

# The Arbor Vine

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



## May 2018

### YEARS OF WISDOM, THANK GOD!

As I write my second to the last Spaw's Paws article I really don't want to begin to say, "good bye" yet. In fact, you can be sure that next month I will not be saying, "good bye," but rather, "see you later." In July of 2010 I began my work in Ann Arbor as the new Ann Arbor District Superintendent for the Detroit Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Since then, I have been pleased, honored and greatly privileged to be your pastor and District Superintendent. In these closing days be sure that my first priority is the Ann Arbor District and in that spirit I will continue to be your pastor. That means I will not go "quietly into the night," but rather do as I have for the past eight years...share with you, the good folks of the Ann Arbor District, what is edifying, spirit-led and what gives glory to God. Here is this month's attempt.

Some things I've learned through the years, from experience, God and you:

I learned I like people who cry when they sing Silent Night (age 6)

I learned you can't hide a piece of liver in a glass of milk (age 9)

I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up (age 15)

I learned that Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life (age 18)

I learned that kindness is a gift that must be returned (age 23)

I learned not to drink downstream from the herd (age 27)

I learned I'm a slow learner (age 27)

I learned, although it is hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents were strict, loving parents with me. I told you I'm a slow learner (age 30)

I've learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it (age 35)

I learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours (age 40)

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights (age 43)

I learned that with God there is ALWAYS a second chance (age 47)

I learned that when I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision (age 48)

I learned not to squat with my spurs on (ouch!). (My ability to learn increased greatly) (age 51)

I've learned it is ALWAYS important to be more loving than to always be right (age 56)

I've learned that everyone can use prayer (I guess I have always known this, but now I believe it!)

I've learned prayer makes a difference! (age 58)

I have learned that even when I have pains, I don't need to be one (age 60)

By the Grace of God, I've learned that I have a lot to learn (today)

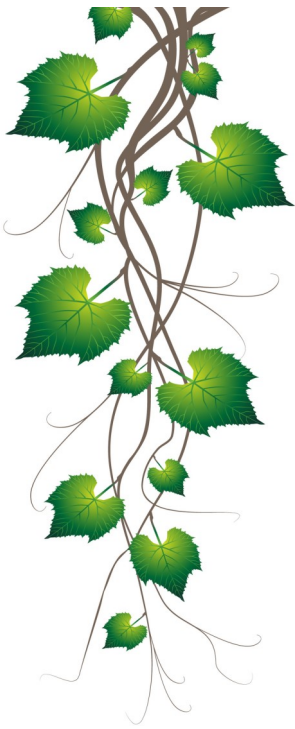
The good folks of the Ann Arbor District have taught me much about love, patience, understanding, kindness, caring, faithfulness, Godliness, dedication, appreciation, and myself.

THANK YOU!

Thanking God for You,

*Mark*

Looking forward to greeting you at my farewell party on June 10 at 3:00 pm at Saline First UMC, 1200 N. Ann Arbor Street in Saline.



Ann Arbor District of the  
United Methodist Church  
900 S 7th St., Ste. 1  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Email: [dmcgee@michiganumc.org](mailto:dmcgee@michiganumc.org)

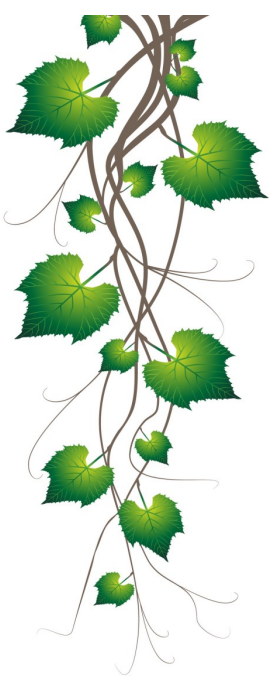
Website: [www.aadistrict.org](http://www.aadistrict.org)

