



Today's highlights

- 8:30 AM Legislative Committees
- 10:30 AM Worship
- 2:00 PM Plenary
- 4:00 PM Susan Beaumont Teaching
- 5:30 PM Recess & Evening Free

 **72° CLOUDY**

*“In the name of
Jesus Christ, stand
up and walk.”*

-Acts 3:6 *NRSV*

CALLED TO BE A BASKET

By Kay DeMoss, Senior Writer/Editor

Bishop David A. Bard made his Annual Conference debut in Michigan on June 1, 2017. The Opening Worship began remembering pastors, spouses, and laity who died since members last met. This was the first time that the Memorial Services of the Detroit and West Michigan Conferences were celebrated together, made visible on stage through the weaving of individual cloth strips into a tapestry of memory and love.

There was time to acknowledge that the 2017 Annual Conference represents a “new day” for United Methodists in the state, with elements of both anticipation and apprehension. Members had the opportunity to express “what-ifs” on cards collected at the close.

Bishop Bard brought a breath of grace into the hall with his remarks, which began, “This is the first time I get to stand before all of you gathered in one place together. And you’re all looking pretty good!” He then introduced a motif for the Conference, “We will talk a lot about baskets this week.” From there he began a commentary on Mark’s account of the Feeding of the 5,000. “Jesus’ disciples are anxious, starved, scared basket cases, concerned over scarcity and the sense of lacking.”

Then Jesus asks the question of the disciples, who were stymied over feeding

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THE WONDER OF STANDING STILL

By Kay DeMoss, Senior Writer/Editor



The Rev. Susan Beaumont, a native of Troy, Michigan, returned to her home state as the lead teacher for the 2017 Michigan Annual Conference. Susan's topic was, "Leading in a Liminal Season." A consultant and spiritual director with years of experience with the Alban Institute, Beaumont first defined liminality: "a transitory space, betwixt and between." Today the denomination, the country, the conference, and personal lives exist in between something that is ending and something that has not yet begun.

Quoting theologian Richard Rohr, she explained, "Liminality is a space we hate to occupy but it's where the biblical God is continually taking us." Addressing the group of leaders in the room as 21st century incarnations of Adam & Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Beaumont outlined what type of leadership is needed for such a time. This different kind of leadership is necessary in order for "god to work with us to do remarkable things."

Basically what's needed is to "stand still and let the Holy Spirit work through us." She outlined opportunities: 1) Communitas; 2) rediscovery of core identity; 3) shedding what no longer fits; and 4) a deepened capacity for discernment. There are also threats: 1) anxiety; 2) denial; 3) shifting power dynamics; and 4) fear that nothing will remain.

"Leading with presence" requires a movement away from knowing to a stance of unknowing; a movement from advocating to deep intense attending; and moving away from striving to a stance of surrender. Leading with presence allows organizations to leave behind judgment, cynicism, and fear and to experience "a fresh breath of creativity that emerges with letting go."

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the crowd-- "What do you have?" From there, "The disciples become baskets of grace, broken open, blessed by Jesus ... The compassion of Jesus is contagious." Bishop Bard encouraged individuals and churches to become baskets of-and-for grace. "God smiles when God's love becomes real to someone in Jesus."

The bishop concluded with the confident hope that the new Michigan Conference will itself be a basket of-and-for grace." Why? Because the world needs grace in abundance. A final prayer before the Service of Holy Communion: "A Tisket, a Tasket, God make of us a basket. If I'm going to be a basket case, that's the kind of basket case I want to be."

A NEW CONFERENCE BY DESIGN



God is doing a new thing among us. That was the core message of Michigan Conference Design Team Co-Chairs, Rev. Marsha Woolley and Rev. Glenn Wagner to the Annual Conference. The chairs introduced members of the Design Team, along with the proposed structure for the new Michigan Conference. The structure focuses on equipping the local church through vibrant congregations, Christ-centered mission and ministry, and bold and effective leaders. Following more than two years of discernment and more than a dozen public listening sessions, the Design Team determined the new conference will be best served moving to a 9-district model. The proposal recommends that districts will be supported by a new group of directors selected by the bishop. Tomorrow, members will meet in legislative sessions and vote on structure items. Full details are found at Design.MichiganUMC.org.

SWEET TWEET #MIUMC17



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Bishop Bard is a basket case #MIUMC17 #msuwesley

