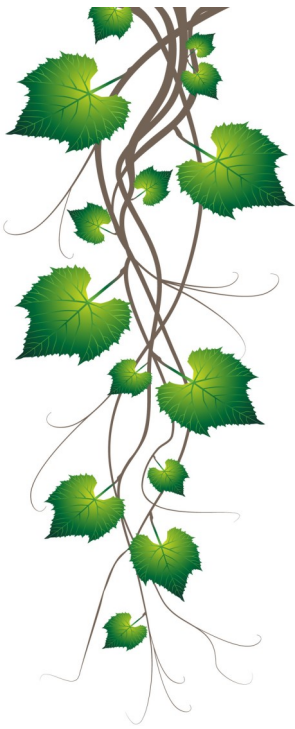


The Arbor Vine

Ann Arbor District of The United Methodist Church
Rev. Mark E. Spaw, District Superintendent



March 2018

O, THAT'S AN EASY ONE!

I hope that your Lenten journey so far has been filled with spiritual insights, awakenings and great revelations. It will soon be Easter and our Lenten journey, a deep look within ourselves, will, I hope, be just beginning to reveal where we need to go and who will lead us. The season of Lent is a wonderful time to reexamine the things we thought we knew and be accepting of the new insights that God can bring.

It is funny the things we think we know. As a matter of fact, we are quite sure of many things. They seem so obvious, so simple. We might find ourselves saying, "O, that's and easy one!"

Let me ask you a couple of 'easy ones' and see how you do.

- 1) How long did the hundred year war last?
 - 2) Which country makes Panama hats?
 - 3) What color is a purple finch?
 - 4) What has Lent taught you?
 - 5) What will you bring to the Easter event in your life?
- (answers at bottom)



The
Season
of
Lent



See, you didn't know as much as you thought. As we come together for the worship and celebration of the Easter event in our lives, my hope is that we will be open to new knowledge and awareness of God in our lives, at its very center. I hope that we will have the courage in this season of Lent, to seek God's will in new and open ways and look at things we thought we knew and not say, "O, that's an easy one," but rather, "Maybe I should look a little closer, a little deeper, just to be sure!"

As we continue this season of Lent together, as a community of faith, I know that we will face our struggles and joys together. As we move from a reflective Ash Wednesday to joyful Palm Sunday to solemn Maundy Thursday and Good Friday to the celebration of Easter, the struggles and joys of Lent are many and will, if allowed, shape our faith and understanding of God's grace in our lives.

I recently received an email that shared these thoughts:

When you've trusted God and walked his way,
 When you've felt His hand lead you day by day,
 But your steps now take you another way...START OVER!
 When you think you're finished and want to quit,
 When you've bottomed out in life's deepest pit,
 When you've tried and tried to get out of it...START OVER!
 When you've prayed to God so you'll know His will,
 When you've prayed and prayed and you don't know still,
 When you want to stop because you've had your fill...START OVER!

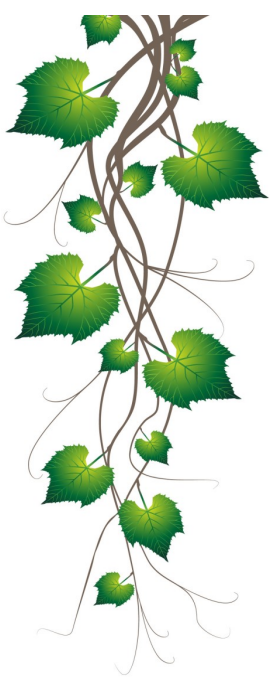
The Lenten season lets us all START OVER!

Starting Over,

Rev. Mark E. Spaw

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MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- 7 David Arnesen
- 8 John Grenfell, III
- 8 Susan Sharai
- 10 Doug & Marianne McMunn
- 10 Dennis Vergowven
- 12 Christopher Butson
- 14 David McKinstry
- 17 Matthew Hook
- 18 Carolyn Harris
- 18 Joyce Weiss
- 21 Lynét Gruenberg
- 21 Gwen Nagy
- 24 Sue Rice
- 26 Beverly Forsyth
- 27 Lisa England
- 30 Kenny Walkup

NEWSWORTHY AND IMPORTANT

ORGANIZATIONAL CONFERENCE—APRIL 27 AT 6:30 PM

There's a Friday night celebration of the coming together of the Albion and Ann Arbor districts. The event will be led by Rev. Elizabeth Hill, the incoming District Superintendent. Rev. Dale Miller (current Albion District DS) and Rev. Mark Spaw will also be attending. We will fellowship with others, choose the name of our new district (see article below) and discuss and choose our district officers and leaders and set the budget. The evening will be hosted by Jackson First UMC located at 275 West Michigan Avenue in Jackson.

ALBION DISTRICT-ANN ARBOR DISTRICT-DISTRICT 8. WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Some of the suggestions we have received include Covenant, Unity, Trinity, and Textile District. Take a look at the boundary lines, counties, the shape of the mitten (or hand) and offer a suggestion. Go to aadistrict.org and click on District Boundaries Report. Send suggestions to Dar McGee at aadisumc@sbcglobal.net.

SPRING LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES

Spring Lay Servant classes are Saturday, April 7 and Saturday, April 21 at Brighton UMC. There are Basic, Refresher and Advanced Classes. Advanced classes include Growing Spiritually, Lay Pastoral Care-Giving and Life Together in the United Methodist Connection. Brochures have been mailed to churches or click the following link to view/print the brochure and for registration information.

