

August 2021

Sumner Center UMC Newsletter

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Sunday Worship 10:30 am in-person

Weekly Worship Services will also continue to be offered each Sunday via
Sumner Centers Facebook page

Pastor Bridget Sheely

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Pastors Notes... With all the distractions and confusions that we face today, it's easy to lose our way or take a wrong turn somewhere along the road. Whether it's wrong decision with career choices, relationships with friends and family or even in our relationship with God, we may lose our way at times.

But the wonder of God's grace is that He allows us and even guides us back into the right path. He does this through the Holy Spirit who gives us knowledge and wisdom to discern our own actions and thoughts — setting apart the traps from the road signs.

If you've lost your way, know that it's never too late to get right back on track. It starts with a simple decision of taking time at one point to sit down and reflect upon the aspects of your life, asking God whether you are going the direction He wants you to go in these areas.

How's your direction in finances, relationships, career, ministry or any other aspect for that matter? Are you on the right track or have you lost your way?

If you've gone one or two wrong turns, ask the Holy Spirit to give you guidance in returning back to Him.

I would like to share with you a few Bible scriptures that assure and help us in finding God's direction and will once more if you've lost your way. God be with you!

Colossians 1:9 "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

Acts 17:26-27 "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us."

Luke 14:28 "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?"

Lamentations 3:40 "Let us examine and probe our ways and let us return to the LORD."

Psalms 37:23-24 "The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he falls, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand."

Psalms 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you."

Deuteronomy 4:29 "But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul."

The Way to Start your Day...

Go outside and face the East and greet the Sun with a blessing, chant or song that you made yourself and keep for early mornings. Do not fret if you do not know how to make a song it is very simple. First, don't try to think what words to use until you're standing there alone. When you feel the Sun, you'll feel the blessing, chant or song too. Just open your heart and release it. You see, a morning needs to be greeted. A new day needs to be honored. It is our responsibility to welcome the Sun and create a good day for it. We must also make a good world for it to live in one day at a time. So, as you rise out of bed tomorrow remember to look to the East and offer your blessing. And if you are very lucky there may be a time when the sky thanks you back with colors of beauty and magic. **Now that's the way to start a day!**

Calendar of Events

(subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

August 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 10:30 am	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Worship 10:30 am	9 Book Study 1:30 @ SUMC or 6:30 Zoom	10	11	12	13	14
15 Worship 10:30 am	16 Book Study 1:30 @ SUMC or 6:30 Zoom	17	18	19	20	21
22 Worship 10:30 am	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Worship 10:30 am	30	31				

2021 conference highlights

Theme: Drawing on Matthew 11:30, the theme was “Jesus. Waymaker.” We were reminded that when we have lost our way or there seems to be no way, Jesus makes a way by inviting us to “come, follow me.”

Hybrid session: This year, two days of Annual Conference took place virtually via Zoom webinar, and attendees spent one day gathered in small groups at local church host sites across Minnesota. On the in-person day, they live streamed morning worship, heard a presentation about a Journey Toward Vitality map and discussed with each other where they saw themselves on that map and which new territories they might explore, and watched Rev. Rachel Billups’ teaching session while discussing in their small groups key questions she posed.

Racial justice resolution: By a vote of 313-28, Annual Conference members voted to adopt a resolution that all congregations in the Minnesota Annual Conference join in the work of dismantling racism, opposing white supremacy, and advocating for racial justice. The resolution was submitted by five conference teams, and before voting on it, members engaged in 30 minutes of “holy conferencing” to discuss it.

Bishop’s Episcopal Address: Since he was a boy, Bishop David Bard said he has been taken with the idea of new places and has loved maps. In his inaugural Episcopal Address, drawing on Mark 7: 24-30, he explored four lessons we can interpret from that text for the work of the church and our work as the Minnesota Conference: 1. Maps are both helpful and limited. 2. Lean into trauma. 3. Embrace new learning and be willing to cross boundaries. 4. Healing space is often created out of broken hearts. He pointed out that we have been working with a Journey Toward Vitality map as we navigate our future, and while it is beautiful, Minnesotans know firsthand the havoc that both winter and construction have on roads and we are sure to encounter some unexpected challenges. “And yet...we go this way together, welcoming any who will walk with us,” he said.

