



Kalamazoo District

West Michigan Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Grace to You and Peace in the Name of Jesus Christ,

I don't know about you, but I actually enjoyed Church Conference season last year. What was good, for me anyway, was getting the opportunity to witness firsthand that United Methodist Churches in Southwest Michigan are yet alive. All that I observed provided a counterpoint to the litany of decline that so often echoes in the halls where denominational officials live and work and plan redistricting. And while laments over things lost and times past are not in short supply throughout the Kalamazoo District, there is also evidence that God's people are learning to sing a new song. My prayer for this coming year is that all of our congregations can find reason to join in the refrain and my plan is for the District to offer opportunities to connect, equip, exhort, and evaluate pastors and congregations so that churches become mission areas that transform their communities.

An opportunity to participate in the evaluative part of this process is offered in the work of our annual Church Conferences. The necessary forms are available for download from resources.michiganumc.org. If you need assistance accessing these forms, please contact the District Office as soon as possible. **Your original SIGNED and COMPLETED forms are due in the District Office 10 days prior to your Church Conference.** Because of confidentiality issues, please send hard copies via postal mail. Although you may assign completion of these forms to various leaders in your congregation, it is your responsibility as the administrative officer of your congregation to ensure that the forms are completed on time.

Enclosed you will find the Church Conference Schedule for 2017. The suggested agenda for your Church Conference is also enclosed. If there are additional items that need to come before the congregation, please let the District Office know 10 days in advance of the date of your Church Conference.

It is the responsibility of the presiding Elder for this Church Conference to assure that all persons present can speak to the issue (non-member included), but that voting will be permissible only for members of the congregation. Proxy votes are not permissible (§246.6 2016 Book of Discipline). The West Michigan Conference Chancellor has notified all Superintendents that when voting on financial and corporate matters, persons under the age of 18 may not vote.

I am looking forward to seeing you face to face. And, I'm eager to hear how the Spirit of the Living God is leading you and the church(es) you serve to witness to Jesus Christ through acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion so that the old, old story sounds like a new, new song to a world eager to hear the Good News.

God's Peace,

Rev. Dwayne E. Bagley,
District Superintendent

Encl: 2017 Church Conference Schedule
2017 Church Conference Agenda