<http://aadistrict.org/layservant.html>

PARSONAGE GUIDELINES

In the back of the Book of Discipline there are several paragraphs listed under Parsonage which provide guidelines when a local church provides a parsonage for the clergy person appointed to their church. There is also a printable guideline available on the district web site. Everything from doing a yearly walkthrough to number of bathrooms to providing housing that is adequate for the clergy person. To have information about the parsonage readily available it has been suggested that keeping a large binder in the parsonage with the receipts, owner manuals, trustee contact information, map of the area, etc., is very helpful.

NEW BEGINNINGS SEMINAR

If your church will have a new pastor appointed please plan to attend one of the New Beginnings Seminars for a healthier transition. The dates are March 15 or 17 at Frankenmuth UMC or May 17 or 19 at Rochester: St. Paul's UMC. The brochure contains details about which session you should attend as well as registration information. Please go to aadistrict.org.

MINISTRY MENTORS

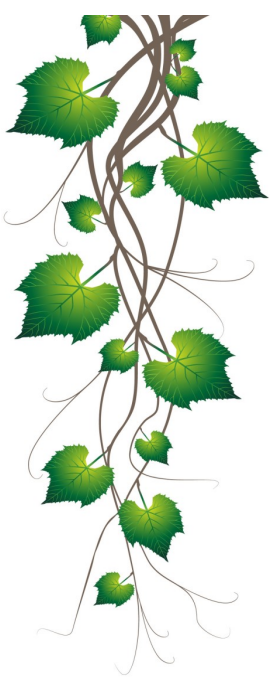
Are you in search of a confidential mentoring relationship? A team of experienced United Methodist clergy serve as clergy mentors and a mentor is available to you free of charge as Michigan United Methodist clergy support colleagues in ministry through Ministry Mentors. Learn more at ministrymentors.org or by contacting Rev. Sherry Parker-Lewis at sherry@brightonfumc.org.

EZRA ~ CONTINUE UPDATES FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

Please remember to update your leadership in Ezra as this information is pertinent to the district and conference. Please use the links below for assistance:

<http://support.michiganumc.org/knowledge-base/church-dashboard-screencast/>

<http://support.michiganumc.org/knowledge-base/church-dashboard-manual/>



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REGISTER NOW FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018

Members of the Michigan Conference are preparing to gather for the 2018 Michigan Annual Conference at the Grand Traverse Resort & Spa, May 31-June 3. “ENGAGE with” will bring together these two annual conferences in Northern Michigan for a historic gathering of worship and fellowship. Historic because this will be the last time the Detroit Annual Conference and the West Michigan Annual Conference will meet as separate organizations. On January 1, 2019 life together as The Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church begins. Information and registration can be found at 2018.michiganumc.org.

TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH BISHOP DAVID BARD

Two conversations with Bishop David Bard are scheduled for this spring. Come speak and listen.

“How do we have difficult conversations in The United Methodist Church?” That is a question Bishop David Alan Bard raises as United Methodists across Michigan share hopes, dreams and concerns about the ministry of the church with those who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgendered, or queer.

At the 2016 General Conference of The United Methodist Church, delegates approved a proposal from the Council of Bishops to form a commission to explore how the church might live with grace with one another in light of significant differences on LGBTQ inclusion. In November 2016, the Council of Bishops asked each resident bishop to organize conversation in their area parallel to the work of the Commission on a Way Forward.

In keeping with that charge, Bishop Bard met with groups of persons around the state during 2017. He noted in his invitation, “It is my expectation that as followers of Jesus we will gather to listen deeply to each other and take from these Weaving the Future conversations not only a more profound understanding of both shared values and differences, but also a renewed commitment to compassionate, intelligent and courageous conversation even when topics are difficult.”

Now Bishop Bard has scheduled the last two conversations that will take place from 7:00 pm—9:00 pm before the special General Conference in February 2019: March 19-Saginaw: First UMC, 4590 Gratiot Rd., Saginaw

April 16-Grayling, Michelson Memorial UMC, 400 E Michigan Ave., Grayling

Those interested in learning more about the official position of The United Methodist Church on human sexuality can visit <http://www.umc.org/topics/topic-human-sexuality-homosexuality>.

ANN ARBOR FIRST UMC ~ PILGRIMAGE OF HOPE

Over the course of the Lenten season, the congregation at Ann Arbor First United Methodist Church has been prayerfully considering their Pilgrimage of Hope as we journey to the resurrection. Congregation members are using the Stations of the Resurrection (borrowed from the Stations of the Cross) as the lens for expressing how we find hope in the Passion story, and in our present lives, when hopelessness seems to abound in our country. Artists are working on their projects and the exhibit will soon be installed in our Social Hall. We invite you to find out more about our project and sign up to see the exhibit through the link below.

<https://tinyurl.com/fumc-a2-pilgrimage>

NORTH LAKE UMC ~ EGG SUPPER

The 142nd Annual Egg Supper will be held at North Lake United Methodist Church on Friday, March 23 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. They will be serving omelets, baked beans, potatoes, deviled eggs, salads, rolls, pie and coffee. The church is handicap accessible and is located at 14111 North Territorial Road in Chelsea. A free-will offering will benefit camp and mission scholarships and the building fund. Contact: Sharon 734-475-7569

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Return Service Requested



The Arbor Vine
