



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 360 United Methodist churches in the state.

- **Area makes 13,000 scarves for General Conference visitors:** Hundreds of United Methodists across the Dakotas-Minnesota Area and beyond have participated in the Lydia Project (after Lydia in Acts 16)—which will provide every delegate, bishop, visitor, and volunteer with a handmade purple scarf when they arrive in Minneapolis next May for the denomination’s quadrennial gathering. Participants have collectively made roughly 13,000 scarves, which will be given to all who attend General Conference 2020, regardless of their role. “What I have learned through this experience is to not put limits on God’s extravagance,” said Rev. MaryAnne Korsch, who coordinated the Lydia Project and initially hoped for 5,000 scarves. “It’s a tangible reminder that we love and serve a God who gives without limits. God’s extravagance is for everybody.” Thank you to all who have participated in this effort to provide radical hospitality to our siblings in Christ!
- **Navigating this liminal time:** Many have named this era in the life of The United Methodist Church a liminal one. Something has ended; a new thing has not yet fully emerged. It is disorienting as what is familiar fades away and what is to be is not yet clear, said Rev. Cindy Gregorson, Minnesota Conference director of ministries. She points out that there are no quick fixes, and this is a time of listening and learning. Drawing from author Gil Rendle,

she suggests the questions we need to hold in this season are: How will we now be with God? And how will we now be with one another? “Liminal times are messy and can be anxiety-producing for those of us who have a hard time with the unknown,” she said. “But this is where God shines. We are invited to enter into the mystery of this holy, creative work, and listen deeply for what God is up to.”

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### BRIGHT SPOTS IN OUR MIDST

- **Youth explore what it means to follow Jesus at The Event:** When we choose to follow Jesus, we have a new perspective and a new mission in the world. This is the message that 300 youth (and chaperones) explored in early November when they gathered in St. Cloud for “The Event,” an annual conference youth gathering that drew people from 32 churches. “I hope these youth understand that following Jesus is a choice you make,” said Youth Ministry Co-chair Sami Tierney. “When you choose to follow Jesus, you’re a new creation and it impacts how you care about people and how you show up in the world. I want these students to know they have an opportunity to live that out every day.”
- **Recovering Love Church transforms lives:** Recovering Love Church in Richfield, which specifically targets those recovering from addiction, launched public worship seven weeks ago. “The most important thing I’ve learned at this church is that I am powerless over the fact of God’s love for me,” said Michael Coyne, a recovering alcoholic who recently joined both the faith community and its launch team. “I have a stronger connection to God now than I ever have in my life.” Rev. Brad Herman hopes that as the church becomes more established, it connects with clinical treatment centers and becomes an extension of their work.

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