Teaching session with Rev. Rachel Billups: In a two-part teaching session, Rev. Rachel Billups—lead pastor at Ginghamburg Church in Tipp City, Ohio—shared some wisdom on how we can be peacemakers as we seek to bridge the significant divides around us. Ginghamburg has adopted four key practices for navigating difficult conversations: 1. Ask anything. 2. Listen well. 3. Freely disagree. 4. Love regardless. Billups also talked about how sharing our God stories is the best tool for discipleship and the best way to move our mission forward.

Through you, Jesus made a way: Attendees learned about how in and through Minnesota United Methodists, the Holy Spirit has broken through in miraculous ways over the past year despite the pandemic. From connecting with people in engaging new and socially distanced ways to protesting racial injustice to helping people access the COVID-19 vaccine, you have made a difference in your communities and served as a vital expression of the kingdom of God.

Missional Report: Conference attendees learned what their apportioned dollars have made possible and how the Minnesota Conference staff have pivoted and walked alongside churches over the difficult past year—from consulting on technology and providing videos for worship to helping churches apply for Payment Protection Plan loans and get donations to the United Methodist Committee on Relief to becoming more intentional around racial justice. Amid the challenges, we learned that when Jesus is our way, we find our way.

Ordination and commissioning: At a moving worship service, one person was ordained as an elder, one person's ordination was recognized and she was received as a full elder in The United Methodist Church, two people were commissioned as provisional elders, and one person was recognized for completing course of study. Drawing from Mark 6: 30-44, Bishop David Bard in his sermon reminded Minnesota United Methodists of the story of Jesus taking five loaves of bread and two fish and feeding the 5,000. He said magic happens when we are present in our situation, when we offer our best and give what we have, and when we turn to Jesus who is always with us.

Laity Session: How do you break through gridlock and have conversations in a new way? That's the question that two presenters from nonprofit LeaderWise explored during the Laity Session. They shared three ways to move difficult conversations forward and deepen relationships: 1. Identify the moral convictions and the scope we bring to the conversation. 2. Connect to our motivations. 3. Understand which types of "bait" you fall for.

Conference approves racial justice resolution



By: Christa Meland

On the final day of the 2021 Minnesota Annual Conference Session, nearly 400 members in attendance approved by a vote of 313-28 a resolution that all congregations in the Minnesota Annual Conference join in the national denominational agency work of the General Commission on Race and Religion (GCORR) and the General Board of Church and Society, the denominational work of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the ongoing efforts of ecumenical

partners in dismantling racism, opposing white supremacy, and advocating for racial justice.

Suggested ways to join in these initiatives, as named in the resolution, include applying for a [Minnesota Church and Society grant](#) to do a group study on racial justice in your congregation, engaging in a [GCORR dismantling racism curriculum and campaign](#), partnering with the Minnesota Conference's [newly hired racial justice organizer](#), creating a congregational Race and Religion Team to engage in anti-racism education within the church and outreach in the church's community, and participating in acts of repentance, such as returning human remains or artifacts sacred to indigenous peoples in Minnesota.

The resolution was submitted by five conference teams: the Minnesota Church and Society Ministry Team, Minnesota Commission on the Status and Role of Women, Minnesota United Methodist Women, the Minnesota Committee on Native American Ministry, and the Minnesota Committee on Religion and Race. These groups pointed out in the resolution that it aligns with [The United Methodist Church's Stand Against Racism](#) as well as the [Minnesota Conference's aspirational vision](#), which articulates a Methodism that is rooted in Jesus, grounded in Wesleyan theology, inclusive of all, and engaged in the work of justice and reconciliation.

"The events over the past 13 months have really brought racial inequities to the forefront," said Gail Chalbi, chair of the Minnesota Church and Society Team, who introduced the legislation live before conference attendees. "I never thought of myself as racist, but after watching videos, reading books, and taking part in seminars, I realized that I wasn't acting as an anti-racist. It wasn't due to not caring, but because of ignorance. Just as women could not give themselves the right to vote, our black and brown brothers and sisters cannot be the ones to give themselves equality...Those of us with white

privilege need to educate ourselves and others on the racial disparities, the history of racism, systemic racism, and what white privilege means. That is what this resolution is endeavoring to do.”

Before voting on the resolution, members engaged in 30 minutes of “holy conferencing” to discuss it. Holy conferencing is a means of grace that involves entering into community (in this case, conversation) with the purpose of thoughtful, prayerful, respectful discourse and discernment while seeking spiritual encouragement and instruction.

