



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING GENERAL CONFERENCE DECISIONS

Please see Pages 5 & 6.

POST GENERAL CONFERENCE WEBINARS

The Susquehanna Conference delegation is hosting two post-General Conference webinars to share the most important takeaways from General Conference and answer questions that you may have.

You **MUST** register to receive the webinar link. Feel free to register individually or as a congregation! These webinars are scheduled for:

Thursday May 16 (7 - 8 pm)

Tuesday May 21 (12 - 1 pm)

Note: If you have specific questions regarding General Conference, please submit them using the "Questions & Comments" field on the registration form.

NEW HEALTH INSURANCE WEBSITE

For full-time clergy enrolled in our Conference Health Insurance, there is a new website where your family can access their health insurance: mywespathhealth.com

This is your one stop shop for ID cards, claims summaries, provider searches, and wellness benefits. The old site, through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, has been disabled for our participants. Clergy themselves can still access their health benefits at my.benefitsaccess.org

COLLECTING ITEMS FOR MISSION CENTRAL CARE KITS

This year we are collecting items for Care Kits for Mission Central. **You are invited as a Church to collect items and have your pastor or lay delegate bring them to Annual Conference.** There will be a place in the Grand Ballroom at the Genetti to drop off donations as well as assemble kits from the collected items.

Each Supervisory Area is asked to provide items used to build the Care Kits. For more details on the specification of items, please follow this link <https://missioncentral.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Mission-Central-CARE-Kit-Instructions.pdf>.

There are 593 United Methodist Churches in the Susquehanna Conference. Our goal is to bring enough supplies to make 1000 kits so that as a Conference we can be a blessing to others.

ELEVATOR INSPECTION & TESTING

In addition to regular maintenance, elevators are subject to state-required inspections every six (6) months and hydraulic tests every three (3) years.

A SUMMER TO REMEMBER AWAITS!

We are so excited to share that REGISTRATION IS OPEN for the 2024 event year! You can register online through our website or by paper registration form. Have questions? Email camps@susumc.org.

BACKPACK TRIP FOR CLERGY/PASTORAL LEADERS

Deep Green Journey, an extension ministry here in the Susquehanna Conference, invites all pastoral leaders (clergy, CLM's) to come enjoy an overnight adventure in the beautiful mountains of PA. This backpack trip is designed for beginners or seasoned backpackers just interested in spending some time away from the office, learning and laughing around the campfire and simply enjoying some time apart. We will be hiking in the Michaux State Forest on the Rocky Knob loop, approximately 6 miles total with moderate elevation. All equipment and food is provided. Beth Jones, director of Deep Green Journey will guide our time together.

Please go to the DEEP GREEN JOURNEY website at: <https://www.deepgreenjourney.com/> for more information.

MISSION u 2024

This year's theme, Welcome Home is an adult curriculum that explores how we can know God as an intimate friend who welcomes us. Abiding in God's safety and dwelling in God's provision, allows us to open our hearts to a fuller embrace of the power and presence of God so that we may find our home in God. Participants are invited to dig deeper into what it means to live in the kin-dom of God and how this helps us to develop practices for building and existing in healthier communities.

This will be presented in a two-day school July 12-13 at Country Cupboard Inn, Lewisburg. One day events on July 11 at Country Cupboard Inn, Lewisburg and on July 27 at Chambers Hill UMC. Online school is July 2, 9, 16, 23. Online registration opens on April 30, 2024.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Rev. Robert Wallace
- 11 Pastor Carol Haas
- 12 Rev. Kermit Shrawder
- 15 Mrs. Lynn Rice
- 23 Mrs. Janice Sunderland
- Rev. John Bondhus
- Rev. Greg Rapp
- Rev. Dr. Michael Stine
- 30 Mrs. Sally Gardy
- 31 Mrs. Karlen Light



MAY ANNIVERSARIES

- 3 Rev. David & Soonseeah Trostle
- 8 Pastor Scott & Ronnia Ryan
- 9 Rev. Franklin & Linda Helt
- 19 Pastor Eric & Karlen Light
- 28 Rev. Dr. Paul & Kadiatu Amara - **30th!**
- 31 Rev. Jane O'Borski & Mr. Drew Cottle - **10th!**
- Rev. David & Jean Shultz



FAREWELL GATHERING

A service of celebration and thanksgiving for Paul's ministry among us

Sunday, May 19, 2024

Wellsboro UMC, 36 Main Street, Wellsboro, PA 16901

Service at 3:00 pm

Reception to follow



This farewell gathering for Paul and Kadie is **open to everyone but please be sure to register**. You can share this invitation with your church(es). **Please contact the District Office (570-323-7452 or williamsport@susumc.org) to register. Deadline to register is Friday, May 10.**

YPMC MISSION TRIP TO MCCURDY MINISTRIES

The Young People's Ministry Council (YPMC) is co-sponsoring a mission trip to McCurdy Ministries in Espanola, New Mexico this year! This trip is open to youth, youth workers, and other persons interested in experiencing a deeply meaningful mission opportunity and learning how to lead mission trips and groups at the same time. This is a very special avenue to serve and grow in leadership. The trip dates will be August 3-10. The subsidized cost is only \$500 which covers airfare also.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Choir Director for Saint John's – Newberry United Methodist Church, 2101 Newberry Street, Williamsport. Part time position to direct an adult and youth vocal choir and oversee other aspects of music ministry. Salary negotiable and commensurate with experience. Employment application required. Application and job description are available by contacting the church office 570-326-5569 Monday through Thursday or visit the church website www.stjnumc.com. PA state clearances and FBI fingerprint clearances required.

