



Today's highlights

- 8:30 AM Worship
- 10:15 AM Legislation
- 2:00 PM Celebrating Ministry
- 4:00 PM Legislation
- 7:00 PM Legislation

 **82° SUNNY**

*“Gather up the
fragments that are
leftover”*

-John 6:12 *NRSV*

WHAT DO WE HAVE?

By Kay DeMoss, Senior Writer/Editor

Conference members learned a little bit of Swahili on Friday morning, taught to them by the preacher of the day, Rev. Eric Mulanda: Sifu Mungu! (Praise God!) Now Associate Pastor of Lansing: Mt Hope UMC, Eric comes to the Michigan Annual Conference by way of his birthplace (DR Congo) and his call to ministry (Africa University). He began by thanking the West Michigan Conference for their support in his theological training (G-ETS). “I stand here today as your brother in Christ,” he said.

Using his personal experience as an agriculturalist in Zimbabwe, and using four passages of scripture, Eric proclaimed: “for us to gather up the abundance, we are called to use what we have.” From John’s account of the Feeding of the 5,000, Eric commented: “The disciples could miss the miracles. They had a habit of sending people away.” Then he asked, “How long are we going to send people away?”

Pondering a story from 2 Kings of Elisha and the widow, Eric asserted, “Let’s come together as a conference,” and then asked, “What do we have that God can start the miracles? Are we ready to use what we’ve got?” And from the story told in Acts of Peter and John encountering the crippled man at the gate: “All that they have is the Name of Jesus and the man rises up and walks. What do we have? We have Jesus Christ in us. With him we are rich.”

NEW SPACES IN MICHIGAN

By Mark Doyal, Director of Communications

The United Methodist Church has challenged each annual conference to launch 13 new churches, 127 new faith communities and 1,269 new small groups by 2020.



Michigan Area Director of New Church Development, Rev. Dirk Elliot, reported to the Annual Conference how the committees of the Detroit and West Michigan Conferences are well on their way to meeting this goal in Michigan.

New churches and faith communities are being launched using a broad range of approaches. The goal is to create unique worship experiences that meet people where they live and attract those who might not attend a traditional church service.

At Buddies Grill in Holt, Lansing-based Sycamore Creek launched “Church in a Pub,” and Bay City Grace launched Levi’s Table at the Uptown Grill, offering food, faith, and friendship. In addition to launching services in new venues, both of these churches also adopted other faith communities in Potterville and Freemont Avenue in Bay City, utilizing a multisite approach with a common mission, vision, values, and culture.

Elliot encouraged congregations interested in expanding to contact him in 2017.

SWEET TWEET #MIUMC17



Devon Herrell @devtheumrev · 4h
Journeying to the Promise Land? NO, just lunch. #MIUMC17



THE ANGEL OF THE AREA

By Kay DeMoss, Senior Writer/Editor

Susan Beaumont returned to the Governors’ Hall Friday afternoon to conclude her teaching on the topic, “Tending the Soul during liminal times.” In her first presentation, she spoke of the importance of “standing still and letting the Holy Spirit work through us.” However, today she added, “If you only stand and wonder, you don’t last very long.” She went on to offer four ways to act as “agents of the divine spark.”

She spoke of “the angel” of the church as the unique spirit that inhabits a congregation or conference in the way spoken of in the Book of Revelation. It is the “truest self” of the institution.



Beaumont suggested four practices that keep us from “crashing through the woods, scaring the soul away.”

First, Deepening of Discernment: “Discernment assumes those with an open spirit can intuit the will of God. It happens best in the community. Discernment is hard work, requiring richer prayer.”

Second, Shaping Memory: “How is the conference talking about itself as things are shifting? Unearth these stories then bring them back into organizational life and ask, ‘Whose truth is this?’”

Third, Clarifying Vocation: “Much is unsettled in a liminal season. It is important to articulate our God-given identity that will provide stability during a disturbance. Missional Identity + Core Values + Strategic Priorities clarify an organization’s unique calling and create vibrancy.”

Fourth, Engaging Emergence: “This process starts when something stops working (that makes us uncomfortable) and continues to disruption. When a system recognizes disruption and yields to it, that’s when innovation starts.”

Susan Beaumont concluded her teaching with a poem, “Patient Trust,” by Teilhard de Chardin, ending: “Give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.”