Phone: 734-663-3939

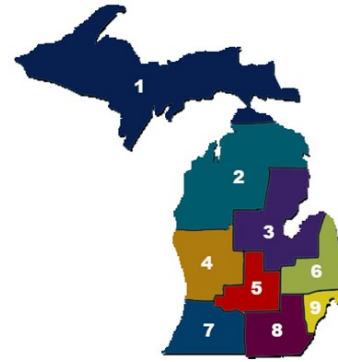
Fax: 734-663-1990

Administrator: Dar McGee





# NEWSWORTHY AND IMPORTANT



## DISTRICT 8 IS NOW THE HERITAGE DISTRICT

April 27 was an exciting evening of our new district coming together for the Organizing Conference at Jackson: First UMC. The evening opened with a time of fellowship and refreshments, provided by Roxie Brafford and Judy Licking and their volunteer kitchen staff. Then Donna Brooks, one of the organists for Jackson First, provided gathering music along with Belle Canto, the women's ensemble from Jackson First. Rev. Elizabeth Hill introduced the Vision Team for the District. Along with Rev. Hill, Rev. Dale Miller and Rev. Mark Spaw read the names of the 84 charges (102 churches) that are included in the Her-



itage District. As the names were read, Rev. Mary Hagley lit a candle for each of the 84 charges (see photo). The congregation prayed, sang, voted, had communion, and worshipped as one district. The program ended on a high note with music led by the Highland UMC Praise Team. The staff at Jackson First showed radical hospitality with special thanks to Dawn Doerr, Tim Meunier, Jim Oldenburg and CJ Oldenburg. And to Max Waagner, our Lay Leader and exceptional host at Jackson First, a huge shout

of THANK YOU, for the way you extended above and beyond to make the evening run as smoothly as possible. This evening could not have happened without the teamwork from many folks.

## DISTRICTS OF THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE NAMED

Eight of the nine new districts of The Michigan Conference have held Organizational Conferences to chose leadership team and select district names. The districts will be fully functioning by July 1, 2018. The new districts are:

District 1 — <b>Northern Skies District</b>	Superintendent Scott Harmon
District 2 — <b>Northern Waters District</b>	Superintendent Anita Hahn
District 3 — <b>Central Bay District</b>	Superintendent David Kim
District 4 — <b>Midwest District</b>	Superintendent Margie Crawford
District 5 — <b>Mid-Michigan District</b>	Superintendent Jerome DeVine
District 6 — <b>East Winds District</b>	Superintendent John Hice
District 7 — <b>Conference is May 12</b>	Superintendent Dwayne Bagley
District 8 — <b>Heritage District</b>	Superintendent Elizabeth Hill
District 9 — <b>Greater Detroit District</b>	Superintendent Charles Boayue

**The list of Heritage District Churches and Clergy will be posted on the district web site soon!**

## MAY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Gail & Tom Burdette
- 4 Julie Ann Pooley
- 9 Amy Starkey
- 10 Evans & Betsy Bentley
- 11 Dennis & Kelly Vergowven
- 13 Brad Luck
- 16 Devin Smith
- 18 Al Bamsey
- 18 Anne Hanna
- 19 Diane Griffin
- 19 Barbara & Gary Dawes
- 20 Janet Smith
- 22 Kevin & Diane Griffin
- 23 Jan & Pete Harris
- 24 Mark Spaw
- 24 Doug Olsen
- 25 Kevin Griffin
- 28 Todd & Cheryl Jones
- 30 Aimee Luck
- 30 Tina Zimmerman & Gregg Sucha
- 31 Gwen & Julius Nagy

# A MESSAGE BISHOP DAVID A. BARD

**BISHOP DAVID A. BARD...**

**...REFLECTS ON THE SCRIPTURAL VALUE OF LISTENING TO EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT**

*Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with – even when it seems they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.... Each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience. (Romans 14: 1, 5b, The Message)*

When I was the pastor of First United Methodist Church in Duluth, Minnesota, my congregation was gracious in giving me the opportunity to engage in some teaching at the College of St. Scholastica. A number of congregation members were faculty at the college, and the academic dean was a member when I arrived as pastor (she later moved away). She was the one who told me of the need at the school for someone to teach a course in health care ethics, and wondered if I would be interested. My doctoral degree happens to be in religious ethics, and though that was not my area of specialization, I was interested. The school, my congregation and my district superintendent all said “yes.”