Seventeen people spoke to the resolution, most of whom affirmed it.

“This is what Jesus modeled for us—he never left anyone out,” said Carol Egan, a lay member of St. Paul’s UMC in Mendota Heights. “That’s what we want to do too: to love the way he does.”

Many noted that the church not only should, but must, take an active role in dismantling racism.

“The authenticity and the integrity of our witness going forward as a church in 2021 really rests on our ability to handle and approach anti-racism well,” said Rev. Tyler Sit, who serves New City Church in Minneapolis and encourages us to approach racial justice efforts not as an extra-curricular activity or committee obligation but rather as “ongoing work of repentance and repair that is essential and core to Christian spirituality.”

Rev. Eric Shin, who serves Discovery UMC in Chanhassen and Korean Evangelical UMC in Hopkins, pointed out that racism is very much alive within the church.

“Not only do we face racism out in our society but also in our churches and possibly in our conference,” he said. “What type of racist practices do we have even in our own institution? I’d love to explore that some more and to see how we can dismantle racism in our society but also in the church as well.”

Rev. Chris Carr, pastor of youth ministries at Lake Harriet UMC in Minneapolis, said for those of us with privilege, this resolution provides an opportunity to take on a Christ-like mentality of humility and enter into conversation without getting stuck in places of guilt or defensiveness but instead live into our full personhood in the body of Christ.

Additional legislation

Members approved [all pieces of legislation](#) before them. Another item of note was the 2022 apportioned budget, which passed by a margin of 336-1. The 2022 budget totals \$5,525,000, which represents a reduction of \$454,000, or 7 percent, from the 2021 approved budget. With an “uncollectible contingency” of \$375,000, the total to be apportioned is \$5,900,000. The uncollectible contingency accommodates anticipated shortfalls in some churches’ apportionment payments.

The budget was recommended to members by the conference Council on Finance and Administration (CFA). While the budget will continue to support our current level of ministry and service during this “gap period” until the General Conference meets in 2022, it also recognizes budget constraints of local churches. The budget reduction was made possible because of significant investment reserve returns over the past year. Portions of the 2022 budget and a significant amount of the uncollectible contingency were funded by a combination of investment earnings and reserves.



Places in the Bible Word Search



P U M X M P B O D Z H T D Q H
J N A Y K E H Z B N E O B T J
V E M S I C L H T G A N K H J
D C T O I B V A E W V E E A A
O Y Y R D I P T S V E D K R R
V Q E P X O H S O U N E K R B
C J Y S R S S Y H B R K U O C
U Y B R E U L E B A B E Z M J
Z T T M S C S T B D Z T J O B
F U A M E H E L H T E B R G I
V N Z P X I U H Q X C D S X W
E E V M M N M S G Y A D C H M
Y A B A A S H S F N Q E D T Y
Y B I E L I P J B Z O J B O K
C X X V R C Z I S R A E L A C

BABEL

BETHLEHEM

CYPRUS

EDEN

GETHSEMANE

GOMORRAH

HEAVEN

ISRAEL

JERICHO

JERUSALEM

JORDAN

SODOM

SCRIPTURE MASTERY PUZZLES

New Testament Scripture Mastery

Draw a line from the scripture to the words matching the correct scripture mastery scripture.

Matthew 5:14-16

Matthew 6:24

Matthew 16:15-19

Matthew 25:40

Luke 24:36-39

John 3:5

John 7:17

John 10:16

John 14:15

John 17:3

Acts 7:55-56

Romans 1:16

1 Corinthians 10:13

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

1 Corinthians 15:29

1 Corinthians 15:40-42

Ephesians 4:11-14

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

2 Timothy 3:1-5

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Hebrews 5:4

James 1:5-6

James 2:17-18

Revelation 14:6-7

Revelation 20:12-13

Whom say ye that I am

Ye have done it unto me

No man can serve two masters

A spirit hath not flesh and bones

Let your light so shine

I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man

I am not ashamed

That ye may be able to bear it

Born of water and of the Spirit

He shall know of the doctrine

Which are not of this fold

If ye love me

The only true God

There are also celestial bodies

In Adam all die

if the dead rise not at all?

Let him ask of God

Until we all come in the unity of the faith

Except there come a falling away first

I will shew thee my faith by my works

Angel fly in the midst of heaven

Perilous times shall come

The dead were judged out of those things

He that is called of God, as was Aaron

All scripture is given by inspiration of God