



Pre-Conference activities on May 30 included a 5K Run-Walk-Elliptigo competition sponsored by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Rev. Ryan Edwardson (right) of Escanaba FUMC placed first. Over \$2,500 was raised. ~mic photo/Hannah Hazen

Today's Highlights

- 10:00 AM Opening Worship
- 1:30 PM Clergy Session
- 1:30 PM Laity Session
- 4:30 PM Plenary Session
- 7:30 PM Legislative Committees
- 9:00 PM 50th Anniversary Reception

 **77° CLOUDY**

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

- LUKE 10:27 *NRSV*

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT THE STARTING LINE

ACME, Mich. (MIC) – Visitors and members gather once again at Grand Traverse Resort for The Michigan Annual Conference in session May 31 – June 3, 2018. It promises to be one for the record books. “We gather together in 2018 in an historic time for United Methodism,” said Bishop David Bard. “For Michigan United Methodists who have long shared a resident bishop but have lived in two conferences, this is the final meeting as separate entities.”

The theme is ENGAGEwith and much of the focus of the four-day agenda will be on relationships. District gatherings, various legislative actions, conversations with new staff members and introduction of a new model for mission engagement all will help ready the state’s United Methodists to live into the new Michigan Conference on July 1.

This Conference will also mark another significant moment in The United Methodist Church. A 50th Anniversary Cake Reception will be held on Thursday evening to commemorate the golden anniversary of the denomination, which was born when The Methodists and The Evangelical United Brethren united in 1968.

In addition to looking back, Conference members will also have an opportunity to look ahead. Bishop Bard remarks, “We gather, aware of the potential impact of the special session of the General Conference in 2019.” A Question and Answer time with the bishop, “Regarding the Commission on A Way Forward” is scheduled for Saturday evening.

STARTING continued on back



Rev. David Kim seems pleased with his longest drive prize at the 2018 Golf Scramble. The 4-person event raised \$1250 to support Campus Ministries. ~photo/Richard Burstall



(Right to left) Alma Hopson and Jennifer Rodgers greet Rev. Dr. Tara Sutton. ~mic photo/Hannah Hazen

STARTING continued on back

The Rev. Benton Heisler, Director of Connectional Ministry for The Michigan Conference, summed it up. "I pray we do not take our eyes off the primary task of 'Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.' Disciple making and world transformation are both complicated, strategic and life changing. That is the greatest gift we can offer the world. We are in countless places with a capacity to influence millions of people. The world needs the healing message the Hope of the Gospel brings."



This year's Corporate Session (held Friday morning) will witness the closing of nine congregations in Michigan. These churches have left a legacy in ministry.

The Church of Jesus Christ is a living, breathing body which fortunately for all of us still contains the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its prophetic message of justice and compassion. Our 800 Michigan United Methodist Churches embody this mission and ministry in so many powerful ways.

But over time, some of our beloved congregations have struggled with mission and ministry, often severely affected by changes in demographics, local economic conditions and natural life cycles. Some Michigan congregations over the last year have not been able to sustain vibrant ministry in the United Methodist tradition. They have great histories of nurturing members and serving their community, but the Bishop, the Cabinet and the various District Board of Church Location and Building have determined that these churches no longer serve the purpose for which they were organized.

The members may transfer their membership to other United Methodist churches, and the appropriate bodies are handling disposition of church buildings and other assets. We trust, that even in death and transition, the seeds that they have planted will bear fruit for the kingdom of God.

Here is the list of the churches being closed at Corporate Session on Friday:

1. Dearborn Heights Warren Valley
2. Melvindale New Hope
3. Flint Lincoln Park
4. Flint Eastwood
5. Ruby
6. Laurium
7. West Mendon
8. Traverse City Christ
9. Vermontville

Members of The Michigan Conference add their prayers and thanks during this time of transition.