For ten years I taught a course on religious perspectives in health care ethics. We read about and discussed fascinating and controversial topics such as abortion, physician-assisted suicide, end-of-life care and the distribution of health care resources. It was not uncommon for a student, in the midst of a discussion, to say, “well, everyone is entitled to their own opinion.” Everyone is entitled to her or his own opinion. This is true enough, and to the extent that the statement represents a willingness to listen to others respectfully, it is helpful. The statement also has limits. Sometimes it is simply used as a way to end conversation, and there are times when conversation needs to end, or at least, take a break. Sometimes people realize that at that moment nothing further is to be gained by continuing to talk.

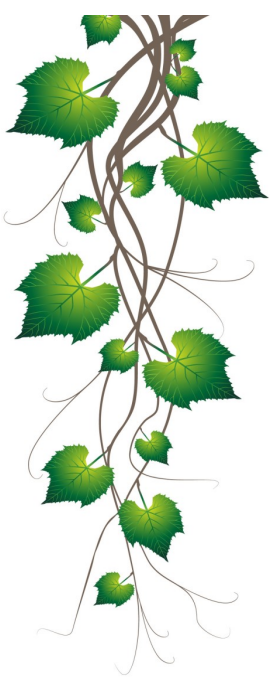
For the statement, “everyone is entitled to their own opinion” to be the final word in a conversation is not helpful. It fails to recognize that some opinions, some points of view, are more well-supported, more well-considered, more well-argued, than others. An important goal in teaching is to help students understand what a more well-considered, well-supported, well-argued opinion looks like. Given the level of discussion in our wider society, it might do us some good to think again about what a well-considered, well-supported and well-argued opinion looks like.

At the same time, while most of us like to think of the opinions we hold as well-supported, well-considered and well-argued, we would also do well to acknowledge that in many of the most important things we think about, there is always room for growth and new learning. Often well-considered, well-supported and well-argued opinions become so through shared conversation and dialogue. We should, then, be people who are open to new ideas, to new ways of looking at our lives and our faith, open to conversation and dialogue. From the very earliest days of the community of those who follow Jesus until now, there have been debates and differences of opinion. In Romans 14, Paul identifies the controversial issues as what to eat and when to worship. He encourages openness, kindness, gentleness – in short, humility.

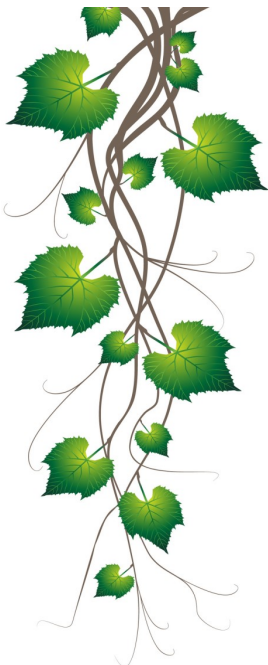
During Lent this year, I read Sister Joan Chittister's book Radical Spirit. I read it devotionally, that is, slowing, a little at a time, meditating and pondering along the way. Radical Spirit is Joan's reflection on the seventh chapter of The Rule of St. Benedict, a chapter about humility. Benedict offers 12 steps of humility, here is the eleventh: “The eleventh step of humility is that we speak gently and without laughter, seriously and with becoming modesty, briefly and reasonably, but without raising our voices.”

