



Pre-Conference activities on May 31 included a 5K Run-Walk-Elliptigo competition sponsored by the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. Over \$2,125 was raised for Hurricane Relief in Haiti.

Today's highlights

- 10:00 AM Opening Worship
- 1:30 PM Clergy Session
- 2:00 PM Laity Session
- 4:30 PM Plenary Session
- 5:30 PM Welcome Bishop BBQ
- 7:30 PM Plenary Session
- 7:40 PM Susan Beaumont teaching

 **70° SUNNY**

*“And all ate
and were
filled”*

- Mark 6:42 *NRSV*

AC AT THE STARTING LINE

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (MIC) --Some ran. Some walked. Some pedaled. And others simply motored to Traverse City for the 2017 Annual Conference, which promises to be a time for making some holy history for the followers of Jesus Christ and John Wesley in the state of Michigan. The theme is, “Gather UP;” and that gathering includes a new bishop, a new venue, new rules to live by, and building a new foundation for life together as one Michigan Conference.

Nichea Guy, Chair of the Michigan Annual Conference Program Committee, said, “I would like to welcome members and visitors to this time full of excitement and opportunity.” Guy noted that Traverse City is “A beautiful place to bless where the Detroit and West Michigan Conferences have come thus far,” and continues, “I hope everyone will be in that place of oneness when they leave this Sunday.”

Why Traverse City? For starters, few locations in the state can handle a group the size of the Michigan Conference. Also, Guy cites other factors that guided the decision of venue. “This site upholds the Social Justice Principles United Methodists value,” Guy explained. “Fair pay, green standards, a whole list of things.” Also, the 2017 Annual Conference continues in the spirit of Repentance and Reconciliation with Native American peoples begun last year. An honoring of local tribal elders will take place before business gets Thursday underway. (See story on page 2.)

“It’s awesome to put people together to nurture new relationships,” Guy concluded. “This will be a time of letting go of some traditions and creating new traditions.”



Terry Wildman, pastor of Northport Indian Mission United Methodist Church, participated in the Act of Repentance and Reconciliation at the 2016 Michigan Annual Conference. ~mic photo/Jeremy Africa

AC SCRAMBLES TO RAISE FUNDS



The 4-Person Golf Scramble held at Grand Traverse Resort earned \$1,600 for Campus Ministries of the Michigan Area. It was won by Dave Hill, Tim Lurkins, Wes Williams, and Tom Beesley with a score of 60.

THEY WERE HERE FIRST

An Act of Repentance and Reconciliation with Indigenous People was a highlight of the 2016 Michigan Annual Conference in East Lansing. The spirit of that unique experience lives on this year at the opening business session at 4:30 pm. AC Program Chair, Nichea Guy, reminds members that this Up North Annual Conference is meeting on tribal ground.

“So we will begin with an honoring of the culture and traditions of the area,” Guy said. Bishop David Bard will greet tribal Elders of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa Indians on behalf of the Michigan Area. Tribal Council Chair, Sam McClellan, and one of the tribe’s leading elders, Tom Peters, will be gifted with Pendleton blankets. An offering of tobacco will be made to others present from United Methodist Native American ministries around the state.

“This is the first time the Annual Conference session has included something like this,” Nichea remarked. “This is a way to live into our commitments. It’s not just for show.” The Program Committee acknowledges that too often these brothers and sisters are “invisible citizens and we need to turn that around by showing respect and honor.”

There are two bodies in the Michigan Area with a focus on first peoples of Michigan: the Indian Workers Conference of the West Michigan Conference and Detroit Conference CONAM (Committee on Native American Ministries).



Annual Conference Program Chair Nichea Ver-Veer Guy

Members have the opportunity to become better acquainted with several of the nine Indian Mission churches in Michigan while attending Annual Conference. On Friday evening three congregations are offering meal options: Greensky Hill, Northport, and Kewadin. There’s free transportation available, and a freewill offering will be received at each site to support Native Ministry. Check at the registration table to sign up for a unique dining opportunity that will benefit others. Full details are found on page 46 of the Program Guide.