

Community United Methodist Church NIC AC Delegation
Reflections on the 178th Session of the Northern Illinois Conference Annual Conference
June 4-6, 2017, Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois

Your Community UMC delegation, consisting of Carl Gilmore, David Hollander, Susan Keaton, Mary Markwell, (and George Groves as the Aurora District UMM president), along with Pastor Tom Rawlinson, return from Annual Conference ready to “let light shine out of darkness” in the work of CUMC ministries.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Annual Conference of the Northern Illinois Conference convened this year with acknowledgements of joy, anxiety, despair, and hope. The theme this year was “light shines through...” and throughout the conference there were references to the fact that there are cracks in everything, but it is through these cracks that the light shines. Bishop Sally Dyck was unequivocal in her expectation that the denomination is stronger as one, and counseled against seeking schism. In the midst of our denominational uncertainty, Bishop Dyck commended to each church the book, *Unity of the Church and Human Sexuality*. Each church is to receive a copy provided by the conference. In her episcopal address, Bishop Dyck quoted a French adage, saying “the hour calls for optimism; we’ll save pessimism for better times.”

There was joy in watching the ordination of Mary Rawlinson as a deacon, and in the commissioning of M Barclay as a deacon. There was joy in the news of our continued full participation in the apportionment and the Rainbow Covenant. At the Reconciling Ministries/MFSA dinner we received a certificate acknowledging our becoming a reconciling congregation this past year. We celebrated 150 years of the United Methodist Women. We enjoyed the leadership of Margaret Ann Crain and Jack Seymour, who again led us in bible study. We marveled that the Bishop’s Appeal on behalf of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund raised over \$70,000.

The Northern Illinois Conference Annual Conference voted to support a reorganization of the conference, which will be implemented over the next five months. It is anticipated that the first meetings under the new Conference Shepherding Teams will commence in November 2017. Finally, the conference budget of \$6.6 million was presented and approved at Annual Conference.

The CUMC lay delegation to Annual Conference looks forward to scheduling with the pastors a fall meeting to share additional details of the Annual Conference gathering.