In her book, Joan writes about this step: “The eleventh step of humility, then, was far ahead of its time, far more about being humane than about merely being proper. This was a function of humility meant to bring people together in mutual respect” (p. 186). She goes on to reflect, “Speech in a Benedictine monastery, we're told here, is expected to be gentle, kind, serious, modest, brief, reasonable, calm, and emotionally controlled.... We are to be direct but kind. Always kind.” (186-187)

Later this month we gather for Annual Conference. We will continue the long tradition of the church of debating and discussing issues that are important for our life together and for what it means to be in ministry with and for Jesus Christ in our day and time. It is my hope and prayer that we will come together to present our best-considered and supported ideas. Even more, it is my hope that we will gather with a sense of humility, that sense that we can all learn and grow. If we come with humility, we will seek to speak gently, kindly, reasonably, and calmly. If we come with humility we will then also treat one another gently and kindly. One final note. As this essay is being made public, I will be meeting with the United Methodist Council of Bishops to discuss the report of the Commission on a Way Forward. I will do my best to be present at that meeting with humility – to speak gently, kindly, reasonably, and calmly, to listen knowing I have things to learn, and to treat others gently and with kindness, always kindness. Your prayers for our gathering are appreciated.



# AROUND THE DISTRICT



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## PORTABLE LABYRINTH PRAYER WALK AVAILABLE TO BORROW

*A Labyrinth is a path of prayer, a walking meditation. It is an ancient beautiful spiritual tool - a pattern, an emblem, a walkway.*

This Labyrinth is made of canvas with a 6 loop painted design. It is an 18 ft. square and includes PVC poles to aid in stability (poles break down into less than 6 ft. lengths). The canvas is fold-able and easily transported in any car. There is also an option to include a brief devotional booklet of which you can make additional copies. There is a modest donation of \$25 being asked for the use of the Labyrinth. The Labyrinth is available (just north of Howell) by contacting Rev. Paula Timm either via email, [revtime2011@att.net](mailto:revtime2011@att.net) or via phone at 989-712-0113.

## DONATE TO LULU UMC MISSION ~ WINGS: ANGEL TO ANGEL A MISSION OF THE LULU UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF IDA

This Mission provides homes for your gently used household items, clothes, books, toys, and more with the citizens of Ida and surrounding areas who are in need. Fresh produce and non-perishable food items are also given away as they are received. Donations are always gratefully accepted and distribution is one time per week on Tuesday, from 2:00 pm—5:00 pm at Lulu United Methodist Church located at 12810 Lulu Road in Ida, MI (at the corner of Douglas)  
Contact: Vicki Moree [vmoree@msn.com](mailto:vmoree@msn.com)

## 2ND REMINDER CHURCH LEADERSHIP UPDATES: EZRA (PRIOR TO JUNE 1)

Local churches it is **vitaly important** to update your leadership in Ezra prior to June 1! As we make the changes to become one Michigan Conference, having accurate leadership data is essential. At the very least, please make sure the positions below are correctly entered and with contact info:

- **S/PPRC Chair**
- **Treasurer**
- **Lay Member(s) to Annual Conference**
- **Lay Leader**
- **Trustee Chair**
- **Ad Bd/Council Chair**
- **Financial Secretary**
- **Mission Chair**
- **Christian Education Chair**
- **Church Staff (all applicable positions)**
- **Camping Coordinator**



If you need help, there are resources below to use or contact Dar in the District Office at [dmcgee@michiganumc.org](mailto:dmcgee@michiganumc.org). To view each resource, highlight each line, right click, right click again on open hyperlink.

- [Watch Screencast](#)
- [Ezra Dashboard Users Manual](#)
- [Ezra Role Glossary](#)
- [Ezra Leadership Positions Glossary](#)
- [Ezra Login](#)

## 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](http://ministrymentors.org) or by contacting Rev. Sherry Parker-Lewis at [sherry@brightonfumc.org](mailto:sherry@brightonfumc.org).

Ann Arbor District Office  
of the United Methodist Church  
900 S. Seventh St. Suite 1  
Ann Arbor MI 48103

**Return Service Requested**



**The Arbor Vine**

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