATEGIC PLANNING ADDRESSES

The Wisconsin Annual Conference has been involved in a Strategic Planning Process, led by Rev. Dan Dick, Research Coordinator for the General Board of Discipleship. The results of the process were reported throughout the days of the Annual Conference. The Cabinet’s address (Nancy Moffatt, Dean of the Cabinet) and the Laity address (Dorothy Radley, Conference Lay Leader) were interwoven with the Strategic Plan report (Sue D’Alessio, Director of Connectional Ministries), along with “testimonies” from lay and circuit ministries, in order to model ways the Conference is working together in collaborative, quality relationships.

GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATION REPORT

Each member of the 2008 General Conference Delegation reported on one day of General Conference. Lisa King announced the delegation’s endorsement of Rev. Jorge Luis Mayorga Solis as a Candidate for election to the Episcopacy. The Annual Conference overwhelmingly affirmed the endorsement.

GREETINGS, PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

Ashley Cone, manager of the on-site Cokesbury Store, presented a check from the United Methodist Publishing House in the amount of \$10,982, representing the Wisconsin Conference’s share of the proceeds from the sales of curriculum and merchandise in 2007. The Conference voted to send this money to the Central Conference Pension Initiative Fund to be used to support pension programs of the central conferences.

Scott Anderson, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, shared information about the work of the council.

Melody Patterson brought greetings from Wiley College (one of eleven historically black colleges affiliated with The United Methodist Church); Dr. Lallene Rector brought greetings from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; Erika Krueger brought greetings from North Central College.

Sheridan Gaines, one of the Lina McCord Black College Fund Summer Interns for 2008, thanked the conference for its 100% support of the Black College Fund.

On behalf of the General Council on Finance and Administration, Lisa King, Director of Finance and Administration of the Wisconsin Conference, presented the “100% General Church Apportionment Support” certificate for 2007, marking nineteen consecutive years of full payment of General Church Apportionments by the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

Sandy Kintner, Chairperson of the Commission on Archives and History, recognized clergy who were marking 25, 50, 60 and more years of service in 2008.

Annual Recognition Awards Recipients:

- Denman Evangelism Award: Dana Saxton (Whitefish Bay UMC); Rev. Greg Jewison
- COSROW Bridge Builder’s Award: Linda Ravelo (Pewaukee); Rev. George Robson
- Disaster Response Committee Love in Action Award: Pam Brownlee (Coulee District)
- Perry Saito Award: Lee and Tom Brown (Madison: First UMC); Rev. Jim Christiansen

The Board of Global Ministries recognized Billie LaBumbard as she retires following eight years of service as Coordinator of Missions (missionbillie) for the Conference.

Rev. Nancy Moffatt was recognized for her six years as District Superintendent (Chippewa-Heartland). Rev. Ann Spindt Henschel was introduced as the new Chippewa-Heartland District Superintendent.

PLENARY ACTION ITEMS

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:	Rule Change – Young Adult Ministries	approved
Action Item 7:	Designation of Earnings from the “new Ministries Fund”	approved
Action Item 8:	Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired/Disabled Clergy	approved
Action Item 9:	Past Service Annuity Rate	approved
Action Item 10:	Minimum Compensation	approved
Action Item 11:	Formal Funding Plan for Pre-1982 Pension Liability	approved
Action Item 12:	Retiree Medicare Supplemental Health Insurance	approved
Action Item 13:	Proposed Policy Changes (related to Action Item 12)	approved
Action Item 14:	Learning, Living & Growing Together	approved
Action Item 15:	Establish a “Conference Faith-Based Safety Task Force”	approved
Action Item 16:	HIV/AIDS Proactive Task Force	approved
Action Item 17:	Celebrating “A Jesus Christmas”	approved
Action Item 18:	Our Response to Global Climate Change	approved as amended
Action Item 19:	Healing, Reconciliation & Rebuilding in Iraq	amended, not approved
Action Item 20:	Discontinuance of Abrams UMC	approved
Action Item 21:	Discontinuance of Lorain UMC	approved
Action Item 22:	Location of 2009 Annual Conference	approved
Action Item 23:	2009 Proposed Budget	approved
Action Item 24:	Allow P&A to set locations for 2010-2012 Annual Conferences	approved

The Conference also celebrated the chartering of the New Hope United Church at DePere, Wisconsin, approved a motion from the floor of the Annual Conference creating a “Task Force for Young Adult Ministries,” And established Partner Relationships with The East Angola Annual Conference and the Wisconsin Native American Ministry for the coming Quadrennium.

OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Clergy in Transition Fund; Dong Bu Conference of the Korean Methodist Church	\$1,585.14
Summer Developers Program; Children & Youth in WI (Rising Sun Camp)	\$1,723.26
New Orleans – Katrina and Wiley College	\$1,590.78
Ministries for the East Angola Conference	\$1,392.26

INGATHERING GIVING TOTALS:

- 373 flood buckets (kept in WI)
- 8,527 preemie caps
- 2,062 school bags
- 223 blankets
- 248 ditty bags (for seafarers)
- 65 medicine chests
- 42 school desks
- \$9,545 for shipping
- \$1,930 phone cards (for seafarers)
- 1,194,211 pennies (our goal was one million) for the Global AIDS Fund (\$11,942)!

Nothing But Nets collected initial pledges of \$18,966 with \$8,126 already given!! This means that we will be sending 1,896 bed nets to protect people from malaria-carrying mosquitoes. New pledges and offerings will continue to be encouraged and accepted!

The 2009 Annual Conference will be at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton, WI on June 14-17, 2009.

Wisconsin Conference Endorses Rev Jorge Luis Mayorga Solis for Bishop

On Wednesday, June 11, the Thirty-Ninth Session of The Wisconsin Annual Conference voted to endorse the Rev. Jorge Luis Mayorga Solis for election to the episcopacy.

United Methodist Bishops are elected at Jurisdictional (regional) Conferences. The North Central Jurisdiction, which includes United Methodists in the Dakotas, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, will meet to elect one bishop from July 15-19 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The newly elected bishop will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher.

Rev. Mayorga has earned high respect, not only within the Wisconsin Conference, but nationally through his denomination wide efforts as a member of the Board of Directors of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, as a Facilitator for the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry and as a Consultant to Annual Conferences establishing Hispanic ministries. He also teaches at Garrett Evangelical for the Course of Study.

Jorge has served as a District Superintendent since 2004 and is now Dean of the Cabinet. He was elected to General Conference in 2004, and was the first clergyperson from Wisconsin elected to the 2008 General Conference Delegation. Rev. Mayorga is also endorsed by MARCHA, the National Hispanic Caucus.

Conference Statistics Report:

Preliminary Membership stands at 87,742; down 2,540 from the previous year.

Preliminary Worship attendance stands at 40,761; down 1,166.

Preliminary Church school attendance stands at 12,568; down 792.

This review was prepared by Sue D'Alessio, Director of Connectional Ministries with the assistance of Kevin Rice Myers, Annual Conference Secretary, Amy Jameson Yackovich, and Lisa King, Director of Finance and Administration.