



Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

CONFERENCE CONNECTIONS

All United Methodist churches are connected through shared mission and ministry and united in their efforts to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world. Check out these news tidbits from the Minnesota Annual Conference, which serves all 350 United Methodist churches in the state.

- **Bishop Ough: Living and dreaming together:** Bishop Bruce R. Ough recently said his heart is broken to see The United Methodist Church so divided and shared his dream: “I dream of a church that is colorful, diverse, and full of love. I dream of a church that is passionately evangelical and transformative in its mission. I dream of a church that is deeply Wesleyan and wonderfully welcoming. I dream of a church that freely and boldly provides space for all who are gifted and called by God.” He acknowledged the cries of lament, anxiety, and anger following General Conference 2019 and pledged to lead the conference to remain focused on making disciples. He advised Minnesota United Methodists: “Do not lose sight of or heart for our first love—the mission of Jesus. In the midst of upheaval, Jesus’ mission remains the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.”
- **2019 Annual Conference—Dare to Reach: Love Boldly!** June 18-20, 2019, St. Cloud. Join us as a voting member or a visitor! Drawing on John 4:1-26, we will look at how Jesus calls us to step out of our comfort zone and reach new people for Christ. We will tell our collective story of how God’s love quenches our thirst, and explore ways to invite everyone to drink from the well so that their thirst is quenched. It will be a meaningful time of worship, learning, and discerning. Register by May 15 for the best rates. Learn more: www.minnesotaumc.org/annualconference

- **Volunteer for General Conference 2020:** Have you heard? The Dakotas-Minnesota Area is hosting the 2020 United Methodist General Conference, which will bring thousands of siblings in Christ from around the world to Minneapolis from May 5-15. The host team is looking for volunteers of all ages, interests, and abilities to extend radical hospitality to guests. Learn more and indicate your interest in volunteering: <https://gc2020welcome.org>

BRIGHT SPOTS IN OUR MIDST

- **Minnesota lay speaker delivers 500th sermon:** Back in 2004, Jack Rogers’ pastor told him he was going to start preaching at a senior living complex. “There’s got to be someone more qualified than me,” he recalls telling Rev. Rachel McIver Morey, who now serves Northfield UMC. But she insisted that he was up for the task. So after Rogers accompanied her a few times and watched her preach, he reluctantly delivered a sermon himself and eventually went through lay speaker training. Now, 15 years later, Rogers recently completed his 500th lay sermon. “The more success I have, the better the example Christ is making me for other people,” he said. “I’m not educated, I’m not good-looking, I’m not athletic, I’m not well-spoken, I’m not well-dressed. I’m as plain and ordinary as you can get...If I can do it, anyone can do it.”
- **Lydia Project exceeds pledge goal:** For the past year, nearly 200 churches across the Dakotas-Minnesota Area have been creating beautiful, hand-made purple scarves for General Conference 2020 participants as a gesture of welcome. This initiative, called the Lydia Project (after Lydia in Acts 16), aims to provide warm hospitality to all who join in the work of legislation, fellowship, and worship when our global connection meets in Minneapolis in May 2020. The number of scarves pledged recently exceeded the ambitious 10,000 goal! Thanks be to God!

STAY CONNECTED!

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