CREATIVE ARTS WORSHIP DIRECTOR

The role of the Creative Arts Worship Director is to provide leadership, vision, and oversight in the areas of contemporary worship. You will work closely with the Pastor and partner with and recruit music teams, sound/media teams and other programming. Leading worship on Sunday mornings is a must. This is a part-time position. View full job description at www.pinestreetumc.org. Resumes accepted at 441 Pine Street, Wmspt, PA or office@pinestreetumc.org. Please contact Pastor James Wooster @ (570) 323-4604 with questions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BBQ CHICKEN FUNDRAISER

Thursday, May 16 from 4:00 – 7:15 PM - \$15 (tip not included)

Eat & Run Catering Restaurant – Water Tower Square, 1000 Commerce Park Dr, Suite 107, Williamsport
Benefits: SW Christians Helping Honduras. **Please see attachment for full details...**

3rd ANNUAL MINI GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thursday, June 20, 2024 at Hoopla's Family Fun & Longshots Grill, 1277 Lycoming Mall Circle, Muncy. 100% of the funds raised will be used to support the Happy World School in San Marcos de Colon, Honduras. Sponsored by SW Christians Helping Honduras. **Please see attachment for full details...**

LYCOMING COUNTY FAIR VESPER SERVICE

Sunday, July 14, 2024

I am in need of Pastors, Choirs, and/or Praise Bands to participate. Please contact Pastor Tammy Seyler at tseyler@susum.org or 570-850-2637.



PAUL & KADIE

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DISTRICT OFFICE HOURS

Monday –
Thursday 9:00
AM – 3:00 PM
Closed Fridays



To be removed from this mailing, please email: williamsport@susumc.org



Special Announcement Regarding General Conference Decisions

May 1, 2024

Dear Siblings in Christ of the Susquehanna Annual Conference,

After years of intensive and prayerful debate, the General Conference delegates from all over the world voted to remove language that prohibited United Methodist clergy from performing weddings for same-gender couples. **This change allows churches and clergy to operate according to their conscience, without consequence.**

There are some important things about this decision that we want you to know. First, **pastors have always decided who they will marry.** This is based on several factors including the couples' preparation for the marriage covenant. This has not changed.

Pastors will continue to decide who they will marry. No one will force a pastor to officiate a marriage ceremony for any couple.

Second, **churches will continue to determine what weddings are held in their church buildings.** This is the decision of the local church's Board of Trustees. Further, the desires of all clergy and congregations in this matter are to be honored and not judged by others.

Specifically, the change will include new language in ¶ 419.12 Book of Discipline that states:

13 The superintendent shall not penalize any clergy from performing, or refraining from performing, -sex marriage service.



14. The superintendent shall neither require any local church to hold or prohibit a local church from holding a same-sex marriage service on property owned by a local church.

We know that different people have different opinions on these matters and the diversity of perspectives needs to be respected.

The delegates of the General Conference also voted to remove prohibitions that prevented a Board of Ordained Ministry from recommending a gay or lesbian person for ordination. Gay persons may enter the process to become candidates for ministry, and if approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, can now be licensed, commissioned, and ordained.

Please be assured that the Bishop and Cabinet will continue to work with churches and clergy to ensure we have the best match possible when making appointments.

We want everyone to have a **VITAL** ministry, not a ministry defined by conflict. We have always worked to place all pastors in appointments where they will be accepted and will be able to work in partnership with the laity to further the mission of Jesus Christ. Our commitment to the local church and the mission of Christ has not changed. Your district superintendent will continue to be your primary contact on appointment related issues.

These recent decisions at the General Conference, reinforce the primacy of God's love in our lives and the world, and add complexity to our life together as United Methodists.

We realize this General Conference decision may bring about various emotions and reactions within our congregations and the broader denomination. There will no doubt be some who are disheartened and pained by this decision as well as some who welcome it. As we collaborate and work together, we feel sure that we can navigate the complexity and respect one another.

The removal of the language around human sexuality returns us to the Book of Discipline that we have had from the founding of the church in 1784 until 1972 when the General Conference first added the restrictive measures into the Book of Discipline.

As United Methodists in the Susquehanna Conference, we remain committed to upholding our Wesleyan values of love, grace, and inclusivity. While we may not all agree on every issue, we are called to continue embodying the love of Christ in our interactions with one another. We invite you to strive to maintain a spirit of unity. Our unity is in Christ and therefore, it is more important than ever to engage in respectful dialogue, compassionate listening, and prayerful practice with one another.

The church is the only institution that exists for those who are not yet a part of it. It exists so others can come to know Christ. It exists to make disciples. Our communion table is open, and so are our hearts. We have important work to do - together. Without fear, and with the joy of the Lord, let's get to the work Jesus calls us to do. Let us be people who share the transforming power of Christ with the world.

In Ministry with you,

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball & Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi
Resident Bishops

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